

# Experiencing Homelessness

The Tenth Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2017

## The Current Situation<sup>1</sup>

Emergency shelter use in Greater Moncton	2016	2015
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA) – 2016 census	144,810	138,644
Total number of unique individuals (clients) admitted to shelters <sup>2</sup>	759	817
Total number of nights stayed	13,041	12,055
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	6.07	5.55
Number of emergency shelter beds (capacity)		
For men	48	48
For women & children (domestic violence) <sup>3</sup>	41	17
For women (not domestic violence)	14	14
Number of beds for drug/alcohol detox:		
For men	13	12
For women	6	6
<b>Housing Indicators</b>		
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1,713	1,645
Of these, # of units owned by the province	646	646
Of these, # in private dwellings	1,067	999
New units in Affordable Rental Housing Program	36	0
Number of transitional housing beds/units <sup>4</sup>	63	57
Number of long-term supportive housing beds/units	361	324
Rental vacancy rate	6%	7.4%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$798	\$760
<b>Income Indicators</b>		
Social assistance for a single person	\$537	\$537
# Individuals on social assistance	5,270	5,261
Minimum wage in NB <sup>5</sup>	\$10.65	\$10.30

Moncton shelters saw an overall drop in the number of individuals accessing their services in 2016 with 759 different individuals booking in to beds; a drop of 7%. This is good news for the region, however, even though there are less overall users within the shelter system, Moncton shelters are seeing people stay longer when they do come. The average length of stay per admission increased to 6.07 days in 2016 from 5.55 days in 2015. When looking at the number of days stayed per client we see an average of 17.18 days/ year in 2016 versus 14.76 days in 2015. Individuals accessing shelters are also returning more often; 5.8% of individuals stayed 10 times or more at shelters in 2016 from 4.16% in 2015. About 25% of clients from each of the two shelters access both locations. These numbers show the need to continue to increase supportive housing options for those who may have difficulty maintaining housing on their own and an increased difficulty in general in finding safe, stable, affordable accommodations. (Cont. on page7)

## 759 different individuals were homeless in 2016, a 7% decrease from 2015



Established in 2000; the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee (GMHSC) is an inter-agency committee representing 21 agencies that work with the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless. Representatives of the three levels of government also participate on the GMHSC. The GMHSC works to provide coordination among stakeholders and service providers toward Greater Moncton having an effective and responsive

system in place to prevent homelessness from occurring and ensure instances that do occur are rare, brief and non-recurring. The GMHSC acts as Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Greater Moncton under the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnership Strategy. This 10<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton uses 2016 data. All ten Report Cards will be available at [www.monctonhomelessness.org](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org).

<sup>1</sup>Sources available inside document

<sup>2</sup> 2015 # adjusted to remove duplicate individuals between shelters

<sup>3</sup> Crossroads opened new shelter in fall of 2016 increasing their capacity

<sup>4</sup> Adjusted 2015 # to include Harvest House rooms for Step-up program not incl. in 2015 Report Card – overall increase of 6 units

<sup>5</sup> To increase to \$11.00 on April 1, 2017

## Homelessness numbers decrease by 7% in 2016

	House of Nazareth (24 beds, men; 6 beds, women)		Harvest House (22 beds, men; 8 beds, women)		Shelters combined	
	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015
Total number of admissions	704	722	1,445	1,340	2,149	2,062
Total number unique individuals	436	449	399	413	759	817
Total number of nights stayed	5,966	5,830	7,031	6,219	13,041	12,055
Average length of stay	8.50	8.07	4.87	4.64	6.07	5.55
Average number of beds used each night	16.31	15.97	19.10	17.04	35.53	32.94

*Despite a decrease in numbers, those who access shelters are returning more often and staying longer*

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)



### In addition, at Crossroads for Women during 2016:

- 117 women and 38 children were admitted, fleeing domestic violence.
  - The total bed nights in 2016 were 3,849
- 15 women participated in the Second Stage Program
  - 44 women were part of the Outreach Program

2016 was a tremendous year for Crossroads for Women. The staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to provide shelter and support to the women and children fleeing family violence.

