

# Understanding Homelessness



Homelessness cannot be resolved simply by providing a home. Root causes that created the situation also need to be addressed... More often than not, people have lost their sense of belonging or have faced a lack of social supports. We now have an opportunity to make a difference and show we are a community that cares.

- Jack Van den Bogaard, Working Group member with lived experience of homelessness

Summary of

# Safe at Home

## The Impacts

Life expectancy for *average Canadian*

Age (yrs)



Life expectancy for *homeless*



Adapted from: St. Michael's Hospital, 2009

A Community-based Action Plan to **End and Prevent Homelessness** in Whitehorse, Yukon

## About the plan



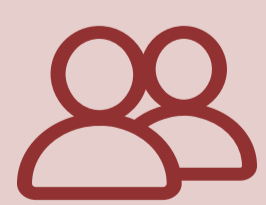
**Safe at Home** was built collaboratively by people with lived experience, the business community, members of the public, municipal, First Nation and territorial governments, and service providers.

It is the culmination of two-years of engagement with community and many hours of working group meetings. It recognizes the complexities of solving homelessness and the need to build an integrated system of care.

Most importantly, it recognizes the urgent need for action and the desire to *do things differently*.

## Our vision

A compassionate community working together to end and prevent homelessness, where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home and can readily access the supports they need, when needed. Ending and preventing homelessness is possible.



2015

City of Whitehorse/ Kwanlin Dün First Nation hosted the Vulnerable Peoples at Risk Forum and Business Roundtable



2016/17

Two Co-Chairs and 18 person Working Group drafted the plan



2017

Plan adopted by Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Yukon Government, and City of Whitehorse



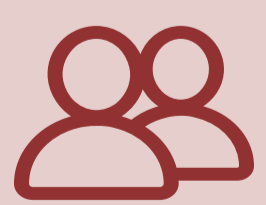
2018

Safe at Home Implementation Manager hired



2018

The Council of Yukon First Nations Leadership passed a resolution endorsing the Plan as a territory-wide tool for addressing homelessness



