



Plan to End Homelessness in Sault Ste. Marie

The Kindness Project of Sault Ste. Marie

A five-year community plan — the programs we will run, the targets we will set, and the partnerships that will end homelessness in our city. Dignity first. Judgment-free. Kind Hearts • Stronger Community.

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1. Executive Summary

This plan answers one question: **what will it take to end homelessness in Sault Ste. Marie, and what part will The Kindness Project play?** It has two tracks.

Track 1 — What we run ourselves. Seven grassroots programs we can launch and operate with our volunteers, partners, and the funding streams open to a community organization: street outreach and housing navigation, an eviction-prevention micro-fund, landlord engagement, a transitional housing pilot, harm-reduction housing supports, and youth and Indigenous-led partnership streams.

Track 2 — What we champion city-wide. The units, policies, and system changes we will advocate for alongside the District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board (DSSMSSAB), the City, CMHA Algoma, the Indigenous Friendship Centre, and every partner working to end homelessness. We do not pretend to do this alone — we take our place in a coordinated community effort.

HEADLINE TARGETS (ESTIMATED — FOR THE USER TO CONFIRM)

20	40	150+	500
PEOPLE HOUSED YEAR 1	EVICTIONS PREVENTED YEAR 1	PEOPLE HOUSED BY YEAR 5	

			NEW AFFORDABLE UNITS CHAMPIONED BY YEAR 5
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THE INVESTMENT

The Year 1 program budget is estimated at **\$167,000** **ESTIMATE** — every figure in this plan is a planning estimate prepared for the user to confirm before any use, grant application, or commitment. Funding will be sought from federal Reaching Home dollars (through DSSMSSAB and the Indigenous stream), provincial Homelessness Prevention Program partnerships, municipal support, corporate sponsors, and community fundraising.

This plan is honest about scope: The Kindness Project is a grassroots organization operating as 17441029 Canada Inc. We cannot build apartment towers. What we can do — meet people where they are, prevent evictions before they happen, walk beside people until they are housed, and fight for the housing our city needs — matters enormously. Housing ends homelessness. Everything in this plan points at housing.

2. Why Now: The Local Picture

Homelessness in Sault Ste. Marie is not a distant problem. It is visible, growing, and outpacing the systems built to respond to it.

WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

421 PEOPLE COUNTED AS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, OCT 2024 PIT COUNT	+72% INCREASE SINCE THE 2021 COUNT	+117% NORTHERN ONTARIO HOMELESSNESS INCREASE SINCE 2021
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Source: Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Later (NOSDA / AMO / OMSSA), reporting Sault Ste. Marie's October 2024 Point-in-Time Count, conducted by DSSMSSAB with the local Homelessness Prevention Team. Northern Ontario holds about 5% of Ontario's population and nearly 10% of its homeless population.

WHAT IS ALREADY IN MOTION

- **Reaching Home (federal):** in March 2025 the federal government committed \$3,598,335 to DSSMSSAB and \$3,387,634 to the Indigenous Friendship Centre over four years. Since 2015, the two organizations have received over \$15 million through Reaching Home and its predecessor.
- **Ontario Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP):** DSSMSSAB's 2026 approved budget allocates \$5,102,300 in HPP funding — the province's main prevention and housing-stability envelope locally.
- **Housing Stability Pilot:** a one-year pilot led by DSSMSSAB with the John Howard Society, Niigaaniin, and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services — tenant engagement, mediation, case management, arrears assistance, and eviction prevention funding — backed by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.
- **Prevention pilot:** a \$565,000 federal one-year pilot with housing stability workers, landlord mediation, and financial guidance — with a measurable goal of keeping 42 people housed by March 2027, about a 14% reduction in known homelessness.
- **HART Hub:** Ontario's Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hub opened in Sault Ste. Marie in December 2025, operated with CMHA Algoma and partners — mental health, addictions, and case management services plus shelter and transitional beds.
- **Trinity Tower:** 108 new affordable homes under construction (federal Affordable Housing Fund support), expected completion winter 2026.
- **Coordinated infrastructure:** DSSMSSAB maintains a real-time By-Name List of people experiencing homelessness; the Homelessness Prevention Team coordinates agencies across the full housing continuum; and the Housing Stability Bank provides financial assistance to people at risk of eviction.

