

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION AND PLANNING PURPOSES

CLOSE TO HOME:
Housing First to Address Youth Homelessness
in the Cowichan Valley, BC



Youth Homelessness and Housing Needs Assessment Report

Prepared by:



Cowichan
Housing Association

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Executive Summary

The Need for Youth Housing First

Homelessness and lack of safe, adequate, affordable housing are critical issues for young people in the Cowichan Region. Research conducted over the past five years has emphasized growing concern around the increasing numbers of youth experiencing homelessness and lack of affordable housing; concurrently, the past five years has seen significant increases in issues related to poverty, mental health and substance use, particularly for youth.

Many of the youth in our community who experience housing instability are also struggling with one or more pressures including substance use, mental health concerns, isolation, discrimination, abuse, harassment, criminal involvement, poverty and sexual exploitation.

The longer a youth lives without stable housing, guidance and supports, the more likely these concerns will increase, potentially having long-term negative consequences. Research and evidence strongly support the premise that addressing homelessness has a demonstrable return on investment in terms of reduced financial cost to society and improved community health and social well-being.

The Close to Home Project was developed in response to these concerns that were voiced at many tables over the past few years, and in particular the Mental Health and Substance Use Collective Impact Table, where dialogue around these issues has led to the conclusion that adequate housing is a pre-cursor to moving forward and addressing community health and youth well-being in a meaningful way.

This project recognizes the sheer volume and complexity of agencies and organizations who are currently involved through different tables, or under umbrellas that are working on these challenges through a particular lens, and who would like to coalesce and combine their collective knowledge.

The aims of the Close to Home project are to develop a Housing First model for the Cowichan Region, and as a first priority, develop an Implementation Plan for Addressing Youth Homelessness, with a focus on the design, development and implementation of a supported youth housing/shelter facility.

There are many agencies in the Cowichan Valley providing services to those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless; however, we know that there are gaps in services regarding homelessness and particularly regarding youth homelessness. Conducting a Needs Assessment is an important step

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

(Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012)

toward formulating a coordinated community plan to address, prevent and ultimately end youth homelessness.

Youth Housing First Needs Assessment

This Needs Assessment has involved:

- Immersing ourselves in the research on youth homelessness and Best Practices
- Investigating the current situation of housing and services available for youth in the Cowichan Region, and
- Engaging with those who provide services and with youth around the region to hear different perspectives and insights on gaps and needs.

Such collaborative sharing has enriched our understanding of what youth need to help them move forward into stable and secure housing while keeping them safe and well. This report provides an in-depth overview of youth homelessness in Cowichan Valley and will be used as a tool in our undertaking to end youth homelessness.

Research: Youth Homelessness and Housing – How Did We Get Here?

Youth homelessness and precarious housing is a serious issue across Canada. Over the course of the year, there are between 35–40,000 young people who experience homelessness, and on any given night between 6–7,000. The issue of hidden homelessness and inadequately housed youth is more difficult to quantify.

The pathway to youth homelessness is neither linear nor experienced as a single event. Many youth experience multiple family ruptures and multiple episodes of living outside of the home (episodic homelessness). Youth facing homelessness or housing instability are highly vulnerable and therefore more likely to encounter further abuse, trauma, violence, exploitation and prostitution while on their journey to stable housing. Not surprising, many of these youth present with complex physical and mental health concerns as well as high levels of substance use, often beginning at an early age. The average age of sexual exploitation is 13.5 years old.

The systemic factors that make youth vulnerable to sexual exploitation is involvement in the child welfare and/or correctional systems, poverty, and racism/oppression; individual factors include a history of physical/sexual abuse, limited education, learning disabilities (including Fetal Alcohol Effects), dysfunctional family of origin, and little or no access to family and friends.

According to the National Youth Homelessness Survey (2016), those who leave home at an early age (16 or younger) are more likely to:

- Experience multiple episodes of homelessness. Over half of the 1,103 surveyed had stayed in more than one location the previous month and 10% had stayed in more than five places
- Be involved with child protection

- Be victims of crime once homeless, including sexual assault
- Have greater mental health and addictions symptoms
- Experience poorer quality of life
- Attempt suicide
- Become chronically homeless. Almost one-third of youth in the study were chronically homeless, meaning they were continuously homeless for more than one year, and 21.8% were episodically homeless, reporting multiple experiences of homelessness over the past three years

How are Other Communities Responding: Ten Lessons Learned

1. Youth needs differ from adult needs; and there are further differences between youth who are male, female, or transgender.
2. Lack of housing is a key barrier and increasing housing stock is critical for the long term.
3. Shelter, transitional housing and scattered site housing form a spectrum of housing that serve different youth needs.
4. Choice is a critical aspect for empowering youth.
5. Wrap-around services are integral. There is a need for intensive case management for youth with mental health and/or other challenges and there can be a lack of treatment options.
6. 24/7 staffing for youth shelters is important and no hard line for length of stay.
7. Youth engagement and youth voices are critical to ensuring that their perspectives are heard.
8. There will be a need for reducing barriers to youth for education, training, employment, financial and skill development opportunities.
9. In rural areas, work to find ways to bridge the transportation gap.
10. Start simply but simply start. One unit or many, the key is to start.

What We Heard from Youth in the Cowichan Region

Youth are incredibly diverse. They are male, female, agender, transgender, LGBTQ2S; they are Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, newcomers and life-long residents. They are even parents. Many youth are working to support themselves and are working to stay in school.

We conducted a survey of youth who are accessing supportive services and programs in the Cowichan Region. Of 107 youth surveyed, we learned:

- 45% were Aboriginal, almost half of whom live on reservation.
- 6.5% live in foster care, a group home or have a Youth Agreement. One youth had lived in multiple (over 20) foster care homes.
- Over half of youth surveyed indicated they have had problems with mental health issues and 25% with substance use. Just over 70% of youth living in foster care indicated they have had problems with mental health issues.
- 60% work *and* go to school.

- 14% are parents, 40% of whom have children in the foster care system.
- Just under 6% of youth were living on the streets (66% of whom were Aboriginal youth); 23% were couch surfing or living with relatives or friends.
- 13% have had problems with paying their rent.
- 16% have had problems with having a place to stay and 33% were worried about having a place to stay.
- 3 youth had stayed at a shelter at least once and another 7.5% said they had needed a shelter but were too young to access it. Half of these youth were Aboriginal.
- When asked what would help, youth said:
 - Housing (e.g. affordable, safe, for young families, easier access, youth rentals, housing registry, help finding housing)
 - Supports/Resources (e.g. mental health, substance use education, financial)
 - Employment & Training (e.g. work programs, higher wages, job search)
 - Youth drop-in Centre

Youth Voices: What would have helped:

Caring family and support.

A group that is very easily accessible and welcoming to everyone.

Central housing board or area with information on available housing and places for rent.

A way to get to work, and someone who would rent to me (too young and First Nations).

Youth Voices: what they would like to see:

More youth off the street and safe in homes.

Affordable housing, so that young folk do not have to move away from the community.

No one left behind.

A safe supportive family and home, with adults to help youth with hard times.

Substance education, general education on the chemical, neurological and physical ramifications of abuse/substances.

More opportunities for social connection.

Engagement with Service Providers

This project conducted an inventory of fifty-two agencies with programs that serve youth, either directly or indirectly. Many of these organizations offer multiple programs, which illustrates the amount of work that is being done and the hard work on the part of many who serve young people in the Cowichan Valley. Yet many service providers expressed concerns that more needs to be done.

We talked with staff from twenty-nine service agencies about their programming and services and their observations about needs and gaps regarding youth homelessness and housing. These organizations collectively identified over sixty youth who have received their services who are either absolutely or precariously housed.

When asked about the issues, a wide range of observations and concerns were shared along several topic areas.

Gaps Identified by Community Organizations

1. Increasing youth homelessness and lack of housing stock
2. Need for better community coordination and planning for youth housing and support services
3. Issues faced by Indigenous youth, LGBTQ2S and transgender youth
4. Issues faced by youth in care and youth transitioning out of care
5. Issues faced by youth with children
6. Increase in issues relating to mental health, substance use/misuse
7. Need for better information, engagement and connection

Needs Identified by Community Organizations

1. Shelter, transitional and permanent housing that meets the needs of a spectrum of youth
2. A 'System of Care' that provides for the range of supports needed to ensure youth are appropriately sheltered or housed and that youth perspectives and well-being is at the centre
3. Community responses and services supported by an overarching coordination structure with a central intake function
4. Participation and involvement strategies that recognize and provide for differing needs and that highlight the voices of youth
5. A process for sharing information and keeping everyone connected

Summary and Next Steps

Like many communities across BC, the Cowichan Region has identified a serious and pressing need to address youth well-being through ensuring that youth have safe, adequate and affordable housing, and adequate support systems and resources.

The purpose of this report has been to document the issue of youth homelessness and concurrent issues in the Cowichan Valley as a precursor to developing a locally relevant Youth Housing First approach.

Research and consultations undertaken have demonstrated the need for housing and supportive services for youth, using a Housing First approach. Of note is the clear agreement between what both youth and service providers have said are the issues and needs, and further, that these needs are closely aligned with Housing First for Youth models and experiences.

Community consultations and youth engagement have laid the groundwork for articulating a Cowichan Region Model. Our next step will be to build upon the research and consultations to articulate the Cowichan Region Housing First for Youth Model and lay the groundwork for implementation.

DRAFT

1. Introduction

1.1 The Close to Home Project

The Close to Home Project was developed in response to concerns about youth homelessness and housing that have been voiced at many community tables over the past few years, and in particular the Mental Health and Substance Use Collective Impact Table, where dialogue around these issues has led to the conclusion that adequate housing is a pre-cursor to moving forward and addressing community health and youth well-being in a meaningful way.

Housing First offers a model of best practice for addressing youth homelessness and housing issues. This approach prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can be supported to be well and flourish. To achieve this, we need a collective effort on the part of many agencies and organizations at all levels. This project recognizes the sheer volume and complexity of agencies and organizations who are currently involved through different tables or under umbrellas that are working on these challenges through a particular lens, and who would like to coalesce and combine their collective knowledge and direct their efforts.

The aims of the Close to Home project are to develop a Housing First model for the Cowichan Region, and as a first priority, develop a Plan for Addressing Youth Homelessness, with a focus on the design, development and implementation of a supported youth housing/shelter facility.

The Close to Home project is hosted and led by Cowichan Housing Association in partnership with Our Cowichan Health Network and Social Planning Cowichan, and in collaboration with the Mental Health and Substance Use Collective Impact Initiative (members include Cowichan Tribes, Island Health Authority, Cowichan Valley Division of Family Practice, First Nations Health Authority, H'ulh-etun Health Society, Halalt First Nations, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Warmland House, Our Cowichan Health Network and Social Planning Cowichan). The Close to Home Youth Housing project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homeless Partnering Strategy.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report will provide an overview of the issues surrounding youth homelessness and inadequate housing and draw upon consultations with community service providers and youth to identify gaps and needs to inform the development of a Housing First approach and Youth Housing Plan.

A Needs Assessment is a systematic process involving a selection of data collection methods to gather relevant information on service gaps whereby needs are identified and documented. The aims in conducting a Needs Assessment were to:

- Investigate the issues surrounding youth homelessness and housing
- Identify available resources for Cowichan Valley's youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Articulate the gaps and needs

This assessment also included an examination of three local communities – Kamloops, Nanaimo, Victoria – and the Infinity Project in Calgary, who have implemented housing strategies/programs to address youth homelessness.

Ultimately, the purpose of this report is to provide a starting point to inform the development of a community-driven, youth-focused plan to move forward in our endeavours to address and hopefully alleviate youth homelessness.

1.3 Methodology: Needs Assessment Process

Background Research

Background research was conducted to understand the context of youth homelessness in Canada, to help situate the issues and to understand the myriad ways youth become homeless or at risk of homelessness. The aim is to create a common understanding of the many barriers and challenges that at-risk youth face and the consequences to youth if the issue of homelessness is not addressed appropriately. Data and statistical information from existing reports on Cowichan Valley are also included in this report to provide a local context and to present a community profile of the region.

Case Studies and Best Practices – What are Other Communities Doing? What Works?

