

Encampments: A Homelessness Crisis



AMO: Homeless Encampments in Ontario: A Municipal Perspective

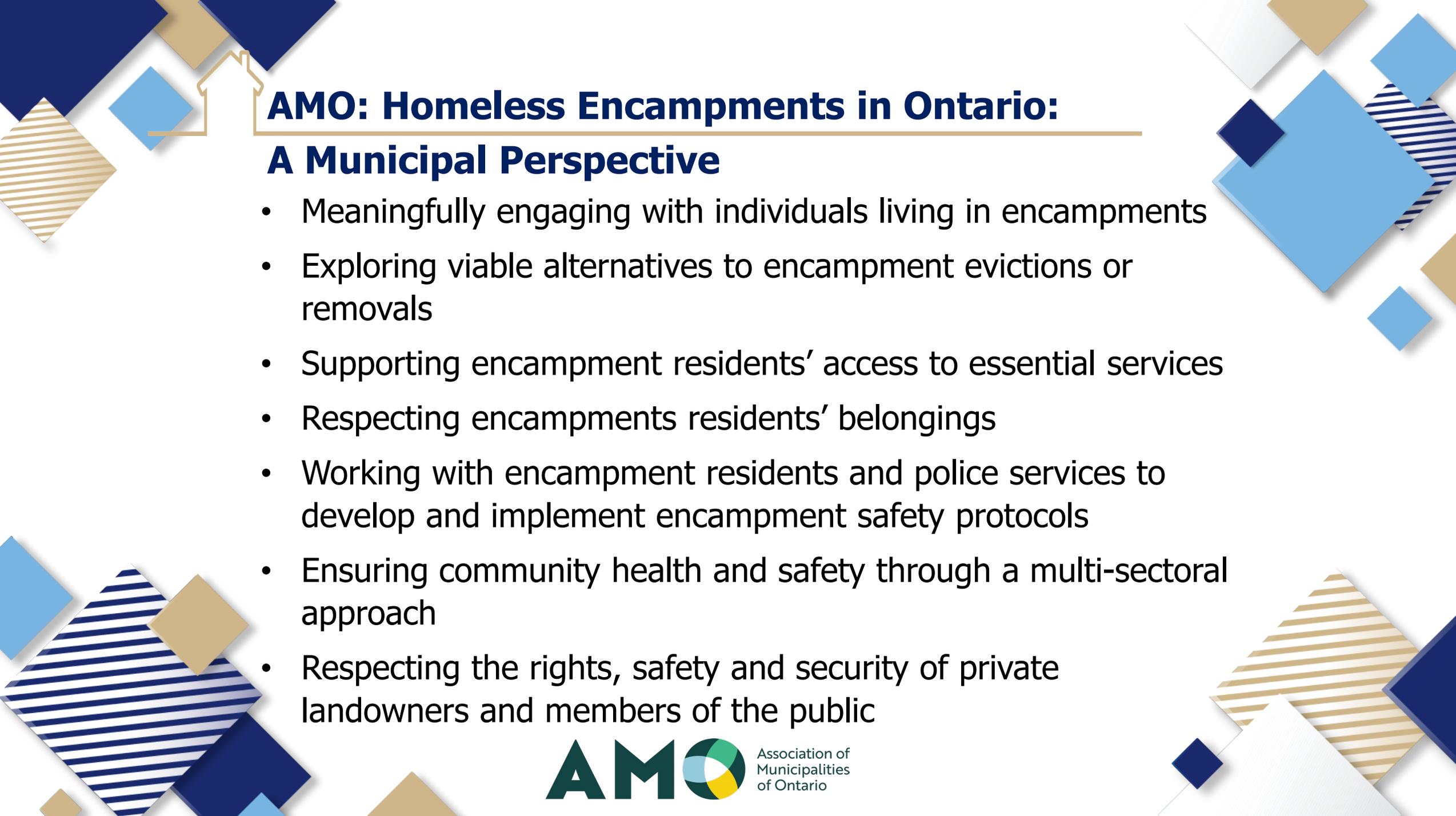


July 2, 2024



Homeless
Encampments
in Ontario:

A Municipal Perspective



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- Meaningfully engaging with individuals living in encampments
- Exploring viable alternatives to encampment evictions or removals
- Supporting encampment residents' access to essential services
- Respecting encampments residents' belongings
- Working with encampment residents and police services to develop and implement encampment safety protocols
- Ensuring community health and safety through a multi-sectoral approach
- Respecting the rights, safety and security of private landowners and members of the public



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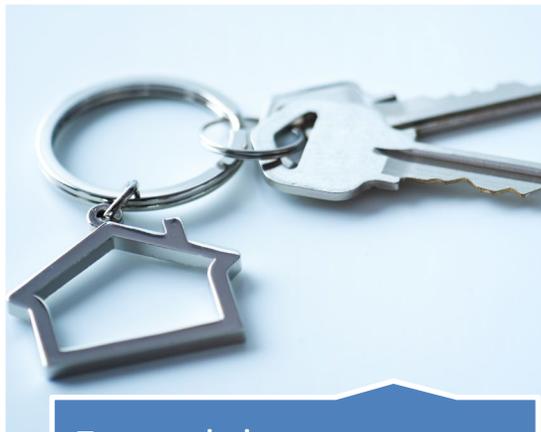
Growing income
insecurity

Insufficient
supply of
deeply
affordable
Housing

Inadequate
approach to
mental health
and addictions



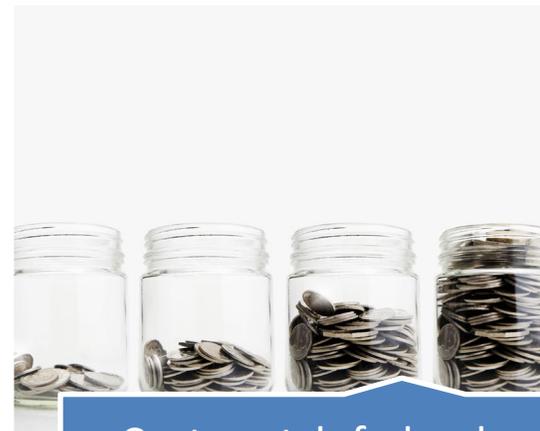
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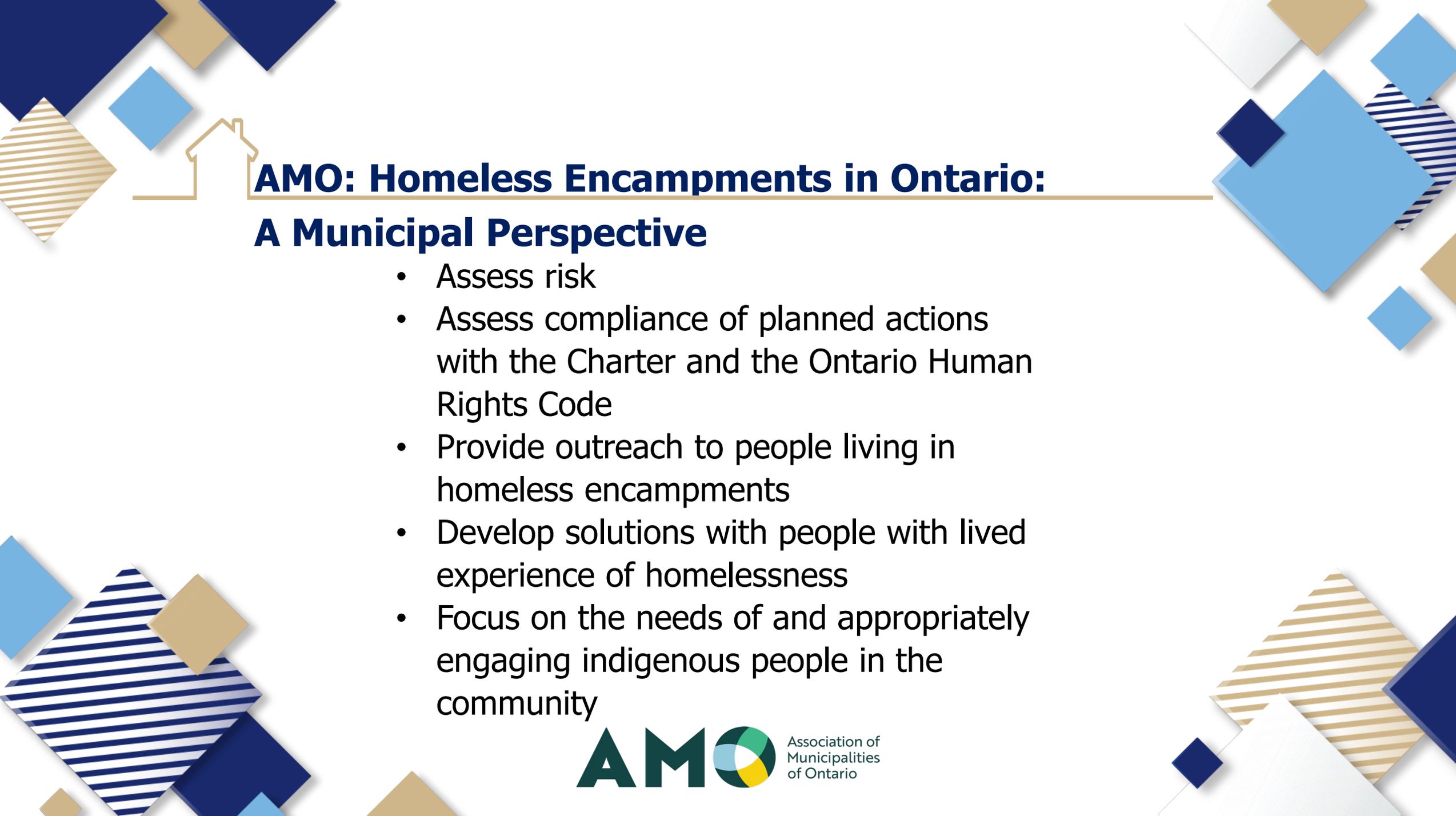
Expand the emergency shelter system



