

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN A NORTHERN COMMUNITY—TIMMINS, ONTARIO

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Carol Kauppi, PhD
Henri Pallard, LLB, D^{oct}
Arshi Shaikh, MSW, PhD
Emily Faries, PhD
Brian MacLean, PhD
Jorge Virchez, PhD
Marie-Luce Garceau, PhD
Suzanne Lemieux, PhD

Poverty, Homelessness and Migration
Centre for Research in Social Justice and Policy
Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario

Presented to
Homelessness Partnering Strategy
Employment and Social Development Canada

Canada 

June, 2014

POVERTÉ, SANS-ABRISME ET MIGRATION
POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS AND MIGRATION
PAUVRETÉ, SANS-ABRISME ET MIGRATION

POVERTY HOMELESSNESS AND MIGRATION
POVERTY HOMELESSNESS AND MIGRATION
PAUVRETÉ SANS-ABRISME ET MIGRATION

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN A NORTHERN COMMUNITY TIMMINS, ONTARIO

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Carol Kauppi, PhD

Henri Pallard, LLB, D^{oct}

Arshi Shaikh, MSW, PhD

Emily Faries, PhD

Brian MacLean, PhD

Jorge Virchez, PhD

Marie-Luce Garceau, PhD

Suzanne Lemieux, PhD

Poverty, Homelessness and Migration

Centre for Research in Social Justice and Policy

Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario

Presented to

Homelessness Partnering Strategy

Employment and Social Development Canada

June, 2014

Understanding and Addressing Homelessness in a Northern Community—Timmins, Ontario. Summary of Findings

© 2014 Carol Kauppi, Henri Pallard, Arshi Shaikh, and Emily Faries

How to cite this document:

Carol Kauppi, Henri Pallard, Arshi Shaikh and Emily Faries, Brian MacLean, Jorge Virchez, Marie-Luce Garceau, Suzanne Lemieux (2014). *Understanding and Addressing Homelessness in a Northern Community—Timmins, Ontario. Summary of Findings*. Report prepared for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Employment and Social Development Canada. Sudbury, Ontario: Centre for Research in Social Justice and Policy, Laurentian University.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français :

Carol Kauppi, Henri Pallard, Arshi Shaikh et Emily Faries (2014). *Comprendre et affronter le sans-abrisme dans une communauté du Nord — Timmins (Ontario). Synthèse des résultats*. Rapport préparé pour la Stratégie des partenariats de lutte contre l'itinérance, Emploi et Développement social Canada. Sudbury (Ontario) : Centre de recherche sur la justice et la politique sociales, Université Laurentienne.

This study was funded by the
Homelessness Partnering Strategy
Employment and Social Development Canada

Poverty, Homelessness and Migration is funded by
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

ᑭᑎᑎᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑎᑭ ᑭᑦᑭᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑎᑦ ᑭᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦᑎᑦ

Poverty, Homelessness and Migration

Pauvreté, sans-abrisme et migration

Centre for Research in Social Justice and Policy
Laurentian University
935 Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury ON P3E 2C6

Tel. 705-675-1151, ext. 5156

homeless@laurentian.ca

sansabri@laurentienne.ca

Fax 705-671-3832

www.lul.ca/homeless

www.lul.ca/sansabri

Disclaimer

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

Les opinions et les interprétations figurant dans la présente publication sont celles de l'auteur et ne représentent pas nécessairement celles du gouvernement du Canada.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to the success of this project. First and foremost, those who assisted us include homeless parents, service providers and agency personnel and members of the community in Timmins. The project was conducted by faculty members and students with Poverty, Homelessness and Migration (PHM), and from the School of Social Work/ École de service social, and the Department of Law and Justice/Droit et Justice at Laurentian University. They worked in conjunction with key members, staff and volunteers of the Poverty, Homelessness and Migration Community Advisory Committee in Timmins: Veronica Nicholson, Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Ed Ligocki, The Good Samaritan Inn, and Dave Landers, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board.

The essential contribution of homeless people in northern communities must be well recognized. We could not conduct the Poverty, Homelessness and Migration project without their participation and willingness to share personal information. The service providers in the Timmins community comprise another group that has made this study possible. They have assisted in many ways, such as providing feedback on methodology, facilitating access to service users, collecting information for the study, and discussing implications and recommendations. The commitment shown by Timmins service providers in helping with the project, despite ongoing service pressures, has been truly remarkable. A comprehensive study of family homelessness could not have been accomplished without their help.

In particular, we gratefully acknowledge the helpful suggestions, comments and assistance of the following people in various phases of this study:

Harish Sundararaju, PHM

Roger Gervais, PHM

Carole Dubé, PHM

Hiren Rawal, PHM

Mandy Scott, PHM

Stephanie Fournier, PHM

Natalie Forget, PHM

Jade Leduc, PHM

Jasmine Therrien, PHM

Sarah Stewart, PHM

Brad McCloskey, Timmins Native Friendship Centre

We also thank all graduate and undergraduate students taking courses at Laurentian University and working with Poverty, Homelessness and Migration during 2013-2014.

Funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Financé par le gouvernement du Canada par l'entremise de la Stratégie des partenariats de lutte contre l'itinérance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS	1
<hr/>	
I. INTRODUCTION	3
A. Timmins: Background Information	3
B. Definition of Homeless Families	4
C. Definition of Homelessness	4
<hr/>	
II. METHODOLOGY	5
Phase 1: Review of Scholarly Literature	5
Phase 2: Analysis of Period Prevalence Count—A PHM Database	6
Phase 3: Survey of Service Providers	6
Phase 4: Qualitative Data Collection—Interviews	6
Phase 5: Focus Groups with Families	7
Phase 6: Focus Groups with Service Providers	7
<hr/>	
III. RESULTS FROM REPORT 1	9
A. Prevalence of Family Homelessness.	9
B. Demographic Features of Homeless Families.	9
C. Reasons for Family Homelessness	10
D. Basic Needs	10
E. Shelters	10
F. Impact on Parents and Children.	11
G. Barriers to Accessing Services	11
H. Addressing Family Homelessness.	11

IV. RESULTS FROM REPORT 2	13
A. Prevalence of Family Homelessness in Timmins	13
B. Demographic Features of Homeless Families.	13
1. Demographic features of all homeless and near homeless families	14
2. Profile of Indigenous homeless and near homeless families	14
C. Factors Contributing to Family Homelessness in Timmins	14
<hr/>	
V. RESULTS FROM REPORT 3	17
A. Service Use Patterns among Homeless Families	17
1. Services utilized by homeless/near homeless families.	17
2. Emergency shelter use.	17
3. Barriers in access to services	18
4. Factors associated with homelessness among families.	18
B. Capacity of the Current Service Delivery System	18
1. Agency staffing	18
2. Geographic area served	19
3. Linkages among service providers	19
4. Demand for services: peak times and slow times	19
5. Strategies utilized to increase the capacity of service delivery system	19
6. Types of services needed by homeless or near homeless families	20
7. Perceived capacity to meet clients' needs	20
8. Reasons for challenges in serving homeless or near homeless families	20
C. Proposed Solutions	20
<hr/>	
VI. RESULTS FROM REPORTS 4 AND 5	21
A. Approach to the Qualitative Analysis	21
B. Findings of Individual Interviews with Parents.	21
1. Homelessness.	21
2. Impacts on families	22
a. Impacts on children	22
Absence of the parent	22
Mental or physical health	22
Safety issues	22
Behaviour of spouse or others	22
b. Impacts on parents or others	23
3. Experiences with services	23
a. Barriers to accessing services	23

Lack of services	23
Shelters	23
Social housing	23
Concern about unhelpful workers	24
Agency rules	24
Gaps in services	24
b. Benefits of services.	24
4. Mental and physical health issues.	24
5. Resilience	24
6. Issues identified by Indigenous parents	25
a. Racism and discrimination	25
b. Cultural aspects	25
c. Migration	25
C. Findings from Focus Groups	25
<hr/>	
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS	27
<hr/>	
REFERENCES	31

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

1. Families made up two-thirds of the homeless persons in Timmins

Analysis of the unduplicated count of homeless persons in Timmins revealed that there were 720 people facing absolute homelessness or near homelessness at the time of study. Further analysis indicated that families with dependent children constituted two-thirds of homeless persons.

