

2016 Progress Report on Homelessness

Moving from Managing to Ending Homelessness

Fredericton Edition



This is the 8th Report on Homelessness in Fredericton. This Report is released by the Community Action Group on Homelessness (CAGH), a joint community initiative of homeless-serving non-profits, government representatives, and community leaders working collaboratively to end homelessness in Fredericton.

In the summer of 2015, the CAGH released *The Road Home: A Plan to End Homelessness in Fredericton* which lays out a road map to ensure an end to chronic & episodic homelessness by 2018/19 and that by 2025-26, no one in Fredericton will experience homelessness on the street or in emergency shelter for longer than 10 days before they have access to appropriate, permanent housing and the supports needed to maintain it.

Since the launch of the *Road Home*, homeless serving organizations have worked to lay the framework for a phased strategic approach rooted in Housing First.



The Road Home

A Plan to End Homelessness in Fredericton

Homelessness & Shelters	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change
# Unique individuals who stayed at an emergency shelter in Fredericton*	256	281	206	195	↓
# of new admissions**	N/A	N/A	850	1,058	↑
Average admissions/client	N/A	N/A	4.05	5.63	↑
# Youth assisted through transitional housing for youth in Fredericton (YIT)	34	39	28	46	↑
# Women (w) and children (c) who stayed at a transition or second stage housing (April 1 2010- March 31 2013)***	N/A	N/A	93(w) 95(c)	84(w) 55(c)	↓

* Grace House & Brunswick House (formerly Men's Shelter) – some people have multiple stays

**Some people return multiple times through the year

*** Liberty Lane, Transition House, and Gignoo House

Homelessness & Housing	2013	2014	2015	2016
Average # of Persons on the Housing Waitlist (Fredericton Region)	1,236	1,270	1,360	1,099
Market rental vacancy (month of October)	6.2%	5.8%	5.9%	6.0%
Market rental average rent for 2-bedroom apartment (month of October)	\$785	\$809	\$840	\$850
# of Affordable Housing Units Created	127	0	0	32
# of SUN moves (Organized departures from Shelters and streets)	16	16	20	33

Homelessness & Hunger	2013	2014	2015	2016
Approx. # Individuals assisted by Food Banks (month of March)	3,099	3,457	2,647	2,794
Approx. # Meals served by Fredericton Community Kitchen (month of March)	13,698	13,092	14,000	14,000

Homelessness & Income	2013	2014	2015	2016
Average# of Social Assistance Cases (Fredericton Region)	4,424	4,408	4,398	4,319
NB Social Assistance Rate for a single person	\$537	\$537	\$537	\$537
Minimum Wage (December)	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.30	\$10.65

Sources Available Upon Request

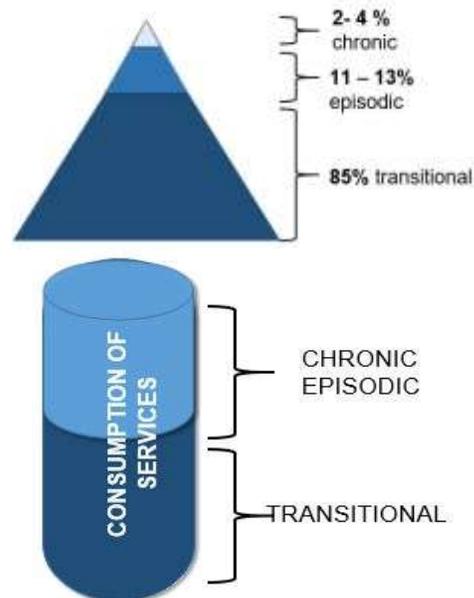
a phased strategic approach

The longer and more frequently a person is exposed to homelessness, the more likely they are to rely on costly and often ineffective emergency services. It has been seen that **chronic and episodic** homelessness (15% of the homeless population) relies on approximately 50% of the resources used in our homeless serving system, due in part to the complex needs and challenges faced by people trapped in an ongoing cycle of homelessness.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS: those who experience long-term and ongoing homelessness as a result of complex barriers, particularly related to mental health and addictions. Someone who is currently homeless and has been homeless for six months or more is considered chronically homeless.

EPISODIC HOMELESSNESS: those who experience recurring episodes of homelessness throughout their lifetime are likelier to face more complex challenges involving health, mental health, addictions or violence. Someone who is currently homeless and has experienced 3 or more episodes of homeless in the past year are considered episodically homeless.

