The Evolution Of Plans To End Homelessness

CAEH - November 2016
Population: 197,000 CMA (106,000 City), provincial capital & province’s largest city

Key Industries: Public services, oil & gas, retail, service & business sectors

Location: Avalon peninsula, most easterly city in North America

Homeless Population: 800, Over-representation of youth (16–24), 30% of shelter population

Waves of change: From fishery collapse to oil boomtown
Housing first – a basic need

- Housing is a basic human need.
- Housing stability supports healthy, prosperous, inclusive communities.
But not for all...

1.5 million Canadian households in “core housing need” (2006).
- 27,300 in NL.
- 9,255 in St. John’s

Undermines our communities.
10,000 homeless in St. John’s, 1892
At Confederation in 1949, St. John’s had practically no public housing.

By 1961, it was home to 5% of all of Canada’s public housing units, despite having only 0.5% of Canada’s urban households.
1950 “An Act to Provide for Slum Clearance & the Development of Housing Accommodation”
Churchill Park Garden Suburb
Post-war housing: a peace dividend

- We owe thanks to this generation.
- They built 650,000 units of affordable housing for over a million Canadians, fuelling our prosperity.
- Imagine Canada today if they hadn’t!

Legacy of Churchill Park
1940s–1950s:
233 homes, 92 apartments. 250 co-op homes & hundreds of units for low-income families.
Canada emerges as a world leader

- **1940s**: A new era for housing in Canada.
- **1950s**: From home building to community building.
- **1960s**: The Renaissance of Canadian cities.
- **1970s**: Focus on social housing.
Social housing

- 2,000 NL Housing units & 450 City housing units in St. John’s.
- St. John’s is the only municipality in the province with a municipal social housing stock.
In 1998, St. John’s vacancy rate was 15%.

From 2000–2013 private rental vacancy rates were historically low across NL:
- 3.2% St. John’s (2.3% 10 year average)
- 1.2% Gander
- 2.2% Grand Falls
- 0.0% Corner Brook

2016 St. John’s vacancy rate rises to 5% amid an economic downturn.
St. John’s 2013–2014:

- Average home prices:
  - MLS $310,000
  - New $403,000
- Prices effectively doubled since 2006
- In 2015 home prices begin to decline with a weakening economy.
# Rising rents – St. John’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month–Year</th>
<th>1 Bedroom Average Rent</th>
<th>2 Bedroom Average Rent</th>
<th>Consumers Price Index NL (all goods)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2008</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2009</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>687</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2010</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>736</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2011</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2012</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2013</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>877</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage increase</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The making of a crisis

- Canada a world leader in affordable housing until the 1990s, then the cuts...
- Senior governments withdrew from developing new housing.
- Homelessness became increasingly visible in Canada’s largest cities.
- Big cities call for action on homelessness disaster in 1998.
In 1998, St. John’s joined municipalities across Canada calling for national action to address Canada’s growing homelessness.

In 1999, Canada announced the National Homelessness Initiative to be delivered by 61 designated communities through local plans.

St. John’s is the only designated community in NL.
Canada’s 10 big communities share 80% of HPS national funding.  
51 other communities (including St. John’s) share 20%.  
In Atlantic Canada:  
◦ NS – Halifax, Sydney  
◦ PE – Charlottetown, Summerside  
◦ NB – Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, Bathurst  
◦ NL – St. John’s  
◦ NL – Rural & Remote: (Grand Falls–Windsor)
End Homelessness St. John’s

- We are a community-led, multi-stakeholder Board founded in 2000, committed to ending homelessness.
- We have a plan to achieve this.
- As the only designated community in NL under Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), we’ve levered provincial, municipal, business & philanthropic investment with $21.8 million from HPS towards local solutions.
Why are we here?

