

Affordable Housing & Homelessness Working Group NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue | February 2020

MOBILE SUPPORT UNIT

The Ally Centre has a new Mobile Support Unit. The Ally Centre's mission is to reduce harm and promote health. One of the main goals at the Ally Centre is to reduce barriers to accessing health care and other services and to create supportive spaces for our most vulnerable populations. The funding for the van came from NSHA's Dept of Health's Harm Reduction funding pocket. It will be used to service "hotspots" in the CBRM. New Waterford receives the greatest amount of syringes distributed by our needle exchange program – 124,000 last year, this is one of the reasons we parked it there. In a recent study, while we were trying to gather evidence and the need to support mobile outreach street health, it was identified that New Waterford is void of any support services. Other towns have community centres and food banks which are a valuable resource for vulnerable people and often assist with linking people with other services. Our hope is that having this van in New Waterford will fill the gap of linking folks with health care and other services and help to alleviate some of the isolation people are feeling. Besides linking people to services, the van is a comfortable spot to just stop in for a chat and a hot cup of coffee and a snack.



From Left to Right: Richard Carrigan, Christine Porter and Shawn Murray

The van is also a distribution point for harm reduction supplies, overdose prevention education and free naloxone. Periodically, blood borne pathogen testing will be offered from the van. In other news, the Alley Centre is now able to offer primary health care and blood borne pathogen testing 3 days a week at the Ally Health Clinic! There is also a full time clinical social worker on board who is able to provide mental health support on a walk-in basis during clinic hours or through appointment on the off clinic days.

NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING SECTOR



The Province of Nova Scotia launched a new grant program to support co-ops and non-profit housing providers facing operational challenges, especially as operating funding under the Social Housing Agreement (SHA) expires. The new Community Housing Capacity Building Program (CHCBP) provides eligible organizations with a non-repayable contribution to undertake activities that help them transform their business model to meet their long-term sustainability goals and ensure they continue to offer affordable housing to their clients. \$15 million will be invested in the community housing sector over the next three years through the CMHC-Nova Scotia bilateral agreement under the National Housing Strategy. \$3.75 million will be used to fund projects under the new CHCBP. Any non-profit housing organization registered in Nova Scotia can apply to the program, although priority will be given to those operating units set to expire under the SHA in 2019/20 and throughout 2022. For more information, please contact communityhousinggrants@novascotia.ca or call 902-424-6177.



Community Housing
Transformation Centre
Centre de transformation
du logement communautaire

Created by CMHC, the Community Housing Transformation Centre (CHTC) is a pan-Canadian non-profit organization whose mandate is to help create a more entrepreneurial and economically viable model of community housing across the country. The Executive Director of the CHTC, Stephan Corriveau, met with a group of providers and stakeholders on January 30, 2020, in Sydney, to give an overview of the new national agency and the new Sector Transformation Fund, which offers funding to community housing organizations that are exploring new and more efficient business models. A new Community-Based Tenants Initiative that support tenant and member advocacy groups also provides funding to eligible projects. The CHTC has a budget of \$50 million to support capacity building and transformation in the community housing sector and they look forward to receiving applications from Cape Breton. For more information, visit their website at <https://centre.support>
You can also speak to someone at 1-833-360-3967.

The Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CAB) have released a five year Community Homelessness Plan. The Plan outlines key funding priorities, spending allocations and the intended community wide outcomes that will be achieved for the next four years. These outcomes align with the National Reaching Home Strategy and will be reported with other designated communities across Canada in a National effort to reduce homelessness. These outcomes also align with identified need based on a 2019 community consultation process.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Reaching Home Annual Allocation	\$795,211	\$785,211	\$817,502	\$817,002	\$817,002
Housing Services	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Prevention and shelter diversion	15%	15%	15%	20%	20%
Support Services	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Capital Investments	20%	20%	20%	15%	15%
Coordination of Resources and Data Collection	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Administration	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
TOTAL	\$795,211	\$785,211	\$817,502	\$817,002	\$817,002
Community Capacity Innovation-CCI Funding	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Community Wide Outcomes

