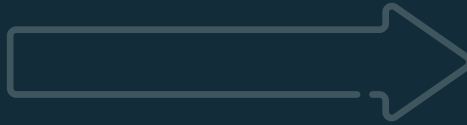


NO



VACANCY

HIGH RENT. LOW VACANCY.
GROWING HOMELESSNESS



HOUSING RESEARCH
COLLABORATIVE



SCARP
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UNION
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Download the data supplement with additional information and
commentary here:

ugm.ca/affordability

**Union Gospel Mission acknowledges that the land on which we work
is the traditional and unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh,
Squamish, and Musqueam Nations.**

NO VACANCY 2.0

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, *No Vacancy: Affordability and Homelessness in Vancouver* provided a point in time snapshot of the growing affordability crisis within the City of Vancouver. By examining structural factors such as vacancy rates at low-end-of-market, cost of average rent, available income, cost of living, social housing built, and rent supplements provided, *No Vacancy* concluded that within the then-current environment, “homelessness [would] continue to grow without addressing these key structural issues.”¹ The most recent point-in-time homeless counts, along with updated data on vacancy rates throughout Metro Vancouver suggest this to be the case. Low-income families, specifically single-parent families, are faced with a stagnant supply of affordable housing options and low vacancy rates, contributing to an increasing level of unaffordability. Due to this reality, much of this report focuses on the challenges low-income families encounter when trying to secure appropriate housing. With the crisis spreading, calling Metro Vancouver home is only getting harder.



KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS

Unaffordability and Rental Scarcity

- Shelter Occupancy: Over the past few years, shelter occupancy has consistently been over 100%.
- Low Vacancy Rates: Vacancy in the region remains critically low at under 1% and continues to trend downwards, with the Vancouver CMA vacancy rate in 2017 (0.9%) half that of 2012 (1.8%).
- Spreading Rental Scarcity: Vacancy rates outside the City of Vancouver have dramatically decreased. This includes rates for bachelor, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom units. Suburban cities such as Surrey are witnessing the most striking changes (5.7% in 2012 to near zero % in 2017).
- Surge in Housing Registry Applicants: registry applicants in Metro Vancouver have increased by 27% since 2014, with a 32% increase across BC overall
- Rent Surge: For bachelor and 1-bedroom units, rents in Vancouver CMA increased by 23% and 24% respectively from 2012 to 2017, compared to increases of 16% and 15% over the same timeframe in the previous report (from 2010 to 2015).
- Despite the stock of subsidized housing units for people experiencing homelessness increasing by 14% since 2014, homelessness has continued to rise throughout Metro Vancouver.

Challenges faced by Women and Families

- More Families In Need: There has been a 32% increase in the number of Metro Vancouver families on BC's Housing Registry since 2014. This is compared to a rise of 3% over the same length of time between 2012 and 2016, indicating that we have witnessed a 16.5% increase in the past two years alone.
- Female Led households: 61% of families on the housing registry are led by single parents, and approximately 87% of these families are female-led.
- A mom working full-time at minimum wage in 2018, supporting one 10-year-old child, would have \$4 remaining after covering basic expenses, which do not include transportation costs, clothing, dental coverage, etc.



INTRODUCTION

The City of Vancouver's 2018 homeless count identified 2181 homeless individuals, the highest numbers observed since the first regional count in 2005 and a 2% increase from 2017.²

For the past five years, emergency shelters across Metro Vancouver have been operating above 100% capacity.³

Table 1: Emergency Shelter Occupancy Rate in Metro Vancouver⁴

Fiscal Year	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	April 2017 - Dec 2017⁵
Occupancy Rate	103%	103%	103%	102%	103%

Source: BC Housing, Homelessness Services System (HSS), snapshot as of April 2016 for 2013-14 to 2015-16 and snapshot as of April 2018 for April 2017 to Dec 2017.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

As in 2016, men comprise the majority of shelter users at 68%. The number of women accessing emergency shelter has remained consistent at 31%, while some women - especially those fleeing domestic violence - prefer to stay in transition houses (short-term accommodation for women and children experiencing or at risk of violence), as opposed to mixed-gender shelters.⁶ The percentage of shelter users identifying as Indigenous has increased to 26%, over the past two years, while less than 1% of individuals accessing shelter self-identify as transgender, a figure that has not changed since 2016.

While the City of Vancouver continues to experience lower vacancy rates than Metro Vancouver overall, vacancy rates for the low end of the market housing across the region remain critically low at under 1% and continue to trend downwards, contributing to significant challenges for low-income individuals and families looking for affordable market housing within the region.

A NOTE FROM UNION GOSPEL MISSION

"We at Union Gospel Mission rely on housing while transitioning men, women and families from emergency situations, like homelessness, into new and stable circumstances. Housing is a key link in our continuum of care, but over the last few years UGM staff noticed a growing and spreading shortage of affordable and/or subsidized housing for our guests, specifically low-income families. A surging need for emergency outreach in Metro Vancouver's suburbs has compelled us to expand mobile operations outward, focusing on newer areas that were once off our radar. At the same time, when a young mother is ready to find independent housing after stabilizing at UGM's 'The Sanctuary' program, her options to move on are critically limited. A growing number of guests accessing food services have income, but still eat at UGM so they can save money on food for rent. Our shelter guests find themselves staying with us for longer periods of time while they search for adequate homes, and many of our housed guests are just one paycheque or income assistance payment away from homelessness. As UGM battles through this unsettling reality, we want to better understand the structural factors contributing to homelessness. To that end, we partnered with Dr. Penny Gurstein of UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning, and Dr. Bernie Pauly at the University of Victoria who lead the development of indicators and framework for monitoring homelessness used in this report and co-authored the 2016 No Vacancy report. We are excited to collaborate on research that focuses on the Metro Vancouver area, and look forward to working with decision makers to increase affordability for Metro Vancouverites who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness."



