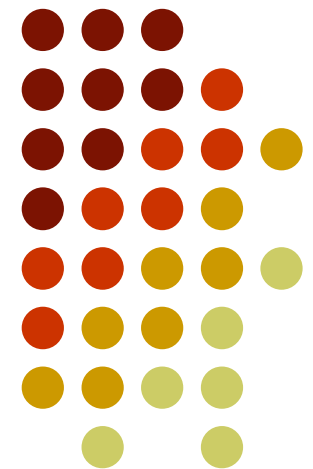


# Housing Resources For Newcomers



**Sophie Fosso and Amy Wilson**  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers



Presentation for 2009 AAISA Provincial Conference  
Facilitated by Amy Wilson, Settlement Practitioner  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers  
October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009  
Calgary, Alberta

**PLEASE NOTE: PRESENTATION FOR EXAMPLE PURPOSES ONLY. ALWAYS CHECK WITH INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES FOR CONTACT INFORMATION, INTAKE CRITERIA AND SERVICES.**





# Outline

- 5 min: **Introduction**
- 20 min: **Housing Resources Power Point**
  - Collecting and organizing relevant information
- 15 min: **Housing Assessment Tool**
  - Streamline services for clients with housing needs
- 30 min: **Case Studies**
  - Share resources, contacts and strategies for solving housing issues
- 20 min: **Brainstorming/ Q&A**
  - Development, application, and maintenance for your agency

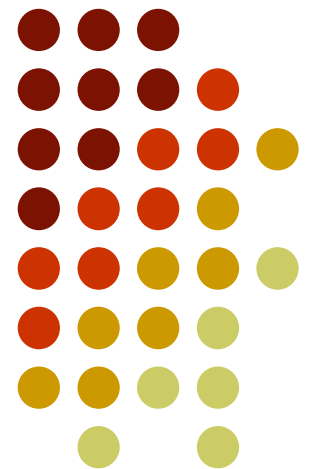
# Objectives



- Provide tools to create a resource for housing that collects information into one accessible place
  - Used as a reference, training manual, forum to share new information
  - Allow practitioners to efficiently meet the housing needs of their clients regardless of previous experience or training with housing
- Share housing related information and resources with co-workers and colleagues
- Share strategies to make resources accessible for all agency staff, up-to-date, and relevant

# Housing Specific Resources

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# Housing Support Services Hub



- Services: Help clients find housing and access community resources
  - Provide outreach, such as arranging and attending viewings,
  - Advocacy with landlords, Alberta Employment and Immigration, etc.
  - Assistance with budgeting and financial issues
  - Host information and networking workshops for community agencies

# HUB



- Eligibility:
  - Large or single parent families
  - Low income or major financial issues
  - Mental or physical health issues
  - People with addictions
  - No criteria for immigration status

# HUB



- Procedure:
  - Referral by a partner agency such as EMCN.
  - Counsellor must call and answer screening questions.
  - If the client fits the criteria, they will be placed on a waiting list
    - generally takes several weeks to two months.
  - Note: The Hub does not provide emergency assistance.

# Boyle Street Co-op and Bissell Centre



- Services: housing program for both singles and families
  - Assist with finding and maintaining housing
  - Maintain a housing database
  - Willing to partner with EMCN, share ideas and landlord information
- Eligibility: low-income, with barriers that require follow-up after they are housed
- Procedure: Client must do an intake at either Boyle Street Co-op or Bissell Centre

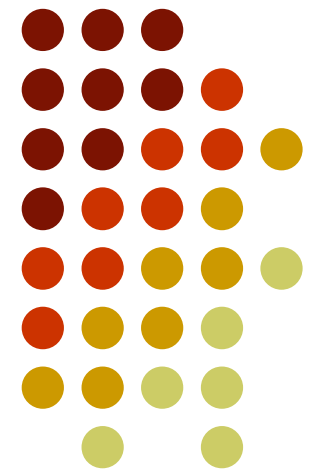
# Government Housing Programs



- Administered by:
  - Agencies including: Bissell Centre, Boyle Street Co-op, Hope Mission
  - Must be a client of one of these agencies
- Usually focus on
  - chronically homeless
  - people with addictions
  - mental health

