

Preliminary Report

# The State of Homelessness in Calgary in 2012

February 3, 2012



Calgary  
Homeless  
Foundation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Key Findings</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>The 10 Year Plan</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Reductions in homelessness</b> .....	<b>2</b>
The community has a better sense of who is actually homeless. ....	2
The number of people rough sleeping is much lower than previously believed. ....	3
It is important to put the 2012 Homeless Count into context. ....	4
Homeless counts provide a limited understanding of homelessness. ....	5
<b>2. Results show Housing First is working</b> .....	<b>6</b>
In a sample group, the majority were housed stably after 12 months of intervention. ....	6
The sample group also had improved access to health services. ....	7
<b>3. Calgary is the epicentre of homelessness in Alberta</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Migration is forecasted to increase as the economy improves, placing more pressure on at risk populations.....	9
<b>4. Emerging trends suggest family homelessness is increasingly becoming a regional rather than local phenomenon</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Length of stay in family shelters is trending down, though challenges remain.....	11
<b>5. An improved understanding of the at risk population</b> .....	<b>12</b>
The estimate of the at-risk population is being refined. ....	13
New research allows communities at risk to be mapped.....	14
As more is known, outcomes for the most vulnerable can be improved. ....	15
<b>References</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Results to date show that the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Calgary (10 Year Plan) is working. Homelessness is down for the first time since 1992.**
  - There was an 11.4% reduction in the homeless count done in 2012, compared with the 2008 homeless count.
  - There was a 24% reduction against conservative 'business as usual' projections for 2012.
  - The rough sleeping population (those sleeping outside) is significantly smaller than previously believed.
  
- 2. We are on track with 10 Year Plan projections. We are meeting the promise of Housing First for people housed under the 10 Year Plan.**
  - A sample group had 92% housing retention rate after 12 months of intervention.
  - Their physical and mental health conditions improved, with a 33% and 28% increase in treated physical and mental health conditions, respectively.
  - Their use of public systems went down, including a reduction in hospitalizations, emergency room visits, EMS use, days in jail and interactions with police. The data suggests about a 40% reduction for all points reported. Notably, emergency response visits and days in jail decreased by about 50%, while interactions with police were down by 60%.
  
- 3. Calgary is the epicentre of homelessness in Alberta, driven by migration, and the labour and rental market.**
  - Sixty-three per cent of all shelter users in Alberta are in Calgary, compared with 28% in Edmonton.
  - The number of rental units in Calgary continued to decrease from 2009 to 2011.
  - Calgary shelter use is much more sensitive to fluctuations in the labour market and migration. Edmonton's much lower number of shelter users is correlated to the fact that Edmonton has twice the per capita rental stock compared with Calgary.
  
- 4. Emerging trends suggest family homelessness is increasingly becoming a regional rather than local phenomenon. Prevention and Housing First programs are working, but Calgary is seeing a high number of Aboriginal and immigrant families in family shelters.**
  
- 5. The size of the at-risk for homelessness pool may be smaller than originally thought.**
  - Homelessness doesn't happen to 'anyone:' it is likelier to occur when a predictable combination of risk factors is present and a number of protective factors are absent.
  - The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) estimates the total number of households at imminent risk of homelessness is about 14,000, compared with the previous estimate that 72,000 households were at risk.
  - These at risk households can be mapped and hotspot communities identified, allowing better targeting of homelessness prevention and poverty reduction efforts. Nine Calgary communities are identified as hotspots.

## INTRODUCTION

The CHF leads the implementation of the 10 Year Plan. To ensure the 10 Year Plan's implementation is based on the best available information, the CHF considers new learnings and emerging trends in ongoing strategic reviews. The State of Homelessness report incorporates new research and data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), system- and program-level evaluation, research, consultations with key stakeholders and an environmental scan.

## THE 10 YEAR PLAN

The 10 Year Plan, initially launched in 2008, was revised and updated in 2011 with a renewed focus on system planning. Its priorities continue to be the reduction of chronic homelessness and emergency shelter use, while demonstrating client benefits from Housing First interventions and decreases in health, correction and shelter services use.

### 10 Year Plan Milestones

- House 1,500 chronic and episodically homeless people by 2014
- By 2014, ensure that no more than 10% of those served by "Housing First" programs return to homelessness
- By December 2014, all individuals who engage in rough sleeping will have access to housing and support options appropriate to their needs
- Eliminate 85% of 2010 emergency shelter beds by 2018
- Reduce the average length of stay in family emergency shelters to 14 days by Dec. 2014 and to seven days by December 2018
- Reduce the average length of stay in emergency shelters to seven days by January 2018

Since February 2011, the CHF focused research, planning, housing and investment efforts on supporting the development of a homeless-serving system focused on ending homelessness. As result of these efforts, the 10 Year Plan continues to show progress.

### 1. Reductions in homelessness

For the first time since the number of people were counted 20 years ago, there is a significant and sustained reduction in homelessness.

The 2012 Homeless Count was done on one of the coldest days of the year (January 18, 2012) in Calgary, when emergency shelter use is typically at its highest. This was a deliberate strategy to ensure a better count of homeless people in emergency shelters. A summer count will be done in 2012 to give a better snapshot of rough sleeping and emergency shelter use during warmer months. The full analysis of the winter 2012 Homeless Count will be completed by April 2012 and released to community.

#### **The community has a better sense of who is actually homeless.**

The Homeless Count enabled an updated understanding of the homeless system and the various facilities' roles in delivering services. One of the key outcomes of the process was an updated classification of emergency shelter, and short- and long-term facilities participating in the Homeless Count.

As a result, there is a much better sense of how many people are actually homeless, how many people are staying in time-limited housing or how many people are in stable, supportive, long-term housing programs. In the past, these three groups of clients were enumerated as homeless. What is known today is that the group housed in facilities without a length of stay requirement, known as Permanent Supportive Housing or Affordable Housing, should not be considered homeless because they are housed securely with supports in place.

**Based on this analysis, the 2012 Homeless Count enumerated 3,190 people in Calgary homeless at any given time. This suggests a reduction of 11.4% in homelessness since the last count in 2008.**

It is important to note that in the analysis, the 2004, 2006, and 2008 counts led by The City of Calgary were recalibrated, removing long-term housing facilities to better gauge historical growth. This was done because including Affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing would have inflated the counts in the past. It is difficult to reclassify historical counts, but it was done conservatively to better assess the growth rate of homelessness in the past. A key limitation of the 2012 Homeless Count and previous counts is that enumerators report observed characteristics (like age and gender) rather than interviewing directly. Further details and demographic analysis of the Homeless Count will be released in full report in April 2012.

Further to the 2012 Homeless Count findings, trends in shelter utilization suggest a decrease in year-over-year use in Human Services short-supportive and emergency shelter beds as well.

**The number of people rough sleeping is much lower than previously believed.**

On January 18, 2012, 64 people were found to be rough sleeping in Calgary, compared with an estimate of 569 rough sleeping in May 2008<sup>i</sup>.

Typically, rough sleepers in Calgary sleep outside and in shelter. Given the extreme cold on the night of the 2012 Homeless Count, it is expected many people, who would otherwise be outside, moved into shelter. Taking into account seasonal fluctuation in shelter utilization, and conservatively estimating the difference between shelter use summer lows and winter highs in the past two years, it is estimated that there may be as many as 146 people who sleep rough in Calgary and who seek shelter in winter. The 64 found on January 18, would be the 'hard core,' entrenched rough sleeping population. Based on this, it is estimated the size of the population who sleeps rough on a point-in-time basis is 210 people. This would be a significantly lower number (-63%) compared with the 569 people estimated in 2008.

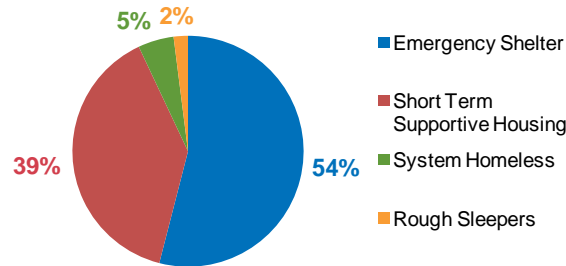
It is important to note that The City of Calgary did not actually undertake a street count in 2008; rather, previous counts were used to generate an estimate<sup>ii</sup>. The 2012 Homeless Count was conducted during very cold temperatures in January, which makes comparison to May counts difficult. A summer count in 2012 will enable a better understanding of the impact of seasonality on homelessness trends. The 2012 Homeless Count was conducted from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 am, instead of 9:00 p.m. to midnight in previous counts after CHF consulted with agencies and rough sleepers. A housing needs assessment was included and rough sleepers were offered the option to be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to facilitate referral to housing agencies if they so wished.

The 2012 rough sleeper count included a broader and deeper catchment area compared with previous counts in Calgary, incorporating 42 street and community zones and six additional zones from partners like Campus Security at SAIT and the University of Calgary, Calgary Parking Authority, CP Rail, Stampede Security, and Fish Creek Park Wardens. Another difference from 2008 is that Alberta Health Services included in-patient units and emergency rooms in their count. CHF relied on the expertise of City of Calgary Bylaw Services, Calgary Police Service and outreach service

providers to ensure a successful count. CUPS, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre and Alpha House were instrumental in advising the CHF on the Homeless Count preparations and followed up with rough sleepers who wanted to start the rehousing process.

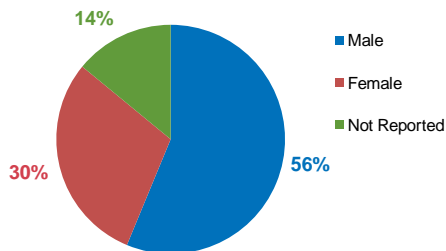
Key trends emerging from the rough sleepers (N=64) enumerated show 56% were males and 30% were females. The majority were working age adults, although 9.6% were youth ages 13 to 24.

**Classification of all People  
believed to be Homeless in Calgary on  
January 18, 2012**

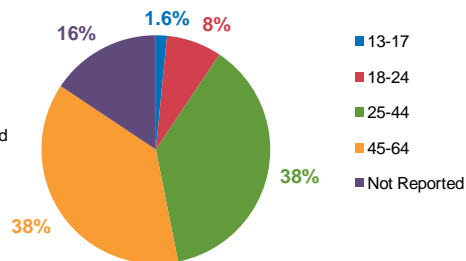


It is important to note the over-representation of Aboriginal people at 38% of rough sleepers enumerated.

