

APPENDIX 1

Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness

Mandate and Roles

I. Mandate and Accountability

Secretariat Mandate

The Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness (Secretariat) was created by Ministerial Order H:001/08 under section 7 of the *Government Organization Act* by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Associate Minister of Affordable Housing and Urban Development, and tasked with developing and implementing a provincial 10-year strategic plan to address homelessness. *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* (the Plan), which was released on March 16, 2009, outlines a comprehensive, co-ordinated, and sustainable approach to solving this core social issue. The Plan aims to end homelessness by reducing dependence on emergency shelter services and developing a Housing First approach to provide permanent homes with appropriate wrap-around support services for all homeless Albertans.

The Secretariat continues to oversee the implementation of the Plan by monitoring and reporting regularly on its progress, and reviewing and renewing the Plan as required.

Municipalities and communities throughout the province will also be assisted with the development of their own 10-year plans. The Secretariat will engage communities and community leaders, including community-based organizations of the seven major cities, service providers and faith communities, governments at all levels and their ministries, departments and agencies, private sector organizations with a stake in the issue, and media across Alberta, in conversations that deepen understanding beyond programs and services to vision, root causes, and systems' impacts, and inspire action directed to ending homelessness in Alberta.

The Secretariat will provide leadership as necessary to ensure that the goal remains a priority in Alberta, and will provide leadership in the development and co-ordination of new initiatives to address homelessness.

Secretariat Accountability

The Secretariat is accountable to the Minister (Minister) of Housing and Urban Affairs (Department). Secretariat members must act honestly and in good faith, leaving aside personal interests to advance the public interest and the mandate of the Secretariat.

Minister's Accountability

The Minister is accountable to the Legislature for the operation of the Secretariat.

II. Duty and Responsibilities

A. The Secretariat

(1) Primary Functions

- a) To provide strategic advice to the Minister directed toward the goal of ending homelessness in Alberta within 10 years.
- b) To monitor the implementation of the Plan by communities across the province and the actions of government in support of the Plan.

(2) Expectations of the Secretariat from Government:

- a) Will develop, review, and ensure approval of an annual work plan, as well as longer-term strategic plans, and monitor throughout the year the progress made against the goals and targets established in the Plan.
- b) Will prepare and provide to the Minister an Annual Report indicating the Secretariat's major activities and accomplishments, and the extent to which its planned activities and goals were achieved.
- c) Will prepare annual financial statements for the Minister for the immediately-preceding fiscal year in a form and manner acceptable to the Minister, and in accordance with the generally-accepted accounting principles recommended by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, and any modification of these principles or any supplementary accounting standards or principles established by the Minister by regulation.
- d) Will discuss with the Minister its resource support needs and adjust its operational and strategic plans in accordance with the resource supports agreed to by the Minister and resource supports available from other sources, e.g. stakeholders represented on the Secretariat, where applicable.
- e) Will hold meetings as required, at least four times a year.
- f) Will engage stakeholders and the public to gather information and become knowledgeable about different perspectives to ensure informed advice is provided.
- g) Will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the advice provided to the Minister is based on sound logic and solid evidence.
- h) Will oversee compliance with all relevant policies and procedures by which the Secretariat operates, and ensure that the Secretariat operates at all times in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, the Secretariat's Code of Conduct, and to the highest ethical standards.
- i) Through a process led by the Chair, will conduct an annual evaluation and review of the performance of the Secretariat as a whole, of individual members for consideration of re-appointment, of sub-committees, and of the Chair. The Secretariat will review the results of such evaluation and discuss potential ways to improve its effectiveness and adopt improvements.

- j) May establish sub-committees that support the mandate of the Secretariat and are accountable to the Secretariat.

(3) Goals and Practices

- a) The Secretariat is one important element in the overall effort to end homelessness in Alberta. As such, its main objective is to contribute, within its mandate, to this important goal. The focus of efforts must always be directed to serving the needs of those with no permanent home.
- b) The Secretariat is primarily responsible for oversight as the Plan is implemented. This includes oversight of community efforts to ensure consistency with the principles and strategies of the Plan as well as oversight of government actions, including funding and policy directives, to ensure alignment with the Plan.
- c) The Secretariat will generally avoid direct involvement in implementation for two reasons: first, to allow communities to apply Plan principles and strategies in a manner that fits their particular context, and second, to maintain a focus on its strategic and monitoring roles.
- d) The Secretariat will communicate openly and effectively in a respectful and constructive manner, helping Albertans understand and support the Plan and helping government identify and deal with community concerns that form barriers to successful implementation.
- e) The Secretariat will employ sound practices in organizing and conducting its work, including annual business plans and reports, good meeting practices, operating within approved budgets, sound contracting practices, evidence-based recommendations, and annual evaluation of its own work processes and results.
- f) As a creation of the Government of Alberta, the Secretariat has a series of duties to the government, the Minister, and Department staff:
 - i. To provide its best advice to the Minister on the continued relevance of the Plan and any changes required to ensure goal achievement.
 - ii. To work in a manner supportive of mutual trust and respect, supporting the Minister's work within and beyond government.
 - iii. To assist in communicating the goals and strategies of the Plan to help achieve broad support across Alberta.
 - iv. To provide regular reports on implementation efforts and results.
 - v. To identify and recommend innovative approaches supportive of the Plan.
 - vi. To report on community concerns and recommend corrective action.
 - vii. To consult on government plans and priorities supportive of the Plan and those creating barriers to achievement of outcomes. This will include funding and policy initiatives.

