

EVERYONE COUNTS:

ST. JOHN'S HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2016

END
#HOMELESSNESS
ST. JOHN'S



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

THE 'EVERYONE COUNTS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The committee met 4 times prior to the count and 2 times after the count. It provided guidance for the implementation of the project and for the final version of the report. The committee consisted of representatives from the following organizations (in alphabetical order):

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
Choices for Youth
City of St. John's
End Homelessness St. John's
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency
Stella's Circle
United Way Newfoundland and Labrador

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United Way Newfoundland and Labrador
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City of St. John's
Correctional Services Canada
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Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice and Public Safety
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network
Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency
Panago Pizza
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Pleasant Manor Corporation
Rod Hand Art
Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
Salvation Army
Sound Salon Spa
St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program
St. John's Native Friendship Centre Association
Stella's Circle
The Gathering Place
The John Howard Society of Newfoundland and Labrador
The Pottle Centre
The Travelling Hygienist
Thrive

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

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ABOUT END HOMELESSNESS ST. JOHN'S

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



ST. JOHN'S

Canada 



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

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

LIST OF DEFINITIONS

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

Administrative data: information collected from residential facilities (e.g. emergency shelters, transitional houses, hospitals, jails, etc.) where people meeting the definition of homelessness stayed on November 30, 2016. Facilities reported the number of homeless people who stayed at their facility on the night of the Count and provided aggregate information for observed gender, age and ethnicity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supportive housing for youth: affordable, longer-term housing for youth. Participants receive individualized and regular supports.

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

Transitional housing: an intermediate step between emergency shelter and permanent housing. It can be differentiated from emergency shelters by the longer length of stay (between three months and three years) and greater intensity of support services offered to clients. Clients do not pay a fixed rent.

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

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

A MESSAGE FROM SHAWN SKINNER, CHAIR OF END HOMELESSNESS ST. JOHN'S



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

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

The PiT Count supports our 2014-2019 St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness by enabling those experiencing homelessness to share their stories and provide us with a deeper understanding of their characteristics and service needs, and underscores the urgent need for all of us to work together to end homelessness.

Our plan is rooted in community engagement and coordination, the development of a range of housing and supports with our partners to meet diverse needs, and driven by evidence-based decision making. PiT Counts provide us with valuable information about the causes of homelessness in our community and the barriers people face in accessing safe, stable, permanent housing. In combination with annual shelter data and other research, successive PiT Counts allow us to monitor trends, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and measure our progress toward ending homelessness in St. John's.

Using the knowledge obtained from this Count (and our next Count in Spring 2018), we will continue to work with people with lived experience of homelessness, our community partners, and government (federal, provincial and municipal) to set priorities for action for long-term solutions to homelessness in St. John's. While we still have a long way to go, I am confident that together we can achieve our goal.

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

OUR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS IN ST. JOHN'S

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

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

PRIORITY AREAS: 2014-2019 ST. JOHN'S PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUTCOMES

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

1. End chronic and episodic homelessness.
2. Re-house and support 523² homeless persons: of these, a minimum of 160 will be chronically and/or episodically homeless.
3. Reduce average length of stay in emergency shelters to seven days.
4. Develop a coordinated homeless-serving system.
5. Enhance the integration of public systems to reduce discharging into homelessness
6. Align resources and funding across diverse sectors to support the St. John's Plan to End Homelessness.

St. John's first homeless population count reveals the urgent need for housing and support services:

Snapshot represents the tip of the iceberg:

An estimated **800 persons** experience homelessness in St. John's annually



² Although EHSJ estimates that 800 people experience homelessness annually in St. John's, not all 800 would require direct housing and/or supports intervention through the Plan's programs to resolve their homelessness. Therefore, the Plan's directly-developed and delivered housing and supports initiatives are designed to serve those most in need of a response, including those who face persistent and recurring barriers to housing stability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On a cold, snowy November 30, 2016 End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ), its partners and over 100 volunteers, conducted St. John's first biennial homeless point-in-time (PiT) count, titled 'Everyone Counts.' This initiative included a count of the number of people experiencing homelessness³ in St. John's on a single day as well as a focused youth outreach approach during the count week to enhance our knowledge of homelessness among this population. On November 30, 2016 there were at least 166 people experiencing homelessness in St. John's, including 38 youth aged 16 to 24 years. This number represents the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in St. John's on one day. This is just the tip of the iceberg, however: during the course of a year, EHSJ estimates that approximately 800 people experience homelessness in St. John's.⁴

The city's emergency shelter data reveals the persistence of homelessness at these levels between 2010-2015, the years prior to EHSJ introducing its *2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness*, which is focused on providing the housing, support services and system coordination needed to prevent and end homelessness in St. John's. The Count also affirms that homelessness is not a choice, with 95.2% of respondents stating they want permanent housing, but face barriers obtaining it.

While the primary purpose of the count was to enumerate the number of people experiencing homelessness in St. John's on a single day, it also provided an opportunity for those experiencing homelessness to share their stories. One hundred and one trained volunteers and front-line staff conducted surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness on the day and night of the St. John's count. Participating youth-serving shelters and service providers conducted surveys over the following five days with youth who were homeless on November 30. In addition, 21 facilities and programs provided administrative data (e.g. observed age, gender and ethnicity) for clients affected by homelessness who used their services on the night of the count. The data presented in this report represents information collected from:⁵

- ▶ 14 street count zones;
- ▶ 10 shelters (including non-profit community-based shelters, privately operated shelters and provisional accommodation for immigrants and refugees);
- ▶ 8 institutional settings (treatment centres, correctional facilities, community-based residential programs, and mental health and addictions programs);
- ▶ 6 community sites (food banks, outreach centres, meal programs and community centres)
- ▶ 1 transitional housing program
- ▶ 2 supportive housing programs for youth⁶

³ The Canadian Definition of Homelessness is available in Appendix 1.

⁴ EHSJ (2014). St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhcn.org/PDF/YJT-Community-Plan-2014-2019.pdf>

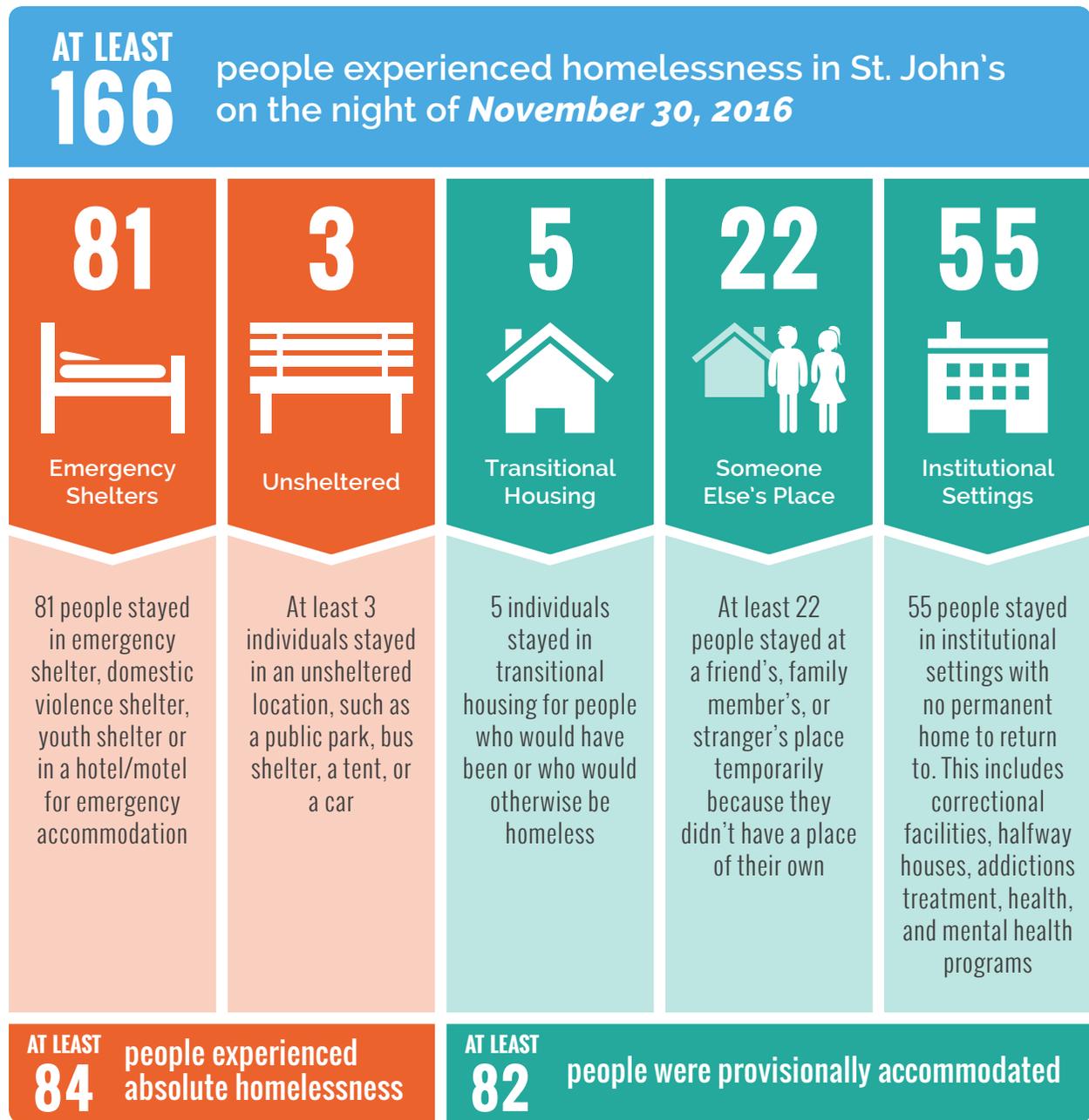
⁵ A full list of participating agencies where data was collected from is available in Appendix 2.

⁶ Youth who resided in supportive housing were not included in the main PiT count number and analysis as these housing arrangements do not fit within the definition of homelessness. Tenure of these accommodations is based on age and need of support. As this programming is age-based, youth residing in supportive housing will require permanent and affordable housing when they exit the program. Given that youth in supportive housing had experience with homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness in the past, those who wished to participate were surveyed and their responses were included in the youth analysis. In most cases, including or excluding this population did not impact the results.

Through the administration of surveys, PiT counts provide useful information about the demographics and service needs of those experiencing homelessness. Importantly, counts provide information about rough sleepers (e.g. people staying in unsheltered locations such as parks, abandoned buildings, etc.), the hidden homeless (e.g. people staying at someone else's place temporarily because they don't have a place of their own), and people who are homeless but are provisionally accommodated in institutional settings, as data about these groups is limited and difficult to obtain. An understanding of the demographics and service needs of those experiencing varying levels of homelessness in a community allows service providers and government agencies to make evidence-based decisions and target resources where they are needed most. Importantly, successive counts will allow EHSJ to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and measure our community's progress toward ending homelessness.

While there are many benefits to conducting a count, there are limitations to this approach. The most important limitation to keep in mind is that a PiT count inherently undercounts the homeless population in a community. Secondly, a PiT count is only a snapshot of homelessness in a community on a single day. It does not provide information about the number of people who experience homelessness over the course of a week, month, or year. Therefore, the number presented in this report likely just scratches the surface of the true extent of homelessness in St. John's - hence, it is just a snapshot revealing the tip of a much larger iceberg.

1.1 KEY FINDINGS



The numbers reported for emergency shelters and transitional housing are reflective of the true number of people who stayed in these settings on November 30. The true number of homeless individuals who stayed in unsheltered locations, at someone else's place, and in institutional settings are likely higher than the numbers reported here.

Of the 166 people enumerated for the November 30, 2016 count, 84 (50.6%) participated in the survey. The following points emerged from the survey data collected.⁷

HOMELESSNESS CAN AFFECT ANYONE AT ANY TIME.

The survey sample was inclusive of males, females, and other gender identities; Indigenous and Non-Indigenous individuals; and a mix of ages, ranging from 16 to 76 years (those under 16 were not eligible to participate). Respondents came from all walks of life – their household income during childhood ranged from low income to above average income; the highest level of education they completed varied from elementary to graduate school; some were employed while others had no income at all. The age at which respondents first became homeless ranged from 3 to 63 years and the factors that led to their homelessness were diverse. Each respondent had a unique story to share through the survey questions and their diversity shows that homelessness can affect anyone at any time.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS WANT HOUSING BUT ENCOUNTER BARRIERS OBTAINING IT.

In most cases, homelessness is not a matter of choice. 95.2% of respondents indicated a desire to get into permanent housing, however, the majority (92.5%) indicated that they had barriers to obtaining it. The most commonly cited barriers were low or no income (47.5%), rent is too high (28.8%), mental health issues (22.5%) and addiction (21.3%). When asked "What would help you find permanent, stable housing?" the most common answers given were support (40.0%), employment (18.5%), more money (16.9%) and more affordable housing options (7.7%).

MOST HOMELESS PEOPLE IN ST. JOHN'S CITE THE NEED FOR SUPPORT SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE.

More than half of the respondents (54.9%) indicated that they needed services relating to four or more services. The most common service need reported was supportive services (71.4%). Based on details added to some surveys, this included supports such as social workers, housing officers, lawyers and trauma specialists. Services relating to mental health (59.5%), employment (58.3%), education (46.4%) and addiction or substance use (44.0%) were also frequently selected.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN THE HOMELESS POPULATION.

19.2% of respondents identified as Indigenous. In comparison to their percentage in the general population (2.5%)⁸, individuals who identify as Indigenous are overrepresented among the homeless population in St. John's. This means that those who identify as Indigenous are 7.7 times more likely to experience homelessness than those who do not.

⁷The maximum sample size for each analysis was n=84. The maximum sample size for the youth analysis was n=34. Those who declined to answer or selected "Don't Know" as a response for a question were excluded from the analysis for the corresponding question. Therefore the sample size for each result shown may vary. The sample sizes are shown within the main body of the report.

⁸See Appendix 3 for data sources for comparisons to the general population

INDIVIDUALS WHO IDENTIFY AS PART OF THE LGBTQ2S COMMUNITY ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN THE HOMELESS POPULATION.

21.7% of respondents identified as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S) community. When the data is broken down by age, it shows that 32.4% of youth respondents (those aged 16 to 24 years) identified as part of the LGBTQ2S community. In comparison to their percentage in the general population (4.7% for the Atlantic Provinces)⁹, those who identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community are overrepresented among the homeless population in St. John's.

NEARLY HALF OF RESPONDENTS HAD INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES DURING THEIR LIFETIME.

47.0% of respondents indicated they received services from Child Protection Services while they remained in their family home or resided with another family member and/or lived in foster care and/or group home.¹⁰ This increases to 70.6% when only youth respondents are considered.

A little over one third of respondents (35.8%) lived in foster care and/or in group homes. When asked if they felt Child Protection Services was helpful in their transition to independence, 62.1% felt that they were not.¹¹ Furthermore, 50.0% of respondents who lived in foster care and/or in group homes became homeless less than a year after leaving.

FOR MANY, THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS BEGAN AT A YOUNG AGE.

The median age at which respondents first became homeless was 19 years and the most common age was 18 years. Nearly three out of five (57.6%) respondents first became homeless by age 24. Approximately one quarter (23.8%) of respondents first became homeless between the ages of 16 to 18 years. Conflict with a parent or guardian was cited as the most common reason people first became homeless (33.7%), followed by addiction or substance use (24.1%).

THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS CAN BE LONG AND RECURRING.

38.3% of respondents experienced chronic homelessness – that is, six or more months of homelessness in the past year. An additional 7.4% experienced episodic homelessness – three or more distinct episodes of homelessness in the past year, adding up to less than six months.

⁹ See Appendix 3 for data source. Local LGBTQ2S activists estimate that the percentage of individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S in the general population in St. John's ranges from 5% to 10% and that this likely increases in the youth population. However, no data is available to confirm these estimates.

¹⁰ In Newfoundland and Labrador, youth can reside in open-custody group homes under the supervision of the corrections system without ever coming into contact with Child Protection Services. However, the number of youth who reside in group homes through Child Protection Services is significantly higher than the number of youth who reside in open-custody group homes. Therefore, we do not expect that this would impact the results shown.

¹¹ Three respondents moved to St. John's from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador so their experience may be related to Child Protection Services in another province.

INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN ST. JOHN'S REPORTED A NOTABLE USE OF PUBLIC SYSTEMS IN THE PAST YEAR

- ▶ 59.5% visited an emergency room for a combined total of 176 visits.
- ▶ 31.3% were hospitalized. Respondents reported a combined total of 46 hospitalizations for a combined total of at least 418 days spent in hospital in the past year.
- ▶ 62.7% interacted with the police at least once including for tickets, searches or arrests for a combined total of 180 interactions.
- ▶ 42.9% were incarcerated at least once. In total, respondents reported 74 periods of incarceration for a combined total of 4126 days spent in jail.

Institutional responses to homelessness including prison and psychiatric hospitals can cost as much as \$66,000 - \$120,000 per year.¹² This is significantly higher than the cost of providing housing with supports, which End Homelessness St. John's is offering homeless persons (between \$13,000 and \$18,000 annually). In addition to the significant benefits people receive through housing, such as improved health and well-being, significant cost savings can be achieved when people have housing. The Mental Health Commission's national study of *Housing First, At Home/Chez Soi*,¹³ estimates that about \$9,250 per person per year is saved when clients received housing and supports compared to those who did not.

LONG-TERM RESIDENTS AND THOSE WHO CAME TO ST. JOHN'S FROM ANOTHER PART OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR OR CANADA ARE AFFECTED BY HOMELESSNESS

38.1% of respondents moved to St. John's within the past five years. Of those who moved to St. John's within the past five years, 50.0% came to St. John's from another part of Newfoundland and Labrador and 50.0% came to St. John's from another province or territory in Canada. Respondents were not asked where they were born, therefore it is unclear whether some respondents were originally from St. John's and had returned to their home province. Two respondents did indicate that the reason they came to St. John's was because they were originally from here.

The 2016 Demographic and Opinion Survey conducted by the City of St. John's¹⁴ found that 13.9% of the general population have been in St. John's for five years or less. Given this, individuals who have moved to St. John's in the last five years are overrepresented among the homeless population in comparison to their rate in the general population. Of those who moved to St. John's within the last five years, one in five came to access services and supports (21.9%), including mental health services, methadone programming, medical treatment, and specific agencies.

¹² Pomeroy, S. (2005). *The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities*. Ottawa, ON: National Secretariat on Homelessness.

¹³ Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) *At Home/Chez Soi Interim Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/document/5032/home-interim-report>

¹⁴ See appendix 3 for data source.

1.2 DISCUSSION & NEXT STEPS

The findings in this report are sobering. The high representation of Indigenous people, of those who identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community, and of those who had involvement with Child Protection Services are of great concern. It is alarming that nearly three out of five respondents first became homeless before age 24 years and two out of five respondents experienced six or more months of homelessness over the past year. These results are not unique to St. John's – the 2016 Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count,¹⁵ in which 32 communities across Canada participated, found that those who identify as Indigenous are nine times more likely to experience homelessness than those who do not. In addition, *Without A Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey*¹⁶ found that 29.5% of youth experiencing homelessness identified as part of the LGBTQ2S community and 57.8% had some involvement with Child Protection. However, there is no comfort in knowing St. John's fits within these national trends. It indicates that we, as a society, have failed somewhere along the way to address the issues that lead to homelessness and perpetuate its recurrence.

End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ) believes the value in conducting a PiT Count is that it catalyzes the work we do to implement our *2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness in St. John's*¹⁷ based on Housing First principles. Housing First recognizes that housing is a basic human right. As a recovery-oriented approach, Housing First is focused on quickly moving people from homelessness into housing and then providing supports necessary to maintain it. Rather than requiring those experiencing homelessness to first resolve the challenges that contributed to their housing instability, including mental health or addictions issues, Housing First is based on the belief that recovery should begin with stable housing.

Ending homelessness using a Housing First approach does not mean that we will never have someone who needs emergency shelter or loses housing; that would not be realistic. But we can have a community with the coordination and supports in place to reduce average shelter stays to seven days or less by 2019, with the ultimate goal of ensuring no one in our city will live on the streets or in emergency shelter for longer than seven days before having access to the supports they need. The Count contributes to the plan by setting a baseline of data and improving our understanding of the characteristics and service needs of our local homeless population. We see progress in other communities that have tied their PiT counts to plans to end homelessness. Communities like Medicine Hat, Alberta, have already achieved their goal of ending homelessness.¹⁸ EHSJ aims to end chronic and episodic homelessness in St. John's by 2019. Through system coordination and the provision of housing and supports based on a Housing First approach, and through a commitment to conduct PiT counts and other research regularly, communities like St. John's, Medicine Hat and many others have made evidence-based decisions that are resulting in real change – for individuals and for the community as a whole.

¹⁵ Hunter, P. (2017). Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Canadian Point-in-Time Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development.html>

¹⁶ Gaetz S., O'Grady B., Kidd S., & Schwan K. (2016). Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey. Retrieved from: <http://homelesshub.ca/YouthWithoutHome>

¹⁷ EHSJ (2014). St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness. <http://www.nlhcn.org/PDF/YYT-Community-Plan-2014-2019.pdf>

¹⁸ Smith, C. (2017). Homeless Find a Champion in Canada's Medicine Hat. Retrieved from https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/02/26/world/canada/homeless-canada-medicine-hat-housing-first.html?emc=edit_th_20170301&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=10750031&referer=

The success of this approach underscores the fact that homeless persons want housing with real choice and appropriate supports, and that individuals who once experienced homelessness can thrive once these critical needs are met. However, no single group can end homelessness on their own. It will take all of us – government, the private and community-based sectors, labour, faith communities and researchers – working in a coordinated manner and building upon the strong foundation of cooperation we already have in place here in St. John's. Together we can address the convergence of vulnerabilities that lead to homelessness, and we can find real solutions to improve outcomes for individuals, families and our community.

