



*"There's not enough
housing for everybody"*
- Montana

FACING HOMELESSNESS

Greater Victoria Report on Housing & Supports 2012/13



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness is a reality in our community. This report highlights some of the conditions in which people become homeless and what needs to be done to solve this problem. The gap between income and housing costs is an important **contributor to homelessness**. Finding affordable housing while meeting the costs of living is difficult for many families and single individuals in our region. While vacancy rates overall have risen, there are fewer low end of market suites available to those living on low incomes. The living wage for families is just over \$18 per hour, making it hard for low income families to have enough money to meet the costs of living. Similarly, many singles on social assistance or earning minimum wage would find it difficult to pay market rent and meet other expenses.

Many people in our community are at **risk of homelessness**. People in core housing need who are unable to find accommodation that does not cost more than 30% of their income are at risk of homelessness. Twenty-seven percent of renters in Greater Victoria are in core housing need, and 10.9% are in severe housing need, paying more than 50% of their income on housing. Subsidized housing continues to be in short supply with more than 1,400 Greater Victorians on the Housing Registry. Many individuals and families use food banks to make ends meet.

Examining the number of people who use emergency shelters, those that are turned away, and the number of people who are homeless on one night, provides us with a picture of the **extent of homelessness**. More than 1,600 unique individuals used an emergency shelter bed in 5 of 6 emergency shelters in Greater Victoria during the past year. While the number of unique individuals is similar to last year, the overall occupancy rate of our emergency shelters has increased from 111% to 112%, due to increased emergency mat capacity. People continue to be turned away from one of the main emergency shelters nightly. On a single night, more 1,000 people were counted as staying in temporary accommodation.

When we examine our **community response** to the challenge of homelessness and housing exclusion we find that while much is being done, there has been little progress in the creation of affordable housing. Greater Victoria service providers are consistently housing people and keeping them housed. While some new subsidized housing has been added for families and seniors, there have not been any new subsidized housing units added for those who are homeless or for Aboriginal people. Rental supplements for individuals at-risk of homelessness or formerly homeless have not increased and there has been a limited increase in the use of rental assistance programs by families and seniors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase the number of Homeless Outreach Program rental supplements available.
- Revisit the criteria for rental assistance programs to broaden their reach.
- Increase the number of subsidized housing units in our community.
- Undertake specific assessment of the needs of youth and families, including Aboriginal peoples experiencing homelessness.

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness continues to be a major concern for our community. The rise of homelessness in rural and urban centers throughout Canada has been associated with changes in the supply and availability of low-cost and affordable housing. Consequently, adequate housing and income are part of a stable foundation needed to address homelessness. In the absence of these, some people are more likely than others to become homeless, and many more are at risk of homelessness.¹ Who will become homeless? Economic and social conditions related to income and housing interact with systemic factors and personal circumstances to create conditions in which individuals and families become homeless. Homelessness is not a choice, it is a consequence of factors that create a situation in which individuals have few choices and are often forced to the streets or shelters.²

In this report, we start with an examination of the current conditions in Greater Victoria which can contribute to homelessness. Then we highlight the number of people at risk of homelessness in our community through reporting on core housing need as well as food insecurity and the number of people on the Housing Registry. We provide a picture of the extent of homelessness in our community by looking at the number of unique individuals using emergency shelters, being turned away from shelters, and number of people using temporary accommodation on a single night. Lastly, we look to our responses to homelessness.

Throughout this report, the voices of people with experiences of homelessness are highlighted. Their voices provide insight into what these numbers mean in terms of the impact on real people. Listening to their voices is an important way to understand homelessness and the day to day struggles and challenges that people face. We are grateful for their wisdom and acknowledge their important and insightful contributions to this report.

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2000). *A plan not a dream: How to end homelessness in ten years*. Washington, DC: National Alliance to End Homelessness.

² Gaetz, S., Donaldson, Richter, T., Gulliver, T. (2010). *The state of homelessness in Canada*. Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness is not just what you see on the street. Even when homelessness is not visible, it still exists when people in our community are living in abandoned buildings, camping, staying in emergency shelters, or couch surfing.³ There are many other people in our community who are living in housing that does not meet health and safety standards such as presence of mold and inadequate electrical or heating systems. All of these living situations, from homelessness to precariously housed, put people at risk of poor physical, mental and emotional health.

Canadian Definition of Homelessness⁴

Homelessness describes a range of physical living situations, organized here into four categories.

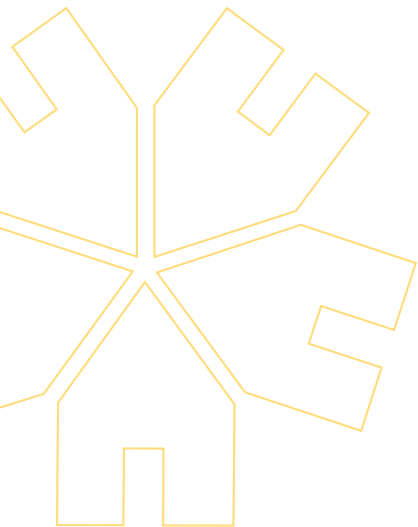
Homelessness and housing exclusion include:

Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;

Emergency Sheltered, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as Violence Against Women shelters;

Provisionally Accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary and who do not have their own home or security of tenure;

Insecurely Housed, referring to people who are 'at-risk' of homelessness, and whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.



³ Canadian Homelessness Research Network (2012). Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Available online at Homeless Hub.

⁴ Canadian Homelessness Research Network (2012). Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Available online at Homeless Hub.

CONTRIBUTORS TO HOMELESSNESS

Anyone can become homeless in the current economic conditions. Homelessness is not a static state but rather a fluid experience, where one's shelter circumstances and options may shift and change quite dramatically and with frequency. Experiences of homelessness are unique and each individual or family will have a story about their pathways into and out of homelessness.

Homelessness is an outcome of the complex interplay of structural factors, systemic failures and individual circumstances.⁵

- **Structural factors** are those conditions in society that have led to an increased cost of living but without a commensurate increase in incomes, particularly for those in the lower income brackets or those on social assistance.⁶ Factors such as stigma and discrimination can act as barriers to obtaining housing, employment, health and social services.
- **Systemic failures** occur when people fall between the cracks or are trapped in the fault lines in our systems of care.⁷ For example, when people are discharged from hospitals or correctional facilities into emergency shelters or when youth transition out of child welfare system.
- **Personal circumstances** of individuals and families occur when individuals or families experience catastrophic events such as job loss, illness, house fire, traumatic events or health problems can add to the risk of becoming homelessness when housing or income are in short supply.⁸ Family violence and conflict, particularly for women, children and youth, may push individuals to flee their homes in order to protect themselves.

This report focuses on the structural factors that contribute to homelessness in our region, particularly housing and income issues.

⁵ Gaetz, S. Donaldson, J., Richter, T., & Gulliver, T. (2013). The state of homelessness in Canada 2013. Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid



HOUSING

Victoria, like other urban centres, has seen a loss in the availability of affordable housing (both private market and public housing) since the 1990's. This can be traced to changes in federal government policies away from an investment in affordable housing.⁹ From 1970 to 1995, approximately 6,200 social housing units were created in the Capital Regional District (CRD), an average of 248 new units per year. Since the mid-1990s, the development of new social housing units in the CRD has slowed considerably. In between 1995 and 2007, a total of 990 social housing units were created in the CRD, averaging 82.5 new units each year.¹⁰ This has led to an increasing reliance on market housing.

A cornerstone of preventing and solving homelessness is access to safe, affordable housing. In Victoria, however, the private rental market is often costly and unavailable for many people living on low incomes.¹¹ Consequently, increasing access to rental market housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is a key part of the Great Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness' strategy.

“If you find a place that’s actually affordable, there’s gonna be a whole whack of [people] that are trying to get in, good luck. There is going to be four or five others trying to get one spot. Cause there’s the welfare stigma too right. People don’t want to rent to people on welfare.” - Jimmy

⁹ Gaetz et al. (2013); Shapcott. (2009)

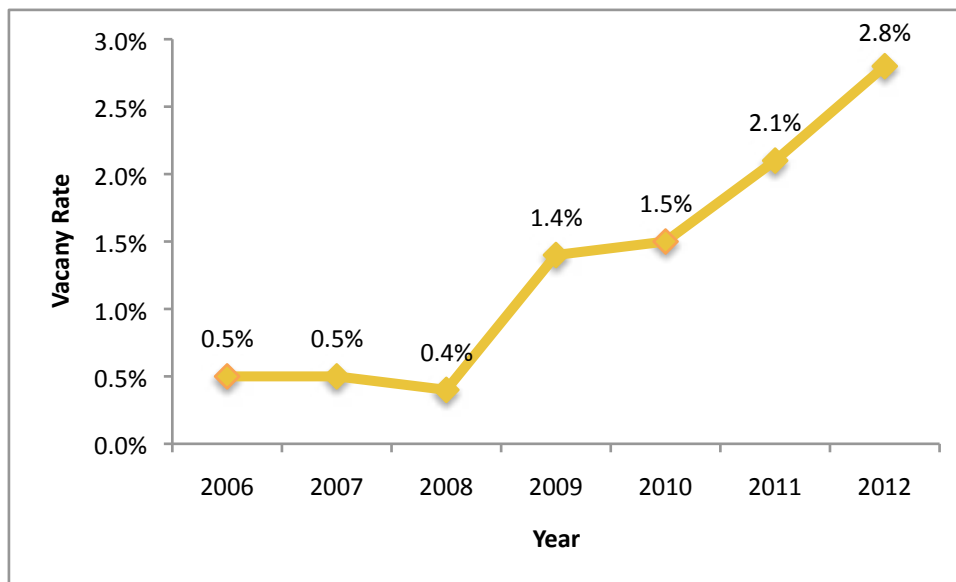
¹⁰ Capital Regional District. (2007). Regional Housing Affordability Strategy for the Capital Regional District.

¹¹ Rental market data presented in this report accounts for only purpose-built apartment stock. In the Victoria CMA, purpose-built rental units account for only half of the rental units in the region (and increasingly so in urban centers across Canada). Most of the recent growth in the rental stock has been in the secondary market, which includes condominiums, basement suites, and garden suites. Condominiums are typically more expensive than purpose-built rental stock.

VACANCY RATE

Greater Victoria's vacancy rate¹² is now at its highest point in seven years. At 2.8%, the vacancy rate is on par with both the national vacancy rate (2.8%) and the BC provincial vacancy rate (2.8%).¹³ When vacancy rates remain lower than 3% over many years, this is generally correlated with rising rents such as we see in Victoria.¹⁴

Victoria CMA - Vacancy Rate for Private Row (Townhouse) and Apartments



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2007-2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

As shown in the map on the following page, vacancy rates are higher outside the City of Victoria, where fewer services and fewer rental units are located. The City of Victoria, where many services are located, has the lowest overall vacancy rate (2.3%). Much of the growth in overall vacancy rate for Greater Victoria can be attributed to higher vacancies in the West Shore (Langford, Colwood, View Royal, Sooke); (5.9%) and Esquimalt (5.4%).¹⁵ Vacancy rates for bachelor suites is much lower than the overall vacancy rates for all areas.

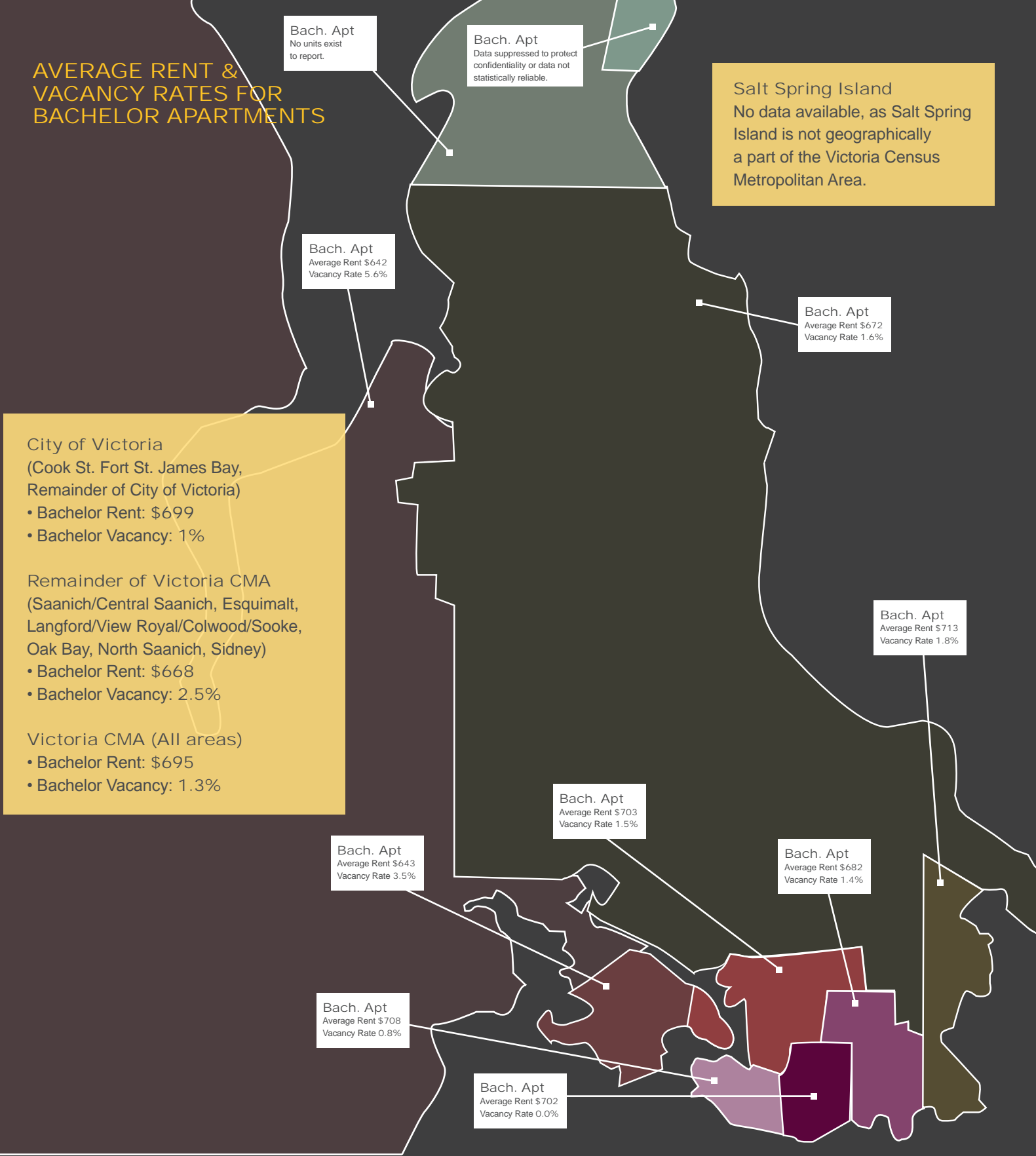
¹² "A unit is considered vacant if, at the time of the survey, it is physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental." Vacancy rate refers to how many units are available for rent, so if there is a 3% vacancy rate, then for every 100 rental units three are physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA; Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2012). No Vacancy: Trends in Rental Housing in Canada.

¹³ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Statistics; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Report: British Columbia Highlight. CMHC's fall reports (released in October) are used in this report on the recommendation of CMHC, as the fall survey has been in place for over 30 years and therefore has an established track record, while the April survey has a less consistent history. The October survey also tends to be less impacted by seasonal trends.

¹⁴ Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2012). No Vacancy: Trends in Rental Housing in Canada.

¹⁵ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

AVERAGE RENT & VACANCY RATES FOR BACHELOR APARTMENTS



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Cook St. Area | Saanich/Central Saanich | North Saanich |
| Fort St. Area | Esquimalt | Sidney |
| James Bay Area | Langford/View Royal/Colwood/Sooke | |
| Remainder of City of Victoria | Oak Bay | |

A closer look at the data shows these higher vacancy rates are not reflected at the low end of the rental market. The Victoria rental market is challenging for anyone looking to rent¹⁶ for less than \$700/month. Vacancy rates for private bachelor, 1 bedroom, and 2 bedroom apartments in the rent range of \$700 demonstrate that these suites are among the least available. For example, the overall vacancy rate for a bachelor suite is 1.3% but for those suites less than \$700/month it is 0.9%. For a 1 or 2 bedroom suite the overall vacancy rate is 2.9% but is only 1% for a 1 bedroom that costs less than \$700 per month and there is zero availability for a 2 bedroom suite in the less than \$700 range.¹⁷

Bachelor Apartment Vacancy Rate Comparison ¹⁸				
Vacancy Type	2009	2010	2011	2012
Bachelor Overall Vacancy Rate %	1.3	0.8	1.7	1.3
Bachelor Vacancy Rate For Rent Range lower than \$700/month	1.3	0.8	2.1	0.9

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2010-2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

1 Bedroom Apartment Vacancy Rate Comparison ¹⁹				
Vacancy Type	2009	2010	2011	2012
1 Bedroom Overall Vacancy Rate %	1.6	1.7	2.5	2.9
1 Bedroom Vacancy Rate For Rent Range lower than \$700/month	0.8	0.6	1.1	1

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2010-2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

2 Bedroom Apartment Vacancy Rate Comparison ²⁰				
Vacancy Type	2009	2010	2011	2012
2 Bedroom Overall Vacancy Rate %	1.1	1.3	1.7	2.9
2 Bedroom Vacancy Rate For Rent Range lower than \$700/month	0.5	0	**21	0

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2010-2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

"The [vacancy] rate is not the issue, there's more than enough there. It's the fact that they're out of price range for a lot of people." - Robert

16 Rent "refers to the actual amount tenants pay for their unit. No adjustments are made for the inclusion or exclusion." Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

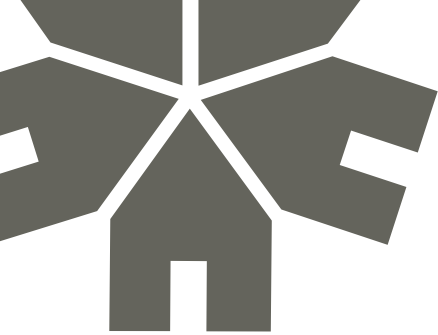
17 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Report: Victoria CMA.

18 Note that this data is based on private apartments only, not apartment and townhouse combined, as is the case for the rest of the rental market data in the report. However, the rental stock universes for the categories of 'private apartments only' and 'private apartments and row house combined' are approximately the same for these portions of the market and thus does not affect data comparability with other housing data in this report.

