



EVERYONE COUNTS:

ST. JOHN'S HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2018



Thank you to the many supporters, partners and volunteers who contributed time, effort and resources to this project. Most of all, thank you to everyone who participated in the survey and shared their stories with us.

The 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee and The Corrections Advisory Committee

The committees met several times before and after the Count and provided guidance for the implementation of the project and for the final version of the report. The committees included representatives from the following organizations (in alphabetical order):

AIDS Committee of NL
Boys and Girls Club of St. John's
Canadian Mental Health Association NL
Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
Choices for Youth
City of St. John's
Correctional Services Canada
End Homelessness St. John's
John Howard Society NL
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice and Public Safety
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency
Stella's Circle
St. John's Native Friendship Centre
Thrive
United Way Newfoundland and Labrador

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Adley's Eats
AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador
Anglican Church of the Good Samaritan
Association for New Canadians NL Reception House
Bell Canada
Bennett Group of Companies
Boys and Girls Clubs of St. John's

Bridges to Hope
Canadian Mental Health Association NL
Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
Cervical Screenings Initiative Program
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Hungry Heart Cafe
Iris Kirby House
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Little Caesar's Pizza
Memorial University
Military Family Resource Centre St. John's
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Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice and Public Safety
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries
Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate NL
Planned Parenthood NL
Pleasant Manor Corporation
Salvation Army
Sarah Brown (Art Work)
Second Cup
St. John's Native Friendship Centre Association
St. John's Status of Women Council
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Starbucks
Stella's Circle
The Gathering Place
The John Howard Society of Newfoundland and Labrador
The Pottle Centre
Thrive
Waypoints

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada, City of St. John's, United Way Newfoundland and Labrador, or any of the partners listed above.

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Prepared by:

Pegah Memarpour

Project Coordinator for 'Everyone Counts'

End Homelessness St. John's

About End Homelessness St. John's

End Homelessness St. John's is a community-led, 'collective impact' Board which brings together all sectors to implement a plan to prevent and end homelessness in St. John's.



ST. JOHN'S

Canada



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List of Acronyms

ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION
AESL	NL Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
CPP	Canada Pension Plan
COH	Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
EHSJ	End Homelessness St. John's
GED	General Education Development
GIS	Guaranteed Income Supplement
HIFIS	Homeless Individuals and Families Information System
HPS	Homelessness Partnering Strategy
OAS	Old Age Security
LGBTQ2S	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Two-Spirit
PiT	Point-in-Time: Homeless Point-in-Time Count
YLC	Youth Leadership Council

List of Definitions

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

Administrative data: information collected from residential facilities (e.g. emergency shelters, transitional shelters, hospitals, jails, etc.) where people meeting the definition of homelessness stayed on April 11, 2018. Facilities reported the number of homeless people who stayed at their facility on the night of the Count and provided aggregate information for observed gender, age and ethnicity where applicable.

Chronic homelessness: a period of six or more months of homelessness in the past year.

Emergency shelters: facilities that provide short-term accommodation for homeless individuals and families, which may include essential services such as food, clothing and counseling.

Episodic homelessness: for the purpose of the PiT count, episodic homelessness is defined as three or more distinct episodes of homelessness in the past year, adding up to less than six months.

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

Housing First: recognizes that housing is a basic human right. As a recovery-oriented approach, Housing First is focused on quickly moving people from homelessness into housing and then providing supports necessary to maintain it. Rather than requiring those experiencing homelessness to first resolve the challenges that contributed to their housing instability, including mental health or addictions issues, Housing First is based on the belief that recovery should begin with stable housing.

Institutional settings: correctional facilities, community-based residential facilities (e.g. halfway houses), addiction treatment centers, and health and mental health programs

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.

Temporary homelessness: less than six months and fewer than three episodes of homelessness over the past year.

Transitional Shelter: an intermediate step between emergency shelter and permanent housing. It can be differentiated from emergency shelters by the longer length of stay (up to one year), no or limited rent payment, clients have no tenancy rights, and support is provided to transition into permanent housing.

Unsheltered homelessness (e.g. rough sleeping): staying outside, in a place not intended for human habitation and/or in a public or private space without consent or contract. This includes in a vehicle, tent, makeshift shelter, bus shelter or abandoned building.

Youth: includes those aged 16 to 24 years at the time of the survey. Dependent youth or children who were residing with their parents or guardians were not included in the overall proportion of youth and were not surveyed.



*Shawn Skinner,
Chair, End Homelessness St. John's*

On behalf of End Homelessness St. John's, our Board, and our community allies, I'm pleased to share the results of 'Everyone Counts 2018', our second biennial homeless Point-in-Time (PiT) Count.

The PiT Count supports our 2014-2019 St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness by enabling those experiencing homelessness to share their stories and provides us with a deeper understanding of homelessness within our community. The experiences of this group and their unique service needs underscores the urgent need for all of us to work together in collaboration to end homelessness.

Our plan is rooted in community engagement, coordination, and the development of a range of housing services and supports to meet the diverse needs of our community through evidence-based decision making. PiT Counts provide us with valuable information about the causes of homelessness in our community and the

barriers people face in accessing safe, stable, and long term permanent housing. Successive PiT Counts allow us to monitor trends, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and measure our progress toward ending homelessness in St. John's.

Using the knowledge obtained from this Count, as well as our first PiT Count in 2016, we will continue to work with people with lived experience of homelessness, our community partners, and governments (federal, provincial and municipal) to set priorities for action on long-term solutions to homelessness in St. John's. While we still have a long way to go, I am confident that together we can achieve our goal.

Everyone Counts was made possible through the support of many volunteers, people with lived experience of homelessness, community groups, local businesses and government partners. My thanks to all those who contributed time, effort and resources to this initiative. Most of all, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who participated in the survey and shared their experiences with us. We are committed to working with you and for you as we implement our plan and work towards ending homelessness in St. John's.

Everyone Counts: St. John's Homeless Point-in-Time Count 2018

Our Plan To End Homelessness in St. John's

End Homelessness St. John's is a community-led, 'collective impact' Board bringing together all sectors to implement a plan to prevent and end homelessness in our city. Our Board is chaired by Shawn Skinner, and includes representatives from the federal government (Service Canada), provincial government (Department of Children, Seniors & Social Development, Department of Advanced Education, Skills & Labour, Department of Health & Community Services, and NL Housing), the City of St. John's (Community Services Department), United Way Newfoundland and Labrador, Choices for Youth, The Gathering Place and Stella's Circle.

End Homelessness St. John's also convenes a Lived Experience Council, and a regular Frontline Forum for all homeless-serving organizations in the city. EHSJ's 2014-2019 *Community Plan to End Homelessness*¹ proposes a vision to end chronic and recurring homelessness in St. John's by 2019, and to prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk. The Plan builds on, and is informed by, the experience gained since 2000 by EHSJ and its predecessor, the St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness.

Priority Areas: 2014-2019 St. John's Plan to End Homelessness

Based on the consultations and the research undertaken, the following priority areas have been established for action by End Homelessness St. John's together with its partners:

System Coordination: A coordinated approach to housing and supports following the Housing First philosophy.

- ▶ Organize the homeless-serving system.
- ▶ Implement coordinated access and assessment.
- ▶ Develop discharge/transition planning measures.

Integrated Information System & Research: Integrated information system and research to support ending homelessness efforts.

- ▶ Implement an integrated information system.
- ▶ Build partnerships with the research community.

Housing & Supports: Developing a range of housing and supports choices to meet diverse client needs.

- ▶ Support measures to increase housing affordability and reduce homelessness risk.
- ▶ Introduce and ramp up a range of Housing First programs.
- ▶ Tailor supports to meet the needs of diverse groups.
- ▶ Support the enhancement of service quality and impact.

Leadership & Resources: Securing the necessary leadership and resources to support the Plan to End Homelessness.

- ▶ Develop the infrastructure necessary to implement the Plan.
- ▶ Coordinate funding to maximize impact.
- ▶ Champion an end to homelessness.

¹ EHSJ (2014). St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhhn.org/PDF/YYT-Community-Plan-2014-2019.pdf>

Outcomes

The implementation of the actions outlined in the Priority Areas will result in the following outcomes:

1. End chronic and episodic homelessness.
2. Re-house and support 460 homeless persons: of these, a minimum of 160 will be chronically and/or episodically homeless.
3. Reduce average length of stay in emergency shelters to 7 days.
4. Develop a coordinated homeless-serving system.
5. Enhance the integration of public systems to reduce discharging into homelessness
6. Align resources and funding across diverse sectors to support the St. John's Plan to End Homelessness.

Executive Summary

On April 11, 2018, End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ) conducted its second biennial Point-in-Time (PiT) Count of the community's homeless population, titled 'Everyone Counts'. The initiative, in partnership with Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), provides a snapshot of the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness on a single day in St. John's. This includes persons staying in emergency, private and transitional shelters; individuals sleeping outside, in their vehicles, or abandoned buildings (e.g., rough sleepers/unsheltered homeless); those temporarily staying at someone else's place (e.g., couch surfers); or persons in institutions with no permanent or stable housing.

With funding from HPS, the City of St. John's, and United Way NL, EHSJ conducted its 2018 Count to gain a broader understanding of the nature of homelessness in St. John's, and included a special focus in this Count on persons experiencing homelessness within the province's correctional institutions.

The 2018 Count determined that at least **165 people** were experiencing homelessness on the night of April 11, 2018, with 9% incarcerated in provincial correctional institutions. As noted, this represents the minimum number of those experiencing homelessness, as many individuals in precarious housing situations are not visibly homeless (i.e., couch surfers, rough sleepers), and are thus undercounted. The Count represents the tip of the iceberg, however: during the course of a year, EHSJ estimates that approximately 800 people experience homelessness in St. John's². The Count also affirms that homelessness is not a choice; while all respondents faced barriers in obtaining housing, not wanting permanent housing was not one of them.

Over 100 trained volunteers and front-line staff took part in conducting surveys over two days in St. John's. Survey and administrative data was comprised of data collected from:

- ▶ 11 street count zones
- ▶ 11 shelters (including non-profit emergency shelters, private emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, and youth shelters)
- ▶ 7 institutional settings (adult correctional institutions, lock-up facilities, community corrections, mental health and addictions programs)
- ▶ 8 community sites (food banks, outreach programs, and meal programs) and
- ▶ 1 transitional shelter

In addition, special methodologies were developed and implemented in partnership with the COH to survey those incarcerated in provincial institutions and community corrections on the night of the Count. Persons enumerated were those who would be released within 30 days following the Count, with no permanent or stable housing, and intending to move to St. John's immediately upon release.

² EHSJ (2014). St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhhn.org/PDF/YYT-Community-Plan-2014-2019.pdf>

The updates and refined methodologies for the 2018 Count, while still not perfect, allowed for a more accurate and encompassing representation of persons facing homelessness in our community.

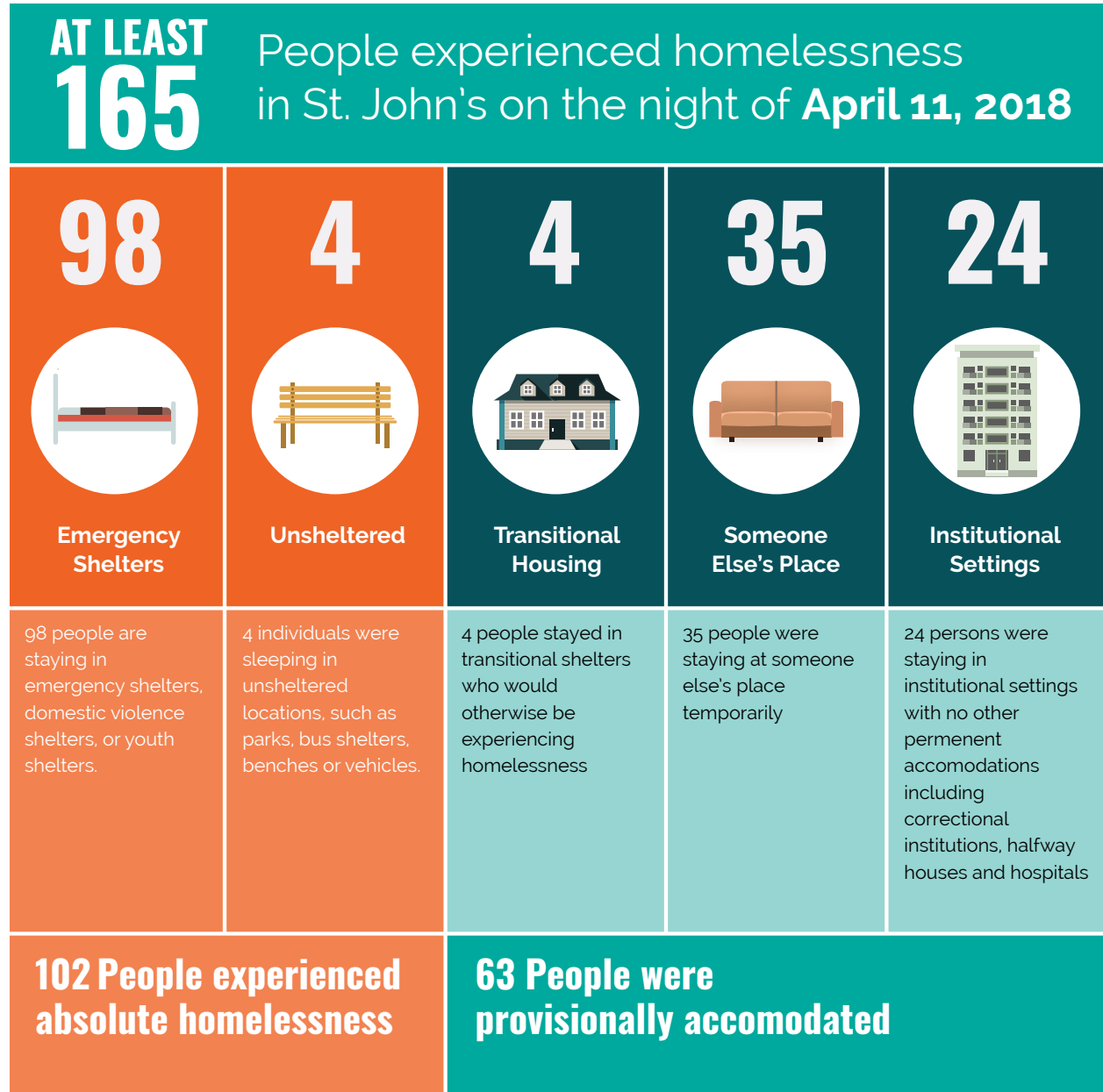
While the primary purpose of the PiT Count is to enumerate the number of persons experiencing homelessness on a single day, it also provides an opportunity to understand the *nature* of homelessness within our community. The combination of survey and administrative data allows communities to gather useful information about the demographic and service needs of those experiencing homelessness. Importantly, Counts collect information on those who experience hidden or unsheltered homelessness, which can be missed when primarily relying on emergency shelter data. Collecting this information is essential for helping communities design and deliver services that meet the needs of this diverse population.

PiT Counts are beneficial in providing a snapshot of homelessness on a single day, but they generally undercount the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. Because PiT Counts only provide information about those experiencing homelessness on a single day, it is important for communities to also track and measure homelessness year-round using other means, such as daily emergency shelter usage combined with other data sources.

To gain a better understanding of homelessness and housing instability within our community, EHSJ also developed a Housing Needs Survey which was administered alongside the PiT Count Survey at Everyone Counts' three magnet events on April 12, 2018. The Housing Needs Survey was geared towards individuals with previous experiences of homelessness who did not meet one of the definitions of homelessness on the day of the Count (e.g. they were living in bedsits or boarding homes, for example), and who may have been at continued risk of homelessness.