- viii. To prepare an annual budget and conduct its work within the budget.
 - ix. To assist Department staff in their efforts to support implementation including the development of measures to track progress.
- g) The Secretariat has an important role in representing (advocating on behalf of) communities, those in need, and Albertans in general:
- i. To support the role of community-based organizations in the seven major cities in implementing the Plan and to help ensure that their independence from government is recognized and preserved.
 - ii. To provide support for community organizations leading the effort to end homelessness in centres beyond the seven major cities.
 - iii. To identify barriers to implementation and represent those to government in an effective and respectful manner that results in corrective action.
 - iv. To work with communities to identify policy initiatives negatively affecting the Plan and represent solutions in a positive, effective manner.
 - v. To identify concerns specific to one or more communities and recommend approaches to deal with these.
 - vi. To encourage collaboration across communities by communicating best practices from one to another.
 - vii. To identify education and training needs and approaches within each community to meet the need for new skills and recommend a response.
- h) The Secretariat has a *direct role* in two areas in the short term:
- i. In development of community plans to end homelessness. Once the plans are developed, the direct role of the Secretariat will end and the monitoring role will begin.
 - ii. In development of an approach to research to ensure that all actions are based on best information and evidence. Once again, the direct role continues until the approach has been agreed on and implemented.

(4) Guiding Principles

In fulfilling its mandate, advice and actions of the Secretariat will be:

a) Innovative

New ways of thinking of the issue will be required. Attention must be given to root causes and the impact of systems, often largely neglected in past approaches.

b) Trustworthy and Trusting

Our approach must engender trust in those with whom we work. Achieving the Plan's goal will require trust across the spectrum of stakeholders and must not be taken for granted.

- c) **Sustainable**
The Plan must be sustainable. Strategies contained in the Plan must balance current needs and future demands.
- d) **Accountable**
All levels of government, the private sector, the non-profit sector, and the community at large will share accountability for developing and implementing strategies to prevent and/or significantly reduce homelessness based on measurable outcomes.
- e) **Collaborative**
The Secretariat will work collaboratively with the public, private, and non-profit sectors to ensure the Plan builds provincial and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness.
- f) **Responsive**
Homelessness strategies, action plans and funding will be responsive to the needs of the homeless, as well as changing environmental, social, and economic factors. The Plan will be reviewed and changed as necessary to meet changing societal conditions.
- g) **Targeted**
The Plan will give priority to the absolute homeless by addressing access to all services related to the homeless population in order to reduce and prevent homelessness. All strategies and action plans formulated by the Secretariat will focus on programs that offer measurable results.

B. The Minister

- a) Appoints or recommends the appointment of Secretariat members and the Chair based on her/his assessment that the appointees have the appropriate knowledge, skills, experience, and values to assist the Secretariat in achieving its objectives and performing its functions.
- b) Monitors the operations and performance of the Secretariat to ensure that it is fulfilling its mandate in compliance with government policies.
- c) Conducts annual reviews of the Secretariat's mandate and purpose to determine if the work of the Secretariat is still relevant to the needs of Albertans; if it is aligned with Government priorities; and if the operations and functions are being carried out in a manner that can achieve government objectives.
- d) Approves an annual resource allocation (budget and support staff) for the Secretariat and facilitates access to appropriate resources.

C. The Deputy Minister

- a) The Deputy Minister supports and acts under the general direction of the Minister.
- b) Informs the Secretariat of government policies and direction affecting the work of the Secretariat.
- c) Provides information obtained by the Ministry as required for the Secretariat's decisions and assessment of progress towards its goals.

- d) Reviews and recommends an annual budget for the Secretariat.
- e) Provides resources from Department staff as requested and deemed suitable by the Secretariat.

