
Whitehorse Point in Time Count 2021



Community Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Safe at Home and the Community Advisory Board would like to thank the many supporters, partners and volunteers who contributed time and expertise to this project. Special appreciation goes to the individuals who participated in the survey and shared their stories with us.

We respectfully acknowledge that the 2021 Whitehorse PiT Count was conducted on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

PARTNERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Boys and Girls Club of Yukon
Blood Ties Four Directions Centre
City of Whitehorse
Downtown Outreach Clinic
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon
Kwanlin Dün First Nation Health Centre
Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services
Outreach Van
Yukon Pride Centre
Skookum Jim Friendship Centre – Youth Emergency Shelter
Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre
Voices Influencing Change
Whitehorse Emergency Shelter
Whitehorse Correctional Centre
Whitehorse General Hospital – First Nations Health Programs
Whitehorse Individual Learning Centre
Youth Achievement Centre
Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition
Yukon University – Social Work Program
Yukon Women's Transition Home: Kaushee's Place and Betty's Haven

THANK YOU

- Volunteer Yukon for their help reaching volunteers for the Count.
- The City of Whitehorse for the donation of bus tickets.
- Baked Café for their donation of food at Headquarters.
- Anthony Boisvert for his role as support to the Coordinator in planning and providing housing navigation.
- Kate Mechan and Mona Luxion for their oversight and support to the Coordinator, including facilitating the magnet event.
- JP Steverink for his assistance with data entry, data cleaning and for providing support with HIFIS.
- Reaching Home Community Advisory Board members for their third-party review and input of the final report and recommendations.

→ Dot Neuls for design and formatting support for the infographic and final report.

PREPARED BY

Jacqueline Mills
PiT Count Coordinator

FUNDED BY


This project funded in part by Reaching Home:
Government of Canada's Homeless Strategy | 

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
PARTNERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS	2
THANK YOU	2
PREPARED BY	3
FUNDED BY	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD	6
SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	8
WHAT IS A PIT COUNT?	8
DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS	9
RESULTS	10
WHERE INDIVIDUALS STAYED THE NIGHT OF THE PIT COUNT	10
DEMOGRAPHICS	12
INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT	16
PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS	19
SERVICE USE	22
SERVICE NEEDS	23
THE PiT COUNT and THE BY-NAME LIST	25
THE BY-NAME LIST (BNL)	25
METHODOLOGY	27
SURVEY	27
DATA COLLECTION	27
DATA STORAGE	28
DATA ENTRY and ANALYSIS	28
ENUMERATION	29
LIMITATIONS	29

VOLUNTEERS	30
COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS	30
<i>NEXT STEPS</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>ADMINISTRATIVE DATA</i>	<i>33</i>
EMERGENCY SHELTERS TOTAL: 38	33
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING TOTAL: 29	33
PUBLIC SYSTEMS TOTAL: 21	33
<i>PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>GLOSSARY</i>	<i>36</i>

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

August 2021

On behalf of the Reaching Home Community Advisory Board, we are honored to have the opportunity to give thanks to those community members experiencing homelessness, volunteers, and frontline service providers for helping implement Whitehorse's third Point-in-Time Count. The count is a snapshot of homelessness in our community and this report is an important reference to help us understand the challenges facing homeless individuals and families in our city.

The results reported are similar to Whitehorse's past two counts and indicate that we have much more work to do to address the needs of unhoused citizens. The onus is on each of us to digest the fact that these results are so much more than numbers. They are people – young and old – and families with stories to share and experiences that must inform the solutions moving forward.

Homelessness is a persistent injustice, particularly for Indigenous community members who are overrepresented within the homeless population. Addressing the root causes of homelessness is more complex than building more affordable housing. If we are to truly create a sense of home, we have an obligation to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action and the Yukon Strategy on MMIWG2S+.

We urge you to reflect on the following questions and commit to one action.

- What is the opportunity we have here?
- What are you going to do about what we have learned?
- How do we reconcile the numbers now that we see them?

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. Our Community Advisory Board is committed to ending homelessness, to streamlining our resources, and to leaning on the wisdom and resilience of those with lived/living experience of homelessness. There cannot be justice until there is equality and if we accept that any of could be homeless at any time, this will give us the extra push to act with the urgency and care that people deserve.

Respectfully,



Maury Fraser

Lived experience of homelessness



Kate Mechan

Chair, Reaching Home Community Advisory Board

SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

At Least **151** people experienced homelessness on the night of April 13th, 2021

ABSOLUTELY HOMELESS - At least 43

38 Emergency Sheltered*



38 people stayed at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, Kaushee's Place and the Youth Emergency Shelter.

5 Unsheltered**



5 people stayed in an unsheltered location including in a car, public space, or a tent.

* Actual occupancy rates on the night of April 13th.

** Estimates based on surveys completed at target locations.

Actual counts of unsheltered persons, persons staying in hotels, motels or at someone else's place may be higher than reported here.

PROVISIONALLY ACCOMMODATED - At least 108

29 Transitional Housing*



29 people stayed at Betty's Haven including children.

31 Hotel/Motel**



31 people were staying in a hotel/motel on the night of the count.

27 Someone Else's Place**



At least 27 people were couch surfing and staying at a friend's, family member's, or stranger's place temporarily.

21 Public Systems*



21 people were in institutional settings. This includes Whitehorse General Hospital, Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Withdrawal Management or the Intensive Treatment Program at Mental Health & Substance Use Services.

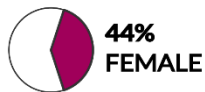
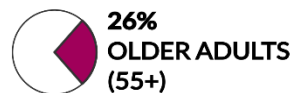
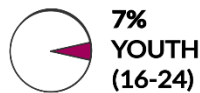
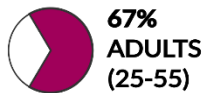
CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



52% Spent the past 12 months homeless.

64% Were homeless for at least a year in the past 3 years.

DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIAL FACTORS



41% had experience in foster care or a group home.



51% experienced homelessness for the first time before the age of 20.



19% reported attending residential school.



25% reported having FASD.



47% reported having a mental health issue.



54% were from a rural Yukon community or the NWT.

OTHER DATA

TOP 2 BARRIERS TO FINDING HOUSING

- Affordability
- Discrimination

TOP 4 SUPPORT NEEDS

- Mental Health & Substance Use
- Physical Disability
- Serious Ongoing Medical Issue
- Brain Injury

COMMON REASONS FOR HOUSING LOSS

- Landlord/Tenant Conflict
- Substance Use
- Unfit or Unsafe Housing Conditions
- Loss of Income

13% reported losing their housing due to the Covid-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Whitehorse received funding from the Government of Canada to conduct a Point-in-Time count (PiT count) – a ‘snapshot’ look at homelessness. Typically, over 60 communities partake in the nationally coordinated initiative; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the count looked different across the country in order to adhere to local COVID-19 restrictions and recommendations. Some communities had to delay their count or cancel altogether. In Whitehorse the count was conducted a year later than planned. Fortunately, we were able to conduct the count similarly to previous years due to our low COVID-19 case counts in the territory and no lockdown measures. The 2021 Whitehorse PiT Count was conducted over a 24-hour period, starting at 4:30 p.m. on April 13th and ending at 4:30 p.m. on April 14th. This was the 3rd PiT count conducted in Whitehorse.

WHAT IS A PIT COUNT?¹

A PiT Count is a coordinated approach to gathering data that aims to count or enumerate the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night. The standard methodology offers a minimum number of data elements that must be gathered in the same way across Canada. Communities can also collect additional data to meet their local needs.

A PiT Count has two primary purposes:

1. **An enumeration, or count, of people experiencing absolute homelessness.** It is intended to identify how many people in a community experience homelessness in shelters and on the streets at a given time. Conducted over subsequent years, PiT counts can be used by the community to track progress in reducing homelessness.
2. **A survey of the homeless population.** Through an accompanying survey, the PiT count gives the community information on the demographics and service needs of their homeless population. This information can be used to target community resources to where they are most needed.

A PiT Count is not intended to:

- **Be a measure of everyone who experiences homelessness in a community over time.** By focusing on a single day, the count will not include some people who cycle in and out of homelessness or provide data on hidden homelessness (e.g. people who are “couch-surfing”). What it will do is provide an estimate of how many people are absolutely homeless (e.g. sleeping in shelters or on the street) on the day of the count. Some communities nevertheless conduct the survey with the hidden homeless population in order to provide some information on their service needs.

¹ This information was taken directly from the [Guide to Point-in-Time Count in Canada: 3rd Edition](#) developed by Employment and Social Development Canada.

DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS²

The core PiT Count approach includes people who are experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.



Unsheltered homelessness: includes people who are sleeping in places unfit for human habitation, including the following locations: streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.



