



Community Data Dashboard

Final Report

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Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Region

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Timeline	3
Ecosystem	5
Research Associate	6
Working Group Members	6
Housing Data.....	7
Housing and Shelter	7
Extreme Weather Response Program	8
Outdoor Sheltering	9
Program Data	9
Connections.....	9
Presentations	10
Dashboard Example	10
Future Onboarding and Outreach.....	11
Appendices.....	13
Appendix A: Housing Definitions	13
Appendix B: Youth Definitions.....	16
Appendix C: Visual Basic Excel Automation Processes.....	17

Introduction

The Community Data Dashboard (CDD) supports the mission of the Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Region (the Alliance, AEHCR) by providing a monthly updated snapshot that will be used to inform our progress toward achieving Functional Zero in the Capital Regional of Vancouver Island. The CDD is an initial step in creating baseline housing, services, and supports information for the Capital Region.

The CDD is one indicator, a snapshot, that is being used to illustrate our progress towards Functional Zero, where experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring. Two questions that are addressed by the CDD are:

- Is there enough housing supply to house all persons identified as experiencing homelessness?
- Are there enough services and supports for all persons identified as experiencing homelessness?

Additionally, the CDD acts as a system inventory for housing and services for the Capital Region. The CDD allows us to share information, in aggregate form, across our partners and others in the region. Aggregate data will eventually be shared across the entire sector and with the general public.

The Community Data Dashboard Working Group (CDD-WG) is the primary community engagement mechanism to provide support for the development, implementation, maintenance, and socialization of the CDD. This requires a multi-stage process, beginning with the collection of shelter and housing baseline data.

Timeline

As part of the initial planning for the CDD project, a timeline for the implementation and initial release of the data dashboard was developed in the fall of 2022 (see Table 1).

Milestone	Expected date for completion
Initial internal data dashboard for housing services	December 2022
All organizations in the housing homelessness serving sector will be onboarded and data provided for the internal dashboard	March 2023
An external public-facing dashboard with aggregate housing data will be released	May 2023
Onboarding of organizations that provide supports and services in the homelessness sector in the CRD to the Community Data Dashboard Working Group	May 2023

Milestone	Expected date for completion
Initial internal release of the CDD with shelter, housing, and services/supports information	August 2023
Posting external agreed upon aggregated information for shelter, housing, services and supports for the homelessness serving sector	December 2023

Table 1: *CDD Project Initial Timeline*

However, the project evolved the timeline revisited and revisions were made April 2023. To start, although a Community Data Dashboard Working Group (CDD-WG) had been stuck in July of 2022, there was a delay in hiring a Research Associate and kicking off the CDD project. Projections for the delayed April 2023 start pushed each stage of the project forward (see Table 2).

Milestone	Expected date for completion
Initial internal data dashboard for housing services	April 2023
All organizations in the housing homelessness serving sector will be onboarded and data provided for the internal dashboard	August 2023
An external public-facing dashboard with aggregate housing data will be released	October 2023
Onboarding of organizations that provide supports and services in the homelessness sector in the CRD to the Community Data Dashboard Working Group	October 2023/November 2023
Initial internal release of the CDD with shelter, housing, and services/supports information	January 2024/February 2024
Posting external agreed upon aggregated information for shelter, housing, services and supports for the homelessness serving sector	April 2024/May 2024

Table 2: *CDD Project Timeline (Revision 1)*

As we began to work through the different milestones on the project timeline, we found that we, again, needed to make revisions. A revised version of the timeline, together with some changes to the milestones, was created late 2023. We noted that the length of time required to collect relevant data exceeded our initial estimates as building relationships with community members is a timely process, requiring consistent engagement, trust-building, and ongoing efforts to maintain meaningful connections, impacting the data acquisition phase. Additionally, the iterative development processes involved in refining housing and other definitions, as well as the other project components introduced complexities, necessitating more time for analysis, reevaluation, and adjustments. The challenges that emerged during the implementation phase, contributed to the overall slippage in the project timeline. Thus, the the timeline was revised to

better reflect these challenges to ensure a more accurate projection for the successful implementation and release of the data dashboard.

Milestone	Date	Progress
Initial internal data dashboard for housing services	April 2023	Completed
All organizations in the housing homelessness serving sector will be onboarded and data provided for the internal dashboard	August 2023	Completed
Onboarding of a select group of organizations that provide supports and services in the homelessness sector in the CRD to the Community Data Dashboard Working Group, starting with rent supports (e.g., rent supplements, rent bank)	February 2024	In progress
Initial internal release of the CDD with shelter, housing, and initial services/supports information	March 2024	In progress
External public-facing dashboard release with aggregate housing data	May 2024	In progress

Table 3: CDD Project Timeline (Revision 2)

Ecosystem

The CDD project sits in a complex ecosystem that compliments current Reaching Home, Canada’s Homeless Strategy¹ project efforts in the Capital Region.

The coordinated access (CA) process is designed to prioritize those most in need of assistance in a community, matching them to appropriate housing and services. The community CA process supports fairness in access to housing and services, as well as streamlining access. These efforts also include design and use of a homelessness management information system (HMIS). The HMIS requires an understanding of the organizations in the sector, as well as those organizations that are sector adjacent, which is being completed through a systems mapping process. These two aspects of the Reaching Home strategy are managed by a project steering committee. The CDD project lies adjacent to the Reaching Home project, complimenting the project through the creation of the housing systems inventory for the Capital Region. Future work cataloguing the services and supports in the Capital Region will further support and compliment the Reaching Home project.

¹ See <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/index-eng.html> for more information regarding Canada’s Homelessness Strategy.

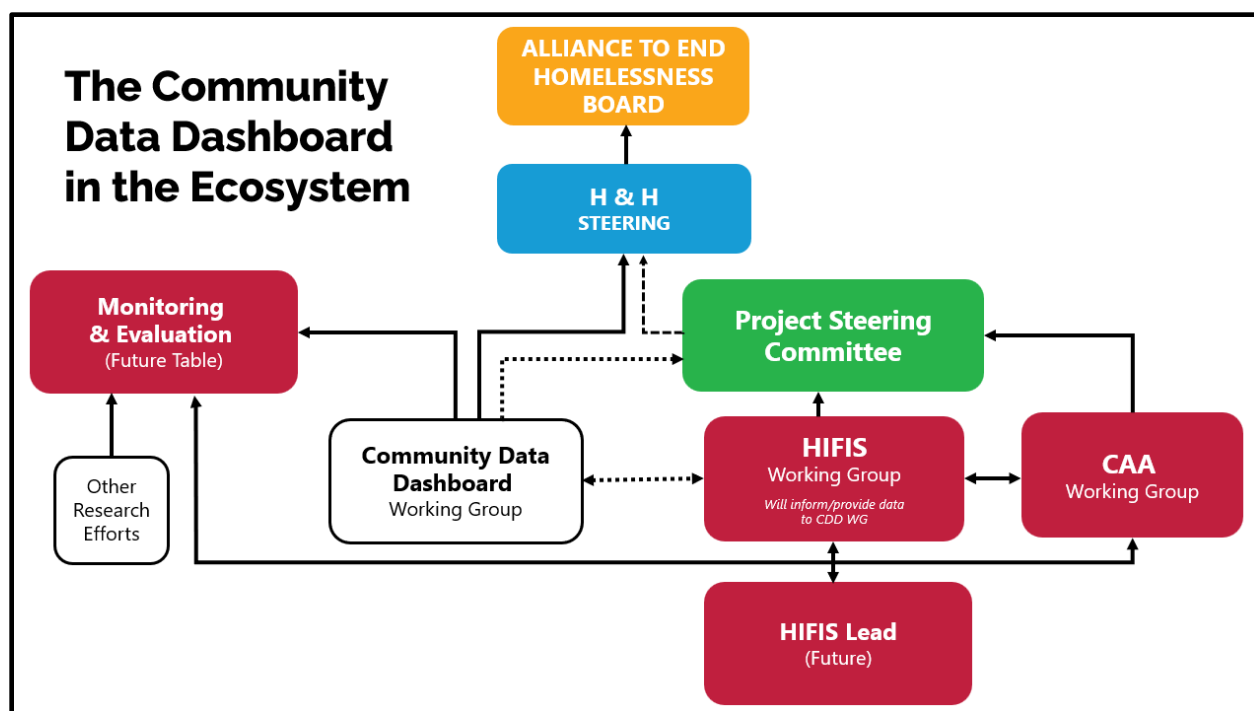


Figure 1: CDD Ecosystem

Research Associate

To support the work necessary to create the initial CDD, the AEHCR hired Research Associate co-op student, Marc Rawson on May 24, 2023. Marc is a Computer Science student attending the University of Victoria. He is assisting with research, updating, and development of the CDD. Marc supports housing provider organizations onboard their housing inventory to the CDD. Additionally, he supports aggregation of data and communication of findings.

Working Group Members

The CDD-WG consists of representatives working in data from the community (homelessness serving sector and homelessness serving sector adjacent organizations) and various levels of government. Starting with the development of the housing inventory, the Alliance engages people from the following housing provider and operator organizations:

- Anawim Companion Society
- Beacon Community Services
- Capital Region Housing Corporation
- Greater Victoria Housing Society
- Island Health
- PHS Community Services Society
- Salvation Army Victoria
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
- The Cridge Centre for the Family
- Threshold Housing Society

- John Howard Society
- Our Place Society
- Pacifica Housing Advisory Association
- Victoria Cool Aid Society
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Victoria Women's Transition House

The Alliance also engages individuals working in data from service provider organizations including:

- Victoria Brain Injury Society
- Victoria Brain Injury Society

As well as government entities including:

- BC Housing
- BC Housing
- City of Victoria Bylaw Services

Engaging with these diverse community partners allows for sharing knowledge that enables us collaboratively build a CDD that reflects the evolving needs of community.

Housing Data

Housing and Shelter

The current version of the CDD includes data aggregated from 12 organizations operating a total of 81 sites/locations. These include: Anawim Companion Society, Capital Region Housing Corporation, The Cridge Centre for the Family, Greater Victoria Housing Society, Island Health, John Howard Society, Our Place Society, Pacifica Housing Society, PHS Community Services Society, Salvation Army, Victoria Cool Aid Society, and Victoria Women's Transition House. In order to ensure that we are aggregating similar housing information, the CDD-WG have created a shared understanding of housing definitions (see Appendix A). As we move forward, we are looking to ensure that housing designed specifically for youth, as well as services and supports, are included and have created a definition for youth (see Appendix B). See Appendix C for information on data aggregation methods.

Housing Type	August 01 - 31, 2023 (#)	September 01 - 30, 2023 (#)
Emergency Shelter Seasonal (temporary)	0	0
Emergency Shelter (temporary)	127	127
Safe Homes (temporary)	0	0
Transition Houses (temporary)	0	0
Transitional Housing (temporary)	431	438
Second-stage Housing (temporary)	7	7
Third-stage housing (semi-permanent)	19	19
Women-specific (permanent)	12	12

Housing Type	August 01 - 31, 2023 (#)	September 01 - 30, 2023 (#)
Supportive Housing (permanent)	382	382
Social/Subsidized Housing (permanent)	566	566
Unknown	1085	1085
Total	2629	2636

Table 4: Shelter and Housing Inventory as of September 30, 2023

Extreme Weather Response Program

During days of extreme weather, the City of Victoria triggers the Emergency Weather Response (EWR), allowing for shelter openings to provide additional mats for people experiencing homelessness. The EWR is activated when the temperature reaches under 0°C or reaches under 2°C combined with another weather implication such as snow, rain, or wind².

Month	Date	Mats Available (Co-ed)
September 01 - 30, 2023¹		0
October 01 - 31, 2023¹		0
November 01 - 30, 2023	Thursday, November 23, 2023	80
	Friday, November 24, 2023	²
December 01 - 31, 2023	Monday, December 4, 2023	80
January 01 - 31, 2024	Saturday, January 6, 2024	30
	Sunday, January 7, 2024	30
	Monday, January 8, 2024	30
	Tuesday, January 9, 2024	30
	Wednesday, January 10, 2024	30
	Thursday, January 11, 2024	30
	Friday, January 12, 2024	80
	Saturday, January 13, 2024	80
	Sunday, January 14, 2024	80
	Monday, January 15, 2024	80
	Tuesday, January 16, 2024	80
	Wednesday, January 17, 2024	80
	Thursday, January 18, 2024	80
February 01 - 09, 2024¹		0

1. No activations for this month.

2. No data.

Table 5: EWR 2023-2024 Season Activations

² See [Salvation Army Shelter in Victoria Expands Capacity During Extreme Weather – The Salvation Army in Canada](#) for more information.

Outdoor Sheltering

The City of Victoria Bylaw Services Department provides daily counts of structures observed by bylaw officers on a weekly basis. This data is aggregated, by week, with mean and median number of structures reported³.

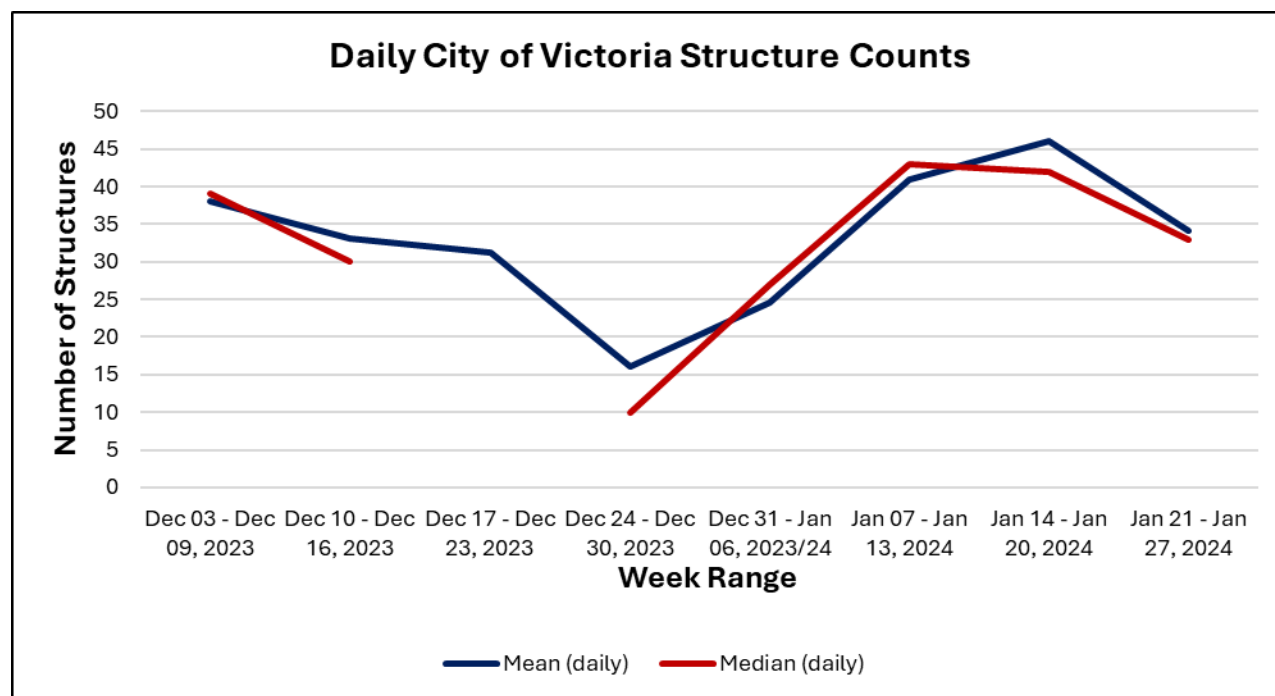


Figure 2: Weekly City of Victoria Structure Counts, Daily Mean and Median

Program Data

We have recently engaged with the Victoria Brain Injury Society, Community Social Planning Council, and BC Housing to learn more about, and capture data that is used to supplement an individual or family's ability to maintain housing (i.e., rent supplement, rent bank). Through continued discussion and collaboration, this information will be incorporated as part of the CDD.

Connections

In our pursuit to enhance the effectiveness of our data dashboard, we established connections with an Assistant Teaching Professor at the school of Health Information Science, University of

³ **Disclaimer:** Please note the number of structures is not an accurate number. The number is a representation of what Bylaw Officers have observed at given dates/times/locations. Factors that affect the counts include daily staffing levels, the assignment of other duties that do not include involvement with structures, and various factors involving the structures themselves.

Victoria, BC, Dillon Chrimes. Professor Chrimes has a wealth of experience building databases, data pipelines, and dashboards. Through this collaboration, we are ensuring a robust and evidence-based approach to understanding and addressing homelessness through data. Additionally, we established connections with the senior statistics and data consultant at the City of Ottawa, Boun Inthavong. The City of Ottawa has implemented the Temporary Emergency Accommodations data dashboard, a similar initiative with notable success, using the same tool that we will be using for our CDD. Our engagement with the City of Ottawa provided us with practical insights into the challenges they encountered during the implementation phase and the strategies they used to overcome them.

This collaborative effort helped us gain expertise and practical experience and it has significantly strengthened our plan and informed our progress to creating a robust dashboard, positioning it as a valuable tool in the regional homelessness serving sector.

Presentations

The CDD has been formally presented to community four times, three times as an initial presentation and once as an update. Firstly, the CDD was presented to the Downtown Service Providers (DSP) committee during their spring 2023 meeting. The DSP meet monthly to discuss ways to better serve the complex needs of community through collaboration across organizations. The CDD concept was presented to the Health and Housing Steering Committee (HHSC) June of 2022. The HHSC provide leadership to ensure approved activities are carried out through the working and/or community service organizations and produce results desired by the community. The HHSC was updated on CDD progress in January of 2024. Additionally, the CDD update presentation has been presented to the Alliance's Board of Directors, this past November of 2023.

Dashboard Example

While we are not there yet, we are working towards creating a fully-fledged CDD using PowerBI⁴, a Microsoft collection of software services, apps, and connectors used to visual information. The City of Ottawa uses PowerBI to turn the information from their HMIS into a visually powerful data dashboard.

⁴ See <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/power-bi/fundamentals/power-bi-overview> for more information.



