

# **CUISR:**

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Community – University Institute for Social Research

## **Count of Saskatoon's Homeless Population: Research Findings**

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## **FOREWORD**

It is important to note that this project is the first of its kind to be conducted in the Saskatoon area. As such, it is likely that the data gathered will raise more questions than answers. As subsequent assessments are conducted in the city, we will be able to adjust the data collection methods used and refine the needs assessment questionnaire in accordance with the lessons learned from the current count. Thus, subsequent projects will have the opportunity to learn from the current experience to collect more data and ask more in-depth questions about the nature of homelessness in Saskatoon.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) conducted the first count of Saskatoon's homeless population on May 22, 2008. The purpose of the project was to count the homeless population and determine their service use patterns and needs. The results will be used to inform service delivery and better serve the needs of Saskatoon's homeless population. The data collected indicate that homelessness is a problem in Saskatoon and that further policy discussions and actions are required.

The project had two components:

- An enumeration, which counted the number of homeless individuals staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing (hereafter service providers) and outdoors
- A street needs assessment, which was a survey examining homeless individuals' service use patterns and needs

Data were collected at four of the city's five emergency shelters and six of the 18 transitional housing service providers. Nineteen outdoor survey areas were identified in consultation with community groups that work with homeless individuals. The number of individuals reporting no fixed address was collected from the Gordie Howe campground, Larson House Detox Centre, and McLeod House. The number of individuals referred to hotels on the evening of the count by the Salvation Army was also collected.

The project was funded through Service Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

### Count Results

- A total of 260 individuals were counted as being homeless in Saskatoon. Of those, 228 were adults and 32 were children.

**Table 1. Total number of homeless individuals counted**

Location	Number of Adults	Number of Children	Total Number	Total Percent
Shelters	169	30	199	76.5
Outdoor	44	0	44	16.9
Detox Centre	7	0	7	2.7
Hotel	6	0	6	2.3
Campground	2	2	4	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100</b>

### Service Provider Count

- As shown in Table 2, 169 adults and 30 children were housed by the targeted service providers on the night of May 22, 2008. Many of the service providers had not reached capacity by 9:30 pm. The Salvation Army and YWCA Shelters turned away several individuals on count night.

**Table 2. Service provider count and number of turnaways**

Services Primarily Accessed by Homeless Individuals	Persons Counted at 9:30 pm		Total Service Provider Capacity (Adult)		Turnaways
	Adults	Children	Number	Percent	Number
<b>Emergency Shelters</b>					
Interval House	8	0	10	80.0	0
Lighthouse	4	0	16	25.0	0
Salvation Army Shelter	38	0	51	74.5	3
YWCA	38	0	38	100.0	20
<b>Transitional Housing</b>					
Larson House Detox Centre	7	0	-	-	NA
Infinity House	12	22	14	85.7	NA
My Home	20	4	25	80.0	-
Quint Male Youth Lodge	7	0	10	70.0	NA
Salvation Army Bethany Home	10	4	10	100.0	-
Tamara's House	4	0	5	80.0	NA
<b>Other Locations</b>					
Hotels	6	0	-	-	-
McLeod House	13	0	14	92.9	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>78.8*</b>	<b>23</b>

\* Average shelter capacity

### Outdoor Count

- Forty-six adults and two children were counted outdoors (including the Gordie Howe campground) on the night of the count.
- The outdoor survey had two parts:
  - Part I - an interview
  - Part II - an observational survey completed by the surveyor when the homeless person was inaccessible

**Table 3. Location where Part I and Part II of the outdoor survey was completed**

Location	Part I		Part II		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Street	14	77.8	19	73.1	33
Park/River	2	11.1	4	15.4	6
Railroad	2	11.1	2	7.7	4
Private Property	0	0.0	1	3.8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>44</b>

## Street Needs Assessment Results

Data for the street needs assessment were collected with clients of service providers and outdoors. Data were collected at four of the city’s five emergency shelters and four of the 18 transitional housing service providers as well as in 19 outdoor survey areas.

### *Service Provider Results*

- Thirty-eight needs assessment surveys were completed, which represents an average response rate of 43 percent (which is comparable to common response rates for surveys that do not compensate their participants). The largest number of surveys was administered at the Salvation Army Shelter, which has the largest number of beds of the eight service providers included in the count.

**Table 4. Number of surveys completed**

Services Primarily Accessed by Homeless Individuals	Surveys Completed	
Emergency Shelters	Number	Percent
Interval House	7	18.4
Lighthouse	1	2.6
Salvation Army Shelter	18	47.4
YWCA	5	13.2
Transitional Housing	Number	Percent
Infinity House	0	0.0
Quint Male Youth Lodge	3	7.9
Salvation Army Bethany Home	1	2.6
Tamara's House	3	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Respondent Demographics*

- Twenty-three respondents (60%) were between 30 and 50 years of age.
- A total of 21 of respondents (58%) were male.
- Seventeen respondents (46%) were Aboriginal and 15 respondents (41%) were Caucasian.
- The most commonly reported sources of income were formal employment (17 respondents or 45%) and social services (14 respondents or 37%). More males than females reported working at formal employment, informal employment, or day jobs. Employment rates did not differ by ethnicity.
- Of the 20 respondents who were employed, 14 (70%) worked full time. Full time employment rates did not differ by gender or ethnicity.
- Twenty-nine respondents (78%) were staying by themselves. Six respondents (all female) were staying with their children.

### *Current and Past Housing*

- Respondents reported an average length of stay of 3.3 months (with a range of 1 day to 2 years). On average, emergency shelter respondents reported shorter stays than those staying in transitional housing (3.1 months and 4.2 months, respectively).
- Most respondents last had their own residence within a year of the count. Seven respondents (23%) last had their own residence within a month prior to the count and 12 individuals (40%) last had their own residence between 30 days and 364 days prior to the count. On average, it had been approximately two years since respondents last had their own residence (with a range of 1.5 days to 16 years).

### *Waiting List*

- Most respondents were not on a housing waiting list; ten respondents (28%) were on a waiting list. More females were on a waiting list than males. More Aboriginal respondents were on waiting lists than Caucasian respondents.
- The YWCA (5 respondents) and Cress Housing (4 respondents) waiting lists were the most frequently cited waiting lists.
- On average, respondents were on waiting lists for approximately 56 days and had checked their housing applications an average of 2.7 days prior to count day.
- All respondents found the application process difficult. The most common difficulties were the expense of available housing, low vacancy rates, and inability to secure appropriate references.

### *Service Use Patterns*

- Respondents used shelters (30 respondents or 79%), health clinics (17 respondents or 45%), and hospitals or emergency rooms (11 respondents or 29%) most frequently in the previous six months. The majority of services did not help respondents find housing although respondents generally did not find it difficult to access any of the services.
- Twenty-one respondents (60%) had a long-term housing plan. Larger proportions of male and Aboriginal respondents had a housing plan. Of the 21 respondents with a housing plan, most expected to move to a residence within a week (5 respondents) or within a month (7 respondents).
- Of the justice and health services, respondents had most often been in contact with the police (15 respondents or 40%) in the previous six months. Respondents were also in contact with ambulance, probation/parole, and jail/detention. Most justice and health services did not help respondents find housing. Male respondents reported equal contact with police and probation/parole whereas female respondents had the most contact with the police. Caucasian respondents had relatively equal contact with ambulance, police, and probation/parole services whereas Aboriginal respondents reported that contact with the police dominated in their experience.

### *Finding Housing*

- Perceived housing affordability (20 respondents or 53%) and limited housing availability (9 respondents or 24%) were the most commonly cited barriers to finding housing.
- When provided with a list of supports which would help them find housing, respondents thought that help finding affordable housing (30 respondents or 79%), more money (27 respondents or 71%), and transportation to see apartments (18 respondents or 47%) would be most helpful.

### **Outdoor Results**

*Note that surveyors approached every individual they encountered outside and conducted a screening procedure to determine eligibility to complete the needs assessment. The number of eligible individuals and the number of Part I surveys differ as two respondents chose not to participate in the survey. Screening questions were not required for individuals for whom the Part II observational survey was completed.*

- A total of 386 individuals were screened to determine if they met the criteria to complete the outdoor survey. Most individuals who were screened were staying at home (297 respondents or 82%), with friends (16 respondents or 4%), or with family members (11 respondents or 3%).
- A total of 20 individuals were eligible to complete the survey based on where they would be spending the night. Of the individuals who were screened, seven were staying outside; four were staying in a car, van, or trailer; four were staying in a tent; four were uncertain; and one was squatting.
- A total of 18 needs assessment surveys (Part I) and a total of 26 observational surveys (Part II) were completed outside on May 22, 2008.

### *Respondent Demographics*

*Note that surveyors completing Part II observational surveys estimated the individual's age and gender only. All other results refer to Part I.*

- Ten Part I respondents (62%) were under 30 years of age. Of the 26 individuals observed with Part II surveys, 15 (58%) were estimated to be between 26 and 49 years of age; six (23%) were under 25; and five (19%) were estimated to be 50 years of age or over.
- Thirteen Part I respondents (72%) were male. Fourteen (54%) of the individuals observed with Part II of the survey were male.
- Nine respondents (50%) were Aboriginal and seven respondents (39%) were Caucasian.
- Formal employment (5 respondents or 28%) and day jobs (5 respondents or 28%) were the most commonly cited sources of income. More males than females were employed at formal employment, informal employment, or day jobs; however, the number of Caucasian and Aboriginal respondents who were employed was similar.
- Six of the seven respondents (86%) who were employed worked full time. Six males were employed full time whereas no female respondents were employed full time. All of the Caucasian and Aboriginal respondents were employed full time.
- Thirteen respondents (93%) were with another adult when they were observed. One individual had a pet. Surveyors did not observe any children outdoors.

### *Current and Past Housing*

- The most frequently cited sleeping locations were abandoned buildings; a car, van, or trailer; and in a park. Some individuals reported staying near the railroad tracks, on a sidewalk, and in tents.
- Most respondents had been without their own residence for less than one year. Five respondents (28%) had their last residence within one month prior to the count and seven respondents (39%) had their last residence between 30 days and 364 days prior to the count. On average, it had been approximately two years since respondents last had their own residence (with a range of 7 days to 11 years).

### *Waiting List*

- One respondent (6%) was on a waiting list (which he described as an “acquaintance’s” waiting list).
- The respondent was on the waiting list for two weeks and had not checked his application.
- The respondent found the application process difficult due to low vacancy rates and the cost of housing.

### *Service Use Patterns*

- Health clinics (11 respondents or 61%), hospitals or emergency rooms (7 respondents or 39%), and drop-ins (6 respondents or 33%) were the most frequently used services. The majority of services did not help respondents find housing although respondents generally did not find it difficult to access any of the services.
- Three of the 18 respondents (17%) had a long-term housing plan. Of those, one expected to move within one week and two expected to move within a month.
- Of the justice and health services, respondents had most often been in contact with the police (11 respondents or 61%) in the previous six months. Respondents had also been in contact with probation/parole and jail/detention (but not ambulance). Most justice and health services did not help respondents find housing. Male and female respondents reported equally the most contact with the police. Aboriginal respondents reported equal contact with police, probation/parole, and jail/detention whereas Caucasian respondents had the most contact with the police.

### *Finding Housing*

- Perceived housing affordability (10 respondents or 56%) and limited housing availability (4 respondents or 22%) were the most commonly cited barriers to finding housing.
- When provided with a list of supports which would help them find housing, help finding affordable housing (17 respondents or 94%), more money (14 respondents or 78%), and help with housing applications (13 respondents or 72%) were cited as the most useful.

## Discussion

- The results dispel several myths about homelessness. In particular, the needs assessment found equal proportions of Caucasian and Aboriginal respondents. Another finding of interest was that nearly half of service provider respondents were employed, with most working full time. Outdoor survey respondents also reported high levels of formal employment and day jobs as their source of income although their employment participation was lower relative to service provider respondents.
- There are several limitations to the counting method used. The method underestimates the number of people experiencing homelessness, particularly because homeless individuals are difficult to contact and it is not possible to effectively count hidden homeless individuals. In addition, because the method captures a “snap shot” of homelessness on one day, it does not differentiate between long-term and short-term homelessness. Homeless individuals and families staying in hotels provided by Social Services, the city jail, and Safe House Shelter were not counted for the evening of the count.
- It is possible that the current project had a lower detection rate than other municipalities for several reasons. While CUISR recruited the desired number of volunteers for the count, the current project had fewer volunteer resources than other municipalities, which limited the number of outdoor survey areas. In addition, a large police presence in some neighbourhoods and safety measures equipping volunteers with reflector vests may have discouraged participation. Two teams that found homeless individuals were unable to complete small portions of their survey areas, and these survey areas were not completed due to limited volunteer resources.
- The project had a number of strengths. CUISR’s volunteer recruitment and training strategies were extremely successful and there was a great deal of support for and interest in the project among the community. CUISR consulted with academic and community contacts when designing the project to ensure that stakeholder needs were met and that the project was conducted in a respectful manner.
- The data collected suggest several avenues for a holistic approach for service providers to intervene with and support individuals struggling with homelessness, including addressing housing affordability and availability as well as pursuing opportunities for collaborating with other service providers.

## INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is an extremely important issue worldwide. While stakeholders in the City of Saskatoon have been working to prevent and reduce homelessness for some time, homelessness has recently been recognised as a growing problem in the city. Many municipalities in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia have implemented initiatives to determine the number of individuals who are struggling with homelessness and having difficulty maintaining suitable accommodations. Homelessness is a complex phenomenon and there are several different types of homelessness. While there are inconsistencies in the terminology used by different municipalities and countries when discussing homelessness, the constructs remain consistent across municipalities.

Individuals and families experiencing **absolute homelessness** currently have no permanent residence. The absolutely homeless do not have conventional housing alternatives and do not stay in shelters, safe houses, or transition houses. This form of homelessness is typified by the stereotypic image of the homeless individual—a man in a sleeping bag lying atop a grate on a downtown sidewalk or a woman with a shopping cart full of bags walking down the street. These individuals may be “sleeping rough”, or sleeping in the open air (e.g., street, parks, stairwells), or in buildings not suitable for human habitation such as sheds, cars, deserted buildings, and tents (e.g., Chamberlain, Johnson, & Theobald, 2007; Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2006; Thompson, 2005; City of Toronto, 2006; Social Planning and Research Council of BC, 2005).

Another form of homelessness is **sheltered homelessness**, which is defined as individuals and families who self-report not having a permanent residence and are currently residing in emergency accommodations such as emergency shelters, safe houses, and transition houses (e.g., Chamberlain, Johnson, & Theobald, 2007; Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2006; Thompson, 2005; City of Toronto, 2006; Social Planning and Research Council of BC, 2005).

Because of the cold climate, **hidden homelessness** is likely the most common form of homelessness in Saskatoon. Like the absolutely homeless, these individuals and families do not currently have secure housing. Sometimes referred to as “couch surfers”, these individuals would have to sleep on the streets or in shelters but they are able to stay with family or friends. While remaining unseen is a common strategy for many homeless individuals, regardless of the type of homelessness they are experiencing, the hidden homeless staying in private residences are extremely difficult to access and cannot be effectively counted (City of Toronto, 2006; Robillard & Peters, 2007).

Finally, a large proportion of individuals or families are **at-risk** of homelessness because they are currently living in housing that is inadequate, overpriced, unsafe, and/or overcrowded. This population is fairly diverse. For example, members of this group may be spending too much of their income on housing (i.e., above the 30% threshold for affordability) or staying in abusive relationships. They also may be currently living in conventional housing but may be experiencing difficulties maintaining their current accommodations and may, in fact, be attempting to gain aid from agencies to alleviate their housing situation (Chamberlain, Johnson, & Theobald, 2007; City of Saskatoon, 2008).

## **Homelessness in Canada**

Affordability is a leading cause of homelessness in Canada. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has defined housing as affordable if that housing is adequate shelter and does not exceed 30 percent of a household income (CMHC, 2008). Other municipalities in Canada have found that homeless individuals often cite affordability issues as reasons they are homeless. For example, the 2005 count of homeless individuals in Greater Vancouver found that 44 percent of survey respondents cited lack of income and 22 percent cited the cost of housing as the reason they were homeless (Social Planning and Research Council of BC, 2005). In 2006, Fort McMurray, Alberta, found that only 44 percent of homeless individuals who completed the survey had a source of income (Fort McMurray Housing Needs Count Committee, 2006). In 2007, Calgary's Drop In Centre, one of Canada's largest emergency shelters, reported that 40 percent of their residents reported working more than 32 hours a week and that over half would be able to afford rent between \$400 and \$800 in a housing market where the average cost of rent was \$851 a month (Calgary Drop-In and Rehab Centre, 2007; Laird, 2007).

In addition to affordability, homeless individuals face a variety of social issues including addiction, mental illness, unemployment, and unstable income (e.g., Laird, 2007; Social Planning and Research Council of BC, 2005). Vancouver's 2005 count of homeless people found that 25 percent of respondents cited health and/or addiction problems as reasons they were homeless. Chamberlain, Johnson, and Theobald (2007) found that 43 percent of homeless individuals in Melbourne, Australia, had addictions problems; of those, 66 percent developed their addiction after becoming homeless. Further, 30 percent of respondents had mental health problems and over half developed their mental health problems after becoming homeless (Chamberlain, Johnson, & Theobald, 2007).

Homelessness is very expensive to the Canadian government. In 2007, the Canadian federal government estimated that 150,000 individuals in Canada were homeless. Laird (2007) estimated the average cost of each homeless person was between \$30,000 and \$40,000, totaling between \$4.5 and 6 billion annually. This estimate includes the cost of health care, criminal justice services, social services, and shelters (Laird, 2007). The total was based on estimates of the size of the visible homeless population and does not include the cost of individuals who are homeless but stay with friends or family members (Laird, 2007). Thus, the figure is likely an underestimate of the actual cost of homelessness.

