

# Experiencing Homelessness

# 5

The Fifth Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2012

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Report Card  
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## The Current Situation \*\*\*

Emergency shelter use in Greater Moncton	2010	2011
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA) – census data	126,424	138,644
Number of individuals who stayed in a shelter bed	682	918
Number of times shelter beds were used	4,259	7,378
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	6.24	7.83
Number of emergency shelter beds (capacity)		
For men	24	48*
For women (domestic violence)	17	17
For women (not domestic violence)	6	14*
Number of beds for drug/alcohol detox:	20	20
For men (plus one emergency)	13	13
For women	6	6
<b>Housing Indicators</b>		
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1,447	1,555
Of these, # of units owned by the province	650	650
Of these, # in private dwellings	797	905**
Number on the provincially-subsidized waiting list	808	933
New units in Affordable Rental Housing Program	63	132
Number of transitional housing beds/units	24	24
Number of long-term supportive housing beds/units	257	267
Rental vacancy rate	4.2%	4.3%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$691	\$715
<b>Income Indicators</b>		
Social assistance for a single person	\$537	\$537
# Individuals on social assistance	5,005	4,950
Minimum wage in NB	\$9.00	\$9.50
<b>Food Security in NB</b>		
Number of food banks	6	6
Number of soup kitchens (4/3 supplemental)	7	7
Number of individuals assisted HungerCount	4,740	3,735



We started to do these Report Cards on Homelessness five years ago, in the hopes of being able to measure the progress we have made to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton. During that time, there has been some good progress – the At Home/Chez Soi program has housed 100 formerly homeless people challenged with mental health issues; the John Howard Society 10-unit building provides transitional housing and programs for adult males. But many of us are increasingly frustrated because we know that the number of people staying in emergency shelters (one of our key indicators) is only the “tip of the iceberg” when it comes to the homeless population. There are many more “hidden homeless,” many of them women and young people, (cont’d pg 6)

**918 people were homeless and stayed in a shelter in 2011.**



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 5<sup>th</sup> Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton uses 2011 data. All five Report Cards will be available at [www.monctonhomelessness.org](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org).

## Emergency shelter use increases in 2011

Shelter use at the House of Nazareth was relatively higher in 2011 for two reasons. In 2010, the shelter was partially or completely closed during the month of December for renovations, which meant that the total number of clients (which had been between 725 and 765 from 2006-09) dropped. In 2011, the waiting time to get an appointment with Social Assistance was longer because of government staff cuts, driving the number of bed nights and the average number of nights stayed per client up. In fact, the waiting time to get an appointment for Social Assistance was a common complaint from many sides throughout the year. Harvest House opened with real beds about mid-year so we will hopefully begin to receive reliable data in future.

	House of Nazareth		Harvest House	
	2011	2010	2011	2010
Total number of clients	749*	682	169	n/a
Total number of nights stayed	4,939	4,259	2,439	n/a
Average number of nights stayed per client	6.59	6.24	9.07	n/a
Average number of beds occupied per night	13.53	11.67	6.68	n/a

\* Representing 458 different individuals compared to 425 in 2010.  
Source: House of Nazareth Annual Reports; HIFIS Report Harvest House

Greater Moncton's inventory of emergency shelter remained the same in 2011:

- House of Nazareth, 30 beds (24 men, six women);
- Harvest House Ministries (24 beds men; eight women; seven transitional rooms for men)
- Addictions Services, 20 detox beds (14 men; six women);
- Crisis Intervention Centre, five beds for emergencies (mental health).
- Crossroads for Women Inc., 17 beds (domestic violence, for women and children).

**933** people were on the waiting list for NB Housing at the end of 2011, up from 808 a year earlier. Of these, more than 50% were non-elderly singles living in Moncton.

### 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.

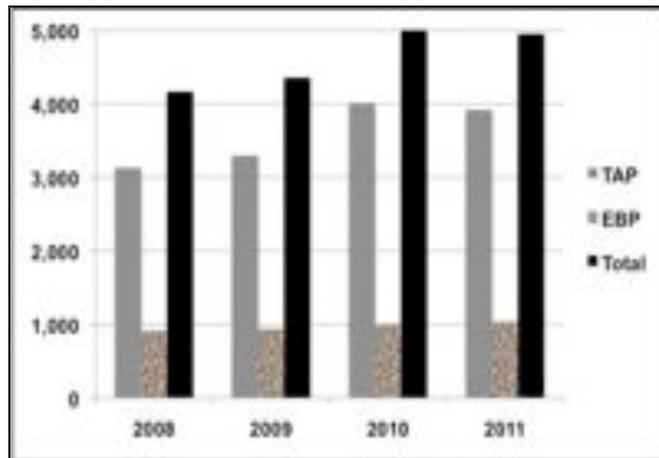
*For each person who is homeless in Canada, 23 more people are vulnerably housed - paying more than half of their monthly income for rent, and living with substantial risk of becoming homeless. People who don't have a healthy place to live - regardless of whether they're vulnerably housed or homeless - are at high risk of serious physical and mental health problems and major problems accessing the health care they need. Many end up hospitalized or in the emergency department.*

—Housing Vulnerability and Health: Canada's Hidden Emergency, 2010

# Living in poverty = food banks, soup kitchens

The number of people in Greater Moncton relying on Social Assistance dropped slightly in 2011, from 5,005 individuals at the end of 2010 to 4,950 at the end of 2011.

Anyone living on Social Assistance is, of course, living in poverty. Almost 80% of those on Social Assistance receive \$537 per month, \$6,444 per year, which is much below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Offs. The LICO's suggest that a single person living in a metro area the size of Greater Moncton needs \$15,865 per year to be at or above the poverty line.



Note: The Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) pays \$537 per month for a single individual; Extended Benefits Program (EBP) pays \$618 (for those certified blind, deaf or disabled by the Medical Advisory Board).

But people living on Social Assistance are not the only ones who rely on food banks and soup kitchens on a regular basis. Food bank use in Canada and New Brunswick has been at an all-time high in the last few years, between 2008 and 2011 increasing by 24% in Canada and 18% in New Brunswick. More than 18,500 New Brunswickers visited a food bank in March 2011, and 34.4% of them were under the age of 18 (HungerCount).

*“Food insecurity – the lack of access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food – is increasingly recognized as a critical issue that lacks a comprehensive response by governments in Canada.”*

- Canadian Housing & Renewal Association

In our area (NB Association of Food Banks District 5\*), 3,375 individuals were assisted, down from 4,740 a year earlier. Of these:

- 33% were children;
- 67% were adults.

Together, Greater Moncton's three main soup kitchens – the Karing Kitchen, Ray of Hope and Mobile One

Community Services soup bus – probably serve 1,000 meals a day during the week. The House of Nazareth provides daily lunch bags at 4pm to people in need, and on the weekend, a hot supper on Saturday nights after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. It served 24,771 meals in total in 2011. The churches are also involved – St. George's Anglican Church, First Baptist Church and Mountain View United Church take turns offering Sunday suppers. *It takes a community to feed those in need.*

\* District 5 includes Greater Moncton, Riverside-Albert, Dorchester, Petitcodiac, Port Elgin, Richibucto, Rogersville, Sackville, Shediac, Sussex & Memramcook.



*Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn't commit.*

-Eli Khamarov

During 2011

*Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Greater Moncton increased by 3.4%.*

*Consumer Prices rose 2.3%.*

*Minimum wage in NB increased by 50 cents.*

*Social Assistance rates rose by 0%.*

Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton			
Unit size	Oct 2011	Oct 2010	Oct 2009
Bachelor	\$479	\$456	\$443
1 Bedroom	\$591	\$577	\$573
2 Bedrooms	\$715	\$691	\$675
3+ Bedrooms	\$794	\$787	\$755

Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports, Fall 2009, 2010, 2011  
[www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/index.cfm)

For ReConnect Street Intervention Program

## ***Finding safe, affordable housing for clients a major challenge***

The YMCA of Greater Moncton's ReConnect Street Intervention Program provides short and long-term assistance to youth and adults who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or living in poverty, all in an effort to increase their knowledge of available resources (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, education, employment, and counseling) and to provide support in accessing them.

ReConnect runs a drop-in most afternoons during the week for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In 2011, staff saw:

- 406 youth
- 2,902 male adults
- 1,187 female adults, for a total of 3,616 drop in clients (not unique individuals)
- This included 172 new male clients and 135 new female clients.

These numbers are a slight increase from what ReConnect saw last year, which would indicate that the need in the Greater Moncton area continues to grow, along with unemployment rates. These numbers show that there is a great need for outreach services in our community.

### **Requests received by ReConnect in 2011:**

Food Packages: 653  
Hygiene Kits: 351  
Clothing: 169  
Housing: 305  
Medication: 35  
Transportation: 398  
Employment: 167  
Financial: 196  
Identification: 207  
YMCA Shower/Gym Passes: 177

A major challenge is finding safe, affordable housing for clients. Most are on social assistance, and cannot afford damage deposits and high rents. Additional barriers, such as drug, alcohol and mental health issues, homelessness and criminal records are major obstacles for clients who are looking for employment. Clients continue to struggle with everyday basic needs. On a monthly basis, there are a significant number of requests for food, hygiene products, clothing, ID, medication, transportation and employment. Food in particular is a high priority need for the clientele. The amounts given via the food banks vary, and depend greatly on the amounts available and given to them. Located at 575 Main Street, Moncton. <http://www.ymcamoncton.com>