INCOME

Within Metro Vancouver, a key structural factor contributing to homelessness is simply the high cost of living that low-income individuals and families face on a daily basis. Despite an increase in the minimum wage on June 1st, 2018 to \$12.65/hour, the minimum wage is still \$8.26 below the region's living wage.⁷ While the Metro Vancouver living wage was at one time sufficient for a single parent with one child to cover basic costs, this is no longer the case.⁸

What's a Living Wage? A living wage is calculated as the hourly rate at which a household can meet its basic needs, once government transfers (benefits) have been added to a household's budget, and deductions (taxes) have been subtracted. **The current living wage in Metro Vancouver for a family of four with both parents working full-time is \$20.91 per hour.**

Source: Ivanova, I., S. Klein & T. Raithby. (2018). Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver. Vancouver, British Columbia: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

A SINGLE MOTHER'S STRUGGLE

The affordability challenges facing a single parent seeking appropriate housing are significant. The overwhelming majority of these single-parent households are female led. While single males face similar income-based challenges, women and families living in low-income situations are disproportionately affected by high market rents, and low vacancy rates within Metro Vancouver.

Table 2 & 3 illustrate two scenarios for low-income women-led households. These scenarios account for a basic form of income (employment or income assistance¹⁸), rent and food. These calculations also factor in childcare costs and the main childcare-related benefits and subsidies available to families in British Columbia. Rent and food cost approximations were made using the Consumer Pricing Index. These calculations do not include costs such as transportation, clothing, or contingencies. Were these to be considered, the monthly remainders would be even lower.

Table 2: Single Mother (31-50) Earning Minimum Wage and Her Son (10) Living in Vancouver CMA		
Year	2017 \$11.35/hour at 40 hours/week	2018 Projection ⁹ \$12.65/hour at 40 hours/week
Monthly after-tax income¹⁰	\$1,684	\$1,855
BC Childcare Subsidy (before/after school care)	\$210	\$210 ¹¹
Canada Child Benefit	\$450	\$456.75 ¹²
Median Monthly Rent (2 Bedroom Apartment)	(\$1,400)	(\$1,543) ¹³
Average food cost ¹⁴	(\$535)	(\$533) ¹⁵
Childcare costs	(\$442)	(\$442) ¹⁶
Remainder for other expenses	-\$33	\$4

As shown in table 2, a single mother working full time for minimum wage in 2017 endures a deficit of \$33/month after basic food, rent, and childcare income and costs.¹⁷ In 2018, performing the same calculations, but including an increase to the minimum wage, and a slight increase to the Canada Child Benefit, projections show that this same family would have \$4/month for all remaining expenses.

**Table 3: Single Mother (31-50) and Son (10)
Receiving Various Levels of Income Assistance¹⁸**

Year 2017	Income Assistance (Expected to Work)	Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB)	Persons with Disabilities (PWD)
Average Assistance Paid to Female Single-Parent Clients	\$976	\$1,043	\$1,337
BC Childcare Subsidy	\$210	\$210	\$210
Canada Child Benefit	\$450	\$450	\$450
Median Monthly Rent (2 Bedroom Apartment)	(\$1,400)	(\$1,400)	(\$1,400)
Average food cost ¹⁴	(\$535)	(\$535)	(\$535)
Childcare costs	(\$442)	(\$442)	(\$442)
Remainder for other expenses	-\$731	-\$674	-\$380

It is worth noting that the average rent actually paid by households on income assistance is \$750.¹⁹ While this is considerably less than the market rent referenced in various income scenarios in table 3, it still consumes a significant proportion of a household's income. It also reinforces the reality that for families on income assistance, market housing is not a feasible option.

Even with recent increases to income assistance levels, the net income for single parent families on income assistance is far below what is required to cover monthly costs. Those in the 'expected to work' category are in the most unaffordable situations, with a monthly deficit of \$731 after paying basic food, rent, and child care costs. Nonetheless, all three categories reveal large monthly shortfalls.

[SEE DATA SUPPLEMENT FOR FURTHER INCOME SCENARIOS]





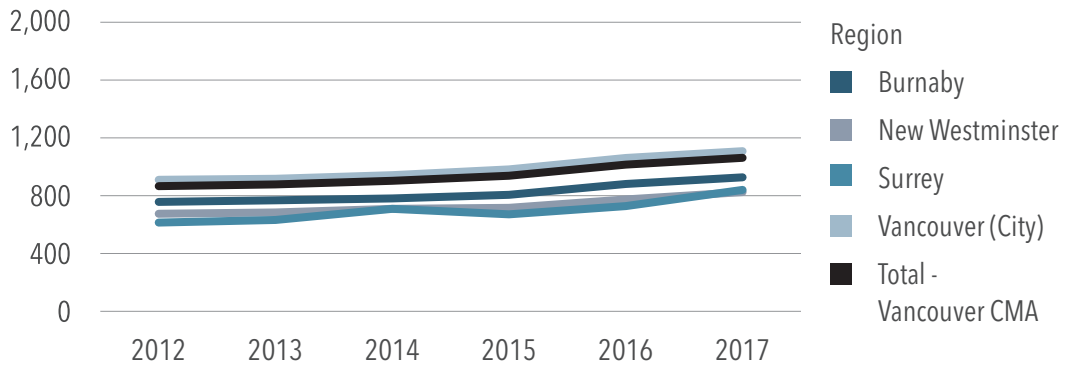
HOUSING COSTS

INTRODUCTION

As the cost of housing in Metro Vancouver continues to rise, it remains out of reach for many individuals and families. Recent media stories have focused on the continued challenges presented to first-time home buyers, as well as the 'empty homes tax'. While these conversations are important, they often neglect the challenges facing low-income individuals and families - specifically single parent families - attempting to find rental units at the low end of market rates.

