To: Chair and Members
   Emergency & Community Services Committee

From: Joe-Anne Priel
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   (ECS07097) (City Wide)

Council Direction: None

Information:

The City of Hamilton in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) has produced On Any Given Night: Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton (2007) which is attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07097. The purpose of this report is to identify the central issues that impact homelessness and to provide a basis for the community, the City and senior levels of governments to discuss and address these issues.

This is the second edition of On Any Given Night: Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton. New data on factors contributing to homelessness, a demographic profile of people experiencing homelessness and key service utilization statistics are presented.

Homelessness can be defined as the lack of safe, affordable, adequate and secure housing. People experiencing homelessness are a diverse, mobile population. Some people without housing have nothing in common but their lack of housing. Among those without housing are single men and women, families, youth, visible minorities, Aboriginal people, and some people with mental illnesses and other health problems.

It is difficult to provide exact measures of homelessness. Although some people who are experiencing homelessness are included in service utilization figures, others are on the street or “hidden.” Many people are at-risk of being homeless because of insufficient income to pay for adequate housing and nutritious food. To gain a better understanding of what influences homelessness in Hamilton, a number of different indicators were examined.

Although improvements have been made, homelessness continues to be a significant issue in Hamilton. The number of people accessing Hamilton’s emergency shelters has doubled since 1995. During the entire year of 2006, 3,950 different individuals stayed at...
an emergency shelter. This represents a 30% increase in shelter usage between 2005 and 2006. Most of the increase is due to approximately 700 individuals who stayed at the new family centre throughout 2006.

Looking at one night during the month of November, trends show that since 2002 the number of shelter residents has stabilized from 396 in that year to 419 individuals in 2006. The Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) data from May 2006 indicates that shelter occupancy rates have stabilized at approximately 80% in Hamilton.

Women and their children experiencing domestic violence can stay in one of four Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters. The VAW shelters report high occupancy rates. From April 2006 to March 2007, 1,504 women stayed in a VAW shelter. On average, women stayed 27 nights. It is important to recognize that many women become homeless because of poverty, family violence and family breakup.

On Any Given Night – Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton (2007) also highlights key actions the City is involved with to address homelessness, including:

- Hostels to Homes Pilot Project;
- Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI) federal funding earmarked for prevention and supportive and transitional housing initiatives;
- 525 units of affordable housing being developed under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing program;
- Administration of approximately $1.25 M. of provincial funding to community partners under the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and;
- Moving forward with community collaborative efforts such as the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and the Affordable Housing Flagship.

Everyone Has a Home: a Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (2007) is Hamilton’s three year plan to address homelessness. The Strategic Plan was developed with extensive community consultation with service providers, advocates, City staff and people experiencing homelessness. In our role as Service Manager for Homelessness and as Community Entity for the Homelessness Partnership Initiative, the City provides leadership in addressing local homelessness issues. To that end, the continued development of a strategic plan on homelessness, along with this homelessness indicators report, provides direction from which to provide that leadership.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager
Community Services Department
Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton
2007 Edition

ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT
ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT IN HAMILTON...

3,950 men, women and children stayed at an emergency shelter at least once in 2006

23 nights is the average length of stay at an emergency shelter

1,644 women stayed at a Violence Against Women (VAW) shelter during 2005/2006

3,817 active applications on the social housing waiting list in 2006

26,000 (21.9%) renter households spend more than 50% of their income on shelter putting them at serious risk of homelessness
Introduction

Hamilton, like many Canadian cities, faces a range of serious social issues which interact to create homelessness. The purpose of *On Any Given Night: Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton (2007)* is to identify the central factors that impact homelessness and to provide a basis for the community, the City and senior levels of governments to discuss and address homelessness. This report builds on the information in *On Any Given Night (2006)* by presenting new data on factors contributing to homelessness, a demographic profile of people experiencing homelessness and key service utilization statistics.

A strategic plan to address homelessness in Hamilton

*Everyone Has a Home: a Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (2007)* is the City of Hamilton’s three year plan to address homelessness. It builds on previous planning documents including the Community Action Plan on Homelessness (SPRC, 2000). The Strategic Plan was developed with extensive community consultation with service providers, advocates, City staff and people experiencing homelessness. Our shared aspiration is to ensure “Hamilton is a community where everyone has a home.” This is a bold vision and accomplishing it will require cooperation and commitment.

The Plan also identifies several outcomes, which are high-level, but provide a valuable method to focus the community’s efforts. The outcomes are:

- The entire community is engaged to address homelessness;
- A continuum of affordable housing that helps residents to achieve their potential;
- Increase supports to help people obtain and maintain housing;
- Access to adequate income; and,
- Efficient and effective use of community resources.

Thirty-six strategies have been identified to help achieve these results and are listed in the Strategic Plan, which can be viewed at www.hamilton.ca/homelessness. Over the next few months, City staff will work with community partners to transform ideas into action. The work of those partners in developing the Strategic Plan as well as the early response to it are clear indicators of a desire to address the hardships facing people who are homeless or are at-risk of becoming homeless.
Who is homeless?
People experiencing homelessness are a diverse, mobile population encompassing many subgroups. Some people without housing have nothing in common but their lack of housing. Among those without housing are many single men and women, families, youth, visible minorities, Aboriginal people, and some people with severe mental illnesses and other serious health problems.
(Source: Adapted from www.raisingtheroof.org)

Why does homelessness occur?
Two major contributors to homelessness are the lack of adequate income and the lack of affordable housing. Other factors influencing why families or individuals may be homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless include:
- experiencing abuse or violence
- losing a job
- experiencing food insecurity
- experiencing mental or physical health issues
- experiencing discrimination by landlords or neighbours
- facing challenges with substance use
- lack of appropriate support services

What do we know?
While improvements have been made, homelessness continues to be a significant issue in Hamilton. Emergency shelters for men, women, youth and families continue to experience relatively high occupancy rates. Based on available data, we know that the number of people accessing Hamilton’s emergency shelters has more than doubled since 1995. Hamilton’s food banks report more than 15,000 visits per month. Just over half of those are families with children. Almost one in five Hamilton residents subsist on an income lower than the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) threshold. The high demand for affordable housing in our community is evidenced by Hamilton’s social housing waiting list which currently has 3,817 active applications.

Concepts & Approaches

Defining of homelessness
Homelessness can be defined as the lack of safe, affordable, adequate and secure housing. A range of experiences exist which can be described as living on the street, hidden homeless, short-term or crisis sheltered or being at-risk of homelessness. The new federal Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI) provides the following descriptions of these categories:
- **Living on the street** refers to individuals or families who, because of a lack of secured housing, live on the street.
- **Short term** or **crisis sheltered** refers to individuals or families staying temporarily in emergency and/or transitional housing. This category also includes the episodically sheltered sub-population. Episodically sheltered refers to the families and individuals who access shelters multiple times through the year, seeking assistance, but who are not necessarily able to move to housing stability.
What is a Housing First Approach?

Housing First can be considered as an approach that focuses on immediately providing housing to homeless people and concurrently providing the needed supports and assistance. While program models vary depending upon the population served, Housing First programs share the following elements:

- **Hidden homeless** refers to individuals or families living in locations not intended for human habitation (e.g. abandoned buildings) and/or continuously moving among temporary housing arrangements provided by strangers, friends or family.
- Those **at-risk of becoming homeless** include individuals or families who are at imminent risk of eviction from their current housing, who pay too high a proportion of their income for housing or who live in unacceptable housing. Also included are those who will be discharged from the criminal justice system, those who are leaving a health facility after an extended stay, as well as youth exiting the child welfare system, and who do not have suitable housing in place prior to their discharge.

(Source: Homelessness Partnership Initiative, 2007)

**Homelessness - Housing Continuum**

The Homelessness – Housing Continuum recognizes a range of housing needs as well as the vulnerability of losing housing to become homeless. There is further recognition that the continuum is not always a linear progression and that individuals and/or families may move back and forth across the continuum depending on their circumstances. Without last month’s rent deposit, without help working through landlord problems to avoid eviction, some people are very close to becoming homeless.

Housing with supports provides vulnerable individuals and families with the daily supports necessary to live in a stable and independent environment. Figure 1 shows a broad overview of selected examples of housing and supports in Hamilton.

**Figure 1**

**Housing and Homelessness Continuum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency and VAW Shelters</th>
<th>Transitional Housing</th>
<th>Supported Housing</th>
<th>Social &amp; Subsidized Housing</th>
<th>Private Market Rental</th>
<th>Affordable Homeownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Family Centre</td>
<td>• Second Stage</td>
<td>• Residential Care</td>
<td>• Units where people</td>
<td>• Rental apartment</td>
<td>• Ownership housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Men's Shelters</td>
<td>Housing for Women</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>pay rent geared to</td>
<td>buildings and/or</td>
<td>that is affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Youth Shelter</td>
<td>and their children</td>
<td>• Senior-assisted living</td>
<td>their income to social</td>
<td>houses</td>
<td>to low-to-moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Women’s shelter</td>
<td>Transitional housing for youth</td>
<td>• Group homes for persons with severe mental illnesses and/or developmental disabilities</td>
<td>housing providers</td>
<td>Accessory apartments</td>
<td>income households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters for Women &amp; children fleeing violence</td>
<td>• Rooming Houses</td>
<td>• Supportive housing for women</td>
<td>• Rent Supplement units in private market rental buildings where some tenants pay rent geared to their income</td>
<td>Single Room Occupancies/rooming houses</td>
<td>and first-time home buyers by virtue of its relatively modest cost and/or through government programs that assist buyers with down payment and/or savings plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prevention, Intervention and Support Services**

- **Trusteeship Programs** - Agency makes payment on an individual’s behalf for shelter costs to ensure their housing is retained.
- **Food Banks and Hot Meal Programs** - Provision of limited groceries and meals
- **Moving and Storage Services** - Free storage and moving of personal effects and furniture
- **Tenant Supports and Prevention Activities** - Helpline and other housing loss prevention and intervention services for individuals and families to help at risk tenants maintain housing; includes education, outreach and advocacy activities
- **Health Care** - Improved accessibility and coordination of health services through outreach activities and clinics
- **Employment and Training Programs** - Assisting individuals to obtaining and maintain employment

**What is a Housing First Approach?**

Housing First can be considered as an approach that focuses on immediately providing housing to homeless people and concurrently providing the needed supports and assistance. While program models vary depending upon the population served, Housing First programs share the following elements:

- A focus on helping people who are homeless access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible, and
- A variety of support services following the housing placement that promotes housing stability and individual well-being.
**Emergency Shelter Systems in Hamilton**

**Emergency shelter system in Hamilton**

Emergency shelters provide short-term lodging and other supports to people experiencing homelessness. In Hamilton, the emergency shelter system is comprised of three types of services:

i. Emergency Shelters;
ii. Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters;
iii. Seasonal Programs (i.e., Out of the Cold).

There are also a number of transitional housing programs that offer short to medium term accommodation to people experiencing homelessness. These numbers are not included in this report.

**Supply of shelter beds/mats**

Currently, there are 509 emergency shelter beds in Hamilton. The majority of emergency shelter beds are for single men (245). The second largest group of shelter beds is for women and children staying in a VAW shelter (100). The total number of shelter beds has increased by 76% between 2000 and 2006 largely due to an infusion of funding from the Federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Men</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>49 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Women</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the Cold</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>76 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Hamilton, 2007*

**Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton**

Exact measures of homelessness are difficult to compile. While some people who are experiencing homelessness are included in service utilization figures, many others are living on the street or ‘hidden’.

The following shelter utilization data is from the City of Hamilton’s Community Services department and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC).
Profile of shelter usage across the emergency shelter system

In 2006, almost 4,000 different individuals stayed at an emergency shelter. This represents a 30% increase in shelter usage between 2005 and 2006. Most of the increase is due to approximately 700 individuals who stayed at the new family centre throughout 2006.

The breakdown of shelter use was 78% male and 22% female in 2006. The average length of stay in an emergency shelter was 23 nights in 2006, slightly up from 20 nights in 2005. In Hamilton, the maximum length of time an individual or family may stay in an emergency shelter is 42 consecutive nights. Shelter residents who participate in intensive case management may stay longer.

The majority of individuals and families access emergency shelter for a short-term or temporary period. Some people experiencing homelessness are unable to secure appropriate housing within a short time frame and may stay at one or more emergency shelters for an extended period of time. In 2006, 70 people stayed more than 200 days in an emergency shelter.

Figure 3 provides a breakdown of singles in the emergency shelter population by age range.

- 14% of the population staying at emergency shelters for singles is below the age of 21
- 53% of the population staying at emergency shelters for singles is between the age 30 to 49
- 19% of the population staying at emergency shelters for singles is over the age of 50

Annual homeless shelter count

The Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) conducts an annual survey of emergency shelter usage in Hamilton. The ‘On a Given Night’ survey data provides historical shelter utilization data in Hamilton. It should be noted, however, that this data only reports on one night in November and may not be representative of fluctuations in occupancy rates throughout the year. While this data provides a snapshot of shelter use on a given night, it does not capture the magnitude of homelessness in a given year.
The number of people accessing shelters in Hamilton on a given
night in November has doubled since 1995. Trends show that
since 2002 the number of shelter residents has stabilized from
396 in that year to 419 in 2006. Occupancy rates on a given night
in November have dropped slightly, in part, due to an increase
in beds and mats available in the emergency shelter system in
2003 and 2004. Each year the number of emergency shelter beds
fluctuates resulting in increased occupancy rates in the youth and
men’s sectors in the past two years.

Single men
Single adult men comprised the largest group of emer-
gency shelter residents at 53% in 2006. On a given night
in November (2006) there were 231 men accessing an
emergency shelter bed or mat. There are four emergency
shelters in Hamilton that provide refuge for single men.
These shelters are the Good Shepherd Men’s Centre,
Mission Services Men’s Residence, Salvation Army Booth
Centre and Wesley Centre.

Single women
Emergency shelter beds are available for women expe-
riencing homelessness for reasons other than domestic
violence. Good Shepherd Mary’s Place provides 9 beds
and the Wesley Drop-In Centre provides 15 mats for
women experiencing homelessness. On a given night
in November 2006, there were 19 women staying at an
emergency shelter in Hamilton. Mary’s Place, as the only
single gendered shelter for homeless women, is often at
capacity and has to turn women away. In 2006, Mary’s
Place turned away women 878 times due to the shelter
being at full capacity.

Discharged into homelessness
People who are released from foster care, prison,
mental health care facilities, hospitals, and other
public institutions without a place to go are said
to be discharged into homelessness. Often indi-
viduals in these situations need to enhance basic
life and job skills and do not have the support
from family and/or friends to help them success-
fully transition into mainstream society.

The Salvation Army Discharge Program offers
transitional housing for 17 men and 2 women,
individuals discharged from hospital to shelter
and offers follow-up in the community for 6
months. Located within the shelter, the program
assists with specific needs and offers intensive
case management to help individuals transition
out of the shelter and into the community.
Families
The number of individuals in families experiencing homelessness accommodated in motels/hotels decreased from 696 in 2002 to 176 in 2006. As a result of the opening of the Family Centre, Hamilton’s newest emergency shelter, families are less likely to be placed in emergency motels/hotels.

On any given night in November 2004 there were 39 people staying in the temporary emergency family shelter. In December 2005, the permanent family emergency shelter opened to accommodate up to 20 families (or up to 80 individuals). On a given night in November 2006 there were 63 individuals who accessed the Good Shepherd Family Centre. It is important to note that the number of families accessing emergency motel and hotel beds is not reflected in the ‘On a Given Night’ data.

Women and children experiencing domestic violence
Women and their children experiencing domestic violence can stay in one of four Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters. There are 100 beds available in the VAW system in Hamilton. From April 2006 to March 2007, 1,504 women stayed in a VAW shelter. On average, women stayed 27 nights during this year. From April 2005 to March 2006, 1,644 women stayed in a VAW shelter. The average length of stay for women in these shelters was 26 nights during this year. The number of children staying in a VAW shelter was not counted during this year. Note that we do not know if these numbers represent one time or multiple stays. In 2006, there were 57 women and children staying at a VAW shelter on a given night in November.

Did you know?
It is important to recognize that many women wind up homeless because of poverty, family violence and family breakup (Lenon, 2000; Novac, et al. 1996a; Miller & DuMont, 2000).

Note: As of 2005/2006 the MCSS no longer collects data on children staying at VAW Shelters. (Source: MCSS, 2007)
Homeless and street-involved youth

According to a study prepared by the SPRC and community partners in 2005, there were at least 600 street-involved youth (or 1.5% of total youth population) in Hamilton. Street-involved youth are young people between the ages of 16 to 21 who are absolutely homeless or precariously housed using services for street-involved youth and/or spend the majority of their time on the street.

Homeless youth, a sub-group of street-involved youth, are those with no place to live and might stay at emergency shelters. On a given night in November 2006, there were 19 youth staying at an emergency shelter.

