

# **Comparative municipal spending on housing and homelessness in Canada's major cities**

**Report commissioned by the City of Edmonton**

**By Nick Falvo, Chidom Otogwu and Greg Suttor**

**Revised May 17, 2024**

## About the authors

---

Nick Falvo is a Calgary-based research consultant with a PhD in Public Policy. Fluently bilingual in English and French, he is the 2021 winner of the CMHC President's Medal for Outstanding Housing Research. Nick is also Editor-in-Chief, North America, of the *International Journal on Homelessness*.

Chidom Odogwu is a data specialist with strong data and research analysis skills. Chidom is interested in government and public policy. He likes to use data to inform policies that affect housing affordability and that can lead to reduction in homelessness. Chidom has a Master's degree in Public Policy and a Bachelor's degree in Economics.

Greg Suttor is a semi-retired housing policy and research consultant. He has 30 years' experience as a researcher and policy advisor, at municipal and provincial governments, Wellesley Institute, and as an independent consultant. He has a PhD, and is the author of numerous research and policy reports and *Still Renovating: A History of Canadian Social Housing Policy*.

## Acknowledgements

---

We wish to thank Rachael Putt and Diana O'Donoghue at the City of Edmonton for ongoing assistance with this project. We also wish to thank the many staff working for municipalities and non-profits across Canada who assisted us with data requests. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Edmonton.

## Table of Contents

<b>About the authors</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. Research results</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3. Conclusions</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Data categories</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Community participation</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Data explanatory notes</b>	<b>47</b>

## Abstract

---

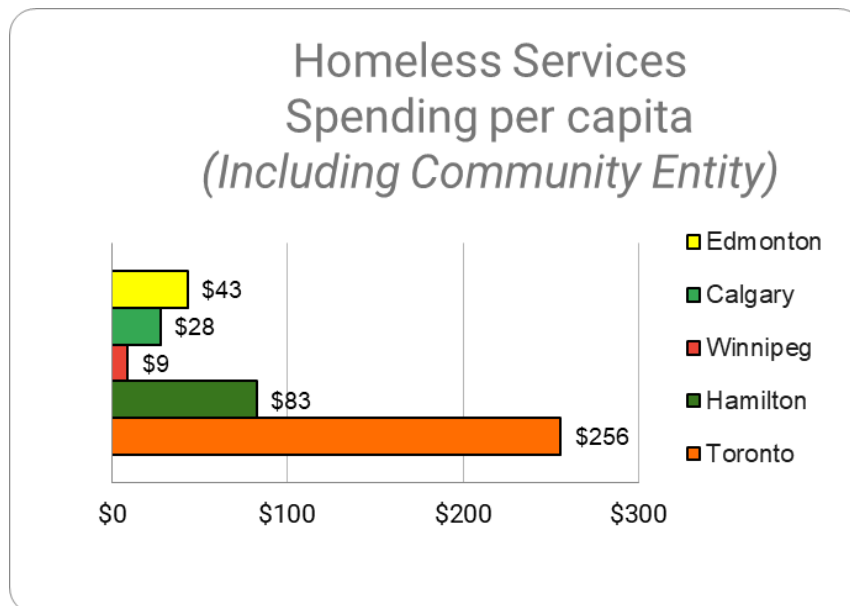
Spending levels by Canada's major municipal governments on both homelessness and housing, while important, are not a precise measure of a municipality's commitment or priority to the issue in question. Such spending levels reflect many other factors, including levels of affordable housing need and homelessness, demographic trends, histories and established practices, political priorities, different roles/responsibilities of municipalities vs provincial government, reliance on municipal housing vs community-based non-profit housing, whether or not the municipality is the designated Community Entity to administer federal homelessness funding, and different legal responsibilities. The present analysis reveals that Toronto is a clear outlier when it comes to spending on both housing and homelessness, and that appears largely explained by many of the previously mentioned contextual factors. Winnipeg lies at the other end of the spectrum here, showing low levels of spending—this may be at least partly explained by a softer rental housing market and Manitoba's relatively generous demand-side strategy related to housing.

## Executive Summary

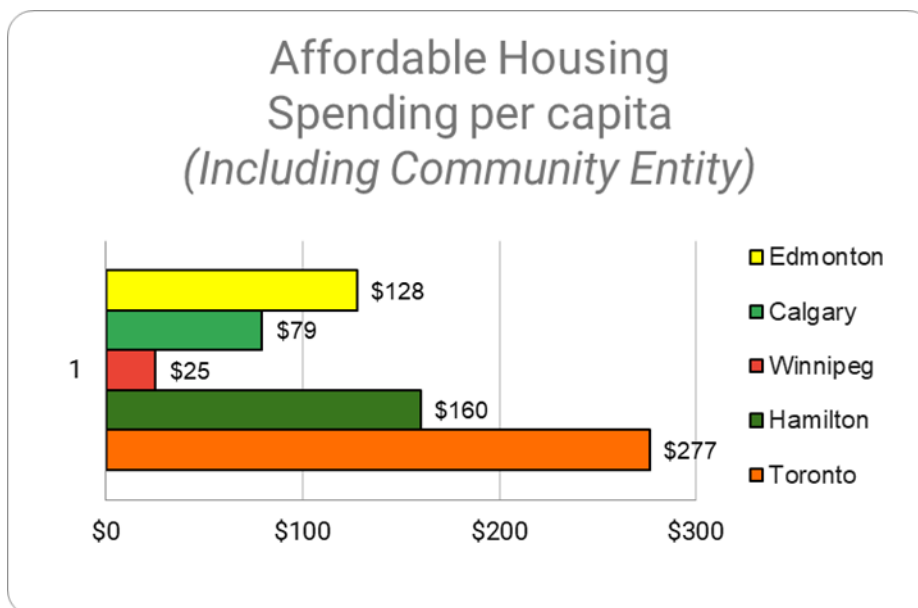
This research study, commissioned by the City of Edmonton, compares the spending of large Canadian urban municipalities on homeless-related services and affordable housing, including capital and operating dollars. The seven cases examined are the cities of Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and Toronto, and Peel Regional Municipality. Spending is understood as one measure of municipal and intergovernmental priority and effort to address these issues.

Data were gathered by requesting 2022 budget data (or actuals) in a standard template from staff of municipalities that agreed to participate. In some cases, data were obtained from publicly available documents. Related data were gathered from the Community Entity (CE)—the body designated to plan and administer federal homelessness funding—in cities where the CE was not the municipality. Data cover program spending on homelessness and affordable housing, but in general not homeless-related policing, ambulance, bylaw enforcement, etc. Homeless-related services includes emergency shelter operations and related capital spending. All spending was translated into per-capita data and compared on that basis. Homelessness spending was not fully broken out in the source data for Vancouver and Hamilton, so some of the findings are based on fewer than seven cities.

Per-capita spending levels varied greatly among the municipalities; this applied to homeless-related services and likewise to affordable housing.



Homeless-related spending ranged from \$9 to \$256 per capita, with a median of \$43. Housing spending ranged from \$25 to \$277 per capita, with a median of \$110. Combined homelessness and housing spending ranged from \$34 to \$532 per capita, with a median of \$153. Edmonton's homeless-related spending and its affordable housing spending equaled the multi-city median levels per capita.



Several institutional and jurisdictional differences were assessed that help explain the very divergent spending levels among the cities.

- *Different roles/responsibilities of municipalities vs. provincial government.* In most provinces, rent subsidies and social housing funding is provincial, but Ontario law and policy make that a municipal responsibility in that province. Emergency shelter funding is also municipal (with cost-sharing) in Ontario but provincial in Alberta and Manitoba.
- *Reliance on municipal housing vs non-profit housing or provincial public housing.* In some cities, spending may partly reflect municipal housing corporations having a prominent role, while other cities may rely more on community non-profits or provincial public housing.
- *In some cases, the municipality is the Community Entity, in some cases not.* A municipality that is the Community Entity will spend more on homelessness than it otherwise would, and its role may extend beyond administering federal funding, to system planning. In general and in this study, Ontario municipalities are the CE while western cities are not.
- *Central city vs. larger municipality.* Many housing and homelessness needs are most evident in inner-city or inner-ring areas, and this may be reflected in the location of services and housing. Municipalities which are the inner half or quarter of a large metro area (e.g. Toronto or Vancouver) may shoulder large program costs, resulting in high per-capita spending because it is spread across a smaller portion of metro-area population (smaller denominator).
- *Histories and established practices.* Municipalities such as Vancouver and Toronto have long-established roles and practices in funding and creating non-market housing, a role that is smaller or more recent in some cities.

The mid-level per-capita spending of Edmonton and the low to mid-level spending of other Prairie cities appears to be related to jurisdictional and role factors such as:

- Not being the Community Entity for federal homelessness funding and system planning;
- Not having primary funding responsibility for emergency shelters;
- Not being the primary funder of rent subsidies and social housing, as occurs in Ontario;
- The municipality making up most of the urban area, so its responses to inner-city issues are spread across a relatively large population denominator.

Contextual differences in housing needs and levels of homelessness can also influence divergent municipal spending levels. The scope of this report allows only preliminary comments on this.

- In general, higher needs may lead to stronger policy/program responses. The research literature shows that cities with higher rents generally have higher levels of homelessness. In other cases, market pressures (e.g. high in-migration) may lead to political pressures and stronger policy/program responses.
- In this study, higher spending on homeless-related services was only weakly correlated with homelessness per capita. Prairie cities have homelessness rates between those of Hamilton and Toronto, but much lower spending than either of those (whether or not spending includes the separate Community Entity that exists in Prairie cities). Higher spending on homelessness services was strongly correlated with higher market rents and more non-market housing.
- In this analysis overall, jurisdictional and role factors such as those noted above, are more important than levels of homelessness in influencing the levels of spending.

This analysis also tracks federal, provincial and net municipal funding *sources* for municipal spending, using combined municipal and CE spending. Federal funding is notably larger than provincial for affordable housing in almost all cities, including Edmonton; provincial funding is larger than federal for homeless-related services in most cities (but fairly equal in Edmonton). Net municipal funds were 56 percent of housing spending but only 33 percent of homeless-related spending (medians for 5 cities). Larger statutory municipal housing and homelessness roles (in Ontario) entail larger net municipal shares of funding and also larger federal-provincial transfers per capita.



---

## 1. Introduction

---

### 1.1 Purpose of this report

The City of Edmonton is developing its first Corporate Homelessness Plan. This will define the City's roles and responsibilities in responding to homelessness, with consideration of a variety of inputs including the responsibilities of other organizations and orders of government working in this space and their funding commitments and efforts to increase affordable housing supply and end homelessness. In order to produce a plan that makes evidence-based recommendations that consider how this work is approached elsewhere, the City commissioned this report to compare how much each of Canada's major municipal governments spends annually on both homelessness and housing (including operating and capital dollars).

With this in mind, the research team was asked to:

- Request data from up to 12 cities across Canada with comparable populations
- Omit cities from smaller provinces
- Omit cities with populations under 200,000
- Include Peel Region<sup>1</sup> and/or Waterloo Region (both of these comprise several local municipalities and carry out housing and homeless responsibilities at the regional level (equivalent to a county or regional district))
- Provide as much detail as possible with respect to where the funding provided by each municipality is directed in terms of programs and services
- Provide a side-by-side comparison of indicators on progress (how cities are performing on ending homelessness linked to their budgets and approach)
- Organize the data in comparable categories across the cases, on a per-capita basis
- Where possible, provide some disaggregation—e.g. which order of government actually provides the funding, how much of each municipal government's homelessness spending goes towards emergency shelters, how much goes towards outreach, etc.
- Provide analysis that includes some context on different provincial/municipal split of responsibilities in different places
- Not draw causal links

---

<sup>1</sup> Peel Regional Municipality (2021 population 1.45 million) is the west-central part of Greater Toronto, comprising the municipalities of Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon – a mix of mature and newer suburbs plus some exurbia, with diverse residential and employment areas.

## 1.2 Putting comparisons in context

Spending is not a precise measure of a municipality's commitment or priority. Different cities have different contexts, characteristics and needs that are likely to affect relative spending on homeless-related services and affordable housing, and must be borne in mind in the comparison. This section outlines some key factors that are significant in this way. This is context for the study's findings but it is not an analysis of how much these factors actually affect needs or spending.

Spending levels reflect many other factors, including the following:

*Levels of affordable housing need and homelessness.* Municipalities experiencing greater housing need and homelessness in general may put more attention on this. Factors accounting for this greater need may include speculation in the rental housing sector, a slowdown in rental construction, a lack of preservation of rental stock, a rise in short-term rentals (e.g. Airbnb, Vrbo) and a reduction in social assistance benefit levels (e.g. benefit levels not being adjusted in line with inflation).

*Demographic trends.* Municipalities experiencing high rates of in-migration—e.g. Calgary during an oil boom—will likely experience tighter rental housing markets in response, as low-income households are squeezed out of the rental market and developers are not able to keep up with new demand. During such periods, those municipalities may face intense public pressure to increase support for low-income households.

*Histories and established practices.* Certain municipalities—e.g. Toronto and Vancouver—have long established roles in creating housing. By contrast, that role is more recent in many other Canadian cities, which lack the same established municipal housing corporations as Toronto and Vancouver.

*Political priorities.* Left-leaning governments have a tendency to support community (i.e., social) housing. Right-leaning governments, by contrast, tend to prefer tax credits for for-profit developers as well as demand-side approaches (e.g. rent supplements and housing allowances).

