

Northern, Rural and Remote Homelessness: A Review of the Literature

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Northern, Rural and Remote Homelessness – A Review of the Literature
Part I: A Compilation of Themes and Key Findings

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Purpose of the literature review and annotated bibliography

An extensive review of the academic, published literature and unpublished community and governmental reports was undertaken on the topic of northern, rural and remote (NRR) homelessness. To our knowledge this document contains the most extensive documentation of academic literature on this topic to date. Part I provides a synopsis of the themes found in the literature. Part II contains a complete annotated bibliography of all of the relevant documents that were located in the course of this review.

One of the main goals for the project is to provide documentation of research and research gaps for NRR community groups who are seeking to address local issues of homelessness. Therefore the synopsis of themes in Part I is intended to be accessible to as broad a population as possible. It is hoped that the information in this document will be useful to NRR communities and organizations in their work to (1) support their requests for funding to address homelessness, (2) educate funders, politicians and community members on these issues, and (3) develop effective strategies to combat homelessness in their communities. In an effort to make the information in this document easy for communities to use in addressing homelessness, the first section is written as a point form summary of the main findings. Connections are made back to the specific documents that address each point and readers are encouraged to review the annotations (in Part II) for the documents that interest them.

This literature review is intended to be a first step in documenting NRR research and as such there are plans for the document to be updated regularly. As well, an academic article is being prepared for publication from this literature review. If a reader has documents to suggest as potential additions to future updates please contact the lead author with reference information or with the complete document. Or contact her to receive an updated version of the document. Contact information for the lead author is listed on the cover page and on the last page.

Definitions

The terms ‘northern’, ‘rural’ and ‘remote’ are all difficult to define with various operational definitions in use for each of them. This research project chose to leave the terms as open as possible to allow for individual authors and documents to identify their own operational definitions. Some of these definitions vary between countries. For example in the United States (US) there are more rural areas in southern regions (Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998), while in Canada rural and remote areas are primarily in the northern reaches of the country. Thus literature from the US usually specifies rural homelessness, while the term ‘northern’ is more likely to be used in Canadian literature.

Given that most of the existing research on homelessness is from studies in large urban centres, the goal of this document is to identify literature from non-urban or small communities. In most cases such research uses one or more of the terms 'northern', 'rural' or 'remote'. Some literature was included even if these terms were not used, if it was perceived to be directly relevant to the topic.

Although poverty is obviously connected to homelessness, there is a much larger amount of literature on poverty and northern, rural or remote communities, with much of it not addressing housing or homelessness issues. Thus this literature is not routinely included in this review, unless a direct connection to housing or homelessness was found.

The term 'homelessness' also has various operational definitions. Again, we chose to leave the term open so that it could be defined by the authors and articles we reviewed. Many authors distinguish between absolute homelessness (sleeping with no roof over one's head or in an emergency shelter) and relative homelessness (at-risk of homelessness such as unstable housing situations or living with others on a temporary basis). Both of these definitions are included here, and there are some interesting rural-urban implications in the use of the terms, as Part I of this document will demonstrate. Another form of homelessness is often located on a continuum between absolute and relative homelessness, that of couch-surfing (also known as sofa-surfing, or doubling-up). It describes the behaviour of those people who no longer have their own place to live and who live with family or friends temporarily, typically moving frequently from place to place often times due to no longer being welcome after living in one place for a period of time. Couch-surfing is also included as a type of homelessness in this document, again with significant rural-urban discussions noted in the literature.

Although the focus is on homelessness, issues of unstable housing are related to the topic. Rural housing issues cover a somewhat broader literature and many, though not all, documents on this topic are included here where they offer relevant or unique information to the discussion. Given the lack of academic NRR homelessness literature in Canada, and that this document is intended to be relevant to NRR Canadian communities specifically, all Canadian literature on NRR housing (with connections to low-income populations or poverty) that was found is included.

Part I: A Compilation of Themes and Key Findings

A. Main themes

Themes, as presented in this section, are found in more than one study or publication and often are found many times throughout the literature.

Theme #1: NRR homelessness does exist, although it is more invisible than urban homelessness

- Homelessness does exist in northern, rural and remote areas.
 - Most of the references state this; none dispute it. (Beavis, Klos, Carter & Douchant, 1997, Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000, 2001, 2003, CMHC, 2003a, Community Partners Addressing Homelessness, 2003, First, Rife & Toomey, 1994, Fitchen, 1991, 1992, Ford, Cantau, & Hedwige, 2003, *Homelessness in the northern territories*, 2005, Layton, 2000, LeCamp, 2006, McLaughlin, 1988, New Focus Society, 2005, Peters & Scheach, 2002, Smithers' Community Association, 2005, Vissing 1996, 2001)
 - Most authors comment on the scarcity of research and literature on NRR homelessness. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000, 2001, 2003, Novac, Brown & Bourbonnais, 1996 & Vissing 1996)
 - Based on per capita statistics, homelessness may even be higher in rural areas than urban. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2001, Lawrence, 1995)
- Couch-surfing or doubling-up is often more prevalent in NRR communities than in urban centres, often because of the cold climate and the rural context including a lack of emergency shelters. (Fitchen, 1991 & 1992, McLaughlin, 1988, Lawrence, 1995, Wagner, Menke & Ciccone, 1995)
 - The prevalence of couch-surfing and other invisible strategies in NRR communities makes comparison of numbers of homeless between rural and urban communities (where homelessness is more visible) difficult. (Lawrence, 1995)
- Absolute homelessness, including sleeping outdoors or in abandoned buildings with no heat, does exist in NRR communities in spite of the cold climate. (Cloke & Milbourne, 2000, Fitchen, 1991, Ford, Cantau, & Hedwige, 2003, LeCamp, 2006, McLaughlin, 1988, New Focus Society, 2005, Peters & Scheach, 2002, Smithers' Community Association, 2005, Vissing, 1996)
 - Although absolute homelessness is more likely to be a summer time occurrence it does occur even in winter, albeit less frequently according to the Canadian literature. (Ford, Cantau, & Hedwige, 2003, McLaughlin, 1988, New Focus Society, 2005)
- Homelessness is more invisible in northern and rural areas than in urban centres. (Cloke & Milbourne, 2000, CMHC 2003a, Fitchen, 1991 & 1992, Vissing, 1996, Wagner, Menke & Ciccone, 1995, Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998)

- One reason for the invisibility is the lack of emergency services or shelters in most NRR communities combined with the cold climate which means many homeless engage in the invisible strategy of couch-surfing. (CMHC, 2003a, Fitchen, 1991 & 1992, McLaughlin, 1988, Lawrence, 1995, Wagner, Menke & Ciccone, 1995)
- Even the absolute homeless stay in places that are generally hidden, such as abandoned buildings, tents outside of town, vehicles, and in the bush. Thus they virtually invisible to the rest of the community. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000, McLaughlin, 1988)
- The invisibility of rural homelessness means that it is often ignored or denied. (Cloke & Milbourne, 2000, 2001, 2003, Fitchen, 1991 & Vissing 1996, 2001)

Theme #2: The face of NRR homelessness as compared with urban homelessness

There are both similarities and differences in the face of homelessness in rural compared with urban areas. Furthermore, there are times when study findings are contradictory. The themes, as well as contradictions to the themes, are listed here.

Differences between rural and urban homelessness:

- Rural homelessness is qualitatively different than urban homelessness in many ways. (First, Rife & Toomey, 1994, Lawrence, 1995, Vissing, 1996)
- NRR homeless people are less likely to have mental health and substance abuse issues compared with homeless populations in urban areas and homelessness is more likely to be connected to economic issues in rural settings, rather than mental illness or substance abuse. (CMHC, 2003a, Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998, First, Rife & Toomey 1994, Wright et al., 1998)
 - One study had different findings which indicated rates of mental illness among rural homeless women to be similar to those rates among urban homeless people. This study also found evidence of substance abuse among some rural homeless women, although the authors are not clear as to how those rates compare with urban homeless rates of substance abuse. (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000)
- NRR homeless are more likely to be families and less likely to be single individuals than urban homeless, although research suggests that there are increasing numbers of homeless families in urban areas as well (CMHC, 2003a, Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000, First, Rife & Toomey 1994, Wright et al., 1998)
- NRR homeless people (compared with urban homeless) are younger, (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000), are more likely to be single women or mothers with children, are more highly educated, and are less likely to be disabled. (First, Rife & Toomey, 1994, p. 104)
- There are greater numbers of women among rural homeless compared with urban homeless. (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000, First, Rife & Toomey 1994, Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998)

- NRR homeless people tend to have larger and more intact informal social support networks to draw on for assistance during homelessness than do the urban homeless. (Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998 & Vissing, 1996)
 - However, informal support networks are becoming progressively more brittle. The longer a homeless person needs support the greater the chance of their support network burning out. (Vissing, 1996)

Similarities between rural and urban homelessness:

- Rural homelessness is complex with many interacting factors. (Cloke, Mibourne & Widdowfield, 2001, 2003, Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998, Vissing, 1996). Urban homelessness research often states this as well.
- Family violence and family dissolution are causes of homeless (often in combination with issues of poverty) for NRR women to a similar degree as for urban women. (CMHC, 1998 & Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998)
 - Family problems such as violence and substance abuse are also exacerbated when families live in overcrowded conditions. (McLaughlin, 1988) In addition, the lack of emergency services and shelters in NRR communities means many women are forced to stay in violent situations. (CMHC, 1998)
- A significant cause of homelessness in both rural and urban areas is economic. Poverty and economic downturns in an area are related to increases in unemployment and reduced job opportunities, and thus related to housing instability and homelessness. (CMHC, 2003a, Fitchen, 1991, Government of British Columbia, 2001 & Layton, 2000)
- Patterns of homelessness vary in rural as well as urban areas. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2001 & First, Rife & Toomey, 1994)
- Squatting, typically seen as an urban phenomenon, also occurs in NRR communities. A study in Whitehorse found a substantial number of squatters who had put up rough shelters on crown land. (Lotz, 1965)
- NRR homeless people, as with the urban homeless, have increased health problems and poorer nutrition than non-homeless people. (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000, Silliman, Yamanoha & Morrissey, 1998)
 - Although NRR homeless children had similar rates of health and developmental issues to urban homeless reports, NRR adults reported fewer health concerns, including mental illnesses, than their urban homeless counterparts. This may be due to rural stigma associated with mental illness resulting in a lower reporting rate rather than a lower incidence, although this is inconclusive. (Wagner, Menke & Ciccone, 1995)
 - In addition to high rates of health problems among rural homeless women, there is poor access to health care thus exacerbating the health issues. The authors did not compare health care access of NRR homeless with urban homeless. (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000)

Theme #3: There are factors specific to NRR regions which affect NRR homelessness

- Cold and severe climates found in northern regions have serious health implications for homeless people including frostbite, loss of fingers and toes, and death due to hypothermia. (Ford, Cantau, & Hedwige, 2003, Layon, 2000 & McLaughlin, 1988)
- The lack of transportation combined with long distances in rural and remote communities mean that access to services and social networks are problematic for people who are homeless or in unstable remote housing. (McLaughlin, 1988)
- The level and depth of poverty, income inequality and poor economic conditions are greater in rural regions than in urban areas. (Wagner, Menke & Ciccone, 1995 & Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998)
- NRR communities are often single-industry (or near single-industry) towns which are therefore highly susceptible to the boom or bust swings in the economy, much more so than are urban areas. (CMHC, 2003b, Halseth & Sullivan, 2000, Lotz, 1965)
 - Swings to ‘bust’ economies have a strong relationship to increasing levels of housing instability and homelessness. (Fitchen 1991 & 1992, Lawrence 1995, Lotz, 1965, Wright, Rubin, & Devine, 1998)
 - See more information on this topic under Theme #6: Causes of NRR homelessness.
- In Canada, northern and rural communities have unique traditions and cultural values. NRR homelessness and its connections to overcrowding and increasing social problems are linked to the loss of cultural values and traditions. (*Homelessness in the northern territories*, 2005 & McLaughlin, 1988)
 - Also see references for Aboriginal homelessness and insecure housing listed under Theme #5: Special Populations.
- Canadian NRR communities are more likely than urban centres to have greater levels of substandard housing and housing in need of repairs. (McLaughlin 1988, CMHC, 2003a & CMHC, 2003b) (This topic is addressed in more depth in Theme #4 below.)
- NRR regions are often idealized in a way that urban centres are not. The romantic notions of NRR as being natural, safe, healthy places to raise families and without serious social problems, combined with the invisibility of rural homelessness, typically result in a denial of NRR homelessness and thus a severe lack of services and supports for homeless people. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000, 2001 & 2003)

Theme #4: Housing issues in NRR areas

- There is a considerable amount of Canadian research on the lack of Aboriginal housing, overcrowding of homes and resulting problems both on and off reserve.

- Research is limited in making connections of housing instability to Aboriginal homelessness. (Beavis, et al., 1997, CMHC, 1987, 1992, 1998, 2005, *Homelessness in the northern territories*, 2005, Layton, 2000, Mackin & Nyce, 2005, Northern Secretariat on Homelessness, 2005 & Yates, 1970)
- Cultural needs are important components in developing housing for Aboriginal elders. (Mackin & Nyce, 2005)
 - A study in Prince George, in northern British Columbia, found that while housing is affordable for the *average* household, small low-income households were at a disadvantage in the housing market. Thus there was a recommendation that the city develop policies to address the housing needs of this population. (Sampson, 1999)
 - Depopulation of a community due to a downturn in the local economy can lead to vacancies in local social housing buildings. This is in contradiction to waiting lists for social housing openings in other (including larger) centres. (Bruce with Carter & Starr, 2005)
 - Two thirds of women in a research study on women and rural housing had issues of housing affordability. That is they paid more than 30 per cent, and in some cases more than half of their income on shelter. This suggests that they are at risk for housing loss. (CMHC, 2002)
 - Housing affordability and needs differ between NRR regions and communities. (CMHC, 2003a, 2003b & 2003c). This study and the resulting three documents are likely the most detailed examination of housing issues in Canadian NRR areas that exist in the literature today.
 - This study looked at various distinct populations in NRR communities and their specific housing needs, including seniors. (CMHC, 2003d)
 - Housing issues have connections to single-industry contexts in NRR communities. (Halseth & Sullivan, 2000)
 - In comparing rural and urban housing in the context of CMHC's three-part definition of core-housing need (affordability, adequacy & suitability) it was found that urban centres had more problems with affordability, while rural houses were less likely to meet adequacy standards. Northern, rural housing was similar to urban in terms of meeting suitability standards. Among rural areas, housing affordability was more of a problem in rural British Columbia and Ontario. (Rupnik, Tremblay & Bollman, 2001)
 - CMHC has also conducted evaluations of various NRR housing programs it has implemented. (CMHC, 1987 & 1992 & Yates, 1970)
 - An independent review of government housing programs in the Northwest Territories (Canada) from 1944 to 1995 determined that the programs were poorly designed and ill-equipped to address northern housing and climate issues. The resulting housing was of poor quality and only marginally addressed the needs of low-income northerners. The author concludes that the programs, rather than providing adequate housing, were more "a vehicle through which government re-affirmed its position in the north" (Robson, 1995, p. 3).

Theme #5: Special populations

As with urban homelessness research, rural research suggests that the people who are homeless are not homogeneous; thus solutions to rural and urban homelessness cannot be a 'one-size fits all' approach. The following groups have been found within NRR homeless populations. Most of the authors argue that each group has special factors and needs that must be considered in understanding homelessness as well as in addressing it. More details on these special populations can be found in the annotated bibliography section of this report and in the original documents.

- NRR homeless are more likely to consist of families (than in the urban homeless), including women-led single parent families. (CMHC, 2003a, Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000, Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998, First, Rife & Toomey 1994, Vissing, 1996, Wagner, Menke & Ciccone, 1995 & Wright, Rubin & Devine 1998)
 - Two-parent families (Vissing, 1996 & Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998)
 - Farming families (First, Rife & Toomey, 1994 & Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998)
- NRR homeless are more likely to be women (including women-led single-parent families) than are urban homeless. (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000, First, Rife & Toomey 1994, Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998 & Vissing, 1996)
- One study found five predominant groups of homeless people in the rural region in Ohio that they studied. (First, Rife & Toomey, 1994)
 - (1) Young low-income families
 - (2) Individuals who are the working poor
 - (3) Women lacking work skills or needing to care for children
 - (4) Older men with fewer supports who are often disabled
 - (5) Disabled people lacking in social support networks and services
- Canadian research also identifies Aboriginal people, both on and off reserve, as a significant population found among NRR homeless and the insecurely housed. (Beavis, et al., 1997, CMHC, 1987, 1992, 1998, 2005, *Homelessness in the northern territories*, 2005, Layton, 2000, Mackin & Nyce, 2005, Northern Secretariat on Homelessness, 2005 & Yates, 1970)
- Youth have also been identified by some studies as a group of NRR homeless although there is very little research on this population. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003 & Peters & Scheach, 2002)
 - Young women (Le Camp, 2006)
- Some seniors in rural areas are in core housing need and also have special support needs that are not always met in NRR communities, according to one CMHC study. (CMHC, 2003b & 2003d)

Theme #6: Causes of NRR homelessness

- Poverty, income inequality and the lack of affordable housing are the overriding factors seen as causes of NRR homelessness. (CMHC, 2003a, Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998, First, Rife & Toomey, 1994, Fitchen, 1991, Government of British Columbia, 2001, Layton, 2000 & Vissing, 1996)
- NRR communities are often single-industry (or near single-industry) towns which are therefore highly susceptible to the boom or bust swings in the economy, much more so than are urban areas. (CMHC, 2003b, Halseth & Sullivan, 2000, Lotz, 1965)
 - Swings to ‘bust’ economies have a strong relationship to decreasing household incomes and increasing levels of housing instability and homelessness. (Fitchen 1991 & 1992, Lotz, 1965, Wright, Rubin, & Devine, 1998)
 - Increasing levels of unemployment, low wage employment, and the relationship of these to declining industries in rural areas is a primary cause of rural homelessness. (Fitchen 1991 & 1992)
 - The increasing subsistence nature of farming and agriculture are also important causes of rural homelessness. (Lawrence 1995; Wright, Rubin, & Devine, 1998)
 - In-migration to ‘boom’ communities can also cause housing shortages and can cause skyrocketing prices to rent and buy homes putting shelter out of the reach of many low-income individuals. (Government of British Columbia, 2001)
- Gentrification of rural areas which are relatively close to urban centres is a cause of NRR homelessness. Homes and land are often purchased by wealthier urban people for use as vacation or summer properties, driving land, house prices and rent prices out of reach of local low-income people. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000 & Fitchen, 1992)
- Increasingly strict land use and building regulations mean that low-income people who could afford to build their own, albeit marginal, shelter in the past, can no longer build as they cannot afford to meet the stricter codes. (Fitchen, 1991 & 1992)
- Although NRR homeless do have some substance abuse and mental illness issues, most researchers found these to be to a lesser rate than among the urban homeless. Most researchers suggested that NRR homeless is more likely to be caused by economic issues in rural settings, rather than mental illness or substance abuse. (CMHC, 2003a, Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998, First, Rife & Toomey 1994, Wright et al., 1998)
 - One study disagreed and found mental illness rates among rural homeless to be similar to urban homeless, although the research did not attribute causes for the homelessness. (Craft-Rosenberg, Powell, Rae & Culp, 2000)

Theme #7: Solutions and strategies to address NRR homelessness

- Decision and policy-makers in NRR communities must recognize that homelessness is a problem in NRR communities and therefore programs and services need to be available for the homeless in rural, as well as urban, communities. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003)
- Solutions to NRR homelessness must be tailored to NRR factors, issues and needs as well as in the context of recognizing local and regional distinctions. In addition, solutions must address the different needs of the different populations of NRR homeless. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000, 2001 & 2003 & Fitchen, 1991 & 1992)
 - In particular this means issues of economic downturns, job losses and poverty are all crucial areas to address in order to address homelessness. (Fitchen, 1991 & 1992 & Vissing, 1996)
- “Rural homelessness is caused primarily by social factors, not individual pathology. This means that the most effective social interventions ... are at the community and institutional level.” (Vissing, 1996, p. 175)
- For solutions to homelessness to be effective and realistic, homeless people must be involved in all levels of program planning and implementation from direct service to policy and political decision-making. (Hemingway, Peters & Fiske, Submitted)
- An example of one support for homeless people in the northern British Columbia (Canada) community of Prince George is the development of a guide for homeless people and service providers that specifies all available community services and access information. (Northern FIRE, 2002)

Theme #8: Research and research methodology

- There is a serious lack of academic and published research and literature on NRR homelessness. Almost all of the authors acknowledge this, none dispute it.
- There are significant rural-urban differences in homelessness which results in the need for NRR unique research methodologies. (Toomey & First, 1993)
- Researching rural homelessness has unique difficulties including the invisibility of NRR homelessness. (Toomey & First, 1993)
- Definitions of ‘rural’, (Toomey & First, 1993) ‘northern’ and ‘remote’ must be clarified so that different researchers use the terms in a way that allows comparisons to be made.
- To get an accurate count of NRR homelessness research must include definitions of couch-surfing and relative homelessness in their studies. (Toomey & First, 1993)
- Rural research into homelessness to date has been conducted largely by practitioners, professionals and community-based groups to address local problems. (Fitchen, 1992 & *Homelessness in the northern territories*, 2005).
 - Most times this research does not get published in academic circles and remains largely unknown outside of the particular community in which the

study took place. This results in much of the NRR homelessness research itself remaining invisible to the larger research and academic communities.