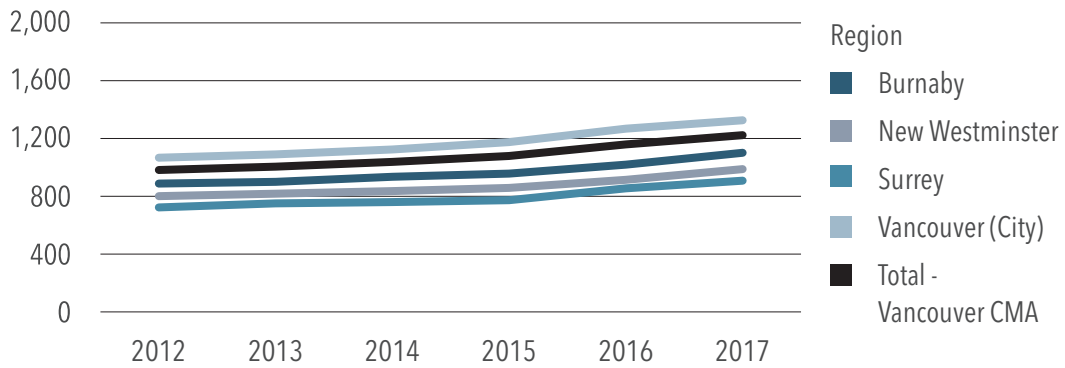
Over the past five years, Vancouver's affordability crisis has become increasingly regional. The low vacancy rates in Vancouver, as well as surrounding municipalities, such as Burnaby and Surrey, have continued to exert upward pressure on low-end market rental units throughout the region. Although renters in the City of Vancouver still face the highest rents in absolute values, communities throughout Metro Vancouver are now experiencing similar yearly rent increases in percentage terms as the metropolitan core. Comparing the current data to the 2016 findings is particularly striking. For bachelor and 1-bedroom units, rents increased by 23% and 24%, respectively, from 2012 to 2017, compared to increases of 16% and 15% over the same number of years analyzed in the previous report (2010 to 2015) (Tables 4, 5 & 6).

Graph 4: Average Rent (\$) - Bachelor



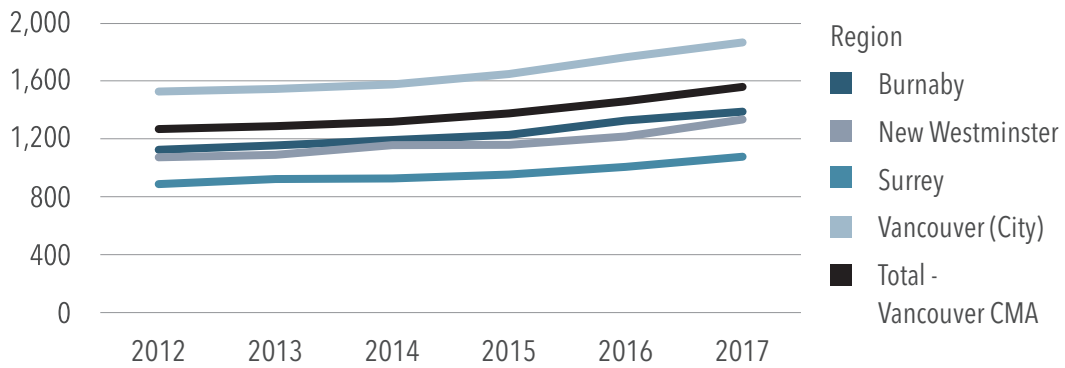
Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Graph 5: Average Rent (\$) - 1 Bedroom



Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Graph 6: Average Rent (\$) - 2 Bedroom



Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

VACANCY RATES: INTRODUCTION

In 2016, low vacancy trends were most pronounced within the City of Vancouver. Recent data suggest that the communities of Surrey, Burnaby, and New Westminster have experienced more dramatic changes in vacancy rates and affordability over the past few years than the City of Vancouver. Vacancy rates for the region remain critically low at under 1% and continue to trend downwards, with the Vancouver CMA vacancy rate in 2017 (0.9%) half that of 2012 (1.8%).

Table 7: Overall Vacancy Rates (%) for Apartment/Row (all units) Combined

Region	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Burnaby	2.2	2.0	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.6
Vancouver (City)	1.1	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9
New Westminster	2.2	2.2	1.4	0.9	0.4	1.1
Surrey	5.7	4.2	2.4	1.9	0.4	0.5
Total - Vancouver CMA	1.8	1.7	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.9

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

More broadly, vacancy rates at the low end of the market were generally lower in 2017 across all unit types than in 2012, pointing to significant challenges for low-income individuals and families looking for affordable market housing.



VACANCY RATES: IS HOUSING AVAILABLE?

Within Metro Vancouver, vacancy rates have continued to decline for most unit sizes. The most significant decrease has happened in areas outside the City of Vancouver. The most dramatic changes in vacancy rates have been observed in Surrey regardless of unit size, while the City of Vancouver has marginally decreased over the same period of time (Table 8, 9 & 10).

Table 8: Vacancy Rates (%) - Bachelor						
Region	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Burnaby	1.4	2.0	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.3
New Westminster	2.1	1.3	1.8	1.4	0.4	1.0
Surrey	3.5	1.4	0.8	3.9	0.0	0.0
Vancouver (City)	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.9
Total - Vancouver CMA	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017)

Table 9: Vacancy Rates (%) - 1 Bedroom						
Region	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Burnaby	1.9	2.1	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.5
New Westminster	2.2	2.4	1.4	0.8	0.5	1.0
Surrey	5.2	5.2	2.3	1.6	0.5	0.5
Vancouver (City)	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9
Total - Vancouver CMA	1.7	1.6	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Table 10: Vacancy Rates (%) - 2 Bedroom						
Region	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Burnaby	2.8	1.5	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.8
New Westminster	2.5	2.3	1.4	0.8	0.1	1.0
Surrey	6.5	3.4	2.4	2.0	0.4	0.7
Vancouver (City)	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.0
Total - Vancouver CMA	2.4	1.9	1.1	0.9	0.7	1.0

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

VACANCY RATES AT LOW END OF MARKET RENT RANGE ²⁰

Vacancy rates at the low end of the market were generally lower in 2017 across all unit types than in 2012, pointing to significant challenges for low-income individuals and families looking for affordable market housing. For families seeking affordable housing, there are virtually no vacancies for 2-bedroom units at the low end of the market, particularly those renting at less than \$750 per month. In 2017, 2-bedroom units at the lowest rent range had an average vacancy rate of zero percent within Vancouver. The rates throughout Metro Vancouver are only marginally better (Table 11, 12 & 13).

