

FACTSHEET: What's Driving Homelessness?

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition recognizes how challenging homelessness is in our community. Nanaimo is not unique in facing a big increase in homelessness. Communities across BC and Canada are challenged by the rapid increase in homeless and the opioid crisis.

Visit [Canada Alliance to End Homelessness](#) and [Homeless Hub](#) for extensive information around the challenges and solutions communities are experiencing.

The Homeless Coalition and the [Nanaimo Health & Housing Task Force](#) are committed to learning from other communities, bringing together the right people and developing locally relevant solutions.

AFFORDABILITY

Ideally, a maximum of 30% of your income is spent on housing. **Almost half (48%) of Nanaimo's renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.**¹

In 2018, rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by nearly 10% while the average BC wage increased by only 2.4%. Rental rate increases are outpacing wages, making housing in Nanaimo unaffordable.²

LOW WAGES

The median income for those living alone or with non-relatives is \$27,850, which means that **45.5% of single people earn less than \$25,000 a year.** Almost a third (29%) of single parent families earn less than \$25,000 a year.³

INSECURE HOUSING

The 2020 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Homeless Count made clear that **once a person loses their home or chooses to leave unsafe housing, it's very difficult to secure housing again.**

Increased rents have made previously affordable homes out-of-reach for those with low incomes. Landlords have a larger tenant pool, making tough competition for those with poor credit and/or mental or physical health problems.

¹ Source: Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2016 * Only includes households with incomes over zero

² Health & Housing Nanaimo - Backgrounder

³ Source: Statistics Canada, Family and Individual Taxfiler Data



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MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS

While not everyone who is homeless has a substance use disorder, a high number do suffer with substance use and it's typically related to an underlying mental health challenge. A significant number of **people experiencing homelessness suffer from both severe mental illness and addictions.**

In the past few years, impacts of the opioid crisis have complicated things further, making it even more difficult to address mental health and substance use.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Homelessness has a direct impact on health, making it **difficult or impossible to obtain medication and to adhere to medical treatment.**

The 2020 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Homeless Count revealed that many people facing homelessness are managing a number of health issues; what we don't know is if those issues occurred before or after they became homeless. It was also found that 24% have an acquired brain injury, supporting evidence that people facing homelessness have higher incidences of traumatic brain injury.

HOW WE'RE TAKING ACTION

Tackling the root causes of homelessness requires intervention at all levels. Without financial investment and resources from all levels of government and the support of many non-profit organizations on the ground, solving this issue would be impossible.

Visit nanaimohomelesscoalition.ca/local-action or more information