

EMERGENCY SHELTER STAYS, CALGARY, 2008-2017

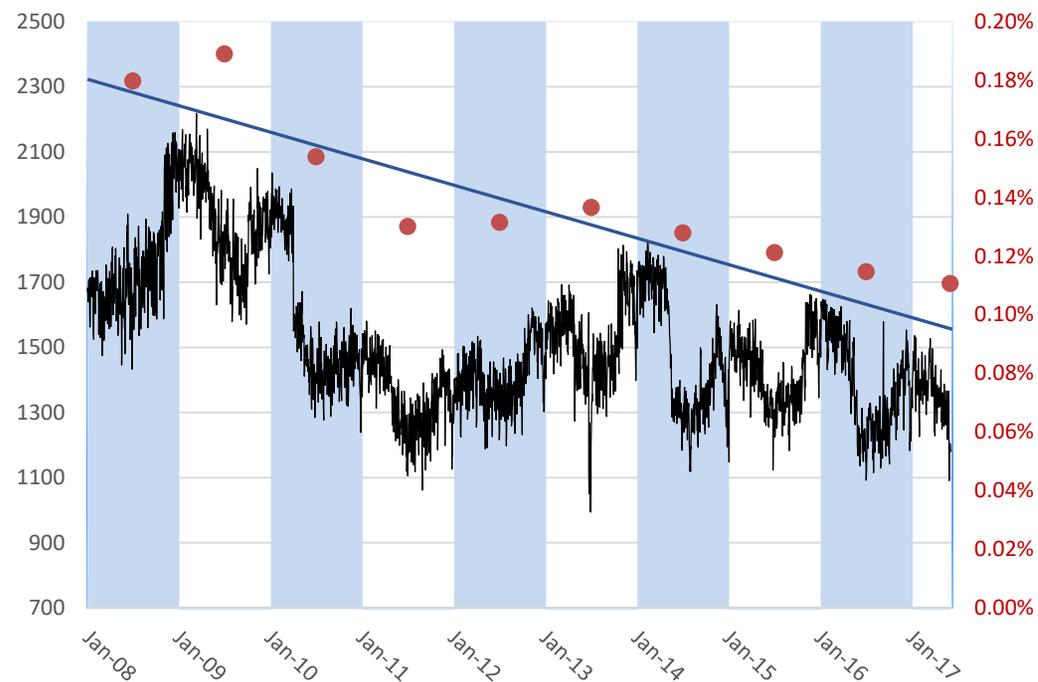
Number of stays in emergency homeless shelters provided for single adults: Total, and the number of stays as a percentage of Calgary's adult population

In 2008, Calgary embarked on a 10-year plan to address homelessness. The chart provides measures of the progress made in that regard. The jagged black line records the nightly number of stays in those of Calgary's emergency shelters allocated for single adults from January 1, 2008 to May 31, 2017. (By far the greatest number of shelter stays are those by single persons. Not shown are stays in shelters that are provided for families.) There is a large variation in the number of shelter stays within any specific year, reflecting seasonal and other influences on shelter use. Importantly, the maximum number of stays observed in a given year is trending downward as shown by the solid blue line. The maximum number of adult shelter beds used in a year has fallen by 31% since 2009.

Despite rapid population growth, the number of single adults staying in Calgary's emergency shelters is trending downward.

Evaluating progress in the fight against homelessness should take into consideration that Calgary's adult population grew

Emergency Shelter Stays, Singles
Total and as a Percentage of Adult Population



Source: Government of Alberta, Statistics Canada Table 51-0056, and author's calculations.

by 26% over the past ten years. Thus the number of people potentially touched by homelessness has grown a great deal. In the chart, the red dots report the average number of stays in emergency shelters as a percentage of Calgary's adult population in each year since 2008. From this perspective as well, significant progress has been made: since 2008 the number of stays in emergency shelters, measured as a percentage of Calgary's adult population, has fallen by nearly 40%. This success has been achieved despite high rents which make Calgary the most expensive city in Canada for those with limited incomes.