NEXT STEPS:

- ▶ The results of this Count will be used to inform EHSJ's 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness in St. John's, and the development of future plans.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to work with people with lived experience of homelessness, community partners and government (federal, provincial and municipal) to set priorities for action as we work toward long-term solutions to homelessness.
- ▶ This report will be made available to other organizations, government and the public.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to conduct counts on a biennial basis and will use the lessons learned from the 2016 Count to improve the methodology for the spring 2018 Count. Through successive counts, EHSJ will be able to monitor trends and measure the effectiveness of interventions and community progress in ending homelessness.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE COUNT DATA

Of note, some groups are admittedly not well-represented in this report for the following reason: A homeless population count is not like conducting a census of households or businesses, in which there are known fixed addresses for the vast majority of participants. Homelessness, by definition, involves housing instability, housing loss, and transience and, therefore, persons who are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, or couch-surfing at someone else's place are not easy to locate during a PiT Count (or in a national Census, for that matter). As a result, the following groups are under-represented in this report.

Unsheltered homeless: Persons who experience unsheltered homelessness stay outside, in a place not intended for human habitation and/or in a public or private space without consent or contract. This includes in a vehicle, tent, makeshift shelter, bus shelter or abandoned building. As is common for research with marginalized populations, it is difficult to engage the most vulnerable individuals.¹⁹ Only three individuals who were surveyed stayed in unsheltered locations therefore the population represented in this report is mostly connected with support services. This is likely due to limitations with the street count – it is impossible to cover every inch of the city and volunteers were instructed not to enter abandoned buildings, which were identified as known areas where those experiencing homelessness stay or frequent.

¹⁹ Flanagan, S.M. and Hancock, B. (2008). Reaching the 'hard to reach'. Retrieved from <http://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-10-92>

Hidden homeless: The hidden homeless are individuals who stay with family, friends, or others because they have nowhere else to go. The PiT Count is not designed to measure the extent of hidden homelessness in a community but those surveyed provide useful information about the experience of hidden homelessness in our community. The State of Homelessness in Canada report (2014) estimates 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night but approximately 42% more - as many as 50,000 - make up the hidden homeless.²⁰ The hidden homeless represent 13.3% of the number of homeless persons counted in St. John's on November 30, 2016 but the true number of those experiencing hidden homelessness in St. John's is likely higher.

Families: Very few respondents (3.6%) reported staying with a family member (dependent, partner, or other relative) on the night of the Count. However, in 2015, 16.1% of shelter users in St. John's accessed shelters as part of a family²¹ therefore families are under-represented in the report.

Females: Females represented 38.9% of the counted population and 44.0% of the PiT Count Survey Sample. These findings are consistent with 2015 local shelter data, in which females accounted for 43.3% of shelter users in St. John's. However, in comparison to the general population in which females represent 52.4%, females are under-represented among the homeless population in St. John's. This does not mean that women are less likely to become homeless - instead it is the nature of their homelessness that differs from males, who are more likely to use shelter services. According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, when women become homeless, they are at increased risk of violence and assault, sexual exploitation and abuse.²² As a result, women are less likely to enter the shelter system and more likely to experience hidden homelessness, live in overcrowded conditions and/or stay in dangerous and unhealthy relationships to avoid living on the streets.

²⁰ Gaetz S., Donaldson J., Richter T., & Gulliver T. (2013). The State of homelessness in Canada 2013. Homeless Hub Paper #4. Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC2103.pdf>

²¹ Community Progress Indicators Report: St. John's. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.nlhcn.org/PDF/CPIR-SJS-2015.pdf>

²² Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2017). Who is homeless? Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/who-homeless>

INTRODUCTION

On a cold, snowy November 30, 2016 End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ), its partners and over 100 volunteers, conducted St. John's first biennial homeless Point-in-Time (PiT) Count, titled 'Everyone Counts.' The PiT Count is a national initiative under Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), which aims to count the number of people experiencing homelessness²³ in a community on a single day and collect information about the demographics and service needs of this population. Given that youth (age 16 to 24 years) represent 26% of St. John's emergency shelter users²³, which is above the national average of 18.7%²⁵, the St. John's Count also included a focused youth outreach approach during the count week to enhance knowledge of homelessness among this population. The results of the Count will be used by EHSJ to inform its 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness in St. John's.²⁶

2.1 NATIONAL PIT COUNT

Between January to April 2016, 32 HPS designated communities participated in Canada's first nationally coordinated PiT count. Prior to this national initiative, few of the 61 HPS designated communities had ever conducted a count before HPS mandated counts in 2015. Furthermore, those that had conducted counts used different definitions and methodologies, and conducted them in different years (and at different times of the year). This meant data was inconsistent, not comparable and difficult to aggregate.

In 2015, a national methodology for PiT Counts emerged from HPS and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) as result of:

- ▶ Examination of count reports and guides on undertaking counts from across Canada for common elements and promising approaches;
- ▶ Identification of promising practices and learnings from other countries, including Housing and Urban Development, the New York HOPE count, Australia, European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless; and
- ▶ Detailed analysis of methodology and data elements on ongoing counts in Canada.

EHSJ and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency participated on the HPS National PiT Count Working Group which developed the national methodology. The nationally coordinated count in Spring 2016 marked the first time this methodology was tested across Canada and the resulting analysis and learnings provided a rich resource for St. John's first biennial count in November 2016. In 2018, HPS intends to coordinate the first fully national count involving all 61 HPS communities (including St. John's). While the HPS methods include a minimum number of data elements that must be collected in the same manner across Canada, communities can collect additional data elements to meet local needs.

²³ See Appendix 1 for the Canadian Definition of Homelessness.

²⁴ Community Progress Indicators Report: St. John's. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/CPIR-SJS-2015.pdf>

²⁵ Highlights of the National Shelter Study 2005–2014. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports-shelter-2014.html>

²⁶ EHSJ (2014). 2014-2019 St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/YYT-Community-Plan-2014-2019.pdf>

2.2 ADAPTING NATIONAL METHODS LOCALLY

In preparing for the 2016 St. John's Count, EHSJ secured the technical assistance of Dr. Alina Turner (Turner Research & Strategy), Dr. Stephen Gaetz (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness) and Andrew Harvey (Local Coordinator) to work alongside an Advisory Committee to develop the PiT Model.²⁷

Dr. Turner, the Local Coordinator, and the COH supported the PiT Count Advisory Committee to develop a model that addressed the following:

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

St. John's approach aimed to be inclusive in the development of the Count process and its implementation with a range of stakeholders, including: those with lived experience, the homeless support community, government, and public systems (health, corrections, police, etc.). Given the considerable community engagement underway to develop the System Coordination Framework,²⁸ the preparatory work involved in conducting the Count was incorporated in the aforementioned process as much as possible. The PiT Count approach used the consultation findings to inform the proposed model and to develop an inventory of eligible facilities to participate in the Count. The Housing First Provincial Conference (March 3-5, 2016) and May 4, 2016 Review Sessions were also leveraged as key opportunities to shape the final PiT model. The proposed direction for the PiT Count was a key discussion item during the May 4, 2016 Review Session. Meetings with key stakeholders, including service providers and public system partners, were included to gauge interest in Count participation and to begin obtaining necessary approvals. Focus groups with those with lived experience also informed the proposed direction.

²⁷Turner, A., & Harvey, A. (2016). Everyone Counts: St. John's Homeless Point-in-Time Count Model. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/Everyone-Counts-SJS.pdf>

²⁸Turner, A., & Harvey, A. (2016). St. John's Homeless-Serving System Coordination Framework. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/SJS-Home-Serving-System.pdf>

2.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of 'Everyone Counts' was to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in St. John's on a single night and improve the understanding of the characteristics and service needs of this population in order to help inform EHSJ's plan to end homelessness. As St. John's first biennial count, the objectives of the count were to:

- 1) Develop a count methodology for use in the St. John's local context, including a focused youth approach
- 2) Implement and evaluate the methodology to make recommendations for future counts
- 3) Establish a baseline count to monitor trends and evaluate effectiveness of interventions and community progress in reducing homelessness
- 4) Improve understanding of the characteristics and service needs of the local homeless population
- 5) Increase knowledge of homelessness in St. John's, particularly as it pertains to sub-populations of people experiencing homelessness and root causes of homelessness, in order to set priorities for action
- 6) Identify priority areas for system planning and program development
- 7) Enhance partnerships in the housing and homeless-serving sector

2.4 OVERVIEW OF THE APPROACH

The focus of 'Everyone Counts' was on enumerating those in emergency shelters and transitional housing with targeted efforts for the hidden homeless (e.g. couch surfers), rough sleepers, and those residing in public systems (e.g. prisons, hospitals) who have no fixed address. Additional efforts were put in place to count the number of youth experiencing homelessness in St. John's. Overall, the Count used a combination of survey and observed administrative data. Administrative data was collected for emergency shelters, transitional houses, supportive housing and public systems using the Facility Form (Appendix 4). Administrators provided information about the number of individuals who stayed at their facility on the night of the count and aggregate information about the age, gender and ethnicity of their clients.

The methodology for 'Everyone Counts' was based on the Everyone Counts St. John's Homeless Point-in-Time Count Model,²⁹ The COH Point-in-Time Count Toolkit³⁰ and The Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada.³¹ The methodology used was similar to that used by cities who participated in the HPS Nationally Coordinated Count from January to April 2016. While this does allow some comparisons between St. John's data and other Canadian cities, it should be noted that the difference in the time of year can impact results.

²⁹Turner, A., & Harvey, A. (2016). Everyone Counts: St. John's Homeless Point-In-Time Count Model. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/Everyone-Counts-SJS.pdf>

³⁰ COH (2016). Point-in-time count toolkit. Retrieved from <http://homelesshub.ca/toolkit/chapter/methodology>

³¹ HPS (2016). Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/pit-countguide.html>

Overall, data was collected from:³²

- ▶ 14 street count zones;
- ▶ 10 shelters (including non-profit community-based shelters, privately operated shelters and provisional accommodation for immigrants and refugees);
- ▶ 8 institutional settings (treatment centres, correctional facilities, community-based residential programs, and mental health and addictions programs);
- ▶ 6 community sites (food banks, outreach centres, meal programs and community centres)
- ▶ 1 transitional housing program
- ▶ 2 supportive housing programs for youth³³

One hundred and one trained volunteers and front-line staff conducted surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness on the day and night of the count between the hours of 11:00 AM and 11:00 PM. Surveyors approached everyone they encountered and asked them to participate in a survey about housing needs in order to gauge the true scope of homelessness in St. John's. To determine if the person's circumstances met one of the definitions of homelessness, surveyors asked them a series of screening questions.³⁴ Those experiencing homelessness were asked 26 questions about their demographics, experience with homelessness, service needs and more. Youth shelter and service providers conducted surveys with youth (age 16 to 24 years) over an additional five days, from December 1 to 5, always asking where they slept on November 30, 2016. Any youth surveyed during these additional five days whose circumstances met the definition of homelessness on November 30 were included in the overall count. In addition to the surveys, 21 facilities and programs provided administrative data for the count. An overview of the methodology is available in Table 1 and a full description of the methodology is available in Appendix 5.

Table 1: Overview of methodology

TARGET POPULATION	COMPONENT 1: ROUGH SLEEPERS	COMPONENT 2: EMERGENCY SHELTER/ TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITIES	COMPONENT 3: HIDDEN HOMELESS	COMPONENT 4: PUBLIC SYSTEMS	COMPONENT 5: YOUTH
ENUMERATION APPROACH	Street Count (rough sleepers)	Facility Form	Homeless-serving drop-in/outreach centres	Facility Form	Youth-serving homeless shelters and service providers
SURVEY APPROACH	Combined survey and tally sheet of observed characteristics by trained volunteers.	Survey by trained staff/ volunteers.	Survey by trained volunteers.	Survey by system staff/designated volunteers, where possible.	Youth Magnet Event Survey by staff & volunteers Youth-serving shelters and service providers to conduct surveys
DATE/TIME	November 30, 2016 Night count (2 hours): 8:30 to 10:30 PM	November 30, 2016 Overnight count after 11:59 PM Surveys (2 hours): 4:30 to 10:30 PM (Time varied by location)	November 30, 2016 Surveys (2 to 4 hours): 11 AM to 7 PM (Time varied by location)	November 30, 2016 Overnight count after 11:59 PM	Magnet Event – November 30, 2016 from 3 to 7 PM Service provider count/surveys December 1 to 5, 2016

³² A full list of participating agencies is available in Appendix 2.

³³ As these housing arrangements do not fit within the Canadian Definition of Homelessness, surveys completed by individuals from these settings were not included in the broader PiT count analysis but were included in the analysis on Youth Homelessness. See section 5 for more details.

³⁴ See appendix 4 for links to 'Everyone Counts' resources.

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE APPROACH

PiT counts provide useful information about the demographics and service needs of those experiencing homelessness, which can be used to make evidence-based decisions and target resources where they are needed most. Importantly, successive counts allow communities to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and measure progress toward ending homelessness. While the benefits of a count far outweigh its limitations, it is important to acknowledge these limitations in the interpretation of the information presented in this report.

Notably, a count inherently undercounts the homeless population in a community. Therefore, the number of homeless individuals enumerated in this report represents the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in St. John's on one day. The count cannot adequately capture information about the extent of hidden homelessness or those at-risk of homelessness and does not provide information about the number of people living in precarious housing in a community. Despite best efforts to canvass known locations where homeless individuals may stay or frequent, it is impossible to cover every inch of the city. Additionally, as a snapshot of homelessness, the count does not provide information on system use throughout the year. Lastly, counts have seasonal variation. Transient populations move in and out of St. John's throughout the year and weather impacts where those experiencing homelessness may stay on any given day. In keeping these limitations in mind, we have provided relevant contextual information in the discussion of the results.

2.6 LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The date of November 30, 2016 was selected for the Count by the PiT Count Advisory Committee. This date was the day before disbursement of Income Support when individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to present at shelters and outreach services.

On the night of the count there was a St. John's Ice Caps hockey game downtown. Although the game did not interfere with surveyors' ability to canvass the downtown area, there is concern that it may have affected the Count. Some individuals experiencing homelessness may have avoided the downtown due to the increased traffic/crowd. Two parking garages, which were identified as locations where homeless individuals stay or frequent, were used for parking for the game, reducing the likelihood that volunteers would encounter homeless persons in those locations.

The weather on November 30 was favourable for a count during this time of year. There was a low of -6 degrees Celsius with the wind chill. There were light snow showers and 10-15 km/hr winds.³⁵

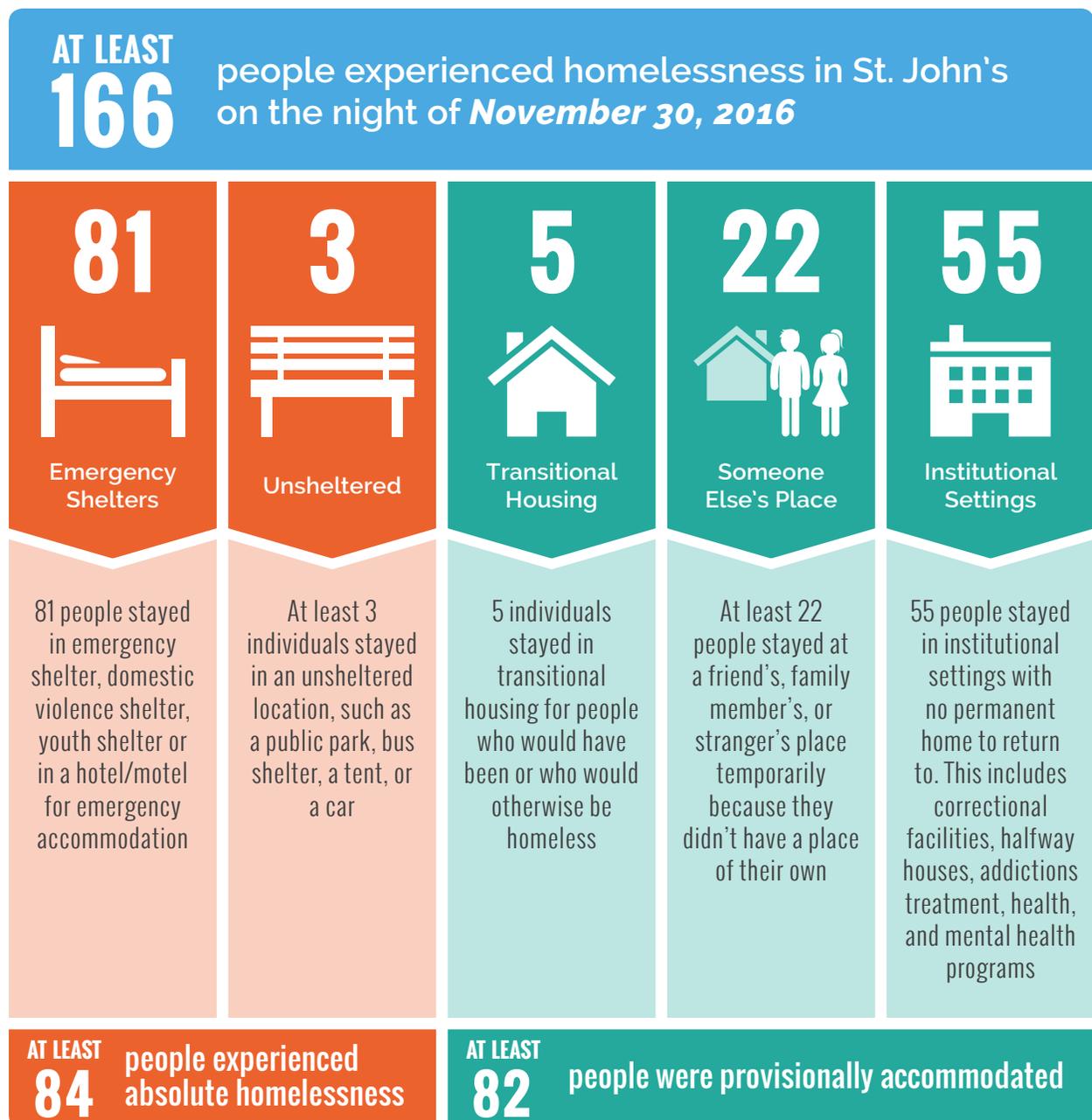
³⁵ Environment and Natural Resources. (2016). Hourly Data Report for November 30th, 2016. Retrieved from http://climate.weather.gc.ca/climate_data/hourly_data_e.html?StationID=50089&month=11&day=30&timeframe=1&Year=2016&Month=11&Day=30&StartYear=1840&EndYear=2016

RESULTS OF 'EVERYONE COUNTS'

3.1 ESTIMATE OF ST. JOHN'S HOMELESS POPULATION ON NOVEMBER 30, 2016

On the night of November 30, 2016 there were at least 166 people experiencing homelessness in St. John's, including 38 youth aged 16 to 24 years. An in-depth analysis of youth homelessness is covered in Section 4. Five individuals were turned away from shelters on the night of the count. These individuals were not included in the count number as we are unable to determine if they were counted at another site.

The HPS Guide to PiT Counts suggests calculating the 'Core Enumeration' by adding those counted in emergency shelters, transitional houses and unsheltered locations. According to this, the Core Enumeration for the Count is 89 people. Calculating the Core Enumeration allows for comparability to other communities, who only count the core populations and not those who are provisionally accommodated in institutions or at another's home.

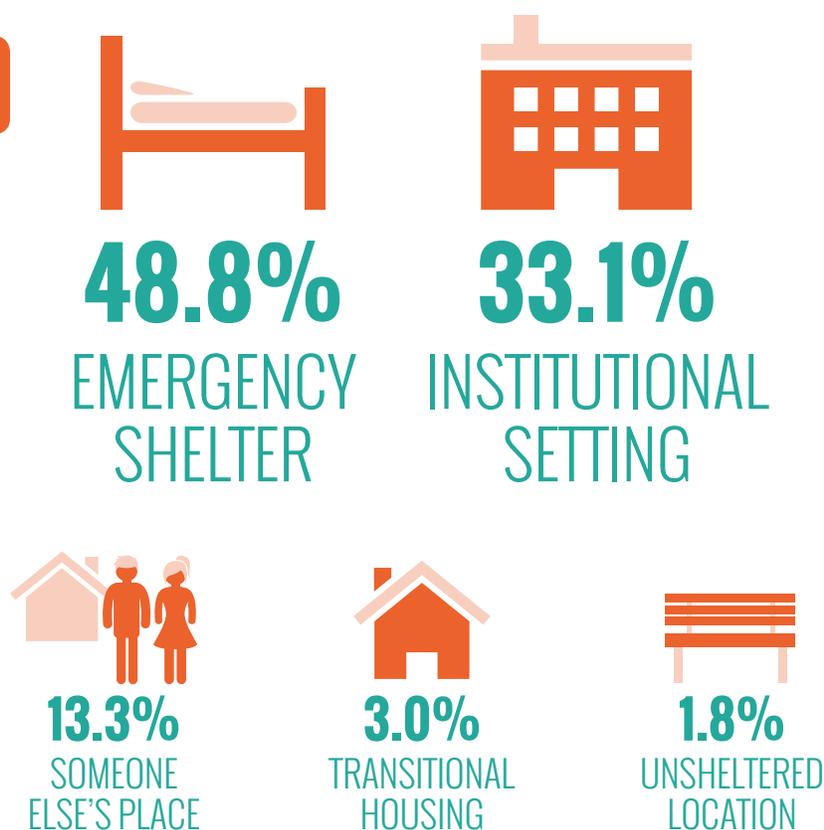


The total number of homeless individuals reported is predominantly based on administrative data and supplemented with survey data, where administrative data is not available or is very limited (e.g. rough sleepers and hidden homeless). Not everyone who was counted was surveyed therefore the survey population represents a sample for analysis of the overall number counted. In total, 84 valid surveys were included in the PiT Count analysis presented in this section.