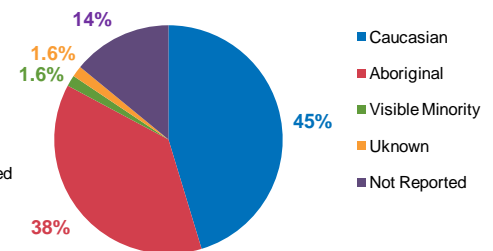
**Rough Sleepers - Gender**



**Rough Sleepers - Age**



**Rough Sleepers - Ethnicity**

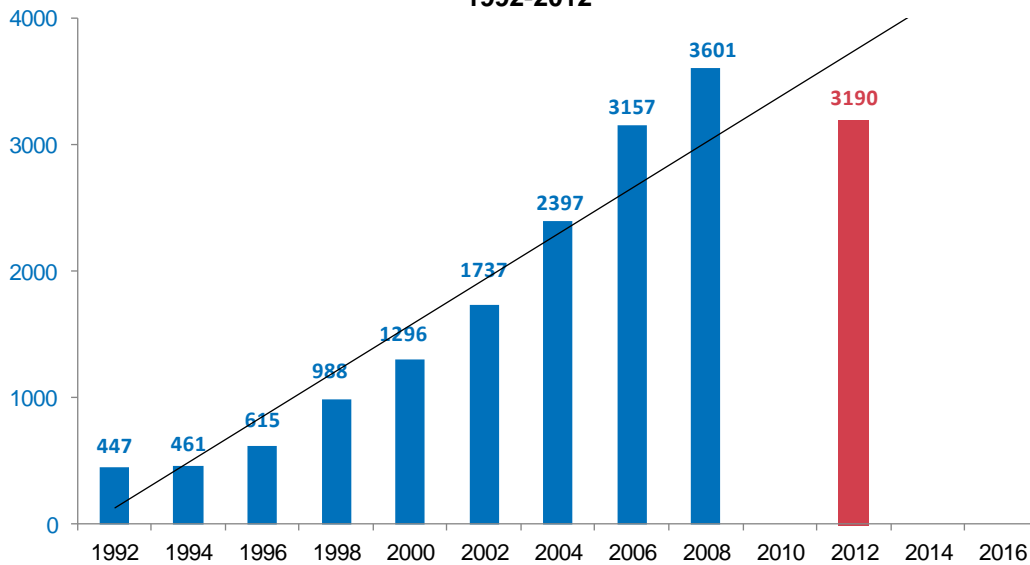


**It is important to put the 2012 Homeless Count into context.**

What is particularly important to remember is that without the efforts of the 10 Year Plan, homelessness would have followed a much different trajectory. If nothing changed in 2008, and homelessness continued to grow at the same rates reported since 1992 (using a linear forecast trend), the total count would have been approximately 4,200 people in 2012; that did not happen.

The 2012 Homeless Count enumerated 3,190 people homeless compared with 3,601 in 2008<sup>iii</sup>. This represents 1,010 less people (24%) than business as usual projections for 2012. It also represents 411 people less than estimated to be homeless in 2008, or -11.4%. This assumes that 2004 to 2012 projections do not include Permanent Supportive or Affordable Housing.

### Readjusted Homeless Count and Growth Rates 1992-2012



The majority of the 3,190 homeless enumerated are in facilities, particularly emergency shelters (54%) and short-term supportive housing (39%). About 5% were enumerated in public systems, including Remand, emergency rooms and hospitals. Only 2% were sleeping rough. The full report will include further analysis of these findings.

#### **Homeless counts provide a limited understanding of homelessness.**

While homeless counts are very useful tools to understand trends in homelessness, they only provide a one-day snapshot. The homeless population is better understood through ongoing, real-time data as opposed to homeless counts. For example, based on the prevalence rate of homelessness calculated by The City of Calgary, it is estimated that approximately 15,000 to 17,000 individuals use the shelter system annually<sup>iv</sup>. There are still significant limits in fully understanding the key trends in homelessness Calgary because of the lack of a shared data system in emergency shelters.

To address these downfalls of homeless counts, the CHF and its partners have implemented a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track basic information about people experiencing homelessness. This electronic database system records client-level information on an ongoing basis about all homeless persons accessing services through local providers. The HMIS successfully underwent a privacy and information security audit by Human Services and received acceptance of its Privacy Impact Assessment by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner in 2011.

The HMIS captures real-time data on numbers of homeless persons, basic demographics, services accessed and outcomes. It captures system capacity and provides a powerful tool for streamlining client access to supports. This information can contribute to a better understanding of client needs, improved system co-ordination and increased understanding about the impact of interventions. To date, 23 agencies are using the HMIS, with another 20 slated to come on-stream in 2012. The CHF's focus in 2012 is to expand implementation across all emergency shelters and facilitate information linkages between the homeless-serving system and public systems, like health and corrections.

## 2. Results show Housing First is working.

Reports from funded CHF agencies suggest that 1,376 people will be housed in 2011/12; bringing the total housed since January 2008 to an estimated 4,000 by March 31, 2012. About one-third of these clients are chronically or episodically homeless.

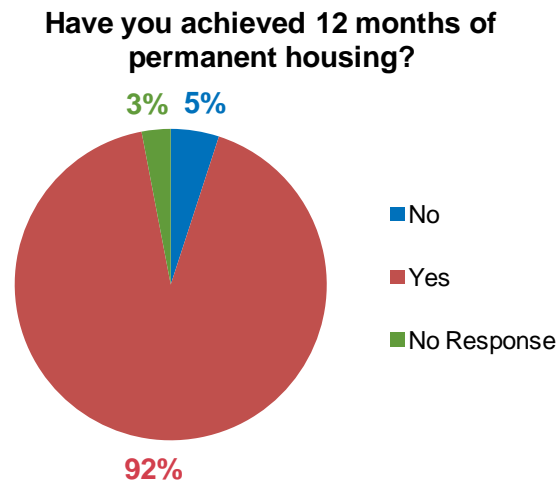
As result of the back entering of data for Human Services-funded programs into the HMIS, the CHF has a much more accurate sense of the numbers of unique individuals served. The sample size totalled 3,747 records collected from April 1, 2009 to November 30, 2011. It includes both children and adults who have been de-duplicated. About 60% (2,232 individuals) of records in the sample were unduplicated adults.

Agencies began to use HMIS in 2011; therefore, data quality efforts are needed to ensure increased reliability. However, the CHF was able to pull a representative sample of 270 unique adult clients (12% of unique adult clients) to further analyze. This is a time-series sample, which includes clients who have both intakes and 12 month follow-ups and whose outcomes can be tracked over time.

Clients in this sample were mostly working-age adults, predominantly male and born in Canada. About 30% were Aboriginal. The split between families and singles was close to even.

