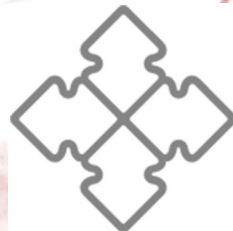


# A Place to Call Home:

## Homelessness in Winnipeg in 2011

*"It's not fun living on the streets. I want a nice place to lay my head down to go to sleep ... a place I can call home ... but there's no place out there to call home."*



Social Planning Council  
of Winnipeg

## A Place to Call Home

### Executive Summary

On any given night in Winnipeg, about 350 people are sleeping at one of the city's homeless shelters. Estimates vary, but another 1,400 people, without a place to call home, are sleeping on the street, in temporary accommodation, or with a range of friends, relatives or mere acquaintances.

There are three main shelters for adults experiencing a housing crisis in the city, in addition to the youth shelters and safe houses for women fleeing domestic violence. Shelters report that their beds are usually full, and sometimes they must turn people away. Countless other agencies, volunteer groups, and churches provide assistance with basic needs, counselling, information and one-on-one support for individuals experiencing homelessness.

With so many people experiencing homelessness in some form, and yet so many agencies involved in assisting individuals and families, there is clearly a social problem that is not being adequately addressed. In fact, the number of people staying in emergency shelters has increased in the past three years. While there are different reasons people do not have a permanent address, the availability of adequate housing and income are two key determinants. To address the issue of homelessness it is therefore necessary to increase the availability and accessibility of housing and reduce the prevalence of poverty.

This report provides only a glimpse into the housing challenges faced by thousands of Winnipeggers. The report utilizes information collected from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) database and anecdotal information gathered from two focus groups held at women's centres earlier this year.

We suggest viewing homelessness as a range of diverse experiences requiring different supports, interventions, policies, and programs that go beyond moving people from one type of homelessness to another, but rather, meet the complex nature of individuals' lives.

Social Planning Council of Winnipeg  
April 2012

## Outline

### Homelessness in Winnipeg: Exploring the Complexity

1. Roofless in Winnipeg: Cold and Alone
  2. Houseless in Winnipeg: Stuck in Transition
  3. Insecurely Housed in Winnipeg: Counting on Others
  4. Inadequately Housed in Winnipeg: No Other Option
- Recommendations

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### About The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW) is a non-profit membership-based organization in the voluntary sector committed to providing leadership in social planning and effecting social policy changes. The SPCW works with diverse communities, including policy-makers, funding agencies, service providers, ethno-cultural and Aboriginal groups, and the general public in Winnipeg to:

- Identify and assess community issues, needs, capacities, and resources;
- Develop and promote policy and program options to policy-makers;
- Support community groups and the voluntary human service sector;
- Raise community awareness of, and provide voice to, social issues and human service needs, social policy options, and service delivery alternatives; and
- Facilitate communication and collaboration among government, business, labour, the voluntary sector and grassroots communities;

The SPCW has an extensive history of working in partnership to develop, implement and coordinate community projects. Collaborative partnerships, capacity building and community development approaches currently govern the Social Planning Council's approach to its mandate.

The organization is governed by a 15 member Board of Directors and has about 150 active members. A staff of five is located in Winnipeg's centre. Most of the funding for the SPCW comes from the United Way.

Go to [www.spcw.mb.ca](http://www.spcw.mb.ca) for more information.

## Homeless in Winnipeg: Exploring the Complexity

When we compiled the Report Card on Homelessness in 2009<sup>i</sup>, we chose the title *Tip of the Iceberg* because we knew that for every person counted at an emergency shelter there are many more struggling to find a safe, decent place to sleep each and every night. Across Canada, various research reports have estimated that for every person spending a night in an emergency shelter, there are another four people among the hidden homeless<sup>ii</sup>.

There are many definitions of homelessness, some subjective, some objective, some political, some personal. The exact experiences people have are harder to define, as lives are not stagnant and people move from place to place, from 'housed' to 'homeless' from 'couch surfing' to 'sleeping rough' to 'emergency housed' to 'under housed.'