Of note, only three individuals who were surveyed stayed in unsheltered locations, therefore the population represented in this report is mostly connected with support services. As is common for research with marginalized populations, it is difficult to engage the most vulnerable individuals.³⁶ Therefore those who are homeless but not connected to services are not well represented in this report.

3.2 WHERE PEOPLE STAYED

(n=166)



50.6% of individuals counted on November 30, 2016 experienced absolute homelessness – staying in emergency shelters and in unsheltered locations. The remaining 49.4% were provisionally accommodated in transitional housing, institutional settings and other people's homes.

The number of homeless persons counted in emergency shelters and transitional housing is highly representative of the true number of homeless persons who stayed in those settings on the night of the count. The numbers reported for institutional settings and unsheltered locations are likely undercounts – some institutions did not participate in the Count and there were limitations to the street count (e.g. exclusion of abandoned buildings).

The State of Homelessness in Canada report (2014) estimates 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night but approximately 42% more - as many as 50,000 - make up the 'hidden' homeless (individuals who stay with family, friends, or others because they have nowhere else to go).³⁷ The PiT Count is not designed to measure the extent of hidden homelessness in a community but those surveyed provided useful information about the experience of hidden homelessness in our community. The hidden homeless represent 13.3% of the number of homeless persons counted but the true number of those experiencing hidden homelessness in St. John's is likely higher.

³⁶ Flanagan, S.M. and Hancock, B. (2008). Reaching the 'hard to reach'. Retrieved from <http://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-10-92>

³⁷ Gaetz S., Donaldson J., Richter T., & Gulliver T. (2013). The State of homelessness in Canada 2013.

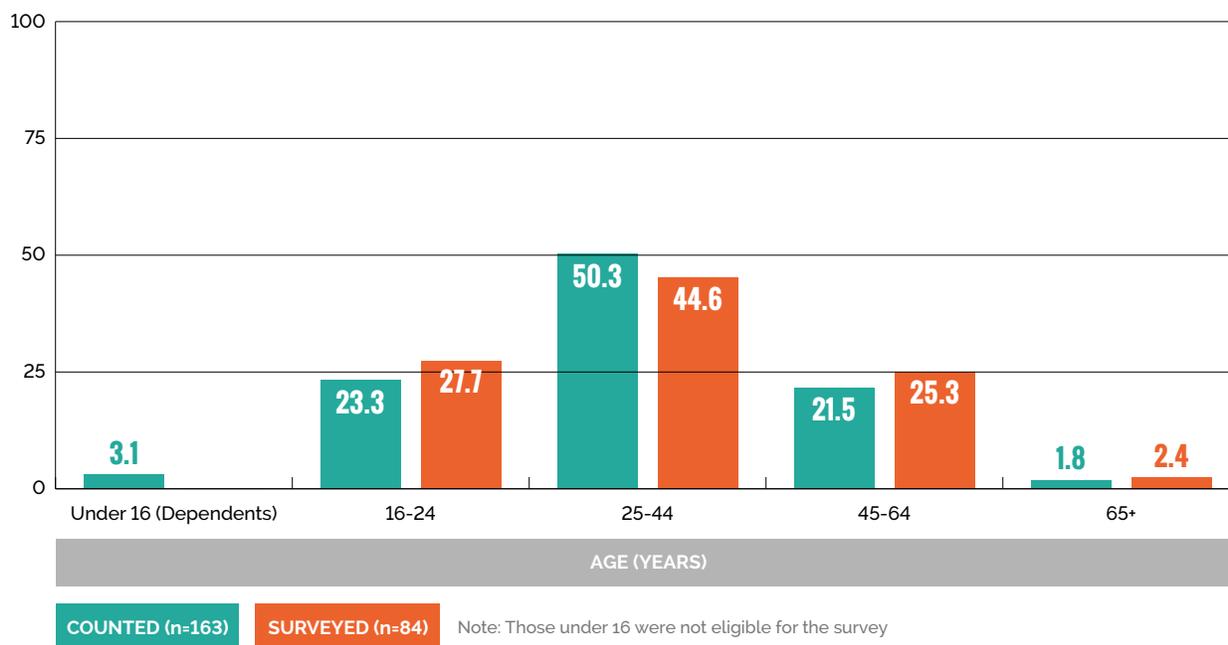
Homeless Hub Paper #4. Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC2103.pdf>

3.3 DEMOGRAPHICS

A) AGE AND GENDER IDENTITY

The majority of those experiencing homelessness on November 30 were adults (25+ years), with those aged 25 to 44 years representing the largest population within this demographic. Youth (16 to 24 years) represent approximately one quarter of the homeless population counted. Very few children (dependents under the age of 16) and seniors (aged 65+) were counted. Of note, youth under the age of 16 were not eligible to participate in the survey. No unaccompanied youth under the age of 16 were encountered on the night of the count. The age distribution for the counted population and surveyed population was consistent across all age groups.³⁸

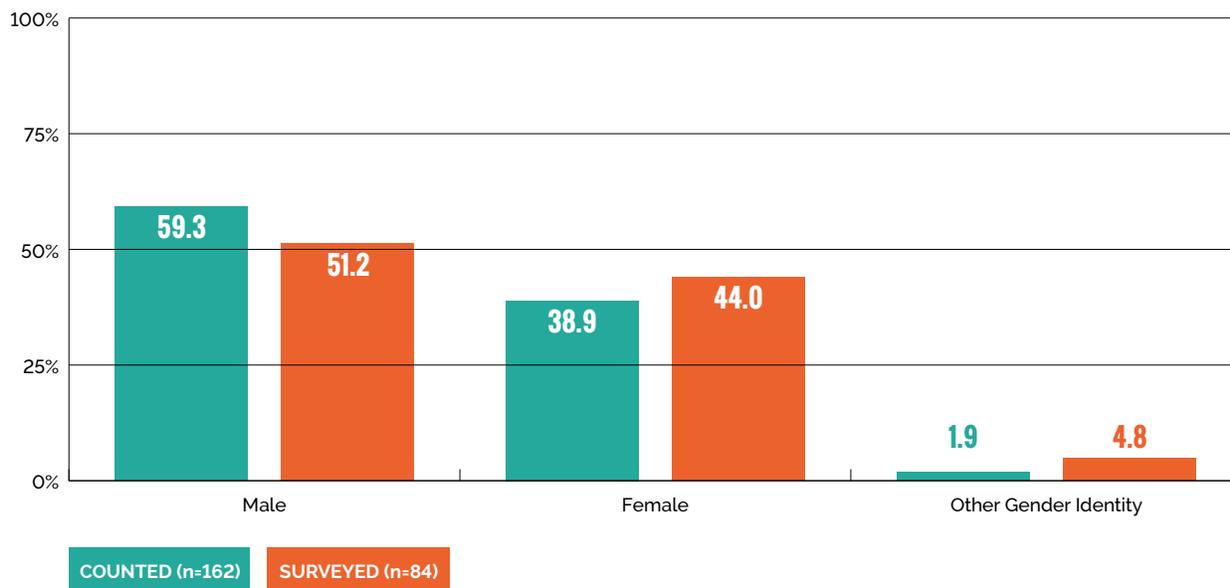
FIGURE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTED & SURVEYED POPULATIONS



³⁸The count number is predominantly based on the administrative data collected from participating agencies using the facility form (Appendix 4) and supplemented by survey information where administrative data does not exist or is limited (e.g. for rough sleepers and the hidden homeless). Not everyone who was counted was surveyed, therefore those surveyed provide a sample for analysis from the overall number counted. However, by comparing the two, we can determine if our survey sample is representative of our counted population in terms of age and gender distribution. 166 individuals were counted but age and/or gender information is missing for some individuals.

Males represented 59.3% of the counted population, while females accounted for 38.9%. Individuals who identified with another gender other than male or female accounted for less than 2% of the counted population.³⁹ In comparison to the general population, males are overrepresented and females are underrepresented among the homeless population in St. John's.⁴⁰

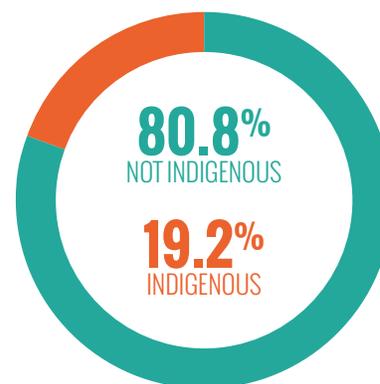
FIGURE 2: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTED & SURVEYED POPULATIONS



B) INDIGENEITY

19.2% of those surveyed identified as Indigenous. Of those who identified as Indigenous, the majority identified as First Nations.⁴¹ 2.5% of the population in St. John's identify as Indigenous. Given this, individuals who identify as indigenous are overrepresented among the homeless population in St. John's in comparison to their percentage in the general population. This is consistent with findings from the National Shelter Study, which found that Indigenous people were 10 times more likely to use a shelter than those who were not indigenous.⁴²

FIGURE 3: INDIGENEITY OF RESPONDENTS (n=78)



³⁹ To ensure privacy and anonymity given the small number of those who identify with another gender other than male or female, we will not break this down further. Please see question 6 on the survey (Appendix 4) for a list of possible responses.

⁴⁰ Males and females account for 47.6% and 52.4% of the general population, respectively. See appendix 3 for data sources for demographic comparisons with the general population.

⁴¹ To ensure privacy and anonymity given the small number respondents who identified as Inuit and Métis, we will not show the percentages for each Indigenous population.

⁴² HPS (2016). Highlights of the National Shelter Study 2005-2014. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports-shelter-2014.html#h2.3-h3.9>

Table 2: Respondents who identify as Indigenous

	PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		GENERAL POPULATION ⁴³	RATIO AMONG PIT SURVEY SAMPLE VS GENERAL POPULATION
	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage	
INDIGENOUS	15	19.2%	2.5%	7.7
NON INDIGENOUS	63	80.8%	-	-
TOTAL	78	100%	-	-

C) SEXUAL ORIENTATION

21.7% of respondents identified as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S) community.⁴⁴ A Forum Research Inc. poll conducted in 2012 found that 4.7% of the population from the Atlantic Provinces identified as LGBT.⁴⁵ Therefore, the percentage of individuals who identified as LGBTQ2S in the St. John's PiT Survey Sample is 4.6 times higher than their percentage in the general population. Females were more likely to identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community than males.

Table 3: Respondents who identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community

	PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		GENERAL POPULATION	RATIO AMONG PIT SURVEY SAMPLE VS GENERAL POPULATION
	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage	
YES	18	21.7%	4.7%	4.6
NO	65	78.3%	-	-
TOTAL	83	100%	-	-

⁴³ See appendix 3 for data sources.

⁴⁴ The question about sexual orientation asked "Do you identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit or Queer community?" Gender identity was covered in a separate question however, the standard abbreviation for LGBTQ2S includes "Transgender" so we have included it here to remain consistent.

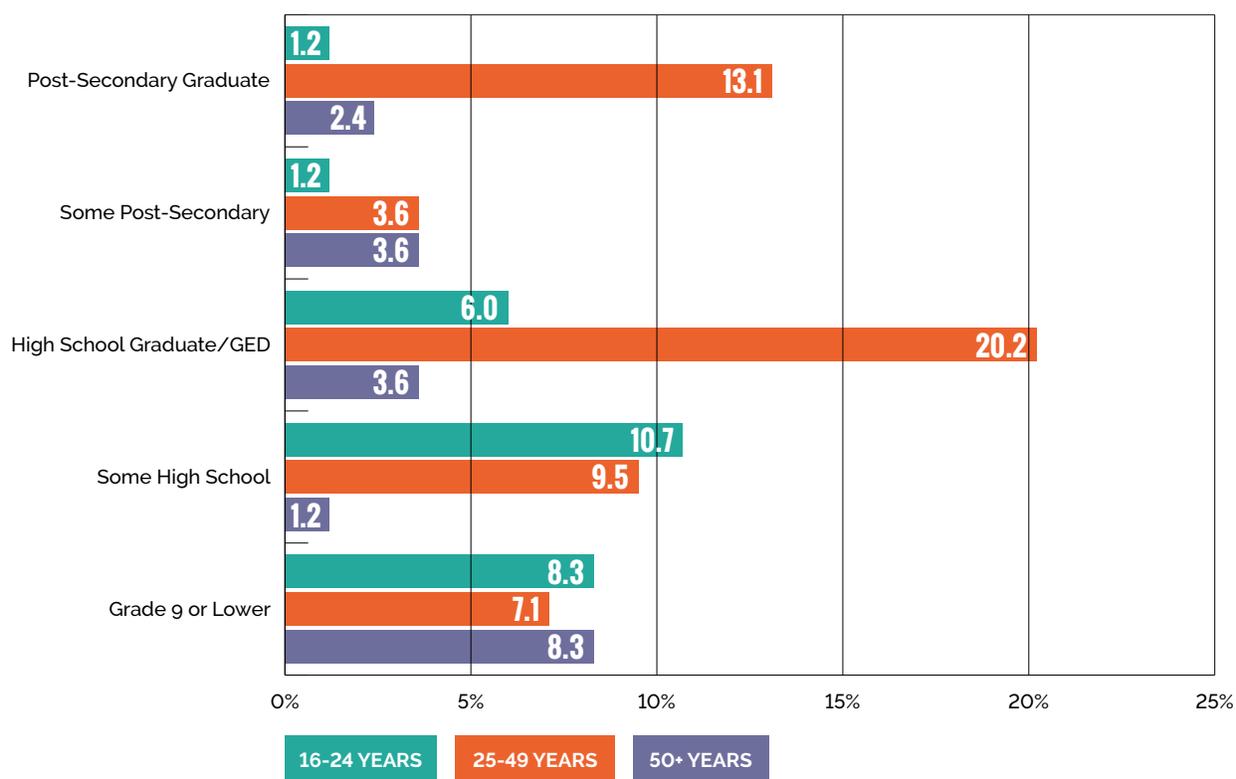
⁴⁵ The Forum Research Inc. Poll asked "Are you lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered?"

D) LEVEL OF EDUCATION

More than half (54.9%) of respondents were high school graduates or had post-secondary education. 45.1% of respondents have not completed high school. Almost half of respondents indicated that they had a service need related to education (46.4%, section 3.6) and one in three indicated that they had a service need related to a learning disability (32.1%, section 3.6).

When broken down by age, youth and older adults (50+ years) were less likely to have completed high school than adults aged 25 to 49 years.

FIGURE 4: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (n=84)



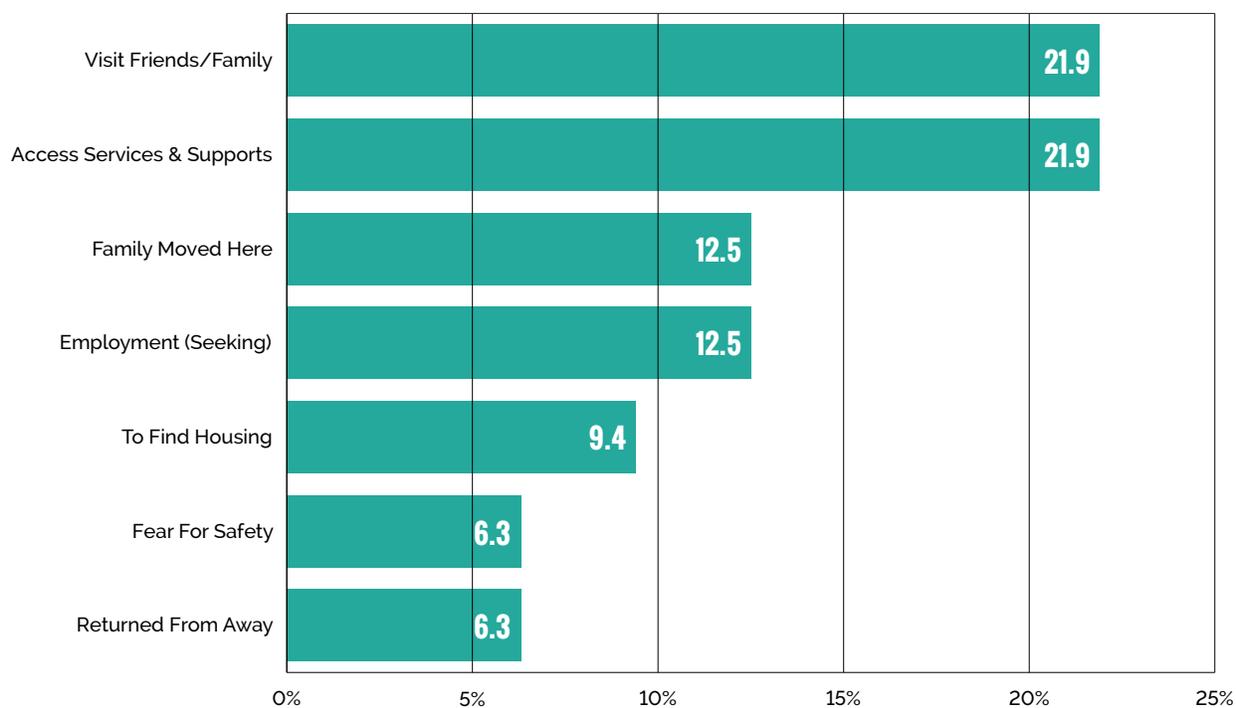
E) MIGRATION INTO ST. JOHN'S

21.4% of respondents moved to St. John's in the past year (n=84). Of those who moved to St. John's within the past year (n=18), 56.3% came to St. John's from another part of Newfoundland and Labrador and 43.7% came to St. John's from another province or territory in Canada. Respondents were not asked where they were born, therefore it is unclear whether some respondents were originally from St. John's and had returned from another region. However, two respondents did indicate that the reason they came to St. John's was because they were originally from here.

38.1% of respondents moved to St. John's within the past five years. Of those who moved to St. John's within the past five years (n=32), 50.0% came to St. John's from another part of Newfoundland and Labrador and 50.0% came to St. John's from another province or territory in Canada. The 2016 Demographic and Opinion Survey conducted by the City of St. John's⁴⁶ found that 13.9% of the general population have been in St. John's for five years or less. Given this, individuals who have moved to St. John's in the last five years are overrepresented among the PiT Count Survey Sample in comparison to their rate in the general population. Of those who moved to St. John's within the last five years (n=32), one in five came to access services and supports (21.9%), including mental health services, methadone programming, medical treatment, and specific agencies. Moving is both a cause and consequence of homelessness.

Other commonly selected reasons for moving to St. John's are shown in the figure below. Less frequently selected reasons, which are not shown, included to access emergency shelter, to attend school and to transition (referring to gender).

FIGURE 5: REASONS FOR MOVING TO ST. JOHN'S WITHIN LAST FIVE YEARS (n=32)



Note: Respondents could select more than one response

⁴⁶ See appendix 3 for data source.

F) IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE STATUS

No respondents reported coming to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past five years.

G) VETERAN STATUS

4.8% of respondents (n=84) had service in the Canadian military. However, it is unclear whether some included their time in cadets as military service. It is possible that this number is actually lower than reported here.

3.4 FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

A) HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Respondents were more likely to have grown up in what they perceived to be middle class (47.5%) or low income (37.5%) households than upper class (15.0%) households.

FIGURE 6: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DURING CHILDHOOD (n=80)



B) INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Nearly half of respondents (47.0%, n=83) indicated they:

- ▶ Received services from Child Protection Services while they remained in their family home or resided with another family member AND/OR
- ▶ Lived in foster care and/or group home⁴⁷

A little over one third of respondents (35.8%) have been in foster care or in group homes during their lifetime. When asked if they felt Child Protection Services was helpful in their transition to independence, 62.1% felt that they were not.⁴⁸

50.0% of respondents who have been in foster care or in group homes became homeless less than a year after leaving.⁴⁹

⁴⁷In Newfoundland and Labrador, youth can reside in open-custody group homes under the supervision of the corrections system without ever coming into contact with Child Protection Services. However, the number of youth who reside in group homes through Child Protection Services is significantly higher than the number of youth who reside in open-custody group homes. Therefore, we do not expect that this would impact the results shown.

⁴⁸Three respondents moved to St. John's from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador so their experience may be related to Child Protection Services in another province.

⁴⁹Based on information from 24 of the 29 respondents who had been in foster care - five respondents did not know or declined to answer therefore they were excluded from the analysis.

Table 4: Respondents experience with Child Protection Services

	FOSTER CARE OR GROUP HOME		RECEIVED SERVICES WHILE RESIDING WITH FAMILY/GUARDIAN	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
YES	29	35.8%	24	30%
NO	52	64.2%	56	70%
TOTAL	81	100%	80	100%

Note: Some respondents selected yes to both questions. Due to this overlap in responses, the percentages shown in this table cannot be added together.

C) FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

30.1% of those surveyed (n=83) reported that they are not in regular contact (more than once a month) with any family member or guardian.