Sheltered homelessness: includes people sleeping in the following locations: emergency shelters (general and specific to men, women, youth, etc.), extreme weather shelters, Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, and transitional shelters. It may include people who receive hotel/motel vouchers in lieu of shelter beds. It does not include people who have security of tenure, who are in Housing First programs or in social or subsidized housing.

In this count, like past PiT counts in Whitehorse, every attempt was made to capture people who were experiencing hidden homelessness and homeless individuals staying in a public system on the night of the count:



Hidden homelessness: includes living temporarily with others without legal protection, guarantee of continued residency, or prospects of permanent housing. In Whitehorse this may include anyone couch-surfing with family, friends or others and also includes those staying in hotels and motels.



Public Systems: is used interchangeably with institutional settings and may include correctional facilities, hospitals, community-based residential facilities (e.g. halfway houses), substance use treatment centres, and health and mental health programs.

² This information was taken directly from the [Guide to Point-in-Time Count in Canada: 3rd Edition](#) developed by Employment and Social Development Canada.

RESULTS

The number of homeless individuals on the night of April 13, 2021 was at least 151.³

- Unsheltered: 5
- Staying at a friend's (couch surfing): 27
- Staying at a hotel: 31
- Public systems: 21
 - This included the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Withdrawal Management Services or the Intensive Treatment Program at Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, and Whitehorse General Hospital
- Emergency Shelters: 38
 - This included: the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, Kaushee's Place, and the Youth Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing: 29
 - This included: Betty's Haven

The information above was taken from a combination of administrative data (for public systems, emergency shelters and transitional housing) and survey data (unsheltered, hotel and couch-surfing).

WHERE INDIVIDUALS STAYED THE NIGHT OF THE PIT COUNT⁴

Of the 120 individuals who identified their sleeping location in a survey response on the night of the PiT count, 35% were experiencing absolute homelessness. All other respondents fell within the provisionally accommodated definition, making up 60% of those counted. This is very similar to what was reported during the 2018 PiT count. In 2018, 34.2% of respondents were experiencing absolute homelessness and 65.8% were provisionally accommodated.



A PiT count cannot accurately measure the magnitude of hidden homelessness in a community due to the methodological and practical challenges of enumerating this population. That said, almost half (48%) of surveyed respondents identified as couch-surfing and living in hotels/motels (Figure 1).

Where individuals stayed⁵

³ The actual number of homeless individuals may be similar or higher due to the inherent limitations of capturing the entire population over one 24 hour period.

⁴ The data in the next section is based on survey responses (unless otherwise indicated). In total, 120 surveys were included in the final data. All percentages are based on the number of respondents to that specific question and not based on all the 120 survey participants, unless all 120 answered that specific question (participants could choose to skip over any question or end the survey at any time).

⁵ Where individuals stayed is based off of the survey responses and is not the same as the administrative data tallies that were provided directly from services themselves.

Absolutely Homeless (35%)



31% of respondents were staying at a homeless shelter on the night of the count (38 of 120 respondents)



4% of respondents were unsheltered on the night of the count (5 of 120 respondents)

Provisionally Accommodated⁶ (60%)



25% of respondents were staying at a hotel/motel funded by a government program on the night of the count (31 of 120 respondents)



23% of respondents were staying at a friend's place on the night of the count (27 of 120 respondents)



6% of respondents were staying in public systems on the night of the count (7 of 120 respondents)

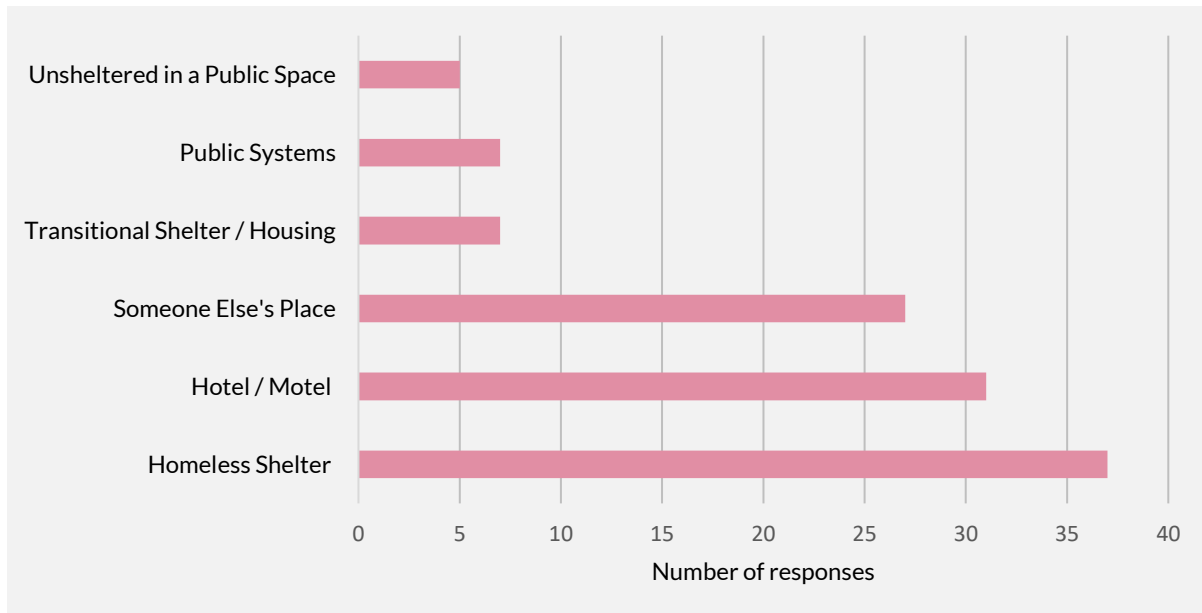


6% of respondents were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count (7 of 120 respondents)

Note: the remaining 5% of people indicated that they were homeless and were not sure where they were staying on the night of the count. Volunteers were not able to answer a probable location.

⁶ These people also responded that they did not have access to a permanent residence where they could safely stay as long as they wanted.

Figure 1: Count of overnight location reported by PiT survey respondents



Note: due to small cell counts, some locations were suppressed.

Who individuals stayed with

- 73% of respondents were alone on the night of the count (i.e. did not stay with any family) (88 of 120 respondents).
- This is slightly less than the percentage of respondents that reported staying alone on the night of the 2018 count. In 2018, 80% of the PiT count respondents reported being alone.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

- **8 survey respondents were between the age of 16 and 25 during the PiT count** (7% of total respondents) and were not staying with a parent or guardian. In 2018, 12% of respondents were youth. Youth under the age of 16 were not eligible to participate in the survey and no unaccompanied youth under 16 were encountered on the night of the count.
- **There were 21 non-surveyed dependent children (under the age of 18) reported by their parents or guardians as being homeless** on the night of the count or counted through administrative tallies from shelters or transition homes. During the 2018 PiT count there were 17 non-surveyed dependent children under the age of 18 counted.
- **Less than 5 seniors were surveyed** on the night of the count.⁷

⁷ For the purposes of this Count, senior is defined as someone who is over the age of 65.

The surveyed population was fairly evenly distributed across age categories with the exception of the under 25 population which represented a smaller proportion of responses (Table I).

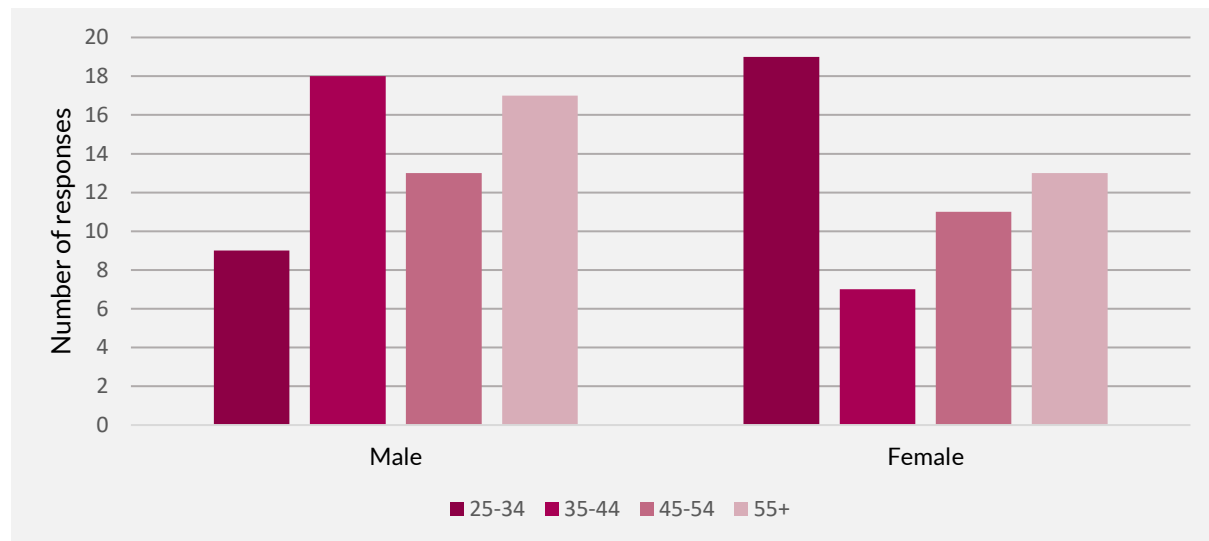
Table I: Count of age category among respondents (n=115)

Age Category	Count of responses
Less than 25	8
25-34	28
35-44	25
45-54	24
55+	30

Gender

- 54% of respondents identified as male (63 of 117 responses) and 44% of respondents identified as female (52 of 117 responses). The remaining respondents were other genders. This is a more balanced gender spread than what was seen in 2018 where 61% of survey respondents identified as male and 39% identified as female.