Table II: Bachelor Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) by Rent Range – Vancouver CMA and City of Vancouver

Rent Range	Geography	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less Than \$750	City of Vancouver	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.1	0.6	0.0
	Vancouver CMA	1.7	1.4	1.6	0.7	0.9	0.6
\$750 to \$999	City of Vancouver	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8
	Vancouver CMA	1.0	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7
Total Vacancy Rate	City of Vancouver	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.9
	Vancouver CMA	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Table 12: One-Bedroom Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) by Rent Range – Vancouver CMA and City of Vancouver

Rent Range	Geography	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less Than \$750	City of Vancouver	1.4	1.5	**21	0.3	0.7	**
	Vancouver CMA	3.3	3.2	2.2	1.2	0.8	1.5 ^D
\$750 to \$999	City of Vancouver	1.2	1.4	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.3
	Vancouver CMA	1.9	2.0	1.3	1.0	0.6	0.6
Total Vacancy Rate	City of Vancouver	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9
	Vancouver CMA	1.7	1.6	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Table 13: Two-Bedroom Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) by Rent Range – Vancouver CMA and City of Vancouver

Rent Range	Geography	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less Than \$750	City of Vancouver	0.0 ^D	0.0 ^D	0.0 ^D	0.0 ^D	0.5	0.0 ^D
	Vancouver CMA	1.7	3.2 ^D	**	0.0	0.2	0.0
\$750 to \$999	City of Vancouver	**	**	1.1 ^D	1.3 ^D	0.4	**
	Vancouver CMA	4.2	2.9	2.3	1.2	0.8	1.1
Total Vacancy Rate	City of Vancouver	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.0
	Vancouver CMA	2.4	1.9	1.1	0.9	0.7	1.0

Source: Average Rent by Bedroom Type by Census Subdivision. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

UNITS IN RENTAL MARKET BY RENT RANGE

Since 2012, the total number of bachelor, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom units in Metro Vancouver have increased. However, despite these increases in the stock of bachelor (7%), 1-bedroom (2%) and 2-bedroom (17%) rentals in Vancouver CMA, the number of affordable market rental units is decreasing. In Vancouver CMA, the most affordable bachelor units (under \$750 per month) decreased by 65% between 2012 and 2017.

The increase in 2-bedroom units throughout Metro Vancouver has been very pronounced. However, the majority of these 2-bedroom units rent for over \$1250, revealing that they are unaffordable for families on income assistance and single parents working minimum wage jobs, as shown in the Table 3, highlighting the challenges faced by single parents families of which a majority are female-led.

Table 14: Total Bachelor Apartment Units in City of Vancouver by Rent Range

Rent Range	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less Than \$750	1,113	1,010	1,023	843 ^D	**	**
\$750 to \$999	5,387	5,173	4,589	3,906	3,292	2,808
\$1,000 to \$1,249	1,062	1,731	2,095	2,396	2,776	2,832
\$1,250 to \$1,499	256	456	495	997	1,307	1,810
\$1,500+	**	**	**	135 ^D	**	731
Total Units	8,023	8,455	8,447	8,344	8,370	8,736

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. 2018. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Table 15: Total 1 Bedroom Apartment Units in City of Vancouver by Rent Range

Rent Range	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less Than \$750	1,666	1,328	1,277	920 ^D	**	574 ^D
\$750 to \$999	13,215	11,710	9,823	9,206	7,398	5,972
\$1,000 to \$1,249	14,003	15,103	14,670	13,606	12,272	10,007
\$1,250 to \$1,499	6,284	6,901	8,816	8,597	8,471	9,961
\$1,500+	1,554	2,056	2,285	5,012	9,284	11,424
Total Units	37,271	37,488	37,704	37,760	38,621	38,305

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. 2018. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).

Since 2012 there has been an increase in the total number of 2-bedroom units in Metro Vancouver. This increase has been more pronounced in suburban cities (17%) than in the City of Vancouver (2%), revealing that more larger units are being introduced outside the metropolitan core. However, the majority of 2-bedroom units are over \$1250 making them unaffordable for families on income assistance or single parents working full time for minimum wage. (Table 2)

Table 16: Total 2 Bedroom Apartment Units in City of Vancouver by Rent Range

Rent Range	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less Than \$750	**	**	**	**	**	**
\$750 to \$999	588	462	395 ^D	424 ^D	**	**
\$1,000 to \$1,249	1,609	1,571	1,454	1,338	1,141	972
\$1,250 to \$1,499	2,127	1,940	1,867	1,932	1,541	1,336
\$1,500+	4,614	4,817	5,035	5,594	6,164	6,706
Total Units	9,386	9,128	9,160	9,573	9,434	9,559

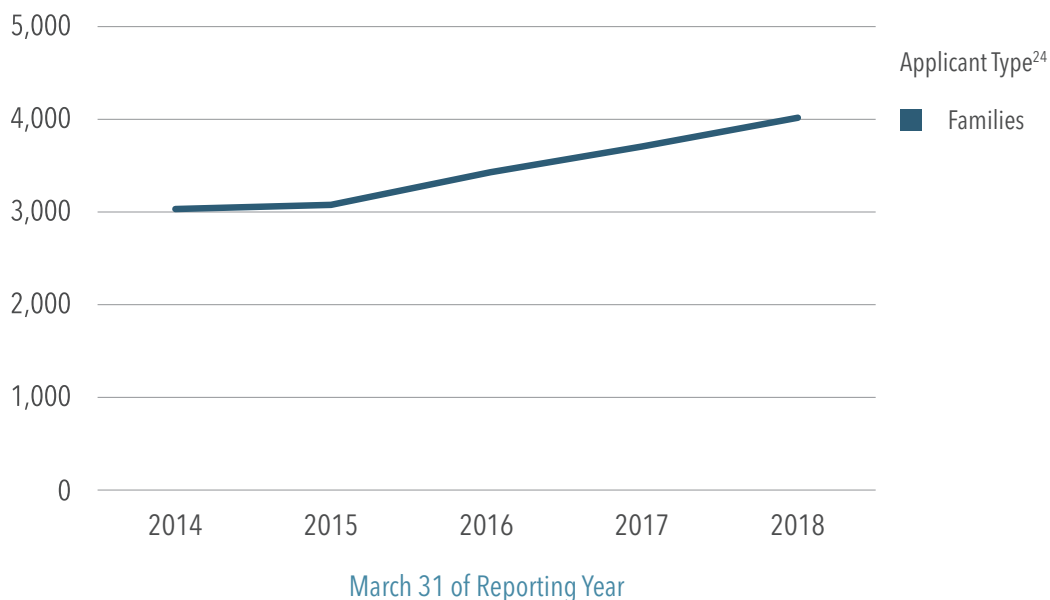
Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. 2018. CMHC Rental Market Survey (2012-2017).



