

Summer 2012

Point-in-time Count Report



Calgary
Homeless
Foundation

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Executive Summary

Point-in-time (PIT) Counts are one day snapshots of homelessness that capture numbers and basic demographics of people staying in emergency shelters, short-term supportive housing (STSH), jails, hospitals and on the streets. A PIT Count cannot measure the full picture of homelessness or those at risk, their reasons, histories, or patterns of homelessness, but can be a helpful indicator of the magnitude of homelessness on a particular day over time.

PIT Counts were conducted by The City of Calgary (The City) every two years between 1992 and 2008. When Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness (10 Year Plan) was launched in 2008, The City deferred the future counts to the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), as the lead implementing agency. The CHF will conduct a PIT Count every year moving forward.

The 2012 Summer Point-in-time Count

On August 15, 2012, the CHF in partnership with several organizations conducted the second PIT count (the Count) of 2012 to begin baseline comparisons for future Counts. Approximately 180 volunteers canvassed 32 street 'zones' or known areas for rough sleepers (those sleeping outside). Mobile teams in vehicles led by Calgary Police Services, City of Calgary Animal and Bylaw Services, and street outreach teams covered an additional seven remote areas, while public and private sector partners added an additional nine areas. Eighty organizations provided data and basic demographics in conjunction with the street count.

Key Findings

1. **Homeless numbers were 12.1% higher in August than in January 2012.** The rapid increases measured from 1992 to 2008 (on average, 15% per year) have stopped. In all, 3,576 people were found to be homeless on the night of August 15, representing a 12.1% increase from January 2012. Without the interventions of Housing First programs the historical growth in homelessness would have continued.

Specifically, of the 3,576 individuals counted:

- 1,703 were in emergency shelters
- 1,351 were in STSH
- 189 had no fixed address in jails and hospitals (systems homeless¹)
- 333 were rough sleepers

Total homeless numbers January and August

	Jan-12	% of Total	Aug-12	% of Total	% Change
Emergency Shelter	1715	54%	1703	48%	-1%
Short-Term Supportive Housing	1260	39%	1351	38%	7%
System Homeless ¹	151	5%	189	5%	25%
Rough Sleepers	64	2%	333	9%	420%
Total	3190	100%	3576	100%	12.1%

¹ System homeless refers to individuals residing in hospitals or jails with "no fixed address," as well as recipients of hotel/motel vouchers from Alberta Works Income Support.

2. **The number of homeless counted in emergency shelters decreased 1% from January 2012.** There were 12 fewer people in emergency shelters than in January 2012,² by contrast, the number enumerated in STSH increased by 7%.
3. **Aboriginal people are overrepresented and amongst the most vulnerable.** Aboriginal people make up 21% of the overall number of homeless, but only 2.5% of Calgary's population. Significantly, the Count found 38% of rough sleepers and 32% of those in hospitals and jails were Aboriginal.
4. **Three hundred and thirty three people were found sleeping outside.** This represents a 41% decrease in those sleeping rough compared with 2008. However, because of differences in methodologies between the two counts, this comparison should be made with caution.
Mainstream systems homelessness remained relatively stable. Those in jails and hospitals constituted 5% of the total homeless population, in both January and August.
5. **In total, 21% of Calgary's homeless are children, youth and young adults.** In the Count, 401 children and youth were enumerated; out of those 275 were children aged 12 and under and 126 aged 13 to 17. Another 320 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 were also enumerated. In total, 721 children, youth and young adults were enumerated under the age of 24.
6. **Women continue to be underrepresented in the homeless population.**³ There were 888 women enumerated, representing 25% or one quarter of the total homeless population. Aboriginal women, however, represent a higher portion of emergency shelter users compared to Caucasian women. Aboriginal women represented 43% of all Aboriginal individuals accessing emergency shelter on the night of the count; compared to 12% of Caucasian women.
7. **Homelessness occurs across the lifespan.** Those between the ages of 45 and 64 accounted for 34% of the total population; 21% of people enumerated were 24 years of age and younger; and 3% of people were aged 65 and over. Of particular concern is the increase of working age adults, between 25 and 44, representing 39% of the homeless population.
8. **Family homelessness is a continued concern.** There were 198 homeless families on August 15. Sixty-seven families were accessing an emergency shelter, while 130 were in STSH.

Limitations

Comparisons with previous Count numbers by The City of Calgary, as well as the CHF Winter 2012 Count are difficult for a number of reasons:

The City conducted its biennial counts in May to accommodate Council requests for data. Best practice research recommends doing PIT Counts during the coldest month of the year, as more people will access emergency shelters and avoid sleeping outdoors, therefore improving the accuracy of the final Count number. Comparing summer and winter Counts is difficult due to the impact of weather on service use, as well as the additional emergency shelter spaces made available in colder months to reduce incidences of rough sleeping. We do know weather, seasonal employment and migration impact homelessness and service utilization; it is the expectation that future Counts will increase our knowledge base and understanding of these factors on patterns of homelessness.

² The Winter 2012 Count had an additional 134 emergency beds as part of winter response programming that was not in effect in the Summer 2012 Count.

³ Findings from the Calgary PIT are consistent with national estimates, suggesting that women comprise 25% of the homeless population. Women are underrepresented within the absolute homeless population, but overrepresented in the hidden homeless population utilizing informal strategies including couch surfing and doubling up to avoid shelter and rough sleeping.

Background

Homelessness is a complex, multifaceted social problem affected by the interplay between systemic and personal challenge, including poverty and inequality, local economy and labour market, affordable housing stock, addictions and mental health, disability, low levels of education and work skills, and a lack of social support. Rates of homelessness have grown to astronomical proportions across North America in the last three decades. Not only has the number of people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness increased, but the composition of the homeless population has changed dramatically. Once considered a phenomenon affecting single men, homelessness is now affecting youth, women, families, immigrants and Aboriginal peoples at increasing rates.

In Calgary, homelessness increased 800% between 1992 and 2008, with an average increase of 30% biannually, growing from 447 people experiencing homelessness in 1992 to 4,060 in 2008.ⁱ The expansion of Calgary's economy and subsequent population without the simultaneous development of new rental stock has disproportionately impacted low income earners and resulted in dramatic increases of homelessness in the city. An important indicator of the severity of the extent of homelessness in Calgary during this time was the duration of episodes of homelessness. Not only were more people falling into homelessness, but they were remaining homeless for prolonged periods of time. Between 1997 and 2002, the percentage of people reporting an episode of homelessness for longer than one year doubled.ⁱⁱ Further, research conducted by the CHF in 2009 found the average length of homelessness for those in emergency shelter was 3.1 years and 6.9 years for rough sleepers.ⁱⁱⁱ

The context of homelessness in Calgary is particularly unique as it is directly impacted by the "boom and bust" economic trends of the city. The following social and economic indicators will provide a contextualized analysis of homelessness and risk in Calgary.

Rental Market Stock

Since 1999, Calgary's multi-unit rental stock has shrunk by one-third; with 29% of rental units lost due to demolitions and condominium conversions.^{iv} Since 2001, Calgary has seen a reduction of 22.4% its available rental market stock, a loss of 12,122 units.^v The number of rental units in Calgary decreased from 2009 to 2012. The number of rental units at the end of 2009 for Calgary was 36,174; by 2011, this number was 34,659.^{vi} This decrease in rental units is consistent with a nine-year pattern of decline. Those who are already vulnerable and experiencing higher pressures to maintain housing can become homeless in a shrinking rental market.

Vacancy Rates

Apartment vacancy rates for Calgary in April 2012 were 2.5% compared with 3.4% in April 2011.^{vii} As improvements in the labour market and increases in net migration to Calgary are forecast to continue, vacancy rates are estimated to reduce further in 2013.^{viii} Apartments in the lowest rent ranges (\$600 to \$749 per month) continue to have the lowest vacancy rates.

