



Pathways to Equity Workshop

Justice Transitions and Housing Insecurity



PATHWAYS TO EQUITY

Nadia Sedaghat, Isobel M. Findlay,
and Rosmary Martinez Rueda

April 14, 2026

Community-University Institute for Social Research

Building healthy, sustainable communities

Since 1999, the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR)—formally established as a university-wide interdisciplinary research centre in 2000—has remained true to its mission of facilitating “partnerships between the university and the larger community in order to engage in relevant social research that supports a deeper understanding of our communities and that reveals opportunities for improving our quality of life.”

Strategic Research Directions

CUI SR is committed to collaborative research and to accurate, objective reporting of research results in the public domain, taking into account the needs for confidentiality in gathering, disseminating, and storing information. CUI SR has five strategic research priorities:

1. Community Sustainability
2. Social Economy and Social Relations
3. Rural-Urban Community Links
4. Indigenous Community Development
5. Community-university partnerships

These strategic directions build on the research priorities/ modules—quality of life indicators, community health determinants and health policy, and community economic development—that led to the formation of CUI SR to build capacity among researchers, CBOs, and citizenry.

CUI SR research projects are funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), local CBOs, and municipal, provincial, and federal governments.

Tools and strategies

Knowledge mobilization: CUI SR disseminates research through website, social media, presentations and workshops, community events, fact sheets, posters, blogs, case studies, reports, journal articles, monographs, arts-based methods, and listserv.

Hub bringing university and community together to address social issues: CUI SR facilitates partnerships with community agencies.

Public policy: CUI SR supports evidence-based practice and policy, engaging over the years in the national and provincial Advisory Tables on Individualized Funding for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee (RIC), and Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership.

Student training: CUI SR provides training and guidance to undergraduate and graduate students and community researchers and encourages community agencies to provide community orientation in order to promote reciprocal benefits.

Pathways to Equity Workshop

Justice Transitions and Housing Insecurity

Nadia Sedaghat, Isobel M. Findlay, and Rosmary
Martinez Rueda



PATHWAYS TO EQUITY



April 14, 2026

Copyright © 2026 Nadia Sedaghat, Isobel M. Findlay, and Rosmary Martinez Rueda.

Community-University Institute for Social Research

University of Saskatchewan

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher. In the case of photocopying or other forms of reprographic reproduction, please consult Access Copyright, the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency, at 1-800-893-5777 or info@accesscopyright.ca.

Printed in Canada

Community-University Institute for Social Research

R.J.D. Williams Building

University of Saskatchewan

432-221 Cumberland Ave.

Saskatoon, SK. Canada S7N 1M3

Phone: (306) 966-2121

Website: <https://cuivr.usask.ca/>

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is important to acknowledge that this workshop was held on the land of Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis. This land is acknowledged as our Mother, the Earth. We at Pathways to Equity at Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), University of Saskatchewan, are committed to honouring and supporting the Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages that belong to the land of Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis. We are committed to working towards mending colonized lands and protecting the land in a way that demonstrates honour, respect, and love. We extend this commitment to the lands and Treaty territories (Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10) that constitute kisiskâciwan ([Saskatchewan], “the swift current”, Cree/Saulteaux), and all Indigenous people that call kisiskâciwan home. We are born to the land and the land claims us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pathways to Equity Working Group would like to acknowledge funding for the group and its activities from Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives (RASI), USask, and for the event lunch and refreshments from the Communities and Sustainability Signature Area. We thank them for promoting the workshop as one of the Signature Area’s branded events. The Working Group also acknowledges the contributions of those who helped to plan and coordinate the event: especially Jim Woodcock who led the coordination, Isobel Findlay, CUISR research associate and co-chair of the Pathways to Equity Working Group, along with James Dixon, Manager of Social Development at the City of Saskatoon; Rosmary Martinez Rueda, CUISR research

coordinator. To all presenters, our sincere thanks for your generous contributions. CUISR research assistant Nadia Sedaghat helped coordinate Working Group activities and served as the lead for data collection and lead author of the report. Lastly, our thanks to the workshop facilitators and members of the working group: Isobel Findlay, James Dixon, Dominic Sikora, Sarah Buhler, Daniel Dickson, Andrea Kotlar, Jim Woodcock, along with Rosmary Martinez Rueda and Remi Kusimo as well as graduate student notetakers, Sonia Arifa, Chinwendu Ikwuegbu, Lydia Ndambuki, Penny Sanz, Naushin Afzal, and Chinaza Mojekwu.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pathways to Equity Workshop on Justice Transitions and Housing Insecurity held on April 14, 2026, at EA Rawlinson Centre, Prince Albert, attracted 50 registrants and 42 participants representing a broad range of voices and perspectives. Hosted by the Pathways to Equity Working Group, Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), USask, and co-branded by the Communities and Sustainability Signature Area, this workshop built on previous events, 2021-2025, continuing the Pathways initiative's commitment to community-engaged research and equity-driven dialogue.

