

10th ANNUAL

Report Card on Homelessness FOR NELSON, BC

INSIDE
Findings of the April 2018
PIT Homeless Count & Survey



JUNE 2018

Researched and prepared by
The Nelson Committee on Homelessness



This 10th Annual Report Card on Homelessness for Nelson (JUNE 2018) will bring the reader a better understanding of those who are homeless and at risk of homelessness, what contributes to homelessness in our community and what we can and are doing about it. It is designed to both encourage questions and inform solutions.

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The Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH)

is a volunteer committee of service agencies and concerned citizens, with Provincial agencies and Federal and City government representation dedicated to long-term solutions to poverty and homelessness. We work with members of the community, businesses, governments and other stakeholders to:

- prevent homelessness by addressing contributing factors and practices that lead to it
- provide assistance and paths out of homelessness
- enable a better understanding of local homelessness issues and best practices
- give community members, businesses and organizations the opportunity to participate in solutions.

We do this by:

- encouraging collaboration and supporting new initiatives
- leading community research
- facilitating information sharing and knowledge building, and
- developing community partnerships among all stakeholders to find solutions.

What do we mean by “homelessness”?

HOMELESSNESS doesn't just mean sleeping rough, on the streets or in the woods.

It means not having access to permanent, safe, stable housing where you can stay as long as you want or shut the door to have your own safe space, or invite someone in for a visit, in privacy. It may mean the risk of having to choose between a roof over your head or other basic needs like food, clothing, medicine and transportation. It may mean you don't have the supports you need to help maintain your health and housing stability.



Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless live on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;



Emergency Sheltered includes those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence;



Provisionally Accommodated refers to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure, and



At Risk of Homelessness refers to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION: Increasingly, public health practices are being applied to homelessness. Preventive policies, practices and interventions reduce the likelihood that someone will become homeless. For those who have been homeless, this also means providing them with enough resources and assistance to help stabilize their housing situation and health, and enhance opportunities to participate in and contribute to community life.

The causes of homelessness are not just individual. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness states that causes also include “*relational factors, broader population-based structural factors and the failure of many public institutions to protect people from homelessness.*” This suggests that homelessness prevention must not only target individuals, but broader structural and systemic reforms directed at addressing the drivers of homelessness. Communities, all levels of government and most departments within have an opportunity to contribute to the prevention of homelessness. What might this look like? Look for examples on Page 5!

Nelson's 2018 Point-in-Time Homeless Count

PURPOSE: Nelson's second Point-in-Time Homelessness Count & Housing Needs Survey gathered information about the extent and nature of homelessness in Nelson. It was part of a nation-wide effort to capture a snapshot of homelessness in 45 communities to better understand the causes of homelessness and the barriers that are preventing people from finding and keeping stable long-term housing.

METHODOLOGY: Over 24 hours on April 10th and 11th sixty-five volunteers helped conduct a count and anonymous survey of people who were experiencing some type of homelessness in 17 different outdoor, service, college, shelter and transitional housing locations. Further surveys were gathered from youth services in town during the week. People who were not homeless were asked about their risk of homelessness.

The results of the 2018 PiT Count provide a better understanding of the current state of homelessness in Nelson. **These results may be used to provide direction and inform strategic community planning.** Further, these findings may help track changes in the homeless population over time and measure progress in addressing homelessness in the future.



725 *people in total were approached and tallied, whether observed, screened or then surveyed as homeless.*

101 *individuals were surveyed*

+ 7 *dependent children*

+24 *people were observed as homeless*

=132 **PEOPLE IN TOTAL WHO EXPERIENCED SOME TYPE OF HOMELESSNESS**

Who was homeless?



8% *Of people had served in the **CANADIAN MILITARY***



32% *Of people were **YOUTH 24 yrs old or under***



31% *Of people identified as having **INDIGENOUS ANCESTRY***



54% *Of people were **MALE***



38% *Of people were **FEMALE***



7% *Of people were **TWO SPIRIT, TRANS, NON-BINARY, GENDER-NEUTRAL, Other***



26% *Of people were **BI-SEXUAL, PAN-SEXUAL, LESBIAN, Other***



70% *Of people were **HETEROSEXUAL***

"We need more affordable housing. Rent needs to be what is given to us for a shelter allowance by Income Assistance." - Survey participant

What does homelessness in Nelson look like?

There is no such thing as a “typical” person without housing, and no one story as to how people’s lives lead in to and out of homelessness.

No one is absolutely safe from it. No one chooses to be without a safe place to live. All ages are affected. Every community in Canada has people who are homeless.

Very few homeless people live on the streets; most cycle between the streets, shelters and other temporary living situation with friends, family members or mere acquaintances, or find house-sitting opportunities.

All these informal, temporary situations are a form of **Hidden Homelessness**, removed from community social supports.

Many people are only homeless once and have the emotional, mental and physical strength or resources and informal or formal supports to stabilize their lives.

Other people, for various reasons, cycle in and out of homelessness.

Hidden Homelessness: A common perception of homelessness is of people sleeping out of doors or staying at a shelter. However, many people experience hidden homelessness:

37% of people enumerated during the PiT Count were experiencing hidden homelessness

75% of people surveyed during the PiT Count had experienced some form of hidden homelessness in the past 12 months.

Where they stayed:

Surveyed respondents and their dependents, plus people reported and observed:



What might homelessness prevention look like?

Structural prevention: Preserving /developing affordable, safe appropriate housing, improving Income supports, poverty reduction strategies and anti-discrimination policy;

Systems prevention: Addressing barriers faced trying to access supports like transportation, disabilities, literacy, and navigation of the systems;

Early intervention: Family mediation, integrated case management;

Evictions prevention and housing stability: Emergency funds, help obtaining and retaining housing, supports for health, well-being, education, employment, social inclusion;

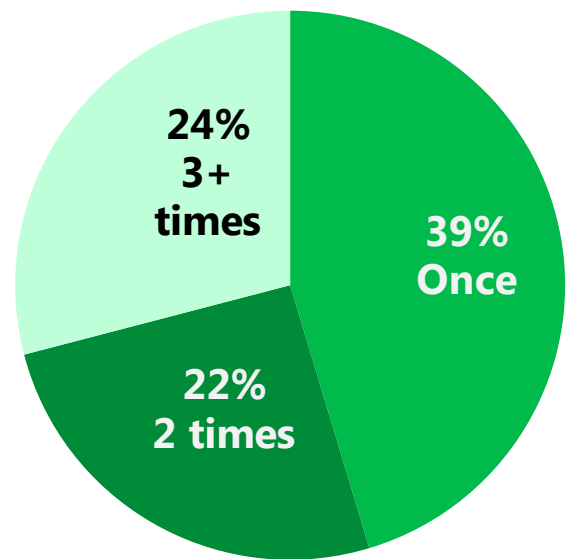
The Cycle of Homelessness:

Often people cycle in and out of homelessness, as precarious, temporary living situations fail.

Of those surveyed

24%

experienced 3 or more episodes of homelessness this past year.



