

Housing and Homelessness Partnership Evaluation Report - Recommendations

Summary and Recommendations

When it was first established in the fall of 2014, the Housing and Homelessness Partnership (Partnership) made a commitment to review the organization at twelve months in an effort to ensure the original vision and mission of the Partnership was being honoured, review what we have accomplished to date, how we can be effective and where we need to improve.

Grant MacDonald, an independent consultant, was retained in the fall of 2015 to do the evaluation of the Partnership. He interviewed members of the Partnership and others in the community. From these interviews and other research, MacDonald reported his findings on the Partnership. The recommendations are below and represent MacDonald's opinions.

1. Establish specific goals and work plans

- Find ways to maintain and continue to give voice to a sense of urgency.
- Develop some measurable goals and further refine each Partner organization's roles and contributions.
 - Possible addendum to the Partnership Charter
- Create a Partnership table calendar of meeting topics tied to these goals.
- Formalize and publish Working Group plans and revisit them regularly.

2. Refocus work at the Partnership monthly meetings on policy and system change

- Develop a twelve month calendar of Partnership table level topics for moving the housing and homeless agenda forward.
- Build in more time for conversation and spend less time reporting and hearing presentations that take up agenda time.
- Consider presentations by the Partnership Table to senior government officials on need for, and the specifics of, system change.

3. Improving Partnership and Working Group dynamics

- Greater effort by all those sitting at more than one table to keep their roles separate.
- Asking more questions of each other.

- Maintain a balance between relationship building and problem solving as the former is still needed.
- Be hard on issues but easy on the people.
- Consider a day-long or two-day retreat with social time built in for Partners and Working Groups.
- Meeting leadership that balances problem solving and maintaining relationships.

4. Communications

- Utilize the Partnership website to strengthen internal accountability by enabling all key players access to meeting minutes and notes.
- Ensure that quarterly progress updates are tied to goals and plans.

5. Broaden involvement and political commitment

- Active outreach to other key agencies and constituencies with no expectations.
- Seek a political commitment to solving the problems of affordable housing and homelessness from the Province at highest levels including Premier, Finance and Treasury Board, and Department of Community Services.
- Allow Housing Nova Scotia to play its role without having to be the only voice for the Provincial Government.

6. United Way's role

- Greater focus on maintaining and strengthening relationships, managing or mediating conflicts, breaking log jams and coaching partners.
- Do not forget to acknowledge the expertise within the Partnership.
- Greater attention on helping set goals and plans and keeping them in front of everyone.
- Clarify United Way's Secretariat role within Working Groups and Task Teams.
- Set an example for organizational transparency as a partner at the Partnership Table.

Action Taken

After receiving the Report in March, the Partnership has taken the following action:

- The Department of Community Services will join the Partnership.
- More educational information will be added to the website and it will be updated with information about the activities of the Partnership and other news in the community.



- The Partnership will dedicate a day in fall 2016 to work together to evaluate progress and strengthen the Partnership.
- Partnership meeting time will be more dedicated to policy and system change strategies.
- The website will be expanded to include knowledge exchange for community groups.

For more information on the mandate of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership see the [Charter](#).