53.8% of respondents indicated that they would like to improve a relationship with a family member and/or guardian. 26.2% indicated that they had a service need related to family reconnect (section 3.6).

D) FAMILY UNITS

Very few respondents (3.6%, n=84) reported staying with a family member (dependent, partner, or other relative) on the night of the count. In 2015, 16.1% of shelter users in St. John's accessed shelters as part of a family.⁵⁰

3.5 THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

A) CHRONIC AND EPISODIC HOMELESSNESS

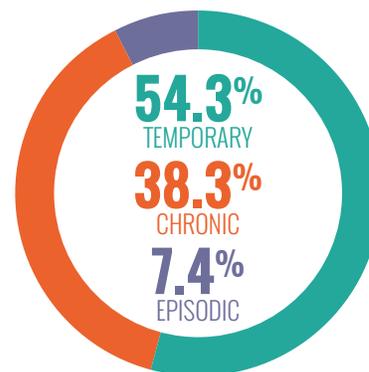
In an effort to understand the experience of homelessness in St. John's, survey respondents were asked to estimate how much time and how many different times they were homeless in the past year. Based on their responses, respondents were categorized into one of three populations of homelessness – chronic, episodic or temporary.

⁵⁰ Community Progress Indicators Report: St. John's. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.nlhcn.org/PDF/CPIR-SJS-2015.pdf>

For the purpose of the count, HPS⁵¹ defined these populations as follows:

- ▶ Chronic homelessness - a period of six or more months of homelessness in the past year.
- ▶ Episodic homelessness - three or more distinct episodes of homelessness in the past year, adding up to less than six months.
- ▶ Temporary homelessness - less than six months and fewer than three episodes of homelessness over the past year.

FIGURE 7: THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS (n=81)

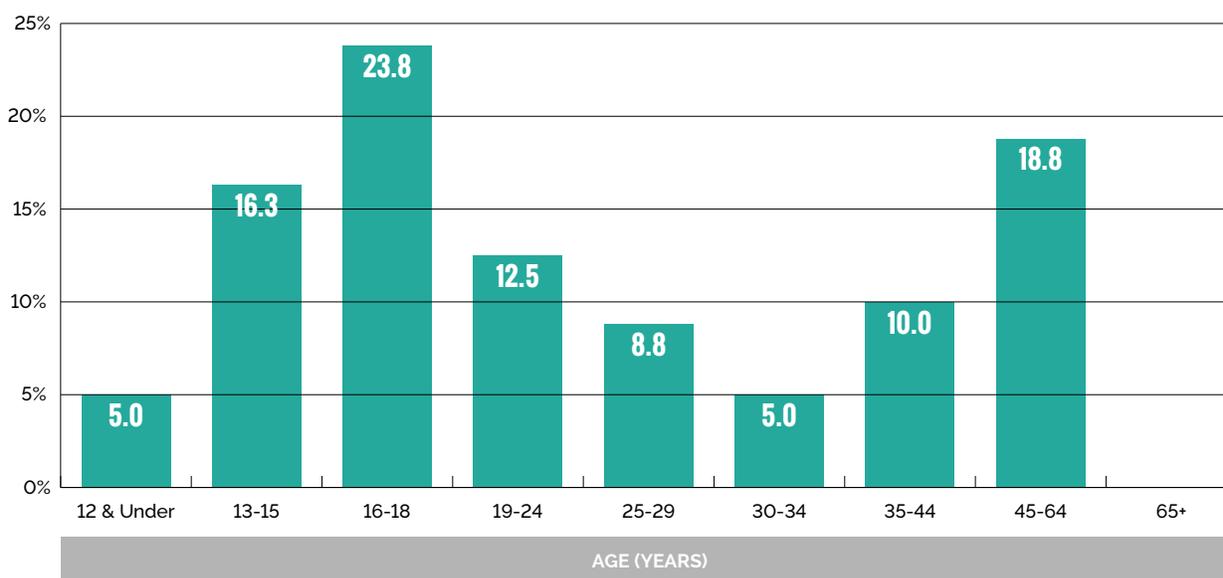


Based on these definitions, 38.3% of respondents were experiencing chronic homelessness and 7.4% were experiencing episodic homelessness. This shows that **the experience of homelessness can be long and recurring**. The remaining 54.3% of respondents were experiencing temporary homelessness. The percentage of respondents experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness in St. John's was lower than that reported in other eastern Canadian communities who participated in the 2016 National Coordinated PiT Count (46% and 14%, respectively).⁵² However, it should be noted that the National Count was conducted during the spring of 2016 whereas the St. John's count was conducted in the fall of the same year. As counts have seasonal variation, this could affect the comparability of results. It should also be noted that a count inherently captures information about those who experience chronic homelessness.

B) AGE OF FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

The median age at which respondents first became homeless was 19 years and the most common age was 18 years. Nearly three out of five (57.6%) respondents first became homeless by age 24. Approximately one quarter of respondents (23.8%) became homeless between the ages of 16 to 18 years. For those who first became homeless as a young child, details on the survey suggest that they attributed their initial entry into the care of Child Protection Services as their first time homeless. Approximately one fifth of respondents (18.8%) became homeless for the first time between ages of 45 to 64 years.

FIGURE 8: AGE OF FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS (n=80)



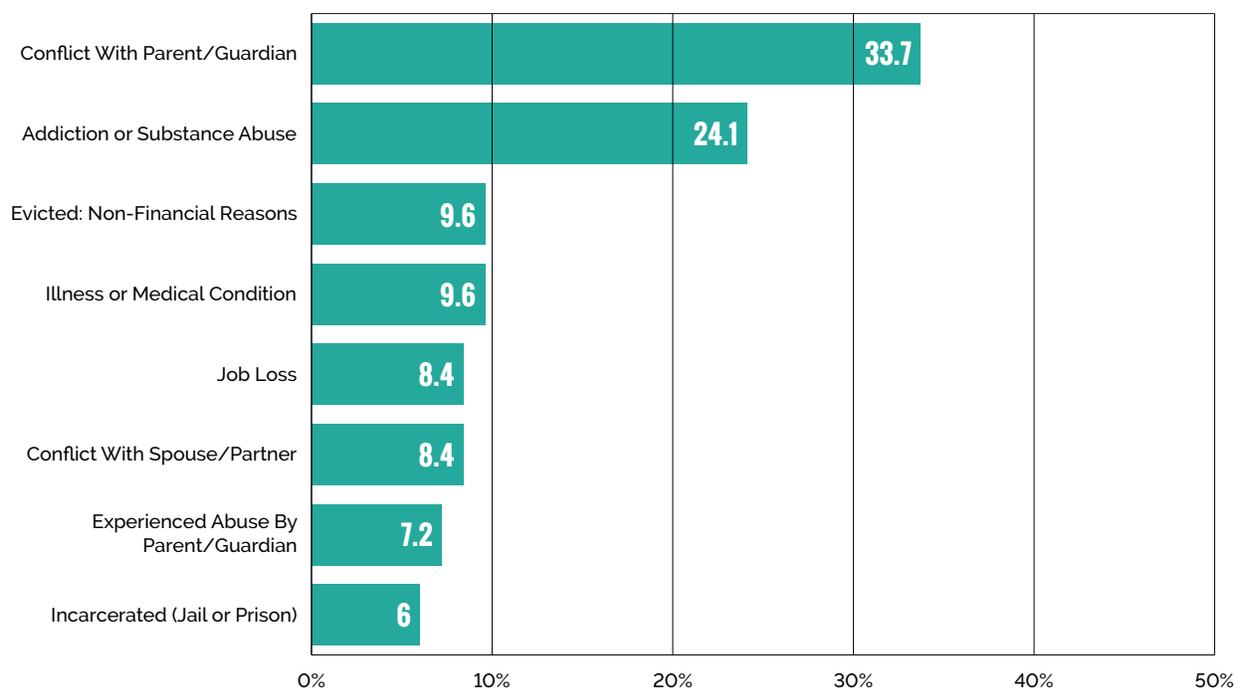
⁵¹ Hunter, P. (2017). Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Canadian Point-in-Time Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development.html>

⁵² Chronic and episodic homelessness represented 46% and 14% of the population for eastern Canadian communities, respectively.

C) REASON FOR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

Many factors contribute to one's experience of homelessness. Thirty percent of respondents reported two or more reasons that caused them to become homeless the first time. Conflict with a parent or guardian was cited most frequently as the reason for first becoming homeless (33.7%). Other forms of family breakdown, conflict and abuse were also reported. The second most commonly selected response was addiction or substance use (24.1%). Interestingly, conflict with a parent or guardian and addiction or substance use were not frequently selected as reasons for first housing loss by those who first became homeless at age 45 or older. The most commonly selected reasons for first becoming homeless for this group was job loss.

FIGURE 9: REASON FOR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS (n=83)



Note: Respondents could select more than one response, therefore the total adds up to more than 100%

D) REASON FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS

The reasons for most recent housing loss are slightly different than the reasons reported for initial experiences of homelessness. The most frequently cited reasons for recent housing loss were incarceration and eviction for non-financial reasons (not specified). The fact that loss of housing due to incarceration is among the top responses is not unexpected, given that 42.9% of survey respondents reported having been incarcerated and 27.4% of those surveyed were currently incarcerated or residing in a community-based residential facility. However, it should be noted that not all who were currently incarcerated listed incarceration as the reason for their most recent housing loss. Employment or financial problems were also cited as reasons for respondents' most recent loss of housing. Conflict with a parent or guardian and addiction or substance use were selected less frequently as reasons for most recent housing loss when compared to the reasons selected for the first experience of homelessness.

FIGURE 10: REASONS FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS (n=81)

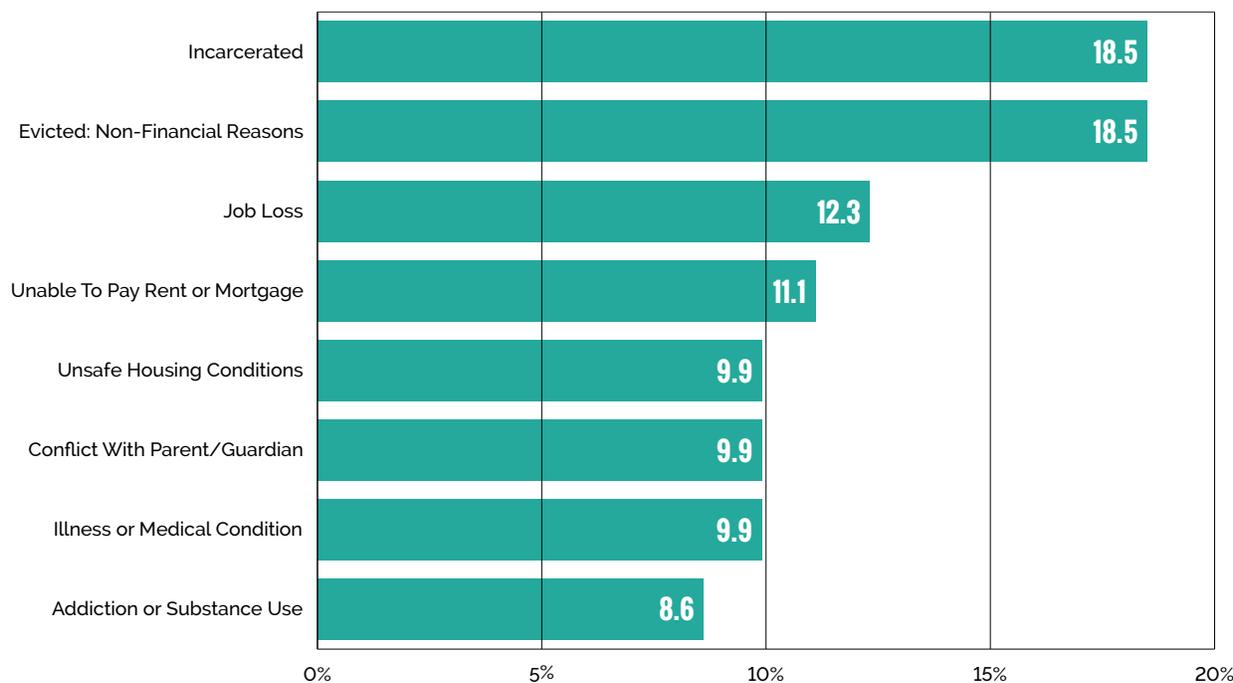


Table 5: Sources of Income (n=84)

E) BARRIERS TO HOUSING

A vast majority of respondents (95.2%) expressed a desire to get into permanent housing. However, most (92.5%) indicated that they had barriers to finding stable housing.

Having low or no income and high rental rates were the most commonly cited barriers to housing.

The majority of respondents (58.3%) rely on income support as a source of income. Currently, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced, Education, Skills and Labour (AESL), which administers income support to those 18 years and older, provides basic monthly benefits up to \$372 for mortgage or rent payments and anywhere from \$544 to \$977 for other monthly expenses, depending on living and family circumstances.⁵³

Clients may also qualify for other monthly benefits, as determined on a case-by-case basis. The average rental rate in St. John's is \$879, ranging from \$697 for a bachelor apartment to \$958 for a two bedroom apartment.⁵⁴ Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that low or no income and high rental rates were reported as the main barriers to housing.

SOURCES OF INCOME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Income Support (e.g. AESL, Youth Services)	49	58.3%
Informal/Self-Employment (e.g. bottle returns, panhandling, illegal activities)	13	15.5%
Employment	11	13.1
Money from Friends/Family	8	9.5
Seniors Benefits (e.g. CPP, OAS, GIS)	5	6%
Disability Benefit	4	4.8%
Employment Insurance	3	3.6%
Savings	2	2.4%
No Income	5	6%
Note: Respondents could select more than one response therefore the totals add up to more than 100%		

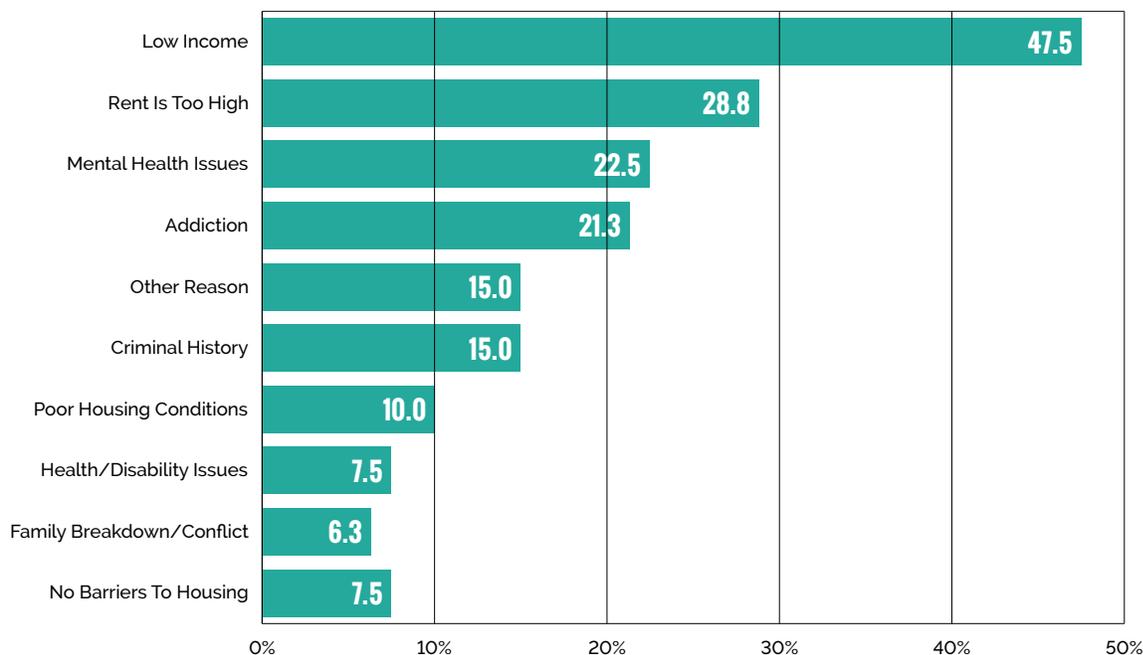
⁵³ Clients receive monthly basic benefits of \$323 to \$756 plus \$71 for a fuel supplement and \$150 for additional assistance. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2017). Monthly Basic Income Support Benefits. Retrieved from <http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/income-support/overview.html> and http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/policymanual/pdf/is/appendix_b5.pdf

⁵⁴ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2016). Rental Market Report. Retrieved from https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64455/64455_2016_A01.pdf?lang=en

Other barriers to housing included mental health issues, addiction and criminal history. A small number of people reported that they didn't want housing (4.8%) and 7.5% indicated that they didn't have any barriers to finding housing.

When asked "What would help you find permanent, stable housing?", many respondents didn't know (19 out of 84). Of the 65 respondents who replied to this question, the most common answer given was more support (40.0%), specifically from a social worker, housing officer or program (e.g. Choices for Youth, Stella's Circle, Front Step).⁵⁵ Other commonly reported responses included employment (18.5%), more money (16.9%) and more affordable housing options (7.7%).

FIGURE 11: BARRIERS TO HOUSING (n=80)



Note: Respondents could select more than one response, therefore the total adds up to more than 100%

3.6 SERVICE USE AND SERVICE NEEDS

A) SHELTER USE

Information about those who stay in emergency shelters is more readily available and easier to compile than information about those who experience other forms of homelessness. A benefit of PiT Counts is that they capture information about populations, such as rough sleepers and the hidden homeless, who may or may not interact with shelter and other homeless support services. According to the 2015 Community Progress Indicators Report,⁵⁶ 695 unique individuals accessed six emergency shelters in St. John's in 2015. The results of the St. John's Count found that 65.5% of respondents stayed at a shelter within the past year but one third of respondents did not (34.4%). Based on these findings, it is likely that many more people in St. John's experience homelessness over the course of a year than is documented.

Approximately half of respondents who experienced hidden homelessness (9 out of 16, 56.3%) or who were provisionally accommodated in institutional settings (13 out of 23, 56.5%) on the night of the count did not use a shelter in the past year. Of note, 40% of respondents who met the definition of chronic homelessness (12 out of 30), as described in section 3.5, did not access shelter services either.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Through End Homelessness St. John's, Stella's Circle and Choices For Youth co-manage Front Step, a community-based program offering personalized support services and housing for youth and adults who have experienced the longest and most frequent episodes of homelessness. The aim of the program is to help end chronic and episodic homelessness in St. John's by 2019.

⁵⁶Community Progress Indicators Report: St. John's. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/CPIR-SJS-2015.pdf>

⁵⁷One of the twelve respondents meeting this criteria, has been incarcerated for the full year.

Table 6: Have stayed at an emergency shelter in the past year

	INCLUDING THOSE WHO STAYED AT A SHELTER ON NOVEMBER 30		EXCLUDING THOSE WHO STAYED AT A SHELTER ON NOVEMBER 30	
YES	55	65.5%	18	38.3%
NO	29	34.5%	29	61.7%
TOTAL	84	100%	47	100%

B) EMERGENCY ROOM AND HOSPITAL VISITS

59.5% of those surveyed reported visiting an emergency room in the past year for a combined total of 176 visits. One quarter of respondents indicated that they had visited an emergency room three or more times over the past year.

31.3% of respondents reported being hospitalized in the past year. Respondents reported a combined total of 46 hospitalizations for a combined total of at least 418 days spent in hospital in the past year.

Table 7: Respondents use of emergency room and hospital services over the past year

NUMBER OF TIMES	EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS		HOSPITALIZATIONS		TIME SPENT IN HOSPITAL		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	TIME	Frequency	Percentage
0	34	40.5%	57	68.7%	0 DAYS	57	68.7%
1	16	19.0%	18	21.7%	1-3 DAYS	10	12.0%
2	13	15.5%	4	4.8%	4-6 DAYS	4	4.8%
3	8	9.5%	1	1.2%	1-2 WEEKS	7	8.4%
4 OR MORE	13	15.5%	3	3.6%	MORE THAN 2 WEEKS	5	6.0%
TOTAL	84	100%	83	100%	TOTAL	83	100%

C) INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE AND THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM

62.7% of respondents reported that they interacted with the police at least once in the past year including for tickets, searches or arrests for a combined total of 180 interactions. One in five respondents (19.3%) indicated they had four or more interactions with police.

42.9% of those surveyed reported that they have been in jail at least once in the past year. 27.4% of those surveyed were currently incarcerated or residing in a community-based residential facility. Of those who spent time in jail over the past year, 58.3% were male and 41.7% were female (n=36). Males were more likely to spend longer periods of time (6 to 12 months) in jail than females.

