

Experiencing Homelessness

7

The Seventh Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2014

The Current Situation*

Emergency shelter use in Greater Moncton	2012	2013
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA) – 2011 census	138,644	138,644
Total number of unique individuals (clients) admitted to shelters	720	781
Total number of nights stayed	11,131	12,873
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	11.8	8.4
Number of emergency shelter beds (capacity)		
For men	48	48
For women (domestic violence)	17	17
For women (not domestic violence)	14	14
Number of beds for drug/alcohol detox:	20	18
For men	14	12
For women	6	6
Housing Indicators		
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1,570	1,610
Of these, # of units owned by the province	650	650
Of these, # in private dwellings	920	960
Number on the provincially-subsidized waiting list	1,219	1,611
New units in Affordable Rental Housing Program	14	34
Number of transitional housing beds/units	24	24
Number of long-term supportive housing beds/units	280	315
Rental vacancy rate	6.7%	9.1%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$731	\$742
Income Indicators		
Social assistance for a single person (Transitional Assistance Program)	\$537	\$537
# Individuals on social assistance	4,919	5,119
Minimum wage in NB	\$10.00	\$10.00
Food Security in NB		
Number of food banks	5	5
Number of soup kitchens (4/3 supplemental)	7	7
Number of individuals assisted HungerCount	4,694	n/a

This 7th annual Report Card highlights key changes throughout 2013 that impact the state of homelessness in Greater Moncton.

Probably the biggest news in 2013 was that the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) would be renewed for another five years (2014-19), with a focus on “Housing First.” Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee members and partners are now developing a new 5-year Community Plan.

As you’ll read in this document, a lot of progress is being made in finding new and innovative ways to house people in need. Together, the new YWCA and SUN Network housing programs housed close to 50 chronically homeless individuals. Still, the number of people staying in emergency shelters continues to rise.

In 2013, we organized a “Trade Fair with a difference “ (see page 3) that brought together non-profits and private sector housing developers. Some interesting partnerships have developed.

But a common theme in all our work is the shortage of real affordable housing. For those living on Social [cont’d pg 6]

* Sources available inside document

**781 different individuals were homeless in 2013, up from 720 in 2012.
An additional 103 women fled domestic violence.**



The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee is an inter-agency committee representing 20 agencies in Greater Moncton that work with the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless as well as representatives of the three levels of government. Established in 2000, the GMHSC provides leadership and coordinates communication among

stakeholders and service providers to ensure the implementation of the Greater Moncton Community Plan on Homelessness. It also works to create public awareness about issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and housing. This 7th Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton uses 2013 data. All seven Report Cards will be available at www.monctonhomelessness.org.

Shelter use only “tip of the iceberg” for homeless population

It is hard to draw any definitive conclusions from the data gathered at our two emergency shelters over 2013. Total admissions were relatively stable at House of Nazareth, while at Harvest House, the total number of admissions spiked at the same time that the average length of stay was cut in half. This means that people were “checking in” and “checking out” more frequently.

The important number is “unique individuals,” and that number decreased by 29 at House of Nazareth, and increased by 90 at Harvest House, for an overall increase of 61 in 2013 compared to a year earlier. We know that there is still some “double-counting” of unique individuals who stay at both shelters. With a new version of HIFIS coming out in 2014, we hope to be able to get a better portrait of what shelter use looks like in Greater Moncton. One thing we do know is that shelter use is only the “tip of the iceberg.” Some estimates suggest that for every shelter user, there are another 3.5 to four people who are part of the “hidden homeless.” Many of them are women and youth.

103 women with their children took refuge at Crossroads for Women in 2013, fleeing domestic violence.

	House of Nazareth		Harvest House	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
Total number of admissions	690	711	324	799
Total number unique individuals	465	436	255	345
Total number of nights stayed	5,597	6,292	5,534	6,581
Average length of stay	8.0	8.7	16.67	8.07
Average number of beds occupied per night	15.29	17.24	15.12	18.02

Source: Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

Households and individuals using Social Assistance in Greater Moncton

	Dec 2013	Dec 2012	Dec 2011
Households in receipt of a monthly cheque	3,265	3,167	3,184
Households benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	983	972	993
Total of both types - households	4,248	4,139	4,178
Individuals in receipt of a monthly cheque	5,119	4,921	4,950
Individuals benefiting from health card, day care, prenatal subsidies (no monthly cheque)	2,091	1,971	2,005
Total of both types - individuals	7,210	6,892	6,956
Provincial total – All types of Social Assistance	49,900	50,966	51,929

Source: NB Social Development

Social Assistance programs offering monthly benefits include the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) and the Extended Benefits Program (EBP). The latter is for people who have been certified disabled. Almost 80% of recipients in Greater Moncton are on the TAP. A single individual receives approximately \$537 per month, not what you might call a living wage.

Despite the province’s best efforts to reduce welfare rolls (and they have done it provincially), in Greater Moncton, numbers increased in 2013. Not surprising that food bank use also continues to grow.

For many, it’s often a choice – pay the rent or feed the kids.

“25% of New Brunswick children live in households without adequate access to food.”

-Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2011 (released 2013)

Shortage of affordable housing continues to dominate

Housing low-income individuals big challenge in Greater Moncton

Forty additional rent supplements in private buildings opened in 2013, compared to 15 a year earlier. Of these, 34 were new units under the Affordable Rental Housing Program. NB Social Development was also able to add six more subsidized units in Greater Moncton through re-allocation of rental subsidies from other areas within the region. As well, several rent subsidies were reallocated between different unit types within the region (e.g., re-allocating a rental subsidy for a senior to a non-elderly client). Nonetheless, the waiting list for social housing continues to grow. As a rule, two individuals living on Income Assistance cannot share a two-bedroom apartment, and a one-bedroom is out-of-reach for most. The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee has stepped up efforts to get both the municipalities and the private sector more involved in affordable housing.



30 new subsidized units under the Affordable Housing Rental Program opened in this building in downtown Moncton in 2013.

A “Trade Show of a different kind”



The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee’s Affordable Housing event in November 2013 brought together non-profit agencies that house clients with private sector property managers and developers. The goal was to come up with some innovative ways to partner that could result in more housing opportunities for low-income people. Some interesting partnerships have developed. If you’re interested in learning more, contact the GMHSC. Thanks again to our sponsor, CMHC.

The number of people on the subsidized housing list has continued to increase, by 58% between 2011 and 2013. The largest group in need is non-elderly singles.

Type	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2013	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2012	Total # on waiting list in Greater Moncton 2011
Family	433	319	246
Senior	377	262	207
Non-elderly single	764	603	472
Disabled	37	35	8
TOTAL	1,611	1,219	933

Source: NB Social Development

Are you low-income and need housing? Call 1-866-426-5191 to get your name on the NB Social Development housing waiting list. They will assess you over the phone, and if you qualify, you will be put on the list the same day.

Transitional housing

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

Longer-term supportive housing

- Alternative Residences Inc. (mental health clients) – three group homes (23 beds); one Transition home (8 beds); 16 one-bedroom apartments; five bungalows/duplexes (30 beds)
- Future Horizons Housing Inc. – 12 units (for Headstart Inc. families)
- MacDonald Independent Living Centre – 34 units (physical disabilities)
- Moncton Community Residences Inc. Serves 143 people in various living arrangements (intellectual/ developmental challenges)
- The Supportive Housing (SUN) Network houses and works with chronic shelter users, as affordable housing becomes available; 26 clients were housed in 2013.
- YWCA Scattered supportive housing for women; 23 women and 10 children were housed at end December.

Social Housing (in addition to provincial)

- St. James Court – 13 townhouses for single parent families earning less than \$31,500 per year for a 2-bedroom and \$36,500 for a 3-bedroom. Building has 10 2-bedroom units and 3 3-bedroom units.