The experiences of individuals in our community and the opportunity to give a voice to those experiencing homelessness is an important goal for EHSJ. The experiences voiced in the Housing Needs Survey will be used to complement the findings of 'Everyone Counts 2018'.

1.2 Key Findings



The experience of homelessness is diverse and affects everyone

Similar to 2016, the Count brings to light that anyone can experience homelessness at any period in their life. Survey respondents ranged from 17 to 78 years of age (respondents under 16 years of age were not eligible to participate); identified as male, female and diverse gender identities; and were both indigenous and non-indigenous. Respondents varied in their levels of education, which ranged from no formal education to post-graduate degrees, as well as their sources of income, which ranged from no income to employment. While experiences of homelessness are unique based on demographics (youth homelessness is different from adult homelessness for example), homelessness is unified by a single characteristic: the lack of safe, adequate, and affordable housing.

Adult homelessness is prevalent, and youth homelessness is persistent

The sample suggests that a significant number of working age adults are experiencing homelessness. Almost 70% of the respondents were working age adults above the age of 25 years old – with one quarter between the age of 45-64 years old. Just over one fifth (23.2%) of the respondents were 16-24 years old. While half of the respondents became homeless as youth, a significant amount – over one quarter – first became homeless after the age of 35. Although the causes of homelessness are multifaceted and complex in their intersectionality, substance abuse and an inability to pay rent were two of the leading factors for both the first and most recent causes of homelessness for adults.

Despite high levels of education among many, adults experiencing homelessness cited low rates of employment

While approximately 40% of respondents over the age of 25 indicated having some form of post-secondary education or graduation from a post-secondary institution, only 13.8% indicated having some form of employment. While employment rates are low amongst those surveyed, 63.5% identified wanting support in obtaining employment in the community. This was the second leading resource needed for obtaining housing identified by respondents. With the province's unemployment rate at the highest in Canada at 14.7%, there appears to be a relationship between experiences of homelessness and lack of employment opportunities for this population.

Housing affordability is the most important factor in helping those experiencing homelessness find housing

Low income (57.6%), in combination with the high cost of rental units (43.5%) in St. John's were cited as the top two barriers to obtaining housing by those completing the PiT Count Survey. Once housing is obtained, persistent low income and high rental rates continue to be a barrier to long term housing stability. Of those who completed the Housing Needs Survey, 45% also indicated these factors as barriers. This suggests that a need exists for housing that is affordable based on household income. The majority of those surveyed in both the PiT Count and the Housing Needs Survey, approximately 45% availed of income support as their main source of income. Further, 65% of those who completed the Housing Needs Survey identified having less than \$100 bi-weekly for food and personal needs after their bills were paid.

The need for services and support is required to address the challenges faced by those experiencing homelessness

Almost all the respondents (96.4%) identified a service or support they needed to address their lack of safe and stable housing. Overall, 74% of respondents indicated needing more than two services. Of those surveyed, 76.5% of respondents indicated needing community supports, while 63.5% indicated needing employment resources in the community. Mental health, education, and ongoing medical services were also common responses given by respondents.

Many are migrating within the province to St. John's to access supports and services

Almost 60% of respondents who migrated to St. John's came from other parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, with 40% moving within the last five years. The concentration of community programs and services located in St. John's is the driving force of migration for those relocating from other parts of the province. Access to supports and services was the most commonly cited reason for moving to St. John's from other parts of the province. The need for community supports and programming that serve communities outside of St. John's has been part of a growing conversation, as community groups and governments recognize the benefits of serving people in their home communities.

Experiences of homelessness can be long and recurring

Chronic homelessness – a period of homelessness that extends longer than six months in the past year - was experienced by just over one third (36.6%) of those surveyed on the night of the Count. One fifth (21.6%) of those surveyed experienced episodic homelessness – three or more distinct periods of homelessness in the past year. It is not surprising that adults are more likely to experience longer periods of homelessness (including chronic homelessness), while youth who were surveyed more commonly experienced one to two periods of homelessness for less than six months.

The relationship between corrections and homelessness is pronounced

Homelessness can be both a cause and effect of incarceration. Those who experience homelessness have an increased likelihood to become involved in the correctional system, while those incarcerated are more likely to become homeless. Over one third of those surveyed indicated having been to jail in the past year, with the average number of days in custody being 41 days. Incarceration was the most commonly cited reason for housing loss and homelessness, with 16% citing this as a reason. There are a variety of reasons why someone would be involved with the justice system while experiencing homelessness, with notable factors including substance abuse issues and mental illness, while other individuals have used incarceration as a means of obtaining housing. Almost 10% of those surveyed cited using incarceration as a means of housing, and approximately 27.7% of those were in custody at the time of the Count.

Indigenous populations are over represented amongst those experiencing homelessness

Similar to findings in 2016, indigenous populations were overrepresented in those surveyed on April 11, 2018. While comprising 3.3% of the general population in St. John's, persons identifying as indigenous made up 25.9% of those surveyed on the night of the Count.

Homeless youth involved in child protection felt child protection was not helpful in their transition out of care

In EHSJ's 2016 Count report, attention was given to the large number of individuals who were involved in child protection services and foster care as youth. In both Counts, a large number of youth indicated an involvement with child protection or foster care. In 2018, 50% and 40% cited being involved with child protection or foster care, respectively, as a youth. Of the youth living in care, half had become homeless within a year after leaving care, and all respondents felt child protection was not helpful in transitioning them out of care. In May 2018, NL's Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development introduced the new Children, Youth and Families Act whose provisions include a focus on preserving family units and allowing youth to stay in care until they are 21 years old. This initiative will likely have future impacts on the experiences of youth exiting care moving forward.

1.3 Discussion and Next Steps

'Everyone Counts 2018' provides a snapshot of homelessness in St. John's and the housing and service needs of this diverse population. While the themes highlighted in this report have been a focus of the homeless serving sector for a period of time, the findings represent the tip of a much larger iceberg. The 2018 data has both reinforced the information discovered in 2016 and identified findings that will inform our Community Plan to End Homelessness and enhance future PIT Counts. While not unique to St. John's, the overrepresentation of Indigenous persons and the prevalence of adults among the homeless population is concerning. So is the persistence of youth homelessness, and the relationship between homelessness and incarceration. These findings indicate that we, as a society, must address the underlying issues that lead to homelessness.

EHSJ believes that the value in conducting PiT Counts lies not only in their ability to inform current and future plans to end homelessness, but in their capacity to help us understand the true nature of homelessness in our community by engaging individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

The data garnered from 'Everyone Counts 2018' revealed important findings about homelessness in St. John's. While 58.5% of the respondents' first experiences of homelessness occurred before the age of 24, one quarter of those surveyed first experienced homelessness after the age of 35. Regardless of education, this group is experiencing high rates of un/underemployed and an inability to obtain affordable housing. Secondly, the multifaceted and unique experience of homelessness brings to light the need for integrated and wrap-around services within the homeless serving sector. A significant number of individuals surveyed experience chronic and episodic homelessness, interact with the criminal justice system, and require supports and services to address substance abuse and mental health issues. These factors suggest we need to look at how our systems and service models are oriented towards those with complex needs.

EHSJ's 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness focuses on coordinating systems and offering a range of housing and supports needed to prevent and end homelessness. Ending homelessness does not mean no one will ever experience homelessness, but it does mean that through system coordination and the timely provision of housing and supports, we will end chronic and episodic homelessness, reduce average shelter stays to 7 days, eliminate discharges from public systems into homelessness, and prevent homelessness for those at risk.

PiT Counts contribute to our Community Plan by providing us with baseline data and a greater understanding of the characteristics and service needs of our homeless population. Going forward, this data can be used to inform the design and delivery of programs and services tailored to the unique and diverse needs of persons experiencing homelessness in our community.

Next Steps:

- ▶ The results of this Count will be used to inform the development of the EHSJ's future plans to end homelessness.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to work closely with community partners, governments, and persons with lived experience as we continue to implement long-term solutions to homelessness
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to focus its efforts on the most vulnerable groups, those experiencing hidden homelessness, and those who are disproportionately reflected in the homeless population – including youth, LGBTQ2 persons, women, and indigenous persons.
- ▶ This report will be made available to other stakeholder organizations, governments, and the public on June 29th, 2018.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to conduct counts on a biennial basis and use lessons from local and national Counts to improve and refine our methodologies for the future.
- ▶ EHSJ will use trends found in future PiT Counts to inform interventions for effectively ending homelessness

1.4 Limitations

While best efforts are made to improve count methodology and effectively enumerate those experiencing homelessness, a number of groups were not well-represented within the sample. Many groups, especially those experiencing hidden homelessness, are difficult to locate during a PiT Count. In turn, several groups were under-represented during the Count, and therefore, future efforts must focus on gathering information on these groups, as they are general some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Unsheltered homeless: Those experiencing unsheltered homelessness are individuals temporarily staying outside, in parks, on benches, in their vehicles, or other places not intended for habitation (including abandoned buildings). Only four persons were identified during the street count as absolutely homeless. This suggests those experiencing unsheltered homelessness are extremely undercounted. This may be for a variety of reasons including the fact that it is impossible to cover every location in the city where someone may be staying. Secondly, those experiencing unsheltered homelessness may not wish to disclose the unsheltered nature of their living situation and therefore may not provide accurate information to surveyors.

Hidden homeless: PiT Counts are not intended to measure the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in a community. Those experiencing hidden homelessness are largely undercounted by PiT Counts and can vary greatly by changes in methodologies. For instance, in 2016 only one coordinated youth magnet event was held at Choices for Youth, while in 2018 three magnet events were held at three different locations throughout April 12. This could have greatly impacted the recorded number of individuals staying at someone else's place on the night of the count. However, this population is probably much larger than what was identified in Everyone Counts 2018. Future efforts will continue to be made to better identify this population and gain more in-depth knowledge regarding those experiencing hidden homelessness.

Families: Similar to 2016, very few families were enumerated within the PiT Count. Only 3.5% of respondents were part of a family unit or staying with family members on the night of the Count. Shelter data reported 10 youth dependents living with a parent or guardian on the night of the count, with no information on the number of family units.

LGBTQ: The under-representation of LGBTQ2 community members within the PiT Count data suggests a need to focus methodologies and partner with local LGBTQ2 focused community organizations to better identify the needs of this population. Surveyors could have also played a role in the limited number of persons identifying as LGBTQ2. During the 2018 Count, only 1.2% of those under the age of 25 identified as LGBTQ2, while reports state that 25-40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ2 in Canada.

Public Systems: While efforts were made to engage public systems in the 2018 PiT Count, issues were faced surrounding the availability and accessibility of information available from public systems. Many of the documentation practices within institutions, including corrections and health care, are not designed for PiT Count use or to easily identify those experiencing homelessness. Therefore, specific public institutions were either not contacted for data collection or provided limited information regarding those within the institutions. While methodologies were refined from 2016 to 2018 as an effort to more accurately identify those experiencing homelessness within these systems, specifically corrections, there is an underrepresentation of this number due to the limited data collection.

Introduction

On April 11 and 12, 2018, End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ) conducted its second Point-in-Time (PiT) Count of the community's homeless population, titled 'Everyone Counts'. The biennial Count, first held in November 2016, provides a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness in the community at point in time every two years. Counts also help our community gain a broader understanding of who is experiencing homelessness and how to better address their needs.

The 2018 Count included a special methodology for identifying individuals incarcerated in correctional facilities³ (including community corrections) who would be released within 30 days following the Count to no permanent or stable housing. Updated and refined methodologies were used in the 2018 Correctional PiT Count to gain a more accurate and encompassing representation of persons facing imminent release from correctional institutions who may require housing and supports.

Everyone Counts 2018 is a collaboration between EHSJ, Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) - with funding from HPS, the City of St. John's and United Way NL. This was also the first time St. John's took part in the nationally coordinated PiT Count. EHSJ uses data from Everyone Counts to inform its planning to prevent and end homelessness in St. John's.

2.2 National PiT Count

The second biennial Canadian coordinated homelessness Count saw 61 communities across the country come together with the shared goal of better understanding homelessness at the local level, while contributing to our national knowledge of homelessness. The local Counts nationwide were held between March and April 2018 to help communities measure their progress in understanding and reducing homelessness. Lessons and strategies learned from the first PiT Counts in 2016 were employed to refine, strengthen and focus the approaches taken during 2018. The use of standardized methods, including common survey questions and implementation strategies, were designed to harmonize Counts across the country.

In 2015, a national methodology for PiT Counts was developed by HPS and the COH in consultation with communities. Prior to this, the small number of Canadian communities conducting Counts used different definitions of homelessness, varying methodologies, and conducted Counts at different times of the year (and during different years). This meant that the data was inconsistent and not comparable among communities. Therefore, the new approach aimed to harmonize and expand Counts across the country to create a baseline of data for assessing homelessness locally and nationally. HPS developed standardized measures and provided coordination and funding support for biennial PiT Counts to help ensure they included common definitions of the core populations experiencing homelessness, as well as core screening and survey questions. A basic methodology was also developed for enumeration purposes. This provided a means for collecting and examining data that was consistent, meaningful and comparative.

3 More detailed information regarding corrections methodology can be found in **Appendix 5**

Between January and April 2016, 32 designated HPS communities participated in Canada's first national coordinated PiT Count. The first nationally coordinated Count found that a total of 5,954 individuals identified as experiencing homelessness in the core population (i.e., emergency shelters, transitional facilities, and unsheltered locations). Of those counted, 24% were in unsheltered locations, 47% were in shelters, and 26% were in transitional facilities. Although St. John's did not participate in the winter-spring 2016 Count, the resulting analysis and learnings provided a rich resource for future Counts in our community. On November 30, 2016, EHSJ utilized these resources to conduct St. John's first PiT Count, titled 'Everyone Counts'. Everyone Counts used the same methods and survey questions developed in partnership with HPS, while also collecting additional data elements to meet local needs.

2.3 Adapting National Methods Locally

All communities, including St. John's, had the ability to build on the core approaches to better address local priorities and understand homelessness within a local context. In 2018, changes had been made to the local methodologies that encompassed many of the lessons learned from both the spring 2016 coordinated PiT Counts in the rest of Canada, and the November 2016 local Count in St. John's.

Leading up to the November 2016 Count, EHSJ's consultant Dr. Alina Turner⁴, the COH, and EHSJ's Everyone Counts Advisory Committee developed a PiT Count model, which would address the scope, processes and implementation of the 2016 local Count in St. Johns.

The model addressed:

- ▶ Scope of the Count
- ▶ Broad objectives of the Count
- ▶ Engagement of critical community stakeholders
- ▶ Process for recruiting and training volunteers
- ▶ Resources needed, particularly volunteers
- ▶ Budget needs
- ▶ Implementation plan
- ▶ Timelines
- ▶ Ethics, confidentiality and safety
- ▶ Process for analyzing and communicating results
- ▶ Participation in the effort to develop a national Count

The success of the 2016 Count was dependent on effective community partnerships, where key stakeholders were involved in the development and implementation of the Count. These stakeholders included individuals with lived experience of homelessness, emergency shelter and transitional shelter providers, non-profit service providers, public systems (particularly corrections and healthcare), researchers, and governments.

⁴ Dr. Alina Turner of Turner and Research provides research and strategy development support to community partners and agencies in the homeless serving sector.

In tandem with the 2016 Count, EHSJ piloted a youth focused count to better understand youth homelessness in St. John's. A focused youth outreach approach was implemented, which surveyed youth for five additional days post Count and organized a youth magnet event. EHSJ partnered with Choices for Youth's Youth Leadership Council and hired a Youth Technical Advisor with lived experience of homelessness to serve on the advisory committee for the youth focused Count. These strategies and the success of the youth count informed the national PiT Count methodology on youth focused Counts.