Urban Aboriginal homelessness

Urban Aboriginal homelessness continues to be a serious issue in communities across Canada. Hamilton is no exception to this assertion as estimates suggest that 20% of people experiencing homelessness in Hamilton are Aboriginal. According to the 2001 census, 1.3% of Hamilton’s population self-identified as Aboriginal indicating that this population is overrepresented in the homeless population.

(Source: HEDAC, Homelessness Trail: “The Voice of the People”, 2001)

Out of the Cold program

Out of the Cold is a drop-in program for people seeking temporary shelter and is operated by local faith groups. In Hamilton, the Out of the Cold program provides 40 mats per night at various locations across the City. On a given night in November, 22 people sought shelter through this program in 2006.

Did you know?

- The poverty rate for the Aboriginal population in Hamilton is 44% whereas the overall poverty rate in Hamilton is 20%.
- 39% of Aboriginal renter households are in core housing need. A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its gross income to pay rent.
- The average household income for Aboriginal renters is $33,794 whereas the average household income for non-Aboriginal renters is $37,918

Sources: CMHC, Housing in Canada Online and Statistics Canada, 2001
Access to Adequate Income Update

Low income affects access to necessities such as adequate housing, nutritious foods, warm clothing and education. It can also affect the overall well-being of an individual as low income may increase stress, lower self-esteem and limit participation in the community.

Social assistance and basic needs

The high demand for affordable housing in our community is evidenced by Hamilton’s social housing waiting list which currently has 3,817 active applications. The total number of beneficiaries in receipt of Ontario Works (OW) was 22,765 and the total number of beneficiaries in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) was 22,497 in 2006. Nine per cent (45,262) of Hamilton residents are coping with social assistance rates that have not kept pace with increases in cost of living. This means participants are increasingly unable to afford basic necessities such as adequate housing and nutritious food.

Cost of a nutritious food basket and average rent compared to social assistance rates

Figure 8 compares Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) average rents in Hamilton and cost of a nutritious food basket for a single person, a sole-support family and a two-parent family to social assistance rates. For instance, a single person living on OW income is approximately $141 short to cover these basic needs. Using the same criteria, a family of four will have just under $259 remaining after paying for rent and food to pay for other necessities such as clothing, school supplies, utilities or other personal items.

**Food insecurity**

Food insecurity in Hamilton, and Canada, is primarily the result of poverty. Food insecurity can be defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. The need for emergency food programs and services is highly correlated to the low levels of social assistance payments: three out of four households using food banks reported OW or ODSP as their primary source of income.

(Source: Hunger Count, Hamilton FoodShare, 2007)

**Food banks and hot meal programs**

Indicative of worsening food insecurity in Hamilton is the increased and persistent reliance on the emergency food system. Food banks provide necessary emergency assistance to thousands of people each month and still must turn some people away. Those who have come to rely on food banks are often not able to meet all of their nutritional requirements. Originally set up as temporary “stop-gap” measures to assist people facing emergency situations, food banks have become a more permanent fixture in the community. Food banks in the community are an integral piece of the puzzle when it comes to people staying housed.

(Source: Hamilton Emergency Food System Assessment – Phase I, SPRC, 2005)

- In March 2007, there were 8,179 visits to local food banks.
- In March 2007, over 52,000 hot meals were served at meal programs.

(Source: Hunger Count, Hamilton FoodShare, 2007)
The lack of affordable housing in Hamilton puts many residents at risk of homelessness.

- In Hamilton, 21.9% of renter households spend more than 50% of their income on shelter putting them at serious risk of homelessness.
- Approximately 45% of renter households spend more than 30% of their household income on shelter.
- The social housing waiting list reveals the pervasive need in Hamilton for rent-geared-to-income housing. There were 3,817 active applications on the social housing waiting list in 2006.
- 400 new units of affordable rental units required to keep pace with demand
- Average rent $610 (1 bedroom) in 2006, slightly down from $615 in 2005
- 4.3% vacancy rate (1 bedroom) in 2006 vs. 5.0% in 2005

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2001; City of Hamilton, 2007; CMHC, 2007)

**Housing wage vs. minimum wage**

The minimum “housing wage” is defined as the amount required for a one-wage earner household to afford a one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartment and not pay more than 30% of their gross income on rent. In 2006, the difference between minimum wage ($7.75/hour) and the housing wage for a one-bedroom apartment ($12.71/hour) or two-bedroom apartment ($15.62/hour) is substantial.

![Figure 11: Housing Wage vs. Minimum Wage, Hamilton, 2006](source: City of Hamilton, 2007)
What’s New in Addressing Homelessness in Hamilton?

Hamilton’s Hostels to Homes Pilot Project (H2HP):
The Hostels to Homes Pilot (H2HP) is an innovative 18 month provincially funded program designed to re-invest community resources to support chronic shelter residents’ move along the housing continuum. Chronic shelter residents are individuals staying in an emergency shelter 42 or more days in the last year. In 2006, Hamilton shelters reported 608 chronic shelter residents. Pilot participants will receive individualized support from the new Integrated Mobile Case Management Team (IMCMT). The IMCMT will help participants find and maintain long-term housing in the community. It is anticipated that 80 individuals will be housed before the end of the 18 month pilot project which began in May 2007.

Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI):
The Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI) is part of the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The City of Hamilton is responsible for administration of the program which is intended “to prevent and reduce homelessness by helping to establish the structures and supports needed to move homeless and at-risk individuals towards self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society.” The HPI is described as a “housing-first” approach with an emphasis on supportive and transitional housing. A new Community Advisory Board has formed to advise the City of Hamilton about funding allocation and project selection under HPI.

Prevention of homelessness:

- The City of Hamilton administers approximately $1.25 M. of provincial funding to community partners under the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP). A key objective of CHPP is to have a network of support services to connect individuals and families to community resources and assist households experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find and keep stable living arrangements.

- CityHousing Hamilton’s Eviction Prevention Policy recognizes that it is better to work with tenants through early intervention to prevent evictions so that housing is maintained and homelessness is reduced.

- The Rent Bank Program, Housing Emergency Loan Program and Trusteeship programs continue to help low income renter households remain housed during a financial crisis.

Creating affordable housing:

- The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program – provides assistance in the form of capital grants and housing allowances for the construction of rental housing with rents at or below the average market rents for the City. As a result of a partnership between the City of Hamilton, the Federal and Provincial governments, 525 new affordable housing units will be built. The total investment into these new housing units is over $29 million.
**Collaborative networks:**
A number of community groups are addressing homelessness and affordable housing issues in Hamilton. Here are a few examples:

- The Affordable Housing Flagship is a voluntary group of formal and informal community leaders with a mandate to ensure that affordable housing contributes to a healthy and vibrant city.

- The Food Shelter and Housing Advisory Committee is a voluntary committee that provides recommendations regarding income, food, and housing and homelessness issues to the Emergency and Community Services committee of Council.

- The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction is spearheaded by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation. The Roundtable brings together civic leaders from numerous boards, agencies, businesses, media, and municipal government to work with concerned residents, organizations and businesses in identifying the issues around poverty and developing solutions to overcome those issues.

Other examples of key community networks include: Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition, Solutions for Housing Action Committee, Woman Abuse Working Group, Hamilton Addictions and Mental Health Coalition, Shelter Operators Group, Emergency Food Action Committee, Roomers and Boarders Committee and the Residential Care Facilities Tenants Coalition.

**Issues/data for future consideration:**
With the implementation of HIFIS and the co-operation of our community partners, gains have been made in what we know about homelessness in Hamilton. However, there is still more to learn. For example, we need to understand more about:

- Aboriginal homelessness
- length of time in shelters across years

This knowledge is crucial in order to continue to develop responses to the homelessness crisis.

**Acknowledgements:**
We would like to acknowledge the important work done by those working with individuals and families that are at-risk of becoming homeless or are experiencing homelessness. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and expertise. Co-operation and collaboration between the City, community partners as well as the involvement of the provincial and federal governments was critical to the development of this report. All play critical roles in our collective efforts to address homeless in Hamilton. With the kind of effort this community has shown in the past we can and will continue to find the solutions necessary so that Hamilton becomes a community where everyone has a home.
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ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT

Measuring Homelessness in Hamilton
2007 Edition
Why does homelessness occur?

Main factors contributing to homelessness:

i. Lack of adequate income
ii. Lack of affordable housing
Who is homeless?

Some people experiencing homelessness have nothing in common but their lack of housing.
3,950 individuals stayed at an emergency shelter in 2006
Number of Shelter Residents by Total Nights Stayed at an Emergency Shelter in 2006

City of Hamilton, HIFIS Data, 2007
What do the numbers mean?

• Prevention is key
• Continue to help people move through the housing continuum
• Move forward with community collaborative efforts to address homelessness
Thank you