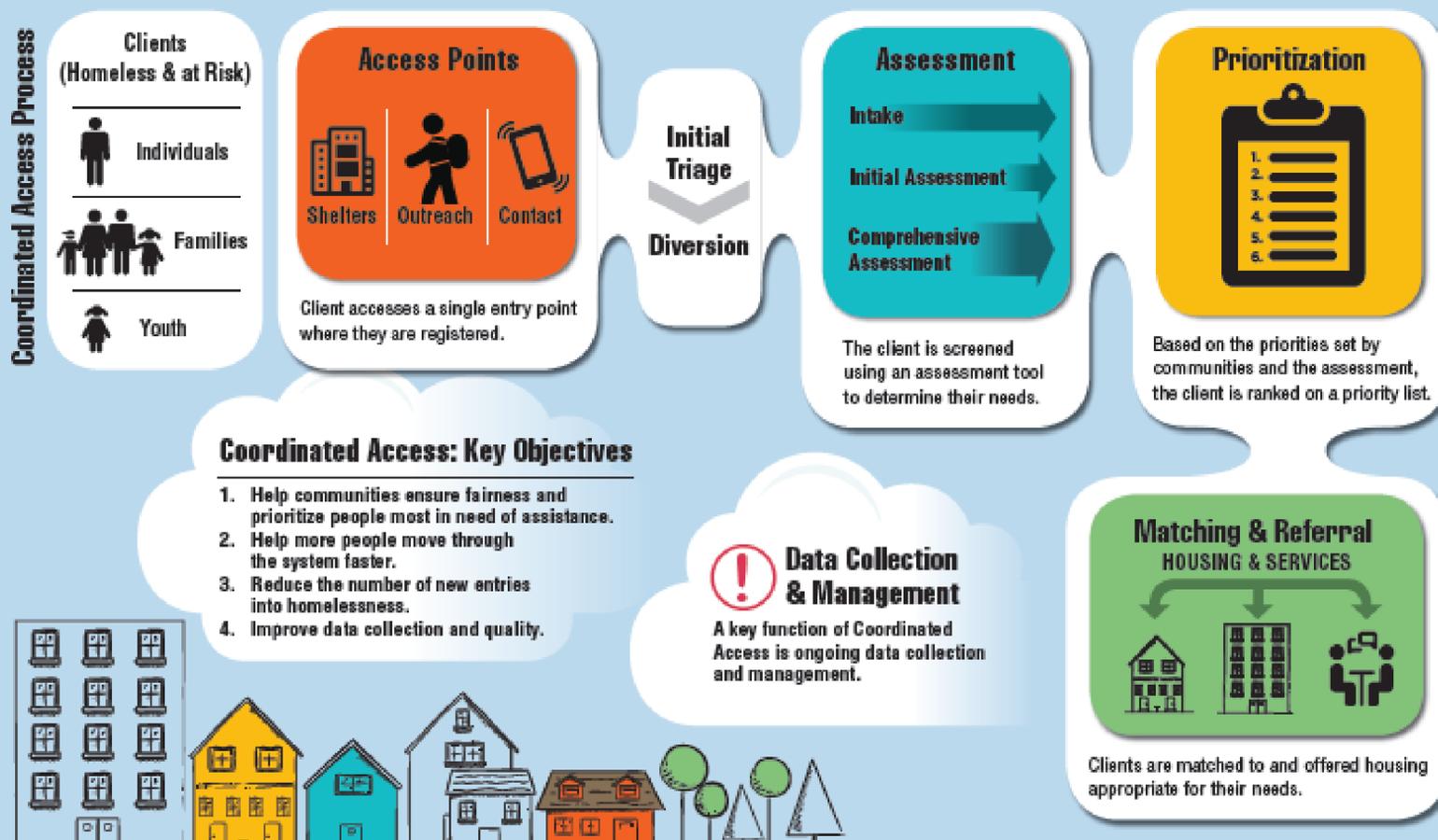
- Chronic homelessness in the community is reduced.
- Homelessness in the community is reduced overall and for specific populations.
- New inflows into homelessness are reduced.
- Returns to homelessness are reduced.
- New affordable units are created in the community (5-10 units by 2024).
- Reduce the number of individuals discharged from public institutions into homelessness.

