



Community and Health Services Department
Office of the Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

DATE: September 10, 2015

RE: **Emergency Housing Use in York Region, 2014**

Emergency Housing Use in York Region, 2014 (Attachment 1) provides demographic information on people who used York Region's four emergency housing facilities in 2014: Leeder Place Family Shelter, Porter Place Men's Shelter, York Region Youth Shelter, and Sutton Youth Shelter. This is the first release of data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and provides a baseline of client data that can be used to track and analyze trends over time, inform service planning, and support the evaluation of homelessness services in York Region. HIFIS is a federal database used and shared by communities across Canada to analyze demographic characteristics and program use of people who are homeless.

In 2014, a system for collecting data on York Region's emergency housing program was fully implemented

In 2012, Community and Health Services completed a comprehensive review of York Region's homelessness services. This review identified a need to develop a proactive homelessness prevention system in York Region. To do this, it is crucial to have data on people using emergency housing and services and the system capacity to collect and use data to determine who is in need and what their needs are.

To address this gap, Community and Health Services implemented the use of HIFIS in York Region's emergency housing. HIFIS was fully functional by 2014.

Homeless Individuals and Families Information System data will be used to inform the development of programs to meet the needs of York Region's households experiencing homelessness

York Region is focused on preventing homelessness in the first place. For a variety of reasons however, some residents become homeless. Data collected through HIFIS will

help York Region set service priorities and measure program effectiveness. It will also provide key stakeholders and community members including the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board led by the United Way with information to work collaboratively to end homelessness in York Region.

While in York Region most people who use emergency housing are temporarily homeless, for some, homelessness can be a longer-term problem. Often, there are a combination of factors that lead to homelessness, such as financial crisis, job loss, or mental health concerns. Through HIFIS, York Region is able to understand the size and make-up of clients that cycle in and out of homelessness and/or stay homeless for extended periods of time.

In 2015 and 2016, York Region will more effectively fill service gaps when new emergency housing sites open in York Region

York Region now knows that in 2014 1,011 clients accessed emergency housing, and most accessed emergency housing only once and stayed an average of 19 days.

Opening in 2015/16, Belinda's Place will provide York Region's first emergency housing facility for single women, and the Richmond Hill Housing and Community Hub will provide greater services and supports for youth. Together, these sites will provide an additional 42 emergency housing beds, increasing the number of available emergency beds in York Region from 115 to 157. With the addition of these two sites, York Region will have better supports for women and youth in need of emergency housing.

Information from HIFIS can help inform key actions outlined in York Region's 10-Year Housing Plan

One of the goals of York Region's 10-Year Housing Plan is to strengthen the homelessness and housing stability system. York Region is committed to getting and keeping residents housed. In order to reach this goal, York Region is developing a seamless way of delivering services to residents and helping low and moderate income and at-risk households find and keep appropriate housing. These actions are supported by using HIFIS data to help develop programs and services that focus on preventing homelessness in the first place and reducing existing homelessness in York Region.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

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Attachment (1)

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Emergency Housing use in York Region, 2014

The Regional Municipality of York partners with the Federal Government along with other municipalities across Canada to collect emergency housing data through the **Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)**.

This information helps to address resident needs and focus current and future resources. This data also contributes to a profile of homelessness in Canada.

