

MEASURING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN THE CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

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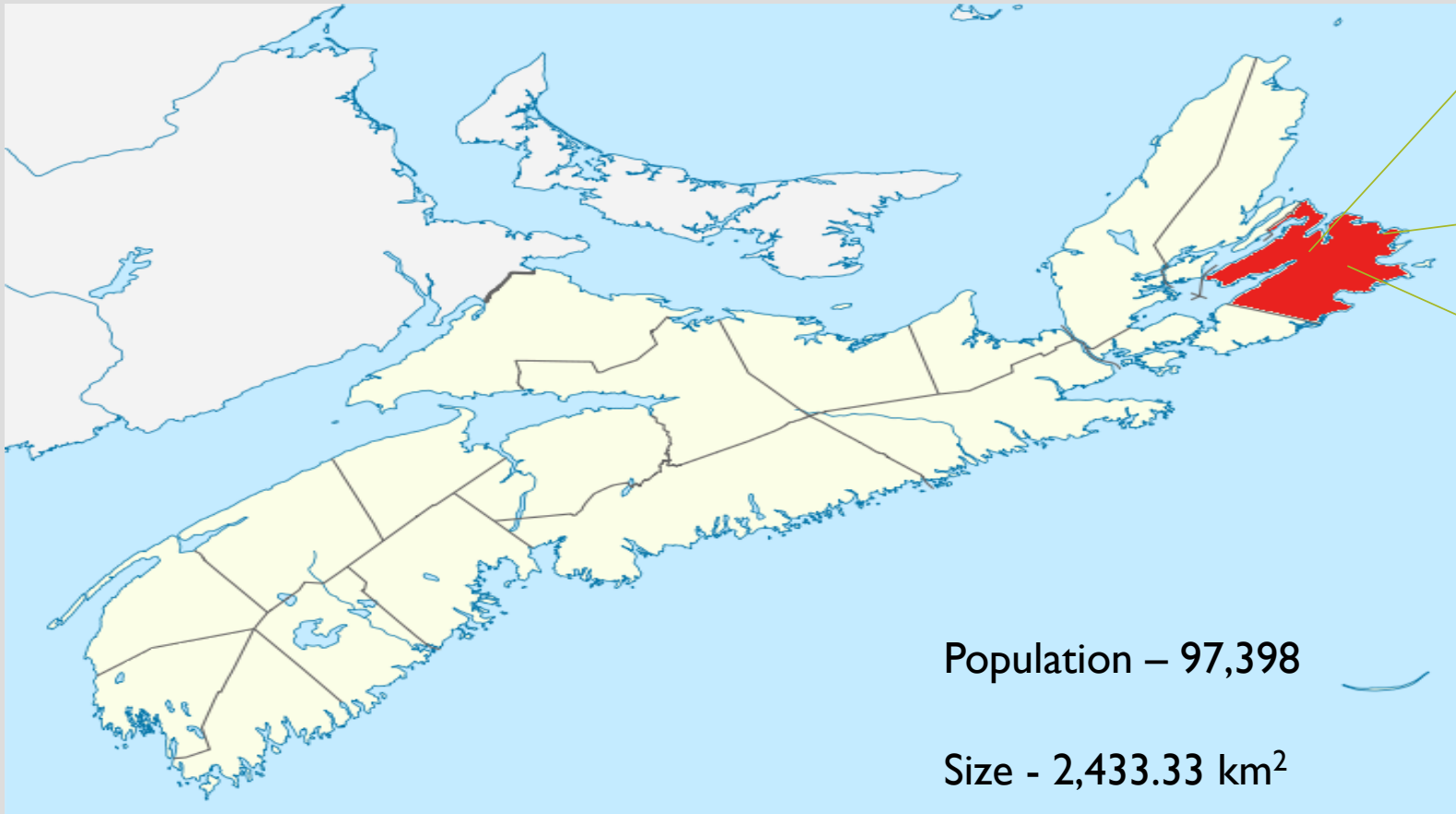
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CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

