



DUFFERIN MEN'S SHELTER

Business Case

Prepared by Choices Youth Shelter

Dufferin Men’s Shelter Business Case

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Exec Summary

The root cause of homelessness is mental health resulting from trauma, a medical condition, or an undiagnosed mental disorder. If left unchecked, crippling mental health leaves people unable to function and can often lead individuals to mask their pain with substance abuse that is hard to kick.

Since 1999, Choices has had its boots on the ground servicing homeless youth in our area. To date, we have seen over 1450 youth come through our doors.

In recent months, Choices has had an unprecedented amount of homeless men show up to our door asking for help, but unfortunately we had to turn them away. Long before the town of Orangeville began talking about the men's homeless issue, Choices was looking at ways to provide support. In the summer, we had an opportunity to do something about the issue, and with the help of a private donor we decided to act. Since August, we have served 6 men.

The objectives of this proposal include providing shelter for up to 8 men, decrease incidents of men's homelessness, increase diversion from the Shelter when possible; and increased referrals/connections to supports and available housing.

Choices appreciates that to ask for funding for a brand-new program may seem presumptuous. But Choices has very real experience that proves recruiting and retaining caring, qualified staff without the commitment implied by predictable funding is impossible. Committing to a property for a reasonable period of time in Orangeville's very competitive real estate market is essential, and again impossible without predictable funding.

There is a "Catch 22" in all this, which underlies Choices request for \$166,546 to establish the confidence necessary for a proven service provider to create meaningful momentum in housing solutions for homeless men in the area. Choices also understands that a shelter may not be the best long-term solution for homeless men, but it is better than anything we have now, and our homeless men deserve the accommodation and the services that are prerequisites for any permanent solutions. We know that we will all learn and evolve our service models based upon the practical experience that this funding will enable.

Randy Narine

Board Chair, Choices Youth Shelter

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Mission

Our mission is to be a safe and supportive resource within Dufferin County that offers men experiencing homelessness, 25+ years of age, an alternative to living on the street, and supports their transition to stable housing.

Goals

The proposed Dufferin Men's Shelter would be an entry point to Dufferin's Housing System. The program will:

- provide short-term shelter for up to 8 men;
- provide quality service and a supportive environment; and
- support partnerships and collaborative initiatives across the housing and homelessness sector.

The goals of the Shelter will be to:

- decrease incidents of men's homelessness in the community;
- increase diversion from the emergency shelter system (when possible);
- reduce emergency department use;
- increase referrals and wrap around supports for clients;
- increase successful transitions to permanent, stable housing for clients and;
- create awareness for men's homelessness through Dufferin County.

Professional Supports

Choices Youth Shelter

Choices has a well-established history of service success, long-standing community partnerships which we hope to leverage to deliver on this proposal. Since our opening in January 2000, the shelter has grown through community support and the dedication of many volunteers and staff. From our very early days, we have provided safe housing for over 1450 area youth. With over 2 decades of experience serving the homeless youth population within Dufferin County and surrounding area, we are excited at the opportunity to expand our service to now service the male homeless population.

The men's shelter can operate under the umbrella of Choices Youth Shelter, benefiting from the professional resources already in place, the established partnerships, and the charitable tax status. This proposal capitalizes on an existing infrastructure and therefore saves costs in the areas of shelter management and shared staffing resources.

Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP)

In early 2021, SHIP began providing Choices Youth Shelter administrative and programming support.

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For nearly 30 years, SHIP has championed the fundamental right of housing by increasing the quality of life through health services and housing supports that promote mental health, physical health, and wellness.

As a respected health service and housing support provider, SHIP promotes Healthy Housing™ by forming lasting relationships with landlords and developers. SHIP advocates mental and physical health services through in-house service teams and partnerships with community-based agencies. SHIP is known for their history of identifying gaps in available service provision and directly addressing those needs. Many of their programs and service models have gained national attention within the healthcare field.

Program Need

There are two areas of need in Dufferin County driving this proposal:

Homelessness

According to the State of Homelessness in Canada 2013 Report, adult men between 25 and 55 years of age represent almost half (47.5%) of the homeless population in Canada¹. These findings were reflected in Dufferin County's 2018 Point-in-Time Count, where 50% of those experiencing homelessness identified as male². This represents an increase in the proportion of men experiencing homelessness when compared to the 2016 results. Currently, there is no emergency shelter available to support these individuals in Dufferin County.

