



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# Housing First: What's Next?



## Key Takeaways



**Housing First is a proven, evidence-based approach that provides people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing and access to supportive health services.**

Amid rising chronic homelessness and limited resources—especially in mental health and substance use health support—there is a growing need to prioritize flexible, cost-effective, and evidence-informed interventions like Housing First.

In October 2024, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) convened 62 experts from across Canada to explore how to advance Housing First as a key approach to addressing chronic homelessness. Discussions focused on current implementation challenges and opportunities to adapt the model to better fit today's context and diverse needs.

■ **Four key recommendations emerged from the discussions.**



### Use data to drive improvement

Collect and analyze national-level data to evaluate and adapt Housing First programs, ensuring they meet current needs and are effective for diverse populations.



### Support and train the workforce

Invest in standardized training, fair working conditions, and stronger collaboration to better equip Housing First providers and bridge gaps between research and practice.



### Expand affordable housing and wraparound supports

Develop a long-term strategy to increase the availability of deeply affordable housing and ensure access to essential health and social services, with culturally safe and inclusive approaches.



### Boost leadership and public engagement

Identify champions at all levels, build public awareness, and engage landlords and media to strengthen support for Housing First and the sustainability of this approach.

Advancing Housing First in Canada requires strong collaboration, shared vision, and inclusive decision making across sectors. Efforts must centre the voices of people with lived experience, Indigenous communities, service providers, policy makers, researchers, and clinicians to effectively address homelessness for those living with mental health and substance use health issues.

To read the full report, please visit  
[https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/  
resource/housing-first-whats-next/](https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/resource/housing-first-whats-next/)  
or use the QR Code.

