

# BUILDING KNOWLEDGE



## Dedicated-Site Supportive Housing SROI Series: Cardington Apartments, Kelowna

This series explores the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of operating dedicated-site supportive housing in B.C. It features five case studies of dedicated-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 Dedicated-Site Supportive Housing in B.C.*

### Other case studies

*The Budzey, Vancouver*

*Kettle on Burrard, Vancouver*

*Queens Manor, Victoria*

*Wesley Street, Nanaimo*

*For every dollar invested in dedicated-site supportive housing at Cardington Apartments, nearly five dollars in social and economic value is created.*



*Cardington Apartments exterior*

Cardington Apartments is a 30-unit dedicated-site, supportive housing building located near Kelowna's downtown area, operated by the John Howard Society, Central & South Okanagan. Established in 2008, Cardington Apartments was the first supportive housing site in the City of Kelowna, made possible through a funding partnership between BC Housing, Interior Health, the City of Kelowna and the Government of Canada. Before becoming supportive housing, the site was a municipal parking lot. Cardington Apartments provides safe and affordable housing with supports for single men and women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Most Cardington Apartments residents live with mental health and/or substance use challenges which contribute to difficulties with maintaining housing. Supports are provided through Cardington Apartments to enable housing stability, help residents connect to community services, and encourage a move towards more independent housing.

The average length of stay at Cardington Apartments is approximately 18 months, although nearly 20% of current residents have been living in the building 24 months or longer, indicating how the program fosters housing stability.



### This study examines:

- › The social and economic value created by investing in the operation of dedicated-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 CARDINGTON APARTMENTS SROI MODEL

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Inputs</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Investment by BC Housing, Interior Health, the City of Kelowna and Government of Canada in the total operating costs of Cardington Apartments, including: staffing, programming, administration, maintenance, insurance, mortgage payments, and security</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 at Cardington Apartments (single male and female adults) (primary stakeholder)</li> <li>› Local communities</li> <li>› Government systems (various levels)</li> <li>› Investors (BC Housing, Interior Health, City of Kelowna, and Government of Canada)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Duration of Outcomes</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› With an average length of stay of 18 months, and nearly 20% of residents maintaining their housing for 24 months or longer, outcomes included in this SROI analysis are expected to last at least one year. Since residents may not continue to experience positive outcomes if the investment stops (they could return to homelessness), outcomes in this case study were not valued beyond one year.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Approach</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› The Cardington Apartments SROI analysis employs a primarily evaluative approach with a small amount of forecasting based on primary and rigorous secondary research.</li> </ul>   |



*“All of the shelters in town are impacted, it takes a weight off of them. [Cardington Apartments staff] advocate for permanent shelter, and keeping people off the streets.”*

*– Community Service Provider*

*“[Cardington Apartments] gave me the chance to have a roof over my head. Help me with my addictions. Get my finances under control. Even have some savings.”*

*– Cardington Apartments Resident*

### Outcomes Included in the SROI Analysis

Outcomes included and valued in the Cardington Apartments SROI analysis were identified based on existing research, information from Cardington Apartments staff, resident interviews, and interviews with key community partners (Inn from the Cold and Interior Health). Each outcome was assigned a financial value in the calculation of the SROI ratio. Outcomes include:

| Stakeholder                               | Key Outcomes Included in the SROI  |
|---|--|
| Residents (male and female adult singles) | <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 social support, socialization, and sense of community (decreased social isolation)</li> <li>› Increased safety and decreased experiences of violence</li> <li>› Increased ability to engage in employment</li> <li>› Decreased harm from substance use and increased ability to move towards reducing use</li> <li>› Increased personal disposable income</li> <li>› Increased ability to be involved in community (such as volunteering)</li> </ul> |
| Local community/neighbourhood             | <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>   |
| Government (all levels)                   | <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 justice systems</li> <li>› Decreased long-term hospital stays by residents</li> <li>› Decreased service use related to substance use by residents</li> </ul>  |

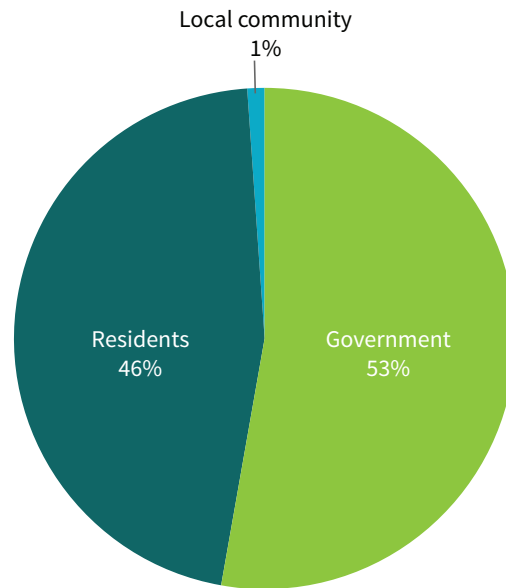


# Cardington Apartments SROI Results

SROI analysis of investment in the Cardington Apartments revealed:



**For every dollar invested in the operation of Cardington Apartments, nearly five dollars in economic and social value is created.**



*Value Breakdown by Stakeholder Group*

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

**Government:** Approximately 53% of the social and economic value generated by Cardington Apartments goes back to government in cost reallocations related to decreased service-use by residents. In other words, for every dollar invested in operating Cardington Apartments, approximately two and a half 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 1% of the value goes back to Cardington Apartments’ local community. This value is generated through improved neighbourhood quality and local spending by residents. The value is experienced by community members who encounter less homelessness in their community, businesses that benefit from local spending, and public institutions like the library that have more actively engaged community members using their services. While some value to the local community is captured through the SROI analysis, this value is likely understated. Benefits from resident volunteering, more efficient delivery of services among community partners, and benefits for businesses beyond local spending were not fully captured in the SROI model.

**Residents:** Approximately 46% of the social and economic value created by Cardington Apartments goes back to its residents, through increases in wellbeing, employment earnings, disposable income, safety, and reduced harm. This shows that while dedicated-site supportive housing like Cardington Apartments creates important value for government, it also generates significant value for people living in supportive housing.

### Lessons Learned

- › Investment in dedicated-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 and local communities. Further investment in dedicated-site supportive housing is expected to generate value while addressing a social need.
- › Further research is needed to continue to understand and track the social and economic value created from dedicated-site supportive housing.

*“Without Cardington I’d be living at the Mission Shelter or on the street. Living day to day. I’d be far blown in addiction living on the street.”*

*– Cardington Apartments Resident*

### Discussion

With nearly five dollars in social and economic value generated by Cardington Apartments for every dollar invested, it is clear that significant social and economic value is created through the operation of dedicated-site supportive housing for single adult men and women with multiple complex needs. Cardington Apartments’ staff and programs create important value through successful work with residents to engage in employment, develop a sense of safety, and create a caring community within the building.

It is important to note, that the SROI analysis of Cardington Apartments provides a conservative estimate of the total social and economic value created since it was not possible to measure the financial value of all potential outcomes. Further, many 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 at Cardington Apartments. The actual social and economic value created by the ongoing operation of Cardington Apartments is likely much higher.

### Thank You

*Our sincere thanks to all the residents who shared their perspectives and stories with us. Our sincere appreciation to Cardington Apartments 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.

#### NOTICE TO READERS:

The greatest care has been taken to confirm the accuracy of the information contained herein. However, the authors, funder, and publisher assume no liability for any damage, injury or expense that may be incurred or suffered as a result of the use of this publication including products, building techniques or practices. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of any individual contributor or BC Housing. It is always advisable to seek specific information on the use of products in any application or detail from manufacturers or suppliers of the products and consultants with appropriate qualifications and experience.

Contact: **Research Centre** Email: [research@bchousing.org](mailto:research@bchousing.org) Phone: **604-439-4135**  
To find more Building Knowledge Case Studies, visit our website at: [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org)



© Oct 2018 BC Housing



*This study was conducted by SROI experts at Constellation Consulting Group*