The workshop opened with welcoming remarks and a blessing from Elder Liz Settee, panelists Dr. Geoffrey Maina, Dr. Kwame Abukari, and Dr. Deborah L. Sinclair from University of Saskatchewan, Faculty of Nursing (PA Campus). A second panel was led by Samantha Williams (PA Safe Shelter for Women), Teegan Jeffers (Riverbank Development Corporation), and Serena Stuart (PA Mobile Complex Needs Team Lead).

The first panel discussion focused on findings from a recent study examining homelessness in Prince Albert and the need to shift responses from managing homelessness to preventing it. Drawing on survey data collected from people experiencing homelessness, the discussion explored the social, demographic, and clinical factors associated with homelessness, including child welfare system involvement, mental health challenges, family conflict, relationship breakdowns, housing costs, and interactions with the criminal justice system. Panelists emphasized strengthening upstream prevention efforts, including educational continuity, early

screening and intervention, substance-use prevention, mentorship programs, and initiatives that strengthen families, improve child welfare experiences, and support successful transitions for youth leaving care.

The second panel discussion focused on the challenges faced by individuals leaving the justice system and the barriers to successful reintegration. Discussion highlighted inadequate release planning, lack of stable housing, income support delays, barriers to healthcare, and disruptions in access to mental health services and medications. Panelists emphasized the need for more low-barrier and supportive housing options, person-centred approaches, continuity of care, and stronger coordination among correctional facilities, healthcare providers, housing organizations, and community agencies. The discussion also highlighted the experiences of victims of crime, particularly women fleeing domestic violence, and reinforced that stable housing is a critical foundation for successful reintegration, improved well-being, and long-term community inclusion.

In roundtable discussions, participants described challenges related to housing stability and community reintegration, including limited housing options, service gaps, and mental health and substance use challenges. They emphasized the need for coordinated, person-centred approaches, stronger collaboration across sectors, more affordable and supportive housing, and greater involvement of people with lived experience. Overall, discussions highlighted the importance of prevention, long-term investment, and integrated community-based solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand affordable, supportive, and transitional housing options, with particular attention to individuals transitioning from the justice system.
- Explore opportunities to repurpose vacant, underutilized, and community-owned spaces to increase housing capacity and improve access to transitional housing.
- Strengthen coordination, communication, and information sharing across housing, justice, health, Indigenous, and community organizations to support more seamless service delivery.
- Implement coordinated and individualized reintegration planning that begins prior to release and continues through the transition back into the community.
- Increase access to education, employment, mentorship, transportation, and life-skills supports that promote long-term housing stability and successful community reintegration.
- Improve access to timely, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive mental health, addictions, and other wraparound supports.
- Meaningfully involve individuals with lived and living experience in program design, service delivery, evaluation, and decision-making processes.
- Support Indigenous-led, culturally grounded, and community-based approaches that strengthen relationships, belonging, healing, and social inclusion.
- Increase investment in prevention-focused initiatives and provide stable, long-term funding for housing, reintegration, and community support programs.

- Strengthen public awareness and community education efforts to reduce stigma and improve understanding of the barriers faced by individuals experiencing housing instability and justice-system involvement.
- Support person-centred housing approaches that recognize and respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of individuals transitioning from the justice system.

INTRODUCTION

Pathways to Equity is a research initiative and working group, long supported by an anonymous donor and administered by Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives (RASI), but now hosted within Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), University of Saskatchewan, and funded by RASI, 2024-2027. Pathways to Equity explores cross-agency and cross-disciplinary research in the areas of homelessness, social justice, education, and health across the province of Saskatchewan. The initiative includes support for community-engaged research projects, workshops, and events. The current thematic focus of Pathways of Equity is on housing security and homelessness.

The current Pathways to Equity Working Group represents a network of faculty members and community members representing diverse community organizations. The overarching goal of this research initiative is “to raise levels of equity and wellbeing through focused, thematic areas of research conducted in direct partnerships with the knowledge and experience of our communities and committed to bringing results back to participants and decision-makers in those communities.” A guiding principle for the Pathways to Equity group is an understanding that different communities experience and understand homelessness differently. Knowing that people experiencing homelessness are not defined by their situation, this initiative fully supports their ability to define their own experience in a way that respects their dignity.

Building on the success of workshops since 2021 and seeking to make more meaningful our provincial mandate, the Pathways to Equity Working Group hosted an in-person workshop in Prince Albert April 14, 2026, on Justice Transitions and Housing Insecurity, engaging the broader community in reviews of research findings and discussion of emergent issues, challenges, and opportunities. The workshop complemented the March 24, 2026, Saskatoon workshop and followed our usual format featuring expert panels, moderated breakout sessions, and plenary report-back discussions. The workshop also learned from earlier workshops about the importance of holistic, inclusive, preventative approaches as well as the importance of centring lived experience, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and investing in wraparound care models that integrate housing with mental health, income, and legal supports. The workshop also underscored the need for data-driven decision-making, sustainable funding, and public education to combat stigma and promote inclusive policy reform. This workshop reaffirmed that housing is not only a basic need but a human right—and that meaningful change requires collective action, informed by those most affected.