Average Rents

The average cost of rent in Calgary in 2012 was the third highest among major Canadian cities.^{ix} The overall average rent for all apartment types in April 2012 was \$1,004 per month, with average two-bedroom units renting for \$1,113 per month, a slight increase from \$1,069 per month in 2011.^x The Canadian average was \$887 per month. Alberta has the highest rental rates of all provinces in

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Canada, with average rent at \$1,055 per month. British Columbia is slightly lower at \$1,036 per month.^{x1}

Minimum wage in Alberta creates a barrier to acquiring and maintaining housing in the rental market. At the time of the Count, minimum wage was \$9.40 per hour⁴ (\$9.05 per hour for an employee serving liquor). According to average rental rates and availability of rental market stock, employees at minimum-wage jobs fall far below their affordable rental limit. An individual making minimum wage in Calgary, working full time (40 hours per week), 52 weeks per year has an affordable monthly rent limit (i.e., less than 30% of their annual income) of \$489 per month.^{xii} According to 2012 reports from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, an average bachelor apartment in Calgary is \$715 per month, \$226 per month above the rental limit.^{xiii}

The City of Calgary advocates that in order for a person earning minimum wage to meet the affordable rental limit for a bachelor apartment, they must earn \$13.60 per hour, and for a one bedroom, \$17.31 per hour.^{xiv}

Migration

Migration to Calgary is expected to increase, which will put pressure on the affordable housing and homeless-serving system. Alberta saw a population increase of 13,396 for interprovincial migrants and an additional 8,671 from international migration.^{xv} According to the 2012 Civic Census Results, Calgary saw a growth of 2.68% resulting in a total population of 1,120,255.^{xvi} The number of people moving to Calgary from other cities and provinces was estimated at 19,658 in 2012, compared with 9,563 in 2011.^{xvii} Alberta experienced net migration of 66,500 in 2012 and is forecasted to expect another 49,500 in 2013.^{xviii}

Initial data from Calgary's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) confirms that new migrants to the city are at an increased risk of homelessness. Two sets of time series from a local emergency shelter – November 2011 to June 2012 and April 2012 to June 2012 – reveal that 16.2% and 20.3%, respectively, are new migrants to the province. Furthermore, 29.3% and 33.1% are new to the city.^{xix} The increasing demand placed on Calgary's homeless-serving systems demonstrates a positive correlation between population growth and the demand for emergency shelter. Data collected from 84 surveys with rough sleepers the night of the PIT Count also highlights a positive correlation between high net migration and increased homelessness. Seventeen percent of respondents reported being in Calgary less than one year, while additional data from CHF's Project Homeless Connect 15 (PHC) found 21% of 151 respondents had been in Calgary less than one year.^{xx}

Core Housing Need

Incidences of core housing need⁵ are higher in Calgary than in Edmonton with rates of 10.8% and 9.7%, respectively. In Calgary, it is estimated that 13,765 renter households are spending more than 50% of their income on rent and have an annual income of less than \$20,000.^{xxi} There are an additional 6,275 renter households spending more than 30% of their income on rent and have an annual income of less than \$20,000.^{xxii} In 2008, The City of Calgary reported that 44.1% of individual renters; 29.0% of family household renters; and 15.1% of multi-family household renters were in need of affordable housing. In total, 37% of all renters in Calgary are low-income and spend more than

⁴ In September 2012, the minimum wage in Alberta was increased to \$9.75 per hour.

⁵ A household is considered to be in core housing need if it would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax income in order to pay for accommodation that is acceptable, defined as adequate, suitable and affordable.

30% of their gross annual income on shelter.^{xxiii} These findings are comparable to the three previous census cycles.^{xxiv}

Aboriginal people living off reserve are significantly more likely than non-Aboriginal people to exceed the affordability benchmark. Aboriginal people have a higher rate of moving than non-Aboriginal people. Additional characteristics of Aboriginal housing include higher rates of overcrowding or unsuitable housing as measured by the National Occupancy Standard and higher rates of living in a dwelling unit in need of major repairs.^{xxv}

Homelessness Risk

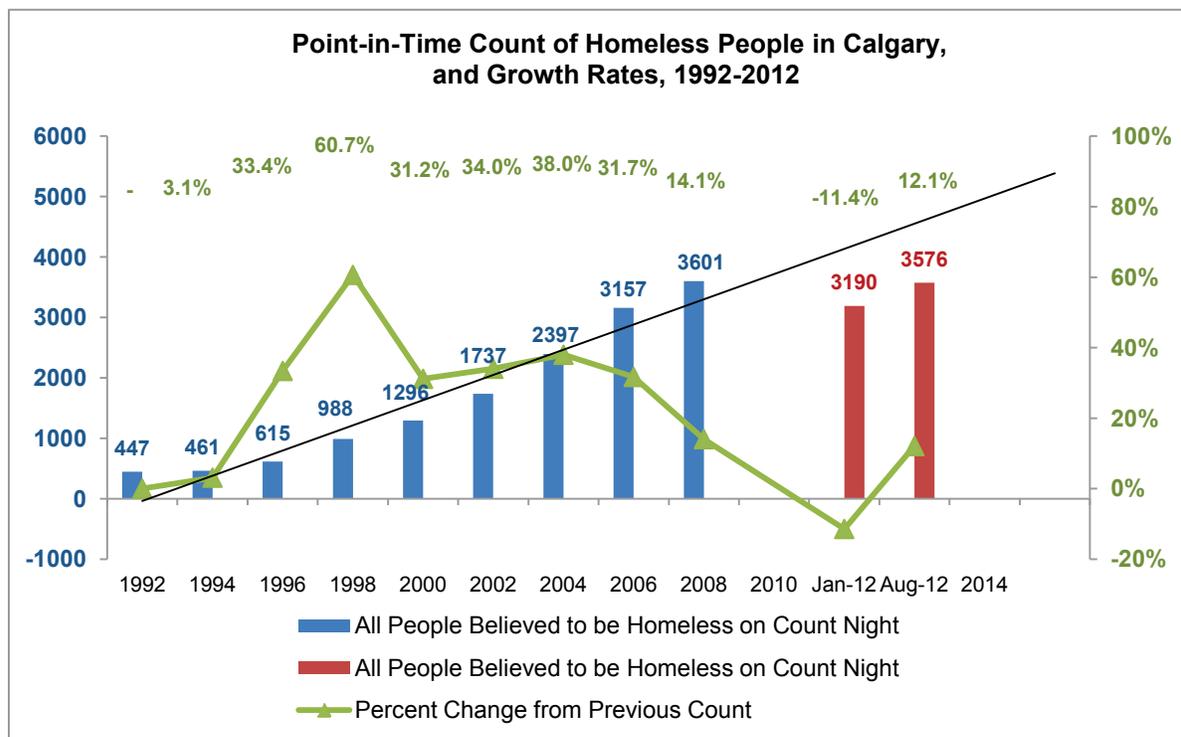
More than 72,195 Calgary households are low income earners earning less than \$44,000 per year and spending more than 30% of their total income on shelter. This accounts for 19% of all Calgary households. In addition, 37% of renters in Calgary are at risk of homelessness.^{xxvi}

Key Findings

1. **Homeless numbers were 12.1% higher in August than in January 2012.** The rapid increases measured from 1992 to 2008 (on average, 15%/year) have stopped.⁶ In all, 3,576 people were found to be homeless on that night in August, representing a 12.1% increase from January 2012. Without the interventions of Housing First programs the historical growth in homelessness would have continued.

Specifically, of the 3,576 individuals enumerated:

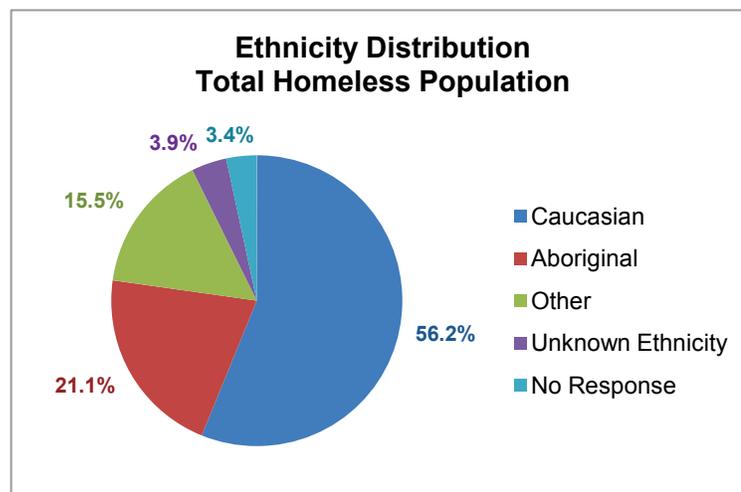
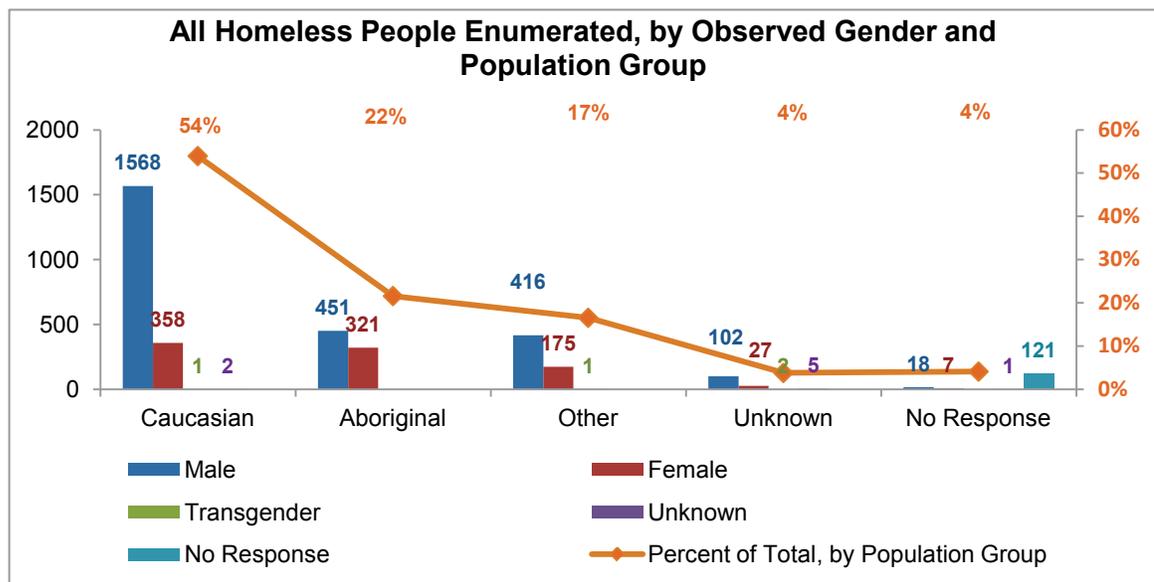
- 1,703 were in emergency shelters
- 1,351 were in STSH
- 189 were in jails and hospitals (systems homeless)
- 333 were rough sleepers



⁶ Numbers for 2004, 2006 and 2008 were recalibrated due to the fact that some STSH facilities were reclassified to permanent supportive housing.

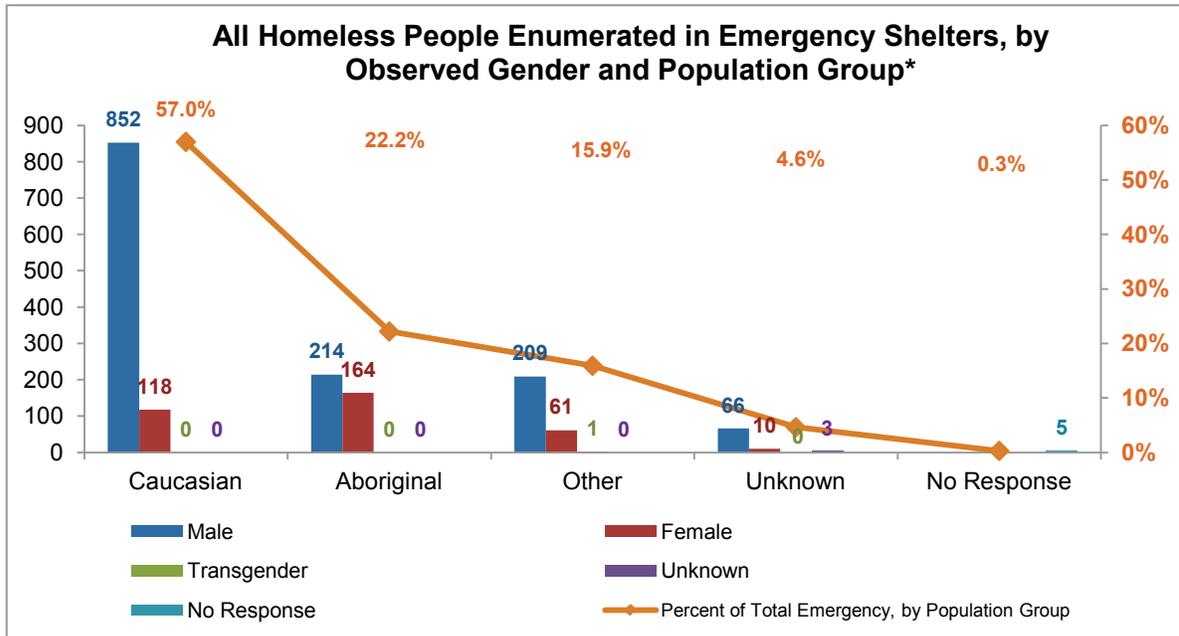
Homeless numbers January 2012 and August 2012 by type:

	Jan-12	% of Total	Aug-12	% of Total	% Change
Emergency Shelter ⁷	1715	54%	1703	48%	-1%
Short-Term Supportive Housing	1260	39%	1351	38%	7%
System Homeless	151	5%	189	5%	25%
Rough Sleepers	64	2%	333	9%	420%
Total	3190	100%	3576	100%	12.1%



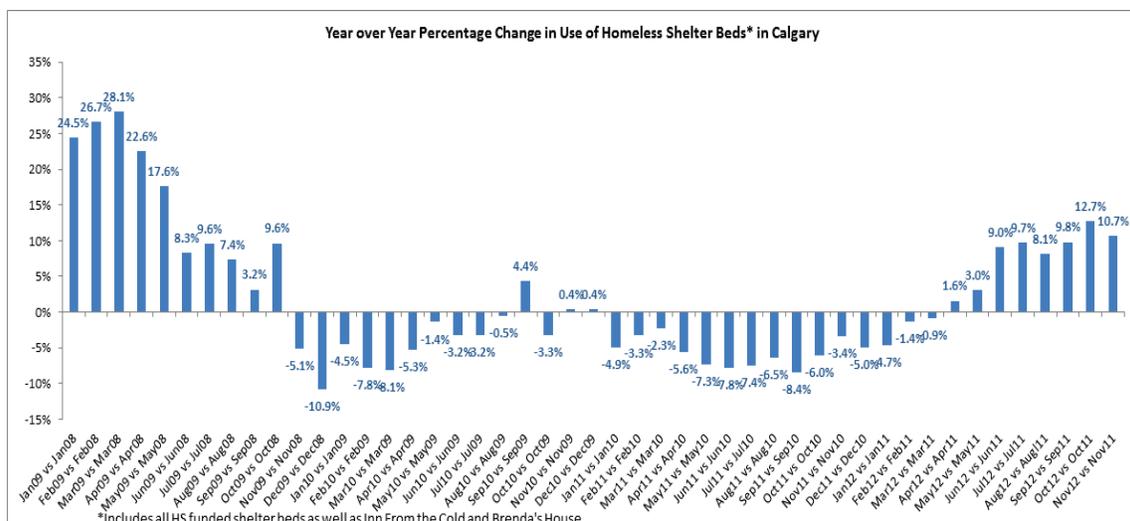
⁷ The small decrease in emergency shelter use (-1%) and large increase (+420%) of rough sleepers is likely due to warmer weather.

- The number of homeless counted in emergency shelters decreased 1% since January 2012. There were 12 fewer people in emergency shelters than in January 2012; by contrast, the number enumerated in STSH increased by 7%.



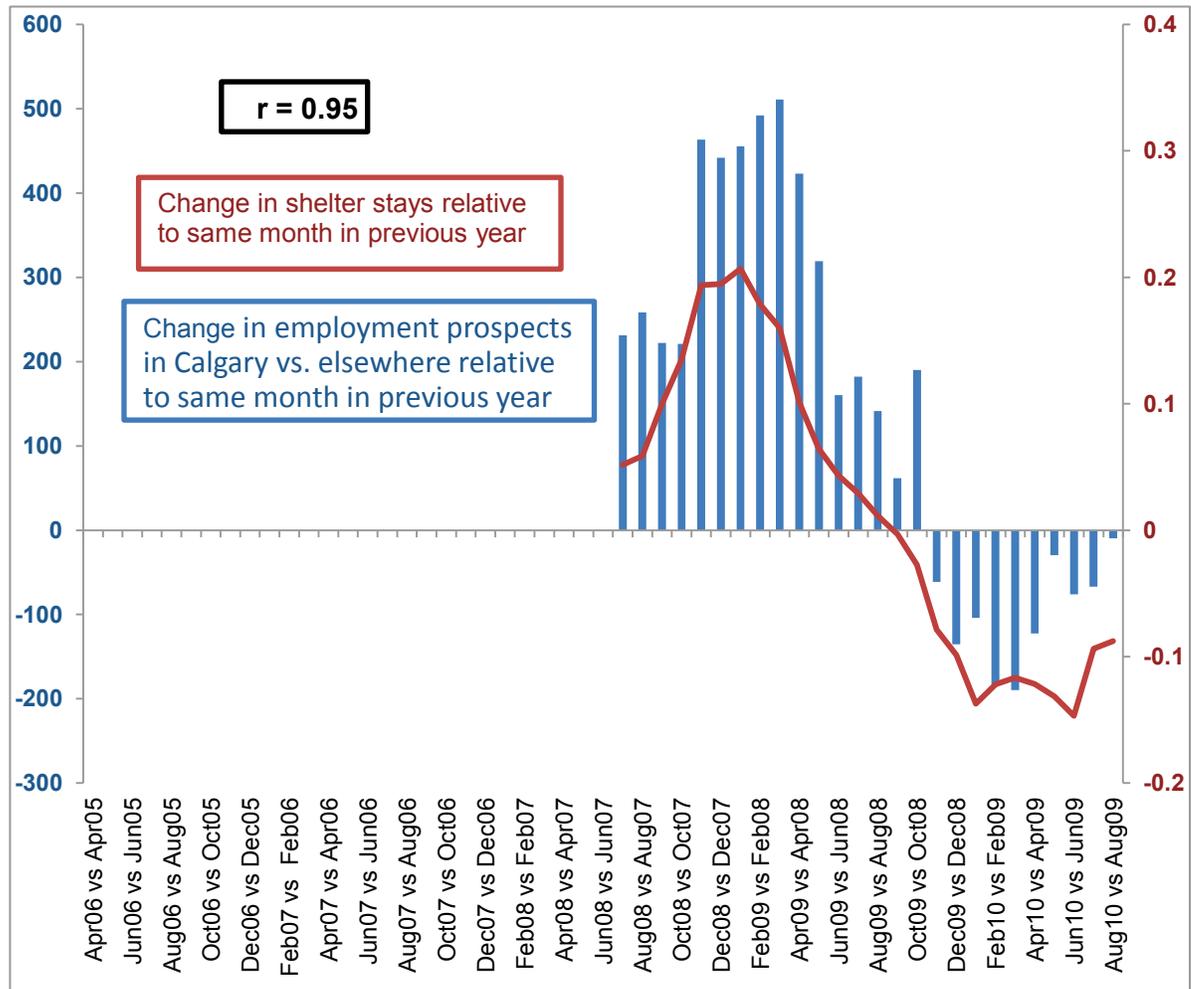
The majority of homeless individuals accessing emergency shelters are Caucasian men. However, the Aboriginal population is overrepresented amongst those accessing emergency shelters. In addition, more Aboriginal women were counted in emergency shelters on August 15 than Caucasian women, representing 43% of the total Aboriginal population enumerated. In contrast, only 12% of the Caucasian population staying in emergency shelters were women.

Shelter Utilization 2008 – 2012

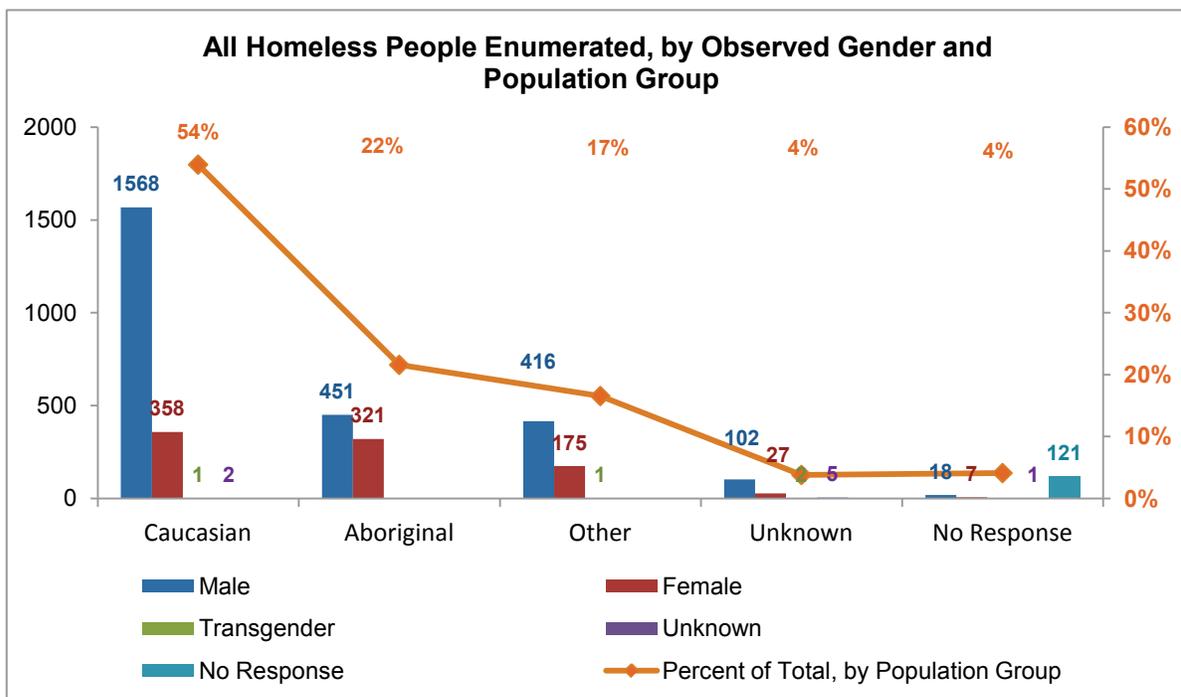
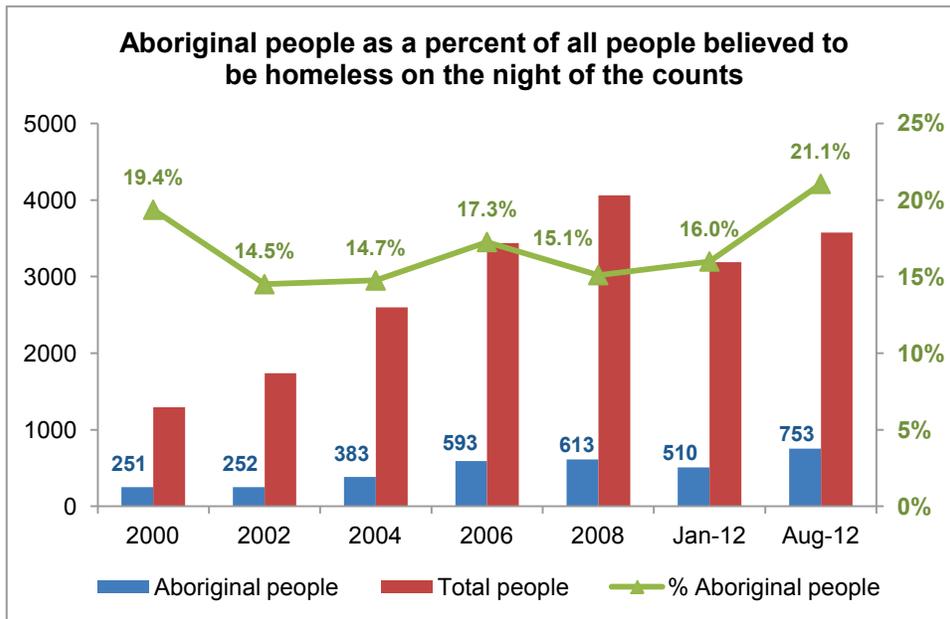


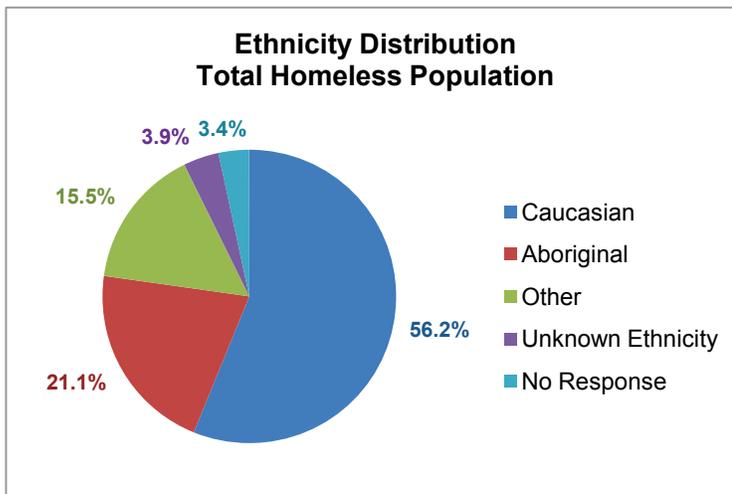
There was an increase in shelter bed utilization between 2011 and 2012, with the month of October 2012 showing the greatest increase at 12.7% relative to the same month in the previous year. Increased shelter utilization may be attributed to the influx of migrants to Calgary and a recovering economy. A study conducted by University of Calgary School of Public Policy, Dr. Ron

Kneebone, Dr. Herbert Emery, and Oksana Grynishak (2012) found a positive correlation between Calgary's employment prospects and shelter utilization as demonstrated in the following graph.

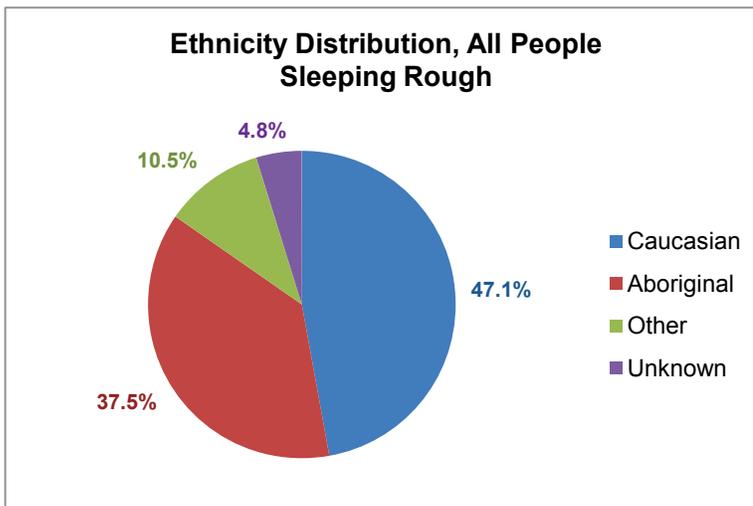


3. **Aboriginal people are overrepresented and amongst the most vulnerable.** Aboriginal people make up only 2.5% of the total Calgary population, while comprising 21.1% of the homeless population, which represents a 5.1% increase since January 2012. Significantly, the Count found 38% of rough sleepers (consistent with the January Count) and 32% of those in hospitals and jails were Aboriginal (representing a 6% increase from January 2012).

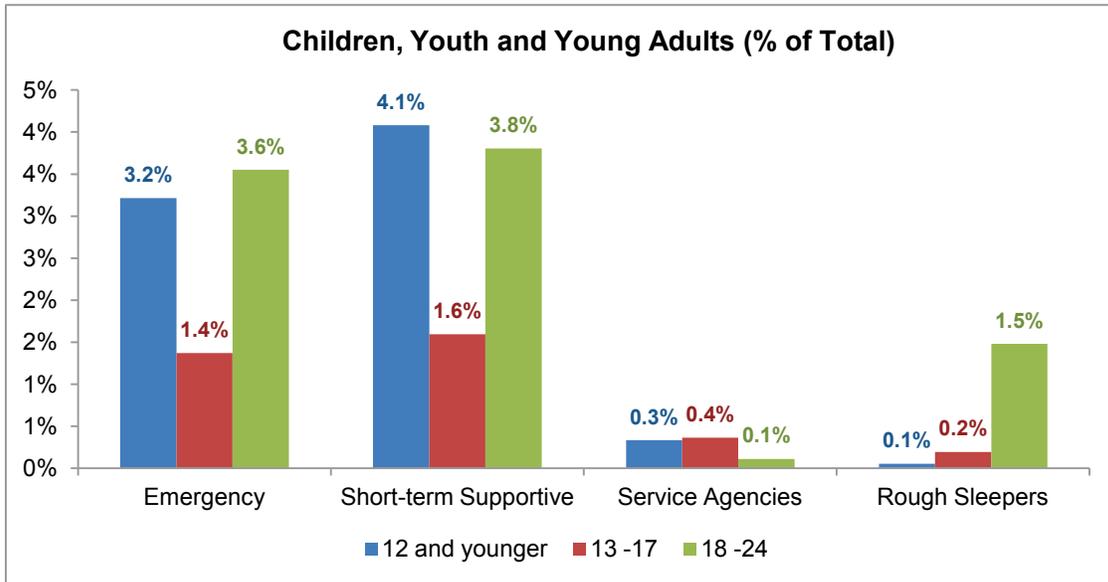




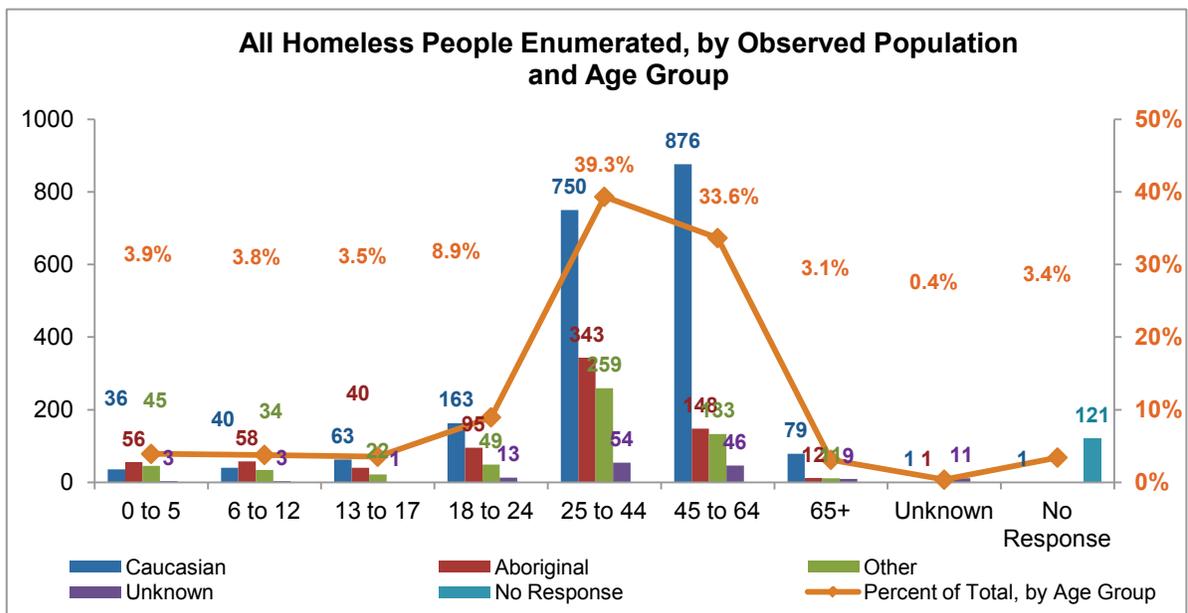
4. **Three hundred and thirty three rough sleepers were enumerated.** This represents a 41% decrease in those sleeping rough compared with 2008. However, because of differences in methodologies between the two Counts, this comparison should be made with caution. **Mainstream systems homelessness remained relatively stable.** Systems homeless constituted 5% of the total homeless population, in both January and August.



5. **In total, 21% of Calgary’s homeless are children, youth and young adults.** In the Count, 401 children and youth were enumerated; out of those 275 were children aged 12 and under and 126 were aged 13 to 17. Another 320 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 were also enumerated. In total, 721 children, youth and young adults were enumerated under the age of 24.



Of all people enumerated, 4.1% of those 12 years and younger were staying at the STSH facilities on the night of the count.

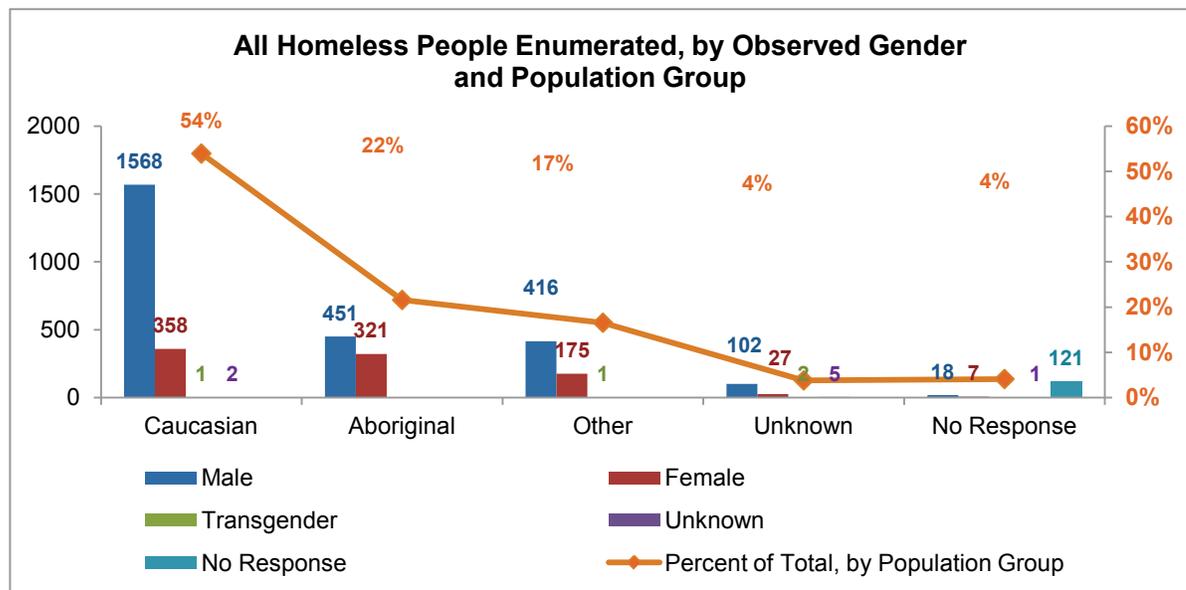


Aboriginal children are overrepresented amongst homeless youth, at 38% of the total youth population. Of particular concern is the number of Aboriginal children experiencing homeless, which was 40% up to five years of age and 43% from six to 12 years of age.

Also of importance amongst homeless children are those that identified as “other.” These homeless children, up five years of age, represented 32% of the total population for this age group in comparison with only 26% of those children having been identified as Caucasian.

6. **Women continue to be underrepresented in the homeless population.** There were 888 women found to be homeless, representing 25% of the total homeless population.

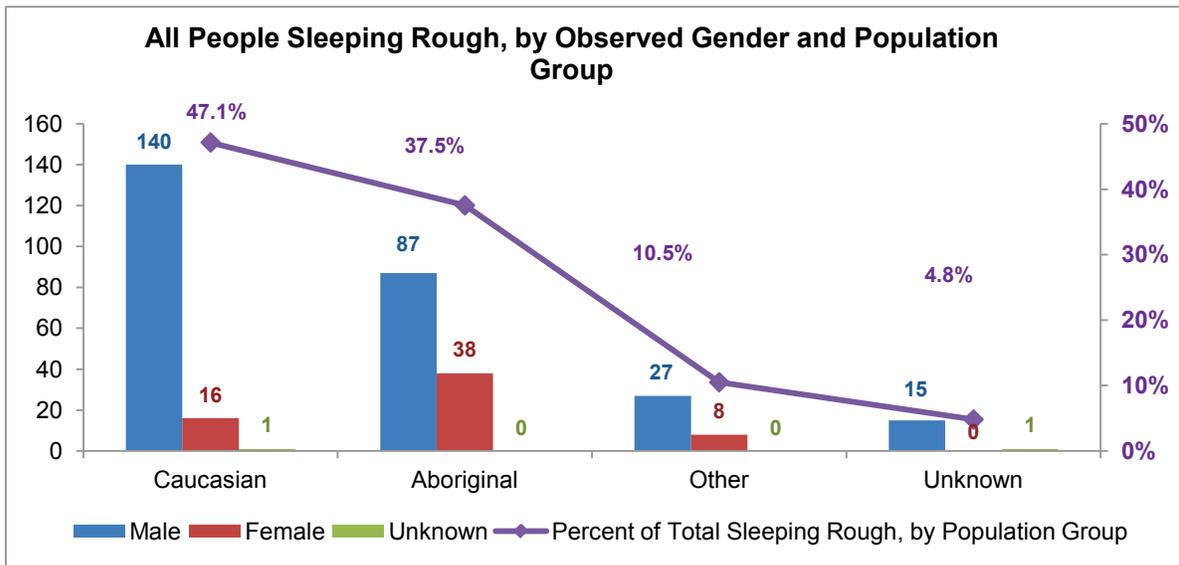
Aboriginal women appear to be a particularly vulnerable population of homeless individuals. Despite the overall underrepresentation of women in the homeless population, Aboriginal women are overrepresented. The number of homeless Aboriginal women in comparison with Caucasian women is disconcerting; with only a difference of 37 individuals counted between these two populations groups. Nineteen percent of the total Caucasian homeless population group were women, whereas 42% of the total Aboriginal homeless population group were women.



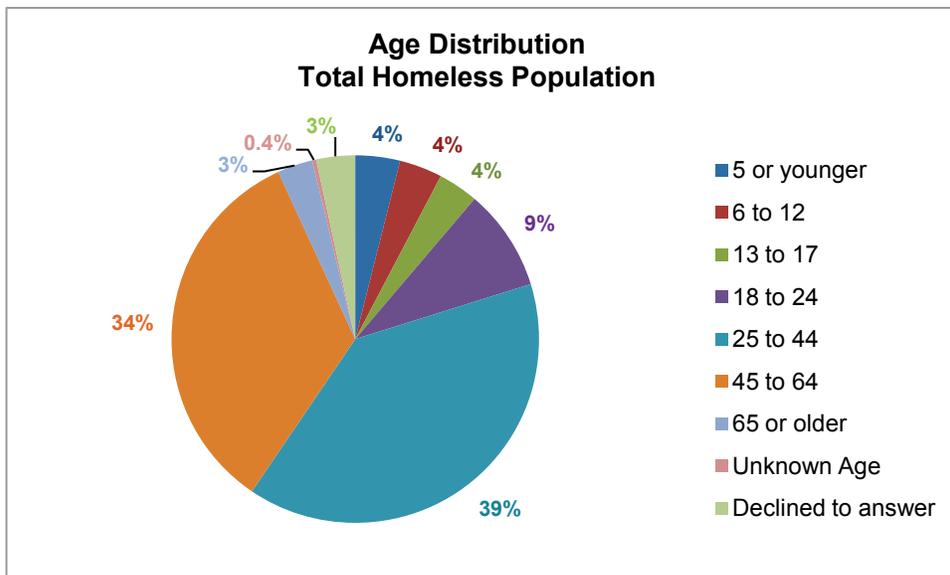
Number of Rough Sleepers Enumerated by Gender and Population Group

	Total by			Population Group	Percent of Females
	Male	Female	Unknown		
Caucasian	140	16	1	157	10 %
Aboriginal	87	38	0	125	30 %

Of particular concern is the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women amongst the total number of rough sleepers enumerated. Thirty percent of the total Aboriginal population group were women, whereas only 10% of the total Caucasian population group were women. However, when looking at the total population of rough sleepers enumerated by gender, 19% were female and 81% were male, supporting the disproportionately high numbers of female Aboriginal rough sleepers.



7. **Homelessness occurs across the lifespan.** Those between the ages of 45 and 64 accounted for 34% of the total population. Twenty-one per cent of people enumerated were 24 years of age and younger; and 3% of people were 65 years of age and over. Of particular concern is the increase in working age adults, between 25 and 44, representing 39% of the total homeless population.



8. **Family homelessness continues to be a concern.** There were 198 families on August 15 experiencing homelessness, with 67 families accessing emergency shelter; 130 in STSH facilities and one family sleeping outdoors. Within these families, there were 275 children 12 years of age and under, representing 57 more children in this age category compared with eight months earlier.

Concluding Thoughts

Comparative analysis draws attention to interesting shifts in the numbers and patterns of homelessness since the implementation of Calgary's 10 Year Plan. It is important to note the basic demographic information highlighted in this report is observed rather than self-reported. This can create potential for error, particularly when determining someone's age and/or cultural background. However, this methodology has been used in The City's biannual counts until 2008 and in the CHF's Winter 2012 Count.

As the CHF and community move forward with future Counts, it is important to incorporate lessons learned to reduce limitations and improve the accuracy of Calgary's Counts. Continual community collaboration with service providers, key partners and people experiencing homelessness will ensure this is done. Future Counts will increase our knowledge base and understanding of the homeless population in Calgary, including a greater understanding of the local socio-environmental factors that contribute to homelessness, such as migration, labour market and affordable housing stock. While there are limitations in the accuracy of data Counts, they do provide essential data and provide one way for the community to measure the impact of Calgary's 10 Year Plan.

Appendix A – Summer PIT Count Methods

The Summer 2012 Calgary PIT Count enumerated homeless persons who, on the night of the count, slept outdoors, spent the night in emergency or transitional housing facilities, or spent the night in jail or hospital.

In order to capture as full a snapshot of the homeless population as possible, two enumeration methods were used. One was a short survey of demographics from shelter facilities, STSH facilities (transitional) and public service agencies (*sheltered homeless*). The other was a street count aimed at capturing the numbers and basic demographics of homeless persons who were sleeping outdoors on downtown streets, in residential and commercial areas, in parks, on river pathways and in more remote natural areas (*unsheltered homeless*). Numbers were collected from all sources within a 24-hour time period to reduce potential duplication.

Prior to the Winter 2012 Count, extensive community consultation was undertaken. The consultation process helped solidify the significant aspects of the Count, such as: the date and time for the Count, the questions to ask facility-operators and rough sleepers, the mapping of 'zones' in the city where people experiencing homelessness were known to sleep, the classification of facilities as emergency shelter, STSH and/or permanent supportive housing, and the organization of street teams (See Winter 2012 Report). After the Winter 2012 Count, surveys were circulated to volunteers and team leaders to solicit feedback for the improvements and/or modifications to the summer count. The following recommendations were implemented:

- reduce the length of survey questionnaire for rough sleepers
- utilize verbal consent for survey questionnaire for rough sleepers versus written consent
- hold a separate training session for team leaders prior to the Count

Additionally, community consultation was needed to update the 'master list' of service providers and facilities to ensure up-to-date information on:

- agency classification
- facility capacity
- licensed/funded capacity
- contact person for data collection
- additional locations and/or programs

After the agency consultations were complete, there were 29 emergency shelters and STSH providers operating 51 different facilities, and five public service agencies operating 10 different facilities which included Calgary Remand Centre, AHS Acute Care Facilities, CPS Arrest Processing Services, the Calgary Young Offenders Centre and Alberta Works Income Support - Contact Centre and Service Delivery offices.

In addition, Calgary Transit, Calgary Parking Authority, Fish Creek Park wardens, campus security for SAIT Polytechnic, Mount Royal University and the University of Calgary, Stampede Security and Canadian Pacific Railway all agreed to provide staff on the night of the Count in order to canvas areas under their supervision. All told, more than 80 programs and/or organizations contributed data.

Recruiting Volunteers and Team Leaders

Volunteers were primarily recruited from the agency consultation and community gatherings. A recruitment e-mail was sent to all agencies and partners to encourage staff to volunteer for the street count. Volunteers were also recruited from the University of Calgary and The City. Particular attention

was given to actively recruit front-line shelter staff and outreach workers as well as CPS, Bylaw and joint teams of CPS and AHS to act as team leaders. A total of 188 volunteers were recruited to participate in the street Count portion (making up 39 teams).

Engaging the Public and Private Sector

While there were a significant number of volunteers recruited, there was also outreach to community organizations and partners to assist in efforts to capture as full a snapshot as possible of homelessness in Calgary. By partnering with businesses and public services, volunteer teams were able to cover more area in the city. Additional business and services engaged in the street Count included:

- **Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)** ran two trains, one at 10:00 p.m. when the Count started, and again at 5:00 a.m. to see if there were any individuals along the track line. If an individual was spotted, this was called into CPR police services, which then drove to the location to conduct the survey.
- **Calgary Parking Authority** security personnel canvassed every downtown parking lot and parkade and tallied the number of individuals encountered who appeared to be homeless, as well as observed gender, age and ethnicity.
- **Calgary Transit** peace officers surveyed the remote c-train stations after the c-train had stopped running at 1:00 a.m. and tallied the number of individuals encountered who appeared to be homeless, as well as observed gender, age and ethnicity.
- **Calgary Stampede** security walked through the Calgary Stampede grounds and tallied the number of individuals encountered who appeared to be homeless, as well as observed gender, age and ethnicity.
- **Fish Creek Park wardens** walked through the Park several evenings prior to the Count looking for people and signs of people. They used this information to ensure they covered the areas actively used on the night of the Count.
- **Campus Security** from Mount Royal University, SAIT Polytechnic (SAIT) and University of Calgary (U of C) were invited to participate. Both U of C and SAIT had their security officers cover their campuses on the night of the Count and tallied the number of individuals encountered who appeared to be homeless, as well as observed gender, age and ethnicity.
- **City of Calgary Animal & Bylaw Services** officers went out several nights prior to the count to locate rough sleepers. On the night of the Count, they used vehicles to access large inner city areas and remote parks, conducting surveys with any persons encountered.
- **Calgary Police Services** HAWC helicopters, two evenings prior to the night of the Count, determined if there were any active camp sites by using heat-activated radar. Any camps found were communicated to City Bylaw, who accessed them the night of the street Count.
- Additional **emergency response partners** (CPS, EMS and Fire) offered assistance with any needs throughout the street Count, including transportation for individuals with medical needs.

Facility Count

Time Period:

10:00 p.m. (August 15) to 4:00 a.m. (August 16)⁸

Contributors:

Facilities included emergency shelters and STSH facilities (such as homeless shelters, women's shelters, and supportive mental health or addictions facilities), all hospital emergency departments, police and prison services, and emergency and social services.

Process:

On the night of the Count, participating facilities and service agencies completed the enumeration forms for all clients staying the night/day at their shelter or facility classified as "no fixed address." The enumeration forms collected basic demographic data including gender, age, ethnicity and number of families. All completed enumeration forms were e-mailed or faxed to the CHF. The majority of facilities submitted data they collected between 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.

Street Count

Time Period:

10:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Contributors:

Street count volunteers included 58 experienced outreach/agency workers and law enforcement officers (Police and Crisis Team, Calgary Police, and Calgary Bylaw), 130 community volunteers, and volunteers from Canadian Pacific Railway, Calgary Parking Authority, Calgary Stampede, Fish Creek Park, the University of Calgary, Mount Royal University, SAIT Polytechnic and Calgary Transit.

Process:

Team leaders arrived at the PIT Count headquarters at the University of Calgary downtown campus. Once signed in, team leaders were given an information package and backpack that contained:

- copies of consent forms for participation in street survey to collect basic demographic information as well as to have that information input into HMIS
- copies of the street survey
- copy of the teams and map of assigned zone in the city
- emergency contact information, including contact phone number for headquarters
- gifts of engagement, including cigarettes, sun screen, socks, bug spray, first aid, hygiene products, bottled water and snacks
- gifts of thanks for those who participated in the survey, including Tim Horton's gift cards.

At 10:00 p.m., teams of three to four (led by one outreach/agency worker or law enforcement officer) travelled to their pre-assigned geographic zone by foot, car or transit. Enumeration forms were used to keep track of the total number of unsheltered homeless individuals counted by each team.⁹ Each team asked homeless individuals encountered to complete a 19-question survey to capture the basic demographics of the city's rough sleeping population, as well as basic information about their previous

⁸ Although the Count allowed inclusion of day and night sleepers over a 24-hour period; the vast majority of facility enumeration was done between 10:00 p.m. on January 18 and 4:00 a.m. January 19. Full Count results were asked to be submitted to the CHF by 6:00 p.m. on January 19 (Best Practices & Lessons Learned in Conducting Counts of Homeless Persons in Calgary, 1992-2008, p.19).

⁹ A mandatory training session was provided for volunteers (1.5 hours before start time of the Count). The orientation outlined the purpose of the Count, the enumeration and interview process, and safety and emergency procedures. A separate and more thorough training session for team leaders was held the week prior to the Summer Count.

living circumstances and housing needs.^{10xxvii} Participation in the survey was voluntary and interviews did not exceed 20 minutes. Consent was obtained from all participants and a \$5 Tim Horton's gift card was offered as an honorarium.^{11xxviii} If people chose not to participate in the survey, teams had a clipboard and tally sheet and collected observed demographic information, including gender, approximate age and cultural background.

In addition to the gifts of engagement, all individuals were offered transportation to an emergency shelter if they wished.^{12xxix} Once the three-hour time period had elapsed, teams returned to the headquarters with their data and signed consent forms. The street Count information was combined with the facility Count information and all data was analyzed. See Appendix C for a copy of the street survey questions.

Limitations to PIT Counts

There is no such thing as a 'perfect Count' and limitations emerge in any research methodology. Several steps were taken to address the limitations outlined in previous city Counts, including the estimation of rough sleepers in 2008. An organized street Count and survey was added, as well as an expansion of community partners so that areas previously uncanvassed, such as riverbanks and forested areas, could be incorporated.

First, it is important to note that PIT Counts are a 'snapshot' only. They show the numbers of people experiencing homelessness on any given night. They cannot capture the full picture or context of homelessness. Second, since facility reported data is often based on agency staff observing characteristics, there is potential for error when observing someone's age and cultural background in particular.

Third, while the street Count component occurs during a three-hour time period, facility reported data could happen at any time during the work day of the Count. For example, staff in a correctional facility may collect numbers before a shift change and/or a STSH facility may conduct a Count before administrative staff leave for the day. This creates the potential for over-counting or duplication in people being counted in facilities and on the streets or in shelters.

Fourth, it is impossible to capture those who are *relatively homeless*¹³ (i.e., couch surfing or temporarily staying with family and friends), and thus the Count only includes the *visibly homeless* (i.e., those residing in shelters, transitional housing and on the streets). Finally, classification of facilities as emergency shelter, STSH or permanent supportive housing providers is complex and can change over time.

Survey and HMIS

Individual rough sleepers were invited to participate in a short survey. In addition, they were asked if they would like a referral to an outreach program to begin discussions about accessing housing. Receiving consent to enter information into Calgary's HMIS system, particularly in future Counts as more service providers implement the HMIS system, will enable a seamless referral to the appropriate

¹⁰ The questions comprising the interview align with the Universal Data Element's utilized by the Calgary HMIS.

¹¹ Small food or beverage items were offered as an incentive to unsheltered homeless to simply participate in the enumeration process. An honorarium in the form of a \$5 coffee gift card was given to those who actually completed an interview.

¹² Shelters were requested to reserve space for unsheltered individuals who decided to move into shelter after being enumerated on the night of the Count.

¹³ Relatively homeless: Those living in spaces that do not meet basic health and safety standards including protection from the elements; access to safe water and sanitation; security of tenure and personal safety; affordability; access to employment, education and health care; and the provision of minimum space to avoid overcrowding.

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program based on client eligibility. The process expands the enumeration portion of the PIT Count into an opportunity to engage Calgary's rough sleepers in a process that can sustainably end their homelessness.

Time of Year and Time of Night

Although a change from May to August and slight change in the time of night the street Count was conducted creates limitations in comparing 2008 numbers with 2012, the timing of Calgary's PIT Count is now aligned with best practice research. As well, interviews with rough sleepers prior to the Winter Count indicated that conducting the Count one hour later than previous counts ensures that those who may be accessing public buildings until closing time have adequate time to return to their 'street spot' for the evening.

Volunteer Feedback Survey

Following the 2012 Winter Count, volunteers were asked to fill in an online evaluation of their experiences. This information was used to enhance the Summer 2012 PIT Count. An online evaluation after the Summer PIT Count was also distributed to all volunteers for feedback.

Agency Debrief and Strategic Planning Session

Between the two Counts, a community debrief session was held, allowing partners to raise concerns and/or provide feedback to strengthen the process of future Counts. From the community session, a number of recommendations were incorporated, including:

- additional training for team leaders prior to the night of the Count
- decrease the number of questions on HMIS surveys conducted with individuals encountered who were rough sleeping
- move to verbal consent for participation in HMIS survey for rough sleepers

Moving forward, community debrief sessions will be held coinciding with the release of a community report to discuss key findings and trends, as well as provide a venue for feedback and consultation to improve consecutive Counts.

Appendix B – List of Facilities and Classifications

Emergency Shelters

Calgary Alpha House
Awo Taan
Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary
– Avenue 15
– Safe House
Children’s Cottage Society
Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre
– Riverfront
– Centre 2507
Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter

Inn From the Cold
– Centre Street Program
– Church Program
The Mustard Seed Calgary
The Salvation Army
– Centre of Hope
– WISH
YWCA of Calgary
– Mary Dover House
– Sheriff King Home
Wood’s Homes
Exit Youth Shelter

Short-Term Supportive Housing (STSH)

AADAC
Calgary Alpha House
Aventa
Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary
– Haven’s Way
Brenda Strafford Centre
Calgary Catholic Immigration Services
– Beltline
– Huntington Hills
– Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre
Calgary Dream Centre
Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre
Discovery House Society
Fresh Start Recovery
Higher Banks Society
Calgary John Howard Society
– Berkana House
– Sabrina House
– Raido House
– Windsor House
Kerby Centre

McMan Youth Family and Community
Services Association
– Homes for Youth
– Wellington Place
Recovery Acres Society
– 1835 House
– 1822 House
– 1839 House
The Salvation Army
– Centre of Hope
– WISH
– Addictions Recovery Program
Servants Anonymous Society
– ASK
– SAFE
Simon House
Sonshine Society
Sunrise Addiction Services Society
Victory Foundation
Youville
– Youth Program
– Elderberry Program
YWCA of Calgary
– Mary Dover House

Systems

Alberta Health Services
– Peter Loughheed
– Foothills
– Rockyview
– Children’s Hospital
– Sheldon Chumir

Corrections
– Calgary Remand Centre
– Calgary Young Offender Centre
– Calgary Arrest and Processing
Alberta Works Income Support Contact Centre

Rough Sleepers

Calgary Transit
Calgary Police Services
Calgary Animal & Bylaw Services
Canadian Pacific Railway
Calgary Parking Authority

SAIT campus security
University of Calgary campus security
Mount Royal University
Calgary Stampede Authority
Fish Creek Park wardens

Appendix C - Street Survey

Screening questions (verbal)

1. **Do you currently have a permanent address? (Yes/No, if yes - end survey, if no - go to next question)**
2. **Have you been approached yet today to do this survey? (Yes/No, if yes - end survey, if no - go to next question)**

Survey Questions (Circle/Fill in correct response)

3. **What is your name?**

a) First: _____

Middle: _____

Last: _____

Suffix: _____

Alias: _____

- b) Don't know (will be entered as anonymous record)
- c) Declined to answer (will be entered as anonymous record)

4. **What is your date of birth?** (If client doesn't know/remember their date of birth, fill in approximate date of birth if available, i.e. year)

a) (____)/(____)/(____)
mm/ dd/ yyyy

- b) Don't know
- c) Declined to answer

5. **What is your gender?**

a) Female b) Male c) Transgender d) Transsexual e) Don't know f) Declined to answer

6. **What is the Postal Code of your last permanent address?**

a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

7. **What is the neighborhood of last permanent address?**

a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

8. **What is your ethnicity?**

a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

9. **If Aboriginal ethnicity, which group do you belong to?**

- a) First Nations (Status) b) First Nations (Non-Status) c) Métis
- d) Inuit e) Don't Know f) Declined to answer

10. Are you coming from a reserve?

- a) Yes b) No c) Don't know d) Declined to answer

11. If from a reserve, which reserve are you from?

- a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

12. What is your current citizenship and immigration status?

- a) Canadian Citizen b) Permanent Resident (Landed Immigrant) c) Refugee – permanent resident
d) Refugee – claimant e) Temporary Foreign worker f) International student
g) Other – please specify: _____ h) Don't Know i) Declined to answer

13. Have you ever served in the Canadian Forces?

- a) Yes b) No c) Don't know d) Declined to answer

14. Where were you living prior to staying on the streets?

- a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

15. How long have you been in Calgary?

- a) Born in Calgary b) Less than 1 year c) Between 1-4 years d) Between 5-19 years
e) More than 20 years f) Don't know g) Declined to answer

16. How long have you been homeless? (Days, months or years)

- a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

17. How many episodes of homelessness have you had in your lifetime?

- a) _____ b) Don't know c) Declined to answer

18. Where do you sleep most often and why?

- a) Shelters b) Outside c) With friends/family d) Other _____
e) Don't know d) Declined to answer

Why: _____

19. Would you be interested in a referral for outreach services?

- a) Yes b) No c) Don't know d) Declined to answer

IF CLIENT IS INTERESTED IN A REFERRAL, PLEASE COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW:

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

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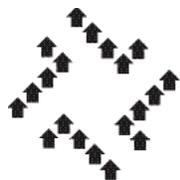
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