

April 24, 2023

Dear Bishop John, Diocesan Council, and the Synod Delegates of the Diocese of New Westminster,

The Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Affordability was initiated by Synod 2021. Since forming in January 2022, our Task Force has learned about, listened to, and reflected on the issues and responses to affordable housing issues. In our report, you will find information on such topics as: *Who is most impacted by lack of decent, affordable housing and how does this impact all of society? What are we as a Diocese and others doing in response? What more should we be doing? And probably the most important question of all...what does our faith call us to do?*

At Synod 2023, we will come before you to ask...Where do we stand? Is this a priority for our Diocese, and if so, how can we show it?

Our Recommendations and Resolutions suggest opportunities that our Diocese might follow, broken down by Diocesan, Regional, and Parish/Individual opportunities. The efforts ask for time, talent, and treasure at all levels, offerings that we believe are available in abundance amongst us and will bring us great joy to give. Homelessness is a daunting problem to address. However, our efforts can improve the lives of people, one person at a time, and transform ourselves in the process.

A summary presentation of the Task Force report was provided at two pre-Synod Information sessions in March, and a video of that presentation is posted on the Diocesan website at <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/housing-affordability-and-homelessness-task-force-report>

We encourage you to read the report cover to cover in preparation for Synod and to watch the video for further inspiration and understanding. We trust that, as the Holy Spirit gives guidance, you will all give the Resolutions and Recommendations full consideration.

We thank you for the opportunity to present our report.

From the Diocesan Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Affordability

Diocese of New Westminster
Task Force on
Homelessness and Housing Affordability



Report to the
Diocese and 2023 Synod Delegates
Submitted April 24, 2023



Longhouses and poles by Bill Reid and Jim Hart, UBC Museum of Anthropology.

We acknowledge with gratitude and humility that the Diocese of New Westminster is located on land that is on the traditional and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), QayQayt First Nation, Kwantlen, q̓ícəy̓ (Katzie), Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen First Nations, kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), and Stó:lō Nation. We in the Diocese of New Westminster continue our journey with Indigenous brothers, sisters, and friends for truth, justice, and reconciliation.

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Section 1. Executive Summary

The Issue

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are at crisis levels throughout Canada, with more than 235,000 people experiencing homelessness each year. The causes of homelessness are complex, but are rooted in issues of poverty, inequality and racism. All over Canada, and in our own Diocese, people are living homeless or are precariously housed because there is simply not enough decent, affordable housing for people who are poor and/or who need specialized housing to support disabilities, mental illness and/or addictions.

The Purpose

This Task Force was convened in January 2022, at the direction of Synod 2021, with the following purpose:

To increase awareness and understanding of the issues and causes surrounding homelessness and housing vulnerability and to provide practical options for the Diocese and its parishes to use their gifts and resources to respond.

The Process

Over 14 months, the 7 Task Force members (3 clergy and 4 lay) did the following:

- Gathered and reviewed resources on our topic (Sections 3 & 5)
- Briefed Deaneries in the Diocese about the project, seeking participation
- Conducted 50 interviews, with parishes, community organizations, government staff and Diocesan committees (Section 3d)
- Assessed the results of interviews & developed preliminary recommendations
- Shared recommendations with Diocesan Council and Committees
- Presented our report at two pre-Synod Information Sessions (March 28 & 29, 2023)
- Submitted final report (April 24, 2023)

Key Findings

From our research, we know that homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are experienced most often by the most marginalized and vulnerable people in our society. Decent, safe, affordable housing, and proper support for mental health and addictions where needed, are critical in breaking this vicious cycle.

Where do we fit in, as a Diocese, as parishes, and as individuals? Through the interview process, we learned of the amazing work already being done in our Diocese, hands-on efforts to relieve immediate suffering through the provision of food security,

outreach and advocacy programs, which in this report we refer to as “crisis relief” efforts. We learned of church redevelopment plans underway for several parishes, which include aspirations for affordable housing. Here is what emerged as priorities for strengthening and building on these efforts:

- **Create a clear Affordable Housing vision** and be visible in its implementation.
- **Increase training/skill building/education** for volunteers and church leaders, to make them more effective and inspired advocates, service providers, and developers of affordable housing.
- **Enhance partnerships and collaboration**, both for ministries that ease immediate suffering and for projects that produce affordable housing.
- **Become visible advocates** for social justice, encouraging and calling on everyone in every community to commit to a more equitable society.
- **Provide generous financial support** and leadership at the Diocesan level to enable these transformational ministries.

There are six **Resolutions** for Synod consideration in Section 2 of the report. They include asking Synod to recognize the crises of homelessness and housing affordability as a Diocesan ministry priority and to respond with tangible actions, including dedicating financial resources. The Diocese is asked to engage in a Housing Visioning Process that includes principles and policies regarding using church assets and properties to create an Affordable Housing Fund and Social Housing units.

Recommendations articulated in Section 2 of this report fall under two key themes and are categorized by Diocesan, Parish and Individual Actions:

- Those that support and expand crisis relief efforts at the grassroots level through enhanced collaboration, advocacy and education, to relieve immediate suffering and to offer transformational opportunities;
- Those that support long-term stability, using our Diocesan properties and assets to subsidize affordable housing for the poor.

Included in the Recommendations are **Resource Requests**:

- Provide \$5000 **crisis relief grants** for churches undertaking ministries that respond to immediate suffering and that provide direct service to homeless and precariously housed people. (food security ministries, advocacy, education and awareness, small infrastructure, community collaboration, visioning) (66 churches x \$5000 = \$350,000)
- Hire a **Housing Animator** to support parishes who are undertaking crisis relief ministries that respond to immediate suffering (appx. \$120k annually).

A timeline for implementation is offered on page 13.

Section 2 – Resolutions and Recommendations

a) Resolutions

MOVED: Rev. Alex Wilson

SECONDED: Rev. Simbarashe Basvi

THAT,

1. Synod declares that responding to the crises of Homelessness and Housing Affordability is a Diocesan ministry priority.
2. Synod receives and affirms in principle the Recommendations of the Report of the Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Affordability at the Diocesan, Regional, and Parish/Personal levels.
3. Synod directs the Diocese to establish a grant fund, subject to available funds, which can be accessed by parishes and worshipping communities to support crisis relief ministries that respond to immediate suffering and needs of the homeless and precariously housed through direct service as outlined in Recommendations 1&2 (up to \$5,000 per parish).
4. Synod approves and directs the Diocese, subject to available funds, to hire a Housing Animator as a staff term person to assist parishes, Archdeacons, and Regional Deans to implement the recommendations of the Task Force; namely, to:
 - a) Develop and maintain regional maps of Homelessness and Affordable Housing services and programs offered through churches, non-profits, Indigenous groups, and government agencies to facilitate communication, collaboration and effective service delivery.
 - b) Develop opportunities for partnerships in the community to deliver homeless and affordable housing services.
 - c) Identify, develop and recruit regional representatives to support the work and delivery of services to those affected.
 - d) Build effective teams, communication, and relationships to effect change in heart, mind, and policy, related to housing affordability and homelessness, across every political, professional, community, and personal level of our diocese.

