

MEASURING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN CAPE BRETON

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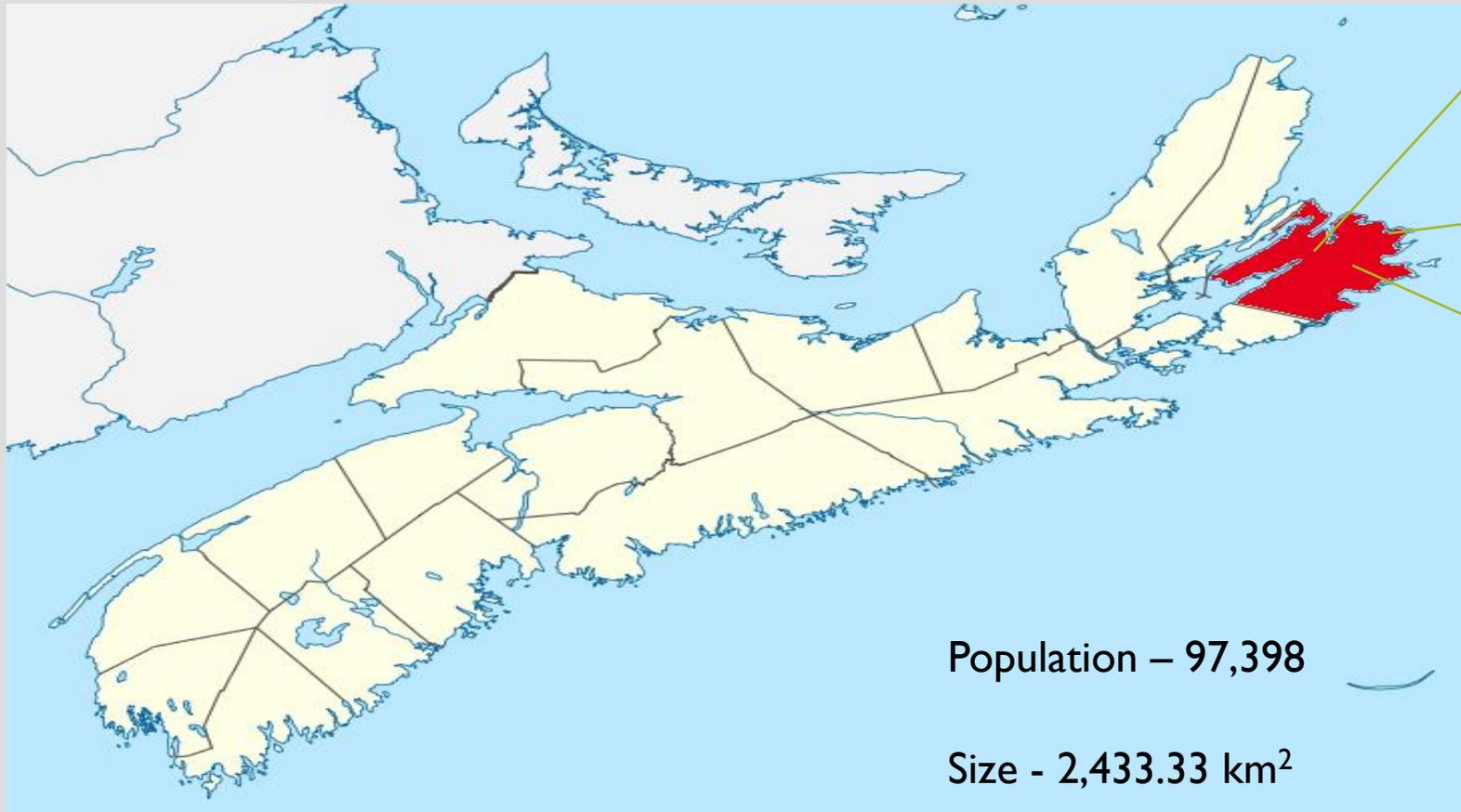
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CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

32.4% of Cape Breton children living in poverty – the highest in Atlantic Canada (2015 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia)

14% Unemployment Rate – (Statistics Canada, Dec, 2015)

Small Population Spread Over Large Area



North Sydney
Sydney Mines

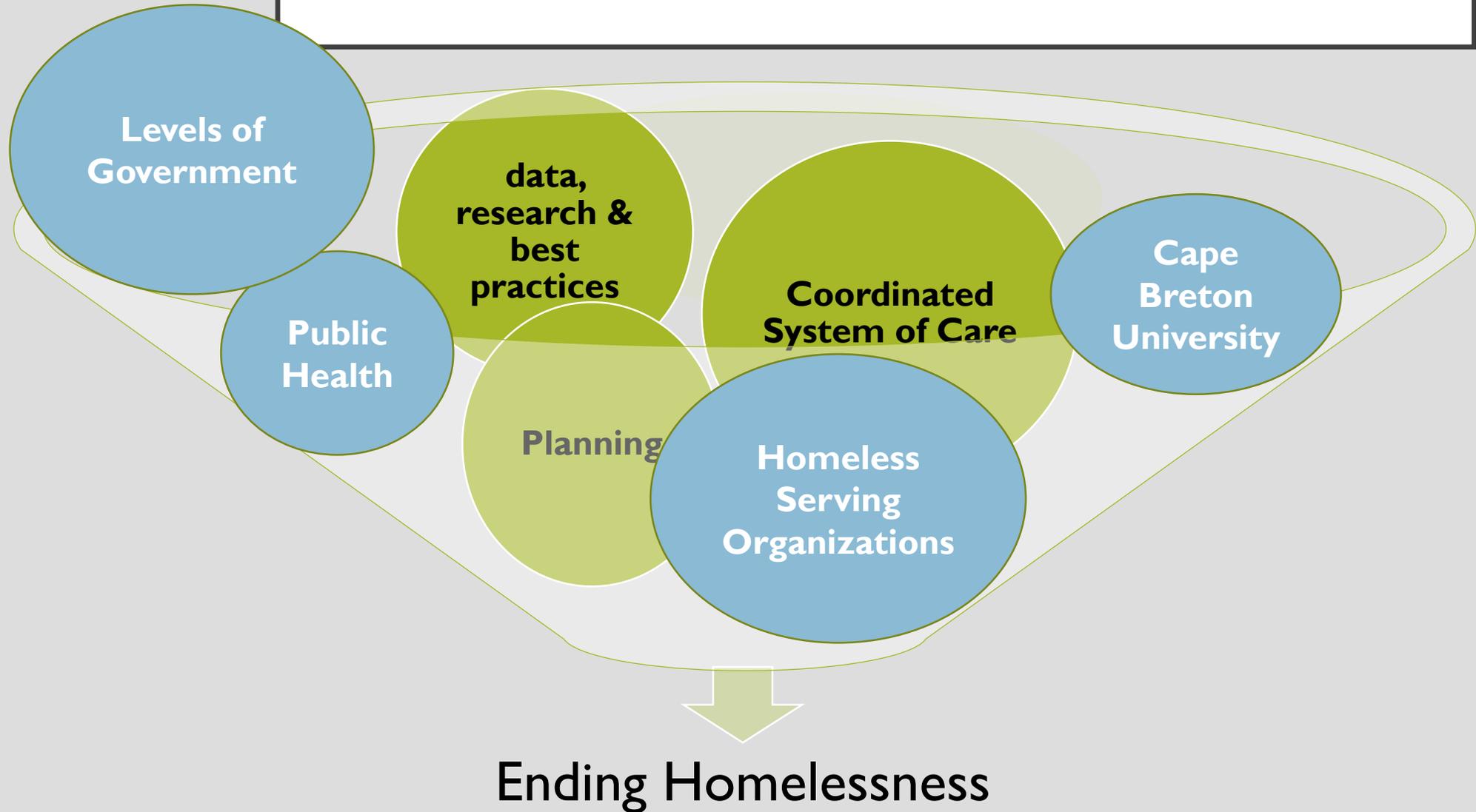
Glace Bay
New Waterford

Sydney

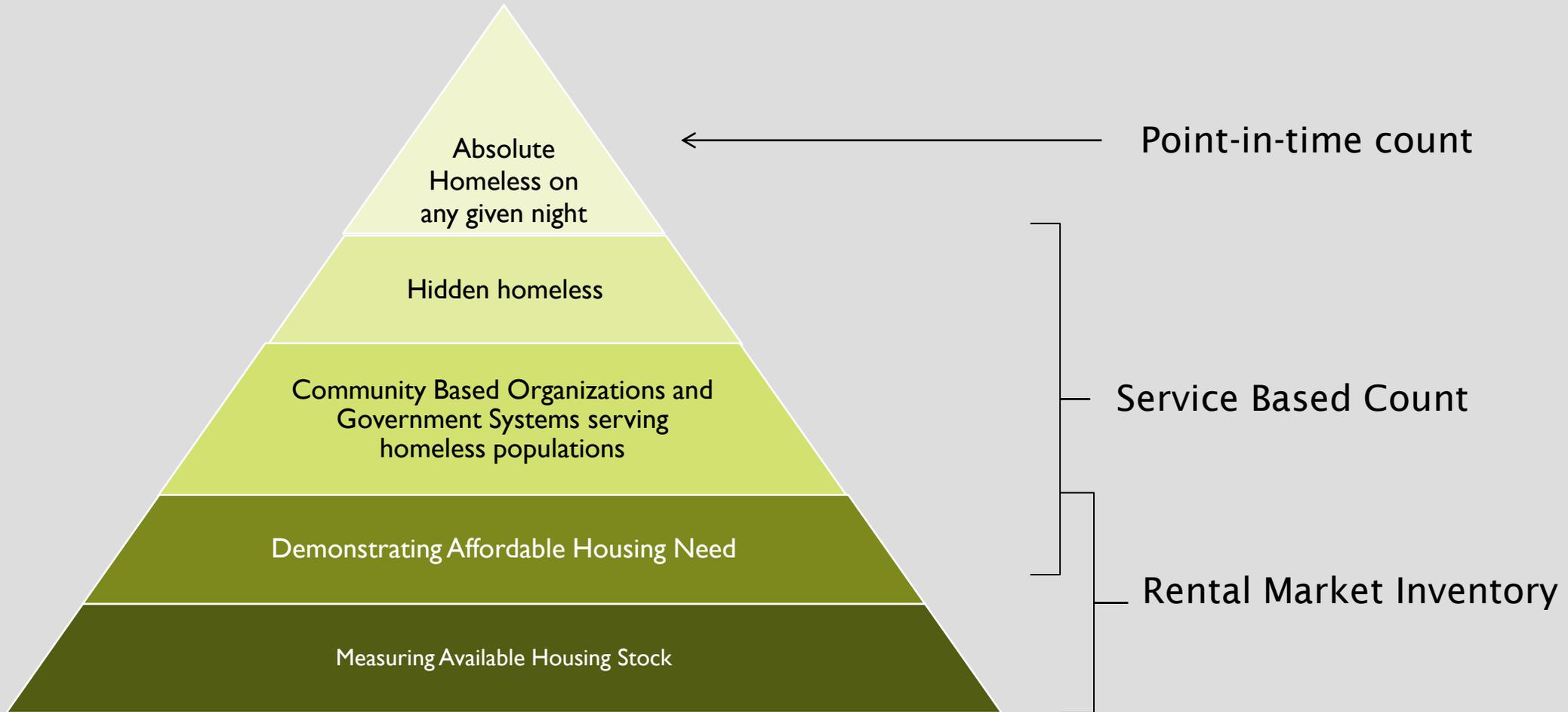
Population - 97,398

Size - 2,433.33 km²

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY APPROACH



RESEARCHING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS



KEY FEATURES OF SERVICE BASED METHOD

- *Period of time - one month record of service contacts.*
- *The goal is to gather aggregate data on existing information only.*
- *Prior ethics approval.*
- *No client consent is required for this study. Information is non identifying census style that is reported per population size.*
- *The use of identifiers to avoid duplication.*

MEASURING HOMELESSNESS IN CBRM, APRIL 2016

Where People Stayed					
Type of Homelessness	Description	Point in Time Count		Service Based Count	
		frequency	%	frequency	%
Unsheltered	Sleeping outside, unfit places for human habitation, don't know where to sleep	24	18%	10	4%
Emergency Sheltered	2 Emergency shelters 1 Domestic violence shelter	30	22%	72	26%
Provisionally Accommodated	Transitional Housing as a provisional step out of homelessness	17	12%	25	9%
	Institutional care, Addiction treatment Centre, half way house or other public system	36	26%	88	31%
	Someone Else's Place	30	22%	84	30%
Total		137	100%	279	100%

LIMITATIONS OF THE SERVICE BASED METHOD

- *Some key service providing organizations and First Nations communities declined participation.*
- *The number of homeless counted by some organizations appears quite low based on the number of clients they provide services to and the amount of time they admit to spending on issues of homelessness.*
- *The research approach (service providers using their own knowledge and/or information from client files) may impact the accuracy of the data collected.*
- *The timing was identified by several organizations as problematic.*
- *Staff buy in/ commitment to completing surveys*

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: WHY WE DID IT

- The secondary rental market is potentially an important source of housing in small communities, but CMHC doesn't track this in CBRM
- We wanted information on characteristics including quality of the housing, accessibility, potential targeting of the housing stock, and different types of housing providers
- We also wanted to know more about rooming houses, which also aren't included in the CMHC rental universe
- We wanted to reach out to landlords, as future partners in Housing First and the development of an affordable housing strategy locally

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: HOW WE DID IT

- We obtained a list of likely rental properties from the CBRM's planning department, and merged this list with a database of properties owners we purchased from the province
- We collected survey data from landlords (non-profit, market and public) over a one year period, and collected data by phone
- Our response rate was very good (63%)

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: (SOME OF) WHAT WE LEARNED

- There is extensive targeting in the rental housing market locally, not only in public and non-profit housing, but among market rentals and rooming houses. This shows us more housing options are available to certain kinds of renters, such as seniors.
- Market rentals with no target renters are of lower quality, showing the housing stock available for Housing First is in greater need of repair.
- Shelter costs are high in the community. (For example, only 10% of one-bedroom, market rentals are equal to or less than the maximum shelter allowance a single individual would receive).
- There is limited accessible housing locally, and accessible units are more expensive, usually for seniors, and are less likely to be vacant .
- About half of the market rentals in CBRM are in the secondary market.

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Having a good “sampling frame” is key. What is available in your community as a starting point?
- A study like this takes time and money. Is funding available?
- Are landlords likely to be responsive? Is there a good working relationship with landlords, many informal connections in the community, or a sympathetic rental property owners association?
- Please contact us for more information and for a copy of our data collection tools!