

HALIFAX

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Item No. 11.1.3
Halifax Regional Council
February 23, 2021

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Navigator Program | Multi-Year Funding

ORIGIN

Letter dated December 22, 2020 from the Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC), North End Business Association (NEBA), Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA) and Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission (DDBC) requesting \$140,000 per annum funding in support of the Navigator Program (see Attachment 1).

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, Section 7A: "Purposes of Municipality 7A The purposes of the Municipality are to (a) provide good government; (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities."

HRM Charter, Section 79A(1): "Municipal expenditures 79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality; (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid."

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to enter into a Contribution Agreement with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and Spring Garden Area Business Commission (in accordance with Attachment 9) to provide a contribution of \$45,000 toward the Navigator Street Outreach Program for fiscal 2020/2021; and
2. Authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to enter into one or more Contribution Agreements with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, Spring Garden Area Business Commission, Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission and North End Business Association (in accordance with Attachment 2), to provide a collective annual contribution of \$140,000 per year toward the Navigator Street Outreach Program for fiscal 2021/2022, 2022/23 and 2023/24, subject to annual budget approval.

BACKGROUND

Navigator Street Outreach Program Overview

The Navigator Street Outreach program (NSO) is a proactive, positive lifeline for individuals who struggle with securing and maintaining housing and employment due to addictions, mental health issues and homelessness. NSO works on the street, as opposed to within the shelter system and supports unsheltered, street involved and homeless individuals who are unwilling or unable to access support persons that work out of Halifax's shelters.

Historical Homelessness Funding

Since 2011, the municipality has supported the outreach component of Halifax's homeless-serving system by funding the Navigator Street Outreach program (see Attachment 3). The most recent Contribution Agreement between HRM, Downtown Halifax Business Commission and Spring Garden Area Business Commission (\$45K/year for fiscal 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020) expired in March of 2020. The most recent Contribution Agreement between HRM, Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission and North End Business Association (\$60K/year for fiscal 2020/2021) will expire in March of 2021.

Historically, HRM has also funded the Halifax's homeless-serving system through grants to not-for-profit organizations and charities that provide emergency shelters, transitional housing and supportive housing.¹ The Community Grants Program provides project grants (\$5,000 maximum) and capital grants (\$25,000 maximum), but does not fund recurring operating expenses or any operating expenses assigned to a project.² HRM has also provided funding outside of the Community Grants Program in the form of a multi-year grant supporting evaluation of [Housing First](#).³ In 2019, Regional Council approved a two-year grant to support coordinated access in rural and suburban communities. To date, the municipality's homelessness-directed funding has been ad-hoc and short-term.

¹ The Community Grants Program provides homeless-serving-system-related funding annually under both the housing and emergency assistance categories. See for example [Item No. 14.4.1 Halifax Regional Council May 10, 2016](#); [Item No. 1 Grants Committee May 15, 2017](#); and [Item No. 14.4.1 Halifax Regional Council June 19, 2018](#)

² See the [Community Grants Program Guidebook](#) for details on grant categories and eligibility requirements.

³ In 2013, HRM committed \$25,000 per fiscal year for a maximum of 4 fiscal years (2.6% of the estimated \$968,544 annual budget) to fund HF evaluation. See [Item No. 9.1.2 Audit and Finance Committee July 15, 2015](#).

Municipal Funding Request and Year-End Reports

DHBC, SGABA, NEBA, and DDBC have collectively requested a municipal contribution in the amount of one-hundred forty thousand dollars (\$140,000) to be provided in the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 fiscal years and shared amongst the four Business Improvement Districts. NSO staff have produced year-end reports detailing activities undertaken in fiscal 2020/21 (see Attachments 7 and 8).

DISCUSSION

Defining Homelessness

Homelessness is a dynamic, person-specific problem that changes from night to night and from person to person. In 2012, the [Canadian Observatory on Homelessness](#) (COH) established a working group to develop, refine and test a homeless definition.⁴ The COH definition is based on a typology describing a range of housing situations along a homelessness continuum. There are four main categories of homeless on the continuum: (1) unsheltered; (2) emergency sheltered; (3) provisionally accommodated; and (4) at risk of homelessness (see Attachment 6).

The COH definition of homelessness acknowledges that many factors contribute to the experience of housing instability and homelessness. These contributing factors include a lack of affordable housing, insufficient supply of housing, inadequate income and/or employment opportunities, challenges or changes to an individual's physical or mental health, addictions, and family breakdown. Often, it is a series of crises that lead an individual or family to experience homelessness.⁵

Homeless-Serving System of Care

A Homeless-Serving System of Care (HSSC) is a local or regional system for helping people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness (See Attachment 5). The HSSC includes mainstream systems, community partners, all levels of government, philanthropists, faith communities and not-for-profit organizations – essentially all touch points serving people who are experiencing homelessness.⁶ Halifax's current homeless-serving system is characterized by the delivery of three (3) general types of services and supports for individuals experiencing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless: (1) emergency shelters and crisis services; (2) homelessness prevention services; and (3) housing stability services and social housing. Individual service providers have unique service delivery models, target populations, prioritization criterion and performance indicators.⁷

Navigator Program | Origins and Overview

The Navigator Street Outreach (NSO) program supports unsheltered, street involved and homeless individuals in addressing barriers to accessing housing, education, employment, mental health supports, addictions treatment, social programs, and healthcare. Operating from a consumer-choice and harm-reduction lens, NSO is a low-barrier, on-street service.

Founded in 2007, NSO originated as a project of Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA). Shortly thereafter, Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) collaborated with SGABA to deliver navigation support in the urban core. Beginning in 2018, the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission

⁴ See Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. (2012.) [Canadian Definition of Homelessness](#). Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

⁵ In 2014, 8% of Canadians aged 15 and over reported that they, at some point in their lives, had to temporarily live with family, friends, in their car, or anywhere else because they had nowhere else to live—a situation referred to as 'hidden' homelessness. See [Insights on Canadian Society: Hidden homelessness in Canada](#).

⁶ Figure 1 (Attachment 5) presents common components of homeless-serving systems.

⁷ See [Item No. 14.4.2 Halifax Regional Council September 20, 2016](#) (Attachment 2; pp.46-53)) for an inventory of entities that make up Halifax's homeless-serving system of care.

(DDBC) and the North End Business Association (NEBA) partnered to coordinate navigation support in north end Halifax and downtown Dartmouth.

Navigator Program Role within the HSSC

The NSO program helps people who are precariously housed, homeless, and/or street-involved access housing, education, employment, mental health supports, addictions treatment, social programs, and healthcare. Bringing services directly to the streets makes NSO almost unique in its approach to service

delivery. NSO staff check in regularly with individuals who are sleeping-rough, panhandling, and/or carrying out daily living activities on the streets. An urban core on-street presence allows NSO to support individuals who are unwilling or unable to access embedded or in-house Homeless-Serving System of Care supports.

NSO works collaboratively with the homeless-serving system to connect clients: NSO both receives referrals from HSSC organizations and refers clients to HSSC organizations. NSO works in collaboration with its partners to co-create individualized approaches to working with and/or for homeless and street-involved individuals and engages in work that touches on all three segments of Halifax’s homeless-serving system (i.e. emergency shelter/crisis services; homelessness prevention; and housing stability). NSO activities are summarized in Table 1 (see below).

