

## Youth Homelessness in Canada: the Road to Solutions

Raising the Roof has launched a three-year research project examining the experiences of 689 street-involved youth in three Canadian cities – Calgary, Toronto and St. John's. The project findings and considerable subsequent expert feedback on those findings have provided a snapshot of youth homelessness in Canada today.

The paper focuses on three essential service and support system components that address the complex needs of street-involved youth: **prevention, emergency response** and **transitions out of homelessness**.

For the full version of the report, click [here](#). For the Executive Summary, click [here](#).

The recommendations below are discussed and supported throughout the paper. They focus on three key aspects of an effective response to youth homelessness: prevention, emergency response, and transitions out of homelessness. They are based on the premise that youth-serving agencies and their community-based partners in government, private and non-profit sectors know what works best in their communities across the country; and that stability and long-term employment are proven positive factors in helping young people move away from the street.

### Recommendations

- 1. Existing funding:** Secure, long-term and flexible funding to enable successful programs for street-involved youth to continue to develop and grow;
- 2. Access to services:** 'One-stop' barrier-free access to services for street-involved youth within their home community;
- 3. Education:** More educational opportunities/grant programs for street-involved youth and increased programs that target early school leavers;
- 4. Employment:** Increased job training and employment opportunities for street-involved youth, in particular graduates of agency programs;
- 5. Housing:** A national housing strategy that includes a continuum of housing specifically for street-involved youth, e.g., youth shelters, transitional housing, co-op housing, safe and affordable housing, as well as supportive housing for youth leaving child protection, foster care and group homes;
- 6. Mentorship:** Increased mentorship support aimed at street-involved youth to build self-esteem and develop life skills;
- 7. Government leadership:** Leadership and collaboration among federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments in developing a Canada-wide plan to address youth homelessness;
- 8. Private sector engagement:** Development of a supportive framework to encourage the private sector to participate in creative solutions to youth homelessness e.g., skills training, employment opportunities, development of supportive work environment;
- 9. Government policy:** Development of distinct policies around youth homelessness to address the unique needs of this population.