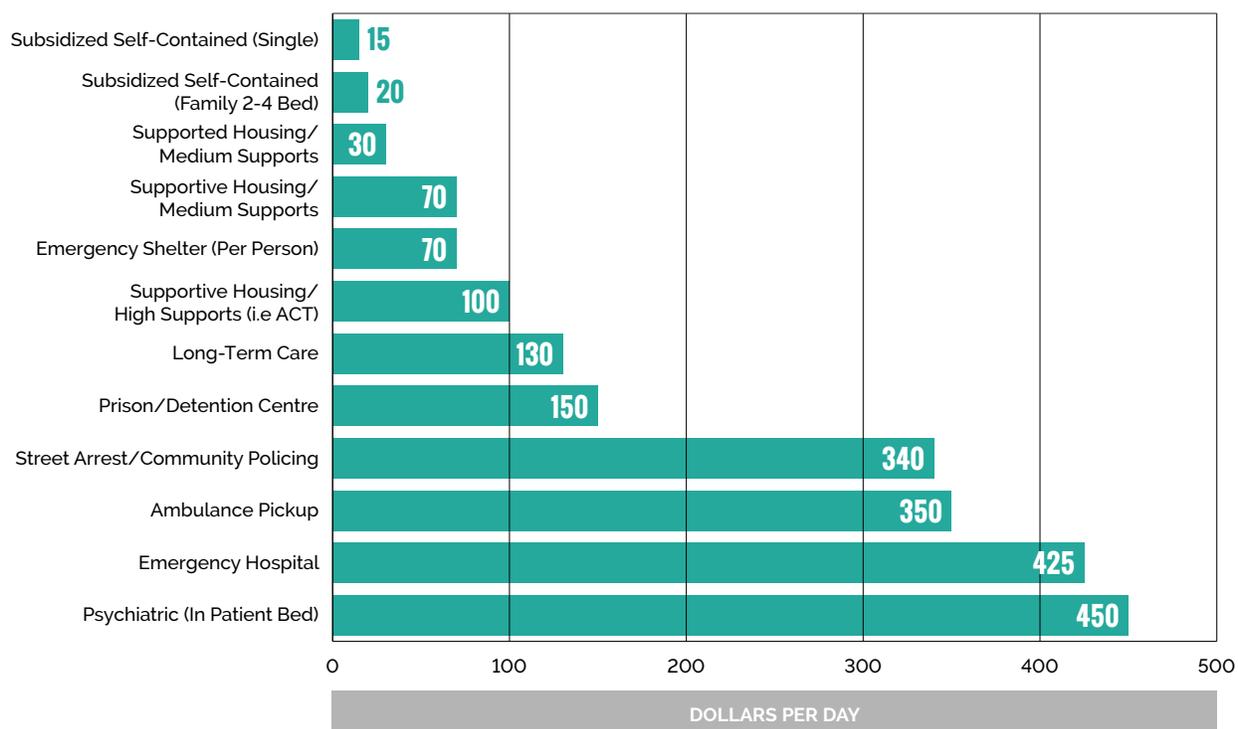
Respondents spent a combined total of 4126 days in jail over the past year (a little over 11 years).

Table 8: Respondents experience with the police and corrections system over the past year

NUMBER OF TIMES	INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE		TIMES IN JAIL		TIME SPENT IN JAIL		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	DAYS	Frequency	Percentage
0	31	37.3%	48	57.1%	1-6	8	22.2%
1	21	25.3%	18	21.4%	7-29	3	8.3%
2	8	9.6%	10	11.9%	30-90	10	27.8%
3	7	8.4%	3	3.6%	91-180	7	19.4%
4 OR MORE	16	19.3%	5	6.0%	181-366	8	22.2%
TOTAL	83	100%	84	100%	TOTAL	36	100%

Individuals experiencing homelessness in St. John's reported a notable use of public systems. In a study of homelessness in four Canadian cities, Pomeroy reported that institutional responses to homelessness including prison and psychiatric hospitals can cost as much as \$66,000 - \$120,000 per year (see below for typical daily costs for services).⁵⁸ This is significantly higher than the cost of providing housing with supports (between \$13,000 and \$18,000 annually). The Mental Health Commission's national study of *Housing First At Home/Chez Soi*⁵⁹ estimates that about \$9,250 per person per year is saved when clients received housing and supports compared to those who did not.

FIGURE 12: TYPICAL DAILY COST FOR SERVICES ACROSS TYPOLOGY OF RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS



⁵⁸ Pomeroy, S. (2005) *The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities*. Ottawa, ON: National Secretariat on Homelessness.

⁵⁹ Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) *At Home/Chez Soi Interim Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/document/5032/home-interim-report>.

D) SERVICE NEEDS

In order to gain insight into the service needs of those experiencing homelessness in St. John's, volunteers read a list of services to the respondents and they could indicate whether or not they had a need for that service. A small proportion (7.1%) indicated that they did not have any service needs and 13.1% had a need for services related to just one option. More than half of the respondents (54.9%) indicated they needed services related to four or more of the options provided illustrating the complexity of service needs among the homeless population in St. John's.

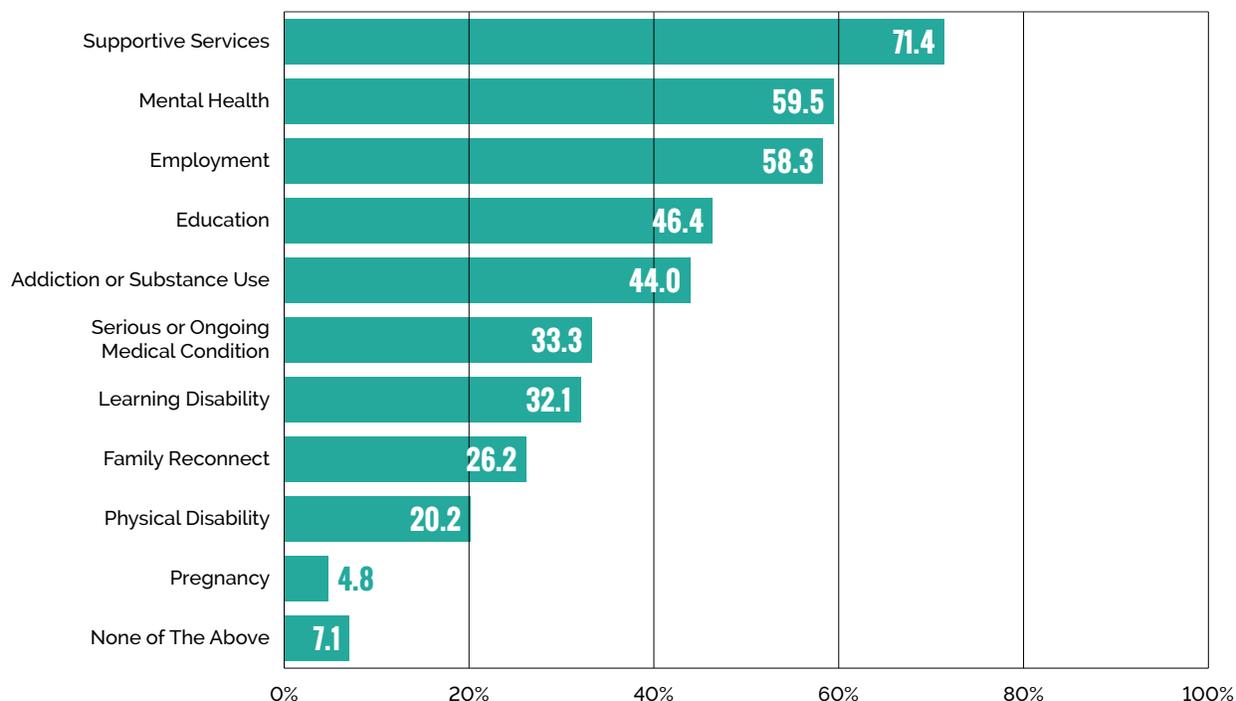
The most common service need was related to supportive services (71.4%). Based on details added to some surveys, this included supports such as social workers, housing officers, lawyers and trauma specialists. A need for mental health services was selected by 59.5% of those surveyed and services related to addiction or substance use was selected by approximately half of respondents. A need for services related to employment and education were also frequently selected by respondents (58.3% and 46.4%, respectively).

When asked if they knew where to go in the community to get help, 18.3% of respondents said no. While the majority of respondents did know where to go in the community to get help (81.7%), details on some surveys indicated that the help they receive is not enough.

Table 9: Number of services needed by respondents

NUMBER OF SERVICES NEEDED	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
0	6	7.1%
1	11	13.1%
2	12	14.3%
3	9	10.7%
4	8	9.5%
5	13	15.5%
6	15	17.9%
7	4	4.8%
8 or more	6	7.2%
TOTAL	84	100%

FIGURE 13: SERVICE NEEDS (n=84)



Note: Respondents could select more than one response, therefore the total adds up to more than 100%

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Youth homelessness can be defined as young people aged 16-24 years who “do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence”.⁶⁰ This homeless population differs from the adult homeless population as youth are less likely to be equipped with the necessary skills and resources to maintain stable housing at such a young age. Many youth who enter into homelessness are often leaving their caregiver’s home or exiting institutional care.

Across Canada, approximately 20% of the homeless population are aged 13 to 24 years.⁶¹ In comparison, youth make up 26% of St. John’s shelter users.⁶² While this is a reality in our city, St. John’s also sees a large population that can be difficult to measure – the hidden homeless. Youth experiencing hidden homelessness are entrenched in a cycle of staying with friends, family members or strangers for temporary amounts of time. Although they have periods of being housed, their housing is not stable, safe, or secure.

In an effort to better understand youth homelessness in St. John’s, ‘Everyone Counts’ implemented a focused youth outreach approach during the count week. Youth service providers conducted surveys over five additional days with youth whose circumstances met the definition of homelessness on November 30. This allowed service providers to collect information about youth who may have experienced homelessness on November 30, but who didn’t access support services until after that date.

To ensure that the youth voice was heard throughout the process, the Project Team hired a Youth Technical Advisor with lived experience of homelessness to serve on the Advisory Committee. Choices for Youth’s Youth Leadership Council (YLC) were also engaged in the process. The Youth Technical Advisor and the YLC provided input on survey questions, methodology and reporting. In addition, the YLC planned, coordinated and led a very successful Youth Magnet Event, which attracted 103 youth. Many of the youth who attended the event were experiencing or have experienced homelessness.

4.1 NUMBER OF YOUTH COUNTED AND WHERE THEY STAYED

On the night of November 30, 2016 there were at least 38 youth, aged 16 to 24 years, experiencing homelessness in St. John’s. An additional 22 youth stayed in supportive housing on the night of the count. Youth who resided in supportive housing were not included in the broader PiT Count number and analysis, presented in previous sections, as these housing arrangements do not fit within the definition of homelessness. However, tenure of these accommodations is based on age and need of support. As this programming is age-based, youth residing in supportive housing will require permanent and affordable housing when they exit the program. Given that youth in supportive housing had experience with homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness in the past, those who wished to participate were surveyed and their responses are included in the analysis presented here. In total, we used 34 surveys for the analysis in this section, 23 surveys from youth that fit the definition of homelessness used in this Count and an additional 11 surveys from youth staying in supportive housing. In most of the analyses, including or excluding the surveys from youth in supportive housing did not significantly impact the results. In cases where including this population did affect results, both analyses are shown.

⁶⁰ COH (2016). Canadian definition of homelessness. Retrieved from:

<http://homelesshub.ca/resource/canadian-definition-youth-homelessness>

⁶¹ Gaetz S., O’Grady B., Kidd S., & Schwan K. (2016) Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness

Survey Retrieved from: <http://homelesshub.ca/YouthWithoutHome>

⁶² HPS (2015). Retrieved from: <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/CPIR-SJS-2015.pdf>

AT LEAST
38

young people experienced homelessness in St. John's on the night of **November 30, 2016**

17



Emergency Shelters

17 youth stayed in emergency shelters

1



Unsheltered

At least 1 youth stayed in an unsheltered location, such as a public park, bus shelter, a tent, or a car

11



Someone Else's Place

At least 11 youth stayed at a friend's, family member's, or stranger's place temporarily because they didn't have a place of their own

9



Institutional Settings

9 youth stayed in institutional settings with no permanent home to return to. This includes correctional facilities, halfway houses, addictions treatment, health, and mental health programs

AT LEAST

18

young people experienced absolute homelessness

AT LEAST

20

young people were provisionally accommodated

AT LEAST
+22

young people availed of supportive housing

The numbers reported for emergency shelters and supportive housing are reflective of the true number of youth who stayed in these settings on November 30. The true number of homeless youth who stayed in unsheltered locations, at someone else's place, and in institutional settings are likely higher than the numbers reported here.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

The average age of the youth surveyed was 21 years old. Males counted for 50.0% of the youth surveyed and females accounted for 40.6%. The percentage of youth who identified with another gender, other than male or female, was 9.4%. This rate is consistent with findings from Without A Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey, which found that 6.1% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as transgender, two-spirit or gender non-binary.

21.4% of the youth surveyed identified as Indigenous, with the majority identifying as First Nations.⁶³ Given this rate, those who identify as Indigenous are overrepresented among the Youth PiT Survey Sample in comparison to their percentage to youth in the general population in St. John's (3.4%).

FIGURE 14: GENDER IDENTITY OF YOUTH RESPONDENTS (n=32)

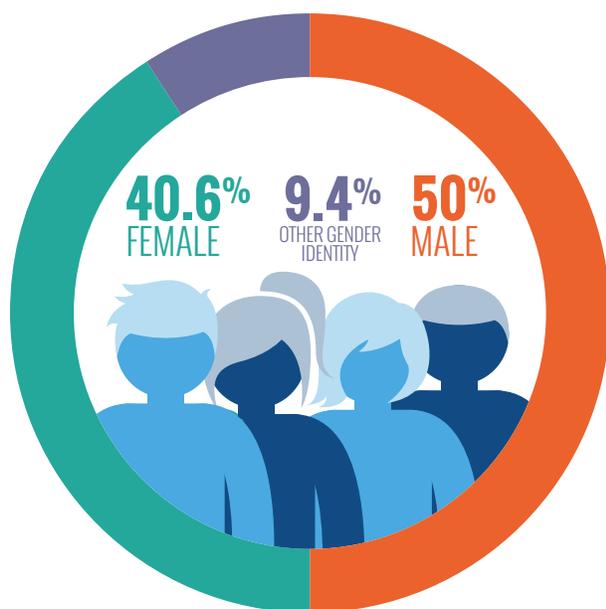


FIGURE 15: YOUTH INDIGENITY (n=28)



32.4% youth surveyed identified as part of the LGBTQ2S community (n=34) therefore youth who identify as LGBTQ2S are over-represented within the Youth PiT Survey Sample in St. John's. This result is consistent with findings from the National Youth Homelessness Survey, which found that 29.5% of youth experiencing homelessness identified as LGBTQ2S.⁶⁴

⁶³ To ensure privacy and anonymity given the small number respondents who identified as Inuit and Métis, we will not show the percentages for each Indigenous population.

⁶⁴ The question about sexual orientation asked "Do you identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit or Queer community?" Gender identity was covered in a separate question however, the standard abbreviation for LGBTQ2S includes "Transgender" so we have included it here to remain consistent.

Table 10: Comparison of youth respondent demographics to other populations

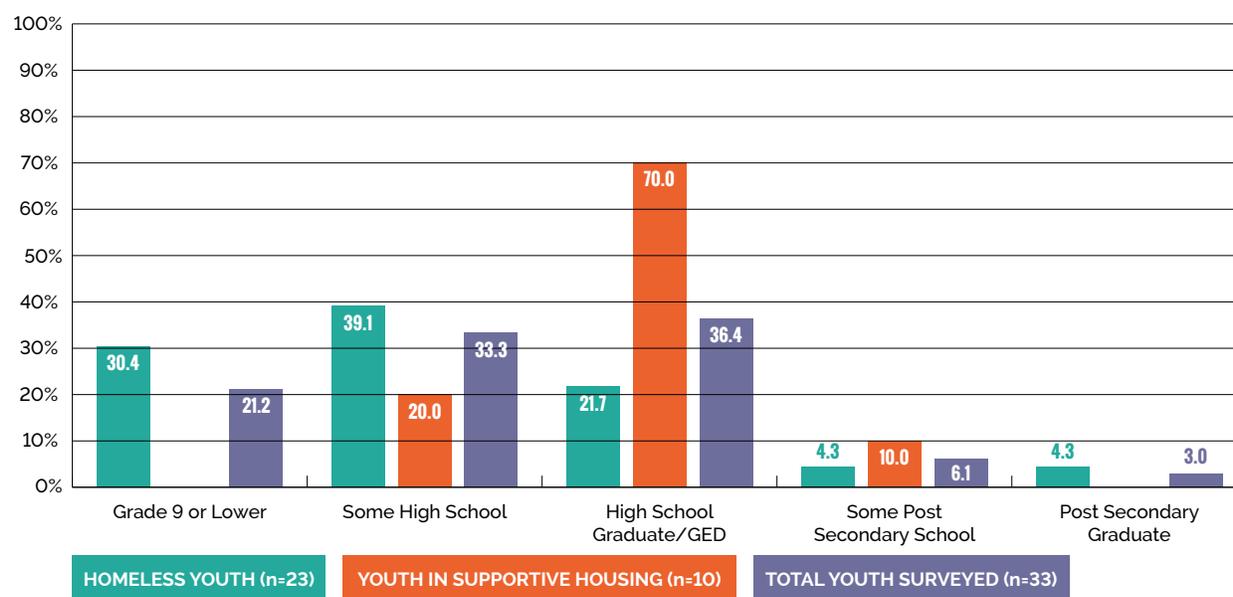
	YOUTH PIT SURVEY SAMPLE	PIT SURVEY SAMPLE	NATIONAL YOUTH SURVEY ⁶⁵	YOUTH IN THE GENERAL POPULATION ⁶⁶	RATIO AMONG YOUTH PIT SURVEY SAMPLE VS GENERAL POPULATION
MALES	50.0%	51.2%	57.6%	49.7%	1.0
FEMALES	40.6%	44.0%	36.4%	50.3%	0.8
OTHER GENDER IDENTITY	9.4%	4.8%	6.1%	-	-
LGBTQ2S	32.4%	21.7%	29.5%	4.7% ⁶⁷	6.9
INDIGENOUS	21.4%	19.2%	30.6%	3.4%	6.3

Note: There is overlap between the Youth Survey Sample and the PIT Count Survey Sample

4.3 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Youth aged 16 to 18 years made up 20.5% of the survey population so it was expected that some youth surveyed would not have completed high school. However, 54.5% of youth surveyed (including those in supportive housing) had not yet completed high school. If we only examine homeless youth and exclude those in supportive housing from the analysis this increases to 69.5%. The difference observed is likely attributable to the supports youth in supportive housing receive.

FIGURE 16: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED



⁶⁵ Gaetz S., O’Grady B., Kidd S., & Schwan K. (2016). Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey. Retrieved from: <http://homelesshub.ca/YouthWithoutHome>

⁶⁶ See appendix 3 for data source.

⁶⁷ The Research Forum Inc. Poll did indicate that those aged 18 to 34 years were more likely to identify as LGBT than older individuals. Unfortunately, the poll did not break down the data by region and age group so the data shown here is for the general population for the Atlantic Region.

In contrast to the provincial high school graduation rate of 94.4% in 2014-2015⁶⁸ only 30.3% of homeless youth had graduated or received their GED (includes those with post-secondary education). Many youth reported having a service need related to education (58.8%) and a learning disability (47.1%). Given this, it is clear that there is a relationship between youth homelessness and education level, but the dynamic of this relationship is complicated.

Four out of five (78.3%) youth who experienced homelessness (not including those in supportive housing) had no formal employment. In November 2016 the youth unemployment rate was 22.1%, the highest it had been in years.⁶⁹ Based on this, youth who experience homelessness are 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than youth in the general population. Many respondents reported having a service need related to employment (70.6%) indicating that many youth would like to work if they had the appropriate supports to do so.

Table 11: Sources of Income Reported by Youth

SOURCES OF INCOME	PERCENTAGE		
	Homeless Youth (n=23)	Youth in Supportive Housing (n=11)	Total Youth Surveyed (n=34)
Income Support (e.g. AESL, Youth Services)	52.2%	90.9%	64.7%
Employment	21.7%	45.5%	29.4%
Informal/Self-Employment (e.g. panhandling, illegal activities)	26.1%	0%	17.6%
Money from Friends/Family	<10%	<10%	<10%
Employment Insurance	<10%	<10%	<10%
No Income	<10%	<10%	<10%

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer so the totals add up to more than 100%.

4.4 MIGRATION INTO ST. JOHN'S

32.4% of youth surveyed moved to St. John's within the last year and 41.1% moved to St. John's within the last five years. Of those who moved to St. John's within the last five years (n=14), the majority moved to St. John's from another part of Newfoundland and Labrador. The most commonly reported reasons for moving to St. John's within the last five years were to access services and supports (e.g. mental health services, Choices for Youth), to find housing and to attend school.

⁶⁸ Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (2015). Quarterly Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.nlesd.ca/includes/files/highlights/doc/1455548028515.pdf>

⁶⁹ Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (2017). Labour Force Characteristics: Youth – Age Group 15 to 24 Years. Retrieved from: http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/Statistics/Labour/PDF/LFC_NL_Youth_Monthly.pdf

4.5 INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

70.6% of youth respondents (n=34) indicated they:

- ▶ Received services from Child Protection Services while they remained in their family home or resided with another family member AND/OR
- ▶ Lived in foster care and/or group home⁷⁰

Of those who have been in foster care and/or a group home (n=15), 80.0% felt that Child Protection Services was not helpful in their transition to independence and 42.9% (n=14) became homeless within one year after leaving the care of Child Protection Services.