Definitions of homelessness can also be misleading as people experiencing homelessness move rapidly from one 'category' to another. For example, a survey of 300 individuals experiencing street homelessness in 2010 revealed the many places people had spent their nights:

- 84% stayed in an emergency shelter
- 31.6% stayed outside
- 29.6% stayed with friends or relatives
- 8.6% stayed in a treatment program
- 6.3% rented a room in a hotel
- 6.0% stayed in a rooming house
- 5.6% were in a hospital
- 2.3% were in jail
- 2.3% slept in a car
- 1.7% stayed in an abandoned building
- 1.7% found shelter in a business<sup>iii</sup>.

A model that broadens how we think about the housing challenges Winnipeggers face is the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS), which describes homelessness as:

- **Rooflessness:** living without a shelter of any kind, (e.g. sleeping outdoors) often called absolute homelessness,
- **Houselessness:** living in temporary facilities, (e.g. institutional shelters or health care facilities) often called sheltered or transitional homelessness,
- **Insecurely housed:** living precariously, (e.g. in insecure tenancies, close to eviction, in an unsafe situation, or subject to domestic violence) includes those who are among the hidden homeless or sometimes termed *relative homeless*,
- **Inadequately housed:** living in a home that does not meet basic standards (e.g. in substandard housing, suffering mould infestation, overcrowding, inaccessible for the person or family) includes people who are in core housing need. Though people who are inadequately housed have legal rights of tenure, they are at a high risk of losing the housing at a moments' notice.

The typology is not a linear pattern. It describes circumstances rather than individuals because individuals can move to or from these different housing circumstances rapidly. A person who stays on a park bench one night, works a temporary job and saves up for a hotel for two nights, then stays at the Salvation Army Booth Centre for a few days, and finally finds a mould infested apartment moves from roofless to insecurely housed to houseless and then to being inadequately housed in a matter of days.

## On any Given Night in Winnipeg in 2011 There Were:

### Roofless

- An unknown number of people sleeping outdoors, in cars, in abandoned buildings, or in semi-public locations like the airport or train station

### Houseless

- 353 people staying in an emergency shelter
- 62 women and children staying at a shelter for women escaping domestic violence

### Insecurely Housed

- Between 700-1,000 people staying in single room occupancy hotels
- About 1,400 people staying with friends, family, or acquaintances without the protection of a lease

### Inadequately Housed

- 28,000 people living in core housing need

We are able to provide information on the numbers of individuals in some of these circumstances because of HIFIS, census data, and a variety of reports and studies<sup>iv</sup>. There is a great deal we do not know.

## 1. Roofless in Winnipeg: Cold and Alone

Rooflessness refers to circumstances where individuals are staying outside, in public places, in 24 hour businesses, or in vehicles. It can also be called *absolute homelessness*. There is no truly accurate way to count the individuals who spend nights in places deemed 'unfit for human habitation.' When people experience rooflessness they rarely know where they will spend each night, whether they will get into a shelter, if they will get a couple hours of undisturbed sleep or if they will be forced to move away by a security guard. Uncertainty, insecurity, anxiety and fear become regular emotions.

***“You don’t know who to turn to, and you’re always angry and all you want to do is cry. That’s the thing about being homeless.”***

In a focus group with women who have experienced homelessness, the women said they stayed outside for various reasons: because they felt unsafe in shelters, shelters were full, or they did not know where else to go. Some women said they would walk around all night, trying to stay awake and safe. They slept on benches, church steps or in bus shelters. Three women were surprised to discover they were not the only ones who brought their kids to the airport to spend a night, safe and warm.

***“You know, those missions are sometimes full when you go there and you still have to stay outside [waiting] and when you get in you still have to sleep with one eye open because you don’t know who is doing what and who is going to do something to you.”***

***“Actually the first night I spent in the airport. I decided to stay there just because I was scared for my kids ... It was difficult, because of dignity you choose to isolate yourself.”***



Photo: Maes, C. (2010). Winnipeg International Airport.



Photo: Maes, C. (2012). Sleeping bags left from people sleeping outside.

