# Community Homelessness Report Summary Niagara Region 2023-2024

The Community Homelessness Report (CHR) is an annual Reaching Home reporting deliverable that supports communities to prevent and reduce homelessness using a more coordinated, systems-based and data-driven response. The CHR was designed to support local discussions and decision making, using all of the information about homelessness currently available at the community level. Communities are encouraged to use their CHR data to develop clear plans of action that help them to reach their homelessness reduction targets and to leverage the collective efforts of service providers working across the community, regardless of how they are funded.

## This is a summary of the CHR for the 2022-23 reporting cycle.

It shows the community's self-assessment of Reaching Home implementation, which includes the following key components:

  • meaningful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners (see Section 1);

  • community-level governance, coordinated service delivery (Coordinated Access) and use of a Homelessness Management Information System or HMIS (see Section 2); and,

  • an outcomes-based approach (tracking community-level outcomes and progress against targets using a Unique Identifier or By-Name List, referred to as a List; see Section 3).

If the community was able to report on outcomes and targets, this CHR Summary also includes results for each of the five core outcomes of Reaching Home (see Section 4).

## Section 1. Community Context – Collaboration between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Partners

Does your community, as a Designated Community (DC), also receive Reaching Home Indigenous Homelessness (IH) funding? **Yes – DC and IH funding streams co-exist.**

Specific to Coordinated Access and the HMIS, has there been ongoing, meaningful collaboration  between the DC CE and the IH CE and/or IH CAB over the reporting period? **No**

**Describe how this collaboration will happen over the coming year in more detail.**

The chair of the Niagara Indigenous Community Advisory Board (NICAB) participates regularly in Niagara Region's Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings. Also, a staff member from Niagara Region's Homelessness Services team has been invited to be present for meetings of the NICAB moving forward. These connections are intended to increase communication, understanding, and collaboration between Niagara Region and the NICAB, including discussions about Coordinated Access and an HMIS.

Two pilot projects (Indigenous Street Outreach Worker and Indigenous Housing First Intensive Case Manager) are to be launched in the first half of 2023 through collaboration between Niagara Region and the Niagara Regional Native Centre (NRNC). Staff from both pilot projects will be provided access to Niagara's HIFIS database, with a data sharing agreement in place. These programs will not be required to store service information within HIFIS following OCAP principles. Providing Indigenous providers access to information in HIFIS will support a coordinated approach to service access and delivery.

The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) is the IH CE for Niagara. OFIFC staff will be consulted about data collection related to Coordinated Access development, including the use of HIFIS. Upcoming collaboration and conversations are planned related to the use of HIFIS for the pilot projects.

Niagara Region staff, including Homelessness Services' data advisors, will be available as appropriate, to support data collection and sharing for the pilot projects, or at the request of the NICAB.


Specific to Coordinated Access and the HMIS, has there been ongoing, meaningful collaboration between the DC or Territorial Homelessness (TH) CE and local Indigenous organizations over the reporting period?          **No**

**Describe how this collaboration will happen over the coming year in more detail.**

The chair of the Niagara Indigenous Community Advisory Board (NICAB) participates regularly in Niagara Region's Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings. Also, Niagara Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Advisor has been invited to be present for meetings of the NICAB moving forward. These connections are intended to increase communication, understanding, and collaboration between Niagara Region and the NICAB, including discussions about Coordinated Access and an HMIS.

Niagara Region is initiating work in 2023 to develop a ten-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) for the period of 2024 to 2033. The NICAB will be engaged to determine how best to engage with Indigenous organizations and Indigenous community members in the development of the new Action Plan. Indigenous organizations are currently represented in the

HHAP Task Force, as well as the following HHAP Working Groups: Housing Focused Shelter, Supported Transitional Housing, Housing Affordability Innovation, and Housing Provider Advisory. The development of Niagara's Coordinated Access system and the use of Niagara's By-Name List are critical to the work of the HHAP and relate to every HHAP Task Force.