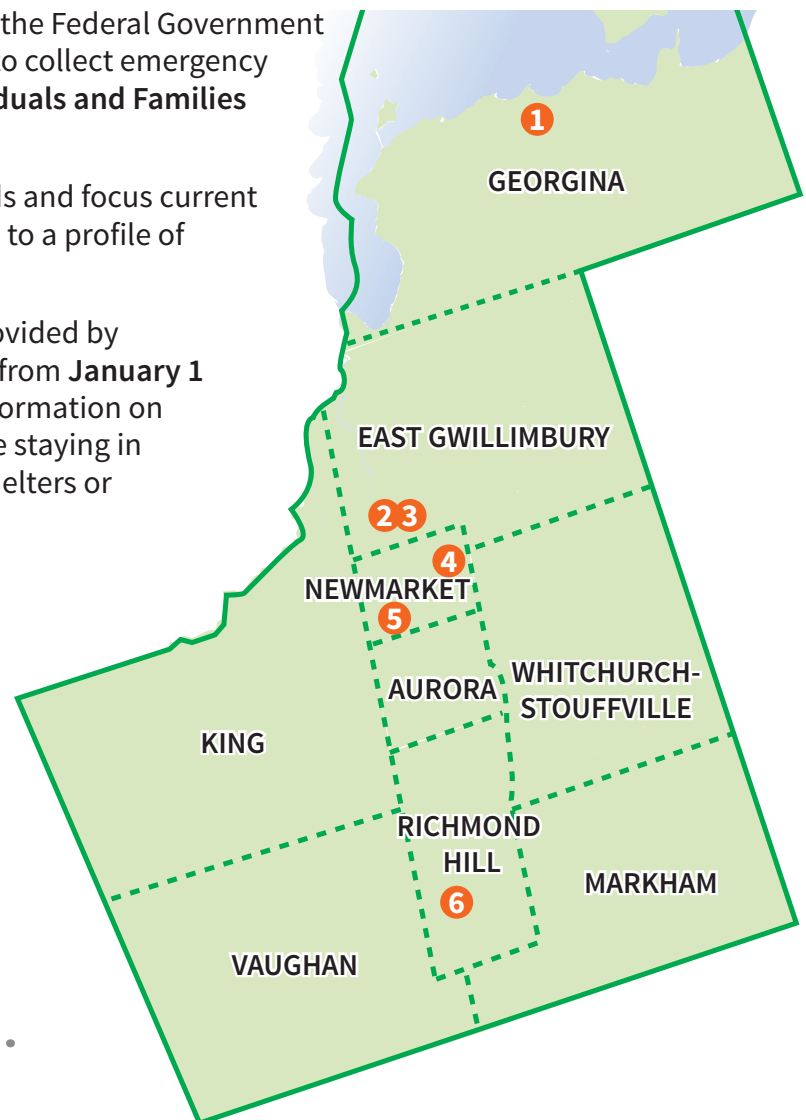
Data summarized in this fact sheet has been provided by York Region's four emergency housing facilities from **January 1 to December 31, 2014**, and does not include information on other people who are homeless, including those staying in "Violence Against Women" shelters, seasonal shelters or "couch surfing."

York Region Emergency Housing

1. **Sutton Youth Shelter**
20898 Dalton Road, Sutton
2. **Leeder Place Family Shelter**
3. **Porter Place Men's Shelter**
(two facilities on one site)
18838 Highway 11, East Gwillimbury
4. **York Region Youth Shelter**
835 Gorham Street, Newmarket

Opening 2015/16

5. **Belinda's Place**
16580 Yonge Street, Newmarket
6. **Richmond Hill Housing and Community Hub**
10415 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill



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Emergency housing beds

In 2014, there were **115** emergency beds available in York Region. York Region has high occupancy rates that fluctuate over the year.

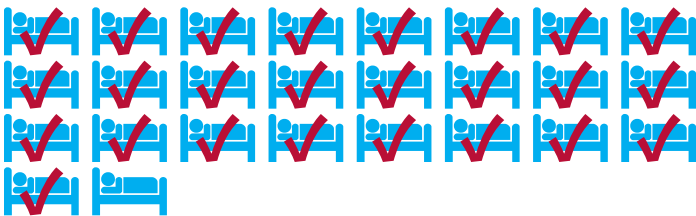
29 beds for single men

(Occupancy rate at 97%) ✓ = Occupied bed



26 beds for youth

(Occupancy rate at 97%) ✓ = Occupied bed



60 beds for families



(Occupancy rate of 80% for rooms) ✓ = Occupied room

Opening 2015/16, Belinda's Place and the Richmond Hill Housing and Community Hub will provide an additional:

 **28** emergency beds for **women**

 **14** emergency beds for **youth**

Who uses emergency housing?

1,011



The number of **unique individuals** who used York Region's emergency housing in 2014

72%*

Male



28%

Female



Less than 1%

Transgender

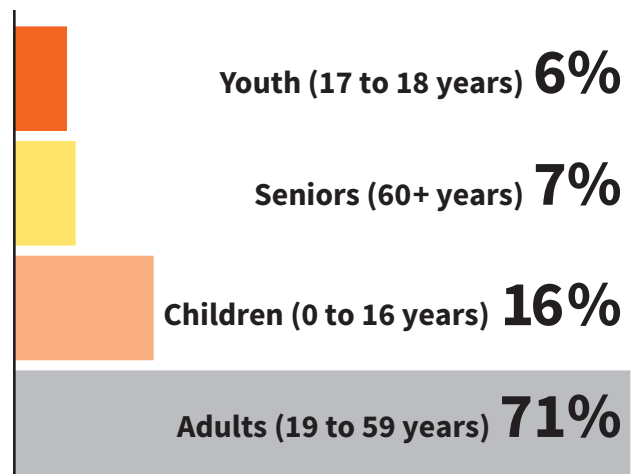


*Two of York Region's four existing emergency housing sites serve **males** only

7% of emergency housing clients self-identified as **Aboriginal**

1% of emergency housing clients were **Veterans**

22% of clients were under 18 years of age



Top reasons why clients use emergency housing

Loss of Housing/
Housing instability:

75%



Family/relationship breakdown:

13%



Discharge from correctional/jail:

3%

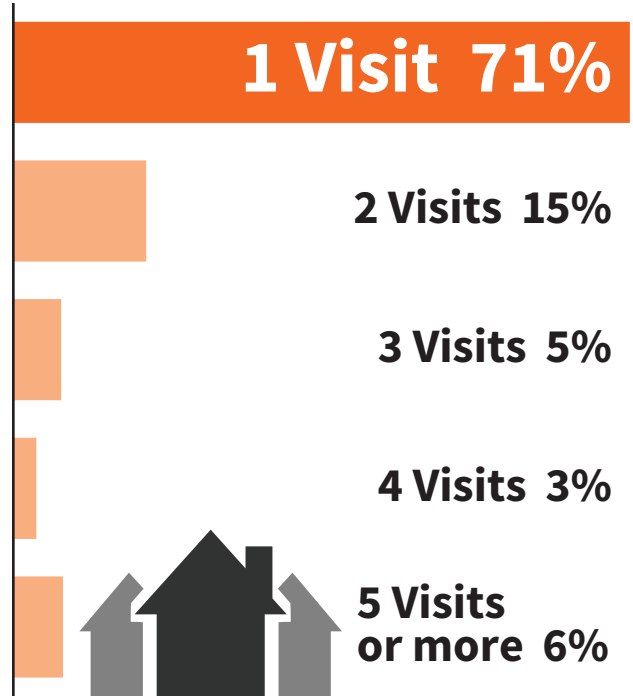


Referral from another
emergency housing site:

3%



Number of visits per client



Most clients visited emergency housing only once in 2014

Homelessness is often the result of a combination of reasons rather than a single cause, including:

Job loss



Financial crisis

Mental health struggles



Substance use

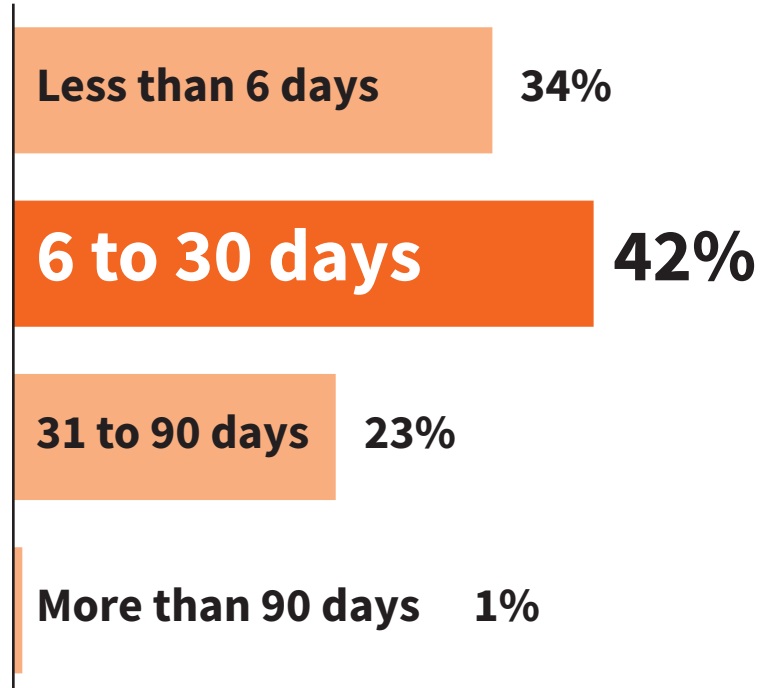
Transient lifestyle



York Region is committed to getting and keeping residents housed

Most users accessed emergency housing only once and stayed an average of 19 days after admission

Number of days per client stay



York Region has 57[†] known chronic and episodic homeless individuals

While homelessness in York Region is a temporary issue for most, it can be a longer-term problem for some. A number of people cycle in and out of homelessness and/or stay homeless for lengthy periods of time.

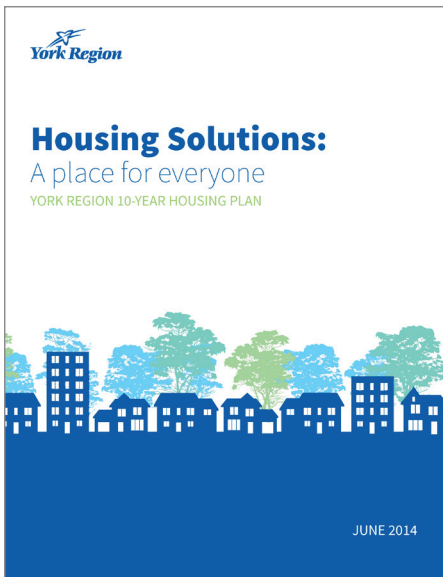
A person is **episodically homeless** if they are currently homeless and have had **three or more episodes**‡ of homelessness in the past year.

A person is **chronically homeless** if they are currently homeless and have cumulatively spent **180 nights** in a shelter within the last year.

‡ *Episode: a person exits and returns to emergency housing after a period of at least 30 days.*



† *These numbers reflect use of emergency housing within York Region only and may be higher for individuals who have used emergency housing in other regions.*



How York Region uses this data

York Region's strategy is focused on preventing homelessness in the first place and reducing existing homelessness. With this data, York Region now has even more capacity to set directions for service priorities and measure programs based on client needs and service effectiveness. This information helps to deliver on a key action outlined in York Region's 10-Year Housing Plan (*Housing Solutions: A place for everyone*) to strengthen homelessness prevention and housing stability, including:

- Developing a seamless way of delivering services to residents.
- Helping low- and moderate-income and at-risk households find and keep appropriate housing through programs and services that have a stronger focus on homelessness prevention.

For more information on HIFIS or York Region's homelessness services and how we can help you, visit york.ca, email CHS-info@york.ca, or contact **Access York at 1-888-256-1112**

Data taken from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) from January 1 to December 31, 2014. This has been made possible through collaboration with Blue Door Shelters and The Salvation Army.



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