

## FACTSHEET: What's Driving Homelessness?

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition recognizes how challenging homelessness is in our community. Nanaimo and region are not unique in facing a big increase in homelessness. Communities across BC and Canada are challenged by the rapid increase in homeless and the opioid crisis'.

Visit [Canada Alliance to End Homelessness](#) and [Homeless Hub](#) for extensive information around the challenges and solutions communities are experiencing.

The Homeless Coalition and the [Nanaimo Health and Housing Task Force](#) are committed to learning from other communities, bringing together the right people and developing locally relevant solutions.

### AFFORDABILITY

Ideally, a maximum of 30% of your income is spent on housing. **Almost half (48%) of Nanaimo's renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.**<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by nearly 10% while the average BC wage increased by only 2.4%. Rental rate increases are outpacing wages, making housing in Nanaimo unaffordable.<sup>2</sup>

### LOW WAGES

The median income for those living alone or with non-relatives is \$27,850, which means that **45.5% of single people earn less than \$25,000 a year.** Almost a third (29%) of single parent families earn less than \$25,000 a year.<sup>3</sup>

### INSECURE HOUSING

The 2018 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count made clear that **once a person loses their home or chooses to leave unsafe housing, it's very difficult for them to secure housing again.**

Increased rents have made previously affordable homes out-of-reach for those with low incomes. Landlords have a larger tenant pool, making tough competition for those with poor credit and/or mental or physical health problems.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2016 \* Only includes households with incomes over zero

<sup>2</sup> Health & Housing Nanaimo - Backgrounder

<sup>3</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, Family and Individual Taxfiler Data



### **MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS**

While not everyone who is homeless has a substance use disorder, a high number do suffer with substance use and it's typically related to an underlying mental health challenge. A significant number **of people experiencing homelessness suffer from both severe mental illness and addictions.**

In the past few years, impacts of the opioid crisis have complicated things further, making it even more difficult to address mental health and substance use.

### **HOW WE'RE TAKING ACTION**

Tackling the root causes of homelessness requires intervention at all levels. Without financial investment and resources from all levels of government and the support of many non-profit organizations on the ground, solving this issue would be impossible.

[Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness 2018-2023](#) is the first step towards all agencies and governments working together to solve homelessness.