Earlier in the year we received an anonymous donation, a building with five bachelor apartments which we renovated and implemented long term, low barrier, safe and affordable housing designed for women suffering from mental health and addictions issues.

We launched a Capital Campaign to raise much needed funds towards a new Transition House and in April of 2016 the construction began. At the end of November, we were finally able to move in and open our doors. This was an important step for Crossroads for Women as we have nearly tripled our capacity to provide emergency shelter services in the community by increasing the number of available beds from 17 to 41. We have added intake rooms for visits from outside resources as well as for confidential counselling required for women and children to begin this new chapter in their lives. The new facility also has a family lounge, a library, a health and wellness multipurpose room, a communal kitchen, a big dining room as well as a dedicated play room indoors and a play park outside. This new transition house enables us to provide emergency shelter to women and children for a longer period of time.

For 2017, Crossroads for Women is thrilled to announce the opening of the South Eastern NB Sexual Assault Center in our facility. In collaboration with Horizon and Vitalité our Outreach Workers are on call 24 hours a day to victims of sexual assault to provide onsite and long term support. We are looking forward to our continued growth. *Submitted by Tina Thibodeau*

### Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton (CMA)

Unit size	Oct 2016	Oct 2015	Oct 2014
Bachelor	\$580	\$530	\$542
1 Bedroom	\$678	\$640	\$647
2 Bedrooms	\$798	\$760	\$762
3+ Bedrooms	\$961	\$892	\$906

*Greater Moncton is one of the few areas of the province with a population increase due largely to migration from other parts of the province. This has driven down the vacancy rate in the region and driven up rents. Recent years of high vacancy have stalled new starts in rental housing which has also affected prices now that demand has gone up. This has put increased pressure on those requiring affordable housing.*

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, Fall 2016, 2015, 2014, [www.cmhcschl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm](http://www.cmhcschl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm)

**Number of Income Assistance claimants increases in Greater Moncton**

Income Assistance programs offering monthly benefits include the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) and the Extended Benefits Program (EBP). The latter is for people who have been certified as disabled. Income levels through social assistance remained unchanged in 2016. This coupled with a slight increase of overall recipients in the GMA means even more pressure on the demands for affordable housing in our region. In fact overall recipients decreased in the province, however GMA saw an increase in demand.

	Dec 2016	Dec 2015	Dec 2014
Households in receipt of a monthly cheque	3,409	3,382	3,249
Households benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	960	956	960
Total of both types - households	4,369	4,338	4,209
Individuals in receipt of a monthly cheque	5,270	5,261	5,011
Individuals benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	2,170	2,125	2,082
Total of both types - individuals	7,440	7,386	7,093
Provincial total – All types of Social Assistance	47,026	48,115	48,943

Source: NB Social Development

**Federal/Provincial Agreement Adds New Subsidized Units**

	2016	2015			
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units:	1713	1,645			
Of these, # of units owned by the province	646	646			
Of these, # in private dwellings (rent supplements)	1067	999			
<b>Filtered Waiting List as of February 28, 2017</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Disabled</b>	<b>Non Elderly</b>	<b>Senior</b>	<b>Region</b>
<b>Moncton Region</b>	316	38	665	543	1562

Source: NB Social Development

36 new rent supplements were added to the Greater Moncton stock in 2016. Many of these were allocated to programs offering Housing First and supportive housing services. The 2017/2018 fiscal year will bring additional subsidies to the region. Waitlist data was available this year after not having it for the 9<sup>th</sup> Report Card. As of February 28, 2017 a total of 1562 people were waiting for subsidized housing; an 8% drop from 2014 when the waitlist showed 1698 individuals. As can be seen, the need far outweighs supply, particularly for Non-elderly applicants.