19 Ibid

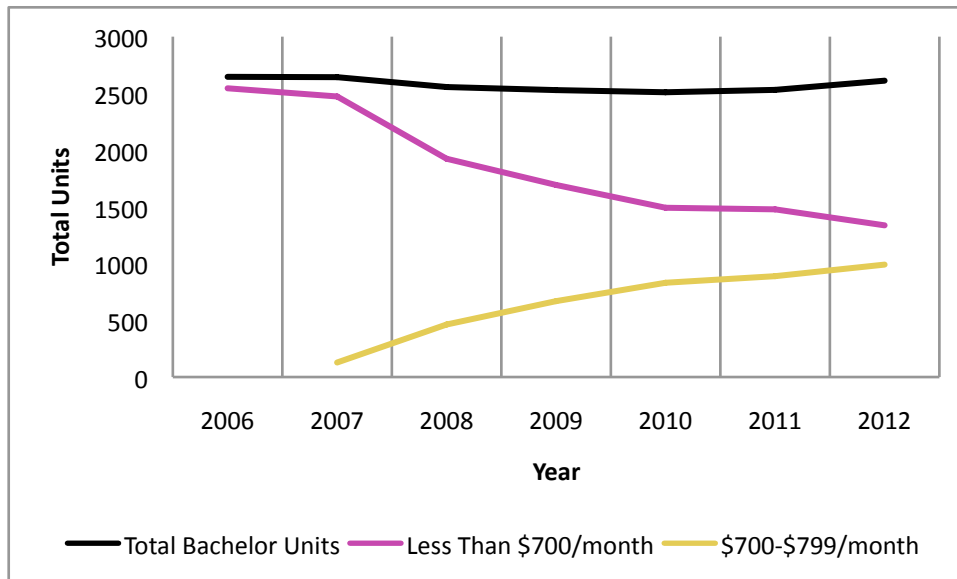
20 Ibid

21 Data suppressed by CMHC



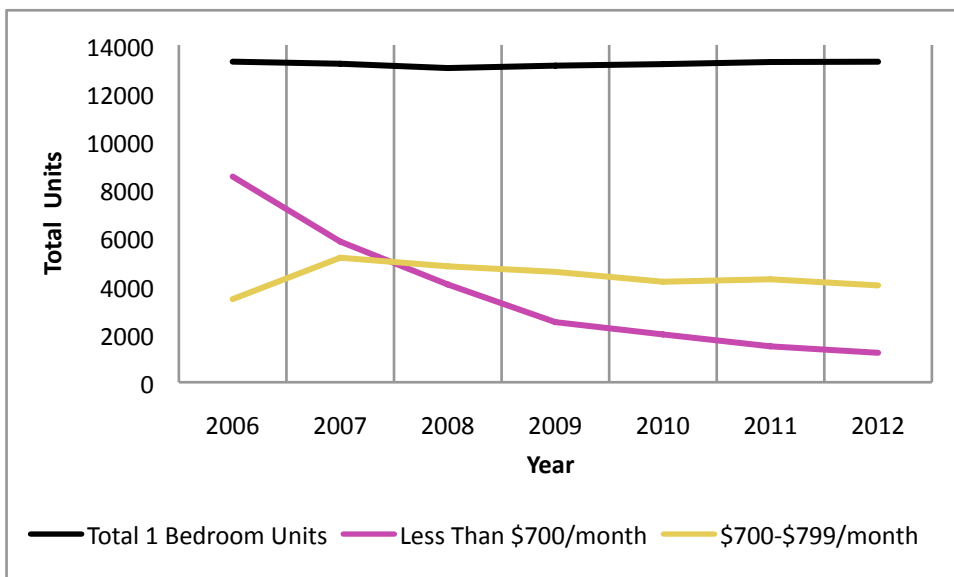
The challenges become even clearer when we look at the declining number of bachelor and 1 bedroom suites that cost less than \$700/month. Since 2006, the overall rental stock has remained unchanged but there has been a decline in the total number of suites on the market that are less than \$700/month.

Total Bachelor Apt Units in Rental Universe by Rent Range (Victoria CMA)



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2006-2012). Rental Market Survey.

Total 1 Bedroom Apt Units in Rental Universe by Rent Range (Victoria CMA)



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2006-2012). Rental Market Survey.

RENTAL COSTS

From 2011 to 2012, average rents increased for all unit types. The average rent for bachelor apartments increased the most out of all unit types from 2011 to 2012. This is also reflected in the long-term trends, which show the average rent for bachelor apartments increasing more quickly than all other unit types, with the average rent increasing by 24% since 2006.²²

The cost at the low end of the market keeps increasing, but there has been little change in the amount available for rent for those on social assistance or fixed incomes. In 2012, the average rent of \$695 for bachelor apartments in Greater Victoria was among the most expensive Canada. Nationally, the average rent for bachelor apartments was \$655 (\$651 in 2011), with Victoria ranking as the 7th most expensive city in Canada.²³

Average Rent by Unit Type (Victoria CMA)



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2007-2012). Rental Market Report, Victoria CMA.

“The rents are going up but people’s income is staying the same, income assistance started at \$350, 22 years ago when I was here, but it’s \$375 now, so it really doesn’t make sense. It has stayed the same for more than 20 years.” - Dee

22 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2007-2012). Rental Market Report, Victoria CMA.
 23 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Rental Market Statistics.

INCOME

Earning an adequate income is another key factor in preventing and solving homelessness. The living wage for a family demonstrates how much is needed to live in Greater Victoria. The calculation of basic living costs for two items (shelter and food) for individuals shows why so many on income assistance and earning minimum wage need other community resources in order to survive.

LIVING WAGE FOR FAMILIES²⁴

The living wage represents the wage both parents in a two parent, two child family need to make in a 35 hour work week to maintain an adequate quality of life in Greater Victoria. The living wage has increased consistently year after year since 2006. For 2013, this hourly wage has increased to \$18.73. Comparatively, in March 2013, the minimum wage in BC increased to \$10.25.²⁵ While this increase has benefited many people, it is still \$8.48 lower than the living wage.

Living Wage for Families in Greater Victoria							
Year	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Living Wage	\$15.63	\$16.39	\$17.02	\$17.31	\$18.03	\$18.07	\$18.73
Difference over previous year	n/a	4.9% ²⁶	3.8%	1.7%	4.2%	0.2%	3.7%

Source: Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. (2013). Supplement Report: 2013 Calculation of Living Wage for Greater Victoria.



24 Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. (2013). Supplement Report: 2013 Calculation of Living Wage for Greater Victoria.

25 Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour. (2011). Minimum Wage Factsheet.

26 Note: this increase is over a two year period and averages 2.5% per year.



A family of four would have to make approximately \$5,222.36 per month to maintain an adequate quality of life,²⁷ but it still could not afford what many other families take for granted. With this wage, a family:

Can	Can't
Can adequately feed, clothe and shelter (rental) their household	Own a home
Can maintain the health of family members	Cannot afford to care for an elderly relative or a disabled family member
Can participate in activities that are an ordinary part of community life	Cannot service loan debts or credit card bills
Can receive up to two weeks paid time off for illness annually	Cannot save for children's education, to purchase a home, holidays or retirement

Source: Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. (2013). Supplement Report: 2013 Calculation of Living Wage for Greater Victoria.

Instead of the living wage, low-income families are often earning at or slightly above the minimum wage. Many common jobs that remain below the living wage include cashiers, security guards, general farm workers, cooks, bakers, and nursery and greenhouse workers.²⁸ Some minimum wage jobs carry the additional challenge of job insecurity, as minimum wage jobs may be of short tenure. Furthermore, women are the most common minimum wage earners across Canada.²⁹

Families living on a minimum wage income and making less than what is needed for an adequate quality of life would not be able to fully cover the costs of shelter, food, clothing, transportation, child care, health expenses, or emergencies. This puts families at-risk for food, income and housing insecurity.

²⁷ Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. (2013). Supplement Report: 2013 Calculation of Living Wage for Greater Victoria.

²⁸ BC Stats. (2010). BC Wage & Salary Survey 2009: Highlights. Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

²⁹ Statistics Canada. (2010). Perspective on Labour and Income: Minimum Wage.

BASIC COSTS FOR INDIVIDUALS

The month to month situation is similarly challenging for individuals on low incomes. Covering even basic necessities can be difficult.

Monthly Costs: Shelter and Food for Single Individuals on Income Assistance									
Single Individual (male)	IA Disability ³⁰			IA PPMB ³¹			Income Assistance ³²		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Income Assistance rates	\$958.09	\$963.72	\$963.86	\$709.59	\$710.71	\$711.29	\$661.67	\$662.79	\$663.37
Bachelor Apt. Median Rent ³³	\$675	\$685	\$695	\$675	\$685	\$695	\$675	\$685	\$695
Average monthly cost of food basket in BC ³⁴	\$293.87	\$298.57	\$305.92	\$293.87	\$298.57	\$305.92	\$293.87	\$298.57	\$305.92
Remainder for monthly expenses	-\$10.78	-\$19.85	-\$37.06	-\$259.28	-\$272.86	-\$289.63	-\$307.20	-\$320.78	-\$337.55

Income assistance has not increased over the past year and not really at all since 2007. A single person on income assistance cannot cover the costs of basic necessities - shelter and food. Because the cost of shelter and food exceeds one’s total income, compromises have to be made on what food is eaten as well as on other necessities, such as clothing, personal hygiene items, transportation, and health-related expenses. This situation is worsening as costs like rent continue to increase and incomes do not.

Income Assistance Definitions:

- Income Assistance (IA) is available for people who are out of work or earning very little, awaiting other income, unable to work, or in immediate need of food shelter or urgent medical attention.¹
- The ‘Person with Disabilities’ (IA Disability) designation identifies a person with a physical or mental impairment who is significantly restricted in his or her ability to perform daily living activities either "continuously or periodically for extended periods" and, as a result of these restrictions, requires assistance with daily living activities.²
- The ‘Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers’ (IA PPMB) category recognizes individuals who are unable to achieve financial independence because of specific barriers to employment.³

1 Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. (2013). Your Guide to Employment and Assistance.
 2 Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. (2013). <http://www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2004/pwd.htm>
 3 Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. (2013). <http://www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2004/ppmb.htm>

“My rent is \$460, they allot me \$610, they’re taking \$20 a month for the damage deposit. That leaves me \$130 a month after I’ve paid the rent.” - Robert

30 Includes other available assistance for single persons: Christmas supplement, Federal GST Credit, BC Harmonized Sales Tax Credit, BC Climate Action Credit. The Universal Child Care Benefit pays \$100 per month for children under age 6. Federal benefits are indexed to the CPI and increased accordingly. The benefits that increased since 2012 are the GST Credit and the Canada Child Tax Benefit, including the base benefit and the NCB Supplement. Ministry of Housing and Social Development. (2013).
 31 Ibid
 32 Ibid
 33 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2010-2012). Affordability Index.
 34 Dieticians of Canada. (2012). The Cost of Eating in BC 2011. Rate is the cost of food for an adult male, 31-50. Adjusted for VIHA and household size, as well applied CPI for subsequent years. Statistics Canada. (2013). Consumer Price Index (CPI), 2011 Basket, Monthly.

