

---

# HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING IN CBRM



PRESENTED BY: FRED DEVEAUX, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

CAPE BRETON COMMUNITY HOUSING

## THE RESEARCH: PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

- The Homelessness and Affordable Housing Working Group (including Nova Scotia Public Health, Cape Breton Community Housing Association, Cape Breton Regional Police, Cape Breton University, and the local Community Advisory Board on Homelessness)
- Funding provided by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy through the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness
- Cape Breton Community Housing has operated the Community Homeless Shelter since 2005

## RESEARCH CONTEXT: HOUSING FIRST

- Revolving door at the Community Homeless Shelter and an ongoing struggle to find safe, affordable housing
- *Housing First*: Internationally accepted and empirically tested program designed to end homelessness that starts with housing and appropriate supports
- Does CBRM have the affordable rental housing infrastructure to implement *Housing First*?
- How many individuals are homeless in CBRM?

# RESEARCH CONTEXT: HOMELESSNESS IN THE CBRM

- Two research studies were conducted in April, 2016, to determine the number of homeless individuals in CBRM
- A Service-Based Count was held in April of 2016 and enumerated **304** homeless individuals over a one month period
- In the Service-Based Count, 237/279 (88%) of the adults enumerated were singles; 90% of these singles were younger than 60, 48% were female and 52% were male; 38% of those counted were under the age of 30
- 69% of respondents reported Low Income and Poor Housing Options as the main reason for their homelessness
- The Service-Based Count was replicated during the month of April, 2018, but results are not yet available

# RESEARCH CONTEXT: HOMELESSNESS IN THE CBRM

- A Point in Time Count (PiT) was conducted during a twelve-hour period on a single day in April, 2016 and found 137 homeless individuals
- In the PiT Count, 88% of the adults enumerated were singles; 52% were female and 48% were male; 19% were youth under the age of 24
- The PiT Count found 24 unsheltered homeless individuals who were sleeping outside or in a place not fit for habitation
- The PiT Count was replicated on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and preliminary (unofficial) results indicate there were approximately 120 homeless individuals enumerated over a twelve-hour period

# RESEARCH CONTEXT: HOMELESSNESS IN THE CBRM

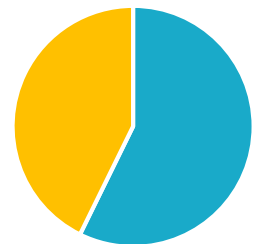
Currently, there are no emergency shelter services for women and youth in CBRM. The Community Homeless Shelter provides emergency accommodation for males only. Females can only access referral services. Over the past **five years**:

- The Community Homeless Shelter had **703** homeless male clients seeking emergency accommodations
- The Community Homeless Shelter had **369** female referrals. Of these, 315 were referred to a local hotel for a maximum of 2 nights (DCS Policy), 2 were referred to Almost Home, **and 38 were unable to be placed anywhere and remained homeless on the night of the referral, including 17 women in the past year alone.**
- The Community Homeless Shelter has had **132** male youth (between 16-19 years old) admissions

# HOUSING STOCK RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY

## For housing stock:

- The researchers merged an inventory of rental housing in CBRM with a provincial database of property owners
- The researchers also called people they knew with rental housing, and used contacts from CBU and newspaper ads
- The response rate was 63% (N=5,627 units, including all public and non-profit housing) and 84 rooms in the CBRM