2. Overrepresentation of women and Indigenous parents or guardians among homeless families

A majority (81%) of homeless parents or guardians were women. Indigenous parents or guardians (36%) were proportionately overrepresented amongst homeless families in Timmins when compared to the total population of Indigenous people in this city (8%).

3. Structural reasons at the origin of absolute homelessness and near homelessness

Unemployment, low wages and lack of affordable and appropriately sized housing were identified as the major reasons for homelessness or near homelessness. The booming mining industry was linked to low vacancy rates and unaffordable rents. Other structural factors were racism and discrimination.

4. Adverse impact of homelessness on parents/guardians and children

The struggles to find appropriate, adequately sized and suitable housing were compounded by family separation, custody battles, stressful relationships with partners and relatives, the trauma of domestic violence, and perceived excessive scrutiny from service providers. Parents and children reported negative effects on their mental and physical well-being.

5. Service utilization by homeless or near homeless families

The primary services utilized by homeless families pertained to basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, transportation), counselling and crisis intervention. Lack of child care, single parenthood and transience posed barriers in accessing services.

6. Unmet needs of absolutely homeless or near homeless families

The unmet needs pertained to the domains of affordable and adequately sized housing, shelters for couples or families, long waitlists for social housing, gaps in services (e.g., substance abuse treatment services), culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Indigenous families, employment services, child care specific services and programs for children and families living in extreme poverty, and long-term solutions to the issue of homelessness and near homelessness.

7. Capacity of current services

A large number of agencies operated with limited human resources and relied heavily on part-time staff and volunteers to deliver services over vast geographic areas. At times, agencies experienced peaks in the demand for services which exceeded the resources available to support homeless families. Logistical and human resource limitations among social service agencies posed challenges to the timely access to services and their utilization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Community partners expressed grave concerns about the rising trend of family homelessness and identified a need for in-depth research in this area.

Homelessness is a major social issue affecting the lives of an increasing number of Canadians (Gaetz, Donaldson, Richter, & Gulliver, 2013). The contemporary reality reveals the rapidly growing presence of families with dependent children among homeless people (Gould & Williams, 2010; Lee, Tyler & Wright, 2010). Homelessness is reported to have devastating impacts on families in terms of the loss of housing, loss of relationships, and disruption in family life (Averitt, 2003; Lindsey, 1998; Paquette & Bassuk, 2009). Parents seek to preserve their families through re-housing and reintegration within the larger society. However, homeless families may require a continuum of services and public assistance to meet their multiple, complex and dynamic needs (Cummins, First & Toomey, 1998; Mulroy & Lauber, 2004). Given the personal, familial and systemic consequences of homelessness, a greater understanding of family homelessness becomes fundamentally important.

In 2011, the Poverty, Homelessness and Migration (PHM) project conducted a period prevalence count of homeless persons in Timmins, Ontario (Kauppi, Pallard, Lemeiux, & Matukala Nkosi, 2012). The findings were startling: families made up two-third of the absolutely homeless population within the city. Community partners expressed grave concerns about the rising trend of family homelessness and identified a need for in-depth research in this area. A six-phase mixed-methods research study was designed to address two primary goals: (i) to examine the prevalence and nature of family homelessness, and (ii) to ascertain service use and needs among homeless families.

A. Timmins: Background Information

The economy of Timmins is resource-based with its characteristic boom and bust cycle. At the time of study, the economy of Timmins was experiencing a boom in the mining industry which was adversely affecting the vacancy rates in the rental housing market.

Timmins is a small urban city located on the Mattagami River in northeastern Ontario. According to the 2011 census (Statistics Canada, 2012), the population of Timmins is 43,165. The 2006 census indicated that the population is predominantly Anglophone and Francophone. From 2001 to 2006, its Indigenous population increased by 14% (Carrière, 2011). The subgroup of people with First Nations heritage grew by 29%, while the Métis population grew by 2%.

The economy of Timmins is resource-based with its characteristic boom and bust cycle. Mining is the predominant resource industry followed by forestry activities (City of Timmins, 2012). Other economic sectors include retail stores, education, health care and other public services, construction, manufacturing, accommodation and food services,

transportation and warehousing. Despite fluctuations in the economy, the unemployment rate in Timmins (7.1%) was lower than the provincial rate (8.3%) in 2011 (SHS Consultation, 2014). At the time of study, the economy of Timmins was experiencing a boom in the mining industry which was adversely affecting the vacancy rates in the rental housing market. A low vacancy rate, a strong demand for rental accommodations and increasing rents were noted as significant contributing factors to homelessness in Timmins (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2012).

B. Definition of Homeless Families

The current project utilized an inclusive and comprehensive definition of family homelessness. A homeless family was defined as one or more homeless persons with at least one child. The person could be a biological parent, a grandparent, a non-biological parent, a foster parent or guardian. Moreover, homeless persons under the age of majority with at least one child were also included in the study. The rationale for the inclusion of guardians was rooted in Indigenous reality where the definition of family might involve multiple generations and where extended family members may assume the responsibility for child rearing (Anderson, 2010).

C. Definition of Homelessness

Homelessness refers to a spectrum of housing and shelter circumstances; people are (i) unsheltered, or absolutely homeless; (ii) emergency sheltered; (iii) provisionally accommodated; and (iv) at risk of homelessness. The present study utilized a broad and inclusive approach by taking into account people who were precariously housed and vulnerable to becoming homeless, in addition to those who were absolutely homeless at the time of the study (Kauppi et al., 2012).

The current project utilized an inclusive and comprehensive definition of family homelessness. A homeless family was defined as one or more homeless persons with at least one child. The present study utilized a broad and inclusive approach by taking into account people who were precariously housed and vulnerable to becoming homeless, in addition to those who were absolutely homeless at the time of the study.

II. METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the goal and objectives of the project, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed during its six overlapping phases as described below.

PHASE 1: REVIEW OF SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

An extensive search and review of scholarly literature regarding family homelessness was undertaken. A variety of search terms including family, homelessness, mothers, fathers, parents, homeless, Indigenous, First Nations, Indigenous, rural, and women with child/children were utilized in multiple combinations through a wide array of databases. In total, 382 articles were identified as related to various aspects of family homelessness. Guided by a review of the abstract and a preliminary scan of the entire article, the research studies were organized into different sections and themes. The selection of 125 articles and six book chapters provided for a review of the scholarly literature from 1986 to 2012 and for saturation¹ of most themes identified in the scan of the published work. Gaps in the literature became evident as the saturation of the theme “protective factors” was not possible. Five to ten articles relating to each remaining theme were retrieved and reviewed and incorporated into Report 1 (see Literature Review: Homelessness Among Families). The research team was unable to locate articles in the French language despite a rigorous search. Therefore, the issues encountered by Francophone homeless families remained underrepresented. Similarly, research on Indigenous homeless families was scant. The studies were mainly situated in urban settings, thus overshadowing experiences of homelessness among rural and small-town families.

