

## Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

**From:** Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development

**Subject:** SS-2024-237 Single Source Award for Year-Round Ark Aid Mission Strategy

**Date:** July 18, 2024

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to the July 18, 2024, SS-2024-237 Single Source Award for Year-Round Ark Aid Mission Strategy report, that;

- 1) A single source award **BE APPROVE** to Ark Aid Street Mission, as per Section 14.4 e) of the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy, to provide Year-Round Stable Responsive Services for an initial period of August 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, with options to renew for two (2) additional years,
- 2) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to reallocate \$1,800,000 of previously approved one-time funding from the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve (approved by Council on February 13, 2024) to fund the Year-Round Stable Responsive Services for an initial period of August 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024,
- 3) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to prepare a budget amendment for consideration through the 2025 Budget Update process for funding in 2025 and future years,
- 4) Civic Administration **BE AUTHORIZED** to undertake all administrative acts which are necessary in relation to this project; and
- 5) The approval given herein **BE CONDITIONAL** upon the Corporation of the City of London entering into a new and/or amending the existing Purchase of Service Agreement with Ark Aid Street Mission.

## Executive Summary

On May 14, 2024, Ark Aid Street Mission (The Ark) submitted a strategy proposal to provide year-round basic needs, outreach, and inclement weather services. Civic Administration was directed by council to extend one-time funding in the amount of \$687,000 to Ark Aid Street Mission Inc. for an additional 61 days until July 31, 2024, to be funded through the Community Investment Reserve Fund and for staff to engage with Ark Aid Street Mission Inc. to review its most recent communication related to a year-round strategy. Civic Administration has reviewed the report and is making a recommendation based on its details and foreseen need in community.

The Ark is proposing to offer services for the period of August 1, 2024, to March 31, 2027, at an annual cost of approximately \$4.3 million/year. The intention of this proposal is to eliminate the need for a yearly Winter Response program and to fill service gaps in community until the Whole of Community System Response Hubs are operational. This program is to operate year-round for up to a three-year period. This approach should support staff retention, training and funding allocation avoiding seasonal hiring and short-term funding requests reducing multiple gaps in services. These services should transition into alignment with the Whole of Community Response i.e. highly supportive housing and Hub model and the system transformation work being done throughout community.

Civic Administration is seeking approval to reallocate previously approved one-time funding of \$1,800,000 from the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve to fund these services for the period of August 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. Civic Administration is also seeking direction to prepare a budget amendment for consideration as part of the 2025 Budget Update process to address funding requirements for 2025 and future years.

## **Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan**

This report aligns with the strategic areas of focus in the 2023-2027 City of London Strategic Plan. The City of London Strategic Plan (2023-2027) identifies housing and homelessness as a key area of focus, and housing and homelessness work is identified throughout the Strategic Plan, impacting all areas of life for Londoners.

### Housing and Homelessness

- The City of London demonstrates leadership and builds partnerships to increase quality, affordable, and supportive housing options.
- London has a robust community system of health, homelessness, housing stability services, policies, procedures, and by-laws in place to support individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness or in precarious housing consistent with Council's recognition of the health and homelessness emergency.

### Wellbeing and Safety

- London has safe, vibrant, and healthy neighbourhoods and communities.
- London is an affordable and supportive community for individuals and families.
- Londoners have safe access to public spaces, services, and supports that increase wellbeing and quality of life.
- Housing in London is affordable and attainable.
- Londoners have access to quality, affordable, and timely services.
- Londoners have equitable access to key services, community supports, and recreational opportunities that enhance wellbeing and resilience.
- Increased access to a range of quality, affordable, and supportive housing options that meet the unique needs of Londoners.
- London continues its efforts to promote animal welfare including companion pets and wild animals.
- Decreased number of Londoners at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Improved safety in London's shelters system

### Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (2019-2024)

London's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (Housing Stability for All Plan), is the approved guiding document for homeless prevention and housing in the City of London and was developed in consultation with Londoners.

