



211 Edmonton:

Unmet Needs Report

Q4 2009

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On 211, we track calls when we're unable to find a referral to meet the caller's need. We also record trends that indicate gaps in the service system. We're distributing this information to increase awareness about the kinds of gaps there are in our community services. Please contact us if you're aware of a service that might fill a need.

Out of calls reported on 211 this quarter (October 1st to December 31, 2009) there were 236 unmet needs recorded. Housing continues to be the most pressing need in the community, accounting for one in five unmet needs calls (20%).

The lack of affordable housing is impacting other areas in the community. Families are either needing financial assistance from social services, or they are putting the majority of their income towards rent, leaving them with no money for other basic needs like food or clothing. This forces them to access other community services such as the Food Bank or Coats for Kids and Families, putting pressure on those organizations to keep up with demand. Others are forced to choose between paying rent or buying bus passes—if they pay rent, they have no way of getting to work to make next month's rent, but if they buy the pass, they are evicted.

The second and third most common unmet needs were material goods (11.9%) and transportation (8.5%). While the Coats for Kids and Families program with the United Way was able to support 8,500 children and families this year, some callers were still unable to get winter clothing. Furniture is another common unmet material need, especially beds.

Transportation difficulties continue to plague people who need assistance with moving, or seniors/people with disabilities attempting to get to and from health care appointments. Lack of transportation for large items also affects donors. There are people in the community looking to donate large furniture items. There are also people in the community who need these items. However, the difficulties of transporting/storing furniture and lack of moving resources make it difficult to connect the people wishing to donate with the people wishing to receive furniture. The agencies that do offer supports with transportation of donated items are finding it a challenge to keep up with the demand, as many rely on volunteers to help them out.

Both the housing and transportation difficulties illustrate the inter-relatedness of community resources. A lack in one area can start a "domino" effect, putting strain on other parts of the system or making it impossible to link available resources to the people who need them. People are unable to donate items because no agencies are available to pick them up. Consequently, the items go to waste even though there are people in the community who could use them. Addressing these unmet needs is an investment because it eases pressure on other resources, freeing them up for the people who most need them.

free

anonymous

professional

confidential

24/7