- NRR homelessness research must be published in academic circles in addition to appearing in community-based reports so that it is more widely available.
- The process of research, service provision and policy development must be inclusive of voices of people experiencing homelessness. (Hemingway, Peters & Fiske, Submitted).

B. Key findings

Points in this section highlight findings that may be described by few, or only one, publication, thus they are not themes found throughout the literature. These findings are still important, however, as they add unique dimensions to the exploration of NRR homelessness. It is not that the remaining literature disagrees with these findings, but rather that only one study has examined these areas. It is important for future research to seek to replicate (or disprove) these (and other) findings.

Key finding #1: NRR places are diverse, not homogenous:

- Rural communities and regions are not homogenous, thus it cannot be assumed the NRR homelessness is the same in all NRR areas. Rural communities and regions are very diverse, therefore homelessness (the extent of it, who is homeless and causes for homelessness) may differ between communities and areas. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2001 & 2003)
- There are significant differences in housing availability, issues and needs between rural communities. (CMHC, 2003a, 2003b & 2003c & Rupnik, Tremblay & Bollman, 2001)

Key finding #2: Migration patterns of homeless and low income people

- One prominent pattern of migration of rural homeless is to go to urban areas where they remain homeless. The move is usually because of a lack of support services and jobs in rural areas. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003, CMHC, 2003a & Fitchen, 1991)
 - One document argues that this migration pattern is a primary cause of homelessness in developing countries. (Glasser, 1994)
- Low-income people also migrate from urban to rural communities. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003 & Fitchen, 1992)
- One study states that there are four primary migration patterns among the rural homeless population. Two of the patterns are listed above. The third pattern is the migration of homeless people within a rural region. This is often in an effort to stay in their community where they have a social support network. The fourth

- pattern is that of migrating through various rural areas in a transient pattern. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003)
- Aboriginal migration patterns have also been noted in Canadian literature. The typical pattern here is migration back and forth between one's home reserve and an urban centre. This movement is often linked with the search for shelter and/or for employment. The movement to an urban centre on a temporary basis may also happen for purposes of receiving medical care (for one's self or a family member) or attending school. (Beavis et al., 1997 & CMHC, 2005)

Key finding #3: Two groups of rural homeless: farming and non-farming

- Although there is very little written on farming and homelessness, these authors make an important point that the subsistence nature of farming combined with the current movement to replace family farms with large agri-business means there is a unique population of farming families present in NRR homelessness. (Wright, Rubin & Devine, 1998)

Key finding #4: International (N)RR homelessness

- Rural to urban migration is seen as a significant cause of homelessness in developing countries. (Glasser, 1994). This has also been noted as an issue in developed countries. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2003)

C. Theories relevant to NRR homelessness

Theory #1: Single industry communities and the boom or bust economic cycle

- For details on this theory see Theme #6: Causes of NRR homelessness.
- An additional concern with boom or bust economies in small communities is that when an industry closes its doors in a single-resource community many people leave for jobs elsewhere sometimes leaving behind social housing stock that then remains empty. This is in contrast to social housing stock in other areas (including larger centres) which typically have long waiting lists. Solutions to these concerns must evolve from within the community to address local issues. (Bruce with Carter & Starr, 2005).

Theory #2: Rural as idyllic and the spatialization of homelessness

- The rural is viewed as idyllic and thus incompatible with homelessness. In addition to this perspective rendering homelessness invisible in rural areas, it also spatializes homelessness in a way that it is to be viewed as an urban phenomenon. The spatialization also has the effect of pushing rural homeless people out of their NRR communities in order to find support services or shelters which largely exist in urban centres. (Cloke, Milbourne & Widdowfield, 2000)

Theory #3: Discourse, space & nature in the context of rural homelessness

- “[T]he homeless are discursively produced as a population occupying a position ‘outside’ of social space” (p. 298) allowing society to view them as part of the realm of ‘nature’ rather than of the ‘social’ realm. In this context the homeless become a group to be managed rather than a part of the society with the right to participate in decision-making. The complication is that ‘the rural’ is considered to be both ‘natural’ and ‘social’ and therefore rural homelessness is problematic due to the tension between the terms. (Lawrence, 1995)

Theory #4: Typologies of rural environments and the impact on rural homeless shelters

- The theory holds that each rural community can be identified as having low or high resources and simple or complex needs of the local homeless population. The various potential combinations of these results in four possible types (cells) of environments, which should each result in 4 different types of rural homelessness shelters. The researcher found only partial support for this theory. (Goodfellow, 1999)

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Section I: Journal Articles, Chapters and Books

Cloke, P., Milbourne, P. & Widdowfield, R. (2000). The hidden and emerging spaces of rural homelessness. *Environment and Planning A*, 32(1), 77-90.

Although the authors point out that researchers from the United States (US) have begun to acknowledge the lack of, and need for, research on rural homelessness they argue that such recognition has not spread to England. They suggest that homelessness in England is spatialised in a way that it is seen to exist in visible urban contexts and not seen in rural spaces. Rural spaces are idealized and connected with concepts such as “close-knit and problem-free living, order, security, tradition, and so on” (p. 80). These views are held by middle-class urbanites in particular who then move to rural areas as gentrification spreads increasingly excluding low-income people from the rural housing market. Unpublished governmental data demonstrates that homelessness is an issue in rural areas, yet rural homelessness officers indicated in a survey that homelessness is invisible in rural areas. As such it also disappears from policy discussions which “feed[s] into the ways in which rural homelessness is dealt with by these authorities” resulting in few services (p. 83). When rural areas do acknowledge the issue the support services “are often characterized by spatial practices which act to push the location of homelessness support and hence the visibility of rural homelessness into small town spaces” thus moving the problem into a non-rural location (p. 83). Homelessness in rural and small town spaces is exacerbated by a lack of housing and employment opportunities, a perception of homeless people being ‘other’ and thus pressure on homeless people to remain as invisible as possible.

Cloke, P., Milbourne, P. & Widdowfield, R. (2001). Homelessness and rurality: Exploring connections in local spaces of rural England. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 41(4), 438-454.

In the literature review the authors suggest that research from the US indicates four themes of rural homelessness. First of all it is largely hidden in that rural homeless people are not as visible in sleeping on the streets, but that they tend to sleep in hidden locations. Second, although the 1990 US Census indicated a lower level of homelessness in rural areas, other research suggests rates of homelessness in rural areas to be higher than in urban centres. Third, levels of homelessness vary between rural areas with declining local economies resulting in increased homelessness. Last, housing structures in rural areas may increase homelessness.

The authors completed their research between 1996 and 1998 in England. Statistics indicated that 14.4 percent of homelessness was located in rural areas in 1996

and that this was an increase from 1992. Findings suggested that reasons for homelessness were similar between rural and urban areas. As well, homelessness varied between rural communities. This was in large part due to higher housing costs in areas with significant tourism and holiday properties which raised housing prices out of reach of local low-income people. In the remaining sections of the article the authors examine homelessness in two predominantly rural areas. They suggest that rural homelessness must be examined in relation to three contexts. The first is that of local housing markets, which can exacerbate homelessness when markets move housing out of reach of low-income people. Second, local responses to homelessness are related to “cultures of rurality” (p. 443). The culture of rural as safe and idyllic result in a denial of homelessness as a rural issue. Third, people who are rural and homeless have to decide whether to stay put in a small community where they have a network of family and friends but a lack of support services, or move to an urban centre where they may be alone but have greater support services. The authors suggest that there is pressure to move homelessness out of rural spaces and into urban centres thus confirming the myth that homelessness is an urban, not a rural, issue. “A major theme running through this paper is the spatial unevenness of rural homelessness. ... [I]t should be recognized that rural homelessness is bound up with a great deal of regional and local diversity” (p. 450).

Cloke P.; Milbourne P.; Widdowfield R. (2003). The complex mobilities of homeless people in rural England. *Geoforum*, 34(1), 21-35.

The focus of this paper is on rural homelessness and issues surrounding their mobility and use of space. The literature review finds that most articles are on urban homelessness but that two main findings are relevant to authors' research. First of all many of the urban homeless move into city's from other areas (including rural regions). Second, systemic structures often serve to increase the movement of homeless people as they search for support services and as they seek to avoid spaces where they are unwanted.

Mobility in rural areas has two assumptions. The first is that low-income rural people move away to urban areas, although the authors acknowledge that this is not true for all rural and low-income people. Second, some types of mobility, namely mobility of the homeless, are seen as morally negative. “Those who are seemingly dispossessed of ‘home’ and ‘community’ are in this way perceived to threaten the safety and predictability of home and community for others (Takahashi, 1998)” (p. 23).

The authors conducted research in England over a two year period. The first part of the research examined unpublished statistics on homelessness across the country. The second part examined homelessness in the regions of Somerset and Gloucestershire and included interviews with local homelessness authorities, interviews with homeless people and case notes on additional homeless people. Four types of mobility patterns for rural homeless were identified. The first is local homeless people who move out of their rural communities. Often this movement is for structural rather than purely voluntary reasons: a lack of social housing, of emergency housing and of private affordable housing. The second pattern is of “homeless people moving within rural areas” (p. 24). In an attempt to remain in a community where homeless people have friends and an informal support network, some homeless people will move around within their local rural community,

often 'sofa-surfing'. Another type of homeless mobility is when homeless people move into a rural community. This movement may occur for a variety of reasons including seasonal employment in the rural area, a wish to return to a past holiday place, or the view of rural as idyllic and thus as a safe place to live, even while homeless. The last type of rural homeless mobility is transience, where the homeless move through the community. The authors state that "it is difficult to categorically determine the extent to which their mobility is chosen and/or the product of a lack of alternatives" (p. 30).

The authors close the article with three sets of conclusions. First, the mobility of rural homeless people is complex and does not consist only of out-migration from rural areas. Second, the "discursive scattering" (p. 32) of homeless people because of their mobility leads local rural populations to deny that there is a homeless problem in their communities. For example homeless people moving into a rural area may be categorized as "job-seekers" or "hippies" rather than being homeless (p. 32). Third, the complex mobility combined with denial of the problem leads to a lack of policy and services to address the issue in most rural communities. The authors also suggest that these trends of the rural homeless must be taken into account in developing solutions, as "urban solutions" will not necessarily be relevant to rural communities (p. 33).

Craft-Rosenberg, Martha, Powell, Martha, Rae, Sandra & Culp, Kenneth. (2000). Health Status and Resources of Rural Homeless Women and Children. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 22(8), 863-878.

