

# BUILDING KNOWLEDGE



This series explores the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of operating scattered-site supportive housing in B.C. It features five case studies of scattered-site supportive housing programs located in communities across the province. An SROI ratio compares the total investment to the financial value of the social and economic outcomes achieved, highlighting the value created by investing in these programs.

#### Full report

*The Social and Economic Value of Scattered-Site Supportive Housing in B.C.*

#### Other case studies

*CMHA Kelowna, Kelowna*

*Lookout Housing and Health Society, Surrey*

*MPA Society, Vancouver*

*Pacifica Housing, Victoria*

## Scattered-Site Supportive Housing SROI Series: Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Mid-island, Nanaimo

Scattered-site supportive housing programs assist individuals experiencing - or at risk of experiencing - homelessness in transitioning from the streets, shelters or inadequate housing to long-term housing stability in the community. BC Housing supports this type of housing by investing in community-based non-profit agencies that provide programming and rent supplements for market housing. These programs are funded through the Homeless Outreach and Homeless Prevention Programs (HOP and HPP).

CMHA Mid-island provides scattered-site supportive housing outreach services, rent supplements, supports and connections to community resources for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness so that they are supported in maintaining market rental housing in the long-term. Programming includes one trained outreach worker who supports approximately 30 residents in maintaining housing stability.

The program serves single adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on Vancouver Island. Most experience complex physical and mental health challenges and substance use concerns that impact their ability to maintain independent stable housing in the community. The supports provided by CMHA Mid-island help residents maintain housing stability and work towards achievement of their personal goals. Through the program, most residents experience stable housing situations for at least one year, with 90% of residents maintaining their housing for one year or longer.

*For every dollar invested in scattered-site supportive housing through CMHA Mid-island, over three dollars in social and economic value is created.*





### This study examines:

- › The social and economic value created by investing in the operation of scattered-site supportive housing
- › The breakdown by stakeholder group of social and economic value that is created
- › Implications for future investment

## The Social Return on Investment (SROI) Methodology

The SROI methodology articulates the financial value of outcomes created through a social investment (such as investment in supportive housing), to reveal how much value is created for every dollar invested. An SROI analysis combines quantitative, qualitative, and participatory research techniques to show the value of outcomes from different stakeholder perspectives. The result is an SROI ratio that compares the total investment to the financial value of the social and economic outcomes that are achieved, showing – in monetary terms – the financial benefit of social investments.

The current research follows the internationally standardized SROI methodology and uses information from existing academic research and grey literature (including other SROI studies and economic analyses), and data gathered from residents, partners, and supportive housing providers.

### KEY ELEMENTS IN THE CMHA MID-ISLAND SROI MODEL

<b>Inputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Investment by BC Housing (through HOP) as the sole investor in total program costs, including staffing, programming, administration, and rent supplements</li> <li>› Rents paid by residents</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe for Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› 2016-2017 operating year</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Residents (single male and female adults) (primary stakeholders)</li> <li>› Landlords</li> <li>› Local communities</li> <li>› Government systems (various levels)</li> <li>› Investor (BC Housing)</li> </ul>
<b>Duration of Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Most residents maintain their housing for a year or longer with support from CMHA Mid-island, but information is not available on length of stay for all residents. For this reason, outcomes are valued for all stakeholders for 90% of one year. This means that outcomes are valued for 90% of a year without value into the future because, without further investment, residents may not continue to experience outcomes and may return to homelessness.</li> </ul>
<b>Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› The SROI analysis of CMHA Mid-island’s HOP scattered-site supportive housing employs a primarily forecast approach based on basic primary and rigorous secondary research.</li> </ul>



### Outcomes Included in the SROI Analysis

Outcomes that have been included and valued in the SROI analysis were identified based on existing research, information from CMHA staff and one in-depth resident interviews. Each outcome was assigned a financial value in the calculation of the SROI ratio. Outcomes include:

Stakeholder	Key Outcomes Included in the SROI
<b>Residents</b> (single male & female) adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Increased access to high quality housing and decreased experiences of homelessness</li> <li>› Increased overall wellbeing including positive changes in physical and mental health</li> <li>› Increased safety and decreased experiences of violence</li> <li>› Decreased harm from risk involved with street-based sex work</li> <li>› Decreased harm from substance use and increased ability to move towards reducing use</li> <li>› Increased personal disposable income</li> </ul>
<b>Landlords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Decreased time and resources managing tenancies (such as evictions, repairs, resident relations)</li> </ul>
<b>Local community/ neighbourhood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Improved local neighbourhood and community quality</li> <li>› Increased local economic activity due to resident spending</li> </ul>
<b>Government (all levels)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Decreased use of emergency services by residents such as ambulances and emergency rooms</li> <li>› Decreased use of homeless shelters by residents</li> <li>› Decreased resident involvement in the justice system</li> <li>› Decreased hospital use by residents</li> <li>› Decreased service use related to resident substance use</li> <li>› Decreased risk of sexual exploitation related to homelessness among residents (and associated decreased government service use)</li> </ul>

*I believe if I didn't have the support of CMHA I would still be homeless.*

*– CMHA Mid-island Resident*

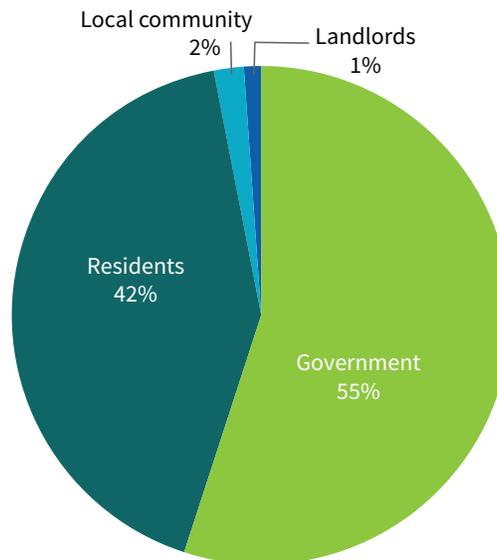


## CMHA Mid-island SROI Results

SROI analysis of investment in CMHA Mid-island’s scattered-site supportive housing revealed:



**For every dollar invested in scattered-site supportive housing through CMHA Mid-island, over three dollars in social and economic value is created.**



*Value Breakdown by Stakeholder Group*

All stakeholders included in the SROI analysis experience value from outcomes, including:

**Government:** Approximately 55% of the social and economic value is expected to go back to the government in cost reallocations related to decreased service use by residents. For every dollar invested in CMHA Mid-island’s scattered-site supportive housing, nearly two dollars is generated for government in cost reallocations due to decreased service use.

**Local Community:** While the community as a whole benefits from decreased service use that increases efficiency and reduces costs to taxpayers over time, an additional 2% of the value is expected to go back to the local community. This value is generated through improved community quality and local resident spending. The value is experienced by community members who encounter less homelessness in their community and businesses that benefit from local spending. While some value to the local community was captured through SROI analysis, this value is likely understated because benefits from resident community engagement and benefits for businesses (beyond local spending) were not fully captured in the SROI model.

**Landlords:** Approximately 1% of the value is returned to landlords who support program success. Landlords experience value through positive and stable tenancies supported through the program and decreased loss of income and time spent due to rent arrears, repairs or evictions. While some value to landlords was captured through the analysis, this value is likely understated because some benefits, such as the value to landlords of knowing they are contributing to community wellbeing through their program involvement, were not fully captured in the model.

**Residents:** Approximately 42% of the social and economic value goes back to residents, through increased wellbeing, safety, disposable income and reduced harm. This indicates that, while scattered-site supportive housing creates important value for the government, it also generates significant value for people living in supportive housing.



### Discussion

With over three dollars generated in CMHA Mid-island's scattered-site supportive housing for every dollar invested, it is clear that significant value is created through scattered-site supportive housing for adults who have experienced homelessness or difficulties maintaining housing.

While the SROI ratio suggests a significant amount of value is generated by the program, the value expressed through the SROI ratio is likely less than the actual value created by the program, as discounts were applied throughout the model to account for the uncertainty inherent when using a forecast approach. Further, the SROI analysis represents a conservative estimate of the total social and economic value created as it was not possible to measure the financial value of all potential outcomes. Outcomes were not valued into the future, despite the possibility of longer term impacts generated through the life skills and experience of stability gained through housing in community-based market rentals. The actual social and economic value created by CMHA Mid-island's scattered-site supportive housing program is likely much higher.

### Lessons Learned

- › Investment in scattered-site supportive housing creates significant social and economic value, not only for the various levels of government that may experience decreased service use, but also for supportive housing residents, families, landlords and local communities. Further investment in scattered-site supportive housing is expected to generate value while addressing a social need.
- › Investment in increasing the supply of affordable housing can enhance the value of scattered-site supportive housing, which relies on the availability of affordable market rentals for vulnerable individuals.
- › Further research is needed to continue to understand and track the social and economic value created from scattered-site supportive housing.

### Thank You

*Our sincere thanks to all the residents who shared their perspectives and stories with us.  
Our sincere appreciation to CMHA Mid-island staff for sharing their valuable insights and for supporting this study.*

### More Information:

Visit BC Housing's Research Centre at [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org) to find the latest workshops, research and publications on building and operating affordable, sustainable housing.

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To find more Building Knowledge Case Studies, visit our website at: [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org)



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This study was conducted by SROI experts at Constellation Consulting Group