Over the past year the average rent paid by recipients of Income Assistance in Greater Victoria has increased from \$490 per month (2012) to \$501/month (as of April 2013).³⁵ This figure is higher than the BC provincial average of \$472/month.³⁶ Comparatively, the shelter portion of income assistance for singles is only \$375.00/month.³⁷ In order to maintain housing, recipients must dip into the rest of their income assistance to cover the rent difference, thus taking away from their resources to cover other basic necessities.

Monthly Costs: Shelter and Food for Single Individual Male			
Single Individual at minimum wage (monthly) ³⁸	2011 (\$8.75/hour) ³⁹	2012 (\$9.50/hour)	2013 (\$10.25/hour)
After-tax income (\$)	\$1313.67	\$1385.33	\$1525.90
Bachelor Apt. Median Rent (\$)	\$675	\$685.00	\$695.00
Average monthly cost of food basket in BC (\$)	\$293.87	\$298.57	\$305.92
Remainder for monthly expenses (\$)	\$344.80	\$401.76	\$524.98

Given what is currently available on the rental market, a person working 37 hours a week at \$10.25/hour would find it challenging to secure affordable housing in Greater Victoria. A bachelor apartment priced at \$695.00 a month would account for 42% of their before-tax income,⁴⁰ well above the 30% threshold for affordable housing. To meet the affordable housing threshold of paying only 30% of their income on rent (for a unit priced at \$695/month), an individual earning minimum wage would have to work a 52-hour work week.



“I am grateful for my status because it covers the cost of my medications.” - Aapaat

35 Ministry of Social Development. (2013).

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 After-tax income figures are based on the average weekly hours of wage earners in BC. In 2013 the average weekly hours for wage earners was 37. 2013 figure calculation: minimum wage in BC x 37 hour week, including: GST credit, BC Climate Action Tax Credit, BC Harmonized Sales Tax Credit, and Working Income Tax Benefit. Benefits estimated by Don Van Wart at MSD. Ministry of Social Development (2011-2013).

39 Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour. (2011). Minimum Wage Factsheet.

40 See the 'At Risk of Homelessness' section for a definition of affordable housing.

THE CHALLENGE IN GREATER VICTORIA

AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Many people in our community are at-risk of homelessness. Both the number of people in core housing need and the number of people waiting for subsidized housing are additional warning signs and signal the need for further action.



“In my rooming house, I didn't have hot water for two years.” - Jimmy

CORE HOUSING NEED

A household is in core housing need if their housing requires major repair, is overcrowded or requires more than 30% of the household's income for rent/mortgage costs.⁴¹ As highlighted by our voices of experience, this means that available housing may not meet CMHC standards for adequate housing.

Households experience core housing need if housing “falls below at least one of the adequate, affordability, or suitability standards and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards)”.⁴² A household would be in severe housing need if they are below median income and paying more than 50% of their income for housing.⁴³

Renters experience higher rates of core housing need than owners. In Greater Victoria, 27% of renters are in core housing need and 10.9% are in severe housing need.^{44,45,46} The main reason is that housing is unaffordable.⁴⁷ The rate of core housing need among renters in Victoria is similar to the Canadian rate of core housing need (27%) and slightly less than the BC average (29.2%). Core housing need is higher for Aboriginal, lone parent and immigrant households.

In Greater Victoria, core housing need amongst renters is projected to increase. The demand for rental housing shows no signs of slowing over the next 25 years, increasing by 15% to 21%. Over the same time frame, core housing need amongst renters in the region is also projected to increase by 19% to 27%.⁴⁸



41 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2009). Rental Market Report, Victoria CMA.

42 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) conducts a 'means test' to derive core housing data. CMHC core housing data captures only individuals who are forced to pay 30% or more of their income on shelter. Thus, individuals who are paying 30% or more of their income by choice (e.g. individuals who are willing to pay higher shelter costs to live in an upscale neighbourhood) are not included in core housing need data. Households tested for core housing need include only private non-farm, non-band, non-reserve households with incomes greater than zero and shelter-cost-to-income ratios (STIRs). CMHC. (2012) Canadian Housing Observer.

43 CMHC. (2010). 2006 Censure Housing Series: Issues 8 – Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at Least 50% of Their Income on Shelter.

44 CMHC. (2010). 2006 Censure Housing Series: Issues 8 – Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at Least 50% of Their Income on Shelter.

45 CMHC (2011). Housing in Canada Online. Based on 2006 census data

46 The actual number of renter households in core housing need for Victoria CMA is 12,485 and 16,900 for both renters and owners. The actual number of renter households in core housing need in Capital Regional District is 12,985 and 18,305 households for both renters and owners.

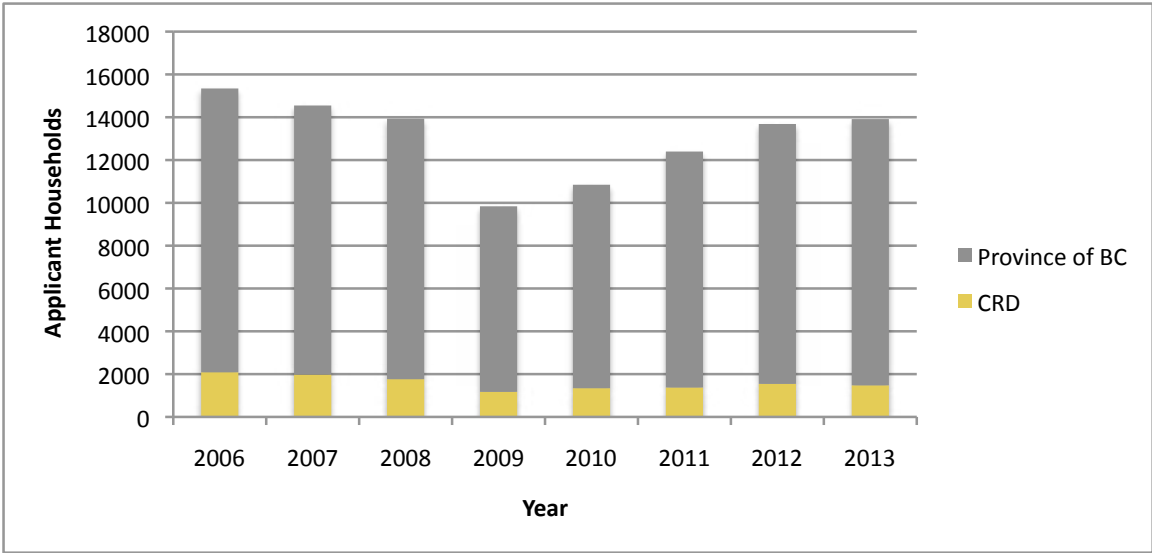
47 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2012). Canadian Housing Observer 2012. Across Canada, the vast majority of core housing need is due to affordability. The number of individuals in core housing due solely to either suitability or adequacy issues account for a very small number of the total individuals in core housing need.

48 BC Non-Profit Housing Association. (2012). Our Home, Our Future: Projections of Rental Housing Demands and Core Housing Need (Capital Regional District to 2036).

HOUSING REGISTRY

The Housing Registry serves as an important indicator of the number of households in need of subsidized housing and who may be at-risk of homelessness.⁴⁹ As of March 31, 2013 there were 1,477 households on the Housing Registry, down slightly from 1,545 in 2012. Since 2006, households in the Capital Regional District (CRD) have accounted for between 10% and 13% of all applicants in BC.⁵⁰

Housing Registry Applicant Households, as of March 31 of Each Year



Source: BC Housing. (2006-2013). Operations Branch, Housing Services Reporting, 4th Quarter Activity - March 31.

Between 2006 and 2009, the number of families on the registry dropped dramatically. This is due in large part to the introduction of the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) for working families in October 2006. Since 2009 the number of families on the housing registry has stabilized (there were 410 families on the registry in 2013 and 426 in 2009). For other household types (i.e. people with disabilities and seniors) the numbers have remained the same since 2006, with a drop in applicants around 2009 and a subsequent increase since that time.⁵¹ Overall, these numbers illustrate the sustained need for subsidized housing in Greater Victoria.

While the numbers tell one story, the experience of being on the Housing Registry is often challenging, frustrating and difficult.

"For about six to seven years, every six months, I phoned in and made sure everything was updated and where was I sitting in the waiting list for BC Housing. Then I got a letter they said weren't going to help me because I don't have a mental health issue and don't have an addiction. That was a big let down." - Aapaat

49 The BC Housing Registry is a centralized database for participating housing providers, coordinated by BC Housing. It allows individuals to apply to subsidized housing using one application form (BC Housing, 2007, Glossary). Not all applicant households on the registry are unhoused and not all housing providers participate in the registry.
 50 BC Housing/ (2006-2013). Housing Services Reporting, 4th Quarter Activity - March 31. These statistics are based on a snapshot of all applicants on the waitlist on the last day of the fiscal year. Applicant statistics reflect applicant households with active (live) or on hold status in BC Housing Registry and includes those applying for a transfer
 51 BC Housing. (2006-2013). Operations Branch, Housing Services Reporting, 4th Quarter Activity - March 31.