*“What’s housing got to do with homelessness?”*

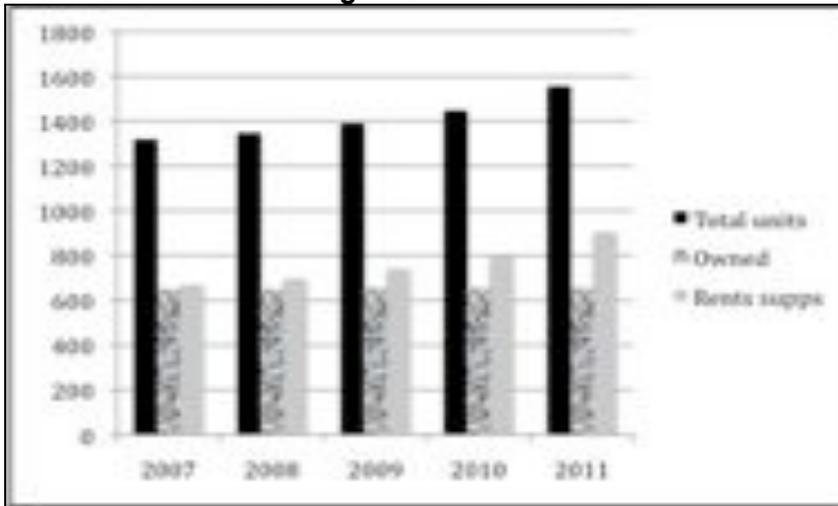
***EVERYTHING!***

*The lack of safe and affordable housing forces many people into homelessness.*

# Aging social housing stock of great concern

The provincial Department of Social Development owns 650 units of Public Housing and Rural/Native Housing in Greater Moncton, a figure that has remained relatively stable since we began these Report Cards five years ago. Social Development also provides rent supplements for another 797 units in private buildings, and this figure has been on the increase, as the table below shows. Some 132 new affordable housing units, including 29 accessible ones, were added to the inventory in five buildings around Metro in 2011. That's good news but for the units owned by the province, the outlook isn't as rosy. The recent Report of the Auditor General sounded a warning that the average age of the 13,157 units managed by NB is 40 years. Unless more maintenance dollars become available, the condition of these properties will fall to "poor" by 2017 and "critical" by 2027. *This is something that should concern us all.*

## Provincial social housing in Greater Moncton



Note: Included in the above figures are four units leased from the department by AIDS Moncton Inc. for use by clients, and two units leased by Crossroads for Women Inc. None of the provincial social housing offers programming or services to clients.

### Transitional housing

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

### Long-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 (Headstart Inc. clients)
- MacDonald Independent Living Centre – 34 units (physical disabilities)
- Moncton Community Residences Inc. – serves 144 people in various living arrangements (intellectual/developmental challenges)

### Social Housing (in addition to provincial)

- St. James Court – 13 units for single parent families earning less than \$31,000 per year

### Other (Halfway houses for people leaving correctional facilities)

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



A total of 132 new affordable housing units were created in Greater Moncton in 2011, such as these apartment buildings in (from left) Riverview, Dieppe and Moncton.

## **At Home/Chez Soi project showing 93% success rate**

By Dr. Tim Aubry (University of Ottawa) and Dr. Jimmy Bourque (Université de Moncton)

Led by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and funded by HealthCanada, the At Home / Chez Soi project in Moncton is part of a national multi-site study of *Housing First* for people with mental health problems and a history of homelessness. Launched in October 2009, the study in Moncton is following people receiving subsidized housing and support for a two-year period and comparing their outcomes to a group receiving usual services in the community. A unique feature of the Moncton site involves following a small subgroup receiving Housing First in a rural region (South-East New Brunswick). Recruitment for the project was completed in April 2011 and researchers on the project from the Université de Moncton and the University of Ottawa have recently released early findings to participants and community partners including the landlords of participants.

As of January 2012, 114 of 123 (93%) participants receiving Housing First were successfully housed. Of those participants who were housed, 94 (82%) were living in their first or second apartment. Recently, the project has opened a transitional apartment building to assist the small number people in the project who have encountered difficulty achieving stable housing. Participants in the program report having very positive relationships with program staff as well as having experienced significant improvements in their lives since becoming housed. Strong partnerships with the provincial government and community organizations have been key contributors to the success of the project. The researchers expect to release the first set of findings on participant outcomes later in 2012. You can access more details on preliminary findings of the At Home / Chez Soi project at <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/homelessness.aspx>.

### **Would you be willing to lend a hand by...**

1. **Educating** yourself and others about the problem of homelessness.
2. **Volunteering** your time to work directly with people experiencing homelessness.
3. **Being a friend** to those who are homeless or precariously housed.
4. **Calling a politician**, either municipal, provincial or federation, and telling them how much ending homelessness matters to you.
5. **Joining** others who care on Facebook & Twitter.
6. **Voting** for those who support affordable housing during each and every election.
7. **Contributing** to and helping organizations that work to end homelessness.
8. **Understanding** that there is a plan to end homelessness...all it takes is you.

(cont'd from pg 1) who are moving continuously from one housing arrangement to another, "couch surfers" who move between friends and family members and back again. No one has developed a methodology for reliably being able to measure how many people are in this situation. Until we do, it will be a challenge to know *how we're really doing* in our efforts to end and prevent homelessness in Greater Moncton. This will be our challenge in the years to come.

The GMHSC would like to thank its supporters, those who participate regularly in our events and offer a helping hand when asked. Mostly, we would like to thank those who take the time to talk to people who are homeless or at risk, to try to understand their situation, and at the very least, to give them a smile and a friendly hello.

This 5<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 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](http://www.monctonhomelessness.org) or join us on Facebook.