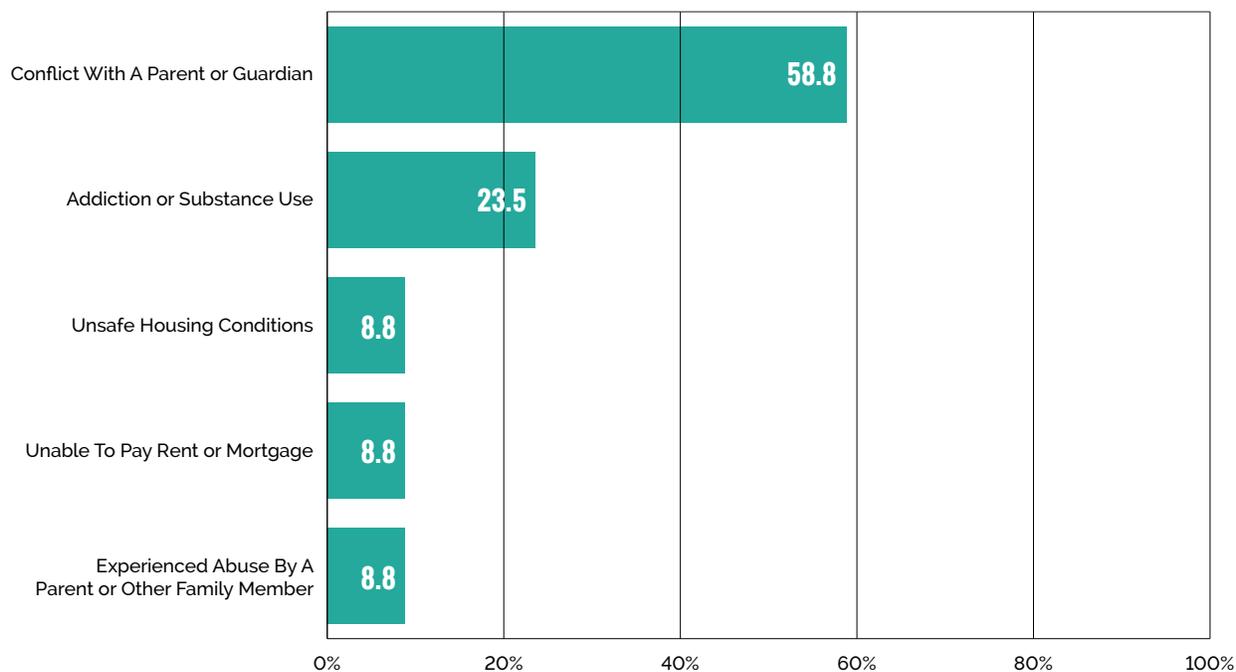
4.6 YOUTH'S EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

A) FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

The average age and median age at which youth respondents first became homeless was 16 years, ranging from 2 years old to 21 years old (n=33). This means that 50.0% of youth respondents were homeless by age 16.

The most commonly selected reasons for youth's first experience of homelessness were conflict with parent or guardian (58.8%) and addiction or substance use (23.5%). Other less frequently selected reasons for becoming homeless the first time (not shown) include aging out of care, hospitalization, incarceration, illness or medical condition, and death of a parent.

FIGURE 17: YOUTH'S FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS (n=34)



Note: Respondents could select more than one response. Other less frequently selected responses are not shown.

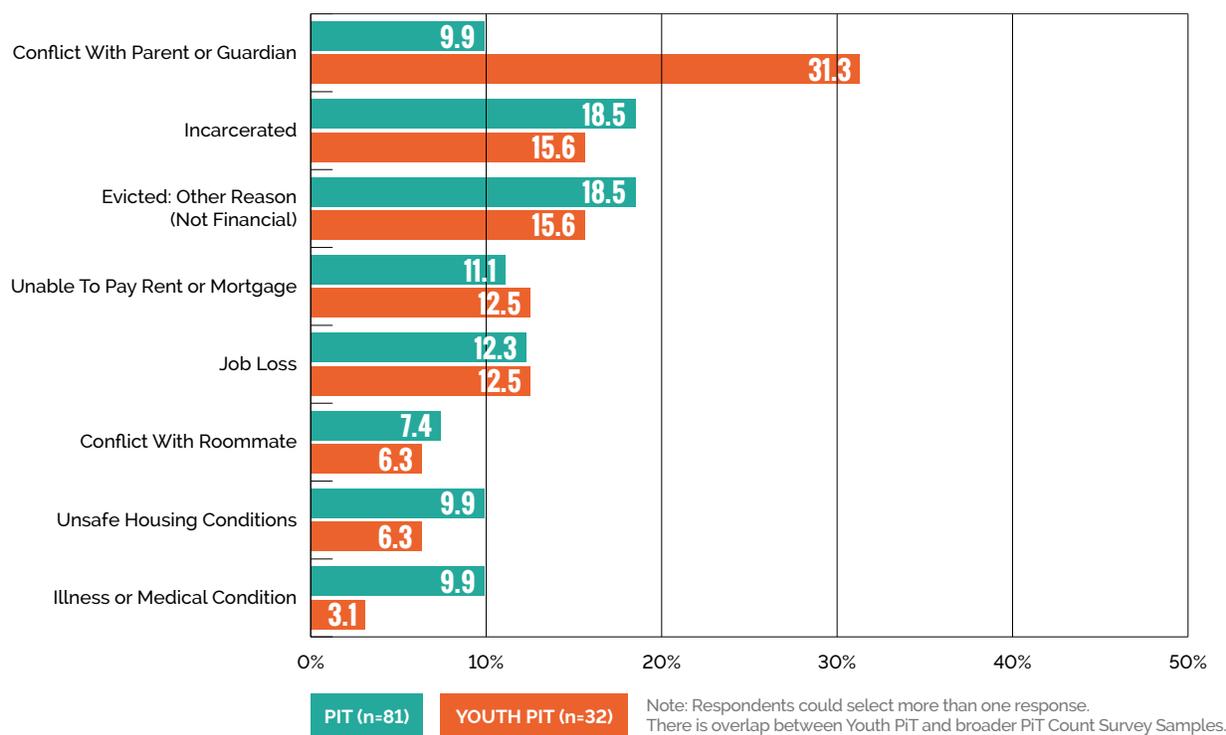
⁷⁰ In Newfoundland and Labrador, youth can reside in open-custody group homes under the supervision of the corrections system without ever coming into contact with Child Protection Services. However, the number of youth who reside in group homes through Child Protection Services is significantly higher than the number of youth who reside in open-custody group homes. Therefore, we do not expect that this would impact the results shown.

B) RECENT EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

One third of homeless youth respondents⁷¹ (33.3%) experienced chronic homelessness – six or more months of homelessness over the past year (n=21). 14.3% of homeless youth experienced episodic homelessness and 52.4% of homeless youth experienced temporary homelessness.

One in three youth (31.3%) cited conflict with a parent or guardian as the reason for their most recent housing loss. This was the most commonly reason selected reason for both youth's first and recent experiences of homelessness. However, in some cases, youth's recent housing loss was also their first experience of homelessness so there is some redundancy between these two questions.

FIGURE 18: REASONS FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS

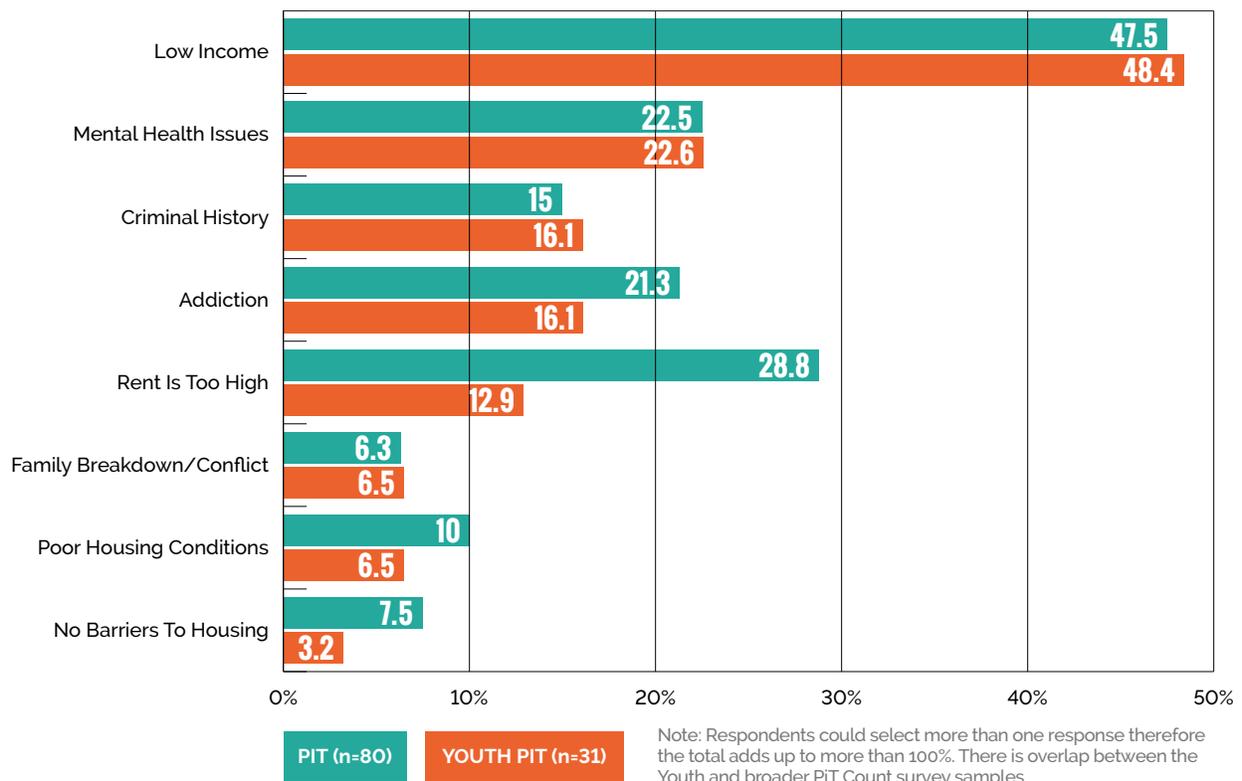


⁷¹ The results shown are for youth experiencing homelessness only as it is unclear whether youth in supportive housing included their time in supportive housing as time homeless

C) BARRIERS TO HOUSING

97.1% of youth surveyed expressed a desire to get into permanent, stable housing (n=34). As for the broader PIT count population, low income was reported by youth respondents as the main barrier to housing. Similarly, mental health issues was reported by approximately one quarter of respondents as a barrier to housing. When asked what would help you to find housing, employment, more money and support were the most common answers given (each was selected by 20.0% of respondents). Other responses included education (16.0%) and help from a youth-serving agency (16.0%).

FIGURE 19: BARRIERS TO HOUSING



4.7 SERVICE USE AND SERVICE NEEDS

A) SHELTER USE

67.6% of youth respondents stayed in a shelter in the last year. An additional 17.6% who didn't access a shelter did access supportive housing, indicating that the majority of youth respondents (85.2%) are accessing support services. However, a small proportion (14.8%) who were provisionally accommodated at another's home or in an institution on November 30 had not accessed shelter services.

B) USE OF PUBLIC SYSTEMS

The majority of youth (91.2%) interacted with public systems over the past year including visits to an emergency room or hospital, interacting with police or going to jail. Youth respondents reported a combined total of:

- ▶ 108 visits to an emergency room
- ▶ 30 hospitalizations for a total of 177 days spent in hospital
- ▶ 62 interactions with police
- ▶ 28 times in jail for a total of 1400 days spent in jail

Table 12: Youth respondents interaction with public systems over the past year

	VISITED AN EMERGENCY ROOM		BEEN HOSPITALIZED		INTERACTED WITH POLICE		BEEN TO JAIL	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
YES	23	67.6%	15	44.1%	16	47.1%	11	32.4%
NO	11	32.4%	19	55.9%	18	52.9%	23	67.6%
TOTAL	34	100%	34	100%	34	100%	34	100%

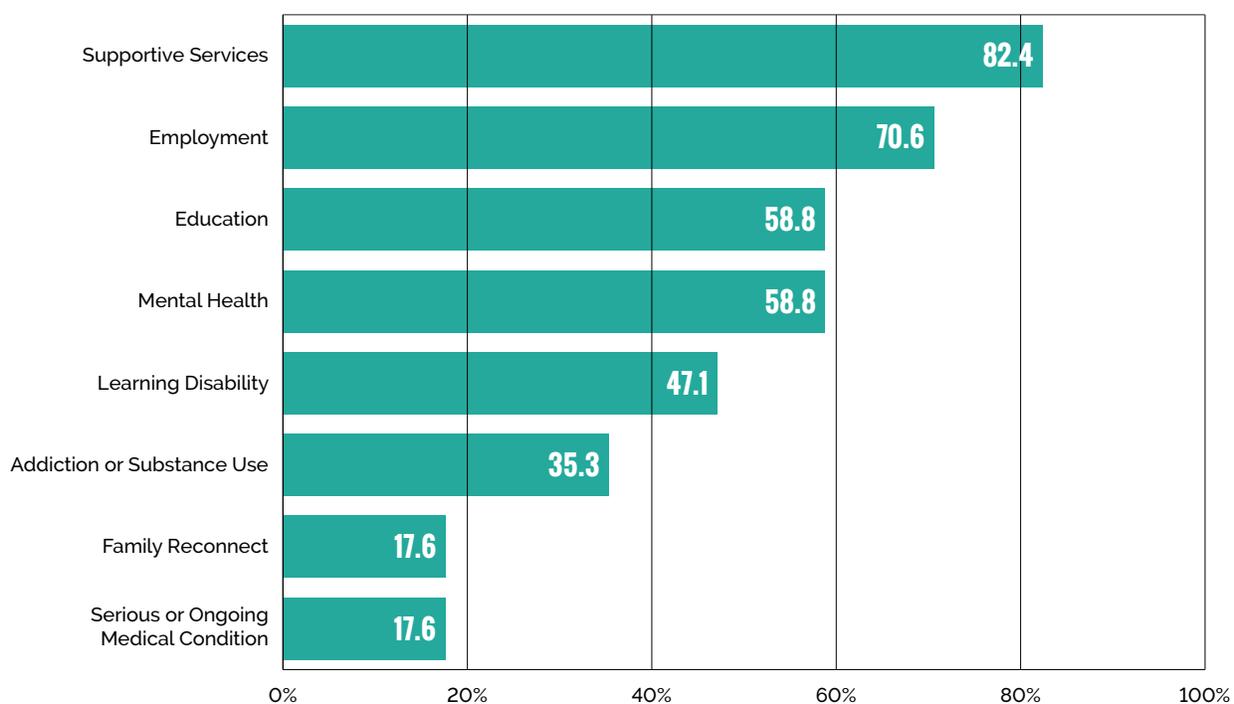
C) SERVICE NEEDS

In order to gain insight into the service needs of youth in St. John's who have current or past experience with homelessness, volunteers read a list of services to the respondents and they could indicate whether they had a need for that service. All youth respondents reported having at least one service need. In most cases, youth had multiple service needs, with two thirds (64.7%) requiring four or more services. This is not surprising given the complex nature of homelessness.

Similar to results for the PiT Survey Sample, supportive services was selected most frequently as a response. Respondents also expressed a need for services related to employment, education, mental health, learning disability and addiction or substance use, among other needs.

82.4% youth reported that they had regular contact (more than once a month) with a family member or guardian and 56.3% expressed that they would like to improve such relationships. However, a need for family reconnect was selected less frequently than other service needs by youth respondents.

FIGURE 20: YOUTH'S SERVICE NEEDS (n=34)



Note: Respondents could select more than one answer therefore the totals add up to more than 100%.

A LENS ON HOMELESSNESS WITHIN THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM

The Canadian Definition of Homelessness⁷² includes people in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements. Therefore, institutions such as correctional facilities, hospitals and treatment programs were asked to participate in 'Everyone Counts' by providing administrative data based on the number of individuals who resided in their facilities on November 30 but who had no fixed address or permanent housing they could return to. Several correctional institutions and community-based residential facilities participated, including the St. John's Lockup, Her Majesty's Penitentiary, Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women, Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre⁷³, The John Howard Society - Howard House, and Correctional Services Canada Community Correctional Facility. Two of these facilities, the NL Youth Centre and the NL Correctional Centre for Women, are located outside of St. John's, however, they are the only correctional facilities in Eastern Newfoundland designated for youth and women, respectively. These facilities were asked to only report on individuals who were from St. John's and who would likely return to St. John's upon release.

Surveys were conducted in all facilities listed above except the Youth Detention Centre by volunteers who had the appropriate security clearances to do so. Surveys were conducted over the phone with individuals from the NL Correctional Centre for Women as this facility is located two hours outside of St. John's. Since very few communities are able to gain access into correctional facilities in this capacity, this opportunity was used to critically evaluate the survey design for this setting and compare the number of eligible surveys to the administrative data obtained. It became evident that the survey design and the "no fixed address" approach was not adequate to assess homelessness in this setting. Some concerns were raised over the following points:

- ▶ Most offenders are likely to lose their primary residence upon incarceration unless they own their own home and it is maintained by a partner, family member, or friend.
- ▶ Some offenders may not give their address upon entry into a correctional facility if it exposes a location where illegal activities are occurring.
- ▶ The length of the individual's sentence impacts whether they can maintain housing or whether they will be looking for housing. It is not reasonable to expect an offender who is serving an extended sentence to maintain housing or to be looking for housing.
- ▶ There are differences in the interpretation of the question about time spent homeless over the past year (Appendix 4, Survey question 10). Some respondents included their period of incarceration as time homeless while others did not.

See Appendix 5.2 for a detailed description of the survey inclusion and exclusion criteria.

⁷² See Appendix 1 for the Canadian Definition of Homelessness

⁷³ The NL Youth Centre was willing to participate, however, no youth from St. John's whose circumstances met the definition of homelessness stayed there on the night of the count.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

In terms of demographics, males represented 55.6% and females represented 44.4% of those surveyed within correctional institutions (n=27). The median age of respondents was 35 years. 18.5% of those surveyed identified as Indigenous. In comparing the PiT Survey Sample to the Corrections PiT Survey Sample, we see no notable differences between the two in terms of gender distribution and Indigeneity. However, respondents who resided in correctional facilities on the night of the count were less likely to identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community than the PiT Survey Sample (14.8% vs 21.7%).

Table 13: Comparison of demographics for survey populations

	CORRECTIONS PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		PIT SURVEY SAMPLE	
	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size
MALES	55.6%	27	51.2%	84
FEMALES	44.4%	27	44.0%	84
INDIGENOUS	18.5%	27	19.2%	78
LGBTQ2S	14.8%	27	21.7%	83

Note: There is overlap between the Corrections PiT and the PiT Survey Samples

5.2 INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

65.4% of respondents (n=26) indicated they:

- ▶ Received services from Child Protection Services while they remained in their family home or resided with another family member AND/OR
- ▶ Lived in foster care and/or group home⁷⁴

Of those who have been in foster care or a group home (n=13), 92.3% felt that Child Protection Services was not helpful in their transition to independence and 41.7% reported that they became homeless within one year after leaving the care of Child Protection Services.

⁷⁴In Newfoundland and Labrador, youth can reside in open-custody group homes under the supervision of the corrections system without ever coming into contact with Child Protection Services. However, the number of youth who reside in group homes through Child Protection Services is significantly higher than the number of youth who reside in open-custody group homes. Therefore, we do not expect that this would impact the results shown.

5.3 EXPERIENCE WITH HOMELESSNESS

The median age at which respondents became homeless was age 19 years. In many ways, the experience of homelessness for those who resided in correctional facilities mirrored that of the PiT Survey Sample, noting that there is overlap between these survey samples (the majority of respondents who resided in correctional facilities were included in the PiT Survey Sample). However, the role of addictions and substance use, and incarceration in the experience of homelessness was more pronounced when we analyze the surveys from those who resided in correctional institutions on the night of the Count.

A) ADDICTIONS AND SUBSTANCE USE

Addictions and/or substance use played a prominent role in the experience of homelessness for those within the corrections system. Almost half (44.4%) of respondents who had no fixed address and who were incarcerated or residing in a community-based residential program at the time of the Count listed addictions or substance use as a reason for their first experience of homelessness. This was the most commonly selected reason among respondents for the first experience of homelessness.

Table 14: Percentage of respondents who reported connections to addictions and substance use

ADDICTIONS OR SUBSTANCE USE LISTED AS:	CORRECTIONS PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		YOUTH PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		PIT SURVEY SAMPLE	
	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size
REASON FOR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS	44.4%	27	23.5%	34	24.1%	83
REASON FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS	11.5%	26	0%	32	8.6%	81
BARRIER TO HOUSING	36.0%	25	16.7%	31	21.3%	80
SERVICE NEED	81.5%	27	35.3%	34	44.0%	84

Note: There is overlap between the Corrections, Youth and the PiT Count Survey Samples

Addiction or substance use was the second most commonly selected reason for respondents' most recent housing loss (11.5%), following behind incarceration (61.5%).

Four out of five respondents who were surveyed within the correctional system reported that they had a service need relating to addictions or substance use. Furthermore, respondents from corrections were more likely to cite addiction or substance use as a barrier to housing.

B) INTERACTIONS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

As expected, those who resided within the corrections system on November 30 reported interactions with the criminal justice system as reasons for their most recent housing loss. Incarceration was reported by 61.5% of respondents as one of the reasons for their most recent housing loss. However, of note, many respondents had previous experience of homelessness prior to their most recent period of incarceration. In addition, it is unclear if respondent's most recent housing loss was due to their most recent period of incarceration as 44.4% of respondents reported they were incarcerated two or more times over the past year.

