



**Pass it forward:  
A community resource for shaping  
government policy**

**June 2011**

Produced for the Housing Support Services Hub  
by Ann Goldblatt and Vasant Chotai  
Edmonton

## Pass it forward:

### A community resource for shaping government policy



#### Table of Contents

<b>A. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Why this resource? .....	3
2. Origins of the Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative .....	3
3. Why the analogy of passing the baton? .....	5
4. Striving for a joint approach to policy-making .....	5
5. Format for <i>Pass it forward</i> .....	5
<b>B. Shaping government decision-making .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1. Practice, procedure, policy or a gap in service: A vertical sort .....	6
2. Who is going to accept the baton? A horizontal sort .....	7
3. Who interacts with whom? Community to government .....	11
4. How and when government makes decisions .....	11
5. Taking the political path .....	14
6. Lessons learned about using stories .....	16
<b>C. Examples to illustrate the process .....</b>	<b>16</b>
1. Access to required medical supplements on Income Support .....	17
2. Earning enough income to cover expenses while on social assistance .....	18
3. Access social housing with a criminal record .....	18
4. Sufficient outreach support .....	19
<b>D. Framework for joint problem-solving: community with government.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>E. Pass it forward .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Annotated Resource List .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	
A. Systemic barriers – the set of 52 .....	25
B. How government makes decisions (schematic) .....	30
C. Sample structure and process for joint problem-solving .....	31

**Pass it forward:**  
**A community resource for shaping government policy**  
 June 2011



**A. Introduction**

**1. Why this resource?**

*Pass it forward* is one product of the Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative (described below). The intent is to provide a tool that supports community capacity to shape government decisions and reduce systemic barriers. The focus of *Pass it forward* is to help community organizations to ...

Identify the <b>right doors</b> , meaning the right <b>people</b> and the right <b>forums</b> , within government where systemic issues can be addressed.	Find the most effective way to <b>bring forward proposals</b> from the community for change, that is, the <b>most appropriate people</b> and the <b>most effective means</b> .	Provide a <b>starting point for dialogue</b> with government decision-makers who have a shared interest in removing unintended barriers.
---	--	--

This resource is oriented to decision-making at the provincial level, within Alberta, but the questions and processes are relevant for other levels of government and geographic areas. Other more generic resources on influencing policy are available. The annotated reference list at the end of this resource offers ready access to those materials.

*Be H.I.P.P. - Have Influence on Public Policy, A manual and tool kit on how voluntary organizations can influence public policy* lays out a fitting starting assumption for *Pass it forward*: “Governments are bound by many processes and influenced by various forces. The more you understand these factors, the more you can influence them.” (YMCA, 2003, p. 17). We are farther ahead when we know the explicit processes and the processes that lie between the lines.

**2. Origins of the Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative**

Systemic Barriers to Housing was an initiative of Edmonton’s Housing Support Services Hub. The Hub was launched in 2008 as a collaborative strategy among thirteen community agencies,<sup>1</sup> funded by Homeward Trust Edmonton<sup>2</sup>.

The member agencies created a central team – a hub of support - that could enhance their capacity to secure housing, prevent evictions and increase the housing stability of the people with whom they work. The focus was on housing and related support for people with a mental illness or an addiction (or both) and for people supporting large, young families on a limited income.

The Hub team offered three core services: coordinated landlord recruitment, inter-agency case management, and trustee and money management services, and the work was guided by the Hub

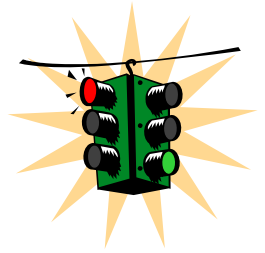
<sup>1</sup> Housing Support Services Hub Member Agencies: Bissell Centre, Boyle Street Community Services, Canadian Mental Health Association, Capital Region Housing Corporation, E4C, Edmonton Community Legal Centre, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, George Spady, PAAFE, Schizophrenia Society, WJS, WINGS, YMCA.

<sup>2</sup> Homeward Trust Edmonton disburses funds from Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs for capital and support projects.

Council, comprised of representatives from each of the member agencies. In 2011, the Hub shifted to trustee and money management as its core service, with new sources of funding.

### Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative in action

During 2009 and 2010, Edmonton’s Housing Support Services Hub used a grant<sup>3</sup> to jumpstart a Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative, driven by first-hand experience of trying to offer support. The initiative had two purposes:



- Investigate systemic barriers that service providers in community agencies see in their practice. These are the barriers that cannot be resolved on an individual basis yet they limit access to stable housing.
- Open dialogue between community agencies and government decision-makers for the purpose of joint problem-solving.

Over the two years, the initiative included action in five areas:

An <b>environmental scan</b> among community organizations to identify systemic barriers to housing, generating a set of 52.
Research on <b>eight priority systemic barriers</b> (priorities selected by the Advisory Committee for the Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative) and stories of the impact on individuals and families.
Preliminary <b>discussion of systemic barriers</b> between members of the Hub Council and government decision-makers within <b>three ministries</b> .
A <b>forum</b> that brought together 80 people (half community and half government) in May 2010 to share the findings and look at <b>models and opportunities for ongoing dialogue</b> between <b>community and government</b> on systemic barriers to housing.
This <b>community resource on shaping government decisions</b> , using four of the priority systemic barriers to housing as the practical examples.

For each of the 52 systemic barriers that surfaced in the **environmental scan**, we identified which government department has the mandate to respond. The systemic barriers and relevant departments, as of June 2010, are listed in Appendix A, clustered by ‘policy’, ‘procedure’ or ‘practice’. These terms form an important anchor for *Pass it forward*. Both the research on the **eight priority systemic barriers** and the proceedings from the May 2010 **forum** are available from the Housing Support Services Hub.

This tool is meant to be shared. Please feel free to forward, copy and distribute, adapt and build upon the content to fit your needs. We only ask that you give credit to this publication.

<sup>3</sup> The Community Partnership Enhancement Fund was an initiative of Alberta Children and Youth Services between 2003 and 2009.

## Why the analogy of passing the baton?

Community organizations are seasoned in trying to influence change on behalf of the people who access their programs and services. They advocate at an individual level and, through various forums, they bring forward concerns and the need for systemic changes to government decision-makers.

The efforts are sometimes successful but many times, the ideas get stuck somewhere along the path or workers do not know what happened as a result of their input or why a change did or did not occur.



We see that moving ideas from the front line to higher levels within community organizations and from community to government is like passing a baton in a relay race. You want to be confident that the person receiving the baton can receive it and take it forward. You want to know that person is not going to drop it before reaching the finish line, and will strive to see it through as quickly as possible.

### 3. Striving for a joint approach to policy-making

Traditionally, communities come to government and lobby to change one policy at a time. Government officials consider the input and may or may not make changes, given other contributing factors. With the next issue, the process begins again.

Both community and government players have constraints and accountabilities to people accessing services, to funders and taxpayers, and to decision-makers. The Hub saw the need for effective and sustained community/government dialogue to jointly develop solutions. ‘Mechanisms’ for ongoing dialogue create a platform to address current policies, procedures and practices, and shed light on future planning.

