

FRESH START IMPACT REPORT

How Ci Measures Impact



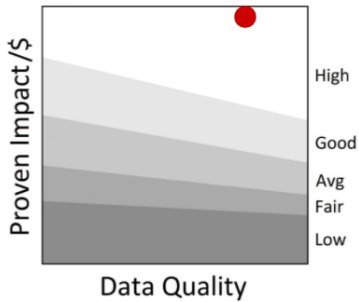
*Fresh Start Recovery
Centre is a High Impact
Charity. Find out why.*

*Asha McMullin
January 16, 2022
Updated June 18, 2022*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fresh Start shows high impact. For every dollar spent, Fresh Start generates \$6 of measurable change.

Impact Rating: High



Fresh Start is a high impact charity. Charity Intelligence estimates Fresh Start creates \$23 million in social value each year by helping its clients live longer and better. This is about \$6 in value for every dollar spent.

It is one of the most effective addiction recovery programs in Canada. In 2020, 49% of Fresh Start's participants were still completely sober one year after completing its program. This is almost three times more successful than average treatment programs in Canada.

More information on Fresh Start's programs and finances can be found in our charity [report](#).

If you want your giving to have impact, Fresh Start is one of the best charities in Canada.



FRESH START HELPS PEOPLE RECOVER THEIR LIVES

Drug abuse and addiction is one of Canada’s biggest healthcare problems. Addiction is deadly, destructive, and hard to treat. Drug and alcohol abuse costs an estimated \$26 billion a year in Canada. The opioid crisis alone killed 6,500 Canadians in 2020 per Public Health Canada.

The availability of treatment is not keeping up with demand. People only reach out once they need urgent help, but underfunded addiction centres without more beds leave people in crisis on long wait lists instead of in recovery.

Addiction recovery is hard. The results and success of recovery programs vary widely. Typically, less than 20% of people who access addiction treatment are sober one year later.

Fresh Start is one of the most effective addiction recovery programs in Canada. In 2020, **49% of Fresh Start's clients who complete the program were still completely sober one year later.**

Fresh start runs a 14–16-week intensive 12-steps recovery program with continued support through counselling, housing, and peer support.

People who complete the program are more likely to be employed and housed than they were before entering.

Addiction recovery isn’t glamorous work, but when done well, it has the power to transform lives.



IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Charity work is supposed to make a difference for the better. How do we know if it's working? Can we tell how big of a difference a charity makes? This report will walk you through how we measure Fresh Start's impact.

Proven Impact per Dollar: Proven Impact is the measurable change, the difference, a charity's activities create. It is the single most important number in charity analysis.

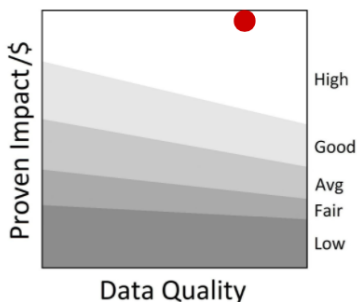
Proven impact is grounded by evidence-based research. Not just wishful thinking but solid proof that its programs are effective and work.

Data Quality: Our estimates on impact are limited by the data we can get from the charity. Often, this data does not give us a complete understanding of its work. We adjust for this by incorporating a Data Quality score into our reporting.

A high data quality score means the charity shows detailed information on programs, clients, and spending. It must also show that the change it claims to create is a direct result of its programs. The higher the data quality, the greater confidence we have in our assessment.

Fresh Start's Data Quality Score is 73%, well above the current average of 42%.

Impact Rating: High



Plotting impact: To keep it simple, we show a charity impact rating on this grid. This is shown on our website in the charity profile.

We assign a rating based on which region the charity falls in: High, Good, Average, Fair and Low.

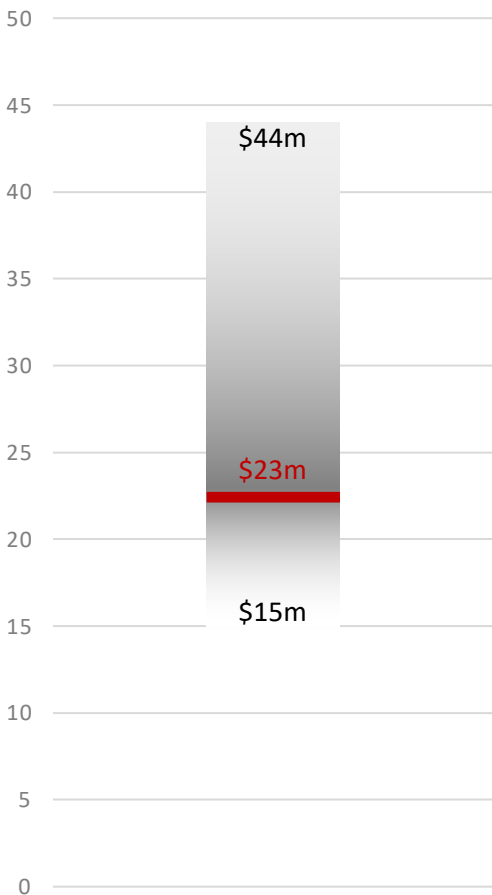
A High impact rating is our strongest recommendation.

IMPACT RANGE

Fresh Start's clients are often unemployed, homeless, and in poor physical health. This puts them in danger. Fresh Start saves its clients' lives.

Fresh Start's range of impact value

\$ million



Charity Intelligence has measured Fresh Start's programs and impact. Our best estimate is that Fresh Start creates \$23 million in social value each year by helping its clients live longer and better. Divided by Fresh Start's total spending of \$3.6 million, this generates **\$6 in value for every dollar spent**.

You can think of it like an investment, a \$1 donation to Fresh Start creates \$6 in value. That's a great return!

Our impact model shows that Fresh Start's addiction recovery programs create between \$15 million and \$44 million of value with our **best estimate at \$23 million**.

As with all models and estimates, there is uncertainty. This chart shows the range of this uncertainty with the upper and lower bounds of our impact model.

The upper bound is the potential, best case scenario, value Fresh Start could generate. The lower bound is supported by strong evidence. It is the lowest value Fresh Start is likely to create given the data we have. Our best estimate uses research findings and Fresh Start's reported results.

We feel our estimate is conservative, as we only count impacts that are backed up by evidence. If charity data is missing, we don't guess how to fill in the gaps. We expect that as data improves, our impact assessments will rise.

For more details see *Calculating Impact* on page 10.

KEY DRIVERS

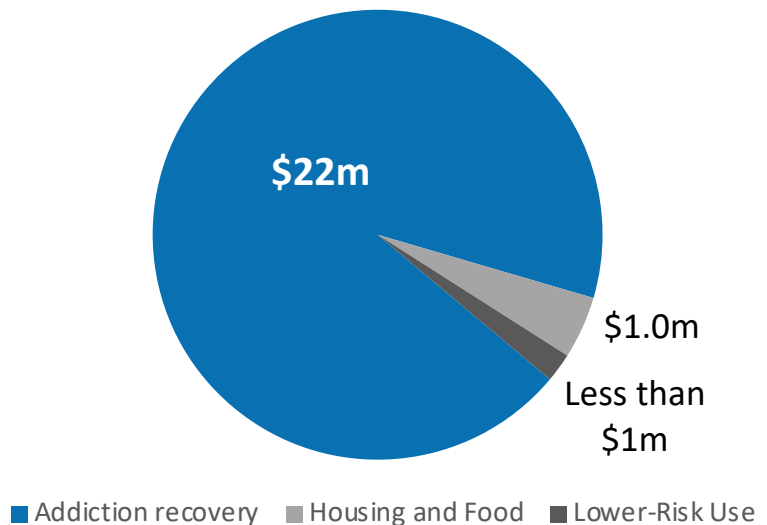
Fresh Start's addiction recovery accounts for 95% of its demonstrated impact.

Our model finds Fresh Start's programs create \$23 million in social value. This social value comes from three of Fresh Start's activities:

\$22 million from addiction recovery: Those that finish Fresh Start's recovery program and remain sober have better health and longevity. Where some charities may have diversity with impact coming from different programs, Fresh Start's addiction recovery outcome is the key driver. Addiction recovery counts for 95% of its impact.

\$1 million from housing and food: Fresh Start's program provides housing during addiction recovery and in Stage II transitions. Fresh Start clients are kept safe, fed and out of homeless shelters.

Less than \$1 million from lower-risk use: Not all clients who graduate from Fresh Start's sobriety programs remain sober. Yet some clients become lower-risk users. We see this lower-risk use making a minor contribution to Fresh Start's total social value.



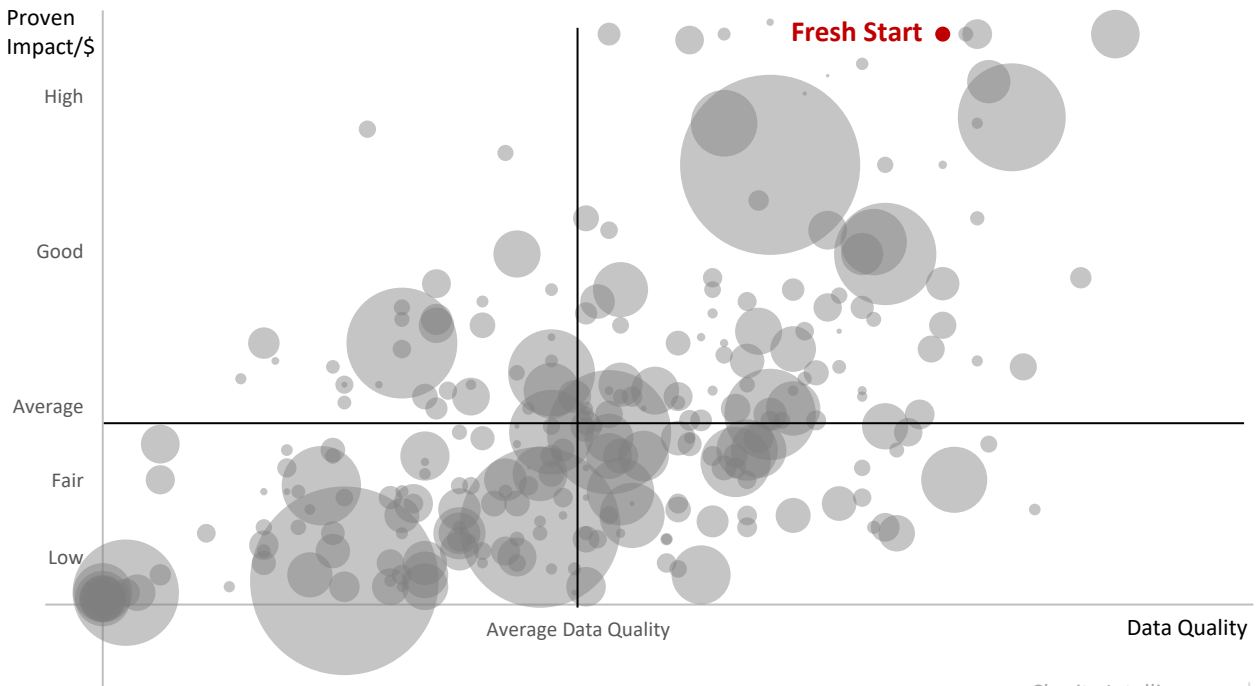
GIVE DIFFERENT

Up to 40 per cent of Canadian giving may be wasted by donors giving to charities without measurable, proven, and high impact.

Not all charities are equal. Our research and analysis finds wide diversity. Our model shows that 40% of Canadian donations go to charities with below average proven impact. In this graph the size of a circle represents the annual donations a charity receives. As you can see, high impact charities are mostly small dots; they don't get much annual giving.

So often, Canadians are encouraged to give more money to charities. As we see it, there would be better results if we gave differently, to charities with high proven impact, rather than more. We urge Canadians to give different.

Some of Canada's most popular and well-supported charities are also the ones with the lowest proven impact. In contrast, Fresh Start is one of the best. Its work is not glamorous, but the results speak for themselves. Fresh Start saves lives.



GRITTY DETAILS

Fresh Start's Impact Data

External References

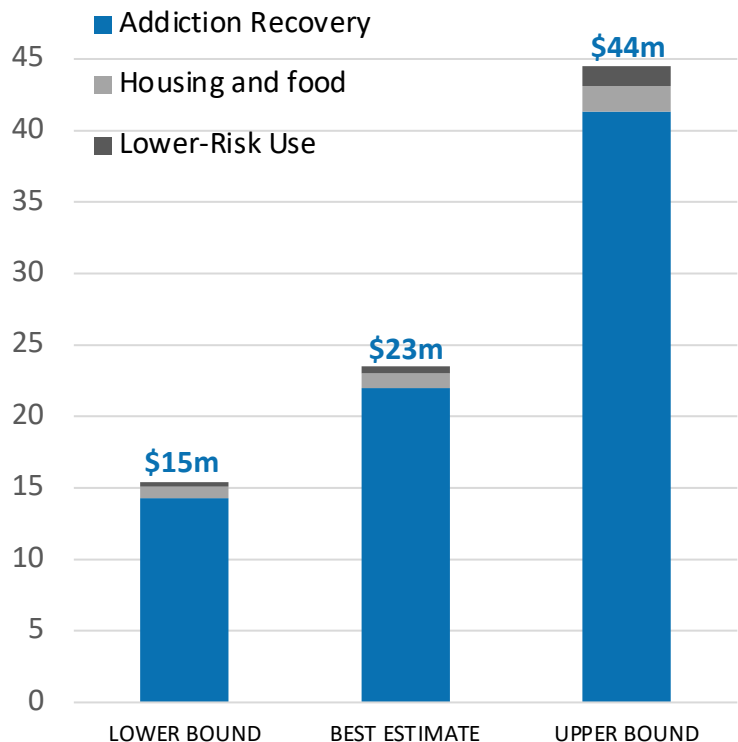
BOUNDS

Here is more detail on the bounds of social impact. Our estimate uses bounds from social science research papers and actuarial economic values we've found (see Sources).

The upper bound is what value a charity's programs could produce in a best-case scenario. The lower bound includes only values supported by strong evidence. From external research reports and Fresh Start's results reporting we arrive at our best estimate.

We find Fresh Start's measurable impact ranges from a lower bound of \$15 million, an upper bound of \$44 million and our best estimate is \$23 million.

Again, within the bounds, our model shows the greatest value coming from Fresh Start's addiction recovery outcomes. Housing and food creates some value too. Lower-risk drug use only contributes marginally in the upper bound.



CALCULATING IMPACT

The table below is a summary of our model’s calculation of Fresh Start’s impact. The table shows the value ranges for Fresh Start’s outcomes (addiction recovery, housing and food, lower-risk drug use).

Fresh Start’s total spending in 2019 was \$3.6 million. This total spending includes spending on its programs, fundraising and administration.

Our best estimate of Fresh Start’s impact is \$23 million. Relative to the \$3.6 million in annual spending, this creates an estimated SROI of 6:1.

This summary also shows uncertainty. The value of the client outcome for addiction recovery has the widest range in value. This could potentially be \$29.0 million or \$8.5 million and our best estimate is \$13.8 million.

We cringe at showing these values to one decimal place as it could give the impression of precision. Yet, some outcomes have low values that wouldn’t show otherwise.

	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Best Estimate
Total Spending: \$3.6 million 2019			
Demonstrated Impact per dollar spent (SROI) (Total social value of outcomes / Total spending)	x 4	x 12	x 6
Summary of Ci's impact model: value for Fresh Start outcomes			
Value in millions \$			
Addiction recovery	14.3	41.3	21.7
Better health and longevity	8.5	29.0	13.8
Cost savings on criminal justice and healthcare system	5.8	12.4	8.0
Housing and Food	0.8	1.8	1.0
Inherent value of housing, stability, safety	0.4	0.9	0.5
Cost savings on public housing and law enforcement	0.4	0.8	0.5
Lower-risk drug use	0.3	1.4	0.5
Better health and longevity	0.2	1.0	0.3
Cost savings on criminal justice and healthcare system	0.1	0.4	0.2
Total Value Added	\$ 15	\$ 44	\$ 23

KEY METRICS

91% of Canadians expect charities to report their results.

CanadaHelps 2021 survey

Charity annual reports heavily feature emotional stories. Stories are anecdotes. Anecdotes are not data. For donors seeking information to give intelligently, Canadian charities can be rich on stories and light on metrics. This lack of results reporting does donors a disservice.

People ask what makes Fresh Start a Charity Intelligence top pick charity. It's right there in its data. We read the annual report and do the financial analysis. But when you combine the figures and results of its addiction recovery program and benchmark this with other addiction programs across Canada, you see what makes Fresh Start an outstanding charity.

Here are Fresh Start's key metrics:

- 1. Program results:** in 2020, 149 men began Fresh Start's recovery program, 80% graduated (119) and 49% were sober one year later. That's 59 men.
- 2. Cost per client and cost per success:** In 2019, Fresh Start's total costs were \$3.6 million which works out to \$21,767 per man in its program, and \$47,209 the cost of success to get one man sober for a year.
- 3. Benchmarking:** comparing Fresh Start's results and costs to other Canadian addiction treatment charities, it has the best results per dollar.
- 4. Client mix:** 41% of Fresh Start's clients come from high-cost backgrounds like jail, homelessness or transitional housing.

KEY METRICS: PROGRAM RESULTS

Fresh Start’s key program result is the number of the men who enroll and graduate from its Phase one 14-16-week addiction program who are sober one year later. Since this isn’t yet known, the most recent data we have is for 2020.

In 2020, 149 men enrolled in Fresh Start’s addiction program. 119 completed the program. This is a graduation rate of 80%. Of these 119 graduates, Fresh Start reports one year later, that 59 were clean and sober. The 2020 program’s success rate is 49%.

Fresh Start Recovery: Key Metrics					
Year ending December	COVID-19		2019	2018	2017
	2021	2020			
Source: Fresh Start's annual report					
Men entered program	172	149	167	134	135
Graduates	138	119	142	89	97
Graduation rate: Completed 14-16 week Phase 1 addiction recovery program	80%	80%	85%	66%	72%
Graduates who are sober one year later - reported the following year	<i>Not yet reported</i>	59	77	48	48
Success rate		49%	54%	54%	49%

Benchmarking matters. The Canadian average rate for addiction recovery success is 15%-20%. Fresh Start’s programs is 2x-3x more successful that the national average.

Success rates will bounce around. The same number reported each year should raise questions. In 2021 Fresh Start’s success rate was 49% compared to 54% the year before.

Success rates will vary due to:

external factors like covid lockdown, complex clients with multiple addictions, and new street drugs that can be more resistant to treatment than alcoholism.

internal factors like program changes, staff turnover, new treatments and supports, length of program, residential or off-site.

Charities build trust with donors by sharing honest results. Donors should not penalize charities with one-year blips in results but instead encourage full transparency.

“The credibility of research and the enduring process of the scientific pursuit of knowledge, are seriously damaged is only flattering results are publishes and troubling findings are hidden or silenced.”

ADD THE FINANCIALS

We layer Fresh Start’s financial information with its social results. In 2020, Fresh Start’s total costs were \$3.3m, a drop compared to 2019’s total cost of \$3.6m.

Total cost gives us the cost per client. In 2020, Fresh Start’s total costs per client was \$22,002, This is inline with Fresh Start’s costs per client for previous years. (We’re looking forward to seeing what happens in 2022 as costs per client leapt 47% to \$32,369. Will this payoff with higher success rates?)

The key metric for cost benefit analysis is Fresh Start’s cost of success. Here it is total costs divided by clients who are sober one year later. The 2020 program has a cost of success of \$55,565, an 18% increase yet within Fresh Start’s historic range.

Fresh Start Recovery: Financials						
Year ending December	COVID-19		2019	2018	2017	
	2021	2020				
Fresh Start's Total Costs	\$ 5,567,516	\$ 3,278,330	\$ 3,635,060	\$ 2,957,242	\$ 2,957,242	
Cost per client (program)	\$ 32,369	\$ 22,002	\$ 21,767	\$ 22,069	\$ 21,905	
Cost for success - total cost / one person clean and sober	<i>Not yet reported</i>	\$ 55,565	\$ 47,209	\$ 61,609	\$ 61,609	

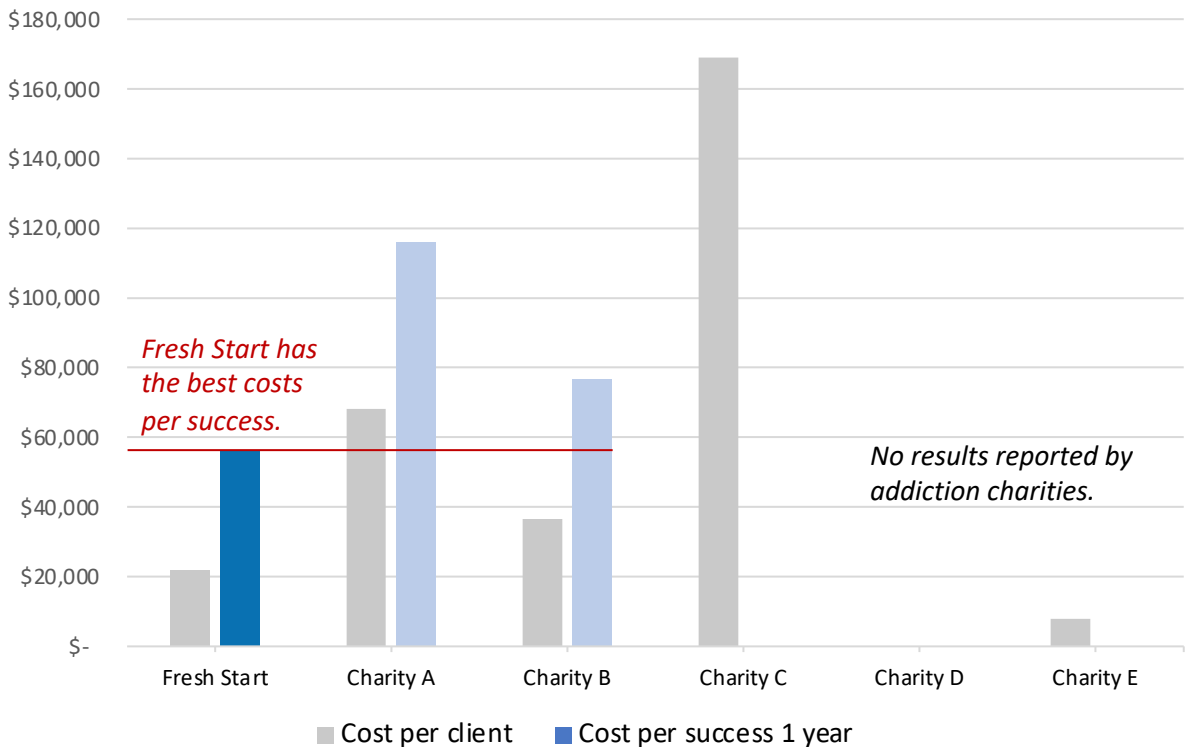
BENCHMARKING

Many other charities run addiction programs. Fresh Start's low cost per outcome is what makes it outstanding compared to other addiction recovery programs we've analysed.

Cost per client range between \$8,000 to \$169,000. In the few charities that report program success rates, the cost per success range from \$56,000 (Fresh Start) to \$115,000.

The other addiction centers do not report basic information like the number of clients receiving treatment for the year, or sobriety rates after completing the program. If you donate to other addiction centers, this is information you need to know.

Benchmarking: other addiction recovery centres



CLIENT MIX

One last thing. It's important to highlight Fresh Start's client mix. A charity's success results can be impressive by working with the easiest clients. Addiction affects Canadians across all backgrounds. This create a wide range of clients in the addiction recovery sector. Yet addiction has different costs and societal values that vary based on the client's characteristics.

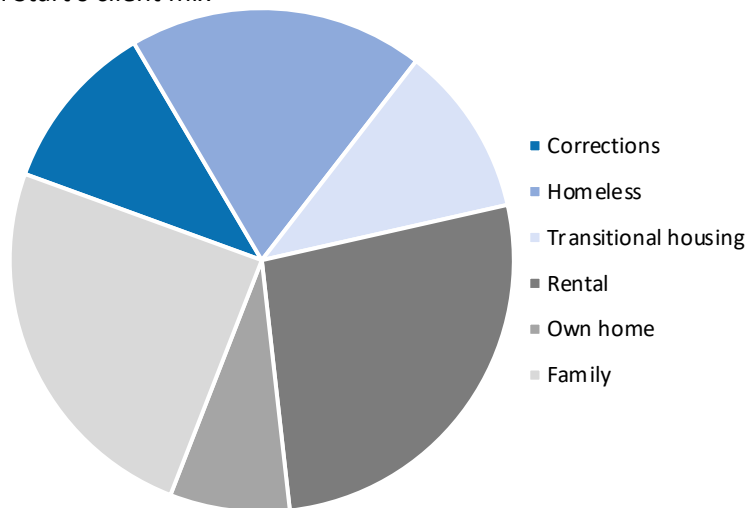
Some addicts incur higher social costs like incarceration, homelessness and institutionalization. Here the client mix is used to assess a charity's value.

41% of Fresh Starts clients come to its recovery program from high-cost backgrounds: jail (11%), homeless (19%) or transitional housing (11%). Fresh Start's addiction recovery success rates are particularly impressive given its client mix.

Fresh Start isn't "cherry picking" "easy clients" but achieves its high results with "tough" cases. This client mix also contributes to Fresh Start's high impact.

41% tough cases

Fresh Start's client mix



SOURCES

Ci relies heavily on others' research. These are the key sources we used in measuring Fresh Start's impact.

Our impact analysis was done in 2020 and used Fresh Start's most current success rate at that time on its 2019 costs.

2020's results are not materially different.

Charity impact values can change, new information and new evidence also affects impact values.

Fresh Start Sources:

Fresh Start Annual Report, 2019 (service data and clients helped)

Fresh Start Financial Statements, 2019 (total spending)

Fresh Start Annual Report 2016 (client demographics)

Fresh Start Annual reports 2015-2019 (average completion and sobriety rates by year)

Addiction Demographics:

US Department of Health and Human Services, "[Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings](#)"

Relapse Rates:

Deborah A Dawson 1, Risë B Goldstein, and Bridget F Grant, "[Rates and correlates of relapse among individuals in remission from DSM-IV alcohol dependence: a 3-year follow-up](#)". National Institutes of Health, 2007

Economic and Health Effects of Addiction:

[Canadian Substance Use Costs and Harms \(CSUCH\) 2021](#) by University of Victoria and Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

[Addiction prevalence and death rate](#) data from IHME at University of Washington School of Medicine

Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser, [Drug Use](#), 2019, Our world in Data from University of Oxford and Oxford Martin School

University of Victoria, [Cost of substance use in Canada 2017](#)

Legal disclaimer: *The information in this report was prepared by Charity Intelligence Canada and its independent analysts from publicly available information. Charity Intelligence and its analysts have made endeavours to ensure that the data in this report is accurate and complete but accepts no liability.*

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