D. The Department

- a) Supports the Secretariat as directed by the Deputy Minister.
- b) Provides the Secretariat with the required staff to support its mandate.
- c) Additional support will be made available upon identified need and within approved budget.

III. Interaction between Secretariat and Department

The Secretariat and the Department will work closely at all times to ensure efficient use of resources and avoid duplication while ensuring that all actions necessary for the achievement of the goal of ending homelessness are taken in a timely manner. Direction to the Executive Director and staff will be given by the Secretariat, through the Chair.

Cooperation will be particularly important in all situations where government policy is at issue. Coordination of external communication will also be important.

Frequency of interaction will be based on the needs of the Secretariat or at the request of the Department. At a minimum, the Secretariat will provide copies of minutes of regular meetings to the appropriate Department representatives, and will be available through the Chair to participate in Department meetings as required.

Department contacts will include the following:

- Deputy Minister
- Assistant Deputy Minister
- Director of Homeless Support
- Director of Homeless Cross-Ministry Initiatives
- Legislative and Program Services Unit of Organizational Planning and Effectiveness.

Collaboration and consultation will take place on issues that are critical to the implementation of the Plan including but not restricted to:

- Data systems and gathering activities
- Research
- Systems issues including action of other departments that impact housing and homelessness
- Community engagement
- Development of outcomes and evaluation processes
- Identification of best practices
- Capacity building of the homeless serving sector
- Communication initiatives
- Governance.

Issues and conflicts that arise in the relationship between the Secretariat and the Department will be addressed with the Deputy Minister through the Chair.

IV. Recruitment and Appointment of Members

Individuals are recruited and appointed by the Government of Alberta and collectively constitute the Secretariat. Appointment of each member of the Secretariat is for a fixed term of up to two years, with the potential of re-appointment based on satisfactory performance. An individual's appointment is limited to a maximum of ten years of continuous service.

The Secretariat, in consultation with the Minister's designate, has developed a Competency Matrix that outlines the skills, experience and knowledge the Secretariat requires as a collective, and identifies how each individual contributes to these needs. When vacancies arise, the matrix will be used to identify competencies required of the new recruit.

When a vacancy occurs, the Secretariat will recommend a set of desired values and competencies to the Minister to form the basis for the recruitment of a new individual. Values will include respect, integrity, excellence, and accountability. Competencies will include strong listening and communication skills, skills in developing consensus, an understanding of wise stewardship of resources, and competencies identified in the Competency Matrix.

Prospective Secretariat members are acquired through a nomination process conducted by the Department with the Secretariat in geographic regions of the province. Nominees are selected using a competency-based process to ensure they have the skill set and knowledge to complement the Secretariat. Nominees that meet the requirements as set out in the nomination process will be presented to the Minister for approval.

Further details on Secretariat structure, the appointment process and member qualifications are included in the Membership Guide.

Remuneration

Remuneration will be paid as per the Committee Remuneration Order – Schedule 1, Part A.

Committee members are entitled to be paid travelling and living expenses in accordance with the Subsistence and Travel Allowance Regulation made by MO 1/98, as amended, or any order made in substitution therefore, as though they were employees of the government.

Orientation and Training

A board manual will be available for all new Secretariat members. The Chair will arrange a program of orientation and training including exposure to the front-line work on homelessness, introduction to Department staff and role and expectations of Secretariat members.

V. Administration of the Code of Conduct

The Code Administrator for members is the Chair. The Code Administrator for employees including the Executive Director is the Human Resources division of the Department.

The Code Administrator receives and ensures the confidentiality of all disclosures and ensures that any real or apparent conflict of interest is avoided or effectively managed. As well, the Code Administrator is responsible for providing advice and managing all concerns and complaints concerning potential breaches of the Code, including conflicts of interest within the agency. Even though an agency may have a delegated process for responding to and managing concerns, the Code Administrator is responsible for ensuring procedural fairness.

VI. Administration

Review of the Mandate and Roles Document

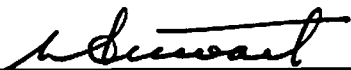
The Mandate and Roles document shall be in effect for not more than three years. It must be renewed or revised by the expiry date, specifically December 31, 2012.

The Mandate and Roles document must be affirmed annually by the Minister and the Secretariat Chair, or on a change in either the Minister or Secretariat Chair.

Transparency

Copies of the Mandate and Roles document will be filed with the Minister, the Secretariat, and the Agency Governance Secretariat. In support of the principle of transparency, this document will also be made available to the public on the Department's website www.housing.alberta.ca.

Approved by:



Chair
Secretariat for Action on Homelessness



Minister
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

April 24, 2010

Date

May 26, 2010

Date