Building on those 2024 and 2025 workshops, a fifth in-person workshop on April 14, 2026, at EA Rawlinson Centre, Prince Albert, attracted 50 registrants and 42 participants representing a broad range of voices and perspectives. The workshop was open and accessible, with invitations (and registration information) shared on CUISR distribution channels with those who had attended the previous virtual and in-person workshops from 2021 to 2025, along with individuals who had signed up to the Pathways to Equity mailing list. Those who received the invitation were encouraged to share the information through their own networks. The below agenda provides an overview of the activities and timeline for the workshop.

2026 Pathways to Equity Workshop Agenda

Justice Transitions and Housing Insecurity

Time	Topic	Time	Who
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Arrival/Registration	30 minutes	Research Assistants
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Welcome Opening remarks and Blessing Pathways to Equity Working Group introductions; Signature Area Table introductions Icebreaking activity	30 minutes	Jim Woodcock, Lori Bradford, Isobel Findlay
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Panel 1: · Dr Geoffrey Maina – UofS, Faculty of Nursing (PA Campus) · Dr. Kwame Abukari – UofS, Faculty of Nursing (PA Campus) Q & A	30 minutes	Jim Woodcock, Isobel Findlay
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	Moderated break out session #1 <i>Current challenges</i>	45 minutes	Pathways to Equity working Group
12:15 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch & Networking Break	30 minutes	---
12:45 pm – 1:15 pm	Panel 2: · Samantha Williams – (PA Safe Shelter for Women) · Teegan Jeffers – (Riverbank Development Corp) · Serena Stuart – (PA Mobile Complex Needs Team Lead) Q & A	30 minutes	Jim Woodcock
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	Moderated break out session #2: Current opportunities/ recommendations for action	45 minutes	Pathway to Equity Working Group
2:00 pm – 2:15pm	Report on break out session findings/recommendations	15 minutes	Nadia Sedaghat
2:15 pm– 2:30 pm	Wrap-up activity on concluding statement/ manifesto and concluding remarks	15 minutes	Jim Woodcock Isobel Findlay

Report Purpose

Against this background and context, this report aims to do the following:

- Highlight the research panel findings
- Summarize the event conversations
- Share the stories and concerns raised by community members
- Conclude with recommendations

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections review the various workshop activities and summarize the key themes that emerged from the panel discussions and breakout sessions.



The workshop opened with welcoming remarks and a blessing from Elder Liz Settee, who emphasized the importance of bringing together community members, practitioners, researchers, and decision-makers to address issues that directly affect people's lives. She highlighted the need for those responsible for developing policies and regulations to engage meaningfully with communities in order to better understand local realities, priorities, and challenges. Drawing on Indigenous perspectives and worldviews, Elder Settee encouraged participants to value diverse ways of knowing and to recognize that meaningful progress requires collaboration, mutual respect, and the sharing of knowledge. Concluding with a blessing, she called on participants to approach the discussions with compassion, wisdom, and a shared commitment to supporting one another and strengthening communities across the region.



Following the opening blessing, Lori Bradford from the Signature Area invited participants to reflect on community infrastructure and the decision-making processes that shape communities and systems. She encouraged attendees to consider how social, cultural, and technical knowledge can be integrated in ways that promote equitable outcomes while remaining attentive to the dynamics of power within these processes. Bradford emphasized the importance of recognizing whose voices are heard, whose expertise is valued, and how accountability is maintained. Framing equity not only as an outcome but also as an ongoing practice, she highlighted the need for continual reflection, humility, and collaboration across disciplines, communities, and knowledge systems. She concluded that pathways to equity are not designed in isolation; rather, they are collectively built through relationships grounded in care, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

Panel Discussion #1



After the icebreaking activity, Jim Woodcock introduced Dr. Geoffrey Maina, Dr. Kwame Abukari, and Dr. Deborah L. Sinclair from University of Saskatchewan, Faculty of Nursing (PA Campus). Drs. Maina, Kwame, and Sinclair presented findings from a recent study examining homelessness in Prince Albert and facilitated a discussion on shifting responses from managing homelessness to preventing it. Drawing on survey data collected in 2025 from people experiencing homelessness (PEH), the presentation explored the social, demographic, and clinical factors associated with homelessness and considered how these insights could inform upstream prevention strategies.

A key finding of the study was that approximately 90% of surveyed participants had experienced involvement with the child welfare system (CWS) at some point in their lives, confirming a strong relationship between child welfare experiences and later housing instability that is noted in the literature. The survey also examined a range of characteristics, including age, race and ethnicity, education levels, parental status, age of first homelessness episode, substance use, mental health conditions, and housing experiences over the previous 12 months.

The presenters identified multiple pathways leading to homelessness, including personal factors such as mental health challenges and the desire for independence, interpersonal factors such as family conflict and relationship breakdowns, and broader structural factors including high housing costs, safety concerns, interactions with the criminal justice system, displacement from reserves, and the impacts of emergencies such as fires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The discussion highlighted that many existing responses in Prince Albert are largely downstream interventions, including shelters, transitional housing, affordable housing programs, complex-needs facilities, and case-management services. While these programs play an essential role in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, the presenters emphasized the need to strengthen upstream prevention efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of homelessness before housing loss occurs.

