

The background features a series of concentric circles in various shades of gray, centered on the page. A thin horizontal line crosses the center of the circles, passing through the text.

CONNECTING  
**THE CIRCLE**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

“ [TRANS, TWO-SPIRIT,  
AND GENDER NON-  
CONFORMING PEOPLE] ARE  
NOT REALLY ACCEPTED  
BY OUR FAMILIES... OR  
SOCIETY IN GENERAL.”

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

# 1. PROGRAM / POLICY DESIGN AND DELIVERY

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## 1.1 Government and community organizations must:

- 1.1.1 Use an intersectional gender-based analysis (IGBA) in the design, delivery, and evaluation of all initiatives (such as policies, legislation, and programs) that relate to housing insecurity and homelessness;
- 1.1.2 Meaningfully engage diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people with lived experience of housing insecurity and homelessness in the design and delivery of those initiatives.

## 1.2 Government and community organizations must develop front-line capacity to use an IGBA by:

- 1.2.1 Providing mandatory training for staff in community and government organizations that serve diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity;
- 1.2.2 Enhancing human resource policies and building capacity in government and community organizations that serve people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness so they can recruit and hire and accommodate more diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people, including people who have experienced housing insecurity and homelessness.

## 1.3 All community and government organizations that support diverse Indigenous women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness must:

- 1.3.1 Learn about and understand truth and reconciliation as well as the impacts of colonialism and oppression;
- 1.3.2 Develop, deliver, and evaluate services for Indigenous women, trans, Two-Spirit, gender non-conforming people through a decolonizing and anti-oppressive approach.

## 1.4 Eliminate barriers rooted in service design and delivery (such as hours of operation, eligibility criteria, accessibility, and availability of childcare) that prevent diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people from accessing the supports they need to gain stable housing.

## 1.5 Ensure eligibility criteria for homelessness services include hidden homelessness and Indigenous homelessness.

## 1.6 Provide targeted outreach and delivery of government services (such as Employment and Income Assistance (EIA), housing, Child and Family Services (CFS) to marginalized women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness in community-based organizations where they are already accessing services.

## 1.7 Expand the ability of government and community-based organizations, with priority to organizations led by and serving newcomer, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ+ people, to offer transition services to diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people migrating to Winnipeg so they can better connect people experiencing homelessness to the resources that meet their unique needs.

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THAT THAT SYSTEM IS  
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COMING BACK.”

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“I WOULD BE SEXUALLY  
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WERE HORRIBLE, HORRIFIC  
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WHERE I EVEN WANTED TO  
COMMIT SUICIDE BECAUSE  
I FELT SO DIRTY AND  
DEGRADED”

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

- 1.8 Support community-based organizations that use an IGBA in the design and delivery of a full continuum of low-barrier housing-related services with wrap-around supports including Housing First programs, transitional and permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and eviction prevention supports, so they can expand and improve services and outreach efforts to better meet the needs of diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Priority should be given to organizations that are led by or serve 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.9 Ensure diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness have access to a low-barrier safe space 24 hours a day. Support those spaces to use an intersectional gender-based analysis in the design and delivery of services that meet basic needs and connect to resources that address homelessness.

## 2 . G E N D E R - B A S E D V I O L E N C E

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- 2.1 Expand the mandate of the Family Violence Prevention Program to include all forms of gender-based violence so that women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people who have experienced violence can access a securely located and gender-specific emergency shelter that offers gender-based violence supports regardless of who perpetrated the violence or where the violence took place.
- 2.2 Extend shelter stays outlined in the EIA Administrative Manual from 30 days to 90 days to better ensure housing with wrap-around supports can be secured before leaving the shelter.
- 2.3 Ensure diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people who are victims of violence have access to community-based mental health and healing services, and ensure perpetrators of violence have access to programs that aim to stop the cycle of violence.
- 2.4 Support innovative solutions to ending gender-based violence, including public education and third-party reporting options, as well as trauma-informed and victim-centred training on working with victims' perspectives for law enforcement and justice personnel.

## 3 . S H E L T E R S Y S T E M

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- 3.1 Ensure gender-based violence and homeless shelters are supported to meet the demand for separate and secure gender-specific spaces as well as family spaces. Consideration should be given to providing options in terms of shelter location and services that take a harm reduction approach.
- 3.2 Support homeless and gender-based family violence shelters to strengthen policy, practice, and training around 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion and implement outreach and communications strategies that explicitly demonstrate how services are inclusive.

“ I REALLY HOPE THAT THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
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— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

“I FELT I HAD TO STAY  
WITH SOMEBODY IN  
ORDER TO GET OFF THE  
STREETS. I STAYED IN  
A HOTEL WHERE I WAS  
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OF SEXUALLY.”

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT



3.3 Conduct a safety and inclusion audit of gender-based violence and homeless shelters that includes diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people and then implement shelter standards, policies, and practices that address safety and inclusion concerns.

## 4. SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

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- 4.1 Increase the supply of adequate, accessible, and quality rent-geared-to-income housing units built with universal design by the public, non-profit, and co-op sectors with specific targets to meet the need for units with three or more bedrooms. Provide supports to the private sector to enable the development of rent-geared-to-income housing.
- 4.2 Consult with diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people with lived experience of homelessness to maximize safety and comfort in new and existing rent-geared-to-income housing developments across the housing spectrum.
- 4.3 Prioritize the construction of adequate, accessible, and quality, rent-geared-to-income housing in a variety of neighbourhoods that are located near essential services including childcare, schools, laundry and transportation services, and grocery stores. Ensure that supports for maintaining tenancy, delivered using an IGBA, are also available nearby or on site.
- 4.4 Ensure diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people can access low-barrier, gender-specific, and responsive transitional and permanent supportive housing options with wrap-around supports to meet their unique needs. Priority should be given to transitional housing models that meet the unique needs of 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous Peoples.
- 4.5 Establish partnerships between community-based housing advocates, housing providers, Winnipeg Police Service, and the Residential Tenancies Branch to develop policies and practices that ensure diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people don't face discrimination, abuse, or exploitation by housing providers.

## 5. INCOME SECURITY

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- 5.1 Invest in reducing rates of poverty and social exclusion among diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people by using an IGBA in the development and implementation of comprehensive poverty reduction plans with targets and timelines.
- 5.2 Enhance the Rent Assist benefit so that caregivers of children aren't forced to use other budgets such as the Canada Child Benefit to pay their rent, and move toward replacing one-off, income related benefits with a guaranteed annual income that will eliminate poverty for caregivers and their families.

- 5.3 Ensure all provincial policies have a reunification focus by extending family shelter benefits and granting emergency rent funds when necessary without the need for EIA director approval. Provide these same shelter benefits and emergency rent funds when necessary for three months prior to a reunification date.
- 5.4 Bring EIA, CFS, and community-based organizations together to align policy and work in collaboration to ensure no caregiver loses their housing when children are placed in care or experience other income insecurity related to changes in family size. Create and implement a province-wide plan to align all provincial departments and portfolios with the current Manitoba Housing policy that ensures secure housing for two years after an apprehension or family size change.

## 6 . S U B S T A N C E   U S E

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- 6.1 Provide publicly funded, gender-specific, and responsive detox and addictions treatment options and beds, including evidence-based day programs and residential programs that last beyond 28 days as needed to ensure immediate entry into detox and a seamless transition from detox into treatment services.
- 6.2 Consult with diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people to ensure they have access to a continuum of detox and addictions treatment services that are designed to meet their unique needs (such as childcare, harm reduction, trauma supports, and criminal records).
- 6.3 Ensure gender-specific and responsive detox and addictions treatment facilities can offer community-based, Indigenous-led healing and wellness practices that provide access to education, cultural reclamation, and that address gender-based and intergenerational trauma.

## 7 . J U S T I C E

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- 7.1 With priority given to Indigenous-led and serving organizations that use an IGBA to support diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people, invest in:
- 7.1.1 Gender-specific and responsive bail support programs with housing supports;
  - 7.1.2 Organizations that offer supports in remand to prevent the loss of homes and children.
- 7.2 Invest in programs and supports provided by Manitoba Corrections and community-based organizations that meet the unique needs of women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender-conforming people in Women's Correctional Centre (WCC). Priority should be given to programs and supports led by Indigenous Peoples and the 2SLGBTQ+ community.



“I HAVE A KID AND I  
HAVE SOME MENTAL  
HEALTH ISSUES AND  
IF I WERE TO GO AND  
ASK FOR HELP THEY  
WOULD THREATEN ME  
TO TAKE MY KID.”

— FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

## 8 . CHILD WELFARE

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- 8.1 Ensure caregivers are supported to meet their parenting needs, keeping children at home wherever possible and avoid child apprehension while they work to address challenges that increase their risk of experiencing homelessness.
- 8.2 Ensure caregivers have access to a culturally responsive support team when involved with CFS, assisting the caregiver to meet their individual needs, avoiding apprehension or working toward reunification as necessary, including the prevention of housing insecurity and homelessness.
- 8.3 Develop and implement an intersectional strategy in the CFS system to better support and nurture Two-Spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming youth in care. This includes gathering appropriate demographic data to know the extent of the need and supporting existing and potential foster families and group homes.

## 9 . CONTINUUM OF HEALTH

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- 9.1 Invest in a range of better quality public and community-based mental health services that are inclusive of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQ+ communities and that meet the unique needs of diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people at all ages, and ensure services can be accessed as soon as needed. Priority should be given to services that address trauma and take a trauma-informed approach.

## 10 . PREVENTING SYSTEM EXITS TO HOMELESSNESS

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- 10.1 Ensure corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, mental health facilities, and detox and addictions treatment facilities partner with community-based organizations that use an IGBA to ensure no women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people exits these services into homelessness.
- 10.2 Ensure diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people:
  - 10.2.1 Have access to an on-site support worker that uses an IGBA to connect them to housing and wrap-around services before, during, and after they exit corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, mental health facilities, and detox and addictions treatment facilities;
  - 10.2.2 Receive EIA benefits prior to exiting corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, mental health facilities, and detox and addictions treatment facilities when needed to secure housing.