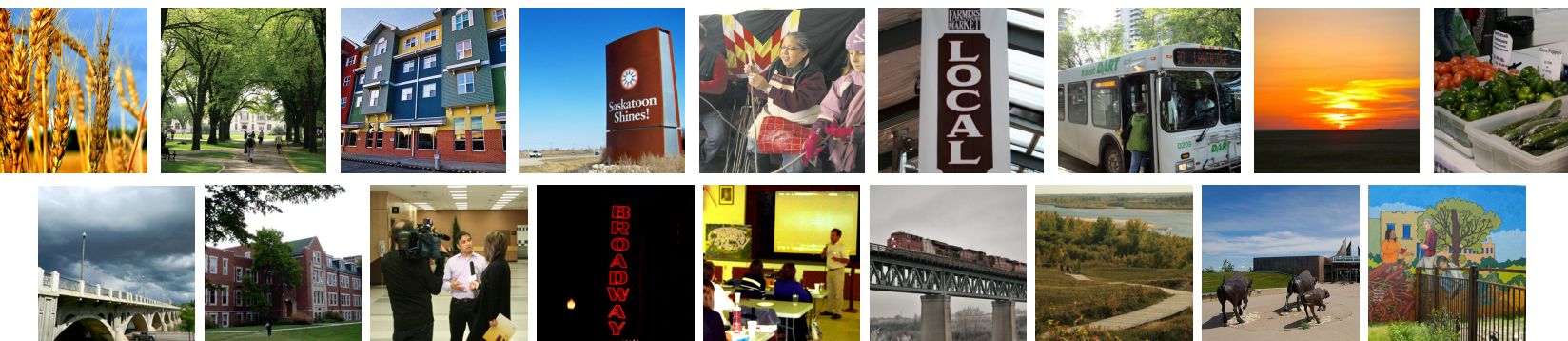




**CUISR**  
COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

# 2015 Point-In-Time Homelessness Count Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Cara Spence Gress, Isobel M. Findlay,  
Bill Holden, Stephen Wormith, Pamela Brotzel,  
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*Student training:* CUIR provides training and guidance to undergraduate and graduate students and encourages community agencies to provide community orientation in order to promote positive experiences with evaluators and researchers.

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UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

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Planning, preparation, and implementation of the Point-in-Time (PIT) Homelessness Count, June 22, 2015, was an enormous community effort involving individuals, agencies, shelters, and community-based organizations delivering services and supports. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Advisory Group of key organizations involved in issues of homelessness in Saskatoon. Members of the group gave important advice on research design and implementation to ensure that the count reflected current social, cultural, and economic realities and responded to community needs.

We are also grateful to those who helped deliver four training sessions for volunteers. Special thanks to Lesley Prefontaine, CSO Supervisor, Community Support Officer Program, and to Vanessa Charles and Ruth Engele who helped reduce risk and ensure the safety and comfort of surveyors and respondents.

To all those who participated in the public perceptions component of the PIT count, June 22, 2015, we express our gratitude. Their experience and reflections added greatly to the local portrait of homelessness. To those who gave of their time to share their experiences of homelessness, what has challenged and what has helped in their efforts to secure stable housing, we extend our deep gratitude. Their contributions help us to get a better understanding of the issues they face, their service use, unmet needs, and to identify what might importantly make their housing situation better.

We also gratefully acknowledge the eighty volunteer surveyors—people with lived experience, administrators, academics, students, retirees, people from the service sector, media, health, policing, and community support officers—without whom the PIT count would not have been possible. They gave of their time and expertise, participated in a required three-hour training session, and conducted interviews with participants on the streets or at shelters on June 22, 2015. We are also grateful to those volunteers who contributed to the debrief session on July 6, 2015 and to ongoing learning about how to design and implement effective PIT counts.



## HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS

The reality of homelessness in Canada persists throughout the country:

- 20% of Canadian renters spend more than half and 40% spend more than 30% of their income on shelter
- 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a year
- Estimated 50,000 more represent “hidden homelessness”
- Homelessness costs the Canadian economy \$7.05 billion a year

Efforts have increased, however, to address the homelessness issue through direct programming initiatives and support for research to document trends and experiences of homelessness. The third Point-in-Time (PIT) Homelessness Count, including an indoor and outdoor enumeration, a street needs assessment, and public perception survey, was held in Saskatoon on June 22, 2015. The 2015 count built on the learning from counts in Saskatoon in 2008 and 2012, while adapting to the requirements of Employment and Social Development Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy Directives 2014-2019. The PIT count, using a “snap shot” approach to collect the data, aimed to identify **chronically homeless** (individuals who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year) and **episodically homeless** (individuals who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year).

In addition to analyzing the size and composition of chronically and episodically homelessness for both individuals and families, the PIT count also examined at-risk groups and sub-populations to establish a better understanding of the trends among homeless populations and determine appropriate programs and services according to needs. To produce as comprehensive and multi-faceted a picture of homelessness in Saskatoon as possible, the count included these new features:

- Surveyed all people encountered on count day about perceptions of and attitudes to homelessness
- Expanded enumeration to include “hidden homeless,” the provisionally accommodated or “couch surfers” without immediate prospect of permanent housing
- Added demographic and other information (immigration status, disabilities, accessibility and barriers to services, and orientation to systems to find housing)

## **Count Results**

A total of 450 people were counted as without permanent shelter, including 45 children:

- 58 adults and 16 children were counted or reported in the outdoor survey
- 112 adults and 7 children were counted in the indoor survey conducted within collaborating shelters and transitional houses
- 235 adults and 22 children were reported staying in four participating shelters or transitional houses by the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

## **Street Needs Assessment Results**

### *Respondent Demographics*

The count indicated that the Saskatoon's homelessness population continues to be disproportionately male (62%) and individuals self-identifying as Aboriginal (45%); while 45% of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 49 years. Most respondents (30%) were on social assistance for income (a further 10% reported disability benefits); 8% had formal employment, 7% reported informal employment, and 4% worked fulltime. Findings were similar for indoor and outdoor survey respondents except in the case of full-time employment where 4% of indoor respondents reported full-time employment compared to 2% of outdoor ones. Similarly, 14% of outdoor respondents reported panhandling as a source of income compared to only 5% of indoor respondents. Almost half (46%) of respondents reported being victims of physical violence while living without permanent shelter, and 45% of respondents reported living with foster families during their childhood, while only 11% lived with foster families until they were 18 years of age. Of those without permanent shelter, 10% identified as being a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces.

### *Chronically and Episodically Homeless*

Of those individuals experiencing homelessness, 47% were chronically homeless (without a permanent address for more than six months), while 47% were found to be episodically homeless or without shelter three times or more over the past year. More than a quarter (27%) were currently on a waiting list for housing (30% of indoor respondents and 21% of outdoor respondents). Forty percent of respondents had resided in Saskatoon for more than five years, a further 16% for 1-5 years, and 9% had lived in Saskatoon since birth, while 18% had been in the city for less than 6 months.

### *Barriers to Finding Housing*

The primary reasons for difficulties in finding housing were these:

- Lack of income or the affordability of housing (60%)
- Health issues: 19% reporting physical health; 18%, mental health; and 18%, disability issues
- Overwhelming life stresses (25%)
- Discrimination (23%)
- Family situations (21%)
- Lack of trust in services and supports (21%)

### *Supports to Find Housing*

In terms of finding housing, respondents identified these key supports:

- Health supports (mental health supports, 38%; health supports, 36%; harm reduction, 31%; and disability accessibility, 25%)
- More money (77%)
- Help finding affordable housing (73%)
- Transportation (62%)
- Help with housing applications (62%)
- Help with legal issues (43%)

### *Service Use Patterns*

In the last six months, the most used services and resources were the following:

- Shelters (60%)
- Food bank (51%)
- Drop-ins (45%)
- Health clinics (45%)
- Hospital/ER (43%)
- Identification Services (29%)
- Police (28%)
- Detox (27%)

### *Comparing Results with 2008 and 2012 Counts*

While it is important to acknowledge the limitations in comparing the findings with previous count findings in 2008 (228 adults and 32 children) and 2012 (368 adults and 11 children), given differences in research design and

timing, different socio-economic conditions, and increased capacity in shelters and transitional housing as well as Housing First initiatives, the 2015 PIT count identified increased numbers of adults (405) and children (45) without permanent shelter, although proportionately more were housed in shelters and transitional homes (80%), hotels (2%), and friend's houses (8%) rather than sleeping outdoors (9%). In 2008, 16.9% were sleeping outdoors while 76.5% were housed in shelters, 2.7% in detox centre, 2.3 % in hotels, and 1.5 % in campgrounds. In 2012, 19.5% were sleeping outdoors, 73.3% in shelters, and 7.2% sleeping with friends.

### *Sources of Income*

Fewer indoor respondents reported formal employment (8%) and full-time employment (4%) than in 2008 when 45% reported formal employment, and 70% of whom reported working fulltime. In 2012, only 10% reported formal employment, 13% of whom reported working full time. There was an increase of those relying on social assistance for income (30%) than in 2012 (26%). The 2015 count reported an increase in the number of veterans without permanent shelter (10%) compared with 2012 (4.3%), and an increase of those subject to physical violence while living outdoors (46%) compared with 38% in 2012.

## **Public Perceptions of Homelessness**

### *Seriousness of Homelessness in Saskatoon*

The 2015 PIT homelessness count included questions that surveyed public perceptions of homelessness in Saskatoon. The majority of the 429 surveyed (77%) rated the homelessness situation in Saskatoon as very serious (47%) or serious (30%), whether the respondent was housed or was without permanent housing. Similarly, those most impacted by homelessness were consistent across all respondents. Aboriginal people (12%), single parents (15%), and those with disabilities (28%), including mental health and addictions, were understood as the most affected by homelessness. When asked to list organizations that help those who experience homelessness, respondents listed these organizations:

- The Lighthouse (69%)
- Salvation Army (53%)
- YMCA/YWCA (34%)
- Friendship Inn (32%)
- Saskatoon Interval House (14%)
- Saskatoon Crisis Nursery (11%)
- McLeod House (10%)

### *Reasons for Homelessness*

Showing significant consistency with the responses of those experiencing homelessness, respondents listed these main reasons for people experiencing homelessness:

- Lack of affordable housing (42%)
- Physical or mental health (40%)
- Lack of employment (32%)
- Discrimination (23%)
- Criminal record (20%)
- Lack of references (20%)
- Damage deposit (17%)

### *Actions to Reduce Homelessness*

Suggestions to build more affordable housing (25%), employment opportunities (12%), additional shelters (16%), and offer more educational, mental health, addictions, and social supports (29%) were the key suggestions to address the problem of homelessness in Saskatoon.

## Who is experiencing homelessness?

450

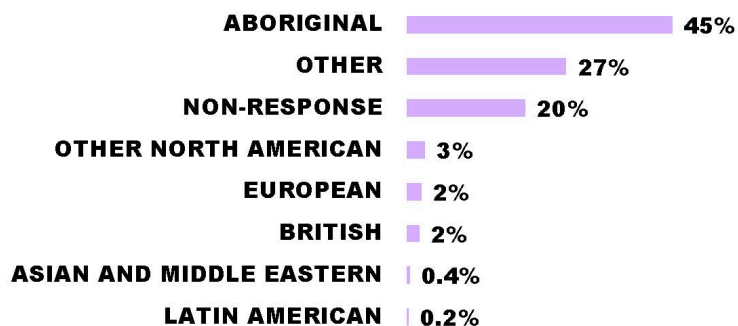
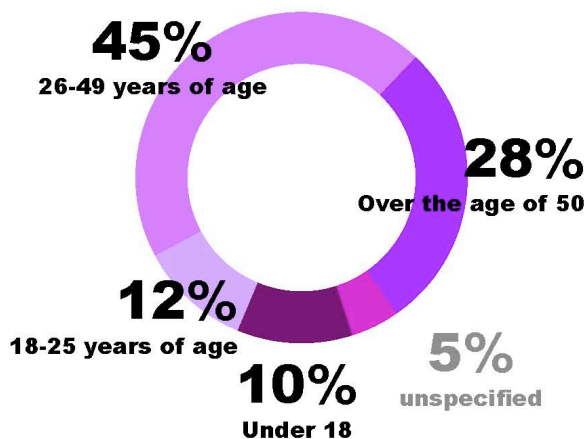
INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCED  
HOMELESSNESS  
IN SASKATOON ON JUNE 22



**80%**  
SPENT THE  
NIGHT IN A  
SHELTER



**9%**  
SPENT THE  
NIGHT  
OUTDOORS



**47%**  
EPISODICALLY  
HOMELESS

**47%**  
CHRONICALLY  
HOMELESS

Note: Totals less than 100% are due to non-responses



## INTRODUCTION

Access to affordable housing has become a crisis in Canada where one in five renters spend more than half their income on shelter, and 40% pay more than 30% (Canadian Rental Housing Index, 2015). Based on 2011 Statistics Canada data, the Canadian Rental Housing Index's interactive mapping tool demonstrates just how close to homelessness many Canadians have become, increasing stress and impacting health care costs for all (McMahon, 2015; Monsebraaten, 2015). A stark reduction in social spending and investment in affordable housing (46% over 25 years), compounded by a decrease in working wages and a 30% increase in population, has made an increasing number of people vulnerable to homelessness and inadequate housing situations. The situation is becoming increasingly visible on the streets and in our communities, with an estimated 235,000 Canadians experiencing homelessness at any time throughout the year and over 35,000 people without shelter on any given night, while "hidden homelessness" may represent as many as 50,000 more (Gaetz, Gulliver, & Richter, 2014). The lack of safe and affordable housing has a direct impact on economic, social, family, and individual realities for all people—homelessness costing the Canadian economy an estimated \$7.05 billion annually (Gaetz, Donaldson, Richter, & Gulliver, 2013). Although strategies and initiatives are in place to address the housing crisis, including investments in plans to end homelessness and Housing First interventions (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014), evidence indicates that more must be done to meet the basic needs of many. The underlying importance of housing as a basis for participating in economic and social spheres and securing an overall quality of life cannot be overstated. Housing is the foundation (Jimmy and Findlay, 2015).

National efforts, such as routine homelessness counts, play an important role not only in identifying the depth of the problem and exploding myths, but also in assessing the impact of programs and policies put in place to address homelessness in our communities. The pan-Canadian Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014) is in place to support community-specific initiatives to respond to local housing needs. With prioritized funding, the HPS recognizes the complexity of homelessness, and works to develop local partnerships and innovative strategies toward solutions to the affordable housing crisis. As part of developing a local portrait of homelessness, the HPS has also implemented systematic shelter data and reporting systems (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System or HIFIS) in addition to provincially mandated systems, service organization data collection, and local homelessness point-in-time counts in order to provide evidence for community specific priorities. Relevant initiatives in Saskatoon include the Housing First for Families at White Buffalo Youth Lodge and the Housing First intensive case manager at Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre (SIMFC). The Journey Home Housing First program of the United Way of Saskatoon and Area housed 24 people in its first year, saving lives, reducing costly service use, and showing a social return on investment of \$2.23 for every \$1 invested (United Way, 2015). Other recent housing placement efforts in Saskatoon involve a Housing Locator and housing placement case managers at The Lighthouse, a Rapid Re-Housing Team and a centralized intake for housing placement programs at both the Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre and at the Friendship Inn.

The Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), a community-based non-profit entity that manages HPS, is a key strategic partner for the Saskatoon community aiming to address issues surrounding homelessness and affordable housing in the interests of “a safe, healthy and prosperous community” (SHIP, 2015). In Saskatoon, the average rent has nearly doubled between 2003 and 2013 and housing prices have nearly tripled, where the average cost of home purchases increased from \$149,000 to \$350,000 (CMHC, 2012; CMHC, 2014). The Saskatoon Health Region reports that 25% of families spend almost one-third (30%) of their income on housing (Neudorf, 2014), while 20% of households are below the poverty line with an annual income between \$5,000 and \$30,000 (Dyck, 2015). The CMHC Spring 2015 Housing Market Outlook anticipated continuing declines in housing starts associated with a weakening economy. Housing pressures are felt by a fast growing Saskatoon population reaching 257,300 by the end of 2014 and averaging 34.5 years of age in the Census Metropolitan Area. Although international migration has slowed, it still exceeds historical averages and even the national average. Aboriginal population is 9.8% (City of Saskatoon, 2015).

SHIP advocates for strategic effectiveness and informs service delivery and policy development for housing and homelessness solutions in Saskatoon, and implements with the Community Advisory Board on Saskatoon Homelessness (CAB-SH) the Saskatoon HPS Community Plan 2014-2019. Consistent with that plan, SHIP and the CAB-SH, on behalf of the HPS, funded the 2015 Point-in-Time Homelessness Count conducted by Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) in Saskatoon on June 22, 2015.

### **PIT Homelessness Counts**

The Point-in-Time (PIT) methodology is a model used to count sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in major urban centres across Canada, as well as in the United States and Europe. A PIT count provides a snapshot of homelessness in a community that captures numbers, demographics, service usage, and other measurements on a single day. PIT counts enumerate individuals experiencing homelessness during a specific time, and therefore are understood as underestimates of actual numbers because of methodological, logistical, and other challenges. Although only estimates, PIT counts nevertheless provide an important source of data on characteristics and context of those experiencing homelessness, and are important for local program planning and monitoring by providing an indicator for a moment in time.

The PIT count methodology applies a Canadian standard of homelessness, whereby all activities around the collection, reporting, and submission of data follow the standards established by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Directives 2014-2019 Report (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014). The enumeration aims to identify the size and composition of the chronically and episodically homeless population and also examine sub-populations such as youth, persons with disabilities, immigrants, veterans, and Aboriginal people. Specifically, the report seeks to identify chronic and episodic homelessness, defined in these ways:

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

habitation);

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

The 2015 Saskatoon count also includes “hidden homelessness,” which is understood as the population provisionally accommodated, often known as “couch surfers,” where individuals are living temporarily with others but do not have the guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for permanent housing. The survey instrument for the PIT count in Saskatoon is therefore modified to measure both the absolute (those with no permanent residence or conventional housing alternatives, such as shelters, safe houses, or transitional houses) and hidden homeless populations, as well as sheltered homelessness (those residing in emergency shelters or transitional houses).

In addition to analyzing the size and composition of chronic and episodic homelessness for both individuals and families, the PIT count also examines other at-risk groups and sub-populations, such as youth and Aboriginal people. To establish a better understanding of the trends among homeless populations and determine appropriate programs and services according to needs, the survey’s street needs assessment also explores issues around migration and immigration, disabilities, accessibility and barriers to services, and orientation to systems to find housing. Additional sections of the survey investigate the following factors and their impact on homelessness: employment, health and education, familiarity with system, and service use and barriers.

### **The PIT Count in Saskatoon**

The Community-University for Social Research (CUISR) conducted the 2015 Saskatoon PIT count on June 22, 2015, building upon the findings and recommendations from the previous PIT counts conducted on May 22, 2008, and September 24, 2012, while respecting the requirements set by Employment and Social Development Canada (2014). The 2015 PIT count has four components:

1. An outdoor enumeration, which surveys individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and their service use patterns and needs (street needs assessment). The outdoor component seeks to identify the “absolute homeless” (with no permanent residence or housing alternative, including shelters, safe or transitional housing) and “hidden homeless” population (who would experience absolute homelessness if they could not stay temporarily with friends and/or family or acquaintances);
2. An indoor enumeration, which counts the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing and detox centres;
3. Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) for June 22, 2015;
4. A survey of public perceptions of and attitudes about homelessness in Saskatoon.

A new feature of the 2015 survey, which aimed to give a comprehensive and multi-faceted picture of housing and homelessness in Saskatoon, was a public perception component. That component engaged all members of the public encountered during the outdoor portion of the point-in-time count as well as all those who agreed to be surveyed in indoor locations. All individuals were asked about their perceptions of and attitudes to the present state of homelessness, the main reasons for homelessness and those most impacted by it, what is being or could be done, and what has successfully been done in Saskatoon. These standardized questions preceded the screening portion of the survey that determines the types of homelessness individuals are experiencing. Asking these questions of all those encountered allowed survey teams to introduce the goal of the 2015 State of Homelessness Report and make initial contact with individuals more comfortable.

This report begins with an environmental scan discussing homelessness studies in several Canadian jurisdictions. After a methods section reviewing the preparation for and conduct of the count, including ethics submission, volunteer training, survey instruments and screening procedures, and volunteer debriefing, this report presents surveyed and reported findings in indoor and outdoor locations and discusses what they mean for the challenges facing individuals and families, for service planning, design, and delivery, and for strategies to reduce or even end homelessness in Saskatoon.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

PIT homelessness counts occur in major centres across Canada, although they have differed in time of year and of day, how homelessness is defined, and what questions are asked. Building on work of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Employment and Social Development Canada (2015) has produced a set of guidelines (involving eight core standards and five recommended standards) to align community PIT counts with the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) coordinated PIT count. Using a common methodology, they aim to help develop evidence-based tools that can be accessed as a resource for community uses. Moreover, a standardized methodology allows for results to be comparable across communities, as well as aggregated to provide provincial and national data and benchmarks to measure progress on housing and homelessness. Beginning in 2016, such standardization and coordination aims to give as accurate a national picture as possible to guide decision making, where previous estimates relied, for example, on the National Shelter Study (Segaert, 2012) and the 2013 State of Homelessness in Canada Report (Gaetz et al., 2013) that based estimates of the unsheltered population on eight PIT counts.

The current Canadian PIT Count methodology includes the following components as common in the survey instruments to create a mandatory minimum data set: screening, gender, age, ethnicity, migration, immigration, homelessness history, and veteran status. In addition, optional suggested questions include: Aboriginal self-identification, family status, employment, health, accessibility, sexual orientation, system interactions, education, service

use, service barriers, reasons for homelessness, and re-housing information. The review of counts across jurisdictions found a variation on the length of local surveys, but all sites include the mandatory questions and versions of all optional questions.

### **Vancouver**

With the help of 450 volunteers, the ninth homelessness count in Vancouver conducted on March 24, 2015, enumerated both sheltered and unsheltered individuals for a 24-hour period and counted a total of 1,746 homeless persons—1,258 found sheltered and 488 unsheltered individuals (Thompson, 2015). Unsheltered homeless include people who have no physical shelter, but stayed outside, on the street, in doorways, parking lots, parks, and on beaches, and those who did not pay for rent. Sheltered homeless include people in emergency shelters, safe houses, transitional houses, or detox facilities, those who were couch surfing at a friend's or family member's house, and people with no fixed address staying overnight in hospitals or jails.

Over the years, Vancouver's homeless population saw increases until a three-year plateau to 2013, an increase in 2014 (to 1,803 from 1,600) and a reduction in 2015. The count includes a disproportionate percentage of male (78%) and Aboriginal (32%) individuals. The number of seniors (55 years and older) experiencing homelessness was higher than previous years at 19% of the homeless population. Numbers of children and youth (24 years and younger) experiencing homelessness has fallen from the previous year (21% down to 17%), but the rates remain higher or equal to other counts and the absolute number of children and youth continues to increase over the counts. Fifty-seven percent of unsheltered homeless have been chronically homeless one year or longer and 30% were homeless one to six months. The homeless population showed a marked decline in health since 2005 (Thompson, 2015, p.6).

The 2015 count was the first attempt to identify the hidden homeless population. It was concluded that the PIT homelessness count is not a good tool for surveying the hidden homeless population in terms of numbers or needs due to a low response rate. The study recommends further research and an alternative approach geared toward refining the definition of hidden homelessness and interviewing a larger sample of individuals (p.14).

### **Alberta**

Alberta piloted the first harmonized PIT homelessness count among seven of the provincial urban centres on October 15 - 23, 2014. The provincial count was in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness as part of an effort to develop a harmonized approach to homeless counts nationally. The objectives of a harmonized count are to create consistency and comparability of data, including a more comprehensive understanding of regional and provincial collaborative efforts. A standardized methodology and harmonized PIT counts are to be implemented across Canadian urban centres in 2016, as outlined in the HPS Directives 2014-2019 Report (Turner, 2015).

The count enumerated 6,663 individuals experiencing homelessness across the seven centres. Most of the homelessness was found in the two largest urban centres—approximately half in Calgary and over a third in Edmonton. The smaller centres accounted for 12% of the homeless population: Wood Buffalo (4.4%); Grande Prairie

(2.5%); Red Deer (2.1%); Lethbridge (2.1%) and Medicine Hat (1.0%). Men (73%) were found to represent the largest proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness. Aboriginal people were consistently over-represented, averaging 30% of individuals across cities. Seniors (65 years and older) and youth (under 24 years old) were under-represented in the sample accounting for 3.6% and 20% respectively. Immigrant individuals represented an average of 11% of the respondents, indicating an over-representation in some centres. Children were found to accompany 7% of the homeless individuals surveyed. Veterans represented 6% of the sample. Despite methodological variations among the previous counts, the 2014 count reported a 3.7% decrease in rates since 2008 (Turner, 2015, p.6).

### **Regina**

Regina conducted its first PIT count of homelessness in the city on May 13th, 2015, in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness efforts to develop a national approach (Turner & Harding, 2015). The YMCA Regina was commissioned to conduct the count, partnering with 150 volunteers and 34 organizations to complete the count on both the street and in shelters. Surveys were administered online using smartphones; paper backups were deployed outdoors, while facilities staff completed facility surveys. A total of 232 individuals were counted as without permanent housing, 204 of whom were counted within emergency shelters, transitional housing, or detox and 28 (or 12.1%) enumerated in the street count, including 8 “sleeping rough.” Sixty-six completed surveys (Turner & Harding, 2015, p. 4). Men account for 64% of the sample and 43% were children and youth (under 24 years old), with 37% under 18 years old. Aboriginal people represented 75% of individuals without housing, and accounted for 100% of those in the street surveys. Immigrant individuals represented 4.8% of the sample and 45.5% of respondents were either chronically or episodically homeless (p. 5).

To help make sense of the data, Turner & Harding (2015) offer the context of trends in “housing affordability, shelter usage, housing markers, income and migration” (p. 7). They highlight population increases of 9.2% between 2011 and 2014, including a fast growing Aboriginal population, associated with economic opportunity and unemployment rates linked to oil price changes. Rents averaging \$1079 to \$1243 underline affordability issues in a city where one fifth face such challenges. Over 5,700 households with incomes of less than \$20,000 a year spent at least 50% of their income on shelter (Turner & Harding, 2015, p. 9). Those risks were compounded by health issues, addictions, abuse and trauma, and experiences with such services as child intervention. And “hidden homelessness” adds to a picture where homelessness may be “two to three times greater than the actual count” (Carmichael Outreach, 2013; as cited in Turner & Harding, 2015, p. 10).

### **Toronto**

Toronto conducted the third PIT homelessness count in the city on April 17, 2013, in partnership with the City of Toronto, a street outreach steering committee, an advisory group comprising community agencies, shelters, supportive housing providers, landlords, business associations, and City staff. Over a 24-hour period, more than 500 trained volunteers conducted surveys outdoors and at indoor facilities including shelters, hospitals, treatment centres, and treatment facilities. A total of 5,253 individuals were counted as homeless in Toronto on count



night, including those with and without shelter, which showed a 1.6% increase from the previous count in 2009. Approximately 9% of those surveyed reported to be sleeping outdoors (City of Toronto, 2013, p.13).

Male individuals account for 65% of the homeless population, and individuals identifying as Aboriginal remain disproportionately represented at 16% of the sample, but representing only 1% of the total population in Toronto. Aboriginal individuals also account for a disproportionate one-third of the population sleeping outdoors, and are younger with 52% under the age of 41 years (p.4). The 2013 count indicates a rapid increase of seniors (61 years and older) claiming homelessness from 5% in 2009 to 10% in 2013 (p.4). Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces represented 7% of the homeless population in the count (p.5). Almost all (93%) of respondents reported a desire for permanent housing, with those claiming that they are not seeking permanent housing because they plan to leave the city or are otherwise detained or incarcerated in the system. Almost 75% of respondents claim the lack of affordable housing is the reason for their condition of homelessness (p.3).

### **Montreal**

Led by leading experts in social housing, the first homelessness count was conducted in Montreal in 2015. Partnering with the Douglas Institute Research Centre, several community organizations, a peer committee, the city of Montreal, the Montreal Police, as well as business owners, hospitals, and universities collaborated on conducting the count. The mandate was to estimate the number of both homeless and hidden homeless in the city (I Count MTL, 2015).

Using the question “Do you have a place to stay tonight?” over 800 volunteers conducted the homeless count as a PIT methodology on March 24, 2015. Hidden homeless estimates were conducted with supplementary surveys over the following two days in day centres and other locations people without housing are often found. Large numbers of women and youth were found not to be using shelters and other formal resources, and remain in fragile conditions largely out of sight.

The count found fewer individuals experiencing homelessness than originally anticipated, given numbers from other large urban centres. A total of 3,016 people experiencing homelessness were counted. Of those, 76% were men and 93% of people sleeping outside were men. Women represented 54% of those residing within transitional housing. Individuals of Aboriginal descent represented 10% of Montreal’s homeless population, well above the less than 1% proportion of the population identifying as Indigenous. Immigrant individuals accounted for 10% of the homeless population, and veterans represented 6% (CBC, 2015).

## METHODOLOGY

A Point-in-Time (PIT) methodology is used to count the number of individuals and families experiencing chronic, episodic, sheltered, and hidden homelessness in Saskatoon on Monday, June 22, 2015. The temperature in June during the summer influences the number of people who stay outside on the streets. During warmer weather, for example, persons experiencing homelessness need to rely less on indoor accommodations. On June 22, the temperature reached a high of 26 and a low of 7 while the temperature for the September 24, 2012, count ranged between 20 and 10 degrees and the average temperature in May (2008 count) was 4.5-18.4 degrees. While National Aboriginal Day on June 21st brought many Aboriginal people to downtown locations of ongoing celebration on the 22nd, it also meant that the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, a proposed site for surveying, was closed on count day.

### **Advisory Group**

A central component of the success of the 2008 and 2012 homeless count was the inter-organizational cooperation among numerous support agencies and CUISR. For the 2015 count, CUISR invited organizations involved with homelessness interested to contribute to the project as part of an advisory group. The recommendations from CUISR's 2012 count suggested that representation from city shelters is crucial for ensuring buy-in and creating awareness about the enumeration. Communication of the research goals with these organizations was designed to elicit a high level of cooperation and ensure that accurate counting could be completed in their premises.

The Advisory Group reviewed and informed the research design to ensure that the count reflected significant shifts in both economics and demographics and responded to community needs. Advisory group members also played an important role in addressing concerns around the access, collection, use, disclosure, and protection of data. Their advice importantly helped refine survey questions, their order and wording, identified additional agencies and organizations that needed consulting, and advised on locations that needed to be added to the survey maps.

### **Ethics Review**

The 2015 PIT Homelessness Count was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (BEH #15-168) on June 16, 2015, and was conducted in adherence with all standards required under behavioral ethics institutional policies.

### **Volunteer Recruitment and Training**

#### *Volunteer recruitment*

Volunteer surveyors were recruited via the first Community Forum in June, via email through CUISR's and the University of Saskatchewan partners and networks, as well as social and local media avenues in order to develop a skilled



and committed volunteer base at a time when the majority of students were already away from campus and other people were beginning the holiday season. Although we had targeted up to 120 volunteers, we managed to enlist eighty, many of whom took on double duties to help compensate. Volunteers included people with lived experience, administrators, academics, students, retirees, people from the service sector, media, health, policing, and community support officers. Because of established networks, many of the volunteers also had health, social work, or psychology backgrounds.

#### *Volunteer training*

Proper and comprehensive volunteer training (including Saskatoon Community Support Officer advice on safety) was a condition of ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Board, University of Saskatchewan. All volunteers, regardless of background, were required to attend a three-hour training session (offered in four sessions over three days) prior to the commencement of the count that highlighted acceptable techniques for approaching and interviewing respondents in a manner that does not expose either the interviewer or respondent to increased risks. Maintaining this requirement ensured that all parties associated with the count were kept safe and acted in a legally and ethically responsible manner. Volunteers were also instructed on what to bring (or not) and what to wear for the count.

#### **Mapping of Geographic Area**

In the 2012 Saskatoon PIT count, an Advisory Group was formed and consultations held with city shelters and other agencies and organizations involved with homeless people to identify areas in Saskatoon with high concentrations of homelessness. The city was divided into a grid with 19 study areas that included these three areas: 1) west of Spadina Crescent to Avenue Y between 20th and 22nd Street; 2) the Central Business District and; 3) along the riverbank. Parks, shelters, and additional discrete locations identified by community partners. A similar consultation with the Advisory Group for the 2015 PIT count was conducted. The geographic areas and locations formerly frequented by homeless persons had changed relative to city development and demographic shifts. Figure 1 represents the finalized geographic areas included in the 2015 PIT count.

Figure 1. Saskatoon Geographic Areas with Survey Boundaries



### **Home Base**

Coordinators at the home base served as the point of contact for any questions that arose during the night of the count. All surveyors returned to the home base with the collected surveys following the enumeration. The Saskatoon Friendship Inn acted as home base (as it was in 2012) due to its centralized location.

### **The Count**

The outdoor count began at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 22, 2015, and was completed by 9:30 p.m. Survey teams, consisting of at least three individuals (one of whom was an experienced researcher) walked along every street and public place in their survey area and other locations where people were likely to be (e.g. Parks, tree bluffs, train tracks, etc.). Teams were instructed not to approach individuals on private property; each team had a mix of men and women, as recommended in the 2012 debrief.

### **Outdoor Survey**

To recruit respondents for the in-person interviews, surveyors approached all individuals in their study area, introduced themselves, and described the project. The survey opened with a statement assuring the respondent of his/her confidentiality and anonymity. Two screening questions were asked of all participants to determine (a) that they had not already been interviewed that evening for this project and (b) that they were willing to answer the questions. A third screening question after the completion of Part One asked where the person would be sleeping that night. If the answer was “at home” or at a hotel (for a visitor/tourist), the person was thanked and informed that the survey was complete. Those who answered that they were staying outside or at a friend’s house and agreed to participate then completed Part Two. Because of the difficulties involved with administering consent forms to the population under study, agreeing to complete the survey constituted informed consent. However, if the individual did not provide consent or the surveyor was unable to complete the questionnaire, observation data were used in its place. An observation report includes data on the person’s outdoor location, appearance, gender, estimated age, potential reasons that the volunteer believes that the individual may be homeless, and reasons that the survey could not be completed. If consent to participate in the survey was provided, the volunteers proceeded to complete the survey instrument with the individual. The outdoor survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

### **Indoor Survey**

The indoor survey was conducted in two shifts: between 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and during the hours of the evening count between 5:30 and 9:30 when the facility had fuller capacity. The 17 pre-arranged locations, including shelters, day centres, detox centres, and transitional homes, included The Lighthouse, The Friendship Inn, The Saskatoon Food Bank, the Saskatoon Francis Morrison Public Library, the Saskatoon Housing Coalition, YWCA, Salvation Army, Mumford House, Infinity House, Interval House, McLeod House, EGADZ, CUMFI Wellness Centre, Crocus Co-op, The Bridge, 601 AIDS Saskatoon, and the Brief Detox Centre. In cases where the indoor locations did not have a staff representative on the Advisory Group, CUISR worked with the organization

to foster an understanding of the survey process and importance of the survey in order to increase the response rates and participation of clients and staff. The indoor survey instrument is found in Appendix B.

### **HIFIS Data**

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) is an information system developed and supported by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). HIFIS is an initiative of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) committed to data collection in support of a national picture of homelessness. Individual shelters deploy the software on site to track shelter usage and share baseline data nationally and locally. HIFIS data include information about age, gender, and ethnicity. HIFIS data were collected at four participating locations: The Lighthouse, Salvation Army, YWCA, and Saskatoon Housing Coalition.

### **Volunteer Debriefing and Feedback**

A volunteer debriefing took place on July 6, 2015, two weeks following the enumeration. Volunteers shared their experiences, discussed challenges, and provided suggestions for refining the survey and training for future homeless counts. The volunteers at the debriefing offered many valuable comments and recommendations. The following is a thematic summary of the feedback:

#### *Timing, Location, and Promotion of the Count*

Volunteers clearly suggested that the count should be done over a 24-hour period. The 2015 outdoor enumeration was done between the hours of 5:30-9:30. Volunteers felt that many people who could be counted were missed during this survey time and might have been included had there been an outdoor survey time like the indoor survey one between 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on count day. Volunteers also felt that shelters should be surveyed in the morning, or timed better to fit particular shelter schedules, in order to get the best response rate. Flexible surveying times over the entire count day was suggested to benefit both participant and volunteer schedules.

Stationary sites at gathering places and high traffic areas were suggested as an opportunity for people to be counted. These stationary sites would provide a community presence for the count, and allow people the opportunity to be counted if they wished to participate. Training staff at various shelters and facilities to administer surveys themselves was also suggested.

Additional promotion of the count was recommended. One volunteer recommended tapping into broad community concerns:

a lot of people care about homelessness but they don't know what they can do. So, tapping into that somehow and connecting with people who have time, and young people who have time and who care. . . . It only takes three days of your life. . . . It's a very small commitment for a very important issue.

In particular, volunteers suggested big colourful posters in shelters and other indoor locations before the count to

prepare potential participants. Also helpful would be plain language pamphlets explaining the count, its purposes and benefits, in more accessible, visually interesting terms than in the current information sheet. The count might also be explained at regular meetings with shelter staff who could lay the groundwork for the count.

### *Volunteer Recruitment*

Volunteer recruitment is often a challenge, and this year's count was no exception. With limited time leading up to count day and only select days and times available for volunteer training, the count did not recruit as many volunteers as the survey could have used. Establishing a volunteer database that is updated and shared among community organizations, and relying on partnering agencies to generate volunteers for the count, as well as targeting service organizations such as Lions, Kinsmen, and Rotary, were suggestions offered by volunteers. They also recommended using sound bites from those who have experienced homelessness to motivate people. In addition they suggested more flexibility on scheduling volunteers in everything from one-hour and two-hour shifts to commitments for several shifts and diverse tasks (at home base as well as in the field) that could accommodate those with disabilities or those who were unable to get the required training.

### *Volunteer Training*

While many appreciated the content and emphases of the training sessions, there were also recommendations to add to the training in recognition that some newcomers to Canada could, for example, use advice about the history of Aboriginal people and the current Truth and Reconciliation efforts. Others would have liked more time to practice and get comfortable with the survey and to come across as sincere. Such practice time might be offered as optional additional training.

### *Survey Implementation*

Several volunteers stressed how glad so many participants were to have the opportunity to be heard. They appreciated the part of the training that focused on writing down what participants chose to share. One said that "it gave credibility when they saw that was happening. We weren't just doing a survey. We were respecting what they said, like 'that was a good comment; I am going to write that down.'" Another said that this is "appropriate research as not everyone fits in a box." Another mentioned, "One lady who was 70 years old and working full time needed to get out of the shelter because she had been there for her time limit so she had to go. And she was really nice. So, basically she was being evicted back into homelessness."

Another suggestion was to colour code the paperwork volunteers use to distinguish surveys, observation reports, information sheets, and other handouts. Three-ring binders might also be used to facilitate note-taking. A token or exchange for participating, a bottle of water or ceremonial cigarette, was recommended for survey participants as an offering of respect characteristic of community research.

### *Community Engagement*

Community buy-in and participation for important community work, such as the homelessness count, is critically important. Ongoing engagement of the community and promotion campaigns, including fact sheets, website summaries, and media relations (CBC morning or noon show appearances, Global, John Gormley radio broadcast, etc) were recommended to keep the issue of homelessness as a consistent topic of conversation in the community, and to ensure optimal commitment on count day and support for other housing and homelessness initiatives.

### *Public Perceptions*

Volunteers considered important and valuable the incorporation of the ‘public perception’ component of the survey, which posed questions to all members of the Saskatoon community on issues of housing and homelessness. Engaging the whole community on the issues surrounding homelessness was seen as important in terms of cause, consequence, and solutions to the issue—especially when there are many misconceptions about homelessness and “a lot of people don’t think we have it here, but with the wildfires burning up north, all these evacuees are technically homeless, so we are all just one natural disaster away from being homeless.”

The voices of respondents are highlighted throughout the survey results section.

## SURVEY RESULTS

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

1. An outdoor survey collected by survey teams on the streets of Saskatoon on count day;
2. An indoor survey collected by survey teams at participating Saskatoon shelters;
3. Data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) covering The Lighthouse, Salvation Army, YWCA, and Saskatoon Housing Coalition;
4. Observational data representing those who wished not to be surveyed, but were believed to be without shelter. Survey teams collected observational data while they were conducting the outdoor survey.

### **Estimated Numbers**

In total, 710 people were surveyed, observed, or reported by the four data collection methods (Table 1). Of those, 405 adults and 45 children were found to be without permanent shelter. The outdoor survey and observational data counted 58 adults and 16 children to be without permanent housing; 112 adults and 7 children in indoor surveys were counted without housing; and all 257 cases (including 22 children) reported by HIFIS were individuals without permanent shelter. One adult reported sleeping outdoors, along with 2 children. The other 43 children were found to be sheltered.

Table 1. Total Number of Individuals Counted and Number without Permanent Shelter

<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Number of People Surveyed or Reported</b>	<b>Sheltered and Unsheltered Adult Homelessness</b>	<b>Number of Children Reported as Homeless</b>
Outdoors	269	34	16
Indoors	160	112	7
Observed	24	24	0
HIFIS	257	235	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>45</b>

The Lighthouse accounted for the largest number of reported sheltered homeless (n=136), followed by the men's Salvation Army (n=63) and the YWCA (n=54). Several other shelters and community service organizations were the source of survey data and reported a number of individuals without permanent shelter (Table 2).

Table 2. Shelter Data (Indoor Surveys and HIFIS Data)

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Number of People Surveyed or Reported</b>	<b>Sheltered and Unsheltered Homelessness</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>The Lighthouse</b>	136	136	37%
<b>The Salvation Army – Men's</b>	66	63	17%
<b>YWCA</b>	54	54	15%
<b>Saskatoon Housing Coalition</b>	27	22	6%
<b>Friendship Inn</b>	25	10	3%
<b>Brief Detox</b>	10	10	3%
<b>Mumford House</b>	9	9	2%
<b>CUMFI McLeod House</b>	6	6	2%
<b>Crocus Coop</b>	13	6	2%
<b>The Bridge</b>	7	5	1%
<b>EGADZ</b>	12	5	1%
<b>CUMFI Wellness Centre</b>	13	4	0.5%
<b>601 AIDS</b>	11	3	0.3%
<b>Saskatoon Food Bank</b>	21	1	0.2%
<b>Interval House</b>	2	1	0.2%
<b>CUMFI Infinity House</b>	1	1	0.2%
<b>Francis Morrison Library</b>	4	1	0.2%
<b>Unidentified Shelter</b>	-	32	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100%</b>

**“Couch surfing at my cousin’s. If I couldn’t, I’d walk the whole night. I wouldn’t stay in a shelter.”**

**—Respondent**

**“At Uni campus on and off. Staying with a friend couch surfing.”**

**—Respondent**

The majority of the total number without permanent housing (adults only) were found to be housed within a shelter (80%), while 11% of respondents reported a temporary housing situation such as ‘couch surfing’ at a friend’s house (8%) or a hotel (2%), and 9% (n=38) were reported to be sleeping outdoors (Table 3). One person reported sleeping outdoors with children.

Table 3. Total number and location of adults without permanent housing

Location	Number of Persons	Percentage
Outside	38	9%
Shelter	319	80%
Hotel	10	2%
Friend's house	35	8%
Other	3	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405*</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*not including children

### Respondent Demographics

For those adult respondents reporting a lack of permanent shelter (n=405), most (45%) were between the ages of 26-49 years of age and 28% were over 50 years old. A number of children under 18 years old (n=29) were reported in indoor and outdoor surveys and 22 children under 18 were reported in a HIFIS shelter (Table 4).

Table 4. Age of Respondents

Age Group	Outdoor Survey	Indoor Survey	HIFIS	Observational	Total Number	Percentage
<b>Children (present or reported)</b>	16	7	22	0	45	10%
<b>19 - 25 years old</b>	3	16	29	7	55	12%
<b>26 - 49 years old</b>	15	59	117	11	202	45%
<b>≥50 years old</b>	9	26	88	4	127	28%
<b>Non-Response</b>	7	11	0	2	21	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100%</b>



While HIFIS data and observational reports did not include completed surveys, they did record age and gender; HIFIS also recorded ethnicity for adults and children. 62% of respondents identified as male, and 27% identified as female (Table 5). Almost half (45%) of the respondents without permanent housing self-identified as Aboriginal, and 27% (n=115) of respondents identified with other ethnic origins. It is important to note that the high non-response rate in Table 6 makes it likely that the percentage of Aboriginal participants is underestimated by about 10%.

Table 5. Identified Gender of Respondents

Gender	Outdoor Survey	Indoor Survey	HIFIS	Observational	Total Number	Percentage
Male	21	60	179	18	278	62%
Female	5	36	76	5	122	27%
LGBT	1	2	1	0	4	0.9%
Other	1	1	0	0	2	0.9%
Non-Response	29	13	1	1	44	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6. Identified Ethnic Origin of Respondents

Ethnicity	Outdoor		Indoor		HIFIS	Total	Percentage
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage			
<b>Aboriginal</b>	17	44%	66	61%	109	192	45%
<b>Treaty Status</b>	10	29%	53	80%	--	--	--
<b>Non-Treaty Status</b>	2	6%	7	11%	--	--	--
<b>Non-Response</b>	5	15%	6	9%			
<b>Other North American</b>	2	6%	10	9%	0	12	3%
<b>British Isles Origin</b>	0	0%	9	8%	0	9	2%
<b>Western European</b>	1	3%	4	4%	0	5	1%
<b>Eastern European</b>	2	6%	1	1%	0	3	0.7%
<b>Northern European</b>	0	0%	3	2%	0	3	0.7%
<b>Asia and Middle Eastern</b>	1	3%	1	1%	0	2	0.4%
<b>Latin and Central American</b>	1	3%	0	0%	0	1	0.2%
<b>Other</b>	5	15%	4	4%	105	114	27%
<b>Non-Response</b>	5	20%	14	10%	65	85	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>		<b>112</b>		<b>279</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Service in the Canadian Armed Forces

In addition to general demographic data, the 2015 homelessness count also collected data related to service in the armed forces, experience of violence, and history of foster care. Of those surveyed, 10% (n=14) of respondents, equally divided across indoor and outdoor locations, had served in the Canadian Armed Forces, while the majority (79%) of respondents had not (Table 7).

Table 7. Respondents with Service in the Canadian Armed Forces

Service with Canadian Armed Forces	Outdoor		Indoor	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	3	9%	11	10%
No	25	74%	90	80%
Non-Response	6	17%	11	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Experiences of Violence

Respondents who were currently experiencing homelessness were asked if they had ever been victims of physical violence while living out-of-doors. Almost an equal number responded that they had been a victim of violence (n=67) as compared to those who had not (n=60) been a victim of violence while living out-of-doors (Figure 2). Respondents from shelters had a 10% higher reported experience of violence while living out-of-doors (Table 8). Again a high non-response rate may underestimate the percentages.

**“They don’t know where to go when they face domestic violence.”**  
—Respondent

Figure 2. Respondent victims of physical violence while living out-of-doors

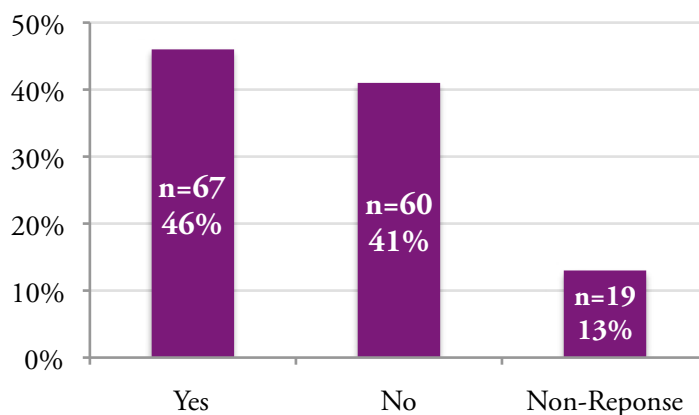


Table 8. Survey Responses of victims of physical violence while living out-of-doors

Victim of physical violence while living out-of-doors	Outdoor		Indoor	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	13	38%	54	48%
No	14	41%	46	41%
Non-Response	7	21%	12	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Experiences with Foster Care

Respondents were asked if they had lived with foster families at any point during their childhood, and if they had remained with a foster family until 18 years of age. Almost an equal number of respondents had lived with foster families at some point during their childhood, but only 11% (n=16) remained with a foster family until 18 years of age (Figures 3 and 4). Respondents from shelters were more likely to have lived with foster families during their childhood (n=53 or 47%), but few of these respondents (n=15 or 14%) lived with foster families until 18 years old (the very high non-response rate here again likely seriously underestimates the percentage).

**“The threat of homelessness kept me in an unsafe place.”**

**—Respondent**

Figure 3. Respondents who lived with foster families during childhood

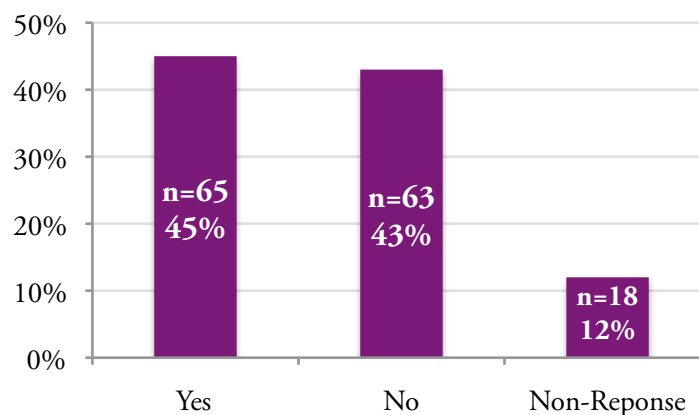
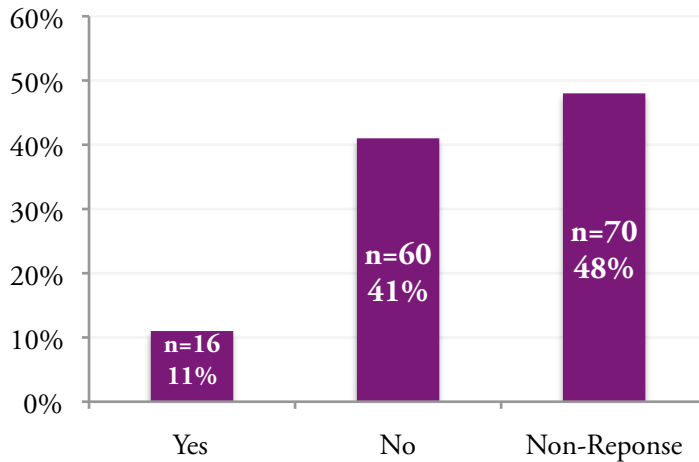


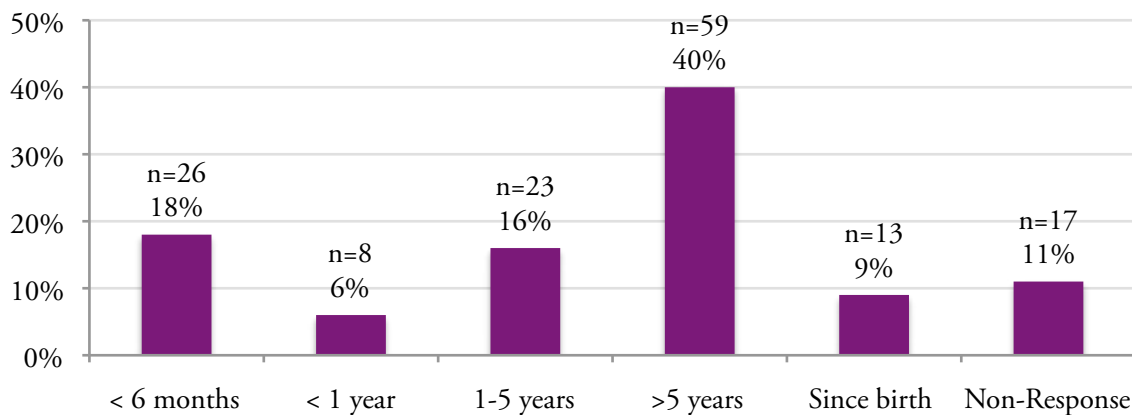
Figure 4. Total respondents who remained with a foster family until 18 years of age



### Chronic and Episodic Homelessness

Many of the surveyed respondents (40%) have resided in Saskatoon for more than 5 years, and 40% of respondents have been in Saskatoon for fewer than 5 years. Only 9% of respondents have lived in Saskatoon since birth (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Length of time respondent has been in Saskatoon



When asked about the length and persistence of experiences of homelessness in the last year, almost half (47%) of respondents (almost equally divided between indoor and outdoor respondents) have not had a permanent address for over 6 months, and 47% of respondents have experienced homelessness three or more times (again indoor and outdoor respondents represented almost equally). In other words, over 47% experience chronic homelessness (Figure 6), an experience of homelessness for 6 months or more, and 47% of respondents are episodically homeless (Figure 7), experiencing three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year.

Figure 6. Total Experiences of Chronic Homelessness

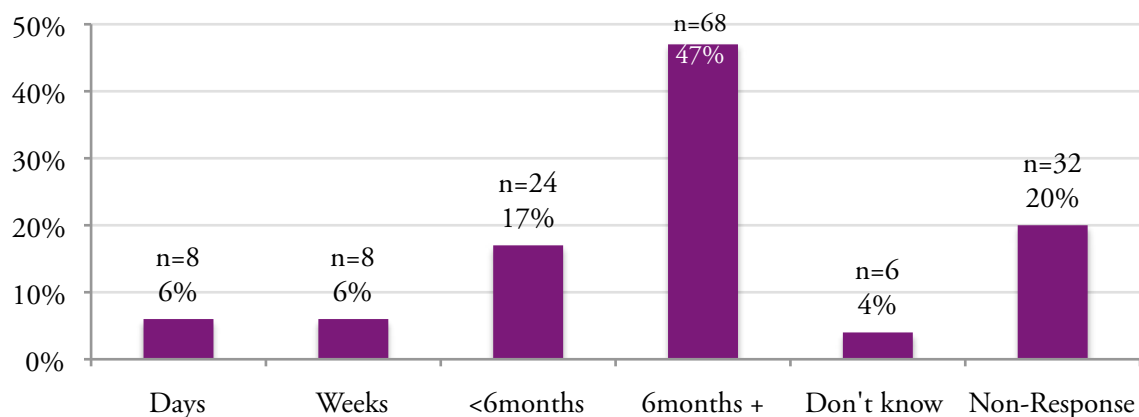
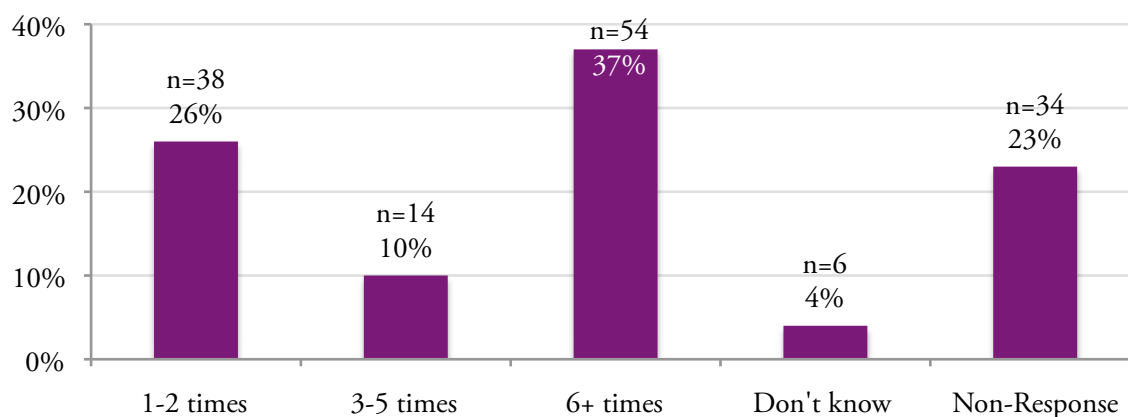


Figure 7. Total Experiences of Episodic Homelessness



**“Help the Northwoods Inn. The owner is a good man. Help renovate and fund to house people. It has kept me out of hospital for over 5 years. My mum died last year and this is the strongest I have been.”**

**—Respondent**

### **Housing Services and Barriers to Housing**

Over a quarter (27%) of surveyed respondents were currently on a waiting list for housing (Table 9), where 68% of the respondents were women and most respondents have been waiting for months for housing. One client claimed that s(he) had been waiting for housing for ten years, while others claimed an average of a six month wait for housing (Table 10). The very high non-response rate in Table 10 needs to be noted.

Table 9. Number of Respondents on Waiting List for Housing

On waiting list for housing	Outdoor		Indoor	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	7	21%	33	30%
No	18	53%	61	54%
I don't know	1	3%	1	1%
Non-Response	8	23%	17	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10. Length of Time on Waiting List for Housing

Length of time on waiting list	Outdoor		Indoor	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Days	0	0%	3	3%
Weeks	1	3%	9	8%
Months	3	9%	15	13%
Years	2	6%	3	3%
I don't know	2	6%	2	2%
Non-Response	26	76%	80	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

When asked about difficulties finding a place of their own to live, income or housing affordability proved the main challenge for the majority of respondents (Figure 8). This finding was also supported by respondents identifying

**“Available housing is too dangerous and scummy.”**

**—Respondent**

both “more money” (77%) and “help finding affordable place” (73%) as necessary for securing them housing (Figure 9). Other support services identified among the top-rated responses were transportation (62%), help with housing applications (62%), and help with legal issues (43%).

**“Overcrowding, peer pressure, and people too scared and ashamed to go get help. Too proud and give up.”**

**—Respondent**

Figure 8. Problems in finding housing

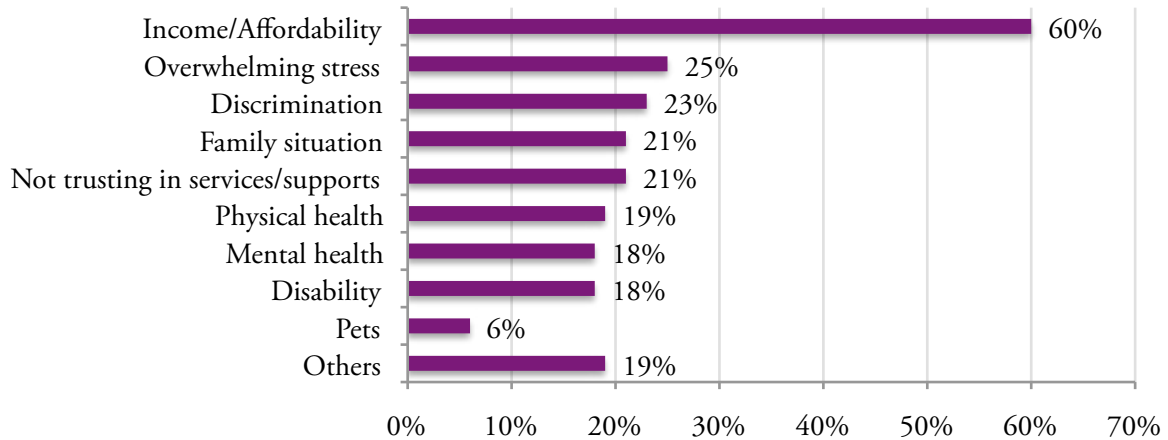
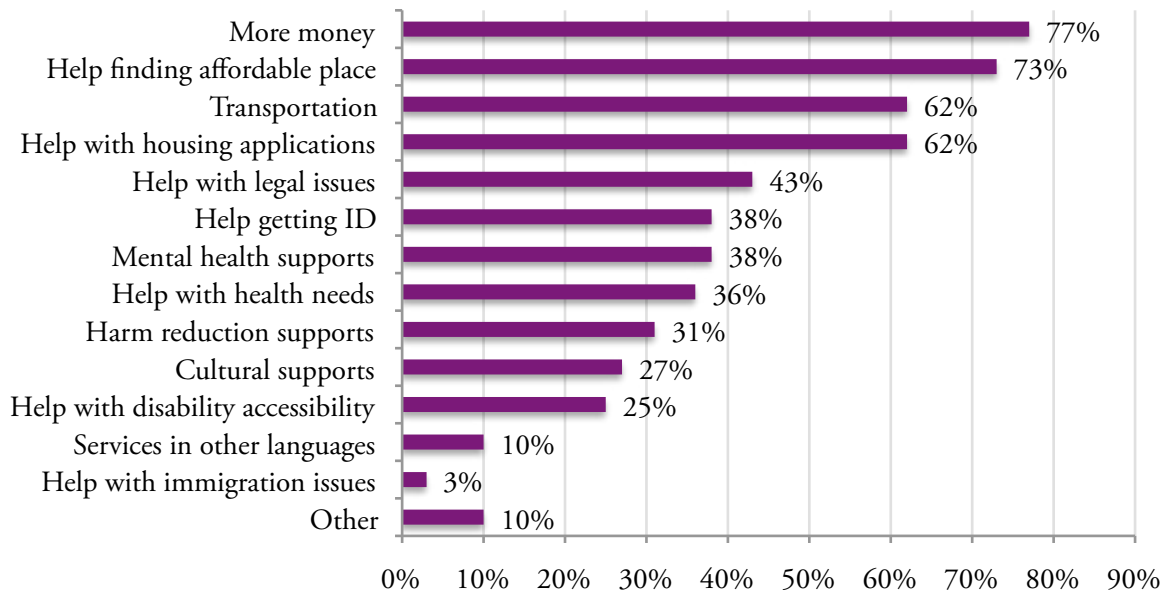


Figure 9. Supports needed to help find housing



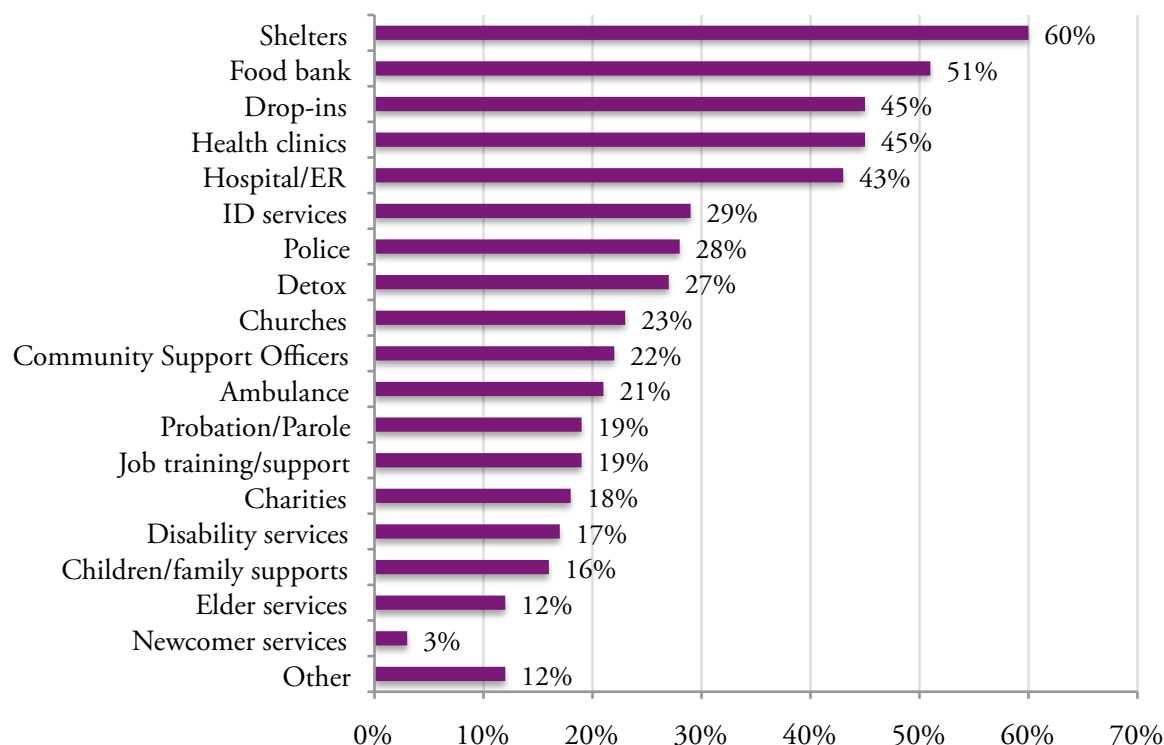
**“Welfare doesn’t cover rent—we have to live with others...  
make houses affordable.”**

**—Respondent**

**“Legal system can drain your finances. Traumatic family breakdowns and bankruptcies.”**  
—Respondent

A majority of the respondents (60%) had used a shelter in the last six months, and over half (51%) had accessed services from the Food Bank. Drop-in centres (45%), health clinics (45%) and the hospital/ ER (43%) were also highly used services by respondents (Figure 10). When asked, 59% (n=86) of respondents stated that the services they had accessed in the past six months did not help them find housing, while 34 (23%) stated that the service providers did assist them in finding housing.

Figure 10. Supports respondents have used in the last 6 months



**“Everyone deserves to have a roof. Abilities is a huge issue on the streets.”**  
—Respondent

Most surveyed respondents (58%) did not require specialized housing due to disabling conditions; however, 34 individuals (23%) identified that they were indeed in need of specialized housing due to a disability (Table 11).



Table 11. Specialized housing required for a disabling condition

Specialized housing for disabling condition	Outdoor		Indoor	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	27%	25	22%
No	15	44%	70	63%
Don't know	3	9%	0	0%
Non-Response	7	20%	17	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Sources of Income

In terms of income (Figure 11), 30% of respondents identified “welfare” as their main source of income. Family and friends were a source of income for 10% of respondents and only 8% had formal employment, and 2% were receiving an income supplement. Those on “welfare,” disability benefit, or reliant

on families and friends were almost equally divided between indoor and outdoor respondents. While indoor respondents were more likely to have formal employment (8% compared to 5% for outdoor), twice as likely to have full-time and part-time employment, four times as likely to have informal employment, and twice as likely to receive child tax credit, panhandling was almost three times more likely among outdoor than indoor respondents (Table 12).

**“Get rid of slum landlords...  
Less parking lots and more  
affordable bachelor pads.”**

**—Respondent**

Figure 11. Sources of income

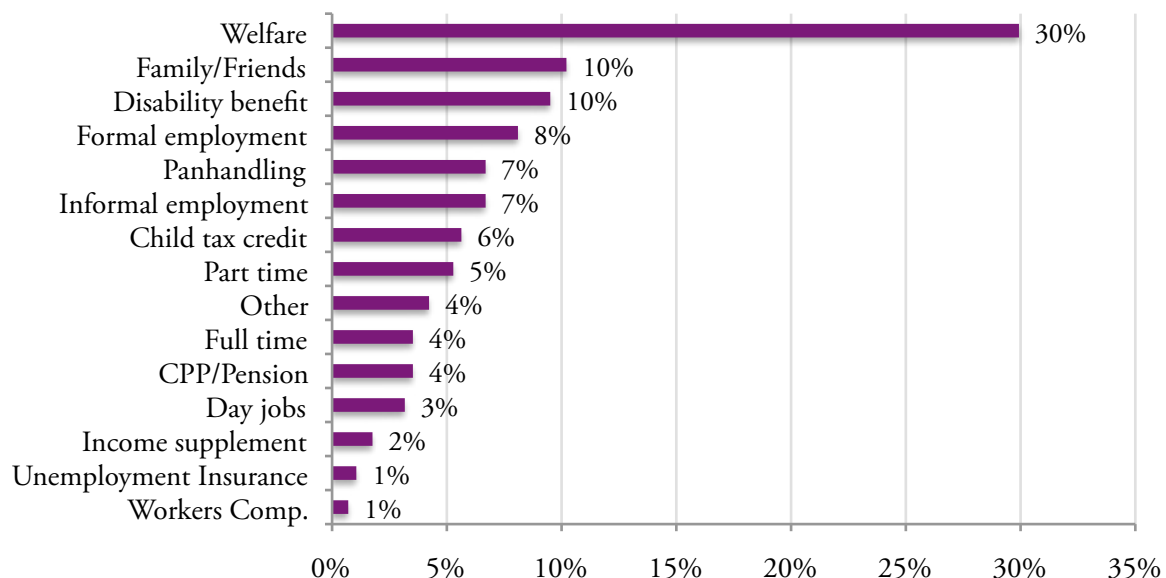


Table 12. Sources of Income of Respondents

Sources of Income	Outdoor		Indoor	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Welfare	18	28%	67	30%
Friends/Family	6	10%	23	10%
Disability benefit	6	10%	21	9%
Formal employment	3	5%	20	8%
Panhandling	8	14%	11	5%
Child tax credit	2	3%	14	6%
Part time	2	3%	13	6%
Full time	1	2%	9	4%
Informal employment	1	2%	18	8%
CPP/Pension	2	3%	8	4%
Day jobs	2	3%	7	3%
Income supplement	2	3%	3	1%
Unemployment insurance	0	0%	3	1%
Workers comp	0	0%	2	1%
Other	5	9%	7	3%

### Concluding Thoughts

When asked if they had anything else to add that we had not discussed and that is important in making their own or others' housing situation better, respondents showed a mix of independence—expressing a desire for “a tent” and a desire “to build my own house”—and a need to address systemic and other factors. One 19-25 year old First Nations woman had “never had a permanent home as an adult,” while another respondent pointed out

**“Homelessness is an epidemic... and very dangerous.”**

—Respondent

**“Everybody. Society as a whole is affected by homelessness.”**

—Respondent

that “there would be a lot less crime, going to hospital, and panhandling if people could stay in their own homes.” For another respondent, it was a need to “address bed bugs and cockroaches in housing stock”; for another it was “peer-assisted living models”; and yet another wanted Social Services to better explain options: “what housing grants are available, what money for electrical, furniture, etc. They don't give people respect or help they need to understand housing options.” While others were concerned about some “exploiting the system who don't need it” or a need “to treat newcomers the same as people already in the system,” another respondent wanted “services under one roof.” Several wanted more awareness: “It's not all a bed of roses. We need more sharing.” Another respondent was content that “the survey is important in helping create awareness. More spotlight on homelessness.”

## Public Perceptions

All persons who were approached to participate in the survey were asked five questions that were designed to gauge public perceptions of homelessness in Saskatoon, awareness of services that support individuals experiencing homelessness, understanding of reasons for and impacts of homelessness, and their sense of what the community of Saskatoon might do to reduce homelessness. When asked if homelessness is an issue in Saskatoon (Figure 12), 77% (n=306) of all respondents stated that homelessness is either a “very serious” or “quite serious” issue for Saskatoon. Seventy-five percent of housed respondents deemed homelessness “very serious” or “quite serious” compared to 80% of those experiencing homelessness. Less than 20% (n=70) of all respondents viewed homelessness “as expected” or “not at all serious” issue in Saskatoon.

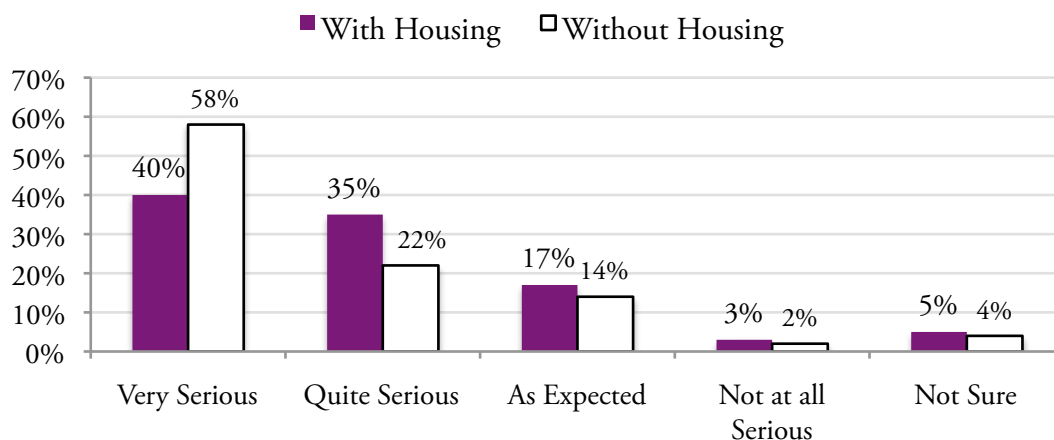
**“People with addictions and homelessness are judged and discriminated. It is not easy to be in that place.”**

—Respondent

**“People feel they can’t help. Society has lost human compassion for others.”**

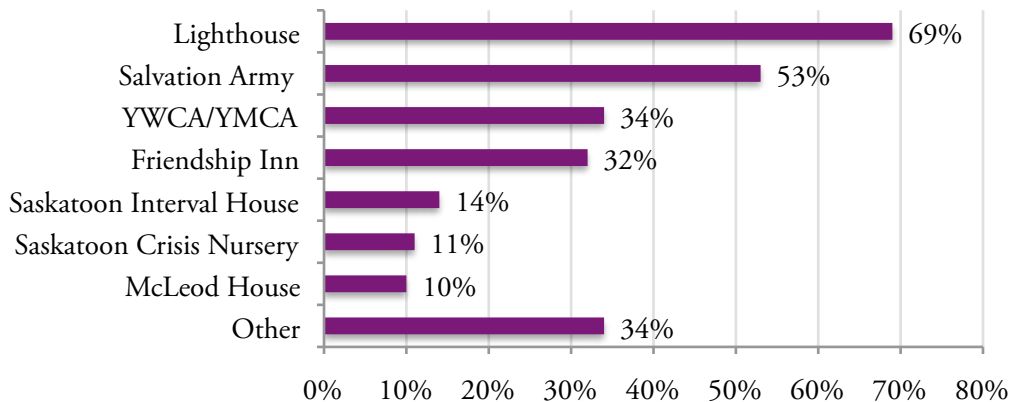
—Respondent

Figure 12. Homelessness as an issue in Saskatoon



When asked if they knew of any organizations that help those experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon (some needed prompts from a list of community-based organizations), respondents were able to identify many of the organizations (Figure 13), and identified 144 “other” organizations, such as Adelle House, AIDS Saskatoon, The Bridge, CUMFI, Crocus, EGADZ, Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, Saskatoon Food Bank, Housing First, Larson House, Mobile Crisis, Mumford House, SWITCH, Rapid Housing, and QUINT.

Figure 13. Organizations that help those who experience homelessness in Saskatoon

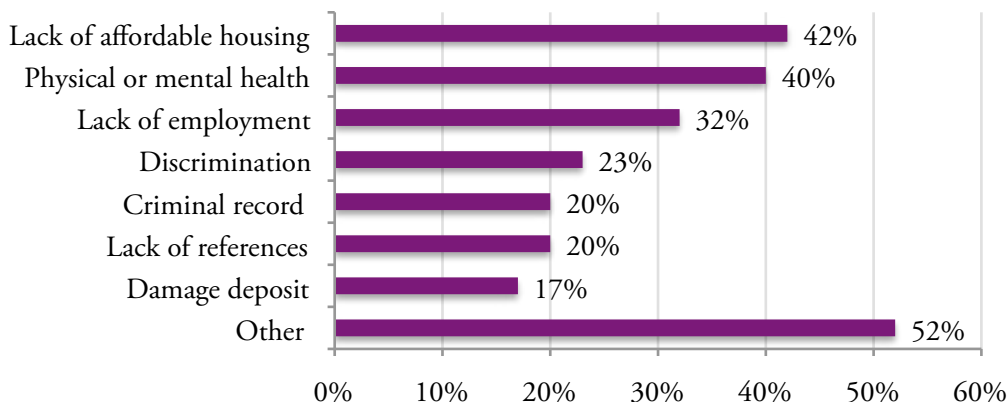


**“In Canada, there is a war on the poor.”**

**—Respondent**

From a list of options (Figure 14), 181 (42%) of respondents identified “lack of affordable housing” as the main reason that people experience homelessness, followed by physical or mental health issues (40%), lack of employment (32%), discrimination (23%), criminal record (20%), lack of references (20%), and absence of damage deposit (17%). Respondents identified “other” reasons for homelessness, including addictions, alcohol, lack of family support, lifestyle choices, domestic violence and abuse, insufficient social and financial support, and social inequality.

Figure 14. Main reasons people experience homelessness

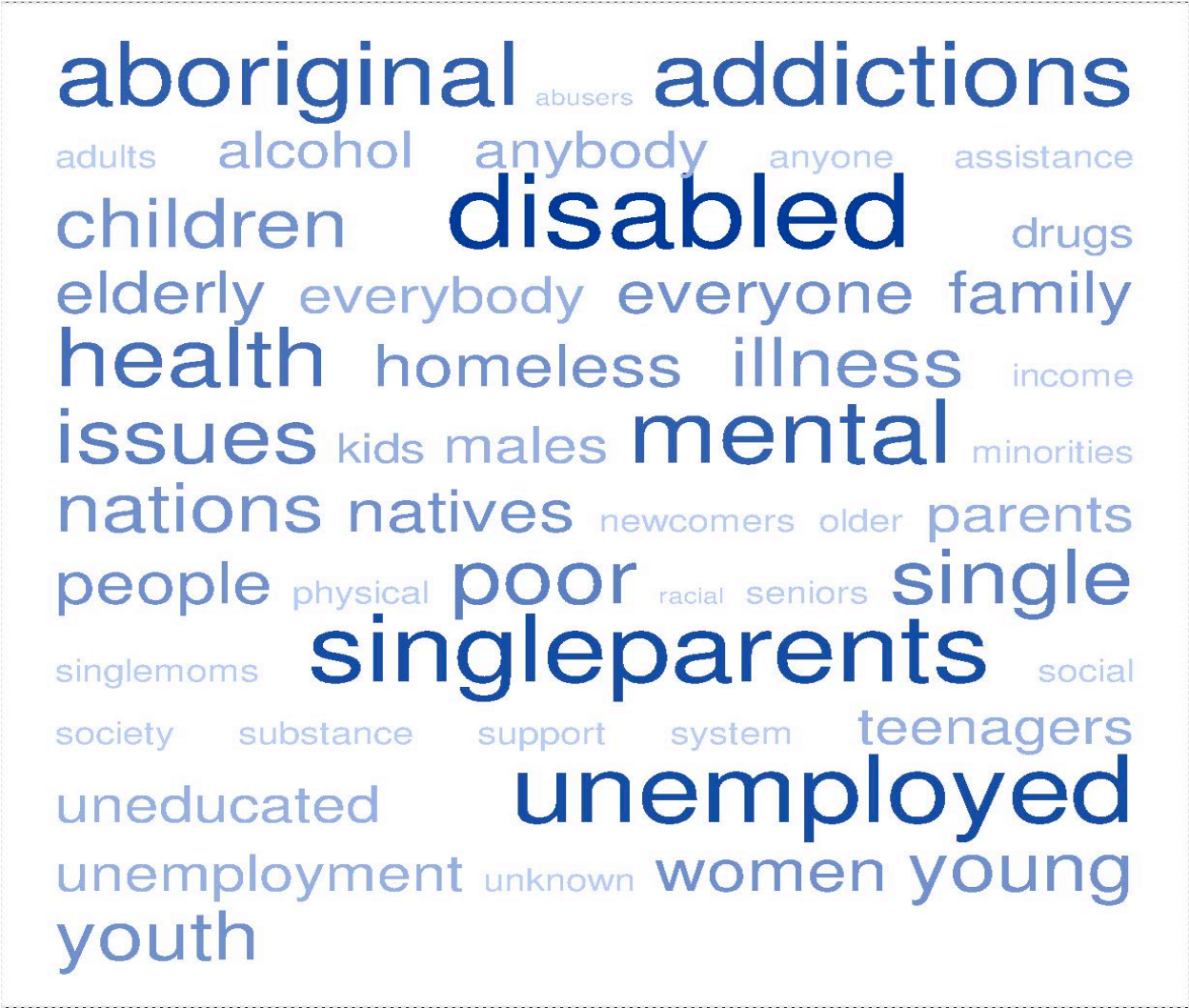


**“Safe, subsidized, and affordable housing. . . . Listen, respond, and deal with the problem. . . . The whole province needs to spread a message of hope.”**

**—Respondent**

In open-ended questions, respondents were asked who they thought were the most impacted by homelessness, and what important actions Saskatoon can take to help reduce homelessness. The responses to these questions did not show significant variance between respondents with housing and those who did not have permanent housing. Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, unemployed, single parents, and those with addictions or mental health issues were most commonly reported as those most impacted by homelessness (Figure 15), while affordable housing, shelters, and support services are the primary focus of initiatives that Saskatoon can undertake, along with awareness and education, to help reduce homelessness in the city (Figure 16).

Figure 15. Who do you think are the most impacted by Homelessness?



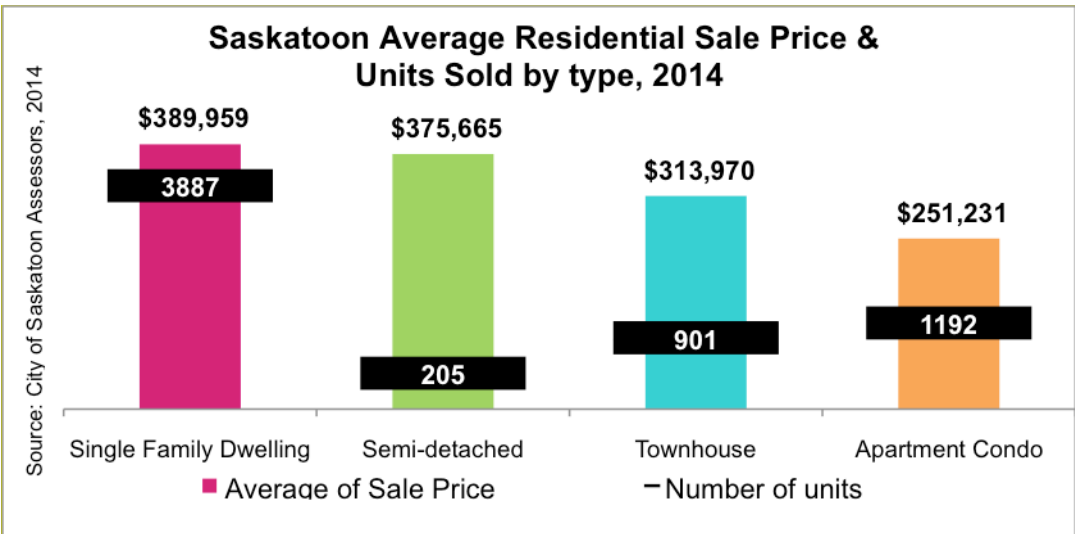
accessible addiction address **affordable**  
 assistance **awareness** better **build** business caps  
 centre community control disabled discrimination drugs  
**education** employment food free **funding** give  
 government harm **health** **help** **homeless**  
 homes **housing** housingfirst improve  
 income increase individual invest issues **job**  
 lighthouse living locator **lower** **mental** money  
 needs open **opportunities** organizations parents people  
 places police poverty prevention problems **programs**  
 promote provide public raise reduce reduction rehab **rent** rental  
**resources** **services** **shelters**  
 single **social** stigma subsidized **support** system  
 unsure work

Saskatoon continues to experience substantial population growth. The City of Saskatoon (2015) reports that since 2008, the population growth rate has varied between 2.3 and 4.1%, with an average population growth rate in Saskatoon of 2.9%. This growth is projected to continue in the years to come. At this time of growth, average home rental rates also continue to increase annually, with an average rent of \$1,200/month. However, according to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC, 2014), rental rates are increasing in Saskatoon, suggesting that rental prices will begin to stabilize or possibly decline. The average selling price also continues to increase across all residential types in Saskatoon. CMHC reports the



average sale price in Saskatoon was \$341,061 in 2014 (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Average Housing Sale – All Residential Types (City of Saskatoon, 2015)



Both the changing socio-economic circumstances and the increased capacity to respond to homelessness since 2008 and 2012 (increased shelter capacity and Housing First initiatives, for instance) need to be considered when attempting to draw comparisons across the three Saskatoon PIT counts, as well as research design and scheduling changes between 2008 and 2015. Similarly, no comparisons can be drawn without understanding the limitations and the strengths of the PIT methodology.

**Limitations**

All homeless counts underestimate the number of people who are homeless at any one time. The Saskatoon count is no different. Although every effort was made to enumerate all homeless people, it was not possible to assign volunteers to all parts of the city for an entire day or interview all homeless people; some parts of the city were missed, some homeless people did not wish to be identified, and some were not possible to find. As noted in the results section, non-response rates add to the tendencies to underestimate.

The concept of a point-in-time methodology must be well understood as not producing an actual or accurate number of people experiencing homelessness, but rather as a ‘snap-shot’ in a given moment in time. This understanding of the point-in-time measurement is critical for interpretation of the findings. In relation to a point-in-time methodology, comparisons across years and jurisdictions are to be approached with caution and not as an accurate portrayal of homelessness trends. It is very difficult to compare data from PIT counts over time. Longitudinal comparisons require a rigorous application of an identical methodology at each point where the research is done. While the survey instrument has been reasonably consistent over the three counts, other elements of the methodology such as switching seasons in 2012, including hidden homelessness in 2015 and the increased ability of HIFIS to provide data in 2015, all conspire to mean the coverage for each survey is different and therefore makes quantitative, his-

torical comparisons unreliable. Similarly and more significantly for a PIT methodology for homeless counts is that the nature of the subjects means the coverage or sampling frame for research subjects can never be determined with any degree of accuracy. To illustrate this, compare the Canadian Census and National Household Survey to a PIT on homelessness. The Census/NHS are PITs; every five years the Census asks respondents to complete a survey that describes individual and household characteristics as of the Census day. The difference, of course is that the Census actually puts the survey instrument into virtually every household, a 100% sampling frame. The homelessness PITs cannot achieve a known coverage.

The short planning period of the 2015 count (approximately 6 weeks) contributed to logistical and practical issues in conducting the PIT. Primarily, a short time line leading up to count impacts volunteer recruiting and training as well as the benefit of a local advisory group. A longer lead time would allow volunteers a better opportunity to schedule their time for the count and allow the research team more time to provide training to meet the diverse schedules of potential volunteers. A longer lead time would allow for more engagement of the local advisory group and give the research team more time to incorporate the information provided by the advisory group in the PIT process. In Saskatoon's case, the research team would have had more time to research new survey areas and coordinate count-day logistics with shelters. A longer lead time could result in a larger volunteer base for count-day surveyors, more effective participation by local shelters and community-based organizations, and better geographic coverage for outdoor survey areas. Community and public engagement strategies, such as public awareness campaigns and community organization participation, are key for the success of future community projects, such as the homelessness count. More time leading up to the count is critical in order to raise awareness of the issue, plan promotional strategies, and ensure full participation and prioritization of the homelessness count among organizations and the public. The key to success is collaboration and participation.

The 2015 homelessness count was conducted on June 22 in Saskatoon, which also coincided with ongoing celebrations for National Aboriginal Day (June 21st). Hosting both important events in Saskatoon impacted the findings of the count. More people were gathered within the downtown area of Saskatoon as part of the celebrations for National Aboriginal Day, potentially providing additional opportunities for participants in the outdoor survey. However, the longstanding community partners from the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre were not able to participate in the survey as the Centre was closed in recognition of the special day. The Indian and Métis Friendship Centre has been a valued community partner in previous homelessness counts, and not surveying the clientele at the Centre for the 2015 count is a decisive limitation of the 2015 findings.

### **Strengths**

The 2015 count built on the learning from counts in Saskatoon in 2008 and 2012, while accommodating the federal government requirements of Employment and Social Development Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy Directives 2014-2019. The homelessness count is a means for the Saskatoon community to come together under a single mission—addressing homelessness. Community initiatives, such as the homelessness count, are an important avenue for community action and awareness. With better understanding of the community-level



service use and gaps, organizations can respond appropriately and represent the needs in the community.

Research design and implementation were greatly strengthened by the input of the Advisory Group, by participants in the June 2015 Community Forum (as this report has been by feedback at the August 2015 Community Forum), and by critical feedback by volunteers participating in training sessions that helped clarify the intent and refine the phrasing of survey questions. Volunteer input in the July, 2015 debriefing sessions further added to Saskatoon's capacity to conduct PIT counts in the future.

When funded by the federal government, results from the counts inform decision-making and program planning at several levels. Funding allocations direct priorities and draw attention to social needs. Specifically, the federal government's direction towards standardization of the homelessness survey, and continued funding for local counts will better allow comparability of findings across jurisdictions and advance the relevance and applicability of the work. Discussing the issue of homelessness and reflecting on the findings of the research is important in order to maintain public awareness and understanding of the complexity of the issue. Raising understandings and becoming better informed of the issues and situations facing those who experience homelessness is a direction toward developing a common understanding and reducing stigma. With better understandings, change can occur in the perceptions of people towards homelessness, and strengthen the community commitment for support.

For all the differences across 2008, 2012, and 2015 counts (Tables 13 and 14), some findings remain consistent and telling over time, reinforcing the sources and costs of factors that amplify the cycles of poverty and homelessness. All age groups are impacted by homelessness. Aboriginal people are overrepresented. Service use patterns show heavy reliance on costly resources such as shelters, health clinics, hospital, and emergency rooms. They also show that most services did not help in finding housing. The major barrier remains housing affordability. Sources of income have become increasingly problematic since 2008 when the sheltered homeless reported formal (45%) and even full-time (70%) employment. In 2012 and 2015 social services or "welfare" were the main sources of income while family and friends were important sources (13% in 2012 and 10% in 2015) and formal employment was reduced to 10% (2012) and 8% (2015). The reduction in percentages of those reporting staying outside (from 27% to 9%) and increase in shelters (from 73% to 80%) between 2012 and 2015 is striking.

Table 13. Findings across Saskatoon PIT Homelessness Counts (2008, 2012, 2015)

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Date of the Count</b>	<b>May 22</b>	<b>September 24</b>	<b>June 22</b>
<b>Total Sheltered and Unsheltered</b>	260	379	450
<b>Outside Adult</b>	17%	27%	9%
<b>Shelter Adult</b>	77%	73%	80%
<b>Total Children</b>	12%	3%	10%
<b>Total Self-Identified Aboriginal People</b>	47%	66%	45%
<b>On Waiting List for Housing</b>	20%	14%	27%

Table 14. Sources of Income for Indoor Survey Respondents across PIT Counts

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Full-time Income</b>	70%	13%	4%
<b>Part-time Income</b>	30%	7%	6%
<b>Formal Employment</b>	45%	10%	8%
<b>Informal Employment</b>	8%	11%	8%
<b>Social Services</b>	37%	26%	30%
<b>Friends and Family</b>	11%	13%	10%

First documented in 2012, participation in the Canadian Armed Forces has risen from 4.3% in 2012 to 10% in 2015. Similarly, in 2012, 38% had experienced physical violence while living outside (sheltered homeless at 28% less likely to be so victimized than those living outdoors at 44% and women more likely at 48% compared to 33% for men). In 2015, 46% had experienced violence living outdoors. Close to half of respondents in 2012 had lived with foster families during childhood (even for indoor and outdoor respondents); 16% has remained in foster care to 18 years of age. In 2015 45% had lived with foster families during childhood while only 11% (3% outdoors and 14% indoors respondents) remained in foster care to 18 years of age (Table 15).

Table 15. Survey Respondent Life Experiences across 2012 and 2015

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Veteran</b>	--	4%	10%
<b>Victims of Physical Violence</b>	--	38%	46%
<b>Persons Lived with Foster Parents</b>	--	46%	45%

## CONCLUSIONS

For a third time, the Saskatoon community came together to dedicate their time and resources to support the 2015 Point-in-Time Homelessness Count on June 22. A snap shot of the conditions and trends of individuals at risk and experiencing homelessness supports a greater understanding of the multi-faceted dimensions of this pressing national concern. The Saskatoon community continues to see the persistence of individuals experiencing homelessness, including both chronic (without a permanent address for more than six months) and episodic homelessness (without shelter three times or more over the past year). While we acknowledge the complexities of comparing data from previous PIT homelessness counts, some findings recur with such consistency that they cannot be ignored clarifying who are most impacted by factors that exacerbate the cycles of poverty

and homelessness. Despite some important initiatives adding to the city's capacity to address homelessness, Saskatoon still faces significant numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness, including children, seniors, men and women, and those identifying as Aboriginal people.

Barriers to finding permanent housing remain a lack of sufficient income and affordable housing stock, various health issues including addictions and mental health and disabilities, as well as overwhelming life stress. More respondents reported a reliance on social services for income support than in previous years, fewer respondents reported formal income sources, while more reported reliance on family and friends. Service use among respondents reveals significant reliance on costly services such as shelters, Food Bank, drop-in programs, health services, including both clinics and Hospital/ER, police, detox, community support officers, ambulance, probation or parole, as well as job training and disability, family, elder, and newcomer services.

The public perception component added to the 2015 PIT methodology was well received by the Advisory Committee, volunteer surveyors, and the general public. The public perception questions were posed to all individuals encountered during count day, regardless of their housing situation. The data offered a wider perception of the prevalence, severity, sources, and possible solutions to homelessness in Saskatoon. Respondents across sectors understood the homelessness situation in Saskatoon to be a serious issue, and pointed to the lack of affordable housing options and mental and physical health conditions as key reasons individuals find themselves without permanent housing. Single families, Aboriginal people, and individuals without sufficient social and/or health supports were identified as most at risk for homelessness. The key suggestions to address the homelessness issue in Saskatoon were to offer more affordable housing options, increase employment opportunities, create more shelters, and offer additional education, mental health, addictions, and other social supports in the community. If PIT counts typically underestimate, it might be argued that efforts documented here to minimize underestimates have helped give us a fuller, more comprehensive picture in 2015. The 2015 PIT findings identified the issues of concern and solutions needed to support individuals and the wider community to address the crisis of homelessness in Saskatoon.

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## APPENDIX A: Outdoor Survey



### 2015 State of Homelessness Survey Outdoor Survey

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research conducting a study about housing and homelessness in Saskatoon. We hope to better understand homelessness, allowing better decisions by decision makers and improved services, although we cannot guarantee these results.

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, complete **part one** of questionnaire with respondent. If NO, thank them and complete observation report*)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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

Location where survey was completed:

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

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

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

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

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the survey. Your participation is voluntary and you can skip a question or stop the survey at any time, for any reason. You will be anonymous and only group data will be reported. By participating in the survey, you are indicating that you understand that it is voluntary and that your confidentiality will be protected. Ok?

#### Part One

1. Do you know of any organizations that help those who are experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon?
  - ☐ The Lighthouse

- ☐ Saskatoon Interval House
- ☐ Salvation Army
- ☐ YWCA/ YMCA
- ☐ Saskatoon Crisis Nursery
- ☐ McLeod House
- ☐ Friendship Inn
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you think homelessness is an issue in Saskatoon?

- ☐ Very serious
- ☐ Quite serious
- ☐ As expected
- ☐ Not at all serious
- ☐ Not sure

3. What do you think are the main reasons that people experience homelessness?

- ☐ Lack of affordable housing
- ☐ Lack of employment
- ☐ Physical or mental health
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Lack of references
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Damage deposit
- ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## Part Two

Where will you be sleeping tonight?

- ☐ At home
- ☐ Outside
- ☐ In a shelter
- ☐ In a hotel
- ☐ At a friend's house (*If YES, ask prompting question below*)
  - *If you couldn't sleep at your friend's house, where would you sleep? At a shelter or sleep outside?*
- ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
(*if OTHER, and judged a place not meant for human habitation, continue to Part 2*)

***If the answer is AT HOME or at a hotel for a visitor/tourist, "That concludes our survey. Thank you for your time."***

***If the answer is NOT "At Home", proceed with Part Two.***

1. May I ask your age?

- ☐ 18 years old or younger
- ☐ 19 to 25 years
- ☐ 26 to 49 years

- ☐ 50 years or older
2. How would you describe your gender identity?
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ LGBTQ
- ☐ Two Spirit
- ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Refused/no answer
3. How would you describe your ethnic or racial background?
- ☐ **Aboriginal** (*First Nations, Métis, Inuit*)
- ☐ **Other North American** (*Acadian, American, Canadian, New Brunswicker, Newfoundlander, Nova Scotian, Ontarian, Quebecois*)
- ☐ **French origins** (*Alsatian, Breton, French*)
- ☐ **British Isles origins** (*Channel Islander, Cornish, English, Irish, Manx, Scottish Welsh*)
- ☐ **Western European** (*Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, German, Luxembourger, Swiss*)
- ☐ **Eastern European** (*Bulgarian, Belarusian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian*)
- ☐ **Northern European** (*Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish*)
- ☐ **Southern European** (*Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Cypriot, Greek, Italian, Kosovar, Macedonian, Maltese, Montenegrin, Portuguese, Serbian, Sicilian, Slovenian, Spanish, Yugoslavian*)
- ☐ **Other European** (*Basque, Jewish, Roma, Slavic*)
- ☐ **Caribbean origin** (*Antiguan, Bahamian, Barbadian, Bermudian, Carib, Cuban, Dominican, Grenadian, Haitian, Jamaican, Kittitian/ Nevisian, Martinican, Montserratian, Puerto Rican, St. Lucian, Trinidadian/ Tobagonian, Vincentian/Grenadian, West Indian*)
- ☐ **Latin, Central, and South American**
- ☐ **Central and West African** (*Akan, Angolan, Ashanti, Beninese, Cameroonian, Chadian, Congolese, Gabonese, Gambian, Guinean, Ibo, Ivorian, Liberian, Malian, Nigerian, Peulh, Senegalese, Sierra Leonean, Togolese, Yoruba*)
- ☐ **North African** (*Algerian, Berber, Coptic, Dinka, Egyptian, Libyan, Maure, Moroccan, Sudanese, Tunisian*)
- ☐ **Southern and East African** (*Afrikaner, Amhara, Bantu, Burundian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Harari, Kenyan, Malagasy, Mauritian, Oromo, Rwandan, Seychellois, Somali, South African, Tanzanian, Tigrian, Ugandan, Zimbabwean, Zulu*)
- ☐ **West Central Asia and Middle Eastern** (*Afghan, Arab, Armenian, Assyrian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Kazakh, Kurd, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Palestinian, Pashtun, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tajik, Tatar, Turk, Uighur, Uzbek, Yemeni*)
- ☐ **South Asian** (*Bengladeshi, Bengali, East Indian, Goan, Gujurati, Kashmiri, Nepali, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sinhalese, Sri Lankan, Tamil*)
- ☐ **East and Southeast Asian** (*Burmese, Cambodian [Khmer], Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Mongolian, Singaporean, Taiwanese, Thai, Vietnamese*)
- ☐ **Oceania** (*Australian, New Zealander*)
- ☐ **Pacific Islands** (*Fijian, Hawaiian, Maori, Polynesian, Samoan*)
- ☐ Refused/no answer
- ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
4. If Aboriginal ethnicity, with which group do you self-identify?
- ☐ First Nations (Treaty)
- ☐ First Nations (Non-Treaty)
- ☐ Métis



- ☐ Inuit
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Declined to answer

5. Have you ever served in the Canadian armed forces? *(Mark yes if they list any military or para-military organizations, i.e. merchant marines)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Have you been a victim of physical violence while living out-of-doors? *(This can include any encounter that they consider to be violent)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*(If Yes)* did you live with them until you turned 18?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. What is your current citizenship and immigration status?

- ☐ Canadian citizen
- ☐ Permanent resident
- ☐ Landed immigrant
- ☐ Refugee—permanent resident
- ☐ Refugee—claimant
- ☐ Temporary foreign worker
- ☐ International student
- ☐ Other (please specify) -----
- ☐ Don't know

9. How long have you lived in Saskatoon?

- ☐ Fewer than 6 months
- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years
- ☐ Since birth
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused to answer

10. What is the neighbourhood of your last permanent address?

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Declined to answer

11. a) How long has it been since you last had a permanent address?

\_\_\_\_\_ days

- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fewer than six months
- \_\_\_\_\_ Six months or more
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused/no answer

b) How often have you experienced homelessness, or have been without a place of your own to sleep, in the past year?

- ☐ 1-2 times
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ 6 or more times
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused to answer

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Declined to answer

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused/no answer

b) If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

- ☐ Income/ affordability
- ☐ Lack of information about services to support housing search
- ☐ Not trusting of services and supports
- ☐ Mental health
- ☐ Physical health
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Pets
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Overwhelming stress
- ☐ Family situation (i.e. children, relatives, dependents, etc.)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

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, alcohol or drug treatment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation to see housing	<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 with disability accessibility	<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"/>

15. Have you used any of the following services in the last 6 months? *(Read list).*

	Yes	No
Ambulance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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"/>
Children and family supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elder services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newcomer services	<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"/>
Community Support Officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Probation/ Parole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services that help you get ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Housing/ Housing placement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please list:

16. 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"/>
Part time <input type="radio"/> Full time <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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canada Pension Plan or other pension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unemployment/Employment Insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workers' compensation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability benefit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child Tax Credit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Old age security/ guaranteed income supplement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Services/Welfare/ rental supplement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Panhandling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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

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

I am leaving you with 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.

## APPENDIX B: Indoor Survey



### 2015 State of Homelessness Survey Indoor Shelter Survey

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with the Community-University Institute for Social Research conducting a study about housing and homelessness in Saskatoon. We hope to better understand homelessness, allowing better decisions by decision makers and improved services, although we cannot guarantee these results.

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, complete **parts one and two** of questionnaire with respondent. If NO, thank them*)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thanks for agreeing to participate in the survey. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can skip a question or stop the survey at any time, for any reason. You will be anonymous and only group data will be reported. By participating in the survey, you are indicating that you understand that it is voluntary and that your confidentiality will be protected. OK?

#### Part One

1. Do you know of any organizations that help those who are homelessness in Saskatoon?

- ☐ The Lighthouse
- ☐ Saskatoon Interval House
- ☐ Salvation Army
- ☐ YWCA
- ☐ Saskatoon Crisis Nursery
- ☐ McLeod House
- ☐ Friendship Inn
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you think homelessness is an issue in Saskatoon?

- ☐ Very serious
- ☐ Quite serious
- ☐ As expected
- ☐ Not at all serious

- ☐ Not sure
- 3. What do you think are the main reasons that people experience homelessness?
  - ☐ Lack of affordable housing
  - ☐ Lack of employment skills
  - ☐ Physical or mental health
  - ☐ Criminal record
  - ☐ References
  - ☐ Discrimination
  - ☐ Damage deposit
  - ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Who do you think are most impacted by homelessness? (*prompts: single parents, people with disabilities, unemployed, etc.*)
- 5. What are important things Saskatoon can do to help reduce homelessness?

## Part Two

- 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 your age?
  - ☐ 18 years or younger
  - ☐ 19 to 25 years
  - ☐ 26 to 49 years
  - ☐ 50 years or older
- 3. How would you describe your gender identity?
  - ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
  - ☐ LGBTQ
  - ☐ Two Spirit
  - ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Refused/no answer
- 4. How would you describe your ethnic or racial background?
  - ☐ **Aboriginal** (*First Nations, Métis, Inuit*)
  - ☐ **Other North American** (*Acadian, American, Canadian, New Brunswicker, Newfoundlander, Nova Scotian, Ontarian, Quebecois*)
  - ☐ **French origins** (*Alsatian, Breton, French*)
  - ☐ **British Isles origins** (*Channel Islander, Cornish, English, Irish, Manx, Scottish Welsh*)
  - ☐ **Western European** (*Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, German, Luxembourger, Swiss*)
  - ☐ **Eastern European** (*Bulgarian, Belarusian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian*)
  - ☐ **Northern European** (*Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish*)
  - ☐ **Southern European** (*Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Cypriot, Greek, Italian, Kosovar, Macedonian, Maltese, Montenegrin, Portuguese, Serbian, Sicilian, Slovenian, Spanish, Yugoslavian*)

- ☐ **Other European** (*Basque, Jewish, Roma, Slavic*)
- ☐ **Caribbean origin** (*Antiguan, Bahamian, Barbadian, Bermudian, Carib, Cuban, Dominican, Grenadian, Haitian, Jamaican, Kittitian/ Nevisian, Martinican, Montserratian, Puerto Rican, St. Lucian, Trinidadian/ Tobagonian, Vincentian/Grenadian, West Indian*)
- ☐ **Latin, Central, and South American**
- ☐ **Central and West African** (*Akan, Angolan, Ashanti, Beninese, Cameroonian, Chadian, Congolese, Gabonese, Gambian, Guinean, Ibo, Ivorian, Liberian, Malian, Nigerian, Peulh, Senegalese, Sierra Leonean, Togolese, Yoruba*)
- ☐ **North African** (*Algerian, Berber, Coptic, Dinka, Egyptian, Libyan, Maure, Moroccan, Sudanese, Tunisian*)
- ☐ **Southern and East African** (*Afrikaner, Amhara, Bantu, Burundian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Harari, Kenyan, Malagasy, Mauritian, Oromo, Rwandan, Seychellois, Somali, South African, Tanzanian, Tigrian, Ugandan, Zimbabwean, Zulu*)
- ☐ **West Central Asia and Middle Eastern** (*Afghan, Arab, Armenian, Assyrian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Kazakh, Kurd, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Palestinian, Pashtun, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tajik, Tatar, Turk, Uighur, Uzbek, Yemeni*)
- ☐ **South Asian** (*Bengladeshi, Bengali, East Indian, Goan, Gujurati, Kashmiri, Nepali, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sinhalese, Sri Lankan, Tamil*)
- ☐ **East and Southeast Asian** (*Burmese, Cambodian [Khmer], Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Mongolian, Singaporean, Taiwanese, Thai, Vietnamese*)
- ☐ **Oceania** (*Australian, New Zealander*)
- ☐ **Pacific Islands** (*Fijian, Hawaiian, Maori, Polynesian, Samoan*)
- ☐ Refused/no answer
- ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. If Aboriginal ethnicity, with which group do you self-identify?

- ☐ First Nations (Treaty)
- ☐ First Nations (Non-Treaty)
- ☐ Métis
- ☐ Inuit
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Declined to answer

6. Have you ever served in the Canadian armed forces? (*Mark yes if they list any military or para-military organizations, i.e. merchant marines*)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. Have you been a victim of physical violence while living out-of-doors? (*This can include any encounter that they consider to be violent*)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(If Yes) did you live with them until you turned 18?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. What is your current citizenship and immigration status?

- ☐ Canadian citizen
- ☐ Permanent resident
- ☐ Landed immigrant
- ☐ Refugee—permanent resident
- ☐ Refugee—claimant
- ☐ Temporary foreign worker
- ☐ International student
- ☐ Other (please specify) -----
- ☐ Don't know

10. How long have you been in Saskatoon?

- ☐ Fewer than 6 months
- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years
- ☐ Since birth
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused to answer

11. What is the neighbourhood of your last permanent address?

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Declined to answer

12. a) How long has it been since you last had a permanent address?

- \_\_\_\_\_ days
- \_\_\_\_\_ weeks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fewer than six months
- \_\_\_\_\_ Six months or more
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused/no answer

b) How often have you experienced homelessness, or have been without a place of your own to sleep, in the past year?

- ☐ 1-2 times
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ 6 or more times
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused to answer

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Declined to answer



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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Refused/no answer

b) If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ days

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks

\_\_\_\_\_ months

\_\_\_\_\_ years

☐ Don't know

☐ Refused/no answer

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

- ☐ Income/affordability
- ☐ Lack of information about services to support housing search
- ☐ Not trusting of services and supports
- ☐ Mental health
- ☐ Physical health
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Pets
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Overwhelming stress
- ☐ Family situation (i.e. children, relatives, dependants, etc.)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

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, alcohol or drug treatment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation to see housing	<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 with disability accessibility	<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"/>

16. Have you used any of the following services in the last 6 months? (*Read list*).

	Yes	No
Ambulance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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"/>
Children and family supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elder services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newcomer services	<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"/>
Community Support Officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Probation/ Parole	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services that help you get ID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Housing/ Housing placement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

If yes, please list:

17. What are your current source(s) of income? (*Read list*)

	Yes	No
Formal employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Part time <input type="radio"/> Full time <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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canada Pension Plan or other pension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workers' compensation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Unemployment/Employment Insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability benefit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child Tax Credit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Old age security/ guaranteed income supplement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Services/Welfare/ rental supplement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Panhandling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

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

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

I am leaving you with 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.

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