*Different roles/responsibilities of municipalities vs provincial government.* Ontario municipalities fund most of the rent subsidies for social housing, while in most other provinces it is the provincial housing corporations that do that.

*Reliance on municipal housing vs community-based non-profit housing.* Some municipalities fund housing primarily through their municipal housing corporations (e.g. Toronto Community Housing), while in other cases the largest role is carried by a provincial or provincial/local provider (e.g. CiviDa in Edmonton) or by independent community-based non-profits (as in Vancouver)).

*In some cases the municipality is the Community Entity, in some cases not.* A municipality that holds the Community Entity role will, almost by definition, spend more on homelessness. Such a municipality might have a tendency to then play a more active role beyond merely disbursing federal *Reaching Home* funding.

*Different legal responsibilities.* Ontario municipalities have devolved statutory/fiscal responsibilities for ongoing rental housing subsidies (see page 14). They are also the Community Entity.

Table 1 digs into many of the above factors, presenting 6 key variables plus population data, and where each of the eight municipalities stand in comparative terms. The 8-city median is calculated for each variable and is referred to in the text below. The table also summarizes key differences in institutional, legal and fiscal roles and responsibilities.

### *Levels of homelessness, and specific groups*

The prevalence or level of homelessness is potentially related to levels of spending on homeless-related services and affordable housing. More homelessness may lead to higher such spending, to help people and address the situation. The inverse relationship—higher spending reducing overall homelessness—is less likely because most spending focuses on crisis response, provides long-term solutions to relatively few people, and does not address most root causes. The causes of homelessness are complex and include mental health and addictions, personal/family crisis, extreme poverty, and lack of housing. But housing needs extend well beyond homelessness, so the level of homelessness may have a weak relationship to the level of housing spending.

Levels of homelessness are measured in Table 1 via two variables: point-in-time (PiT) counts and emergency shelter usage data. PiT data are a standardized indicator reflecting surveys carried out on a fairly consistent basis across Canada in 2020-2022. Emergency shelter usage data are more timely (2022 or recent) but less consistent. PiT counts include homeless people using emergency shelters as well as those not using shelters at that point, such as those in streets, public spaces and encampments, as well as hospitals and jails. Communities may have other more accurate ways of tracking homelessness levels (e.g. By Name Lists) that cannot be used as comparators because they have not been adopted nationally.

- Median homelessness (PiT count) was 199 per 100,000 population, with most cities between 130 and 270. Peel Region was lowest (60) and Vancouver highest (316).
- Median recent shelter usage was 143 per 100,000 population, with cities ranging widely from 69 (Edmonton) to 350 (Toronto).
- Edmonton's PiT count was relatively high (249) while its per-capita shelter usage was the lowest.

Two groups of people with high levels of homelessness are measured here: Indigenous and Refugees (refugee claimants /asylum seekers /others). These are included because they are very numerous in some cities and not others, and each group has needs distinct from other populations. For most cities, these are measured in PiT or shelter data or are cited in related reports (source and data quality varies). Many cities are experiencing rising numbers of homeless refugees, but this is not always reflected in 2020-2022 PiT data.

- 
- Indigenous: The median Indigenous share of people experiencing homelessness was 31 percent, with cities varying enormously, from 6 percent (Peel) to 75 percent (Winnipeg).
  - Refugees: The median refugee share of people experiencing homelessness was low to medium, with cities varying enormously, from very low in Vancouver and Winnipeg, to 43–50 percent recently in Toronto and Peel.
  - Edmonton (54 percent of the total being Indigenous) was second only to Winnipeg on that measure, but very low on refugees.

### *Housing System Context*

The lack of availability and affordability of rental housing tends to result in more homelessness. This has many dimensions, but two important variables are rent levels and social/affordable housing stock. Higher rents and less availability of rental housing are strongly associated with higher homelessness in multi-city analyses.<sup>2</sup> This is because they mean higher rent/income ratios, more arrears and evictions, and more difficulty obtaining housing after becoming homeless. Having relatively little social/affordable housing might also be expected to contribute to such conditions as well. Data for rent levels and social housing are both at the CMA (Census Metropolitan area) level, because market-wide conditions are most relevant, and due to data availability.

- The median 2022 one-bedroom rent was \$1,296, with cities ranging from 17 percent lower than this to 19 percent higher. Vancouver, Toronto and Peel were highest (with very similar rents) while Edmonton and Winnipeg were lowest.
- The median among the CMAs was 68 people per social/affordable unit, with cities varying from 98 in Edmonton and Calgary to 36-37 in Toronto and Ottawa. More population per unit means less housing vis-à-vis demand. (Differences reflect provincial-municipal policy priorities over time as well as Alberta's stronger growth in recent decades of low Canadian social housing production.)
- Edmonton has relatively moderate rents (19 percent below the eight-city median) but very few social/affordable units in relation to population.

---

<sup>2</sup> For example, Lee et al. (2003), "Determinants of homelessness in metropolitan areas" *Journal of Urban Affairs* 25(3): 335-356; Hanratty (2017), "Do local economic conditions affect homelessness? Impact of area housing market factors, unemployment, and poverty on community homeless rates" *Housing Policy Debate* 27(4): 640-655.

---

*Municipalities in their urban-region context.*

Most cities' inner areas have concentrations of homelessness and related services, and of lower-cost rental. The latter are home to more people vulnerable to homelessness, but also offer potential ways out of homelessness. Such inner/outer patterns arise from urban development history (e.g. many inner areas have lower-cost rental not found in new suburban areas), social mix associated with housing mix (e.g. people with low incomes must seek lower-cost rental), local policy responses to these urban issues, and interplay between the locations of persons experiencing homelessness and services for them.

Municipalities comprising the inner part of their urban area therefore tend toward more homelessness and affordable housing per capita: the central city concentration is spread across a smaller population denominator. Most municipalities in this study contain 70 to 100 percent of CMA population; Vancouver (25% of its CMA) and Toronto (45%) are the exceptions, which may contribute to high per-capita rates.

All cases in this comparison have populations of 0.6 to 1.3 million (i.e. Edmonton's population  $\pm 40\%$ ) and in that regard are suitable 'similar cases' to compare; the exception is the City of Toronto (2.8 million).

*Jurisdictional funding roles and responsibilities*

There are significant differences in the institutional, legal, and fiscal roles and responsibilities by province and city that directly affect levels of spending on housing and homelessness.

Table 1 summarizes the following notable differences in this regard:

- a) **Community Entity:** In all western Canadian cities including Edmonton, a significant part of homeless-related services is provided by a community organization which is also the designated "Community Entity" (CE) under the federal *Reaching Home* program. *Reaching Home* is the main vehicle through which funding for homelessness initiatives from the federal government flows to communities. Most CE funding does not flow from or through the municipal budget. This includes Homeward Trust in Edmonton. By contrast, all Ontario municipalities in this study are also the Community Entity; this will tend to raise their levels of spending on homelessness compared to western Canadian cities. In large cities across Canada, including Ontario and western provinces, separate Indigenous Community Entities have recently been established, alongside the existing CE, to better address the high levels of Indigenous homelessness and related needs; however the creation of Indigenous CE's has not necessarily resulted in increased funding from the federal government but rather changed the way funding is governed and dispersed.
- b) **Devolved housing funding responsibilities:** Ontario devolution in 1998-2000 transferred to municipalities the housing funding responsibilities that are national or state/provincial everywhere else. The Housing Services Act designates various cities and counties etc. as the 'service manager' which is required to pay for most social housing and RGI subsidies. This

---

greatly raises the housing spending of Ontario cities when compared to the rest of Canada. It should also be noted that, in Alberta, provincial funding to deliver homelessness programs and services in both Calgary and Edmonton flows primarily through the CE.

c) City or provincial funding for emergency shelters: In Alberta, the provincial government provides most funding to emergency shelters, although municipalities supplement this. In Ontario, by contrast, all public funding of emergency shelters (except women's shelters) comes through the municipal budget; provincial cost-sharing covers part of this but the majority is net municipal funds. Many non-profit shelter providers across Canada also do large amounts of fundraising.

d) Municipal housing corporations: In some cities, a housing corporation is a large part of the municipal role. Cases in this study vary, with large housing corporations, small ones, or none; the latter may rely more on community-based non-profits/co-ops. This analysis includes municipal funding to the housing corporation but not spending by the housing corporation. It is possible that cities with a housing corporation tend to flow more funding to it than other cities flow to community-based providers, but it was not possible to analyse that within this study's scope.

<b>Table 1: Selected Indicators for 7 cities</b>	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>	<b>Peel</b>	<b>Toronto</b>	<b>7-city Median</b>
<b>Population denominator and city size</b>								
Municipal population (2021)	1,010,899	662,248	1,306,784	749,607	569,353	1,451,022	2,794,356	<b>1,011,000</b>
CMA* population (2021)	1,418,118	2,642,825	1,481,806	834,678	785,184	6,202,225	6,202,225	<b>1,482,000</b>
<b>Levels of homelessness</b>								
Homeless PIT count 2020-2022	2,519	2,095	2,782	1,256	545	866	7,347	<b>2,100</b>
Daily shelter usage 2022 or recent	702	not avail.	2,209	not avail.	1,578	1,708	9,769	<b>1,710</b>
<b>Housing system factors</b>								
Average 1-bedroom apartment rent 2022	\$1,071	\$1,543	\$1,222	\$1,056	\$1,197	\$1,484	\$1,526	<b>\$1,222</b>
Number of social/affordable housing units 2022	14,446	40,789	15,082	12,200	14,223	16,948	169,459	<b>15,080</b>
<b>RELATIVE PRESSURES BY CITY (selected indicators)</b>								
Homelessness (PIT 2020-22) per 100,000 pop	249	316	213	168	96	60	263	<b>213</b>
Shelter usage (2022/recent) per 100,000 pop	69	not avail.	169	not avail.	277	118	350	<b>169</b>
Indigenous % of total homelessness	54%	39%	30%	75%	23%	6%	15%	<b>30%</b>
Refugee % of total or High/Med/Low	Low	1%	Rising (no data)	1%	7%	50%	43%	<b>Low-Med</b>
Average rent as % of 7-city median	88%	126%	100%	86%	98%	121%	125%	<b>100%</b>
Population per social/affordable housing unit	98	65	98	68	55	366	37	<b>68</b>
<b>JURISDICTIONAL AND ROLE FACTORS</b>								
Municipal share of CMA population	72% = Majority of CMA	Innermost 25% of CMA	88% = Most of CMA	90% = Most of CMA	73% = Majority of CMA	25%, Mature suburbs	45% = Inner half of CMA	
Community Entity for Reaching Home	Homeward Trust Edmonton	Lu'ma + VCF**	Calgary Homeless Foundation	End Homelessness Winnipeg	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality	
Municipality pays most RGI/rent subsidy?	No	No	No	No	Yes ‡	Yes ‡	Yes ‡	
Most shelter funding paid by city? province? CE?	Province	unknown	Province	Province	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality	
Is there a municipal housing corporation?	Yes	Yes (small)	Yes	See note‡‡	Yes	Yes	Yes (large)	
Red shading: darker colour is a visual indication of higher needs or pressures. 7-city medians are not weighted by city population; large numbers are rounded. For detailed data sources, see Appendix 3 of this report.			*CMA = Census Metropolitan Area. **Lu'ma Native Housing Society + Vancity Community Foundation. ‡ 'Service Manager' under Ontario law, responsible for ongoing affordable housing subsidies. ‡‡ Winnipeg Housing Redevelopment Corp.: independent non-profit associated with City of Winnipeg.					



---

### 1.3 Data and method

In consultation with the client, the decision was made to focus on larger Canadian cities, generally with populations of over half a million. Researchers contacted the following ones in September 2023: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Hamilton, Peel Regional Municipality, and Waterloo Regional Municipality. Where the Community Entity (CE) was separate from the municipal government, researchers also reached out to the CE and, where applicable, the Indigenous CE. The City of Montreal declined to participate in the study, and Ottawa data was not received in time for the analysis and report.

Researchers asked officials with each municipality to provide with annual spending under the following categories: homelessness prevention; client supports & related; emergency shelter operations; housing support services; rent subsidies and/or assistance to social/affordable housing; creating social/affordable housing – capital (or equivalent transfers to non-profits/3rd parties); emergency shelters and transitional accommodation – capital (or equivalent transfers); housing repair and retrofit – capital or equivalent; planning and coordination. Municipalities were provided with a template for these categories and explanations of what spending would fit in each category (see Appendix 1 of the present document).

Municipal officials were asked to provide data for either the 2022 calendar year or the 2022/23 fiscal year. Some municipalities were able to provide more complete data than others. For the cases in which municipalities did not complete the template, researchers sought out public documents setting out this budget information and also asked officials to direct them to such sources. In these cases, the researchers categorized the spending according to the template. Ultimately the publicly available data for Waterloo Region was insufficiently broken out to include it in the analysis and the publicly available data for Peel Region which was good for combined housing and homelessness spending, but not each of those separately.

In consultation with the client, the decision was made to exclude spending by municipal housing corporations. On the one hand, these municipal agencies can be a large part of overall municipal activity in affordable housing; but on the other hand, the diverse local and provincial histories mean that some communities rely more on a municipal housing corporation while others rely on a provincial housing corporation or community-based providers as means to the same general goals. A major consideration was that typically one-third to one-half of housing corporation revenues come from tenant rents, and it was not appropriate in the analysis to treat this the same way as tax-funded spending. The analysis does capture the portion of municipal housing corporations' spending that flows from or through the municipal budget.