Figure 2: Count of gender and age among PiT respondents



Note: This figure excludes respondents who identified as other or unknown genders and includes dependents that were listed by survey participants.⁸ As there were few respondents between the ages of 16 and 24, gender breakdown for the under 25 category is not provided in order to protect the privacy of the respondents.

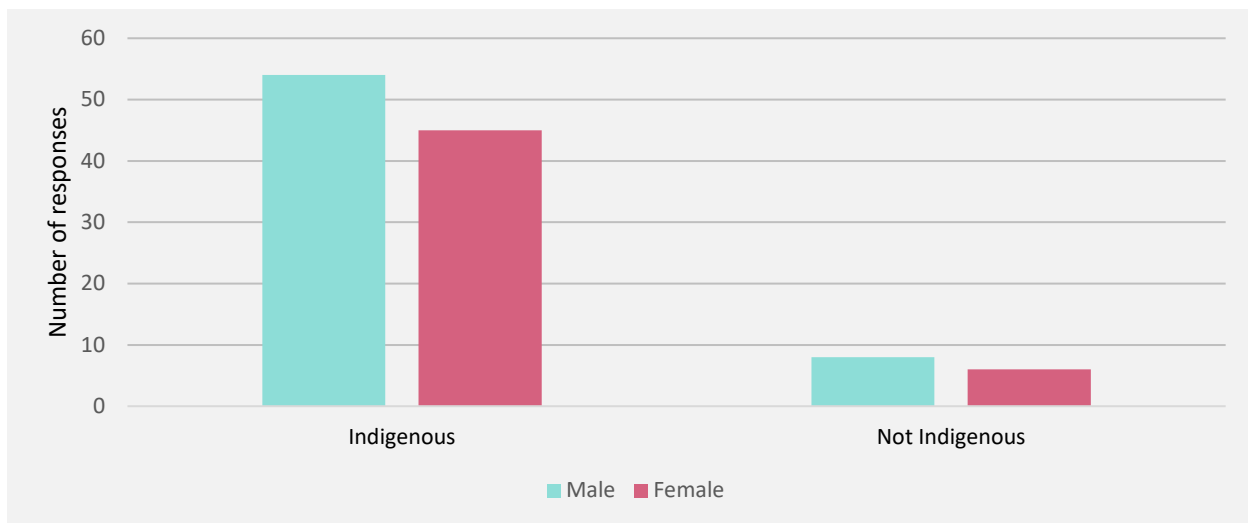
⁸ Dependents could include people over the age of 25 that survey participants noted were in their direct care.

Indigenous Ancestry and Ethnicity

- **85% of survey participants were Indigenous** (100 of 118 responses) (i.e. First Nations, Inuit, Metis or having Indigenous ancestry). This is slightly higher than what was seen in 2018 when 82% of respondents reported being Indigenous. Of these, 82% were First Nations (82 of 100 responses).
- **67% of survey participants indicated they were Indigenous only**⁹ (60 of 89 responses).
- **28% of survey participants indicated they were an ethnicity other than Indigenous** (25 of 89 responses). Of these respondents, 68% were Caucasian (17 of 25 responses) (e.g. European, French, Ukrainian, Euro-Latinx).
- **Less than 5 respondents reported being immigrants to Canada.**

Among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents, there were more males than females (Figure 3).

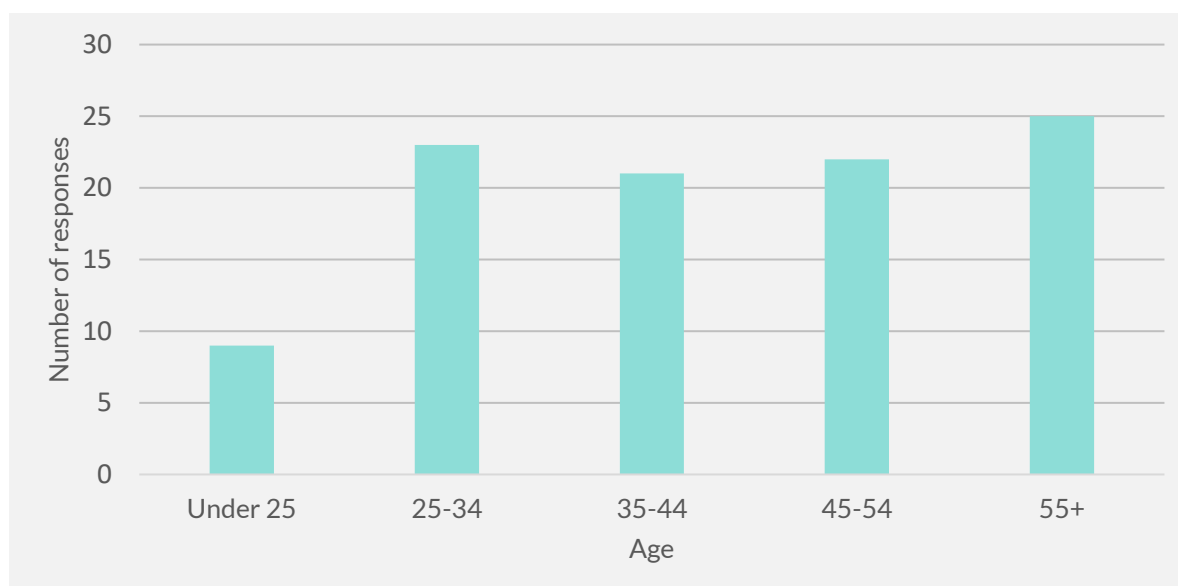
Figure 3: Count of gender and Indigenous status among PiT respondents (n=113)



Similar to what was seen across the entire surveyed population, there is an even age distribution across age groups of Indigenous people, with the exception of those under 25 (Figure 4). This is expected since Indigenous individuals made up 85% of total responses.

⁹ 'Indigenous only' means that the respondent indicated that they did not identify with any other ethnic group.

Figure 4: Count of age among PiT respondents who have Indigenous ancestry



Sexual Orientation

- 77% of respondents reported their sexuality as straight/heterosexual (87 of 112 responses)
- 11% of respondents reported their sexuality as bisexual (12 of 112 responses).
- 10% of respondents reported their sexuality as either: asexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer or two-spirit (11 of 112 responses).
- The remaining two respondents responded that they did not know.

In the 2018 PiT count report, exact numbers of sexual orientation were not released due to privacy concerns. In this count more respondents reported a sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual and therefore we are able to report these numbers.

Sexuality, Gender and Ethnicity

- Of the 63 respondents who identified as male, 54 identified their sexuality as straight (86%).
- Of the 52 respondents who identified as female, 33 identified their sexuality as straight (63%), 10 identified as bisexual (19%) and 5 identified as lesbian (10%).
- Of the 100 respondents who were Indigenous, 76 identified their sexuality as straight (76%) and 10 identified as bisexual (10%).

Language

- When asked what language respondents are best able to express themselves, 94% of respondents identified English as their preferred language to communicate (103 of 110).
- 6% of respondents reported that they were best able to express themselves in a language other than English (7 of 110). Six of these seven respondents identified an Indigenous language specifically.

INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

Veteran Status

- 8% of respondents reported previously working with the military or RCMP (9 of 119 respondents).

In the 2018 PiT count report, exact counts of veteran status were not released due to privacy concerns. In this count, more respondents reported veteran status and therefore we are able to report these numbers.

Foster Care

- 41% of respondents reported being in foster care or a youth group home when they were younger (48 of 116 respondents).
 - Of these respondents, 63% reported that Family and Children's Services did not help them transition to independence (30 of 48 respondents); 13% reported that they did help the transition to independence (6 of 48 respondents).
 - 69% were homeless within a year of exiting the foster care system.

In 2018, 47% of individuals responded that they had been in foster care at some point. This is slightly more than the results seen in the 2021 survey.

Residential School

- 19% of respondents reported attending residential school (22 of 116 respondents).

