

HPS Frequently Asked Question: Sustainability

1. Background

The objective of the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) program is to prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada by developing partnerships that contribute to a **long-term sustainable and comprehensive continuum of supports** to help those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness move towards self-sufficiency. This objective has been an integral part of the program through its evolution.

This means that activities funded by HPS, especially in designated communities such as Metro Vancouver, must show how they are **sustainable** and recipients must provide a sustainability plan that demonstrates how they will maintain activities **after HPS funding ends**. Where a sustainability plan is not possible, **service projects** must have an exit strategy in place before a recommendation for funding can be made.

In keeping with these provisions of the HPS program terms and conditions, the RSCH evaluates applications for HPS funding in Metro Vancouver with a sustainability lens. Indeed, ensuring that funded projects have long-term sustainability has always been one of the criteria that the RSCH has considered when recommending projects for funding.

Nevertheless, there is the recognition of how sustainability remains a major challenge for project sponsors across the region. Funders from the government and non-profit sectors are concerned that important homelessness services may be lost and clients left without support should the HPS program end; presenting major social, economic and political difficulties for stakeholders across the region.

To address these concerns about the sustainability of HPS funded projects, the RSCH, Metro Vancouver and Vancity Community foundation have committed to review all applications for HPS funds received in response to the November 21, 2011 call for service project proposals to ensure that projects that are recommended for funding also show efforts to address all sustainability issues surrounding their projects.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this FAQ is to provide guidance to prospective HPS applicants for the preparation of the sustainability plan required to be attached to each application for HPS funding.

The sustainability plan will be reported against on an annual basis to Vancity Community Foundation as part of the project monitoring process. Projects that are not able to submit sustainability plans must provide an exit strategy with their applications. As well, projects that are not able to show positive progress on their sustainability plans may be asked to implement an exit strategy in the final year of funding.

3. What is sustainability?

Sustainability can be defined as the **ability of a project to maintain its operations, services and benefits during its planned life cycle**. In practical terms, project sustainability means being able to:

1. maintain a good percentage of your project's activities a given number of years after HPS funding ends (e.g. five years); and
2. continue community actions inspired by your project.

4. Considerations for a sustainability plan

Sustainability is about much more than simply projecting continued funding. For the purposes of this Call for Proposals, addressing the sustainability plan requirement may be as simple as answering the following questions:

1. Does the project have the right leadership in place?
 - a. Is there a long-term plan in place? i.e. Strategic plan?
 - b. Is there a collaborative approach to leadership?
 - c. Does the organization have a committed and involved board of directors?
 - d. How responsive can the organization be to changes in the environment?
2. Does your organization understand the community need?
 - a. Has the community been involved in program design?
 - b. Does the community have a vested interest in the project continuing?
3. Does your organization have a way to demonstrate and measure program impact?
 - a. Do you have an evaluation plan in place?
 - b. Do you have a way to communicate results to community stakeholders?
4. Are the right partners in place?
 - a. Do you currently have other funding partners?
 - b. Do you currently have other partners who may not provide funds, but can provide an in-kind service to assist in reaching the project's long-term impacts?
 - c. What is the likelihood that your funding partners will continue to fund project activities beyond March 31, 2014?
 - d. Do you have a plan to communicate the project to other partners?
 - e. Do you have a plan to solicit new partners and/or maintain current partnerships?
 - f. Is each partner clear on their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of the service?
5. Does the organization have a Fund Development plan?

STRATEGIC VISION		
Sustainability Plan Area	Present <i>(itemize what are present)</i>	Planned <i>(itemize what are planned)</i>
Leadership		
Community Need		
Measuring and Demonstrating Impact		
Partnerships		
Fund Development Plan		

5. Considerations for an exit strategy

If it is not possible to sustain or continue your project after March 31, 2014 without HPS funds, please indicate how you will transition your project after HPS funds end using the table below, keeping in mind the least amount of impact on your target population.

EXIT STRATEGY			
Strategy	Yes (explain)	No (explain)	Timeline
A) Business Continuation			
1. Shut down?			
2. Combine with another project?			

EXIT STRATEGY			
Strategy	Yes (explain)	No (explain)	Timeline
A) Business Continuation			
3. Sell?			
4. Spin off (for profit or non-profit)?			
5. Other strategy?			
B) Community Information			
1. Will you involve other community partners in your exit strategy?			
2. How do you intend to communicate your exit strategy?			
o To clients			
o To partners			