In 2018, the Everyone Counts methodology flowed from the 2016 model, while including enhancements to achieve a more refined and effective Count. Changes were made based on recommendations drawn from EHSJ's 2016 PiT Count report, HPS's Everyone Counts – A Guide to PiT Counts in Canada⁵, and the COH PiT Count Toolkit⁶. Additionally, the focus on homelessness in correctional institutions during EHSJ's 2018 Count resulted in the creation of a Corrections Advisory Committee to help refine the methodologies utilized for the corrections-specific PiT Count in 2018. EHSJ engaged the COH to work with this committee to develop and finalize an integrated Corrections Count methodology, which focused specifically on individuals residing in correctional institutions on the night of the Count.

2.4 Purpose and Objective

The purpose of 'Everyone Counts 2018' was to determine the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness in St. John's on a single night. This initiative was undertaken to improve and gain a more in-depth understanding of the characteristics and service needs of those experiencing homelessness in the community. Findings from this report will help inform future EHSJ plans to end homelessness.

The objectives for the second PiT Count were to:

- Refine and strengthen Count methodologies to our local context
- Develop and implement Count methodologies for correctional institutions
- Identify the needs of those experiencing homelessness in St. John's
- Continue using Count methodologies to monitor trends and evaluate effectiveness of interventions and community programs reducing homelessness
- Support previous findings and knowledge from the first local PiT Count
- Identify priority areas for system planning and program development

Further, the overall purpose was to gain a more in-depth and accurate understanding of homelessness. When used longitudinally, homeless Counts can be useful in helping identify emerging trends over time, while providing a method to measure progress, raising community awareness about homelessness, and improving efforts to end homelessness. While the most important use of the Count is to track how the homeless population changes over time, comparing the April 2018 Count with the Count conducted in November 2016 should be done with caution. Significant changes in methodologies make direct comparisons problematic.

5 Statistics Canada. (2016). Everyone Counts – A Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada – 2nd Edition. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time-counts.html>

6 Jesse Donaldson. (2016). Point-in-Time Count Toolkit. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. Retrieved from: <http://homelesshub.ca/pitcounttoolkit>

2.5 Overview of the Approach

The focus of PiT Counts, including Everyone Counts 2018, was to enumerate the number of individuals in St. John's who were staying at emergency shelters, transitional shelters, unsheltered homeless, and those experiencing hidden homelessness (e.g., couch surfers). Additionally, a focus was placed on counting those residing in public systems (e.g., prisons/hospitals) who have no permanent housing prospects post-release and are returning to St. John's. The total enumeration utilizes administrative data and surveys. Administrative data is collected from emergency shelters, transitional shelters, and public systems using facility forms (**Appendix 4**). These forms acquire anonymous information on the number of individuals in an agency, their gender, and indigeneity. Administrators were given the option to provide aggregate⁷ data on clients where all the information was not available, or if the anonymity of the clients would be compromised.

The methodology for 'Everyone Counts 2018' was refined from the 2016 PiT Count, which followed the Point-in-Time Count model, the COH Point-in-Time Count Toolkit, and the Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada. Methodologies were adapted from other cities that conducted PiT Counts during the first nationally coordinated PiT Count from January to April 2016.

In 2018, survey and administrative data was comprised of data collected from:

- 11 street count zones
- 11 shelters (including non-profit emergency shelters, private emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, and youth shelters)
- 7 institutional settings (adult correctional institutions, lock-up facilities, community corrections, mental health and addictions programs)
- 8 community sites (food banks, outreach programs, and meal programs) and
- 1 transitional shelter

From April 11, 2018 to April 12, 2018, over 100 trained volunteers and frontline staff visited these locations to conduct surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness. The Count began on the night of April 11, 2018 at 10:00pm and ended at 2:00am on April 12, 2018. Volunteers returned the following morning at 8:00am and visited other community facilities until 10:00pm that evening. To gauge the true scope of homelessness in St. John's, surveyors approached and engaged with everyone they encountered within each zone or facility. Individuals were invited to participate in the study and screening questions were asked to determine if the individuals met one of the definitions of homelessness. If the person was experiencing homelessness, and consented to the survey, they were asked a series of 24 questions regarding their personal information and experiences of homelessness in St. John's.

In conjunction with the PiT survey, individuals who did not meet one of the definitions of homelessness were given the option to complete a short self-reported survey on their past experiences of homelessness and their current housing conditions. In an effort to gain insight into barriers to long-term housing stability, EHSJ circulated the Housing Needs Survey at all three local magnet events on April 12, 2018. While these individuals were not homeless on the night of the Count, their experiences provided a broader understanding of homelessness within our community.

A full description of methodologies is available in **Appendix 5**.

⁷ Aggregate level data groups all respondents together in large categories to anonymize the data collected.

TARGET POPULATION	ROUGH SLEEPERS*	EMERGENCY SHELTER/ TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITIES	HIDDEN HOMELESS	PUBLIC SYSTEM
ENUMERATION	Surveyed during Street Count	Administrative data Facility forms	Homeless-serving drop-in/outreach centers/magnet events	Administrative data / Facility forms
SURVEY APPROACH	Surveyed by trained staff and volunteers	Surveyed by trained staff and volunteers	Surveyed by trained volunteers at magnet events or centres	Surveyed by system staff/ designated volunteers
DATE AND TIME	Surveys April 11, 2018: 10:00pm to 2:00am	Overnight Count Between April 11, 2018 and April 12, 2018 (10:00pm to 10:00pm) Surveys April 11 & 12, 2018 (Time may vary based on location and volunteers)	Surveys April 12, 2018 between 8:00am to 10:00pm	Overnight Count Between April 11, 2018 and April 12, 2018 (10:00pm to 10:00pm) Surveys April 11 & 12, 2018 (Time may vary based on location and volunteers)

* Rough Sleepers include individuals who are sleeping in unsheltered locations and areas not intended for habitation (i.e. abandoned buildings).

2.6 Limitations

Despite best efforts to align methods, canvas every area, and provide detailed training and analysis, there is no perfect Count. While PiT Counts provide useful information on those experiencing homelessness in a community, including demographics and service needs, it is important to highlight the limitations of a Count as well.

PiT Counts cannot reach everyone and are not an appropriate measure of all those experiencing homelessness in a community. PiT Counts inherently undercount the homeless population and provides a minimum number. The Count can provide a true number of those living in emergency and transitional shelters on a specific night, as this information is collected through administrative data. However, the Count is not an adequate representation of those experiencing hidden homelessness or those precariously⁸ housed in the community.

It is important to recognize that PiT Counts are simply a snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations in a community, which in turn, does not capture system use throughout the year.

Further, Counts rely heavily on service provider reports (e.g., administrative data) and self-reported surveys, which can contain errors and omissions. Documentation practices of agencies and systems may have incomplete, self-reported, or inaccurate information, which presents limitations within the data.

Additionally, there are many community outreach services, meal programs, and food banks that operate on the day of the Count. Unfortunately, despite best efforts, not all programs and services

⁸ Those who are living in unsheltered areas, rough sleepers, or temporarily living with friends or family (e.g., couch surfers).

run on the same day, resulting in fewer numbers at certain sites and increased numbers at others. Further, due to limited volunteers, not every intended site and street count zone was visited.

Although Counts do present specific limitations, the advantages of a Count – especially when done longitudinally – outweigh the weaknesses.

2.7 Local Circumstances

Additional factors can impact PiT Counts, including weather and dates selected. These factors may influence the likelihood of how many people are counted and where, including some rough sleepers, the hidden homeless population, and shelter users.

On the night of April 11, 2018, the weather was cold and wet, and reached a low of -5 degrees Celsius during the Street Count. The colder April weather could have decreased the number of unsheltered homeless encountered on that evening, while increasing the number of shelter users.

HPS guidelines required that communities participating in the coordinated national Count conduct their local Counts during March and April 2018. The specific date of the 2018 St. John's Count was recommended by EHSJ's PiT Count Advisory Committee. The chosen day was selected for several reasons: individuals receiving Income Support would not yet have received their semi-monthly income by the Count date and were more likely to access services and meal programs from local community groups at this time. Further, best efforts were made to pick a date when most homeless-serving organizations would experience a high volume of service users (though it was acknowledged that some community agencies have designated programming on other days during the week, and peak service use varies accordingly).

2.8 New This Year

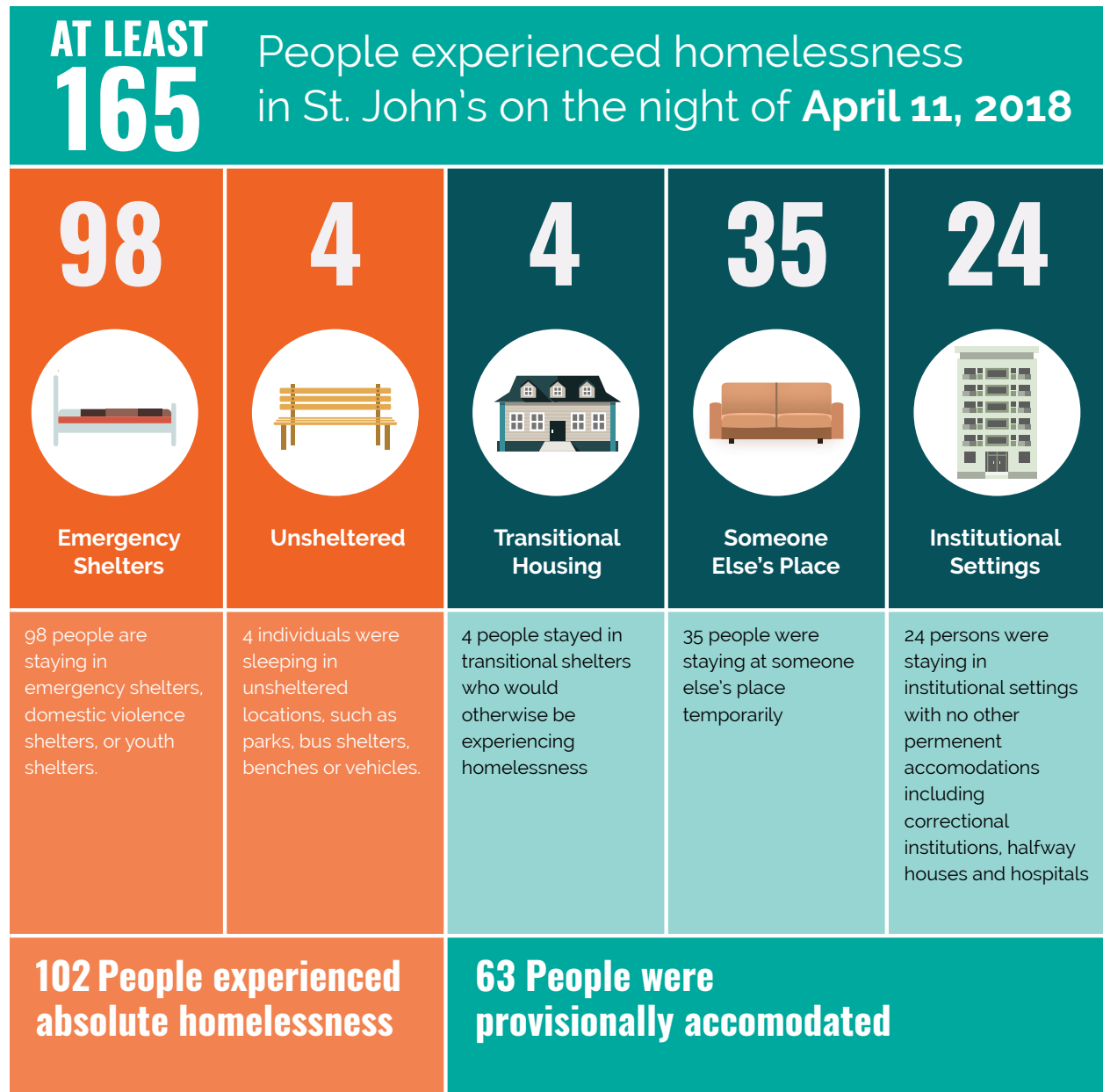
As many lessons were learned from St. John's first PiT Count on November 30, 2016, several key changes were made to the methodologies for 2018. These methodologies were intended to refine and strengthen the 2018 approach to more accurately identify those experiencing homelessness in St. John's.

Key changes included:

- ▶ Extended count time, which was conducted over a 24-hour period from April 11, 2018 to 10:00pm to April 12, 2018 to 10:00pm
- ▶ The Street Count was extended in 2018, covering the 10pm to 2am timeframe
- ▶ Two additional magnet events were added to the Count in 2018
- ▶ The 2018 Count took place in April instead of November to align with spring Counts taking place across Canada. Although temperatures in April are still relatively cool, it was anticipated that the milder season may help with the logistics of the Count and with identifying individuals living on the street
- ▶ With guidance from HPS, changes were made to defining 'Transitional Shelter' for the purposes of the Count, including a fixed housing term of less than one year, no or limited rent payment, no tenancy rights, and transition support
- ▶ Data was collected from individuals held in correctional institutions across the province on the night of April 11, 2018. The Count included those coming to St. John's immediately upon release; who would not be housed upon release; and whose release date would occur within the 30 days following the Count.

The methodological changes allow for greater comparative data analysis among Canadian communities within the nationally coordinated 2018 Count and will enhance our understanding of homelessness. However, the 2016 and 2018 Counts are less comparable to each other due to the changes in the Counts' seasonal timing and methodology between 2016 and 2018. Below are highlights from the preliminary findings from the data collected from EHSJ's Everyone Counts 2018.

St. John's Homeless Population



On the night of April 11, 2018, a minimum⁹ of 165 people had experienced homelessness in St. John's. Of the 165 people counted, 85 individuals (or 51.5 %) completed surveys at local magnet events¹⁰, emergency shelters, foodbanks, outreach locations and correctional facilities. This included 11 individuals surveyed inside local correctional institutions across the province. More information regarding the surveys can be found in **Appendix 4**. Five individuals were turned away from local shelters on the night of the Count; while not counted in our shelter enumeration, these individuals

⁹ PiT Counts are not able to fully capture the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in a community. Generally, those who are provisionally accommodated and experiencing unsheltered homelessness are underreported.

¹⁰ Magnet events are designed to encourage participation from people experiencing homelessness who may be missed through other methods. These events usually have food, resources and entertainment. Those in attendance who meet the definition of homelessness then have the option to be surveyed at the event.

may have been surveyed on the street count. There are many factors that contribute to an individual being turned away from an emergency shelter, including ineligibility or shelter capacity.

The "core enumeration" for the Count is 106 people: according to Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) guidelines, this is the total number of individuals staying in emergency shelters, transitional shelters¹¹, and unsheltered locations. The core enumeration excludes those who are provisionally accommodated in institutions or someone else's home, and thus does not vary greatly despite methodological changes. Therefore, the core enumeration can be used to compare enumerations with other communities that count their core population.

3.2 Where People Stayed



¹¹ Transitional shelters are defined using four criteria: fixed housing term of less than one year, no or small rent payment, no tenancy rights, clients receive supports to help transition to permanent housing. For Information on HPS guidelines: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time.html>

On the night of the Count, 59.4% of those experiencing homelessness stayed at emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, youth shelters, and private shelters. The number of persons living in emergency shelters is highly representative of the number of shelter users on the night of the Count, as this information is collected directly from all local shelters.

In contrast, those who are provisionally accommodated (e.g., living in institutions, transitional shelters, and at someone else's place) made up 38.2% of those experiencing homelessness on April 11.

