

Experiencing Homelessness

The First Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton, 2008

The Current Situation in Greater Moncton

Homelessness Indicators	2007
Population of Greater Moncton (CMA-2006 census)	126,424
Number of individuals who stayed in a shelter bed	725*
Number of times shelter beds were used	4,707
Average length of stay in emergency shelters (days)	6.49
Number of emergency shelter beds in Greater Moncton:	
For men	26
For women (domestic violence)	17
For women (not domestic violence)	4
Number of mats (men and women)	30
Number of beds for drug/alcohol rehabilitation:	20
For men	14
For women	6
Number of food banks	6
Number of soup kitchens	6
Number of individuals assisted HungerCount 2007	6,354
Housing Indicators	
Number of provincially-subsidized social housing units	1318
Of these, # of units owned by the province	649
Of these, # provincially-subsidized in private dwelling	669
Number on the provincially-subsidized waiting list	671
New units in 2007 Affordable Rental Housing Program	69
Number of transitional housing units	8
Number of long-term supportive housing units	42
Number of affordable housing units	999
Rental vacancy rate (April 2007)	6.1%
Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment	\$643
Income Indicators	
Social assistance for a single person	\$285
# individuals on social assistance in Greater Moncton (includes those on disability assistance)	4,328
Minimum wage in NB (end 2007)	\$7.50

*Probably twice as many stayed at Harvest House; data not available

725* people were homeless and stayed in a shelter at some point in 2007.

131 women and 88 children fled domestic violence.



GREATER MONCTON
HOMELESSNESS
STEERING COMMITTEE

This is the first Report Card on Homelessness in Greater Moncton. It presents a profile of homelessness in the tri-city area. Future progress or lack of progress in Greater Moncton will be measured using the indicators in the table above.

The Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee is an inter-agency committee representing agencies in Greater Moncton that work with the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless. 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. www.monctonhomelessness.org

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”).

Who is “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.



Why Does Homelessness exist in Greater Moncton?

Homelessness can occur for any number of reasons. The lack of adequate job opportunities and the lack of affordable housing make it difficult for people with lower paying jobs or unstable employment to get and keep stable and suitable housing. People with low incomes have no cushion when an unexpected expense arises. Families or individuals may be at risk of homelessness when they:

- Have incomes too low to access and retain suitable and appropriate housing;
- Become unemployed;
- Experience abuse or violence;
- Suffer from physical or mental health conditions;
- Face challenges with substance use problems;
- Have conditions such as a physical or developmental disability or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder;
- Face difficulties or discrimination by landlords or neighbours.

...not everyone has support from family or friends...

Paycheque to paycheque

Many people live from paycheque to paycheque. A loss of employment for even a week or two can put them at risk of homelessness. Low income “cut-offs” refer to the income level below which households spend more than 50 percent of their income on food, shelter and clothing. The “cut-offs” are based on household and community size.

Almost 14% of all people over age 15 living in private households in Greater Moncton lived in low income (before tax) in 2005. A breakdown by gender shows that 14.8% of women and 12.2% of men in Greater Moncton lived in low income in 2005 (2006 Census). The median family income in Greater Moncton in 2005 was \$59,813 (this means that 50% of families earned more, 50% earned less). The median income of female lone-parent families was \$29,977.

Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs) Greater Moncton 2006 (after tax)	
1 person	\$14,859
2 people	\$18,085
3 people	\$22,519
4 people	\$28,095
5 people	\$31,992
6 people	\$35,480
7+ people	\$38,967
14% of people over age 15 in Greater Moncton were living in low income in 2006	

Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006 Poverty Lines (LICOs)

Pay the rent or feed the kids?

The cost of renting in Greater Moncton has not decreased over the past few years. In fact, in the spring of 2008, Moncton and Fredericton were the only urban centres in the province with an average rent higher than the provincial average (Rental Market Report, New Brunswick, Spring 2008, CMHC). As the cost of housing relative to income rises for low-income earners – and especially given rising fuel costs these days – less money is available for other necessities such as food. The use of food banks reflects the fact that many households are facing significant economic problems, and are thus vulnerable to homelessness. Many food bank users are the working poor.

Average Monthly Rents in Greater Moncton			
Unit size	Oct 2007	Oct 2006	End 2005
Bachelor	\$413	\$426	\$393
1 Bedroom	\$532	\$540	\$513
2 Bedrooms	\$643	\$636	\$612
3+ Bedrooms	\$706	\$673	\$665

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report – NB Highlights – December 2006
CMHC Rental Market Report – New Brunswick Highlights – Fall 2007

Someone working 8 hours a day at minimum wage would earn roughly \$1,300 a month. They would spend 50% of their income on rent in a two-bedroom apartment. And then there's the electricity bill, the taxes, the water, the groceries...

A lack of affordable housing & uncertain job market create the conditions for homelessness...

What we're doing now to help in Greater Moncton

Emergency shelters in Greater Moncton		
Name	#	For
Addictions Services	20 beds	Drug/alcohol (14 for men; 6 for women). Need to get on waiting list.
Crossroads for Women Inc.	17 beds	Domestic violence (women and children).
Harvest House	30 mats	Men and women sleep on floor in Outreach centre.
House of Nazareth	30 beds	24 men; 4 women; 2 on reserve

Sources: House of Nazareth annual report 2007; Crossroads for Women annual report 2007-08; interviews.

The House of Nazareth offers emergency shelter for individuals in need, and provides meals and clothing as well. Sixty-three percent of those who used the shelter in 2007 were from New Brunswick. At 4pm each day, bagged lunches are given out to people not staying at the shelter. Every weekend after the 15th of the month, full course meals are offered at 5:30pm on Saturdays and Sundays to residents and non-residents. Some soup kitchens in Moncton are closed on weekends, and people on low income can often not afford to purchase enough food for the whole month. The House of Nazareth also operates Recycle Centre "Boutique Encore," a second-hand store offering used clothing, furniture and other household goods. Items are given free of charge or sold at affordable prices for those who can afford to pay.



2007 Statistics – House of Nazareth	
Total number of clients	725
Total number of nights stayed	4,707
Average number of nights stayed per client	6.49
Average number of beds occupied per night	12.89
Total meals served (including bagged lunches)	27,793
Clients served at "Boutique Encore"	11,244

Sources: House of Nazareth annual report 2007

Crossroads for Women statistics for fiscal year 2007-08:

- 131 different women, 88 different children stayed there at some point during this year
- Of the 13 shelters in the province, Crossroads is the busiest.
- Totals nights stayed: 1,619 women; 1,108 children.
- Length of stay at Crossroads:
 - 21 women stayed 24 hours
 - 75 stayed two weeks
 - 13 stayed more than two weeks but less than four
 - 21 stayed four weeks
- Discharge information:
 - 23 returned home to mate
 - 12 returned home, mate left
 - 4 went to Second stage housing
 - 36 found housing
 - 24 went to stay with friends or relatives

In September 2008, Harvest House had an average of 30 people per night sleeping on mats in the Outreach Centre. Some were pregnant women.

There is very little shelter for homeless or at risk women in Greater Moncton, especially those who are young and pregnant.

Of the 13 shelters in New Brunswick for women and children fleeing domestic violence, Crossroads for Women in Moncton is the busiest.

What we're doing now to help in Greater Moncton (continued)

Food Banks

Albert County food Bank
 Christian Food Bank
 Mobile One Food Pantry
 Open Hands Food Bank
 West End Food Bank
 YMCA Community Food Bank



Soup Kitchens

Karing Kitchen
 Mobile One Soup Kitchen
 Ray of Hope Needy Kitchen
 First United Baptist Church (supplemental)
 Humphrey Memorial United Church (supplemental)
 St. George's Anglican Church (supplemental)



Food Dépot Alimentaire distributed 170,000 pounds of food monthly to 23 food banks and soup kitchens in Westmorland, Albert and Kent in 2007.

The Mobile One Soup Kitchen served 34,267 meals in 2007. The Mobile Food Pantry program (including the temporary High Street Mobile Food Bank project) served 85,418 meals in the same year.

HungerCount is an annual survey conducted since 1989 by the Canadian Association of Food Banks as a way of providing an up-to-date portrait of hunger and food insecurity in Canada. The results of the 2007 survey showed an unacceptable level of hunger in Canada. Despite the fact that unemployment has reached its lowest point in decades, and that money continues to flow into the country thanks to a robust market for natural resources, high rates of food bank use remind us that governments cannot ignore their responsibility to the nation's most vulnerable citizens.

In New Brunswick, during HungerCount 2007, 6.1% of the population of Greater Moncton was assisted, compared to 2.2% provincially and 2.3% nationally. More than 28% of those assisted were children. Some 10% reported employment income.

HungerCount 2007	Greater Moncton	New Brunswick	Canada
Individuals assisted:	6,354 (6.1% of municipal population)	16,347 (2.2% of provincial population)	720,231 (2.3% of national population)
Percent children:	28.2%	33.1%	38.7%
Percent reporting employment income:	10.3%	10.7%	13.5%
Percent receiving social assistance	70.5%	65%	50.7%
Percent seniors:	4.3%	9.2%	6.1%

Source: HungerCount 2007 – Canadian Association of Food Banks
 Stats Canada – Estimated population in Canada April 1, 2007 based on 2006 Census = 31,612,895

Other shelter needs in Greater Moncton for homeless & those at risk

In addition to emergency shelters, there are a number of other agencies and organizations that offer transitional, supportive and affordable housing in Greater Moncton, to help the homeless and those at risk to transition into a more stable living situation. This is what the situation looked like at the end of 2007.

What is Transitional Housing? Housing facilities that provide services beyond basic needs and that, while not permanent, generally allow for a longer length of stay than emergency housing facilities (up to three years). These facilities offer more privacy to residents than emergency housing, and place greater emphasis on participation. They are targeted to those in need of structure, support, and/or skill building to move from homelessness to housing stability, and ultimately to prevent a return to homelessness.

What is Long-term supportive housing? Housing for individuals and families that include supports and services integrated into the housing, and no length-of-stay duration. Services depend on clients' needs and are provided to help residents maintain independence and stability to promote social inclusion.

What is Social housing? Public, co-op or non-profit housing with long-term government subsidies paid to a housing provider (three or more years).

What is Affordable housing? Social housing or other housing that has been built under a government affordable housing program. Social housing includes public housing, non-profit housing, co-op housing and rent supplement units in the private rental sector. Housing is affordable if it costs less than 30% of before-tax household income. Source: Community Plan 2007-09 Reference Guide, August 31, 2007

At end 2007, 126 families, 237 seniors and 272 non-elderly singles were on the waiting list for provincially subsidized units in Greater Moncton. To get on the list call **1-866-426-5191**.

Transitional housing		
Name	#	For
Crossroads for Women Second Stage Housing	6 units	Women leaving Crossroads shelter, can stay one year
Moncton Youth Residences Inc.	2 units (6 beds)	At risk youth (16-20); two 3-bed units, one for females; one for males; supervised; can stay up to one year

Long-term supportive housing

Alternative Residences Inc. – For mental health clients. 30 units including 26 community apartments; four 24-hour residences. Can accommodate approximately 66-76; two year transition.

Future Horizons Housing Inc. – 12 units (three 2-bedrooms; nine 3-bedrooms) only available to clients of Headstart Inc. Support services (e.g. counselling, life skills, personal motivation, budget management) are provided on on-going basis. Families can stay five years or more.

Social housing

The provincial Department of Social Development owns 647 units of Public Housing and Rural/Native Housing in Greater Moncton. It also provides rent supplements for another 669 units in private buildings. There is typically a long waiting list to access these units; at the end of 2007, 671 individuals and families were on the list, including 272 non-elderly singles and 237 seniors.