32% of Cape Breton children live in poverty – the highest in Atlantic Canada

14% Unemployment Rate

Small Population Spread Over Large Area



North Sydney
Sydney Mines

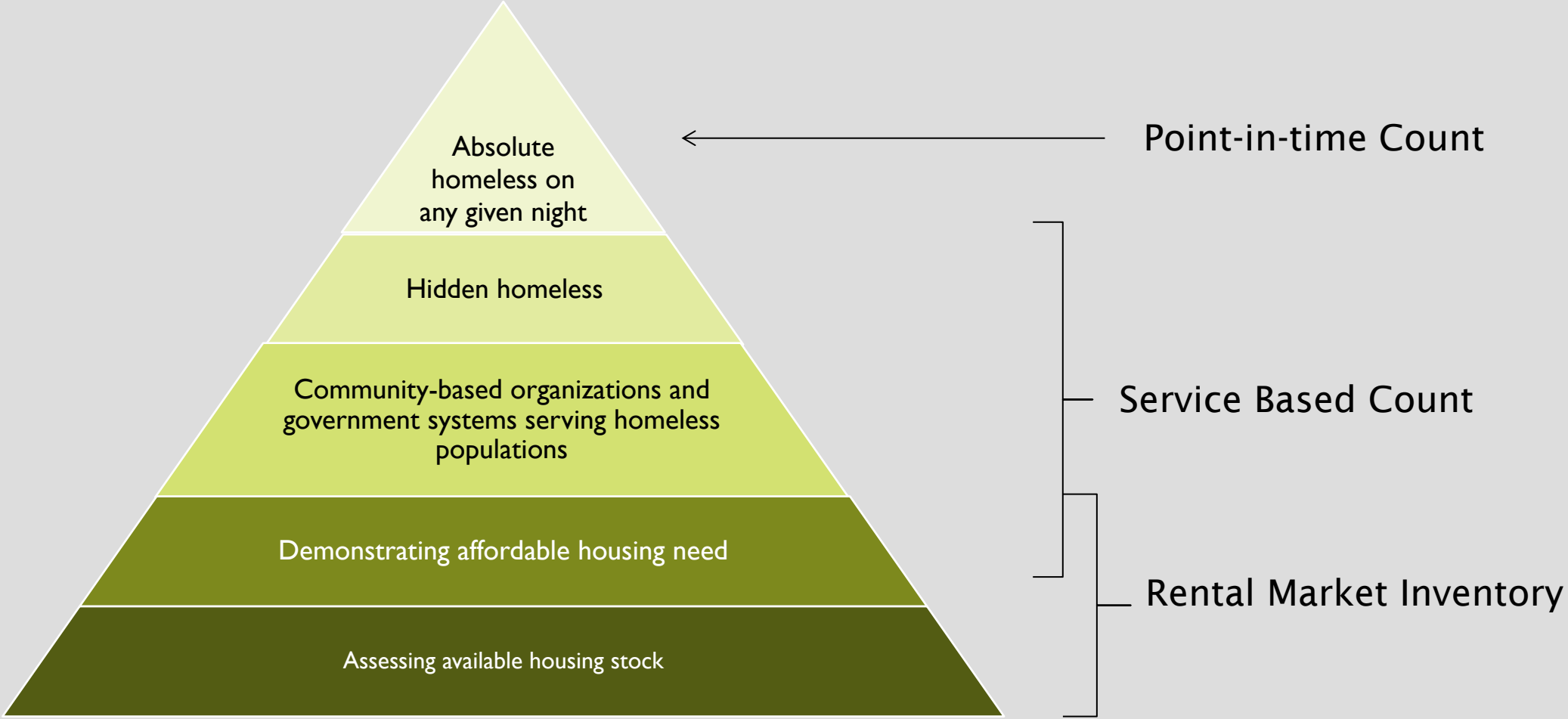
Glace Bay
New Waterford

Sydney

Population – 97,398

Size - 2,433.33 km²

RESEARCHING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN A SMALL COMMUNITY



MEASURING HOMELESSNESS

Results					
		Point-in-time Count		Service Based Count	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Unsheltered		24	18%	10	4%
Emergency Sheltered		30	22%	72	26%
Provisionally Accommodated	Transitional housing as a provisional step out of homelessness	17	12%	25	9%
	Institutional care, addiction treatment centre, half way house or other public system	36	26%	88	31%
	Someone else's place	30	22%	84	30%
Total		137	100%	279	100%

KEY FEATURES OF SERVICE BASED METHOD

- Period of time - one month record of service contacts, conducted in April of 2016.
- The goal is to gather data using existing information only (from client files), and in partnership with government and community agencies (we engaged 40).
- Prior ethics approval was obtained from the health authority.
- No client consent was required. Information is non identifying.
- The use of identifiers was required to avoid duplication.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SERVICE BASED METHOD

- Some key service providing organizations and First Nations communities declined participation.
- The number of homeless counted by some organizations appears quite low based on the number of clients they provide services to and the amount of time they admit to spending on issues of homelessness.
- The research approach (service providers using their own knowledge and/or information from client files) may impact the accuracy of the data collected.
- The timing was identified by several organizations as problematic.
- Staff buy in/ commitment to completing surveys.

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: WHY WE DID IT

- The secondary rental market is potentially an important source of housing in small communities, but CMHC doesn't track this in CBRM
- We also wanted information on characteristics including quality of the housing, accessibility, potential targeting of the housing stock, and different types of housing providers
- We also wanted to know more about rooming houses, which also aren't included in the CMHC rental universe
- We wanted to reach out to landlords, as future partners in Housing First and the development of an affordable housing strategy locally

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: HOW WE DID IT

- We obtained a list of likely rental properties from the CBRM's planning department, and merged this list with a database of properties owners we purchased from the province
- We collected survey data from landlords (non-profit, market and public) over a one year period
- We asked questions about rents, utilities, accessibility, state of repairs, vacancies, and targeting of units to particular renters
- Our response rate was very good (63%)

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: (SOME OF) WHAT WE LEARNED

- About half of the market rentals in CBRM are in the secondary market.
- Shelter costs in the secondary market are the same as in the primary market for one-bedroom rentals. For two-bedroom rentals, shelter costs are higher in the secondary market, and for three-bedroom rentals, they are lower.
- Rentals in the secondary market are less likely to have leases, and are of higher quality.
- Overall, there is extensive targeting in the rental housing market locally, not only in public and non-profit housing, but among market rentals and rooming houses. This shows us more housing options are available to certain kinds of renters, such as seniors, and less are available to single, younger people.
- There is limited accessible housing locally, and accessible units are more expensive, usually for seniors, and are less likely to be vacant .

SURVEY OF RENTAL HOUSING STOCK: IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Having a good “sampling frame” is key. What is available in your community as a starting point?
- A study like this takes time and money. Is there a university in your community? Is funding available?
- Are landlords likely to be responsive? Is there a good working relationship with landlords, many informal connections in the community, or a sympathetic rental property owners association?
- Please contact us for more information and for a copy of our data collection tools and final reports!

THANKS!

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