The literature review reveals that health information for rural homeless women and their children is limited. Demographics for the United States (US) outlined in the literature review indicate that rural homeless populations compared to urban homeless are often younger, have greater numbers of women, are more likely to have households made up of families rather than individuals, are more likely to have been born in the US, are more likely to be Caucasian, and have on average been homeless for a shorter period of time. In rural areas homeless people are expected to rely on their families for support, which can strain the family system. The authors report that the rate of mental illness found in homeless populations is similar for urban and rural.

The authors interviewed 31 homeless women all staying at a shelter in a small town. All of the women had come from farms or other small towns. Interviews consisted of several survey instruments including: the Rural Homeless Interview (developed by the authors); the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test; and the Beck Depression Inventory. "The Rural Homeless Interview contains eight sections: demographic characteristics, health history, alcohol and drug use, mental health, family structure, health care resources, personal resources, and children's health" (p. 868). The women were found to have higher rates of health problems compared with housed women. Rates of substance abuse and mental illness were found to be similar between the research group of rural homeless women and literature reports of research on urban homeless people. In addition the women had high rates of other stressors in addition to homelessness. Many of the women relied on personal support networks for assistance. Given the high levels of health concerns, the finding that over half of the women reported being unable to access health care in the prior year is of concern to the researchers. The researchers suggest that

there is a need for future studies to examine the availability and accessibility of health care resources in rural areas.

Cummins, L. K., First, R. J. & Toomey, B. G. (1998). Comparisons of rural and urban homeless women. *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work* 13(4), 435-453.

Research indicates that a growing percentage of the homeless are women, but there is little if any research on the rural and urban differences of female homelessness. Twenty-one rural counties in Ohio were randomly selected for study on rural homelessness. Of the 919 respondents, 473 were women. Respondents were interviewed and interviews utilized the Homeless Person Survey Instrument and four additional scales measuring mental health/illness and substance use. Data suggests that rural homeless women have more social supports than urban homeless women. In addition, mental illness and substance abuse is not as prevalent for rural homeless women. Rural and urban homeless women both have high levels of family conflict as a factor which precipitates homelessness. Rural homelessness is complex with many factors contributing to the issue. Yet rural homelessness in comparison to urban homelessness is much less likely to be connected to personal issues (substance abuse and mental illness) and more likely to be connected to economic issues such as depressed local economies and poverty.

First, R. J., Rife, J. C. & Toomey, B. G. (1994). Homelessness in rural areas: Causes, patterns, and trends. *Social Work*, 39(1), 97-108.

Reports suggest that rural poverty and homeless are growing problems and that gap of inequality between rural and urban areas is increasing. Much of this is due to economic downturn, loss of rural jobs, farm foreclosures, and spin off pressure on rural businesses. The authors report that in spite of this, “no large-scale systematic studies of rural homelessness have been published” (p. 99). Twenty-one rural counties in Ohio were randomly selected for this study, from which 919 homeless adults were interviewed. Attempts were made to identify and interview every known homeless person in each of the selected counties. Of the 1,100 adults identified for participation, 83.5 per cent were interviewed. The study used the Homeless Person Survey Instrument, which included sections on demographics, life experiences, and psychiatric status. Results found gender differences such that women were more likely than men to be younger, to have children, to be divorced or separated, to be living with family or friends and to report family conflict as a reason for homelessness. Men were more mobile, tended to be more likely to utilize shelters or abandoned buildings or cars for shelter, and tended to be homeless for longer than women. Almost half of all respondents were staying with family or friends for shelter. Almost 90 per cent of respondents had been homeless for less than a year. Over half had lived in the area for more than one year. Reasons given for homelessness were primarily economic (45 percent of respondents) or family problems (30 per cent). Several differences in demographics of rural homeless compared with urban homeless were identified.

Data from this study indicate that homeless people in rural areas are younger, are more likely to be single women or mothers with children, are more highly

educated, and are less likely to be disabled. They are also more likely to be homeless because of economic reasons than because of mental illness or drug and alcohol abuse. (p. 104)

Other issues specific to rural communities include a lack of support services, such as a lack of emergency shelters. Addressing poverty and the lack of affordable housing is necessary to address rural homelessness.

Fitchen, J. M. (1991). Homelessness in rural places: Perspectives from upstate New York. *Urban Anthropology*, 20(2), 177-210.

Rural homelessness exists but is invisible and ignored because it does not fit with the urban images associated with homelessness such as large shelters and people sleeping on subway benches or heating grates. Thus it is also not well-researched. The existing literature points to unstable housing and doubling-up as types of rural homelessness. Other temporary shelters include sleeping in vehicles, staying in campgrounds outside of the usual season, sleeping in sheds or abandoned buildings, and staying in houses or trailers that are in extremely poor condition. Fitchen's description of rural homeless demographics are based on research by First, Rife and Toomey (1994, see above). Fitchen reviews economic conditions in rural versus urban United States (US), stating that poverty is the main cause of rural homelessness. Rural poverty is related to loss of jobs, increases in rates of single-parents and urban to rural migration of low-income individuals and families.

Fitchen conducted unstructured interviews with 20 low-income people and 30 additional structured questionnaire-interviews with low-income women. Respondents identified that the primary strategy for dealing with homelessness was to double-up with relatives or friends. In rural areas precarious housing and frequent moving are also a type of homelessness. Rural homelessness is complex with many components and contributing factors. Fitchen states that rural homelessness is increasing in the state of New York "because the housing situation has deteriorated, traditional rural strategies for minimizing housing costs have been curtailed, and marital and kinship ties have weakened for many people" (p. 191). Low-cost housing stock is decreasing, low-income people are less likely to be home owners than in the past thus increasing their housing instability, the cost to rent is increasing and poor shelter conditions contribute to frequent moves which result in greater risk for homelessness. Stricter land use regulations ensure home ownership is left to the wealthier and rural areas near urban centres are experiencing gentrification.

Fitchen recommends more research into rural homelessness and the development of definitions of homelessness that are specific to rural contexts. Research should include examining the connections between poverty and homelessness and between urban-rural. Recommendations for addressing rural homelessness include the need to develop emergency programs and services in rural areas and the need for long-term initiatives such as affordable housing and the monitoring of rural housing stock. In addition, Fitchen concludes by stating poverty, as the cause of rural homelessness, must be addressed.

Fitchen, J. M. (1992). On the edge of homelessness: Rural poverty and housing insecurity. *Rural Sociology* 57(2), 173-193.

Fitchen documents the lack of literature and research on rural homelessness and states that this creates problems in definitions of homelessness that are appropriate to rural areas. Fitchen first locates rural homelessness in the context of rural poverty and states that rural economies must be studied to fully understand the context of rural homelessness. She states that in the United States (US) “the recent increase in poverty in rural areas may be attributable to three intersecting trends: erosion of rural employment and earnings (Gorham and Harrison 1990), increase in single-parent families (Deavers and Hoppe 1992), and migration of low-income urban people to small towns (Lichter et al. in press)” (p. 176).

Fitchen conducted her research in eight New York counties considered to be rural or largely rural. Preliminary research of 20 unstructured interviews and several focus groups served as the foundation for the development of a more structured questionnaire which was administered to 40 low-income women considered to be “on the edge of homelessness” (p. 178). Fitchen found several factors as causes of rural homelessness including the lack of affordable housing, decline in homeownership, more restrictive building codes making it more difficult for low-income people to build, increases in costs of rental units, and volatile rental markets in areas close to urban centres where people are relocating from urban areas to nearby rural regions and gentrifying the previously low-cost rental accommodations. Respondents indicated several coping responses to finding themselves without shelter including: doubling-up (also known as couch-surfing); resigning oneself to living in inadequate and unsafe conditions; moving frequently in an attempt to locate better or cheaper accommodations. Fitchen concludes that in rural regions the definition of homelessness needs to include those at risk of becoming homeless and those doubling up or in marginal housing conditions. In addition, programs and policies to address rural homelessness must take into account rural realities. Fitchen concludes by stating that “in the long run, though, it is essential to address the rural poverty that generates rural homelessness” (p. 192).

Ford, N., Cantau, N. & Hedwige, J. Homelessness and hardship in Moscow. (2003). *The Lancet* 361(9360), 875.

Although Moscow is a city of 12 million and thus not applicable to the rural focus of this annotated bibliography, it is situated in a northern climate with severe winters and this factor is relevant to northern homelessness. The article documents the deaths of homeless people every year in Moscow due in large part to the severe winters. From 1999 to 2003 at least 1,697 homeless people died from hypothermia in Moscow. Other problems associated with winter homelessness include frost bite and the loss of fingers and toes, in addition to other health problems. There is a severe lack of shelter and support services for the homeless in Moscow.

Glasser, Irene. (1994). *Homelessness in global perspective*. New York: G.K. Hall & Co.

Glasser's book is an examination of homelessness at a global level, including literature from many countries, developed and developing. Although the book does not focus on rural homelessness specifically, there is a brief discussion linking 'rural' and homelessness. Glasser argues that homelessness in industrialized countries is seen as due to "a lack of affordable housing ... coupled with family disintegration, drug and alcohol abuse, and the deinstitutionalization of the chronically mentally ill" (p. 9-10). Homelessness in developing countries is described as primarily due migration from rural areas to urban centres as well as the search for employment or to escape disaster or violence. There is a brief mention that rural homelessness exists in Peru (p. 64) although there is no discussion of rural homelessness in developed countries. This is likely in large part due to the lack of literature on this topic at the time the book was written. The discussion of 'rural' instead focuses on rural to urban migration as a cause of homelessness in developing countries.

Goodfellow, Marianne. (1999). Rural homeless shelters: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 8(1), 21-35.

Rural environments differ from urban, and differ between rural areas. Goodfellow suggests that the makeup of the rural environment will influence the structural operation of a homeless shelter. She developed a typology of rural environments to test this theory. There are four cells in the typology: "Cell 1, low resources – simple population needs; Cell 2, low resources – complex population needs; Cell 3, high resources – simple population needs; and Cell 4, high resources – complex population needs" (p. 23). Homeless populations were considered simple if they were more or less homogenous while more heterogeneous homeless populations were considered to have 'complex population needs'. Resource capacity was determined by examining factors including the state of the local economy, rate of poverty, housing availability and affordability, and government spending. Results were mixed with findings supporting two theoretical propositions. First of all complex homeless populations do result in service providers developing bridges with other local service providers in an effort to meet client needs. Second, shelters with "high resource capacity and high resource complexity" lead to organizations with "extensive service provision, nonrestrictive policies, and high interconnectedness" (p. 34). The remaining results did not support the rest of the theoretical propositions, and other factors may account for the lack of results, such as limited agency records. The size of the shelter may also interact with resources in predicting the type of agency service provision.

Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security, and BC Housing Management Commission. (2001). *Homelessness – causes and effects, volume 2: A profile, policy review and analysis of homelessness in British Columbia*. Victoria, BC: Author.

A snapshot of homelessness in British Columbia (BC) was undertaken in 1996 and 1997 by a research team which spoke with emergency shelters for the homeless in seven communities across BC. The seven communities include: Victoria, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, Prince George and Terrace. Although the document does

not discuss homelessness in the context of rural or northern situations, several of these communities may be considered to be located in northern or rural areas. While most of the data described is a compilation of information from all communities, one distinction between communities is that Nelson, Kamloops and Nanaimo have higher proportions of renters paying more than 50% of their income in rent when compared with the other communities. In addition, the largest increases in people paying more than 50% of their income in rent were found in Kamloops and Nelson. Inadequate incomes, a lack of affordable housing and a lack of support services were issues across the province in connection to homelessness.

Interestingly the report states that in-migration due to a strong economy may tap community resources of affordable housing such that a strong economy may result in increases in housing pressure and thus increases in homelessness (p. 98). This dynamic may be particularly relevant in small single-industry communities as are prevalent in the north, and thus is a potential perspective for future northern homelessness research.

Hemingway, D., Peters, H. & Fiske, J. (Submitted). The citizenry, democracy and homelessness. *Canadian Review of Social Policy*.

People living with homelessness are often outside the traditional communication networks that governments rely on when consulting citizens about policy reform or service delivery. As a result, those living with homelessness face a plethora of strategies designed (but not by them) to “fix” their situation. Starting from the premise that those who have experienced homelessness are the experts when it comes to determining what initiatives will best meet their needs, one main objective of this project was to create a process through which the voices of these excluded citizens could be heard. Using a participatory action research approach, people living with homelessness or near homelessness in the northern British Columbian city of Prince George were asked to be part of discussions about what would work best for them in terms of social policy and service delivery. In addition to having their voices directly heard through this discussion process, several individuals agreed to join the project as community researchers. They received research training and participated in all aspects of the research process, including project development, data collection, data analysis and some writing. There was a reciprocal learning experience between the community-based and university-based researchers. As with empowerment based research, the primary restructuring of relationships were of those within the research team, however the data from the focus groups is also anticipated to be a contribution to the restructuring of the needs assessment of and service provision for people who are homeless and the policies that surround these activities. Although this research took place in a northern community the focus of the article is on the inclusion of homeless people in research and service provision and thus the research process documented here is valuable to all geographic regions.

Lawrence, Mark. (1995). Rural homelessness: A geography without a geography. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 11(3), 297-307.

Using data from Iowa in the United States (US) as an example, Lawrence seeks to explore the theoretical concepts of ‘homeless’ and ‘rural’ in the context of space while

examining discourses which serve to exclude the rural homeless from society. The literature review shows that although the sheer magnitude of homelessness in rural areas does not compare with urban concentrations, a proportional comparison suggests that there may be a greater incidence of homelessness in rural regions. Rural homelessness is linked to economic downturns, the decline of agrarian economies, and “the uneven transformation of rural labor forces” (p. 299). To understand the depth of rural homelessness it is important to take into account levels of near homelessness, such as people who stay on a short term basis with friends or relatives (also known as doubling-up or couch surfing). Yet comparisons with urban homelessness then become difficult as urban counts rarely include this group of near homeless. It is the lack of research on rural homelessness which is of interest here as a “discursive silence” (p. 300). A paradox is created where the homeless are invisible, yet are considered to be a sign of the increasing immorality of today’s society: “the homeless are now held to be responsible not only for their own poverty but for the general decay of modern society” (p. 301).

“...[T]he homeless are discursively produced as a population occupying a position ‘outside’ of social space” (p. 298) allowing society to view them as part of the realm of ‘nature’ rather than of the ‘social’ realm. In this context the homeless become a group to be managed rather than a part of the society with the right to participate in decision-making. The complication is that ‘the rural’ is considered to be both ‘natural’ and ‘social’ and therefore rural homelessness is problematic due to the tension between the terms. Discourses on homelessness have become so diverse “as to lose track of any stable referent” (p. 304). Homelessness is ‘placeless’ and ‘spaceless’ and as such homeless people become defined by others (non-profit organizations, churches, academics, etc.).

Layton, J. (2000). *Homelessness: the making and unmaking of a crisis*. Toronto: Penguin / McGill Institute. (See pages 124-127).

Layton’s book provides a useful overview of homelessness in Canada from definitions and counting to a broad comparison of homelessness issues between the provinces. However painting a broad national picture necessarily sacrifices detail on topics such as northern and rural issues. There are only two and a half pages dedicated to covering two northern topics: (1) northern homelessness and (2) Aboriginal homelessness, with most of the information in these sections being anecdotal. Poverty, increasing energy costs and the lack of affordable housing are identified as contributing to northern homelessness. Data indicates that Aboriginal people are more likely to have low-incomes in comparison with other Canadians, suggesting that this will therefore be linked to increased housing accessibility issues.

Lotz, J. R. (1965). The squatters of Whitehorse: A study of the problems of new northern settlements. *Arctic*, 18(3), 173-188.

The author explores the large squatting areas in or near Whitehorse through a survey delivered by the author. Squatting was first considered to be a problem in 1942. Although the first squatters were primarily Indian and Metis, by 1960 recent immigrants to the country made up 15 per cent of the squatters while 12 per cent were considered to

be Indian. Sixty-one households or 21 per cent (of the 287 total households) were made up of white men married to or in a common-law relationship with an Indian woman. Another group of squatters were seasonal workers who came to Whitehorse for summers to work on construction projects. From a 1956 census it was determined that one third of the lower town site population was made up of squatters. Many of the squatters had part-time or temporary full-time employment, but stated that the cost of housing in the city of Whitehorse was too expensive. The largest proportion of squatters (28 per cent) were employed in temporary positions by the Department of National Defence. If squatters saved enough money to buy land and build a home, they instantly changed from being perceived of as “social liabilities into real settlers in the eyes of the city’s residents” (p. 184). However, the low incomes and lack of financial stability put that goal out of reach of many of the squatters. Yet they could not move into ‘rural’ areas as the primary sources of employment were found in the city. Lotz comments that the “stop and go” pattern of industry (known as ‘boom or bust’ today) contributes to the financial and housing instability (p. 187). Lotz states that this problem of squatting happens in other communities as well, as people are seeking the employment found in these centres. Lotz states the tendency to view ‘the north’ as monolithic and ‘rural’ detracts from understanding the patterns of squatting as people move closer to these Yukon ‘cities’ in search of employment. Although Lotz does not use the term ‘homelessness’ the comparison of his definition of squatters is comparable, and the context of squatting in this 1960 research is similar to more current discussions of homelessness.

McLaughlin, M. (1988). Homelessness in small-town and rural Canada. *Perception* 12(1), 33-36.

Homelessness in rural and small-town Canada is often ignored or presumed to be nonexistent. Yet it does exist, and in spite of the severe winters, absolute homelessness also exists with people living in tents, carving shelters out of cliffs and living in abandoned buildings, particularly in spring and summer months. Homelessness also translates in people ‘doubling up’, or living temporarily with friends or relatives. Severe levels of doubling up can lead to the spread of health problems and can exacerbate social problems such as family violence and substance abuse. Factors of specific interest to northern homelessness include: (1) long distances which creates problems in access to services and higher housing construction costs; (2) severe winter climates causing increases in heating costs and in the dangers of homelessness; (3) unemployment or seasonal employment; and (4) loss of culture and traditions which contribute to increases in social problems.

Robson, R. (1995). Housing in the Northwest Territories and the post-war vision. *Urban History Review*, 24(1), 3-20.

Robson reviews all government programs to assist with housing provision in the Northwest Territories after World War II. Although both territorial and federal governments were involved in program development, Robson argues that the few benefits from some programs were overshadowed by the problems. Overall the programs were poorly designed and ill-equipped to address northern housing and climate issues. In

addition, some of the programs did not provide assistance to those in the most need, the lowest income families. He states that the programs “did not provide the mechanisms necessary to contend with the concurrent problems of a low-income clientele living in a high-cost living environment” (p. 12) and that another program “was in fact more attuned to industrial housing needs than social housing needs” (p. 14). “The houses were inferior, expensive, small, often not provided with services and above all else, clearly not constructed with a view to meeting the housing needs of the local population” (p. 18). Although the involvement of local organizations provided a way for local people to have input into housing programs, Robson argues that the goal of government was not the provision of adequate housing so much as it was “a vehicle through which government re-affirmed its position in the north” (p. 3).

Robson provides a thorough critical review and discussion of housing programs in the Northwest Territories in this article. Although it does not discuss issues of homelessness directly it is a very useful document in understanding the related issue of housing shortages in northern Canada.

Rupnik, C., Tremblay, J. & Bollman, R. D. (2001). Housing conditions in predominantly rural regions. *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* 2(4), 1-15.

According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) there are three measures used to determine housing conditions: adequacy, affordability and suitability. Urban and rural comparisons of a compilation of these three measurements demonstrate that urban households have a greater number of households in poor housing conditions. This is primarily due to the measurement of affordability as housing is less affordable in urban areas than in rural. When compared on adequacy measures, 10 per cent of predominantly rural homes were in need of major repairs compared with 7 per cent of urban homes. The suitability measurement found that out of the various rural designations, rural northern households had close to the same per cent of problems as urban households, although the remaining rural areas had fewer suitability issues than did urban areas. Housing affordability in rural areas is a greater problem for British Columbia and Ontario.

Silliman, K., Yamanoha, M.M., & Morrissey, A.E. (1998). Evidence of nutritional risk in a population of homeless adults in rural northern California. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 98(8), 908-910.

Research demonstrates that urban homeless people have poor nutrition; however there is a lack of data on rural homeless. Seventy-five people were interviewed. Respondents were found via two emergency food programs in small communities in rural California. The interview consisted of a survey and each person was asked to recall everything he or she had eaten in the last 24 hours. In addition blood samples were taken from 42 participants. Results found that homeless rural adults may be at nutritional risk as participants' diets were lacking in many areas. Fat stores were also found to be depleted. The authors recommend that organizations offering emergency meals may benefit from nutrition education in order to prepare meals that are more nutritionally balanced.

Toomey, B. G. & First, R. J. (1993). Counting the rural homeless population: Methodological dilemmas. *Social Work Research & Abstracts*, 29(4), 23-28.

Levels of homelessness are difficult to calculate in urban and rural settings, however when factors specific to urban homelessness research are assumed for rural homelessness it may result in inaccurate information. While counting the homeless is very difficult in urban areas, it becomes next to impossible in rural areas. There are two areas that must take into account rural differences in counting the rural homeless: definitions of homelessness and research methods. In urban areas a commonly accepted definition of homelessness is those people living in an emergency shelter. However, many rural areas do not have a shelter, thus appearing to not have any homeless, while in reality the homeless are living in other circumstances such as in the bush or doubling up (i.e. rotating between various places belonging to friends or family). Expanding the definition of homelessness to including doubling up, among other things, is important in order to capture rural homelessness, although such data then becomes difficult to compare with urban data based on shelter counts. Rural is also hard to define and each study must clearly state the definition being used in order to be able to compare the findings with other studies.

Research methods must also compensate for rural differences. Rural communities often do not perceive of locals who have lost their home and are living with relatives as homeless. On the other hand, 'outsiders' who are transient and come through the community are seen as homeless. Thus use of language must take into account local usage. In addition, small communities are often closed and less likely to be open to homelessness researchers than are urban centres. Rural researchers must be prepared to spend time building rapport with community members and being open and transparent with the community about their research goals and plans. As well, key informants in rural areas are often people in different roles than in urban centres. "Whereas urban key informants are often social services providers, rural key informants are likely to be mail carriers, health inspectors, laundromat attendants, hotel and motel desk clerks, part rangers, librarians, and convenience store clerks" (p. 5). Understanding rural / urban differences regarding homelessness and homelessness research is imperative to gathering accurate and useful data.

Vissing, Y. (1996). *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Homeless Children and Families in Small Town America*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press.

Vissing's book is an in depth discussion of homelessness facing families and children in rural areas. Her information was gathered in the United States over six years and based on approximately 12 different research studies. Vissing states that homelessness is an issue in rural communities and that because of the lack of emergency shelters and the prevalence of couch-surfing rural homelessness typically remains invisible. She argues that the face of homelessness is different in rural communities with the largest population being children and families, including female single-parent families. While rural communities have a reputation for caring for their own, Vissing argues that these "informal safety nets are increasingly fragile" (p. 167) and that this is

paired with a dearth of formal or governmental programs resulting in an increase in rural homelessness. Economic contexts and poverty combined with personal problems are important factors in rural homelessness although she argues that “rural homelessness is caused primarily by social factors, not individual pathology. This means that the most effective social interventions ... are at the community and institutional level.” (p. 175). Vissing closes the book with suggestions for addressing homelessness at community, institutional and governmental levels. The book is arguably one of the most detailed explorations of US rural homelessness in the academic literature.

Vissing, Y. (2001). Homelessness is a problem in rural areas. In Jennifer A. Hurley, (Ed.), *The Homeless: Opposing Viewpoints*, pp. 33-38. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, Inc.

Based on her research (and 1996 book above) Vissing argues in this brief section that rural homelessness is invisible and largely ignored in the United States (US) although homelessness is at least as much of a problem in rural areas as it is in urban areas. Due in part to the lack of homeless shelters in rural areas people are forced to rely on friends and relatives for temporary shelter when they are homeless. Vissing states that 41% of homeless people in rural areas do this compared with 11% of the urban homeless. In addition, rural homeless are more likely to be made up of female-headed households (32%) than are urban homeless (16%). Vissing emphasizes the extreme stress that homelessness places on people, especially children. She indicates the cause of rural homelessness to be the increasing gap between the rich and poor combined with the victim-blaming perspective of homeless found through much of the US and the resulting focus on corporate welfare rather than social welfare.

Wagner, J. D., Menke, E. M., & Ciccone, J. K. (1995). What is known about the health of rural homeless families? *Public Health Nursing*, 12(6), 400-408.

The literature review states that families comprise one of the fastest growing groups of the homeless, in both urban and rural areas. In addition rural people, more so than urban, usually take more personal responsibility for their health and typically hold more traditional values in areas such as gender roles. Yet there is little research on rural homelessness in general and less on the health of rural homeless people. Goals for this research include “1) to describe rural homeless families; 2) to determine the health and health care practices of rural homeless mothers; and 3) to describe the developmental, mental, and physical health of the children in these families” (p. 400). Participants were recruited through agencies which provide services to the homeless and the agencies were located in one of five rural regions of Ohio. These regions were chosen from the ones used by First, Rife and Toomey (1994) (see annotated reference above). The interview asked 90 questions on such things as demographics, homelessness history and the health status of the adult and children.

Findings indicate similarities with urban homelessness in that the majority of homeless families are of single mothers with their children. The ethnic distribution matched that of the general population, as other homelessness studies have found. Rural homeless were found to be homeless for longer periods of time than urban counterparts

and this is believed to be linked to the reality of more extensive poverty in rural regions than in urban. More rural homeless families than urban reported doubling up as a way to find shelter and this may be linked to the lack of shelter facilities in rural regions. However, doubling up is believed to mask the level of rural homelessness. Self-reported health concerns were lower than expected but this fits with the theory that rural people take more responsibility for their health than do urban people. In addition, research of housed people found that rural housed individuals reported fewer health concerns than urban housed individuals. Reporting of mental health issues was lower for these rural homeless participants than for urban homeless but this may be due to more stigma of mental illness in rural areas. The study found that the rates of health problems and developmental delays with children in these homeless families to be comparable to the rates for urban homeless children. The multiple health issues and complex needs of rural homeless families suggest that case management and interdisciplinary approaches to working with rural homeless families would be useful.

Wright, J., Rubin, B. A. & Devine, J. A. (1998). *Beside the golden door: Policy, politics and the homeless*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. See Chapter 9: Outside American cities: Rural and European homelessness, pp. 177- 193.

The focus of this book is an overview of homelessness specific to the United States (US). Topics include understanding definitions of homelessness, issues in counting the homeless, and negotiating the potentially controversial discussion of cause vs. effect of issues such as mental health, substance abuse, family breakup and poverty in connection to homelessness. Chapter nine is identified as pertaining to homelessness outside of American cities although most of the chapter discusses European homelessness while there are only a few pages on rural poverty in the US and only two pages on rural homelessness (pp. 182 – 184). The brief section is a testament to the lack of data on the topic of rural homelessness.

Rural poverty is divided into two populations: farming families and non-metropolitan (and non-farming) poverty. The authors state the poverty has decreased among farming families due to two changes: (1) the “continuous replacement of small-scale economically marginal family farming operations by large-scale agribusiness enterprises” (p. 179) and (2) the increasing move by farming families to engage in non-farming employment to support the farm. Wright et al. dispel romantic notions of concern over the loss of family farms by arguing that they have never been more than subsistence ventures, if that. Poverty in non-metropolitan (including non-farming) populations is higher than the poverty rate for metropolitan populations, although it is compounded by regional and race factors. The southern US has higher rates of poverty than the northern states, and racial minorities have higher rates of poverty than do Caucasians. Non-metropolitan areas are more predominant in the southern US and contain larger populations of people from racial minorities.

Rural homelessness is, of course, connected to rural poverty. Wright et al. state that homelessness in rural areas is due largely to economic reasons rather than personal disabilities (such as addictions or mental health issues). Rural homelessness differs from urban in several ways: there are greater numbers of women among the rural homeless and greater numbers of homeless two-parent families in rural areas. In addition, rural

homeless is typically quite invisible, in part due to the lack of shelters and other services driving rural homeless people to find other temporary shelter such as living in vehicles, motels or staying with friends.

Yates, A. B. (1970). Housing programmes for Eskimos in Canada. *The Polar Record*, 15(94), 45-50.

Review of federal government housing programmes to assist Eskimo people in renting or buying homes finds that programmes must acknowledge the low-incomes of the people they are trying to assist. Reduced days in hospital are linked to the housing programmes and it is expected that adequate housing will also improve school attendance. Basic minimum housing standards are important to maintain for reasons of health and dignity. Creation of a viable economy needs to happen in addition to housing. “History will, we hope, recognize that the essential purpose of this programme was achieved, and that in its time it effectively served the Eskimo people in their transition from old ways of life to new” (p. 50).

Section II: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Research Reports

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) documents listed here include those with a focus on northern and rural housing as well as homelessness. All CMHC documents are available as a hard copy from CMHC, as loan items from the CMHC library, or on-line at the CMHC web site: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/index.cfm>

Beavis, M. A., Klos, N., Carter, T. & Douchant, C. (1997) *Lit Review: Aboriginal Peoples and Homelessness*. Ottawa: CMHC.

There is a limited volume of literature on Aboriginal homelessness, with even less available on rural Aboriginal homelessness. Many if not most Aboriginal reserves can be considered to be located in rural settings and there is a shortage of on-reserve housing with living conditions considered to be at “third world” standards (p. 21). This results in Aboriginal people moving to urban centres to find work and a place to live often simply trading on-reserve homelessness for urban off-reserve homelessness. The migration back and forth between reserve and urban centers is important in understanding Aboriginal rural homelessness. The authors state that the lack of transition shelters for abused women (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in rural communities is also a factor in discussions of homelessness.

Bruce, D. with Carter, T. & Starr, E. (2005). *Social housing in the context of rural depopulation*. Ottawa: CMHC. (See also the CMHC summary of this report titled: *Research highlights, August 2005, socio-economic series 05-019: Social housing in the context of rural depopulation*.)

Social housing stock in some areas of rural Canada has high vacancy rates due to depopulation of these communities. One issue arising from this situation is the financial viability of these projects. With vacancies in some rural communities and waiting lists for social housing in many urban communities it is also important to address questions of best use of housing projects with vacancies as well as how to determine the location of future social housing projects. Macro (structural), community and property characteristics all contribute to the vacancies. The boom and bust cycle in single-industry communities (as are common in the north) is also a factor in depopulation and thus housing vacancies. Changes in household size also play a role in vacancies, and types of changes vary across communities. Issues related to the projects themselves include structures that are older and in poor repair, lack of good property management, poor location, and lack of amenities and services. Solutions to social housing vacancies need to address issues at a variety of levels and be specific to each unique community. Homelessness is not specifically addressed in this document.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (1987). *CMHC on-reserve housing programs: Program evaluation report*. Ottawa: CMHC. (There is a second document from the same year which is a summary of this document. It is titled: *Evaluation of CMHC on-reserve housing programs: Summary report*).

Data from 1977 documents “the appalling condition of on-reserve housing” and data from 1984, while demonstrating some improvement, indicates that there is still an “urgent need for housing assistance” (p. i). Rationale for CMHC involvement is offered and three CMHC programs are evaluated (1) provision of on-reserve rental housing (2) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, and (3) financial lending programs. The evaluation describes mixed outcomes of the programs and suggests continuing with all of them as well as offering alternatives or program improvements. The focus of this document is on housing and housing programs, and homelessness itself is not directly addressed.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (1992). *Evaluation of the rural and native housing programs: Main report*. Ottawa: CMHC. (There is a second document from the same year which is a summary of this document. It is titled: *Evaluation of the rural and native housing programs: Summary report*.)

