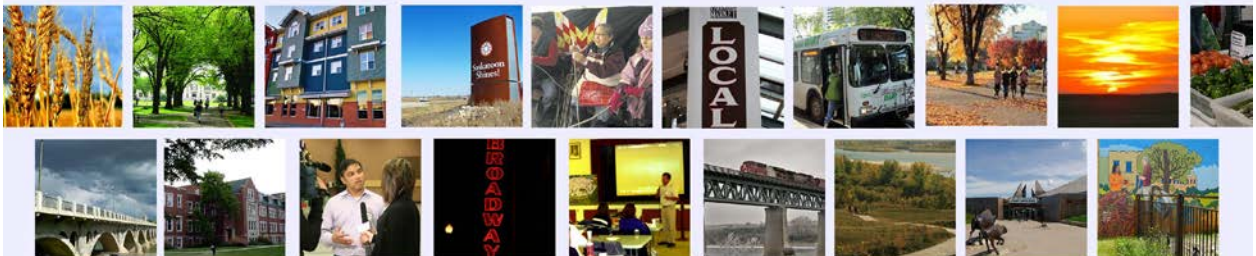# CUISR
COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

2018 Point-In-Time Homelessness Count Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Isobel M. Findlay, Jania Chilima, Bill Holden, and Abdrahmane Berthe

Community-University Institute for Social Research

Building healthy, sustainable communities
Since 1999, the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR)—formally established as a university-wide interdisciplinary research centre in 2000—has remained true to its mission of facilitating "partnerships between the university and the larger community in order to engage in relevant social research that supports a deeper understanding of our communities and that reveals opportunities for improving our quality of life."

Strategic Research Directions
CUISR is committed to collaborative research and to accurate, objective reporting of research results in the public domain, taking into account the needs for confidentiality in gathering, disseminating, and storing information. In 2007 CUISR adopted five interdisciplinary strategies:

1. Saskatoon Community Sustainability
2. Social Economy
3. Rural-Urban Community Links
4. Building Alliances for Indigenous Women's Community Development
5. Analysis of community-university partnerships

These strategic directions extend our research organized until 2007 in three modules—quality of life indicators, community health determinants and health policy, and community economic development—the result of efforts to address health, quality of life, and poverty that led to the formation of CUISR to build capacity among researchers, CBOs, and citizenry.

CUISR research projects are funded largely by SSHRC, local CBOs, provincial associations, and municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Beginning in 2007, CUISR's reputation for high quality community-based participatory research (CBPR) enabled us to diversify our funding by responding to community agency requests to conduct research projects for them for a fee.

Tools and strategies
Knowledge mobilization: CUISR disseminates research through newsletters, brown bag luncheons, reports, journal articles, monographs, videos, arts-based methods, listserv, website.

Portal bringing university and community together to address social issues: CUISR facilitates partnerships with community agencies.

Public policy: CUISR supports evidence-based practice and policy at these tables: provincial Advisory Table on Individualized Funding for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, and Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee (RIC).

Student training: CUISR provides training and guidance to undergraduate and graduate students and encourages community agencies to provide community orientation in order to promote positive experiences with evaluators and researchers.

2018 POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

ISOBEL M. FINDLAY, JANIA CHILIMA, BILL HOLDEN, AND ABDRAHMANE BERTHE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2018 Saskatoon PIT count was the first year that the coordination role was isolated from the research team. In 2015, it was identified that there were considerable actions within the coordination of the project that could be better developed, implemented, and evaluated by an external (to the research team) coordinator.

The coordinator started with SHIP in December 2017 and worked through to the final reporting period in July 2018. During this time the following items were the responsibility of the coordinator:

- Develop and support the community advisory team (CAC)
- Create an internal and external communication strategy
- Submit reports to SHIP/HPS teams
- Organize and support the volunteer training sessions
- Support research team where appropriate
- Ensure deadlines are met
- Develop and implement a strategy for the youth magnet event
- Secure outside funding for the youth magnet event
- Provide support and mentorship for the lived experience team members
- Coordinate the PIT count day (including volunteer, mapping, honoraria, hospitality and all operations of the event)
- Work with the CAC and research team to develop the map and survey questions

Using practices from previous years the coordinator was tasked with creating all the volunteer packages, assigning teams to areas and ensuring that volunteers were trained, prepared and fully understood the process. During the PIT count the coordinator role was important so that the research team was able to focus on the data coming

in from the volunteers. Previous years, the research team was bogged down in the coordination of the day which did not allow them the time to verify and clean data as it was returned by volunteers. The ability to debrief and confirm data on site, on the day of the count was an important new opportunity for the research team.

The role of the coordinator played a critical connection between the research team, SHIP, and the CAC. It was an integral part of both the internal and external communications strategy and created a mechanism for all partners to connect more consistently with the team.

Planning and implementation of the 2018 Point-in Time (PIT) Homelessness Count on April 18 was an enormous community effort involving individuals, agencies, shelters, and community-based organizations delivering services and supports. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of 35 community partners, including front-line service providers, systems policy professionals, people with lived experience of homelessness and poverty, Indigenous program and service providers, and community agencies involved in issues of homelessness in Saskatoon. CAC members gave important advice on research design and implementation to ensure that the count reflected current social, cultural, and economic realities and responded to community needs.

We are also grateful for the administrative support of Joanne Hritzuk, CUISR administrative coordinator, who participated in the CAC, shared her experience of coordinating previous counts, prepared all print materials for training sessions, count day, and debrief, and helped with administration of count day.

Our special thanks to Bill Holden, Daniel McLaren, and Ashley Young, City of Saskatoon Planning and Development, for preparation of the survey route maps.

We are also grateful to those who helped deliver five training sessions for volunteers. Special thanks to Lesley Prefontaine, CSO Supervisor, Community Support Officer Program, and to Constable Dawn Epp, Saskatoon Police Service, and to Ruth Engele, David Fineday, and Dylan Desjarlais who shared personal stories of lived experience, sharing their knowledge and expertise to increase understanding and give voice to those so often left unheard, and to help reduce risk and ensure the safety and comfort of surveyors and respondents.

HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS

Coordinated, multi-sector interventions, mobilizing diverse knowledges to make sure that **"everyone counts,"** are showing signs of preventing, reducing, or even ending homelessness. Still, more work needs to be done to ensure that all Saskatoon residents have access to **safe, affordable, and appropriate housing**. Some populations (Indigenous people, most conspicuously), for example, continue to be impacted disproportionately and many households face high levels of precariousness and risk of homelessness:

- Saskatoon households spend on average 24% of their income on rent and utilities.
- 11% of Saskatoon households experience overcrowding.
- 45% of Saskatoon households spend more than 30% of income on rent and utilities; a further 20% spend more than 50% of income on rent and utilities.

In this context, Point-in-Time (PIT) Homelessness Counts are key resources that gather data to help understand factors in homelessness, to **give a human face to the statistics**, and to help design and implement effective program and policy investments and interventions. The fourth Saskatoon PIT Homelessness Count—and first as part of Employment and Social Development Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) national coordinated PIT count—including an indoor and outdoor enumeration, a streets needs assessment, and public perception survey, was held in Saskatoon on April 18, 2018.

The 2018 count built on the learning from Saskatoon counts in 2008, 2012, and 2015, while adapting to the requirements of HPS's second coordinated PIT count. Using a "snapshot" approach to collect the data, the PIT count aimed to identify **chronically homeless** (individuals who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year) and **episodically homeless** (individuals who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year).

The PIT count also examined at-risk groups to establish a better understanding of the trends among homeless populations, how local trends match or not national trends, and determine appropriate programs and services according to needs. To produce a **comprehensive and multi-faceted a picture of homelessness** in Saskatoon, the count survey included these components:

- Retained a **Public Perceptions** component (Part One), a **unique feature** of the 2015 count, engaging all people encountered on count day in a **community conversation** about perceptions of and attitudes to homelessness.

- Retained the expanded enumeration to include **"the hidden homeless,"** the provisionally accommodated or "couch surfers" without immediate prospect of permanent housing.

- Included the **HPS mandatory 14 Core Questions** in Part Two.

- Incorporated **additional questions relevant to the local context** (approved by the Community Advisory Committee and HPS).

- Included for the first time an **honorarium** to thank participants for their time and knowledge, respecting the principle of **Nothing about us, without us** and the principle of informed consent where honoraria are at levels that will not unduly influence.

In addition to some new survey components, the survey was implemented in new ways:

- Added a **Youth Magnet Event** hosted at White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL).

- Expanded the number of study areas to 44 (from 19 in 2012 and 27 in 2015).

- Implemented both **mobile** (1-25 study areas) and **stationary locations** (26-44 study areas) as well as **high traffic locations** (A-E in Study areas map).

These additional data sources are included in the discussion of results:

- Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) covering The Lighthouse, Salvation Army, YWCA, and Saskatoon Housing Coalition

- Observational data representing those who were perceived to be without shelter but wished not to be surveyed

- Qualitative and observational data collected from the youth magnet event at WBYL.

For the first time, an additional data source was provided by the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) count of patients (3) admitted and homeless on April 18, 2018. Because the SHA data reported no demographic or other information, these numbers are not discussed in the results.

Count Results

In addition to three individuals who indicated homelessness when seeking medical attention at emergency rooms in Saskatoon on April 18, a total of **475 people** were counted as without permanent shelter, **including 11 children**:

- 90 adults and 2 children were counted or reported in the outdoor survey.

475 including 11 children experiencing homelessness on April 18, 2018

- 79 adults and 7 youth were counted as **"hidden homeless"** in the outdoor survey.
- 82 adults, 16 youth, and I senior were counted in the indoor survey conducted within collaborating shelters and transitional houses.
- 186 adults, 3 youth, and 9 children were reported staying in four participating shelters or transitional houses by HIFIS.

Numbers are relatively stable since the 2015 count reported 450, including 45 children. Results may reflect the effectiveness of Housing First initiatives to reduce family homelessness, although a changed definition of children (0-18 up to 2015 count and 0-14 for 2018 coordinated count) also impacts numbers.

High reported levels of **precarious housing conditions** included 86 cases of hidden homelessness (35 in 2015). Without safe, reliable, and consistent housing, these experiencing hidden homelessness face unusual difficulties in navigating and accessing programs and services.

Street Needs Assessment Results: Core Questions

Respondent Demographics

Saskatoon's homelessness population is overwhelmingly adult (92%); the 2016 national coordinated count also found the majority were adult (52%). The remaining 8% in Saskatoon are distributed across youth (5.5%), children (2.3%), and seniors (.2%).

The homeless population

92% adult, 61.6% male, 85.5% Indigenous

continues to be disproportionately

male (61.6%) and individuals

self-identifying as Indigenous (85.5%); immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimants accounted for only 2.1% and

the military or RCMP for only 2.5% of respondents.

Over 88% reported being straight or heterosexual;

of 201 adults, 11.4% reported being bisexual, gay,

two-spirit, or questioning.

41.1% first experienced homelessness as adults, 21.4% as children, and 34.5% as youth

First Experience of Homelessness

While 44.1% first experienced homelessness as adults, 21.4% were children (14 and under) and 34.5% were

youth (15-24). Literature on Canadian homelessness indicates that those who first experience homelessness as

youth are more likely to experience homelessness again later in life.

53.3% chronic homelessness; 41.5% episodic homelessness

Chronic and Episodic Homelessness

Of those individuals experiencing homelessness, 55.3% reported chronic homelessness (without a permanent

address for more than six month), while 41.5% reported episodic homelessness or without shelter three times or

more over the past year.

Length of Residence in Saskatoon

Overwhelmingly, respondents were long-term

residents of Saskatoon. Close to 17% had "always"

lived in Saskatoon, over 42.5% had been resident

17.1% had "always" lived in Saskatoon; over 42.5% had been resident for 11-30+ years

for 11-30+ years, and the mean time was 9.9 years. They also overwhelmingly came from elsewhere in

Saskatchewan (76.2%) followed by Alberta (10.9%); only one respondent reported coming from outside

Canada.

Reasons for Coming to Saskatoon

While some came as part of family relocation (23%) or to visit friends or family (13.5%), some came to access

services and supports (19.6%), housing (6.8%), or emergency shelters (2%), and some came out of fear for

safety (1.4%). Others came for employment (either seeking or already secured for a total of 27%) or to attend

school (6.8%), but ended up with nowhere to stay.

Emergency Shelter Use

Although shelter use in Canada has declined since 2005 and stays are short (under 10 days) for youth and adults, adults over 50 and families typically stay twice as long as these others and all groups stayed longer for an **increase in occupancy from 82.7% to 92.4%** despite **static capacity** over the period 2005-2014. Over 72% of those surveyed and reported had made use of shelters in the past year, while 27.2% had not. It is important to understand their reasons for not using the shelter system:

- Preferring to stay with family and friends (23%)
- Being turned away because shelters were full (16%)
- Lack of funding (13%).

Shelter capacity issues and underfunding are reinforced by these findings—and by reported fear of, unfamiliarity with, or inaccessibility of shelters. Fear for safety at 11% came next, although discomfort, anxiety, and need for privacy (8%); dirt and fear of diseases (6%); inability to stay with family members (5%); and fear of theft (3%), for example, are also relevant. Fourteen percent preferred to be outside because they disliked shelters, their schedules and regulars, thought others more in need, or feared the stigma of the label of homelessness.

Causes of Housing Loss

Consistent with national trends, the main causes of housing loss for youth were conflict with parent or guardian and addictions or substance abuse (30.4% each); for adults, addictions (27.3%); inability to pay rent was the next cause for both youth and adults.

Sources of Income

Sources of income remain increasingly problematic since the 2008 count when sheltered homeless reported formal (45%) and even full-time (70%) employment. In 2012 and 2015 "welfare" became the main source while employment reduced to 10% (2012) and 8% (2015). Most 2018 respondents (60.37%) reported welfare or social assistance for income. Family and friends were a source of income for 3.23% of respondents and only 3.69% reported employment, 2.71% reported employment insurance, 5.99% reported GST refunds, while another 17.51% reported informal employment or self-employment (including bottle returns and panhandling). Benefits accounted for the remainder: child and family (1.38%), seniors (.46%), and disability (4.61%).

Street Needs Assessment Results: Additional Questions

Education Profile

The largest percentage (48.7%) had completed some high school, while another 28% had completed high school, 13.4% had some postsecondary, and 0.9% had graduate degrees.

Experience with Foster Care

Consistent with national trends, 52.6% had been in foster care; close to 80% did not remain in foster care until 18.

Experience of Violence

Close to 70% had experienced violence while homeless: **66% of men, 72% of women, and 100% of trans and two-spirit people**. The unsheltered population (80.4%) represented the highest percentage of these victims of violence, followed by those who reported hidden homelessness (75.6%). Even the sheltered population (58.1%) proved unusually vulnerable to violence.

> **66% men, 72% women, 100% trans and two-spirit people, and 80.4% unsheltered experience violence**

Housing Services and Barriers to Housing

Low income and affordability (17.2%) were major barriers to finding housing, although 28.4% of other responses also speak to these issues: high rents, unemployment, no income assistance, no money, or social assistance. Health issues (addictions, health, disability, mental health) accounted for another 18.4% of responses. These issues were compounded by these barriers: family breakdown (6.4%), discrimination (5.6%), not trusting of services and support (5.2%), transportation (1.6%), no references (.8%), criminal history (2.4%), and family situation (3.6%).

A job (20.4%), housing program support (14.8%), and affordable/low income housing (12.2%) would be most helpful in securing permanent, stable housing. Choosing from a list of services most needed to help find housing, respondents listed these:

- Help finding an affordable place (91.9%)

- More money (91.2%)

- Transportation to see housing (75.2%)

- Help with housing applications (74.5%)

- Help getting ID (i.e. health card, others) (62.2%)

Interestingly, confirming a trend across the country where they have become vital community gathering spaces linking people to key resources, libraries were the most used service both in terms of number of users (145) and frequency of use (5453). Although fewer (102) used drop-ins, they ranked second in frequency of use (3804), followed by health clinics (122 user over 1675 times), Food Bank (141 and 1554 times), and shelters (131 and 1000 times). Other **health services**—emergency room (used 114 times by 114 respondents), hospitals (253 times by 92 users, detox centres (562 times by 79 users), and mental health services (562 times by 79 users)**underline the health costs of homelessness**. Only 39% reported the services helped them to find housing.

Libraries, drop-ins, health clinics, food bank, and shelters the most used services in past year

Specialized Housing Needs for Disability

Almost 15% of respondents reported specialized housing needs due to disability conditions.

Waiting List for Housing

Over 26% reported being on a waiting list for housing (a mean of 167 days), almost 43% of whom listed Indigenous and specifically Métis housing services.

Concluding Thoughts

Many offered final thoughts on systemic and other barriers, including **discrimination**, as well as supports that could make a difference. Some identified **slum landlords** and the **lack of affordable, safe housing for different needs**. Others pointed to the financial barrier to staying in a shelter and others to the barriers to couples staying together. Others recommended more culturally appropriate services and health services, more

places like the Bridge and Friendship Inn, and greater investment in education and literacy in particular. A lack of programming for different needs was a persistent theme: better access to transportation; bus passes; identification; food; more drop-in centres, counselling, and supports for those dealing with addictions, struggling with mental health or suicide, or transitioning from prison; and a coordinated and centralized housing information centre.

Youth Magnet Event

Because of the difficulties of reaching and surveying youth, especially those experiencing hidden homelessness, many communities have turned to youth magnet events to try to produce a fuller, more accurate picture of homelessness in their local contexts.

Like all successful magnet events, the 2018 Saskatoon Youth Magnet Event hosted at White Buffalo Youth Lodge depended on good planning, effective partnerships, strong promotions and sponsorships, the right location and activities (in this case a 3-on-3 basketball tournament), and an excellent group of volunteers. The results:

- Over 150 community members attended, including 92 self-identifying as youth.
- Service providers, elder, social workers, researchers, and Saskatoon Police Service personnel attended.
- 14 youth participants were connected successfully to services.
- 27 surveys were completed.
- In addition, many youth documented on banners their sense of the meaning of a home and homelessness.
- They also made a plea to "do this more often!"

Public Perceptions of Homelessness

In a public perceptions section of the survey, **housed (84%) and unhoused (87%) were equally clear on the seriousness of homelessness in Saskatoon**. Over 98% were able to identify organizations that help those experiencing homelessness. The top four mentioned were:

- Lighthouse (47%)
- Salvation Army (40.58%)
- YWCA (28.8%)
- Friendship Inn (21.6%)

The **top five reasons** given for homelessness were **addictions, lack of affordable housing, lack of employment, physical or mental health,** and **discrimination**.

Those most impacted by homelessness were listed as youth, people with disabilities, unemployed, Indigenous people, single mothers with children, single parents, and those with addictions or mental health issues.

More affordable housing was the top response to what Saskatoon can do to help reduce homelessness. More shelters, programs, funding, and supports as well as better education opportunities were among other top responses.

Comparing Results with 2008, 2012, and 2015 Counts

It is important to acknowledge the limitations in comparing the findings with previous count findings in 2008 (228 adults and 32 children), 2012 (368 adults and 11 children), and 2015 (405 adults and 45 children) given differences in research design and timing, different definitions of age groups, different socio-economic conditions, and increased Housing First initiatives. Still, we have made significant efforts to minimize underestimates in the 2018 PIT count so that we have as full a picture as possible on which to act. In addition to little change in the numbers since 2015—437 adults (25-64), 1 senior (65+), 26 youth (15-24), and 11 children 0-14)—some findings remain so consistent over time that they cannot be ignored. They also underline who are most impacted by systemic barriers.

All age groups are impacted by homelessness. **Indigenous people are overrepresented and unduly impacted**. Service use patterns show the **human costs** of **heavy reliance on costly health services,** although the **top service** by far was **the library** underlining what a key resource it has become for community members in search of information and knowledge, access to computers, and a welcoming, supportive environment. The findings give opportunity to work together to address costly systemic inequalities and contribute to the reconciliation narrative promoted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. As one front-line worker put it in the context of the Advisory Committee on Homelessness consultations, "housing people when done properly is reconciliation realized."

INTRODUCTION

On April 18, 2018, a huge community effort combined in Saskatoon's fourth Point-in-Time (PIT) Homelessness Count, the first completed in the context of the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy coordinated count (*Everyone Counts: The 2018 coordinated point-in-time count*). Engaging diverse stakeholders and sharing knowledge broadly before, during, and after the PIT count aimed to ensure that diverse voices are heard and **"everyone counts"** in efforts to prevent reduce, and end homelessness.

Mass homelessness is a phenomenon of human making—one that costs $7.05 billion annually. Disinvestment in safe, affordable housing and social supports along with economic shifts mean that 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness yearly, 50,000 face "hidden homelessness," and many more are at risk What once impacted few older males now impacts young and old across genders and sexualities, families, veterans, people with disabilities—and **Indigenous people disproportionately** (Gaetz, Dej, Richter, & Redman, 2016a). In a rich country, one in eight Canadians nevertheless live in poverty (ESDC, 2018) and struggle to meet daily needs. While the average proportion of income spent in Saskatchewan on rent and utilities is 22%, the Saskatoon average is 24% with an average monthly bill for rent and utilities of $1,127 ($1,021 provincially) and 11% experiencing overcrowding (10% provincially). Adding to the picture of **household precariousness** and **risk of homelessness**, Saskatoon reports 45% of households spending more than 30% of income on rent and utilities and 20% spending more than 50% of income (Canadian Rental Housing Index, 2018).

Coordinated, multi-sector human interventions, mobilizing diverse knowledges, are showing signs of preventing, reducing, or even ending homelessness in different community contexts. Support for such efforts is being strengthened by initiatives such as the Poverty Challenge in Ottawa, May 2018. The challenge for civic leaders and policy and program decision makers was to navigate one day in the life of those experiencing poverty and/or homelessness: to find shelter or housing, apply for a health card or disability benefit, find food at a food bank, for instance. For participants, it was "a lesson in humility" to learn about system difficulties and barriers to access (Rynor, 2018). A 2018 report by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission underlined system navigation barriers facing those seeking rental accommodation, the gap between social assistance benefits and the high cost of rent, as well as discrimination against those on "welfare," single mothers, Indigenous people, and those with disabilities, adding to their particular vulnerabilities.

Housing First

Among coordinated interventions, Housing First initiatives in Canada have had significant success. They focus on rights-based interventions rather than on "readiness," "treatment first," or compliance-based interventions on the assumption that all deserve housing (with "wrap-around services") which is at the heart of recovery and people's ability to participate socially and economically (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013c). Housing First programs have been shown to achieve the following:

- Improve housing stability

- Reduce emergency visits and hospitalization

- Improve health and mental health outcomes

- Stabilize or reduce addictions symptoms

- Reduce police and criminal justice system involvement

- Improve quality of life (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013c)

In Saskatoon, Housing First initiatives include those for families at White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL) and YWCA Saskatoon, the Housing First intensive case manager at Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre (SIMFC), and United Way of Saskatoon and Area's Journey Home Housing First program, which by February 2017 had housed and supported 50 of the city's most chronically homeless citizens (the majority had been homeless for 3 to 5 years). The 27 individuals who agreed to share their data reported in their first year a 58% reduction in service use for a saving of $480,480 (United Way, 2018). Those Housing First initiatives have housed a total of 197 adults and 255 children between 2015 and 2018. In addition, rapid rehousing at AIDS Saskatoon, the Lighthouse, Salvation Army, SIMFC, WBYL, and YWCA has housed 468 adults and 124 children for an overall total of **1044 housed since the 2015 PIT homelessness count**. In 2018 alone, Housing First and rapid rehousing at these facilities have housed a total of 589 adults and children.

These Housing First interventions rely in turn on the evidence base provided by shelter data afforded by the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and by PIT counts across the country.

PIT Homelessness Counts

The PIT methodology is a tool used to enumerate and survey those who are experiencing sheltered, unsheltered, or transitional homelessness—the "core population" under study—in communities across Canada and elsewhere (systems homelessness in hospitals, detox, detention, or jails and so-called "hidden homeless" or "couch surfers," the provisionally accommodated without immediate prospect of permanent housing, may also be included). A PIT count provides a snapshot of homelessness in a community that captures numbers, demographics, service usage, and other measurements—and does so quite literally at one point in time, typically a single day. Because PIT counts enumerate individuals experiencing homelessness during a specific time, they are understood as underestimates of actual numbers because of methodological, logistical, and other challenges. Although only estimates at a moment in time, PIT counts nevertheless provide an important source of data on characteristics and contexts of those experiencing homelessness, and are important for local program planning and monitoring. If conducted over time, PIT counts can demonstrate progress or indicate barriers towards reducing homelessness in a given community and support design of interventions based on evidence from the local context.

In addition to examining sub-populations such as youth, persons with disabilities, immigrants, veterans, and Indigenous people, the PIT count's enumeration aims to identify the size and composition of the **chronically** and **episodically** homeless population.

- **Chronically homeless** refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e., have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation);

- **Episodically homeless** refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or inhabitable location) (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014)

To establish a better understanding of the trends among homeless populations and determine appropriate programs and services according to needs, the survey's street needs assessment also explores issues around migration and immigration, disabilities, use, accessibility, and barriers to services, orientation to systems to find housing, employment, health and education.

HPS Coordinated PIT Count, 2016

Making sure that "**everyone counts**," the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy's (HPS) second coordinated PIT count, 2018, engaged over 60 communities to build on the success of the first such coordinated count in 2016. Drawing on local and national experts, these coordinated counts use standardized methods and definitions to strengthen rigour, reliability, and comparability of results across locations and time to build a better picture of the state of homelessness in Canada. A total of 32 communities (28 of whom conducted their first PIT count) implemented the 2016 count using similar core survey questions, "core methodology," and a mandated population to be included in the count (ESDC, 2016a). Each community had access to training, a guide, toolkit, and diverse online resources on the Community Workspace on Homelessness.