Community and government want to arrive at policies, procedures and practices with minimal confrontation and maximized use of limited resources, as quickly as possible, leading to the best possible outcomes for the individuals and families affected. This resource is designed to support that process.

While a system for jointly addressing systemic barriers to housing has not yet been implemented, this resource includes a framework for joint problem-solving between community organizations and government.

### 4. Format for *Pass it forward*

*Pass it forward* is organized in three sections followed by the annotated bibliography.

- Shaping government decision-making
- Examples to illustrate the process
- Framework for joint problem-solving: community and government

## B. Shaping government decision-making

### 1. Practice, procedure, policy, or a gap in service? A vertical sort

Front-line service providers named 52 systemic barriers that limit access to stable housing. For people with mental health issues and addictions, or managing large families on a low income, the consequences of these barriers can be serious and cumulative. Without intending to cause harm, public policies, procedures and practices, as well as service gaps, sometimes create hardships for this population.

Community organizations are often the catalysts for change to remove systemic barriers because they see the adverse effects first hand. The key becomes finding the most effective entry point. On the government side, openness and capacity to make a change is influenced by the authority to make a decision or move the issue forward.

The central question for the community is ...

**Which is the appropriate level of government for creating change?**

The answer is determined by the kind of change required, making it possible to do a *vertical* sort. Does the issue require a change in policy, a change in procedure, a change in practice, or are resources needed to address a service gap? If the issue lands at the wrong level, the community may lose precious time trying to move the issue forward, inadvertently step on toes, or unknowingly jeopardize opportunities for co-operation.

Type of change	Who in government has the authority to make a change?
<b>Practice</b>	Supervisor or Manager; regional / local office [operations]
<b>Procedure</b>	Manager, Senior Manager or Director [policy/operations]
<b>Policy</b>	Senior Manager of Policy, Director, Assistant Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister or Minister [policy]
<b>Service Gap</b>	Senior Manager of Policy, Director, Assistant Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister or Minister; a senior-level committee [policy]

The definitions in the table below distinguish practices, procedures, policies, and service gaps in the context of provincial decisions.

## Definitions <sup>4</sup>

<b>Practice</b>
Practice is the <b>habitual act of implementing the steps outlined in the procedure</b> to deliver the policy. Although staff is generally trained in policy and procedures, <b>delivery of service depends upon its interpretation by individual staff or the delivery branch and its supervisor</b> . Thus, <b>practice may vary somewhat from office to office</b> .
<b>Procedure</b>
Procedure is a <b>fixed, step-by-step sequence of activities or instructions that must be followed to implement the policy</b> . Procedures are <b>directed to the service delivery staff</b> , and <b>sometimes</b> may be general enough to give <b>flexibility</b> in making case-by-case decisions; procedures contain the <b>‘what’, the ‘how’, the ‘where’ and the ‘when’</b> . Procedures are <b>developed and adopted by senior management</b> in policy area <b>in consultation with the service delivery area</b> .
<b>Policy</b>
Policy is the set of guiding rules for action or for a program <b>legislated</b> by the government to achieve specific outcomes. Policy broadly <b>gives a mandate to the executive staff to deliver services to achieve goals set by the government</b> ; policy will contain the <b>‘what’ and the ‘why’</b> . Policies are generally <b>adopted by the Minister (or Cabinet)</b> and occasionally by executive management if delegated down.
<b>Service gap</b>
Service gap is a <b>missing service or policy necessary to meet a demand or a need that exists in the community</b> . The <b>decision</b> to fill the gap lies in the hands of the <b>elected political members and Cabinet</b> , but they generally <b>consider input from their staff and from the community</b> .

## 2. Who is going to accept the baton? A horizontal sort

Having determined the most effective level of government to engage, based on the change desired, a second stage of *horizontal* sorting determines who is going to pass the baton and who is going to receive it at that level.

- Under whose mandate does a particular systemic barrier fall, that is, which provincial ministries or other decision-making bodies have the authority to consider the issue and make a change?
- What is the most appropriate forum where this issue should be raised and who specifically is the most appropriate contact (i.e. which position)?
- Who should be making the approach from the community?

Determining the answer to these three questions may be tricky to do from outside government. This is where relationships with receptive individuals can make a difference. Within the government website, [www.gov.ab.ca](http://www.gov.ab.ca), you can link with each ministry's website. Though the detail on 'who is responsible for what' varies by ministry, this is the general structure of how provincial departments in Alberta are organized, making it easier to know who to approach:

---

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Vasant Chotai, November 2010, *Social Policy* website [www.chotai.ca](http://www.chotai.ca), under construction.

<b>Minister</b>					
<b>Deputy Minister</b> (e.g. Alberta Employment and Immigration)					
<b>Assistant Deputy Minister</b> (e.g. Workforce Supports Division)		<b>Assistant Deputy Minister</b> (e.g. Immigration Division)		<b>Assistant Deputy Minister</b> (e.g. Delivery Services Division)	
Program Area (e.g. Alberta Works)		Program Area (e.g. Immigration)		Delivery Area for Programs (e.g. Delivery Services)	
<b>Policy Director</b> (e.g. Skills Program; Income Support)	<b>Program Director</b> (e.g. Skills Program; Income Support)		<b>Policy Executive Director</b>	<b>Program Director</b>	<b>Regional Director</b> (e.g. Edmonton)
<b>Senior Manager</b>	<b>Senior Manager</b>		<b>Assistant Director</b>		<b>Manager</b>
<b>Manager</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Manager</b>		<b>Supervisor</b>
<b>Analyst; Advisor</b>	<b>Planner</b>	<b>Planner</b>	<b>Senior Policy Analyst</b>		<b>Front-line worker</b>
					<b>Front-line worker</b>

High level: Minister, Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Ministers

Senior level: Directors, Senior Managers

Middle level: Managers, Supervisors

Junior level: Planners, Analysts, Advisors, Front-line workers

### Who can respond?

- Staff or committees that consist of high or senior level members in the ‘Program’ area generally deal with *service gap* and *policy* issues.
- Committees with middle level or junior level members in the ‘Program’ area deal with *policy* and *procedures* issues.
- *Practice* decisions are often made at internal staff meetings in the ‘Delivery’ area and can generally be dealt with by a manager or a supervisor.

### What steps does government take when an issue is identified? Internal passes

- If a planner receives the ‘baton’, the planner will take the issue one level up to a manager.
- If an issue starts with or is passed to a manager, the manager can direct the planner(s) to carry out research on the issue, including impact and costs.
- The issue and the findings move to an internal committee for discussion. The committee develops options and a briefing note for the director or, in the case of *service gaps* and *policy* issues, to the high level players.
- Managers may be able to resolve *Procedure* issues without taking the issue further up the ladder.
- Once an option for action is approved, the junior staff, singly or in a team, will develop implementation steps. This involves changing *policy and procedures* manuals and informing staff of the changes.



## Who should you contact with the issue if you are in a community organization?

On-going relationships with receptive people who work within the departments are a great advantage when you are looking for advice on who to approach.

Committees of government can be ‘closed’ with only internal ministry staff participating or ‘open’ to members from outside government. Open or closed, these committees may lie within one ministry or reach across several ministries that serve the same or similar clients. The following table outlines the possible formats:

Community organizations	Government	Operational parameters
<i>Closed committee</i>		
Single or multiple community organizations	Single ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue falls within the bounds of a single ministry.</li> <li>• A closed committee is able to conduct confidential internal decision-making and give interim advice to senior management or the minister without raising community expectations.</li> <li>• Generally, the committee relies on research and outside input.</li> <li>• Community organization representatives may be invited or offer to attend for a specific agenda item to provide input.</li> </ul>
Single or multiple community organizations	Multiple ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above, except the issue crosses a number of ministries.</li> </ul>
<i>Open committee</i>		
Single or multiple community organizations	Single ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One ministry has the mandate on resolving the issue.</li> <li>• The issue is generally broad and non-sensitive and can be discussed in an open forum.</li> <li>• Collaboration between government and community organizations is necessary for issue resolution.</li> <li>• Key members of the community organizations are invited to join the committee as a participating member.</li> </ul>
Single or multiple community organizations	Multiple ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above, except the issue falls within the mandates of a number of ministries.</li> <li>• Key representatives from community organizations may be invited or may offer to sit on the committee as a participating member.</li> </ul>

### *On the agenda of a closed committee*

If the relevant committee is a closed one, the chair or a member of the committee may be able to invite you to a meeting for an agenda item dealing with your issue. You will be given time to present the issue and supporting evidence, options for action and a rationale for your proposed action. In your absence, the committee will then discuss the issue and what action to take to reduce the problem. An example of this is the directors’ Policy Committee at Alberta Employment and Immigration which has only internal staff as members.

### *On the agenda of an open committee*

With an open committee, you (or another community representative) will be able to participate in all discussions related to the issue. Decisions rest within the ministry. An example of a single-ministry, open committee is the Strategic Alliance Committee, formed by Alberta Employment and Immigration. Internal and external senior people are at the table, including representatives from several community organizations, businesses and academic institutions.

### **When should you move the issue up a notch if it is not getting resolved?**

Staff have different levels of accountability and decision-making authority, depending on their position in the hierarchy, and the role or function they are assigned (policy, operations, or administration). Even within the same area or level, staff may hold different perspectives and initiative. Since you cannot assume that your discussions on the issue will be taken forward for resolution, follow-up with your last contact keeps the issue moving forward rather than allowing it to be neglected or forgotten.

You should move the issue up to the next level of staff in the government when ...

- Your contact advises you that he/she cannot do anything more and that an external person would be more successful raising it at a higher level; or
- Your contact is not dealing with the issue. In this situation, you may need a supervisor to supervisor approach, from community to government. It is important to be aware of the protocol in order to maintain the good relationship you have developed with your contacts. You will need that relationship in future, i.e. focus is on the original issue rather than using this as the opportunity to launch a complaint about the contact).

Access to the people at the top of the hierarchy is often `controlled` by those responsible for filtering requests. Contacts within the department can identify who holds sway; the more informed that individual is on the issue and rationale for taking the issue to the senior players, the better chance an organization has of gaining access.

Public servants have to follow internal rules and sometimes they may have exhausted all possibilities of resolving the issue even when you have taken it to the highest level, following the protocol. As an alternate and sometimes complimentary path, a community agency may opt to take an issue into the political arena through a local MLA or the relevant Minister. Maintaining a good relationship with your contact in the ministry who is convinced of the issue can lead to useful advice on the requirements for that step. Senior level players or boards of community organizations are usually in the best position to take issues to the political level. Considerations for this arena are discussed in section five below, *Taking the political path*.

### 3. Who interacts with whom? The pass from community to government

The person in the most strategic position to bring an issue forward to government is tied to the type of issue and the level of authority. The following chart outlines the most appropriate player on the community side to pass the baton forward and to whom the baton is passed within government.

Type of issue	Community 	→	Government 
<b>Practice</b>	Front-line worker		Supervisor
	Supervisor		Supervisor/Regional Manager
<b>Procedure</b>	Supervisor		Manager
	Director/Executive Director		Senior Manager/Director
<b>Policy</b>	Director/Executive Director		Senior Manager, Policy (can move up to Director – Assistant Deputy Minister – Deputy Minister – Minister)
	Director/Executive Director		Senior Manager, Policy (can move up to Director – Assistant Deputy Minister – Deputy Minister – Minister; or put on the agenda of a senior-level committee)

### 4. How and when government makes decisions

The first three sections of *Pass it forward* zeroed in ‘who’ questions. This section sheds more light on how the provincial government makes decisions and timing in its cycle of budgets and elections. By knowing the ‘how’ and the ‘when’, community agencies can be strategic and ideally in a better position to engage in a joint problem-solving process between community and government.

#### How the Alberta government makes decisions: process, factors and priorities

Government is constantly weighing factors and competing priorities when deciding on a new policy or program, or considering a change in an existing policy or program. As explored in the first three sections, different types of decisions are made at different levels in the hierarchy. Appendix B – How government makes decisions - provides a schematic to visualize how the decision-making process works within the Alberta government

#### How high?

- Decisions with the greatest impact rise to the highest level, ultimately the elected official responsible for the mandate, i.e. the Minister of the mandated ministry.
- A Minister is likely to consult caucus (the Members of the Legislature Assembly within the governing party) on potentially controversial issues.

- For decisions with significant political and budget implications, a Minister needs the approval of the Premier and Cabinet, e.g. a major shift in an existing program or the introduction of a significant new program.
- Big policy decisions or decisions about program content require a mandate through an Act or a Regulation passed by the Legislature. Ministers present changes to an Act or Regulations for debate by government and opposition MLA's but these will have already been vetted through the Premier and Cabinet. (Some Regulation changes require only the Minister's authority to come into effect.)

#### **Delegated to make a decision**

- Most government decisions are made by people in the department, according to the level of authority delegated to them. Ministers delegate some policy decisions to senior management staff of the department - the Deputy Minister, the Assistant Deputy Minister or Executive Director of provincial 'headquarters'.
- Departmental staff often have the authority to make decisions as to *how* to deliver a service or program – procedures, standards and forms. These decisions could be located at the provincial headquarters or in the regions. Practice or method of delivery is generally a decision made in the regions or at the local delivery office.

#### **Factors influencing decisions**

- Ministers receive facts, analysis and advice from the department's policy and procedures staff.
  - Departmental staff base their advice for the Minister on research (including internal data, surveys, academic publications and non-governmental organization or community group reports) as well on experience with policies in other jurisdictions and provinces.
  - Staff also rely on feedback from the department's front-line delivery staff and delivery agencies who offer experience from case examples and from working with community agency workers.
  - Community agency workers bring direct knowledge since they deal with people facing systemic barriers and in need of immediate help. However, in most instances, community agency workers do not have direct influence on the policy and procedures staff of the department – they are limited to indirect influence through the front-line delivery staff.
- Departmental front-line workers are constrained by legislation and policies and by their assigned budget. Some decisions are a reflection of local practice; local practices can be changed without necessarily affecting policy or budget. For decisions constrained by policies that are not accommodating, community agencies look for other avenues to reach decision-makers.
- Political dimensions are part of the picture. Ministers' policy decisions are influenced by party priorities and by interests, e.g. the business community, advocacy groups, the news media, the general public (taxpayers/voters), and sometimes individuals who access programs and services. Community agencies may decide to use these channels as avenues to influence change.

- Community agencies generally make the most headway when they are able to build a strong case for a particular change, basing the arguments on evidence and experience, when they can come together as one voice, when they can grab a window of opportunity (right timing), and when they find the right person or channel to influence the change.

### **A matter of timing**

Finding the strategic ‘window of opportunity’ becomes easier when community agencies know when to approach government and when to hold back. Two cycles are paramount: the budget cycle and the election cycle.

Decisions with neither a budgetary impact nor potentially negative political implications – generally, practice, procedure and minor policy decisions – are amenable to change at any time of the year. Hence, community agencies can approach the departmental staff when a need arises to effect a change. However, advocacy for change on major policy and service gap decisions that have budgetary and/or political implications is most effective when well-timed.

While decision-making can appear to be chaotic, governments do follow specific decision-making processes. To have influence, you need to know, respect, and use them. For example, even when a government wants to move quickly, electoral, decision-making and budgeting cycles may limit it. It’s helpful to know how to identify these decision making ‘windows’ or most opportune times to influence public policy. (YMCA, 2003, p. 20)

### **Budget cycle:**

Alberta’s provincial budget cycle runs from April to the following March. A community agency can initiate a change that impacts the department’s budget anytime in the year but implementation of the change is likely only in the next fiscal year, and only if the cost of change is included in the next year’s budget.

- Unless the cost of change is very small and can be accommodated within the current budget, any change with a significant cost implication will have to wait until the next budget (unless it is an emergency).
- Next year’s budget is announced in April but the process of budget preparation starts in September of the preceding year; competing priorities and expenditure decisions are firmed up two to three months before the budget date.
- The consideration of a major policy change has to start even before the September budget estimations. Discussion of the issue, research and information collection, an options paper, and a briefing note for the Minister may take anywhere from three to six months. Thus, community agencies wanting to propose a major policy change have to approach the department as early as May in order to be part of the current budget cycle.

### **Election cycle:**

The election cycle is a consideration for major government policy and critical service gap measures and decisions.

- With elections in Alberta usually occurring every four years, the last year before the election is held is known as a 'red zone'. Any major policy or program change that may have a negative political implication is unlikely to be taken up by the government. At the same time, any major change that has a positive political implication may get a warm reception.
- Generally, changes are easier in the first and second years after the election when political risk is minimal.

## **5. Taking the political path**

Community agencies have more than one avenue for trying to influence change. Building relationships with departmental staff and decision-makers has already surfaced as an important strategy. In the same vein, cultivating relationships with MLA's creates opportunities to raise awareness and educate elected officials on lived experiences and on policy barriers and service gaps for people in communities. This may or may not be the right time and place to ask for policy changes or additional resources.

Examples from community agencies for building positive connections include:

- Distributing annual reports to elected officials.
- Inviting officials to events to interact with individuals accessing the services and programs of the organization, hearing and learning about their personal stories.
- Inviting elected officials to an annual breakfast to educate them about the work of the agency.

In some agencies, Executive Directors assume a direct role connecting with politicians; in others, board members are the people making the direct connections.

### **Considerations**

- Collaborative proposals have greater traction. There is a greater traction if a number of community agencies work together and collectively present a joint proposal for policy change, particularly if it deals with several ministries or with a service gap.
- Previously-established connections open doors. Agencies can individually or collectively approach or write local MLA's or MLA's with whom they have established a relationship, the affected Minister (directly or through Executive Assistant), or an Assistant Deputy Minister of the department. It is important to copy and keep in the loop department officials with direct responsibility for a policy or program area.
- Policy-making is the result of both a rational process and political will. Elected officials are considering costs and benefits as they take in information from community agencies and other interested bodies.
  - What is the government's ideology and does the policy change suggested match or collide with that ideology?
  - How will supporting this request affect my chances of being re-elected?
  - Will I be able to convince my fellow caucus members to support this change?

- Who is asking for these changes? Who would oppose them? Do I trust and care about their opinions?
  - Is there enough public pressure to warrant making this change? Would enough people care if we did not make this change?
  - What is it going to cost in dollars?
- A personal experience may be the key motive or tipping point for a leader to go forward with a policy change. Self-interest comes into the picture for a politician or senior bureaucrat personally touched by an issue.
  - An effective approach to elected officials respects the knowledge they already hold on an issue and leaves space for dialogue toward mutual understanding within the allotted time. The meetings open doors to further contacts and next steps.
  - Agencies can request an invitation to present on an issue to the Policy Field Committee where influential elected officials and their staff are present.

<b>Policy Field Committees of the Alberta Government</b>
<p><i>Policy Field Committees</i> include members from all provincial political parties and mirror the governing party's Standing Policy Committees. Members of the public can make presentations to MLA's through these committees. The intent is to examine and formulate positions that are then brought to the Alberta Assembly.</p> <p>Members are appointed on the second day of a new Legislature and continue for the duration of that particular Legislature. It is helpful to find out who sits on committees of government and Treasury Board when considering who to approach on particular issues. The current Policy Field Committees include the following bodies with the respective mandates:</p>
<p><b>Community Services</b> Culture and community spirit, education, housing and urban affairs, municipal affairs and tourism, parks and recreation.</p>
<p><b>Economy</b> Advanced education and technology, employment and immigration, finance and enterprise, infrastructure and transportation.</p>
<p><b>Health</b> Children and youth services, health and wellness and seniors and community supports.</p>
<p><b>Public Safety and Services</b> Aboriginal relations, government services, government organization, personnel administration, expenditure management, revenue, justice, policing and public security.</p>
<p><b>Resources and Environment</b> Agriculture and rural development, energy, environment, international and intergovernmental relations and sustainable resource development.</p>

Adapted from *Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature*  
<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf>

## 6. Lessons learned from using stories

With systemic barriers in hand, community organizations can provide stories that would speak to the impact of the barriers, drawn from their practice experience. Often it is a combination of barriers that can throw off an individual's or family's attempt to secure or maintain housing. One barrier can serve as the catalyst or the tipping point for a domino effect for those living close to the edge.

Stories speak to the lived experience of individuals. Two lessons emerge from the process of the Systemic Barriers to Housing Initiative. In the absence of detail on the full context for each situation, some aspects of the problems are understood. Adding depth and multiple perspectives would enrich each story with insight and bring clarifying information to the table. The problems are not discounted but an opportunity for deeper exploration opens up.

The experience reinforces the importance of having a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and joint problem-solving. The dialogue would create a platform to identify concerns generated through community practice, analyze the context from community and government perspectives, and consider viable solutions. The Systemic Barriers to Housing Initiative did not ask for stories that speak to successes, that is, situations in which people are able to access programs or services without barriers. Success stories would set up a positive environment to work with government counterparts.

## C. Examples to illustrate the process

From the eight priority issues for the Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative, we will use four examples to illustrate the process described above, to move an issue toward resolution.

Leading into the examples is a useful excerpt from the *Local Action Handbook for Making Connections Teams* (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, n.d.).

### Questions for Family Economic Success Site Teams to Ask and Answer

- What is the structure of the system(s) we want to influence?
- Where is the point of entry?
- Where is the leverage point for policy change?
- Where does the money come from?
- Who makes decisions in these systems? When and how? (And are we willing to become strange bedfellows?)
- What is the policy (and political) environment? Can we attach our issues to another powerful agenda?
- What is the economic environment? How will we make an economic argument for any costs associated with our policy agenda?
- What and who will I need to take along to the meeting with the decision-makers?



## Example 1: Access to required medical supplements on Income Support

### Step 1. Understanding the Issue

- ✓ The problem is that medical supplements are difficult to get and funds are often not sufficient to cover the full cost. The issue is two-fold: (a) proof for the need can come only from a physician (difficult to get an appointment) and not from any other medical practitioner such as a health nurse or a nutritionist; and (b) the amount of money given for a medical supplement is inadequate.

### Step 2. Vertical Sorting

- ✓ (a) The requirement for proof of need from a physician is a matter of program procedure; and (b) The amount of money made available for medical supplement is a matter of policy. This policy is embedded in the regulation with the Minister holding authority over the amount. Therefore, an appeal panel has no jurisdiction to vary it; this authority is delegated by the Minister to the Director of Strategic Policy & Supports.
- ✓ Although a supervisor or a manager can deal with the procedure issue, here it may be easier for the director from the community organization to take forward both the policy and the procedure issues, at the same time, for resolution. The case examples and the extent of difficulty faced by low income people who have come in contact with the community organization should be clearly illustrated as evidence.

### Step 3. Horizontal Sorting

- ✓ These two issues involve only one ministry – Alberta Employment and Immigration.
- ✓ The Director of Strategic Policy & Supports can be the entry point. Internally, the director will have to take the issue up with the ADM (or possibly the Minister since there is a cost implication). The community organization director needs to convince the counterpart of the importance of the issue and provide all supporting documentation.
- ✓ If there is no link established, the community organization director can channel the issue through a community representative on the Strategic Alliance Committee (which consists of senior community representatives and senior staff from Alberta Employment & Immigration).
- ✓ If the issues do not get resolved satisfactorily and the problem in the community persists, community organizations have the option of raising the issue with the Minister directly. In this situation, you want to keep senior government officials informed so as not to adversely affect your ongoing relationship.

### Step 4. Keep staff in the loop

- ✓ Procedure issues are more likely to get resolved ahead of policy issues. Regardless of the outcome, front-line staff who often identify the initial concerns, based on practice experience, welcome knowing what happened as a result of the efforts to influence government decisions.

## Example 2: Earning enough income to cover expenses while on social assistance

### Step 1. Understanding the Issue

- ✓ Benefits levels for Income Support and AISH are low and clients are not able to cover their daily expenses. If the earnings exemption policy was changed and clients were allowed to keep more of their employment earnings, they would be able to cover their expenses.

### Step 2. Vertical Sorting

- ✓ This is a policy issue. This is a program policy as opposed to delivery policy. The earnings exemption policies for both Income Support and AISH are embedded in the respective regulations.
- ✓ Any change will require regulation changes through the responsible Ministers and will have cost implications to the departments.
- ✓ As per the table above, it will have to be a director or Executive Director from the community organizations who should take forward the issue to their counterparts in government.

### Step 3. Horizontal Sorting

- ✓ Looking through the government websites shows that this one issue involves two programs operated by two separate ministries - Income Support by Alberta Employment and Immigration, and AISH by Alberta Seniors and Community Supports.
- ✓ Each program has its own regulation, thus the two ministries have to amend their own regulations to effect any change.
- ✓ Again, the above table indicates that the director or Executive Director of the community organizations would have to take up the issue separately with the directors or the ADMs of those two ministries, or table the issue at a cross-ministry committee if one exists and if the director is a member of that committee. It is much more effective if the issue is supported with figures that illustrate the problem clients are experiencing (such as the actual breakdown of costs experienced by the client and the total benefits received by that client from all sources).
- ✓ If all of these efforts fail and the problem persists in the community, there is still an option of raising the issue with the responsible Ministers.

### Step 4. Keep staff in the loop

- ✓ Front-line staff who are often the people to identify the initial concerns based on practice experience, welcome knowing what happened as a result of the efforts to influence government decisions.

## Example 3: Accessing social housing with a criminal record

### Step 1. Understanding the Issue

- ✓ The issue is that people with a criminal record within the past five years are not allowed into social housing in Edmonton. This becomes a problem when these people cannot afford private

market rental housing and wind up in untenable shelter or living on the street, endangering their health or life, or return to criminal activity out of desperation and frustration.

#### Step 2. Vertical Sorting

- ✓ This is a practice issue determined by safety and security decisions of a local housing management body. Alternative approaches to alleviate security concerns could remove a barrier to housing for people with criminal records.
- ✓ Since the practice is implemented at a higher level, it would be more effective if a supervisor from the community organization takes the issue forward to the housing management body or authority. (If this does not resolve the issue, it may need to be taken a notch higher to the manager's level).

#### Step 3. Horizontal Sorting

- ✓ Although Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs is responsible for the social housing program, the practice is determined locally and is implemented by the arm's length social housing management body.
- ✓ The supervisor from the community organization can take the issue forward to the supervisor or the manager of the social housing management body.
- ✓ If the issue does not get resolved and the problem persists, the issue can be raised by a higher-level authority with his/her counterpart. If necessary, the ministry staff from Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs can be involved in the discussion.

#### Step 4. Keep staff in the loop

- ✓ Front-line staff who are often the people to identify the initial concerns based on practice experience, welcome knowing what happened as a result of the efforts to influence government decisions.

### **Example 4: Sufficient outreach support**

#### Step 1. Understanding the Issue

- ✓ People with multiple barriers have a problem of not being able to maintain stable housing and fit into the community. The issue is that there is not sufficient outreach support for these people to rehabilitate and integrate.

#### Step 2. Vertical Sorting

- ✓ This is a service gap. It is a wide issue that needs to be discussed at a high level with a broad understanding of the whole system.
- ✓ A portion of community organizations are struggling to provide support but the supports are limited in scope and length of time. Outreach support needs to be built into subsidized housing programs.

- ✓ Because of the high level involvement in resolving the issue, as the above table shows, the Executive Directors of the community organizations should take this issue forward to the government.

### Step 3. Horizontal Sorting

- ✓ Resolution of the service gap may involve a number of government ministries (such as Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs, Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Seniors and Community Support).
- ✓ The resolution of the service gap issue could have organizational and cost implications for one government ministry or several ministries. Coordination between these ministries is also critical.
- ✓ As the above table indicates, such a large issue should be discussed with the senior level government staff such as directors or ADM's. If there is a multi-ministry committee, the issue should be tabled at their meeting.
- ✓ If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, then it may be taken to a Minister or Ministers, preferably with support from a number of community organizations, some prominent community leaders, some MLA's, and senior ministry staff where possible. All supporting evidence for the need should be included when tabling the issue.

### Step 4. Keep staff in the loop

- ✓ Resolving this issue may take considerable time, and may only be partially resolved. The high level officials may be required to keep discussions confidential by the government while discussions are held due to the organizational and cost impacts. However, it is important to inform the organization staff of the final outcome upon completion.

As the four examples illustrate, tackling social issues is as much an art as it is a science. At each step, decisions are often made based on past experiences, discussions with various people in the network, and honouring protocol to ensure cooperation from the affected parties. There is a higher chance of resolution if the steps are followed.

## **D. Framework for joint problem-solving: community with government**

The Hub recognized the need for an entity and leadership to sustain and support joint problem solving on systemic issues that have already been identified and that will surface over time. As of June 2011, establishing an infrastructure that adds value is a work in progress for the Systemic Barriers to Housing initiative.

For organizations seeking an effective model to support joint problem-solving, an important consideration is whether an existing group can satisfy the need or whether a new entity will add value. Leadership is a significant element as catalyst and convenor, and to sustain focus and momentum.

### **Considerations for choosing an effective joint problem-solving table**

Groups that already bring community and government to the table are potential bodies for addressing barriers. The following considerations can be used to screen whether existing joint community and government bodies meet the need.

- Does the issue(s) fit within the mandate or could the mandate be expanded?
- Are the 'right' people at the table, i.e. individuals with the delegated authority to influence change and make changes in this area? Could appropriate individuals be brought in?
- Is there a climate of mutual respect among the players?
- Does the group have a track record of successfully influencing change?

Using an existing body for addressing the barriers is easier than creating a new body to address them. A new entity will require agreement from people in power, as well as time, coordination, and administrative support. However, the conclusion from the above analysis may be that a new entity is the most effective way to fill a gap.

### **Why designate a lead body?**

An organization with sufficient resources, credibility with both community and government, and a broad mandate to address systemic barriers is well positioned to create and sustain joint problem-solving. In contrast, a single organization with a narrower scope may be seen as too invested in one issue or perspective or simply not resourced to sustain this kind of effort.

### **Questions to guide the choice of the lead body**

- Does the leadership role fit with the mandate, goals, and priorities of the proposed organization?
- Does the organization have the resources in place to assume a leadership role?
- Does the organization have credibility and a network of key contacts within the community and government?

### **Process considerations** (see Appendix C, Sample structure and process for a joint problem-solving body)

- What will be the process for prioritizing issues?
- How will community organizations identify emerging issues over time? Is there an existing network that brings community organizations together through which issues can be identified and representatives identified for joint problem-solving discussions?
- Will issues be most effectively addressed by a single joint problem-solving group or by forming issue-specific task groups? Who will conduct the required research to investigate the identified issues and propose possible solutions?
- What role will the joint-planning group have once ideas have been forwarded to appropriate policy-makers within government?
- How will the joint-planning group report back to the community organizations on outcomes?

### **Resource considerations**

- What human resources are available to coordinate the process, oversee and support research, and prepare summary reports?
- Are funds available to support meeting expenses?

## E. Pass it forward

This resource was created with the hope of supporting and informing community agencies that are seeking to shape government decision-making in Alberta. The stakes are high for community agencies committed to removing systemic barriers and for public servants and elected officials who want to make a difference. Ideally, achieving positive change is a joint problem-solving venture when the baton passes from community to government. If both community and government can hold onto the baton, the responsibility is shared and there is far less likelihood that it will be dropped.

As indicated in the introduction, *Pass it forward* is meant to be shared. Please feel free to forward, copy and distribute, adapt and build upon the content and annotated list of resources to fit your needs.

Many agencies enter this discussion from a place of accumulated experience. The resource can be used to stimulate thinking and as a catalyst for opportunities to share successes, challenges, and lessons learned between organizations. Systemic change is inherently complex; creating a deeper understanding of strategic approaches is meant to benefit all of the players affected.

## Annotated Resource List

### *Tools for influencing policy*

Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (n.d.) **Resources for policy advocacy**  
<http://acicr.ca/our-services/supporting-healthy-public-policy/resources-for-policy-advocacy>  
Annotated resource list with links to a portion of the resources included below and others.

Alberta Culture and Community Spirit and Grant MacEwan University (2009). **Board Development - Advocacy**

<http://culture.alberta.ca/bdp/bulletins/AdvocacyBulletin09-print.pdf>

One in a series of publications prepared for community boards in Alberta. Defines advocacy and provides specific tools to support boards, including strategies, self-administered checklists, and an understanding of Canada Revenue Agency rules.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Family Economic Success (FES). **Local Action Handbook for Making Connections Teams**

<http://www.aecf.org/upload/PublicationFiles/FES3622H817.pdf>

Handbook designed to stimulate the thinking of practitioners trying to strengthen the structures that lead to family economic success. Features ideas and examples of policy and regulatory actions that can be promoted by residents, and can be decided and implemented locally.

Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto (2004). **Thought About Food? Influencing Policy**, Health Communications Unit, pp. 47-60.

<http://partcfood.msvu.ca/section5/5.pdf>

Workbook explains policy and how it affects an issue, and describes a step by step process to increase a community organization's ability to influence policy. Process includes engaging stakeholders, developing networks, and the policy process.

Edwards, M. (2001). **Social Policy, Public Policy: From Problem to Practice**, Allen & Unwin Publication. Based on four case studies of major social policy reforms in which the author was a major player – the Child Support Scheme, AUSTUDY, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme and long-term employment policies presented as 'Working Nation' in Australia. Deals with how a policy problem is identified, by whom, key ingredients in policy analysis, when consultation occurs, how a policy decision is reached, and the evaluation process.

Government of Alberta, **Citizen's Guide to the Alberta Legislature**

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pub/gdbook/CitizensGuide.pdf>

Nova Scotia Nutrition Council (2005). **A Workbook on Food Security & Influencing Policy**, Food Security Project of Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University, Sections 4 and 5.

<http://www.foodthoughtful.ca/>

Workbook deals with food security but the policy process can be applied to any issue area. Defines organizational policy and public policy, and provides tools to influence public policy. Influencing policy requires knowing the issue, goals, supporters and opposition, and how to engage them. Workbook outlines steps for taking action and strategies for action.

University of Kansas, **Influencing policy development**, The Community Toolbox

[http://ctb.ku.edu/en/dothework/tools\\_tk\\_11.aspx](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/dothework/tools_tk_11.aspx)

- Outline for Influencing Policy Development
- Outline with links to tools
- How-to Information on Influencing Policy Development
- Example(s) of Influencing Policy Development
- Links to other online resources for Influencing Policy Development

VOICE: Voluntary organizations involved in collaborative engagement, ***Make your voice count: A guide to collaborative healthy policy development***

<http://www.project-voice.ca/English/Home.html>

Website with tools and resources to assist voluntary organizations involved in the work of trying to influence health policy.

YMCA Canada, (2003). ***Be H.I.P.P. - Have Influence on Public Policy, A manual and tool kit on how voluntary organizations can influence public policy***

[http://www.ymca.ca/media/59241/be\\_hipp\\_manual.pdf](http://www.ymca.ca/media/59241/be_hipp_manual.pdf)

Manual designed by YMCA Canada to help leaders in the YMCA and voluntary sector leaders to increase their understanding of the structure, processes, priorities and key players of local, provincial and federal governments in addition to providing tools for developing and influencing public policy strategy. Includes a description of “who’s who” in the federal government and their role in decision-making.

*Supporting e-learning module:* Two-hour self-guided e-learning module, also called “BE H.I.P.P. - Have Influence on Public Policy,” created for current and future voluntary sector leaders to increase knowledge and understanding of public policy.

<http://www.ymca.ca/behipp/hipp.html>

### ***Discussion and examples of communities influencing policy***

Public Health Agency of Canada, (Devon Dodd, J. & Hebert Boyd, M.) (2000) ***Capacity Building: Linking Community Experience to Public Policy***. 2000

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Capacity\\_building/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/Capacity_building/index.html)

“... a resource designed to help people in both the public sector and the community understand how to include community experience in the policy-making process.” Includes current policy development process, opportunities, and challenges for a more inclusive public policy process. (Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research)

Public Health Agency of Canada, (Lilley, S.) (2004) ***What Works! Putting Community Issues on the Policy Agenda, Eight stories from Atlantic Canada***

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/What\\_works/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/canada/regions/atlantic/Publications/What_works/index.html)

Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, ***Policy development***,

A series of brief descriptions and links to primarily discussion papers on community engagement in public policy processes across Canada.

[http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3s4\\_18.html](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3s4_18.html)



## Appendix A

### Hub Systemic Barriers to Housing Sorted by Practice, Procedure, Policy and Service Gaps

Practice Issues	Department as of June 2011
1. Rent raised by Social Housing body, without notice, if they suspect you have another tenant. [Clarification: Notice is provided.]	Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEI)
2. Some service providers focus on strict interpretation of the rules while others focus on serving people and trying to make benefits work in their favour (creative).	AEI
3. Have to be homeless to qualify for emergency housing in a hotel.	AEI
4. Emergency housing in a hotel is sometimes covered and sometimes not.	AEI
5. Limitations on third party payments; individual has to give consent; once consent is withdrawn, cannot use third party payment option.	AEI
6. If a person has pests, may not be able to get rid of them but not allowed to move to another unit until pests have been eliminated.	Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA)
7. Social Housing body removes person from wait list for housing if they qualify for subsidy.	HUA
8. Need an address to apply for social housing or supplement (may have to sign lease and gamble); [Clarification: Individuals can submit application without an address but it will not be approved without an address and rent statement.]	HUA
9. Evicted or dropped from a benefit if suspected of wrong-doing – guilty until proven innocent (e.g. Social Housing, Child Tax Benefit – ex-spouse may be using address even though no longer a resident) [Clarification: Called, three letters sent, investigation to prevent eviction if at all possible.]	HUA

<b>Procedure Issues</b>	<b>Departments</b>
10. Workers do not know (or do not act on knowledge) that they can fax a bank which would allow a person to cash a government cheque, even without a bank account or official ID.	AEI
11. Only medical notes from doctors are accepted to prove need for additional financial support ('detrimental to the person's health').	AEI
12. AISH waiting lists to process applications (3-6 months).	AISH - Seniors and Community Supports (AISH)
13. Require official ID to cash a government cheque.	AEI, AISH
14. Difficult to access workers because workers have enormous caseloads. Relationships will be lost with move to call centre.	AEI, AISH
15. Need an advocate to help with forms, understand benefits, work through appeal process.	AEI, AISH, HUA
16. Need government-issued photo identification to apply for housing or subsidy (cost, complex process) [Clarification: Required to receive supplement but not to apply.]	HUA
17. Criminal record makes person ineligible for social housing.	HUA

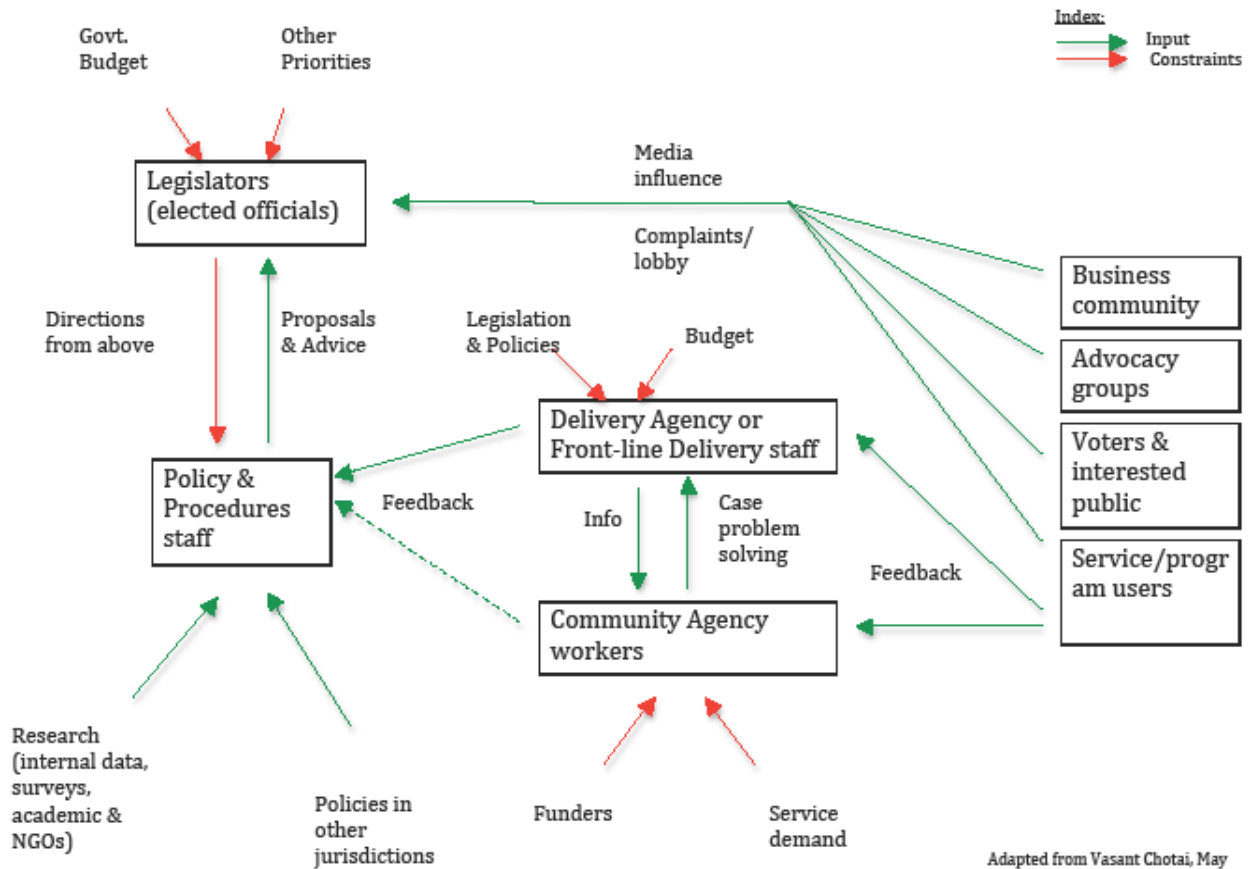
<b>Policy Issues</b>	<b>Departments</b>
18. Insufficient amount to cover rent and any other expenses that arise (transportation, telephone, cable, recreation – holistic needs).	AEI
19. Income Support [formerly Supports for Independence] claws back money received while waiting for Employment Insurance to begin (for intervening months); [Clarification: Income Support provides retroactive coverage for intervening months.]	AEI
20. Work income disqualifies individual from support; can't afford rent or have to rent in a place that is not conducive to staying clean and dry.	AEI

21. Assistance figures have stayed the same while cost-of-living has gone up.	AEI
22. Reduced support – Hep C and HIV special diets now combined (was \$72 – now \$36).	AEI
23. Cannot rent a house with rent arrears. [private market]	AEI, HUA
24. Can only apply for damage deposit every 3 years (may have to move for safety, increase in family size).	AEI, HUA
25. Can't pay security deposit over time, on a repayment plan. [private market?]	AEI, HUA
26. While hospitalized, individual can lose shelter and have nowhere to go when discharged.	AEI, HUA
27. Rent shortfall cap leaves people with insufficient funds to cover rent.	AEI, HUA
28. Damage deposit assistance from government falls short of what is required.	AEI, HUA
29. Decisions made before consultation takes place. Community not consulted before new policies and programs are rolled out.	AEI, HUA
30. When people living on the street move into housing, requires one-to-one support.	AEI, AISH, HUA
31. Eligibility for benefits reviewed even if your condition is chronic.	AISH
32. Some AISH clients can't earn allowable amount to supplement income.	AISH
33. Female equivalent of Urban Manor does not exist – women are vulnerable.	AISH, HUA
34. Shelters are often full and turn people away. With children, harder to find shelter space.	AISH, HUA
35. Have to change programs/workers at age 65 (continuity issue).	Alberta Health Services (Mental Health), AEI, AISH

36. Social housing wait list for housing is two years long.	HUA
37. Even if clean and dry, people get lonely – only people they know are using. Triggers or create noise and evicted.	HUA
38. When assessed for eligibility for subsidy, income from SFI for housing allowance is considered an asset even though it falls far below rent costs.	HUA
39. Time for processing subsidy applications (6-9 months) – may have to sign a list and then wait 6-9 months for approval and top-up.	HUA
40. More vacancies than last year but rents still high.	HUA
41. People are further behind than they were before HEP was introduced because rents have remained high.	HUA
42. Landlords have 10-30 days to return damage deposit. Leaves person without money to put on next damage deposit for first month. Told to go to a shelter.	HUA
43. Employment income counts against benefits but insufficient to cover rent.	HUA
44. Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness vs. barriers to accessing or remaining housed (inconsistent).	HUA
45. Social housing authority overwhelmed by added responsibility for rent supplement applications.	HUA
46. Private landlord may be providing supportive housing but doesn't meet code requirements for a non-family residence.	City of Edmonton
47. Not allowed to maintain camps in river valley; shelters inhumane; not wanted on urban benches and lawns – hard to provide outreach support when people have to keep moving	City of Edmonton

<p>48. Age restrictions, before (social housing body) and after 18 (Terra, ICYHP, YES), limit access to housing support programs. [Clarification: No age restriction before age 18 for Capital Region Housing]</p>	<p>HUA</p>
<p>49. Housing First not answer for everyone – some people need help for a toothache or a broken bone, or basic living skills – we don't ask people what they need.</p>	<p>HUA</p>
<p>50. When parents with dependent adults have to move into care for themselves, creates stress for adult child who requires access to appropriate housing and support.</p>	<p>HUA</p>
<p>51. People who hoard need one-to-one help.</p>	<p>HUA</p>
<p>52. Outreach support insufficient.</p>	<p>HUA</p>

## Appendix B How Government makes Decisions



Adapted from Vasant Chotai, May 2010, *Social Policy* website [www.chotai.ca](http://www.chotai.ca) under construction

## Appendix C

### Sample structure and process for joint problem-solving

While there is not a single structure and process for joint problem-solving, this appendix provides a sample for consideration when bringing community and government together to address systemic issues.

#### Roles

##### ***Leadership body***

- Oversee the development of a detailed systemic barriers plan toward problem-solving, involving key players in community and government.
- Based on community priorities, form two initial ad hoc task teams (more, if deemed necessary) to address a specific barrier or a cluster of related barriers (see role of task teams below). In consultation, identify appropriate government and community representatives for the task teams.
- Ensure ongoing participation of government and community agency representatives.
- Report on outcomes to an organization well linked to the community agencies that identify the issues.
- Support implementation of a plan to resolve systemic barriers with required resources (see budget implications below).

##### ***Liaison to community agencies***

- One community-based organization may be well positioned to be the link with a network of community agencies and front-line workers. Through a consultation with the community agencies, the liaison identifies priority issues as the basis for forming ad hoc task teams.
- Identify possible community and government members for task teams.
- Consult with community members while working on specific barriers is in progress.
- Bring forward new issues as they emerge to the lead body.
- Report task team outcomes to community agencies.

##### ***Task Teams – Ad hoc – focused on specific barrier or cluster of related barriers***

- Comprised of appropriate community and government representatives. Not a decision-making body.
- Flesh out issues. Direct required research to further investigate issues.
- Generate possible solutions.
- Move proposed solutions to appropriate policy-making levels of government for action.
- Contribute input on draft policies/procedural changes.
- Report on outcomes to the lead body.

#### Process

The following steps frame a process for addressing systemic barriers.

- Lead body consults community agencies to identify priority issues, based upon an agreed-upon set of criteria. The priority issues will determine the focus of the ad hoc task teams and guide

the selection of the most appropriate community and government representatives to address one or a cluster of related issues.

- Lead body, in consultation with the liaison organization, will develop terms of reference for the task teams. Form two initial ad hoc task teams (add more if deemed necessary).
- Ad hoc task teams undertake required research to further investigate the identified issues and propose possible solutions. The task teams will consult with community agencies and government departments as appropriate. The task teams will take proposed solutions to appropriate government bodies to consider solutions and, if appropriate, draft procedural changes and new policies. Contribute input on draft procedure and policy documents.
- The ad hoc task teams report outcomes to the lead body. In turn, the liaison organization reports on outcomes to its network of community agencies.
- Lead body develops new ad hoc task teams as additional priority issues emerge.

## **Resources**

### **This project will require human resources for:**

- Project management/Project Manager.
- Coordinate involvement of and consultation with Hub team leader and SOS chair. Coordinate formation and support of ad hoc task teams.
- Arrange meetings (e.g. space, refreshments, mileage and parking).
- Undertake research requested by ad hoc task teams.
- Prepare summary reports.

### **Other resources required may include:**

- Facility rental (if required)
- Equipment rental (if required)
- Mileage and/or parking for ad hoc task team members
- Refreshments for meetings
- Printing/copying documents