

# VI-SPDAT Community Partnership

## Introduction

Project Homefind has been funded through the Homelessness Partnering Initiative--Rural & Remote Projects. One of the project's objectives is to develop a shared sustainable and dynamic community data base on local homelessness. The training session was held on October 29, 2014. Enumeration began on January 1, 2015. This data base will be available at [www.makingkenorahome.ca](http://www.makingkenorahome.ca)

## Homelessness Data Base

The data base will be developed using the VI-SPDAT. It is a common measurement tool that is widely used and can be completed within 10 minutes. Each test is to be completed only once per calendar year per person. Key to building and maintaining the data base will be community partners who commit to administering the tool when appropriate and forwarding the anonymous data to the collator. The collated data will be accessible on an ongoing basis through a shared space.

We hope to engage multiple sectors in this partnership. Participation won't be onerous and there are multiple benefits for our partners as well as our community.

## Partnership Benefits

- The completion of a VI-SPDAT informs the partnering agency of the client's presenting issues.
- The VI-SPDAT assessment component will automatically prioritize according to vulnerability risk.
- The completed VI-SPDAT identifies housing support needs for planning purposes.
- The VI-SPDAT screening provides a base line for tracking an individual's life improvements for ongoing clients.

## Community Data Base Benefits

- The collated data will be available to local agencies for strategic planning purposes.
- The data base will enhance community planning for addressing local homelessness.
- The use of a widely accepted common measurement tool for homelessness will enable intercommunity comparisons of the issue for broader planning on regional, provincial and national levels.

## Process

### **1. Identification**

When an individual identifies as homeless as an issue, the community partner asks the person has completed a VI-SPDAT within the calendar year. If they have been unassessed, the partner explains the purpose, process and confidentiality of participation in the project. If consent is obtained, the questionnaire can be completed.

### **2. Questionnaire Completion**

The interviewer can use either a paper or electronic copy of the questionnaire. The procedure is described fully in the VI-SPDAT Manual. Those who administer the tool report that the completion time improves with practice as the interviewer becomes more familiar with the definitions provided.

### **3. Data Submission**

The interviewer ensures that the individual's is deleted from the electronic copy before forwarding the data to [makingkenorahome@hotmail.com](mailto:makingkenorahome@hotmail.com). Once completed, the copies of the completed questionnaires may be kept by the partnering agency for their own files or disposed of in accordance with privacy legislation. Once received the homelessness information will be collated with other submissions into a data chart which will be available through the Making Kenora Home website at [www.makingkenorahome.ca](http://www.makingkenorahome.ca).

Because an individual is counted only once a year, the need for VI-SPDAT completion is reduced by comprehensive partnering throughout the community. For example, a VI-SPDAT can be administered on discharge from the jail or hospital, during a counselling session or at the emergency shelter. Once done, the tool does not have to be completed again with an individual until the following year. The ricocheting of marginalized persons between agencies often leads to distorted perceptions of social issues. With community partnering we will develop a more realistic picture of the vulnerability of our homeless citizens.

For further information contact Nan Normand at the Northwest Community Legal Clinic (807) 468-8888 or [normandn@lao.on.ca](mailto:normandn@lao.on.ca).