THE HOUSING REGISTRY

While the occupancy rate of emergency shelters funded by BC Housing has remained above 100% for the past five years (despite an increase in the number of beds), the number of applicants on the BC Housing Registry has increased dramatically. The 2016 *No Vacancy* study reported a 15% increase in housing registry applicants in Metro Vancouver over the previous five years. The 2018 numbers reveal nearly double the increase observed in the previous report: registry applicants in Metro Vancouver have increased by 27% since 2014. There has also been a 32% increase in the number of Metro Vancouver families on the Housing Registry since 2014. As of March 31, 2018, there were 4,017 families within Metro Vancouver on the Housing Registry.

Graph 17: Households on The Housing Registry ^{22,23}

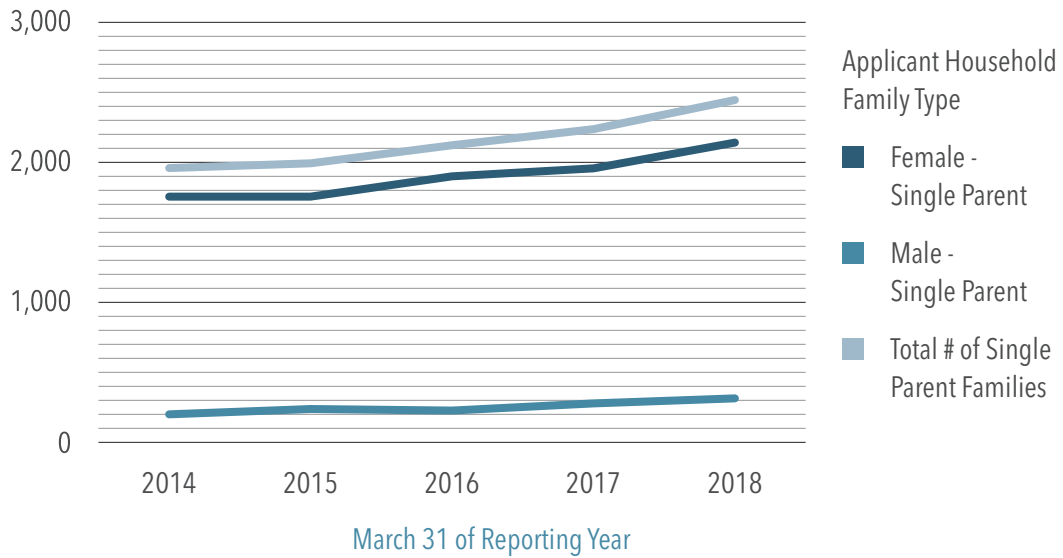


Prepared by: BC Housing, Research and Corporate Planning Department, July 2018

Source: BC Housing, Housing Registry Applicant Profile History Pivot Model, 4th Quarter Activity - March 31, 2014-2018.

Between 2014 - 2018, single-parent family applicants to the Housing Registry have increased dramatically. This is not surprising given that a disproportionate number of single parent families experience poverty. In 2015, a report by First Call BC found that 47.7% of children in lone-parent families were living in poverty, a statistic four times greater than children in couple families (11.2%).²⁵ While the increase to the Housing Registry was particularly pronounced among male-led families, 87% of the single-parent families on the Housing Registry are female-led.²⁶

Graph 18: Households by Single Parent Family Type & Gender on The Housing Registry in Metro Vancouver Regional District and BC



Prepared by: BC Housing, Research and Corporate Planning Department, July 2018

Source: BC Housing, Housing Registry Applicant Profile History Pivot Model, 4th Quarter Activity - March 31, 2014-2018.

It is clear that there is a critical need for targeted, family-oriented housing and services throughout the entire housing continuum.

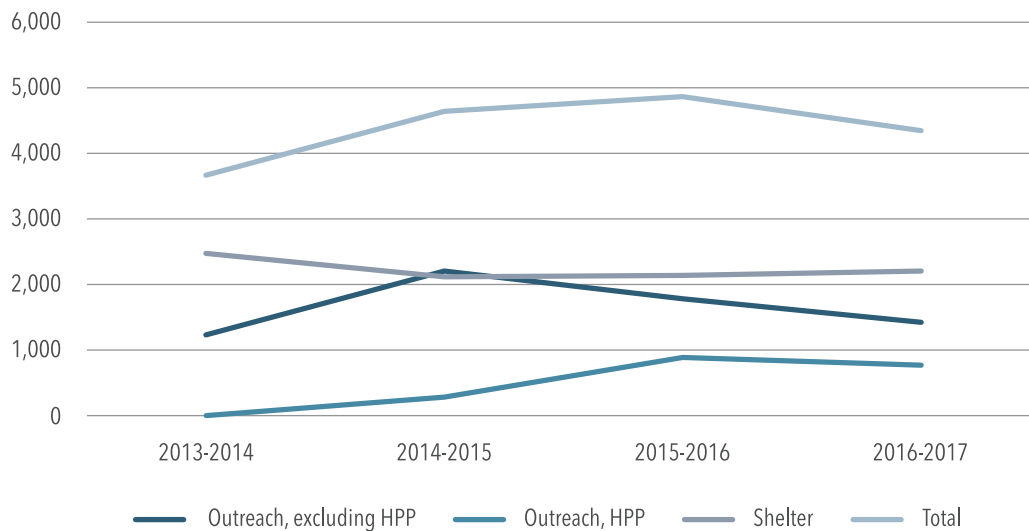




HOUSING OUTREACH & PREVENTION

BC Housing Outreach Programs are an important part of helping individuals and families move from homelessness to stable housing. In 2016-2017²⁷, 4,397 people in Metro Vancouver were housed through outreach funded by BC Housing initiatives. This total reflects a combination of several programs, including A/HOP (Aboriginal Homelessness Outreach Program), IOM (Integrated Offender Management), ESP (Emergency Shelter Program), and HPP (Homeless Prevention Program). Each program involves outreach staff that work directly with individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in order to address their housing needs and provide referrals to other services.

