

## Changes in informal access to selected indoor public spaces in Toronto: Winter 2020/21

February 3, 2021

*Learn more about this project and download maps and fact sheets:  
[Changes in informal access to selected indoor public spaces in Toronto](#)*

This is a summary of an information-gathering and mapping project by staff at MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital, which is a site of Unity Health Toronto. Our goal was to explore the loss of access to specific types of indoor public space during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to examine if the City of Toronto's "Winter Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness" and "Winter Services Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness" address these losses.

We did not assess how welcoming specific public spaces are or were to people looking to come in out of the cold. There will be significant variation between different community centres, libraries, coffee shops and restaurants.

We did our best to verify all information associated with this project. Please note, this project is not intended as a resource, and maps and information will not be updated. We welcome clarifications and corrections. Please contact us at: [info@maphealth.ca](mailto:info@maphealth.ca).

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## What we did

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- Examined the City of Toronto's "Winter Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness" for 2019/20 and 2020/21, and the "Winter Services Plan" for 2020/21.
- Monitored the City's daily shelter census in late January for capacity and occupancy, with a particular focus on respite and warming centres.
- Called city-run community recreation centres and libraries to ask about drop-in access during the various stages of "lock down" in 2020/21.
- Mapped 24-hour fast food restaurants and coffee shops on "blue line" night bus routes that were open in the winter of 2019/20.
- Looked at changes to the Out of the Cold program.
- Looked at changes to indoor access in drop-in centres affiliated with the Toronto Drop-in Network.
- Learned more about the role of ventilation and filtration in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in indoor paces.
- Compiled funding opportunities related to ventilation and filtration.

## What we found

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There is a severe lack of access to public, indoor space in the winter of 2020/21, even during cold weather alerts. The City of Toronto's "Winter Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness" and subsequent "Winter Services Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness" do not address this lack of access.

It is important to note that while the situation has been exacerbated by the pandemic, the lack of safe, accessible, indoor space in Toronto, in particular during the winter, is a longstanding issue.

## What we recommend

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### *For the City of Toronto*

The current lack of access to indoor public space underlines the urgency of asks that have been coming for months from people and groups across Toronto.<sup>1,2</sup> These include the need for the City to:

- Place an immediate moratorium on encampment evictions and stop seizure of survival equipment such as tiny homes and tents.
- Outfit encampments with necessities such as winter survival gear and access to sanitation.
- Immediately add enough hotel rooms so that everyone who wants one has access to one.

- Embed overdose prevention and harm reduction supports onsite, and ensure that a large number of these hotel rooms are in the downtown core.
- Use all resources necessary to ensure that people have access to quality, permanent housing.

We also recommend that the City:

- Communicate clearly that Toronto is in crisis. Many people who look for access to safe, appropriate indoor space this winter will not find it. City documents and communications do not convey this reality.
- Open additional 24-hour warming centres and leave them open indefinitely.
  - Prioritize ventilation and filtration and use only a small fraction of allowed occupancy to help reduce the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19.
  - Identify appropriate space that is not being used. Our survey of city-run spaces turned up many buildings that are currently closed. Choose areas where warming space is needed, and then identify empty buildings with large spaces, appropriate facilities, and good ventilation and filtration. There are many ways to improve ventilation and filtration in congregate spaces, see [here](#) for more information.
  - Provide a safe, welcoming and dignified space with staff who understand Cultural Safety. Include meals, activities, and appropriate facilities such as comfortable places to rest and sufficient washroom space. Ensure staff are well-supported by the City to deliver these services.
  - Provide TTC access to people living outside, in shelters, and in precarious housing in order to make sure people can get to warming centres.
- Make it simple for people to figure out how and where to access indoor space during the different stages of lockdown. It took a team of researchers who had unlimited access to internet and phones weeks to understand what was available during the different stages of lockdown. In some cases, we still remain unsure.
- Support people working in libraries and community centres to appropriately direct people who are looking for access to indoor space.
- Provide support to community agencies that want to re-open indoor drop-in space. This includes: providing resources to [optimize ventilation and filtration](#); ensuring access to appropriate personal protective equipment for everyone in the space; assessing appropriate occupancy levels given airborne transmission; and training and support for management and staff on additional protocols such as screening and infection prevention and control.

