

Experiencing Homelessness

The Ninth Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2016

The Current Situation*

Emergency shelter use in Greater Moncton	2014	2015
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA) – 2011 census	138,644	138,644
Total number of unique individuals (clients) admitted to shelters	780	862
Total number of nights stayed	13,268	12,049
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	7.11	6.36
Number of emergency shelter beds (capacity)		
For men	48	48
For women & children (domestic violence)	17	17
For women (not domestic violence)	14	14
Number of beds for drug/alcohol detox:	18	18
For men	12	12
For women	6	6
Housing Indicators		
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1,622	1,645
Of these, # of units owned by the province	650	646
Of these, # in private dwellings	972	999
Number on the provincially-subsidized waiting list	1,698	N/A
New units in Affordable Rental Housing Program	5	0
Number of transitional housing beds/units	26	34
Number of long-term supportive housing beds/units	317	324
Rental vacancy rate	8.7%	7.4%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$762	\$760
Income Indicators		
Social assistance for a single person	\$537	\$537
# Individuals on social assistance	5,011	5,261
Minimum wage in NB	\$10.30	\$10.30**
Food Security in NB		
Number of food banks	4	3
Number of soup kitchens/community suppers	2/4	3/4
• Sources available inside document •• To increase to \$10.65 on April 1, 2016		

The good news in 2015 was probably the election of a Liberal government in October, with a solid platform to begin re-investing in social housing. The not-so-good news is that, as this 9th Report Card went to press, they have yet to start. We know they have been busy but we do face a housing crisis in Canada, and it's getting worse.

The provincial government is now in a "holding pattern," waiting for the money for social housing to flow from Ottawa. We saw some federal-provincial movement with the signing of the "Investment in Affordable Housing" agreement in April 2014. But in the meantime, operating agreements for social housing are rapidly expiring. New Brunswick is now in a "net loss" situation when it comes to social housing – with more money leaving the province than coming in.

Members of the GMHSC were happy when the federal government renewed the Homelessness Partnering Strategy for another five years (2014-19), with an emphasis on Housing First. But now, like many others, we are asking the question: *How can we do Housing First without Affordable Housing?* (cont'd page 6)

**862 different individuals were homeless in 2015, a 10% increase from 2014.
An additional 107 women fled domestic violence.**



The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee is an inter-agency committee representing 20 agencies in Greater Moncton that work with the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless as well as representatives of the three levels of government. Established in 2000, the GMHSC provides leadership and coordinates communication among stakeholders and service providers to ensure the implementation of the Greater Moncton Community Plan on Homelessness. It also works to create public awareness about issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and housing. This 9th Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton uses 2015 data. All nine Report Cards will be available at www.monctonhomelessness.org.

Homelessness numbers increase by 10% in 2015

	House of Nazareth (24 beds, men; 6 beds, women)		Harvest House (22 beds, men; 8 beds, women)		Shelters combined	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Total number of admissions	715	722	1,150	1,340	1,865	2,062
Total number unique individuals	418	449	362	413	780	862
Total number of nights stayed	6,645	5,830	6,623	6,219	13,268	12,049
Average length of stay	8.78	8.07	5.44	4.64	7.11	6.36
Average number of beds used each night	18.21	15.97	18.15	17.04	18.18	16.51

66% of those staying at House of Nazareth were one-time-only users, as were 40% of those staying at Harvest House.

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)



Domestic violence is one of the top reasons for family homelessness.

In addition, at **Crossroads for Women** during 2015:

- 107 women and 44 children were admitted, fleeing domestic violence.
- The average stay for most individuals/families is 30 days.
- The total bed nights in 2015 were 3,815.

In the absence of Crossroads, these women and children would have been homeless.

Number of Income Assistance claimants increases in Greater Moncton

Income Assistance programs offering monthly benefits include the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) and the Extended Benefits Program (EBP). The latter is for people who have been certified disabled.

Of the 5,261 individuals receiving a monthly cheque in Greater Moncton, 79% were on the TAP in 2015. These people receive approximately \$537 per month. Affordable housing options for them include rooming houses, shelters and the streets.

The number of people on Social Assistance increased slightly in 2015.

	Dec 2015	Dec 2014	Dec 2013
Households in receipt of a monthly cheque	3,382	3,249	3,265
Households benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	956	960	983
Total of both types - households	4,338	4,209	4,248
Individuals in receipt of a monthly cheque	5,261	5,011	5,119
Individuals benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	2,125	2,082	2,091
Total of both types - individuals	7,386	7,093	7,210
Provincial total – All types of Social Assistance	48,115	48,943	49,900

Source: NB Social Development

The only affordable housing options for individuals on Income Assistance of \$537 per month are rooming houses, shelters and the streets.

No new Affordable Housing units created in 2015

No new units in the Affordable Rental Housing program were created in 2015. Changes in numbers are explained by the following: Sixteen portable rent

	2014	2015
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units:	1,622	1,645
Of these, # of units owned by the province	650	646
Of these, # in private dwellings (rent supplements)	972	999

Source: NB Social Development

supplements were created. These are for people with disabilities who have a support worker. The rent supp is normally attached to the unit, not the individual. As the name suggests, the individual is able to take the rent supplement with them, when and if they move, even to another region. One Rural Native Housing unit was sold, because it was in bad repair. Four units were revoked (which sometimes happens when the landlord no longer wants the units or is not cooperating). The remainder were “adjusted to municipal limits,” meaning re-assigned from another region close by.