Research was gathered on how other communities are addressing youth homelessness and three sample community programs were selected to inform the needs assessment and provide insight into what works and the challenges experienced in other communities in BC. Data was gathered from websites and then in-depth interviews were conducted to investigate best practices. Two interviews took place in person (Nanaimo and Victoria) and a third was conducted by phone (Kamloops). In-depth interviews lasted approximately 2 hours. The key findings and challenges identified in those case studies are presented in Section 4.

Consultations with Local Community Agencies and Service Providers

Twenty-nine in-person interviews were conducted with staff and administrators of local community agencies, government and with indirect service providers (e.g., libraries) that provide and/or oversee programs and services that local youth may access (see Appendix A for List of Agencies contacted). Most of the interviews were conducted with two or three project team members. Interviews typically were one to two hours in duration. These semi-structured interviews provided:

- An overview of the resources for youth in the Cowichan Valley.
- The known issues and concerns that youth face.

- Perspectives of service providers about what is needed in the community to help provide and guide our youth into housing stability.

Four focus groups were conducted in person with local service providers who work more directly with at-risk youth (i.e., BikeWorks/ArtWorks youth outreach team, Warmland shelter, Cowichan Tribes Youth Centre, Cowichan Valley Youth Services), with some follow-up emails or telephone calls. Most sessions ran approximately one to two hours. In-depth conversations with these outreach workers and service providers allowed for a richer discussion and review of what services youth in Cowichan Valley currently have (and what they choose to access) and what they need (that they would likely access).

Engagement and Consultations with Youth

Youth outreach and engagement was approached through engaging youth to engage other youth via surveys and events and through a survey focused on youth who are currently accessing services and supports.

i. Youth Engaging Youth

Safe Youth Cowichan (SYC) is a group of young people who have been working over the past four years to engage at-risk youth in innovative community initiatives, are very interested in the issue of youth homelessness and housing needs, and view these issues along the continuum of youth mental health and well-being. SYC are currently undertaking two activities that provide synergies for the Close to Home Project and have added a dimension of homelessness and housing to these activities.

- A survey to explore youth mental health issues includes questions about homelessness and housing issues. The survey took place over summer months and fall.
- A regional youth forum and community development design initiative that presented questions about youth homelessness and housing.

ii. Focused Youth Survey

A Youth Survey was administered in partnership with CMS Food Bank (serving Cobble Hill, Mill Bay and Shawnigan Lake), Cowichan Basket Society, Canadian Mental Health Association (U-Fix it BikeWorks and ArtWorks and Youth Outreach), Cowichan Lake Community Services, Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association, Cowichan Valley Open Learning Cooperative, Hiiye'yu Lelum Society House of Friendship (Bladerunners and Outreach), and Island Savings Centre Youth Drop-in Centre. The survey was preceded by presentation of information and protocols to each agency that agreed to host. Six locations administered the survey to the youth they serve, and in four locations, it was administered by Close to Home Project Staff.

2. Background Context: Youth Homelessness

2.1 What is Youth Homelessness?

Definitions

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2016) offers the following definition:

“Youth homelessness” refers to the situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence.

Youth homelessness is a complex social issue involving young people who need adequate supports to help them move forward in their lives. From a Human Rights perspective: All young people have the right to the essentials of life, including adequate housing, food, safety, education and justice.

“By failing to implement more effective strategies to address youth homelessness, we are undermining the human rights of these youth.”

(Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey, 2016)

Youth Definitions/Age Ranges

Various age ranges are used to define youth. Some agencies and programs have services for youth as young as 12 or 13 years old, while some include youth up to age 30. Youth can ‘fall through the cracks’ being denied services or programs that could be beneficial to them simply because they do not fit a particular age group or age range. Similarly, when emergency shelters are only for those 19 years and older, youth too young to access this service can be left on their own, making them vulnerable to shelter options that put them at risk. As several Cowichan Valley service providers have noted, the physical age of a homeless youth does not always accurately reflect their developmental stage.

Local service providers have also pointed out that when youth are defined or categorized with a wide age range (e.g., 13 to 24 years) it is important to consider there will be significant differences with the needs, circumstances and development between pre-teens, teens, adolescents and young adults. Some homeless youth are also parents and may have their children with them in precarious housing or in the care of government protection services. Homeless youth who have had negative experiences in government care during their childhood may be reluctant to involve child services for assistance with their own children, even when battling homelessness, housing instability, mental health or substance use issues.

2.2 Homelessness: The Canadian Context

Canada's Homeless Population

According to the *State of Homelessness in Canada 2013*, as many as 1.3 million Canadians have experienced homelessness or extremely insecure housing at some point during the previous five years. Furthermore, the number of Canadians who experience homelessness on any given night is estimated to be approximately 30,000 individuals. Broken down this includes:

- Unsheltered (outside in cars, parks, on the street) – 2,880
- Staying in Emergency Homeless Shelters – 14,400
- Staying in Violence Against Women Shelters – 7,350
- Provisionally Accommodated (homeless but in hospitals, prison or interim housing) – 4,464

The *State of Homelessness in Canada 2016* increased the estimate of Canadians who experience homelessness on any given night to be 35,000 individuals and estimated that at least 235,000 Canadians access homeless emergency services or sleep outside in any given year. The actual number is predicted to be much higher because many homeless are 'hidden' in that they are staying with friends or family or otherwise not accessing homeless services.

Hidden Homeless

Often referred to as 'couch surfing' as this includes people who are temporarily living with friends, family or acquaintances because they have nowhere else to live and no immediate prospect of permanent housing.

In 2014, 8% of Canadians aged 15 and over reported that they, at some point in their lives, had to temporarily live with family, friends, in their car, or anywhere else because they had nowhere else to live—a situation referred to as 'hidden' homelessness. (Statistics Canada, 2014)

According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2016), there is no reliable data on the hidden homelessness in Canada at the national level and very little at the community level; they are not visible or accessing homeless-serving shelters/services so are difficult to enumerate. Researchers suggest that most homeless people fall into this category. It is estimated that as many as 50,000 people could be hidden homeless on any given night in Canada.

At Risk of Homelessness

Although not technically homeless, many individuals or families whose current housing situations are dangerously lacking security or stability are considered to be at risk of homelessness (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

The *State of Homelessness in Canada 2013* estimates that roughly 380,600 households are living in severe housing need (living in poverty and spending more than 50% of their income on rental housing).

Homelessness is a problem larger than the number of people counted on the streets or in shelters.

Mental Health

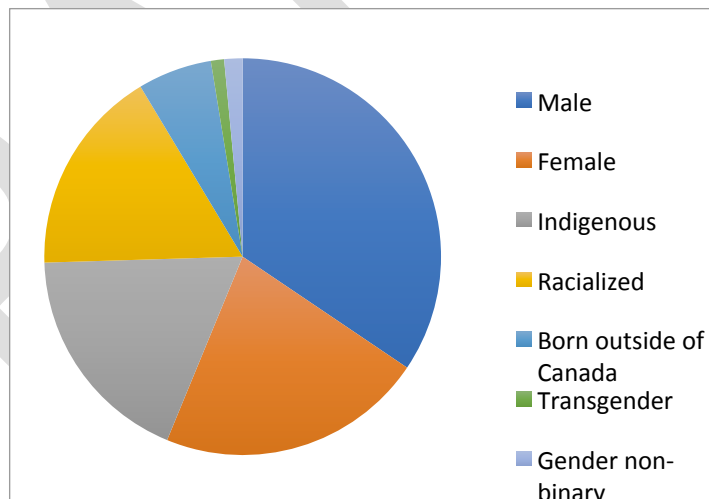
According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2017), approximately 30-35% of those experiencing homelessness and up to 75% of women experiencing homelessness have mental illness and those with mental illness experience homelessness for longer periods of time.

2.3 Youth Homelessness in Canada

Youth Homelessness

Young people who are homeless (ages 13-24) make up approximately 20% of the homeless population in Canada. Over the course of the year, there are between 35–40,000 young people who experience homelessness, and on any given night between 6–7,000. (Gaetz et al., 2014).

- 57.6% identified as male
- 36.4% identified as female
- 30.6% identified as Indigenous
- 29.5% identified as LGBTQ2S
- 28.2% identified as members of racialized communities
- 10.1% were born outside Canada
- 2.5% identified as gender non-binary
- 1.8% identified as transgender



Youth Hidden Homelessness

More than any other group faced with housing challenges, youth homelessness is more hidden and difficult to quantify. According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2016), youth may be twice as likely as adults to be part of the hidden homeless population. This group is more likely to be constantly moving around couch surfing between friends, family and acquaintances than to be visibly

homeless. Homeless youth often do not want to be seen and are more likely to avoid homelessness services out of discomfort or a fear of authorities and/or stigmatization.

Youth at Risk of Homelessness

When looking at youth homelessness it is also important to consider the youth who may be technically housed (living with caregivers) but are living in situations that are unsafe, unhealthy, abusive, not nurturing or supportive, or the housing itself is precarious (e.g., no heating, excessive mould problems, structurally unsafe). Youth at risk of homelessness are more likely to experience episodic homelessness as well as mental health concerns (Gaetz, 2014).

2.4 Pathways to Homelessness

Causes of Homelessness for Youth

The causes of, or pathways to, youth homelessness are varied, intricately connected and complex. According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2012), the pathway to youth homelessness is neither linear nor experienced as a single event. Many youth experience multiple family ruptures and multiple episodes of living outside of the home (episodic homelessness).

The 2016 National Youth Homelessness Survey (NYHS) states that to address youth homelessness in Canada we need to understand the intersecting individual, relational, institutional and structural factors that cause some youth to become homeless. As the largest pan-Canadian study on youth homelessness this national survey offers the most comprehensive data to date on Canadian youth's experiences of homelessness.

Youth facing homelessness or housing instability are highly vulnerable and therefore more likely to encounter further abuse, trauma, violence, exploitation and prostitution while on their journey to stable housing. Not surprising, many of these youth present with complex physical and mental health concerns as well as high levels of substance use, often beginning at an early age. The average age of sexual exploitation is 13.5 years old.

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation (2014), the systemic factors that make youth vulnerable to sexual exploitation is involvement in the child welfare and/or correctional systems, poverty, and racism/oppression; individual factors include a history of physical/sexual abuse, limited education, learning disabilities (including Fetal Alcohol Effects), dysfunctional family of origin, and little or no access to family and friends.

*“One of the highest risk factors that predispose youth to becoming involved in the sex trade is homelessness, which often occurs when the youth can no longer live at home and do not find the services provided by the child welfare services meet their needs.”
(Lutnick, 2016; Scheirich, 2004)*

Individual and Relational Factors

Breakdown of conflict in relationships within the home is the main cause of youth homelessness. Some important points reported in the National Youth Homelessness Survey (2016):

- Many of the youth chose or were forced to leave an unsafe, abusive, neglectful or otherwise untenable situation.
- 63.1% of surveyed homeless youth experienced childhood trauma and abuse. A total of 51.1% reported experiencing physical abuse as a child or adolescent, 24% reported experiencing sexual abuse and 47.5% reported experiencing other forms of violence and abuse.
- 57.8% of youth indicated that they had some kind of involvement with child protection services in their life.
- Identity-based conflict after a young person comes out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or 2-spirited (LGBTQ2S). Although there is little data on this group, evidence suggests this is a growing population of homeless youth.
- Bullying and learning disabilities impact school engagement and achievement. Most homeless youth (83%) reported experiencing bullying at school either 'sometimes' (37%) or 'often' (46%). Therefore, homeless youth are approximately four times more likely to have experienced bullying than Canadian youth in general. In the study, 50% reported being tested for a learning disability in school. Difficulties experienced at school can create conflict in the home.
- Youth involved with criminal activity can create family conflict and lead to homelessness.

The *Youth Rights! Right Now! Ending Youth Homelessness: A Human Rights Guide* (2016) reported:

- Abuse in the home was a factor for 61% of young females who are homeless.
- Mental health issues and/or substance use experienced by the youth or someone else in their household can lead to homelessness. Most homeless youth face mental health challenges creating additional risks and obstacles to an already difficult experience.