# Social and Subsidized Housing

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# Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC)



- Services: Community Housing and Rent Supplement
- Eligibility:
  - Must be low income with less than \$7000 in savings.
  - Will not accept Refugee Claimants or Temporary Foreign Workers
  - Clients must choose either social housing or rent subsidies.
  - Clients must contact CRHC at least once a year while they are on the waiting list
- Procedure: Fill out application form. Client must return it in person to: 10232 112 St

# CRHC Social Housing



- Low-income housing with rent based on 30% of income.
  - Points are given for items such as income, family size, current living situation, etc.
  - Waiting list is generally three to four years, but emergency situations may get in sooner
  - The Haven is housing for immigrants, have large suites
  - Fastest way into CRHC housing is by staying in a shelter



# homeEd

- Services: Community Housing
  - Rent based on 27% of income
- Eligibility:
  - No immigration status criteria
  - Must have four years of rental history and two years of employment history
  - Counsellor can write a referral letter explaining the situation if clients do not meet the criteria

# homeEd



- Procedure:
  - Fill out application form and mail it to the main office for general applications
    - #100 11722-96 street
  - Or, call the specific site the client is interested in
    - The manager of each site manages his or her own waiting list
  - Waiting list is usually six months to a year
  - Largest suite is three bedrooms, so not good for very large families

# Trinity Manor



- Eligibility:
  - Must be in Canada for three years or less
  - Permanent resident
  - Must be open to participating in settlement programming
- Procedure:
  - Clients can apply at the Trinity Manor office
  - Have a waiting list

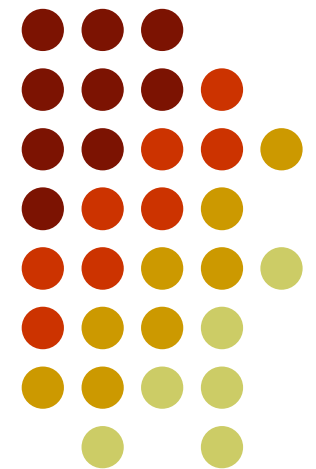
# Specialized Housing



- Mental Health:
  - Canada Mental Health Association
- Families fleeing domestic violence:
  - Must go to a shelter and be referred
- Youth:
  - Inner City Youth Housing, youth shelters
- Seniors:
  - Senior's Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE), Operation Friendship, Greater Edmonton Foundation

# Emergency Resources

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# Emergency Resource Lists

- Several Edmonton agencies create emergency resource lists- including shelters and places to receive meals
- Upload these lists on their respective websites:
  - Homeward trust: [www.homewardtrust.ca](http://www.homewardtrust.ca)
  - Edmonton Public Library: [www.epl.ca](http://www.epl.ca)
  - The Support Network publishes the Tough Times Handbook and resource lists, some for specific cultural groups
    - Access from their website:  
[www.thesupportnetwork.com](http://www.thesupportnetwork.com)

# Alberta Works



- Make sure client has gone to Alberta Works and exhausted all options there.
  - 780-644-5135
  - If you think they should be receiving support and are not, try these contacts:
    - Social workers at inner city agencies
    - Supervisor at downtown office
    - Go up two levels (supervisor's supervisor)
- **Emergency Social Services**
  - May provide money to stay in a hotel
  - Must call after hours: 780-644-5135
  - On hold for a long time, be persistent

# Shelters



- There are no family shelters
  - The men must go to one of the men's shelters.
- WIN House
  - Normally only accept women who are fleeing abuse, but may make an occasional exception. Call 780-477-9181
- Camrose Family Emergency Shelter: Brigantia Place
  - Will take low-income women and children
  - 45 min. drive out of the city. Social Services may pay for the bus fare to get there.
  - Call first, often full
    - Crisis Line: (780) 672-1035
    - Business Line: (403) 672-1173