- e) Facilitate exchange of information among parish Outreach leaders.
 - f) Support parishes by arranging the provision of training and skill building in community advocacy.
 - g) Work with regional teams to respond, deploy, and advocate for homelessness and housing affordability.
 - h) Develop and maintain awareness and understanding of regional and local opportunities for advocacy on affordable housing issues and keeping Regional Deaneries abreast of such opportunities.
 - i) Arrange for the sharing of stories and experiences through Topic and other media.
 - j) Review applications for Diocesan “crisis relief” grants (up to \$5000) and monitor report-outs in annual vestry reports.
5. Synod directs the Bishop to develop, through the two standing committees of the Diocese and in consultation with parishes, a Diocesan Housing Vision that includes principles and policies regarding using church assets and properties to create an Affordable Housing Fund and Social Housing units.
6. Synod directs the Diocese to establish an Affordable Housing Implementation Committee to help bring these resolutions and recommendations to fruition.

b) Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Enhanced Collaboration

Rationale: *We approach our ministry with a spirit of hope and collaboration, inspired by the actions and opportunities that already exist in our churches and communities. Working together, across faiths, and with other organizations and government bodies, we can accomplish more, understand better, and grow our communities into more just and equitable places to live.*

A. Diocesan Action:

Subject to available funds and/or staff or consultant resourcing:

1. Develop and maintain regional maps of Homelessness and Affordable Housing services and programs offered through churches, non-profits, Indigenous groups, and government agencies to facilitate communication, collaboration and effective service delivery.

2. Develop opportunities for partnerships in the community to deliver homeless and affordable housing services.
3. Identify, develop, and recruit regional representatives to support the work and delivery of services to those affected.
4. Mark annually October as Homeless Action Month in the diocese and invite parishes to respond to the needs in their neighbourhoods through prayer and raising supplies and funds, as appropriate, to support local initiatives.
5. Develop and deploy formation resources to deepen prayer and support the work.

B. Regional Action:

1. Regional Archdeacons/ Deans are encouraged to keep Homelessness and Affordable Housing issues and opportunities on their meeting agendas and develop ways to collaborate between churches and within the region, through shared facilities, ministries and volunteer pools.
2. Facilitate opportunities to bring parish Outreach Coordinators together.
3. Clericus to consider starting shared prayer and study groups to support this work.

C. Personal/Parish Action:

1. Parishes are encouraged to designate an Outreach Coordinator to foster and maintain community relationships, liaison with counterparts in other parishes and the Diocese in order to identify and act on opportunities for collaboration.
2. Offer opportunities for prayer and Christian formation in the parish to support responses in the work.
3. Explore and build capacity to invite our neighbours and friends into this work with us.

Recommendation 2: Enhanced Advocacy

Rationale: *We are called to speak out with conviction, with a spirit of love and understanding, when we witness injustice and inequity, and to actively walk with those who are vulnerable and oppressed.*

A. Diocesan Action:

Subject to available funds and/or staff or consultant resourcing:

1. Release clear, timely, and actionable statements on key Homeless /Affordable Housing issues as they emerge, such as new housing programs, actions involving tent cities, etc.
2. Support parishes by arranging the provision of training and skill building in the area of community advocacy.

3. Develop and maintain awareness and understanding of regional and local opportunities for advocacy on affordable housing issues and keeping Regional Deaneries abreast of such opportunities.
4. Work to effect change in hearts, minds and policy related to Homelessness and Affordable Housing issues across every political, professional, community and personal level of our Diocese, such as through sharing of stories and experiences in *Topic* and other media.

B. Regional Action:

1. Encourage active and identifiable participation by parishes in activities and events involving Housing issues, such as annual homeless counts, October's Homelessness Action month, and Municipal council consideration of housing projects.
2. Encourage regular articles through *Topic* to feature ministries and issues related to Homelessness and Affordable Housing.
3. Diocesan Housing animator/team to identify advocacy opportunities throughout the Diocese and work with Regional Deans and individual parishes to support participation.

C. Personal/Parish Action:

1. Encourage individuals in the Diocese to train for and participate in advocacy programs for individuals in their communities needing one-on-one assistance to navigate benefit programs to which they are eligible.
2. Encourage regular articles and story sharing through *Topic* to feature ministries and issues related to Homelessness and Affordable Housing.
3. Deepen our prayer and understanding of election platforms related to finances and housing affordability.
4. Support individuals through prayer and Christian formation opportunities.

Recommendation 3. Enhanced Resourcing

Rationale: *Our ministry comes at a cost of time, talent and treasure, one which we all can contribute to generously, with joy, knowing that the transformation in us and in our communities brings great reward.*

A. Diocesan Action:

Subject to available funds and/or staff or consultant resourcing:

1. Deploy grants to parishes of up to \$5000 to crisis relief ministries that support immediate efforts related to Homelessness and Housing Affordability, totalling \$345,000 if all parishes apply.

- a. Eliminate or simplify application processes, such as by requiring only submission of receipts.
 - b. Include Ministries connected to food programs, grocery support, outreach programs, small infrastructure expenses, education and awareness programs, and visioning.
 - c. Diocesan Housing Animator to administer the grant program. (see *Recommendation 3.A.2 below.*)
 - d. Reporting is captured in the parish vestry report and sent to Mission and Ministry Development.
2. Recognizing the urgent need for parish support, hire a Diocesan Housing Animator to support Recommendations 1 & 2 (Collaboration and Advocacy Ministries that relieve immediate suffering, e.g., food programs, advocacy, community building): *Note: The Diocesan Housing Animator position is not envisioned to support property redevelopment projects. See page 12 for job duties.*
 3. Support parishes currently exploring property redevelopment to respond to, and reduce, homelessness and housing vulnerability, especially for marginalized groups such as Indigenous peoples, seniors, refugees, and disadvantaged youth.
 - a. Provide and/or identify sources for pre-redevelopment grants for professional help with visioning and viability assessment.
 - b. Distribute “how to” information on the redevelopment process and identify professionals who can be brought in to conduct feasibility studies.
 - c. Ensure Diocesan support is distributed equally to urban and rural parishes based on need and opportunities.

B. Regional Action:

1. Provide leadership to parishes to leverage local collaboration and grants to support the establishment of regional outreach programs and to support homeless and housing affordability issues.
2. Explore ecumenical conversations and commitments towards breaking the cycles of homelessness and housing affordability.

C. Personal/Parish Action:

1. Encourage designation of an Outreach allocation in the annual budget.
2. Offer local formation to explore the difference between fixing and serving at-risk populations.
3. Prayerfully consider our stewardship of resources to include not just our money, but also our time.

Recommendation 4. Create a Housing Vision

Rationale: *God gives us this chance to show our faith in new and bold ways, as stewards of his assets and properties. Help us to explore what we stand for and what we want our legacy to be.*

A. Diocesan Actions

Subject to available funding, including staff and/or consulting resources

1. Undertake a Diocesan visioning exercise to assess the opportunities, priorities, principles and policies around using our assets and church properties to create Social Housing, considering:
 - a. creation of an Affordable Housing Fund and/or support of Social Housing, for people who are homeless or precariously housed. (See Section 3(a) for a definition of Social Housing, and Section 3(g) for ideas to generate and allocate funds.)
 - b. Specific measures to identify and cultivate redevelopment partnership opportunities that maximize success in securing government and other funding for Social Housing (e.g., partnering with other churches, non-profits, Indigenous groups).
 - c. A strategy for achieving sustainable clergy housing options for parishes who desire to offer them as part of their leadership retention strategy.
 - d. A perspective that all our assets should continue to be viewed as resources for the Community as a Whole and as vehicles for relationship-building.
 - e. An affirmation of Canada's commitment to housing as a basic human right, as stated in Article 11.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Canada is a party.

Job Duties of Diocesan Housing Animator

Diocesan Housing Animator to support **crisis relief ministries** (e.g. food programs, outreach, advocacy, community building) that provide immediate relief to homeless and vulnerable people. Duties include:

1. **Collaborating and Advancing Relationships**

- Develop and maintain regional maps of Homelessness and Affordable Housing services and programs offered through churches, non-profits, Indigenous groups, and government agencies to facilitate communication, collaboration and effective service delivery.
- Develop opportunities for partnerships in the community to deliver homeless and affordable housing services.
- Identify, develop, and recruit regional representatives to support the work and delivery of services to those affected.
- Build effective teams, communication, and relationships to effect change in heart, mind, and policy, related to housing affordability and homelessness, across every political, professional, community, and personal level of our diocese.
- Facilitate exchange of information among parish Outreach leaders.

