



HOMELESSNESS IN REGINA 2010 REPORT

Homeless Individuals and Families
Information System (HIFIS)

Authors:

Hirsch Greenberg, MSW
Rebecca Schiff, PhD
Alaina Harrison, MA
Mark Nelson, BA

University of Regina

Homelessness in Regina: 2010 Report
The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Regina Project
April 2011: Regina Saskatchewan

Copyright ©2011 Hirsch Greenberg, MSW. All Rights Reserved

This report is copyright by Hirsch Greenberg, for the *Regina Saskatchewan Proposal for the Community Coordination, Training and Technical and Data Analysis for the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Initiative*. The content of this report has been produced with the intent that it be readily available for personal or public non-commercial use and may be reproduced, in part or in whole, and by any means without charge or further permission, with full attribution: complete title of materials and acknowledgement the authors.

Our Thanks

After three years we wrapped up our project with the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) on March 31, 2011. HIFIS was made possible with the financial support of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Collecting information on those who are homeless in Regina was supported by those service providers who have tirelessly worked to ensure that no individual or family would go without a roof over their heads. We recognize the following organizations with our deepest thanks:

- Salvation Army (7 sites)
- Souls Harbour (5 sites)
- YWCA (3 sites)
- John Howard Society of Regina
(2 sites)
- YMCA
- Sofia House
- Ehrlo Community Services
- Rainbow Youth Centre

We wish to extend our gratitude as well to the Regina Homelessness Committee, the National HIFIS office for their technical support, and the numerous organizations, services and individuals of the Collaborative City on Homelessness and Housing. Our appreciation and recognition is extended to the Regina Urban Aboriginal Strategy for their leadership in addressing the homeless and housing crisis in Regina.

There are many others, individuals, services and organization which we have not mentioned as the list would be very long and we could inadvertently miss one or two. Two services providers we think others would agree should be recognized for their front-line day-to-day efforts to assist those who are homeless in the face of the high cost of housing and the low vacancy rate in Regina: Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry and Carmichael Outreach. And, to all those individuals, services and organizations not mentioned here please accept our thanks for your dedication and commitment to the homeless.

Our project staff during our three years was: Rebecca Schiff, Dianna Graves, Catherine Howett, Alaina Harrison and Mark Nelson and students of the Department of Justice Studies, University of Regina.

On behalf of our project staff,

Hirsch Greenberg
Project Coordinator

Executive Summary

Data Collection

All data for this report was collected from Regina organizations participating in the national Homeless Individuals and Family Information System (HIFIS) (page 7).

Participating Organizations

There are 7 umbrella organizations in Regina using HIFIS at 19 shelter sites (page 8)¹.

Three Year Trend

The average number of beds occupied on a daily basis rose between 2008 and 2010 by 44.5% (page 9).

Among all HIFIS shelter service providers, the average daily capacity was 92.9%; regardless of weather conditions during any given month (page 9).

Age and Gender (2010)

There is a slightly higher ratio of males to females (3:2) using emergency, transitional and/or violence against women shelters. Note: This includes shelters exclusive to women. (page 17).

As age increases, the number of male admissions to shelters is greater than for women. (page 17).

Shelter Use 2008 to 2010.

Individuals and families using either emergency and/or transitional shelters between 2008 and 2010 (pages 10 to 13 & 15):

- a) increased every year;*
- b) shelters functioned at close to full capacity in 2010;*
- c) females tend to be younger and stay longer than males; this can, only in part, be explained by the admissions to violence against women's shelters.*
- d) males tend to be older and stay for shorter periods of time but also return more often.*
- e) 1,484 individuals stayed in a shelter only once during 2010 and on average stayed for 56.2 days (1,202 individuals had two or more admissions).*

¹ Does not include non-shelter services

Reasons for Discharge

Almost 30 different reasons for leaving a shelter are reported; 83.7% (inclusive of individuals discharged multiple times) were unable to find a home to live in after discharge (page 14).

Income versus Housing Costs: AFFORDABILITY

Many fulltime workers cannot afford to rent a one, two or three bedroom apartment (page 18).

To afford a bachelor or a one, two or three bedroom apartment based on the average cost per month in Regina, the minimum wage would have to range from \$10.04 per hour to \$20.35 per hour (page 18).

Based on Saskatchewan Assistance rates no individual or family can afford to rent an apartment of any size (page 19) (NB. see discussion on page 19 for exceptions).

How we collected the information

HIFIS is the acronym for a nationally designed and locally delivered and supported database known as the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System. Organizations across Canada serving the homeless and near homeless are invited to document their activities and services using HIFIS free of charge.

In Regina, since the first quarter of 2008, existing and new service providers participated in using HIFIS. By March 2011, seven organizations participated, providing 19 emergency and transitional shelter services.²

In exchange for using HIFIS, organizations are asked to sign a data-sharing-protocol (DSP) to track 10 mandatory fields and to share these fields with the HIFIS national office:

- I. "HIFIS ID" is a unique identification number for each service provider.
- I. "Shelter name and ID code" of each shelter providing services.
- II. "Shelter purpose" is the description of the purpose of the shelter (e.g. shelter services, food, clothing and/or counselling).
- III. "Bed count" is the number of registered beds available in each shelter service.
- IV. "Shelter type" identifies the type of shelter (e.g., emergency, transitional, violence against women (VAW))
- V. "Unique client ID" is a non-traceable client identification number based on birth date and name.
- VI. "Client date of birth" is the client's birth date.
- VII. "Client gender" is the self-identified gender of the client (e.g. male, female, transgender, etc.)
- VIII. "Registration book-in-date" is the day the client registers to stay in a shelter.
- IX. "Registration book-out-date" is the day of departure from the shelter.