An extensive search and review of scholarly literature regarding family homelessness was undertaken. Search terms included family, homelessness, mothers, fathers, parents, homeless, Indigenous, First Nations, Indigenous, rural, and women with child/children.

The terms were utilized in multiple combinations through a wide array of databases.

¹Saturation, in literature reviews, as well as in other qualitative analyses, is obtained when the study of new material does not produce any additional information; repetition of ideas becomes apparent such that further investigation is not required when it does not provide additional information or knowledge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2010; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003).

PHASE 2: ANALYSIS OF PERIOD PREVALENCE COUNT—A PHM DATABASE

In the second phase of the research, the team analyzed the PHM database containing the period prevalence count of homeless persons in Timmins. The unduplicated count of homeless persons was obtained by utilizing a service-based method to gather information about the total number of homeless persons, including those having custody of children, their demographic characteristics, sources of income, reasons for homelessness and mental and physical health conditions. In the present study, the analysis focused on a sub-group of homeless persons with custody of children. The purpose of this analysis was to gain an understanding about the prevalence, nature and circumstances surrounding family homelessness in Timmins. The findings of the second phase of the study were compiled in Report 2 (see A Comparative Study with Three Northern Ontario Communities).

PHASE 3: SURVEY OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

Information pertaining to existing services offered to homeless persons with children, to the capacity of the current service system, and to gaps in the services was gathered through a survey of service providers serving homeless and near homeless individuals. A questionnaire was developed by reviewing existing survey instruments and selecting questions that addressed the objectives of the current project and that were appropriate for the cultural context in Timmins. The survey was conducted in the spring and summer of 2013. Twenty-eight organizations, services or programs were invited to participate in the survey; twenty-three agencies took part for a response rate of 82%. The participating agencies provided a wide range of services/programs such as shelters, soup kitchens, employment services/income support, outreach, physical and mental health services, and housing services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. The findings were incorporated into Report 3 (see Survey of Service Providers).

PHASE 4: QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION—INTERVIEWS

The fourth phase aimed at enhancing understanding of the nature of homelessness among families, of factors contributing to homelessness, and of issues pertaining to the availability, accessibility and relevance of services within the community. With the assistance of survey respondents and service providers, a team of bilingual and tri-cultural research assistants recruited homeless parents/guardians for individual interviews and focus groups.

Thirty Anglophone, Francophone and Indigenous parents participated in individual interviews and 18 of the participants were Indigenous parents. Challenges were encountered in recruiting Anglophone and Francophone parents for individual interviews; 7 Anglophone parents and 5 Francophone parents were interviewed.

PHASE 5: FOCUS GROUPS WITH FAMILIES

In the fifth phase, two focus groups were conducted with 12 Anglophone, Francophone and Indigenous parents. They included 10 mothers and 2 fathers.

PHASE 6: FOCUS GROUPS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

In the sixth phase of the study, focus groups with service providers were conducted. Four focus groups were conducted with service providers. Three focus groups were conducted separately with Anglophone, Francophone and Indigenous providers. A fourth focus group included a mix of service providers who provided services to these socio-cultural groups. Focus groups included three or more participants. The findings of the interviews and focus groups are incorporated in Report 4 (see Perspectives of Homeless Parents and Service Providers on Family Homelessness).

III. RESULTS FROM REPORT 1

About 9,500 children spent a night in an emergency shelter in 2009, an increase of 50% since 2005.

The salient themes emerging from an extensive search and study of the scholarly literature on family homelessness are presented below.

A. PREVALENCE OF FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

An examination of the published research reveals that family homelessness is a rising concern across Canada. Krane and Davies (2007) reported that 40% of the residents in shelters were mothers with dependent children. A national study utilizing the data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) revealed that the proportion of children under sixteen years of age using shelters increased from 4% in 2005 to 6.5% in 2009 (Segaert, 2012). About 9,500 children spent a night in an emergency shelter in 2009, an increase of 50% since 2005. Within family shelters, there was a 40% increase in bed use between 2008 and 2009. The median length of stay at family shelters nearly tripled from 10 nights in 2005 to 29 nights in 2009; their operating capacity averaged over 100%. These numbers excluded families residing in the 593 violence against women shelters (VAW) across Canada, where approximately 75% of residents were accompanied by two children on average (Burczycka & Cotter, 2011).

B. DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF HOMELESS FAMILIES

Epidemiological and survey methods research found that homeless families, compared to single homeless adults living without children, were predominantly female-headed and from minority ethnic communities (Banyard & Graham-Bermann, 1998; Culhane, Metraux, Park, Schretzman, & Valente, 2007; Rossi, 1994; Zoltnick, Tam, & Bradley, 2010).

C. REASONS FOR FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

The major contributing factors to family homelessness identified in previous studies pertained to the scarcity of affordable housing, economic restructuring, poverty, and insufficient social welfare support from the government (Gould & Williams, 2010; Lee, 2012). Unemployment, job loss, low-wages, lack of job security and a lack of benefits (e.g., health care) were found to diminish monetary resources required to secure and maintain housing. Abuse, domestic violence, dissolution of marriage, separation from partner, drug problems, family friction (e.g., conflicts with support network), estrangement from extended family and residential mobility were other commonly reported precipitating factors in the scholarly literature (Fertig & Reingold, 2008; Johnson, 1989; Lehmann, Kass, Drake, & Nichols, 2007; Sev'er, 2002; Shinn, Weitzman, Stojanovic, Knickman, Jimenez, Duchon, James, & Krantz, 1998). In addition, racial prejudice and discrimination were significant precipitating and perpetuating factors of homelessness among families of minority ethnicity and racialized groups (Benbow, Forchuk, & Ray, 2011).

D. BASIC NEEDS

The scholarly literature revealed that various forms of homelessness ranging from living on the streets to paying an enormous portion of one's income on rent often left insufficient money to secure other basic necessities such as food, clothing and transportation (Lee, 2012; Rossi, 1994; Zlotnick et al., 2010).

The major contributing factors to family homelessness identified in previous studies pertained to the scarcity of affordable housing, economic restructuring, poverty, and insufficient social welfare support from the government. Homeless families sought refuge at shelters when they exhausted resources within their personal support networks.

E. SHELTERS

Homeless families sought refuge at shelters when they exhausted resources within their personal support networks (Averitt, 2003). Some homeless families found that shelters were not equipped to offer anything beyond a roof over the heads (Averitt, 2003). Shared rooms and washroom facilities conflicted with a desire to maintain privacy and effective family functioning (Averitt, 2003; McArthur, Zubrzycki, Rochester, & Thomson, 2006; Schindler & Coley, 2007). Enforcement of the rules and regulations regarding curfews, child care guidelines, chores, visiting hours, and restrictions on alcohol and substance use posed many challenges for homeless mothers and fathers (Averitt, 2003; Choi & Snyder, 1999a; Schindler & Coley, 2007).

Lack of affordable child care posed barriers in accessing social services or attending job interviews (Averitt, 2003). At certain shelters, mothers were prohibited from taking turns caring for each other's children. As a result, mothers of small children were often immobilized until they were able to access public child care programs for which there were often long wait-lists.

F. IMPACT ON PARENTS AND CHILDREN

For most parents, homelessness appeared to undermine their ability to protect and nurture their children, often leaving mothers and fathers feeling depressed, anxious, guilty, powerless and ashamed (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009). According to parents, their major concerns were their inability to meet their children's basic needs, to protect them from disease or physical harm, and to provide them with structure and security in the shelter setting (Averitt, 2003).