Institutional Factors (System Failures)

Many young people become homeless because they have slipped through the cracks of the systems designed to help them – such as child protection, health and mental health care and juvenile justice. For instance, when young people choose to leave their government placement or they are discharged (e.g., due to non-compliance) or they age out of care and become an 'adult,' they are lacking adequate and ongoing supports. According to the 2016 National Youth Homelessness Survey:

- 57.8% of youth had been involved with child protection services. On average, youth became involved with child protection services at 8.5 years old and for one-third (31.5%) their involvement began before the age of 6.
- Indigenous youth (70.5%) were more likely than youth who were members of racialized communities (43.5%) and white youth (55.51%) to report involvement with child protection services. Factors such as family conflict, poverty and discrimination can play a role.

Structural Factors

This category captures issues that are out of the control of a young person and largely originate outside of the family at the community or societal level (social and economic conditions).

- Poverty and insufficient incomes to match market housing
- Inadequate education
- Unemployment
- Discrimination (homophobia, transphobia, bullying, racism)
- Lack of housing stability

Housing Instability and Episodic Homelessness

According to the NYH Survey (2016), homeless youth often have multiple episodes of housing instability and homelessness.

- 75.9% of survey participants had experienced multiple episodes of homelessness, and 37% of those had more than five experiences
- 40.1% of participants were under 16 when they first experienced homelessness
- Those who left home before 16 were more likely to experience multiple episodes. Of those, 50% reported five or more episodes of homelessness
- Indigenous youth reported higher rates of multiple experiences (80.4%)
- LGBTQ2S youth reported higher rates of multiple experiences (80.2%)

3. Consequences of Youth Homelessness

*Importantly, young people who experience forms of adversity prior to becoming homeless, such as child protection involvement, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect, were more likely to experience poorer mental health, suicide attempts, lower quality of life, and negative psychological resilience.
(National Youth Homelessness Survey, 2016)*

3.1 Consequences of Early Experiences of Homelessness

According to the National Youth Homelessness Survey (2016), those who leave home at an early age (16 or younger) are more likely to:

- Experience multiple episodes of homelessness. Over half of the 1,103 surveyed had stayed in more than one location the previous month and 10% had stayed in more than five places
- Be involved with child protection
- Be victims of crime once homeless, including sexual assault
- Have greater mental health and addictions symptoms
- Experience poorer quality of life
- Attempt suicide
- Become chronically homeless. Almost one-third of youth in the study were chronically homeless, meaning they were continuously homeless for more than one year, and 21.8% were episodically homeless, reporting multiple experiences of homelessness over the past three years
- Experience bullying

3.2 Other Consequences to Youth (regardless of age of homelessness)

Youth who experience homeless are vulnerable to:

- Declining mental and physical health. Of the youth surveyed, 85.4% reported high symptoms of distress, with 42% having at least one suicide attempt and 35.2% having at least one drug overdose requiring hospitalization.
- Poor nutrition and nutritional vulnerability. Most youth surveyed did not have access to good quality food on a regular basis.
- Low school participation. The drop-out rate for homeless youth is 53.2% compared to less than 9% for average Canadian rate. Interestingly, 73.9% homeless youth would like to return to school.
- Unemployment. Just over 75% of youth reported being unemployed compared to an unemployment rate of 13.3% among youth in Canadian public.
- Just over half of all youth surveyed were not in employment, education or training.
- Criminal victimization. Of the homeless youth, 68.7% reported being a victim of a crime compared to 19% of Canadians in any given year. Only 7.6% of Canadians report being a victim of a violent crime compared to 59.6% for homeless youth.
 - Young women (37.4%) and transgender/gender non-binary youth (41.3%) reported higher levels of sexual assault over the previous 12 months.

3.3 Impacts of Youth Homelessness

“Homelessness impacts everyone. From the costs of emergency shelters, to institutional health and psychiatric services and the criminal justice system, to the individual physical and mental health impact on every homeless person, the causes and effects of homelessness cost all Canadians dearly.”
(Gaetz, 2012:14)

The annual economic costs of responding to homelessness in Canada through emergency responses such as shelters, policing, and emergency medical services is estimated to be as high as \$7.05 billion, annually (Gaetz et al, 2013).

A 2005 study of four Canadian cities estimated that annual cost of institutional responses (prison, detention centres, and psychiatric hospitals) was \$66,000 to \$120,000 per person (Pomeroy, 2005).

The cost gradient for responding to homelessness is highest for institutional uses, moderately high for emergency services and lowest for supportive and permanent affordable housing (even with supports).

3.4 The Case for Stable Housing and Supports

Studies have shown that investing in homelessness prevention costs less than it does to keep someone on the streets.¹ By focusing on prevention and housing (with supports, if necessary), we would not only be responding appropriately and compassionately to a problem that harms individuals, families and communities, but we would also be saving money (Gaetz, 2012).

A Toronto study found that the average monthly costs of housing people while they are homeless were \$4,333 for provincial jail, or \$10,900 for a hospital bed while the average monthly cost for a shelter bed was \$1,932, rent supplements \$701 or social housing \$199.92 (The Wellesley Institute, 2007).

If supportive housing can be provided to chronically homeless people with serious mental illness and addictions, the cost of housing is substantially offset by the reduced use of acute care services when people have stable housing and ongoing support (Poulin et al., 2010).

People who are housed when they leave prison are less likely to reoffend. The John Howard Society estimates that by providing supports to someone who would otherwise become homeless the life-time savings to the system is estimated to be \$350,000 per person (Stapleton et al., 2010).

Housing First approaches, even though they involve rent subsidies and in some cases intensive case management, can save money. Overall, for high service users, the annual cost savings to all of these systems is \$9,390 per person, per year (Goering et al., 2012).

4. How are Communities Responding?

4.1 Focus on Prevention

Across Canada, many communities are working to develop preventative and responsive programming to address youth homelessness.

The pan-Canadian report National Youth Homelessness Survey (Gaetz et al., 2016) looked in depth at

the situations of youth across Canada and stressed the importance of shifting from crisis response to focusing on prevention.

The components of work recommended include:

Family first – supporting young people at risk of homelessness through family reconnection, to assist young people to remain in their communities, near schools, peers, and families.

Early intervention – Place-based early intervention programs bring services and supports directly to young people through school, community centres, help lines, and centralized intake.

School-community partnerships – School-based prevention approaches can help the education system identify and quickly intervene when young people are at risk of homelessness or dropping out of school.

Transitional supports for young people leaving care – Effective strategies must involve partnerships between government, child protection services, and experienced community-based service providers to transform the system for these youth.

4.2 Housing First for Youth

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) adapts the successful Housing First model to meet the needs of developing adolescents and young adults. As a program intervention, it means moving youth out of homelessness as quickly as possible with no preconditions. Young people are provided with a range of housing options, including returning home (with supports), supportive housing, transitional housing, and scattered site independent living.

Key to this approach is that young people are provided with a range of supports that will help them maintain housing, learn life skills, have positive relationships with peers and adults, and re-engage with school, employment training, and/or employment. Shifting to HF4Y means providing homeless youth with the same housing and wrap-around supports that would help any young person make a successful transition to adulthood.

(Gaetz et al., 2016: 13)

Housing First as a Philosophy

The following beliefs form the foundation of a Housing First philosophy:

- Safe, affordable and appropriate housing is a basic human right.
- Regardless of circumstance, people need to be housed immediately and then supported from a strengths-based and person-driven perspective.
- Due to the intensities of trauma, mental health and substance use often seen with those who experience homelessness or housing instability, a Housing First approach should be viewed through a harm-reduction, recovery-oriented, trauma-informed lens.
- Respecting participant choice fosters learning and self-determination.
- Replacing complicated and complex policies with flexible models allows for a more individualized approach that recognizes each person as unique and valuable.

Housing First for Youth Models Must Consider:

Youth

Youth require additional supports to successfully move into adulthood.

The intersecting and multi-layered complexity of housing instability for youth and the diverse pathways into homelessness necessitate an individualized developmental approach.

Indigenous Culture

In Canada, different cultures often co-exist within the same community. Identifying, understanding and appreciating cultural differences allows for a more holistic approach when considering housing options and is an important dimension to integrate when designing Housing First models for diverse populations.

Urban-Rural

The housing needs and considerations between urban and rural settings can vary considerably and many Canadian communities include a mix of both. On-reserve housing for Aboriginal people similarly may be in urban or rural settings. Transportation and access to services are examples of key issues that must be addressed when considering a Housing First model that involves rural communities.

Five Core Principles of Housing First for Youth

- 1) Young people should be provided with immediate access to permanent housing with no housing readiness requirements
- 2) Approach should be based on positive youth development orientation
- 3) Focus must be on youth choice and self-determination
- 4) Young people need individualized and client-driven supports (program model that fits the needs of the individual youth)
- 5) Social and community integration is key (support in learning how to develop adult relationships, working with employers and landlords, educational supports, community involvement – to help them move forward in their lives)

4.3 Case Studies and Best Practices

Tillicum Lelum Safe House for Youth, Nanaimo

Tillicum Lelum's Youth Safe House (YSH) is a short-term protective accommodation on an emergency basis for at-risk youth. The YSH "promotes a safe, secure, stable and nurturing environment for our youth". Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Society has partnered with the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) and Island Health for the YSH. Thirteen years ago, the YSH started off as a four-bed facility, and has progressed into a larger facility that has eight beds for youth ages 12 to 18 years old. The YSH mainly support the youth with housing and service referrals.

Youth can be referred to the YSH through self-referral or MCFD referral; the majority of the referrals are self-referrals. The YSH is full 20% of the year, and about 60% of the time they have 4 empty beds available. There is 24/7 staffing, which allows around the clock self-referrals and support if needed. YSH has an open-door policy; although it has an Aboriginal focus, it is open to any youth; majority of the youth who use the YSH are non-Aboriginal.

Each youth develops their own "positive plan" for what they will do during the weekdays. Their plan could be to attend school or work, or to search for housing. The staff monitor how the plans are proceeding, by working with the youth themselves and, when appropriate, contacting their school to check on attendance.

The YSH is available to youth either for one night or for however long they need. Each youth has unique needs and issues; therefore there is no set time limit for length of stay. YSH has found that one month is the best time for youth; it is enough time for them to stabilize and find housing, especially since MCFD processes can take a couple of weeks.

Staff may identify family supports as a primary challenge and offer family mediation or recommend other resources. YSH can also refer youth to the Tillicum Lelum “family finder” service for more supports. This may comprise involving other family members who are able to take care of the youth temporarily.

Two gaps were identified by YSH staff: transportation and youth engagement. The YSH is located away from the downtown core of Nanaimo for safety reasons, but creates barriers for transportation. The YSH currently has no day programs, because the youth are typically out during the day working on their positive plan. However, in September of 2017 they will be creating a position specifically for outreach and this will increase youth engagement. Outreach services will include keeping in touch with current clients, previous clients, and outreach to at-risk youth who may need to use the YSH.

Threshold Housing Society, Victoria BC

Threshold Housing Society (THS) was founded in 1990 through a church group that had a house given to them. THS has grown to include a full spectrum of housing, starting with shelter, transitional, supportive, and ending with independent living. Their mission is: “Threshold Housing Society is committed to creating a safe and stable home environment for our community’s vulnerable youth by offering acceptance, transitional housing, life skills, and opportunities to realize their potential and ultimately — hope for the future.”

Their main source of funding comes from BC Housing and they receive funding from the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) as well. There are four THS houses, situated outside of the downtown core of Victoria, in the areas that include Victoria, Oak Bay, and Saanich. Through their housing spectrum, THS houses 52 youth at a time, and receive an average of 137 referrals per year. THS does not own or manage any of these properties.

To help address youth homelessness, THS takes the approach of “self-reliance through long-term supportive transitional housing”. THS recognizes that youth needs differ from adult needs, and therefore believe in youth-focused strategies to end homelessness that recognize the dynamic needs of youth.

THS estimates that it takes about six months for youth to settle and stabilize once in transitional and supported housing. Once stable, youth receive referrals to appropriate resources (e.g., counselling), and have a support worker to monitor their progress. Getting back to school or back to work is considered progress; this progress happens through referrals to other resources in the community, but also through youth engagement within THS.

THS support workers focus on rapport building with the youth and this can take many forms in order to engage with the youth (e.g., going for coffee, driving youth to school or work, etc.). THS will also engage the youth with fun activities, such as camping and tubing in the summer months. Other services that THS includes are: Ready to Rent (residential tenancy education), financial budgeting, and building like skills and independent living skills. The common theme is that youth have left parental guidance too early, therefore need to learn like skills.