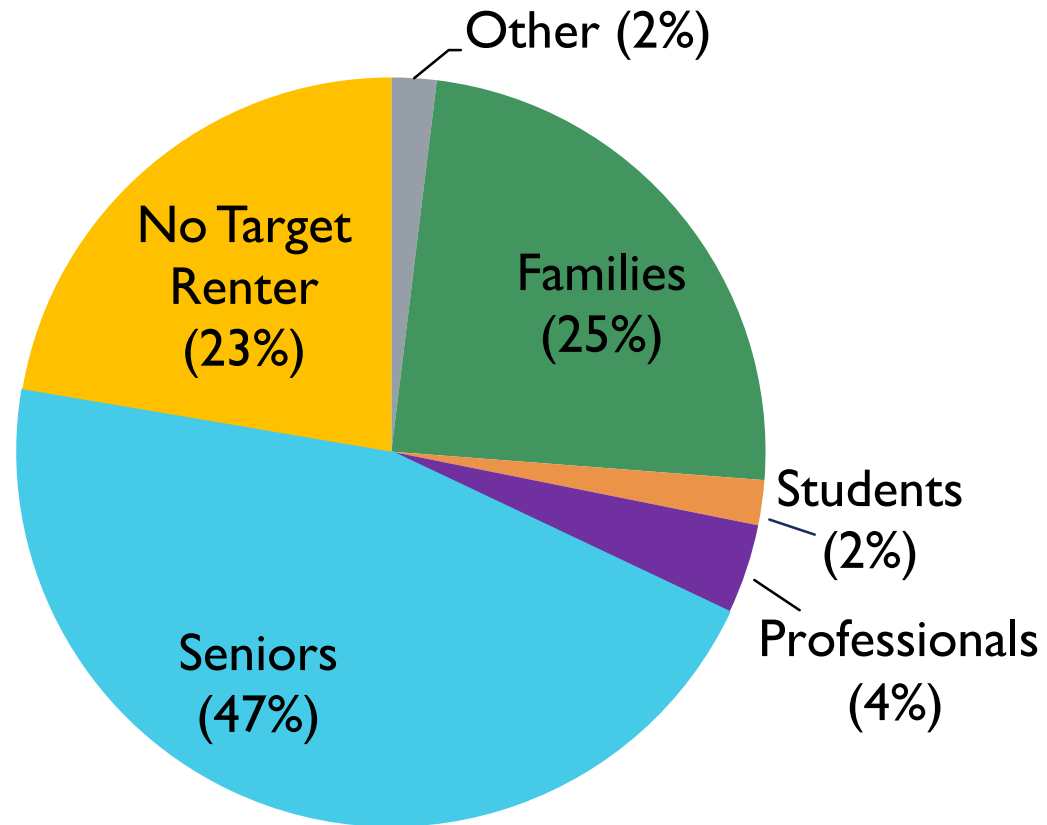


# HOUSING STOCK RESEARCH RESULTS

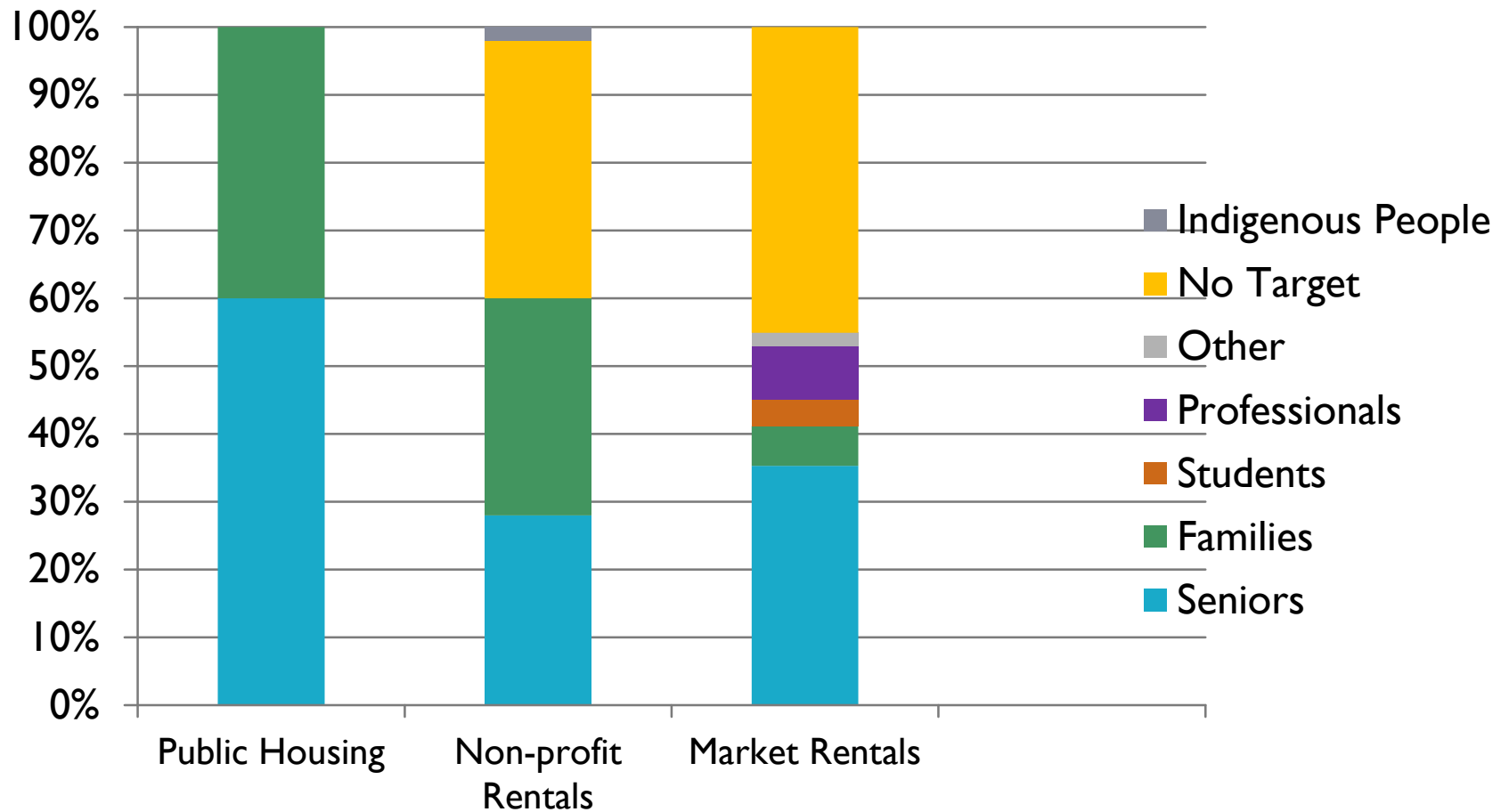
- The study on housing stock is a mirror image of the service-based homelessness count
- Single, younger people (<59, without children) are left out of decent, affordable housing opportunities in the CBRM
- Leaving people out has consequences for health, sense of belonging, and is a serious impediment to ending homelessness
- At a basic level, data show a policy gap, where housing provision has not yet caught up with socio-economic trends