Homeless women felt the real loss of their children or the constant threat of their potential loss to child protection services due to their lack of housing, lack of privacy, diminished parental authority and public viewing of their parenting practices at family shelters (Benbow et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Paquette & Bassuk, 2009; Schultz-Krohn, 2004). Many women stated that they were on guard about how others might perceive their parenting behavior at shelters (Cosgrove & Flynn, 2005). Mothers expressed deep concerns about the negative influences of shelter living on their children's well-being (David, Gelberg, & Suchman, 2012). Many felt that the shelter system exposed their children to a variety of bad influences, such as poorly disciplined children in other families (Styron, Janoff-Bulman, & Davidson, 2000).

Children within homeless families experienced unique challenges as they moved around with their parents in search of housing and a stable life (DeForge, Minick, Zehnder, & Carmon, 2001; Kirkman, Keys, Bodzak, & Turner, 2010). The literature suggested that the adverse effects of homelessness and housing instability were pervasive in every sphere of children's lives, including relationships, mental health, physical health, education and schooling. Nevertheless, it was found that children had considerably varied notions about what constituted home and homelessness (Kirkman et al., 2010).

G. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

The research noted the existence of barriers to accessing services in the interconnected structural and personal domains (Choi & Snyder, 1999b; Nwakeze, Magura, Rosenblum, & Joseph, 2003; Swick, 2008; 2005). The structural barriers included lack of affordable housing, unsafe neighbourhoods, bureaucratic hassles, restrictive eligibility for public assistance programs, long-wait times for subsidized housing, inadequate employment opportunities and a lack of cohesive and meaningful social services. In the personal domain, the barriers to service use pertained to feelings of isolation, despair and chaos, a pervasive sense of insecurity and powerlessness, and limited social skills necessary for healthy family functioning. At times, the struggle for survival so consumed the homeless families they could not take care of their other mental and physical health needs (Nwakeze et al., 2003).

The structural barriers included lack of affordable housing, unsafe neighbourhoods, bureaucratic hassles, restrictive eligibility for public assistance programs, long-wait times for subsidized housing, inadequate employment opportunities and a lack of cohesive and meaningful social services.

H. ADDRESSING FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

The vast majority of homeless families required services in the areas of job training and employment, adult education, mental and physical health care, public assistance, parenting and life-skills training, and services for children (Anderson, Stuttaford, & Vostanis, 2006; Kim, Calloway, & Selz-Campbell, 2004; Swick, 2010). Furthermore, the previous

research demonstrated the need for different forms of housing services (e.g., shelters, transitional housing, vouchers, and subsidies) and interagency collaborations to meet the diverse needs of homeless families (Anderson et al., 2006; Bassuk & Geller, 2006; Fischer, 2000; Fogel, 1997).

Homeless women felt the real loss of their children or the constant threat of their potential loss to child protection services due to their lack of housing, lack of privacy, diminished parental authority and public viewing of their parenting practices at family shelters. Children within homeless families experienced unique challenges as they moved around with their parents in search of housing and a stable life.

IV. RESULTS FROM REPORT 2

Results of the second phase of the study are organized in three broad sections: (A) pre-valence of family homelessness, (B) demographic features of homeless families, and (C) reasons for family homelessness.

A. PREVALENCE OF FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN TIMMINS

Analysis of the unduplicated count of homeless persons in Timmins revealed that there were 720 people facing homelessness/near homelessness at the time of study. Further analysis indicated that families with dependent children made up two-thirds of homeless individuals. Thirty-nine percent of homeless parents or guardians reported that they had been absolutely homeless during their lifetime. Approximately one-fifth of families were experiencing absolute homelessness.

B. DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF HOMELESS FAMILIES

Demographic characteristics of homeless or near homeless families were examined, including data pertaining to Indigenous homeless families.

Indigenous parents or guardians (36%) were overrepresented amongst homeless families in Timmins where the total population of North American Indians and Métis is 8%.

1. Demographic features of all homeless and near homeless families

A majority, 81%, of homeless parents or guardians were women. With regard to their ethno-cultural background, 42% identified as Anglophone, 19% as Francophone, 36% as Indigenous, and the rest as visible minorities. Notably, Indigenous parents or guardians (36%) were overrepresented amongst homeless families in Timmins where the total population of North American Indians and Métis is 8% (Statistics Canada, 2012). In contrast, French-speaking parents or guardians (19%) were underrepresented in relation to the overall population of 37% in Timmins.

Problems with work (26%) were cited as a major reason for homelessness. In particular, low wages, lack of money and unemployment created conditions of homelessness or risk of homelessness.

The age range of homeless parents or guardians was between 16 and 83 years, with a mean age of 37 years. Approximately one-fourth of parents or guardians reported being single and over one-fourth were separated, divorced or widowed. The most common family size was two children, as identified by 39% of homeless women and 48% of homeless men.

The reported main sources of income for homeless families were the Ontario Disabilities Support Program (ODSP) and employment, respectively 28% and 29%. Another major source of income was Ontario Works followed by employment insurance or WSIB benefits. Less than 10% reported that they had no income.

2. Profile of Indigenous homeless and near homeless families

One-third of Indigenous families in Timmins had experienced absolute homelessness in their life times and in the past. Most Indigenous homeless families were headed by women (91%). The age of Indigenous homeless parents or guardians ranged from 18 to 71 years, with a mean age of 35.

The reported main sources of income for homeless families were the Ontario Disabilities Support Program (ODSP) and employment, respectively 28% and 29%.

Nearly half of the Indigenous parents or guardians were single (46%). Less than one fourth reported their marital status as separated, divorced or widowed. Government assistance in the form of Ontario Works was the primary source of income among Indigenous homeless families (37%). Slightly more than one-fourth of families generated income through employment which included casual work.

C. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN TIMMINS

One-fifth of the respondents referred to problems with work (26%) as a major reason for homelessness. In particular, low wages, lack of money and unemployment created conditions of homelessness or risk of homelessness. Problems with social assistance (e.g., inadequate amount, late payment) and family issues (e.g., domestic violence, divorce) were identified as contributing factors by about 17% of the homeless parents or guardians. In addition, problems with

housing were cited in approximately 13% of the responses; while physical and mental health issues were mentioned in about 15%. Thus, families facing the risk of homelessness identified multiple reasons for their precarious housing situation. The central reason was structural, with unemployment and low wages cited by three-quarters of the participants.

V. RESULTS FROM REPORT 3

The third phase of the study involved a survey of service providers. The salient results emerging from the survey are organized around (A) service use patterns among homeless families and factors associated with homelessness among families, (B) capacity of the current service delivery system, and (C) proposed solutions.

A. SERVICE USE PATTERNS AMONG HOMELESS FAMILIES

1. Services utilized by homeless/near homeless families

The primary services utilized by homeless families pertained to basic needs, counselling and crisis intervention. Life skills support services, housing and room rentals, and outreach services were also accessed by homeless or near homeless families. Parenting assistance and addictions treatment were other key services believed to be utilized by homeless or near homeless families.

The primary services utilized by homeless families pertained to basic needs, counselling and crisis intervention. Most agencies reported not having sufficient beds to serve homeless families and noted as a reason that “demands exceeded the capacity”.

2. Emergency shelter use

Among three agencies, the bed utilization was reported to be 25%, 70% and 80% at the time of the survey. Only one agency responded affirmatively that it had sufficient emergency housing/shelter beds for homeless families. In contrast, most agencies reported not having sufficient beds to serve homeless families and noted as a reason that “demands exceeded the capacity”.

