



**Research Project on Homelessness  
In Greater Vancouver**

**Prepared for:  
The Greater Vancouver Regional District**

**July 2002**

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**Advisory Issued November 2005**  
**Errors in CMHC Core Housing Need data affect estimates of households**  
**At-risk of Homelessness in Greater Vancouver**

CMHC is releasing revisions to previous estimates of core housing need. During verification of ongoing research, CMHC found that some households had been misclassified when Statistics Canada applied core housing need to both the 1996 and 2001 Censuses. The outcome of the misclassification was to overestimate core housing need for both 1996 and 2001. Data for 1991 were not affected. The at-risk of homelessness data used in this report identifies Greater Vancouver households that are in core housing need and spending at least 50% of their income on housing. Because at-risk households were identified using core housing need data from 1996 and/or 2001, errors in the collection of that data impact the at-risk of homelessness data for the region. The extent of that impact will be assessed upon receiving revised data from CMHC.

Further information on the impact of the misclassification is available at [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/About/whwedo/whwedo\\_021.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/About/whwedo/whwedo_021.cfm).



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**This report contains three (3) volumes  
Volume 2 and Volume 3 each has its own Table of Contents**

**Volume 1 – Executive summary**

**Volume 2 – Profile of homeless and at-risk people in Greater Vancouver**

**Volume 3 – A methodology to obtain first person qualitative information  
from people who are homeless and formerly homeless**



**Research Project on Homelessness  
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**Volume 1**

**Executive Summary**

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# ***Executive Summary***

## **Introduction**

In July 2001, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) commenced this research project on homelessness in Greater Vancouver. The work was conducted by a team of consultants whose work was guided by GVRD staff and by a Research Advisory Committee, whose members included representatives of organizations providing services to the homeless in the region, and of local and senior governments. This research project is intended to provide data that will support implementation of the (March, 2001) *Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver* to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

The objectives of the research were to:

- Provide a credible estimate of the number of homeless and “at-risk” persons, by sub-region in Greater Vancouver;
- Provide a demographic profile of both these populations;
- Develop a data management system at the GVRD to provide a means of storing and organizing this data in a form that allows for periodic updating, and making this information accessible to all those working to address homelessness in the Greater Vancouver region; and
- Develop a methodology to conduct first person interviews with homeless and formerly homeless people.

This research report on homelessness in Greater Vancouver is set out in three volumes:

- Volume 1 provides the executive summary and overview of the entire project;
- Volume 2 provides the profile of homeless and at-risk people in Greater Vancouver; and
- Volume 3 provides a methodology to obtain first person qualitative information from people who are homeless or were formerly homeless.

This research was funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) under the “Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative” (SCPI).

## **Profile of homeless and at-risk people in Greater Vancouver (Volume 2)**

The purpose of the homelessness profile detailed in Volume 2 was to provide good quality information about the size and nature of the homeless population and of people who are at-risk of homelessness in Greater Vancouver.

The information is presented in two parts. Part I estimates and describes the population and households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD. Part II describes the nature and

extent of homelessness in the region. Research data was collected by municipality, and is contained in Appendices A and B to this report; Appendix C contains a contact list of agencies in the region; Appendix D contains a description of research methods for the survey of homeless people. For the purposes of analysis, municipal data was aggregated for a number of sub-regions in Greater Vancouver, and both this sub-regional and overall regional analysis appears in the text of the report. In both parts of Volume 2, a regional picture is presented first, followed by a profile of specific groups of people within the homeless and at-risk population (e.g. seniors, urban Aboriginals), wherever possible. The report then describes the at-risk and homeless situation in the six sub-regions that comprise the GVRD, where data allows.

## **Major Findings**

### ***Part I – Population at-risk of homelessness***

This research project provides a quantified estimate of those persons and households at economic risk of homelessness. It used the “INALHM” concept applied to 1996 Census data as a measure of the risk of homelessness.<sup>1</sup> This measure of risk best describes those persons and households with economic issues that may lead to homelessness, including those living in inadequate or unsuitable accommodation. It does not capture the entire population at-risk of homelessness, in recognition of an array of factors that could contribute to someone being at-risk of homelessness. For example, a woman at-risk of homelessness due to violence in her home would not be included in these figures if her present household were not also at economic risk of homelessness.

#### **Magnitude and trends**

The figures show an alarming increase in the number of households and persons in households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD between 1991 and 1996: an increase from 39,005 to 57,685 households. This increase in the population at-risk of homelessness may be attributed to: strong population growth over the period (14%) and generally worsening conditions for owners and renters. For example, the average value of dwellings in the region grew 14.2% between 1991 and 1996 (constant dollars). Rental rates for bachelor apartments in Greater Vancouver also increased by almost 13% in real terms over the period.<sup>2</sup> Incomes on the other hand, showed a decline. From 1990 to 1995 average (real) household income declined by 4.3% in the GVRD. In addition, very low vacancy rates between 1991 (2.2%) and 1996 (1.1%) suggest a limited supply of rental housing.

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<sup>1</sup> “INALHM” refers to in core housing Need and spending At Least Half” of their household income for shelter (Modified). The adjective “Modified” here refers to a database that includes Aboriginal households. Based on CMHC. May 2001. *Research Highlights. Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at Least Half of their Income on Shelter*. Socio-economic Series. Issue 55-7. Census 2001 data is not available at time of writing.

<sup>2</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report. BC & Yukon Region.

Similar comparative data showed that residents of the GVRD are relatively worse off in terms of the risk of homelessness compared to their counterparts in Toronto and Calgary. Renter households are over-represented among those at-risk, forming almost two thirds of the GVRD's at-risk households, whereas renter households represented 41% of total GVRD households in 1996. Approximately one in seven renter households in the GVRD is precariously housed and at-risk of homelessness. Owner households, however, also represent a considerable share of this population, about one third.

### **Key Characteristics of the Population At-Risk**

People between the ages of 25 and 44 years represented the largest share of people at risk of homelessness in 1996. Almost 60% of the 130,000 *people* at-risk lived in dual and single parent family households with children, a ratio that was even higher among those living in owner households. In contrast, among all at-risk *households*, single person households predominated. While lack of education can be said to be a factor in risk of homelessness and many at-risk individuals had not completed high school, there was also a significant number who had attended or were attending university. Aboriginal people were over-represented among those at-risk of homelessness, compared to the GVRD as a whole (5% compared to 1.7%), especially in renter households. Most at-risk persons were Caucasian, although approximately 40% of persons in at-risk households were members of a visible minority, and among these persons, the largest visible minority group was Chinese. People in at-risk households moved frequently, and tended to live in an apartment. They had a high unemployment rate of 21%. However, notably, almost half of at-risk persons (48%) had employment income as their major income source.

### **Differences between at-risk owners and renters**

There were some obvious differences between owner and renter households at-risk of homelessness, both in terms of incidence and their characteristics. Firstly, more renter households than owner households were at-risk, and they represented a greater share of at-risk households compared to the proportion of renter households among all GVRD households. This disparity in the incidence of at-risk households among renter and owner households may be explained by the fact that the INALHM data is measure of *economic* risk, and that the economic disparity between renter and owner households in Greater Vancouver has increased between 1991 and 1996, when measured by average household income, as well as by household wealth/assets.<sup>3</sup> But, the biggest increase in the number of households at-risk between 1991 and 1996 occurred among owner households: an increase of 88% or 8,260 owner households.

At-risk renter households:

- were most likely to consist either of one person (50%) or be single or dual parent families with children (30%);

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<sup>3</sup> Source: David Hulchanski, *A Tale of Two Canadas: Homeowners Getting Richer, Renters Getting Poorer*. University of Toronto Urban and Community Studies, August 2001.

- had lower household incomes than owner households, by 37%;
- spent slightly less of their income on shelter (65%) than owner households (68%)

When compared with people living in at-risk owner households, people living in at-risk renter households:

- had similar levels of educational attainment;
- were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity;
- were less likely to be a member of a visible minority group;
- were less likely to be immigrants;
- were more likely to be disabled;
- were more likely to have moved in the previous year;
- had a higher unemployment rate;
- were more likely to report government transfer payments as their major income source; and
- were more likely to live in an apartment that needed major repairs.

#### **Comparison with all GVRD residents**

Compared to all GVRD residents, the population at-risk of homelessness in 1996:

- mirrored GVRD residents in terms of the share of population age 25 – 44 years (36% versus 35%)
- had a much lower average household income (\$16,303 versus \$54,055)
- was less likely to have completed high school (35% versus 28%)
- was more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity (5% compared to 1.7%)
- was more likely to be an immigrant (41% compared to 35%)
- was more likely to have moved in the previous 5 years (69% versus 44%)
- was more likely to be unemployed (21% versus 8.6%)
- was more likely to live in an apartment as opposed to a single detached dwelling (38% compared to 25%)

#### **Sub-groups at-risk of homelessness**

The profile examined the situation of some specific sub-populations of individuals at-risk of homelessness, notably women, Aboriginal people, seniors, immigrants, lone parents and persons with disabilities. Of these, the two largest sub-groups of individuals at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD were females (67,435, or 51% of the total at-risk population) and immigrants (53,100, or 41% of the total at-risk population). However, the incidence of these two sub-groups among at-risk individuals may be linked to their relative share of the overall population. On the other hand, although smaller in absolute numbers, Aboriginal persons, lone parents and persons with a disability had the highest incidence of risk. For example, 15% of all Aboriginal persons in the GVRD were at-risk of homelessness according to these figures. Likewise, 15% of all GVRD lone parents, and 10% of all persons with a disability in the GVRD were at-risk of homeless in 1996.



Some notable findings:

- A significant share of **Aboriginal** persons at-risk of homelessness were children under the age of 10 years (25% or 1,748 persons), a much higher share than for all at-risk individuals (16%).
- **Aboriginal household maintainers** were between the ages of 25 and 44 years, the largest share were single person households, and 43% had not graduated from high school;
- **Females and immigrants** comprised the largest sub-groups among those at-risk of homelessness in 1996, representing 51% and 41% respectively of the 131,000 at-risk persons in the GVRD.
- **Most at-risk immigrants** were living in households comprised of dual parent families with children (52%).
- **Persons with a disability** who were at-risk of homelessness comprised 13% of all at-risk persons in the GVRD. Seniors made up a relatively large share of this group, about 37%. Persons with a disability were more likely to be female and living by themselves; they also had a higher unemployment rate (35%) than at-risk persons generally.
- There were over 67,000 **females** of all age groups among the at-risk population, 7.5% of women region-wide.
- Fifteen percent of all **lone parents** in the region were at-risk of homelessness. They were 39 years old on average and were most likely to be female (88%). Most were living in a single-family household, but 4% lived in a multi-family household.
- **Seniors** of age 55 and over represented about 15% of all persons at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, but 20% of the overall GVRD population, meaning they were under-represented in the at-risk population. Most at-risk seniors were of the age 65 and over, with an average age of 68 years. At-risk seniors were more likely to be female and living by themselves.
- At-risk **youth** had an average age of 14 years. Most were living in family households with their parents (54%); males were over-represented among youth aged 10 to 14 years, and older youth were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity.

### Sub-regions

The Vancouver sub-region (comprised of the City of Vancouver and (UEL) University Endowment Lands in this study) had the largest number of households at-risk of homelessness in 1996 and possessed the largest share of all at-risk households (40%). This is not surprising since Vancouver also had the largest share of all regional households in 1996 (32%). These at-risk households comprised almost 10% of all Vancouver households, exceeding the regional incidence of 8.4%. The South of Fraser sub-region (comprised of White Rock, Surrey, Delta, and both the City and Township of Langley) had the second largest share of households at-risk of homelessness (22%), slightly lower than its share of all regional households (26%). At-risk households in both Vancouver and the North Shore (comprised of the District and City of North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Lions Bay and Bowen Island) paid the largest share of their income for

rent compared to the regional average. Growth in the number of households at-risk of homelessness between 1991 and 1996 ranged from 26% in the North Shore to a high of 82% in the Northeast Sector (comprised of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra) compared to a regional rate of 48% over five years.

- At-risk households in the **Vancouver sub-region** were most likely to consist of one or two unrelated persons living in rental apartment accommodation. Their unemployment rate (23%) exceeded the rate for all at-risk households and this is reflected in the 32% of households earning less than \$10,000 per year. Primary household maintainers in this sub-region were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity than elsewhere in the region.
- In the **South of Fraser sub-region**, at-risk households were more likely to be families with children, and a significant share were female led lone parent households. They were also more likely to be living in a single detached house which they owned.
- Primary maintainers of at-risk households in the **Inner Municipalities** were more likely to be over the age of 65 (20%) compared to 9% regionally and of Chinese visible minority status (21%) compared to 15% regionally.
- More at-risk households in the **Northeast Sector** reported employment as their major income source (55%) compared to elsewhere in the region.
- The highest share of non-visible minority maintainers of at-risk households was located in the **Ridge Meadows sub-region**.
- More at-risk household maintainers in the **North Shore sub-region** were over age 55 than in any other sub-region (35% compared to 15% regionally). These households were more likely to report Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) or pension as their major income source.

## ***Part II – Homeless population in Greater Vancouver***

### **Magnitude and trends**

A survey of the number of emergency shelter clients across the Province was done in 1999, but no previous estimate of the number of homeless people in Greater Vancouver has been available until now. The estimate in this study is derived from the findings of a “snapshot survey” of homeless people completed as part of this study, as well as an estimate of the “undercount” of these survey numbers. The survey involved a night time count of sheltered homeless people at 40 emergency shelters, transition and safe houses in the region, and a daytime count of street homeless at 45 locations across the region where homeless people congregate during the day. The 24-hour homeless snapshot survey in Greater Vancouver produced a count of between 1,181 and 1,206 homeless persons on January 14/15, 2002. While not all homeless people were counted that day, these survey figures are the best available using established methods. Homeless people were found in virtually every municipality within the GVRD. In addition, a significant number of street homeless were found that day, particularly in areas outside the City of Vancouver.

A review of some preliminary (and limited) Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) data showed that roughly double (2,098) the number of homeless individuals used emergency shelters between January and November 2001 compared to the number of homeless people actually enumerated on snapshot day (1,181 to 1,206 persons) in January, 2002.

### **Characteristics**

The profile information generated by the snapshot survey confirms what is generally understood by service-providers about the characteristics of people who are homeless:

- 68% are male;
- most are between 25 and 44 years;
- they are living alone;
- most are Caucasian, followed in level of incidence by Aboriginal ethnicity;
- they are homeless because of abuse and family breakdown, moving, or being stranded;
- 38% had been homeless for less than one month;
- 32% had been homeless for more than 6 months;
- 71% stated their permanent home was within the GVRD;
- their major income source was income assistance or a training program;
- 66% had at least one health condition;
- addiction was the most common (self-reported) health condition; and
- the profile of shelter clients has not changed significantly since 1999.

### **Difference between the street homeless and sheltered homeless**

The sheltered homeless comprised 68.5% of all homeless persons enumerated during the 24-hour homeless snapshot, and the street homeless 31.5%. Compared to the sheltered homeless, the street homeless:

- were more likely to be female;
- were under 19 years of age;
- were living with a partner;
- were of Aboriginal ethnicity;
- were more likely to identify abuse and family breakdown, addiction, and lack of a job as the main reason they were homeless;
- had been homeless longer – 29% had been homeless for one year or more, compared to only 14% of the sheltered homeless;
- were less likely to be receiving income assistance;
- were more likely to have had no source of income at all, and some relied on binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, and bottle collecting; and
- were in poorer health - they were more likely to have at least one (self-reported) health condition (72% compared to 63%) and they reported roughly twice the incidence of addiction, medical conditions, and physical disability.

## **Comparison with at-risk population**

The homeless population shared several characteristics with the at-risk population profiled in Part I. Firstly, the majority of homeless people in Greater Vancouver were in the 25 to 44 age group, as was the at-risk population. Aboriginal people were over-represented in both populations. Compared to the population at-risk, the homeless differed in that males outnumbered females, they were mostly living alone, and their major income source was income assistance, not employment, (although 11% of homeless persons reported employment income as their major source of income at the time of the snapshot survey).

## **Sub-groups**

Separate profiles of five different sub-populations of homeless persons (women, seniors, Aboriginal people, unaccompanied youth, and the long term homeless) show distinct differences among them. The two largest sub-groups were females and the long term homeless. Homeless seniors over age 55 tended to be Caucasian and homeless youth tended to be more equally split between males and females. Homeless women were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity than all homeless persons. The Aboriginal homeless had been homeless the longest, with 43% reporting a duration of 6 months or longer. They were also more likely to be living with an addiction compared to members of other sub-groups. The long-term homeless (those who had been homeless 6 months or more) had the highest rate of (self-reported) mental illness of all the sub-groups and compared to the entire homeless population.

## **Geographic Sub-regions**

The largest number and share of homeless persons was found in the Vancouver sub-region, followed by the South of Fraser and Inner Municipalities sub-regions. Interestingly, where the homeless were found does not necessarily reflect the place they view as their permanent home or home community. While 60% of the homeless were located in Vancouver, only 26% viewed Vancouver as their last permanent home. The distribution of the sheltered and street homeless among the sub-regions differed. The largest number of sheltered homeless persons was located in Vancouver (likely due to the fact that Vancouver had about 70% of the total number of shelter beds in the region), while the largest number of street homeless was found in the South of Fraser sub-region. Compared to the Inner Municipalities and South of Fraser sub-regions, Vancouver's homeless population was more likely to be male and of Aboriginal origin. They were also more likely to view their last permanent home as outside of BC. Homeless persons in the Inner Municipalities tended to reflect more closely the profile of the regional homeless population, while those in the South of Fraser sub-region tended to be equally split between males and females, tended to have youth over-represented, a larger share was living with a partner, and few were receiving income assistance as their major income source.

## **Methodology to obtain first person qualitative information (Volume 3)**

The purpose of the methodology presented in Volume 3 was to provide a tool that will enable community groups or agencies to obtain qualitative information about the homeless population, through “first-person” research with homeless and formerly homeless people. Findings from this type of research can be used to:

- Put a face on homelessness;
- Inform the development of appropriate policy and program responses and target scarce resources as effectively as possible;
- Document the life experiences of people who become homeless and the situations/processes that led them to become homeless;
- Document the kinds of services, programs or other assistance that have been found helpful for people to exit homelessness, and to identify what services are missing, and what are the barriers to accessing services;
- Identify prevention strategies; and
- Support a communications strategy.

The steps that were followed to develop this methodology included:

1. A review of approaches used in Canada and the United States to gather first person qualitative information from homeless and formerly homeless people. This included close collaboration with the City of Vancouver’s Co-ordinator of the Tenant Assistance Program, who for several years, has worked with enumeration of street homeless people in that city.
2. Key informant interviews with individuals most closely involved in eight (8) of the examples identified in the above noted review.
3. Development of a draft methodology to conduct personal interviews with people who are homeless and formerly homeless.
4. Two focus group meetings with people who were currently and formerly homeless to obtain their input on the draft methodology and interview guide.
5. Pilot interviews with four (4) individuals who were homeless and with three (3) people who had experienced homelessness in the recent past.
6. Review of the methodology by a professional qualitative research consultant.

As for the entire research project, this methodology was developed under the guidance of the Research Advisory Committee.

Some of the key points discussed in Vol. 3’s presentation of the methodology are outlined below.

1. **Number of interviews.** The appropriate number of interviews need to be determined in the context of the overall research design and timeline of each study. Research analysts who specialize in qualitative studies believe the goal of qualitative research is to obtain in-depth information that is rich in quality, and they recommend working with small numbers of individuals.
2. **Target population and specific sub-group to be studied.** This methodology recommends conducting interviews with people who are both currently and formerly homeless. Researchers need to identify the specific group they want to interview for their study, based on the purpose of their research.
3. **Skills and background of interviewers.** The skills of the interviewers are critical to the attainment of accurate and credible information. It is important to use skilled interviewers who:
  - Are familiar and comfortable with people who are homeless;
  - Are compassionate, respectful, patient, flexible, and good listeners;
  - Will be able to establish a sense of trust and good rapport (this may require consideration of the gender or age of the interviewer to “match” that of the study participants);
  - Are able to stay focused and synthesize and interpret what is being said in the interview; and
  - Have experience in conducting qualitative interviews.

Interviewers could include well-liked and trusted outreach workers or service providers, experienced staff, and homeless, formerly homeless, or community-based individuals.

4. **Training.** Training is essential and should be specifically tailored to the team of interviewers hired for each project.
5. **Locating, recruiting and approaching people to interview.** Among the ways to locate or recruit people to interview are:
  - Approaching social or community agencies for assistance;
  - Asking shelter operators for assistance;
  - Approaching people who are homeless directly on the street;
  - Asking people who are homeless or formerly homeless to help recruit others to interview; and
  - Putting up “recruitment notices” in places that provide affordable housing (for people who are formerly homeless).

In approaching potential candidates for an interview, interviewers must be able to make the person approached feel comfortable. The way to do this will vary from person to person. However, interviewers should dress casually (e.g. jeans), and offer food and/or coffee, or other appropriate means of compensation (see #9 below).

6. **Protection of privacy.** It is critical to respect and protect the privacy of study participants. One way to achieve this is to ask interview participants to provide a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. Anonymity and confidentiality are required and the study participants should be assured of this at the outset. Photographs should not be taken of any of the people who are interviewed. Observers of these interviews should not be permitted.
7. **Location of interviews.** Interviews should take place wherever the person being interviewed will be most comfortable and where both the participant and the interviewer feel safe. This could include a coffee shop or in the offices of a recruiting agency. Some people who are approached for an interview might feel more relaxed if they are inside, while others may wish to remain exactly where the interviewer finds them, which includes being on the street. Ideally, the location should be safe, reasonably quiet, private and offer few distractions.
8. **Recording of interviews.** Researchers may wish to record interviews by taking hand-written notes or by using a tape recorder. Regardless of the approach taken, the interviewer should advise the participant which methodology of recording will be used. Some studies have used a team of two individuals, where one person asked the questions and the other recorded the information.
9. **Honorariums.** Interviewers should provide participants with an honorarium to show respect for the time and information provided by the participant. Currently, a reasonable honorarium could be from \$15-\$30 per interview, plus the cost of a meal or coffee for an interview that will last from 1 to 1.5 hours.
10. **Analysis and report preparation.** The way in which information from personal interviews will be analyzed should be addressed during the research design stage. It is necessary to determine how the results will be used and the depth of analysis that will be required. Findings from interviews cannot be used to draw conclusions about the homeless population as a whole. Reports should also be written in a way that is accessible to the participants, and this may involve presentation of research findings in formats other than written reports.
11. **Reporting back to participants after the interviews.** The methodology recommends providing an opportunity for people who participated in the interviews to attend a follow-up meeting after analysis of all the interviews is completed. The purpose of the meeting would be to thank the participants for their input, discuss the results of the interviews and review a draft report.
12. **Budget.** In developing a budget for this work, it is estimated that between seven (7) and twelve (12) hours are required to conduct a 1.5 hour interview, depending on the level of detail to be provided in the analysis. This would include time for:

- Interview preparation
- Recruiting interviewees
- Debriefing
- Conducting interviews and travel
- Coding
- Transcribing/typing interview notes
- Analysis and summary of interviews

13. **Interview guide.** A sample Introduction and Consent Form and Interview Guide are attached to this methodology. The purpose of the interview guide is to obtain information about the life experiences of people who become homeless, about what might be done to prevent people from becoming homeless, and about what people need to access and maintain stable housing. It is expected that groups or agencies using this methodology might wish to adapt the interview guide for their own use depending on the specific goals of their study and the group targeted for interviews.





**Research Project on Homelessness  
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**Volume 2**

**Profile of Homeless and At-Risk People  
in Greater Vancouver**

**Prepared for:  
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**July 2002**

**Consulting Team:  
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# Executive Summary

## Background

In July 2001, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) commenced a research project on homelessness in Greater Vancouver. This research project was funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) under the “Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative” (SCPI), and is intended to provide data that will support implementation of the (March, 2001) “Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver”. The work was conducted by a team of consultants whose work was guided by GVRD staff and by a Research Advisory Committee, whose members included representatives of organizations providing services to the homeless in the region, and of local and senior governments.

## Purpose and Scope of Research

The purpose of this research project was threefold:

- To provide a credible estimate of the number of “absolute homeless” people and of people at-risk of homelessness in the Greater Vancouver region;
- To provide a demographic profile of these two populations;
- To develop a methodology for first person interviews with homeless and formerly-homeless people.

The “universe” of homeless and at-risk people in the region was determined by the definition of these populations used in the regional plan on homelessness. The geographic scope for the research was the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

## Volume 2 Organization

Volume 2 is presented in two parts. Part I estimates and describes the population and households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, and Part II describes the nature and extent of homelessness in the region. Research data was collected by municipality, and is contained in Appendices A and B to this report; Appendix D contains a description of research methods. For the purposes of analysis, municipal data was aggregated for a number of sub-regions in Greater Vancouver, and both this sub-regional and overall regional analysis appears in the text of the report. In both parts of the report, a regional picture is presented first, followed by a profile of specific groups of people within the homeless and at-risk population (e.g. seniors, urban Aboriginals), wherever possible. The report then describes the at-risk and homeless situation in the six sub-regions that comprise the GVRD, where data allows.

## Report Availability

This research report is posted on the GVRD website: [www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness](http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/homelessness).

## Major Findings

### ***Part I – Population at-risk of homelessness***

This profile uses the INALHM concept applied to 1996 Census data as a measure of the risk of homelessness.<sup>1</sup> This measure of risk best describes those persons and households with economic issues that may lead to homelessness, including those living in inadequate or unsuitable accommodation. It does not capture the entire population at-risk of homelessness. For example, a woman at-risk of homelessness due to violence in her home would not be included in these figures if her present household were not also at economic risk of homelessness.

### **Magnitude and trends**

The figures show an alarming increase in the number of households and persons in households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD between 1991 and 1996: an increase from 39,005 to 57,685 households (see Table 4). This increase in the population at-risk of homelessness may be attributed to: strong population growth over the period (14%) and generally worsening conditions for owners and renters. For example, the average value of dwellings in the region grew 14.2% between 1991 and 1996 (constant dollars). Rental rates for bachelor apartments in Greater Vancouver also increased by almost 13% in real terms over the period.<sup>2</sup> Incomes on the other hand, showed a decline. From 1990 to 1995 average (real) household income declined by 4.3% in the GVRD. In addition, very low vacancy rates between 1991 (2.2%) and 1996 (1.1%) suggest a limited supply of rental housing.

Similar comparative data showed that residents of the GVRD are relatively worse off in terms of the risk of homelessness compared to their counterparts in Toronto and Calgary. (see p. 8). Renter households are over-represented among those at-risk, forming almost two thirds of the GVRD's at-risk households, whereas renter households represented 41% of total GVRD households in 1996. Approximately one in seven renter households in the GVRD is precariously housed and at-risk of homelessness. Owner households, however, represent a considerable share of this population, about one third.

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<sup>1</sup> In core housing Need and spending At Least 50% of their household income for Housing(Modified). Based on CMHC. May 2001. *Research Highlights. Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at Least Half of their Income on Shelter*. Socio-economic Series. Issue 55-7.

<sup>2</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report. BC & Yukon Region.

## Key Characteristics

People between the ages of 25 and 44 years represented the largest share of people at-risk of homelessness in 1996. Almost 60% of the 130,000 *people* at-risk lived in dual and single parent family households with children, a ratio that was even higher among those living in owner households. In contrast, among all at-risk *households*, single person households predominated. While lack of education can be said to be a factor in risk of homelessness and many at-risk individuals had not completed high school, there was also a significant number who had attended or were attending university. People of Aboriginal ethnicity were over-represented among those at-risk of homelessness compared to the GVRD as a whole (5% compared to 1.7%), especially in renter households. Most at-risk persons were Caucasian, although approximately 40% of persons in at-risk households were members of a visible minority, and among these persons, the largest visible minority group was Chinese. People in at-risk households moved frequently, and tended to live in an apartment. They had a high unemployment rate of 21%, however, almost half of at-risk persons (48%) had employment income as their major income source.

## Differences between at-risk owners and renters

There were some obvious differences between owner and renter households at-risk of homelessness both in terms of incidence and their characteristics. Firstly, more renter households than owner households were at-risk, and they represented a greater share of at-risk households compared to their distribution among all GVRD households. This disparity in the incidence of at-risk households among renter and owner households may be explained by the fact that the INALHM data is measure of *economic* risk, and that the economic disparity between renter and owner households in Greater Vancouver has increased between 1991 and 1996, when measured by average household income, as well as by household wealth/assets.<sup>3</sup> But, the biggest increase in the number of households at-risk between 1991 and 1996 occurred among owner households: an increase of 88% or 8,260 owner households.

At-risk renter households:

- were most likely to consist either of one person (50%) or be single or dual parent families with children (30%);
- had lower household incomes than owner households, by 37%;
- spent less of their income on shelter (65%) than owner households (68%)

When compared with people living in at-risk owner households, people living in at-risk renter households:

- had similar levels of educational attainment;
- were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity;
- were less likely to be a member of a visible minority group;

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<sup>3</sup> Source: David Hulchanski, *A Tale of Two Canadas: Homeowners Getting Richer, Renters Getting Poorer*. University of Toronto Urban and Community Studies, August 2001.

- were less likely to be immigrants;
- were more likely to be disabled;
- were more likely to have moved in the previous year;
- had a higher unemployment rate;
- were more likely to report government transfer payments as their major income source; and
- were more likely to live in an apartment that needed major repairs.

### **Comparison with all GVRD residents**

Compared to all GVRD residents, the population at-risk of homelessness:

- mirrored GVRD residents in terms of the share of population age 25 – 44 years (36% versus 35%)
- had a much lower average household income (\$16,303 versus \$54,055)
- was less likely to have completed high school (35% versus 28%)
- was more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity (5% compared to 1.7%)
- was more likely to be an immigrant (41% compared to 35%)
- was more likely to have moved in the previous 5 years (69% versus 44%)
- was more likely to be unemployed (21% versus 8.6%)
- was more likely to live in an apartment as opposed to a single detached dwelling (38% compared to 25%)

### **Sub-groups at-risk of homelessness**

The profile examined the situation of some specific sub-populations of individuals at-risk of homelessness, notably women, Aboriginal people, seniors, immigrants, lone parents and persons with disabilities. Of these, the two largest sub-groups of individuals at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD were females (67,435, or 51% of the total at-risk population) and immigrants (53,100, or 41% of the total at-risk population). However, the incidence of these two sub-groups among at-risk individuals may be linked to their relative share of the overall population. On the other hand, although smaller in absolute numbers, Aboriginal persons, lone parents and persons with a disability had the highest incidence of risk. For example, 15% of all Aboriginal persons in the GVRD were at-risk of homelessness according to these figures. Likewise, 15% of all GVRD lone parents, and 10% of all persons with a disability in the GVRD were at-risk of homeless in 1996.

Some notable findings:

- A significant share of **Aboriginal** persons at-risk of homelessness were children under the age of 10 years (25% or 1,748 persons), a much higher share than for all at-risk individuals (16%).
- **Aboriginal household maintainers** were between the ages of 25 and 44 years, the largest share were single person households, and 43% had not graduated from high school;

- **Females and immigrants** comprised the largest sub-groups among those at-risk of homelessness in 1996, representing 51% and 41% respectively of the 131,000 at-risk persons in the GVRD.
- **Most at-risk immigrants** were living in households comprised of dual parent families with children (52%).
- **Persons with a disability** who were at-risk of homelessness comprised 13% of all at-risk persons in the GVRD. Seniors made up a relatively large share of this group, about 37%. They were more likely to be female and living by themselves. Persons with a disability also had a higher unemployment rate (35%) than at-risk persons generally.
- There were over 67,000 **females** of all age groups among the at-risk population, 7.5% of women region-wide.
- Fifteen percent of all **lone parents** in the region were at-risk of homelessness. They were 39 years old on average and were most likely to be female (88%). Most were living in a single-family household, but 4% lived in a multi-family household.
- **Seniors** age 55 and over represented about 15% of all persons at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, but 20% of the overall GVRD population, meaning they were under-represented in the at-risk population. Most at-risk seniors were age 65 and over, with an average age of 68 years. At-risk seniors were more likely to be female and living by themselves.
- At-risk **youth** had an average age of 14 years. Most were living in family households with their parents (54%), males were over-represented among youth aged 10 to 14 years and older youth were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity.

### Sub-regions

The Vancouver sub-region (comprised of the City of Vancouver and UEL in this study) had the largest number of households at-risk of homelessness in 1996 and possessed the largest share of all at-risk households (40%). This is not surprising since Vancouver also had the largest share of all regional households in 1996 (32%). These at-risk households comprised almost 10% of all Vancouver households, exceeding the regional incidence of 8.4%. The South of Fraser sub-region had the second largest share of households at-risk of homelessness (22%), slightly lower than its share of all regional households (26%). At-risk households in both Vancouver and the North Shore paid the largest share of their income for rent compared to the regional average. Growth in the number of households at-risk of homelessness between 1991 and 1996 ranged from a low of 26% in the North Shore to a high of 82% in the Northeast Sector, compared to a regional rate of 48% over five years.

- At-risk households in the **Vancouver sub-region** were most likely to consist of one or two unrelated persons living in rental apartment accommodation. Their unemployment rate (23%) exceeded the rate for all at-risk households and this is reflected in the 32% of households earning less than \$10,000 per year. Primary

- household maintainers in this sub-region were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity than elsewhere in the region.
- In the **South of Fraser sub-region**, at-risk households were more likely to be families with children, and a significant share were female led lone parent households. They were also more likely to be living in a single detached house which they owned.
  - Primary maintainers of at-risk households in the **Inner Municipalities** were more likely to be over the age of 65 (20%) compared to 9% regionally and of Chinese visible minority status (21%) compared to 15% regionally.
  - More at-risk households in the **Northeast Sector** reported employment as their major income source (55%) compared to elsewhere in the region.
  - The highest share of non-visible minority maintainers of at-risk households was located in the **Ridge Meadows sub-region**.
  - More at-risk household maintainers in the **North Shore** were over age 55 than any other sub-region (35% compared to 15% regionally). These households were more likely to report OAS/GIS or pension as their major income source.

## ***Part II – Homeless population in Greater Vancouver***

### **Magnitude and trends**

A survey of the number of emergency shelter clients across the Province was done in 1999, but no previous estimate of the number of homeless people in Greater Vancouver has been available until now. The estimate in this study is derived from the findings of a “snapshot survey” of homeless people completed as part of this study, as well as an estimate of the “undercount” of these survey numbers. The 24 hour homeless snapshot survey in Greater Vancouver produced a count of between 1,181 and 1,206 homeless persons on January 14/15, 2002. While not all homeless people were counted that day, the above figures are the best available using established methods. Homeless people were found in virtually every municipality within the GVRD. In addition, a significant number of street homeless were found that day, particularly in areas outside the City of Vancouver.

A review of some preliminary (and limited) Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) data showed that roughly double (2,098) the number of homeless individuals used emergency shelters between January and November 2001 compared to the number enumerated on snapshot day (1,185 to 1,206 homeless persons).

### **Characteristics**

The profile information generated by the snapshot survey confirms what is generally understood about the characteristics of people who are homeless:

- 68% are male;
- most are between 25 and 44 years;
- they are living alone;

- most are Caucasian, followed by Aboriginal ethnicity;
- they are homeless because of abuse and family breakdown, moving or being stranded;
- 38% had been homeless for less than one month;
- 32% had been homeless for more than 6 months;
- 71% stated their permanent home was in the GVRD;
- their major income source was income assistance or a training program;
- 66% had at least one health condition;
- addiction was the most common health condition; and
- the profile of shelter clients has not changed significantly since 1999.

### **Difference between the street homeless and sheltered homeless**

The sheltered homeless comprised 68.5% of all homeless persons enumerated during the 24 hour homeless snapshot, and the street homeless 31.5%. Compared to the sheltered homeless, the street homeless:

- were more likely to be female;
- were under 19 years of age;
- were living with a partner;
- were of Aboriginal ethnicity;
- were more likely to identify abuse and family breakdown, addiction, and lack of a job as the main reason they were homeless;
- had been homeless longer – 29% had been homeless for one year or more, compared to only 14% of the sheltered homeless;
- were less likely to be receiving income assistance;
- were more likely to have had no source of income at all, and some relied on binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, and bottle collecting; and
- were in poorer health - they were more likely to have at least one health condition (72% compared to 63%) and they reported roughly twice the incidence of addiction, medical conditions, and physical disability.

### **Comparison with at-risk population**

The homeless population shared several characteristics with the at-risk population profiled in Part I. Firstly, the majority of homeless people in Greater Vancouver were in the 25 to 44 age group, as was the at-risk population. Aboriginal people were over-represented in both populations. Compared to the population at-risk, the homeless differed in that males outnumbered females, they were mostly living alone, and their major income source was income assistance, not employment, (although 11% of homeless persons reported employment income as their major source of income at the time of the snapshot survey).

### **Sub-groups**

Separate profiles of five different sub-populations of homeless persons show distinct differences among them. The largest sub-groups were females and the long term



homeless. Homeless seniors over age 55 tended to be Caucasian and homeless youth tended to be more equally split between males and females. Homeless women were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity than all homeless persons. The Aboriginal homeless had been homeless the longest, with 43% reporting a duration of 6 months or longer. They were also more likely to be living with an addiction compared to members of other sub-groups. The long-term homeless (those who had been homeless 6 months or more) had the highest rate of mental illness of all the sub-groups and compared to the entire homeless population.

### **Sub-regions**

The largest number and share of homeless persons was found in the City of Vancouver (the “Vancouver sub-region”), followed by the South of Fraser and Inner Municipalities sub-regions. Interestingly, where the homeless were found does not necessarily reflect the place they view as their permanent home or home community. While 60% of the homeless were located in Vancouver, only 26% viewed Vancouver as their last permanent home. The distribution of the sheltered and street homeless among the sub-regions differed. The largest number of sheltered homeless persons was located in Vancouver (likely due to the fact that Vancouver had about 70% of the total number of shelter beds in the region), while the largest number of street homeless was found in the South of Fraser sub-region. Compared to the Inner Municipalities and South of Fraser sub-regions, Vancouver’s homeless population was more likely to be male and of Aboriginal origin. They were also more likely to view their last permanent home as outside of BC. Homeless persons in the Inner Municipalities tended to reflect more closely the profile of the regional homeless population, while those in the South of Fraser sub-region tended to be equally split between males and females, there were many youth, a larger share was living with a partner, and few were receiving income assistance as their major income source.

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The 24-hour homeless survey involved 28 permanent and cold/wet weather emergency shelters, 2 safe houses and 10 transition houses on the night of January 14, 2002 and 60 agencies across several GVRD municipalities during the daytime of January 15, 2002. The Greater Vancouver Regional District and the consulting team wish to acknowledge the participation of the following agencies and thank them for their tremendous dedication to the project. The survey would not have been possible without their assistance.

<b>GVRD Homeless “Snapshot” Survey: Night-time participants</b>		
<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Vancouver (cont’d)</b>	<b>Surrey</b>
St. James Service Society-Umbrella	Atra Transition House Society - Bridge Women's Shelter	South Fraser Community Services-The Front Room
Sheena's Place	Circle of Eagles-Anderson Lodge	Options Services to Communities Society - Surrey Men's Shelters
Salvation Army-Dunsmuir House	Dusk to Dawn	Sheena's Place
Salvation Army - Harbour Light	Helping Spirit Lodge	<b>New Westminster</b>
Salvation Army -Haven	<b>Burnaby</b>	Salvation Army-Garfield Hotel
Union Gospel Mission	Marguerite Dixon Transition House	Fraserside Emergency Shelter
Covenant House	Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth & Families	Salvation Army-Stevenson House
Family Services of Greater Vancouver- Walden Safehouse	<b>Tri-Cities</b>	Monarch Place

Peggy's Place—The Kettle	Golden Ears Hotel	<b>Maple Ridge</b>
Lookout Emergency Aid Society	Coquitlam Transition House	Salvation Army – Caring Place
Triage Emergency Services and Care Society	<b>Richmond</b>	Cythera Transition House
Catholic Charities	Salvation Army-Richmond House	<b>Delta</b>
Salvation Army - New Beginnings-Homestead	Nova Transition House	Scottsdale House
Powell Place	<b>Langley</b>	<b>North Vancouver</b>
Vi Fineday Place	Ishtar Transition House	SAGE Transition House
		North Shore Shelter

<b>GVRD Homeless “Snapshot” Survey: Daytime participants</b>		
<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Burnaby (continued)</b>	<b>New Westminster</b>
Christ Church Cathedral	One Stop Pop and Bottle Recycling Depot	Union Gospel Mission
First Baptist Church	Lower Mainland Purpose Society	New Westminster Community Development Society
Gathering Place	City of Burnaby	4 square - drop-in
Coast Foundation Drop-in	<b>Tri-Cities</b>	Lookout/Cliff Block
	Share Society	Lower Mainland Purpose Society
	Coquitlam Kinettes	<b>North Shore</b>
Franciscan Sisters of Atonement	Coquitlam City Centre Library	Harvest Project
Union Gospel Mission	Trinity United Church	Salvation Army
The Dugout	Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre	North Shore Women's Centre
United We Can Bottle Depot	Pinetree Community Centre	City of North Vancouver Library
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre	City of Coquitlam	Bottle Depot - West 1st Avenue
Youth Action Centre	<b>Richmond</b>	North Van., Neighbourhood House, Youth Services
The Door Is Open	Salvation Army	Co-Pro
Saller Centre	Pathways Club House	City of West Vancouver Youth Services
Mission Possible	City Centre Community Centre	City of North Vancouver
	Steveston Community Centre	North Shore Health Region
Mental Patients Association	Minoru Sports Pavilion	District of North Vancouver
Kitsilano Branch Library	Richmond Youth Services Society	<b>Maple Ridge</b>
Community of Hope		Salvation Army
St Mikes Church sandwich line	Canadian Mental Health Association	Kings Inn Community Soup Kitchen
Vancouver Public Library, Mt. Pleasant Branch	City of Richmond	City and District of Langley
Kingsgate Mall	<b>Surrey</b>	Langley Stepping Stone
City of Vancouver	Crescent Beach Reconnect Program	Rainbow Lodge
<b>Burnaby</b>	South Fraser Community Services (SFCSS) – Front Room	Youth Team Family and Youth Services Society
West Burnaby United Church	SFCSS/Surrey Reconnect	St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Eastburn Community Centre	Salvation Army	Langley City Library
Bonsor Community Centre	Women's Place	City and Township of Langley
Burnaby Library, Metrotown Main Branch	Surrey Public Library - Whalley	

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# 1 Introduction

While people have been homeless in Greater Vancouver for many years since at least the 1950s and 60s, there has been virtually no reliable information about the size and nature of this population. This is partly due to the complexity of the task, and partly a result of insufficient coordination and funding to do so. Within Greater Vancouver, the City of Vancouver has been estimating the number of homeless people living within its boundaries by means of regular walkabouts of city streets, but this quantified research approach has been an exception in the region. In the absence of data, governments, service agencies, advocacy groups and others have had to rely on estimates and anecdotal information. This study represents the first regionally coordinated effort to produce an estimate and profile of homeless people in Greater Vancouver.

## 1.1 Background

In 2001, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) commenced a research project on homelessness in Greater Vancouver. This research project was funded under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and is intended to provide data that will support implementation of the (March, 2001) “Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver”. This regional plan was developed through a year-long community-based planning process, spearheaded by the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. Municipalities and community groups throughout the region have been reviewing the regional plan, and are being asked to endorse its guiding principles, and to use the plan as a working document. This process of endorsement is expected to be complete by the end of 2002.

The research was conducted by a team of consultants whose work was guided by GVRD staff and by a Research Advisory Committee, established to include representatives of organizations providing services to the homeless in the region, as well as representatives of local and senior governments.

## 1.2 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this component of the regional research project is to provide good quality information about the size and nature of the homeless population and of people who are at-risk of homelessness in Greater Vancouver. Research data was collected by municipality, wherever possible, but for the purposes of analysis, is presented in this report by GVRD sub-region (see Section 1.4).

There are three objectives of the research:

- To provide a credible estimate of the number of homeless and “at-risk” persons, by sub-region in Greater Vancouver;

- To provide a demographic profile of both these populations; and,
- To develop a data management system at the GVRD to provide a means of storing and organizing this data in a form that allows for periodic updating, and making this information accessible to all those working to address homelessness in the Greater Vancouver region.

This volume reports on the accomplishments of these objectives. Another component of the research project was the development of a method for obtaining first person information from homeless and formerly homeless people (see Volume 3).

Early phases of the work involved reviewing existing quantitative information available about homeless persons and individuals at-risk of homelessness in Greater Vancouver, identifying the gaps in that information, and recommending an approach to fill these gaps. The Research Advisory Committee adopted the recommendations of the consultants:

*With respect to the at-risk population:*

- Obtain and analyse a special tabulation of 1996 census data for the Greater Vancouver population describing the population at-risk of homelessness;
- Obtain information from service providers about the at-risk population;

*With respect to the homeless population:*

- Conduct a 24 hour homeless snapshot; and
- Analyse shelter client data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).

### **1.3 Definitions**

Definitions are important because how we define homelessness in part determines how we measure it and correspondingly the size of the population. There are as many definitions of homeless as there are attempts to measure it – some are elaborate conceptual definitions, and others are more practical, operational definitions. Homelessness possesses a temporal dimension – someone’s residential status can change over time, that is, an individual can be in and out of homelessness several times during a year. Someone who is homeless today may have been housed yesterday, although there is usually a gray area of precarious housing in the intervening period.<sup>4</sup> In order to bring some consistency into the discussion regionally, the conceptual definitions of the terms

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<sup>4</sup> Gender is an example of a characteristic that is generally fixed over time, whereas unemployment is something that an individual can move in and out of, like homelessness.

“homeless” and “risk of homelessness” employed are those adopted by the regional homeless plan, with one modification, as described below.

***Homeless people*** are people who either are living or have lived with no physical shelter - on the street, in doorways, in parkades, in parks and on beaches as well as people staying temporarily in emergency shelters, safe houses for youth or transition houses for women fleeing violence. Some people who are homeless use emergency shelters some of the time, and sleep outside the rest of the time. Some people who are homeless avoid emergency shelters and other forms of service. Together, the sheltered homeless and the street homeless are sometimes called the ‘absolute homeless’.

Also included in the homeless category conceptually for the purposes of this profile are people who ‘couch surfing’ or are staying temporarily with family and friends. Discussions with service providers at the outset stressed that homelessness in smaller or suburban municipalities often takes the form of couch surfing (especially by youth), partly due to the lack of local services and facilities for homeless people, as well as to preferences. To exclude these individuals from the estimate and profile of homelessness in the region would underestimate the extent of homelessness in these areas.

There are different degrees of homelessness. Some persons are homeless only once, on an emergency basis, for a short period of time. Others are homeless for an extended period of time, usually six months to one year or more, and sometimes stretching to 10 years – called chronic homelessness. And still others become homeless on a recurring basis, moving in and out of homelessness. These individuals are usually termed the episodically homeless.

***People who are at-risk of homelessness*** are those living in spaces or situations that do not meet basic health and safety standards, do not provide for security of tenure or personal safety and are not affordable. This is sometimes called relative homelessness.

The way these conceptual definitions were operationalized through primary data collection is described in the separate sections on risk of homelessness and homelessness that follow. Generally, operationalization resulted in a narrowing of the definition. For example, people who were couch surfing were included in our estimate of homeless persons *if we found them*, but the method used to identify homeless people was not specifically designed to locate people who were couch surfing.

#### **1.4 Geographic scope**

The geographic scope of the profile is the area within the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). This region includes 21 municipalities, one Electoral Area, and over twenty Indian Reserves, but for the purpose of this research, only municipalities (and the University Endowment Lands) were included. (For the at-risk data however, the urban Aboriginal population was included.) Six sub-regions were identified at the outset of the research process, and will be referred to throughout the report:

“Vancouver” – Vancouver and the University Endowment Lands (UEL)

“Inner Municipalities” – Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster

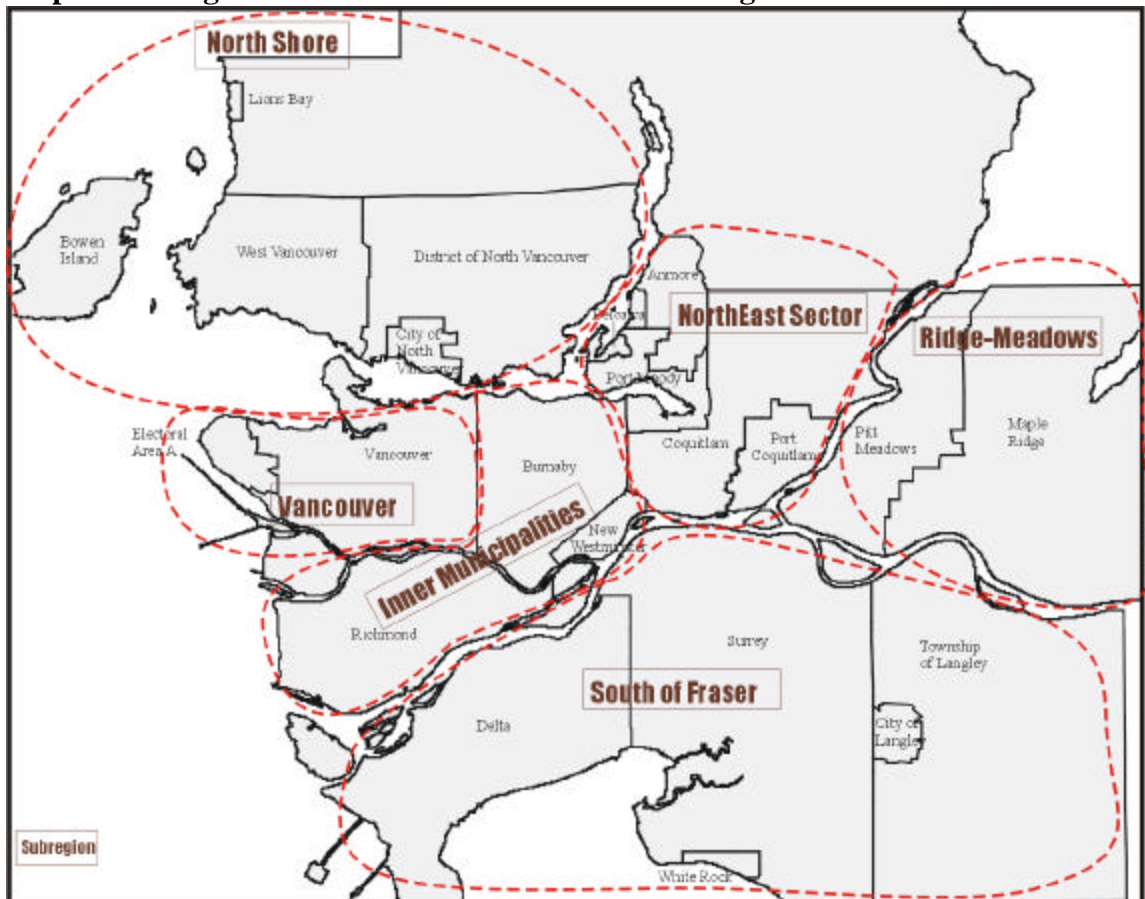
“North Shore” – City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and of West Vancouver, Lions Bay and Bowen Island

“South of Fraser” – Surrey, White Rock, Delta, City of Langley, Township of Langley

“North East Sector” – Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra

“Ridge Meadows” – Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows

**Map 1: Subregions within the Greater Vancouver Regional District**



## 1.5 Report organization

This report is presented in two parts. Part I provides an estimate and profile of the population and households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, and Part II provides an estimate and profile of the homeless population. In both parts of the report, a regional picture is presented first, followed by a profile of specific sub-groups within those populations, wherever possible. Following the regional perspective, the report then describes the at-risk and homeless situation in the various sub-regions, where data allows. Subregional data is an aggregation of the municipal level data, which is provided in Appendices A and B.

## Part I

# 2 Individuals and households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD

## 2.1 Introduction

This section provides an estimate of the size of the population at economic risk of homelessness in the GVRD, presented regionally, and then among specific population sub-groups and geographic sub-regions. The incidence of people and households at-risk of homelessness is a particularly important indicator to monitor, as people who are homeless have generally been at-risk of homelessness prior to becoming homeless.

### 2.1.1 Methods, definitions and data sources

This profile uses 1996 Census 20% sample data to measure the size and characteristics of the population at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, augmented by anecdotal and statistical information collected from local service providers. The GVRD Research Advisory Committee selected this approach as providing the most defensible information available about homelessness risk.<sup>5</sup>

A specially created definition of ‘risk’ based on a concept developed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) called ‘In core housing Need and spending At Least Half their income on shelter’ (INALH)<sup>6</sup> is employed here, but with a slight modifications. INALH applies the concepts of “core housing need” and a shelter (cost) to income ratio (STIR) of 50% or more to private non-Native, non-farm households that do not live on reserves or in band housing. The definition of core need is as follows:

”Most Canadians have access to a dwelling unit that is adequate in condition (does not require major repairs), suitable in size (has enough bedrooms) and affordable (shelter costs are less than 30 percent of before-tax household income). Some Canadians live in dwellings that do not meet one or more of these standards. In some cases these households could afford to rent alternative housing that meets all three standards; in some cases they cannot. A household is in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards *and* it would have to spend 30% or more of its income to

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<sup>5</sup> Eberle, Margaret. *Profile of homelessness in Greater Vancouver: Data collection methodologies*. Interim report prepared for the Research Advisory Committee. Sept. 19, 2001

<sup>6</sup> CMHC. May 2001. *Research Highlights. Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at Least Half of their Income on Shelter*. Socio-economic Series. Issue 55-7.

pay the average rent of alternative local market housing that meets all three standards.”<sup>7</sup>

This at-risk profile adopts a modified form of INALH, which is applied to private non-reserve, non-farm households but differs from the CMHC definition in that it *includes Aboriginal households*.<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this profile, the concept has been re-named INALH Modified or INALHM. It was prepared for the GVRD by Statistics Canada by means of a custom tabulation.

INALHM is a conservative definition of ‘economic risk’, compared to other housing and/or poverty measures including Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut-offs (LICO), core housing need, and 50% Shelter to Income Ratio (STIR). For example, almost 23% of the GVRD’s 1995 population<sup>9</sup> fell below Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut-offs (LICO). In contrast, the INALHM definition results in 7.3% of the 1996 GVRD population being at-risk of homelessness. INALHM is also more conservative than core housing need, in fact it is a sub-set of households in core housing need. For example, in 1996, INALH households represented about 40% of households in core housing need Canada wide.<sup>10</sup> There were over 66,000 GVRD renter households paying 50% or more of their income for rent in 1996 (24% of households) however, about 40,000 or 14% of GVRD renter households were classified as INALH during the same time period.

Three types of variables are used to describe the population at-risk of homelessness in Part I as follows:

- i) *person* variables relate to an individual and describe personal characteristics such as gender and age;
- ii) *household* variables refer to an entire household and describe household characteristics such as household income and dwelling type; and
- iii) *household primary maintainer* variables refer to the first person identified as being responsible for household payments and describe personal characteristics such as gender and immigrant status.

In the text, the switch from one unit of analysis to another is indicated with italics.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this tabulation, Native households include households which meet one of the following criteria:

1. Family households in which at least one spouse, common-law partner, or lone-parent self-identified with at least one Aboriginal group (North American Indian, Metis or Inuit) and/or reported as being Treaty Indian or Registered Indian and/or was a member of an Indian Band or First Nation.
2. Family households in which at least 50% of household members self-identified as Aboriginal, as above.
3. Non-family households in which at least 50% of household members self-identify as Aboriginal, as above.

<sup>9</sup> GVRD Strategic Planning Dept. Demographic Bulletin. *Money, Money, Money*, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> CMHC. Research Highlights. *Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at least half their Income on Shelter*. Issue 55-7. May 2001.

Where possible the characteristics of the population at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD are compared with those of the GVRD as a whole. Census terms are described in the Glossary.

In addition, several agencies were contacted to obtain additional information about some of the sub-populations known to be at-risk of homelessness. A list of these agencies is provided in Appendix C.

### **2.1.2 Limitations**

Census data is a reliable and defensible source of demographic and other information about Canada's population at a point in time. However the Census may miss some individuals and households who are at-risk of homelessness to the extent that they are doubled up with others, or couch surfing and thus more difficult to enumerate. If this is true, then census data may under-estimate the total population at-risk of homelessness as defined by the INALHM concept.

In addition, while the INALHM concept is an excellent measure of risk of homelessness, it does not capture the entire population at-risk of homelessness. INALHM best describes those persons and households with economic reasons that may lead to homelessness, as well as those living in inadequate or unsuitable accommodation. Economic risk is a major factor to homelessness risk, but is not the only contributing factor. For example, a woman at-risk of homelessness due to violence in her home would not be included in these figures if her present household is not also in core housing need and spending more than 50% of their household income for housing.

At the time of writing, the most recent census data available is from the 1996 Census. 2001 Census data suitable for describing the at-risk population will not be available until mid or late 2003. While 2001 census data would likely show an increase in the absolute number of individuals and households at-risk of homelessness since 1996, it is unlikely that their characteristics would change significantly. That being said, this profile using 1996 data should serve as a good baseline for future comparisons using 2001 census data.

## **2.2 Magnitude and trends**

A total of 131,010 *people* were living in households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996 according to the INALHM definition. (See Table 1) They represented 7.3% of the GVRD's total 1996 population of 1,787,645.<sup>11</sup> Sixty percent or 78,315 at-risk persons resided in renter households and 52,695 or 40% resided in owner households. The share of all persons in at-risk households is much higher among renter households compared to owner households. Thirteen percent of persons in renter households in the GVRD were at-risk of homelessness compared to 4% of all persons in owner households region-wide. This disparity in the incidence of at-risk households among renter and owner households can be explained by the fact that the INALHM data is measure of

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<sup>11</sup> Non farm, non-reserve households.

*economic* risk, and that the economic disparity between renter and owner households in Greater Vancouver has increased between 1991 and 1996, when measured by average household income, as well as by household wealth/assets.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 1 – Population at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD 1996**

<b>Persons</b>	<b>Persons in at-risk renter households</b>	<b>Persons in at-risk owner households</b>	<b>All at-risk persons</b>
Number of Persons in At-risk Households 1996	78,315	52,695	131,015
Number At-risk Persons as percent of all Persons in Households 1996	13.1%	4.4%	7.3%

There were close to 58,000 *households* at-risk of homelessness region wide in 1996. (See Table 2) They represented 8.4% of all GVRD households in 1996. Although strictly comparable figures (INALHM) are not available for other urban areas in Canada, INALH figures show that in 1996 the percentage of households in need and spending at least 50% of their income on shelter were as follows: Vancouver CMA 8.7%, Toronto CMA 8.2%, and Calgary CMA 5.4%. The ratio of INALH households to all households for BC was 7.7%, and for Canada was 6.7%.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, the GVRD has a serious issue with respect to risk of homelessness relative to the rest of the province, and to Canada.

In Greater Vancouver, this problem is much more serious for renter households than for owner households. The share of GVRD renter households at-risk was 14.4% compared to 4.3% for owner households, this disparity again to be explained by increasing disparities in income and wealth, as cited above. Average household size for at-risk households was 2.3 persons per household, compared with 2.6 persons per household in all GVRD households. The smaller household size among at-risk households is likely explained by the relatively large number of one person households. (See Table 7).

<sup>12</sup> David Hulchanski, *A Tale of Two Canadas: Homeowners Getting Richer, Renters Getting Poorer*. University of Toronto. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, August 2001.

<sup>13</sup> CMHC. *Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need And Spending At least Half Their Income on Shelter*. Socio-Economic Series. Issue 55-7. May 2001. Personal communication John Engeland, Senior Researcher CMHC. June 27, 2002.



**Table 2 – Households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD 1996**

Households	At-risk renter households	At-risk owner households	All at-risk households
Number At-risk Households 1996	40,025	17,665	57,685
Number At-risk Households as a percent of all Households 1996	14.4%	4.3%	8.4%
Average At-risk Household Size 1996	2.0	3.0	2.3

Table 3 shows the growth in the number of *people* living in households at-risk of homelessness between 1991 and 1996. There were 51,000 more people living in households at-risk of homelessness in Greater Vancouver in 1996 compared to 1991, an increase of 65% in five years. The increase was even more dramatic for owner households, where the number of people living in at-risk households increased by 93%. The proportion of all GVRD residents who were at-risk also increased from 5.1% in 1991 to 7.3% in 1996. This places the increase in the number of people at-risk in the context of overall GVRD population growth, which was quite strong in the period 1991 to 1996, over 14%.

**Table 3 – Trends – Population at-risk of homelessness 1991 –1996**

Persons	Persons in at-risk renter households	Persons in at-risk owner households	All at-risk persons	All at-risk persons as a percent of all persons in the GVRD
Number of Persons in At-risk Households 1996	78,315	52,695	131,015	7.3%
Number of Persons in At-risk Households 1991	52,010	27,315	79,325	5.1%
Percent change 1991 - 1996	51%	93%	65%	

Similarly the number of *households* at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD grew dramatically between 1991 and 1996 from 39,000 to almost 58,000 households. (see Table 4) This is an increase of 48% or almost 10% per year on average<sup>14</sup>, and compares

<sup>14</sup> This is consistent with CMHC's findings using INALH data which showed that the number of INALH households increased by 56% Canada wide between 1991 and 1996. CMHC. Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need *And* Spending At least Half Their Income on Shelter. Socio-Economic Series. Issue 55-7. May 2001. It is also consistent with the increase in the number of household paying 50% or more of household income for shelter between 1991 and 1996. Statistics Canada. 1996 Census Nation Series Tables and 1991 Census Nation Series Tables. The number

with the total GVRD household growth in this period of 14% or approximately 3% per year. Again the growth rate in at-risk households was largest among owner households. However, viewed as a proportion of all GVRD households, the share of all households at-risk of homelessness rose from 6.4% in 1991 to 8.4% in 1996.

This increase in both the population and number of households at-risk of homelessness may be attributed to: strong regional population growth over the period (14%) and generally worsening conditions for owners and renters. In Greater Vancouver, increases in shelter costs exceeded growth in incomes over this period. For example, the average value of dwellings in the region grew by 14.2% between 1991 and 1996 (constant dollars). Incomes on the other hand, declined. From 1990 to 1995 average (real) household income declined by 4.3% in the GVRD.<sup>15</sup> Rental rates for bachelor apartments in Greater Vancouver also increased by almost 13% in real terms over the period.<sup>16</sup> In addition, very low vacancy rates in the GVRD between 1991 (2.2%) and 1996 (1.1%) suggest a limited supply of rental housing.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 4 – Trends - Households at-risk of homelessness 1991 – 1996**

<b>Households</b>	<b>At-risk renter households</b>	<b>At-risk owner households</b>	<b>Total at-risk households</b>	<b>As a percent of all households in the GVRD</b>
Number At-risk Households 1996	40,025	17,665	57,685	8.4%
Number At-risk Households 1991	29,600	9,405	39,005	6.4%
Percent Change 1991 - 1996	35%	88%	48%	

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of owner households paying 50% or more increased by 93% and the number of renter households increased by 45% between 1991 and 1996. The percentage of Canadian households in 'core housing need' also rose in this period by 44%. CMHC. Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Changes in Canadian Housing Conditions, 1991-96. Socio-economic Series 55-5.

<sup>15</sup> GVRD Strategic Planning Dept. Demographic Bulletin. *Money, Money, Money*. June 1998.

<sup>16</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report. BC & Yukon Region.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## 2.3 The At-Risk Population: Key Demographic Characteristics

### 2.3.1 Age and gender

Table 5 shows that most people who were at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996 were men and women between the ages of 25 and 44 years (about 47,000 people or 36% of the total) with an average age of 32 years. This is roughly the same as for the total 1996 regional population in which 35% of the population was between 25 and 44 years.<sup>18</sup> Of concern are the more than 20,000 children under age 10 living in households at-risk of homelessness. They represent 16% of the at-risk population region-wide which means they are somewhat over-represented compared to their share in the GVRD population (12%). Overall, when compared to the regional population in 1996, the at-risk population is somewhat younger. Seniors age 55 and over were under-represented among the at-risk population, comprising 15% of the at-risk population, compared to 20% of the GVRD population as a whole. Females were slightly over-represented among the at-risk population generally. There were proportionally more older females age 65 and over at-risk of homelessness compared to males.

**Table 5 – Age and gender**

Age	At-risk males		At-risk females		Total at-risk population	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4 years	5,720	9%	5,045	7%	10,765	8%
5 - 9 years	5,310	8%	4,770	7%	10,080	8%
10 - 14 years	5,010	8%	4,235	6%	9,245	7%
15 - 19 years	4,455	7%	4,215	6%	8,670	7%
20 - 24 years	5,175	8%	6,210	9%	11,385	9%
25 - 34 years	11,300	18%	12,840	19%	24,140	18%
35 - 44 years	11,475	18%	11,535	17%	23,010	18%
45 - 54 years	7,335	12%	6,885	10%	14,220	11%
55 - 64 years	4,255	7%	3,990	6%	8,245	6%
65 years & over	3,535	6%	7,705	11%	11,240	9%
Total	63,575	100%	67,435	100%	131,010	100%

### 2.3.2 Household type

Tables 6 and 7 display information about the type of households that comprise the at-risk population. Using Statistics Canada definitions, a Census family includes spouses, common-law partners, lone parents, and never-married sons and/or daughters. An individual living alone or with another person that is not included in the census family definition, is classified as a 'non-family household.' A 'multiple-family household' is considered a dwelling with two or more census families occupying the same home.

<sup>18</sup> GVRD. Strategic Planning Dept. Greater Vancouver's population over 60 years of age will nearly double by the year 2021. October 1997.

Table 6 shows that nearly 60% of *individuals* at-risk of homelessness live in families with children (includes dual and lone parent families with children). People living in dual parent families with children made up the largest share (39%) of the population at-risk of homelessness (over 50,000) in the GVRD, followed by non-family households with one person only (19%). Eighteen percent of people in at-risk households were living in female lone parent families with at least one never-married son and/or daughter.

Differences by tenure: In renter households the picture is slightly different. People in non-family households comprised the largest share of at-risk individuals (38%), followed by dual parent families with children (25%) and female led lone parent families (24%). In at-risk owner households the majority of people were living in dual parent families with children (58%) consisting of over 30,000 people.

**Table 6 – Persons at-risk of homelessness by household type**

Household Type	Persons in at risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Couples/ family with children	19,795	25%	30,810	58%	50,605	39%
Couples/ family without children	6,875	9%	6,025	11%	12,900	10%
Female lone parent family with children	18,755	24%	4,645	9%	23,400	18%
Male lone parent family with children	2,085	3%	900	2%	2,985	2%
Total-multiple-family households	1,395	2%	4,865	9%	6,260	5%
Non-family household, one person only	20,100	26%	4,240	8%	24,340	19%
Non-family household, two or more persons	9,315	12%	1,210	2%	10,525	8%
Total	78,320	100%	52,695	100%	131,015	100%

Characteristic differences between individuals and households at-risk: In contrast to individuals, half of all *households* at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD were non-family households, most of which consisted of one person (42%). (see Table 7) Twenty-one percent of at-risk households were dual parent families with children and 16% were lone parent families (predominately female lone parents) for a total of 37% family households with children. Dual parent family households with children dominated among owner households (42%) compared to renter households (12%). The percentage of non-family households was higher for renter households (60%) compared to owner households (27%). Altogether region-wide there were just over 1,000 multiple family households representing 2% of at-risk households.

**Table 7 – Households at-risk of homelessness by household type**

Household Type	At-risk renter households		At-risk owner households		All at-risk households	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Couples family with children	4,910	12%	7,350	42%	12,260	21%
Couples family without children	3,285	8%	2,830	16%	6,125	11%
Female lone parent family	6,600	16%	1,590	9%	8,190	14%
Male lone parent family	740	2%	330	2%	1,070	2%
Total-multiple-family households	265	1%	775	4%	1,040	2%
Non-family household, one person only	20,100	50%	4,240	24%	24,340	42%
Non-family household, two or more persons	4,130	10%	540	3%	4,670	8%
Total	40,040	100%	17,655	100%	57,695	100%

In summary, non-family households predominated among *households* at-risk of homelessness, but more *people* at-risk of homelessness lived in family households with children.

### 2.3.3 Household income

Of the more than 130,000 *people* living in at-risk households (excluding those with 0 or negative income), more than 60% had a household income below \$20,000 (1995 dollars, as reported in 1996 Census). (See Table 8). The largest share (46%) is comprised of people with a household income between \$10,000 and \$19,999, followed by those with an income between \$20,000 and \$29,999 (25%). Less than 3% of individuals had a household income over \$39,999. People in renter households tended to have lower household incomes than people in owner households. Seventy-seven percent of people in at-risk renter households had a household income of less than \$20,000 compared to 35% of people in at-risk owner households. Over 60% of people in at-risk owner households had an income between \$20,000 and \$39,999.

**Table 8 – Persons at-risk of homelessness by household income**

Income level	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		Persons in all at-risk households	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	13,215	17%	6,235	12%	19,450	15%
\$10,000 - \$19, 999	47,320	60%	12,370	23%	59,690	46%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	14,275	18%	18,410	35%	32,685	25%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	3,345	4%	13,680	26%	17,025	13%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	160	0%	2,005	4%	2,165	2%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	78,315	100%	52,700	100%	131,015	100%

In the year prior to the 1996 census, almost three quarters of *households* at-risk of homelessness earned less than \$20,000. This is in stark contrast to the regional population overall, where only 8% of households earned less than \$20,000.<sup>19</sup> The largest share of households at-risk of homelessness earned between \$10,000 and \$19,999 (See Table 9). Among all at-risk households, average household income was \$16,303 compared with average regional household income of \$54,055.<sup>20</sup> In fact no at-risk household earned over \$50,000. At-risk renter households tended to have lower annual incomes than at-risk owner households. For example, 86% of at-risk renter households had an income of less than \$20,000 in the previous year compared to 42% of owner households. Over 50% of at-risk owner households had an income between \$20,000 and \$39,999 compared to only 14% of renter households.

**Table 9 – Households at-risk of homelessness by household income**

Household Income	At-risk renter households		At-risk owner households		All at-risk households	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	10,210	26%	2,350	13%	12,560	22%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	24,150	60%	5,185	29%	29,335	51%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	4,720	12%	5,865	33%	10,585	18%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	905	2%	3,760	21%	4,665	8%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	40	0%	495	3%	535	1%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	40,025	100%	17,655	100%	57,680	100%

#### 2.3.4 Average shelter cost

Not only is the average cost of shelter paid by at-risk *households* 50% or more of their household income (by definition), Table 10 shows that shelter costs actually represented, on average, 66% of household income in 1996. In this case, at-risk owner households bear a heavier burden than at-risk renter households.

**Table 10 – Average shelter cost to income ratio (STIR)**

Income and shelter cost	At-risk renter households	At-risk owner households	All at-risk households
Average Household Income - Annual	\$13,838	\$21,889	\$16,303
Average Household Income - Monthly	\$1,153	\$1,824	\$1,359
Average Shelter Cost - Monthly	\$746	\$1,238	\$897
Average Shelter Cost to Household Income Ratio	64.7	67.9	66.0

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada. 1996 Census. Nation Series.

<sup>20</sup> GVRD. Key Facts.

## 2.4 Personal characteristics

### 2.4.1 Education

According to the figures in Table 11, *people* living in at-risk households generally display the same educational attainment as the regional population.<sup>21</sup> However, a slightly greater share of individuals in at-risk households (35%) had not graduated from secondary school, compared with 28% of the regional population.<sup>22</sup> This was closely followed by people who had received other non-university education or training at institutions that do not grant degrees (24%). A significant share of the at-risk population had attended or were attending university (27%) including 13% that had finished a bachelor's degree or higher. This compares with 31% of the regional population over 15 years who had attended university.

**Table 11 – At-risk persons by educational attainment**

Highest level of schooling (Age 15 or over)	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than grade 9	5,065	8%	3,985	10%	9,050	9%
Grade 9-13	16,185	26%	9,740	24%	25,925	26%
Secondary school graduation certificate	6,895	11%	5,615	14%	12,510	12%
Trades certificate or diploma	1,405	2%	990	2%	2,395	2%
Other non-university education	15,365	25%	9,335	23%	24,700	24%
University without degree	8,405	14%	5,230	13%	13,635	14%
University with bachelor's degree or higher	7,795	13%	4,905	12%	12,700	13%
Total	61,115	100%	39,800	100%	100,915	100%

The educational attainment of persons in at-risk renter and owner households is roughly the same although renter households tended to have a slightly lower percentage of persons with a secondary school graduation certificate than owner households.

### 2.4.2 Aboriginal ethnicity

Beginning with the 1996 Census, Statistics Canada collected data for Aboriginal persons and households in two ways: according to 'Aboriginal ethnicity' and 'Aboriginal identity'. In previous census' Aboriginal people were categorized only by ethnic origin, that is, the ethnic or cultural group to which a person's ancestors belonged, called 'Aboriginal ethnicity'. In the 1996 Census the concept of Aboriginal identity was added – that is, an Aboriginal person as an individual who 'personally identifies' with at least one Aboriginal group.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Includes people still attending school.

<sup>22</sup> GVRD Strategic Planning Dept. Demographic Bulletin. Making the Grade. April 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Some Aboriginal organizations are of the view that the Census under-estimates the Aboriginal population.

Table 12 shows the number of people living in at-risk households by Aboriginal ethnicity. A total of 6,990 people or 5% of the at-risk population in the GVRD in 1996 was of Aboriginal ethnic origin.<sup>24</sup> Aboriginal people were over-represented in the at-risk population regionally because Aboriginal people comprise 1.7% of the overall GVRD population.<sup>25</sup> The great majority (91%) of at-risk Aboriginal persons were living in renter households (6,330 out of 6,990 persons), whereas this proportion was 58% among non-Aboriginal people at-risk.

**Table 12 – At-risk persons by Aboriginal ethnicity**

Aboriginal Ethnicity	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aboriginal	6,330	8%	660	1%	6,990	5%
Non-Aboriginal	71,985	92%	52,035	99%	124,020	95%
Total	78,315	100%	52,695	100%	131,010	100%

#### 2.4.3 Visible minorities

The following table (Table 13) describes people at-risk of homelessness according to their ‘visible minority’ status. Visible minorities include “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are ‘non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.’”<sup>26</sup> Census data grouped people with a Caucasian background into the ‘not-visible minority’ category.

<sup>24</sup> 5,045 individuals personally identified with an Aboriginal group (4%).

<sup>25</sup> GVRD. Strategic Planning Dept. Greater Vancouver’s Aboriginal Population. January 1998.

<sup>26</sup> 1996 Census Dictionary, Final Edition. August 1999.



**Table 13 – At-risk persons by visible minority status**

Visible Minority	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Black	1,770	2%	290	1%	2,060	2%
South Asian	3,110	4%	7,735	15%	10,845	8%
Chinese	4,625	6%	18,500	35%	23,125	18%
Other Asian and Arab <sup>27</sup>	8,190	10%	3,720	7%	11,910	9%
Latin American	1,750	2%	145	0%	1,895	1%
Other visible minority	320	0%	430	1%	750	1%
Multiple visible minority	470	1%	410	1%	880	1%
Not visible minority	58,080	74%	21,465	41%	79,550	61%
Total	78,315	100%	52,695	100%	131,010	100%

The majority of individuals at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996 were not members of a visible minority (61%), but conversely-stated a significant share *was* of visibly minority status (39%). This figure is somewhat higher than the comparable figure for the GVRD where 31% of residents were members of a visible minority.<sup>28</sup> There are important differences in the incidence of at-risk visible minorities, by tenure. Persons in at-risk owner households were more likely to be members of a visible minority group (59%), much higher than among persons in at-risk renter households, where 26% were members of a visible minority. Chinese was the single largest visible minority group (18%) among those living in households considered to be at-risk of homelessness, and most of these individuals lived in owner households (35%). Similarly, South Asian people comprised 8% of the population at-risk of homelessness and again most of these individuals were living in owner households.

#### 2.4.4 Immigrant status

According to Statistics Canada, immigrants include people who are currently living, or have been granted permission to live, in Canada permanently as a landed immigrant. Individuals and their families “who held a student or employment authorization, Minister’s permit or who were refugee claimants”<sup>29</sup> are considered ‘non permanent residents’. Although the majority of individuals at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD were not immigrants (57%), a significant percentage of people were reported to have immigrant status (41%). (See Table 14) This means immigrants were over-represented in the at-risk population because in the GVRD, immigrants represented 34.5% of the 1996 population.<sup>30</sup> Renter and owner households differ significantly according to their immigrant status. Immigrants made up the majority (55%) of people in at-risk owner

<sup>27</sup> Other Asian includes Filipino, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Korean and Arab/West Asian.

<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada. 1996 Census. Nation Series.

<sup>29</sup> Includes people who ‘ever had been landed immigrants’. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others are recent arrivals. 1996 Census Dictionary, Final Edition. Statistics Canada. August 1999, p.24.

<sup>30</sup> GVRD. Strategic Planning Dept. Demographic Bulletin. Greater Vancouver’s Population Growth Fueled by International Immigration. 1998.

households and about one third of people in at-risk renter households. Non-permanent residents represented 2% of the total at-risk population.

**Table 14 – People in at-risk households by immigrant status**

Immigrant Status	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Immigrant	24,155	31%	28,955	55%	53,110	41%
Non-Immigrant	52,075	66%	23,025	44%	75,100	57%
Non-permanent Resident	2,085	3%	720	1%	2,805	2%
Total	78,315	100%	52,700	100%	131,015	100%

#### 2.4.5 Disabilities

In the Census, disability status refers to “a limitation in the kind or amount of a person’s activity because of a long-term physical condition, mental condition or health problem.”<sup>31</sup> A long-term disability refers to disabilities that have lasted or are expected to last six months or more.

Most people living in at-risk households had no activity limitations or long-term disabilities (87%). (See Table 15) Twelve percent of the people in at-risk households had one or more activity limitations with or without a long-term disability. These individuals were more likely to live in a renter household rather than an owner household.

**Table 15 – People in at-risk households by disability status**

Disability Status	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
One or more activity limitations with no long-term disability	3,690	5%	1,915	4%	5,605	4%
Long-term disability with no activity limitation	795	1%	255	0%	1,050	1%
One or more activity limitations with long-term disability	8,400	11%	2,170	4%	10,570	8%
No activity limitations or long-term disability	65,435	84%	48,355	92%	113,790	87%
Total	78,320	100%	52,695	100%	131,015	100%

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p.10

## 2.4.6 Mobility

Mobility is included as a variable in this analysis of at-risk households, as it is an indicator of housing instability. Tables 16 and 17 show the number of individuals in at-risk households that had moved, regardless of location, within the past year and within the past five years.<sup>32</sup> The data shows that the at-risk population is a highly mobile population. One third of at-risk households had moved in the year prior to the 1996 census, and three quarters had moved in the five preceding years. This suggests a high degree of mobility compared to the overall population, since only 44 percent of Greater Vancouver residents had moved in the previous five years.<sup>33</sup> At-risk persons living in owner households show more residential stability than those living in renter households, since only 17% of individuals in at-risk owner households had moved in the previous year. However this increased to 65% over a five-year time period (still lower than persons living in renter households at 81%.)

**Table 16 – People in at-risk households who moved in the previous year**

	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 Year Ago - Movers	32,925	43%	9,040	17%	41,965	33%
1 Year Ago - Non-movers	44,210	57%	42,935	83%	87,145	67%
Total	77,135	100%	51,975	100%	129,110	100%

**Table 17 – People in at-risk households who moved in the previous 5 years**

	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
5 Years Ago - Movers	57,995	81%	31,700	65%	89,695	75%
5 Years Ago - Non-movers	13,710	19%	16,840	35%	30,550	25%
Total	71,705	100%	48,540	100%	120,245	100%

<sup>32</sup> One year movers and non-movers exclude children 1 year of age or under, while the population of five year movers and non-movers excluded persons 5 years of age and under.

<sup>33</sup> GVRD. Strategic Planning Dept. Moving to and Around Greater Vancouver. May 1998.

## 2.5 Employment and income

### 2.5.1 Labour force activity

A significant majority of at-risk individuals who were in the labour force in 1996 were employed. Over three quarters of those people living in at-risk households were employed (79%) in the week prior to the 1996 Census. (See Table 18) However, the share of at-risk people who were unemployed (21%) was considerably higher than for Greater Vancouver (8.6%).<sup>34 35</sup> The degree of risk of homelessness appears to correspond more strongly to the *income* generated by employment, rather than the fact of employment itself. It appears that employment does not prevent an individual from being at-risk of homelessness, but that rather those who work for low wages form a major share of the GVRD's at-risk population.

Tenure differences: People in both at-risk renter and owner households were more likely to be employed than unemployed; however, the unemployment rate among persons in at-risk renter households (26%) was more than double that of owner households (12%).

In addition, the labour force participation rate (people who are either working or looking for work as a share of the population age 15 or over) for at-risk individuals was low (57%) compared to that of GVRD residents (67%).<sup>36</sup>

**Table 18 – People in at-risk households by labour force activity**

Labour Force Activity	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
In Labour Force	34,715		22,845		57,560	
<i>Employed</i>	25,575	74%	20,170	88%	45,745	79%
<i>Unemployed</i>	9,140	26%	2,675	12%	11,815	21%
Not in Labour Force	26,405	43%	16,955	43%	43,360	43%
Total	61,120	100%	39,800	100%	100,920	100%

### 2.5.2 Work activity in 1995

Table 19 shows the full or part-time employment status of those at-risk individuals who were working in the year prior to the census (1995). Together tables 18 and 19 shows that not only were many at-risk individuals employed at the time of the 1996 census, most (64%) worked full-time in the year prior to the census. Individuals living in at-risk

<sup>34</sup> GVRD. Strategic Planning Dept. Demographic Bulletin. The Region at Work. 1998.

<sup>35</sup> An unemployed individual is considered to be in the labour force if he or she had been looking for work or had arrangements for work inside a four week time period, or were on temporary lay-off.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

owner households were somewhat more likely to be working full-time (68%) than people residing in a renter household (61%).

**Table 19 – Workers in at-risk households by work activity**

Work Activity in 1995	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Worked mostly full-time	18,565	61%	15,460	68%	34,025	64%
Worked mostly part-time	11,930	39%	7,240	32%	19,170	36%
Total workers in 1995	30,495	100%	22,700	100%	53,195	100%

### 2.5.3 Major source of personal income

Almost half of the population age 15 or over in at-risk households cited employment as their major source of personal income (48%).<sup>37</sup> (See Table 20) The next largest share (42%) reported government transfers comprised of Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) (8%), Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan (CPP/QPP) (3%), Employment Insurance (EI) (4%), Child Tax Credits (1%) and other government sources (26%). The latter category consists of all other government sources not previously named such as social assistance, payments from training programs, income and accommodation supplements, veterans' pensions and allowances, pensions to widows and dependents of veterans, and workers' compensation. Nine percent of at-risk individuals cited another income source, regular cash income not previously reported in the other nine sources,<sup>38</sup> as their major source of income.<sup>39</sup>

Tenure differences: People in at-risk owner households were more likely to receive employment income (58%) than people in renter households (42%). Individuals living in owner households were also more likely to cite 'other' income sources as the major source of personal income. The single biggest income source other than employment for renter households was 'other government sources' (34%).

<sup>37</sup> Includes positive and negative income.

<sup>38</sup> Alimony, child support, support from persons outside the household, income from abroad, net income from roomers and boarders, non-refundable scholarships and bursaries, severance pay, royalties, wage-loss replacement benefits and strike pay. 1996 Census Dictionary, Final Edition. Statistics Canada, August 1999, p.37.

<sup>39</sup> Comparable regional data unavailable.

**Table 20 – At-risk persons by major income source**

Major Source of Personal Income	Persons in at-risk renter households		Persons in at-risk owner households		All at-risk persons	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employment Income	23,530	42%	19,770	58%	43,300	48%
Government Transfer Income						
<i>OAS/GIS</i>	5,320	10%	2,060	6%	7,380	8%
<i>CPP/QPP</i>	1,895	3%	1,080	3%	2,975	3%
<i>EI</i>	2,240	4%	1,235	4%	3,475	4%
<i>Child Tax Credits</i>	415	1%	490	1%	905	1%
<i>Other Government Sources</i>	19,030	34%	4,480	13%	23,510	26%
Other Income	3,500	6%	4,885	14%	8,385	9%
Total	55,930	100%	34,000	100%	89,930	100%

## 2.6 Dwelling characteristics

### 2.6.1 Dwelling type

Structure type: At the time of the 1996 census, households at-risk of homelessness were most likely to live in an apartment with less than 5 storeys (38%) or a single-detached house (28%). (See Table 21) If we look at all GVRD households, the picture is quite different. In 1996, 45.5% of the region's households lived in single detached houses, and 25% lived in apartments with less than 5 stories.<sup>40</sup> Note that rooms in Single Room Occupancy hotels are included in the relevant apartment category.

A considerable share of at-risk households lived in duplexes (12%), which, according to the 1996 census definition, includes secondary suites (main unit and suite are counted separately in this total).

Tenure differences: Over half of all at-risk owner households resided in a single-detached house compared to only 15% of renter households. Sixty-five percent of renter households were living in apartments, including 47% in apartments less than 5 storeys and 18% in apartments with 5 or more storeys.

**Table 21- At-risk households by dwelling type**

Dwelling Type	At-risk renter households		At-risk owner households		All at-risk households	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single-detached house	6,135	15%	9,810	56%	15,945	28%
Semi-detached house	935	2%	425	2%	1,360	2%
Row house	1,605	4%	1,510	9%	3,115	5%
Duplex	4,910	12%	2,000	11%	6,910	12%
Apartment, less than 5 storeys	18,970	47%	2,740	16%	21,710	38%
Apartment, 5 or more storeys	7,315	18%	1,040	6%	8,355	14%
Other structural type	160	0%	135	1%	295	1%
Total	40,030	100%	17,660	100%	57,690	100%

### 2.6.2 Need for repair

Of the 57,685 households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996, 5,450 households or 9% were residing in a dwelling that needed major repairs. (See Table 22) Major repairs include “defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings, etc.”<sup>41</sup> This was higher than for the GVRD: the comparable rate for

<sup>40</sup> GVRD Strategic Planning Dept. Demographic Bulletin. Home is Where the Housing is. June 1998.

<sup>41</sup> 1996 Census Dictionary, Final Edition. Statistics Canada. August 1999, p.156

all households in 1996 was 6.8%.<sup>42</sup> More renter household dwellings needed repair (10%) compared with those of owner households (8%).

**Table 22 – Dwellings of at-risk households – Need for major repair**

Need for repair	At-risk renter households		At-risk owner households		All at-risk households	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Major Repairs Needed	4,115	10%	1,335	8%	5,450	9%
Major Repairs Not Needed	35,910	90%	16,325	92%	52,235	91%
Total	40,025	100%	17,660	100%	57,685	100%

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<sup>42</sup> Statistics Canada. Occupied Private Dwellings by Period of Construction and Condition of Dwelling, 1996 Census. CMAs.



## 2.7 Sub-groups at-risk of homelessness

Data was tabulated separately for eight sub-populations that are known to be particularly vulnerable to a risk of homelessness, and for whom census data could be obtained: Aboriginal persons, immigrants, persons with disabilities, females, lone parents, youth (age 10 to 14 and age 15 to 19), and seniors age 55 and over. It is important to note that individuals in these groups are not mutually exclusive, for example, a person who is an immigrant at-risk of homelessness could also have a disability and be female. Children are included in all sub-groups, with the exception of age related groups such as lone parents, seniors and youth. Some selected demographic characteristics are presented for each sub-group. In addition a separate tabulation of native *households* was obtained and summary data is presented below. Table 23 describes Aboriginal persons, immigrants, persons with a disability and females, Table 24 profiles Aboriginal households and Table 28 contains figures for lone parents, youth and seniors.

The two largest sub-groups of individuals at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996 were immigrants (53,100 or 40% of individuals at-risk) and females (67,435 or 51% of individuals at-risk). However, this is likely because both groups represent a significant share of the overall population (34.5% and 51% respectively). On the other hand, although smaller in absolute numbers, at-risk Aboriginal persons, lone parents and persons with a disability comprised a significant share of their sub-populations within the GVRD at 15%, 15% and 10% respectively. For example, 15% of all Aboriginal persons in the GVRD were at-risk of homelessness according to these figures. Likewise, 15% of all GVRD lone parents, and 10% of all persons with a disability in the GVRD were at-risk of becoming homeless in 1996.

### 2.7.1 Aboriginal persons

There were 6,990 Aboriginal persons at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996.<sup>43</sup> They comprised over 15% of the region's Aboriginal population, one of the highest incidences of any of the sub-groups described here. (Note that the universe of INALHM persons excludes those people living on reserves.)

*Personal characteristics:* A significant share of this sub-group were children under the age of 10 years (25% or 1,748 persons), much higher than for some other sub-groups and all at-risk individuals (16%). The average age of Aboriginal persons at-risk of homelessness was 25 years, again lower than for the entire at-risk population. There were few at-risk Aboriginal persons age 55 and over (4% of total) compared to other sub-populations and all at-risk persons. Forty percent of the Aboriginal persons in this group resided in female-headed lone parent households, followed by non-family households. According to these figures, 17% of Aboriginal persons at-risk of homelessness in the region were faced with an activity limitation.

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<sup>43</sup> Using Aboriginal ethnicity data.

*Employment and income:* The unemployment rate for Aboriginal people at-risk was very high: 39% in the period preceding the Census. This is reflected in the level of household income. For 78% of this Aboriginal population, household income was below \$20,000 compared to 61% for the at-risk population generally. Most persons in this group received the majority of their income from government sources such as income assistance, training programs, veteran's allowance, and workers compensation.

*Dwellings:* In terms of dwelling type, Aboriginal persons at-risk of homelessness were most likely to be living in single detached dwellings and apartments of less than 5 storeys. Duplexes accounted for 17% of their dwellings, perhaps reflecting accommodation in homes with secondary suites. Aboriginal persons at-risk of homelessness tended to reside in sub-standard accommodation, with about one fifth of their dwellings requiring major repair. This is the highest rate of any sub-group described here, and much higher than the rate for the entire at-risk population (9%). Most at-risk Aboriginal persons (82%) had moved within the previous five-year period.

### **2.7.2 Aboriginal households**

A separate tabulation of Aboriginal households at-risk of homelessness was prepared as part of this profile, and is contained in Table 24. The definition of Aboriginal household employed includes family households with at least one spouse, common-law partner, or lone parent self-identified Aboriginal member and/or family and non-family households with at least 50% of household members self-identified as Aboriginal.

*Personal and household characteristics:* According to these figures, there were 2,680 Aboriginal households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996 comprising about 5% of all at-risk households in the region. Fifty-three percent of the primary maintainers in these households were male and over 60% were between the ages of 25 and 44. The highest percentage of primary maintainers was living in single person households (39%), followed by female lone parents (28%). The majority of primary maintainers in these at-risk households had no activity limitations or long-term disability, although 23% had one or more activity limitation with a long-term disability.

*Education:* Forty three percent of primary maintainers in at-risk Aboriginal households had not graduated from high school and a significant share had obtained some non-university education. Twelve percent had been to university, but only 2% had obtained a bachelors degree or higher.

*Employment and income:* Many primary maintainers in at-risk Aboriginal households were unemployed in 1996 (44%). The majority had a household income of less than \$20,000 and 35% made less than \$10,000 annually. Twenty-six percent cited employment as their major source of income; however, over 70% received government transfer income as their major source, most of which consisted of social assistance, payments from training programs, and others.

*Dwellings:* The majority (60%) of at-risk Aboriginal households lived in apartments and 19% lived in single detached houses. Dwellings occupied by at-risk Aboriginal households were twice as likely to need major repairs (18%) compared to all at-risk households. Most (84%) Aboriginal household primary maintainers had moved in the five years preceding the census.

