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Maiden Edition | April-May 2024



I am thrilled to introduce the inaugural edition of our newsletter, Wawatay, which means Northern Lights in Ojibwe. Through Wawatay, we aim to showcase the latest news, initiatives, and efforts dedicated to this vital cause.

Homelessness is more than just a lack of shelter; it represents a deprivation of dignity, opportunity, and the fundamental right to a home.

Behind every statistic lies a personal story—a story of resilience, struggle, and hope. The streets can be unforgiving, and the most vulnerable among us face unimaginable challenges, often succumbing to the harsh realities of addiction, despair, and the elements. Each loss is not just a moment of grief; it's a rallying cry for change. We honor their memory by tirelessly advocating for a community where homelessness does not steal futures.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to all those serving on the frontline of our sector. Your unwavering commitment and dedication are the driving forces behind meaningful change, bringing hope and support to those enduring hardships. We recognize the weight of your efforts and the toll it takes. Thankfully, we are now at a pivotal moment where the stars are

aligning. All levels of government and community funders recognize that homelessness is a crisis and are stepping up to provide increased support. This surge in resources will pave the way for more initiatives, enhanced training, and expanded staffing.

The boost in support not only strengthens our efforts here in Winnipeg but also extends its impact to communities across the country. Together, we can harness this momentum to effect real change and create lasting solutions for homelessness.

I invite you all to stay subscribed and to share within your networks for inspiring stories, updates on our programs, and opportunities to get involved and make a positive difference in our community through Wawatay. Let us continue to work together, guided by compassion and determination, to ensure that everyone has a place to call home.

Jason Whitford,
President and CEO,
End Homelessness Winnipeg.

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Naatamooskakowin
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Winnipeg's Coordinated Access System

HOPE
END HOMELESSNESS
WINNIPEG
"A community where everyone has a home and supports they need to belong."
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT US:
620-211 Above Street Run
Winnipeg, MB R2C 3S3
204.942.8677
info@naatamooskakowin.ca
www.naatamooskakowin.ca

Asking for help
Homeless or about to lose housing?
Here are some options!

First Connections Resources

- Debt Loans
- Education
- Employment
- Health Supports
- Home Listings

Need More Help?

ACCESS POINT
Sharing Experience

PERSONALIZED REFERRAL
Prioritization Matching & Referral
Housing Support Providers

ONGOING SUPPORT
Identification
Medical Needs

ONGOING SUPPORT
Counseling
Elder Connections
Peer Support
Income

Do you need housing help?
CALL 211
Or show this to someone helping you

Connect quickly with the housing and supports you need.

End Homelessness Winnipeg, serving as Winnipeg's Community Entity for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, played a pivotal role in collaboratively developing a Coordinated Access system in the city. Bestowed with its name by Elder Belinda Vandenbroeck in March 2022, [Naatamooskakowin](#), derived from Cree, reflects its purpose as a central hub for seeking help.

Naatamooskakowin represents a new era in addressing homelessness in Winnipeg, providing a streamlined approach for individuals facing barriers in securing housing and essential supports. These barriers, ranging from accessibility needs to familial complexities, no longer stand as insurmountable obstacles but rather as challenges met with compassion and comprehensive solutions.

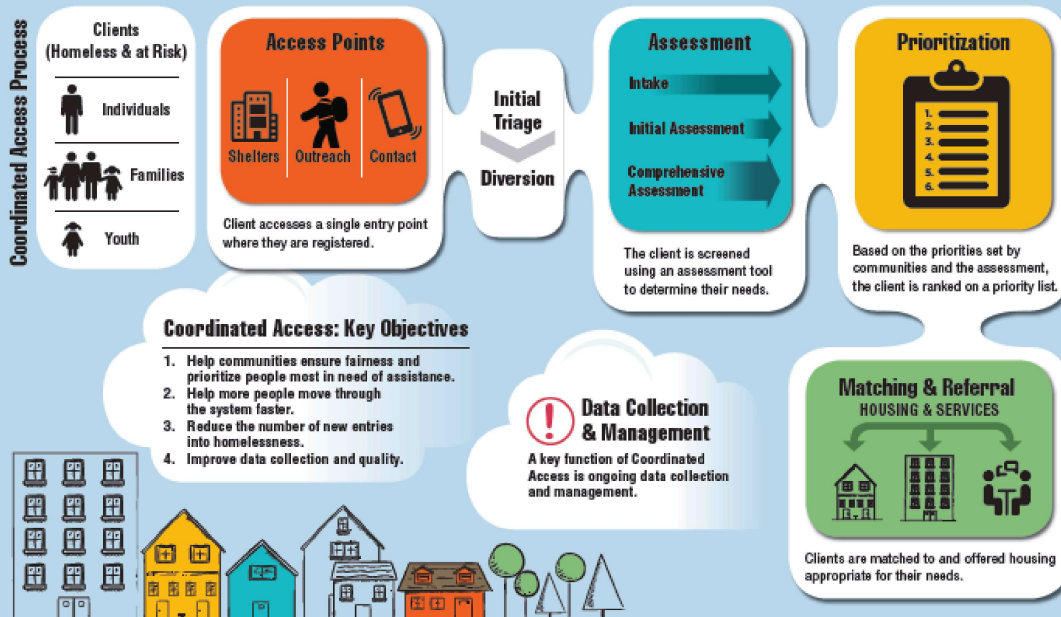
The inception of Naatamooskakowin was not a solitary endeavor but the culmination of collective efforts driven by the imperative to create a more equitable society. [End Homelessness Winnipeg](#), as the Community Entity for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, undertook the responsibility of co-creating this coordinated access system. This endeavor was guided through an Indigenous lens and by the principles of Reaching Home, emphasizing trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and person-centered approaches.

The journey toward Naatamooskakowin began with community engagement sessions in late 2019, echoing the voices of hundreds of diverse stakeholders.

The wisdom of the 7 Teachings – Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility, and Truth – resonated as guiding principles, underpinning the ethos of the Coordinated Access system. Cultural safety, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care emerged as non-negotiable pillars, ensuring inclusivity and respect for lived experiences.

What is Coordinated Access?

Coordinated Access (CA) is a process through which individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, are provided access to housing and support services, based on a standardized set of procedures for client intake, assessment of need, and matching and referral to housing.



Employment and Social Development Canada / Emploi et Développement social Canada

Canada

Through the establishment of an Advisory Committee in Fall 2020, the governance structure for Naatamooskakowin took shape, fostering collaboration and accountability. This inclusive approach continued with the formation of a Coordinated Access Council in January 2021, signaling a commitment to transparency and community-driven decision-making.

In June 2021, the community gathered once more to crystallize the vision and outcomes for Naatamooskakowin. A vision emerged: to create lasting solutions, facilitating a seamless transition from homelessness to housing through collaboration and coordination. The outlined outcomes, crafted by Lived Experts, underscored the imperative of rapid, consistent, and culturally safe intake and assessment processes, alongside the provision of comprehensive supports post-housing.

Naatamooskakowin stands as a testament to the power of collective action and the resilience of the human spirit. It embodies the hope for a future where homelessness is not a sentence but a temporary circumstance, met with compassion, dignity, and unwavering support. As Winnipeg embraces this transformative initiative, it paves the way for a more just and inclusive society,

where every individual has a place to call home.

In the spirit of Naatamooskakowin, let us continue our journey towards equity, solidarity, and compassion, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a brighter tomorrow.

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National Indigenous Homelessness Council gets new website



[HOME](#) [ABOUT US](#) [PROGRAMS](#) [NEWS](#) [CONTACT](#)



In a recent development that marks a significant milestone for the National Indigenous Homelessness Council (NIHC), the organization proudly announced the soft launch of its brand-new website. The freshly unveiled platform, which sports an eye-catching new logo, is now inviting community members to explore its features and provide feedback. This initial phase, aimed at gathering insights from users, will help shape the final touches before the grand public unveiling.

The website, accessible at www.nihc-cnasa.ca, is expected to soon enrich its offerings with a dedicated job board, an employee pool, and a 'Community Corner' that will feature immersive videos and pictures from community visits. Moreover, a special 'Wisdom Bundle' section will offer valuable Elder messages and insights, further emphasizing NIHC's commitment to community engagement and cultural preservation.

In addition to digital advancements, NIHC is also celebrating growth within its team. The council warmly welcomes Justine Stewart as its new Administrative & Human Resources Coordinator. With her impressive background from southern United States, Justine emerged as a standout candidate during the recruitment process. Her role will include significant contributions to the ongoing development of the NIHC website, among other responsibilities. The NIHC community is encouraged to share their website feedback directly with Justine at Admin@nihc-cnasa.ca.