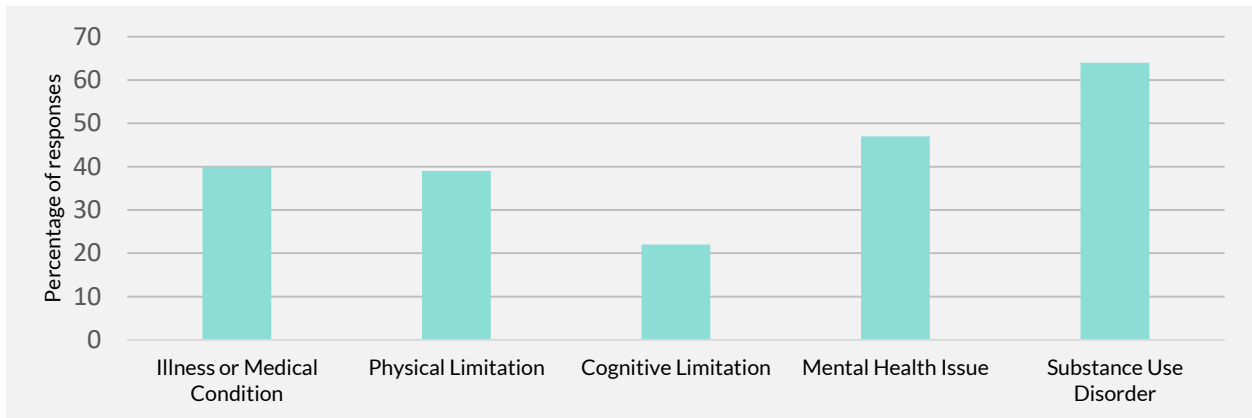
Questions about residential schooling were not asked in the 2018 PiT count.

Illness, Medical Conditions, Disorders and Limitations

Many respondents reported having a medical condition, illness, limitation or disorder (Figure 5).

- 40% of respondents reported having an illness or medical condition (47 of 117 respondents).
- 39% of respondents reported having a physical limitation (36 of 118 respondents).
- 22% of respondents reported having a cognitive limitation (26 of 117 respondents).
- 47% of respondents reported having a mental health condition (54 of 115 respondents).
- 64% of respondents reported having a substance use disorder (75 of 117 respondents).

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents with various health conditions, illnesses or disorders



Brain Injuries and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

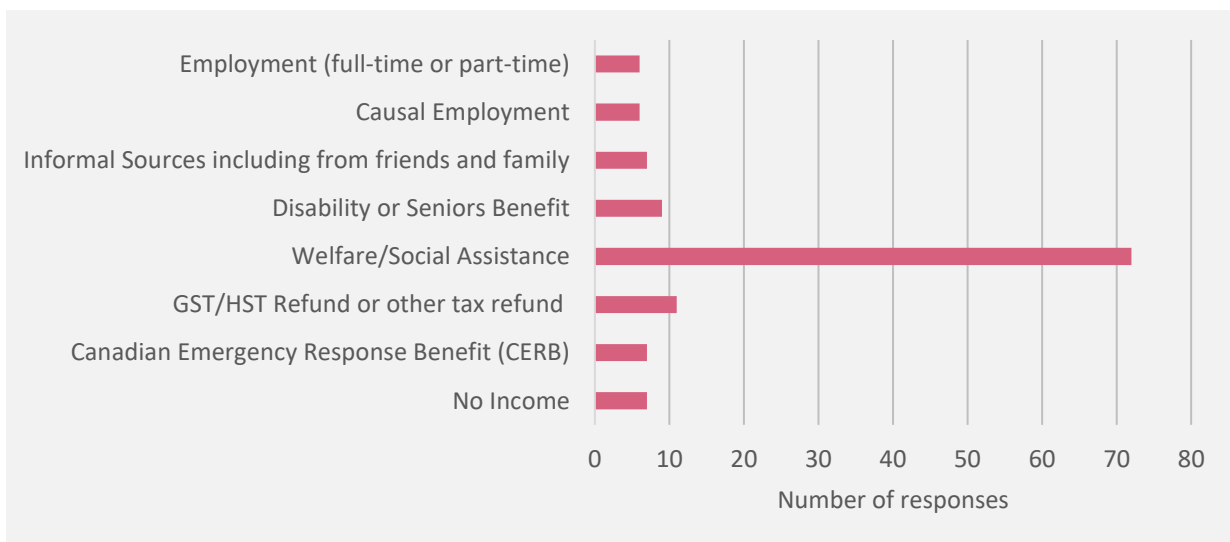
- 17% of respondents reported having an acquired brain injury (20 of 118 respondents).
- 25% of respondents reported having FASD (28 of 112 respondents).

Source of Income

The PiT Count asks respondents about how they receive income (Figure 6). Respondents could select multiple forms of income. This survey does not ask about level of income.

- 9% were employed (full time, part-time or causal employment) (n=12).
- 5% had no source of income (n=7).
- 5% received the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) (n=7).
- 60% received welfare/social assistance (n=72).

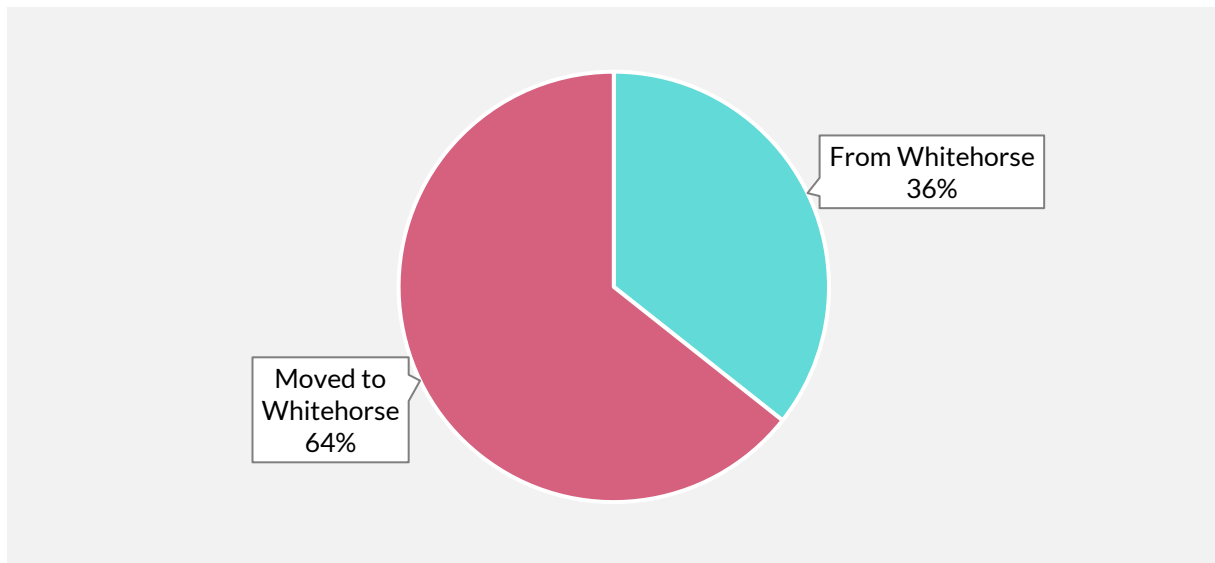
Figure 6: Count of respondents' form of income



Community of Origin and Migration

- 36% of respondents have always lived in Whitehorse (41 of 115 respondents).
- 64% of respondents moved to Whitehorse (74 of 115 respondents) (Figure 7).
 - Of these people, 32% moved from rural Yukon to Whitehorse (n=24); 22% moved from NWT to Whitehorse (n=16); and 20% moved from BC to Whitehorse (n=15). The remaining respondents moved from other locations across Canada (n=14) or did not respond where they had moved from (n=5).
- In the 2018 count, the findings showed that 27% of respondents had always been in Whitehorse, while 73% of respondents had moved to Whitehorse. The 2021 survey indicates there was a higher proportion of respondents who were originally from Whitehorse.

Figure 7: Proportion of respondents that are from Whitehorse and moved to Whitehorse



When people who had moved to Whitehorse were asked how long they had been in the community, most had been in Whitehorse for over 10 years (39%). However, many respondents had moved to Whitehorse within the past year (22%) (Table II).

Table II: How long people reported living in Whitehorse of those who reported originally being from somewhere else

Time in Whitehorse	Count of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Less than 1 Year	16	22%
1-3 Years	14	19%
3- 5 years	7	9%
5-10 years	8	11%

More than 10 years	29	39%
--------------------	----	-----

Of those who moved to Whitehorse, the most common reasons for doing so included:

- because their family moved here;
- for employment (either seeking or secured); or,
- to visit friends or family.

PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness in the past 12 months

- 31% of respondents were homeless for less than 6 months in the past 12 months (37 of 120 respondents).
- 17% of respondents were homeless for between 6 and 12 months in the past 12 months (21 of 120 respondents).
- 52% of respondents were homeless for the entire past 12 months (62 of 120 respondents).