**Table 23 - At-risk profile - Aboriginal Persons, Immigrants, Persons with a disability and Females**

	At-risk Aboriginal Persons (ethnicity)		At-risk Immigrants		At-risk persons with activity limitation or disability		At-risk females	
Number of Persons in At-risk Households 1996	6,990		53,110		17,230		67,435	
Number of Persons in all Households 1996	45,890		622,540		170,805		907,695	
Number At-risk Persons as a percent of Persons in all Households	15		9		10		7	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>								
0 - 9 years	1,780	25%	2,610	5%	770	4%	9,815	15%
10 - 14 years	535	8%	3,210	6%	440	3%	4,235	6%
15 - 19 years	590	8%	3,765	7%	410	2%	4,215	6%
20 - 24 years	700	10%	3,760	7%	620	4%	6,210	9%
25 - 34 years	1,400	20%	9,785	18%	2,395	14%	12,840	19%
35 - 44 years	1,055	15%	11,790	22%	3,350	19%	11,535	17%
45 - 54 years	600	9%	7,620	14%	2,830	16%	6,885	10%
55 - 64 years	235	3%	4,865	9%	2,250	13%	3,990	6%
65 years & over	100	1%	5,695	11%	4,160	24%	7,705	11%
Average Age	25		39		48		34	
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	3,440	49%	25,435	48%	7,785	45%		
Female	3,550	51%	27,680	52%	9,445	55%		
<b>Household Type</b>								
Couples family with children	1,350	19%	27,565	52%	2,820	16%	24,715	37%
Couples family without children	385	6%	5,795	11%	2,120	12%	6,435	10%
Female lone parent	2,810	40%	5,045	9%	2,310	13%	15,235	23%
Male lone parent	250	4%	820	2%	420	2%	960	1%
Total multiple-family households	75	1%	4,500	8%	610	4%	3,140	5%
Non-family household, One person only	1,395	20%	7,035	13%	7,450	43%	12,410	18%
Non-family household, Two or more persons	720	10%	2,350	4%	1,500	9%	4,535	7%
<b>Aboriginal Status (Ethnic)</b>								
Aboriginal	6,990	100%	105	0%	1,380	8%	3550	5%
Not Aboriginal	0		53,005	100%	15,850	92%	63,885	95%

**Table 23, cont'd**

	At-risk Aboriginal persons		At-risk Immigrants		At-risk persons with activity limitation or disability		At-risk females	
<b>Visible minority status</b>								
Black	70	1%	1,150	2%	165	1%	965	1%
South Asian	40	1%	7,045	13%	1,165	7%	5,320	8%
Chinese	30	0%	19,070	36%	970	6%	11,690	17%
Other Asian	45	1%	8,415	16%	820	5%	6,440	10%
Latin American	10	0%	1,380	3%	110	1%	975	1%
Other visible minority	10	0%	545	1%	65	0%	440	1%
Multiple visible minority	10	0%	505	1%	105	1%	395	1%
Not visible minority	6,775	97%	15,010	28%	13,825	80%	41,200	61%
<b>Immigrant Status</b>								
Immigrant	105	2%	53,115	100%	5,500	32%	27,680	41%
Non-immigrant	6,870	98%	0		11,645	68%	38,240	57%
Non-permanent Resident	15	0%	0		85	0%	1,510	4%
<b>Disability Status</b>								
One or more activity limitations with no long-term disability	300	4%	2,460	5%	5,605	33%	3,220	5%
Long-term disability with no activity limitation	175	3%	225	0%	1,050	6%	480	1%
One or more activity limitations with long-term disability	900	13%	2,805	5%	10,570	61%	5,740	9%
No activity limitations or long-term disability	5,610	80%	47,620	90%	0	0%	57,990	86%
<b>Mobility Status (5 Year) (2)</b>								
5 Years Ago - Movers	4,945	82%	41,025	78%	10,470	62%	45,885	74%
5 Years Ago - Non-Movers	1,050	18%	11,455	22%	6,360	38%	16,500	26%
<b>Highest Level of Schooling (3)</b>								
Less than secondary school graduation	2035	44%	16,115	34%	7,155	45%	18,975	36%
Secondary school graduation certificate	505	11%	6,115	13%	1,700	11%	6,880	13%
Trades certificate or diploma	145	3%	1,170	2%	370	2%	1,050	2%
Other non-university education	1,335	29%	10,195	22%	4,105	26%	13,710	26%
University without degree	535	11%	6,375	13%	1,930	12%	6,845	13%
University with bachelor's degree or higher	120	3%	7,315	15%	750	5%	5,925	11%
<b>Total - Labour Force Activity (3)</b>								
In Labour Force	2,380		25,450		4,560		26,560	
Employed	1,455	61%	20,450	80%	2,950	65%	21,160	80%
Unemployed	925	39%	5,000	20%	1,610	35%	5,405	20%
Not in Labour Force	2,295	49%	21,840	46%	11,455	72%	26,820	50%

**Table 23, cont'd**

	At-risk Aboriginal persons		At-risk Immigrants		At-risk persons with activity limitation or disability		At-risk females	
<b>Household Income (excludes 0 and negative income)</b>								
Less than \$10,000	1,405	20%	8,210	15%	4,300	25%	8,380	12%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	4,060	58%	21,795	41%	9,010	52%	33,260	49%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	1,130	16%	14,030	26%	2,595	15%	16,470	24%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	340	5%	7,995	15%	1,180	7%	8,340	12%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	55	1%	1,085	2%	130	1%	980	1%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	
<b>Major Source of Personal Income (4)</b>								
Employment Income	1,310	31%	19,760	49%	2,525	17%	20,075	44%
Government Transfer Income	2,825		15,290		11,455		20,880	
OAS/GIS	90	2%	3,260	8%	2,975	19%	5,430	12%
CPP/QPP	70	2%	1,155	3%	1,575	10%	1,680	4%
EI	135	3%	1,615	4%	375	2%	1,720	4%
Child Tax Credits	45	1%	640	2%	95	1%	520	1%
Other Government Sources	2,475	59%	8,615	21%	6,430	42%	11,530	25%
Other Income	100	2%	5,025	13%	1,280	8%	4,870	11%
<b>Structural Type of Dwelling</b>								
Single detached	2,225	32%	21,730	41%	4,275	25%	25,240	37%
Semi-detached and row	545	8%	5,270	10%	1,435	25%	6,995	10%
Duplex	1,195	17%	8,105	15%	1,925	3%	9,610	14%
Apartment, has less than 5 storeys	2,395	34%	12,485	24%	7,045	5%	19,050	28%
Apartment, 5 or more storeys	540	8%	5,320	10%	2,435	8%	6,210	9%
Other structural type	90	1%	200	0%	110	11%	335	1%
<b>Condition of Dwelling</b>								
Major repairs needed	1,535	22%	3,235	6%	2,275	13%	6,195	9%

**Footnotes:**

- (1) - Population 1 Year of Age and Over
- (2) - Population 5 Years of Age and Over
- (3) - Population 15 Years of Age and Over
- (4) - Population 15 Years of Age and Over with Income (Positive or Negative)

**Table 24 - At-risk profile – Aboriginal Households<sup>44</sup>**

	<b>At-risk Aboriginal Households</b>	
	Number	Percent
<b>Gender of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
Male	1,265	47%
Female	1,420	53%
Total	2,685	100%
<b>Age of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
15 – 24	355	13%
25 – 34	970	36%
35 – 44	665	25%
45 – 54	440	16%
55 – 64	180	7%
65 +	65	2%
Total	2,680	100%
<b>Household Type</b>		
Couples family with children	295	11%
Couples family without children	200	7%
Male lone parent	65	2%
Female lone parent	745	28%
Non-family households, one person only	1,040	39%
Non family households, two or more persons	335	13%
Total	2,680	100%
<b>Visible Minority Status of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
Visible minority	50	2%
Multiple visible minority	0	0%
Not visible minority	2635	98%
Total	2685	100%
<b>Immigrant Status of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
Immigrant	125	5%
Non-Immigrant	2,550	95%
Non-permanent Resident	10	0%
Total	2,685	100%
<b>Mobility Status (5 Year) of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
5 Years Ago – Movers	2,260	84%
5 Years Ago - Non-Movers	425	16%
Total	2,680	100%

<sup>44</sup> The definition of Aboriginal households includes family households with at least one spouse, common-law partner, or lone parent self-identified Aboriginal member and/or family and non-family households with at least 50% of household members self-identified as Aboriginal.

**Table 24, cont'd**

	<b>At-risk Aboriginal Households</b>	
	Number	Percent
<b>Highest Level of Schooling of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
Less than grade 13	1,150	43%
Secondary school graduation certificate	260	10%
Trades certificate or diploma	70	3%
Other non-university education	865	32%
University with or without degree	335	13%
Total	2,680	100%
<b>Disability Status of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
One or more activity limitations with no long-term disability	180	7%
Long-term disability with no activity limitation	95	4%
One or more activity limitations with long-term disability	625	23%
No activity limitations or long-term disability	1,780	66%
Total	2,685	100%
<b>Labour Force Status of Primary Household Maintainer</b>		
In Labour Force		
<i>Employed</i>	755	56%
<i>Unemployed</i>	590	44%
Not in Labour Force	1,335	50%
Total	2,685	100%
<b>Household Income (excludes 0 and negative income)</b>		
Less than \$10,000	930	35%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1,420	53%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	255	10%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	75	3%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	0	0%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%
Total	2,680	100%
<b>Major Source of Household Income</b>		
Employment Income	700	26%
Government Transfer Income	1,935	72%
OAS/GIS	70	3%
CPP/QPP	50	2%
EI	50	2%
Child Tax Credits	20	1%
Other Government Sources	1,745	65%
Other Income	45	2%
Total	2,680	100%



**Table 24, cont'd**

	<b>At-risk Aboriginal Households</b>	
	Number	Percent
<b>Structural Type</b>		
Single detached house	500	19%
Semi-detached and row house	140	5%
Duplex	385	14%
Apartment, less than 5 storeys	1,230	46%
Apartment, 5 or more storeys	395	15%
Other structural type	25	1%
Total	2,675	100%
<b>Condition of Dwelling</b>		
Major repairs needed	475	18%

*Augmenting Data:*

In an effort to obtain a better understanding of the issues that may place Aboriginal people at-risk of homelessness, key informant interviews were conducted with several agencies and data was collated from a number of recent research initiatives in the region. The following is a summary of the key findings.

**Urban Aboriginal people** – Most Aboriginal spokespersons suggest that census data under represents the Aboriginal population. For example, a report by the United Native Nations (UNN) Society<sup>45</sup> points out in the 1996 census, the number who claimed Aboriginal ancestry in BC was 172,475. “However, some government departments have chosen to accept a different estimate based on 1996 census results that were based on a question of Aboriginal identity versus Aboriginal ancestry,” resulting in a total, and smaller, Aboriginal population of 139,665.<sup>46</sup>

The purpose of the UNN report was to identify organizations concerned with the continuum of services relating to Aboriginal homelessness, and to point out gaps in services; identify essential services; provide a profile of Aboriginal homeless, describing demographics, social indicators, and root causes; and make recommendations on long-term strategies to address Aboriginal homelessness, including funding allocation methodologies. The study estimates that by applying Low Income Cut Off (LICO)<sup>47</sup> rates to the incomes of the Aboriginal population in BC, 41% of Aboriginal people are at-risk of homelessness.

Helping Spirit Lodge is a transition house with 30 beds for Aboriginal women and their children and/or homeless women seeking refuge from domestic violence. They recently published statistics on their client population that estimates that between 1991 and 1997 they were contacted by 5,000 women and children looking for refuge.

A report for the C.D. Howe Institute<sup>48</sup> reviews census evidence on social outcomes in eight Canadian cities, including Vancouver. It determines that aboriginal people live disproportionately in the poorest neighborhoods, and that these neighborhoods display characteristics associated with the ghettos of US cities. In general, the education levels and employment rates for Aboriginal people who live in poor neighborhoods are well below those for Aboriginal people in non-poor neighborhoods. A poor neighborhood is defined in the study as census tracts with poverty rates more than twice the average 1995 family poverty rate –i.e.32.6%.

The following tables from the C.D. Howe Institute report illustrate in Table 25 the Aboriginal population of the Vancouver CMA, in Table 26 poor and non-poor

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<sup>45</sup> United Native Nations Society, *Aboriginal Homelessness in British Columbia*, 2001.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5

<sup>47</sup> LICO's were developed by Statistics Canada to identify households that would spend approximately 20% more of their incomes to acquire the basic necessities, i.e., food, clothing and shelter.

<sup>48</sup> Richards, John, *Neighbors Matter: Poor Neighborhoods and Urban Aboriginal Policy*, prepared for the C.D. Howe Institute Commentary, 2001.

neighborhoods in the Vancouver CMA and in Table 27 the proportion of the Aboriginal people residing in poor neighborhoods in Vancouver.<sup>49</sup>

**Table 25: Aboriginal population of the Vancouver CMA.**

Aboriginal Population in Vancouver in 1996								
	Indian			Metis				
	Single Origin	Multiple Origin	Total	Single Origin	Multiple Origin	Total	Aboriginal Identity	Vancouver
Vancouver	11,045	26,925	37,970	1,510	7,870	9,380	31,060	1,813,660

Source: 1996 census

**Table 26: Poor and non-poor neighborhoods in the Vancouver CMA**

	Poor Neighborhoods	Nonpoor Neighborhoods	Vancouver Total Population	Neighborhood Poverty Rate
Vancouver	136,430	1,677,230	1,813,660	7.5%

Source: 1996 census

**Table 27: Neighborhood poverty rates in Vancouver for Aboriginal people**

Aboriginal Population living in poor neighborhoods in Vancouver in 1996 (percent)						
	Indian		Metis			
	Single Origin	Multiple Origin	Single Origin	Multiple Origin	Aboriginal Identity	Non-Aboriginal
Vancouver	31.8	12.4	28.5	10.2	21.9	7.3

Source: Calculated from unpublished 1996 census data

### 2.7.3 Immigrants

Immigrants comprised the largest sub-group among those at-risk of homelessness in 1996, with a total of 53,110 persons. They represented more than one third of the 131,000 at-risk persons in the GVRD in 1996. About 9% of immigrants who resided in the region in 1996 were at-risk of homelessness.

*Household type:* Most immigrants at-risk of homelessness were living in households comprised of dual parent families with children (52%). However 8% of these individuals were living in multiple family households, which is higher than the proportion for all at-risk persons (5%) and for other sub-groups.

*Personal characteristics:* Almost three quarters of immigrants at-risk of homelessness in 1996 were members of a visible minority (72%), the largest being Chinese (36%)

<sup>49</sup> Single Origin is when an individual selects either North American Indian or Metis or Inuit as their ancestry. Multiple Origin is when an individual selects two or more of North American Indian or Metis or Inuit as their ancestry.

followed by Other Asian and South Asian. They were quite mobile, 78% having moved (anywhere) within the preceding five years. Members of this sub-group had attained a relatively high educational status compared to others who are at-risk even though this sub-group includes children who are still in school. For example, 28% of at-risk immigrants had completed some university education or obtained a degree.

*Employment and income:* Immigrants at-risk tended to be employed, earning more household income than members of some other sub-populations and this income was more likely to be obtained through employment. Members of this group tended not to be significant recipients of government transfer income.

*Dwellings:* Forty one percent of immigrants at-risk were living in single detached houses, followed by apartments with less than 5 storeys, few of which needed major repairs.

*Augmenting data:* Participants in a recent study conducted by MOSAIC, an agency in Vancouver that serves immigrants and refugees, reported that they are living in overcrowded, unaffordable, dirty, unpleasant, and poorly maintained accommodations. These dwellings do not meet basic maintenance standards, and complaints to landlords or housing managers regarding drafts, leaks, mold, pests, broken appliances and insufficient heat in winter are generally ignored. They do not feel safe or comfortable in their current housing, and feel at-risk of becoming homeless.<sup>50</sup>

In discussions with several agencies that work with immigrant groups, it has been noted that immigrants face additional barriers to accessing affordable housing compared to the rest of the population. Some of the issues that affect their ability to access housing include:

- Discrimination and racism;
- Large families;
- Lack of references;
- Difficulty obtaining relevant and up-to-date information;
- Confusion and difficulty with the process of applying for housing;
- Reluctance to seek help from community or government resource agencies;
- Little knowledge of services; and
- Communication barriers.

Family breakdown and the breakdown of sponsorship agreements also place immigrants at-risk of homelessness. Participants in the MOSAIC study reported that the fear of being at-risk of becoming homeless is of particular concern to abused women with young children and women fleeing from their spouses due to marital problems. When these problems occur, immigrant households may have no financial resources and may not be able to access income assistance or housing. Conflict at home and abuse have been noted

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<sup>50</sup> MOSAIC. April 2002. *A Survey on the Extent of Substandard Housing Problems Faced by Immigrants and Refugees in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Summary Report*. Prepared by MOSAIC for the Regional Homelessness Research Committee.

as the primary reasons why members of the Chinese community use shelters and transition houses.<sup>51</sup> According to SUCCESS, an agency in Vancouver that serves the Chinese population, this is why approximately 10-12% of its clients are at-risk of homelessness. Most of these clients are seniors, although some youth are also at-risk of becoming homeless. According to MOSAIC, refugee claimants are at a higher risk of becoming homeless than others because of the lack of opportunities and support systems available to them. For example, refugee claimants are not eligible for federal settlement programs.

#### **2.7.4 Persons with a disability**

This sub-group consists of persons of all ages who met the Census definition for having a long-term disability (consisting of a physical condition, mental condition or health problem) or an activity limitation. There were over 17,000 persons with a disability or activity limitation who were at-risk of homelessness in 1996, representing 10% of all persons with a disability in the GVRD or 13% of all at-risk persons.

*Personal characteristics:* Seniors made up a relatively large share of this group, approximately 6,000 persons or 37%. In addition, persons with a disability were more likely to be female, likely because of the age pattern described above. Most at-risk persons with a disability lived by themselves. People of Aboriginal ethnicity (8%) were over-represented within this at-risk sub-group.

*Employment and income:* Overall, people with a disability who are at-risk of homelessness had a high unemployment rate (35%) and a significant share was not in the labour force. Government transfer was the predominant income source for most persons in this sub-group with quite a high percentage reporting OAS/GIS and CPP.

*Dwellings:* Single detached, semi-detached and row houses accounted for half of all dwellings occupied by members of this sub-group. The preponderance of semis and row houses may be due to the stock of social housing targeted for this group.

*Augmenting data:* In an effort to obtain a better understanding of health issues that may place people at-risk of homelessness, key informant interviews were conducted with several agencies that serve a variety of client groups. The following is a summary of what was learned as a result of these interviews.

**People with addictions** – Key informants estimated that between 10% and 15% of adults have some sort of addiction to drugs or alcohol.<sup>52</sup> Individuals with the most serious addictions might be at-risk of homelessness because:

- They may lose their jobs;

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<sup>51</sup> According to SUCCESS, an organization in Vancouver that serves approximately 650 clients per year from the Chinese community.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Health and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

- Families or room-mates may not tolerate the addiction;
- Landlords may not tolerate the addiction;
- They may spend too high a percentage of their incomes on their addictions and get behind in paying the rent;
- There are limited housing options for people leaving detox and recovery facilities.

**People with HIV/AIDS** – The Wings Housing Society provides housing assistance for individuals with HIV/AIDS. They provide approximately 80 portable housing subsidies in Vancouver and 30 subsidized housing units for people living with HIV/AIDS. In February 2002, there were 338 applicants on the waiting list for housing with Wings. Of these, 18 were families and 18 were couples. The rest were single individuals. About 10% of the applications were from single women or households headed by women. The McLaren Housing Society of BC, another agency that provides housing for people with HIV/AIDS had a waiting list of 185 applicants, many of whom would also be on the waiting list for Wings. The McLaren Housing Society is able to provide about 30 portable housing subsidies and housing in 52 non-profit units. Approximately 25 applicants were on a waiting for housing with the Dr. Peter Centre, an organization with a 10-bed residence for people with HIV/AIDS who cannot live independently in the community and require 24-hour care. Approximately 100 individuals were on the waiting list to access their day program.

People living with HIV/AIDS may be at-risk of homelessness because their medical condition makes it impossible for them to work and they have low incomes that make it difficult to afford private market housing. They often have poor relationships with their families and face discrimination if landlords or other tenants in a building find out about their health/medical condition. About 95% of applicants seeking affordable housing with the Wings Housing Society receive Disability 2 BC Benefits, and may be eligible for \$786/month, plus \$225 for a nutritional supplement (as of March, 2002). The additional benefits are intended to help cover the costs of HIV medications, which can be very expensive, and are not generally covered by health insurance. It is believed that most applicants couch surf or stay in shelters and SROs while waiting for housing. A few may live in private market housing, if they receive financial support from family or friends. Many clients at the Dr. Peter Centre live in almost perpetual chaos and move every two or three months.

**People with a serious and persistent mental illness and concurrent disorders -** Mental Health Services of the South Fraser Health Area of the Fraser Health Authority, surveyed their mental health teams and determined that of their clients with a serious and persistent mental illness, 283 men and 235 women (total 518) are at-risk of homelessness. These figures are based on the client's current income - 452 (87%) are on assistance or disability pension - and housing situation. As well, 204 of these individuals (39.5%) have concurrent illnesses (addictions).

A key informant at the Mental Health Evaluation and Community Consultation Unit (MHECCU) at the University of British Columbia, while stating that he did not have access to data that determined the size of the population of those with a serious and

persistent mental illness who are at-risk of homelessness, nevertheless reinforced the widely used estimate that 2-3% of the general population have a serious and persistent mental illness. He also stated that approximately one third of people diagnosed with a serious and persistent mental illness are connected to a mental health team, and emergency service providers in the region noted, during development of the regional strategy on homelessness, that it was those persons with mental illness who were *not* attached to a mental health team who were more vulnerable to absolute homelessness, even though the large majority of this population unconnected to a team receives some service, usually through a private physician or hospital. However, it is very likely that some individuals are receiving no services at all for a variety of reasons.

It was determined that mental health services planners use estimates between 1.5% and 3% of the population have a serious mental illness. If we use the most conservative end of this range (1.5%) and the estimate of GVRD population in 2001 (2,028,996) provided by BC Stats, we can calculate that at least 30,435 people in the GVRD have a serious mental illness. Of these, approximately 3,000<sup>53</sup> should *not* be at-risk of homelessness because they have a Supported Independent Living (SIL) unit, a supported apartment or another form of rent supplement. This leaves as many as 27,500 individuals in the GVRD who might be at-risk of homelessness due to a serious mental health condition. Funding for the SIL Program is provided by the Ministry of Health to the five health authorities across the province. The authorities determine how to allocate the funding within their jurisdiction. At this time, it appears that there has not been a reduction in funding for this program.

More specific data on one of the populations with a serious mental illness shows that in 1998/99, 6,596 individuals were diagnosed with schizophrenia in the GVRD.<sup>54</sup> The vast majority of these individuals are assumed to live on social assistance or a disability pension. Since average rents for a one bedroom or bachelor unit in good repair in the GVRD far exceed the shelter allowance of social assistance or a disability pension, many of those not receiving housing assistance may be considered at-risk of homelessness. Recent (Spring, 2002) decreases in the shelter portion of Social Assistance rates will exacerbate this gap in housing affordability for this particular population. According to the Ministry of Human Resources, families of three or more persons will experience reductions in the shelter component of income assistance. For example, a family of four, including those on Disability 2, will see the shelter portion reduced by \$60/month (from \$650/month to \$590/month).<sup>55</sup>

**People with physical disabilities** - In discussions with the BC Paraplegic Association it was noted that individuals with physical disabilities are usually at-risk of homelessness due to complicating factors apart from their physical disability. These include:

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<sup>53</sup> From interviews with Mental Health Services Divisions of the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Health Authorities.

<sup>54</sup> Provided by Wayne Jones, Research Associate Mental Health Evaluation and Community Consultation Unit, the Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences at St. Paul's Hospital

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Human Resources. Takes effect July 1, 2002.

- Struggles with substance misuse, mental health issues, anger management, behavioural concerns (perhaps, linked to diagnosed or undiagnosed brain injury);
- Barriers preventing the utilization of available accessible housing;
- Prolonging unnecessary institutionalization due to the lack appropriate housing (30% of clients of the George Pearson Centre would like to move out if appropriate housing could be found).

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Wound Program has a 9-member team that treats patients who have traumatic spinal cord injuries caused by accidents and illnesses some due to drug use. They provide services at their office at Evergreen Clinic, in people's homes, and at other locations. They are currently treating 157 patients and estimate that 42 clients, (38 men and 4 women) may be at-risk of homelessness for reasons such as behaviours, incomes, drug use, mental health issues, personality disorders, inappropriate "visitors" and losing financial support from WCB and ICBC. The ages of these at-risk clients range from 19 to 59, with the large majority between age 35 and 45.

### **2.7.5 Females**

There were over 67,000 females of all age groups among the at-risk population in Greater Vancouver representing 7.5% of all females region-wide. They share many of the same personal characteristics as their male counterparts, with some important exceptions in terms of employment and income.<sup>56</sup>

*Personal characteristics:* The largest age group of females at-risk of homelessness was between the ages of 25 and 44 years (36%), which is comparable to the male share. Many females were living in dual parent households with children, in lone parent families headed by a woman, and by themselves. Sixty one percent of females were not of visible minority status, similar to the male rate of 60%. Members of this sub-group were as likely to be Aboriginal (5%) as the male at-risk population (5%).

*Education:* Females at-risk of homelessness tended to have the same educational achievement as for at-risk males: 24% of at-risk women had either attended university or obtained a university degree compared to 28% for males.

*Employment and income:* Males and females at-risk of homelessness differ the most in terms of their employment and incomes. Eighty percent of at-risk females over age 15 were employed in the week prior to the 1996 Census, which is comparable with the male employment rate. However, 44% of females indicated that their major source of income was employment compared to 53% of males. Furthermore, at-risk females were much more likely to have a smaller household income than their male counterparts. Only 1% of females earned more than \$40,000 compared to 16% of at-risk males. So, while at-risk males and females have similar employment rates, females earn significantly less.

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<sup>56</sup> This is due to the fact that females of all ages are included in this sub-population.



*Augmenting data:* Domestic violence is one of the factors that has been identified as causing women to be at-risk of homelessness. Research on homelessness has demonstrated that there is a close connection between domestic violence and homelessness. In the 24 hour snapshot survey of the homeless population in Greater Vancouver, 26% of respondents reported that abuse and/or family breakdown was the main reason why they were currently homeless. In the year 1999-2000, 11 of the transition houses in Greater Vancouver served close to 3,400 women and children and turned away an additional 6,500 women and children.<sup>57</sup>

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, when a woman leaves an abusive relationship, she often has nowhere to go. A lack of affordable housing and long waiting lists for assisted housing mean that many women and their children are forced to choose between abuse at home and the streets.<sup>58</sup> According to the San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness, domestic violence victims are particularly susceptible to homelessness because:

- They tend to be in households with financial problems – even though they are in every income level;
- The primary goal of the batterer is often to isolate the victim and make him or her dependent on the abuser for support; and
- Abusers often sabotage their victim’s employment efforts by causing them to be late or absent or harassing them so they quit or are terminated.

It is possible to estimate the number of women in the GVRD who might be at-risk of domestic violence. For example, a Health Canada study on family violence in Canada found that nearly three in ten Canadian women (29%) who had ever been married or lived in a common law relationship had been physically or sexually assaulted by a marital partner at some point during the relationship. A survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 1999 found that 8% of women reported experiencing family violence in the last 5 years.<sup>59</sup> Based on this estimate, close to 33,000 women could be at-risk of domestic violence in the GVRD in the next 5 years, and this may be a conservative estimate.<sup>60 61</sup>

However, it is more difficult to estimate the percentage of women at-risk of domestic violence who are also at-risk of homelessness. There is no information on the extent to

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<sup>57</sup> Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver.

<sup>58</sup> National Coalition for the Homeless – Domestic Violence and Homelessness, April 1999. NCH Fact Sheet #8.

<sup>59</sup> Statistics Canada. 1999. *General Social Survey*

<sup>60</sup> It is important to note that some researchers believe this is an underestimation of the problem because this information was gathered through a telephone survey that excluded respondents who did not speak any of the official languages, people with speech disabilities, Aboriginal and homeless people, and poor people living without a telephone. Furthermore, because these studies provide estimates based on abuse of women by husbands or partners, with whom they are living, it does not include data on women abused by partners with whom they are not living, or by other family members (fathers, mothers, children, siblings of the victim).

<sup>61</sup> According to 1996 census data for the Vancouver CMA (GVRD), there are 411,325 women in married or common law relationships. Eight percent would be 32,906 women.

which women who leave their abusive partners become homeless. In the 1996 report, *No Room of Her Own: A Literature Review on Women and Homelessness*, the author states that “although it is generally understood that women usually lose their housing when they flee from abusive male partners, there is no research on the extent to which this occurs, or perhaps more importantly, the extent to which the fear of becoming impoverished and homeless deters women from leaving unsatisfactory or abusive relationships with men.”<sup>62</sup>

The research project *Silent and Invisible* released in 2001, examined violence and abuse in the lives of women aged fifty and older in British Columbia. The study determined from information gathered from transition house workers and senior’s advocates as well as older abused women that violence against older women, primarily by their spouses, is a continuation of long-term partner abuse. The study found that older women (aged 60 and over) disproportionately under-utilize shelters, representing only 2% of all women served in 1998. Women 50 to 59 were also under represented, representing 6% of shelter users.

The study documents the effort to record the stories of these women through a telephone call-in campaign using toll-free phone lines and mailed stories. The women’s ages ranged from 50 to 87 and the majority of their abusers were their husbands, though sons and daughters were the abusers of some.

The project report makes a series of recommendations in the areas of policy, training, research and development and community development.

#### **2.7.6 Lone parents**

Table 28 profiles lone parents, seniors and youth at-risk of homelessness. Almost 10,000 lone parents were at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD in 1996, representing about 15% of all lone parents region-wide.

*Household type and personal characteristics:* Lone parents at-risk were generally between the ages of 25 and 44 years, had an average age of 39 years and were most likely to be female (88%). Most were living in a single-family household, but 4% lived in households with more than one family. About 10% of lone parents were of Aboriginal ethnicity, and the majority was not a visible minority. The Chinese visible minority group comprises the largest share with 7%. Most lone parents were not immigrants (63%). Thirty seven percent of at-risk lone parents had not graduated from high school, but they had a high rate of other non-university education (32%) and university education (18%).

*Employment and income:* Lone parents who were at-risk of homelessness had a 30% unemployment rate, compared to 21% for all at-risk persons in the GVRD and considerably higher than the rate for Greater Vancouver (8.6%). Almost three quarters of

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<sup>62</sup> Novac, Sylvia. 1996. *No Room of Her Own: A Literature Review on Women and Homelessness*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, p. 20.

lone parents had a household income below \$20,000 and this was most likely to come from government sources, of which income assistance was one.

*Dwellings:* At-risk lone parents were concentrated in single detached dwellings and apartments under 5 stories. Eighteen percent lived in a duplex compared to only 12% for all at-risk households. Thirteen percent of these dwellings were in need of major repair compared to 9% of the dwellings occupied by all at-risk persons.

### **2.7.7 Seniors**

Table 28 shows that there were almost 20,000 persons age 55 and over living in at-risk households in 1996 region-wide. Seniors represented about 15% of all persons at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, and 20% of the overall population. This means that, as a group, seniors were under-represented in the at-risk population.

*Household type and personal characteristics:* Most at-risk seniors were age 65 and over, with an average age of 68 years. At-risk seniors were more likely to be female and living by themselves, and this corresponds to the profile of senior females in the overall regional population. Only 2% of at-risk seniors were of Aboriginal ethnicity, compared to 5% of all at-risk persons. Fifteen percent were a Chinese visible minority and 54% were immigrants, one of the highest rates of all at-risk sub-groups. Similarly, these seniors were more likely to have an activity limitation (31%), compared to 12% for all at-risk persons.

*Education and income:* The figures show that over 50% of Greater Vancouver seniors at-risk of homelessness had not graduated from secondary school. Household income was very low, with 81% earning less than \$20,000. The bulk of this income came from Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS), Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and other government sources.

*Augmenting data:* In discussions with several agencies that provide services for seniors, it was noted that many seniors face additional issues, compared to the rest of the population, which create barriers to accessing safe appropriate affordable housing. These include health, education and language.

Seniors Profile 2000, published by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, states that 58% of the seniors in the Downtown Eastside area live on incomes below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO). The Profile also found that 40% of seniors in the area do not speak English or French, (92% speak Chinese), 62% live alone, 25% of the area's population is over 65 (6,649 in 1997), and only 8% of the seniors have completed high school.

The Ministry of Health and the former Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security suggest<sup>63</sup> using a factor of 3.5% to estimate the population over the age of 65

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<sup>63</sup> Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors and Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security, *Supportive Housing in Supportive Communities*, undated.

who will need supported housing. BC Stats estimates the size of the GVRD population for 2001 who are over 65 at 243,766. This means that currently 8,532 seniors in the GVRD are estimated to need supported housing. Estimates from several GVRD municipalities suggest that only about half that many supported units exist. Of these, the majority are affordable only to middle and upper income individuals. The Province has recently announced 3,500 units for the entire province under its new Assisted Living Program, targeted for the frail elderly and persons with disabilities. Regional allocations of these units will be made in collaboration with local health authorities.

Furthermore, many seniors renting private dwellings have limited options in finding safe, affordable, and appropriate housing in the GVRD according to a recent study done by the Seniors Housing Information Program (SHIP).<sup>64</sup> Using 1999 SHIP data, the study examined seniors in the GVRD that were considering moving and found that 18% of clients cited a health decline as the largest reason for moving. Of these clients, 74% only needed low level supports such as personal care, meals, and cleaning. Due to decreases in funding for low levels of care, many of these seniors with lower incomes remain at-risk in their own homes without the appropriate housing supports.

In addition, 16% of seniors in the SHIP study were considering a move due to an affordability concern. Calculations of the total monthly income and rental amounts of SHIP clients revealed that 54% had a monthly income of between \$750 and \$1,250 and a majority of these clients paid between \$500 and \$700 a month for rent. Therefore, a significant number of clients were paying more than 30% of their income on rent and in some cases more than 50% of their income on rent. Furthermore, some seniors reported rental amounts that were higher than their monthly income, representing seniors in immediate housing crisis.

### **2.7.8 Youth**

The youth described in Table 28 represent all youth in the region who lived in an at-risk household in 1996. It does not mean that they were living independently, although some of them were. In all there were 17,920 youth age (10 to 19 years) living in at-risk households region-wide (9,250 youth, or 52% were between the ages of 10 and 14 years and 8,670 youth were between the ages of 15 and 19 years). Altogether they represented about 8% of the total 1996 GVRD population in these age cohorts.

*Personal characteristics:* The average age of these at-risk youth was 14 years. Most were living in dual parent family households (54%) and 26% were living in female led lone parent households. Males were over-represented among youth aged 10 to 14 years and youth were somewhat more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity (6% and 7%) than all at risk persons (5%). Few at risk youth had activity limitations.

*Employment and income:* At-risk youth tended to live in households with an income at the higher end of the scale. Over 50% of youth were living in households with an income over \$20,000 compared to only 27% of all at-risk individuals. Employment was the

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<sup>64</sup> Seniors Housing Information Program, *The Seniors Housing Development Forecast Tool*, 2001.

major income source (71%) for those at-risk youth with an income. These youth were also more likely to live in a single detached house (50% and 55%) than all at-risk individuals (28%).

*Augmenting data:* In BC, it is estimated that approximately 1% of 10-14 year old youth and another 1% of youth who are 15-19 years old are at a high risk of homelessness independent of their families.<sup>65</sup> Based on population projections for the year 2002 in the GVRD, this means that approximately 2,400 youth in the GVRD are at a high risk of becoming homeless.

There are several factors that cause youth to be at-risk of homelessness. According to the CMHC report, *Environmental Scan on Youth Homelessness*, one of the major causes of youth homelessness is family breakdown.<sup>66</sup> Many youth cannot live at home for a variety of reasons, including family violence and physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth may become homeless because of rejection from their families and friends. Drug addiction and mental health issues are other factors that contribute to homelessness. There is concern that youth who enter street life become entrenched very quickly due to active recruitment by pimps into the sex trade. “Youth, particularly young women, are less likely to escape involvement, and the length of time from entering street life to entrenchment is shortening”.<sup>67</sup> The lack of affordable housing is another issue affecting youth. Even if housing is available, youth often face discrimination by landlords. The poor economy in various parts of Canada has also forced increasing numbers of young people facing economic pressures to move to urban centres such as Halifax and then westward to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. When they arrive in these cities, youth often find themselves without resources and skills, education or experience necessary to obtain employment. The vast majority of homeless youth have not completed high school.

There is also a connection between youth homelessness and the child welfare system. A 2001 study of street youth in Vancouver found that 44% had lived in a foster home or group home.<sup>68</sup> Youth in care who reach the age of 19 are generally unprepared for independent living and require income assistance. Gaps in youth services have been identified, including culturally relevant services, youth detox, emergency and short-term housing, safe houses, long-term housing, and assistance in accessing appropriate housing.

A questionnaire carried out for the North Shore Youth Safe Shelter Steering Committee in December 2000 illustrates some of the issues facing youth at-risk of homelessness. Surveys were conducted with 485 youth in grades 10, 11 and 12 from 8 schools on the North Shore. Of these youth, 133 (27%) responded “yes” to the question: “Have you ever been asked to leave home or decided to leave home for at least 1 night.”

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<sup>65</sup> Ministry for Children and Families, February, 2002.

<sup>66</sup> Kraus, Deborah, Margaret Eberle and Luba Serge. 2001. *Environmental Scan on Youth Homelessness*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

<sup>67</sup> Kraus, Deborah, Margaret Eberle and Luba Serge. 2001. *Environmental Scan on Youth Homelessness*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

<sup>68</sup> The McCreary Centre Society. 2001. *No Place to Call Home: A Profile of Street Youth in British Columbia*.

- Of the “yes” responses, 52% were females and 48% were males.
- 80% chose to leave home and 25% were asked to leave.
- 25% left home once, 24% left home twice, and 45% left home 3 or more times.
- 58% were 12-14 years old when they first left home, and 33% were 15-18 years old.
- 41% stayed away one day, 27% stayed away several days, 5% stayed away 1 week, 9% stayed away 2 weeks, 5% stayed away 1 month and **11% stayed away longer than one month.**
- 72% stayed with friends, 20% stayed with a relative, 11% stayed in a park, 7% went downtown, 3% stayed in a car, 2% in a garage, and 1% in a mall.
- 77% left because of family conflict, 17% because of their drug and alcohol use, 9% because of family drug/alcohol addiction problems, 8% because of mental health issues, and 3% for financial reasons.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Note: Percentages may not add up because some answers represent more than one incident of leaving home, and because respondents may have skipped over some questions.

**Table 28 – At-risk persons by sub-group – lone parents, seniors and youth**

	Lone parents		Persons aged 55+		Youth aged 10 - 14		Youth aged 15 - 19	
Number of Persons in At-risk Households 1996	9,605		19,490		9,250		8,670	
Number of Persons in all Households	65,910		349,585		111,805		111,760	
Number INALHM Persons percent of all Persons in Households	15%		6%		8%		8%	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>								
0 - 9 years	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
10 - 14 years	0	0%	0	0%	9,250	100%	0	0%
15 - 19 years	85	1%	0	0%	0	0%	8,670	100%
20 - 24 years	800	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
25 - 34 years	3,085	32%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
35 - 44 years	3,155	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
45 - 54 years	1,530	16%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
55 - 64 years	625	7%	8,245	42%	0	0%	0	0%
65 years & over	325	3%	11,240	58%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Average Age</b>	39		68		12		17	
<b>Household Type</b>								
Couples family with children	0	0%	2,435	12%	5,540	60%	4,705	54%
Couples family without children	0	0%	4,815	25%	35	0%	215	2%
Female lone parent	8,190	85%	790	4%	2,915	32%	2,270	26%
Male lone parent	1,070	11%	220	1%	390	4%	410	5%
Total multiple-family households	340	4%	1,415	7%	300	3%	315	4%
Non-family household, One person only	0	0%	9,205	47%	0	0%	75	1%
Non-family household, Two or more persons	0	0%	610	3%	70	1%	680	8%
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	1,140	12%	7,795	40%	5,010	54%	4,455	51%
Female	8,470	88%	11,700	60%	4,235	46%	4,215	49%
<b>Total Aboriginal Status (Ethnic)</b>								
Aboriginal	915	10%	330	2%	535	6%	590	7%
Not Aboriginal	8,690	90%	19,155	98%	8,715	94%	8,080	93%

**Table 28, cont'd**

	Lone parents		Persons aged 55+		Youth aged 10 – 14		Youth aged 15 – 19	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Visible minority status</b>								
Black	235	2%	50	0%	120	1%	185	2%
South Asian	335	3%	1,505	8%	845	9%	790	9%
Chinese	710	7%	2,945	15%	2,025	22%	2,215	26%
Other Asian	880	9%	880	5%	1,150	12%	1,145	13%
Latin American	215	2%	65	0%	140	2%	180	2%
Other visible minority	85	1%	95	0%	90	1%	65	1%
Multiple visible minority	60	1%	55	0%	65	1%	100	1%
Not visible minority	7,085	74%	13,885	71%	4,805	52%	3,985	46%
<b>Total – Immigrant Status</b>								
Immigrant	3,430	36%	10,565	54%	3,210	35%	3,765	43%
Non-immigrant	6,075	63%	8,725	45%	5,865	63%	4,705	54%
Non-permanent Resident	105	1%	200	1%	175	2%	200	2%
<b>Total – Disability Status</b>								
One or more activity limitations with no long-term disability	570	6%	1,840	9%	260	3%	260	3%
Long-term disability with no activity limitation	70	1%	280	1%	35	0%	30	0%
One or more activity limitations with long-term disability	940	10%	4,290	22%	145	2%	115	1%
No activity limitations or long-term disability	8,025	84%	13,075	67%	8,810	95%	8,260	95%
<b>Total – Highest Level of Schooling (3)</b>								
Less than secondary school graduation	3,485	0%	1,050	5%			6,275	72%
Secondary school graduation certificate	1,185	12%	2,080	11%	0		1,045	12%
Trades certificate or diploma	210	2%	595	3%	0		55	1%
Other non-university education	3,040	32%	3,300	17%	0		635	7%
University without degree	1,025	11%	1,645	8%	0		650	7%
University with bachelor's degree or higher	650	7%	1,365	7%	0		0	0%
<b>Total – Labour Force Activity (3)</b>								
In Labour Force	5,150	54%	3,670	19%	0		3,110	36%
Employed	3,595	70%	2,885	79%	0		2,250	72%
Unemployed	1,550	30%	785	21%	0		855	27%
Not in Labour Force	4,460	46%	15,820	81%	0		5,565	64%



**Table 28, cont'd**

	Lone parents		Persons aged 55+		Youth aged 10 - 14		Youth aged 15 - 19	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total - Household Income (excludes 0 and negative income)</b>								
Less than \$10,000	820	9%	3,080	16%	755	8%	990	11%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	6,225	65%	10,970	56%	3,720	40%	3,595	41%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	1,730	18%	3,585	18%	3,010	33%	2,535	29%
\$39,000 - \$39,999	790	8%	1,680	9%	1,580	17%	1,370	16%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	45	0%	175	1%	180	2%	175	2%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total - Major Source of Personal Income (4)</b>								
Employment Income	2,510	26%	2,635	14%	0		2,790	71%
Government Transfer Income	6,255		12,995		0		715	
OAS/GIS	200	2%	7,385	40%	0		0	0%
CPP/QPP	220	2%	1,895	10%	0		30	1%
EI	335	3%	225	1%	0		30	1%
Child Tax Credits	415	4%	50	0%	0		0	0%
Other Government Sources	5,080	53%	3,440	19%	0		650	16%
Other Income	825	9%	2,890	16%	0		440	11%
<b>Total - Structural Type of Dwelling</b>								
Single detached	3,090	32%	5,595	29%	5,065	55%	4,345	50%
Semi-detached and row house	1,290	13%	1,350	7%	1,075	12%	1,100	13%
Duplex	1,715	18%	1,635	8%	1,420	15%	1,280	15%
Apartment, has less than 5 storeys	3,035	32%	7,155	37%	1,395	15%	1,550	18%
Apartment, 5 or more storeys	430	4%	3,620	19%	265	3%	385	4%
Other structural type	50	1%	135	1%	30	0%	10	0%
<b>Total - Condition of Dwelling</b>								
Major repairs needed	1,255	13%	1,255	6%	865	9%	850	10%

## 2.8 Risk of homelessness in GVRD sub-regions

Data on households at-risk of homelessness is presented for the six sub-regions that comprise Greater Vancouver: Vancouver, South of Fraser, Inner Municipalities, Northeast Sector, Ridge Meadows, and the North Shore. (See Section 1.4 of this report for description and mapping of these sub-regions.)

In 1996, there were 57,690 households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD and most of them were located in Vancouver (40%), South of Fraser (23%), and the Inner Municipalities (20%) (see Table 29). Vancouver had a larger share of the at-risk population than its share of the overall regional population (32%). These three sub-regions also tended to have a higher ratio of at-risk households to the total number of households in those regions. For example, in Vancouver, almost 1 in 10 households was at-risk of homelessness according to the INALHM definition. The average at-risk household size was between two and three people per household for each sub-region. In addition, the average shelter cost to household income ratio (STIR) was highest in the North Shore and Vancouver and lowest in the Northeast Sector and Ridge Meadows but all were in the mid to high sixty percent range.

Table 29 also shows that while over 23,000 at-risk households lived in the City of Vancouver and UEL, far more at-risk households (about 35,000) lived elsewhere in the GVRD.

**Table 29 – Summary of at-risk households by sub-region**

	Vancouver	South of Fraser	Inner Municipalities	Northeast Sector	Ridge Meadows	North Shore	Total Region
Number of at-risk households	23,185	12,980	11,780	4,075	1,655	4,015	57,690
Share of total at-risk households	40%	22%	20%	7%	3%	7%	100%
Number of all households	219,730	175,215	141,805	58,945	24,225	64,455	684,375
Share of all households	32%	26%	21%	9%	4%	9%	100%
Number of at-risk households as a share of all households	9.5	7	8	6.5	6.8	6.7	8.4
Number of persons in at-risk households	44,680	34,875	28,455	10,400	4,070	8,505	130,985
Average at-risk household size	2	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.6	2	2.3
Average shelter cost to income ratio	67	66	66	64	64	68	66

Table 30 shows the increase in the number of households considered at-risk of homelessness between 1991 and 1996 in each of the GVRD's sub-regions. Large absolute increases occurred in the Vancouver and South of Fraser sub-regions. There was a wide range of growth rates in the number of households at-risk of homelessness, from a high of 82% over five years in the Northeast sub-region to a low of 26% on the North Shore.

**Table 30 – Percent change 1991 to 1996 by Sub-region**

<b>Sub-region</b>	<b>At-risk households 1996</b>	<b>At-risk households 1991</b>	<b>Increase in number of households at-risk 1991 - 1996</b>	<b>Percent increase in number of households at-risk 1991 - 1996</b>
Vancouver	23,185	16,485	6,700	41%
Inner Municipalities	11,780	7,935	3,845	48%
South of Fraser	12,980	8,035	4,945	62%
NorthEast Sector	4,075	2,245	1,830	82%
North Shore	4,015	3,175	840	26%
Ridge Meadows	1,655	1,100	555	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,690</b>	<b>38,975</b>	<b>18,715</b>	<b>48%</b>

Table 31 provides detailed profile information for the Vancouver, South of Fraser and Inner Municipalities sub-regions. Table 32 follows with data for the Northeast Sector, Ridge Meadows and the North Shore sub-regions. Some sub-regional data is based on the household, and some, particularly demographic variables, refer to the characteristics of the primary household maintainer. This census term refers to the first person identified as being responsible for household payments, not all persons in the household. As such, data for primary maintainers cannot be compared with data for all individuals within a household.

### **2.8.1 Vancouver**

Data for the “Vancouver sub-region” in this study includes the City of Vancouver and the University Endowment Lands. According to the figures in Table 31, 23,180 households in Vancouver were considered to be at-risk of homelessness in 1996, representing 9.5% of all Vancouver households at that time. Fifty seven percent of primary maintainers in these households were male and 43% were female. About half of these individuals were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. The majority of at-risk households consisted of one person (54%), although 25% were families with children (14% couples with children, 10% female lone parents, and 1% male lone parents), and 11% were non-family households with two or more persons.

Seventy percent of the primary maintainers in at-risk Vancouver households were not considered a visible minority. The largest percentage with visible minority status was Chinese (14%), followed by Other Asian (7%). (Other Asian includes Korean, Japanese,

Southeast Asian, Filipino, and Arab/West Asian.) Forty-one percent of the households at-risk in Vancouver were immigrants and 2% were non-permanent residents.

Almost three-quarters of at-risk households had moved in the last five years. The largest share of primary maintainers had not graduated from high school (30%) followed by those with non-university education. Thirty three percent of the primary maintainers of at-risk households had attended university, but only 18% had completed a bachelors degree or higher. Twenty one percent of the primary household maintainers had an activity limitation or long-term disability.

Twenty three percent of primary maintainers were unemployed and 40% were not in the labour force. Half of the at-risk Vancouver households had an income of between \$10,000 and \$19,999, followed by 32% with an income of less than \$10,000. The major sources of income were government transfer payments (47%) and employment (45%). Thirty two percent of at-risk households in Vancouver reported other government sources as the major source.

The vast majority (82%) of at-risk households in Vancouver were renters. Forty-three percent of households were living in an apartment with less than five storeys, followed by 24% in apartments with five or more storeys (both of which include SROs). Ten percent of the dwellings occupied by at-risk households needed major repairs, the highest of all sub-regions.

### **2.8.2 South of Fraser**

The South of Fraser sub-region consists of Surrey, Delta, City of Langley, Township of Langley, and White Rock. Of the 12,980 at-risk households in the South of Fraser region, 53% of primary maintainers were male and 47% were female (see Table 31). The majority of maintainers were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Compared to Vancouver, this sub-region had more dual parent family households with children at-risk of homelessness (28%), and proportionally fewer one person households (29%).

South of Fraser had a high percentage of South Asian primary maintainers compared to other regions; however, 73% of primary maintainers in at-risk households in this region were not a visible minority. Thirty-six percent were immigrants. Most at-risk households in the South of Fraser had moved within the last five years. Thirty two percent of primary maintainers of at-risk households had not graduated from high school, and 26% had obtained some other non-university education.

Eighteen percent of primary maintainers in at-risk households in the South Fraser sub-region were unemployed at the time of the Census. Over half of these households had a household income between \$10,000 and \$19,999, and 24% had an income of between \$20,000 and \$29,999. Forty-nine percent reported employment and 44% reported government transfers as the major source of income. Twenty-four percent of at-risk households in the South of Fraser region received income from other government sources and 12% received Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS).

The majority (57%) of at-risk households in South of Fraser were renters compared to 43% owners. They were more likely to live in a single detached house (44%) followed by apartments less than five storeys and duplexes. Nine percent of the homes occupied by at-risk households in South of Fraser needed major repairs.

### **2.8.3 Inner Municipalities**

The Inner Municipalities sub-region is comprised of the municipalities of Burnaby, New Westminster and Richmond. There were a total of 11,770 at-risk households in the Inner Municipalities in 1996. 54% of primary maintainers were male and 47% of primary maintainers were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. A significant percentage of primary maintainers of at-risk households in the Inner Municipalities were over the age of 65 years (20%). One person households made up the largest share of at-risk households (38%) followed by dual parent families with children (27%).

A significant percentage (21%) of at-risk households in the Inner Municipalities were of Chinese visible minority status and almost half (48%) of all at-risk households were immigrants. Again, the majority of households had moved within the last five years. The two most frequently reported levels of educational attainment were 'not graduated from high school' (32%) and 'other non-university education' (26%). A significant share (28%) of these maintainers had attended university.

Seventeen percent of at-risk household maintainers in the Inner Municipalities were unemployed at the time of the census, and a significant percentage of households were not in the labour force (42%). More than half of at-risk households were earning between \$10,000 and \$19,999 annually, followed by households making between \$20,000 and \$29,999 (20%). Eighteen percent of households had an income of less than \$10,000. The major source of income for at-risk households in the Inner Municipalities was roughly split between employment (48%) and government transfers (41%). The majority of at-risk households lived in apartments and were renting (65%), although 35% were owners.

**Table 31 – At-risk profile by sub-region - Vancouver, South of Fraser and Inner Municipalities**

	<b>Vancouver</b>		<b>South of Fraser</b>		<b>Inner Municipalities</b>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	13235	57%	6825	53%	6370	54%
Female	9945	43%	6155	47%	5410	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12980</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11780</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>						
15-24	2370	10%	1095	8%	900	8%
25-34	5990	26%	3295	25%	2495	21%
35-44	5640	24%	3450	27%	3005	26%
45-54	4200	18%	1935	15%	2010	17%
55-64	2055	9%	1240	10%	1055	9%
65+	2935	13%	1955	15%	2300	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23190</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12970</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11765</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Household Type</b>						
Couples family with children	3150	14%	3580	28%	3120	27%
Couples family without children	1890	8%	1615	12%	1280	11%
Male lone parent	335	1%	330	3%	245	2%
Female lone parent	2335	10%	2625	20%	1590	14%
Multiple-family households	295	1%	390	3%	245	2%
Non-family households, one person only	12615	54%	3775	29%	4425	38%
Non-family households, two or more persons	2540	11%	665	5%	865	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23160</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12980</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11770</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Visible Minorities</b>						
Aboriginal (ethnic)	1565	7%	655	5%	510	4%
Black	460	2%	115	1%	335	3%
South Asian	805	3%	1465	11%	400	3%
Chinese	3225	14%	425	3%	2435	21%
Other Asian	1725	7%	595	5%	805	7%
Latin American	355	2%	110	1%	95	1%
Other visible minority	100	0%	105	1%	55	0%
Multiple visible minority	120	1%	45	0%	80	1%
Not visible minority	14825	64%	9505	73%	7045	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13020</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11760</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Immigrant Status</b>						
Immigrant	9520	41%	4715	36%	5640	48%
Non-immigrant	13135	57%	8200	63%	5910	50%
Non-permanent Resident	525	2%	65	1%	235	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12980</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11785</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 31, cont'd**

	Vancouver		South of Fraser		Inner Municipalities	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Mobility Status (5 Year) of Primary Household Maintainer</b>						
5 Years Ago - Movers	16905	73%	9350	72%	8390	71%
5 Years Ago - Non-Movers	6280	27%	3630	28%	3380	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23185</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12980</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11770</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Highest Level of Schooling of Primary Household Maintainer</b>						
Less than grade 9	2355	10%	1135	9%	1080	9%
Grade 9-13	4545	20%	3730	29%	2635	22%
Secondary school graduation certificate	2260	10%	1410	11%	1375	12%
Trades certificate or diploma	465	2%	435	3%	345	3%
Other non-university education	5720	25%	3855	30%	3105	26%
University without degree	3565	15%	1465	11%	1600	14%
University with bachelors degree or higher	4265	18%	930	7%	1620	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23175</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12960</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11760</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Disability Status of Primary Household Maintainer</b>						
One or more activity limitation with no long-term disability	1195	5%	690	5%	660	6%
Long-term disability with no activity limitation	390	2%	135	1%	95	1%
One or more activity limitation with long-term disability	3285	14%	1850	14%	1555	13%
No activity limitations or long-term disability	18310	79%	10285	79%	9465	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12960</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11775</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 31, cont'd**

	Vancouver		South of Fraser		Inner Municipalities	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Tenure</b>						
Rented	18,995	82%	7,455	57%	7,675	65%
Owned	4,195	18%	5,520	43%	4,105	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,190</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,975</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,780</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Labour Force Status of Primary Maintainer</b>						
In Labour Force	13,845	100%	8,035	100%	6,820	100%
Employed	10,620	77%	6,620	82%	5,645	83%
Unemployed	3,225	23%	1,420	18%	1,175	17%
Not in Labour Force	9,335	454%	4,935	398%	4,955	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,180</b>	<b>1128%</b>	<b>12,975</b>	<b>1046%</b>	<b>11,775</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Household Income</b>						
Less than \$10,000	7,410	32%	1,605	12%	2,120	18%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	11,590	50%	6,565	51%	6,250	53%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	2,925	13%	3,075	24%	2,315	20%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	1,135	5%	1,555	12%	940	8%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	115	0%	175	1%	145	1%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,175</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,975</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,770</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Major Source of Income</b>						
Employment	10,460	45%	6,395	49%	5,695	48%
Government Transfer Income	11,005	47%	5,730	44%	4,875	41%
OAS/GIS	2,060	9%	1,595	12%	1,650	14%
CPP/QPP	730	3%	525	4%	445	4%
EI	745	3%	425	3%	320	3%
Child Tax Credits	125	1%	45	0%	110	1%
Other Government Sources	7,355	32%	3,125	24%	2,340	20%
Other Income	1,705	7%	865	7%	1,210	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,170</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,990</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,780</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Structural Dwelling Type</b>						
Single detached	3,595	16%	5,650	44%	3,145	27%
Semi-detached and row house	810	3%	1,170	9%	1,355	12%
Duplex	3,165	14%	1,840	14%	860	7%
Apartment, less than 5 storeys	10,005	43%	3,795	29%	4,845	41%
Apartment, 5 or more storeys	5,535	24%	345	3%	1,550	13%
Other structural type	55	0%	165	1%	25	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,165</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,965</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,780</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Condition of Dwelling</b>						
Major Repairs Needed	2,420	10%	1,205	9%	982	8%



#### **2.8.4 Northeast Sector**

In the Northeast sub-region consisting of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Belcarra and Anmore, there were 4,065 households at-risk of homelessness in 1996 (see Table 32). 55% of these households had a male primary maintainer, and 54% of these maintainers were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. The largest share of at-risk households in this sub-region consisted of one person (32%) and dual parent families with children (27%), although a significant percentage of at-risk households in the region were headed by female lone parents (18%).

The majority of primary maintainers in at-risk households in the Northeast Sector were not a visible minority (72%). Chinese was the largest visible minority group of primary maintainers (13%). Thirty-eight percent of at-risk primary maintainers in this subregion were immigrants and almost three-quarters had moved within the last five years. Most maintainers of at-risk households had obtained other non-university education (32%), followed by 29% who had attended high school but not graduated. Thirteen percent of primary maintainers had one or more activity limitations with a long-term disability and 80% had none.

Fifty-nine percent of households at-risk of homelessness in the Northeast Sector were renters. Eighty-four percent of primary maintainers were employed. Most household incomes were between \$10,000 and \$29,999 although 17% had a household income of less than \$10,000. Over half of at-risk households reported employment as their major source of income and of households receiving government transfers as a major source of income, other government sources and Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) were most frequently cited. Thirty-seven percent of at-risk households resided in a single detached house, followed by 33% in apartments under five storeys. Major repairs were needed in 9% of dwellings occupied by at-risk households in the Northeast Sector.

#### **2.8.5 Ridge Meadows**

A total of 1,660 households were considered at-risk of homelessness in 1996 in the Ridge Meadows sub-region (Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows) (see Table 32). Fifty-four percent of the primary maintainers of these households were male and over half were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Again, the major household type was one person households, followed by families with children. Nineteen percent of households were female lone parent.

In Ridge Meadows maintainers in at-risk households were generally not a visible minority (the lowest of all sub-regions) and a very low percentage were immigrants (22%). Seventy-three percent of primary maintainers in these households had moved within the last five years. The largest share of at-risk maintainers had not graduated from secondary school (37%) and fewer had attained a university education compared to other sub-regions. Over three quarters of primary household maintainers had no activity

limitations or long-term disabilities, although 22% had either a disability or activity limitation or both.

Fifty-three percent of at-risk households in this sub-region were renters and 47% were owners. Of the 66% of primary household maintainers in the labour force, 85% were employed and 15% were unemployed (lower than the regional at-risk rate of unemployment). The largest share (45%) of at-risk households in this sub-region had an income between \$10,000 and \$19,999. Half of at-risk households in Ridge Meadows cited employment as the major source of income and 46% cited government transfers of some kind. Over half of the at-risk households were residing in single detached houses (much higher than the 28% of all at-risk households region-wide) and 9% of dwellings occupied by at-risk households in Ridge Meadows needed major repairs.

### **2.8.6 North Shore**

Out of the 4,010 households at-risk of homelessness in the North Shore sub-region (North Vancouver City, North Vancouver City, West Vancouver, Lions Bay and Bowen Island) 49% of primary maintainers were male and 24% were between the ages of 35 and 44 years (see Table 32). Seniors appear to be over-represented among the at-risk population on the North Shore as there were proportionally more primary maintainers over the age of 65 in this sub-region than elsewhere.

The majority (78%) of primary maintainers in households at-risk were not a visible minority and 'Other Asian' was the largest of visible minorities there (12%). Forty-five percent of the at-risk household maintainers were immigrants, which is among the higher concentrations of at-risk immigrants in the sub-regions. Sixty-four percent of these at-risk households had moved within the last five years. A considerable share of maintainers in at-risk households here had attended university (39%).

Among at-risk households on the North Shore two thirds were renters and one third were owners. Only twelve percent of primary maintainers were considered unemployed (the lowest rate of all sub-regions). Over half of the at-risk households had a household income between \$10,000 and \$19,999. Employment was cited as the major source of income for 52% of households, although 14% reported Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) and 14% other income, which is consistent with the relatively large group of seniors among at-risk primary maintainers. The majority of households at-risk of homelessness lived in apartments; 34% lived in apartments under five storeys and 19% lived in apartments five or more stories. Seven percent of dwellings occupied by these households needed major repairs.

**Table 32 – At-risk profile by sub-regions –Northeast Sector, Ridge Meadows and North Shore**

	Northeast Sector		Ridge Meadows		North Shore	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Gender (primary maintainer)</b>						
Male	2,215	55%	885	54%	1,960	49%
Female	1,860	46%	770	47%	2,050	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age (primary maintainer)</b>						
15-24	325	8%	120	7%	210	5%
25-34	1,095	27%	450	27%	660	17%
35-44	1,110	27%	485	29%	970	24%
45-54	650	16%	200	12%	750	19%
55-64	375	9%	160	10%	560	14%
65+	505	12%	230	14%	855	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,060</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,005</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Household Type</b>						
Couples family with children	1,115	27%	480	29%	805	20%
Couples family without children	500	12%	205	12%	600	15%
Male lone parent	70	2%	25	2%	55	1%
Female lone parent	725	18%	310	19%	595	15%
Multiple-family households	80	2%	15	1%	25	1%
Non-family households, one person only	1,315	32%	530	32%	1,670	42%
Non-family households, two or more persons	250	6%	85	5%	245	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,055</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,995</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Visible Minority Status (primary maintainer)</b>						
Black	0	0%	10	1%	35	1%
South Asian	80	2%	15	1%	95	2%
Chinese	535	13%	35	2%	175	4%
Other Asian	285	7%	65	4%	480	12%
Latin American	45	1%	0	0%	25	1%
Other visible minority	20	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Multiple visible minority	20	0%	15	1%	0	0%
Not visible minority	3,090	76%	1,520	92%	3,190	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Immigrant Status (primary maintainer)</b>						
Immigrant	1,540	38%	360	22%	1,780	45%
Non-immigrant	2,465	61%	1,290	78%	2,120	53%
Non-permanent Resident	60	1%	0	0%	95	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,065</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,995</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mobility Status (5 Year) (primary maintainer)</b>						
5 Years Ago - Movers	3,010	74%	1,205	73%	2,570	64%
5 Years Ago - Non-Movers	1,060	26%	450	27%	1,440	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 32, cont'd**

	<b>Northeast Sector</b>		<b>Ridge Meadows</b>		<b>North Shore</b>	
<b>Highest Level of Schooling (primary maintainer)</b>						
Less than grade 9	240	6%	145	9%	160	4%
Grade 9-13	925	23%	470	29%	645	16%
Secondary school graduation certificate	520	13%	175	11%	500	13%
Trades certificate or diploma	115	3%	75	5%	100	3%
Other non-university education	1,305	32%	545	33%	1,070	27%
University without degree	495	12%	155	9%	765	19%
University with bachelors degree or higher	445	11%	95	6%	790	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,045</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,030</b>	<b>101%</b>
<b>Disability Status (primary maintainer)</b>						
One or more activity limitation with no long-term disability	250	6%	120	7%	270	7%
Long-term disability with no activity limitation	40	1%	10	1%	35	1%
One or more activity limitation with long-term disability	525	13%	230	14%	425	11%
No activity limitations or long-term disability	3,260	80%	1,290	78%	3,265	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,995</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 32, cont'd**

	Northeast Sector		Ridge Meadows		North Shore	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Tenure</b>						
Rented	2,385	59%	885	53%	2,635	66%
Owned	1,705	42%	770	47%	1,375	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,090</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Labour Force Status (primary maintainer)</b>						
In Labour Force	2,615		1,080		2,535	
<i>Employed</i>	2,200	84%	920	85%	2,240	88%
<i>Unemployed</i>	415	16%	160	15%	295	12%
Not in Labour Force	1,455	36%	580	35%	1,475	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Household Income</b>						
Less than \$10,000	700	17%	295	18%	445	11%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1,975	48%	745	45%	2,200	55%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	1,010	25%	350	21%	900	22%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	360	9%	245	15%	420	10%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	30	1%	20	1%	50	1%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,075</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,015</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Major Source of Income</b>						
Employment	2,260	55%	830	50%	2,080	52%
Government Transfer Income	1,500	37%	760	46%	1,360	34%
OAS/GIS	390	10%	185	11%	545	14%
CPP/QPP	90	2%	70	4%	190	5%
EI	195	5%	50	3%	115	3%
Child Tax Credits	40	1%	10	1%	0	0%
Other Government Sources	780	19%	435	26%	505	13%
Other Income	310	8%	75	5%	570	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,010</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Dwelling Type</b>						
Single detached	1,510	37%	840	51%	1,200	30%
Semi-detached and row house	550	13%	265	16%	290	7%
Duplex	490	12%	150	9%	405	10%
Apartment, less than 5 storeys	1,355	33%	350	21%	1,345	34%
Apartment, 5 or more storeys	140	3%	30	2%	750	19%
Other structural type	40	1%	20	1%	10	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,085</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Condition of Dwelling</b>						
Major Repairs Needed	385	9%	155	9%	295	7%

## 2.9 Summary – Part I – Population at-risk of homelessness

This profile uses the INALHM concept applied to 1996 Census data as a measure of the risk of homelessness.<sup>70</sup> This measure of risk best describes those persons and households with economic circumstances that may lead to homelessness, including those living in inadequate or unsuitable accommodation. It does not capture the entire population at-risk of homelessness. For example, a woman at-risk of homelessness due to violence in her home would not be included in these figures if her present household were not also at economic risk of homelessness.

### 2.9.1 Magnitude and trends

The figures show an alarming increase in the number of households and persons in households at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD between 1991 and 1996: an increase from approximately 80,000 to over 131,000 people (Table 3), and an increase from 39,005 to 57,685 households (see Table 4). This increase in the population at-risk of homelessness may be attributed to: strong regional population growth over the study period (14%) and generally worsening conditions for owners and renters. For example, the average value of dwellings in the region grew 14.2% between 1991 and 1996 (constant dollars). Rental rates for bachelor apartments in Greater Vancouver also increased by almost 13% in real terms over the period.<sup>71</sup> Incomes on the other hand, showed a decline. From 1990 to 1995 average (real) household income declined by 4.3% in the GVRD. In addition, very low vacancy rates in the region between 1991 (2.2%) and 1996 (1.1%) suggest a limited supply of rental housing.

Similar comparative data showed that residents of the GVRD are relatively worse off in terms of the risk of homelessness compared to their counterparts in Toronto and Calgary. (see Section 2.2). Renter households are over-represented among those at-risk, comprising almost two thirds of the GVRD's at-risk households, whereas renter households represented 41% of total GVRD households in 1996. Approximately one in seven renter households in the GVRD is precariously housed and at-risk of homelessness. Owner households, however, represent a considerable share of this at-risk population, about one third.

### 2.9.2 Key Characteristics

People between the ages of 25 and 44 years represented the largest share of people at-risk of homelessness in 1996. Almost 60% of the 130,000 *people* at-risk lived in dual and single parent family households with children, a ratio that was even higher among those living in owner households. In contrast, among all at-risk *households*, single person

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<sup>70</sup> In core housing Need and spending At Least 50% of their household income for Shelter (Modified). Based on CMHC. May 2001. *Research Highlights. Special Studies on 1996 Census Data: Canadian Households in Core Housing Need and Spending at Least Half of their Income on Shelter*. Socio-economic Series. Issue 55-7.

<sup>71</sup> CMHC Rental Market Report. BC & Yukon Region.

households predominated. While lack of education can be said to be a factor in risk of homelessness and many at-risk individuals had not completed high school, there was also a significant number who had attended or were attending university. People of Aboriginal ethnicity were over-represented among those at-risk of homelessness compared to the GVRD as a whole (5% compared to 1.7%), especially in renter households. Most at-risk persons were Caucasian, although approximately 40% of persons in at-risk households were members of a visible minority, and among these persons, the largest visible minority group was Chinese. People in at-risk households moved frequently, and tended to live in an apartment. They had a high unemployment rate of 21%, however, almost half of at-risk persons (48%) had employment income as their major income source.

### 2.9.3 Differences between at-risk owners and renters

There were some obvious differences between owner and renter households at-risk of homelessness, both in terms of incidence of risk and profile characteristics. Firstly, more renter households than owner households were at-risk, and they represented a greater share of at-risk households compared to their distribution among all GVRD households. This disparity in the incidence of at-risk households among renter and owner households may be explained by the fact that the INALHM data is measure of *economic* risk, and that the economic disparity between renter and owner households in Greater Vancouver has increased between 1991 and 1996, when measured by average household income, as well as by household wealth/assets.<sup>72</sup> But, the greatest increase in the number of households at-risk between 1991 and 1996 occurred among owner households: an increase of 88% or 8,260 owner households.

At-risk renter households:

- were most likely to consist either of one person (50%) or be single or dual parent families with children (30%);
- had lower household incomes than owner households, by 37%; and,
- spent less of their income on shelter (65%) than owner households (68%).

When compared with people living in at-risk owner households, people living in at-risk renter households:

- had similar levels of educational attainment;
- were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity;
- were less likely to be a member of a visible minority group;
- were less likely to be immigrants;
- were more likely to be disabled;
- were more likely to have moved in the previous year;
- had a higher unemployment rate;
- were more likely to report government transfer payments as their major income source; and

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<sup>72</sup> Source: David Hulchanski, *A Tale of Two Canadas Homeowners Getting Richer, Renters Getting Poorer*. University of Toronto Urban and Community Studies, August 2001.

- were more likely to live in an apartment that needed major repairs.

#### 2.9.4 Comparison with all GVRD residents

Compared to all GVRD residents, the population at-risk of homelessness:

- mirrored GVRD residents in terms of the share of population age 25 – 44 years (36% versus 35%)
- had a much lower average household income (\$16,303 versus \$54,055)
- was less likely to have completed high school (35% versus 28%)
- was more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity (5% compared to 1.7%)
- was more likely to be an immigrant (41% compared to 35%)
- was more likely to have moved in the previous 5 years (69% versus 44%)
- was more likely to be unemployed (21% versus 8.6%)
- was more likely to live in an apartment as opposed to a single detached dwelling (38% compared to 25%).

#### 2.9.5 Sub-groups at-risk of homelessness

The profile examined the situation of six specific sub-populations of individuals at-risk of homelessness: women, Aboriginal people, seniors, immigrants, lone parents and persons with disabilities. Of these, the two largest sub-groups of individuals at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD were females (67,435, or 51% of the total at-risk population) and immigrants (53,100, or 41% of the total at-risk population). However, the incidence of these two sub-groups among at-risk individuals may be linked to their relative share of the overall population. On the other hand, although smaller in absolute numbers, Aboriginal persons, lone parents and persons with a disability had the highest incidence of risk. For example, 15% of all Aboriginal persons in the GVRD were at-risk of homelessness according to these figures. Likewise, 15% of all GVRD lone parents, and 10% of all persons with a disability in the GVRD were at-risk of homeless in 1996.

Some notable findings:

- A significant share of **Aboriginal** persons at-risk of homelessness were children under the age of 10 years (25% or 1,748 persons), a much higher share than for all at-risk individuals (16%).
- **Aboriginal household maintainers** were between the ages of 25 and 44 years, the largest share were single person households, and 43% had not graduated from high school;
- **Females and immigrants** comprised the largest sub-groups among those at-risk of homelessness in 1996, representing 51% and 41% respectively of the 131,000 at-risk persons in the GVRD.
- **Most at-risk immigrants** were living in households comprised of dual parent families with children (52%).
- **Persons with a disability** who were at-risk of homelessness comprised 13% of all at-risk persons in the GVRD. Seniors made up a relatively large share of this group, about 37%. They were more likely to be female and living by themselves.



- Persons with a disability also had a higher unemployment rate (35%) than at-risk persons generally.
- There were over 67,000 **females** of all age groups among the at-risk population, 7.5% of women region-wide.
  - Fifteen percent of all **lone parents** in the region were at-risk of homelessness. They were 39 years old on average and were most likely to be female (88%). Most were living in a single-family household, but 4% lived in a multi-family household.
  - **Seniors** age 55 and over represented about 15% of all persons at-risk of homelessness in the GVRD, but 20% of the overall GVRD population, meaning they were under-represented in the at-risk population. Most at-risk seniors were age 65 and over, with an average age of 68 years. At-risk seniors were more likely to be female and living by themselves.
  - At-risk **youth** had an average age of 14 years. Most were living in family households with their parents (54%), males were over-represented among youth aged 10 to 14 years and older youth were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity.

#### 2.9.6 Sub-regions

The Vancouver sub-region (see Section 1.4 for identification of this study's sub-regions) had the largest number of households at-risk of homelessness in 1996 and possessed the largest share of all at-risk households (40%). This is not surprising since Vancouver also had the largest share of all regional households in 1996 (32%). These at-risk households comprised almost 10% of all Vancouver households, exceeding the regional incidence of 8.4%. The South of Fraser sub-region had the second largest share of households at-risk of homelessness (22%), slightly lower than its share of all regional households (26%). At-risk households in both Vancouver and the North Shore paid the largest share of their income for rent compared to the regional average. Growth in the number of households at-risk of homelessness between 1991 and 1996 ranged from 26% in the North Shore sub-region to a high of 82% in the Northeast Sector sub-region, compared to a regional rate of 48% over five years.

Some notable findings:

- At-risk households in the **Vancouver sub-region** were most likely to consist of one or two unrelated persons living in rental apartment accommodation. Their unemployment rate (23%) exceeded the rate for all at-risk households and this is reflected in the 32% of households earning less than \$10,000 per year. Primary household maintainers in this sub-region were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity than elsewhere in the region.
- In the **South of Fraser sub-region**, at-risk households were more likely to be families with children, and a significant share were female led lone parent households. They were also more likely to be living in a single detached house which they owned.

- Primary maintainers of at-risk households in the **Inner Municipalities** were more likely to be over the age of 65 (20%) compared to 9% regionally and of Chinese visible minority status (21%) compared to 15% regionally.
- More at-risk households in the **Northeast Sector** reported employment as their major income source (55%) compared to elsewhere in the region.
- The highest share of non-visible minority maintainers of at-risk households was located in the **Ridge Meadows sub-region**.
- More at-risk household maintainers in the **North Shore** were over age 55 than any other sub-region (35% compared to 15% regionally). These households were more likely to report Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) or pension as their major income source.

## Part II

### 3 Homelessness in the GVRD

This section presents an estimate of the number of homeless people in the GVRD on one day, and a profile of this homeless population from interview data generated by this one-day survey conducted in January, 2002. Also, this section presents some preliminary figures showing the number of persons who used shelters over a period of almost one year in 2001.

The first estimate measures homelessness in the region at one 'point in time', in this case, one day. The point in time, 24-hour homeless snapshot estimates the number of people who are currently homeless and provides a profile of their characteristics. Included are individuals who slept outside or 'on the street', in three types of emergency accommodation, or who stayed with someone else temporarily where they do not pay rent and do not have assured long term accommodation (e.g. couch surfing) on the evening of January 14, 2002. However, of the individuals who were 'couch surfing' that evening, only those who also used a 'homeless' service or spent time in a location with homeless people, were likely to be found. Others who couch surf, who do not access services or spend time in 'homeless' locations, would not be enumerated using this approach.

The second approach, called period prevalence, measures the extent of homelessness over a *period* of time, in this case, 11 months. That is, it defines a homeless person as anyone who had at least one incidence of homelessness that resulted in the use of an emergency shelter for one day or more anytime between January and November 2001. The estimate is based on preliminary data reported through the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and is subject to some severe limitations. (See Section 3.7.2). This information is presented to show the difference between point in time and period prevalence measures; it is not an estimate of the number of homeless people using shelters in one year.

#### 3.1 Point in time estimate (one day)

##### 3.1.1 Methods, definitions and data sources

A 24-hour homeless snapshot survey was conducted on January 14 and 15, 2002 to obtain a one-day count (*point in time*) and a profile of the homeless population in Greater Vancouver. It consisted of two components designed to enumerate both the sheltered homeless and the street homeless, that is, those homeless people who do not stay in emergency accommodation.

In the first component (the night time survey), staff at emergency shelters, transition houses and safe houses were asked to complete a brief survey form listing anonymously all the people who stayed with them on the night of January 14, 2002 and providing some basic demographic characteristics for each client. The night-time component was

supplemented with a daytime component designed to enumerate those homeless who did not stay in one of three types of emergency accommodation the night before, but who visited other locations used by homeless people. On January 15th during the daytime, interviewers approached clients of services and in locations such as drop in centres, bottle depots, meal programs, and parks known to be frequented by the homeless. (These daytime locations were identified in advance to researchers by local community agencies and service-providers.) Individuals at these locations were asked a series of screening questions to determine if a) they had already answered the survey, b) they were homeless and c) they did not stay in emergency accommodation covered by the night-time component. If the interviewee qualified, the interviewer would complete the questionnaire. Night-time providers were asked to fax in their completed forms at the end of the evening and the daytime interview results were gathered.<sup>73</sup>

Forty temporary accommodation providers in Greater Vancouver participated in the nighttime survey (28 shelters, 2 safe houses and 10 transition houses), and, for the daytime component, interviews took place in approximately 45 homeless service locations and congregating areas<sup>74</sup> across the region. Emergency shelters serve a range of clients who are without shelter for a variety of reasons. Safe houses serve youth, usually under the age of majority (19 years), many of whom are sexually exploited and require safe overnight accommodation. Transition houses provide temporary accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Some emergency shelters serve a particular population group, for example, families or adult males, and they vary in the extent of service provided. This is important because the particular program provided by the facility may determine the character of its homeless clients. There were 623 shelter beds in Greater Vancouver at the time of the survey: of these, the largest share of beds is devoted to men (42%), followed by individuals with multiple needs such as mental illness, addictions and other serious issues (22%). Some of these beds are offered as part of the Cold-Wet Weather Strategy (CWWS), and are available in the winter months on a minimal barrier basis. Therefore, the number of available beds, and clients served in each (i.e. the shelter capacity) determines the profile of the client population. Table 33 shows the distribution of emergency shelters that participated in the snapshot by type of client served.

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<sup>73</sup> Detailed information about this method, including a discussion of coverage, limitations and documentation, are presented in Appendix D.

<sup>74</sup> A congregating area may consist of several 'locations' within a general geographic area, for example, in front of the drug store, liquor store, Wendy's etc. on Denman Street.

**Table 33 - Participating shelters by client type**

<b>Client type</b>	<b>Number of beds</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Adults	52	8%
All	6	1%
Families	27	4%
High needs	137	22%
Men	262	42%
Women	34	5%
Women and children	73	12%
Youth	32	5%
Total	623	100%

Capacity can exceed the number of beds because some shelters use mats to accommodate additional people.

Includes Cold/Wet Weather Strategy (CWWS) beds.

### **3.1.2 Limitations**

Homelessness by its very nature is a difficult phenomenon to measure. Any method is bound to be less successful at reaching those homeless people who live ‘rough’ in isolated areas and people who are ‘couching surfing’ and not using homeless services or spending time where homeless people congregate. This initiative was especially challenging in that the geographic scope for this research was vast: it was the entire Greater Vancouver region, not just the urban core as with most homeless counts. The 24-hour homeless snapshot survey was not a “census” as it did not enumerate every homeless person in the region on January 14/15, 2002. That being said, the information obtained from the 24-hour snapshot survey provides the best available current data, using established methods. A detailed discussion of method, coverage issues and limitations is contained in Appendix D. A summary of these appears here.

Although the snapshot coverage is good, there are some limitations. Specifically, some transition house and safe house agencies did not participate in the nighttime component, thus under-counting the sheltered homeless. If missing facilities were full on January 14<sup>th</sup>, this under-coverage would amount to between 40 and 45 individuals. In addition, information is not available about homeless families who may have been placed by the Ministry of Human Resources temporarily in hotel/motel accommodation that night.

With respect to the daytime component, there are two potential sources of under-coverage, both of which are discussed in more detail in the Appendix D:

- **those who could not be enumerated by the methodology** –This refers to those who were not sheltered on January 14 and who passed through none of the pre-identified ‘homeless’ locations during their peak enumeration hours. These are likely to be people who sleep ‘rough’ and who avoid contact with services, at least during peak hours. They may have been found in the early morning hours at their isolated sleeping

locations (locations that were considered not appropriate to seek out for this exercise). The other group that falls into this category is those staying temporarily with others on January 14/15 and who had no need for services. Missing or 'unidentified' homeless locations could also contribute to potential undercoverage using this approach, although extensive efforts were made to pre-identify locations in consultation with local key informants. The size of this group is unknown.

- **those who slipped through due to a lack of rigor in the screening** – With more resources and better training to do a more thorough screening, some additional unsheltered homeless people would have been identified. Screening was carried out in a comprehensive way in Vancouver, but interviewers in some suburban locations chose to approach only known homeless persons, resulting in fewer screened persons, and potentially missing some homeless persons. However, these persons might number in the 20s or 30s, but not the 100s.<sup>75</sup>

In total, the known under-coverage amounts to between 60 and 85 homeless individuals.

The item non-response for the snapshot survey questions ranged from negligible for age and gender, to approximately 20% for some of the other questions. One men's shelter reported only the number of individuals and their age. Also, one rather large cold wet weather shelter reported only the number of individuals and their gender on snapshot night, but no other variables. To facilitate comparison, the tabulation is made only for complete records for each of the specific characteristics. *However, it is important to note that the characteristics of those shelter clients who did not respond to a question are not necessarily the same as those who did respond.*

The (2002) 24-hour homeless snapshot survey is similar to the BC Shelter Client Snapshot, which took place on a province-wide basis in November 1999. However, the November 1999 estimate sought information only from those individuals staying in emergency shelters and safe houses. It did not include transition house clients, nor did it attempt to enumerate the street homeless. Relying on emergency shelter data is the most common method of counting and describing the homeless. It does not however capture the full extent of homelessness. It excludes those who do not use shelters but sleep 'rough' and specific sub-groups such as women, youth and Aboriginal people for whom there are few suitable shelters. The 2002 snapshot design was based on the 1999 design to allow for comparison.

### **3.1.3 Point in time estimate**

The 24-hour homeless snapshot survey enumerated a total of 1,050 homeless adults and unaccompanied youth, and 71 accompanied children, for a total of 1,121 people during a 24-hour period on January 14 and 15, 2002. (See Table 34) Most of the individuals were enumerated through emergency shelters and are termed the '*sheltered homeless*'. Also included in the '*sheltered homeless*' for the purposes of this profile are clients of safe houses and transition houses. However, almost one-third of the adult homeless people

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<sup>75</sup> Based on estimate by Rita Green, Statistics Canada. See Appendix D for details.

enumerated on January 14/15 2002 did not sleep in any form of emergency accommodation the night before. They slept outside, in cars, garages and couch surfed. They are termed the ‘*street homeless*’. It does not mean however that these people never stay in an emergency shelter or other temporary night-time accommodation, only that they did not stay there on January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Table 34 summarizes the findings of the 24-hour homeless snapshot survey. Over 70 homeless children who were accompanied by their parents were included in the 24-hour homeless snapshot, representing 6% of the total. All except two children stayed in a shelter or transition house the night before.<sup>76</sup>

**Table 34 - Sheltered and street homeless in the GVRD, January 14/15, 2002**

Homeless category	Adults and unaccompanied youth		Accompanied children	Total Homeless		Turned away
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Sheltered homeless						
Shelters/safe houses	665	63%	30	695	62%	97
Transition houses	54	5%	39	93	8%	14
Street homeless	331	32%	2	333	30%	N/A
Total homeless counted during 24 hour snapshot	1,050	100%	71	1,121	100%	111
Known under-coverage*				60-85		
Adjusted homeless count				1,181-1,206		

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

\* Estimated in consultation with a professional statistician

Shelter, safe house and transition house providers were asked to note how many people they turned away that night, either because they were full or the individual seeking shelter was not appropriate for their facility. On the evening of January 14, 2002 97 individuals were turned away from emergency shelters, mostly because they were full (88) and 14 women and children were turned away from transition houses. Some of the individuals that were turned away may have been included in the snapshot as street homeless, if they spent the night somewhere else that meets the definition of homeless for this project and were interviewed on January 15 during the daytime.

<sup>76</sup> Interviewers were instructed to ask about the presence of children, although this did not appear on the form.

## 3.2 A profile of sheltered and street homeless persons

The following sheltered and street homeless profile presents a demographic picture of homeless adults and unaccompanied youth in the GVRD using the point in time data collected during the '24-hour homeless snapshot' on January 14/15, 2002. It also describes some pertinent characteristics of their homeless experience, for example, how long they have been homeless. Results are presented separately for the sheltered and street homeless, as well as for the total homeless population identified on snapshot day. The following tables profile the 1050 homeless adults and unaccompanied youth but do not include the 71 children who were enumerated with their parent(s) or caregiver.

It is important to note that describing the demographic and other characteristics of homeless persons by no means infers that these characteristics are in fact responsible for an individual's homelessness. Rather, demographic and other socio-economic information is sought to provide a tool that can be used in service planning to help meet the specific needs of the people who are homeless and certain sub-groups within the homeless population.

### 3.2.1 Gender

Males represented about two thirds of the homeless population counted on snapshot day, and females about one third. There were proportionately more women among the *street homeless* population (39%) compared to the *sheltered homeless* population (29%) although men outnumbered women. This tends to support the notion that homeless women either avoid emergency shelters in favour of more informal arrangements, and/or that there is an inadequate supply of women's only facilities. This is certainly the case in the suburban areas of the region, where there are no women only shelters.

**Table 35 - Gender**

Gender	Sheltered homeless		Street homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	501	71%	199	61%	700	68%
Female	207	29%	126	39%	333	32%
Total respondents:	708	100%	325	100%	1,033	100%
Not stated/unknown/Other	11		6		17	
Total	719		331		1,050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey.



### 3.2.2 Age

Individuals aged 35 to 44 years comprise the largest age group among the region's homeless (30%) followed by those aged 25 to 34 years (22%). (See Table 36) Combined, these two age groups account for over half of the total homeless population counted on snapshot day. This is followed by older adults aged 45 to 54 and young adults aged 19 to 24 years. Five percent of the homeless population enumerated on snapshot day was age 55 years or over. Of note, there are more homeless youth under age 19 among the street homeless than among the sheltered homeless. Both the absolute number and the share of street homeless under age 19 (28%) is much larger than that of the sheltered homeless (5%)

**Table 36 - Age**

Age groups	Sheltered homeless		Street homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 19	31	5%	93	28%	124	13%
19-24	118	18%	30	9%	148	15%
25-34	166	25%	50	15%	216	22%
35-44	210	32%	89	27%	299	30%
45-54	103	16%	48	15%	151	15%
55-64	24	4%	13	4%	37	4%
65+	10	1%	4	1%	14	1%
total respondents:	662	100%	327	100%	989	100%
Not stated	57		4		61	
Total	719		331		1,050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

### 3.2.3 Family status

Ninety percent of the homeless population on January 14/15, 2002 who responded to this question was reported to be single or living alone, a percentage which is even higher among the sheltered homeless (95%). (See Table 37) A relatively small percentage reported to be living with a partner (7%), or with family or others (3%). The street homeless were more likely to be living with a partner (14%) than the sheltered homeless. Percentages are based only on those homeless individuals who replied to each question. The transition house questionnaire did not include a question on family status, since women fleeing domestic violence are in a 'transition' period and while they may be married, are temporarily living apart from their partners.

**Table 37 – Family status**

Family Status	Sheltered homeless*		Street homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Living Alone	487	95%	256	82%	743	90%
Living with Partner	16	3%	44	14%	60	7%
Other (with relative/friend)	12	2%	11	4%	23	3%
Total of respondents:	515	100%	311	100%	826	100%
Not stated	150		20		170	
Total	665		331		996	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey. \* Excludes transition house clients.

### 3.2.4 Ethnicity

Homeless people who were enumerated during the 24-hour homeless snapshot were asked to report their ethnic background or race. The majority of the homeless adults identified on January 14/15, 2002 who responded to this question were Caucasian (includes European origin) (69%), followed by Aboriginal (17%). (See Table 38) Persons of Aboriginal ancestry are over-represented among the homeless population, compared with the total GVRD population in which they comprise only 1.7%. The same percentage of Caucasian people (69%) was found among the *sheltered homeless* and the *street homeless* while Aboriginal ethnicity was twice as likely to be reported among the *street homeless* (27%) compared to the *sheltered homeless* (12%). This suggests that Aboriginal people who are homeless avoid shelters, that shelters do not serve this population well or that they are under-reported in the sheltered homeless reported here.<sup>77</sup>

**Table 38 – Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Sheltered homeless		Street homeless*		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Caucasian/European	386	69%	177	69%	562	69%
Aboriginal	70	12%	70	27%	140	17%
Other	64	11%	7	3%	71	9%
Asian	21	4%	4	1%	25	3%
Black/African	19	3%	1	0%	20	2%
Total of respondents:	560	100%	259	100%	819	100%
Canadian (and/or American)	1		38		39	
Not stated	158		34		192	
Total	719		331		1,051	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

<sup>77</sup> One cold wet weather emergency shelter with a large mat program that tends to serve mostly Aboriginal clients did not report ethnicity information. The Aboriginal share of the sheltered homeless would be higher, as would the Aboriginal share of the total homeless.

### 3.2.5 Reason for being homeless

Isolating one cause of homelessness for an individual or group of individuals is a difficult task, given the complex and dynamic nature of homelessness. Cause is particularly difficult to identify in a brief survey such as the homeless snapshot survey. A qualitative interview method would be more successful in eliciting meaningful information about the multi-dimensional factors contributing to homelessness (see Vol. 3 of this report). Nonetheless, the snapshot survey asked respondents for the main reason why they were currently homeless. As expected, survey participants cited a range of reasons. Of those who responded to this question, the largest share reported that their homelessness was due to abusive situations and/or family breakdown (26%), followed by moving or being stranded (13%), transient lifestyle (13%) and eviction (12%). (See Table 39)

Abuse and/or family breakdown was a relatively equally important reason for both the *street homeless* and the *sheltered homeless* groups. The *street homeless* group was more likely to identify ineligibility for income assistance as a reason for their homelessness. The *sheltered homeless* were more likely to identify moving/being stranded as a reason for homelessness. The *sheltered homeless* were much less likely to attribute their homelessness to addiction/mental health or disability issues (4%) compared to the *street homeless* (10%).

The *sheltered homeless* tended to associate their homelessness with abuse and/or family breakdown (26%), moving and/or being stranded (17%) and a transient lifestyle (20%) although the latter is a term used by shelter staff to mean ‘moving from place to place and having no money.’ It is probably comparable to the response ‘Other/No job/ Not enough money/No affordable housing’. It is also likely that ‘transient lifestyle’ is more of a symptom of homelessness than it is a reason.

**Table 39 - Reason Identified for Homeless Status**

Reason for Homelessness	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Evicted	68	13%	31	10%	99	12%
Moving/ Stranded	85	17%	20	6%	105	13%
Ineligible for Income Assistance	12	2%	28	9%	40	5%
Abuse, Family Breakdown, Conflict	134	26%	87	27%	221	26%
Addiction	5	1%	33	10%	38	5%
Refugee	8	2%	1	0%	9	1%
From treatment, corrections, jail	35	7%	12	4%	47	6%
Other Reasons	165	32%	97	30%	262	31%
- Transient Lifestyle*	104	20%	1	0%	105	13%
- Not enough money/Out of funds No affordable housing	4	1%	37	12%	41	5%
- Mental Illness/ Disability/ Health/ Treatment/ Respite	18	3%	1	0%	18	2%
- Fire/ Unsafe Premises*	14	3%	0	0%	14	2%
- no job/no jobs available	4	1%	6	2%	10	1%
Multiple Reasons	2	0%	11	3%	13	1%
Total of respondents	520	100%	320	100%	834	100%
no answer/not stated	199		11		210	
Total	719		331		1050	

\* Category appeared as an option on the shelter survey, but not an option on the street homeless survey.

### 3.2.6 Length of time homeless

Almost 40% of the homeless people who responded to this question on January 14/15, 2002 had been without a permanent home for less than one month, what might be considered the ‘newly homeless’. (See Table 40) Another 30% were homeless for between one and six months. People who had been homeless for 6 months or more are termed the long-term homeless for the purposes of this profile and comprised 32% of the total homeless population. Twelve percent had been homeless for one year or more.

Significant differences exist between the sheltered and the street homeless in terms of the length of time since they had lived in a permanent home. The *sheltered homeless* tended to be homeless for a shorter period of time than the *street homeless*, suggesting a tendency for homeless people to avoid shelters once they have become ingrained in street life. Forty-seven percent of the *sheltered homeless* could be considered the ‘newly homeless’, as they had been without a permanent home for less than one month, compared to only 24% of the *street homeless*. Twenty four percent of the *sheltered homeless* can be considered the long-term homeless, compared to 44% of the *street homeless*.

**Table 40 - Length of Time Homeless**

Length of time	Sheltered homeless		Street homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 1 week	79	15%	19	6%	98	12%
1 week to under 1 month	167	32%	55	18%	222	26%
1 month to 6 months	154	29%	99	32%	253	30%
6 months to under 1 year	52	10%	48	15%	100	12%
1 year or more	74	14%	92	29%	166	20%
total of respondents:	526	100%	313	100%	839	100%
Not stated	193		18		211	
Total	719		331		1,050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

### 3.2.7 Home community

When asked which municipality they would consider their last permanent home, the majority of homeless individuals (71%) who responded to this question reported a municipality within the GVRD. (See Table 41) A significant share (30%) reported a home outside Greater Vancouver, suggesting a fair degree of mobility. For example, 17% reported their last permanent home was elsewhere in Canada and 10% considered home a location elsewhere in BC. Comparatively speaking, the percentage of *street homeless* with a last permanent home in the GVRD (76%) was higher than that of the *sheltered homeless* (68%). The percentage of *sheltered homeless* from elsewhere in Canada (18%) was higher than that of the *street homeless* (14%).

**Table 41 - Last Permanent Home**

Last permanent home	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
GVRD	347	68%	240	76%	587	71%
Rest of BC	53	10%	27	9%	80	10%
Elsewhere in Canada	94	18%	44	14%	138	17%
Rest of World	18	4%	3	1%	21	3%
Total of Respondents:	512	100%	314	100%	826	100%
Not stated / not known	207		17		224	
Total	719		331		1050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

### 3.2.8 Major source of income

Of the homeless adults and unaccompanied youth included in the 24-hour homeless snapshot, the largest share (40%) reported that income assistance or a related training program was their major income source. (See Table 42) The next most frequently reported 'income source' was "no income"(21%). Altogether, 51% of these homeless

persons were receiving some form of government transfer payment (income assistance, disability benefits, employment insurance) as their major income source. Income from income assistance and training programs was the largest source of income for the *sheltered homeless* (48%) compared to only 26% of the *street homeless*.<sup>78</sup> Because of the difficulties with obtaining and maintaining income assistance, it is likely that those who are not receiving income assistance would be found among the street homeless. The *street homeless* population was more likely to report no income (30%) and a significant share noted that income from binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, and bottle collecting (11%) formed the major part of their income. The *street homeless* also reported illegal sources of income such as prostitution and theft (4%).

**Table 42 - Major Source of Income**

Major Source of Income	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Welfare or training program	261	48%	83	26%	344	40%
No income	80	15%	96	30%	167	21%
Employment	75	14%	23	7%	98	11%
Disability benefit	47	9%	30	9%	77	9%
Binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, bottle collecting	14	3%	34	11%	48	6%
Employment Insurance	15	3%	4	1%	19	2%
Pension	14	3%	7	2%	21	2%
Other	26	5%	40	13%	66	8%
- Illegal sources	0	0%	12	4%	12	1%
Total of Respondents:	541	100%	317	100%	858	100%
Not stated	178		14		192	
Total	719		331		1050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

### 3.2.9 Health conditions

The 24-hour snapshot requested information about each homeless individuals' health by asking if they possessed one or more of the following four health conditions: medical condition, physical disability, addiction, and mental illness. Medical condition refers to chronic problems like asthma and diabetes; and physical disability refers to an impairment affecting mobility or movement. It should be stressed that this information is not based on a clinical diagnosis; rather it relies either on the homeless individual's

<sup>78</sup> This is to be expected since provincial funding requires that clients to most emergency shelters be eligible for income assistance.

opinion and willingness to impart this information or on the subjective opinions of shelter providers and/or interviewers and as such should be viewed with caution. Under reporting of some health conditions such as addiction and mental illness would be the most likely bias in the data. In all, two-thirds (66%) of the homeless enumerated that responded to this question reported at least one health condition and 34% reported none. (See Table 43)

**Table 43 – Incidence of health conditions**

Health Condition	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No health conditions	198	37%	93	28%	291	34%
At least one health condition	335	63%	238	72%	573	66%
total of respondents:	533	100%	331	100%	864	100%
Not stated	186		0		186	
Total	719		331		1,050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

The *street homeless* were more likely to have at least one health condition (72%) compared to the *sheltered homeless* (63%). Table 44 shows that addiction was the most significant health problem overall (39%) followed by a medical condition (24%).

**Table 44 – Type of health conditions**

Health Condition (more than 1 possible)	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Addiction	202	38%	135	41%	337	39%
Medical condition	132	25%	124	37%	256	30%
Mental illness	126	24%	69	21%	195	23%
Physical disability	64	12%	68	21%	132	15%
<b>total of respondents:</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>100%</b>
Not stated	186		0		186	
Total	719		331		1,050	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

According to this table, the *street homeless* have higher incidences of most health conditions, with the exception of mental illness. For example, 41% of individuals living on the street had an addiction problem compared to 38% of the sheltered homeless. The street homeless were almost twice as likely to have a physical disability, and much more likely to have a medical condition. More sheltered homeless clients have a mental illness according to this data. This may be due to the fact that there are several specialized shelters for persons with a serious and persistent mental illness in Greater Vancouver.

### 3.3 Sheltered homeless trends - 1999 and 2002

Tables 45 to 52 present data which compares the demographic and other characteristics of Lower Mainland shelter and safe house clients enumerated in the November 1999 shelter snapshot,<sup>79</sup> with those shelter and safe-house clients enumerated in the night-time component of the 2002 24-hour homeless snapshot survey. More clients were enumerated in 2002 than in 1999 because new shelters have opened since then and because a all Greater Vancouver shelters participated in 2002.

The 2002 survey was designed to be generally comparable with the 1999 survey; however, there were changes in methodology and design of the survey interview tool that preclude precise comparability. For the most part, these changes were implemented to achieve compatibility with HIFIS in the future and to better reflect answers provided for the 1999 snapshot. For example, more answer categories were provided for the length of time homeless question. In general, more questions went unanswered in the 2002 survey. One men's shelter reported only the number of individuals and their age. Also, one rather large cold wet weather shelter reported only the number of individuals and their gender on snapshot night, but no other variables. To facilitate comparison, the tabulation is made only for complete records for each of the specific characteristics.

#### 3.3.1 Gender

Table 45 shows an increase in the proportion of female shelter and safe-house clients (29%) among the 2002 respondents compared to the 1999 snapshot (19%). This may be due to the opening since 1999 of a new women's shelter and some new cold wet weather beds for women.

**Table 45 – Gender -1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>1999 Snapshot</b>	<b>2002 Snapshot</b>
	N=363	N=708
Male	81%	71%
Female	19%	29%
Total	100 %	100 %

<sup>79</sup> Eberle et al. 2001. Homelessness in British Columbia. Vol 2. *A Profile, Policy Analysis and Review of Homelessness in BC*. BC Ministry of SDES.



### 3.3.2 Age

As in 1999, the greatest share of the 2002 shelter client population is between the ages of 35 and 44 years, followed by the 25 to 34 years cohort. (See Table 46) However, there may be a trend to a more youthful clientele. For example, the population under the age of 35 has increased to 48% from 45%. There are also proportionately fewer clients over the age of 55 (10% in 1999, compared to 5% in the 2002 survey).

**Table 46 - Age groups - 1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

Age	1999 Snapshot	2002 Snapshot
	N=363	N=662
Under 19	8%	5%
19-24	14%	18%
25-34	23%	25%
35-44	28%	32%
45-54	18%	16%
55-64	6%	4%
65+	4%	1%

### 3.3.3 Family status

Clients staying in shelters on snapshot night were somewhat more likely to be single in 2002 than in 1999 (95% in 2002, compared with 90% in 1999). (See Table 47)

**Table 47 – Family status - 1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

Family status	1999 Snapshot	2002 Snapshot
	N=361	N=515
Single	90%	95%
Couple / Living with partner	4%	3%
Living with relative / friend*		2%
Family with children*	6%	

\* 1999 and 2002 presented different options for the family status.

### 3.3.4 Ethnicity

Table 48 shows that the share of Aboriginal clients staying in shelters and safe houses has remained about the same (minor change from 14% to 12%) in that period. Caucasians remain the single largest group served in Greater Vancouver shelters (69%).

**Table 48 – Ethnicity - 1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

Ethnicity	1999 Snapshot	2002 Snapshot
	N=347	N=560
Caucasian (& European*)	73%	69%
Aboriginal	14%	12%
Asian	5%	4%
Black	N/a	3%
Other	8%	11%

\* 2002 snapshot

### 3.3.5 Length of time homeless

The length of time homeless has not changed significantly since 1999 – most shelter clients still report that their homelessness has lasted less than six months. (See Table 49) Over the same period there has been an increase in the proportion of clients who have been homeless for more than one year, up from 11% in 1999 to 14% in 2002.

**Table 49 – Length of time homeless -1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

Length of time homeless	1999 Snapshot	2002 Snapshot
	N=351	N=526
Less than 6 months	75%	76%
6 to 12 months	15%	10%
More than 1 year	11%	14%

### 3.3.6 Major source of income

Table 50 shows the major income source for shelter clients in 1999 and 2002. Income assistance remains the single largest income source for more than half of shelter clients in 2002, although this proportion has dropped from 57% to 48%. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of “working homeless persons”, those who report employment as their major source of income, increasing from 4% in 1999 to 14% in 2002. More said they received income from ‘other’ sources (11%), and a significant portion stated that binning, panhandling, bottle collecting was their major source of income (3%). The 2002 survey form was changed to include binning, panhandling, squeegeeing and bottle collecting as a source of income and this is reported under ‘other’ in the table below. However, it is possible that persons indicating they had no income source in 1999 were obtaining their income from these sources.

**Table 50 – Major source of income - 1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

	<b>1999 Snapshot</b>	<b>2002 Snapshot</b>
<b>Major Source of Income</b>	N=338	N=541
Welfare/Training program	57%	48%
None	25%	15%
Disability Benefit	7%	9%
Employment	4%	14%
Pension	4%	3%
Other	2%	11%

### 3.3.7 Health conditions

The incidence of health conditions among shelter clients on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002 has increased for all conditions identified below, with some substantial changes in the rates for substance abuse and medical conditions. (See Table 51) Substance abuse remains the most common health condition among shelter clients. However, the increase in medical conditions among homeless persons may warrant further research into the types of medical conditions associated with the homeless population.

**Table 51 – Health conditions - 1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

	<b>1999 Snapshot</b>	<b>2002 Snapshot</b>
<b>Health condition (may have more than one)</b>	N=363	N=533
Physical disability	11%	12%
Mental illness	21%	24%
Medical condition	19%	25%
Substance misuse/addiction	33%	38%

### 3.3.8 Reasons for seeking shelter accommodation

Table 52 shows the reasons for admission to a shelter, as reported in the 1999 and 2002 surveys. While the reasons appear to have changed in 2002, for example, fewer clients are reported to be ‘out of funds’ than in 1999, the changes are likely due to a questionnaire change that sought to remove symptomatic responses. Some shelter providers do not ask clients why they are seeking admission at the shelter; rather they mark a general category, such as ‘out of funds’ or ‘transient lifestyle’.<sup>80</sup> Some new answer categories were provided in 2002 such as ‘ineligible for income assistance’ and ‘health and mental health’, and some 1999 answer categories were combined. In

<sup>80</sup> The out of funds category was not provided in the 2002 survey form because a) it is likely a symptom, not a cause, of homelessness; and b) HIFIS does not use this category. ‘Transient lifestyle’ was not presented to street homeless as an option, therefore it likely that some of ‘other’ might include a preference for transient lifestyle.

addition, a larger share of individuals provided no response to this question in 2002. For these reasons, very little in the way of comparison between the two surveys can be made.

**Table 52 – Reason for admission -1999 and 2002 shelter clients**

<b>Reason For Admission</b>	<b>1999 Snapshot n=353</b>	<b>2002 Snapshot n=520</b>
Out of funds / financial*	32%	1%
Substance misuse / addiction*	9%	1%
Evicted	17%	13%
Just moved/visiting/stranded	13%	17%
Transient lifestyle	0%	20%
Abuse, family breakdown or conflict	11%	26%
From Hospital, corrections etc	8%	7%
Fire/safety	2%	3%
Refugee	1%	2%
Ineligible for income assistance	0%	2%
Health and mental health	0%	3%
Other	6%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* 2002 Snapshot terminology

### 3.4 The street homeless

#### 3.4.1 Where they stayed last night

The survey asked some questions of the street homeless that were not relevant for the sheltered homeless. This information is reported here. Individuals whom interviewers approached in the daytime were asked where they stayed the previous night in order to determine if they qualified for the survey. Of those 335 individuals who qualified as street homeless, the largest share (56%) or 166 individuals reported staying at someone else's place temporarily or 'couch surfing' the night before. (See Table 53) As stated previously, people who are staying temporarily at someone else's place, where they do not pay rent and have no security of tenure, are considered homeless for the purposes of this profile. This is traditionally a very difficult population to find and count. Altogether, 27% of the street homeless stayed outside, and a further 8% stayed in a car, garage or public building.

**Table 53 - Where street homeless stayed last night**

Location	Number	Percent
Outside	80	27%
Someone else's place	166	56%
Car/garage/public building	23	8%
Other - squat, etc	26	9%
Total of respondents	296	100%
Not shelter, but not stated	36	
Total	331	

Source: 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

#### 3.4.2 Reasons for not staying in a shelter

The street homeless were also asked why they did not stay in a shelter, safe house or transition house the night before. As Table 54 shows, the largest response (38%) was 'dislike shelters'. This was followed by 33% percent that stated 'other reasons' which includes those who were able to stay with a friend for the evening. However, a significant share (13%) did try to stay in a shelter, but were turned away - because it was full (8%), because they were inappropriate for the shelter or because they were barred from staying there. (An individual is deemed 'inappropriate' for a shelter if they are too young to stay in an adult shelter, or there were no beds suitable for their gender.) About 9% did not stay at a shelter for reasons due to location. This suggests that although there were 331 homeless people who did not stay in an emergency shelter on January 14, 2002 and who are called the street homeless in this profile, many have probably stayed in a shelter before and may do so in the future.

**Table 54 - Why street homeless did not use a shelter**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Dislike shelters	112	38%
Turned away or barred		
Turned away - full	23	8%
Turned away - inappropriate or barred	14	5%
Location		
Couldn't get there	28	9%
Didn't know about	22	7%
Other	97	33%
total of respondents	296	100%
No answer	35	
Total	331	100%

### **3.5 Homelessness among sub-populations**

Because the homeless population is diverse and has unique needs, it is useful to look at the characteristics of some specific sub-populations separately. Five sub-groups were created using data on the adult and unaccompanied youth homeless population from the '24 hour homeless snapshot: seniors (persons aged 55+) (n=51); unaccompanied youth aged 13 to 18 (n=124); females (n=333); Aboriginal people (n=140) and the 'long-term homeless' (n=266). This latter group comprises individuals who have been homeless for six months or longer. Note that these groups are not mutually exclusive – someone could be a member of two or more groups for example, an Aboriginal senior who was homeless. Percentages were calculated based on the total homeless (street and sheltered) in each category. (Table 55 summarizes the data for each of the sub-populations).

#### **3.5.1 Women**

There were a total of 333 homeless females included in the '24-hour homeless snapshot'. Forty-eight percent were between the ages of 25 and 44; however the results also showed a significant number of females were under the age of 24 (35%). Eighty-three percent of females were living alone compared to 6% living with a partner.<sup>81</sup> Compared to other sub-groups within the homeless population, homeless females had a higher share of Aboriginal ethnicity (23%).

Abuse and family breakdown was the largest contributing factor for homelessness (46%) among women. Fifty-seven percent of homeless women had been homeless for over one month and over 74% had lived somewhere in the GVRD before becoming homeless. Their major source of income was income assistance or a training program (40%), although a large share reported they have no income (24%). Sixty-five percent of women had at least one medical condition. Homeless women had a fairly high rate of addiction (38%), followed by a medical condition (33%), mental illness (23%), and physical disability (13%).

#### **3.5.2 Seniors**

Seniors in this study are defined as those persons aged 55 and over. There were 51 homeless seniors enumerated on snapshot day. Males tend to predominate among the seniors and most of these individuals were 'younger' seniors between the ages of 55 and 64. Over 94% were single and 76% were of Caucasian/European background.

Eviction was the main reason cited for homelessness among seniors (25%), the highest rate of any sub-group. This was followed by 'not enough money/no job/no affordable housing' (11%) and financial reasons (11%). Most people over age 55 had been homeless for less than one month (59%), perhaps following an eviction. Seventy-nine percent of these homeless seniors last lived in a permanent home within the GVRD and they view pension (34%) or income assistance (25%) as their main source of income.

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<sup>81</sup> The 22% that did not answer the question of family status include women staying in a transition house at the time of the survey who were not asked that particular question due their circumstances. See section 5.3

Sixteen percent of homeless seniors also received disability benefits. The health of homeless adults over the age of 55 is relatively poor compared to other sub-groups. Seventy-eight percent have at least one health condition compared with 66% of all homeless individuals surveyed. Forty-nine percent have a medical condition, followed by 35% with a physical disability, 27% with an addiction, and 18% with a mental illness.

### 3.5.3 Aboriginal people

One hundred and forty homeless individuals of Aboriginal ancestry were enumerated on snapshot day, comprising 13% of the homeless population in the region. However, as noted earlier, (See Section 2.7.2) this is likely an under-estimate. Thirty-three percent of homeless Aboriginal people were between the ages of 35 and 44, and 25% were between the ages of 25 and 34. This sub-population was the only group with roughly equal proportions of males and females. Most Aboriginal people who were homeless were single, although 15% were living with a partner or family and/or friends.

The reasons for homelessness among Aboriginal homeless persons were: abuse and family breakdown (27%), transient lifestyle (13%), eviction (11%), and moving/stranded (7%). The Aboriginal community was over-represented in the long-term homeless category, with 28% having been homeless for over one year compared to 20% for the total homeless population. This group was also more likely to have lived elsewhere in BC before becoming homeless than any other group (16%). Fifty-three percent said income assistance or a training program was their major income source and 13% cited no income. Seventy-seven percent of homeless Aboriginal people had at least one health condition, and they possess the highest percentage of addiction problems (50%) among the sub-groups, followed by a medical condition (35%).

### 3.5.4 Unaccompanied youth

There were 124 unaccompanied homeless youth under age 19 included in the homeless snapshot, with the youngest being 13 years old. In contrast to most of the other sub-groups, females formed the majority (57%) in this group. Eighty-nine percent of these youth were single and 8% were living with a partner. The majority of youth were Caucasian/European (71%), with the next largest ethnic group being Aboriginal (20%).

Youth under 19 years identified abuse/family breakdown/conflict as the most significant reason for homelessness (56%). Many youth, over 70% of the total, have been homeless for more than one month and 20% of these youth have been homeless for one year or more. Most youth (80%) viewed a municipality within the GVRD as their permanent home. Many homeless youth reported *no source of income* (56%), a rate much higher than any other group and the homeless population as a whole (17%). Only 11% of youth viewed income assistance as their major income source. Youth under 19 were less likely to have a health condition than members of other sub-groups; however, 29% cited addiction as a health issue.



### **3.5.5 The long-term homeless**

The long-term homeless consist of individuals who responded that they have been homeless for six months or longer. A total of 266 people were counted in this category during the 'snapshot'. As a group, they tended to be male (67%), and between the ages of 35 and 44 years and single. They were mostly Caucasian/European (67%), and were most likely to cite abuse or family conflict or a transient lifestyle as their main reason for being homeless. Most of the long-term homeless have been homeless for one year or more (62%) and while most view a municipality in the GVRD as their last permanent home, a significant share (24%) indicate elsewhere in Canada. About one third of this sub-population reported income assistance as their major source of income. Almost one quarter of the long-term homeless reported having a mental illness, and 33% reported having a medical condition. Only 24% of people who had been homeless for six months or more reported having no health conditions.

**Table 55 – Sub-group profiles**

	Females N=333		Persons aged 55+ N=51		Aboriginal N=140		Youth aged 13 – 18 N=124		Long-term Homeless N=266	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Gender</b>										
Male			38	75	70	50	53	43	176	67
Female	333	100	13	25	69	50	71	57	87	33
No answer/unknown					1				3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>										
<19	71	22			22	16	124		45	17
19-24	43	13			16	11			49	19
25-34	70	21			35	25			35	13
35-44	88	27			46	33			85	32
45-54	43	13			19	14			40	15
55-64	10	3	37	73	2	1			7	3
65+	2	1	14	27	0				1	0
No answer	6								4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Family Status</b>										
Living Alone	218	83	45	94	109	84	100	89	226	89
Living with Partner	31	6	1	2	12	9	9	8	23	9
Other	15	12	2	4	8	6	3	3	5	2
No Answer	69		3		4		12		8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>										
Aboriginal	69	23	2	4	140		22	20	57	24
Black	4	1	1	2			0	0	5	2
Caucasian / European	189	62	40	83			78	71	160	67
Asian	3	2	2	4			2	2	7	3
Other	35	12	3	6			8	7	10	4
Canadian	15		1				4		16	
No answer	15		2				10		11	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Time Without Permanent Home</b>										
Less than 1 week	38	11	8	20	11	8	11	9		
1 week to under 1 month	74	22	16	39	30	23	25	20		
1 month to under 6 months	102	31	8	20	35	26	41	34		
6 months to under 1 year	35	10	5	12	20	15	20	16	100	38
1 year or more	52	16	4	10	37	28	25	20	166	62
No Answer	32		10		7		2			
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 55, cont'd**

	Females N=333		Persons aged 55+ N=51		Aboriginal N=140		Youth aged 13 – 18 N=124		Long-term Homeless N=266	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Reason Homeless</b>										
Evicted	23	7	11	25	14	11	4	3	14	6
Moving / stranded	27	9	5	11	9	7	6	5	16	7
Ineligible for income assistance	12	4	0		7	5	8	7	10	4
Abuse, family breakdown or conflict	142	46	3	7	35	27	64	56	49	20
Addiction	12	4	1	2	8	6	3	3	22	9
Refugee	1	0	1	2	1	1	0		4	2
From treatment, corrections, jail	14	5	1	2	6	5	1	1	14	6
Other Reasons	66	21	22	50	45	35	28	25	109	44
- Not enough money /Out of funds/ financial reasons	9	3	5	11	7	5	3	3	20	8
- Mental illness/disability health/treatment/respice	8	3	0		0		0		0	
- Fire/unsafe premises	6	2	1	2	0		0		3	1
- Transient lifestyle	20	6	5	11	17	13	16	14	44	18
- no job/no jobs available	0		0		1	1	1	1	4	2
Multiple reasons	11	4	0		4	3	3	3	7	3
No answer	25		7		11		10		21	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Health Issues</b>										
No health issues	112	35	11	22	31	23	59	51	63	24
Physical health issues	42	13	17	35	32	24	3	3	50	19
Medical health issues	105	33	24	49	47	35	16	14	90	35
Addiction / substance abuse issues	119	38	13	27	67	50	33	29	125	48
Mental health issues	72	23	9	18	28	21	13	11	63	24
No Answer	16		2		5		9		7	
No Total (multiple "Yes" responses possible)										
<b>Last Permanent Home</b>										
GVRD	247	74	38	79	95	70	98	80	166	67
Rest of BC	26	9	4	8	22	16	9	7	19	8
Elsewhere in Canada	31	10	4	8	15	11	15	13	60	24
Rest of World	8	3	2	4	4	3	0		3	1
No answer/ Don't Know	21	6	3		4		2		18	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Major Source of Income</b>										
Welfare or training program	124	40	11	25	67	53	14	11	82	32
Disability benefit	27	9	7	16	12	9	0		24	9
Employment	27	9	3	7	7	6	3	2	18	7
Employment Insurance	9	3	3	7	1	1	0		3	1
Pension	8	3	15	34	2	2	0		4	2
Binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, bottles	11	4	1	2	10	8	7	5	29	11
No income	74	24	4	9	16	13	69	56	59	23
Other	31	10	0		12	9	30	24	35	14
No answer	21		7		13		1	1	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.6 Homelessness in GVRD sub-regions

This section presents the 24-hour homeless snapshot survey results by sub-region within the GVRD. Municipal level data is presented in Appendix B. There are six sub-regions as follows (See Section 1.4 of this report for a map):

Vancouver – Vancouver and the University Endowment Lands  
 Inner Municipalities – Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster  
 North Shore – City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and West Vancouver, Lions Bay and Bowen Island  
 South of Fraser – Surrey, White Rock, Delta, City of Langley, Township of Langley  
 North East Sector – Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra  
 Ridge Meadows – Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows

Table 56 below presents the distribution of the homeless population according to the sub-region in which they were found, both during the nighttime and daytime component of the 2002 snapshot. In addition to Vancouver, both the South of Fraser sub-region and the Inner Municipalities sub-regions had significant numbers of homeless. Most homeless people were located in Vancouver (60%), followed by South of Fraser (18%) and the Inner Municipalities (11%).

#### 3.6.1 Distribution by sub-region

The distribution of the street homeless population is quite different than the sheltered homeless. The *street homeless* were more evenly distributed throughout the region, with the largest number located in South of Fraser (116 or 35%) followed by Vancouver (28%) then the Inner Municipalities (18%). The *sheltered homeless* were concentrated in Vancouver (74%) where the majority of shelter beds are located.

**Table 56 - Homelessness by sub-region, found**

Homelessness by sub-region found	Sheltered homeless		Street homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Vancouver	535	74%	93	28%	628	60%
Inner Municipalities	58	8%	58	18%	116	11%
North Shore	24	3%	20	6%	44	4%
South of Fraser	71	10%	116	35%	187	18%
North East Sector	6	1%	7	2%	13	1%
Ridge Meadows	25	3%	37	11%	62	6%
Not stated	0		0			
<b>Region</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>100%</b>

When viewed according to the respondent's 'last permanent home' (Table 57) the distribution is quite different. Many homeless people view Vancouver as their last

permanent home (26%), but it is matched by locations outside the GVRD (26%). A significant proportion (17%) stated that a municipality in the South of Fraser sub-region was their last permanent home. In addition, many homeless people identified their last permanent home as being either somewhere else in BC, Canada or elsewhere in the world. The sheltered homeless were more likely to call Vancouver home (32%), while the largest share of the street homeless reported the South of Fraser sub-region as being their permanent home (29%).

**Table 57 - Homelessness by sub-region, last permanent home**

Last Permanent Home	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Vancouver	181	35%	53	17%	234	28%
Inner Municipalities	43	8%	35	11%	78	9%
North Shore	16	3%	12	4%	28	3%
South of Fraser	80	16%	98	31%	178	22%
North East Sector	14	3%	10	3%	24	3%
Ridge Meadows	13	2%	32	9%	45	5%
Outside GVRD	165	32%	74	24%	239	29%
No answer	207		17		155	
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>100%</b>

There are differences between tables 56 and 57 – where someone stays now is not necessarily the place they view as their permanent home. For example, while 60% of the homeless people reported in the snapshot survey were located in Vancouver, a much smaller proportion (26%) viewed Vancouver as their last permanent home. This reflects the “drift” of homeless persons to areas where shelters and services are available, reported anecdotally by service-providers.

### 3.6.2 Vancouver

Table 58 profiles the homeless individuals located in the Vancouver, Inner Municipalities, and South of Fraser sub-regions.<sup>82</sup> Of the 628 homeless individuals found in Vancouver, 535 or 85% were staying in an emergency shelter, safe house or transition house and 15% are considered street homeless. Almost three quarters of the homeless were male and 56% were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Ninety-three percent of the homeless persons in Vancouver were living alone, however the *street homeless* were more likely to live with a partner than the sheltered homeless. Sixty-five percent of the homeless people had a Caucasian/European background; however, the percentage of homeless Aboriginal people in Vancouver (20%) was higher than in the region as a whole (17%) and both the Inner Municipalities (12%) and South of Fraser (11%) sub-regions.

<sup>82</sup> There were too few homeless individuals in the three remaining sub-regions to profile separately.

Sixteen percent of Vancouver's homeless people attributed their situation to moving or being stranded and 22% were homeless due to a 'transient lifestyle.' Eighteen percent cited abuse, family breakdown or conflict as their reason for homelessness. Thirty-seven percent of homeless individuals in Vancouver had been homeless for less than one month although nearly one quarter had been homeless for one year or longer. Most people reported a municipality within the GVRD as their last permanent home; however, 29% cited a location elsewhere in Canada.

Homeless individuals in Vancouver were most likely to identify income assistance or a training program as their major source of income (45%). Sixty-nine percent of the homeless adults found in Vancouver had at least one health condition. Addiction was the most prominent health issue (44%), followed by a medical condition (28%), and mental illness (24%).

### **3.6.3 Inner Municipalities**

A total of 116 homeless people were found in the Inner Municipalities sub-region during the 24 hour homeless snapshot (65% male, 35% female). Youth comprised a larger share of the homeless in the Inner Municipalities (25%), compared to Vancouver (5%) although in absolute numbers, there were more homeless youth in Vancouver. Forty-two percent of the homeless people in this area were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Most people were living alone, although 9% were living with a partner. The majority of homeless persons (66%) were Caucasian/European, however, the Inner Municipalities had the highest percentage of homeless Asians in the GVRD (7%).

Abuse, family breakdown or conflict was the most common reason for homelessness for 31% of those enumerated by the snapshot, followed by eviction (15%). Thirty-six percent had been homeless for between one week and one month and 28% had been homeless for between one month and six months. A smaller proportion had been homeless for one year or more in the Inner Municipalities compared to Vancouver and the South of Fraser. Over 78% cited a location within the GVRD as their last permanent home.

Income assistance or a training program was the major source of income for 43% of these homeless persons; however, 26% said they did not have any income. The majority of homeless people found in the Inner Municipalities reported no health conditions (52%). Twenty-four percent had a medical condition, followed by 17% with a mental illness and 15% with an addiction. The Inner Municipalities had the lowest percentage of homeless people with addictions of the three sub-regions.

### **3.6.4 South of Fraser**

The gender breakdown of the homeless population in South of Fraser sub-region was more equally split between males and females. Youth comprised the largest share of the homeless persons enumerated in South of Fraser (31%), consisting entirely of 58 street homeless. Fifty-seven percent of the homeless population on snapshot day was under the age of 35 years. Most homeless people were single; although, a relatively high

percentage of people (13%) were living with a partner compared to 9% in the Inner Municipalities and 4% in Vancouver. This sub-region had 11% of homeless individuals with an Aboriginal background, but had the highest share of Caucasian homeless individuals (84%) of the three sub-regions.

Of the three sub-regions, South of Fraser had the highest percentage of people reporting abuse, family breakdown or conflict as the reason for their homelessness (40%). This may be related to the high proportion of homeless youth enumerated there. Forty-one percent of the homeless individuals in this sub-region had been homeless for between one month to six months and 24% had been homeless from one week to one month. A considerable share had been homeless for over six months (28%). Eighty-eight percent of homeless adults in this sub-region considered their last permanent home to be within the GVRD.

Thirty percent of respondents reported income assistance or a training program as their major source of income, followed by 27% who declared no income. The homeless in South of Fraser were more likely to report other sources of income than Vancouver or Inner Municipalities. Seventy-one percent of the homeless interviewed had at least one health condition. The incidence of health conditions was higher than in the other two sub-regions: 44% reported an addiction, 37% reported a medical condition, and 24% reported a mental illness.

**Table 58 – Homelessness in Vancouver, Inner Municipalities and South of Fraser sub-regions**

	Vancouver N=628		Inner Municipalities N=116		South of Fraser N=187	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	462	74	75	65	91	51
Female	159	26	41	35	86	49
No answer/ unknown	7					
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>						
<19	30	5	27	25	58	31
19-24	102	18	11	11	16	9
25-34	138	24	23	21	32	17
35-44	186	32	23	21	53	28
45-54	90	16	15	14	22	12
55-64	20	3	8	7	4	2
65+	10	2	0		2	1
No answer	52		9			
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Family Status</b>						
Living Alone	432	93	80	86	152	86
Living with Partner	18	4	8	9	23	13
Other	11	2	5	5	2	1
No Answer	146		7			
<b>Total (excludes Transition House clients)</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Aboriginal	92	20	12	12	18	11
Black/African	16	3	2	2	2	1
Caucasian/European	303	65	65	66	138	84
Asian	13	3	7	7	3	2
Other	42	9	13	13	7	2
Canadian (excluded from percentage)	7		7		15	
No answer	155		10		7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Time Without Permanent Home</b>						
Less than 1 week	59	13	19	18	13	7
1 week to under 1 month	108	24	39	36	44	24
1 month to under 6 months	113	26	30	28	77	41
6 months to under 1 year	56	13	10	9	23	12
1 year or more	105	24	9	8	30	16
No Answer	187		9		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>



**Table 58, cont'd**

	<b>Vancouver</b> N=628		<b>Inner Municipalities</b> N=116		<b>South of Fraser</b> N=187	
<b>Reason Homeless</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Evicted	47	11	17	15	26	14
Moving / stranded	69	16	12	11	14	8
Ineligible for income assistance	13	3	12	11	5	3
Abuse, family breakdown or conflict	78	18	35	31	75	40
Addiction	12	3	1	1	17	9
Refugee	7	2	2	2	0	0
From treatment, corrections, jail	33	8	4	4	4	2
Other Reasons	168	39	30	27	40	22
- Not enough money /Out of funds/ financial reasons	13	3	8	7	6	3
- Mental Illness/disability health/treatment/respite	3	1	0	0	15	8
- Fire/unsafe premises	10	2	0	0	4	2
- Transient lifestyle	95	22	3	3	4	2
- no job/no jobs available	4	1	3	3	1	1
Multiple reasons	5	1	0	0	6	3
No answer	193		3		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Health Issues</b>						
No health issues	146	31	51	52	54	29
Physical health issue	76	16	12	12	17	9
Medical health issue	129	28	24	24	69	37
Addiction / substance abuse issue	203	44	15	15	82	44
Mental health issue	111	24	17	17	45	24
No Answer	162		18		0	
No Total (multiple "Yes" responses possible)	628		116		187	
<b>Last Permanent Home</b>						
GVRD	250	59	83	78	164	88
Rest of BC	49	12	9	8	10	5
Elsewhere in Canada	124	29	11	10	11	6
Rest of World	0	0	3	3	1	1
No answer/ Don't Know	205		10		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Major Source of Income</b>						
Welfare or training program	203	45	49	43	56	30
Disability benefit	38	9	10	9	18	10
Employment	56	13	7	6	16	9
Employment Insurance	12	3	2	2	3	2
Pension	13	3	2	2	4	2
Binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, bottles	22	5	6	5	11	6
No income	68	15	30	26	50	27
Other	27	6	8	7	26	14
multiple sources	8	2	0	0	1	1
No answer	181		2		2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>

## 3.7 Period prevalence estimate

### 3.7.1 Methods and data sources

The period prevalence approach recognizes the dynamic nature of homelessness, in that individuals move in and out of homelessness over time. Another way of looking at this in the context of emergency shelters, for example, is that several individuals can use one shelter bed over the course of a month, or a year. In order to look at the homeless situation from this perspective, preliminary data was obtained from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) for the year 2001. HIFIS is a national shelter client database developed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for shelter operators to use for administrative purposes as well as for research and policy-making.

HIFIS records information about individual shelter clients, as well as the visits these clients make to any shelter that is participating. Data from individual shelters can be aggregated so that each individual can be accounted for separately, thus presenting a picture of the flow of unique individuals through the shelter system for any period, not just visits. However, records for a longer time period are preferable.

### 3.7.2 Limitations

The use of HIFIS in shelters throughout the region, while growing, is not complete. Just over half of the 28 Greater Vancouver shelters used HIFIS at least some of the time in 2001. Some shelters were consistent in their use, and others were not. In addition, some shelters did not report their data regularly to the provincial HIFIS coordinator, a role currently within BC Housing.

The HIFIS data contained in this profile represents the first application of HIFIS data in British Columbia. It is important to note that this data *does not represent all Greater Vancouver shelter clients* for several reasons:

1. not all shelters in Greater Vancouver reported to HIFIS;
2. of those that did report, some did not do so regularly; and
3. the data is for the period from January to November 2001, not a full year.

Specifically, this data represents information reported by 18 out of 28 Greater Vancouver emergency shelters. However, only five of the eighteen shelters reported regularly (for at least 8 out of 11 months). For these reasons, a more detailed analysis of demographic data captured through HIFIS, although desirable, was not possible.<sup>83</sup>

A final limitation on this data is that HIFIS records information only about homeless individuals who use emergency shelters. It is not designed to capture information about

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<sup>83</sup>A project to install computers in all Greater Vancouver shelters, and provide staff training and technical support should facilitate better and more frequent reporting. Efforts to improve the HIFIS system should also improve its utilization.

those homeless people who do not use (or are turned away from) shelters, although these people may be captured within the data over a longer time horizon as it has been shown that most homeless individuals who avoid services will use a shelter at some point over a sufficiently long period.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.7.3 HIFIS estimate of homelessness and chronicity

According to HIFIS records for January to November 2001 inclusive, 2,098 different individuals at some point within that period used one of the Greater Vancouver emergency shelters reporting through HIFIS. (See Table 59) This figure does not depict all shelter clients, for the reasons stated above, but it is provided here to illustrate the difference between the extent of homelessness over a period of time, compared to a point in time and how often shelter clients use the service over a period of time. The HIFIS figure shows that over 2,000 individuals had at least one period of homelessness over 11 months and used a shelter within Greater Vancouver compared to 1,181, the number homeless on one day in January 2002.

**Table 59 – HIFIS-Tracked Shelter Clients, Greater Vancouver, Jan. – Nov. 2001**

Frequency of use	Number of clients	Percent	Estimated number of visits	Percent
One time	1,535	73%	1,535	49%
2-3 times	470	22%	1,068	34%
4-10 times	90	4%	464	15%
11 or more times	3	0%	43	1%
Total clients	2,098	100%	3,110	100%

Source: HIFIS data. BC Housing, Apr 12, 2002.

Based on reporting from 18 shelters out of 28 in the GVRD. Only 5 shelters reported regularly.

According to these figures, almost three quarters of the total or about 1,500 shelter clients visited a Greater Vancouver region shelter only once during this 11-month period, although the visit may have lasted for several days or up to one month, the maximum generally permitted at any one admission. What is important is that these individuals do not re-appear within the shelters reporting to HIFIS at any other time throughout this period. This may mean that their homelessness episode has ended. It may also mean that these individuals visited a shelter previously, or indeed may do so in 2002 or a later year. And, because not all shelters reported to HIFIS, some of these individuals may have used a shelter not reporting to HIFIS.

<sup>84</sup> Comment by Dennis Culhane. Peressini, T. et al. 1996. Estimating Homelessness. Towards a Methodology for Counting the Homeless in Canada. CMHC.

If chronic homelessness is defined as four or more visits to a shelter in one year, then 4% of the shelter clients fall within that category. However, these 4% of clients accounted for 15% of all shelter visits. Twenty-two percent of shelter clients might be termed the episodically homeless, visiting a shelter more than once but less than four times during the year. It would be useful to know how many bed nights was used by each homeless individual to aid in understanding more about the nature of chronic homelessness for example, however, this information was not available from HIFIS.

Thus this period prevalence data shows that more individuals use shelters over a period of time than are homeless on one day, and that most shelter clients use the system once, on an emergency basis only. This is consistent with findings in Toronto, prepared for the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force.<sup>85</sup>

### **3.8 Summary – Part II – Homeless population in Greater Vancouver**

#### **3.8.1 Magnitude and trends**

A survey of the number of emergency shelter clients across the Province was done in 1999, but no previous estimate of the number of homeless people in Greater Vancouver has been available until now. The estimate in this study is derived from the findings of a “snapshot survey” of homeless people completed as part of this study, as well as an estimate of the “undercount” of these survey numbers. The 24 hour homeless snapshot survey in Greater Vancouver produced a count of between 1,181 and 1206 homeless persons on January 14/15, 2002. While not all homeless people were counted that day, the above figures are the best available using established methods. Homeless people were found in virtually every municipality within the GVRD. In addition, a significant number of street homeless were found that day, particularly in areas outside the City of Vancouver.

A review of some preliminary (and limited) Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) data showed that roughly double ( 2,098) the number of homeless individuals used emergency shelters in 2001 compared to the number enumerated on snapshot day (1,181 to 1,206 homeless persons).

#### **3.8.2 Characteristics**

The profile information generated by the snapshot survey confirms what is generally understood about the characteristics of people who are homeless:

- 68% are male;
- most are between 25 and 44 years;
- they are living alone;
- most are Caucasian, followed by Aboriginal ethnicity;

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<sup>85</sup> Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force. 1999. *Taking Responsibility for Homelessness: An Action Plan for Toronto*. January 1999.

- they are homeless because of abuse and family breakdown, moving or being stranded;
- 38% had been homeless for less than one month;
- 32% had been homeless for more than 6 months;
- 71% stated their permanent home was within the GVRD;
- their major income source was income assistance or a training program;
- 66% reported at least one health condition;
- addiction was the most common reported health condition; and
- the profile of shelter clients has not changed significantly since 1999.

### **3.8.3 Difference between the street homeless and sheltered homeless**

The sheltered homeless comprised 68.5% of all homeless persons enumerated during the 24 hour homeless snapshot survey, and the street homeless comprised the remaining 31.5%. Compared to the sheltered homeless, the street homeless:

- were more likely to be female;
- were under 19 years of age;
- were living with a partner;
- were of Aboriginal ethnicity;
- were more likely to identify abuse and family breakdown, addiction, and lack of a job as the main reason they were homeless;
- had been homeless longer – 29% had been homeless for one year or more, compared to only 14% of the sheltered homeless;
- were less likely to be receiving income assistance;
- were more likely to have had no source of income at all, and some relied on binning, panhandling, squeegeeing, and bottle collecting; and
- were in poorer health - they were more likely to have at least one health condition (72% compared to 63%) and they reported roughly twice the incidence of addiction, medical conditions, and physical disability.

### **3.8.4 Comparison with at-risk population**

The homeless population shared several characteristics with the at-risk population profiled in Part I. Firstly, the majority of homeless people in Greater Vancouver were in the 25 to 44 age group, as was the at-risk population. Aboriginal people were over-represented in both populations. Compared to the population at-risk, the homeless differed in that males outnumbered females, they were mostly living alone, and their major income source was income assistance, not employment, (although 11% of homeless persons reported employment income as their major source of income at the time of the snapshot survey).

### **3.8.5 Sub-groups**

Separate profiles of five different sub-populations of homeless persons show distinct differences among them. The largest sub-groups were females and the long term homeless. Homeless seniors over age 55 tended to be Caucasian and homeless youth

tended to be more equally split between males and females. Homeless women were more likely to be of Aboriginal ethnicity than all homeless persons. The Aboriginal homeless had been homeless the longest, with 43% reporting a duration of 6 months or longer. They were also more likely to be living with an addiction compared to members of other sub-groups. The long-term homeless (those who had been homeless 6 months or more) had the highest rate of mental illness of all the sub-groups and when compared to the entire homeless population.

### **3.8.6 Sub-regions**

The largest number and share of homeless persons was found in the City of Vancouver (within the “Vancouver sub-region”), followed by the South of Fraser and Inner Municipalities sub-regions. Interestingly, where the homeless were found does not necessarily reflect the place they view as their permanent home or home community. While 60% of the homeless were located in Vancouver, only 26% viewed Vancouver as their last permanent home. The distribution of the sheltered and street homeless among the sub-regions differed. The largest number of sheltered homeless persons was located in Vancouver (likely due to the fact that Vancouver has about 70% of the total number of shelter beds in the region), while the largest number of street homeless was found in the South of Fraser sub-region. Compared to the Inner Municipalities and South of Fraser sub-regions, Vancouver’s homeless population was more likely to be male and of Aboriginal origin. They were also more likely to view their last permanent home as outside of BC. Homeless persons in the Inner Municipalities tended to reflect more closely the profile of the regional homeless population, while those in the South of Fraser sub-region tended to be equally split between males and females, there were many youth, a larger share was living with a partner, and few were receiving income assistance as their major income source.

## 4. Appendices

### Appendix A - At-risk population and households by municipality

**Table A1 - At-risk households and persons in municipalities as a share of GVRD**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Number of at-risk households</b>	<b>At-risk households as percent of GVRD at-risk households</b>	<b>Number of people living in at-risk households</b>	<b>At-risk persons as percent of GVRD at-risk persons</b>
Burnaby	5,915	10%	14,165	11%
Coquitlam	2,625	5%	6,740	5%
Delta	1,780	3%	4,885	4%
Langley City	855	1%	1,860	1%
Township of Langley	1,130	2%	3,040	2%
Maple Ridge	1,340	2%	3,225	2%
New Westminster	2,235	4%	3,735	3%
North Vancouver City	1,805	3%	3,420	3%
North Vancouver District	1,285	2%	3,260	2%
Pitt Meadows	315	1%	845	1%
Port Coquitlam	1,050	2%	2,675	2%
Port Moody	400	1%	985	1%
Richmond	3,630	6%	10,555	8%
Surrey	8,535	15%	24,110	18%
Vancouver	22,965	40%	44,205	34%
West Vancouver	805	1%	1,545	1%
White Rock	680	1%	980	1%
Others <sup>86</sup>				
<b>GVRD</b>	<b>57,685</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>131,015</b>	<b>99%</b>

<sup>86</sup> Data for Anmore, Belcarra, Lions Bay, UEL, and Bowen Island excluded because of small data size for these municipalities. The same pertains to Table A2.