## **Analysis**

### **1.0 Background Information**

#### **1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter.**

The following reports are related to the Direct Solicitation Proposal Year-Round Ark Aid Mission Strategy and Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response

- Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 5 Year Review and Update (CPSC: June 17, 2019)
- Municipal Council Approval of The Housing Stability Plan 2019 to 2024 as Required Under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (CPSC: December 3, 2019)

- Municipal Council Approval of the Housing Stability Plan 2019 to 2024 (CPSC: December 3, 2020)
- Housing Stability for All Plan 2020 Update (CPSC: May 11, 2021)
- Housing Stability for All Plan - Mid-Year Update (CPSC: September 21, 2021)
- Housing Stability Services – Social Services Relief Fund Phase Four Allocations (CPSC: November 23, 2021)
- Housing Stability for All Plan 2020 Update (CPSC: May 31, 2022)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response Program and Action and Accountability Working Group Update (CPSC: November 29, 2022)
- Health and Homelessness Summits – Proposed Whole of Community System Response (SPPC: Feb 28, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response and Community Accountability Working Group Funding Reallocation Request (CPSC April 12, 2023)
- Update – Whole of Community System Response Implementation (CPSC: April 18, 2023)
- Update 2 – Whole of Community System Response Implementation (SPPC, May 9, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response Outcome Report (CPSC May 24, 2023)
- Housing Stability for All Plan 2022 Update (CPSC: May 24, 2023)
- Winter Response Program Outcome Report Year-over-Year Comparison (CPSC: August 15, 2023)
- Winter Response 2022-2023 Final Report (CPSC: March 18, 2024)
- Whole of Community System Response – Quarterly Report (SPPC, April 16, 2024)

## **2.0 Discussion and Considerations**

### **2.1 Background**

Council has approved short term funding for Ark services since December 2020 and continuous funding since October 2022. This has included an increase to the ask of provisions year over year.

- Council approved an extension of Ark services at Cronyn Warner providing 60 beds until July 31, 2024.
- The Ark currently provides all meals for Basic Need supports for depots and encampment strategy.
- The Ark provided most overnight beds (120) and indoor day space (160) for 2023-24 Cold Weather Response.
- The Ark has been an active participant in the Whole of Community Response from the onset of the original Health and Homelessness Summits and continues to be a collaborator for ongoing community sessions.

### **2.2 Housing Stability Services Review of Proposal**

Civic Administration is supportive of many aspects of the Year-Round Stable Responsive Services proposal submitted by the Ark, with the following analysis:

This plan supports the delivery of services to some of the most marginalized individuals in the community and contributes to an overall stabilization of the sector. This proposal offers stability in service delivery and can pivot as the community looks to introduce more Hubs and Highly Supportive Housing.

This system expansion is created with an intent to wind down. It is not the introduction of another shelter nor is it permanent. It is geared to supporting the sector as it evolves into The Whole of Community System Response.

Civic Administration currently contracts an agency to provide transformational outreach. Civic Administration analysed the Ark Aid proposal regarding the additional transformative outreach elements and has determined that it is not a priority at this time.

The Community Encampment Response Plan endorsed in June by Council has identified

the need for transactional outreach for basic needs provisions. Civic Administration Will be reporting back to a future SPPC meeting on the roll out details and costing for these types of services. Given this, Civic Administration is not recommending the inclusion of transactional outreach services as part of the Ark proposal. The same criteria were used for consideration and the exclusion of costs for food preparation and distribution.

The Ark's year-round plan in its current design proposes to fill existing gaps in the housing stability system for outreach, basic needs, beds, and stabilization.

Civic Administration recognizes the Ark has experienced many successes supporting winter and cold weather responses.

Civic Administration recognizes this plan could fill gaps and benefit the sector by not having to establish and ramp up yearly cold weather and inclement weather responses.

Civic Administration reviewed the submitted proposal, collaborated with the Ark to provide this recommendation based on the proposed service deliverables, understanding of need in community and the goals of the Housing Stability Action Plan. The direct solicitation attached as an Schedule A is what we based our conversations on and evolved into this report.

### **2.3 Housing Stability Services Recommendation**

Based on our analysis and collaboration of the proposal, Civic Administration recommends the Ark be entered into contract agreement for a period up to 3 years providing the following services:

- 24/7 Front Door and Assessment at The Ark Aid Street Mission at 696 Dundas St. to provide immediate needs and works as a referral step to be to the transitional spaces. No one to be turned away without connection. Will assist everyone who presents and triage from this door to the next where available.
- 40 rotational drop-in spaces that includes basic needs and services such as meals, access to showers, laundry, and bathrooms.
- 30 resting spaces to provide temporary overnight stays, system navigation and warm transfer to appropriate and available services in community (for example: health services, crisis, stabilization spaces and Cronyn Warner).
- Stabilization Transitional Beds at Cronyn Warner at 432 William St. (for individuals referred from Ark Aid Street Mission, Coordinated Access, hospital, or other community partners)
- 60 beds to provide ongoing support to those unable to access shelter spaces, providing a community environment with self-directed supports of medical and case management services on site.
- Facility has a focus on seniors, vulnerable and medically fragile individuals, and those experiencing homelessness for the first time.

### **3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations**

#### **3.1 Cost of Services and Funding Source**

The combined cost of the proposed services for operating 696 Dundas Street Ark Mission and 432 William Street Cronyn-Warner sites is up to \$360,000/month (or \$4,320,000/year).

On February 13, 2024, as part of the recommendations in a report entitled "SS-2024-042: Housing Stability Services Single Source", Council approved a drawdown from the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve in the amount of up to \$4,599,855 to fund the anticipated cost of those contract awards. In finalizing contracts with the service providers outlined in that report, it has been determined that the full amount of the approved drawdown from the Operating Budget Contingency Reserve will not be required.

Civic Administration is recommending repurposing \$1,800,000 (\$360,000/month x 5 months) of that previously approved amount to fund these services on a one-time basis

for the period of August 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. Due to the significance of the funding request and because there is no identified source of funding for future year costs, Civic Administration is seeking direction to prepare a budget amendment for inclusion in the 2025 Budget Update to address the funding requirement for 2025 and future years.

## 4.0 Key Issues and Considerations

### 4.1. Support Structure

Outlined below is the Ark's trajectory for August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to deliver services while working toward the Whole of Community plan.

- Maintain Cronyn Warner program for stabilized transitional resting spaces 60 spaces 24/7.
- Operate 696 Dundas St. for day basic needs, triage assessment, system navigation and diversion services changing the space to each day nighttime resting spaces 16-24h/day (with cleaning shutdowns) to support approx. 120 individuals during the day and 30 each night.
- Encampment supports provided via encampment strategy (funded via Basic Needs Plan Report)
- Community Safety/ neighbourhood engagement & outreach services for accompaniment to appointments, transitions into and out of programs and on-going case management is currently unfunded but proposed in all options for "now" implementation. Agency will commit to this work through donated dollars.

## Conclusion

This proposal aims to address service gaps in the community until the Whole of Community System Response Hubs are fully operational, eliminating the need for an annual Winter Response program. By running year-round for up to three years, the program will help retain staff, improve training, and streamline funding, avoiding the challenges of seasonal hiring and short-term funding requests. Ultimately, this approach will reduce multiple service gaps. As the services transition, they will align with the Whole of Community Response, including highly supportive housing and the Hub model, supporting the ongoing system transformation work in the community.

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Julia Rennick, Manager, Housing Stability Services</b>
<b>Recommended by:</b>	<b>Craig Cooper, Director, Housing Stability Services</b>
	<b>Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development</b>



**Year Round Stable Responsive Services: Basic Needs, Encampments & Outreach Services, System capacity increase & Inclement Weather Strategy.**

**August 2024- March 31, 2027**

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**Background:**

Since 2020 Ark Aid Street Mission Inc. has engaged in providing emergency winter services to those living unsheltered in the city of London, initially this population was estimated to be about 300 individuals, currently estimates are over 2000.

Demand for basic needs, indoor respite, running water, bathrooms, clothing, showers, hygiene items, clean/dry socks and clothing, social connection, system navigation, advocacy and a general place of welcome and relief for those living unsheltered/ unhoused is very high, while at the same time there are no year round funded drop in services for this population where these needs can be met year round.

Though those luck enough to be able to access the 309 shelter spaces in our community, or the newly established youth and indigenous hub spaces are receiving this care and support; the pressures on a woefully under sized shelter system require others who are not primarily mandated to respond to the homelessness crisis such as police, by-law, waste management, business community, and individual residents to shoulder the costs, response and challenges of a large underserved population.

The Health and Homelessness All of Community Strategies targeting the highest vulnerability demographic within the homeless population (estimated in 2023 to be 600 individuals) anticipates up to 15 hub locations and 600 highly supportive housing units to be developed in our city. To this date, two such hubs are in progress of developing with hopes of more, and over 100 units established. Ark Aid has participated in the development of this work and aligns to the efforts while recognizing that the volume of the interventions the organization has been implementing these previous years are fulfilling a key role in creating capacity in the system. Recognizing the responsive nature

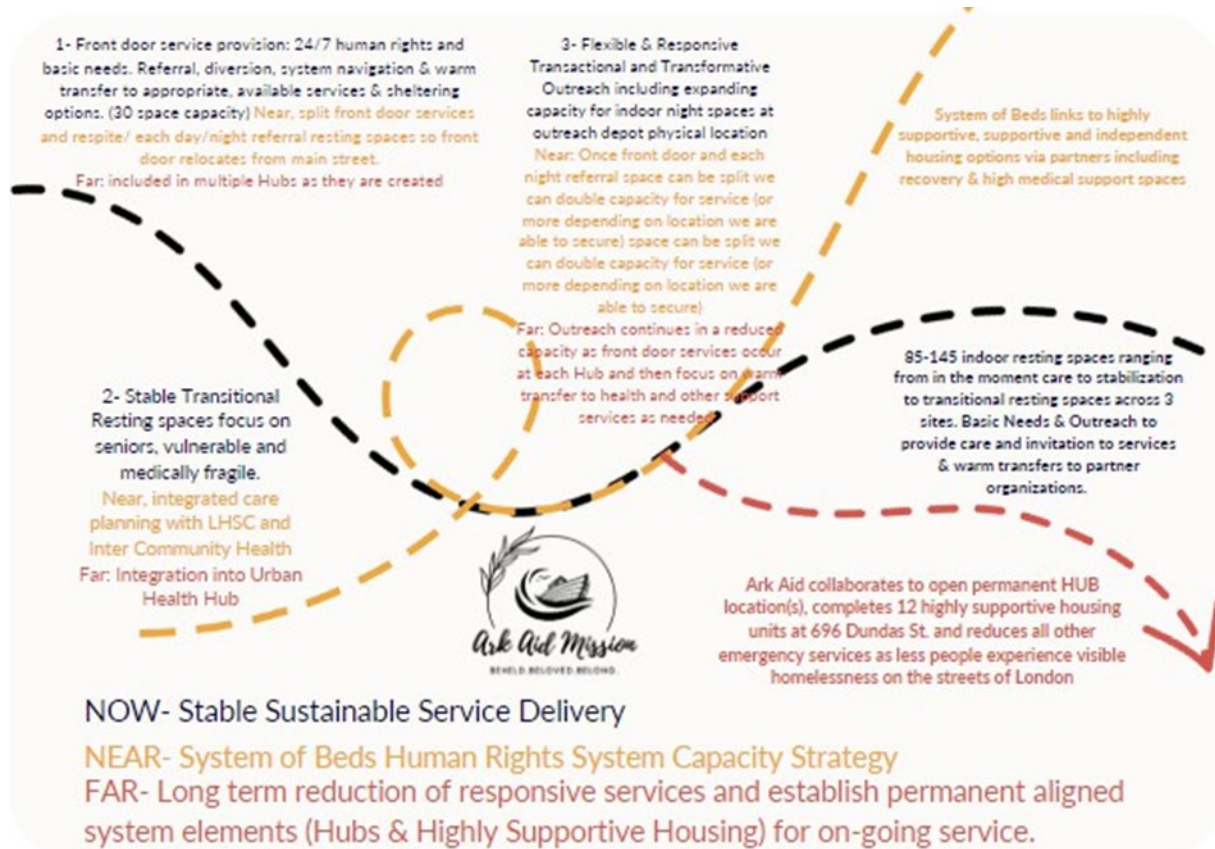
of our role in both aligning strategically to these new efforts while serving a diverse and growing population of those experiencing homelessness, we offer a pivot strategy seeking stable funding to expand the volume of short term resting spaces and indoor services towards a long term development of hubs in our community and highly supportive housing.

This proposal has been updated to reflect on-going work with colleagues in the sector and key partners who will enable the proposed interventions to be delivered collaboratively and comprehensively. Additionally, this proposal includes a per-solutions cost this is to provide a choice for council and community to debate elements of this strategy and to determine if various elements can be delivered in other ways or by leveraging currently existing funded services aligning to the proposed strategy.

Finally, the funding request is for 3 years (August 2024-March 31, 2027) This time horizon is not arbitrary- it is to ensure that cost savings borne by comprehensive planning based on resource availability, a stable workforce and strategic planned pivot to a new system approach is time lined to align to the implementation horizons of momentum around hubs, supportive housing and system stabilization.

The Now, Near, and long term strategies envisioned in this proposal address the following demonstrated needs in our city and align to various strategies of the city of London which are referenced in the alignment documents listed at the end of this proposal.

### Solution being Proposed:



Built on the foundation of Ark Aids 696 Dundas location which is our head office and owned by us, we can support spin off programs to scale to the needs of our community with a stable work force. Specific programming provided from 696 are front door/ assessment and stabilization services including an outreach depot. Our commercial kitchen has been providing up to 1000 meals per day to people in the city of London distributed through Cronyn- Warner, Encampment strategy meals, Outreach, and our daily drop in programs. This location also serves as our administrative offices, the space planned (drawings done and permits approved) to put in supportive housing (currently envisioned to be hospice/ palliative care model) and community programming including arts/ culture/ life skills/ and co-located services such as clinics, probation-parole, etc.)

The proposed services are defined as follows:

- Front door & Assessment (diversion) Services: Basic needs provision, 24/7 access resting space and system navigation, basic first aid and harm reduction services provided on site. Warm transfers to appropriate and available services in our community including Hubs, Shelters, stabilization spaces, hospital, crisis mental

health services. Links to ongoing housing stability services via Coordinated Access and individual propelled efforts including encampment education and support.

NOW: @ Ark Aid Street Mission 696 location in future front door at Outreach depot location and with stable rotational each day/ night referral resting spaces for up to 30 people (1 pet) with system navigation support.

(Daytime rotational drop in for up to 60 people and night space for up to 30)

- Stable Transitional Resting Spaces: Focus on Sr., Vulnerable, and medically fragile including first experience of homelessness. (60 +5 spaces 24/7) Cronyn warner location to provide on-going supports to those who are unable to access shelter spaces in the city and are able to stay in a community living environment with a clear objective of taking steps towards health and housing.

This space is participatory, self directed and supported with medical and case management services on site working towards permanent housing with participants of the program.

- Flexible and Responsive Outreach Services- Including emergency overflow spaces for indoor respite as needed (seasonal, demand specific and space provisioned) Transactional and Transformative services designed to integrate a outreach depot to be offered as a co-located and coordinated space with other outreach partners in the city for front door services (ultimately to be split out from the 696 Dunda St. location inclusive of drop in over night spaces that are rotationally available to those that show up for service 24/7. Dependant on space found to house this component, bed and staffing expansion could take place here or in additional spaces for up to 50 additional people.

(serving minimum 200 people daily- indoor space TBD to support 20-50 people 24/7)

Our programs and services are designed to align to the H&H Encampment Table strategy, the Hubs vision and includes a desire to finish the development of highly supportive housing (hospice/ palliative focused) as funding and pathways to complete these efforts align. By the end of the three year project evaluation, we hope to be established in at least one Hub project so that the wind down of these services coincides with greater permanent service delivery models.

Our services are low barrier, highly inclusive and meet demands of low acuity populations people experiencing housing instability, and marginalized people who require community and care to thrive in their neighborhoods. Thus the design of this system of beds and approaches supports a housing first & housing always approach. High acuity users are offered these spaces however, it is acknowledged that these highly congregate and simplistic environments are not meant to be long term stays and may not be appropriate for the highest acuity population who may self select out of these services. The strategy proposed is rooted in a consent based model of care where active participation and consent to engage are key (and the only) criteria for on-



going service. This model provides respite for those who are pre-contemplative to system engagement (encampment supports, drop in services, and basic needs delivery of care) contemplative, using our resting spaces and system navigation services, and preparing: staying at Cronyn-Warner becoming paper ready and fully engaged in system processes, action: participating in our community driven life skills, community development and neighborhood initiatives, and developing their case plans and housing strategies ultimately becoming housed and maintenance: having a community of care to engage in once housed to address loneliness, cyclical issues that may come up and ongoing pursuit of life goals.

All programs offered in this plan are designed to support people towards the goal of being housed and supported in their health and well being. This strategy, though it can be split apart is intended to integrate to the "system of beds" approach fostered by LHSC, ourselves and partner organizations and summarized in [this slide presentation](#) (Schedule A). Should this model prove successful, we believe that in the near future over 200 stable spaces for support could be added to the currently existing system and will be designed to pivot over time to the envisioned Hubs/ Highly supportive Housing strategies while providing immediate care to crisis people are experiencing in London.