Number of Individuals Housed through Outreach Programs in Metro Vancouver (2013-14 to 2016-17)



Prepared by BC Housing, Supportive Housing & Programs, July 2018

Source: BC Housing, Homelessness Services System (HSS), 2013-2017

While the number of individuals housed through these outreach programs has fluctuated year over year, they are a vital step in preventing and alleviating homelessness throughout Metro Vancouver (see table 19). In 2017 the BC Government committed \$291 million towards 2,000 supportive modular housing units across the province, and 600 units within Vancouver as a response to the affordability crisis and rising homelessness within the region. Of the 600 units proposed for the City of Vancouver in September 2017, over half are now tenanted (260 units) or under construction (272 units).²⁸

While these outreach programs, along with the modular housing, have provided relief for some living on the streets and in shelters, the underlying issues of low vacancy rates at all levels, and a low stock of affordable rental housing - specifically 1 and 2 bedroom units suitable for families - continue to dictate BC Housing's ability to find suitable housing for families experiencing homelessness.

Table 19: Number of Individuals Housed through Outreach Programs (A/HOP, IOM and HPP) and Emergency Shelter Program (ESP), including Temporary Programs, in Metro Vancouver²⁹

Program Securing Housing	Fiscal Year				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Apr-Dec 2017 ³⁰
Outreach, excluding HPP	1,232	2,233	1,797	1,424	1,112
Outreach, HPP ³¹	--	280	877	765	413
Shelter	2,493	2,174	2,187	2,208	1,577
Total Secured Housing	3,725	4,687	4,861	4,397	3,586

Prepared by: BC Housing, Research and Corporate Planning Department, July 2018

Source: BC Housing, Homelessness Services System (HSS), 2013-2017



RENTAL ASSISTANCE & SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

It is important to recognize that the housing continuum is not a linear trajectory in which an individual progresses from one end to the other, but rather a spectrum of possible circumstances and approaches. There are two main tenant-based assistance programs: RAP and SAFER. Both offer portable rent subsidies, monthly payments directly to tenants to offset the rent of a unit in the private market. The Rental Assistance Program (RAP) began in 2006 and is targeted at low-income working families. The Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents Program (SAFER) is designated for low to moderate income BC seniors. Over the past five years, the RAP and SAFER programs have continued to provide support to thousands of families across British Columbia and within Metro Vancouver (table 20).

Table 20: Households Receiving Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents (SAFER) Rent Supplements in Metro Vancouver

Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Rental Assistance Program (RAP)	5,965	6,150	5,723	5,513	5,275
Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents (SAFER)	8,995	9,472	10,235	10,812	11,573
Total	14,960	15,622	15,958	16,325	16,848

Prepared by: BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department, July 2018

Source: BC Housing, Unit Count Pivot Tables, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 (# of supplements)

Table 21 outlines homelessness-related services and subsidized housing targeting families within the larger context of Metro Vancouver's housing continuum. While the stock of units designated for people experiencing homelessness (Homeless Housed, shaded in blue) has increased by 14%, over the past five years, the stock of independent social housing for Low Income Families (shaded in yellow) has stagnated, with housing designated for families decreasing by 4.5% between 2014 and 2018. This is concerning as these units are in high (and growing) demand, as outlined in Table 17 (Households on the Housing Registry). Of the total low-income family units, over half are occupied by single-parent families.³²

Service Allocation	Service Allocation Subgroup	Unit Count at March 31st of Each Fiscal Year				
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Emergency Shelter and Housing for the Homeless	Homeless Housed	5,605	5,846	6,112	6,009	6,392
	Homeless Rent Supplements	681	1,467	1,516	1,598	1,821
	HPP Rent Supplements (subset of Homeless RS)	--	665	725	745	792
	HOP Rent Supplements (subset of Homeless RS)	499	593	578	658	822
	Homeless Shelters	1,026	1,014	1,260	1,240	1,256
Emergency Shelter and Housing for the Homeless Total		7,312	8,327	8,888	8,847	9,469
Independent Social Housing	Low Income Families	12,317	12,394	12,625	12,499	11,753
	Low Income Seniors	13,712	13,918	13,726	13,561	13,166
Independent Social Housing Total		26,029	26,312	26,351	26,060	24,919
Transitional Supported and Assisted Living	Frail Seniors	6,425	6,260	6,106	5,767	5,424
	Special Needs	3,502	3,556	3,602	3,532	3,580
	Women & Children Fleeing Violence	292	262	262	262	270
Transitional Supported and Assisted Living Total		10,219	10,078	9,970	9,561	9,274
Rent Assistance in Private Market Total		15,175	15,840	16,162	16,528	17,051
Total		58,735	60,557	61,371	60,996	60,713

Source: Unit Count Reporting Model, 31 March 2018.

Prepared: BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Dept. July 2018.

AVERAGE RENT PAID BY TENANTS IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

Table 22 shows the average rent paid by tenants across client groups within different types of subsidized housing. Comparing the average rent paid by low-income families (\$686) to rents in the private market (\$1,558) attests to the importance of subsidized housing in bringing down housing costs and providing households with more money to allocate on other expenditures – such as childcare, food, and transportation.

Table 22: Average Monthly Tenant Rent Contributions by Client Group in the Metro Vancouver Regional District as of March 31, 2018 ³⁴

Client Group	Average Monthly Tenant Rent Contribution
Homeless Housed	\$448
Frail Seniors	\$950
Special Needs	\$427
Independant Seniors (excluding SAFER)	\$469
Low Income Families (excluding RAP)	\$686
All Client Groups	\$576

Source: BC Housing, Housing Connections, March 31, 2018

Prepared by: BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department, July 2018

The relative stagnation of rental assistance (Table 12) combined with the widespread private market rent increases over the past few years suggests that many families are struggling to make ends meet. In September 2018, rent ceilings increased across the province and the maximum annual household income to be eligible increased from \$35,000 to \$40,000.³⁵ Additionally, monthly benefit rates for RAP and SAFER increased, offering more help to more British Columbians. Along with the recent commitment to build another 2500 supportive-housing units throughout British Columbia over the next 10 years, it is clear that BC Housing and the Provincial Government understand the urgent need to build additional subsidized units for low-income individuals and families.³⁶ These changes are welcome and mean that considerably more low-income families will become eligible for increased support.