Homelessness in the past 3 years

Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents were homeless for at least one year in the past 3 years. Almost one-third (31%) have been homeless for the entire 3 years (Table III).

Table III: Amount of time that respondents were homeless over the past 3 years

Time spent homeless in the past 3 years	Count of responses	Percentage of responses
0 - 6 months	21	19%
7-12 months	18	17%
1 - 2 years	29	27%
2 - 3 years	7	6%
3 years	34	31%

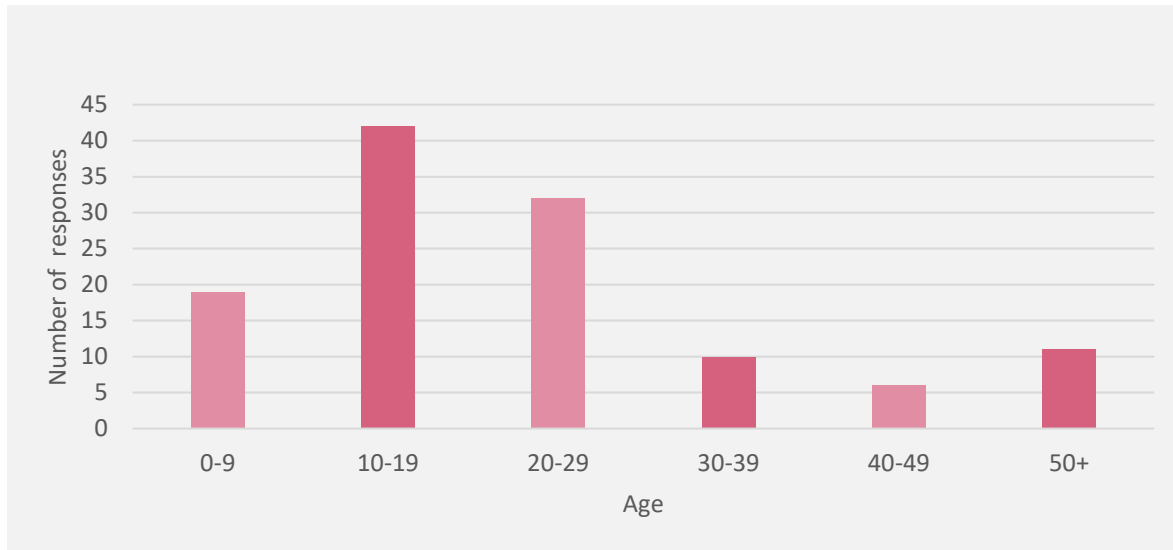
Homelessness and COVID-19

- 13% of respondents reported losing their housing due to the COVID-19 pandemic (15 of 116 respondents).

First experience of homelessness

- 51% of respondents reported first experiencing homelessness before the age of 20 (61 of 120 respondents) (Figure 8). Of these respondents, 31% first experienced homelessness before the age of 10 (19 of 61 respondents).

Figure 8: Age at which respondents first reported experiencing homelessness



Reasons for most recent housing loss

When individuals were asked what the reason for their most recent housing loss was, the most frequent responses were:

- Substance use
- Not enough income for housing (e.g. lost benefit, income, or job)
- Landlord/tenant conflicts
- Unfit or unsafe housing conditions
- Conflict with a spouse or partner

Barriers to housing

94% of respondents want to get into permanent housing (102 of 108 respondents). When asked what barriers exist when trying to access housing, the most common responses were:

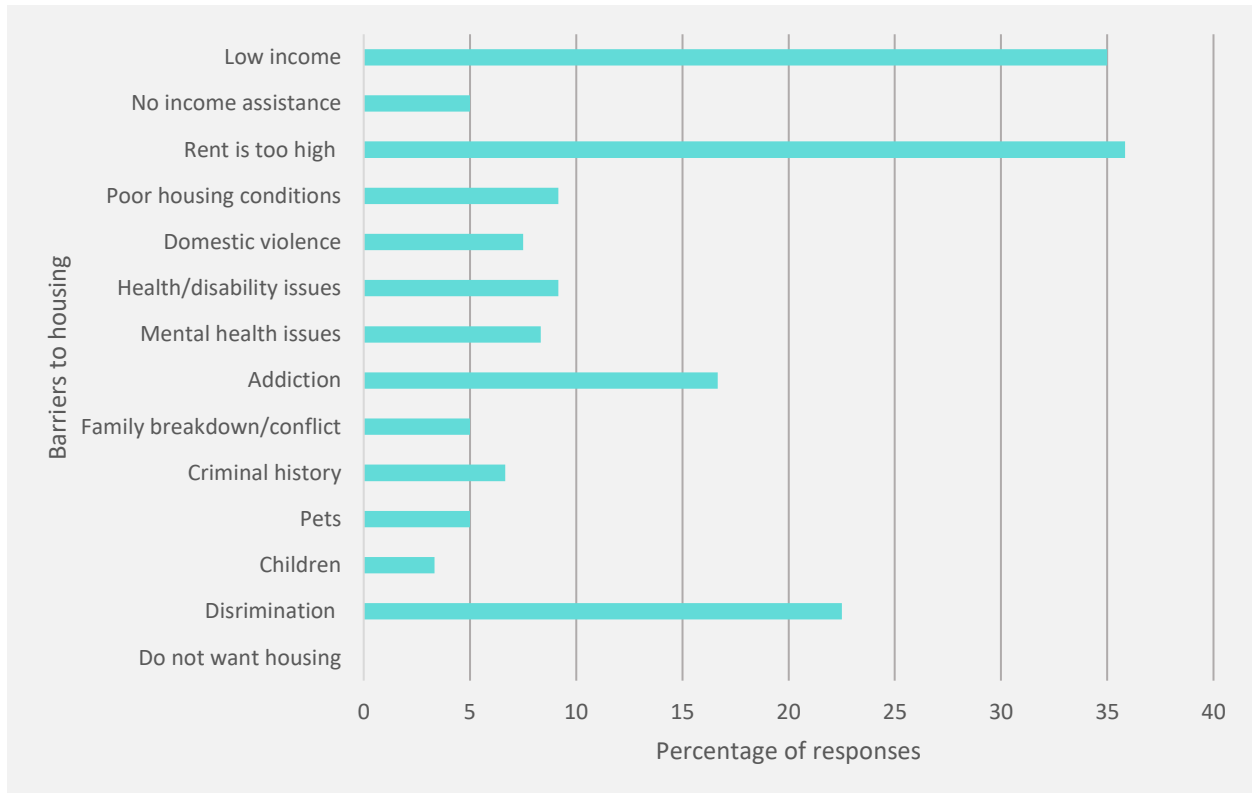
- Rent is too high
- Low income
- Discrimination
- Addiction (Figure 9)

These were the same as the most common responses in the 2018 PiT count when individuals were asked the same question.

No one responded that they did not want housing. Less than 5 respondents replied that they had no barriers to housing.

Note: Not all answers fit into the pre-determined boxes. Other responses included: lack of availability, location, not enough support and wanting housing in a different community.

Figure 9: Barriers to housing (percentage of responses n=120)



Note: Percent totals exceed 100 because survey participants could select more than one response. The number of total responses for each barrier are below:

- Low income (n=42)
- No income assistance (n=6)
- Rent is too high (n=43)
- Poor housing conditions (n=11)
- Domestic Violence (n=9)
- Health/disability issues (n=11)
- Mental health issues (n=10)
- Addiction (n=20)
- Family breakdown/conflict (n=6)
- Criminal history (n=8)
- Pets (n=6)

- Children (n=4)
- Discrimination (n=27)
- Do not want housing (n=0)

SERVICE USE

Shelter use

- 73% of respondents had used a shelter in the past year (88 of 120 respondents). This was higher than in 2018 where only 61% of respondents reported using a shelter.

This could have included a local shelter (the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, Kaushee’s Place, Youth Emergency Shelter), but could also have included a shelter outside of Whitehorse. When those who did not stay in a shelter in the past year were asked the reasons why they had not stayed, the most common response was that they were able to find somewhere else to stay (i.e. family or friends or a hotel/motel).