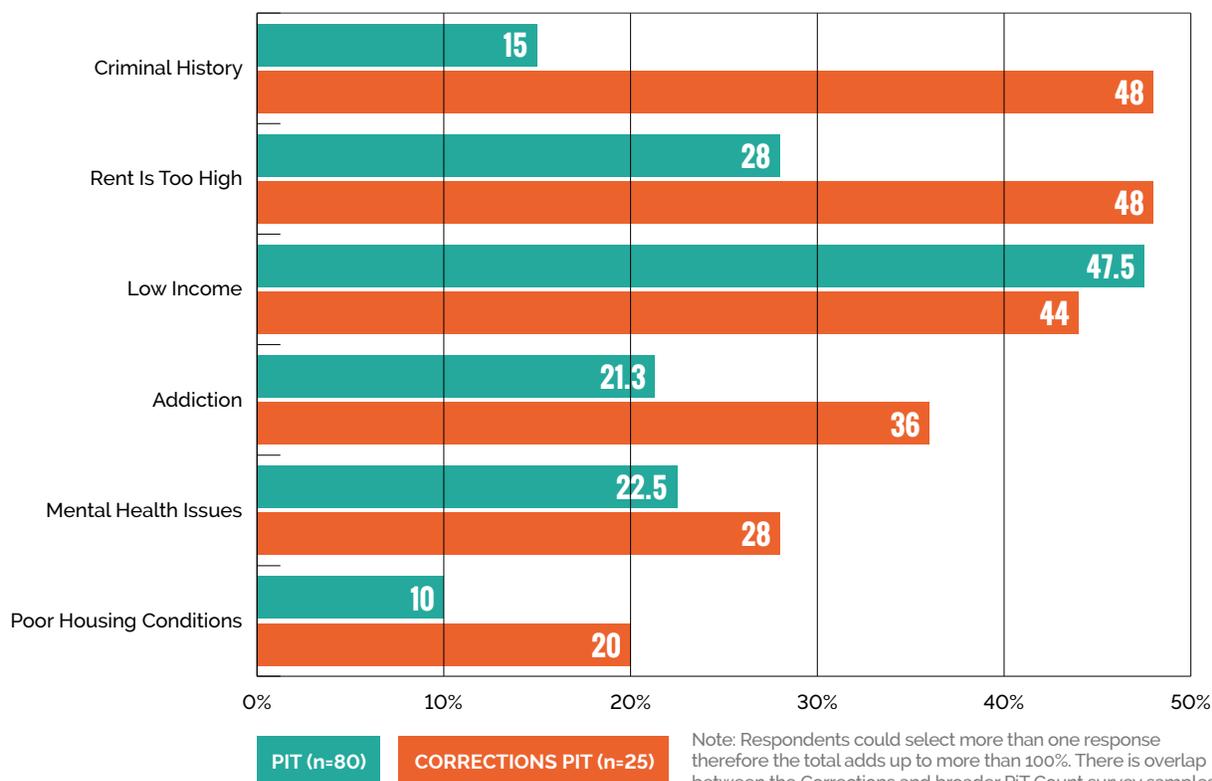
Criminal history was reported most frequently as a barrier to housing for those resided within the corrections system with no fixed address. Similar to the youth and broader PiT count populations, rent is too high, low income and addiction were also frequently selected by respondents as barriers to housing.

Table 15: Percentage of respondents who reported connections to the criminal justice system

INCARCERATION OR CRIMINAL HISTORY LISTED AS:	CORRECTIONS PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		YOUTH PIT SURVEY SAMPLE		PIT SURVEY SAMPLE	
	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size
REASON FOR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS	14.8%	27	2.9%	34	6.0%	83
REASON FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS	61.5%	26	15.6%	32	18.5%	81
BARRIER TO HOUSING	48.0%	25	16.7%	31	15.0%	80

Note: There is overlap between the Corrections, Youth and the PiT Count Survey Samples

FIGURE 21: BARRIERS TO HOUSING



5.4 SERVICE NEEDS

77.8% of respondents who resided in correctional facilities on the night of the Count reported having a need relating to four or more services. Services related to employment, addiction or substance use, and supportive services were most frequently selected.

Many respondents reported having a service need relating to education (77.8%) and a learning disability (51.9%). Given that 55.5% of respondents had not completed high school, this result is not surprising.

Similar to the broader PiT count population, 69.3% of respondents indicated that they are not in regular contact with a family member or guardian. However, 72.0% would like to improve a relationship with a family member or guardian. Given this, almost half of respondents (44.2%) reported a need for services related to family reconnect.

When asked if they knew where to go in the community to get help, 30.8% of respondents said no.

FIGURE 22: SERVICE NEEDS



LIMITATIONS OF THE COUNT DATA

Of note, some groups are admittedly not well-represented in this report for the following reason: A homeless population count is not like conducting a census of households or businesses, in which there are known fixed addresses for the vast majority of participants. Homelessness, by definition, involves housing instability, housing loss, and transience and, therefore, persons who are living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, or couch-surfing at someone else's place are not easy to locate during a PiT Count (or in a national Census, for that matter). As a result, the following groups are under-represented in this report.

Unsheltered homeless: Persons who experience unsheltered homelessness stay outside, in a place not intended for human habitation and/or in a public or private space without consent or contract. This includes in a vehicle, tent, makeshift shelter, bus shelter or abandoned building. As is common for research with marginalized populations, it is difficult to engage the most vulnerable individuals.⁷⁵ Only three individuals who were surveyed stayed in unsheltered locations therefore the population represented in this report is mostly connected with support services. This is likely due to limitations with the street count – it is impossible to cover every inch of the city and volunteers were instructed not to enter abandoned buildings, which were identified as known areas where those experiencing homelessness stay or frequent.

Hidden homeless: The hidden homeless are individuals who stay with family, friends, or others because they have nowhere else to go. The PiT Count is not designed to measure the extent of hidden homelessness in a community but those surveyed provide useful information about the experience of hidden homelessness in our community. The State of Homelessness in Canada report (2014) estimates 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night but approximately 42% more - as many as 50,000 - make up the hidden homeless.⁷⁶ The hidden homeless represent 13.3% of the number of homeless persons counted in St. John's on November 30, 2016 but the true number of those experiencing hidden homelessness in St. John's is likely higher.

Families: Very few respondents (3.6%) reported staying with a family member (dependent, partner, or other relative) on the night of the Count. However, in 2015, 16.1% of shelter users in St. John's accessed shelters as part of a family⁷⁷ therefore families are under-represented in the report.

Females: Females represented 38.9% of the counted population and 44.0% of the PiT Count Survey Sample. These findings are consistent with 2015 local shelter data, in which females accounted for 43.3% of shelter users in St. John's. However, in comparison to the general population in which females represent 52.4%, females are under-represented among the homeless population in St. John's. This does not mean that women are less likely to become homeless – instead it is the nature of their homelessness that differs from males, who are more likely to use shelter services. According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, when women become homeless, they are at increased risk of violence and assault, sexual exploitation and abuse.⁷⁸ As a result, women are less likely to enter the shelter system and more likely to experience hidden homelessness, live in overcrowded conditions and/or stay in dangerous and unhealthy relationships to avoid living on the streets.

⁷⁵ Flanagan, S.M. and Hancock, B. (2008). Reaching the 'hard to reach'. Retrieved from <http://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-10-92>

⁷⁶ Gaetz S., Donaldson J., Richter T., & Gulliver T. (2013). The State of homelessness in Canada 2013. Homeless Hub Paper #4. Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC2103.pdf>

⁷⁷ Community Progress Indicators Report: St. John's. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.nlhnh.org/PDF/CPIR-SJS-2015.pdf>

⁷⁸ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2017). Who is homeless? Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/who-homeless>

THE PIT COUNT & OUR COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

The findings in this report are sobering. The high representation of Indigenous people, of those who identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community, and of those who had involvement with Child Protection Services are of great concern. It is alarming that nearly three out of five respondents first became homeless before age 24 years and two out of five respondents experienced six or more months of homelessness over the past year. These results are not unique to St. John's – the 2016 Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count⁷⁹, in which 32 communities across Canada participated, found that those who identify as Indigenous are nine times more likely to experience homelessness than those who do not. In addition, *Without A Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey*⁸⁰ found that 29.5% of youth experiencing homelessness identified as part of the LGBTQ2S community and 57.8% had some involvement with Child Protection. However, there is no comfort in knowing St. John's fits within these national trends. It indicates that we, as a society, have failed somewhere along the way to address the issues that lead to homelessness and perpetuate its recurrence.

End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ) believes the value in conducting a PiT Count is that it catalyzes the work we do to implement our *2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness in St. John's*⁸¹ based on Housing First principles. Housing First recognizes that housing is a basic human right. As a recovery-oriented approach, Housing First is focused on quickly moving people from homelessness into housing and then providing supports necessary to maintain it. Rather than requiring those experiencing homelessness to first resolve the challenges that contributed to their housing instability, including mental health or addictions issues, Housing First is based on the belief that recovery should begin with stable housing.

Ending homelessness using a Housing First approach does not mean that we will never have someone who needs emergency shelter or loses housing: that would not be realistic. But we can have a community with the coordination and supports in place to reduce average shelter stays to seven days or less by 2019, with the ultimate goal of ensuring no one in our city will live on the streets or in emergency shelter for longer than seven days before having access to the supports they need. The Count contributes to the plan by setting a baseline of data and improving our understanding of the characteristics and service needs of our local homeless population. We see progress in other communities that have tied their PiT counts to plans to end homelessness. Communities like Medicine Hat, Alberta, have already achieved their goal of ending homelessness.⁸² EHSJ aims to end chronic and episodic homelessness in St. John's by 2019. Through system coordination and the provision of housing and supports based on a Housing First approach, and through a commitment to conduct PiT counts and other research regularly, communities like St. John's, Medicine Hat and many others have made evidence-based decisions that are resulting in real change – for individuals and for the community as a whole.

The success of this approach underscores the fact that homeless persons want housing with real choice and appropriate supports, and that individuals who once experienced homelessness can thrive once these critical needs are met. However, no single group can end homelessness on their own. It will take all of us – government, the private and community-based sectors, labour, faith communities and researchers – working in a coordinated manner and building upon the strong foundation of cooperation we already have in place here in St. John's. Together we can address the convergence of vulnerabilities that lead to homelessness, and we can find real solutions to improve outcomes for individuals, families and our community.

⁷⁹ Hunter, P. (2017). Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Canadian Point-in-Time Counts. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development.html>

⁸⁰ Gaetz S., O'Grady B., Kidd S., & Schwan K. (2016). *Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey*. Retrieved from: <http://homelesshub.ca/YouthWithoutHome>

⁸¹ EHSJ (2014). *St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness*. <http://www.nlhcn.org/PDF/YYT-Community-Plan-2014-2019.pdf>

⁸² Smith, C. (2017). Homeless Find a Champion in Canada's Medicine Hat. Retrieved from https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/02/26/world/canada/homeless-canada-medicine-hat-housing-first.html?emc=edit_th_20170301&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=10750031&referer=

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

At the end of their Count shifts, volunteers provided feedback about their volunteer experience and offered suggestions to improve future counts. Of those who completed feedback forms, the majority (63 out of 70) found that the training session effectively and efficiently prepared them to fulfill their assigned roles in the count. Overall, 67 out of 70 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their volunteer experience.

The recommendations provided below are based on comments and suggestions from volunteers, participating agencies, the YLC, the Project Coordinator, and EHSJ's Everyone Counts Advisory Committee. As this was St. John's first Count, the recommendations focus on improvements in future counts, specifically relating to the planning and methodology. However, the findings of this report will be used to inform EHSJ's 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness and will help to set priorities for action as EHSJ works to prevent and end homelessness.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COUNTS:

- ▶ Ensure there is at least six months of planning time prior to the Count in order to engage public systems and other partners who require their own approval processes in order to participate
- ▶ Consider changing the timing of the PiT Count to spring or earlier in the fall
- ▶ Consider conducting the street count later in the evening (between 10:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m.)
- ▶ Explore means of increasing coverage for the street count
- ▶ Continue to integrate the youth count into the overall PiT Count
- ▶ Explore means to improve Count methodology and survey design for Public Systems
- ▶ Increase participation in the Count survey. Half of those enumerated (50.6%) participated in the survey. Efforts should be made to increase this to at least 80%. This could be achieved by allowing shelter surveys to be conducted over one to two full days and by encouraging shelter staff to conduct surveys with clients.
- ▶ Provide more opportunities during volunteer training for role-playing
- ▶ Develop a resource for team leaders that outlines all safety protocols
- ▶ Continue to build capacity in the community and work to engage more community partners in future counts.

NEXT STEPS:

- ▶ The results of this Count will be used to inform EHSJ's 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness in St. John's, and the development of future plans.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to work with people with lived experience of homelessness, community partners and government (federal, provincial and municipal) to set priorities for action as we work toward long-term solutions to homelessness.
- ▶ This report will be made available to other organizations, government and the public.
- ▶ EHSJ will continue to conduct counts on a biennial basis and will use the lessons learned from the 2016 Count to improve the methodology for the spring 2018 Count. Through successive counts, EHSJ will be able to monitor trends and measure the effectiveness of interventions and community progress in ending homelessness.

APPENDIX 1

CANADIAN DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

TYPES	LIVING SITUATION	INCLUDED
UNSHELTERED	1.1 People living in public or private places without consent or contract	✓
	1.2 People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation	✓
EMERGENCY SHELTERED	2.1 Emergency overnight homeless shelters (adult, youth, and family)	✓
	2.2 Shelters for individuals and families impacted by family violence	✓
	2.3 Emergency shelters for people fleeing a natural disaster	✗
PROVISIONALLY ACCOMMODATED	3.1 Interim housing (transitional housing)	✓
	3.2 People living temporarily with others but without guarantee of continued residency or prospects of permanent housing	✓
	3.3 People accessing short-term, temporary rental accommodation without security of tenure (hotels, motels)	✓
	3.4 People in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements	✓
	3.5 Accommodation/reception centers for recently arrived immigrants and refugees*	✓
AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS	4.1 People at imminent risk of homelessness	✗
	4.2 Individuals who are precariously housed	✗

*were willing to participate but no one stayed there on the night of the Count

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FACILITY/ PROGRAM NAME	CATEGORY	ADMINISTRATIVE DATA	SURVEYED BY STAFF	SURVEYED BY VOLUNTEERS
AIDS Committee of NL	Tommy Sexton Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	
Association for New Canadians ⁸³	Reception House	Emergency Shelter	✓		
Ben Said Services Ltd.	Ashley Ben Said	Emergency Shelter	✓		
Choices for Youth	Outreach Centre	Community Site		✓	✓
	Rally Haven	Supportive Housing for Youth	✓		
	The Lilly	Supportive Housing for Youth	✓		
	Young Men's Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	✓
Correctional Services Canada	NL Community Correctional Centre	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
Eastern Health	Mental Health and Addictions Program	Institutional Setting: Mental Health and Addictions Services	✓		
End Homelessness St. John's	Front Step ⁸⁴	Housing First Program		✓	
Gower Street United Church		Community Site			✓
Iris Kirby House	Iris Kirby House	Domestic Violence Shelter	✓		✓
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour	Social Work Services	Public system	✓		

⁸³Were willing to participate however no one stayed there on the night of the count

⁸⁴Through End Homelessness St. John's, Stella's Circle and Choices for Youth co-manage Front Step, a community-based program offering personalized support services and housing for youth and adults who have experienced the longest and most frequent episodes of homelessness. Only clients who were accepted in the program but not housed as of November 30 (e.g. still experiencing homelessness) were included in the Count.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES (CONTINUED)

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	FACILITY/ PROGRAM NAME	CATEGORY	ADMINISTRATIVE DATA	SURVEYED BY STAFF	SURVEY BY VOLUNTEERS
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development	Youth Corrections and Youth Services	Public System/Youth Service Provider	✓		
Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice and Public Safety	Her Majesty's Penitentiary	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
	St. John's City Lockup	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
	Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		
	NL Correctional Centre for Women	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
Pleasant Manor Corporation	Pleasant Manor	Transitional Housing	✓		✓
Salvation Army	Wiseman Centre	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	✓
	Food Bank	Community Site			✓
St. John's Native Friendship Association	Shanawdithit Shelter	Emergency Shelter	✓		✓
Stella's Circle	Brian Martin Housing Resource Centre	Community Site		✓	
	Emmanuel House	Institutional Setting: Treatment Centre	✓		
	Naomi Centre	Emergency Shelter	✓	✓	
The Gathering Place		Community Site			✓
The John Howard Society of NL - Howard House	Howard House	Institutional Setting: Corrections	✓		✓
The Pottle Centre		Community Site			✓

DATA SOURCES FOR DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS WITH THE GENERAL POPULATION

Indigeneity

Statistics Canada (2013). National Household Survey Aboriginal Population Profile.

Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/aprof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=1001519&Data=Count&SearchText=st.%20john's&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>

LGBTQ2S

Bozinoff L. (2012). One twentieth of Canadians claim to be LGBT.

Retrieved from https://www.forumresearch.com/forms/News%20Archives/News%20Releases/67741_Canada-wide_-_Federal_LGBT_%28Forum_Research%29_%2820120628%29.pdf

Males and Females

Statistics Canada (2012). 2011 Census.

Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Migration into St. John's

City of St. John's (2016). Demographic and Opinion Survey.

Retrieved from http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publicationDemographic%20Survey%20Results_StJohns_2016.pdf

APPENDIX 4

LINKS TO 'EVERYONE COUNTS' RESOURCES

Facility Form

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/facility_form

Recommendations

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/recommendationspdf~1

Survey Screening Tool

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/survey_screening_tool

Survey

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/everyone_counts_survey_final_numbered_2docx

Street Count Zones

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/st_johns_2016_street_count_maps_with_instructionspdf

Unsheltered Tally Sheet

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/unsheltered_tally_sheet_finaldocx

Volunteer Recruitment Information and Registration Form

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/volunteer_recruitment_information__registration_formdocx

Volunteer Information Package

https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca/pitcounts/resources/english/community_documents/st_johns_2016/volunteer_package_final_docx

METHODOLOGY

The focus of 'Everyone Counts' was on enumerating those in emergency shelters and transitional housing with targeted efforts for the hidden homeless, rough sleepers and public systems. Additional efforts were put in place to count the number of youth experiencing homelessness in St. John's. Overall, the count used a combination of survey and observed administrative data. The methodology for 'Everyone Counts' was based on the Everyone Counts St. John's Homeless Point-in-Time Count Model,⁸⁵ The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Point-in-Time Count Toolkit⁸⁶ and The Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.⁸⁷ EHSJ and the NL Statistics Agency participated on the HPS National PiT Count Working Group which developed the national methodology. The methodology used was similar to that used by cities who participated in Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy National Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness from January to April 2016. While this does allow some comparisons between St. John's data and other Canadian cities, it should be noted that the difference in the time of year can impact results.

A5.1 DATA COLLECTION

The date of November 30, 2016 was selected for the count by EHSJ's PiT Count Advisory Committee. This date was the day before disbursement of Income Support when individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to present at shelters and outreach services.

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

1. Shelters, transitional houses and supportive housing programs
2. Street count zones
3. Community sites
4. Magnet event
5. Public systems
6. Youth-serving shelters and service providers

A list of all participating agencies is available in Appendix 2.

⁸⁵Turner, A., & Harvey, A. (2016). Everyone counts: St. John's Homeless Point-In-Time Count Model. Retrieved from <http://www.nlhcn.org/PDF/Everyone-Counts-SJS.pdf>

⁸⁶COH (2016). Point-in-time count toolkit. Retrieved from <http://homelesshub.ca/toolkit/chapter/methodology>

⁸⁷HPS (2016). Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/pit-countguide.html>

Table 16: Overview of Methodology

TARGET POPULATION	COMPONENT 1: ROUGH SLEEPERS	COMPONENT 2: EMERGENCY SHELTER/ TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FACILITIES	COMPONENT 3: HIDDEN HOMELESS	COMPONENT 4: PUBLIC SYSTEMS	COMPONENT 5: YOUTH
ENUMERATION APPROACH	Street Count (rough sleepers)	Facility Form	Homeless-serving drop-in/outreach centres	Facility Form	Youth-serving homeless shelters and service providers
SURVEY APPROACH	Combined survey and tally sheet of observed characteristics by trained volunteers.	Survey by trained staff/volunteers.	Survey by trained volunteers.	Survey by system staff/designated volunteers, where possible.	Youth Magnet Event Survey by staff & Volunteers Youth-serving shelters and service providers to conduct surveys
DATE/TIME	November 30, 2016 Night count (2 hours): 8:30 to 10:30 PM	November 30, 2016 Overnight count after 11:59 PM Surveys (2 hours). 4:30 to 10:30 PM (Time varied by location)	November 30, 2016 Surveys (2 to 4 hours): 11 AM to 7 PM (Time varied by location)	November 30, 2016 Overnight count after 11:59 PM	Magnet Event – November 30, 2016 from 3 to 7 PM Service provider count/surveys December 1 to 5, 2016

A) SHELTERS, TRANSITIONAL HOUSES AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR YOUTH

Administrative data was collected from 10 emergency shelters, one transitional housing program and two supportive housing programs for youth. Each facility was asked to complete a facility form sent as a SurveyMonkey link.⁸⁸ Facilities reported information on the number and demographics of people staying at that location as of 11:59 PM on November 30. AESL provided administrative data for two shelters.

Surveys were conducted at shelters and transitional houses by trained volunteers and/or staff on November 30, 2016. Youth who stayed in supportive housing were surveyed at the youth magnet event. The PiT Count Coordinator worked with each shelter and transitional house to determine the best time for volunteers to arrive in order to engage as many participants as possible over a two hour time period. Except in cases where staff administered the surveys, surveys took place between 4:30 PM to 10:30 PM. Volunteers worked in teams at their assigned locations. Team leaders worked with shelter staff to recruit participants for the surveys.