***“When I was staying on the streets, I had nowhere to go, you know especially at two in the morning it’s pretty dangerous. When I would sleep in the park and I was soaking wet I had no clean clothes to change into. It was very difficult, including finding place to go to the bathroom you know, so you have to go behind whatever but you would have to be careful that no one came around and killed you in the night for a cigarette.”***

## 2. Houseless: Stuck in Transition

Houselessness, sometimes termed *sheltered homelessness* includes experiences of staying in institutions, emergency shelters, or other temporary shelters designed for crisis use.

Staying at a shelter often means giving up everything a person has ever owned and starting over. It means waiting in line every day for food and every night for a place to sleep. Many people have described homelessness as a ‘rut’ that is easier to get stuck in than to get out of. Emergency shelters are critical for keeping people safe and away from the elements when they fall into a housing crisis. In a winter city like Winnipeg, it is also a matter of life or death. Though they end up ‘housing’ some people for long periods of time, emergency shelters are not a home.

The Winnipeg Street Health Report<sup>v</sup> found that the majority of people experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg do so for short periods of time. There is a small group of individuals who, for various reasons, experience homelessness for 10 years or more

### Length of time homeless in lifetime:

- 15.1% less than 6 months
- 36.9% 6 months – 2 years
- 24.8% 2 years – 5 years
- 13.2% 5-10 years
- 10% more than 10 years

This information is comparable with other studies across North America. The Calgary Homeless Foundation plans interventions based on the assumption that 80% of the homeless population is “transitionally homeless” while 10% is “chronically homeless” and 10% is “episodically homeless.”

## Migrating to Homelessness

Aboriginal peoples are drastically over represented among those experiencing housing crises in Winnipeg. A recent study found that over 50% of those experiencing homelessness in Winnipeg identified as Aboriginal (18% were Metis and 35% were Status First Nation)<sup>v</sup>.

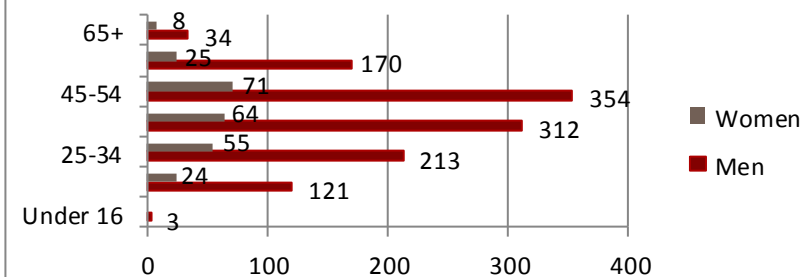
Almost 2/3 of the Aboriginal people surveyed during the study were not born in Winnipeg<sup>vi</sup>. First Nations people moving off reserves, particularly from isolated communities, face unique challenges upon their arrival to Winnipeg. While the majority of people move to the city for a better life, it is often more difficult to find a home, a job, and support than people anticipate. Young people are targeted by gang members, who even wait at bus and train stations looking for new recruits. Seniors requiring health care in the city may stay in a hospital because there is nowhere accessible and affordable to go.

When homelessness is discussed in the media or by government, the discussion most often refers to individuals spending nights at emergency shelters. There are three main emergency shelters in Winnipeg: Main Street Project, Salvation Army Booth Centre, and Siloam Mission.

Because some shelters began to utilize HIFIS after January 2011, unique individuals could not be compared across shelters. Each data set may include some of the same individuals if a person stayed at two or three different shelters in the year. Thus, we cannot calculate the total number of unique individuals who have

stayed in an emergency shelter in 2011. In future years, it is anticipated that HIFIS will lead to better tracking of individuals as they move between shelters.

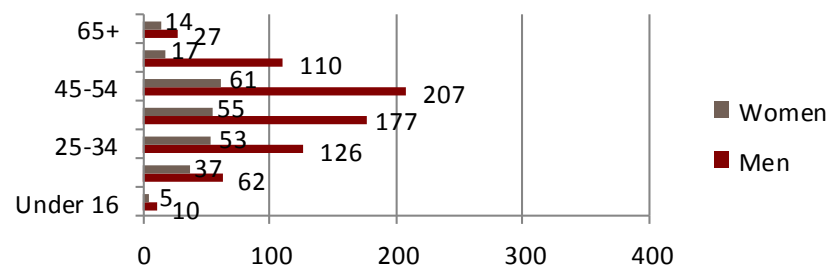
### Individuals Staying at Main Street Project Emergency Shelter in 2011, by age and gender



\* "Unique individual" is one person who has stayed at a particular shelter at any given time in the 2011 year.

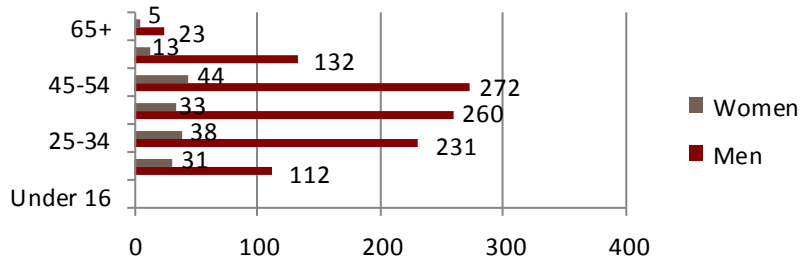
\* Transgender individuals are grouped into the gender they identify with for HIFIS

### Individuals Staying at Siloam Mission Emergency Shelter in 2011, by age and gender





### Individuals Staying at Salvation Army Emergency Shelter in 2011, by age and gender

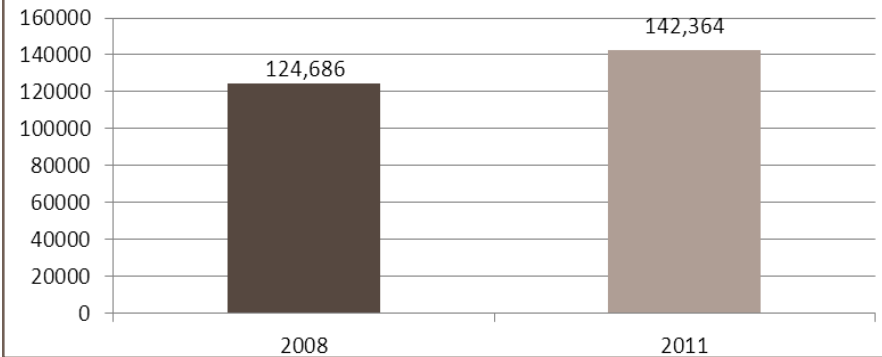


Comparisons Over Time

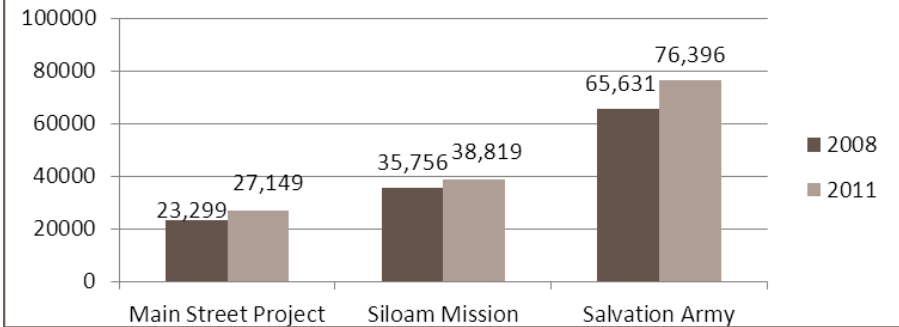
Emergency shelters track how often they are used through ‘bed use’ measurement, that is, how many nights a bed (or mat) at the shelter had someone spend a night on it, in one year.

While the population of Winnipeg has grown by about six percent, there has been a fourteen percent increase in shelter bed use in the past three years. Part of this growth in shelter use is due to the Cold Weather Strategy, initiated in 2008, which ensures more emergency shelter beds are available when temperature reaches minus twenty degrees. This means that some of the increase in shelter use comes from individuals who are roofless going to a shelter to survive the night. At the same time, many people are turned away from emergency shelters on days that the cold weather protocol is not in effect because the shelters are full or because the person does not meet the requirements for service. Many others, particularly women and youth, choose not to use shelters because the shelters themselves or the neighbourhood where they are located are unsafe.