Those living temporarily in someone else's place made up 21.2% of individuals enumerated in the Count, a number that is likely undercounted and only the tip of a much larger iceberg. As PiT Counts are limited in their ability to measure the extent of hidden homelessness in a community, the true number of those experiencing hidden homelessness is likely much higher.

The 2016 PiT Count, conducted in November, found that the hidden homeless population comprised 13.3 % of those enumerated. While this number has seemingly increased at first glance, changes in methodologies between the 2016 and 2018 Counts (e.g., increasing the number of magnet events) would likely have a significant impact on this number, suggesting that our refined methodologies are getting closer to capturing the actual number of those experiencing homelessness in the community. More information on the methodologies can be found at **Appendix 5**.

Further, while 14.6% of those enumerated were living in an institutional setting, some institutions did not participate in the Count or had limitations in their record-keeping processes. Therefore, the data collected in this section is limited and only identifies a small number of those experiencing homelessness within institutional settings.

Youth:

Those surveyed were more commonly identified as shelter users, with 71.9% of youth identified as staying in an emergency shelter. The remainder were staying at someone else's place, and 1.2% were incarcerated at the time of the survey.

3.3 Demographics

a) Age

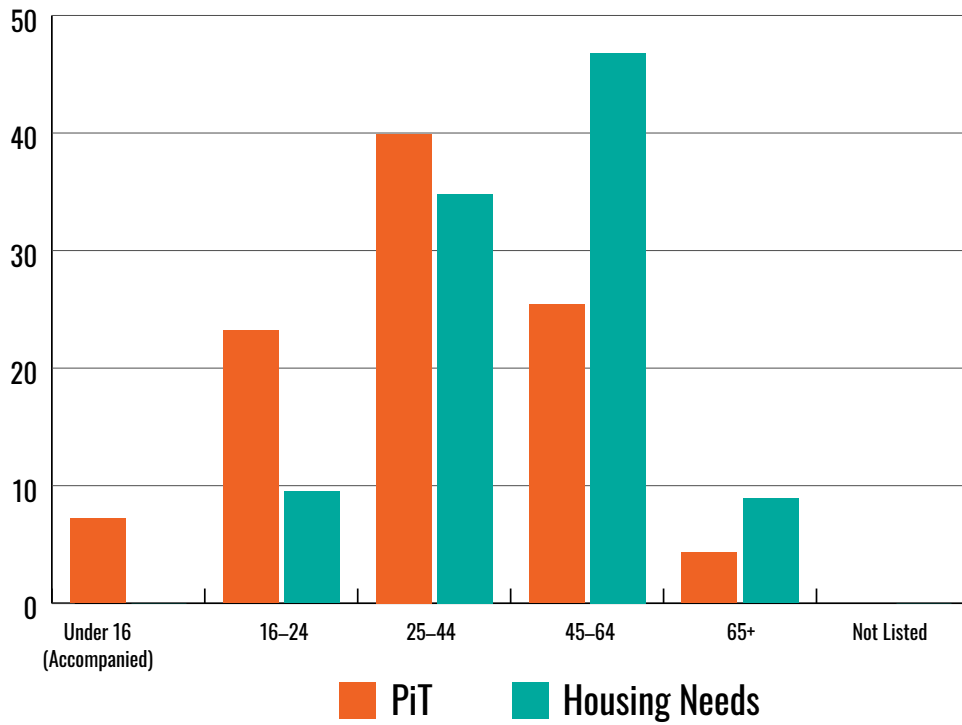
Of the individuals enumerated on April 11, 2018, the results indicated that over half (69.6%) were working age adults above the age of 25, and approximately 50% were above the age of 30. While 40% were between the ages of 25-44 years old, and a quarter (25.4%) fell between the ages of 45-64 years old.

Just over one fifth (23.2%) of the respondents were 16-24 years old. This falls in line with information presented by A Way Home, which identifies that 20% of those experiencing homelessness in Canada are between 13-25¹² years old. Very few respondents were children under the age of 16 (accompanied youth) or seniors over the age of 65 years old. No unaccompanied youth under the age of 16 were encountered during the PiT Count¹³.

¹² See Appendix 3 for data source

¹³ The count number is calculated using administrative data collected from participating agencies using the facility form (Appendix 4) and survey information is utilized to supplement information where administrative data is not available (i.e. unsheltered persons, hidden homeless populations). While not all the individuals counted were surveyed, total counts and basic demographics were calculated using administrative data and survey data. Some information is missing for age and gender demographics provided through administrative data.

Age of PiT/ Housing Needs Respondents



Youth:

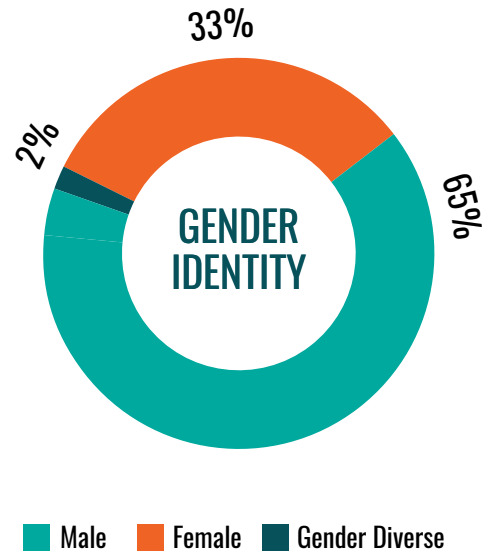
When looking more closely at youth: The majority of those counted under 24 years old (50%) fell between the ages of 22-24 years old, while a significant group (43.7%) fell between the ages of 19-21. The average age of youth enumerated was 21 years old.

b) Gender

Regarding gender, males are over-represented in the data, with 64.7% of participants identified as male, while 32.7% identified as female. In the general population, males represent 49.2% of the population and females make up 50.8%¹⁴. The prevalence of males within PiT Count is not surprising, as women are less visible amongst those surveyed being homeless and under-represented in homeless Counts across the nation, as similar findings have been reported in other Canadian PiT Counts¹⁵

Individuals who did not identify as male or female are grouped together in the data to protect the anonymity of participants, and these individuals represented 2.6% of those counted.

This population is reported as gender diverse; possible selection options for this category were two-spirit, trans male, trans female, gender queer/non-conforming, or other.



Youth:
Female youth were under-represented, making up only 21% of those counted.

Males made up 60% of those surveyed in the Housing Needs Survey, while women made up 36.3%. While 3.2% of individuals identified as gender diverse.

GENDER	PIT SURVEY	HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY	GENERAL POPULATION
Male	64.7	60	49.2
Female	32.7	36.3	50.8
Gender Diverse	2.6	3.2	*

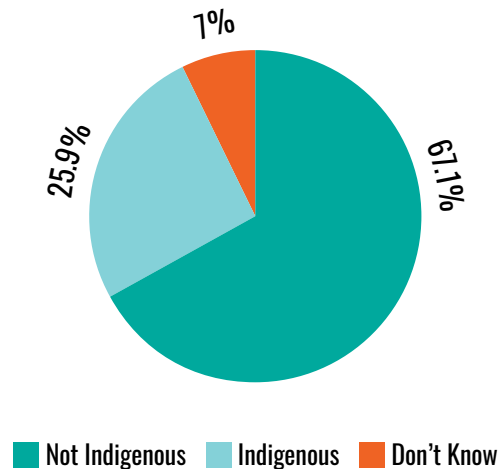
¹⁴ Source can be found in Appendix 3

¹⁵ Turner, A. (2015). 2014 Alberta Point-in-Time homeless count: provincial report. *7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness*.

c. Indigeneity

25.9% of individuals surveyed during the Count identified as having Indigenous ancestry, which included Metis, Inuit, First Nations and the option "Have Indigenous Ancestry"¹⁶. 7% of respondents said they did not know if they had Indigenous ancestry.

In comparison, 3.3% of the population of St. John's identifies as Indigenous according to Statistics Canada in 2016, suggesting the over-representation of this group within the homeless population¹⁷.



INDIGENOUS STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Not Indigenous	57	67.1
Indigenous	22	25.9
Don't Know	6	7

d. Sexual Orientation

Of the individuals surveyed, 9.4% identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit.

The under-representation of LGBTQ2 community members within the PiT Count data suggests a need to focus methodologies and partner with local LGBTQ2 focused community organizations to better identify the needs of this population.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
lgbtq2	8	9.4
Heterosexual	77	90.6

Youth:

Among the youth surveyed, only 1.2 % of those under the age of 25 identified as LGBTQ2, far below the estimated 25-40 % of LGBTQ2 youth believed to be experiencing homelessness in Canada¹⁸

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	PI T SURVEY YOUTH%	GENERAL POPULATION%
lgbtq2	1.2%	20-40%
Heterosexual	98.8%	-

16 To protect the anonymity of those surveyed all indigenous ancestries were groups together.

17 See **appendix 3** for data source

18 <http://homelesshub.ca/solutions/population-specific/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-transsexual-queer-questioning-and-2>

e. Level of education

More than half of the individuals surveyed (53.5%) had graduated high school or had at least some post-secondary education or higher. Of those, 17.4% of respondents had identified having graduated from a post-secondary institution.

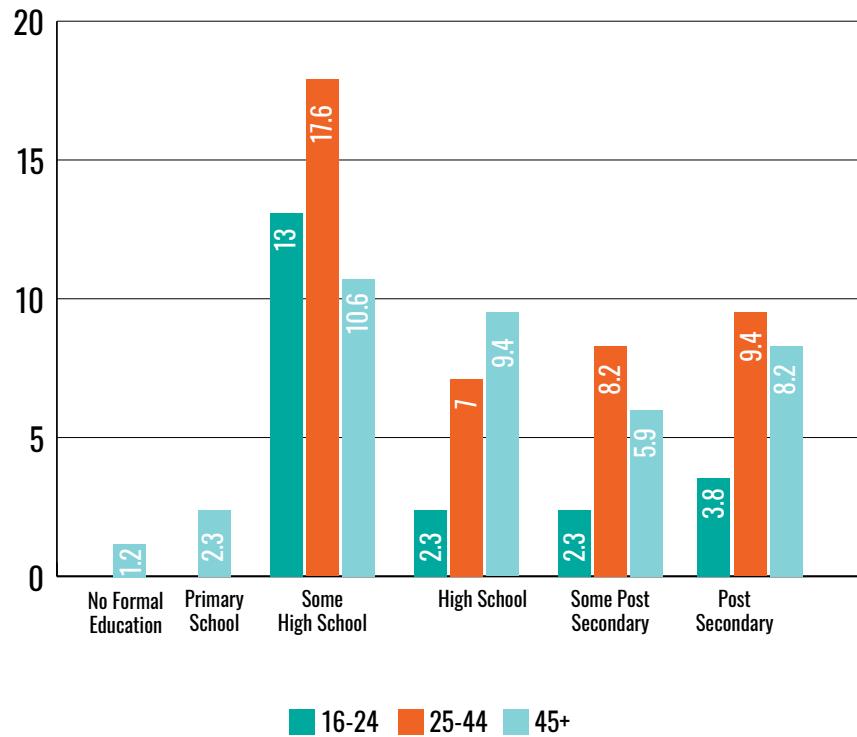
In contrast, 46.5% of individuals had not graduated from high school or had no formal level of education.

Education was indicated as an important service need for individuals, where 55.3% of those surveyed identified education as a service they required.

Youth between the ages of 16-24 more commonly identified having some high school education as their highest level of education. Over one third (39.1%) of participants over the age of 25 had some form of post-secondary education or higher. Age is likely a factor in the highest level of education cited by youth people.

Interestingly, when looking of those who indicated having some form of post-secondary education or higher, only 13.8% indicated having employment as a source of income¹⁹. To contextualize this within a local context, the unemployment rate in the province is 14.7 % as of February 2018; currently the highest unemployment rate in Canada (suggesting that those who have higher levels of education may still have challenges in finding employment in the city, and subsequent experiences with homelessness).

Education Level Of Survey Respondants



¹⁹ It is of note that some individuals may have chosen to leave the work force due to age (retirement), taking care of children, disability, etc. Therefore, a 13.8% employment rate does not equal an 86% unemployment rate within the survey.

f. Income

The most common income source reported by survey participants was income support/ social assistance (45.8%), followed by informal sources of income (8.2%), employment (7%) and GST refund (7%). Men were twice as likely to identify informal forms of income as a source of income. Only women indicated Child Tax Benefit as a source of income.

Additionally, 23.5% of participants indicated having no current income source, with 50% of those individuals incarcerated at the time of the survey.

78.5% of individuals who completed the Housing Needs Survey identified as being on income support, while 12.1% received employment income. When asked how much money they had left over after bills were paid bi-weekly, 65% of participants indicated they had less than \$100 bi-weekly for groceries and personal needs.

INCOME	PIT PERCENT	HOUSING NEEDS PERCENT
Employment	7	12.1
Informal	8.2	3.3
Employment Insurance	3.5	3.3
Income Support	45.8	78.5
Government Benefit*	10.6	14.4
Child Family Tax Benefit	4.7	.05
Money from family/friends	5.8	1.6
GST Refund	7	10.5
No Income	23.5	.05

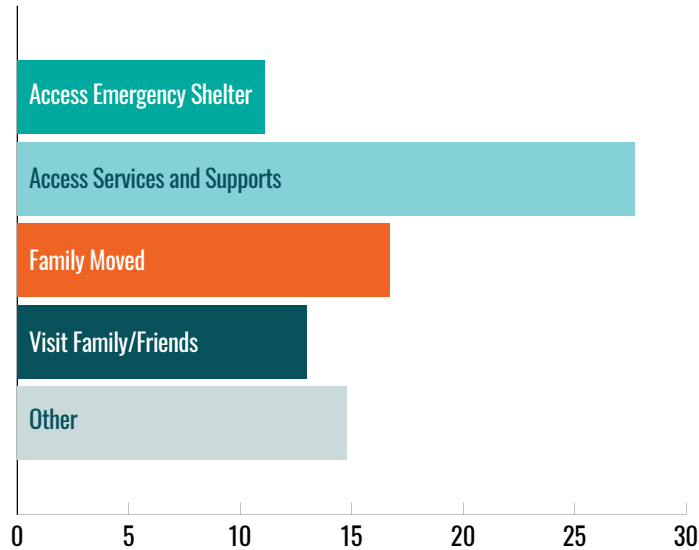
*Government Benefits include Pension, Disability and Seniors Benefits

g. Migration to St. John's

Notable proportions of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community had migrated to St. John's, with 63.5% of individuals surveyed indicating they migrated to St. John's.

Taking a closer look at those who migrated to St. John's, one third (33.3%) moved to St. John's over the past year, 24.1% moved between one to five years ago, while 42.6% moved over five years ago.

Overall, the most commonly cited reason for migrating to St. John's were to access services and supports and moving because of family. No individuals surveyed moved to participate in school or for recreation purposes. Other commonly selected options are cited in the chart below (less frequently selected options are not listed in the chart).



Additionally, 58.7% of individuals who had moved to St. John's had migrated from other communities across Newfoundland and Labrador. Almost half (40%) of these individuals had moved to St. John's within the last five years. In comparison to the local population, 13.9% of individuals moved to St. John's within the last five years²⁰. When asked the main reason for moving to St. John's from their community, 30% indicated they migrated for access to services and supports, including medical supports, substance abuse supports, and other resources.

Moreover, 36.9% of respondents came from other provinces and territories²¹. Notably, out-of-province migrants most commonly came from Ontario and Alberta, respectively. Over half (55.5%) of those who moved to St. John's from out-of-province indicated they did so to be with or visit family. Two individuals indicated moving to St. John's because they were from Newfoundland and Labrador.

