

Alberta Counts Homeless Population

Key Findings - Lethbridge

On April 11 and 12, 2018, The City of Lethbridge participated in the Government of Canada's second Homeless Partnership Strategy Coordinated Point-In-Time (PIT) count. The Count offers a snapshot of homelessness across Canada. Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness (7 Cities) coordinated the Alberta Count in order to better understand homelessness in Alberta. The 7 Cities are: The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge.

This year marked the first nationally-coordinated PIT count, using an updated standardized methodology across Canada. For the first time, the count included data for health and correctional facilities and short-term supportive housing units, making comparison with previous years difficult.

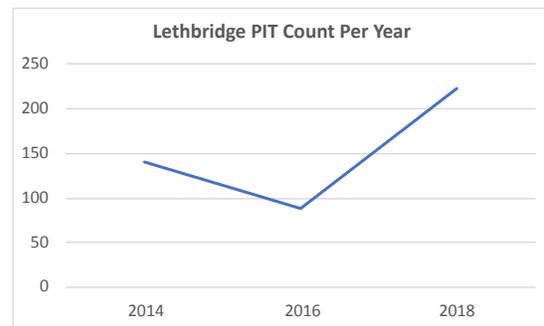
1. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

223 individuals were counted as experiencing homeless.

In 2016, only 89 persons were included in the count. Method refinements, such as the inclusion of additional transitional housing units as well as provincial system data for health and correctional facilities compared to 2016 partially explain the increase in homelessness count in Lethbridge.

The evening of the PIT Count, 109 individuals at the shelter identified as homeless, but only 67 slept at the shelter. The average shelter occupancy for April 2018 was 81 per night.

Provincially, 5,735 people were counted as experiencing homelessness in the 7 Alberta cities in 2018, 7% more than in during the 2016 count.



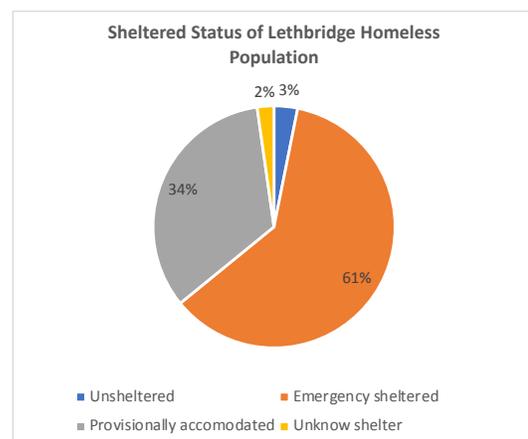
5 of the 7 Cities counted more people experiencing homelessness in 2018 than in 2016.

2. HOMELESSNESS EXPERIENCE

In addition to the street count, the following service locations were included: Lethbridge Shelter, Wood's Home Youth Shelter, Southern Alcare Manor Treatment Facility, and Blackfoot Family Lodge Society Transitional Accommodation for Indigenous women and their children. Administrative data only was also collected for the following locations and systems: YWCA Harbour House Women's Emergency Shelter, Streets Alive Mission Transitional Accommodation for men, Lethbridge Hospital emergency services and in-patients, Lethbridge Correctional Services, Alberta Works/AISH Hotels and Motels, Lethbridge Police Holding cells

7 (3%) were unsheltered, 136 (61%) emergency sheltered, 75 (34%) provisionally accommodated, and 5 (2%) unknown.

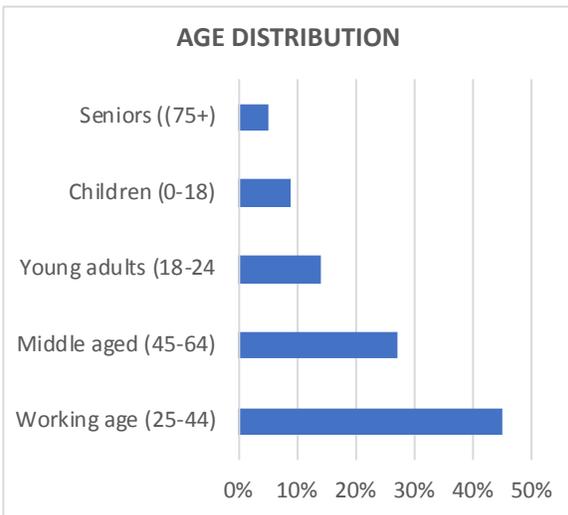
Provincially, 3% were unsheltered, 47% emergency sheltered, and 49% provisionally accommodated.



3. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

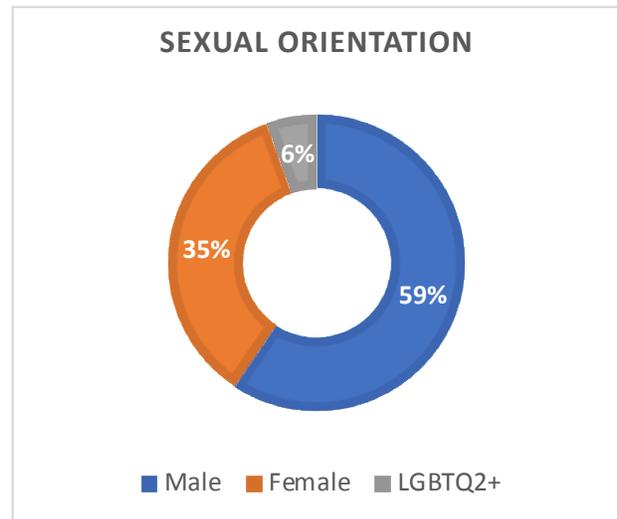
Those experiencing homelessness were invited to complete a survey in exchange for a small honorarium. 128 individuals completed a survey. Demographic information is based on survey results.

73% of Lethbridge respondents and 50% across Alberta self-identified as Indigenous (26% across Alberta using administrative data)



The largest group experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge were adults of working age (25-44 years old): at 45%, followed by the middle-aged (45 to 64) at 27%, the young adults (18-24) at 14%, the children at 9% and the seniors at 5%.

Provincially, 37% were adults of working age, 39% were middle-aged, 8% young adults, 11% children and 5% seniors.



59% of those experiencing homelessness identified as male, 35% as female* and 6% as other.

Provincially, 72% identified as male, 28% as female.

*14 of the 128 surveys were taken in a womens transitional housing facility, likely explaining the relative high percentage of female respondents.

4. HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS

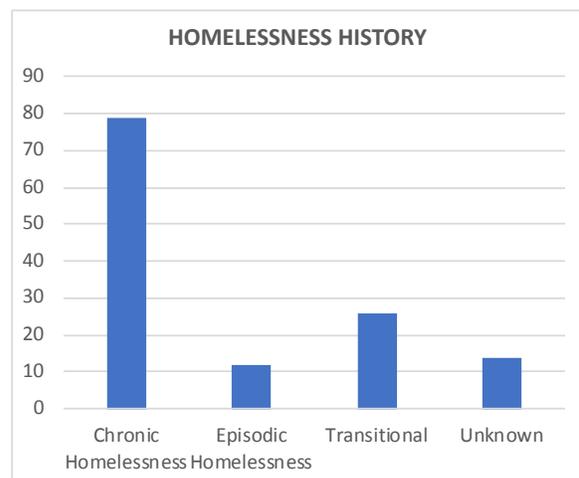
The majority of respondents have been homeless for a long period of time: 65% were chronically homeless*, 10% were episodically homeless**, 21% experienced transitional homelessness***, and history of homelessness was unknown for 4%.