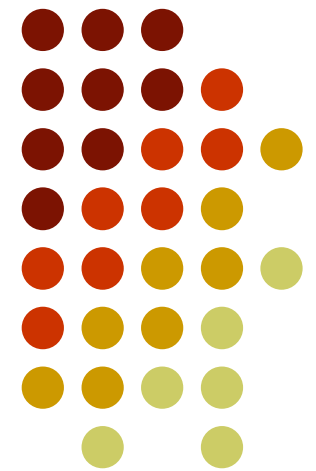
# Ethnic or Religious Groups



- Some cultural or religious groups, churches, and places of worship may provide emergency support on a case by case basis. This should be a last resort. Try United churches, groups that cater to the community the client is from, and churches involved in Winter Emergency Programs

# Financial Resources

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# Alberta Works



- Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Fund (HEP) no longer exists
- General line: 780-644-5135
- Downtown: 780-415-4900
- Meadowlark Office: 780-415-8116
- Emergency Social Services  
Call after 4:30pm
  - 780-644-5135

# Emergency Needs Allowance



- Offers one time help once every three years from \$350 to a maximum of \$1000
- Everybody qualifies except TFW
- Clients on SFI or AISH should contact their workers.
- Other people should apply at Alberta Works

# Capital Region Rent Supplement



- Everybody qualifies except refugee claimants, TFWs and sponsored refugees
- Apply using the general CRHC application form
- If a client is on SFI, they will probably never receive rent supplements, even if they qualify
- CRHC has many rent supplements. A client may apply for as many as they like, but will only receive one
- Understaffed and underfunded- waiting list is long



# Other Financial Resources

- Some groups/agencies might give financial help for clients in need
- Must be well documented
- Must resolve an issue
- One time help: clients must be able to otherwise take care of him/herself
- Use for security deposit, utilities arrears, etc.
- Clients who just need a little hand
- Don't overuse

# Saint Vincent DePaul Society



- **Description:** financial help and second hand items
- **Procedure :** call (780)-471-5577
- **Eligibility :** Everyone living in Edmonton

# Winspear Foundation



- **Eligibility** : Anyone facing any financial issues could seek help
- **Procedure**: Call (780) 436-0033 and write a letter of reference
- They will ask for a letter describing the background along with documentation of the case
- May take a while to get through

# The CTV Good Neighbour Fund



- Description: The fund provides limited financial resources, goods or partial payments
- Dedicated to helping those who are not covered by other assistance
- Procedure: apply online at [www.goodneighbourfund.ca/](http://www.goodneighbourfund.ca/)

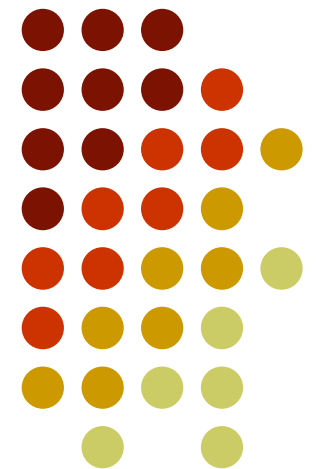


# Free Stuff!

- Sleep Country: free mattresses
- Bissell Community Closet: household goods and clothing
- Mustard Seed: household goods, meals
- Unity Centre: food, clothing, furniture

# Residential Tenancy Act

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# Basic Rules

- The landlord is obliged to keep the unit liveable
  - ex. No bedbugs, warm enough
- There are rules about overcrowding
  - Need a court order from the Health Region to evict
- Landlords cannot discriminate because of type of income, culture, religion, etc.
- Clients can be evicted for many things
  - You can file a notice of objection to buy time
  - There is not much you can do about non-payment of rent

