

DID YOU KNOW?

THE COST OF HOMELESSNESS

Our current response to homelessness is failing our most vulnerable community members. We are responding reactively, trying to manage the situation rather than addressing the root causes. We rely heavily on providing emergency services including health-care, shelters and corrections. This is a very expensive and ineffective way of addressing a social problem that is getting worse and worse.

Many people believe that we continue to respond reactively, rather than pro-actively because this approach is less expensive. This is not the case. Our current response costs the taxpayer more than a policy of ending homelessness.

Homelessness is expensive

In Canada, the average cost for a person struggling with homelessness could cost the taxpayer \$53,144 per year¹. This includes:

- health services,
- substance-use treatments,
- emergency room visits,
- police interaction,
- incarceration,
- shelters and supportive housing

Not only is this approach more expensive, it's not addressing the complex issues that contribute to homelessness such as:

- lack of affordable housing,
- the foster care system,
- physical and mental health issues,
- substance-use issues and many more.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ending homelessness saves taxpayers' money

The Housing First model moves people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent homes with no pre-conditions. Once housed, people receive additional services and supports as needed.

The average cost to house a person in Canada using the Housing First model is \$14,177-\$22,257 per year¹. The lowest cost is for a moderate needs person who requires minimal additional supports and services, and the highest cost is for people who require significant support.

It's cheaper to house people experiencing homelessness and provide the supports and services they need to stabilize their lives than it is to continue our current reactive responses.

When we focus on ending homelessness by addressing its root causes and preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place, we spend much less money, while supporting our most vulnerable neighbours.

[VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE](#)

¹Distasio, Jino. (2017, October 9). Canadians spending big money on homelessness without addressing its root causes. CBC News.

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substance-use treatments



emergency room visits



police interaction



incarceration



shelters and supportive housing

ENDING HOMELESSNESS SAVES TAXPAYERS' MONEY

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The average cost to house an individual per year:

\$14,177-\$22,257

moderate needs user

highest needs user

Source: Distasio, Jino. (2017, October 9). Canadians spending big money on homelessness without addressing its root causes. CBC News.

DID YOU KNOW?

HOMELESSNESS IS EXPENSIVE

The difference in the cost of housing an individual experiencing homelessness in the shelter system, compared to supportive housing that helps them rebuild their lives is shocking.

COST OF A TEMPORARY SHELTER BED



\$13,000 – \$42,000 PER YEAR

Shelters are temporary spaces for people experiencing homelessness that usually provide food and a variety of other services.

CREATING HOMES SAVES TAXPAYER MONEY AND HELPS PEOPLE

Investing in rehousing people who are experiencing homelessness is cost effective.

COST OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



\$13,000 – \$18,000 PER YEAR

Supportive housing provides on-site supports like access to mental and physical health care, life-skills training, education and more.

DID YOU KNOW?

RESOURCES - THE COST OF HOMELESSNESS

ARTICLES

[Canadians spending big money on homelessness without addressing its root causes](#)

[One homeless person costs \\$171,000 a year](#)

[Million Dollar Murray](#)

[Nanaimo Homeless Count Shows Serious Need for Increased Investments](#)

PAPERS

[The real cost of homelessness: Can we save money by doing the right thing?](#)

[2020 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count Report](#)

VIDEOS

[Nanaimo Homeless Coalition - The Cost of Homelessness](#)

[Good People, CBC Gem "Between the Cracks"](#)

WEBSITES

[Nanaimo Homeless Coalition](#)

[Homeless Hub - Cost Analysis Of Homelessness](#)

FACTSHEETS

[Fact Sheet: Affordable Housing](#)

[Fact Sheet: What's Driving Homelessness](#)

[Fact Sheet: Homelessness in Nanaimo](#)

[Housing & Homelessness Glossary](#)