### In a sample group, the majority had retained their housing after 12 months of intervention.

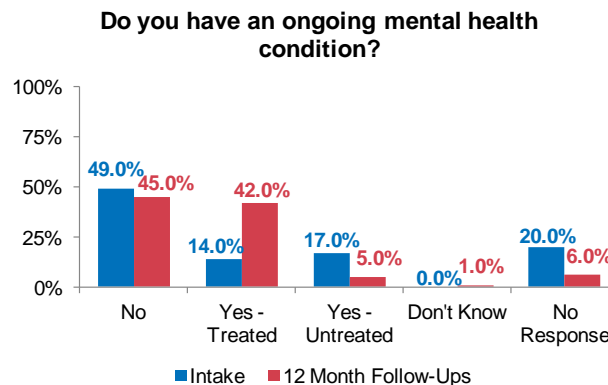
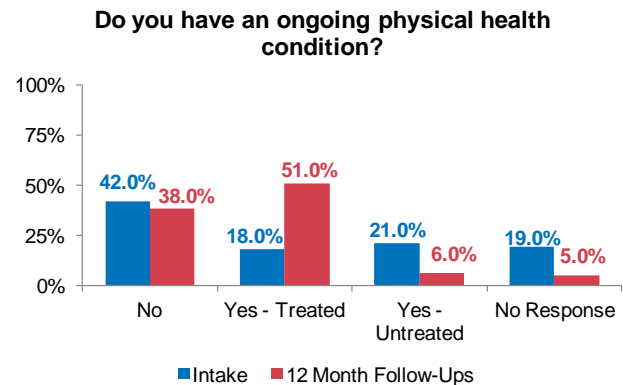
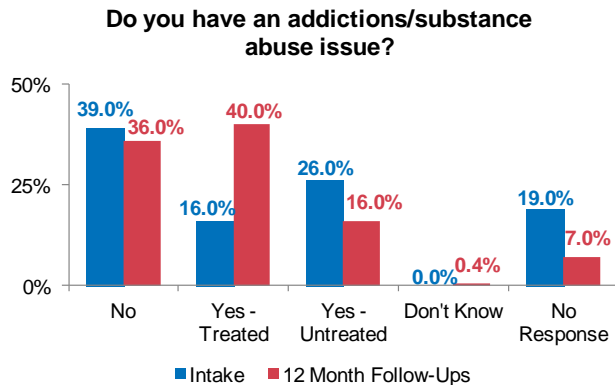
According to the 12 month follow-up assessments, 92% reported that they had achieved 12 months of permanent housing.





**The sample group also had improved access to health services.**

When considering the impact of intervention of accessing treatment for health conditions, 33% and 28% reported an increase in treated physical and mental health conditions, respectively. A decrease of 10% of untreated addictions/substance abuse issues and an increase of 24% in treated addictions/substance abuse issues was also reported.

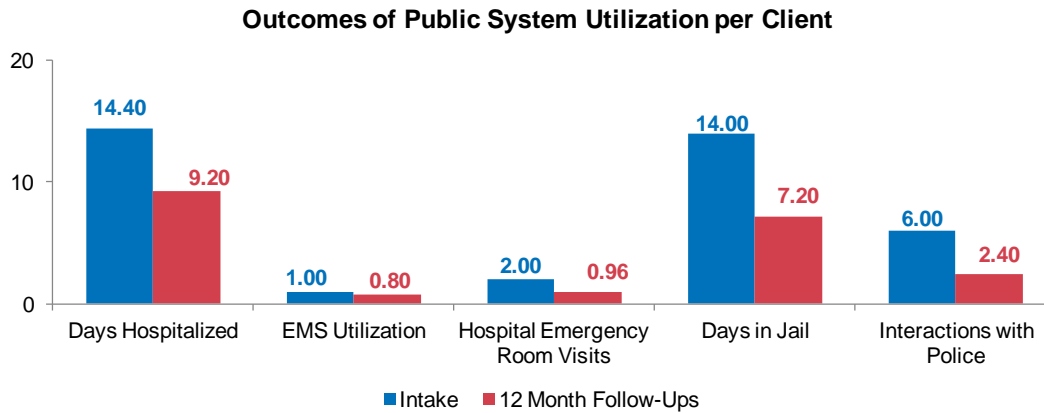


The sample group also used health and correctional systems less.

The data also suggests client significantly reduced their use of public systems, including hospitalizations, emergency room visits, EMS use, days in jail and interactions with police.

The post-intervention data asks for system use in the last three months, whereas the intake data asks for information over the previous 12 months prior to intake. To ensure a conservative estimate, the CHF assumed the reported three-month post-intervention usage to be consistent for 12 months. It is likely this estimate under-reports the reduction in public system usage. An increase in HMIS data quality will ensure a more accurate analysis moving forward. Note, all “no” responses were assumed to be zeros when conducting analysis and a weighted averages formula was used to calculate average outcomes over the given period.

The data suggests about a 40% reduction for all points reported. Notably, emergency room visits and days in jail decreased by about half. Interactions with police were down by 60%.



Change in Reported Utilization between Intake and 12 Month Follow Up	
Days Hospitalized	-36%
EMS Utilization	-20%
Hospital Emergency Room Visits	-52%
Days in Jail	-49%
Interactions with Police	-60%

### 3. Calgary is the epicentre of homelessness in Alberta.

Although the results from Housing First programs and indications of reductions in homelessness are encouraging signs that the 10 Year Plan is working, there are still challenges ahead. One of these is the result of Calgary's role in the economy and its attractiveness to migrants, coupled with a tight rental market. About 63% of the shelter users in Alberta are in Calgary, compared with 28% in Edmonton<sup>v</sup>. A strong labour market attracting more migrants and decreasing affordable rental stock are primary factors contributing to Calgary's higher homeless rates<sup>vi</sup>.

A School of Public Policy study (2011) led by Drs. Ron Kneebone and Herb Emery, and Oksana Grynishak<sup>vii</sup> concluded that shelter use in Calgary is intimately tied to the attractiveness of the city to migration, as well as the local housing and labour market. When comparing shelter use patterns between Calgary and Edmonton historically, it was concluded that Calgary shelter use is much more sensitive to fluctuations in the labour market and migration. Further, Edmonton's much lower number of shelter users is correlated to the fact that Edmonton has twice the rental stock compared with Calgary. The squeezing of the rental market impacts migrants who are at risk, as well as the local at risk population.

Calgary's role in the global economy makes it attractive to migrants seeking job opportunities. The low number of available rental stock, less than 35,000 purpose-build rental units<sup>viii</sup>; the lack of new rental properties; and, the continuing loss of existing stock to condo conversions create competition for housing among the lowest income earners with limited choices. Those who are already vulnerable and experiencing higher pressures to maintain housing can become homeless.

**Migration is forecasted to increase as the economy improves, placing more pressure on at risk populations.**

The Government of Alberta has stated that the province's economy is no longer in recession and will grow to become one of the strongest economies in Canada<sup>ix</sup>. Alberta's population is expected to continue to grow, due primarily to inter-city and inter-provincial migration.<sup>x</sup> Calgary's economic recovery has led to increasing job opportunities, a return to positive migration rates and reduced vacancies for Calgary's rental units. Cost of living increases for basic needs items are emerging in housing, food and transportation<sup>xi</sup>.

Migration to Calgary is expected to increase, which will put pressure on the homeless-serving system. The number of people moving to Calgary from other cities and provinces was estimated at 9,563 in 2011. This is up from 2010 results, which showed more people leaving Calgary than moving to it.<sup>xii</sup>

The average cost of rent in Calgary in 2011 was the fourth highest among major Canadian cities<sup>xiii</sup>. Average rents for apartments dropped in 2010 for the second consecutive year, driven in part by the increase in vacancy rates. However, by October 2011, rents had increased. The overall average rent for all apartment types was \$978 per month, with the average two-bedroom units renting for \$1,084 per month, up from \$1,069 per month in 2010<sup>xiv</sup>. The Canadian average was \$883 per month.

The number of rental units in Calgary decreased from 2009 to 2011. The number of rental units at the end of 2009 for Calgary was 36,174; by 2011, this number was 34,814. This decrease in the rental units is consistent with a seven-year pattern of decline. Since 1999, Calgary's multi-unit rental stock shrunk by one-third. Twenty-nine per cent of rental units were lost due to demolitions and condominium conversions.<sup>xv</sup>

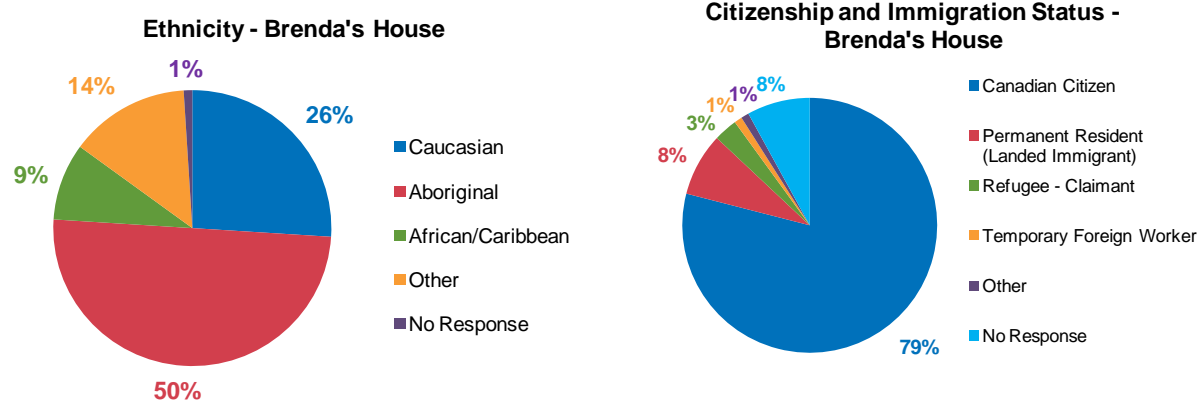
Apartment vacancy rates for October 2011 were 1.9%, compared with 5.3% in October 2009. As improvements in the labour market and increases in net migration to Calgary are forecast to continue, vacancy rates are estimated to reduce further in 2012<sup>xvi</sup>. Apartments in the lowest rent ranges (\$600 to \$749 per month) continue to have the lowest vacancy rates.

The creation of more affordable housing in Calgary will be critical to ending homelessness. Provincial investment in housing should be more heavily weighted to Calgary, where the greater need and greater percentage of emergency shelter spaces exist.

#### 4. Emerging trends suggest family homelessness is increasingly becoming a regional rather than local phenomenon.

The tight affordable housing market is a key barrier for low income families, particularly those with additional risk factors, to maintain housing stability. Recent trends in family homelessness have shown that more families coming to Calgary (Aboriginals on and off-reserve, immigrants and people moving to Calgary for work). There are relatively few 'domestic' families in Calgary's family homelessness system: prevention programs and housing responses are effective.

Brenda's House, a 14-unit shelter, reported in HMIS data from April 1, 2009 to November 30, 2011, 348 unique families using the shelter. Of these, 50% self-identified as Aboriginal and another 12% were born outside Canada.



The analysis of HMIS data from the Inn from the Cold (IFTC) family shelter, a 20-unit facility, had a sample size of only 48 unique households from May 7, 2010 to November 30, 2011, thus was not used for analysis in this report. As HMIS data becomes available, this analysis will be updated.

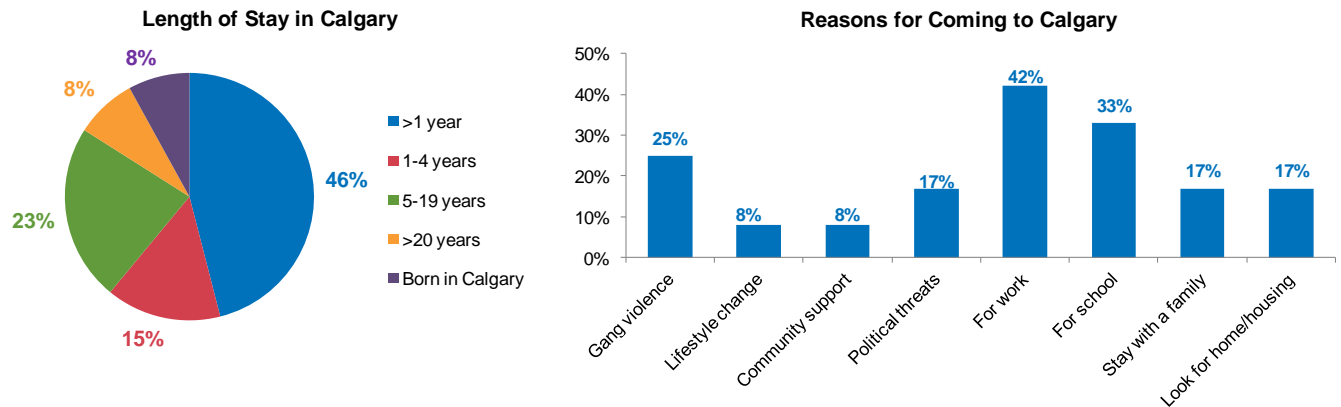
However, IFTC's agency-level data shows that in 2010 and 2011, 219 unique families accessed shelter, of which 52% were Aboriginal and 15% were immigrant. In the fall of 2011, IFTC also reported an increase in families moving to Calgary seeking shelter, leading to the need for overflow shelter beds. The agency noted that many of these families consisted of Aboriginal and immigrant members.

The Aboriginal population in the two shelters is primarily local, from surrounding reserves, but also comes from other urban centres and out of province. There is not currently enough reliable data to track where these Aboriginal populations come from, but will in the future through HMIS.

To better understand the motivation for migration, two focus groups and a survey with 13 family shelter clients at Brenda's House and IFTC was conducted in September 2011. The survey was too small to be representative and findings need to be interpreted with caution. Further research is necessary to confirm trends.

The surveys and focus groups showed that about 92% of respondents had moved to Calgary and 46% were in Calgary for less than one year. One-third of migrants arrived from another province.

As the charts below indicate, the key reasons for migration and homelessness are economic. However, the high percent that are fleeing unsafe conditions is of particular concern.

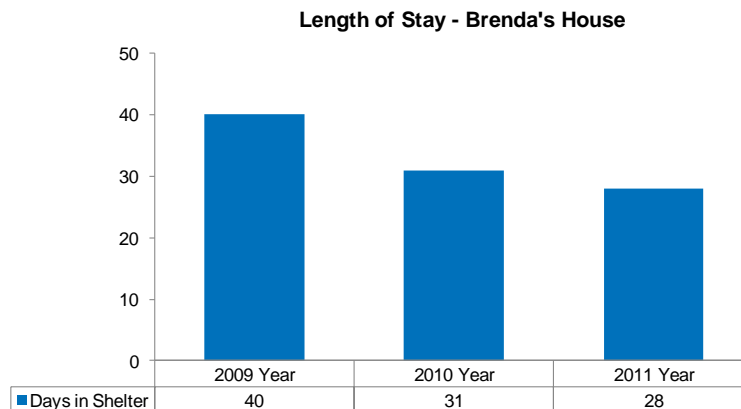


The focus groups suggest that most of the families were already experiencing a high level of housing instability and hidden homelessness before entering the family shelter system. Further, the key reasons for accessing shelter are related to housing instability.

These trends point to the need for CHF to develop regional partnerships, especially with nearby Aboriginal communities, and to work with the Government of Alberta and Government of Canada on regional planning.

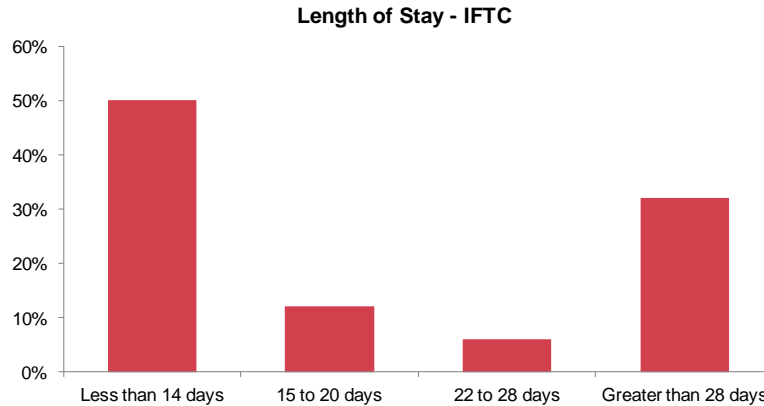
### Length of stay in family shelters is trending down, though challenges remain.

The good news is that the length of stay of families in shelters has been decreasing at Brenda's House. In fact, the length of stay decreased 23% and 10%, respectively in 2010 and 2011.



IFTC 2011 data for length of stay suggests most families (50%) stayed for less than 14 nights, although 32% of families stayed for longer than 28 nights.

This trend points to the effectiveness of the family system in moving clients out of shelter quickly, despite ongoing demand. A small percentage of clients, 7.8% of Brenda's House families out of a total of 348 unique households, are using the shelter more than once. Therefore an estimated 50 to 60 families system-wide need to be targeted with intensive interventions to reduce episodes of homelessness.



Despite this encouraging trend, more recent reports suggest that lengths of stay are increasing due to more demand for emergency shelter. Shelter use at Brenda's House and IFTC is consistently above 95%.

In the past quarter, Brenda's House reported signs of increasing length of stay due to system capacity to accommodate demand in rehousing programs. Recent trends point to caution regarding capacity to maintain gains in length of stay reductions. IFTC reports that migration of complex families is becoming a key driver impacting the system's ability to keep up with demand and should be a key system priority effort in 2012.

## 5. An improved understanding of the at risk population.

New research suggests that the number of people at risk of homelessness is much smaller than previously believed and the risk of people becoming homeless follows predictable patterns<sup>xvii</sup>.

Homelessness doesn't happen to 'anyone;' it is likelier to occur when a predictable combination of risk factors is present and a number of protective factors are absent.

To refine this understanding of the at-risk for homelessness population, the CHF worked with the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work to understand what differentiates those who fall into homelessness from those who do not. Not all individuals who experience poverty fall into homelessness; therefore there is a need to understand what risks and assets are involved for those that do.

Research findings consistently point to particular risk factors that are present in both at risk and homeless populations. These factors include individual and structural factors that can be broadly summarized as:

- 1) an imbalance in the income and housing costs,
- 2) chronic health issues, particularly mental health, disabilities/physical health,
- 3) addictions,
- 4) experiences of abuse and trauma, and
- 5) interaction with public systems, particularly correctional and child intervention services.

Research findings also identified protective factors that moderate the risk for homelessness, which generally centered on economic, social and human capital (healthy social relationships, education, access to affordable housing and adequate income).