A Way Home (AWH) Kamloops

In early 2014, a community group called the Youth Supportive Housing Committee emerged to focus on the issues of youth homelessness and youth transitioning out of foster care. At the same time, Kamloops had been named a pilot community in a national initiative aimed at ending youth homelessness. Research with homeless and at-risk youth was being undertaken in the community, in a partnership between the City of Kamloops, the Thompson Nicola Cariboo United Way, the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society, the Kamloops Homelessness Action Plan, and a group of youth called Youth Against Youth Homelessness.

The result was A Way Home -- a plan to end youth homelessness in Kamloops. The full plan was released in June 2014, and the grassroots Youth Supportive Housing Committee adopted it as their own and became the A Way Home Committee. A Way Home is guiding the plan's implementation and leading the work to end youth homelessness in Kamloops. Their work has been so successful and ground breaking that the national initiative that provided funding in the first place has named themselves after the Kamloops movement.

A Way Home Kamloops Plan has three main components:

(<http://www.kamloops.ca/socialdevelopment/homefree/awayhome.shtml#.Wb7oda0ZO8U>)

STRATEGY	RECOMMENDATIONS
PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster youth resilience and meaningful community engagement Work with schools to educate youth about homelessness and available supports Promote family mediation and support Ensure effective support for youth aging out of government care Ensure youth are not discharged into homelessness Coordinate the activities of youth-serving organizations to best serve youth
HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Housing First project for youth Develop transitional housing for youth Develop transitional housing for Aboriginal youth
SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote relationship-based approaches to supporting youth Explore innovative models of peer-based support and mentorship Provide excellent outreach services to connect youth with housing and support Ensure adequate services for youth with mental health issues Enhance services for LGBTQ youth and foster public awareness Enhance services for Aboriginal youth and foster public awareness Ensure that education, training, and job skill development are accessible to youth

AWH Kamloops is also one of several demonstration sites for The Upstream Project: a school-based prevention program that identifies youth at-risk and provides them with the wrap-around supports they need to maintain housing and avoid school drop-out. This program is adapted from The Geelong Project (TGP). With TGP, all young people, in any given school, are evaluated using an evidence-based assessment tool.

AWH's housing development happened as opportunities arose. Housing started off as 5 youth units; from there, they expanded and partnered with Kamloops Native Housing. Through this partnership, one unit was for Aboriginal girls specifically. Young mothers who might lose their children due to housing instability are set up in furnished apartments. From there, they are moved through to permanent housing. The Canadian Mental Health Association's Kamloops Branch serviced adults through Phoenix programming; they allotted two housing first suites for AWH youth. Other opportunities, such as two-bedroom apartments, came up at different times in AWH's access. Some of these were used for corrections transitional housing.

AWH have program suites, which are available to people for a one-year term. These suites are subsidized as well as sponsored by local businesses and sponsors. Once youth are housed in these units, programming is client-driven. AWH conducts a "wellness plan" adapted to the youths' needs, for both physical and mental health. Through these wellness plans, youth develop their goals, and can be as simple as "I will eat 2 times today."

AWH conducted a pilot project addressing the highest at-risk youth who struggle with mental health and substance use. This was zero-barrier housing, and was only staffed 8 hours a day. One of the strengths of AWH's project is the inter-agency support that happens through their Wrap Force. A vital part of this was having the ICM team join the Wrap Force; this added the clinical supports that they were lacking. AWH Kamloops identified two key aspects: understanding that youth housing is vastly different than adult housing, and that youth themselves need to be involved in decisions and planning. They engage youth as paid positions to allow for skills building, leadership skills, and potential career development.

One of the challenges AWH has faced is the difficult process of exposing hidden homelessness. To address this challenge, AWH encourages survey conductors to still ask the questions even if youth state they are not homeless. AWH conducted a pilot project addressing the highest at-risk youth who struggle with mental health and substance use.

Infinity Project (Boys and Girls Club of Calgary)¹

In March 2009, the Boys and Girls Club Calgary launched The Infinity Project, a youth-focused Housing First program funded by the Calgary Housing Foundation (CHF). Utilizing the Housing First model adopted by Calgary's 10-Year Plan, the project provides youth (aged 16 to 24) with a

¹ (Excerpted from: Homeless Hub (Date) Housing First in Canada Housing First Case Studies. Calgary Alberta The Infinity Project)

permanent home in the community of their choice and the supports they need to maintain housing and become self-sufficient. Since 2009, the project has supported 58 youth in becoming housed.

The following Housing First principles are the foundation for The Infinity Project's services and programs:

- Housing is a human right. Youth do not earn their home through good behaviour and do not need to be 'housing ready' to be successful in maintaining their home. Youth should not have to change residences when their service needs change.
- 'Choice' and 'voice' in one's own life is essential.
- All youth need time and practice to learn to be good neighbours and to gain the skills and confidence necessary to live as self-sufficient adults.
- Supportive, accepting relationships that youth can count on are essential as youth move out of homelessness and street life.
- Youth need financial and instrumental supports to get started.
- All people, including youth, benefit from connection with community supports and resources that offer a safety net in times of trouble.

Program Framework

The Infinity Project works with up to 30 youth at any given time. The anticipated length of participation in Infinity is two years, with the recognition that each youth requires a unique plan with a unique timeline. Approximately 5-10 youth rotate in and out of the program every year. During intake, consideration is given to 'right matching'; matching the youth's needs with Infinity's services.

Transition planning, which refers to both the transition into adulthood as well as transition out of Infinity and homelessness-focused services, begins at the time of intake. As part of this transition plan, youth are supported to complete the necessary concrete tasks (as listed in the Graduation Checklist) in preparation for independence. Participation in the Infinity Project is voluntary and youth retain the right to self-discharge from support services and from the housing that has been arranged for them. Refusal of support services does not result in housing loss.

Housing Support

Infinity uses a scattered-site model that promotes individual community living where a youth can feel at home and find support long past program involvement. Infinity staff work with youth to find affordable, permanent housing quickly and provide the financial support, through CHF funded rent supplements, to access that housing. Housing Support Workers (HSW) assist youth in communicating with landlords, reviewing lease agreements, securing convertible leases, responding to landlord concerns, developing budgeting skills and helping youth access additional financial supports, employment, training, schooling, parenting and life skills. In the event of eviction, staff works to rehouse the youth as quickly as possible and minimize the time of housing instability.

Many youth in the Infinity program lack healthy supportive relationships in their lives. The

relationship built with their HSW is vital to the youth's movement out of street involvement and homelessness. Using Outcome Star, an outcome and goal-planning tool, the HSW assists the youth in identifying individual goals and developing action plans in a range of areas including:

Motivation and taking responsibility; a range of life skills; social networks and relationships; drug and alcohol misuse; physical, emotional and mental health; managing tenancy and accommodation; and avoiding criminal offending.

The Infinity Project is fully funded by CHF. The total annual budget for the April 2012 to March 2013 fiscal year was \$608,221.00. The project serves 30 youth at a time.

Key Lessons:

1. Choice: Young people need to be able to choose the neighbourhood they live in so that they can access other services including education, employment and being close to family.
2. Housing Supply: Although Calgary City Council has recently approved plans to increase the housing stock, there is still a lack of safe and affordable housing in Calgary. Youth face additional barriers to accessing housing because many landlords are hesitant to rent to youth, especially those under the age of 18. Not having a home makes it difficult for youth to attend school and maintain a job.
3. Intensive Advocacy and Assistance for Youth Under 18: Infinity staff found that youth under 18 require more intensive advocacy, as well as assistance with education and employment, system and benefit navigation, as well as health and wellness training.
4. Financial Assistance: They also require extra financial assistance, including longer and additional rental and living subsidies.
5. Services to Address Complex Mental Health Needs: An increasing number of youth are also struggling with mental health and addiction challenges, requiring intensive case management and ongoing support to help them become self-sufficient and avoid a return to homelessness.
6. Small Caseloads: Maintaining small caseloads in recognition of the developmental stages of youth has been beneficial in stabilizing and maintaining housing, as well as working towards goal planning.
7. Reduce Barriers: Need for reducing barriers to youth for education, training, employment, financial and skill development opportunities.

The Youth Plan also identified three goals:

- Reduce the length of shelter stays for youth;
- Implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); and
- Ensure that no more than 10% of young people served by Housing First programs return to homelessness.

5. Cowichan Valley Community Profile

5.1 Overview

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) on Vancouver Island is part of the traditional unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples. This region stretches from the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island to the Strait of Georgia (Salish Sea) and southern Gulf Islands to the east. It reaches north to Ladysmith and south to the Malahat/Mill Bay area. Over 83,000 people live in the region with the majority of the population along the eastern side of the island. 11,615 or 14% are youth aged 15 – 29 years.

- 4500 are youth (2275 males, 2225 female) aged 15 – 19 years
- 3515 are youth (1855 male, 1665 female) aged 20 – 24 years
- 3600 are youth (1800 male, 1795 female) aged 25 – 29 years

(Statistics Canada, 2016)

There are four municipalities – City of Duncan, Town of Lake Cowichan, District of North Cowichan and the Town of Ladysmith, as well as numerous unincorporated communities, a number of Gulf Islands and many First Nations reserves. The seven local First Nations are: Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lake Cowichan First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Malahat First Nation, Penelakut Tribe and Stz'uminus First Nation.

This project conducted an inventory of fifty-two agencies with programs that serve youth, either directly or indirectly. Many of these organizations offer multiple programs which illustrates the amount of work that is being done to serve young people in the Cowichan Valley.

5.2 Homelessness in the Cowichan Region

Overview

Three Point in Time Counts undertaken in the Region in 2014 and 2017 illustrate rising numbers of homeless individuals and families.

2014 Regional Homelessness Count (Social Planning Cowichan, 2014)

- 58 Absolutely Homeless
- 76 Relatively Homeless

2017 Duncan Point in Time Winter Count (Emmanuel, 2017)

- 73 Absolutely Homeless (75% male, 35% Aboriginal)
- 71 Relatively Homeless (transitional housing, couch surfing, etc.)

Summer 2017 Point in Time Count (Emmanuel, 2017)

- 89 adults Absolutely Homeless + 2 youth + 4 children
- 62 Hidden Homeless surveys
- 39 At Risk

6. Youth Homelessness and Housing: What do we know?

6.1 Youth Service Providers Meetings 2016

In June and July of 2016, Cowichan Housing Association hosted two community meetings to discuss youth homelessness that were attended by over 50 agencies. At this early stage, the issue of youth homelessness was identified as a serious issue. Participants shared observations including:

- Youth are defined as 13-25 years of age, but service providers have seen homeless youth as young as 12 years of age.
- Most youth do not identify as homeless, as their housing situations are precarious, which can be couch surfing, temporarily living with friends or family, trading favors for housing; these youth do not have a secure long-term house to live at. Because these living situations can be privately known, it can be difficult to measure youth homelessness, in turn making it harder to resolve the issues.
- Some of the issues that have lead youth to homeless situations are trauma, different forms of abuse, and simply their home situations are not ideal. It is believed that homelessness is a systems failure.
- Our approach is reactive versus preventative, and some see approaches such as shelters as a Band-Aid and temporary solution.
- At a local recreational centre, youth sleep in the stairwells, and enter the building as soon as it opens. They use the building as shelter in the day, use the washroom to clean themselves up, and use the free Wi-Fi.
- On the streets, youth feel a sense of community and/or family, which is possibly something they were not receiving in their home. In the national homeless population, youth are the fastest growing group, between the ages of 16 and 24. To prevent chronic homelessness, we need to start with youth homelessness to avoid expansion of the homeless population.
- The visible issues arising with youth on the streets are: drug use, drug dealing, drug overdoses, and improper needle disposal. Drug overdoses have been increasing, with fentanyl the biggest concern.
- These problems are not only concerns for the youth involved in these street activities, but for youth walking in this area and their safety.

6.2 2017 Summer Point in Time Count

The 2017 Summer Count (Emmanuel, 2017 Draft Report) surveyed 24 youth between the ages of 17 to 25. Of these youth, 8 were Absolutely Homeless, 14 were Hidden Homeless and 2 were at-risk of homelessness. 11 were male and 13 were female. 15 identified as First Nations, Metis or Non-Status Aboriginal. 18 youth had lived in the Cowichan Region for five years or over. See Table 1 (page 28) for more details.