### Beds Used in Emergency and Transitional Shelter in Winnipeg (shelter numbers combined) 2008 vs. 2011



### Beds Used in Emergency and Transitional Shelter in Winnipeg 2008 vs 2011

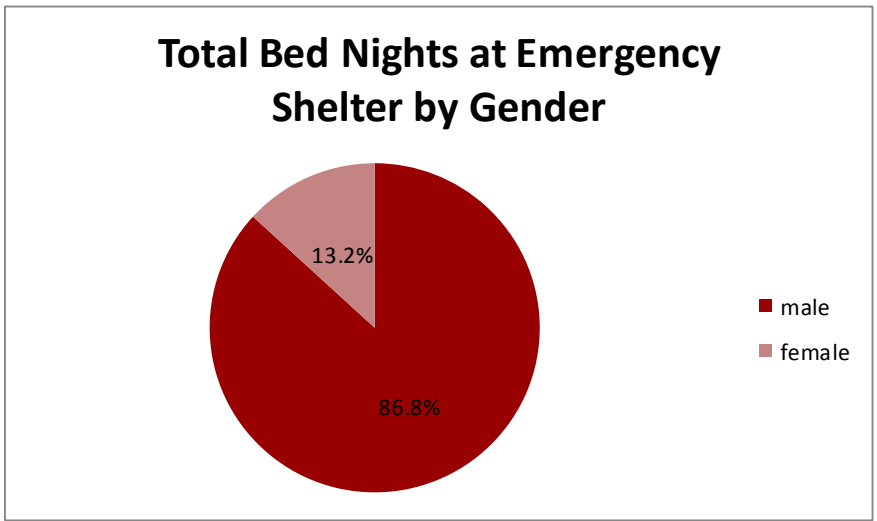
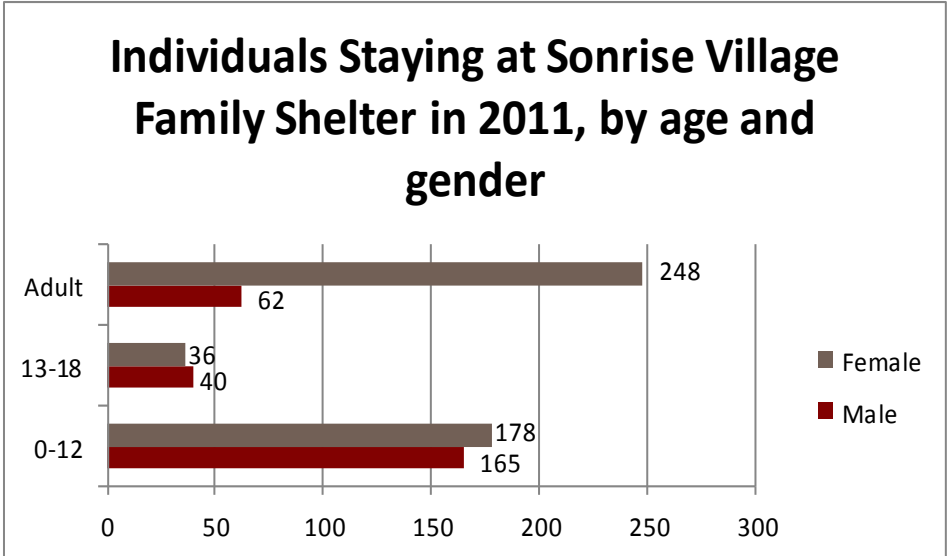


\*Transitional shelter (Main Street Project’s Main Stay and Salvation Army’s Residence) are included for the purpose of comparison because 2008 data did not separate emergency shelter and transitional shelter use.

About 50% of the men staying at each shelter were between the ages of 35-54. Women staying at emergency shelters were more likely than men to be seniors (over the age of 65) or youth (between the ages of 16-24).

Men are much more likely than women to stay in emergency shelters when they experience homelessness. This does not mean women do not become homeless, but rather that they stay different places, including with friends or relatives. Some turn to unsafe relationships out of desperation. They are not tracked, rarely seen, and are what has been termed the *hidden homeless* (described under inadequate and insecure housing).

families to stay together and provides support to families in crisis. Families are moved into more permanent housing within three months.