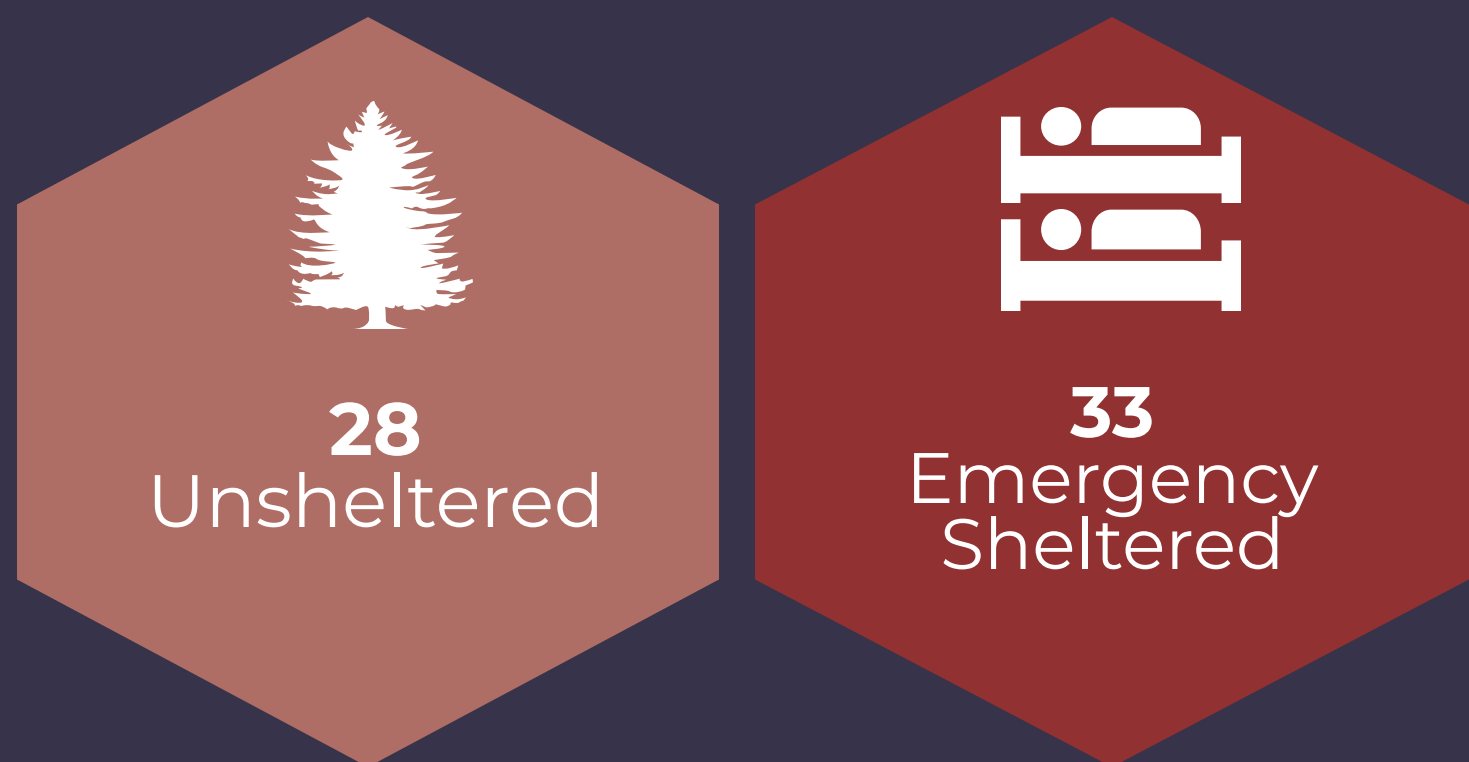
2019

Safe at Home: Community Action Forum was hosted to further planning and collective action