Table 23: Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid for Elderly Residents (SAFER) Average Rent of Supplements³⁷ in BC

Region	Program	Fiscal Year End				
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Province of BC	RAP	\$375	\$404	\$403	\$405	\$402
	SAFER	\$151	\$179	\$175	\$187	\$189

Prepared by: BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department, July 2018

Source: BC Housing, RAP and SAFER 4th Quarterly Reports 2014-2018 (average rate of supplements - \$)





CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The number of homeless individuals continues to rise throughout Metro Vancouver. As observed in *No Vacancy: Affordability and Homelessness*, structural factors such as low vacancy rates, rising market rents, and the lack of low-end of market housing, continue to drive Metro Vancouver's affordability crisis. While in 2016 these challenges were primarily confined to the City of Vancouver, the crisis has expanded into the surrounding municipalities. This is evidenced by the rapid decline in vacancy rates throughout Burnaby, New Westminster & Surrey, which, just two years ago, were considered viable alternatives for low-income families encountering soaring housing costs and low vacancy rates in Vancouver.

The spread of the affordability crisis is pronounced among low-income families, who are encountering low vacancy rates, rising rents, and an undersupply of 1 and 2 bedroom affordable market and subsidized rentals throughout Metro Vancouver. While the commitment to build 2000 units of modular housing throughout BC, with 600 in Vancouver, is a positive step towards addressing affordability and homelessness, there is clearly a need for continued investments in family oriented subsidized housing and market rental subsidies for low-income families.

Over the past two years, multiple governments have taken steps to address these rising challenges, but this work must continue. Increasing the stock of subsidized housing for low-income families, addressing income security, and the continued development of temporary modular housing are crucial steps in reducing homelessness within Metro Vancouver.

DATA LIMITATIONS

Terminology for Geographic Areas: The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Association refers to Vancouver and surrounding municipalities as Vancouver CMA, while BC Housing refers to the same region as Metro Vancouver. The geographic area of both regions is the same. The use of each term within the tables in the report depends on whether the data was sourced from CMHC or BC Housing, while Metro Vancouver is used as a general term to refer to this region throughout the text of the report.

Market Housing Data: Rental market housing data in this report are derived from the CMHC October Rental Market Survey. The October survey was used as it has been in place for over 30 years and has an established track record, compared to the less consistent history of the April survey. The October survey also tends to be less impacted by seasonal trends. CMHC data are based on market units that provided data for the Rental Market Survey. It does not include non-market units, units where rent is unknown, subsidized/social housing, secondary suites, and rental units in structures with less than 3 rental units. The data therefore do not capture social housing, secondary suites, or rental condominium suites, which some people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness may access.

CMHC grades data estimate reliability as: a (excellent), b (very good), c (good), or d (fair). Data marked 'd' is advised to use with caution. The amount of suppressed and/or less reliable data for the larger units suggests that caution should be exercised in interpreting these figures.

Income Scenarios (Tables 2 & 3): These scenarios are based on a sample household with the described family characteristics. The scenarios do not suggest that it is the same family year over year, as using median rents for 2017 and 2018 means that the cost of rent increases by an amount greater than would be allowed under rent control.

Food costing for the scenarios use Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Region to allow comparison with previous report and based on provided data. Vancouver Coastal Health does not include all areas in Metro Vancouver. In reality, Metro Vancouver falls within two health regions: VCH and Fraser Health.

Housing Outreach Data: All housing outreach data are based on client records, not individuals. Because BC Housing data are taken from several housing outreach providers, there is no way to distinguish clients between different providers. It is possible that two records may come from the same individual (i.e. if the client used a different name at 2 agencies), or that an individual could potentially be housed by different sites during a year (client will get a new record if housed through a different site).

END NOTES

¹ *No Vacancy: Affordability & Homelessness in Vancouver, 2016.*

² 1,522 people sheltered and 659 unsheltered, Vancouver's Homeless Count 2018 <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-homeless-count-2018-final-report.pdf> (2018).

³ Some shelters provide accommodations (bed nights) for more beds than are being funded by BC Housing.

⁴ HSS data is entered by providers. The accuracy of the data is dependent on provider entry. HSS is a live database, meaning shelter providers can go back to clean up previous data at any time. Therefore the data for a specified period may be different when a different snapshot is used. This data includes permanent, year-round shelters in Metro Vancouver that provide data to BC Housing. This data excludes mats from Extreme Weather Response, Homeless Emergency Action Team, and Temporary Winter shelters. Data does not represent individuals, but the cumulative number of nights stayed at shelters during the fiscal year.

⁵ For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, data is only provided for the period of April 2017 - December 2017 because after that time housing providers began using the HIFIS database.

⁶ Maki, K. (2017). *Housing, Homelessness, and Violence Against Women: A Discussion Paper*. Ottawa, Ontario: Women's Shelters Canada.

⁷ Ivanova, I., S. Klein & T. Raithby. (2018). *Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

⁸ Ivanova, I., S. Klein & T. Raithby. (2018). *Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

⁹ This is an approximation using currently available data. In addition to the specific line notes below, these calculations do not include other important household costs such as transportation, clothing, health care premiums, or contingencies.

¹⁰ Includes federal and provincial taxes and CPP and EI deductions. Calculated using <https://easytaxca.com/payroll-calculator-2017/>. EI and CPP deductions were verified using Government of Canada manual EI and CPP calculation factsheets.

¹¹ The new Affordable Child Care Benefit replaced the Child Care Subsidy on September 1, 2018. However, using the Government of British Columbia online benefit estimator for the hypothetical family results in an estimation of 'up to \$210/month', unchanged from the previous subsidy. This amount may be higher during summer months. Benefit Estimator accessed at <https://myfamilyservices.gov.bc.ca/s/estimator>.

¹² The Canada Child Benefit increased from \$540 per month for the July 2017 to June 2018 payments, to \$546.75 per month for the July 2018 to June 2019 payments. These benefit amounts apply to dependents aged 6 to 17.

¹³ 2018 median monthly rent estimated using Consumer Price Index for *Shelter - Rented Accommodation* for British Columbia, for July 2018. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/economy/consumer-price-index>.

¹⁴ Notes on food costing data:

1. Food costs use Vancouver Coastal Health Region to allow comparison with previous report and due to data availability. In reality, Metro Vancouver region falls partially within VCH and partially within the Fraser Health authority.
2. 2017 food costs come from data provided by Population and Public Health, BC Centre for Disease Control, which is part of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA).

¹⁵ 2018 food cost estimated using Consumer Price Index for *Food – Food purchased from stores*, for July 2018. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/economy/consumer-price-index>.