# Residential Tenancies Act



- Framework for landlord and tenant relations in Alberta, setting minimum standards of conduct for both landlords and tenants
- If you have questions, call the consumer centre at: (780) 427-4088

# Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution



- An alternative means of resolving serious disputes between landlords and tenants
- Faster, less expensive and more informal than the courts
- Phone: 780-644-3000
- Email: [rtdrs@gov.ab.ca](mailto:rtdrs@gov.ab.ca)

# Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board



- Description:
  - They do only educational workshops
  - Provide information to landlords tenants, property managers and outreach workers
  - Provide forms such as objection to eviction notices, lease agreements, etc.
- Non-confrontational disputes
- Contact: Tel: 780-496-5959

# Environmental Public Health

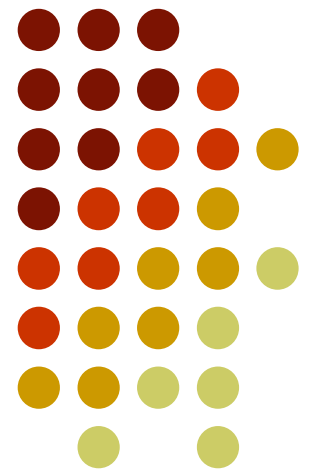


- Services: Assess suites for health concerns such as bedbugs etc.
- Eligibility: Ensure that your client has spoken to the landlord first. Document all interactions with the landlord.
- Access: 780-735-1400

# Legal Resources

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For clients with legal problems or  
issues with their landlords



# Student Legal Services



- Description: Free legal advice and representation to court. They deal with civil law, criminal law and family law.
- Eligibility: People with low income. Each one should apply in person. They choose to help or to refer the person to another place
- Procedure: 780-429-2226

# Alberta Law Line



- Free legal advice for everybody with low income who is in need of any kind of legal help. They have an income guideline.
- Procedure: over the phone. The service is confidential. They have translation services
- Access: 780-644-7777

# Edmonton Community Legal Centre



- Offers free legal information, advice and representation
- Who qualifies? Low income people
  - They do the assessment and tell the person whether they qualify or not.
  - Your legal matter has merit
  - They have the legal expertise
  - You meet their income guidelines
  - There are no other legal services able to assist the person in their matter
  - Criminal law and Family law are not in their agenda
  - Access: (780) 702-1725

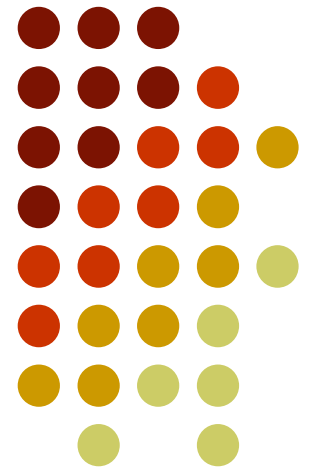


# Legal Aid

- Provides legal support to people with low-income
- Charge a reduced fee
- Help with matters related to: criminal law, immigration, family law, landlord and tenant disputes, debt
- [www.legalaid.ab.ca](http://www.legalaid.ab.ca)

# Resource Contact Information

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# Resource Contacts

- Housing Support Services Hub: 780-429-5018
- Boyle Street Co-op: 780-424-4106
- Bissell Centre: [www.bissellcentre.org](http://www.bissellcentre.org)
- Operation Friendship: [www.ofss.org](http://www.ofss.org)
- Mustard Seed: [www.mustard.ab.ca](http://www.mustard.ab.ca)
- Unity Centre: [www.unitycentreofedmonton.ca](http://www.unitycentreofedmonton.ca)
- Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC): [www.crhc.ab.ca](http://www.crhc.ab.ca)
- homeEd: 780-474-5706
- Homeward Trust: [www.homewardtrust.ca](http://www.homewardtrust.ca)
- Edmonton Public Library: [www.epl.ca](http://www.epl.ca)
- Support Network [www.thesupportnetwork.com](http://www.thesupportnetwork.com)
- Alberta Works
  - General line: 780-644-5135
  - Downtown: 780-415-4900
  - Meadowlark Office: 780-415-8116
  - Emergency Social Services: Call after 4:30pm
  - 780-644-5135