Timeline

# Homelessness in Whitehorse

## 61 Absolutely Homeless

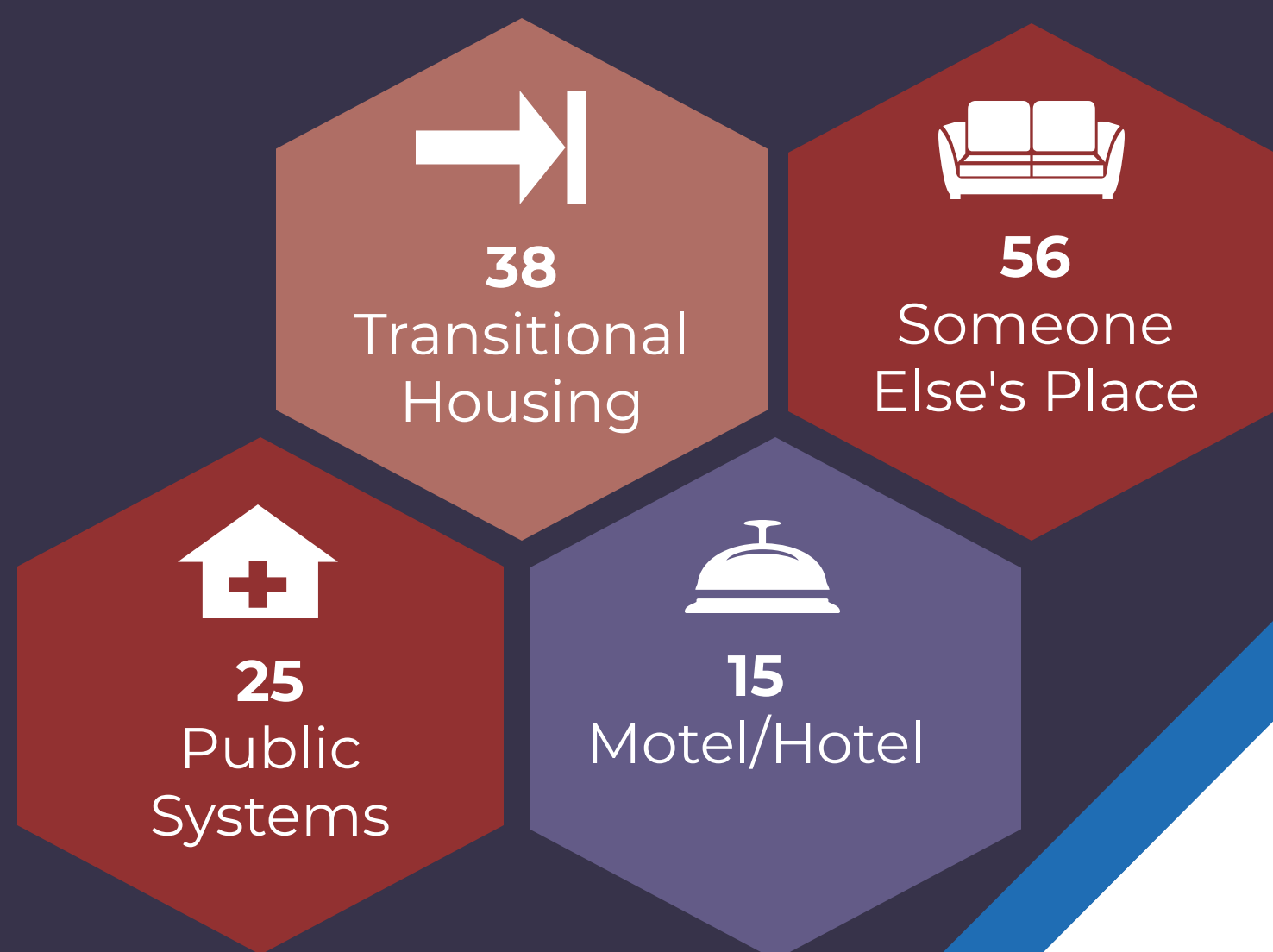


At least **195** people experienced homelessness on the night of April 17, 2018

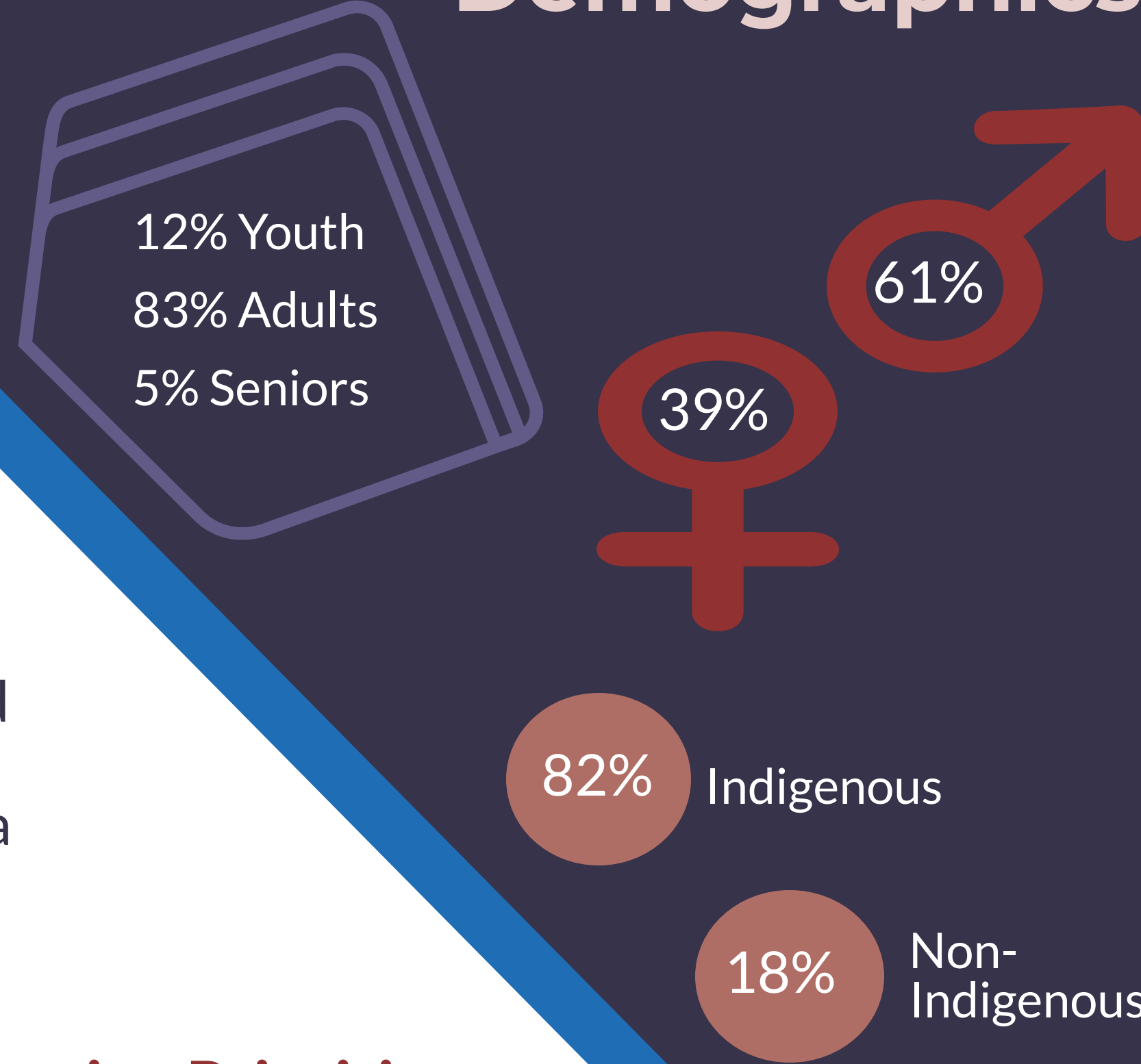
57% Chronically homeless (six or more months in past year)

40% Episodically homeless (two or more times in past year)

## 134 Provisionally Accomodated



## Demographics



## Highlights

Safe at Home is guided by principles that provide the foundation for five inter-related **strategic priorities** (three **core** and two **supporting**), each with a set of **goals, key actions and measures of success.**

### Core Priorities

- Increasing the Supply of Safe, Stable and Affordable Housing Options
- Access to Housing and Programs and Services within a System of Care
- Preventing Homelessness

### Supporting Priorities

- Strengthening Community Support and Engagement
- Improving Data Collection and Evaluating Success of Systems

Source: Point in Time Count, 2018

## What "ending homelessness" means for us as Yukoners...

### Rural connections



People coming out of Corrections who are from [rural] communities are further marginalized because they have no means of going back. Others leave a community looking for work in Whitehorse, can't find [it], then have no ability to return to their community, and they become homeless.

- Justice worker

Ending homelessness **does not mean an absence of crisis in people's lives.** It means that our community responds to crisis by offering a variety of emergency shelter services and that no one finds themselves unsheltered.

Ending homelessness requires rapid rehousing into **stable and appropriate accommodations with the supports** people require to remain housed.

Ideally, ending homeless would also mean that shelter stays will last **no longer than 30 days.**

This goal will be reached over time as systems of care and appropriate housing is established.

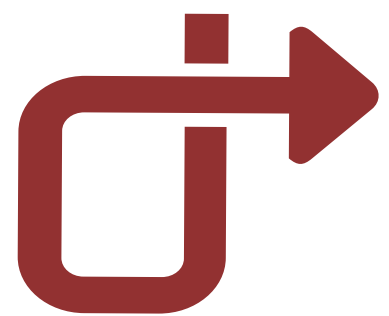
# Identified gaps

In 2017 the Working Group identified the following gaps as those which, if addressed would have the most immediate impact (in no particular order).

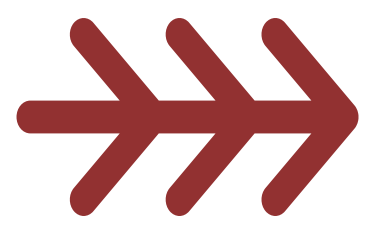
- Transitional housing for women leaving a correctional facility
- Emergency shelter services for families not fleeing violence
- A safe place for young pregnant women to reside and receive support
- Transitional housing for youth transitioning out of care
- Quicker access to services through a more coordinated system of care
- Affordable rental housing for single individuals (bachelor & one-bedrooms)
- A harm reduction program for those dependant on alcohol
- Access to laundry, washroom and transportation
- Supported housing options for people living with cognitive impairments
- Day programs for people currently unemployed who are looking to gain skills and for those under influence of drugs or alcohol

## What's next?

Implementing **Safe at Home** is not the responsibility of any one government or agency. It was built with the expertise of frontline workers, people with lived experience, government representatives, and community organizations as a result of strong, local political leadership.



This plan provides a working framework that will **evolve over time** as community partners and governments work collectively to end homelessness.



Part of next steps is to establish a **multi-year implementation plan** supported by stakeholders and driven by community champions.

## Collaboration

*Safe at Home is the spark for a new chapter for positive change in Whitehorse, the Yukon and beyond.*

### Safe at Home Steering Committee

The role of the Steering Committee is to provide advice and guide the implementation of the Community-Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness.

The Steering Committee is founded on unique and innovative partnerships and as a result, Safe at Home is catching the attention of jurisdictions across the country. The participation of community organizations and people with lived experience ensures the plan reflects and is informed by the **realities on-the-ground**.

#### Territorial Government

Department of Health and Social Services  
Yukon Housing Corporation

#### First Nations Governments

Kwanlin Dün First Nation  
Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

#### Municipal Government

City of Whitehorse

#### Non-Governmental Organization

Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

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