



August 2022 Newsletter

If you have questions, would like to share ideas, or are interested in partnering with or joining our team, please email us at ask.khrc@ubc.ca – we look forward to connecting with you! You can also check out our [website](#) for more information on our work. If you aren't already on our mailing list, subscribe now and you'll receive periodic updates on our activities, research opportunities, and events!

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KHRC Research Brief: Kelowna and Municipal Social Policy

This historical overview of public records reviews the history of social policy and social development by the City of Kelowna, from the early 1990's (as captured by a 2006 SPARC BC report), to the recent regional discussions on Poverty and Wellness, to the forthcoming Social Policy Framework.

- [Kelowna & Municipal Social Policy: A Historical Overview of Public Records \(July 5, 2022\)](#)
- A summary of current municipal social development files is available on a recently designed City of Kelowna's [Social Wellness](#) page.

Housing Stock & Affordability

In an effort to synthesize and link to various sources of data and analysis related to housing and homelessness, the KHRC has been working to link community-specific information into comprehensive reports. While the bulk of currently available information is still grounded in the 2016 Census, these sources can still inform planning and programming as well as serving as a comparison point as updated products are released following the 2021 Census.

This first report provides a range of information specific to the Kelowna CMA / RDCO, including Core and Extreme Core Housing Need as well as Affordability more generally across regions, household type, and age, and also comments and considerations for local planning.

- [Housing Stock & Affordability – Kelowna CMA / RDCO \(August 29, 2022\)](#)

KHRC Blog: Enumeration & Homelessness

The ways in which we have quantified experiences of homelessness have shifted and grown over time, in accordance with both our conceptualizations of the issue as well as shifting technological costs and capacities. There now exists a range of demand-side methods for estimating the prevalence of homelessness, many of which have been recently implemented at different levels and at different times.

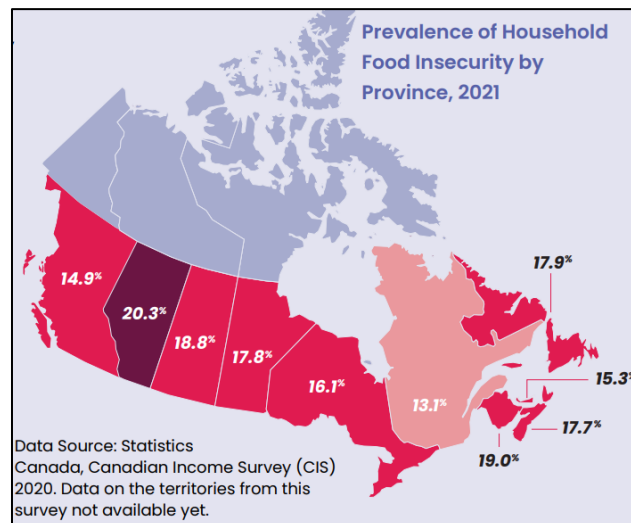
- [The Enumeration of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness \(May 24, 2022\)](#)

Method	Definition	Source / Link
Point-in-Time Count	Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts are a community-level measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness; they typically take place every couple of years on a single night between March 1 and April 30.	Government of Canada – Reaching Home
By-Name List	A By-Name List is a real-time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in your community.	Built For Zero Canada
BC-style Data Integration	In Phase 1 of an ongoing data innovation project, the Government of BC sought to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness throughout 2019. The analytic definition of the 2019 Homelessness Cohort integrates SDPR BC Employment and Assistance program no fixed address (NFA) data and BC Housing Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) shelter use data with the Ministry of Health Medical Services Plan (MSP) client registry as the population directory used to link the data.	Preventing and reducing homelessness: an integrated data project (Government of BC)
Full Data Integration	The above could in theory be expanded to include relevant NFA stays in health facilities, judicial facilities, and non-profit facilities at a provincial level, and could also be integrated with NFA data through federal support programs (e.g. CPP, EI, etc.)	
Federal Census	The Canadian census is a nationally distributed questionnaire to enumerate and provide information on the entirety of the resident population. It includes those residing in private dwellings and in collective dwellings (and may include those with a temporary address if interpreted as a resident by whoever filled the questionnaire).	See Statistics Canada regarding methodology , and examples of omissions
Public Survey Approaches	Other survey methodologies can be used to inform prevalence and provide context, with both broad or narrow scopes as well as representative or non-representative samples.	For example, recent youth-oriented surveys through Upstream Kelowna or Penticton's Youth Homelessness Research Project