3. Barriers in access to services

The major structural barriers identified by over 60% of respondents were the lack of appropriately sized housing units, the lack of program funds to support the transportation needs of homeless families, the stigma attached to programs/ services, and lengthy application or approval processes. Inadequate financial and logistic resources and increased wait times were agency-level barriers, while single parenthood and transience or migration were individual level obstacles in access to services.

4. Factors associated with homelessness among families

Service providers described factors contributing to absolute as well as near homelessness among families who accessed services of the agency in the year prior to the survey. The major factors contributing to absolute homelessness included lack of affordable housing, alcohol and drug abuse, and mental illness in the family. Domestic violence and unemployment were also identified as significant factors related to absolute homelessness among families.

Alcohol and drug abuse in the family, low income, dependence on welfare, and unaffordable and substandard housing were believed to place families at risk of homelessness. In addition, about three-fourths of the service providers indicated that divorce or separation, domestic violence, and unemployment were major factors related to near homelessness among families. More than 50% of the respondents stated that age (i.e., below 25 years) and cultural heritage (i.e., Indigenous) of the parent or guardian were tied to the increased possibility of homelessness among precariously housed families. Overall, 61% of the service providers believed that racism, discrimination and prejudice in the housing market were linked to near homelessness among families in Timmins.

B. CAPACITY OF THE CURRENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

1. Agency staffing

Fifty percent of the agencies operated with a staff of less than twelve persons. The range for the number of full-time staff was 0 to 155 (excluding the Timmins and District Hospital) while the range for part-time staff was 0 to 46. The majority of these agencies were supported by volunteers. Volunteers provided, on average, a total of 29 volunteer hours each week per agency.

Organizations found ways to “do more with less” and extended hours of operation. They also engaged in triage to serve those with the highest needs. Service providers stated that the desire of couples to remain together posed challenges in serving homeless or near homeless families.

2. Geographic area served

About 18% of the agencies reported that they served the area within the current boundaries of the City of Timmins while one-third had mandates to serve the Cochrane District or northeastern Ontario.

3. Linkages among service providers

All respondents stated that they were linked with other service providers through formal and informal agreements as well as relationships established over time. Linkages involved were primarily partnerships, participation on joint committees, board memberships, and formal service agreements. Furthermore, linkages were perceived to improve overall service delivery, to allow access to a greater number of services with fewer “roadblocks”, to consolidate expertise, to make for effective communication, to facilitate a better understanding of Indigenous homelessness, poverty and other issues, and to keep fewer clients from falling through gaps in the system.

4. Demand for services: peak times and slow times

More than half of the service providers reported experiencing peak times in the demand for services among homeless or near homeless families. The middle to the end of the month was the time period identified as the busiest time. About quarter of the agencies reported experiencing slow times on an annual basis. The middle of the summer was reported to be slower by a majority of the agencies.

5. Strategies utilized to increase the capacity of the service delivery system

All service providers (100%) utilized various strategies to accommodate the particular demands of clients in peak periods. Referrals to other organizations or the provision of transportation were the most commonly devised strategies to deal with peaks in service demand. Agencies also stretched their policies, mandates and resources at such times. A number of agencies assisted homeless or near homeless families with basic needs through provision of food, blankets, clothing or shelter. Organizations found ways to “do more with less” and extended hours of operation. They also engaged in triage to serve those with the highest needs.

Major solutions proposed by service providers included the creation of services specifically for homeless families, creation or provision of more affordable and subsidized housing, increased public assistance, lowering rent costs, shelters for couples, and mental health and substance abuse services.

6. Types of services needed by homeless or near homeless families

Over three-quarters of the service providers believed that all or most clients needed services in the area of basic needs such as food and clothing. More than half of the respondents reported that most clients needed income and housing supports. One-third or more of the service providers indicated that all or most of their clients needed services in the areas of domestic violence counselling and of employment supports. Over a fifth of the respondents stated that all or most clients need culturally appropriate services, in particular Indigenous homeless or near homeless families.

7. Perceived capacity to meet clients' needs

A majority of the service providers (64%) believed that the needs of families experiencing forms of homelessness were served well (46%) or very well (18%).

8. Reasons for challenges in serving homeless or near homeless families

The service providers noted several reasons for challenges in meeting the needs of homeless and near homeless families. More than one third of service providers stated that the desire of couples to remain together posed challenges in serving homeless or near homeless families. Furthermore, problematic behaviour on the part of parent(s) or guardian(s) and eligibility criteria for the programs and services created barriers in the delivery of services. Over half of the service providers stated that available services were refused to parent(s) or guardian(s) because they were under the influence of alcohol. Exhaustion of agency resources and lack of resources within the community were important factors contributing to challenges.

C. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Major solutions proposed by service providers included the creation of services specifically for homeless families, creation or provision of more affordable and subsidized housing, increased public assistance, lowering of rent costs, shelters for couples, and mental health and substance abuse services. Over half of the service providers expressed solutions in the areas of child care and parenting services, culturally sensitive services, employment support and better incomes for families as well as improvement in linkages among services. Half of the respondents suggested development and provision of special services and programs for dependent children or adolescents in homeless and near homeless families.

VI. RESULTS FROM REPORTS 4 AND 5

A. APPROACH TO THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Parents identified six issues as reasons for being homeless. These were housing issues, a lack of income, relationship issues, health or mental health, lack of education and aspects of the community of Timmins.

The analysis focused on describing the major issues found in the narratives of the participants of interviews and then examining the emergence of dominant themes within the focus groups.

The findings discuss 14 dominant themes and 38 dominant sub-themes. The dominant themes emerging from the analysis include the number of times each theme was mentioned by women and men and by all participants (i.e., frequency of mention).

B. FINDINGS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS

1. Homelessness

I believe that what's going on is because of the mines are booming, right? There's more people moving to Timmins (Cate I, W).

Aspects of homelessness emerged as a dominant theme and the four minor themes pertained to reasons for homelessness, hidden homelessness, histories of homelessness and absolute homelessness. Parents identified six issues as reasons for being homeless. These subthemes were housing issues, a lack of income, relationship issues, health or mental health, lack of education and aspects of the community of Timmins. The results are reported showing the pseudonym assigned, the socio-cultural group (I=Indigenous origins, F=Franco-European origins and A=Anglo-European origins) and the gender of the parent/guardian (W=woman and M=man).

Interestingly, a number of parents expressed the view that the high cost of housing in Timmins was related to the mining industry. Hence, the economic basis of the community was perceived to have an impact on the availability of rental accommodations. Cate (I, W) and Alain (F, M) explained this link:

It's a mining town. I think, yeah, rents are elevated because of that (Alain F, M).

I believe that what's going on is because of the mines are booming, right? There's more people moving to Timmins (Cate I, W).

Close to half of the parents interviewed had been homeless in the past. Luna (I, W) had been homeless several times when her children were infants:

Yeah, I have been in lot of homeless situations. I have been in a shelter for a while. When he [son] was a baby, I was in shelter for like 6 months—when he was about 5 months. And then I went back to living with my mom. And then I went in to a shelter when she [daughter] was born, when she was only 3 months old. And then I went back to living with my mom... and my mother got homeless too. We got evicted from our place.

Thus having a social support network in Timmins did not mean that parents, especially Indigenous parents, could avoid becoming homeless.

Parents were concerned about mental health or emotional impacts on their children, which included stress, anger, frustration, sadness or insecurity, and the manifestation of these emotions through crying, as well as adverse physical health problems.