Included in these figures are four units leased from the department by AIDS Moncton Inc. for use by its clients, and two units leased by Crossroads for Women Inc. for its clients.

None of the provincially owned or privately owned units offers any programming or services to clients. The only exception to this would be a few rent supplements operated by Alternative Residences Inc. for mental health clients.

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

Affordable Housing

Atlantic People's Housing Ltd. has been a key developer of affordable housing in the Greater Moncton area. This non-profit organization currently owns and/or manages 999 units of housing, including 697 for families and 232 units for seniors.

Other

There are two halfway houses in Greater Moncton for those exiting correctional services: Cannell House, 20 beds for men, and Greenfield House, 16 beds for men, five for women, one for emergency.

Beyond shelter in Greater Moncton

Shelter is the first but not the only need of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. They have a variety of needs, including outreach, drop-in programs, health and education services, advice and counselling. FindMyWay is a unique on-line database of services available in the Greater Moncton area.

http://en.findmyway.ca/start/moncton_region

What can YOU do?

1. **Educate** yourself and others about the problem of homelessness.
2. **Volunteer** your time to work directly with people experiencing homelessness.
3. **Advocate** on behalf of people who are homeless and organizations that work with people who are homeless.
4. **Contribute** to and help organizations that work to end homelessness.
5. **Become aware of the language you use** and refrain from using words that refer to people experiencing homelessness in derogatory ways.
6. **Be aware of and help change attitudes** about homelessness among your friends, family and people within the community to help reduce NIMBY (“not in my backyard”) reactions.
7. **Be inclusive** and promote inclusive communities throughout the city.

Many agencies and their dedicated staff assist homeless individuals and families. However, the elimination of homelessness requires the cooperation of the entire community as well as all levels of government.

This first 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. Homelessness is not a new phenomenon, although it has become more common in Canada since the 1980s.

That is not to say it will “always be with us” and that we should learn to “live with it” – quite the contrary. Homelessness is a complex issue that involves both economics and individual circumstances. Progress has been made and tools and solutions are emerging to help Greater Moncton as a community address homelessness. This Report Card will help to find new avenues to further this progress. www.monctonhomelessness.org

Who are the “hidden homeless”?

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy defines the hidden homeless as individuals or families living in locations not intended for human habitation (e.g. abandoned buildings) and/or continuously moving among temporary housing arrangements provided by strangers, friends or family. This is also known as “couch surfing.” There is currently no way to measure the size of this population in Greater Moncton. During the month of September 2008, we asked some questions to those dropping into Youth Quest Inc. on St. George Street and to those using the Needle Exchange Program. Here’s what we found:

NEEDLE EXCHANGE:

- 11 interviews were done at the Needle Exchange. Of these five were males, six females; ages ranged from 21-44. Average age was 31.
- Seven were living in rooming houses, and had been there for less than three months (three for less than one month). Prior to that, five reported having no place to live and two reported living in a rented apartment.
- Only one person reported currently having no place to live. Two were sharing accommodations or living with friends. One reported renting an apartment.
- The longest anyone reported being in his or her current housing situation was less than one year, which indicates a high rate of mobility.

YOUTH QUEST DROP-IN:

- 41 young people filled out the questionnaire. Of these 27 were male, 14 female. Ages ranged from 15 to 24. Average age was 19.
- Accommodations were as follows (numbers exceed 41 because respondents filled out all that applied):

-Own home (3)	-Rooming house (14)
-Alone (7)	-With family (10)
-With friends (14)	-Rent is subsidized (11)
-Emergency shelter (4)	-No place to live (2)
- 28 had lived in their current accommodations less than six months; 9 had lived more than a year.
- Of the 4 at the emergency shelter, 2 had been there less than one week; 1 more than a week but less than a month; 1 for 1-3 months.
- Of those with no place to live, 1 reported that that had been his situation for more than a year; the other, that it was for more than a week but less than a month.