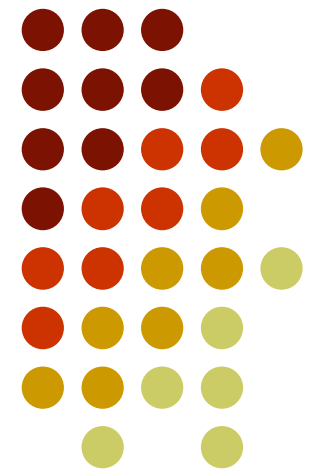


# Resource Contacts

- WIN House
  - Contact Terry or Katy at 780-477-9181
- Camrose Family Emergency Shelter: Brigantia Place
  - Crisis Line: (780) 672-1035
  - Business Line: (403) 672-1173
- Saint Vincent DePaul Society: (780)-471-5577
- CTV Good Neighbour Fund: [www.goodneighbourfund.ca](http://www.goodneighbourfund.ca)
- Student Legal Services: 780-429-2226
- Alberta Law Line 780-644-7777
- Edmonton Community Legal Centre (780) 702-1725
- Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution: 780-644-3000
- Landlord and Tenancy Advisory Board: 780-496-5959
- Environmental Public Health: 780-735-1400
- Legal Aid: [www.legalaid.ab.ca](http://www.legalaid.ab.ca)

# Case Studies

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# Case Studies: Groups

1. Choose a recorder and a speaker (2 min)
2. Read case study (2 min)
3. Brainstorm Solutions (10 min)
  1. Challenges how to resolve them
  2. Available resources
  3. Short, medium and long-term plan
  4. Record your ideas
4. Speaker will present your solutions and challenges to the group (2 min)



# Case Study One

- Family of five people: 2 parents, 3 preschool children
- The father is a TFW
- Wife and children are visitors
- The husband's working hours reduced
  - income was \$1800 and now it is \$1200 per month
  - rent is \$750 for a one bedroom.
- Behind on rent
- The apartment is overcrowded
- 14 day eviction notice



# Response

- Help with the next month's rent: emergency financial resources
- Overcrowding apartment: The landlord should report to Public Health, after that he will be allowed to give a 14 day eviction notice to the tenant
- Object to eviction notice if possible
- Financial issues: Refer them to an employment counsellor, make sure he has applied for EI
- Refer them to the food bank as many times as possible
- Refer them to the HUB, homeEd
- Not eligible for government benefits or social housing because he is a TFW



## Case Study Two

- A family 6: four school aged children
- Refugee claimants
- Drove their car from Quebec, and just arrived in Edmonton. They were planning on staying with a family acquaintance, but the acquaintance's wife refused when she saw size of the family
- On Income Support in Quebec, and
- Used this month's cheque to pay for their trip to Edmonton. They are
- Homeless, have no money, and need a place to stay tonight.
- Neither parent speaks English well



# Response

- Emergency Social Services: might give them a voucher to stay in a hotel
  - May be difficult because they received SFI in Quebec and they are refugee claimants
- Camrose Shelter: Will accept women and children who are not fleeing abuse
- Father in men's shelter
- Churches or community groups
- Ask a women's shelter to make an exception
- Medium and long term solutions: HUB and homeEd



## Case Study Three

- A couple with two children and their niece
- Sponsored Refugees
- Two bedroom apartment
- Building got a new manager- gave the family an eviction notice due to overcrowding
- The mother stays home and cares for the children She attends LINK classes in the evening. She was a nurse in her home country.
- The father is in the ETIP program. His income is very low while he is in school.
- The niece is working part-time and contributes to the household income.