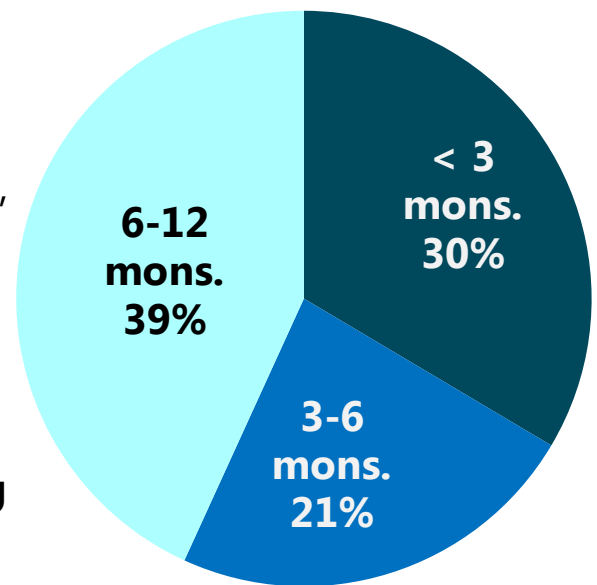
Chronic Homelessness:

Without access to sufficient income, affordable housing or supports and services, people who are homeless can find their situation becomes more chronic.

Of those surveyed

39%

were without permanent, safe housing for more than 6 months during the past year.



Residency & Mobility

Another common perception is that homeless people are all transient, mobile and have no permanent community. While they may be looking for an affordable housing option, or just shelter and a safe place, or job opportunities for which they are capable, the PiT Count Survey found that the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness had lived in Nelson over 5 years but were struggling to achieve stability.

55% had lived here for 5+ years. 68% had lived here for over a year.

The top four reasons that people gave for coming to Nelson were (in order):

- Family moved here
- Nelson's Reputation / Culture
- Fear for Safety
- To access services and supports. But even at that,

Only 9 of 101 surveys indicated people came to Nelson for services.

Paths **into** and out of homelessness:

YOUTH



For most people, the path towards homelessness starts early in life. Children and youth may leave home situations when individual and family problems become overwhelming: a family breakup; family violence; physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse; unsafe behaviours by family members at home; non-acceptance of their emerging sexual or gender identity or mental health issues; substance use by self or family member (often a way to cope with trauma or mental health issues) or involvement with the child protection system.

56%

of respondents
experienced homelessness
before 19 years of age.

40%

of **ALL RESPONDENTS**
have been in
foster care or a group home.

32% of respondents were under the age of 24.

OF THOSE:

54% have been in foster care.

43% identify as LGBTQ2S

50% have been in Nelson 5+ years.

#1 contributing factor to youth homelessness:

43%: Conflict with Parent / Guardian

#1 barrier for youth finding stable housing:

93%: High rents

Top service needs for youth:

50% Mental Health

47% Tenants' Rights/Supports

32% Temporary Employment

HIGH HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS:

57% crashed at someone's place the night before

75% did so at least 1 time in the previous 12 months.

50%

of **INDIGENOUS**
respondents have been in
foster care or a group home

31%

of **NON-INDIGENOUS**
respondents have been in
foster care or a group home

"We need a whole apartment for youth coming out of care, with strong life skills training or support."

"I'd like to see a housing option or a centre that provides drop in services like food and temporary stays for youth in precarious housing situations".

-Survey participants

Paths into and **out of** homelessness: YOUTH



Cicada Place offers housing with supports to youth-at-risk

Having to leave an unsafe or unaccepting home is never easy, especially for youth. Nelson Community Service's (NCS) Youth Services offer outreach services and supports. Cicada Place, a 10-unit apartment offers transitional housing for at-risk youth to live independently within a supportive environment. The Program assists youth aged 16 to 22 to make the transition into responsible adulthood by helping them develop independent living skills. This year the City teamed up with NCS to submit a housing project proposal that included youth-supported housing on top of the Nelson and District Youth Centre. This is still being pursued.

**Stable,
supportive,
transitional
housing
provided**

Youth Centre offers employment services and more!

The road to adulthood can be rocky at the best of times. The Nelson and District Youth Centre offers youth a place to explore, learn, gather get exercise, learn new skills and/or hang out with friends. A range of employment services, training and programs are offered in a safe, non-judgemental milieu. Activities offered include: skating, pool, foosball, basketball, music, a youth flea market and more. NDYC coordinates Nelson's Youth Interagency Committee meetings to share information and to plan some future initiatives.

**A safe place to
hang
Employment
services
Youth activities
Connections &
supports**

BC extends supports to youth-in-care

Policy or "systemic" changes can make a big difference in people's lives. In April 2018 youth 19 to 26 years who are transitioning out of care welcomed these changes:

- needs-based funding eligibility continues one more year, up to the 27th birthday;
- funding availability increases from 8 to 12 months per year
- the maximum monthly funding levels increase by \$250 to \$1250 per month.

BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness forms

This May, agencies and community groups from across BC sent representatives to the first meeting of a Coalition To End Youth Homelessness in BC. It is spearheaded by Kamloop's successful *A Way Home* project which transformed youth services by bringing all sectors together to develop youth housing and supports. Canada's first Youth PiT Count in Kamloops, the success of its *A Way Home* project and the Project's call for policy changes and provincial supports to end youth homelessness suggested Kamloops as a microcosm of what could work provincially. Now supported by the Province, the Coalition will research best practices in BC communities. It will put youth voices first, work for a diverse community-led movement, and integrate the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. Local Youth Outreach worker Rick Kutzner attended the first meeting, and a local youth will be a regional representative. Nelson's *Homelessness Action Week* will focus on youth homelessness this October.

Paths **into** and out of homelessness: HOUSING INSTABILITY

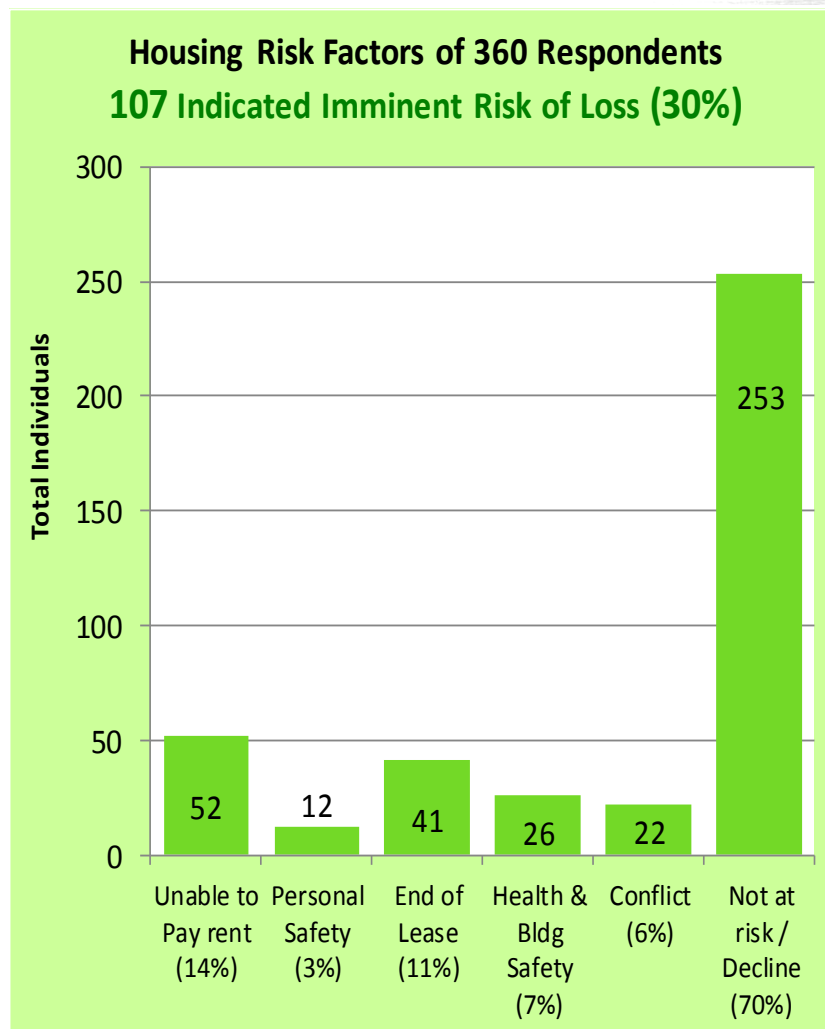


Housing Precariousness:

This year we asked community members **who currently have housing** how secure they felt that housing was. →

Household conflicts and lack of family and other informal supports leave people vulnerable when health issues or economic pressures arise. The cost of housing and the lack of enough affordable housing at rates local incomes can afford also contribute to housing instability.

People currently without secure housing who were surveyed gave these reasons for most recently losing their housing:



REASONS FOR LOSING HOUSING:

34%	Conflict & Abuse: With/by parents & guardians or spouses /partners
34%	Tenancy Issues: Unsafe housing, Conflict with roommates or landlords; reno-victions
24%	Financial: Unable to pay rent, job loss, income or benefit reductions
23%	Health: Illness, Hospitalization, Addictions
21%	Other: Aged out, other, declined, unclear

There is not enough rental housing stock in Canada. Affordable rentals are even more in demand. After decades, this is beginning to be addressed through government policies and programs, but there is a huge gap to fill, especially in the face of other housing market pressures that have hit BC and other parts of Canada. *(Continued on P. 10).*

Paths **into** and out of homelessness:

HOUSING INSTABILITY



(Cont.) The majority of government investment will be directed to market and low-end-of market rental housing, not subsidized Rent-Geared-To-Income (RGI) housing.

It will be a challenge for non-profits to keep rents low over the life of their new or re-furnished buildings without these subsidies, if they are to maintain affordable housing for low income households. Hopefully new rental units will eventually free up other lower income rental opportunities for people. Supplying enough rental housing on the market will take some time, however, given the rate of senior government levels of investment and the lack of private sector interest.

Waitlists for affordable housing are long

Non-Profit Housing Provider	# of units	Waitlist	Turnover last year
Nelson CARES	155 ↑	171	24
CMHA-Anderson Gardens	33	82	2
Links Housing Coop	31	50	3
Kiwanis Seniors Hsg.	62 ↓		
Nelson Comm. Services - Cicada Place (Youth)	10	25	9

On-line Rental Ad:

"Looking for someone to share a 2-Bdrm apartment.

I don't have the place yet but have submitted an application and need to find a roommate before committing . No smoking, no partying, no pets."

"I have a good full-time job in town. I am making more than minimum wage. This spring I had to find a new rental and couldn't believe how many places come so close to 50% of my monthly wages. Through work/friend connections I have found a place, but am living paycheck-to-paycheck and am worried about a potential rental increase in the fall. I am scared I will be struggling this way for the rest of my life. This is not a healthy way to live."

- from FB West Kootenay Housing Stories

BC Housing Strategy will help make a difference

Changes to Residential Tenancy Laws will limit rent increases to only once ever 12 months where there is a turnover of fixed-term tenancies, no matter if there is a new tenant by way of an assignment. Landlords will pay hefty fines if a stated reason for the tenant to vacate for landlord use (e.g. renovations or family use) does not happen after a reasonable time, unless there are extenuating reasons. A Rental Task Force will also be bringing forward changes in the fall.

BC to build 2,500 supportive homes for people struggling with homelessness BC will fund an additional 2,500 new homes with 24/7 support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to the 1,300 new modular homes built in BC for people in need this year.

Paths into and **out of** homelessness: **HOUSING STABILITY**



Safe, stable, affordable housing can make a huge difference in helping to improve someone's health, their life, and in turn, the life of the community.

SHARE Housing Initiative moving closer to a go



The SHARE Housing Initiative Society is planning to build a \$10-million, five-storey building with 39 one-bedroom units plus some commercial space on its property on Falls Street. It received variances it needed from City Council in February and a funding approval from the Columbia Basin Trust and BC Housing in May. The site is behind Kootenay Christian Fellowship and Our Daily Bread.

Nelson CARES redevelops Lakeside Place

Lakeside Place in lower Fairview is being redeveloped into a modern, four-storey, wood-frame building that will provide 47 affordable rental apartments for seniors and people with disabilities. Demolition and construction will start this summer. Nelson CARES has worked hard to find housing for the long-standing tenants there, in preparation for this. Three additional one-bedroom units are also planned at their Cedar Grove Estates housing location.



Women's T-House offers safety and supports

From May 1, 2017 to March 31st 2018 Aimee Beaulieu Transition House provided shelter and supports to 53 women and 28 children fleeing domestic violence.

They found long-term, safe housing for
21 women and 9 children
and returned 10 women and 8 children to their homes
once they were safe.

***"I am so happy that
the Transition House
is here, otherwise I
would be in a much
worse situation."
- Survey Participant***

BC government investment will help children and women affected by violence

BC is committing \$141 million over three years and \$734 million over 10 years to build and provide housing supports for women and children feeling violence.

Paths **into** and out of homelessness: **POVERTY**

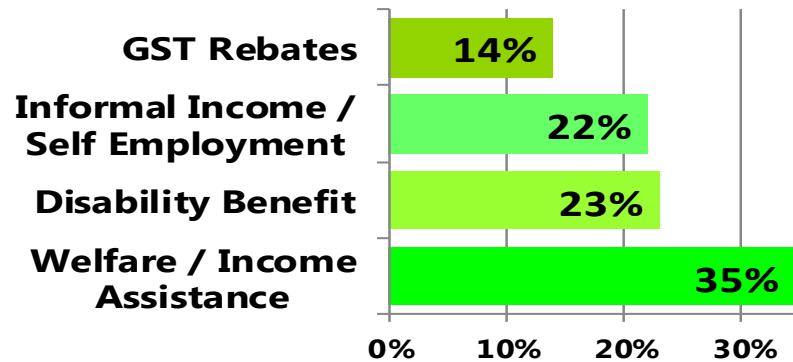


Individuals experiencing homelessness are often trapped in a cycle of poverty. They need housing in order to help find employment but can't afford housing if they are on government assistance and/or have barriers to employment.

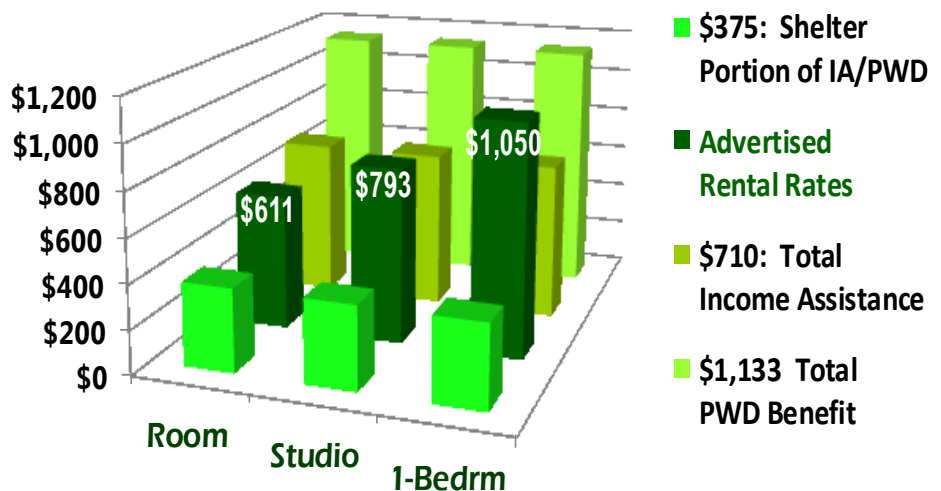
BC Income Assistance rates were frozen at \$610/month for singles for a decade, then increased to \$710/month in 2017 as a first act of the new BC government. It is still a challenge.