# WHO ARE THESE UNITS FOR? TARGETING RENTERS IN CBRM



# WHO ARE THESE UNITS FOR, BY TYPE OF PROVIDER?

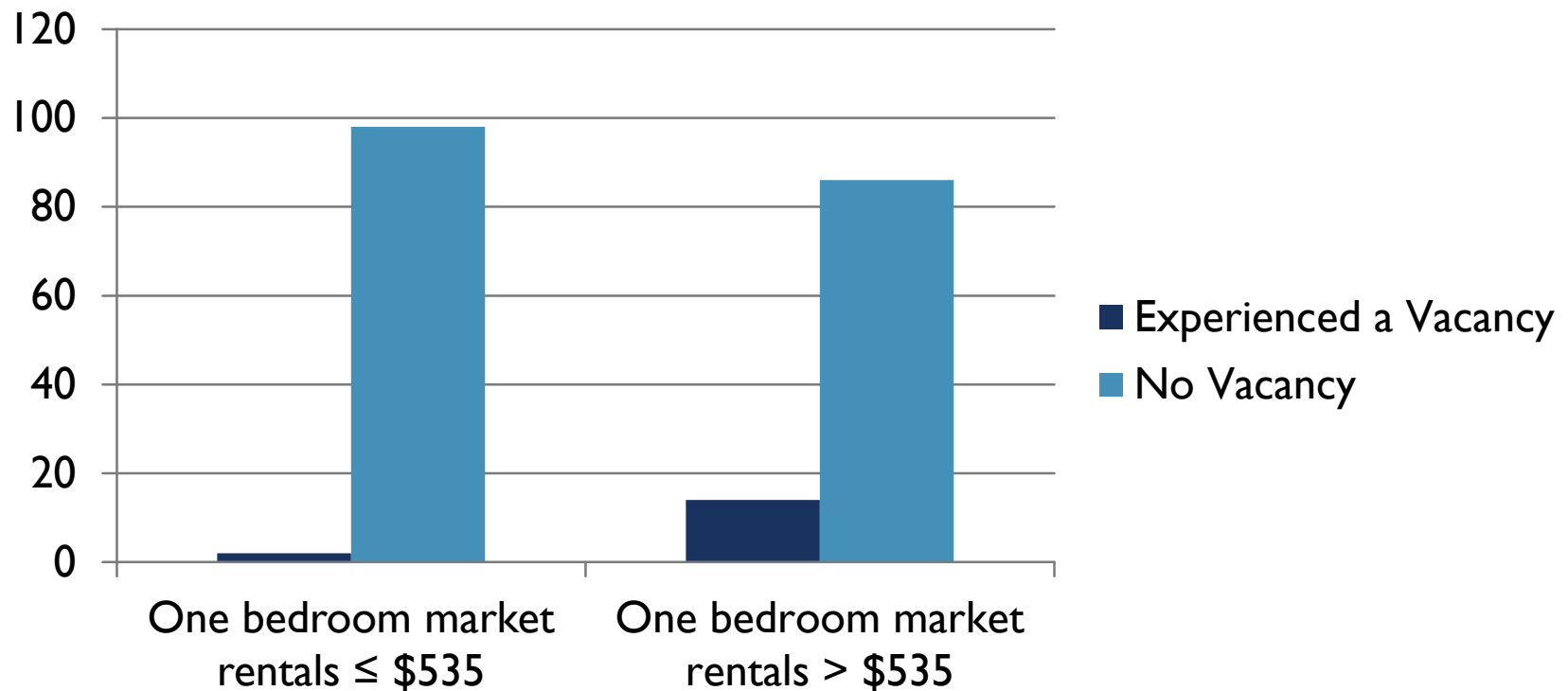


# MEDIAN SHELTER COSTS VERSUS SHELTER ALLOWANCES

	One Bedroom	Room	Two Bedroom	Three Bedroom
<b>Median Shelter Cost</b>	\$630 - \$650	\$451	\$800 - \$850	\$925 - \$1060
<b>Shelter Allowance</b>	\$300 (up to \$535)	\$223	\$570	\$620
<b>% of Shelter Cost Covered by Shelter Allowance</b>	46% - 48% (or 82% to 84% for a single person with a disability)	54%	67% - 71%	58% - 67%

- The shelter allowance provided to single, non-senior households (as long as they are able-bodied) is the least generous

# VACANCIES: ONE BEDROOM MARKET RENTALS BY COST



Only 2% of one bedroom market rentals \$535 or less had a vacancy in the past year, versus 14% for higher cost units.



# A HOUSING POLICY GAP?

At its simplest, data show a policy gap, where the practices of housing providers have not yet caught up with socio-economic trends:

- High unemployment (16%)
- Low median household incomes of single households (\$21,703)
- High youth unemployment (25%)
- An increase in single person households, due to delayed co-habitation and greater separation/divorce

# RECOMMENDED POLICY AND FUNDING INTERVENTIONS

- Expand emergency shelter services for women and youth in CBRM
- Continue to expand Housing First Programming in CBRM and develop MOSH-styled health supports for homeless individuals
- Raise the shelter allowance for single households (and everyone), and/or implement a portable rent subsidy program for all low-income renters/or implement basic income
- Allow single, non-senior households in public housing
- Continue to provide funding for housing support workers in the CBRM
- Make sure new investments in affordable housing do not exclude single, non-senior households
- Collect better data on rental housing (rooming houses, the secondary market and targeting of the stock)
- Declare a commitment to ending homelessness in Nova Scotia