The considerable level of migration to St. John's from other communities across the province to access services reflects the centralization of community resources located in St. John's. Communities outside the St. John's area have minimal community organizations and supportive housing accommodations focused on supporting those experiencing homelessness²².

h. Immigration

Only 3.5% of individuals were born outside of Canada, while 2.3% declined to answer or did not know their citizenship status.

²⁰ Economic Development, Culture & Partnership Division; Department of Community Services. (2017). *City of St. John's* Retrieved from <http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/State%20of%20the%20Economy%202017%20-%20Sept.pdf>

²¹ Two individuals cited coming from outside Canada.

²² See more on need for provincial expansion at Choices for Youth. (2017). *We Are Ready*. Retrieved from <http://www.choicesforyouth.ca/expansion>

i) Veteran Status

Veteran's made up 8.1% of those surveyed, a total of 7 individuals surveyed. All those individuals identified as male. Respondents were not asked the type or length of service. Veterans make up 2.9%²³ of the general population, thus veterans are over-represented in the homeless population. There is limited research on the prevalence of homelessness among veteran's in a Canadian context.

3.4 Family circumstances

a) Involvement in Child Protection Services

Of the 85 respondents, 30.6% of participants indicated that they:

- ▶ Had been involved with child protection or child services as a child while in their family home, or with another family member and/or
- ▶ Lived in foster care/or group home

Of those individuals living in foster care or group homes, one third (34%) became homeless within one year of leaving care. When asked if they found child protection helpful in transitioning them into independence, 73% indicated that child protection was not helpful. Similar findings were found in the 2016 PiT Count.

	INVOLVED IN CHILD PROTECTION	FOSTER CARE / GROUP HOME
No	65.9	68.2
Yes	30.6	30.6
No Response	3.5	1.2

Youth:

Those surveyed under the age of 24 were more likely to be involved in child protection and foster care. 50% had been involved in child protection in their youth, and 40% had been in foster care or group homes. Of those, half had become homeless within a year of leaving care. None of the youth respondents found child protection helpful in transitioning them out of care.

b) Family Relationships

Of those asked about their current relationships with family members, 70.9% of participants indicated they were in regular contact with at least one family member or guardian. When asked about their current relationship with their families, 45.4% indicated some conflict with their family, and 33.7% indicated having no conflict with their family.

Although 61.6% said they would want to improve their relationship with their family members if given the opportunity, only half of those surveyed (32.9%) cited family reconnection support as a service they want.

d. Family Units

Few survey participants (3.5%) identified as being part of a family unit or staying with family members (e.g., dependents, guardian, spouse, or other relatives) on the night of the Count.

Shelter data highlighted 10 youth dependents living with a parent or guardian on the night of the Count. Information was not collected regarding the number of family units within the shelter data.

23 Veterans Affairs Canada. (2018). Veterans Affairs Canada Statistics – Facts and Figures: 1.0 Demographics. Retrieved from <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/statistics/1-0>

3.5 The Experience of Homelessness

a. Chronic And Episodic Homelessness

Data was used to understand the patterns of homelessness experienced by individuals surveyed on the night of the Count. Respondents were asked how much time they had spent in homelessness and how many different times they were homeless over the last year. Responses were categorized into three types of homelessness: temporary, chronic, and episodic.

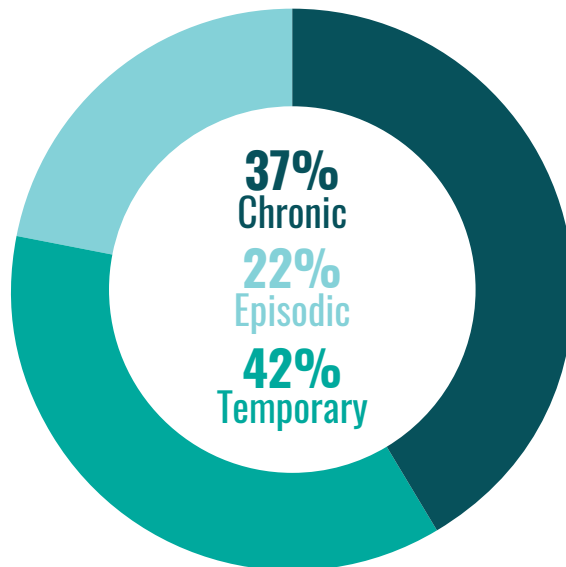
Definitions²⁴:

TYPE	DEFINITION
Chronic Homelessness	A period of six or more months of homelessness in the past year
Episodic Homelessness	Three or more distinct episodes of homelessness in the past year
Temporary Homelessness	Less than six months and fewer than three episodes of homelessness over the past year

Just over one third of respondents experienced chronic homelessness (36.6%), as specified by the above definition, while 21.6% of individuals experienced episodic homelessness. The remaining 41.8% experienced temporary homelessness. One eighth of the respondents were unaware of their time spent homeless over the last year or declined to answer.

Youth:

Were more likely to experience only one to two episodes of homelessness, with two thirds of those surveyed indicating one to two episodes of homelessness over the last 12 months. Similarly, 73.3% had experienced less than six months of homelessness.

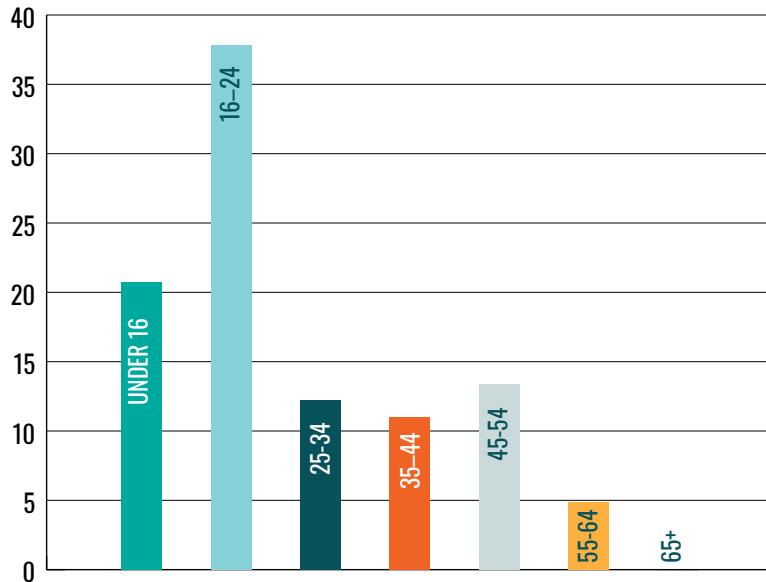


24 These definitions provided through the HPS Guidelines.

b. Age of First Experience of Homelessness

Of the 83 respondents who provided information on the age they first experienced homelessness, 56.5% became homeless before the age of 24; with one quarter becoming homeless between the age of 16 to 18 years old, and one fifth becoming homeless before the age of 16 years old.

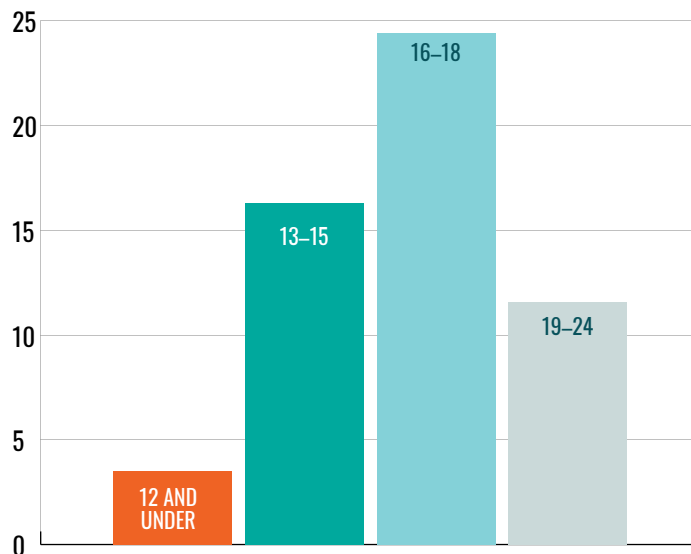
Age First Experienced Homelessness



Interestingly, almost one third of those surveyed experienced first-time homelessness well into adulthood, where 28.2% of respondents became homeless after 35. Older adults above the age of 55 made up a lesser percent, with 4.7% becoming homeless between the ages of 55-64, and no individuals surveyed identified becoming homeless after the age of 65.

The average age of first homelessness was 26 years old, the median age of first homelessness is 20, the most common age identified was 17.

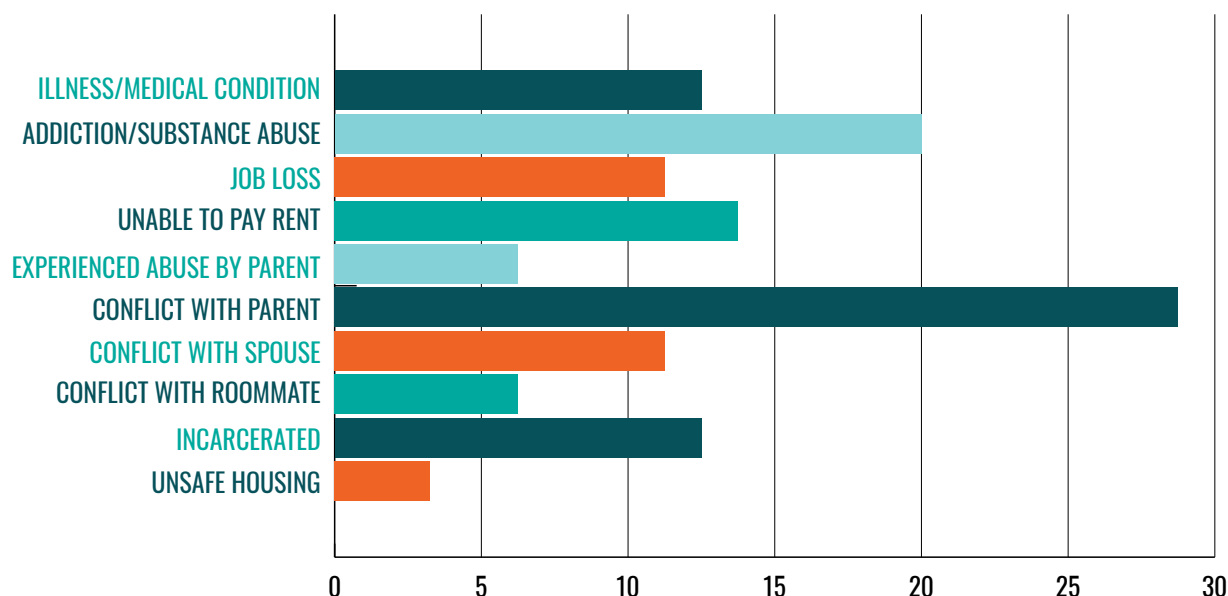
Age of First Experience of Homelessness Under 24.



c. Reason For First Experience Of Homelessness

Regardless of age, over one quarter (28.75%) identified becoming homeless for the first time due to conflict with their parents or guardian; 95% of respondents who cited conflict with parents or guardian were under the age of 24 at the time they first became homeless.

The second most commonly selected response was addiction and substance abuse, with 20% of participants selecting this reason for their first experience of homelessness. Other common responses include an inability to pay rent (13.7%), followed by illness/medical condition and incarceration (both at 12.5%). Other reasons for first homelessness was cited by 25% of those surveyed – 5% of these individuals identified abuse from a family member. All of these individuals were over the age of 35.



d. Reason for Most Recent Housing Loss

Respondents were asked what resulted in their most recent experience of homelessness. Not surprisingly, results differed from what caused respondents to first become homeless. The most common response cited for recent homelessness was incarceration, with 16% of respondents indicating that time spent incarcerated resulted in a loss of housing; with 46% of these individuals were incarcerated at the time of the Count. However, it should be noted that not all those who were incarcerated identified this as a reason for their experience of homelessness. This was also the most frequently cited response of homelessness in the 2016. The connection between homelessness and incarceration was to be expected, with 12.9% of respondents having had spent time in custody. Following incarceration, addictions and substance abuse, inability to pay rent or mortgage, and conflict with spouse or partner were cited as the most common reasons for housing loss.

Other reasons for housing loss included conflict with roommates and experiences of abuse by a spouse or partner. While conflict with parents and guardians were cited as the most common reason for the first experience of homelessness, it only made up 3.7% of the responses for most recent housing loss.

REASON FOR CURRENT HOMELESSNESS	PERCENTAGE
Illness/medical condition	7.4
Addiction/substance abuse	14.8
Job loss	6.2
Unable to pay rent or mortgage	14.8
Eviction	7.4
Experience abuse by spouse	11.1
Unsafe housing condition	9.9
Conflict with spouse	14.8
Conflict with parent	3.7
Conflict with roommate	13.5
Incarceration	16

e. Barriers To Housing

When asked what challenges individuals faced in finding housing, the most common response was low income (57.6%), followed by the high cost of rental units (43.5%). In 2016, similar findings were found in the first local PIT Count, as low income and high rental rates were also cited as the most common barriers to housing.

In both the 2018 PIT Count and Housing Needs Survey, the majority of those surveyed cited income support as their main source of income. Currently, in Newfoundland and Labrador, a single person in receipt of income support under the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (AESL) can receive \$534 to \$906 for basic needs and shelter accommodations. Additional supplements can be provided for fuel, transportation and medical circumstance²⁵. The average rental cost for a bachelor apartment was \$699, \$786 for a one-bedroom apartment, and \$941 for a two-bedroom apartment²⁶.

Other challenges to housing included, addictions, mental health issues, and poor housing conditions. None of the respondents indicated not wanting housing as their challenge to obtaining housing

25 Advanced Skills, Education, and Labour. (2018). Retrieved from: <http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/income-support/overview.html#monthlyrates>

26 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2017). Rental Market Report. Retrieved from: https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/sf/project/cmhc/pubsandreports/esub/_all_esub_pdfs/64455_2017_a01.pdf?sv=2017-07-29&ss=b&srt=sco&sp=r&se=2019-05-09T06:10:51Z&st=2018-03-11T22:10:51Z&spr=https,http&sig=0KetqosPGtnokW/Oe66BpqguDljVgBRH9wLOCg8HfE3w%3D

BARRIERS TO HOUSING	PERCENTAGE
Low income	57.6
Income assistance	11.8
Rent too high	43.5
Poor housing condition	17.6
Domestic violence	5.9
Health issues	9.4
Mental health issues	18.8
Addiction	18.8
Family break down	8.2
Criminal history	16.5
Discrimination	16.5
Don't want housing	0

When asked “what would help you find housing?”, out of the 70 individuals who gave a response, almost half said support or assistance would be the most helpful resource to finding housing. In this context support was identified as housing support, social workers/case managers, or organizations (e.g., Choices for Youth, Stella’s Circle, Iris Kirby House). The second most common responses were affordable housing (30%), more income (28.5%), and employment (14.3%)²⁷.

Respondents of the Housing Needs Survey identified low income (45.6%) and high rental rates (45%) as challenges to finding housing when needed.

²⁷ Individuals could provide more than one response, resulting in %ages that equaled to greater than 100 %.

3.6 Service use and service needs

a. Shelter Use

STAYED IN A SHELTER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	53	62.4
No	32	37.6

In 2015, 695 individuals²⁸ accessed shelters throughout the year. This includes persons who had repeated stays in shelters. St. John's currently has approximately 134 shelter beds across the city, including emergency shelters, private shelters, domestic violence shelters, and youth shelters. A 73% shelter occupancy rate was enumerated on the night of the PiT Count.

During this year's Count, 37.6% of respondents indicated they had not used a shelter in the past year.

Of those surveyed, 62.5% who had not stayed in a shelter over the past year were staying at someone else's home. Those experiencing hidden homelessness are generally under-represented within PiT data, therefore, this number may be much larger than reported.