Particular attention was given to the role of family environments and child welfare experiences as significant risk factors. The presenters noted that childhood trauma, family dysfunction, insecure attachment, educational disruption, neglect, and mental health challenges can increase

vulnerability to homelessness later in life. As a result, they advocated for strategies that strengthen families, improve the safety and supportiveness of child welfare experiences, and facilitate successful transitions for youth leaving care.

Several upstream prevention strategies were proposed, including educational continuity, early screening and intervention, substance-use prevention, mentorship programs, and initiatives to improve school retention. The overarching goal of these interventions is **to help at-risk youth thrive rather than merely survive.**

The presentation concluded with an overview of a new community-based research project focused on co-creating a youth homelessness education intervention in Prince Albert. The study seeks to better understand the risks of homelessness among Indigenous youth with child welfare experience and explore how community partners can work collaboratively to reduce these risks. Participants were invited to reflect on the policy and program changes required if child welfare involvement is recognized as a significant predictor of future homelessness and to consider what supports are necessary to ensure safe and successful transitions out of care.

Moderated Break Out Session #1 - Current Challenges

For the first breakout session, participants were divided into small discussion groups to explore current challenges related to homelessness prevention and housing stability within Prince Albert

and surrounding communities. The session was designed to encourage dialogue among participants from diverse sectors and backgrounds, allowing them to share experiences, insights, and perspectives on barriers affecting individuals, families, and service providers. Participants were given 45 minutes for the discussion. The first five minutes were dedicated to introductions and group organization, including identifying the designated notetaker and reviewing the discussion process. Participants then engaged in structured discussions around a series of guiding questions, with approximately 10 minutes allocated to each question. Facilitators and notetakers guided participants through the discussion process (see Appendix A for the full facilitator guide).

The specific questions that were assigned to each table follow:

1. Considering the current situation in Prince Albert, what aspects of housing and other supports are working well, and where are the major gaps or failures? How can these strategies be strengthened to deliver better performance and long-term housing security for those involved in the justice system?
2. What systemic barriers—such as Prince Albert’s housing unit shortfall and limited availability of supportive and transitional units—are preventing those transitioning from the justice system (including women, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2S+, those who have experienced intimate partner violence) from securing stable housing
3. Where are Prince Albert’s justice transition and reintegration programs for individuals returning to the community falling short, and what key improvements are needed to better support successful re-entry?
4. What barriers persist and what supports are missing that would help individuals maintain stability in the long term, beyond the immediate post release period and what changes in

program design, evaluation, or funding models that would help ensure reintegration supports actually lead to measurable improvements in justice transition outcomes?



Five common themes were identified following the roundtable discussions of challenges, such as lack of housing options, system coordination and navigation barriers, gaps in reintegration programming and ongoing support, intersecting health and social barriers, and the need for community-centred approaches.

Lack of Housing Options

Across all discussion groups, participants identified shortages in affordable housing, social housing, supportive housing, and transitional housing as major barriers to successful transitions

“Housing is a major issue—for example, finding an apartment, especially for those released from federal prison.”

from the justice system and the achievement of long-term housing stability. Participants noted that long waiting lists, rising housing costs, and limited housing options for individuals with complex needs further constrained access to stable accommodation. They also highlighted the lack of halfway houses and transitional housing supports for individuals exiting federal correctional institutions, emphasizing the importance of these resources in facilitating successful community reintegration.

Participants also expressed concern about the quality of available housing, particularly for low-income individuals, and identified restrictive zoning regulations as barriers to exploring alternative housing solutions. As a result, access to stable housing was frequently described as a foundational requirement for successful reintegration and long-term stability.

System Coordination and Navigation Barriers

Participants consistently identified fragmented service delivery as a major barrier to successful housing and reintegration outcomes. Discussions highlighted gaps in coordination among housing, justice, health, and social service systems, with many participants noting that organizations often operate independently rather than collaboratively. Inadequate discharge planning, limited communication between and among organizations, and barriers to information sharing were identified as key challenges that can disrupt continuity of support.

“Better outcomes will come from working as a connected system.”

“There are different agencies that exist; with proper communication among each other they will be able to function better and give out their services appropriately.”

Participants emphasized the need for stronger partnerships, coordinated case planning, and improved communication across organizations, particularly before individuals are released from custody. They also described the complexity of navigating multiple systems, noting that disconnected services and unclear pathways can make it difficult for individuals to access the supports they need.

“Systems are too complex and difficult to navigate.”

Overall, the discussions suggest that improving coordination and service navigation is essential for reducing service gaps, strengthening continuity of care, and supporting successful transitions into the community.

Gaps in Reintegration Programming and Ongoing Support

Participants identified substantial gaps in justice transition and reintegration programming. Many felt that individuals often leave correctional facilities without adequate preparation, including housing arrangements, identification documents, employment opportunities, or connections to support services. Roundtable discussions highlighted the limited availability of rehabilitation programming both during incarceration and after release.