## **Homelessness in Saskatoon**

The City of Saskatoon has recently experienced a rapid and large increase in the cost of housing. In 2005, the average cost of a house remained relatively stable, increasing five percent (City of Saskatoon, 2008). In 2006, the cost of a house in the city was \$160,000, an increase of 10 percent from the previous year (City of Saskatoon, 2008). However, in 2007, the average cost of a house in Saskatoon increased to \$250,000—a staggering 51.4 percent (City of Saskatoon, 2008). In 2006, the average gross income required to afford a 25-year mortgage was approximately \$48,000 a year, whereas in 2007 the gross annual income needed to afford the average house was over \$70,000 (City of Saskatoon, 2008). The cost of rent in the city has also increased; in October 2006, a one-bedroom apartment rented for \$498/month (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2007). In October 2007, the average cost of a one-bedroom apartment had increased to \$566/month (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2007).

Thus, the affordability of housing in the city has rapidly decreased, particularly in the last year. A staggering 35 percent of the city's households have been found to have annual incomes below \$30,000 (Wallace, 2007). The 2006 census data revealed Saskatoon had a larger percentage of residents struggling with low income relative to the rest of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006a, 2006b). In 2005, 13.4 percent of Saskatonians were below the low income cut off after tax compared to 10.8 percent of all Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2006a, 2006b). In particular, Saskatonians under the age of 18 were struggling with low income—16.7 percent in the low income category after tax compared to 11.7 percent of Canadians under 18 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2006a, 2006b). In Saskatoon, residents were recently estimated to spend, on average, 40 percent of their gross annual income on housing (City of Saskatoon, 2008), well above the CMHC's 30 percent threshold for affordability. Furthermore, individuals under the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) were spending 53 percent of their income on shelter (Wallace, 2007). The incidence of low income households is projected to increase as moderate income families begin struggling with accommodations as housing becomes increasingly expensive in the city (Wallace, 2007).

In addition to increases in the cost of housing, Saskatoon has also experienced a sharp reduction in vacancy rates for rental units. In 2004, Saskatoon had one of the highest vacancy rates in Canada (6.3%; City of Saskatoon, 2008). However, in 2007, the city's rental vacancy rate was less than three percent, with the vacancy rate on the city's east side being nearly zero percent (City of Saskatoon, 2008). The number of available rental properties has also decreased due to record condominium conversions (Wallace, 2007). It has been found that dwellings with three or more bedrooms, particularly rental properties, are becoming increasingly difficult to locate; placing large families in need of housing assistance is consequently becoming more difficult (Wallace, 2007). Moreover, there is currently a 3,500 unit deficit of affordable housing units (City of Saskatoon, 2008).

The reductions in housing affordability and availability in the city have likely affected the number of individuals who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Anecdotally, the Homelessness Community Advisory Committee has estimated that nearly 400 individuals in the city are absolutely homeless and 6,000 individuals are struggling with hidden homelessness (Wallace, 2007). Moreover, approximately 30,000 individuals in Saskatoon were estimated to be at-risk of homelessness (Wallace, 2007). Nearly 14,000 of those individuals were receiving income supports (which have not increased adequately relative to rent increases) and 9,000 households did not have suitable housing (Wallace, 2007). Single parents, working families, people of Aboriginal descent, and single people have been identified as being in greatest need of housing in the city (City of Saskatoon, 2008). Women in abusive relationships and people with mental illness or addictions issues are currently considered to be at the greatest risk of homelessness (City of Saskatoon, 2008). In addition, the city has recognized students, recent immigrants, and visible minorities as an emerging at-risk population (City of Saskatoon, 2008; Wallace, 2007).

Currently there are several housing providers offering "rent-geared-to-income" social housing, supportive housing, transitional/emergency housing, affordable rental housing, or assisted homeownership. However, agencies working with homeless people have recognized a growing need for additional shelters and affordable housing units. Yet it is currently difficult to demonstrate a need for additional shelters in the absence of a count of homeless people in the city and a systematic investigation of the nature of homelessness in Saskatoon. Thus, we currently do not know which groups (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity) are represented among Saskatoon's homeless and how many individuals in Saskatoon are homeless.

## Saskatoon's Homeless Count

For the past year in Saskatoon, demand for housing at all points on the housing continuum has escalated bringing the issue of homelessness to the forefront of community concern. Through broad community consultations that occurred over the spring and summer of 2007, stakeholders identified the need to gain a better understanding of the issues facing the on-the-street and hidden homeless by collecting information from people in that life situation. Emerging issues of emergency shelter overflow further escalated the need to obtain quantitative and qualitative information around the absolute and sheltered homeless in Saskatoon.

In response to this identified need in the 2007 Community Plan on Homelessness and Housing, the Saskatoon Homelessness Advisory Committee recommended that the Homelessness Partnering Strategy support the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) in leading Saskatoon's first Street Needs Assessment to be made available to the community to further support service planning and delivery in Saskatoon.

### Advisory Group and Community Support

In addition to the support from Service Canada, CUISR established an Advisory Group comprised of representatives from community organisations that are involved with homeless populations. In order to form the Advisory Group, CUISR compiled a list of organizations involved with homelessness that might be interested in participating. Representatives from the agencies were invited to a presentation of the preliminary research methodology on January 24, 2008. The project received a great deal of support from community-based organizations; as such, the initiative was also supported by the Saskatoon Police Service, the Saskatoon Health Region, and Passion for Action Against Homelessness (PAAH), which allowed the Advisory Group to conduct its meetings in conjunction with their regular meetings. In addition, many other community-based organisations considered the initiative an important method of gathering information to help with efforts to address the needs and gaps in service provision for Saskatoon's homeless.

### Project Timeline

The homeless count project began in November 2007 and ended in June 2008. The project comprised two phases:

#### *Phase I (November 2007 to January 2008)*

- Conduct Document Review: Review existing literature related to counting homeless populations in comparable contexts both nationally & internationally.
- Submit ethics application to the University of Saskatchewan.
- Form an Advisory Group: Coordinate the formation of an advisory group to inform and guide the process of developing the framework to do the count as well as the collection and dissemination of the information.
- Develop a Counting Strategy for Saskatoon: Develop a methodology for the local context and develop tools to collect the data.

### Phase II (February to June 2008)

- Recruit and Train Volunteers: Coordinate the work of the organizations and the training of volunteers to collect the data. Part of the training materials will include a safety plan to ensure the volunteers know what measures to take to stay safe while collecting data.
- Collect Data: Volunteers conduct in-person interviews via outdoor and shelter surveys.
- Analyse Data and Write Report: The results provide information on the profile of homeless people in Saskatoon as well as on current needs and service utilisation patterns. The report also reviews strategies to reduce homelessness that have been used in other municipalities.
- Develop Dissemination Tools: Disseminate the results to increase awareness of the homelessness problem among the community as well as to aid shelters to respond in an informed way to the needs of Saskatoon's homeless.

## **METHOD**

The current project used the point-in-time counting methodology, which counts the number of individuals experiencing absolute and sheltered homelessness. The point-in-time counting methodology is the most commonly used method of counting homeless people (e.g., City of Calgary, 2006; City of Toronto, 2006). In the traditional counting method, the count is conducted by teams of volunteers assigned to specific grids over one 24-hour period. The methodology provides a “snap shot” of the homeless population at the time of the survey. The current research used teams of volunteers to conduct in-person interviews and involved two types of surveys: a service provider survey and an outdoor survey. When developing the methodology, the research team consulted with and received mentorship from the City of Toronto, which has a well established count.

### **Ethics**

Ethics approval was requested by the University of Saskatchewan and granted on May 12, 2008, by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board. See Appendix A for a copy of the Research Ethics Board's certificate of approval for the study.

### **Volunteer Training**

Volunteer surveyors were recruited via email through CUISR's email list as well as at the University of Saskatchewan. In addition, the project received substantial interest from local media and a local newspaper wrote a short article on the project, which attracted some volunteers. Recruitment was also conducted online; the homeless count research team created a Facebook group and placed a call for volunteers on the local Kijiji.com website. Owing to the nature of CUISR's networks, many of the volunteers the project attracted had health, social work, or psychology backgrounds and were highly committed to the project.

Volunteers completed a training session on either May 10, 17 or 18, 2008. A short training session was also conducted at the Saskatoon Food Bank on May 20, 2008. The volunteers were pre-assigned to teams of three to four surveyors prior to the training session. The researchers ensured that each team had at least one individual who had experience interviewing or working with at-risk individuals. Most volunteers trained with their team for the training so they could become comfortable with one another prior to count night.

The training comprised a short backgrounder on homelessness, including the definitions of the types of homelessness used for the research. Then, the trainer walked the surveyors through how to administer the survey and gave the volunteers the opportunity to practice administering the survey within their teams. The trainer then provided an overview of the schedule for count night, following which the volunteers who felt they needed some advice could stay for a short discussion on how to approach and interact with vulnerable participants.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for the count was conducted on May 22, 2008. This day was chosen because the average daily temperature in Saskatoon increases in May (see Table 1). The research team wanted to conduct the survey when night-time temperatures were warmer to ensure fewer people would be relying on family, friends, or shelters at night, increasing the likelihood of detection by volunteers. By having the count on a weeknight, the researchers ensured that fewer people would be out, reducing the likelihood that surveyors would be overwhelmed by potential screening respondents. Also, by having the count in the middle of the month, the effects of income on housing would be minimized. In addition, consultation with Tourism Saskatchewan’s calendar of events for May indicated no conflicting community events on this date.

**Table 1. Average Monthly Temperature in Saskatoon**

<b>Temperature</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>
Daily Average (°C)	-5.8	4.4	11.5	16	18.2	17.3
Standard Deviation	3.7	2.4	1.8	1.5	1.3	2
Daily Maximum (°C)	-0.7	10.6	18.4	22.6	24.9	24.4
Daily Minimum (°C)	-10.9	-1.9	4.5	9.4	11.4	10.2

The Rainbow Community Centre acted as the Field Office for the project. The Rainbow Community Centre is a non-profit organisation whose mission is, “to better the lives of those living in the core neighbourhoods of Westside Saskatoon by offering programs and services that address poverty, improved housing, wellness, education and empowerment”. The centre is located in the downtown core, a location that was central to the areas being surveyed.

Volunteers for the service provider and outdoor surveys reported to the field office at 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm, respectively. Data collection for the service provider survey was conducted between 6:30 and 9:30 pm and the outdoor survey took place between 8:30 and 11:30 pm. See Table 2.

**Table 2. Schedule for Count**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:00 am to 5:00 pm	Set up (Field office managers, media spokesperson)
4:30 to 5:00 pm	Volunteer coordinators, runners, and food coordinators arrive
<i>Service provider Survey</i>	
5:00 to 6:00 pm	Volunteer surveyors met their team, signed in, and picked up equipment (including cell phone and flashlight check and test)
6:00 to 6:30 pm	Traveled to service provider
6:30 to 9:30 pm	Conducted service provider survey
9:30 to 10:00 pm	Surveyors returned completed surveys and equipment, signed out, had a snack, and debriefed if necessary
<i>Outdoor Survey</i>	
7:00 to 8:00 pm	Volunteer surveyors met their team, signed in, and picked up equipment (including cell phone and flashlight check and test)
8:00 to 8:30 pm	Traveled to survey area
8:30 to 11:30 pm	Conducted outdoor survey
11:30 pm to 12:00 am	Surveyors returned completed surveys and equipment, signed out, had a snack, and debriefed if necessary

**Outdoor Survey**

For the outdoor survey, areas of the city where homeless people tend to be located were identified in consultation with the Advisory Group, city shelters, and other community organizations involved with homeless individuals. The areas included in the survey area grid included: (1) west of Spadina Crescent to Avenue Y between 20 and 22 Street; (2) the Central Business District down 11 to 25 Street; and (3) along the riverbank. Parks within the city were also included. The day prior to the count, the researchers participated in a ride-along with the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) to ensure the survey areas identified for the research were appropriate. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey area maps distributed to the volunteers.

In Saskatoon, there are indications that homeless individuals tend not to occupy the types of visible public areas (such as doorways and areas around ATMs), as is the case in municipalities such as Vancouver and Toronto. In addition, Saskatoon does not have the public transit infrastructure (e.g., subway or light rail transit) found in larger municipalities, where homeless individuals might stay to shelter from the elements. Finally, relative to larger cities such as Vancouver and Toronto, the City of Saskatoon has less pedestrian traffic during the times the survey will be conducted. Thus, it was expected that fewer individuals would be found outdoors relative to some of the larger Canadian cities.

***Administration Procedure***

The volunteer teams were assigned to specific survey areas and were provided with a map of the region they were expected to canvass. Surveyors were asked to walk every street and other public place in their survey area. To recruit respondents for the outdoor survey, volunteers approached all individuals in their survey area, introduced themselves, and described the project. The study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board and thus, the

survey opened with a statement assuring the respondent of his/her confidentiality and anonymity. Because of the difficulties involved with administering consent forms to the population under study, completion of the survey constituted informed consent. Volunteers did not approach individuals on private property to recruit participants and were asked not to wake up any individuals they saw sleeping in public places.

### **Service Provider Survey**

The service provider survey was conducted in shelter facilities in the city (see Appendix C). As key stakeholders, the shelters were informed of the implementation of the survey and the researchers gained the shelter facilities' permission to conduct the survey as part of consultation on the project. Owing to limited volunteer resources, the service provider survey was not administered at other types of service providers who work with homeless individuals (e.g., hospitals, Detox Centre). However, for the purposes of the count, the researchers did determine the number of individuals with no fixed address who stayed at the Larson House Detox Centre and campgrounds in the city. While Social Services refers individuals without housing to hotels during the day, the Salvation Army is responsible for these referrals in the evening. Thus, the Salvation Army provided information on the number of individuals they referred to hotels on the night of May 22, 2008, for the count. Individuals who did not contact the Salvation Army were not included.

### ***Administration procedure***

Teams of volunteers were assigned to administer the survey at a shelter. Generally, upon arriving at the shelter, the survey team reported to a staff member and were set up in a specific location within the shelter to administer the survey (although specific arrangements differed by shelter). To ensure the survey did not disrupt the shelter and its residents, shelter residents were advised by the staff that the survey would be conducted that night. In most cases, residents who were interested in participating in the survey approached the surveyors; however, in some cases, surveyors were able to approach shelter residents to recruit them to conduct the survey.

The introduction to the service provider survey was identical to the outdoor survey. The surveyors introduced themselves and described the project. Respondents were also assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. Consent forms were not administered to the shelter residents except in one shelter, where the shelter requested participants be provided with a consent form.

## **Survey Questionnaires**

The survey items used for the questionnaire were modelled on the survey used by the City of Toronto in 2006, although the wording was modified and some content was added to tailor the survey to the local context. The City of Toronto's count is well established and their needs assessment survey covers content areas the researchers felt were important for the assessment of needs and gaps in service provision for homeless individuals. In addition, Toronto's survey was extensively tested to ensure the highest possible response rate was obtained from respondents (Iain de Jong, personal communication, February 7, 2008).

## Outdoor Survey

The outdoor survey comprised three sections: a set of screening questions as well as Part I (the needs assessment questionnaire) and Part II (an observational form for counting individuals who could not or did not want to participate).

### *Screening Procedure*

Outdoor survey volunteers completed three screening questions to determine if the potential respondent was eligible to complete the survey. First, respondents were asked if they had already been interviewed by a surveyor to avoid duplication of surveys and to avoid double-counting. Respondents were then asked where they would be sleeping that night. If the individual reported s/he would be sleeping in housing or a shelter, the survey was terminated. If the individual reported s/he would be sleeping outdoors, the volunteer asked the respondent if s/he would be willing to proceed with the survey.

The outdoor survey teams approached 386 individuals to determine if they were eligible for the count. The range of individuals screened by the teams was between zero and 49 people. The night of the count, some teams (particularly Team 1) reported a large police presence (multiple cruisers and the canine unit) in their survey areas, which reduced the number of individuals in those areas. Teams 3, 6, 7, 8, and 18 screened the greatest proportion of individuals.

**Table 3. Number of individuals screened by the outdoor surveyors, by team number**

<b>Team number</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	0	0
2	11	3
3	48	12
4	9	2
5	8	2
6	42	11
7	41	11
8	43	11
9	12	3
10	22	6
11	6	2
12	27	7
13	18	5
14	12	3
15	5	1
16	9	2
17	24	6
18	49	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100</b>

If in response to the screening question about where s/he would be spending the night the person reported s/he would be staying in an outdoor location, the respondent was eligible to complete the survey.

Table 4 displays the locations where potential respondents reported they would be spending the night. The vast majority of individuals screened (82%) reported they were staying at home, with friends or with family members.

A total of 20 individuals were eligible to complete the survey based on the location they reported spending the night: staying outside; in a car, van or trailer; in a tent; squatting; or were unsure where they were spending the night. Seven individuals reported they would be staying outside; four individuals would be staying in a car, van, or trailer; and four individuals reported they would be staying in a tent. Four individuals did not know where they would be spending the night. Five individuals' responses fell into the "other" category. Of those, one individual reported squatting.

**Table 4. Locations potential respondents reported spending the night**

Location	Number	Percent
Home	297	82.0
Friends	16	4.4
Family	11	3.0
Hotel	8	2.2
Outside	7	1.9
Shelter	6	1.7
Car/van/trailer	4	1.1
Tent	4	1.1
Don't know	4	1.1
Other		
U of S	2	1.4
Halfway house	1	
Pawn shop	1	
Squatting	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### *Survey Interview*

If the individual consented to complete the survey, the volunteer began the survey interview. The outdoor survey was divided into two parts. Part I represented the needs assessment questionnaire and included items on:

- Location where the survey is being conducted
- Location where the respondent will be staying that night
- Preferences related to obtaining housing including:
  - Services that would help the respondent to obtain housing
  - Common barriers to obtaining housing
- Recent service utilisation including:

- Use of housing, food bank, job training, health care services
- Whether the respondent is currently getting help to obtain housing
- Other services that might help the respondent obtain housing
- Length of homelessness
- Demographic characteristics including age, gender, ethnicity, and current sources of income

If the individual did not consent to complete the survey (or if the surveyor was unable to complete the questionnaire with the individual) and the surveyor felt the individual might be homeless, Part II was completed. Part II was a short form of the survey, which was based on the volunteer's observations. Part II included information about the person's location, appearance, estimated age, and reasons the volunteer thought the individual may be homeless. See Appendix D for a copy of the outdoor survey questionnaire's screening questions as well as Part I and Part II.

### **Service Provider Survey**

The service provider survey comprised a set of two screening questions and the needs assessment questionnaire. For the screening, respondents were first asked if they had already been interviewed to avoid duplication of surveys. The respondent was then asked if they would be willing to proceed with the survey. If the individual consented to complete the survey, the volunteer began interviewing the respondent.

For the service provider survey, the survey questionnaire included the same items as Part I of the outdoor survey, however, respondents were also asked:

- Length of stay at the shelter

The service provider survey did not include Part II. Instead, the researchers obtained the capacity of the shelter when the surveyors arrived, the capacity of the shelter when the surveyors left, and the number of individuals who were turned away from the shelter that evening by having the surveyors request a shelter's staff member complete a form. Appendix E includes a copy of the service provider survey questionnaire.

### **Additional Considerations**

There were several additional considerations the research team took into account when designing the project.

#### ***Decoys***

Many municipalities, including the City of Toronto, employ decoys (who are unknown to the surveyors) to determine if the surveyors stopped all individuals in their survey area and as a quality control measure. When the surveyor completes the survey with the decoy, a note is made on the survey to ensure it is not included in the surveys dataset. However, the Saskatoon count did not include this portion of the methodology because of its controversial nature.

#### ***Ethnicity***

Most of the project's survey areas were on the West side of the city, an area with a large Aboriginal population. While including an ethnicity item in the questionnaire likely resulted in an overrepresentation of Aboriginal respondents, the researchers felt it was important to include this demographic item. An estimate of the number of individuals of Aboriginal ancestry who are homeless will help provide information on the level of demand for culturally-sensitive approaches and interventions. In addition, because of the recent economic boom, the city has attracted

individuals from outside the province, including immigrant populations. The City of Saskatoon (2008) defined immigrants as an at-risk population in their Housing Business Plan. Examining ethnicity as part of the count may help determine if immigrants and individuals of visible minority status are experiencing difficulties accessing appropriate housing.

***Participant Honoraria and Response Rates***

It is common practice to provide survey research participants a small honorarium to compensate for their participation and increase response rates. For the current project, the researchers opted not to provide an honorarium for participating because the research participants were part of a vulnerable population and providing a reward for participating could be construed as coercive. It is important to note that survey research using randomly sampled, non-hidden populations tends to produce response rates of approximately 40 percent when respondents are not compensated (Warriner, Goyder, Gjertsen, Hohner, & McSpurren, 1996).

Because the number of individuals staying in the shelters was collected, it was possible to determine the response rates for each of the shelters. For the current project, the average response rate for the shelter survey was 43 percent, which is comparable to response rates reported by Warriner et al. (1996).

**Table 5. Service provider survey response rate**

<b>Services Primarily Accessed by Homeless Individuals</b>	<b>Capacity at 9:30</b>	<b>Surveys Completed</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
<b>Emergency Shelters</b>			
Interval House	8	7	87.5
Lighthouse	4	1	25.0
Salvation Army Shelter	38	18	47.4
YWCA	38	5	13.2
<b>Transitional Housing</b>			
Infinity House*	12	0	0
Quint Male Youth Lodge	7	3	42.9
Salvation Army Bethany Home	10	1	10.0
Tamara's House	4	3	75.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>43.0**</b>

\* Note: surveyors were unable to administer surveys at Infinity House as the shelter double-booked their evening activity

\*\* Average response rate (excluding Infinity House)

## RESULTS

The project had two components: (1) a count, which determined the number of homeless individuals staying outdoors or in shelters, and (2) a street needs assessment, which was a survey examining homeless individuals' service use patterns and needs.

The majority of the data are presented as frequency and percent distributions describing the number and percentage of respondents providing particular responses. In some cases, responses were analyzed by gender and ethnicity to best identify the needs of particular groups.

### Count Results

The first component of the homeless count project was to count the number of homeless individuals residing in shelters and staying outdoors on the night of May 22, 2008.

#### Overall Count

A total of 260 individuals were counted. Of those, 169 adults and 30 children were counted in shelters and 44 adults and two children were counted outdoors. In addition, seven and six individuals had no fixed address and were staying in hotels and the Larson House Detox Centre, respectively.

**Table 6. Total number of homeless individuals counted<sup>1</sup>**

Location	Number of Adults	Number of Children	Total Number	Total Percent
Shelters	169	30	199	76.5
Outdoor	44	0	44	16.9
Detox Centre	7	0	7	2.7
Hotel	6	0	6	2.3
Campground	2	2	4	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100</b>

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<sup>1</sup> To be modified pending communication from the Safe House and city jail.

### Service Provider Count

The survey was conducted at eight targeted shelters. Surveyors collected information on the shelter's capacity and the number of individuals who were turned away from the shelter on the evening of the count. Data were also collected from the Larson House Detox Centre, McLeod House, and hotels (i.e., Salvation Army referrals), which are displayed below.

As shown in Table 7, a total of 169 adults and 30 children were housed by the targeted shelters on the night of May 22, 2008. Many of the shelters had not reached capacity by 9:30 pm. The Salvation Army and YWCA Shelters turned away several individuals on count night.

Please note that surveyors were unable to administer surveys at Infinity House as the shelter had double-booked their evening activity. In addition, surveyors were not sent to My Home or Safe House; thus, surveys were not administered at those locations.

**Table 7. Service provider count and number of turnaways<sup>2</sup>**

Services Primarily Accessed by Homeless Individuals	Persons Counted at 9:30 pm		Total Service Provider Capacity (Adult)		Turnaways
	Adults	Children	Number	Percent	Number
City Jail					
Hotels	6	0	-	-	-
Larson House Detox Centre	7	0	-	-	NA
Infinity House*	12	22	14	85.7	NA
Interval House	8	0	10	80.0	0
Lighthouse	4	0	16	25.0	0
McLeod House	13	0	14	92.9	-
My Home**	20	4	25	80.0	-
Quint Male Youth Lodge	7	0	10	70.0	NA
Safe House					-
Salvation Army Bethany Home	10	4	10	100.0	-
Salvation Army Shelter***	38	0	51	74.5	3
Tamara's House	4	0	5	80.0	NA
YWCA	38	0	38	100.00	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>78.8*</b>	<b>23</b>

\* Average shelter capacity

<sup>2</sup> To be completed and modified pending communication from Safe House and city jail.

## Outdoor Count

A total of 46 adults and two children were counted outdoors on the night of the count. There were two parts to the outdoor count. Part I of the survey (the entire needs assessment questionnaire) was administered to 18 individuals. The majority of the outdoor surveys were administered on the street. Two surveys were administered in a park/river valley location and two surveys were administered by a railroad track. Part II was completed by observation when the person was thought to be homeless and was sleeping, inaccessible, incapable of participating, or refused to participate. A total of 26 people were counted with Part II. Most of the Part II observational forms were completed on the street. An additional two adults and two children who reported no fixed address were counted at the Gordie Howe campground.

**Table 8. Location where survey was completed**

Location	Part I		Part II		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Street	14	77.8	19	73.1	33
Park/River	2	11.1	4	15.4	6
Railroad	2	11.1	2	7.7	4
Private property	0	0.0	1	3.8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>44</b>

## Needs Assessment Survey Results

A total of 38 surveys were completed at the eight shelters. For the outdoor component of the project, 18 surveys were completed. The results of the needs assessment survey are provided below. The number and percentage of responses to each item are presented for the service provider and outdoor surveys. Some results are also presented by gender and ethnicity. Please note that there are a small number of respondents in some cases and it was not possible to statistically calculate whether there were true differences between groups due to the small sample size.

### Respondent Demographics

Survey respondents provided information on several demographic characteristics including age, gender and ethnicity.

#### Age

Most service provider respondents (60%) were between 30 and 50 years of age. Most outdoor survey respondents (62%) were under 30 years of age. Few respondents were over 50 years old.

**Table 9. Age of respondents**

Age	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 20	3	9.1	5	31.3
20 to 29	6	18.2	5	31.3
30 to 39	10	30.3	3	18.8
40 to 49	10	30.3	0	0.0
50 to 59	3	9.1	3	18.8
60 or Over	1	3.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

When completing Part II of the outdoor survey, the surveyors estimated the age of the individual they were observing. Of the 26 individuals observed, a total of 58 percent were estimated to be between 26 and 49 years of age; six individuals were thought to be under 25 and five individuals were estimated to be 50 years of age or over.

**Table 10. Estimated age**

Age category	Number	Percent
Under 25	6	23.1
26 to 49	15	57.7
50 or over	5	19.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>

### ***Gender***

As illustrated in Table 11, most survey respondents self-identified as male. A total of 58 and 72 percent of respondents were male in the shelters and outdoors, respectively. No respondents identified themselves as being transgendered.

**Table 11. Respondent gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Service provider</b>		<b>Outdoor</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	21	58.3	13	72.2
Female	15	41.7	5	27.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

For Part II of the survey, approximately 54 percent of the individuals observed outdoors were male and 42 percent were female. The individual's gender was unclear in one case.

**Table 12. Observed gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	14	53.8
Female	11	42.3
Unclear	1	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>

### ***Ethnicity***

The most frequently reported ethnicities were Caucasian and Aboriginal and the proportion of Caucasian and Aboriginal respondents was nearly equal. In the shelters, approximately 46 percent self-identified as Aboriginal and approximately 41 percent were Caucasian. One individual reported they were "Canadian" and was placed in the "other" category. Half of the outdoor survey respondents were Aboriginal and approximately 39 percent were Caucasian. Two individuals fell into the "other" category, one who reported being "Canadian" and another who reported being of European and Asian descent.

**Table 13. Respondents' ethnicity**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Service provider</b>		<b>Outdoor</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Caucasian	15	40.5	7	38.9
Aboriginal	17	45.9	9	50.0
East Indian	1	2.7	0	0
African	2	5.4	0	0
Refused	1	2.7	0	0
Other	1	2.7	2	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Sources of Income**

Approximately half (45%) of service provider respondents cited formal employment as their main income source. Social Services (37%) was the second-most common source of income. Formal employment (28%) and day jobs (28%) were outdoor respondents' most commonly cited sources of income. Three service provider respondents cited IATSE, long-term disability, and a newspaper route as "other" income sources. One outdoor survey respondent collected bottles as an "other" income source. Please note respondents could cite more than one source of income.

**Table 14. Sources of income**

Source of income	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Formal employment	17	44.7	5	27.8
Informal employment	3	7.9	4	22.2
Day jobs	5	13.2	5	27.8
Canada Pension Plan	3	7.9	1	5.6
Employment insurance	0	0.0	0	0.0
Family/friends	4	10.5	4	22.2
Government programs	6	15.8	2	11.1
Panhandling	0	0.0	4	22.2
Social services	14	36.8	3	16.7
Other	3	7.9	1	5.6

Table 15 shows respondents' income sources by gender. As illustrated, more males than females reported being employed at formal employment, informal employment, and day jobs.

**Table 15. Income sources by gender**

Source of income	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Formal employment	13	4	17	4	1	5
Informal employment	3	0	3	3	1	4
Day jobs	3	2	5	5	0	5
Canada Pension Plan	3	0	3	1	0	1
Employment insurance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family/friends	2	2	4	3	1	4
Government programs	0	6	6	2	0	2
Panhandling	0	0	0	2	2	4
Social services	4	9	13	2	1	3
Other	1	2	3	1	0	1

There were no differences in the number of Caucasian and Aboriginal respondents who were employed (formally, informally, or for day jobs). More Aboriginal service provider survey respondents reported government programs or social services as sources of income.

**Table 16. Sources of income by ethnicity**

Source of income	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total
Formal employment	8	7	15	2	2	4
Informal employment	2	1	3	2	2	4
Day jobs	1	4	5	3	2	5
Canada Pension Plan	2	0	2	0	0	0
Employment insurance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family/friends	3	1	4	2	1	3
Government programs	1	5	6	0	1	1
Panhandling	0	0	0	4	0	4
Social services	3	10	13	1	2	3
Other	3	0	3	0	1	1

Respondents who reported they were working at formal employment, informal employment or day jobs were asked whether they worked full time (defined as 35 hours per week) or part time. Of the 20 service provider and seven outdoor respondents who were employed, 70 percent and 86 percent, respectively, had full time jobs.

**Table 17. Respondents with full and part time employment**

Response	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Full time	14	70	6	85.7
Part time	6	30	1	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>

For service provider survey respondents, there were small differences between the number of male and female respondents who reported being employed full or part time. There were no female outdoor survey respondents who reported being employed full time.

**Table 18. Respondents with full and part time employment, by gender**

Response	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Full time	8	6	14	6	0	6
Part time	3	2	5	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

There were no differences in regards to the number of Caucasian and Aboriginal respondents who reported being employed full or part time.

**Table 19. Respondents with full and part time employment, by ethnicity**

Response	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total
Full time	7	6	13	2	4	6
Part time	1	3	4	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

***Respondents Staying Alone or with Other People***

As shown in Table 20, service provider respondents were asked if they were staying with another adult or their children while staying at the shelter. The majority of shelter residents (78%) reported they were staying at the shelter by themselves. Six respondents were staying with their children while at the shelter. All the individuals who reported they were staying with children were female.

**Table 20. Shelter respondents staying alone or with other people**

Response	Number	Percent
Staying alone	29	78.4
One other adult	2	5.4
More than one adult	0	0
With children	6	16.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

The outdoor surveyors made observations about the number of adults, children and pets that were with the survey respondent at the time of the interview. Most outdoor respondents were staying with another adult although respondents were observed being with up to four other adults. One individual had a pet. Finally, outdoor surveyors did not observe children staying outdoors.

**Table 21. Outdoor respondents alone or with other people**

Number of adults	Number	Percent
None	1	7.1
One adult	7	50.0
Two adults	3	21.4
Three adults	1	7.1
Four adults	2	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

## Current and Past Housing

Respondents answered several questions about their current accommodations and housing, including sleeping patterns, length of shelter stay, and time since they last had their own residence.

### *Sleeping Location (Outdoor Survey Only)*

Outdoor survey respondents were asked where they planned to sleep on May 22, 2008, and where they spent the night of May 21, 2008. The most frequently cited locations were abandoned buildings; a car, van or trailer; and a park. Three respondents spent May 22<sup>nd</sup> in an “other” location: one in an apartment hallway, another on the porch of a friend’s garage and one on the riverbank. On May 21<sup>st</sup>, four individuals stayed in an “other” location: one in an apartment hallway, another at Larson House, one on the riverbank, and another walked around finding bottles.

**Table 22. Location where respondent spent the night on May 21 and May 22, 2008**

Location	Place spending the night		Place spent last night	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Abandoned building	3	21.4	1	5.9
Car/van/trailer	3	21.4	2	11.8
Park	3	21.4	2	11.8
Railroad tracks	2	14.3	2	11.8
Sidewalk	2	14.3	1	5.9
Tent	1	7.1	1	5.9
Friends*	NA	-	1	5.9
Shelter*	NA	-	1	5.9
Under bridge	0	0.0	1	5.9
Don't know	1	7.1	0	0.0
Other	3	21.4	4	23.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Respondents who reported they were staying with friends or at a shelter were ineligible to complete the survey and the administration was terminated

### *Time in Transitional Housing (Service Provider Survey Only)*

Service provider respondents were asked how long they had stayed at the shelter. The average amount of time respondents had resided in the shelter was 100 days, with a range of one day to two years. Emergency shelter respondents reported shorter stays, on average, than those staying in transitional housing: emergency shelter respondents stayed an average of 93 days (around 3 months) and transitional housing respondents stayed an average of 126 days (around 4 months).

**Table 23. Average number of days in transitional housing**

Type of Service	Average time in housing (days)	Minimum (days)	Maximum (days)	Total respondents
All service providers	99.8	1	730	36
Emergency shelters	93.4	1	730	29
Transitional housing	126.3	3	480	7

***Time since Last Residence***

Most respondents had been without a residence for less than one year. For the service provider survey, seven respondents (23%) had their last residence less than one month prior to the count. Twelve individuals (40%) had their last residence between one month and up to one year prior to the count. For the outdoor survey, five respondents (28%) had their last residence less than one month prior to the count. Seven respondents (39%) had their last residence between one month and up to one year prior to the count.

**Table 24. Length of time since last residence**

Length of time	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 1 month	7	23.3	5	27.8
1 Month to less than 1 year	12	40.0	7	38.9
1 to 2 years	5	16.7	3	16.7
3 to 4 years	3	10.0	0	0.0
5 years or more	3	10.0	3	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

On average, respondents reported it had been approximately two years since they last had their own residence. Service provider respondents had been without a residence between 1.5 days and 16 years. Outdoor respondents had been without a residence between 7 days and 11 years.

**Table 25. Average number of years since last residence**

Survey	Average time since last residence (days)	Minimum (days)	Maximum (days)	Total respondents
Service provider	675.6	1.5	5,840	30
Outdoor	678.3	7	4,015	18

## Waiting List

The City of Saskatoon has several housing waiting lists for individuals who are experiencing difficulties maintaining a permanent residence. Respondents were asked several questions about waiting lists for housing.

### *Waiting List Registration*

Table 26 displays the number of individuals who reported being on a housing waiting list. Most respondents were not on a waiting list for housing. In the service providers, 26 (72%) respondents reported they were not on a waiting list. For the outdoor survey, 17 respondents (94%) reported they were not on a waiting list for housing.

**Table 26. Respondents on housing waiting list**

Response	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	10	27.8	1	5.6
No	26	72.2	17	94.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 27 illustrates the gender of respondents who reported being on a housing waiting list. For the service provider survey, more females than males were on a waiting list.

**Table 27. Respondents on housing waiting list, by gender**

Response	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Yes	3	7	10	1	0	1
No	18	8	26	12	5	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 28 shows the number of respondents who reported being on a waiting list, by ethnicity. For the service provider survey respondents, a greater number of Aboriginal respondents reported being on waiting lists, relative to the number of Caucasians.

**Table 28. Respondents on housing waiting list, by ethnicity**

Response	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total
Yes	2	8	10	1	0	1
No	13	9	22	6	9	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>

Respondents who reported they were on a waiting list were asked on which waiting list(s) they currently were registered. Respondents could choose more than one waiting list. The most frequently cited waiting list for the service provider survey was the YWCA’s waiting list (5 respondents), with the Cress Housing waiting list being the next most frequently cited (4 respondents). Three service provider respondents were on “other” waiting lists; one with Affinity housing, one for a private apartment, and one was on their own waiting list (reporting “self”). The outdoor respondent who stated they were on a waiting list said they were on an “acquaintance’s” waiting list.

**Table 29. Waiting lists**

Waiting list	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Saskatoon Housing Authority	3	30	0	0
Cress Housing	4	40	0	0
Saskatoon Housing Coalition	0	0	0	0
SaskNative Rentals	3	30	0	0
YWCA	5	50	0	0
Other waiting lists				
“Acquaintance”	0		1	
Affinity housing	1		0	
Private apartment	1		0	
“Self”	1		0	

***Time on Waiting Lists***

Table 30 shows the amount of time respondents reported being on waiting lists. Service provider respondents reported being on waiting lists between three days and nine months, with an average of approximately 56 days. The outdoor respondent who was on a waiting list had been on the waiting list for two weeks.

**Table 30. Number of days on waiting list**

Survey	Average time on waiting list (days)	Minimum (days)	Maximum (days)	Total respondents
Service provider	55.6	3	270	10
Outdoor	14	14	14	1

Respondents were asked how long it had been since they last updated their application or checked to see if they were still on the waiting list. Service provider respondents reported they had checked their applications an average of approximately three days prior to count day (one respondent had checked their application on the day of the count and several respondents had checked their application up to seven days prior to the count day). The outdoor respondent who was on a waiting list had checked their application two weeks prior to count day. See Table 31.

**Table 31. Average number of days since application last updated**

Survey	Average time updated application (days)	Minimum (days)	Maximum (days)	Total respondents
Service provider	2.7	0	7	8
Outdoor	14	14	14	1

***Barriers to Applying for Housing***

Respondents who were on waiting lists were asked whether they encountered any difficulties when applying for the waiting list. The majority of respondents found the application process difficult.

**Table 32. Respondents who found the application process difficult**

Application difficult	Service provider	Outdoor	Total
Yes	9	1	10
No	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>

Respondents were asked what kinds of problems they had experienced when applying for housing. The most common difficulties were the expense of the housing available, low vacancy rates, and ability to obtain appropriate references. Fives responses fell into the “other” category.

**Table 33. Types of problems experienced in applying for housing**

Types of problems experienced	Number
Expense	5
Vacancy rates	3
References	2
Other	
No children allowed	1
Too much information	1
Quality of housing	1
Too busy	1
Eligibility problems (no children, no disability)	1

## Service Use Patterns

The needs assessment survey examined respondents' service use patterns to determine whether a variety of services were helping respondents obtain housing and barriers that respondents may have encountered to accessing services in the city.

### *Past Service Use*

Respondents were asked which services they had used in the previous six months. Service provider residents used shelters most frequently (79% of respondents) although this was not a common response for outdoor respondents (28% of respondents). Health clinics were the most commonly used service by outdoor respondents (61%) and were service provider respondents' second-most used service (45%). Hospitals or emergency rooms were also frequently used by respondents (39% of outdoor respondents and 29% of survey respondents).

Respondents were also asked whether the services had helped them find housing. Shelters were most frequently reported as helping respondents find housing (14 service provider respondents and one outdoor respondent). The majority of services did not help respondents find housing.

**Table 34. Service use in past 6 months**

Service	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Number	Percent	Helped Find Housing	Number	Percent	Helped Find Housing
Shelters	30	78.9	14	5	27.8	1
Health clinics	17	44.7	2	11	61.1	0
Hospital/ER	11	28.9	1	7	38.9	0
Food Bank	10	26.3	1	4	22.2	0
Churches	9	23.7	3	5	27.8	1
Drop-ins	7	18.4	0	6	33.3	0
ID	7	18.4	1	4	22.2	0
Detox	6	15.8	1	4	22.2	0
Job training	6	15.8	0	5	27.8	0
SHA	3	7.9	1	0	0.0	0
Other	7	18.4	3	4	22.2	1

Respondents also provided examples of "other" services that they had used in the last 6 months. Service provider respondents cited the following services:

- Art Centres
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Buses
- Community-based (mental health)
- Downtown library
- School's leisure services
- Youth resource centre, social services

Of those services, respondents reported the Arts Centres, the Downtown library, and Social Services had helped them find housing.

Outdoor respondents reported they had used the following services in the last six months:

- Build a nation counselling service
- Egadz
- Larson House
- Salvation Army van food truck at Nutana

Of those, Larson House had assisted the respondent to find housing.

***Barriers to Accessing Services***

Respondents were asked if they found accessing any of the above services difficult. The majority of respondents did not find accessing any of the services they had used in the last six months difficult.

**Table 35. Service access difficult**

Response	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	4	12.9	3	30
No	27	87.1	7	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents were asked what problems they experienced accessing the services they used. The following barriers were cited by service provider respondents:

- Application process;
- Difficulty due to work schedule;
- Family status barriers;
- Income barriers;
- Legal aid (not getting child support from father);
- Difficulty of operating library computers (easier to use paper);
- Social home programs limits set at welfare rates;
- Inability to qualify for credit to purchase; and
- Waiting lists for programs like Youth Resource Centre day program.

Outdoor respondents cited the following barriers to accessing services:

- Social services paying only for three days with the Salvation Army;
- Unable to access health services without a health care card; and
- Unable to access shelters without ID.

**Long-Term Housing Plans**

The survey also asked participants if they currently had a long-term housing plan. Of the 35 service provider respondents who answered the survey item, 21 (60%) reported having a long-term housing plan. Most of the 16 outdoor respondents (81%) did not have a long-term housing plan.

**Table 36. Housing plan**

Response	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	21	60	3	18.75
No	14	40	13	81.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 37 illustrates the number of respondents who reported having a long-term housing plan, by gender. A larger proportion of service provider respondents who reported having a long-term housing plan were male.

**Table 37. Number of respondents who had a long-term housing plan, by gender**

Response	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Yes	15	6	21	2	1	3
No	5	8	13	9	4	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>

There was a slightly larger proportion of Aboriginal respondents relative to Caucasian respondents who reported having a long-term housing plan. See Table 38.

**Table 38. Number of respondents who had a long-term housing plan, by ethnicity**

Response	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total	Caucasian	Aboriginal	Total
Yes	7	11	18	1	2	3
No	7	6	13	4	7	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>

Of the 21 service provider survey respondents who had a housing plan, five expected to move to a residence within a week and seven expected to move within a month. Of the three outdoor survey respondents who had a housing plan, one reported they would move to a residence within one week and two expected to move within a month.

**Table 39. Anticipated time to move**

Response	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
One week	5	23.8	1	33.3
One month	7	33.3	2	66.7
Three months	3	14.3	0	0.0
One year	4	19.0	0	0.0
Don't know	2	9.5	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>

***Contact with Health and Justice Services***

Respondents were also asked whether they had been in contact with ambulance, police, probation or parole, and jail or detention in the last six months. Respondents had most often been in contact with the police (40% of service provider respondents and 61% of outdoor respondents). Respondents had also been in contact with ambulance, probation/parole, and jail/detention.

When asked if the health or justice service had helped the respondent find housing, most respondents reported the service did not help them find housing. Ambulance services helped one service provider respondent find housing. Probation/parole helped one service provider and one outdoor survey respondent find housing.

**Table 40. Contact with health and justice services**

Service	Service provider			Outdoor		
	Number	Percent	Helped find Housing	Number	Percent	Helped find Housing
Ambulance	4	10.5	1	0	0.0	0
Police	15	39.5	0	11	61.1	0
Probation/Parole	7	18.4	1	3	16.7	1
Jail/Detention	5	13.2	0	3	16.7	0

Table 41 displays the gender of respondents who had contact with health and justice services. Most of the males residing in shelters had been in contact with police and probation/parole whereas the majority of female shelter residents reported having contact with the police. Most of the male and female outdoor survey respondents had contact with the police.

**Table 41. Contact with health and justice services, by gender**

Service	Service provider				Outdoor			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Number	Helped find Housing	Number	Helped find Housing	Number	Helped find Housing	Number	Helped find Housing
Ambulance	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Police	6	0	8	0	6	0	5	0
Probation/Parole	6	0	1	1	2	0	1	1
Jail/Detention	4	0	1	0	2	0	1	0

When examining the ethnicity of respondents who had contact with various services, the distribution of services with which Caucasian shelter residents had contact was evenly distributed between ambulance, police, and probation/parole. However, the majority of Aboriginal shelter respondents reported having contact with the police. This trend is reversed for outdoor respondents; the only service Caucasian respondents had contact with was police. Aboriginal outdoor respondents had contact with police, probation/parole, and jail/detention.

**Table 42. Contact with health and justice services, by ethnicity**

Service	Service provider				Outdoor			
	Caucasian		Aboriginal		Caucasian		Aboriginal	
	Number	Helped find Housing	Number	Helped find Housing	Number	Helped find Housing	Number	Helped find Housing
Ambulance	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Police	3	0	11	0	4	0	5	0
Probation/Parole	4	1	3	0	0	0	3	1
Jail/Detention	0	0	5	0	0	0	3	0

## Finding Housing

Respondents were asked about the barriers they experienced finding their own housing. In addition, respondents were asked questions about services that might help them obtain housing.

### *Barriers to Finding Housing*

Housing affordability was the most commonly cited barrier to finding housing for both groups of respondents (53% of service provider and 56% of outdoor survey respondents). Limited housing availability was among the second most common barrier (24% of service provider and 22% of outdoor respondents). For service provider respondents, 13 percent were not currently searching for housing and 11 percent were experiencing difficulties finding time to look due to scheduling difficulties with work. Outdoor respondents also found some housing to be inaccessible due to factors such as having children or pets (22%). Lifestyle factors such as stress and alcohol addiction were mentioned by 22 percent of outdoor respondents as barriers.

**Table 43. Barriers to finding own residence**

Barrier	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Affordability <sup>3</sup>	20	52.6	10	55.6
Low vacancy rate/Limited availability	9	23.7	4	22.2
Not currently looking	5	13.2	0	0.0
Difficulty finding time	4	10.5	0	0.0
Quality of housing availability	3	7.9	1	5.6
Difficulty finding suitable references	2	5.3	1	5.6
Unfamiliarity with Saskatoon	2	5.3	0	0.0
Accessibility (e.g., children, pet)	1	2.6	4	22.2
Personal appearance	1	2.6	3	16.7
Difficulties finding transportation to view apartments	1	2.6	1	5.6
Bad credit	0	0.0	2	11.1
Lifestyle factors (e.g., stress, addiction)	0	0.0	4	22.2
Other	4	13.2	3	16.7

Respondents also cited several “other” barriers. For service provider respondents, these were:

- Education - filling application forms
- No call backs from rental agency
- In and out of my house; staying with friends
- Very hard

Outdoor survey respondents also cited some “other” barriers:

- Need reading glasses (stolen)
- Fire and protective services/City forced me out of my home
- Police harass me instead of helping me

<sup>3</sup> Note: Perceived affordability was examined

### ***Help Finding Housing***

The survey provided a list of several supports and asked respondents whether they thought the support would be helpful for them to find housing. The top three responses for service provider respondents were help finding affordable housing (79%), more money (71%), and transportation to see apartments (47%). The top three responses for outdoor respondents were help finding affordable housing (94%), more money (78%), and help with housing applications (72%).

**Table 44. Supports to help find housing**

Supports to help find housing	Service provider		Outdoor	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Help finding affordable housing	30	78.9	17	94.4
More money	27	71.1	14	77.8
Transportation to see apartments	18	47.4	10	55.6
Mental health supports	8	21.1	4	22.2
Cultural supports	7	18.4	3	16.7
Help getting ID (e.g., health card)	5	13.2	9	50.0
Help with legal issues	5	13.2	8	44.4
Help addressing your health needs	4	10.5	11	61.1
Help getting alcohol or drug treatment	3	7.9	5	27.8
Services in a language other than English	3	7.9	4	22.2
Help getting detox services	2	5.3	5	27.8
Harm reduction supports (e.g., needle exchange)	1	2.6	5	27.8
Help with housing applications	0	0.0	13	72.2
Help with immigration issues	0	0	1	5.6
Other	6	15.8	2	11.1

Six service provider respondents suggested “other” services which might help them gain access to housing:

- Access to classifieds in the papers (the paper is delivered to the shelter but I never see it)
- Access to subsidized programs (reasonable access)
- Affordable housing for working singles
- Connections to family members
- Current transition housing
- If housing applications were more basic

Two outdoor respondents suggested the following services that might also help them obtain housing:

- Help to find a place for several teenagers to share
- Shelter, food, and sleep

## DISCUSSION

The current project represented the first Homeless Count conducted in Saskatoon. A total of 228 adults and 32 children experiencing absolute and sheltered homelessness were counted. Needs assessment surveys were completed with 38 shelter residents and 18 absolutely homeless individuals. While this is not a large number of completed surveys, which limits the confidence we may have in the results, the needs assessment survey did provide interesting and consistent results, which dispel many myths about homelessness.

The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 50 years of age, with outdoor survey respondents being younger than sheltered respondents. In addition, it was found that most respondents were male, particularly individuals staying outdoors. The most commonly reported ethnicities were Caucasian and Aboriginal; however, there were approximately equal proportions of individuals of Aboriginal ancestry relative to individuals of European ancestry.

Another finding of interest was that nearly half of service provider respondents were employed, with most working full time. This finding is consistent with findings in Calgary, which found a large proportion of shelter residents work 32 hours a week (Calgary Drop-In and Rehab Centre, 2007; Laird, 2007). Outdoor respondents most commonly relied on full time formal employment and day jobs for their income although they had a lower rate of employment relative to sheltered respondents. Housing affordability and limited availability were the most commonly reported barriers to finding housing. Moreover, when asked about services that might help them to find housing, help finding affordable housing and more money were the two most common responses. The survey results suggest that there may be a substantial number of individuals in the city who, despite being employed and the economic boom currently occurring in the province, are struggling to maintain their accommodations due to the high price of rent and low vacancy rates.

When examining patterns in current and past housing, outdoor respondents stayed in a wide variety of sleeping locations. There was a great deal of variability in the amount of time since respondents had their own residence (1.5 days to 16 years), although the average amount of time (approximately 2 years) was similar for both groups. This average was relatively short compared to the City of Toronto, which reported an average length of homelessness of approximately 6 years for absolutely homeless individuals and 3 years for sheltered homeless individuals (City of Toronto, 2006). When examining length of stay at the shelters, there was also a large range in length of stay (1 day to 2 years) although the average was slightly longer than five months.

An important finding was that most respondents were not on housing waiting lists, particularly outdoor respondents, male respondents, and individuals of European ancestry. The findings suggest it may be desirable to target male and Caucasian individuals to increase their representation on waiting lists. In addition, the vast majority of the respondents who were on waiting lists found the application process to be difficult, suggesting there may be barriers in place that prevent Saskatoon's homeless individuals from taking advantage of the housing services that are available. Because so few respondents were on waiting lists, there may also be limited awareness of waiting lists among Saskatoon's homeless individuals, although this was not examined directly by the needs assessment survey. Absolutely homeless individuals may be particularly unaware, as the outdoor survey respondents reported low levels of shelter usage and appeared to be relying on shelters far less than sheltered respondents. This finding also suggests that relying on shelters to increase

awareness of waiting lists among Saskatoon's homeless population may not be an effective means of intervening with Saskatoon's absolutely homeless individuals.

There was a large proportion of sheltered and absolutely homeless respondents using health clinics, hospitals and emergency rooms, although most of the services listed in the survey did not help the survey's respondents to find housing. In addition, of the various health and justice services examined in the survey, respondents reported having the most contact with the police although there was also contact with ambulance, probation or parole, and jail or detention centres. Because the health sector has a large amount of contact with homeless individuals, it may be possible that interventions to assist homeless individuals in obtaining housing may be facilitated through the Saskatoon Health Region. It may also be possible to work with the Saskatoon Police Service to develop a referral mechanism for housing.

### **Limitations**

While the point-in-time methodology is currently the most common method of conducting counts of homeless populations, some limitations must be noted. First, the methodology underestimates the number of people experiencing homelessness, particularly because homeless individuals are a difficult population to contact and the methodology does not count the number of hidden homeless. Second, because the method provides a "snap shot" of what homelessness looks like on one day of the year, it is not possible to differentiate between long-term and short-term homelessness. In addition, cyclical variations, such as seasonal differences in the number of people sleeping outdoors, are not captured. Finally, questions relating to needs assessments for service provision for homeless people may be difficult to answer, particularly because it is not possible to determine if the sample for the current study was representative of all homeless individuals in Saskatoon. Because the count provides an estimate and not an exact number of homeless individuals, it is not possible to determine the exact amount of services such as the number of shelter beds and subsidised housing units; amount of rent supplements; and physical and mental health services needed by all of Saskatoon's homeless.

The number of homeless individuals found in Saskatoon's 2008 Homeless Count was smaller than the number found in other municipalities. For example, Edmonton's 2006 homeless count counted approximately 2,600 homeless individuals and Calgary's 2006 count counted approximately 3,400 homeless individuals (City of Calgary, 2006; Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2006). When considering that the populations of Edmonton and Calgary are approximately five times that of Saskatoon's, Saskatoon's count could have yielded nearly 700 homeless individuals. There are several reasons Saskatoon's count may not have found a large number of homeless individuals. It is possible that the detection of homeless individuals for the current count was poorer than that of other municipalities. First, due to safety considerations, surveyors were unable to go onto private property and may not have captured individuals staying on private property. Indeed, some surveyors found that many homeless individuals they encountered reported individuals commonly squat in private buildings such as parkades. Additionally, owing to limited volunteer resources, there were a limited number of survey areas in the current count. In addition, some volunteers reported there was a large police presence in some neighbourhoods (several cruisers and the canine unit flashing their lights), which may have resulted in fewer individuals staying outside, particularly in the low-income neighbourhood in which the count was being conducted. Moreover, to enhance volunteer safety, volunteers were equipped with reflector vests when conducting their surveys. Some volunteers reported that residents thought they were police

(and in some cases actively avoided the surveyors) when the surveyors were recruiting respondents for the survey. Finally, two teams that found homeless individuals were unable to complete small portions of their survey areas and, due to limited volunteer resources, it was decided that teams would not be sent out to complete the survey areas. Thus, it is possible that some homeless individuals in those survey areas were not counted.

However, there are some indications that Saskatoon's homeless population is less visible than in other municipalities. Because of the very cold climate, it is likely that Saskatoon's homeless individuals rely less on staying outdoors than individuals in other municipalities. Moreover, Saskatoon does not have a subway or light-rail transit system (there are also very few bus shelters in the city in which an absolutely homeless individual may bed down for the night). Anecdotally, increases in the cost of housing in Saskatoon have recently become an extremely large issue in the community. Because housing costs increases in Saskatoon have been recent relative to other municipalities, it is also possible that homeless individuals in Saskatoon may have a greater capacity to stay with family or friends than in other cities, particularly as sympathy over the cost of housing may be more "fresh" for Saskatoon residents.

### **Strengths**

Despite the limitations outlined above, the 2008 Homeless Count had a number of strengths. CUISR's volunteer recruitment strategy was extremely successful. Because the request to conduct a homeless count in Saskatoon came from the community and because housing is currently an enormous concern in the city, there was a great deal of support for and interest in the project. This is perhaps particularly true to CUISR's network of community contacts, which comprises many organizations that are involved with individuals struggling to maintain housing. In addition, CUISR's links with the University of Saskatchewan provided important links to the academic community. Accordingly, CUISR was able to consult with a variety of community-based organizations to obtain advice about how to appropriately conduct the project and with academic resources regarding methodological issues. The City of Toronto's Streets to Homes program was also extremely open to consultation and provided a great deal of support to design and implement the project. Finally, the researchers took a participatory approach to the needs assessment by providing respondents with several open-ended questions. The open-ended items allowed respondents to communicate their needs in their own words, without imposing the researchers' perspective. Thus, the project was conducted in a manner that was respectful of homeless individuals and methodologically consistent with other municipalities, particularly the City of Toronto.

Training volunteers on a separate day from the count provided the project with a number of advantages. By having volunteers sign up for the additional day, CUISR ensured the project's volunteers were committed to the project, which likely increased the volunteer retention rate for the night of the count. In addition, volunteers were pre-assigned to teams and most volunteers trained with their team members to become comfortable with one another prior to count night. In cases where it was not possible to have team members train together, team members' contact information was distributed so that the team members could contact each other in advance and determine a time to meet on the night of the count. In addition, we made every attempt to personalize training materials, communications, and count night materials, which likely increased retention. As a result, 92 of 100 surveyors completed the training and 88 surveyors participated on the night of the count.

Three of the four surveyors who did not participate in count night advised the researchers in advance that they would be unable to participate.

Training volunteers on a separate day from the count had several advantages in terms of interviewer skill and potential data quality. Because count night was on a weekday, which would have limited the length of the training session due to conflicts with work, CUISR was able to have a longer and more rigorous training session than would have been possible if surveyors had been trained on the day of the count. Moreover, by distributing the survey to surveyors in advance, surveyors were also given the opportunity to practice the survey and ask questions for a longer period of time. In addition, CUISR's wide network of contacts facilitated the recruitment of a number of skilled and involved volunteers. Many of our volunteers had backgrounds in health, social work and psychology, which enabled us to have teams where at least one individual in each group had experience interviewing and/or working with at-risk populations. This may have increased the quality of data collected relative to another training strategy.

### **Conclusions**

The 2008 Homeless Count was the first to be conducted in the City of Saskatoon. The results of the needs assessment survey provided several avenues to consider for designing interventions to reduce homelessness in Saskatoon:

- ✓ Many respondents were employed full time, particularly those residing in shelters. Increasing the number of affordable housing units and increasing ease of access to affordable housing would likely be a significant help to individuals struggling with the cost of housing, particularly those individuals who are employed.
- ✓ Many respondents cited the low vacancy rate in the city as a primary reason that they were having difficulty finding a residence. Because the number of rental properties in the city may be decreasing because of condominium conversions, it is advisable that the City reduce the number of apartment buildings being converted into condominiums and encourage property developers to build apartment and condominium complexes as opposed to detached properties.
- ✓ Most respondents were not on a housing waiting list and those who were on waiting lists found the application process to be difficult. A review of the application processes for the different housing waiting lists may provide insight into possible barriers that applicants may be encountering and enable the process to be made less difficult.
- ✓ Many respondents reported relatively high rates of contact with the health care system and with the police. The possibility of partnering with the Saskatoon Health Region and Saskatoon Police Service to develop a housing referral mechanism could be explored.
- ✓ When asked what would help respondents find housing, help finding affordable housing and more money (speaking to affordability) were most frequently referenced. In addition, respondents thought transportation to see apartments and help with housing applications would be most helpful. All of these suggestions speak to the need for affordable housing that is easily accessible and the need to facilitate access to affordable housing when designing strategies for housing Saskatoon's homeless population.

In addition, if a count of absolutely and sheltered homeless individuals is conducted in the future, the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- ✓ Volunteer recruitment should continue to be done via email within CUISR's network and at the University of Saskatchewan. In addition, the Facebook group and Kijiji.com advertisement were also very helpful for recruiting volunteers. However, in the future, volunteers should also be recruited through the City of Saskatoon's volunteer database as well as the local newspaper; an article on the project appeared in the newspaper shortly before the count and there was a spike in volunteers interested in participating, which suggests newspaper advertisements would be useful in attracting more volunteers.
- ✓ Personalizing volunteer communications, training packages and count night materials should continue as this strategy helped keep the count organized and helped with volunteer retention.
- ✓ Holding the training session on a separate day should also continue as this served to increase retention and may have helped to increase the quality of the data collected.
- ✓ The current needs assessment survey contains three open-ended questions. While including these items allowed the researchers to adopt more of a participatory approach, CUISR received feedback from some volunteers that the survey was too long. In the future, researchers should keep one open-ended question (Question 8a) and use the responses provided by participants as options for the remaining open-ended items.
- ✓ The number of outdoor survey areas included in the count should be expanded, particularly to include more areas on the East side of the city. Other areas throughout the city should also be included to enable a city-wide estimate to be derived via statistical extrapolation. In addition, to be consistent with Saskatoon's Community Plan Asset Inventory, only Emergency Shelters should be included for the service provider portion of the survey.
- ✓ Representatives from the city's shelters should participate in the Advisory Group. Working more closely with the shelters may help to increase buy-in and service provider response rates.

By continuing to improve the methodology, future initiatives will continue to enjoy success. It is important to make use of the findings to improve initiatives for Saskatoon's homeless population to help end homelessness in the City of Saskatoon.

The first homeless count was well-received by the community. Saskatoon has been proactive in addressing homeless concerns of the community by conducting a homeless count at the beginning of an economic boom. The Homeless Count shows that the majority of homeless people are homeless because of the lack of affordable and appropriate housing. We can prevent homelessness in Saskatoon becoming a larger issue. It is reasonable to assume that if housing issues are not addressed in a timely and systematic way, the homeless population of Saskatoon will continue to increase.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Response from Research Ethics Board**



**Certificate of Approval**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR  
Steve Wormith

DEPARTMENT  
Psychology

BEH#  
08-98

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon SK

STUDENT RESEARCHERS  
Nicola Chopin

SPONSOR  
SERVICE CANADA

TITLE  
A Count of Saskatoon's Homeless Population

ORIGINAL REVIEW DATE  
12-Apr-2008

APPROVAL ON  
12-May-2008

APPROVAL OF:  
Ethics Application  
Consent Protocol

EXPIRY DATE  
11-May-2009

Full Board Meeting

Date of Full Board Meeting:

Delegated Review

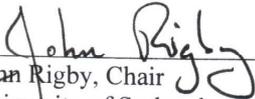
**CERTIFICATION**

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

**ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: [http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics\\_review/](http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Rigby, Chair  
University of Saskatchewan  
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:

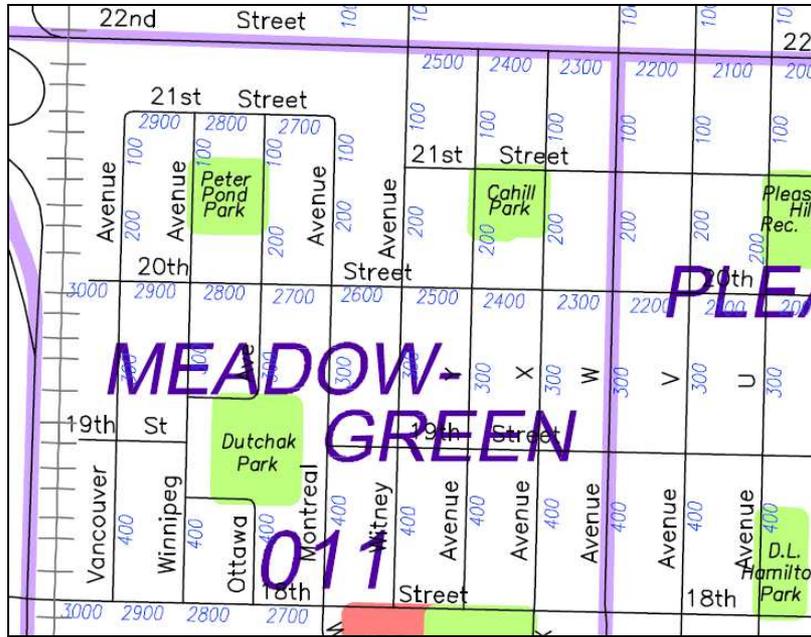
Ethics Office  
University of Saskatchewan  
Room 302 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place  
Saskatoon SK S7N 5C8  
Telephone: (306) 966-2975 Fax: (306) 966-2069

**APPENDIX B**

**Homeless Count 2008 Survey Areas**

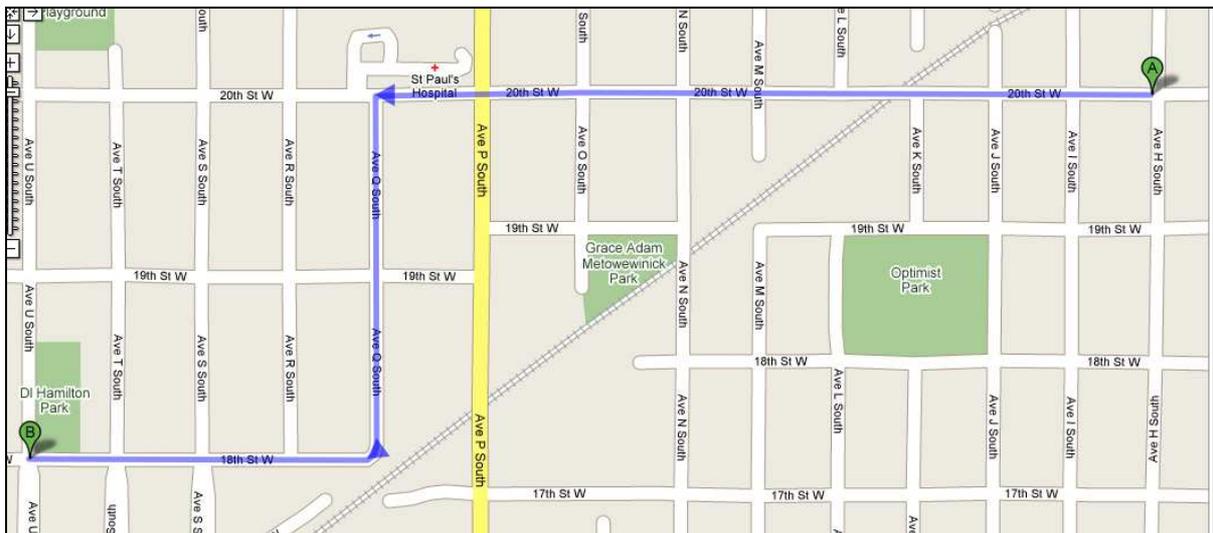
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #1



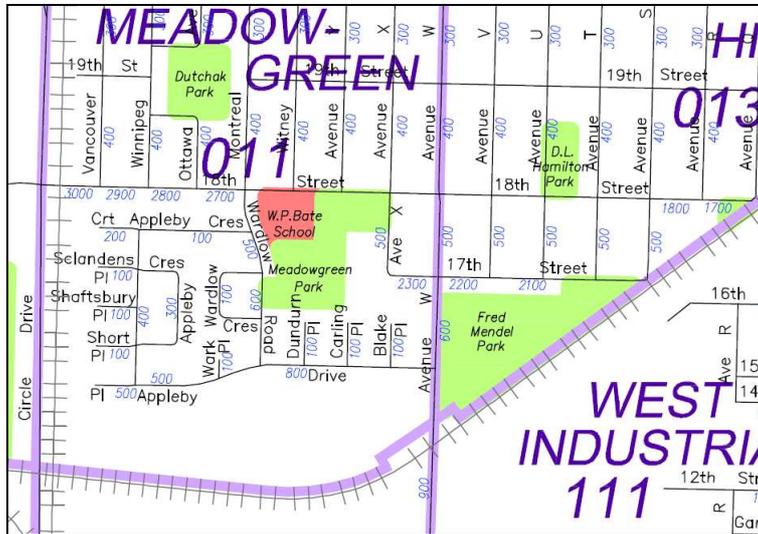
**Start At:** 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave U (West)

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave U (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #2



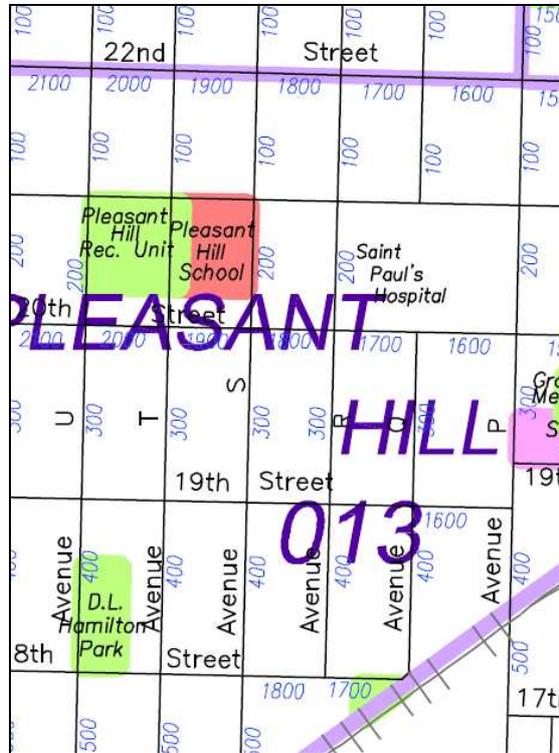
**Start At:** 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave S

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave S (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #3



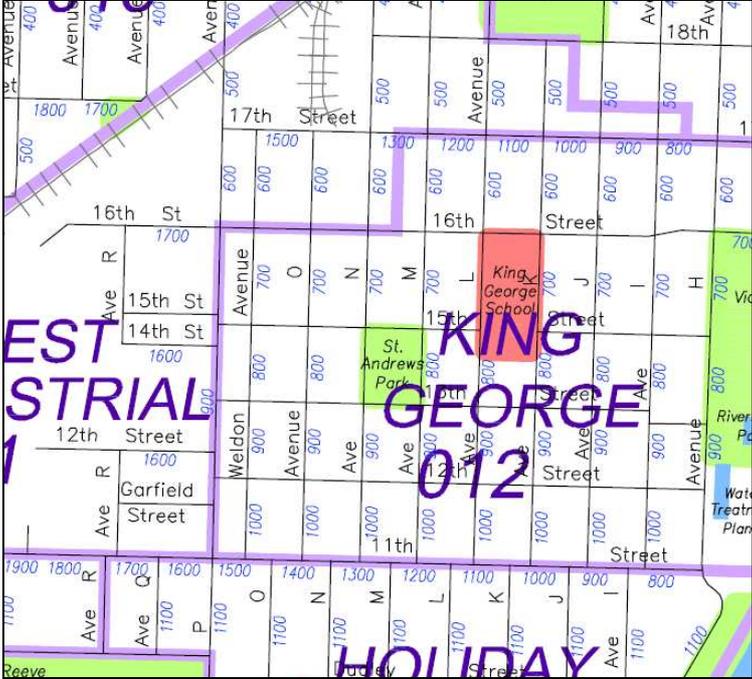
**Start At:** 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave U (East)

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave U (East) (B)



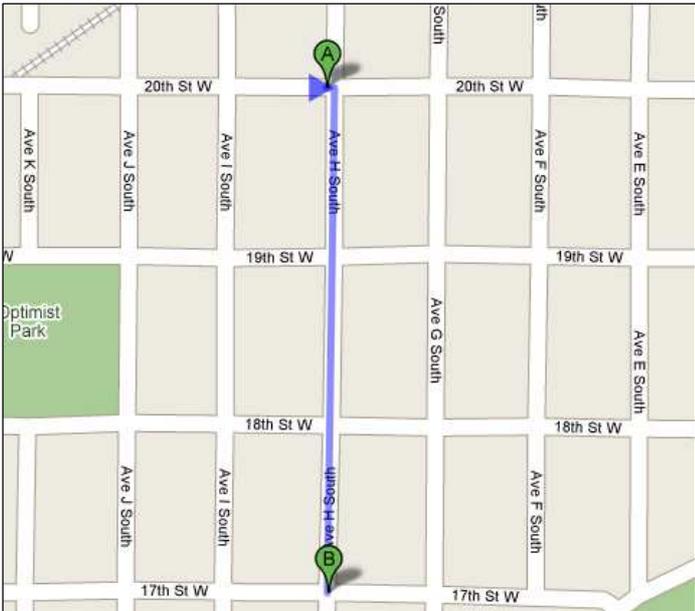
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #4



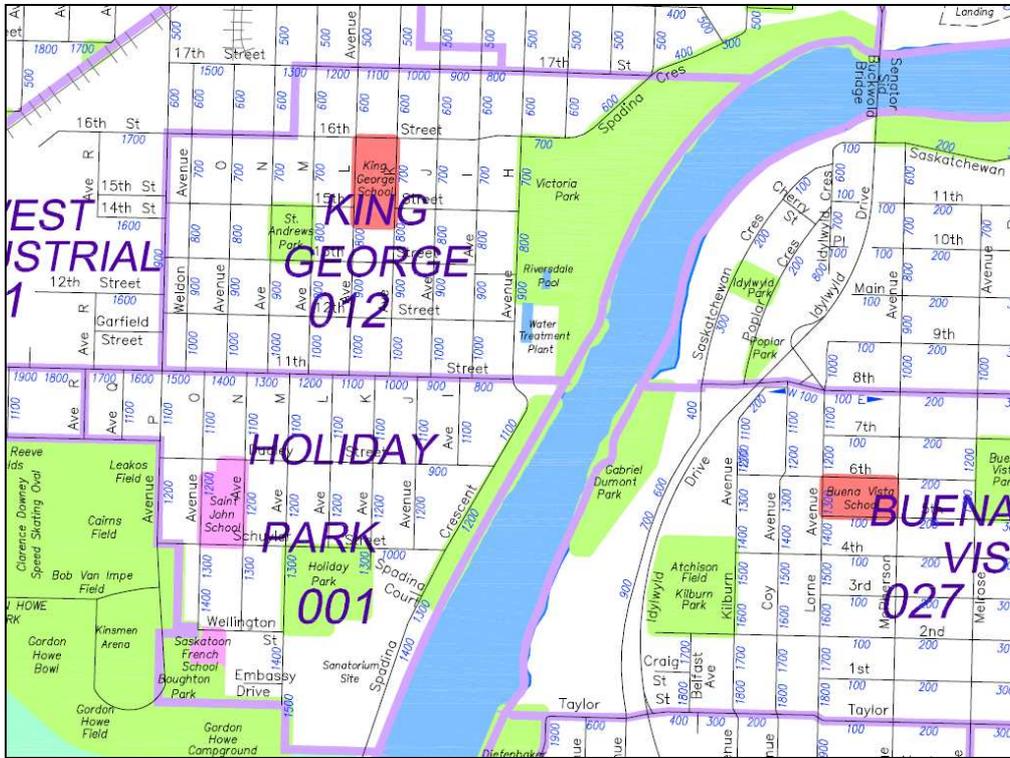
**Start At:** 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave H

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Ave H (B)



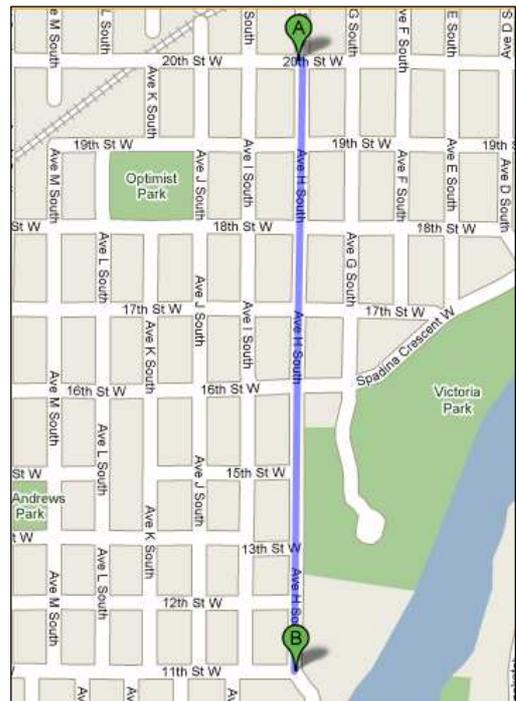
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #5



**Start At:** 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Spadina Crescent

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Spadina Crescent (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #6



**Start At:** 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Ave F (West)

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Ave F (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #7



**Start At:** 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Ave F (East)

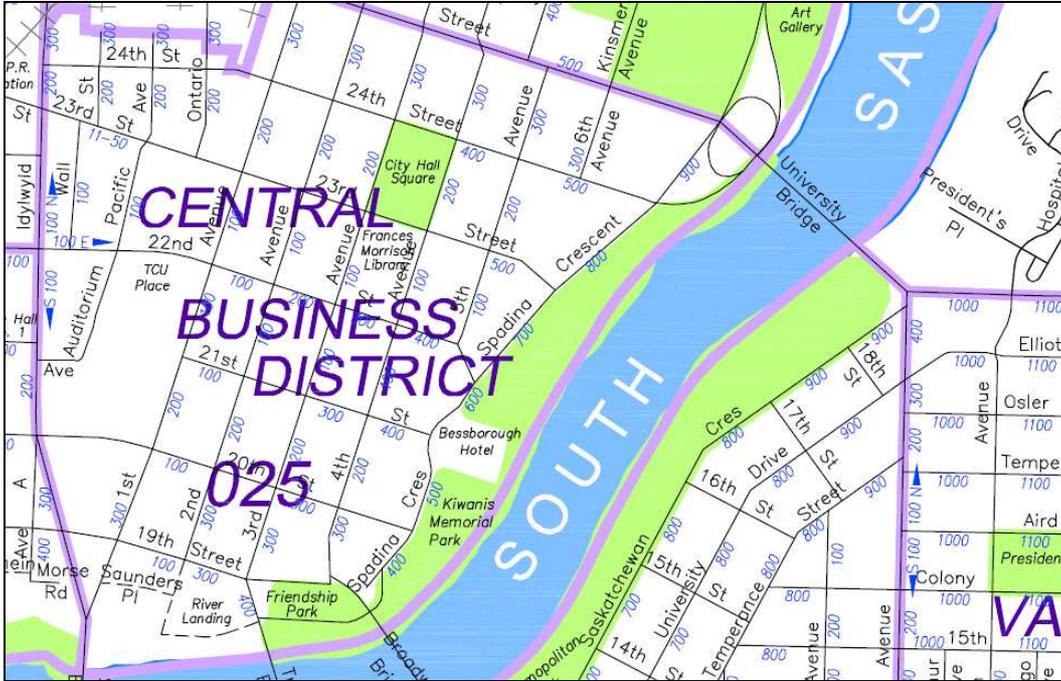
**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Ave F (B)





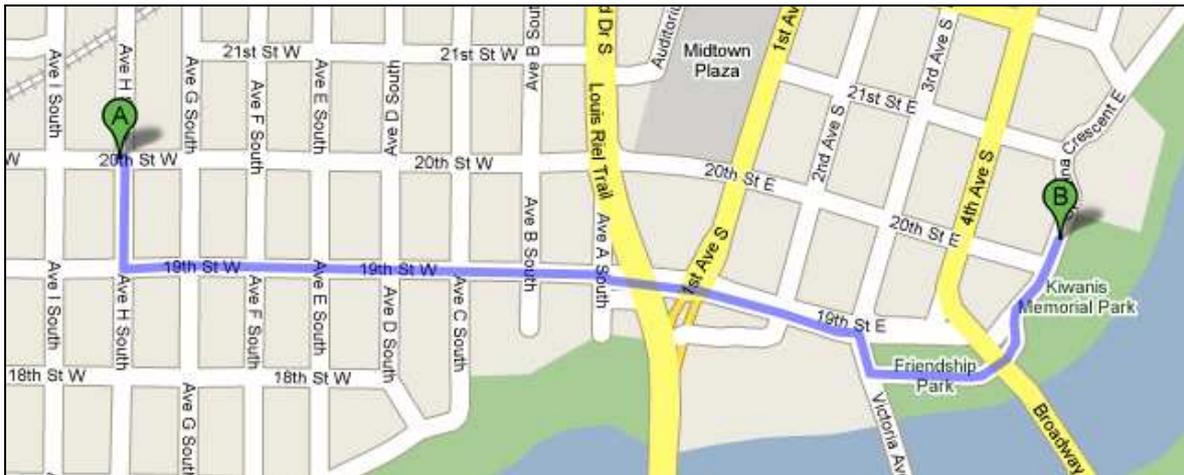
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #9



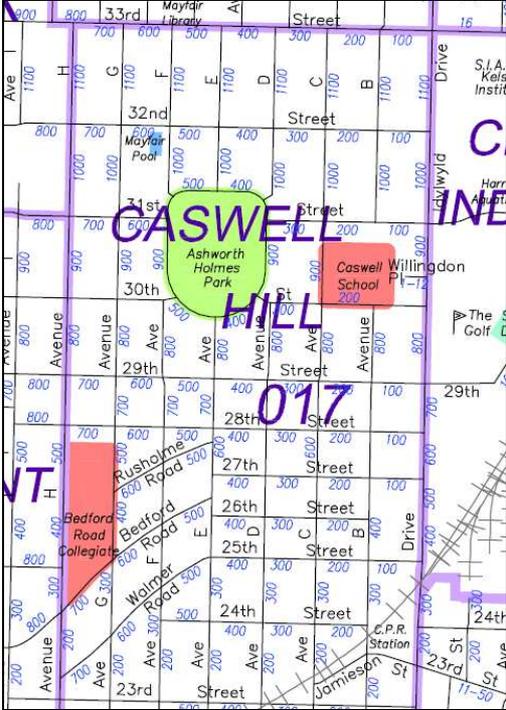
**Start At:** Kiwanis Memorial Park

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Kiwanis Memorial Park (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #10



**Start At:** 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Ave H

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Ave H (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #11



**Start At:** Idylwyld Drive and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Idylwyld Drive and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street (B)



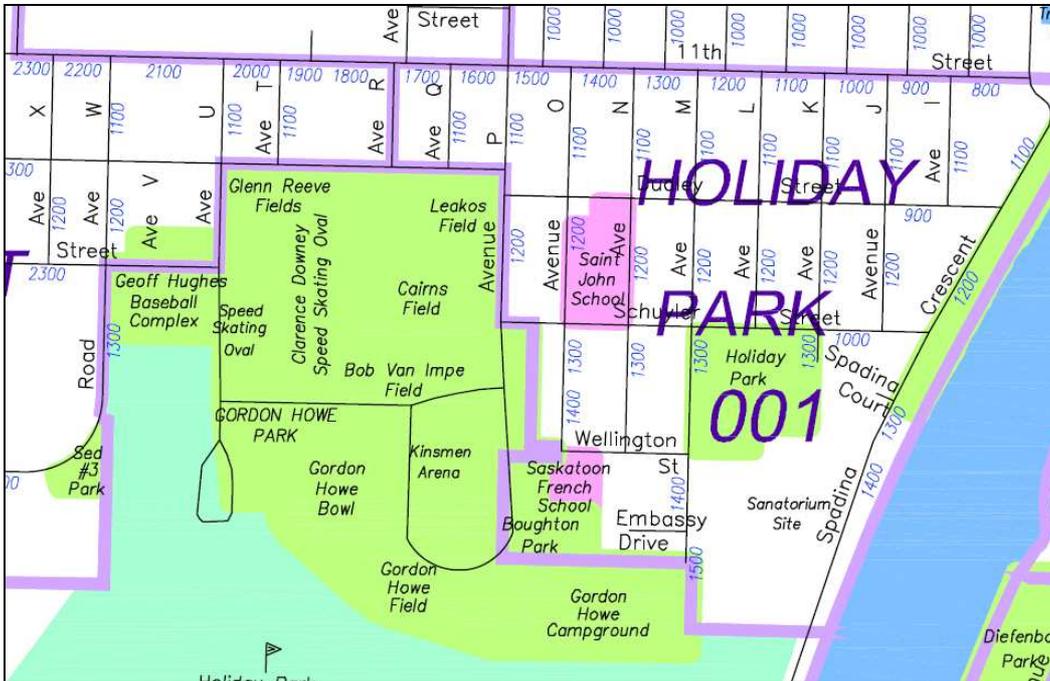






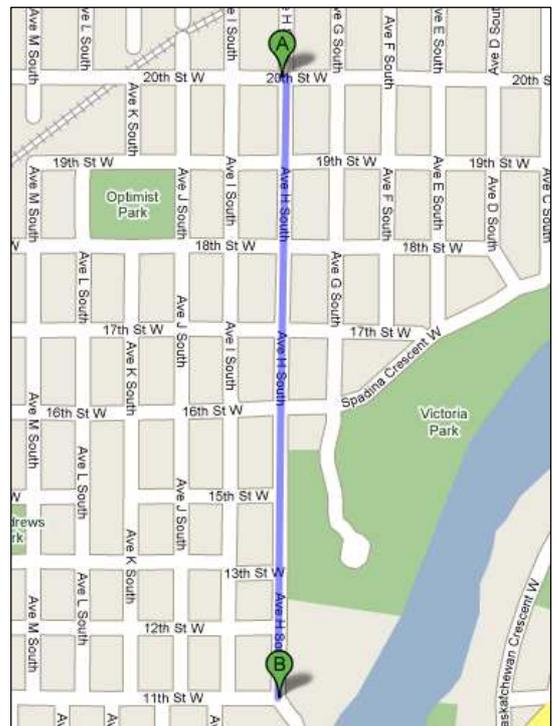
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #15



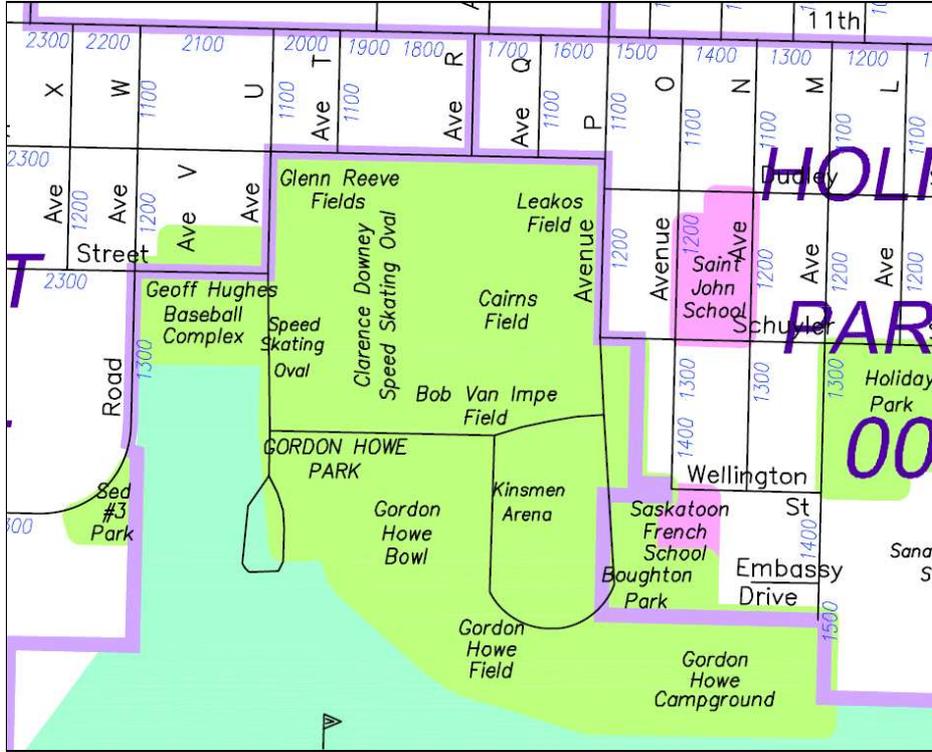
**Start At:** 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Spadina Crescent

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Spadina Crescent (B)



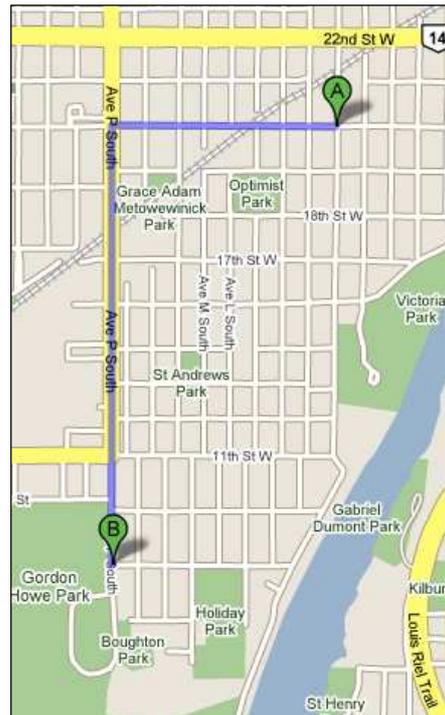
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #16



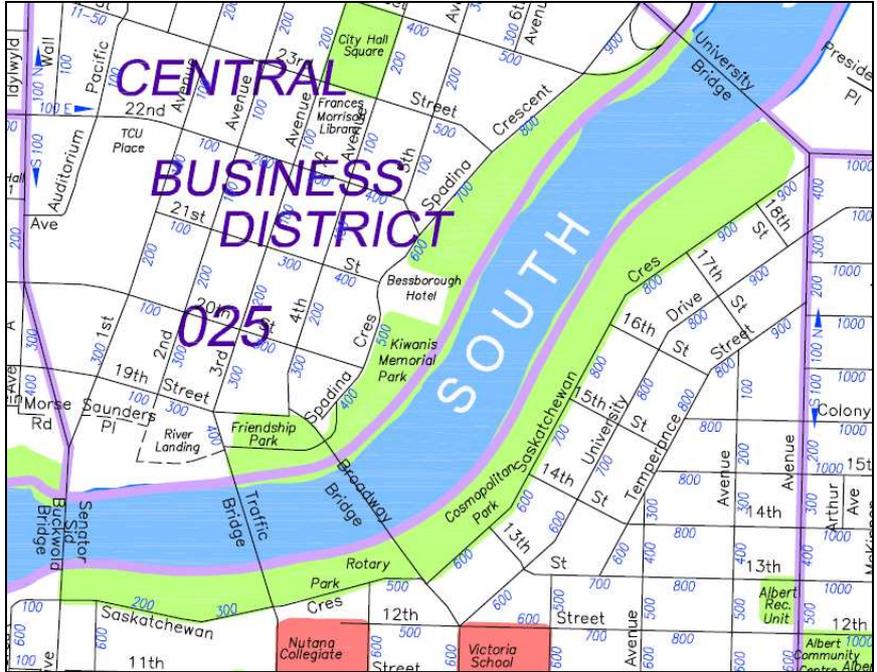
**Start At:** Schuyler Street and Ave P

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Schuyler Street and Ave P (B)



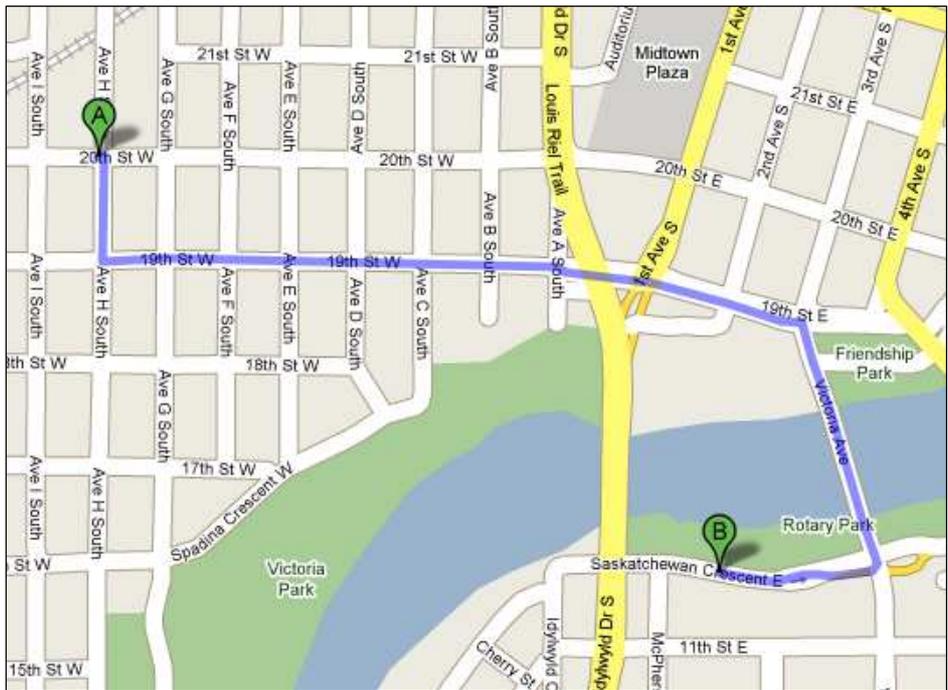
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #17



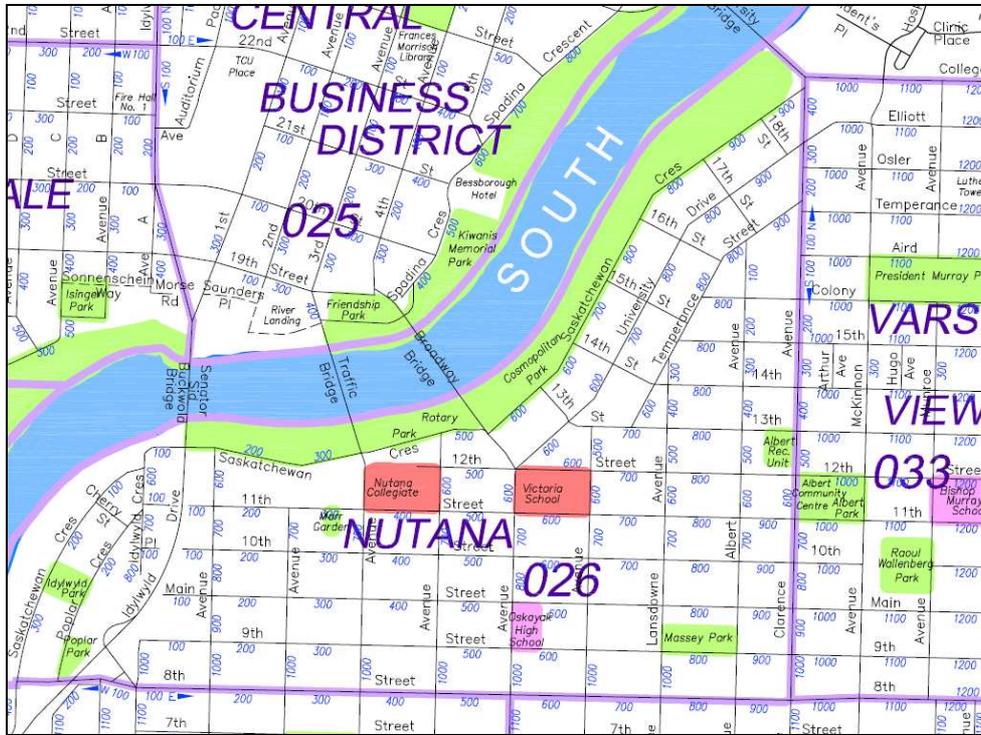
**Start At:** Rotary Park

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Rotary Park (B)



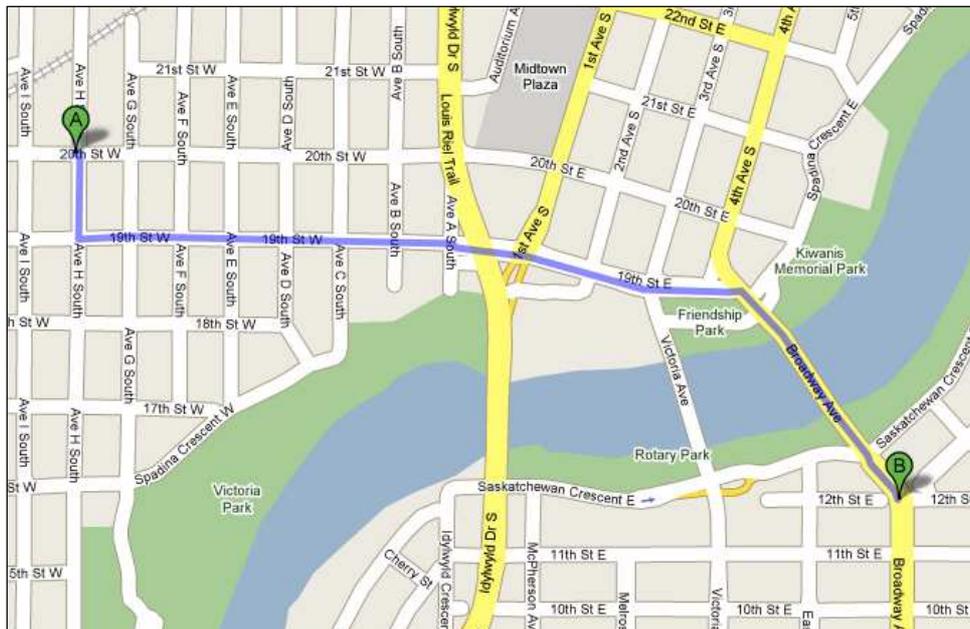
# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #18(a)

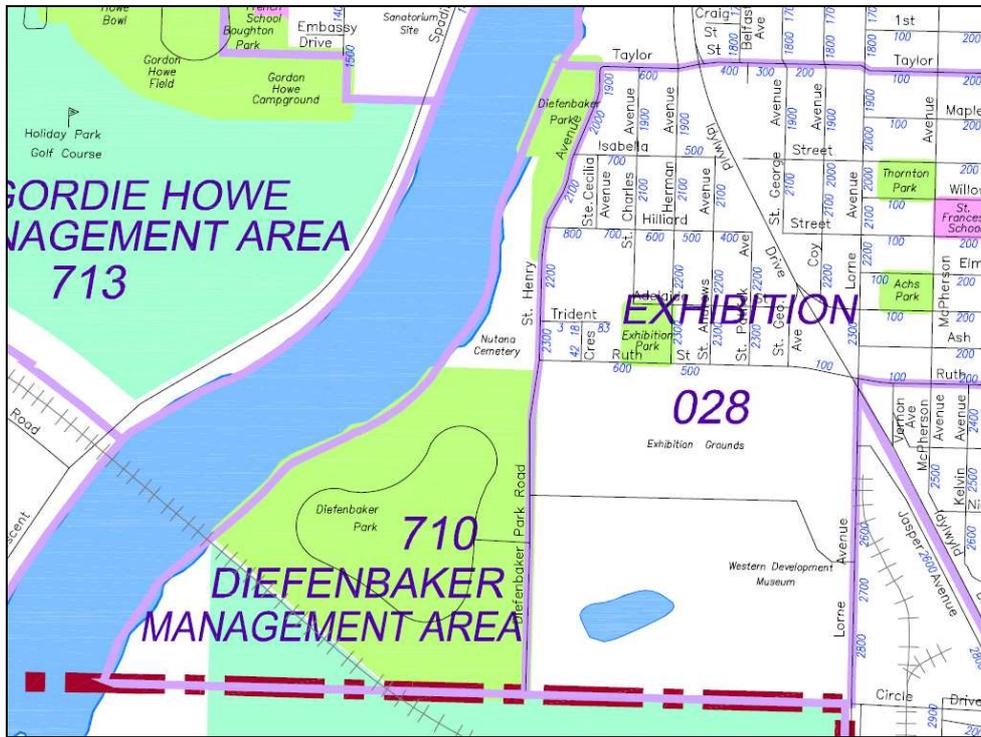


**Start At:** Broadway Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Street

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Broadway Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Street (B)



**Survey Area #18(b)**



**Start At:** Diefenbaker Park Entrance – Diefenbaker Park Road

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Diefenbaker Park Entrance – Diefenbaker Park Road (B)



## **Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008**

**Survey Area #19**

**Shelter Address:** Egadz – My Home

**\*Surveyors were not sent to My Home**

# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #20

**Shelter Address:** Quint Male Youth Lodge  
1505 20<sup>th</sup> Street West

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to My Home 2 (B)



# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

Survey Area #21

Shelter Address: YWCA Shelter  
510 - 25<sup>th</sup> Street East

Directions: from Rainbow Community Center (A) to YWCA Shelter (B)

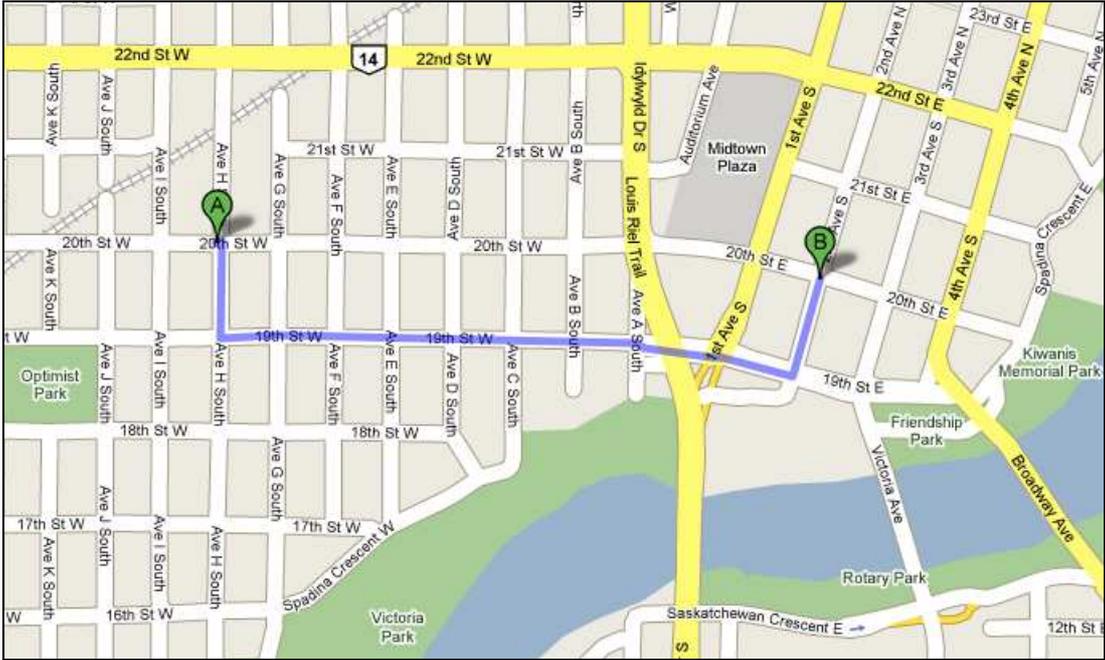


# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #22

**Shelter Address:** Lighthouse Shelter  
304 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Lighthouse Shelter (B)

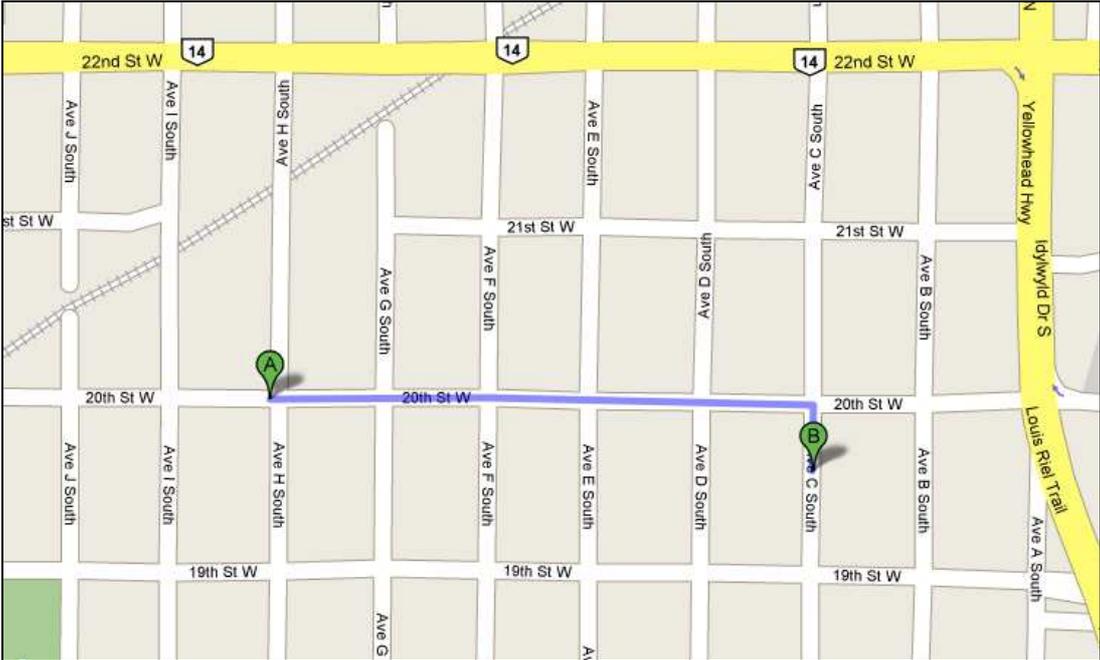


# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #23

**Shelter Address:** Salvation Army Shelter  
339 Avenue C South

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Salvation Army Shelter (B)



## **Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008**

**Survey Area #24**

**Shelter Address:** McLeod House

**\*Surveyors were not sent to McLeod House**

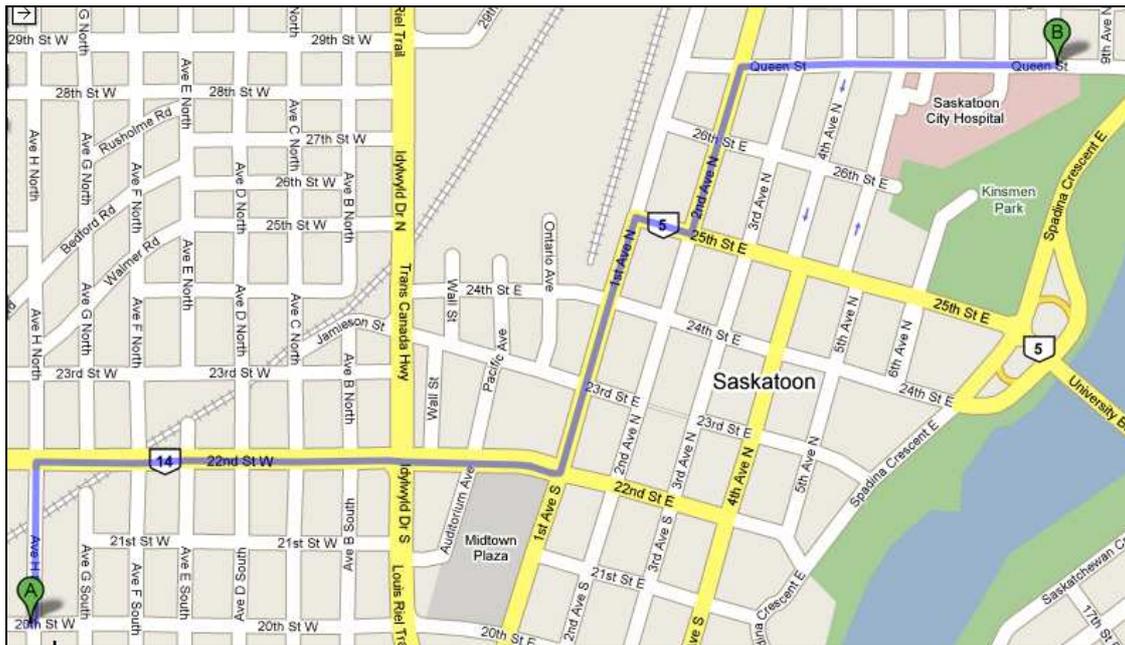


# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #26

**Shelter Address:** Bethany Home  
802 Queen Street

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Bethany Home (B)

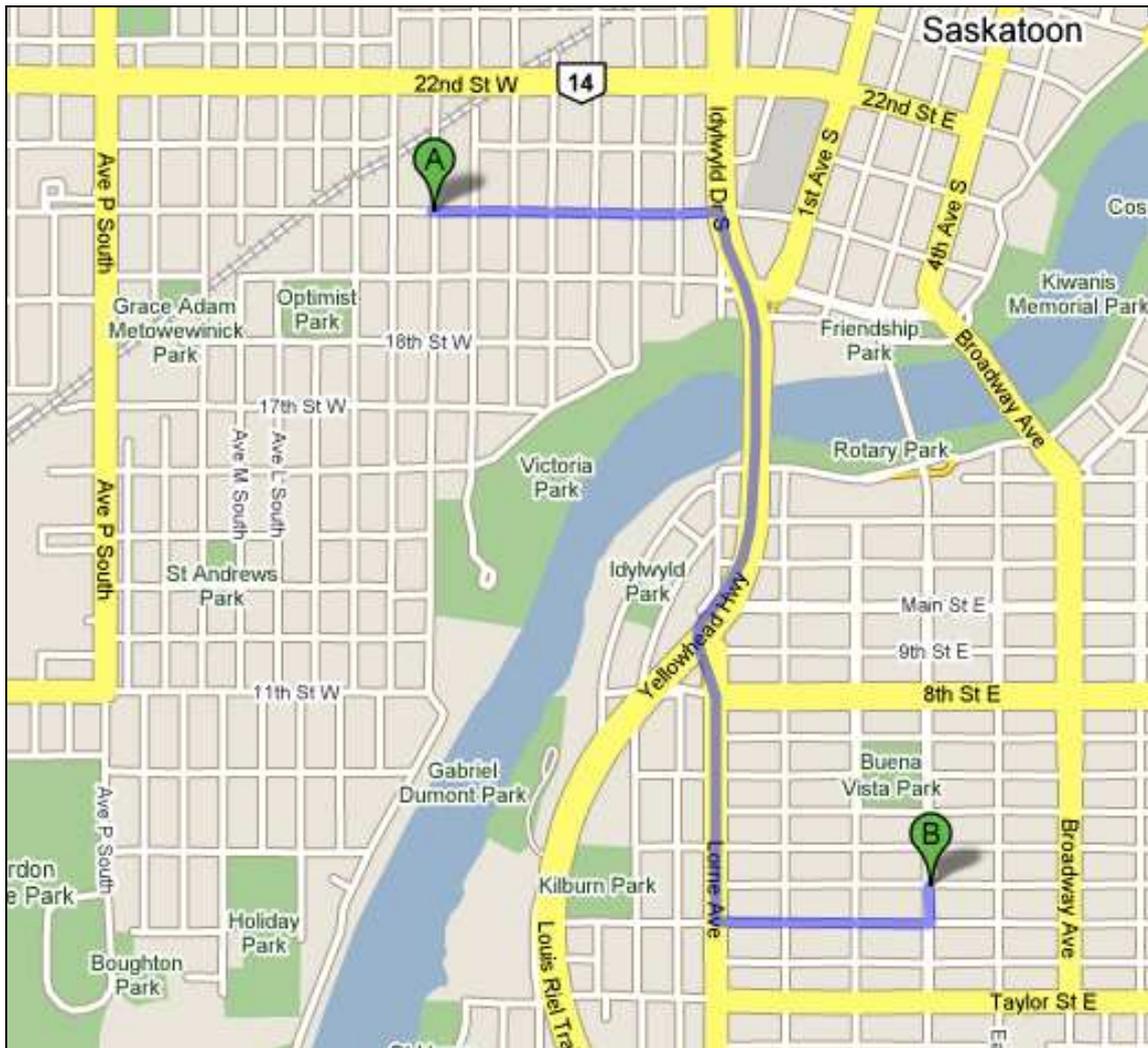


# Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008

## Survey Area #27

**Shelter Address:** Tamara's House  
1605 Victoria Avenue

**Directions:** from Rainbow Community Center (A) to Tamara's House (B)



## **Homeless Count of Saskatoon 2008**

**Survey Area #28**

**Shelter Address:** Safe House

**\*Surveyors were not sent to Safe House**



**APPENDIX C**

**List of Shelters**

CUISR targeted several of the city’s shelters for the service provider survey based on consultation with the shelters and community-based organizations. Table 45 lists the city’s emergency shelters and transitional housing providers and illustrates whether they were included in the count (City of Saskatoon, 2007):

**Table 45. List of shelter facilities**

Shelter Name	Included in the Homeless Count?	
	Yes	No
<b>Emergency Shelters</b>		
Interval House	✓	
Lighthouse (Short Term)	✓	
Salvation Army (Men’s Unit)	✓	
Saskatoon Crisis Nursery		✓
YWCA	✓	
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Adelle House		✓
Calder Center		✓
Carmel House		✓
CUMFI Infinity House	✓	
Egadz – My Home & My Home Too*	✓	
Elizabeth Fry Community Training Residence		✓
John Howard Society – Cedar House		✓
Larson House & Brief Detox Centre*	✓	
Meewasinota Aboriginal Healing Centre		✓
Quint – Men’s Youth Lodge	✓	
Quint – Pleasant Hill Place		✓
Red Willow		✓
Ronald McDonald House		✓
Salvation Army – Bethany Home	✓	
Salvation Army – New Frontiers		✓
Salvation Army – Noah’s Ark		✓
Salvation Army – Serenity Cove		✓
Tamara’s House	✓	

\*The survey was not administered at these locations due to scheduling difficulties

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Outdoor Survey Questionnaire**

## Screening Questions – Outdoor Survey

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research. We are conducting a survey about what homeless individuals need to obtain housing.

Have you already been interviewed tonight by someone wearing a name tag like this (*point to volunteer name tag*)? (*If YES, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
- No

Where will you be sleeping tonight? (*If INDOOR LOCATION, "That concludes our survey. Thank you for your time."*)

- Outside
- At home
- At a friend's house
- In a shelter
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to answer a few questions? (*If YES, do Part 1. If NO, do Part 2*)

- Yes
- No

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Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research. We are conducting a survey about what homeless individuals need to obtain housing.

Have you already been interviewed tonight by someone wearing a name tag like this (*point to volunteer name tag*)? (*If YES, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
- No

Where will you be sleeping tonight? (*If INDOOR LOCATION, "That concludes our survey. Thank you for your time."*)

- Outside
- At home
- At a friend's house
- In a shelter
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to answer a few questions? (*If YES, do Part 1. If NO, do Part 2*)

- Yes
- No

## Outdoor Survey Questionnaire

Location where survey was completed:

- On the street
- In a park or the river valley
- In another public place (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the survey. It will take about 10 minutes to complete. You will be completely anonymous and only group data will be reported. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can skip a question or stop the survey at any time, for any reason.

**Observations:** *(Complete this section by observation – do not ask these questions)*

Number of other adults present: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children present: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pets present: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part One:** *(Begin asking questions here)*

1. May I ask you how old you are? \_\_\_\_\_ years

*If unknown or refused, estimate by these ranges:*

- 25 years or younger
- 26 to 49 years
- 50 years or older

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused/no answer

3. What is your racial background? *(Read all options)*

- European/Caucasian descent
- Aboriginal/Métis
- East Indian
- Asian
- Middle Eastern
- African
- Central American
- South American
- Refused/no answer
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. a) Are you currently on a waiting list for housing?

- Yes
- No (Go to Q5)
- (Don't read) Don't know (Go to Q5)
- (Don't read) Refused/no answer (Go to Q5)

b) What waiting list(s) are you on? (Read each option and check all that apply)

- Saskatoon Housing Authority
- Cress Housing
- Saskatoon Housing Coalition
- SaskNative Rentals
- YWCA
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

c) How long have you been on the waiting list(s)?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days
- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks
- \_\_\_\_\_ months
- \_\_\_\_\_ years
- Don't know
- Refused/no answer

d) When was the last time you updated your application or made sure you were still on the list?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days ago
- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks ago
- \_\_\_\_\_ months ago
- \_\_\_\_\_ years ago
- Don't know
- Refused/no answer

e) Has anything made applying for housing difficult?

- Yes
- No (Go to Q5)
- Don't know (Go to Q5)
- Refused/no answer (Go to Q5)

f) (If yes), what problems have you had applying for housing?

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5. a) Please describe the place you will stay tonight (*Check only one – prompt if necessary*):

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Sidewalk           | <input type="radio"/> Parking garage                          | <input type="radio"/> Friend's house ( <i>Go to closing script</i> ) |
| <input type="radio"/> Ravine             | <input type="radio"/> Coffee shop                             | <input type="radio"/> Other (specify): _____                         |
| <input type="radio"/> Grate              | <input type="radio"/> Internet café                           | <input type="radio"/> (Don't read) Don't know                        |
| <input type="radio"/> Park               | <input type="radio"/> Bathhouse                               | <input type="radio"/> (Don't read) Refused/no answer                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Abandoned building | <input type="radio"/> Tent                                    |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Car/van/trailer    | <input type="radio"/> Shelter ( <i>Go to closing script</i> ) |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Transit shelter    |   |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Under a bridge     |   |  |

b) Where did you stay last night?

- |  |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Sidewalk           | <input type="radio"/> Under a bridge | <input type="radio"/> Friend's house                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Ravine             | <input type="radio"/> Parking garage | <input type="radio"/> Other (specify): _____         |
| <input type="radio"/> Grate              | <input type="radio"/> Coffee shop    | <input type="radio"/> (Don't read) Don't know        |
| <input type="radio"/> Park               | <input type="radio"/> Internet café  | <input type="radio"/> (Don't read) Refused/no answer |
| <input type="radio"/> Abandoned building | <input type="radio"/> Bathhouse      |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Car/van/trailer    | <input type="radio"/> Tent           |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Transit shelter    | <input type="radio"/> Shelter        |  |

6. How long has it been since you last had your own residence?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days  
 \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
 \_\_\_\_\_ months  
 \_\_\_\_\_ years  
 Don't know  
 Refused/no answer

7. a) Have you used any of the following services in the last 6 months? (*Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each*) (*If none, move to Q7e*).

	Yes	No
Health clinics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job training/Job supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Detox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drop-ins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food bank	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospital/emergency room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services that help you get ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saskatoon Housing Authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

b) Of the services you just mentioned you have used, are any helping you get permanent housing? *(Mark all that are indicated – if none, move to Q7e)*

	Yes	No
Health clinics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job training/Job supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Detox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drop-ins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food bank	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospital/emergency room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services that help you get ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saskatoon Housing Authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

c) Have you had any problems accessing any of the services you just mentioned that might help you get housing?

- Yes
- No *(Go to Q7e)*

d) *(If yes)*, what problems have you had?

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e) Do you currently have a long-term housing plan?

- Yes
- No *(Go to Q7g)*

f) Based on your housing plan, when do you expect to move into housing? *(Read aloud and check the corresponding time)*

- Within one week
- Within one month
- Within three months
- Within one year
- (Don't read)* Don't know
- (Don't read)* Refused/no answer

g) Have you had any contact with any of the following in the last 6 months? (*Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each*)

	Yes	No
Ambulance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Probation/Parole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jail, detention centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. a) What kinds of problems have you had finding a place of your own to live?

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

	Yes	No
More money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help getting ID (e.g., health card)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help finding an affordable place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with housing applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with immigration issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harm reduction supports (e.g., methadone, needle exchange)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation to see apartments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with legal issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help addressing your health needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help getting detox services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help getting alcohol or drug treatment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services in a language other than English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My next questions are about your income.

9. a) What are your current source(s) of income? *(Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each)*

	Yes	No
Formal employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal employment (for example, under the table or for cash)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Day jobs (e.g., Ready to Work)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family/friends <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canada Pension Plan <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployment/Employment Insurance <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government Programs (e.g., Child Tax Credit) <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Services/Welfare <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Panhandling <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- b) Do you work full time or part time? By full time, I mean 35 hours a week.

- Full time  
 Part time

**Volunteer Closing Script (Please read):**

That concludes our survey. Thank you for participating. Your answers will help shelters and shelters in the City of Saskatoon better plan its services for homeless people. *(Leave card with information about housing services).*

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

Thank you again for your assistance.

**Part Two:**

Person observed is:

- On the street
- In a park
- On private property
- In another public space (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Two is used when the individual** (*Check which one applies*)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is sleeping and you think the individual is homeless
- \_\_\_\_\_ Refuses to participate in the survey and you think the individual is homeless
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is inaccessible because they are on private property
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seems to be incapable of participating in the survey and you think the individual is homeless

**Demographic Questions**

1. Presumed sex

- Male
- Female
- Unclear

2. Presumed age

- Looks 25 or younger
- Looks 26 to 49
- Looks 50 or older
- Unclear

3. Reason for thinking the individual is homeless and unsheltered

- Carrying bags, backpacks, garbage bags, suitcases, blankets, shopping cart, sleeping bag and/or bedrolls
- Sleeping on the street or other public place
- Sign indicating homeless and requesting assistance/money
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Reason for thinking the individual is incapable of completing the survey (*if that option was chosen above*):

- Language barrier
- Behaviour
- Disability
- Sleeping
- Mental health issue
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- No time/Too busy/Moving

**APPENDIX E**

**Service Provider Survey Questionnaire**

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

### Screening Questions – Shelter Survey

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research. We are conducting a survey about what homeless individuals need to obtain housing.

Have you already been interviewed tonight by someone wearing a name tag like this (*point to volunteer name tag*)? (*If YES, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to answer a few questions? (*If YES, continue with survey. If NO, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
  - No
- 

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research. We are conducting a survey about what homeless individuals need to obtain housing.

Have you already been interviewed tonight by someone wearing a name tag like this (*point to volunteer name tag*)? (*If YES, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to answer a few questions? (*If YES, continue with survey. If NO, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
  - No
- 

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research. We are conducting a survey about what homeless individuals need to obtain housing.

Have you already been interviewed tonight by someone wearing a name tag like this (*point to volunteer name tag*)? (*If YES, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
- No

Would you be willing to answer a few questions? (*If YES, continue with survey. If NO, "Thank you for your time."*)

- Yes
- No

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

## Shelter Survey Questionnaire

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the survey. It will take around 10 minutes to complete. You will be completely anonymous and only group data will be reported. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can skip a question or stop the survey at any time, for any reason.

1. Are you staying here with anyone?

- No, alone
- Yes, with one other adult
- Yes, with more than one other adult
- Yes, with children

2. May I ask you how old you are? \_\_\_\_\_ years

*If unknown or refused, estimate by these ranges:*

- 25 years or younger
- 26 to 49 years
- 50 years or older

3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused/no answer

4. What is your racial background? *(Read all options)*

- European/Caucasian descent
- Aboriginal/Métis
- East Indian
- Asian
- Middle Eastern
- African
- Central American
- South American
- (Don't read)* Refused/no answer
- (Don't read)* Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. a) Are you currently on a waiting list for housing?

- Yes
- No *(Go to Q6)*
- Don't know *(Go to Q6)*
- Refused/no answer *(Go to Q6)*

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

c) What waiting list(s) are you on? *(Read each option and check all that apply)*

- Saskatoon Housing Authority
- Cress Housing
- Saskatoon Housing Coalition
- SaskNative Rentals
- YWCA
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

c) How long have you been on the waiting list(s)?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days
- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks
- \_\_\_\_\_ months
- \_\_\_\_\_ years
- Don't know
- Refused/no answer

d) When was the last time you updated your application or made sure you were still on the list?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days ago
- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks ago
- \_\_\_\_\_ months ago
- \_\_\_\_\_ years ago
- Don't know
- Refused/no answer

e) Has anything made applying for housing difficult?

- Yes
- No *(Go to Q6)*
- Don't know *(Go to Q6)*
- Refused/no answer *(Go to Q6)*

f) *(If yes,)* what problems have you had applying for housing?

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6. a) How long have you been using this shelter/transitional housing?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days
- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks
- \_\_\_\_\_ months
- \_\_\_\_\_ years
- Don't know
- Refused/no answer

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

b) How long has it been since you last had your own residence?

\_\_\_\_\_ days

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks

\_\_\_\_\_ months

\_\_\_\_\_ years

Don't know

Refused/no answer

7. a) Have you used any of the following services in the last 6 months? *(Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each) (If none, move to Q7e).*

	Yes	No
Health clinics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job training/Job supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Detox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drop-ins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food bank	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospital/emergency room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services that help you get ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saskatoon Housing Authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

b) Of the services you just mentioned you have used, are any helping you get permanent housing? *(Mark all that are indicated – if none, move to Q7e)*

	Yes	No
Health clinics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job training/Job supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Detox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drop-ins	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food bank	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospital/emergency room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services that help you get ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saskatoon Housing Authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

c) Have you had any problems accessing any of the services you just mentioned that might help you get housing?

- Yes
- No (go to Q7e)

d) (If yes,) what problems have you had?

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e) Do you currently have a long-term housing plan?

- Yes
- No (Go to Q7g)

f) Based on your housing plan, when do you expect to move into housing? (Read aloud and check the corresponding time)

- Within one week
- Within one month
- Within three months
- Within one year
- (Don't read) Don't know
- (Don't read) Refused/no answer

g) Have you had any contact with any of the following in the last 6 months? (Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each)

	Yes	No
Ambulance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Probation/Parole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jail, detention centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>If Yes, did they help you with housing?</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

8. a) What kinds of problems have you had finding a place of your own to live?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

	Yes	No
More money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help getting ID (e.g., health card)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help finding an affordable place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with housing applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with immigration issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harm reduction supports (e.g., methadone, needle exchange)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation to see apartments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with legal issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help addressing your health needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help getting detox services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help getting alcohol or drug treatment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services in a language other than English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team # \_\_\_\_\_

My next questions are about your income.

9. a) What are your current source(s) of income? *(Read list and ask yes or no for each question and check their response to each)*

	Yes	No
Formal employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal employment (for example, under the table or for cash)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Day jobs (e.g., Ready to Work)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family/friends <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canada Pension Plan <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployment/Employment Insurance <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government Programs (e.g., Child Tax Credit) <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Services/Welfare <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Panhandling <i>(Go to closing script)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- c) Do you work full time or part time? By full time, I mean 35 hours a week.
- Full time
  - Part time

**Volunteer Closing Script (Please read):**

That concludes our survey. Thank you for participating. Your answers will help shelters and shelters in the City of Saskatoon better plan their services for homeless people.

Thank you again for your assistance.