



Emergency Shelters Update: May 2023

Thanks to the generosity of many people the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth has provided crisis emergency shelters for those experiencing homelessness in the Province since December 2021. These twenty emergency shelters are small 8x8 powered buildings containing a twin size bed with linens and climate control to keep people temporarily safe from the elements. In the spring of 2022 we were pleased to hire Lindsay Misiner, as our Emergency Shelters Coordinator. Her passion and experience help her to work daily with our occupants assisting them take the steps needed to secure an income, housing, and other basic necessities. Thanks to her efforts, and the work of so many parish volunteers, we have made significant progress since the last Emergency Shelters update shared in [November 2022](#).

We Are Making a Difference!

- Since July 2022, we helped five people acquire housing, of which four have their own apartment, and one in a rooming house as a collaboration through Mobile Outreach Street Health or MOSH (<https://nechc.com/what-we-do/mosh/>).
- We expect that up to eight of our long term occupants will be able to move forward with housing before winter of 2023. Some of them are elderly and we are accessing alternative supportive living options, whereas some will move forward with other organizations such as MOSH and Metro Regional Housing Authority, to name a few.

Our Ministry is Evolving

- Over the past year, our intake process and client-to-shelter coordinator interactions and timelines have evolved, and we are seeing lots of progress. Our program is able to take on people experiencing homelessness who are considered low-acuity. That is, people who are highly independent with lower needs in terms of supporting their physical and mental health. They must also be willing and able to work with the shelter coordinator on next steps in their housing journey.
- We begin with establishing an income/budget, including income assistance and/or employment, then move on to acquiring available government subsidies (<https://housing.novascotia.ca/programs/canada-nova-scotia-targeted-housing-benefit>). From there, we work with occupants to access community services such as counselling and/or medical care from the North End Community Health Clinic and NS Health Authority.
- We then start searching for apartments within their budget. Once a unit is secured, we help them to move in by getting furniture donations from parishes (a huge help thus far!), as

well as purchasing household items to support their move. As part of the program our shelter coordinator works with occupants for up to five months after move in, to ensure they are settling in and paying their rent.

All of the above is only possible with the support from the parish coordinators and volunteers on site each and every week offering support to our occupants.

- We recently partnered with Geo Nova Scotia (<https://geonovascotia.ca/>), who partner with Eastlink to provide free internet and Chrome books to low-income people. This has been months in the making and is a huge accomplishment! We have successfully provided free home internet for four occupants, and three Chrome books to occupants to help them with education and work. We are able to request more Chrome books and modems for more occupants as they move into apartments. This is significant! Home internet can cost a minimum of \$70 per month on top of other necessary bills, leaving many people with low income disconnected from news, health related updates, family connections and more. Our partnership with GEO Nova Scotia allows us to provide our clients with the connection they deserve, with no financial burden to access something so simple...and necessary.

Get Involved!

We recently secured funding to create and place five new emergency shelters. If your parish is interested in hosting an emergency shelter for the first time and want to know more about the program or you would like to add to the shelters currently on your property please contact Lindsay Misiner at lmisiner@halifaxarmouth.org or (902) 789-9795.

Recent reports have shown Halifax to be the third most expensive rental market in Canada, with single bedroom apartment averaging \$2,000 per month (\$2,500 for two bedrooms) with rental rates rising 25% compared to 2022 (National Rent Report) and the average house price in Halifax-Dartmouth is \$555,470 (Canadian Real Estate Association). Meanwhile, Affordable Housing Nova Scotia reports there are 938 “actively homeless” people in HRM. As the housing crisis in our province continues to grow, we are committed to providing an option when there are very few options. In addition to emergency shelters we are exploring how we can use the resources we have to provide more sustainable options for those who struggle with home insecurity.