Outcomes and Limitations

Since the start of our Regina project we have documented almost 4,500 different individuals and/or families: adults (18 - 54 years old), seniors (> 55 years old), and youth and children (<17 years old) who have sought emergency and/or transitional shelter services for at least one day; often for longer periods of time. Reasons for seeking shelter services include escaping from domestic violence, young people without a viable family home, women with children with no place to go, existing residence is unsanitary, overcrowding, rent is too expensive, and having no affordable housing or social housing support services.

² This information does not include the non-shelter service providers and affordable housing providers who may also use HIFIS in Regina

Over 35 months our project encountered a number of limitations in collecting the data and reporting the data.

Collecting the data

- I. Not every service provider started collecting data at the same time. This influences our ability to accurately compare data from one year to the next.
- II. Not every service provider has the staffing resources to enter the data either consistently or continuously. Our project assisted to some extent in this regard with student and part-time staff support. This support was, however, limited to 3-6 months.
- III. Technical problems were commonplace with servers and computers crashing, interrupting data input.
- IV. Some service providers had staff changes and this interrupted the inputting of the data.
- V. Some service providers agreed to share their data as they input it on an Excel spreadsheet and this had to be manually converted to be included with the HIFIS data (increasing the possibility of errors).
- VI. There were extended periods of time (6-months or more) when some service providers collected no data at all. This contributed to challenges in making accurate annual comparisons or monthly or quarterly reports.
- VII. There were staffing changes during our project and this affected support to the service providers.
- VIII. Entering age and gender was sometimes neglected.
- IX. Many service providers were not able to enter data beyond the required ten fields (listed above) which limited our reporting abilities.

Reporting on the data

- I. We were able to obtain sufficient amounts of data from each participating organization to provide a realistic picture of homelessness in Regina based on the role of each service provider (domestic violence, youth, single men, families, etc.)
- II. We are not able to provide a reasonable picture based on all populations who may encounter homelessness. For example, organizations providing services to the mentally ill or those with addiction were not part of the project.
- III. Where data was lacking our rule of thumb was to extrapolate information if the organization provided at least 5 months of complete data.
- IV. Special efforts were made to ensure that consistent data was used in providing the 3-year comparison. This included extracting the data from HIFIS to SPSS.

Shelter Coverage

Almost 79% of Regina's emergency and transitional beds for men, women, youth and families are registered with HIFIS.

Registered and Non-Registered HIFIS Service Providers

Organization Type	HIFIS Users	Non-HIFIS USERS	Total	% Using HIFIS
<i>Emergency Men, Women, and Family Shelter Beds</i>	137	45	182	75.3%
<i>Transitional Men, Women and Family Shelter Beds</i>	112	0	112	100%
<i>Transitional Youth Shelter Beds</i>	20	5	25	80%
<i>Emergency and Transitional Violence Against Women Shelter Beds</i>	22	28	50	44%
Total	291	78	369	78.9%

Based on the number of all service providers using HIFIS, we have estimated that if all beds were registered there would be 3,401³ men, women, youth and families seeking shelter services during 2010. This represents 1.8% of Regina's population.⁴ Of note, the number of people seeking shelters only reflects those that are absolutely homeless or roofless.⁵ Other individuals and families not accounted are those: "double-bunking" or "couch-surfing", that can't afford rent or live in unhealthy homes. These latter groups could easily double the number of homeless people in Regina.

³There were 2,686 individuals seeking shelters among all HIFIS service providers.

⁴ Source: Population, Employment and Economic Analysis of Regina. City of Regina Planning and Sustainability Department. June 2010. Populations for the years 2005-2009 are Statistics Canada population estimates for the City of Regina, which include the Census undercount and estimates of growth between Census years.

⁵And does not include those who choose not to seek assistance from shelter services

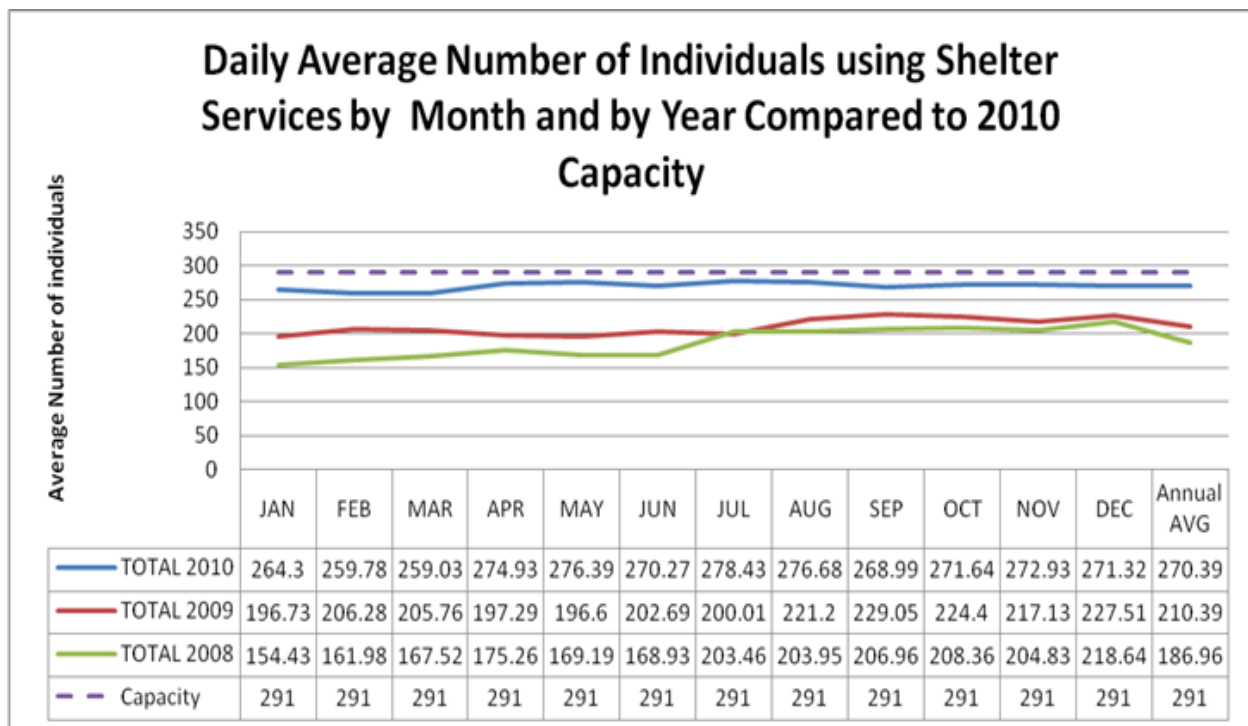
Service Providers Participating in HIFIS by Organizational Type

Emergency Shelter for Adults
Salvation Army (1 site)
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission (2 sites)
YWCA (2 sites)
YMCA (1 site)
Transitional Housing for Adults and Families
Salvation Army (3 sites)
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission (3 sites)
Ehrlo Community Services (1 site)
Transitional Housing for Youth
John Howard Society of Regina (2 sites)
Salvation Army (2 sites)
Violence Against Women Shelters
Sofia House (1 site)
YWCA (1 site)

There are 7 umbrella organizations providing 19 shelter services in Regina. There are other service providers offering advocacy, assistance in finding and staying in a home, and/or providing affordable housing that were not part of our project.

A Three Year Trend

The average number of beds occupied on a daily basis in all HIFIS shelters from 2008 through 2010 rose by 44.5%.

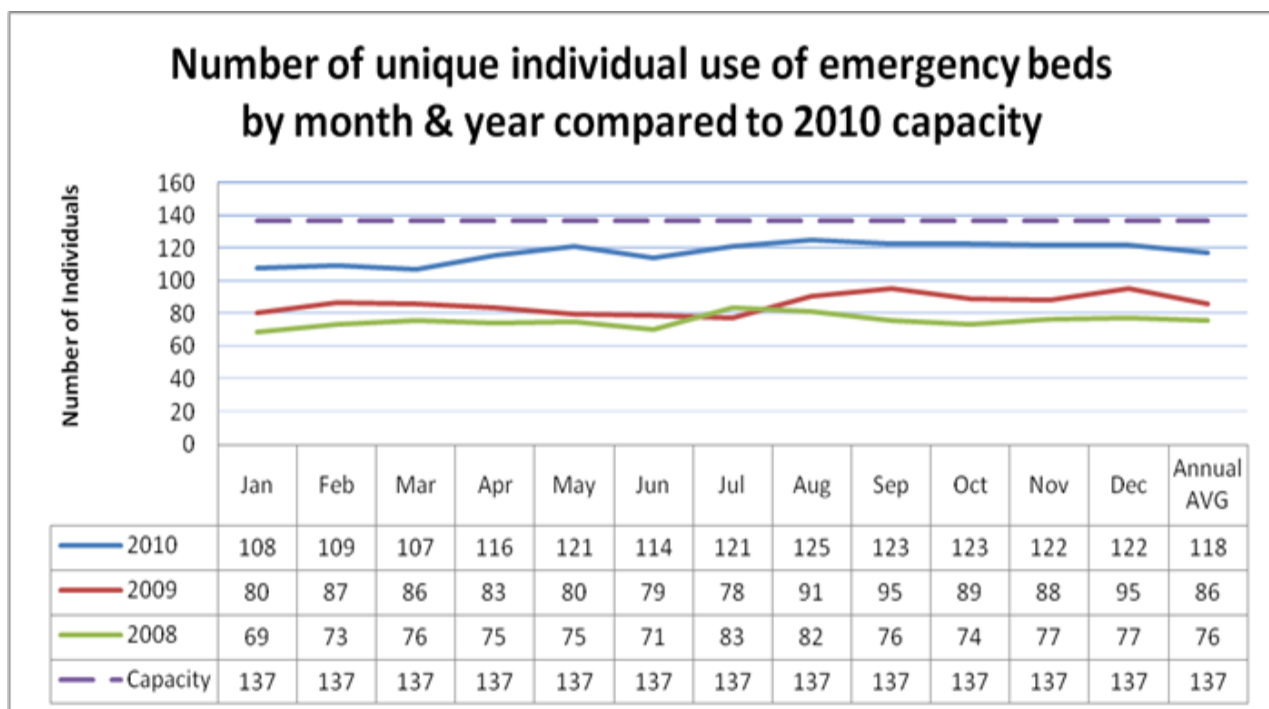


The number beds occupied daily rose from an average of 187 in 2008 to 270 in 2010. This is accounted for by two interrelated factors: increased capacity and increased need. The total number of bed nights in Regina is 291 among HIFIS users in 2010. This daily use represents an average of 92.9% of capacity in 2010.⁶

⁶ There are some differences of opinion as to how the sites of organizations are classified into emergency, transitional adult, youth transitional and violence against women categories. For the purpose of this report we adopted the original agreed upon classification so that we may compare our results over three years.