Affordability/Lack of Housing

Affordability and the lack of affordable housing remains a key reason why individuals experience homelessness. The Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB) reports that average rent for one-bedroom units in Dufferin has increased substantially year over year, while vacancy rates remain stagnant³. According to the data, the average rent for two-bedroom apartments in Dufferin was \$2,200 per month in the second quarter of 2021 and is estimated to continue to increase. These market conditions make it extremely challenging for individuals with low-income, including those in receipt of social assistance, to secure permanent accommodations in the area. As a result, individuals must resort to finding short-term or unsafe accommodations, including emergency shelters, couch surfing, or living on the streets.

¹ Stephen Gaetz, Jesse Donaldson, Tim Richter, & Tanya Gulliver (2013): The State of Homelessness in Canada 2013. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

² Dufferin County (2018): Dufferin County 2018 Point-in-Time Homeless Count Results. Orangeville, ON: County of Dufferin.

³ The Toronto Real Estate Board. Rental Market Report – Second Quarter 2021. Toronto, ON.

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Responding to these needs requires a range of strategies, one of which is an emergency shelter for men in order to provide safe short-term housing and resource connections. The Dufferin Men's Shelter will enhance synergies with our current partnerships and develop new partnerships with other community organizations that have the knowledge and experience to address the complexities of our clients, and who can offer integrated services and person-centered supports based on needs.

Programming Approach

Staffing Model

Services will be offered through a team, which will include 7 staff providing the following supports:

1 FTE – The Caseworker will provide one-on-one assistance and counselling services, meeting clients and identifying their challenges, connecting clients with community resources, monitoring progress, and reporting updates. This will be a shared service with the Dufferin (Choices) Youth Shelter.

2 FTE and 5 PTE – Community Shelter Workers will conduct intake assessments, actively practice diversion, and provide front-line support to individuals in the shelter, which will include creating housing search opportunities for clients.

The Shelter will endorse, support and train staff on the following:

- Empowerment Client-Centered
- Strength-Based Approach
- Active Listening
- Reality Therapy
- Non-Judgmental Reality Testing

Target Population

The program intends to serve up to two individuals per month in Phase 1. The current building has the capacity to serve 8 clients per month.

Eligible individuals will be those who are:

- 25+ years;
- actively seeking stable housing and;
- willing to engage in support services as needed.

Emergency Shelter

The Dufferin Men's Shelter (hereafter referred to as "the Shelter") model is informed by OrgCode's Housing Focused Shelter recommendations, our experience offering similar services

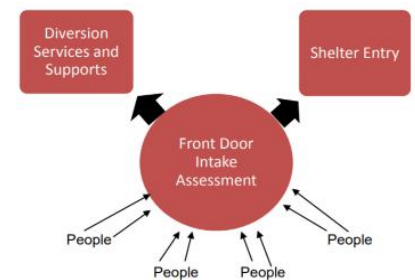
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through our Youth Shelter and our knowledge of the needs and barriers within Dufferin County's housing and homelessness community.

The Shelter will adopt an Emergency Shelter diversion practice. Staff will provide support to individuals seeking access to shelter by assisting them to remain in their current housing or to find somewhere else to stay that is safe and appropriate (even temporarily) until a more permanent housing option can be secured. With a diversion policy in place, access to the Shelter would be permitted only after attempts to support housing retention or rapid re-housing have been unsuccessful⁴

The Shelter strategy proposes to be part of the Dufferin Coordinated Access Team (CAT) which will create an entry point for individuals to access and transition through the housing system.

In conjunction with the County's By-Name List, there will be continuity within the emergency shelter system, one which prioritizes the most vulnerable shelter users and creates a low barrier, accessible, efficient, and effective entry point to the system.



Diversion

To effectively respond to homelessness, communities should be able to help residents maintain or regain housing without having to enter emergency shelter. Diversion is a strategy that helps people experiencing a housing crisis quickly identify and access safe alternatives to emergency shelter. Homeless response systems and shelters should engage in diversion strategies because it reduces new entries into homelessness, cuts down on shelter wait lists, reduces demand for limited shelter beds, and targets more intensive homelessness interventions to those with higher needs⁵.

The Shelter will implement and train staff on the nine steps to effective diversion practice, with each step progressing more deeply into resolving the current housing crisis while concurrently determining if shelter access will be required. This training will be extensive throughout the program and will provide a cohesive approach and understanding that diversion is a critical step that supports positive system outcomes.

Individuals who are appropriate for diversion will meet with a Community Shelter Worker to start housing stabilization planning. In these circumstances, planning involves securing short-term

⁴ Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration (2013). What is Diversion? An Overview of Emergency Shelter Diversion as a Practice and the Local Context in Waterloo Region. Waterloo, ON: Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

⁵ National Alliance to End Homelessness (2018). Key Takeaways: The Role of Emergency Shelters in Diversion. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/role-emergency-shelter-diversion>. Accessed September 3, 2021.