Table 1: Key NSO activities⁸

Category	Description
Transit	Facilitating access to public transit (may include assistance securing a low-income transit pass and/or providing transit tickets).
Eviction prevention	Helping to keep individuals/families housed, including crisis support for people at imminent risk of eviction (may include landlord-tenant mediation or payment of damages/rental arrears).
Housing acquisition	Interventions that help homeless individuals/families to rapidly access new/appropriate housing (may include payment of first/last month rent and/or damage deposits). ⁹
Relocation	Helping precariously housed individuals to move/relocate (may involve support to set up a new apartment and/or moving related expenses).
Employment	Supporting individuals entering/re-entering the workforce (may include providing necessary work tools and/or clothing, ¹⁰ payment for specialized training programs, ¹¹ assistance setting up a bank account ¹² or facilitating relocation for the purposes of securing employment).

⁸ Not all services are at a financial cost to NSO. NSO collaborates with local organizations that can either cover or defray applicable costs.

⁹ NSO supports Halifax’s Coordinated Access System (CAS) and Housing First (HF). Both HF and CAS require effective outreach to ensure vulnerable individuals receive housing support. The trusting and mutually respectful relationships NSO staff develop are critical to ensuring that individuals who refuse to use, or are denied access to, Halifax’s shelter system, receive needed housing support.

¹⁰ Including interview-appropriate attire, steel-toed boots and anti-skid shoes.

¹¹ Including WHIMS, food handling, traffic control and fall arrest courses.

¹² Bank accounts are necessary to accommodate direct deposit of wages.

Identification	Facilitating replacement or first-time acquisition of official/government identification (may include ID-clinics). ¹³
Health services	Interventions that help homeless individuals/families to access primary health care, addiction treatment and/or mental health services (may include attending appointments with clients ¹⁴ , transporting clients to health providers, paying for medication and/or encouraging clients to access on-street health services). ¹⁵
Cold weather supplies	Ensuring individuals/families that sleep-rough are appropriately protected against the environment (may include providing cold-weather clothing and/or sleeping bags).
Food	Supporting homeless and street-involved individuals who are food-insecure (may include direct provision of food and/or facilitating food-bank/food-kitchen access).
Community education	Supporting members of the business/residential community vis-à-vis homelessness (may include clinics/workshops to address addictions and/or mental health among the homeless population).

Rationale for Municipal Funding

Homeless and street-involved individuals are among the most vulnerable members of our community and special consideration must be given to their safety. Those experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer harassment and criminal victimization than those who are housed.¹⁶ Supportive, safe housing is critical to public safety. Once an individual has access to safe, secure and affordable housing, other issues (such as mental health, addictions, income security and employability) can be more appropriately addressed.

NSO's mandate aligns closely with the municipality's [Public Safety Strategy](#) by improving the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents. NSO (indirectly or directly) supports fourteen Actions¹⁷ and eight Priority Areas in the strategy.¹⁸ These include actions relating to housing, food security, mental health, community cohesion and harmful use of alcohol and drugs. It is worth noting that the NSO program advances these public safety objectives for a segment of the population that is both very difficult to reach and largely underserved by other health and housing-related supports.¹⁹

Homelessness and COVID-19

Epidemics and pandemics have a disproportionate impact on people experiencing poverty, marginalization, stigmatization and discrimination. Amid the current COVID-19 pandemic, this disparity is particularly relevant for individuals who experience homelessness.²⁰ Homeless shelters are an ideal environment for transmission of severe acute respiratory syndromes because of shared living spaces,

¹³ The NSO offers ID-clinics in collaboration with Service Nova Scotia, that provide individuals with new or replacement identification. Identification is critical to accessing income assistance and the lack of official identification can be a barrier to becoming employed and/or housed.

¹⁴ NSO staff will work with the individual (and other service providers) to set up and attend appointments to ensure that the user's access to services is smooth and issue free.

¹⁵ NSO plays a key role in facilitating access to primary health care among street-involved individuals.

¹⁶ Numerous studies have established that homeless individuals experience high levels of violence and victimization (both before and after becoming homeless) including higher incidence physical and sexual assault. See [More Sinned Against than Sinning? Homeless People as Victims of Crime and Harassment](#).

¹⁷ Actions 11, 13, 19-24, 48, 52, 59, 63, 68 and 70.

¹⁸ Priority Areas 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1 and 4.3.

¹⁹ In part, this underservicing is owing to care avoidance among homeless people. Several studies have shown that homeless people have unmet care needs and poor access to care, and (partially) avoid or underuse this care. See [Care avoidance among homeless people and access to care](#) and [Primary healthcare needs and barriers to care among Calgary's homeless populations](#).

²⁰ See [COVID-19 and people experiencing homelessness: challenges and mitigation strategies](#).

crowding, difficulty achieving physical distancing and high population turnover.²¹ People who are homeless also have a high prevalence of chronic health conditions that increase the risk of poor outcomes if they develop COVID-19.²²

Physical distancing has substantial negative implications for individuals who are homeless or precariously housed. Abrupt closure of drop-in services and community centres, and resulting disruption in social relationships and support, can lead to deterioration in physical and mental health.²³ Similarly, reduced access to public spaces such as libraries, community centres and malls, and a reduction in resources such as peer counselling services, disproportionately affect individuals experiencing homelessness. Intersecting factors such as mental illness, substance use, involvement in sex work and distrust of service providers may contribute substantially to difficulties faced by individuals in engaging with pandemic-specific protocols.²⁴

The NSO program provides critical support for street-involved and homeless individuals at a time when homeless-serving supports are either absent altogether or compromised. Navigators focus on building relationships and rapport and take a trauma-informed approach to care. These (pre-existing) relationships will be key to ensuring the health and welfare of Halifax's most vulnerable residents as the municipality continues to deal with the ramifications of COVID-19.

Rationale for Increased Municipal Funding – Evictions Pressures

The COVID-19 recession has resulted in income loss and rental arrears, especially for lower-income households who are mostly renters. Eviction bans across Canada have had some effectiveness in preventing or slowing down evictions but, when those bans are lifted, many households will be on the brink of absolute homelessness.²⁵ These COVID-19 pressures have been exacerbated in HRM by historically-low rental vacancy rates. The Halifax CMA vacancy rate has continued to trend lower, down to 1% from 1.6%, and average rents increased as demand outpaced new rental apartment supply.²⁶

Rationale for Long-Term Funding Commitment – COVID-19 Impact

There is serious risk of increased homelessness in HRM due to the pandemic-induced recession. The impacts of COVID-19 will be felt, but there may be a lag effect that delays the full impact for up to five years.²⁷ Predicting this lag-effect is complicated by the possibility of future waves of COVID-19. This lag effect stems from a strong desire of households to avoid absolute homelessness and it is enabled by the social welfare system (which can delay or even prevent absolute homelessness).