Eight rural and native housing programs are reviewed and evaluated in this document. The programs were found to be effective in addressing the housing needs of low-income people; 90 percent of program clients since 1986 were in core housing need. Thirty percent of clients were of Aboriginal ancestry, falling short of the goal of 50 percent. Rural families continue to have lower incomes, on average, than their urban counterparts, suggesting that the need for rural housing assistance is still high. Core housing need is higher for Aboriginal households, with 44 per cent in core housing need. Rural households in the territories and northern parts of the provinces had greater core housing need than those in southern areas. The focus of this document is on housing and housing programs, and homelessness itself is not directly addressed.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (1998). *Canadian women and their housing: 1997*. Ottawa: CMHC (see pages 8, 14, 15, 20). (See also the CMHC summary of this report titled: *Research highlights, date?, socio-economic series 72: Canadian women and their housing: 1997*.)

The authors state that 22.4% of Canadian women live in rural areas. The lack of affordable housing in northern and rural communities results in serious overcrowding of homes. The restriction of federal funds for northern housing has led to overcrowding and thus family conflict. The lack of emergency and transition shelters is related to overcrowding and means that women experiencing violence are often forced to stay in violent relationships. The authors' previous comments are linked to both northern women in general and Inuit communities specifically. High unemployment among Inuit populations is also linked to the inability to access adequate housing. "Because of these multiple factors, 44 percent of households in the Northwest Territories are estimated to be in core housing need, compared to 14 percent of households in other areas of Canada" (p. 15). Although there is some information specific to northern, rural and remote housing/homelessness issues in this report, the information is brief. There is no overview of issues specific to northern, rural and remote communities.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (1998). *Core housing need among off-reserve Inuit, Métis, status and non-status Indians in Canada*. Ottawa: CMHC.

Research exploring housing issues for Inuit, Métis, status and non-status Indians includes comments on both rural and urban dynamics for these populations. Although this is not a study on homelessness, the key finding relevant to the discussion of rural homelessness is that "a large proportion of Aboriginal households located in northerly, remote areas of the country occupy housing that is crowded, in need of major repair and lacking adequate bathroom facilities" (p. iv). These conditions are more prevalent in "Labrador, the northern Prairies and the Northwest Territories" (p. iv). There are differences between the four groups. Off-reserve Inuit and Métis households are more likely to be living in rural and northern communities than are off-reserve status and non-status Indians. Subsistence economies in northern Inuit communities contribute to Inuit low-incomes and thus housing issues. Forty percent of Inuit households are in core housing need compared with 32 per cent of Métis, 36 per cent of status and 24 per cent of non-status households. The focus of this document is on housing and housing programs, and homelessness itself is not directly addressed.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2002). *Research highlights, socio-economic series issue 112: Housing options for women living alone in rural areas*. Ottawa: CMHC.

The study of women living alone in a rural area was conducted in the region of Boundary located in the West Kootenay area. One in 12 households in this area is comprised of a single woman. Fifty women were interviewed via convenience sampling and 80 per cent of the respondents 50 years of age or greater. Two thirds of these women had housing affordability issues as they spent more than 30 per cent of their income on shelter. Half spent more than half of their income on shelter. Affordability was due to

low incomes as more than 60 per cent had incomes under \$20,000 and 30 per cent under \$10,000. The women appreciated the rural lifestyle, had strong social support networks, and wanted to remain in their homes, although many indicated that they were in need of assistance with maintenance work. All the women interviewed were housed, and homelessness was not addressed in the research.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2003a). *Housing needs of low-income people living in rural areas, Volume 1*. Ottawa: CMHC.

The research examines the literature on rural housing needs, statistical analyses on the same topic with data from Canada Census 1991 and 1996, and case studies of 12 rural communities. Volume 1 provides an overview of the research findings. Rural housing conditions and needs vary greatly between communities and regions. Rural areas tend to have more homeowners and fewer people renting than in urban centres, although housing stock is generally in poorer condition in rural areas. Housing supply varies between communities, but the lower levels of rental units in rural areas can make it difficult for low-income people to find affordable housing.

There is a brief section devoted to rural homelessness (p. 26-28). Although literature on rural homelessness is growing, it tends to be largely community-based reports and case studies. The case studies in this research suggested low levels of rural homelessness largely due to the lack of services to assist these people who then move elsewhere. Respondents indicated a larger presence of families at risk of homelessness. Rural homelessness is also marked by its invisibility, again due to the lack of support services for homeless people but also because the homeless stay in less visible situations (with family or friends, in a motel or just outside of the community in a vehicle or camping situation). Thus rural homelessness is more likely to be 'relative' rather than 'absolute'. Rural homelessness is largely about poverty and is connected to the economic situation of the community, while issues such as mental illness are less likely to be factors in rural homelessness compared with urban homelessness. Rural homelessness also includes whole families, including two-parent and single-parent families.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2003b). *Housing needs of low-income people living in rural areas, Volume 2: Statistical review, literature review, case study report*. Ottawa: CMHC.

Volume 2 of this research on rural housing needs contains three separate documents: (1) statistical review, (2) literature review and (3) case study report. In the first review the statistics demonstrate that although the average income is lower in rural than urban areas, the cost of shelter is also lower resulting in a lower incidence of housing need in rural communities compared with urban. However, limited housing options and stock mean that households which are in housing need have fewer options to access in meeting this need. In the literature review key findings include the changing demographics with most rural populations experiencing an out-migration of youth and an aging population. Northern and Aboriginal communities are exceptions with much younger populations. "More of the rural [housing] stock is [in] need of repair, and overcrowding is a problem, especially in the North" (p. 35). Given the high construction

costs in these communities meeting the need for affordable housing by low-income households is difficult. Rural homelessness is increasing with few options in place to address the issues; this topic is to be pursued in the case study interviews.

The final report on the findings from the case studies documents that “the housing needs of low income persons in rural Canada are quite diverse and vary from place to place across the country” (p. 27). There were four themes arising from this research. The first is that the economic condition of the community is the key factor in “shaping the nature of the low income households, and the housing situations they face” (p. 27). Second, the as the distance of the rural community from the closest urban centre changes the issues facing the community regarding housing and economic context also change. Isolated communities often experience the boom or bust cycle of single-industry communities, while rural communities near larger centres feel housing pressures as people working in the urban areas move into the nearby rural bedroom communities. Third, small communities are disadvantaged with a very limited housing market meaning there is little new housing to address housing needs. Last, the presence of seniors in a rural community has a positive impact on local economies, but seniors need a variety of services which must be available before they will move to the community.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2003c). *Housing needs of low-income people living in rural areas, Volume 3, Case Studies*. Ottawa: CMHC.

Written as a follow up to the two previous research reports, this document does not describe the compiled research findings, but rather describes each of the 12 rural communities which were a part of the original research. The descriptions include the economic context, provincial context, and housing market details specific to each location. A description of challenges and an analysis suggesting roads forward for the community wrap up each section. The communities are from one of the three territories and eight of the ten provinces. Homelessness is not specifically addressed in the document.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2003d). *Research highlights, socio-economic series issue 03-012: Housing needs of low-income people living in rural areas: The implications for seniors*. Ottawa: CMHC.

According to statistics from the 1996 Canada census 25 per cent of rural households are senior households (those over age 65). The research examined the status of senior households in 12 communities by researching local documents and interviewing local professionals and staff in various capacities. Senior households were not interviewed. A greater number of homes are owned rather than rented in rural areas (82 per cent) compared with urban areas (64 per cent). Senior owned households were no more likely to be in core housing need than non-senior households (10.9 and 10.1 per cent respectively) in rural areas. However, in rural areas, of seniors renting their homes 34.7 per cent were in core housing need compared with 29 per cent of non-senior households. Rural senior home owners are more likely to be living in poor housing conditions compared with urban home owners. Poor housing conditions include poor insulation and high heat and utility costs which are of more concern in northern climates.

Rural communities have advantages such as affordable land costs although smaller communities may struggle to provide the support services needed by seniors. Homelessness is not specifically addressed in this report.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2005). *Temporary supportive housing for Aboriginal people and their families*. Ottawa: CMHC. (See also the CMHC summary of this report titled: *Research highlights, September 2005, socio-economic series 05-026: Temporary supportive housing for Aboriginal people and their families*.)

Research into Aboriginal use of temporary housing included a literature review, interviews with Aboriginal people who had used temporary housing and interviews with staff from 12 organizations which offer temporary housing services. The research was conducted with organizations and individuals in the northern Ontario communities of Kenora, Fort Frances, Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay. Hostels, motels and emergency shelters were all defined as types of temporary shelter. The literature indicates that people leave their home communities because of overcrowding and lack of housing, needing medical care, attending school elsewhere. These may result in the use of temporary shelters as do issues of poverty and family violence. Also, “Aboriginal people who grew up in the foster care system are more likely to need temporary shelter” (*Research highlights*, p. 2). Many people will migrate back and forth between their home community and a larger centre (which may still be in the north) resulting in an on-going use of temporary shelters. People prefer to use shelter services specifically designed for Aboriginal people. Organizations state there is increasing need for more temporary shelters including those for specific target groups such as seniors, women, youth, etc.

Halseth, G. & Sullivan, L. (2000). *Housing transition in single industry “instant towns”*. Ottawa: CMHC. (See also the CMHC summary of this report titled: *Research highlights, November 2001, socio-economic series 96: Housing transition in single industry ‘instant towns’*.)

Northern Canadian communities are often developed around one industry and at times in remote areas the entire town is created, even built, by the employer for the purpose of meeting industries needs for labour. This explains the term “single-industry instant towns” used by Halseth and Sullivan. The researchers review literature on the topic and perform an analysis and comparison of two such communities in northern BC: Mackenzie and Tumbler Ridge. Planning such communities should include (and more recently often does include) family-centered community services; a goal to long term economic diversification and plans to mitigate the effects of potential future downturns in the economy. Housing quality and options should be improved and affordable housing can be a problem in some communities particularly for female single-parent families where the majority of the well-paid employment is filled by males. Although the focus of this report is on housing, the information can be indirectly linked to the potential for homelessness in such communities.

Mackin, N. & Nyce, D. (2005). *Architecture for elder health in remote British Columbia: A Nisga’a – led research*. Ottawa: CMHC. (See also the CMHC summary of this report

titled: *Research highlights, October 2005, socio-economic series 05-030: Architecture for elder health in remote British Columbia: A Nisga'a – led research.*)

Research into elder health and housing in the Nisga'a community (in northwestern British Columbia) details findings on the history of architecture and elder health as well as community suggestions for improving current and future living conditions. In the Nisga'a language the meaning of the word "wilp" encompasses the physical traditional post and beam house structure as well as one's extended family, demonstrating the strong connections between house and family. The report lists various recommendations for building homes for elders including the need to work with the community and seniors and fashion homes that meet cultural as well as physical needs. Homelessness is not specifically addressed in this research report.

Novac, S., Brown, J. & Bourbonnais, C. (1996). *No room of her own: A literature review on women and homelessness*. Ottawa: CMHC.