ICYMI: Household Food Insecurity in Canada

➤ [Household Food Insecurity in Canada \(2021\)](#)

In 2021, 15.9% of households in the ten provinces experienced some level of food insecurity in the previous 12 months. That amounts to 5.8 million people, including almost 1.4 million children under the age of 18, living in food-insecure households. These estimates do not even include people living in the territories or on Indigenous reserves, who are known to experience high vulnerability to food insecurity. This high rate of household food insecurity has persisted through the past three years, with little change from 2019 to 2021. Despite the systematic monitoring of food insecurity since 2005, this problem has not gotten any better.



KHRC Thesis: Addressing Homelessness in Vernon

Congratulations to Bethany Presley for completing her thesis work on homelessness responses in Vernon during her Master of Arts at UBCO.

➤ [Addressing homelessness in a smaller Canadian city: Community-engaged research with Vernon, B.C.](#)

Cities across Canada are experiencing an increase in homelessness and are struggling to keep up with the needs of the growing homeless population. Smaller cities are no exception to this trend. Canada is experiencing a homelessness crisis across the nation as a combined result of the federal government's divestment of affordable and social housing, increased housing and rental prices, cutbacks in full-time and well-paying employment, and reduced investments in mental health supports throughout the country. Government policy changes and shifts in the economy have shortened the affordable housing supply and reduced rental subsidies and other supports for low-income populations. In response to the growing issue of homelessness, the Federal Government initiated a homelessness strategy called Reaching Home that provides selected communities across Canada with funding to address homelessness. However, communities that are excluded from this program are finding it increasingly challenging to address and reduce homelessness. Vernon, British Columbia is one of the many cities struggling to deal with homelessness without supports from the Federal Government. Concomitant to the exclusion of smaller cities, funding research has also prioritized homelessness in larger Canadian cities such as Toronto and Vancouver. As a result, little is known at the academic level around how smaller Canadian cities address homelessness with limited funding and capacity. Using a community-engaged methodology, I have partnered with Vernon to examine the ways in which the city addresses homelessness with minimal supports from the Federal Government. I hope that this research will put Vernon and other smaller Canadian cities on the academic radar, drawing attention to the challenges faced by smaller communities throughout the homelessness crisis. The goal of this research is to fill the gap in knowledge within academia around how smaller Canadian cities alleviate homelessness with limited funding and resources.

FYI: Homelessness and Mobility / Migration

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction has recently updated their policy on moving expenses for those connected to the Income Assistance system, clarifying that access includes those experiencing homelessness.

➤ [BCEA - Moving, Transportation, & Living Costs](#)

Effective: July 8, 2022

General Supplements & Programs

▪ [Moving Transportation & Living Costs](#)

Policy has been updated to clarify that those experiencing homelessness can access the Moving, Transportation and Living Costs Supplement if they meet eligibility criteria.

Policy and procedures have been updated to remove the restriction of personal assets from inclusion in the Moving, Transportation and Living Costs Supplement when requested for moves outside of BC.

Procedures have been added for Documents Required for Moves Within BC.

As we've noted previously, based on data from Point-in-Time counts we know that individuals experiencing homelessness relocate for a variety of reasons, without much clear geographic concentration, and that the fact that this phenomenon exists and is plausibly associated to breaks in vulnerable individuals' social and other support systems should be the focus of attention (more so than any attempt to quantify for the purpose of regional comparison alone). While the relocation of individuals experiencing homelessness is perhaps more documented in the United States than in Canada, reporting that does exist suggests the practice is used sparingly (despite a "persistent myth" from the 1990's of Alberta providing one-way bus tickets to BC) and with a goal of promoting stability and support through existing ties and networks.

- [Migration & Homelessness: A Summary of Evidence on Intraprovincial, Interprovincial, and International Migration across Canadian Communities \(2022\)](#)
- Kaufman, D. F. (2021). [Canadian homeless mobilities: Tracing the inter-regional movements of At Home/Chez Soi participants](#). The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien, 65(3), 292-305.

We also have indirect data from the Integrated BC Data on movement across Census Divisions, wherein the 10% estimated movement between CDs falls below the 21% of 2018 BC PIT respondents who reported being in their community for less than a year. This may suggest that half of "recent movers" had housing when they left their initial location (and accordingly not showing up in the integrated data analysis), but those figures are likely too distinct to compare. The Ministry of Social Development – in theory – may be able to identify whether BCEA recipients move while experiencing homelessness (i.e., "No Fixed Address" in Location 1 and "No Fixed Address" in Location 2), move into homelessness (i.e., Listed Address in Location 1 but "No Fixed Address" in Location 2), or move out of homelessness (i.e., "No Fixed Address" in Location 1 but a Listed Address in Location 2).

- [Preventing & Reducing Homelessness: An Integrated Data Project \(2021\) - Figure 7](#)
- [BC Housing - 2018 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C.](#)
- [BC Housing - 2020/21 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C.](#)

ICYMI: Inflation and Non-Indexed Income Support

➤ [Income Support, Inflation, and Homelessness \(Kneebone & Wilkins, 2022\)](#)

In this note, we provide measures of the effects of high rates of inflation in food prices and the costs of housing on Canadian households reliant on government-provided income assistance. Inflation puts these households at risk because little of their income is indexed to inflation. That which is indexed to inflation varies by province and by family composition. In most provinces, protection from inflation depends on periodic ad hoc adjustments to income support payments, adjustments that are sometimes separated by many years. A notable exception is Quebec, where nearly full indexation ensures recipients of income support are protected from inflation. In other provinces, the general lack of full indexation means that during periods of inflation, Canadians reliant on social assistance are subject to two types of risk, one economic and one political. The economic risk is due to the fact inflation threatens to cause them to endure a catastrophic fall in what is already a low standard of living. The political risk arises because in most provinces, whether inflation results in a fall in living standards is entirely dependent upon whether politicians choose to provide periodic, unscheduled increases in social assistance incomes, euphemistically referred to as income “enrichments.” With a single stroke of a legislative pen the political risk can be eliminated and the economic risk minimized. The high rates of inflation currently being experienced add urgency to this consideration. We show that deteriorating health, increased reliance on food banks and rising rates of homelessness are just some of the inevitable consequences of delay.

Table 3: Indexation of Social Assistance Incomes

	Basic Social Assistance [†]	Additional Social Assistance Benefits [†]	Federal Child Benefit*	Provincial Child Benefit [†]	GST Rebate*	Provincial Tax Credits [†]
British Columbia	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Alberta	No		Yes	No	Yes	
Saskatchewan	No		Yes		Yes	No
Manitoba	No	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Ontario	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quebec	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Brunswick	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nova Scotia	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
Prince Edward Island	No		Yes		Yes	No
Newfoundland & Labrador	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

ICYMI: Single Adults Living in Poverty

➤ [Maytree Opinion - Why we need to care about single adults living in poverty \(June 29, 2022\)](#)

The popular imagination has long been dominated by particular notions of who is on welfare – single mothers and people with disabilities, and, of course, the so-called “idlers,” the people who simply don’t work. Certainly, lone parents and people with particular types of disabilities do make up a notable portion of social assistance caseloads. But that’s not the whole story. It’s not even most of the story. The majority of social assistance cases in Ontario – both Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) – are of “unattached singles” (adults who are not married/do not live with their partner). In fact, as our forthcoming Social Assistance Summaries report will show, these single adults made up more than 60 per cent of OW cases and nearly 80 per cent of ODSP cases in 2021. Together, they equal the population of Ontario’s fastest growing city.

