



**A city where everyone has a
home and lives with dignity**

Annual Report 2021–2022

Message from the TSN Chair & Executive Director

The TSN has a dual mandate. We work in the moment – supporting emergency homelessness providers to deliver the highest quality programs and services to people who require emergency shelter.

At the same time, we work for the future, developing and advancing strategies and solutions that will create new affordable and deeply supportive housing – so that we can reduce our reliance on emergency shelters and reduce the size of the emergency homelessness sector.

This past year, the TSN continued to support the sector to respond to and operate within the context of an ever shifting and evolving pandemic environment. We provided information and resources that helped service providers keep shelter residents and staff safe, homelessness programs open, and emergency beds available to people who needed them. In April 2021, we initiated the “Community Health Ambassador Program” to promote vaccination efforts at sheltering sites while at the same time building the capacity of people with lived experience through meaningful training and employment experiences. Driving us in our efforts to engage people with lived experience in decision making and service delivery, not just at TSN but throughout the sector, has been the Pipeline Project. Funded by the Metcalf Foundation, the Pipeline Project generated tools and resources that will provide lasting value to the sector as we create leadership opportunities and employment for shelter residents and people with lived experience.

The pandemic has transformed the 24-hour emergency homelessness system. In July 2021, TSN published “Meeting Crisis with Opportunity”. Undertaken in partnership with Dixon Hall, the study documented the impact of COVID-19 on the shelter system. It provides important insights into the

successes and challenges of the pandemic response as well as recommendations for facilitating intentional post-COVID planning towards a more client and housing focused system, one that is grounded in explicit commitments to human rights, inclusion, anti-racism and equity. Building on this work, in December, 2021 we launched “Re-Imagining Toronto’s Shelter System”. Working again in collaboration with Dixon Hall and with support from KPMG and the Catherine Donnelly Foundation we initiated a series of research and planning activities to help identify feasible and actionable options for re-investing resources used to operate the shelter hotel program and the shelter system as a whole towards more dignified emergency shelter and stable and supportive housing options.

In addition to the loss and grief resulting from the pandemic, we bore witness to the ravages of the opioid crisis, with opioid related toxicity deaths increasing by 139% during the pandemic. In collaboration with

partners across the homelessness and health systems, TSN helped to advance a Health Services Framework for the sector that will ensure primary care, harm reduction and mental health services and supports are available, relevant and accessible to shelter residents. We collaborated with the City’s Shelter Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), The Neighbourhood Group (TNG) and Inner City Health Associates (ICHA) to deliver peer led vaccination promotion and clinics. We partnered with the Black Physicians Association of Ontario (BPAO) and Toronto Public Health (TPH) to deliver Black client centered clinics, ensuring that Black residents had access to culturally safe and appropriate support and service. In January 2022, TSN secured funding for the Shelter Sector Grief and Loss Project. Over the coming year we will conduct research and engagement activities to develop a model for building the sector’s resilience and collective capacity to respond to crisis and critical incidences.

In the midst of this sea of change, we recognize and honour the work of all homelessness service providers. Sector staff have worked tirelessly on the front lines, demonstrating patience, flexibility, compassion and resolve. They inspire us, at TSN to continue advocating, alongside our partners, for progressive social and housing policy and investments that will increase the supply of both affordable and supportive housing in Toronto.

We want to thank the TSN member agencies, Board members, our staff, community researchers, community ambassadors and shelter residents – for your continuous efforts, your dedication and your wisdom.

Celebrating Front Line Workers - Shelter and Homelessness Worker Appreciation Week

TSN worked with the Mayor’s Office this year to recognize the tireless commitment of shelter and homelessness workers. We hope to establish this as an annual event.

*NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor John Tory, on behalf of Toronto City Council, do hereby proclaim **January 24 – 30, 2022** as “**Emergency Shelter and Homelessness Service Worker Appreciation Week**” in the City of Toronto.*



Patricia Mueller, Chair



Sonja Nerad, Executive Director

Grounding Our Work

Vision

We believe that housing is a human right and envision a city where everyone has a home that enables them to live with dignity

Mission

The Toronto Shelter Network is an umbrella organization that champions the best housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. We enhance the collective capacity and voice of people with lived experience of homelessness and diverse homelessness service providers in Toronto through knowledge sharing and learning, collaborative planning, research and advocacy

Values

Equity

We advocate for policies that reduce discrimination and improve access and the just treatment of diverse populations experiencing homelessness.

Client Centered

We promote homelessness services that are informed by the voice of people with lived experience and respectful of and responsive to the unique and emerging needs and priorities of homelessness service users.

Accountability

We are responsible for achieving our goals, acting with integrity and communicating honestly and transparently with our members and stakeholders.

Collaboration

We work together with partners, including people with lived experience of homelessness, to share and leverage knowledge, ideas, skills, and resources that help to end homelessness.

Quality

We encourage continuous service improvement and testing new ideas through a focus on data driven decisions, service standards and developing promising practices.

Strategic Priorities

Build Member Capacity

We will provide relevant and valuable supports and services to our members so that they can continue to deliver excellent services.

Collaborate for Transformation

We will collaborate on research, policy and advocacy initiatives and the development of transformative housing strategies that expand housing options for our members and their clients.

Strengthen the TSN

To remain sustainable, we will strengthen our governance and operations, increase and retain our membership, and diversify our revenues.



Sector Engagement, Development and Supports

Adapting and Responding Throughout COVID

We hosted COVID-19 related webinars and tailored resources to address the unique issues and needs of population specific groups. We worked with members to monitor trends and identify system concerns, and we met twice monthly with SSHA to problem solve in response to the ever shifting and evolving pandemic situation. We took what we heard from members and advocated for the needs of homeless populations with SSHA, the provincial government and at service system planning tables.



Innovating to Meet the Needs of Black Shelter Residents

More than 40% of Toronto’s shelter residents are members of the Black community. We know that vaccine hesitancy, particularly for racialized groups is rooted in both the historical and contemporary contexts of systemic racism, marginalization, and neglect. To address the need for tailored vaccination promotion strategies and more diverse representation in clinical teams that administer and promote vaccinations, TSN partnered with the BPAO and TPH to deliver 20 Black-Client-Centered Clinics (i.e., vaccination clinics staffed by Black health care providers) across the shelter sector.

Centering People with Lived Experience in our Work - Community Health Ambassador Program

During the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the Campaign Vaccination Toronto project was initiated by TSN to address the vaccination/health promotion needs of shelter clients and service providers.

Over the past year, the TSN built a roster of Community Health Ambassadors (i.e., current shelter residents/ individuals with lived experience in the shelter system) who are supported to engage their peers in health education, thereby addressing health needs and facilitating the uptake and maintenance of positive health behaviours.



Jointly with health partners, ICHA and TPH, Community Health Ambassadors delivered hundreds of hours of health promotion at sheltering sites in areas such as COVID-19 vaccination, shingles, and pneumococcal vaccination, Hepatitis A vaccination and harm reduction. Community Health Ambassadors were instrumental in connecting with shelter clients who are frequently hard-to-reach through creative avenues and by drawing on their lived experience to provide unique insights and supports.

The program employs a strengths-based approach by recognizing the critical role that peer workers play in supporting health promotion outreach due to their diverse experiences, relationships and connections, knowledge, and skill sets. Through the program, Health Ambassadors enhanced their health/health promotion knowledge and skills and improved their self-efficacy and confidence. Several Ambassadors have moved on to other training/work opportunities.

Sector Education and Development

Last year, TSN engaged more than 3,000 service providers, front-line staff, sector partners and people with lived experience of homelessness through our monthly All Member meetings and sector workshops. TSN partnered with subject matter experts to deliver information sessions and workshops on topics relevant to the shelter sector, such as:

- Harm Reduction in Toronto's Emergency Homelessness System
- Anti-Black Racism: A train-the-trainer workshop providing tools and skills to effectively address Anti-Black racism through Cultural Humility
- Grief and Loss: Panel discussion on identifying challenges and sharing best practices
- Mental Health and Wellness: Sessions designed specifically for front-line staff
- COVID-19: Navigating labour relations and the implications of mandatory vaccination directives and policies

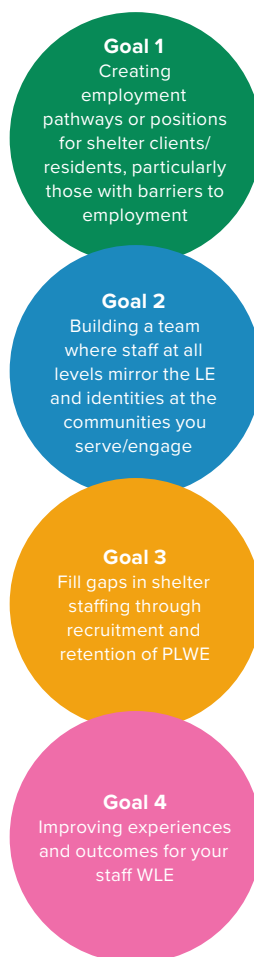
In addition to these formal sessions, TSN coordinated the sector tables, which met on a regular basis throughout the year. Sector Tables provide an important opportunity for networking, information sharing and camaraderie. Thank you to all of the Sector Table Co-Chairs and participants. With your support we maintained regular meetings throughout the pandemic.

Research & Capacity Building

The Shelter Sector Pipeline Project: From Homelessness to Equitable Work

Last year we entered our second year of the Pipeline Project. Funded by the Metcalf Foundation, this initiative supports Toronto's 24-hour emergency homelessness sector in a collective effort to hire, retain, and promote people with lived experience of homelessness (PWLE); and to help organizations across the sector to be exemplary employers for these staff.

- **Sharing research findings:** Based on surveys, interviews, and secondary research conducted in August 2020-April 2021, we gave a presentation to shelter staff about the current state of employment for PWLE in Toronto's 24-hour homelessness services sector, including challenges, benefits, and best practices.
- **Co-designing best practices and key definitions:** We established and coordinated two Working Groups: the Recruitment and Hiring Working Group (focused on employment of PWLE in all types of shelter jobs); and the Peer Work in Shelters Working Group (focused on specialized positions for PWLE). Participants included management, frontline, and human resources staff from shelters; peer workers from related sectors; PWLE with an interest in shelter work; and other expert advisors. Through the Working Groups and consultation sessions, we collaboratively established priority best practices recommendations around recruitment and hiring of people with lived experience, and developed shared definitions of key concepts around peer work and employment of PWLE, by integrating diverse perspectives.
- **Sharing recommendations and advice:** We provided guidance and advice regarding best practices to diverse shelter staff, and supported them in the early stages of expanding their peer work programs. We also began work on a Toolkit for Shelters on Employment of People with Lived Experience, to be launched in October 2022.



Welcome Home Project

TSN's Welcome Home Project wrapped up in October 2021. Many resources and toolkits were developed through the project, with the primary aim of supporting homelessness service providers across Toronto with their community engagement work. Funded by the Trillium Foundation, the following Welcome Home resources are available on our website.

- Best Practice Guide: bit.ly/3LRk4kM
- Community Education Presentation Templates: bit.ly/3C2JB6a
- Managing Community Conflict Toolkit for Community Engagement Leads: bit.ly/3BVpPcz
- How-To CLC/EMBRACE Toolkit: bit.ly/3dQImA3
- Community Liaison Workers Guidelines: bit.ly/3Rn0P3K
- Toolkit for Community Liaison Community Members: bit.ly/3UQn9FJ

Grief and Loss Project

Early in 2022, TSN launched the Shelter System Grief and Loss Project. Funded by SSHA, this initiative will improve the capacity of the shelter system to manage grief and loss in the workplace by:

- Improving our understanding of best practices in the delivery of resilience and of grief and loss programs that can be adapted to the shelter sector.
- Improving access to tools, training and resources that can support shelter service providers to implement best practice grief and loss programming.
- Improve the capacity of individuals, teams and organizations to respond to and heal from loss and traumatic events.

Guided by an Advisory Committee comprised of front line and management staff, this project will be implemented over the coming year and produce a A Grief and Loss Service Model that shelters can adapt to their individual settings and which we hope will provide a standard/ framework for SSHA to implement for the sector as a whole.



Meeting Crisis with Opportunity and Re-imagining Toronto's Shelter System

In the spring of 2021, TSN and Dixon Hall released “Meeting Crisis with Opportunity”, a study which documented the impact of COVID-19 on the shelter system. Our report brought to the forefront questions of system sustainability. It highlighted the promise of hotel programs as a more dignified shelter option and it recommended that the future vision for the shelter system move forward in an evidence-based way or leverage gains made during the pandemic.

With many shelter hotel leases set to expire in the next two years, TSN has been moving forward additional research to unearth **evidence** to help inform our contribution to shelter transformation planning efforts. This past year we conducted a review of practices used by jurisdictions around the world to deliver emergency homelessness services during the pandemic. We brought together shelter providers for Round Table Discussions and engaged with more than 200 shelter residents to capture their experience with the hotel program and housing supports. This work will culminate in the soon to be released Re-Imagining Toronto's Shelter System Report - Stay Tuned!

Research & Capacity Building (cont'd)

Partners and Collaborators

Thank you to everyone who participated in TSN projects – your knowledge, experience and wisdom is invaluable!

- Black Physicians Association of Ontario
- City of Toronto, Shelter Support and Housing Administration
- Grief and Loss Steering Committee members
- Imagine Clinic
- Inner City Health Associates
- KPMG
- Lived Experience Lab
- Meeting Crisis With Opportunity Advisory Committee members
- Mentor/Mentee Canada
- Pipeline Project Advisory Committee and Working Groups members
- Sick Kids
- The Housing Secretariat
- The Neighbourhood Group
- Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness
- Toronto Public Health
- U of T Black Medical Students Association
- Welcome Home Advisory Committee members
- William Osler Health System

Homelessness System Planning and Advocacy

Last year, TSN participated in numerous planning tables and initiatives to advocate for policy and programming changes that create a more inclusive and client focused shelter system and which prioritize deeply affordable and supportive housing. We appeared before City Council on numerous occasions to depute on issues impacting member organizations and shelter residents, and participated in the development of the Toronto Homelessness Solutions Plan, the Homelessness Health Framework, Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines, and the COVID-19 Shelter Transition and Relocation Plan.

In addition, we participated in numerous research projects such as the Embedded Harm Reduction Evaluation Study, the Shelter Safety and Bans Study and the Beyond Housing Evaluation Project. Our aim at these tables was to inform research that is actionable and relevant to shelter providers and shelter residents.



Financial Report

This year report shows TSN's success in generating funding for projects that will build the sector wide capacity.

Revenue	2022	%	2021	%
City Of Toronto Grants	\$ 299,127	64.3	\$ 197,015	58.1
Metcalf Foundation	93,884	20.2	69,129	20.4
Trillium Foundation	45,179	9.7	27,921	8.2
Donations	7,124	1.5	20,000	5.9
Membership Dues	20,200	4.3	22,570	6.7
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy	–	–	2,418	0.7
Interest	–	–	–	–
Total Revenue	\$ 465,514	100	339,053	100

Expenses	2022	%	2021	%
Personnel	250,239	53.7	174,180	57.7
Conference	–	–	–	–
Purchased Services	200,232	42.9	118,546	39.3
Professional Fees	5,186	1.1	4,673	1.5
Insurance	967	0.2	1,373	0.5
Office And General	9,736	2.1	3,032	1.0
Total Expenses	\$ 466,360	100	\$ 301,804	100

Excess Of Expenses Over Revenue For The Year	(846)	37,249
Net Assets, Beginning Of Year	52,772	15,523
Net Assets, End Of Year	\$ 51,926	\$ 52,772

Audit provided by Pennylegion Chung LLP

Board, Members & Staff

TSN Board of Directors

Patricia Mueller

President
(Chief Executive Officer,
Homes First Society)

Louise Smith

Secretary and Treasurer
(Chief Operating Officer,
Eva's Initiatives for
Homeless Youth)

Debbie Hill-Corrigan

(Executive Director, Sojourn
House)

Bobbie Gunn

(Director, Housing Services,
Street Haven at the
Crossroads)

Carol McDonald

(Manager, Women's
Residence Portfolio
Shelter, Support and
Housing Administration,
City of Toronto)

Carol Latchford*

(Executive Director,
Red Door Family Shelter)

David Reycraft

(Director of Housing
Services, Dixon Hall)

Sylvia Braithwaite

(Director, 24 Hour Services,
Fred Victor Centre)

Mauricio Urtecho

(Executive Director, Toronto
Housing and Homeless
Supports, The Salvation
Army)

*Departed 2021/2022

TSN Team

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Gabriela Russek

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*Sector Engagement and
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Maiesha Rahman

*Campaign Vaccination
Toronto Project Coordinator*

Stephanie Chan

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Edward Pereira

*Community Health
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William Patrick Porter

*Consultant, Grief and Loss
Project and Re-imagining
Toronto' Shelter System*

Haia Iman*

*Meeting Crisis with
Opportunity
Project Coordinator*

Carmelle Wolfson*

*Meeting Crisis with
Opportunity Researcher*

Shafeeq Armstrong*

*Welcome Home Project
Coordinator*

Special thanks to our roster, current and past, of Community Health Ambassadors



Funders & Member Agencies

Thank You TSN Funders



City of Toronto, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA)

City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA)



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Thank You TSN Member Agencies!

Christie Ossington
Neighbourhood Centre

Christie Refugee
Welcome Centre

City of Toronto

COSTI Immigrant Services

Covenant House

Dixon Hall

Friends of Ruby

Eva's Initiatives for Youth

Fife House

Fred Victor Centre

Good Shepherd

Homes First Society

Horizons for Youth

Kennedy House
Youth Services

Margaret's

Nellie's

Red Door Family Shelter

St. Felix Centre

The Salvation Army

The Scott Mission

Sistering

Sojourn House

Street Haven at the
Crossroads

Toronto Hostel Training
Centre

Turning Point
Youth Services

Warden Wood
Community Centre

YMCA of Toronto


Youth without Shelter


YWCA

YouthLink

Report design: Green Living Enterprises



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