2. **Advocacy Support**

- Support parishes by arranging the provision of training and skill building in the area of community advocacy.
- Work with regional teams to respond, deploy, and advocate for homelessness and housing affordability.
- Develop and maintain awareness and understanding of regional and local opportunities for advocacy on affordable housing issues and keeping Regional Deaneries abreast of such opportunities.
- Arrange for the sharing of stories and experiences through Topic and other media.

3. **Grant Administration**

- Review applications for Diocesan “jumpstart” grants (up to \$5000) and monitor report-outs in annual vestry reports.

The Housing Animator’s role is not intended to support church redevelopment projects.

Proposed Implementation Timing of Recommendations

Year 1 (2023-2024)

- Strike an Implementation Committee
- Initiate Housing Vision
- Hire Housing Animator for “crisis relief” projects
- Commemorate Homelessness Action Month (October)
- Designate Parish Outreach Coordinators (volunteers)

Year 2-3

- Make “crisis relief” grants available
- Prepare and deliver training, education and formation resources
- Prepare regional maps of homelessness services
- Identify and act on collaboration opportunities (regionally)
- Assess priorities of Diocesan Housing Vision, including Diocesan allocations toward Affordable Housing
- Identify a batch of property development projects and partnerships

Year 4-7

- Evaluate progress of transformational, grassroots ministries
- Property development projects proceed to advanced stages of assessment

Year 6-10

- Evaluate and discern response to emergent housing issues

Section 3 – Background to Recommendations and Resolutions

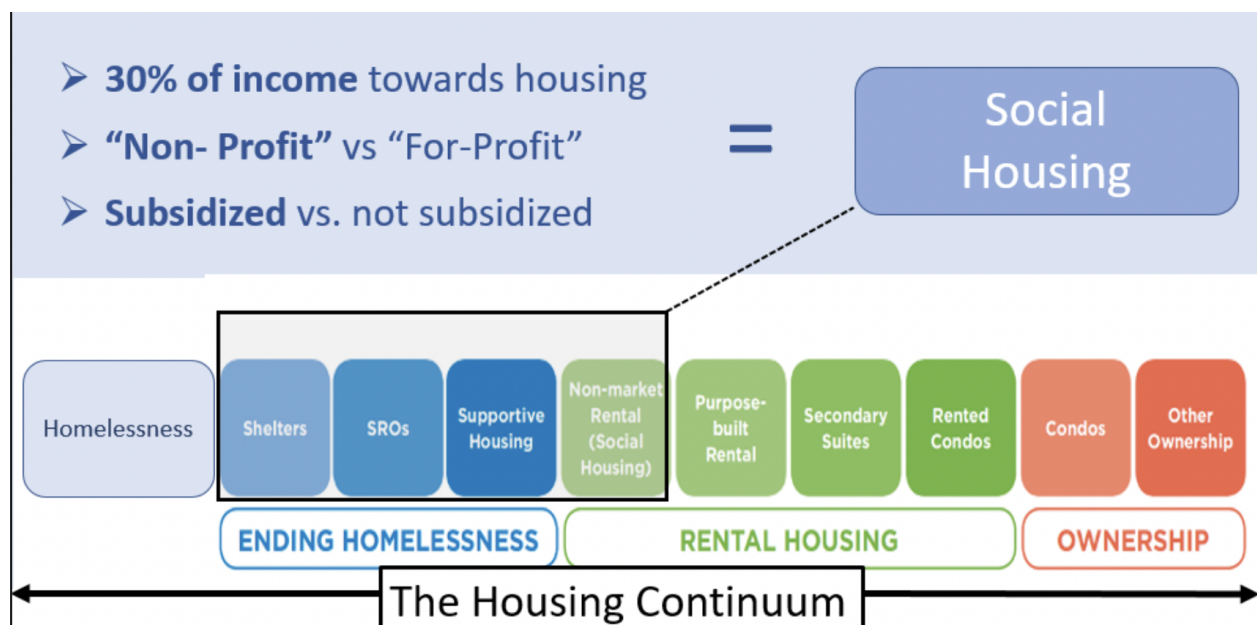
This Section provides detailed background material and analysis to support the Recommendations and Resolutions. Included are:

- a) What does the term “Affordable Housing” really mean?
- b) Issue and impact review
- c) Our Faith leads us to act: Theology of homeless ministries
- d) Interview findings
- e) Affordable Housing visions from around the world
- f) Parish visions transformed into housing
- g) How the Diocese can use its resources to house people

a) What does the term “Affordable Housing” really mean?

Finding a suitable home at an affordable price is a challenge for many. Housing affordability is based on many factors, including a home’s location, size and condition, and what is affordable to one person may be unaffordable to another. Many organizations, government programs and even mortgage lenders consider housing affordable if it costs no more than 30% of household income before taxes.

The graphic below shows the spectrum of housing options. The options from “Shelters” through “Non-Market Rental” are sometimes referred to as “Social Housing” and rents are capped at 30% of a tenant’s income. These options are for those with the lowest incomes in our community. People who live in one of these units are usually on a government income assistance program. The housing offered under these options is currently financed and operated through government and non-profit funding programs. There is currently a serious shortage of housing units available compared to need, and people can wait many, many years to be offered a suitable unit. In the meantime, they may find themselves homeless or paying for a “for profit” apartment for which they spend far more than 30% of their income.



The options above from “Purpose-built Rental” through “Other Ownership” are offered on a “for profit” basis and generally have monthly rents or mortgages based on the market price of housing, not on a person’s income. Here in our Diocese, housing based

on market price is among the highest in the country both for rentals and for ownership. People can and do pay much more than 30% of their income to live in this housing. The availability of units at the lower end of the “market price” scale is very low, and people find themselves spending more and more of their income to find a suitable unit.

There are government programs at the provincial and municipal level that aim to increase affordability and stability of market-priced housing. This includes provincial restrictions on annual rent increases as well as municipal policies that provide incentives to private developers to build “affordable rentals.” Depending on the municipality, “affordable rentals” can mean rents linked to market price, e.g. 80% of market, or rents linked to incomes.

For purposes of this report, the Task Force has focused research and recommendations primarily on the Social Housing, non-profit end of this spectrum. Some of the church redevelopment projects underway in our Diocese will fall under the other end of the spectrum, i.e. “for profit” rental housing or ownership, as financing to accomplish Social Housing is scarce. The Affordable Housing fund recommended in this report could be used by the Diocese to fund Social Housing as part of church redevelopment projects.

For further information, see:

- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/affordable-and-social-housing/housing-glossary>
- <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/memo-to-mayor-and-council-definition-of-social-housing.pdf>
- <https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2022/07/08/What-Does-Affordable-Housing-Even-Mean-Anymore/>
- <https://www.surrey.ca/sites/default/files/media/documents/SurreyAffordableHousingStrategyWeb.pdf>
- <https://council.vancouver.ca/20180619/documents/rr1a.pdf>
- <https://www.bchousing.org/publications/2021-Housing-Income-Limits-HILS-Effective-September-1-2021.pdf>
- <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/mirhpp-public-faqs.pdf>

b) Issue and Impact Review

Introduction

Synod 2021 provided direction to the Task Force

“to explore and assess the impact of housing affordability and homelessness within regional and parochial communities to understand the ways in which race, Aboriginal identity, age, socioeconomic status and human sexuality impact accessibility to housing.”

To fulfill this piece of the project, the Task Force reviewed and summarized reports and studies by others rather than engage in original research. Sources used, and others that may be of interest, are noted at the end of this summary.

The Scale of the Problem

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are at crisis levels throughout Canada. Canada-wide, an estimated 235,000 people experienced homelessness in 2018, a number that has been rising continuously over the last decade. Homelessness includes people sleeping rough, in shelters, vehicles, motels or inadequate housing, or temporarily living with friends or relatives because they have no home.¹

In British Columbia, it is estimated that over 23,000 people experienced homelessness in BC in 2019, while on average 9,300 individuals were homeless each month². During a “point in time” count in Spring 2020, 8,667 people were living homeless in BC, 4,000 of them in our own Diocese. These “point in time” numbers represent an 11% increase from 2018 and are likely an undercount of the true homeless population.³ Additionally, none of these statistics count those renters living right on the edge, one paycheck from eviction and who would be unable to find affordable accommodations in their community should they lose their current home. A recent Ipsos poll found that 53% of Canadians are \$200 or less from financial insolvency.⁴

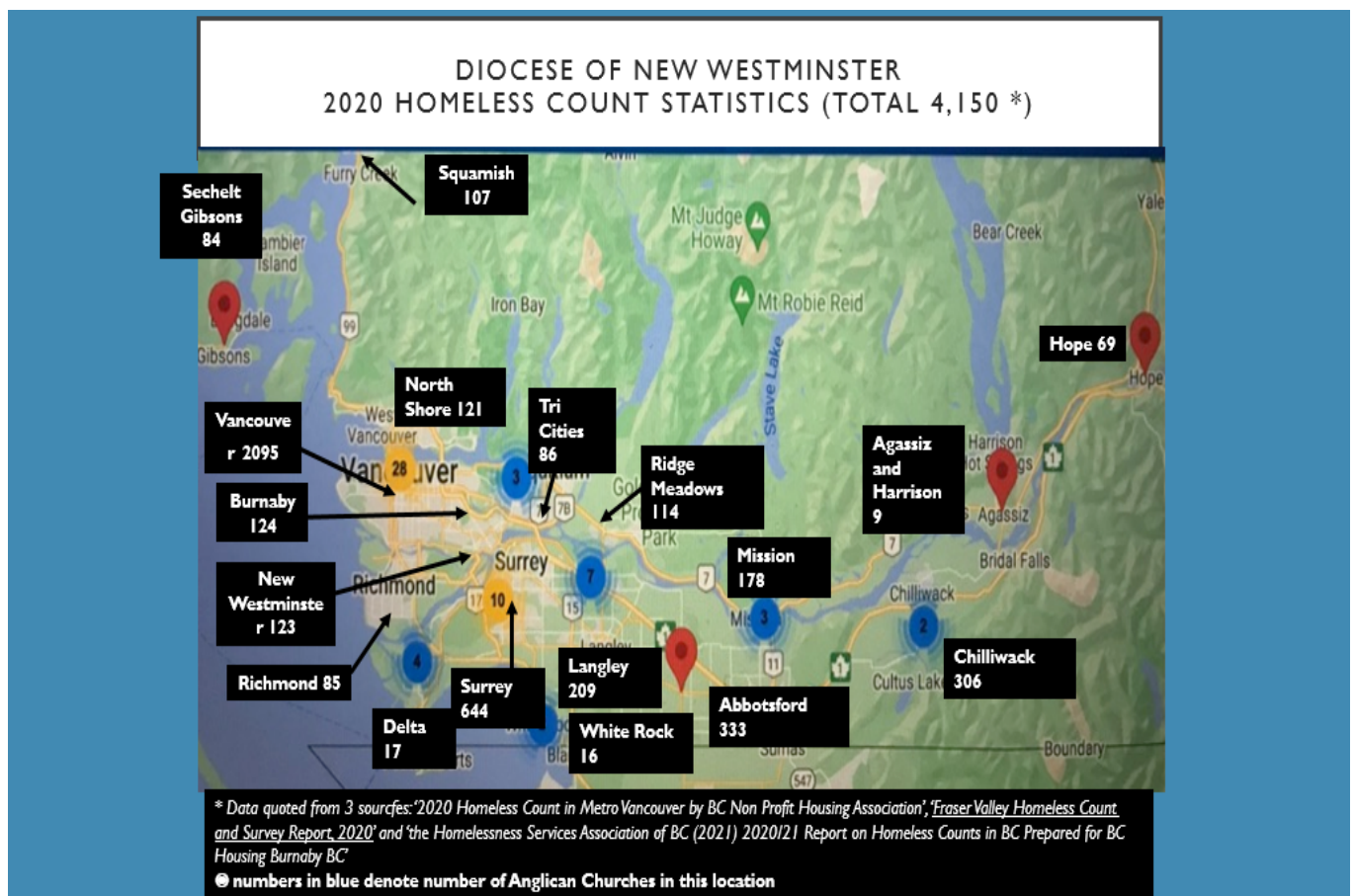
A profile of our homeless population

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing are most experienced by the most marginalized and vulnerable people in our society: low-income seniors, older single women, people with disabilities (including addictions and mental illness), disadvantaged youth, those identifying as LGBTQ2S+, and Indigenous people.

Some of the most disturbing findings from a recent report prepared by the Homelessness Services Association of BC include³:

- Poverty, lack of affordable housing, and inadequate access to mental health and addiction supports are the most common reasons people become homeless.
- 36% of people living homeless grew up in foster care or group home facilities.
- 32% of homeless people are seniors (55+) or youth (under 25). Senior women are particularly vulnerable.
- 67% of homeless people identify as having addictions; 51% have a mental health issue and 66% have more than one health concern.
- 38% of the homeless population identifies as Indigenous, but Indigenous people account for only 6% of the total population.

The following graphics provide snapshots of the homeless situation in our Diocese and of who is represented in BC's homelessness statistics.³



Infographic¹

Highlights

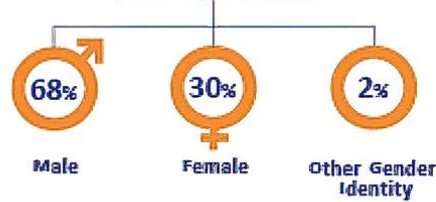
This infographic includes data from 24 homeless counts conducted in communities across B.C. The counts took place in 2017 and the spring of 2018. This data provides an overall snapshot of homelessness in B.C., informs B.C.'s Homelessness Action Plan, and will provide a baseline to measure progress.



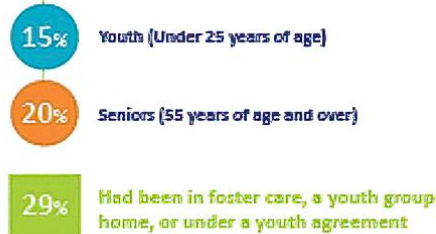
People were identified as experiencing homelessness



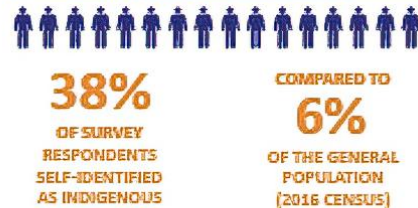
GENDER IDENTITY



AGE BREAKDOWN



INDIGENOUS OVERREPRESENTATION



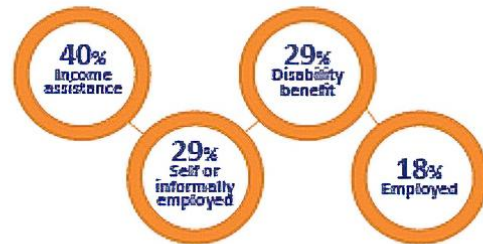
MAIN BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HOUSING

53% Rent too high

51% Income too low

30% No available, suitable housing

SOURCES OF INCOME



LENGTH OF TIME HOMELESS

52% had been homeless for one year or more

31% had been homeless for less than six months

HEALTH CONDITIONS



LENGTH OF TIME LIVED IN COMMUNITY

50% lived in community ten years or always

28% lived in community one year to less than ten years

21% lived in community less than one year

¹ Percentages are based on the number of people who responded to survey questions and not the total number of people identified as experiencing homelessness.

Indigenous homelessness is particularly alarming

Indigenous people are vastly over-represented in BC's homeless population, accounting for 38% of the homeless population (2020) yet accounting for only 6% of BC's total population.³ According to Sharanjit Uppal in *A portrait of Canadians who have been homeless*,⁵ higher rates of homelessness among the Indigenous population are well-documented and are associated with systemic barriers to employment and education, racial discrimination in the workplace or the housing market, and the intergenerational effects of colonization and residential school experiences.

The Homeless Hub notes that “many of the personal issues (including familial dysfunction, substance use, addictions, health issues, community violence) faced by Indigenous peoples and that act as contributors to homelessness can be directly linked to various types of historical trauma. Structural issues can include transitions from reserves to urban living, racism, landlord discrimination, low levels of education, and unemployment. As a result, research has shown that Indigenous populations disproportionately experience lower levels of education, poorer health, higher rates of unemployment, and lower income levels compared to non-Indigenous people.”⁶

Jesse Thistle in *Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada*⁷, writes “Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families, and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages, and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally, or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships” (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

The homelessness and housing affordability crisis affects us all

The homelessness and housing affordability crisis impacts our society financially, socially, and spiritually, causing pain to people who experience it and to society who looks on.

Financially, people without a home and lacking support for mental illness and addiction tend to draw significantly on social services for survival, including shelters, social agencies, and hospitals. They also tend to interact more frequently with police, fire, and paramedic services — those agencies on the frontlines, dealing with the visible symptoms of homelessness. This costs money and stretches our public resources thin. A 2016 study found that an estimated \$63,000 per year in BC was spent per homeless person to provide emergency services and supports.⁸

In *The State of Homelessness in Canada*,⁹ the authors note that “as Canadians, we are spending more money on people who do not need help [through home ownership tax breaks] compared to those in greatest need. And by not spending on those in greatest need, we are not only creating hardship for many Canadian families, but we are also creating a considerably larger expense for the Canadian economy.”

Socially, homelessness in communities can stoke fear, anger and a breakdown in community life. Writer Judy Ponio identifies six key ways in which society is impacted¹⁰:

**Homelessness costs the government more money, compared to ensuring everyone is adequately housed.*

**Homelessness poses a threat to public health, increasing society’s vulnerability to communicable diseases.*

**Homelessness can compromise public security, raising fear and anger in neighbourhoods.*

**Homelessness breaks down community life, bringing into question our morals and faith in humanity.*

**Homelessness creates social barriers – an “us versus them” scenario.*

**Homelessness shapes the next generation – children of homeless people are more likely to become homeless themselves.*

Spiritually, it is painful for us to watch this crisis escalate when Jesus asks us to reach out to and serve the most vulnerable in our society. As we move through our work with the Diocesan Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Affordability, it is important for us to recognize our complicity in the structures that created othering, marginalizing people who fell outside of the norms that were accepted in church life. These structures marginalized Indigenous people, unmarried mothers, people of colour, and queer folk. We failed to support those dealing with addiction and mental health, turning our eyes away from government policies and practices that led to mass homelessness. We did not seek to be in relationship with our family who most needed our love. Our church did not follow the teachings of Jesus. There was no justice. Today, as we investigate the causes of homelessness, we must recognize how we have failed to serve Jesus and act in a new way, bringing our resources, energy and faith to address the systemic nature of homelessness and its structural injustice.

Footnotes

1. **Characterizing people experiencing homelessness and trends in homelessness using population-level emergency department visit data in Ontario, Canada** by Stephenson Strobel, Ivana Burcul, Jia Hong Dai, Zechen Ma, Shaila Jamani, and Rahat Hossain. See

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2. Preventing and Reducing Homelessness Integrated Data Project, See <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/affordable-and-social-housing/homelessness/homelessness-cohort>
 3. **2020/21 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C. Prepared by Homelessness Services Association of BC, December 2021.** See <https://www.bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2020-21-BC-Homeless-Counts.pdf>
 4. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/over-half-53-canadian-households-200-or-less-away-insolvency-yet-still-optimistic-about-financial>
 5. **A portrait of Canadians who have been homeless**, by [Sharanjit Uppal](#), released March 14, 2022. See <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2022001/article/00002-eng.htm>
 6. **Who is Homeless?** The Homeless Hub, See <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/indigenous-peoples>
 7. **Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada**, Jesse Thistle,. See <https://homelesshub.ca/IndigenousHomelessness>
 8. **Costs of services for homeless people with mental illness in 5 Canadian cities: a large prospective follow-up study.** Eric A. Latimer, Daniel Rabouin, Zhirong Cao, Angela Ly, Guido Powell, Tim Aubry, Jino Distasio, Stephen W. Hwang, Julian M. Somers, Vicky Stergiopoulos, Scott Veldhuizen, Erica E.M. Moodie, Alain Lesage, Paula N. Goering and for the At Home/Chez Soi Investigators. See <https://www.cmajopen.ca/content/5/3/E576.full>
 9. **The State of Homelessness in Canada**, Stephen Gaetz, Tanya Gulliver, & Tim Richter, 2014. See <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/ending-homelessness/cost-effectiveness-ending-homelessness>
 10. **How Homelessness Affects Society**, By Judy Ponio, Our Father's House <https://ofhsoupkitchen.org/how-homelessness-affects-society>

c) Our Faith Leads us to Act: The Theology of Homeless Ministries

Rev. Simbarashe Basvi, Task Force Co-Chair, reflects, “God is present among the homeless. He wants us to reach out to them so that the Church becomes a place of hope and transformation and a place where, through the presence of Jesus Christ, homelessness is transformed. God is within the slums as much as he is within the suburbs. The Church should not just pray for the homeless but should move a step further and provide practical solutions to homelessness. The Church is the embodiment of the work of the Trinity in the restoration and transformation of God’s people so that when dignity is restored we enjoy life in its fullness.”

The following scripture and excerpts from readings spoke strongly to the Task Force.

Jesus understood homelessness, in Matthew 8:20:

While foxes have holes and birds have nests, he himself had nowhere to lay his head.

In Matthew 25: 42- 45 Jesus calls us to action:

⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

Paul refers to his own homelessness (1 Corinthian 4:11) and to Old Testament mandates to provide shelter (e.g. Leviticus 25:35, Deuteronomy 15:7-11, & Isaiah 58:6-7).

As James points out, talk is cheap; our talk (and our faith) must be accompanied by action:

“Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?” (James 2:15–16).

The Theology of Homelessness can be guided by the Five Marks of Mission that our Diocese subscribes to ([About | Anglican Diocese of New Westminster](#)), especially the third mark: “To respond to human need by loving service”.

The Church of England provided an extensive theological discussion of the church's role in addressing the housing crisis in its February 2021 report *Coming Home: Tackling the housing crisis together*

(<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/COE%204794%20-%20A0HCC%20Full%20Report%20-%20V6.pdf>), especially in *Chapter one: A positive view of housing and community*.