A total of 5,954 of the core population were identified as experiencing homelessness, 24% of whom were unsheltered and 56.7% experienced chronic homelessness (68% in the West and 46% in the East). Sixty percent were male and close to 40% female, with less than 1% reporting another gender identity; most were adults (24-49). Another 245 identified as homeless and were not sure where they would spend the night. Hidden homelessness ranged from 1.1% to 49.8% where communities targeted this population in "magnet events" with meals, services, and/or activities (ESDC, 2016a). Fourteen percent reported family homelessness (81% in shelters or transitional housing); 86% were (largely female) single parents. Thirty-seven percent reported Indigenous identity (ranging from a low of 7% to a high of 97%); they were younger, more likely to be female, and more likely to report hidden homelessness as well as longer durations and more episodes of homelessness. Veterans representing 2.4% of the Canadian population were 5% of the reported homeless; newcomers represent 4% of the population and of reported homelessness.

When asked about reasons for housing loss, youth (14-24) identified conflict with a parent or guardian as the main reason, while adults (25-49) listed addictions or substance abuse, older adults (50-64) and seniors (65+)

listed eviction or inability to pay rent. Of newcomers, 31% reported reasons associated with the motivation for their migration; 40% of women newcomers (almost 25% of all women) cited domestic abuse. Youth homelessness saw a significant increase among those between 16 and 20 with men and women evenly represented (ESDC, 2016a).

Indigenous Homelessness

Patrick (2014) exposes the dangers of homelessness literature that naturalizes, pathologizes, and universalizes Indigenous experience while ignoring the politics and structural foundations of poverty, "the routinized and naturalized" patterns of "multilayered discrimination and disadvantage Aboriginal Peoples face" (p. 11). She underlines the spatial and imaginative marginalization of Indigenous peoples in Canada, the uniqueness and diversity of their experiences as a result of intergenerational trauma, as well as their resilience and agency. Understanding the significance of "home" and "social relations" and "cultural connections" rather than housing, Patrick argues, is key to addressing the issue: "Being without a place to call home is one of the most severe manifestations of marginalization and deprivation in our society" (p. 11). Building in such research after significant consultation with Indigenous scholars, knowledge keepers, elders and experts nationally and regionally, the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness published an Indigenous definition of homelessness, similarly stressing not the lack of habitation but a "composite lens of Indigenous worldviews," as identified by the Aboriginal Standing Committee:

> These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships. (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012; cited by Thistle, 2017, p. 6)

While the "complex interactions" of factors and "situations that intersect with the typology of four kinds of homelessness" (unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and at risk of homelessness), Thistle (2017) stresses that "Indigenous homelessness is not simply a response to such circumstances, but is best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and dispossessed First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories" (p. 6). A concerted state process

destroying "Indigenous social systems, cultures and worldviews," destabilizing and traumatizing individuals and communities, is at the heart of Indigenous homelessness causing symptoms—"intemperance, addiction and street-engaged poverty"—that are mistakenly taken to be the source of that homelessness. "Racism and discrimination" as well as chronic government underfunding add layers of "systemic and societal barriers, such as a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, insufficient and culturally inappropriate health and education services, irrelevant and inadequate employment opportunities, and a crumbling infrastructure in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities." These same destructive factors undermine individual and community efforts to achieve "a healthy 'sense of place,' as well as a healthy sense of identity," displacing people into "unviable, marginal geographic spaces" where disadvantage is "normalized" (Thistle, 2017, pp. 7-8). These sad realities make understanding the twelve dimensions of Indigenous definition of homelessness all the more important:

- Historic Displacements Homelessness
- Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness
- Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness
- Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness
- Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness
- Overcrowding Homelessness
- Relocation and Mobility Homelessness
- Going Home Homelessness
- Nowhere to Go Homelessness
- Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness
- Emergency Crisis Homelessness
- Climatic refugee Homelessness (Thistle, 2017, pp. 10-12)

They also make clear the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action endorsed by the federal government's Advisory Committee on Homelessness (Government of Canada, 2018b) in guiding actions to remedy the situation of homelessness, including Indigenous homelessness and youth homelessness discussed in the next section. Especially important are calls relevant to child welfare (Calls 1-5), education (Calls 6-12), language and culture (Call 13), health (Calls18-24), and justice (Calls 25-42).

Youth Homelessness

Although youth are variously defined in the literature, for the purpose of PIT counts, youth are defined as those aged 15 to 24. Indigenous youth represent a significant portion of this population—as high as 30% in Vancouver, for example and also of the specifically "hidden homeless" (Patrick, 2014, p. 32); they represent 30.6% of overall youth homelessness (Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd, & Schwan, 2016b). Minority racialized youth represent 17.4% and newcomer youth represent 10% of youth homelessness; males account for 58%, females for 36%, and those defining themselves as transgender or gender non-binary account for 6% (Gaetz, et al., 2016b). In addition to factors discussed above that have a disproportionate impact on children and youth, Indigenous children represent 40% of children in care, experience Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder at rates ten times higher than the non-Aboriginal population, and HIV infection at rates two and a half times higher (Patrick, 2014). In fact, researchers widely acknowledge the role of the child welfare system as "a strong arm of colonization" perpetuating mainstream rather than Indigenous assessments of the best interests of children and families (Baskin, 2013, p. 406). More than 50% of homeless youth have been in jail or youth detention, 40-50% have had foster care or group home involvement, and 10-20% of youth have experienced mental health issues. Youth homelessness, then, has systemic, structural, and individual causes (Gaetz, O'Grady, Buccieri, Karabanow, & Marsolais, 2013b).

Youth homelessness is unique in its association with "ruptured relations with family" as well as friends and community supports at a time when they have developed few coping skills and are navigating developmental issues. Between 60 and 70% "leave family environments where they have experienced interpersonal violence, including physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse." Abuse, domestic violence, and exposure to addictions and mental health issues are also factors (Gaetz, et al., 2013b, pp. 3-4). Broader systemic factors include poverty, food insecurity, inadequate housing, discrimination, and limited access to education and employment opportunities (Gaetz et al., 2013b). The result is that 20% of these youth are trapped in chronic homelessness (Gaetz, et al., 2016b).

Despite such disadvantage and a keen awareness of "structural injustices," Indigenous youth often form peer support networks for survival and "a sense of community." This is not the popular image of youth homelessness often associated with danger and delinquency (Baskin, 2013; Gaetz, et al., 2013b).

Indigenous girls are at particular risk of exploitation and abuse; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirited youth (LGBTQ2S) representing 28% of homeless youth (Gaetz, et al., (2016b) also experience "unique and intersecting forms of social suffering" (Patrick, 2014, pp. 34-35). Coming out in an unsupportive home setting is a major factor of such homelessness (Abramovich, 2013). Holistic programs to support employment and cultural reintegration have been successful in reducing homelessness (Patrick, 2014) and are a key part of Gaetz's (2013) solutions: evidence-based, integrated, and coordinated policies and practices, including preventive programming to protect youth, early intervention and emergency response, and accommodation and supports.

The PIT Count in Saskatoon

On April 18, 2018, the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) conducted the 2018 Saskatoon PIT, the community's first coordinated count as one of the 61 communities participating in counts during the period of March - April 2018. Two other communities in Saskatchewan—Regina and Prince Albert— coordinated their counts on the same day. This 2018 coordinated PIT count builds upon the findings and recommendations from the previous PIT counts conducted on: June 22, 2015; September 24, 2012; and May 22, 2008, while respecting the requirements set by Employment and Social Development Canada (2017). The 2018 PIT count has five main components or data sources:

- An outdoor enumeration, which surveys individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and their service use patterns and needs (street needs assessment). The outdoor component seeks to identify the "absolute homeless" (with no permanent residence or housing alternative, including shelters, safe or transitional housing) and "hidden homeless" population (who would experience absolute homelessness if they could not stay temporarily with friends and/or family or acquaintances);
- An indoor enumeration, which counts the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing and detox centers;
- Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) for April 18, 2018;
- Observational data representing those who were perceived to be without shelter but wished not to be surveyed;
- A survey of youth homelessness through the 'magnet event' targeting youth who may not be effectively connected to homeless-serving sectors.

The indoor and outdoor surveys also included a survey of public perceptions of and attitudes about homelessness in Saskatoon. A sixth data was added for the first time in 2018: the Saskatchewan Health Authority's count of patients admitted with the ICD-10-CA code Z59.0 (homelessness) on April 18, 2018 in Saskatoon. Because the reported numbers are not associated with demographic or other information, they are not discussed in the analysis of data.

As part of the coordinated PIT count approach, the indoor and outdoor surveys had to include 14 core questions supplied by the HPS (See Appendix A and B). Furthermore, the core methodology required the communities to consider 8 core standards to ensure a certain level of standardization, while 5 recommended standards were also outlined to ensure contextual needs of each community (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017).

The 2018 count maintained the innovation in the 2015 Saskatoon survey, which aimed to give a comprehensive and multi-faceted picture of housing and homelessness in Saskatoon by including a Public Perception component. That component engaged all members of the public encountered during the outdoor portion of the PIT count as well as all those who agreed to be surveyed in indoor locations. All individuals were asked about their perceptions of and attitudes to the present state of homelessness, the main reasons for homelessness and those most impacted by it, what is being or could be done, and what has successfully been done in Saskatoon (See appendix A and B). Asking these questions of all those encountered helped introduce the goal of the 2018 State of Homelessness survey, increased public awareness and education, made surveyors' initial contact with individuals more comfortable, and reduced potential social stigma associated with answering a PIT count survey.

The next section of the report presents the methodology including ethics submission, and the processes undertaken to prepare the survey instruments. Preparation for count day, volunteer training, and volunteer debriefing are also explained. Following the methodology section, this report presents findings from the various data sources, including surveys and HIFIS reported data, discussing what they mean for those individuals and families facing homelessness; for service planning, design, and delivery; and for strategies to reduce or eradicate homelessness in Saskatoon.

METHODOLOGY

A coordinated PIT methodology was used to count the number of individuals and families experiencing chronic, episodic, sheltered, hidden, and youth homelessness in Saskatoon on Wednesday, April 18th, 2018. Contextual factors, such as weather conditions, can influence who stays outside on the streets or who seeks shelter. For instance, in the Northern hemisphere, spring is considered to start on the spring equinox, or March 20 in 2018. However, the local weather conditions for Saskatoon were anything but spring-like in March and April. Saskatoon experienced prolonged winter conditions with the month of April being severely cold with the coldest first week of April ever recorded in Saskatoon. April 6 was the coldest in Saskatoon's history, reaching -24.4 degrees C but feeling like -34 degrees C (Quinlan, 2018). The chill and cold lingered on, and on April 17, a day before the PIT count day, Saskatoon experienced a blizzard and a low temperature of -1°C. The monthly mean temperature was -0.7°C and the highest monthly maximum temperature reached was 26.2°C, showing a high degree of fluctuations over April days (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2018). In comparison, on June 22, the PIT count day for 2015, the temperature reached a high of 26°C and a low of 7°C, while the temperature for the September 24, 2012, count ranged between 20 °C and 10°C and the average temperature in May (2008 count) was 4.5-18.4 °C.

Ethics Review

The 2018 PIT Homelessness Count was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (BEH #18-41) on March 26th, 2018, and was conducted in adherence with all standards required under behavioural ethics institutional policies. In addition, for the first-time, an honorarium was included to thank the participants of the outdoor and indoor homelessness surveys for sharing their knowledge and time, respecting the ethical principle of Nothing about us, without us. The honorarium offered to participants was either a $ 10 Giant Tiger gift card or $ 10 Tim Hortons gift card, both approved by the Community Advisory Council (CAC), and consistent with best research practice endorsed by the HPS and the ethics board. While they importantly respect those with lived experience, such honoraria should also respect the principle of informed consent, not be used to promote or attract participation, and should be at levels (not more than $10) that will not unduly influence (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2014, 2017a).

Community Advisory Council

The success of previous Saskatoon PIT homelessness counts depended significantly on the inter-organizational cooperation among numerous agencies and CUISR. *The HPS Guide to Point-In-Time Counts in Canada – 2nd Edition* (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017) similarly recommends that a community advisory council (CAC) be formed early in the process and that CAC members be actively engaged in planning and preparing for the local PIT count. For the 2018 PIT count, the PIT coordinator (for a fuller account of the coordinator role, see the Acknowledgements earlier in the report) invited organizations involved with homelessness and those who are interested to contribute to the project, drawing on the database of previous CAC membership. The following organizations were active on the CAC:

- AIDS Saskatoon,
- City of Saskatoon
- Community Support Officers
- CUISR
- EGADZ
- Friendship Inn
- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
- Interval House
- Mumford House
- OUT Saskatoon
- Quint Male Youth Lodge
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatoon Anti-poverty Coalition & Passion for Action Against Homelessness
- Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre,
- Saskatoon Indian & Metis Friendship Centre
- Saskatoon Police Service
- Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership
- Saskatoon Public Schools
- Saskatoon Tribal Council

- SHIP

- The Bridge

- The Lighthouse

- The Salvation Army

- United Way of Saskatoon and Area

- YWCA

The CAC met from January 31st, 2018, on a bi-weekly basis until April 4th, 2018. The CAC reviewed and informed the research design to ensure that the PIT homelessness count reflected significant shifts in both economics and demographics and responded to community needs. Advisory group members also played an important role in addressing concerns around the access, collection, use, disclosure, and protection of data. Their advice importantly helped refine survey questions, their order and wording, identified additional agencies and organizations that needed consulting, and advised on count date as well as locations that needed to be added to the study areas map.

In addition to their pre-PIT count contributions, some members also volunteered on count day, and the CAC also had a chance on May 29 to provide feedback on preliminary PIT count data analysis and dissemination strategy for relevant audiences, such as the community at large, media, shelter residents and others experiencing homelessness, and volunteers.

Volunteer Recruitment and Training

Volunteer recruitment

Volunteer surveyors were recruited through a multi-pronged approach. In addition to efforts through the CAC, its networks and listservs, through social and local media, and at a community information session on March 14 in the Station 20 West Multipurpose room, the main recruitment avenue was through an online registration system on *EventBrite,* an event management website commonly used for local events. The PIT Coordinator was responsible for recruitment activities with regular updates to the CAC.

These approaches ensured a skilled and committed volunteer base and the return of some experienced volunteers. Given the timing of the PIT count this year, there were fewer university student volunteers as

they were preoccupied with their final exams. A total of 150 volunteers registered. Volunteers were diverse, including people with lived experience, administrators, academics, students, retirees, people from the service sector, media, health, policing, and community support officers. Because of established networks, many of the volunteers also had health, social work, or psychology backgrounds.

Volunteer training

Comprehensive volunteer training (including Saskatoon Police Service and Community Support Officer advice on safety) was a condition of ethical clearance from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, University of Saskatchewan. All volunteers, regardless of background or experience, were required to attend a three-hour training session before the count. The training sessions offered at different times of the day to accommodate volunteers took place on the following dates and locations:

- Tuesday, April 10 (10:00am – 1:00pm): Francis Morrison Library.
- Wednesday, April 11 (1:00-4:00pm): Francis Morrison Library Downtown.
- Wednesday, April 11 (5:30-8:30pm): Saskatoon Police Service.
- Thursday, April 12 (1:30-4:30pm): Francis Morrison Library.
- Monday, April 16 (2:00-5:00pm): Station 20 West.

The training highlighted the historical and current literature on homelessness issues in Canada as well as Saskatoon's experience with three previous counts to provide volunteers with a broad background and context for their surveying duties. It also explained roles and responsibilities related to the coordinated national PIT count of which Saskatoon was now a part. This contextual information and a panel presented by those with lived experience was a necessary foundation to build community resources and awareness of homelessness issues and to prepare for training in administering the surveys and understanding ethical obligations. Special attention was given to ethical issues related to surveying youth given the count's emphasis on hidden and youth homelessness. Though PIT counts are "designed to be minimally invasive," they must be conducted with due regard to issues of consent, respect, equity, confidentiality, and privacy. Also, although parental consent is typically required for research participants under 18, for those experiencing homelessness, parental consent may be "neither feasible nor desirable" (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2017a).

Volunteer researchers were advised not to assume the role of counsellor but to direct research participants to resource cards and information brochures and to counselling and other supports available at the youth magnet event at White Buffalo Youth Lodge. Given the legal age of consent in Saskatchewan, no youth under 16 would be surveyed; those under 16 could be documented on the tally sheet. If researchers determined a child was in need of protection, was being exploited, or was in danger, there was an obligation to report to child welfare agencies and/or police (such situations overriding concerns about confidentiality). Researchers had to inform research subjects of this fact when/if they became aware of the participant's age. In the light of possible adverse consequences, decisions would be made in consultation with street service agencies and/or police. Volunteers were also advised of debrief and counselling opportunities available for them should they experience distress.

Survey protocol training covered how to approach and interview potential respondents in a manner that does not expose either the interviewer or respondent to increased risk. In addition to reviewing the surveys (core, additional, and community questions) and receiving time for practice, volunteers were also instructed on logistical matters, including what to bring (or not) and what to wear for the count. All volunteers signed an oath of confidentiality, a University of Saskatchewan waiver, and a photograph release form.

Mapping of Study Areas

To select the geographical study areas for the PIT count, a "known-locations" approach was used by the CAC (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017). Under this approach, suggestions are made for locations where teams of volunteers will canvass based on CAC member knowledge of where those experiencing homelessness would be located. The geographic areas and locations formerly frequented by those experiencing homelessness had changed relative to city development and demographic shifts. This is the best way to select PIT location for rural and sparsely populated areas (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017). After several meetings and iterations, the map in figure 1 was produced by the City of Saskatoon Planning and Community Development team.

The city was divided into 44 study areas (up from 19 in 2012 and 27 in 2015) and for the first time included both stationary and mobile locations. The study areas numbered 1-25 were mobile locations, where the

volunteer surveyors canvassed the area on foot during their shifts. The study areas numbered 26 – 44 were stationary locations in gathering places and high traffic areas. These stationary sites would provide a community presence for the count and allow people the opportunity to be counted if they wished to participate. In addition to these study areas, transitional and emergency shelters were targeted for indoor surveying as well as other high-traffic locations where people may congregate or seek services (Marked A to E with brown dots in figure1).
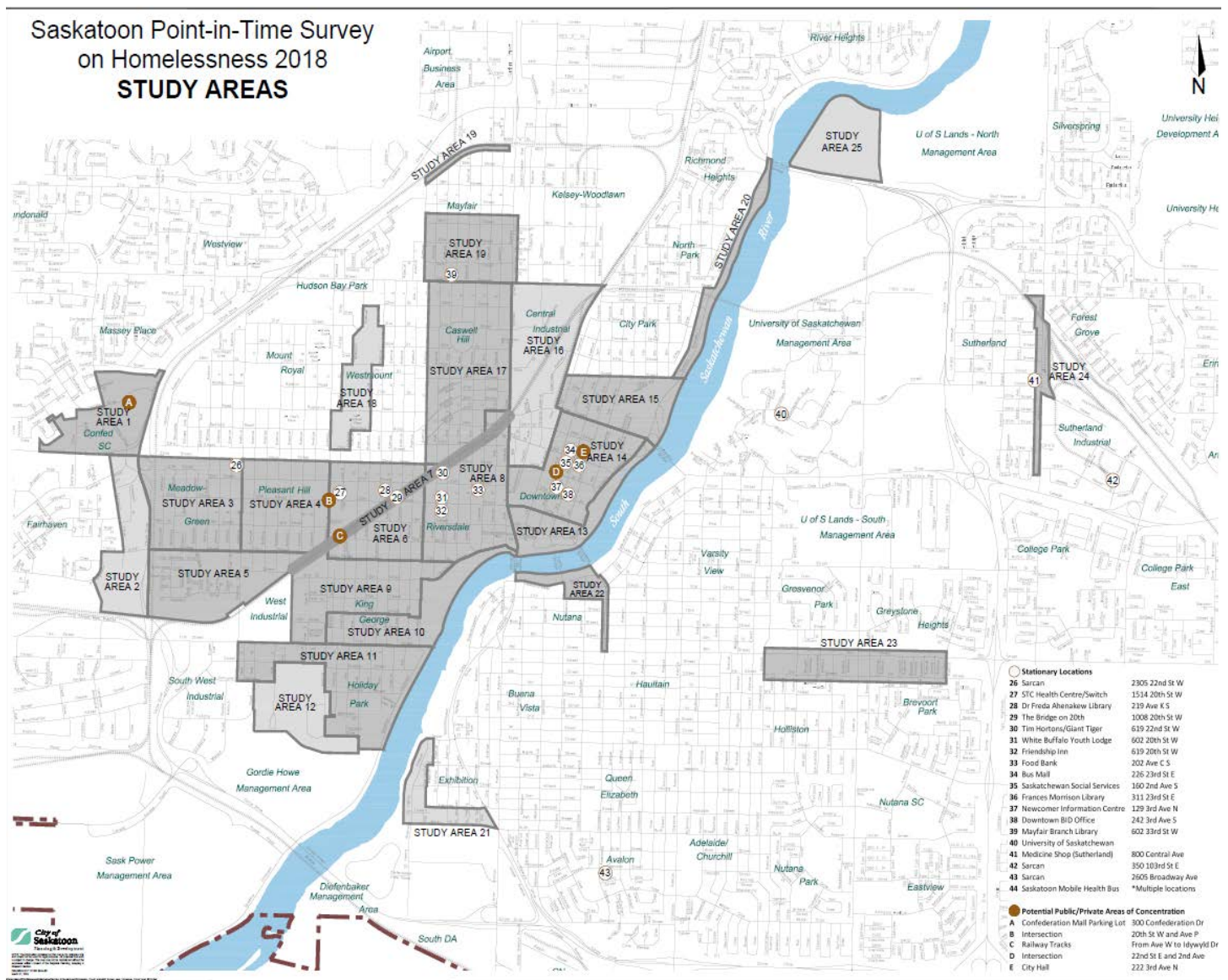

Figure 1. 2018 PIT Homelessness Count Map of Study Areas

Home Base

Field staff and the PIT Coordinator at the home base served as points of contact for any questions that arose during the PIT count day. All volunteer surveyors gathered at the home base to meet their survey team, sign in, and receive all relevant PIT count materials. They returned to the home base with the collected surveys and participated in a debrief following the enumeration. The Saskatoon Friendship Inn acted as home base (as it was in 2015 and 2012) due to its centralized location in relation to the study areas, which were located largely within the city core neighborhoods and central business district.

The Count

The count began at 10:00 a.m. and was completed at 8:00 p.m. when it was dusk. Survey teams, consisting of at least three individuals (one of whom was an experienced researcher) walked along every street and public place in their survey area and other locations where people were likely to be (e.g. parks, train tracks, etc.). Alternatively, teams were available for study participants at stationary locations and high traffic areas as well as at the Youth Magnet Event hosted at WBYL. Teams were instructed not to approach individuals on private property; each team had a mix of men and women, as recommended in the 2012 debrief.

Outdoor Survey

Volunteer surveyors approached all individuals in their study area, introduced themselves, and described the purpose of the PIT homelessness count. The survey opened with a statement assuring the respondent of his/her confidentiality and anonymity. Two screening questions were asked of all participants to determine (a) that they had not already been interviewed and (b) that they were willing to answer the questions. A third screening question after the completion of part 1, the public perception questions, asked where the person would be sleeping that night (Appendix A). If the respondents selected response "someone else's place", then follow up questions C1 and C2 were asked to verify and screen in for hidden homelessness. If the answer was "motel/hotel" or "hospital, jail, prison, remand centre," again, a follow up question C2 was asked to verify whether that person is temporarily in these locations and that they have a safe place to return to or not. If the answer was "own apartment/home," the person was thanked and informed that the survey was complete.

For all those who answered that they were staying at the following locations—emergency shelter; domestic violence shelter; transitional shelter/housing; public space (e.g., sidewalk, park, forest, bus shelter); vehicle (car, van, rv, truck); makeshift shelter, tent or shack; abandoned/vacant building; other unsheltered location—or selected the respondent doesn't know option were asked to participate in part 2 of the survey. Part 2 had both core questions asked across all count communities and a set of additional questions that the CAC felt were necessary to provide evidence to support implementation strategies for important programs that aim to reduce or end homelessness in Saskatoon.

Because of the difficulties involved with administering consent forms to the population under study, agreeing to complete the survey constituted informed consent. However, if the individual did not provide consent or the surveyor was unable to complete the questionnaire, observation data were used in its place. Observations were recorded on a tally sheet (Appendix C). The observation tally sheet includes data on the person's outdoor location, appearance, gender, estimated age, potential reasons for the surveyor belief that the individual may be homeless, and reasons that the survey could not be completed.

Indoor Survey

The indoor survey (Appendix B) was conducted during the same time as the outdoor survey. Shelter facilities, both emergency shelters and transitional housing, were surveyed. The survey also helps in demonstrating the number of people being turned away and who end up using a variety of non-shelter services such as emergency rooms and correctional centres. The surveys were conducted in the following locations:

- Brief Detox and Social Detox Unit
- Saskatoon Interval House
- Salvation Army
- YWCA Residence, Crisis Shelter, and Margaret's Place
- Quint Male Youth Lodge
- The Lighthouse
- PRIDE Home
- Beehive Apartments

HIFIS Data

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) is an information system developed and supported by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). HIFIS is an initiative of the HPS committed to data collection in support of a national picture of homelessness. The HIFIS data include information about age, gender, citizenship, veteran status, Indigenous identity, and ethnicity. Individual shelters deploy the software on site to track shelter usage and share baseline data nationally and locally. On a long-term basis, the HIFIS data help in portraying a better picture of the inflow—number of shelter users who are new to the shelter system—and the outflow or number who do not return, as well as capturing the shelter population that is "stable" (HPS, 2018a). 2018 HIFIS data were collected at four locations: The Lighthouse, Salvation Army, YWCA, and Saskatoon Housing Coalition.