FOOD BANK USE

Food bank usage is an indicator both of food insecurity and those at risk of homelessness. In Greater Victoria there was an increase in number of people accessing food banks from the previous year ⁵²This is particularly concerning as this year four instead of five food banks reported.



NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ACCESSING FOOD BANKS IN GREATER VICTORIA⁵³



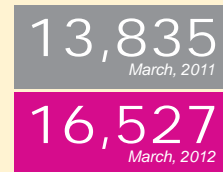
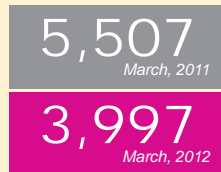
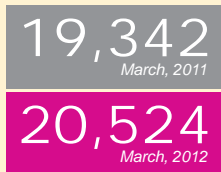
Total people accessing food banks in Greater Victoria



Children accessing food banks in Greater Victoria⁵⁴

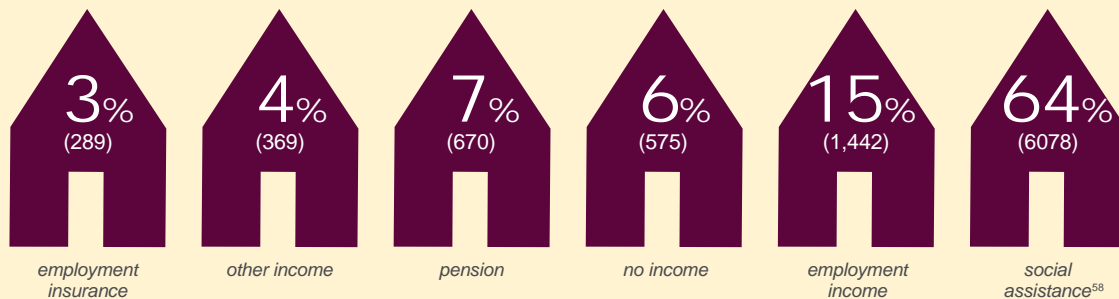


Adults accessing food banks in Greater Victoria



HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED BY INCOME SOURCE⁵⁵ AT TWO GREATER VICTORIA FOOD BANKS⁵⁶

Total households assisted in March 2012 by two food banks: 9514⁵⁷



72%(6,558) of the households assisted were renters at one major food bank.

52 Not all food banks in Greater Victoria participated in the 2012 Hunger Report. Due to data limitations, trending for income indicators and client totals is not possible. The total usage number for Greater Victoria presented in the report is based on four food banks (out of the five used in the report last year), and even with this limited data, there was still an increase over 2011. Food Banks Canada (2012). Hunger Count 2012: British Columbia Summary of Findings.

53 The 2011 figures are based on data from five Greater Victoria food banks and the 2012 figures are based on four food banks reporting. Food Banks Canada (2012). Hunger Count 2012: British Columbia Summary of Findings.

54 Food Banks Canada defines 'children' as 18 years of age and under. Generally these clients are part of a family receiving food and not collecting their own food bank hampers

55 1% of households were categorized as 'unknown'.

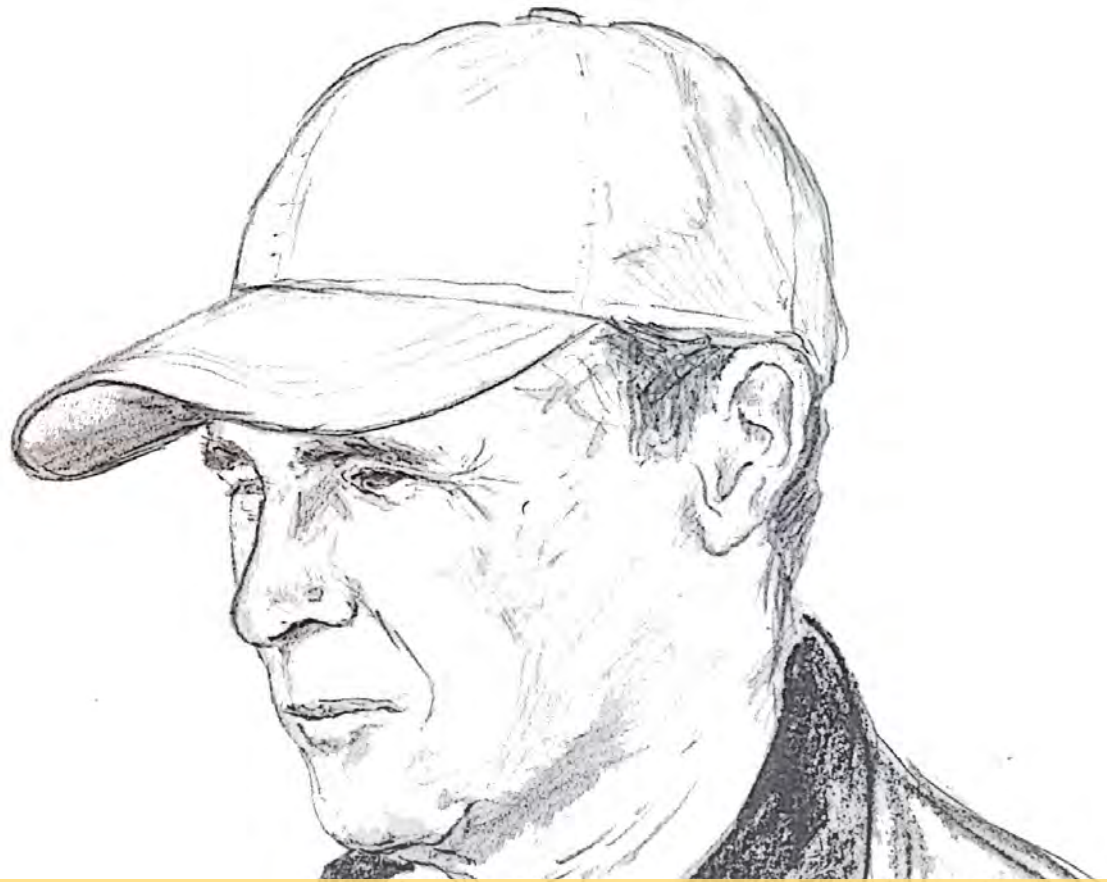
56 Food Banks Canada (2012). Hunger Count 2012: British Columbia Summary of Findings.

57 Food Banks Canada (2012). Hunger Count 2012: British Columbia Summary of Findings.

58 Food Banks Canada defines 'social assistance' as provincial support for people that are ineligible for EI, or other forms of financial support, or are unable to work due to disability.

EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

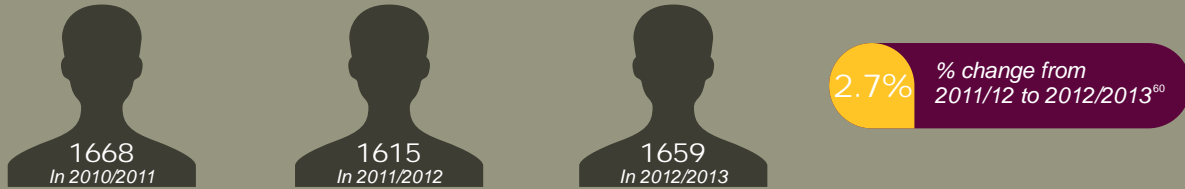
To get a sense of how many people are currently experiencing homelessness in Greater Victoria, we can look at how many people use emergency shelters annually, the number of people using temporary accommodation on a single night of the year, the number of times people are turned away from emergency shelters monthly and from all facilities on one night of the year. While these are undercounts, they tell us a great deal about the scope of the problem and whether or not the situation is changing.



“All of a sudden they become destabilized, they’ve had this place for a month, and now they’re back to square one for a week, plus however long it takes to get back into the shelter because they haven’t got anywhere else to go.” - Syd

EMERGENCY SHELTER USE

Drawing on data from five Greater Victoria emergency shelters over the past year, at least 1,659 unique individuals used an emergency shelter at least one time. This is the number of people who used one or more of the emergency shelters throughout the past year.⁵⁹



Source: Victoria Cool Aid Society. (2013). Crystal Reports unique individuals crosstab report based on Homeless Individuals and Families Information System. Beacon Community Services. (2013). Out of the Rain Youth Shelter unique individuals.



EMERGENCY SHELTER OCCUPANCY⁶¹



Occupancy Rate in Emergency Shelter Program (ESP) Shelters

Emergency shelters in the region are used extensively. Looking at usage levels of each individual shelter gives a more in-depth picture of how extensive the use is. For example, the 40 seasonal mats at Divine Intervention Shelter were used by 407 people over the winter season.

In 2012/13, the overall emergency shelter occupancy rate was 112%. Our emergency shelters are still operating over capacity. This is because emergency mats in a communal space are opened to accommodate all those in need of shelter during the winter months. This is higher than the occupancy rate in 2011/12 and likely reflects increased mat capacity. The 2012/13 occupancy rates for emergency shelters funded through BC Housing's Emergency Shelter P program (ESP) excluding the additional mats on the floor is 96%.



EMERGENCY SHELTER TURNAWAYS

Emergency shelters frequently reach their capacity. When this occurs, shelters are forced to turn away other individuals who are looking for a place to sleep. Over the past year, there were at least 5405 instances of 3pm turnaways at Rock Bay Landing emergency shelter, averaging out to 450 instances of turnaway per month. In general, instances of turnaways increased in the colder months, when demand for beds is higher.

3pm turnaways represent incidences in which individuals for whom no bed was available in the morning, returned at 3:00pm on the same day and still no bed was available. Some individuals may experience multiple turnaways at 3pm in a row, waiting days until they are able to get a bed. Even though there are multiple emergency shelters in Greater Victoria, when someone is turned away at 3pm it may be too late to access an alternative shelter. Instead, there is a good chance the individual will have nowhere else to go and may be forced to sleep rough..

3pm Turnaway Data for Cool Aid Shelters - 2012/13 - RBL Shelter Programs⁶⁴



Source: Victoria Cool Aid Society. (2013). Crystal Reports turnaway crosstab report based on Homeless Individuals and Families Information System.

⁵⁹ Of the five adult programs, all of them are run by Victoria Cool Aid Society and three operate year-round (Next Steps, Sandy Merriman, and Rock Bay Landing emergency shelter beds) and two operate seasonally (Rock Bay Landing seasonal mat program and Divine Intervention mat program seasonal mat programs). The one youth shelter program is a seasonal mat program run by Beacon Community Services. Due to unavailability of HIFIS data, one shelter is not included in the reporting of the number of unique individuals using emergency shelters. Note that Divine Intervention was included in data for 2010-11 but was not included in 2011-12 because it did not operate. Victoria Cool Aid Society. (2010-2013). Crystal Reports unique individuals crosstab report based on Homeless Individuals and Families Information System

⁶⁰ The numbers for 2010/11 and 2011/12 have been revised from last year as the result of improvements in data reporting.

⁶¹ Shelter Occupancy rates are a measure of how full emergency shelter sites are over the course of one year. Occupancy rates provided here are based on BC Housing's Emergency Shelter Program sites. Homelessness Services System; Victoria Cool Aid Society. (2010-2013). Crystal Reports Occupancy Divine Intervention.

⁶² In 2011/12 the total occupancy rates were over 100% primarily due to extra mats at Rock Bay Landing since May 21, 2011, which are not included in ESP capacity but recorded by provider as shelter stays in HSS. Other shelters also have additional capacity which is not included in bed-nights available but is included in bed-nights used.

⁶³ In 2012-13, RBL Mat program data was not collected by BC Housing. The total occupancy reported here includes the data for the RBL Mat program, provided by Cool Aid. Victoria Cool Aid Society. (2013). Shelter Occupancy, Homeless Individuals and Families Information System.

⁶⁴ RBL mat program (40 mats) was introduced on May 20, 2011 and terminated Apr 31, 2012. As of May 2012, there have been 20 mats in use strictly for overflow purposes at Rock Bay Landing, with different eligibility criteria for the mats. Changes in the number, process and eligibility criteria for assigning RBL mats affect how turnaways are recorded, making it difficult, if not impossible, to draw any conclusions about shelter turnaway trends between 2011/12 and 2012/13.



“We will die a whole lot quicker by pneumonia than we will be staying outside one night and freezing to death isn’t likely to happen here, but we can be dead in three days by pneumonia.”

- Robert

PROFILE OF EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM CLIENTS IN GREATER VICTORIA

Many different people access emergency shelters in Greater Victoria.

Since 2008, the number of women using emergency shelters has been far lower than the number of male users. In 2012/13, 20% of emergency shelter clients were women, while 80% were men.⁶⁵ One cause of this disparity is that there are far fewer emergency shelter beds available for women as compared to men. As well, women may be more vulnerable to violence and avoid shelters due to safety concerns.

Similar to last year, 19% of emergency shelter clients self-identified as Aboriginal. This number has remained relatively consistent over the past five years. However, these figures likely represent an undercount as 25% of emergency shelter clients responded 'don't know'.⁶⁶

Due to safety concerns, restrictions, and other a variety of reasons, some people do not stay in shelters (e.g. families, women, and youth). Common restrictions include no pets and being barred for past incidents.

Sleeping rough is not easy. When the weather becomes harsh, sleeping outdoors can be even more life-threatening. Extreme Weather Response mats (EWR – known as Extreme Weather Protocol in Greater Victoria), supplement the year-round emergency shelters and seasonal emergency shelters.⁶⁷ The EWR mats provide shelter only during extreme weather conditions, and are generally on the floor of a large hall. In 2012/13, on nights when the EWR mats were activated, an average of 59 mats were available from October to December and 93 mats were available from January to March.⁶⁸ People accessing the EWR mats in 2012/13 were 9% female and 91% male.⁶⁹

65 BC Housing. (2013). Homelessness Services System.

66 BC Housing. (2012-2013). Homelessness Services System.

67 The seasonal emergency shelters include one program targeted for youth 25 and under.

68 BC Housing. (2013). Extreme Weather Response Database.

69 Ibid.

FACILITY COUNT

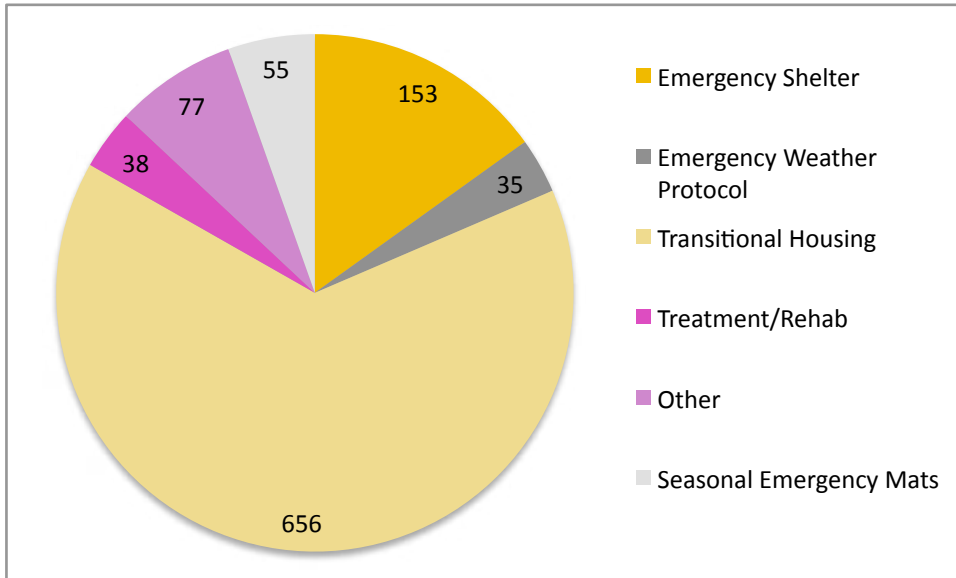
On February 6, 2013 we conducted a count of the number of people who accessed facilities for the homeless on one night. This includes individuals and families staying in emergency shelters and those who are provisionally accommodated (staying in temporary accommodation, like transitional housing, but who don't have their own home or security of tenure). There were 1,069 individuals. While this reflects a drop from last year (1,205), this is due to our inability to enumerate the number of people staying in hotels and motels in the region. 82 facilities were enumerated with 53 of those facilities being located in the City of Victoria.

Facility Count by Gender/Age by Facility Type

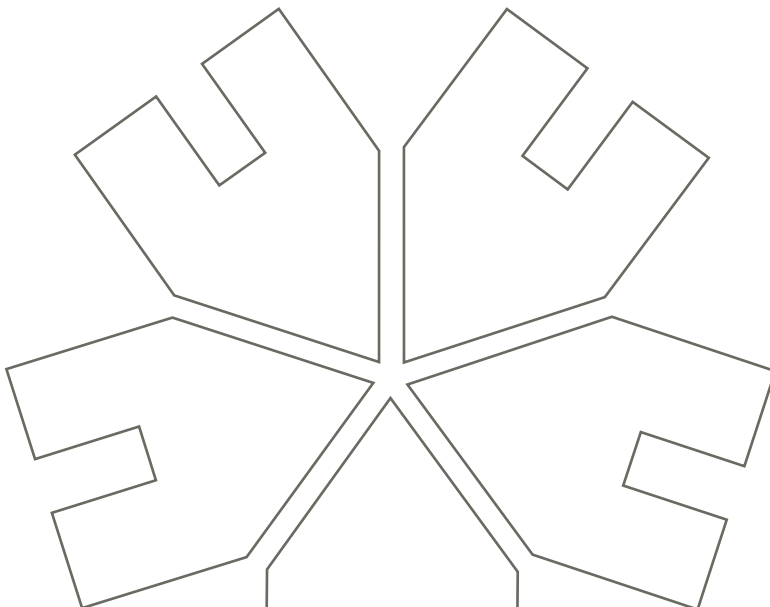
	Emergency Shelter	Extreme Weather	Seasonal Emergency	Transitional Housing	Hotel/Motel	Treatment	Other	Total Sheltered	Turned Away	Total
Adult Male	111	26	39	319	N/A	25	71	591	28	619
Adult Female	37	4	4	187	N/A	13	3	248	15	263
<i>Total Adult</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>839</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>882</i>
Youth Male	2	3	10	23	N/A	0	1	39	1	40
Youth Female	1	2	2	31	N/A	0	2	38	3	41
<i>Total Youth</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>81</i>
Child Male	0	0	0	54	N/A	0	0	54	4	58
Child Female	2	0	0	42	N/A	0	0	44	4	48
<i>Total Child</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>106</i>
TOTAL	153	35	55	656	N/A	38	77	1014	55	1069

Sixty-three families including 106 children were counted among the individuals enumerated. Of those counted on this single night, 1,014 were staying in some form of accommodation while 55 were individuals who had been turned away from accommodation. Facilities enumerated (except for treatment and other) were between 89% and 93% occupied on the night of the count.

Facility Count 2013 Individuals by Facility Type



Fifty-five people were turned away on the night of the count. Women were more likely to be turned away from transitional facilities while men were more likely to be turned away from emergency shelters.





COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS

To understand our community response to homelessness we are focusing on three things that can help us see if we are making gains to house and support people. These include the addition of new affordable housing units, the number of individuals we have housed who have remained housed and steps taken to prevent homelessness.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING UNITS

Throughout Greater Victoria, subsidized units are available to individuals and families. Rents in subsidized units are generally set at 30% of a household's income, but rents may also be a flat rent, such as the income assistance shelter allowance amount. These units are operated by BC Housing and other non-profit Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness partners.

In BC Housing's non-profit and directly managed subsidized units, the average monthly tenant rent contribution as of March 31, 2013 ranged from \$334 (for tenants in units designated for individuals at risk of homelessness or formerly homeless), to \$512 (for low-income families), to \$1,050 (for frail seniors in units with on-going supports and services).⁷⁰ These are considered affordable housing for people on low incomes.



NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

The need for more affordable housing in the Capital Regional District (CRD) has been clear for some time. In 2007, the CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy stated the challenge bluntly: “in the last decade, the housing situation in the Capital Region has worsened.”⁷¹

In 2012/13, few new affordable units were added in the CRD. In fact, this year there were no new housing units created to help homeless individuals. Since 2009 there has been a total of 291 new affordable units operated by BC Housing added in Greater Victoria.⁷² As of 2012/13, BC Housing administers a total of 7,376 affordable units in the Capital Regional District, 445 of which are designated for homeless individuals.⁷³

Number of New and Deactivated Units Administered by BC Housing by Client Group in the Capital Regional District ⁷⁴									
Category	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		2012/13		Cumulative New Units Since 2009
	# of New Units	# of Units Deactivated	# of New Units	# of Units Deactivated	# of New Units	# of Units Deactivated	# of New Units	# of Units Deactivated	
Homeless Housed ⁷⁵	0	0	67	0	95	0	0	0	162
Special Needs (including women and children fleeing violence) ⁷⁶	13	4	0	16	13	4	0	6	-4
Aboriginals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frail Seniors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	-24
Independant Seniors	0	14	0	0	0	6	55	12	23
Low Income Families	69	46	24	0	54	0	33	0	134
Net New Units Per Year	18		75		152		46		291

Source: BC Housing. (2010-2013). Central Property System, March 31.

71 Capital Regional District. (2007). Regional Housing Affordability Strategy for the Capital Regional District.

72 BC Housing. (2010-2013). Central Property System, March 31.

73 BC Housing. (2013). Central Property System, Unit Count Model for March 31. There may be other affordable housing units in the community that are not funded by BC Housing.

74 Note that this table includes only affordable housing units funded by BC Housing. Number of units deactivated counts the number of units that are no longer counted by BC Housing because the agreement between BC Housing and the housing provider expired or terminated during the fiscal year based on the status change date. This does not necessarily mean that these subsidized housing units are no longer available to those in need.

75 This category only includes housing units and excludes rental supplements for homeless individuals. Previous versions of this report stated that this category included homeless rental supplements in addition to housing units. This was an error in the title and the category did not include homeless rental supplements.

76 Units categorized as 'women and children fleeing violence' are transitional accommodation and not permanent affordable housing. These units were separated out from the 'special needs' category for 2012-2013 but due to data limitations these units cannot be separated for previous years.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE

In addition to increasing the stock of affordable housing in the region, the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness' Housing Procurement Action Plan aims to increase the number of rental subsidies available to individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Such subsidies enhance the ability of individuals to access rental market housing.

The Rental Assistance Program (RAP) provides eligible low-income, working families with at least one child financial assistance to help with their monthly rent payments in the private market.⁷⁷ In 2008/09 the eligibility criteria for the RAP program were expanded and as such, the number of recipients increased sharply that year. The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) provides financial assistance to seniors with low to moderate income to help them make private market rents affordable.

The number of families accessing RAP increased 5% between March 31, 2012 and 2013, while the number of senior households accessing SAFER decreased slightly. Since 2006, the average rent subsidy has decreased \$10.07 for the SAFER program (in 2012/13 the average subsidy is \$150.59) and increased \$42.27 for the RAP program (in 2012/13 the average subsidy is \$371.96).⁷⁸

Rent Subsidies by Client Group in Capital Regional District						
Program	Fiscal Year					
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
SAFER (and other seniors rent subsidies)	1,500	1,481	1,467	1,524	1,555	1,546
RAP (and other family rent subsidies)	13 ⁷⁹	611	678	740	719	756
Total Rent Subsidies	1,513	2,092	2,145	2,264	2,274	2,302

Source: BC Housing. (2008-2013). Central Property System, March 31.

Research by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria in 2010 calculated that approximately 50% of those eligible to receive rental assistance (RAP program) were not on the program. Many working families in the Capital Regional District who require such financial assistance may not access it for a variety of reasons. One reason documented by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria is that the application process takes time, so families who are in emergency need cannot access the subsidy as quickly as required.⁸⁰

77 BC Housing. (2008-2013). Central Property System, March 31.

78 BC Housing. Central Property System, March 31 of 2010-2013

79 The Rental Assistance Program for working families (RAP) was introduced in 2006.

80 Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. (2010). BC's Rental Assistance Program: A Policy Review for the Capital Regional District.

RENTAL SUPPLEMENTS

BC Housing also provides rental supplements for individuals who are homeless. The supplements are provided to agencies who then provide rental supplements for clients. Homeless rent supplements connect people who are homeless to housing, income assistance, and support programs, through the Homelessness Outreach Program (HOP), Aboriginal Homelessness Outreach Program (AHOP), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), and Streets to Homes (S2H). The number of rent supplements shown (i.e. 150 in 2012/13) represents an estimate of the total number of rent supplements given monthly based on available funding.

In 2012/13, the level of funding for homeless rent supplements remained the same as in 2011/12. No new rental supplements were added.

Homeless Rent Supplements in Capital Regional District (Cumulative)					
Fiscal Year					
2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
0	70	70	70	150 ⁸¹	150

Source: BC Housing. (2008-2013). Central Property System, March 31.



Montana

⁸¹ The increase in the number of homeless rent supplements between March 31, 2011 and March 31, 2012 is due to a change in the way that homeless rent supplements are recorded in BC Housing systems and is not reflective of an increase in funding for homeless rent supplements in the Capital Regional District. The rent supplements figures include rent supplement funding from BC Housing used for HOP, AHOP, VICOT, Streets to Home, and ACT.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE HOUSED

Outreach programs are available to assist people in the transition from homeless to housed. For many individuals, this support is necessary in the step into permanent housing. BC Housing provides funding for outreach and to help connect clients to housing through two programs: the Emergency Shelter Program (ESP) and Homeless Outreach Program (HOP), and together these programs have helped house hundreds of people since 2008/09.

Number of Individuals Housed through Homeless Outreach Programs and Emergency Shelter Program in the Capital Regional District ⁸²					
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
HOP ⁸³	355	359	297	433	294
ESP ⁸⁴	270	277	203	206	216
Total Secured Housing	625	636	500	639	510

Source: BC Housing. (2009-2013). Homelessness Services System, March 31.

For both programs, the number of individuals housed has had an overall decrease since 2008. However, both programs appear to have had success in ensuring people remain housed in 2012/13; 90% of people housed through ESP remained housed after 6 months and 92% of people housed through HOP remained housed after 6 months. These numbers do not represent all clients of these programs, but are based on the number of people they were able to get in contact with. For instance, 90% of the individuals they were able to get in contact with were still housed after 6 months.⁸⁵

There is overlap in the type of clients served by each program. However, compared to the Emergency Shelter Program (ESP) the Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) tends to serve a higher proportion of women, youth, and individuals identifying as Aboriginal. In terms of the type of housing that the programs are securing for clients, ESP has a higher rate of clients being housed in social housing units, whereas HOP has a higher rate of clients being housed in market rental units.⁸⁶

“I know Streets to Homes has been a big help for some people. They’re just really happy that they were able to access it. It’s something that I can’t get, but it’s something that other people have gotten. And it’s taken them from the position of being on the street to being in a place. And that’s been good for them.” - Syd

⁸² Numbers are based on March 31st snapshot each year. Outreach programs do work together to house clients and more than one program may count the same client as housed. It is not possible to remove these duplicates.

⁸³ These figures include those housed by Homelessness Outreach, Aboriginal Homelessness Outreach, Streets to Homes, ACT and VICOT.

⁸⁴ These figures are based on four shelters in the CRD.

