

# Request for Proposals

## Assessment of Homeward Trust's Housing First Program Delivery to Aboriginal People

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### **PROJECT SPONSOR: HOMEWARD TRUST EDMONTON**

Homeward Trust Edmonton (HTE) is a community-based, comprehensive housing organization that provides leadership and resources towards ending homelessness in Edmonton. We fulfill our mandate by leading initiatives and programs, engaging community stakeholders and partners, conducting research, creating awareness and funding housing and support projects.

Engagement with Aboriginal populations is fundamental to Homeward Trust. It is a sad reality that Aboriginal people are overrepresented in the homeless and at-risk populations. Comprising nearly 40% of the homeless population, cultural engagement is an essential part of ending homelessness.

This is reflected in Homeward Trust's indenture, which stipulates that four (4) of our nine (9) board members will be from the Aboriginal community, and that the organization will have an Aboriginal Advisory Council.

**Project Background:** The 2008 count of homeless people in Edmonton - a point-in-time count - found 3079 people identifying themselves as homeless; approximately 40% of them identified themselves to be of Aboriginal descent. Furthermore, given the unique challenges of this population, it is imperative that there are adequate and appropriate support services available to them.

In response to this situation, *A Place to Call Home: Edmonton's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*, lists the following goals:

- Work with the Aboriginal community to develop the capacity of an Aboriginal agency or agencies to deliver Aboriginal specific services in support of the Housing First Program by Aboriginal peoples to Aboriginal peoples when requested.
- Work with the Aboriginal and existing service community to ensure services provided to Aboriginal people are relevant, respectful and effective in helping Aboriginal people secure and maintain a home.

Homeward Trust believes in the principle of 'housing first', that every person has the right to a safe, secure home. This principle is at the core of both the City of Edmonton's and Government of Alberta's 10 year plans to end homelessness, and of the housing first support program, which officially started on April 1, 2009.

In this program, the focus is on ending homelessness by providing permanent housing and follow-up support. Individuals who are experiencing homelessness are housed first and then given appropriate supports. The program is intended to last 12 months; clients are stabilized, then transitioned to a reduced level of support. The final stages of the program involve making plans to discharge the client, once they are able to be self-sufficient.

Homeward Trust works with 11 teams at different agencies to deliver the program. Additionally, Homeward Trust coordinates landlord relations, worker and landlord training, a furniture bank to support clients, and data collection and analysis to support the program and ensure we are meeting client needs.

Since April 2009, over 750 people have found housing through this program, of whom 40% are Aboriginal.

Homeward Trust will hire a researcher or research team to conduct interviews with staff and clients to gather rich, qualitative data regarding the Housing First Program, specifically regarding how it is experienced by Aboriginal Clients. The findings of the interviews, in addition to the data collected by the program, will form a more comprehensive understanding of the program, specifically how it is experienced by Aboriginal clients. This information will then be used by Homeward Trust to improve future data collection, inform worker training and determine the structure and approach of new services, either through additional team development or services to teams.

### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROJECT:**

**Approach:** This project will be a strengths-based qualitative research project that will assess the successes of the program, as well as identify gaps in services, and/or challenges in service delivery for Aboriginal peoples.

**Data Collection Methods:** There are two ways data will be collected:

- Interviews: the researcher(s) will conduct semi-structured interviews with service providers and Aboriginal participants in Edmonton's Housing first Program. Interviews will be digitally audio recorded and transcribed. All transcriptions, with identifiers removed will be delivered to Homeward Trust in electronic and paper form.
- A focus group will be facilitated by the researcher(s) with service providers who are not partner organizations with the Housing First Program, but who do provide services to Aboriginal people who are homeless. The focus group will be digitally audio recorded and transcribed. All transcriptions, with identifiers removed, will be delivered to Homeward Trust in electronic and paper form.

**Project Sample:** The number and inclusion criteria are as follows:

- Interviews: 40 Housing first Aboriginal Clients (20 men/20 women). 20 Service Providers. Total sample n=60.
- Focus Group: 10 service providers.

**Data Analysis & Report Writing:** Data will be coded and analyzed using a thematic analysis method, which is satisfactory to Homeward Trust. Assessment report will be submitted in APA 5 format, on Microsoft Word, in paper and electronic format. It will include quotations from research participants (confidential and anonymous) to illustrate the themes/subthemes discussed.

### **RESEARCHER QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A completed Graduate degree in Social Sciences (Masters or Doctorate).
- A demonstrated knowledge of and experience working with Alberta's Aboriginal people and specifically services available to them.
- Demonstrated qualitative research experience (individual projects, member of research teams), & knowledge of qualitative research methods (data collection and analysis).
- Excellent written communication skills.
- The successful applicant will be required to undergo a Criminal Record Check, and a Child Welfare check.

**PROJECT SUPERVISION:**

The project will be supervised directly by Homeward Trust. The project advisors will include (1) Aboriginal Advisory Council for Homeward Trust; and (2) Homeward Trust Research Committee.

**DELIVERABLES:**

| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Deadline</b>    |
|---|--------------------|
| Sign contract   | July 21, 2010      |
| First Deliverable: Submit work plan and interview questionnaires for review & feedback. | August 9, 2010     |
| Commence Data collection  |                    |
| Second Deliverable: Mid-way status report on data collection                            | September 30, 2010 |
| Third Deliverable: Deliver all transcribed interviews (no identifiers)                  | October 31, 2010   |
| Commence data coding  |                    |
| Fourth Deliverable: Preliminary analysis report   | November 30, 2010  |
| Fifth deliverable: Final Data analysis chart  | December 20, 2010  |
| Six Deliverable: First draft of report submitted for feedback                           | January 20, 2011   |
| Final Report  | February 28, 2011  |

**HOW TO APPLY:**

Interested parties will prepare a detailed letter of intent to include the following:

1. Detailed Curriculum Vitae from lead researcher; (as well as a description of the qualifications of others who will be involved in the project).
2. Submission of a research-writing sample.
3. A one page description the approach to this project and any specific ideas, techniques or suggestions that might make the project proceed smoothly.
4. Indication of name of business that will contracted with; business number; and copies of business insurance policy (with minimum 2 million dollars liability).

**PROJECT BUDGET:**

\$40,000 (includes all project expenses).

**EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Level of qualitative research experience.
- Quality of written submission.
- Demonstrated understanding and experience in working with Aboriginal people and/or completing research with Aboriginal communities.
- Demonstrated sensitivity to the specific issues faced by Aboriginal homeless people.
- The researcher possesses adequate insurance.

**COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS:**

Applicants can expect a written response to the application within one month of grant application submission deadline.

**DEADLINE AND CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Letters of Intent must be submitted, prior to the closing date of **July 9, 2010** to the following address:

Susan McGee  
Executive Director  
Homeward Trust Edmonton  
6th Floor  
10242 105 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3L5  
Phone: 780.496.2630  
Fax: 780.496.2634

Email: [smcgee@homewardtrust.ca](mailto:smcgee@homewardtrust.ca)

**Please submit Letters of Intent by registered mail or e-mail to the addresses provided above.**