Data Entry and Analysis

Good quality data are important for an accurate picture of homelessness in Canada to direct policy and program development and to measure the progress made by existing homelessness programs and initiatives. After data cleaning by the principal researcher (based on debriefs with every team on count day and reviewing paper surveys for inconsistencies and confusions), two databases were used to enter the survey data. All the mandatory core survey questions were entered into HPS HIFIS 3 online database (HPS, 2018a). As an electronic records management database, it provided an easy means of storing and sharing data among communities, HPS, and other researchers (HPS, 2018b). This option enabled some quick analysis right after the data were entered, given the built-in capabilities to produce reports and download entered data in various formats.

The second database was locally designed using Microsoft Excel ©. This database allowed the research assistants to enter survey responses from the remainder of the survey, and also to download the core question responses from the HPS HIFIS database. This second database enabled ongoing analysis of the community questions, public perception questions, and the core and additional questions, comparisons and graphing, to meet the needs of HPS, the CAC, agencies, and Saskatoon community.

The analysis also followed the HPS suggested methods and strategies (ESDC, 2017; Government of Canada, 2018a). Therefore, a few suggestions and assumptions had to be built into the analysis frame for the collected survey data. For instance, based on the CAC advice and the HPS recommended methods, all non-responses contributed by refusal to complete the questions, non-contact, or in misunderstanding survey questions were to be removed from the samples (Gideon, 2012). This step was important in cleaning the data because the informed consent gave participants the right to withdraw or skip any questions they did not choose to answer.

With the removal of non-responses from the samples, the response rates were in themselves non-weighted in reflecting the participation rates in the PIT count survey (Groves & Lyberg, 2010; Särndal & Lundström, 2005). For this reason, the sample (n) size is offered in the analysis and further explanations are also offered to clarify the changing sample size. To avoid unrealistic extrapolation, no regression analysis was performed on the data. The analysis relied on descriptive statistics and comparison of trends among the PIT years.

To minimize data processing errors in the data entry phase that may result inadvertently from activities such as coding of open-ended questions, data entry of close-ended questions, data cleaning, imputation of missing data, and data reporting or tabulation (Bautista, 2012; Groves & Lyberg, 2010), two research assistants entered the data and performed the data management tasks together. Additionally, frequent sharing of the database output with the research team also occurred throughout the data entry and analysis phase. Such quality assurance and control are a necessary step in survey data entry so as to ensure accuracy and reliability (Gideon, 2012).

Volunteer Debriefing and Feedback

A volunteer debriefing took place on May 4, 2018, just over two weeks following the PIT count. About forty volunteers shared their perspectives on the execution of the PIT count from recruitment and training to interaction with survey participants and best dissemination and uses of the data. In addition to praising the recruitment and training, and the important role of the coordinator in communications and engagement, volunteers provided suggestions for refining the survey and training for future homeless counts, including staggering shifts to avoid lineups. They had an important conversation on the honoraria (that were well received despite running out of gift cards) used for the first time and the discomfort on the subject among

systems people but not among community members. They cautioned about making policy recommendations that make systems people feel better at the costs of those in need and underlined the need to have inclusive practices and, importantly, the **resources to ensure inclusion is done properly**.

The following summarizes key recommendations:

Recruitment Strategy

- Post flyers and poster at public libraries.

- Engage media and community newspapers.

- Paint pictures for the public by providing examples of personal experiences of homelessness, poverty, and navigating complex systems and also perspectives of /learning from volunteers (about homelessness and about the process of participating in the count)

- Use videos on social media.

- Provide potential volunteers with links to HPS and Canadian Observatory on Homelessness materials.

- Target faith communities, Chamber of Commerce, Saskatoon Business Associations, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

Volunteer Training

- Supply a volunteer training package before training sessions.

- Offer core training for all volunteers and supplementary training for those without experience.

- Offer engagement and training opportunities between counts.

Survey Instrument

- Keep survey as short as practicable.

- Review sexual orientation question which some did not understand.

- Reconsider order of core questions, where some found transitions abrupt.

- Ensure private spaces for surveying in shelters to maintain confidentiality (the Food Bank and Learning Centre offered good, quiet spaces for completing the surveys).

Community Buy-In

- Engage participating organizations to ensure support and a welcome from shelters.

- Review timing of shelter visits as mealtimes were not the best times.

Honoraria

- Offer tobacco or sweetgrass.

- Explore food and transportation options (bus tickets, for example).

- Host community suppers that people can attend at any one time during a week.

- Offer food at stationary locations.

- Host a round dance.

Public perception Survey

- A valuable piece of the picture.

- Good and useful data to support policy and program initiatives.

Dissemination

- Maintain the technical report and community presentations before and after the count.

- Complement with infographics and one-pagers distributed to shelters and other agencies.

- Highlight qualitative findings to give fuller, more impactful picture of who are impacted by homelessness and how.

- Host a thank-you community event (perhaps at WBYL).

SURVEY RESULTS

Five main sources of data are analyzed and included in this discussion of results:

1) An outdoor survey collected by survey teams on the streets of Saskatoon on count day

2) An indoor survey collected by survey teams at participating Saskatoon shelters

3) Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) covering The Lighthouse, Salvation Army, YWCA, and Saskatoon Housing Coalition

4) Observational data representing those who were perceived to be without shelter but wished not to be surveyed

5) Qualitative and observational data collected from the youth magnet event at WBYL on PIT count day.

For the first time in the Saskatoon PIT counts, an additional data source was provided by the Saskatchewan

Health Authority (SHA) count of patients admitted with the ICD-10-CA code Z59.0 (homelessness) on April 18, 2018**.** The SHA data reported only numbers (3) experiencing homelessness with no demographic or other information. For this reason, these additional numbers are not otherwise discussed below.

Estimated Numbers

In addition to the three individuals reported by the SHA for which we have no demographic information, in total, 475 people were surveyed, observed, or reported by the five main data collection methods in the 2018 Saskatoon PIT count (Table 1). Of those, 437 were adults (age 25-64) (92.0%); 26 youth (age 15-24) (5.5%); 11 children (age 0-14) (2.3%), and one senior (age 65+) (0.2%). A total of 55 adults and 2 children were found to be unsheltered and a further 99 (16 youth, 82 adults, and one senior) were found to be sheltered, while 186 adults, 3 youth, and 9 children were reported sheltered in the *HIFIS Shelter Data*. The observational data from the tally sheets used in the outdoor survey counted 35 adults living in unsheltered conditions. Hidden homelessness accounts for 86 individuals surveyed, including 79 adults and 7 youth (Table 1).

Table 1. Total number of individuals surveyed, observed, or reported to experience homelessness

Age groups	Unsheltered: Surveyed	Sheltered: Surveyed	Hidden homelessness: Surveyed	HIFIS Shelter Data (Emergency and Transition-al)	Unsheltered: Observed	Total Number	Percentage
Child (0-14)	2	0	0	9	0	11	2.3%
Youth (15-24)	0	16	7	3	0	26	5.5%
Adults (25-64)	55	82	79	186	35	437	92.0%
Senior (+65)	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.2%
Total	57	99	86	198	35	475	100.0%

Figure 2 below illustrates the age distribution in terms of percentages and the large number of adults experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon. The 2016 coordinated PIT count noted these top five reasons for adult homelessness:

1. Addiction and substance abuse.

2. Eviction due to inability to pay rent.

3. .Eviction due to other non-financial reasons.

"We need to find solutions to the core issues and we need to protect children."--Respondent

4. Abuse by a partner or spouse.

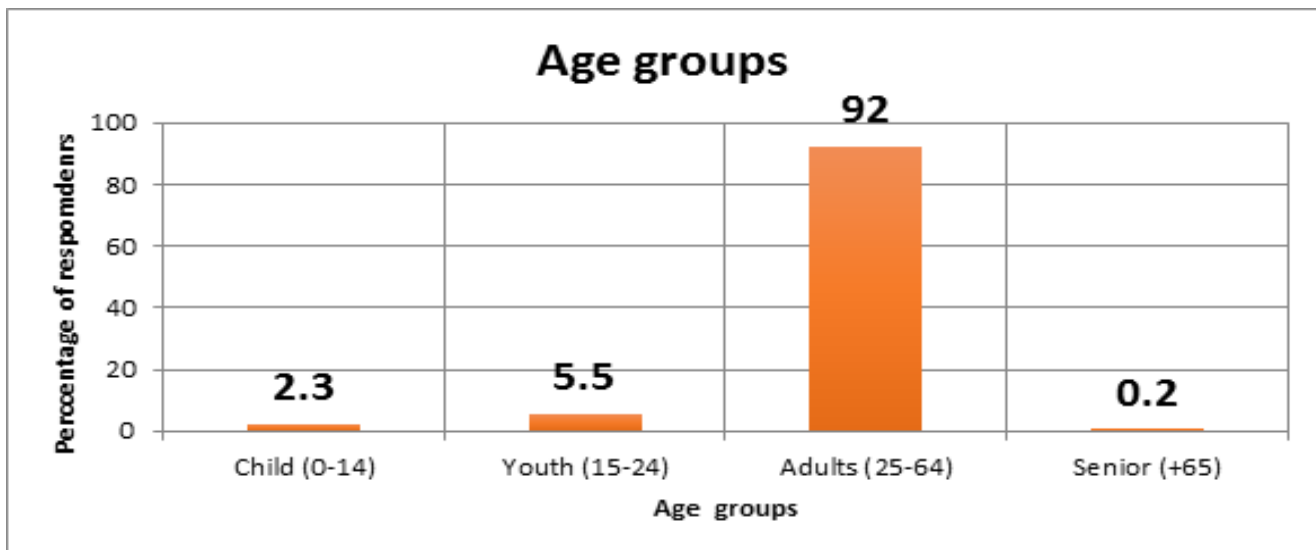5. Conflicts with a partner or spouse (ESDC, 2016a).

Figure 2. Percentage age distribution of those who experienced homelessness in 2018

First Experience of Homelessness

Respondents' history of homelessness was captured by a question about the first time an individual experienced homelessness. Literature on Canadian homelessness indicates that those who experience homelessness as youth are more likely to experience homelessness again later in life (ESDC, 2016a). Such a compounding factor contributed to the finding of the 2016 State of Homelessness report (Gaetz et al., 2016a) that adults (25-49) make up the largest age group of people experiencing homelessness at a staggering 52% in Canada. Table 2 below shows the distribution of the

"Increase social services rates so that people can afford more social housing." —Respondent

first episode of homelessness, with 76 of the 220 surveyed indicating that they experienced homelessness for the first time during their youth and a further 47 during their formative childhood years. The highest number of respondents—97—stated that their first experience was during adulthood.

Table 2. Age group distribution at first episode of homelessness

	Unsheltered: Surveyed	Sheltered: Surveyed	Hidden Homelessness	Total Number	Percentage
Child (0-14)	18	11	18	47	21.4
Youth (15-24)	10	31	35	76	34.5
Adult (25-64)	24	49	24	97	44.1
Total	52	91	77	220	100

Chronic and Episodic Homelessness

When asked about the length and persistence of experiences of homelessness in the past year, more than half (55.3%) of 217 respondents had experienced chronic homelessness; that is; they were currently homeless and had been homeless for six months or more in the past year (Figure 3).
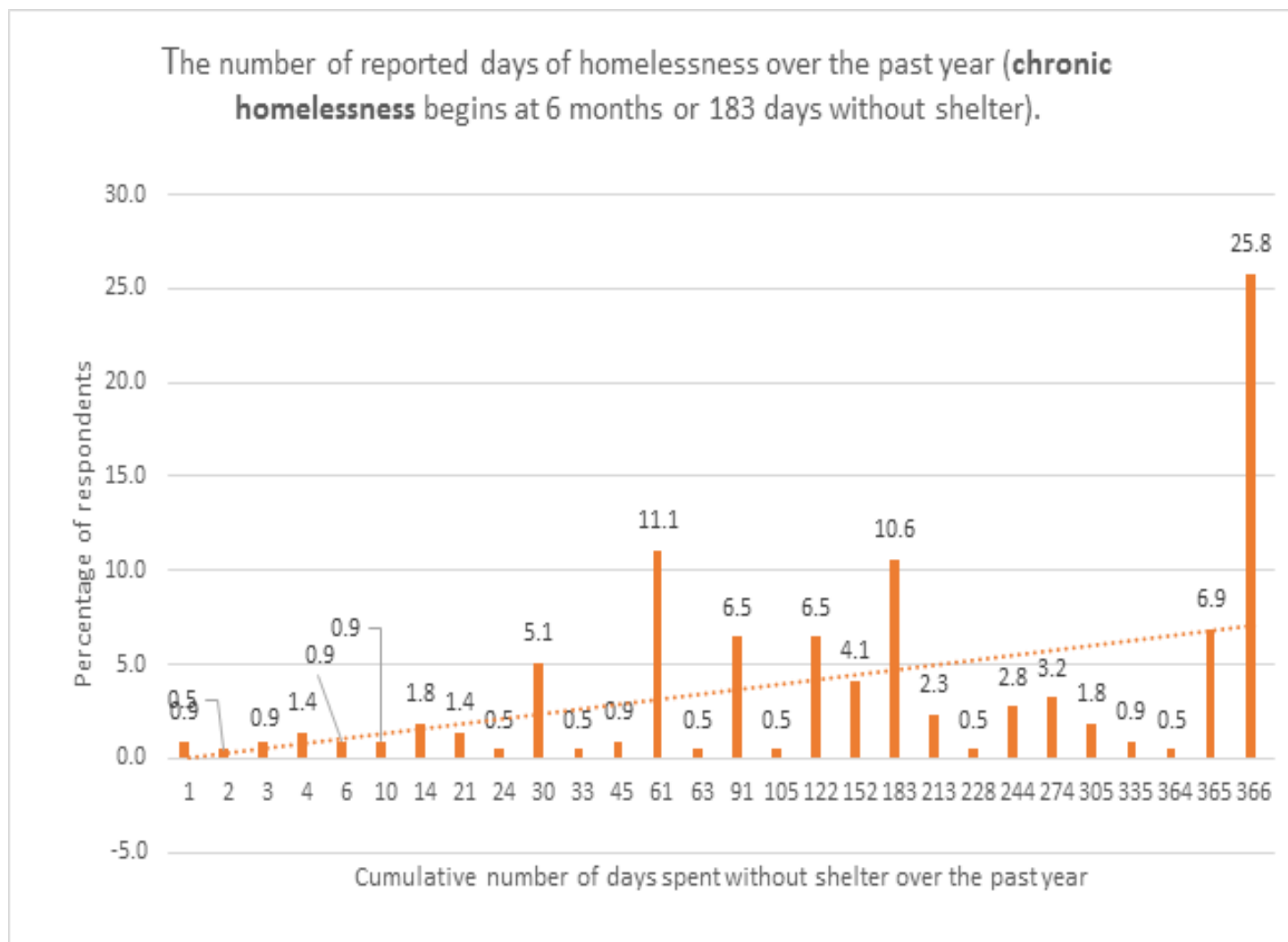

Figure 3. The number of reported days of homelessness over the past year (**chronic homelessness** begins at 6 months or 183 days without shelter)

Those who had experienced episodic homelessness—three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year—represented 85 of the 205 respondents (or 41%) as indicated in table 3.

Table 3. Frequency of episodic homelessness over the past year

Frequency of experiencing homelessness	Total number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
1-2 times	120	59%
3-5 times	**62**	**30%**
6+ times	**23**	**11%**
Total	205	100%

Emergency Shelter Use

Although shelter use in Canada has declined by 20,000 since 2005 to a total of 136,865 users in 2014 and only 2% used shelters every year, between 2010 and 2014, Gaetz et al. (2016a) estimate that 450,000 Canadians made at least one use of an emergency shelter and report that 28-34% of the shelter population is Indigenous. Although fewer use shelters and stays are short (under 10 days) for youth and adults, adults over 50 and families typically stay twice as long as these others and all groups stayed longer for an increase in occupancy from

82.7% to 92.4% despite static capacity over the period 2005-2014 (ESDC, 2016b). While gender distribution remains unchanged at 72.4% male who are on average 40 years old and 27.3% female who are on average 36 years old (outside Violence against Women shelters), family homelessness continues to be an issue and shelter use continues to increase among older adults and seniors (ESDC, 2016b; Gaetz et al., 2016a).

The HIFIS data reported those who used emergency shelters and transitional shelters on the night of April 18th. Because only four shelters in Saskatoon use the HIFIS system, a comprehensive view of shelter use is not always possible. Those surveyed who reported staying at a shelter help fill out the picture. Figure 4 indicates shelter use in the past year, recording a total of 171 (72.8%) of respondents reporting that they had occupied shelters over the past year while 64 (27.2%) said they hadn't.
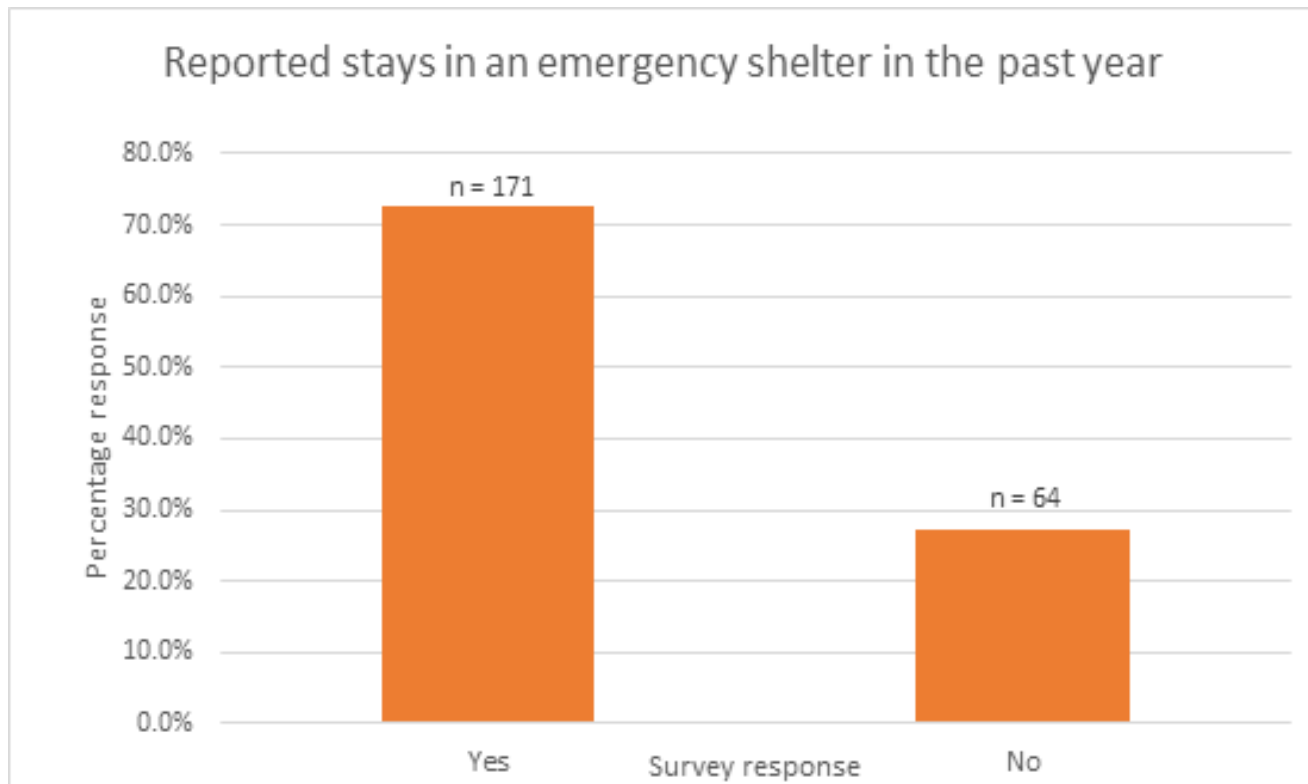
Figure 4. Shelter use in the past year

As we have seen, shelter use is not even across user groups. It is important that we understand why one quarter of surveyed people experiencing homelessness do not use the shelter system and may prefer the street or couch surfing (ESDC, 2016a). Falvo's (2011) report on homelessness in Yellowknife, for example, documented that the city's emergency shelters are crowded and understaffed, while transitional housing and independent living support units are underfunded (as evidenced by long waitlists). Falvo (2011) also showed that at times, these shelters have limited abilities to meet the diverse needs of the local homelessness population (they were unable to offer daytime programming or adequately support those with substance dependency issues, for instance), observations which are consistent across many Canadian locations including Saskatoon. Figure 5 lists the reasons given by the 64 respondents who did not stay in a shelter.
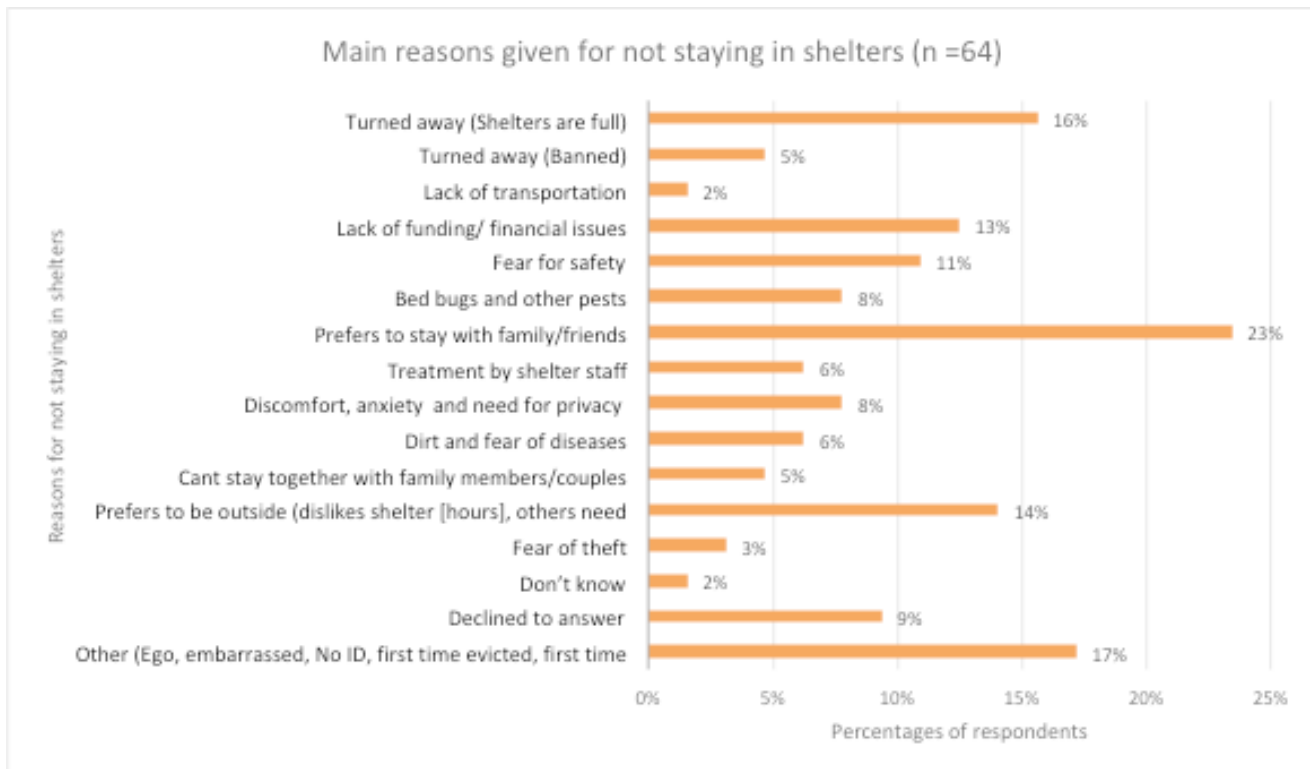
Figure 5. Main reasons for not staying in emergency shelters

"Inadequate resources and facilities. This City is underserved when it comes to helping homeless people."—Respondent

While there were many reasons given for not accessing shelters in Saskatoon, respondents listed these top three reasons chosen from the survey list:

- Preferring to stay with family and friends (23%)
- Being turned away because shelters were full (16%)
- Lack of funding (13%).

Shelter capacity issues and underfunding discussed above are reinforced by these findings—and by reported fear of, unfamiliarity with, or inaccessibility of shelters. Fear for safety at 11% came next, although a number of "other" factors may be relevant to safety, including discomfort, anxiety, and need for privacy (8%); dirt and fear of diseases (6%); inability to stay with family members (5%); and fear of theft (3%), for example.

While only 3 of 64 (5%) mentioned being banned from shelters, 14% preferred to be outside because they disliked shelters, their schedules and regulars, and felt that some need shelters more than they did. Seventeen percent gave a variety of reasons including that they feel embarrassed to be labelled homeless, they don't possess identification cards to access shelters, or have no familiarity with shelters, while some facing eviction for the first time didn't know how to approach shelters, and others feared welfare when they had jobs in different places.

Who Is Experiencing Homelessness?

This section adds to the picture of who is experiencing homelessness by reporting on how long people had been resident in Saskatoon, demographic and socio-economic indicators, and causes of homelessness. Overwhelmingly, respondents had long-term relationships with the community. While only 16.9% of surveyed respondents had "always" resided in Saskatoon, a further 42.5% had been residents for 11 to more than 30 years (see Figure 6). Others reported a range of length of time—from up to thirty days (9.5%) to 60 and more years— that they have been residents of this community. The mean time for the 237 individuals who were surveyed was 9.9 years (standard deviation = 4.57).
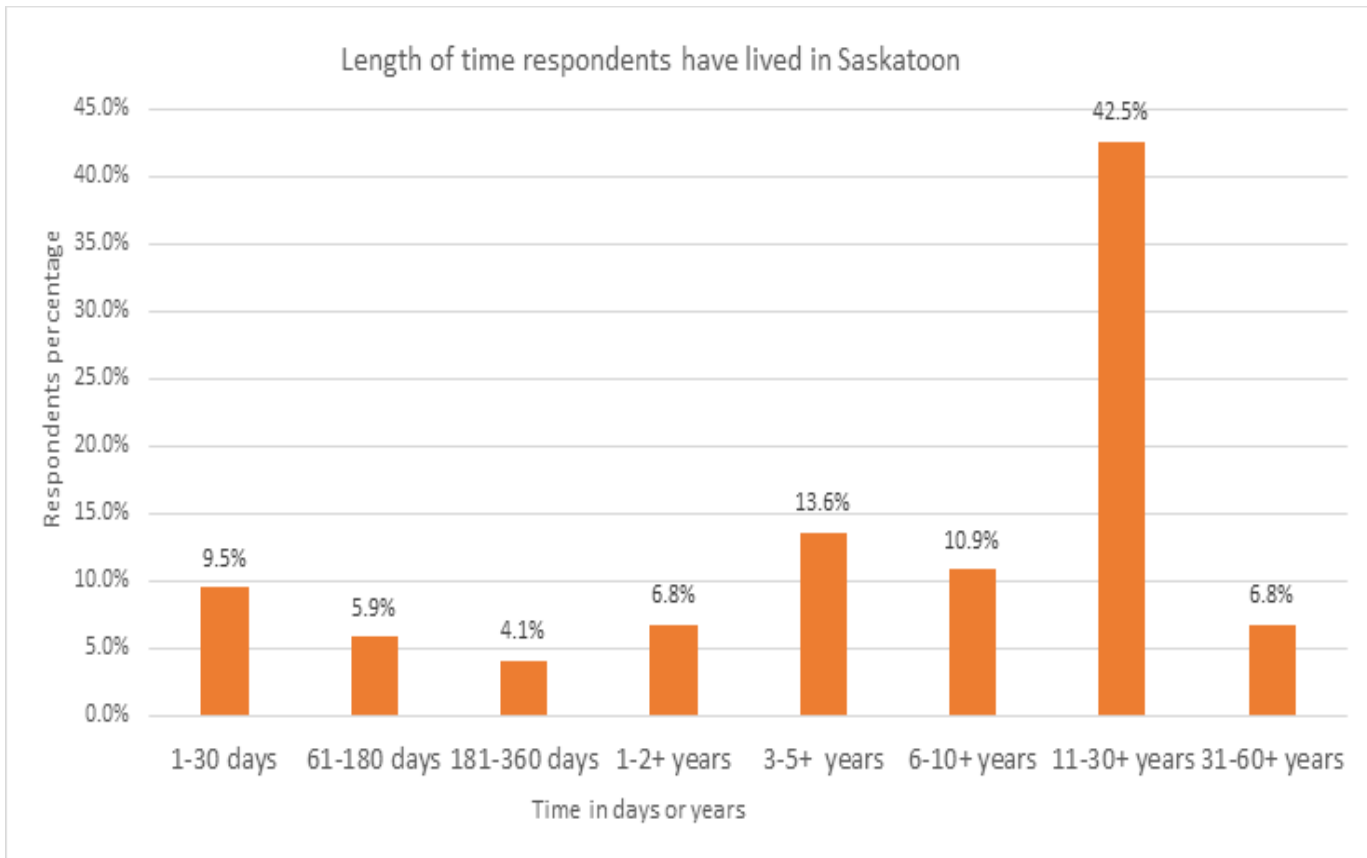
Figure 6. Length of time respondents have lived in Saskatoon

A total of 147 respondents answered a follow-up question to determine their province or country of residence before coming to Saskatoon. Table 4 indicates that majority of those experiencing homelessness in the City are from Saskatchewan (112 or 76.2%), followed by those from Alberta (10.9%). British Columbia, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, and Ontario combined represent no more than 12.3% of respondents, while one individual reported the Philippines.

Table 4. Home location before Saskatoon

Home Location before Saskatoon	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Alberta	16	10.9
British Columbia	4	2.7
Manitoba	7	4.8
Northwest Territories	1	0.7
Ontario	6	4.1
Saskatchewan	112	76.2
Philippines	1	0.7
Total	147	100

Reasons for Coming to Saskatoon

Respondents from outside Saskatoon offered diverse and cross-cutting reasons that they chose to come to live in Saskatoon (Figure 6). While some came as part of family relocation (23%) or to visit friends or family (13.5%), some came to access services and supports (19.6%), housing (6.8%), or emergency shelters (2%), and some came out of fear for safety (1.4%). Others came to seek opportunity—for employment (either seeking or already secured for a total of 27%) or to attend school (6.8%), but ended up with nowhere to stay.
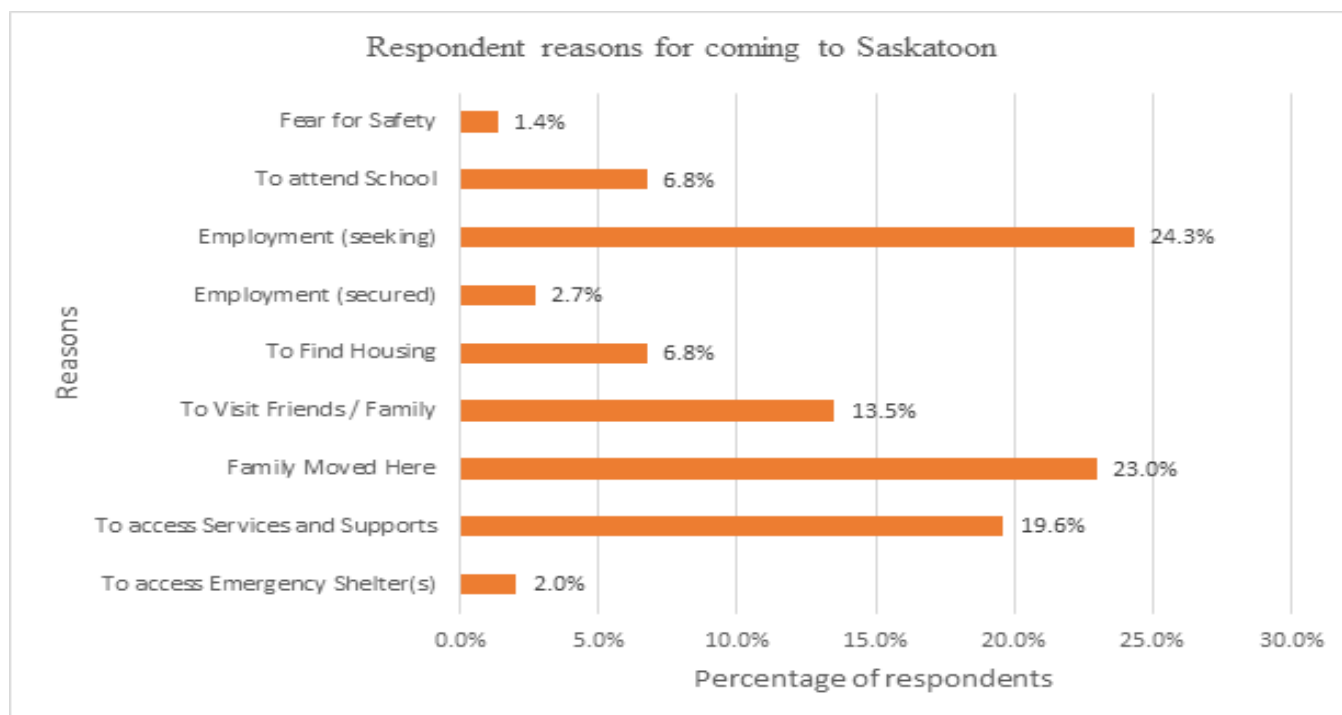

Figure 7. Respondent reasons for coming to Saskatoon

Immigrants and Refugees

Immigrants and refugees accounted for a small number of those who experienced homelessness in Saskatoon. Out of the 237 individual who responded to the question about coming to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant (question 8 in Appendix A and B), only 2 (0.8%) identified as immigrants and 3 (1.3%) as refugees. The length of time reported in Canada for these two sub-populations of newcomers was between 10 days and 23 years. By comparison, the 2016 coordinated PIT Count found that immigrants and refugees represented from 0% to 16% among the PIT participating communities (ESDC, 2016a).

Indigenous Identity

As we have already discussed, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness across Canada (ESDC, 2017; Gaetz et al., 2016a). For Indigenous Peoples, 'home' often denotes relationships and connections to kin (Gaetz et al., 2016a). As such, homelessness for Indigenous peoples may include loss of land, language, family bonds, as well as spiritual disconnection and cultural disintegration (Christensen, 2013). Figure 8 below underlines that disproportion of Indigenous people (85.5%) compared with non-Indigenous people (14.5%) among those experiencing homelessness (n = 235).
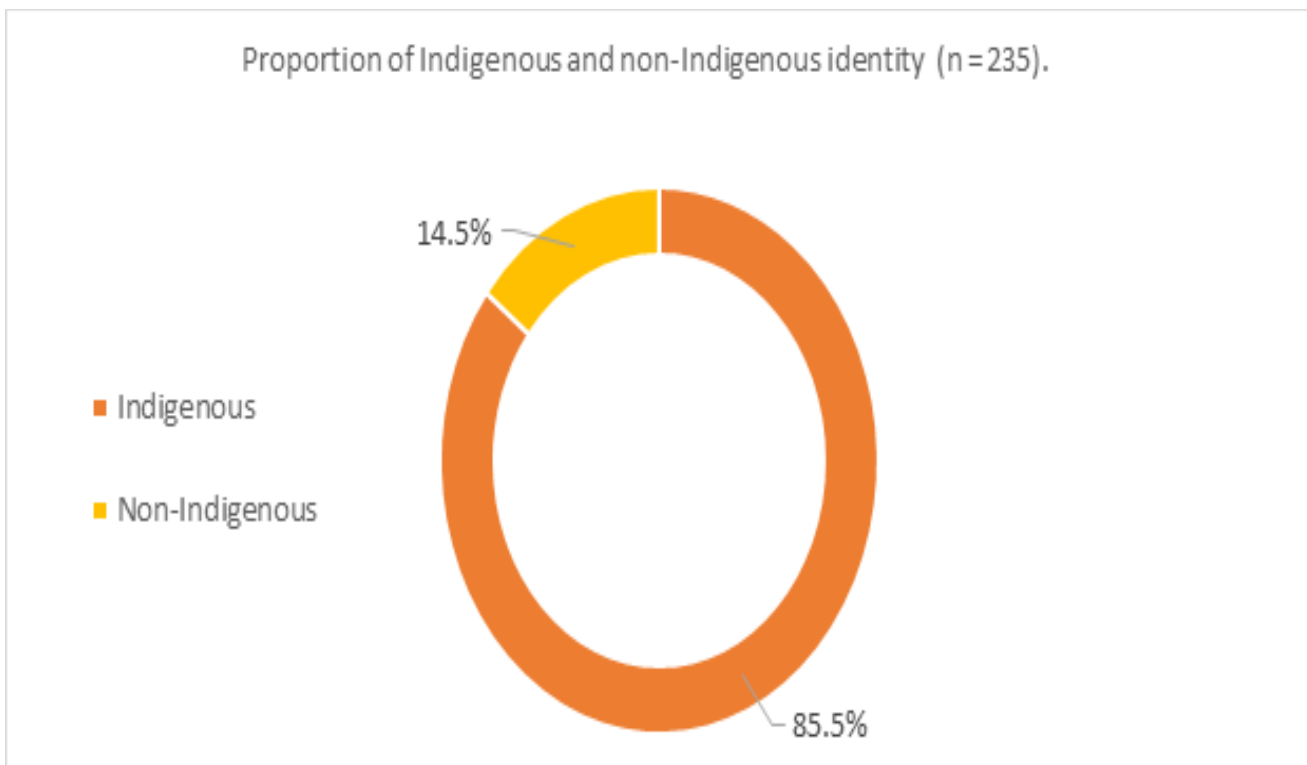

Figure 8. Proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous identity (n = 235)

Table 5 shows the distribution of those who identified as First Nations (with or without status), having some Indigenous ancestry, Inuit, Métis, or non-Indigenous ethnicity among the three categories surveyed—unsheltered, sheltered, and hidden homelessness. According to the 2016 *State of Homelessness Report*, Indigenous people are overrepresented among the hidden homeless (Gaetz et al., 2016a). The 2018 Saskatoon PIT count similarly reports a disproportionate number (75 or 89.3%) of those identifying as First Nations (with or without status) and one each (or 1.2%) for Indigenous ancestry and Métis experiencing hidden homelessness compared with only 7 (or 8.3%) non-Indigenous people.

Table 5. Indigenous identity or ancestry and Non-Indigenous representation among sheltered, unsheltered, and hidden homelessness

Ethnicity	Unsheltered: Surveyed	Sheltered: Surveyed	Hidden Homelessness	Total respon-dents	Percentage of respondents
First Nations (with or without status)	48	60	75	183	77.9%
Have Indigenous Ancestry	1	2	1	4	1.7%
Métis	4	9	1	14	6.0%
Not Indigenous	3	24	7	34	14.5%
Total	56	95	84	235	100.0%

Canadian Military and RCMP Veterans

It is estimated that 2,950 veterans are experiencing homelessness, representing 2.2% of the homeless population in Canada (ESDC, 2016a). Key drivers of veteran homelessness have been shown to be alcohol and drug addiction, and mental health challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and difficulty transitioning to civilian life (Gaetz et al., 2016a). Of those surveyed during the Saskatoon 2018 PIT count, all were adult (25-64 years), of whom 2 (0.8%) respondents served in the military while 4 (1.7%) served as RCMP. Most respondents to this question (97.5%) served neither in the military nor RCMP (Table 6).

Table 6. Reported service in Canadian Military or RCMP

Service in the Canadian Military or RCMP	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
No military or RCMP service	230	97.5%
With Military service	2	0.8%
With RCMP service	4	1.7%
Total	236	100%

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

Gender identity refers to people's "internal feeling" of whether they identify as male, female, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, transgender, two-spirit), and sexual orientation refers to how people identify those to whom they are "sexually or romantically attracted (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.)" (Abramovich, 2013, p. 403). Table 7 and Table 8 report on sexual diversity in the 2018 Saskatoon PIT count. Table 7 shows that there was one adult (25-64 years) who identified as Two-spirit and another who was Trans Female. The majority of the respondents identified as male, a total of 144 out of 234, across all four age groups, while females were 87 within the four age groups.

> "**We need resources for vulnerable populations; and programs that get to the core of the poverty issues.**"
> **—Respondent**

Table 7. Reported or surveyed age distribution and gender of those experiencing homelessness

Age group	Gender (n = 233)						
	Female / Woman	Male / Man		Trans Female / Trans Woman	Trans Male / Trans Male	Gender-queer/ gender non-con-forming	Other
Child (0-14))	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Youth (15-24)	7	15	0	0	0	0	
Adults (25-64)	79	127	1	1	0	0	1
Seniors (65+)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 8. Reported or surveyed age distribution and sexual orientation of those experiencing homelessness

Age group	Sexual Orientation (n=226)						
	Straight / Heterosexual	Bisexual	Queer	Gay		Lesbian	Questioning
Youth (15-24)	21	2	0	0	0	0	0
Adults (25-64)	178	13	0	4	3	0	3
Seniors (65+)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

A total of 200 or 88.5% of respondents out of 226 (one of whom did not specify) stated that they were straight/heterosexual in terms of their sexual orientation. Adults (25-64 years) reported a diversity of sexual orientations: 178 straight, 13 bisexual, 4 gay, 3 two-spirit, and 3 questioning among respondents' self-reporting on the question on sexual orientation. Of the total of 15 reporting bisexual, two were youth (Table 8).

Even though society's acceptance of sexual diversity is growing, and more youth are coming out at younger ages (Lepischak, 2004), LGBTQ2S youth homelessness has been growing in Canada, adding danger to their well-being and safety (Abramovich, 2013). Abramovich (2013) made these recommendations to the City of Toronto on how to assist LGBTQ youth facing homelessness:

There is a dire need for specialized services that create safe spaces for LGBTQ homeless youth, for stricter policies in the shelter system against homophobia and transphobia, and for more discussions of inclusion and acceptance among shelter providers and workers. Professionals working with homeless youth, as well as the general public, need a solid understanding of the impacts of homophobia and transphobia on the lives of people who identify as LGBTQ, and of the ways in which the LGBTQ community has been and still is marginalized and oppressed. (p.401)

The distribution across gender identity (61.6% male, 37.5% female, and less than 1% other gender identity) matches closely the 2016 coordinated PIT count results of more than 60% male and close to 40% female with less than 1% reporting another gender identity (ESDC, 2016a). Those identifying as female were more likely to be in a sheltered location or among the hidden homeless than in an unsheltered location, while males were more evenly distributed across sheltered, unsheltered, and hidden homelessness (Table 9)—again replicating closely ESDC (2016a) findings.

Table 9. Gender identity by location (unsheltered, sheltered, or hidden homelessness

Gender	Unsheltered - Surveyed	Sheltered \ Surveyed	Hidden Home-lessness	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Female / Woman	13	38	36	87	37.5%
Male / Man	42	56	45	143	61.6%
Trans Female / Trans Woman	0	1	0	1	0.4%
Two-Spirit	0	0	1	1	0.4%
Total	55	95	82	232	100.0%

Causes of Housing Loss

Reasons for housing loss tend to differ based on the age group of those who experience homelessness (ESDC, 2016a). Results from the Canada-wide PIT count of 2016 indicated that noticeable trends included:

- Addictions and substance use was cited across age groups, although it was less commonly indicated by seniors.

- Financial factors become more prevalent with age, including an inability to pay rent and job loss. This may come from older adults that lose their employment and have difficulty finding a new job.

- Eviction for non-financial reasons is prevalent across age groups.

- Interpersonal factors were noted by youth and adults in the form of abuse, conflict or both. (ESDC, 2016a, p.18).

Consistent with national trends (ESDC, 2016a), Figure 9 below shows that addiction and substance abuse were also reported across the age groups in the 2018 Saskatoon PIT Count. The low incidence of addictions for seniors is also replicated, although only one respondent was a senior who also reported addiction and substance abuse; hence the graph shows

**"Resources are needed and a shift to focus on employment and bridging programs from incarceration to housing."
—Respondent**

100%. Also, the surveyed youth (15-24 years) highlighted similar reasons for housing loss to those of the national trends: conflicts and addiction or substance abuse were the leading causes of housing loss reported by 30.4% of the youth, followed by inability to pay rent or mortgage (13%). Adults (25-64 years) reported the most diverse reasons for housing loss (Figure 9).

"We need to do something about it. There are lots of people with addictions but that's no excuse; they are still people. Just talk, no action". —Respondent
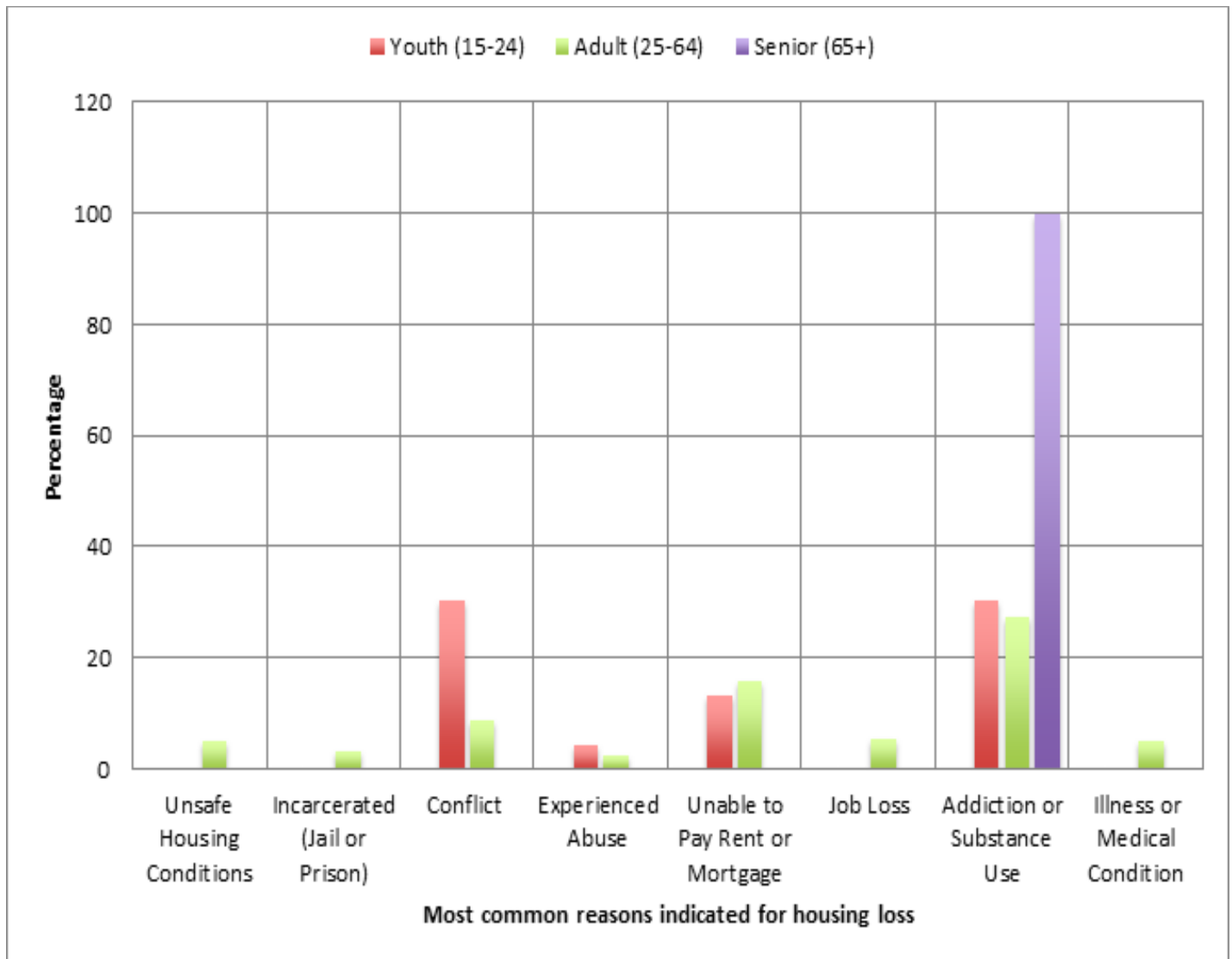
Figure 9. Main reasons for housing loss by age group

Sources of Income

The last of the Part Two core questions required by HPS focuses on sources of income. In terms of income (Figure 10), the majority (60.37%) of respondents identified welfare, social assistance as their main source of income. Family and friends were a source of income for 3.23% of respondents and only 3.69% reported employment, 2.76% reported employment insurance, 5.99% reported GST refunds, while another 17.51% reported informal employment or self-employment (including bottle returns and panhandling). Benefits (child and family, seniors, and disability) accounted for 6.45%.
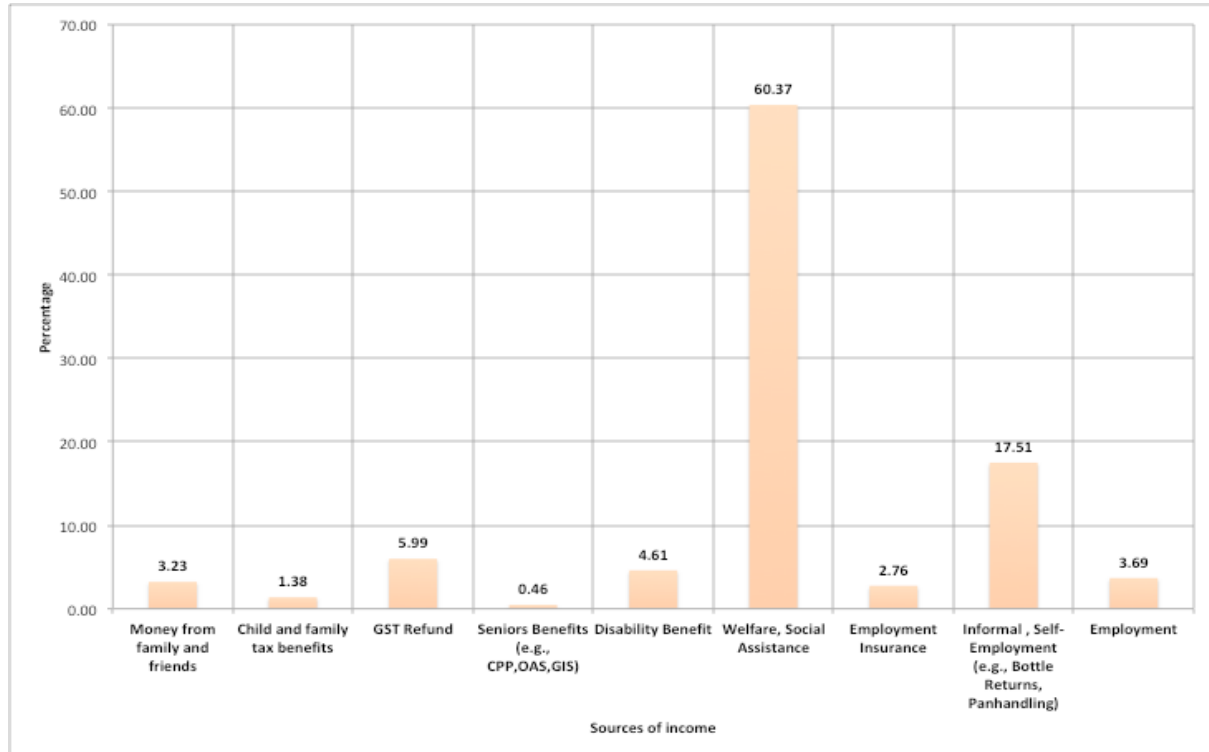
Figure 10. Sources of income

The next section reports findings from the additional questions in Part Two of the survey approved by the CAC and HPS and designed to answer questions relevant to local circumstances.