Other (Halfway houses for people leaving correctional facilities)

- Cannell House, 20 beds for men
- Greenfield House, 16 beds for men, five for women

“A Home for Her” houses 23 women and 10 children

During 2013, YWCA Moncton housed 23 women and 10 children in its *A Home for Her Scattered Housing Program*. This program targeting homeless and precariously housed women and their children is offered in partnership with Crossroads for Women, and houses women in existing rental stock and NB Housing units throughout the Greater Moncton area.

In addition to being safely and appropriately housed, women in the YWCA’s program are provided with supportive case management services and offered skill-building programming, financial literacy training and other personal development and wellness opportunities. YWCA Moncton also regularly refers program participants to partner agencies in the community, including local food banks, the Salvus Clinic, Blankets for Moncton, Mental Health and Addictions Services, etc.

Four program participants have successfully transitioned into independent housing; five program participants have secured employment; and four have become registered YWCA volunteers, making significant contributions to the agency by supporting events such as the 2013 Women of Distinction awards gala.

The Scattered Housing program is only the first phase of YWCA Moncton’s women’s housing strategy. The next phase involves a housing complex for young pregnant and parenting women. This demographic of women is underserved in New Brunswick and particularly vulnerable not only to housing insecurity, but also to gender-based violence. During the final weeks of 2013, Moncton City Council made an important contribution to this next phase of the *A Home for Her* strategy by overwhelmingly voting in favour of donating land to YWCA Moncton for the complex.

Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton (CMA)

Unit size	Oct 2013	Oct 2012	Oct 2011
Bachelor	\$532	\$485	\$479
1 Bedroom	\$626	\$619	\$591
2 Bedrooms	\$742	\$731	\$715
3+ Bedrooms	\$908	\$897	\$794

Rent on a bachelor apartment increased by 9% in 2013, while rent for other types of rentals was relatively stable, probably because of the high vacancy rate in Greater Moncton, 9.1% at the end of December. This compared to 6.2% in Fredericton, 11.4% in Saint John and 11.8% in Bathurst.

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, Fall 2013, 2012, 2011 www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm

Progress on the municipal front

The City of Moncton showed excellent leadership throughout 2013 on issues of poverty and housing:

- In late 2012, the City voted to establish a Poverty Committee to look at what the city could do to reduce poverty within its boundaries. The Poverty Committee consulted many stakeholders throughout 2013, and presented its report to Council in November. Some key recommendations included that the City needs to accept its responsibility to address and reduce poverty; that the City should hire a “Poverty Reduction Coordinator” whose first job will be to organize a Poverty Forum in 2014. City Council unanimously accepted the report. The Coordinator is budgeted to begin work April 1st.
- Moncton City Council unanimously endorsed the campaign by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to fix Canada’s “Housing crunch.”
- In December, Moncton City Council voted to sell a piece of land for \$1 to YWCA Moncton for its young mom’s housing project. This will be a much-needed addition to Moncton’s inventory of safe and affordable housing for women.

What is Homelessness?

- Living on the street.
- Staying overnight in emergency shelters.
- Staying in places not meant for human habitation.
- Moving continuously among temporary housing arrangements provided by friends, family or strangers (“couch surfing”).

Are YOU at risk of homelessness?

Families and individuals can lose their housing for any number of reasons: fleeing abuse, losing a job or having an income too low to stay in suitable housing.

Some people are at risk because of mental health issues or substance use problems or they lack life skills or ability to live on their own.

SWAG addresses stigma against sex workers in Moncton

In summer of 2013, Codiac RCMP arrested 11 women for prostitution-related offences in downtown Moncton. That event dominated the media, with concerns expressed by many that street-level sex workers are marginalized by poverty, substance use and social exclusion, and can often not access services they need once they are in conflict with the law.