Figure 3: City of Ottawa Temporary Accommodations All Clients Dashboard

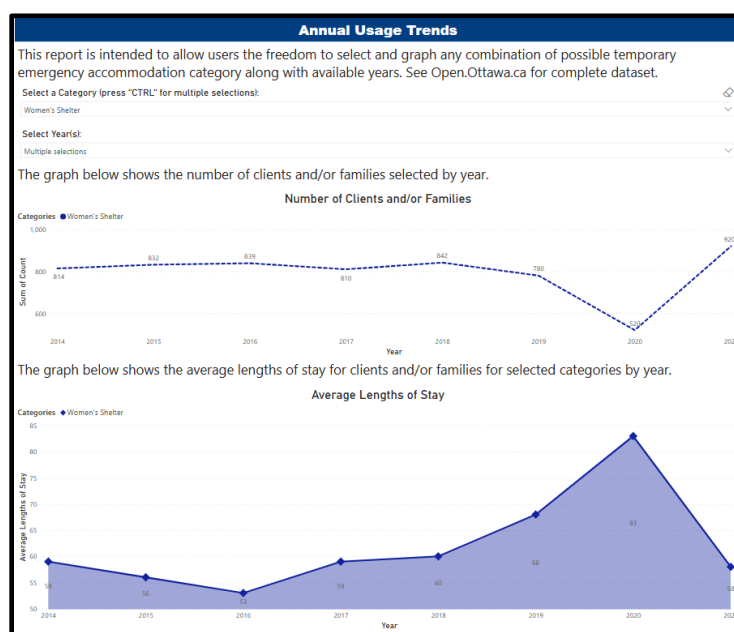


Figure 4: City of Ottawa Temporary Accommodations Annual Usage Trends Dashboard

Future Onboarding and Outreach

To broaden the scope and impact of our data-driven approach to addressing homelessness, we have successfully expanded our working group by onboarding key organizations and stakeholders. These include renowned non-profit organizations such as

Shelter Solutions and Community Aid Network, as well as governmental bodies like the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The inclusion of these diverse entities brings a wealth of expertise, resources, and perspectives to our collaborative efforts. Shelter Solutions, with its extensive experience in providing housing solutions, contributes valuable on-the-ground insights, while Community Aid Network's focus on community engagement enhances our ability to implement grassroots initiatives. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's involvement ensures alignment with broader policy frameworks and facilitates seamless coordination with governmental initiatives. By fostering a collaborative network of such esteemed organizations, our working group not only gains access to a wealth of knowledge and resources but also enhances the overall efficacy and sustainability of our homelessness intervention strategies. This inclusive approach strengthens our collective commitment to creating meaningful and lasting solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness.

We look to continually expand our working group to incorporate additional organizations that can further enrich our collaborative approach to information sharing leading to a comprehensive CDD. We are actively seeking partnerships with diverse community organizations and to build relationships and partnerships to diversify our perspective and strengthen our impact. As we continue to cultivate these partnerships, we anticipate dynamic and inclusive partnerships that enhance the collective impact of our shared mission. We are currently in the process of building relationships with the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society, Islanders Working Against Violence, M'akola Housing Society, and Sooke Shelter Society.

Appendices

Appendix A: Housing Definitions

Housing Categories¹

Emergency Shelter (temporary)

- Primary response to homelessness, providing temporary shelter.
- Mats; single, shared, or multi- bedrooms.
- Offers short-term crisis support to those who are experiencing homelessness.
- May provide basic needs such as food and health services.
- Specialized shelter services exist for certain subgroups of the homeless population, and other individuals who use shelters (e.g., shelters designed for women fleeing violence).

Seasonal Emergency Shelter (temporary)

- Temporary emergency shelters that operate for a fixed length of time (generally November 1 through March 31).

Safe Homes (temporary)

- Specifically for women fleeing violence, especially in rural or remote communities.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- A variety of housing types are provided, depending on the community (e.g., apartment or townhouse unit, hotel or motel room, or secure room in a private home or rental unit).
- Individual stay is typically no longer than 10 days.

Transition Houses (temporary)

- Safe, temporary, 24/7 staffed shelter; primarily for women fleeing violence.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Most transition houses are residential homes in confidential locations where women and families live communally.
- Support workers are available to provide emotional support, crisis intervention, and safety planning.

Transitional Housing (temporary)²

- Intermediate step between emergency crisis shelters and permanent housing, providing a safe and secure environment.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Residents are encouraged to rebuild their lives.
- Temporary solution that aims to bridge the gap, moving from homelessness to permanent housing.
- Often used as a form of supportive housing for treatment and mental health.
- Individual stay is typically 3 months to 3 years.

Second-stage Housing (temporary)

- Temporary housing for women & children fleeing violence who have completed a stay in transition housing or safe housing.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Residents are encouraged to make plans for independent living.
- Individual stay is typically 6 to 24 months before transitioning to more permanent housing³.

Third-stage Housing (semi-permanent)

- Safe and affordable housing for women and children who are ready to live more independently.
- Single bedrooms or units.
- Offers less support than second stage housing.
- Focus is on building life skills.
- Transition to permanent housing; affordable or market rent.
- Individual stay is typically 3 to 5 years.