Escaping poverty is extremely challenging, especially in a housing and rental market like Nelson's. People who have experienced homelessness or are on some form of government assistance, or are fleeing violence, or have chronic health conditions can be disregarded in favour of tenants with professional jobs, glowing personal and job references, and higher incomes.

Top 4 Sources of Income



Rents VS. Single Assistance Rates



"It's challenging maintaining consistent, permanent work."

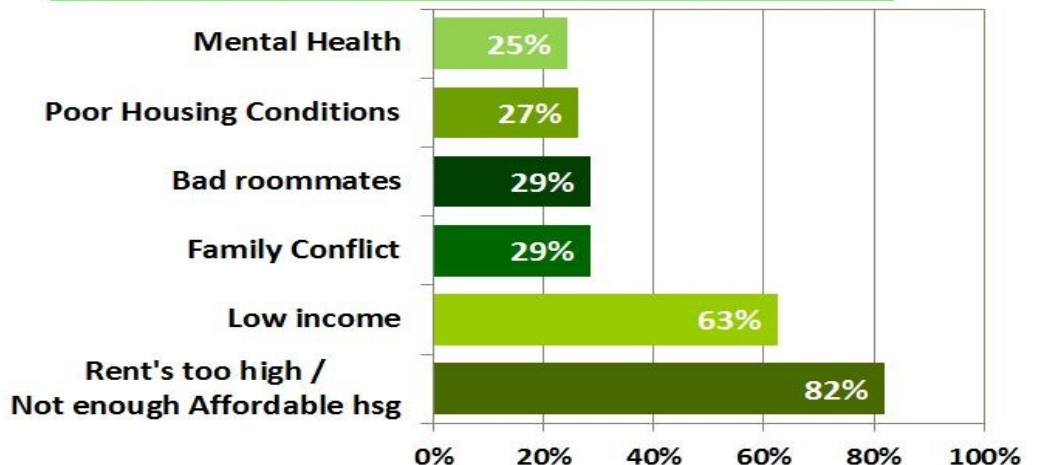
"Stop the discrimination and stigma on renters on IA/PWD."

"The longer you're homeless the longer it takes to get back in society."

"I lose precious belongings every time I move. Not having access to a phone is a major barrier to finding housing or work."

-Survey Participants

6 Top Barriers to finding/keeping housing

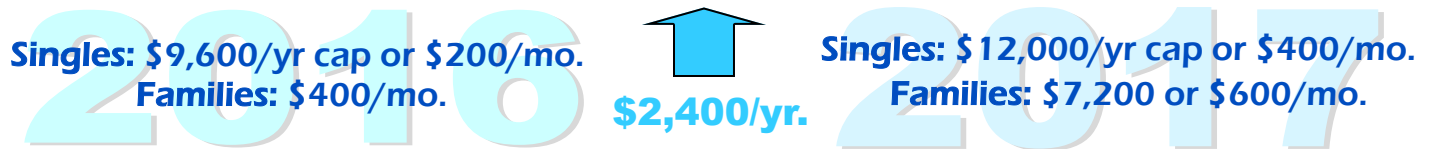


Paths into and **out of** homelessness: POVERTY



Increased earning exemptions policy helps make a difference

BC instituted a \$200/month increase in earning exemptions for people on Income and Disability Assistance, to help them stay more connected to the workforce and make ends meet.



Nelson's Street Collaborative

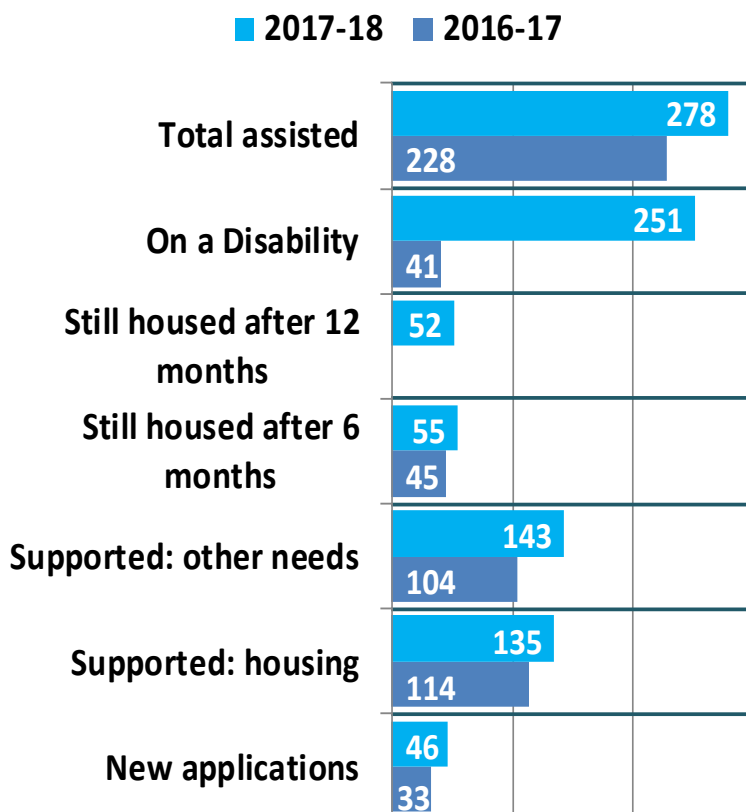
The Collaborative is a multi-sectoral group that reviews the systems that create the cycles of poverty, homelessness and poor health in Nelson. It has successfully pursued new initiatives that have increased understanding of these factors and improved individual and community life. It continues to identify and address service gaps and systemic barrier. **One main goal is the creation of temporary work options** for people with health or other issues that make it difficult to maintain a permanent job - options that can work when one is healthy enough to work. Suggestions for the future from people who were part of the street culture include: morning pick-up points to connect with employers; a temp agency; ties to local farmers; a co-op and a wage subsidy program to help employers hire eligible people.

Self-worth gained by work can't be underestimated.

"Not every homeless person is lazy. We have talent!"

- Collaborative Participant

Homeless Prevention Program stabilizes tenancies



Community Service's HP Program brings hope, safety, resources and supports to help individuals and families find and keep their housing. It assists youth leaving care, women leaving violence, people leaving institutional care and people of indigenous ancestry.

HPP workers Monica Fernandez and Allison Murray worked hard to stretch 20 minimal rent subsidies 269 times last year to help over 130 individuals and families stabilize their housing situation. The HPP also helps people to secure income, disability or other government assistance, refers clients to other agencies and supports tenants and landlords through disputes, mediations and arbitrations.