Emergency Shelter Use in Regina

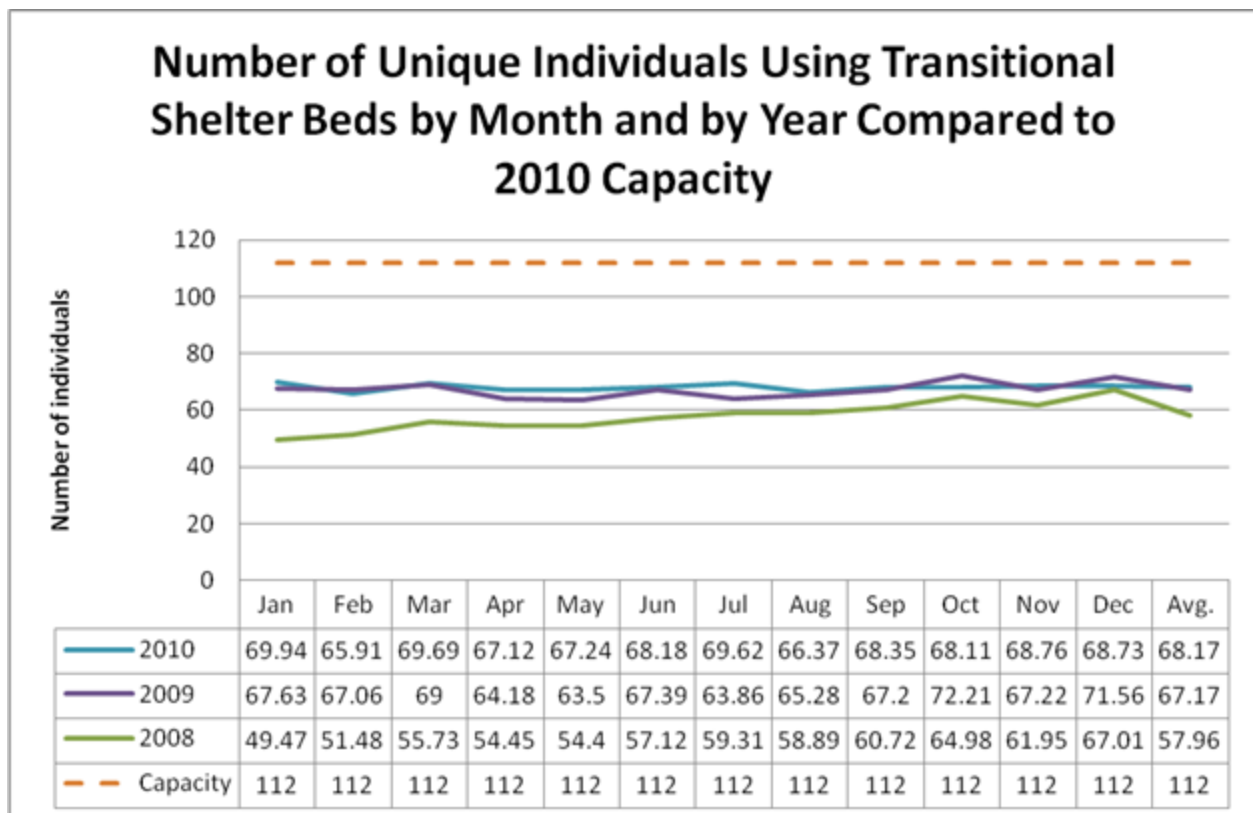
There was a 15.7% increase in unique individuals who used an emergency bed at least once from 2008 to 2010.



In 2008 there were 907 individuals using emergency beds; in 2009 there were 1,031 individuals; and in 2010 there were 1,411 individuals recorded. The 2010 capacity for emergency beds is 137. In an average month in 2010, 118 different individuals used an emergency bed at least once during each month. This represents 86% of capacity use of emergency shelters. As the graph illustrates, the usage over a 12 month period in each year is relatively flat. This might surprise some, but cold weather doesn't appear to be a factor in emergency shelter use; in the cases of some individuals weather may be a factor (e.g. transients passing through Regina).