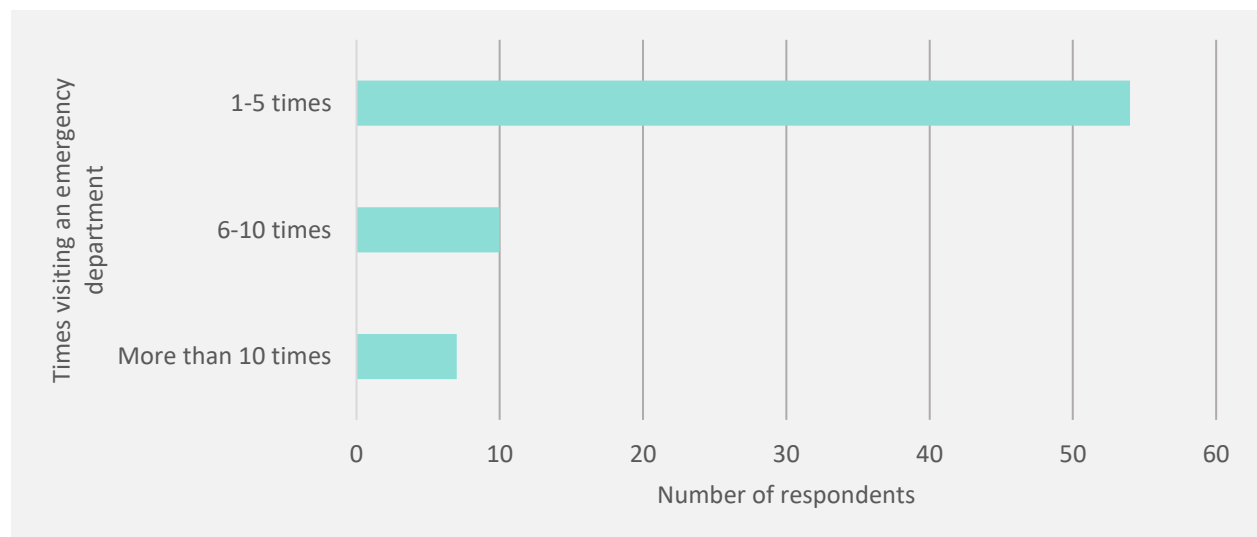
Other Service Use

Emergency Department

59% had visited the emergency department in the 12 months (71 of 120 respondents). Of these people:

- 76% had been to the emergency department 1-5 times in the past year (54 of 71 respondents).
- 14% had been to the emergency department 6-10 times in the past year (10 of 71 respondents).
- 10% had been to the emergency department more than 10 times in the past year (7 of 71 respondents).

Figure 10: Number of times respondents reported visiting an emergency department in the past year, of those who did visit an emergency department



In 2018, a higher percentage of respondents reported using the emergency department (71%).

Hospitalizations

- 13% of respondents reported being hospitalized in the past 12 months (16 of 120 respondents). This is much lower than what was reported in 2018 where 42% reported that they had stayed in a hospital overnight.

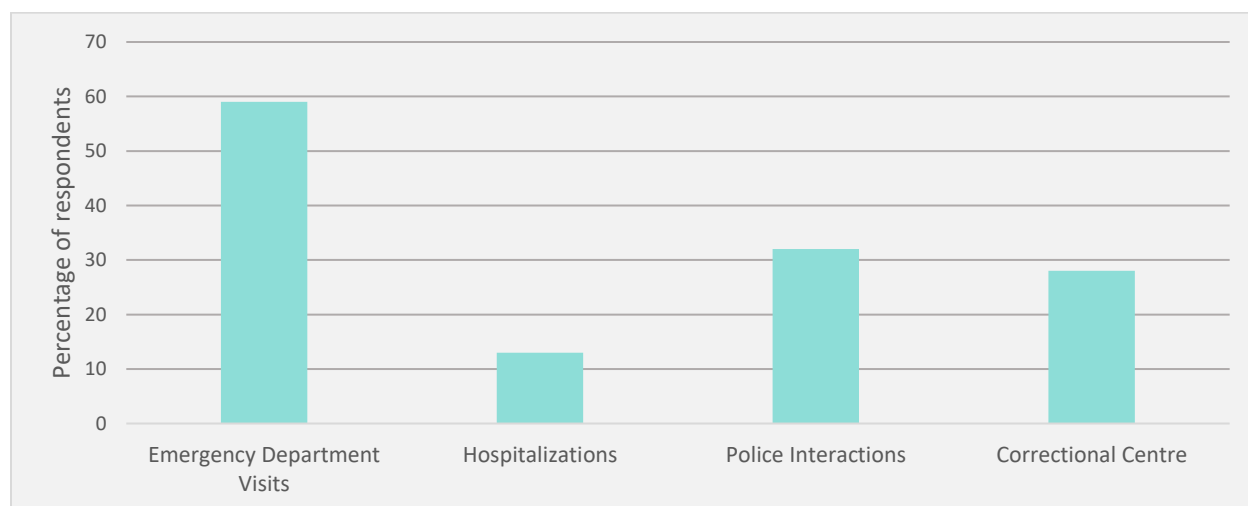
Police Interactions

- 32% of respondents reported at least one interaction with police in the past 12 months (38 of 120 respondents). In 2018, a higher percentage of respondents, (42%) reported interacting with police at least once in the past year. Interactions could have included tickets, arrests, or searches; although respondents were not asked to be explicit as to which type of interaction they had experienced.

Correctional Centres

- 28% of respondents reported being in a correctional facility at least once the past 12 months (34 of 120 respondents). In 2018, 34% of respondents reported being in jail in at least once in the past 12 months.

Figure 11: Percentage of respondents who reported interacting with various services in the past 12 months

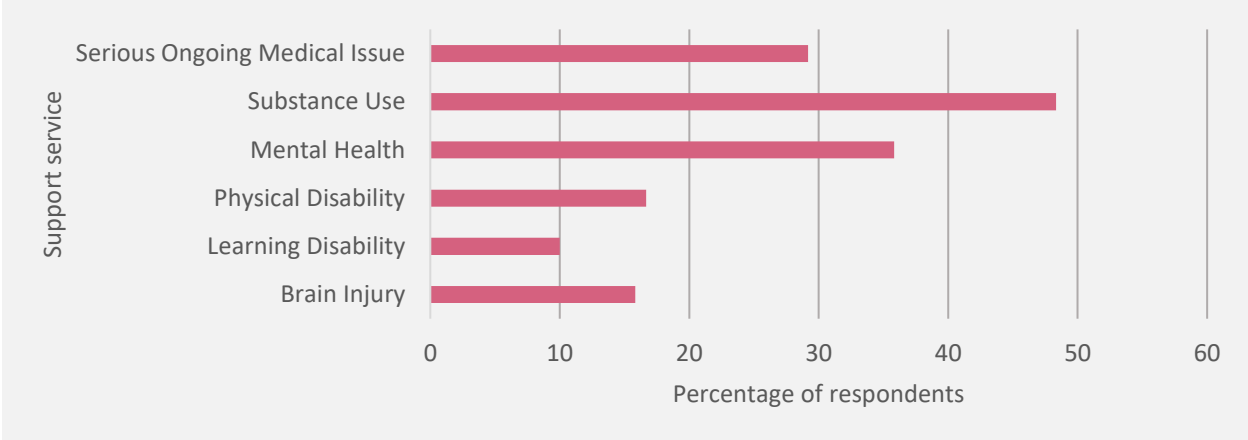


SERVICE NEEDS

Participants were read a list of services that they may or may not need, as a way to gain insight into participants' service needs. They either answered "yes" or "no" to needing the specific service. Participants were not asked whether or not they were connected to or engaged with the services listed at the time of the PiT count.

Of the people who responded, the top service needs included: addiction or substance use, mental health, and ongoing medical issues. Many respondents identified multiple service needs, reflecting some of the complex challenges that may impact the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness.

Figure 12: Percentage of respondents who reported needing select services



Note: Percent totals exceed 100 because survey participants could select more than one response.

THE PiT COUNT and THE BY-NAME LIST

THE BY-NAME LIST (BNL)

A By-Name List is a real-time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in the community. It includes a robust set of data points that supports coordinated access, prioritization at a household level, and an understanding of homeless inflow and outflow at a systems level. This real-time actionable data supports triage to services, system performance evaluation and advocacy (for the policies and resources necessary to end homelessness).¹⁰

What does the BNL have to do with the PiT count?

While the BNL is not comparable to the PiT count data, the intake to the list requires individuals to answer many similar questions. When maintained and used in a coordinated way across a community, the BNL provides real-time data.

We are not able to directly determine whether the individuals on the BNL also participated in the PiT count since the PiT count does not collect personal identifiers. However, we did ask participants if they were on the BNL.

This was the first time that questions about the BNL have been asked in Whitehorse. The majority of respondents (78%) reported not being on the BNL (81 of 104 respondents). Only 17% of respondents were on the BNL (18 of 104 respondents) (Figure 13).

