

# Experiencing Homelessness

# 8

## The Eighth Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2015

This 8<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton highlights changes in 2014 that impact housing and homelessness, both good and bad. The good news is that we are increasingly finding innovative ways to house people in need that really *does* meet their needs (see pgs 7 & 8). Moving forward, we will focus on *Housing First*, an approach that says, house the person, then provide supports to help them stay housed, and find the treatment/supports they need.

The bad news is that the lack of Affordable Housing continues to be a major challenge, and it will get worse unless governments decide to act:

- Only five new units were added to the Affordable Housing inventory in Greater Moncton in 2014. Two were for people with disabilities, and three were 3-bedroom units for families.
- On April 1, 2014, the federal and provincial governments renewed the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement for another five years, for \$78 million. But for every dollar coming into the province under the IAH, \$2.20 is leaving because of the expiry of operating agreements (see pg 6).

### The Current Situation\*

Emergency shelter use in Greater Moncton	2013	2014
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA) – 2011 census	138,644	138,644
Total number of unique individuals (clients) admitted to shelters	781	780
Total number of nights stayed	12,873	13,268
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	8.4	7.11
Number of emergency shelter beds (capacity)		
For men	46	46
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
<b>Housing Indicators</b>		
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1,610	1,622
Of these, # of units owned by the province	650	650
Of these, # in private dwellings	960	972**
Number on the provincially-subsidized waiting list	1,611	1,698
New units in Affordable Rental Housing Program	34	5
Number of transitional housing beds/units	24	26
Number of long-term supportive housing beds/units	315	317
Rental vacancy rate	9.1%	8.7%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$742	\$762
<b>Income Indicators</b>		
Social assistance for a single person	\$537	\$537
# Individuals on social assistance	5,119	5,011
Minimum wage in NB	\$10.00	\$10.30
<b>Food Security in NB</b>		
Number of food banks	5	4
Number of soup kitchens/community suppers	2/4	2/4

\* Sources available inside document; \*\* 12 increase includes 5 new units; 7 adjusted to municipal limits.

**780 different individuals were homeless in 2014, compared to 781 in 2013.  
An additional 120 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 8<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton uses 2014 data. All eight Report Cards will be available at [www.monctonhomelessness.org](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org).

## Homelessness numbers relatively unchanged from 2013

	House of Nazareth (24 beds, men; 6 beds, women)		Harvest House (22 beds, men; 8 beds, women)		Shelters combined	Crossroads for Women (17 beds)	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2014	2013	2014
Total number of admissions	711	715	799	1150	1,865	103	126
Total number unique individuals	436	418	345	362	780	109	120
Total number of nights stayed	6,292	6,645	6,581	6,623	13,268	3,735	3,527
Average length of stay	8.7	8.78	8.07	5.44	7.11	32.48	28
Average number of beds occupied per night	17.24	18.21	18.02	18.15	18.18	10.23	9.66

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

Despite our best efforts to house people who are homeless or precariously housed (documented in this Report Card), the statistics for 2014 are stubbornly unchanged from a year earlier. The good news is that number of unique individuals using the shelters has not increased significantly. The bad, that they are not dropping either. For the past three censuses, Greater Moncton has been the “growth centre” of Atlantic Canada. Between 2006 and 2011, the population in the Moncton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) increased by 9.7%, compared to 2.9% for the province as a whole. Between 2001 and 2006, the growth was 6.5% in Moncton CMA, compared to 0.1% in New Brunswick. Resources available to house and treat and support people in our area are definitely NOT keeping up with provincial migration patterns.

### Types of Homelessness

<b>Unsheltered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleeping rough, out of doors</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency sheltered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless emergency shelters</li> <li>• Violence against women shelters</li> </ul>
<b>Provisionally accommodated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In institutional settings (prison, hospital) with no place to go when they leave</li> <li>• In interim housing (transitional, supportive)</li> <li>• Temporarily with friends or relatives (couch surfing), with no immediate prospects of housing (“hidden homeless”)</li> </ul>

Source: The State of Homelessness in Canada 2014

*For every “visibly” homeless person (staying in shelters, sleeping rough), there are an estimated 3.5 to 4 “hidden” homeless people (couch surfing, sleeping in vacant building & abandoned cars). Many of the hidden homeless are women and youth.*

### 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.

## Number of Social Assistance claimants decreases in Greater Moncton

Social 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.

Some 78% of recipients in Greater Moncton are on the TAP. A single individual receives approximately \$537 per month. Affordable housing options for these people include rooming houses, shelters and the streets.