AIDS Moncton, a front-line service provider in Moncton’s downtown core, which runs a Needle Distribution Service, spearheaded efforts to bring stakeholders including the RCMP to the table to discuss concerns and areas for action. The Sex Worker Action Group (SWAG) was established, and met several times over the fall. SWAG will host a Community Forum on the sex trade in Moncton in 2014. This partnership between non-profits and the RCMP has been an impressive model of how issues can be addressed when people with seemingly different points of view are willing to work together.

In the meantime, further arrests or prosecutions of street-based sex workers are now on hold, since the Supreme Court ruling in December effectively gutted Canada’s prostitution laws by finding that legislation against street soliciting, living on the avails and keeping a brothel was unconstitutional. We expect to hear more on this important issue throughout 2014.

“Street-level sex workers are marginalized by poverty, substance use and social exclusion.”

Supportive Housing (SUN) Network housing the homeless

Greater Moncton's Supportive Housing (SUN) Network was launched in late 2012 with a mandate to house individuals who have been chronically homeless, and to work with them to help them maintain their tenancy. The overall goal is to reduce emergency shelter use.

During 2013, the SUN's two Housing Support Workers housed 26 people, seven in subsidized apartments (where the tenant pays 30% of the rent) and 19 in rooming houses. These two positions are funded by the province, and housed in the Re-Connect Street Intervention Program.

"I have a feeling of being secure in my own place, and my anxiety attacks have decreased by 75%."

-SUN client

Rooming houses are being used because there are not enough subsidized units available. There has been a noticeable difference in the level of progress made by clients, however, based on the type of housing provided. Those in subsidized apartments report a feeling of security that was previously lacking in their everyday lives. Many have seen major improvements to their health, the result of a healthier diet, and less stress in their daily lives. All of those in subsidized units have stayed house, while the same is not true for those in rooming houses.

From ACT to FACT...

[Cont'd from page 1] assistance, the only workable solution is a subsidized unit, but the waiting list for social housing has grown by 58% over the past two years. Only 34 new affordable housing units were added to the inventory in 2013. During the past year, we lost two important agencies that served the marginalized population: Family Services Moncton and BUILT Network, which provided pre-employment training for people with mental health challenges.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada's At Home/Chez Soi program, which housed 100 chronically homeless people with mental health issues in Greater Moncton, wound down. Its Assertiveness Community Treatment (ACT) Team was transitioned into a provincial Flexible ACT Team. The FACT will continue to work with At Home/Chez Soi clients, and will also accept referrals and self-referrals for people with serious mental illness. The numbers to call are **506-856-2444** (Horizon Health Network) or **506-862-4144** (Réseau Vitalité). The FACT, unfortunately, does not have housing capacity. It hopes to partner with Social Development to house clients.

This 7th Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton is an opportunity to inform the community about the issue of homelessness and how it is being addressed in our community. The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee and its 20 agency members are working hard to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton. You can contact us by visiting our website at www.monctonhomelessness.org or join us on Facebook.

What you can do to end and prevent homelessness...

Greater Moncton is a very generous community. We often get requests from people who want to get involved in helping people who are homeless. Some suggest they plan to start a non-profit organization, for example, to put together "emergency kits" and deliver them to homeless people during the night. (This has been a frequent suggestion this year, in fact.) We strongly encourage people NOT to start another non-profit, but rather to connect with the existing agencies that are working hard to end and prevent homelessness. Here are some things you CAN do to help.

1. **Educate** yourself and others about the problem of homelessness.
2. **Volunteer** your time to work directly with people experiencing homelessness. **Be a friend** to those who are homeless or precariously housed.
3. **Call a politician**, municipal, provincial or federation, and tell them how much ending homelessness matters to you.
4. **Join** others who care on Facebook & Twitter.
5. **Vote** for those who support affordable housing during each and every election.
6. **Contribute** to and help organizations that work to end homelessness.
7. **Understand** that there is a plan to end homelessness...all it takes is you.