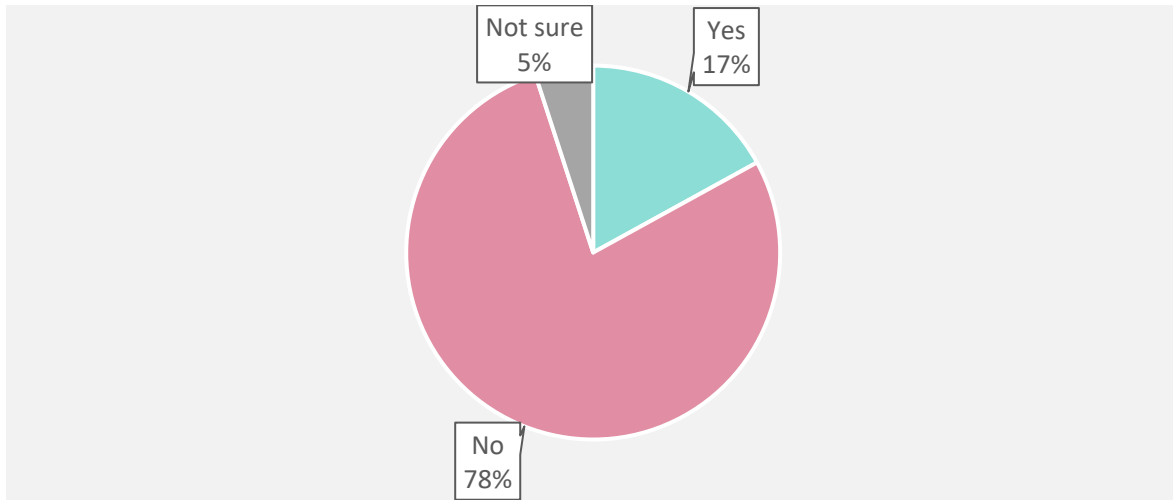
On April 14th, 2021, the day that the 2021 PiT count ended, there were 206 people on the BNL. This number includes inactive, housed, and active people on the list. The number of actively homeless people on the BNL was 75.

While the PiT count and the BNL are not comparable, some inferences can be drawn. For instance:

- The 2021 PiT count did not adequately capture people who were on the By-Name List (only 24% of people who were on the BNL were captured in the PiT count).
- The BNL is likely not a complete picture of homelessness in Whitehorse since the BNL only had 75 actively homeless individuals at the time of the count and this count captured 151 individual experiencing homelessness.

¹⁰ Taken from Built for Zero Canada <https://bfzcanada.ca/by-name-lists/>

Figure 13: Percentage of respondents who reported being on the By-Name List; not on the By-Name List and were not sure about being on the By-Name List



For more information about the By-Name List' – contact Safe at Home Society at (867) 334-9310

METHODOLOGY

The overall methodology from the Whitehorse 2021 Point in Time Count followed the [Guide to Point-in-Time Count in Canada: 3rd Edition](#) developed by Employment and Social Development Canada. Outlined below are specifics to our local approach. As much as possible, the 2021 PiT count intended to be conducted similarly to the 2018 PiT count for comparability (i.e. similar locations used, etc.). Due to COVID-19, comparability of the two PiT counts was somewhat limited.

SURVEY

The 2021 PiT survey was designed and adopted by a sub-committee of the Reaching Home Community Advisory Board and the Coordinated Housing Access Team prior to the count.

The survey began with a brief introduction explaining the count, its purpose, and how the results will be used. Informed consent was obtained prior to initiating the survey. Individuals who answered the screening questions and were eligible to continue with the survey were given the choice of a \$5 gift card from Tim Horton's or McDonald's for their participation. It was important that this honorarium was offered as a thank you and a way of honouring a person's story, as opposed to a tool to coerce respondents to participate. Volunteers were asked not to mention the gift card until consent was received and were asked to provide the gift card regardless of the number of survey questions answered.

The survey had a total of 15 questions (some questions had multiple parts) and included:

- **1 screening question and 1 optional hidden homeless screening question**
- **Mandatory core questions**
 - Covered family status, age, Indigenous ancestry, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, migration, military service, first experience of homelessness, length of homelessness in the past year, emergency shelter use, loss of housing and income.
- **Optional questions**
 - Covered reason for not using emergency shelter, reason for migration to Whitehorse, foster care, Indigenous community, service use, desire for housing, and barriers to housing.
- **Locally developed questions**
 - Covering service needs, responses regarding FASD, and the By-Name List.

The PiT survey used for the 2021 count is available upon request. Please contact ed@safeathomeyukon.ca

DATA COLLECTION

Volunteers and frontline staff collected surveys over a 24-hour period from Tuesday April 13th, 2021 to Wednesday April 14th, 2021.

Administrative tallies from service providers were completed for individuals who were staying overnight in their care who had no fixed address.

Data was collected at the following locations:

- ✓ **7 street routes throughout the downtown core**
 - Routes were pre-determined ahead of time with the help of front-line outreach workers. Each volunteer team was given a map of an area to conduct surveys of everyone they encountered.
- ✓ **Emergency shelters and transitional housing programs**
 - Both volunteers and frontline workers administered surveys at three different emergency shelters and one transitional housing program. We also collected administrative tallies from all emergency shelter and transitional housing programs.
- ✓ **Service locations**
 - Both volunteers and frontline workers administered surveys at seven service locations during the day of April 14th, 2021.
- ✓ **Public systems**
 - Due to capacity and logistical issues, surveys were only conducted at the Intensive Treatment Program at Mental Wellness Substance Use Services and not other public systems. We collected administrative tallies from other public systems including the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and Whitehorse General Hospital.
- ✓ **A magnet event**
 - This occurred at the Safe at Home Society office as a brunch on the morning of April 14th, 2021. This event was advertised through social media, flyers and posters. The event complied with relevant COVID-19 guidance.

Administrative tallies were collected from all 3 emergency shelters and 1 transitional housing program. A supervisor at each location was asked to complete the form and report on the number and demographics¹¹ of individuals staying there overnight on April 13th.

DATA STORAGE

After each volunteer shift, surveys were returned by volunteers to the Safe at Home office. Surveys completed at different agencies were collected by the PiT coordinator and returned to the Safe at Home office. All paper surveys were secured in a locked filing cabinet at the Safe at Home office after the completion of the PiT Count. This includes unused surveys.

DATA ENTRY and ANALYSIS

The PiT Count Coordinator and Safe at Home Data Lead were responsible for data entry. Data was manually entered from paper surveys into the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System Lite (HIFIS), which is a standalone module designed by the Homelessness Policy Directorate at Employment and Social Development Canada.

¹¹ Demographics included gender and age

Several strategies were employed to reduce double counting of individuals experiencing homelessness in the 2021 PiT Count

- ✓ All volunteers and frontline workers asked potential respondents if they had already completed the survey as part of the screening questions.
- ✓ All respondents were asked to provide a unique identifier (i.e. first initial, last initial, day of birth). Surveys with very similar or matching identifiers were reviewed manually to cross-reference answers and determine if they were duplicates.

There were a total of 125 surveys completed in the 24-hour period. There was a total of 5 duplicate surveys removed during the data entry and cleaning phase. Duplicates were found through matching unique identifiers and through similar or identical patterns in answers (e.g. demographic characteristics). After removal of the duplicate surveys and data cleaning, there were a total of 120 surveys to enter. Analysis for the purpose of reporting happened by uploading the data into Microsoft Excel and analyzing frequencies for selected questions and categories of interest. Not everyone chose to answer every question, so the response rate varied for each question. For most questions, between 110-120 people responded. In the results section, the exact number of respondents to each question is given (e.g., n = 118).

ENUMERATION

The PiT Count enumeration total is the number of community members experiencing homelessness on the night of the Count, based on both the administrative data provided and the survey data collected. The survey data provides the total of those who are unsheltered and hidden homeless (including those staying at someone else's place or at hotel/motel). However, it is important to highlight that not everyone who was counted was surveyed.

LIMITATIONS

Potential unique limitations to this specific PiT Count include:

- ✓ The 2021 territorial election was held the day before the PiT Count. While we cannot say for certain the effect the election could have had on the count, it may be possible that information released in the media about the PiT Count was overlooked due to the information regarding the election and the election results. Anecdotally we heard from our volunteers that people were discouraged from talking to them because there was a thought that they may be part of a campaign team.
- ✓ The COVID-19 pandemic meant that places where volunteers were welcome in previous counts to complete surveys were not able to allow volunteers to be present in their spaces. This may have limited the reach of the count.
- ✓ The 2021 PiT Count occurred a full year after initially planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ideally the PiT count would occur bi-annually as planned.

VOLUNTEERS



There were 24 volunteers recruited for the 2021 PiT count. This included event volunteers, headquarters volunteers, survey volunteers on the street and at service locations, and data analyses volunteers. The number of volunteers does not include staff who facilitated surveying at their organizations. The PiT Count relies heavily on volunteers. Without the time that they donated, this event and report would not be possible.

Not including the time frontline workers and partnering organizations provided to support the Count, volunteers gave approximately 158 hours of their time. If we put a cost to this commitment at \$22 per hour, we estimate that approximately \$3500 worth of volunteer time was contributed to Whitehorse's PiT Count.