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accommodations, discussion long-term housing options and linking individuals to existing resources within the community. The County of Dufferin provides several supports that address housing stability and focus on prevention. A few great examples are Homelessness Prevention Program and Housing Access Dufferin, which provide financial and non-financial assistance to eligible residents of the County to get or keep affordable housing.

Assessment Tool(s)

The Shelter will assess each client using any required or recommended tools provided by County of Dufferin, to determine client triage to diversion services, or entry. The Shelter will have access to knowledge and training as it relates to a variety of screening and assessment tools. In particular, the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) will be used to triage clients for support.

Client Support Services

The Shelter will provide tailored supports and services and foster a safe and supportive environment free from abuse, exploitation, and violence. Guidance for client support services will be provided by SHIP who are experts in the field.

The Shelter will implement the following as part of Client Support services:

- Intake Assessment
- Care and Housing Plan
- System Navigation and Referrals

Intake Assessment

If it is determined that a shelter stay is necessary, staff will proceed with an Intake Assessment. Preliminary needs and housing plan goals will be established during a phone intake and identified in HIFIS. Emphasis will be placed on brief, action-oriented goals with target dates for housing.

Staff will support the following activities through admission:

- transition into the home by collaborating with client and any existing supports to arrange the physical transition (e.g., arrange storage of personal belongings/moving support/transportation to building);
- introduction to shelter staff with minimal need to repeat their story/information and;
- preserve privacy and dignity throughout this orientation process.

Housing Plan

The Housing Plan will collect a brief history of housing challenges, successes, and goals. This will be co-created by both staff and clients and will be the mechanism of communication of housing-focused plans for further planning.

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Initial Plan

Housing help workgroups will be offered, through facilitated short daily conversations for the first two weeks. These supports structured around housing search (self-help) will be targeted towards new shelter residents, with separate groups offered to those experiencing longer shelter stays or more significant housing barriers.

At the two-week point of stay, staff will arrange an initial housing planning meeting to review/update plan based on what barriers/opportunities have been identified. Staff on various shifts will have assigned primary responsibilities to support the needs of clients and their housing plans. Staff will maintain updated housing resources and information on current housing listings. As a housing focused shelter, this will include support with advocacy and accompanied viewings as indicated in the housing plan, offered on day, evening, and overnight shifts.

30 Day Re-Assessment

Through collaborative efforts, it is intended that clients will be successfully re-housed prior to the 30th day of stay in the Shelter. If a longer stay is required, staff will meet with the client to complete a re-assessment of need and determine if additional resources are required.

System Navigation and Referrals

Staff will identify existing circles of care through preliminary meetings with the individual and help the clients identify how community-based supports may be drawn upon to resolve their housing crisis. Staff will work collaboratively with clients to determine their resources, goals, and needs and provide information about applicable community resources. System navigation and collaborative care approaches will integrate clients into community and reduce the risk of future housing instability.

6 Month Project Timeline

The 6-month start up project timeline will be based on approval and funding allotment. Below are some high-level key activities/milestones:

- Secure immediate emergency 6-month funding from the Town of Orangeville
- Obtain new location
- Secure funding from the County of Dufferin
- Investigate other funding opportunities

Performance Measures

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If funding is approved, the program will establish key performance metrics and review these on a routine basis to assess program utilization, shelter user satisfaction, community impact, determine program trends and examine effectiveness of program services.

Annual Budget

Expense Line Item	Budgeted Cost	Comments
Staffing Salaries		
Salaries	\$172,775	1 staff on shift 24/7 365 days a year
Benefits	20,617	Cost of CPP, EI, WSIB and benefits
Staffing Expenses		
Training	3,000	Required training for staff
Travel	1,000	
Phone	1,500	Cell phone for staff on site
Computer	2,500	Computer equipment
House Expenses		
Rent	42,000	Cost of current houses being rented
Utilities	10,000	Heat, hydro and water
Phone/Internet/TV	4,000	For client use
Repairs & Maintenance	15,000	Regular maintenance and repairs
Landscaping/Snow Removal	4,200	
Cleaning	15,000	
Furniture/Linens	12,000	Replacements of beds, mattresses, linens
Client Expenses		
Food	6,000	Food staples, donations from food bank
Client programming	13,000	Client supplies, programming, travel
Overhead/General		
Bookkeeping	3,000	
Office supplies	1,500	
Insurance	6,000	Insurance for house and shelter program
Total expense	333,092	

Approximate costs to operate for 6 months based on the annual budget would be \$166,546. This would be the need to get the Shelter running while Choices searches for alternative funding sources.

Choices will be looking for sources of funding including donations and grants to help fund the costs of the Shelter.