For more information and to provide your feedback on the NIHC website, please visit www.nihc-cnasa.ca

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Housing advocate sees hope for solutions in Winnipeg's housing crisis



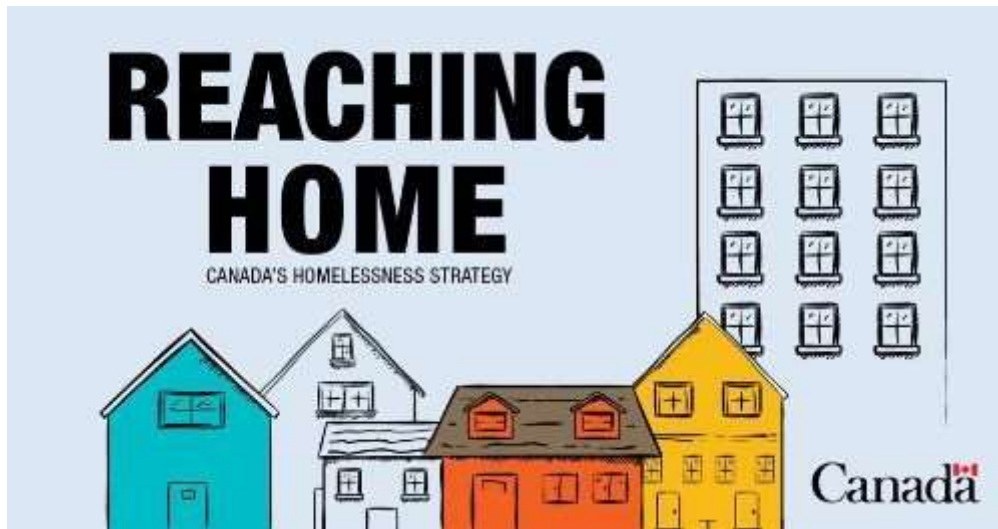
Winnipeg's fight against homelessness is entering an optimistic new chapter, according to Mark Fleming, a seasoned housing advocate and chair of the Reaching Home Community Advisory Board (CAB). In a recent interview, Fleming shared his positive outlook on the city's homelessness initiatives, fueled by unprecedented collaboration across government levels and the community's united front.

With a background deeply rooted in nonprofit and community-based work, Fleming has witnessed the multifaceted challenges of homelessness firsthand. His journey from being a young volunteer to getting to the forefront of strategic efforts to provide housing and end homelessness in Canada has been marked by significant achievements and learning curves. However, the collaborative spirit and innovative approaches emerging in recent times have ignited Fleming's optimism for the future.

In a candid conversation with Oraye St. Franklyn, Communications Coordinator for End Homelessness Winnipeg's Reaching Home, Fleming highlighted the successful strides made in expanding mobile outreach services and implementing emergency funding mechanisms as key milestones of the Reaching Home CAB, reflecting its commitment to immediate and impactful solutions. These efforts underscore a broader shift towards more dynamic and responsive strategies in addressing the needs of Winnipeg's homeless population.

Despite the ongoing challenges of funding constraints and bureaucratic complexities, Fleming emphasized a notable shift in the landscape of homelessness initiatives. The crux of this transformation lies in the newfound willingness among municipal, provincial, and federal governments, including sector partners to work together towards eradicating homelessness. This synergy, according to Fleming, marks a crucial moment in the journey towards developing comprehensive and lasting solutions for the city of Winnipeg.

The importance of community involvement and the power of partnerships were also central themes in Fleming's interview. The collective efforts of the Reaching Home CAB, sector partners, community organizations, and the public have been instrumental in driving the program's success.



Fleming praised the city's desire to embrace collaboration, which has not only enhanced the scope and impact of various projects but also fostered a more inclusive approach to problem-solving.

Further enriching the conversation was Fleming's insight into the [National Indigenous Homelessness Council's](#) work, where he serves as Secretary-Treasurer. The council's focus on culturally relevant solutions highlights the necessity of integrating Indigenous perspectives and methodologies in addressing homelessness across Canada.

Fleming's vision for the future is rooted in a comprehensive strategy that leverages the strengths of all stakeholders involved. His optimism is bolstered by the collaborative endeavors and the alignment of goals across government levels, which he believes are crucial for crafting effective and sustainable solutions to homelessness.

As Winnipeg stands on the brink of a new era in its fight against homelessness, Fleming's reflections offer a ray of hope. The Manitoba government's recent commitment to invest \$30 million into social and affordable housing resonates with Fleming's hopeful outlook on the initiatives tackling homelessness in the city.

This investment underscores a united dedication across all government tiers to collaboratively confront this critical challenge. By strategically engaging with non-profit organizations, municipal bodies, and Indigenous governments, Manitoba is laying the groundwork for a comprehensive and enduring approach to eradicating homelessness.

This collaborative effort not only signifies a concerted move towards addressing immediate housing needs but also paves the way for long-lasting, inclusive solutions that promise to transform the landscape of homelessness in the province.

[See link for the complete excerpt of Mark Fleming's Interview:](#)

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Winnipeg Street Census 2024 coming soon



End Homelessness Winnipeg, along with its sector partners, is pleased to announce the upcoming 2024 Winnipeg Street Census. The census, scheduled for fall, continues the effort from previous censuses in 2015, 2018, and 2022 to collect comprehensive data on our city's homeless population. The aim is to better understand their needs and to improve our services and support systems for them.

The 2024 Street Census will involve detailed surveys conducted by trained volunteers and street outreach teams across Winnipeg. These surveys will collect demographic information, shelter preferences, and other data critical to understanding the current state of homelessness in our community. Additionally, we will gather information from community organizations and government agencies to complement and deepen our analysis.

AT LEAST 1,256 PEOPLE EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS ON MAY 24 AND 25, 2022

WHERE PEOPLE STAYED



Volunteers are essential to the success of the Street Census, and we will soon be issuing a call for individuals who wish to contribute their time and efforts to this project. Those interested in volunteering can reach out in advance via email to RA@endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca.

Given the ongoing concerns related to public health and safety, we will continue to implement strict health protocols to ensure the safety of both volunteers and participants, as was done in the 2022 census.

The Street Census is a key component of the strategy to address homelessness, providing data that helps shape response and services. We encourage the community to get involved, either by volunteering for the census or by supporting our efforts to make Winnipeg a city where everyone has the support they need.


Stay tuned for more information on how you can participate in the 2024 Winnipeg Street Census.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
WERE MORE LIKELY TO **LIVE UNSHELTERED** & LESS LIKELY TO ACCESS **SHELTERS OR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

8% 

EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
MOVED TO WINNIPEG IN THE
LAST 12 MONTHS

MORE THAN
1/2 

WERE ON **EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE**

- MORE THAN **1/2** HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH **CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**
- **54%** FIRST EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS AT OR BEFORE 18 YEARS OLD
- **92.3%** ARE INDIGENOUS



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West Central Women's Resource Centre (WCWRC) Announces New Supportive Housing

The West Central Women's Resource Centre is proud to announce the opening of a new supportive housing facility at 590 Victor Street, designed as a safe haven for women and their children escaping gender-based violence. This 16-unit apartment building, supported by funding from End Homelessness – Reaching Home and other sector partners, provides not only long-term affordable housing, but also comprehensive wrap-around support services tailored to meet the needs of residents.

At this new facility, residents will benefit from a range of services including life skills training, educational support, housing and employment assistance, and specialized recovery support for survivors of gender-based violence. These services are aimed at empowering women to rebuild their lives in a supportive and secure environment.

The WCWRC is committed to offering a space where women can find safety, support, and opportunities to thrive.









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Indigenous Community Training and Development Program

In partnership with organizations serving the homeless population, individuals with lived experience, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders, a collaborative effort is underway to develop an Indigenous-led training and development program. This initiative is in response to the disproportionate representation of Indigenous individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg. The training program aims to equip service providers with a comprehensive understanding of homelessness, integrating historical and contemporary perspectives, including the impacts of systemic racism, oppression, and colonization. Through an Indigenous lens, the training will promote trauma-informed care and supportive, healing relationships, fostering a deeper understanding of the people being served by employees.

If you are interested in joining the Indigenous Community Training Committee, please reach out to:

Jessica Kilimnik

Indigenous Community Training and Development Specialist

C 431-294-4930

[E jkilimnik@endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca](mailto:jkilimnik@endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca)

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Is Naatamooskakowin the Right Fit?

Naatamooskakowin encompasses three major program types to address the diverse needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. These programs include Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT).

‘Housing First’ is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed. The basic underlying principle of Housing First is 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 addiction issues as it is for anyone. Housing is provided first and then supports are provided including physical and mental health, education, employment, substance abuse and community connections. Housing is not contingent upon readiness, or on 'compliance' (for instance, sobriety). Rather, it is a rights-based intervention rooted in the philosophy that all people deserve housing, and that adequate housing is a precondition for recovery.

Rapid Re-Housing is similar to Housing First but is aimed at individuals or families who are often not part of traditional Housing First programs. The Rapid Re-Housing model looks for people (both individuals and families) who are experiencing episodic or transitional (as opposed to chronic) homelessness. Like Housing First it has no "readiness requirements" but is focused on getting people into housing and out of shelters as quickly as possible. People who are eligible for rapid re-housing are usually judged to have low to moderate acuity.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is an integrated team-based approach designed to provide comprehensive community-based supports to help people remain stably housed. It is one of the most studied community programs in all of healthcare and has a very strong evidence base. Programs that follow the Pathways model typically offer intensive supports through ACT teams to address the needs of clients with mental health and addictions, and may support individuals in accessing psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation.

There are a variety of Rapid Re-Housing models; many use scattered site housing although others may provide communal housing. Rapid Re-Housing often includes rent supplements (usually time-limited) and should include some level of community support services.

Together, these programs under Naatamooskakowin aim to provide comprehensive support tailored to each participant's unique circumstances.

When considering individuals for Naatamooskakowin, here are some key questions to ponder:

1. **Duration of Homelessness:** Is the individual currently without stable housing? Priority for Naatamooskakowin is given to those who have been homeless for at least 6 months in the past year, or 18+ months in the past 3 years. If not, Naatamooskakowin may not be the most suitable option. Instead, consider exploring prevention supports such as the Manitoba Rent Relief Fund or the Canada-Manitoba Housing Benefit.
2. **Crisis Situation:** Naatamooskakowin is not designed to address emergencies. If someone is in crisis, support them to address those immediate needs first. They might still benefit from Naatamooskakowin, but alongside crisis supports and not as the primary support at the moment
3. **Dependents or Youth:** Pregnant people and people staying with dependent children are prioritized. It doesn't matter how or if the dependent children are related. If children or youth are experiencing homelessness, it is an urgent priority.

For the full list, please visit: [Access Points](#)

Program Update

In this fiscal year (April 1st, 2023 - March 31st, 2024), we've conducted:

- **Sharing Experiences (Intake):** 263
- **Warm Handoffs:** 184 (Participants connected to new programs)

Waitlists

Please note the current waitlists for specific programs:

- Housing First: 54
- Rapid Rehousing: 5
- ACT - Assertive Community Treatment: 37

How to Connect to Naatamooskakowin

To connect someone to Naatamooskakowin, please visit [this link](#) for additional details on how to schedule an appointment.

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Op-Ed: Enhancing supports to keep families together

There have been ongoing issues with the Child and Family Services System (CFS) concerning the welfare of children in provincial care, and regrettably, the latest budget does not go far enough to tackle these issues. While valid concerns persist regarding CFS interactions—such as birth alerts, apprehensions, suitable placements, safeguarding children in provincial care, effectively supporting transitions out of care, and need to how to prevent CFS involvement in the first place —these changes necessitate policy, systemic reforms and money to implement.

While budgets and statistics may be interpreted as ‘just a number’, with over 8,990 children in care, 91% of whom are Indigenous, one wonders how many individual families are impacted and have experienced the traumatic removal of children from their care. Consideration must be given to how we work to prevent the apprehension of children that leads to families being divided.

What impacts family stability? Families may be navigating poverty, housing instability, mental health, addictions, trauma; they may have had recent involvement with the justice system, or changes such as loss of employment or death. Families may also struggle to parent a child whose behavioral needs exceed their capacity, and for whom an assessment is required. Due to year-long wait times, parents may have to wait for such assessments, diagnosis, and therefore, access to resources.

The factors that influence a family’s stability cross provincial departments and commonly include services provided by the Departments of Families (Children’s disABILITY Services, CFS), Education and Early Childhood Learning, Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, and Justice. Inter-departmental funding must be dedicated to resources specifically aimed at promoting family stability and keeping families together.

In 2013, Justice Ted Hughes released the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry Commission which reviewed the tragic death of 5-year-old Phoenix Sinclair, an Indigenous child who died in 2005 in the care of her parents, but who had recent CFS involvement. The Inquiry issued 62 recommendations for actions, which reflect the following statement made by Justice Hughes:

“The root causes of neglect—including poverty, poor housing, food insecurity, and substance abuse—lie beyond the scope of the child welfare system to resolve. But a collaborative approach, working with parents and harnessing the collective resources of child welfare and other provincial government

departments, other levels of government, and the province's many community-based organizations, can make a difference for vulnerable families."

Further evidence that existing provincial policies, processes, and regulations related to service provision need to be dismantled, is demonstrated in a recent response by the province, to a recommendation made by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY). The recommendation to prevent apprehensions and increase reunification by funding and evaluating responses to parental substance use disorder was made in 2021, in a public report, called Finding the Way Back. As part of the provincial response in 2022, it is stated that "This recommendation is not consistent with how mental health and addictions services are coordinated in Manitoba". The response indicates that provincial departments continue to be disjointed, as Mental Health and Addictions are viewed as 'separate' from CFS. A question we need to ask is, what are the continuous risks posed to families if provincial systems do not collectively work towards funding and making resources accessible?

It has been almost 19 years since Phoenix Sinclair's death, and we continue to see systemic challenges that reflect a poor underfunded cross-sectoral response from the provincial government that simply fails to respond to the needs of families. We need a collective response from Government that considers the resources and funding gaps that impact families so that we can prevent future tragic outcomes for children, youth, and young adults. If we want to end the intergenerational trauma experienced by families whose service needs continue to be unmet, the cycle of apprehension being the first step to service delivery must stop.

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Sara Riel Community Helper Navigators

Starting April 1, 2023, Manitobans living with severe and enduring disabilities are encouraged to apply for Manitoba Supports for Persons with Disabilities (MSPD). Yet, despite this opportunity, confusion persists within the community regarding the program's details and how it differs from the regular EIA disability stream - Medical Barriers For Employment (MBFE). Many

recipients of regular EIA disability benefits may qualify for additional support under MSPD, adding to the uncertainty.

To address these concerns and offer guidance, the Provincial Government partnered with Sara Riel to launch the MSPD Community Navigator Helpers. Their mission is to empower applicants, aiding them in making informed decisions about the disability program best suited to their needs. These navigators assist with paperwork, connect applicants with medical professionals, and provide support throughout the process. They also assist those already on MSPD by connecting them to the much needed supports in the community.

While MBFE remains available, MSPD signifies a new chapter in the EIA Disability program. It caters specifically to individuals enduring severe and long-term disabilities, whether mental or physical, ensuring lifelong support without the stress of annual reassessments. This change brings immense relief to recipients, eliminating the fear of benefit loss and the potential trauma triggered by reassessment.

Moreover, MSPD offers additional financial benefits, including the ability to earn more through part-time work without affecting benefits. Recipients also receive allowances for phone and laundry expenses, along with other financial and health benefits.

Community Helper Navigators actively engage with social agencies and participate in community events to reach as many individuals as possible. Their goal is to ensure that those facing prolonged and severe disabilities are aware of the new program and can access the financial assistance and support they deserve.

If you're eager to learn more about MSPD, don't hesitate to reach out to Sara Riel's Community Helper Navigators! They're friendly, approachable, and committed to providing clear answers to your questions. You can contact them at 204-296-3872 or via email at info@sararielinc.com or in person at 210 Pacific Avenue office (Monday through Thursday 9am-3pm).

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End Homelessness Winnipeg receives its mandate from the [10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg](#), launched in 2014. The Plan called for creation of a new non-profit organization to provide ongoing leadership to end homelessness in our city. Working closely with the network of existing services, this new organization would have one driving mission: to end homelessness.

Collaboration across systems and deep within community and government sectors would be central to its work, as would the knowledge and efforts of those with Lived Experience of homelessness, Indigenous leaders, community organizations, and the philanthropic and private sectors. End Homelessness Winnipeg opened its doors in 2015 under this mandate.

Next Issue: June 2024

Youth mentor with lived experience helping others exit homelessness, shares remarkable story.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Gizhe Waa Ti Sii-Win
September 13, 2024

Reaching Home Conference

November 2024

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If you'd like your event listed, please send an email to socialmedia@endhomelessnesswinnipeg.ca

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