TRANSITIONAL HOMELESSNESS: Most people experience homelessness for a short time and infrequently in their life time. Usually, this is a result of lack of income or housing affordability challenges. Most exit homelessness with minimal or no intervention.



People are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed. This is as true for people experiencing homelessness and those with mental health and addictions issues as it is for anyone.

By strategically focusing on ending chronic and episodic homelessness initially, we relieve pressure on our system and are then better equipped to focus on prevention measures and move upstream to address the needs of those at risk of or experiencing transitional homelessness.

Achieving an end to chronic and episodic homelessness means departing from treatment first approaches that require people experiencing homelessness to first complete treatment for addictions and or mental health issues as a pre-condition of being housed. Instead, Housing First calls for immediate access to permanent housing and the supports needed to maintain it.

saving money by doing the *right thing*

Long-term homelessness
(shelters, streets and couches)

=

Higher rates of emergency service use
Social Service Use – Chronic & Episodic
\$72,000 - \$134,000/year

+SUPPORTS

=

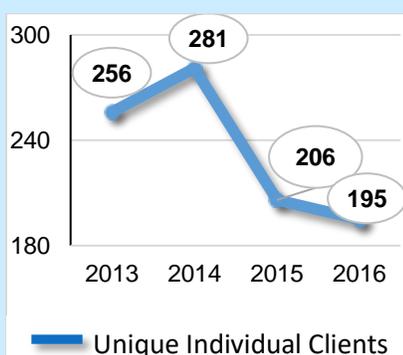
LESS

The John Howard Society of Fredericton created 12 Housing First style units in 2010 and tracked service usage for twelve formerly chronic and episodically homeless tenants and saw an **83% reduction in emergency service** (police, hospital, ambulance, etc.) usage in the first year when provided with affordable housing and supports.

Fredericton Overview

Four year trend at the Fredericton Homeless Shelters

Facilities at the Fredericton Homeless Shelters Inc. includes a 25 bed men's shelter, a 10 bed women's shelter and a 4 unit transitional housing facility.



In 2016 **195** individuals stayed at the Fredericton Homeless Shelters compared to **281** individuals in 2014.

There has been a **31%** decrease in shelter usage since the launch of The Road Home.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Shift to Housing First values
- Creation of Intensive Case Management Team
- Outreach services doubled in size
- Increase in available rent subsidies for organized departures
- Creation of Emergency Housing Fund

The trends are encouraging as the number of individuals staying at the Fredericton Homeless Shelters Inc has fallen for the past two years in a row shows signs that a systems approach grounded in Housing First can make a powerful impact. The 31% decrease in unique shelter users is a promising indicator that we are moving in the right direction.

Since the launch of the Road Home: A Plan to End Homelessness in Fredericton, a number of changes have taken place within our homelessness serving system; such as the adoption of a common intake and assessment model, the creation of a Housing Loss Prevention Fund and Emergency Housing Fund, and the addition of an Intensive Case Management (ICM) team to our menu of services. Also, due to an increased investment in housing and homelessness in the 2016 Federal Budget, our region received an increase in available rent subsidies. The Fredericton region office of Social Development partnered with community to ensure that half of these new subsidies were used specifically for people who have experienced chronic/episodic homelessness, who have complex barriers to housing stability.

While reduced shelter usage (unique # of individuals) is worth celebrating, these are not the only indicators of homelessness. Our 2016 Fredericton Homeless Count, shelter data and the federal Community Progress Indicators Report reveal several trends that indicate that we need increase our efforts to break the cycle of homelessness amongst people with the most complex challenges to housing.

- From 2010 – 2015 the % of **'long stays'** (30 days or more) at shelters has **increased by 51%** while 'short stays' (1 – 4 days) has decreased by 25%: longer stays equals fewer beds for transitional homelessness as shelters remain full
- Our men's shelter is **often running at or above capacity for the past 2 years**
- There was an 18% increase in average number of admissions/user from 2015 to 2016 indicating challenges maintaining housing
- Participants of the 2016 Homeless Count who were sleeping outside or in shelters indicated an **average duration of homelessness of 34.8 months**
- # of individuals using shelter went down by 31% but # of **admissions went up by 39%** suggesting an increase in episodic homelessness and a greater need for follow up/housing stability supports.

