

Supporting Tenants, Enabling Pathways (STEP)

The Supporting Tenants, Enabling Pathways (STEP) pilot project is a partnership between BC Housing, the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the Streethome Foundation. The project seeks to ensure supportive housing units in Vancouver are occupied by people most in need of supports, and that those who can live independently have support to move on to other affordable housing options.

Supportive housing is subsidized housing that provides a range of on-site, non-clinical supports, such as life-skills training, and connections to primary health care, mental health or substance use services.

STEP pilot project goals

- To increase access to supportive housing for applicants who require a high level of support
- To help supportive housing tenants move to independent housing, if they wish

STEP pilot project rationale

Access to supportive housing is crucial for many individuals seeking a pathway out of homelessness. As of March 31, 2017, there were nearly 2,500 applicants in the City of Vancouver on the Supportive Housing Registration Service waiting to access supportive housing units.

Some people who currently live in supportive housing may not need the support provided there. Instead, they may wish to move to another affordable housing option. However, they may require support and financial assistance to make this transition.

The STEP pilot project will identify 100 individuals who are willing and can move from supportive housing to another affordable housing option over the next 24 months.

Supporting tenants to move along the housing continuum using a coordinated approach will make the best use of existing health and supportive housing resources.

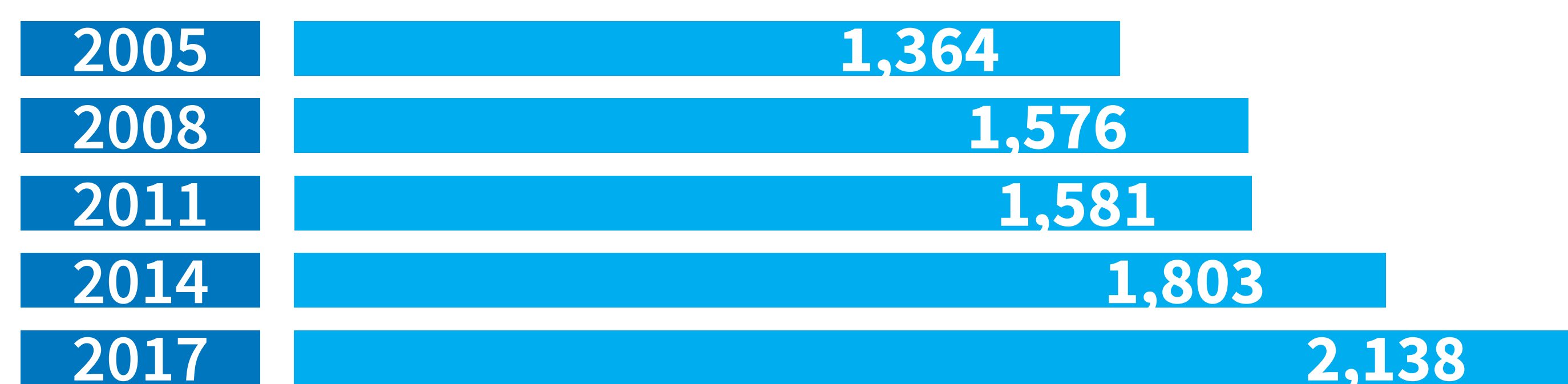
Where will STEP participants move to?

Affordable housing options for STEP participants will be found in BC Housing directly managed buildings and in the City of Vancouver's subsidized housing portfolio (both new and existing buildings).

The outreach team will also contact landlords who operate both non-profit and rental market housing to identify units. Housing selection for each STEP participant will be centred on housing choice and outreach staff will support their transition plans.

Relevant statistics:

- The 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver found a **19% increase** in the number of people who were identified as experiencing homelessness in Vancouver in 2017 compared with 2014.



- More than **four out of five** of the people who were identified as experiencing homelessness in the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver (all communities) reported at least one health condition.

- There are approximately **6,500 supportive housing units**, in 150 buildings across Vancouver, targeted to individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

Meet the project partners:



City of Vancouver: Has convened the partners and will dedicate a number of affordable housing units to support the implementation of the pilot. The City of Vancouver outreach team will assist STEP participants in developing transition plans and relocating to their new housing units.



Vancouver Coastal Health: Will provide access to supportive housing units to support implementation of the pilot as priorities permit.



BC Housing: Will dedicate a number of BC Housing directly managed units to support the implementation of the pilot and will lead the evaluation process.



Streethome Foundation: Has made grant money available to assist STEP participants with moving costs.

How can you help?

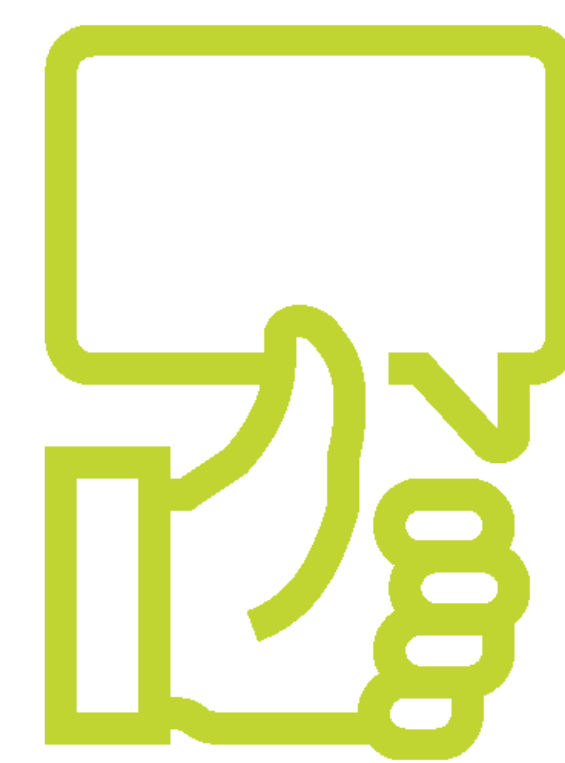
If you're a non-profit housing provider who manages independent subsidized housing in Metro Vancouver, come and join us as a landlord partner in the STEP pilot project.

Please contact Will Valenciano at BC Housing to learn more about how you can get involved.

Phone: 604-648-4278

Email: wvalenci@bchousing.org

The STEP process:



The project team identify individuals currently living in supportive housing units who no longer need the support provided there, and who could be supported to transition into independent housing if they wish.



The STEP project participant, their referral agency, and the outreach team meet to find an appropriate independent housing option that would meet the participant's needs.



The outreach team and the STEP participant develop a move-on plan. Using grant funding provided by the Streethome Foundation, the individual is supported in their move to independent housing.



The outreach team stays connected to the participant in their new housing situation and helps resolve any issues that may arise.



Vacated units are tenanted with individuals who are experiencing homelessness (either accessing shelter services or unsheltered) and are in need of a supportive housing environment.

STEP pilot project evaluation

The STEP pilot project will be carefully monitored to ensure it is achieving its objectives. The evaluation of the STEP pilot project will be led by BC Housing, with participation from the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the Streethome Foundation.

These key questions will guide the evaluation process:

- Is the project successful in connecting STEP participants to affordable independent housing?
- How successful are STEP participants in retaining housing after leaving supportive housing?
- Are STEP participants satisfied with their new housing?
- Is the project increasing supportive housing capacity in the community?
- Is the project successful in targeting supportive housing vacancies to more vulnerable households in need of support?
- Is the project cost-effective?

Evaluation methods

While the evaluation design is not yet complete, the following evaluation methods are anticipated:

- Database analysis
- Survey of STEP participants
- Key informant interviews

Evaluation timeline

The STEP pilot project is expected to run for two years. Evaluation activities will be conducted at key points in the process and a final report will be compiled at project completion.