In this report, the various categories of spending in the template are aggregated into affordable housing spending, and homeless-related services spending. It is important to note that homeless-related services include shelter operations and related capital spending; and that in most cities, much of the affordable housing spending is capital or equivalent rather than operating.

There are several limitations related to the present analysis. These include:



- 
- *A lack of consistency between respondents.* Each official completing the template may have interpreted each question/category differently. Put differently, ‘apples to apples’ comparisons are inherently challenging with this type of methodology.
  - *The challenge of incorporating all spending related to housing and homelessness.* This report covers program spending on homeless-related services and affordable housing. It does not (except incidentally) cover homeless-related spending in areas such as bylaw enforcement, use of public space, encampments, policing, other emergency services, etc. Determining what percentage of spending in these other areas is related to housing and homelessness would require its own research exercise.

Appendix 2 provides an overview of which municipalities completed the spreadsheet.

---

## 2. Research results

---

### 2.1 General comparison

This subsection presents the core results of the comparison. All data are on a per-capita basis, and reference is made to the median level among the cities compared. Where certain categories were missing or not broken for particular municipalities, this is noted and the number of cases shown on the graphs is fewer.

There was wide variation among the seven municipalities in per-capita spending on affordable housing and on homeless-related services. This is apparent in every graph in this section.

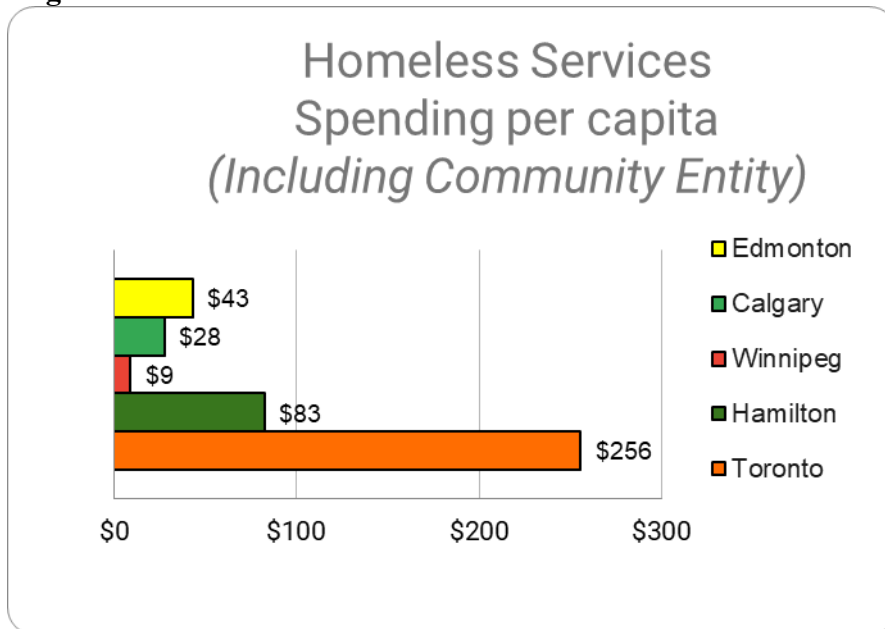
Fundamental differences of roles, responsibilities, and institutional structures account for much variation. Prominent in this matter is that in most large cities of western Canada about half or more of homeless-related services (but not emergency shelter operations) are funded through an independent third-sector Community Entity (CE)—such as Homeward Trust Edmonton or Calgary Homeless Foundation—whereas in Ontario most large municipalities *are* the CE. Therefore this section includes a comparison of municipal-only spending (excluding independent CEs) alongside a comparison of spending that includes the CE (whether it is independent or municipal).

Other differences of roles, responsibilities, and institutional structures are explored in subsections 2.2 and 2.3, pointing to other differences that account for disparities in spending.

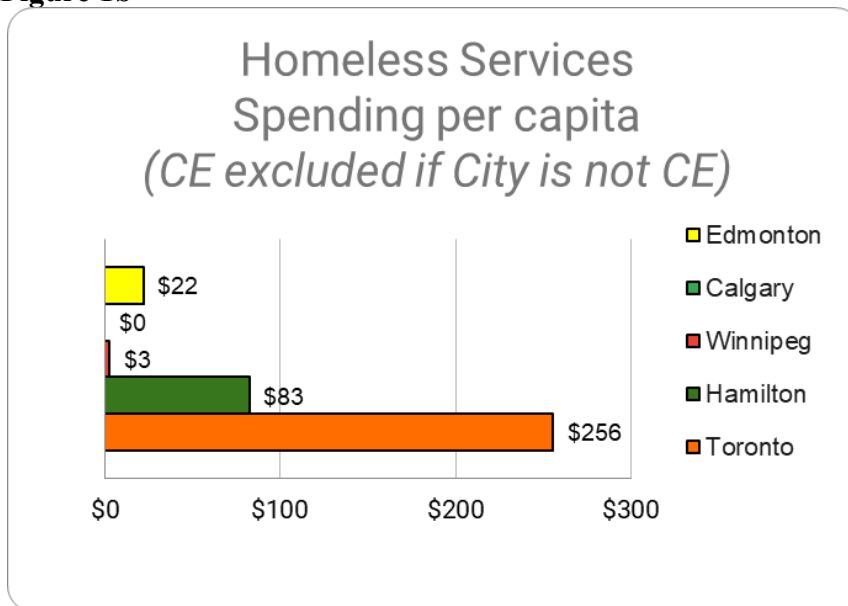
*The source for all figures (graphics) in section 2 is the data collected from participating municipalities and in some cases from publicly available documents, as described in Section 1.3.*

**Homeless-related spending** (Figures 1a and 1b)<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1a**



**Figure 1b**



<sup>3</sup> Data for Peel homeless-related spending was not broken out separately from housing spending, and homeless-related spending was missing for Vancouver. Peel but not Vancouver data were available for combined housing and homelessness. Therefore Vancouver appears only in the housing comparison and Peel in the combined housing and homelessness comparison.

- Median spending on homeless-related services was \$43 per capita including the CE. The outliers were Winnipeg at \$9 (one-fifth of the median) and Toronto at \$256 (six times the median). As noted above, in this analysis shelter operations and also related capital spending are included in homeless-related services.
- Looking at municipal-only spending (excluding independent CEs), median spending on homeless-related services was \$22 per capita. Winnipeg and Toronto remained the low and high outliers, but (compared to CE-included) there was even greater spread below or above median levels.

Edmonton's per-capita homelessness spending equaled the median for the five cities with available data (regardless of whether the CE is included or excluded).

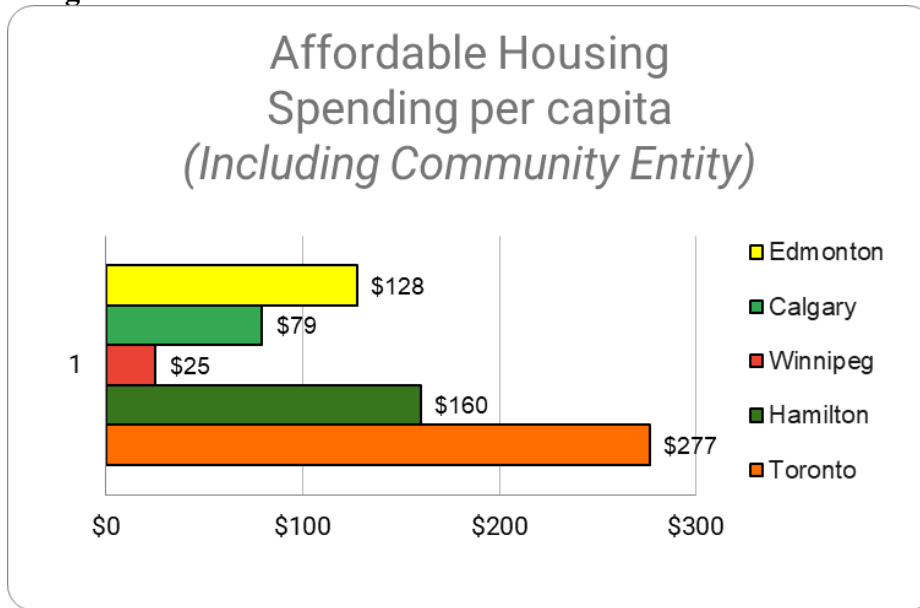
### *Housing Spending* (Figures 2a and 2b)<sup>4</sup>

- Median per-capita spending on affordable housing, including the CE, was \$128 for the five comparable cities. There was a slightly narrower range and disparity for housing spending than for homelessness, and municipalities were spread much more evenly across the range.
  - The low case (Winnipeg) was about one-fifth of median spending while the high case (Toronto) was at 2½ times the median level for the five cities.
- Looking at municipal-only spending (excluding independent CEs), median spending on affordable housing remained at \$128 per capita for six cities. Disparities in spending are notably greater than where the CE is included; otherwise, the same general patterns apply.<sup>5</sup>
- Edmonton's housing spending with CE included was \$128 per capita, equaling the median for five cities. Excluding independent CEs, Edmonton's housing spending was \$95 per capita or 74 percent of the median for six cities.

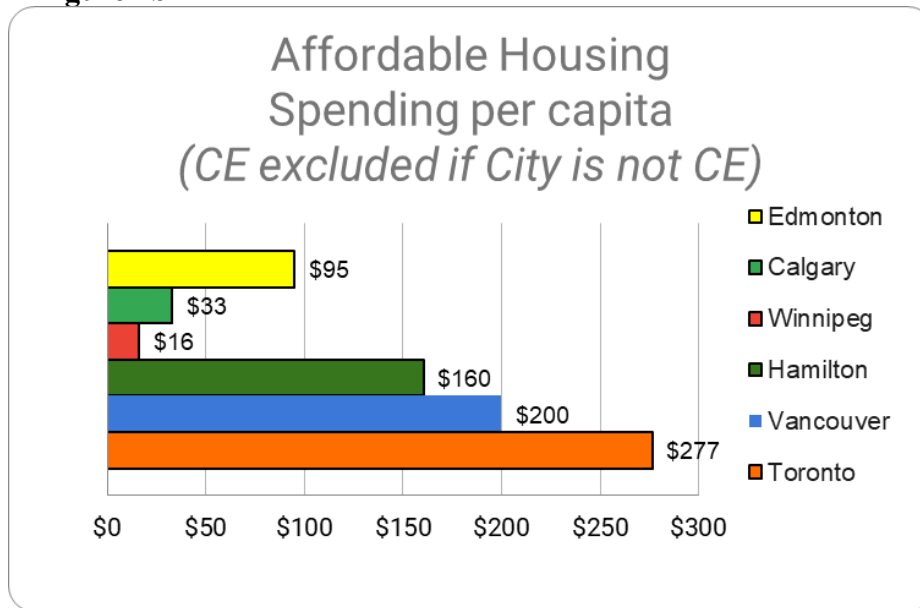
<sup>4</sup> Because Peel housing data were for capital only, it is not included in this comparison.

<sup>5</sup> The City of Vancouver is included in the municipal-only comparison (excluding independent CEs), but is not part of the CE-included comparison because the Vancouver CE covers the entire Greater Vancouver area. Including relatively high-spending Vancouver in the municipal-only comparison happens to produce the same \$128 per capita median as in the CE-included comparison.

**Figure 2a**



**Figure 2b**



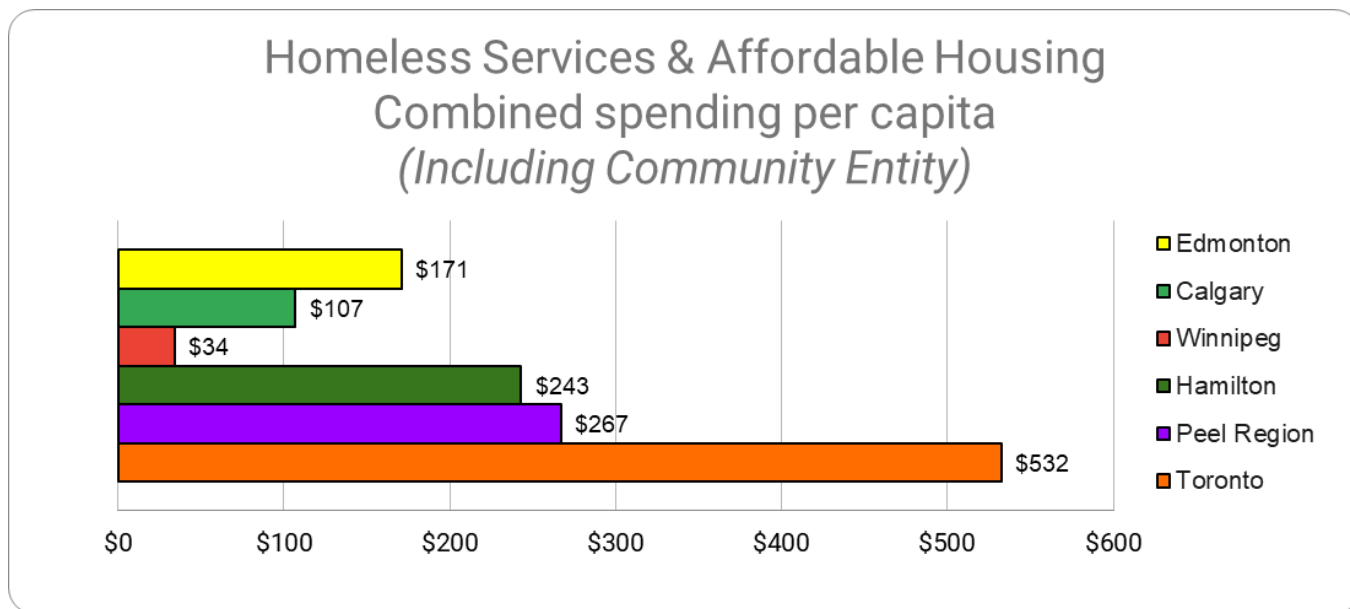


**Combined housing and homeless-related spending** (Figures 3a, 3b, and 4)

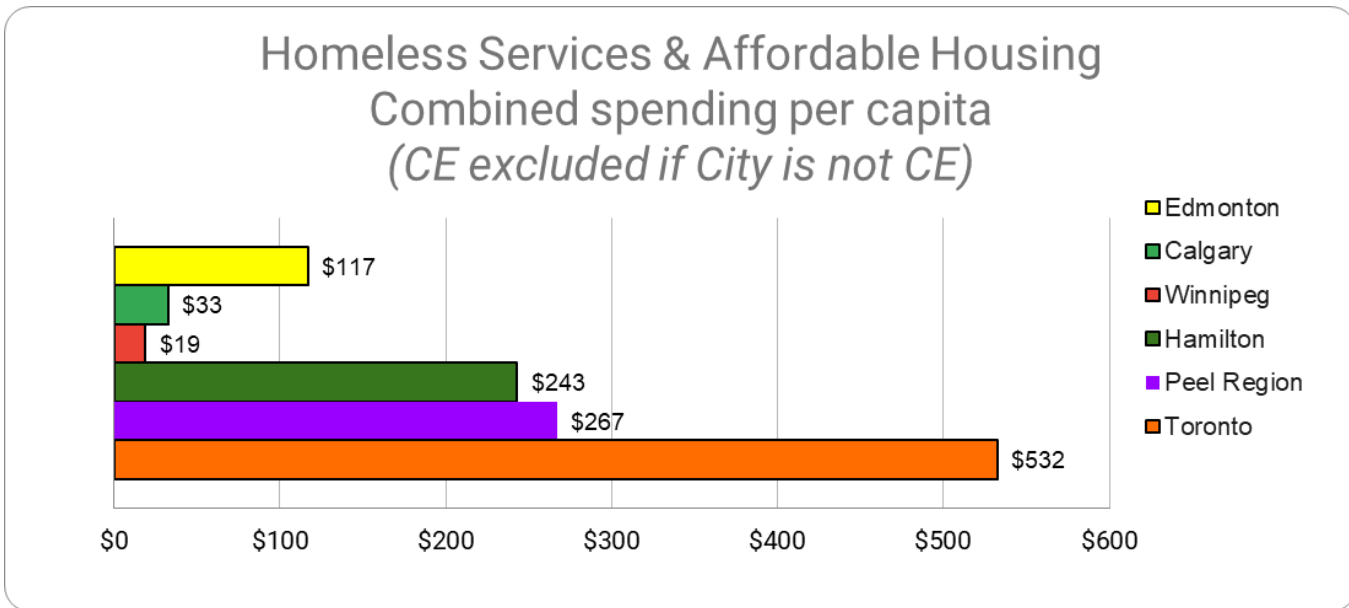
- Median combined per-capita spending on housing and homelessness, including the CE, was \$207 for six cities, ranging from \$34 (Winnipeg) to \$532 (Toronto). These outliers were at one-sixth of median spending and 2½ times median spending.
- Looking at municipal-only spending (excluding independent CEs), median combined spending on housing and homelessness was \$180 per capita for the same six cities. The outliers were the same, but with somewhat higher divergence from median.
- Edmonton’s combined housing and homelessness spending with CE included was \$171 per capita, or 83 percent of the median. Excluding independent CEs, Edmonton’s spending was \$117 per capita or 65 percent of median.

Two important contextual points in this comparison are that where the municipality is not the CE, the most homeless services are funded by the CE rather than municipally, and in general the majority of municipal spending is on affordable housing development.

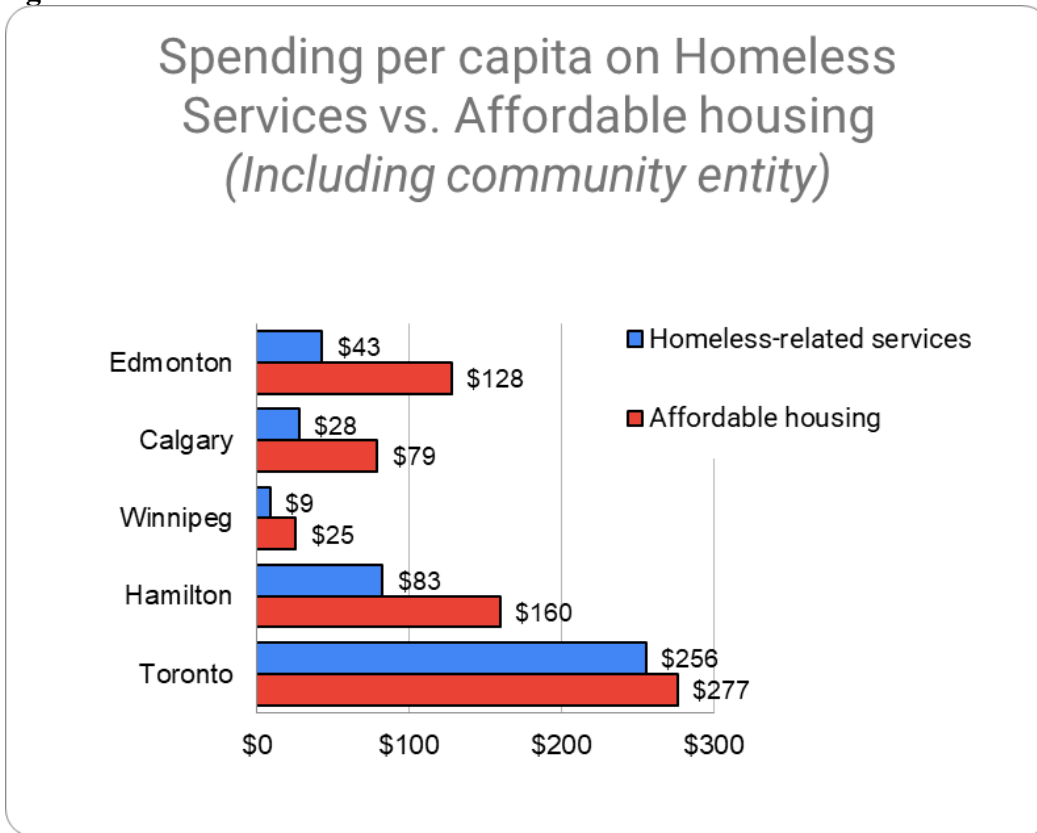
**Figure 3a**



**Figure 3b**



**Figure 4**



- 
- All cities in this comparison spent more on affordable housing than homeless-related services (Figure 4). In general they spent 2½ times as much on housing as on homelessness: median \$110 versus \$43 per capita (for five cases with data for both categories). Toronto was the big exception, spending almost as much on homelessness as on housing.
  - Edmonton’s per-capita housing spending (including the CE) was 2½ times as high as its homeless-related spending – consistent with the multi-city pattern.





**2.2 Spending in its jurisdictional and fiscal context**

*b) Municipality and community entity*

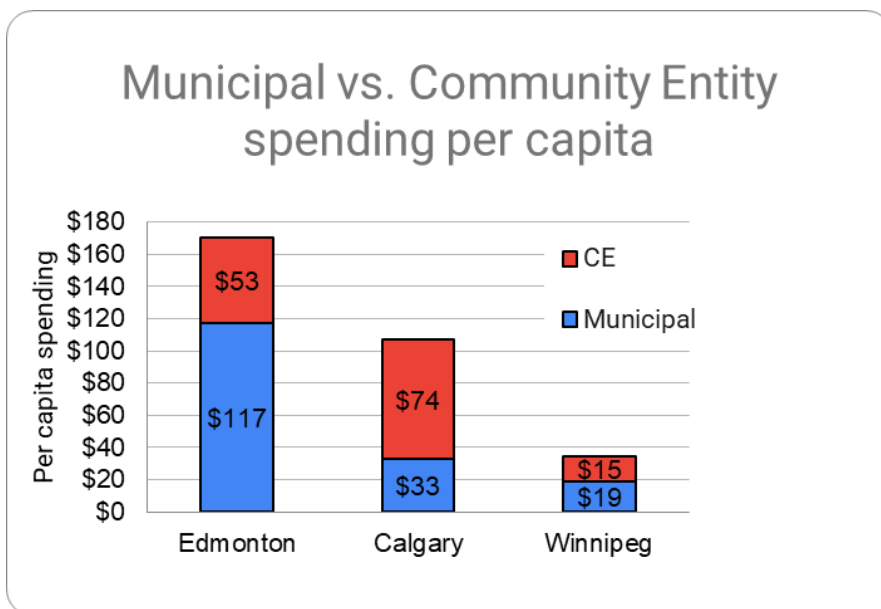
The large impact of CE spending on overall comparisons was evident in section 2.1

Here we focus on relative municipal and CE spending in the three large Prairie cities including Edmonton. (Ontario cases are excluded because the municipality is the CE; Vancouver is excluded because its CE covers the full metro area and population, not just the City.) The combined housing-and-homelessness total is compared (not only homelessness) because CE spending in all cases includes significant dollars for housing access and housing support services and in many cases includes some dollars for rent subsidies and/or creating housing.

These three cities show wide differences in spending levels and in the CE versus municipal shares of spending.

- In Edmonton the municipality spent about two-thirds of the combined municipal+CE total; in Winnipeg the municipal share was just over half the combined amount; in Calgary the municipal share was 31 percent.
- Calgary Homeless Foundation spent almost 40 percent more per capita than its Edmonton CE counterpart, Homeward Trust. The City of Edmonton spent 3½ times as much per capita as the City of Calgary.
- Winnipeg spending per capita—by the municipality and by the CE—was much lower than in the other two cities.

**Figure 5**



---

**a) Ontario ‘service manager’ municipalities versus other cities** (Figures 6 and 7)

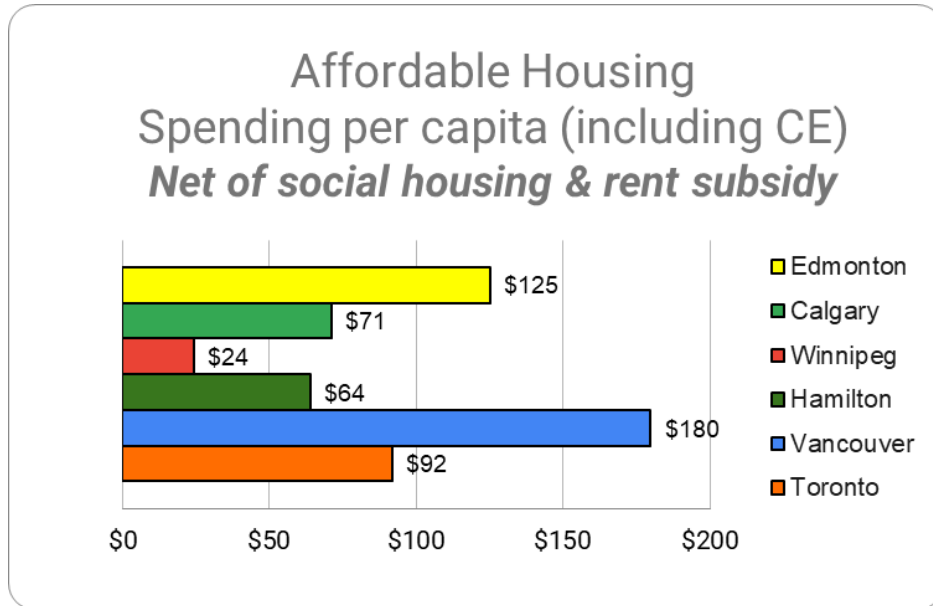
As noted in Section 1.2, various Ontario municipalities (including all those in this comparison) are designated as ‘service managers’, having a statutory responsibility to provide most ongoing funding for social housing and rent subsidies. This is a fiscal responsibility that is provincial in other places, and adds hugely to municipal housing spending in those cases. While most large cities across Canada spend significant funds on *creating* affordable housing, outside Ontario the level of municipal ongoing operating subsidies and rent subsidies for social housing is small. The impact of this on housing spending is shown in Figure 6, and on combined housing and homelessness spending in Figure 7.<sup>6</sup>

- For housing spending net of social housing and rent subsidies, Toronto’s drops from \$277 (in Figure 2a) to \$92 per capita (in Figure 6) while Hamilton’s drops from \$160 to \$64 per capita. This drop is 60 to 67 percent for these cities, i.e. two-thirds of their housing spending is in this category, most of it ongoing rent and mortgage subsidies.
- Hamilton now falls below the median \$81 per-capita housing spending for the six cities, and lower than Edmonton or Calgary; Toronto remains high but is now at only half the Vancouver level per capita. Hamilton drops from 45 percent above to about 20 percent below median while Toronto shifts from 150 percent above median to just 13 percent above median.
- For combined housing and homelessness spending net of social housing and rent subsidies, Toronto’s drops from \$532 to \$347 per capita while Hamilton’s drops from \$243 to \$147 per capita. This drop is 35 to 40 percent for these cities.
- Hamilton now falls slightly below the six-city median for combined spending on housing and homelessness; Toronto remains a high outlier, spending well over twice the median level, because of its large budget for homeless-related services.