If you’re tempted to think that those single adults on OW are the “idlers,” consider this: The social assistance system that we have today was designed for another time. A time when a full-time job was secure and came with a wage that afforded an adequate standard of living. It might even have come with benefits and a pension. A time when the prevailing view of disability was that it is physical, visible, and unchanging. A time when a social safety

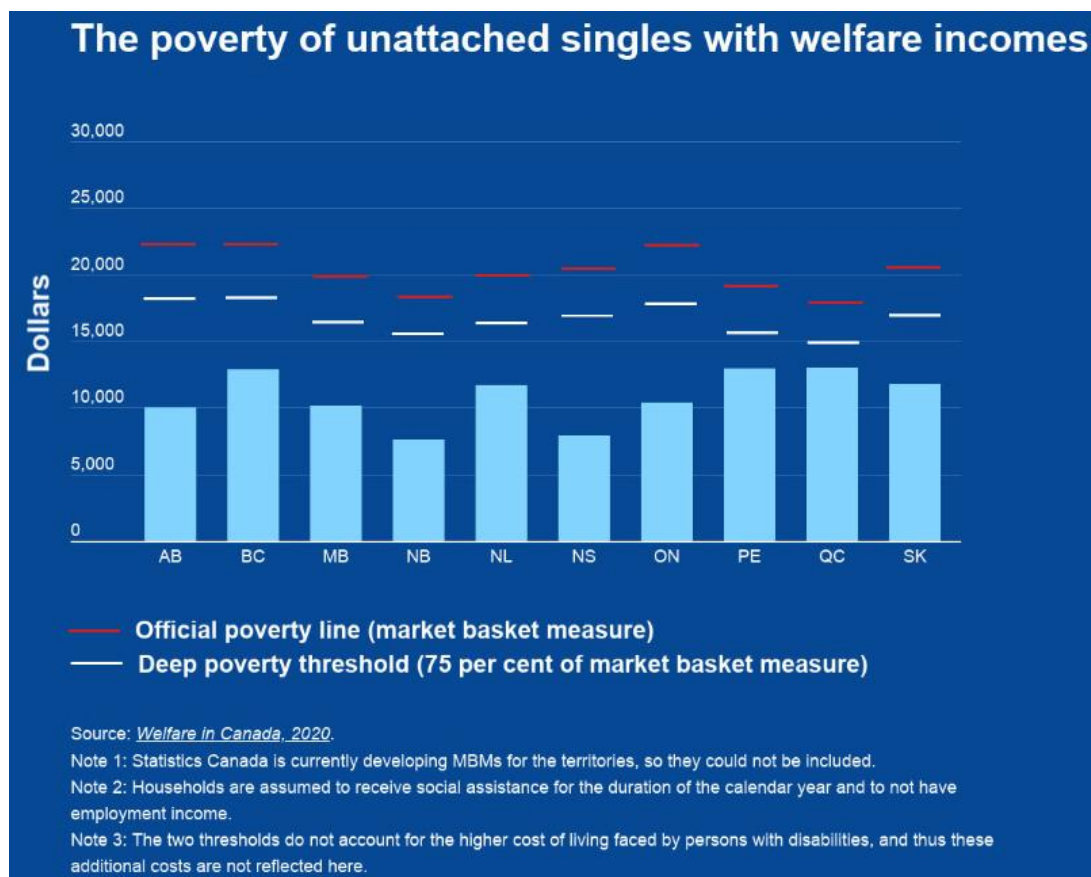
net was considered a form of charity and focused on “worthy” recipients, such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

This does not reflect the reality of today’s labour market, nor our more nuanced understanding of disability. It does not reflect the myriad ways that our social systems create poverty – from failing to provide adequate mental health and addiction services, to pushing young people out of care without support, to failing to help people leaving prison to establish a new life. Importantly, it does not align with the recognition that it is the government’s duty to ensure that each person can experience a life with dignity.

Additional Context on Social Assistance

➤ [Policy Options - Who is receiving social assistance? \(Tabbara, 2022\)](#)

The realities of social assistance recipients are often misunderstood in Canada. As is the case for many social issues, this is primarily because access to data has long been limited. Yet without strong evidence, it is impossible to make evidence-informed policy decisions. With new data released by Maytree, we’re hoping this changes. Among the findings, we now know who is the most likely to receive social assistance, and how access to social assistance may have been impacted by the pandemic. Maytree’s [“Social Assistance Summaries”](#) is an annual report that publishes data on the number of social assistance recipients. This year, for the first time, disaggregated data on household types and gender/sex from 11 jurisdictions has been collected and provided through the report. Disaggregated data, or data broken down into more detailed components, provides information on who is being affected by policy problems. It is an important and necessary tool that allows governments to implement more equitable, informed and thoughtful policy solutions. We explore two of the most striking findings in the report. First, as it has been suspected for a long time, unattached singles are significantly overrepresented among social assistance recipients. Second, 2021 saw a decrease in the number of recipients in over three-quarters of social assistance programs across Canada. However, this is not because they were lifted out of poverty, but because they lost eligibility through pandemic supports.



Additional Comments on Economic Data & Indexing Social Support

As the earlier report noted, the lack of indexing for social support systems means that inflationary pressures can quickly overwhelm individuals on the brink of poverty and homelessness. However, the scope of the issue can be difficult to contextualize by through the consecutive reporting of year over year changes alone. Ignoring the function of product substitution in consumer habits – and noting that the extent to which goods have easy substitutes varies across components – indexing all components of CPI to September 2019 can provide a sense of the price of a basket of goods over time. While 2020 represented a period of time wherein there was a deflation in certain prices, the rebound that followed it was far greater, and all components beyond clothing now exceed what would have been a 2% annual growth scenario. While the price of gas fell, it is still roughly 60% more than September 2019, with the food basket 13% higher. Again, while we would have expected just over 6% inflation based on Bank of Canada targets, even target inflation presents a constant stressor in the absence of indexation of supports.

- [Statistics Canada: Consumer Price Index Data Visualization Tool](#)
- Recall that according to [Maytree](#) there were just over 160,700 cases (families and single adults) in British Columbia's social assistance program during 2020-21. Twenty-nine per cent (46,637) of cases received Income Assistance (also known as Temporary Assistance) and 71 per cent (114,108) received Disability Assistance.
- Again, the [BC Basic Income recommendations](#) include a call for indexation of benefits -- not to the CPI, but rather to the official Market-Based Measure poverty line. The full adoption of these evidence-informed recommendations may have a great impact on preventing homelessness across British Columbia, and we encourage all local governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to continue to work with the province to monitor progress on their implementation.

For the sake of planning for the people receiving benefits and to maintain adequacy levels, benefits need to be indexed to inflation. Recommendation 61 would index all benefits to movements in the MBM poverty line, which is in effect an inflation index based on spending patterns and prices for people at or near poverty level incomes.

ICYMI: Impact of Safe Consumption Facilities

- Dow-Fleisner, S. J., Lomness, A., & Woolgar, L. (2022). [Impact of Safe Consumption Facilities on Individual and Community Outcomes: A Scoping Review of the Past Decade of Research](#). *Emerging Trends in Drugs, Addictions, and Health*, 100046.

... Findings indicate that SCFs were associated with reducing drug use related infection and disease transmission, enhancing access to addiction and other health services, reducing the risk of non-fatal overdoses, and were not associated with a significant increase in drug use, an increased rate of drug-related crime. Both qualitative and quantitative research support SCFs as a cost-effective approach to harm reduction for people who inject drugs with positive community outcomes as well. This review discusses the current state of the evidence and provides recommendations for future research directions.

ICYMI: Cost Analysis for Safe Consumption Facilities

- Khair, S., Eastwood, C. A., Lu, M., & Jackson, J. (2022). [Supervised consumption site enables cost savings by avoiding emergency services: a cost analysis study](#). *Harm Reduction Journal*, 19(1), 1-7.

We report on a cost analysis study, using population level data to determine the emergency service costs avoided from emergency overdose management at supervised consumption services (SCS)...

... The proportion of clients who have overdosed at the SCS has decreased steadily for the duration of the program. The number of overdoses that can be managed on site at the SCS has trended upward, currently 98%. Each overdose that is managed at the SCS produces approximately \$1600 CAD in cost savings, with a savings of over \$2.3 million for the lifetime of the program.

Recap: Federal Actions to Promote Housing Affordability (as of April 2022)

- [Department of Finance: Making Housing More Affordable](#)

And above link directs to a federal webpage overviewing the Budget 2022 items related to the following programs:

- Tax-Free First Home Savings Account
- Launching a New Housing Accelerator Fund
- Rapidly Building New Affordable Housing
- An Extended and More Flexible First-Time Home Buyer Incentive
- A Ban on Foreign Investment in Canadian Housing
- Making Property Flippers Pay Their Fair Share
- Supporting Rent-to-Own Projects
- Moving Forward on a Home Buyers' Bill of Rights
- Multigenerational Home Renovation Tax Credit
- A New Generation of Co-Operative Housing Development
- Investing in Housing for Indigenous Communities
- Direct Support for those in Housing Need
- Doubling the First-Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit
- Speeding Up Housing Construction and Repairs for Vulnerable Canadians
- Affordable Housing in the North
- Doubling the Home Accessibility Tax Credit
- Long-Term Supports to End Homelessness

ICYMI: The National Housing Strategy and Lived Experience

The dismantling of homeless encampments across the country amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the high cost of rent and the use of 'renovictions' and 'demovictions' to circumvent caps on rent increases, has re-focused attention on the urgency of advancing the right to housing, a commitment laid out in the National Housing Strategy (NHS, 2018), which establishes "the right of every Canadian to access adequate housing" (p. 8). Achieving the right to housing demands centring the expertise of people with lived/living experience of homelessness and/or core housing need (people with LE), who understand uniquely what happens when housing is unaffordable, unavailable, and/or inadequate. Drawing on existing literature and reports that describe the experiences of people with LE, we make recommendations about improving the National Housing Strategy (NHS).

- [A National Housing Strategy By and For Whom? Documented Experiences of People With Living Knowledge of Housing Need \(Systems Planning Collective, June 15 2022\)](#)

Quantifying Functional Zero Homelessness - Rare, Brief, and / or Non-Recurring

The common vision of an end to homelessness is framed as a scenario in which homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring (see [Built for Zero Canada](#)). Built for Zero communities in Canada, in the US, and elsewhere have all sought to advance this vision of ending homelessness through the benchmark of Functional Zero, typically specific to a priority population, with [Community Solutions' website](#) noting:

“Communities in Built for Zero focus on achieving functional zero for one population, as a step on the way toward ending homelessness for all populations. A study by the Urban Institute found that this focused approach can accelerate a community’s progress on subsequent populations.”

The current focus in [BFZ communities](#) and nationally under [Reaching Home](#) has been on reducing chronic homelessness and / or veteran homelessness, with the following [BFZ thresholds](#):

- *A community has ended chronic homelessness when the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness is zero, or if not zero, then either 3 or .1% of the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness, whichever is greater.*
- *A community has ended veteran homelessness when the number of veterans experiencing homelessness is less than or equal to the number of veterans a community has proven it can house in a month.*

In their commentary on “[the value of functional zero](#)”, the Urban Institute note that “on the most basic level, achieving functional zero for either veteran or chronic homelessness means that more people are housed and fewer people are experiencing homelessness in a community”. While that is technically true of Functional Zero for Veteran Homelessness, it’s likely but not mathematically guaranteed under the goals for ending chronic homelessness; it is possible to solve chronic homelessness and have experiences of homelessness be both common and recurring. This comment is made not as a critique of any existing frameworks or prioritization plans locally or nationally, but rather simply to note that there are other metrics by which we can also evaluate progress in ending homelessness. While we can assume a 6-month threshold for brevity (as reaching functional zero chronic homelessness is an articulated goal for many communities), the other two components often go undefined. That being said, interim targets could easily be adopted, with measurement compatible with existing pushes to adopt BNL enumeration models.

Vision	Goal	Comments
Homelessness is Brief	Any experiences of homelessness last less than 6 months	The adoption of Functional Zero Chronic Homelessness as a common goal naturally leads to a possible initial service flow through target of 6 months. However, there are also more ambitious targets that could be adopted thereafter, such as the early Medicine Hat goal of 10 days maximum in shelter, the original 10-year Alberta Plan did adopt a specific target of 21 days to re-house, and some Housing First for Youth fidelity assessments call for housing within three months of program entry. The current target for Kelowna is to reach this target (equivalent to chronic functional zero) by December 31 st 2025.
Homelessness is Rare	A per capita active homelessness rate below 0.1%?	While we’re not familiar with any specific threshold for rarity, it would presumably be a rate and not a raw figure. The 0.1% threshold defining an end to chronic homelessness presents an easy threshold for experiences of homelessness broadly among the population. Furthermore, this is plausibly achievable as a goal, as a handful of OECD countries have rates below that threshold even with broad definitions of homelessness. This metric is also one that could be tracked through a comprehensive BNL (or any other form of enumeration, if presented as a ratio to account for population shifts generally). By this hypothetical target of “0.1%”, homelessness in British Columbia has not been rare. This is evidenced both by PIT method and in terms of the 2019 Homeless Cohort through provincial data integration, though certain communities and Census Divisions, respectively, came close (or may be below

		that level, depending on the underlying population boundary used to produce the rate). A future, live BNL will allow for a more nuanced sense of inflow / outflow within the system, as is also acknowledged in the City of Kelowna Council Priorities reporting.
Homelessness in Non-Recurring	<10% of By Name List experiences recurrent episode by year five?	As with “rarity”, I’m not familiar with any official thresholds adopted to track recurrence. The Journey Home Midterm report adopts a <10% threshold for discharges into homelessness; perhaps that’s a reasonable target for recurrence as well. Adoption of a By Name List that maintains historical records over some defined time period would allow one to track recurrence (e.g. percent of “Moved to Permanent Housing” outflow reclassified as “Returned From Housing” inflow within XX years, to use Toronto Shelter System Flow terminology). Non-recurrence may naturally lend itself to being the last of the goals to be evaluated, as it will be time delayed.

Final Draft: Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy

The final draft of the [Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy](#) is available on the RDCO site as of June 2022. Recall that it’s goal was:

“To fulfill the vision of the community that all residents must have basic needs met as well as access to preventative services, opportunities and a sense of belonging and inclusion. It will be important to ensure that investments in new and expanded resources and programming are data driven and have measurement strategies in place to support impact tracking.”

As of August 31st, the concurrently developed [Regional Housing Strategy](#) is still in draft form, though remains available on the RDCO site as well.

ICYMI: Abandoning Inappropriate Homelessness Interventions

- Denvall, V., Bejerholm, U., Stylianides, K. C., Johanson, S., & Knutagård, M. (2022). [De-implementation: lessons to be learned when abandoning inappropriate homelessness interventions](#). *International Journal on Homelessness*, 1-17.

“Evidence on what works to end homelessness is growing. Evidence also highlights that some forms of help are harmful and should be de-implemented. The ability to abandon low-functioning interventions is considered essential to improve conditions for homeless people. It is common for challenges to be encountered when evidence exists claiming that alternative approaches are more effective and/or cost-effective. This is particularly true in the context of the problematic staircase model and the highly effective Housing First. In this study, the aim was to collect published articles on the process of abandoning established methods with low scientific support. This scoping review explores evidence on de-implementation that may clarify why it can be difficult to introduce interventions like Housing First despite having strong scientific evidence. The call for a shift toward greater provision of Housing First in Sweden underlines the timeliness of this problem. Forty-one articles published between 2014 and 2020 were included. The review found no articles focusing on the de-implementation of homelessness services. Findings from other fields show that the important first step is to identify what needs to be phased out. Together with organized demands from users and favorable financial effects, scientific evidence can constitute driving mechanisms for de-implementation. We found a lack of practical frameworks and theoretical explanations that could support successful phasing out of unnecessary interventions in the homelessness field. It is suggested that to support the implementation of new ways of working that better benefit homeless people, we must pay attention to established ways of working. This requires a developed theory of de-implementation of homelessness interventions and calls for more robust research.”

