

# DEFINING THE DATA

VOLUME 1: Homelessness, Chronic Homelessness & Functional Zero

Defining the Data is a regular series in Saint John's BNL Newsletter. Data definitions help us to speak the same language so we can work together towards an end to homelessness in our community

## HOMELESSNESS

As a community, Saint John endorses the [Canadian Definition of Homelessness](#); a broad understanding which encompasses a variety of experiences, both visible and hidden.

It's important to note that rarely is someone's experience of homelessness static. They may move through some or all of these living experiences at different points.

Homeless-serving agencies in Saint John provide crucial, daily support for people at various points along the homelessness spectrum, from prevention to emergency shelter and re-housing.

Canadian definition of homelessness	Currently Captured on the BNL
Unsheltered/ Sleeping Rough 	
Emergency Sheltered 	
Provisionally Accommodated 	
At risk of homelessness 	

Despite the broad definition outlined above, as a [Built for Zero](#) community, Saint John often focuses on measuring and reducing chronic homelessness, a subset of the larger homeless population.

We use the [Reaching Home](#) definition of chronic homelessness, which refers to individuals who have experienced a total of at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year.

## CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

### Why focus on chronic homelessness?

Under the guidance of Reaching Home, Canada's Homelessness Strategy and BFZ-C, our first step in ending all homelessness in Saint John is to focus on ending chronic homelessness. Ending all homelessness may seem lofty, but if we can focus on manageable steps towards that end, we can make incremental progress.

### What does it look like to end chronic homelessness in Saint John?

We know that there will always be some form of homelessness. With this in mind, we aim to reduce chronic homelessness to meet **functional zero**. This occurs when **three or fewer people** (adults, children and families) are actively experiencing chronic homelessness for at least three consecutive months, as measured through our [By-Name](#) List.

## FUNCTIONAL ZERO

Whereas we have a relatively manageable number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in our community, reaching functional zero is in our sights in Saint John!