The Church of England report says the Christian theology of incarnation tells the story of the gospel in bricks and mortar and offers people who live in such homes a taste of *Shalom*, living in harmony with God, ourselves, our neighbour, and the created order. The report suggests that all attempts to address the housing crisis should be measured against five benchmarks: Are our homes and communities sustainable, safe, stable, sociable, and satisfying?

The *Coming Home* report goes on to say that, in the Anglican tradition, the idea of the church "parish" goes beyond the church building and its congregants to include the neighbourhood in the fullest sense, geographical units that embrace schools, shops, care homes, businesses, council offices and much more. Clergy are given the "cure of souls" of the whole parish, not just those who come to church. The mission of the church is to care for the whole life of a community, not just its spiritual well-being.

This broad concept of "parish" is picked up by Toronto Anglican theologian Rev. Dr. Jason McKinney. In his lecture "The Church as Commons: A Theological Case for Affordable Housing", Rev. Dr. Jason McKinney suggests that the church's approach to affordable housing must be a spiritual one that involves letting go of its idea of "having" church land as private property, in favour of "holding" it for the common good. (Anglican Diocese of Ottawa 125th Anniversary Lecture Series, *Ottawa Anglican* YouTube.) This requires building relationships with the various secular, governmental, Indigenous, and religious groups in the community.

d) Interview Findings

The Process

Over the course of 4 months (May through August 2022), the Task Force conducted approximately 50 interviews with churches in the Diocese, Diocesan committees, community organizations, and municipal government staff. The purpose of the interviews was to gain an understanding of the homelessness and housing conditions around the Diocese; to learn about programs and services (aspirational or in place) to support vulnerable people; to understand the successes and challenges of these programs and services; and to hear recommendations for responding to the challenges. The Task Force sincerely thanks everyone who participated in interviews. Your feedback was essential to our work.

Summary

The interviews made clear that the Covid shut-down took a toll on the programs, services, and attention being offered to homeless and precariously housed people. Pre-Covid, the bulk of church-sponsored initiatives focused on programs that provide immediate relief rather than long-term prevention. Food security programs, outreach, and advocacy are far more prevalent than projects that deliver housing of any kind - temporary or permanent. Churches, non-profits and government staff are struggling to restart and/or initiate new programs that were suspended in the height of Covid. The level of need and the conditions on the street are much more severe and overwhelming than in the past. Our Diocesan community expressed the need for help with training volunteers in outreach and advocacy, developing regional partnerships, and accessing financial resources to aid in program delivery. Of note is the current Diocesan support for the Feed My Sheep initiative, the 2022-2023 Care+Share program that provides funding to nine food programs in the Diocese.

While many interviewees understood and stressed the need for more affordable housing, few were contemplating a redevelopment project on their church properties. To many, the massiveness of such an effort seems overwhelming. In contrast, at the Diocesan level, there was considerably more discussion of and interest in property redevelopment that could fund infrastructure repairs and improvements, as well as further other important ministries including affordable housing. We understand that recently, the Diocese received a grant toward assessing the Diocese's portfolio of properties. A handful of churches are undertaking this assessment on their own.

Interview Themes and Responses

Homelessness & Housing vulnerability conditions around the Diocese:

All regions are seeing dramatic changes in housing affordability

- **Fraser Valley** (Hope, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, Langley): Dire situation, with people displaced by fires, floods, & exodus from the lower mainland. Huge increase in homelessness. Not enough services or government housing.
- **Surrey**, many homeless, tent campers, few services compared to need.
- **Sea to Sky/Sechelt**: There is not enough rental housing, and it has become very expensive. Working people, long-time locals living in cars, campers.
- **North and West Vancouver**: Expensive housing. Very little designated affordable. Seniors can't afford rents, few extended care options.
- **Lower Mainland** (Richmond, Delta, White Rock): working class people living right on the edge.
- **Vancouver**: DTES issues, Nimbyism re: new projects, rent increases, over-filling apartments, high rental turnovers as people try to find cheaper places

Programs and Initiatives of Diocesan Churches

- **Mostly food-oriented programs (community meals, take-out, food banks)**
- **Housing oriented programs on church property include:**
 - Churches who operate housing on their property (2)
 - Churches considering redevelopment (appx 6)
 - Churches who have had or are considering emergency shelter (4)
- **Other programs serving homeless/vulnerable people:**
 - Contribute volunteers and money to other organizations' initiatives
 - Support refugee families
 - Use church hall for community meetings about local housing issues/projects
 - Provide washer/dryer for people needing to wash clothes
 - Diocesan funding for housing support (Archbishop Fund for Refugees with extraordinary expenses)
 - Advocacy for people seeking housing, other benefits
 - 24-hour "open door" church for quiet/meditation/safety

Program Successes

- Volunteers are transformed
- Many people are helped through tough times (financial, loneliness, advocacy, etc)
- Strong community relationships (with government, other orgs, other faiths, other Anglican churches)

- Leveraging and working with other programs; not reinventing the wheel at each church
- Energetic leadership in parish strengthens programs
- Food programs bring people into the church, ease loneliness and hunger
- Fundraising programs go toward good causes

Program Challenges

General

- Shrinking volunteer pool in churches
- Clergy spread very thin, overwhelmed
- Difficulty “restarting” since Covid
- Limited funding
- Limited volunteer expertise (to offer advocacy, manage redevelopments, engage in visioning)
- More regulations to adhere to since Covid
- Church infrastructure aging, not conducive to having food and shelter programs
- Fear of homeless, NIMBYism (in parish and in community)
- Needs of clients beyond skill level of church volunteers (mental health, addictions)
- Systemic issues (poverty, equality, racism, etc.)

Regional

- Too little attention paid to Fraser Valley (by Diocese and government)
- Most regions feel under-served by support programs (Ministry, govt housing, advocacy, shelters)

Redevelopment specific

- Funding needed for housing developments on church property (from exploratory visioning to “bricks and mortar”)
- Lack of expertise on steps, “how to”, for churches wanting to redevelop
- Government regulations to redevelop (zoning and community opposition)
- Not enough Anglican visibility/advocacy in community around homeless issues/support
- Lack of indoor spaces for homeless people during daytime
- Lack of access to showers, laundry for homeless people
- Safety challenges/stigma of interacting with homeless, or bringing them into church space

Ideas and Recommendations Offered through Interviews

- Create a Clear Anglican Vision & Be Visible
 - Diocesan leadership in creating a Diocesan-wide property use and redevelopment vision: Serve our neighbours first, ourselves last

- Diocesan leadership in creating partnerships (between parishes and with First Nations, municipalities, other faiths and non-profits) for better success in developing housing using government funding programs
- Diocesan leadership to create a sustained focus on the housing affordability crisis and its causes
- Greater visibility of the Diocese in ecumenical responses to homelessness
- Undertake a study to see how parish properties can be used for the good of the community

- Increase Training/Skill Building/Education
 - Diocesan funded facilitators/experts to help manage property redevelopments and renos that support housing initiatives (from vision to building)
 - Diocesan support for church outreach visioning (one on one)
 - Diocesan support for training church leaders in advocacy/activism
 - Mentorship between churches to spread successful ministry models
 - Food safe programs
 - Diocesan support to assess risk/liability for programs operated on church property (housing, shelter)
 - Diocesan conference on “homefulness”
 - Create a “best practices” guide for housing-related ministries
 - Create more awareness among Diocesan leadership of serious problems facing Fraser Valley region
 - Annual Diocesan campaign around increasing parishioner awareness of housing affordability and poverty issues, and ways people can get involved