Local Assets

Fredericton Outreach Services

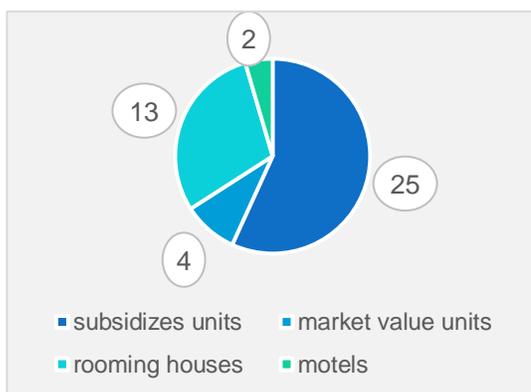
In 2015, Capital Region Mental Health and Addictions Association (CRMHAA) and the John Howard Society of Fredericton (JHSF) joined forces to create Fredericton Outreach Services (FOS) which partners heavily with the Fredericton Homeless Shelters and our Downtown Community Health Clinic (FOS also worked in collaboration with Partners for Youth Outreach until the fall of 2016). In November of 2016, FOS amalgamated two outreach funding streams (Homeless Partnering Strategy and Department of Social Development) and more than doubled the size of the team. In December 2016, FOS grew to 5.5 members, and now has the capacity to offer two outreach models ensuring those in need receive the right amount of supports at the right time:

- **Intensive Case Management (ICM):** low client to worker ratio (1:20) for people assessed to have the most complex challenges (moderate to high acuity or chronic/episodic) – recovery oriented, client focused with after-hour supports
- **Transitional Supports:** designed to meet the needs of low acuity or transitionally homeless individuals

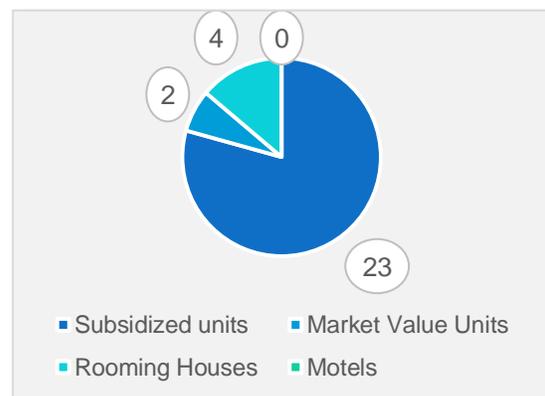
In keeping with Housing First principles, FOS focuses on rapidly re-house individuals as quickly as possible and then begin to work on the issues that contributed to their homelessness from the stability and safety of a home.

From April 1st 2016 to March 31st, 2017 FOS helped **59 individuals access housing** in subsidized or market value units (NOTE: some of these are also accounted for as SUN moves). Meanwhile **21 individuals** were helped to access provisional housing in **rooming houses and motels** until a more stable housing solution can be found. Total moves included **77 moderate and high acuity** and **7 low acuity**. The following tables show re-housing by housing type for high and moderate acuity clients who were engaged by FOS.

HIGH ACUITY

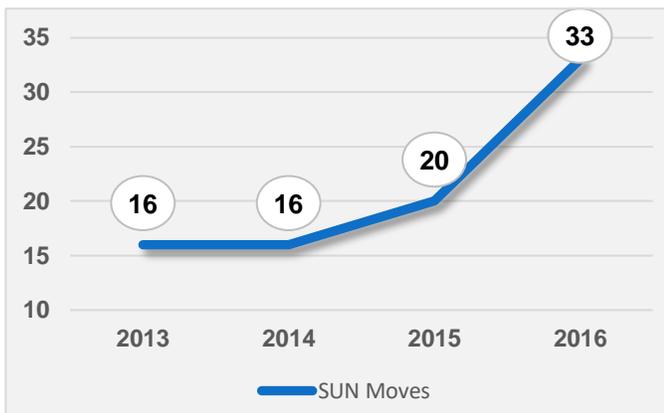


MODERATE ACUITY



Supportive Housing Network (SUN)

A concerted effort to transition long term homeless shelter clients and homeless into affordable housing began in 2010 and has led to the creation of the Supportive Housing Network in Fredericton. The multi-stakeholder committee works collaboratively to support the successful transition and sustainable tenancy of homeless individuals into safe, affordable housing. As of March 2017, SUN has helped **re-house 138 people** since its inception.