Since entering the second COVID-19 wave, there has been great uncertainty regarding households' ability to continue servicing their growing mortgage debt.²⁸ The recession has also diminished the ability to get mortgage approvals. In part, this is due to many people having reduced income (or having lost their

²¹ See [COVID-19: a potential public health problem for homeless populations](#).

²² The risk of severe COVID-19 is increased for people experiencing homelessness owing to the high prevalence of medical comorbidities including heart disease, respiratory conditions, liver disease and high rates of smoking in homeless populations.

²³ The pandemic has also created additional costs and operational pressures for emergency shelters, including for cleaning, personal protective equipment and increased staffing

²⁴ See [COVID-19 and people experiencing homelessness: challenges and mitigation strategies](#).

²⁵ See [Trudeau government should spend more on affordable housing and homelessness](#).

²⁶ See [Rental Market Report | Halifax CMA](#).

²⁷ See [The long-term impact of the COVID-19 Recession on homelessness in Canada: What to expect, what to track, what to do](#).

²⁸ The debt-to-income ratio is a key indicator of debt as a vulnerability of the financial and housing sectors. See [COVID-19: Second Wave Brings Uncertainty on Household Debt](#)

jobs entirely); it is also due in part to new mortgage rules taking effect on July 1st 2021.²⁹ This means an entire cohort of would-be homeowners will be in the rental market, driving down rental vacancy rates.³⁰

DHBC/SGABA Agreement Renewal

Provision for a \$45,000 NSO funding contribution to DHBC/SGABA is included in the municipal budget for fiscal 2020/2021. These provisionally-allocated NSO funds remain undisbursed as staff do not have Council authorization to disburse these funds.³¹ Therefore, staff are recommending that Regional Council direct the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to enter into a Contribution Agreement with DHBC/SGABA for fiscal 2020/2021 and that the Agreement include the key terms and conditions identified in Attachment 9 to this report.

Administrative Efficiency and Program Continuity

Since 2011, HRM has been an NSO program funder. While federal and provincial support has been minimal and inconsistent (see Attachment 3), HRM's funding has been consistent and substantive. The short-term nature of NSO program funding has resulted in municipal staff returning to Regional Council nine times since 2011 to secure approvals, creating an administrative burden and consuming staff and Council resources.³² Moreover, the short-term duration of the funding introduces instability into the employment relationship between the BIDs (as employers) and the Navigators (as employees).³³ Therefore, staff propose that the NSO be included in the municipal budget as a standing request on a go-forward basis for fiscal years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. NSO funding will be recommended by staff and considered/approved by Regional Council as part of the annual Budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are sufficient funds in the 2020/2021 approved budget in Government Relations and External Affairs Cost Centre E400 - 8004 for the \$45,000 contribution to DHBC and SGABA. Funding of \$140,000 for continuation of the program in fiscal year 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 will be maintained in the same cost centre, subject to annual approval of funds through the budget process.

Fiscal Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Operating – E400	45,000	140,000	140,000	140,000

RISK CONSIDERATION

Upon a risk assessment, HRM staff deemed that there are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate low.

²⁹ See [CMHC reviews underwriting criteria](#).

³⁰ See [The long-term impact of the COVID-19 Recession on homelessness in Canada: What to expect, what to track, what to do](#).

³¹ In 2017, Regional Council approved \$45K per annum for fiscal years 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 (subject to budget approval). See [Item No. 14.1.4 Halifax Regional Council October 17, 2017](#).

³² Legal Services are engaged whenever funding Agreements are drafted/executed as a consequence of a NSO program approval.

³³ This uncertainty (vis-à-vis employment tenure) is problematic given the required Navigator skill-set and the importance of relationships to the position (client-Navigator-partner organizations). Turn-over of Navigators would be detrimental to NSO program success.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff conferred with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC), North End Business Association (NEBA), Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA) and Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission (DDBC) prior to the submission of the joint letter of request.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate environmental implications associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Regional Council could choose to not to provide financial support toward the Navigator Street Outreach program.
2. Regional Council could provide a contribution toward the Business Improvement Districts for the Navigator Street Outreach program on terms other than those recommended in this report.
3. Regional Council could provide a grant or contribution to fund another group or homelessness-serving activity.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Joint Letter to Mayor and Council
Attachment 2	Proposed Grant/Contribution Agreement Key Terms & Conditions
Attachment 3	Navigator Program Funding Breakdown
Attachment 4	Housing and Homelessness Timeline
Attachment 5	Homeless-serving system of care (Figure)
Attachment 6	Typology of Homelessness
Attachment 7	DDBC/NEBA Navigator Report
Attachment 8	SGABA/DHBC Navigator Report
Attachment 9	DHBC/SGABA Navigator Agreement

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Scott Sheffield, Government Relations and External Affairs 902.490.3941

ATTACHMENT 1

Joint Letter to Mayor and Council (Circulated Electronically December 2020)

Dear Mayor and Council, I am writing on behalf of the Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC), the Spring Garden Road Business Association (SGRBA), the North End Business Association (NEBA), and my own organization, the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission (DDBC), regarding our Navigator Programs and to request your continued financial support. DHBC & SGRBA and DDBC & NEBA are requesting that the Halifax Regional Municipality continue to support the Downtown Halifax/Spring Garden Road Navigator Street Outreach Program and the Dartmouth/ North End Navigator Street Outreach Program with financial contributions to each program of \$70,000 per year for each of the next three years 2021-2024 (a combined ask of \$140,000 per year). This funding would be pooled with funding from the business community.

In 2017, Regional Council provided a three-annual contribution of \$45,000 to the Downtown Halifax/Spring Garden Road Navigator Program and in January 2020 provided \$60,000 to the North End Business Association/Downtown Dartmouth Navigator Program. This past November each program received an additional \$10,000 in funding to help prevent evictions. All four business improvement districts are facing budgetary pressures related to COVID-19 and its economic consequences and neither program would be able to continue without receiving at least the amounts that they previously received.

Our districts have significant populations of street involved, homeless or precariously housed individuals that sometimes have difficulties accessing necessary services. The Navigator programs will assist Halifax in addressing its strategic priorities around safe communities, housing and economic growth and advance the goals of the Halifax Anti-Poverty Reduction Plan.

The attached reports outline the successes of the program over the past year. Our Navigator Street Outreach Program does not duplicate existing services offered by a variety of public agencies and not for profit organizations but connects them in a real way with people on the street in our districts. The outreach program has also facilitated training and education for the business community to assist in resolving potential issues in a positive manner with street involved individuals.

The Navigator program has demonstrated results in our four districts and similar programs that exist in cities across North America. We feel that this proposal will address a need in our communities and assist in advancing your 2021-2025 Strategic priorities.

Halifax Regional Municipality's financial support for the proposal will make it sustainable.

Respectfully Submitted,

DDBC
DHBC
NEBA
SGRBA

ATTACHMENT 2

Proposed Grant/Contribution Agreement Key Terms & Conditions

- a) The initial term of the agreements shall be for a maximum of 12 months, commencing on the later date of the execution of the Agreement by the Municipal Clerk or Mayor, and continue in force until March 31st and the combined amount of the grants or contributions shall not exceed \$140,000/year for fiscal 2021/2022, 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- b) The grants or contributions shall be subject to Council approving, in the budget, the funds for the grants or contributions for the applicable fiscal year.
- c) The grants or contributions shall be used in support of providing Navigator Street Outreach programming and support for street-involved and homeless individuals in HRM.
- d) The Agreements shall require reporting which accounts for the expenditure of any grants or contributions received from the Municipality

Attachment 3

Navigator Program Funding Breakdown

See Table 2 for a breakdown of annual Navigator Street Outreach program funding sources. Details regarding timing and amounts of municipal funding are provided below.

Table 2: Navigator Program Budget Contributions (2008-2021)

Period	Municipal	BIDs	Federal	Provincial	Deferred	Other	Total
2008-2009	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
2009-2010	\$0	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,000
2010-2011	\$0	\$29,340	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$29,340
2011-2012	\$14,670	\$38,642	\$0	\$0	\$10,767	\$10,000	\$74,079
2012-2013	\$25,000	\$43,001	\$20,056	\$0	\$8,058	\$5,000	\$101,115
2013-2014	\$27,000	\$47,000	\$56,644	\$0	\$6,396	\$21,663	\$158,703
2014-2015	\$29,000	\$49,000	\$58,443	\$0	\$3,167	\$1,381	\$140,991
2015-2016	\$12,210	\$26,729	\$0	\$0	-\$1,666	\$1,101	\$38,374
2016-2017	\$45,000	\$38,147	\$0	\$0	-\$12,727	\$245	\$70,664
2017-2018	\$45,000	\$50,601	\$0	\$0	\$10,401	\$0	\$106,002
2018-2019	\$70,000	\$60,505	\$0	\$50,000	\$938	\$2,331	\$183,774
2019-2020	\$155,000	\$56,965	\$0	\$0	\$4,876	\$2,405	\$129,245
2020-2021	\$120,000	\$34,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$94,000
Amount	\$542,880	\$471,929	\$135,143	\$50,000	\$30,209	\$44,126	\$1,308,286
Percent	41.5%	36.07%	10.33%	3.82%	2.31%	3.37%	100.00%

Urban Core | Baseline NSO Program

In July of 2015, Regional Council approved a one-time NSO contribution in the amount of forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000) to be provided in the 2016/2017 fiscal year.³⁴ Prior to 2016-2017, annual municipal funding for NSO had been provided through the municipality's Business Improvement District (BID) Contribution Fund (\$34k in 2011/12; \$34k in 2012/13; \$37k in 2013/14 and \$39k in 2014/15).³⁵ In October of 2017, Regional Council approved an annual grant of \$45,000 for the Navigator Street Outreach Program for fiscal years 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 (subject to budget approval).³⁶

North End and Downtown Dartmouth | NSO Expansion

In fiscal 2018/2019, NEBA and DDBC secured \$50,000 in provincial funding³⁷ and \$25,000 in municipal

³⁴ See [Item No. 11.3.1 Halifax Regional Council July 21, 2015](#) and [Item No. 14.1.15 Halifax Regional Council September 6, 2016](#).

³⁵ Eligible BID Contribution Fund projects were formerly approved annually by the municipality's Grants Committee. The Contribution Fund funding pool was set at \$107,000/year and was shared among the municipality's eight BIDs on a proportional basis. See Table 1 for actual expenditures.

³⁶ See [Item No. 14.1.4 Halifax Regional Council October 17, 2017](#).

³⁷ In June of 2018, the Province approved a \$50,000 Building Vibrant Communities (BVC) grant by the Province in support of the NSOP pilot initiative. See [Grant Recipient List](#).

funding³⁸ for an NSO pilot. Together with the business districts' combined contribution of \$15,000, these funds covered NSO operational costs for the period between December 22nd of 2018 and November 22nd of 2019. In October of 2019, Regional Council approved bridge funding in the amount of \$20,000 for fiscal year 2019/2020.³⁹ This bridge funding was intended to ensure continuity of service to the street involved and homeless population (until March 2020) and permit consideration of the multi-year funding request in the context of the discussion and approval of the municipal operating and capital budget and tax rates for fiscal 2020/2021. In January of 2020, Regional Council approved \$60,000 in NSO expansion funding for fiscal 2020/2021.⁴⁰

³⁸ See [Item No. 14.1.10 Halifax Regional Council July 31, 2018](#).

³⁹ See [Item No. 15.2.1 Halifax Regional Council October 8, 2019](#).

⁴⁰ See [Item No. 15.1.7 Halifax Regional Council January 28, 2020](#).

ATTACHMENT 4

Table 3: Housing and Homelessness Timeline

Date	Development
May 2007	Urban core program launches to address homelessness and panhandling in Halifax and Dartmouth's downtown business districts.
May 2007	DHBC, SGABA, Quinpool and DHBC jointly fund the urban core program. ¹
May 2011	DDBC and Quinpool discontinue urban core program funding contributions. Geographic scope/focus of urban core program contracts.
June 2011	DHBC and SGABA jointly fund the urban core program through their respective BID Discretionary Fund allocations. ¹
Oct 2013	Regional Council endorses HRM's formal participation with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership (HHP).
Oct 2014	DHBC and SGABA request municipal grant to supplement BID Discretionary Fund allocation.
June 2015	Affordable Housing Working Group develops a 5 Year Strategic Plan.
July 2015	Council approves a one-time urban core program contribution (\$45,000) for fiscal 2015/2016.
Sept 2016	Council approves a one-time urban core program contribution (\$45,000) for fiscal 2016/2017. Municipal contributions under BID Discretionary Fund discontinued.
Oct 2017	Council approves Public Safety Strategy identifying housing and homelessness as public safety priorities.
Oct 2017	Council approves multi-year urban core program contributions (\$45,000/year for fiscal years 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020).
July 2018	DDBC and NEBA request funding for an expanded urban core program that would service north end Halifax and downtown Dartmouth.
July 2018	Council approves a one-time expanded urban core program contribution (\$25,000) for fiscal 2018/2019.
July 2018	Regional Council approves Affordable Housing Work Plan.
Nov 2018	Council directs staff to return with a report on rural/suburban program pilot.
April 2019	Council approves multi-year funding for rural/suburban coordinated access expansion project (\$90K in fiscal 2019/2020 and \$60K in fiscal 2020/2021).
July 2019	DDBC and NEBA request multi-year funding for expanded urban core program (\$60K in fiscal years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022)
Aug 2019	Council directs staff to return with report on multi-year funding for the expanded urban core program.
Oct 2019	Council approves bridge funding (\$20K) for the expanded urban core program.

