

## RESEARCH INSIGHT

# Evictions in Canada: Links Between Evictions and Homelessness



This Research Insight is part of a series on evictions in Canada. Other topics in this series include:

- The link between evictions and health
- The link between evictions and populations that are experiencing vulnerabilities

## Insight Summary

Most people who are evicted don't experience homelessness. However, previous research suggests that evictions may put some people at increased risk of homelessness.

To better understand how evictions and homelessness are related, we need to first determine the extent to which people are experiencing an eviction and experiencing homelessness around the same time. We also need to explore why evictions might lead to homelessness for some people. This knowledge can inform the design of effective support programs for people who experience eviction and help prevent homelessness.

This Research Insight asks two main questions:

- To what extent are evictions related to homelessness?
- Are some population groups more vulnerable to experiencing homelessness following an eviction than others?

## Key Findings

1

Among the general population in Canada, 7% of people have experienced an eviction during at least one point in their lives. Among those who have experienced homelessness, 28% indicated they have also experienced an eviction at some point in their past. These values are consistent with those drawn from Cycle 2 of the CHS (see Statistics Canada, 2022).

2

19.1% of households who reported that they were evicted in 2021 indicated they had experienced hidden homelessness that same year. Hidden homelessness means that these households stayed with friends or family because they had nowhere else to go. A very small percentage experienced absolute homelessness (stayed in a shelter or slept outdoors, in a vehicle, etc.). This percentage was too small to report.

3

Out of all households who indicated they had experienced either hidden or absolute homelessness in 2021, 9.8% reported that they were evicted that same year. This finding aligns with results from an analysis of administrative data from emergency shelters in Canada found that 12.5% of first-time shelter users and about 5% of recurrent shelter users identified eviction as a reason for their entry into emergency shelter (Chen, Cooper, & Rivier, 2021).

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To answer the key questions, we examined data from the Canadian Housing Survey (CHS – Cycle 3) for three purposes:

- To determine the percentage of the population who had experienced eviction and had experienced homelessness at any point in their lives.
- To examine the population of households that were evicted in 2021 and determine how many of those households also experienced homelessness that same year.
- To examine the population of households who experienced homelessness 2021 and determine how many of those households also experienced an eviction that year.

We focused on experiences of eviction and homelessness in 2021 because it is the most recent full year captured by CHS data (as Cycle 3 was administered between October 2022 and March 2023).

While the CHS is a useful source of data on homelessness and evictions, it has limitations:

- The CHS collects information from a sample of households in Canada. This sample does not include people experiencing homelessness at the time of data collection. People living in institutions or in collective dwellings such as seniors' residences or student residences are also not surveyed.
- Respondents are asked to report the year and the month they last experienced an eviction, but only the year that they last experienced homelessness. This means it is not possible to assess (with a high degree of certainty) if experiences of homelessness occurred after an eviction.

To contextualize the findings from our analysis of the CHS, we drew upon key findings from literature reviews conducted in previous CMHC-funded studies on evictions in Canada.

**7%**

**of people have experienced an eviction during at least one point in their lives.**

Among those who have experienced homelessness, 28% indicated they have also experienced an eviction at some point in their past.



## Brief Analysis

### Contextualizing the findings

While we can't determine from CHS data whether homelessness occurred as a result of eviction for those who experienced both in the same year, we can infer this is the case based on the findings of previous studies using different research methods. The findings of three qualitative studies on evictions recently funded by CMHC help to contextualize the findings from our analysis of the CHS. Each of these studies involved a review of literature on evictions and interviews with service providers and/or people who have experienced an eviction in the past.

The studies include:

- Evictions and Eviction Prevention in Canada (Zell & McCullough, 2020);
- Seniors and Evictions in Canada: A Life-course Approach (Zell & McCullough, 2021); and
- The Lived Experience of Evictions in Canada (Wachsmuth et al., 2023).

In all three of the previously funded studies several interviewees reported experiencing a period of homelessness – often hidden homelessness - after an eviction. The studies provide some insight into the experiences of vulnerable populations as well. In interviewing seniors, Zell & McCullough (2021) found that several participants experienced some form of homelessness following an eviction. Wachsmuth et al. (2023) found that individuals who had a disability (or had someone with a disability in their household) were more likely to have experienced homelessness after eviction than other participants in the study. The authors also found that many people who didn't experience homelessness following an eviction felt they had narrowly avoided homelessness only because of the support they received from family and friends.

The literature reviews conducted in these three studies indicated that some population groups may be more at risk of experiencing homelessness after an eviction than others. Links between eviction and homelessness may be different for different population groups. Characteristics that may make some people more at risk include gender, age, or previous experience(s) of homelessness.

- **Women.** Violence in the home or the breakdown of a relationship can create financial difficulties, especially for women. These circumstances contribute to evictions and to homelessness (Zell & McCullough, 2020).
- **Youth.** Many young people who experience homelessness have also been through an eviction. Evictions can have negative consequences for youth, such as a breakdown of family relationships, loss of social connections, and lower achievement at school (Zell & McCullough, 2020).
- **Older adults.** Adults aged 65 and over who experience eviction may face additional challenges finding new rental housing. These possible challenges are due to difficulties navigating the search for rental housing. Older adults may also have trouble finding housing options that are appropriate for their physical and support needs. This places them at greater risk of homelessness after an eviction (Zell & McCullough, 2021).
- **People with past experiences of homelessness.** People with past experiences of homelessness are more vulnerable to eviction. They may be less aware of their tenant rights and may also have physical or mental health needs that are not well supported (Wachsmuth et al. 2023).

Many individual factors such as mental health challenges, financial challenges, substance use challenges are associated with both evictions and homelessness. A range of systemic factors also influence both homelessness and evictions. To fully understand how evictions are related to homelessness, we need to know how systemic factors drive homelessness, housing insecurity, and evictions. Systemic factors include things like discrimination in the rental market, high rental costs, and stagnant wages (Zell & McCullough, 2020).

## Future Research

Drawing on the findings from the CHS and the research literature, we identify three main recommendations for future research and data development.

### **Further develop data to explore the short- and long-term connections between evictions and homelessness**

- Limited data on evictions makes it difficult to understand what happens to people's housing situations immediately after an eviction and over time.
- There are situations in which homelessness could precede eviction, such as if a household loses a housing subsidy/ voucher that had assisted them to exit homelessness and afford rental housing.
- The development of long-term datasets could help identify differences in housing outcomes between people who experience a brief period of homelessness and people who experience chronic homelessness after an eviction.

### **Determine how the relationship between evictions and homelessness may differ across a broader range of population groups**

- Some people (racialized and Indigenous people, single parents, older adults, for example) may face discrimination in the rental market. This discrimination makes finding new housing after an eviction particularly difficult.
- We need more research and data to be able to tell if some population groups are more likely to experience homelessness because of an eviction and why.

### **Examine how evictions continue cycles of housing instability and homelessness**

- We need long-term datasets to see how evictions can trigger or worsen cycles of housing instability.
- We also need more information on informal or illegal evictions to understand cycles of housing instability. People with past experiences of homelessness might not wait to receive a formal eviction notice before leaving their home. They may not even know that landlords must deliver them such a notice.



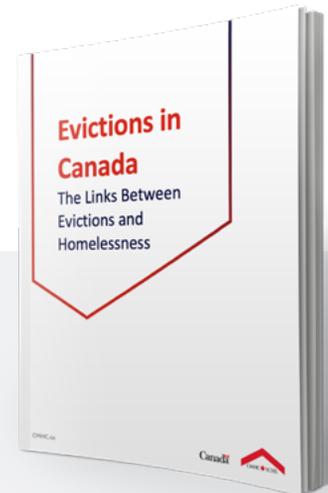
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Research insights are summaries of our research reports.

These insights:

- identify a housing research issue, gap or need
- provide an overview of the research project undertaken to address it
- present major findings of the research

The research presented in this series explore the areas of Housing Need, Housing Finance, Housing Supply and Outcomes of the National Housing Strategy.



## Full Report

Worton, S. K., Rotberg, S., Feltaous E., Bachour, M., Verbeek, M. (2025).

*Evictions in Canada: The links between evictions and homelessness.*

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Ottawa, Canada.

[Evictions in Canada \[electronic resource\]: The links between evictions and homelessness.](#)

## For Further Reading

Poulin, L., Feltaous E., Rotberg, S., Worton, S. K., Bachour, M., Verbeek, M. (2025). *Evictions in Canada: Inequities in health among groups at higher risk of evictions.* Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Ottawa, Canada.

[Evictions in Canada \[electronic resource\]: Inequities in health outcomes among groups at higher risk of evictions.](#)

Bachour, M., Verbeek, M., Rotberg, S., Feltaous, E., Worton, S. K. (2025). *Evictions in Canada: Populations Experiencing Vulnerabilities.* Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Ottawa, Canada.

[Evictions in Canada \[electronic resource\]: Populations experiencing vulnerabilities.](#)

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