For the first time since we began to produce these Report Cards, the number of people on the waiting list for social housing is not available.

Greater Moncton’s Point-in-Time count a first for the metro area, for New Brunswick

For the first time, since the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee was formed in 2000, we were able to do a Point-in-Time (PIT) count. This is a 24-hour period when people living in shelters and places not fit for human habitation are surveyed to get more detailed information about



I count. Je compte.

The solution for chronic and episodic homelessness is permanent supportive housing.

their needs. While the count focused on people who have been chronically and/or episodically homeless, we also included questions to solicit information about people who are the “hidden homeless,” a lot of whom are “couch surfers.” We know that for every “visibly” homeless person, there are 3.5 to four who are part of the “hidden homeless.” Results were just coming in as this Report Card went to press; they will be available at our annual Community Breakfast.

RCMP – Mobile Mental Health Unit partnership making a difference in metro

By Kathleen Buchanan, Acting Program Manager
Addictions and Mental Health Services, Horizon Health Network

The RCMP and Addictions and Mental Health Mobile Crisis Program began their partnership in July 2015. One clinician from the Mobile Crisis services is assigned to all RCMP Addiction & Mental Health calls during their entire shift, seven days a week. Since its inception, the partnership has diverted 75% of these calls from visiting the ER departments; thus redirecting the clients to more appropriate services for them in the community. The success has exceeded expectations, and the services continue to strive for its goal to increase outreach to the community during crisis situations and connect clients to long term support when they ask for it.

Need help in a mental health crisis? Greater Moncton has a Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team that operates from 2pm to 10pm. Call 1-866-771-7760



A rooming house is one of the few housing options for the 4,140 “non-elderly singles” in Greater Moncton who live on approximately \$537 per month. That amount is for everything: housing, food, personal needs etc.

But New Brunswick is one of the few provinces in the country where the rooming house sector remains a part of the “wild, wild west.” Ask someone down at City Hall how many rooming houses we have in Moncton, and where they’re located, and no one can tell you.

Despite the fact that the Residential Tenancies Act was amended in 2010 to include roomers and boarders (the last province in the country to do so), little has changed. Tenants remain afraid to complain, and they still live in fear of being kicked out, often for no reason. Women, in particular, often do not feel safe staying in a rooming house.

Landlords sometimes establish a rooming house out of the “good of their heart,” because they want to help people, and they do their best to keep the place clean, safe and affordable for tenants. Most do not. Rooming houses “fly under the radar.”

Some municipalities – such as Halifax and St. John’s – have tried to put a little order into the system by requiring rooming houses to be registered (like every other business). That can lead to improvements in fire and safety standards, and protect lives.

We have been encouraging both the province and the city to move on this issue. At the very least, it will create another housing option for vulnerable people, in these tough financial times.

Transitional housing

- Crossroads for Women Second Stage Housing – eight units; new transition house five units
- Harvest House, seven units
- John Howard Society of Southeastern NB – 10 units (adult males)
- Youth Impact Jeunesse Inc. – eight transition beds (four female, four male)

Longer-term Supportive Housing

- Alternative Residences Inc. (mental health clients) – four community residences (32 beds); 16 one-bedroom apartments; six bungalows/duplexes in shared accommodations (31 beds)
- Future Horizons Housing Inc. – 12 units (for Headstart Inc. families)
- MacDonald Independent Living Centre – 34 units (physical disabilities)
- Moncton Community Residences Inc. Serves 160 people in various living arrangements (intellectual/ developmental challenges)
- The Supportive Housing (SUN) Network houses and works with chronic shelter users, as affordable housing becomes available; 13 clients were housed in 2015.
- YWCA Scattered supportive housing for women; 13 women, one man and 15 children were housed in 2015.
- The Peer Supported Housing project operates two six-unit apartment buildings for those who have experienced multiple housing challenges. This is a project of Salvus Clinic in partnership with the United Way of Southeastern NB.

Social Housing (in addition to provincial)

- St. James Court – 13 townhouses for single parent families earning less than \$32,000 per year for a 2-bedroom and \$36,500 for a 3-bedroom. Building has 10 2-bedroom units and three 3-bedroom units.

Other (Halfway houses for people leaving correctional facilities)

- Cannell House, 20 beds for men, under contract with Corrections Services Canada
- Greenfield House, 19 beds for men, five for women and one emergency

Are you low-income and need housing?

Call 1-866-426-5191 to get your name on the NB Social Development housing waiting list. They will assess you over the phone, and if you qualify, you will be put on the list the same day.

Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton (CMA)			
Unit size	Oct 2015	Oct 2014	Oct 2013
Bachelor	\$530	\$542	\$532
1 Bedroom	\$640	\$647	\$626
2 Bedrooms	\$760	\$762	\$742
3+ Bedrooms	\$892	\$906	\$908

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, Fall 2015, 2014, 2013 www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homains/stda/index.cfm

Rental construction in Greater Moncton has averaged over 400 starts annually since 2010. In 2015, there was a pullback, with only 107 apartment starts to the end of September and 43 apartment completions between January and June (compared to 162 completions during the same period in 2014). That's why Moncton's vacancy rate dropped from 8.7% in 2014 (as of October) to 7.4% in 2015. Dropping vacancy rates makes it more difficult for people living in poverty to find a place to rent.

Are YOU at risk of homelessness?

Families and individuals can lose their housing for any number of reasons: fleeing abuse, losing a job or having an income too low to stay in suitable housing. Some people are at risk because of mental health issues or substance use problems or they lack life skills or ability to live on their own.

Food bank use in 2015 drops slightly

HungerCount 2015 showed that food bank use dropped in New Brunswick in March 2015, for the first time since 2008. The total number of people assisted was 18,986 in 2015, compared to 19,950 in 2014, a decrease of -3.1%. Of these, 32.3% were children.

The number of people accessing food banks in Canada remains 26% higher than in 2008 – when the number was 852,137 nationally and 15,638 in New Brunswick – before the start of the global financial crisis that sent Canadian food bank use soaring. The cost of housing is a major reason why people use a food bank. Of food bank users in NB:

- 70.2% are on Social Assistance
- 8.3% have jobs
- 6.5% are on disability income support
- 6.4% are on a pension
- 59.9% pay market rent
- 16.5% live in social housing
- 21% own their own home
- 3.1% are homeless

Source: The HungerCount report presents results from an annual study of more than 4,000 food banks and other food programs in every province and territory www.foodbankscanada.ca/Hunger-in-Canada/

What you can do to end and prevent homelessness...

1. **Educate** yourself and others about the problem of homelessness.
2. **Volunteer** your time and skills – contact local organizations and ask how you can help.
3. **Be** respectful and courteous to homeless people.
4. **Call** or write a letter to the elected officials who represent the area to let them know how homelessness affects you and your community.
5. **Join** others who care on Facebook & Twitter.
6. **Vote** for those who support affordable housing during each and every election.
7. **Donate** funds or goods to local organizations that are making a difference.

Learn about the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee's 5-year Community Plan (2014-19) to end and prevent homelessness. Available at www.monctonhomelessness.org/research

(Cont'd from page 1)

As a recent report noted: “A significant challenge associated with the HF model is that it generally relies on there being an ample stock of affordable housing available. This is problematic in the Canadian context because there is a severe shortage of social housing and affordable private-market housing in many Canadian communities.” (Matthew Stock, January 2016)

This month, a coalition of seven housing sector leaders released a joint statement in anticipation of the federal budget, calling on the government to immediately build 100,000 new Affordable Housing units, and to support community transformation and innovation, in terms of social housing. In it, they said: “Over the past 25 years, Canada’s population has increased by 30%, while the annual federal investment in affordable housing decreased by 46% ...As a result, nearly one in four Canadian households cannot afford their housing and 235,000 experience homelessness every year.”

The solution for economic homelessness is Affordable Housing.

The lack of Affordable Housing is the major stumbling block that each of the four Homelessness Steering Committees in New Brunswick face, (as well as the 57 other homelessness steering committees in Canada), in trying to do the work of getting vulnerable people off the streets, out of the shelters, and into permanent housing. Nonetheless, there were some important initiatives in Greater Moncton 2015, and we highlight them in this Report Card.

- In January, the City of Moncton hired a Social Inclusion Coordinator, and appointed a Poverty/Social Inclusion Committee to guide the work. The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee was invited to join. Following a Social Inclusion Summit in September, the Committee and Coordinator have worked hard to develop a five-year plan to make Moncton a more inclusive city. Kudos to Mayor George LeBlanc and City Council members for showing tremendous leadership on this!
- The GMHSC was also invited to join Horizon Health Network’s Community Engagement Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide local Horizon representatives and community stakeholders (such as non-profit agencies that work with vulnerable populations) to share information, consult, be involved and collaborate about planned or suggested health-care delivery improvement initiatives. People living in poverty and homelessness are major users of the health care system.
- YWCA Moncton rolled out a major fundraising campaign to support its new initiative – *TransitionElle*. This innovative project will house a Young Mothers Housing Wing, an Early Learning and Child Care Centre, a Women’s Training and Leadership Centre, among other services for young moms and their children. It fills a big gap in services in metro, especially for young, pregnant teens who often end up kicked out of the house, and homeless.
- Crossroads for Women also developed a new housing option for vulnerable women, in addition to its Transition House for women and children fleeing domestic violence and its Second Stage housing. This housing project includes five bachelor units for women who are precariously housed.
- On the “bad news” side, the number of shelter users increased by 10%, and no new Affordable Housing Rental units were created in 2015.

This 9th Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton is an opportunity to inform the community about the issue of homelessness and how it is being addressed in our community. The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee and its 20 agency members are working hard to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton. You can contact us by visiting our website at www.monctonhomelessness.org or join us on Facebook.