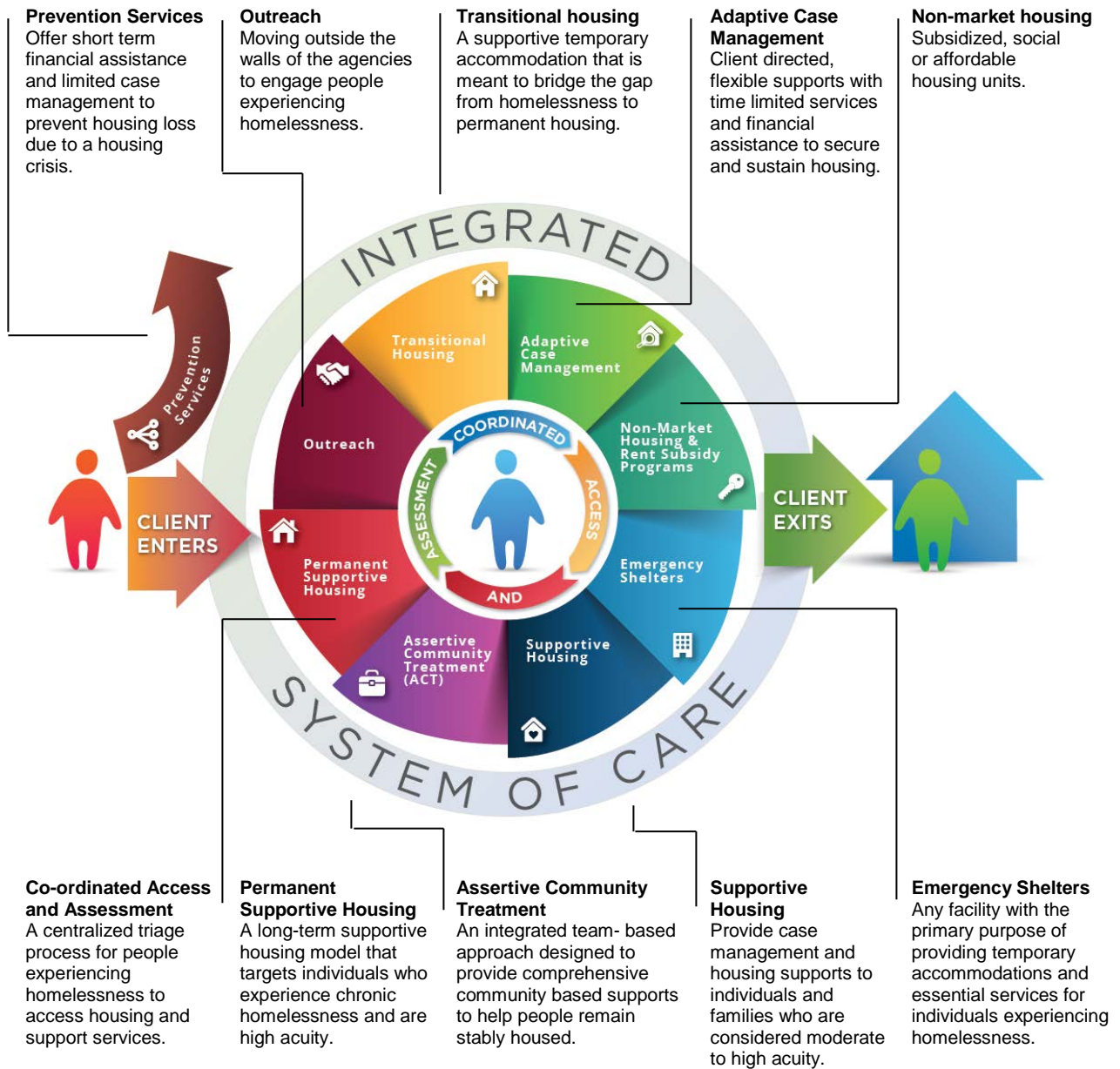
Jan 2020 Council [approves](#) funding (\$60K) for the expanded urban core program for fiscal 2020/2021.

March 2020 Regional Council [approves](#) Social Policy identifying housing as a focus.

¹The Council [approved](#) BID Discretionary Fund was municipally funded. Fund eligibility was restricted to BIDs and disbursed using a proportional share formula tied to BID area rate levies.

ATTACHMENT 5

Figure 1: Homeless-serving System of Care (HSSC)



Source: [Calgary's System Planning Framework](#) | March 2017

ATTACHMENT 6

Typology of Homelessness

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Table 4: Typology of Homelessness⁴¹

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY	LIVING SITUATION	GENERIC DEFINITION	
1. UNSHELTERED	1.1	People living in public or private spaces without consent or contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public space, such as sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, etc. Private space and vacant buildings (squatting).
	1.2	People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living in cars or other vehicles. Living in garages, attics, closets or buildings not designed for habitation. People in makeshift shelters, shacks or tents.
2. EMERGENCY SHELTERED	2.1	Emergency overnight shelters for people who are homeless.	<p>These facilities are designed to meet the immediate needs of people who are homeless. Such short-term emergency shelters may target specific sub-populations, including women, families, youth or Aboriginal persons, for instance. These shelters typically have minimal eligibility criteria, offer shared sleeping facilities and amenities, and often expect clients to leave in the morning. They may or may not offer food, clothing or other services. Some emergency shelters allow people to stay on an ongoing basis while others are short term and are set up to respond to circumstances, such as extreme weather.</p>
	2.2	Shelters for individuals/families impacted by family violence.	
	2.3	Emergency shelter for people fleeing a natural disaster or destruction of accommodation due to fires, floods, etc.	
3. PROVISIONALLY ACCOMMODATED	3.1	Interim housing for people who are homeless.	Interim housing is a systems-supported form of housing that is meant to bridge the gap between unsheltered homelessness or emergency accommodation and permanent housing.
	3.2	People living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing.	Often referred to as 'couch surfers' or the 'hidden homeless', this describes people who stay with friends, family, or even strangers.
	3.3	People accessing short term, temporary rental accommodations without security of tenure.	In some cases, people who are homeless make temporary rental arrangements, such as staying in motels, hostels, rooming houses, etc.
	3.4	People in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements.	People who may transition into homelessness upon release from: Penal institutions; Medical/mental health institutions; Residential treatment programs or withdrawal management centers; Children's institutions/group homes.

⁴¹ See Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. (2012) [Typology of Homelessness](#). Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

		3.5	Accommodation/ reception centers for recently arrived immigrants and refugees.	Prior to securing their own housing, recently arrived immigrants and refugees may be temporarily housed while receiving settlement support and orientation to life in Canada.
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4. AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS	Although not technically homeless, this includes individuals or families whose current housing situations are dangerously lacking security or stability, and so are at-risk of homelessness. They are living in housing that is intended for permanent human habitation, and could potentially be permanent (as opposed to those who are provisionally accommodated). However, because of external hardship, poverty, personal crisis, discrimination, a lack of other available and affordable housing, and / or the inappropriateness of their current housing (which may be overcrowded or does not meet public health and safety standards) residents may be “at risk” of homelessness.	4.1	People at imminent risk of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those whose employment is precarious • Those experiencing sudden unemployment • Households facing eviction • Housing with transitional supports about to be discontinued • People with severe and persistent mental illness, active addictions, substance use, and/or behavioural issues • Breakdown in family relations • People facing, or living in direct fear of violence/abuse
		4.2	Individuals and families who are precariously housed	Those who face challenges that may or may not leave them homeless in the immediate or near future. CMHC defines a household as being in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards).