WHERE THE GAPS ARE — AND WHERE WE FIT

- **Shelters fill up.** The low-barrier men's shelter (721 Wellington St. E.) runs overnight on weekdays and 24 hours on weekends; Lotus House (235 Wellington St. W.) operates 30 emergency beds plus 8 transitional Bridge Units for youth, women, and families. In winter, demand exceeds capacity and people sleep outside.
- **Prevention is under-scaled.** Eviction-prevention dollars exist, but people fall through the cracks before they ever reach a formal intake — especially after hours, when trust barriers are highest.
- **Navigation is fragmented.** Services are strong individually but hard to navigate as a system for someone in crisis, couch-surfing, or new to the street.
- **Grassroots outreach is missing at scale.** No one is out on the streets every week whose only job is relationship, trust, and walking people toward housing. That is the gap The Kindness Project is built to fill.

A note on data: this plan uses the most recent publicly reported figures available. The current active By-Name List count and detailed shelter occupancy figures are not publicly published; our targets and reporting will align with DSSMSSAB data as it is shared with community partners.

3. Guiding Principles

Every program, target, and partnership in this plan is held to these principles:

- 1. Housing First.** Housing is the intervention. People do not need to earn housing by getting sober, getting treatment, or proving they are "ready." A stable home is the foundation everything else is built on — and supports wrap around the person, not the other way around.
- 2. Dignity first, judgment-free.** Every interaction begins with respect. We meet people where they are — on the street, in a tent, in a shelter, in a landlord's office — and we never make help conditional on who someone is or what they struggle with.
- 3. Indigenous-led solutions.** Indigenous people are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness. Programs affecting Indigenous community members must be designed and delivered with — and where appropriate by — Indigenous organizations, elders, and people with lived experience.
- 4. Lived experience at the table.** People who have experienced homelessness shape our programs, our outreach approach, and our advocacy — not as tokens, but as decision-makers.
- 5. Prevention is kinder and cheaper than crisis.** Keeping someone housed costs a fraction of shelter stays, emergency room visits, and encampment responses — and it costs the person far less trauma.
- 6. Transparency and accountability.** We report what we do, what it costs, and what changed — publicly, every year. If we have the responsibility, we accept the accountability.

4. What Success Looks Like — Housing Targets

Targets keep us honest. The table below sets **estimated targets — for the user to confirm** — across the five years of this plan. "Direct" targets are outcomes The Kindness Project is accountable for through its own programs. "City-wide" targets are system outcomes we champion through advocacy and partnership with DSSMSSAB, the City, and community partners — we do our part, and we hold the system to the rest.

All targets are planning estimates — proposed numbers for the user to confirm, adjust, or replace before this plan is published or used in any funding application.

Target	Year 1 (by Oct 2027)	Year 3 (by Oct 2029)	Year 5 (by Oct 2031)
People housed through our navigation & transitional programs (direct)	20	75 cumulative	150+ cumulative
Evictions prevented through the micro-fund & mediation (direct)	40	150 cumulative	300 cumulative
People engaged through street outreach (direct)	150	400 cumulative	750 cumulative
Active landlord partners (direct)	10	25	50
Transitional units operating (direct)	4	12	20
Affordable/supportive units championed city-wide (advocacy)	108 (Trinity Tower to occupancy)	250 committed	500 committed
Chronic homelessness (city-wide, with DSSMSSAB & partners)	Baseline & measure	Measurable reduction	Functional zero pursued

Year 1's direct targets are deliberately modest: 20 people housed and 40 evictions prevented would already represent roughly a 14% reduction in the known homeless population counted in 2024 —

matching the ambition of the federal prevention pilot now underway locally. Credibility comes from hitting real targets, not promising miracles.