Volunteer recruitment occurred in the 2 months leading up to the count. Recruitment tactics included using social media, posting the position through Volunteer Yukon, and reaching out to volunteers who had helped in the past. All volunteers had to participate in 3 hours of training. The training included:

- ✓ Purpose of a PiT count
- ✓ Key definitions
- ✓ Methodology
- ✓ Logistics
- ✓ Sensitivity to culture, individuals and stories
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Survey facilitation
- ✓ Results from the last count

Volunteer surveyors were directed to approach everyone they encountered to determine their eligibility to participate in the survey regardless of presumptions about appearance or perceived homelessness. Surveyors were trained to deliver surveys in a non-judgmental way; upholding respondents' rights to anonymity, to withdraw consent, or to stop at any time. Volunteers had information regarding access to various services in Whitehorse and information about the By-Name List if respondents had targeted questions about housing support.

All volunteers who participated in the training attended their shift(s).

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

In advance of the 2021 PiT Count we contacted the Yukon COVID-19 Response Unit to let them know of our operational plan. In addition to following the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer of Health at the time of the count, we also:

- ✓ Ensured all volunteers were screened prior to their shifts for COVID-19 symptoms
- ✓ Limited numbers in the Safe at Home office Headquarters
- ✓ Had packages for volunteers to have on hand, which included hand sanitizers and disposable masks
- ✓ Briefed volunteers on all COVID-19 measures

- ✓ Limited volunteer teams to two people
- ✓ Provided pre-packaged food only at the magnet event

NEXT STEPS

Recommendations for future counts

- As much as possible confirm volunteer shifts well in advance, as well as giving them information on their survey partner so they are able to connect beforehand.
- Give lots of time for volunteers to practice administering the survey in person.
- Ensure that volunteers are given a weather update beforehand and that they are told in advance to dress for the weather.
- Start engagement early with potential volunteers, public systems and partner agencies.
- Focus on youth, spend extra time working with youth serving agencies to see how to best capture them in the count.

Next Steps

- This report will be made available to elected officials and all levels of government, volunteers, community members with lived experience, service providers, and the public.
- These results will be communicated broadly to bring awareness to the issue of homelessness in the community.
- The results will be used to advocate for change in the community.
- A needs assessment will be completed to see, if in two years, a PiT count will occur again or if the By-Name List is established to a point where a PiT count is no longer necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Shelters, transitional housing and public systems provided administrative data. This information is presented below. To protect privacy, counts less than 5 are suppressed.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS TOTAL: 38

Kaushee's Place, Emergency Shelter for Women and Children¹²

- Between 10-15 beds occupied on the night of April 13, 2021
- Maximum occupancy per night: 15 beds (9 rooms)
- Maximum length of stay: 30 - 60 days
- Average length of stay: 45 days

Skookum Jim, Youth Emergency Shelter (for youth aged 17 to 24)

- Less than 5 beds occupied on the night of April 13, 2021
- Maximum occupancy per night: 11 beds
- Maximum length of stay: N/A

Whitehorse Emergency Shelter

- 25 beds occupied on the night of April 13, 2021 (9 male/13 female)
- Maximum length of stay: N/A
- Average length of stay: N/A

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING TOTAL: 29

Betty's Haven, Second Stage Housing for Women and Children

- 29 beds occupied on the night of April 13, 2021
- Maximum Occupancy per night: 15 apartments (28 rooms)
- Maximum Length of Stay: 18 months
- Range of Stay: 1-18 months

PUBLIC SYSTEMS TOTAL: 21

Withdrawal Management Services and Intensive Treatment Program at Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services

- 8 beds occupied – 7 service users were homeless on the night of April 13, 2021 (3 male/ 4 female)
- Maximum occupancy per night: 8 beds (lower currently due to COVID-19 capacity)
- Maximum length of stay: N/A
- Average length of stay: 3-4 days

¹² While the number of beds occupied does not need to be suppressed because it is greater than 5, if it is not, readers would easily be able to discern the number of youth staying at the Skookum Jim Youth Emergency Shelter. As both Kaushee's Place and the Skookum Jim Emergency Shelter had youth staying overnight it was decided that both numbers would be suppressed.

Whitehorse General Hospital

- 2 hospital patients were homeless on the night of April 13, 2021

Whitehorse Correctional Centre including the Arrest Processing Unit¹³

- 43 beds at WCC cells and at the APU were occupied, 12 were homeless on the night of April 13, 2021
- Maximum occupancy per night: 151
- Maximum length of stay: N/A (as of April 14, 2021 the maximum length of stay for a sentenced individual was 22 years)
- Average length of stay: N/A (for 2020 the average length of stay ranged from 23.16 days for females on remand, to 85.01 days for males who were sentenced)

¹³ On the night of April 13th there were inmates at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre from the Correctional Centre in Nunavut due to issues with the building. The inmates from Nunavut were excluded from the administrative count because upon their release they would be flown back to Nunavut.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Name of Organization	Program Name	Category	Administrative Data Provided	Surveyed by Staff	Surveyed by Volunteers
Whitehorse Emergency Shelter	Emergency Shelter	Emergency Shelter	Y		Y
Women's Transition Home	Kaushee's Place, Emergency Shelter	Violence Against Women Emergency Shelter	Y	Y	
	Betty's Haven - Second Stage Housing	Transitional Housing for Women and Children	Y	Y	
Skookum Jim Friendship Centre	Emergency After Hours Outreach Services (EAHOS)	Youth Emergency Shelter	Y	Y	
Health & Social Services: Mental Wellness & Substance Use Services	Withdrawal Management	Public System: Treatment Centre	Y	Y	
	Intensive Live-In Treatment Program	Public System: Treatment Centre	Y	Y	
Department of Justice	Whitehorse Correctional Services	Public System: Corrections	Y		
Yukon Hospital Corporation	Whitehorse General Hospital	Public System: Hospital	Y		
Blood Ties Four Directions Centre	Drop-In Program	Service Location		Y	
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon	Drop-In Program	Service Location		Y	
Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre	Wednesday Lunch and Drop-In Program	Service Location			Y
Department of Education	Individual Learning Centre	Service Location			Y

Note: both the Boy's and Girls Club and the Youth Achievement Centre had staff prepared to conduct the count; however, no surveys were completed at either location.

GLOSSARY¹⁴

Absolute homelessness: Staying in an unsheltered location or in an emergency shelter.

Administrative data/tally: Information collected from organizations and public institutions (i.e. emergency shelters, transitional housing, Whitehorse General Hospital, Mental Health and Substance Use Services, and the Whitehorse Correctional Centre) where people meeting the definition of homelessness stayed on April 17, 2018. In addition to reporting the number of people who were experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, the administrative data included aggregate information for observed gender, age, and ethnicity.

Canadian definition of homelessness: Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

Chronic homelessness: A period of six or more months of homelessness in the past year, or 180 days cumulatively.

Emergency shelters: Facilities that provide short-term accommodation for people experiencing homelessness, which may provide other essential supports and services such as food.

Episodic homelessness: Defined as three or more distinct episodes of homelessness in the past year.

Hidden homelessness: Living temporarily with others without legal protection, guarantee of continued residency, or prospects of permanent housing (e.g., couch surfing).

Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS): A national information system that helps service providers with their day-to-day operations and planning activities. HIFIS includes features to track and support the management of Housing First activities, collects data on shelter use, and has a Point-in-Time count module that helps develop a national portrait of homelessness.

Indigenous homelessness: Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each

¹⁴ Definitions were obtained from a number of sources: End Homelessness St. John's Everyone Counts Summary, Safe at Home: Community-Based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness in Whitehorse, Yukon, and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships.

Provisionally accommodated: Staying in transitional housing, living temporarily with others without guarantee of continued residency, and/or staying in institutional care with no permanent housing arrangement.

Public systems: Used interchangeably with institutional settings and may include correction facilities, hospitals, community-based residential facilities (e.g., halfway houses), substance use treatment centres, and health and mental health programs.

Transitional housing: Refers to housing where people can live for a limited period of time and participate in employment and/or training programs, enrol in education programs, address issues related to problematic substance use and/or mental illness, and ultimately transition to more permanent, stable housing.

Unsheltered homelessness: Staying outside, in places not intended for human habitation and/or in a public or private space without consent. This includes in a tent, vehicle, makeshift shelter or abandoned building. For the purpose of enumeration, this also included respondents who did not know where they were staying on the night of the count.

Youth: Includes individuals aged 16 to 24 years at the time of the survey. Dependent youth or children reported as residing with their parents or guardians were included in the overall count but were not included in the proportion of youth who were homeless as they were not living independently of their parents and/or caregivers. Youth under the age of 16 were not surveyed due to the complexity of obtaining consent to participate without parent/guardian assent.

Youth homelessness: Refers to the situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence.