



**TORONTO HOSTELS
TRAINING CENTRE**

Training for Change

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Dear Colleague,

I am pleased to present the Toronto Hostels Training Centre's new Strategic Plan. It is the result of an intensive consultation process over the course of the past eighteen months, both within our organization and with many of the people that we work with and serve. Our Board of Directors has endorsed the plan, which over the next three years will inform our decisions regarding the allocation of our resources.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- Fellow members of the Board of Directors, who invested many hours in the consultation and planning process;
- Staff members, who contributed their valuable insights and experiences to the process;
- Clients and Facilitators of the Centre, who shared with us their personal experiences and identified emerging needs within the community;
- Other external stakeholders, who contributed their insights and support for this initiative.

A special thank you is also due to our Executive Director, Ruth Gillson, who coordinated the planning process.

This Strategic Plan prepares us to meet the opportunities of the next three years as we continue to *inspire growth and transform lives*.

We hope the information contained in this document is useful and provides you with a better understanding of the directions the Centre will be pursuing in the future. We look forward to working together in the years ahead on the important initiatives outlined in this plan.

Debbie Hill-Corrigan
Chair, Board of Directors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Toronto Hostels Training Centre appreciates that participating in a strategic planning process takes time and commitment and we would like to recognize the contributions of a number of people who were involved in supporting the planning process.

- The Toronto Hostels Training Centre Board of Directors who invested many hours in the consultation and planning process, contributing their sector knowledge, experience and expertise.
- THTC staff members who contributed their valuable insights and experiences to the process, contributing to discussions at meetings and interviews.
- Clients and facilitators of the Centre, who willingly and generously shared their personal experiences and identified emerging needs within the community. Their perspectives were instrumental in informing this strategic plan.
- And lastly, our member stakeholders, who contributed their insights and support for this initiative.

BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Toronto Hostels Training Centre is operating in a complex political, economic, social and technological environment. There continues to be high levels of unemployment (approximately 9.5% in Toronto) and social assistance rates have lost more than half their value compared to rate levels in 1994; unemployment is a major trigger for homelessness. There has been a decline in readily available long-term mental health treatment, programs and community support and a rising number of homeless with complex mental health, substance use and other health issues. There is less provincial funding for the City of Toronto for homeless prevention services, and significantly reduced funding available to support low income residents as a result of the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) implemented in 2012. (*City of Toronto report, "Changes to Provincial Approaches for Homeless Prevention and Social Assistance Programs: Implementation Strategies and Issues."*)

More than one-third of the outdoor homeless population identifies as Aboriginal, an increase of 18% since 2009; 16% of Toronto's total homeless population self-identify as Aboriginal compared to 15% in 2009. Nearly 20% of homeless youth identify as part of the LGBTQT community, more than twice the rate for all age groups. The share of seniors in the homeless population has more than doubled since 2009; those aged 51 and above represent 29.1% of the homeless population, compared with 19.6% four years ago. This is increasing the demand for services and supports as the economic climate worsens. (<http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC2103.pdf> Page 6 references the high housing costs, the Canadian households living below the Low Income Cut-Off line and the fall in average earnings for Canadians. Page 14 references this in more detail citing the changes in our economy, declining income, and widening of wage gaps, etc.)

Continuing education and life-long learning is experiencing a major transition in response to demands and the necessity to be a competitive candidate in the workforce: adults face ongoing demands to develop new and different knowledge and skill sets on a continuous basis. Digital support for access and participation in learning activities has become integral to the formal and informal education and learning process.

In March 2013, the Toronto Hostels Training Centre (THTC) embarked upon a strategic planning initiative that would set the direction for the Centre for the next three years. THTC engaged Jan Campbell of StrategiSense

Inc. to support the design and facilitation of the overall process. The first phase of the process involved conducting a high level environmental scan to gather information about activities, trends and relationships about THTC from internal and external environments, in order to support the Board in setting strategic priorities for the future.

The environmental scan was conducted over a 14 week period with the goal of providing an overview of key internal strengths, areas of improvement, trends, external opportunities with respect to pursuing THTC's mission as well as external threats that may hinder the pursuit of THTC's mission. There were a total of 114 points of contact with THTC stakeholders in the environmental scan process. Documents reviewed included internal reports and documents as well as external reports.

The environmental scan participant breakdown and response type were as follows:

- 42 Workshop Participants via focus group and survey
- 20 Workshop Trainers/Facilitators via focus group and survey
- 2 Staff Members via face to face interview
- 9 Board Members via focus group and survey
- 1 Executive Director via face to face interview
- 39 Community Partners/Collaborators via survey, sector meetings and interviews
- 1 Funder via interview

Key informants from the Centre's partners/collaborators category ranged from the health, housing, shelter, youth, children, recreation, and drop-in sectors. Those from the shelter sector were in the higher participant range comparatively. The percent of survey respondents by affiliation with respect to high use workshop participants were as follows: 47% members/affiliates, 11% non-member/affiliates, 13% City funded, 21% independent and 8% other.

Given the increased funding and service delivery challenges within the sector, the Toronto Hostels Training Centre Board of Directors felt it was timely to further strengthen and more clearly define the Training Centre's operational mandate by embarking on a strategic planning process. Through the process, vision and mission statements were developed along with five key values and six strategic directions.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION STATEMENT:

A robust and dynamic homeless and housing sector with the skills, knowledge and experience to end homelessness – inspiring growth and transforming lives.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To enhance the capacity of the homeless and housing sector to better respond to emerging needs through high quality, practical training, promoting evidence-based practices, and supporting coordination of the sector.

VALUES:

- *Humanistic Approach*
We believe in and respect that everyone has value and worth. We draw, learn, and build on the strengths of the people with whom we work.
- *Access, Equity and Anti-Oppression*
We strive to provide a learning environment that is safe, unbiased and barrier-free.
- *Relevance and Responsiveness*
We incorporate the front-line and practical perspective of participants. We are responsive to emerging needs.
- *Learning and Innovation*
We stimulate learning and foster innovation that contributes to skills development and best practices.
- *Collaboration*
We value and draw on the strengths and contributions of our members and stakeholders.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Continue to respond to the trends and needs of the housing and homeless sector through innovative training initiatives and services.
- Establish a role in sharing evidence-based practices and providing coordination for the sector to support service excellence.
- Be a catalyst for shared knowledge of trends and needs, and facilitate connections across the sector supporting ongoing system transformation and leadership.
- Diversify our funding base through revenue generation and other funding sources in order to expand our training initiatives and services.
- Cultivate strategic partnerships and consolidate relationships with current stakeholders.
- Strengthen our organizational capacity to deliver responsive products and services.

MONITORING THE RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Toronto Hostels Training Centre will monitor its progress towards achieving the strategic directions by tracking, measuring and reporting on the achievement of outcomes across the organization. Indicators and measures of success will be identified within an operational planning framework that will be developed by the Executive Director. The Board of Directors, in addition to reflecting the relevant strategies within their board planning framework, will oversee and monitor the results and associated impact of the strategic plan.