Of all the individuals surveyed, the most commonly cited reason for not staying at a shelter over the past year was a preference to stay with friends (45%), followed by incarceration (15.7%).

b. Hospital Use:

Participants were asked about their stays and interactions with public systems (hospitals, recovery centres, and mental health facilities) over a 12-month period prior to the Count. It is important to note that response rates for this question ranged and were based on the respondents' memory and personal accounts, which limited the reliability of the data.

Over the last 12 months:

- ▶ 61.2% had been admitted to emergency rooms
- ▶ 32.9% had been admitted to hospital for physical health reasons
- ▶ 14.1% had been admitted for mental health reasons
- ▶ 18.8% had been admitted to a recovery center

On average, over the 12-month period prior to the Count, respondents reported averages of:

- ▶ Times in emergency room: 3.2 Times
- ▶ Times admitted for physical health: 1.75 Times
- ▶ Days admitted for physical health: 21.33 Days
- ▶ Times admitted for mental health: 2.5 Times
- ▶ Days admitted for mental health: 16.5 Days
- ▶ Times in recovery centre: 2.9 Times
- ▶ Days in recovery centre: 48 Days

28 Up to date data was not available

TIMES HOSPITALIZED	EMERGENCY ROOM %	PHYSICAL HEALTH %	MENTAL HEALTH %	RECOVERY CENTER %
1	32.7	64.3	41.7	43.8
2 TO 3	34.6	21.4	16.7	31.2
4+	26.7	10.7	33.3	18.8
DON'T KNOW	5.8	3.5	83.3	6.2

c. Police and Corrections

Overall, 60% of respondents indicated having some form of police involvement over the last 12 months. On average, individuals were involved with police 3 times. Of those involved with police, 27% had experienced one incident involving police, 19.2% had been involved twice with police, while 21.1% had been involved with police more than 11 times.

Additionally, 35% of those surveyed indicated having been to jail in the last year²⁹. 63.3% of these participants had been to jail once, while 13.7% had been incarcerated more than four times over the last year.

The average number of days spent in custody was 41 days. Of those who indicated they had spent days in custody, 27.6% spent up to two weeks in custody, while 6.9% spent 15 to 30 days in custody, and 24% spent three to six months in custody.

DAYS HOSPITALIZED	PHYSICAL HEALTH %	MENTAL HEALTH %	RECOVERY CENTER %
1	13.8	8.3	0
2 TO 6	31	8.3	12.5
7 TO 14	3.5	33.3	25
14+	13.8	16.8	37.5
DON'T KNOW	34.5	33.3	25

There are a variety of reasons individuals experiencing homelessness interact with police or the justice system. While commonly cited reasons have been addictions and mental illness, obtaining a means of housing was cited as one of the reasons for incarceration. Within the PiT survey, 9.4% of respondents indicated using incarceration as a means of obtaining housing, 27.7% of these individuals were incarcerated at the time of the Count.

Individuals who experience homelessness have a higher usage of public systems than the general population – particularly in relation to deteriorating health and interactions with the justice system.

²⁹ No distinction was made between remand and sentenced custody.

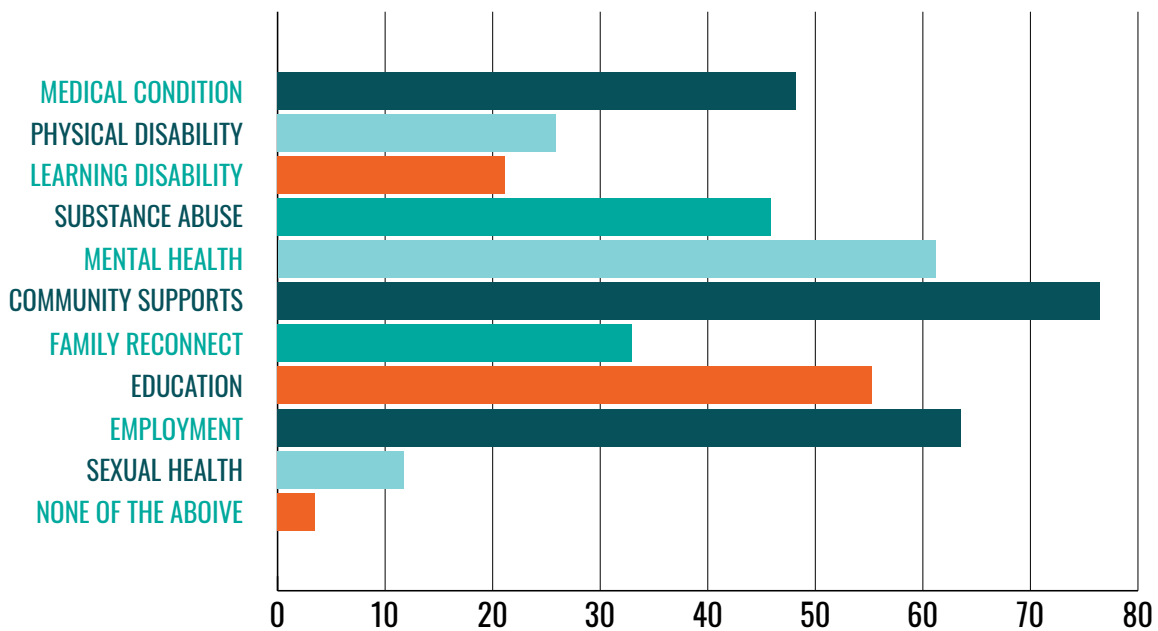
Individuals experiencing homelessness in St. John's reported a notable use of public systems. As a result, there is a high cost associated to homelessness and the over use of these systems. In contrast, community supports, and programs can be associated to cost saving measures – for instance while provincial jails have a monthly cost of \$4,333, social housing costs governments \$199.92³⁰ per month.



d. Service Needs

Those surveyed were read a list of services available in the community to identify which services would be beneficial to those experiencing homelessness. A small portion indicated they needed none of the services mentioned (3.4%). Respondents were able to select all the answers that applied.

Overall, 74% of respondents indicated needing more than two services. Of those surveyed, 76.5% of respondents indicated needing community supports, while 63.5% indicated needing employment resources in the community. Mental health, education, and ongoing medical services were also common responses given by respondents.



When asked if they knew where to go in the community for help, one out of five respondents indicated they did not know where to go for support in the community.

30 Gaetz, S. (2012) The real cost of homelessness. The Canadian Homelessness Research Network, Retrieved from http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/costofhomelessness_paper21092012.pdf

A Lens On Homelessness Within The Corrections System

4.1 Homelessness within Correctional Systems

This year as part of the 2018 Count, a focus was placed on individuals held in correctional institutions who lacked permanent housing within the community. Currently, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has experienced a growth in incarceration rates. In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that 359 individuals³¹ were incarcerated in provincial correctional institutions, with just over 40 % of that population currently held on remand³² (a number that is said to be rising considerably across the country). The connection between incarceration and experiences of homelessness, mental health, addiction and poverty have been frequently and well documented.

To better understand those incarcerated in correctional facilities who may be at risk of being released into homelessness, refined methodological strategies were implemented for the 2018 Count. During the November 2016 Count, EHSJ collected administrative data on individuals inside the six correctional institutions and community-based residential facilities. Those who identified as having "No Fixed Address" were counted, and surveys were conducted with these individuals. Several concerns were highlighted during the 2016 Count regarding the use of "No Fixed Address" as an inclusion criterion, as well as the length of time an individual is sentenced³³.

In turn, several methodological changes were made in the April 2018 PiT Count, specifically to the eligibility criteria:

All correctional institutions were included in the Count, including adult correctional facilities, youth detention centres, and community-based residential facilities (i.e., halfway houses).

Inclusion of those who will be imminently released, which was defined as being released within 30 days following the PiT Count date of April 11, 2018.

Inclusion of only those who plan to stay in St. John's or move to St. John's immediately post-release.

Inclusion of those released who have no discharge plan that includes housing.

Additional questions were added to the survey for those within correctional institutions to collect more accurate information from those within correctional settings.

These methodological changes have significant impacts on the number of individuals counted within the PiT Count. For instance, simply using No Fixed Address did not eliminate individuals who simply did not provide their address, or who could have lost their housing due to their time incarcerated. Thus, Everyone Counts focused on individuals who would be released within 30 days of the Count and who would return to St. John's. This ensured that the Count enumerates those who would likely utilize programs and services within the homelessness serving sector.

Several corrections organizations and community-based facilities participated in the Count, including the St. John's Lock-up, Her Majesty's Penitentiary, Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre

³¹ See Appendix 3 for source

³² Remand is defined as those incarcerated in pre-trial detention, while awaiting trial or sentencing.

³³ The length of an individual's sentence impacted their ability to maintain housing in the community and did not seem relevant for the PiT Count and the objective of gaining a snapshot of those experiencing homelessness in a point in time.

for Women, Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre, John Howard Society – Howard House, and Correctional Services Canada's Community Corrections Facility. Those with potential release dates within 30 days after the Count were surveyed. If they were released, their surveys were included within the Count's data; those who were not released from institutions were not counted.

See **Appendix 5** for more detailed descriptions of the survey inclusion and exclusion criteria.

4.2 Enumerated Correctional Count

On the night of the Count, 15 persons were held in correctional institutions who had no permanent place to live. These individuals were to be released from sentenced custody or court within 30 days of the Count. Of those, 11 of the individuals (73.3 %) were surveyed on the day of the Count.

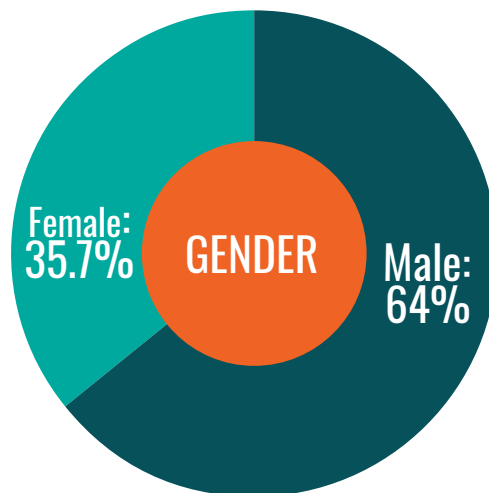
Any changes between the 2016 PiT Count can be associated to the refined methodologies of this years' Count. Due to the changes in methodologies and inclusion criteria, direct comparisons between both Counts cannot be made.

4.3 Demographics

a. Gender and Age

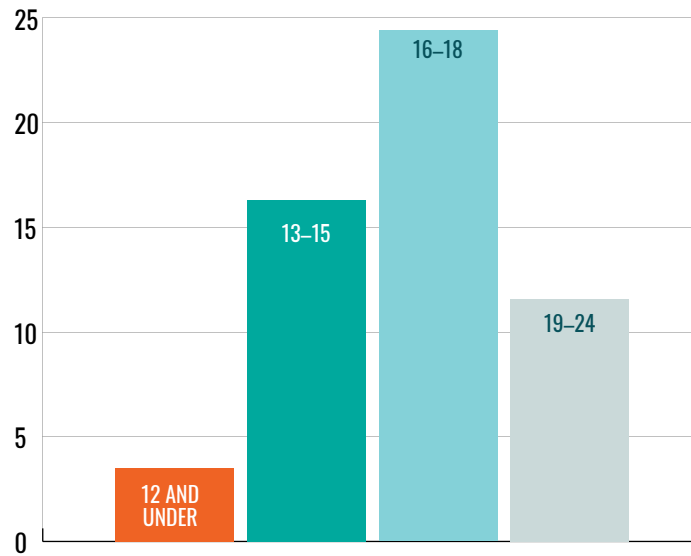
Males made up the majority of those counted within correctional institutions, with 64.3% of those enumerated identifying as male. Overall, males are over-represented within the Canadian correctional system, making up 84 % of those admitted into provincial and territorial correctional institutions in 2016³⁴. Furthermore, young and middle-aged adults are over-represented within the national correctional system – which was also reflected in the PiT survey data, where 81.8 % of those surveyed were between the ages of 25-44 years old.

No individuals identified as gender diverse or above the age of 65 within the PiT correction survey data.



34 Reitano, J. (2016). Adult Correctional Statistics in Canada, 2015/2016. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14700-eng.htm>

Age of Count Respondants



b. Sexual Orientation and Indigeneity

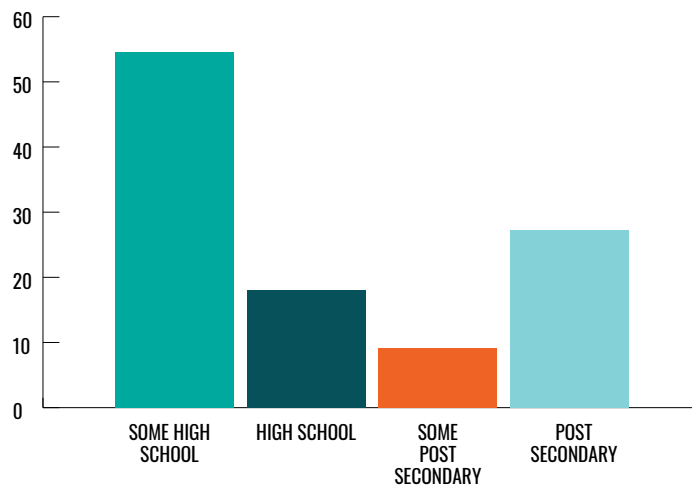
All but one individual surveyed identified as part of the LGBTQ2 community; to protect the anonymity of the respondent all non-heterosexual options were grouped together.

Only 18 % of those surveyed identified as non-indigenous. This is lower than the national average which highlighted a significant over-representation of aboriginals in provincial jails at 26 %³⁵.

c. Education

Across the sample, 54.5 % of those surveyed had some high school education, while just over one third (36.4 %) had cited having some post-secondary education or higher. These findings were consistent with those of the data from the PiT Count survey.

Education Level of Corrections Survey Respondants



35 Reitano, J. (2016). Adult Correctional Statistics in Canada, 2015/2016. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14700-eng.htm>

4.4 Experience of Homelessness

a) State of Homelessness

45.6% of those surveyed identified first experiencing homelessness between the ages of 16-24. With conflict with a parent or guardian cited as the main reasons for their first experience of homelessness.

Across the sample, 54.5% of individuals staying in correctional institutions on the night of the Count had cited experiencing their current state of homelessness as a result of incarceration. Unlike the 2016 PiT Count where addiction was cited as the most common reason resulting in their most recent experience of homelessness, this was not found in the 2018 Count. However, a significant number of those surveyed indicated their struggles with addictions presented challenges in finding housing (45.5%) and required addiction support (90.9%) as a needed service.

b) Shelter Experience

Many of the individuals surveyed identified having not stayed in a shelter over the past year; approximately 72.7%. While 36.4% stated this was due to incarceration, a preference to stay with friends and living in one's vehicle were also cited as main reasons by respondents.

As aforementioned, the connection between the experiences of homelessness and incarceration are longstanding. The bidirectional relationship – which has been well documented – suggests that those who are homeless are more likely to end up in prison, while incarceration itself perpetuates an imminent risk of becoming homeless³⁶.

4.5 Service Needs

When asked what challenges those incarcerated experienced with respects to finding housing, 54.5% of those surveyed identified low income as the main challenge. Other main challenges included discrimination, addiction, and high rates of rent. Options with few responses have not been listed in the chart. Interestingly, criminal history was not selected by many respondents as a challenge to finding housing, which was the top response in the 2016 PiT Count.

Respondents also indicated that housing support and affordable housing would be the main things needed to help them find housing upon release. Suggesting a need for housing availability and housing related supports for those being prior to release.

Further, 90% of the respondents identified substance abuse and mental health supports as services they required. The other top responses were community supports and employment, followed by family reconnect and education.