**Transitional housing**

- **Crossroads for Women** Second Stage Housing: eight units; new transition house five units
- **Harvest House**: 30 units
- **John Howard Society of Southeastern NB**: 10 units (adult males)
- **Youth Impact Jeunesse Inc.**: 8 transition beds (four female, four male)

**Longer-term Supportive Housing**

- **Alternative Residences Inc.** (mental health clients): 4 community residences (32 beds); 16 one-bedroom apartments; six bungalows/duplexes in shared accommodations (31 beds)
- **Horizon Health Flexible Assertive Community Treatment (FACT)**: clinical services for individuals living with Severe Mental Illness. Housing is an integral part of care plan and they received 5 subsidies in 2016 for their clients.
- **Future Horizons Housing Inc.**: 12 units (for Headstart Inc. families)
- **HART (Housing Assessment Review Team)**: common intake & assessment pilot project. Received 5 subsidies in 2016
- **MacDonald Independent Living Centre**: 34 units (physical disabilities)
- **Moncton Community Residences Inc.**: Serves 160 people in various living arrangements (intellectual/ developmental challenges)
- **Supportive Housing (SUN) Network**: houses and works with chronic shelter users, as affordable housing becomes available; 19 clients were housed in 2016.
- **Salvus Peer Supported Housing** in partnership with the United Way of Southeastern NB offered 10 units in two buildings run by the program as well as 5 scattered units throughout the community for those who have experienced multiple housing challenges.
- **YWCA, A Home for All**: 31 housing units, some of which are located at scattered sites in the Greater Moncton Area and offers Transitional and Housing First supports. In 2016, a total of 36 women, 3 men, and 15 children were housed

**Social Housing (in addition to provincial)**

- **St. James Court**: 13 townhouses for single parent families earning less than \$32,000/yr for a 2-br and \$37,500 for a 3-br. Building has 10 2-br & three 3br units.

In 2016, YWCA opened the doors to the YW Jean E.S Irving Centre for Women and Children, a place where women and children thrive. The new centre, located at 135 Kendra Street, includes the following:

- Young Mothers Housing Wing, which consists of 12 one bedroom and 3 bachelor apartments for expecting, parenting, and single individuals as young as 16. This enriched housing program provides on-site access to education, financial literacy, Life Skills, career development, housing supports, peer supports, and many other programs and activities;
- Margie's Early Learning Centre, which provides children with the positive and stable foundation required for a lifetime of learning and success;
- Women's Training & Leadership Centre, where women and acquire the skills, tools and opportunities to create the change they desire;
- Health & Wellness Centre, where residents can access pre and post-natal care, mental health supports, and fitness programs;
- Teaching Kitchen, where food literacy and healthy meal preparation is offered;
- Youth Empowerment Centre, which is designed to help youth build meaningful relationships, develop positive self-regard and make informed and empowered choices.

YWCA Moncton is thrilled to have its new Centre where it can support and empower women, and their families, through advocacy and integrated services that foster independence and wellness.

Through its partnerships with the Department of Justice and the Salvus Clinic, YWCA has been able to provide housing and essential trauma-informed supports to individuals who are or have been in the sex trade. With these supports, they are not only able to maintain safe and affordable housing, but they are also empowered to work on their personal goal of transitioning out of the sex trade.

**HART pilot launched to streamline access to supportive housing**

***In the midst of a shortage of housing options, agencies respond by ensuring units that are available are filled by those with the highest need first.***

In early October, 2016, eight Moncton agencies launched Atlantic Canada's first coordinated intake and assessment program for housing. HART (Housing Assessment Review Team) was developed by AIDS Moncton, Harvest House, House of Nazareth, John Howard Society of Southeastern New Brunswick, Salvation Army Family and Community Services, Salvus Clinic, YMCA of Greater Moncton, YWCA Moncton, and supported by the GMHSC.

HART was launched as an initial 1 year pilot project where participating agencies have changed their intake processes and agreed on a common way of assessing client needs to ensure that available transitional and long-term supported housing options are allocated by highest need and vulnerability first. These agencies have a history of collaboration and working together to assist mutual clients and the HART pilot enhances these partnerships to a more coordinated level. In a resource-strapped environment it is common to think of competition for resources in the non-profit sector. This new process shows vision beyond individual agencies for the greater good of the community. New apartment units or resources acquired by any partner are an addition to the system as a whole and a win for the community and those who need housing the most.