As indicated in 1.3 above, Niagara Region will be supporting two pilot projects with the Niagara Regional Native Centre (NRNC) for the remainder of 2023. These pilots provide an opportunity to test the coordination of Region-funded homelessness programs with existing Indigenous programs including Abbey House. The first pilot project is an Indigenous Assertive Street Outreach Worker who will provide support to Indigenous people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Niagara. The worker will report to the Niagara Regional Native Centre (NRNC) and collaborate with Indigenous providers and programs and the Niagara Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) team. The second pilot project is an Indigenous Housing First Intensive Case Manager with a case load of fifteen. This worker will also report to NRNC and collaborate with Indigenous providers and programs, and the Housing First team. Both programs will be provided access to Niagara Region's HIFIS database, with a data sharing agreement in place. However, they will not be required to store service information within HIFIS in accordance with OCAP principles. Pilot project staff access to HIFIS data will support a coordinated access approach to service delivery. Additionally, the Housing First pilot will test a shift from prioritizing Indigenous people for access to non-Indigenous programs to providing Region support for dedicated caseloads in Indigenous programs. These pilots will also provide an opportunity to strengthen relationships and further identify and address Niagara Region policies that create barriers for engagement, capacity building, initiatives, innovation, and solutions to homelessness for Indigenous people.

Additional opportunities for collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous providers and programs will be sought during 2023. The NICAB has indicated that in the future it would prefer to be the flow through for Niagara Region funding designated for Indigenous-led initiatives, and decide how that funding is invested.

Indigenous providers are requesting that Niagara Region use a holistic approach to addressing homelessness that touches on other areas such as poverty reduction, health and mental health, and land use policies.

In preparation for the upcoming funding allocation process for homelessness services, Niagara Region will explore the opportunity to provide a proportional share of funding for use to support and build enhanced capacity for local Indigenous-created and -led Housing and Homelessness Initiatives.

With respect to the completion of the Community Homelessness Report (CHR), was there ongoing, meaningful collaboration between local Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and, where applicable, the IH CE and/or IH CAB?        **No**

**What is the plan to ensure meaningful collaboration occurs during next year's CHR process?**

As described in 1.3 and 1.4 above, engagement between the Niagara Indigenous Community Advisory Board and Niagara Region will continue through 2023, including the engagement of Indigenous organizations and Indigenous community members in Niagara Region's service and system planning, as determined appropriate by the NICAB.

It is anticipated that Reaching Home reporting will grow out of the planned collaborations launching in the first half of 2023, with engagement occurring on an ongoing basis throughout 2023. An assessment of the quality of engagement will occur at the end of 2023 to reflect together on whether the engagement between the NICAB and Niagara Region has been purposeful, inclusive, transformative, and proactive.

It is worth mentioning that short time periods provided for both reporting and responding to funding opportunities hinder the relationship between Niagara Region and Indigenous partners.

Does your community have a separate IH CAB?     **Yes**

# Section 2. Coordinated Access and Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) Self-Assessment
**Summary Tables**

The table below provides a summary of the work your community has done so far to meet the Reaching Home minimum requirements for Coordinated Access and an HMIS.

|  | Met | Started | Not Yet Started |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of minimum requirements** | 18 | 0 | 0 |

The table below shows the percentage of minimum requirements completed for each core Coordinated Access component.

| Governance | HMIS | Access Points to Service | Triage and Assessment | Coordinated Access Resource Inventory | Vacancy Matching and Referral |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

**Summary Comment**

**Are there particular efforts and/or issues that you would like to highlight for this reporting period related to your community's work to achieve the Reaching Home minimum requirements?**

Niagara Region achieved Reaching Home Coordinated Access in November 2022.

Document readiness has been incorporated into our By-Name List utilizing HIFIS custom table functionality to add a form onto client's profiles. Program engagement and offers of housing resources are being recorded utilizing a new goal called Coordinated Access Connection to record and monitor offer progress and outcomes.

Niagara has focused on ending veteran homelessness since 2021 with an aim to reach Veteran Functional Zero by Summer of 2023. Using Built For Zero-Canada Accelerator Funds from True Patriot Love, our Assertive Street Outreach team is piloting a Veteran Support Worker position from November 2022 to June 2023. The Worker is a 45-year military career veteran (important lived experience to increase rapport building). Niagara has strong partnerships with the dedicated local Royal Canadian Legion team and Veteran Affairs Canada, including weekly connection points / case conferencing. Through the work to end veteran homelessness, we are learning how focusing on a specific population could be applied to another population group in the future.

We have continuous lived expertise participation at our Built for Zero home team and HHAP Task Force. Our Coordinated Access Guide was endorsed by our Home Team. The lived expert advisory is consulted regularly about system changes and policies. Additionally in 2022 and 2023, lived expert advisory members were provided access to third party peer support training. In 2023, a peer support worker will be piloted with NASO.

# Section 3. Outcomes-Based Approach Self-Assessment

**Summary Tables – Minimum Requirement**

The tables below provide a summary of the work your community has done so far to transition to an outcomes-based approach under Reaching Home.

| Step 1:<br><br>Has a List | Step 2:<br><br>Has a real-time List | Step 3:<br><br>Has a comprehensive List |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | Yes | Yes |

**Step 4: Can report monthly outcomes and set targets using data from the List**

**(reporting in Section 4 is mandatory for 2023-24 CHRs, if not earlier)**

| List was in place as of January 1, 2023 (or earlier) | Can generate monthly data | Has set targets | Has an outcomes-based approach in place |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | Outcome 1: Yes | Outcome 1: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 2: Yes | Outcome 2: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 3: Yes | Outcome 3: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 4: Yes | Outcome 4: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 5: Yes | Outcome 5: Yes | Yes |

**Step 4: Can report annual outcomes and set targets using data from the List (reporting in Section 4 is mandatory once annual data can be generated)**

| List was in place as of April 1, 2022 (or earlier) | Can generate annual data | Has set targets | Has an outcomes-based approach in place |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | Outcome 1: Yes | Outcome 1: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 2: Yes | Outcome 2: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 3: Yes | Outcome 3: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 4: Yes | Outcome 4: Yes | Yes |
| Yes | Outcome 5: Yes | Outcome 5: Yes | Yes |

**Summary Comment**

**Are there particular efforts and/or issues that you would like to highlight for this reporting period related to your community's work to transition to an outcomes-based approach under Reaching Home?**

In the past year, Niagara has enhanced the data available on the By-Name List to include the following indicators:

-number of days logged in the housing history in the past three years

-client document readiness: yes, no, partial

-client forms of identification available

-client has proof of income: yes, no

-client's preferred municipality/ies for housing

-client's preferred unit type(s) for housing

-client's accessibility considerations for housing

Niagara recently completed the policy and procedure for sharing the By-Name List with service providers and is in the process of rolling these out. The purpose of sharing the By-Name List at this time is to improve data quality.

**More information about the Unique Identifier List**

**Step 1. Have a List**

Where does data for the List come from?          **HIFIS**

**Please describe how the List is created using HIFIS:**

Niagara's list is a custom report of HIFIS data generated through Structured Query Language (SQL) code.

**Step 1. Have a List (cont.)**

**For the List, does the community have…**

| | |
|---|---|
| A written policy/protocol that describes how interaction with the homeless-serving system is documented | Yes |
| A written policy/protocol that describes how housing history is documented. | Yes |

**Chronic Homelessness**

| | |
|---|---|
| X | Federal Definition |
| | Local Definition |

**From the List, can the community get data for…**

| | |
|---|---|
| Newly identified on the List | Yes |
| Activity and inactivity | Yes |
| Housing history | Yes |

**From the List, can the community get demographic data for…**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Age** | **Yes** |
| **Household Type** | **Yes** |
| **Gender Identity** | **Yes** |
| **Indigenous Identity** | **Yes** |
| **Veteran Status** | **Yes** |

**Step 2. Have a real-time List**

How often is information about people experiencing homelessness updated on the List? **Daily**

Is people's interaction with the homeless-serving system (activity and inactivity) updated regularly on the List?        **Yes**

Is housing history updated regularly on the List?        **Yes**

Is there a process in place for keeping chronic homelessness status on the List up-to-date?        **Yes**


**Step 3. Have a comprehensive List**

Does the community have a document that identifies and describes all of the service providers that help people experiencing homelessness with their housing challenges?        **Yes**

**Optional question: How does data from the List compare to other community-level data sources that are considered accurate or valid? This is an optional follow-up question for communities that have completed the "Understanding Community-Level Data" worksheet.**

Niagara's By-Name List is far and away the most comprehensive source of homelessness data available in the community.

**Step 4. Track outcomes and progress against targets using data from the List**

Does the List meet the benchmark of a "Quality By-Name List" confirmed by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness?   **Yes**

# Section 4. Community-Level Outcomes and Targets – Monthly

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level outcomes for the reporting period.

