

FACTSHEET: Homelessness in Nanaimo

Like many cities across Canada, Nanaimo is in the midst of an affordable housing and homelessness crisis. Since 2016, the population of homeless residents has increased by 149% to 433 people; already strained services for vulnerable residents are unable to keep up with demand.

Facts about homelessness:

Someone experiencing homelessness lives day-to-day, with no certainty when or where they'll be able to eat, bathe, or sleep. They live without the basic amenities many of us take for granted. When focused on survival, it's near impossible for someone without the security of shelter and stability of regular meals to think about recovery, health and employment.

- The 2020 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count found **433 homeless individuals**. An estimated 150-200 people were not captured by the Count, bringing Nanaimo's homeless population to over 600 people.
- The length of time people are experiencing homelessness is increasing. Over **77% have been chronically homeless - homeless for more than six months**.
- **People experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo, are from Nanaimo**. 71.2% have lived here for more than five years and initially moved to Nanaimo for the same reasons as everyone else: work, school and family.
- The number of people sleeping on the streets is much higher in Nanaimo than in other Canadian communities; **61.9% are sleeping in places not intended for human habitation**.

How we're taking action:

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition recognizes the negative impact this crisis is having on our community and is working with all levels of government to take action.

- The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition drives solutions to end homelessness by uniting the organizations, citizens and governments which support at-risk residents, while also working to diminish the harm caused by homelessness on individuals and community.
- Nanaimo receives annual funding from the Government of Canada's Reaching Home; Canada's Homelessness Strategy, which is allocated by the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition to local non-profits working to end homelessness.
- In May 2019, Nanaimo City Council approved the creation of a City-led Health & Housing Task Force to work on solutions to end homelessness.
- Throughout 2020 the Health & Housing Task Force, the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, and United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island undertook research, including a series of Health & Housing Design Labs, a comprehensive needs assessment on social and health issues in Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Point-in-Time Homeless Count.



- The information gleaned from this research has been integrated into a draft 5-year Health and Housing Action Plan (HHAP). It is now undergoing a validation process with engaged community members.
- Nanaimo has also received a new investment by BC Housing to create over 300 new affordable homes in Nanaimo, including permanent, purpose-built supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness and new affordable rental homes for individuals, seniors and families.

For more information, visit: nanaimohomelesscoalition.ca/local-action

Resources:

- [Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness 2018-2023](#)
- [Nanaimo's Affordable Housing Strategy](#)
- [2020 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Homeless Count](#)