⁸⁸Links to 'Everyone Counts' Resources are available in Appendix 4.

B) STREET COUNT ZONES

Surveys were conducted in 14 street count zones (Appendix 4) on November 30 from 8:30 to 10:30 PM. The time was chosen to overlap with the time when most shelter surveys were taking place in order to avoid duplication.

The zones were established based on a list of known locations (i.e. bridges, parking lots, buildings) where people experiencing unsheltered homelessness may stay or frequent. The locations were identified in consultation with the PiT Count Advisory Committee, the City of St. John's (Parks Division, Recreation Division, Parking Enforcement), the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Pippy Park, Choices for Youth's Youth Leadership Council, and Thrive's Street-Reach program. The Project Coordinator and Youth Technical Advisor developed the maps for the project using Google Maps Pedometer.⁸⁹

Volunteer surveyors worked in teams of three or four. At least one member of each team had experience working with those experiencing homelessness. Each team was assigned to a specific zone and provided with maps of their area, which indicated "hot spots" or known areas. Volunteers were instructed to cover as much of their area as possible in the two hours allotted, focusing on the hot spot locations, and to survey everyone they encountered.

C) COMMUNITY SITES

Surveys were administered by trained volunteers and/or staff at five community sites (this number excludes Choices for Youth who hosted the magnet event described below). The community sites were Gower Street United Church, Salvation Army Food Bank, Brian Martin Housing Resource Centre, The Gathering Place and The Pottle Centre. Surveys were conducted over a two hour period between 11 AM and 3 PM, based on peak hours of operation and the programming schedule of the participating site. The main focus of this approach was to survey individuals among the hidden homeless population. Surveyors were instructed to approach all individuals using that service to determine if they were eligible for the survey.

D) YOUTH MAGNET EVENT

A youth magnet event was planned, coordinated and hosted by Choices for Youth's Youth Leadership Council (YLC). The main objective of the magnet event was to recruit youth experiencing homelessness, specifically hidden homelessness, to one location in order to be counted and surveyed. The event was held at Choices for Youth's Outreach Centre on November 30, 2016 from 3:00 to 7:00 PM and was based around the Centre's community supper. The YLC, with support from the Choices for Youth staff, coordinated the food, entertainment, prizes and other activities. They worked closely with the PiT Count Coordinator regarding the coordination of count-related activities. Importantly, participation in the survey was not a requirement to attend the event. Trained volunteers and staff administered the survey throughout the course of the event. The event was promoted through a social media (Facebook) event and through the distribution of posters and postcards throughout the city.

⁸⁹ Google Map Pedometer (2016). Retrieved from <http://mappedometer.com>

E) PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Public systems were engaged to provide administrative data on individuals who were provisionally accommodated in institutional settings but who met the definition of homelessness. In this case, institutions were asked to complete the facility form and report on individuals who had no fixed address. Information was provided by correctional facilities, halfway houses, treatment centres, and mental health and addictions programs. Surveys were conducted in several correctional facilities, as some volunteers had the appropriate security clearances to do so.

F) YOUTH-SERVING SHELTERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

As part of 'Everyone Counts', End Homelessness St. John's piloted a hidden homelessness methodology which focused on the youth sub-population in tandem with the St. John's Count. As part of this initiative, youth-serving shelters and service providers were engaged to conduct surveys with youth from December 1 to December 5, always asking where youth slept on November 30. In some cases, youth-serving shelters or service providers were unable to conduct surveys with youth, however, they provided additional administrative data, where applicable.

In total, information was collected from:

- ▶ 14 street count zones;
- ▶ 10 shelters (including privately operated shelters and provisional accommodation for immigrants and refugees);
- ▶ 8 institutional facilities (treatment centres, correctional facilities, community-based residential programs, and mental health and addictions programs);
- ▶ 6 community sites (food banks, meal programs and community centres)
- ▶ 1 transitional housing program
- ▶ 2 supportive housing programs for youth

A5.2 SURVEY

A) SURVEY DESIGN

Based on guidance from the HPS and the COH, two survey instruments were designed to collect information – the survey and the tally sheet (Appendix 4).

The survey components included:

1. An introduction containing information about the count, its purpose, and what the results will be used for
2. A question addressing whether or not the participant had already participated in the survey
3. A question seeking informed consent from the participant to participate in the survey
4. Screening questions to determine eligibility based on definitions of homelessness (determined by HPS)
5. Mandatory data elements (determined by HPS)
6. Optional data elements
 - a. Developed by the COH (determined by the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee)
 - b. Developed and determined by the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee in consultation with the COH using a youth-focused lens

The survey was piloted with the YLC in November, 2016. The YLC provided feedback about the process and made recommendations about question design, specifically regarding the optional data elements that were created using a youth-focused lens. The feedback was brought back to the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee and changes were made accordingly.

The final survey consisted 31 questions (26 main questions with 5 containing follow-up or sub-questions) covering the topics indicated in table 16. Links to the screening questions and survey are available in Appendix 4.

Table 17: 'Everyone Counts' Survey Data Elements

MANDATORY DATA SET	OPTIONAL DATA SET	
Developed and determined by HPS	Developed by the COH and determined by the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee	Developed and determined by the 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee in consultation with the COH
<u>14 Core HPS Questions</u> covering: family status, age, Aboriginal identity, immigration status, LGBTQ2 identity, gender identity, migration, military service, first experience of homelessness, experience of homelessness in the past year, emergency shelter use, loss of housing and income	<u>8 Optional COH Questions</u> covering: Aboriginal community, reason for migration to St. John's, education, foster care, service use, desire for housing, and barriers to housing,	<u>9 Optional Local Questions</u> covering: reason for first experience of homelessness, experience with Child Protection Services, transition to independence, time between leaving care and becoming homeless, financial circumstance during childhood, relationships with family, desire to improve family relationships and community resources

B) ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

As stated previously, trained volunteers and staff administered the survey. Unaccompanied youth under the age of 16 were not surveyed. Dependents under the age of 18 were not surveyed if they were staying with a parent or guardian on the night of the count. Surveyors were instructed to approach everyone they encountered to determine their eligibility for the survey. They were trained to administer the survey in a non-judgemental and neutral manner. In addition, surveyors were told to respect respondents' rights and personal space (e.g. not wake anyone up, not interrupt anyone who was actively working). Respondents were informed that the survey was voluntary, their name would not be recorded, and they had the right to decline any question and/or the rest of the survey at any point.

For the street count, surveyors were instructed to use the tally sheet provided (Appendix 4). This sheet was used to track respondents who declined to answer the survey, who have already answered the survey, have been screened out or have been observed only. Volunteers recorded where the individual was encountered, the reason they were not surveyed and whether they are included among observed homelessness (clearly homeless, but declined or are unable to respond to the screening questions). For those who were clearly homeless but who were unable or declined to be surveyed, observation data (age and gender) and indicators of homelessness were recorded.

C) HONORARIA AND ENGAGEMENT GIFTS

Individuals who met the definition of homelessness and who agreed to participate in the survey were provided with an honorarium for their time. The honorarium used for this count was a \$10 Dominion gift card. The 'Everyone Counts' Advisory Committee determined the honoraria based on feedback from the YLC and other service providers. Dominion was chosen because of the wide range of products available at that store, including cigarettes, personal care items, food and clothing. The amount chosen was determined based on the budget available for these items and the anticipated number of surveys to be conducted. In addition, the committee felt that the survey was quite long and \$10 was an appropriate amount to show the respondent that their participation and feedback was valued.

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

Street Count surveyors were provided with additional engagement gifts (e.g. granola bars, mitts, hats, etc.) to be used to engage individuals on the street, regardless of their participation in the survey. Street count volunteers were also provided with resource cards (kindly donated by Thrive's Street Reach program).

D) YOUTH COUNT SURVEY INCLUSION/EXCLUSION

From December 1 to 5, 2016 an additional three surveys were completed with youth who met the definition of homelessness on November 30, 2016. A youth service provider provided administrative information for four additional youth (each was assigned a unique identifier) who were provisionally accommodated with family or friends on the night of November 30. Most shelters reported having the same clients stay at the shelter for the additional five days, therefore youth would have been counted in the administrative data provided for November 30.

Eleven surveys were conducted with youth who reside in supportive housing for youth. These surveys were not included in the broader PiT Count number and analysis, as these housing arrangements do not fit within the definition of homelessness. However, tenure of these accommodations is based on age and need of support. As this programming is age-based, youth residing in supportive housing will require permanent and affordable housing when they exit the program. Given that youth in supportive housing had experience with homelessness or had been at risk of homelessness in the past, those who wished to participate were surveyed and their responses were included in the analysis on youth homelessness. In total, we used 34 surveys for the analysis on youth homelessness, 23 surveys from youth that fit the definition of homelessness used in this count and an additional 11 surveys from youth staying in supportive housing. In most of the analyses, including or excluding the surveys from youth in supportive housing did not significantly impact the results. In cases where including this population did affect results, both analyses are shown.

E) CRITICAL EVALUATION OF SURVEYS COMPLETED WITHIN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Several correctional institutions and programs participated in this count including: The St. John's Lockup, Her Majesty's Penitentiary, Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women, Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre,⁹⁰ The John Howard Society-Howard House, and Correctional Services Canada Community Correctional Facility. These facilities were asked to provide administrative data based on the number of individuals who resided in their facilities on November 30 but who had no fixed address or permanent housing they could return to. Two of these facilities (NL Youth Centre and NL Correctional Centre for Women) are located outside of St. John's, however, they are the only correctional facilities in Eastern Newfoundland designated for youth and women, respectively. These facilities were asked to only report on individuals who were from St. John's and who would likely return to St. John's upon release.

Surveys were conducted in all but the Youth Detention Centre by volunteers who had the appropriate security clearances to do so. Surveys were conducted over the phone with individuals from the NL Correctional Centre for Women as this facility is located two hours outside of St. John's. Since very few communities are able to gain access into correctional facilities in this capacity, this opportunity was used to critically evaluate the survey design for this setting and compare the number of eligible surveys to the administrative data obtained. It became evident that the survey design and the "no fixed address" approach was not adequate to assess homelessness in this setting. Some concerns were raised over the following points:

- ▶ Most offenders are likely to lose their primary residence upon incarceration unless they own their own home and it is maintained by a partner, family member, or friend. Depending on how frequently a facility updates their address information, there may be many people who have no fixed address but who would have somewhere to go upon release.
- ▶ Some offenders may not give their address upon entry into a correctional facility if it exposes a location where illegal activities are occurring.
- ▶ The length of the respondent's sentence. It is not reasonable to expect an offender who is serving an extended sentence to maintain housing or to be looking for housing. Should they be considered homeless if they have resided and will continue to reside in institutional settings for extended periods of time?
- ▶ There are differences in the interpretation of the question about time spent homeless over the past year (Appendix 4, survey question 10). Some respondents included their period of incarceration as time homeless while others did not.

Based on these concerns, a small subcommittee evaluated the surveys to determine their eligibility for the count. In many cases, additional information about the respondents' housing situation and/or period of incarceration was required to inform the decision to include or exclude them. Where possible, facility administrators provided the additional information about the respondents' period of incarceration and housing situation immediately prior to incarceration. Administrators were provided with the unique identifier (described below) for the respondent. Administrators did not provide the respondent's name or any additional identifying information to the research team and the research team did not share survey responses with administrators.

⁹⁰The NL Youth Centre was willing to participate but no homeless youth from St. John's stayed there on November 30, 2016.

Surveys were included in the broader PiT count analysis (section 3) based on the following criteria:

- a) The period of homelessness was longer than the period of incarceration over the past year
- b) The respondent indicated that they had stayed in a shelter in the past year
- c) The respondent's reason for most recent housing loss was something other than "incarceration"
- d) Clarification about the respondent's housing situation immediately prior to incarceration was obtained, where applicable, and it was determined that they did meet the definition of homelessness

Surveys were excluded from the broader PiT analysis based on the following criteria:

- e) The respondent indicated that they did have a place that they rented or owned
- f) The respondent did not identify as homeless and excluded the survey from question 9 onward (Appendix 4, Survey).
- g) The respondent's only experience of homelessness was their most recent period of incarceration
- h) The respondent was serving an extended sentence
- i) The respondent was not capable of living independently
- j) Clarification about the respondent's housing situation immediately prior to incarceration was obtained, where applicable, and it was determined that they did not meet the definition of homelessness
- k) The survey could not confidently be included or excluded based on criteria listed above and additional information was not available to inform the decision. Surveys that met this criteria were included in the analysis pertaining only to homelessness in correctional institutions.

In total, 36 surveys were conducted within correctional institutions and facilities. Of these, 23 were included in the broader PiT count analysis and 13 were excluded. Of the 13 that were excluded, 4 were excluded solely on criteria k. These 4 surveys were included in the analysis on homelessness within correctional facilities.

A5.3 ENUMERATION

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness enumerated by this count is predominantly based on the administrative data collected and supplemented by survey information where administrative data does not exist or is limited⁹¹ (e.g. for rough sleepers and the hidden homeless). Not everyone who was counted was surveyed, therefore the survey provides a sample for analysis from the overall number counted.

Where possible, administrative data was critically evaluated and cross-referenced with the survey information available from users of that facility. If required, administrative data was adjusted to reflect accurate information about clients (e.g. gender identity, Aboriginal status). Administrative data from correctional institutions and programs was adjusted if survey respondents were excluded from the count.

⁹¹ One service provider did provide administrative data for individuals who met the definition of hidden homeless. The age range was provided and each individual was assigned a unique identifier. Information regarding gender was not provided but would have been provided if needed to prevent duplication.

A5.4 AVOIDANCE OF DOUBLE COUNTING AND DUPLICATION

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

- 1) The enumeration number was predominantly based on the administrative data collected. In cases where administrative data does not exist or is limited (e.g. for rough sleepers and the hidden homeless), surveys were used to inform the count number.
- 2) Where possible, shelter surveys and street surveys were conducted at the same time (8:30 to 10:30 PM) to avoid duplicate entries.
- 3) Volunteers wore identifiable yellow 'Everyone Counts' buttons and asked people if they had already participated in the survey before they began the screening process.
- 4) Survey respondents were assigned unique identifiers (first name initial, month of birth, last name initial, day of birth) to aid in de-duplication. Surveys with matching identifiers were identified. The surveys were reviewed in further detail and it was determined that they were matching entries. One duplicate entry was excluded from the analysis.

These strategies ensured that high-quality results were obtained.

A5.5 RESPONSE RATES

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

The combined response rate for emergency shelters and transitional houses was 54.2% (32 out of 59). It should be noted that six individuals who stayed at two participating emergency shelters were surveyed at the youth magnet event. An additional four emergency shelter clients were surveyed at community sites, however, it is unknown which shelters these clients stayed at. These ten individuals were not included in the response rate calculation as they were not surveyed at the shelter where they stayed on the night of November 30.

For institutional settings the response rate was 69.2% (27 out of 39).

It is impossible to estimate the response rate for unsheltered and hidden homeless populations as the total number of these populations is unknown.

A5.6 DATA CLEANING, ENTRY AND ANALYSIS

In total, 106 individuals were surveyed. Eighty-four surveys were eligible for the broader PiT count analysis (meeting the definition of homelessness). An additional 11 surveys from youth residing in supportive housing with past experience of homelessness were not included in the broader PiT count analysis but were included in the youth-specific analysis. Lastly, 4 surveys conducted with individuals in correctional settings were not included in the main analysis but were included in the in-depth analysis of homelessness within correctional facilities (Section 5). We removed 7 surveys that were deemed ineligible.

Data entry was performed by the PiT Count Coordinator and two Student Project and Planning Assistants using the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) software, version 3.82. Data was entered over a period of two weeks. Initial data cleaning was completed by the Project Coordinator using Microsoft Excel. Further data cleaning and analysis was completed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency using SPSS, in consultation with the Project Coordinator. Respondents who declined to answer or selected "Don't Know" were excluded from the analysis.

A5.7 WEATHER

The weather on November 30 was favourable for a count for this time of year. There was a low of -6 degrees Celsius with the wind chill. There were light snow showers and 10-15 km/hr winds.⁹²

A5.8 LIMITATIONS TO THE POINT-IN-TIME APPROACH

The priority of the national point-in-time approach is to capture data about homeless persons who are sleeping rough (street homelessness) and staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities. Communities can opt to include hidden homelessness and public systems. While the benefits of a count far outweigh its limitations, it is important to acknowledge these limitations and strive for improvement. The key limitations to this approach are listed below.

- 1) The count inherently undercounts the homeless population. It represents the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness on a single day.
- 2) As a snapshot of homelessness on one particular day, the Count does not provide information on system use throughout the year.
- 3) A point-in-time count cannot adequately capture the hidden homeless or those at risk of homelessness.
- 4) Seasonal variation can impact the results of the count.

⁹²Environment and Natural Resources. (2016). Hourly Data Report for November 30th, 2016. Retrieved from http://climate.weather.gc.ca/climate_data/hourly_data_e.html?StationID=50089&month=11&day=30&timeframe=1&Year=2016&Month=11&Day=30&StartYear=1840&EndYear=2016

- 5) It is unlikely that every area where homeless individuals stayed on November 30, 2016 was visited by volunteers. The street count focused on areas where homeless individuals were known to frequent or stay. Therefore other areas of town, where volunteers may have encountered individuals experiencing homelessness were excluded. During consultations with service providers, several abandoned buildings were identified as areas of interest. However, due to concerns about liability and volunteer safety, volunteers were instructed to not enter abandoned buildings.
- 6) Individuals experiencing homelessness may not wish to be seen or counted. Promotion of the count, having large numbers of surveyors out on the streets and events that draw large numbers can send some individuals into hiding. On the night of the count there was a St. John's Ice Caps hockey game downtown. Although the game did not interfere with surveyors ability to canvass the downtown area, homeless individuals may have fled the downtown. In addition, some parking garages, which were identified as hot spots, were used for parking for the game, reducing the likelihood that volunteers would encounter homeless persons in those locations.
- 7) Counts rely on service provider reports and client surveys, which can contain errors and omissions.
- 8) The count used surveys to collect information about those experiencing homelessness in St. John's. While best efforts were made to optimize the survey design, responses to survey questions can be influenced by survey respondents' honesty, introspective ability, ability to recall past events, and understanding and interpretation of survey questions.

VOLUNTEERS

The success of 'Everyone Counts' was highly dependent on volunteers. Approximately 100 volunteers were needed to administer surveys and work at the headquarters location on the day of the count. In total, 101 volunteers assisted with the count. Not including the time of partnering agency staff, volunteers contributed approximately 600 hours to the project. Based on a rate of \$24/hour,⁹³ we estimate that \$14,400 worth of volunteer time was contributed to this project.

A6.1 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Volunteers were recruited through existing partnerships within the housing and homelessness-serving sector, community programs and the university. Organizations were encouraged to circulate the recruitment link to their networks via email or by posting on their social media pages. Volunteers signed up through a SurveyMonkey link (Appendix 4). The recruitment link asked volunteers to provide their contact information, identify which role(s) they were interested in, indicate their level of experience working with the homeless and conducting surveys, select the training shift and volunteer shift they were available for and provide their emergency contact information. Volunteer recruitment began on October 24, 2016 and closed on November 14.

A6.2 VOLUNTEER TRAINING

All volunteers were required to attend a mandatory training session on November 29, 2016 (either from 2 to 4 PM or 7 to 9 PM). Team leads were required to attend an additional hour of mandatory training on November 29, 2016 (from 1 to 2 PM or 6 to 7 PM). Training took place at the Headquarters Location which was The Gathering Place Auditorium. Volunteers were pre-assigned to their training shift and asked to confirm their attendance through a SurveyMonkey link. Training was facilitated by the Project Coordinator and Thrive's Street Reach staff (indicated below).

General Training covered:

1. Introduction to the Count
2. Pit Count Day Logistics
3. Volunteer Packages (including Liability Waiver and Oath of Confidentiality)
4. Practical Tips and Considerations (facilitated by Thrive)
5. Street Safety (facilitated by Thrive)
6. Cultural Sensitivity (facilitated by Thrive)
7. The Survey
8. Survey Practice

⁹³Alexander, C. and Gulati, S. (2013) TD Economics: An Economist's Case for Volunteering. Retrieved from <https://volunteer.ca/content/td-economics-economists-case-volunteering>

Team Leader Training overlapped slightly with general training but emphasized several key aspects where team leaders' roles differed from other surveyor roles. The following topics were covered in Team Leader Training:

1. The Role of Team Leaders
2. Ethics of Research, Confidentiality, Informed Consent and Honoraria
3. The Survey Screening Questions
4. Safety Protocols

A6.3 VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Initially, 112 volunteers signed up for the count. Several volunteers dropped out and others volunteered after the registration deadline, leading to a final count of 101 volunteers. Of these, 92 attended training to be survey volunteers and 9 others assisted at the headquarters location throughout the day. All volunteers who attended training arrived for their shift on the day of the count. This is largely attributed to the short period of time between training and the count shift.

A6.4 VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

At the end of their shift, volunteers were asked to provide feedback about training, their volunteer experience and suggestions for improvement. Seventy (70) volunteers completed feedback forms and their comments and suggestions were used to inform the recommendations provided in this report.

63 out of 70 volunteers who provided their feedback considered that the training session effectively and efficiently prepared them to fulfill their assigned roles in the count. Five out of 70 did not agree that the training was helpful and 2 of the respondents did not attend training (they were assigned to a Headquarters role). Overall, 67 out of 70 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their volunteer experience, while 3 were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied.