



New research: British Columbia shelter system tests homeless stipend

By Bridgette Watson, CBC News, October 7, 2020

“[The New Leaf project](#) is a joint study started in 2018 by Foundations for Social Change, a Vancouver-based charitable organization, and the University of British Columbia. After giving homeless Lower Mainland residents cash payments of \$7,500, researchers checked on them over the course of a year to see how they were faring.

“All 115 participants, ranging in age between 19 and 64, had been homeless for at least six months and were not struggling with serious substance use or mental health issues. About half were chosen at random to be given cash while the other half were a control group.

“Not only did those who received the money spend fewer days homeless than those in the control group, they had also moved into stable housing after an average of three months, compared to those in the control group, who took an average of five months.”

Many participants who received the stipend were food-secure after one month and were able to budget their stipend effectively for the year.

“Claire Williams, CEO of Foundations for Social Change, a charitable organization, said it costs, on average, \$55,000 annually for social and health services for one homeless individual. According to study data, the project saved the shelter system approximately \$8,100 per person for a total of roughly \$405,000 over one year for all 50.”

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