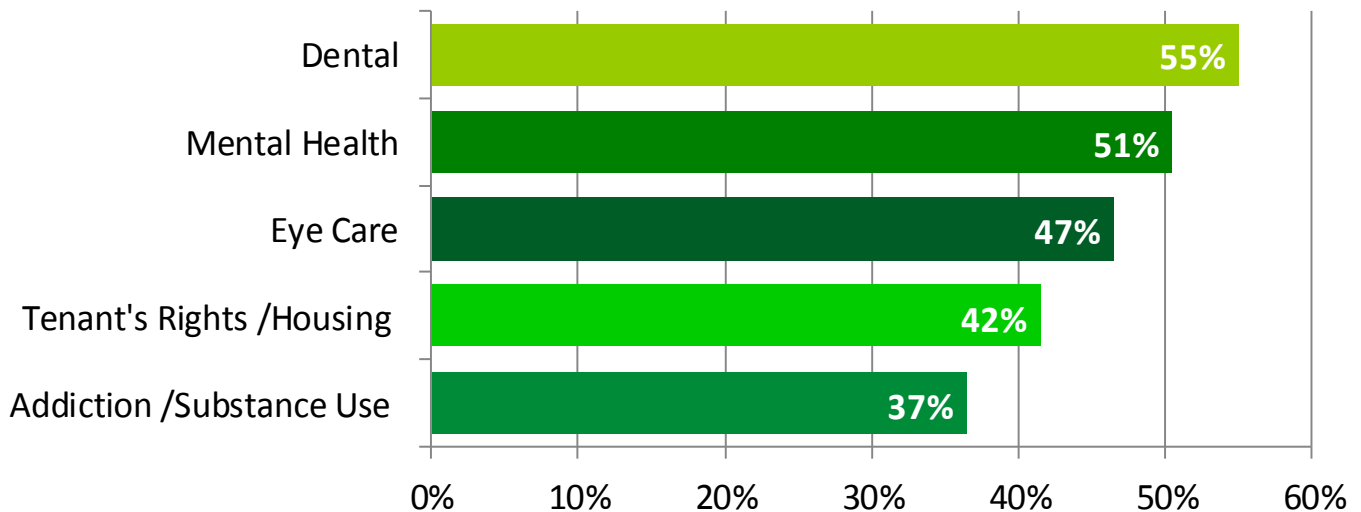
"I am working hard to show landlords the 'safety net' I can provide." -M Fernandez

Paths **into** and out of homelessness: **SUPPORTS**



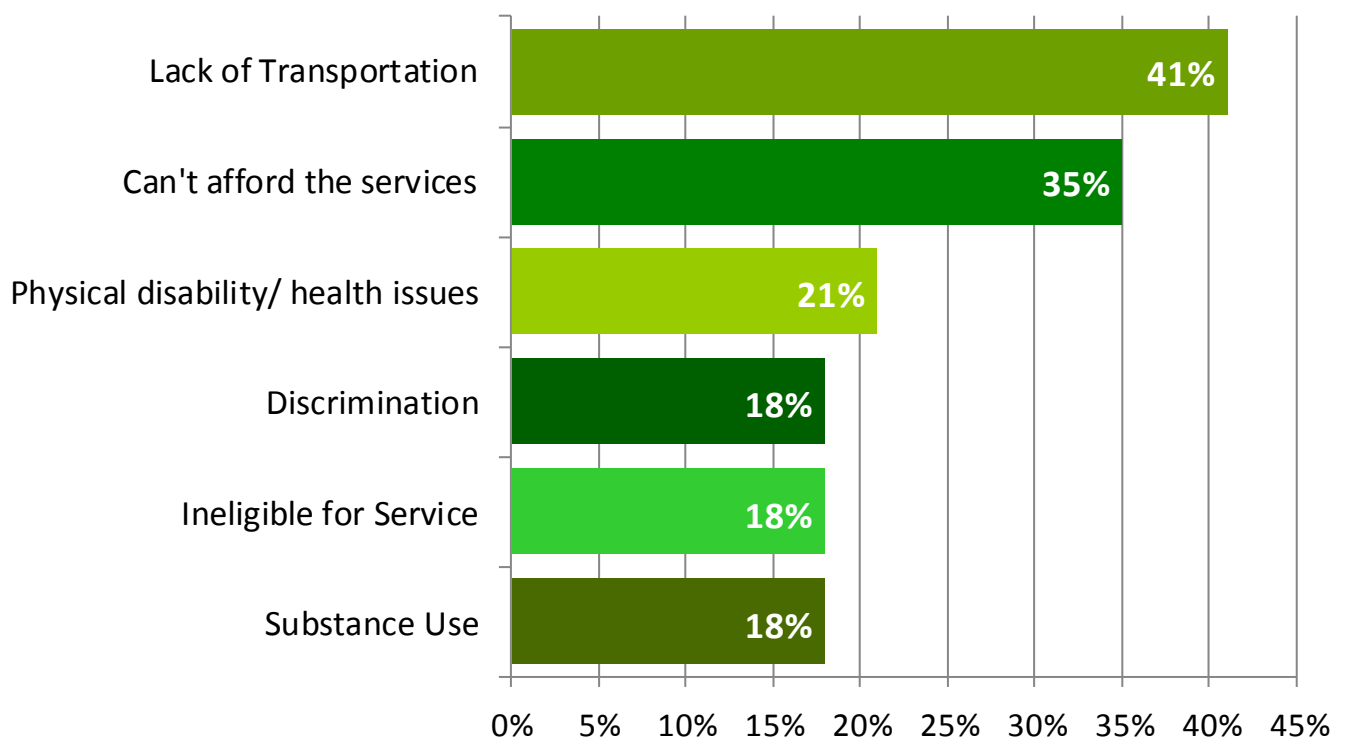
Many individuals who experience homelessness also need support in other areas of their life in order to achieve stability. Here is what people surveyed indicated:

Top 5 Needs for Services



Invisible barriers like assumptions, stereotyping, labelling and dismissing can create stigma. Being stigmatized can prevent people from asking for or accessing services like other members of the public. Other factors can create barriers too, say the people surveyed:

Top 6 Barriers to Accessing Services



Paths into and **out of** homelessness: **SUPPORTS**



Helping move people from homelessness to housing

14 former clients and
8 other housing
placements are
Supported.

2 are finding
employment.

1 is upgrading their
education.

5 new program
residents have been
welcomed this year.

Homelessness is usually experienced by people cycling in and out of temporary living situations, shelters and sleeping rough. Part-time Transitional Support Worker Jeremy Kelly helps make a difference in people's lives by working with Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter and other service providers who refer people to him (many with histories of chronic homelessness or evictions). Kelly helps people stabilize their housing through the Transitional Support Program that allows for rules and goals to be set to help provide housing security and gain tenancy skills. Kelly also helps secure income assistance and disability benefits for people and links them to other services or supports that they may need. Participants live at Nelson CARES's Ward Street Place and stay with the program three months to a year or more, with a goal of moving to a Residential Tenancy Agreement or to private rental housing when ready.



Housing Support Worker helps maintain tenancies

Nelson CARES' Housing Support Worker (HSW) helps to stabilize and maintain tenancies for program clients at Ward Street Place and at other Nelson CARES' housing projects. Some tenants have multiple issues that can put their health and therefore their housing at risk.

The HSW offers a range of supports. He may advocate for supplements, help to get people a disability benefit, remind people of health care appointments, help tenants get adequate food (groceries), provide transportation to appointments, help to keep a client's unit clean and help them meet basic tenancy standards. The HSW also tries to help build a sense of community in the buildings, focusing on both social events like a Valentine's Day Ice Cream Social and life skill programming such as budgeting, self-care, socializing, and one pot cooking classes. The HSW also hosts activities at Nelson CARES' family housing in Rosemont.

The position is paid for from the proceeds of Nelson CARES' ***Coldest Night of the Year*** fund-raising event. Stabilizing individual health and housing can help stabilize community health.

Paths **into** and out of homelessness: **SUPPORTS**



The living circumstances and poverty of people who are homeless affect their ability to cope with health and other problems. Respondents to the The PiT Count Survey indicated an increase over 2016 in the use of Emergency Services.

This may reflect better connections being made to health services and the presence of a beat-cop and the Street Outreach Team now in the downtown area. The fentanyl crisis has stretched the demand on services and supports this past year. Survey respondents reported these interactions with emergency services:

Interactions with Emergency Services

2016

2017



Ambulance Service

Used by **14 people**

Used by **30 people**



Emergency Ward

33 people used
95 times

51 people used
140 times



Hospitalization

29 people in hospital
75 times (187 days)

28 people in hospital
62 times (548 days)



Police Interactions

28 people interacted
208 times

52 people interacted
579 times



Jail

12 people in jail
22 times (495 days)

16 people in jail
50 times (354 days)

"Homelessness impacts everyone. Relying on emergency services is expensive.



\$1,932
Shelter Bed



\$4,333
Provincial Jail



\$10,900
Hospital Bed



Housed Person Homeless Person
Annual Cost of Hospitalization

"While emergency services will always be necessary because of personal crises, preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place and rehousing people who already are homeless is both a humane and cost-effective solution."



Street Outreach Team helps 'street culture' make connections to improve life

The Street Outreach Team completed its first full year of assisting people of Nelson's downtown street culture with services, supports and information to help some make a transition to an improved life:

- 37-38 people were **taking steps towards recovery**;
- 18-20 **went to treatment**;
- 13 successfully **secured employment**,
- 10 were **taking steps towards housing**;
- 7 **reconnected with family**

There was also a decrease from the previous year in the number of unique clients presenting with four or more MHSU complaints at Kootenay Lake Hospital's Emergency Ward.

From Oct 1 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017



Kootenay Lake Hospital Emergency Department visits where Mental Health/Substance Use (MHSU) was the Chief Presenting Complaint **Fell 5.6%** compared to the previous year.



Admissions to acute care of MHSU ED presentations **increased 7.1% to 20.8%** from the previous fiscal year.

Nelson Fentanyl Task Force and members making a difference

Nelson City Police Chief Paul Burkhardt, Tina Coletti from Nelson Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU), and Cheryl Dowden from ANKORS helped organize a multi-sector Task Force to provide harm reduction, treatment, continuity of care, education and prevention around people using and addicted to drugs in the Nelson community. An increase in deaths due to fentanyl overdoses was the impetus for this initiative. Members have been very active this past year helping to raise awareness and to educate people in the region.

Improved supports to people in the region include community partnership initiatives:

- ANKORS provided training and access to naloxone kits for businesses and service groups
- MHSU partnered with ANKORS and Nelson CARES to establish eight Adult Recovery Beds.
- ANKORS is piloting a monthly overdose prevention site at cheque time. As Police Chief Burkhardt noted, after checking with other police chiefs, it is better to do drugs in a safe place rather than behind your business, or in the park, or in the bathroom of a restaurant.
- A regional addictions Withdrawal Centre has been established in Castlegar, contracted by MHSU.

Paths into and out of homelessness: SUPPORTS

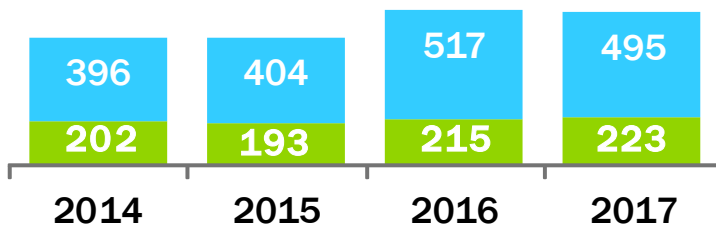


Stepping Stones offers more than emergency accommodation

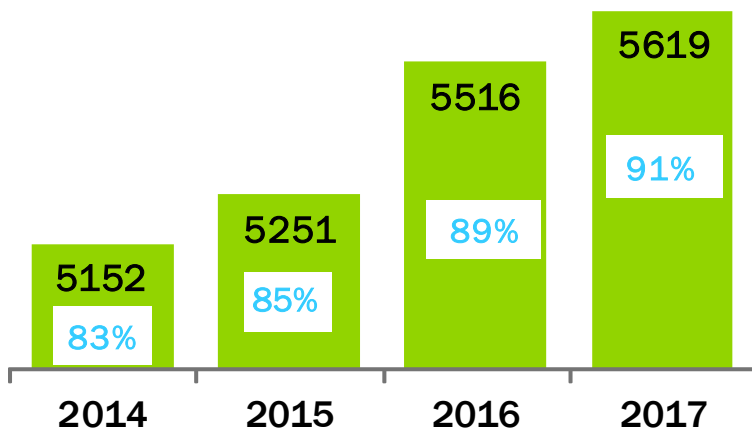
Stepping Stones for Success Emergency Shelter offers more than 17 safe shelter beds for people who have no where else to stay for the night. It helps connect some of the most marginalized people in our community to supports and services that help them to stabilize their lives, obtain income or disability assistance, find employment or housing and address chronic health and mental health issues.

People served and # of different stays

■ # of individuals ■ # of bed stays



Bed nights used & Occupancy Rate



Total # of people who stayed	223
# on disability benefit	87
# on income assistance	74
# of Mental Health clients	91
# who reported being employed	24
# who reported finding housing	94
# receiving Drop In assistance	541

DROP IN ASSISTANCE: 541 people who stayed there or had stayed there in the past received help at the Shelter's Drop In to:

- access computers for housing or job searches or to apply for / check on their Income Assistance or Disability Benefits;
- receive a meal or snack;
- use the phone to make appointments or connect to other services;
- get help with referrals to other supports, and
- get an important ear to listen.

Supported Recovery Beds making a difference in people's lives

After its first year of operation, a supportive recovery bed program that provides housing and supports for people who need these while receiving treatment for problematic substance use has seen 7 people successfully complete their full program and many more achieve smaller successes in meeting parts of their wellness plans. The program is managed by ANKORS in partnership with Nelson CARES and Interior Health. It offers life skills and clinical supports. A small team is able to offer flexible, truly individualized supports. They emphasize arrangements with other community services and institutions to provide resources for on-going supports. These last for as long as someone feels they need it once they leave the program, to help people reintegrate successfully into community. The average stay has been three months, The program allows up to 6 months. It has welcomed 18 people. The longest anyone has had to wait on the wait list is two months.



Community Indicators: HOUSING

COMMUNITY INDICATORS are a standardized method to document the context of local homelessness, poverty and housing precariousness - and monitor changes over time.

CMHC Vacancy Rates for Nelson: (Townhouse & Apartments)

CMHC surveys purpose-built rent-controlled units in buildings of three or more rental units.

Finding: Vacancy rates have remained very low in Nelson over several years.

Trend: People of low and modest income are looking for more rentals outside of Nelson.

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Overall Vacancy Rate:	0.06%	0.04%	0.07%	0.00%
Studio	0.00%	3.30%	*	*
1 Bedroom	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2 Bedroom	0.80%	0.00%	0.80%	0.00%
3 Bedroom	*	*	*	*

* indicates too small a sampling to count

CMHC Rental Rates:

Finding: Overall rental rates continue to climb over several years, with the rate of increase continuing the last two years.

Finding: 1

47% of renters pay over 30% of their income for housing.