Two key philosophies are embedded in these strategies and services

- These services rely on one another as safety exists when there is more than one door open, they also are designed to wind down as needs reduce or new portions of the system develop further. We hope that in two years we can transform various elements into a Hub and that the Ark location at 696 Dundas will have supportive housing upstairs.
- We believe that stabilizing this effort affords the community at large the following:
  - A plan and strategy to respond to the crisis in our community recognizing the issue will not be resolved immediately but system transformation takes time.
  - Stabilizing the workforce, those who use services and the system who rely on places to send people for supports. This creates capacity in the community for system change to take place
  - A responsive work force and strategy means we will pivot services in alignment with community tables and needs within our scope of basic needs, outreach and drop in capacities.
  - We develop policies and practices for a system of care approach that facilitates movement towards permanent appropriate and sustainable housing.
  - They system and the government can count on, hold accountable and be proactive in managing the crisis on the streets of London with a funded, predictable and responsive plan

# Redefining our System of Beds



## Background

- Cold Weather Response funding ended May 31st, 2024
- Sarah Campbell (Ark Aid) presented to council on May 7th 2024 around the need for a year-round response
  - 120+ people become unhoused – will require a more aggressive encampment strategy
  - Decrease in meals provided
- Ark Aid was granted extension funding until July 31st, 2024 to continue Cronyn Warner location and certain supportive services
- Council voted 0 to 14 to extend the funding for two months and asked for a long-term plan to be re-presented
- The Whole of Community work has fostered collaboration among various partners to address immediate steps towards a high acuity group of people, but the current issue is larger than the high acuity group. There is a need to expand the broad system to acknowledge the rising demand for services and the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness in our community.



## The Problem

This opportunity for improvement is **two-fold**:

- Organizations have been **unable to locate viable locations for co-locating** front door services, respite facilities, and transitional housing in order to fit the structured hubs framework which is intended to support homelessness in London, Ontario.
- Independent organizations possess expertise in their respective fields. However, as a network, we currently **lack a strategic approach** to integrating our services and supporting the entire population, not just individuals who are considered to be high acuity.

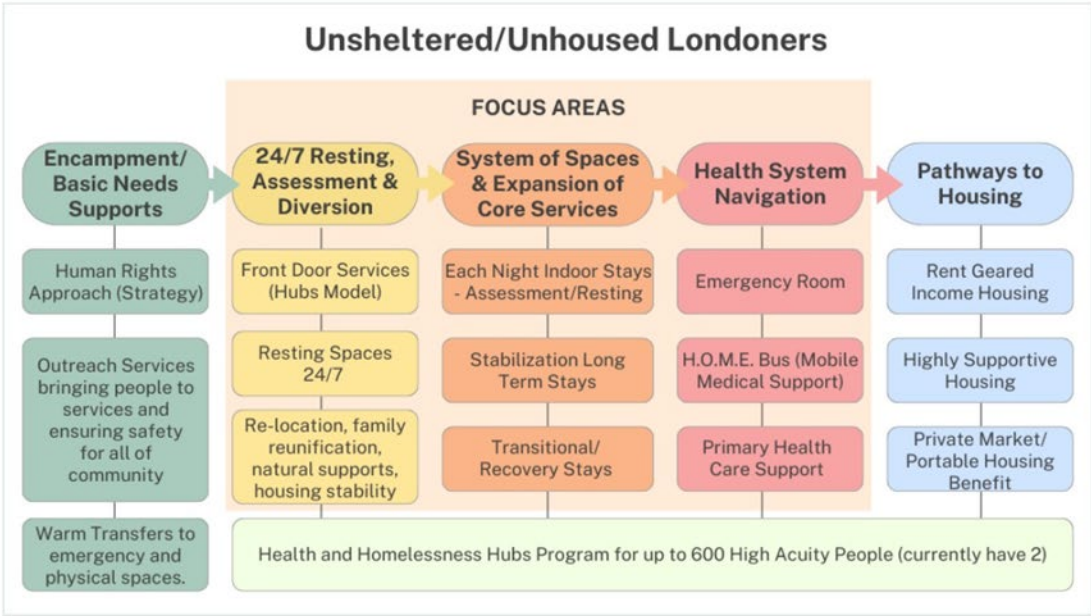
## The Evolved Solution

Community partners coordinate their services and support to deliver a **comprehensive and integrated system of beds** through **spoke-hub-node** model prioritizing medically complex participants