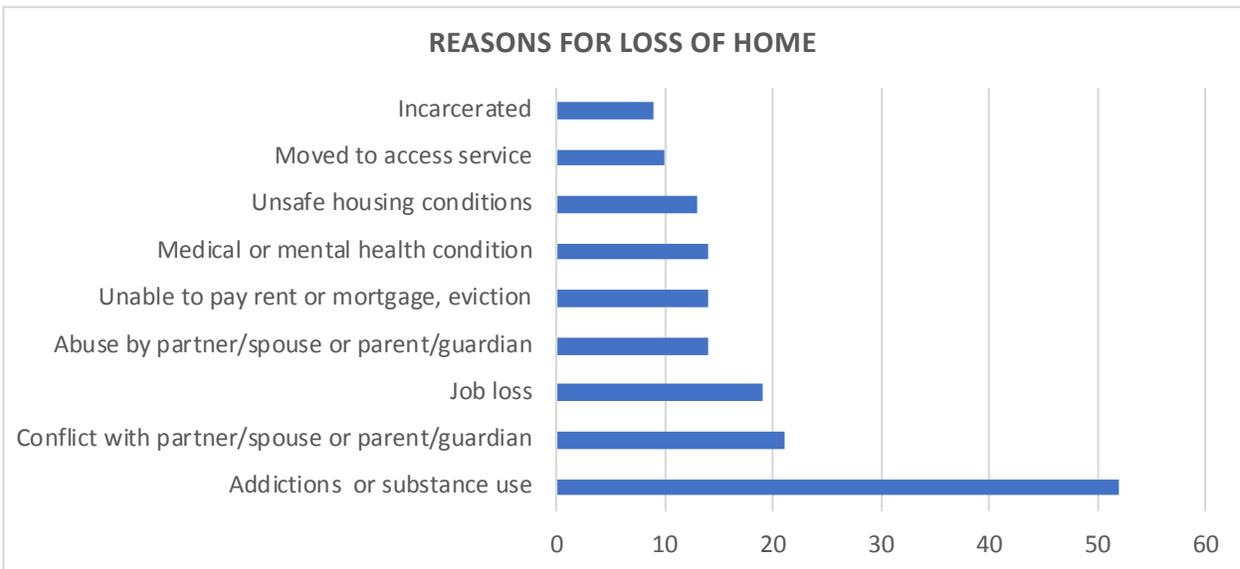
Provincially, 62% were chronically homeless and 6% episodically homeless. 22% experienced transitional homelessness and history of homelessness was unknown for 10%.

*Chronic homelessness: have been homeless for at least 180 cumulative days over the past year

**Episodic homelessness: homeless 3 or more time in the past year

***Transitional: experiencing homelessness for a short time and infrequently





The most common reasons for loss of housing* were substance abuse & addictions (41%), job loss (15%), inability to pay rent or mortgage (11%), conflict with spouse/partner (13%), and unsafe housing conditions (10%).

Provincially, the most common reasons were addictions or substance use (25%), job loss (16%), and unable to pay rent (15%).

*In many cases, there were multiple reasons for loss of home.

5. Methodological Considerations

McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association coordinated the Point-In-Time Count for Lethbridge. A total of 64 individuals volunteered their time. The teams consisted of one or two volunteers and one staff from a Housing First agency. The walking routes were determined by numbered zone maps used in previous PIT counts. All 7 Cities agreed to offer an honorarium as a means of thanking survey participants. In Lethbridge each respondent received a small honorarium and a Community Links Getting Connected Booklet.

The Lethbridge Adult Shelter provided a count of persons experiencing homelessness, but did not share any additional administrative data for the individuals housed at the Shelter during the night of the count. For that reasons, demographic information provided in this report is based only on survey data.

6. About Social Housing in Action

Social Housing in Action (SHIA) is an initiative of the City of Lethbridge funded by Alberta Human Services, Outreach & Support Services Initiative (OSSI) and The Government of Canada Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The City of Lethbridge works with community, organizations, partners and stakeholders to ensure homelessness is addressed, prevented and ended in Lethbridge. Using a Housing First Approach, SHIA offers rapid re-housing to people who find themselves in a homeless or at-risk situation, and consistent availability of client-focused, integrated housing and support systems.

Between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018, 12 service providers offered 18 Social Housing programs. Over 900 individuals benefited from the programs and 213 were newly housed during the year.