



strategic plan

2019–2024



a home for every person



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the land we work on

RainCity Housing acknowledges that our buildings and programs are located and operate on the unceded ancestral homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Shishalh, Kwikwetlem, Katzie, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, Tsawassen, Semiahmoo, and Sto:lo nations.



Over the past five years, RainCity has grown substantially providing vital services to individuals seeking our support, while advocating for systematic change to realize our vision of “A home for every person”. While we provide more services than ever before, the rising cost of living across Greater Vancouver and the ongoing poisoning epidemic continues to increase demand for the caring and innovative housing and services we provide.

As we look forward to the next five years, it is critical we build a strong foundation to ensure we are prepared to support the needs of the communities we serve. This means investing in our most critical resource, our employees, through the following initiatives: Providing a psychologically healthier workplace; Training and developing employees to meet the needs of their roles and continuously improve; Implementing teams, policies and systems to better support the exceptional work of employees; Celebrating successes and identifying and working on areas for improvement.

We also recognize that RainCity is a community leader and we have a role in supporting other organizations providing similar services through partnerships and sharing of our learnings, so together we can develop better solutions to homelessness, marginalization and the ongoing drug poisoning epidemic.

I want to personally thank all of those who have participated in helping us identify directions for our next five years. This plan is the result of input from over 200 employees who participated through surveys and small group discussions. It is also informed by the almost 300 tenants who shared their experiences using our housing and supports through surveys. Thank you to everyone for your thoughtful input.

The plan you have helped shape will help RainCity continue to provide welcoming housing and supports to people who face extreme marginalization and is critical to building safer, stronger and more inclusive communities for everyone.

Jennifer Cudlipp, CPA CGA
Board Chair

RainCity Housing is an organization that continually strives to provide safe, welcoming housing and support options for people who have long term experiences of marginalization. Over the past five years, RainCity has expanded its reach to offer shelter, housing and support in a number of new communities including Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, Richmond, Surrey, Sechelt and Gibsons. Over this five year period we have also worked to develop and grow our Peer Services Department and our Indigenous Services Department to help inform our work and better respond to the issues facing people who we strive to support.

Over these past few years, RainCity, as an organization and a community of people, has been highly impacted by the ongoing poisoning epidemic that has devastated communities throughout British Columbia. Despite our growth, the development of new departments and the ongoing poisoning epidemic, RainCity staff have continued to work together to welcome people inside and address the stigma and discrimination that many of the people we work with confront on an all too frequent basis. We both want to acknowledge and thank all of our staff for continuing to come alongside people in ways that increase their safety, security and sense of belonging.

As this Strategic Plan launches, RainCity is about to open four new housing sites - one in Sechelt, one in Richmond, and two in Chilliwack - where we look forward to offering safe, welcoming housing options to people from those communities.

This Strategic Plan focuses on continuing to strengthen the community of people that make up RainCity by focusing on psychological health and safety in the workplace; training and development for our staff; clear roles and accountabilities for each of us in our respective roles and mechanisms to better track how we are doing and identify areas for improvement. This Strategic Plan also focuses on ways that RainCity can partner with others to continue to influence changes in policies and practices that negatively impact members of marginalized communities. RainCity has a long history of developing or adopting new and emerging practices to better support people in our communities and this Strategic Plan creates a space for this critical work moving forward.

We are looking forward to the next five years as we work together to strengthen the RainCity community and build stronger and more inclusive communities both within our programs and within the wider communities in which we work. We want to thank all of our staff, members of our leadership team and our Board of Directors for continuing to work together to create better housing and support options for people experiencing marginalization in communities throughout the lower mainland.

Catharine Hume
Co-Executive Director

Greg Richmond
Co-Executive Director

RainCity Housing provides housing and supports for people who have experienced various forms of trauma and marginalization and who live with mental health and substance use issues. We currently operate over twenty five programs in six communities across the Lower Mainland providing shelter, housing and supports to over 2,000 people every year. Within these programs, RainCity offers a comprehensive range of services and supports, including meals, peer services, indigenous services, employment and medication supports.

Our origins as an emergency shelter provider has provided us with on-going knowledge of the ways in which services, systems, institutions and the community can all, in their own ways, fail people. This experience, combined with our strong and growing peer and indigenous practice, has created an organisational culture that seeks to develop new and better models and approaches whenever we can.





Since 1982, RainCity Housing has been working to develop better housing and support models to come alongside the people that we work with. Throughout our history we have developed and refined approaches to better respond to the challenges that the people we work with confront.

The current strategic plan is built on the following foundation:

- Fully accessible shelter and housing
- Harm reduction practice
- Recovery orientation
- Housing First approach
- Indigenous initiatives and embedded roles
- Peer initiatives and embedded roles



a home for every person

Our mission is to advance social equity by building upon the strengths of our community and of each individual.

We strive to support the dignity of each human being and the development of more just and inclusive communities.



how we do this work

- **Integrity**
Striving to be transparent and just
- **Hope and Reciprocity**
Building relationships with people and supporting their unique goals and strengths
- **Connection and Community**
Building on ways communities and relationships sustain us, and strengthening our connections to land, culture and family
- **Diversity & Inclusion**
Supporting, employing and allying with people who have diverse backgrounds and experiences
- **Continuous Learning and Innovation**
Being curious about people, reflecting on our work and finding ways to be better at what we do

we strive to ensure people
accessing our services:

- Have safe, affordable and well maintained housing
- Have their nutritional needs met
- Have their healthcare needs met
- Experience increased safety in their lives
- Receive services that are free from stigma

Using the four strategic priorities below as the basis for our planning, we consulted with staff and tenants via surveys and hosted a series of staff focus groups.

Building on this feedback and engagement, we have identified 6 goals for the coming five years.

In light of our sustained growth over the past five years and the current poisoning epidemic which continues to impact our tenants and staff, we have chosen to focus four of our goals on internal development and capacity.



our vision: a home for every person

We strive to support the dignity of each human being
and development of more just and inclusive communities

strive

for accountability
and good practice

partner

with others
to achieve our vision

influence

practice and policy
beyond RainCity

improve

our knowledge,
skills, and practice

our five-year focus:

Workplace psychological
health and safety.

Clear accountabilities and ways to
measure improvement over time.

Demonstrate new ways
of providing housing
and supports.

Share our learning
and experience.

Strong departments
supporting programs.

Agency-wide learning
and development.

how we do our work:

- Integrity, hope, and reciprocity
- Continuous learning and innovation
- Diversity and inclusion
- Connection and community

our foundation:

- Fully accessible shelter and housing
- Recovery-orientation
- Indigenous initiatives and embedded roles
- Harm reduction practice
- Peer initiatives and embedded roles
- Housing First

goal statement 1

improve the psychological health and safety of the workplace

why this is important

Through our staff survey and focus groups this theme emerged as a high priority. Workplaces with a positive approach to psychological health and safety are better able to recruit and retain staff, have improved employee engagement, enhanced productivity and are more creative and innovative. These impacts will translate to our tenant support activities.

objectives:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive action plan to promote psychological health and safety and prevent harm
- Develop a culture of recovery, wellness and resilience

goal statement 2

develop and implement an agency-wide learning and development strategy

why this is important

The area of training and development was identified as a priority in our staff survey and focus groups. Staff and management training and development will help ensure that we are able to provide the best possible services and supports to the people we work with.

objectives:

- Develop learning and development pathways to match departmental and individual needs throughout the employee lifespan
- Identify, develop and prepare pathways for staff interested in management roles

goal statement 3

develop and embed a culture of continuous improvement and collective accountability throughout the organization

why this is important

In order for us to know that we are providing the best possible housing and supports, it is essential that people are clear about their roles and receive feedback to support development. By gathering outcome information we can build on our strengths and identify areas for improvement.

objectives:

- Create a culture of safety in coaching, feedback and joint accountability
- Establish and implement comprehensive systems to measure outcomes and identify and address areas for improvement across departments, programs and individuals

goal statement 4

achieve a scalable and sustainable infrastructure to drive the ongoing operational and strategic goals of the organization

why this is important

As RainCity continues to expand in response to the urgent homelessness crisis throughout the Lower Mainland, we need to ensure that we can adequately support new teams and programs while maintaining support for current programs in areas including finance, human resources, IT, communications and senior leadership roles.

objectives:

- Improve and increase departmental capacity to support programs and teams
- Create and implement standardized processes to support effective and consistent practice

goal statement 5

partner with others in the community to influence system change as it relates to housing and supports for communities of people experiencing marginalization

why this is important

Many of the issues facing the people we work with are rooted in system and policy failures. RainCity is committed to helping influence system and policy change to contribute to more just and inclusive communities.

objectives:

- Partner with others to influence responses to the poisoning epidemic.
- Develop additional objectives for action in year 2–5 of the plan.

goal statement 6

influence change in practice
related to housing and supports
for communities of people
experiencing marginalization

why this is important

Throughout our history, RainCity has developed emerging and promising practices related to housing and support for people who experience extreme marginalization. By sharing our learnings, we contribute to improved responses to people experiencing homelessness and various forms of marginalization and extend our reach and impact.

Specific objectives for this goal will be developed for year 2 of this plan (2020)

vision

a home for every person

mission

To advance social equity by building upon the strengths of our community and of each individual

guiding principles

- Integrity
- Hope and Reciprocity
- Continuous Learning and Innovation
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Connection and Community

our foundation

- Fully accessible shelter and housing
- Recovery-orientation
- Indigenous initiatives and embedded roles
- Harm reduction practice
- Peer initiatives and embedded roles
- Housing First

strategic priorities

- | Strive for accountability and good practice in everything we do
- | Improve our knowledge, skills, processes and how we are organized
- | Influence response to poverty, health inequities and homelessness in our communities
- | Partner with agencies, organizations and communities of people to achieve our mission

goal statements

1. Improve the psychological health and safety of the workplace
2. Develop and implement an agency wide learning and development strategy
3. Develop and embed a culture of continuous improvement and collective accountability throughout the organization
4. Achieve a scalable and sustainable infrastructure to drive the ongoing operational and strategic goals of the organization
5. Influence change in practice related to housing and supports for communities of people experiencing marginalization
6. Partner with others in the community to influence system change as it relates to housing and supports for communities of people experiencing marginalization



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