While most respondents knew where to access supports in the community, respondents indicated at least three services they needed in the community.

36 Gaetz, S., & Grady, B. (2009). Homelessness, Incarceration and Discharge Planning. Retrieved from <http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/7.3%20Gaetz%20and%20%27Grady%20-%20Homelessness%20%20and%20Discharge%20Planning.pdf>

SERVICES NEEDED	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Substance abuse	10	90.9
Mental health	10	90.9
Community supports	9	81.8
Family Reconnect	8	72.7
Education	8	72.7
Employment	9	81.8

4.6 Interactions with the criminal justice system

Not surprisingly, those incarcerated on the night of the Count had come into frequent contact with police, with all but one individuals having two or more encounters with police. 45% cited having over four incidents.

The majority of respondents had been incarcerated once; and identified longer periods of incarceration. 45.5% of participants identified having spent over six months incarcerated. This suggests that individuals surveyed are still serving their first sentence.

5.1 Discussion and Next Steps

'Everyone Counts 2018' provides a snapshot of homelessness in St. John's and the housing and service needs of this diverse population. While the themes highlighted in this report have been a focus of the homeless serving sector for a period of time, the findings represent the tip of a much larger iceberg. The 2018 data has both reinforced the information discovered in 2016 and identified findings that will inform our Community Plan to End Homelessness and enhance future PiT Counts. While not unique to St. John's, the overrepresentation of Indigenous persons and the prevalence of adults among the homeless population is concerning. So is the persistence of youth homelessness, and the relationship between homelessness and incarceration. These findings indicate that we, as a society, must address the underlying issues that lead to homelessness.

EHSJ believes that the value in conducting PiT Counts lies not only in their ability to inform current and future plans to end homelessness, but in their capacity to help us understand the true nature of homelessness in our community by engaging individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

The data garnered from 'Everyone Counts 2018' revealed important findings about homelessness in St. John's. While 58.5% first experiences of homelessness occurred before the age of 24, one quarter of those surveyed first experienced homelessness after the age of 35. Regardless of education, this group is experiencing high rates of un/underemployed and an inability to obtain affordable housing. Secondly, the multifaceted and unique experience of homelessness brings to light the need for integrated and wrap-around services within the homeless serving sector. A significant number of individuals surveyed experience chronic and episodic homelessness, interact with the criminal justice system, and require supports and services to address substance abuse and mental health issues. These factors suggest we need to look at how our systems and service models are oriented towards those with complex needs.

EHSJ's 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness focuses on coordinating systems and offering a range of housing and supports needed to prevent and end homelessness. Ending homelessness does not mean no one will ever experience homelessness, but it does mean that through system coordination and the timely provision of housing and supports, we will end chronic and episodic homelessness, reduce average shelter stays to 7 days, eliminate discharges from public systems into homelessness, and prevent homelessness for those at risk.

PiT Counts contribute to our Community Plan by providing us with baseline data and a greater understanding of the characteristics and service needs of our homeless population. Going forward, this data can be used to inform the design and delivery of programs and services tailored to the unique and diverse needs of persons experiencing homelessness in our community.

5.2 Recommendations

- ▶ Continue to ensure a minimum of six months of planning prior to the time of the next biennial Count in 2020 to allow sufficient time to engage public systems and other partners who require additional processes in order to participate.
- ▶ Continue to conduct spring PiT Counts, in alignment with nationally coordinated PiT Counts.
- ▶ Explore increased volunteer engagement and coordination with Memorial University and colleges to boost capacity for increasing Street Count coverage and extending Count times

later into the night.

- ▶ Consider the merits of linking future PiT Counts with other forms of research, such as period prevalence studies³⁷, for a broader view of homelessness and housing instability within our community. This could be especially valuable as federal and provincial governments move to implement long-term housing and homelessness strategies, and the City of St. John's and EHSJ develop new 10-year affordable housing and homelessness plans, respectively.
- ▶ Develop partnerships with groups and community partners to enhance the enumeration of under-represented groups within the PiT Count, including LGBTQ2 communities and women.
- ▶ Building on the 2016 Count which piloted a youth approach, explore a focused youth outreach approach during the count week to enhance knowledge of homelessness among this population (e.g. more youth magnet events and surveys spanning a one-week period).
- ▶ Develop standardized volunteer/surveyor training strategies that place a greater focus on survey delivery and consistency
- ▶ Magnet events are effective, yet resource intensive and time consuming for community partners. To ensure the feasibility of magnet events during future Counts, develop resource opportunities and provide additional support prior for the execution of magnet events.

5.3 Next Steps

- ▶ The results of this Count will be used to inform the development of the EHSJ's future plans to end homelessness.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to work closely with community partners, governments, and persons with lived experience as we continue to implement long-term solutions to homelessness
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to focus its efforts on the most vulnerable groups, those experiencing hidden homelessness, and those who are disproportionately reflected in the homeless population – including youth, LGBTQ2 persons, women, and indigenous persons.
- ▶ This report will be made available to other stakeholder organizations, governments, and the public on June 29th, 2018.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to conduct counts on a biennial basis and use lessons from local and national Counts to improve and refine our methodologies for the future.
- ▶ EHSJ will use trends found in future PiT Counts to inform interventions for effectively ending homelessness

³⁷ Period prevalence looks at homelessness over a period of time (e.g. number of individuals using a shelter over a one-year period). By enumerating homelessness over a period of time, more people are counted because: not everyone experiences homelessness at the same moment in time; and people move in and out of homelessness.

5.4 Limitations

While best efforts are made to improve count methodology and effectively enumerate those experiencing homelessness, a number of groups were not well-represented within the sample. Many groups, especially those experiencing hidden homelessness, are difficult to locate during a PiT Count. In turn, several groups were under-represented during the Count, and therefore, future efforts must focus on gathering information on these groups, as they are general some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Unsheltered homeless: Those experiencing unsheltered homelessness are individuals temporarily staying outside, in parks, on benches, in their vehicles, or other places not intended for habitation (including abandoned buildings). Only four persons were identified during the street count as absolutely homeless. This suggests those experiencing unsheltered homelessness are extremely undercounted. This may be for a variety of reasons including the fact that it is impossible to cover every location in the city where someone may be staying. Secondly, those experiencing unsheltered homelessness may not wish to disclose the unsheltered nature of their living situation and therefore may not provide accurate information to surveyors.

Hidden homeless: Pit Counts are not intended to measure the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in a community. Those experiencing hidden homelessness are largely undercounted by PiT Counts and can vary greatly by changes in methodologies. For instance, in 2016 only one coordinated youth magnet event was held at Choices for Youth, while in 2018 three magnet events were held at three different locations throughout April 12. This could have greatly impacted the number of individuals staying at someone else's place on the night of the count. However, this population is probably much larger than what was identified in Everyone Counts 2018. Future efforts will continue to be made to better identify this population and gain more in-depth knowledge regarding those experiencing hidden homelessness.

Families: Similar to 2016, very few families were enumerated within the PiT Count. Only 3.5% of respondents were part of a family unit or staying with family members on the night of the Count. Shelter data reported 10 youth dependents living with a parent or guardian on the night of the count, with no information on the number of family units.

LGBTQ: The under-representation of LGBTQ2 community members within the PiT Count data suggests a need to focus methodologies and partner with local LGBTQ2 focused community organizations to better identify the needs of this population. Surveyors could have also played a role in the limited number of persons identifying as LGBTQ2. During the 2018 Count, only 1.2% of those under the age of 25 identified as LGBTQ2, while reports state that 25-40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ2 in Canada.

Public Systems: While efforts were made to engage public systems in the 2018 PiT Count, issues were faced surrounding the availability and accessibility of information available from public systems. Many of the documentation practices within institutions, including corrections and health care, are not designed for PiT Count use or to easily identify those experiencing homelessness. Therefore, specific public institutions were either not contacted for data collection or provided limited information regarding those within the institutions. While methodologies were refined from 2016 to 2018 as an effort to more accurately identify those experiencing homelessness within these systems, specifically corrections, there is an underrepresentation of this number due to the limited data collection.

Appendix 1

Canadian Definitions of Homelessness

Types	Living Situation	Included
Unsheltered	People living in public or private places without consent or contract	✓
	People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation	✓
Emergency Sheltered	2.1 Emergency overnight homeless shelters (adult, youth, and family)	✗
	2.2 Shelters for individuals and families impacted by family violence	✓
	2.3 Emergency shelters for people fleeing a natural disaster	✗
Provisionally Accomodated	3.1 Interim housing (transitional shelters)	✓
	3.2 People living temporarily with others but without guarantee of continued residency or prospects of permanent housing	✓
	3.3 People accessing short-term, temporary rental accommodation without security of tenure (hotels, motels)	✓
	3.4 People in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements	✓
	3.5 Accommodation/reception centers for recently arrived immigrants and refugees	✗
At Risk Homelessness	4.1 People at imminent risk of homelessness	✗
	4.2 Individuals who are precariously housed	✓

Appendix 2

Participating Agencies

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FACILITY/ PROGRAM NAME	CATEGORY	ADMINISTRATIVE DATA	SURVEYED BY STAFF	SURVEYED BY VOLUNTEERS
Abba Inn	Leonard Clarke	Private Shelter	✓		
AIDS Committee of NL	Tommy Sexton Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	
	Swap	Outreach			✓
Ben Said Services Ltd.	Ashley Ben Said	Emergency Shelter	✓		
Bridges to Hope	Bridges to Hope	Food Bank			✓
Choices for Youth	Outreach Centre	Community Site		✓	✓
	Young Men's Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	✓
Connections for Seniors	Connections for Seniors Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	
Correctional Services Canada	NL Community Correctional Centre	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
Eastern Health	Mental Health and Addictions Program	Institutional Setting: Mental Health and Addictions Services	✓		
Iris Kirby House	Iris Kirby House	Domestic Violence Shelter	✓		✓
Leonard Phair	Leonard Phair	Private Shelter	✓		
Memorial University	MUN Food Bank	Food Bank			✓
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour	Social Work Services	Public System	✓		
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development	Youth Corrections and Youth Services	Youth Service Provider	✓		

Participating Agencies (Cont'd)

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FACILITY/ PROGRAM NAME	CATEGORY	ADMINISTRATIVE DATA	SURVEYED BY STAFF	SURVEYED BY VOLUNTEERS
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice and Public Safety	Her Majesty's Penitentiary	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
	St. John's City Lockup	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
	Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		
	NL Correctional Centre for Women	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
Pleasant Manor Corporation	Pleasant Manor	Transitional Housing	✓		
Salvation Army	Wiseman Centre	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	✓
St. John's Native Friendship Association	Shanawdithit Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓		✓
St. John's Status of Women's Council	St. John's Women's Centre	Drop-in Program			✓
Stella's Circle	Brian Martin Housing Resource Centre	Community Site		✓	
	Naomi Centre	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	
The Gathering Place	Drop in Centre	Community Site			✓
The John Howard Society of NL	Howard House	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓

Appendix 3

Data Sources

Age demographics

A Way Home: Vers Un Chez Soi. (2017). Retrieved from <http://awayhome.ca/youth-homelessness-in-canada/>

Gender Demographics

Statistics Canada. (2018). Census Profile, 2016 Census. Retrieved from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=1001519&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchText=st.%20john's&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Population&TABID=1>

Indigeneity

Statistics Canada. (2017). Aboriginal Peoples Highlight Tables, 2016 Census. Retrieved from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/abo-aut/Table.cfm?Lang=Eng&T=103&PR=10&S=88&O=A&RPP=25>

Appendix 4

Links to 'Everyone Counts' resources

Facility Form

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/survey/community_documents_templates/st_johns_2018_resources?sort=name&order=desc

Housing Needs Survey

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/survey/community_documents_templates/st_johns_2018_resources/housing_needs_survey_everyone_counts_st_johns_2018_pdf

Survey

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/survey/community_documents_templates/st_johns_2018_resources/survey_form_everyone_counts_st_johns_2018pdf

Street Count Zones

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/survey/community_documents_templates/st_johns_2018_resources/route_map_everyone_counts_st_johns_2018_pdf

Volunteer Recruitment Registration Form

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/survey/community_documents_templates/st_johns_2018_resources/volunteer_recruitment_registration_form_everyone_counts_st_johns_20

Volunteer Information Package

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/survey/community_documents_templates/st_johns_2018_resources/volunteer_package_everyone_counts_st_johns_2018pdf

Appendix 5

Methodology

The focus of 'Everyone Counts 2018' is on counting the number of individuals within emergency shelters and transitional shelters, while simultaneously targeting efforts to enumerate those who are hidden homeless, unsheltered homeless, and residing in public systems. The Count used a combination of survey and administrative data to gain a snapshot of homelessness within St. John's.

The methodology for 'Everyone Counts 2018' is based on recommendations from Everyone Counts: St. John's Homelessness Point-in-Time Count 2016, the Point-in-Time Count Toolkit, and the Everyone Counts – A Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada – 2nd edition. As part of the nationally coordinated Count, the methodology included Core Standards that was consistent across all communities who participated. The approach also included recommended standards, which were based on effective practices used by communities in Canada. While communities are encouraged to adopt these standards, flexibility was given to adapt local methodologies to meet the needs of the specific community.

A5.1 Date of the Count

HPS requires that nationally coordinated Counts be conducted between March 1 and April 30, 2018. The date for this year's Count was April 11, 2018, which was selected by the EHSJ's PiT Count 2018 Advisory Committee. The decision for the date was based on several factors including:

- ▶ Income support cheques were disbursed between April 13 to 16, which allowed for Counts and surveys to be completed prior to cheque distribution. This is usually when clients require services from local community organizations and meal programs. This date also allows for backup dates prior to income support disbursement in case of inclement weather.
- ▶ The overnight approach allows shelter staff to conduct surveys overnight from April 11, 2018 and all-day April 12, which should increase survey participation rates at shelters. This approach also maximizes volunteer resources as volunteers can participate in the evening Count, then at the service Count the following day.
- ▶ While Memorial University exams start on April 11th, this date is before the end of term when many students leave St. John's. In turn, this will allow for student volunteers to participate in the Count and may also include individuals attending university who experience homelessness to be counted.
- ▶ Mid-week Counts allow for training to occur from April 6th to April 9th, allowing some time before the Count to ensure volunteers have completed waivers and oaths of confidentiality. In turn, facilities who provided administrative data did so on the night of April 11, 2018 into April 12, 2018. Surveys were conducted on the evening of April 11, 2018 and on the day of April 12, 2018.

A5.2 Data Collection

The scope of 'Everyone Counts' encompasses as wide a range of circumstances as possible. In this context, data was collected from:

Unsheltered Count (Street Count)

Emergency and transitional shelters

Community sites (e.g. meal programs, outreach services, food banks, etc.)

Magnet events

Public systems (e.g. corrections, health)

There were two types of data collected:

- ▶ Administrative data - collected from facilities that provide residential services (i.e., beds) to individuals experiencing homelessness including emergency shelters, transitional shelters, and public systems such as correctional facilities and hospitals. This data was collected using facility forms.
- ▶ Surveys - conducted with individuals who were experiencing homelessness on April 11, 2018 and who met the screening criteria. All participation in the surveys were voluntary.

