

The Gap Committee

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Gap Committee was formed to provide a community-based and collaborative approach to issues of homelessness within Durham Region. Comprised of individuals who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness and precarious housing, service providers, and compassionate partners, the committee advocates for the voices of the people, facilitating communication, and establishing a strong collaboration between those in the community and local agencies.

Together, we pool our knowledge to recognize and address gaps in homelessness and housing services, working collaboratively to develop solutions aimed at preventing and ultimately eliminating homelessness in the Durham Region. With a shared commitment to this cause, the committee meets regularly to discuss pressing issues, share insights, and innovate strategies. Each member's unique perspective enriches the dialogue, ensuring that solutions are both comprehensive and empathetic.

Our approach is grounded in the belief that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home. By leveraging data-driven insights and personal experiences, the Gap Committee is able to advocate for policies and programs that are both effective and compassionate. Community engagement plays a vital role in our efforts; we actively seek input from those directly affected by homelessness to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

Through workshops, public forums, and collaborative projects, the Gap Committee aims to raise awareness about the complexities of homelessness and mobilize the community to take action. By fostering a spirit of empathy and solidarity, we hope to build a future where homelessness is not just managed but eliminated, and where every individual can thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment.

The Gap Committee: Nothing About Us Without Us

The Vision

The Vision of The Gap Committee is a strong and unified voice representing people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and precarious housing. Members play a pivotal role in shaping policies and decisions related to local services, serving as essential participants in the ongoing initiatives to prevent and reduce homelessness in Durham Region.

The Mission

The Mission of the Gap Committee is to build community by bringing together the expertise of people who are street engaged, with lived experience of homelessness and precarious housing, service providers, and other caring partners. Together as equal partners we work to fill the gaps in services and find shared solutions to prevent and end homelessness in Durham Region.

Goals:

Create healthy, inclusive communities.

- ♦ Encourage street engaged, homeless, and precariously housed individuals to recognize their value as essential community members.
- ♦ Demystify homelessness and foster recognition within the community about the importance of accepting the homeless population as valued members of the community.
- ♦ Advocate for human rights as it directly affects the street engaged, homeless, and precariously housed population's capacity to engage in a thriving community.

Support individual's ability to live independently.

- ♦ Encouraging personal empowerment and fostering resourcefulness to enhance well-being, in addition to accessing formal mental health, medical, and social services, to support individuals in maintaining stable housing.
- ♦ Marginalized individuals, who are newly housed, need support from peers to provide understanding, empathy, and social connection within the community.

Membership:

The goal of people participating with the Gap Committee is to advocate for those who are experiencing homelessness, those who are street engaged and those who are precariously housed residing in Durham Region.

The Gap Committee is led by the Core Executive Council (CEC) consisting of individuals with lived experience of homelessness and precarious housing, a service provider representative, and a representative from the Gap Committee's lead agency. The CEC advises the Gap Committee on advocacy, supports homeless and precariously housed individuals, sets meeting agendas, oversees projects, and ensures alignment with Co-Production principles.

Membership to the Gap Committee is open to

- residents of the Region of Durham who are street engaged, experiencing or have experienced homelessness or precarious housing (the Voice of Lived Experience),
- community, nonprofit and faith-based organizations,
- social service agencies,
- concerned community members,
- private business and industry,

- educational institutions,
- local, provincial, and federal government representatives and staff.

Responsibilities of Members:

- Have the best interests of the Gap Committee and its members in mind at all times.
- Comply with the Gap Committee Code of Conduct.
- Attend and participate fully in meetings remembering the Gap Committee conducts meetings based on the principles of Co-Production.
- Fulfil any responsibilities members offer to take on during a meeting and be prepared to report on progress in a timely manner.
- Share information and contribute to a meaningful dialogue in good faith.
- Provide input to promote a successful and healthy community for all residents of Durham Region.

Meetings

Meetings provide a forum where public and private members can work collaboratively to improve the current delivery of services for individuals who are experiencing homelessness, street engaged, and experiencing precarious housing to fill identified gaps that may be creating barriers for those who are facing poverty and homelessness.

Meetings may be held in-person or virtually (e.g. Zoom)

Frequency of Meetings:

Regular Gap Committee meetings will be organized once a month.

Chairs

The position of Chair will be shared between two members (Co-Chairs) with lived experience of homelessness or precarious housing.

The Co-Chair responsibilities include calling meetings of the committee, and leading committee meetings. Meetings can be held with only one Co-Chair in attendance.

The Co-Chair can appoint a Facilitator to lead a Gap Committee meeting.

Review of the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.