# Response



- Object to the eviction notice: a landlord cannot evict a tenant for overcrowding if he or she has already agreed to the number of people in the suite, unless they have an order from Capital Health
- CRHC rent supplement: not eligible unless sponsorship has broken down
- HUB: This family is probably not eligible for the HUB because they have two parents and only two children

# Case Study Four



- A single mom with six children
- Permanent residents
- On income support
- Left her husband because he was abusive to her and the children
- She is temporarily living with a friend, but has to leave by the end of the month



# Response

- Emergency Social Services
- Women's Shelter (WIN House, Laurana, Strathcona Safe House)
  - This is the fastest way into CRHC
- HUB
- Capital Region Housing (CRHC)
- homeEd



## Case Study Five

- A father and his son come to your office because they want to apply for Trinity Manor.
- They have been in Canada for four years.
- The father is fifty six and has some health problems.
- The son is in school, and cannot get a part-time job because he has to accompany his father to his many doctor appointments.
- They are currently living in a one bedroom apartment.
- They would like to find a new apartment because their place is too small and the area is not safe.
- The apartment also is infested with bedbugs and cockroaches.

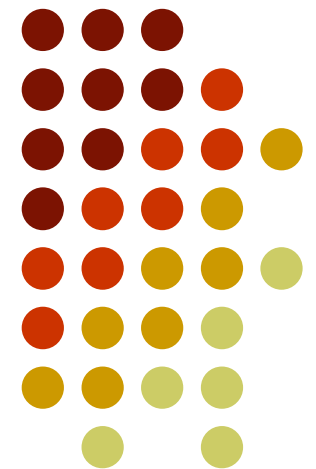
# Response



- Operation Friendship: will help with doctor's appointments, etc.
- Home Ed and Capital Region Housing
- Environmental Public Health: Make sure tenant has spoken to the landlord about the bugs. After that, call Environmental Public Health and they will do an inspection. This is within the tenants rights, and a landlord may not retaliate in response.

# Housing Assessment Tool

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# Housing Assessment Tool

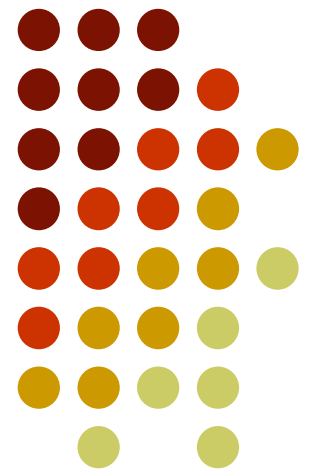


- Question for client
- Associated action for counsellor in bold
- Documentation of client's case and everything that has been done for him or her
- Anyone using this tool should be able to accurately assess client's housing needs/desires and which, programs or services they are eligible to access
- Supplementary information organized in a file or binder

# Brainstorming

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Application  
Action





# Questions for Brainstorming

What do I already know?	
Agency resources	
Community resources	
Existing relationships	
Strategies to gather/strengthen existing internal and external resources and relationships	
What do I need to know?	
Internal and external resources	
Policies and procedures of external and government agencies Ex. Eligibility for social housing	
Strategies for gathering this information	
Making this information available within my agency	
How can we efficiently manage this knowledge?	
Sharing in my agency	
Keeping it current	
Training staff	

# Questions for Brainstorming



- What do I know?
  - Strategies to gather/strengthen existing internal and external resources and relationships
- What do I need to know?
  - Identifying gaps
  - Strategies for gathering this information
- How can we manage this knowledge?
  - Sharing, training, updating



# Developing and Sharing in Your Agency

- Conduct an in-service or workshop at your agency to share contacts, strategies, etc.
- Place electronic documents in shared folder
  - People can add/change information as needed
  - One person should maintain it
- Include tool and power point in training materials when orienting new staff
- Create a binder and/or file for hard copies
- Create a list of landlords you are working with

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Creators: Sophie Fosso and Amy Wilson  
Housing Support Workers  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Current as of April 20, 2009  
For internal EMCN use only