Transitional Bed Usage in Regina 2008-2010

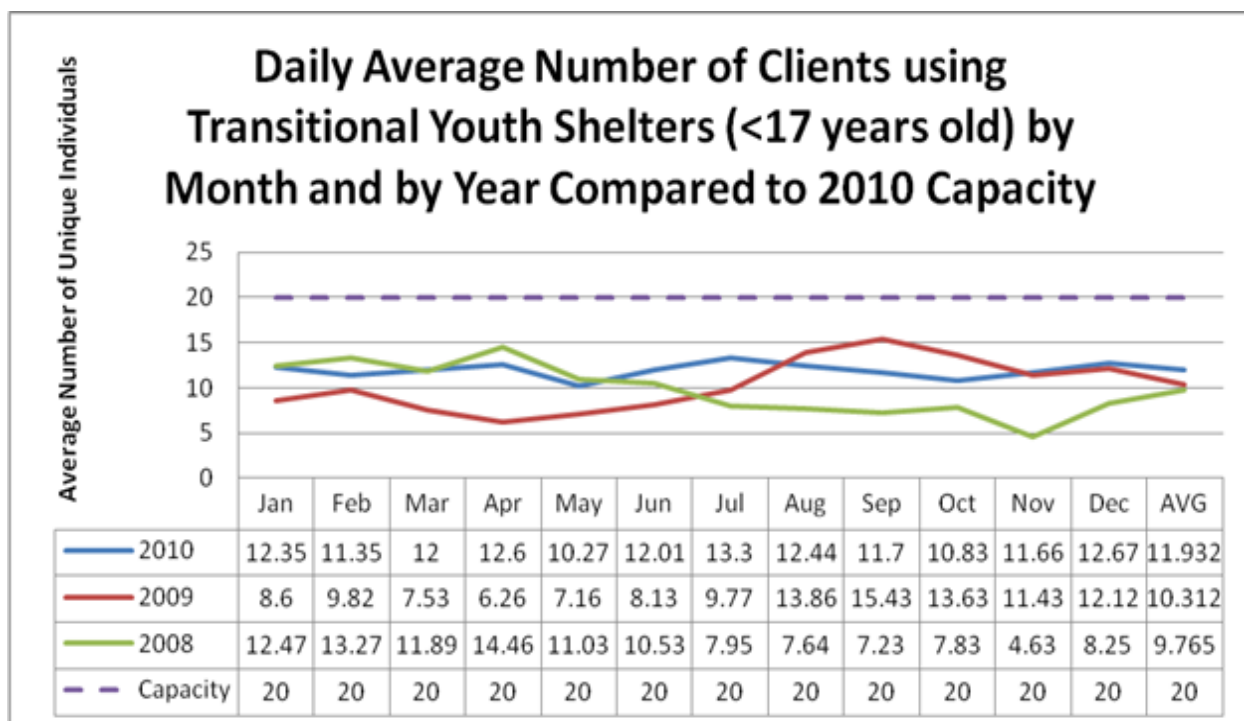
On average 68 individuals stayed in an adult or family transitional shelter each month during 2010; an increase of 17.6% from 2008.



Similar to observations of emergency shelter use, there does not appear to be a sufficient difference for transitional shelter use between months suggesting that weather may be a smaller consideration when using transitional shelters than some might believe. Capacity averaged 60.9% of available transitional beds (N=112). There were more people using transitional shelters in 2010 than 2009 and 2008.

Transitional Youth Shelters in Regina 2008-2010

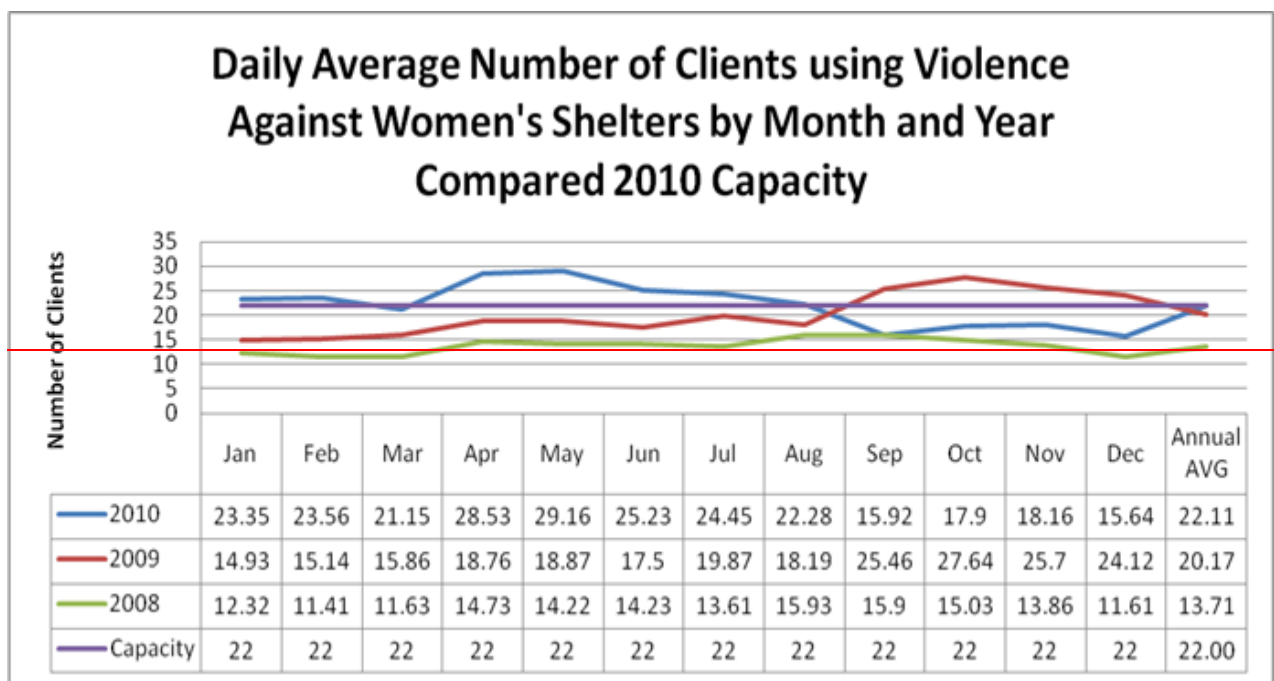
At any one time on average, almost 11 youth lived in one of 4 transitional youth shelters between 2008 and 2010.



The fluctuations for 2009 are accounted for by one organization combining sites and not recording data until July 2009 and then combining two sites as one. Fluctuations in 2008 reflect the staffing changes which occurred at one site influencing the number of intakes. While the averages show an approximate 22% increase from 2008 to 2010 (9.765 to 11.932 respectively), because of data recording issues with staff changes at one site and start up of one site in 2009, this increase should be viewed cautiously.

Violence against Women Shelters in Regina 2008-2010

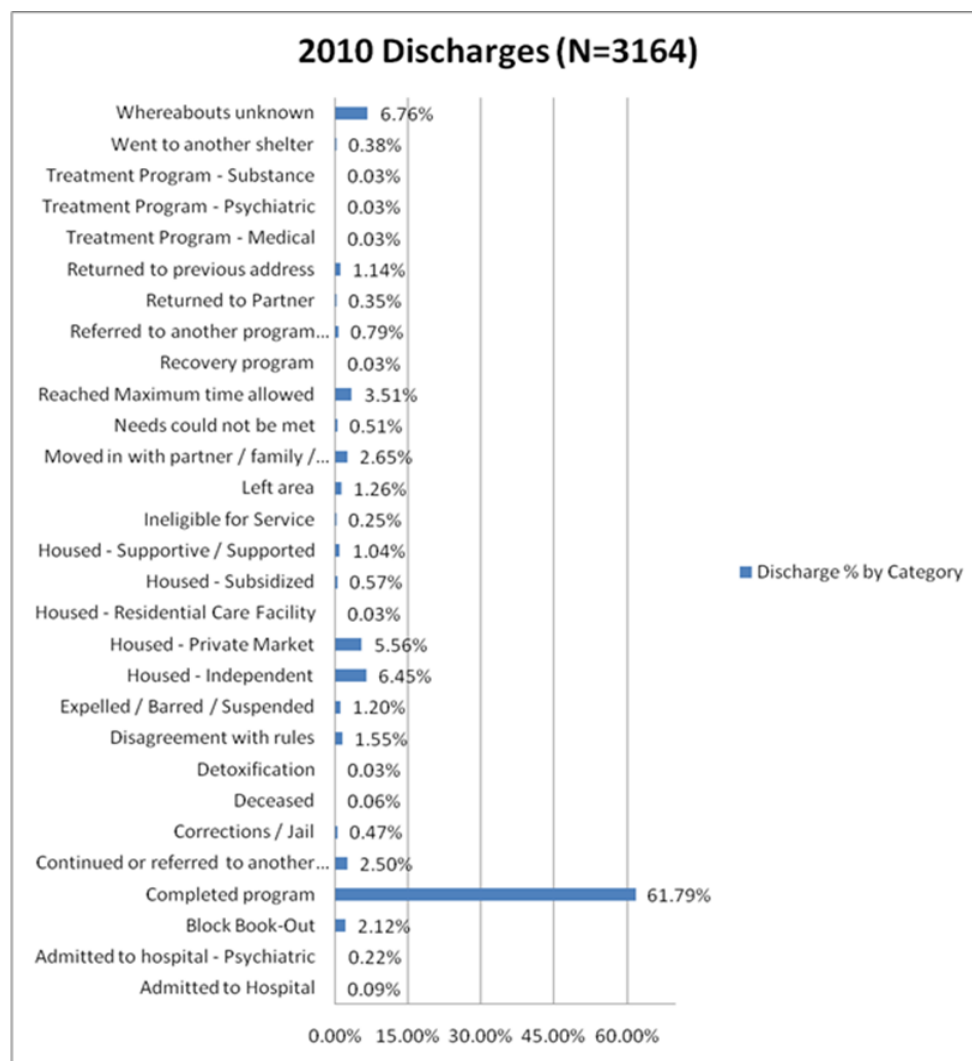
On average 22 individuals stayed in VAW shelters each month in 2010. This means that these shelters were generally operating at or above capacity.



VAW shelters during 2010 operated at virtually full capacity each month and this has increased steadily from 2008 to 2010. The 'over capacity' is in how the authors report on the number of beds in VAW shelters. The number of suites is counted rather than the number of beds. The reason for this approach is to better reflect capacity. For example, a 4 bed suite with a woman and her two children is considered 'at capacity'. The fourth bed is not open to others. Thus the suite is counted as one bed, yet, 3 individuals are counted as admitted, explaining 'over-capacity'.

Discharges from Shelters in Regina 2010

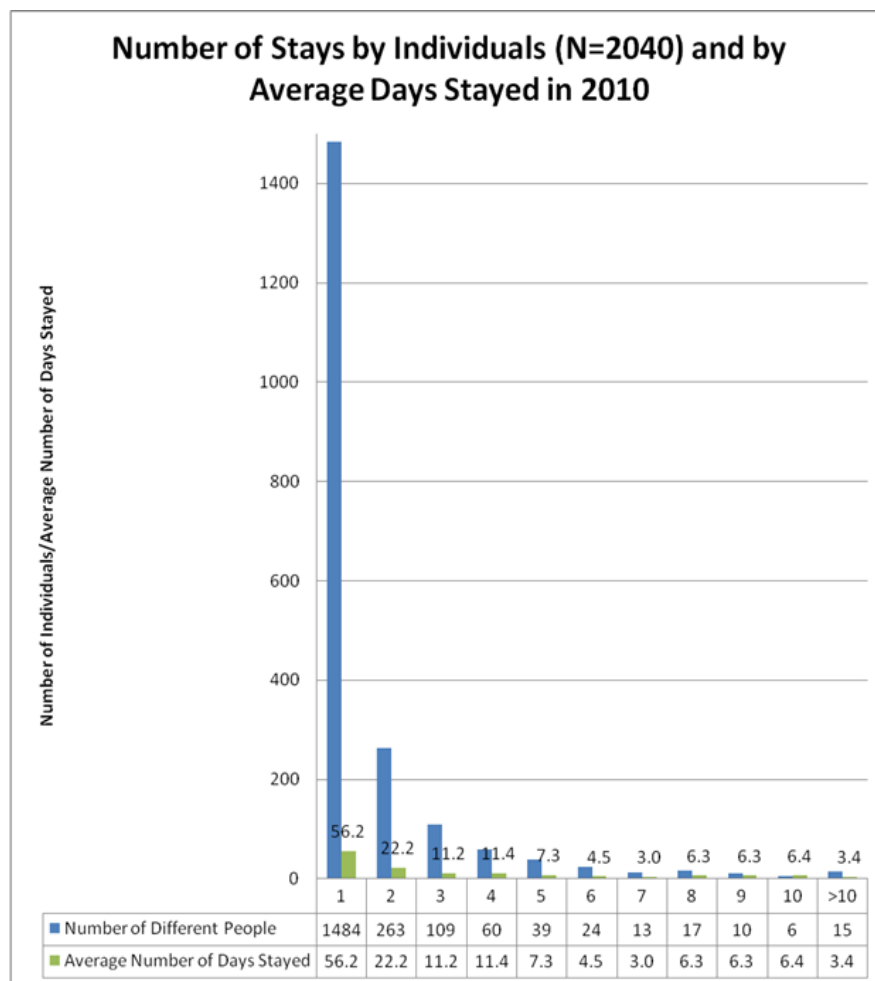
The vast majority of discharges from shelters were individuals completing a program, yet, they had no place to go.



This chart provides a very broad view of the reasons individuals during 2010 were discharged. The total number discharged for 2010 was 3,164. The total number of unique individuals that were admitted was 2,186. The difference between these two numbers (n= 978) represents multiple admissions of individuals and therefore multiple discharges. Of the total number of discharged clients (N=3,164), 83.7% were unable to find a home.

Number and Duration of Shelter Stays in Regina 2010

1,484 individuals stayed in a shelter one time during 2010, remaining for an average of 56.2 days.



This chart describes the number of admissions per individual and the average length of stay. As the number of stays increase, the average number of days stayed decreases. This could suggest that some individuals find temporary shelter in a non-shelter service such as with family or friends but then return when this arrangement ends. Other explanations follow on page 16.

One Time versus Repeat Shelter Users

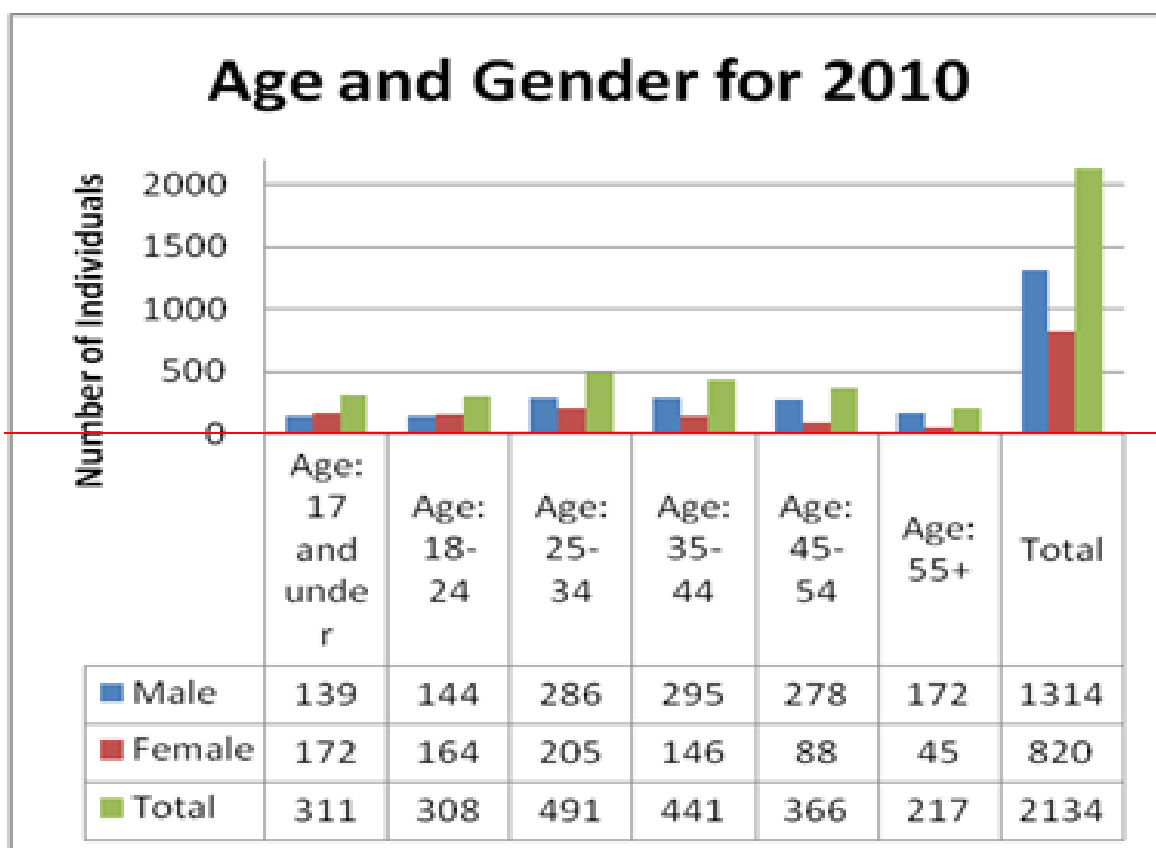
The more times an individual stays in a shelter the shorter are the average number of days per stay.

However, as the number of admissions increases for a given individual the average number of days stayed begins to equal that of individuals who have less repeat stays. For example, individuals with 10 admissions stay on average 6.4 days or in total 64 days. Individuals who were admitted once ($n=1,484$) during 2010, have average total of 56.2 days. This is explained by the different services being provided. Individuals admitted to a transitional shelter will tend to stay longer but return less often while those who are admitted to an emergency shelter will stay for a shorter period of time but return more often.

The total number of stays by individuals ($N=2040$) does not equal the total number of individuals who used a shelter service. Two shelter services did not report on stays by individuals for 2010.

Age and Gender of Shelter Users in Regina 2010

Age and sex were reported on for 2,134 individuals during 2010. Some organizations did not report on both categories, excluding 552 from the total number of individuals for 2010 (N=2686).



There is a slightly higher ratio (3:2) of males over females admitted to emergency and transitional shelters during 2010. There are also more male beds than female beds. Across all shelter service providers, male and female admissions for individuals 24 years old and younger are close in number while males have a slightly higher admission rate as age increases. The gap between male and female shelter admissions gets wider as age increases. That is, females tend to be younger than males overall among those using shelters.

Rental Housing Affordability in Regina 2010

Even if they are working full time, many Reginans can't afford rising rental costs.

Fall 2010 average cost of rent by type of apartment

X = Non-affordable (over 30% of monthly income)

√ = Affordable (less than 30% of monthly income)

Type of Work	Monthly Income*	30% of Monthly Income	Bachelor \$522	One Bedroom \$742	Two Bedroom \$882	Three Bedroom+ \$1,058
Cashier	\$1,811.30	\$543.39	√	x	x	x
Security Guard	\$2,031.43	\$609.43	√	x	x	x
Food Services Supervisor	\$2,395.00	\$718.50	√	x	x	x
Early Childhood Educator	\$2,576.97	\$773.09	√	√	x	x
Janitor/Caretaker/Building Superintendent	\$3,113.01	\$933.90	√	√	√	x
Retail Salesperson/Sales Clerk	\$3,251.67	\$975.50	√	√	√	x
Mechanic	\$3,367.80	\$1,010.34	√	√	√	x
Plumber	\$3,503.00	\$1,050.90	√	√	√	x
Dental Assistant	\$3,519.72	\$1,055.92	√	√	√	x
Electrician (excluding Industrial and Power Systems)	\$4,328.05	\$1,298.42	√	√	√	√

* Based on mean hourly wage for Regina.

Source: CMHC. Regina CMA Rental Market Report. Fall 2010.

Government of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Wage Survey 2009.

Why a 30% Income Threshold?

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines "Affordable Housing" as costing a household 30% or less of its before-tax income. There are many other demands on income that also must be met in order to have a good standard of living such as food and clothing. The more spent on shelter, the fewer resources available for these equally important considerations.

Minimum Wage in Saskatchewan:
\$9.25/hour

Most on the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan can't afford a place to live based on average rental prices in Regina.

Fall 2010 average cost of rent by type of apartment

X = Non-affordable (over 30% of monthly income)

√ = Affordable (less than 30% of monthly income)

Saskatchewan Assistance Category	Monthly Adult Allowance + Shelter Allowance	30% of Monthly Income	Bachelor \$522	One Bedroom \$742	Two Bedroom \$882	Three Bedroom+ \$1,058
Single Employable	\$255 + \$328 = \$583	\$174.90	X	X	X	X
Single Unemployable	\$255 + \$459 = \$714	\$214.20	X	X	X	X
Childless Couple	\$255 + \$526 = \$781	\$234.30	X	X	X	X
Families with 1-2 Children	\$255 + \$636 = \$891	\$267.30	X	X	X	X
Families with 3-4 Children	\$255 + \$688 = \$943	\$282.90	X	X	X	X
Families with 5 or more Children	\$255 + \$760 = \$1015	\$304.50	X	X	X	X

Source: CMHC. Regina CMA Rental Market Report. Fall 2010.

Government of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Assistance Rates. April 1, 2011.

Fall 2010 average cost of rent by type of apartment

X = Non-affordable (over 30% of monthly income)

√ = Affordable (less than 30% of monthly income)

Saskatchewan Assistance Category	Shelter Allowance	Bachelor \$522	One Bedroom \$742	Two Bedroom \$882	Three Bedroom+ \$1,058
Single Employable	\$328		X	X	X
Single Unemployable	\$459	X	X	X	X
Childless Couple	\$526	√	X	X	X
Families with 1-2 Children	\$636	√	X	X	X
Families with 3-4 Children	\$688	√	X	X	X
Families with 5 or more Children	\$760	√	√	X	X

Source: CMHC. Regina CMA Rental Market Report. Fall 2010.

Government of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Assistance Rates. April 1, 2011.

Hourly wages required to afford rent, based on a single earner working 40 hours a week and spending 30% of their income.

BACHELOR - \$522	\$10.04
ONE BEDROOM - \$742	\$14.27
TWO BEDROOM - \$882	\$16.97
THREE + BEDROOM - \$1058	\$20.35

Important Note

The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) provides for an additional rental supplement for families with children and those with a disability. To qualify, recipients of SAP must apply for the rental supplement and demonstrate that the rental accommodation meets minimum quality standards and be approved by the housing enforcement office. Many SAP recipients do not qualify for the supplement: those who are single and childless couples. In addition, there are those renters who are reluctant to request the rental supplement because it may jeopardize their relationship with their landlord by asking for a quality assurance inspection of the property. The low vacancy rate in Regina exacerbates the problem should the rental property not meet the minimum standard. This report takes the position of presenting the basic minimum SAP rates fully acknowledging that rental supplements are available and may increase an individual's or family's income. However, the onus falls to the renter which in the opinion of the authors affects the application and approval rate thus minimizing its intended purpose to ensure everyone who wants a home has a home.