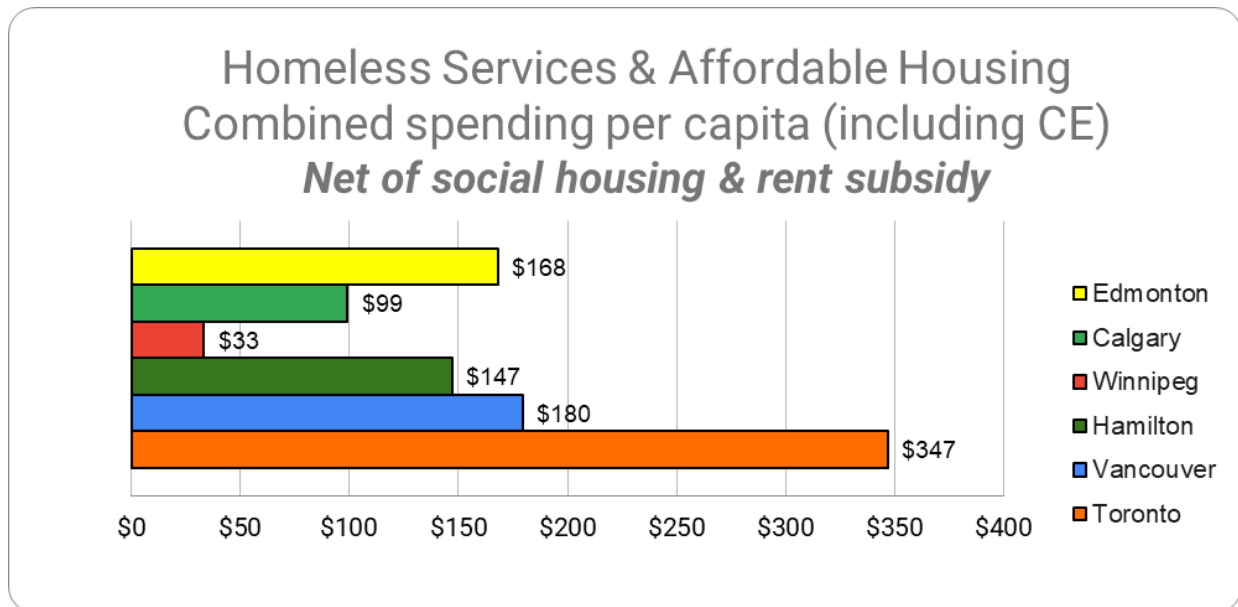
---

<sup>6</sup> This comparison omits Peel because available data did not clearly break out operating spending on social housing and rent subsidies. In this discussion a revised median is calculated for the six cases, net of social housing and rent subsidies.

**Figure 6**



**Figure 7**



---

***b) Responsibility for funding homeless emergency shelters***

In most cities, emergency shelters are a large part of homeless-related services; they are also often a venue where related street outreach is based or where client supports are provided. In Alberta and Manitoba, the provincial government has the primary role in funding emergency shelters separate from the CE. This contrasts to Ontario where funding to emergency shelters flows through municipal budgets, and where that funding is the sum of large provincial cost-sharing as well as large net municipal money.

***c) Social assistance and rent subsidies***

For people at imminent risk of homelessness, or who are homeless or seeking to move from homelessness to housing, social assistance is in many cases the main source of income. Social assistance is therefore an important contextual factor and an important difference between the various provinces and cities. This includes: differences in absolute levels; eligibility rules and barriers to accessing basic social assistance and public disability assistance; and importantly, the gap between social assistance incomes and rent levels in high-rent versus moderate-rent cities. It was not possible within the scope of this study to analyse these important factors.

These factors may be important in regard to Winnipeg, which has middling levels of homelessness but very low levels of spending. Because Winnipeg continues to be a more moderate-rent city than others, the gap between social assistance incomes and rent levels may be less. Its situation may also be influenced by Manitoba's demand-side housing programs i.e. direct rent subsidies to tenants wherever they live, not only those in social housing. Manitoba's Rent Assist program, launched in 2014 and now combined with the Canada-Manitoba Housing benefit, may be Canada's most generous demand-side rental assistance program. However, it was not possible within the scope of this analysis to examine any relationship to or impact on municipal spending.

**d) Central cities versus other municipalities** (Figures 7 and 8)

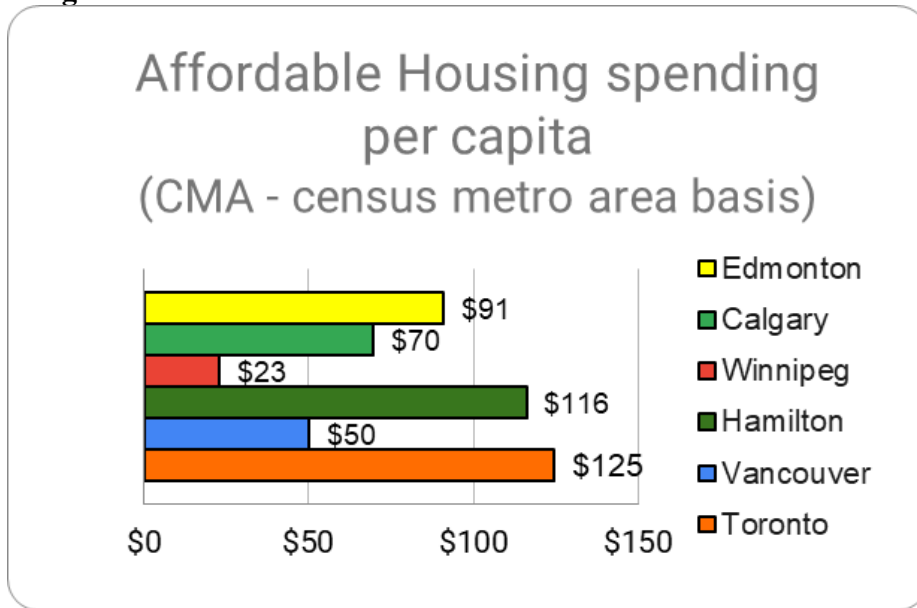
Section 1.2 noted that central cities which are a small share of a large Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) may tend to have higher per-capita spending than cases where the municipality covers most of the CMA. In effect, if program responses to downtown or inner-ring housing and homeless issues rest mostly on the shoulders of the central municipality, then spending is spread across a smaller population denominator. The cases most affected are Toronto and Vancouver.

We can simulate a more ‘apples to apples’ geographic comparison by measuring the central municipality’s spending in relation to CMA population. Figures 8 and 9 are parallel to Figures 2b and 3b respectively—except that the population denominator is changed here to the CMA rather than the municipality.<sup>7</sup>

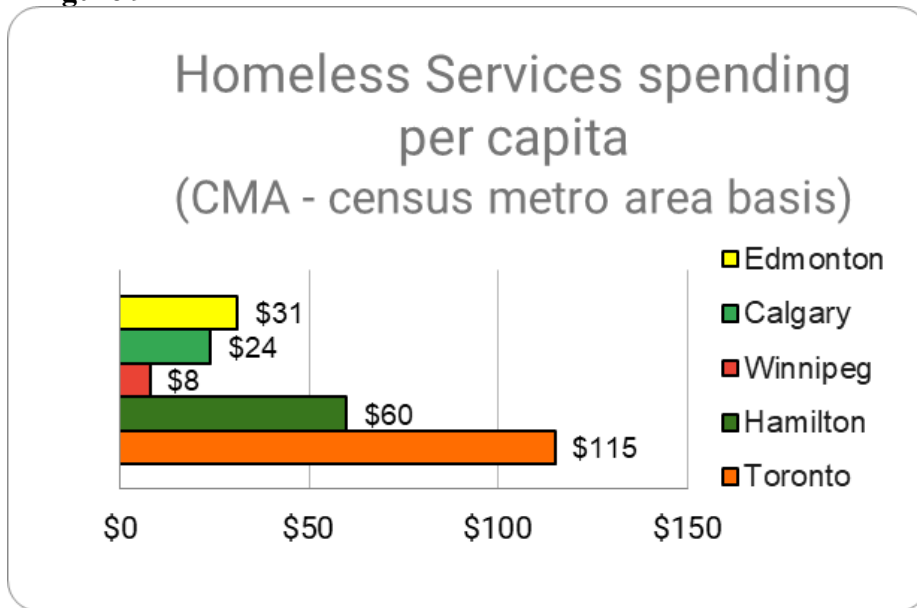
- All cities’ per-capita spending was somewhat lower on a CMA population basis, but for Toronto and Vancouver, spending was much lower. On a CMA population basis there was far less difference between these two higher-spending cases and the other cities.
- Using a CMA population rather than municipal population denominator:
  - Toronto housing spending drops from \$277 to \$125 per capita (from 150 percent above median to 55 percent above median).
  - Vancouver housing spending drops from \$200 to \$50 per capita (from about 70 percent above median to about 38 percent below median).
  - Toronto’s homelessness spending drops from \$256 to \$115 per capita (from 6 times the median level to 3.7 times the median).
- On a CMA population basis, there was a much narrower range and less disparity in per-capita spending among the cities.

<sup>7</sup> While other municipalities in Greater Vancouver and Greater Toronto also spend on housing and homelessness, the central city accounts for a substantial majority of that type of municipal spending in the metro area. Homelessness spending is not presented here, and CE spending is excluded in all cases, because of geographic incompatibility for Vancouver (where most homelessness spending is at the Metro Vancouver and regional CE level, and not included in City of Vancouver data).

**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**



## 2.3 Spending and contextual factors: Preliminary observations

Section 1.2 and Table 1 documented the very different contexts of the seven cities compared in this report. On a different dimension from the fiscal, jurisdictional and geographic factors discussed in subsection 2.2 are contextual factors directly to do with homelessness and housing. These include per-capita prevalence of homelessness in relation to population, and relative presence of refugees and Indigenous people in the homeless population; in the housing realm they include rent levels and the relative supply of social/affordable housing. The seven cities vary greatly on these factors.

It is not possible within the scope of this report to undertake a fuller analysis of how contextual factors affect spending. This subsection presents only some initial exploration.

Table 2 presents the simple correlation of homeless-related funding per capita (including Community Entity spending) with four selected key contextual factors.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2**

	Edmonton	Calgary	Winnipeg	Hamilton	Toronto	Statistical correlation. of per-capita funding with contextual factor:
<b>Homeless-related funding per capita</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>256</b>	
<b>Selected contextual factors:</b>						
Homeless (PiT 2020-22) per 100,000 pop.	249	213	168	96	263	<b>0.39</b>
Average 1-bedroom apartment rent 2022	\$1,071	\$1,222	\$1,056	\$1,197	\$1,526	<b>0.94</b>
Indigenous % of total homelessness	54%	30%	75%	23%	15%	<b>-0.70</b>
Population per social/affordable housing unit	98	98	68	55	37	<b>-0.77</b>
Source: Calculated from data in Table 1 and Figure 1a. Simple statistical correlation (Excel).						

In summary, among these 5 cases, per-capita municipal spending on homeless-related services is:

- Strongly correlated with the level of rents: cities with higher rents tend to spend more.
- Correlated, but only weakly (coefficient 0.39) with the level of homelessness per capita.

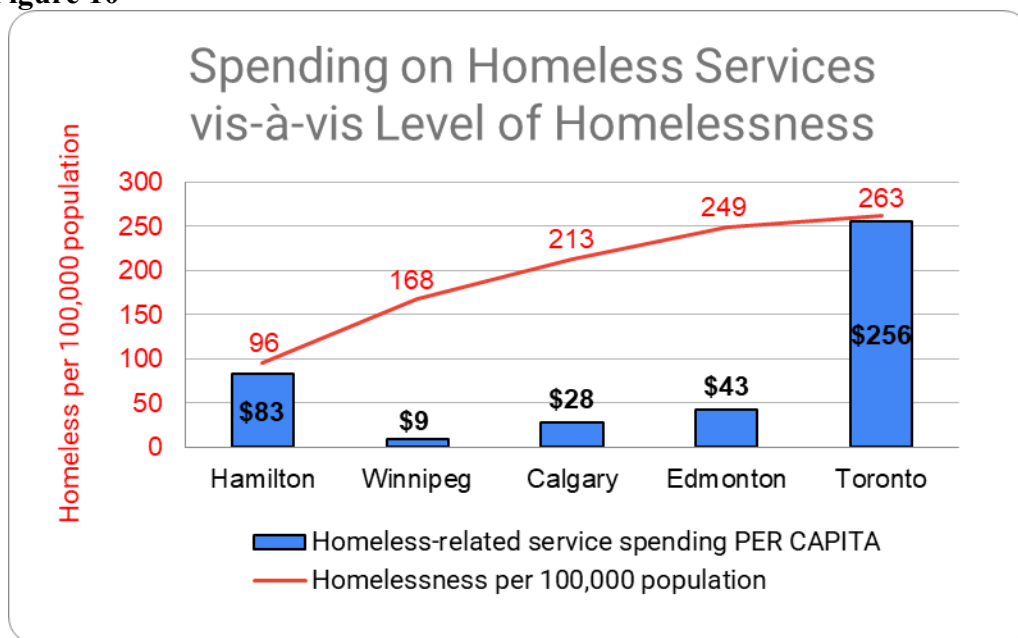
<sup>8</sup> This comparison omits cases for which data on homeless-related spending were not available (Vancouver) or not broken out from total housing and homelessness spending (Peel).



- Strongly *inversely* correlated with the Indigenous presence among the homeless population: cities with relatively more Indigenous homelessness tend to spend less.
- Strongly *inversely* correlated with population per social/affordable housing unit: cities with more non-market housing also tend to spend more on homeless-related services.

Figure 10 further illustrates one element of this, showing the homeless-related spending per capita along with the relative levels of homelessness, as measured by PiT counts (Figure 9).<sup>9</sup> The three Prairie cities have homelessness per capita at 64 to 95 percent of Toronto’s level and well above Hamilton’s, but their spending is much lower than Hamilton’s, let alone Toronto’s.

**Figure 10**



In sum, the differences in spending from one city to another appear to have more to do with institutional/jurisdictional matters discussed in this report, along with established practices and political priorities, and not with levels of homelessness or related housing pressures.

<sup>9</sup> Data are for combined municipal plus CE spending on homeless-related services. It was not possible to include refugees because hard data were missing in 2 cases.



## 2.3 Provincial and Municipal Sources of Funding

Municipal and CE spending on affordable housing and homelessness is supported by a mix of federal, provincial and municipal (FPM) sources of funding. This subsection offers a preliminary look at how this differs among five cities studied. (Data were not available from Vancouver or Peel.) All data are for per-capita funding, i.e. equalized on the basis of municipal population.

The research team is less confident about the consistency and reliability of data on funding sources than about other data in this report. For example, where federal funding flows through the provincial budget to a municipality, this may be considered as provincial funding by the province and the municipality and reported as that; certain CEs that receive federal *Reaching Home* program funding did not report any significant federal funding sources.

When examining FPM sources of funding it is important to start with absolute amounts before turning to percentage shares. Absolute amounts vary so widely between cities that a small federal or provincial *share* in one case can easily be bigger than a large share in another case.

Figure 11a shows the funding amounts and FPM composition for the five cities; this is for the combination of affordable housing and homeless-related services, and combined municipal and community entity (CE).

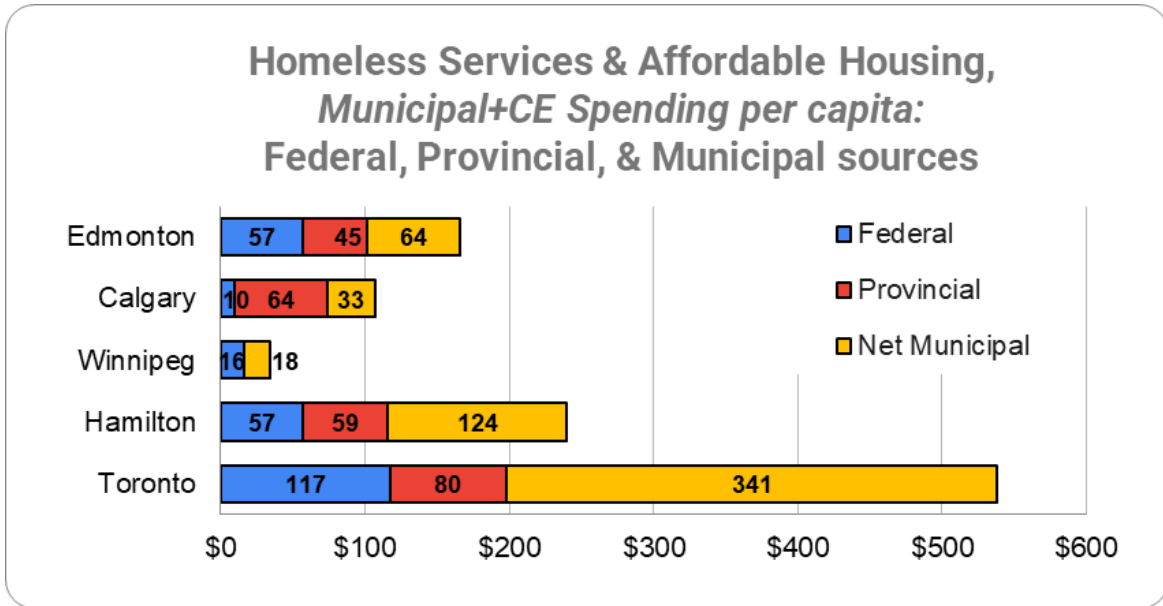
- There are great differences among the cities in the absolute and relative amounts of funding that come from federal, provincial, and net municipal sources. The large difference between Ontario and Prairie provinces in municipal program responsibilities and associated funding (see earlier subsections) is also reflected in much larger federal and provincial housing and homeless-related transfers to Ontario municipalities.

The strikingly different overall amounts and FPM amounts are understood to be influenced by numerous factors including:

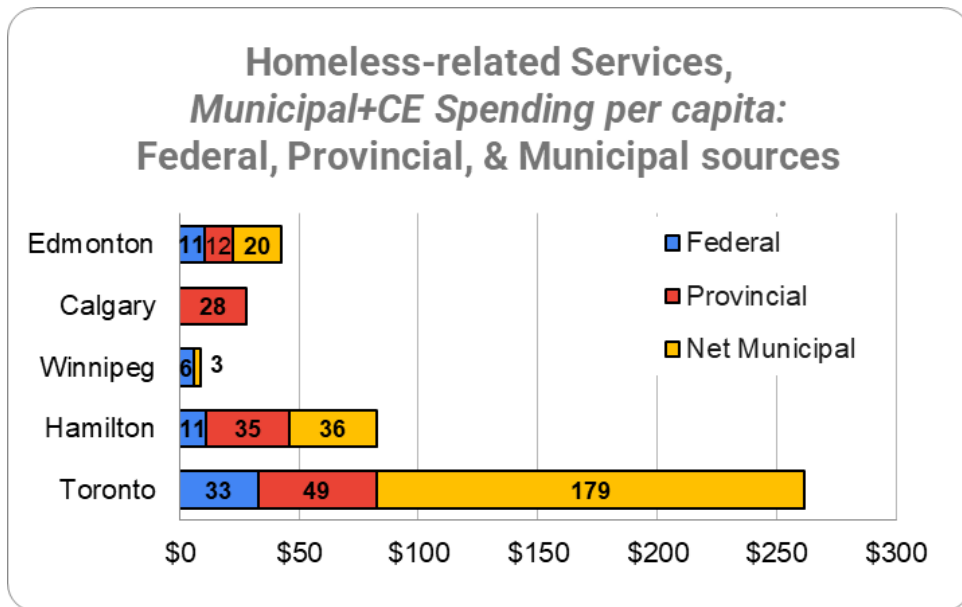
- Provinces' divergent institutional-fiscal arrangements whereby key services are funded directly by a province ministry in some places, but through municipal governments in other places. Notably, emergency shelter funding and ongoing social/affordable housing rent subsidies are provincial in the Prairie provinces but primarily municipal in Ontario.
- Different levels of homelessness and related needs, and funders' response to these.
- Priority for social/affordable housing in many cities, versus housing benefits in Manitoba.
- Funders responding to established program delivery and planning roles that are larger in certain places, for example the City of Toronto or Calgary Homeless Foundation.
- Funding arising from historical commitments, e.g. more RGI social housing developed in Ontario in the 1960s to 1980s, due to the larger population difference of Ontario vs. Prairies then than now, and stronger Ontario priority for housing in that era.

- Larger municipal housing and homelessness responsibilities in Ontario’s devolved system are reflected in larger federal-provincial transfers *and* larger net municipal spending (per capita) than in Prairie cities.

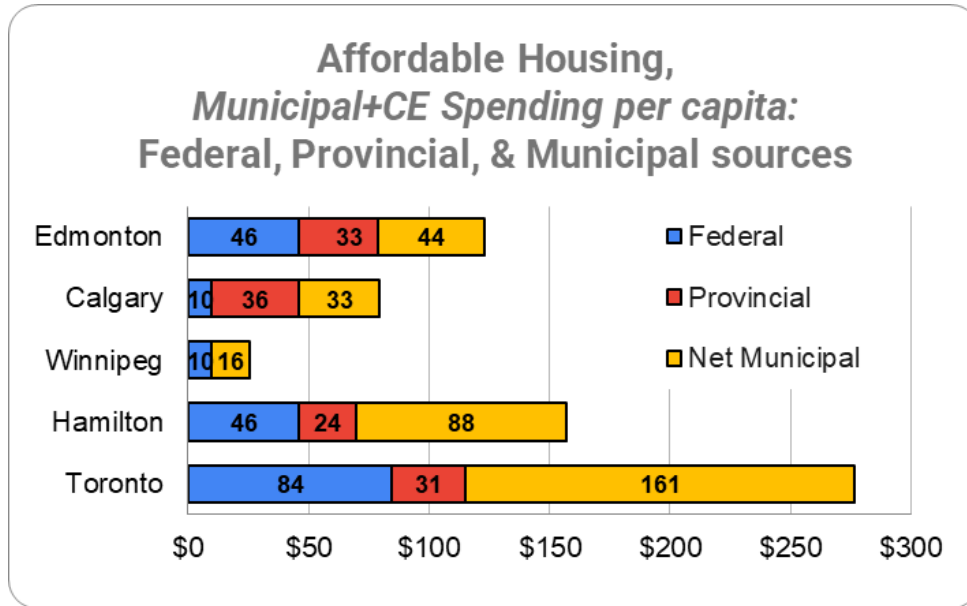
**Figure 11a**



**Figure 11b**



**Figure 11c**



Figures 11b and 11c break out funding amounts and FPM composition separately for homeless-related services and for affordable housing. The same general patterns apply as seen in Figure 11a. However, a few points other are notable:<sup>10</sup>

- Combined federal-provincial funding in most cities is about 1½ times as large for housing as for homeless-related services. Edmonton was an extreme case, with over 3½ times as much F-P funding for housing as for homelessness.
- For affordable housing, federal funding is notably larger than provincial (median \$46 vs. \$31 per capita), and this applies in all cities.
- For homeless-related services, provincial funding is much larger than federal overall (median \$28 vs. \$11 per capita). The exceptions were Edmonton (with fairly equal federal and provincial funding) and Winnipeg (see below).
- Calgary and Edmonton each have quite different patterns, both within housing funding and within homeless-related funding. (It is unclear whether this relates partly to different interpretation of spending survey categories by municipal and provincial respondents.)
- Winnipeg has not only lower funding per capita but also no provincially sourced municipal funding for housing or homelessness, according to the data provided. It is not clear whether this relates to more reliance on direct provincial spending in these areas.
- Calgary stands out for an apparent absence of federal funding for homeless-related services, and consequently a low federal funding percentage in its overall housing and homelessness spending.
- Toronto not only has the largest per-capita spending on housing and on homelessness, but also the largest per-capita net municipal funding contribution by far.

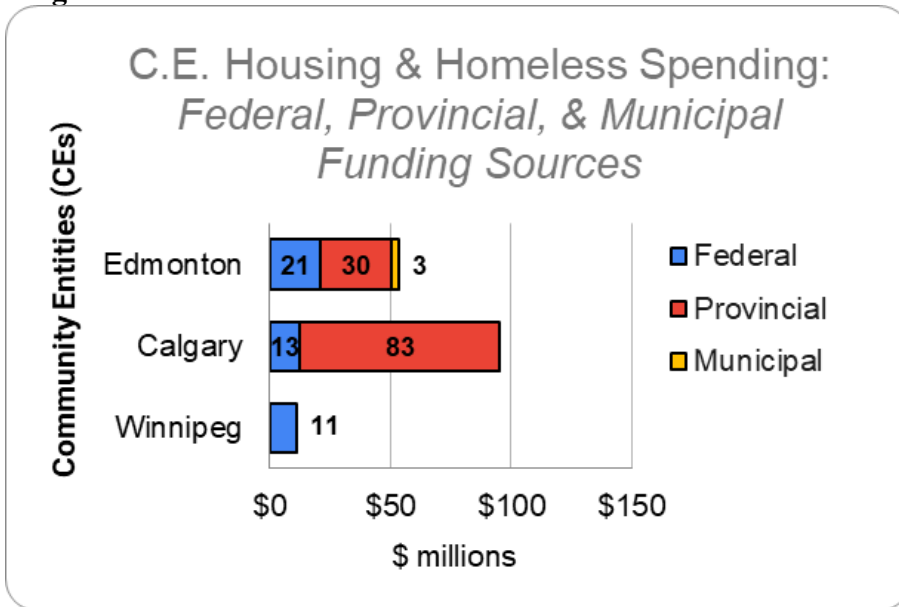
Figures 13a, 13b and 13c present FMP relative shares of total funding without regard to absolute amounts.

- The comments above on absolute differences are also reflected in these graphs.
- Net municipal funds were typically about half of combined housing and homelessness spending (median 52% for the five cities). This was somewhat higher for housing (median 56% net municipal) and lower for homeless-related services (44%).
- Edmonton and Calgary have notably lower net municipal shares (30–37%) of combined housing and homelessness spending than is the case in Ontario cities or in Winnipeg (52–63% net municipal). This also applies to housing spending (34–42% net municipal in Edmonton and Calgary vs. 56%–62% elsewhere). Edmonton was notably above the median (47% vs. 33%) in its net municipal share of spending on homeless-related services.

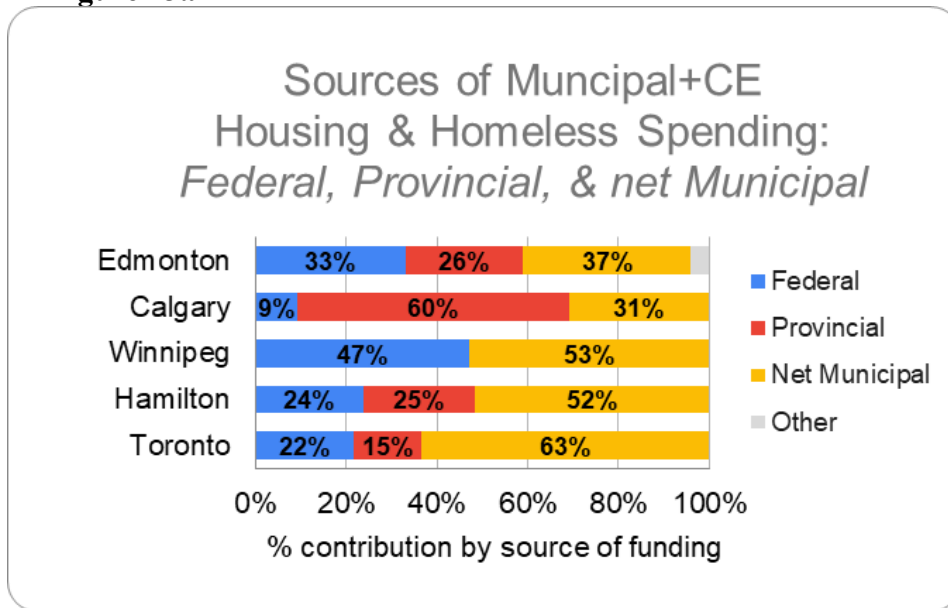
FPM funding shares are strongly influenced by the relative scale of CE program delivery and funding, and the composition of that (Figure 12). Calgary's CE has much larger funding and, according to the data provided, it receives far more provincial funding.

<sup>10</sup> See data note in Appendix on 'other' source of housing funding for Edmonton.

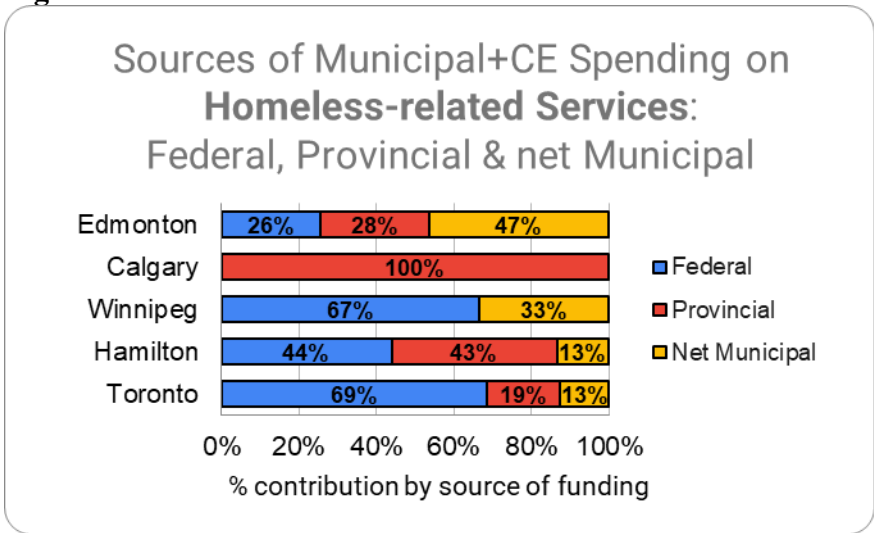
**Figure 12**



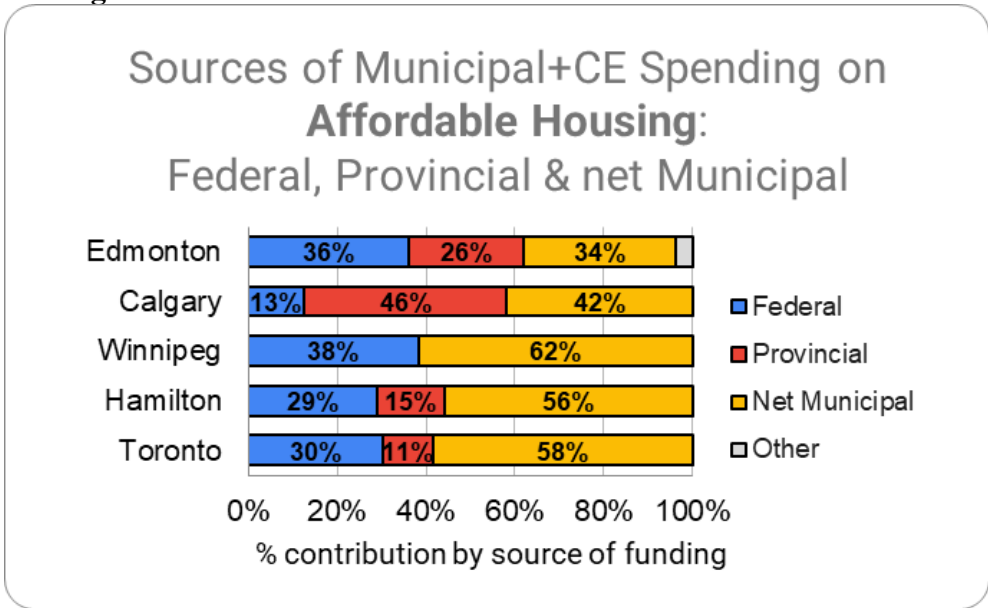
**Figure 13a**



**Figure 13b**



**Figure 13c**



---

### 3. Conclusions

---

Readers seeking a summary of findings should refer to the Executive Summary. This section focuses on broader and thematic reflections and conclusions.

This report has endeavoured to put the larger city-to-city differences in context: in terms of their different levels of homelessness; in housing system factors such as rents and social/affordable housing stock; and in jurisdictional and institutional terms—i.e. divergent provincial-municipal roles, fiscal arrangements, and municipal geographies in different places.

A very prominent part of this report’s findings is the very wide range of per-capita spending levels among larger Canadian municipalities. However, as discussed throughout this report, spending is not a precise measure of a municipality’s commitment or priority. Spending levels reflect many other factors, including the following:

*Levels of affordable housing need and homelessness.* Municipalities experiencing greater housing need and homelessness may spend more. Factors accounting for this greater need may include speculation in the rental housing sector, a slowdown in rental construction, a lack of preservation of rental stock, a rise in short-term rentals (e.g. Airbnb, Vrbo) and a reduction in social assistance benefit levels (e.g. benefit levels not being adjusted in line with inflation).

*Demographic trends.* Municipalities experiencing high rates of in-migration will likely experience tighter rental housing markets in response, as low-income households are squeezed out of the rental market and developers are not able to keep up with new demand. During such periods, those municipalities may face intense public pressure to increase support for low-income households.

*Histories and established practices.* Certain municipalities—e.g. Toronto and Vancouver—have long established roles in creating housing. That role is more recent in many other Canadian cities, which currently lack the same established municipal housing corporations as Toronto and Vancouver. Local policies and practices can be partly conditioned by provincial policy; this plays out in one way in Ontario, where various housing responsibilities are legally devolved to municipalities; in a different way in British Columbia, whose interventionist approaches in housing<sup>11</sup> have helped foster and fund local efforts.

*Political priorities.* Left-leaning governments have a tendency to support community (i.e., social) housing. Right-leaning governments, by contrast, tend to prefer tax credits for for-profit developers as well as demand-side approaches (e.g. rent supplements and housing allowances). While both types of policy responses have important roles to play, a government’s preference for one approach over another affects spending patterns.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Smith (2022), *Multiple barriers: the multilevel governance of homelessness in Canada* (University of Toronto Press), p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Kemp, P. (Ed.). (2007). *Housing allowances in comparative perspective*. Policy Press.

*Different roles/responsibilities of municipalities vs. provincial government.* Ontario municipalities, under provincial law and policy, fund most of the rent subsidies for social housing, while in most other provinces it is the provincial housing corporations that do that. This greatly raises Ontario municipal housing expenditure by comparison to Prairie cities. In Alberta and Manitoba, most funding for emergency shelters comes directly from the provincial government whereas in Ontario that funding is cost-shared but flows from the municipal budget.

*Community Entity role.* In some cases the municipality is the Community Entity (CE), i.e., the designated organization to do system planning, receive federal *Reaching Home* (homelessness) funding, and disperse it to service providers; in other cases the municipality is not. A municipality that is the CE will spend more on homelessness than it otherwise would—because it is the vehicle for federal funding and also because its system planning role may lead to added capacity-building and program initiatives.

The present analysis reveals that Toronto is a clear outlier when it comes to spending on both housing and homelessness, and that appears largely explained by many of the above contextual factors. It is noteworthy, for example, that approximately half of those sleeping in Toronto's emergency shelters today are refugee claimants.<sup>13</sup>

Winnipeg lies at the other end of the spectrum here, showing low levels of spending. This may be at least partly explained by a softer rental housing market and a relatively generous demand-side strategy related to housing. Launched in 2014, Manitoba's Rent Assist program, combined with the Canada-Manitoba Housing benefit, may be Canada's most generous demand-side housing program. The fact that Winnipeg's emergency shelters are funded primarily by Manitoba's provincial government is also a factor.

Relative levels of homeless-related spending among the municipalities do not appear to have a close relationship with relative levels of homelessness, as measured by PiT counts (see figure below). The three Prairie cities have homelessness per capita at 64 to 95 percent of Toronto's level and well above Hamilton's, but their spending is much lower than Hamilton's, let alone Toronto's. Differences in spending appear to have more to do with institutional/jurisdictional matters discussed in this report, along with established practices and political priorities.

Importantly, high levels of per-capita homelessness do not appear to neatly predict spending levels on housing and homelessness. Put differently, while high per-capita rates of homelessness may result in higher per-capita levels of spending on housing and homelessness, other contextual factors appear to be more important determinants of those spending levels.

Edmonton has low to moderate per-capita spending levels on housing and homelessness, compared to the cities in this analysis. Several contextual and institutional factors appear to have some influence on this finding.

---

<sup>13</sup> See data in Table 1 and sources in Appendix 3.



- 
- Like other Western Canada cities and in contrast to the Ontario cities, Edmonton is not the Community Entity for federal homelessness funding nor does it have primary funding responsibility for emergency shelters.
  - Edmonton does not have an Ontario-style statutory ‘service manager’ role under provincial law and policy, i.e. with primary fiscal and jurisdictional responsibility for housing subsidies and with similar overall responsibility for homeless-related services.
  - Like other Prairie cities and unlike Vancouver or Toronto, the City of Edmonton comprises the majority of its metropolitan area. Therefore in this comparison, any concentration of central and inner-ring housing and homelessness issues and related program/spending responses is spread across a relatively large population denominator.

This report attempts to track the sources of all of the above funding, but this is a challenging exercise—e.g. municipal contacts who provided us the data may not have had a full understanding of the true source of provincial funding that flows through their respective municipality. Notwithstanding that caveat, federal sources of funding are absolutely and relatively more important for homelessness than for housing. Edmonton is an exception, with a relatively small amount of federal funding for homelessness. Higher-spending municipalities tend to receive higher federal and provincial transfers that contribute to that spending.

---

## Appendix 1: Data categories

---

Officials from whom data was requested for this exercise were asked to complete an Excel spreadsheet with the following program categories (with explanations provided on a second worksheet):

- Homelessness prevention
- Client supports & related
- Emergency shelter operations
- Housing support services
- Rent subsidies and/or assistance to social/affordable housing
- Creating social/affordable housing – capital (or equivalent transfers to non-profits/3rd parties)
- Emergency shelters and transitional accommodation – capital (or equivalent transfers)
- Housing repair and retrofit – capital or equivalent
- Planning and coordination

For each category, officials were asked to disaggregate the data according to whether the sources of funding were federal, provincial or municipal.

Explanations provided for each category were as follow:

### *Homelessness prevention*

- Eviction prevention (includes landlord/tenant intervention, advice, case management, etc.)
- Rent banks
- Budgeting advice, credit counseling, etc.
- Discharge planning
- ‘Secondary prevention’ targeted interventions for those at imminent risk of homelessness
- Rent assistance of up to 6 months to sustain housing for persons already housed
- Staffing costs for these and related functions and services
- One-time funding (e.g. related to emerging post-pandemic matters)"

### *Client supports & related*

- Street outreach & activities related to encampments
- Rapid rehousing
- Interventions to help people move from streets to shelters, streets/shelters to housing, etc.
- Landlord/tenant intervention to help clients to get housed
- Housing placement, by-name lists, co-ordinated access to housing, etc.
- Housing set-up costs for clients
- Rent assistance of up to 6 months when moving from homelessness to home

- 
- Basic needs services per the *Reaching Home* 2023 directive, excluding emergency shelter
  - Clinical and treatment services eligible in the *Reaching Home* 2023 directive
  - Staffing costs for these and related functions and services
  - One-time funding (e.g. related to emerging post-pandemic matters)"

#### *Emergency shelter operations*

- Operating costs of emergency shelters, including property costs, staffing, etc.
- Any related client supports provided in or in conjunction with emergency shelters
- Staffing costs for these and related functions and services
- One-time funding (e.g. related to emerging post-pandemic matters)"

#### *Housing support services*

- Transitional housing – operating costs including property costs, staffing, etc.
- Support staff in permanent supportive, social/affordable, or municipal housing
- One-time funding (e.g. related to emerging post-pandemic matters)"

#### *Rent subsidies and/or assistance to social/affordable housing*

- Rent assistance, rent geared to income, of housing benefit/housing allowance of more than 6 months, whether in private rental or social/affordable rental
- Ongoing or periodic subsidies to a municipal housing corporation
- Ongoing or periodic subsidies to non-profit, supportive, seniors, or co-operative housing
- One-time funding (e.g. related to emerging post-pandemic matters)"

#### *Creating social/affordable housing – capital (or equivalent transfers to non-profits/3rd parties)*

- Capital funding to create new social/affordable housing (includes supportive housing)
- Similar funding to acquire housing or other properties and turn those into social/affordable or supportive housing (with or without renovation/additions)
- Similar funding for redevelopment and replacement of municipal housing and/or of non-profit or supportive housing
- Operating budget transfers, of a one-time or capital character, to non-profits or other third parties, for the purposes listed under this category"

---

*Emergency shelters and transitional accommodation – capital (or equivalent transfers)*

- Capital funding to create new emergency shelters or for upgrading, renovation, expansion energy retrofit, or replacement of these
- Capital funding to create transitional accommodation or for upgrading, renovation, expansion, energy retrofit, or replacement of this
- Similar funding to acquire housing or other properties and turn it into emergency shelters or transitional accommodation (with or without renovation/additions)
- Operating budget transfers, of a one-time or capital character, to non-profits or other third parties, for the purposes listed under this category"

*Housing repair and retrofit – capital or equivalent*

- Capital or operating budget funding for major maintenance, energy retrofit, repair or renovation of municipal housing and/or non-profit or supportive housing
- Capital or operating budget funding for maintenance, energy retrofit, repair or renovation of private rental or homeowner housing"

*Planning and coordination*

- Developing housing or homelessness plans and/or overseeing implementation
- Grants administration and 'head office' oversight for services under other categories
- Planning, budgeting, strategy, data/monitoring, research, reporting out, and/or policy development, in regard to affordable housing or homelessness
- Program coordination, implementation, and/or project management costs of functions or services in other categories here
- One-time funding (e.g. related to emerging post-pandemic matters)"

A draft version of this report (i.e., the present document) was sent to all participating municipalities in February 2024. They were given two weeks to provide feedback.

## Appendix 2: Community participation

The following table provides a breakdown of how each community responded to the data request.

Community	Response
Toronto	<p>City of Toronto completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>Toronto's Indigenous CE declined to participate.</p>
Montreal	<p>City of Montreal declined to participate.</p>
Vancouver	<p>City of Vancouver did not complete the Excel spreadsheet, but did direct the research team to helpful online data.</p> <p>Vancouver's CE and Indigenous CE declined to participate.</p>
Calgary	<p>City of Calgary did not complete the Excel spreadsheet, but did direct the research team to helpful online data.</p> <p>Government of Alberta provided provincial data for Calgary's CE. Calgary's CE provided federal data.</p> <p>Calgary's Indigenous CE declined to participate.</p>
Edmonton	<p>City of Edmonton completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>Edmonton's CE completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>Edmonton's Indigenous CE was not administering <i>Reaching Home</i> funding in 2022.</p>
Winnipeg	<p>City of Winnipeg completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>Winnipeg's CE and Indigenous CE completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p>
Ottawa	

	<p>City of Ottawa expressed interest in completing the Excel spreadsheet, but did not do so by the deadline.</p> <p>Ottawa's Indigenous CE completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p>
Hamilton	<p>City of Hamilton completed the Excel spreadsheet.</p> <p>Hamilton's Indigenous CE declined to participate.</p>
Peel Region	<p>Peel did not complete the Excel spreadsheet, but did direct the research team to somewhat helpful online data.</p>
Waterloo Region	<p>Waterloo Region did not complete the Excel spreadsheet. They did direct the research team to online data, but that data was insufficiently broken out to include it in the analysis.</p>

---

## Appendix 3: Data explanatory notes

---

### A3.1 General notes on municipal and CE expenditure data

Actuals for calendar 2022 are used, rather than budgeted amounts, unless otherwise noted. In some cases, municipal respondents did not specify/confirm data as actual or budgeted amounts.

Although the research team provided detailed guidelines on categorizing spending, different municipal respondents may have interpreted/applied these differently, producing inconsistencies.

2022 may not be a typical year in all cases. Capital spending on homeless-related facilities and affordable housing in a given city and year may be above or below typical 3-year or 5-year levels. As well, some pandemic-related spending initiatives were still part of 2022 spending.

Data do not include spending of a housing corporation associated with the municipality, except insofar municipal corporation spending includes transfers to that housing corporation (except Peel – see A3.2). Ontario municipal spending includes federal transfers (received via the Provincial government) which other provinces may flow to housing providers directly.

Indigenous Community Entities in general were not able to respond with data following outreach by the research team; their spending is therefore not included in CE data. In cities where the Indigenous CE accounts for a relatively large share of system-wide expenditure, overall spending levels may be understated in this report relative to other cities.

Data include capital and operating. Capital data for a given year (2022) may or may not be typical for a current/upcoming 3- to 5-year capital budget period. Municipalities may not have consistent financial reporting practices for budgeted capital expenditures delayed from one year to the next.

Provincially-sourced spending data equals all funds received or counted as provincial in municipal responses, or in some cases in provincial government responses, using the research team's survey template. It is not possible to know whether some of these provincial funds include federal transfers earmarked for homeless-related services or affordable housing, or whether this is inconsistent between one province and another.

---

### A3.2 Data notes from or about specific municipalities

#### Vancouver data:

Data are taken from publicly available documents, with attribution by the research team to the standard spending categories; some inconsistencies may arise.

#### Edmonton data:

Adjustments are made to the combined City of Edmonton and Homeward Trust data to avoid double-counting.

Edmonton data include various activities relating to homelessness in public space, transit, etc., above/beyond spending in homelessness programs and affordable housing programs. A \$4.7M surplus school site development is counted in the total but not in federal, provincial or municipal sources (reflecting the data provided by the City of Edmonton)

#### Calgary data:

Data for municipal spending are taken from publicly available documents, with attribution by the research team to the standard spending categories; some inconsistencies may arise. For Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), federal spending was supplied by CHF for fiscal 2022/23; provincial spending was supplied by Government of Alberta for calendar 2022.

#### Winnipeg data:

The research did not examine whether the generally lower Winnipeg spending levels reflect relatively stronger roles by the provincial government and/or the Indigenous CE; housing system factors (see p. 28) including a large Manitoba housing benefit program and moderate rent levels (i.e. a narrower affordability gap for people with income from social assistance, near-minimum wages, or OAS/GIS); or lower overall fiscal priority for homelessness and affordable housing. Spending on *Creating social/affordable housing* includes \$9.63 million “conditionally-approved Tax Increment Financing contributions to be paid down over 15 to 25 years. All capital contributions were allocated or conditionally-approved in 2022.”

#### Hamilton data:

Does not include OPHI spending (Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, part of National Housing Strategy funding flowing from Ontario government to municipalities). Spending on *Creating social/affordable housing* “does not include all DC, SPA, PRF” [i.e. spending sourced from Development Charges revenue, other levies, etc.]. Spending data was not provided for subcategory *Emergency shelters and transitional accommodation - capital (or equivalent transfers)*; homeless-related spending may therefore be undercounted.



---

#### Peel data:

Data are taken from publicly available documents, with attribution by the research team to the standard spending categories; some inconsistencies may arise.

Data include Peel Living (housing corporation) expenditure. Housing spending amounts per capita may therefore be overstated vis-à-vis other municipalities (by approximately the amount of rent revenues plus any transfers from housing corporation reserves).

#### Toronto data:

Data are the sum of datafiles provided separately by the Housing Secretariat and the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration division; there is no data duplication.

### A3.2 Sources for Table 1.1

#### Population 2021

Municipal and CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) pop. from 2021 Canadian census, profile tables.

#### Homeless PiT count 2020-2022

Year varies by city.

Edmonton:	Homeless Hub, Edmonton Community Profile, 2022 PiT data at <a href="https://www.homelesshub.ca/community-profile/edmonton">https://www.homelesshub.ca/community-profile/edmonton</a> (cf 2,462 on Apr/22 By-name list <a href="https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/">https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/</a> )
Vancouver:	BC Non-Profit Housing Association (2020), <i>Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver</i> (Prepared for the Community Entity for Greater Vancouver.) <a href="https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/HC2020_FinalReport.pdf">https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/HC2020_FinalReport.pdf</a> The count in Table 1 is for the City of Vancouver.
Calgary:	Calgary Homeless Foundation (2023), <i>Calgary Point-in-Time Count Report 2022</i> <a href="https://www.calgaryhomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CHF-PiT-Count-Report2022.pdf">https://www.calgaryhomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CHF-PiT-Count-Report2022.pdf</a>
Winnipeg:	Brandon, J. (2022) <i>The Winnipeg Street Census 2022: Final Report</i> (End Homelessness Winnipeg and Social Planning Council of Winnipeg).
Hamilton	City of Hamilton (2022) <i>Point in Time Connection Results 2021</i> <a href="https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/housing-shelter/preventing-ending-homelessness/point-time-connection">https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/housing-shelter/preventing-ending-homelessness/point-time-connection</a>
Peel	Peel Region & Peel Alliance to End Homelessness 2021 <i>Everyone Counts Peel</i> <a href="https://pub-peelregion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=24480">https://pub-peelregion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=24480</a>
Toronto	City of Toronto (2021), <i>Street Needs Assessment 2021</i> <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-171729.pdf">https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-171729.pdf</a>
Ottawa	City of Ottawa (2021), <i>2021 Homelessness Point-In-Time Count</i> <a href="https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/PointInTime_Infographic_EN_.pdf">https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/PointInTime_Infographic_EN_.pdf</a>

### Shelter usage 2022 or recent (daily occupancy)

Edmonton	Average of daily data for 2022, Homeward Trust data webpages at <a href="https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting">https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting</a> (specific page at: <a href="https://public.tableau.com/vizql/v_202322308301549/javascrpts/hybrid-window/min/index.html?id=1hb6e0ioj%24guks-13-cj-ba-s9sysx&amp;moduleId=view_data">https://public.tableau.com/vizql/v_202322308301549/javascrpts/hybrid-window/min/index.html?id=1hb6e0ioj%24guks-13-cj-ba-s9sysx&amp;moduleId=view_data</a> )
Calgary	From Alberta Government web data, “Emergency Shelters Daily Occupancy AB”: Average occupancy, Calgary, for Jan 1, 2022 and Jan 1.
Hamilton	Average of month-end 2022 shelter occupancy at Hamilton webpages: <a href="https://open.hamilton.ca/datasets/0869417f4ab04937a9fa3acc770b3d12_22/explore">https://open.hamilton.ca/datasets/0869417f4ab04937a9fa3acc770b3d12_22/explore</a>
Peel	October 2023 report to Council <a href="https://pub-peelregion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=30190">https://pub-peelregion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=30190</a> Data appendix (Sept 25 2023 snapshot data): <a href="https://pub-peelregion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=30192">https://pub-peelregion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=30192</a>
Toronto	“Shelter System Flow Data” webpage, average daily shelter occupancy for 2022, based on rolling 3-month average by month: <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/research-reports/housing-and-homelessness-research-and-reports/shelter-system-flow-data">https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/research-reports/housing-and-homelessness-research-and-reports/shelter-system-flow-data</a>
Ottawa	Average nightly shelter usage by month for 2022 at: <a href="https://ottawa.ca/en/family-and-social-services/housing/temporary-emergency-accommodations-dashboard#section-118199c7-88ac-466e-8cb5-7aef47931a20">https://ottawa.ca/en/family-and-social-services/housing/temporary-emergency-accommodations-dashboard#section-118199c7-88ac-466e-8cb5-7aef47931a20</a>
Vancouver and Winnipeg:	No shelter data.

### Average 1-bedroom apartment rent 2022

All cities from CMHC, *Rental Market Survey* (Oct 2022 data). CMA data are best indicator of overall housing market conditions. Exception: Peel (*Rental Market Survey* data subset for Peel).

### Number of social/affordable housing units 2022

CMA data are used because consistent data are available except for two cities; this is also a much better indicator of overall housing system conditions than municipal-specific data.

CMHC Social and Affordable Housing Survey, 2022 (CMA data) at:

[https://eppd1strscr01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprdcontainer/sf/project/archive/data\\_tables/data\\_tables/social\\_and\\_affordable\\_rental\\_structure\\_survey\\_tables/social-affordable-housing-survey-rental-2022-en.xlsx](https://eppd1strscr01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprdcontainer/sf/project/archive/data_tables/data_tables/social_and_affordable_rental_structure_survey_tables/social-affordable-housing-survey-rental-2022-en.xlsx)

Exceptions:

Hamilton:	The CMHC survey rates their data for Hamilton as “very poor” [i.e. huge undercount of stock]. MMAH devolution data provided to ONPHA are used instead.
Peel:	15,600 municipally administered (per Peel 2023 Housing Support budget) + 1,348 federal co-ops = 16,948 estimated total.

### Indigenous homelessness

From PIT count report listed above, or Indigenous PiT count companion report in some cases.

Special notes:

Vancouver: Data (in Metro Vancouver report) are for the City of Vancouver

Hamilton: PiT report notes high non-response among Indigenous population.



---

Refugee homelessness

From PIT report noted above except as noted.

Special notes:

Vancouver: Data are for Metro Vancouver, not City.

Calgary: No mention of refugees in PIT report or Calgary Homeless Foundation data online. Calgary staff report that this is an emerging issue.

Peel: Same source as shelter data noted above; refugee data are for Sept 2023.

Toronto: Same source as shelter data noted above; refugee data are for Apr-June 2023.

Ottawa: PiT report stated that 7% of homeless are combination of Immigrants in Canada less than 1 year + Refugees.