“[There is] no preparation in terms of getting back to the community.”

Participants also described significant barriers faced by young people and other vulnerable populations transitioning back into the community, noting that limited post-release supports can undermine successful reintegration efforts.

“People leaving the justice system often struggle to find stable housing and consistent support right after release.”

Transportation barriers were also identified as a challenge, including limited access to transportation to reach shelters, housing services, employment opportunities, and community supports. Participants further highlighted the lack of identification documents and other administrative barriers as obstacles to accessing housing, income supports, and essential services. Participants emphasized the importance of sustained funding and long-term investment to support effective reintegration programs. Short-term or inconsistent funding was identified as a barrier to maintaining services, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring continuity of support for individuals transitioning back into the community. Overall, the discussions suggest that reintegration is often treated as a discrete event rather than a longer-term process. Participants emphasized that short-term interventions alone are insufficient and that successful reintegration requires sustained, individualized support that evolves alongside individuals’ changing needs.

Intersecting Health and Social Barriers

Participants identified mental health challenges, substance use, trauma, and disabilities as significant factors affecting housing stability and successful reintegration. Discussions

“Waiting time for getting a mental health prescription is sometimes 3 months.”

highlighted limited access to mental health and addictions services, long wait times for treatment and prescriptions, insufficient counselling supports, and a lack of specialized services for individuals with complex needs. Participants also noted that these challenges are often compounded by social stigma and discrimination, which can create additional barriers to housing, employment, and community inclusion.

Participants expressed concern that individuals with mental health concerns are frequently judged or excluded, making it more difficult to access opportunities and maintain stability.

“People with opportunities look down on people with mental health issues.”

Several groups also pointed to the impacts of generational trauma, limited addiction recovery supports, and inadequate mental health facilities. The discussions suggest that mental health and substance use challenges cannot be viewed in isolation; rather, they intersect with broader social barriers that can further marginalize individuals and undermine successful reintegration.

Overall, the discussions highlighted that mental health, substance use, service accessibility, and social inclusion are deeply interconnected. Addressing these challenges requires not only improved mental health and addictions supports but also broader efforts to reduce stigma and strengthen social inclusion for individuals facing complex barriers.

Need for Community-Centred Approaches

Findings from the roundtable discussions repeatedly emphasized the importance of involving individuals with **lived and living experience** in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services. Discussions highlighted concerns that people experiencing homelessness or transitioning from the justice system are often excluded from decision-making processes, despite possessing valuable knowledge about the barriers they face and the supports they need.

“Individuals experiencing homelessness are not meaningfully involved in program design.”

There was also strong support for culturally grounded and community-led approaches, including peer supports, Indigenous perspectives, mentorship opportunities, and programs that build on

“Need to shift from a deficit-based to an asset-based approach.”

community strengths. Participants advocated for moving beyond deficit-focused approaches and recognizing the assets, resilience, and expertise that individuals and communities bring to addressing housing and reintegration challenges.

The discussions suggest that sustainable solutions require meaningful community engagement and the inclusion of diverse voices in planning, implementation, and evaluation. Participants emphasized that culturally responsive services, peer support, and lived-experience leadership can help ensure programs are **relevant, accessible, and responsive to community needs**. Moving beyond deficit-based models toward strengths-based approaches requires recognizing community assets, lived expertise, and cultural knowledge as essential components of effective solutions.

Panel Discussion #2



The second panel discussion featured conversations on justice transitions and housing security in Prince Albert, led by Samantha Williams (PA Safe Shelter for Women), Teegan Jeffers (Riverbank Development Corporation), and Serena Stuart (PA Mobile Complex Needs Team Lead), followed by a Q&A session.

Stuart addressed the challenges faced by individuals leaving the justice system and emphasized that inadequate release planning is one of the most significant barriers to successful reintegration. The panel noted that many individuals are released from correctional facilities without stable housing, sufficient income, or access to necessary supports. Particular concern was raised about people on remand, whose release dates are often unpredictable and therefore receive little or no transition planning. The speakers explained that delays in accessing income assistance and the

shortage of affordable housing frequently result in people being discharged directly into homelessness or emergency shelters. The panel further noted that barriers to healthcare, including limited access to family physicians, mental health services, and medications, often complicate the transition process and increase the risk of housing instability.

The discussion then focused on the relationship between housing stability, harm reduction, and support for individuals with complex needs. Panelists highlighted the need for more low-barrier and supportive housing options that recognize the realities of mental health challenges, cognitive disabilities, and substance use disorders. Rather than relying on “one-size-fits-all” housing models, the speakers advocated for **person-centred approaches** that meet individuals where they are and provide the flexibility necessary for long-term housing success. Williams emphasized the value of second-stage housing and outreach supports that help individuals and families develop life skills, access services, and maintain stable housing. The panel also discussed the experiences of **victims of crime, particularly women fleeing domestic violence, who often leave their homes, belongings, communities, and support systems behind**. These individuals frequently face significant barriers related to trauma recovery, income security, and finding safe and affordable housing in a new community. Speakers also noted that **vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness are at increased risk of exploitation and victimization** when appropriate housing and support systems are unavailable.