When families lose their housing, many parents avoid asking for help out of fear that their children will be taken away. If children are removed by Child and Family Services, parents receive less income and often lose access to a number of services, making it even more challenging to find housing and therefore reunite their family. Studies have shown that the trauma of becoming homeless lasts long after someone finds a permanent home. Sonrise Family Shelter allows

*“With the children it’s very difficult [being homeless] because you wonder what will happen to the children. Because if some authorities find out, they will say ‘well you deal with your life and we’ll take care of your kids’ lives.’”*





mother. This can lead to a cycle of homelessness as a number of reports have linked being in the care of child welfare to homelessness later in life or upon leaving care.

Women also said they often had to choose between homelessness and abusive or unhealthy relationships. One woman was told by Child and Family Services that if she did not have a place to stay, they would take her kids from her. Instead, not knowing what else to do, she stayed in an abusive situation.

***“I was homeless because I lost my social assistance - they wouldn’t pay for my rent anymore - I was a single mom with two kids so I had to let my kids stay with my sister and I stayed on the streets for the whole summer till I could find someone to help get my home together. And you know, it really hurts just to think about it.”***

Women in our focus groups told us they had to make the most difficult choice of their lives when they found themselves without a place to call home: the choice between taking their children with them to a shelter, going to a potentially unsafe location, or leaving them with friends, relatives, or children’s services. None of these options are ideal and each option carries its own risks pertaining to healthy child development and the health and well-being of the

### 3. Insecurely Housed: Counting on Others

Insecure housing describes circumstances where people are living precariously, usually with no legal protection and often depending on the permission of others to remain where they are. The term *insecurely housed* is slightly misleading because although people spend their nights in a house, they do not have a home of their own. This is *hidden homelessness* because people often rely on informal networks for support and social agencies do not know how many individuals, or which individuals, might be experiencing this type of homelessness. Insecure housing includes the estimated 1,000 Winnipeggers staying in single room occupancy (SRO) hotels without the protection of a lease, as well as those staying in housing designed to be temporary or transitional. This category also includes those who are couch surfing, that is, when individuals stay with different family, friends or mere acquaintances temporarily, usually without a room or a formal agreement. People experiencing violence in their house who may have to leave at any moment are also considered insecurely housed.

Insecure housing is directly related to income levels and security. People living in poverty, unless they live in social or supportive housing, are essentially condemned to be insecurely housed. Low paid, part-time and temporary work means pay cheques may not cover the rent. The amount of money provided by social assistance for rent is much lower than average rents in Winnipeg, causing recipients to use money meant for food or other basic necessities to pay for housing.

#### Transitional Housing

Between Main Street Project's Main Stay, The Salvation Army Residential Services, and The Red Road Lodge, 1,098 individuals in Winnipeg in 2011 had a place to return to at night, a place to keep

their belongings, and a place where they could learn new skills. Many people benefit from the supports and stability offered by transitional housing. Transitional housing is only funded to be temporary and is designed to move people on to long-term homes. With few housing options for people with low incomes in Winnipeg, the process of 'transitioning' to permanent housing is often delayed.

There is a critical need for more housing and community treatment in Winnipeg based on a harm reduction model. Harm reduction programs or policies are designed to reduce drug-related harm without requiring the cessation of drug use<sup>vii</sup>. This philosophy recognizes that not all individuals using drugs are able to or interested in stopping their use, and focuses attention on reducing harms and supporting individuals without moralizing or stigmatizing them.

One young woman in our focus group had gone to recovery for her addiction where she was told that relapse is common for addicts. She left recovery for transitional housing, and briefly relapsed. She had to leave the housing and was, at the time of the focus group, staying at an emergency shelter. She spoke about the difficulties of remaining sober while at an emergency shelter – she lacked support, was surrounded by others with active addictions, and had no schedule or activities to distract her from her addiction.

#### Moving from Inadequate/Insecure Housing to a Home

Over the past three years, Winnipeg has made progress in transforming inadequate or insecure housing into a permanent home. Three programs: The Bell Hotel, The Madison Lodge, and At Home/Chez Soi, provided the supports, income and/or housing for 424 individuals to move from homelessness to a home in 2011. The three programs differ widely in their approach, and each model has been shown to work in other locations to meet the long term housing needs of particular populations.

## Social Assistance and Housing Insecurity

Every woman we spoke to in the focus groups had been cut off social assistance at least once. This, coupled with low rates, was frequently the reason women became homeless in the first place, and low rates were the main reason they stayed homeless. The women told us that if they were couch surfing, they usually had to pay the person they were staying with. If they were couch surfing, however, they stopped receiving a shelter allowance from Employment and Income Assistance, and therefore were provided with less than \$10/day to live on.

*“Some people get cut off welfare and then they have nothing to turn to so they live in these places or they choose to live in the street, and some of them go and try to find jobs but they can’t.”*

*“They cut me off because I was bouncing around to different places and [they] didn’t explain it to me even though I was an out-of-towner [and didn’t know the rules].”*

*“[I lost my social assistance] because I filed my taxes and I had a tax rebate...they didn’t send me a letter or tell me that I had to use this money to pay for rent. That money was for my kids - it was child tax - and I had used it to buy things that my kids needed...social assistance told me they couldn’t help me. They told me that they would start helping me after two months. They should have sent me a letter or called me to tell me that they would not pay for me ahead of time. So I had to pack up whatever I could and sold whatever I could take. I had no family or anyone to turn to.”*

*“Social assistance stopped giving me money so I had to live in an abusive relationship because my family did not want me to stay with them.”*

*“I had one eviction notice and now welfare wants to cut me off because they think I should be getting childcare support from my daughter’s dad but he’s himself on assistance. It’s one thing after another. they stopped paying for hydro since last September and my hydro was cut off.”*

*“My disability got cut with no warning. I got cut off \$300. I never got a letter or nothing, they just cut it because they didn’t like the way my doctor filled out my disability papers. It’s hard to get a doctor. It’s like, ‘okay we want you to go back to the psychiatrist.’ Well, it’s a two year waiting list. What am I supposed to do, wait two years? I was like okay you guys know the medications I’m on, lately, like what if I get cut off my medications? I do have health problems right, like whether it’s physical, mental.”*

*“My EIA got cut off... I’ve been in a wheel chair for five years and now have been taught to walk all over again. But then that affected my EIA benefits because I’m not eligible [for disability assistance] anymore.”*

## Eviction Prevention Strategies

While evictions are not the only cause of homelessness, preventing people from being evicted can support those who have adequate housing to maintain it, and prevent people from spiraling into housing crises.

There are a number of eviction prevention programs across Canada, ranging from Rent Banks to legal support to resource centre support. The Winnipeg Rental Network provides information to landlords and tenants on conflict mediation and legal rights and responsibilities. They have researched eviction prevention strategies and continue to discuss the best way to prevent evictions in Winnipeg.

Because of the increasingly difficult rental market, Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) developed a Rent Bank, which has loaned rent money to youth facing an unforeseen financial crisis and assisted them in maintaining their housing. RaY has a one hundred percent rate of return on the loans, which are interest free, require a repayment agreement and provide the option of working off the loan through the Growing Opportunities Program.

For more information on eviction prevention, read *Cycles of homelessness: Understanding eviction prevention and its relation to homelessness* (Acacia Consulting and Research, 2006) and *Cost effectiveness of eviction prevention programs* (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2005).



#### 4. Inadequately Housed: No Other Option

People who are inadequately housed may have a place they call home, but they are still restrained by limited income and the availability of safe, good housing. People in these situations are *at risk of homelessness* or are *underhoused*. They may rent or own substandard housing that may be mold infested and is often overcrowded. The number of people inadequately housed is often expressed as people in core housing need. However core housing need as used in the census does not accurately report all those who might struggle with bedbug or other pest infestations (and cannot address them due to income constraints), those with landlords who do not address safety concerns, or persons with disabilities whose housing is not accessible for them.

***“There are fights in the hall ways, there’s people banging on doors at three o’clock in the mornings, there’s people pulling hair, there is drunkenness, you wake up sometimes at two o’clock in the morning and there will be like the fire, ambulance, the police and you consistently are frightened to leave your door open...And when things go wrong in that unit or in that building that they put you in, you have to deal consistently with them coming in to spray for bed bugs on regular basis, like every two months or every month. You get the sense of I’m sick of them coming in to disrupt my life because they need to spray for this.”***

Winnipeg has some of the oldest housing stock in Canada. In 2006 about 22,000 of these housing units were in need of major repairs. There are programs in Winnipeg to address inadequate housing,

including the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. Though this program was originally designed to support low income homeowners, it has expanded to improve housing for people who rent their homes. The innovative Tenant-Landlord Cooperation Program works with landlords and tenants to improve the ability of landlords to provide adequate housing, including through upgrading properties and addressing conflicts with tenants. In the inner city, Neighbourhood Renewal and Development Corporations are actively addressing the problem of inadequate housing. Despite these resources, many individuals still have no choice but to stay in a house that could be unsafe, inaccessible, or overcrowded.

#### Core Housing Need

Core Housing Need is a commonly used statistic on incidence of insecure and/or inadequate housing. An individual living in core housing need does not have housing that is adequate, affordable, and/or suitable.

*Adequate* means housing is not in need of major repair.

*Affordable* means that the housing does not cost more than 30% of before tax household income.

*Suitable* is defined as housing that is not crowded.

In 2006, the most recent statistic available, 28,000 people were living in core housing need in Winnipeg. 20,000 of these were renters.

The populations more likely to experience poverty are the same populations more likely to experience core housing need: new immigrants, First Nation and Metis peoples, and female-led lone parent families.

## Recommendations

Calls to coordinate and plan the efforts of the three levels of government, the community and non-profits agency sector are growing in Winnipeg. The time is right for such a planning process to take place. The Province of Manitoba has a *Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy*, which mandates the government to put forward its commitments to poverty reduction in each budget. It is also developing a *Vulnerable Persons Strategy* which will include people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. The City of Winnipeg is about to begin consultations for updating its *Housing Strategy*. The City will be responsible for administering the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding, a role which some cities have used as a catalyst for developing a plan to end homelessness. At the same time, business leaders who were brought together by the Downtown BIZ and the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council are suggesting a homelessness plan could now get support from the corporate sector in Winnipeg.

These initiatives are happening simultaneously, some without necessary research and consultation and not in a coordinated manner. There is now momentum and potential to address homelessness in Winnipeg. **Any strategy requires input of and accountability to those who are most affected, that is, people who have experienced homelessness. Three key areas of intervention that a homelessness plan must coordinate resources, policies, and programming around if we want to end homelessness and housing exclusion are:**

### 1. Housing

a. Adopt the recommendations from the Rental Roundtable of the Provincial Government to increase the number of rental units in Manitoba. Practical strategies for increasing affordable rental housing should be prioritized and funded appropriately.

b. Develop more social and cooperative housing units (Right to Housing and Make Poverty History Manitoba are asking for a proportion of the new affordable rental units being built downtown to be rent-geared-to-income housing, for example).

### 2. Income

a. Increase shelter allowance of social assistance to 75% of median market rent (close to 1992 levels) to allow for better access to the housing market of those on social assistance.

b. Continue to work with EIA advocates to address issues in the 2009 Ombudsman Report.

c. Undertake a review of the EIA policies that lead to or maintain homelessness.

### 3. Support

a. Develop targeted Eviction Prevention Programs, like a Rent Bank, and an Eviction Prevention Protocol as they are cost effective and can support renters in remaining housed.

b. Consider policy options for addressing housing needs of people who are couch surfing, including support with damage deposits and funding for temporary accommodation arrangements.

c. Increase the capacity of the Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) teams to support people who have been homeless for long periods of time to find and maintain housing.

d. Ensure the *Vulnerable Persons Strategy* considers the different support needs for people with a mental illness.

e. Develop a protocol for discharging individuals at risk of homelessness from institutions (eg. Jail, hospital, child welfare, addictions treatment) to community settings with the support they need to find and maintain housing.



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Data on shelter use is from HIFIS database and from Siloam Mission's annual data.

All quotes, unless otherwise cited, are from two focus groups held at Women's Resource Centres with women who had experienced homelessness.

Photos of women are from these focus groups. Women chose which photo to use and how they would be portrayed in the report.

The photo on the cover was taken by a woman who was experiencing homelessness who asked to remain anonymous.