NEW PROGRAM TO HELP COORDINATE HOUSING SUPPORT & SERVICES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A key priority from the Community Homelessness Plan is the Coordinated Access Program. Beginning in February 2020, the Ally Centre of Cape Breton received funding to lead the development and implementation of Coordinated Access (CA). Coordinated Access is a key element in moving towards an integrated systems approach with a common decision-making process and common goals, rather than a collection of service providers making individual decisions. It helps to highlight areas where there are gaps in services, reduces service duplication, and overall allows for seamless service delivery for individuals. CA focuses on a centralized database that collects and displays real-time data on clients; available housing and supports; clear access points of entry; common assessment; standardized protocols; and resources focused on supporting people to obtain and maintain appropriate and long term housing.

What is Coordinated Access?

Coordinated Access (CA) is a process through which individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, are provided access to housing and support services, based on a standardized set of procedures for client intake, assessment of need, and matching and referral to housing.



WELCOME!

The Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Groups welcomes newly hired manager of the CA program, Diane Penny. Diane will be responsible for building the sector's capacity in working together to reduce homelessness.



COMMUNITY HOMELESS SHELTER MOVES TO BIGGER LOCATION

The Community Homeless Shelter formally on Margaret St. has opened in a larger space on 106 Townsend St. in downtown Sydney. The number of beds has increased from 18 to 28 with room for more beds if needed. The new building is split into two separate spaces, one for women and one for men. Each space is fully contained with kitchen, living areas, bedrooms, laundry facilities and bathrooms. Funding for the New Hope Shelter move and expansion was cost shared between Housing Nova Scotia, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Cape Breton Community Housing .

The shelter also has on-site housing support workers who will be help people find and maintain affordable and long term housing.



AHHWG TO CONDUCT PiT HOMELESS COUNT IN APRIL 2020 IN CBRM

The Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Group welcomes Soleil Blinkhorn, newly appointed Point-in-Time Count Coordinator. Soleil currently works at Cape Breton Community Housing Association as a Youth Trustee in the Housing First Program. She will also be coordinating the 2020 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count which will be taking place throughout the CBRM in mid to late April. The Point-in-Time Count is a 24 hour period where volunteers collect data from shelters, transitional housing facilities, corrections, community drop in centers to get a snapshot of homelessness within our community. Volunteers also walk the streets and complete a survey with individuals experiencing homelessness to learn about their experiences. PiT count data gives a snapshot of local homelessness and provides another way to look at the issue.

This is the third Point in Time count in CBRM: In April 2016, 137 people were found to be experiencing homelessness in our community. In April 2018, 115 people were found. We are currently looking for volunteers to help with the PiT Count for 2020. If you are interested in learning more please contact Soleil at pit@cbcha.ca or (902) 578-6416.



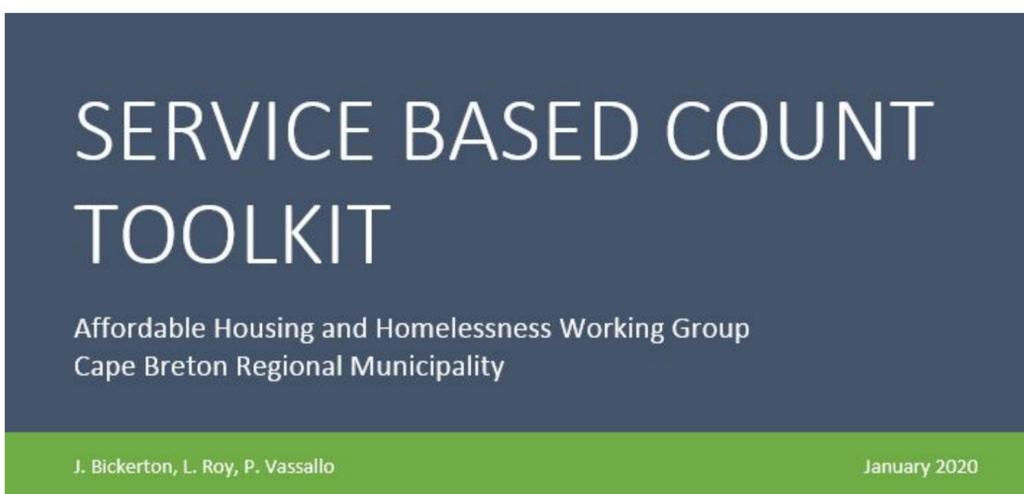
Soleil Blinkhorn, Point in Time Count Coordinator

NEW TOOLKIT TO HELP COMMUNITIES IDENTIFY HOMELESSNESS

The Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Group (AHHWG) has decided to develop a toolkit to document the study of counting and understanding homelessness and to share this study with others who are interested in doing the same in their community. The Service Based Count is a community development approach that works in partnership with many organizations and agencies to look at homelessness among the population that accesses services and supports in the community.

The CBRM AHHWG began in the fall of 2015 when the Community Advisory on Homelessness Board (CAB) provided funding for Cape Breton Community Housing Association to initiate a Housing First readiness plan for the area. The AHHWG decided to initiate a service based method of counting homeless individuals with the goal of deepening an understanding of hidden homelessness. The first Service Based Count was conducted during the month of April 2016. It identified 304 people experiencing homelessness. It was repeated in April 2018 and identified 278 people. In addition to this method, a 12 hour Point in Time (PiT) count was conducted in April 2016/18. The AHHWG found it was useful to compare the Service Based Count to the PiT to validate the results and deepen the understanding of hidden homelessness.

A key difference between the two counts is that the Service Based Count is an indirect estimation method that involves collecting information from service providers. This is a good toolkit for communities that want to study homeless.



Health Promoters from Public Health Sydney took the lead in planning and implementing the Service Based Count in 2016 and in partnership with Cape Breton University in 2018. The toolkit was written by Lilla Roy, Cape Breton University, Peggy Vassallo and Janet Bickerton, Public Health. For more information please contact Peggy Vassallo at peggy.vassallo@nshealth.ca or 902-563-2214.

OPEN HOUSE

Please join us for an open house as the **Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration** opens its doors in its new downtown location!



THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20
3-6 PM
319 CHARLOTTE STREET, SYDNEY
 (CROWELL'S BUILDING, 1ST FLOOR)

BASIC INCOME

LUNCH & LEARN

FEBRUARY 21, 2020

12:00 – 2:00 PM

Sydney Curling Club
 619 George Street, Sydney

Let's talk about a basic income for all! How could this reduce poverty in Nova Scotia?

Join a Lunch & Learn with your local volunteer Community Health Boards (CHBs) and Basic Income Nova Scotia.

Event hosted by the CHB Poverty Reduction committee.

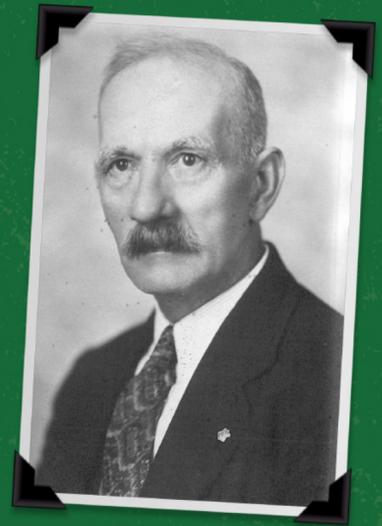
No cost to attend. Lunch provided.

RSVP to CHB Coordinator at Brenda.Moore@nshealth.ca or 578-8017

<https://www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca/>
<https://www.big-ns.org>



21ST ANNUAL J.B. McLACHLAN MEMORIAL LECTURE



The annual J.B. McLachlan Memorial Lecture honours the life and legacy of one of Cape Breton's and Canada's finest labour leaders. J.B. McLachlan was a Scottish immigrant and coal miner who arrived in Cape Breton in 1902 and helped lead District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America until he died in 1937.

Housing for All

by **Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid**

Thursday, February 27, 2020

11:30 am - 1:00 pm
 Verschuren Centre (atrium)

*Free and open to the public.
 Refreshments will be available.*



Catherine Leviten-Reid
 Associate Professor, Community Economic Development

Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid is an Associate Professor in the MBA in Community Economic Development program. Dr. Leviten-Reid does research on housing, community development, the social economy, and social care. Her work has been published in journals including the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Community Development, and VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations.



The Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Group:
 Cape Breton Community Housing Association, Public Health, Mental Health & Addictions, Cape Breton University, Community Advisory Board on Homelessness, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Cape Breton Regional Police Services, Department of Community Services, Housing Nova Scotia, The Ally Centre, New Dawn, Cape Breton County Seniors Council, Pathways Cape Breton, Elizabeth Fry Society.