Although HART is the first coordinated intake program to launch in Atlantic Canada, it is not a new model, but a recognized best practice in ensuring homeless service delivery systems are able to respond quickly and efficiently to meet housing and support needs. There are several communities across Canada who have successfully implemented similar models or are working on them, many have assisted HART in its development.

While HART is a new system for organizations allocating available transitional and supportive units, however it does not come with a host of new housing options. The province has been supportive in providing 10 NB Housing rent subsidies to the HART table so far, however each agency still has the same number of units they had before the pilot began.

The positive impact of the HART model can be seen when looking at statistics at this midway mark of the pilot. As of the end of February, 78 intakes have taken place with a total of 26 individuals housed or in the process of moving into housing; a total housing rate of 33%. Given the shortage of housing available there is an equal percentage of intakes waiting for housing. It is hoped that the continued demonstration of success and efficiency in moving individuals through the housing system, will result in support toward HART and its partners to continue receiving additional resources for housing options for those who are most vulnerable in Moncton.

***For more information on the HART process and how to access supports you may contact any member agency or visit the HART page on the GMHSC website ([monctonhomelessness.org](http://monctonhomelessness.org))***

### ***Food Bank Use Back on the Rise in NB***

HungerCount 2016 showed that food bank use increased in New Brunswick in March 2016. The total number of people assisted was 19,769, compared to 18,986 in 2015, an increase of 4.1%. This increase outweighs the 3% drop seen last year over 2014 numbers.

The number of people accessing food banks in Canada climbed to 28% above 2008 numbers—when the number was 852,137 nationally and 15,638 in New Brunswick and speaks to the country and our province’s failure to adequately support citizens who have fallen on hard times

#### ***Of food bank users in NB:***

- 58.7% are on Social Assistance
- 10.9% are employed
- 56.9% pay market rent
- 14.3% live in social housing
- 21.8% own their own home

***Further indication of the inadequacy of income supports and wages to keep pace with costs of living – and particularly housing – in our province.***

Source: The HungerCount report presents results from an annual study of more than 4,000 food banks and other food programs in every province and territory [www.foodbankscanada.ca/Hunger-in-Canada/](http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/Hunger-in-Canada/)

### ***New Community Food Centre Improves Access to Food Security Programs***

The spring of 2016 saw the opening of the Peter McKee Community Food Centre; a project that saw the West End Food Bank and Open Hands foodbanks combine for a more unified and efficient system. This model will increase opportunities to offer programs beyond food hand-outs toward increased self-sufficiency and nutrition for foodbank users. The Food Centre has already started to offer a GED class, community gardens and gardening programs and renovations for a professional kitchen will allow for classes to teach how to cook and preserve fresh produce and even increase skills for employment in the food service sector. The new centre has also increased the capacity to offer fresh, perishable food items as they now have fridge and freezer capacity for storage.

***Between May 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017 the Peter McKee Centre has served 22,932 individuals, 32.8% of which are children***

*YMCA ReConnect maintains a Food Security Information Sheet with updated listings of all meals and food programs in Greater Moncton.*

*It can be accessed on the Resources Page of the GMHSC website: [monctonhomelessness.org](http://monctonhomelessness.org)*



## Why Hasn't Moncton Ended Homelessness Yet?

*By Joanne Murray*

Ending homelessness seems like a simple, straightforward task. We did a Point-In-Time Count last February and we counted 67 people who were living rough or on the street. So, let's build two 48-unit apartment buildings and voila! Problem-solved, right?

In reality, the solution is not such a simple straight line. Yet Medicine Hat has professed to have "ended" homelessness in their communities. So what does that mean, exactly? The answer can be found in the work that has been recently completed by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary, and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

Not to get too mired down with concepts, however, before we can define what "ending homelessness" means, we have to begin with a common definition of "homelessness". Iterations of a definition have been circulating for many years. The most recent one I could find on Homeless Hub is: Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.

The journey to creating a definition of "ending homelessness" began a few years ago. A definition was written and agreed upon after a multi-year process of literature reviews, consultation with people who experienced homelessness plus all of the other stakeholder groups in the sector - a truly collaborative process.

