

To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Cynthia Li

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Subject: Proposal for Studying and increasing information and support surrounding homelessness in communities such as the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre (CDIRCS)

Introduction:

The Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre (CDIRCS) is non-profit organization that focuses on reducing poverty for those who are homeless or at risk, hoping to provide means of independent living. They provide meals, housing, counselling, medical care and access to other services. The Centre partners with stakeholders and other organizations to aid in both short term and long term support.

Statement of Problem:

Centres that are non-profit can be underfunded at times. There is a constant need for support and supplies from many sources which can be challenging. They require involvement from the community itself as well as all levels of government or external organizations when possible and can face obstacles when doing so.

Crises and COVID-19 can impact businesses, employment and housing. Situations such as these put a strain on centre's such as CDIRCS because they are a go-to for people however are not government funded and need to support themselves. In a crisis such as COVID-19 where the government has asked people to stay home if possible and to maintain social distancing, requests such as these have become increasingly difficult for shelters and centres to implement on top of other responsibilities which puts the safety and health of those in or seeking the centres at a higher risk. Different people entering and leaving can become more frequent which in turn opens the door for more risks of contact and without a constant supply of sufficient products, can increase transmission. There may also be a possibility of overcrowding because the government has asked people to stay inside for safety with a variety of other possible obstacles.

Proposed Solution:

Body temperature can be screened with thermometers and more frequent cleaning of common areas. Both require more volunteers or staff members as CDIRCS is open 24 hours. Knowing when the centre is most busy is also helpful in preparation. Masks and gloves can be provided by the government, other organizations or donated. Homemade masks/masks made of cloth that can be donated or made are also an alternative if there are not enough disposable ones.

To increase information on homelessness it is important to not only raise awareness but also provide ways of educating and connecting with others. Doing so can gather more support in volunteers and staff, other organizations and donations. Social media is a good tool to remain present and platforms such as Twitter allow for information to be delivered simply which is easier for a larger audience to digest and to be made aware of. Pages and articles with more details can be linked as well after initially capturing the attention of people. Instagram provides the means of using pictures and videos, visual stimuli to provide information simply and consistently.

Scope:

To identify some of the main challenges, I hope to research about questions ranging from small details to more general inquiries:

- What are the changes to the centre since and have they been fairly smooth or difficult to apply?
 - If smoothly or with difficulty or in-between, why? (eg. generally increase/decrease in people involved, involvement from bigger institutions, awareness etc.)
- When are donations most often made and when is there more of a need for them?
- What are the main methods of extending information to the general public and is that a concern?
 - Is there a target audience?
- Has there been more people or less?
- When during the year or what times during the day is the centre most busy?
- What are the costs of sudden need for an increase in supplies such as gloves and masks?

Methods:

After thoroughly studying the website itself and gathering more information from secondary sources of research such as articles or journals, some questions may be refined or added. I hope to be able to interview staff or volunteer as well as volunteer myself for the primary source of research. More straightforward information, such as increase or decrease in people or busiest times of the day/year may require less time however may not be gathered through a survey. Another secondary source for further research, if necessary, may include statistics (such as Statistics Canada) or research into other strategies centre's have been using or wanting to use.

My Qualifications:

I have volunteered at similar centre's before and have an understanding of some of the roles needed. Other times, speaking with coordinators has provided me with some insight into the operations as well as concerns. These have all brought to light the complexity of maintaining and growing a non-profit organization.

Conclusion:

Decreasing homelessness and alleviating poverty in communities remains a challenge. Beyond bringing awareness, through educating and providing information more support can be gathered. This can include donations and support from organizations. It provides opportunities to improve strategies and apply them through connecting with more people. By addressing some of the questions above as well as any new ones that may arise during interviews, I hope to be able to gather more insight to gauge the plausibility of my proposed solution and improve it. With your approval, I look forward to beginning this project.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Cynthia