Another key theme was the importance of continuity of care when individuals transition from correctional facilities back into the community. Speakers described how access to mental health

services, psychiatric care, medications, and primary healthcare is often disrupted upon release, placing individuals at risk of housing instability and further involvement with crisis systems. They stressed the need for greater coordination among correctional facilities, healthcare providers, housing organizations, and community agencies to ensure that supports initiated during incarceration continue after release.

During the Q&A session, an audience member commended the panel for drawing attention to systemic barriers including income support challenges, housing shortages, and service gaps rather than focusing on individual shortcomings. The audience member then asked what training would best prepare staff working in transitional and supportive housing settings to deliver person-centred care while supporting clients with complex needs. In response, the panel emphasized the importance of **trauma-informed care, de-escalation and safety training, and approaches that recognize behaviour as a form of communication often rooted** in trauma and lived experience. Panelists highlighted the need for staff to approach clients with empathy, respect, open-mindedness, and an understanding that each individual's needs and goals are different. They concluded that effective housing and reintegration services must be flexible, individualized, and focused on meeting people where they are, rather than expecting clients to adapt to rigid program structures.

The Q&A session continued with further audience engagement on issues related to housing access, service coordination, and community supports for people transitioning from the justice system. The discussion reinforced the need for increased housing availability, low-barrier and

supportive housing models, stronger cross-sector collaboration, and person-centred approaches that address the diverse needs of individuals affected by homelessness, victimization, mental health challenges, and justice system involvement. Overall, both panelists and participants emphasized that **stable housing is a critical foundation for successful reintegration, improved well-being, and long-term community inclusion.**

Moderated Break Out Session #2 - Current Opportunities/Recommendations for Action

Following the second panel discussion, the second breakout session proceeded with the members of the Pathways to Equity Working Group facilitating the discussions and notetakers documenting insights at each table. The specific questions that were assigned to each table follow:

1. What opportunities can Prince Albert build on to expand affordable, supportive, and transitional housing? Where do you see the greatest potential for immediate progress?
2. How can housing programs better integrate wraparound supports—such as mental health care, cultural supports, or employment pathways—to improve long-term stability for people seeking housing in Prince Albert?
3. What changes or innovations could strengthen reintegration supports for individuals returning to the community, particularly regarding stable housing, coordinated case management, or culturally informed services?

4. How can justice services, housing providers, Indigenous organizations, and community agencies work together more effectively to create more successful justice-transition pathways in Prince Albert?



Four themes emerged from the roundtable discussions, highlighting key opportunities and recommendations for action: Integrated Housing and Supportive Solutions, Strengthening Transition Programming and Wraparound Supports, Advancing Community-Led and Culturally Responsive Approaches, and Investing in Prevention and Long-Term Sustainability

Integrated Housing and Supportive Solutions

Participants identified expanding housing availability as a key opportunity to improve housing stability and support successful transitions for individuals experiencing homelessness or returning to the community following justice system involvement. Discussions highlighted the need for increased access to affordable, supportive, and transitional housing options, particularly for individuals with complex needs and those leaving correctional institutions.

“We should move quickly on partnerships.”

Participants emphasized the importance of expanding transitional housing options, including halfway housing, to provide individuals with a stable pathway between institutional settings, shelters, and long-term housing. They also identified opportunities to increase housing capacity by making better use of existing community resources, including repurposing abandoned homes, underutilized buildings, church spaces, and other community facilities.

Participants noted that expanding housing supply requires addressing broader barriers that affect housing development and accessibility, including restrictive zoning bylaws and NIMBYism or

community resistance toward supportive housing developments. Discussions highlighted the need for more flexible and inclusive approaches that allow communities to develop housing solutions that respond to local needs. Participants also identified opportunities to strengthen partnerships with housing providers, landlords, and community organizations to increase housing availability. Suggestions included working with landlord associations, creating incentives for housing providers, and developing innovative housing models that promote both affordability and community connection. Overall, participants viewed expanding housing options as a critical foundation for improving housing security, particularly when combined with the appropriate supports needed to help individuals successfully maintain housing.

Strengthening Transition Programming and Wraparound Supports

Participants emphasized that successful reintegration requires more than a single intervention or short-term assistance. Discussions highlighted the importance of providing coordinated, ongoing supports that begin before individuals return to the community and continue throughout their transition toward long-term stability. Participants identified opportunities to strengthen transition planning by ensuring individuals have access to essential supports before and after release, including housing arrangements, identification documents, employment pathways, rehabilitation programming, and connections to community-based services. Participants emphasized that reintegration should be understood as an ongoing process rather than a one-time transition event.

“There is no preparation in terms of getting back to the community.”

Participants also highlighted that housing stability depends on more than providing a physical place to live. Individuals require practical supports that help them develop the skills, resources, and confidence needed to maintain housing and participate successfully in the community.

“People need more than a house. Teach them how to manage themselves in the home.”