SUN brings together homeless serving agencies, church groups, businesses, concerned citizens, formerly homeless individuals and representatives from the provincial department of social development to help re-house homeless individuals each month.

Over the past 4 years, SUN's capacity for monthly moves has grown significantly due to an increase in dedicated rent subsidies for chronic/episodically homeless individuals.

Common Intake/assessment and Triage

Implementing a 'phased strategic approach' means adopting a common assessment tool to help identify the needs and barriers of homeless populations so that we are better equipped to triage supports as required. In 2015, Fredericton Outreach Services adopted the **Service Prioritization Assistance Decision Tool (SPDAT)** to help in their efforts to identify and serve high to moderate acuity clients. SPDAT is an evidence-based tool that measures acuity: acuity refers to the level of needs in the homeless population and considers a number of factors. Acuity levels are not distributed evenly amongst those experiencing homelessness or at risk; as such, this is why a standardized and consistently applied acuity assessment tool is critical to coordinating the homeless-serving system. It ensures providers 'speak the same language,' thereby increasing community knowledge regarding levels of need and ensuring better program matching of those in need with resources poised to meet their needs effectively.

Since 2015, our community now has **three fully certified SPDAT trainers** and more than a dozen individuals are trained to perform SPDAT assessments.

Since the adoption of SPDAT, approximately 50 University of New Brunswick Nursing students have been trained in use of a shorter version of this tool, VI-SPDAT, as a component of their practicum training to assist in their care of vulnerable populations.

Local Assets

Emergency Housing Fund

As a result of an increase to social infrastructure spending under the 2016 Federal Budget, our region received an increase to the Homeless Partnering Strategy funding stream for 2016/17 and 2017/18. Part of these new funds have been used to create the Emergency Housing Fund (EHF) which will allow our FOS team to help Housing First clients (moderate to high acuity) cover housing costs in the short term. The funding provides a temporary bridge when needed for Housing First clients who are waiting to access rent supplements from provincial programs. This fund became active in the last quarter of 2016/17 and already **18 requests for support have been approved** (including individuals, couples and families). This is significant as it often represents individuals who are sleeping outside, in stair wells and ATMs over our winter months (Jan – March 2017). This fund is anticipated to help rapidly re-house/provisionally house dozens of people in the coming months as we work to secure long-term affordable housing solutions.

Housing Loss Prevention Fund

This fund will be used to support Housing First clients with housing loss prevention. To be eligible for this fund a case for funding must be made by the Housing First/ Outreach Team after all other sources of funding are exhausted. This fund must be used as a last resort to prevent eviction. This fund may also be an incentive for landlords to engage in the Housing First program supporting an expansion to scattered sites. This **\$42,000** fund was created as a result of community fundraising efforts through the Next 26 & Let's Get Frank about Homelessness campaigns and is expected to help end the cycle of homelessness for many of our community's most vulnerable. **This fund became active in the last quarter of 2016/17 (January – March) and has already been used to prevent a recurrence of homelessness for 10 Housing First clients** and will continue to provide supports to dozens more in the months to come.

Fredericton Homeless Shelters Inc.:

Transitional Supportive Housing Units

With the assistance from the CAGH's Next 26/Let's Get Frank funds (\$25,000 grant), the Shelters added 4 transitional housing units to its service menu for chronically and episodically homeless residents of the Shelters. These units were designed to align with Housing First (HF) principles and support HF core values through its tenant eligibility and selection policies; recovery-oriented approach in regards to services and supports; and with the ultimate aim of moving residents into independent and permanent housing (with services and supports as needed) as quickly as possible, with no preconditions requirements. Fredericton Homeless Shelters works actively with the Fredericton Outreach Services and supports the program by providing onsite office space for the FOS team.

