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**Municipal Affairs and Housing
Office of the Minister**

PO Box 216, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2M4 • Telephone 902-424-5550 Fax 902-424-0581 • novascotia.ca

January 13, 2021

MLA Keith Irving, Chair, Standing Committee on Community Services
VIA EMAIL: c/o kim.langille@novascotia.ca

Dear MLA Irving:

The below response is provided to you per the request of the Standing Committee of Community Services received by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing on December 15, 2020. I am pleased to provide the following information as it pertains to government's response to homelessness.

The bed capacity in Nova Scotia's emergency and temporary shelters by type and location:

Location	Clients served	Bed count	Permanent (365-day operations)/ Temporary/ Seasonal	
Halifax	Women	34	Permanent	
	Men	72	Permanent	
	Total permanent: 126	Youth (Co-ed)	20	Permanent
	Total temporary: 40	Co-ed	40	Temporary
	Total seasonal 25	Co-ed	25	Seasonal
Total Halifax: 191				
Sydney	Co-ed	28	Permanent	
New Glasgow	Co-ed	4	Permanent	
Truro	Co-ed	10	Permanent	
Yarmouth	Youth	7	Permanent	
Total Province: 240				

All shelter beds/operations receive funding through the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing except for the New Glasgow and Truro shelters, which are largely volunteer based.

All shelters that operate the beds listed in the table above have funded positions under the Integrated Action Plan to Address Homelessness (IAP) to support clients in transitioning to permanent housing. These positions support clients into connecting with rent subsidies and resources to access and maintain permanent housing.

Under the IAP, 647 individuals have been housed from April 1, 2020, to September 1, 2020, compared to 567 housed in all of 2019/2020.

On November 25, 2020, the province announced \$1.7M to create 40 temporary emergency shelter beds in HRM. The shelter beds are funded for 12 months with the intention that shelter clients across the shelter system are continually being supported and ultimately transitioned to permanent housing.

The estimated unmet demand for emergency and temporary shelters by type and location:

Homelessness is known to be a difficult phenomenon to measure as people experience homelessness differently.

As of December 15, 2020, there were 496 individuals listed actively homeless on the Halifax By Name List (BNL). The BNL includes individuals who are in emergency homeless shelters, sleeping rough, couch surfing or in precarious housing situations.

Measuring homelessness via a BNL and providing coordinated access for these individuals to services is a requirement under the federal Homelessness Strategy Reaching Home. It is anticipated that other communities including Sydney and Bridgewater will support a BNL to measure homelessness and allocated resources.

Amherst, Truro, and Kentville are also expected to undertake counts to measure homelessness in their communities.

The total 2020-2021 provincial capital and operational spending estimates for emergency and temporary shelters by type and location.

Location	Type	Operational Spending (non-IAP)	Capital Spending
Halifax	Permanent (men/ women /youth)	\$3.89	\$218.5K
Halifax	Temporary (co-ed)	\$1.5M	N/A
Halifax	Seasonal (co-ed)	\$40K	N/A
Sydney	Permanent (co-ed adult)	\$618K	N/A
Yarmouth	Permanent (co-ed youth)	\$358K	N/A

Please note that funds listed in the “Operational Spending” column are allocated to support the daily operations for shelter providers; provincial funding provided through the IAP is not included in these figures.

Shelters can apply to the Shelter Enhancement Program to provide capital repairs. The amounts included in the “Capital Spending” column are directly related to applications received for funding by emergency shelters across the province.

The total 2020-2021 third quarter provincial capital and operational spending for emergency and temporary shelters by type and location:

Location	Type	Q3 Operational Spending (non-IAP)	Capital Spending
Halifax	Permanent	\$973K	\$45,421
Halifax	Temporary	\$367K	N/A
Halifax	Seasonal	\$0K	N/A
Sydney	Permanent	\$154.5K	N/A
Yarmouth	Permanent	\$89,500	N/A
New Glasgow	Permanent	N/A	\$188K

Please note that funds listed in the “Q3 Operational Spending” column are allocated to support the daily operations for shelter providers; provincial funding provided through the IAP is not included in these figures.

Capital spending through the Shelter Enhancement Program in Halifax primarily occurred in the second quarter (\$172,999).

Under Safe Restart funding, the province allocated \$188K in funding to support renovations to Viola’s Place in New Glasgow to support social distancing requirements and provide a community space in their permanent shelter to provide housing related services. As well, Pictou County Roots for Youth, a youth boarding house in New Glasgow, received \$40K in funding to create 2 additional boarding rooms and improve accessibility of the space.

No applications for renovations were received outside of these commitments.

Quantify any additional funding being provided by the Nova Scotia government to meet the unmet demand for emergency and temporary shelters by type and location:

DMAH is committed to connecting individuals to permanent housing. To this end, \$1.49M (1.29M in provincial funding and \$200,000 in federal funding) has been committed in 2020/21 to rent subsidies to specifically address homelessness.

DMAH is investing \$4.1M in the IAP annually for five years beginning 2020/21. The IAP will provide funding for front line supports across the province with a goal to connect individuals and families to permanent housing. These investments are made to introduce or complement existing services in communities.

Additional investments include:

- Fifteen additional housing support workers funded in Halifax, in addition to the original 8 positions funded through DMAH. These housing support workers are placed with shelters, housing agencies, or agencies who serve a specific client group, including:
 - 902 MAN Up -serving African Nova Scotians,
 - The Elizabeth Frye Society - serving women leaving Corrections
 - The Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre.

- Four Intensive Case Managers were funded to support individuals with high barriers to housing. These Intensive Case Managers are operating in Halifax with Phoenix Youth Shelter, Shelter Nova Scotia, Welcome Housing and Support Services.
- Four Diversion workers were funded to support individuals transitioning from Health or Corrections. These workers are operating in Halifax with the Mobile Outreach Street Health and Mi'Kmaq Native Friendship Centre, as well as in Amherst and Sydney.
- Eight Trustee programs located in Halifax (Salvation Army), Kentville, Bridgewater, Truro, New Glasgow, Amherst and Sydney (1 part-time position specific to youth and 1 full-time position specific to adults). Trustees are voluntary, and they offer support to individuals to ensure rent and utilities are paid. This service is an asset to clients applying for housing in the private market and in eviction prevention.
- Rapid Rehousing at Salvation Army, Centre of Hope, Halifax, works with men who have low to moderate barriers to housing by providing intensive housing support and connection to permanent housing.
- Diverting Families at Adsum for Women and Children, Halifax, supports families with children to provide emergency housing units for families with children experiencing homelessness and supporting them as they are connected to permanent housing.
- Host Homes through Portal Youth, Kentville, provides transitional housing options for youth across the Annapolis Valley.
- Seventeen Housing support workers are located across the province. Locations were chosen based on identified need by local agencies and where there were no existing resources funded through the federal homelessness strategy.
- Housing support locations outside of HRM, funded under the IAP are Sydney, Port Hawkesbury, New Glasgow, Truro, Annapolis-Digby, and Yarmouth.

Federally funded housing supports are located in Sydney, Amherst, Antigonish, Truro, Kentville, Bridgewater, Liverpool and Yarmouth.

Everyone deserves safe and affordable housing; the province is committed to providing support to individuals to connect them to housing. Shelter beds are critical in our homeless serving system and provide a safe place for individuals, but we know as a department that connecting individuals to permanent housing through supports is the safest option for our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your questions. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

I hope that you, your family, and your colleagues are staying safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Porter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chuck Porter, Minister
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing