



Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis of Inn from the Cold

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SROI analysis conducted by
Constellation Consulting Group





Contents

- 1.0 Introduction and Background 1
- 2.0 What We Know from Existing Research 3
 - 2.1 Research on the Needs of Families Experiencing Homelessness 3
 - 2.2 The Social Impact of Supporting Families in Need of Housing 4
 - 2.3 The Social Value of Supporting Families in Need of Housing..... 5
- 3.0 SROI Analysis Details 7
 - SROI Step 1: Establishing Scope & Identifying Stakeholders 8
 - SROI Step 2: Mapping Outcomes..... 9
 - Table 1: Inn from the Cold Outcomes Included in the SROI Model 10
 - SROI Step 3: Evidencing Outcomes & Assigning a Value 14
 - Table 2: Valuation of Outcomes Included in the SROI Model 15
 - SROI Step 4: Establishing Impact 21
 - SROI Step 5: Calculating the SROI Ratio 21
 - SROI Step 6: Reporting, Using, Embedding 22
- 4.0 Family Perspectives 23
- 5.0 Inn from the Cold SROI Results 26
 - 5.1 Limitations 28
- 6.0 Conclusions 30
- Appendix A: Resources Consulted 31
- Appendix B: SROI Sensitivity Tests 34
- Appendix C: SROI Study Review 35



1.0 Introduction and Background

With a vision for a community where no child or family is homeless, Inn from the Cold has been helping vulnerable families find stability in times of crisis for over 25 years. To advance their vision, Inn from the Cold provides three types of programming:

- 1. Prevention and Diversion (P&D):** This is housing-first programming that is in place to support families facing a temporary crisis. P&D programming provides wraparound supports to help families stay in their existing homes when faced with eviction, or attain other available permanent housing as soon as possible. The purpose of this programming is to prevent families and children from experiencing the trauma and stress of homelessness. Once family housing situations are stabilized, Inn from the Cold supports families in strengthening their capacity to be successful in maintaining that housing for the long-term.
- 2. Shelter:** Shelter programming at Inn from the Cold provides temporary emergency shelter and transitional sheltering to families when they are unable to stay in their existing homes and they have nowhere else to turn. At the shelter, families stay together in a semi-private environment that includes access to three healthy meals and snacks each day. Families are also provided with basic needs such as, clothing, footwear, toiletries, baby items, and special supplies for their child or youth. While staying with Inn from the Cold, families are supported in finding new housing as quickly as possible.
- 3. Supportive and Affordable Housing:** Housing programming at Inn from the Cold includes intensive support for families facing homelessness (Housing with Recovery Supports (HRS) Program) as well as low-barrier affordable housing options for families (with minimal support). Through the HRS Program, families are supported with finding and keeping stable housing, accessing basic needs, developing life skills, accessing financial support and connecting to other community resources and supports. With HRS support, families work intensely with a case manager, to ensure they have the personal, social, physical, financial and human assets needed to remain housed for the long-term. Within the continuum of available housing options for families is the affordable housing programs facilitated by Inn from the Cold (Journey House and Neoma). Families in these programs pay affordable rents to live independently (or with minimal support) in high quality housing.

Overall, programming at Inn from the Cold is guided by trauma-informed and housing-first



principles. Programs are designed with flexibility and responsiveness embedded to meet the unique needs of each family served.

With over half the families involved with Inn from the Cold identifying as Indigenous, the Inn also offers an Indigenous Engagement Program for families. This program supports families in engaging with services from an Indigenous lens that encompasses an Indigenous worldview and ways of knowing. Through the program, Inn from the Cold partners with Indigenous families to establish cultural connections and resources relevant to each family's needs.

Understanding that significant value is created when families are supported in avoiding housing crises, in 2018 Inn from the Cold undertook a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to assess the social impact and social value created by the program offering at the time. With both significant societal and significant organizational changes since 2018, in 2023 Inn from the Cold worked with an Accredited SROI practitioner at Constellation Consulting Group to re-assess its social value creation using the SROI methodology. The current report presents details of the analysis process and the final results from the 2023 SROI analysis.



2.0 What We Know from Existing Research

Homelessness has been identified as one of society's most complex and persistent issues. To try and understand the causes of and best responses to homelessness, researchers, policy makers and homeless-serving organizations have undertaken numerous studies, building a body of evidence around possible solutions. While a growing body of research examines homelessness amongst *individuals*, the issue of *family homelessness* remains understudied, despite its deeper complexity and farther-reaching social consequences.¹ Nevertheless, preliminary research evidence around family homelessness is emerging and can be drawn upon to understand the issue and how it might be addressed. The current SROI analysis can contribute to this burgeoning pool of evidence while drawing upon existing research to help bolster understanding of this complex social issue.

2.1 Research on the Needs of Families Experiencing Homelessness

Child and family homelessness is distinctly different than single adult homelessness because it impacts all family members both individually and as a family unit.² Families experiencing homelessness come disproportionately from situations of poverty, low social capital, violence, conflict, systemic racism, landlord discrimination, trauma, separation, and substance abuse.³ Though families experiencing homelessness come in all configurations, research suggests that the majority are headed by women and include one or more young children. Homelessness for families can be triggered by a number of factors, including experiences of violence (e.g. domestic violence), refugee or uncertain immigration status, pregnancy, childbirth, and substance abuse.⁴

Preliminary research evidence suggests that the negative impacts of family homelessness are numerous, including:⁵

- High health care utilization (incl. frequent use of emergency health systems and frequent/longer hospital admissions).
- Frequent experiences of violence, exploitation, conflict, and abuse.
- Involvement with child protective services.
- Mental health issues.
- Substance abuse issues.
- Physical health issues.
- Experiences of trauma.
- Higher-risk pregnancies.

¹ Bassuk, E., DeCandia, C., Tsertsvadze, A., & Richard, M. (2014); Clark, R., Weinreb, L., Flahive, J., & Seifert, R. (2018).

² Clark, R., Weinreb, L., Flahive, J., & Seifert, R. (2018).

³ Box, E., Flatau, P., & Lester, L. (2022); Forchuk, C., et al. (2022); Sylvestre, J., et al. (2018).

⁴ Clark, R., Weinreb, L., Flahive, J., & Seifert, R. (2018).

⁵ Bassuk, E., DeCandia, C., Tsertsvadze, A., & Richard, M. (2014); Lenz-Rashid, S. (2017); Clark, R., Weinreb, L., Flahive, J., & Seifert, R. (2018); Yamamoto, A., et al. (2021). Clark, et al. (2019); Sylvestre, J., et al. (2018).



- More frequent encounters with the justice system.

Overall, research suggests that children in families experiencing homelessness have higher needs and lower access to supports than children in housed families.⁶ For these children, the experiences that often accompany homelessness can have life-altering consequences, including:⁷

- Disrupted development resulting in developmental delays (including physical, mental, and social-emotional development delays).
- Lifelong mental health issues.
- Physical health issues.
- Behavioural issues (including violent behaviours).
- Foster care experiences that increase the likelihood of negative outcomes.
- Involvement in criminal activities and possible incarceration.
- Substance abuse issues.
- Difficulties in school, including low academic achievement, behavioural issues in school, and difficulty completing grades or graduating.

Estimating the number of families who are experiencing homelessness can be difficult as many families do not enter services or are split up (due to foster care placements) before accessing services. Beyond the families experiencing ‘hidden homelessness’ in Calgary, in 2021 the point-in-time homelessness count for the city identified 107 families reported as experiencing sheltered homelessness, making up a total of 311 individuals (16% of overall number of people enumerated in the count).⁸

2.2 The Social Impact of Supporting Families in Need of Housing

Research has shown that both shelter services and housing supports can create positive social outcomes for families experiencing homelessness. While housing supports produce greater change and more long-lasting impacts for families, when shelter services are enhanced by supportive programming (e.g. child development programming, etc.) a shelter stay can increase family wellbeing, the likelihood of becoming housed, and connection to other services and supports.⁹ When families are housed with support, positive outcomes are amplified. Research evidence suggests that positive outcomes include:¹⁰

- Increased wellbeing (both physical and mental).
- Decreased use of emergency services.

⁶ Kulik, D., Gaetz, S., Crowe, C., & Ford-Jones, E. (2011).

⁷ Lenz-Rashid, S. (2017); Wilson, A. & Squires, J. (2014).

⁸ Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2021); Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2022).

⁹ Culhane, D., Park, J., & Metraux, S. (2011); Sylvestre, J., et al. (2018).

¹⁰ Lenz-Rashid, S. (2017); Lim, *et al.* (2018); Bassuk, DeCandia, Tsertsvadze & Richard. (2014); Curry & Abrams. (2015); Garcia, I., & Kim, K. (2020); Gubits, D., et al. (2018); Wiens, K., et al. (2021); Bovell-Ammon, A., et al. (2020).



- Decreased interactions with child welfare services (incl. decreased investigations, interventions, apprehensions).
- Improved health (both physical and mental).
- Increased safety.
- Decreased experiences of violence.
- Decreased toxic stress.
- Decreased behavioural issues among children.
- Increased academic engagement and achievement among children.
- Strengthened positive relationships within the family.
- Increased sense of belonging.

Overall, preliminary research evidence suggests that supportive housing options for families can reduce episodes of homelessness and create long-lasting positive outcomes for all family members.

2.3 The Social Value of Supporting Families in Need of Housing

The positive outcomes produced by supporting families in need of housing are not only positive in the sense of increased overall wellbeing for families; they also create significant social value for families, governments, communities, and other stakeholders. While literature on the cost of individual homelessness is extensive, however, there is limited research on the cost of family homelessness.

The range of government service costs calculated in cost of individual homelessness studies vary widely, from \$4,000 per person per year at the low end to \$140,000 per person per year on the high end. Similarly, cost of family homelessness studies present a range of government service costs, from \$22,000 per family per year to \$84,000 per family per year. This variability is largely due to differences in the types of costs included. For example, some studies consider the government cost of homelessness to include only a small range of health costs, while others include a large range of health costs as well as justice and other service costs. The variability is also partly due to study method, with some studies using more rigorous methods to determine service use and changes in service use (such as a randomized control trial). Finally, the location of the study community may impact the costs calculated. For example, higher costs may exist in remote Northern communities compared to large urban centres. Rather than seeking to create new research on the cost of homelessness, the current study leverages existing research from the local Alberta community to understand the cost of homelessness amongst families.

There are also numerous SROI studies examining the social and economic value that is created through investment to support individuals experiencing homelessness. These studies generally examine not only the value to government, but also value to clients and other stakeholders, such



as neighbours and communities. Again, there is a general lack of SROI studies examining the value created by addressing family homelessness. SROI ratios vary considerably in these studies, from the low end indicating that for every dollar invested approximately three dollars in social and economic value is created to the high end indicating that for every dollar invested approximately fifteen dollars in social and economic value is created. The range of value is impacted by the rigorousness of the study, the local community context, intangible valuation techniques employed, and the range of discounts applied. A detailed chart of findings from the reviewed studies is included in Appendix C.



3.0 Inn from the Cold 2023 SROI Analysis Details

Using the internationally standardized SROI methodology outlined in *A Guide to Social Return on Investment*, the 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold leveraged existing research, internal evaluation metrics, and conservative estimates to determine the social value that the organization creates. The SROI methodology provides a framework for articulating the financial value of social outcomes created through key investments, revealing how much value is created for every dollar invested. SROI goes beyond standard cost-benefit analysis by focusing on the value of outcomes experienced by a variety of stakeholders, rather than focusing solely on investments and outputs. This means that social outcomes, such as increased wellbeing, are represented in financial terms alongside more tangible cost savings and value creation for governments, communities, and individuals. According to Davies *et al.* (2020):

“The point of utilising an SROI framework is to make the value of social impacts more explicit, which will hopefully lead to a more reasoned consideration of them in policy and management decision-making. SROI is about value not money. Money is simply a common readily available unit and as such is a useful and widely accepted way of conveying value.”¹¹

The SROI methodology combines quantitative, qualitative, and participatory research techniques to understand the value of outcomes from different stakeholder perspectives. The end result of an SROI analysis is an SROI ratio that compares the cost of investment to the financial value of social outcomes that are achieved, showing in monetary terms, the financial benefit of social investments.

While SROI enables analysis of the value of social outcomes using the *language* of financial returns, the social and economic value return calculated through an SROI analysis is not *equivalent* to a financial return in spendable dollars. It is better understood as an approach to valuing social outcomes through financial measures other than standard economic indicators, such as GDP.¹²

Further, while the value of public service use avoided may be captured within an SROI analysis, this value is not likely to result in tangible changes to public service expenditures. Rather, this value is better conceptualized as a ‘cost reallocation’ within a system, whereby ‘savings’ are experienced as increased system efficiency and effectiveness. For example, if an SROI includes the cost of an Emergency Room visit that is avoided, the cost savings is not likely to be experienced as a change in the overall cost of operating the Emergency Room; rather, the value

¹¹ Davies, L. E., Taylor, P., Ramchandani, G., & Christy, E. (2020). Page 111.

¹² See for example: Ravi, A., & Reinhardt, C. (2011). See also: Joseph Siglitz in relation to well-being valuation.



comes from the alleviation of pressure on Emergency Room staff and an increase in the ability of others in need of emergency services to access the Emergency Room quickly and effectively.

The six steps outlined below are the standard process for conducting an SROI analysis and have been used for the current analysis:

SROI Step 1: Establishing Scope & Identifying Stakeholders

This first SROI Step involves determining the specifics of what will be analyzed, including which stakeholders might experience value, what investment will be analyzed, and the timeframes for the analysis. Stakeholders who are included in the SROI are those who experience material change due to the investment or who have invested resources in the creation of outcomes.



The following stakeholders were included in the analysis of Inn from the Cold:

- Families living in shelter (emergency & transitional shelters; adults & children).
- Families living in shelter who are also engaged with P&D support (adults & children).
- Families engaging with the HRS Program (supportive housing; adults & children).
- Families housed in affordable housing through Inn from the Cold (Journey House & Neoma; adults & children).
- Families receiving P&D support in the community.
- Service inquiries from other community members.
- Volunteers.
- Practicum/internship students.
- Community partners.
- Landlords.
- The community at large.
- Government services and systems.
- Funders.



This SROI step also involves determining the investment that will be considered in the SROI analysis. For the current study, Inn from the Cold's operational budget in the 2022 calendar year (from January to December, 2022) was utilized, less the one-time moving costs incurred in 2022.



Finally, this SROI step involves determining the timeframe over which outcomes are considered in the analysis. For the current study, outcomes generated from January to December 2022 have been included. For Affordable Housing stakeholders, outcomes from November 2022 to March 2023 have been included, since outcomes were not available for the full 2022 calendar year (Neoma and Journey House opened in November 2022).



SROI Step 2: Mapping Outcomes

This step in the SROI process involves mapping the links between the activities supported by an investment (e.g. supporting families in gaining housing) and the outcomes or changes that these activities create (e.g. greater housing stability for families). Outcome mapping for the 2023 Inn from the Cold SROI analysis was guided by:



Review of existing research on the value and impacts of similar projects.



Review of past assessment of value (i.e. 2017 SROI analysis) and information generated through ongoing evaluation activities at Inn from the Cold.



Perspectives provided by key stakeholders, including perspectives from **16** families served by Inn from the Cold, **14** staff at Inn from the Cold, **3** landlords interacting with Inn from the Cold, **26** volunteers at Inn from the Cold, **3** students who completed internships/practicum placements with Inn from the Cold, and **12** of Inn from the Cold's community partners.

Based on research and the information gathered from stakeholders, outcomes for each stakeholder group were mapped and, based on the materiality and significance of identified outcomes, the following outcomes were ultimately included in the SROI outcome map:



Table 1: Inn from the Cold Outcomes Included in the SROI Model

Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis
Families living in shelter.	Increased access to temporary safe accommodation; feelings of safety and security in a shelter setting.
	Non-shelter basic needs are met (incl. food, clothing, etc.).
	Increased connection to culture.
	Increased family stability and wellness.
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.
	Increased or maintained positive and trusting relationships with service providers.
	Children have increased or maintained ability to pursue learning (e.g. registration for school, tutoring, etc.).
	Increased opportunity to move towards housing and stability.
	Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social), from access to temporary accommodation.
	Increased feelings of hope and confidence in ability to navigate life's challenges.
Families living in shelter who are also engaged with P&D support.	<i>All outcomes listed above under 'families living in shelter'</i>
	Decreased length of stay in shelter.
	Decreased likelihood of return to shelter after exit (increased ability to maintain housing stability into the future)
Families engaging with the HRS Program (supportive housing).	Increased access to safe and stable housing.
	Decreased risk of eviction contributing to decreased risk of shelter stays (e.g. due to education with families, mediation with landlords, de-escalation of crises, etc.).
	Increased or maintained stability and routine for children leading to improved emotional regulation.
	Increased connection to culture.
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.
	Increased ability to engage in employment (e.g. due to employment preparation, vocational supports, etc.).



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis
	<p>Increased access to income support benefits available through government programs.</p> <p>Increased ability to engage in education opportunities (e.g. parents starting an education program, tutoring for children).</p> <p>Decreased harm from substance use.</p> <p>Increased family stability and wellness (leading to family reunification in some instances).</p> <p>Increased connection to natural supports.</p> <p>Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social).</p>
<p>Families housed in affordable housing through Inn from the Cold (Neoma and Journey House).</p>	<p>Increased access to safe and stable housing.</p> <p>Decreased risk of substantial rent increases and/or eviction leading to reduced stress and ability to plan for the long-term.</p> <p>Increased or maintained stability and routine for children leading to improved emotional regulation.</p> <p>Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.</p> <p>Increased connection to culture.</p> <p>Increased ability to engage in employment (e.g. due to employment preparation, vocational supports, etc.).</p> <p>Increased access to income support benefits available through government programs.</p> <p>Increased ability to engage in education opportunities (e.g. parents starting an education program, children attending school).</p> <p>Decreased harm from substance use.</p> <p>Increased family stability and wellness (leading to family reunification in some instances).</p> <p>Increased sense of community (decreased social isolation).</p> <p>Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social).</p>
<p>Families receiving P&D support in the community.</p>	<p>Increased ability to maintain or access safe and stable housing.</p> <p>Decreased risk of eviction contributing to decreased risk of shelter stays (e.g. due to education with families, mediation with landlords).</p>



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis
	Increased or maintained stability and routine for children leading to improved emotional regulation, ongoing engagement with school.
	Increased connection to culture.
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.
	Increased connection to natural supports.
	Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social).
Service inquiries from other community members.	De-escalation of crisis situations leading to decreased stress and anxiety.
	Increased connection/engagement with community resources, supports, and programming leading to decreased need for shelter.
	Follow-up contact leading to decreased need for ongoing support.
Volunteers	Increased connection to community.
	Development of transferrable skills (e.g. empathy, leadership, etc.).
	Increased connection with corporate investment (corporate volunteers only).
Internship/practicum students	Increased access to meaningful professional development opportunities.
	Development of transferrable skills through exposure to different roles, activities, families (e.g. empathy, leadership, etc.).
	Contribution to implementation of current best and promising practices at the Inn.
Community Partners	Increased community coordination leading to decreased time spent supporting families with systems navigation.
	Increased uptake of programs, reduced time, energy, and resources recruiting participants.
	Increased access to high-quality space for the facilitation of programs.
Landlords	Decreased loss of income due to rent arrears, property damage, admin time related to evictions, etc.
	Decreased conflict with tenants (e.g. better tenant guest management, fewer disturbances, etc.)
Community at large	Increased community wellbeing (e.g. decreased social disorder, increased participation by citizens, etc.)



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis
Government services and systems.	Avoided experiences of family homelessness, resulting in decreased shelter use, justice system involvement, health system use, etc.
	Decreased length of shelter stay (P&D shelter families).
	Reduced recidivism in shelter access (P&D shelter families; shelter families connected with housing).
	Increased access to health services to promote wellbeing leading to decreased use of emergency services by shelter families.
	Increased ability to reach vulnerable populations with public health information leading to increased participation in key public health measures (e.g. vaccination programs).
	Increased ability among family members to navigate substance use concerns and/or recovery services.
	Increased use of budgeted government supports (e.g. income support program, employment supports, etc.).
	Decreased use of income support and/or increased taxes paid by family members who become employed.
	Decreased government service use associated with family members who increase their education (e.g. academic advancement).
	Enhanced ability by pregnant family members to make healthy choices during pregnancy leading to optimized health during pregnancy.
	Increased family stability leading to avoided apprehensions or family reunification after apprehension.
	Decreased behavioural issues among children leading to fewer social/school challenges.
	Support for meeting government crisis response needs (e.g. monitoring, reporting, for crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, 2013 flood.)



SROI Step 3: Evidencing Outcomes & Assigning a Value



This SROI step involves **evidencing outcomes**, meaning determining how many stakeholders experience each mapped outcome included in the SROI model.

An SROI analysis can be ‘evaluative’ or ‘forecast’. An evaluative SROI analysis provides a definitive statement of value based on rigorous primary research on evidence of outcomes achieved by stakeholders. A forecast SROI analysis provides a projected value statement based on rigorous secondary research evidence that reveals reasonable expectations of outcomes achieved by stakeholders. Both approaches are valid and powerful and can be used in combination based on the availability of stakeholder data.

The current SROI uses a combined forecast and evaluative approach leveraging information on outputs and outcomes collected by the evaluation team at Inn from the Cold, and rigorous existing research on outcomes from similar projects. Moving forward, the SROI analysis model can be evolved to be a fully evaluative model as outcome data becomes increasingly refined.



This SROI step also involves **valuing outcomes** meaning establishing the financial value of each mapped outcome included in the SROI model.

Mapped outcomes were financially valued using financial proxies¹³ from academic and grey literature (including other SROI studies). Where possible, valuation information and methods from other Canadian SROI studies were used, enabling some comparison between studies, and ensuring results from the current study are aligned with other, similar work. Alignment with the valuation approach from the 2017 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold was also undertaken, where possible.

Ultimately, outcome valuation in the 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold included:

¹³ Financial proxies are estimates of financial value where it is not possible to know an exact value.



Table 2: Valuation of Outcomes Included in the SROI Model

Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis	Valuation
Families living in shelter.	Increased access to temporary safe accommodation; feelings of safety and security in a shelter setting.	Personal cost of pain and suffering due to assault.
	Non-shelter basic needs are met (incl. food, clothing, etc.).	Total value of basic needs and other supplies provided.
	Increased connection to culture.	<i>Outcome not financially valued.</i>
	Increased family stability and wellness.	Wellbeing valuation: ability to stay together as a family.
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of activity registration.
		Total value of tickets provided.
		Value of 1 hour of child minding.
	Increased or maintained positive and trusting relationships with service providers.	<i>Outcome not financially valued</i>
	Children have increased or maintained ability to pursue learning.	Personal and intangible value from increased educational attainment.
		Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 1-hour professional tutoring session.
Increased opportunity to move towards housing and stability.	Wellbeing valuation: temporary accommodation to secure housing for families.	
Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social), from access to temporary accommodation.	Wellbeing valuation: Rough-sleeping to temporary accommodation for adults with dependent children.	
Increased feelings of hope and confidence in ability to navigate life's challenges.	Health valuation: Value of hope.	
Families living in shelter who are also engaged with P&D support.	<i>All outcomes listed above under 'families living in shelter'</i>	<i>Valued above.</i>
	Decreased length of stay in shelter.	One month proportion of annual wellbeing valuation: temporary accommodation to secure housing for families.
	Decreased likelihood of return to shelter after exit (increased ability to maintain housing stability into the future).	Personal cost of eviction plus cost of personal crisis.
	Increased access to safe and stable housing.	Wellbeing valuation: temporary accommodation to secure housing for families.



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis	Valuation	
Families engaging with the HRS Program (supportive housing).	Decreased risk of eviction contributing to decreased risk of shelter stays.	Personal cost of eviction	
	Increased or maintained stability and routine for children leading to improved emotional regulation.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 8 CBT sessions for anxious children	
	Increased connection to culture.	<i>Outcome not financially valued.</i>	
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.	<i>Partially valued above.</i>	
	Increased ability to engage in employment.	Value of employment income at Alberta Minimum Wage	
	Increased access to income support benefits available through government programs.	Annual core benefits for a couple with two children living in private housing (ETW - expected to work)	
	Increased ability to engage in education opportunities.		Personal and intangible value from increased educational attainment.
			Personal and intangible value from increased educational attainment.
			Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 1-hour professional tutoring session
	Decreased harm from substance use.	Personal cost of supporting an addiction.	
Increased family stability and wellness (leading to family reunification in some instances).	Wellbeing valuation: ability to stay together as a family.		
Increased connection to natural supports.	Wellbeing valuation: Connection to community/neighbours.		
Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social).	Valued above with housing stability outcome.		
Families housed in affordable housing (Neoma and Journey House).	Increased access to safe and stable housing.	Wellbeing valuation: temporary accommodation to secure housing for families.	
	Decreased risk of substantial rent increases and/or eviction leading to reduced stress and ability to plan for the long-term.	Average difference between average market rent and rent at Journey House, Neoma.	
		Personal cost of eviction.	
Increased or maintained stability and routine for children leading to improved emotional regulation.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 8 CBT sessions for anxious children.		



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis	Valuation
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.	<i>Outcome partially valued above.</i>
	Increased connection to culture.	<i>Outcome not financially valued.</i>
	Increased ability to engage in employment.	Value of employment income at Alberta Minimum Wage.
	Increased access to income support benefits available through government programs.	Annual core benefits for a couple with two children living in private housing (ETW - expected to work)
	Increased ability to engage in education opportunities (e.g. parents starting an education program, children attending school, tutoring for children, etc.).	Personal and intangible value from increased educational attainment.
		Personal and intangible value from increased educational attainment.
	Decreased harm from substance use.	Personal cost of supporting an addiction.
	Increased family stability and wellness (leading to family reunification in some instances).	Wellbeing valuation: ability to stay together as a family.
	Increased sense of community (decreased social isolation).	Wellbeing valuation: Connection to community/neighbours.
Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social).	Valued above with housing stability outcome.	
Families receiving P&D support in the community.	Increased ability to maintain or access safe and stable housing.	Average value per family of support provided to gain or maintain housing
	Decreased risk of eviction contributing to decreased risk of shelter stays.	Personal cost of eviction.
	Increased or maintained stability and routine for children leading to improved emotional regulation, ongoing engagement with school, etc.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 8 CBT sessions for anxious children.
		Personal and intangible value from increased educational attainment.
	Increased connection to culture.	<i>Outcome not financially valued.</i>
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming.	<i>Outcome partially valued above.</i>
	Increased connection to natural supports.	<i>Outcome not financially valued.</i>
	Increased personal wellbeing (physical, emotional, social).	Wellbeing valuation: temporary accommodation to secure housing for families.



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis	Valuation
Service inquiries from other community members.	De-escalation of crisis situations leading to decreased stress and anxiety.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 1 crisis counselling session.
	Increased connection to and engagement with community resources, supports, and programming leading to decreased need for shelter services.	Wellbeing valuation: Rough-sleeping to temporary accommodation for adults with dependent children.
	Follow-up contact leading to decreased need for ongoing support.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of 1 hour of social worker time.
Volunteers	Increased connection to community.	Wellbeing valuation: Community involvement.
	Development of transferrable skills (e.g. empathy, leadership, etc.).	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of a skill development course.
	Increased connection with corporate investment (corporate volunteers only).	Value of workplace satisfaction.
Internship/practicum students	Increased access to meaningful professional development opportunities.	Value of workplace satisfaction.
	Development of transferrable skills through exposure to different roles, activities.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of a skill development course.
	Contribution to implementation of current best and promising practices at the Inn.	Revealed preference valuation: Cost of a workplace mental health training workshop.
Community Partners	Increased community coordination leading to decreased time spent supporting families with systems navigation.	Value of systems navigation time saved (minimum 2 hours per month per partner).
	Increased uptake of programs, reduced time, energy, and resources recruiting participants.	Valued of participant recruitment time saved (1/2 hour per participant).
	Increased access to high-quality space for the facilitation of programs.	In-kind value of space provided.
Landlords	Decreased loss of income due to rent arrears, property damage, admin time related to evictions, etc.	Cost savings to private landlords.



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis	Valuation
	Decreased conflict with tenants (e.g. better tenant guest management, fewer disturbances, etc.)	Cost savings to private landlords from avoided conflict (1 hour of landlord time per month; 1 landlord-tenant board dispute per year).
Community at large	Increased community wellbeing (e.g. decreased social disorder, increased participation by citizens, etc.)	<i>Outcome not financially valued.</i>
Government services and systems.	Avoided experiences of family homelessness, resulting in decreased shelter use, justice system involvement, health system use, etc.	Alberta cost of family homelessness (including health, justice, community services).
	Decreased length of shelter stay (P&D shelter families).	Cost of Inn from the Cold shelter stay shortened by 30 days (based on \$350/room per night/family).
	Reduced recidivism in shelter access (P&D shelter families; shelter families connected with housing).	Cost of average Inn from the Cold shelter stay of 60 days (based on \$350/room per night/family).
	Increased access to health services to promote wellbeing leading to decreased use of emergency services by shelter families.	Full hospital cost per Emergency Department visit.
	Increased ability to reach vulnerable populations with public health information leading to increased participation in key public health measures (e.g. vaccination programs).	Social and health value of a vaccine dose administered.
	Increased ability among family members to navigate substance use concerns and/or recovery services.	Cost of substance abuse per person (health cost, justice cost, gov't spending on research and prevention, lost productivity).
	Increased use of budgeted government supports (e.g. income support program, employment supports, etc.).	Annual core benefits for a couple with two children living in private housing (ETW - expected to work).
	Decreased use of income support and/or increased taxes paid by family members who become employed or advance their employment opportunities.	Taxes paid at minimum wage PLUS Annual core benefits for a couple with two children living in private housing (ETW - expected to work).
	Decreased government service use associated with family members who increase their education (e.g. adults engaging in academic advancement).	Public costs of lower educational attainment avoided.



Stakeholder	Outcomes Included in SROI Analysis	Valuation
	Enhanced ability by pregnant family members to make healthy choices during pregnancy leading to optimized health during pregnancy.	Value of healthy pregnancy (including reduced substance use during pregnancy).
	Increased family stability leading to avoided apprehensions or family reunification after apprehension.	Average cost of maintaining a child in foster care or formal kinship care with regular visits by child protection worker.
	Decreased behavioural issues among children leading to fewer social/school challenges.	Cost of special education per student per year.
	Support for meeting government crisis response needs (e.g. monitoring, reporting, etc. for crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2013 flood in Calgary, etc.).	Outcome not financially valued.



SROI Step 4: Establishing Impact

This SROI step involves considering what other elements are part of the outcomes experienced by stakeholders including:

- Deadweight – how much of the outcome would happen anyway (i.e. without investment in the organization).
- Displacement – how much the outcome might displace other positive outcomes.
- Attribution – how much of the outcome would be attributable to others.

These elements are applied as discounts to the value included in the SROI analysis (expressed as percentages). They help ensure that the SROI value is not over-claimed and provide a ‘reality check’ on the actual social/economic impact of the investment.

For the 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold, discount values were determined based on:

- Internal evaluation information
- Engagement with stakeholders
- Existing research
- Reasonable estimations

Where estimations were made, they were sensitivity tested to ensure estimated discounts were not over/under claimed (see Appendix B for details). Overall, a 3.5% discount rate was applied to any value claimed into the future to account for the time value of money.¹⁴

SROI Step 5: Calculating the SROI Ratio

The last step in an SROI analysis is calculating the SROI ratio. The ratio is calculated by multiplying the number of stakeholders who experience an outcome by the value of that outcome (financial proxy), and then discounting for impact. All outcomes are then added together for the total present value, which is divided by the total investment.

The SROI ratio indicates how much social and economic value is created for every dollar invested in a social initiative. For example, an SROI ratio of 1 : 3 would indicate that for every dollar invested in the initiative, three dollars is created due to outcomes achieved.

As part of this process, sensitivity tests are conducted to explore the impact of any assumptions or estimations that were made as part of the analysis. Within the current SROI analysis, sensitivity tests explored the impact of estimations or assumptions related to:

- The financial proxies used to represent the value of outcomes.
- The duration of key outcomes (e.g. length of time housed).
- The discounts applied.

¹⁴ Based on social discount rate suggestion from Boardman, Moore & Vining. (2010).



See Appendix B for sensitivity test result details.

SROI Step 6: Reporting, Using, Embedding

The final step in an SROI analysis is the creation of an SROI report and other communications documents. The current report is part of this final activity. Communications can involve presentations, executive summary reports, reports for government use, and reports for fundraising. The final SROI activity also relates to using results on an ongoing basis for continuous planning, forecasting, and evaluation.



4.0 Family Perspectives

The 2023 Inn from the Cold SROI analysis process produced important information about stakeholder perspectives on the outcomes and value of Inn from the Cold’s services. Of key importance, were perspectives shared by families served by Inn from the Cold. In total, **5** families currently involved in the shelter program and **11** families currently supported with housing (incl. P&D, HRS, and Affordable Housing) shared their perspectives about their experiences with Inn from the Cold. While only five families in shelter were interviewed, most families supported with housing had initially engaged with Inn from the Cold shelter services and were able to provide additional insights about these services.

Family Engagement Summary

Type of Service Used	# of families engaged
Shelter Program	16
Affordable Housing	9
Supportive Housing	3
Prevention & Diversion	5

The perspectives shared by families were key in defining, refining, evidencing, and valuing outcomes for the SROI analysis.

Shelter Experiences

Families staying at the Inn from the Cold shelter and families who had previously stayed at the shelter described numerous positive outcomes they had experienced because of Inn from the Cold’s shelter program. They felt the shelter was effective in keeping families off the streets and supporting families with basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing. Beyond the immediate outcomes associated with having basic needs met, families spoke about the positive outcomes experienced as a result of the supports offered at the shelter. At the shelter, they felt their children experienced greater stability and safety while developing new social connections and positive coping mechanisms. Families also identified the importance of Inn from the Cold’s shelter in providing a safe place to stay with connection to resources and services (including preventive health services) that support personal wellbeing and the ability to stabilize, and ultimately transition to new housing opportunities. In their own words, families said:

[The shelter] was very helpful. I wasn't treated differently. I was treated with dignity. I felt like I belonged. Everyone that worked [at the shelter] was very helpful. The staff were always asking if we needed anything.



*A lot of good things happen [at the shelter]. They made us feel at home and they made us feel loved. I felt so loved!
My worries lifted. I felt at home.*

[Staying at the shelter] was a win-win for everyone in my family.

[Staying at the shelter] has been beneficial for my mental and emotional health.

I know I am safe here [at the shelter] with my kids.

When asked to speculate about what their situation might have been if the Inn from the Cold shelter was *not* available, families felt that their situation would be, in many instances, dire. Families speculated that without the shelter their family may have been split up, they may have had to rely on a violent or toxic partner/relationship, they would have been sleeping in their car, or they may have spent time sleeping outdoors on the street. Overall, family stakeholders emphasized that the Inn from the Cold shelter program provides a unique option for families in crisis, ensuring they can stay together and avoid negative experiences on the streets. In their own words, families said:

*We would have been lost without Inn from the Cold –
I didn't even have a plan to stay in Canada.*

*I was running out of money. I would have ended up staying
on the streets with my kid.*

*It was not going to be good. It would have been very uncomfortable.
We would have been on the streets.*

*[The Inn from the Cold shelter] was life saving. If I was alone, I could have
managed it but with my family, I couldn't have.*

Housing Experiences

All housed families who were interviewed as part of the 2023 SROI study indicated that their initial contact with the Inn from the Cold shelter ultimately led to their current housing. This suggests that the shelter program is an important gateway into longer-term housing stability for families.

Housed families described numerous positive outcomes they had experienced as a result of their housing, including decreased Children's Services involvement, increased engagement in education or employment, and increased ability to work towards personal goals. Most fundamentally, housed families emphasized their ability to avoid homelessness and establish a sense of home due to Inn from the Cold's support. They felt that, with housing, their safety had



increased, their health had improved, and their children's wellbeing had been bolstered. In their own words, families said:

Without this [housing] I wouldn't be on the path to getting my kids back.

The best is the freedom. The kids, they can run around. Whenever they are outside, they come in and they are happy to have a place they call home.

It is my first time living on my own, so I feel accomplished.

*Good luck came with this house. I got my own car, and I got my job,
and I got my Permanent Resident card in this house.
Everything good came from this house.*

*I am good, we are living a normal life. I am working part-time job.
My daughter is going to school.*

When asked to speculate about what their situation might have been if Inn from the Cold housing support was not available, families described a number of negative situations. Without housing support through Inn from the Cold, some families speculated that they would be homeless (e.g. staying in shelter, staying on the street, couch surfing, staying in a personal vehicle), or forced to maintain housing by staying with an abusive person. Others said they would possibly be paying more for rent, reducing their ability to provide for their family and maintain housing in the long-term.

Overall, both families who had stayed at the Inn from the Cold shelter and families who had gained/maintained housing with support from Inn from the Cold expressed gratitude towards the Inn from the Cold staff who had supported them. Many said there were no things that they thought could be improved about Inn from the Cold's programming and supports, while others had keen insights into how services could be ameliorated. These suggestions have been shared with Inn from the Cold leadership for the purpose of continuous program improvement.



5.0 Inn from the Cold SROI Results

The 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold revealed an SROI ratio of 1 : 6.79 meaning that:

For every dollar invested, Inn from the Cold creates **nearly seven dollars** in social and economic value.



The SROI ratio indicates that Inn from the Cold generates important social value that not only covers investment made in the organization but also creates a ‘value add’ for multiple stakeholders. This includes value for the families supported through Inn from the Cold, value for landlords, value for communities, value for volunteers and practicum/internship students, and value to publicly funded services and systems (e.g. justice system, health system). Overall, the result suggests that by investing in strengths-based, trauma-informed, housing-first solutions to family homelessness, not only does the wellbeing of families experiencing housing instability increase, but the community as a whole benefits through increased system efficiency and overall community wellbeing.

Previous SROI assessment of Inn from the Cold in 2017 revealed a social return of \$4.63 for every dollar invested. The current updated SROI result suggests that program changes since 2018 are creating an important ‘value add’ for stakeholders. Changes since 2018 include expansion of the Inn’s prevention and diversion work, a new shelter space, and new affordable housing units, which all contribute to positive value creation by the organization. Further, the updated 2023 SROI analysis includes a more fulsome capture of the value to stakeholders beyond families and government systems and services, including value to stakeholders such as volunteers, P&D support inquiries, and practicum/internship students.

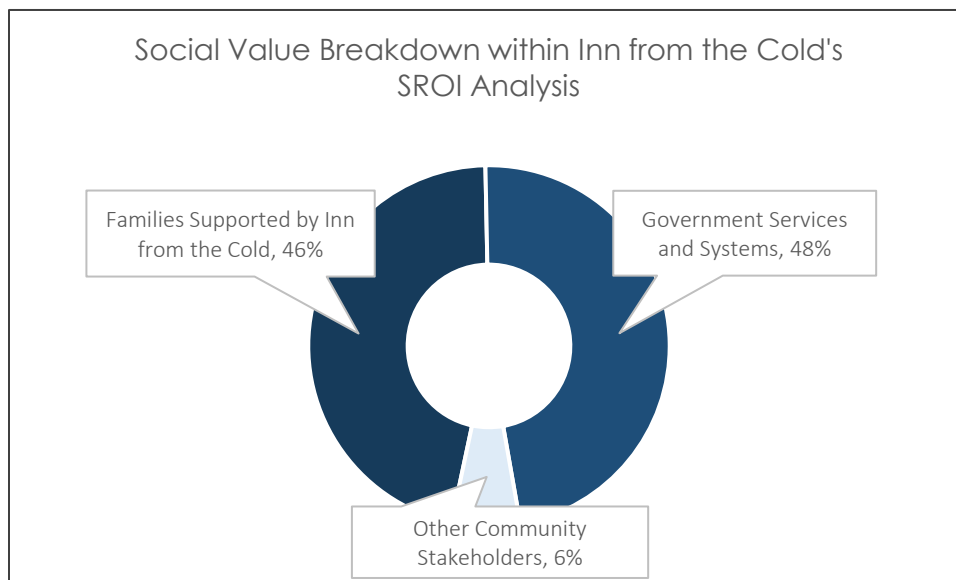
The value calculated through the current SROI analysis is distributed across multiple stakeholders. For families served by Inn from the Cold, positive changes in wellbeing, access to supports, and housing stability result in important social value. In total, approximately **46%** of the value captured through the SROI is estimated to go back to families served by Inn from the Cold (across programs).

Another **48%** of the social value captured through the SROI analysis is estimated to go back to government in cost reallocations related to positive changes in service use (e.g. health service



use, child welfare system interactions, etc.). While this value is captured within the SROI analysis, it is not likely to result in tangible changes to government expenditures. Rather, the value is experienced as a 'cost reallocation' representing increased efficiency and effectiveness of services. Overall, the SROI suggests that, for every dollar invested, approximately three dollars is generated for government.

The remaining **6%** of the social value captured through the SROI analysis is estimated to go back to other stakeholders including landlords, volunteers, practicum/internship students, and inquiries to the P&D program. The community at-large also likely experiences important social value due to Inn from the Cold's work, however this value is not well-captured within the SROI analysis.



While the SROI ratio for Inn from the Cold suggests that the organization is creating significant social value for multiple stakeholders, it nevertheless represents a conservative estimate of the total value that is created as it was not possible to measure and capture the financial value of all potential outcomes for all potential stakeholders. Further, the SROI was conducted as a hybrid forecast/evaluative analysis, which means some values included in the SROI were estimated based on research, experience, and/or preliminary evaluation findings. Where estimates were made, conservative estimates were taken to ensure the analysis would not be at risk of overclaiming. In particular, the 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold represents a conservative estimate of value as it:

- Does not capture the value of important, though intangible, outcomes like increased connection to culture.



- Does not capture the value of community-wide positive outcomes (e.g. decreased social disorder, healthier communities, etc.).
- Does not speculate about the long-term impact of Inn from the Cold's work. A sensitivity test to determine the impact of not speculating about the long-term value creation is presented in Appendix B and demonstrates that the value captured through the current SROI model is likely on the lower end of possible value creation.
- Uses conservative valuation of outcomes throughout (not valuing using the highest researched value available). Sensitivity tests to determine the impact of using higher-value financial proxies are presented in Appendix B and demonstrate, again, that the SROI ratio presented here is a conservative assessment of the possible value created.

The 2023 Inn from the Cold SROI results are in line with published SROI analyses of similar initiatives, which show that, for every dollar invested, between \$3.13 and \$15 in social value is created. A detailed chart of findings from the reviewed studies is included in Appendix C.

5.1 Limitations

Despite adherence to the internationally standardized SROI methodology and efforts throughout the study to increase the reliability of findings, the 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold includes some limitations that may impact the robustness and generalizability of findings. These include:

- **Limitations inherent in the methodology:** The SROI methodology is limited by its novelty and potential for biases. While the Accredited SROI Practitioner who conducted the analysis tried to mitigate these biases, SROI inherently involves many assumptions that may impact the robustness of the current findings.¹⁵
- **Limitations in the availability of long-term outcome data:** While available information was leveraged for the SROI study, detailed long-term data on the outcomes experienced by families is, as yet, preliminary.
- **Limitations in financial valuation and possible undervaluing:** Many social outcomes are not easily translated into financial terms, limiting the ability to fully capture the value of Inn from the Cold using the SROI methodology. In particular, while Inn from the Cold has dedicated programming to support Indigenous families in building cultural connection, this connection was not financially valued within the SROI. At the same time, this limitation helps ensure that the SROI value is not over claimed.
- **Limitations in timeframes considered:** To maintain a conservative estimate of value, outcomes valued in the SROI were, for the most part, not considered to endure beyond a

¹⁵ For further discussion of limitations of the SROI methodology, see for example: Fujiwara (2015).



single year (the year of investment that was analyzed). This potentially undervalues the longer-term impact of outcomes achieved by stakeholders.



6.0 Conclusions

Using the internationally standardized SROI methodology, the 2023 SROI analysis of Inn from the Cold revealed an SROI ratio of 1 : 6.79, suggesting that for every dollar invested, Inn from the Cold creates nearly seven dollars in social and economic value. Of this value, it is estimated that approximately three dollars is returned in the form of reduced demand for public services and systems. As governments seek more cost-efficient ways to support the wellbeing of citizens and communities grappling with housing insecurity, the current SROI study suggests that investment in a wraparound continuum of housing support for families generates important cost savings and value for multiple stakeholders. This includes value for families, value government systems and services, and value for communities.

While the Inn from the Cold SROI ratio suggests that significant social value is created by the organization, it nevertheless represents a conservative estimate of value as it was impossible to capture the full value of all positive outcomes experienced by all stakeholders. Further, while research suggests that supporting families in avoiding homelessness can have important long-term positive impacts, particularly for children, the SROI analysis did not speculate as to the longer-term value of Inn from the Cold's work. Ongoing data collection and future updates to the SROI model developed in 2023 can ultimately result in a more comprehensive SROI assessment, likely demonstrating an equivalent or higher social return moving forward.



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Appendix B: SROI Sensitivity Tests

1. **Higher rent value:** Test of average three-bedroom rent (two-bedroom rent included in the model).
2. **Government cost of homelessness:** Test using an alternative financial proxy with a higher value.
3. **Wellbeing valuation:** Test of using a higher value QALY valuation (wellbeing valuation included in the model).
4. **Duration of housing outcomes:** Test of longer-term maintenance of housing (2 years without further support).
5. **Lower discount estimates overall:** Test of estimated deadweight, attribution, displacement – decrease all estimates by 5%.
6. **Higher discount estimates overall:** Test of estimated deadweight, attribution, displacement – add 5% to all estimates.

Calculated Ratio	Sensitivity Test	Test Result
6.79	1 – Higher rent value	6.79
	2 – Government cost of homelessness	9.13
	3 – Wellbeing valuation	8.00
	4 – Duration of housing outcomes	10.32
	5 – Lower quantity estimates	7.10
	6 – Higher quantity estimates	6.48

The sensitivity tests conducted on the SROI model suggest that the final SROI result is a conservative estimate of the total value created by Inn from the Cold. The assumptions related to the cost of homelessness, the personal intangible value associated with housing, and the length of time families are housed created the greatest deviation from the final result presented in this report, suggesting that additional fine-tuning of measures to determine these figures may be needed (e.g. tracking long-term housing outcomes for families).



Appendix C: SROI Study Review

Study Name	SROI Ratio	Program Details	Location
Lee. (2009)	3.13	Hostel providing supportive housing to those who are currently homeless + a community facility with supports.	Wisbech, UK
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Common Knowledge Research & Consulting. (2014)	3.14	Second stage and supportive housing for women with children (dedicated site) 1.09 for community; 2.05 for government	Halifax, Canada
CMHA Mid-Island SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	3.34	Scattered-site supportive housing for singles	Nanaimo, BC
MPA Society SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	3.43	Scattered site supportive housing for singles with mental health issues	Vancouver, BC
Bonellie & Maxwell. (2012)	3.69	Shared living accommodation with support for youth (16-30) (shared accommodation – dedicated site)	Rural UK
Queens Manor SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	3.64	Supportive housing for singles (dedicated site)	Victoria, BC
Pacifica Housing SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	3.77	Scattered site supportive housing for singles	Victoria, BC
Wesley Street SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	3.96	Supportive housing for singles (dedicated site)	Nanaimo, BC
Kids Under Cover (2016)	4.17	Early intervention and prevention of youth homelessness by providing housing and scholarships	Australia
Troy. (2011)	4.21	Supportive housing and addictions treatment for Indigenous women with children (dedicated site)	Ottawa, Canada
Kettle on Burrard SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	4.42	Supportive housing for singles and youth (dedicated site)	Vancouver, BC
Hubberstey, C. (2022).	4.45	Housing and supports for pregnant women struggling with substance use.	Victoria, BC
Dodds. (2014)	4.53	Supportive housing for young persons (dedicated site)	Sunderland, UK
Lookout Society SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	4.56	Scattered site supportive housing for singles and some families	Surrey, BC
Inn from the Cold SROI Study (2017)	4.63	Inn from the Cold, 2017	Calgary, AB
Cardington Apartments SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	4.74	Supportive housing for single persons (dedicated site)	Kelowna, BC
CMHA Kelowna SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	4.77	Scattered site supportive housing for singles and youth	Kelowna, BC
The Budzey SROI Case Study (BC Housing) (2018)	5.04	Supportive housing for women and women-led families (dedicated site)	Vancouver, BC
Ryan (2016)	5.60	Housing for homeless youth with a volunteer family resulting in reduction in long-term homelessness	UK
Martyres. (2013)	5.95	Range of supportive housing options for youth (21 spots total) (scattered & dedicated/communal sites)	Canterbury, UK



Study Name	SROI Ratio	Program Details	Location
Miller & Robertson. (2014)	6	Temporary supportive housing for homeless women who are pregnant or parenting (dedicated site)	Saint John, Canada
Inn from the Cold SROI Study (2023)	6.79	Inn from the Cold, 2022 calendar year	Calgary, AB
Smirl. (2016)	7	Dedicated site supportive housing. SROI ratio could be up to 12.6 : 1	Winnipeg, MB
Durie. (2011)	8	Housing support for homeless families and single people (scattered site)	Dumfries & Galloway, UK (Scotland)
Robertson & Miller. (2013)	8.25	Housing First at 4 housing programs (scattered site) – for men	Region of Waterloo, Canada
Robertson & Miller. (2013)	9.37	Housing First at 4 housing (scattered site) – for youth	Region of Waterloo, Canada
Robertson & Miller. (2013)	9.75	Housing First at 4 housing programs (scattered site) – for women	Region of Waterloo, Canada
Robertson & Miller. (2013)	10.64	Housing First at 4 housing programs (scattered site) – for men	Region of Waterloo, Canada
Young. (2021)	11.07	WPI works to build a secure future for disadvantaged women and their children by providing them with long-term, safe, high-quality and affordable (no more than 30% of income) homes.	Melbourne, Australia
Boyle, Palmer & Ahmed. (2016)	15.06	Housing First for singles	Belfast, UK