Women-specific (permanent)

- Affordable housing specifically designed to assist women, may include women fleeing violence.
- Unit or home; rented.
- Permanent housing with Residential Tenancy Agreement (RTA).
- Includes some support.

Supportive Housing (permanent)

- Subsidized housing with on-site support for people who need assistance to live independently.
- Units.
- Groups supported include single adults, seniors, and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- 24/7 staff on-site to provide non-clinical support such as: life skills training, connections to health care, mental health, and/or substance-use services.
- Support is linked to housing, not the individual.

Social/Subsidized Housing (permanent)

- Rents are usually calculated using the Rent Geared to Income (RGI) model and are reviewed annually.
- Includes purpose-built low-income housing developments.
- Subsidized units in market-rate buildings, or market-rate apartments paid for in part by provincial rent subsidies.

Co-op Housing (permanent)

- Housing cooperative or "co-op" is a type of residential housing option.

- Housing co-ops are consumer co-operatives, entirely owned by their members.
- Co-op housing may be a non-profit organization.
- Co-ops are mixed income communities.
- Members set policies, make decisions, and elect leaders who report to them together.
- Presents individuals with greater autonomy over their housing.

Market Housing (permanent)

- Rental Rooms/Suites
- Rental Apartments
- Rental Townhouse/Duplex/House
- Condominiums (Condos)
- Townhouse/Duplex
- Single family houses

Affordable Housing (permanent)

- Rental or ownership
 - Ownership costs should be less than 30 percent of the homeowner's pre-tax income⁴ ([BC Gov](#)).
 - Affordable rental units are available to individuals with low-to-moderate income (based on BC Housing-specified [Housing Income Limits](#), updated periodically).
- Government programs and non-profit organizations offer low-income homeowners' subsidies and financing.

Glossary

Affordable Housing is created with the support of government financing and funding strategies.

Bed: A bed in a room with 2 or more occupants who are not related.

Island Health housing includes complex care units.

Market Affordability is created by a variety of potential causes, like age, neglect, or location—whatever the reason, the rents and prices are affordable to a broader cross section of the population.

RTA: Residential Tenancy Agreement (e.g., lease)

RGI: Rent Geared to Income (Subsidized housing with housing provider matching rent to tenants' income.)

Unit: Self-contained units, or private rooms, with doors

¹ Supported Housing, found in some documentation regarding housing types, is not included in this list of housing as it is considered supportive housing for some organizations and social housing by other organizations.

² Does not include recovery programs.

³ Some organizations may extend the length of stay to up to 5 years. This may be as a result of availability of third stage housing for women.

⁴ The median pre-tax total income for the CRD in 2019 - \$40,000 and 2020 - \$43,200 ([2021 Census](#)).

Appendix B: Youth Definitions

Definitions for youth

Encompass all youth housing, programs, services, and supports in the Capital Regional District.

- a) Housing – for the purpose of housing/rent, an individual between the ages of 15 and 24 is considered a youth.
- b) Programs, Services, and Supports – for the purpose of programs/services/supports, an individual between the ages of 15 and 29 is considered a youth.

Appendix C: Visual Basic Excel Automation Processes

Currently, data is being stored on a secure site, with each partner organization only having access to their own data. The following is the initial method we are using to aggregate data across these disparate housing data sources.

Unit Type Summation:

1. Create/update spreadsheet with “date”, “organization name”, “co-ed”, “family”, “men-only”, “women-only”, “youth”, and “senior” fields.
2. Loop through each organization’s spreadsheet within housing provider spreadsheets folder. For each:
 - a. Find the row with sums.
 - b. Write “date accessed”, “housing provider”, and the sums of “co-ed”, “family”, “men-only”, “women-only”, “youth”, and “senior” to aggregate spreadsheet.
3. Repeat step 2 until all organizations are looped through.
4. Sum aggregate info, leaving a total for “co-ed”, “family”, “men-only”, “women-only”, “youth”, and “senior”.
5. Done