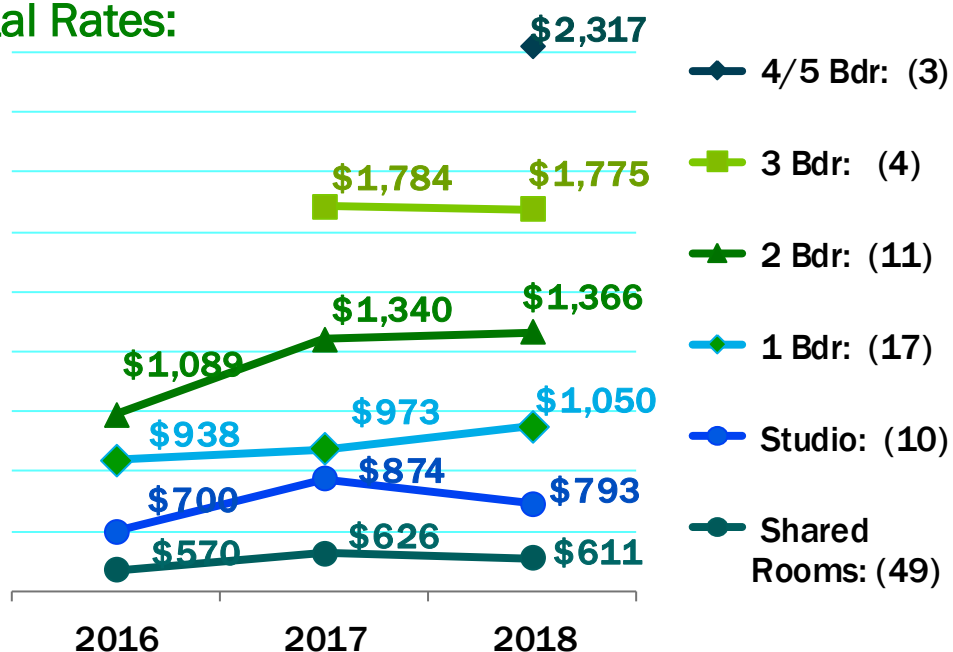
¹ *StasCan Nelson Community Profile 2016*

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% + -
Overall Rental Rate:	\$710	\$743	\$741	\$772	\$816	5.7%
Studio	\$527	\$550	\$572	\$605	\$591	-2.3%
1 Bedroom	\$657	\$686	\$684	\$714	\$704	-1.4%
2 Bedroom	\$792	\$829	\$809	\$830	\$917	10.5%
3 Bedroom	\$1,125	\$1,111	\$1,106	\$1,106	\$1,114	0.7%

Nelson Advertised Rental Rates:

Findings: ²

- ♦ 3 Bdrm rate holding steady
- ♦ 2 Bdrm rate slightly up
- ♦ 1 Bdrm rate continues to climb
- ♦ Studio rate has decreased significantly from last year
- ♦ Room rate in shared living slightly down in price but double in numbers
- ♦ SRO's have almost disappeared.



² NCOH Survey, April-May 2018 of Black Press, Pennywise I Love Nelson, Kijiji, Craig's List, WK Prop. Rentals, FB Nelson-Homes & Rooms for Rent; Selkirk College Off-Campus Hsg; Coldwell Banker & phoned Landlords.

SHARED LIVING: Approximately 30 of these rental situations were 2 & 3 bedroom suites or homes where roommate situations outcompeted family use. No landlord was in the home.



Community Indicators: HOUSING

REGIONAL AVERAGE **ADVERTISED** RENTAL RATES (APRIL/MAY 2018) ³

	Nelson	Nelson Rural	Trail Area	Castlegar Area	Slocan Valley	Salmo Area	Proctor to Kaslo area	Rossland
RV / PAD		\$550	\$695		\$388			
SHARED	\$611	\$666	\$500	\$555	\$471	\$425		\$567
STUDIO	\$793	\$717	\$625	\$650	\$563	\$600		
1 BDRM	\$1,056	\$808	\$848	\$900	\$1,110		\$897	\$683
2 BDRM	\$1,366	\$1,071	\$859	\$1,136	\$996	\$1,200		\$1,100
3 BDRM	\$1,775	\$1,483	\$1,100	\$1,500	\$1,200		\$1,000	\$1,798
4/5 BDRM	\$2,317	\$1,088	\$1,200	\$1,530				\$2,000
SURVEYED	101	29	35	43	18	4	6	14
COSTED	95	29	31	38	18	3	6	13

Findings: Compared to 2017 there has been:

- ♦ An acceptance of posting formal and informal RV sites under housing rentals
- ♦ An increase in the number of Nelson rural rentals available
- ♦ Substantial rent increases in Castlegar 2017-18
- ♦ An increase in the number of short term rentals, especially in Nelson and Kaslo, and somewhat in Castlegar and Trail
- ♦ A substantial increase in one-bedroom rental rates in Trail.
- ♦ Three Bedroom rentals are very scarce.
- ♦ Two Bedroom rental rates went up notably in Castlegar and the Slocan Valley.

Residential Tenancy Board	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	4 Yr Change	2018
Allowed increases (%)	4.3	3.8	2.2	2.5	2.9	3.7	11.3	4%
Nelson rent increases (CMHC)			4.6	-0.3	4.2	5.7	14.2	

# of Rent Supplements - BC Housing	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Chg
Seniors (SAFER: Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters)	61	68	68	76	90	18%
Families (RAP: Rental Assistance Program)	74	80	70	71	59	-17%
Homeless (Homeless Prevention & Outreach)	10	30	30	30	30	0%

SHARED LIVING: Roomers have no tenancy rights if they pay rent directly to the leaseholder or tenant who is on the rental agreement with the landlord, nor do renters sharing a kitchen or bathroom with the landlord. This can put their housing at-risk. They have recourse through small claims court but if locks are changed, for example, possessions may take a long time to reclaim.



Community Indicators: **INCOME**

Individuals and families on fixed incomes, or working at minimum or low wage rates can find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet as costs of living rise. Much-needed increases in the minimum wage are welcomed, but **a renter obtaining housing on a minimum income wage continues to pay about 50% of their modest income for a one-bedroom rental in Nelson** (which does not always include utilities). Paying 30% of household income for housing and utilities is considered the measurement for affordability by Canada Mortgage and Housing. The minimum wage is set to rise to \$13.85 on June 1, 2019 which could bring some relief to low-income households **IF** rents remain stable.

Most Nelsonites have noticed a marked climb in housing costs over the last few years. Nelson was not immune to the ripple affect of the hot housing market in the lower mainland, which spread to the Okanagan and then to the Kootenays. Low incomes and climbing costs of living can put households at risk.

Minimum Wages vs. Rental Costs

19.3%

of Nelsonites

live below the Canadian

Low-Income Measure Threshold (LIM-AT)

24.1%

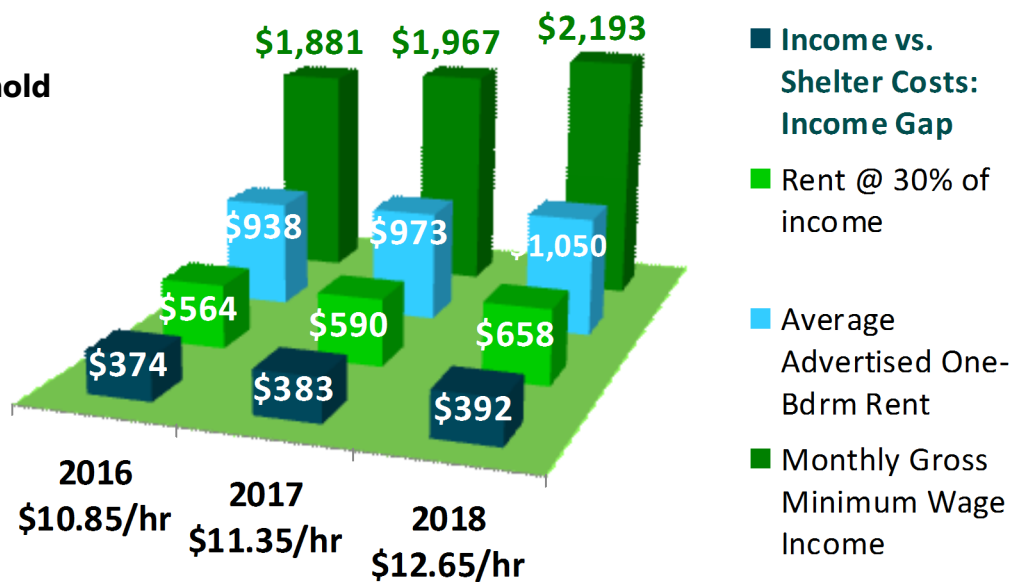
of 0-17 year olds in Nelson live below the LIM-AT

VS.

18.5%

Of 0-17 year olds in BC.

- Statistics Canada 2017, Nelson & BC Census Profile, 2016



Unemployment Rate:

	2010	2015
Nelson	8.6	8.9
Men		8.3
Women		9.6
BC	7.8	6.7
	2016	2017
Kootenay Economic Dev. Area	8	7.3

Consumer Price Index

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2016-17 Change	2014-2017 Change
Canada	125.2	126.6	128.4	130.4	1.6	6.1
BC	118.9	120.2	122.4	125	2.1	6
Food	129.5	134.5	136.9	137.7	0.6	7.9
Transportation	127.6	126.3	129.2	134.1	3.8	6.1
Energy	161.9	151.6	147.3	159.4	8.2	1.8
Electricity	150.4	160.2	167.3	173.3	3.6	21.1
Motor Gasoline	186.3	166.7	159.4	178.5	12	-3
Fuel Oil /Other	252.1	208.7	195.3	216.8	11	-9.7



Community Indicators: **FOOD SECURITY**

St. Saviour's Food Pantry located in St. Saviour's Anglican Pro Cathedral's basement, has assisted hungry people in Nelson for over 17 years. "We treat everyone who comes through our door with dignity and respect," says Nora Nitz, volunteer manager of the Food Pantry which is run by an all-volunteer team. People feel comfortable at the Food Pantry, regardless of their affiliation. Many are low income working people, pensioners, and single parents. Some have disabilities and some have alcohol and drug issues. The Pantry helps with some basic referrals, and works for a culture of peace and friendship, finding many strengths and much humor among the people who come.

Numbers of visits in 2017 are down from 2016.

It may be due to the increase in the Persons With Disability (PWD) benefit helping people.

-Sandra Hartline, Volunteer

Volunteer Sandra Hartline reported that visits in 2017 are down from 2016. "They are taking home fewer cans of vegetables, probably having more money to purchase them fresh. We provide fresh produce and fruits when available from our St. Saviour's Food Pantry Garden, now in its 4th year. We have over 40 community and corporate donors., Donation jars are also located at community businesses," says Hartline. The Food Pantry is open every Friday, including holidays, from 9 to 11 am.

The Nelson Food Cupboard operates out of the basement of Nelson United Church. It strives to create a welcoming environment where people can access healthy food, join a cooking or gardening program, and be a part of a community centred on nutritious food and fun social activities. In October of 2017, the Good Food Bank switched to offer both a morning and an afternoon option to people using the food bank, and due to demand, began asking people to come once per week, hopeful to offer more food for the once-a-week visit. Their reception now has healthy snacks and food demonstrations for people waiting to pick up groceries or for people just wanting to stop by for a break and a snack. They moved to a membership model and have signed up 636 members to date, or 1,208 people, including family members. Most are from Nelson, but some are from the Slocan Valley, Castlegar, Salmo and the villages at the north end of Kootenay Lake. Hours are Mondays 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, Wednesdays 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (or by appointment).

23%
of people receiving food from the Food Cupboard last year were **under 18 Yrs. old**
up from 19% in 2016

Garden volunteers contributed over 400 hours and grew \$6,000 worth of organic vegetables that the food bank and food skills classes used. Gardeners were welcome to take home some of their harvests. Seven school groups also helped out.

75 people participated in the food skills programs, which included a healthy-on-a-budget lunchtime series, harvest preserving classes, and family dinners. The Harvest Rescue program gleaned \$12,000 worth of fresh produce, mostly fruit. On winter solstice they held their first community dinner which was well attended, delicious and fun.

Last year
there were
13,866 visits
to the Food Cupboard,
down from 2016,
probably because of the changes in hours in October.

-Marya Skrypiczajko, Exec. Dir.



Community Indicators: **FOOD SECURITY**

	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Food Bank Visits**	19,762	23,297	22,887	19,647	19,927
Nelson Food Cupboard Visits	13,201	15,322	15,675	16,408	13,866
Nelson Food Pantry Visits	2,000	2,957	3,754	n/a	3,299
Salvation Army Visits + Hampers / School lunches	2,575	3,456	3,458	3,239	2,762
Meals served	12,268	20,373	29,966	34,121	28,297
Our Daily Bread*	12,268	19,522	18,224	18,175	12,661
Salvation Army Meals served		851	11,742	15,946	15,636

***Visits defined as each visit plus family members helped at home.*

The Salvation Army also saw a decrease in numbers using their Food Bank and School Lunch program. Yvonne Borrows, Director of Community Ministries at the Salvation Army noted two changes that could have influenced this.

"Some families may have less pressure on them because of the cancellation to claw back of maintenance payments from families on Income Assistance. Also people on Income Assistance and on Persons-With-Disability Benefits received an increase of \$100/month last fall from the new BC government, after 10 years of no increase. They have more money to spend on food now."

Borrows also reported that the food banks in Slocan and Kaslo are no longer served primarily from Nelson and are making a go of it on their own, with only some support from Nelson now.

Last year
the Salvation Army
helped provide food to

773 kids
under 12 yrs.

349 teenagers

as well as to

521
school lunches

Our Daily Bread of Kootenay Christian Fellowship provides a hot lunch program. People are asked to donate \$20 for a meal card good for 22 meals or \$5.00 to cover the cost of their meal. If people are not able to donate, there are some sponsorship opportunities available or they can volunteer to cover the cost of their meal.

Anne-Marie Haynes, ODB Manager, explains their meal numbers are down, partly because other agencies are offering more meal programs or programming with meals. She adds *"Quite a few people who come here have found employment in the last year too. I think it is infectious; there's an excitement that seems to spread around people getting work. The big lack right now is an evening dinner. It's hard because most volunteers want to spend that time with their families."*

Last Year
Our Daily Bread
Averaged

51
Hot Lunches
Per Day



The Nelson Committee on Homelessness

is a coalition of citizens and stakeholders dedicated to long-term solutions to homelessness, housing and poverty in Nelson, BC.

We invite you to learn more about homelessness, volunteer at one of our upcoming events this year or volunteer with one of the many local community groups working to address poverty and homelessness. Please pass this Report card on to others and share local facts on homelessness and poverty with your family, friends, neighbours and co-workers.

What's ahead this year?

HOMELESSNESS ACTION WEEK: October 8th to 14th 2018

A Focus on Youth Homelessness with guest speakers, films and more!

COMMUNITY CONNECT DAY: Saturday. November 17th 2018

Wildflower School Gym (Central School)

Are you someone who is struggling to make ends meet? Over 70 service providers offer free haircuts, dental, eye and medical check-ups, physio and chiropractic treatment, a free café, winter coats, boots and more! While you're there, connect with community services in town that can help with your health, employment, housing, income and much more! No barriers.

Everyone welcome! Could you volunteer? Could you offer a service? Let us know!

Acknowledgements: The Annual Report Card is made possible by many people. Sincere thanks go to all the community members who shared their information and comments with the Point In Time Homeless Count surveyors, to the 65 PiT Count volunteers and service providers who helped gather the information and comments, and to all the local organizations and people who contributed their annual statistics, comments, advice and information to this Report Card.

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Photos: Connect Day: Dustin Lalik **PiT Count:** Ann Harvey **Page 7:** Jesus Roderiguez332039 Unsplash.com

Apologies to anyone missed, and to those whom I didn't have room to include.

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*The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author
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