



The Tri-Cities Homelessness Landscape

How many homeless persons are there in the Tri-Cities?

It is difficult to get an exact number of people who are homeless in the Tri-Cities at any given time, as the number fluctuates. However, it is clear that the number of homeless persons in the Tri-Cities has declined significantly over the past couple of years.

In 2002, the total number of homeless persons enumerated in the Tri-Cities was 13. This number increased to 38 in 2005 and to 94 in 2008 during the formal 24 hour regional homeless counts in March of each of those years. However, it is recognized that this was an undercount of the actual numbers. First, it is difficult to enumerate homeless persons who are “couch-surfing” with a friend or relative, and second it became obvious during the 2008 count (which was more rigorous than the previous counts) that some homeless persons will avoid being enumerated.

The outreach work performed by the Hope For Freedom Society has provided a more accurate estimation of the number of homeless in the Tri-Cities as it is based on day-to-day contact with homeless persons. In March 2008, Hope For Freedom estimated about 210 persons homeless in the Tri-Cities. By the fall of 2009, this number had fallen to 160 and by fall 2010 had further declined to about 80 individuals. The number of homeless persons in the Tri-Cities by fall 2011 was just under 50.

One of the reasons for the decline in homelessness in the Tri-Cities has been the success of outreach workers combined with the Cold Wet Weather Mat Program (see below) in connecting homeless persons with resources (typically housing or addictions recovery programs).

Are there currently any emergency shelter spaces in the Tri-Cities for homeless persons?

There are currently no permanent emergency shelter spaces in the Tri-Cities. However, the City of Coquitlam has dedicated and zoned land for a 24 hour/day, year-round, full service shelter and transitional housing facility at 3030 Gordon Ave., and in an October 12th, 2011 BC Housing media release, the province committed to funding the facility. Raincity Housing & Support Society has been selected to develop and operate the facility, and the opening is scheduled for late spring, 2014.

The Tri-Cities [Cold Wet Weather Mat Program](#) which has provided overnight shelter in one of 5 host churches from November 1st – March 31st is currently in its 5th season of operation. Over the first 4 seasons, the mat program provided shelter and food to 596 different persons for a total of 8,139 mat-nights and helped 132 persons transition from the street into detox and recovery services and housing since inception. The CWW Mat Program is scheduled to discontinue operation following the 2011/2012 season – planning is underway for an interim “Bridge Shelter” to fill the gap until opening of the permanent shelter at 3030 Gordon Ave.

During periods of cold and snowy weather, an [Extreme Weather Response](#) shelter operates at Trinity United Church to augment the capacity of the Cold Wet Weather Mat Program.

What is being done to meet the needs of homeless persons in the Tri-Cities?

Shelter

During the fall and winter months, the Cold Wet Weather Mat Program provides a warm place to sleep overnight, with an evening meal prior and a breakfast and bag lunch the following morning.

Through contact with Hope For Freedom shelter and outreach workers, the program provides an opportunity for homeless persons to be connected with services and resources currently available in the Tri-Cities and beyond..

Outreach Services

The [Hope For Freedom Society](#) (HFFS) operates a program of outreach to persons homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Tri-Cities under contract to BC Housing. Three outreach workers seek out homeless persons where they live, establishing contact, developing rapport and connecting them with available resources and services when they are ready. HFFS also operates a Homeless Resource Centre with shower facilities, counselling and job search support. Contact: Lisa Batista at 604-830-1528.

The [SHARE Food Bank](#) depot at Trinity United Church, 2211 Prairie Ave, Port Coquitlam which operates Wednesdays from 12 – 2 PM provides assistance to homeless persons who attend the food bank. Contact: Joyce Lissimore, 604-612-0778 or lissimore@telus.net

Meal and Clothing Programs

Northside Foursquare Church - Grace campus
2606 Kingsway Avenue , Port Coquitlam
Food, clothing and shoes are available on Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Contact: Paul Oorebeek, 604-942-7711 or poco@northsidechurch.ca

Trinity United Church
2211 Prairie Ave. Port Coquitlam
Soup Kitchen – on Wednesdays, 12 – 2 PM
Contact Bernie Poitras, 604-941-2408
Food, clothing and shoes are available on Wednesdays, 12 noon – 2 PM
Contact: Joyce Lissimore, 604-612-0778 or lissimore@telus.net

A Warm Place for Women
A monthly social evening for women in need, hosted by Soroptimist International of the Tri-Cities.
Kinsman Centre at Aggie Park, Port Coquitlam – 1st Thursday of the month.
Coquitlam Legion, 1025 Ridgeway Ave., Coquitlam – 3rd Thursday of the month.
Contact: Darlene McCann Darlene_mccann@telus.net or Chari Grant davidg1@uniserve.com.

Laundry and Shower

SHARE Food Bank - 2615 Clarke St. Port Moody (rear of building)
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM. Shower time restricted to 20 minutes. All toiletries and soap provided.
Contact: 604-931-2451

Homeless Resource Centre – operated by the Hope For Freedom Society
Contact: Lisa Batista at 604-830-1528.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering your time with programs that are providing for the needs of homeless persons in the Tri-Cities:

- ◆ Visit www.tricityshomelessness.ca/howtohelp
- ◆ Contact Community Volunteer Connections: www.volunteerconnections.net
- ◆ Call the Society for Community Development 604.777.2394 or e-mail infoscd@telus.net or visit www.societyforcommunitydevelopment.com

For information on making a financial donation:
Visit www.tricityshomelessness.ca/howtohelp/Making+a+Financial+Donation