Community Report

Point-in-Time Count

Kelowna, British Columbia

2018

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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

The 2018 PiT Count can be used to evaluate progress in reducing homelessness, tracking demographic changes and monitoring evolving service needs in the community.
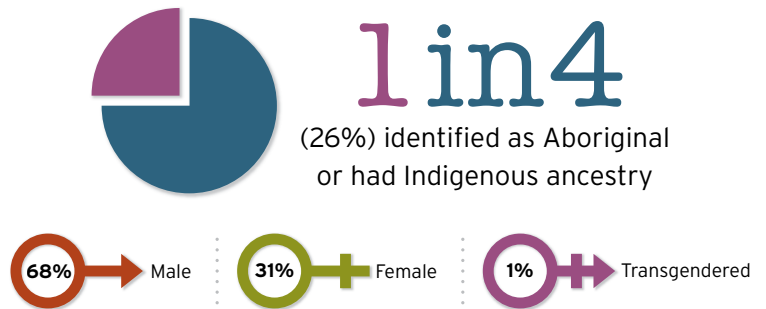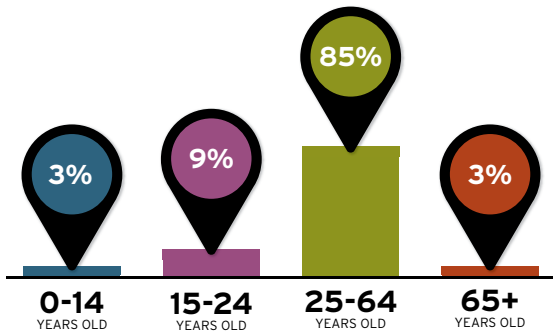
Background: The Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) provided support to 30 communities across Canada to conduct a coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count of the homeless population in 2016. The count provided vital information to participating communities about their homeless population, and contributed to the understanding of homelessness in Canada. A PiT Count aims to enumerate individuals in a community who are, at a given time, staying in shelters or an unsheltered location (e.g., on the street, in parks), providing a snapshot of homelessness in a community. PiT Counts include a survey that provides communities with information on the characteristics of their homeless population (e.g., age, gender, veteran status, Indigenous identity). In 2018, HPS has increased the number of communities participating in the coordinated PiT Count to 61. As one of the designated communities, Kelowna's PiT Count was held on March 6th, 2018. The 2018 PiT Count can be used to evaluate progress in reducing homelessness, tracking demographic changes and monitoring evolving service needs in the community.

Methodology: The community strategy, developed in consultation with local stakeholders and homeless-serving agencies in 2016, was reproduced to allow for comparisons between the 2018 PiT Count. A list of sheltered and unsheltered locations where the homeless population frequents was compiled and categorized using a set of pre-determined guidelines and operational definitions. Teams of trained volunteers, led by experienced team leaders (outreach workers from local homeless serving agencies), traveled through designated zones and into emergency shelters to conduct the count and invite individuals to take part in the survey. Additional data (age, gender, Indigenous identity) on individuals staying in temporary system-supported housing were collected from 13 interim housing locations and 10 institutional care facilities.

Conclusion: The results of the 2018 PiT Count provide a better understanding of the current state of homelessness in Kelowna. These results may be used to provide direction and inform strategic community planning. Due to the reproducible methodology used, the results from the 2018 Kelowna PiT Count are comparable to the results from the 2016 Kelowna PiT Count. This represents the first time two consecutive homelessness enumerations can be compared for the City of Kelowna. Further, these findings will continue to act as a benchmark to track changes in the homeless population over time and measure progress in addressing homelessness.

Point-in-Time Count

KELOWNA **MARCH 6, 2018**

85%

3% **9%** **3%**

0-14
YEARS OLD

15-24
YEARS OLD

25-64
YEARS OLD

65+
YEARS OLD

1 in 4

(26%) identified as Aboriginal
or had Indigenous ancestry

68% → Male   **31%** + Female   **1%** → Transgendered

AT LEAST

286

PEOPLE

were experiencing
homelessness in Kelowna

23%

INCREASE
Since 2016

98%

**indicated that
they had stayed
in an emergency
shelter within
the past year**

18%
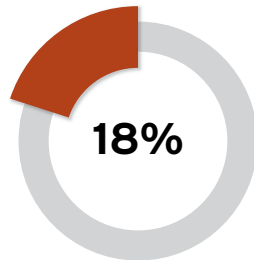
Episodically
Homeless

experienced 3 or more episodes of
homelessness within the past year

Average days
homeless within
the past year
has increased from
**192 days
in 2016**
to
**241 days
in 2018**

67%
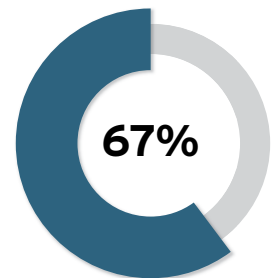
Chronically
Homeless

homeless for 6 months or
more within the past year

**There were
an additional**

319

**individuals living
in temporary
system-supported
housing**

Top 5 Reasons
for Housing Loss

- Unable to Pay Rent or Mortgage
- Household Conflict
- Addiction or Substance Abuse
- Job Loss
- Illness or Medical Condition

View the full 2018 Point-in-Time
Count report online at
centralokanaganfoundation.org

Thank you to all of the organizations,
community partners, participants,
and volunteers that contributed to
the 2018 Point-in-Time Count.

Canada ✦

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Introduction

Homelessness is a pervasive issue in Canada. It is estimated that 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year[1]. As the largest city in British Columbia's interior, Kelowna is no exception. With a population of approximately 127,380 residents, Kelowna has one of the lowest primary rental vacancy rates in Canada, falling to an all-time low of 0.2% in the fall of 2017[2,3]. According to the 2018 Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey[4], Kelowna's housing market ranked as the seventh least affordable market in Canada. Beyond the availability and affordability of housing, the causes and consequences of homelessness are complex and affect a diverse cross-section of the population. Many factors can contribute to an individual being homeless, including mental health, sudden job loss, addiction, substance use, or domestic abuse among other factors. To prevent and reduce homelessness, it is important to understand who is being affected. As a designated community of the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), Kelowna received funding to take part in the second nationally coordinated Point-in-Time Count between March 1 and April 30, 2018.

> When completed in subsequent years using consistent methodology, a PiT Count can be used to track changes in the homeless population over time and measure progress in reducing homelessness in a community.

A Point-in-Time (PiT) Count is a method used to measure sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. It aims to enumerate individuals in a community who are, at a given time, staying in homeless shelters, temporary housing, or an unsheltered location (e.g., on the street, in parks), providing a snapshot of homelessness in a community. A PiT Count also includes a survey that collects information on the characteristics of the homeless population (e.g., age, gender, Indigenous identity). This information can be used by the community to gain a better understanding of the local context, support local planning, identify community priorities, and assist with service mapping. PiT Count data may also be used to increase public awareness and promote government engagement. When completed in subsequent years using consistent methodology, a PiT Count can be used to track changes in the homeless population over time and measure progress in reducing homelessness in a community. By following the national guidelines[5], the data collected will contribute to a broader understanding of homelessness across Canada. However, it is important when comparing PiT counts to consider the contextual changes observed within the city between counts. This includes examples such as the increase in overall population size and the opening of new shelters and interim housing facilities.

Despite the numerous benefits of conducting a PiT Count, it is important to interpret the findings carefully as it is impossible to capture everyone who experiences homelessness in a community. PiT Counts are limited in their ability to capture hidden homelessness (e.g., people who are "couch-surfing"). Further, by focusing on a single night, the count will not include some people who cycle in and out of homelessness. What it will do is provide an estimate of how many people are homeless on a given night. A PiT Count should be considered the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness in a community. The focus of the Kelowna PiT Count is to identify individuals who are absolutely homeless (e.g., sleeping in shelters or on the street) and temporarily housed on the day of the count.

The two primary purposes of the Kelowna PiT Count are to (1) provide an enumeration, or count, of people experiencing absolute homelessness, and (2) through a survey, provide information on the characteristics of the homeless population.

Methodology

While following the national guideline, a community strategy was developed to most accurately reflect the current state of homelessness in Kelowna.

The 2018 Kelowna PiT Count methodology mirrored the 2016 Kelowna PiT Count methodology, so the results can be reasonably compared. A PiT Count Steering Committee of stakeholders, guided by the PiT Count Coordinator, was formed to build on the local approach developed in 2016 and to provide input throughout the implementation of the count[6]. Sector representation on the committee included the Municipal Government, local Health Authority, RCMP, Community Advisory Board on Homelessness, Urban Aboriginal Community, Youth, Front-line shelter staff, Homelessness Services and an individual with lived homeless experience. Six of the 12 members returned from the 2016 PiT Count Steering Committee. Criteria were determined, based on the local context, to categorize locations where the homeless population resides. While following the national guideline[5], a community strategy was developed to most accurately reflect the current state of homelessness in Kelowna.

Methodology

Absolutely Homeless[5]**.** An individual was operationally defined as absolutely homeless if they were residing in an unsheltered location or accessing a homeless shelter. Unsheltered locations include places unfit for human habitation, including the following locations: streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep. One month prior to the count, a known-location strategy was used to compile a list of unsheltered locations where homeless individuals frequented. Feedback was provided by the PiT Count Steering Committee as well as other community partners including municipal and regional by-law, a private security company, and outreach service providers. Homeless shelters include emergency shelters (general and specific to men, women, youth, etc.), extreme weather shelters, and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters.

Temporarily Housed Homeless[7]**.** An individual was operationally defined as temporarily housed if they were accessing system-supported (government or non-profit sector) interim housing or institutional care. Interim housing provides services beyond basic needs, offers residents more privacy, and places greater emphasis on participation and social engagement. Interim housing targets those who would benefit from structure, support and skill-building prior to moving to long term housing, with the ultimate goal of preventing a return to homelessness. Institutional care serves individuals that are being provisionally accommodated in medical/mental health institutions, penal institutions, residential treatment or withdrawal management centres, or children's institutions/group homes but lack permanent housing to return to upon release. This includes individuals who: a) were homeless prior to admittance and who have no plan for permanent accommodation after release; or b) had housing prior to admittance, but lost their housing while in institutional care; or c) had housing prior to admittance, but cannot go back due to changes in their needs. In any case, without adequate discharge planning and support, which includes arrangements for safe and reliable housing (and necessary aftercare or community-based services), there is a likelihood that these individuals may transition into homelessness following their release. For both interim and institutional care, locations were included if residency was guaranteed for 3 years or less.

Hidden Homelessness[7]**.** An individual was operationally defined as hidden homeless if they were living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing. They are typically not paying rent, their duration of stay is unsustainable in the long term, and they do not have the means to secure their own permanent housing in the future. They differ from those who are staying with friends or family out of choice in anticipation of prearranged accommodation, whether in their current hometown or an altogether new community. This living situation is understood by both parties to be temporary, and the assumption is that it will not become permanent.

Community Strategy

The Kelowna PiT Count was conducted on the evening of March 6th, 2018. The temperature high during the day was 3°C, with a low of -3°C. 83 volunteers were recruited to conduct surveys with individuals experiencing absolute homelessness. Students were recruited from the University of British Columbia Okanagan School of Social Work, Southern Medical Program, and School of Nursing and the Okanagan College Human Service Work program. 30 team leaders were recruited from local homeless serving agencies to support and lead the 83 volunteers during the count. Volunteers and team leaders attended a required three-hour training session where they were provided with detailed information on understanding homelessness, survey administration, enumeration protocols, cultural sensitivity, and personal safety.

Teams consisting of three to four volunteers and one to two team leaders were assigned to a homeless shelter, unsheltered location, or interim facility depending on the density of the location. A total of 27 teams participated in the count including 15 unsheltered teams, six sheltered teams, four interim facility teams, two youth magnet events, and the Interior Health mobile safe injection site. Surveys were conducted between 6:00 pm and 10:00 pm to correspond with the homeless shelter's intake and reduce opportunities for duplication in the enumeration of people experiencing absolute homelessness. Unsheltered teams were given a map with detailed directions and highlighted points of interest, a tally sheet to report the number of observed homeless, and surveys to be conducted. Volunteer teams were instructed to approach everyone that they encountered within their assigned zone. Volunteer teams entering a homeless shelter or interim facility conducted surveys only, and were not provided with a tally sheet, as the enumeration of the sheltered population was accomplished through the collection of systems data. Two magnet events for youth were held, one at the local youth shelter and a second at Foundry Kelowna. The magnet events functioned to increase survey engagement among young people as they are generally considered to be a hard-to-reach population. All volunteer teams were provided with emergency contact numbers and the KCR- Community Resource Street Survival Guide information sheet about local resources to hand out if they encountered an individual in crisis or immediate need. All participants that completed a survey were given a $10 Tim Hortons Gift Card.

PiT COUNT

6:00pm – 10:00pm

March 6, 2018

83

volunteers

30

team leaders

Data Collection

To enumerate and collect demographic information about individuals experiencing homelessness, a mixed-methods design was used including survey data, tally sheets, and systems data (Figure 1).

3 DATA SOURCES

Tally Sheets	Survey Data	Systems Data

Unsheltered Homeless	Homeless Shelters	Hidden Homelessness	Interim Housing	Institutional Care

5 POPULATIONS

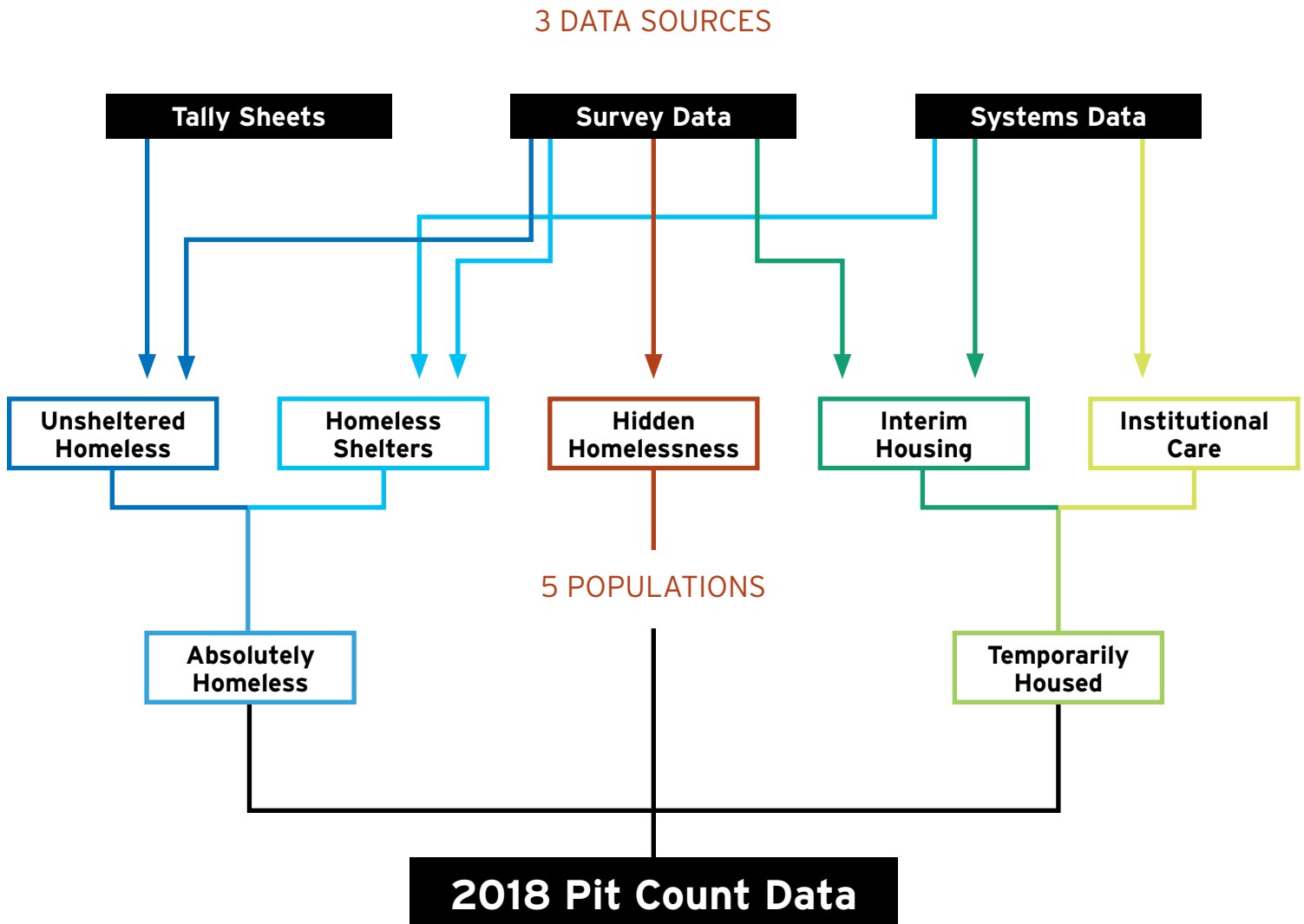| Absolutely Homeless		Temporarily Housed

2018 Pit Count Data

Figure 1. The PiT Count data collection strategy consisted of collecting 3 types of data sources from the 5 population groups defined.

Data Collection

Systems Data. Sheltered locations where homeless individuals may be residing, including homeless shelters, interim housing, and institutional care facilities, were contacted prior to the night of the count. Arrangements were made to obtain access to the systems data for individuals residing at each location on the night of the count. Each organization received detailed instructions regarding how to report their records, including instructions on how to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of each client. Information was collected regarding the total number of clients residing at each location on the night of the count as well as demographic information including age, gender, and whether they identified as an Indigenous person. Institutional care providers were asked to only provide information on temporarily housed clients, as previously defined, that would lack permanent housing upon release, including those that self-reported being homeless, have no fixed address, or discharge plan. Sheltered locations were also asked to provide data regarding their total capacity and the number of waitlisted individuals, where applicable.

Survey Data. The survey consisted of three sections, including an introductory script, five screening questions, 14 HPS core questions and two additional questions. The additional questions were taken from the optional questions from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH). The introductory script served to introduce the volunteer and the purpose of the survey. Individuals were informed that the survey would take about 10 minutes to complete and that their participation was voluntary, they may skip any question or stop the interview at any time, and that their responses would be anonymous. The screening questions were used to determine that an individual had not already taken the survey, was willing to participate, and was eligible to conduct the survey. Additional screening questions were added to identify and screen-in individuals experiencing hidden homelessness. Individuals were asked; "Where are you staying tonight?" and if someone identified with a hidden homeless location, the follow-up questions "Can you stay there as long as you want or is this a temporary situation?" and "Do you have a house or apartment that you can safely return to?" Depending on the responses to these questions, an individual's eligibility was determined. Survey questions included participants' age, gender, Indigenous identity, number of family members present, military or RCMP service, number of homeless episodes, amount of time being homeless, first homeless episode, reason for housing loss, source of income, foster care/group home history, and challenges to housing. A complete list of the survey questions and potential responses are available online at www.centralokanaganfoundation.org.

Tally Sheets. Volunteer teams surveying in unsheltered locations used tally sheets to record individuals that did not participate in the survey. Tally sheets were used to record when an individual was not surveyed. Volunteers reported the reason the person was not surveyed (whether they declined, already responded, or were observed only). For individuals that were observed homeless, volunteers indicated the reasons why they perceived the individual to be homeless (e.g., sleeping on bench with belongings).

Findings

Data were collected through agencies system data to collect information regarding individual's age, gender, and whether they identified as an Indigenous person, from a total of 6 shelters (Table 1), 13 system-supported interim housing locations (Table 2), and 10 institutional care locations (Table 3). A total of 234 individuals were identified as staying in a homeless shelter on the night of the count. An additional 264 individuals were identified as residing in interim housing and 55 individuals residing in institutional care. Volunteer teams identified 52 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the night of the count. A total of 193 surveys were completed, including 118 sheltered homeless and 14 unsheltered homeless, representing a response rate of 50% of the sheltered homeless population and 27% of the identified unsheltered homeless population. Two additional populations were surveyed in 2018; including 50 surveys completed by individuals in interim housing and 11 surveys completed by individuals experiencing hidden homelessness.

	HOMELESS SHELTERS				
	Location (Organization)	Count	Total Capacity[1]	Survey Data	Systems Data
1	Alexandra Gardner Shelter (NOW Canada)	15	20+	x	x
2	Cornerstone (John Howard Society) NEW 2017	80	75+	x	x
3	Inn From the Cold	45	43+	x	x
4	Kelowna's Gospel Mission	77	90+	x	x
5	Kelowna Women's Shelter	15	16+	x	x
6	Youth Shelter (Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs)	2	10+	x	x
	Total	**234**	**254+**		

Table 1. Client enumeration, total capacity, and data collection strategy for local homeless shelter.

1 The total capacity of the homeless shelter may be expanded by providing sleeping mats or additional cots, denoted by the (+) symbol.

6
homeless shelters

13
interim housing locations

10
institutional care providers

Findings

	Location (Organization)	Count	Total Capacity	Survey Data	Systems Data
	INTERIM HOUSING				
1	1043 Harvey House (John Howard Society)	4	9		x
2	Cardington Apartments (John Howard Society)	30	30	x	x
3	Essentials Safe Housing (NOW Canada)	9	12	x	x
4	Family Den (Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society)	9	8		x
5	Freedom's Door	50	50		x
6	Gateway (Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs)	1	2	x	x
7	Heath House (CMHA)	18	18		x
8	House of Hope (H.O.P.E. Outreach)	7	10	x	x
9	Rowcliffe -2nd & 3rd Floor (Karis Support Society)	39	42	x	x
10	Ozanam House (Society of St. Vincent de Paul)	17	19		x
11	Penny Lane (Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs)	2	6	x	x
12	Francis Avenue & Gordon Drive (Society of Hope)	39	36		x
13	Willowbridge (CMHA)	39	40		x
	Total	**264**	**282**		

Table 2. Client enumeration, total capacity, and data collection strategy for local interim housing locations.

	Location (Organization)	Count	Survey Data	Systems Data
	INSTITUTIONAL CARE			
1	Cara Centre	5		x
2	Coral House (Okanagan Mental Health Society)	9		x
3	Florin House	8		x
4	Holding Cells (RCMP)	9		x
5	Kelowna General Hospital	6		x
6	Supported Recovery (The Bridge Youth and Family Services)	4		x
7	Bridgeway Intensive Residential Treatment (The Bridge Youth and Family Services)	5		x
8	Adult Withdrawal Management Services (The Bridge Youth and Family Services)	5		x
9	Youth Withdrawal Management Services (The Bridge Youth and Family Services)	3		x
10	Winter Surge (Interior Health Authority)	1		x
	Total	**55**		

Table 3. Client enumeration of individuals that would lack permanent housing upon release and data collection strategy for local institutional care providers.

Absolutely Homeless

To reflect the most accurate enumeration of the absolutely homeless population in Kelowna, a combination of homeless shelter systems data (n=234), unsheltered survey data (n=14), and volunteer-observed homelessness (n=38) were used. A total of 286 individuals were identified as being absolutely homeless with 234 (82%) experiencing sheltered homelessness and 52 (18%) experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

A combination of shelter systems data (n=234) and unsheltered survey data (n=14) were used to most accurately reflect the age, gender, and percentage of the population who identify as Indigenous (Table 4). The absolute homeless population had a mean age of 40 years, with the majority being male (68%), indicating no Indigenous identity (74%), and falling between the ages of 25-64 years (85%). Notably, there were a high number of women indicating Indigenous Identity (34%) when compared to their male counterparts (23%). Figure 2 depicts the percentage distribution of gender by age ranges.

ABSOLUTE HOMELESS DEMOGRAPHICS	n=248
Age (Mean, Standard Deviation)	40 years (±14)
Age Range (%)	
0-14 years	3
15-24 years	9
25-64 years	85
65+ years	3
Gender (%)	
Male	68
Female	31
Transgender	1
Aboriginal Identity (%)	
None	74
First Nations	14
Metis	7
Non-Status / Aboriginal Ancestry	5
Inuit	0

Table 4. Age, gender, and Indigenous Identity of individuals experiencing absolute homelessness.
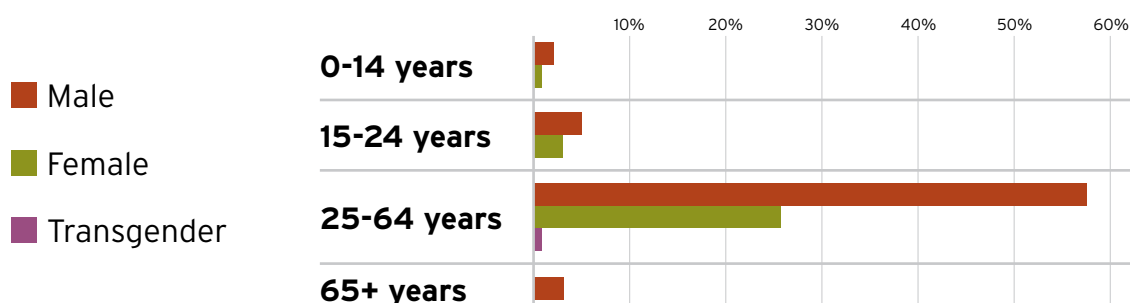

Figure 2. Gender distribution (%) by age range of individuals experiencing absolute homelessness.

Absolutely Homeless

A total of 132 surveys were completed with individuals that were identified as being absolutely homeless (Table 5). 91% indicated that they were not with any family members, whereas, 9% identified being with a family member on the night of the count. 98% indicated that they had stayed in an emergency shelter within the past year. 4% indicated that they had served in the Canadian Military and none indicated service in the RCMP. 2% indicated they were new immigrants or refugees that had moved to Canada within the past five years. The average number of days spent homeless within the last year was 241 days, ranging from three days to 365 days. 67% of participants were identified as being chronically homeless as a result of being homeless for six months or more within the past year. The average number of homeless episodes within the past year was 1.8 times, ranging from one (current episode) to 14 episodes. 18% of participants were identified as being episodically homeless as a result of experiencing three or more different episodes of homelessness within the past year. 29% of those experiencing absolute homelessness identified that they had been in foster care and/or group home. Of those who had been in foster care and/or group home (n=30), 30% became homeless within one year of leaving care. 94% of participants identified their sexual orientation as straight, 5% identified as bisexual and 1% identified as lesbian. The absolute homeless population had a mean age of 31 years when they had their first experience of homelessness, with 37% of those experiencing absolute homelessness before the age of 25.

ABSOLUTE HOMELESS CHARACTERISTICS	n=132
Family Members (%)	
Yes	9
No	91
Emergency Shelter Stay (%)	
Yes	98
No	2
Service (%)	
Military	4
RCMP	0
No Service	96
Immigrant or Refugee (%)	
Yes	2
No	98
Days Homeless within Past Year (Mean, Standard Deviation) 241 days (±135) Length of time Homeless within Past Year (%)	
0-2 Months	18
3-5 Months	14
6-12 Months	67

Table 5. Characteristics of individuals experiencing absolute homelessness. Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

Absolutely Homeless

Table 5 Continued.

ABSOLUTE HOMELESS CHARACTERISTICS	n=132
Homeless Episodes within Past Year (Mean, Standard Deviation) 1.8 episodes (±1.8) Number of times Homeless within Past Year (%)	
1 Time (current episode)	71
2 Times	11
3 or more Times	18
Been in Foster Care and/or Group Home (%)	
Yes	29
No	71
Became Homeless Within 1 year of Leaving Foster Care and/or Group Home (%)	
Yes	30
No	70
Sexual Orientation %	
Straight	94
Lesbian	1
Bisexual	5
1st Homelessness Experience (Mean, Standard Deviation) 31 years (±14.3) 1st Homelessness Experience (%)	
0-14 years	12
15-24 years	25
25-64 years	62
65+ years	2

Table 5. Characteristics of individuals experiencing absolute homelessness. Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

Participants were asked "What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?", "What are your sources of income?" and "What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?" The highest reported reason for housing loss was unable to pay rent or mortgage (19%), followed by household conflict (17%) which includes spouse/partner conflict, parent/guardian conflict and roommate conflict. The highest reported source of income was from disability benefits (27%), followed by welfare /income assistance (26%), and informal income (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling) (18%). The highest reported challenge trying to find housing was rents too high (24%), followed by low income (21%), discrimination (10%), and addiction (8%).

The highest reported challenge trying to find housing was rents too high (24%)

Absolutely Homeless

REASON FOR HOUSING LOSS (%)	
Unable to Pay Rent or Mortgage	19
Household Conflict[1]	17
Addiction or Substance Use	16
Job Loss	12
Illness or Medical Condition	8
Unsafe Housing Conditions	7
Conflict With: Landlord	4
Unable to Find Housing	3
Renovations/ Rezoning/ Rental Sold	3
Other[2]	3
Experienced Abuse by: Spouse / Partner	2
Incarcerated (Jail or Prison)	2
Hospitalization or Treatment Program	2
Household Death	2
Personal Choice	1
Victim Of Landlord Fraud	1

SOURCE OF INCOME (%)	
Disability Benefit	27
Welfare / Income Assistance	26
Informal Income (e.g., Bottle Returns, Panhandling)	18
Employment	10
No Income	9
Employment Insurance	3
Seniors Benefits (e.g., CPP/OAS/GIS)	2
GST Refund	2
Money From Family / Friends	2
Other[3]	2

BARRIER TO HOUSING (%)	
Rents Too High	24
Low Income	21
Discrimination	10
Addiction	8
No Income Assistance	6
Mental Health Issues	5
Family Breakdown / Conflict	4
Health / Disability Issues	4
Pets	4
Criminal History	3
Poor Housing Conditions	2
Domestic Violence	2
Other[4]	2
Children	2
No Resources Available	1
No Housing Availability	1
Credit history/ References	1
No I.D.	1
Rental Inexperience	1
Don't Want Housing	0.3

Table 6. Survey responses to the questions, "What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?", "What are your sources of income?" and "What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?" Note: Multiple responses were accepted. Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

1 Household conflict included; Spouse/Partner (9%), Roommates (5%) and Parent/Guardian (3%).

2 Other answer options included; eviction, bylaw fined owner, immigration status, general conflict.

3 Other answer options included; other source, dealing drugs, and escort.

4 Other answer options included; landlords in general, untrustworthy landlords, hard to find steady job, Canadian status, lazy, moving for services, and work/house too far apart.

Absolutely Homeless

The question "How long have you been in Kelowna?" is reported as the number of people that moved to Kelowna in the past year to match the question asked in 2016. Two new follow-up questions were asked in 2018 "What is the main reason you came to Kelowna?" and "Where did you live before you came here?" The highest reported reason for moving to Kelowna was to visit friends/family (26%). The second highest reported reason was to access services and supports (23%), followed by those looking to find housing (13%). Of those that identified that they had moved to Kelowna within the past year, their answers as to where they moved from varied. Communities were spread throughout Canada with the majority being within British Columbia. This was similar to the answers provided to the question "Which Indigenous community are you from?" A wide range of communities across British Columbia and Canada were identified (Table 12).

MOVED TO KELOWNA WITHIN PAST YEAR (%)	
No	74
Yes	26
WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON YOU CAME TO KELOWNA? (%)	**WITHIN PAST YEAR (N=33)**
To Visit Friends / Family	26
To Access Services and Supports	23
To Find Housing	13
Employment (secured)	10
Employment (seeking)	8
To Access Emergency Shelter(s)	5
Family Moved Here	3
Fresh Start	3
Fear for Safety	3
Gain Sobriety	3
Family Conflict	3
Travelling Through	3

WHERE DID YOU LIVE BEFORE YOU CAME HERE?	
British Columbia	# of Respondents
Abbotsford	1
Armstrong	1
Chilliwack	1
Coquitlam	1
Dawson Creek	1
Invermere	1
Kamloops	2
Kootaneys	1
Nelson	1
Oliver	1
Peachland	1
Penticton	2
Trail	1
Vancouver	2
Vancouver Island	1
Vernon	1
West Kelowna	1
Alberta	
Calgary	3
Edmonton	2
Red Deer	1
Other	
Hamilton, Ont.	1
Montreal, Que.	1
White Horse, N.W.T.	1

Table 7. Survey responses to the questions, "How long have you been in Kelowna?", "What is the main reason you came to Kelowna?" and "Where did you live before you came here?". Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

Indigenous Identity and Homelessness

Those who identify as Indigenous have been noted to be overrepresented in the homeless population. In the 2016 PiT Count Canadian Report, respondents that identified as Indigenous represented 37% of the homeless population[8]. During the 2018 Kelowna PiT Count there was a difference between the absolute and temporarily housed populations in terms of the percentage of individuals identifying as Indigenous. The representation of those that identified as Indigenous in the absolute homeless population was 26% as compared to 20% recorded in the temporarily housed population. "Which Indigenous community are you from?" was added to the PiT Count survey (Table 8). Most people relocated from a community within BC. It is important to note that a number of individuals that identified as Indigenous did not provide an Indigenous community of origin.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES		
Absolute		Interim
British Columbia	Other Province/Territory	BC & Alberta
Gitanmaax Band Council, BC	Acadia, NS	Cheslatta Carrier Nation, BC
Lheidli T'enneh Band, BC	Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, ON	Heiltsuk Nation, BC
Lower Nicola Indian Band, BC	Beaver Lake Cree Nation, AB	Little Red River Cree Nation, AB
Lower Similkameen Indian Band, BC	Enoch Cree Nation, AB	Okanagan Indian Band, BC
Okanagan Indian Band, BC	Long Plain, MB	
Osoyoos Indian Band, BC	Peguis First Nation, MB	
Splatsin First Nation, BC	Salt River First Nation, N.W.T.	
Sts'ailes Band, BC		
Westbank First Nation, BC (x2)		
Wet'suwet'en First Nation, BC		

Table 8. Survey responses to the question "Which Indigenous community are you from?" of all respondents that identified as Indigenous or having Indigenous Ancestry. Each community was identified once except for the community denoted by a (x2).

Temporarily Housed Homeless

A total of 319 individuals were identified as temporarily housed in interim housing (n=264) or institutional care (n=55). Individuals identified in temporary housing had a mean age of 37 years, with the majority being male (59%), indicating no Indigenous identity (80%), and falling between the ages of 25-64 years (78%) (Table 9). Figure 3 depicts the percentage distribution of gender by age ranges.

TEMPORARILY HOUSED DEMOGRAPHICS	n=319
Age (Mean, Standard Deviation)	37 years (±15)
Age Range (%)	
0-14 years	11
15-24 years	9
25-64 years	78
65+ years	2
Gender (%)	
Male	59
Female	40
Transgender	1
Aboriginal Identity (%)	
None	80
First Nations	11
Metis	7
Non-Status / Aboriginal Ancestry	2
Inuit	0

Table 9. Age, gender, and Indigenous identity of individuals in Temporary Housing.
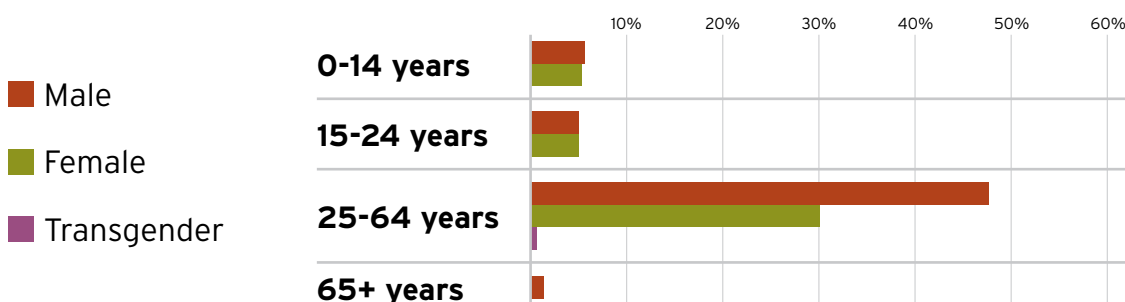

Figure 3. Gender distribution (%) by age range of individuals residing in temporary housing.

Temporarily Housed Homeless

A total of 50 surveys were completed with individuals living in interim housing (Table 10). As mentioned in the methodology on page 7, not all interim housing facilities participated in the survey portion of the PiT Count. The survey collected is a subpopulation of the total interim housed homeless and may not represent the whole group. This population is part of the HPS defined core population and this is the first time Kelowna's interim housed individuals have had the opportunity to participate in the survey portion of a PiT Count. Please see table 3 for a list of facilities that completed surveys. Depending on resources available, a goal for future counts will be to include all interim housing facilities.

88% of participants indicated that they were not with any family members, whereas, 12% identified being with a family member on the night of the count. 40% indicated that they had stayed in an emergency shelter within the past year. 2% indicated that they had served in the RCMP and none indicated service in the Canadian Military. 25% indicated that they had moved to Kelowna within the past year. Zero participants indicated they were new immigrants or refugees that had moved to Canada within the past five years. The average number of days spent homeless within the last year was 194 days, ranging from zero days to 365 days. 58% of participants were identified as being chronically homeless as a result of being homeless for six months or more within the past year. The average number of homeless episodes within the past year was 1.2 episodes, ranging from one (current episode) to five episodes. 12% of participants were identified as being episodically homeless as a result of experiencing three or more different episodes of homelessness within the past year. 37% of those experiencing temporarily housed homelessness identified that they had been in foster care and/or group home. Of those who had been in foster care and/or group home (n=15), 33% became homeless within one year of leaving care. 84% of participants identified their sexual orientation as straight, 12% identified as bisexual and 4% identified as lesbian. Of the interim housed population surveyed, 59% experienced absolute homelessness before the age of 25.

TEMPORARILY HOUSED CHARACTERISTICS	n=50
Family Members (%)	
Yes	12
No	88
Emergency shelter Stay (%)	
Yes	40
No	60
Service (%)	
Military	0
RCMP	2
No Service	98

Table 10 Continued.

TEMPORARILY HOUSED CHARACTERISTICS	n=50
Immigrant or Refugee in past 5 years (%)	
Yes	0
No	100
Days Homeless within Past Year (M, SD) 194 days (±150) Length of time Homeless within Past Year (%)	
0-2 Months	34
3-5 Months	8
6-12 Months	58
Homeless Episodes within Past Year (M, SD) 1.2 episodes (±1.2) Number of times Homeless within Past Year (%)	
0 Times	24
1 Time (current episode)	59
2 Times	4
3 or more Times	12
Been in Foster Care and/or Group Home (%)	
Yes	37
No	63
Became Homeless Within 1 year of Leaving Foster Care and/or Group Home (%)	
Yes	33
No	66
Sexual Orientation %	
Straight	84
Lesbian	4
Bisexual	12
1st Homelessness Experience (M, SD)	24.7 years(±11.1)
1st Homelessness Experience (%)	
0-14 years	22
15-24 years	37
25-64 years	41
65+ years	0

Table 10. Characteristics of those individuals surveyed in interim housing. Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

Temporarily Housed Homeless

Participants were asked, "What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?", "What are your sources of income?" and "What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?" (Table 11). The highest reported reason for housing loss was addiction or substance use (42%), followed by household conflict (16%) which includes spouse/partner conflict and parent/guardian conflict. The highest reported source of income was from disability benefits (51%), followed by welfare /income assistance (32%), employment (10%). The highest reported challenge trying to find housing was that rents too high (27%), followed by low income (16%) and addiction (11%).

Reason for Housing Loss (%)	
Addiction or Substance Use	42
Household Conflict[1]	16
Unable to Pay Rent or Mortgage	8
Experienced Abuse by: Spouse / Partner	6
Job Loss	5
Illness or Medical Condition	5
Incarcerated (Jail or Prison)	5
Unsafe Housing Conditions	3
Other[2]	3
Renovations/ Rezoning/ Rental Sold	3
Experienced Abuse by: Parent / Guardian	2
Sexual Assault: Landlord	2
Source of Income (%)	
Disability Benefit	51
Welfare / Income Assistance	32
Employment	10
Informal Income (e.g., Bottle Returns, Panhandling)	2
No Income	2
Child and Family Tax Benefits	2
Other[3]	2
Barrier to Housing (%)	
Rents Too High	27
Low Income	16
Addiction	11
Discrimination	5

Barrier to Housing Continued (%)	
Mental Health Issues	5
Poor Housing Conditions	5
Pets	5
No Housing Availability	5
Health / Disability Issues	4
Children	4
Criminal History	3
No Income Assistance	2
Family Breakdown / Conflict	2
Domestic Violence	2
Credit history/ References	2
Don't Want Housing	2
Other[4]	2
Rental Inexperience	1

Table 11. Survey responses to the questions, "What happened that cause you to lose your housing most recently?", "What are your sources of income?" and "What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?" Note: Multiple responses were accepted. Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

1 Household conflict included; Spouse/Partner (8%) and Parent/ Guardian (8%).

2 Other answer options included; children apprehended, legal.

3 Other answer options included; alimony.

4 Other answer options included; poor landlords, landlord picky, smoking.

Temporarily Housed Homeless

The question "How long have you been in Kelowna?" is reported as the number of people to move to Kelowna in the past year to match the question asked in 2016. In 2018, two new follow-up questions were asked "What is the main reason you came to Kelowna?" and "Where did you live before you came here?" (Table 12). The majority of the reported reasons for moving to Kelowna were to access services and supports (69%). The remaining reported reasons included to visit friends/family, to find housing, family moved here, and a fresh start (8% each). Please note that this sample size is only 12 individuals that identified themselves as moving to Kelowna within the past year.

Moved to Kelowna within past year (%)	
No	75
Yes	25
What is the main reason you came to Kelowna? (%)	**Within Past Year (n=12)**
To access Services and Supports	69
To Visit Friends / Family	8
To Find Housing	8
Family Moved Here	8
Fresh start	8
Location	**# of Respondents**
Calgary	1
Coquitlam	1
Grand Forks	1
Okanagan Falls	1
Penticton	5
Prince George	1
Vancouver	2

Table 12. Survey responses to the questions, "How long have you been in Kelowna?", "What is the main reason you came to Kelowna?" and "Where did you live before you came here?" Rounding caused some categories reporting (%) not to add to 100%.

Hidden Homeless

A total of 11 individuals were identified as experiencing hidden homeless (n=11). The PiT Count was not able to collect a representative cohort of those experiencing hidden homelessness. The Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy acknowledges that a PiT Count cannot accurately measure the number of people who are experiencing hidden homelessness during the count[8]. Communities can attempt to enumerate the hidden homeless population to raise awareness of vulnerability. Six of 11 (55%) respondents that accessed emergency shelter in the past year would be considered vulnerable. Although this may not be representative of the hidden homeless population, this indicates that further efforts to learn about the hidden homeless population are justified. Recommendations will be considered in future counts to improve on methodology.

Changes since Kelowna's 2016 Point-in-Time Count

The overall population experiencing absolute homelessness has increased from 233 individuals in 2016 to 286 individuals in 2018.

The changes from Kelowna's 2016 PiT Count must be considered in the context of the changes seen in the city within the past two years including an increase in population and the opening and closing of facilities[6]. In 2018, core questions were added and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) recommended additional questions. Only the 2016 questions can be compared. Interim survey data was not collected in 2016. Only the demographic information that was collected through systems data in 2016 can be compared.

The overall population experiencing absolute homelessness has increased from 233 individuals in 2016 to 286 individuals in 2018. This represents an increase of 53 individuals or 23%. Due to this increase, it is noted that most categories compared to 2016 have increased in the absolute number of individuals identified; however, the data is represented as the percentage of the population identified in that year. This allows for the comparison of how the population has changed proportionally to the absolute homeless population collected but it is important to remember that the absolute numbers overall have an increasing trend.

Changes since Kelowna's
2016 Point-in-Time Count

The number of individuals enumerated as unsheltered homelessness decreased from 69 to 52, which is a decrease of 11% in the total absolute population enumerated. The number of people enumerated in emergency shelters increased by 43% (70 people). There was a 5% increase in those identifying as staying in an emergency shelter within the past year.

There was a 2% increase in those identified as Indigenous, bringing the percentage from 24% in 2016 to 26% in 2018. A considerable change in the number of women experiencing either sheltered or unsheltered homelessness and identified as Indigenous was reported. 34% of women identified as Indigenous, compared to 5.6% representation of Indigenous women in the general Kelowna population[3]. This is a decrease from the 42% of absolute homeless women identifying as Indigenous in 2016.

Chronically homeless enumeration increased 7% while episodically homeless enumeration decreased 2%. The average days spent homeless within the past year increased 49 days, from 192 days in 2016 to 241 days in 2018. This represents a significant increase in the average number of days spent homeless within the past year between 2016 (M=192, SD=119) and 2018 (M=241, SD=135) conditions; t (190)=2.7, p=0.007.

The percentage of women increased by 2%, while the male population decreased by 2%. The average age of those experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness decreased from 41 years to 40 years. More people responded as being in the 25 to 64 year old category (increase by 6%). The 0 to 14 year old population increased by 1%, while the 65+ and 15 to 24 year old categories decreased by 3% and 4% respectively.

There was a 1% decrease in proportional family homelessness in Kelowna. Proportionally the amount of absolute homeless individuals who served either in the Canadian Military or RCMP decreased from 6% in 2016 to 4% in 2018. However it is noted that the number (n=5) of veterans identified were the same in both PiT Counts. In 2016, no newcomers to Canada, within the past five years, were identified. In 2018, this group represented 1.6% of the absolute homeless population, for a total of 2 individuals.

The answer option "Evicted: Other Reason" was removed as an answer option for the core question "What caused you to lose your housing most recently?" This offered respondents the option to answer the question more specifically but unfortunately has made this question not comparable to 2016.

There was a notable decrease in those identifying "Disability Benefit" as a source of income, from 40% in 2016 to 27% in 2018. The survey option "Welfare/Income Assistance" was chosen 3% less in 2018. Options that increased included "Informal Income", "Employment" and "No Income", increasing 6%, 4% and 4% respectively.

Changes since Kelowna's
2016 Point-in-Time Count

The overall population experiencing temporarily housed homelessness has increased from 273 individuals in 2016 to 319 individuals in 2018, representing an increase of 46 individuals or 17%. Notably, most categories compared to 2016 have increased in the absolute number of individuals. The data is represented as the percentage of the population identified in that year. This allows for the comparison of how the population has changed proportionally to the temporarily housed homeless population. It is important to remember that the absolute numbers overall have an increasing trend. This increase could be a result of the facilities that were identified in 2018 being different than 2016, due to facility operational changes and closures/openings.

For the temporarily housed population, the representation of males in 2018 was 7% less than in 2016. There was an increase of 7% of females enumerated as temporarily housed. The addiction support program rotates from a 6-week female program to a 6-week male program. During the 2016 PiT Count there was a male cohort in the program and during the 2018 PiT Count there was a female cohort. This could have been a factor contributing to the increase in female representation and a decrease in male representation in 2018. The representation of those identifying as transgender remained constant at 1% between PiT Counts.

Those that identify as Indigenous represented 20% of the 2018 temporarily housed population which is an increase of 6% from 2016. The Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society's interim housing facility "Family Den" was not enumerated in 2016. This could have contributed to the increase.

The average age of the temporarily housed homelessness population decreased from 40 years in 2016 to 37 years in 2018. Less people responded as being in the 25 to 64 year old category (decrease by 3%) as well as a decrease in the 15 to 24 year old population (decrease by 4%), while the 0 to 14 year old category increased by 7% and the 65+ cohort remained the same.

Discussion

The 2018 PiT Count results represent an accurate collection of information regarding the state of homelessness in Kelowna. The true value of PiT Counts comes with the repetition of these counts over time[8]. This is the first time in Kelowna's history that two standardized counts can be compared. Surveys and organizations' systems data were collected from 6 homeless shelters with an additional 15 volunteer teams canvassing the streets, alleys, and parks of Kelowna where homeless individuals were known to frequent and entered emergency shelters to conduct surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness. The Interior Health mobile injection site was operational during the hours of the PiT Count; therefore surveys were completed at this location. Findings suggest that there were at least 286 individuals experiencing absolute homelessness in Kelowna on the night of March 6th 2018. To develop strategies targeted at addressing homelessness in our community, it is important to understand the characteristics of this population which is why the PiT Count includes survey questions to collect this information.

AT LEAST
286 PEOPLE were experiencing homelessness in Kelowna

23% INCREASE Since 2016

Kelowna's absolute homeless population is diverse, with males aged 25-64 years representing the largest cohort. Other key subpopulations include Indigenous peoples (26%), youth under the age of 25 (12%), and older adults over the age of 65 (3%). Consistent with national averages, Indigenous peoples are over-represented in the homeless population, making up only 5.5% of Kelowna's total population but over one quarter of the absolute homeless population[3]. Of particular concern, is the disproportionally high number of women indicating Indigenous identity, representing 34% of all women experiencing absolute homelessness. When compared to their male counterparts, Indigenous males make up 23% of the total male population experiencing absolute homelessness. According to the present findings, rates of youth absolute homelessness in Kelowna fall below the national average recorded during the 2016 Coordinated PiT Count[8]. Regardless, youth remain a distinctly unique population that must be considered. The youth absolute homeless population identified in our PiT Count, as defined as those from 0-24 years old, decreased proportionally by 3% from 2016 to 2018. However, looking at the number of individuals counted who reported experiencing absolute homelessness each year, there was an increase of 3 individual youth experiencing homelessness counted in 2018. Therefore, how the overall absolute homelessness population is changing must be considered when comparing the youth population between PiT Counts. The proportional decrease in youth absolute homelessness could be contributed to the efforts of those service providers that provide programs and supports specifically to youth. This includes the preventative diversion techniques employed by the Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs Youth Shelter as well as Foundry Kelowna led by the Canadian Mental Health Association and

Discussion

its 25 partner organizations. Prevention focused supports and services for the youth population can be used as examples of effective strategies in reducing homelessness in other age categories. The PiT Count can be used as a tool to measure continued efforts to reduce youth absolute homelessness in Kelowna.

85%

3% **9%** **3%**

0-14 YEARS OLD **15-24** YEARS OLD **25-64** YEARS OLD **65+** YEARS OLD
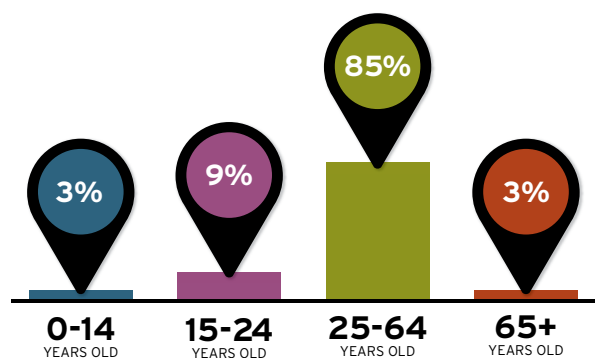
With an average age of 40 years and 3% of individuals being over the age of 65, a proportion of Kelowna's homeless population is aging. This is of particular concern as the median age of death for a homeless person in BC is 40 to 49 years, whereas the average life expectancy of a non-homeless individual is 76 years[9]. Consideration of rapidly rehousing this at-risk population should be a focus due to high mortality rates.

Findings suggest that the reasons for an individual to become absolutely homeless are varied. The most frequently recorded reason for housing loss was an inability to pay rent (19%). In addition, 12% of individuals reported a loss of employment, and 3% reported an inability to find housing as their reason for housing loss. In some circumstances, it may be an individual's decision to leave a precarious or intolerable living situation, or could face other complex life challenges and barriers. For example, experiences of household conflict (17%), unsafe housing conditions (7%), or domestic abuse (2%) could result in an individual sacrificing their current living arrangements. Results also suggest that health concerns such as addiction or substance abuse (16%) illness or medical condition (8%) and hospitalization or treatment program (2%) pose an ongoing struggle for many individuals. A variety of other life events or changes such as a death in the household (2%), victim of landlord fraud (2%), having a conflict with a landlord (4%) or your rental agreement ending due to the property rezoning, selling or undergoing renovations (3%) could result in absolute homelessness if another accommodation cannot be found or afforded. In any situation, it is important that appropriate supports be put in place for individuals to re-establish permanent housing, and that the broader community, economic, and societal factors are considered as part of a strategy to address homelessness.

A variety of sources of income were identified by those who were surveyed and the most frequently cited source was from disability benefits (27%). Along with those citing employment insurance (3%) as a source of income, this may suggest that a significant portion of the absolute homeless population may be living with some form of physical or mental disability that is affecting their ability to secure employment. Furthermore, the top two sources of income, disability benefits (27%), and welfare/income assistance (26%), are forms of government subsidy. For an individual who is unable to secure additional sources of income, government subsidies alone may not be sufficient to secure a permanent residence. The income sources that increased included informal income (18%), employment (10%) and no income (9%), which increased 6%, 4% and 4% respectively. The amount of absolute homeless individuals who had formal employment typically defined as the "working homeless" increased by 4% since 2016, which could signal that the cost of housing in Kelowna is exceeding limits even for those with employment. Those

Discussion

that identified as collecting senior's benefits in 2018 (2%) decreased as compared to the 2016 PiT Count results; however this follows the decreasing numbers of the 65+ population identified in the absolute homeless population.

Of those that identified that they had moved to Kelowna within the past year (26%), their answers as to where they moved from varied. Communities were spread throughout Canada with the majority being within British Columbia. Similar to the general population, the reason someone is experiencing absolute homelessness has moved here are: visit friends/family (26%); family moved here (3%); seeking or have secured employment (18%); or to find housing (13%). The second highest response to "Why did you move to Kelowna?" was to access services and supports (23%) with no individuals indicating that they moved to Kelowna for recreation/shopping. Individuals may also be fleeing violence or unsafe living conditions as people gave reasons of family conflict (3%), to access emergency shelters (5%) and fear for safety (3%). Except for those who identified that they moved to Kelowna to access emergency shelters, it is difficult to discern if these individuals lost their housing prior to moving to Kelowna or once they had arrived. Regardless, these results may indicate that new residents to Kelowna are struggling to find employment and affordable housing. Despite ongoing efforts of many organizations, large-scale systemic changes will be required to reduce and prevent homelessness in Kelowna. It is also noted that no participants answered fire evacuation as a reason for moving to Kelowna, as there had been speculation that forest fires in recent years may have displaced a large amount of people.

The percentage of women experiencing absolute homelessness increased by 2% and there was a corresponding male population decrease by 2% since the 2016 PiT Count. New to 2018, participants were asked about their sexual orientation, in addition to their gender, with 94% of the absolute homeless population identifying as straight, 5% as bisexual and 1% as lesbian. It is noted that there were no participants that identified their sexual orientation as gay; this could have been a result of participants not feeling safe identifying as such when completing the sheltered and unsheltered survey. The other new HPS core question results indicate that 37% of the absolute homeless population had their first homeless experience before the age of 24. This highlights the importance of supports being in place for those from an early age, to reduce the number of people that fall into the cycle of homelessness in their youth. 29% of the absolute homeless population indicated that they had been in foster care or a group home, contributing to those experiencing homelessness for the first time under 24 years old. This can be confirmed by 30% of those in the absolute homeless population that were in foster care/group home having experienced homelessness less than a year after leaving foster care/group home.

Although a PiT Count is a widely used strategy to enumerate the homeless population and considered to be one of the most accurate strategies, there are several considerations that must be made when interpreting the findings. Despite extensive efforts to capture a large breadth of individuals experiencing homelessness, there are certain populations that will be missed during the count. For example, a PiT Count is unable to capture individuals that are at-risk of homelessness or experiencing hidden homelessness (e.g., people who are "couch-surfing").

Discussion

It is estimated that over 50,000 Canadians experience hidden homelessness per year[1]. Furthermore, as the PiT Count was conducted on a single night, it is more likely to include individuals who experience long-term, chronic homelessness than those who move in and out of homelessness. Accordingly, the majority of absolutely homeless individuals (67%) were classified as being chronically homeless (homeless for 6 months or more within the past year). Episodic homelessness refers to individuals that have experienced 3 or more episodes of homelessness within the past year. Episodic homeless individuals move in and out of homelessness and make up 18% of the enumerated population experiencing absolute homelessness in Kelowna. The changes to the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness has resulted in a significant increase in the average number of days spent homeless within the past year. The average days spent homeless within the past year increased 49 days, from 192 days in 2016 to 241 days in 2018. This represents a significant increase in the average number of days spent homeless within the past year between 2016 (M=192, SD=119) and 2018 (M=241, SD=135) conditions; t (190)=2.7, p=0.007.

Homeless shelters provide a diverse range of services to various populations. The large majority (98%) of absolutely homeless individuals surveyed reported that they had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year, indicating that these organizations provide much needed supports for individuals experiencing homelessness. In addition to homeless shelters, there are many interim housing locations that serve individuals who may otherwise be homeless if not for their services. These organizations serve a variety of populations, offering programs specific to men, women, youth, Indigenous peoples and families. The range of services and housing options provided are as diverse as the populations they serve. In addition to interim housing, homeless individuals may also be temporarily residing in institutional care. To provide the most accurate snapshot of homelessness in Kelowna, the count was expanded to include individuals that were temporarily housed in interim housing or institutional care. Information was collected from 13 interim housing locations and 10 institutional care providers. As defined prior, it is important to emphasize that only facilities that have a maximum stay of 3 years or less were included. This excluded those that were in supported care but had no limitation on how long they could reside, thus acting as permanent housing. An additional 319 individuals were enumerated living in temporary system-supported housing. Similar to the absolute homeless population, individuals identified in temporary housing were a majority of males (59%), indicating no Indigenous identity (80%), and falling between the ages of 25-64 years (78%). The mean age of 37 years in the temporary housed population is less than the absolute population which may be due to a few facilities housing families with dependent children.

The 50 surveys collected from a subset of the interim housing is another source of information to learn about the homeless population in Kelowna. It was not recorded at what time each individual had entered into the facilities or whether or not the participant had transitioned from absolute homelessness before entering into temporarily housed homelessness. However, we do know that 40% of this population had used an emergency shelter within the past year indicating that a large portion of this population was recently experiencing absolute homelessness. As some interim facilities accommodate those with dependent children the amount of participants identifying as

Discussion

being with family members was 12%, which contributed to lowering the mean age of the population to 37 years as compared to the absolute homeless population mean of 40 years. Differences between this survey group and those experiencing absolute homelessness include the greatest reason for housing loss being addiction or substance use (42%). This could be in part due to some interim facilities offering support and programs for those experiencing addiction or substance use. The amount of individuals indicating that they received their income through disability benefits (51%) and welfare/income assistance (32%) were greater than the absolute homelessness population. This could indicate that those staying in interim housing facilities are being connected to the appropriate resources to access these programs.

Seasonality is another factor that may affect the PiT Count. Depending on the time of year in which the PiT Count is conducted, the number and distribution of homeless individuals may vary. To keep the 2016 and 2018 PiT Counts as comparable as possible, they were preformed within 10 calendar days apart. The temperatures on each PiT Count were very comparable with the 2016 PiT Count being 1°C colder than 2018 on the night of the count. During the colder months, homeless individuals may be more likely to gravitate towards service providers, such as homeless shelters. Therefore, a cold weather count may result in more individuals being enumerated in homeless shelters rather than sleeping rough. This is reflected by the present findings of 234 individuals being enumerated in a sheltered environment and 52 in an unsheltered location. It can be seen by a response rate of 50% of the sheltered homeless population and 27% of the identified unsheltered homeless population that a cold weather count may allow for more surveys to be completed. These results also suggests that the addition of a new emergency shelter put in place during this winter could support a lowered unsheltered homeless population being enumerated, decreasing from 30% in 2016 to 18% in 2018.

The 2018 Kelowna PiT Count methodology exemplifies the benefits of coordinated efforts. Collection of the system data and sheltered surveys would not have been possible without the help of all organizations participating. By coordinating volunteer recruitment through local post-secondary institutions, the PiT Count provided an opportunity for students to connect with local service providers and learn more about homelessness. Front-line workers were able to facilitate a valuable practical experience in a safe and friendly environment as well as share their experiences and expertise with future professionals.

As this was the second count conducted in Kelowna following the national HPS Guide to PiT Counts in Canada[5], it is not recommended that comparisons be made to previous homeless counts before 2016, as the enumeration strategy and survey design were significantly different. This count followed and built upon the 2016 methodological design allowing for the above changes to be observed. Future counts should follow and build upon the current methodological design, so that changes in Kelowna's homeless population can continue to be observed.

Conclusion

The results of the 2018 Kelowna PiT Count come at a critical point in addressing homelessness in our community. Homelessness has recently been at the forefront of community discussions between all levels of government, community funders, homeless serving agencies, and the private sector. The findings of the 2018 Kelowna PiT Count can be used to assist with future development of initiatives through the Journey Home Strategy and act as a benchmark to measure future success. Journey Home is focused on the development of a long-term strategy to address homelessness. Ideally, the next PiT Count will measure the efforts put forth by the community to reduce homelessness. The goal set out by the Journey Home Strategy is to eliminate chronic and episodic homelessness by 2024. Therefore, the next three PiT Counts could be instrumental in measuring the efforts of this commitment.

Operational Definitions

Absolutely Homeless. An individual was operationally defined as absolutely homeless if they were residing in an unsheltered location or accessing a homeless shelter.

Unsheltered Homelessness[5]**.** Unsheltered locations include places unfit for human habitation, including the following locations: streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.

Homeless Shelters[5]**.** Homeless shelters include emergency shelters (general and specific to men, women, youth, etc.), extreme weather shelters, and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters.

Temporarily Housed Homeless. An individual was operationally defined as temporarily housed if they were accessing system-supported (government or non-profit sector) interim housing or institutional care where residency was guaranteed for 3 years or less.

Interim Housing[7]**.** Interim housing provides services beyond basic needs, offers residents more privacy, and places greater emphasis on participation and social engagement. Interim housing targets those who would benefit from structure, support and skill-building prior to moving to long term housing, with the ultimate goal of preventing a return to homelessness.

Operational Definitions

Institutional Care[7]**.** Institutional care serve individuals that are being provisionally accommodated in medical/mental health institutions, penal institutions, residential treatment or withdrawal management centres, or children's institutions/group homes but lack permanent housing to return to upon release. This includes individuals who: a) were homeless prior to admittance and who have no plan for permanent accommodation after release; or b) had housing prior to admittance, but lost their housing while in institutional care; or c) had housing prior to admittance, but cannot go back due to changes in their needs. In any case, without adequate discharge planning and support, which includes arrangements for safe and reliable housing (and necessary aftercare or community-based services), there is a likelihood that these individuals may transition into homelessness following their release.

Hidden Homeless[7]**.** An individual was operationally defined as hidden homeless if they were living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing. They are typically not paying rent, their duration of stay is unsustainable in the long term, and they do not have the means to secure their own permanent housing in the future. They differ from those who are staying with friends or family out of choice in anticipation of prearranged accommodation, whether in their current hometown or an altogether new community. This living situation is understood by both parties to be temporary, and the assumption is that it will not become permanent.

Chronically homeless[10]**.** 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[10]**.** 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).

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