Of those on the TAP:

- 51% are women
- 49% are men

The number of people on Social Assistance decreased slightly in 2014.

	Dec 2014	Dec 2013	Dec 2012
Households in receipt of a monthly cheque	3,249	3,265	3,167
Households benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	960	983	972
Total of both types - households	4,209	4,248	4,139
Individuals in receipt of a monthly cheque	5,011	5,119	4,921
Individuals benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	2,082	2,091	1,971
Total of both types - individuals	7,093	7,210	6,892
Provincial total – All types of Social Assistance	48,943	49,900	50,966

Source: NB Social Development

## ....while NB Housing waiting list continues to grow

The number of people on the NB Housing waiting list has increased by 28% in the past two years. Not all people on the waiting list for social housing are homeless. But if they qualified to get on the list, it usually means that they are living in housing that is not affordable based on their income (they should not pay more than 30% of total income on housing); not adequate (in need of major repair and/or the lack of basic facilities such as an indoor toilet); and/or not suitable (overcrowded, not enough bedrooms for the number of occupants).

Recent research suggests that 29,565 households in New Brunswick are in core housing need (Canadian Housing Observer, 2011 statistics). As a recent publication of the NB Non-Profit Housing Association stated: *"Finding and keeping a job, completing an education, raising a family or aging with dignity are next to impossible without a safe and affordable place to call home."*

Type	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2014	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2013	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2012
Family	430	433	319
Senior	425	377	262
Non-elderly single	805	764	603
Disabled	38	37	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,698</b>	<b>1,611</b>	<b>1,219</b>

Source: NB Social Development

*Affordable housing options for people receiving \$537 per month on Social Assistance include rooming houses, shelters and the streets.*

*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.*

## Did You Know?

*Food bank use continues to be at an all-time high in Greater Moncton, New Brunswick and Canada as a whole. In March 2014, 19,590 New Brunswickers used food banks, of whom one-third were children; 17% had a job or were on EI; and two-thirds were on social assistance.*

-HungerCount 2014

## Did You Know?

*AIDS Moncton Inc. operates a needle distribution service. In 2013-14, it served over 400 unique individuals – of whom 121 were women and 264 were men – and distributed 79,353 needles.*

## Did You Know?

*“The way to ‘fix’ a homeless person is to give them a home.”*

-Michael Enright,  
CBC Radio

## Youth QUEST drop-in serves homeless, at risk youth

Youth QUEST Central is a multi-resource centre on St. George Street for youth between the ages of 16 and 24, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Operated by Youth Impact Jeunesse Inc. (formerly Moncton Youth Residences Inc.), the centre assists clients with finding community resources to meet their basic needs, and offers a variety of in-house services to assist and support them in making positive life choices. We offer case management, an employability program, transitional housing, GED classes, Internet access, shower facilities, hygiene products, clothing, snacks, a weekly supper, free recreational activities, and a caring atmosphere with supportive people.

Since April 2014, a total of 5,232 clients accessed the Centre (3,387 male, 1,845 female). Staff did a total of 8,084 interventions including, but not limited to, personal, career and education counselling. As well,

- 187 clients accessed shower facilities;
- 188 clients accessed laundry facilities;
- 799 accessed hygiene products;
- 730 accessed clothing;
- 2,491 accessed the media centre;
- 2,068 accessed food;
- 27 clients received assistance with education or skill enhancement;
- 12 clients received assistance with employment.



We've noticed a bit of a decrease in the numbers from last year at this time by 570 clients, due in part to clients moving to different locations or aging out of the service.

The QUEST Case Management program, which provides case management, client assessments, and pre-employment and employment preparation services to our clients, opened 39 new cases since August 2014. Some 35 clients were screened, which meant they came in for some assistance with resumes or apartment searches, and decided not to become a client of QUEST Case.

-Cathy Manuel

*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*



## ***New five-year Community Plan to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton***

Effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee began a new five-year period of the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The committee is made up of approximately two dozen non-profits that serve the homeless or those at risk, two levels of government and CMHC. In consultation with community stakeholders, including the homeless population, we spent much of 2014 developing a new five-year plan that focuses on ending and preventing homelessness. Here are the five key strategic directions of the new plan, which was approved by Ottawa in August 2014. (The complete plan is available at <http://monctonhomelessness.org/research.html>)

- To reduce homelessness through a Housing First (HF) approach. By 2016-17, 40% of our HPS allocation (\$240,000 per year) will be used to house the chronically and episodically homeless.
- To improve the self-sufficiency of homeless individuals and families and those at imminent risk of homelessness through individualized services. This strategy is for non-HF clients. It will focus on housing loss prevention, and referring clients to appropriate resources in the community.
- To preserve or increase the capacity of facilities used to address the needs of people who are homeless or at risk. This strategy focuses on existing transitional and supportive housing programs, and will help them to upgrade and maintain their facilities.
- To ensure coordination of resources and leveraging. With support from the GMHSC's Community Development Officer, members of the Steering Committee will continue to work together to share resources and leverage funds from other private and non-profit groups in the community.
- To improve data collection and use. A big focus in this new 2014-19 period is on measuring outcomes, showing that we are actually housing people who are homeless and helping them to stay housed.