Out of the consultation, it was clear that the definition should include the concepts of "Absolute Zero" homelessness, and "Functional Zero" homelessness. Absolute Zero homelessness is defined by everyone having access to housing and supports, so that no one becomes homeless or at-risk in the first place. A Functional Zero state of homelessness would be when communities experience homelessness rarely, and when it does happen there are systems in place to re-housing people quickly and prevent it from happening again.

I think it's realistic to accept Functional Zero on the route to Absolute Zero. Preparing your community for Absolute Zero homelessness requires a system- and sector-wide commitment to things like becoming aware of what is needed to achieve the end to homelessness, working together on the goals and priorities that will form the National Housing Strategy, and the Provincial Housing Strategy. It will mean developing local goals and priorities that feed into the Strategies, and working together on achieving them.

We can end homelessness in Moncton by working together, achieving Functional Zero and then Absolute Zero. As a supportive housing provider working with others in the sector, I am confident that we can achieve this if we, as a community, put in the work that is required to get there!

**To read full report visit: [http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Functional\\_Zero.pdf](http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Functional_Zero.pdf)**

(Continued from page 1)

A slight increase is also seen (4.63%) in individuals discharged from health (hospital, detox, psychiatric treatment) and correctional institutions directly to shelters, speaking to gaps in our overall system of care and coordination across the broader system of support.

The greater Moncton area has seen some wins in 2016 in terms of an increase in Supportive Housing and Housing First Supports as well as an increase in subsidized units:

- The 2016 Federal budget offered funding for affordable housing through a Federal/Provincial partnership which saw an increase of \$56 million over two years in New Brunswick. This includes funds for increasing and maintaining affordable housing stock, addressing housing needs of seniors and women fleeing domestic violence, as well as new housing subsidies. So far Greater Moncton has seen 36 new subsidies, several of which have been offered to community-based supportive housing programs.
- The Federal budget also allowed for a 50% increase to the annual Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS) funding added here in Moncton. This has helped increase staffing to Housing First programs, provide capital funding to improve/maintain existing housing as well as aid in the creation of new units. Funds have also been allocated toward eviction prevention.
- The FACT (Flexible Assertive Community Treatment) team for Horizon Health Received 5 NB Housing subsidies to support clients with persistent mental illness. This program is also expanding with Horizon Health and Vitalité each having their own FACT teams in 2017.
- Common intake and Assessment is a key goal in the 2014-2019 GMHSC Community Plan. In 2016 the creation of HART (Housing Assessment Review Team) is a realization of this goal and a first in Atlantic Canada. This partnership of 8 supportive housing, shelter and frontline service providers is easing access to supportive housing and creating efficiencies in the service delivery system. 10 NB Housing subsidies (5 in 2016, 5 in 2017) have been allocated to the project so far. (See page 4 for more details about HART)

Indeed 2016 has been a year where the potential for real action toward ending homelessness has emerged within each of the three levels of government.

- The federal Liberal Government began consultation and development toward a new National Housing Strategy in the fall of 2016. They are due to launch the strategy this coming fall. The initial “What We Heard” report was positive in highlighting a need to end homelessness, meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and continue and enhance the HPS program, among other measures.
- New Brunswick Government has also begun work toward the development of its own Housing Strategy. Initial consultations have begun with the bulk of the work occurring throughout 2017.
- The City of Moncton’s Social Inclusion Plan has moved forward in addressing its Housing Choice and Affordability pillar with the launch of a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment for the region which will assist the municipality in determining how it will move forward in policy and program development and inform the Provincial Housing Strategy.

The GMHSC and its members are active participants in each of these initiatives in order to best support the possibilities within these government initiatives to result in real changes on the ground where they are needed most: increased Housing First supports and housing for those experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness as well as increasing housing options that are affordable to others on limited income, from income assistance to low-waged employment.



This 10<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton is an opportunity to inform the community about the issue of homelessness and how it is being addressed in our community. The GMHSC and its members are working hard to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton. You can contact us by visiting our website at [www.monctonhomelessness.org](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org) or join us on Facebook.