Education Profile of Those Experiencing Homelessness

There was significant diversity in the education profile of the 232 respondents, although the largest proportion—48.7%--had completed some high school while another 28% had completed high school and a further 13.4% had at least some postsecondary, a minority (0.9%) of whom had graduate degrees (Figure 11).
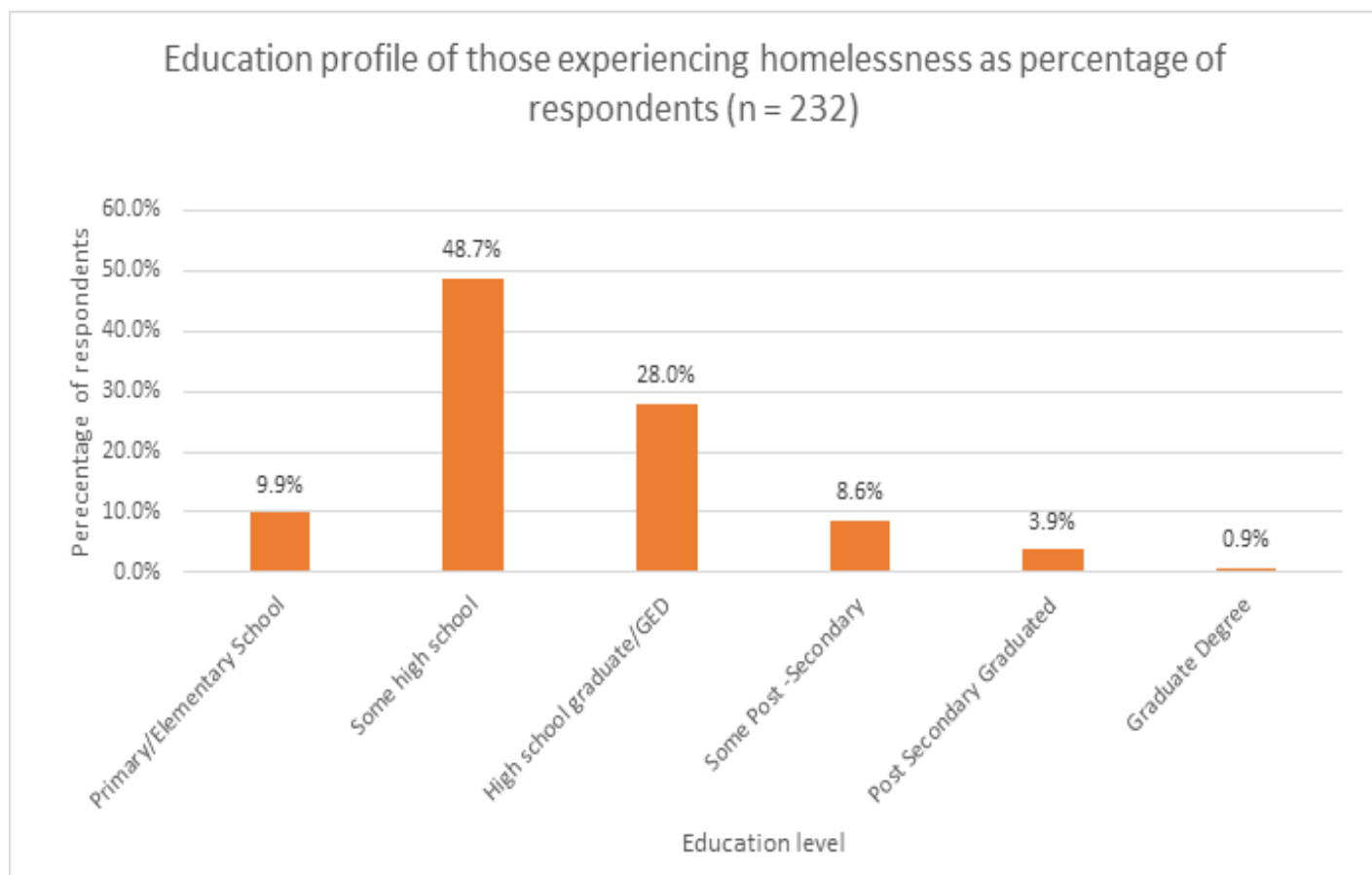
Figure 11. Education profile of those experiencing homelessness as percentage of respondents (n = 232)

Experience with Foster Care.

A 2016 study of youth homelessness reported that 57.8% of youth experiencing homelessness have also had experience in the foster care or child protection services, while only .3% of the general population have had such involvement in the system. What is more, Indigenous youth and LGBTQ2S youth are overrepresented in these figures (Gaetz, et al., 2016b). A 2016 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the federal government discriminates against Indigenous children on reserve by failing to provide equitable levels of child welfare services with those available elsewhere. Both underfunding and culturally inappropriate approaches added to the injustice to Indigenous children (Nichols, 2017). Such findings have prompted Ontario and Alberta to lead the way in rethinking and reshaping policy and programming and to an action plan promoting human rights and equity (Nichols, 2017; Nichols et al., 2017).

Of the 230 respondents to the question about foster care or group home experience, 121 (52.6%) confirmed the national trend by reporting their involvement, while 109 (47.4%) had no such experience (Figure 12). Of those who have experienced foster care or group homes, 25 (20.3%) lived there until they were 18 years of age. The average time after leaving foster care that a respondent experienced homelessness was 13 years; however, some reported as little as one day after leaving foster care.
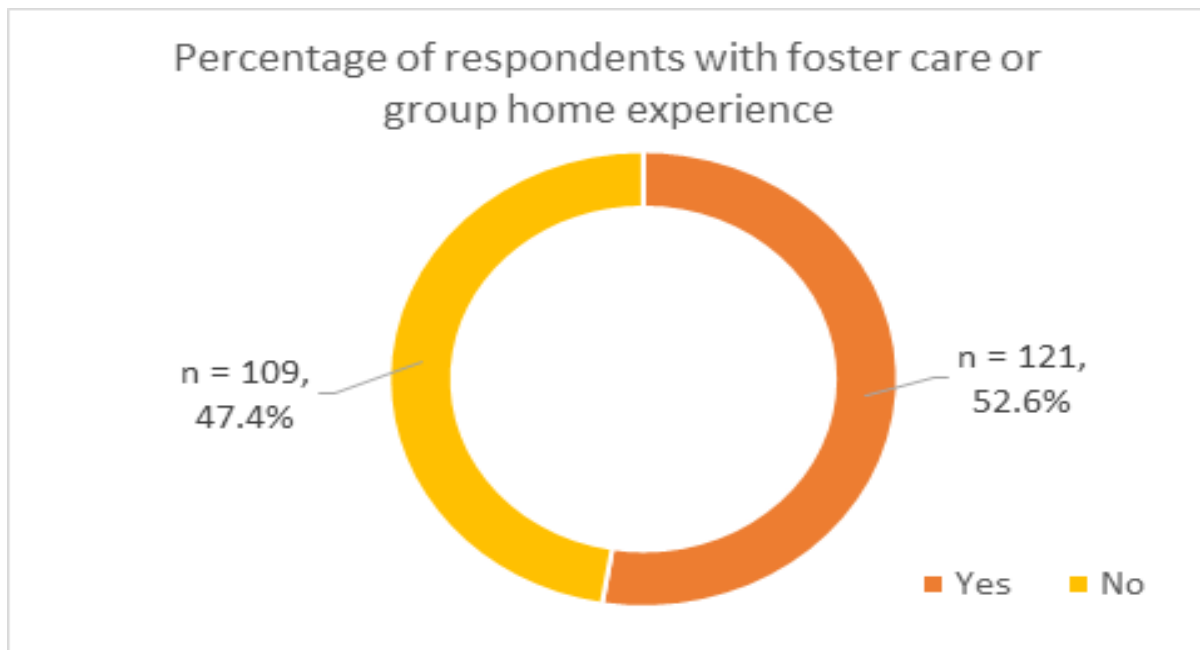

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents with foster care or group home experience

Experience of Violence

Respondents were asked if they had ever been victims of violence while experiencing homelessness. Of 226 individuals who responded to this question, 157 (69.5%) stated that indeed they had experienced violence, while 69 (30.5%) had not (Figure 13). The unsheltered population (80.4%) represented the highest percentage of these victims of violence, followed by those who reported hidden homelessness (75.6%). Even the sheltered population (58.1%) proved unusually vulnerable to violence (Table 10).

Figure 13. Responses on violence while experiencing homelessness

Table 10. Victims of violence as percentage of respondents among unsheltered, sheltered, and hidden homelessness

Victim of Violence	Unsheltered: Surveyed	Sheltered: Surveyed	Hidden home-lessness	Total
Yes	80.4%	58.1%	75.6%	69.5%
No	19.6%	41.9%	24.4%	30.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The experience of violence is also a highly gendered phenomenon, although no group was immune to its effects. Table 11 shows all (100%) of those who identified as trans female and two-spirit experienced violence, while 71.8% of females were targeted for violence. Males also face violence at a high rate (66.2%) while experiencing homelessness.

Table 11. Gender and experience of violence

	Gender (n = 220)			
Victim of Violence	**Male / Man**	**Female / Woman**	**Trans Female / Trans Woman**	**Two-Spirit**
Yes	66.2%	71.8%	100.0%	100.0%
No	33.8%	28.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Housing Services and Barriers to Housing

When respondents were asked about difficulties finding a place

of their own to live, low income or affordability proved the main challenge for many respondents (17. 2%),

although a number of other categories speak to these issues too:

"rent is too high"

(11.2 %), "unemployment" (6.8%), "no income assistance" (4.8%),

"no money" (3.6%), or "social assistance" (2%) (Figure 14). Other

"Get rid of slum landlords and get decent places."
— Respondent

barriers to housing identified by 5% or more of respondents include: Addiction (9.2%); Unemployment (6.8%);

Family breakdown (6.4%); Discrimination (5.6%) and Not trusting of services and support (5.2%). In addition

to addiction, health issues (3.2%), disability issues (1.2%), and mental health issues (4.8%) proved significant

barriers. Transportation (1.6%), lack of references (.8%), criminal history (2.4%), overwhelming stress (3.2%),

and family situation (3.6%) compounded the housing search challenges.

"The biggest barrier is not having ID. A lost wallet is preventing
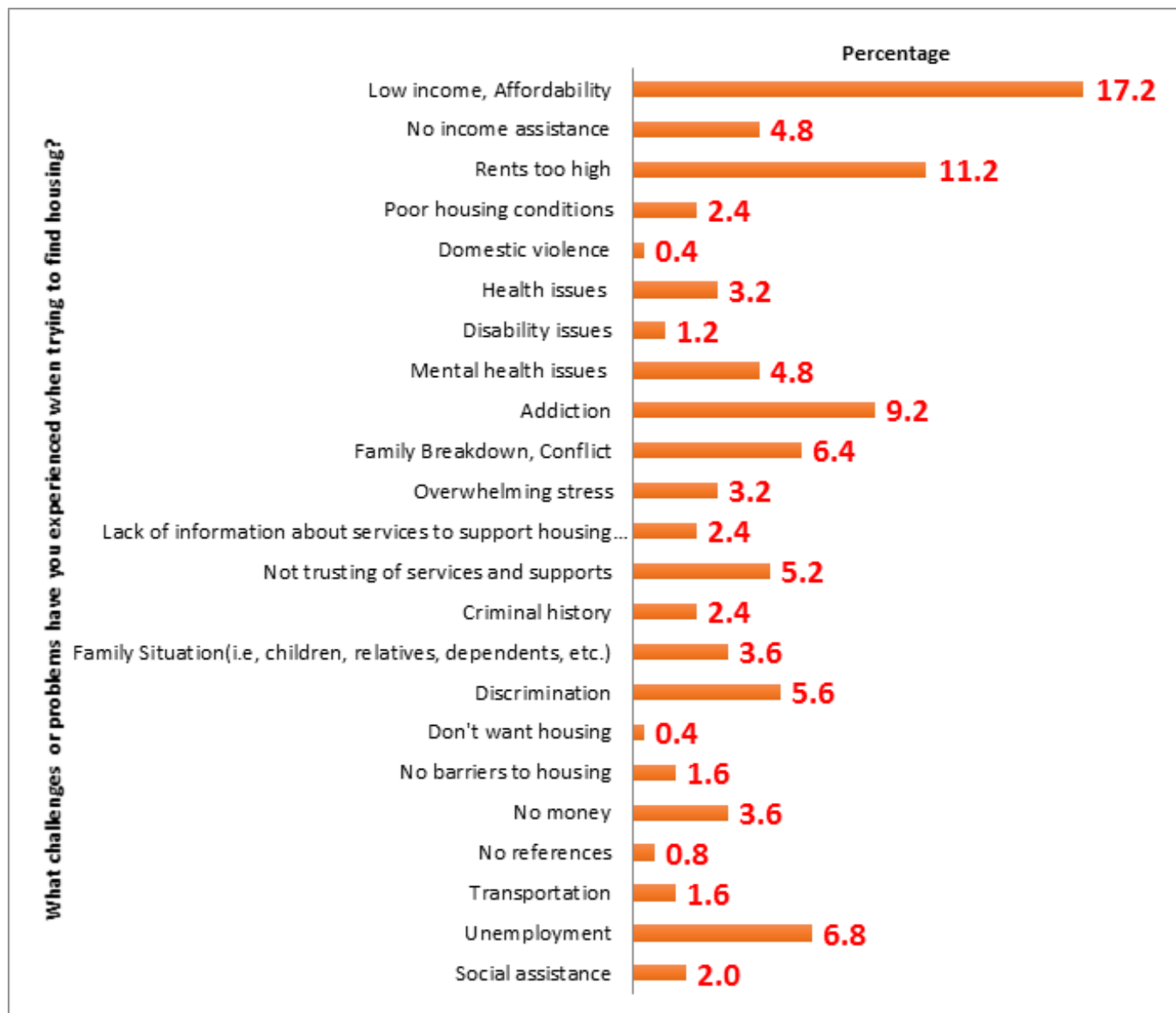**me from accessing services".--Respondent**

Figure 14. Challenges in finding housing

Support for Finding Permanent and Stable Housing

When asked what would help them find permanent and stable housing, 196 respondents gave the list of supports in Table 12. The top three supports needed are these: job (20.4%), housing program support (14.8%), and affordable/low income housing (12.2%).

"People need jobs that pay enough to live off."
—Respondent

Table 12. Support needed to help find permanent and stable housing

Support needed to help find permanent and stable housing	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Addiction services and counselling	8	4.1%
Affordable/low income housing	24	12.2%
Case worker and support worker	8	4.1%
Help from people	9	4.6%
Housing program support	29	14.8%
Income assistance	11	5.6%
Information and resources	8	4.1%
Job	40	20.4%
Low rent	10	5.1%
Money	14	7.1%
Quint	2	1.0%
References	18	9.2%
Roommates	2	1.0%
Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre	1	0.5%
Sobriety	4	2.0%
Transportation and vehicles	8	4.1%
Total	196	100.0%

Similarly, when a list of possible help for finding housing was offered to respondents to select by checking "yes" or "no" (Appendices A and B), the five most significant responses indicating services of utmost need are (Figure 15):

- Help finding an affordable place (91.9%)

- More money (91.2%)

- Transportation to see housing (75.2%)

- Help with housing applications (74.5%)

- Help getting ID (i.e health card, others) (62.2%)

It is important to note, however, that a number of services with high "yes" response rates underline the health support needs of respondents:

- Harm reduction supports (51.2%)

- Help addressing health needs (51.5%)

- Help with disability accessibility (43.3%)

- Manage alcohol issues (53.6%)

- Mental health supports (50.2%)

Cultural supports (58.7%) also ranked highly.

By contrast, confirming the low representation of immigrant and refugee populations, the following topped the list of services that were not seen as priority in helping with housing search by this group of respondents (Figure 15):

- Help with immigration services (88.7%)

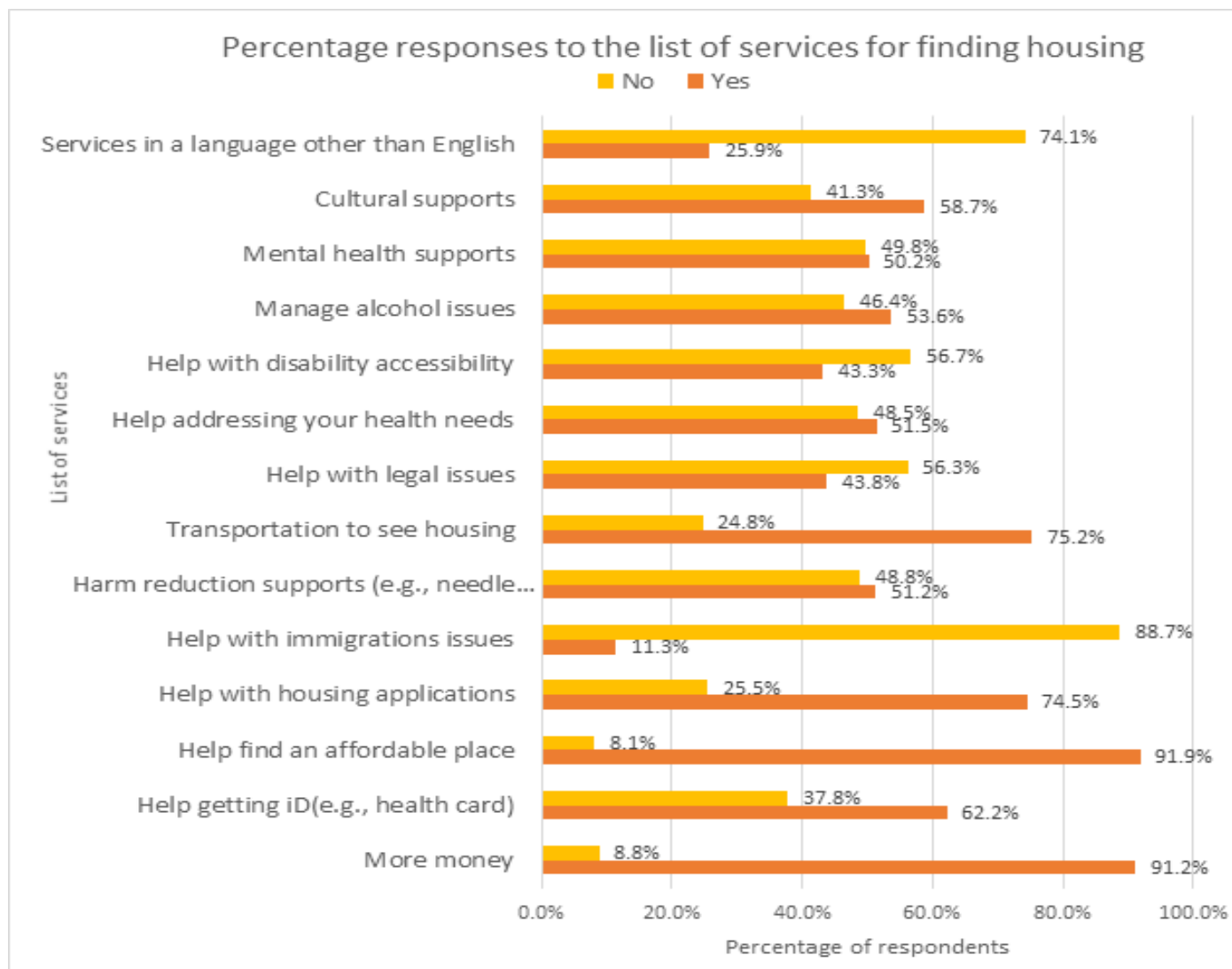- Services in languages other than English (74.1%)

Figure 15. List of services and help in finding housing

Respondents were also given the opportunity to comment ("Yes" or "No") and estimate the frequency of use of a list of services in the past 12 months (Question 20 in Appendices A and B).

Table 13 summarizes the services used most by respondents in the past year. The library was the most used service both in terms of number of users (yes = 145) and frequency of use (5453 times). That libraries emerged top of the list was consistent with the well-documented changing role of libraries in communities across Canada where they are magnets for those in search of information and knowledge, access to computers, and a warm, welcoming, and supportive environment. Although fewer

"I faked mental health to stay in Dubé and I faked crystal meth to stay at BDU. I also slept in an apartment foyer, but the cleaning staff called the cops, even though the apartment tenants were fine with it." —Respondent

(102) reported use of drop-ins, their frequency of use (3804) ranks them second, followed by health clinics (122 users over 1675 times). The Food Bank (yes = 141) at a frequency of 1554 times is fourth, and the shelters fifth (yes = 131) for a frequency of 1000 times. Other health services—emergency room (used 1114 times by 114 respondents), hospitals (253 times by 92 respondents), detox centres (562 times by 79 respondents), and mental health services (562 times by 79 respondents)—add to the human and other costs associated with health service use by respondents. Further, 48 respondents were hospitalized for a total of 283 days, 61 reported ambulance use 145 times, and 27 accessed disability services 28 times in the past year (12 months). Services of police (348 times), prison (512 times), probation/parole (112 times), and community support officers (166 times) were also well used.

Table 13. Services used in the past year (12 months) and frequency of use (n specified)

Services used in the past year (12 months)	"No" re-sponses (not used)	"Yes" responses (used)	Total respons-es (n)	Total number of times service was used
Emergency room	71	*114*	185	*588*
Hospital	88	*92*	180	*253*
Days you have spent hos-pitalized	67	*48*	115	*283*
Police (Tickets, arrests, searches)	83	77	160	348
Prison/Jail	105	48	153	512
Days you have spent in prison/Jail	85	41	126	758
Probation/Parole	125	43	168	112
Community Support Officers	141	37	178	166
Ambulance	119	61	180	145
Library	42	*145*	187	*5453*
Health clinics	64	*122*	186	*1675*
Job training/Job supports	128	52	180	235
Detox	104	79	183	562
Mental Health (counsel-ing, treatment)	123	59	182	*337*
Shelters	57	*131*	188	*1000*
Children and family sup-ports	136	43	179	231
Elder services	158	20	178	79
Disability services	151	27	178	28
Newcomer services	159	11	170	91
Drop-ins	76	*102*	178	*3804*
Food bank	43	*141*	184	*1554*
Services that help you get ID	120	62	182	151
Social Housing/Housing placement	128	52	180	104
Churches	102	76	178	391
Charities	141	22	163	251

Only 39% of the respondents indicated that of the services they used in the past year are helping them to find housing (Figure 16).
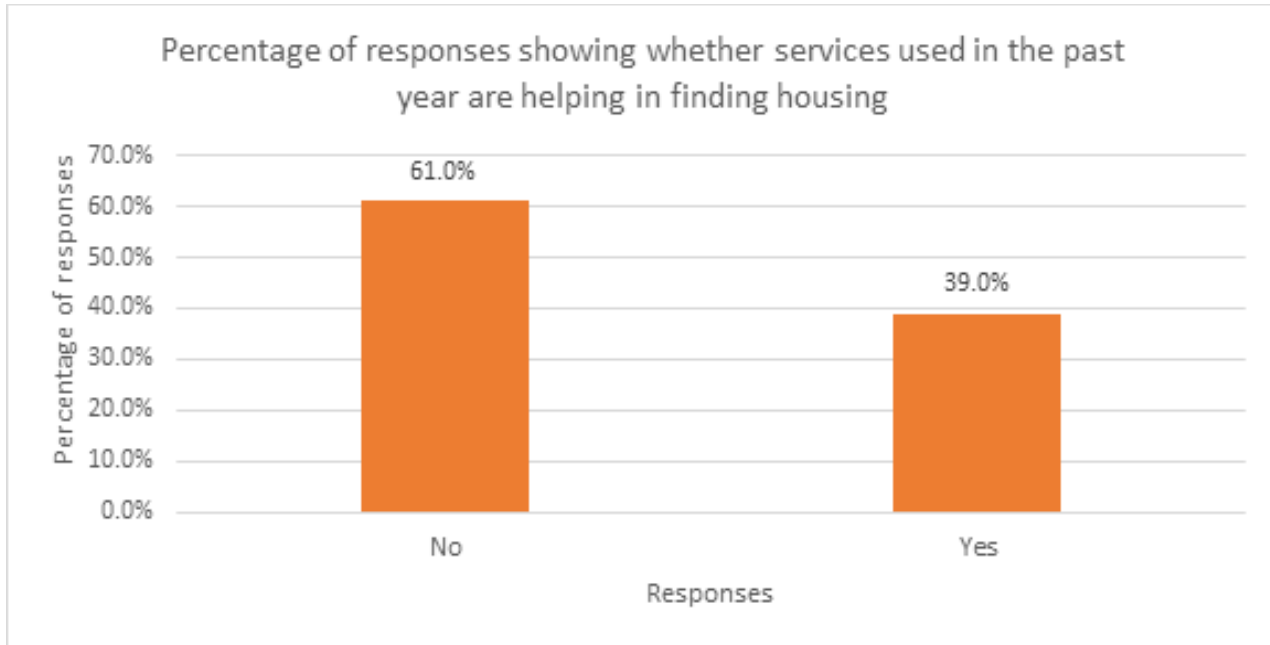
Figure 16. Percentage of responses showing whether services in the past year are helping find housing

Specialized Housing Needs for Disability

Of the 189 respondents who answered the survey question on specialized housing needs, only 28 (14.8%) said they needed specialized housing due to disabling conditions. In the 2015 Saskatoon PIT count, 23% or 34 respondents reported specialized housing needs (9 unsheltered and 25 sheltered).

Waiting List for Housing

Figure 17 shows the percentage of respondents on a waiting list for housing: 49 (26.1%) of the 188 respondents.
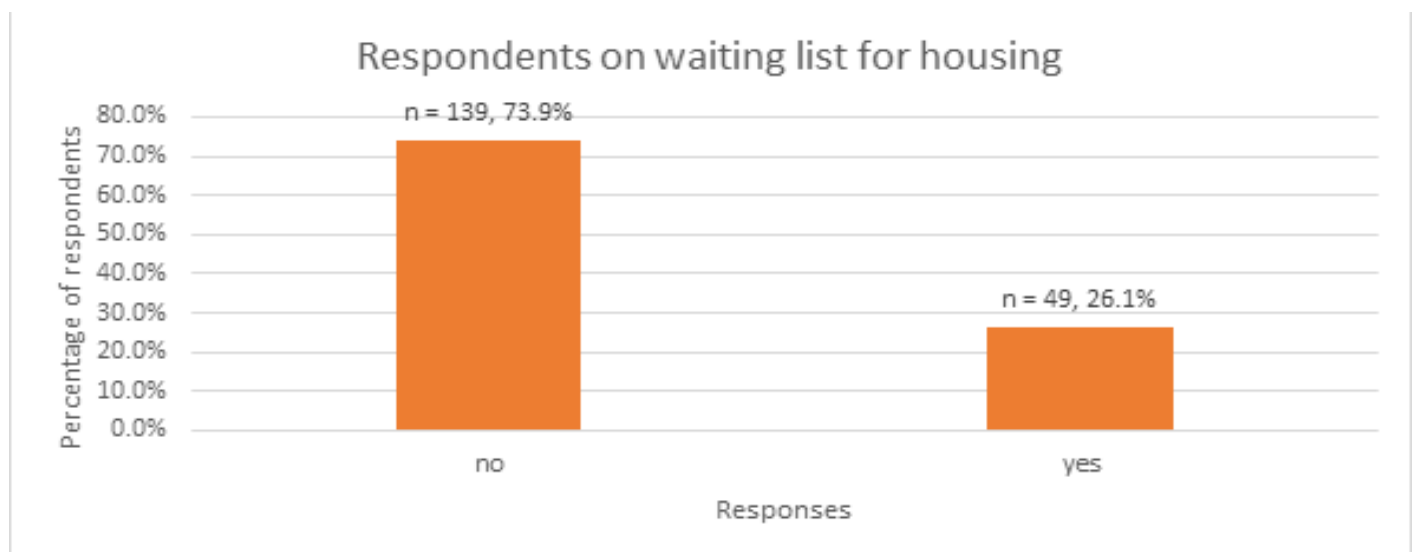
Figure 17. Respondents on waiting list for housing

Table 14 lists the location mentioned by the 49 respondents (some respondents mentioned more than one location). Of interest is the high number of requests sent to Indigenous, including specifically Métis housing support (all CUMFI options, SaskNative Rentals, and SIMFC), which together make 35.8% of the housing service providers mentioned by respondents.

Table 14. Waiting list locations

Waiting list location	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
601 Outreach (AIDS Saskatoon)	1	1.8%
Cress Housing	4	7.1%
CUMFI	2	3.6%
East Side	1	1.8%
Ferguson	1	1.8%
Friendship Inn	7	12.5%
Infinity House (CUMFI)	1	1.8%
Lighthouse	7	12.5%
Long Term Care	1	1.8%
McLeod House (CUMFI)	1	1.8%
MH Approved Homes	1	1.8%
Mobile Crisis	1	1.8%
Quint Community Development Corporation	6	10.7%
Saskatoon Housing	4	7.1%
Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre (SIMFC)	7	12.5%
SaskNative Rentals	9	16.1%
St Paul's	1	1.8%
YWCA	1	1.8%
Total	56	100.0%

Respondents reported a range of times (a mean of 167 days) they had been on a waiting list for housing. The shortest wait time reported by 4 (10.8%) of respondents is one day, while the longest time on the waiting list reported by one individual was 1095 days.

Concluding Thoughts

When survey participants were asked to provide additional commentary about their perspectives and expertise on being homeless in Saskatoon, they spoke with clarity and resiliency about their experiences within a system filled with barriers, resistance, and racism. One respondent recommended being "an advocate for what we need. Be the voice of the homeless and uplift them." This person could do this because of the "trusting support" of "a healthy partner." Some complained of the financial barrier to staying in a shelter—"$45. How can homeless people afford that?" and "why are there no emergency shelters that are not tied to funding?" or "big empty spaces with mattresses where you don't need to pay"—while another spoke of shelters' failures to accommodate couples. Others recommended more culturally appropriate services and health services, more places like the

> **"People with mental health issues don't know where to go; we need to get people who can be trusted to show the way."—Respondent**

Bridge and Friendship Inn, while others recommended greater investment in education and literacy in particular, arguing that poor literacy can lead to homelessness. A lack of programming for different needs was a persistent theme: better access to transportation, bus passes, identification and ID clinics, food, and more drop-in centres, counselling, and supports for those dealing with addictions, struggling with mental health or suicide, or transitioning from prison.

Others pointed to the lack of affordable housing to meet diverse needs—from bachelor suites to families requiring three- and four-bedroom apartments and yet others identified barriers facing young people, those living with disabilities, and seniors. More clean housing was another major theme, when "so many beds had bugs and cockroaches." And several spoke to the importance of addressing slum landlords and those landlords who "abuse and take advantage of welfare."

> **"Something should be done about landlords who abuse and take advantage of welfare."
> —Respondent**

Several spoke of the stigma of homelessness and the ongoing challenges of stereotyping and the need for greater public education. One person asked, "Treat us kindly and respectfully."

Give us "places that are not too judgmental" was another request. Insisting that "no one chooses to be homeless," one person asked that people "give us a chance to prove our worthiness and not be stereotyped." Another plea was for "compassion and help to find a safe home" and understanding of the racism and discrimination many face daily.

> **"No one chooses to be homeless. People should not be looked down upon because they are homeless."—Respondent**

If public education was important to many in addressing issues, so was accessible information about available programs. One wish list had a coordinated and centralized information centre to help address housing needs.

Youth Magnet Event

Because of the difficulties of reaching and surveying youth, especially those experiencing hidden homelessness, many communities have turned to youth magnet events to try to produce a fuller, more accurate picture of homelessness in their local contexts. To attract the target audience, magnet events are widely promoted via traditional and social media and include entertainment, food, activities, access to services, and the opportunity to complete a survey or use an alternative means of registering views and experiences of homelessness. Key advantages of youth magnet events in particular are these:

- Surveying couch-surfing youth
- Connecting youth to services
- Providing youth advisors with leadership opportunities
- Offering community support to youth homelessness (COH, 2017b)

The 2018 Saskatoon Youth Magnet Event was hosted at White Buffalo Youth Lodge. It held a 3-on-3 basketball competition with a professional referee, prizes, free pizza, and a DJ to draw youth. The focus was not on the 3-on-3 tournament; rather, as a magnet event, it was the tool used to create an effective "magnet." The event was promoted in five high schools and two local elementary schools. Organizers worked with teachers and administrative staff at schools to get printed flyers into the hands of all students at each high school.

Registration for the basketball tournament was done online with a new email set up specifically for registrations. At the elementary schools only the grade 6 – grade 8 students received flyers. Social media (Facebook event page, Instagram posts) were a big part of the promotion as well.

A team of volunteers were brought together to help organize, plan, and run the event. Several of the organizers worked as youth workers at agencies serving youth in the community. Their background and experience working with vulnerable youth were key to the success of the event. Several lived-experience youth worked with the lead organizer to inform and give perspectives on running the event.

On the day of the event, over 150 community members attended, including 92 self-identifying as youth, as well as service providers, elders, social workers, researchers, and Saskatoon Police Service personnel.

Youth were informed that the 3-on-3 tournament was sponsored as a way to engage them on their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives on homelessness. Organizers walked around with PIT Count surveys and asked youth if they would be willing to voluntarily complete the surveys. During the course of the evening 27 youth completed surveys. 14 youth were connected to services through a social worker from the Friendship Inn who sat at a table in a quiet location in a room off the side of the gym. In addition to survey collection, youth connection to services was a particular target of this event, and organizers were extremely happy to see this happen. For each of the youth connected to the social worker, a follow-up appointment was also made.

Another interesting aspect of the event was the opportunity for youth to express their feelings, experiences, and knowledge around "home" and "homelessness" on large paper banners that were attached to the side walls of the gym. Perspectives written on each banner were particularly poignant as youth were able to anonymously write out their thoughts.

Asked what home meant to them, participants gave these answers underlining how important home is for feelings of safety, security, a place where they feel grounded and loved, a place where they can be themselves:

·   Home is where I feel safe.

·   Home is my foundation.

·   Home is irreplaceable.

·   Home is my place.

·   My crib

·   Everything

·   Very crucial

·   Home is where to turn to in need of love.

·   A place where you can be you.

·   Home is where you make it.

·   Family, safety, love

·   Home sweet home and wifi

·   Peace, love, everything else, and most important is God and his son Jesus

·   Mohana is home.

·   Where family connects

·   My comfort zone

·   A place where you feel love!

By contrast, homelessness, often expressed in one or few words, meant the loss of home, that life-affirming foundation. Described in negatives, homelessness was associated with fear, insecurity, emptiness, loneliness, and loss:

- When I have nowhere to call home

- Very scary indeed

- No sense of direction

- Insecurity

- No safe place to call my own

- Nowhere to turn to for love

- Feeling scared and alone with no place to go

- Being lost

- Loss of love, care, and empathy

- Emptiness

- Sadness

Feedback from youth at the end of the event was overwhelmingly positive. Youth felt that it would be important to hold events like this annually in order to have opportunities for youth to connect to housing and other services. Organizers also felt that the event was a success. In particular, organizers were happy with the overall attendance, response to surveys, and connection of youth to services.

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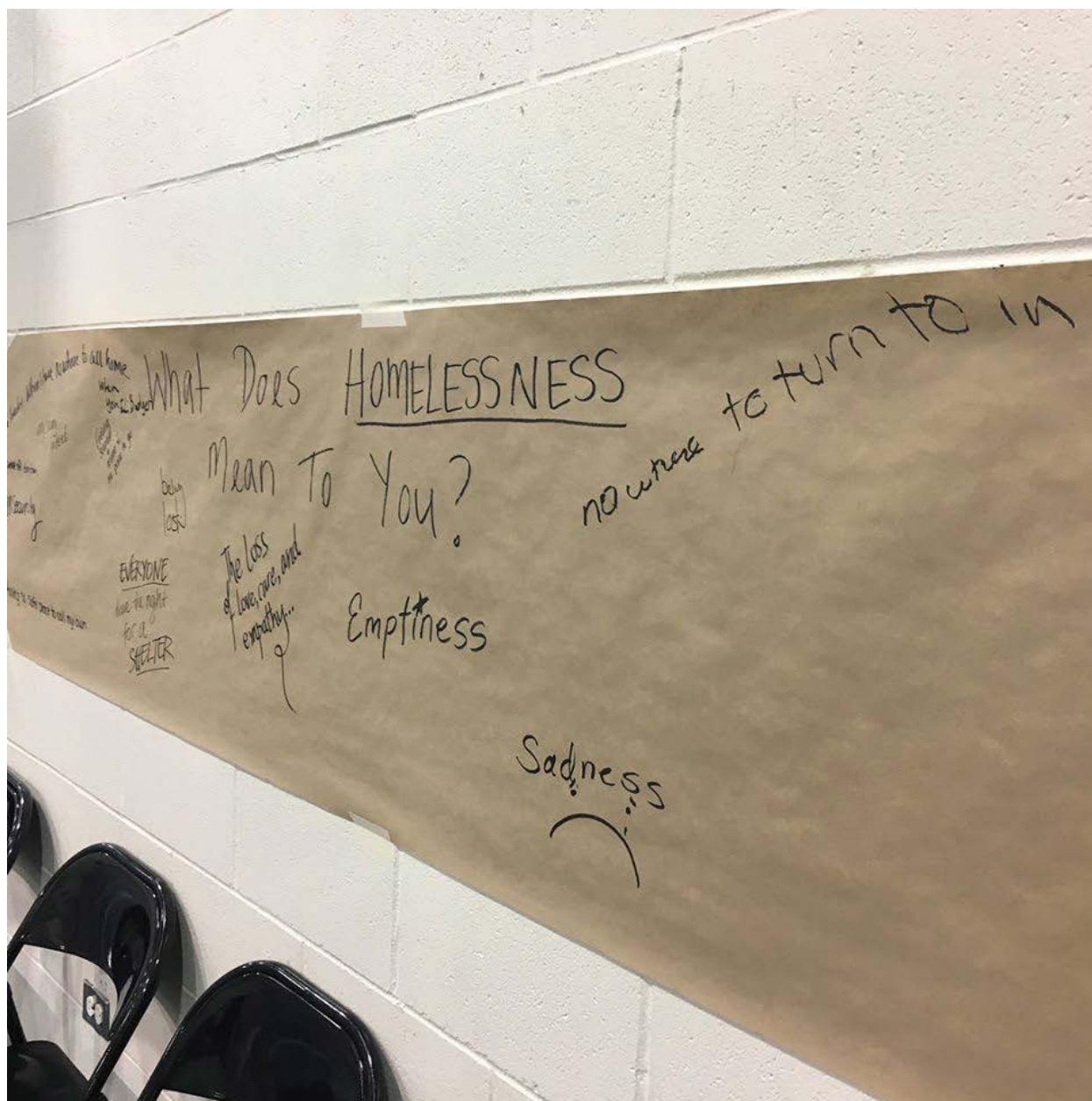
Photo credit: Chris Randall

Public Perceptions

All persons who were approached and agreed to participate in the survey were asked five questions designed to gauge public perceptions of homelessness in Saskatoon, awareness of services that support individuals experiencing homelessness, understanding of reasons for and impacts of homelessness, and their sense of what the community of Saskatoon might do to reduce homelessness. A total of 562 respondents (320 individuals who were housed or not experiencing homelessness and 242 experiencing sheltered, unsheltered, or hidden homelessness) participated in the public perception survey.

When asked if homelessness is an issue in Saskatoon, 84% of housed respondents deemed homelessness "very serious" or "quite serious" compared to 87% of those experiencing homelessness. Very small percentages of both housed and unhoused respondents deemed homelessness "not at all serious" in Saskatoon—3% and 4% respectively (Figure 18). Perception of the seriousness has increased since the 2015 count when 75% of those with housing and 80% of those without housing considered homelessness a serious issue.

"Raise minimum wage and compensate people with real money."— Respondent
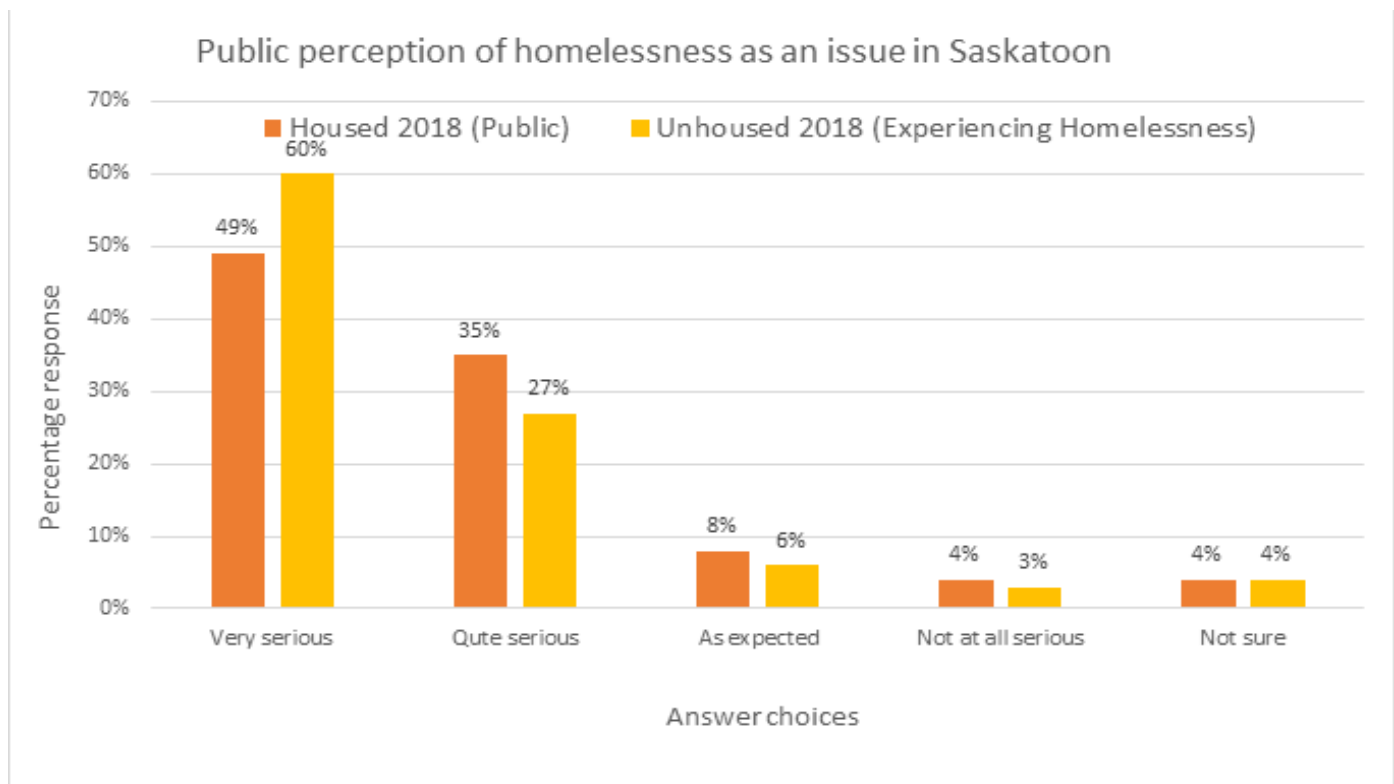
Figure 18. Public perceptions of homelessness in Saskatoon

When asked if they knew of any organizations that help those experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon (some needed prompts from a list of community-based organizations), 552 respondents were able to identify many of the organizations (Table 15). The top four most commonly mentioned were: Lighthouse (389 or 70.47% of respondents); Salvation Army (224 or 40.58%) YWCA (159 or 28.8%); and Friendship Inn (119 or 21.6%). Many other organizations were named (Table 15).

Table 15. Name of organization providing help to those experiencing homelessness

Name of Organization	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Lighthouse	389	70.5%
Salvation Army	224	40.6%
YWCA	159	28.8%
Friendship Inn	119	21.6%
Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre	77	14%
Food Bank and Learning Centre	61	11.%
AIDS Saskatoon-601 Street Outreach	51	9.2%
YMCA	50	9.1%
Mumford House	39	7.1%
EGADZ	38	6.9%
CUMFI -McLeod House	32	5.8%
White Buffalo Youth Lodge	29	5.3%
The Bridge	28	5.0%
CUMFI -Infinity House	25	4.5%
Saskatoon Interval House	22	4%
Saskatoon Crisis Nursery	14	2.5%
Social Services	13	2.4%
Quint	13	2.0%
Hospitals and health (including SWITCH, West-side Community Clinic, St. Paul's and Emergency rooms)	11	2.0%
Larson Home	11	2.0%
Detox	10	1.8%
Persons Living with AIDS Network of SK (PLWA)	10	1.8%
Mobile Crisis	10	1.8%
Women's Shelter	7	1.3%
Churches	6	1.1%
Beehive and Pride Home	4	0.7%

From a list of options (Figure 19), 307 (56%) of respondents identified "addictions" as the main reason that people experience homelessness, followed by "lack of affordable housing" (169 or 31%), "lack of employment" (136 or 25%), "physical or mental health" (95 or 17%), and "discrimination" (57 or 10%). Respondents identified "other" reasons for homelessness, including family dynamics, lack of support, losing loved ones, lack of ID, alcohol, hopelessness, lack of help from social workers, and unsafe housing options, for instance.
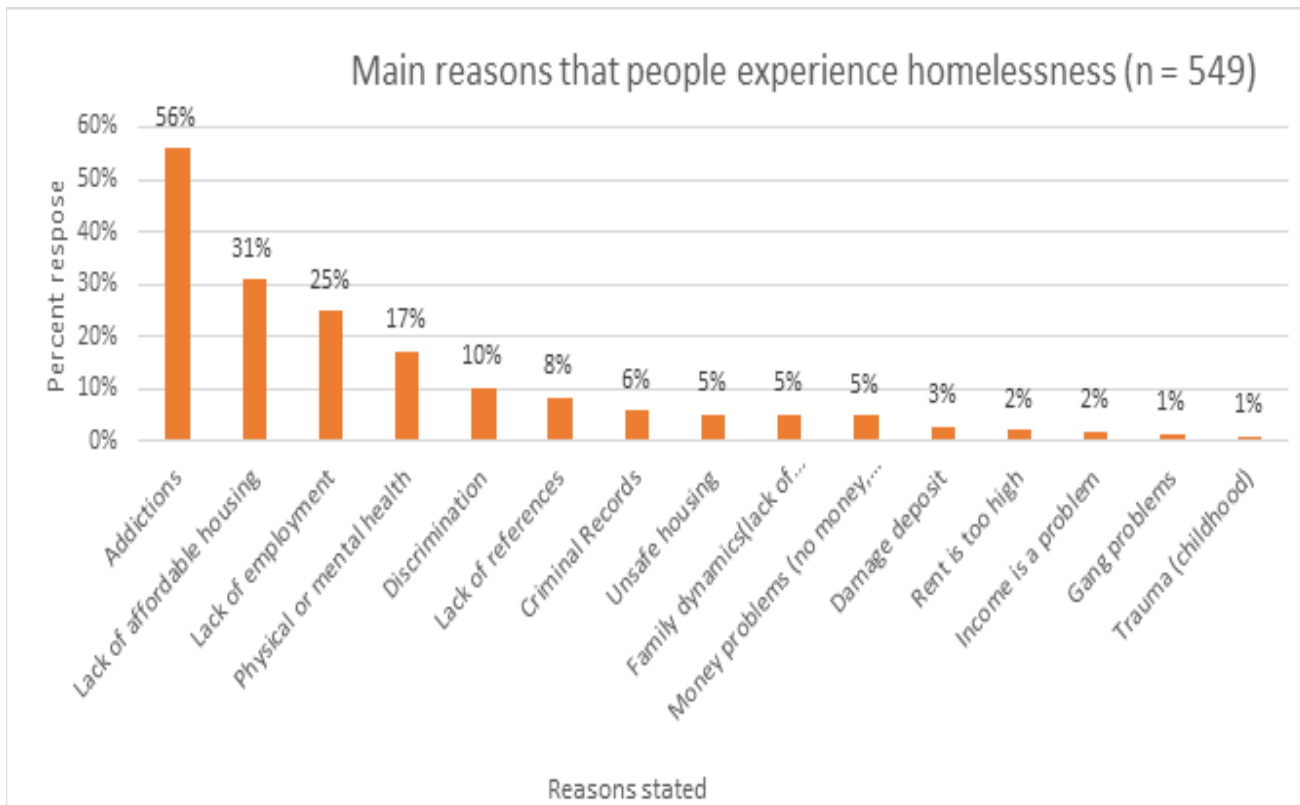
Figure 19. Main reasons that people experience homelessness

In open-ended questions, respondents were asked who they thought were the most impacted by homelessness, and what important actions Saskatoon can take to help reduce homelessness. The responses to these questions were remarkably similar for respondents with or without housing.

Youth, people with disabilities, unemployed, Indigenous, single mothers with children, single parents, and those with addictions or mental health issues were most commonly reported as those most impacted by homelessness (Figure 20). Important actions Saskatoon could take to reduce and eventually end

"Take care of the opioid addiction. We need more help."— Respondent.

homelessnessare shown in the word cloud (Figure 21). The larger the font size of the word in the cloud, the higher the frequency of that word being mentioned by respondents as an important initiative to take.
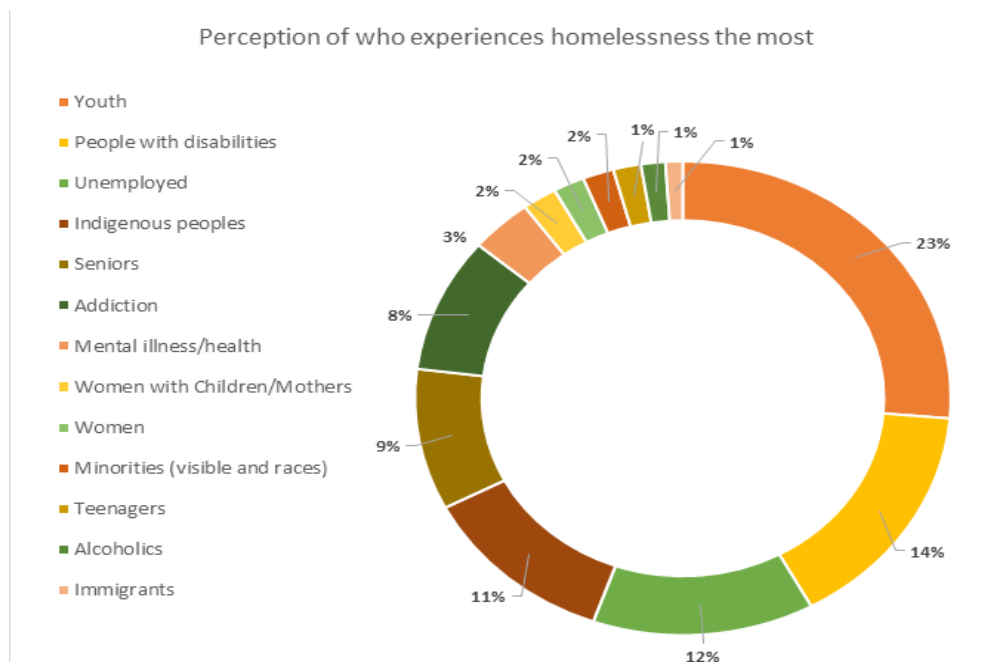
Figure 20. Perception of those most impacted by homelessness

Figure 21. What are important things Saskatoon can do to help reduce homelessness?

" If they are in the streets, I don't see why we can't help them with mobile crisis? I know someone who sits in a wheelchair all night long."— Respondent.

DISCUSSION

Saskatoon continues to experience substantial population growth. The City of Saskatoon (2018a) reports that since 2009, the population has grown by about 58,500 with an average annual population growth rate 2.7% (City of Saskatoon, 2018a). The population at the last PIT count (2015) was approximately 258,112, while for 2018 it was estimated to be 278,500 (Figure 22). This population growth is projected to continue in the short term at a rate between 2% and 3%. Natural increases (relative numbers of births over births) over the years 2012-2017 were over 2,000 annually in the Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and are projected to increase by 2,200 annually to 2020. After decreases to 2015, net international migration is the main source of population growth in Saskatchewan (City of Saskatoon, 2017).
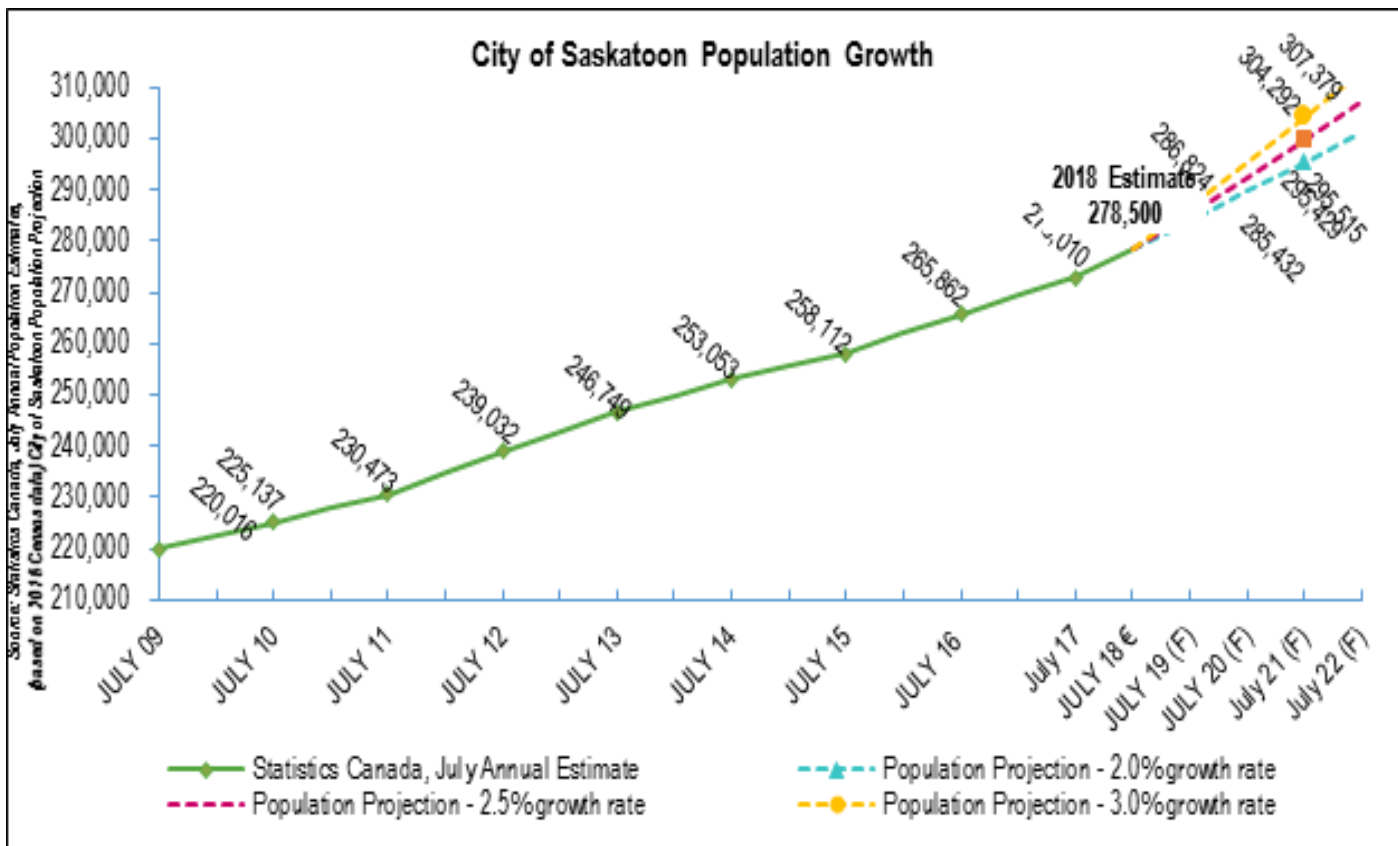
Figure 22. City of Saskatoon population growth (Source: City of Saskatoon, 2017)

During this time of growth, the Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Area saw about 26,000 new housing units added to the housing stock. Significant numbers of rental multiple unit dwellings were added (Table 16). The result of this has been a rapid increase in vacancy rates in rental properties as new stock has come on stream (Figure 23).

urrently the apartment vacancy rate is 9.6% over the apartment rental stock (CMHC, 2017; City of Saskatoon, 2018b). The overall vacancy rate has decreased to 14%, down from 18% last year, according to Colliers International (as reported in the *StarPhoenix*) (MacPherson, 2018).

Table 16. Housing stock numbers, 2009-2017 (City of Saskatoon, 2018b)

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017f
Total Dwellings	1428	2381	2994	3753	2980	3531	2293	1909	1915
Single Unit Dwellings	1101	1638	1608	2025	1658	1577	1000	1092	1078
Multiunit Dwellings	327	743	1386	1728	1322	1954	1293	817	837
Source: Conference Board of Canada									
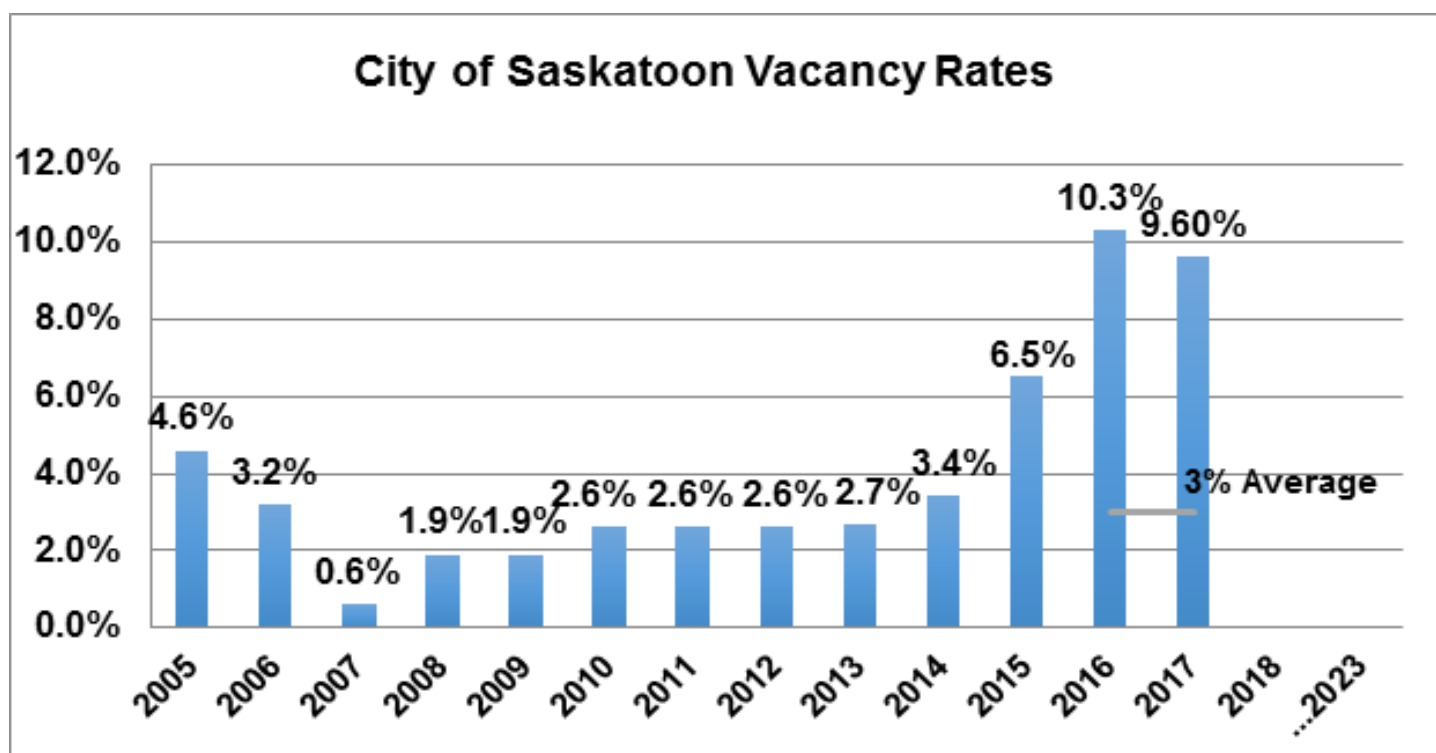
Figure 23. Saskatoon vacancy rates, 2005-2017 (Source CMHC Rental Market Report, October 2017)

Average rental rates in the city of Saskatoon have fallen marginally for two consecutive years. Average rent for 2017 was $999 (CMHC, 2017); the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was approximately $950/month (MacPherson, 2018). Even though average rent has decreased, the City of Saskatoon housing assessment report has continued to note that affordability challenges remain, especially for those with low income, including minimum wage earners, people with disabilities, and seniors on fixed incomes (City of Saskatoon, 2018b).

Issues of affordability are reinforced in answers to the public perception questions of the PIT count (Figure 19 above). The 2016 statistics on housing starts and sale prices (Figure 24) also underline ongoing affordability challenges—something the City has aimed to address through investments in attainable housing units; that is, housing that both meets household needs and costs less than 30% of gross household monthly income (see Figure 25 for 2010-2016 attainable housing units).
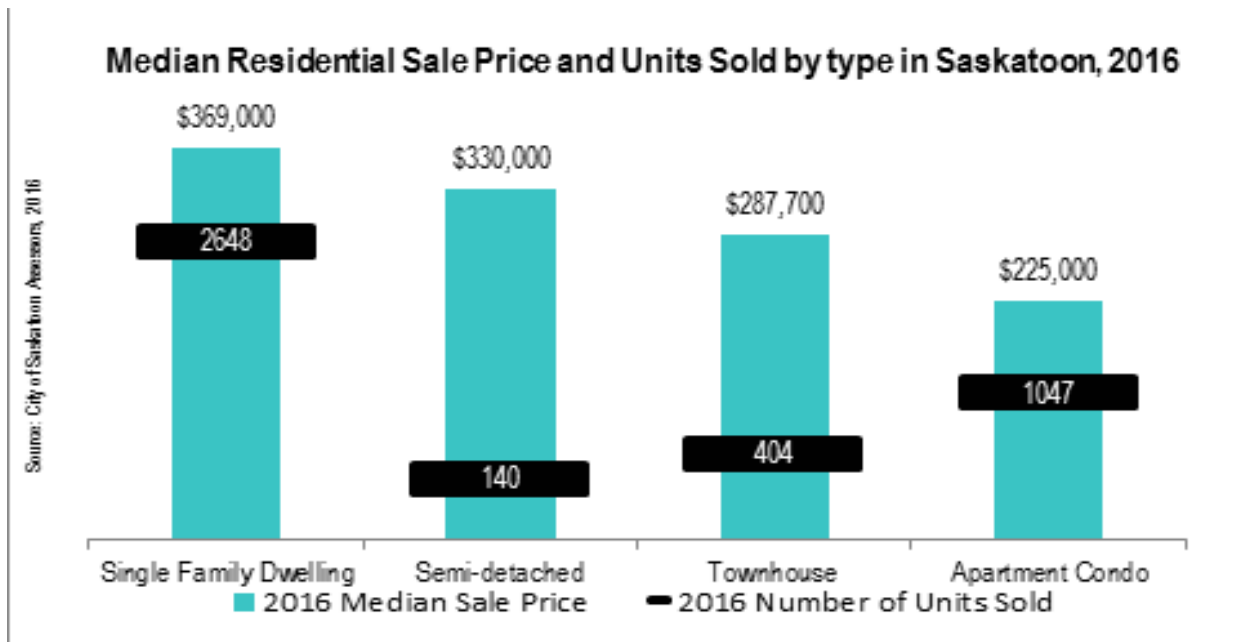

Figure 24. Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Area housing starts by type (Source: City of Saskatoon, 2017)
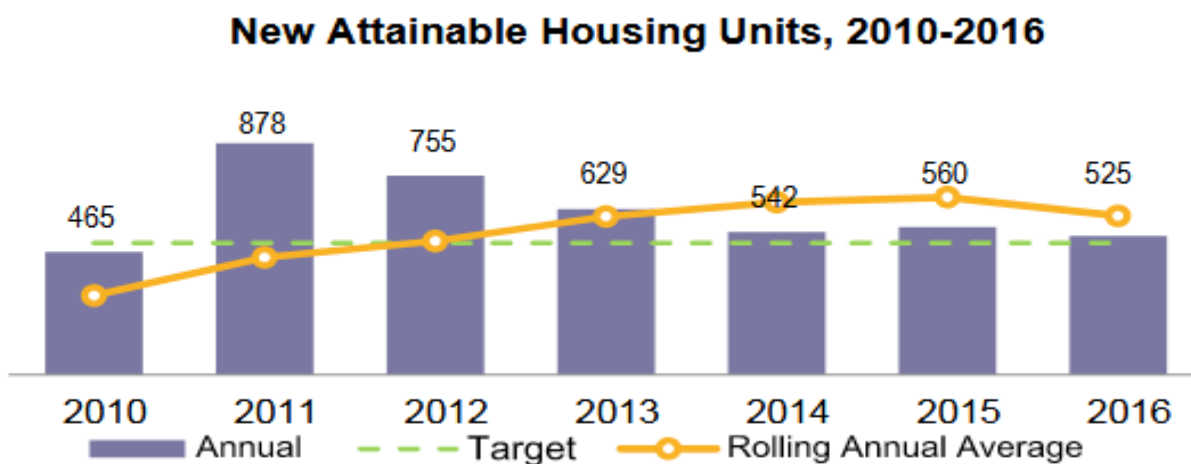
Figure 25. New attainable housing units, 2010-2016 (Source: City of Saskatoon, 2017)

After economic growth between 2010 and 2015, 2016 marked the second year of negative economic growth; employment dropped .66% in the Saskatoon CMA and inflation outstripped 2017 after-tax income of $37,956 on average (City of Saskatoon, 2017). The changing socio-economic circumstances and the increased capacity

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to respond to homelessness since the 2008, 2012, and 2015 PIT counts (Housing First initiatives discussed earlier, for instance) need to be considered when attempting to draw comparisons across the four Saskatoon PIT counts (see Figure 26). We also need to take into account research design and scheduling changes between 2008 and 2018. Similarly, no comparisons can be drawn without understanding the limitations and the strengths of the PIT methodology.
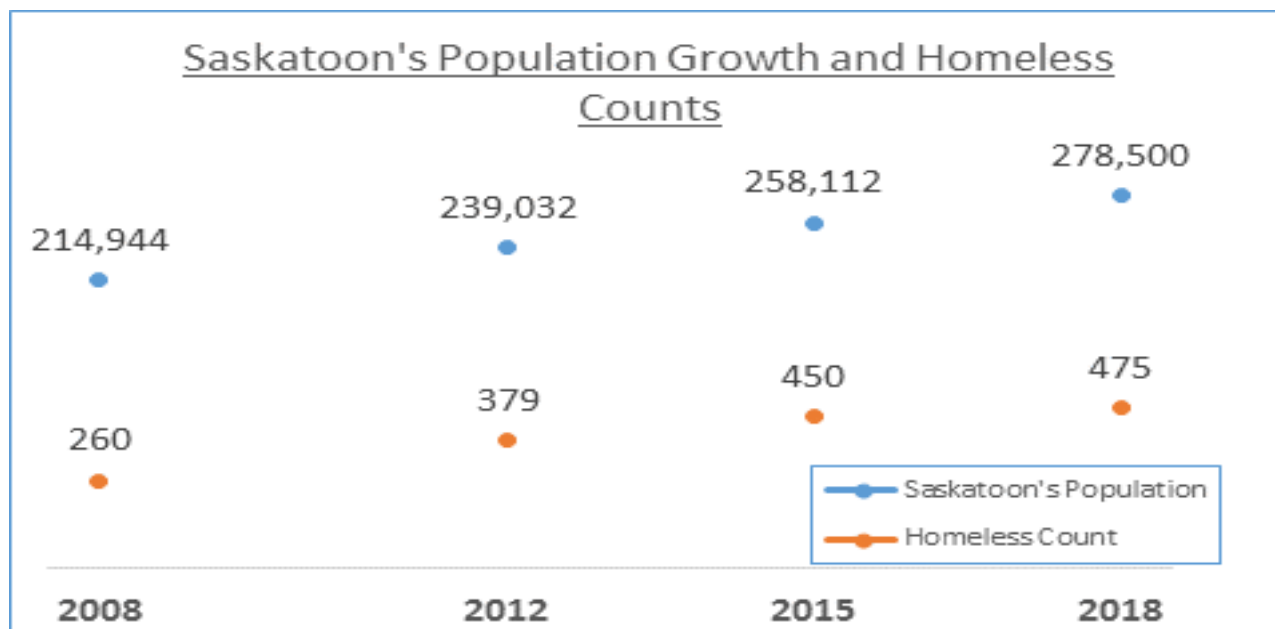
Figure 26. Saskatoon`s population growth and PIT homelessness Counts (Source: Daryl Sexsmith, City of Saskatoon Planning & Development)

Limitations

Like all PIT homelessness counts, the 2018 Saskatoon count underestimates the number of people who are homeless at any one time. Although 2018 saw increased efforts—expanded number of study areas, stationary as well as mobile locations, a magnet event, and increased numbers of volunteers from 80 in 2015 to 150 in 2018—to enumerate all people experiencing homelessness, it remained impossible to assign volunteers to all parts of the city for an entire day or interview all people experiencing homelessness. Some parts of the city were missed, some people did not wish to be identified as homeless, some had been homeless in recent months or days but were housed on count day, and some were not possible to find.

Hence, it must be well understood when interpreting findings that a PIT methodology produces a snap-shot rather than an actual or accurate number of people experiencing homelessness. Comparisons across years and

jurisdictions are to be approached with caution and not as an accurate portrayal of homelessness trends, though the task is facilitated by the 2018 coordinated count`s efforts to standardize methodology, standards, definitions, screening, and questions. Longitudinal comparisons require a rigorous application of an identical methodology at each point where the research is done. While the survey instrument has been reasonably consistent over the four Saskatoon counts, other elements of the methodology such as switching seasons over time, including hidden homelessness in 2015 and 2018, adding a magnet event targeting youth in 2018, and the increased ability of HIFIS to provide data in 2015 and 2018, all mean that the coverage for each survey is different and therefore makes quantitative, historical comparisons unreliable. Similarly, the 2008, 2012, and 2015 counts defined children as those 18 years of age and under and adults as those 19 and over, while the current coordinated count defined children as those 14 years and under, youth as 15-24 years old, and adults as 25-64 years. More significantly for a PIT methodology for homeless counts is that the nature of the subjects means the coverage or sampling frame for research subjects can never be determined with any degree of accuracy. To illustrate this, compare the Canadian Census and National Household Survey to a PIT on homelessness. The Census/ NHS are PITs; every five years the Census asks respondents to complete a survey that describes individual and household characteristics as of the Census day. The difference, of course is that the Census actually puts the survey instrument into virtually every household, a 100% sampling frame. The homelessness PIT counts cannot achieve a known coverage.

Although we had a longer planning period for the 2018 count (over three months) than for the 2015 count (approximately 6 weeks), the time of year impacted volunteer recruitment, especially in the postsecondary sector where count day coincided with examinations. Also the April 18 weather (minus 2 at 8:00 a.m. reaching a high of 9 degrees at 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. and dropping to 5 degrees by 8:00 p.m.) was less than ideal for efforts to connect with people outdoors. The expanded activities, including designing and hosting a magnet event, added to logistical and other challenges. Still, the longer lead time allowed for more engagement of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and afforded the research team more time to integrate CAC advice into the PIT process. Still, further planning time might have supported more effective participation by local shelters and community-based organizations. More time leading up to the count is critical in order to raise awareness of the issue, plan promotional strategies, and ensure full participation and prioritization of the homelessness count among organizations and the public. The key to success is collaboration and participation.

Strengths

The 2018 count continued to build on the learning from counts in Saskatoon in 2008, 2012, and 2015 while accommodating the new standards and methodology of the federal government`s Homelessness Partnering Strategy`s 2018 coordinated PIT count—and profiting from the extensive resources on the online portal of the Community Workspace on Homelessness hosted by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. The homelessness count is a means for the Saskatoon community to come together to address homelessness, to come together in action and awareness. With better understanding of the community-level service use and gaps provided by the additional contextually-sensitive questions and data, organizations can respond appropriately and represent the needs in the community.

Input from the CAC, those participating in the Community forum on March 14, and volunteers participating in training sessions greatly strengthened research design and implementation. They importantly helped clarify the intent and refine the phrasing of survey questions. Volunteer input in the May 4, 2018, debriefing session further added to Saskatoon's capacity to conduct PIT counts in the future.

When funded by the federal government, results from the counts inform decision-making and program planning at several levels. Funding allocations direct priorities and draw attention to social needs. Specifically, the national government's direction towards standardization of the homelessness survey, and continued funding for local counts will better allow comparability of findings across jurisdictions and advance the relevance and applicability of the work.

Discussing and reflecting on the findings of the research is important in order to increase public awareness and understanding of the complexity of the issue—and to reduce social stigma, while strengthening community commitment to support needed investments and change.

For all the differences across 2008, 2012, 2015, and 2018 counts (Table 17), some findings remain consistent and telling over time, reinforcing the sources and costs of factors that amplify the cycles of poverty and homelessness. All age groups are impacted by homelessness. Indigenous people are overrepresented. Service

use patterns show heavy reliance on libraries, fulfilling new and important functions in communities across Canada, drop-ins, health clinics, food banks, and shelters, as well as health services such as emergency rooms, hospitals, detox centres, and mental health services, underlining the enormous health and other costs to all of homelessness. Reported hospital stays (283 days by 48 individuals), ambulance use (145 times), and disability services (28 times) in the past year were also significant. Police (348 times), prison (512 times), probation/ parole (112 times), and community support officer service (166 times) were also well used.

Survey responses also show that most services did not help in finding housing. The major barrier remains housing affordability. Sources of income have become increasingly problematic since 2008 when formal (45%) and even full-time (70%) employment for those employed were associated with homelessness. In 2012 and 2015 social services or "welfare" were the main sources of income with family and friends important sources (13% in 2012 and 10% in 2015) and formal employment reduced to 10.2% (indoor 2012), 6.8 % (outdoor 2012) and 8% (2015). In 2018, welfare was top (60.37%), while family and friends accounted for 3.23% and employment only 3.69% and informal employment 17.51%.

Table 17. Findings across Saskatoon PIT Homelessness Counts (2008, 2012, 2015, and 2018)

	2008	2012	2015	2018
Date of the Count	May 22	September 24	June 22	April 18
Total sheltered and unsheltered	260	379	450	475
Outside (Adults)	17%	27%	9%	18.95%*
Sheltered (Adults)	77%	73%	80%	56.4%*
Total Children	12%	3%	10%	2.3%*
Total Hidden Homelessness	-	-	35 or 7.8%	86 or 18.1%
Total Self-Identified Indigenous People	47%	66%	45%	85.5%
On Waiting List for Housing	20%	14%	27%	26.1%**

* For the 2018 PIT Count, a child was defined within the 0-14 years range. Those from 15-24 years were defined as youth, while only those between 25 and 64 were defined as adults; seniors were 65+.

** This rate is calculated from those who responded to question 23 of the survey, n = 188; not those who completed part 2 of the PIT survey, n = 242.

First documented in 2012, participation in the Canadian Armed Forces rose from 4.3% in 2012 to 10% in 2015 but dropped to 2.5% in 2018 for the military and RCMP combined. Similarly, in 2012, 38% had experienced physical violence while living outside (sheltered homeless at 28% less likely to be so victimized than those living outdoors at 44% and women more likely at 48% compared to 33% for men). In 2015, 46% had experienced violence living outdoors, while in 2018, 69.5% reported such violence (80.4% in unsheltered situations, 58.1% in sheltered situations, and 75.6% of those experiencing hidden homelessness). High rates of victimization were reported across gender: 66.17% men, 71.76 women, and a shocking 100% of trans women and two-spirit respondents.

Close to half of respondents in 2012 had lived with foster families during childhood (even for indoor and outdoor respondents); 16% had remained in foster care to 18 years of age. In 2015, 45% had lived with foster families during childhood while only 11% (3% outdoors and 14% indoors respondents) remained in foster care to 18 years of age. In 2018, 52.6% reported involvement with foster care or group homes and 20.3% remained there until they turned 18 (Table 18).

Table 18. Other findings across 2008-2018 PIT counts

	2008	2012	2015	2018
Veteran	-	4%	10%	2.5%*
Victims of Physical Violence	-	38%	46%	69.5%**
Persons Lived in Foster Care or Group Home	-	46%	45%	52.6%***

*Includes both military and RCMP services. Respondents n = 236.
** Respondents of question 17 in the survey, n = 226.
*** Respondents of question 16 in the survey, n = 230.

CONCLUSIONS

For a fourth time, the Saskatoon community came together to dedicate their time and resources to support the 2018 Point in Time Homelessness Count on April 18. A snapshot of the conditions and trends of individuals at risk and experiencing homelessness, the count supports a greater understanding of the multi-faceted dimensions of this pressing national concern and the persistence of individuals experiencing homelessness, including both chronic (without a permanent address for more than six months) and episodic homelessness (without shelter three times or more over the past year). While we acknowledge the complexities of comparing data from previous PIT homelessness counts, **some findings recur with such consistency that they cannot be ignored. They underline who are most impacted by factors that exacerbate the cycles of poverty and homelessness.**

Despite some important initiatives adding to the city's capacity to address homelessness, Saskatoon still faces significant numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness, including children, seniors, men and women, and those identifying as Indigenous people. This report has aimed to give life to the numbers by giving voice to those experiencing homelessness so that together we can help address costly systemic inequalities and contribute to the reconciliation narrative promoted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) Calls to Action. As one front-line worker pointed out in consultations hosted by the federal government's Advisory Committee on Homelessness, "housing people when done properly is reconciliation realized" (Government of Canada, 2018b, p. 3).

Barriers to finding permanent housing remain insufficient income and affordable housing stock, various health issues including addictions and mental health and disabilities, as well as family breakdown, discrimination, and overwhelming life stress. Transportation, lack of references, criminal history, and family situation aggravated the housing search challenges. Service use among respondents reveals significant reliance on libraries, marking the changing role of libraries in Canadian communities, as well as drop-in programs, a range of health services, underlining the health costs of homelessness, food banks, and shelters, as well as police, prison, probation, community support officer services.

The public perception component added since the 2015 PIT methodology was well received by the CAC, volunteer surveyors, and the general public. The data offered a wider perception of the prevalence, severity, sources, and possible solutions to homelessness in Saskatoon. Respondents across sectors understood the homelessness situation in Saskatoon to be a serious issue, and pointed to addictions; the lack of affordable housing options, employment, and mental and physical health supports; and discrimination as key reasons individuals find themselves without permanent housing. Interestingly, public understanding of who are most impacted does not match findings in the literature or Saskatoon's own PIT count findings showing Indigenous [peoples as disproportionately impacted. Youth, people with disabilities, and the unemployed were all listed ahead of Indigenous people. More affordable housing was again (as in 2015) the top recommendation to address the homelessness issue in Saskatoon, followed by more funding and support, more shelters and programs, lower rents, better education opportunities, and more addiction treatment. If PIT counts typically underestimate, it might be argued that efforts documented here to minimize underestimates have helped give us a fuller, more comprehensive picture in 2018—one that we can act on to rebuild our sense of community so that everyone counts.

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APPENDIX A: Outdoor Survey

CUISR
Community-University Institute for Social Research

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

2018 State of Homelessness Survey
Outdoor Survey

Hi, my name is _____ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research at the University of Saskatchewan. We are conducting a survey on housing and homelessness in Saskatoon.

- **Participation is voluntary** and **your name will not be recorded**.

- You can choose to **skip any question** or to **stop the interview at any time**.

- Results will contribute to the understanding of homelessness across Canada, and will help with research to improve programs and services.

Screening Questions

Screening Question A:
Have you answered this survey with a person wearing a name tag like this *(point to volunteer name tag)*?

o Yes (If YES, "Thank you for your time." Tally)	o No (If NO, go to screening question B)

Screening Question B:
Are you willing to participate in the survey? *(If YES, complete part one and two (two only after screening question C) of questionnaire with respondent. If NO, thank them)*

o Yes (If YES, go to PART ONE: COMMUNITY QUESTIONS and then screening question C)	o (If NO, "Thank you for your time." Tally)

PART ONE: COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

1. **Do you know of any organizations that help those who are experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon? (**Do not read the options; may prompt.)

o The Lighthouse	o Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre
o AIDS Saskatoon – 601 Street Outreach	o Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre
o Saskatoon Interval House	o Saskatoon Friendship Inn
o Salvation Army	o White Buffalo Youth Lodge
o YWCA	o Other: _____
o YMCA	o Don't know
o Saskatoon Crisis Nursery	o Decline to answer
o CUMFI – McLeod House	
o CUMFI – Infinity House	

2. **Do you think homelessness is an issue in Saskatoon** (on a scale of very serious to not at all serious)?

○ Very serious ○ Quite serious ○ As expected	○ Not at all serious ○ Not sure

3. **What do you think are the main reasons that people experience homelessness?** (Do not read options; may prompt.)

○ Lack of affordable housing ○ Lack of employment ○ Physical or mental health ○ Addictions ○ Criminal record	○ Lack of references ○ Discrimination ○ Damage deposit ○ Unsafe housing ○ Other (Specify): _____ ○ Decline to answer

4. **Who do you think are most impacted by homelessness?** *(prompts: single parents, people with disabilities, youth, unemployed, etc.)*

5. **What are important things Saskatoon can do to help reduce homelessness?**

Location: _____   Time: _____AM/PM
Interviewer: _____   Contact #: _____

Screening Question C:

Where are you staying tonight?/Where did you stay last night[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]

a. Decline to answer
b. Own apartment/ house
	c. Someone else's place
	   ->ask c1 and c2
	
	d. Motel/hotel
	   ->ask c2
	
	e. Hospital, jail, prison, remand centre
	   ->ask c2
		f. Emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter
		g. Transitional shelter/housing
		h. Public space (e.g., sidewalk, park, forest, bus shelter)
		i. Vehicle (car, van, rv, truck)
		j. Makeshift shelter, tent or shack
		k. Abandoned/vacant building
		l. Other unsheltered location
		m. Respondent doesn't know [likely homeless]

[Thank & end survey]	**[Follow up questions]**	**[Skip to survey question 1]**

C1: Can you stay there as long as you want?

C2: Do you have a house or apartment that you can safely return to?

a. As long as wanted **[thank and end survey]** b. Temporary situation ------**> go to c2** c. Don't know ------------------**> go to c2** d. Declined **[thank and end survey]**

a. Yes **[thank and end survey]** b. No ----------------------**> begin survey** c. Don't know ---------**> begin survey** d. Declined **[thank and end survey]**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the survey. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. Please note that you will receive a gift card as a thank you for your participation.

PART TWO : CORE QUESTIONS

1. **What family members are staying with you tonight?** [Check all that apply]

☐ None ☐ Partner				☐ OOther adult ☐ decline to D answer				
☐ Child(ren)/dependent(s) [Indicate Gender gender and Age age for each]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

2. **How old are you? [OR] What year were you born?** [If unsure, ask for best estimate]

○ Age_____or year born_____	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

→ For the next questions, "homelessness" means any time when you have been without a secure place to live, including sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or living temporarily with others.

3. **How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?**

○ Age_____	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

4. **In total, *how much time* have you been homeless over the past year?** [Best estimate.]

○ Length _____ days	weeks	months	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

5. **In total, *how many different times* have you experienced homelessness over the past year?** [best estimate.]

○ Number of times _____ [includes this time] ○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

6.
   Have you stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year? [give local examples of homeless shelters]

○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

6b. If not, what are the main reasons? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY].

○ Turned away (Shelters are Full)	○ Prefers to stay with friends/family
○ Turned away (Banned)	○ Treatment by shelter staff Pet(s) Other:
○ Lack of transportation	○ Don't know
○ Lack of funding	○ Decline to answer
○ Fear for safety	○
○ Bed bugs and other pests	○

7. **How long have you been in Saskatoon?**

o Length _____ days / weeks / months / years - --------> o Always been here o Don't know o Decline to answer	**Where did you live before you came here?** o Community _____ province_____ Or country_____ _ o Decline to answer

7b. What is the main reason you came to Saskatoon? **[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY].**

o To access emergency shelter(s) o To access services and supports o Family moved here o To visit friends/family o To find housing o Employment (Seeking) o Employment (Secured)	o To attend school o Fear for safety o Recreation/Shopping o Other: o Don't know o Decline to answer o

8. **Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or refugee claimant?**

o Yes, immigrant ------------------> o Yes, refugee----------------------> o Yes, refugee claimant--------> o No o Don't know o Decline to answer o	**If yes:** **How long have you been in Canada?** o Length: _____ days | weeks | months | years Or date: _____/_____/_____ day / month / year o Don't know o Decline to answer

9. **Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry? This includes First Nations with or without status, Métis, and Inuit.** [If yes, please follow-up to specify.]

o Yes --> o No o Don't know o Decline to answer	**If yes:** o First Nations (with or without status) o Inuit o Métis o Have indigenous ancestry

10. **Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?**
 [Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force. Mark yes if they list any military or para-military organizations, i.e. merchant marines]

o Yes, military	No		
o Yes, RCMP	o	o Don't know	o Decline to answer

11. What gender do you identify with? [Show list.]

o Male / man	o Trans female / trans woman	o Not listed:
o Female / woman	o Trans male / trans man	_____
o Two-spirit	o Genderqueer/gender non-conforming	o Don't know
		o Decline to answer

12. **How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian?** [Show list.]

- Straight/heterosexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Two-spirit
- Questioning
- Queer
- Not listed: _____
- Don'tknow Decline
- to answer

13. **What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?** [Do not read the options. Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

- ☐ Illness or medical condition
- ☐ Addiction or substance use
- ☐ Job loss
- ☐ Unable to pay rent or mortgage Unsafe housing conditions
- ☐ Experienced abuse by: parent / guardian
- ☐ Experienced abuse by: spouse / partner
- ☐
- ☐ Conflict with: parent / guardian
- ☐ Conflict with: spouse / partner
- ☐ Incarcerated (jail or prison)
- ☐ Hospitalization or treatment program
- ☐ Other reason: _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐

14. **What are your sources of income?** [Read list and check all that apply]

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Informal/self-employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling) Employment insurance
- ☐ Welfare/social assistance
- ☐
- ☐ Disability benefit
- ☐ Seniors benefits (e.g., cpp/oas/gis)
- ☐ Gst refund
- ☐ Child and family tax benefits
- ☐ Money from family/friends
- ☐
- ☐ Other source: _____ ____
- ☐ No income
- ☐ Decline to answer

PART TWO : ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

15. **What is the highest level of education you completed?**

- ☐ Primary/Elementary School
- ☐ Some High School
- ☐ High School Graduate/GED
- ☐ Some Post-Secondary
- ☐
- ☐ Post - Secondary Graduated
- ☐ Graduate Degree (e.g: Masters, PhD)
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ Decline to answer
- ☐

16. **Have you ever been in foster care and/or group home?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know
- ○ Decline to answer

16b. *If Yes,* did you live there until you turned 18?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know   ○ Decline to answer

16c. Approximately how long after leaving foster care/group home did you become homeless?

- ○ Length ……. Days/weeks/months/ years
- ○ Don't know
- ○ Decline to answer

17. **Have you been a victim of violence while experiencing homelessness?** (This can include any encounter that they consider to be violent)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○
- ○ Don't know   Decline to answer

18. What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing? [Do not read the options].

☐ Low income/affordability
☐ No income assistance
☐ Rents too high
☐ Poor housing conditions
☐ Domestic violence
☐ Health issues
☐ Disability issues
☐ Mental health issues
☐ Addiction
☐ Family breakdown/Conflict
☐ Overwhelming stress
☐ Lack of information about services to support housing search

☐ Not trusting of services and supports
☐ Criminal history
☐ Pets
☐ Family situation (i.e. children, relatives, dependents, etc.)
☐ Discrimination
☐ Don't want housing
☐ No barriers to housing
☐ Other reason: _____
☐ Don't know
☐ Decline to answer

19. What would help you find permanent, stable housing?

○ _____	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

19b. Which of the following would help you find housing? *(Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each)*

More money	Y_____ N_____
Help getting ID (e.g., health card)	Y_____ N_____
Help finding an affordable place	Y_____ N_____
Help with housing applications	Y_____ N_____
Help with immigration issues	Y_____ N_____
Harm reduction supports (e.g., methadone, needle exchange, alcohol or drug treatment)	Y_____ N_____
Transportation to see housing	Y_____ N_____
Help with legal issues	Y_____ N_____
Help addressing your health needs	Y_____ N_____
Help with disability accessibility	Y_____ N_____
Manage alcohol issues	Y_____ N_____
Mental health supports	Y_____ N_____
Cultural supports	Y_____ N_____
Services in a language other than English	Y_____ N_____

Other (specify): _____

20. In the past year (12 months) have you used these services: [ASK RESPONDENTS TO GIVE THEIR ESTIMATE OF HOW MANY TIMES]

Emergency room	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Hospital	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
→Days you have spent hospitalized	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Police (*Tickets, arrests, searches*)	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Prison/ jail	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
→Days you have spent in prison/jail	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Probation/ Parole	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Community Support Officers	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Ambulance	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times
Library	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times

Health clinics	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Job training/Job supports	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Detox	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Mental health (counselling, treatment)	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Shelters	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Children and family supports	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Elder services	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Disability services	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Newcomer services	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Drop-ins	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Food bank	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Services that help you get ID	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Social Housing/ Housing placement	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Churches	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	
Charities	Y_____ N_____ #_____Times	

Other (specify): _____
None of the above
Decline to answer

21. Of the services you have used, are any helping you find housing?

○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

21 b. If yes, please list: _____

22. Do you require specialized housing because of a disabling condition?

			○ Decline to answer
○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	

23. Are you currently on a waiting list for housing?

			○ Decline to answer
○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	

23b. If yes, where? _____

23c. If yes, how long have you been on the waiting list(s)?

○ Length _____days/weeks/months/years	○ No	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

24. Is there anything else you would like to add that we did not talk about that is important and would make your own or other people's housing situation better?

Volunteer Closing Script (Please read):

That concludes our survey. Thank you for participating. Your answers will help service providers in the city of Saskatoon better plan its services for people experiencing homelessness. (*Leave card with information about housing services).*

I am leaving you with brochures with information about agencies that may help you to get housing if you're interested in contacting them.

Thank you again for your assistance. Here is the gift card to thank you for completing the survey and sharing your knowledge and experience.

APPENDIX B: Indoor Survey

2018 State of Homelessness Survey Indoor Shelter Survey

Hi, my name is _____ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research at the University of Saskatchewan. We are conducting a survey on housing and homelessness in Saskatoon. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

- **Participation is voluntary** and **your name will not be recorded**.

- You can choose to **skip any question** or to **stop the interview at any time**.

- Results will contribute to the understanding of homelessness across Canada, and will help with research to improve programs and services.

Screening Questions

Screening Question A: **Have you answered this survey with a person wearing a name tag like this** *(point to volunteer name tag)***?**

○ Yes (If YES, "Thank you for your time." Tally)   ○ No (If NO, go to screening question B)

Screening Question B: **Are you willing to participate in the survey?** *(If YES, complete parts one and two of questionnaire with respondent. If NO, thank them)*

○ Yes (If YES, go to screening question C)   ○ (If NO, "Thank you for your time." Tally)

C. Are you staying here tonight?

○ YES	○ NO
[BEGIN SURVEY & NOTE *f.* OR *g.* ON SURVEY, AS APPROPRIATE]	**[ASK RESPONDENT TO SPECIFY LOCATION]**

[Surveyor, specify overnight location]

a. DECLINE TO ANSWER	f. **EMERGENCY SHELTER, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER**
b. OWN APARTMENT/ HOUSE	g. **TRANSITIONAL SHELTER**
c. SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE	h. PUBLIC SPACE (E.G., SIDEWALK, PARK, FOREST, BUS SHELTER)
d. MOTEL/HOTEL	i. VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, RV, TRUCK)
e. HOSPITAL, JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE	j. MAKESHIFT SHELTER, TENT OR SHACK
	k. ABANDONED/VACANT BUILDING
	l. OTHER UNSHELTERED LOCATION
	m. RESPONDENT DOESN'T KNOW [LIKELY HOMELESS]
[THANK & END SURVEY]	**[BEGIN SURVEY & NOTE LOCATION ON SURVEY FORM]**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the survey. Please note that you will receive a gift card as a thank you for your participation.

SHELTERED SURVEY	
Facility/Program Name: _ . _ _ . . .	**Time:**
_____AM/PM	**82**
Interviewer: _____	**Contact #:**
_____	

C. [Surveyor: Indicate overnight location]

PART ONE: COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

1. **Do you know of any organizations that help those who are experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon?** (Do not read the options; may prompt if necessary.)

o The Lighthouse	o Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre
o AIDS Saskatoon – 601 Street Outreach	o Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre
o Saskatoon Interval House	o Saskatoon Friendship Inn
o Salvation Army	o White Buffalo Youth Lodge
o YWCA	o Other: _____
o YMCA	o Don't know
o Saskatoon Crisis Nursery	o Decline to answer
o CUMFI – McLeod House	
o CUMFI – Infinity House	

f. EMERGENCY SHELTER, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER **g.** TRANSITIONAL SHELTER	**Other location:**

2. **Do you think homelessness is an issue in Saskatoon** (on a scale of very serious to not at all serious**)?**

o Very serious	o Not at all serious Not sure
o Quite serious	o
o As expected	

3. **What do you think are the main reasons that people experience homelessness?** (Do not read the options; may prompt.)

o Lack of affordable housing	o Lack of references
o Lack of employment	o Discrimination
o Physical or mental health	o Damage deposit
o Addictions	o Unsafe housing
o Criminal record	o Other (Specify): _____
	o Decline to answer

4. **Who do you think are most impacted by homelessness?** *(prompts: single parents, people with disabilities, youth, unemployed, etc.)*

5. **What are important things Saskatoon can do to help reduce homelessness?**

PART TWO: CORE QUESTIONS

1.   What family members are staying with you tonight? [Check all that apply]

☐ None ☐ Partner			☐ Other adult ☐ D ecline to answe r						
☐ Child(ren)/dependent(s) [Indicate Gender gender and Age age for each]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

2.   How old are you? [OR] What year were you born? [If unsure, ask for best estimate]

○ Age_____or year born_____	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

→ For the next questions, "homelessness" means any time when you have been without a secure place to live, including sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or living temporarily with others.

3.   How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

○ Age_____	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

4.   In total, *how much time* have you been homeless over the past year? [Best estimate.]

○ Length _____ days	weeks	months	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

5.   In total, *how many different times* have you experienced homelessness over the past year? [best estimate.]

○ Number of times _____ [includes this time] ○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

6.   Have you stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year? [give local examples of homeless shelters]

○ Yes ○ No	○ Don't know ○ Decline to answer

6b. If not, what are the main reasons? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY].

○ Turned away (Shelters are Full)	○ Prefers to stay with friends/family
○ Turned away (Banned)	○ Treatment by shelter staff Pet(s) Other:
○ Lack of transportation	○ Don't know
○ Lack of funding	○ Decline to answer
○ Fear for safety	○
○ Bed bugs and other pests	○

7. How long have you been in Saskatoon?

o Length _____ days / weeks / months / years --------->	**Where did you live before you came here?**
o Always been here	o Community _____ prov- ince_____
o Don't know	Or country_____ o De- cline to answer
o Decline to answer	

7b. What is the main reason you came to Saskatoon? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES; SELECT ALL THAT APPLY].

o To access emergency shelter(s)	
o To access services and supports	o To attend school
o Family moved here	o Fear for safety Recreation/Shopping Other:
o To visit friends/family	o Don't know
o To find housing	o Decline to answer
o Employment (Seeking)	o
o Employment (Secured)	o

8. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or refugee claimant?

o Yes, immigrant ------------------->	**If yes: How long have you been in Canada?**
o Yes, refugee----------------------->	o Length: _____ days | weeks | months | years
o Yes, refugee claimant-------->	Or date: _____/_____/_____ day / month / year
o No	o Don't know
o Don't know	o Decline to answer
o Decline to answer	
o	

9. Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry? This includes First Nations with or without status, Métis, and Inuit. [If yes, please follow-up to specify.]

o Yes -->	**If yes:** o First Nations (with or without status)
o No	o Inuit
o Don't know	o Métis
o Decline to answer	o Have indigenous ancestry
o	o

10. Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP? [Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force. Mark yes if they list any military or para-military organizations, i.e. merchant marines]

o Yes, military	No		
o	o	o Don't know	o Decline to answer
Yes, RCMP			

11. What gender do you identify with? [Show list.]
o **Male / man**   o **Trans female / trans woman** o **Not listed:**
Female / woman o **Trans male / trans man** _____ **Two-spirit** o **Genderqueer/gender non-conforming** o **Don't know**
o **Decline to answer**

12. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian? [Show list.]
Straight/heterosexual   o **Bisexual**   o **Queer**   o **Don't know**
Gay   o **Two-spirit**   o **Not listed:**   o **Decline to**
Lesbian   o **Questioning**   _____ **answer**

13. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? [Do not read the options. Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

☐ Illness or medical condition	☐ Conflict with: parent / guardian
☐ Addiction or substance use	☐ Conflict with: spouse / partner
☐ Job loss	☐ Incarcerated (jail or prison)
☐ Unable to pay rent or mortgage Unsafe housing conditions	☐ Hospitalization or treatment program
☐ Experienced abuse by: parent / guardian	☐ Other reason: _____
☐ Experienced abuse by: spouse / partner	☐ Don't know
☐	☐ Decline to answer
	☐

14. What are your sources of income? [Read list and check all that apply]

☐ Employment	☐ Disability benefit	☐ Other source:
☐ Informal/self-employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling) Employment insurance	☐ Seniors benefits (e.g., cpp/oas/gis)	_____
	☐ Gst refund	____
☐ Welfare/social assistance	☐ Child and family tax benefits	☐ No income
☐	☐ Money from family/friends	☐ Decline to answer
	☐	

PART TWO : ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

15. What is the highest level of education you completed?

☐ Primary/Elementary School	☐ Post - Secondary Graduated
☐ Some High School	☐ Graduate Degree (e.g: Masters, PhD)
☐ High School Graduate/GED	☐ Don't Know
☐ Some Post-Secondary	☐ Decline to answer
☐	☐

16. Did you live with foster families at any point during your childhood?

○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

16b. *If Yes,* did you live with them until you turned 18?

○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

16c. Approximately how long after leaving foster care/group home did you become homeless?

○ Length ……. Days/weeks/months/ years	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

17. Have you been a victim of violence while experiencing homelessness? (This can include any encounter that they consider to be violent)

○ Yes	○ No	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

18. What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing? (Do not read the options.)

☐ Low income/affordability
☐ No income assistance
☐ Rents too high
☐ Poor housing conditions
☐ Domestic violence
☐ Health issues
☐ Disability issues
☐ Mental health issues
☐ Physical health
☐ Disability
☐ Addiction
☐ Family breakdown/Conflict
☐ Overwhelming stress
☐

☐ Lack of information about services to support housing search
☐ Not trusting of services and supports
☐ Criminal history
☐ Pets
☐ Family situation (i.e. children, relatives, dependents, etc.)
☐ Discrimination
☐ Don't want housing
☐ No barriers to housing
☐ Other reason: _____
☐ Don't know
☐ Decline to answer
☐

19. What would help you find permanent, stable housing?

○ _____	○	○ Don't know Decline to answer

19b. Which of the following would help you find housing? *(Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each)*

More money	Y_____ N_____
Help getting ID (e.g., health card)	Y_____ N_____
Help finding an affordable place	Y_____ N_____
Help with housing applications	Y_____ N_____
Help with immigration issues	Y_____ N_____
Harm reduction supports (e.g., methadone, needle exchange, alcohol or drug treatment)	Y_____ N_____
Transportation to see housing	Y_____ N_____
Help with legal issues	Y_____ N_____
Help addressing your health needs	Y_____ N_____
Help with disability accessibility	Y_____ N_____
Manage alcohol issues	Y_____ N_____
Mental health supports	Y_____ N_____
Cultural supports	Y_____ N_____
Services in a language other than English	Y_____ N_____
Other (specify): _____	

20. In the past year (12 months) have you used these services: [ASK RESPONDENTS TO GIVE THEIR ESTIMATE OF HOW MANY TIMES.]

Emergency room	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Hospital	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
→Days you have spent hospitalized	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Police(*Tickets, arrests, searches*)	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Prison/ jail	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
→Days you have spent in prison/jail	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Probation/ Parole	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Community Support Officers	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Ambulance	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Library	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Health clinics	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Job training/Job supports	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Detox	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Mental health (counselling, treatment)	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Shelters	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Children and family supports	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Elder services	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Disability services	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Newcomer services	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Drop-ins	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Food bank	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Services that help you get ID	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Social Housing/ Housing placement	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Churches	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Charities	Y_____	N_____	#_____	Times
Other (specify): _____				
None of the above				
Decline to answer				

21. Of the services you have used, are any helping you find housing?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know   ○ Decline to answer

21 b. If yes, please list.

22. Do you require specialized housing because of a disabling condition?

			○ Decline to answer
○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	

23. Are you currently on a waiting list for housing?

			○ Decline to answer
○ Yes	○ No	○ Don't know	

23b. If yes, where? _____

23c. If yes, how long have you been on the waiting list(s)?

○ Length _____days/weeks/months/years	○ No	○ Don't know	○ Decline to answer

24. Is there anything else you would like to add that we did not talk about that is important and would make your own or other people's housing situation better?

Volunteer Closing Script (Please read):

That concludes our survey. Thank you for participating. Your answers will help service providers in the city of Saskatoon better plan its services for people experiencing homelessness. (*Leave brochures with information about housing services).*

I am leaving you with brochures with information about agencies that may help you to get housing if you're interested in contacting them. Thank you again for your assistance. Here is the gift card to thank you for completing the survey and sharing your knowledge and experience.

APPENDIX C: Tally Sheet.

UNSHELTERED TALLY SHEET

Area: _____   Time: _____to_____

Interviewer: _____   Contact phone #: _____

Instructions: For those who are ***not* surveyed**, please fill in the sheet below indicating the reason. For those who DECLINE or are OBSERVED only, but who are clearly homeless, please also indicate the reason you believe they are homeless (e.g., asleep outside with belongings).

#	Location (e.g., building, park, nearest intersection)	Reason not Surveyed				Observed Homelessness	
		Declined*	Already Responded	Screened Out (Response	Observed*	Observed Homeless	**Indicators of Homelessness**
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							

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