

Niagara Region's

# Strategy to End Homelessness





# Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 3

Homelessness Prevention and Diversion..... 4

Housing Focused Shelters ..... 6

Assertive Street Outreach..... 8

Coordinated Access ..... 10


Community Health and Well-being Partnerships 11

Supportive Housing ..... 12

Community Housing ..... 14

System Capacity Building..... 16

Attainable Housing Strategy Implementation ..... 18



# Introduction

In 2019 the services that help Niagara’s homeless adopted an important change in how we approach homelessness, with a move from just managing homelessness to trying to ending it. Since that time, we have been transforming our system, investing in best practices and innovation backed by data, and collaborating with our partners to improve the lives and outcomes of those experiencing homelessness. This new approach is backed by a nation-wide change effort known as Built for Zero.

Homeless	The situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.
Ending Homelessness	Can be achieved when all services in a system are laser-focused on preventing people from becoming homelessness and returning people who are experiencing homelessness to housing.
Built for Zero	An ambitious national change effort helping a core group of leading communities end chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness.
Point in Time Count	An estimate of homelessness in a community during a given time-period, generally 24 hours.
Quality by Name List	A real-time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in a community. The data is used to prioritize people with greatest need for available services and housing and informs investment and service system decisions.
Common Assessment	A transparent approach to support consistent matching and prioritization of individuals for appropriate services and housing resources.

# Homelessness Prevention and Diversion

Prevention and Diversion provides services to keep people at risk of becoming homeless in safe and stable homes instead of emergency shelters or unsheltered homelessness.

<b>Prevention</b>	Activities and supports to help people keep a safe and appropriate place to live when there is a high risk of losing current housing.
<b>Diversion</b>	A practice to help people seeking shelter to identify immediate alternate safe and appropriate housing arrangements and connect them with services and financial assistance to return to permanent housing.
<b>Community Programs Coordinators</b>	Provide eviction prevention, tenant support and community engagement for households in Community Housing.
<b>Rapid Rehousing</b>	Short-term rental assistance and services tailored to individual needs that help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed.

Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Prevention Framework Implementation	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
South Niagara Prevention Pilot			Pre-2023 - 2023 Q4		
Rapid Rehousing Program				2024 Q3 - Continuing	
Prevention Consortium	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Full System Participation in Diversion	2025 Q1 - Continuing				
Enhanced Diversion Training and Rollout	2024 Q2				
Create Eviction and Housing Loss Prevention Triage Tool and Guidelines	2025 Q1, Q3				
Expanded Landlord Engagement	2025 Q2 - Continuing				
Model to Identify at Risk Individuals	2025 Q3 - Continuing				

**Q1:** Jan., Feb., March, **Q2:** April, May, June, **Q3:** July, Aug, Sept, **Q4:** Oct., Nov. Dec.

# Housing Focused Shelters

Housing focused shelters are not just a place to stay, but a place where supporting a person’s safe exit from shelter is the goal from day one.

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<b>Housing First Philosophy</b>	Is rooted in the underlying principle that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed. This is as true for people experiencing homelessness and those with mental health and addictions issues, as it is for anyone.
<b>Housing Focused Shelter</b>	A low-barrier emergency accommodation for people experiencing a housing crisis. Being housing focused means supporting people to return as soon as possible to safe, appropriate housing with the supports they need to stay housed.

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Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Family Strategy		2025 Q1 - Continuing			
Coordinated Exit Planning Pilot				2024 Q2 - Q4	
Community Health Brokers in Shelters			2024 Q1 - Continuing		
Seniors Community Program in Shelters				2024 Q3 - Continuing	
Permanent Shelter Sites in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls		2025 Q1 - Continuing			
Shelter Standards Implementation and Annual Review		2024 Q2, 2025 Q1 - Q3			
Transition from Seasonal to Permanent Shelter - Niagara Falls		2023 Q4			
Transition from Seasonal to Permanent Shelter - St. Catharines			2024 Q2		
Established New South Niagara Shelter		2024 Q4			
Shelter Capacity Review Implementation		2023 Q3 - Continuing			
Shelter/Housing Options for Individuals with Pets		2025 Q3			

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# Assertive Street Outreach

Assertive Street Outreach helps keep unsheltered individuals healthy and safe while they work to find housing.

<b>Unsheltered Homelessness</b>	People living in places not designed for human habitation (car, garage, or tent) or in a public space (park, or sidewalk) or abandoned building.
<b>Assertive Street Outreach</b>	An evidence-based, housing-focused program which engages with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to minimizes the harmful effects of rough sleeping while working towards long-term housing solutions.
<b>Outreach Aftercare</b>	Supports to increase housing stability for people who have returned to housing from unsheltered homelessness.
<b>Encampment Mapping Tool</b>	A secure online software application used by all assertive street outreach service providers to collaboratively map the location of sites in Niagara where people are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The tool also tracks services responses, including resources deployed at each site.

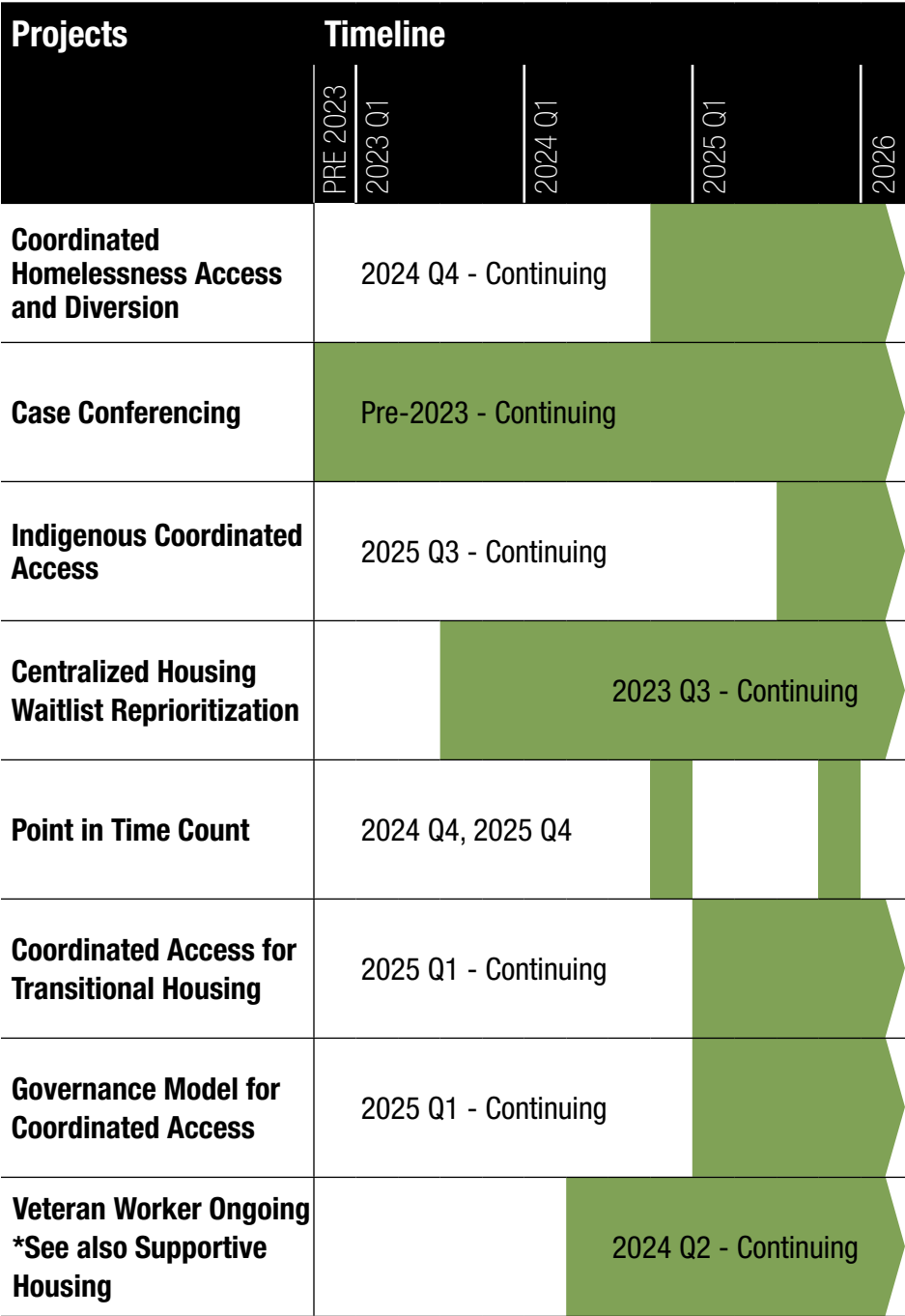


Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Local Area Municipality Encampment Collaboration			2024 Q1 - Continuing		
Enhanced Support to Interim Family Shelter			2024 Q2 - Continuing		
Veteran Outreach			2024 Q2 - Continuing		
Outreach Aftercare	Pre-2023 - 2024 Q4				
Indigenous Outreach Pilot	Pre-2023 - 2025 Q2				
Assertive Engagement Intervention Team Pilot		2024 Q2 - Q3			
Implement Niagara Assertive Street Outreach Program Recommendations		2025 Q1 - Continuing			
Hot Spot Mapping	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Lived Expert Street Ambassadors		2026			

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# Coordinated Access

Coordinated access helps people accessing services get the service they need.



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# Community Health and Well-being Partnerships

Partnerships with other sectors ensures people have the supports they need beyond just homelessness services. Working together creates a team providing comprehensive supports that address many complex needs.

Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Expanded Situation Table Model			2023 Q4 - Continuing		
Building Safer Community Grant				2024 Q1 - Q4	
Community Safety and Well-being		2023 Q2 - 2024 Q3			
Expansion of Regional Essential Access to Connected Health Care Services			2024 Q2 - Continuing		
Homelessness Addiction Recovery Treatment Hub Proposal	2024 Q4, 2025 Q3 - Continuing				
Welcoming Streets	2025 Q1 - Continuing				
Health Transfers of Care Working Group			2024 Q2 - Continuing		
Poverty Reduction Strategy and Granting	2024 Q1, 2024 Q4 - Continuing				
Housing First Act Team	2025 Q3 - Continuing				

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# Supportive Housing

Supportive housing helps people with complex needs achieve and maintain independent living in stable long-term housing that provides essential support services.

<b>Chronic Homelessness</b>	Refers to individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness and who have either experienced a total of at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year or have had recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a total of at least 18 months (546 days).
<b>Housing First and Home for Good Programs</b>	A proven recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that focuses on moving individuals with complex needs into independent and permanent housing with case management to support housing retention and improved well-being.
<b>Bridge Housing</b>	A temporary support for individuals with significant need in the areas of mental health, addictions and physical health to prepare for permanent housing or permanent supportive housing.
<b>Recuperative Care Bed Program</b>	A short stay transition setting for individuals experiencing homelessness who are discharged from hospital and need supports to recover and recuperate.

Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Bridge Housing Niagara Falls	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Recuperative Care Bed Program	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Supportive Housing Strategy	2025 Q1 - Continuing				
Veterans Homelessness Program	2024 Q4 - Continuing				
Indigeneuous Led Violence Against Women Transitional Housing	2024 Q4 - Continuing				
Phase One Geneva Street Bridge Housing	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Expanded Access to Community Addiction Services of Niagara and Niagara Region Mental Health workers	2024 Q4 - Continuing				
Canada Ontario Housing Benefit Rollout					
Indigenous Housing First Pilot	2023 Q3 - 2025 Q2				

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# Community Housing

Community Housing helps individuals and families who are struggling to find suitable homes in the private market find affordable and stable housing.

Community Housing	Includes housing provided by Niagara Regional Housing as well as Non-profit and Co-operative Housing as well as rent supplements and housing allowances with private landlords.
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Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
End of Mortgage Strategic Planning-on-Going		Pre-2023			
Community Housing Master Plan Roadmap and Implementation		2023 Q2 - Continuing			
Niagara Regional Housing New Development Project Manager Expansion	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Rapid Housing Initiative	Pre-2023 - Continuing				
Port Cares Build		2024 Q1 - 2025 Q1			
Last Mile Funding for Net New Units		2023 Q1 - Continuing			

Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
End of Mortgage Strategy for Non-profits and Co-ops		2023 Q1 - Continuing			
New Housing and Homelessness Action Plan		2025 Q2 - Continuing			
Phase Two Geneva Street Remediation of Lands			Pre-2023 - 2023 Q4		
Geneva Street Build Phase Two and Three		2026			

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# System Capacity Building

System Capacity Building is necessary to ensure homelessness services provide professional and high-quality care.

Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Critical Incident and Restriction Tracking and Reporting			2024 Q1 - Continuing		
System Policy Development			2024 Q1 - Continuing		
Motivational Interviewing - Train the Trainer				2024 Q1 - 2025 Q1	
Housing Focused Shelter Training			2023 Q3		
Common Assessment Tool Training			2023 Q3		
Diversion Training for Prevention Organizations			2023 Q3		
Homeless Services Human Resources Plans	2025 Q3				
Data Health and Integrity Work	2024 Q2 - Continuing				
Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute Trainings	2024 Q1 - 2025 Q1				
Lived Experts Recommendations		2023 Q3 - Continuing			



Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Cold Weather Response		2024 Q4 - 2025 Q1			
Review of Cold Weather Response		2025 Q2			
Contract Management and Monitoring Implementation			2024 Q2 - Continuing		
Case Management File Audits Privacy Audits			2024 Q1 - Continuing		
Building Strong and Productive Teams and Intensive Case Management Training		2025 Q1			
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Review of Homelessness		2025 Q2 - Continuing			
Case Note and Documentation Training		2025 Q2			
Human Trafficking Awareness Training		2025 Q2			
Intimate Partner Violence Awareness Training		2025 Q4			
Communications Strategy		2025 Q1 - Continuing			
Frontline Wellness Training		2025 Q4			

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# Attainable Housing Strategy Implementation

Attainable housing here means housing that does not require government subsidy for rent and is available to households with an income of 80-120 per cent of area average household income.

Projects	Timeline				
	PRE 2023	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	2025 Q1	2026
Housing-as-a-Priority					
Advocacy for Infrastructure Funding					
Facilitating Streamlining of Planning and Permitting Processes					
Housing Education and Engagement Tools					

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**Don't know where to call for help?**

**Dial 211 to access homelessness services or connect with over 50,000 services in Ontario.**

**Have a question about Niagara's homeless serving system?**

**Email your question to:  
[homelessness@niagararegion.ca](mailto:homelessness@niagararegion.ca)**

June 2025