5. Programs We Will Run

Seven programs. Each one is described with what it does, who it serves, who runs it, and what it costs — **every cost figure a planning estimate for the user to confirm.**

P1 — STREET OUTREACH & HOUSING NAVIGATION TEAMS

What it does: weekly street outreach to encampments, shelters, and known outdoor locations — not to "check on" people, but to build the trust that makes housing possible. Navigators help each person get ID, income supports (OW/ODSP), health care, and a housing plan; they connect people to the DSSMSSAB By-Name List and Coordinated Access so no one waits in a vacuum.

Who it serves: unsheltered people, encampment residents, shelter users, and people couch-surfing — prioritizing chronic homelessness and high vulnerability.

Staffing: 1 part-time Housing Navigator (20 hrs/week @ \$17.95/hr) + 6 trained outreach volunteers on rotating teams of 3. Supervised by the CEO/Founder; quarterly case reviews with a partner agency.

Estimated annual cost: \$25,000 **ESTIMATE** — navigator wages (~\$18,700), transportation, phones, ID fees, and outreach supplies.

P2 — KEEP HOME FUND (EVICTION-PREVENTION MICRO-FUND)

What it does: fast, small grants — rent or utility arrears, damage deposits, first/last month's rent, moving costs — for households at imminent risk of losing housing. Decisions within 48 hours. Works alongside (not duplicating) the DSSMSSAB Housing Stability Bank: we catch the people who fall through formal intake, after hours, or through trust barriers.

Who it serves: low-income renters facing eviction notices, arrears, or unsafe housing they must leave; families and youth prioritized.

Staffing: volunteer intake team (2 trained volunteers) + CEO approval for disbursements; simple ledger, receipts, and quarterly review.

Estimated annual cost: \$15,000 **ESTIMATE** — direct assistance for roughly 10–15 households per year at an average of about \$1,000 per household, plus administration.

P3 — LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

What it does: recruits private landlords willing to rent to people exiting homelessness. We offer landlords a single point of contact, a small damage-mitigation guarantee, mediation when tenancies wobble, and tenants with a navigator in their corner. This mirrors the landlord-mediation approach already being piloted locally — we extend it with grassroots relationships.

Who it serves: landlords (who get reliability) and tenants exiting homelessness (who get a door opened).

Staffing: volunteer Landlord Liaison + navigator support; quarterly landlord appreciation and feedback roundtables.

Estimated annual cost: \$5,000 **ESTIMATE** — damage-mitigation guarantee pool and outreach materials; program is volunteer-led.

P4 — TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PILOT (MASTER-LEASE UNITS)

What it does: The Kindness Project master-leases private-market units (Year 1: 4 units) and sublets them to people exiting homelessness with wraparound navigator support, clear house expectations, and a planned move to permanent housing within 6–12 months. A bridge — not a destination.

Who it serves: people ready to leave shelter or encampment life who need a stable address and support to sustain it; coordinated with HART Hub and shelter discharge planning.

Staffing: navigator caseload support + volunteer tenant mentors; partnership with a property partner for maintenance.

Estimated annual cost: \$82,600 **ESTIMATE** — 4 units at ~\$1,200/month average rent (\$57,600), plus \$25,000 in support staffing and tenant start-up costs (furnishings, deposits).

P5 — HARM-REDUCTION HOUSING SUPPORTS

What it does: harm-reduction supplies, naloxone training, safer-use education, and overdose-response planning delivered *in housing contexts* — for tenants in our transitional units, people newly housed, and encampment residents. Delivered in coordination with the HART Hub, CMHA Algoma, and the Community Wellness Bus so clinical care and grassroots outreach reinforce each other instead of duplicating.

Who it serves: people who use substances and are housed, newly housed, or unsheltered.

Staffing: 4 trained volunteers with harm-reduction certification; peer workers with lived experience paid honoraria where funding allows.

Estimated annual cost: \$8,000 **ESTIMATE** — supplies, training, naloxone kits, and peer honoraria.

P6 — YOUTH HOUSING STREAM

What it does: dedicated navigation for youth (16–24) at risk of or experiencing homelessness — family mediation where safe, rapid connection to Lotus House's youth shelter beds and Bridge Units, education and employment links, and aftercare check-ins for the first year after housing.

Who it serves: youth 16–24, including youth aging out of care.

Staffing: 1 part-time youth navigator (shared with P1 in Year 1; dedicated role by Year 3) + 3 trained youth volunteers.

Estimated annual cost: \$6,000 **ESTIMATE** — Year 1 runs inside P1 staffing; covers youth-specific supplies, transport, and activities.

P7 — INDIGENOUS-LED PARTNERSHIP STREAM

What it does: funding and volunteer support that flows to Indigenous-led housing work rather than duplicating it — supporting the Indigenous Friendship Centre's Reaching Home Indigenous stream, Niigaaniin, and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services with outreach volunteers, cultural-event support, and joint advocacy. Program design for Indigenous participants is led by Indigenous partners.

Who it serves: Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, as determined with Indigenous partners.

Staffing: Indigenous advisory circle (elders, partners, lived experience) + dedicated volunteer team.

Estimated annual cost: \$10,000 **ESTIMATE** — partnership contributions, cultural programming support, and joint outreach costs.

6. The Cost of the Plan

Every figure below is a planning estimate — for the user to confirm before any use, grant application, or public commitment. Year 3 and Year 5 figures assume successful fundraising and scale-up; they are planning ranges, not promises.

Program	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
P1 — Street Outreach & Housing Navigation	\$25,000	\$55,000	\$85,000
P2 — Keep Home Fund (eviction prevention)	\$15,000	\$40,000	\$75,000
P3 — Landlord Engagement	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000
P4 — Transitional Housing Pilot	\$82,600	\$180,000	\$275,000
P5 — Harm-Reduction Housing Supports	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$15,000
P6 — Youth Housing Stream	\$6,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
P7 — Indigenous-Led Partnership Stream	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$25,000
Administration, insurance & evaluation (~10%)	\$15,400	\$33,500	\$52,000
Total	\$167,000	\$368,500	\$572,000

Year 1's \$167,000 budget is sized to what a grassroots organization can credibly raise and manage: one part-time navigator, a volunteer-powered outreach corps, a modest eviction-prevention fund, four transitional units, and the partnership streams. Growth in Years 3 and 5 comes from proven results unlocking larger grants — we scale what works, and we say so publicly when something does not.

7. Partnerships — Who Does What

Ending homelessness is a team effort. This table sets out each partner's role and what The Kindness Project brings to the relationship. We seek to complement — never duplicate or compete with — existing services.

Partner	Their role in the system	What we do together
DSSMSSAB / Community Housing & Development	Service system manager; By-Name List & Coordinated Access; HPP & Reaching Home community entity; Housing Stability Bank	Refer navigated clients into Coordinated Access; align our counts with the By-Name List; seek sub-recipient / partnership funding under Reaching Home and HPP
City of Sault Ste. Marie	Municipal housing policy, land use, and the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan	Advocate for affordable-housing approvals and surplus-land use; champion the 500-unit target; participate in community planning tables
Indigenous Friendship Centre	Reaching Home Indigenous stream holder (\$3.39M / 4 yrs); cultural and community services	P7 partnership stream; joint outreach; Indigenous-led design of all Indigenous-facing work
CMHA Algoma & HART Hub	Mental health, addictions, case management; shelter and transitional beds	P5 harm-reduction coordination; warm referrals both directions; discharge planning into P4 units
Lotus House	30 emergency beds + 8 Bridge Units for youth, women, families	P6 youth stream referrals; aftercare for youth exiting shelter
Women in Crisis Algoma	Shelter and support for women and children fleeing violence	Safe referral pathway; no wrong door for disclosures
Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services	Indigenous housing programs and supports	Housing Stability Pilot alignment; P7 joint advocacy
Niigaaniin	Indigenous-led community services	P7 partner; shared outreach and cultural programming
John Howard Society	Justice-involved and at-risk populations; housing supports	Re-entry housing navigation; prevention pilot alignment
St. Vincent Place	Food, clothing, and basic-needs supports	Basic-needs referrals from outreach; joint community events

Sault Area Hospital	Crisis services; discharge planning	Warm handoffs for people discharged into homelessness
211 Ontario	24/7 community services navigation	Every outreach contact leaves with 211; we promote it constantly
Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness	National prevention leadership; Built for Zero methodology	Learn from the local prevention pilot; adopt proven measurement practices

8. Funding Sources

No single funder ends homelessness. The plan blends public dollars, private giving, and community fundraising — and is honest about what fits a grassroots organization that is **not a registered charity**.

Source	What it can fund	Fit for The Kindness Project
Reaching Home (federal) — via DSSMSSAB as Community Entity, and the Indigenous stream via the Indigenous Friendship Centre	Housing navigation, prevention, transitional supports, Indigenous-led projects	Strong fit as a funded partner/sub-recipient. Direct applications typically flow through the Community Entity and Community Advisory Board; we pursue partnership funding, not standalone applications.
Ontario Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) — via DSSMSSAB (~\$5.1M/yr locally)	Prevention, emergency shelter, transitional and supportive housing	Strong fit as a delivery partner. HPP flows through the Service Manager; our P2 Keep Home Fund and P4 pilot align directly with HPP-eligible activities.
City of Sault Ste. Marie — municipal grants and in-kind support	Community grants, fee waivers, surplus land, facility access	Good fit. Pursue community grants and in-kind support (space, permits for clean-ups and events).
Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness / national prevention grants	Prevention pilots, landlord engagement, system-change projects	Good fit. The local \$565,000 prevention pilot shows this door is open; our P2/P3 programs mirror its model.
Foundations	Program grants, capital, capacity building	Fit depends on structure. Most foundations require registered-charity status. Until then: apply through a charitable trustee partner, or pursue foundations that fund non-charities. The charitable-status path is a Year 2–3 strategic decision.
Corporate sponsors & local businesses	Keep Home Fund, transitional unit furnishings, event sponsorship	Strong fit. Sponsorship tiers already exist in our partnership kit; homelessness-plan sponsorship packages to be developed in Year 1.
Community fundraising	Unrestricted dollars for rapid response	Strong fit. Kindness campaigns, clean-up fundraisers, and direct appeals fund the flexible dollars formal grants cannot.

On charitable status: The Kindness Project operates as 17441029 Canada Inc. and is not a registered charity. That keeps us nimble, but it limits access to foundation grants and charitable tax receipts. A Year 2–3 decision point in this plan is whether to pursue charitable registration or a long-term trustee partnership with a registered charity. Either path is compatible with the programs above.

9. Implementation: 1-Year, 3-Year & 5-Year Plan

YEAR 1 — LAUNCH & PROVE (OCT 2026 – OCT 2027)

Quarter	Milestones
Q1 (Oct–Dec 2026)	Finalize this plan with community and partner input; recruit and train 6 outreach volunteers; hire part-time Housing Navigator; launch weekly street outreach; open Keep Home Fund intake; sign first 5 landlord partners; establish Indigenous advisory circle
Q2 (Jan–Mar 2027)	Master-lease first 2 transitional units; launch landlord damage-mitigation pool; begin P5 harm-reduction outreach with HART Hub coordination; first quarterly public progress update
Q3 (Apr–Jun 2027)	Units 3–4 online; 10 landlord partners active; youth stream formalized with Lotus House; first eviction-prevention outcomes reported; apply for Reaching Home partnership funding via DSSMSSAB
Q4 (Jul–Oct 2027)	Year 1 targets assessed: 20 housed, 40 evictions prevented; first Annual Impact Report published; Year 2 budget and charitable-status decision; community celebration of housed neighbours (with consent)

YEARS 2–3 — SCALE WHAT WORKS (TO OCT 2029)

- Grow to 12 transitional units; dedicated youth navigator hired; Keep Home Fund tripled to **\$40,000/yr** **ESTIMATE**.
- 25 active landlord partners; formal landlord association roundtable each quarter.
- Indigenous-led stream co-delivers a culturally grounded housing program with the Friendship Centre and Niigaaniin.
- Advocacy: 250 new affordable/supportive units publicly committed city-wide; Trinity Tower fully occupied with priority access for people exiting homelessness.
- Measurement: three years of outcome data; program evaluations published; unsuccessful approaches named and changed.

YEARS 4–5 — SUSTAIN & FINISH THE JOB (TO OCT 2031)

- 20 transitional units operating; 150+ people housed cumulatively; 300 evictions prevented cumulatively — **ESTIMATED TARGETS**.
- Keep Home Fund at **\$75,000/yr** **ESTIMATE**, with a path to endowment or permanent municipal/provincial funding.

- Advocacy: 500 new affordable/supportive units committed city-wide; functional zero for chronic homelessness pursued as a community-wide goal with DSSMSSAB and partners, measured against the By-Name List.
- The Kindness Project's direct programs become a permanent, funded part of Sault Ste. Marie's homelessness response system — grassroots in spirit, professional in practice.

10. Measuring & Reporting Progress

We measure outcomes, not just activities. Every quarter, leadership reviews the numbers; every year, the community sees them.

WHAT WE TRACK

Indicator	How we count it
People housed	Individuals placed in stable housing through our navigation or transitional units, with 6- and 12-month retention follow-up
Evictions prevented	Households receiving Keep Home Fund or mediation support who remain housed 6 months later
Outreach engagements	Unique individuals engaged by outreach teams, with consent-based records
Landlord partnerships	Active landlords with at least one placement or standing agreement
Transitional unit outcomes	Occupancy, average length of stay, exits to permanent housing
System contribution	Referrals into DSSMSSAB Coordinated Access; alignment with By-Name List trends and PiT Count results
Community voice	Annual feedback from people with lived experience, volunteers, and partners

HOW WE REPORT

- **Quarterly:** internal leadership review of targets vs. actuals; corrective action where we fall short.
- **Annually:** a public Annual Impact Report — programs delivered, people housed, evictions prevented, dollars spent, lessons learned, next-year priorities.
- **Continuously:** outcome data shared with DSSMSSAB to strengthen the community's By-Name List and coordinated response; success stories shared publicly only with explicit consent.
- **Honestly:** when a program does not work, we say so, explain what we learned, and change it. Accountability means reporting the misses too.

11. Our Commitment

Sault Ste. Marie counted 421 neighbours experiencing homelessness in October 2024 — 72% more than three years earlier. Behind that number are people: people we have met on outreach, people sleeping in tents as winter comes, people one missed paycheck from losing everything.

This plan does not pretend The Kindness Project can end homelessness alone. It commits us to our part — the outreach, the prevention fund, the landlord relationships, the transitional units, the walking-beside — and to fighting alongside our partners for the housing our city needs: 500 new affordable and supportive units in five years, and a community-wide drive toward functional zero for chronic homelessness.

We will lead with kindness. We will operate with integrity. We will measure what matters. And when we fall short, we will say so and do better.

Kind Hearts • Stronger Community

Compassion in Action. Hope in the Community.

PLAN APPROVAL

BRANDON CRACK, CEO/FOUNDER — SIGNATURE

DATE

Sources: Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Later (NOSDA/AMO/OMSSA); DSSMSSAB 2026 Approved Budget (Housing Services); DSSMSSAB Homelessness Prevention program page; federal Reaching Home funding announcement, March 7, 2025 (MP Terry Sheehan); Sault Business Matters / SooToday Point-in-Time Count coverage, October 2024; Ontario HART Hub announcement, December 2025. All dollar figures and numeric targets in this document are planning estimates for the user to confirm.