¹⁶ Childcare costs for 2018 are not yet available and cannot be fairly estimated with the CPI categories provided with the BC CPI update.

¹⁷ Rent and food cost approximations made using the Consumer Pricing Index.

¹⁸ The assistance categories are defined as follows for one-parent families:

1. Expected to Work: Employable one-parent families where the parent is under 65.
2. Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB): One-parent families where the parent meets the Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) criteria and is under 65.
3. Persons with Disabilities (PWD): One-parent families where the parent is a PWD.

¹⁹ Data provided by Ministry of Social Development. Median rent claimed by single-parent female clients as of March 2018.

²⁰ Data is limited to the Primary Rental Market for comparability with the 2016 report

- All data originates from CMHC October rental market survey
- CMHC grades data estimate reliability as: *a (excellent)*, *b (very good)*, *c (good)*, or *d (fair)*. Data marked 'd' is advised to use with caution.

²¹ Two asterisks denote that data is suppressed by CMHC, either to protect confidentiality or because data are not statistically reliable.

²² Applicant statistics reflect applicants with active (live) or on hold status in the Housing Registry, a centralized database for participating housing providers containing current applicant information.

²³ Rent supplements, transfers, and pending applications are not included in this report.

²⁴ Eligible applicants must apply under one of the following Housing Registry applicant categories:

1. Family: a minimum of two people, including one dependent child.
2. People with Disabilities: a single person who can live independently and qualifies for a disability pension.
3. Seniors: one or two persons, with at least one person who is 55 years or older.
4. Wheelchair accessible: at least one applicant requires a wheelchair-modified unit. May be family, senior, or person with disabilities.

5. Singles: singles and couples under age 55 who do not meet the definition of person with disabilities.

²⁵ First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. (2017). *2017 BC Child Poverty Report Card*. Vancouver, British Columbia: In collaboration with SPARC BC and Campaign 2000: End Child & Family Poverty.

²⁶ First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. (2017). *2017 BC Child Poverty Report Card*. Vancouver, British Columbia: In collaboration with SPARC BC and Campaign 2000: End Child & Family Poverty.

²⁷ 2016-17 is the last year for which complete data are available. BC Housing's HSS data entry system was retired at the end of Dec 2017. Jan-March 2018 data is not available at this time. The Apr-Dec 2017 period is not a complete year so cannot be compared with previous years.

²⁸ City of Vancouver. (2018). Temporary Modular Housing. Retrieved from <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/temporary-modular-housing.aspx#pdSection47548>.

²⁹ **Data Notes:** HSS Data is entered by providers. The accuracy of the data is dependent on provider entry. HSS is a live database, meaning service providers can go back to clean up previous data at any time. Therefore, the data for a specific period may be different when a different snapshot is used. Numbers include housing by service providers contracted for temporary periods. Further, numbers are inflated since the same individual may be counted in a subsequent year, as a result of being a client at more than one site during the year. An individual housed in one year may be counted in a subsequent year, therefore the years cannot be summed to arrive at totals.

³⁰ HSS was retired at the end of Dec 2017 and replaced by the new system HIFIS. Jan-March 2018 data is not available at this time.

³¹ The Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) was launched in 2014/15.

³² BC Housing Research and Corporate Planning Department, June 2018. It is important to note that Indigenous peoples are supported across the housing continuum and not limited to units specifically designated for Indigenous peoples. However, these units do provide a number of specific targeted spaces within each type of subsidized housing.

³³ This table is abridged to reflect a focus on units targeting women and families. Please see data supplement for complete Metro Vancouver Housing Continuum table that includes all service categories.

³⁴ Tenant households profiled in this report are current tenants in BC Housing subsidized units as of March 31, 2018. Tenant rent contribution is calculated based on the BC Rent Scale before adjustments such as heat allowance. Tenant households required to file an annual Declaration of Income and Assets report are profiled. Market rent tenants and caretakers have also been excluded from this report.

In some projects, tenants will contribute 30% of their income up to a maximum of economic rent for the project. Economic rents may increase to cover operating costs, which may lead to increases in tenant rent contributions, but tenant rent contributions will not exceed 30% of their income.

Homeless Housed: Refers to housing for clients that is provided for a minimum

of 30 days and up to two or three years. The housing includes the provision of on- or off-site support services to help the clients more towards independence and self-sufficiency. This housing is targeted to individuals who are at the risk of homelessness, or formerly homeless.

Frail Seniors: Housing for seniors who need access to housing with on-going supports and services. Tenant rent contributions for frail seniors includes shelter and support costs.

Special Needs: Housing for clients who need access to affordable housing with support services. These clients include for example adults with mental and/or physical disabilities or youth.

Independent Seniors: Housing for seniors where minimal or no additional services are provided. Seniors are usually defined as individuals who are 65 years of age and older.

Low Income Families: Independent housing for low to moderate income households with a minimum of two people including at least one dependent child.

³⁵ RAP and SAFER subsidies are determined using household income and the rent of the unit, where households receive a certain portion of the difference between 30 percent of income and the monthly rent cost, up to the rent ceiling identified for that area. It follows that an increase in rent ceilings would therefore increase the amount that many households are receiving in subsidies. Source: Government of British Columbia. (2007). Backgrounder: Rental Assistance Program. Retrieved from https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2005-2009/2007FOR0024-000198-Attachment1.htm.

³⁶ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-cities-scramble-to-find-sites-for-next-wave-of-funding-to-house/>

³⁷ RAP and SAFER average rate of supplements is taken from the March 'Average Subsidy' line in the 4th Quarter RAP/SAFER Report.

RAP Rent Ceiling Increases Effective April 1, 2014 were:

- Families of 3 or less, Metro Vancouver, \$1,055 (up from \$975); all other areas of B.C.: \$970 (up from \$900)
- Families of 4 or more, Metro Vancouver, \$1,190 (up from \$1,100); all other areas of B.C. \$1,015 (up from \$940)

SAFER Rent Ceiling Increases effective April 1, 2014 were:

- Singles: Metro Vancouver: \$765 (up from \$700); all other areas of B.C.: \$667 (up from \$610)
- Couples: Metro Vancouver: \$825 (up from \$755); all other areas of B.C.: \$727 (up from \$665)