**Outcome #1: Fewer people experience homelessness (homelessness is reduced overall)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly

|  | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | March 2023 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that month) | 1097 | 923 | 947 | 1083 | 870 |

|  | March 2024 | March 2025 | March 2026 | March 2027 | March 2028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that month) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #1 (monthly):**

**Please provide contact about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS "Community Homelessness Report" used to generate data for this outcome? **Yes**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?        **Yes**

**Outcome #2: Fewer people were newly identified (new inflows to homelessness are reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #2 for the reporting period.

|  | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | March 2023 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who were newly identified (that month) | 190 | 109 | 118 | 118 | 100 |

|  | March 2024 | March 2025 | March 2026 | March 2027 | March 2028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who were newly identified (that month) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #2 (monthly):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Repor**t" used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

**Outcome #3: Fewer People return to homelessness (returns to homelessness are reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #3 for the reporting period.

|  | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | March 2023 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Returns to homelessness (that month) | 8 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 20 |

|  | March 2024 | March 2025 | March 2026 | March 2027 | March 2028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Returns to homelessness (that month) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #3 (monthly):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?          **Yes**

**Outcome #4: Fewer Indigenous peoples experience homelessness (Indigenous homelessness is reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #4 for the reporting period.

|  | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | March 2023 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indigenous peoples who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that month) | 111 | 95 | 114 | 130 | 111 |

|  | March 2024 | March 2025 | March 2026 | March 2027 | March 2028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indigenous peoples who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that month) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #4 (monthly):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?          **Yes**

**Outcome #5: Fewer people experience chronic homelessness (chronic homelessness is reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #5 for the reporting period.

|  | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 | March 2023 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced chronic homelessness for at least one day (that month) | 208 | 343 | 453 | 505 | 129 |

|  | March 2024 | March 2025 | March 2026 | March 2027 | March 2028 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced chronic homelessness for at least one day (that month) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #5 (monthly):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?        **Yes**

# Section 4. Community-Level Outcomes and Targets – Annual

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report annual community-level outcomes for the reporting period.

**Outcome #1: Fewer people experience homelessness (homelessness is reduced overall)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #1 for the reporting period.

|  | **2019-20** | **2020-21** | **2021-22** | **2022-23** | **Target** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that year) | Not applicable | 2393 | 2493 | 2802 | 2000 |

|  | **2023-24** | **2024-25** | **2025-26** | **2026-27** | **2027-28** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that year) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #1 (annual):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?      **Yes**

**Outcome #2: Fewer people were newly identified (new inflows to homelessness are reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #2 for the reporting period.

|  | **2019-20** | **2020-21** | **2021-22** | **2022-23** | **Target** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who were newly identified (that year) | Not applicable | 994 | 1192 | 1362 | 1000 |

|  | **2023-24** | **2024-25** | **2025-26** | **2026-27** | **2027-28** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who were newly identified (that year) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #2 (annual):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?        **Yes**

**Outcome #3: Fewer people return to homelessness (returns to homelessness are reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #3 for the reporting period.

|  | **2019-20** | **2020-21** | **2021-22** | **2022-23** | **Target** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Returns to homelessness (that year) | Not applicable | 140 | 202 | 230 | 200 |

| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Returns to homelessness (that year) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #3 (annual):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?        **Yes**

**Outcome #4: Fewer Indigenous peoples experience homelessness (Indigenous homelessness is reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #4 for the reporting period.

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indigenous peoples who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that year) | Not applicable | 239 | 270 | 318 | 248 |

| | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indigenous peoples who experienced homelessness for at least one day (that year) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #4 (annual):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?          **Yes**

**Outcome #5: Fewer people experience chronic homelessness (chronic homelessness is reduced)**

Based on the information provided in the Community Homelessness Report, the community does not have to report monthly community-level data for Outcome #5 for the reporting period.

|  | **2019-20** | **2020-21** | **2021-22** | **2022-23** | **Target** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced chronic homelessness for at least one day (that year) | Not applicable | 753 | 983 | 1217 | 396 |

|  | **2023-24** | **2024-25** | **2025-26** | **2026-27** | **2027-28** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People who experienced chronic homelessness for at least one day (that year) | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |

**Context for Outcome #5 (annual):**

**Please provide context about your results, as applicable.**

Data from previous CHRs have changed because duplicate client profiles were merged and those who did not provide consent were excluded (applied to all years).

Was the HIFIS **"Community Homelessness Report"** used to generate data for this outcome? **No**

Was the federal standard for calculating this outcome used (see Annex A)?      **Yes**