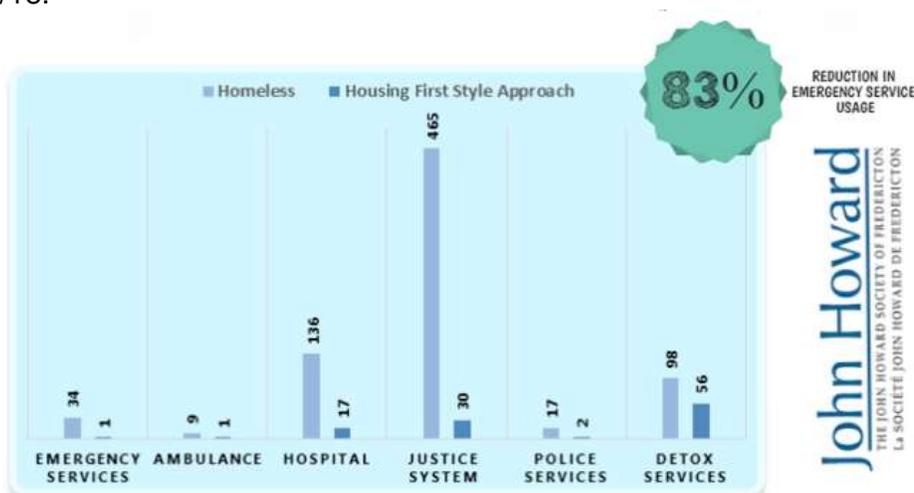
Liberty Lane: New Construction and Housing First Unit

Through the support of a \$50,000 grant from the CAGH's Next 26/Let's Get Frank fund, Liberty Lane will be establishing one Housing First unit in their new 13 unit development, scheduled to open in the spring of 2017. Liberty Lane plays a critical role in our community and, over the past five years, has provided second stage housing to **70 women and their children** who were fleeing domestic violence. In 2016, 17 women and their families were turned away from Liberty Lane because their facilities were at capacity. Now with the creation of their new facility, they will **increase their housing capacity by 50%**.

John Howard Society of Fredericton:

Housing First Apartments

On October 1, 2010, the John Howard Society of Fredericton opened a 12 unit supportive affordable housing program based on the principles of **Housing First**. This development has been an incredible asset to our community and has seen great outcomes. In their first year of operation, this development demonstrated an **83% reduction in emergency service** usage and has maintained a **90% retention rate** amongst its tenants. Building on the success of this model, JHSF added **four more units** to its housing portfolio in 2016 and is currently working on additional builds for 2017/18.



Fredericton Downtown Community Health Clinic

In March of 2017, the Horizon Health Network and the University of New Brunswick opened a new Downtown Community Health Clinic which provides integrated health service delivery, education and research in a primary health care setting. In addition to providing interdisciplinary primary health care, the centre advances exploration and innovation in community-based health service

delivery and applied health research. In addition to a full team of health professionals, the Clinic also has two full-time social workers who are members of the Clinic's interdisciplinary team and who work collaboratively with homeless serving community. The Clinic has been a long-time member of SUN committee and partners with Fredericton Outreach Services (FOS). The Clinic also actively provides Street Outreach, including regular visiting to the rooming houses in the downtown.

Another unique feature of FDCHC is its Community Access Room, a laundry and showering facility for the vulnerably housed or homeless population. It's also a place where you can have a cup of coffee and learn about helpful community resources.



Housing Affordability in Fredericton

Lack of social and affordable housing is one of the greatest hurdles to Housing First



In New Brunswick, the average cost of rental accommodations is highest in Fredericton while vacancy rates are the lowest. This creates a challenging housing climate in our community: especially for low income earners.

According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) data, a one bedroom apartment in Fredericton costs 10% more than the provincial average and Fredericton's vacancy rate is 25% lower than the provincial average: creating a tight housing market and limiting housing options for people living in poverty.

Housing affordability is routinely measured using an affordability standard set out by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Affordable Housing is adequate shelter that does not exceed 30% of household income. This affordability threshold is used as a guideline for low and moderate income households in determining how much of their gross income should be directed to shelter costs, while leaving enough for food, transportation, taxes, clothes and other necessities. According to Statistics Canada, **43% of renters in Fredericton are in 'core housing need'** (spending 30% or more of household income on housing) while 13% of owners fall into this category.

Comparing Income Assistance rates against our housing market, it is seen that it can be extremely challenging (if not impossible) for individuals and families to find affordable housing in the private market. For example, the 2016 Income Assistance rate for single non-elderly clients is \$537/month, meaning no more than \$161/month should be spent on housing; however, the average one bedroom is \$687/month.

Single non-elderly on assistance monthly income	\$537
Applying the 30% factor (amount for shelter)	
Monthly amount for shelter to avoid core housing need	\$166

Senior on OAS/GIS – monthly income	\$1,446
Applying the 30% factor (amount for shelter)	
Monthly amount for shelter to avoid core housing need	\$433

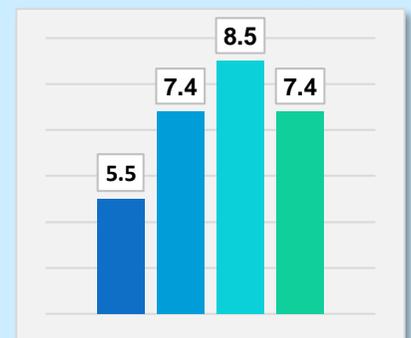
Family of four on Income Assistance – monthly income	\$1,060
Applying the 30% factor (amount for shelter)	
Monthly amount for shelter to avoid core housing need	\$318
Average cost for a 3 bedroom apartment Fredericton	\$1,058

Housing Indicators by Community

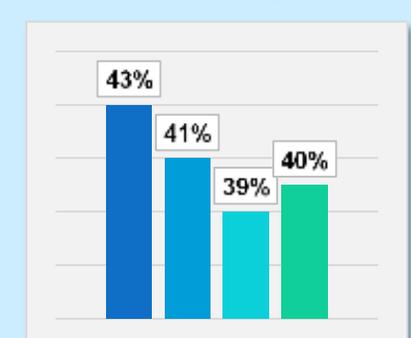
RENTAL PRICE – 1 BEDROOM



VACANCY RATE (%)



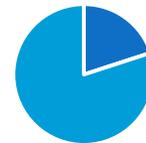
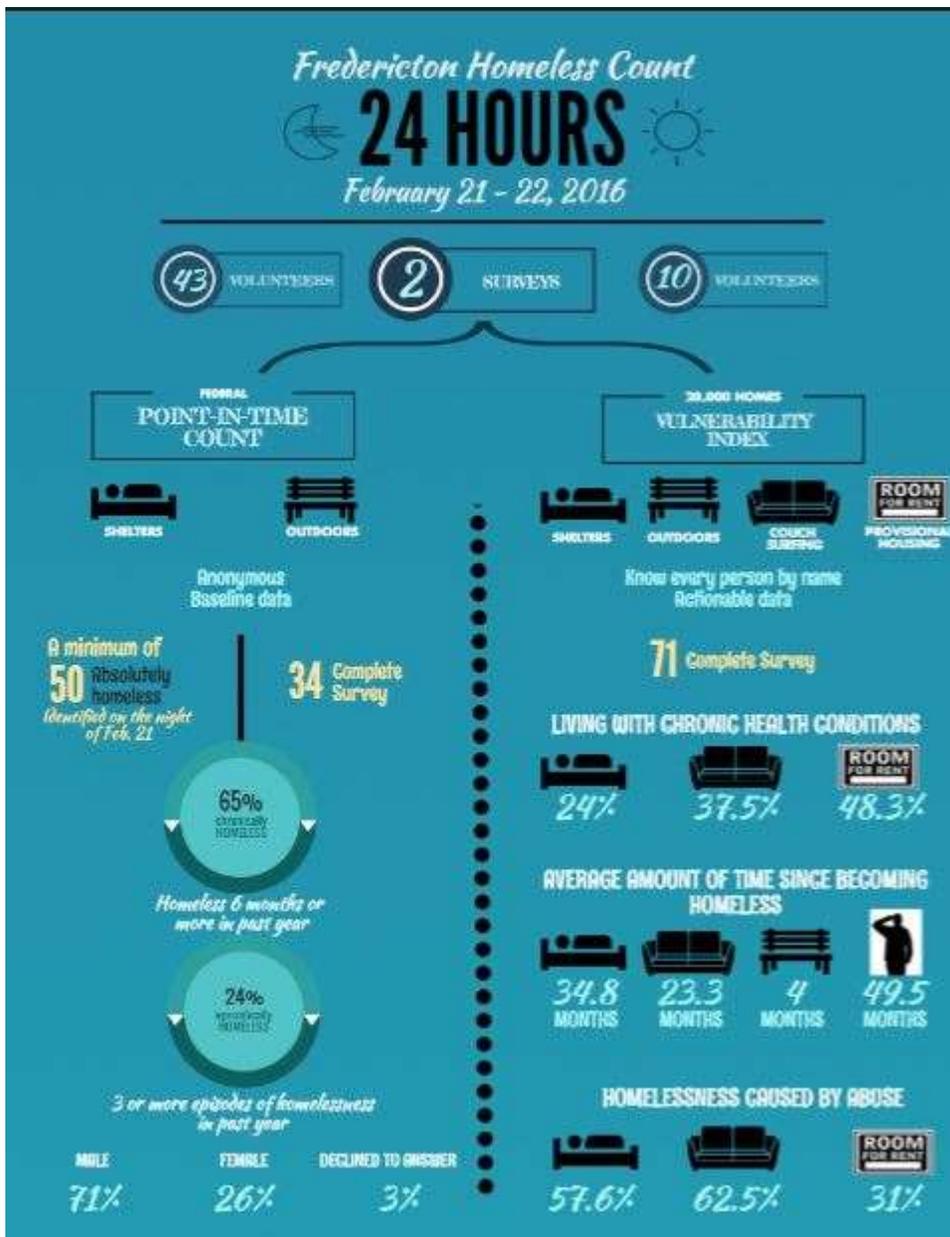
RENTERS - CORE HOUSING NEED



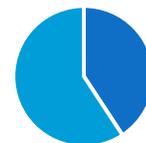
2016 Fredericton Homeless Count

The first Fredericton Homeless Count was held over a 24 hour period from February 21st to February 22nd, 2016. The Count partnered with 10 organizations and mobilized 43 volunteers who connected with 190 people and conducted 87 surveys. Two surveys were offered simultaneously: 1) the Point-in-Time Count Survey through the Federal Government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and 2) the 20,000 Homes Campaign Survey which used the assessment model outlined on p.9 (VI-SPDAT) to provide a general assessment of acuity of respondents'

The findings from the Fredericton Homeless Count will aid our community's understanding of the characteristics and needs of our local homeless population and allow for better service provision and coordination. On the night of February 21st, 2016 fifty people were identified as absolutely homeless (in shelters or sleeping outdoors). Thirty-four individuals elected to participate in the Point-in-Time Count Survey and 71 individual participated in the 20,000 Homes Campaign Survey.



20% categorized as "low acuity" and recommended for mainstream housing



55% categorized as "medium acuity" and recommended for rapid rehousing



25% categorized as "high acuity" and recommended for permanent supportive housing

Frontline Voices

For this edition of the Progress Report we asked some of the dedicated individuals working on the front-line of homelessness to submit some thoughts and updates on the valuable work done within their agencies. For this edition we would like to highlight updates and perspectives from executive directors of three different emergency, transitional and second stage housing providers.

Fredericton Homeless Shelters Inc.

Submitted by Warren Maddox, Executive Director

For FHSI, 2016 proved to be a year of great progress and transition. Last year, we managed to solidify our position in the community as not only a first-responder to those experiencing homelessness, but also begin to address the issues to prevent recurring rates of homelessness among our residents. We have done this through our 23-hour, 360-support models and close coordination with our Outreach partners, which has been instrumental in not only helping our residents to feel completely supported, but have also proved successful in other realms too. We have been successful in helping our residents gain access to resources while acting as an impartial body that both knows how to navigate the various systems but that can also act as an advocate on their behalf. The past year has been one of substantial growth for us, especially with the opening of our newest shelter, Brunswick Home. We are also happy to report that all of our shelters and their residents are doing well.

Further to this, 2016 has been a year of substantial growth in that we have finally been able to bring in a designated resident transition planner whose main job is to help residents set personal and employment goals, help them access the resources needed in order to achieve those goals, and then hold them accountable for their progress through regular check-ins. Our transition plans originally began as a project that we wanted to give a try and has since become something that we believe is instrumental in helping our residents transition out of The Shelters and into full independence. Our transition planning model is delivered in three parts that all deal with different issues. The first part is designed to calm any immediate crises that the resident is dealing with and help them gain access to the resources that they need. Much of the time, the crises that we are helping our residents deal with are centered around mental health and access to mental health medications, healthcare, addictions, and of course, needing shelter. Once we have helped our residents gain access to the resources that they need, we help them set some personal and employment goals for themselves. To help our residents gain employment, we work with them either one-on-one or sometimes in groups and help them build a resume and cover letter, job hunt, provide training, materials and other support as needed.

FHSI has evolved, we have moved from a human warehouse to a housing option that changes lives and as such we are proud of our role as the front-line organization that believes in action over rhetoric. The restoration of human dignity is not a theoretical with us, it is our daily mandate.



Liberty Lane

Submitted by **Fiona Williams, Executive Director**

Like many non-profits, at Liberty Lane we make the best of what we have; and we get creative about it at times! However, we cannot be creative about not being wheelchair accessible in our split-level building, or turning away mothers with more than three children because we only have one and two bedroom units. For Liberty Lane it is time to move, build and evolve.

Liberty Lane has a new facility under construction with a wheelchair accessible unit, a wheelchair accessible resource centre, three bedroom units (as well as one- and two-bedroom units), and the new location puts us near regular bus routes, other support services, amenities, and recreation facilities.

Women who are leaving or living with family violence have options within the two services at Liberty Lane. First, is our Second Stage Housing: the new facility has 10 apartments as part of our safe affordable housing program with on-site support groups and individual attention. Second, is our Family Violence Prevention Outreach Program: the outreach workers meet with women who have experienced family violence. The outreach workers offer safety planning, community support groups for women, referrals, and individual support.

Each woman participating in Liberty Lane programs sets her own goals, and our staff empowers the women to live out their goals through support, education about healthy relationships, and information about local resources. The children of Liberty Lane are safer when their mothers are safer.

Liberty Lane looks forward to partnering with other services in the community, and most importantly to providing adaptive services to the women and children who enter our doors.

Youth in Transition

Submitted by **Julie Gallant-Daigle, Executive Director**

Youth homelessness in Canada is a serious and pervasive issue. Although the problem at times lacks visibility, statistics recount that over the course of the year the number of young people who wind up homeless in Canada is at least 35,000 and on any given night, there may be 6000 homeless youth. Many of these youth rely on housing services on a temporary or long-term basis; one in five shelter users are youth. The situation here in New Brunswick and within Fredericton is no anomaly. Youth experiencing housing crisis need and actively seek out services.

Since March 2002 Youth in Transition has assisted 273 youth over 394 stays. Since 2007, our average overall occupancy at Chrysalis House has remained 74%. We also consistently have a wait list of boys and girls.

The impact of housing instability of crisis on a youth is dire. Only one in three youth experiencing homelessness in Canada graduate high school. More than half of homeless youth have been in jail, a youth detention center or prison. "When young people come to depend on emergency services without access to permanent and age-appropriate housing and necessary supports, this leads to declining health and well-being and most certainly to an uncertain future." (Gaetz, Youth, 2)

The problem is pervasive; the need is there, as is the desire to access services.

The causes of youth homelessness include but are not limited to: domestic violence, mental health, addictions, abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect), poverty, underemployment, lack of housing affordability, and system failures (child protection, health & mental health and corrections). (Gaetz, Coming Age, 2014)

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness



At the 2016 State of the City Address, Fredericton's Mayor, Mike O'Brien, made an unprecedented move and announced the launch of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness (MTFH). Mayor O'Brien has long been a vocal supporter of Housing First principles and a leader in promoting sustainable solutions to homelessness. Mayor O'Brien has served as the Chair of the Community Action Group on Homelessness and the City's Affordable Housing Committee.

In an effort to make Fredericton a more livable, sustainable, and affordable city for all, the Task Force was struck to identify municipal actions in support of The Road Home: A Plan to End Homelessness in Fredericton.

Working in collaboration with the CAGH, the Task Force brought together experts from organizations relevant to the housing and homelessness sectors including: architects, designers, builders, private, non-profit and public sector property developers, non-profit associations, apartment owners, and academics. Collectively, these members worked to identify areas of focus that fall within the City's jurisdiction that could promote the outcomes/goals set out in The Road Home.

Some of the goals of the Task Force include:
Identify quick-start actions that the City can adopt related to the Road Home

- Identify medium and long term goals that will support the vision of the Road Home
- Submit full report to Council for April 2017 for consideration
- Affordable Housing Committee will follow up on all actions approved by Council and will continue to report on progress



However, in the short time frame of the Task Force, its members have reached well beyond this initial focus and have initiated partnerships and projects that will have a significant and long lasting impact on homelessness in Fredericton. The full scope of these initiatives, ground breaking partnerships and strategies will be shared in full with the release of the Task Force's Final Report later this spring.

Stay tuned! Great things lay ahead for The Road Home in 2017!

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