



Annual Report 2011-2012

Navigator Street Outreach

Navigator Street Outreach provides homeless and street-involved individuals with support to address barriers to securing and maintaining employment and housing, support to navigate services around health, mental health and addictions support and partners with a variety of community agencies to ensure individuals receive the supports required to transition.

Based on the numbers from the 2011-2012, we know the following about people who are street-involved in the downtown core (based on self-reports or observed behaviors):

Table 1: Client Information 2011-2012

Total Contacts	295	
Female	62	
Male	233	
Youth (16-30)	154	52%
Senior (55+)	22	
New Clients	136	
Panhandled	95	
Income		
No Income	18	
Employed	22	
Income Assistance	244	83%
Pension	9	
Housed	115	
Rooming House	23	
Homeless	159	54%
Shelter	83	
Couching	24	
Streets	52	

Employment Support

Where individuals are motivated and assessed to be job-ready, the Navigator is able to offer key supports to assist them in securing and maintaining employment. This support ranges from providing bus tickets to get to the work site, to replacing identification (so they can apply for work, open bank account, or cash checks), to providing basic work tools, clothing or specialized equipment (steel-toed boots, anti-skid shoes). Some individuals may also be offered assistance to return to their home community, or relocate to another city if they have secured full-time employment.

In 2011-2012, the Navigator supported 44 individuals to secure and/or maintain full-time employment. The specific services provided are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Direct Support Programs

Program	Clients Served	Services Provided	Cost
Lunch Program	29	211	2532.00
Street Sweeping Program	29	139	2780.00
Employment Support Program	137	262	10,639.71
Identification	38	57	1118.86
Work tools	14	14	541.54
Work clothes	9	9	434.52
Work boots	29*	29	1409.35
Transportation	33	88	1740.00
Relocation	16	19	2038.60
Phone Program	13	13	600.53
Training	16	19	1695.58
Other	19	22	626.05
TOTALS		612	15,951.71

*Includes 14 pairs of work boots donated by Laing House.

Stories of Success

The Navigator worked with a young man who had been staying at the Salvation Army. He managed to find an apartment in Dartmouth, and then secured a cleaning job at the Salvation Army. The Navigator assisted this young man with appropriate work clothes, transportation and necessary identification.

The Navigator worked with a man who had made a number of positive steps to get back on track. He and his girlfriend secured an apartment in Clayton Park, and the Navigator assisted them with damage deposit top-up. Both were on methadone and receiving income assistance. He worked a number of sweeping shifts and proved to be reliable and trustworthy. As challenges emerged with the sweeping program (related to supervision of clients) this man was offered a three month peer support position to sweep alongside other clients and role-model work ethic.

Housing Support

The Navigator provided housing support to 34 individuals. Individuals received help with housing searches, damage deposits, identification, power and phone arrears, rental arrears, transportation to viewings, securing funding and references. Of these 34 individuals, 21 were supported to leave the streets or shelter (exited homelessness) and another 13 were formerly homeless and prevented from returning to the street or shelter. Another eight individuals were referred to Halifax Housing Help. As well, each person that identified they were homeless was referred to an appropriate shelter.

Table 3: Housing Support Service Breakdown

Program	Services Provided	Cost
Power Arrears	8	487.00
Damage Deposit	1	120.00
Rent Arrears	2	260.00
Transportation	12	198.00
Home Heating	2	200.00
Total	25	1092.00

Stories of Success

The Navigator supported a young (18), pregnant woman who was homeless with a referral to Supported Housing for Young Mothers (SHYM). The Navigator attended the interview process, provided a reference, and within five weeks this young woman moved into the program. SHYM will provide her the daily support she needs to parent her child appropriately.

The Navigator supported a couple who were expecting their first child to secure an apartment. The couple spent most of their time panhandling on Spring Garden. They were both on disability with Income Assistance, and were living in a rooming house in the South End. The Navigator assisted with an apartment search and drove the couple to a number of apartment viewings. They were able to secure an apartment within five days of starting the search. They remain housed (seven months) and have stopped panhandling downtown.

Navigation

Many individuals approached during outreach are not currently “ready” for employment or housing. Often, behaviors associated with mental health or addictions struggles create too big a barrier. The Navigator provide support to individuals attempting to “navigate” various systems, and advocate for specific services, including addictions services, mental health supports, Income Assistance, legal/justice. The Navigator often accompanies individuals to appointments to ensure their attempts to access services are smooth and issue-free.

- For individuals that identify struggles with mental health (or are identified by the greater community as potentially in need of assistance) the Navigator works with community partners to ensure that people get the care they deserve. Approximately 26% of individuals engaged had mental health concerns (47 struggled with mental health, another 32 with mental health and addictions)
- For individuals struggling with addiction, assistance is offered to access treatment options, complete referral processes or support with transportation to Detox Units across the province. Approximately 75% of individuals engaged struggled with at least one addiction.

Stories of Success

The Navigator supported a long-time addict in his effort to secure long-term drug treatment in Vancouver. The man was on methadone and was using crack, and wanted to get off everything. He managed to get accepted to a drug treatment program in Vancouver, but income assistance would not cover the cost of transportation to the program. The Navigator worked with MOSH and a few churches to cost-share a plane ticket, and drove him to the airport to catch the plane. The gentleman successfully completed the six-month treatment program, and continues to be drug-free while living and working in Vancouver.

The Navigator worked with a young man who struggled with addiction and mental health. This young man was well known in the downtown, spent many nights sleeping on the street and panhandled during the day to support his drug use. He had been homeless for three years. The Navigator checked with this individual every day, offering support and options, and attending a few case conferences with other agencies who were concerned about this young man. The Navigator supported the MOSH team to secure him a space in a long-term treatment program in the Valley. When he showed back up on Spring Garden Road, the Navigator attempted to convince him to return to the program. The young man did return, and successfully completed the program. He then secured an apartment with the supportive apartment program at Connections Clubhouse. He has rarely been seen panhandling in the downtown since.

Partnerships and Community Engagement

Partnerships: New in 2011-2012: Youth Employability Project, Second Chance, the Provincial Ombudsman Office, Freedom Renewal Centre (FRC)

One key partnership that has developed over the past 12 months has been with the Freedom Renewal Centre in Tantallon. The Freedom Renewal Centre provides a welcoming space of renewal for marginalized people in HRM by hosting day retreats for people living in poverty or without housing, who live with mental health or addiction issues, or are isolated because of their age, education or past issues with the law. Navigator Street Outreach and Freedom Renewal Centre developed a project called *Community Building Community*.

Community Building Community provided six formerly homeless men with a weekly day-retreat at the Centre. The group spent their mornings engaged in community service projects, then shared a home cooked meal each lunch, and spent their afternoons engaged in a variety of group activities that they had chosen (including digital photography, genealogy, bread-making and first aid). Participants were provided an honorarium for their valued participation, and the group engaged in various aspects of story-telling as they worked together to produce a film that tells the Community Building Community story. The project was made possible by grants from the Chebucto and Halifax Community Health Boards.

Ongoing partnerships: Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH), the ARK, Laing House, Halifax Housing Help (HHH), the Public Good Society, Out of the Cold Shelter, Adsum for Women, IWK Nursing, Salvation Army, St. Mary's Basillica, HRP.

Community Initiatives: In an effort to develop new and effective strategies that respond to the addiction, health and socio-economic needs of the street population, the Navigator was involved with the following projects/committees:

- Street Population Addiction and Wellness Strategy Steering Committee (SPAWS)
- Salvation Army Community Council
- AHANS Board Member

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