- Enhance Partnerships & Collaboration
 - Combine church ministries with others in region (ecumenical, non-profit) rather than duplicate
 - Diocesan leadership to create and leverage ongoing multi-faith connections
 - Map “who is doing what” region by region to enable easier partnerships
 - Facilitated opportunities to gather with others within region, create partnerships
 - Find neighbourhood “hubs” where multiple programs can gather – “one stop shop”
 - Create partnerships (with First Nations, govt, non-profits) when exploring property redevelopment
 - Greater coordination and awareness of Diocesan committees to provide churches clear direction and support (Refugee Committee, Property Development Committee, Mission and Ministry Committee)

- Become Visible Advocates for Social Justice
 - Diocesan leadership in advocating to governments and in the community on social justice, systemic issues, specific housing projects
 - Training for church leaders to become effective advocates
 - Hire Diocesan staff to keep churches abreast of regional housing issues, projects, policies
 - Advocate to governments for streamlined zoning to allow for small-scale housing on church property (1-4 units)

- Provide Funding
 - Diocesan grants or “assessment credit” for churches doing housing ministries or property redevelopment
 - Diocesan funding for parish “visioning” around outreach ministries
 - Diocesan funding for staff support (Housing facilitators, advocates, training, education, outreach, property development experts)
 - Diocesan support for clergy housing
 - Direct Diocesan purchase of apartments for low-income and/or clergy
 - Diocesan leadership to streamline and administer programs to reduce parish costs (bulk food buying, bookkeeping, IT, legal)
 - Designate a portion of church property sales or dispositions toward affordable housing initiatives. Ideas include: designating a small portion of each sale or a large portion of designated sales or allocate church bare land on a long-term lease basis at minimal rent for the development of subsidized housing
 - Create a Diocesan rent bank or associate with an existing rent bank so that churches with housing on their properties can provide for low-income tenants

e) Affordable Housing Visions from Around the World

Anglican Church of Canada: 2013 Joint Assembly resolution

- Learn more about the issues contributing to poverty, homelessness, and substandard housing .
- Act to support existing initiatives.
- Advocate renewed federal funding and a national housing strategy.
- Pray for safe, affordable housing for all.

Anglican Diocese of Ottawa

The Anglican Diocese of Ottawa is working to achieve two main goals around homelessness and affordable housing by 2021:

- Create 125 new units of affordable housing within the Diocese.
- Have every parish engaged in efforts to pray, learn, advocate, and act to end homelessness through affordable housing.

Anglican Diocese of Toronto

Synod 2019 put forward an Affordable Housing motion directing Diocesan Council to develop an affordable housing plan that determines the feasibility of building affordable housing on diocesan-owned lands and establishes specific achievable targets (e.g. 250 units by 2024). In a report back to Synod 2021, the working group established for this task concluded that it was unable to complete the exercise without first developing a theological perspective on land and an overall governance framework for development projects. That work is underway, following a series of Diocesan-wide workshops.

United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada is using its property to build a nationwide portfolio of mixed-income rental housing and gathering spaces, with an aim to create 15,000 homes in the next 15 years, 5,000 of which will be designated “affordable units” offered at below market rental rates. The Church created a corporation, Kindred Works, an independent company who redevelops and manages land on behalf of the Church, its congregations and ecumenical partners.

Episcopal Church (US)

The Economic Justice Loan Committee invests in nine community loan funds, honoring its commitment to share resources in ways that prioritize those who have been

disenfranchised and oppressed, The Episcopal Church's Economic Justice Loan Committee approved nine investments in 2020 totaling \$2.7 million. The loans were given to community development financial intermediaries that help with affordable housing, job creation, and other avenues that support economic well-being

Church of England

In response to a major study commissioned by the Church of England in 2021, *Coming Home*, the following actions and recommendations emerged:

Actions by the Church of England:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury has submitted a General Synod motion, recognizing that housing and communities are part of the mission and ministry of the Church of England.
- A Bishop for Housing and an executive team will embed this vision within the Church and support dioceses in using their land well.
- The Church Commissioners have committed to signing the 2020 UK Stewardship Code, and will report regularly on how their land use delivers against environmental and social outcomes.

Recommendations for the Church of England:

Where appropriate:

- The legal framework for selling church assets be amended so church land and buildings can be used for social and environmental, as well as economic, benefit.
- The Church Commissioners set an example to other landowners by favouring new developments on its land that align with the Commission's five core values.
- A review is carried out to examine how the Church Commissioners' strategic land can be used to deliver more truly affordable housing.
- The Church Commissioners consider whether they could draw down more from their assets and release strategic land, to unlock the potential for many more affordable homes.
- Clergy and lay activists are offered training on how to engage on housing matters.
- Local church community work shifts from crisis interventions to prevention.
- To facilitate these recommendations, the Commission has co-created:
 - An interactive map that accurately identifies all church land and buildings within dioceses
 - A survey to demonstrate how parishes are meeting local needs and building community
 - Guidance and case studies to help churches respond effectively to housing needs locally
 - Books, videos and Bible study notes to reflect and engage with housing issues from a Christian perspective

f) Parish Visions Transformed into Housing

The Diocese of New Westminster and its parishes have an impressive history of building Social Housing to respond to local needs. Often, these responses have resulted from the vision of parishioners who have then “spun off” the construction and operation of the facilities to separately incorporated societies. Some of these societies retain a relationship with their “mothering” parishes and some do not. The following is a brief review of some of these projects.

St. James

In the early 1960s, May Gutteridge and other volunteers of St. James parish in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside founded the St. James Community Service Society. They perceived the need for a number of services, including housing for persons with mental health challenges, women and children fleeing abusive relationships, and people requiring end of life palliative care. In 2013, the assets and operations were transferred to a new secular organization, The Bloom Group, but the legacy of the St. James parishioners’ vision continues to provide accommodation for nearly 300 persons.

The Pendrellis

In 1972, St. Paul’s parish in the West End of Vancouver discerned a housing ministry, from which arose The Pendrellis. It is a 12 storey apartment building next to the church which provides accommodation for about 87 seniors. It is now operated by Pendrellis Society, which maintains a close relationship to the church.

The 127 Society for Housing

In the early 1980’s, Hilda Gregory of Christ Church Cathedral attended a discernment exercise sponsored by the Diocese and discerned a need to provide accommodation for persons to be displaced by the development of the Expo lands and Yaletown. This resulted in the creation of The 127 Society for Housing and the construction of Jubilee House in 1984. That modest four storey building has since been replaced by a much larger building and supplemented by two more buildings. These three buildings provide accommodation for about 350 people, mostly seniors in subsidized units. The Society continues to draw most of its Board from Christ Church Cathedral parishioners and the Cathedral and its parishioners continue to provide important financial support for 127’s community worker program.

St. George's Place

The parish of St. Mary Magdalene in Vancouver is situated between the GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre and Vancouver General Hospital. In the 1990's, when it was known as St. George's, parishioners saw a need to provide transitional accommodation to patients of GF Strong and their families. The existing church building was torn down and replaced by a 4 storey building with 19 units, some as large as 4 bedrooms. All are fully wheelchair and disability accessible and rent subsidized as such. The new building also provides a new worship space for the parish. The accommodation is operated by the St. George's Place Society.

g) How the Diocese can use its Resources to House People

The Diocese can help get people into homes, in the short and long term, by strategically deploying its existing resources with partners. Here are three ways this might be accomplished:

1. Create an “Affordable Housing Fund” to generate funds for immediate Affordable Housing needs. The fund could be used to provide housing stability for the precariously housed and to help the unhoused find homes.

Here are some ideas for using an Affordable Housing Fund:

- a) Provide rent subsidies to low-income people who rent in the private market and who are not eligible for other rental subsidies. This would target people who cannot find a government-subsidized rental in Social Housing and who are not eligible for RAP or SAFER subsidies, which target low income families and low income seniors.
- b) Provide rent subsidies to church redevelopment projects that include housing, to allow some units to be offered at Social Housing rates (30% of income, for low-income people).
- c) Help parishes develop small short-term housing projects, such as a few “tiny homes” on their property.

