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Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
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HOUSING FIRST IN RURAL NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR:
BUILDING A SYSTEMS APPROACH
GROUNDING IN HOUSING FIRST IN
RURAL COMMUNITIES

**Newfoundland & Labrador Provincial Housing First Conference Prep
Webinar #2**

February 18, 1pm EST

ALINA TURNER, PhD

Shifting from a program- by-program to a systems approach to ending homelessness.

Restructuring our approach to homelessness following the
Housing First philosophy.

Overview

- Overview of system planning & Housing First key concepts
- Rural realities concerning Housing First & moving to systems approach
- Regionalized system planning
- Examples of rural system planning approaches grounded in Housing First

A note on Housing First...

- Housing first is used to describe **an approach** to providing immediate shelter for homeless persons before requiring treatment of abstinence
- **AND** also used to describe a **specific program** with detailed services for persons disabled by mental illness and co-occurring substance use/dependency issues

Systems-Focused Plan to End Homelessness

- Community plan aligned with system planning using Housing First.
- Shift from managing homelessness to ending it.
- More than introducing Housing First programs.
- Sets out strategy to transform local service continuum using Housing First approach.



Homeless-Serving System

- Local or regional system for serving those who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness
- Method of organizing and delivering homeless services appropriate to client needs
- Organizations working together towards the same goal of ending homelessness
- Tangible metrics to determine program and system success, and examine how funds are expended

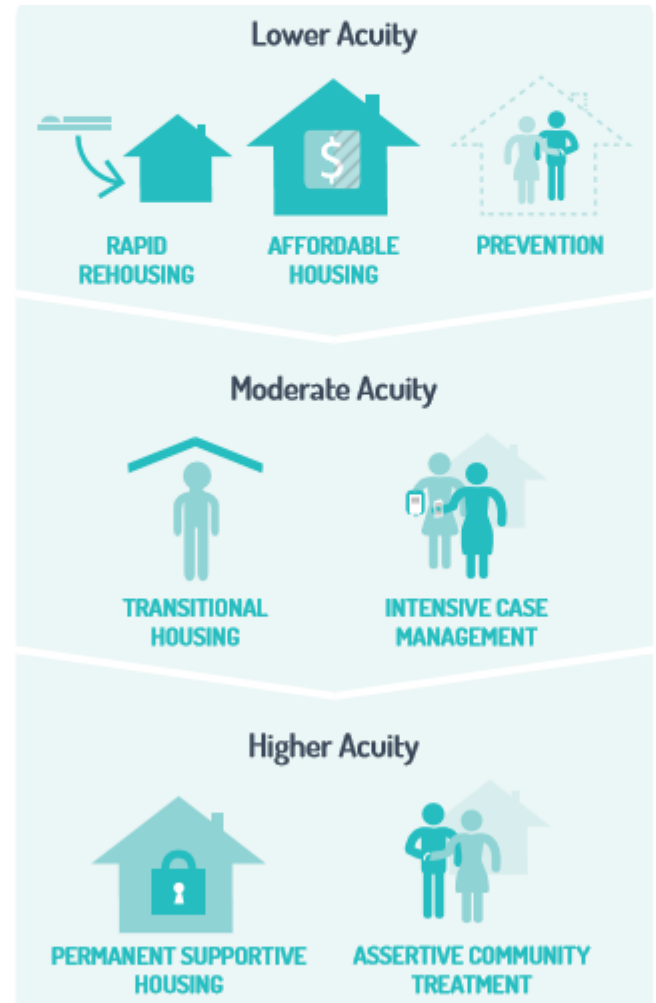


Designing the System

80% transitionally homeless

10-15% episodically homeless

5-10% chronically homeless



The following diagram presents some of the common program components of successful homeless-serving systems. ►



The 'Rules' of the System

Agreed upon standards, policies and protocols to guide program and system operations including:

- Referral processes,
- Prioritization & eligibility criteria,
- Common assessment tools,
- Service standards,
- Client engagement, etc.



Rural Homelessness Trends

- Rural homelessness has distinct dynamics from urban regions
- Homelessness is reported to be 'on the rise' across rural areas – related to economic growth
- Homelessness in rural communities primarily hidden, but forms of rough sleeping are common
- Chronic homelessness reported across Canadian communities
- Indigenous migration impacts homelessness in rural communities significantly
- Key sub-populations: youth, women fleeing violence, families, seniors, newcomers



NL homelessness estimates

During 2012:

- 1,685 individuals required emergency shelter (this includes domestic violence shelters)
- 141 Individuals experienced unsheltered homelessness (people living on streets, in wooded areas, etc..)
- 3,743 individuals experienced hidden homelessness (temporarily living with friends or relatives)
- **An estimated total of 5,569 persons in NL experienced homelessness.**

Estimates – By region

A breakdown of the 1,685 sheltered homeless estimate:

Region	
St. John's	854
Rural Avalon	154
Burin	124
Clarenville & Gander	114
Grand Falls- Windsor	34
Stephenville	92
Corner Brook- St. Anthony	143
Labrador	170
Total	1,685

Rural/Remote Realities

- Most have **no emergency shelter services** available
- Support **services** minimal or non existent
- Many lack any significant **systems-wide** cooperative efforts addressing homelessness
- **Official recognition** of homelessness often a challenge
- Lack of regionalized, formal **provincial/territorial response** (including funding) to address rural homelessness
- Lack of **funding** for a relatively costly program
- Lack of access to **housing units**
- Challenges hiring program **staff**, particularly those in the medical field
- **Housing First**: interest and curiosity, but lack of clarity of local application/relevance due to lack of housing stock; some emerging practices are promising- federal HPS funds.

Local Responses

- Establishment of emergency shelters and food banks/soup kitchens are most common homelessness responses
- Coordination to respond to homelessness varies across rural communities
- Availability of affordable housing and rent supports in rural communities can make a considerable impact



Housing First Feasibility

- High level of interest in Housing First, though notable challenges to implementation were identified:
 - lack of funding for implementation,
 - lack of local clinical expertise,
 - insufficient housing stock for scattered-site approaches,
 - landlord(s) buy-in,
 - inability to reach efficiencies of scale due to low client numbers,
 - transportation challenges

Housing First Adaptations

- Innovative rural Housing First implementations
 - leverage existing community resources to deliver case management, housing location, rent supports and permanent housing
 - regional implementation approach leveraging available resources across rural communities

- Rural Newfoundland & Labrador
- Revelstoke, BC
- Smithers, BC
- Yellowknife, NWT
- New Brunswick – Chez Soi, NB
- Redcliff/Medicine Hat, AB
- Vermont ACT, US

Local Coordination Examples

Happy Valley Goose Bay

- Pop. ~7,500
- Housing Support Worker
- 28 supportive housing units
- Bi-weekly coordination meetings to case plan with systems (health, income supports, housing/homeless services)

Clarenville

- Pop. ~ 6,000
- CAB incorporated to employ Housing Support Worker
- Co-chairs are regional manager, mental health & income supports; housing manager on CAB
- Co-chairs supervise Housing Support Worker – results in enhanced integration

Moving a Systems Approach Forward

- Key elements of homeless-serving systems will have to be reformulated and conjoined with partner regions to develop a streamlined, integrated response for rural areas.
- To interpret system of care components in a regional and rural context, a number of issues should be considered:
 - Is there sufficient demand for service component in a particular site?
 - Is it cost-efficient to centralise or decentralize service?
 - Can outreach services be provided across communities?
 - Which services are best centralized in the urban centre?
 - Is there sufficient capacity/resources to deliver services locally?

Delivery Methods Considerations for Rural Systems of Care

System Component	Regionalized Coordination Functions
Rent Supports	System planning & integration
Prevention	Funding Coordination
Outreach	Regional HMIS operations
Coordinated Entry	Research & Homeless Counts
System Integration	Training & Capacity Building
Housing First - Intensive Case Management	Quality Assurance & Performance Management
Emergency Shelter	
Transitional Housing	
Permanent Supportive Housing	
Affordable Housing	
Supportive Services	

Regional Integration through System Planning

Successful integration achieved when particular strategies applied across systems.

- Common policies and protocols, shared information
- Coordinated service delivery and training
- Having staff with the responsibility to promote systems/service integration
- Creating a local interagency coordinating body
- Centralized authority for homeless-serving system planning & system coordination
- Co-locating mainstream services within homeless-serving agencies and programs
- Adopting and using an interagency management information system



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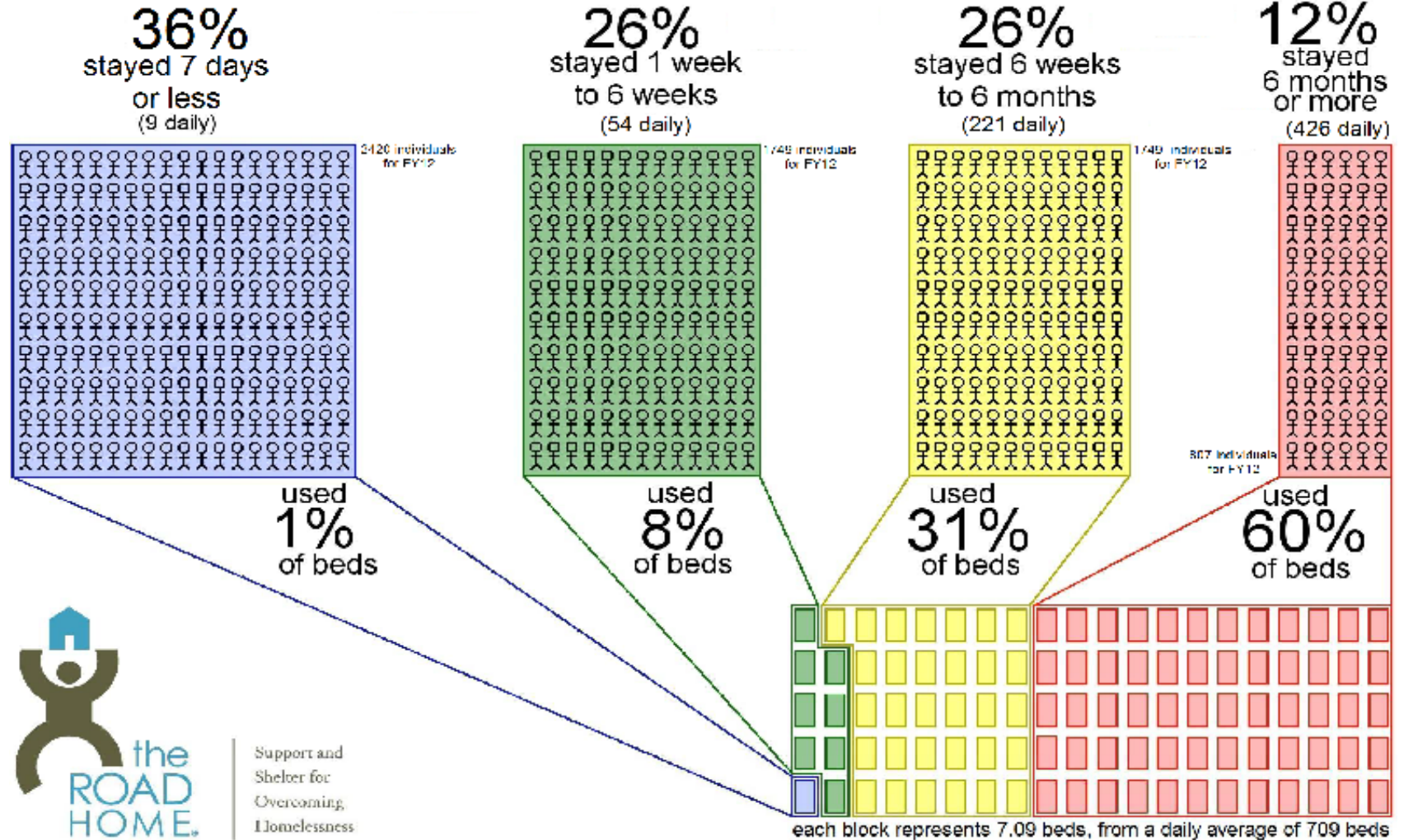
Rural Utah's Approach

<u>Categories</u>	<u>2005 Count</u>	<u>2014 Count</u>
Sheltered	11,275	12,685
Unsheltered	<u>2,415</u>	<u>986</u>
Total	13,690	13,671
% state pop.	0.55%	0.49%
Chronic	1,932	539 (72%)

Shelter Bed Usage

2007 to 2012

This diagram illustrates how homeless clients utilize the shelter system



Support and Shelter for Overcoming Homelessness

Homeless Coordinating Committee

MISSION

End Chronic Homelessness and
Reduce overall Homelessness

Jon Pierpont
Dept. of Workforce Services

Spencer Cox
Dept. Governor

Gordon Walker
Housing and Community Development
Division

Bill Crim Businesses/
United Way

Dr. David Patton
Department of Health

Craig Burr
Corrections

Dept. of

Al Hernandez
Veterans' Admin.

Gina Ramer

Formerly Homeless

Social Security
Denver Office

Pamela Atkinson
At Large

Financial
Institutions

Max Lang Office
of Education

Terry Feveryer
S.L. Housing
Authority

Lana Stohl Dept.
of Human Services
(DHS)

Jonathan Hanks
Utah Housing
Corporation
Balance of
State

Mike Gallegos Local
Governments

Philanthropic Orgs.

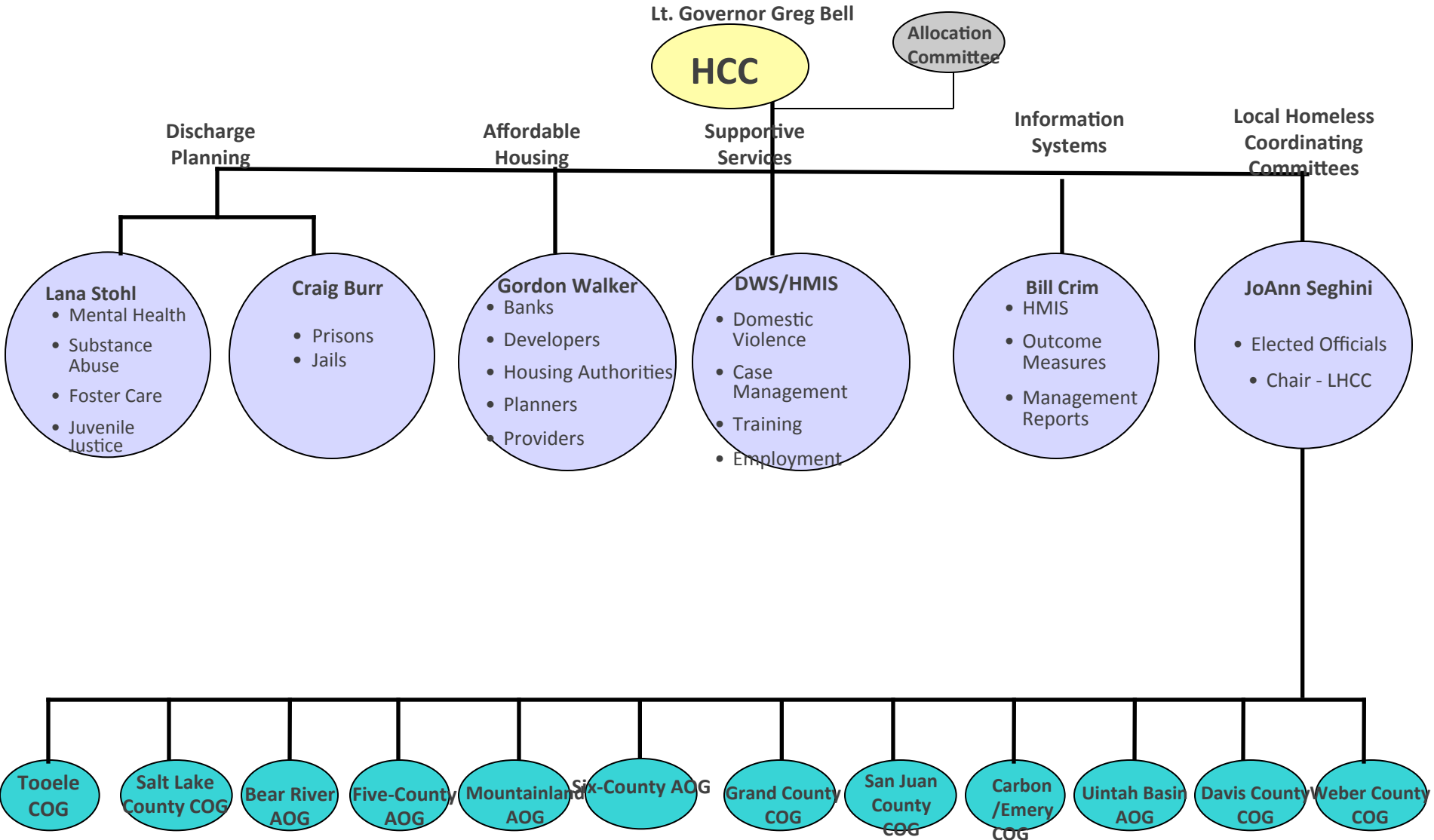
Ron Humphries
Faith Based Orgs.

Rollins
Care

Tara SLC Cont. of
Bill Hulterstrom
Mountainland Cont. of Care

Jane Lewis
State Continuum of Care

Homeless Coordinating Committee Organization



COG – Council of Governments

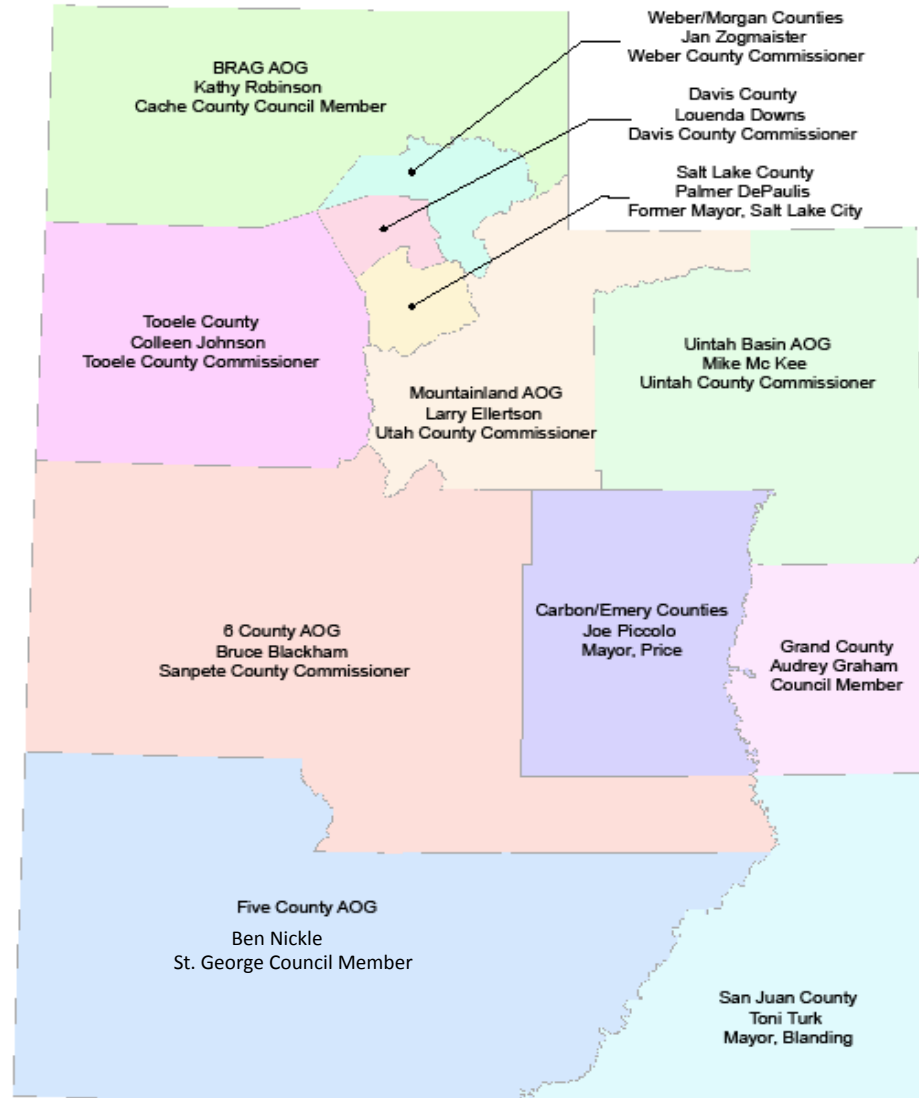
AOG – Association of Governments

Local Homeless Implementation Plan



TEN-YEAR HOMELESS PLAN ORGANIZATION

LOCAL HOMELESS COORDINATING COMMITTEES



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 EMERGENCY RESPONSE
 HOUSING, ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORTS
 HUMAN RESOURCES
 MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT
 MONITORING PROGRESS
 PLANS TO END HOMELESSNESS
 POPULATION SPECIFIC
 PREVENTION
 PROGRAM EVALUATION
 ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Housing First in Rural Canada: Rural Homelessness & Housing First Feasibility Across 22 Canadian Communities

Jeannette Waegemakers Schiff; Alina Turner

 **DOWNLOAD THIS RESOURCE**





This study examined rural homelessness dynamics in 22 communities spanning Canada's provinces and territories. The main aim of the research was to develop a preliminary understanding of the scope of rural homelessness from a comparative lens and identify whether and how Housing First as an approach and program type can be implemented in a rural context.

WEBINAR



Jeannette Waegemakers Schiff, PhD
 Alina Turner, PhD

<http://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/housing-first-rural-canada-rural-homelessness-housing-first-feasibility-across-22-canadian>



Guide to Performance Management in a Housing First Context



Alina Turner
*University of Calgary; Turner
Research & Strategy Inc.*
April 14, 2015

Tags: Housing First, Housing First toolkit,
performance management, program evaluation

Categories: Homeless Hub Collection

Introducing the Guide

In its renewal of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), the Government of Canada has prioritized Housing First as a key strategy to reduce homelessness. A Housing First approach focuses on moving people who are experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness as rapidly as possible from the street or emergency shelters into permanent housing with supports to maintain housing stability.

To support communities transitioning to Housing First, HPS commissioned the development of a guide to performance management specifically for Community Entities with the support of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. The [Guide is accessible in full here](#), a [French version is also available](#).

You can also [register](#) for today's Homeless Hub webinar from 1-2PM (EDT) that introduces the key topics covered in the Guide.



<http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/CEGuide-final.pdf>

Volume 7 • Issue 32 • October 2014

BEYOND HOUSING FIRST: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A SYSTEM-PLANNING APPROACH TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS[†]

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Acknowledgments: Jeannette Wagemakers Schiff, PhD for credit on selecting images of rural homelessness presented in previous presentations with the author.