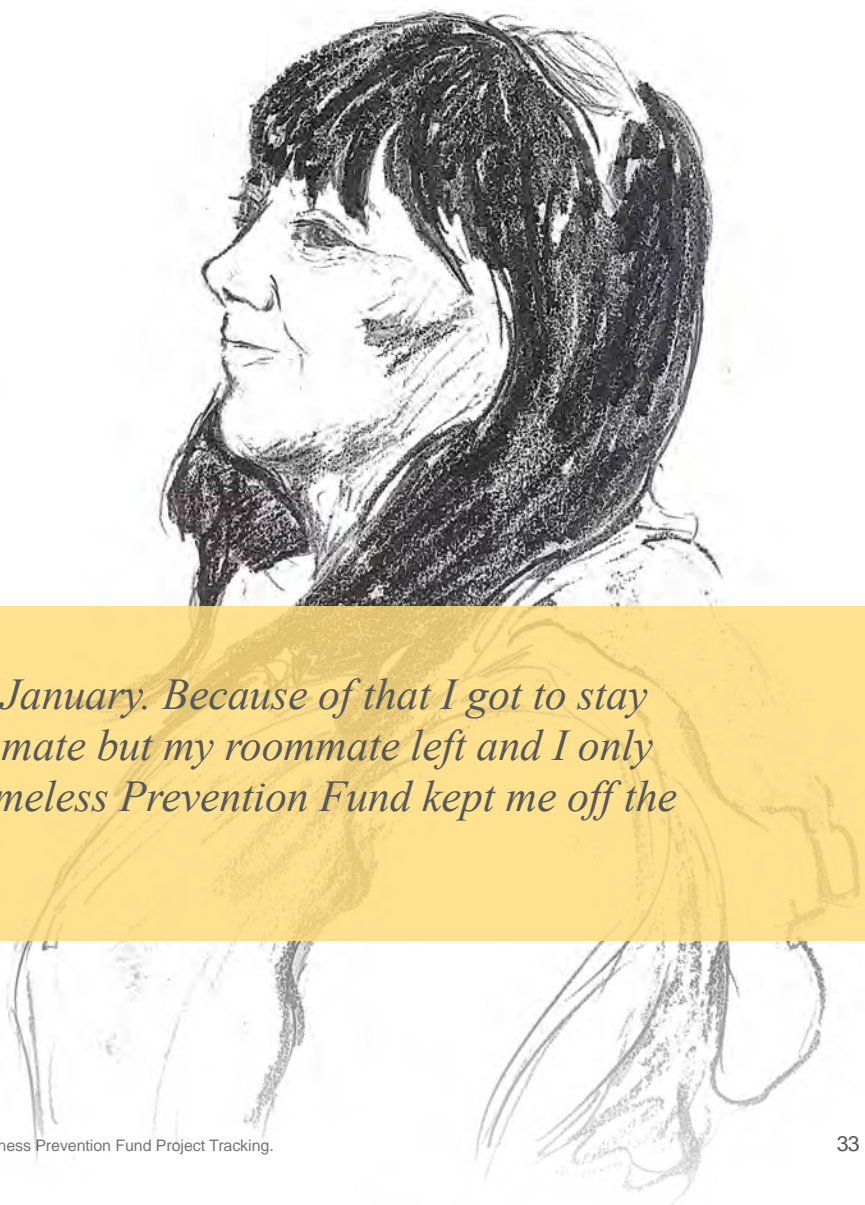
⁸⁵ BC Housing. (2013). Homelessness Services System, March 31.

⁸⁶ BC Housing. (2013). Homelessness Services System, March 31.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUND

The Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPF) provides emergency assistance to individuals and families in Greater Victoria who are experiencing the threat of homelessness. Grants may be used to pay rent, utility bills or damage deposits, and the maximum available amount is \$500. HPF is a partnership between the Great Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and ten Coalition partners. Recipients have to demonstrate that they have exhausted all other means of help, and can only apply once a year. They do not have to repay the money.

In 2012/13, the Homelessness Prevention Fund assisted 71 individuals and 29 families, averaging 8 grants each month. The majority of grants issued (88%) were used for emergency rent costs and averaged \$444.00 each. Other grants were used for damage deposits (7%, averaging \$355.00 each) and emergency utility (5%, averaging \$396.00 each). In 2013/13, the Homelessness Prevention Fund distributed approximately \$42,000 through ten partner agencies.⁸⁷



“They helped me back in January. Because of that I got to stay in my place. I had a roommate but my roommate left and I only had half the rent. The Homeless Prevention Fund kept me off the street.” - Dee

DATA LIMITATIONS

Greater Victoria does not have an integrated data system such as HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) which is used extensively in the U.S. and by Calgary Homeless Foundation. In the absence of such a system, we draw data from multiple data systems with varying levels of data quality. As well, data reporting by any single data provider can change from year to year, which requires reanalysis of previous year's data and revisions to previous findings, thus impacting reliability overtime. All data refers to the 2012-2013 fiscal year (April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 inclusive), unless otherwise noted. Data based on snapshots is extracted as of March 31, 2013. If data reported is prior to 2012-13, it represents in most cases the most recent data available.

Data provider-specific limitations:

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: All rental market data from CMHC data is produced by the Rental Market Survey, which targets only privately initiated structures with at least three rental units, which have been on the market for at least three months. Included are all non-farm, non-band, non-reserve, private households. CMHC reporting does not include secondary suites, rooms rented monthly in houses, or hotels. Households tested for core housing need include only private non-farm, non-band, non-reserve households with incomes greater than zero and shelter-cost-to-income ratios less than 100%.

Food Banks Canada: Data reported through the Hunger Count is based on the total number of individuals who receive groceries from food banks and their affiliated agencies during the month of March of a given year. The Hunger Count does not include people who receive food from food banks through prepared-meal programs, such as soup kitchens. The month of March is the study period because it is an unexceptional month, without predictable high or low use patterns.

Geographic data limitations:

Greater Victoria is used in this report to refer to both the Capital Regional District and the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area.

Different data reporting structures limit the ability to report consistently. For a direct comparison between Victoria CMA and CRD, see <http://www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning/maps/documents/MapVCMA.pdf>.

The Victoria Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) includes: thirteen municipalities; Juan de Fuca Electoral Area [Capital H (Part 1) which is comprised of East Sooke, Jordan River, Malahat, Otter Point, Shirley, and Willis Point]; and nine First Nations reserves.

The Capital Regional District (CRD) includes the Victoria CMA as well as Salt Spring Island; the Southern Gulf Islands; and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area [Capital H (Part 2) which is comprised of the area north and west of Jordan River to Port Renfrew]; and an additional four First Nations reserves.

Data reporting based on CMA: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation rental market data

Data reporting based on CRD: BC Housing, Food Banks Canada, facility count (Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness), Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation core housing data

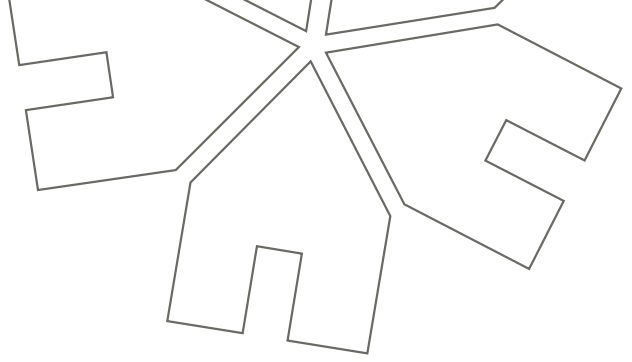
Data sources not contingent on geography: shelter-specific data, Ministry of Social Development, Dieticians of Canada

Shelter Data limitations:

Currently, not all Victoria area shelters use HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families information System). As such, there is currently no integrated data information system for all emergency shelters in Greater Victoria. Emergency shelter indicators are based on shelters for which data is available. Where HIFIS data is reported this includes five of the six major shelters in Victoria.

BC Housing extracts data from a live BC Housing database called the Homelessness Service System. Data in this database is entered and updated by agencies, so the accuracy of the data is dependent on provider entry. Data presented in this report was extracted as of March 31, 2013, and thus represents a snapshot in time (previously entered data may be updated by the providers at any time, so data is based on snapshots of what was in the system on the date of the snapshot). This data base includes housing and shelter programs funded by BC Housing

The number of shelter beds that BC Housing funds and monitors changes from year to year, meaning the data collected and reported are drawn from an annually shifting sample of the shelter population. This limits the ability to compare shelter data over time.



All emergency shelter data is based on client records, not individuals. Individuals get a new client id number and record when they go to a different shelter. While the data does not represent individuals, the general trends revealed through the database have been validated against other sources and appear to reflect what is known about the homeless population in BC.

There have been some refinements to the data extraction methodologies to improve data reporting between 2009/10 and 2010/11, as well as 2011/12 and 2012/13. It is not believed that these changes will significantly affect comparisons between the reporting years where comparisons are reported.

All percentages are based on the total number of records where there is a response to the question being examined, not the total number of records (i.e. records missing for the indicator in question are excluded from the calculations, so as not to skew responses).

Housing Outreach Data Limitations:

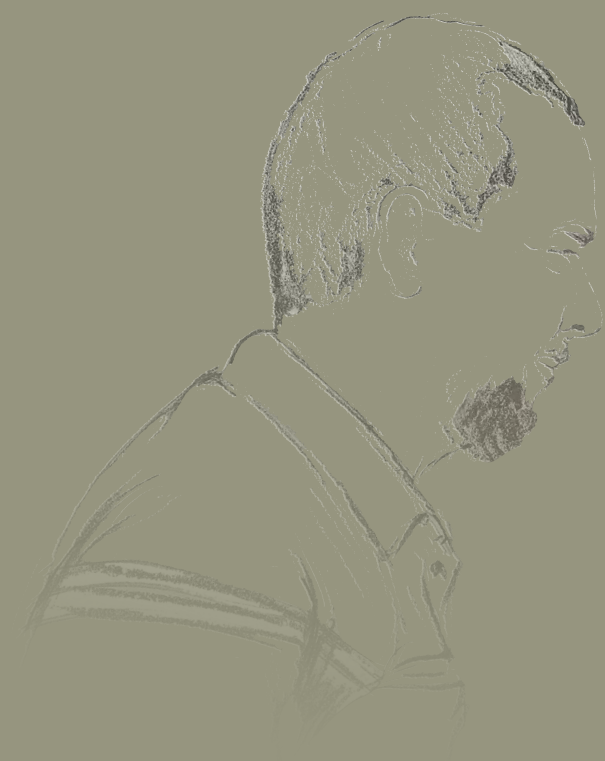
All housing outreach data is based on client records, not individuals. Because BC Housing data are taken from several housing outreach providers, there is no way to distinguish clients between different providers. It is possible that two records may come from the same individual (i.e. if the client used a different name at 2 agencies), or that an individual could potentially be housed by different sites during a year (client will get a new record if housed through a different site).

Housing information is based on the most recent incidence of housing for a particular record. Only the most recent housing placement is considered in this analysis.

DATA SOURCES

Thank you to our data providers and expert resources:

BC Housing, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, BC Statistics, Beacon Community Services, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Capital Regional District, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, Dieticians of Canada, Food Banks BC, Food Banks Canada, Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour, Participating facilities in the 2013 Facility Count, Statistics Canada, Victoria Cool Aid Society.



Centre for
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RESEARCH** OF BC



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