

Rural Housing Symposium

Presentation of Roundtable Themes

May 24, 2007

Debert, NS



Background

- Coastal Communities Coalition enabled AHANS to conduct 7 community roundtable discussions on housing and homelessness in their communities

Project outcomes

- Increased public and stakeholder awareness of rural poverty issues in Nova Scotia with an emphasis on homelessness, affordable housing and safe housing
- Written rural housing policy recommendations for presentation to federal and provincial levels of government.
- Stronger and united voice for housing advocates across the province.
- Creation of an entity or forum to focus on and advance rural housing issues.
- Data base of housing providers, developers and advocates.
- Increased capacity of rural based housing providers to support constituent's housings.
- Identification of gaps in knowledge and research opportunities.



Participating communities

- Truro
- Antigonish
- Sydney
- Bridgewater
- Yarmouth
- Kentville
- Preston

What were the conversations about?

- What is...?
- What we would like to see...?
- What are some possible pathways forward?
- What we anticipate in the future?

Common themes

- **Poverty** – the underlying cause of homelessness and affordability problems
- **Rural homelessness** – marked by lack of emergency services and couch surfing
- **Stigma** – limits housing choices
- **Lack of appropriate housing** – for seniors, families, youth, single women

Common themes

- **Quality of housing** – aging stock, slum landlords, limited access to repair programs
- **Investment in affordable housing** – lacks flexibility and reach
- **New pressures** – rising costs, taxes, aging, rural out-migration
- **Dissatisfaction with current models**

Regional Issues

- TRURO
 - New growth
 - Youth homelessness
 - Enforcement of tenancy regulations
 - Municipal planning

Regional Issues

- ANTIGONISH
 - Options for young women living in dangerous situations
 - Housing location and public transportation

Regional Issues

- SYDNEY
 - Independent living options for mental health consumers
 - Housing for working families
 - Barrier-free housing
 - Youth 16-18
 - Lack of new investment in housing

Regional Issues

- BRIDGEWATER
 - Elderly men living in shacks in the woods
 - Youth sleeping rough
 - Condition of private housing
 - Waiting lists for repair programs

Regional Issues

- YARMOUTH

- Access to provincial housing programs
- Lack of emergency care
- Long waiting lists for social housing
- High vacancy rates due to condition of units

Regional Issues

- KENTVILLE

- Fixed income – 70% spent on housing
- Senior housing
- Correction system seen as emergency care
- New growth caters to high end needs
- Funding programs do not reflect community needs

Regional Issues

- PRESTON
 - Lack of new housing and ownership options
 - Proof of title
 - Composite households and funding criteria
 - Lack of services in the community
 - Community land & Preston Housing Board

What are our wishes?

- Support community based solutions
- Invest in education
- Challenge stigma
- Learn from best practices
- Develop partnerships
- Use existing skills and resources
- Advocate for new housing models

What are we really saying?

- What are our assumptions?
- What do we need to challenge?
- What are our fears?
- What is our passion?
- What can we do as individuals?
- What can we do as communities?
- What can we do TODAY...?

Thank You

