

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE



Dedicated-Site Supportive Housing SROI Series:

The Budzey Building, Vancouver

This series explores the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of operating dedicated-site supportive housing in B.C. It features five case studies of dedicated-site supportive housing programs located in communities across the province. An SROI ratio compares the total investment to the financial value of the social and economic outcomes achieved, highlighting the value created by investing in these programs.

Full report

The Social and Economic Value of Dedicated-Site Supportive Housing in B.C.

Other case studies

Cardington Apartments, Kelowna

Kettle on Burrard, Vancouver

Queens Manor, Victoria

Wesley Street, Nanaimo

The Budzey Building (“the Budzey”) is a 10-storey building in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside neighbourhood that is operated by RainCity Housing. Since July 1, 2015, the Budzey has offered safe, affordable and secure housing with supports to women and women-led families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. New Budzey residents are often already living in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside either without housing or in inappropriate housing conditions. Some of the residents are living with mental health and/or substance use challenges.

The Budzey has 147 units. Of these, 41 are allocated to women-led families (one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments). There are also 106 studio apartments allocated to single women. Supports provided through the Budzey are designed to help residents address issues that may have led to homelessness in the past while strengthening abilities to live independently. Of the 147 residents who moved into the Budzey when it was first opened in 2015, 113 individuals were still residents as of May 2018.

The average length of stay at the Budzey is approximately 24 months. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the Budzey in promoting housing stability for residents with previous housing challenges.

For every dollar invested in dedicated-site supportive housing at the Budzey, approximately five dollars in social and economic value is created.

The Budzey exterior





This study examines:

- › The social and economic value created by investing in the operation of dedicated-site supportive housing
- › The breakdown by stakeholder group of social and economic value that is created
- › Implications for future investment

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) Methodology

The SROI methodology articulates the financial value of outcomes created through a social investment (such as investment in supportive housing), to reveal how much value is created for every dollar invested. An SROI analysis combines quantitative, qualitative, and participatory research techniques to show the value of outcomes from different stakeholder perspectives. The result is an SROI ratio that compares the total investment to the financial value of the social and economic outcomes that are achieved, showing - in monetary terms - the financial benefit of social investments.

The current research follows the internationally standardized SROI methodology and uses information from existing academic research and grey literature (including other SROI studies and economic analyses), and data gathered from residents, partners, and supportive housing providers.

KEY ELEMENTS IN THE BUDZEY SROI MODEL

Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Investment by BC Housing and key donors in the total operating cost of the Budzey, including: staffing, programming, food programming, administration, maintenance, insurance, mortgage payments, and security › Rents paid by residents
Timeframe for Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › 2016-2017 operating year
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Single, female residents at the Budzey (primary stakeholders) › Female-led family residents at the Budzey (primary stakeholders) › Children of Budzey residents › Local communities › Government systems (various levels) › Investor (BC Housing)
Duration of Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › With an average length of stay of 24 months, and 113 of 147 residents who moved into the Budzey when it opened in 2015 still living in the building as of May 2018, outcomes included in the SROI are expected to last at least one year. Since residents may not continue to experience outcomes if investment stops (they could return to homelessness), most outcomes in this case study were not valued beyond one year. However, the value of improved health during pregnancy was valued for five years into the future (conservative duration) as these benefits would likely continue at least this long, regardless of length of stay or further investment.
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The SROI analysis of the Budzey employs a primarily evaluative approach with a small amount of forecasting based on primary and rigorous secondary research.



Outcomes Included in the SROI Analysis

Outcomes included and valued in the Budzey SROI analysis were identified based on existing research, information from the Budzey staff, resident interviews, and an interview with a key partner (Sheway Vancouver). Each outcome was assigned a financial value in the calculation of the SROI ratio. Outcomes include:



Stakeholder	Key Outcomes Included in the SROI
Residents (female-only lease holders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increased safety and decreased experiences of violence › Decreased harm from risk involved with street-based sex work › Increased access to high-quality housing and decreased experiences of homelessness › Increased overall wellbeing, including positive changes in physical and mental health › Increased social support, socialization, and sense of community (decreased social isolation) › Increased ability to engage in employment › Decreased harm from substance use and increased ability to move towards reducing use › Increased ability to parent with supports and to stay connected or reconnect with family › Increased personal disposable income › Increased ability to be involved in community (such as volunteering)
Children of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increased opportunity for families to stay together › Increased safety and decreased experiences of violence or abuse › Increased overall wellbeing
Long-term guests (non-lease holders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increased connection to family and supports
Local community/neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Improved local neighbourhood and community quality › Increased local economic activity due to resident spending
Government (all levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Decreased use of emergency services by residents such as ambulances and emergency rooms › Decreased use of homeless shelters by residents › Decreased resident involvement in justice systems › Decreased long-term hospital stays by residents › Decreased service use related to resident substance use › Decreased child welfare involvement among resident families › Improved health during pregnancy › Decreased risk of sexual exploitation related to homelessness among residents (and associated decrease of government service use) › Increased ability for children of residents to successfully engage in education

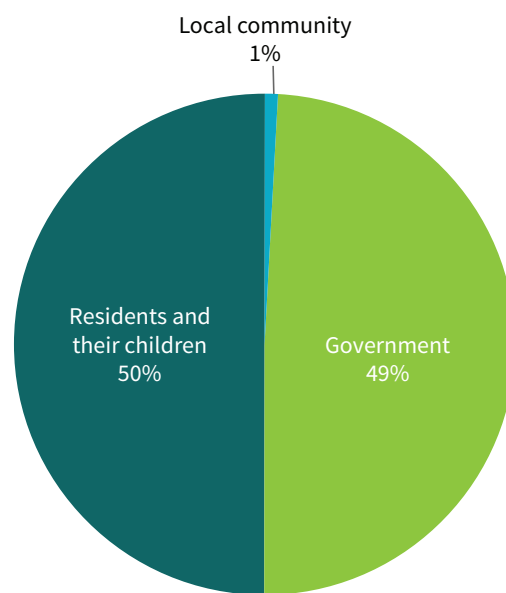


The Budzey SROI Results

SROI analysis of investment in the Budzey revealed:



For every dollar invested in the operation of the Budzey, approximately five dollars in social and economic value is created.



Value Breakdown by Stakeholder Group

“The tenants benefit from emotional support, home support, advocacy support as well.”

– Budzey Community Partner

All stakeholders included in the SROI analysis experience value from outcomes including:

Government: Approximately 49% of the social and economic value generated by the Budzey goes back to the government in cost reallocations related to decreased resident service use. In other words, for every dollar invested in operating the Budzey, approximately two and a half dollars is generated for government in cost reallocations due to decreased service use.

Local Community: While the community as a whole benefits from decreased government service use that increases efficiency and reduces costs to taxpayers over time, an additional 1% of the value goes back to the local community where the Budzey is located. This value is generated through improved neighbourhood quality and local resident spending. The value is experienced by community members who encounter less homelessness in their community, businesses that benefit from local spending, and public institutions like the library that have more actively engaged community members using their services. While some value to the local community has been captured through SROI analysis, this value is likely understated, as benefits from resident volunteering, more efficient delivery of services among community partners, and benefits for businesses (beyond local spending) were not fully captured in the SROI model.

Residents and their children: Approximately 50% of the social and economic value created by the Budzey goes back to residents and their children or families through increases in wellbeing, employment earnings, disposable income, safety, and reduced harm. This shows that while dedicated-site supportive housing like the Budzey creates important value for the government, it also generates significant value for people living in supportive housing.

Lessons Learned

- › Investment in dedicated-site supportive housing creates significant social and economic value, not only for the various levels of government that may experience decreased service use, but also for supportive housing residents and local communities. Further investment in dedicated-site supportive housing is expected to generate value while addressing a social need.
- › Further research is needed to continue to understand and track the social and economic value created from dedicated-site supportive housing.

*“For the first time in many years,
I feel housing security.”*

– Budzey Resident

Discussion

With approximately five dollars in social and economic value generated by the Budzey for every dollar invested, it is clear that significant social and economic value is created through the operation of dedicated-site supportive housing for women and women-led families with children. The Budzey creates important added value through its specialized support for families and vulnerable women, who are at greater risk of experiencing violence, abuse, and long-term negative outcomes. The significant value revealed through the Budzey SROI reflects the possible longer-term and female-specific value generated by this specialized program.

It is important to note, that the SROI analysis of the Budzey provides a conservative estimate of the total social and economic value created, since it was not possible to measure and capture the financial value of all potential outcomes. Further, many outcomes were not valued into the future, despite the possibility of longer-term impacts generated through the life skills and experience of stability gained through housing at the Budzey. The actual social and economic value created by the Budzey and its programs is likely much higher.

Thank You

*Our sincere thanks to all the residents who shared their perspectives and stories with us.
Our sincere appreciation to the Budzey staff for sharing their valuable insights and for supporting this study.*

More Information:

Visit BC Housing’s Research Centre at www.bchousing.org to find the latest workshops, research and publications on building and operating affordable, sustainable housing.

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Contact: **Research Centre** Email: research@bchousing.org Phone: **604-439-4135**

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This study was conducted by SROI experts at Constellation Consulting Group