Source: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH)

Year-End Report
December 2019 - November 2020
Prepared by: Shawn Parker, NSOP North End / Dartmouth

**The North End / Downtown Dartmouth
Navigator Street Outreach Program**

1. OVERVIEW

The North End/Downtown Dartmouth Navigator Street Outreach Program (NSOP) was founded on the belief that individuals who are facing challenges should have equal access to community services. By engaging with individuals who are homeless or street-involved, the NSOP looks to provide support through this challenging time in their life.

A significant role of the NSOP is to be an advocate for these individuals and to meet them where they are at the moment. NSOP seeks to encourage and support individuals and to cultivate their true potential to be engaged and healthy members of the community.

NSOP offers support to secure employment, find sustainable housing solutions, prevent eviction, purchase medication, obtain addictions and/or mental health services, provide financial assistance with utility arrears, address food security, acquire essential/adequate clothing, provide transportation, connect with education institutions, obtain valid/mandatory identification, and assist with relocation. Referrals are also made to the appropriate community services departments.

2020 has been a challenging year due to Covid 19. The NSOP was operating with reduced working hours and limited funds from (March - Aug). The focus became housing, food insecurity, and the challenges of keeping the community updated with information regarding the pandemic. Pop-up shelters were provided in various locations within the city. The NSOP supported 75 individuals at these pop-up shelters with toiletry bags and supported the staff at the shelters that were dealing with a wide range of challenges associated with this population. The shelters were located in hotels, motels, Citadel High School, Community YMCA, and Needham Recreation Centre.

2. PARTNERSHIPS

NSOP is an initiative of the North End Business Association and Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission. It works in collaboration with the greater Halifax community of agencies and organizations to create long-term solutions to the challenges faced by those NSOP serves. Organizations which NSOP has worked with include:

MOSH/Housing First	Department Of Social Services
Alderney Public Library	Mainline
Adsum House	Margaret's House
Canadian Mental Health Assoc	Metro Regional Housing Authority
Community YMCA	Metro Turning Point
Shelter Nova Scotia	Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
Dalhousie Legal Aid	North End Community Health Center
Welcome Housing	North End Memorial Public Library
Meals on Wheels	Salvation Army

3. SERVICES PROVIDED

From December 2019 to November 2020 the NSOP has connected with 648 individuals in North End Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth. Whether it was engaging folks in a conversation, guiding them in a direction that could best serve their needs, or following up to ensure a successful connection was made, below is a summary of the people connected with and the support provided.

A) People Reached

Category	Clients(interactions)
Male	218
Female	131
Senior's	184
Youth (16-24)	108
Transgender	7
Total of	648

B) Client Services Provided:

NSOP has played a significant role in helping individuals with housing, eviction prevention, paying damage deposits, paying for medication, assisting with residential moves, obtaining employment, transportation fare, meals, obtaining IDs, and community services. Below is a summary of these interactions. Meals-On-Wheels and the North End Community Health Centre were essential in providing meals that were delivered in the communities to help address food insecurity concerns.

Housing	5
Eviction Prevention	12
Employment	10
Apartment set up	2
Relocation/movers	2
ID's	4
Food/Vol	15
Bus Tickets/Pass	100
Medication Support	4
Clothing	20
Addictions	13
Meals	2745
Damage Deposit	1
Toiletry/Healthy Bags	135
Mental Health	9
Education	11
Total Services	3,027

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“North End is Listening 2” & “Downtown Dartmouth is Listening”(February)

NSOP will conduct one Zoom workshop, North End is Listening 2 and the Downtown Dartmouth Is Listening 2 will be in person, dependent on gathering restrictions. The topic of discussion will be Mental Health, Community Safety, and Housing. These workshops are designed to bring the business community and service providers together to have a dialogue on these challenging issues faced in North End Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth. The objective is to build capacity and empathy with business owners and staff. Due to the recent uptake in Covid 19. We decided to reschedule this for the new year.

North End Is Listening														0.00
Downtown Dartmouth Is Listening														0.00
Community Eng. Subtotal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,465.88	1,465.88	
Payroll Expenses														
Navigator Salary	4,892.30	4,647.69	4,892.30	4,892.30	4,892.30	6,726.92	3,669.24	4,280.77	3,669.22	4,892.30	6,115.37	4,892.30	58,463.01	
MERC: EI, CPP	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.33	323.32	323.32	3,879.94	
Payroll Subtotal	5,215.63	4,971.02	5,215.63	5,215.63	5,215.63	7,050.25	3,992.57	4,604.10	3,992.55	5,215.63	6,438.69	5,215.62	62,342.95	
Administrative Expenses														
Telephone	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	154.18	206.14	1,902.12	
Office Supplies, printing									99.44				99.44	
Meeting Expenses													0.00	
Professional Development													0.00	
Administration (in kind)	416.66	416.66	416.66	416.66	416.67	416.67	416.67	416.67	416.67	416.67	416.67	416.67	5,000.00	
Misc													0.00	
Admin Subtotal	\$570.84	\$570.84	\$570.84	\$570.84	\$570.85	\$570.85	\$570.85	\$570.85	\$670.29	\$570.85	\$570.85	\$622.81	7,001.56	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,308.51	\$5,844.45	\$5,824.01	\$5,786.47	\$5,886.48	\$7,621.10	\$4,563.42	\$5,174.95	\$5,031.46	\$6,303.98	\$7,445.71	\$8,424.80	\$74,215.34	

**Note: Expense tracking may differ slightly from NEBA financial records due to tax calculations based on NFP rates. Expense tracking records are an in-house tool for managing Navigator funds. From March to August 2020 the program was operating on limited funds.*

BUDGET			
REVENUE		EXPENSES	
DHBC	15000	Payroll Expenses	64500
NEBA	15000	Administrative	8000
HRM	60000	Housing	5000
	90000	Services	6000
		Comm. Engagement	6000
		Misc.	500
			90000

**Note: NEBA revenue is \$10,000 cash and \$5,000 in kind*

6. FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

Value of Program

The relationship that the NSOP has developed over the last year with the citizens facing daily challenges is the most important part of this work. It is where the Navigator program can provide assistance that makes a difference to both individuals and the community. The proof is in seeing and hearing the differences that have been made in people's lives. Also, engaging various businesses and agencies in this meaningful work has been really important. That is the support network for this program. The NSOP has played a critical role in connecting these organizations and people to them.

Biggest Challenges in NSOP Work

- A. Affordable housing/ Homelessness:** The lack of affordable, accessible housing for people and obtaining the necessary assistance, for them, is the biggest challenge in terms of being able to make sustainable, timely, and effective change. This is something NSOP has no control over. NSOP participates in housing discussions and will continue to advocate, where possible, for more social and affordable housing. With covid 19 having an effect on the limit the permanent shelters can admit; the seasonal opening of out of the cold shelter opened up 25 beds for these individuals. The NSOP along with housing intake workers from Welcome Housing and MOSH Housing First surveyed HRM to get a count of folks that were sleeping outside. With this count along with figures from the Downtown Navigator and various agencies we estimate the number of individuals that are chronically homeless in HRM to be 490.

- B. Food insecurity:** People living in precarious situations often have to make choices between paying bills, paying rent, or buying food. Also, the cost of food is increasing, making it more difficult to have enough. The NSOP program was able to collaborate with the Meals on Wheels program and the Northend Health Centre to help address food insecurity by providing over 2745 + meals.

- C. Financial hardship the low-income citizens face:** Due to the high unemployment rate and fixed income from the government, these citizens have difficulty making ends meet for the month. NSOP plays a vital role in offering financial support when funds are available.

Program Needs

Continued/increased funding because clients do not receive enough money to pay for their basic living expenses, therefore they are not able to pay all of their monthly expenses and rely on the NSOP to help with arrears. The NSOP also assists citizens that have no income and rely 100% on handouts and agency support. NSOP has been working with partner organizations to help people get the means to be able to access government programs, but there is a critical support gap, which the NSOP helps to fill where it can.

6 Month Work-plan

Goals & Objectives

- Foster relationships and provide support to street-involved individuals
- Continue to support local business with challenges they face with street-involved individuals
- Continue to network with local agencies/organizations that also support street-involved individuals
- Continue and grow program capacity

A. Community Engagement

- Provide 2 Naloxone Training workshops for local businesses, agencies, and organizations to equip them with the knowledge to deal with an opioid overdose situation. (March, April) 2021
- Part 2 of North End is Listening and Downtown Dartmouth is Listening workshops on building community capacity for responsibly responding to vulnerable individuals. (2021)
- Foster stronger relationships with the business community, service providers, community organizations and to be present at community events.

B. Supporting Street-involved Community

- Street outreach and connecting people to services

C. Advocacy

- Attend roundtables and discussions to highlight issues and needs in the street-involved community.

D. Professional Development

- Mental health training
- Navigator best practice and addiction training

6 Month Work Plan (Dec 2020 - May 2021)**

	Dec 2020	Jan 2020	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021
Northend is listening 2						
Dartmouth is listening 2						
Naloxone Training						
Meals Program						
Outreach with Rick the Nurse						
Client Interaction						
Housing Support Meetings						

** The North End / Downtown Dartmouth NSOP has funding until the end of March 2021, through HRM, NEBA, and DDBC. Additional funding and a 3 year long-term commitment to the program are being sought through HRM.. Completion of a 6-month work plan is dependent upon funding being granted.

Questions or comments regarding this report?

Please contact:

Shawn Parker

North End / Downtown Dartmouth Navigator Street Outreach Program

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Annual Report 2019-2020

Founded in 2007, Navigator Street Outreach is a social program that originated as a project of Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA) in an attempt to provide support to the street-involved community. Shortly thereafter, Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) collaborated with SGABA enabling Navigator Street Outreach to expand its scope of practice.

Today, as a continued program of SGABA and DHBC, with ongoing funding from the HRM, Navigator Street Outreach is built on the belief that everyone should have equal access to social services. The mission of Navigator Street Outreach (NSO) is to support individuals who are homeless or street-involved to address barriers in accessing housing, education, employment, mental health supports, addictions treatment, social programs, and healthcare. NSOP works collaboratively with a variety of community organizations in efforts to ensure that service users have access to the appropriate supports and services required to promote long-term, sustainable change.

Essentially, the Navigator Street Outreach Program has a simple task: Find people who are homeless or street involved, ask them what they want to do, and then help them do that. However, the implementation of this task is often far from simple. Most of the time, people want help finding housing. Other times, people want help with work, or assistance navigating the various social supports that are available, or help with their mental or physical health. People's lives are complex, so navigating these intersecting systems is also a large part of the program. The NSO program is unique among services in Halifax in that we can assist lots of people across all different areas that they might need help in. We are also nimble enough to be able to fill gaps in the existing system as we see them occur.

Update for December 2020

The summer of 2020 saw a number of different events that affected the Navigator program. Many of the clients of the program were moved into hotels during the height of the lockdown, but when the funding ran out they were released back to the streets. This resulted in a visible increase in people sleeping outside over the summer. In the past, there has not been very good data on how many people are outside at any given time, so the Navigator Program collaborated with a number of other organizations to do a brief survey and count of all the people who were sleeping outside. The resulting report garnered some local media attention which in turn forced the department of community services to change some of its discriminatory policies towards people not in shelters. The results of the survey are attached at the end of this report.

The other ongoing issue facing the Navigator Program is the complete lack of any housing or even shelter beds for people experiencing homelessness. All five of the regular shelters in Halifax are routinely full, and to get a bed in one of them requires calling multiple times a day and hoping for a vacancy. Out of the Cold opened in December, and their 24 beds were full within two days of opening. Many different privately run affordable housing buildings in North Dartmouth, Fairview, and Spryfield are being bought up by developers who “renovict” all the tenants, and then charge much higher rents after the building is reopened. There are no places for people to go, so we will continue to see an increase in homelessness until this issue is resolved.

Demographics

From 1 April 2019, to 31 March 2020, the Navigator program has connected with 224 individuals.

Category	Number of people
Female	68
Male	153
Transgender	3
Youth (under 25)	20
Senior (65 and over)	47
Panhandled	56

This year we saw an increase in the amount of seniors being served by the Navigator program, with a corresponding decrease in the youth being seen. Although I don't track the amount of people I work with who own pets, anecdotally, I didn't see many people with animals this year either. I only worked with 3 people who self-identified as trans which indicates that I need to

be more trans-inclusive in my professional practice, especially considering the fact that transgendered people are more likely to experience homelessness than cisgendered people. (<https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-transsexual-queer>)

Programs

Housing Support

Most people I work with need some form of help finding housing. This year, 57 people I worked with were able to find housing. I have realized a gap in my statistics however, as I do not know how long these people maintained their housing, or if they returned to the streets. Next year I will track the length of time people were housed, and whether or not they returned to homelessness.

Employment Support

I was able to help 26 people find and secure employment this year. For the majority of the people I worked with, employment supported consisted of getting people work boots, or enrolled in a traffic safety (flagging) course. With other folks, employment support consisted of different tools they needed to start working. In a small number of cases, I assisted with transportation out of province so people could get to jobs they had lined up in other parts of the country.

Identification Support

This year, community partners were able to establish a community identification clinic which helped many people get photo identification through access nova scotia. This new mobile ID clinic consisted of staff members from Access NS coming to the Gottingen street Income Assistance office, and taking pictures of folks who needed ID. Many people were helped with ID in this way. I also helped 57 different people obtain ID through the usual Access NS offices.

Outreach

A focus of the Navigator Program is to be a constant presence on the street, and to be in places where people who need our services might be. This is another useful and unique aspect of this program. A large part of street outreach is relationship building, so that people know who you

are, they know that you will be around, and if they ever need help or decide they want to change, then they know they can find you. It is difficult to track the outcomes of street outreach like this, because sometimes a lot of time is spent with one person to achieve certain goals, while another person can have the same goal, but it can be achieved a lot faster. An example of this would be helping one person who has been homeless for years find and maintain housing, compared to finding housing for someone who has only recently become homeless and faces fewer barriers to maintaining housing. Both people would be met on the street, while one person might take months of relationship building before they trust you, while the other might trust you the minute you offer help.

Community Partners

In the past year, the Navigator program has continued to partner with different community organizations to ensure effective service delivery to the people we work with. These community partners include:

- Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH)
- Mobile Outreach Street Health Housing First
- St. Mary's Basilica – Our Daily Bread Outreach
- Shelter Nova Scotia
- Halifax Public Libraries
- Halifax Regional Municipality
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Mainline Needle Exchange
- Direction 180
- Department of Community Services
- Affordable Housing Association Nova Scotia
- Access Nova Scotia
- Halifax Regional Police
- Salvation Army
- Out of the Cold Shelter
- Dalhousie Social Work Clinic
- Dalhousie Legal Aid
- Metro Works
- Salvation Army
- Safety First
- Adsum for Women & Children
- Halifax Housing Help
- Metro Turning Point
- Phoenix for Youth

- Landlords throughout HRM
- United Way
- Barry House
- Saint Vincent de Paul Society
- North End Downtown Dartmouth Navigator

Coordinated Access

In the past year, the Navigator program has continued to be involved with the implementation of the Coordinated Access system to end chronic homelessness in Halifax. Coordinated access is a way of identifying how many people are experiencing homelessness, determining what supports those people may need, and then assigning appropriate supports to those people in order to end their experience of homelessness. There is a group of over 15 organizations, including the Navigator Program, that meet bi-weekly to implement the Coordinated Access system. So far the system has been successful in helping more than 150 different people access appropriate supports in order to get them housed. I was the chair of the Case Conferencing Table of Coordinated Access from December 2019 to March 2020.

Statistics

Over the last year I have realized some shortcomings in the statistics I have been collecting. For the 2020-2021 year, I am going to focus on statistics that track more outcomes over the course of the year, and less one-time inputs or interventions. I hope that this will be helpful in the future to better direct time and resources of the Navigator program.

For more information regarding Navigator Street Outreach, please contact:

Eric Jonsson

Program Coordinator

P: (902) 209-6517

E: navigatorstreetoutreach@yahoo.com

Appendix A: Summer 2020 Homeless Survey

Count of People Sleeping Outside

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Summer 2020

Eric Jonsson Navigator Street Outreach Program

Michelle Malette Adsum for Women and Children

Darcy Gillis Welcome Housing and Support Services

Megan MacBride and Tara Downey, North End Community Health Centre

Acknowledgements

This survey took place on unceded Mi'kmaw territory. It was able to happen because of the good will of folks who have been struggling with poverty and homelessness, and the willing cooperation of community agencies including Welcome Housing and Support Services, the North End Community Health Centre, Adsum for Women and Children, the Sackville Area Warming Centre and the Navigator Street Outreach Program. Any questions should be directed to Eric Jonsson at 902-209-6517

Editorial

We surveyed 35 people over the course of the day, and there were a few surprising findings. The first surprising and saddening thing was the number of people sleeping outside. 10 people surveyed were not known by any agency to currently be experiencing homelessness, and there were at least 11 or 12 people who were known to be homeless on the survey date who were not able to be found. We can extrapolate then and say that the actual minimum number of people sleeping outside is closer to 50. 35 is just the number we found on the one day.

The second surprising number was the amount of people who currently receive no income at all. This is because income assistance is cut off to people who do not have an address. Some people did receive some income assistance while sleeping outside because they were able to use a friend or family member's address, and thus collect a small cheque that way. Most people (19) did not have any address they could use however, so they are not getting any income assistance at all. This unjustly punishes the furthest marginalized folks. People living in shelters at least get the monthly Standard Household Rate-Essentials of \$280, while folks living outside get nothing. This is an easy policy decision that needs to change to help folks who are the most in need.

There are some other findings that are not surprising but are worth noting all the same. Indigenous people make up about 4 percent of the overall population of Halifax, yet they make up 31 percent of the people who were sleeping outside. Three people identified as having African ancestry which is a greater percentage than the overall population. There were also zero people who identified as being a veteran, which is consistent with homelessness in Halifax. 17 percent of people surveyed identified as being LGBTQ2S, which is higher than the overall population, but consistent with other research of homelessness. 37 percent of respondents identified as female or non binary, while only 28 percent of adult shelter beds are for female identified folks.

Methodology

The survey took place on Tuesday, the 25th of August 2020. The weather was overcast and drizzly, and it had rained the preceding night. Two teams of two people spread out across the municipality, starting at 730 am, and finishing at 6 pm. The teams met with folks who were known to be living outside, or who were found to be living outside based on peer referral. Most surveys occurred near where people were sleeping. Most surveys were completed on the Halifax peninsula, 1 occurred in Dartmouth and 7 occurred in Sackville. Participants were given the choice of either \$20 cash or \$25 superstore gift cards for their time.

Findings

Overall, 35 surveys were completed. Here is a breakdown of the responses:

The average age of respondents was 41, the oldest was 79, and the youngest was 21. Three people were over age 60, and 3 were younger than 25.

We surveyed 1 person who identified as non-binary, 12 female, and 22 Male.

6 people identified as members of the LGBTQ2S community.

The average amount of time people were homeless over the past year was 7.25 months, with many folks being homeless the entire year, with others being homeless a few days.

15 people said they would go to a shelter, but the shelters are always full so they don't bother trying to call and see if there are any available beds.

34 people are Canadian citizens, none were veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP.

11 of the 35 surveyed identified as indigenous, and 3 identified as having African ancestry.

19 people had no income at all, 9 people were on income assistance, 3 were on CPP old age, 1 person collected CPP disability, 2 people collected CERB and one person only received GST.

31 people chose to receive \$20 cash and 4 folks chose the \$25 Superstore gift card.

Survey Format

Count of people sleeping outside

25 August 2020

Hello, my name is _____ I am helping to count the number of folks sleeping outside in the HRM right now. Would you like to participate? In return, I can give you \$20.00 cash or a \$25.00 gift card. All questions are optional.

Name:

Location they sleep most frequently:

1 How old are you? [OR] When were you born?

2. In total, how long have you been homeless over the PAST YEAR?
3. Can you or would you go to a shelter? Why or why not?
4. Are you a Canadian Citizen?
5. Are you indigenous or do you have African ancestry?
6. Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP?
7. What gender do you identify with?
8. Are you a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Queer or 2 spirit community?
9. Do you currently collect any income? From which source?
10. Are you on the by name list? Do you want to get on the list?
11. Do you want housing?
12. Do you have any questions?

Sign here for CASH or GIFT CARD (circle one) _____

Contact Eric Jonsson at 902-209-6517 if you have any questions after the survey is complete. All completed forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the Navigator Street Outreach Program's office until they can be tallied up and the data is compiled. After that has happened they will be shredded.

ATTACHMENT 9

Proposed Grant/Contribution Agreement Key Terms & Conditions

- a) The initial term of the agreement shall be for a maximum of 12 months, commencing on the later date of the execution of the Agreement by the Municipal Clerk or Mayor, and continue in force until March 31st and the amount of the grant or contribution, for fiscal 2020/2021, shall not exceed \$45,000.
- b) The grant or contribution shall be used in support of providing Navigator Street Outreach programming, and support for street-involved and homeless individuals in HRM.
- c) The Agreement shall require reporting which accounts for the expenditure of any grants or contributions received from the Municipality.