Table 1: 2017 Point in Time Count – Youth Surveys

	Absolute Homeless	Hidden Homeless	At Risk
Number	8	14	2
Age Range	17 to 24	18 to 25	22 to 25
Male – Female	4 – Males 4 - Females	6 – Males 8 - Females	1 – Male 1 - Female
Number First Nations	2 - Metis	11 – First Nations 1 – Non-Status	1 – First Nations
Education	Grade 10 to 1 yr University	Grade 8 to 12	Grade 8-9
Foster Care	5 – had been in FC	9 – Foster Care	1 – Foster Care
When First Experienced Insecure Housing	Between: 15 and 22 yrs Time: 1 to 6 yr Average: 2.4 yrs	Between ages: 7 and 21 Time: 1 to 17 yrs Average: 16.6	Between: 21 and 24 yrs Time: 1 yr Average: 1 yr
How Long lived Here	1 person for a month, 6 have lived here 5 yrs to always	2 people 7-9 months, 10 always lived here – one for 7 yrs, one for 22 yrs.	2 - Always
Why Housing loss – unstable	MH – 4 people Conflict/Abuse – 4 Evicted - 2	Conflict/Abuse – 8 Unable to pay rent – 7 Addiction – 6 Mental Health – 4 Unsafe - 4	2 – Unsafe 1 – Unable to pay rent
Income	3 – employed 3 – Informal – self- employed 3 – IA & Disability 2 – Friends Family 2 – No Income	6 – Disability 6 – Income Assistance 4 - Other	1 – Disability 1 – Income Assistance

Youth identified services that they are unable to access including:

- Local Doctor and dentist
- Assistance with eye glasses

- Youth advocate
- Transportation
- Counselling
- Rehabilitation
- Income tax assistance
- Regaining ID
- Assistance with housing and getting children back

Youth also identified what would have helped them to be adequately housed:

- Employment
- Low-cost housing and support for housing
- More support for those with disabilities and mental health issues
- Substance abuse counselling and income assistance
- Identification
- More services and better information about services
- Community support
- Nowhere to go after foster care
- Higher Benefits
- Mental health services, detox centre for youth that is continued on
- Foster system better overseen and extend age of help
- Not to have to choose between food or a home
- Experienced prejudice
- Advocacy with Landlords
- Affordable housing for a family of 5
- References for good landlords for safety reasons
- Rent Smart to be accepted more widely
- Landlords not renting to people who have children

Some additional challenges that youth identified were:

- Ministry not helpful. Discrimination based on age (17 yr old – in foster care)
- Low-priced housing
- Difficult to work and maintain a bed at Warmland
- Youth rental units with support
- People take advantage of you when you are homeless. (Sister – stay here if you do sex.)
- Longer time in supportive housing
- Many places in Duncan have bug problems and are unsafe for children. If a house doesn't have bugs they have drugs
- Multiple issues wrong with apartments and they are not getting fixed

6.3 Consultations with Service Providers

Point in Time Counts are just that – a formal count on a given day that identifies individuals and surveys them to document housing status. Consultations with local service providers indicated that there are many more youth who are either absolutely homeless or precariously housed.

Appendix A provides a table of community organizations who were consulted about their programming and services and their observations about needs and gaps regarding youth homelessness. These organizations collectively identified over 60 youth who have received their services who are either absolutely or precariously housed.

Quantifying the extent of youth homelessness is a challenge. However, we know that:

- Twenty-four (24) youth were surveyed during the Summer 2017 Point in Time Count. These youth were between the ages of 17 to 25. 8 were Absolutely Homeless, 14 were Hidden Homeless and 2 were at-risk of homelessness. 11 were male and 13 were female. 15 identified as First Nations, Metis or Non-Status Aboriginal. 18 youth had lived in the Cowichan Region for five years or over.
- Of 33 Connecting Youth surveys collected to date, seven youth identified as being without shelter or a place to stay sometimes or often.
- Of 107 youth surveys collected by CHA, 6% are living on the streets and 25 are living with friends and family; 34% have been worried about having a place to stay.
- During December 2016 – September 2017, Canadian Mental Health Association Outreach Team was in contact with 71 youth (30 female and 41 male, 15-24 years of age. It is estimated that:
 - 2 of these youth are living in very unstable conditions (street entrenched/living rough, no place to go and sleeping on the streets)
 - 24 youth are precariously housed: staying with friends/family sometimes, staying on the street sometimes (unstable)
 - 38 are Unknown: 38
 - 6 are housed
- CMHA also has 8-9 youth up to 25 years old who are in transitional housing.
- Seventeen youth were provided with homeless prevention services through House of Friendship.
- Approximately 25 youth use the services of the Basket Society on a given day.

Several other service providers have observed youth in situations of homelessness and precarious housing, for example:

- *1 of our youth is precariously housed; has 2 kids of her own; she was evicted recently.*
- *We know of a couple youth in the past who were having trouble at home, sleeping on couches and with friends, and ended up in the extreme weather.*

- *We know of about 5 youth who are camping by the river. In winter time, there is a lot of couch surfing, but the number is bigger; many people stay in overcrowded conditions.*
- *We know of 10 at-risk youth who hang out in the corners of our building.*
- *One of clients is homeless and she has a 14-year-old child.*
- *3 youth have just aged out of the ministry; they are currently moving through our housing spectrum.*

When asked about the issues, a wide range of observations and concerns were shared including:

- Lack of a safe, no barrier place for youth to be or stay
- Lack of rentals to house youth
- Systemic barriers
- Lack of culturally appropriate housing (need for larger family housing plus smaller bachelor units)
- Inadequate, crowded and sometimes 'slum' housing
- Safety issues, especially with exploitation of young women
- Youth not attending school
- Mental health issues
- Drugs, alcohol use and addiction
- Lack of services (e.g., sobering centre serves ages 17 and up)
- Isolation
- Abuse by landlords
- Youth in Care
- Lack of transportation
- Youth in care who age out
- Youth reluctance to stay in group homes
- Lack of trauma and addictions support
- Barriers to access to programs
- Youth living off reserve and barriers to access
- Lack of information for youth

The following is a summary of Gaps and Needs Identified by community agencies.

6.4 Gaps and Concerns Identified by Community Organizations

1. Youth Homelessness and Lack of Housing Stock
2. Community Coordination and Planning for Youth Housing and Support Services
3. Issues Faced by Indigenous Youth, LGBTQ2S and Transgender Youth
4. Issues Faced by Youth in Care and Youth Transitioning out of Care
5. Youth with Children and Families
6. Mental Health, Substance Use/Misuse
7. Information, Engagement and Connection

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND LACK OF HOUSING

- Increase of youth sleeping outside/ living on the streets. Increase in youth couch surfing (hidden homelessness).
- Reports of youth under 19 coming to Warmland (adult shelter not appropriate for youth 19-25.)
- Extreme shortage of affordable rentals is a driver for homelessness and precarious housing.
- Youth living in inadequate or unsafe housing (e.g., overcrowded, unsafe, no heat, mould or pests, landlord issues).
- Lack of youth-specific housing options (youth require specific housing options that are different from adults, including housing for youth with children).
- Lack of support to help youth attain and maintain housing (e.g., adequate income, housing subsidies, help with identification, references, etc.).
- Reports of youth who are homeless and/or precariously housed experiencing sexual exploitation and sexual assault.
- Indigenous and LGBTQ2S youth of particular concern.

COMMUNITY COORDINATION AND PLANNING FOR YOUTH HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- More/better coordination between agencies and programming needed.
- Community Agencies' staff time is limited for attending and participating in research and planning. There is a sense of too much time being taken to be ready for action.
- It is important to have Aboriginal leadership in moving forward with any youth housing plans/projects.

ISSUES FACED BY INDIGENOUS YOUTH

- High numbers/over-representation of Indigenous Youth in homelessness counts (absolute, precarious, and at risk)
- Concerns about housing conditions, overcrowding, couch surfing, lack of housing on reserve.
- Indigenous youth face multiple barriers to accessing off-reserve housing and programs (lack of references, low/no credit, discrimination).
- Indigenous youth have a higher rate of involvement in Child Protection.

ISSUES FACED BY LGBTQ2S AND TRANSGENDER YOUTH^{2, 3}

- LGBTQ2S youth are over-represented in the homeless youth population and under-represented in emergency shelters.
- Youth report having difficulty finding shelters where they feel safe and respected and they are often subject to discrimination and violence.
- Transgender youth face higher rates of discrimination than any other youth group.

ISSUES FACED BY YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT CARE

- Youth aging-out of government care need housing, housing readiness/life skills and financial stability.
- Increase in youth who are technically housed with government home – group home or foster family – but choose not to stay there.
- Some youth in care may be ready to live in supported or independent housing.
- Youth in care who are not in school need a place to be during the day.

ISSUES FACED BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH FAMILIES

- Concerns about young people who have children and who need adequate housing both in terms of health and well-being, and to ensure that they can keep their children.
- Concerns about young mothers whose children are apprehended due to lack of adequate housing.
- Concerns about children and youth living with parents/families who are homeless who may not be accessing services out of worry that their children may be apprehended.

² <http://homelesshub.ca/blog/making-lgbtq2s-shelter-spaces-safe-inclusive-and-affirming>

³ <http://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/1-3-transgender-youth-will-be-rejected-shelter-account-their-gender-identityexpression>

CONCERNS ABOUT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- Observations of increasing number of youth experiencing mental health issues. Observing younger ages having challenges.
- Specific concerns re: transgender youth and risk of suicide.
- Need for increasing options and/or access to supports.

CONCERNS ABOUT YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE/MISUSE

- Observed increase in substance use by youth, along with an increase in toxicity of drugs and ease of accessibility. Sometimes youth are overusing drugs in order to stay awake, stay safe or stay pain-free.
- Youth express concerns about accessing help (feeling judged and uncomfortable).
- Concern about how addiction can isolate youth from their support networks.
- Concern about youth incurring debts due to their addictions (potential link to criminal activity).
- Concern for youth “parenting” their parent/caregiver with substance use issues.

NEED FOR BETTER YOUTH INFORMATION, ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTION

- Concern for youth who lack connections to family, to each other, to school, to community.
- Concern about isolation of youth – either due to social anxiety, depression, substance use or simply because they lack transportation.
- Youth/Families: parents with children/youth living homeless may not be accessing needed services or supports due to concerns about having children apprehended.
- Youth unaware of all the programs and services available in the community. Difficulty accessing youth to inform them of events/activities/resources. Youth not comfortable asking for help.
- Trend of increasing numbers of younger children accessing Duncan drop-in centre and fewer teenagers attending. Older youth not wanting to hang out with much younger youth (and vice versa).