Overview of Methodology for St. John's PiT Count 2018

TARGET POPULATION	ROUGH SLEEPERS	EMERGENCY SHELTER/ TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITIES	HIDDEN HOMELESS	PUBLIC SYSTEM
ENUMERATION	Surveyed during Street Count	Administrative data Facility forms	Homeless-serving drop-in/outreach centers/magnet events	Administrative data / Facility forms
SURVEY APPROACH	Surveyed by trained staff and volunteers	Surveyed by trained staff and volunteers	Surveyed by trained volunteers at magnet events or centres	Surveyed by system staff/ designated volunteers
DATE AND TIME	Surveys April 11, 2018: 10:00pm to 2:00am	Overnight Count Between April 11, 2018 and April 12, 2018 (10:00pm to 10:00pm) Surveys April 11 & 12, 2018 (Time may vary based on location and volunteers)	Surveys April 12, 2018 between 8:00am to 10:00pm	Overnight Count Between April 11, 2018 and April 12, 2018 (10:00pm to 10:00pm) Surveys April 11 & 12, 2018 (Time may vary based on location and volunteers)

a) Unsheltered Count

The unsheltered Count included those who slept in unsheltered locations or places unfit for human habitation, including streets, alleys, parks, transit stations, vehicles or abandoned building. The street Count took place from 10:00pm to 2:00am the following morning. The time was selected by the EHSJ's Lived Experience Council who noted that most individuals will settle in for the night between 11:00pm and 2:00am when many fast food locations and bus services close for the night.

12 street count zones were selected across St. John's, with core areas and "hot spot" locations where people experiencing homelessness would frequent or stay. The zones were consistent with the 2016 Count, with small amendments through volunteer feedback. Volunteer surveyors worked in teams of three or four on the night of the Count. Teams were assigned zones and provided with maps of their area with clear indicators for "hot spot" areas. Due to limited volunteer participation, one zone was

removed on the night of the Count and teams were provided with additional volunteers. Volunteers were instructed to cover as much of the area as possible and approach everyone they encountered. Training, which was required for all volunteers, incorporated strategies on approaching individuals and safety measures while on the street count.

b) Emergency and Transitional Shelters

The sheltered Count included people sleeping in emergency shelters (general and specific to men, women, youth, etc.), Violence Against Women shelters, and transitional shelters. All shelters provided administrative data on who was staying in their facilities on the night of the Count. Facility forms included the age, gender identity, and indigenous status of those staying at the facilities on the night of April 11, 2018.

In addition, trained shelter staff and/or trained volunteers conducted surveys with individuals who consented to participate to collect additional information about their circumstances and service needs. Surveys were conducted on the evening of April 11 and continued throughout April 12 in order to maximize participation in the survey.

Other than in cases where staff were completing surveys, the PIT Count Coordinator worked with each shelter and transitional program to determine when volunteers would be scheduled.

c) Community Sites

Community sites were included in the Count to obtain information about hidden homelessness in St. John's. This component of the Count included locations such as, food banks, outreach centers, community centers, and meal programs. This also included magnet events at community locations, which were utilized to attract people experiencing homelessness to one location where they could be surveyed.

Volunteers worked in teams of three or four under the supervision of an experienced team lead at the assigned site. Volunteers approached everyone they encountered, went through the designated screening questions and obtained consent from participants.

d) Magnet events

A magnet event is a strategy used during a PiT Count to attract a specific target group. This allows a community to survey individuals experiencing homelessness who may be missed through the sheltered and unsheltered components of a Count. The event usually offers a range of services that may be appealing to individuals who are experiencing homelessness such as a meal, haircuts, foot care, recreation and leisure activities, entertainment, therapy animals, outreach services, etc. and provides the option to complete a PiT Count survey.

Three magnet events were planned and coordinated with the respective organizations for April 12, 2018.

- 1.** The Gathering Place (25 years or older) magnet event was held from 7:00am to 2:30pm. The event was planned and coordinated by the Gathering Place Staff.
- 2.** Choices for Youth (16 to 29 years old) held their magnet event from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at their outreach centre. The event was planned and coordinated by the Youth Leadership Council.
- 3.** Thrive (16 years or older) held their magnet event from 7:00pm to 10:00pm at the Kirk Church. The event was planned by Thrive's outreach program.

This meant that events were held throughout the entire day on April 12, 2018 at respective locations. Trained volunteers and staff approached everyone they encountered at the events, read the scripts, obtained consent to participate and asked the screening questions to determine eligibility for the survey. The Project Coordinator worked with each host organization to determine the best way to promote each event.

e) Public Systems

Public systems were engaged to obtain administrative data for clients who were provisionally accommodated in institutional settings, who met the definition of homelessness. The data was collected from individuals who were residing in residential facilities on the night of the Count, who had no fixed address indicated, who would be released within 30 days of the Count but had no discharge plan that included housing. In all cases, clients must be returning to St. John's upon release. All health institutions shared aggregate level data which included demographics.

30 days post count, amendments were made to the administrative data available for all persons who were not released from the public systems counted on April 11, 2018. These individuals were removed from the data.

A5.2 Survey

a) Survey Design

The survey instruments were designed based on guidance from the HPS, the COH, the St. John's Everyone Counts Advisory Committee, and Corrections Advisory team.

The survey components included:

- 1.** An introduction containing information about the Count, its purpose, and what the results will be used for
- 2.** A question addressing whether the participant has already participated in the survey
- 3.** A question seeking informed consent from the participant to participate in the survey
- 4.** Screening questions to determine eligibility based on definitions of homelessness (determined by HPS)
- 5.** Mandatory data elements (determined by HPS)
- 6.** Optional data elements
 - a.** Developed by the COH (determined by the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee)
 - b.** Developed and determined by the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee and Corrections Advisory Team in consultation with the COH

The survey was tested with EHSJ's Lived Experience Council in December 2017. The council provided feedback about the process and made recommendations about question design, specifically regarding the optional data elements that were created locally. The feedback was brought back to the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee and changes were made accordingly.

The final survey consisted of 24 questions, including five screening questions.

b) Survey Design for Correctional Institutions

In the 2016 St. John's Count, it was determined that the survey design for the general community Count was not adequate for surveying within corrections. As a result, a Corrections Advisory Team was established. Screening individuals in corrections requires collection of additional data elements:

1. They must be incarcerated overnight on April 11
2. They must be released or appear in court (if on remand) between April 12 and May 11, 2018
3. They must intend to go to or stay in St. John's, even if only temporarily when released
4. They must meet the definition of homelessness. In addition, several survey questions were removed from the survey, modified or added to better suit this setting.

Alongside those with No Fixed Address, individuals could be surveyed if:

1. Individuals were homeless prior to admittance and who have no plan for permanent accommodation after release
2. Had housing prior to admittance, but lost their housing while in institutional care
3. Had housing prior to admittance but cannot go back due to charges or changes in their needs.

A by-name list was documented by administrators and institutional staff regarding those enumerated on the day of the Count, as well as those surveyed. On May 11, 2018, those released were checked against by-name list. Anyone released from the institutions were enumerated in the count, while those who remained in the institutions were excluded.

c) Housing Needs Survey

While PiT Counts are intended to present a snapshot of homelessness, EHSJ felt valuable insight could be gained from the experiences and needs of individuals who have previously experienced homelessness in the community. As a secondary component of the PiT survey, individuals who did not meet one of the definitions of homelessness were given the option to complete a short self-report survey on their barriers to long-term housing stability. This survey was distributed at all three of the local magnet events on April 12, 2018. The data was used as a complementary data set to better understand a more rounded scope of homelessness within our community.

d) Administering the Survey

As previously mentioned, trained volunteers and staff administered the survey. Unaccompanied youth under the age of 16 were not encountered or surveyed during the Count. Surveyors were instructed to approach everyone they encountered to obtain consent and determine their eligibility for the survey. Volunteers were trained to administer the survey in a non-judgmental and neutral manner. In addition, surveyors were told to respect respondents' rights and personal space (e.g. not wake anyone up, not interrupt anyone who is actively working). Respondents were informed that the survey was voluntary, their names would not be recorded, and they had the right to decline any question and/or the rest of the survey at any point.

e) Honorarium and Engagement Gifts

Individuals who provided consent to participate in the survey and who met the definition of

homelessness as determined by the screening questions would be given an honorarium for their time. The honorarium used for this Count was a \$10 Dominion gift card for surveys conducted in the community. Survey participants who were incarcerated at the time of the survey had \$10 added to their commissary. The 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee determined the honoraria based on feedback from individuals with lived experience of homelessness and service providers during our 2016 Count and continued the honorarium for the 2018 Count. Dominion was chosen because of the wide range of products available, including cigarettes, personal care items, food and clothing. Given that individuals who were incarcerated at the time of the Count could not access Dominion stores, it was determined they would receive a cash honorarium. The amount chosen was determined based on the budget available for these items and the anticipated number of surveys conducted. In addition, the committee felt that the full survey is quite long and \$10 is an appropriate amount to show the respondent that their participation and feedback were valued.

The honorarium was not used to coerce anyone into participating. Importantly, volunteers were given instructions that the honorarium would not be mentioned until after the respondent had provided consent to participating and was determined to be eligible for the survey. Volunteers were further instructed that the honorarium should be provided regardless of whether eligible respondents completed all questions. In some environments, such as shelters, community sites and the magnet events, where people gather together, it was difficult to prevent others from learning about the honorarium prior to their participation in the survey.

Street Count surveyors were provided with additional engagement gifts (e.g. granola bars, mitts, hats, etc.) to be used to engage individuals on the street, regardless of their participation in the survey.

A5.3 Enumeration

The enumeration for this Count was predominantly based on the administrative data collected and supplemented by survey information where administrative data did not exist or was limited (e.g. for rough sleepers and the hidden homeless). Not everyone who was counted was surveyed, therefore the survey provided a sample for analysis from the overall number counted.

Where possible, administrative data was critically evaluated and cross-referenced with the survey information available from users of a specific facility. Once public systems data was made available, administrative data was adjusted to reflect accurate information about clients (e.g. gender identity, Indigenous status).

A5.4 Avoidance of Double Counting and Duplications

To avoid double counting individuals experiencing homelessness and to eliminate duplicate entries of results, the following strategies were implemented:

The enumeration number was predominantly based on the administrative data collected. In cases where administrative data did not exist or was limited (e.g. for rough sleepers and the hidden homeless), surveys were used to inform the Count number

Volunteers wore identifiable yellow 'Everyone Counts' buttons and ask people if they had already

participated in the survey with someone wearing a similar button before they began the screening process

Survey respondents were assigned unique identifiers (first name initial, last name initial, month of birth, day of birth) to aid in de-duplication. If surveys with matching identifiers were identified, the survey questions were reviewed in further detail to determine if it was in fact the same individual.

A5.5 Response Rates

The response rate was calculated based on the number of people who were surveyed (excluding dependents) and only included locations where surveys were administered. Therefore, facilities that only provided administrative data were not included in the calculation.

The combined response rate for emergency shelters were 30 % (30 out of 98). It should be noted that 6 individuals were surveyed at the magnet events, but it is unclear which shelters these individuals were staying at.

For institutional settings the response rate was 45.8 % (11 out of 24).

It is not possible to estimate the response rate for unsheltered and hidden homeless populations as the total number of these populations are unknown.

A5.6 Data Cleaning, Entry and Analysis

Data entry was performed by the PiT Count Coordinator using the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) software, version 3.82. Data was entered at the headquarters location as surveys were returned from survey volunteers. Initial data cleaning was completed by the Project Coordinator using Microsoft Excel. Further data cleaning and analysis was completed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency using SPSS, in consultation with the Project Coordinator. Respondents who decline to answer or selected "Don't Know" were excluded from the analysis for the relevant question(s).

A5.7 Weather

On the night of April 11, 2018, the weather was cold, and wet and reached a low of -5 degrees Celsius. The colder April weather could have decreased the number of unsheltered homeless encountered on that evening, while increasing the likelihood of shelter users.

A5.9 Limitations to the Point-in-Time Count

The priority of the national PiT approach was to capture data about persons experiencing homelessness who are sleeping rough (street homelessness) and staying in emergency shelters and transitional shelters. Communities could have opted to include hidden homelessness and public systems. While the benefits of a Count far outweigh its limitations, it is important to acknowledge these limitations and strive for improvement. The key limitations to this approach are listed below.

1. The Count inherently undercounts the homeless population. It represents the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness on a single day
2. As a snapshot of homelessness on one particular day, the Count does not provide information on system use throughout the year
3. A PiT Count cannot adequately enumerate the hidden homeless or those at risk of homelessness.
4. Seasonal variation impacts the results of the Count
5. Every area where homeless individuals stayed on April 11 was not visited by volunteers. The street count focused on areas where homeless individuals were known to frequent or stay. Therefore, other areas of town, where volunteers would have encountered individuals experiencing homelessness were excluded. In addition, volunteers were instructed not to enter abandoned buildings due to concerns of liability and safety, despite the fact some of the buildings had been identified as areas of interest
6. Individuals experiencing homelessness may not wish to be seen or counted. Promotion of the Count, having large numbers of surveyors out on the streets and events that draw large numbers could have sent some individuals into hiding
7. Counts rely on service provider reports and client surveys, which can contain errors and omissions
8. The Count uses surveys to collect information about those experiencing homelessness in St. John's. While best efforts are made to optimize the survey design, responses to survey questions are influenced by survey respondents' honesty, introspective ability, ability to recall past events, and understanding and interpretation of survey questions.

Appendix 6

Volunteers

The success of 'Everyone Counts' is highly dependent on volunteers. Approximately 100 volunteers participated on the night of the count conducting surveys and working at the headquarters location on the day of the Count.

A6.1 Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers were recruited through existing partnerships within the housing and homelessness-serving sector, community programs and local university/colleges. Organizations were encouraged to circulate the recruitment link to their networks via email or by posting on their social media pages. Volunteers were able to sign up through a SurveyMonkey link (Appendix X). The recruitment link asked volunteers to provide their contact information; identify which role(s) they were interested in; indicate their level of experience working with the homeless population and conducting surveys; select a training and volunteer shift; and provide their emergency contact information. All volunteers were at least 19 years of age.

A6.2 Volunteer Training

All volunteers were required to attend a mandatory two-hour training session. Team leads were required to attend an additional hour of mandatory training prior to general training. Training took place at the Headquarters Location (Boys and Girls Club Buckmaster's Circle location) and in the Foran Greene Room at St. John's City Hall during the week prior to the Count. Volunteers were pre-assigned to their training shift and confirmed their attendance.

General Training covered:

1. Introduction to the Count
2. Pit Count Day Logistics
3. Volunteer packages (including Liability Waiver and Oath of Confidentiality)
4. Practical tips and considerations
5. Street safety
6. Cultural sensitivity
7. The survey
8. Survey practice

Team Leader Training overlapped slightly with general training but emphasized several key aspects where team leaders' roles differed from other surveyor roles. Topics covered include:

1. The Role of team leaders
2. Ethics of research, confidentiality, informed consent and honoraria
3. The survey screening questions and survey
4. Safety protocols

All volunteers were required to sign an Oath of Confidentiality before they left training (**Appendix X**). This was required before they could survey participants.

A6.3 Volunteer Participation

Initially, 102 volunteers signed up for the Count. Several volunteers were unable to make it to the event dates and/or training. On the final day of the Count, 85 volunteers were registered. Of those, 75 were assigned to street count and service locations, and 10 were assigned to headquarters.

93 persons attended training over the two training days, and 12 team leads attended training.

A6.4 Volunteer feedback

Volunteer feedback forms were distributed online and emailed to volunteers after the Count. 24 people filled out the online survey.

Feedback highlighted several key themes regarding training, the Street Counts, and question phrasing. Firstly, many felt that rather than having a separate training session for team leaders, a short-extended session following general training would be suitable for Team Leaders. Secondly, Additionally, volunteers felt that extended survey training was necessary go through the survey in greater detail. Additionally, volunteers felt that while the Street Count downtown zones would benefit from additional groups covering smaller areas, more practical lighting tools (i.e., headlamps/ clipboard lamps), and one-sided surveys. Finally, volunteers found that many respondents interpreted the word "housing" as a colloquial term for Newfoundland and Labrador housing.