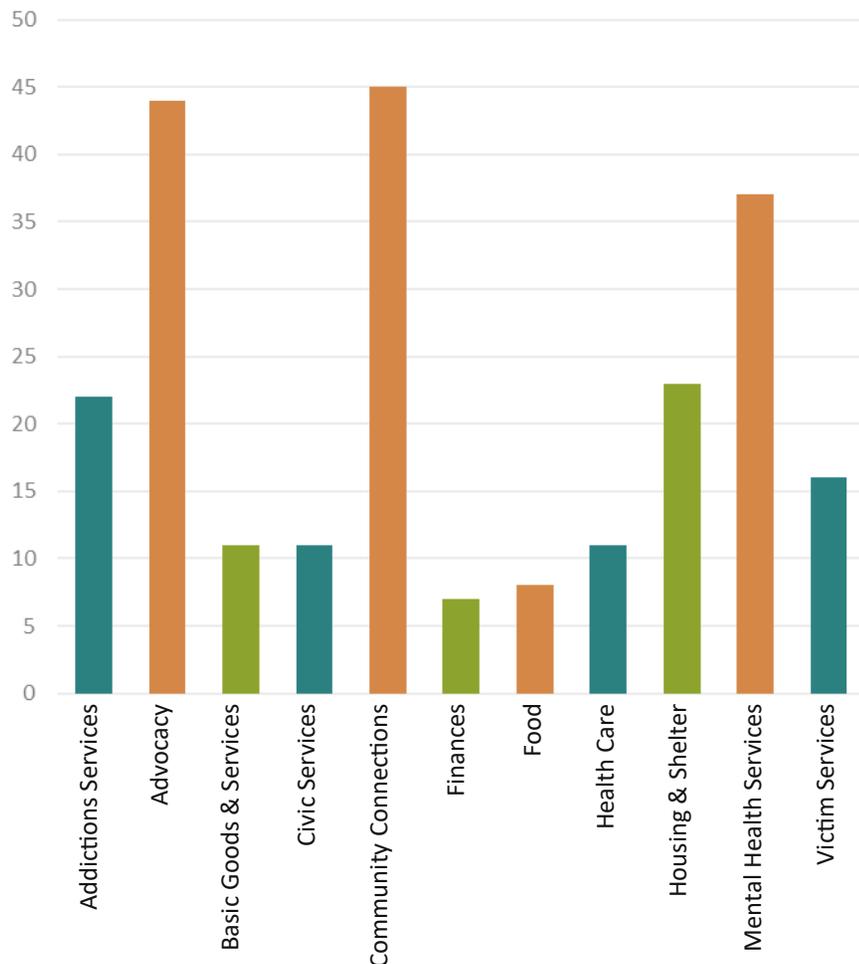




Mapping Metro Vancouver to Support Housing First Implementation

New Westminster

In 2016, homelessness service providers across Metro Vancouver met to discuss the availability and operation of the system of community resources necessary to support Housing First implementation. This resource provides a summary of the findings of each of the discussions in New Westminster.



Analysis compared the number of resources in each category to the number of households in the community that pay more than 30% of their income in rent. ¹

Areas of More Support Compared to Metro Vancouver

- Basic Goods & Services
- Finances
- Housing & Shelter

Areas of Less Support Compared to Metro Vancouver

- Victim Services
- While New Westminster has higher concentrations of Housing & Shelter resources, a higher proportion of renting households impacts rental affordability as well as limited access to supported housing
- Resource levels are identified as sufficient but housing within New Westminster is difficult due to affordability issues
- Opening hours of the food bank can make accessing food resources challenging
- Wait lists are identified as a limitations to accessing mental health services

¹Explanation of the definitions of the resource categories and discussion on the analysis methodology may be found at housingfirstsupport.ca.

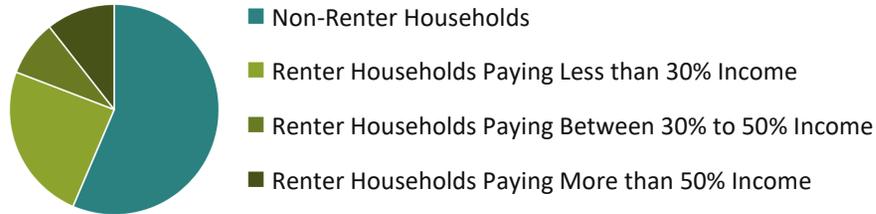
New Westminster

Community Statistics²

Households: 30,585

Renter Households: 13,325

Rent >30% Income: 5,875



²Data obtained from the Rental Housing Index, October 2016: rentalhousingindex.ca.

Community Overview

New Westminster benefits from a socially aware community, responsive municipality and engaged MLA and MP. Service providers identify coordination in service provision as individuals exit homelessness. Housing affordability is identified as the prominent challenge for individuals exiting homelessness with many unable to afford to remain in New Westminster, their community of choice. New Westminster also houses a high proportion of seniors with 35% of residents over 50 years of age in the 2011 Census.

Factors for Success

- Service providers connect with each other to create a holistic community approach to client needs and are supported by a strong Inter-Agency Council
- The City of New Westminster has engaged in analysis, planning bylaw development related to homelessness and housing to develop a Homeless Coalition, increase affordable housing supply, support development of family housing, incentivize development of rental housing and limit renovations'. The City also supported a local free shuttle service that is provided by the River Market and other businesses and are piloting a rent bank.
- Support and participation from the local community, including the Business Improvement Association
- Strong network of programming for youth including connections with the school system
- Innovative programming for landlord engagement and employment support

New Westminster

Areas of Challenge

- Housing affordability challenges are also associated with poverty—many families rely on foodbanks and meal programs to survive and are at risk of homelessness.
- Geographical challenges (large hills separating service hubs) increase reliance on transportation. High rent costs reduce the funds available for transportation for individuals with low incomes.
- Service providers identify challenges in accessing front-line health care services that meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness such as on-site visits from nurse practitioners.
- Residents must leave New Westminster to access detox services and sometimes residential treatment services.
- Many people experiencing homelessness may have undiagnosed mental issues but have challenging accessing existing mental health services.
- The demand for services to support seniors experiencing or at-risk of homelessness is much greater than current service capacity.

Potential Action Areas to Support Housing First Implementation

- Leverage success found in other business-supported and community-led initiatives to develop community-sponsored rent supplements.
- Expand on existing landlord network programs or replicate the programming for adults. Utilize the network to coordinate access to housing to reduce time spent by staff identifying the same housing opportunities.
- Utilize community networks to raise awareness of seniors homelessness issues to increase support.
- Target the prevention of youth homelessness through partnerships with existing at-risk youth programming.
- Identify opportunities to share learnings and success in New Westminster with other municipalities that may result in partnerships to increase access to needed services outside the community.
- Engage local health provider personnel to create ‘case by case’ success in delivering more tailored health supports to build the case for wider implementation.

What other communities can learn from New Westminster: successful engagement and partnership with community, businesses and government representatives and partnership between service providers

This project was a partnership between the Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy, Simon Fraser University’s Gerontology Research Centre and bc211.



GERONTOLOGY
RESEARCH CENTRE



metrovancover
SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR
A LIVABLE REGION