6.5 Needs Identified by Community Organizations

1. Shelter, transitional and permanent housing that meets the needs of a spectrum of youth
2. A System of Care that provides for the range of supports needed to ensure youth are appropriately sheltered or housed and that youth well-being is at the centre
3. Community responses and services supported by an overarching coordination structure with a central intake function
4. Participation and involvement strategies that recognize and provide for differing needs and that highlight the voices of youth
5. A process for sharing information and keeping everyone connected

HOUSING OUR YOUTH

Youth Respite/Shelter/Safe House/Transitional Housing

- Low/no barrier, to meet youth “where they are at”
- Open and staffed 24/7
- Trauma-informed practice
- Culturally safe and appropriate for Indigenous youth and LGBTQ2S
- Safe place to receive nutritious food, warm clothes, shower
- Safe and appropriate for young women/girls (including young Moms)
- Safe and appropriate for those who identify as female

Youth-appropriate Supported and Independent Housing Options

- Low/no barrier supported housing options for youth with different needs (Housing First Model)
- Affordable rental housing (build, renovate, repurpose)
- Alternative housing options (e.g., secondary suites, tiny homes, controlled tent cities, container homes)
- Wrap around services without pre-conditions
- Tenant advocacy, mediation and education to prevent evictions
- Transportation (both on and off reserve)

Integrate a Youth Lens that includes

- Indigenous Youth
- LGTBQ2S
- Gender

BUILD A SYSTEM OF CARE

Youth Housing First - Service Philosophies and Interventions

- Youth need to be met “where they are at” with no/low barriers to service and no conditions in order to access treatment or housing
- Housing First models that align with trauma-informed harm reduction, client-centred, strengths-based approaches to service, that is more suited to youth and appropriate for the Spectrum of Youth

Centralized Intake for At-Risk/Vulnerable Youth

- Coordination between agencies and outreach
- Adequate Case Management for each youth to connect them to the right community resources
- Youth ACT and ICM teams

System of Care

- Need multi-tiered system that attends to the spectrum of youth needs from shelter and housing to mental health and well-being
- Critical that youth are involved in decisions

WRAPPING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Support to Transition Out of Care

- Community-based support to help youth to prepare for aging out of care

Skills Building and Training

- Life skills training (e.g., cooking, budgeting/finance, laundry)
- Housing readiness training (e.g., Ready to Rent courses)
- Educational options (e.g., upgrading high school or post-secondary preparation, literacy skills)
- Communications and conflict resolution
- Employment readiness training (resume writing, interviewing)
- Computer literacy and access to computers and internet
- First Aid, Food Safe and other certificates

Mental Health and Substance Use Supports (including prevention, treatment and Interventions)

- Outreach and Supports (24/7) for youth dealing with mental health and addictions (either themselves or those they live with)
- Low/no barrier access to treatment options (e.g., safe injection sites, sobering/detox centre, treatment centres, harm reduction)
- Prevention education and supports

Counselling and Education Supports

- Increase access to counselling services
- Liaison and partnerships with schools to identify and support youth who are experiencing challenges (including elementary schools)
- Increase community education on mental health and substance use to dispel myths and reduce stigma
- Conduct Community Outreach, Education and Awareness for Youth on Domestic Violence and Sexual Exploitation
- Relationship supports for parents and youth, foster parents, group home providers and/or social workers

Healthy Activities

- Increase options for drop-in for youth (including evenings and weekends)
- Increase promotion of local activities for youth (using appropriate technologies/social media)
- Examine and address supply of age-appropriate programming and appropriate age groupings (e.g., with sports, games, activities)

PROVIDE FOR A RANGE OF PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT**Community Organizations Options for Participation and Involvement**

- Identify different options and tiers for involvement in planning

Youth Leadership is Key**Youth Engagement with/by Youth**

- Create opportunities for youth to engage with vulnerable youth
- May increase youth comfort in asking for help
- Need youth voice on youth services

Interim Action Plan

- Identify immediate actions that can be taken to address youth homelessness

INFORMATION AND LINKAGES ARE KEY**Youth Resources Online**

- Current and future youth-oriented services/activities/events are promoted online via social media, preferably updated by youth

Youth Hub or Neighbourhood House in Central Area

- Safe place for youth to learn about services and resources (e.g., counselling, treatment, housing, finances)
- Place for youth and workers to build relationships & connections

6.6 Consultations with Youth

Youth Outreach and Engagement

The project partnered with Safe Youth Cowichan (Social Planning Cowichan) to join up activities related to youth engagement and researching youth issues. Safe Youth Cowichan (SYC) members were very interested in the issue of youth homelessness and housing needs, and viewed these issues along the continuum of youth mental health and well being.

SYC conducted a survey to explore youth mental health issues that included questions about homelessness and housing issues. This research will be completed in spring of 2018.

Community Awareness

In October 2017, SYC Youth undertook a community education initiative to create awareness youth homeless in the Cowichan Valley through displays at two local Starbucks and the local library, as well as postcard infographic handouts administered in busy local areas

Dialogue Sessions: Connecting Youth

During September, 2017 the project partnered with SPC on Connecting Youth dialogue sessions and workshops that engaged and consulted with youth to inform strategies designed to address issues around youth mental health, substance use and assess personal/neighbourhood safety.⁴ During September, 200 youth were engaged in workshops. A key preliminary result was the identification of a housing project by youth, some of whom have lived experience, in a local high school. The Close to Home Project has continued to liaise with this group to explore leadership and involvement of youth in the work to address youth housing needs.

Housing Concerns for Youth Survey

A Youth Survey to capture views of youth who are accessing programs and services was administered by the Close to Home Project in partnership with CMS Food Bank, Cowichan Basket Society, Canadian Mental Health Association (BikeWorks and Youth Outreach), Cowichan Lake Community Services, Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association, Cowichan Valley Open Learning Cooperative, Hiiye'yu Lelum Society House of Friendship and Island Savings Centre Youth Drop-in Centre. The survey was preceded by discussion around information and protocols to each agency that agreed to host.

⁴ Project partners for Connecting Youth include the Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative, School District 79, Cowichan Housing Association, Canadian Mental Health Association, Cowichan Intercultural Society, the Inclusive Leadership Collaborative, Warmland Shelter, RCMP, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society and the Community Safety Advisory Commission of the CVRD.

Youth Survey Highlights

We conducted a survey of youth who are accessing supportive services and programs in the Cowichan Region. Of 107 youth surveyed, we learned:

Youth are incredibly diverse. They are male, female, Agender, Transgender, LGTBQ2S; they are Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, Newcomers and life long residents. They are parents with young children. Many youth are working to support themselves and are working to stay in school at the same time.

- 45% were Aboriginal, almost half of whom live on reservation.
- 6.5% live in foster care, a group home or have a Youth Agreement. One youth had lived in multiple (over 15) foster care homes.
- Over half of youth surveyed indicated they have had problems with mental health issues and 25% with substance use. Just over 70% of youth living in foster care indicated they have had problems with mental health issues.
- 60% work AND go to school.
- 14% are parents, 40% of whom have children in the foster care system.
- Just under 6% of youth were living on the streets (66% of whom were Aboriginal youth); 23% were couch surfing or living with relatives or friends.
- 13% have had problems with paying their rent.
- 16% have had problems finding a place to stay and 33% were worried about having a place to stay.
- 3 youth had stayed at a shelter at least once and another 7.5% said they had needed a shelter but were too young to access it. Half of these youth were Aboriginal.
- When asked what would help, youth said:
 - Housing (e.g. Affordable, for young families, easier access, youth rentals, housing registry, help finding housing)
 - Supports/Resources (e.g. Mental health, substance use education, financial)
 - Employment & Training (e.g. Work programs, higher wages, job search)
 - Youth drop-in Centre

Cowichan Youth Housing Survey Results Summary

Demographics	Percentage Respondents
Age - youth were ages 11-29	
• 15 years or younger	21.5
• 16 to 18	38.3
• 19 to 24	29
• 25+	11.2
Gender	
• Female	42.1
• Male	53.3
• Transgender	0.9
• Agender	0.9
• LGBTQ2S+	13.1
Aboriginal Background	
• Total Aboriginal	44.9
• Do not have status cards	33.4
• Live on reservation	47.9
• Would like to live on reserve but there is no available housing.	8.3
Where do youth live?	
• Duncan	42.9
• Cowichan Lake Area (Lake Cowichan and Youbou)	24.3
• Central Cowichan (Crofton, Chemainus, Saltair)	8.4
• Southern Gulf Islands (Thetis and Penelakut)	8.4
• North Cowichan (North Cowichan, Maple Bay, Sahtlam)	7.5
• South Cowichan (Cobble Hill, Malahat, Cowichan Bay, Shawnigan)	7.5
Education & Employment	
• Do not go to school	20.6
• Graduated from High School	10.3
• Work part or full time	35.5
• Youth who work and go to school	60.5
Young Parents	
• Youth who are parents	14
• Aboriginal	93
• Have children in the foster care system	40
• Have their children living with friends or family	13.3
How Long in Cowichan Valley	
• 1 year or less	6.5
• 2-5 years	13.1
• Entire life	49.5
Children in Care	
• Youth in foster care home, group home, or have a Youth Agreement	6.5
Housing Situations	
• Live on the streets	5.6
• Of those on the streets are Aboriginal	66.7
• Transitional or supportive housing	2.8
• Aboriginal in Transitional or supportive housing	66.7

• Couch surfing	0.9
• Live with Relatives or Friends	23.3
Problems with:	
• Mental Health	55.1
• Having a place to stay	15.9
• Substance use	25.2
• Being able to afford rent	13.1
Stable Housing	
• Worried about having a place to stay	33.6
• From Central Cowichan and worried about having a place to stay	75
Shelter	
• Have stayed at a shelter	2.8
• Needed to stay at a shelter but were too young to access	7.5
• Aboriginal Youth who needed to stay at a shelter but were too young	50
Themes- “If you’ve been without a place to stay, what would have helped?”	Number
• Housing (e.g. affordable, for families, youth rentals, housing registry, help finding housing)	19
• Supports/Resources (e.g. natural and community support, financial, mental health)	11
Themes - “What do you want to see for Youth in Cowichan?”	Number
• Housing (e.g. Affordable, for young families, more youth housing, apartments, easier access, shelter)	30
• Supports/Resources (e.g. Mental health, substance use education, financial)	19
• Social & Recreational Activities (e.g. groups, places to hang out, indoor skate park)	16
• Employment & Training (e.g. Work programs, higher wages, job search)	7
• Youth drop-in Centre	4
Themes - What is Needed	
• Family housing, more housing	
• Natural supports and options in schools	
• Housing and supports	
• Natural supports and affordable housing	
• Social and recreational activities, employment, and youth drop-in centre	
• Recreation/activities, and mental health support	
• Youth housing options and a shelter	

7. Summary and Next Steps

Like many communities across BC, the Cowichan Region has identified a serious and pressing need to address youth well-being through ensuring that youth have adequate supports and safe, adequate and affordable housing.

The purpose of this report has been to document the issue of youth homelessness and concurrent issues in the Cowichan Valley as a precursor to developing a locally relevant Youth Housing First approach.

Research and consultations undertaken so far have demonstrated the need for housing and supportive services for youth using a Housing First approach. Community consultations have laid the groundwork for articulating a Cowichan Region Model.

Our next step will be to build upon the research and consultations to articulate the Cowichan Region Housing First for Youth Model and Housing Plan, and lay the groundwork for implementation.

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Appendix A: Agencies Contacted and Focus Groups Conducted

1. Canadian Mental Health Association
2. Cowichan Valley Youth Services (formerly Community Options Society)
3. Cowichan Basket Society
4. Cowichan Family Life Association
5. Cowichan Green Community
6. Cowichan Independent Living Resource Centre
7. Cowichan Intercultural Society
8. Cowichan Lake Community Services
9. Cowichan Neighborhood House Association
10. Cowichan Women Against Violence
11. Discovery Youth and Family Services
12. Duncan Community Corrections
13. Duncan Mental Health
14. Duncan United Church
15. Hiiye'yu Lelum Society, House of Friendship
16. Halalt First Nations
17. Island Health
18. Island Savings Centre - Youth Drop in Centre
19. Ladysmith Community Justice Program
20. Ladysmith Resources Centre Association
21. Literacy Now Cowichan
22. Lyackson First Nations
23. M'akola Housing
24. Malahat Nation
25. Meals on the Ground
26. Ministry of Child and Family Development
27. North Cowichan
28. RCMP- North Cowichan/Duncan Detachment
29. Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre

Focus Groups Conducted:

1. Cowichan Valley Youth Services
2. Cowichan Tribes - Youth Drop in Centre
3. Canadian Mental Health Association - Warmland
4. U-Fix it BikeWorks and ArtWorks - Youth Outreach Team

Appendix B: Inventory of Youth Services

Organizations: Youth-Specific organizations.

Organizations: Have Youth-Specific programs, but not entirely a youth organization.

Organizations: Not Youth-Specific, but might serve youth.

Organization	About
Alano Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a safe and casual space for people in recovery. Kitchen provides a small menu of low-cost items. Christmas dinners open to everyone.
Alcoholics Anonymous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemainus: United Church, 9814 Willow Street (at Alder). Wed: 7pm Cobble Hill: 3141 Cameron-Taggart Road Fri: 8pm Duncan: <i>Alano Club</i>, 201-107 Evans Street Daily: 12:00pm; Sat: 8pm; Sun: 7:30pm; <i>Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre</i> 5768 Allenby Road Mon: 12pm; <i>New Life Baptist Church</i> 1839 T'zouhalem Road Thu: 7:30pm; <i>Duncan United Church</i> 246 Ingram Street Fri: 8pm Women's Meetings: <i>Old Cowichan Station School House</i> 2375 Koksilah Road Mon: 7pm; <i>Duncan United Church</i>, 246 Ingram St. Sat: 10:30am Ladysmith: Meetings most evenings at Ladysmith Resources Centre Association (LRCA), lower meeting room, 630-2nd Avenue. Lake Cowichan: <i>Cowichan Lake Community Services</i> 121 Point Ideal Road, Mon: 7:30pm
BC Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive Housing Program: offers options for people at risk of homelessness, women at risk of violence, seniors and people with disabilities Rental Assistance Program: Provides eligible low-income working families with assistance to help with their monthly rent payments. Must have gross family income of \$35,000 or less, have at least one dependent child, and been employed at some point in the last year. Housing Registry: The Housing Registry is a centralized database for housing providers that contains current applicant information. Housing providers can use this to find tenants when units become available. Individuals searching for subsidized housing can submit an online application form for housing units in developments managed by Housing Registry members Subsidy Program: Financial support for subsidized housing is based on "rent-geared-to-income". Low-to moderate income tenants pay rent based on the gross income of the household rather than on the market rate. Affordable rent is defined as costing no more than 30% of a household's total gross monthly income, subject to a minimum rent that tenants will be asked to pay based on the number of persons

	living in the home
Canadian Mental Health Association- Cowichan Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caulfield Place: Operated by Island Health. Provides two-year transitional housing for people with mental health and substance use concerns. • Disordered Eating Specialized Services for Youth: age 13 to 19, who struggle with all types of disordered eating - from anorexia nervosa to severe obesity. We provide client-centered counselling for the individual and the family in collaboration with local community and regional and provincial services. • Family Capacity Program: Rainbows free support group for children who have suffered significant loss. Affordable counselling for children and youth and their families. • U-Fix It BikeWorks and ArtWorks: Tue-Fri: 2:30pm-5:30pm; Sat: 12-4pm, and open to all youth. BikeWorks provides opportunities to learn about bike repairs and ongoing maintenance plus through sweat equity, youth can earn credit for their own set of wheels. ArtWorks Youth have the opportunity to participate in a variety of group and individual arts and craft projects. • Youth Outreach Team: conducts youth outreach to youth ages 14-24 who are homeless or precariously housed and guide them to community resources and assistance. • Warmland: 30 emergency shelter beds and has 24 transitional housing units. Residents have access to meals and showers. Some in-house weekly services include nurse practitioner and mental health and addictions counsellor. • Offers 24 minimal-barrier, transitional housing units to provide housing for those who have difficulty finding stable housing. • Free Sunday Brunch: 11am–1pm. • 7:30am-5:30pm Washrooms/Showers/Free Phone for local calls. Showers available 8am-5pm every day for men and women. • Homelessness Outreach Workers: assist adults who need assistance accessing community services, finding and maintaining housing and setting goals for improving their living situation. • Sobering Centre: can help youth 17-25, open 24/7 • Overdose prevention site: for all ages
Cedars (Cobble Hill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a full continuum of addiction recovery programs for men and women designed to provide a framework for sustainable recovery, recognizing that everyone’s journey to recovery will vary
Clements Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities. Provides a Home Sharing program for contracted employees who share living space and responsibilities as roommates. A Supported Independent Living program provides in-home support to enable individuals to maintain their chosen living situation • Sundrops Centre for Child Development: provides early intervention

	and therapeutic services for families with children/youth living in the Cowichan Valley from Malahat to Chemainus and the surrounding area, including Lake Cowichan and Penelakut.
CMS Food Bank Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food hampers for residents of Cobble Hill, Mill Bay and Shawnigan Lake available every Tue: 10am-2pm. Bread also available every Tuesday.
Coast Salish Employment and Training Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists member Nations to gain employment training or attain funding that will allow them to be employable. • CSETS offers daycare programs, and adult and youth employment strategies.
Cowichan Basket Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily meals and phone usage, and a camping hamper once a month
Cowichan Community Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized kitchen groups provide a safe, empowering environment where diverse groups of people can come together to learn/share skills of budgeting, planning, shopping and cooking healthy meals to take home.
Cowichan Family Life Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports individuals and families to strengthen relationships and reach their full potential. Provides affordable peer counselling services and workshops on healing anger, personal power and self-esteem and more.
Cowichan Green Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate local community gardens and facilitate a variety of programs to help people learn about food resources and how to grow food. • Sponsor Farmer’s Market Nutrition and a Coupon Program to assist low income families and seniors to access local food markets • A variety of programs and workshops to help youth learn to grow food. Also, a Garden Pantry Thrift Store. KinPark Family Drop-in Centre has many free programs and events such as cooking classes and after school activities. • Youth Outreach team: goal is to connect with other youth through community projects. YO and SYC are partnering on a community partnership grant: “Growing neighborhood connections” • Skills link: ages 15-30 in a group of 6 on average • Fruit tree mapping and preserving workshops: Quamichan area • Community gardens: kin park raised garden bed making • Foodfit: (18+) 12-week program for low-income community members who experience barriers around healthy eating and physical activity but who are motivated to make lasting changes to their health. The program combines fun, hands-on cooking sessions and food-based activities with take-home recipes, easy-to-understand nutrition information, group exercise, shared meals, self-directed individual and group goal-setting, and reflection.
Cowichan Housing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates the Ready to Rent BC’s courses and workshops, including RentReady-Youth which is a three-hour tenancy education workshop.

<p>Cowichan Independent Living Resource Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help anyone fill out and send in forms for disability benefits and help to replace identification cards. • Loans medical supplies for 3-month periods.
<p>Cowichan Intercultural Society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIS is a leading community resource for immigrant settlement services and for education and awareness in developing a welcoming, inclusive community. A range of services includes Immigrant settlement services, classes in English as a Second Language, youth programs, employment aid and community outreach. • The Multicultural Youth Leadership Group is a drop-in program where youth engage in topics important to them and provide helpful services back to the community. Meets on Wednesday afternoons at St. John's Anglican Church from 3:15 pm-5:45 pm. • The Compassionate Leaders Project is a school-based program that cultivates leadership skills in youth. Can offer cross-cultural training programs by request of school staff.
<p>Cowichan Lake Community Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a variety of education, prevention, recreation, counselling and support groups. • Youth Drop-in: Come and hang out with your friends, play wii, foosball, and cards, make crafts and just relax and have fun. Wednesday 3:15-4:45 • KICK- Kind Involved Confident Kids: a fun and supportive group that helps kids learn life skills, play games and be creative in a healthy social setting. • FUSE- Fair, Unique, Safe, Empowered: This group is a fun, activity based group that cover topics than young teens may need to know about how to survive in the real world as they grow and transform into adults. • Youth Leadership Training: Invited participants will have monthly gatherings to plan events and take training to enhance skills for later work life. Roles include mentoring, leadership and supporting kids involved in our programs. • Girls Troupe: a weekly program run after school for girl's grade 5 and up. This program is a safe place for girls to come together once a week and hang out. It is run from an interactive empowerment perspective and covers topics such as healthy relationships, positive self-esteem, life skills, and building confidence. This program also gives the girls a place to build strong lasting friendships with one another. • "Fun Bus"- 13 kids plus staff and youth leaders go bowling, ice skating, etc. Builds social skills. • Reconnect: high school program. This program was modified for youth who excel in a different learning atmosphere; CLCS counsellors attend their class. • Community Garden- behind the high school • Christmas hampers: 205 last year (turkeys, potatoes, carrots, eggs,

	<p>butter, buns, canned food, cereal, PB, coffee/tea, toys).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach team- local team (CLCS facilitates)- involves RCMP, town council, health unit, rec centre, library, member nation, school.
Cowichan Neighborhood House Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free soup, buns and bread every Monday-Friday, 1-5pm. Offers bags of frozen soup, bread and buns. • Free computer/internet access, and can assist with job searching. • Youth drop-in- Mon-Fri: 3-5pm; Youth tutoring Wed 3:30-4:30; Free drop in for youth 12-19. Socialize, play pool, ping pong or other games. Participate in field trips, cooking, homework help or other recreation. • Youth drop-in nights – Fri and Sat. • Workshops for youth: including Hip Hop, Baking, Teen Depression and Suicide Prevention. • Youth Cooking: Thursdays; learn to cook from scratch, ages 10-16 • Yearly Training: Food safe, first aid, canning workshops, naloxone use • Non-Violent Intervention Course (\$300/person)- can be free if person puts in volunteer hours at CNHA • Eat Well on a Budget Class: for people 19+; learn to cook from scratch. • Field Trips: swim, wild play, blueberry picking; youth help raise money and volunteer to help pay for field trips. • Summer Art Program: art therapy
Cowichan Tribes (for members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Housing Department: Works to maintain on-reserve housing and for development of new housing units. Provides mould assessment program. • Ts'ewultun Health Centre: Dental Clinic services, free check-ups for children. Mon-Fri: 8:30am-4:30pm, 1st Tue of the month: 4:30pm-7pm; Free foot care. Offering Aboriginal Health Services, including Native Sobriety Group, Men's Support Group, counselling, Hospital and Community Liaison Support. Youth counselling services, programs in suicide prevention, Canoe Journey Life Journey (a semi-annual youth life-skills program) and other more. • Kwam Kwum Tthun Shqwaluwun – Youth Centre: Tue/Wed: 3-8pm; Thu: 3-9pm; Fri: 3-11pm; Sat: 3-11pm. Provides a safe and positive environment for Tribes youth to hang out, have fun and learn. Afterschool programming, ages 7-11 (age that gets missed with other programming); can take 10 youth. Summer camp, ages 12-18. Cadets program.
Cowichan Valley Basket Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soup Kitchen: soup, sandwiches, bread, etc. Mon-Sat: 10am-4pm • Monthly food hamper distribution- Mon, Wed, Fri: 10am-1:30pm. Second & third Thursday of the month: 10am-1:30pm. • Washrooms/Free Phone, 10am-6pm.
Cowichan Valley Regional District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational programs/youth drop-in centre. Offers safe, supervised environments; provides resource information; supports existing

	<p>community organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Corner Drop-In Centre Mon - Wed: 3:15-5:30 pm Thurs: 3:15-8:30 pm Fri: 3:15-9:00 pm Also open during lunch for Cowichan High. Provides a safe space for kids after school hours: pool table, video games and movies.
Cowichan Valley Regional RCMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims Services is a police-based program that provides free and confidential support services to victims and witnesses of crime and traumatic events. They provide emotional and practical support services to clients in the North Cowichan/Duncan, Lake Cowichan and Shawnigan Lake RCMP detachment areas.
Cowichan Valley Youth Services (previously known as Community Options Society)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides free counselling to youth 13 - 19 and young parents. • Services for youth and their families to talk, deal with overwhelming emotions, learn new skills and to facilitate change. • Some of the programs that are available include: Individual and Family Counselling, Wellness Group for Youth, School Workshop, Parenting courses and Parent drop-in • Leadership and Resiliency Program (LRP): youth 12-17 years of age- a school and community based program with three components: In-school weekly resiliency groups; community volunteer experiences. • YEMP (Youth Employment Mentorship Program)- helps youth get skills to go back to work, or to go back to school (96% success rate; 10 years running)
Cowichan Women Against Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a range of programs addressing interpersonal violence including violence in relationships and sexualized abuse and assault. • Horizons Pre-Employment Program: supports women's entrance or return to the workforce. For women where, low self-esteem/self-confidence have become a barrier to employment. Through a series of group workshops, participants discover strengths, interests and skills. • Homelessness Outreach Worker: a response program to support women transitioning from violence to independence.
Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowichan Young Carers Program: provides support, information, education and advocacy to youth in a caregiving role to a family member • We provide one-on-one support, support groups, information and connection to community resources. • We also offer education and advocacy for youth when appropriate. We offer workshops twice a year on youth wellness, leadership and empowerment. • Our First Nations Youth Facilitator provides support to First Nations youth caregivers. • This program also provides information and education to youth workers, schools, social workers, and other professionals about young carers and how to identify and support them

Duncan Christian Reform Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal Last Saturday of each month, doors open at 5pm.
Duncan Needle Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harm Reduction supplies, needle and pipe exchange, safer injection education. Free and confidential health services. Other Needle Exchange sites include: <i>Warmland House</i>, 2579 Lewis St.; <i>Island Health: Substance Use Counselling</i>, 71 Government St.; <i>Island Health: Adult Mental Health</i>, 3088 Gibbins Rd.; <i>Margaret Moss</i> (M-F 9:00-4:00), 675 Canada Avenue.
Duncan United Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community dinner, second Sunday of each month, doors open at 5pm. Meals on the Ground: Mon, Wed, Fri. Doors open at 4:30pm. A grassroots program that provides meals to folks in the Cowichan Valley who need more food security in their lives. All of the meals are made and donated by individuals and groups within the Cowichan Valley.
Global Vocational Services/WorkBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information on employment services including: services for people with disabilities and immigrants, resume writing, cover letter writing, job search advice, employment counselling, computer access for job search and career support/advice.
Good Food Box Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10.00 a month. Orders are combined to purchase in bulk. Boxes are packed at Warmland and volunteer packers are given lunch. Place order before 2nd Wednesday of the month at one of several locations: <i>Canadian Mental Health office, Warmland, Cowichan Neighbourhood House Chemainus, Cowichan Lake Community Services</i>, for Cowichan Tribes members: <i>Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre</i>
Growing Together Child and Parent Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Parent Program providing quality child care for infants to 3 years and mentorship for young parents returning to school to finish their basic education. Some community spaces may be available as well as special needs support with funding/referral from supported child development.
Harvest House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Hampers: <i>Chemainus</i>, Fri: 11:30am-1:30pm; <i>Crofton</i>, Mon: 10am-11am
Hiiye'yu Lelum - House of Friendship Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide services primarily to Aboriginal people living off-reserve. Provides direct support for people who are homeless, such as a hot breakfast, showers, counselling, links to housing and support accessing many community resources. Breakfast Club & Homelessness Outreach Program serving Aboriginal people. Breakfast: Mon/Wed/Fri, 6am-8:45am Coffee & Muffins: Tue & Thur, 6am-8:45am Laundry: Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri Showers available. 6am-8:45am During Breakfast Club, laundry is available Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri. Showers available Mon-Fri as part of the Breakfast Club, 6am-8:45am. Aboriginal Youth: Help with placement and homeless prevention for Aboriginal youth and young families between the ages of 18-30 of age who are living off reserve and not in subsidized housing. This help includes one-time funding for: security deposit, first months rent, late

	<p>rent (eviction), late hydro (cut off notice), and start-up kits for first time renters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Pathways Program: offers family group conferences (culturally appropriate conflict resolution for families), and outreach (one to one support for parents, resource referrals, parent skill learning). • Healthiest Babies Possible: nutritional counselling, prenatal education and postnatal support, vitamins, grocery gift cards, etc. • Early Years Program: for Aboriginal families with children from 0-6 years old. Funded through MCFD. Learn about: cooking, CPR, swimming, etc., in a supportive group setting. • Young Families Program: This program is for young families with children ages 0 to 6 years-old, which promotes positive self-esteem with First Nation families. Includes: Elders Teachings, games, arts, stories, bonding/traditions • Skills to Employment Program: helps individuals discover their strengths and identify barriers to employment. • Healthy Children, Healthy Futures: a Parenting Education and Discussion Group for parents and caregivers of children 0 to 6 years old. • The Youth Inclusion Project (YIP): a crime prevention program that provides pro-social activities to at-risk youth in the Cowichan communities.
H'ulh-etun Health Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, dental, and counselling services for Halalt, Lyackson and Malahat First Nations.
Inclusive Leadership Co-operative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides workshops and training that is intergenerational but with a strong focus on mentoring youth leadership and creating inclusive community. • Draws on principles of compassionate communication and many tools for building relationships and conflict resolution.
Island Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Independent Living Program: A psychosocial rehabilitation support and rent subsidy service for adults diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness. SIL participants must have the ability to live on their own without the need for live-in support or constant supervision. • Housing Options Program: Provides housing services to adults who have a severe and persistent mental illness, are not acutely ill and are currently developing or clarifying plans for living independently. • Substance Use Services: Provides substance use counselling. • Adult Mental Health Support Services: Coordinates care of people with serious and persistent mental illness. Individuals are supported in accessing medical and psychiatric services and in all life-role functions. Services include crisis intervention, acute, long-term and on-going needs. • Discovery Youth and Family Substance Use Services: Provides

	<p>counselling for youth who are experiencing difficulties related to their own or another person's substance use, as well as support for parents of adolescents regarding substance use concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan Mental Health & Addictions Services: Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT) is outreach based. Crisis Response Team provides urgent response for adults who may be suicidal or in a psychiatric crisis. Acute Inpatient Services provides acute inpatient assessment and treatment at Cowichan District Hospital. Adult Short Term Assessment and Treatment Team (ASTAT) provides services to adults with serious short-term mental health conditions. Alcohol and Drug Counselling Services provides outpatient alcohol and drug services for people whose lives have been negatively affected by substance use. Adult Community Support Services (ACSS) provides outreach case management services to adults with severe and persistent mental illness. On Board Program provides early psychosis intervention for youth ages 13-30. Open Door provides psychosocial rehabilitation services to people with severe and persistent mental illness. Developmental Disability Mental Health Team (DDMHT) provides consultation and assessment services ONLY. Serves people fourteen years and older with a demonstrated developmental disability and co-occurring mental illness. Housing Options provides residential services. Supported Independent Living (SIL) provides psychosocial support and rent subsidies to people with severe and persistent mental illness. • Child Youth Family Health: Prenatal and postnatal information, classes, and counselling; Postpartum Depression support group/information; Breastfeeding consultation; Communicable Disease diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), tuberculosis (TB) and others; School-aged health services including immunizations; Youth Drop-in clinics for youth up to 25 years of age (Duncan - Monday 2-4/ Thursday 1:30-4 and Lake Cowichan 1st & 3rd Tuesday 2:30-4) - help for youth with health concerns, including Nutrition/diet information, Personal/family problems, Birth control info & prescriptions, Diagnosis & treatment of STIs, Pregnancy testing & counselling; Immunization for children and adults; Nutritionist; Dental Hygienist; Healthy Beginnings (Relaxed groups for moms, dads and other who care for children); Triple P Parenting Community Programs (Positive Parenting Programs). • Healthy Beginnings (Shawnigan Lake, Cobble Hill and Mill Bay): drop in program for moms and dads of infants and children under 3 years of age. Hosted experts: infant development consultants and nutritionists. • Provides outpatient alcohol and drug services for people whose lives have been negatively affected by substance use. • Provides screening, assessment, referrals, individual and group
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	<p>treatment, education, hospital assessment and referral, alcohol and drug counselling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaret Moss Health Clinic: Health care services for individuals and families. Including: STI screenings, immunization updates (by appointment only) and affordable birth control for clients up to age 25.
Island Savings Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washrooms available 6:30am-10pm. • Low-Income Access Program for residents of the CVRD (with proof). • We offer sports, activities and recreation programs and events for all ages.
Ladysmith Community Health Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in youth clinic
Ladysmith Community Justice Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative justice program: anyone can refer someone who wants to go through a restorative justice process if a crime was committed.
Ladysmith Food Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Bank Tuesdays: 10am-12noon.
Ladysmith Resource Centre Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soup Kitchen: Offers a variety of child, youth, adult and family programs (e.g., early literacy, new dads, pre-natal nutrition, youth, family support); counselling; seniors support. • Can provide youth with food and clothing • Students Help Seniors (Youth Prog)- ages 13-18 • Born Healthy Program: teach nutritious food prep and provide lunch (would serve young parents) • Dad's Drop-In: healthy communal breakfast (would serve young dad's) • Cooks in the Kitchen Program, youth 11-19; runs 4x a year for 5 weeks. Teaches kids: how to shop, reading cooking instructions, learn sanitary practices, and how to cook simple nutritious meals. Teaches self sufficiency, encourages team work, and gives them a sense of pride • Ladysmith Extreme Weather Shelter: Operates between November 1st and March 31st when extreme weather conditions exist. 5-10 temporary emergency beds are available. Hot meal, clothing and dog food may be available. Call Ladysmith Resources Centre for location and information. • Youth Program: This program operates on an outreach basis for youth between the ages of 13 to 18 who may be experiencing problems at home, in school, or are experiencing conflict in their lives. • What does a Youth Program Worker do? • Connects with local youth to ensure safety and well-being while supporting them to make positive choices and changes • Assists with emotional support for youth experiencing crisis situations and works to develop safety plans and resource referrals • Assists with connecting youth to basic needs and supports such as shelter, income assistance, health care and education, addictions counseling and other appropriate resources

	<p>Youth involved with the Youth Worker may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living on or involved in street activities • Experiencing parent teen conflict • Using drugs and alcohol • Experiencing a crisis that may lead to high risk behaviors or situations • Have dropped out or been expelled from school • Have run away from home or caregivers • Involved in violent peer interactions (bullying) • The Youth Worker will take referrals from youth themselves, family, friends, teachers, and other service providers. • This is a confidential service that is provided free of charge. The Youth Worker's hours are flexible in order to meet the needs of our clients.
Lake Cowichan Food Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves: <i>Lake Cowichan, Honeymoon Bay and Youbou.</i> • Food Bank and Good Food Box Program. Registration required. Hampers available 2nd Wednesday of each month: 1pm-2pm.
Literacy Now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for individuals to fill out forms, letter writing, resume building, support in filing out impact statements, and financial literacy support. • Information: opening a bank account. Assistance: BC Housing registration.
Malahat First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs: work experience and readiness, life skills, computer skills, driver training, literacy, leadership skills, educational supports, and family supports.
Meals on the Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free dinner at the Duncan United Church, Mon- Wed- Fri
Ministry of Children and Family Development and Child and Youth Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a wide range of free services to help children and youth with mental health, child protection, family support, foster care, child and youth mental health. • Parent support group for parents and caregivers, based on the importance of relationship and attachment, promotes children's mental health by strengthening parent's capacity to nurture and protect • Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), Child and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN), Youth Justice and Forensic Services, Child Protection and Family Service, Guardianship, Adoption and Permanency Planning. • Youth Agreement (YAG)- 17-26; these are for youth who are independent, and cannot live at home (kicked out, etc). Under a YAG they get \$600 a month as financial support
Narcotics Anonymous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness Program: 1059a Canada Avenue, Duncan Sun: 7:30pm • Fresh Start: 107 Evans Street, Duncan Mon, Wed, Fri: 7:30pm • Renewed Hope 71 Government Street, Duncan Tue, Thu: 1:00pm
North Cowichan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Cowichan Youth Outreach provides positive recreation, education, and social programs for youth ages 12 to 18 years in the Crofton and Chemainus communities <p>Youth Outreach at Chemainus Secondary</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mondays: Project Breakfast- muffins, fruit, granola bars • Separate room with a pool table, air hockey, couch, resource wall; open 1 hr before school and during lunch hour • Tuesdays: Girl Code- crafts, etc. • Thursday afternoons: drop in sports at Crofton El. First hour grades 4-6, and second hour grades 7-9. <p>Cowichan Neighborhood House Association- Youth nights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5pm with younger ages, and 7-10pm are older youth
Providence Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A working organic farm. General Store is open Tuesday-Sunday. Lunch in the dining room Monday-Friday for a \$5 donation – only one sitting at 12:30pm.
Salvation Army Family Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers an emergency food program for people who have already used their food bank hamper. Available up to four times a year - by appointment. • Sassy Lion Thrift Store: Mon-Fri: 10am-4:30pm Free bread on Wednesday. • Mill Bay Thrift Store: Sometimes has free bread available. • Can assist with arranging pro bono legal services. Mostly family law but can address other issues as well.
Somenos House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential emergency shelter and support services for women of ages 17 and up (with or without children) experiencing/at risk of abuse/violence.
St. John's the Evangelist Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Table Community Dinner (Ladysmith): Third Friday of the month at 5:30pm – dates may change around Christmas and Easter holidays.
Ts'i'ts'uwatul' Lelum (M'akola Housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides culturally appropriate, respectful, affordable shelter and hospitality services to all Residents. • Access to subsidized assisted living units is through a Home Health assessment • Four storey building, 50 units (46 one bedroom and 4 two-bedroom units) • Residents pay 70% of their after-tax income which covers: 1) monthly rental accommodation; 2) hospitality services: two meals and two snacks daily, weekly housekeeping, laundry, etc.; 3) personal care; and 4) on-site emergency response system. Residents on income assistance pay a flat rate.
Vancouver Island Regional Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library cards are free and allow you to go online at the library for an hour each day. Computers and free WIFI are available at all VIRL libraries.