Update: Overdose Deaths in British Columbia

- BC News Release (August 16th 2022): [Ten thousand lives lost to illicit drugs since declaration of public health emergency](#)

At least 1,095 British Columbians are believed to have been lost to the toxic drug supply between January and June 2022, according to preliminary data released by the BC Coroners Service. “The ever-increasing toxicity of the unregulated, illicit drug market is taking a heart-breaking toll on the lives and well-being of members of our communities across the province,” said Lisa Lapointe, chief coroner. “Deaths due to toxic drugs in the first half of 2022 have surpassed the number of deaths experienced in the same period in 2021, putting our province, once again, on track for a record loss of life.”...

“Tragically, in the seventh year of this public health emergency, as we are experiencing increasing numbers of deaths in July, our province has now lost more than 10,000 lives to illicit drugs since April 2016,” Lapointe said. “These were men, women and youth from all walks of life. They lived in our neighbourhoods, worked in our workplaces and played on our sports teams. Some lived ordinary lives, while others faced enormous challenges. All of them fell prey to the lethal supply of illicit drugs that is omnipresent. As recommended by the subject matter experts on the recent Death Review Panel, it is imperative that we urgently provide access to safer supply across our province. It’s only when we drastically reduce people’s reliance on the profit-driven, illicit drug trade, that we will save lives and turn the trajectory of this crisis around.”

- [Decriminalization](#) will proceed in BC starting January 2023
- However, [public opinion](#) on the plan remains split (but support may be growing)

ICYMI: Peer Assisted Care Teams in BC’s Lower Mainland (PACTs)

- BC News Release (April 11th 2022): [New and expanded care teams support people in crisis](#)

“People in crisis will soon have access to new peer-assisted care teams in New Westminster and Victoria and an expanded care team on the North Shore thanks to a \$1.26-million investment through Budget 2022. The teams – also known as PACTs – are civilian-led and support people in distress by connecting them to mental-health and substance-use supports... The funding will also support the expansion of the PACT on the North Shore, which was launched as a pilot by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) North and West Vancouver Branch and its community partners in fall 2021.”

- Related to this topic is the report by the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act from earlier this year: [“Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia”](#), which included recommendations aimed at reducing the use of police as a first response to mental health crises
- Note that this is distinct from Kelowna’s [PACT](#) (which, in contrast, stands for “Police and Crisis Team”), in which two specially-trained officers work rotating shifts with a Registered Psychiatric Nurse

ICYMI: Employment and Persons Experiencing Homelessness

- Marshall, C. A., Boland, L., Westover, L. A., Goldszmidt, R., Bengall, J., Aryobi, S., ... & Gewurtz, R. (2022). [Effectiveness of employment-based interventions for persons experiencing homelessness: A systematic review](#). *Health & Social Care in the Community*.

The effectiveness of these interventions on employment, mental well-being, housing tenure, community integration, and substance use is presented. Findings suggest that research evaluating employment interventions for persons who experience homelessness is in an early stage of development. Researchers and practitioners may consider collaborating with persons with lived experiences of homelessness and practitioners in co-designing and modifying existing approaches to target key outcomes more effectively. Policymakers may consider allocating

resources to such initiatives to further the development of practice and research aimed at supporting persons who experience homelessness to secure and sustain employment during and following homelessness.

- Dr. Carrie Anne Marshall's [Social Justice in Mental Health Research Lab](#) based out of Western University engages in a number of topics related to homelessness; Co-Investigators are largely from the School of Occupational Therapy

ICYMI: Webinars, Podcasts, & Media

- Spotify Link: [On the Way Home](#) (CAEH / Blue Door) is a podcast that brings together the voices and issues involved in ending homelessness in Canada
- Spotify Link: [Homelessness in Kelowna](#)
- City of Kelowna: [Kelowna Talks podcast](#)
- Spotify Link - The Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative: [Best Evidence Podcast](#)
- Spotify Link - BC Housing Podcast: [Let's Talk Housing](#)

For weekly posts on homelessness research in Canada and around the world, check out the Homeless Hub's [Research Matters Blog](#).

If you would like to continue to receive updates on our activities, research opportunities, and events, please [subscribe](#) to our mailing list, and if you have any questions email us at ask.khrc@ubc.ca

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