

Responding to Homelessness in the Comox Valley

Impact of the Strengthening Communities Grant

Responding to Homelessness illuminates key impacts of the Strengthening Communities Grant - a multi-year partnership project to strengthen supports for people experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley.

This data, self-reported by principal partner agencies, under-estimates project impact given data collection did not commence immediately, and collection became increasingly comprehensive and standardized as the project progressed.

In 2021 the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) was awarded a **\$1.96 million Strengthening Communities Grant** to improve the health and safety of unsheltered homeless people. The City of Courtenay administered the grant on behalf of the CVRD until the project concluded in 2024.

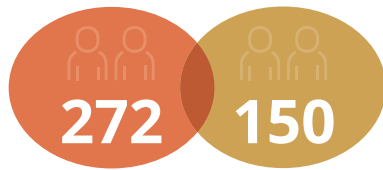
In the 2023 homelessness count, an individual was identified as experiencing homelessness if they did not have a place of their own where they paid rent or could expect to live for at least 30 days.

The Strengthening Community Grant funded 6 key supports :

- Emergency warming centre.
- Overnight shelter/day time community access hub.
- Community meal service.
- Peer led outreach in Courtenay.
- Rural outreach on Denman and Hornby islands.
- Trauma informed practice, and cultural competency training.

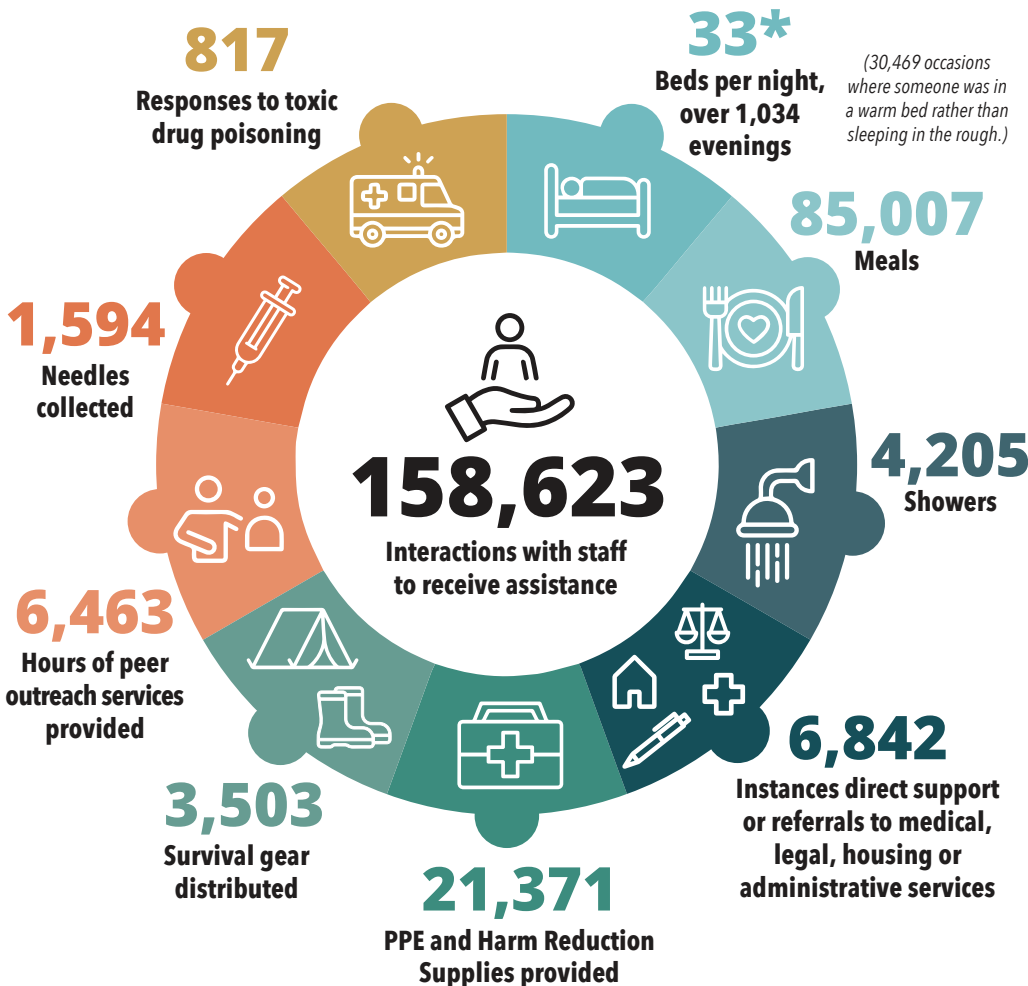
Supports not only improved the health, safety and wellbeing of people seeking shelter – they saved lives.

"I am motivated to continue this work because I like working with people and I believe we all have a responsibility to support the most vulnerable in our society. I believe CONNECT is an essential part of this community, and were it not for the tireless efforts of our team I have no doubt at all that many, many people would have died from overdoses and/or the adverse effects resulting from homelessness." — Connect Staff



272 people were identified as experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley, per the 2023 Homelessness Count

Up to 150 people per day received assistance through one or more key venues/activities



City of Courtenay

* During the life of this project, 33 beds were provided 8,913 evenings, and 10 beds were provided 1,510 evenings.

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Training: Reducing Stigma, Enhancing Care



A diverse audience attended a series of free training sessions – from elected officials to front line workers.

The training was often led by Elders, and/or people with lived or living experience (PWLLE).

Lasting Project Legacies

A Web of Community Connections

The project united communities, enhancing social ties and the safety net.

Increased Awareness & Understanding

It raised awareness about the causes and challenges facing vulnerable individuals, prioritizing meaningful engagement with those most affected.

Empowering Lives

It illuminated the gifts of people seeking shelter, and supported their actions to realize aspirations.

Voices of Impact

"With supports - she has been sober for over a year, attended college to become a community support worker, and just yesterday graduated with top marks in her class." — Connect Staff

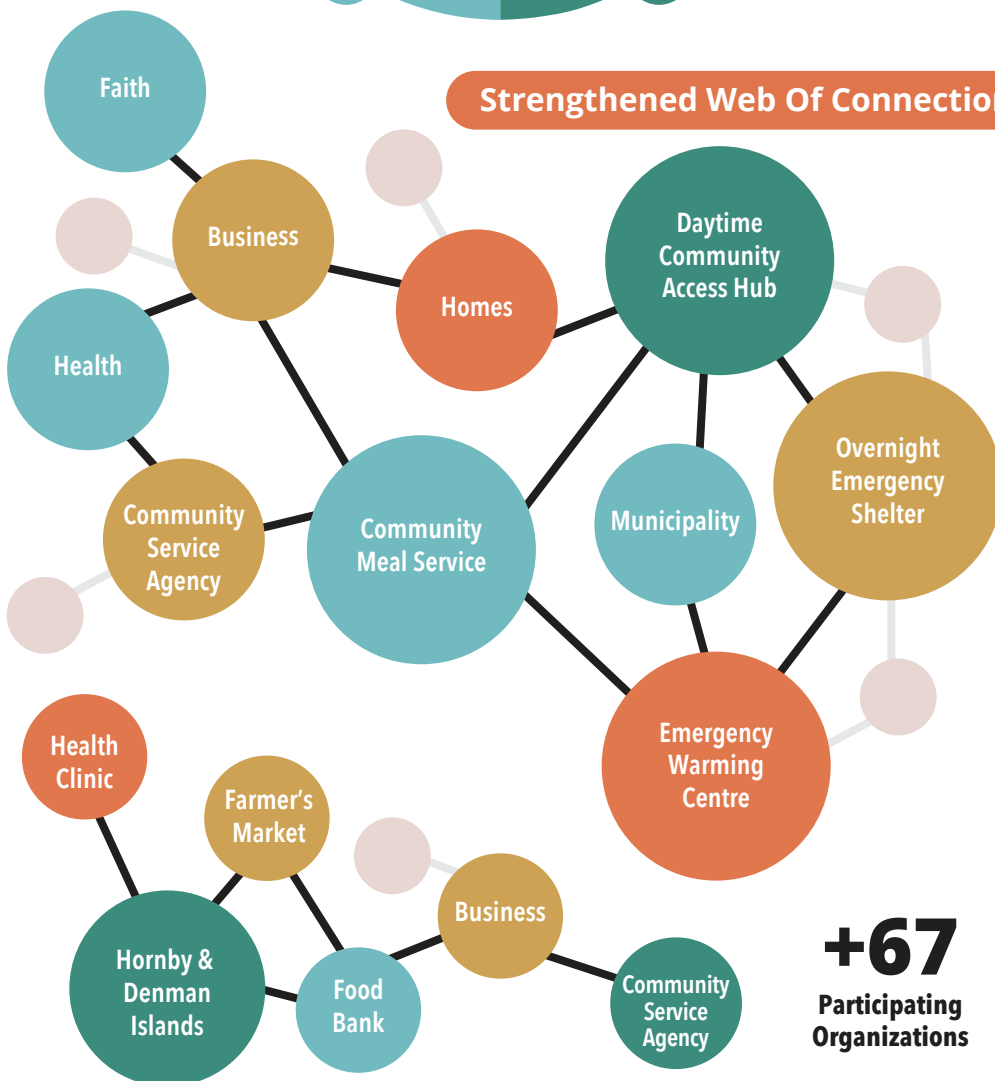
"Outreach work has opened doors for me — building connections and inspiring me to make a difference." — Peer Outreach Worker

"Here, people truly care and go the extra mile to help those in need." — Participant, Sunday Station

Transformative Insights

Stories from those with lived experience helped reshape perspectives and drive collective change.

Strengthened Web Of Connections



+67
Participating Organizations