Participants identified several areas where additional supports could strengthen long-term outcomes, including life-skills development, financial management, employment opportunities, mental health and addictions services, mentorship, and access to professional support workers. Discussions emphasized that individuals should be supported in developing essential skills rather than being expected to manage complex responsibilities without adequate preparation.

Participants further emphasized the importance of individualized and person-centred approaches that recognize differences in individuals’ experiences, needs, and circumstances. Participants highlighted the need to consider factors such as trauma, mental health challenges, substance use, disabilities, and previous experiences with systems when designing support approaches. The roundtable discussions also highlighted the opportunities to improve connections among justice services, housing providers, health services, Indigenous organizations, and community agencies. Stronger communication, shared planning, and coordinated referrals were viewed as important strategies for ensuring individuals can access appropriate supports at the right time.

Overall, participants viewed successful transition as requiring a connected continuum of supports that combines housing, rehabilitation, health services, employment opportunities, and community relationships to promote long-term stability.

Advancing Community-Led and Culturally Responsive Approaches

Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that programs and services reflect the experiences, strengths, and knowledge of the communities they aim to support. Discussions highlighted the need for meaningful involvement of individuals with lived experience, Indigenous organizations, and community members in designing and improving housing and reintegration approaches.

Participants identified opportunities to move beyond deficit-based approaches by recognizing community strengths, lived expertise, cultural knowledge, and resilience as important resources for developing effective solutions. Participants emphasized that individuals experiencing homelessness or transitioning from the justice system should have meaningful opportunities to contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

“Our workforce needs to be represented by our community.”

Participants highlighted the value of culturally responsive services, Indigenous-led approaches, peer support, mentorship, and opportunities for community connection. Discussions emphasized

“Reconciliation is not money; it is action.”

that healing and reintegration are strengthened when individuals can access supports that are culturally relevant, relationship-based, and grounded in lived experience. Participants also noted the importance of moving beyond symbolic commitments toward meaningful action and sustained partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Overall, participants viewed community leadership and culturally responsive approaches as essential components of effective housing stability and reintegration efforts.

Investing in Prevention and Long-Term Sustainability

Participants emphasized the need to shift from reactive responses toward prevention-focused approaches that address challenges before they escalate into crises. Discussions highlighted concerns about short-term solutions, repeated research without implementation, and limited long-term investment in programs that support housing stability, mental health, and community well-being.

“Moving towards action on the solutions found is very important rather than keep doing the same research all over again.”

Participants identified opportunities to strengthen prevention through sustained funding, improved evaluation practices, evidence-informed decision-making, and greater investment in early intervention. Participants emphasized that addressing challenges earlier can reduce long-term social and economic impacts associated with homelessness, addiction, and justice involvement.

Participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring programs have sufficient and consistent resources to maintain effective services over time. Short-term funding cycles were identified as barriers to building sustainable programs, maintaining partnerships, and providing continuity of support for individuals. Overall, participants emphasized that lasting change requires moving from crisis response toward long-term planning, prevention, and investment in solutions that address underlying causes of housing instability and social exclusion.



At the conclusion of the workshop, Nadia Sedaghat, Research Assistant, with the support of notetaker Sonia Arifa, synthesized and presented the key themes, ideas, and recommendations that emerged from the breakout group discussions. Sedaghat highlighted common challenges, priorities, and potential strategies identified across the various groups. The presentation also offered participants an opportunity to learn from discussions held at other tables, identify shared concerns and priorities, and reflect on collective recommendations for addressing justice transitions and housing security in Prince Albert.

CONCLUSION

Discussions throughout the workshop highlighted a range of interconnected challenges and opportunities related to housing stability, justice transitions, and community reintegration in Prince Albert. Participants identified several key barriers affecting individuals returning to the community following justice system involvement, including limited housing options, fragmented service systems, gaps in reintegration supports, mental health and substance use challenges, and the insufficient inclusion of lived experience perspectives in decision-making processes.

A recurring message across the discussions was that housing stability cannot be addressed through housing interventions alone. Participants emphasized the importance of coordinated and person-centred approaches that integrate housing, health, mental health, addictions, employment, cultural supports, and community connections. Successful reintegration was consistently described as a long-term process that requires sustained support rather than a series of short-term interventions.

Participants also identified numerous opportunities to strengthen current approaches. These included expanding affordable, supportive, and transitional housing options; improving coordination and communication across organizations and systems; investing in wraparound services; strengthening culturally responsive and community-led initiatives; and increasing the involvement of individuals with lived and living experience in planning and decision-making. Across all discussions, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration among housing providers, justice services, Indigenous organizations, governments, and community agencies.

There was a shared recognition that improving housing stability and reintegration outcomes requires coordinated action, long-term investment, and a stronger focus on prevention.

Overall, the findings highlight the need for integrated, community-informed, and sustainable approaches that address both immediate housing needs and the broader social, economic, health, and cultural factors that influence long-term stability and successful community reintegration in Prince Albert.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand affordable, supportive, and transitional housing options, with particular attention to individuals transitioning from the justice system.
- Explore opportunities to repurpose vacant, underutilized, and community-owned spaces to increase housing capacity and improve access to transitional housing.
- Strengthen coordination, communication, and information sharing across housing, justice, health, Indigenous, and community organizations to support more seamless service delivery.
- Implement coordinated and individualized reintegration planning that begins prior to release and continues through the transition back into the community.
- Increase access to education, employment, mentorship, transportation, and life-skills supports that promote long-term housing stability and successful community reintegration.

- Improve access to timely, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive mental health, addictions, and other wraparound supports.
- Meaningfully involve individuals with lived and living experience in program design, service delivery, evaluation, and decision-making processes.
- Support Indigenous-led, culturally grounded, and community-based approaches that strengthen relationships, belonging, healing, and social inclusion.
- Increase investment in prevention-focused initiatives and provide stable, long-term funding for housing, reintegration, and community support programs.
- Strengthen public awareness and community education efforts to reduce stigma and improve understanding of the barriers faced by individuals experiencing housing instability and justice-system involvement.
- Support person-centred housing approaches that recognize and respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of individuals transitioning from the justice system.

APPENDIX A

Facilitator Guide for Pathways to Equity Workshop Justice Transitions and Housing Insecurity

EA Rawlinson Centre 142 12th Street West

April 14, 2026

Break-out Sessions: Session One 11:30 am – 12:15 pm / Session Two 1:15 pm – 2:00 pm

Session One (11:30 am – 12:15 pm): This session will last 45 minutes. The first 5 minutes will allow participants to settle in and introduce themselves. Once in your discussion group, introduce yourself and your notetaker (listed below) and then describe the process (see pp. 2-3). You will have 10 minutes to discuss each question. One of our assistants will let you know when it is time to move on to the next question.

Facilitator	Notetaker
Isobel Findlay	Chinwendu Ikwegbu
Andrea Kotlar	Lydia Ndambuki
Jim Woodcock	Penny Sanz
Remi Kusimo	Naushin Afzal
Rosmary Martinez	Chinaza Mojekwu

1. Considering the current situation in Prince Albert, what aspects of housing and other supports are working well, and where are the major gaps or failures? How can these strategies be strengthened to deliver better performance and long-term housing security for those involved in the justice system?
 2. What systemic barriers—such as Prince Albert’s housing unit shortfall and limited availability of supportive and transitional units—are preventing those transitioning from the justice system (including women, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2S+, those who have experienced intimate partner violence) from securing stable housing?
 3. Where are Prince Albert’s justice transition and reintegration programs for individuals returning to the community falling short, and what key improvements are needed to better support successful re-entry?
 4. What barriers persist and what supports are missing that would help individuals maintain stability in the long term, beyond the immediate post release period and what changes in program design, evaluation, or funding models that would help ensure reintegration supports actually lead to measurable improvements in justice transition outcomes?
- **Session Two (1:15 pm – 2:00 pm):**
 1. What opportunities can Prince Albert build on to expand affordable, supportive, and transitional housing? Where do you see the greatest potential for immediate progress?

2. How can housing programs better integrate wraparound supports—such as mental health care, cultural supports, or employment pathways—to improve long-term stability for people seeking housing in Prince Albert?
 3. What changes or innovations could strengthen reintegration supports for individuals returning to the community, particularly regarding stable housing, coordinated case management, or culturally informed services?
 4. How can justice services, housing providers, Indigenous organizations, and community agencies work together more effectively to create more successful justice-transition pathways in Prince Albert?
- **Facilitation Process:**
 1. My role is to guide and animate the discussion, to ensure all voices around the table have equitable opportunities to contribute and to keep us focused on the purpose of this table discussion. Our notetaker will be taking notes and we can help them get an accurate record of discussion.
 2. The purpose of this group discussion is to learn and listen to others, to share our own perspectives and experiences related to justice transitions and housing insecurity. Overall, we hope to:
 - a. Identify priority areas for action
 - b. Identify priority research areas
 - c. Discover areas of expertise, interest, and community capacity.
 3. Small group discussion guidelines:
 - a. Everyone is welcome to share – their experiences are valid regardless of their background. We encourage everyone to participate as fully as they wish.
 - b. Everyone can introduce a new topic that is relevant to the discussion.
 - c. We appreciate and respect that some people are here to listen and to learn.
 - d. We won't invite you to speak if you signal that you'd rather listen.
 - After the group discussions, Research Assistant Nadia Sedaghat will present group findings and priorities to the larger group in a report back session for feedback (2:00 pm-2:15 pm).
 - The final session (2:15 pm – 2:30 pm) will aim to produce a concluding statement or manifesto to which the plenary group can agree.
 - 4. At the end of the day, we will gather all the flip chart sheets to draft a report of the day's proceedings and findings.
 - 5. Facilitators will encourage the group to fill out the end of workshop survey and indicate their interest in participating in/developing workshops and other action on justice transitions and housing security.
 - 6. Any questions before we begin?



COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

432 - 221 Cumberland Avenue

Saskatoon, SK S7N 1M3

Phone: 306.966.2121

<https://cuivr.usask.ca/>