### **Transitional housing**

- Crossroads for Women Second Stage Housing – eight units (women)
- John Howard Society of Southeastern NB – 10 units (adult males)
- Moncton Youth Residences Inc. – eight transition beds (four female, four male)

### **Longer-term Supportive Housing**

- Alternative Residences Inc. (mental health clients) – three group homes (23 beds); one Transition home (8 beds); 16 one-bedroom apartments; five bungalows/duplexes (30 beds)
- Future Horizons Housing Inc. – 12 units (for Headstart Inc. families)
- MacDonald Independent Living Centre – 34 units (physical disabilities)
- Moncton Community Residences Inc. Serves 150 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; 14 clients were housed in 2014.
- YWCA Scattered supportive housing for women; 20 women and 18 children were housed in 2014.
- The Peer Supported Housing operates two six-unit apartment buildings for the “harder to house.” 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

## ***What is Housing First?***

Housing First is a client-driven approach that provides **immediate access to permanent housing**, in addition to **flexible, community-based services** for people who have experienced homelessness. Housing First provides housing **without requiring** psychiatric treatment or sobriety as determinants of “housing readiness.” Housing First draws from **a harm reduction approach** and **a recovery orientation**. The goal of Housing First is to end chronic homelessness by providing **immediate housing** and then working with participants to **promote recovery and well-being**.

*-Housing First Tool Kit, 2014, Mental Health Commission of Canada*

## Expiry of Operating Agreements: A crisis waiting to happen

After World War II, the federal government began investing in social housing. It did this by signing Operating Agreements with housing providers such as non-profit organizations, co-operatives and public housing operators. At the peak of Canada's social housing program in 1993, the federal government was investing over \$2 billion each year on 600,000 social housing units through various operating agreements. The majority of units were targeted to Canada's lowest-income earners.

When new funding stopped in 1993 and existing agreements started to expire, total federal funding began to decline. From \$2 billion a year in 1993 to \$1.6 billion in 2014, the investment will be at \$35 million in 2035, and at zero by 2040.

*This is a disaster waiting to happen!* Many social housing providers will be unable to provide affordable rents. For most agreements, funding accounted for financing costs, and the difference between operating costs and rental revenue. Rent increases, economic evictions and ultimately homelessness may result. An estimated 66% of people in these social housing units (334,000 families in Canada) risk losing their homes.

In New Brunswick, the expiry of operating agreements will impact 10,035 units of housing, or 76% of the provincial portfolio of social housing. National research suggests that two-thirds of the portfolio will face serious viability challenges. In New Brunswick, this translates to an estimated 6,750 units of affordable housing, the replacement value of which would exceed \$1 billion. In Greater Moncton, an estimated 1,890 units will be impacted.

*For every dollar coming into the province through the Investment in Affordable Housing agreement, an estimated \$2.20 of federal support will be lost as Operating Agreements expiry, and subsidies end.*

In April of 2014, the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) agreement was renewed by the federal and New Brunswick governments, for \$78 million over five years. But for every dollar coming into the province through the IAH, an estimated \$2.20 will be lost because of the Expiry of Operating Agreements.

The Canadian Housing Renewal Association has launched a campaign, "Housing for All," to raise awareness of this serious issue during the upcoming federal election campaign. Check it out at <http://housing4all.ca/>

## Coldest night of the year



Moncton Mayor George LeBlanc led the pack at the "Coldest night of the year" walk to raise money for homeless youth in Greater Moncton. [Photo: David Corkum]

Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton (CMA)			
Unit size	Oct 2014	Oct 2013	Oct 2012
Bachelor	\$542	\$532	\$485
1 Bedroom	\$647	\$626	\$619
2 Bedrooms	\$762	\$742	\$731
3+ Bedrooms	\$906	\$908	\$897

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, Fall 2014, 2013, 2012 [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm)

## ***Housing Options: Housing First doesn't work for everyone***

As we move into a new five-year phase of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, the focus will be on "Housing First." But research shows that Housing First does not necessarily work for everyone. Here and on the following page are three examples of Moncton-based housing options that use "Housing First" principles adapted for the *"harder to house."*

### ***Peer Supported Housing***

The Peer Supported Housing project started during the At Home/ Chez Soi project. While "Housing First" helps over 80% of chronically homeless individuals find long-term secure housing, there remains a small percentage of individuals (15-20%) who are not able to be housed using this model. Peer Supported Housing provides an alternative to scattered site apartments while still having many benefits of the Housing First model.

Peer Support Housing uses a congregate model of housing. The apartment buildings are small; each building has six single bedroom apartments with a common entrance. The buildings have enhanced security features that allow the building to monitor unwanted guests and rapidly reissue keys when keys are lost. A couple (termed peers) with lived experience of homelessness, addiction and/or mental health issues and who have progressed towards recovery in their lives occupy one of the units in each building. The peers act as superintendents in the building, and model good tenant relationships. The tenants agree to pay 30% of their income toward rent. Tenants in the building are also encouraged to have regular home visits from either a mental health team member or Salvus Clinic team member.

Presently there are two Peer Supported Housing buildings in the Moncton area, which are at full occupancy. This housing project adds to the spectrum of housing options for individuals with housing challenges. This is a project of Salvus Clinic in partnership with the United Way of Southeastern NB. One tenant when asked how he liked his apartment replied *"Wonderful! I'm satisfied to be in my shelter."*

-Dr Sue Crouse

### ***Scattered Housing for women***

During 2014, YWCA's *A Home for Her* housed 20 women and 18 children. This Scattered Housing Program is for homeless or precariously housed women, some of whom live with addictions and/or acute mental health challenges. At first, the program used a cohabitation model, which required strong guidelines and rules to ensure that women could safely and respectfully share an apartment. When rules were broken, however, evictions resulted. As an agency dedicated to women's safety, empowerment and well-being, evicting women was difficult due to the lack of a women-only homeless shelter in our community. As a result, the program went through a shift in its approach, bringing it more in line with the national trend of using a harm reduction/Housing First lens when addressing homelessness.

Many of the changes brought to *A Home for Her* came as a result of working with Jenny, a mother of two young children, who has a lengthy history of homelessness due to struggles with addictions and mental health. By working with a team of inter-disciplinary professionals from various agencies, Jenny has been able to work on regaining and maintaining custody of her children. Since housed with *A Home for Her*, she has been to Detox twice, continues to attend a Methadone clinic, and is awaiting a bed at a long term substance treatment facility. While Jenny works to abstain from using street drugs and to improve her mental health, *A Home for Her* has welcomed her father to temporarily move in with her to assure the care and safety of her children. Thanks to great collaborative relationships with government and community organizations, *A Home for Her* has increased the quality of its services for the harder to house clients, such as Jenny.

-Michèle Nadeau

## ***SUN Network making a difference in housing the chronically homeless***

The Greater Moncton Supportive Housing (SUN) Network was launched in late 2012 with a mandate to house individuals who have been chronically homeless, and to work with them to help them maintain their tenancy. The overall goal is to reduce emergency shelter use. These two positions are funded by the province, and hosted by the Re-Connect Street Intervention Program.

In 2014, SUN's two Housing Support Workers housed 14 people: six new clients into subsidized apartments (where the tenant pays 30% of the rent) and eight new clients into rooming houses. Of the seven clients housed in subsidized apartments in 2013, five have maintained their tenancy with the support of our housing workers; two were evicted. To date, we have a total of 10 clients housed in subsidized units and one client to be placed in March 2015. We are currently supporting eight new clients in rooming houses and continue to support two clients who were previously housed in 2013. We continue to use rooming houses because there are not enough subsidized units available. Unfortunately, for our clients who are placed into rooming houses, many do not achieve the level of success and recovery that we are having with clients receiving subsidized units. The rooming house environment is not suitable or conducive to a healthy lifestyle. This type of low-income housing is keeping people sick and living in poverty.



Colin Bowser  
1978 - 2014

Sadly, we lost a wonderful soul this past year. Colin Bowser, a client and friend of the SUN Network, passed away in November 2014. He was a bright light for many people; always smiling, cheerful and warm, he cared for everyone he came into contact with. Colin is sorely missed by everyone who had the pleasure to be in his life. R.I.P. Colin.

*—Gillian Johnson*

### ***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.
8. **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.html](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org/research.html)

This 8<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org) or join us on Facebook.