

Executive Summary
Community Advisory Board on Homelessness
Point-in-Time Count, 2018

In April, Charlottetown & Summerside took part in a nationally coordinated effort, led by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, to measure homelessness in Canada.

The Point-in-Time Count, the second of its kind in Charlottetown & Summerside, was led by The John Howard Society of PEI (Community Entity) in partnership with the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and The Community Advisory Board.

Over a period of twenty-four hours, volunteers counted and surveyed individuals staying in emergency shelters, temporary accommodation and unsheltered locations, such as sidewalks, parks and other public places.

The count offers a "snapshot" of homelessness in Charlottetown & Summerside on a single night. The results of the count will produce the *minimum* number of people experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness in our community. In addition to a count of absolute homelessness, individuals who were couch-surfing, staying temporarily with friends or family, were given the option to participate in the survey.

The results will improve our understanding of the needs and circumstances of the people who are affected by homelessness in our community. We will gain key data on gender, age, Aboriginal identity, veteran status and more.

In the future, successive counts will allow us to measure progress towards our ultimate goal: ending homelessness in Charlottetown & Summerside.

Results

- A total of 118 people were surveyed and 32 people were screened out as they did not identify as homeless; however, that did not indicate that they were not at risk of homelessness or that they did not require services.
- In comparison to the 2016 PiT Count, there was a closer gender gap as 53% (66% in 2016) of surveys reported as male and 47% (34% in 2016) female.
- 86% of people surveyed fall between the ages of 18-54 with 7% between 16-18 years of age and 7% in the 55+ category. The number of adults were consistent with the 2016 findings; however, there were fewer youth (3%) and more seniors (11%) in 2016.
- There was a mixed demographic inclusive of people who identified as Indigenous (14%), immigrant or refugee (1%) and veterans (6%). The percentage of people identifying as Indigenous is the same as reported in 2016 where there is increase in veterans (2% in 2016) and a decrease in immigrants or refugees (9% in 2016).

In order to get a picture of the number of people experiencing homelessness the night of the PiT Count, all participants were asked the question “Where are you staying tonight”? There were a total of 32 people who indicated they will be staying at their own apartment/house and therefore were screened out as they did not report as homeless the night of the count. Of the people who indicated they did not have their own house or apartment:

- 49% were staying in transitional housing, similar to the 2016 result (50%)
- 15% were staying in an emergency shelter, compared to only 8% in 2016
- 13% were staying in systems (hospital, jail, etc.)
- 23% were considered hidden homeless (people staying with a friend, couch surfing, etc.). This percentage is the same as reported in 2016.

Homelessness is an ongoing problem in PEI and is not typically resolved in the short term. 59% of participants experiencing homelessness indicated they have been homeless for more than 3 months total. This number increased from 46% in 2016. This increase is not a surprise as there is limited affordable housing available and longer waitlists for people to be housed. Further statistics showed that 30% indicated being homeless for a total of 6+ months, similar to 2016, and 16% for 12+months. 11% of participants also indicated they experienced homelessness 3 or more times.

58 participants indicated they were not originally living in Charlottetown or Summerside and had moved there over time. Of those 58 people, 47% moved to Charlottetown or Summerside to access services and supports. Another 12% indicated they moved to find housing, and 9% to seek employment. Many of those participants were moving from rural PEI to the urban centers.

In order to learn more about the challenges faced by people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness participants were asked 'What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?'

- 64% of participants believe the rents are too high and 30% specified poor housing conditions.
- 63% consider themselves low income
- 34% are challenged by addiction, 29% by mental health
- 27% (38% if inclusive of domestic violence) experience family conflict

Many participants, although in needs of housing, are also in need of a variety of other services. To find out which services in PEI are lacking accessibility, participants were asked 'Do you need services related to:'

- 54% of participants require services related to mental health
- 51% of participants need services related to addictions
- 26% of participants are seeking help for serious or ongoing medical conditions
- 16% of participants identified a physical disability
- 13% of participants indicated a learning disability
- 4% of participants experienced a brain injury

Conclusion:

In concluding the second national Point-in-Time (PiT) Count, the community is able to begin to see comparisons, both positive and negative, surrounding homelessness within the Designated Communities (DC) of Charlottetown and Summerside. Over time, as there are more PiT Counts conducted, the data can be tracked to see patterns, fluctuation in homelessness, and resources that may be lacking within the communities.

As there becomes an increased awareness into the homeless issues in the DC, there is an increased need and desire for collaboration among various organization to come together for a similar cause. The information provided is only the beginning of the path to find solutions and collaborations in order to end homelessness in PEI.