Establish homeless encampment guidance



Cost-match federal encampment funding



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- Assess risk
- Assess compliance of planned actions with the Charter and the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Provide outreach to people living in homeless encampments
- Develop solutions with people with lived experience of homelessness
- Focus on the needs of and appropriately engaging indigenous people in the community



Encampment Strategy: City of Stratford



Simmons, G. (2023). *Cleared encampment part of Stratford's co-ordinated response to homelessness* [Photograph]. Beacon Herald. <https://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/news/local-news/cleared-encampment-part-of-stratfords-co-ordinated-response-to-homelessness>



Local Definition: Encampment

Refers to one or more temporary accommodations consisting of tents, vehicles, makeshift shelters, bus shelters and/or vacant buildings on public or privately owned land



Encampments on Private Land

- Private landowners are responsible for their own property in accordance with City of Stratford Municipal By-laws, the Ontario Building Code, Building Code Act, Ontario Fire Code, and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act
- Provisions already exist for private property landowners to have people removed from their property if they wish
- Landowners are strongly encouraged to walk their land and contact the non-emergency police phone number for enforcement of the Trespass to Property Act or other applicable enforcement legislation



Integration with Collaborative Partners

Various departments and positions within the City of Stratford are involved in the response, including:

Social
Services

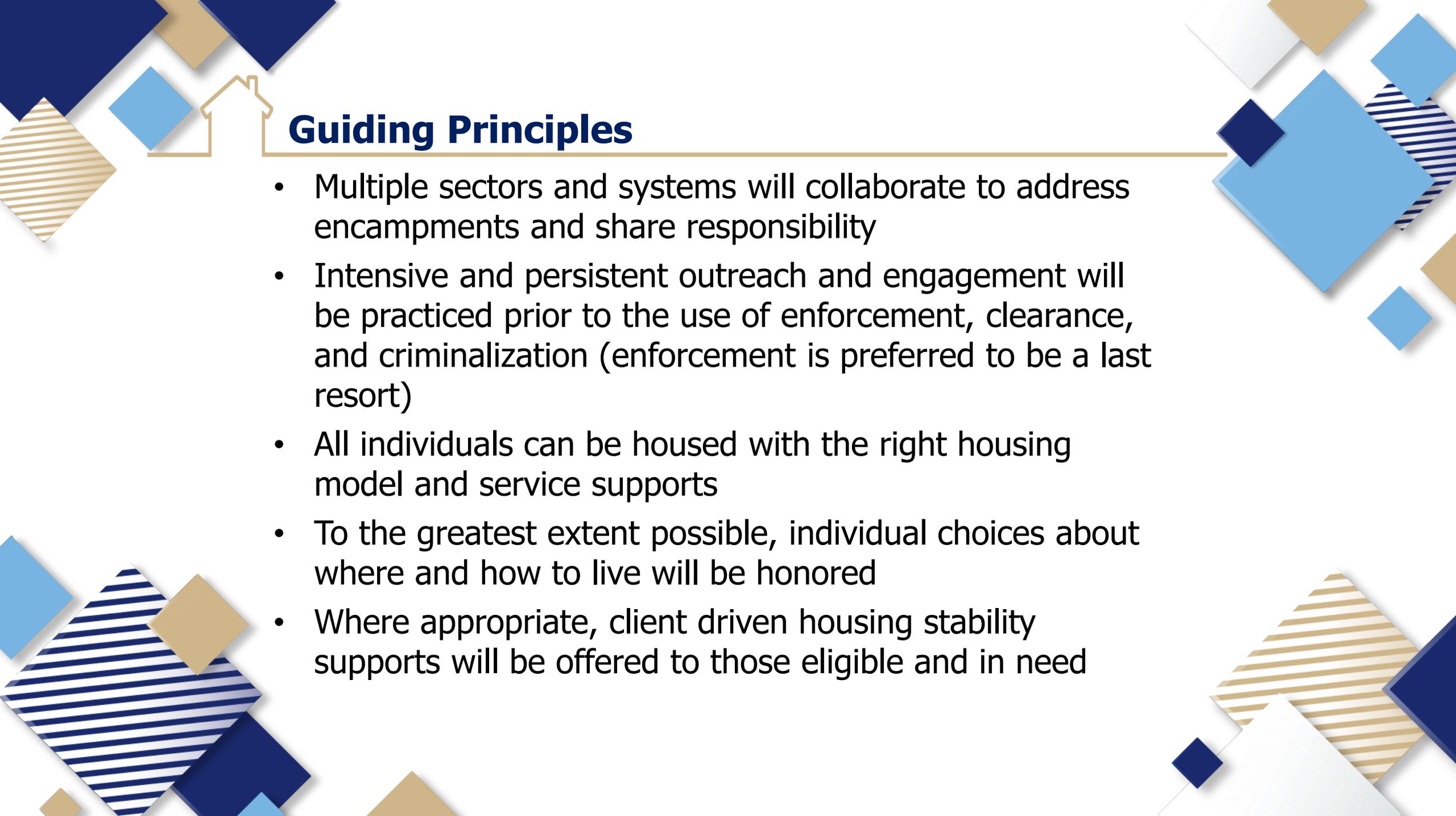
Police
Services

Fire Services

Community
Services

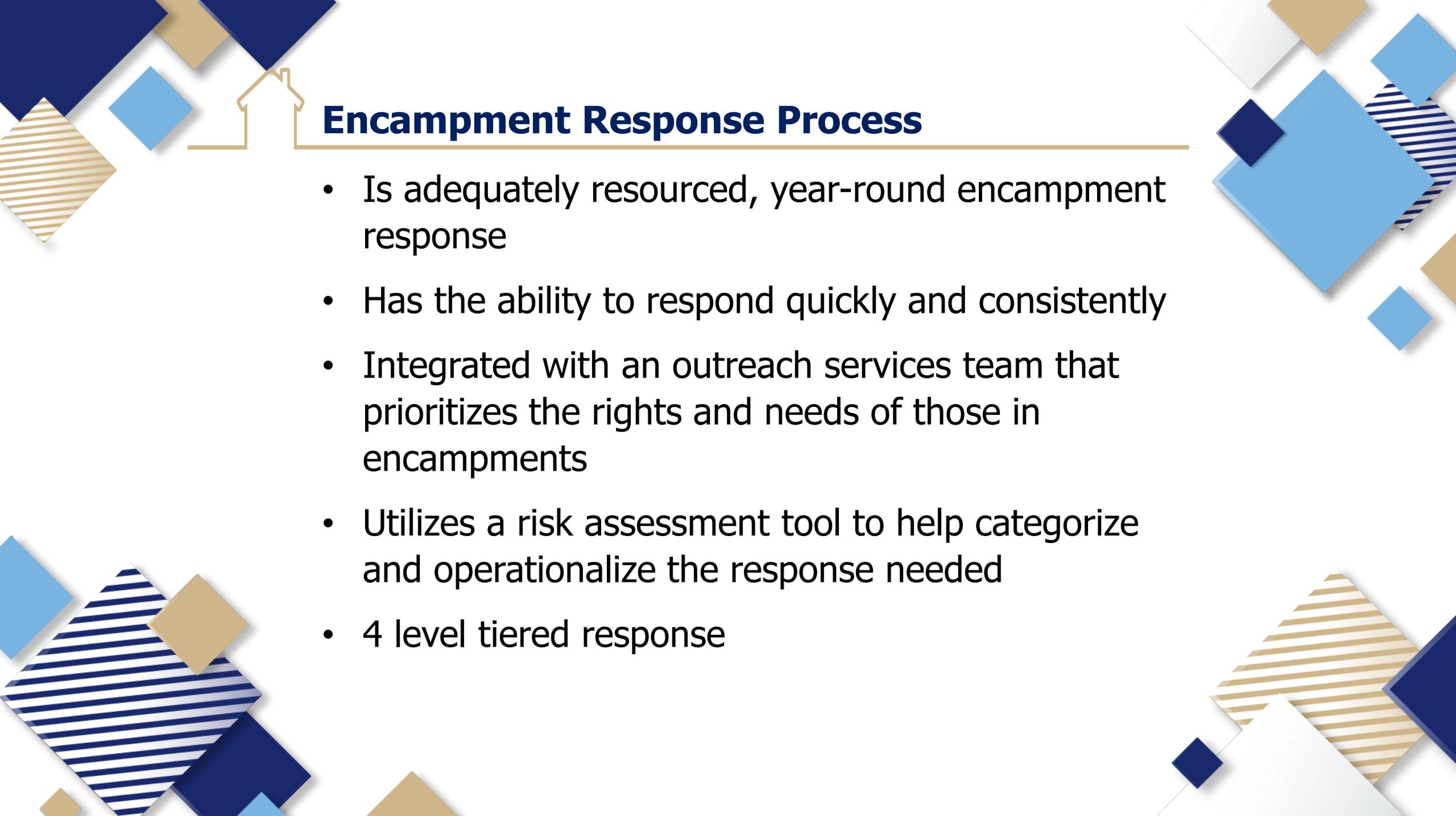
Infrastructure
Services

Building and
Planning



Guiding Principles

- Multiple sectors and systems will collaborate to address encampments and share responsibility
- Intensive and persistent outreach and engagement will be practiced prior to the use of enforcement, clearance, and criminalization (enforcement is preferred to be a last resort)
- All individuals can be housed with the right housing model and service supports
- To the greatest extent possible, individual choices about where and how to live will be honored
- Where appropriate, client driven housing stability supports will be offered to those eligible and in need



Encampment Response Process

- Is adequately resourced, year-round encampment response
- Has the ability to respond quickly and consistently
- Integrated with an outreach services team that prioritizes the rights and needs of those in encampments
- Utilizes a risk assessment tool to help categorize and operationalize the response needed
- 4 level tiered response

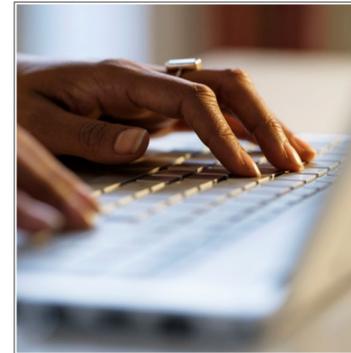


In Development



Consistent key performance indicators

A communication and reporting structure



A response focused on working towards systemic improvements



In Conclusion

- Encampment response is focused on Public Land
- Guided in rights-based approaches
- Rooted in a collaborative process where key partners assist within all steps of response
- Utilizes strong outreach services to build trust and relationships
- Strategy is constantly evolving and changing to adapt to emergent needs of the community