2. Impacts on families

Experiences of homelessness impacted on both parents and their children. The main issues pertained to the perceived effects on children. The results indicate that the parents were more concerned about impacts on their children than on themselves or others.

a. Impacts on children

Absence of the parent. Many parents were separated from their children because the children were living or staying temporarily with other family members or were “in care” with child welfare authorities.

Mental or physical health. Parents were concerned about the mental health or emotional impacts on their children, which included stress, anger, frustration, sadness or insecurity, and the manifestation of these emotions through crying, as well as adverse physical health problems (e.g. respiratory problems, a stabbing, and injuries through falls). David (A, M) had noticed that his children were angry because he was absent from their daily lives: “It sucks because it [homelessness] keeps me away from my kids. Like they get mad every time I go visit them and leave, like it's sad. Like that's all I can care about.”

Safety Issues. Safety concerns were noted by Indigenous parents. For example, in a previous place where Loree (I, W) and her son had been staying the year prior to the interview, her son was stabbed: “My son was 16 and there were too many fights there, so he got stabbed there upstairs.”

Behaviour of spouse or others. A few parents were concerned about the conduct of others who were caring for their children. Experiencing child welfare involvement, Lisa (I, W) commented on the cultural differences: “She [foster parent] doesn't let them [children] live their Native culture”. David expressed concerns about custody battles and stated that his ex-wife was not providing adequate care for his children. “I want to get an apartment and get both my kids back. I will take

care of them myself because she [ex-wife] obviously can't. I hate being away from my kids. Just lost my sons. I have court tomorrow. I am going to try for custody again".

However, some parents did not recognize any impacts of homelessness on their children.

b. Impacts on parents or others

A number of participants commented on the challenges of homelessness due to their separation from various family members. Being separated from their children was difficult for most fathers and mothers. Some noted that one difficulty was that their children were not able to visit them in the place where they were living.

You can't be a parent living in a place like this. You don't want anyone [seeing you] in a freaking homeless shelter (Robert, A, M.).

Similarly, at age 55, Loree (I, W) was finding it difficult sleeping outdoors in a tent and her youngest child, a 17 year old, was staying with another of Loree's children in Timmins. She wanted a more stable living situation: "I just want an apartment so I can take care of my son. That's what I want, yeah, so he can be safe". Mona (I, W) stated: "Because when you are being homeless, it's just, it's an awful feeling itself, and having to [live] separate from family, it's even worse you know."

3. Experiences with services

Being separated from their children was difficult for most fathers and mothers. Some noted that one difficulty was that their children were not able to visit them in the place where they were living.

a. Barriers to accessing services

Participants identified many barriers to services. This was a dominant theme—one that the participants spoke about extensively.

Lack of services. Parents were concerned about the lack of services in a number of areas. These pertained firstly to the need for housing supports. Parents identified the need for a rent bank, for housing workers to deal with landlords, and for assistance with moving, services to assist with transportation, employment-seeking, recreation for families with children especially on the weekends, prevention services, counselling, case management and services for youth.

Shelters. A second set of concerns about services pertained to shelters and the need for a shelter for homeless families. This was reflected in the story of Mona (I,W) who was unable to access shelters and was relying on temporary accommodations within her social network:

[I'm] like staying here and there, all over, the family, friends, just to have a place to sleep at night. Because I couldn't even take my son to the shelter with me. (Mona, I,W).

Lorne (A, M) noted that the shelter was an inappropriate environment for young children as "you don't know who or what's floating around". Furthermore, parents stated that a lack of privacy, excessive scrutiny and insufficient capacity of shelters to take all family members posed barriers in access to emergency shelters.

Social housing. The problems with social housing centred primarily on the wait list and the forms of social housing needed in Timmins. The wait list was long and some parents reported that they had been told that they may have to wait many years for social housing.

Concern about unhelpful workers. Parents had encountered workers who were deemed overly intrusive and thus had hindered rather than helped to resolve their issues.

Agency rules. Parents expressed numerous concerns about rules and regulations within social service agencies; such regulations posed barriers to access and limited the provision of services.

Gaps in services. It was noted that every kind of service for families was needed in Timmins. Loree (I, W) explained that the absence of choices was affecting her son and herself:

Yes, I have my 17 year old, but he has been staying with his brother... And I am not with him right now... they cut him off from my [disability] cheque because I have no fixed address... I have to still support him.

Many parents identified a gap in services that would provide a location and/or fun activities for children during weekends.

b. Benefits of services

Parents also valued and praised existing services, noting the strengths of workers, provision for basic needs, shelters, subsidy programs and the social networks to which they gained access by being involved with a program or service.

4. Mental and physical health issues

The problems with social housing centred primarily on the wait list and the forms of social housing needed in Timmins. The wait list was long and some parents reported that they had been told that they may have to wait many years for social housing.

Mental health issues were mentioned more often than physical health. Parents spoke of the many emotional impacts of homelessness. They described sadness or depression, shame and embarrassment, isolation and loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness and loss of motivation, feeling vulnerable, misunderstood, frustrated or bored. Mothers and fathers in all three socio-cultural groups spoke about the mental health impacts associated with homelessness.

The mental health challenges also impacted on physical health for some. Participants identified a range of physical ailments such as diabetes, stroke, heart attack, arthritis, joint problems (e.g., hip, knee surgery), mobility issues (e.g., in a wheel chair, requiring a cane), visual impairment, chronic pain and exhaustion.

5. Resilience

Comments of nearly all participants (27 of 30) revealed forms of resilience in their struggles with homelessness. Their narratives of resilience pertained to aspects of resourcefulness, personal development and strategies for improving their situation.

Parents spoke of the many emotional impacts of homelessness. They described sadness or depression, shame and embarrassment, isolation and loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness and loss of motivation, feeling vulnerable, misunderstood, frustrated or bored. Mothers and fathers in all three socio-cultural groups spoke about the mental health impacts associated with homelessness.

6. Issues identified by Indigenous parents

a. Racism and discrimination

Indigenous mothers and fathers spoke about their awareness and experiences of racism.

b. Cultural aspects

A number of Indigenous parents were concerned about the limited number of culturally specific and culturally competent/safe programs available to them.

c. Migration

Several parents spoke about the challenges of migration, including moving from James Bay communities to Timmins. It was noted that the lack of housing in First Nations communities was linked to migration to the city. However, others spoke of having moved to Timmins from other towns and cities in northeastern Ontario as well as other locations.

C. FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

The results from the analysis of the 6 focus groups provide support for the findings from the individual interviews in that only 3 of 38 themes discussed in the interviews were not identified in one or more of the 6 focus groups. Only 8 of 38 themes did not arise in the service provider discussion groups and 9 of 38 themes did not arise in the family discussion groups.

The results suggested that service providers were less aware of the impacts of homelessness on families and of the resilience of homeless family members compared with parents. A significant finding is that 35 of 38 or 92% of the themes arose in both individual interviews and in focus groups.

Narratives of resilience pertained to aspects of resourcefulness, personal development and strategies for improving their situation. A number of Indigenous parents were concerned about the limited number of culturally specific and culturally competent/safe programs available to them.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The above findings reveal unique challenges faced by homeless or near homeless families in Timmins. The homeless families were predominantly headed by women with dependent children. Indigenous families were overrepresented among homeless families and this finding underscores the possible influence of major structural and societal forces, including discrimination and racism, operating as precipitating factors for homelessness and near homelessness. Interestingly, Francophone families were underrepresented among the homeless population, possibly due to their ability to seek services in the English language without disclosing their linguistic and ethnic background.

Most of the homeless families accessed services pertaining to the most basic human needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter). Hence, the struggles of homeless families not only centered upon meeting the core housing needs, but also upon securing other basic necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and child care.

Homeless parents or guardians faced challenges in accessing temporary and emergency shelters as the shelters did not allow family members to be together. The lack of shelters for families and couples in Timmins forced parents to separate from their partners and children. Long wait lists for social housing and low vacancy rates in the rental market due to the booming mining industry created additional barriers to securing long-term housing.

The struggles to find appropriate, adequately sized and suitable housing were compounded by family separation, custody battles, stressful relationships with partners and relatives, trauma of domestic violence, perceived excessive scrutiny from service providers, and racism and discrimination. Lack of child care, single parenthood and transience also posed barriers in accessing services. Homeless parents and guardians expressed deep concerns about the impact of homelessness or near homelessness on the safety, health and well-being of children. Furthermore, homeless parents and guardians felt ashamed and vulnerable because they were not able to provide safe and secure housing for their children and stability in their lives.

Logistical and human resource limitations among social service agencies posed challenges in the timely access to services and their utilization. A large number of agencies operated with limited human resources and relied heavily on part-time staff and volunteers to deliver services over vast geographic areas. At times, the agencies experienced peaks in the demand for services which exceeded the resources available for homeless families. Augmenting existing linkages and stretching agency resources were common practices among service providers.

Service providers emphasized the great need to create and sustain services specifically designed for homeless families. Affordable housing, wait lists, shelters for families and rooming choices, substance use/treatment services, culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Indigenous families, employment services, child care, and long-term

solutions to the issue of homelessness and near homelessness were all areas where needs remained unmet. Participants identified special services and programs for children facing family separation, unstable living circumstances, and frequent changes of caregivers due to family homelessness or near homelessness as other areas where needs were not met.

Housing First (HF) has been identified as an effective strategy for addressing homelessness (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014; Goering, Veldhuizen, Watson, Adair, Kopp et al., 2014). However, the implementation of an HF approach requires the availability of accommodation for people who are homeless. The shortage of housing in Timmins was a contributing factor to family homelessness in this northern city and thus it poses a serious barrier to the implementation of a Housing First initiative. In the absence of adequate accommodation for families, it is urgent to support families in the short term. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that short-term strategies cannot resolve the problem of rising homelessness.

Long-term solutions to homelessness must be implemented so that the needs of vulnerable children and adolescents are met. As Goering et al. (2014, p. 5) have noted, cost savings are realized through the implementation of HF: "... every \$10 invested in HF services resulted in an average savings of \$21.72." Hence the findings of the At Home/Chez Soi Project indicate that solutions involving the provision of housing result in cost savings. Such solutions are required in order to prevent the deleterious effects of homelessness on children and families living with forms of homelessness.

The recommendations emerging from all six phases of the study, including long-term and short-term strategies, are presented below.

1. Develop new public housing initiatives in order to create more subsidized housing units.
2. Develop strategies to create additional safe, decent, and affordable private sector housing.
3. Enhance services in the areas of greatest need for homeless families:
 - a. supportive housing and income security;
 - b. basic necessities including food, clothing and transportation;
 - c. employment services;
 - d. education;
 - e. counselling and addictions;
 - f. domestic violence;
 - g. mental health, including trauma resolution;
 - h. physical health; and
 - i. culturally appropriate services for Indigenous families
4. Create new services and programs specifically designed for homeless families, including parents or grandparents, young parents, guardians and children.
5. Provide funding for the creation of shelters and services for couples with children as well as lone-parents with dependent children.
6. Provide funding to agencies so that they have sufficient beds available to serve homeless families.
7. Provide suitable space in shelters so that parents can visit with their children.

8. Provide sufficient funding to agencies serving homeless people to ensure that adequate staffing is available to meet the needs of families.
9. Provide training for agency staff to sensitize them to issues for homeless parents and to ensure that homeless family members are treated with respect and dignity.
10. Engage in outreach work to enable homeless families to be aware of programs and services available to them.
11. Establish housing supports that can prevent families from losing their housing and their possessions.
12. Develop local, provincial, and national initiatives to address the structural problems of unemployment, lack of jobs, and low wages for vulnerable families.
13. Educate landlords in order to reduce discrimination against key groups (e.g., people with mental illness, battered women, and Indigenous people).
14. Take steps to address racism to ensure that Indigenous families can obtain rental housing and to ensure fairness in access to services.
15. Work with Indigenous communities to further develop strategies for supporting Indigenous families that move from their First Nations communities into urban centres.
16. Develop linguistic and culturally appropriate services for Indigenous and Francophone families.
17. Enhance emergency service systems to address the needs of families that become homeless as a result of relocation.

POVERTY HOMELESSNESS AND MIGRATION | PAUVRETÉ SANS-ABRISME ET MIGRATION

Following the presentation of findings of our study, *Understanding and Addressing Family Homelessness in a Northern Community – Timmins, Ontario*, 40 participants rank-ordered the recommendations that emerged from the study. The recommendations based on the rank-ordering activity and the score for each recommendation are given.

Score	Priority	Recommendation
109	1	Develop new public housing initiatives in order to create more subsidized housing units.
87	2	Develop strategies to create additional safe, decent, and affordable private sector housing.
83	3	Enhance services in the areas of greatest need for homeless families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. supportive housing and income security; b. basic necessities including food, clothing and transportation; c. employment services; d. education; e. counselling and addictions; f. domestic violence; g. mental health, including trauma resolution; h. physical health; and i. culturally appropriate services for Indigenous families
50	4	Develop local, provincial, and national initiatives to address the structural problems of unemployment, lack of jobs, and low wages for vulnerable families.
45	5	Provide funding for the creation of shelters and services for couples with children as well as lone-parents with dependent children.
43	6	Establish housing supports that can prevent families from losing their housing and their possessions.
41	7	Work with Indigenous communities to further develop strategies for supporting Indigenous families that move from their First Nations communities into urban centres.
32	8	Engage in outreach work to enable homeless families to be aware of programs and services available to them.
30	9	Create new services and programs specifically designed for homeless families, including parents or grandparents, young parents, guardians and children.
28	10	Provide funding to agencies so that they have sufficient beds available to serve homeless families.
24	11	Provide sufficient funding to agencies serving homeless people to ensure that adequate staffing is available to meet the needs of families.
23	12	Educate landlords in order to reduce discrimination against key groups (e.g., people with mental illness, battered women, and Indigenous people).
23	13	Take steps to address racism to ensure that Indigenous families can obtain rental housing and to ensure fairness in access to services.
16	14	Enhance emergency service systems to address the needs of families that become homeless as a result of relocation.
10	15	Provide training for agency staff to sensitize them to issues for homeless parents and to ensure that homeless family members are treated with respect and dignity.
6	16	Provide suitable space in shelters so that parents can visit with their children.
3	17	Develop linguistic and culturally appropriate services for Indigenous and Francophone families.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, I. (2010). Services for homeless people in Europe: supporting pathways out of homelessness? In O'Sullivan, E., Busch-Geertsema, V., Quilgars, D. & Pleace, N. (eds.). *Homelessness Research in Europe*. Brussels: FEANTSA.
- Anderson, L., Stuttaford, M., & Vostanis, P. (2006). A family support service for homeless children and parents: User and staff perspectives. *Child & Family Social Work, 11*(2), 119-127. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2006.00399.x
- Averitt, S. S. (2003). "Homelessness is not a choice!" the plight of homeless women with preschool children living in temporary shelters. *Journal of Family Nursing, 9*(1), 79-100.
- Banyard, V. L., & Graham-Bermann, S. (1998). Surviving poverty: Stress and coping in the lives of housed and homeless mothers. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 68*(3), 479-500.
- Bassuk, E. L., & Geller, S. (2006). The role of housing and services in ending family homelessness. *Housing Policy Debate, 17*(4), 781-806.
- Bassuk, E. L., Rubin, L., & Lauriat, A. S. (1986). Characteristics of sheltered homeless families. *American Journal of Public Health, 76*(9), 1097-1101.
- Benbow, S., Forchuk, C., & Ray, S. L. (2011). Mothers with mental illness experiencing homelessness: A critical analysis. *Journal of Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing, 18*(8), 687-695. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2850.2011.01720.x
- Burczycka, M., & Cotter, A. (2011). *Shelters for abused women, 2010*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2003). *Family homelessness: Causes and solutions*. Research Highlights, Socio-economic Series 03-006.
- Carrière, K. (2011). *Timmins Aboriginal Services and Programs Gap Analysis: Final Report and Recommendations*. Timmins Economic Development Corporation.
- Choi, N. G., & Snyder, L. (1999a). Voices of homeless parents: The pain of homelessness and shelter life. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 2*(3), 55-77.
- Choi, N. G., & Snyder, L. J. (1999b). Homeless families with children: Barriers to finding decent housing. *Journal of Poverty, 3*(2), 43-66.
- Cosgrove, L., & Flynn, C. (2005). Marginalized mothers: Parenting without a home. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 5*(1), 127-143.
- Culhane, D. P., Metraux, S., Park, J. M., Schretzman, M., & Valente, J. (2007). Testing a typology of family homelessness based on patterns of public shelter utilization in four US jurisdictions: Implications for policy and program planning. *Housing Policy Debate, 18*(1), 1-28.
- Cummins, L. K., First, R. J., & Toomey, B. G. (1998). Comparisons of rural and urban homeless women. *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work, 13*, 435-453.

- David, D. H., Gelberg, L., & Suchman, N. E. (2012). Implications of homelessness for parenting young children: A preliminary review from a developmental attachment perspective. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 33*(1), 1-9.
- DeForge, V., Minick, P., Zehnder, S., & Carmon, M. (2001). Children's perception of homelessness. *Pediatric Nursing, 27*(4), 377-383.
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2014). Housing First. Retrieved from: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/communities/homelessness/housing_first/index.shtml
- Fertig, A. R., & Reingold, D. A. (2008). Homelessness among at-risk families with children in twenty American cities. *Social Service Review, 82*(3), 485-510.
- Fischer, R. L. (2000). Toward self-sufficiency: Evaluating a transitional housing program for homeless families. *Policy Studies Journal, 28*(2), 402-420.
- Fogel, S. J. (1997). Moving along: An exploratory study of homeless women with children using a transitional housing program. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 24*(3), 113-133.
- Gaetz, S., Donaldson, J., Richter, T., & Gulliver, T. (2013). *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2013*. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Goering, P., Veldhuizen, S., Watson, A., Adair, C., Kopp, B., Latimer, E., Nelson, G., Mac-Naughton, E., Streiner, D. & Aubry, T. (2014). *National At Home/Chez Soi Final Report*. Calgary, AB: Mental Health Commission of Canada. Retrieved from: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca>
- Gould, T. E., & Williams, A. R. (2010). Family homelessness: An investigation of structural effects. *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment, 20*, 170-192.
- Johnson, A., K. (1989). Female-headed homeless families: A comparative profile. *AFFILIA: Journal of Women and Social Work, 4*(4), 23-39.
- Kauppi, C., Pallard, H., Lemieux, S. & Matukala Nkosi, T. (2012). *Homelessness in Timmins 2011: Final report*. Centre for Research in Social Justice and Policy: Sudbury, ON.
- Kim, M. M., Calloway, M. O., & Selz-Campbell, L. (2004). A two-level community intervention model for homeless mothers with mental health or substance abuse disorders. *Journal of Community Practice, 12*(1), 107-122.
- Kirkman, M., Keys, D., Bodzak, D., & Turner, A. (2010). "Are we moving again this week?" children's experiences of homelessness in Victoria, Australia. *Social Science & Medicine, 70*(7), 994-1001.
- Krane, J., & Davies, L. (2007). Mothering under difficult circumstances: Challenges to working with battered women. *AFFILIA: Journal of Women and Social Work, 22*(1), 23-38.
- Lee, B., Tyler, K. & Wright, J. (2010). The New Homelessness Revisited. *Annual Review of Sociology, 36*, 501-521.
- Lee, R. (2012). Family homelessness viewed through the lens of health and human rights. *ANS, 35*(2), E47-59.
- Lehmann, E. R., Kass, P. H., Drake, C. M., & Nichols, S. B. (2007). Risk factors for first-time homelessness in low-income women. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 77*(1), 20-28.
- Lindsey, E. W. (1998). Service providers' perception of factors that help or hinder homeless families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 79*(2), 160-172.
- McArthur, M., Zubrzycki, J., Rochester, A., & Thomson, L. (2006). 'Dad, where are we going to live now?' exploring fathers' experiences of homelessness. *Australian Social Work, 59*(3), 288-300.
- Mulroy, E.A., & Lauber, H.(2004). A user-friendly approach to program evaluation and effective community interventions for families at risk of homelessness. *Social Work, 49*(4), 573-586.
- Nwakeze, P. C., Magura, S., Rosenblum, A., & Joseph, H. (2003). Homelessness, substance misuse, and access to public entitlements in a soup kitchen population. *Substance use & Misuse, 38*(3-6), 645-668.
- Paquette, K., & Bassuk, E. L. (2009). Parenting and homelessness: Overview and introduction to the special section. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 79*(3), 292-298.
- Rossi, P. H. (1994). Troubling families: Family homelessness in America. *American Behavioral Scientist, 37*(3), 342-395.

- Schindler, H. S., & Coley, R. L. (2007). A qualitative study of homeless fathers: Exploring parenting and gender role transitions. *Family Relations*, 56(1), 40-51.
- Schultz-Krohn, W. (2004). The meaning of family routines in a homeless shelter. *AJOT: American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 58(5), 531-542.
- Sev'er, A. (2002). A feminist analysis of flight of abused women, plight of Canadian shelters: Another road to homelessness. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 11(4), 307-324.
- Shinn, M., Weitzman, B. C., Stojanovic, D., Knickman, J. R., Jimenez, L., Duchon, L., James, S., & Krantz, D. H. (1998). Predictors of homelessness among families in New York City: From shelter request to housing stability. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88(11), 1651-1657.
- Segaert, A. (2012). *The national shelter study: Emergency shelter use in Canada 2005-2009*. Ottawa, ON: Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.
- SHS Consulting (2014). City of Timmins: Community Housing Plan. Phase 1. Demand and Supply Analysis. ON: Richmond Hill.
- Statistics Canada (2012). Timmins, Ontario and Cochrane, Ontario. Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released on October 24, 2012.
- Styron, T., Janoff-Bulman, R., & Davidson, L. (2000). "Please ask me how I am": Experiences of family homelessness in the context of single mothers' lives. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9(2), 143-165.
- Swick, K. J. (2005). Helping homeless families overcome barriers to successful functioning. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(3), 195-200.
- Swick, K. J. (2008). The dynamics of violence and homelessness among young families. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(1), 81-85.
- Zlotnick, C., Tam, T., & Bradley, K. (2010). Long-term and chronic homelessness in homeless women and women with children. *Social Work in Public Health*, 25(5), 470-485.