Based on the research findings, an assessment tool (Homelessness Assets and Risks Tool – HART) was developed by the University of Calgary Social Work research team who are testing its reliance in predicting homelessness. The assessment tool will be critical to tailoring interventions in prevention activities.

Preliminary results from more than 700 surveys of at risk Calgarians participating in the HART study confirm the following factors exacerbate the risk for homelessness<sup>xviii</sup>:

- 91% of those with housing are **renters** not owners; 56% believe their housing is **not stable**, that is, they are at risk of eviction.
- 46% had a recent experience with a **physical or mental health issue**.
- 31% spent time in an **addictions facility** in the last five years, of those 23% did not have access to safe, stable housing when they were discharged.
- 32% spent time in a **medical facility**, in the last five years, of those 17% did not have access to safe, stable housing when they were discharged.
- 21% spent time in a **correctional facility** and more than 33% of those did not have access to safe, affordable housing upon their release.
- 25% of respondents were **Aboriginal**; 76% of them had a direct experience with **residential schools** and 34% recently migrated from a reserve to Calgary.
- About 8% reported being **newcomers** to Canada.
- 77% have **little to no support** from family or friends and 65% do not have family to rely on to help with financial or housing support.
- 50% had a **previous episode** of homelessness; 45% of those had an episode of homelessness before the age of 18.
- 42% experienced family **abuse as a child** and had one or more parents with an active addiction.
- 22% were involved with **child intervention services** and 85% of those did not receive support for safe, stable housing in those interactions.
- 64% were **suspended from school** in their youth and 50% lived with family conflict and/or **bullying**.
- 35% lived in homes that relied on **social assistance**
- 33% of youth participants (ages 15 to 24) were recently **kicked out of their homes** and 44% were single parents.
- 56% of youth participants say their **parents do not take an interest** in their activities and 78% have **not accessed supports** from a youth-serving agency for stable housing.
- 65% of adult women participants had a history of **domestic violence** and 59% grew up in homes where there was violence. 31% had their children removed by authorities; 19% had been victims of sexual assault.

### **The estimate of the at-risk population is being refined.**

Given a better understanding of the risk factors that precipitate homelessness, the original scope of homelessness prevention, which was considered 72,195 Calgary households that are low income earners and spending more than 30% of income on shelter<sup>xix</sup>, can be revisited.

With the help of The City of Calgary Social Research Unit, the at-risk population is estimated to be approximately **13,765 renter households**, who were spending more than 50% of their income on rent and had an annual income of less than \$20,000 based on Census 2006 data. An understanding of the prevalence of additional risk and protective factors in the at-risk population will be further refined, particularly in light of the role of addictions and mental illness.

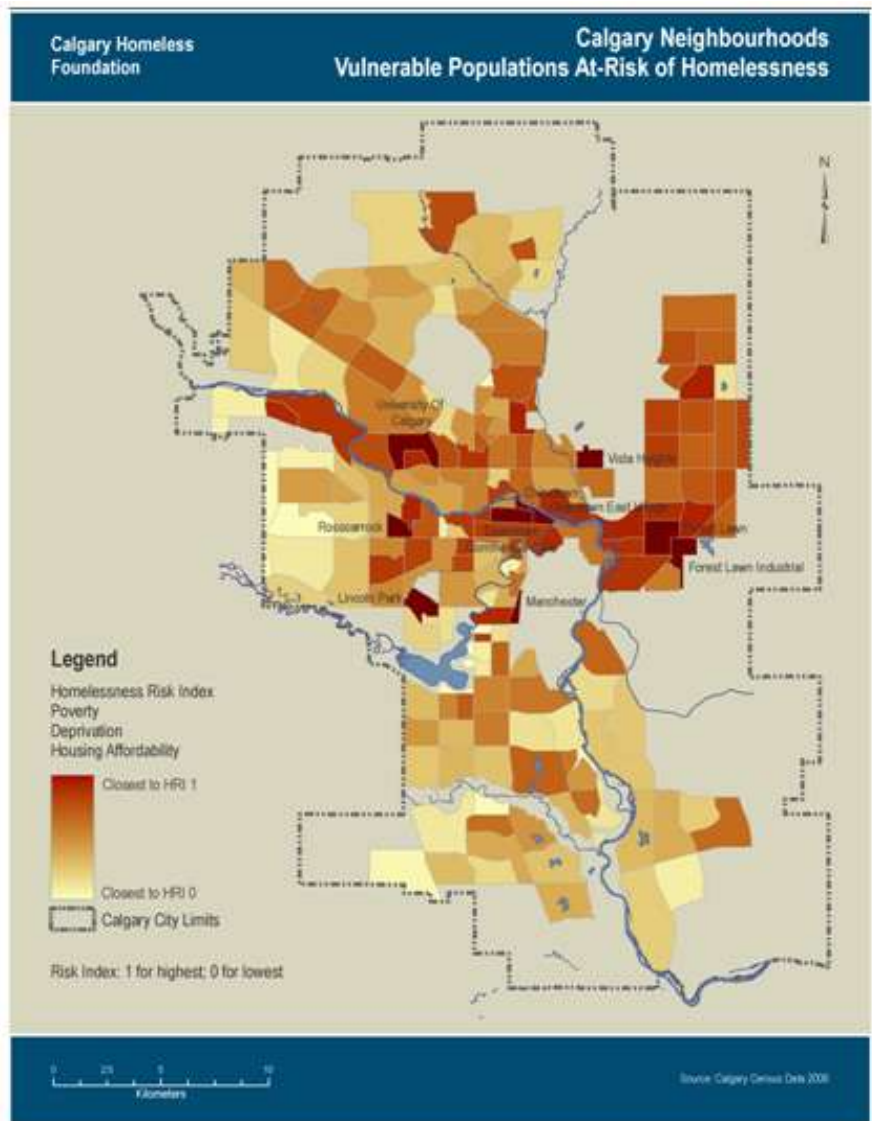
**New research allows communities at risk to be mapped.**

Using known indicators, available data from Census 2006 and this new understanding about at-risk populations, “hot spots” of where the at-risk population is located can be identified. This enables better targeting of services and points to areas of concentration for homelessness risk in Calgary communities.

The intent of this analysis is to use GIS-based analysis and localized data to contribute to the discussion of risk factors, predictors and pathways in and out of homelessness. Calgary neighbourhoods with vulnerable populations can be identified and special attention can be provided at the neighbourhood level. Calgary communities can be evaluated based on both incidence and risk of the various indicators to better target interventions<sup>xx</sup>.

Communities with the greatest concentration of at risk households include:

- 1) Downtown Core
- 2) Chinatown
- 3) East Village
- 4) Albert Park
- 5) Forest Lawn
- 6) Forest Lawn Industrial
- 7) Highland Park
- 8) Rosscarrock
- 9) Manchester





**As more is known, outcomes for the most vulnerable can be improved.**

Since more is known about predicting homelessness, prevention programs can be more precisely targeted towards those likeliest to fall into homelessness. Findings further point to the need for alignment in social service and policy efforts with an aim to alleviate vulnerability and poverty. Funders including the United Way of Calgary and FCSS, as well as public systems like corrections, health, child intervention, domestic violence, addictions treatment and education, can better target interventions collaboratively towards the most vulnerable Calgarians who likely touch all of these systems at some point.

Better targeting and collective planning at the community level will ensure maximum impact for clients, as well as reductions in system use and costs. At the individual and family level, improved health, education, public safety, housing stability and well-being outcomes can be achieved.

The restructuring of Government of Alberta Human Services Ministry presents a unique opportunity to address homelessness prevention at the systems level. The child intervention, domestic violence, income supports and the homeless-serving system can better interact to mitigate the flows into homelessness in the first place.

The Interagency Council on Homelessness can play a key role in further ensuring provincial alignment and shared accountability for implementation of Alberta's Plan to End Homelessness across ministries, including Human Services, Justice, Solicitor General, Education, Health, Municipal Affairs and Finance. The Council can foster a research-driven, performance-based and result-oriented implementation of Alberta's Plan to End Homelessness, while ensuring cross-ministerial alignment on the 10 Year Plan's priorities.

## References

---

- <sup>i</sup> City of Calgary 2008 Biennial Count of Homeless Persons. Retrieved from: [http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS\\_0\\_2\\_428286\\_0\\_0\\_18/Biennial+Count+of+Homeless+Persons.htm](http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_428286_0_0_18/Biennial+Count+of+Homeless+Persons.htm)
- <sup>ii</sup> See note the full text of 2008 Count referenced above for a full description of the analysis used in 2008.
- <sup>iii</sup> Recalibrated based on the reclassification of 481 units of permanent supportive or affordable housing in 2008.
- <sup>iv</sup> Calculation by City of Calgary based on Perras & Huyder, 2003 Interagency shelter user count for 2002 (A collaboration with the Interagency Committee). Calgary: The Mustard Seed (Calgary) Street Ministry.
- <sup>v</sup> Homelessness in Alberta: The Demand for Spaces in Alberta's Homeless Shelters Kneebone, R., Emery, J.C., Grynishak, O. (2011). Homelessness in Alberta: The demand for spaces in Alberta's homeless shelters. *The School of Public Policy: SPP Research Papers*, 4(13). Retrieved from: <http://policyschool.ucalgary.ca/files/publicpolicy/homelessness%20in%20alberta.pdf>
- <sup>vi</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>vii</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>viii</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report, Calgary CMA Fall 2011. Retrieved from: [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64371/64371\\_2011\\_A01.pdf?fr=1324572788062](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64371/64371_2011_A01.pdf?fr=1324572788062).
- <sup>ix</sup> Budget 2011 lays the foundation to build a better Alberta: (<http://alberta.ca/acn/201102/2995959A17440-F534-F9A7-69D0FFBC2B28A33A.html>).
- <sup>x</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>xi</sup> Statistics Canada (2011) Consumer Price Index as reported by Calgary Economic Development. Retrieved from: <http://www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/live-work-play/live/cost-living>.
- <sup>xii</sup> According to the 2011 Civic Census Results, Calgary saw a growth of 1.81%, resulting in a total population of 1,090,936. This was partially the outcome of an increase in migration from other provinces to Calgary in 2011, in comparison to a negative net migration to Calgary in 2010. The number of people moving to Calgary from other cities and provinces was estimated at 9,563 in 2011. This is up from 2010 results which showed more people leaving Calgary than moving to it. Retrieved from: <http://www.calgary.ca/CA/City-Clerks/Pages/Election-and-information-services/Civic-Census/2011-Results.aspx>.
- <sup>xiii</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report, Calgary CMA Fall 2011. Retrieved from: [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64371/64371\\_2011\\_A01.pdf?fr=1324572788062](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64371/64371_2011_A01.pdf?fr=1324572788062).
- <sup>xiv</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>xv</sup> See note xiii; also calculated using statistics from Steele & Des Rosier, 2009, and CMHC, Canadian Housing Observer and Rental Market Reports for Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary. Retrieved from: <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/b2c/b2c/init.do?language=en>); and Canadian Housing Statistics, 2000.
- <sup>xvi</sup> See note xiii
- <sup>xvii</sup> Tutty, L., Bradshaw, C., Worthington, C., MacLaurin, B., Waegemakers Schiff, J., Hewson, J., Dooley, D., Kean, S., McLeod, H. (2009) Risks and Assets for Homelessness Prevention: A Literature Review for the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Retrieved from: <http://calgaryhomeless.com/what-we-do/research/>.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Tutty, L., Bradshaw, C., Worthington, C., MacLaurin, B., Waegemakers Schiff, J., Hewson, J., Dooley, D. (2011) Preliminary analysis only from phase 2 of the HART research project, full analysis ongoing.
- <sup>xix</sup> City of Calgary, (2011) Calgary & Region Social Outlook: 2011-2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.calgary.ca/CA/fs/Pages/Corporate-Economics/Publications-Archived.aspx>
- <sup>xx</sup> Calgary Homeless Foundation (2009) Exploratory GIS Analysis of Vulnerable Populations at Risk of Homelessness in Calgary. Report for Calgary Homeless Foundation compiled by Chantal Hansen.