- We believe every person has a right to safe, appropriate housing and supports tailored to their strengths and needs.
- To develop and implement an integrated, coordinated community plan to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.
- As the ‘backbone’ for the Plan, our Board – in partnership with the City of St. John’s – is entrusted with resources from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and others to translate this belief into meaningful, concerted action.
St. John’s priorities 2000–2013

1. Supportive housing
2. Homelessness prevention
3. Outreach
4. Community development

Canada’s first national youth homelessness conference: Beyond the Street, St. John’s, NL 2006
Guiding principles

The right to:

- Choice
- Self-managed housing
- Self-identification of support needs
- Disability-related supports
- Choose where one lives
- Respect
- Personal safety
- Take risks
- Change one’s mind
237 supportive housing beds (163 units).
37 transitional housing beds (22 units).
63 emergency shelter units

That’s 337 spaces to date

Plus a range of initiatives to engage partners, raise awareness, mobilize knowledge, and build capacity (including investments in the City’s housing action).
Planning together

Planning charrette
Murray Premises, 2007
“I can see my future”
Housing takes shape
Built by youth, for youth
www.stellascircle.ca

Stella's Circle

Hope Lives Here

Stella's Circle

REAL WORK
REAL HELP
REAL HOMES

Hungry Heart cafe
Social enterprise provides training & employment for participants
Hope lives here
HomeShare NL

- A community-led initiative matching students with seniors to share housing.
  - 26,000 St. John’s post-secondary students.
  - 93% of NL seniors own their own homes.
Higher education & healthy aging

- Housing stability for youth so they can grow & learn.
- Housing stability for older adults so they can age in place.
- Future expansion to other populations?
A civic awakening

- St. John’s completes a study of housing needs (2007).
- Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Affordable Housing created in 2008.
- Affordable Housing Working Group created in 2014.
- In 2012 the City becomes the HPS Community Entity for End Homelessness St. John’s
Council adopts an Affordable Housing Action Plan (Feb 2011).

Revised Plan unanimously approved in 2014.
In 2007 we saw the need to expand our work to include policy change, skills development, shared learning...
We created the St. John’s Housing & Homelessness Network

Founding planning day
2007
Now a province-wide network

Established 2009
CABs & Community plans now in place across NL

- St. John’s
- Marystown – Burin Peninsula
- Clarenville – Bonavista
- Grand Falls – Windsor
- Corner Brook
- Stephenville
- Happy Valley/Goose Bay
- Labrador West
- Baccalieu
- Gander–New–Wes–Valley
- Mount Pearl – Senior’s Committee
- Northern Peninsula & Coast of Bays
Provincial momentum

- Provincial Social Housing Plan adopted in 2009.
- New provincial government pledges in 2016 to develop a social housing strategy AND a plan to end homelessness.
In 2015, NL releases ‘A Road Map for Ending Homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador’.

The consultant’s report is reviewed by a multi-stakeholder task force and End Homelessness St. John’s.
It’s time to shift gears:

From managing homelessness, to ending it
Housing First:
Homelessness strategy headed in a new direction:
The Telegram, May 28, 2014
St. John’s engages Dr. Alina Turner to assist the community in creating the 2014–2019 Plan to End Homelessness.

Turner is the former Vice President of Strategy for the Calgary Homeless Foundation.
2014–2019 Community Plan priorities

1. **End** chronic and episodic homelessness.
2. **Re-house and support** 528 homeless persons, and prevent homelessness for those at risk.
3. **Reduce the average length of stay** in emergency shelters to 7 days.
4. **Develop a coordinated** homeless-serving system.
5. **Enhance the integration** of public systems to reduce discharging into homelessness.
6. **Align resources and funding** across diverse sectors to support the St. John’s Plan to End Homelessness.
Priorities in detail:

1. System Coordination
   - Organize the homeless-serving system.
   - Implement coordinated access & assessment.
   - Develop discharge planning measures.

2. Information & Research
   - Implement an integrated information system.
   - Build partnerships with the research community.
   - Support measures to increase housing affordability & reduce homelessness risk.
   - Introduce & ramp up a range of Housing First programs.
   - Tailor supports to meet the needs of diverse groups.
   - Support the enhancement of service quality & impact.

3. Housing & Supports
   - Develop the infrastructure necessary to implement the Plan.
   - Coordinate funding to maximize impact.
   - Champion an end to homelessness.
St. John’s aims to be the 1st Atlantic Canada community to end chronic & episodic homelessness – by 2019.

Once we’ve ended chronic homelessness, it will never return to our community.
What we’re doing along the way

2014
- Establish a solid foundation

2015
- Housing First ramp–up to end chronic & episodic homelessness

2016
- Moving upstream: Homelessness prevention & rapid re-housing

2017
- Maintain focus

2018
- Focus on sustainability
How will we get there?...and know that we’re on the right path?

- Guided by Housing First principles.
- Meaningfully engaging our communities.
- Through inclusion, collaboration & consensus.
- Having each other’s back.
- Leaving our hats at the door.
- Learning & doing together.
- Celebrating our milestones, acknowledging & overcoming our hurdles.
- Assessing our progress, using ‘ground truth’.
End Homelessness St. John’s

Board

Executive

Community Entity (City)

Priority Teams

System Coordination
Information & Research
Housing & Supports
Leadership, Resources & Coordination
• **Shawn Skinner** (Chair)
• **Elizabeth Davis**, Co–chair, The Gathering Place
• **Tammy Davis**, Executive Director, United Way of NL
• **Aisling Gogan**, Coordinator, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Dept. of Seniors, Wellness & Social Development
• **Annemarie Johnson**, Senior Development Officer, Service Canada (Ex–officio)
• **Cynthia King**, Director, Income & Social Supports, Dept. of Advanced Education & Skills
• **Bruce Pearce**, Community Development, End Homelessness St. John’s (Ex–officio)
• **Sheldon Pollett**, Executive Director, Choices for Youth
• **Colleen Simms**, Director, Mental Health & Addictions, Department of Health & Community Services
• **Gail Thornhill**, Director of Supportive Housing, Stella’s Circle
• **Gail Tobin**, CEO, Iris Kirby House
• **Judy Tobin**, Manager, Non Profit Housing, Community Services Dept., City of St. John’s (Ex–officio)
• **Madonna Walsh**, Manager, Affordable Housing, NL Housing
• **Jenny Wright**, Executive Director, St. John’s Status of Women Council/Women’s Centre
Homelessness in NL & St. John’s
A closer look
During 2012:

- 1,685 individuals required emergency shelter (this includes domestic violence shelters)
- 141 Individuals experienced unsheltered homelessness (people living on streets, in wooded areas, etc..)
- 3,743 individuals experienced hidden homelessness (temporarily living with friends or relatives)

An estimated total of 5,569 persons in NL experienced homelessness.
### Estimates – By region

A breakdown of the 1,685 *sheltered* homeless estimate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. John’s</td>
<td>854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Avalon</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burin</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarenville &amp; Gander</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Falls– Windsor</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephenville</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corner Brook– St. Anthony</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
St. John’s homeless population
~800

- 80% transitional
  ~680
- 10-15% episodic
  ~80
- 5-10% chronic ~40
St. John’s shelter use

- 61.5% males
- 38.5% females
- 17.7% families
- 9.2% youth < 16
- 30% youth 16–24

Data not available for:
- Aboriginal or ethnic identity, migration, rough sleeping, those with No Fixed Address (institutions, hotels).

Length of stays:

- **Short:**
  - 1–4 days
  - 33%

- **Medium:**
  - 5–29 days
  - 51%

- **Long:**
  - >30 days
  - 16%
Why people use shelters

Main reasons for service:
- Partner abuse, eviction, personal safety, lack of housing, family/relationship breakdown.

Contributing factors:
- Mental health issues, substance use, conflict with the law, lack of housing (eviction, unsafe, etc.), family/relationship breakdown.
Homeless counts

- St. John’s will conduct its first biennial Count on November 30, 2016.
- EHSJ has also recruited the NL Statistics Agency in partnership with NL Housing & the NLHHN to develop data sharing & coordination.
- HIFIS–4 selected as our HMIS.
Commitment to evidence-based decision-making and planning, a “Homelessness Research Agenda” will be built into our community's approach to system planning.
Our interventions & investments

A closer look
Matching interventions to needs

**Lower Needs**
Prevention, Rapid Re-housing, Affordable Housing

**Moderate Needs**
Intensive Case Management, Transitional Housing

**Higher Needs**
Permanent Supportive Housing (Assertive Community Treatment)
Our Housing First programs

- Intensive Case Management & Housing Supports
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Prevention & Rapid Rehousing
- Assertive Community Treatment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EHSJ Programs: 2014–2019</th>
<th>Client Type</th>
<th>Total Estimated Individuals Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive Case Management</strong> (Launching 2015, sustain to 2019)</td>
<td>Chronically &amp; episodically homeless</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prevention &amp; Rapid Re-housing</strong> (Launching 2016, sustain to 2019)</td>
<td>Transitionally homeless</td>
<td>360 (approximately 240 households)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>528 Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2015 we engaged Dr. Alina Turner – supported by a local coordinator recruited from the community – to work with our Board’s Housing First System Coordination Framework Advisory Team to develop the Framework through a best practices review & stakeholder engagement (COH assisted our PiT Count).

In May 2016 – following a Provincial Housing First Forum and a Framework Design Review Session with stakeholders – our Board approved the resulting Framework and a supporting 2016–2019 investment plan for its implementation.

In October 2016 we recruited a System Planner & Performance Management Planner to work with the community, people with lived experience & public systems to implement the Framework.

The 3–year, $1.83 million slate of Framework activities is 70% funded so far (with the 2016 starting year fully funded), thanks to contributions from HPS, the Government of NL, the City of St. John’s & the United Way NL.
We are implementing a hybrid Coordinated Access (CA) model with multiple locations throughout the community using the same assessment form, targeting tools, and referral processes, with End Homelessness St. John’s playing a key coordinating role supported by the new System Planner.

St. John’s has a limited number of providers working with the target population, which already act as access points to housing and support services.

Need for enhanced coordination and alignment across these providers and methods of analysing trends system-wide, rather than on a case-by-case basis.

Model aims to ensure there is ‘no wrong door’ to access coordinated services using the same protocols.
St. John’s CA Agencies

- Key agencies who are part of the homeless-serving system would become CA Agencies using consistent protocols.

- Capacity building, ongoing technical assistance and coordination support needed (EHSJ)

- Rollout would be phased, starting with 3–4 agencies in the next 12 months and expanding pending buy-in and capacity.

- Designated phone line to facilitate information and referrals using a standard protocols.

- The level of the authority for the CA Agencies is that of screening & assessment, rather than mandatory admissions where CA decisions are binding to the receiving program.
Progress at work:

Ending chronic & episodic homelessness in St. John’s, NL
Between Jan–Mar 2016, our new Intensive Case Management program ‘Front Step’ had accepted 32 referrals and housed 25 persons who had experienced chronic & episodic homelessness.

The program is on target to house 70 persons during 2016.
% of Front Step clients who say they’ve been helped to...

- Find housing (92%)
- Keep housing (100%)
- Help to plan for and get what they need (92%)
- Get to appointments (92%)
- Talk to landlords (85%)
- Build their daily skills (85%)
- Get needed funding/access Income Support (85%)
On a scale of 1–10 (where 1 = not at all satisfied, and 10 = very satisfied), 83% of Front Step participants rated their degree of satisfaction highly (8 to 10 out of ten), with 50% rating it 10 out of 10.

All of the participants surveyed felt the program will help them work on their challenges and move forward, thanks to the support and encouragement provided and the circle of care and safe housing which allows for focusing on other life issues.
We see our Community Plan as a prime opportunity to address shared priorities, build partnerships with all governments & sectors, and forge an integrated system to end homelessness.

Let’s open new doors together!
Contact:
Bruce Pearce
709-689-9615
bpearce@nl.rogers.com