**Table A2 – At-risk data by municipality - summary**

Municipality	At-risk households 1996	At-risk households as a percent of all municipal households	At-risk renter households	At-risk households as a percent of all renter households	At-risk owner households	At-risk households as a percent of all owner households	People living in at-risk households	At-risk household size	At-risk households 1991	1991 - 96 % change
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#		#	%
Burnaby	5,915	8.7	4,155	13.6	1,755	4.7	14,165	2.4	3,845	53.8
Coquitlam	2,625	7.4	1,570	14.4	1,050	4.3	6,740	2.6	1,535	71
Delta	1,780	5.7	920	13.9	860	3.5	4,885	2.7	1,060	67.9
Langley City	855	9.2	645	17	210	3.8	1,860	2.2	480	34.4
Langley District Municipality	1,130	4.4	435	10.3	690	3.2	3,040	2.7	745	51.7
Maple Ridge	1,340	6.8	775	16.2	570	3.9	3,225	2.4	945	41.8
New Westminster	2,235	9.5	1,835	14.6	400	3.7	3,735	1.7	1,810	23.5
North Vancouver City	1,805	9.4	1,515	14.2	290	3.4	3,420	1.9	1,605	12.5
North Vancouver District	1,285	4.6	585	9.6	700	3.2	3,260	2.5	900	42.8
Pitt Meadows	315	6.8	115	10.7	200	5.6	845	2.7	155	103.2
Port Coquitlam	1,050	6.6	595	14.6	460	3.9	2,675	2.5	510	105.9
Port Moody	400	5.5	220	12.3	180	3.3	985	2.5	200	100
Richmond	3,630	7.2	1,680	11	1,945	5.5	10,555	2.9	2,280	59.2
Surrey	8,535	8.5	4,975	16.7	3,565	5.1	24,110	2.8	4,980	71.4
Vancouver	22,965	10.6	18,800	14.9	4,165	4.6	44,205	1.9	16,370	40.3
West Vancouver	805	5.1	500	12.6	300	2.5	1,545	1.9	625	28.8
White Rock	680	7.8	485	16	195	3.4	980	1.4	605	12.4
Others										
<b>GVRD</b>	<b>57,685</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>40,025</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>17,665</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>131,015</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>39,005</b>	<b>47.9</b>



## Appendix B – Homeless population by municipality

### Table B-1 - Homeless population by municipality found

Adults by municipality found	Sheltered homeless		Street homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Burnaby	7	1%	10	3%	17	2%
Coquitlam	2	0%	1	0%	3	0%
Delta	10	1%	0	0%	10	1%
City of Langley	6	1%	7	2%	13	1%
Township of Langley	4	1%	0	0%	4	0%
Maple Ridge	25	3%	37	12%	62	6%
New Westminster	36	5%	33	10%	69	7%
North Vancouver District	8	1%	3	1%	11	1%
North Vancouver City	16	2%	4	1%	20	2%
Pitt Meadows	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Port Coquitlam	4	1%	6	2%	10	1%
Port Moody	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Richmond	15	2%	14	4%	29	3%
Surrey	51	7%	109	33%	160	15%
Vancouver	535	74%	93	28%	628	60%
West Vancouver	0	0%	13	4%	13	1%
White Rock	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No answer	0	0%	0	1%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B2 - Homeless population by last permanent home**

Adults by Last Permanent Home	Sheltered Homeless		Street Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Burnaby	16	3%	13	4%	29	4%
Coquitlam	9	2%	5	2%	14	1%
Delta	8	2%	3	1%	11	1%
Langley(City and Township)	8	2%	4	1%	12	1%
Maple Ridge	13	3%	26	8%	39	5%
New Westminster	17	3%	14	4%	31	4%
North Vancouver (City and District)	16	3%	9	3%	25	2%
Pitt Meadows	0	0%	5	2%	5	0%
Port Coquitlam	5	1%	4	1%	9	1%
Port Moody	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Richmond	10	2%	8	2%	18	2%
Surrey	62	12%	91	29%	153	19%
Vancouver	181	35%	53	17%	234	28%
West Vancouver	0	0%	3	1%	3	0%
White Rock	2	0%	0	0%	2	0%
Rest of BC	53	10%	27	9%	80	10%
Elsewhere in Canada	94	18%	44	14%	138	16%
Rest of World	18	4%	3	1%	21	2%
No answer/don't know	207		17		224	
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Appendix C - Agencies contacted for information about vulnerable populations at-risk of homelessness**

<b>At-risk Population</b>	<b>Agency</b>
People with concurrent disorders and with a serious and persistent mental illness	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (4 people)
	Mental Health Evaluation & Community Consultation Unit (MHECCU) at UBC
	Fraser Health Authority (2 people)
	Ministry of Health, Mental Health services (2 people)
People with addictions	Ministry of Health
	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Addictions Services
	Fraser Health Authority
	Maple Cottage, New Westminster
	Vancouver Recovery Club
Individuals leaving jails and prisons	Ministry of the Attorney General, Community Corrections Branch
People with brain injuries	Provincial Brain Injury Program
	Lower Mainland Brain Injury Association
People with physical disabilities	BC Paraplegic Association
	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Wound Program
Individuals with HIV/AIDS	Wings Housing Society
	McLaren Housing Society of BC
	Dr. Peter Centre
People who are mentally handicapped	Community Living Society of the Lower Mainland
	Ministry of Children and Families

<b>At-risk Population</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Immigrants and Refugees	Multiculturalism BC
	MOSAIC
	Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society
	SUCCESS
Women fleeing domestic abuse and violence	Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Stopping the Violence and Regional Programs Branch
	BC Institute Against Family Violence
	The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women
	National Clearing House on Family Violence
	BC Housing
Seniors	Seniors Housing Information Program
	Hightower & Associates
	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
	411 Seniors Centre
Urban Aboriginal people	GVRD Aboriginal Homeless Committee
	Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society
Youth	Ministry of Children and Families
	Ministry of Education
	BC Stats
	McCreary Centre Society
	City of North Vancouver, Community Development

## Appendix D - 24-hour homeless snapshot survey

### Method

The initial phase of the work consisted of consulting with service providers throughout the region in order to promote awareness of and support for the initiative. The consultants attended meetings of the Cold-Wet Weather Strategy and Shelter Net BC to explain the project, answer any questions and obtain the support of these organizations. They were consulted with respect to the timing (date) of the snapshot and their suggestions for revised or additional questions were incorporated in the daytime questionnaire.

It was also important to consult with some of the sub-regional and municipal planning projects that were underway in various locations throughout the GVRD. Members of these initiatives were invited to a meeting of the Research Advisory Committee so that they would be aware of this regional research and could provide comment on various aspects of the methodology. The consultants communicated with the BC and Yukon Transition House Society in an effort to engage transition houses in the homeless snapshot.

A date in mid- January 2002 was selected because it fell within the time frame of the project schedule, and because many cold/wet weather strategy beds were operating by that time. The specific day was selected to be a few days prior to income assistance cheque issue day when homeless people would be most likely to seek service of some kind.

The GVRD facilitated distribution of materials to all participants in the survey, and status of the survey work was reported through the GVRD to the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.

The enumeration of homeless individuals through the 24-hour homeless snapshot was divided into two parts:

- A. The complete enumeration of all shelters, safe houses and transition houses for the night of January 14, 2002, called the “night-time component”.
- B. The enumeration of ‘locations’ where homeless people may be found, such as congregating areas, meal programs and other services, during the hours of 8 am to 8 pm on January 15, 2002. This was designed to identify those homeless persons who had not spent the previous night in a shelter, safe house or transition house. This is called the “day-time component”.

The 2002 24-hour homeless snapshot survey differed from the 1999 homeless snapshot in several respects: it added transition houses to the night-time providers and a daytime component was added to include those homeless people who did not stay in a shelter, safe house or transition house the night before. Adding the daytime service providers meant that areas outside of the City of Vancouver where there are few shelters would be better covered than using a shelter only approach. Furthermore, the 2002 snapshot survey was

conducted in Greater Vancouver only, whereas the 1999 snapshot survey was for the province.

### **Night-time component**

Master lists of shelters (including cold/wet weather facilities), safe houses and transition houses were developed, to include all facilities operating in the GVRD. The list included some facilities that are not strictly shelters but are open during the night to provide refuge for homeless people. Approximately two weeks in advance of the survey, all facilities received an information package were sent a package asking them to participate in the snapshot. Then, a few days prior to the 14<sup>th</sup>, all night-time providers were telephoned to ensure they received the package and to ascertain if they would participate.

Documentation for the night-time component consisting of the shelter and transition house survey forms and lists of night-time locations appears at the end of this appendix.

### **Day-time component**

The daytime component used a census approach to enumerate street homeless people at service and other locations throughout the region. This approach was used for safety and security reasons and to avoid the difficulties associated with a nighttime count, particularly in a large regional setting. Nonetheless, this was a large and complex undertaking requiring considerable cooperation from service providers and volunteers.

The sampling frame consisted of two general types of locations – line up locations such as soup kitchens and meal programs, and indoor and outdoor congregating areas such as drop in centers, community centers, malls, street panhandling locations etc. A list of all such locations was compiled in advance based on discussions with key informants in each municipality. The list identified the estimated number of homeless individuals to be found at that location, if possible, and the ‘best’ time to find these people. Each location was called in advance by a member of the research team, informed about the snapshot and asked to provide assistance, if necessary. Letters were also sent to the indoor daytime locations to gain their support/participation in the snapshot. Interviewers attempted to visit all pre-identified locations on snapshot day, January 15<sup>th</sup>. Interviewers at line-up locations were instructed to count the size of the line-up with a hand held counter before approaching everyone in the line up.

A questionnaire with screening questions was developed for the personal interviews to be conducted at these locations. The screening questions ensured that only qualified homeless individuals were interviewed. To qualify for inclusion in the daytime component, an individual at one of these locations:

- must not have been interviewed earlier that day;
- must be homeless according to the project’s definition; and
- did not stay in a shelter, safe house or transition house the night before.

Two different formats were used for the screening component of the questionnaire – a separate screener form, useful for situations with many people, and a combined screener/questionnaire, better for situations with fewer people. Documentation for the daytime component consisting of the survey and screener forms and lists of daytime locations appears at the end of this appendix. Although a different format was used, the daytime questionnaire gathered the same information as the nighttime snapshot forms. The one page questionnaire took only a couple of minutes to complete. Questionnaires were pre-tested at a lunch line-up in downtown Vancouver and some modifications were made.

Interviewers were enlisted from local service providers and other sources to conduct the screening and personal interviews for the daytime component. They attended a training session offered by the consulting team in advance of snapshot day. Teams of two interviewers traveled to pre-identified locations on snapshot day to conduct interviews. Approximately 40 interviewers consisting of staff and volunteers of homeless service providers, social planners, youth outreach workers, researchers and consultants, were involved in this undertaking. Interviewers were instructed during training to avoid interviewing in the presence of media in order to preserve interviewee confidentiality. They wore identifying buttons and carried candies and cigarettes as icebreakers. Youth outreach workers were recruited to use their networks and skills to locate youth to interview for the daytime component. Most teams spent an average of 5 or 6 hours in the field, although some teams spent many more hours. Five area coordinators provided support to the interviewer teams on snapshot day.

### **Extent of coverage**

Perfect or complete information about the homeless is virtually impossible to obtain. Much homelessness is by its very nature hidden and difficult to enumerate using typical household based methods.

*Most if not all participants who have attempted to survey, sample or count the homeless in the past noted that, regardless of how meticulous the effort to count the homeless is, some portion of the population will be excluded (Peressini et al 1996).*

That being said, the information obtained from the 24-hour homeless snapshot survey is the best available using established methods.

The enumeration of the homeless through the 24-hour homeless snapshot was divided into two parts:

- A. The complete enumeration of all shelters, safe houses and transition houses for the night of January 14, 2002.
- B. The enumeration of ‘locations’ such as congregating areas, meal programs and other services, during the hours of 8 am to 8 pm on January 15, 2002. This was designed to identify homeless people who had not spent the previous night in a shelter, safe house or transition house.

With this methodology, if the enumeration of night-time facilities was complete, and if the list of daytime locations was complete and each thoroughly enumerated, then the only homeless persons missed would be those that were not sheltered on the night of January 14 and who passed through none of the daytime locations on January 15. Early in the planning, it was recognized that youth and sex trade workers might slip through the cracks. Special provisions were made to have them enumerated by knowledgeable youth outreach workers on January 15, as part of the daytime enumeration.

Part A of the enumeration was essentially complete, with all operating permanent and cold/wet weather shelters, 2 out of 5 safe houses and 10 out of 12 transition houses reporting those staying there that night. The colder than usual weather increased the likelihood that persons normally sleeping ‘rough’ would seek shelter that night and be caught by shelter/transition enumeration.

**Table D1 – Participation in the night-time component**

	Number of facilities in GVRD	Number facilities that participated	# Missing beds
Shelters (incl. CWWS)*	28	28	0
Safe houses	5	2	7+8+?
Transition houses	12	10	10+?
Total	45	40	40-45 beds

\*Cold/wet weather strategy beds

The difference between the total capacity of the night-time facilities operating that night, and those that participated in the snapshot represents the potential undercount. The estimated capacity of the non-reporting night-time facilities is between 40 and 45 beds. If these five facilities were full on the night of January 14<sup>th</sup>, it would add an additional 40-45 individuals to the number of homeless in the region. In terms of coverage of different client types, these would be youth and women and children.

The daytime enumeration (part B) was organized so that interviewers could apply the screening portion of the questionnaire to as many people as possible. The screen (first 3 questions of the questionnaire) classified all of those approached into the following categories:

- ‘out’ previously screened
- ‘out’ have a home
- ‘out’ sheltered on previous night
- ‘in’ homeless and not sheltered on previous night

People were to be screened:

- as they lined up at various meal programs



- where they congregated, outside, at bottle depots, or at drop-in centres

A very thorough ‘frame’ or inventory of all such locations throughout the region was compiled using the knowledge of local experts. As well, the interviewers were recruited from the ranks of people who worked regularly with the homeless, and could add locations, if some were missing from the list. Conceptually, if all of the locations were enumerated during all hours of January 15, 2002, then the number of homeless missed would be extremely low; under-coverage would only occur from having missed a location with homeless people who went nowhere else that day. Also, as enumeration progressed throughout the day, more and more people approached would fall into the ‘previously screened’ category, to the point where no new homeless people were being identified at the end of the day.<sup>87</sup>

It was, of course, not feasible to enumerate all locations during all hours. With the intention of maximizing the number of people screened, enumeration of each meal line-up location was made to coincide with the peak hours of operation. At peak times, it might not be possible to screen all persons waiting for a meal. Accordingly, interviewers were also asked to count or estimate the number they were not able to screen. Peak hour enumeration was also adopted for bottle depots and drop-ins; other congregating areas (parks, streets, etc.) were scheduled to fill in the remaining time. Outside of the meal program locations, interviewers were not asked to keep track of persons they might have, but were unable to screen; some did. In the event, 1,084 persons were screened, of which 335 fell into the ‘unsheltered homeless’ category.

The methodology was applied most rigorously in the City of Vancouver. Of the 6 meal line-up programs operating on January 15, interviewers were able to screen all people at 4 of them. In the remaining 2, approximately 88 people were not screened. By applying the proportion screened ‘in’ for these locations to the people not approached, it is possible to estimate that 11 more of these 88 would likely have been unsheltered homeless. In bottle depots and other congregating areas in Vancouver, interviewers reported 13 people that were not screened. Using the same logic, an estimated 3 more people were likely to have been unsheltered homeless. Neither of these numbers (11 and 3 more) is accurate enough to add to the 335 unsheltered homeless enumerated. They just provide an indication of the following: “Had it been possible to screen 101 more persons at the same locations in Vancouver, we could expect that as many as 14 might have been unsheltered homeless”.

In areas outside the City of Vancouver, 8 meal programs were in operation. Interviewers were able to screen all people at 3 of them, but at 3 others, interviewers only approached people they knew to be homeless. In the remaining 2, interviewers only approached people not previously screened, and counts of those not approach are unavailable. In congregating areas, the interviewers sometimes approached only people they knew to be homeless. It is not possible to estimate an undercount; however the actual count of the

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<sup>87</sup> The interviewers noticed this phenomenon, though they were not required to collect screening information by time of day. In future studies, it is possible to add more rigor to data collection and use ‘capture/recapture’ principles to estimate whether enumeration continued long enough.

homeless obtained is felt to be a reasonably reliable representation of the homeless who use services.

Incomplete response to the screen also contributes to the undercount. The 335 unsheltered homeless identified during the daytime enumeration, came only from those that completed all 3 questions on the screening portion of the questionnaire. Thirty-seven respondents had incomplete screens. By assuming that the proportion of non-respondents who would have been screened 'in' is the same as that observed amongst respondents (those with complete screens), it is possible to estimate that 28 of the 37 would likely have been unsheltered homeless. This brings the daytime enumeration estimate of the number of unsheltered homeless to 363 people. The 28 additional people are predominantly male (62%) and somewhat older (average age 41 years) than the respondents.

Notwithstanding the care that went into maximizing the coverage of the homeless, some were missed and cannot be estimated. These fall into two categories:

- **those who could not be enumerated by the methodology** – (i.e. Those who were not sheltered on January 14 and who passed through none of the listed locations during their peak enumeration hours). These are likely to be people who sleep 'rough' and who avoid contact with services, at least during peak hours. They could only be found in the early morning hours at their isolated sleeping locations (these locations considered not appropriate to visit for this exercise). The other group that falls into this category is those staying temporarily with friends on January 14/15 and who had no need for services. The size of this group is unknown.
- **those who slipped through due to a lack of rigor in the screening** – With more resources and better training to do a more thorough screening, some additional unsheltered homeless would have been identified. Screening was carried out in a comprehensive way in the City of Vancouver, but interviewers in other urban and some suburban locations chose to approach only known homeless persons, resulting in fewer screened persons, and potentially missing some homeless persons. As was seen in the City of Vancouver, however, these might number in the 20s or 30s, but not the 100s.

### **Quality of the data**

All Questionnaires:

All questions should contain a "no answer/unknown" option for selection.

All questionnaires should contain:

- a) the same questions;
- b) the same choices.

All questionnaires will have a unique identifier number. All questionnaires will need to identify location and municipality where the interview occurred.

**Non-response** – The non-response for many questions ranged from 17 to 224, the lowest non-response attributed to the question of gender; the highest non-response was to the question of “last permanent home”. One large men’s shelter accounting for 90 questionnaires could only be used for gender and age responses. Another cold-wet weather strategy shelter, accounting for 48 individuals, provided only gender information about the homeless individuals. This cold-wet weather shelter caters mostly to the Aboriginal clientele, therefore the results by ethnic identity might be under-represented with respect to Aboriginal persons.

**Gender** - Male/Female. If neither is selected, then “no answer / unknown” is default response.

The asking of this question is not considered appropriate. The interviewer, if unsure, should leave blank.

**Age** - numeric response or “date of birth” response. The date of birth will enable a calculation of age.

**Family Status** - This question was not consistent across all target groups. While the study focused on finding children, future questionnaires should ascertain information about children for comparative purposes. Proposed options for this question are as follows:

1. Single
2. Single with child/children (number of children & age of children)
3. Couple/Living with Partner
4. Couple/Living with Partner with child/children (number of children & age of children)
5. With Other (relative/friend) – no children
6. With Other (relative/friend) with child/children (number of children & age of children)
7. No Answer

The response “Other” could also have been represented with “Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)”. Experience shows that the response will likely be a relative or a friend.

### **What is your ethnic background**

This question proved difficult for some people to answer, particularly with the open-ended question but forth to the street homeless. Many people responded ‘Canadian’ to this open-ended question. Statistics Canada terminology should be used in the categories presented on the questionnaire. This may change in the future to reflect Statistics Canada definitions of Aboriginal Identity and Visible Minorities Identity.

1. Aboriginal person (North American Indian, Metis, or Inuit (Eskimo))
2. Asian (includes Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Southeast Asian, South Asian)
3. Black
4. Middle East/Arab/West Asian
5. Other visible minority \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)
6. Multiple visible minority \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

7. Not a visible minority (Caucasian)
8. No Answer

**What City was your last permanent home** - This should be an open ended question. The interviewer should be trained to ask further if the location of the City is not known (to ascertain what province or country the City is located in).

**How long have you been without a place of your own** - this question has five options (plus “no answer / unknown”). The final choice “1 year or more” may lead to a disclosure of the number of years the individual has been homeless. The interviewer should capture this additional data for anecdotal purposes.

**What is the main reason you do not have your own place** – this question seeks the primary reason for homelessness, so the interview asks that one reason be selected. Recognizing that some people will want to select multiple reasons, the reporting out should accommodate “multiple reasons”.

A review of the reporting out section of this report, and experience with the questionnaires, has lead to the following recommended options for future questionnaires:

1. Evicted
2. Moving/Stranded
3. Ineligible for income assistance
4. Conflict / Family breakdown / Abuse
5. From jail / corrections / halfway house
6. Addiction
7. Refugee
8. Fire/unsafe building
9. Disability/Health/from treatment/Respite
10. Prefer transient lifestyle
11. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

The reporting out will likely contain many “*Other – out of funds*” and “*Other – no job*”. However, Out of funds and No job are more likely a symptom of homelessness than a cause, therefore the questionnaire is designed to address the root cause while still allowing the individual to identify any reason by selecting answer, *Other* \_\_\_\_\_, the open-ended response.

**What is the major source of income (mark one)** – this question seeks the primary source of income for homeless persons, so the interview asks that one reason be selected. A review of the reporting out section of this report, and experience with the questionnaires, has lead to the following recommended options for future questionnaires:

1. Welfare / Social Assistance / Training program
2. E.I. Employment Insurance
3. Disability benefit
4. Pension
5. Employment
6. No Income
7. Binning / Bottles / panhandling / squeegeeing
8. No Answer
9. Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

**Do you have any of the following health problems** – this survey question asks about sensitive information, something individuals might not want to disclose. The information gathered from this question will help shelters and service providers identify training

needs and programs to meet their clients needs. Shelter staff and interviewers were instructed to note if they suspected the respondent had any of the four health conditions in the office section. These would be included as 'yes' responses, resulting in a small percent increase in incidence.

Yes   No   Office

Physical Disability  
Medical Condition  
Addiction / Substance Abuse  
Mental illness  
None  
No Answer

### **Lessons learned**

The following describes the key lessons learned from planning and implementing the 24 hour homeless snapshot survey.

- 1) It was challenging to conduct this snapshot survey on a region-wide basis, particularly the daytime component. It took much longer than was anticipated to identify and make contact with appropriate personnel (interviewers and individuals who could provide assistance with identifying daytime homeless locations) in each municipality. For municipalities with little experience in counting/studying/serving the homeless (most of them) it was difficult for informants to identify daytime locations where homeless people could be found. Most of the budget over run arose in this phase of the snapshot. In addition, the large geography made coordination on snapshot day difficult. We found it is important to have enough supervisors so that all interviewers receive a briefing and a debriefing on snapshot day.
- 2) The use of volunteers as interviewers worked well. Most volunteers were connected to agencies that serve the homeless and the at-risk population so they had a stake in the outcome, knew their way around their community and could help identify locations where the homeless might be found. Training is key to ensure that similar procedures and methods are used.
- 3) There needs to be sufficient lead time to plan and organize an endeavour of this magnitude. In terms of timing, it would be better to avoid the Christmas period, both before and after. Future snapshots should consider avoiding December and January for this reason.
- 4) Conducting a snapshot of this nature is impossible without community support. In addition, the project team was fortunate to have the assistance of a local individual with many years experience working with the homeless in the City of Vancouver, and whose credibility and experience contributed greatly to the positive outcome.

- 5) There was some media and political interest in the snapshot survey, resulting in requests by members of the media and by politicians to accompany interviewers and “observe” during interviews with homeless people. These requests were denied, in conformance with the confidentiality and anonymity required for study participants. One way of addressing this issue might be to keep the snapshot date confidential, as is done in Calgary. Another is to commit to each enquirer for “observer status” that they will receive a copy of survey findings, as soon as they are available.

### **Technical Materials for 24-Hour Homeless Snapshot Survey**

The materials used to implement the 24 hour homeless snapshot survey follow.

List of Emergency Shelters, Cold/Wet Weather Beds, Safe Houses, and Transition Houses
Transition House Information Sheet
Transition House Clients Snapshot
Shelter Information Sheet
Shelter Clients Snapshot
Snapshot Information Package
Resources Required for 24-Hour Snapshot
Daytime Locations
Daytime Line-up Form
Daytime Survey Form

<b>Emergency Shelters, Safe Houses, Cold/Wet Weather Beds and Transition Houses in the Lower Mainland - December 18, 2001</b>							
<b>Name</b>	<b>Mailing Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Phone (604)</b>	<b>Fax (604)</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>#beds</b>	<b>#CWW</b>
<b>Emergency Shelters</b>							
Salvation Army-Garfield Hotel	1107 Royal Ave., V3M 1K4	New Westminster	521-2421	521-8819	Rob Anderson	10	6 mats
Salvation Army-Stevenson House	32 Elliot, V3L 7V8	New Westminster	526-4783	526-8641	Alex Bempong	10	
Salvation Army-Richmond House	3111 Shell St., V6X 2P3	Richmond	276-2490	276-2490	Les McAusland	7	3
Fraserside Emergency Shelter	1206 8th St. V3M 2R9	New Westminster	525-3929	522-4031	Lynn Hillfer	12	
Options Services to Communities Society - Surrey Men's Shelters	13210 89th Ave. V3V 7V8	Surrey	597-1284	572-7413	Peter Fedos	20	
Scottsdale House	11779-72nd Ave., V4E 1Z2	Delta	572-9550	572-8994	Rose Perrault	10	
Sheena's Place	13474-112 A Ave. V3R 2G7	Surrey	581-1538	520-1169	Lyn Fletcher	10	
Salvation Army-Dunsmuir House	500 Dunsmuir, V6B 1Y2	Vancouver	681-3405	681-3005	Capt. Halvorsen	30	
Salvation Army - Harbour Light	119 E. Cordova V6A 1K8	Vancouver	646-6800	682-1673	Samuel Fame	10	
Salvation Army -Haven	128 E. Cordova V6A 1K8	Vancouver	646-6817	682-1673	Samuel Fame	15	25
Catholic Charities	828 Cambie, V6B 2A7	Vancouver	443-3219	683-0926	Mary MacDougall	84	10
Lookout Emergency Aid Society	346 Alexander, V6A 1C6	Vancouver	681-9126	681-9150	Al Mitchell	42	
Triage Emergency Services and Care Society	707 Powell, V6A 4C5	Vancouver	254-3700	215-3040	Mark Smith	28	

Immigrant Services Society-Welcome House	536 Drake St. VGB 2H3	Vancouver	684-7498	684-5683	Jim Siemens	70	
Salvation Army - New Beginnings-Homestead	975 W57th Ave. V6P 1S4	Vancouver	266-9696	266-7401	Ken Kimberly	11	
Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth & Families	40 Begbie St. V3M 3L9	New Westminster	526-2522	526-6546	Catherine Leach	2	
Powell Place	329A Powell, V6A 1G5	Vancouver	606-0403	606-0309	Kathy Stringer	36	
Vi Fineday Place	c/o 1906 W15 Ave. V6J 2L3	Vancouver	736-2423	736-2404	Brenda Dennis	15	
Urban Native Youth Association Aboriginal Safe House	1640 E. Hastings V5L 1S6	Vancouver	254-7732	254-7811	Jerry Adams	7	10
Covenant House	575 Drake St., V6B 4K8	Vancouver	685-7474	685-7457	Sandy Cooke	18	
Vancouver Native Health Society	449 E. Hastings, V6A 1P5	Vancouver	254-9949	254-9948	Lou Demerais	8	
Family Services of Greater Vancouver-Walden Safehouse	4675 Walden V5V 3S8	Vancouver	877-1234	875-0254	Christopher Graham	7	
Circle of Eagles--Anderson Lodge	1470 E. Broadway, V5N 1V6	Vancouver	874-9610	874-3858	Marjorie White	10	
Dusk to Dawn	112-1056 Comox St., V6E 4A7	Vancouver	688-0399	683-0383	Brian Williams	0	0
Atira Transition House Society - Bridge Women's Shelter	204-15210 North Bluff Rd. V4B 3E6	White Rock	581-9100	531-9145	Janice Abbott		
Atira Transition House Society - Shimia Safe House	204-15210 North Bluff Rd. V4B 3E6	White Rock	581-9100	531-9145	Janice Abbott		
Union Gospel Mission	616 East Cordova, V6A 1L9	Vancouver	253-3323	253-3496	Al Mayall	9	
<b>Cold/Wet Weather Strategy Beds</b>							
Salvation Army-Garfield Hotel	see above	New Westminster	521-9017	521-8819	Rob Anderson	10	6 mats
South Fraser Community Services-The Front Room	P.O. Box 500, Stn. Main V3T 5B7	Surrey	589-8678 or 589-7777	583-8848	Annette Welsch		36



Catholic Charities	see above	Vancouver	443-3219	683-0926	Mary MacDougall	10	84
Lookout Emergency Aid Society-Marpole shelter	8982 Hudson St. V6P 4N4	Vancouver	264-1680	264-1610	Al Mitchell		50
First Baptist Church	969 Burrard St., V6Z 1Y1	Vancouver	683-8441	683-8410	Rev. Bob Swann		10 mats
Salvation Army-Haven	see above	Vancouver	646-6806 or 682-1673	682-1673	Samuel Fame	15	25
The Gathering Place	609 Helmken, V6B 5R1	Vancouver	665-2391	257-3863	Diane MacKenzie		50 mats
Evelyne Saller Centre	320 Alexander St. V6B 1C3	Vancouver	665-3075	606-2671	Joanne Stevens		15 to 25
St. James Service Society-Umbrella	1321 Richards St. V6B 3G7	Vancouver	606-0367	606-0367	Kathy Stringer	606-0400	16
Sheena's Place	402 E. Columbia, V3L 3X1	New Westminster	581-1538	581-9280	Bonnie Morarity		10
Union Gospel Mission	see above	Vancouver	253-3323	253-3496	Al Mayall		30 mats
Golden Ears Hotel	2517 Shaughnessy V3C 3G3	Port Coquitlam	552-1726	552-1697	Rob Anderson		4 mats
Salvation Army-Caring Place	22777 Dewdney Trunk Rd, V2X 3K4	Maple Ridge	463-8296	463-5539	Barb Wardrope		6
North Shore Shelter	705 W2nd St. V7M 1E6	North Vancouver	982-9126	982-9127	Richard Turton		25 to 30
Note: The Salvation Army - Crosswalk shelter was closed at this time.							

<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>						
<b>Transition Houses</b>							
Coquitlam Transition House	Port Coquitlam						
Helping Spirit Lodge	Vancouver						
Marguerite Dixon Transition House	Burnaby						
Nova Transition House	Richmond						
SAGE Transition House	North Vancouver						
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter	Vancouver						
Atira Transition House - Durant Transition House	White Rock						
Monarch Place	New Westminster						
Peggy's Place - The Kettle	Vancouver						
Ishtar Transition House	Langley						
Cythera Transition House	Maple Ridge						

**The GVRD 24-hour Homeless Snapshot**  
**January 14, 2002**

Transition house name: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_

Total capacity/beds                      # Adults \_\_\_\_\_      # Children \_\_\_\_\_

Number staying Jan 14th, 2002              # Adults \_\_\_\_\_      # Children \_\_\_\_\_

*Please fill out the attached form(s), one row for every adult client who stayed in the transition house overnight on Jan 14, 2002. Children with a parent are included in the parent's row. Unaccompanied youth are included individually. Each row should be numbered consecutively. Please ask clients for the necessary information at the time that you feel is most appropriate. This includes during an earlier intake interview. If a client declines or is unable to answer all of these questions, please indicate that an individual/family used a bed/room by inserting a check mark in the first box and noting the number of children, if any. Otherwise, note the responses for as many questions as possible for each client.*

**Turnaways**

Turnaways are people you were unable to serve tonight because you were full, or for other reasons. You may want to indicate in the comment area below what are the 'other reasons' for turning someone away.

Number of adults turned away: \_\_\_\_\_      Number of children turned away: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for turnaway (please indicate how many adults turned away for each reason):

# Full: \_\_\_\_\_                      # Other reasons \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any unusual events or circumstances that may have affected the snapshot tonight?

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If you have questions or need assistance to complete the form, call Margaret Eberle: (604) 254-0820 or Deborah Kraus (604) 221-7772.

**Please return on January 15, 2002**  
**Fax completed forms to M. Eberle (604) 254-0822 or**  
**Mail to: M. Eberle, 3857 W. 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC. V6S 1Y2**

Thank you!



**GVRD 24-hour Homeless Snapshot  
January 14, 2002**

Shelter name: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_

Total capacity/beds \_\_\_\_\_ # Adults \_\_\_\_\_ # Children \_\_\_\_\_  
(including cold-wet)

Number staying Jan 14th, 2002 \_\_\_\_\_ # Adults \_\_\_\_\_ # Children \_\_\_\_\_

*Please fill out the attached form(s), one row for every adult client who stayed in the shelter overnight on Jan 14, 2002. Children accompanying adults should be included with one adult family member only. Unaccompanied youth are included individually. Each row should be numbered consecutively. Please ask clients for the necessary information at the time that you feel is most appropriate. If a client declines or is unable to answer these questions, please indicate that an individual/family used a bed/room by inserting a check mark in the first box and noting the number of children, if any. Otherwise, note the responses for as many questions as possible for each client.*

**Turnaways**

*Turnaways are people you were unable to serve tonight because you were full, or you were unable to offer them a bed due to other circumstances.*

Number of adult turnaways Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for turnaway (please indicate how many adults turned away for each reason):

# Shelter full: \_\_\_\_\_ # Inappropriate for your shelter \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any unusual events or circumstances that may have affected the snapshot tonight (snowstorm, fire, etc)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions or need assistance to complete the form, call Margaret Eberle: (604) 254-0820 or Deborah Kraus (604) 221-7772.

**Please return on January 15, 2002**

**Fax completed forms to M. Eberle (604) 254-0822 or**

**Mail to M. Eberle, 3857 W. 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC. V6S 1Y2**

Thank you!

Client		What is your age? (complete one)		Family type		Kids	Immediate reason for admission	How long have you been without a permanent home?					In what city was your last permanent home?	What is your ethnic background?				What is your major source of income? (mark one)							Do you have any health conditions? (as many as apply)											
Gender	__yrs	day/mo/yr	Single	Couple	Family with children	How many children staying with you?	See options below, insert letter or other reason	Less than 1 week	1 week to under 1 month	1 month to less than 6 months	6 months to less than 1 year	1 year or more	Municipality	Aboriginal	Black	Caucasian	Asian	Other	Welfare/training program	Disability Benefit	Employment	Employment Insurance	Pension	Binning or panhandling	No income source	Other	Physical disability	Medical condition	Addiction	Mental illness	None					
1																																				
2																																				
3																																				
<b>Immediate reason for admission (one per client)</b>																																				
a) evicted			e) Ineligible for income assistance			i) Refugee claimant					m) Parental conflict																									
b) moved/visiting/stranded			f) Spousal abuse			j) Substance abuse					n) Other (please specify in box above)																									
c) from treatment			j) Parental abuse			k) Fire/unsafe premises																														
d) From corrections/jail			h) Family breakdown			l) Transient lifestyle																														

**Snapshot Information Package**  
**24-hour Snapshot Count and Profile of Homeless Persons in the GVRD**  
**To be conducted January 14-15/2002**

Background

The Greater Vancouver Regional District has hired a team of consultants to learn more about people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness in the Region. The consultants are working with a Research Advisory Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Regional Homelessness Steering Committee, and includes representatives of municipal, regional, and provincial governments and organizations that provide services to people who are homeless.

To obtain good quality information about the size and nature of the homeless and at risk population in the Region, the consultants plan to:

- Conduct a 24-hour snapshot of people who are homeless.
- Analyze some preliminary data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), which is used by shelters in the Lower Mainland. The purpose will be to supplement the 24-hour snapshot and obtain information about people who experience homelessness at some point over a longer period of time (e.g. 6 months or 1 year).
- Prepare a profile of people at risk of homelessness using 1996 Census data for households who are paying in excess of 50% of their gross income for rent and are in core housing need.

This background sheet provides information on the 24-hour snapshot.

**24-HOUR SNAPSHOT**

**Night-time count and profile**

**January 14<sup>th</sup> from 12 midnight – January 15<sup>th</sup> 7:00 a.m.**

The 24-hour snapshot includes a one-night survey of emergency shelters and other locations that provide temporary accommodation such as transition houses. Each night-time service provider will be asked to complete a form listing anonymously all the people who stayed with them that night including some basic demographic characteristics. The consultants will also try to obtain data for the one night from the HIFIS program.

**Day-time count and profile**

**January 15<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (as appropriate)**

The night-time count will be supplemented with interviews the next day with clients of daytime services and locations frequented by homeless people who do not use emergency shelters or transition houses. Locations identified to date include drop in centres, bottle depots, meal programs, parks etc. After determining if an individual at these locations is

homeless, an interviewer will ask if the respondent stayed the previous night in one of the locations covered by the night-time survey. If not, then the respondent will be asked if they would like to continue with a short interview.

All the information gained during the 24-hour snapshot will be analyzed to provide a point in time estimate of the number and characteristics of people who were found to be homeless during the period of the snapshot. This information will be made available to all interested parties through the Internet and in a published format.

At present, the consultants are identifying possible sites and services in each municipality that might participate in the 24-hour snapshot.

A separate process is being developed for youth. It is hoped that youth outreach workers in all parts of the GVRD will identify youth who are homeless in their areas and obtain information to complete a brief questionnaire (to be developed).

### **Approach for day-time count and profile**

Interviewers will work in teams of two. Each team will include someone knowledgeable about where people who are homeless may be found and someone who is experienced working with this client group and sensitive to their needs. At least one person on each team will be expected to attend a training session tentatively set for **January 8<sup>th</sup>**.

Two basic types of places will be included in the daytime snapshot – places with outdoor line ups, places that provide services inside, and congregating areas (indoors and outdoors).

An attempt will also be made to try and reach people who are not likely to be found in congregating areas.

#### **Locations with line ups:**

At meal programs (soup kitchens etc), bottle depots and similar services the team will:

- Enumerate people in the line-up just before opening and at peak hours;
- For each place it will be necessary to count size of line-up right away (have a clicker counter) to determine total number of people, record the number of people approached, and the number interviewed;
- All team members will wear an ID button for this project;
- Teams will ask screening questions and questionnaire – very short; and
- Offer cigarettes or snacks – to those who are eligible to complete questionnaire and those not eligible.

#### **Street Sweep:**

This component consists of both indoor and outdoor locations where the homeless congregate (see list below). However, interviewers still must ask screening questions to find out if the person is homeless and if they were already counted. The team will:

- Undertake the Count during peak hours;



- Roam these pre-identified locations, and try to approach obvious people. i.e. panhandlers, squeegeers, or in indoor locations, seek directions from staff (if agreed in advance);
- Be guided by local key informants;
- Wear an ID button;
- Use the same questionnaire as above;
- Offer cigarette or snacks– to those who are eligible to complete questionnaire and those who are not.

**Examples of indoor locations - services and institutions where people come and go:**

- Drop in centres
- Social service organizations
- Churches
- Libraries
- Community centres
- Neighbourhood houses

**Examples of outdoor congregating areas (panhandling, squeegeeing, etc):**

- Fast food outlets
- Malls
- Shopping areas
- High traffic retail areas
- Liquor stores
- Skytrain stations
- Parks

**Daytime snapshot interviewers**

The interviewer's role is a critical one for the success of the 24-hour homeless snapshot. The following information has been put together to assist the consultants and stakeholders in each municipality to find suitable qualified interviewers.

**Some important points about the interviewers and their role:**

- All interviewers will be covered by Workers Compensation specifically for this project;
- All interviewers will wear identification linking them with this project;
- Personal safety is paramount at all times;
- At least one person from each team will attend a training session (to be held in January 2002); and
- Interviews will take place during the daytime on January 15th.

Each team must possess the following combination of skills/attributes. They may all reside in one person or be shared by the team members.

1. Be familiar with local homeless service provider locations and outdoor and indoor congregating areas (parks, skytrain stations etc).

2. Have experience working with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
3. Participate in training offered by this project (to take place in January 2002.)

The following are some general guidelines for selecting all interviewers to participate in the 24-hour homeless snapshot.

**In general, all interviewers MUST:**

- Be familiar and comfortable with people living in deepest poverty;
- Be compassionate, accepting, willing to suspend judgment and blame;
- Enjoy one-on-one conversation, be curious;
- Have a sense of humour;
- Have some awareness of systemic causes of poverty and homelessness;
- Recognize and have some knowledge of substance abuse, mental illness, physical disability;
- Feel genuine respect for the homeless, mentally ill, and substance abusing;
- Be comfortable making eye contact, and giving non-verbal and verbal affirmation;
- Know whether they are safe or not, in unfamiliar situations;
- Be comfortable with both seriousness and playfulness
- Be willing to offer assistance, and willing not to try to change their subjects;
- Be patient and willing to take the time; and
- Be able to manage confidentiality and pose no risk on the street to the subject.

In addition, it would be helpful if the interviewer:

- Is physically fit;
- Has previous personal experience of homelessness;
- Has personal, previous, experience of substance abuse (at least 5 years clean and sober);
- Be familiar to, and trusted by the subjects; and
- Has some experience conducting interviews.

**Where to find interviewers:**

The following may be sources of qualified interviewers:

- Well liked service providers;
- Well liked outreach workers;
- Nuns and Brothers in Catholic Churches;
- Experienced volunteers at organizations who work with the homeless;
- Drug and alcohol program workers (mature in sobriety, so no "attitude")
- People (over age 40) training for chaplaincy, pastoral care, or palliative ministry, through the Theology Schools, hospitals and prisons; and
- Psychiatric nurses who think outside of the box.

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Margaret Eberle (604) 254-0820, Deborah Kraus (604) 221-7772 or Jim Woodward (604) 224-0273.**

**Research Project on Homelessness in Greater Vancouver  
Resources required to facilitate the 24-hour snapshot Survey  
on January 14/15, 2002**

Background

The following information describes the tasks involved in organizing the 24-Hour Snapshot on January 14/15, 2002 and the human resources required. The Snapshot was organized over a period of two months primarily by four consultants. Three co-ordinated the daytime portion with one responsible for Vancouver, another the North Shore, Richmond, New Westminister, Surrey and Delta and the third Burnaby, the Tri-Cities, Langley and Maple Ridge. The fourth consultant co-ordinated the night-time portion of the count.

The tasks involved in the preparations for the night-time portion of the count included:

- Developing comprehensive lists of emergency shelters, transition houses, safe houses in the GVRD;
- Developing and mailing a package of materials for the night-time count including a description of the Project, a letter requesting participation and a form to record the count; and
- Contacting all emergency shelters, transition houses and safe houses to confirm their participation and respond to their questions.

The tasks involved in the preparations for the daytime portion of the count included:

- Assigning daytime organizers by sub-region to prepare for the count and to supervise the count on January 15, 2002;
- Identifying appropriate volunteers in each municipality to act as interviewers on count day;
- Confirming participation of volunteers for the daytime count;
- Organizing teams of two to cover the entire GVRD (approximately 30 teams);
- Training the volunteers to conduct interviews;
- Identifying locations where homeless individuals might be located on count day;
- Contacting all service providers and facilities where homeless people might be found during the day, explaining the Project, determining if there are line-ups of the homeless in conjunction with services and ensuring their co-operation in the count;
- Locating additional outdoor locations where the homeless congregate and determining if these sites should be visited and at what time during the day; and
- Contacting all participants again before the count to confirm participation, determine how co-ordination will be handled on count day and answer questions.

The following table outlines the tasks involved and the number of days required to organize the daytime and night-time components of the 24-Hour Snapshot count. The consulting team believes that in a second count some tasks would require less time to

complete by using a similar methodology and the forms, letters and lists that were developed for the 2002.

<b>Daytime count</b>		
<b>Volunteer interview teams worked in 14 municipalities during the daytime count</b>		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Days to organize daytime count</b>
Recruit volunteer Interviewers (60)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Explain the project</li> <li>• Call back</li> <li>• Confirm</li> <li>• Remind</li> </ul>	4 days
Secure participation from agencies (60)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Explain the project</li> <li>• Call back</li> <li>• Confirm</li> <li>• Remind</li> </ul>	4.2 days
Identify potential locations (85)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify</li> <li>• Explain the project</li> <li>• Confirm</li> </ul>	5.8 days
Co-ordinator team meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assign tasks and responsibilities</li> <li>• To develop strategies</li> </ul>	1.5 x 4 = 6 days
Co-ordinator time to train interviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize training session</li> <li>• Facilitate training session</li> </ul>	1.5 x 2 = 3 days
Co-ordinator time to develop forms, letters and purchase supplies		7 days
Co-ordinator time on snapshot day		1.4 x 4 = 5.6 days
	Subtotal daytime	<b>35.6 days</b>
<b>Night-time Count</b>		
28 permanent and cold/wet weather emergency shelters, 2 safe houses and 10 transition houses participating in the night-time count		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Days to organize night-time count</b>
Develop lists of emergency shelters, transition houses and safe houses		3 days
Contact emergency shelters, transition houses and safe houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the project</li> <li>• Confirm their participation</li> <li>• Call back and remind</li> </ul>	4.5 days
Assemble the package of information, letters and forms and distribute to participants		5 days
Contact shelters, safe houses and transition houses after the count and retrieve survey data		2 days

	Subtotal night-time	14.5 days
	Subtotal daytime	35.6 days
	Total snapshot	50.1 days

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	<b>Vancouver</b>									
VD1	Christ Church Cathedral breakfast line/sandwich project				10-11am		Downtown	331-1573	Mary Lewis	690 Burrard, Vancouver, V6C 2L1
VD2	First Baptist Church dinner Tues night		150+ pl		9:30-11 pm dinner	youth	Downtown	604-837-7520	Pastor Bob Swann	969 Burrard Vancouver V6Z 1Y1
	Gathering Place city centre, especially in laundry and TV areas						Downtown	665-2391	Diane McKenzie	609 Helmcken Vancouver V6B 5R1
	Coast Foundation drop in						Downtown	683-3787		1225 Seymour St. Vancouver V6B 3C1
DTES1	First United Church Sanctuary	10 to 35	200+ pl		10:00:00 AM (soup 8:30, coffee 9:30) suggested time census 7:30 - 10 am		DTES	604-681-3405	Rev Brian Burke,	320 E. Hastings Vancouver V6A 1P4
DTES2	Franciscan Sisters of Atonement		100 + pl		3:30 to 5 sandwich (2:30 -4 pm census suggest)		DTES	685-9987	Mary Elizabeth Callagher	385 E. Cordova Vancouver
DTES3	Union Gospel Mission lunch line up	??	100-200 pl		12:30 to 1:30 pm (lunch served 1:30) census suggested 1:30-3:30 pm		DTES	604-255-0340	Pastor Al Mayall	616 E. Cordova (Princess and Cordova) Vancouver V6A 1L9
	The Dugout soupline	2-5 ind			7-8am		DTES	685-5239	Jackie	59 Powell St. Vancouver V6A 1E9

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
DTES5	United We Can Bottle Depot		400-500 pl per day		8-11 am		DTES	681-0001	Ken Liotta	39 E. Hastings Vancouver V6A 1K2
	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre				12:30 soup	women	DTES	681-8480	Pauline Greaves	302 Columbia St. Vancouver V6A 1K2
	Youth Action Centre				9 am breakfast, 12 lunch 4 pm dinner	youth	DTES	602-9747	Ann Aran	342 E. Hastings Vancouver V6A 1P4
<b>code</b>	The Door Is Open				11 am lunch 3:45 pm snack	??	DTES	669-0498	Brother Tim	373 E. Cordova St. Vancouver V6A 1L4
DTES8	Saller Centre on ramp	2-7 ind			5-6 am		DTES	665-3075	Ernie Leffler	320 Alexander Vancouver V6A 1C3
	Mission Possible (drop in and snacks)				1:30 to 4pm		DTES	253-4469		543 E. Powell St. Vancouver V6A 1Z5
	Mental Patients Assn	1-4 ind			10 - 1pm		Kitsilano	738-5770 ext 234	Brawn Shankar	1731 W. 4th Ave Vancouver V6J 1M2
	2900 - 3000 blk w. Broadway, Starbucks and Calhouns	5-6 ind			7-8 am		Kitsilano			
	Kitsilano Branch Library	3-4 ind			10-1pm		Kitsilano	665-3976		2425 McDonald Ave Vancouver V6K 3Y9
	McDonalds 3200 w. Broadway	5-10 ind			7-11 am		Kitsilano			
	Muffin shop, little mall at 4th and alma	3-6 ind			7-9:30 am		Kitsilano			
	West 4th and Vine	3-7 ind			7:30 to noon		Kitsilano			



code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	Under Burrard Bridge, nr Chestnut St., south abutment, and on month above marina	2-7 ind			6:00 AM		Kitsilano			
	Community of Hope	4 -5 ind			noon-2		Van/Outside Downtown	708-3788	Pastor Lee	535 E. Broadway Vancouver V5T 1X4
	St Mikes Church sandwich line	4-7 ind			6-7 pm		Van/Outside Downtown	875-6369	Deacon Stuart Isto	404 E. Broadway Vancouver
OD2	South Granville, s. of Broadway	5-10 ind			7:30 to 9 am pl sleeping rough panhandling for breakfast booze		Van/Outside Downtown			
101	London Drugs, 600 blk W. Broadway	5-7 indiv			9:30-10:30 or 11:30 to 1:30 pm		Van/Outside Downtown			
102	Wendys and McDonalds	?			11:30 to 1:30 pm		Van/Outside Downtown			
103	Vancouver Public Library, Mt. Pleasant Branch and Kingsgate mall	2-3 individuals			10 - noon		Van/Outside Downtown	665-3962	Daniela Esparó	370 E. Broadway Vancouver V5T 4G5
	Vancouver Native Health Society									449 Hastings Street Vancouver V6A 1P5
code	Main and Ontario @ Terminal - skytrain underpasses, massive squeegee and panhandling operation				after 9 am rush hour		Van/Outside Downtown			
	Recovery Club	?			anytime		Van/Outside Downtown			12th and Sophia Vancouver

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	Robson nr Denman, panhandlers and breakfasters, McD, Safeway, Starbucks, Liquor Store, Bus stops, and Denman outside Shoppers Drug mart and West End Comm Centre				7-11 am		West End			
	Davie St. 1000 and 1200 blocks, shopping district, sleeping, panhandling and squeegeeing				6 am to noon		West End			
	Fast food outlets nr Denman and Davie, Bath House and Sunset Beach, and the Gazebo at Alexandra park				before noon		West End			
118										
119	<b>Burnaby</b>									
	Youth outreach teams Lower Mainland Purpose Society For Children and Families **					Youth	Burnaby, Tri-Cities, New West	526-2522	Catherine Leach	40 Begbie St. New Westminster, BC V3M 3L9
	<b>Services/locations with line-ups</b>									
	West Burnaby United Church **	1-2/ week		Tuesday 11:00am to 12:30pm		adult men and women	Burnaby , New West	434-4747	Lori Pederson	6050 Sussex Ave. Burnaby, V5H 3C2
	<b>Congregating areas</b>									
	Eastburn Community Centre**	3-4 / week		m-f: 8:30am- 9 pm		Mostly men for showers	Edmonds area	535-5321	Colleen Herbert	7435 Edmonds St. Burnaby, BC V3N 1B1
	Bonsor Community Centre**	2-4 / week		m-f: 6:10am- 11pm		Mostly men for showers	Metrotown area	439-1860	Gary Mockler	6550 Bonsor Burnaby V5H 2G8

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	Burnaby Library Metrotown Main Branch **	several per month		m-f: 9am-9pm		Mostly men	Metrotown area	436-5432	John O'Grady	6100 Willingdon Ave. Burnaby, BC V5H 4N5
code	One Stop Pop and Bottle Recycling Depot	1 or 2					Edmonds area	527-0466		7496 Edmonds
B1	<b>Tri Cities</b>									
B2	Share Society <i>Adult team</i>					adults	Tri-Cities	540-9161	Roxann MacDonald	200 - 25 King Edward, Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 4S8
B3	<b>Services/locations with line-ups</b>		30-60							
B4	Coquitlam Kinettes ** free supper	6-Apr		6:00pm		adult men, women and children	Coquitlam	291-3535	Bridgette Fox	38 Deerwood Place Port Moody, V3H 4Z7
	<b>Congregating areas</b>									
	<b>Coquitlam</b>									
	Coquitlam River	7-8 men along Coq. River/ Mundy Park/summer				Mostly men	Tri-Cities	540-9161	Roxann MacDonald	
C1	Coquitlam City Centre Library**	2 homeless people		7:00 am - 9:00pm		almost always men	Coquitlam	937-4130	Jeanne St. Pierre	3001 Burlington Coquitlam, BC V3J 6A9
	Bridge near West Coast Express, Trinity United Church coffee shop									

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	Pinetree Community Centre**	4 people occasionally visit		7:00 am to 10:00 pm		mostly men	Coquitlam Centre	927-6960	Tom Crawshaw, Centre Manager	1260 Pinetree Way Coquitlam, BC V3B 7Z4
	<b>Port Coquitlam</b>									
C2	Safeway near Lion's Park									
C3	Port Coquitlam Women's Centre potluck lunch**	4-5 women		12:00 - 1:00 Mon.-Thurs.		Women	PortCoquitlam	941-9275, fax: 941-9275	Louise Hara	2420 Mary Hill Rd. Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 3B1
<b>code</b>										
C4	<b>Port Moody</b>									
C5	Recycling Depot									
PC1	<b>Langley</b>									
PC2	<b>Volunteers</b>									
	Langley Stepping Stone Rehabilitative Society						City	530-5033	Maureen Joyce	20102 Michaud Cres. Langley City
	<i>Adult team</i> Ishtar and Rainbow Lodge					Adults	Langleys	Judy- 530-9442	Jeannette - 530-7171	
PM1	<i>Youth Team</i> Family and Youth Services Society (FAYSS)	youth services				youth	Langleys	534-2171	Paul Rypkema, Executive Director	201-20538 Fraser Highway, Langley, BC V3A 4G2
	<b>Services/locations with line-ups</b>									

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address	
	St. Joseph's Church Soup Kitchen			noon		men and women/ various ages	Langley	534-3303	Joyce Waldbillig	20676 Fraser Highway Langley, B.C.	
	<b>Congregating Areas</b>										
	langley City Library	10 youth and occasional adults		9:00am to 6:00 pm		youth and adults	City of Langley	514-2850	Mary Kierans, Head Librarian	20399 Dougless Crescent, Langley, BC	
	Aldergrove Mall - Extra Foods										
	Brookswood 7-11										
	Youth congregating - Apex, BLT, Internet Café, Emergency Services, Reachout (LFS caseload), Tim Hortons, MacDonalds. Burger King.										
L1	Adult Congregating - McBurney Junction, Along Nicomekl River (camps) Under bridge on Nicomekl River behind Langley FS, Mall across from City Hall, Aldergrove Mall, Fort Langley camping along the river.										
	<b>Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows</b>										
L3	2 Adult Teams from Salvation army will do 2 line ups and a few congregating areas		60-100					463-8296 Fax: 463-5539	Kathy Chu Barb Wardrope		
L4	Salvation Army **	Caring Place daily soup kitchen 10 men		noon - no line up, just straight in		families and men, a few women	Maple Ridge/Pit Meadows	463-8296 Fax: 463-5539	Barb Wardrope	22777 Dewdney Trunk Road, Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 3X4	

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
L5	Kings Inn Community Soup Kitchen					mostly youth	Maple Ridge/Pit Meadows			
L6										
L7	<b>Surrey - Adults</b>									
	12 people co-ordinated by the Front Room									
<b>code</b>	<b>Services/locations with line-ups</b>		140							
	The Front Room - drop-in and meal	40	100	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.	4:45 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Adult men and women	Surrey	Tel: 583-8558 589-7777 Dirprograms@sfcss.com	Linda Syssoloff and Annette Welsh	South Fraser Community Services Society P.O. Box 500 Surrey Main Surrey BC V3T 5B7
	Salvation Army- drop-in and lunch	Don't know		8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (lunch)	Adult men and women	Surrey	Tel: 581-3896 Fax: 581-6199	Warren Stonnell	
MR1	<b>Indoor locations</b>									
MR2	Women's Place	5-10				Women	Surrey/White Rock	Tel:536-961, womens_place@telus.net	Suzi Kram and Lynn Reynolds	
	Library - Whalley	6 or more		9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.		Adult men and women	Whalley	Melanie: 572-8269#305 Trish:588-5951#310, Mghoulden@city.surrey.bc.ca	Melanie Houlden and Trish Miller	
	<b>Congregating areas</b>									

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	135 A Street and local area									
	Gateway Skytrain station									
<b>code</b>										
	King George Highway/92nd Avenue									
S1	Cedar Hills									
S2	Cloverdale area									
	Cloverdale Library									
	Bear Creek Park									
S3	Tynehead Park									
S4	Surrey Central Skytrain Station									
	King George Skytrain Station									
	Surrey Place Mall area									
	Guildford Library									
s5	Guildford Mall area									
s6	Riverside Shopping area									
s8	Hawthorne Park									
s9	Revy area									
s10	Browns Bay area									
s11	Tom Binney Park									
s12	Scott Road Skytrain area and track									
s13	Royal Kwantlen Park									
<b>code</b>	108th Stroll									
s14	Riverside stroll									
s15	King George stroll									
s16	Scott Road/72nd stroll									
s17	96th stroll									
s18	Bottle depot									
s19	<b>Surrey - Youth Outreach</b>									

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
s20	2 youth outreach staff from Surrey Reconnect					Youth	Surrey	Tel: 589-4746 Cell:790-0170, diryouthserv@sfcss.com	Peter Fahey	South Fraser Community Services Society P.O. Box 500 Surrey Main Surrey V3T 5B7
s21	Crescent Beach Reconnect Program					Youth	White Rock	Tel:538-5092 Fax: 538-5092	Kelly Crabb	Crescent Beach Community Services, Reconnect Youth Program #4 1365 Johnston Road White Rock,V4B 2H4
s22										
s23	<b>Delta</b>									
s24	No locations identified									
s25										
s26	<b>Richmond - Adults</b>									
s27	Vinola Aguilera							Tel: 275-2236		c/o Rob Innes
s28	Barry Lamb							Tel: 279-7110? 207-1377, marie_lemon@telus.net	Marie Lemon	Canadian Mental Health Association Suite 260 7000 Minoru Blvd. Richmond, BC V6Y 3Z5
s29	Les McAusland, Salvation Army							Cell:723-4705 or 277-1593, leslie_mcausland@telus.net	Les McAusland	



code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
s30	Rob Innes							Tel: 276-4193, rinnes@city.richmond.bc.ca	Rob Innes	
	<b>Services/Locations with line-ups</b>									
s31	<b>In door locations</b>									
	Pathways Club House	1-2		8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	come at 3:45 to pick up completed questionnaires	Mental Illness	Richmond	Tel: 276-8834 Fax: 276-0342	David McDonald (away until Jan 21) and Susan Knight	Unit 160 5811 Cedarbridge Way, Richmond, BC V6X 2A8
	Library						Richmond	Tel: 231-6422	Beryl	
	Richmond Centre						Richmond			
	City Centre Community Centre							Tel: 718-8004	Try Bernadette	
<b>code</b>	Minoru Sports Pavillion							Tel: 718-8009	Alison Dennis	
	<b>Congregating areas</b>									
	<b>Richmond - youth outreach</b>									
	Outreach workers from Richmond Youth Services Society				0	Youth	Richmond	Tel: 271-7600, denisew@rysa.bc.ca	Denise Woodley - Staff will be Crysta, Daniele, Carol	8191 St. Albans Road Richmond, BC V6Y 2L2
	<b>New West - Adults</b>									

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	First Nations Urban Community Society (did not participate at this time)							Tel: 517-6120	Michel RObinson	
			100							
	<b>Services/Locations with line-ups</b>									
	Union Gospel Mission - drop-in and meal programs			1:00 for lunch and 4:45 for dinner	1:30 for soup 5:30 supper	Adult men and women	New West	Tel: 525-8989, billwong@sprint.ca	Bill Wong	658 Clarkson Street, New West V3M 1E1
	New West Community Development Soc.							Tel: 517-6150	Vicki Austed	
	<b>Indoor locations</b>		50-60							
	4 square - drop-in			9:30-4:30	9:30 - 10:00	Adult men and women	New West	Tel: 521-8414	Rauna May, Senior Pastor or Pastor Robert	333 6th Street, New Westminster, V3L 3A9
	<b>Congregating areas</b>									
<b>code</b>	<b>New West - Youth Outreach</b>									
	Purpose Society									
	<b>North Shore - Adults</b>									
	Hilary King - District							Tel:983-6003, hilary.king@nshr.hnet.bc.ca		

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	John Day and Deanna Sherill - City							Tel: 983-9488 #304, john@harvestproject.org		Harvest Project 201 Bewicke North Vancouver V7M 3M7
	Marga Dowling from Harvest Project and Dianna Hurford to help as needed.							Tel: 221-6449, dianna_hurford@yahoo.com		
	Richard Turton							Tel: 982-9126, richard@lookoutsociety.bc.ca		
	<b>City of North Vancouver</b>		40-50							
	Harvest Project	4 to 10		10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.		Adult men and women	North Van	Tel: 983-9488, davidrichards@ harvestproject. org	David Richards	201 Bewicke North Vancouver V7M 3M7
	Salvation Army			Pick up forms by 3:30		Adult men and women	North Van	Tel:988-7225 Fax: 988-4140	Linda	105 West 12th Street North Vancouver V7M 1N2
	North Shore Women's Centre	a few		10:00 - 5:00		Women		Tel: 984-6009 Fax: 980-4661	Deanna Otle	944 West 16th Street

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	Library							Tel: 998-3450 Fax: 983-3624, wchee@cnv.org	Lynn Chee	
	Bottle Depot - West 1st Avenue									
	<b>District of N. Vancouver</b>									
	<b>West Vancouver</b>									
	Co-Pro							<b>Tel home: 926-2528</b> Tel office: 922-4324 Fax: 926-2543	Barb Davies	Home address: 2586 Mathers Ave. (26th and Mathers) Dundareve (West Vancouver)
NW1	<b>North Shore - Youth Outreach</b>									
<b>code</b>	North Vancouver, Neighbourhood House - Walter Knot Phone: 641-8072 Fax:987-2107									North Shore Neighbourhood House 225 East 2nd Street, North Vancouver, V7L 1C4
	North Vancouver, Neighbourhood House - Crystal Saunders Phone: 987-8138 Email: csaunders@nsnh.bc.ca									North Shore Neighbourhood House 225 East 2nd Street, North Vancouver, V7L 1C4

code	Daytime Location/Description	# homeless or est of proportion homeless	capacity/ie number of meals served to anyone	open hours	peak hours	Target Gp	geographic area	phone # , email	Contact Person,	Address
	Deep Cove area - Christine Ahern Phone: 783-8053 Email: ahernc@dnv.org									c/o Parkgate Community Centre 3625 Banff Court North Vancouver, V7H 2Z8
	West Vancouver - Ira Applebaum Phone: 925-7233 Email: iapplebaum@westvancouver.net									c/o Parks and Community Services 750 17th Street, West Vancouver V7V 3T3

## 4 Daytime Line-up Form

1 Have you already answered this survey today?	2 Do you have a room, apt. or house that you consider your own?	3 Where did you stay last night?		4. Determine or estimate	5. Age	L i n e #
				Sex		
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				
Y      N → go to 2 ? Where?  _____	Y → END (do 4 & 5) N → go to 3	Shelter/safe house Transition house ? Which one?	Outside Someone else's place Car/garage/public building Other Unable to determine	M F	__ __  years	
END (do 4 & 5)		END(do 4 & 5)				

**1. Have you already answered this survey today?**

Y N → go to 2  
?  
1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1 1a) Where?

\_\_\_\_\_  
?  
END

**2. Do you have a room, apt. or house that you consider your own?**

Y → END N → go to 3

**3. Where did you stay last night?**

- Shelter or safe house
  - Transition house
  - Outside
  - Someone else's place
  - Car/garage/public bldg
  - Other
  - Unable to determine
- ? Which one?

1.1.1.1.1.1.1.2

? go to 4  
END

-----survey start-----

**4. In what city was your last permanent home? (Probe for municipality)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. What is the main reason you do not have your own place? (Mark one)**

- Evicted
- Moving/stranded
- Ineligible for income assistance
- Abuse, family breakdown or conflict
- Addiction
- Refugee
- From treatment, corrections, jail
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**6. How long have you been without a place of your own? (Mark one)**

- Less than 1 week
- 1 week to under 1 month
- 1 month to under 6 months
- 6 months to under 1 year
- 1 year or more

7. Is there a reason why you did not stay in an emergency shelter, safe house or transition house last night? (Mark one)

- Turned away – full
- Turned away – inappropriate
- Didn't know about them
- Don't like them
- Couldn't get to it
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your (birth date/age)?

\_\_\_\_\_ yrs  
Day/Month/Year

9. Sex (Do not ask)

Male                      Female

10. I'd like to ask you about your family status. Are you:

- Living alone?
- Living with a partner?

11. What is your ethnic background?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What is your major source of income? (Mark one)

- Welfare or training program
- Disability benefit
- Employment
- Employment insurance
- Pension
- Binning, panhandling, squeegeeing
- No incomeOther \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you have any of the following health problems?

	Yes	No	Office
Medical condition			
Physical disability			
Addiction			
Mental illness			
None			

**THANK-YOU!**



# Glossary of Terms

*The following census terms are used in Part I of Volume 2. Source: Statistics Canada 1996 Census Dictionary Final Edition. August 1999.*

**Aboriginal Ethnicity** - Persons determined as Aboriginal based primarily on the ancestral origin of the individual.

**Aboriginal Identity** - Persons determined as Aboriginal based on the personal identification of an individual with one or more Aboriginal groups. This group may include members of an Indian Band/First Nation who are not Treaty Indians or Registered Indians.

**Activity Limitation**—Refers to the limitation in a person's activity because of a disability, including physical, mental, or health conditions.

**Census Family**—Includes now-married couples (with or without never-married children from either spouse), couples living common-law (with or without never-married children from either spouse), or a lone-parent of any marital status, with at least one never-married son or daughter living in the same dwelling.

**Census Family Status**—Family persons refer to family members belonging to a census family (spouses, common-law partners, lone parents, never-married children), and non-family persons refer to household members who do not belong to the census family but may be living with someone who is related or unrelated to the person. If the individual is living alone, he/she is considered a non-family person.

**Dwelling: Semi-detached house** – One of two dwellings side by side (or back to front) to each other, but not any other dwelling or structure. A semi-detached dwelling has no dwellings either above it or below it and the two units together have open space on all sides.

**Dwelling: Row house** – One of three or more dwellings joined side by side (or occasionally side to back) such as a town house or garden home, but not having any other dwelling either above or below.

**Dwelling: Duplex** – One of two dwellings located one above the other but not attached to any other dwelling or structure (except its own garage or shed).

**Dwelling: Condition** – Refers to whether, in the judgment of the respondent, the dwelling requires any repairs (excluding desirable remodeling or additions).

**Households**—Refers to a person or a group of persons (excluding foreign residents) who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada, including family and non-family residential arrangements. Every person is a member of only one household.

**Household Maintainers**—The person in the household that pays the majority of the expenses for the dwelling.

**Household Type: Family**—A household that contains at least one census family.

**Household Type: Lone-parent**—Refers to a mother or father with no common-law partner or spouse present, living in a dwelling with one or more never-married sons/daughters.

**Household Type: Multiple-family**—A household with two or more census families (with or without additional non-family persons) occupying the same private dwelling.

**Household Type: Non-family**—Refers to a person living alone or to a group of two or more individuals sharing a private dwelling but who are not a census family.

**Immigration: Immigrant** —Refers to individuals that are, or have been, granted immigrant status with the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Therefore, some immigrants may have lived here a number of years while others may have only recently arrived. Although most immigrants are born outside of Canada, a few were born in Canada.

**Immigration: Non-permanent Resident**—Persons who held a student or employment authorization, Minister's permit or who were refugee claimants at the time of the census, as well as family members residing with them.

**Income: Employment Income**—Includes the total income from wages and salaries, net income from non-farm unincorporated business and/or professional practice and net farm self-employment income received by individuals 15 years of age and over during calendar year 1995.

**Income: Government Transfer Payments**—Total income from all transfer payments received from federal, provincial or municipal governments during 1995. Includes: Old Age Security pension; Guaranteed Income Supplement; benefits from Canada or Quebec Pension Plan; Employment Insurance; federal Child Tax benefits; and, other income from government sources.

**Income: Major Source of Income**—Refers to the component that represents the largest proportion of an individual's total income.

**Income: Other Income from Government Sources**—Refers to all transfer payments (excluding sources listed in the government transfer payments category above) such as:

social assistance payments, provincial income and/or accommodation supplements to the elderly, payments from training programs, TAGS payments, payments from provincial automobile insurance plans, veteran's pensions, war veterans' allowance, pensions to widows and dependents of veterans, and workers' compensation, refundable provincial tax credits and federal goods and service tax credits, received from federal, provincial or municipal programs during 1995.

**Income: Other Money Income**—Includes regular cash income received in 1995 that is not included in the other nine income source categories. This may include alimony, child support, periodic support from individuals that are not in the household, net income from roomers and boarders, income from abroad (not including dividends and interest), non-refundable scholarships and bursaries, severance pay, royalties, wage-loss replacement benefits and strike pay.

**INALH** - In core housing Need and spending at Least Half of income on shelter

**INALHM** - In core housing Need and spending at Least Half of income on shelter (Modified). Here, modified refers to the inclusion of Aboriginal households.

**Long-term disability**—Physical conditions, mental conditions, health problems, disabilities or handicaps that have lasted or are expected to last six months or more, starting from the time the condition began.

**Labour Market: Employed**—Includes persons 15 years or older who worked for pay or were self-employed or were absent from their job or business for the entire week because of vacation, illness, a labour dispute at their workplace or other reasons, during the week (Saturday to Sunday) prior to Census Day.

**Labour Market: Unemployed**—Includes persons 15 years or older who were: temporarily laid off; definitely starting a new job in four weeks or less; or had actively looked for work in four weeks or less prior to Census Day.

**Labour Market: In the Labour Force** – refers to persons 15 years of age or older, excluding institutional residents, who were employed or unemployed during the week prior to Census Day.

**Labour Market: Not in the Labour Force**—Refers to individuals 15 years or older who are neither categorized as employed nor unemployed. Individuals considered to not be in the labour market also included persons looking for work during the last four weeks but who were not available to start work in the week prior to enumeration.

**Labour Market Activities: Work Activity in 1995**—Refers to the number of weeks in which a person (age 15 years or older) worked for pay in self-employment in 1995 at all jobs held and whether these weeks were mostly full time (30 hours or more per week) or mostly part time.

**Mobility Status: Place of Residence 5 Years Ago**—Refers to the relationship between the person's place of residence five years previous to the census and the current place of residence. If no difference exists, the person is a non-mover. If a difference does exist, the person is a mover.

**Native Households** – The definition of Aboriginal households employed here includes family households with at least one spouse, common-law partner, or lone parent self-identified Aboriginal member and/or family and non-family households with at least 50% of household members self-identified as Aboriginal.

**Schooling: Highest Level of**—Refers to highest grade of elementary or secondary school attended, or highest year of university, or other non-university completed.

**Schooling: Trades**—A person who has a trades certificate or diploma regardless of whether other educational qualifications are held or not. A trades certificate may be obtained through an apprenticeship or journeyman's training or exclusively through in-school training at trade or vocational schools, employment centers or trades divisions of community colleges.

**Schooling: Other Non-university Certificate** - A person who has a non-university certificate or diploma, regardless of whether other educational qualifications are held or not. A non-university certificate or diploma is obtained from institutions that do not grant degrees, including nursing schools, community colleges, CEGEPs, institutes of technology or private business colleges.

**Primary Household Maintainer**—Refers to the first person in the household identified as the household maintainer.

**Visible Minority**—Includes persons who are neither Aboriginal nor Caucasian in race or white in colour, including: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab/West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islander.

**Other Asian** – Korean, Japanese, Southeast Asian/West Arab and Filipino.



**Research Project on Homelessness  
in Greater Vancouver**

**Volume 3**

**A Methodology to obtain first person qualitative information  
from people who are homeless and  
formerly homeless**

**Prepared for:  
The Greater Vancouver Regional District**

**April 2002**

**Primary researchers – Deborah Kraus and Judy Graves**

**Consulting Team:  
Jim Woodward & Associates Inc.  
Eberle Planning and Research  
Deborah Kraus Consulting  
Lisa May & Associates  
Judy Graves**

## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to present a methodology to gather first person qualitative information from people who are currently and formerly homeless. This work was undertaken as a component of regional research on the incidence and nature of homelessness in the Greater Vancouver region, carried out during 2001-2002. The findings of that research are reported in the other volumes of the Research Project on Homelessness in Greater Vancouver (April, 2002).

The goal of this methodology is to provide a tool that will enable community groups or agencies to:

- Obtain qualitative information about the homeless population, including women and men, families with children, seniors, Aboriginal people, people with mental and physical health issues, and people who are chronically and episodically homeless;
- Put a face on homelessness;
- Inform the development of appropriate policy and program responses and target scarce resources as effectively as possible;
- Document the life experiences of people who become homeless and the situations/processes that led them to become homeless;
- Document the kinds of services, programs or other assistance that have been found helpful for people to exit homelessness, and to identify what services are missing, and what are the barriers to accessing services;
- Identify prevention strategies; and
- Support a communications strategy.

The steps that were followed to develop this methodology include:

1. A review of approaches used in Canada and the United States to gather first person qualitative information from homeless and formerly homeless people.
2. Key informant interviews with individuals most closely involved in eight (8) of the examples identified in the above noted review.
3. Development of a draft methodology to conduct personal interviews with people who are homeless and formerly homeless.
4. Two focus group meetings with people who were currently and formerly homeless to obtain their input on the draft methodology and interview guide.
5. Pilot interviews with four (4) individuals who were homeless and with three (3) people who had experienced homelessness in the recent past.
6. Review of the methodology by a professional qualitative research consultant.

The methodology outlined in this report recommends conducting personal interviews to obtain qualitative information about the participant's personal feelings, opinions and experiences.

Some of the key points discussed in the methodology are outlined below.

1. **Number of interviews.** The appropriate number of interviews will need to be determined in the context of the overall research design and timeline of each study. Research analysts who specialize in qualitative studies believe the goal of qualitative research is to obtain in-depth information that is rich in quality, and they recommend working with small numbers of individuals.
  2. **Target population and specific sub-group to be studied.** This methodology recommends conducting interviews with both people who are currently and formerly homeless. It is also suggested that researchers identify the specific sub-group they want to interview for their study based on the purpose of their research.
  3. **Skills and background of interviewers.** The skills of the interviewers will be critical to the attainment of accurate and credible information. It is important to use skilled interviewers who:
    - Are familiar and comfortable with people who are homeless;
    - Compassionate, feeling, patient, flexible, and good listeners;
    - Will be able to establish a sense of trust and good rapport;
    - Are able to stay focused and synthesize and interpret what is being said in the interview; and
    - Have experience in conducting qualitative interviews.
- Interviewers could include well-liked and trusted outreach workers or service providers, experienced staff, and homeless, formerly homeless, or community-based individuals.
4. **Training.** Training is essential and should be specifically tailored to the team of interviewers hired for each project.
  5. **Locating, recruiting and approaching people to interview.** There are several ways to locate or recruit people to interview. Suggestions include:
    - Approaching social or community agencies for assistance;
    - Asking shelter operators for assistance;
    - Approaching people who are homeless directly on the street;
    - Asking people who are homeless or formerly homeless to help recruit others to interview; and
    - Putting up notices in places that provide affordable housing (for people who are formerly homeless).

In approaching potential candidates for an interview, interviewers must be able to make the person approached feel comfortable. The way to do this might vary from person to person. However, interviewers should dress casually (e.g. jeans), and offer food and/or coffee, or other appropriate means of compensation.

6. **Protection of privacy.** One of the objectives of this methodology is to respect and protect the privacy of study participants. One way to achieve this is to ask interview participants to provide a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. Given the need for anonymity and confidentiality, photographs should not be taken of any of the people who are interviewed
7. **Location of interviews.** Interviews should take place wherever the person being interviewed will be most comfortable and where both the participant and the interviewer feel safe. This could include a coffee shop or in the offices of a recruiting agency. Some people who are approached for an interview might feel more relaxed if they are inside, while others may wish to remain exactly where the interviewer finds them. Ideally, the location should be safe, reasonably quiet, private and offer few distractions.
8. **Recording of interviews.** Researchers may wish to record interviews by taking hand-written notes or by using a tape recorder. Regardless of the approach taken, the interviewer should advise the participant which methodology of recording will be used. Some studies have used a team of two individuals, where one person asked the questions and the other recorded the information.
9. **Honorariums.** Interviewers should provide participants with an honorarium to show respect for the time and information provided by the participant. Currently, a reasonable honorarium could be from \$15-\$30 per interview, plus the cost of a meal or coffee for an interview that will last from 1 to 1.5 hours.
10. **Analysis and report preparation.** The way in which information from personal interviews will be analyzed should be addressed during the research design stage. It is necessary to determine how the results will be used and the depth of analysis that will be required. It is important to note that findings from interviews cannot be used to draw conclusions about the homeless population as a whole. Reports should also be written in a way that is accessible to the participants.
11. **Reporting back to participants after the interviews.** The methodology recommends providing an opportunity for people who participated in the interviews to attend a follow-up meeting after analysis of all the interviews is completed. The purpose of the meeting would be to thank the participants for their input, discuss the results of the interviews and review a draft report.
12. **Budget.** In developing a budget for this work, it is estimated that it could take between seven (7) and twelve (12) hours to conduct a 1.5 hour interview, depending on the level of detail to be provided in the analysis. This would include time for:



- Interview preparation
- Recruiting interviewees
- Debriefing
- Conducting interviews and travel
- Coding
- Transcribing/typing interview notes
- Analysis and summary of interviews

13. **Interview guide.** A sample Introduction and Consent Form and Interview Guide are attached to this methodology. The purpose of the interview guide is to obtain information about the life experiences of people who become homeless, about what might be done to prevent people from becoming homeless, and about what people need to access and maintain stable housing. It is expected that groups or agencies using this methodology might wish to adapt the interview guide for their own use depending on the specific goals of their study and the group targeted for interviews.

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present a methodology to gather first person qualitative information from people who are currently and formerly homeless. This work was developed as a component of regional research on the incidence and nature of homelessness in the Greater Vancouver region, carried out during 2001-2002. The findings of that regional research are reported in the other volumes of this Research Project on Homelessness in Greater Vancouver (April, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

The goal of the first person methodology is to provide a tool that will enable community groups or agencies to:

1. Obtain qualitative information about the homeless population, including women and men, families with children, seniors, Aboriginal people, people with mental and physical health issues, and people who are chronically and episodically homeless;
2. Put a face on homelessness;
3. Inform the development of appropriate policy and program responses and target scarce resources as effectively as possible;
4. Document the life experiences of people who become homeless and the situations/processes that led them to become homeless;
5. Document the kinds of services, programs or other assistance that have been found helpful for people to exit homelessness, and to identify services that are missing, and barriers to accessing services;
6. Identify prevention strategies; and
7. Support a communications strategy.

The methodology presented in this report is derived from two main sources:

- It builds on a review of different methods and approaches used by others for similar social research; and
- It incorporates findings from focus groups and seven pilot interviews conducted in November and December, 2001 with people who are currently and formerly homeless.

The steps that were followed to develop this methodology are described more fully in section 3 below.

## 2. Background

This methodology to obtain qualitative information from people who are currently and formerly homeless was part of a larger GVRD research project to develop a profile of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness throughout the Greater Vancouver

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<sup>1</sup> These reports are available from the Policy and Planning Department of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD).

region. The research was funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and is intended to provide data that will support implementation of the (March 2001) regional plan to address and prevent homelessness in Greater Vancouver. The regional plan was developed through a year-long community-based planning process spearheaded by the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.

The purpose of the regional research was to:

- Provide a credible estimate of the number of homeless and at-risk persons throughout Greater Vancouver;
- Provide a demographic profile of both these populations; and
- Develop a data management/organization system in the GVRD that will store this data on homelessness, make it accessible, and provide an opportunity for periodic updating.

A fourth objective of the regional research project was to develop a methodology for gathering first person qualitative information because:

- First person information has an immediacy and directness that statistics and service provider testimonials cannot duplicate, and thus it helps sensitize community residents, policy-makers, and interest groups to the particular nature of local homelessness issues;
- This type of research is an effective way of gathering “entry-exiting” information about the homeless population; and
- This type of research shows respect for homeless individuals by providing them with an opportunity to tell their stories and express their views in a direct voice.

### **3. What sources of information were used to develop the methodology proposed in this report?**

In developing the methodology set out in this report, the consultants conducted research as noted below and took the following steps.

1. A review of methods used in Canada and the United States to gather first person qualitative information from homeless and formerly homeless people. The findings from this research are described in the First Interim Report to the GVRD Research Advisory Committee dated July 12, 2001. The report identified four different approaches, including personal interviews (structured and unstructured), focus groups, testimonials, and a combination of methods such as surveys, interviews focus groups, workshops and conferences. The interim report also provided an overview of 12 different examples that used the above noted approaches.
2. Key informant interviews with individuals most closely involved in eight (8) of the examples identified in the First Interim Report. The purpose of the key informant

interviews was to learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of each approach and to provide a brief description of the study. These descriptions are attached as Appendix “A” to this report. A full report of the key informant interviews is contained in the Second Interim Report to the GVRD Research Advisory Committee dated November 16, 2001, titled *A Review of Different Methodologies to Obtain First Person Qualitative Information from Homeless and Formerly Homeless People*.

3. Development of a draft methodology to conduct personal interviews with people who are currently and formerly homeless - based on the information contained in the Second Interim Report.
4. Two focus group meetings. The consultants organized two focus group meetings: one with a group of people who were homeless, and the other with a group of people who had experienced homelessness in the recent past. Participants in these two focus groups were invited by service providers and community outreach workers. The participants provided input on the draft methodology and interview guide. The results of the focus group meetings are contained in the Third Interim Report to the GVRD Research Advisory Committee dated November 8, 2001.
5. Pilot interviews. Based on the input provided by the focus group participants, the consultants conducted pilot interviews with four (4) individuals who were homeless and with three (3) people who had experienced homelessness in the recent past. The purpose of the interviews was to test the draft methodology and interview guide.
6. Review of the draft methodology by a professional qualitative research consultant.<sup>2</sup>

The methodology outlined in Section 6 of this report is based on all 6 of the above steps. In addition it was approved by the GVRD Homelessness Research Advisory Committee.

#### **4. Why obtain first person qualitative information?**

There are several benefits as well as pitfalls to obtaining qualitative information directly from people who are homeless or formerly homeless. The following points paraphrase some of the comments made by key informants who were asked about this issue.

##### **Benefits of obtaining first person qualitative information**

- There are many reports that provide statistical information about homelessness. There is also a need to present homelessness without numbers – to provide information that people can connect to. Personal stories can have a huge impact on how people care about homelessness and how they respond to homelessness in everyday life.
- Personal stories can provide “knock in the guts” information that evokes a visceral

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<sup>2</sup> Sheila Martineau PhD, Qualitative Research Consultant

reaction.

- Personal stories can help break down myths about people who are homeless and help break down the “us and them” mentality.
- First person qualitative information can provide rich and in-depth information.
- For some people who are homeless it is a relief to tell their stories.
- Qualitative information can yield powerful statements. Sometimes a quote can make the reader think about things in a different way. This kind of information can help people to connect on a human level with the issues.
- First person information enables the readers to hear directly from the people being interviewed - “their truth, their words, their experiences, and their culture”. This type of work can avoid stereotypes, generalizations, and reinterpretation of the underclass by professional middle class people, who use their own language and filters.
- First person information enables the reader to understand the full depth of the person’s experiences (e.g. homelessness), and allows for the people who have experienced homelessness to recommend strategies that will be most effective.
- First person information can help the reader see “people who are homeless” as opposed to the “homeless population” or “the homeless”.
- First person information can provide a different perspective than what researchers can obtain from the service agencies. It is similar to an approach of finding out about customer satisfaction. It is important to hear first hand from people living the experience. They know what they need.
- Qualitative research can help identify issues that require further study and help shape future research instruments, including quantitative and surveys.

### **Pitfalls of obtaining first person qualitative information**

- It is sometimes difficult for people to talk about their experience of becoming homeless. It evokes painful memories.
- There are some things that participants may not want to talk about in person to an interviewer. Surveys may be less threatening.
- If the participant does not trust the interviewer, or feels that the interviewer is very naïve, the information may not be reliable.
- Participants may provide superficial answers about their needs (e.g. they need jobs, money, and housing.) It is important to dig deeper - to probe and get more specific information (e.g. what type of housing, what kind of additional support).
- Participants may question the practical implications of obtaining first person information from people who are homeless. There are concerns about whether or not this is tokenism, or research for the sake of research. Will anything happen to benefit homeless people? Will the research lead to action? However, it was also noted that if sharing their experiences will help others, people who are homeless are willing to tell their stories.

## 5. What is qualitative research?

The methodology recommended in this report is a qualitative research model that involves personal interviews with people who are homeless and formerly homeless. In this type of research, the interview questions are mostly open-ended to encourage participants to respond from their own perspective. There is generally a “richness” or “depth” in the quality of the information.

“A qualitative research approach provides in-depth knowledge about a specific topic or issue. It focuses on a participant’s perceptions. Qualitative research generally involves collecting detailed information from a small group of participants. Among other features, qualitative research uses a variety of methods to collect in-depth information from small sub-groups within a specific population for the purpose of understanding the views and needs of that particular group. For example, among street-involved youth, a sub-group might constitute First Nations youth or youth working in the sex trade. In-depth interviews, oral histories, or examining letters or journals are examples of methods used for qualitative research.”

“Quantitative research differs from qualitative research in that the former generally involves the collection of statistical data from large, random samples for the purpose of generalizing findings to the larger population. Surveys, structured interviews or lab experiments are examples of methods used for quantitative research”.<sup>3</sup>

Interviews in quantitative studies generally obtain information that can be measured, quantified, and compared with similar structured questions used in other studies. The questions are mostly closed-ended in that they provide a choice of several possible structured answers.

Both qualitative and quantitative research require rigorous analytic approaches and expertise. However, quantitative data requires mostly statistical analysis while qualitative data predominantly requires text analysis.<sup>4</sup>

## 6. What is the proposed methodology?

### 6.1 Personal interviews

The methodology outlined in this report recommends conducting personal interviews to obtain qualitative information about the participant’s personal feelings, opinions and experiences. This approach was selected because:

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<sup>3</sup> Sheila Martineau PhD, Qualitative Research Consultant

<sup>4</sup> Sheila Martineau PhD, Qualitative Research Consultant



- One-on-one personal interviews give participants an opportunity to have their voices heard and provide rich information;
- It is possible to ask more personal questions in a one-on-one interview compared to what can be asked in a group situation;
- It may be less intimidating for some individuals to participate in a personal interview on the street rather than have to go somewhere else for a group interview (although it has been noted that some people are more comfortable participating in a group); and
- For some individuals it is a relief to tell their stories in a personal interview.

Some disadvantages of this approach should also be noted:

- It is sometimes difficult for people to talk about their experience of becoming homeless – this experience can evoke painful memories;
- It is essential to use skilled and experienced interviewers who can establish a good rapport and trust with the participants and also delve into the issues; and
- It may be necessary for the interviewer to identify the underlying details that result in homelessness.

## **6.2 Interview sample**

### **6.2.1 Number of interviews**

It will be necessary for each research sponsor to determine the number of interviews to be completed for its project. Two of the factors to consider will be the amount of time and funding available. Research analysts who specialize in qualitative studies believe the goal of qualitative research is to obtain in-depth information that is rich in quality. They recommend working with small numbers of individuals. The appropriate number of interviews needs to be determined in the context of the overall research design and timeline of each study. For community-based research with short timelines, 10 one-hour interviews may provide ample data for analysis if the questions are well focused and the interviewers have the necessary skills and experience.<sup>5</sup>

### **6.2.2 Identifying a sub-group or target population**

Qualitative studies do not aim to obtain a random or representative sample. “You can’t judge qualitative research by quantitative standards”. It is recommended that researchers identify the specific sub-group they want to interview for their study based on the purpose of the research.

### **6.2.3 People who are homeless and formerly homeless**

This methodology recommends conducting interviews with both people who are currently and formerly homeless. People who are formerly homeless are often able to

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<sup>5</sup> Sheila Martineau PhD, Qualitative Research Consultant

provide a broad perspective and insight about their past experience, including what kind of programs, services or other assistance provided a benefit with respect to obtaining stable housing. In addition, the backgrounds of people who were once homeless are generally indistinguishable from people who are currently homeless with respect to a range of issues including drug and alcohol use, involvement with the criminal justice system, mental health issues, unemployment, family breakdown, loss of friends and family, loss of care for their own children, foster care, sofa surfing, sleeping rough, and ill health. It is also necessary to hear from people who are currently homeless because they can speak directly about their immediate needs and gaps in existing services. However, people who are currently homeless are often pre-occupied with their immediate need for survival and may not have the time or energy for perspective or insight.

## **6.3 Interviewers**

### **6.3.1 Skills and background**

The skills of the interviewers will be critical to obtaining accurate and credible information through this methodology.

#### **Interviewers must:**

- Be familiar and comfortable with people who are homeless or living in the deepest poverty. People being interviewed will immediately sense if the interviewer is fearful, awkward, remote, condescending and not 100% comfortable with them;
- Be compassionate, feeling, patient, and flexible;
- Feel and show genuine respect for the people being interviewed;
- Be good listeners and interested in what the interviewees have to say;
- Be curious and enjoy one-on-one conversation;
- Have a sense of humour;
- Be accepting and willing to suspend judgement and blame;
- Be able to establish a sense of trust and good rapport;
- Recognize and have some knowledge of substance abuse, mental illness, and physical or medical disabilities;
- Be comfortable making eye contact and giving non-verbal and verbal affirmation;
- Be able to manage confidentiality and pose no risk to people on the street;
- Be able to make an interview feel like a conversation, while keeping the interviewee on track and maintaining their critical faculties;
- Be able to stay focused and synthesize and interpret what is being said in the interview; and
- Have experience in conducting qualitative interviews.

Some key informants and focus group participants suggested that it would also be helpful if the interviewer:

- Has personal experience of homelessness;

- Has personal, previous experience of substance abuse (at least 5 years clean and sober/drug-free); and
- Is familiar to, and trusted by potential interviewees.

In this case, potential candidates to conduct interviews could include well-liked and trusted outreach workers or service providers; and experienced volunteers/staff at organizations that work with people who are homeless or living in poverty, including churches, mental health agencies, drop-in centres, and drug and alcohol programs. However, it is advisable to avoid using interviewers who are currently providing services to interviewees.

Gender, age, and the cultural/ethnic background of people who will be interviewed should also be considered when hiring interviewers. For example, some women will agree to be interviewed only by women, and youth have indicated a preference to be interviewed by other youth.

There may be some benefits of hiring homeless, formerly homeless, or community-based individuals to act as interviewers. They may have better access to the street population than professional researchers, and may be more sensitive in selecting the right choice of words. They know the “ins and outs” of the homeless population and should be able to put interviewees at ease. In addition, hiring homeless individuals can help build capacity within this population, develop skills and provide some income. However, some of the disadvantages are that the quality of the interviews might be better with an experienced or professional interviewer who is skilled at asking probing or follow-up questions and at recording the interviews.<sup>6</sup>

### 6.3.2 Training

Regardless of who is hired to conduct the interviews, training is essential. Interviewers must understand the goals of the study, and should practice role-playing to better understand the people they will be interviewing. Training should include an opportunity to practice some interviews and time to review with interviewees and other interviewers what worked and what did not. The interviewers should be very comfortable with the interview guide that will be used so that the questions will flow easily. Interviewers should also understand the importance of consistency in how questions are asked because the way in which a question is worded may affect the way in which it is answered.

Training should be specifically tailored to the particular interview team. For example, if professional interviewers are used, more emphasis should be placed on issues associated with the target group to be interviewed (e.g. what is the best way to approach people who are homeless or formerly homeless). If homeless, formerly homeless, or community-

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<sup>6</sup> Street youth conducted interviews for the McCreary Centre Society report, *Street Talk: Early Processes in the Lives of Youth Becoming Homeless*, and “organic intellectuals conducted interviews for the Social Alternatives Unit and BC Housing Community Based Research Project, on Homelessness, *The View from the Sidewalk* (see Appendix “A”).

based individuals will be hired to conduct the interviews, it may be necessary to place greater emphasis on standard research methods and recording of interviews. Training should also address issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, the role of the researcher, body language, clothing, and compensating the interviewee.

### **6.3.3 Workers' Compensation**

Project sponsors should ensure that all interviewers are protected by Workers' Compensation, either through the interviewers' place of employment or through the research project.

## **6.4 Locating/recruiting people to interview**

Some of the different locations where participants can be recruited include drop-in centres, known outdoor locations (e.g. bottle return depots), shelters, and motels.

Researchers may use some or all of the following approaches to locate or recruit people to interview. The approach may vary depending on the purpose of the study and the group or sub-group targeted for the research.

- Ask social or community agencies for assistance in identifying people who are currently or formerly homeless (e.g. drop-in centres, mental health agencies, recovery homes, treatment centres, social service agencies, and other agencies that provide outreach services);
- Ask shelter operators for assistance in identifying people who are homeless;
- Approach people who are homeless directly on the street - people who are sitting may be more willing to talk than those who are walking around. (Note: the interviewer must be able to identify people who are homeless by sight, and this approach is always open to peril of giving offence when mis-identifying homeless people);
- Ask people who are homeless or formerly homeless to help recruit others to interview; and
- Put up notices in places that provide affordable housing (for people who are formerly homeless).

## **6.5 How to approach potential candidates for an interview**

In approaching potential candidates for an interview, researchers should:

- Be aware and sensitive to the fact that people who have experienced homelessness may be ashamed to admit this;
- Be aware that potential candidates may be motivated by a desire to help others and may be interested in participating in a study if they feel they could have an impact on government policies to address homelessness;
- Approach people with respect and explain up front the purpose of the study and that the information will be confidential;

- Tell potential candidates up front that they will receive an honorarium; and
- Advise potential candidates how information from the research will be made available to them.

All focus group participants stressed the need to make the person approached feel comfortable. The way to do this might vary from person to person. However, interviewers should dress casually (e.g. jeans), and offer food and/or coffee, or other appropriate means of compensation.

It has been noted that people who are homeless may be most willing to talk the day or week before welfare cheques are issued.

## **6.6 Interview guide**

A sample Introduction and Consent Form and Interview Guide are attached in Appendix “B” and “C”.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of the interview guide is to learn more about the life experiences of people who become homeless, about what might be done to prevent people from becoming homeless, and about what people need to access and maintain stable housing. It was noted during the pilot interviews that the introduction and preliminary information provided should be as brief as possible.

It is expected that groups or agencies using this method might wish to adapt the interview guide for their own use depending on the specific goals of their study and the group targeted for interviews. A few pilot interviews should be conducted to ensure that the interview guide can achieve the objectives of the specific project for which it is being used. Finally, when printing a final version of the interview guide, plenty of space should be left after each question for the interviewer/recorder to take notes.

## **6.7 Protection of privacy**

One of the objectives of this methodology is to respect and protect the privacy of study participants. One way to achieve this is to ask interview participants to provide a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. This will give participants an identity and enable them to identify themselves in the final report. The interviewer should also advise participants how confidentiality will be handled in reporting the research findings.

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that researchers who used a previous version of the interview guide to conduct interviews in Surrey and Langley reported that:

- It can be confusing when interviewing people who have had several episodes of homelessness if participants discuss these different episodes including the first time they were homeless, the most recent episode, and other times in between.
- Some interviewees felt that the questions were too focused on housing when many other issues (e.g. income support, employment, and drug treatment) are key factors in being homeless.

Thanks to Steven Rose, Outreach Coordinator, Pinganodin Lodge, Ottawa for providing comments on a previous version of the interview guide.

## 6.8 Location of interviews

Interviews should take place wherever the person being interviewed will be most comfortable and where both the participant and the interviewer feel safe. For example, the interviewer could invite the interviewee to a coffee shop for a coffee or snack. Another possible location may be in the offices of a recruiting agency. Some people who are approached for an interview might feel more relaxed if they are inside, while others may wish to remain exactly where the interviewer finds them. Ideally, the location should be safe, reasonably quiet, private and offer few distractions.

## 6.9 Recording of interviews

Researchers may wish to record interviews by taking hand-written notes or by using a tape recorder. Regardless of the approach taken, the interviewer should advise the participant which method of recording will be used. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. Some studies have used a team of two individuals, where one person asked the questions and the other recorded the information. Focus group participants stated that it would make no difference to them if the interview were tape recorded or if the interviewer took notes. However, they were not sure if this would be the case with others approached for an interview. Some questions were raised about whether people who are interviewed might be more careful with what they say in a taped interview, and they might want to listen to the tape to make sure it reflected what they meant to say. Advantages and disadvantages of different approaches are noted below.

	<b>Teams of 2 people with one writing notes</b>	<b>One interviewer and a tape recorder</b>	<b>One interviewer who also takes notes</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Each person can focus on their task.</li> <li>-The note-taker can assist the interviewer if necessary.</li> <li>-Interviewers may feel safer conducting interviews in pairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interviewer can focus on the participant and maintain eye contact.</li> <li>-Can maintain a 1:1 ratio.</li> <li>-Can capture all info on tape.</li> <li>-Costs less than hiring 2 people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can maintain a 1:1 ratio.</li> <li>-Costs less than hiring 2 people-</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Participants may find it intimidating to have two people present.</li> <li>-Hard to capture all info with notes.</li> <li>-Costs more to hire 2 people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Interviewer needs to obtain consent to record interview.</li> <li>-There could be technical difficulties (or too much background noise) and information would be lost.</li> <li>-Interviewer may feel less safe if alone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Difficult to maintain eye contact and take notes at the same time.</li> <li>-Hard to capture all info with notes.</li> <li>-Interviewer may feel less safe if alone.</li> </ul>

## 6.10 Honorariums

Interviewers should provide participants with an honorarium to show respect for the time and information provided by the participant. Currently, a reasonable honorarium could be from \$15-\$30 per interview, plus the cost of a meal or coffee for an interview that will last from 1 to 1.5 hours.

## 6.11 Photographs

Given the need for anonymity and confidentiality, photographs should not be taken of any of the people who are interviewed.

## 6.12 Analysis and report preparation

Issues regarding how the information from personal interviews will be analyzed should be addressed during the research design stage. At that time it will be necessary to determine how the results will be used and the depth of analysis that will be required. This discussion should occur with someone who has knowledge and experience in qualitative research, and ideally, this person will be part of the research team. Depending on the depth of analysis desired and the number of interviews to be conducted, it may be necessary to analyze the results with the assistance of appropriate computer software.

Based on the questions contained in the interview guide for this methodology, it should be possible to analyze the responses according to the issues noted below.

Questions	Currently homeless	Formerly homeless
1. Basic demographics (e.g. gender, age, ethnic background, and first language).	Intro	Intro
2. Where respondent is from and length of time in Greater Vancouver.	Intro	Intro
3. Marital status and number of children	Q: 28-29	Q: 26-27
4. Current living situation	Q: 1-2	Q: 1-2
5. Length of time homeless	Q: 3 & 11	Q: 3-4
6. Living situation immediately prior to becoming homeless	Q: 4-8	Q: 5-6
7. Immediate <b>trigger</b> of homelessness and factors that <b>contributed</b> to respondents becoming homeless	Q: 9-10 & 12-14	Q: 7-10
8. Types of assistance that might have <b>prevented</b> the respondents from becoming homeless	Q: 15-17	Q: 11-14
9. Factors that contributed to the respondents <b>remaining homeless</b>		Q: 18 & 21
10. Factors that helped respondents <b>exit</b> homelessness or might have helped the person exit homelessness sooner		Q: 15-17, 19, 20 & 23

11. Services or assistance being used by respondents to exit homelessness (if any)	Q: 18-19	
12. Services or other type of help needed/wanted	Q: 21-22	
13. <b>Barriers</b> to respondents leaving the street	Q: 20 & 24	Q: 17 & 22
14. Factors that helped (or would help) respondents maintain their housing	Q: 23	Q: 24
15. Impact of affordable housing on respondents lives		Q: 25
16. Issues from respondents' childhoods that may be relevant to homelessness	Q: 25-27	Q: 26-28
17. The role of pets in the respondents lives (Q 28)	Q: 30	Q: 31

The seven pilot interviews carried out for this report were not analyzed because this was not the purpose of the pilot. From a cursory review, however, the following is an example of what we were able to learn using the interview guide.

Pilot interviews were conducted with 4 people who were homeless and 3 people who were formerly homeless. Of those who were homeless, 3 were men between the ages of 39 and 45, and one was a woman 45 years of age. All of the formerly homeless interviewees were women between the ages of 22 and 46.

All three of the women who were formerly homeless indicated that the breakdown of their relationship with an abusive partner was the main event that triggered their experience (or most recent experience) of homelessness. For one woman, this coincided with losing her job. Factors that contributed to this woman's homelessness were a lack of support from members of her family, lack of assistance from local community agencies, and an inability to find housing that she could afford while receiving income assistance. Drug addiction was a major factor that contributed to homelessness for the other two women. Using drugs took priority over looking for housing and money that could have been used for housing was used for drugs.

For Alice, (not her real name), a 22 year old woman who is formerly homeless, the use of drugs and alcohol was a factor that contributed to her being episodically homeless from the age of 17. Alice started drinking at the age of 7 and began brewing her own alcohol from the age of 12. She had begun using cocaine by the age of 11. When asked what might have helped Alice from becoming homeless in the past, she said that it might have helped if her parents or someone from school had noticed that she was using drugs and alcohol. The turning point for Alice was when she had a drug overdose, wound up in hospital, and realized she needed to change her life and "get clean and sober". She went to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous and began seeing a drug and alcohol counsellor. Alice continues to see a counsellor to help address the issues from her past that led to her drug use. She believes the only reason she has stable housing now is because she is in recovery and no longer uses drugs or alcohol.

Among the people interviewed who were currently homeless, the following factors were cited as the immediate triggers of homelessness:



- Eviction;
- Having the hydro cut off;
- Sharing a house with a few other people. One person moved out and things “fell apart”; and
- Breakdown of a common law relationship.

Some of the longer term contributing factors included mental health issues, alcohol and drug use, insufficient income (unless sharing with a common law partner), and literacy issues (e.g. unable to read ads for housing in the newspaper).

The following are examples of some themes that might emerge during the analysis of information obtained from the interviews.

<b>Immediate triggers of homelessness</b>	<b>Longer term factors contributing to homelessness</b>	<b>Factors contributing to an exit from homelessness</b>	<b>Other issues</b>
Eviction	Impact of childhood experiences	Role of outreach workers/agencies	Loneliness as a barrier to leaving the streets
Breakdown of relationship	Mental health issues		Role of pets
	Alcohol and drug use		Impact of housing on people’s lives
	Discrimination by landlords		
	Literacy		

It is important to note that findings from interviews can be discussed only in the context of the individuals who participated in the study. The intention is to understand the sub-group interviewed and not to generalize to the homeless population as a whole.

Persons interviewed for this study indicated that they would be interested in any reports that used their information. Therefore, it is recommended that any reports be written in a way that is accessible to the participants. It was also suggested that the participants have an opportunity to review a draft report to ensure that it reflects the reality of their experiences.

### **6.13 Reporting back to participants after the interviews**

This report recommends that the methodology include an opportunity for people who participated in the interviews to attend a follow-up meeting after analysis of all the interviews is completed. Participants in the both the focus and pilot interviews indicated support for this idea. The purpose of the meeting would be to thank the participants for

their input, discuss the results of the interviews and review a draft report. It has been recognized that it may be difficult to locate homeless people who participated in an interview to notify them of the follow-up meeting. Some strategies to address this issue might be to enlist the assistance of the agency that helped recruit the people who were interviewed (if applicable) or have a date pre-arranged and write this on a business card to be given to all participants. A hot meal (or honorarium) would provide an additional incentive for people to attend.

## 7. Budget issues

In developing a budget for qualitative research, in addition to the costs related to the interviews, it is necessary to identify resources and time required for training, data entry, coding, analysis and interpretation. The following is an estimate of the time that might be required to conduct interviews using the proposed interview guide for a 1.5 hour interview. The estimates were developed based on information from some of the projects described in Appendix “A” and discussions with researchers conducting interviews with people who are homeless and formerly homeless in several municipalities in the GVRD. It is important to note that the information presented should be used only as a guide. The amount of time and resources required to obtain first person qualitative information from people who are currently or formerly homeless will vary greatly depending on the goals of each particular study and objectives regarding the level of analysis to be provided.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Hours/Interview</b>	<b>Hours/Interview</b>	<b>Hours/Interview</b>
	<b>Basic Analysis 1 interviewer</b>	<b>Basic Analysis 2 People/Interview</b>	<b>Enhanced Analysis<sup>8</sup> 1 interviewer</b>
Preparation for interviews, recruiting interviewees, and debriefing	1.5 hours	3.0 hours	1.5 hours
Conducting interviews and travel	2.0 hours	4.0 hours	2.0 hours
Transcribing/ Typing interview notes			3.5 hours
Coding and analysis	3.0 hours	3.0 hours	4.0 hours
Summary of interviews/report	.5 hours	.5 hours	1.0 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 hours</b>	<b>10.5 hours</b>	<b>12 hours</b>

This budget assumes that members of the project team would conduct the interviews. If the team will hire other interviewers, then an additional 10-15 hours should be added for recruitment, training, and co-ordination.

<sup>8</sup> May involve the use of software support the analysis of qualitative research.

The amount of time needed for researchers to recruit interviewees will depend on the approach being taken and the degree to which agencies will assist in this process.

Additional costs will include \$15-\$40 per interview to provide honorariums and snacks for the participants.

## Appendix “A”

### Descriptions of approaches

#### 1.1 Personal interviews

##### 1) Health Canada, The Street Lifestyle Study (1997)

<b>Method</b>	This study used first person interviews to obtain qualitative information from former street youth. The authors also conducted informal interviews with staff members of participating agencies to explore some of the issues raised in the interviews.
<b>Purpose</b>	To learn about risk factors that lead young people to adopt the street lifestyle and factors that influence young people making the transition off the street.
<b>Target Group</b>	Former street youth who were 14-29 years old and who had made a successful transition off the street. Youth were interviewed in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary, and Vancouver.
<b># Interviewed</b>	70 former street youth.
<b>Sampling method</b>	The research design was based on the selection of a convenience sample by staff in the participating agencies. This was seen as the most viable way to gain access to former street youth who met the eligibility criteria.
<b>Recruitment</b>	Youth were recruited by agencies that were participating in the study. Each of the participating agencies was asked to select a sample of 10 to 15 former street youth who met the eligibility criteria. An attempt was made to recruit approximately equal numbers of male and female subjects.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	Interviews were undertaken at offices of the host agencies who participated in this study. These agencies were generally in convenient locations.
<b>Interviewers</b>	Interviews were conducted by the authors of the study.
<b>Interview length</b>	Between 1 and 1.5 hours.
<b>Time of day</b>	Afternoons and evenings.
<b>Compensation</b>	Participants were provided with a nominal fee of \$15 for completing an interview.
<b>Budget</b>	It was noted that qualitative studies may take more time than quantitative ones because of the time required for coding, data entry, and analysis. Total costs will depend on the number of interviews.
<b>Consent</b>	The participating agencies arranged for the youth to sign consent forms.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	
<b>Additional comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a good choice to interview people who had left the streets because they had tremendous insight. However, it was difficult to find these individuals, and it was necessary to go to agencies that served street youth and ask them to identify youth who had made the transition.</li> <li>• Both homeless and formerly homeless individuals should be studied. Interviews with individuals who came through the experience and left the street can provide a complete picture of what held them to the street, what helped them leave, and what were some of the barriers to leaving. However, the interviewers will not hear from the individuals who have</li> </ul>

	<p>given up. Therefore, ideally, a study of the homeless population should include two sub samples: individuals who are formerly homeless and individuals who are currently homeless and entrenched in street life. It would be important to find out if these people have given up on leaving the streets or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to ask more questions about negative school experiences as this seems to have a significant impact on homelessness. It is important to find out why youth are dropping out of school.</li> <li>• It often took youth more than one try to make it off the street. Often, the services they needed were not there for them. For example, welfare may have provided income for one months rent, but landlords wanted a deposit in advance. Also, the youth had no money for cooking utensils or bedding etc. If youth left the street, they were faced with the issue of social isolation. They did not feel accepted by mainstream society, but if they associated with street people, they ended up back on the street. Therefore, it is important to ask questions about this experience.</li> <li>• If interviews are being done with individuals who were formerly homeless, it is OK to use professional researchers to carry out the interviews. However, for interviews with people on the street, it is better to hire individuals who are familiar with this population and who can establish a good rapport with them. The interviewers must be able to find and talk to this population.</li> <li>• To show respect for people who are homeless it is important to reflect that their time and information is worth something. Compensation should be between \$25-\$30.</li> <li>• Interviewers should be clear that all information will be held in strict confidence and that the identity of the participants will be protected (e.g. won't use name or any other identifier).</li> </ul>
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## 1.2 *Personal interviews and focus groups*

### 2) **The McCreary Centre Society, Street Talk: Early Processes in the Lives of Youth Becoming Homeless (Underway)**

<b>Method</b>	This study used first person interviews to obtain qualitative information. A focus group/workshop was also held for street-involved youth to provide advice on the research content and process. Some of the issues covered included: how to access youth under 19, who should carry out the interviews, when should the interviews take place, how can participants be made to feel comfortable, and how should participants be compensated for their time.
<b>Purpose</b>	To explore the early choices and processes involved in youth coming to the street and/or becoming homeless, to inform policy and practice at the national and local levels, and to contribute to the development of early prevention and intervention strategies on behalf of street-involved youth in Canada.
<b>Target Group</b>	Street youth in downtown Vancouver who are 12 to 18 years old.
<b># Interviewed</b>	30 street youth.
<b>Sampling method</b>	The methodology involved a convenience sample. The goal was to interview a cross-section of youth, achieve a gender balance and include the various sub-cultures. The decision to carry out 30 interviews was seen as an attempt to

	balance the need to keep the sample small enough so as not to lose the richness of the data but large enough to include a cross section of youth.
<b>Recruitment</b>	The interviewers looked for participants in their assigned geographic areas of Vancouver. Agencies serving youth in the area were also contacted to assist in recruiting participants.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	Most interviews (60%) took place in restaurants. Approximately 25% of interviews were conducted in an agency. Half of these individuals were approached on the street and decided to go to an agency location for the interview. Another 10% of interviews were conducted on the street or in a park or alley – where the interviewers first approached the youth.
<b>Interviewers</b>	The McCreary Centre Society hired 3 street youth as research assistants and 3 university students as recorders/note takers. They were paired up in teams of two so that the street youth asked the questions and the students took notes. The interviewers and recorders participated in 3 days of training. The interviewers usually brought a tape recorder to the interviews, and most participants agreed to have their interviews taped. The interviewers did not want to rely exclusively on tape recordings because in some cases there would have been too much background noise. Interviewers also took field notes to record their impressions of the interviews and participants.
<b>Length of interview</b>	Approximately one hour.
<b>Time of day</b>	From late morning to mid afternoon and the evening.
<b>Compensation</b>	Each youth received \$15 as compensation for participating in the study, plus the cost of their meal if the interview was in a restaurant.
<b>Budget</b>	It is estimated that each interview took about 7.5 hours (1 hour for the interview x 2 people, 1 hour for preparation, recruiting and debriefing x 2 people, and 3.5 hours for typing/transcribing and submitting notes). In developing a budget, time is also required for training, testing, coding, and analysis.
<b>Consent</b>	Researchers followed a protocol to obtain informed consent and assure participants that their identity would be anonymous and their interview would be kept confidential.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	The questionnaire was developed with input from approximately 25 street youth who participated in a workshop on question topics and strategies for accessing youth. Participants were asked for biographical information (using a pseudonym) and the remaining questions took about 30 minutes.
<b>Additional comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The street youth hired as research assistants were very familiar with the various components of the street youth population. E.g. one was familiar with the DES and sex trade, one was familiar with the squeegee and pan handling culture, and one was knowledgeable about boys town.</li> <li>• Advantages of hiring street youth to conduct the interviews were that they were able to have good access to the street youth population. It is believed that the interviewers were able to interview young people who might not have talked with anyone else.</li> <li>• Some of the disadvantages were that one of the youth found it too difficult emotionally to complete the qualitative interviews. In addition, it is possible that a more skilled interviewer would have probed more on some of the questions (but question if that might have been too intrusive).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is essential to provide training on topics such as confidentiality, anonymity, and the role of the researcher. It is important for interviewers to understand their role and that they are not an outreach worker.</li><li>• Pairing the interviewer with a recorder worked well for the interviewers. The recorder provided additional support (e.g. could jump in if the interviewer missed something), and helped with feelings of safety. The interviewers also found it helpful to have someone else take notes and manage the tape recorder. None of the persons interviewed indicated concern about the 2:1 ratio.</li><li>• If a tape recorder is being used it is important to ensure that it will be possible to hear the interview over the background noise.</li><li>• Some youth were not interviewed because they did not speak English well enough. It is important to consider if translation will be feasible at the outset of the project.</li><li>• The focus group was very useful in identifying questions that would be too sensitive to ask youth in a personal interview. There are some things that the youth did not feel comfortable discussing.</li></ul>
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3) **The Social Alternatives Unit and BC Housing, Community Based Research Project on Homelessness (2001), *The View From The Sidewalk, Towards A New Definition of People Who Are Homeless, A Study By Organic Intellectuals***  
 – online at: [www.vcn.bc.ca/~voice](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/~voice)

<b>Method</b>	<p>This study involved personal interviews and several workshops with a core group of 12 Organic Intellectuals over a four month period.</p> <p>The purpose of the workshops with the Organic Intellectuals was to discuss the existing literature on homelessness, review definitions of homelessness, develop a methodology for the interviews, identify themes to be addressed during the interviews, share experiences of the interview process, and discuss the policy implications of their findings.</p> <p>An Organic Intellectual is defined as someone whose knowledge is derived from firsthand experience, and supplemented through formal schooling or alternative educational resources. Part of being an organic intellectual is that these individuals use their intellectualism to help better the social condition/class from which they came, which in this case, is homelessness. This project sought a team of individuals who were homeless or had experienced homelessness in their lives and who had developed, through their life experiences, self-learning, and Humanities 101, analytical tools and the ability to understand and critique government policies, reports and academic work on homelessness.</p>
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this project was to enable people who are homeless or were once homeless to review definitions and policies of homelessness for the purpose of critiquing and possibly redefining them, based on their analytical skills, experiences and interviews with other homeless people.
<b>Target Group</b>	A wide range of people who are homeless in various communities throughout BC, including the invisible homeless, children, men, women, individuals who have a physical or mental disability, people who have been through the criminal justice system, and people with addictions.
<b># Interviewed</b>	The team of Organic Intellectuals carried out interviews with approximately 200 individuals.
<b>Sampling method</b>	The Organic Intellectuals interviewed as many people as they could in a limited period of time. They interviewed all the homeless people they met who were willing to talk to them.
<b>Recruitment</b>	The Organic Intellectuals explained who they were and the nature of their project, and asked potential participants if they would be willing to talk with them.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	The Organic Intellectuals carried out their interviews on the streets, at shelters, drop-in centres, parks, hotels, and anywhere else they encountered homeless people. All these places were very effective. The Organic Intellectuals were able to conduct the interviews in places where people who are homeless are most comfortable.
<b>Interviewers</b>	The Organic Intellectuals carried out all the interviews.
<b>Length of interview</b>	The average interview took from 30-45 minutes. However, some took more and others took less time.



<b>Time of day</b>	Any time, day and night.
<b>Compensation</b>	The interviewees received between \$5 and \$15 depending on the length of the interview. The Organic Intellectuals received \$700 each for their work on this project to review the literature, attend group meetings (approximately 30 hours), conduct interviews outside the lower mainland (a 2-day period), conduct interviews in the lower mainland, and submit readable notes to team members responsible for writing-up the project.
<b>Budget</b>	The total budget for this project was \$50,000.
<b>Consent</b>	Each interviewee signed a release form.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Interview questions focused on agreed-upon themes. There was no structured questionnaire or interview guide.
<b>Additional comments</b>	It is believed that both the interviewees and Organic Intellectuals should have been paid more for their services and experiences. Too often, the services and time of people who are homeless are undervalued because they are homeless. The professionals who study them may be paid 10 times as much. This is the type of situation that perpetuates homelessness. Unfortunately, this issue was not realized until it was too late.

**4) Morrell-Bellai, Tammy, Paula Goering, and Katherine Boydell, Becoming and Remaining Homeless: A Qualitative Investigation (2000)**

<b>Method</b>	This study used first person interviews to obtain qualitative information. A focus group was also used to help shape the research plan and questions.
<b>Purpose</b>	To explore the process of becoming homeless and the process of remaining homeless. This was the qualitative component of a large-scale study of the homeless population in Toronto.
<b>Target Group</b>	Homeless male and female adults in Toronto. There was a deliberate attempt to include both genders, various age groups, and both shelter users and avoiders. In addition, participants with specific characteristics were sometimes selected to facilitate further exploration of an emerging theme.
<b># Interviewed</b>	29 homeless individuals - The quantitative component of this study involved a representative sample of 300 adult shelter users (selected to match the more than 10,000 adults who stayed in shelters in 1995) and an additional 30 individuals who did not use shelters. Of these 330 individuals, 29 participated in an in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interview.
<b>Sampling method</b>	The 29 individuals were selected based on the need to include a broad range of participants (e.g. length of time homeless, gender, and ethnicity). Other factors included their comfort level in talking about, and ability to recall in detail, the events that occurred in the year prior to becoming homeless. It was felt that 29 interviews was a good number, because each interview provided 50-70 pages of rich text.
<b>Recruitment</b>	All the individuals who participated in the quantitative study were asked if they would be interested in participating in the qualitative interviews.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	
<b>Interviewers</b>	The authors carried out the interviews. All interviews were audio recorded.
<b>Length of interview</b>	

<b>Time of day</b>	
<b>Compensation</b>	Participants were paid \$15/interview. In addition, they were offered coffee and muffins.
<b>Budget</b>	
<b>Consent</b>	Participants signed a consent form for both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Questions focused on asking the participant to describe the series of events in the year prior to their becoming homeless that they felt had contributed to this eventuality.
<b>Additional comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups can be very helpful with designing the questionnaire.</li> <li>• It would be a good idea to hire people who have experienced homelessness to carry out the interviews. They know the “ins and outs” of the population and this would enhance the capacity of people who are homeless. However, the interviewers also need to have the necessary skills, and be compassionate, flexible, comfortable, and able to make the interview feel like a conversation.</li> <li>• It is important to provide an honorarium to participants – to acknowledge that their time has value.</li> </ul>

### 1.3 Focus groups

#### 5) Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver, Input from People who are homeless/at risk (2001)

<b>Method</b>	This study involved focus groups with people who are homeless.
<b>Purpose</b>	To involve people who are homeless in the Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver and provide an opportunity for them to review and comment on the Plan.
<b>Target Group</b>	People in Greater Vancouver who are homeless. This generally included the clients of the host agencies (shelters, drop-in and resource centres) who participated.
<b># Interviewed</b>	Eighteen focus groups were held with from 2-30 people per group
<b>Sampling method</b>	N/a
<b>Recruitment</b>	The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness sent a letter to shelters, drop-ins and resource centres in Greater Vancouver asking them to “host” focus group sessions by providing the meeting space and inviting their clients to attend. The host agencies recruited participants.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	Focus groups were held on the premises of the host agencies (e.g. shelters, drop-ins and resource centres).
<b>Facilitators</b>	Most of the sessions were facilitated by staff from the host agencies. Members of the Steering Committee provided note-takers/recorders for each session.
<b>Length of focus group session</b>	Approximately one hour.
<b>Time of day</b>	Different times of the day and early evening.
<b>Compensation</b>	Food and refreshments were provided.
<b>Consent/ Privacy</b>	Facilitators asked all the participants to respect the personal privacy of others and not to repeat what they had heard. Facilitators were also asked to respect the confidentiality of the participants when reporting on the results of the

	sessions.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	
<b>Additional comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One hour may not be enough time to engage in in-depth discussion.</li> <li>• Would recommend that focus groups include 5-7 participants.</li> </ul>

#### 1.4 Testimonials/Personal stories

##### 6) National Coalition for the Homeless, the Homeless Voices project, United States

<b>Method</b>	The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) uses testimonials/personal stories to raise awareness about homelessness. These testimonials are available on the NCH web site ( <a href="http://www.nationalhomeless.org">www.nationalhomeless.org</a> ) as part of their Homeless Voices project. Testimonials are also an important part of the Faces of Homelessness Speakers program, which involves presentations by people who are or have been homeless. This program aims to educate the public about homelessness and what can be done to end it. The presentations provide an opportunity to personalize homeless, dispel stereotypes, and inspire hope by presenting the first-hand experience of the panelists, and allowing the general public to interact with these “experts” through question and answer periods and one-to-one discussions after the presentations. The written testimonials are handed out at the presentations, and are also a tool to help the presenters structure their stories.
<b>Purpose</b>	To recognize that homeless people themselves are the true experts in this field, to help break down stereotypes about people who are homeless, and to show that people who are homeless are capable of expressing themselves.
<b>Target Group</b>	Approximately half of the participants are homeless and half were homeless in the past.
<b># Interviewed</b>	N/a
<b>Sampling method</b>	N/a
<b>Location of interviews</b>	NCH staff travel throughout the United States and interview people who are homeless. Interviews may take place on the street or when people come into the NCH office.
<b>Recruitment</b>	Participants are recruited from shelters, service providers or directly from the street.
<b>Interviewers</b>	NCH staff
<b>Length of interview</b>	N/a
<b>Time of day</b>	N/a
<b>Compensation</b>	Speakers receive a \$20 honorarium.
<b>Consent</b>	There are no issues regarding confidentiality and privacy because the purpose of this project is for presenters to share their stories with others. Photographs are taken only with written permission
<b>Questionnaire</b>	Participants are given an interview guide which they may use to help them with their personal stories. NCH staff are also available to offer assistance in developing the presentation or testimonial. (See attached Appendix B)
<b>Additional comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The personal connection is very important and powerful. For example, people will remember an anecdote by someone talking about how he felt</li> </ul>

	<p>looking in the phone book and finding his name – something we can all relate to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The personal connection can have a huge impact on making people care about homelessness and want to do something about it. It can change the way people respond to homelessness in everyday life.</li> </ul>
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### 7) Calgary Drop-In Centre, No Fixed Address: Tales From the Street (2001)

<b>Method</b>	This project involved in-depth interviews to prepare a book of personal stories of people from the streets of Calgary. This method was chosen to put a face on homelessness, and to make it as personal as possible. There have been lots of statistical reports on homelessness, but the goal was to take a visceral approach.
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this book was to put a personal face on homelessness and provide some understanding of the breadth of the situations that led people to become homeless. There are many causes, and it is hoped that by telling peoples' stories, the book will help educate the public and dispel some of the myths about people who are homeless. The book provides insight as to how the people got into their situations and "allows the reader to stand in their shoes for a few minutes". This book was published by the Calgary Drop-In Centre to raise awareness and funds for a new all-purpose facility.
<b>Target Group</b>	Homeless individuals who used the Calgary Drop-In Centre. The goal was to include people who would show the diversity of the homeless population.
<b># Interviewed</b>	This book includes testimonials from 19 individuals with diverse backgrounds who were living on the streets of Calgary.
<b>Sampling method</b>	N/a
<b>Recruitment</b>	The author put up a notice at the Drop-In Centre and some of the staff approached people they thought would be interested. The author also volunteered at the Drop-In. She got to know people and asked them to participate. Information about the project was also spread by word-of-mouth, and more people came forward to tell their stories.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	Several interviews were conducted at the Calgary Drop-in Centre. Many of the older people felt more comfortable there. Other interviews took place in coffee shops and restaurants. The author also went bottle-picking with two individuals. This proved to be a significant event that helped break the ice and build trust.
<b>Interviewers</b>	The interviews were conducted by Susan Scott, a journalist formerly with the Calgary Herald. She volunteered in the Drop-In Centre a few nights a week for close to 2 years. This was an important factor in gaining the trust of the participants. They understood that she was an OK person who wouldn't exploit them.
<b>Length of interview</b>	1.5 hours or longer.
<b>Time of day</b>	Interviews were generally done in the evenings, however, a few participants requested other times and places.
<b>Compensation</b>	Participants did not receive financial compensation. However, if they chose to be interviewed in a coffee shop or restaurant, the author paid for the

	refreshment or meal.
<b>Budget</b>	The research took place over a period of 18 months. It was quite labour intensive - 2-3 hours per night, 2-3 times/week. Time was also spent double and triple checking the information.
<b>Consent</b>	Initially, the authors planned to take pictures of all the participants. However, they became concerned about what could happen if their identities were revealed. Although all the participants signed a consent form, in some cases the authors decided not to use real names or include a photograph. Decisions were made in consultation with staff at the Drop-In Centre. Great care was taken to protect the participants and to decide which photographs should be used or not. The long term good of the participant was paramount, and most photos were not included. However, one woman's name and photo were used, and her story led to a family reconciliation. See attached Appendix B.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	There was no set of questions. Each interview was different. The goal was to help the participants feel comfortable talking and telling their stories. An attempt was made to use a chronological approach as a framework. However, flexibility was very important.
<b>Additional comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The author wishes there was another chapter in the book about trends or common threads – something the subjects couldn't put their fingers on but that became evident from all the stories. One of these trends would have been the lack of support in times of crisis.</li> <li>• It is important to listen to what the participants want to say rather than just listen to what you want to hear for your project.</li> </ul>

### 1.5 Interviews, focus groups and testimonials

#### 8) City of Toronto, Homeless Voices (1998)

<b>Method</b>	This study involved a combination of methods to obtain first hand information from people who were homeless. These include interviews with homeless people, interviews with staff working in agencies that provide services to homeless people, focus group discussions with homeless people held in drop-in centres and emergency shelters; and commissioning 20 homeless people to write personal stories based on their first hand experiences of being homeless in Toronto.
<b>Purpose</b>	To update a previous report, <i>Homeless Not Helpless</i> , and understand the ways in which the experience of homelessness in Toronto had changed over the past 8 years. The purpose of the original report was to obtain input from homeless people for the City of Toronto's public planning process and to inform public policy.
<b>Target Group</b>	A cross section of homeless males and females including those who used shelters and those who slept outside.
<b># Interviewed</b>	In total, the authors spoke with over 150 homeless people and over 20 staff from agencies working with homeless people.

<b>Sampling issues</b>	The number of participants was based on the time and resources available. It is difficult to get a random sample. It is important to determine what categories are important (e.g. age, gender and ethnicity) and select people based on that criteria.
<b>Recruitment</b>	Notice for the focus group meetings was provided at the drop-in centres. The interviewers went to drop-in centres to recruit people interested in providing testimonials. The interviewers provided a note book, asked the individuals to write their stories, and said they would meet them in two weeks. Participants were told they would be paid upon receipt of their testimonials.
<b>Location of interviews</b>	Wherever homeless people slept or hung out.
<b>Interviewers</b>	The authors for the study – both of whom have a great deal of experience working with people who are homeless. In addition, the authors often hire homeless people to do interviews and focus groups.
<b>Length of interview</b>	The focus groups were no more than 1 hour.
<b>Time of day</b>	Interviews and focus group meetings held at drop-in centres occurred during the day. Interviews on the streets were done in the evenings and on weekends.
<b>Compensation</b>	Participants were paid \$50 for each testimonial and are usually paid \$20 per interview or focus group.
<b>Budget</b>	The research budget for this project was about \$10,000.
<b>Consent</b>	The interviewers informed the individuals that the information would be strictly confidential and all names would be changed.
<b>Questionnaire</b>	N/a
<b>Additional comments</b>	Factors for success include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure the interviewers are experienced and comfortable with the work</li> <li>• Make the participants feel comfortable</li> <li>• Be patient</li> <li>• Guarantee confidentiality</li> </ul>

**PART I. INTRODUCTION & CONSENT**

**A. Approach**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my associate \_\_\_\_\_.

1. We are doing research for (name of organization sponsoring the research)\_\_\_\_\_.
2. We are looking to interview people who do not have a room, apartment, or house to rent, and they are living in a shelter, outside, or in an abandoned building. Does this [Did] this apply to you [at some time in your life]?
3. [If so] We would like to interview you.

*Offer some sort of refreshment (small snack or coffee)*

4. The research will take about 1 hour of your time. I will ask the questions, and my partner will [write down and/or tape record] your answers.
5. We will give you \$xx as an honorarium for your participation.
6. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any time.
7. We will protect your privacy and not release your identity to anyone.
8. We can interview you here or in a café, whichever you prefer.
9. Do you agree to participate: Yes                      No
10. I will sign my name to indicate that that you have agreed to participate as set out above. (We are not asking you to sign, so your identity can be kept confidential and anonymous.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Research assistant

11. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the research or researchers, please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Name

Organization

Phone Number

**12. Give a business card**

## **Part B. Additional information**

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the causes of homelessness, about what might be done to prevent people from becoming homeless, and about what people need to get and keep affordable housing. One of the goals is for this information to be used to help shape government policies and programs.

Some important points about this research are that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- We will not ask you your name, so your identity will be anonymous
- You can choose not to answer any question or can stop the interview at any time
- Your participation does not affect your use of services in any way
- Your interview will be kept confidential with the exception of myself and... working under the direction of [name of project sponsor]. All notes from your interview will be stored securely at the [project sponsor's office] for one year and then disposed of.

Your verbal agreement to participate indicates that:

- You have read this letter describing the research project and procedures, or it has been read to you
- You have considered the information
- You understand that your agreement to participate in this research is voluntary.



**PART II. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

<p>I'm going to start by asking you a few simple questions about your age and background. We are asking everyone these questions so we can describe the range of different people we interviewed in our study. We are not going to ask you your name, so the information will be anonymous.</p>	
1. Gender	<p>Male Female</p>
2. Age – What year were you born in? OR How old are you?	<p>Year of birth Age at time of study</p>
3. What is your ethnic background or nationality?	<p>Probe for interviewer:  Caucasian Aboriginal (staus/non-status) Asian Other_____</p>
4. What is your first language?	<p>Probe for interviewer:  English Other_____</p>
5. Where did you spend most of your time growing up?	<p>Probe for interviewer:  City/town_____ Region_____ Province_____ Country_____</p>
6. How long have you lived in Vancouver (or in municipality where the study is taking place)	
7. Where did you live before that?	<p>Probe for interviewer:  City/town_____ Region_____ Province_____ Country_____</p>

**PART III. QUESTIONS – People who are homeless**

**A. Current living situation**

I am now going to ask you some questions about your current living and sleeping situation.

1. Where did you stay/sleep last night?

*Probe: In a shelter, outside somewhere, inside at a friend’s place, other\_\_\_\_\_*

2. How long have you been staying there?

*Probe: A few nights? A few weeks? Longer?*

3. When was the last time you had a permanent address (stayed in one place for 6 months or more)?

*Probe: How long ago?*

4. What type of housing were you living?

*Probe: Apartment? House? Room?*

5. Did you live there alone or were you sharing?

6. Were you staying for free or did you pay rent?

7. How long did you live there?

8. Tell me a bit more about your life at that time?

*Probe: Did you have a job?*

*Were you in school?*

*Source of income?*

**B. Causes of homelessness**

9. Tell us what happened – what were the circumstances that led to your moving out?

*Probe: (e.g. Couldn’t afford the rent, evicted, relationship ended, housing condemned, issues with landlord, other...)*

10. Then what happened - how did you end up on the street?

*Probe: What happened?*

11. Have there been other times in your life when you didn't have a place to live – homeless? If yes, tell me about it.

*Probe: How long ago?*

*How long was it before you found a place to stay?*

*Where did you find to live?*

12. What would you say is the main/biggest reason why you don't have a place of your own to live in right now?

13. Can you think of any other reasons why?

*Probe: Examples might include issues with landlord, lack of housing, low income, lack of support networks, lack of references, discrimination....*

14. Are there any factors related to your health or lifestyle that are or have affected your housing situation?

Ask about:

- Physical health - describe
- Mental health - describe
- Addictions – describe
- Other - describe

### **C. Prevention**

15. Did you go to anyone for help or advice before you lost your housing? If yes, what did they do?

16. Is there anything that anyone could have done to help you keep your place?

17. When you first lost your housing, is there anything that could have been done to help you **get another** place to live?

**D. Help now**

18. Since you have been on the street, has anyone helped or tried to help you:

- a) Get a place to live? If yes, who and what happened?
- b) With income assistance? If yes, who and what happened?
- c) Other kind of assistance? If yes, who and what happened?

19. What kind of services do you think would help you right now?

20. What would you say are some of the barriers/hassles that keep you from getting these services?

**E. Services or other type of help needed/wanted**

21. If you had some choices of the type of housing where you could live right now, what would you choose?

*Probe: Would you want to stay where you are? Move inside?*

*Probe: Would you want your own apartment with a private kitchen and bathroom?*

*Shared housing? Place where meals are provided?*

*Places that have full or part-time support staff?*

*Places where it is OK to use drugs and alcohol? Places where no drugs or alcohol are permitted?*

22. What would you need to get the housing you want?

*Probe: This could be something new - it doesn't have to be something that already exists*

23. If you had housing, what do you think would help you KEEP it?

24. If you were to get housing, is there anything you would miss about your current life? Explain.....

**F. Background**

I have just a few last personal questions.

25. To the best of your memory, how often did you or you and your family move when you were growing up. Do you think it was:

1 or 2 times      3-5 times      6-10 times      more than 10 times

26. Were you ever in foster care as a child?      Yes      No

27. What is the last grade of school that you completed?

28. Are you single, in a relationship (married or common law), separated or divorced?

Single    Married or Common Law    Separated    Divorced

29. Do you have any children?    Yes    No

30. Do you have any pets?    Yes    No

**G.    Reporting back**

31. We are wondering if people we interview would be interested in attending a follow-up meeting to discuss the results of the interviews. If this were an option, would you be interested in attending some type of follow-up meeting?

Yes    No

32. If there were to be a follow-up meeting, would you prefer to:

- a)    Have a private meeting with the other people who were interviewed or
- b)    Participate in a meeting that would include government representatives, service providers, and other people who are homeless or formerly homeless?

Thank you very much for your time

***Pay honorarium***

---

Signature of interviewer to confirm that honorarium was paid

Ask if any comments about the interview process/questions

**H.    Interview and Note-Taker Comments**

Record observations, thoughts, impressions, or questions arising from the interview.

**PART III. QUESTIONS – People who are formerly homeless**

**A. Current living situation**

1. I would like to know about where you currently live. (Reminder that all answers will be strictly confidential).

a) What kind of housing do you have?

Probe for interviewer:

In a non-profit building

Apartment in a building with a private landlord

Room in the main part of a house

Basement suite in a house

Single room occupancy hotel

Other. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

b) Do you have your own place to live or do you share with other people?

share                      have own place

2. How long have you been living there?

3. Where did you live before that?

**B. Time when homeless**

I appreciate that this may have been a difficult period in your life, but would like to ask you about the time when you did not have your own fixed address and were homeless.

3. How long were without your own fixed address or homeless?

*Probe: Days? Weeks? Months? Years?*

4. During that time, where did you stay most of the time?

*Probe: Shelters? Outside? Abandoned buildings? Couch surfing? Other*

**C. Causes of homelessness**

5. Where were you living before you became homeless? What type of housing was it?

*Probe: Apartment? House? Room? Other?*

6. Did you live there alone or with others?
7. I know that this is personal, but in our study, we are trying to learn more about some of the causes of homelessness. We would appreciate if you would tell us how you lost your housing - what happened – what were the circumstances that led to your moving out?

*Probe: (e.g. Couldn't afford the rent, evicted, relationship ended, housing condemned, issues with landlord, other.....)*

8. Then what happened? How did you end up on the street?

*Probe: What happened?*

9. What would you say were the main reasons why you became homeless?

*Probe: Were there any other reasons?*

*Examples might include issues with landlord, lack of housing, low income, lack of support networks, discrimination.*

10. Were there any factors related to your health or lifestyle that were a cause of your homelessness?

Ask about:

- Physical health - describe
- Mental health - describe
- Addictions - describe
- Other - describe

#### **D. Prevention**

11. Did you go to anyone for help or advice before you lost your housing? If yes, what did they do?
12. Is there anything that might have helped you to keep the last permanent housing you had? Anything anyone could have done to help you?
13. Did you go to anyone for help or advice *immediately* after you lost your housing? If yes, what did they do?
14. Is there anything that could have been done to help you get another place to live at that time?

*Probe: Is there anything that you wish could have been done to help you at that time?*

**E. Moving Back Into Housing**

15. During the time when you didn't have your own place, did anyone help or try to help you:

- a) Get a place to live? If yes, who and what happened?
- b) With income assistance? If yes, who and what happened?
- d) Other kind of assistance? If yes, who and what happened?

16. What kind of services do you think would have helped you at that time?

17. What would you say were some of the barriers/hassles that prevented you from getting these services?

18. Looking back, what were the things about being homeless that kept you there?

19. What were the factors that helped you find stable housing?

*Probe: Did something specific happen?  
What was the turning point?  
Did you get any help?  
What type of help?  
Where did this help come from? Who from?*

20. Looking back, was there anything that could have made it possible for you to get your own place sooner?

*Probe: If yes, what?*

21. Did you try to get your own place more than once?

*Probe: If yes, what caused you to return to the street?*

22. What was the hardest thing about getting off the street?

**F. Services or other type of help needed/wanted**

23. What would you say are the most important things that you needed to be able to get off and stay off the street? (Probe for 3 things?)

24. Once you got housing, what would you say are the most important things you need to be able to keep it?

25. How would you describe your life now that you have permanent housing?

*Probe: Working? School? Arts? Music?*



## **G. Background**

I have just a few last personal questions.

26. To the best of your memory, how often did you or you and your family move when you were growing up. Do you think it was:

1 or 2 times      3-5 times      6-10 times      more than 10 times

27. Were you ever in foster care as a child?

28. What is the last grade of school that you completed?

29. Are you single, in a relationship (married or common law), separated or divorced?

Single      Married or Common Law      Separated      Divorced

30. Do you have any children?    Yes    No

31. Do you have any pets?    Yes    No

## **H. Reporting back**

32. We are wondering if people we interview (not for this study but in the future) would be interested in attending a follow-up meeting to discuss the results of the interviews. If this were an option, would you be interested in attending some type of follow-up meeting?

Yes      No

33. If there were to be a follow-up meeting, would you prefer to:

- a) Have a private meeting with the other people who were interviewed or
- b) Participate in a meeting that would include government representatives, service providers, and other people who are homeless or formerly homeless?

### ***Pay honorarium***

---

Signature of interviewer to confirm that honorarium was paid

Ask if any comments about the interview process/questions

Thank you very much for your time

## **I. Interview and Note-Taker Comments**

Record observations, thoughts, impressions, or questions arising from the interview.