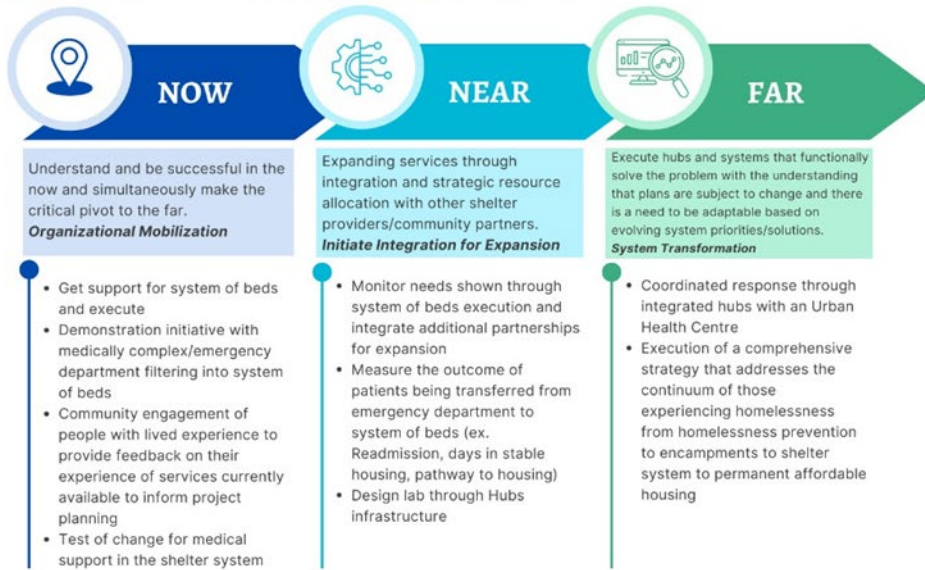
## The Goal

An integrated network that is flexible, agile, comprehensive, and scalable to meet the needs of the most marginalized in our community.





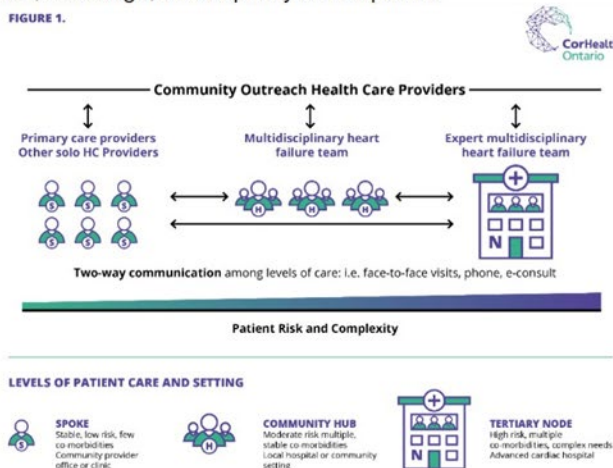
## Working Towards Our Long-Term Vision



## Learning from Integrated Care Pathways

**Spoke-Hub-Node** structures establish close working relationships among care providers who may be currently operating in isolation, and thus foster opportunities for building trust among providers, improved knowledge translation, exchange, and capacity development.

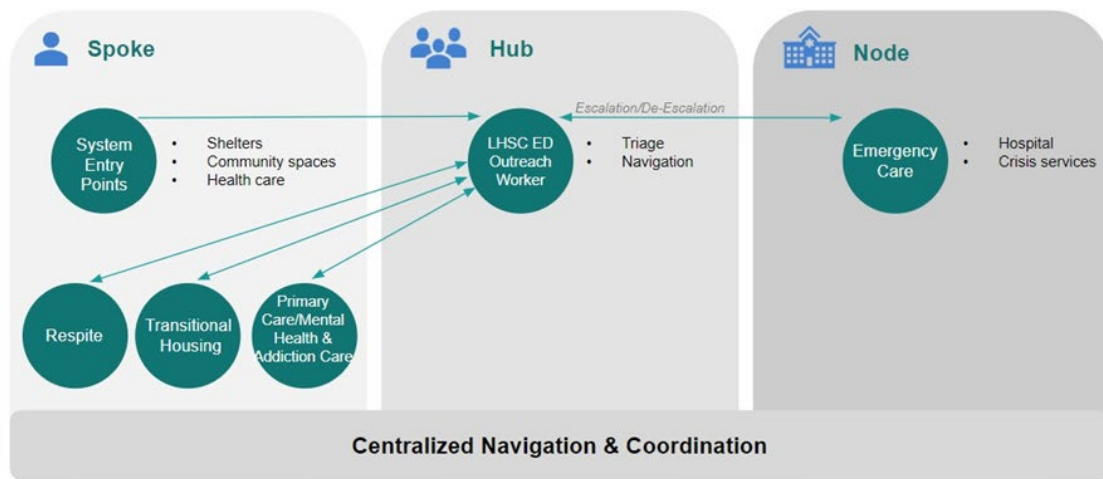
FIGURE 1.



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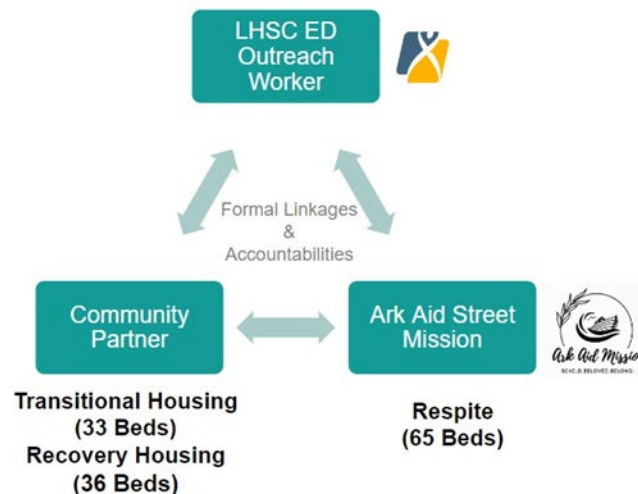
- Minimum standards at each level
- Leveraging existing community assets
- Common criteria for escalation/de-escalation
- Community consensus and agreement
- Interconnected, independent organization

## Integrated Hub Model – Future State



## Demonstration of Integrated System of Beds

Decoupling the front door hub, transitional housing, and respite enables system agility and flexibility, maximizes community assets – while maintaining effective collaboration through integrated accountability agreements.



## Anticipated Outcomes

- **Stepwise Plan for Integration of System of Beds:** Implement a phased, bite-sized approach to integrate a system of beds and support for the unhoused, working alongside the hubs plan without ignoring existing strategies.
- **Enhanced Collaboration and Learning:** Develop organizational and community capabilities through an organic, collaborative, learning-by-doing approach, fostering growth in partnership and integration efforts.
- Components of this work can be transitioned into a health hub
- Strengthening of the supportive housing unit goals

This is a proposed idea for now but there might be other partners and partnerships that are created while we work to meet the current broad system need.



# Questions and Feedback

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### Appendix 3

ANNUAL FUNDING for EACH OPTION- Options must be combined to be effective.				
Options:	Full Service	Outreach depot co-locates at 696 Dundas location	Near Option Breaking out Front door/ Assessment and Stabilization/ life skills services	Limited Ark Day services & Encampment supports paid for by city and no responsive emergency front door space.
1. Ark Base Services 24/7:	\$ 2,099,503	\$ 2,099,503	\$ 1,669,345	\$ 1,669,345
2. Stable Transitional (Cronyn-Warner)	\$ 2,648,538	\$ 2,648,538	\$ 2,648,538	\$ 2,648,538
3. Flexible and Responsive Outreach:	\$ 762,623	\$ 762,623	\$338,623	\$338,623
4. Outreach depot Location TBD off Dundas with emergency flex space	\$ 1,609,884		\$ 1,609,884	
<b>Total for ALL</b>	<b>\$ 7,120,548</b>	<b>\$ 5,510,664</b>	<b>\$ 6,266,390</b>	<b>\$ 4,656,506</b>
Inclusions:	3 locations	2 locations	3 locations	2 locations
	up to 140 spaces night spaces and rotational of 260	90 night spaces	up to 140 night spaces	90 night spaces
	incremental implementation into October 2024	160 day spaces	260 day spaces	160 day spaces
	Encampment supports built into this budget	Encampment supports built into this budget	outreach coordination	outreach coordination
			<b>NEAR (Oct/Nov) when funding source is secured</b>	<b>NOW funding</b>
<b>Monthly cost for each: (Every option is less than the per month cost of Cold Weather Response 2023/24)</b>	<b>\$593,379</b>	<b>\$459,222</b>	<b>\$522,199</b>	<b>\$388,042</b>
% less than Cold weather response 2023/24	-10.68%	-30.87%	-21.08%	-41.00%
<b>Comparative: (historical funding from city)</b>				
Extension funding June/ July (monthly)	343500			
Winter Response funding 2023/24 (monthly)	664300			