

United Way Maritimes Impact Area



Housing &
Homelessness

What is Homelessness?

Homelessness is the situation of an individual or family without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate means or ability to acquire it. There are many different terms to describe homelessness, such as unsheltered, sleeping rough, or unhoused. Each person's experience of homelessness is unique, and specific groups may be affected by and define homelessness differently.

What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable housing is the term used to describe housing that is affordable based on a household's income. Typically, the cost of housing is affordable if it doesn't exceed 30% of a household's income. That's because as the cost of housing rises, it makes it more challenging for a household to afford other basic necessities, such as food, transportation, childcare, clothing etc.

What is Core Housing Need?

Core housing need is the term that describes housing that is unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable. That might mean the home is in poor condition, doesn't have enough rooms for the size of the household, or costs more than 30% of the household income. Core housing need can describe households that meet some or all of the three criteria.

Who experiences homelessness?

1.7 million Canadian households, or 12.7% are living in core housing need. Approximately 25% of Canadian households pay more than 30% of their income on shelter costs, and 1 in 5 renter households spend more than 50% of their income on rent.

At least 235,000 people living in Canada experience homelessness each year. This does not account for hidden homelessness: those who do not have long-term housing stability but are temporarily couch surfing, staying with friends or family and not self-identifying as homeless.

Additionally:

- Indigenous people are eight times more likely to experience homelessness than non-Indigenous people
- 67.8% of the homeless population in Canada are men
- Approximately 20% of homeless Canadians are youth aged 13-24

Sources for this document can be found at www.unitedwayhalifax.ca/impact-area-sources/



United Way
Maritimes

Serving Central &
Southwestern NB,
PEI & Mainland NS



Local Statistics

New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From 2018-2022, homelessness increased by 40%• 28% of renter households spent more than 30% of their income on shelter costs• 9.2% of households were in core housing need in 2022• Average rents increased 6.4% from 2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From 2018-2022, homelessness increased by 182%• 34.7% of renter households spent more than 30% of their income on shelter costs• 12.9% of households were in core housing need in 2022• Average rents increased 4.5% from 2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From 2018-2022, homelessness increased by 130%• 30.2% of renter households spent more than 30% of their income on shelter costs• 6.5% of households were in core housing need in 2022• Average rents increased 3.8% from 2023-2024

Housing stability is an important component of the social determinants of health. A lack of stable housing contributes to other complex issues such as mental health and substance use, food insecurity, poor health outcomes and challenges with maintaining meaningful employment or education.

The current housing situation is considered to be a crisis, caused by a number of factors including population growth, increasing housing costs, loss of affordable units, financialization of housing and public policy decisions.

United Way Maritimes Impact

United Way Maritimes will address homelessness and affordable housing through community investments, capacity building, delivery of programs, and thought leadership activities to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased access to a safe, comfortable, and supportive place to rest every day
- Increased access to ongoing supports to successfully transition to and/or maintain housing
- Increased access to affordable, safe, secure, and appropriate housing

What might this look like?

Immediate Needs	Intervention & Prevention	Addressing Root Causes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing temporary or transitional housing• Street outreach for individuals experiencing homelessness• Emergency shelters (e.g., drop-in centers, youth shelters, family shelters, etc.)• Diversion programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs providing wrap around services and supports• Case management• Eviction prevention• Home repair support• Support to find housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnering to offer innovative housing and shelter solutions• Leading cross sector tables to identify system gaps and develop solutions to support individuals to find housing and stay housed.• Advocacy for public policy changes to housing and residential tenancies.