Literature on women and homelessness is reviewed with a focus on Canada although a substantial amount of material from the United States is included as well as some from Britain and Australia. There is nothing specifically on northern, rural or remote homelessness, reflecting the lack of literature on this topic in the mid-1990s. The authors' recommendations include the need for research on the topic of women and homelessness in rural areas.

Section III: Unpublished Research & Reports from Northern and Rural British Columbia

Community Partners Addressing Homelessness. (2003). *Community partners addressing homelessness: Prince George community plan*. Prince George, BC: Unpublished. Available on-line: http://www.city.pg.bc.ca/rec_culture/grants/scpi/cpah_final_plan.pdf

Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH) is a group that came together in Prince George, BC in response to the federal government's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). NHI funds through the Supporting Community Partners Initiative (SCPI) for Prince George (non-Aboriginal community) were dispersed via a proposal process spearheaded by CPAH. A series of focus groups and workshops were held with people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness as well as with the business community, service providers, youth, seniors and the general public. Feedback from these sessions was compiled to create the list of priorities to guide the choice of projects for SCPI funding. Priorities include the need to address homelessness in a way that recognizes the unique local setting, such as severe winter climate and recent economic downturn. Homelessness is viewed along a continuum with acknowledgement that services are needed at all the various points on the continuum, from the need for shelter for the absolute homeless to the need for social or health supports for the relative homeless. Appendix Six contains a background document on Prince George data and connections to homelessness.

Le Camp, J. (2006). *Adolescent women's perspectives of homelessness in the Canadian north*. Prince George: University of Northern British Columbia, M. Sc. (Community Health) Thesis.

Research on youth homelessness that addresses women's experiences and northern contexts is extremely limited. Research for this thesis consisted of interviews and focus groups with 6 women who had experienced homeless in the Yukon as youths (13-18 years of age). Feminist and structural theories provide the framework for data analysis. Data suggests that the primary cause of youth homelessness for the respondents was conflict with parents and that a lack of services for homeless youth contributed to continued homeless and living/sleeping in unsafe situations. In addition, being under the age of 18 made it difficult to utilize some of the services that are available. Issues of northern climates mean that homelessness is often a form of 'couch-surfing', although sleeping on the street also occurs. Whitehorse as a small city is connected to the limited number of available support services. Recommendations include developing intervention and prevention services that address the specific concerns related to age (youth) and gender for young homeless women. Government involvement and funding are important.

New Focus Society. (2005). *Profile of the homeless and those at risk of being homeless*. Quesnel, BC: Unpublished.

Contact information for the New Focus Society and the document can be found at: <http://www.shareanyware.com/portal.asp?clientID=27>

The report documents surveys of 147 homeless people in the three Cariboo communities of Quesnel, Williams Lake and 100 Mile House. The respondents identified an additional 82 homeless people connected to the respondents as either spouses or children. Most of the respondents had incomes of less than \$10,000 and were on income assistance. The most pressing needs of the respondents were for affordable housing, food, assistance finding employment, access to health and community support services including services for mental health and addictions issues. Sixty per cent of the respondents had been homeless for less than three months, 20 per cent for 3 to 12 months and 20 per cent for over 12 months. Respondents accessed a variety of types of shelter including couch-surfing, hotel/motel, emergency shelters, sleeping in vacant buildings and also sleeping outside even in winter months. Five of the respondents were sleeping outside at the time of the survey (November 2004 – February 2005). The report describes the demographics of the respondents and also includes data on available community services gathered from service providers. Homeless people do access community services, where they exist.

Recommendations include increases in community collaboration in service provision to this population and addressing service gaps. Government staff and organizations need to understand the level of the problem and participate in finding solutions. (BC Ministry of Human Resources staff, for example, denied that homelessness was a problem in Quesnel). A continuum of housing options (from emergency shelter to affordable housing) must be provided and high levels of poverty and high rent costs should also be addressed.

Northern FIRE. (2002). *Prince George Guide to Free or Low Cost Services*. A document from: Home is more than where the heart is: Listening to the voices of people who live with homelessness (a Northern FIRE research project). Prince George: Northern FIRE. Research team and directory authors (in alphabetical order): Kevin Brown, Jo-Anne Fiske, Clayton Gosney, Dawn Hemingway, Linda Krantz, Margaret LeClaire, Arlene McEwan, Judy Manahan, Heather Peters, Jillian Stockburger. Unpublished.

Research into homelessness in the northern British Columbia city of Prince George indicated the need for a document outlining services available to homeless people. This document does not summarize the research study findings, but instead documents free or low cost services in Prince George available to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

Peters, H. & Scheach, D. (2002). *Youth Homelessness and Housing Needs in Williams Lake and Area*. Unpublished. Williams Lake, BC: Research and report sponsored by the Williams Lake Social Housing Society.

In 2002 research was completed to determine if youth homelessness was an issue in Williams Lake and if so, to what extent and what the community suggestions were for solutions. Four focus groups were held with youth and service providers and over 200 surveys were completed by youth. It was determined that there was in fact an issue with youth homelessness and youth at risk of homelessness. Fourteen per cent of youth surveyed did not have a place to live at the time of the survey, and 80 per cent of those youth had been without a place to live for over one month. Forty per cent had been homeless at some time in the past. In addition, almost 30 per cent of respondents were spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rents. Thirteen youth paid for rent by performing illegal activities and four reported performing sexual favours to pay for their rent. Recommendations include: (1) provision of short term emergency shelter; (2) provision of long term housing; (3) programs to prepare youth for independent living; (4) subsidies to support youth in independent living; (5) enforcement of health and safety standards for rental units; and (6) creation of more jobs for youth and an increase in income supports to levels above the poverty line.

Sampson, P. (1999). *Affordable housing and low income households in Prince George*. Prince George: University of Northern British Columbia, M. A. (Interdisciplinary Studies) Thesis.

The research for this thesis is a case study of affordable housing with the northern British Columbian city of Prince George as the case. The author traces the history of housing policy at federal, provincial (BC) and municipal (Prince George) levels, assesses housing affordability for low-income households in Prince George and surveys ten people regarding housing affordability in the city. Although municipal housing reports indicate that housing is affordable for the average household, this research examined various types of households and concluded that there is a lack of affordable housing for small-size low-income households specifically. The thesis recommends that Prince

George “develop an affordable housing policy based on a consideration of the number of small, low-income households in the community” (p. 81).

Smithers’ Community Association. (2005). *Is There a Better Way? The Issue of Homelessness in Smithers*. Smithers, BC: Unpublished.

A community-based research project investigated the experiences of people with homelessness in the northern BC community of Smithers from 2004 to 2005. The report concluded that there is a problem with homelessness in Smithers and that it tends to be hidden. While there are some services offered to the homeless in the community, there is a need for emergency shelter and increased support services.

Section IV: National Unpublished Research Reports

Please note that this section does not exhaust the potential unpublished reports on northern, rural and remote homelessness across Canada. However, the purpose of this document is to focus on northern British Columbia specifically and Canada generally, so reports are included in this section only when they are perceived to add pertinent information to a northern, rural and remote perspective.

Homelessness in the northern territories: A review of existing research. (Date unknown, assumed approximately 2005). Unpublished, author unknown. Retrieved September 16 2005, from Government of Canada National Homelessness Initiative website: http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/research/toolkit/index_e.asp

As can be noted from the title the focus of the document is literature specific to the three northern territories of Canada. The authors point out that core housing need and overcrowding are very high in the territories and that housing issues are well documented. Causes of homelessness have only been indirectly studied and are first and foremost related to the extreme housing shortage and lack of affordable housing in particular. A lack of supportive services to individuals with personal issues complicates the housing problem as do the rapid cultural changes specific to northern Aboriginal peoples. The document also outlines numerous gaps in the research as well as on-going research studies currently underway in the territories. One of the strengths of this document is the thorough referencing of unpublished and community-based research reports that have come out of the territories.

A review of the reference list for this document is of particular interest. Of the 89 references only 20% of the total documents are academic articles, with most focusing on issues indirectly related to homelessness or housing such as poverty and health issues in the north. Five articles, or less than 5% of the total documents, are scholarly articles directly related to northern housing and homelessness topics: one is on rural homelessness (McLaughlin, 1988), one is on squatting in Whitehorse (Lotz, 1965) and the other three are on housing. (Four of these five documents are included in this annotated bibliography and one was not found). More than three quarters (76%) of the references are government documents (including federal, territorial and Canada Mortgage

and Housing Corporation (CMHC) documents) and other unpublished documents such as conference proceedings or reports issued by task forces or research centres. While the quality of these documents is not in dispute, unpublished and non-governmental documents generally remain outside of academic literature searches and as such can quickly become difficult to locate or eventually disappear altogether unless one lives in the community and remembers which agency may have the document on their shelf. These documents are often based on valuable community research studies, and the results are important to many northern communities facing similar issues. Thus it would be extremely useful for these researchers to publish their research findings so that they are more widely available to future researchers. This is a common problem with rural, remote and northern research on homelessness as much of it is community-based and thus does not get published.

International Annotated Bibliography on Homelessness. (Date unknown, assumed approximately 2005). Unpublished, author unknown. Retrieved September 16 2005, from Government of Canada National Homelessness Initiative website:
http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/research/toolkit/index_e.asp

This document lists a variety of academic articles and some books from around the world and provides a brief description of each. The references are organized by continent and country and each is also described as fitting with one (or more) of six domains as well as sub-topics. One of the six domains is northern, although only four references are identified as addressing this domain. All four of these documents have been included in this paper.

National Secretariat on Homelessness (NSH). (Date unknown, assumed approximately 2005). *Annotated Bibliography: Homelessness and Northern Issues*. Ottawa: National Secretariat on Homelessness. For copies contact NSH: Joanna Olender
Joanna.Olender@hrsdcc-rhdcc.gc.ca Phone: 819-956-7019.

From 2003 – 2006 the National Research Program on Homelessness had northern homelessness as one of its research priorities. The National Secretariat on Homelessness compiled a brief (5 pages) document highlighting and annotating a list of literature on northern homelessness and housing. The articles profiled span from 1965 to 2004, although most are from 1995 and on. The topics are varied including homelessness, housing, poverty, health, northern factors that may relate to homelessness issues, and Inuit and Aboriginal housing. Some of the articles (such as those on poverty and health) relate to housing and homelessness only in an indirect way. In addition, there are numerous Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation documents and other scholarly articles that the NSH document does not include. We have included relevant articles from the NSH document in this paper, and have listed the NSH document here for its connections to broader factors related to homelessness and housing.

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This report is a document in progress. Continued updates will be made by Professor Peters. If you wish to suggest an article or report to be considered for inclusion in updates of this literature review please forward the reference or document to Professor Peters. Or contact her for an updated version of the literature review and annotated bibliography.

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