The Affordable Housing Fund could be established and grown in these ways:

- a. Create a Diocesan Affordable Housing Fund (similar to Care+Share or PWRDF) to which individuals can designate donations or bequests.
 - b. Designate the investment earnings of a specified amount of Diocesan holdings to be placed in an Affordable Housing Fund annually. For example, a \$10m investment generates between \$200k-\$500k annually.
 - c. Contribute a portion of church property sales toward the Affordable Housing Fund.
2. Looking at longer term housing, often the most difficult challenge faced by parishes who would like to develop housing is the lack of financing to begin the project either until it can receive an allocation from BC Housing or until it can generate income from rents upon completion of construction.

Where third party financing cannot be obtained, the Diocese could provide low or no-interest loans on relaxed repayment terms to church redevelopment projects that include a Social Housing component, as part of a broader Social Investment strategy. This type of partnership often attracts government funds as well. Such loans could be provided from the Affordable Housing Fund or other Diocesan resources.

3. If Diocesan land becomes available that is suitable for development, the Diocese could provide that land on a long-term lease basis to a development partner, such as The 127 Society for Housing. The lease could be provided at a nominal lease cost that would be consistent with the commitment of the Diocese to the housing ministry while retaining ownership of the land it has leased and the ultimate benefit of the capital improvements.

Section 4. Background of the Task Force

a) Meet the Task Force

In response to a Synod 2021 Resolution, Diocesan Council appointed a Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Affordability, whose work began in February 2022 and concludes at Synod 2023. (See Section 4c– Synod Motion - below). Bishop John appointed two Co-Chairs to lead the effort.

Rev. Simbarashe Basvi (St. David's, Delta) – Co-Chair

Vicki Potter, ODNW (St. John's Shaughnessy, Vancouver) – Co-Chair

Peter Bailey, ODNW (Christ Church, Hope)

Sharon Cooper (St. John the Apostle, Port Moody)

Rev. Paul Richards (Church of the Holy Trinity, White Rock)

David Van Blarcom, ODNW (The 127 Society for Housing)

Rev. Alex Wilson (St. Anselm's, Vancouver)

Rev. Tellison Glover served as Diocesan Liaison.

We thank Rev. Armand Mercier (St Alban's Richmond) and Rev. Christine Wilson (St. Mary's Kerrisdale) for their contributions to this project.

b) Terms of Reference

The Task Force's purpose is to increase awareness and understanding of the issues and causes surrounding homelessness and housing vulnerability and to provide practical options for the Diocese and its parishes to use their gifts and resources to respond.

The Task Force has three areas of focus:

1. To gather and assess information to understand the ways in which race, Indigenous identity, age, socio-economic status, and human sexuality impact accessibility to housing;
2. To gather and assess information about how churches in the Diocese of New Westminster, as well as churches and other organizations in Canada and beyond, have actively responded to homelessness and housing affordability issues;
3. To develop policy and program options for the Diocese and its parishes, supported by the research from tasks 1&2 above, that increase our effectiveness in supporting the homeless and vulnerably housed.

c) Synod 2021 Motion

RESOLUTION 01

MOVED: The Reverend Alex Wilson

SECONDED: Mrs. Shirin Theophilus, ODNW

THAT,

1. The Diocese of New Westminster acknowledge the dual crises of housing affordability and homelessness in the Lower Mainland;
2. Synod 2021 direct Diocesan Council to create a task force made up of a wide variety of lay, ordained, and Aboriginal voices, to engage with leadership at every level of the church, with other faith traditions, and those in the public square:
 - a) to explore and assess the impact of housing affordability and homelessness within regional and parochial communities, consulting with civic, business, and community support programs to understand the ways in which race, Aboriginal identity, age, socioeconomic status and human sexuality impact accessibility to housing;
 - b) to explore the ways in which other churches, ecumenical, and multifaith bodies across Canada have responded to their own affordability and homelessness crises;
 - c) to develop and propose a diocesan response to these two crises that may include, but not be limited to, utilizing current land holdings in this Diocese;
 - d) to report its findings and response options, based on those findings, to Diocesan Council in a timely manner.
3. That members of the task force conduct this work in the course of their regular duties, with any budget requirements identified being allocated from the Diocesan Justice and Peace Fund at the discretion of property and finance.

Section 5 - Resources

Articles, studies and reports studied by the Task Force

1. *The Homefulness Podcast* available on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Amazon Music](#), [Spotify](#), and [Stitcher](#).
2. <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-tiny-shelter-village-875-terminal-avenue>
3. <https://shelterforce.org/2020/01/10/tiny-houses-not-a-big-enough-solution/>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/mar/23/tiny-houses-solution-homelessness-seattle>
5. [City of Vancouver considers tiny house community - The Globe and Mail.pdf](#)
6. [Better Than Tents in the Park: Vancouver Sun. Feb 9, 2022](#)
7. <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-modular-housing-prototype>
8. <https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/churchs-affordable-housing-project-falls-through-amid-skyrocketing-building-costs-delays-4688776>
9. <https://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/douglas-todd-valiant-metro-churches-try-to-plug-housing-gap>
10. [Fraser Valley Homeless Count and Survey Report, 2020, https://www.fvrd.ca/assets/About~the~FVRD/Documents/Homelessness/2020%20Homeless%20count%20and%20survey%20report.pdf](#)
11. <https://www.homelesshub.ca>
12. [Report Preventing and Reducing Homelessness Integrated Data Project, Province of British Columbia 2021](#)
13. [Episcopal Church Affordable house and farm land use](#)
14. [The Church as Commons: A Theological Case for Affordable Housing](#)
15. [DNW Website Shelter & Food Outreach](#)
16. ["Men Become Disposable" Todd Graves Sun](#)
17. <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/mobile-shower-program-for-homeless-launched-by-burnaby-organization-1.5867613>
18. [Housing info from the United Way Healthy Aging housing group](#)
19. [BC Rent Bank](#)
20. [CMHC Housing action Plan Guide](#)
21. [Towards more inclusive neighbourhoods](#)
22. [United Church Housing in Toronto https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-united-church-to-transform-its-properties/](#)
23. [Turning Points Collaborative- Vernon BC](#)

24. Aboriginal Housing Management Association- Housing Strategy- Updated May 2,2022
25. Urban Aboriginal Housing Facilities- Updated May 2, 2022
26. Indigenous Housing Conditions (Peter) Updated June 14, 2022
27. Affordable Housing Conference Materials Updated May 11, 2022
28. Redevelopment of St. Michaels Multicultural- Updated May 19-2022
29. Affordable Housing Article- Updated Jun 13, 2022
30. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/14/headway/houston-homeless-people.html?smid=em-share>
31. DTES Street Outreach Report July 2022
32. Duncan, BC, Campers and RVs,
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/duncan-bc-rvs-housing-solutions-1.6531909>
33. Homelessness, Poverty and impact on LGBTQ community,
<https://www.homelesshub.ca/povertyhub/diversity/LGBTQ>
34. United Church housing strategy:
<https://united-church.ca/news/united-property-resource-corporation-unlocks-real-estate-assets>
35. Anglican Diocese of Ottawa: <https://ottawa.anglican.ca/homelessness/>
36. Street Outreach Initiative- St James Vancouver (updated Aug 31, 2022)
37. Coming Home, a report from the Church of England,
<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/church-must-play-key-role-national-effort-solve-housing-crisis-says>
38. A Snapshot of Homelessness Policies Around the U.S. and the World
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/30/us/homeless-policies-new-york-world.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>