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NWT DENE NATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS

The Dene Nation Health Department held the one-day engagement zoom session on Homelessness in Yellowknife on April 19th, 2022 from 9am-12:30 pm.

The participants included regional participants (3) Sahtu, (1) Gwichin, (1) Dehcho, (1) Akaitcho, (1) Salt River First Nation and (2) Yellowknife.

The Agenda:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 9:00 am | Opening Prayer |
| 9:15 am | Introductions |
| 9:30 am | Recorded Presentation by AFN Jordan Fischer (Senior Policy Analyst) on AFN National First Nations Homelessness Action Plan |
| 9:45-10:30 am | A National Action Plan |
| 10:30-10:40 am | Break |
| 10:40-12:00 pm | First Nations Think Tank Partnerships & Collaboration |

The Facilitator was Deneze Nakehk'o from the Dehcho area.

We also had an elder Marie Speakman to do the opening and closing prayers for the session.

The notetaker was our health staff member, Kate Bonnetrouge

The participants included those with lived experiences, advocacy for Homeless people, Youth, Wellness Director, Housing Coordinator, Community Elder, and former Territorial MLA.

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*The following are the 14 questions that were provided to the group, with their responses below.

A National Action Plan

1. *What do experiences of housing insecurity and homelessness look like for First Nations, and how do they differ for First Nations compared to other populations in Canada?*
 - Many First Nations in NWT experience homelessness because of high rent, addictions, overcrowding and lack of housing units.
 - Many First Nations do not own their own homes unlike many other populations in Canada.
 - Experiences include poverty, racism, and gaps in services.
 - Addictions of alcohol and drug usage also play a crucial role for First Nations experiencing homelessness
2. *Does homelessness have a different definition for First Nations than for other populations in Canada? If so, what would that definition include?*
 - Yes, it does. The Indigenous definition of homelessness considers the traumas imposed on Indigenous Peoples through colonialism.
 - According to the [Definition of Indigenous Homelessness](#) in Canada, it is “a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing...Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews.”
3. *What goals, objectives, and actions should be included in a national action plan for First Nations homelessness on and off reserve?*
 - Securing funding to go directly to the communities instead of going to the territorial government.
 - The need for strong leadership both regionally and nationally to take on responsibility to help those in homelessness situations. One participant stated she did not have a leader to reach out to her and that you need leaders that care. Even after she went to the media no one reached out to help her. (4 pages news release attached)
 - More advocacy is needed from AFN to address inequalities of social programming. There is a need for political support to have our own addictions centre here in the north. In addition, there is no aftercare programming for our First Nations that go down south for treatment of their addictions. The hub centres such as Yellowknife have some resources, but the employees are made up of immigrants that have no experience working with First Nations people. Discrimination needs to be addressed in areas of all social and health services. Discrimination and Nepotism also needs to be addressed in our own communities. Favoritism is huge when the leaders choose who is to get a housing unit.

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- The plan must be developed by our community members, not outside players who do not live in the communities. Resources in urban centres must have employees that are of Aboriginal descent, employment equity then will be met.
- Housing policies need to be revamped as to overcrowding of units, rental arrears, and housing maintenance.

4. *What does success for a national action plan for First Nations homelessness look like? How should that success be measured?*

- Regional needs must be inclusive as remote communities do not have access to roads and the cost of transporting any goods is extremely high. The need to assist more for those who want to build or repair a house.
- The success would be to have those who are experiencing homelessness have some place to go then living on the streets or couch surfing. A community must take responsibility of their members and be able to work together with other communities to address alcohol and drug addictions. Success can be measured by those that do change their lives to overcome addictions. Success stories can be shared as a tool.

First Nations

5. *What are your community's greatest concerns related to addressing housing insecurity and/or homelessness? (e.g., housing, mental health, addictions, child welfare involvement, poverty, etc.)*

1. Addictions
2. Mental health
3. Resources
4. Housing Policies
5. Youth Homelessness
6. Overcrowding

6. *What challenges do members of your First Nation face when accessing homelessness services?*

- Racism, lack of cultural identity, traditions, and language
- No funding to assist someone
- Shelters always full and this causes displacement of nowhere to go
- Lack of family and leadership support

7. *What resources, programs, or services does your community require to prevent or reduce the number of members experiencing homelessness?*

- Homelessness shelters need to employ First Nations
- Aftercare resources in our communities for addictions and drug use

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- Non-government community wellness workers
- Medical travel appointments should be able to rebook a client if he/she misses their return trip

8. *Are you aware of any best practices related to addressing First Nations homelessness that could be supported by a national action plan for First Nations homelessness on and off reserve?*

- No not prior to this engagement however in November 2021 we held a on the land camp at Aurora Village to get homeless people off the streets during Covid. It was a short term project to prevent Covid from spreading. A managed alcohol program was implemented whereas the participants would receive alcohol or marijuana on a daily basis. This was monitored to ensure intoxication did not happen. Counsellors were on site and an addiction program was offered. This camp operated for 4 months.

9. *How can First Nations support their members experiencing homelessness wherever they reside, including away from their community?*

- Provide and support treatment for those that are experiencing alcohol and/or drug addiction
- Provide transportation for their members to get back home if they get stuck in the urban centres
- Each community should set up a committee to provide assistance to those that are homeless.

Partnerships & Collaboration

10. *Does your First Nation have existing partnerships to address First Nations homelessness in or away from your First Nation?*

- No Yellowknife has always had a homelessness advisory committee and never includes community members. This committee on homelessness always receives funding and it is geared for only Yellowknife residents.

11. *Where might relationships be developed or strengthened to effectively prevent, reduce, or eliminate First Nations homelessness?*

- The City of Yellowknife homelessness committee should include members from the communities as most of the homeless people are transient. They come from their communities and get stuck in the urban centres. Partnering with the City of Yellowknife will be beneficial.
- Medical Travel needs to revisit their policies especially for those that miss their flights home.

12. *What resources, policies, or commitments are needed from governments to reduce, or eliminate First Nations homelessness?*

- Housing Policies in NWT need to be reviewed
- Federal funding should go directly to the communities and not to the Territorial Government
- There is a need for an Addictions Treatment Centre in the north and an aftercare program led by First Nation employees.

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- Community addictions workers should be in place in every community that are not government employees.
- Employment equity and capacity needs to be addressed

Final question:

13. *Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the development of a national action plan for First Nations homelessness on and off reserve?*

- This plan must be developed by First Nations and funding must be secured.

Discussion Outcomes, Recommendations and Regional Specific Perspectives on Homelessness

- A lot of mental health issues and addictions surface the First Nations homeless population.
- The youth have a lot of challenges such as negative self worth, no work skills/experiences, and isolation from family and friends. Forced to be homeless because of over-crowding in one house.
- Being homeless creates a lot of frustration, anger, resentment, and helplessness.
- Homelessness people must deal with racism, partly because there are a lot of immigrants working in resource centres such as the Salvation Army here in Yellowknife.
- Other populations in Canada get treated better. For instance, immigrants coming into Canada receive security for a home. The federal government looks after them better than our First nations people.
- Federal funding should go directly to the communities and not the Territorial government to administer our funding for First Nations.
- Recommend AFN to seek further funding for this homelessness issue.
- Our Leaders need to revisit policies and be proactive as homelessness involves many social issues.
- The need to bridge “gaps” in services such as Income Support. The policies are too invasive and outdated.
- More resources are needed and there is a need for First Nations to have control over those resources.
- In order to address addictions, we need a treatment centre here in the north. In addition, support is needed when someone comes back from treatment in the south. Preventative programs should be in every community and not employ government workers.

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Submitted By: Roxanne Cook (Health Director)

Attachments:

1. Participant Story
2. Tlicho Behchoko 2017 Needs Assessment: Report of Survey Results (the questionnaire itself is not attached)

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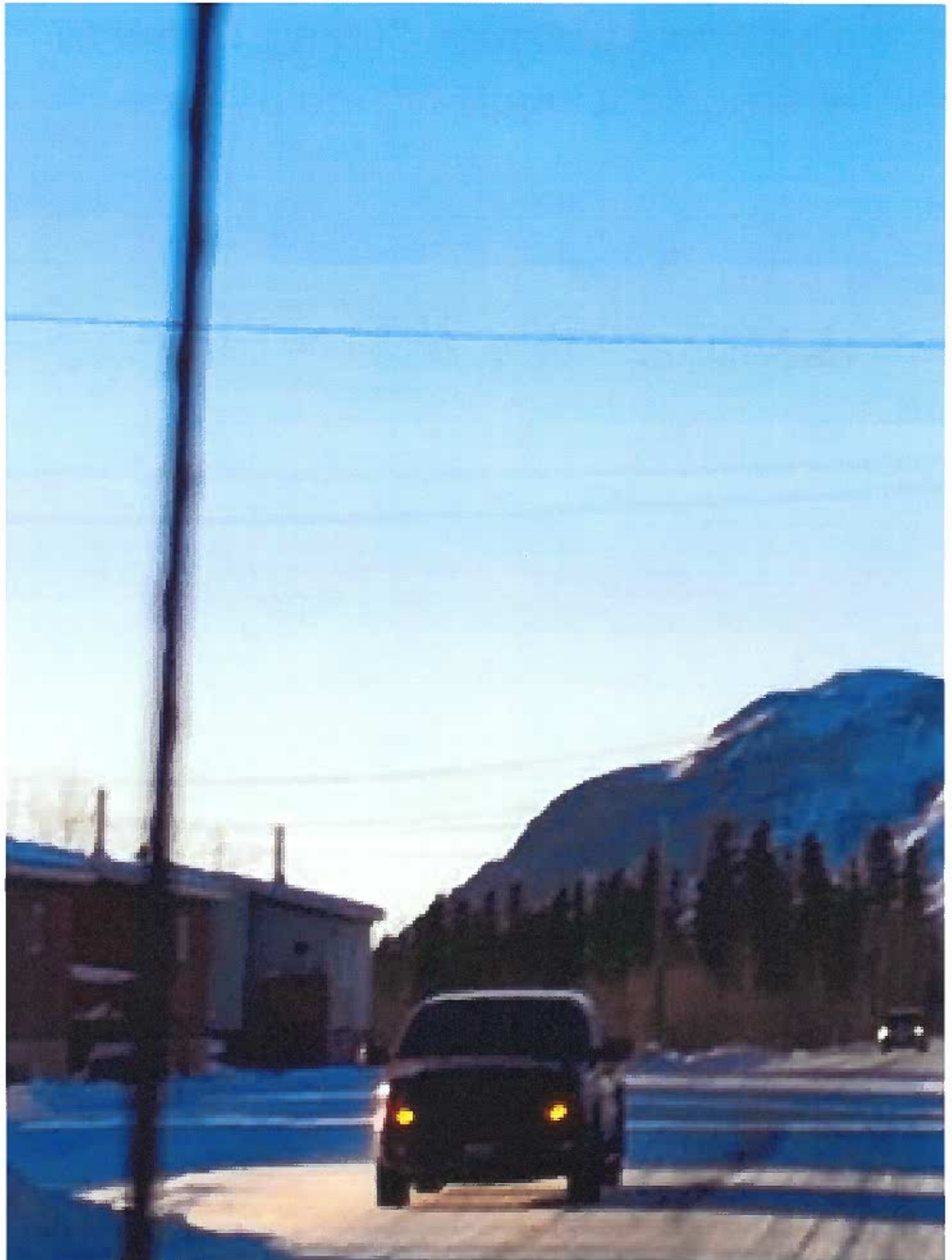
Five Years of Couch Surfing: One NWT Woman's Struggle to Find a Home

- APRIL 7, 2022

- CA

Participant Story to the Media

(4pages)



Every evening, Marlene Menacho walks, visits friends and relatives in Tulita, a community of less than 500 people in the Sahtu region of the Northwest Territories. Around midnight, the 49-year-old woman returned to her nephew's house.

That's when Menacho knows the other four people who live in the two-bedroom house will be in bed.

That's when she won't bother anyone.

She will go to sleep on the couch in the living room.

For the past five years, Menacho has gone from couch to couch, sleeping in the homes of her relatives and friends across the territory.

"It's scary. I don't like to ask. But I tell myself that if I don't ask, no one will do it for me," she said.

Tulita's main street, Mackenzie Drive, on a winter's day in March 2019. 'Unfortunately, Tulita is one of many communities where the waiting list for homes is longer than we have available homes' said the Northwest Territories Housing Minister. (John Last/CBC)

Menacho has been on the waiting list for social housing in his community for years. Her situation is generally not what people think of when they think of homelessness in the Northwest Territories.

It's often hidden, but Menacho and dozens of others in small northern communities are still homeless.

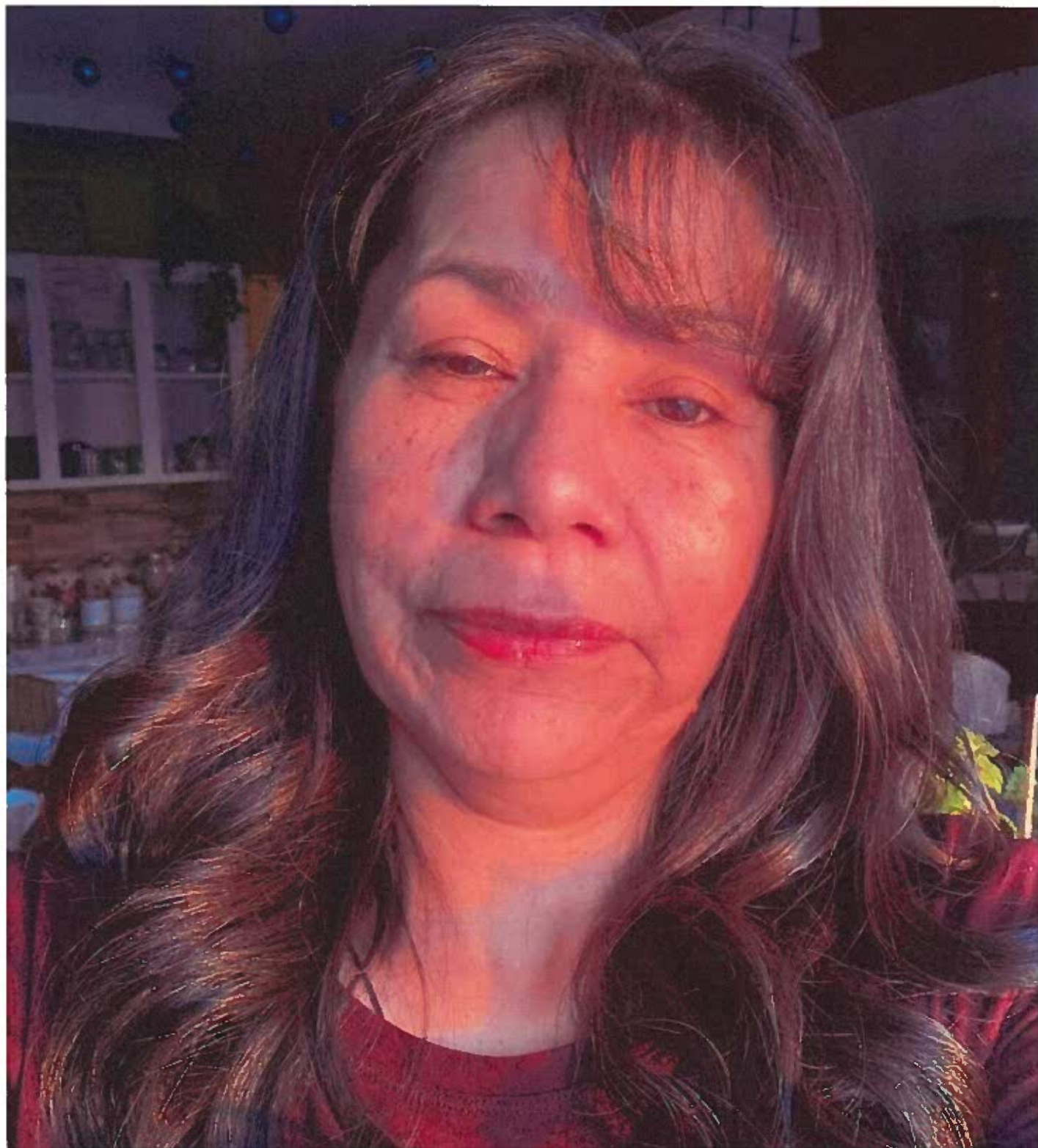
"I don't want to lose hope. I'm praying for a home," she said.

Conquer \$13,000 in debt

Menacho first entered public housing in Tulita thirty years ago. She lived in a two-bedroom house, worked occasionally, and drank heavily. When she wasn't working, her rent was about \$70 a month. When she had a job, she was billed near the market rate.

"I walked into the booze heaps and instead of paying bills and stuff, I used [my money] for that," Menacho said.

Over three years, she racked up \$13,000 in back rent, and in 2016 she received an eviction notice. She moved out soon after.



Menacho has spent years paying \$13,000 in back rent, only to find she's on a waiting list that doesn't seem to end. (Submitted by Marlene Menacho)

That's when Menacho said she quit drinking. She moved in with her daughter and young grandson for several years. But then they moved to another community, leaving Menacho with nowhere to go.

For the next three years, Menacho took on odd jobs and contracts while sleeping on the couches of friends and family. She spent time living and working in other communities including Wrigley and Norman Wells.

Almost every dollar she earned, Menacho said, went to pay her arrears. In 2021, thanks to \$3,000 in assistance from the YWCA of the Northwest Territories, she was finally able to pay off her debt.

"I felt like I was on top of the hill. It felt good. I felt like I was going to touch the sky or something. It just felt good to done something," she said.

Waiting for a house

With her arrears gone, Menacho was put on the waiting list for a one-bedroom apartment in 2020.

She says she has contacted the Tulita Housing Association and Northwest Territories Housing Minister Paulie Chinna several times, but usually gets the same response.

"Unfortunately, Tulita is one of many communities where the waiting list for homes is longer than we have units available to respond to," Chinna Menacho wrote in a Dec. 6 email.

"Although a number of homes have recently been repaired and returned to service, unfortunately the demand has far exceeded the supply of available units."

Chinna declined to talk about Menacho's situation, saying it would be "inappropriate" for her to talk about individual clients.

There are 2,600 social housing units spread across the 33 communities of the Northwest Territories, but most of them are decades old. Some suffer from environmental damage, such as erosion and mold. Many are also overcrowded, which has been a concern with COVID-19.

That's why, last month, Chinna and other senior northern housing officials spoke to a federal committee about the housing shortage in the three territories, its disproportionate impact on Indigenous peoples, and what the federal government could do to help.

And why northern premiers have raised it among the issues Canada needs to address to claim sovereignty in the Arctic, hoping that there will be some recognition of the specific needs of the North in the federal budget for Thursday, which should focus on the skyrocketing cost of housing in Canada.

In July 2021, the federal government announced it was investing \$4.9 million to build eight modular housing units in Tulita. The funding is part of \$60 million earmarked for the Northwest Territories through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund.

Two of the units will be used as emergency accommodation for vulnerable people in need, the federal government said. The other six units will accommodate seniors and other community members.

"In my community, there are too many people living in one house, overcrowded," Tulita Mayor Douglas Yallee said on the day the funding was announced. "To be on the waiting list, it's a long time to wait for accommodation, for your own accommodation."

"There must be more housing to do. But it helps, let's put it that way."

The SRC contacted the hamlet of Tulita to find out if construction of these units had begun, but received no response. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation did not respond to questions about the number of people on the waiting list for public housing.

Meanwhile, Menacho says she just has to wait. She continues to accept odd jobs and says she refuses to stay anywhere for free.

"Wherever I stay, I'm doing something. I can't stay there for nothing. I have to clean up or refund or give back. When I get money I tell them 'it's for an electricity bill or coffee' and I'll give it to them," she said.

"It's hard. Living in your suitcase day after day. I don't know what my next step will be. I still don't know. I don't know if I have to get up and leave tomorrow. But I don't want to leave. If I leave, they'll think I gave up."

Appendix 1

Tłıchq Łeagia Ts'ııı Kq (TLTK) 2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment

Report of Survey Results

March 2018

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homelessness
Partnering Strategy's Innovative Solutions to Homelessness

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the
author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of
Canada

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tłıchq Łeagıa Ts'ııłı Kq (TLTK) would like to thank Employment Services Development Canada (ESDC) for the funding to provide the opportunity to reach out to the homeless persons living in Behchokò, and the homeless in Yellowknife from Behchokò, to hear their stories and assess their needs.

More importantly, we would like to acknowledge all the participants who took the time to sit and share those stories and current situations in their lives, often feeling pain to describe historical and current situations and events. We felt honored to hear the details of their lives that had led them to this painful place of homelessness, and our intention is that they see their voice was heard and their responses were acted on to address the homelessness in Behchokò and Yellowknife.

Thank you to the Tłıchq Christian Fellowship who generously provided and hosted the community dinner and meeting for the presentation of the results of the *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tłıchq Łeagıa Ts'ııłı Kq (TLTK) recently completed a *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* project funded by Employment Services and Development Canada (ESDC). The purpose of the project was to understand the extent of homelessness in Behchokò, to better support partnered action to meet the needs of homeless residents in the community. As one of the lead organizations serving the homeless in Behchokò, the TLTK is well-positioned to host this work, and to steward it moving forward.

Homelessness has been a growing issue in Behchokò, and the subject has captured national media attention. Anecdotally, community members assert that homelessness needs to be taken seriously, and additional supports are needed to help community members either currently defined as homeless, or at risk of future homelessness.

The primary mechanism used to understand the extent and needs of the homeless in Behchokò was a 24-page survey. The survey, which was comprised of 80 questions, was developed by a consultant with the support of local stakeholder organizations, and delivered via interview by the consultant and two trained community members. Various outreach avenues were utilized, including posters, social media posts, advertisements on community radio, and targeted phone calls and emails.

In total, 104 surveys were received, with all but one fully completed. Significantly more men than women responded. Given that there are an estimated 125 homeless residents in Behchokò, the response rate is excellent. Although a number of distinct demographic groups were represented in the survey results, one was not. Community knowledge suggests that

some students attending the high school do not have a stable place to live, but we did not receive enough youth responses to the survey to be truly representative.

Challenges for the stakeholders and partners, and the homeless themselves, are evident in the survey results: the magnitude of needs of homeless people in Behchokò are great, and though housing is essential in the beginning to meet those needs, extensive additional supports are required to address and meet the comprehensive physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. The effects of colonialism are evident, and many homeless residents struggle with alcoholism and drug addictions, mental health concerns, lack of employment and life skills training, and many other issues.

What is clear is that the majority of homeless people in Behchokò are from the community, and all but 3% identify as Indigenous (Tłıchǫ, Aboriginal, Metis, or Inuit). The largest age group are 40-49 years old, and the majority of survey respondents have children but do not live with their children.

Only about 20% of respondents have a high school diploma or higher education credential. One-third of male respondents and 40% of female respondents attended residential school or day school, while more had other family members (siblings, parents, grandparents) attend residential school or day school.

In examining respondents' experiences with homelessness, half of respondents had been homeless for a year or longer, with the majority not able to remember the age at which they first became homeless. Homeless respondents reported many different places they seek shelter, including the homes of family, friends, and significant others. Formal homelessness supports in Yellowknife were also acknowledged, though the lack of a shelter in Behchokò prevents homeless residents from accessing formal homeless supports.

When asked about factors that led to their homelessness, the most popular responses were addiction or substance abuse or eviction. Many homeless survey respondents indicated that they are multi-barriered, that is, they have a number of issues to overcome. Many survey respondents have existing health problems, and are lacking support systems. The majority of survey respondents also have trouble accessing some basic needs, including food, hygiene supplies, medications and health supports. Unemployment is also a serious barrier, and forces some homeless residents to engage in illegal work.

A seemingly insurmountable barrier that prevents homeless people from accessing housing is existing housing debts, most commonly to GNWT Housing. Of the 22 survey respondents that admitted to owing money to GNWT Housing, 17 owe between \$1000 and \$20,000. 1 male respondent and 1 female respondent owe in excess of \$40,000. These debts make it difficult to impossible to secure permanent accommodations, and for many this factor alone led to a tone of hopelessness during the survey interviews.

Finally, thinking proactively, survey respondents were asked to identify the resources that would be most helpful in ending their homelessness. All of the following services had support from at least 80% of respondents: laundry and shower facilities; daily breakfast program; food bank; longer-term homeless shelter; emergency shelter; clothing share; greenhouse and gardens; supported housing program; and homelessness on-the-land healing.

There is much possibility for supports and services for the homeless in Behchokò. However, this work requires collaboration and commitment from all of the stakeholder agencies in the community and from Yellowknife. The Terms of Reference and Strategic Framework, both located in the Appendix, offer a roadmap going forward.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Tłıchq Łeagıa Ts'ııłı Kq (TLTK) has recently completed a *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* project funded by Employment Services and Development Canada, and this is the report of the findings from the surveys completed with the persons experiencing homelessness in Behchokò, or homeless persons from Behchokò currently living in Yellowknife, or those transiting back and forth between the two communities. As a primary service delivery agent addressing homeless needs in Behchokò, TLTK recognized there was a severe lack of government and organizational collaboration with regards to a cohesive strategy to address the needs of the homeless. This project was initiated to attempt to unify all the Behchokò and Yellowknife governments and agencies in developing a comprehensive strategic framework for addressing homelessness, and to give a voice to the homeless themselves in the historical conditions that may have resulted in homelessness, the current situation they live each day, and their ideas on potential solutions for addressing both immediate challenges, and ultimately, their homelessness.

Specific actions for the project included:

1. To undertake a *Behchokò Homelessness Community Needs Assessment* to determine the extent of homelessness in Behchokò, and to ascertain the needs of homeless persons in the community by conducting a survey with questions generated from the homeless and from community partners. This included interviewing homeless persons residing in Behchokò and homeless living in Yellowknife but originally from Behchokò, or transiting back and forth between the two communities.
2. To form an alliance with community governments, organizations and educational institutions to create a partnership that will help to identify all the issues for homeless community members, and that will commit to and participate in a *Behchokò Homelessness Solution Strategy* for the community.

3. To create a *Behchokò Homelessness Solution Strategy Framework* based on partnerships formed and information collected during the survey and community dinners and meetings.
4. To formalize the Homelessness Solution Strategy partnership with a *Terms of Reference*.

To complete the project, E. Huse & Associates was contracted to design and conduct the 2017 *Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* project, and to work with and mentor two community members to assist with interviewing the homeless.

1.1 Purpose of 2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategic Solutions Strategy

TLTK saw the need to spearhead a needs assessment specifically for the homeless and collect information on all the issues contributing to their situations, and to discern potential implementable solutions in the community. The homelessness needs assessment included input on survey development from TLTK staff, a professional consultant, strategic community stakeholders in Behchokò and Yellowknife, community Elders, and the homeless themselves. Additionally, once the data was collected and entered into a database, a report and strategic framework would be generated from the data to begin planning viable options, and to solidify partnership contributions to have a solid homelessness solutions strategy framework for the community.

The *Behchokò Homelessness Solutions Strategy* was to be developed from data collected, along with input from the homeless and stakeholders, and other territorial and national resources for potential best practices in addressing the needs identified through the survey interviews. The framework will be an on-going working document as new ideas are generated, and resources become available; meaning, as the stakeholders partner and make commitments to develop new programs, services or projects, secure funding, and begin implementing strategies.

1.2 About Tłıchq Friendship Centre

Tłıchq Łeagıa Ts'ıııı Kq (TLTK), is a benevolent, philanthropic, non-profit corporation, governed by the Societies Act of the NWT that exists to build values, character and community for Tłıchq region by providing a safe environment and practical support through a broad range of programs and services. TLTK is a place of healing offering programs to Tłıchq children, youth, adults, Elders, and families. Healing and wellness programs are provided on the land and in communities. In the last 32 years, the organization has expanded to address the growing needs of residents in the region. Partnerships are developed to advance effective programs leading to wellness, personal development, and increased knowledge of the Tłıchq way of life.

According to our mandate, the TLTK exists:

- To encourage cross-cultural understanding and awareness between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.
- To support and facilitate the development of individual learning, community groups, training programs, education courses and recreational programs.
- To encourage, through programs in response to community needs, self-reliance, independence and responsibility.
- To develop leadership and volunteerism within the community.
- To provide a Friendship Centre for the Tłıchq people and others living within our communities.

TLTK currently offers fourteen programs that provide a broad range of services to community members addressing: health and wellness; homelessness; at-risk youth after school and weekend programs; children's programs; crime prevention; Elder's issues; and disadvantaged individual and family situations. Some of our recent projects include:

- In March 2016 we completed a *Behchokò Community Needs Assessment* interviewing 295 Behchokò residents on a multitude of topics on current issues and needs in the community and asking their opinion for new programs and services. While we did have some questions regarding homelessness in the Behchokò Community Needs Assessment, and there were many homeless persons interviewed during that project, TLTK realized a project directly assessing only the needs of the homeless was required.
- In Sept 2016 we received funding to purchase new freezers to have traditional meat and other frozen foods available, and we are training our homelessness program manager to a higher skill set with leadership courses to expand our programs to meet these needs.
- Winter 2017 we received 20k for On-the-Land Healing sessions for homeless persons last winter at our acreage with cabin and tents.
- In March 2017, TLTK hosted a Tłıchq Women's Conference brining in women from all five communities in the Tłıchq region, to hear speakers and presentations on a multitude of topics representing the vulnerabilities and strengths of Tłıchq women of all ages.
- In April 2017 we secured \$315,000 from CANNOR towards upgrades and renovations to the aging friendship centre building, which includes: The leveling and repair of the foundation, the leveling of walls and roof repair, replacing current shingle roof with sheet metal, replacing current heating system with a pellet boiler, addition to the building for showers and laundry for the homeless, replacing carpets and flooring, and, painting the interior and exterior of the building—all using as much local labour as possible. The renovations are in the final stages of completion.
- For 2018, we have again secured funding to facilitate a 6-day On-the-Land Grief and Trauma Healing session for the homeless with Lee Mason of Young Warriors Network, and sessions will also be facilitated for youth and adults in the community by Lee to address prevention of homelessness.

TLTK is one of the few organizations in the community addressing the needs of the homeless. Currently, and for the past 35 years, we have had hot lunch programs, daily snacks and refreshment available, and collect food, clothing, footwear and goods to meet the needs of the homeless. We now have a food bank to address the homeless hunger and nutritional needs, receiving weekly boxes of dated food from grocery stores in Yellowknife and locally. This is both used in the friendship centre for meals for the homeless and distributed to hungry community members as food is available.

Our Program Manager does collect data on the homeless coming to the friendship centre (ages, gender, living conditions, their food consumption), but it is not formatted or structured for measurability.

1.3 Methodology

Prior to travelling to Behchokò on June 23rd to June 30th, the consultant researched all documents relevant to homelessness in Behchokò, including a substantial number of documents from the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition. She also reviewed homelessness documents from across Canada, including academic journal articles, and resources available through the Homeless Hub (homelesshub.ca).

Literature Review

A considerable amount of literature was reviewed from across Canada looking at the design of surveys for the homeless, the results of homelessness needs assessments, and at frameworks for developing strategies to address the needs of the homeless within their communities.

Yellowknife has undertaken extensive research, working group development and strategic planning to address homeless in the community. Recent documents developed regarding homelessness in Yellowknife include:

1. *Yellowknife Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Plan 2014-2019*
2. *Yellowknife Community Advisory Board (CAB) on Homelessness Terms of Reference*
3. *Turner Strategies. Everyone is Home: Yellowknife's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*
4. *Yellowknife 2015 Point-in-Time Homeless Count*
5. *Yellowknife 2015 Point-in-Time Count REPORT*
6. *Yellowknife Homelessness Road Map Action Plan: Report of the Homelessness Working Group – October 2016*
7. *Nick Falvo. Homelessness in Yellowknife: An Emerging Social Challenge*

Nationally there is a plethora of research, assessments, planning and strategizing to address homelessness, but understandably no simple answers to address all the complex and heart wrenching situations that result in the homeless life. The following documents provided insight into the multitude of needs across the country, and the depth of degradation in the lives of

homeless persons, particularly looking at displacement and homelessness in the Indigenous context.

1. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness – *The Definition of Indigenous Homelessness*
2. Social & Cultural Geography. Julie Christensen. *'Our home, our way of life': spiritual homelessness and the sociocultural dimensions of Indigenous homelessness in the Northwest Territories, Canada.*
3. Calgary Homeless Foundation. *System Planning Framework*
4. *Housing First in Rural Canada: Rural Homelessness & Housing First Feasibility Across 22 Canadian Communities*
5. Journal of Rural and Community Development. *Rural Homelessness in Canada: Directions for Planning and Research*
6. Rebecca Schiff, PhD, Alina Turner, PhD, Jeannette Waegemakers Schiff, PhD. *Rural Homelessness in Canada*
7. Micmac Native Friendship Society. *Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Community Action Plan*
8. Catherine Palmer & Associates Inc. *Aboriginal Housing in British Columbia: Needs and Capacity Assessment*
9. Calgary Plan to Prevent & End Youth Homelessness – 2017 Refresh (available at: <https://www.turnerstrategies.org/our-work>)
- 10.

Several news articles have also captured the plight of the homeless for Tłıchq residents from Behchokò.

1. **NEWS** – November 19, 2016 *Evicted and homeless: housing crisis in Behchokò, NWT has no easy solutions*
www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/evicted-and-homeless-housing-Behchokò-reaction-1.3858684
2. **NEWS** – November 27, 2017 *With nowhere to live, Behchokò man applies to Aurora College to find housing*
www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/Behchokò-homelessness-student-housing-1.4420549

Stakeholders

In 2014, the **Yellowknife Community Advisory Board (CAB) on Homelessness** was formed to address issues of homelessness in Yellowknife, through the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The CAB membership includes partners from the Federal, Territorial, Municipal and Aboriginal governments, as well as many homeless serving 'sectors' such as Youth, Persons with Disabilities, seniors, and Yellowknife Business.¹ However, it is unfortunate that there is no representative from Behchokò, or even in the Tłıchq Region,

¹ <https://www.yellowknife.ca/en/living-here/Homelessness.asp>

representing the needs of the Tłıchǫ homeless. This is particularly disconcerting since the majority of homeless currently living in Yellowknife are from Behchokǫ.

For Behchokǫ, the stakeholders and potential partners are located in both Behchokǫ *and* Yellowknife, as the majority of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness in Yellowknife are originally from Behchokǫ (2015 Homeless Count p, 78) and as a result, addressing homelessness in Behchokǫ will reflect in the numbers of residents either moving to Yellowknife or bouncing back and forth.

Prior to arriving in Behchokǫ the consultant began scheduling appointments with potential stakeholders she had contacted that would not be available for the planned community dinner arranged at the friendship centre for a presentation on the upcoming homelessness needs assessment project.

With the last week in school, report cards due, and several other meaningful events in the community happening simultaneously, it was finally decided that the consultant would meet one-on-one with as many stakeholders as possible over the seven-day period. This actually turned out to be extremely positive as she received information from stakeholders that she would not have received in an open community meeting. During the week the consultant met one-on-one with more than fifteen stakeholders and has compiled a list of enthusiastic partners interested in contributing their knowledge and time to addressing homelessness in Behchokǫ.

TLTK staff and consultant to work with community governments, organizations, educational institutions, RCMP, and community homeless persons, to obtain enough information to develop strong relevant questions for the survey. Confirmed stakeholders include:

GNWT Housing Department in Yellowknife
GNWT Housing Department in Behchokǫ
Tłıchǫ Government
RCMP – Behchokǫ Detachment
Community Government of Behchokǫ
Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency
Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School
Mary Bishop Health Centre
Jimmy Erasmus Senior's Home
Tłıchǫ Christian Fellowship
St. Patrick's Catholic Church
Side Door Youth Centre - Yellowknife
Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition
Yellowknife Women's Society
Community Elders one-on-one
NWT Disabilities Council

The intent of the meetings was to learn how the specific organization was presently working with the homeless, whether their involvement was mandated within their government department or organization, or if they were reaching to assist the homeless outside their mandate.

Potential stakeholders were also asked for their views and ideas on possible strategies and solutions to address homelessness in Behchokò, and for those homeless from Behchokò who were currently residing in Yellowknife.

Definition of Homelessness

To determine who would be included as participants for the survey, we used the Canadian Definition of Homelessness from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, to identify respondents for the survey.

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

*Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other. That is, homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations, organized here in a **typology** that includes*

- 1) **Unsheltered**, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;*
- 2) **Emergency Sheltered**, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence;*
- 3) **Provisionally Accommodated**, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure, and finally,*
- 4) **At Risk of Homelessness**, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards. It should be noted that for many people homelessness is not a static state but rather a fluid experience, where one's shelter circumstances and options may shift and change quite dramatically and with frequency.²*

² www.homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition

Our intention was to reach everyone in Behchokò who currently, recently, or imminently would fit the definition, as well as those in the same situation in Yellowknife who were originally from Behchokò.

As the project progressed, continuing research uncovered a definition of Indigenous homelessness, and after having interviewed many people it was clear that Indigenous homelessness is indeed deserving of a more appropriate definition to address the depth of spiritual and cultural degradation from colonization and displacement.

*Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes **First Nations, Métis and Inuit** individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost.*

The complex interactions between these factors in Indigenous homelessness produce situations that intersect with the typology of four kinds of homelessness, as presented in the Canadian Definition of Homelessness. These include: Unsheltered, Emergency Sheltered, Provisionally Accommodated and At Risk of Homelessness. While aspects of these four categories are tied to current housing markets and the limited availability of affordable housing, Indigenous homelessness is not simply a response to such circumstances, but is best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and dispossessed First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories relationships (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

Homeless Focus Group

We also felt it would be valuable to have a focus group directly with homeless persons in Behchokò so they were invited to lunch, even if they were not on the hot lunch list, and able to participate in the focus group. Unfortunately, this was held the same day the community elementary school had a huge barbecue at lunch and were giving away all the leftovers to the homeless, so even though the lunch was scheduled for 1:00 pm we did not have a large attendance. However, the five people attending the focus group were pleased to share their concerns about their lives in the community when they have no homes. They provided valuable information on their challenges and towards content for the survey development.

With information from the homelessness focus group, potential stakeholders and partners, and the relevant territorial and national homelessness research, Ms. Huse developed a DRAFT survey attempting to encompass all the areas of personal living for the homeless.

Research Instrument

The 24-page *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment Survey* was developed, reviewed, revised and approved by the Board of Directors and staff. The survey was then sent to all interested partners and stakeholders for review and recommendations. Unfortunately, and possibly due to the length of the survey, many of the stakeholders did not respond to the request for review. However, the few partners that did respond offered solid suggestions and recommendations that were taken into consideration in the revisions.

The survey was also sent to Dr. Alina Turner of Turner Strategies, the lead consultant on the *Everyone is Home: Yellowknife 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness – Final Report 2017*, and she also provided valuable input into the final survey document.

The survey was designed so the data collected could be cross tabulated to create graphs for TLTK and partner organizations to insert into grant applications to leverage funding, and so the TLTK board of directors and staff could incorporate the information into their strategic planning process.

In addition to graphed data collected, we added several open-ended questions for respondents to speak freely on their own situation, and effectively have a voice in various aspects on reasons for homelessness in Behchokò, both directly affecting their lives and for Behchokò as a community. We wanted to convey that the information collected and their time spent was valuable, and that their voice was important to effecting long term plans and securing new resources to meet the needs of the community's vulnerable residents.

Each participant received a \$10 gift certificate for either The Northern grocery store in Behchokò or The Independent in Yellowknife, whichever they chose. This was a small remuneration for their time and information, with interviews taking 30-60 minutes to complete.

Consent Form

Each participant signed a Consent Form (see Appendix B), along with the signature of the interviewer and the date of the interview. The interviewer read the contents of the Consent Form to ensure each participant knew the meaning of the information and how the survey results would be used, and that they were free to stop the interview at any point in the survey. We also asked for additional consent to use their comments anonymously for publication, and if the YES was not circled, the comments from the respondent were not used in the data for presentation.

Approach

Prior to conducting the homelessness needs assessment survey interviews in Behchokò we advertised by several methods:

- Hired youth to deliver a poster of information to each home in Rae and Edzo;
- Posted information on the TLTK Facebook and website;
- Posted on the Tłıchq̓ Government website;
- Posted larger posters around the community;
- Behchokò community radio advertisements;
- CKLB radio announcements; and,
- Word-of-mouth, phone calls and emails.

In Yellowknife the survey was advertised on CKLB radio and with posters and word-of-mouth through organizations serving the homeless population.

All survey data was collected doing one-on-one interviews with each homeless person. All were completed in person except one interview which was done over the phone with a homeless person from Behchokò, currently in the Correction Centre in Hay River.

Counselling Availability

Counselling supports are critical for communities when undertaking projects that could possibly trigger personal trauma, and for this reason counsellors in both Behchokò and Yellowknife were identified and available for any participants who felt they needed counselling after their interviews for any reason. Each participant was given information on where and who to contact. TLTK also continues to offer counselling supports as needed any time after this project is completed. We wanted to formalize the counselling specifically during the project, so the homeless participants knew we valued both the information we collected and each individual.

Surveyors

In addition to the consultant, three Tłıchq̓ women fluent in Dogrib were hired to assist with interviewing, although after three days one of the women was unable to continue for medical reasons. For almost all the participants of the survey Dogrib was their first language, so the assistance of the Tłıchq̓ women was invaluable. In fact, without their help we would not have obtained the depth of information and stories that we did, and we certainly would not have reached the number of homeless persons we did. The Tłıchq̓ women were not only trusted by community members to receive the personal information, but these women also had a friendly and easy manner that put participants at ease so they were able to disclose the personal information.

Prior to survey interviews with the homeless, the consultant spent several hours going over the questions in the survey with the Tłıchq surveyors to ensure the understanding of each question and request for comments. Each of the surveyors then interviewed both the consultant and each other. However, it was recognized in the initial debriefing sessions that there were some variances of understanding on certain questions, which were clarified for the next interviews, but did result in some minor oddities in the final data.

In Behchokò, survey interviews were completed at the friendship centre or wherever we could find homeless persons: where they were staying, or in our vehicles alongside the road. In all situations we were cognizant of our safety and ensured we were not alone in a situation where a problem could arise.

In Yellowknife we interviewed homeless people from Behchokò at: the Salvation Army; Safe Harbour Day Centre; the Yellowknife Mall; and, ten men were interviewed in the Slave Lake Correction Centre. The majority of interviews in Yellowknife took place in a quiet setting upstairs at Safe Harbour Day Centre. At Safe Harbour we appreciated both the space and the extra security the staff presence provided the interviewers. We generally worked in pairs in every situation in Yellowknife but did have one incident where the assistance of a staff member at Safe Harbour was needed. Additionally, we had a few homeless persons in Yellowknife from other NWT communities besides Yellowknife, who were angry they were not included in the interview. This necessitated extra explanation regarding the parameters of the survey, but the surveyors still felt intimidated by the men.

The surveyors completed a total of 104 survey interviews. Interviews in Behchokò took place the last week in September and beginning of October, and in Yellowknife October 5-7. The two Tłıchq surveyors continued to conduct surveys after the consultant had left the communities and while the data from the other surveys were being entered into the database. Additional surveys were received until October 20th.

Challenges

A number of challenges were identified during and after survey collection:

- During the two-week trip to Behchokò to complete the survey interviews the TLTK friendship centre was undergoing extensive renovations and working around and beneath the building on the foundation and water/sewage system. When difficulties arose with the water tank and the water needed to be shut off, the friendship centre had to close due to regulations that with no water or washrooms, they could not remain open. Portable washrooms were secured and placed outside for the remainder of the time of interviewing.
- For the majority of the surveys, almost all survey questions were completed even if the answer was that they “Prefer not to answer.” Two participants chose not to complete

the survey, however one of those persons completed the entire interview with another surveyor at a later time.

- We did use all the available answers when compiling the data, but there are some inconsistencies to numbers answered throughout the survey.
- Some of the questions did not have the most efficient formatting to receive the best answers therefore the responses are not used in the data results, and that was the fault of our survey design. These questions with unusable data are identified within the Survey Results section.

SECTION 2: HOMELESSNESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT RESULTS

2.1 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment

Response

Our total response was 104 surveys, with only one partially completed. (Note: There are an estimated 125 homeless Behchokò residents.) We had anticipated more surveys completed by youth as we know that some attending the Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School do not have stable living conditions however, due to privacy considerations the school was not able to identify those students to the surveyors. This was the same situation for the side Door Youth Centre in Yellowknife. We did put posters up at the school and youth centre, and the homelessness survey information was shared by staff, and a few youths did come forward to complete the survey.

Data Input and Analysis

The needs assessment surveyed 79 men and 25 women, for a total of 104 respondents. Approximately half (57) of the respondents were men currently in Rae (Behchokò). Of the 79 men, 56 were between the ages of 40 and 59.

Each of the surveys was entered into an Excel database and we used as much of the information from each survey as was possible. The results and graphs generated from the survey answers are presented, along with additional answers and comments from the participants. Some data is cross tabulated to show how we can use the database to generate specific information required for reports, collaborations, grant writing, and strategic planning. There are multitudes of ways we can cross tabulate for various organizations, and this will be available upon request to community governments and organizations. However, the database will not be shared, only the information generated upon request.

Community Dinner and Presentation of 2017 Behchokò Needs Assessment Results

A community dinner and presentation of data results was held in the community with consultant Ellen Huse, and more than 30 people attended to hear the results of the 2017

Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment Survey. The dinner was held at the Tłıchq Christian Fellowship church since the friendship centre was undergoing flooring installation.

The meeting was advertised on CKLB radio, CBC Radio, the community radio, the TLTK website and Facebook page, the Tłıchq Government website, and with posters around the community. The Methodology and Highlights (both graphs and percentages) were presented, and a Tłıchq community member was present to provide excellent and thorough translation of each page of information and statistics. The results were well received, and several people left their names on a list to receive the presentation in hard copy or by email.

Meeting One-on-One with Stakeholders

Ms. Huse met with several stakeholders in the community to discuss the survey results and to brainstorm potential strategies for the *Solutions Strategy Framework* and new working group.

Data Dissemination and Sharing

Over the course of the *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* project there were many people, both professional and community members, that were interested in the data we were collecting. We will be sharing a substantial amount of the data collected in the community meeting presentation, but not the entire report on the results as seen in this document. Some of the information collected is specific and confidential to TLTK. And, as stated earlier, data cross tabulations will be available to other agencies on request to use to leverage funding in grant applications.

Ongoing Collaboration

In the initial stages of the project there was high interest in partnering and potential collaboration between stakeholders. However, over the course of the project it became apparent that various stakeholders were making decisions to undertake their own projects without including TLTK in either decision making, or partnering on delivery of the project or service. Unfortunately, variances in political or community alliances continues to plague the potential of a cohesive partnership to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce Behchokò homelessness.

2.2 Stakeholder collaboration

Although the *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* has improved relationships between TLTK and some community stakeholders, there are still communications and collaboration challenges to overcome. The political environment is not conducive to a cohesive multi-agency approach to address all the issues the homeless are facing. Government, organizations, and agencies are competing for funding as well as project, program and service delivery.

A large part of the *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* was to network with other organizations and to attempt to make bridges to heal these relationships, and in offering of the *2016 Behchokò Community Needs Assessment* data and the *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* to others for their use in grant writing or reporting, we trust will help to build partnerships for the future.

2.3 Magnitude of needs

Access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing is a social determinant of health, and is inextricably linked to issues that impact quality of life in Behchokò, including lack access to education and training, generational impacts of residential school, debt/insufficient income, lack of assistance dealing with mental health issues (diagnosed or not), addictions, and intergenerational trauma. The identified needs can be overwhelming and discouraging. Additional funding and the ability to work collaboratively are integral to meeting community needs.

2.4 Funding and resources

Funding and resources: Unquestionably, both from interviewing the homeless participants and from the results of the survey, people felt that additional programs, services and activities were needed to address homelessness in Behchokò. In the process of meeting with government and organization managers, homeless persons and community members, we saw that there were actually many gaps and needs that the TLTK could address if they had the facilities, staff and volunteer capacity, and the necessary funding.

While other organizations in the community may have a mandate to provide social programs and services that people are requesting, the fact *is* that the needs of the Behchokò homeless residents are not being met and for the most part, the programs, services and activities are either not available, or not available as often as needed. And, of course, the barriers and challenges that were identified in our homelessness needs assessment survey will also affect resident participation in other organizations, as well as TLTK.

In addition to using the data to leverage funding for desired programs and services in the community, TLTK will look at the barriers and challenges the homeless face to participating in programs, and determine how we can mitigate some of those obstacles.

The positive response to each topic of the survey where people were asked if they wanted to see more programs and services, while it does have a slight variation from topic to topic, generally shows that the programs and services in each of the subjects will be beneficial to the community and that people would participate if they were offered. We know particularly with

the homeless, as TLTK is currently working on several large homeless projects, that this is a priority for the friendship centre. For instance, in addition to the large numbers either using or requesting participation in the hot lunch program, in conversation with the homeless during the research we were told that for the past year and a half two homeless individuals had lived at the dump in a shack with a stove and a generator. This was just one of the several unfavorable situations we learned about for the homeless in Behchokò. So for now, the friendship centre is a welcoming, gathering place for the homeless each day, and is meeting a critical need in the community for people to be warm, fed, and have friendly accepting faces to meet them. In addition to the current lunch program and meeting some of the immediate needs of some food and a place to use the toilet, the intent is to secure additional funding to meet the broader basic needs for the homeless for daily living, and to help them get on their feet with training and employment opportunities.

2.5 Behchokò Homelessness Strategic Solutions Framework Outline

One of the project deliverables is a Strategic Framework to guide organizational and collaborative action on homelessness. Given the amount of information collected via the survey, it seems prudent to organize, contextualize, and make meaning of the results in a way that is actionable and understandable. For the high-level Behchokò Homelessness Strategic Framework, please see Appendix 3. This Strategic Framework will be shared with partner organizations and local stakeholders, who will work in tandem to complete the development of the strategy.

SECTION 3: DATA AND CONCLUSIONS

Data and Analysis

A detailed, question by question review of the survey is included below, under the heading “Survey Responses.” The information presented in this section provides an overview.

Much like the general population in Behchokò, the homeless population is almost entirely Indigenous (Tłıchǫ, Aboriginal, Metis, or Inuit). 76% of survey respondents live in Behchokò, and of those, more than half have always lived there. One-third preferred not to say how long they had been living in the community. Nearly all survey respondents were living somewhere in the Northwest Territories before coming to Behchokò, if they had not always lived there.

Homelessness affects people of all ages, and survey respondents ranged from 15 to 69 years old. However, the largest group of respondents (44%) were men ages 40-49. In total, 79 men and 25 women responded to the survey. Of those, 40% had children ages 0 to 19 years old, but 75% of homeless people who had children were not living with their children.

Educational attainment was low in survey respondents – 30% of survey respondents had a grade 8 education or less. Only 20% had a high school graduation or higher. One-third of total respondents had or has a learning disability. Although only 40% of female and 29% of male respondents attended residential or day school, 80% of female and 68% of male respondents had a parent, grandparent, or other close family member attend residential or day school.

In examining respondents' experiences with homelessness, half of respondents had been homeless for a year or longer, with the majority not able to remember the age at which they first became homeless. Homeless respondents reported many different places they seek shelter, including the homes of family, friends, and significant others. Formal homelessness supports were also identified, including transitional housing, emergency shelter, medical detox, hospital, and jail, though the lack of a long-term, non-emergency shelter in the community prevents some homeless residents from accessing formal homeless supports.

When asked about factors that led to their homelessness, the most popular responses were addiction and substance abuse or eviction, with 56% of female respondents noting eviction and 48% choosing addiction and substance use. The most popular response among males was Other, at 56%, followed by addiction and substance abuse at 43%. (Note: For this question, respondents could choose more than one answer.)

Many homeless survey respondents indicated that they are multi-barriered, that is, they have a number of issues to overcome. Many survey respondents have existing health problems and are lacking support systems. Notably, women have fewer supports to help them through an emergency, to offer emotional support, and to check in regularly. Interestingly, women's number one response when asked what would help them to overcome their homelessness was social supports and programs. The majority of survey respondents also have trouble accessing some basic needs, including food (40% of female respondents and 28% of male respondents), hygiene supplies, medications and health supports. Three-quarters of female respondents and 71% of male respondents are addicts, and 64% of female respondents and 54% of male respondents identify as depressed. 72% of total respondents need dental work.

Unemployment is also a serious barrier, with all but 6 survey respondents reporting no employment. It is likely no surprise, then, that survey respondents had both legal and illegal income sources (for example, child and family tax benefits and panhandling). Survey respondents believe that increased training and employment opportunities would contribute to decreased homelessness.

A final barrier that prevents homeless people from accessing housing is existing debts, most commonly to GNWT Housing. Of the 22 survey respondents that admitted to owing money to GNWT Housing, 17 owe between \$1000 and \$20,000. 1 male respondent and 1 female respondent owe in excess of \$40,000. These debts make it difficult to secure permanent accommodations and a despondency was clearly evident when participants discussed the burden of debt.

Next Steps

As for next steps, the staff and Board of Directors of TLTK will need to meet determine strategic directions and use of data from the *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* to expand the programs and services for the Behchokò community, and for the Tłıchq Region.

1. Reconfirm the commitment of partners and stakeholders, adding any new stakeholders from recent initiatives. Find out what has been done in the interim with their governmental department or agency since the survey was conducted.
2. Arrange and facilitate a one-day meeting for all interested partners and stakeholders, to approve the Terms of Reference and to contribute to a Behchokò Homelessness Solutions Strategy. The one-day meeting offers an opportunity to brainstorm ideas and strategies based on the results of the survey. New ideas could include:
 - a. Having homeless persons speak to high school students on the value of staying in school and completing their education.
 - b. The potential for building tiny homes in the community, which could include having the homeless themselves, particularly those with good carpentry skills, working on the tiny homes. This could also be a training program for youth and homeless in carpentry skills.
 - c. The potential to partner with academic institutions on projects to address homelessness, such as Simon Fraser University did with the Heiltsuk First Nation in Bella Bella, BC on their tiny houses project.
 - d. Having some of the front runners on dealing with trauma, such as Bessell van der Kolk, come to the NWT and both teach about effects of trauma on the body (*The Body Keeps the Score*), and on methods to begin healing from all trauma previously experienced. <https://besselvanderkolk.net/index.html>
 - e. Which organizations, churches or individuals in Yellowknife or Behchoko, could be approached to provide regular visits to men in the North Slave Correctional Complex in Yellowknife.
3. Research new initiatives and funding opportunities from the federal and GNWT government.
4. TLTK to secure funding to hire a full time Homelessness Program Coordinator, that can be a champion to organize stakeholder meetings and information sharing, and to apply for funding to increase programs and services for homeless individuals in Behchokò.

With this *2017 Behchokò Homelessness Needs Assessment* data, and as TLTK capacity grows and funding opportunities become available, our mandate is to proceed with new programs and services for *all* the residents of Behchokò, but to continue focussing on meeting the disparate needs of the homeless in the community. Ideally, the community, partners and stakeholders will strategize to especially meet the needs of children, youth, young mothers and the Elders, in all areas of mental, spiritual, physical and emotional health, so there is less chance that vulnerable community members ever have that first experience of homelessness.