### *For community agencies*

Community agencies with large, unused spaces may want to consider adding some hours during which they provide access to a warming space. To help reduce the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19 these should be large spaces with very low occupancy, and good ventilation and filtration. There are many ways to quickly improve ventilation and filtration in congregate spaces, see [here](#) for more information. For a guide from Toronto Public Health for warming spaces, see [here](#).

### *For hospitals*

If people cannot be referred directly to an indoor space, and want to stay at the hospital, please do everything possible to facilitate this. Right now, people "discharged to homelessness" may have no option at all to go inside, day or night.

## **Detailed findings**

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### *City data and Winter Plan*

The City's own data makes it clear that many people have been left without access to indoor space this winter. According to the City's daily shelter census, at the end of January 2021, shelters were close to capacity, and respite and warming centres were full.<sup>3</sup> City data also demonstrates that in the first two weeks of November 2020, an average of 38 people a day were unable to find space when they called Central Intake for a bed.<sup>4</sup> This situation could have been predicted based on the City's Winter Plan. In the fall of 2020, community groups estimated that well over 1,000 people were sleeping outside.<sup>5</sup> The City's Winter Plan, however, added somewhere between 560 and 680 spaces. (The Winter Plan press release lists 560 new spaces; the linked backgrounder lists 620 new spaces; the "Winter Services Plan" lists 680 new spaces.)<sup>6,7,8,9</sup>

Both City data and experiences reported on social media and in the mainstream press demonstrate that not everyone who looks for safe, appropriate, indoor space this winter will find it. However, City communications consistently under-represent the degree to which Toronto is in crisis. For example, the press release for the City's Winter Plan includes quotes from City officials that give the impression that all who want it will have access to safe and appropriate indoor space.<sup>6</sup> In addition, communications from City officials often seem to suggest that people who remain outside do so in the face of reasonable options to "come inside."<sup>10</sup>

### *Respite and warming centres*

Combined respite and warming centre capacity is down approximately 40 per cent over last year. In 2019/20, combined respite and warming centre capacity was 514.<sup>11</sup> In 2020/21, it was 319.<sup>12</sup> It should also be noted that there is a discrepancy between the respite and warming centre capacity listed in the City's Winter Plan for 2020/21 (371), and the capacity listed on the City's shelter census for the night of January 31 (319).

### *Respite centres*

In 2019/20, there were seven respite centres, with a combined capacity of 464.<sup>11</sup> In January 2020/21, the City had six respite centres, with a combined capacity of approximately 174.<sup>13</sup> Respite centres operate year-round, 24/7. In City documents, respite centres are described as prioritizing, "ease of access to safe indoor space."<sup>14</sup> It seems, however, that at least some are operating similarly to bedded programs, with many spaces accessed through phone call booking. As a result, there may be less "ease of access to safe indoor space" than indicated in the Winter Plan. According to the City's shelter census

on January 31 2021, respites were at 98 per cent capacity, with three spots available city-wide. Most areas of the city do not have a respite centre.

### *Warming centres*

In 2019/20, there was one warming centre with a capacity of 50 people. In January 2020/21, the City had four warming centres, with a combined capacity of between 130 and 145 people.<sup>15</sup> Warming centres are open only when an extreme cold weather alert is called, or when the City otherwise deems it appropriate to do so. The current threshold for a cold weather alert is -15. On the night of January 31 2021, warming centres were at 98 per cent capacity, with three spots available city wide. Most areas of the city do not have a warming centre.

### *Libraries and community centres*

Many community centres and some libraries have shut down due to pandemic restrictions. This is significant loss of space for people who depend on these spaces for a broad range of uses and activities. As of this writing, libraries that remain open no longer offer access to indoor space. Community centres that remain open offer access to bathrooms, with a very small number offering access to showers as well.

It was difficult to figure out what is being offered at libraries and community centres during the different stages of lock down. While libraries seemed to have updated information on their websites, we learned more detail when calling. In the case of community centres, we had to call each one individually to get a sense of what was on offer, particular during the December set of pandemic restrictions. As the province shifts restrictions over time, it may become increasingly difficult for people to figure out if and how to access indoor spaces at libraries and community centres. This is particularly true for people with limited or no access to phones or internet.

Notably, some locations told us they frequently have to turn people away, and that they don't know where to refer them. Still others could name spaces that used to be available (such as Metro Hall, which is no longer a warming centre), but weren't aware of current warming centres, or respites.

### *Out of the Colds*

In the winter of 2019/20, there were 16 Out of the Cold (OOTC) programs run at synagogues and churches. OOTC programs generally run from November to March, although this can vary by location. In 2019/20, the 16 OOTCs had approximately 90 overnight beds, and offered dinner and drop-in evening hours to those who stayed overnight. Most programs also extended their dinner and drop-in services to additional people who did not stay to sleep. In combination, the OOTCs offered dinner and drop-in services to an average of 130 people a night who did not stay to sleep.

Shelter, Support and Housing has said that they have replaced the approximately 90 overnight spaces formerly provided by OOTCs “in a central location.”<sup>7</sup> They have not, however, replaced the additional evening drop-in hours previously provided by the OOTCs. The loss of the OOTCs has meant lost evening drop-in capacity in areas where there are no respites or warming centres. For example, five out of the 16 now-closed OOTCs were in midtown.<sup>16</sup> To our knowledge there were no replacement services established in this area.

In the winter of 2020/21 there is only one OOTC-run indoor drop-in program, a dinner on Wednesday and Sunday nights.<sup>17</sup> Several other OOTC-related initiatives, however, continue to run, such as those providing take-out meals.

### *Toronto Drop-in Network drop-in centres*

The Toronto Drop-In Network (TDIN) is an “active coalition of over 50 drop-in centres throughout the City of Toronto that work with people who are homeless, marginally housed, or socially isolated.”<sup>18</sup> TDIN membership includes non-profit agencies and faith-based organizations. Drop-in spaces often include access to washrooms, showers and meals, in addition to community programs. In the winter of 2020/21, the number of drop-ins with the capacity to offer access to indoor space dropped by almost 60 per cent, from 51 to 21. However, many drop-ins that are closed to indoor use are serving take-out meals, and supporting people in various outreach capacities.

### *24-hour coffee shops and restaurants*

In 2019, there were approximately 105 chain restaurants and coffee shops with 24-hour indoor seating that were within 200 metres of a Blue Night Network bus stop. McDonalds had 48 per cent of locations, while Tim Hortons had 46 per cent. The remaining locations include A&W, Fran’s, Denny’s, Burger King and T-Bones. In January 2021, due to pandemic restrictions, all of these coffee shops and restaurants were closed to indoor dining. However, some 24-hour locations were still open for take-out. Bathroom access in these locations was variable.

This is a significant loss of public, indoor, 24-hour space that was accessible by transit overnight. This loss has not been replaced by the City— almost no 24-hour drop-in spaces remain when warming centres are closed. It should be noted that we did not look at how welcoming specific places were to people looking to come in out of the cold, and there will be significant variation between locations. We know, however, that some coffee shops and fast food restaurants were important resources for people, in particular during the winter.

## **Acknowledgements**

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We thank the many people and organizations who helped us think this project through; offered input for the maps, fact sheet and reports; and helped us collect and contextualize information. We appreciate the lengthy phone calls, multiple zoom meetings, and endless email exchanges. Thank you for sharing so much time, thought and care. Special thanks to LLana James for input into the conceptualization of this work.

This project was initiated and carried out by staff at the MAP research centre at St. Michael’s Hospital, with the help of many others, including former MAP staff. There was no associated funding, and we offer particular thanks to staff who worked on this project in whole or in part on their own time. Current MAP staff who worked on this project in alphabetical order by last name: Jessica Demeria, Kimberly Devotta, Kate Francombe-Pridham, Evie Gogosis, Emily Holton, Jesse Jenkinson, Amy Katz, James Lachaud, Alison McFadden, Gary Moloney, Tadios Tibebe, Anne-Marie Tynan and Suzanne Zerger.

## Notes

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1. Ross G & Draaisma M. (Dec. 7, 2020). “Advocates for unhoused people demand that Toronto stop clearing encampments in parks.” CBC news. Available at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/homeless-advocates-moratorium-evictions-encampments-city-parks-1.5831855>
2. “Public statements against encampment evictions.” As submitted to the City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ec/comm/communicationfile-124792.pdf>
3. Daily Shelter Census, City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/research-reports/housing-and-homelessness-research-and-reports/shelter-census/>
4. “Central Intake Shelter Access Data Indicators and Trends – Update.” (Nov. 20, 2020). City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-158747.pdf>, p. 8
5. “Right to Housing in Toronto: Report on encampments in Toronto during COVID-19.” (2020). Right to Housing in Toronto. Available at: <https://right2housingto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/R2HTO-Encampments-Rights-Review-final.pdf>
6. “Toronto’s 2020-2021 winter plan for people experiencing homelessness includes more spaces and enhanced street outreach.” (Oct. 6, 2020). Press release, City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/news/torontos-2020-2021-winter-plan-for-people-experiencing-homelessness-includes-more-spaces-and-enhanced-street-outreach/>
7. “City of Toronto 2020-2021 winter plan for people experiencing homelessness.” (Oct. 6, 2020). Backgrounder, City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/news/city-of-toronto-2020-2021-winter-plan-for-people-experiencing-homelessness/>
8. “Winter Services Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness.” Undated. Available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/housing-shelter/homeless-help/winter-services-plan-for-people-experiencing-homelessness/>
9. Most of the “spaces” in the Winter Services plan clearly refer to single beds or studio apartments. However, there are 120 new units for women listed as part of the Winter Plan, some of which may be two bedroom units. According to the “Winter Services Plan,” tenants are slated to begin moving in in February 2021—it’s unclear when move-ins will be complete. As result it is unclear if “total new spaces added” = “total number of people served,” but that is likely largely the case.
10. Bédard, M & Bond, A. (Dec. 12, 2020). “Should tent encampments be left alone?” Toronto Star. Available at: <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/the-saturday-debate/2020/12/12/the-saturday-debate-should-tent-encampments-be-left-alone.html>
11. “Toronto’s 2019-2020 winter plan for people experiencing homelessness includes specialized services, more spaces and service locations.” (Nov. 6, 2019). City of Toronto: <https://wx.toronto.ca/inter/it/newsrel.nsf/11476e3d3711f56e85256616006b891f/a12733be914680b4852584aa007644f7?OpenDocument>
12. The figure of 319 is the combined capacity for the six respite and four warming centres listed on the City’s daily shelter census for January 31, 2021. The spaces available at Better Living Centre (BLC) are sometimes referred to as “respite spaces.” However, in the City shelter census the BLC is referred to as a “response site.” As a result, we have not included the spaces in the BLC as part of the respite system. The BLC has separate spaces for a warming centre when the City chooses to open warming centres due xto weather conditions. We have included include the BLC’s warming centre in this document.
13. This figure is taken from the City’s daily shelter census for January 31, 2021.

14. "Housing + Homelessness Service Glossary, 2019." City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/9522-housing-homelessness-services-glossary.pdf>
15. Capacity listed for warming centres fluctuated in the daily shelter census, as did capacity for respite centres.
16. Out of the Cold calendar from Dixon Hall, 2019/20. Available at: <https://dixonhall.org/blog-post/the-out-of-the-cold-2019-2020-season-calendar-is-here>.
17. Out of the Cold flyer, 2020/21. Available at: <https://www.streethealth.ca/news/blog/out-of-the-cold>. (**Please note, hours have changed since this flyer was posted.** Please seek out the most recent information before attending or making referrals.)
18. "About TDIN: What is a drop-in?" Available at: [https://www.tdin.ca/about.php#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Toronto%20Drop-in%20Network%20\(TDIN\)?%20In,who%20are%20homeless,%20marginally%20housed,%20or%20socially%20isolated](https://www.tdin.ca/about.php#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Toronto%20Drop-in%20Network%20(TDIN)?%20In,who%20are%20homeless,%20marginally%20housed,%20or%20socially%20isolated).



## Appendix 1 – Methods and data sources – detailed information

February 19, 2021

The focus of this project is informal access to public, indoor space in Toronto during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are different ways to decide what constitutes a space that is “informal” and “public,” and multiple ways to present the data associated with these spaces.

Our goal was to capture spaces available on a walk-in basis, without booking or pre-registration. In practice, however, access to indoor space is in flux across sectors. It was not always possible to determine how some spaces were operating. Informal access to public, indoor space in Toronto will continue to be in flux, and the information included in our maps and final report may stale date quickly.

We detail our decisions and definitions below. We also provide hyperlinks to our sources, so that others can explore the data. Much of this information is also available on the fact sheets associated with each [map](#).

For more information about our data sources or methods, please contact us at: [info@maphealth.ca](mailto:info@maphealth.ca)

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- Libraries and community centres
- Toronto Drop-In Network drop-ins

## Methods and data sources

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### (1) Space definitions and descriptions

#### *Informal public indoor space*

For the purposes of this project, we defined an *informal* indoor space as one that people can access on a walk-in basis, without booking or pre-registration. We also focused on spaces that allow people to come and go, without committing to a specific length of stay. As a result, we did not examine services such as registered programming at community agencies, shelter beds, housing programs, or health care.

In 2020/2021, access processes to indoor spaces are in flux due to shifting pandemic restrictions and COVID-19 outbreaks. Many spaces that would have been categorized as informal in 2019 now have specific access requirements such as pre-registration, or are no longer available for indoor access.

We defined *public* spaces broadly as spaces that are open and accessible to the public, rather than as publicly-funded spaces (i.e. we mapped chain restaurants as well as libraries). Some spaces we included, however, focus on specific groups of people, such as the 24-hour women's drop-ins.

The categories of informal indoor public spaces we mapped were chosen based on the following:

- a) Public accessibility of their information, and;
- b) Capacity as a project team to compile accurate and comprehensive information about a particular type of space within the study time period to ensure the results would be useful and relevant during winter 2020/2021.

This project is not a comprehensive depiction of informal public space in Toronto. We note that there are many spaces that would match our definitions and goals but that have not been included. These include malls, places of worship, internet cafes, independent restaurants and coffee shops, and chain restaurants and coffee shops that are not 24-hour.

Lastly, we did not look at how welcoming specific public spaces are or were to people looking to come in out of the cold. There will be significant variation between sites.

#### *24-hour chain restaurants and coffee shops*

We focused on 24-hour chain restaurants and coffee shops with indoor dining along the TTC [Blue Night Network](#), as these locations represented indoor space that was open and accessible by public transit overnight.

We started by identifying popular chain restaurants that were known to have some 24-hour sites (McDonalds, Tim Hortons, A&W, Fran's, Denny's, Burger King, and T-Bones). We then identified sites that were a short way from the Blue Night Network bus route. This resulted in a list of 536 locations. We then called individual locations and checked websites to determine if these locations had 24-hour indoor seating prior to the pandemic.

Through this process, we determined that, prior to the pandemic, approximately 105 sites offered 24-hour indoor dining overnight along the Blue Night Network. Twenty-four hour locations that were drive-through only or located in hospitals were not included. Finally, there are other chain and independent

restaurants across Toronto that had 24-hour indoor space prior to the pandemic. These locations are not captured in this project.

### *Out of the Cold dinners and drop-in programming*

Prior to the pandemic, Out of the Cold (OOTC) programs ran at synagogues and churches from November to March. They offered overnight bed spaces, as well as dinner and evening drop-in hours to many additional people who did not stay overnight. We explored the dinner and drop-in capacity that OOTCs offered over and above their bedded program, as this represents a change to informal access to indoor space. We did not explore the OOTC bed spaces. The combined overnight beds of the 16 OOTC locations in 2019/2020 [have been replaced by the City](#) in a central location for winter 2020/2021.

### *Allied services*

According to the City's 2019 "Housing and Homeless Service Glossary," allied shelter services constitute ["Emergency overnight spaces that offer a safe, warm indoor space and connections to other supports to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness. Provided to respond to increased demand for homeless shelters and/or operate from a low-barrier approach to serve people who may otherwise not access homeless shelters."](#)

As a result of this definition, we decided to map all services listed under the "allied services" category in the daily shelter census. However, we recognize that, right now, these services may not all be operating as originally intended. We did not map shelters, COVID-19 Hotels, or COVID-19 interim housing, as we did not consider these spaces to be informal indoor space.

The services listed under the "allied services" section of the daily shelter census are: six 24-hour respites, four warming centres and two 24-hour women's drop-ins. We mapped the City's two 24-hour women's drop-ins as part of the [drop-in centre map](#), as they are both members of the Toronto Drop-In Network. We mapped the [respite and warming centres](#) together on a separate map.

### **24-hour respites**

When we use the term respite, we are referring to sites labelled as 24-hour respites on the daily shelter census. They are listed under the category of "allied services." According to the standards set for respites, they ["prioritize ease of access to safe indoor space"](#) and are "generally more accessible, especially to those who are vulnerable and who may not otherwise access shelters."

Based on the description of respites included in City documents, we considered them to be informal indoor space and chose to include them in this project. At present, however, the City website states that, ["Temporary shelter and respite sites may not have space to accommodate walk-in referrals. Calling Central Intake in advance is recommended to minimize unnecessary travel..."](#)

As per the daily shelter census, the City has also opened five 24-hour temporary response sites during COVID-19, with a total capacity of more than 300 spaces. These spaces are listed separately from respites and other allied shelter services on the daily shelter census. We could not find a public definition of response sites that shares how they might be different from or similar to either a shelter or a respite. The City has produced [a map of respites](#)— it includes two out of the five response sites.

### 24-hour women's drop-ins

We included the city's two 24-hour women's drop-ins on the Toronto Drop-In Network Map, as they are members of the Toronto Drop-In Network. They are also listed under the category of "allied shelter services" on the daily shelter census, [and are held to the same standards as 24-hour respite sites](#). Like the respites, the 24-hour women's drop-ins now have more restricted access. According to [information](#) made publicly available through the Toronto-Drop-In Network (accessed on February 19, 2021), one of these drop-ins is "not accepting new referrals at this time" and is "open to current participants only." The other is "not accepting new referrals at this time except through Central Intake."

### Warming centres

Warming Centres are also categorized as "allied shelter services." Unlike respite centres, warming centres are only opened during cold weather alerts, or when the City otherwise decides it's appropriate to do so. They are described by the 2019 "Housing and Homelessness Service Glossary, 2019" as providing "[immediate safe indoor space for people during extreme cold weather alerts](#)."

We chose to map warming centres alongside the 24-hour respite sites as low-barrier options available this winter. However, we are in the process of producing a separate map of the four warming centres only, which will be ready by the end of February, 2021. This is to address our understanding that warming centres are currently more able to receive walk-ins than 24-hour respites.

### *Libraries and community centres*

We used the [Toronto Public Library website](#) to identify library branches. We did not include other libraries in Toronto such as those associated with universities.

We used the [City of Toronto website](#) to identify city-run community recreation centres and arenas. We did not include civic centres, or community centres run by non-profits or faith groups.

### *Toronto Drop-In Network drop-ins*

We included the Toronto Drop-in Network (TDIN) members as part of this project, as they specifically "[work with people who are homeless, marginally housed, or socially isolated](#)." TDIN membership includes non-profit agencies and faith-based organizations. Drop-in spaces often include access to washrooms, showers and meals, in addition to community programs. The city's two 24-hour women's drop-ins are TDIN members, and we have mapped them in this category.

There are other drop-in services and youth spaces available across the city run by the city, non-profits, community health centres, and other agencies who are not members of TDIN. These services are not included on this map and we did not examine whether they currently had easily accessible space. Additionally, we did not include TDIN members on the 2021 map who were providing outdoor services or take-away meals, as our focus was on access to indoor space.

## (2) Decisions and calculations re: capacity and locations

### *24-hour chain restaurants and coffee shops*

We focused on access to the 24-hour indoor dining spaces at chain restaurants and coffee shops. Since all indoor dining space in Toronto is currently closed, there are no 24-hour chain restaurants and coffee shops on the 2020/2021 map.

We did not examine the capacity of each restaurant or coffee shop included in this project. We also did not map bathroom access at these locations. Based on our inquiries, bathroom access at restaurants and coffee shops seemed to be variable.

### *Out of the Cold dinners and drop-in programming*

Capacity data for the 2019/2020 OOTC program was collected directly from OOTC programs by Rafi Aaron, spokesperson for the Interfaith Coalition to Fight Homelessness, and co-chair of the Beth Shalom/Beth Tzedec Out of the Cold program. Our interest was in the capacity of OOTCs to offer drop-in space to people who were not participating in their bedded program.

To calculate the capacity of each OOTC to serve people over and above those participating in their bedded program, we subtracted the capacity for the bedded program from the capacity for the drop-in hours. For example, if an OOTC had the capacity to serve 100 people for dinner, and the capacity to accommodate 50 people overnight, we calculated their additional drop-in capacity over and above their bedded program as 50 people.

We did not include capacity numbers for the one indoor dinner program that is currently available through the OOTC program, which runs at one downtown location, twice a week, as the program was newly-established and evolving when we were finalizing this project. The current OOTC dinner program is supported and administered by a collaborative of volunteers, harm reduction workers, community agencies and faith groups.

### *Allied services and City data*

#### **24-hour respites**

In the [City's Winter Services Plan](#) for 2020/2021, the six respites centres are listed as having a combined capacity of 221. In the context of the shelter census, respite capacity fluctuates somewhat, presumably due to COVID-19 outbreaks. For our combined respite and warming centre map, we chose to use the total respite capacity listed in the shelter census for January 31 2021, the last night available before we began finalizing the project. This number was 174. On February 18 2021, the last night available before we began finalizing this document, this number was 188.

To calculate 2019/20 capacity for both respites and warming centres, we used the [2019/20 Winter Plan](#).

#### **24-hour women's drop-ins**

We did not look at capacity for the 24-hour women's drop-ins, or for any of the drop-ins included in the Toronto Drop-In Network map.

## Warming centres

In the City's Winter Services Plan, warming centres are listed as having a combined capacity of 145. For our combined respite and warming centre map, we chose to use the total warming centre capacity listed in the shelter census for January 31 2021, the last night available before we began finalizing the project. This number was 145. On February 18 2021, the last night available before we began finalizing this document, this number was also 145. All maps included in this project are dated-stamped and are meant as a point-in-time snapshot of available space.

To calculate 2019/20 capacity for both respites and warming centres, we used the [2019/20 Winter Plan](#).

## City Winter Services Plan

In the project summary, we state that the City added between 560 and 680 spaces for winter 2020/21. This was based on available public documents including an [October 6 press release](#), and a subsequent [Winter Services Plan](#).

We estimated that a "space" in the Winter Services Plan was approximately equivalent to an "individual" served. This was a rough estimate based on the types of spaces added through the Winter Services Plan. For example, hotel spaces were referred to as "beds," rather than "rooms," though it is possible that some beds may be shared. Likewise, it is possible that some of the studios or apartments may also be shared.

We considered that this potential increased occupancy would be offset by periodic reductions in capacity due to COVID-19 outbreaks, such as those affecting respite capacity, and the fact that some housing units [will not be at full occupancy until May 2021](#).

Since our report was published, the City has announced additional spaces, such as hotel rooms at 45 Esplanade with an opening date of February 22, 2021. City documents state that at 45 Esplanade, ["205 rooms are available currently with the ability to rent up to the 254-room maximum."](#)

## *Libraries and community centres*

We did not look at capacity for libraries or community centres. Instead, we tried to gauge the degree to which they were available for indoor access during different stages of pandemic restrictions through direct contact with locations, and the use of web resources. As a result, we looked at:

- Whether or not facilities were open or closed.
- What types of access (if any) were offered by facilities that were still open.

We began gathering information in early December 2020, and produced a map on this basis. Given the substantial changes put in place to indoor access in Toronto at the end of the year, we produced another map that reflected the situation in late January 2021.

## *Toronto Drop-In Network drop-ins*

We compared the number of locations that were open in 2019 and 2021 based on two publicly available documents, both produced by the Toronto Drop-in Network. The first is a [schedule from 2019/2020](#). The

second is [2021 google document](#). We note that the google document is a live link, and currently available locations may have changed since our maps were created.

We did not examine changes to capacity within the drop-in centres, but we note that capacity and hours have dramatically reduced in some instances and are often changing.