



## **Community Social Planning Council**

Greater Victoria Coordinated Identification Services

### **More and more households are one personal crisis away from homelessness in Greater Victoria**

**June 22, 2022**

(Greater Victoria): New report from the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria “Drivers of Homelessness: Findings for Action,” reveals that housing affordability is putting low income households at risk. The report draws from a rich data set of households that are at risk of homelessness in the region. It shows just how vulnerable housing affordability is making households - 77.5% of those households are spending more than 50% of their income on housing and 69% have incomes below the poverty line.

Most households can weather a personal crisis - a death of a loved one, a divorce, a workplace injury, an ill child, or others - but, households that are already stretched by housing costs and affordability cannot.

The report shows that some households are more vulnerable than others. “Although key drivers of homelessness are housing affordability and poverty,” reports Diana Gibson, Executive Director of the Community Social Planning Council, “Our programs indicate that Indigenous households, women (especially those who are single parents), people with diverse gender or sexual orientation, and people with disabilities are at much greater risk of housing insecurity.”

Other key report findings show that homelessness prevention works. The majority of individuals who accessed the programs were at imminent risk of homelessness and would have been homeless without the support.

At the online report launch event June 22, an expert panel will discuss the findings and how they might inform solutions.

With the knowledge and insights of an advisory committee with lived experience of homelessness, the report’s authors identified actions for change at the system, social, and policy levels. Policy suggestions from the report include broadening and reinforcing homelessness prevention services such as the Greater Victoria Rent Bank, extending services and supports to people who are precariously housed (in line with the federal definition of homelessness), and creating policy that moves households out of core housing need – the key financial indicator for risk of homelessness.

**At the lunch and learn on June 22**, local, provincial and national leaders will discuss the findings. Local housing expert and report author Max Novotney, is joined by Esther de Vos, Executive Director of Research for BC Housing; Erin Dej, Assistant Professor at Wilfred Laurier University and researcher with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness; and tenant legal advocate Hannah Mang-Wooley, at Together Against Poverty Society.

Online registration for the June 22 event is at <https://bit.ly/DoH22>.



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**The Community Social Planning Council** is a non-profit community organization that has been leading housing and homelessness, antipoverty and broader community development initiatives across the region for over 80 years. Regional programs include Point in Time Homeless Count, Greater Victoria Rent Bank, and the Low-Income Transit Assistance Program. For more information visit [communitycouncil.ca](http://communitycouncil.ca).

**The programs that form the basis of the report include:** the Greater Victoria Rent Bank loan program funded by the BC Rent Bank, with funding from the province of British Columbia, and the Housing Security Grants Program funded in part through the Capital Regional District's administration of the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Program: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. Funding was also provided by the United Way and the City of Victoria. All data from the Housing Security Grants Program and the Rent Bank were collected and shared in partnership with BC Rent Bank.

### Quotes

**(Anonymous Participant):** "My recent housing crisis has shown me just how close the average household is to homelessness. In a region where rents are through the roof and increasingly dramatically, I am certain that many households are just one crisis away from falling into homelessness. If it was not for CSPC's homelessness prevention program, I do not know what I would have done."

**(Anonymous Participant):** "I can't say enough how profoundly the Housing Stability Grant program helped me, just by not having to worry about all the volatility that I was going through with the pandemic. I didn't have to give up my car, so I ended up being able to get another job and have a means of getting there. It wasn't a ton of money that I received, but it was enough to dramatically improve my situation. I had so much more agency."

**(Anonymous Participant):** "I often get frazzled because of my brain injury, making things in life very difficult to navigate, especially when I was in housing crisis. You guys never gave up - you made me feel like you were not going to stop until I got help. If it wasn't for this program, I don't know what I would have done - it saved my life. It got me to the place where I could breathe for a second. This program saved my life."

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