



**In my ideal world, you would be
my neighbour.**

RESULTS FROM THE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS 2H FORUM—OCTOBER 2017

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS 2H FORUM

In October 2017, the Council of Community Homelessness Tables for Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley led a region-wide forum that brought together elected officials, community leaders as well as housing, homelessness and Indigenous serving organizations to look at the issue of housing and homelessness in the Lower Mainland.

The forum focused on creating shared priorities and identifying local innovations and solutions for addressing homelessness. There were more than 200 individuals and organizations from across the Lower Mainland who came together to share their ideas and to talk about the types of strategies and actions needed.

The 2H Forum also provided the opportunity for individuals and organizations working on the issue of homelessness to check-in and to take measure of some of the local and regional actions that have been adopted and the results achieved. As well, it provided an opportunity to share information on potential strategies to build and strengthen existing relationships, both regionally and locally.

AREAS OF FOCUS

The forum explored a number of different topics and opportunities for action around:

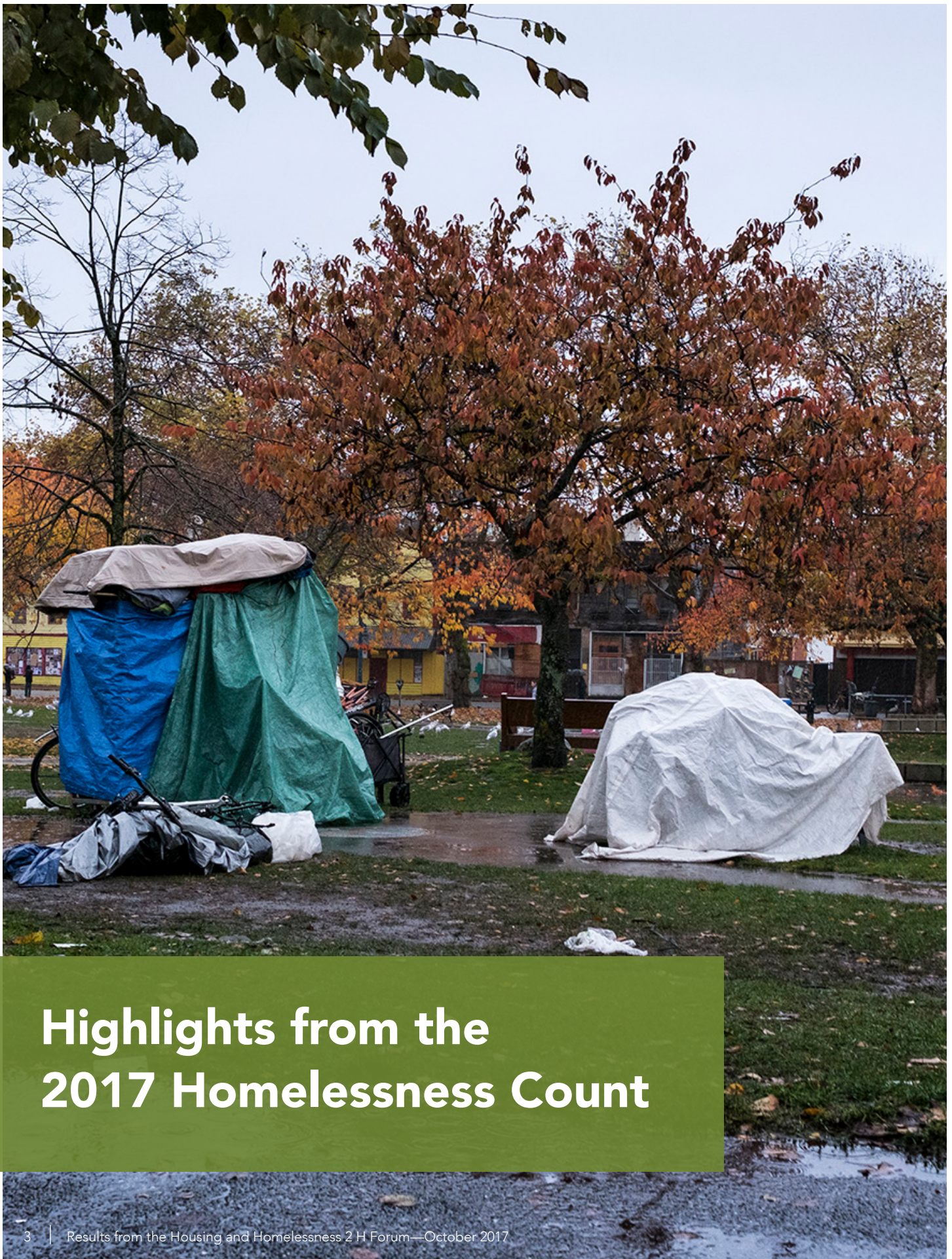
1. Regional collaboration and innovation;
2. Indigenous homelessness;
3. Information sharing and coordination;
4. Prevention and harm reduction;
5. Building increased public awareness and support for addressing homelessness;
6. Responding to gaps in the system of services and supports available for those who are homeless; and,
7. Creating new pathways forward.

This report highlights some of the opportunities for action identified through the process.



The pathways into and out of homelessness are neither linear, nor uniform. Individuals and families who wind up homeless may not share much in common with each other, aside from the fact that they are extremely vulnerable and lack adequate housing, income and the necessary supports to ensure that they stay housed. The causes of homelessness reflect an intricate interplay between structural factors (poverty, lack of affordable housing), systems failure (people being discharged from mental health facilities, corrections, child protection services into homelessness) as well as individual circumstances (family conflict and violence, mental health and addictions) with homelessness usually resulting from the cumulative impact of these factors.

Source: The State of Homelessness In Canada, the Homeless Hub.



Highlights from the 2017 Homelessness Count

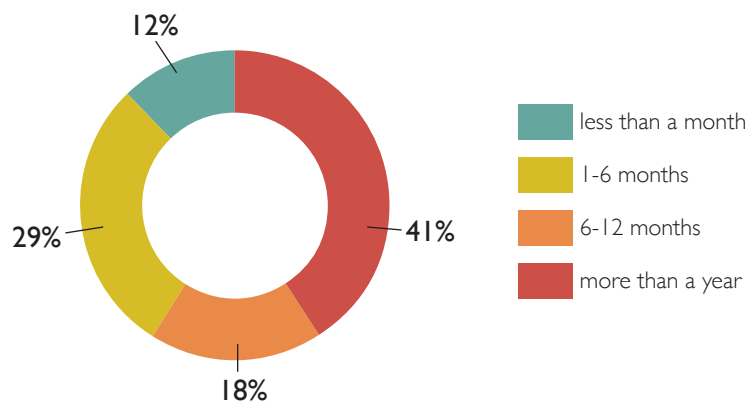
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2017 HOMELESS COUNT

Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 3,605 individuals who were homeless. This included 2,573 (71%) who were sheltered and 1,032 (29%) who were unsheltered.

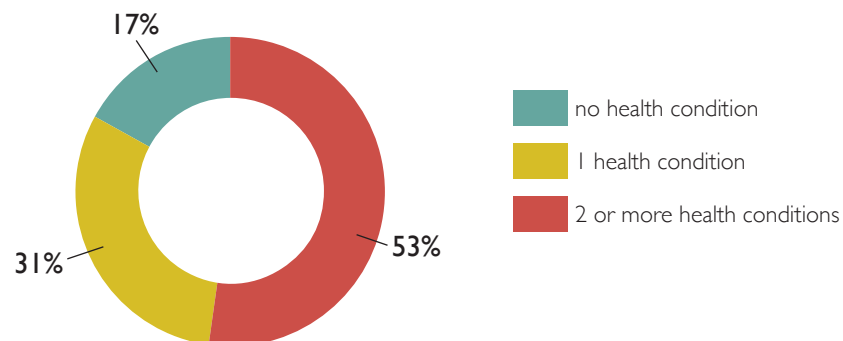
Number of Days Homeless

Of those who were homeless, 12% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 29% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 18% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 41% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



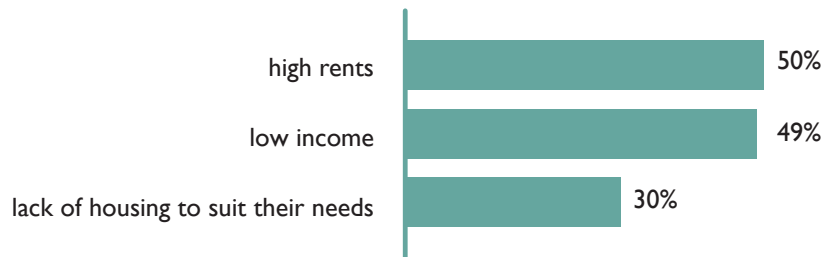
Health or Medical Conditions

Of those who were homeless, 31% reported that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 53% reported that they had two (2) or more health or medical conditions. Approximately 17% reported that they did not have any health or medical conditions.



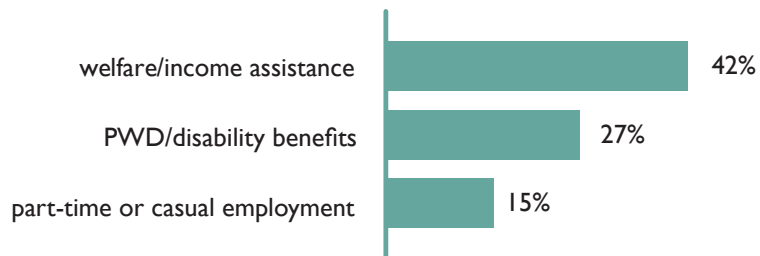
Reasons for Homelessness

Among those who were homeless, 40% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons that were identified:



Source of Income

Among those who were homeless, 15% reported that they relied on three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:





Indigenous Homelessness

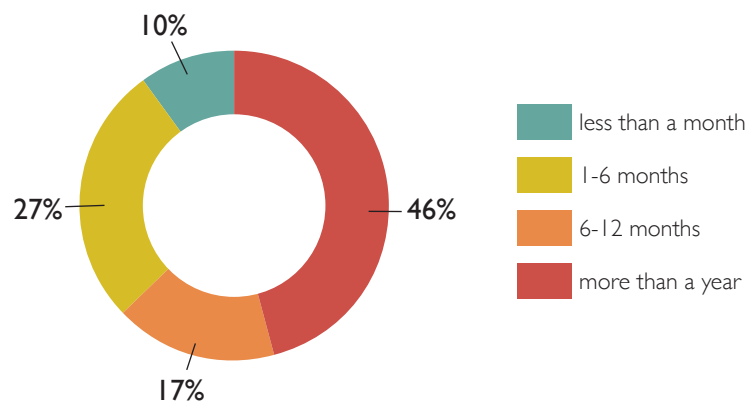
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

Indigenous People Who Are Homeless

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 746 Indigenous people who were homeless. Of these, 359 (48%) were sheltered and 387 (52%) were unsheltered. Indigenous people accounted for 34% of all individuals surveyed on the night of the count.

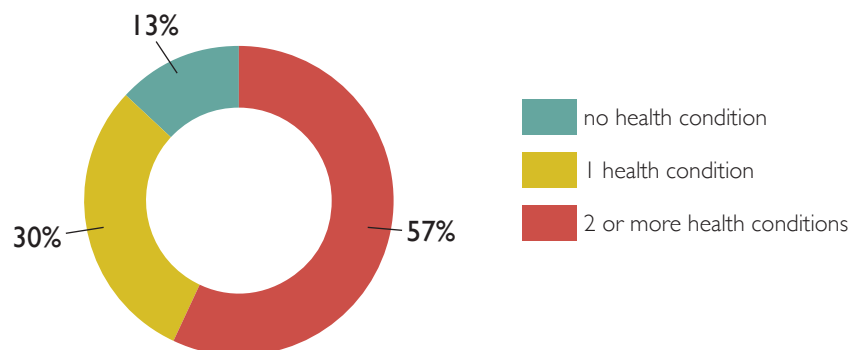
Number of Days Homeless

Of the Indigenous people who were homeless, 10% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 27% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 17% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 46% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



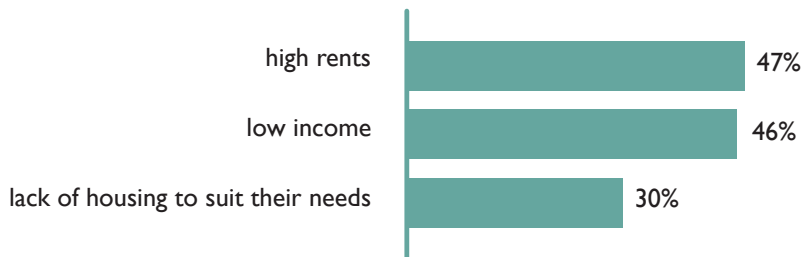
Health or Medical Conditions

Of the Indigenous people who were homeless, 30% reported that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 57% reported that they had two (2) or more health or medical conditions. Approximately 13% reported that they did not have any health or medical conditions.



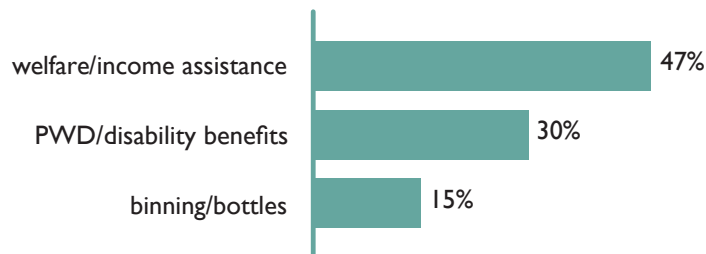
Reasons for Homelessness

Among the Indigenous people who were homeless, 40% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons that were identified:



Source of Income

Among the Indigenous people who were homeless, 16% reported that they relied on three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:



ADDRESSING INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

1. Respect

Relationships within the Aboriginal community can be captured in one word— respect. This means respect for their distinct history, cultures and legal status as well as their unique relationship to the land. How do you demonstrate this respect? By taking the time to engage in a meaningful dialogue that respects the specific needs of Indigenous people who are experiencing homelessness and that seeks to build lasting relationships.

2. Authentic Engagement

Homelessness in Metro Vancouver is not going to end overnight and therefore we must look for ways to continue to build bridges between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community in the years to come. Through this process we must jointly guard against tokenism and ensure that Aboriginal participation is not just an afterthought or a box to check off but that the engagement is genuine and meaningful.

3. Listen and Learn

There is the need to actively involve the Aboriginal community in all aspects of working to address homelessness. This includes learning from their local knowledge and understanding. It also means adopting ideas and approaches which ensure that the actions that are taken are inclusive and culturally sensitive. The AHSC would also ask that we aspire to contribute to the long-term success of Aboriginal people through the development of local economic opportunities and capacity building. This can be done through partnering with the AHSC and other Indigenous serving organizations and by recognizing their contributions and insights to the process.

4. Engage and Properly Resource the AHSC

There is a real interest in participating in the research and initiatives that provide real opportunities for the Aboriginal community. This includes both the design and implementation of solutions to address homelessness which are essential given the incidence of Aboriginal homelessness is disproportionately high. Investments from the non- Aboriginal/ mainstream community should take into account this disparity and seek to create opportunities that ensure that Aboriginal people are treated as equal partners in working toward solutions.

5. Draw on traditional knowledge

We need to commit to learning from one another. The AHSC represents over 20 agencies across Metro Vancouver and has many connections that go far beyond the primary AHSC members. The AHSC has a depth of knowledge in addressing homelessness in Metro Vancouver. The members know the people on the streets, their needs, and what is needed to create solutions. Drawing from this knowledge and expertise can ensure that the count and the actions and decisions arising from the count are about more than just the “number of Aboriginal homeless people on the streets”.

6. Acknowledge the Problem

Utilize the social capital and community assets of the AHSC such as our connections, our services, and innovative tools like community voicemail. Allow the AHSC to tell its story based on the results of the count. This is perhaps the most important piece. Self-determination comes from meaningful ownership of both the 'issue' and the 'solution'. As well focus on community investments that matter and that foster lasting impacts. We know instinctively that the cost of housing in Metro Vancouver is out of reach of the general population, let alone marginalized populations like the Aboriginal community. It is important to stop ignoring the obvious and to declare that government has a responsibility to act, and act big, to address this issue and the long-term consequences in Metro Vancouver.

7. Investing in ways that matter

We need to stand up for what is right—together. Government (at all levels) and Metro Vancouver should be compelled to invest in services and affordable housing for all those in need. The long-term goal should be to support the Aboriginal community to become self-sufficient, not just conduct a periodic study to emphasize how the homeless crisis is disproportionately affecting Aboriginal people. Effective strategies are those that begin to acknowledge the enduring effects of racial and cultural discrimination stemming from colonialism and that continue to negatively impact the housing and employment opportunities that are available to Aboriginal people today. In moving forward, all of the actions undertaken and investments made should be taken in the true spirit of reconciliation.



Men who are Homeless

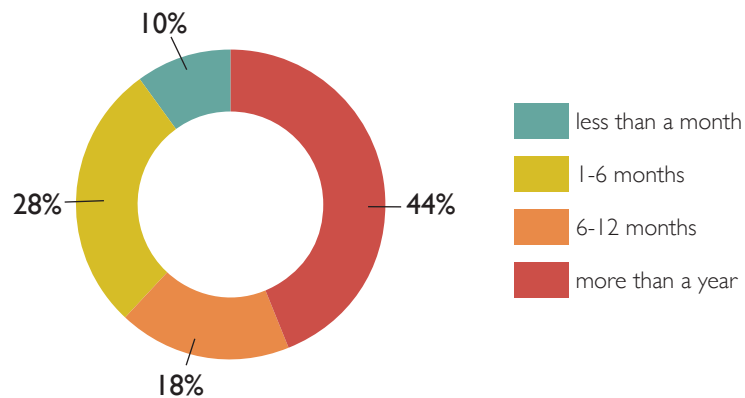
MEN WHO ARE HOMELESS

Men who are Homeless

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 1,688 men who were homeless. Of these, 958 (57%) were sheltered and 730 (43%) were unsheltered. Men accounted for 72% of all individuals surveyed on the night of the count.

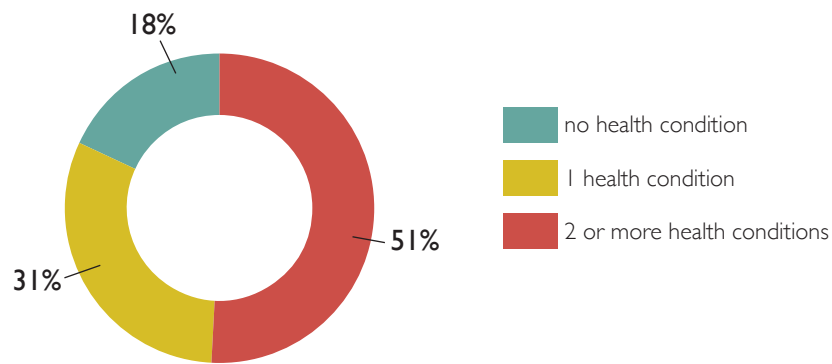
Number of Days Homeless

Of the men who were homeless, 10% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 28% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 18% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 44% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



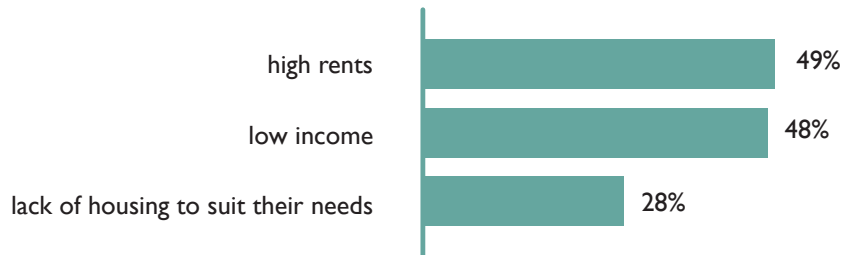
Health or Medical Conditions

Of the men who were homeless, 31% reported that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 51% reported that they had two (2) or more health or medical conditions. Approximately 18% of men who were homeless reported that they did not have any health or medical conditions.



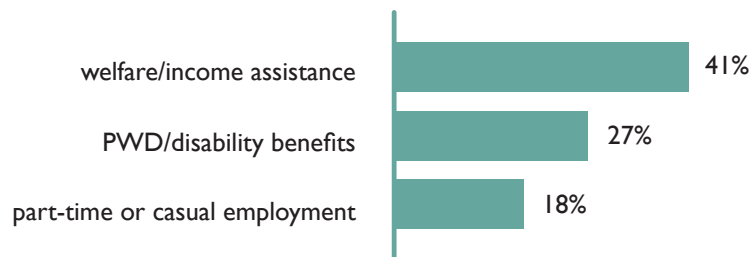
Reasons for Homelessness

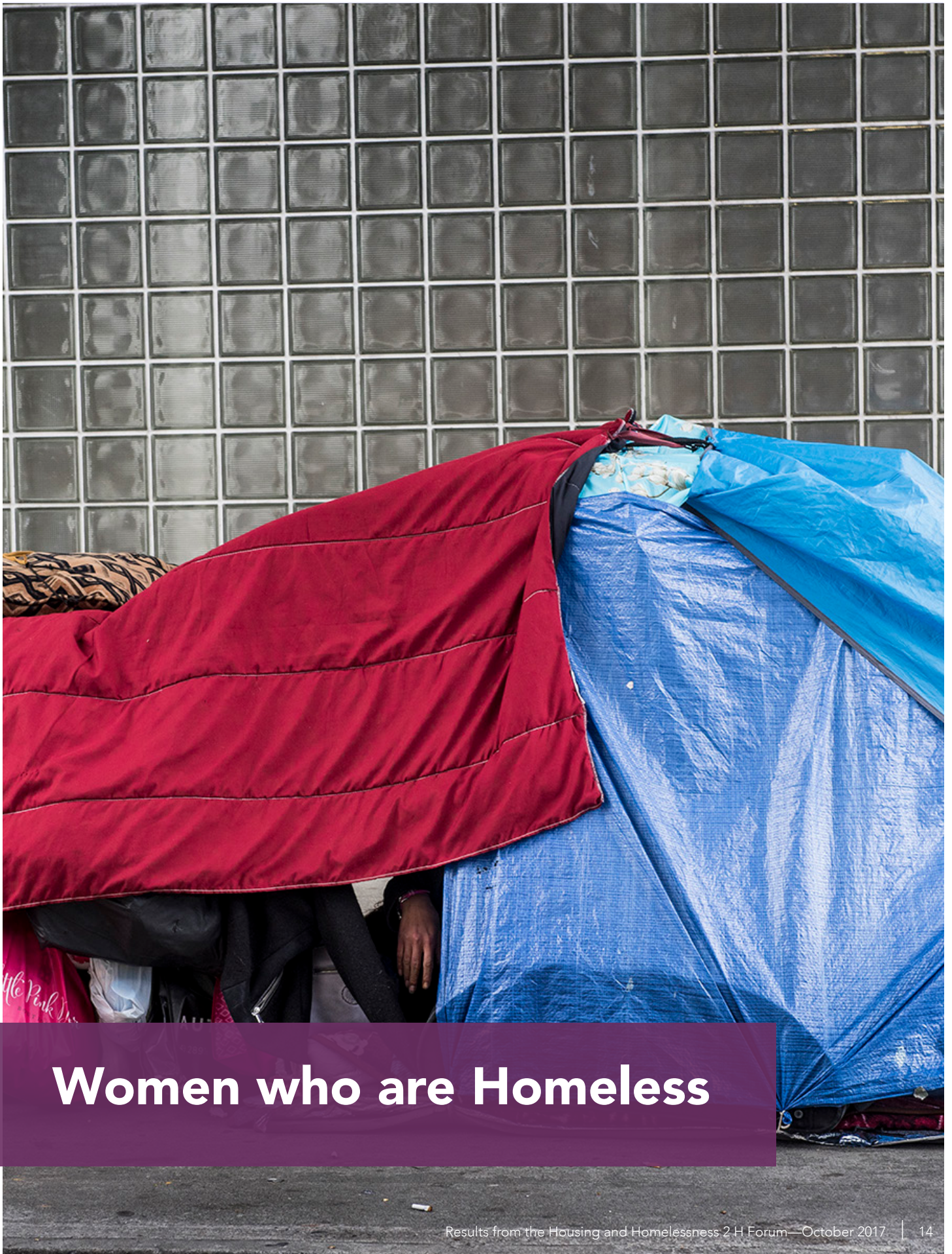
Among the men who were homeless, 38% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons provided:



Source of Income

Among the men who were homeless, 16% reported that they relied on three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:





Women who are Homeless

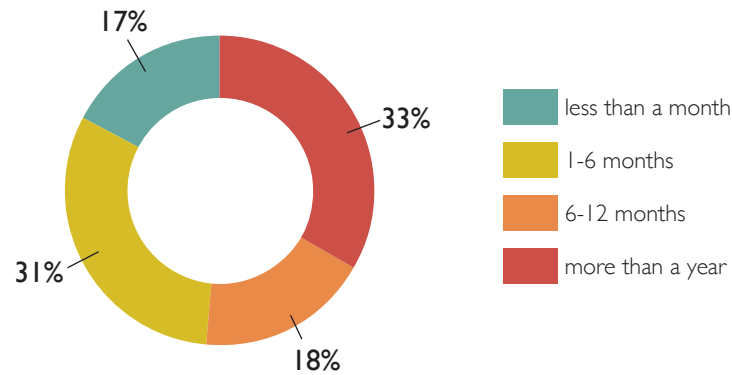
WOMEN WHO ARE HOMELESS

Women who are Homeless

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 628 women who were homeless. Of these, 379 (60%) were sheltered and 249 (39%) were unsheltered. Women accounted for 27% of all individuals surveyed on the night of the count.

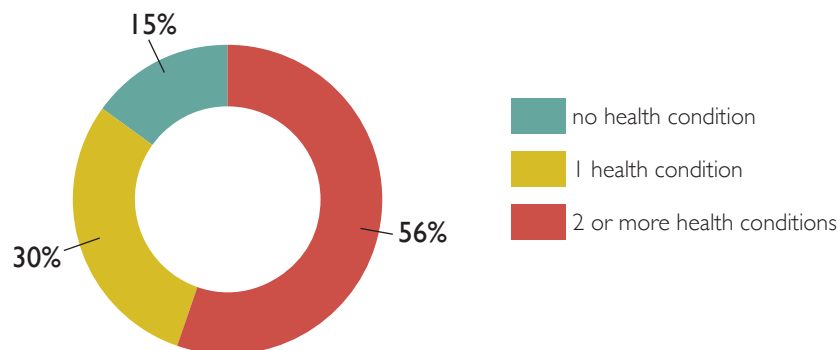
Number of Days Homeless

Of the women who were homeless, 17% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 31% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 18% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 33% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



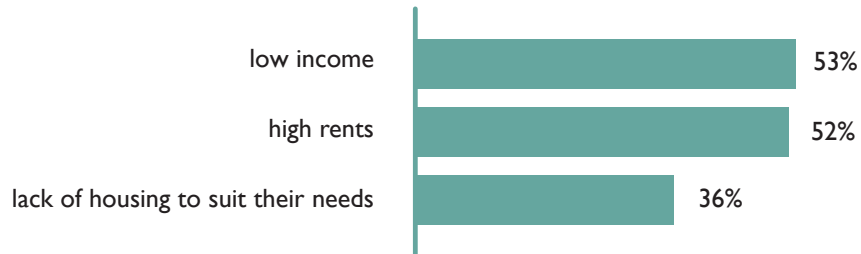
Health or Medical Conditions

Of the women who were homeless, 30% reported that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 56% reported that they had two (2) or more health or medical conditions. Approximately 15% of women who were homeless reported that they did not have any health or medical conditions.



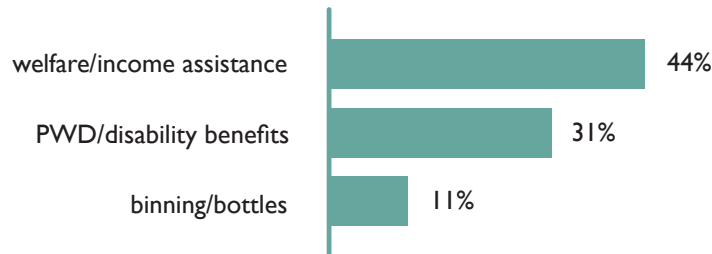
Reasons for Homelessness

Among the women who were homeless, 50% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons that were provided:



Source of Income

Among the women who were homeless, 13% reported that they relied on three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:





Seniors who are Homeless

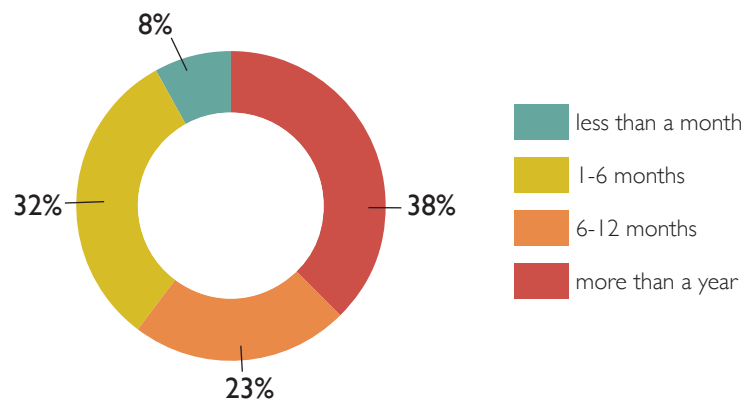
SENIORS WHO ARE HOMELESS

Seniors and Near Seniors Who are Homeless

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 518 individuals who were 55 or older who were homeless. Of these, 351 (68%) were sheltered and 167 (32%) were unsheltered. Seniors 65 and older accounted for 24% of the total.

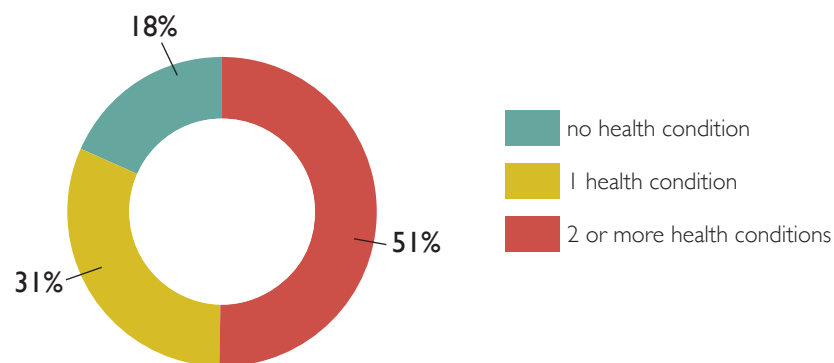
Number of Days Homeless

Of those who are seniors, 8% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 32% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 23% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 38% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



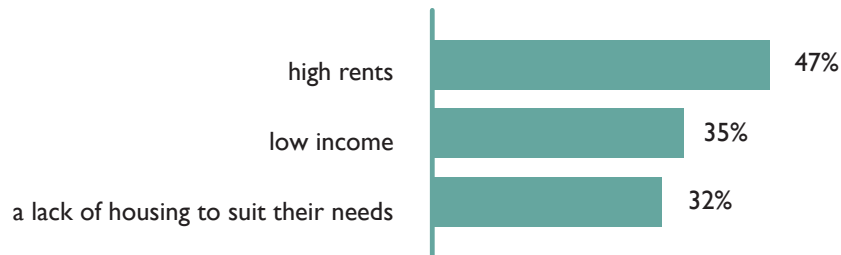
Health or Medical Conditions

Of seniors who were homeless, 31% reported that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 51% reported that they had two (2) or more health or medical conditions. Approximately 18% of seniors who were homeless reported that they did not have any health or medical conditions.



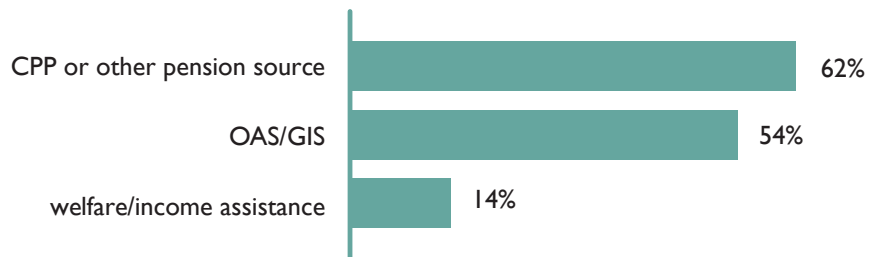
Reasons for Homelessness

Among the seniors who were homeless, 27% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons provided by seniors who were homeless:



Source of Income

Among the seniors who were homeless, 11% reported that they had three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:





Homeless and At Risk Youth (24 and Under)

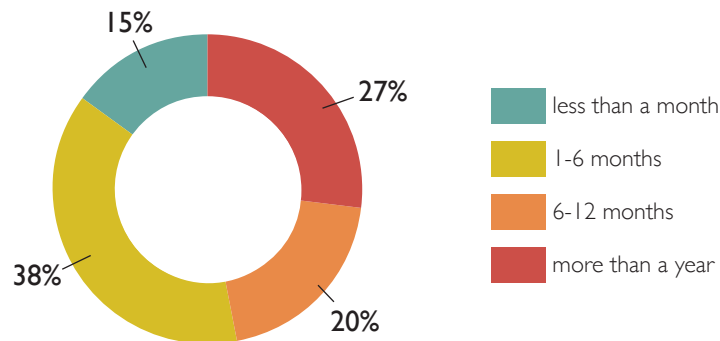
HOMELESS AND AT RISK YOUTH (24 AND UNDER)

Homeless and At Risk Youth

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 386 individuals who were 24 and under who were homeless. Of these, 229 (59%) were sheltered and 157 (41%) were unsheltered.

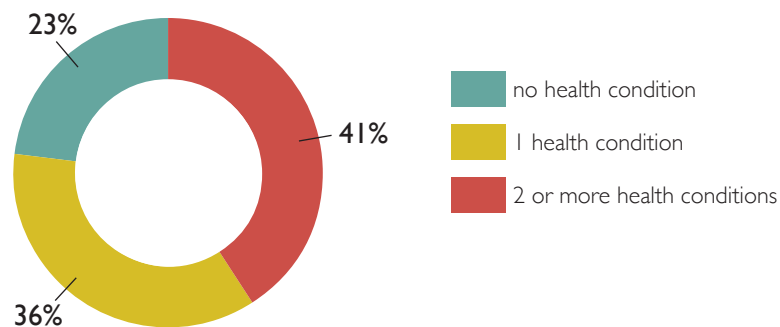
Number of Days Homeless

Of those 24 and under who were homeless on the night of the count, 15% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 38% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 20% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 27% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



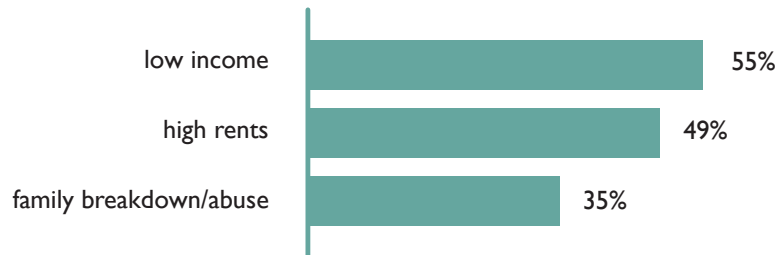
Health or Medical Conditions

Of those 24 and under who were homeless on the night of the count, 36% reported that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 41% reported that they had two (2) or more health or medical conditions. Approximately 23% of youth 24 and under who were homeless on the night of the count reported that they did not have any health or medical conditions.



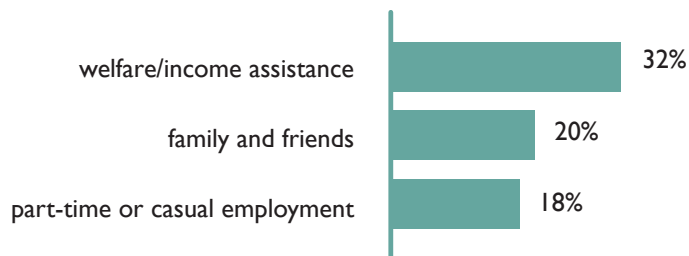
Reasons for Homelessness

Among youth 24 and under who were homeless on the night of the count, 50% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons provided:



Source of Income

Among youth 24 and under who were homeless on the night of the count, 12% reported that they relied on three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:





Individuals with Health and Medical Conditions

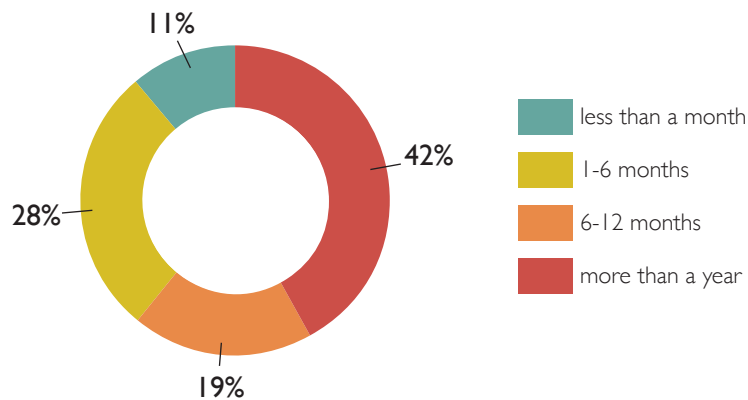
HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS WITH HEALTH OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Individuals with Health or Medical Conditions who are Homeless

At the time of the 2017 homeless count, there were 1,837 individuals who reported that they had specific health or medical conditions. Of those who reported specific health or medical conditions, 1,028 (56%) were sheltered and 809 (44%) were unsheltered.

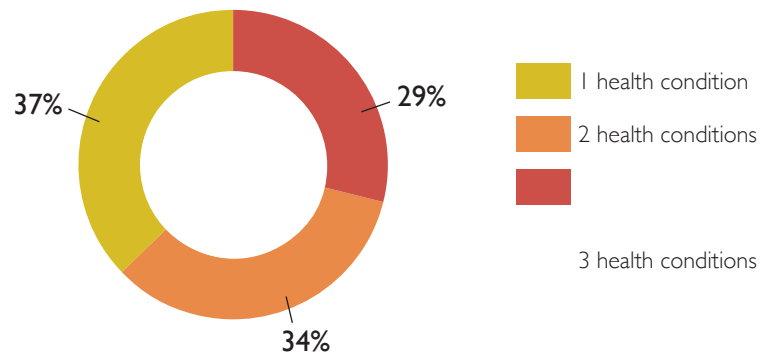
Number of Days Homeless

Of those who reported specific health or medical conditions, 11% had been homeless for less than 1 month while 28% had been homeless for between 1 month and 6 months. An additional 19% had been homeless for between 6 months and 1 year while 42% had been homeless for more than 1 year.



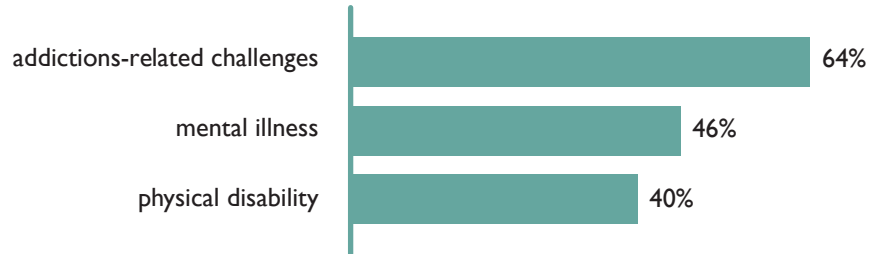
Health or Medical Conditions

Of those who were homeless and who reported that they had a health or medical condition, 37% indicated that they had one (1) health or medical condition while 34% reported having 2 health or medical conditions and 29% reported having 3 health or medical conditions.



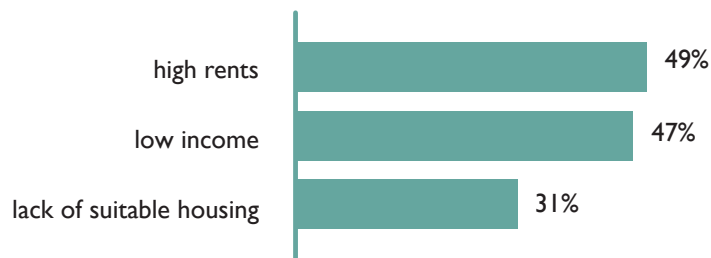
Health or Medical Conditions

Of those who were homeless and who reported that they had a health or medical condition, 40% reported that they had a physical disability, 46% reported that they had a mental illness and 64% reported that they had addictions-related challenges.



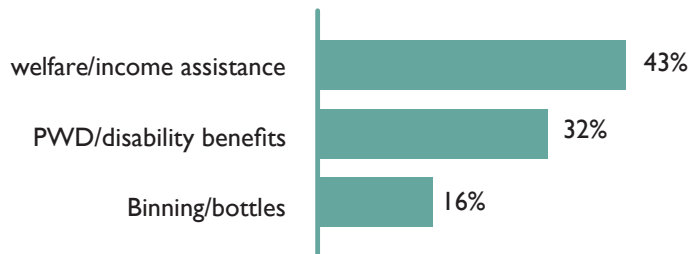
Reasons for Homelessness

Among those who reported that they had specific health and medical conditions, 46% identified three (3) or more different factors which contributed to their homelessness and/or which were preventing them from accessing housing. The following were the top three (3) reasons provided:



Source of Income

Among those who reported that they had specific health and medical conditions, 21% reported that they relied on three (3) or more different sources of income with the following representing the top three (3) responses that were provided:



A photograph showing a red folding chair in the foreground, partially obscured by a purple text box. Behind the chair is a tent with a blue top and a tan bottom section. The tent is set up against a light-colored, textured wall. A white plastic bag is visible near the tent's entrance. The ground is dark and appears to be dirt or gravel.

Public Awareness and Education

RESPONSES TO A SURVEY BY VISION CRITICAL
ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARD HOMELESSNESS

ALMOST 94%

SEE HOMELESSNESS AS A **MAJOR PROBLEM** IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

ALMOST 2 IN 3

SEE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AS THE
MOST IMPORTANT
REGIONAL ISSUE

44%

INDICATED THAT
LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS THE
LEADING CAUSE OF
HOMELESSNESS

1 IN 5

INDICATED THAT THEIR LEVEL OF SYMPATHY
FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS **HAS INCREASED**

90%

BELIEVE THAT
THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS
SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE
SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
THAT THEY NEED

87%

BELIEVE THAT
THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS
SHOULD BE TREATED WITH
DIGNITY AND RESPECT

75%

BELIEVE THAT THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE
RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS THAT THEY NEED TO AFFORD **BASIC NECESSITIES**

65%

BELIEVE THAT **IT IS POSSIBLE**
TO HAVE A COMMUNITY WHERE THERE IS A HOME FOR EVERYONE WHO CHOOSES ONE

BUILDING INCREASED AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The conversations around addressing homelessness in the Lower Mainland focused on a number of key themes as well as possible strategies and initiatives including:

- Recognizing individuals with lived experience and working to create spaces where they can tell their stories and share their understanding in ways that help to contribute to real and meaningful solutions.
- Targeting NIMBYism while finding ways to support the development of more affordable housing across communities as well as the development of targeted strategies to respond to existing and emerging housing needs.
- Confronting the stigma associated with poverty and homelessness as well as combatting discrimination and violence toward people living in poverty and working to build increased awareness, compassion, empathy and understanding about the needs of families and individuals who are living in poverty and who are at increased risk of homelessness.
- Promoting cultural safety and sensitivity at the community level and throughout the leadership ranks including working to address the high levels of judgement and discrimination Indigenous people continue to face with a view of addressing the high levels of homelessness among Indigenous people in Canada as part of the pathway to reconciliation.
- Connecting the housing affordability crisis to the homelessness crisis in the minds of the public and working to build support across community leaders, members of the public and civil society to ensure that no one lacks a roof over their head.

A photograph showing a mattress with a floral pattern lying on a sidewalk. In the background, there are large trees, a brick building, and a white van. A concrete barrier is visible between the mattress and the trees.

Regional Collaboration and Innovation

EMERGING IDEAS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE 2H FORUM

- More focus on prevention and harm reduction
- Safe spaces for women
- More pet-friendly housing
- More culturally responsive services and supports for Indigenous people who are homeless
- More supports for Indigenous women who are homeless
- More funding for grandparents who are providing for their grandchildren
- More housing and supports for recent immigrants and refugees
- More support for women experiencing abuse and domestic violence
- Work to address the hidden nature of seniors' poverty and the social isolation and vulnerability that many seniors face
- Promote peer-based services and supports for seniors including the introduction of a seniors' advocate and systems navigator
- Work to expand the full range of housing choices that are available across communities and promote and support improved access to services no matter where one lives in the region
- Expand the range of housing choices for vulnerable and at risk youth including youth aging out of care
- Explore opportunities for home sharing or establishing a "room-mate" system
- Explore opportunities to create centralized services and supports to better meet the needs of vulnerable and 'at risk' populations
- Expand the range of housing and supports for people with mental illness and addictions-related challenges

REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION

There were numerous discussions about the different strategies and actions needed to strengthen the regional response to homelessness and the different roles that the regional partners and actors play. Ideas for strengthening regional collaboration and innovation included:

- Adopting a system-based approach for addressing homelessness: This included looking at opportunities to focus on prevention-based strategies as well as providing for an expanded range of housing and support options to meet the full range of needs across communities.
- Strengthening the current system of measurement and reporting: This includes building a better and deeper understanding of the true number of individuals who are homeless as well as working to put into place permanent solutions that mean that everyone who wants a home has a home.
- Learning from Abbotsford's experience in building capacity and in securing funding to create a 'service hub model' that provides a single point of entry for people who are homeless and that supports a coordinated intake and referral system.
- Building a common definition of homelessness: This includes working together to establish a collective regional vision for making homelessness in Metro Vancouver "rare, brief, and one-time" in keeping with the directions and ideas advanced by HomeFront.
- Developing research and policies that match local conditions and that move beyond housing to include other supports: This includes improved income and access to economic opportunities as well as improved access to transportation and other supports.
- Changing the mind-set and narrative around homelessness: This includes working together to ensure that people have access to the opportunities that they deserve and that lead to their success. It also includes the need to ensure that people have access to safe, secure and affordable housing, as well as the chance to contribute their skills, talents and abilities and a shot at a future that is important to them.

AFFORDABILITY PRESSURES ARISING FROM INCREASED RENTAL HOUSING DEMAND

Increase in Renter Households—2011 to 2016

	Total Households 2016	Renter Households 2011	Renter Households 2016	Increase in Renter Households 2011-2016	% Increase in Renter Households
Province	1,835,430	517,430	592,825	75,395	15%
Fraser Valley Region	103,020	23,665	2,8490	4,825	20%
Hope	2,860	620	710	90	15%
Chilliwack	3,1750	7,655	8,710	1,055	14%
Harrison Hot Springs	715	105	140	35	33%
Kent	2,090	345	475	130	38%
Abbotsford	4,7970	11,875	14,650	2,775	23%
Mission	13,420	2,530	3,065	535	21%

Metro Vancouver Region	955,300	304,270	347,225	42,955	14%
Langley DM	41,085	5,605	7,285	1,680	30%
Langley City	11,840	3,945	4,505	560	14%
Surrey	169,680	40,870	48,990	8,120	20%
White Rock	10,005	3,135	3,215	80	3%
Delta	35,625	6,565	7,545	980	15%
Richmond	73,375	15,420	18,895	3,475	23%
Electoral Area A (UBC)	6,095	2,450	3,265	815	33%
Vancouver	283,905	135,425	150,745	15,320	11%
Burnaby	92,195	31,475	34,980	3,505	11%
New Westminster	32,700	13,330	14,365	1,035	8%
Coquitlam	51,320	11,575	14,540	2,965	26%
Belcarra	255		25	25	
Anmore	685	50	60	10	20%
Port Coquitlam	21,720	4,515	5,015	500	11%
Port Moody	12,975	2,905	3,250	345	12%
North Vancouver DM	31,105	5,740	6,650	910	16%
North Vancouver City	24,640	10,315	11,615	1,300	13%
West Vancouver	16,935	3,580	4,260	680	19%
Bowen Island	1,480	380	265	(-115)	--
Lions Bay	495	70	45	(-25)	--
Pitt Meadows	7,120	1,465	1,615	150	10%
Maple Ridge	30,065	5,440	6,085	645	12%

Source: Statistics Canada—2011 National Household Survey and 2016 Census

RENTER HOUSEHOLDS FACING AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGES

*Renter households spending 30% to 100% of their income on their housing costs—
Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley (2011 to 2016)*

	Renter Households 2011	STIR 30% to 100% 2011	% of Renter Households	Renter Households 2016	STIR 30% to 100% 2016	% of Renter Households
Province	517,430	183,640	35%	592,825	208,540	35%
Fraser Valley Region	23,665	8,770	37%	2,8490	10,115	36%
Hope	620	290	47%	710	290	41%
Chilliwack	7,655	3,365	44%	8,710	3,550	41%
Harrison Hot Springs	105	40	38%	140	75	54%
Kent	345	155	45%	475	165	35%
Abbotsford	11,875	3,800	32%	14,650	4,700	32%
Mission	2,530	985	39%	3,065	1,085	35%
Metro Vancouver Region	304,270	102,160	34%	347,225	117,295	34%
Langley DM	5,605	1,745	31%	7,285	2,235	31%
Langley City	3,945	1,565	40%	4,505	1,910	42%
Surrey	40,870	12,135	30%	48,990	15,085	31%
White Rock	3,135	1,145	37%	3,215	1,315	41%
Delta	6,565	1,985	30%	7,545	2,365	31%
Richmond	15,420	5,355	35%	18,895	6,465	34%
Electoral Area A (UBC)	2,450	830	34%	3,265	990	30%
Vancouver	135,425	46,265	34%	150,745	52,065	35%
Burnaby	31,475	10,365	33%	34,980	11,210	32%
New Westminster	13,330	4,445	33%	14,365	4,700	33%
Coquitlam	11,575	4,050	35%	14,540	5,100	35%
Belcarra				25	10	40%
Anmore	50	0	0%	60	15	25%
Port Coquitlam	4,515	1,595	35%	5,015	1,705	34%
Port Moody	2,905	930	32%	3,250	925	28%
North Vancouver DM	5,740	1,920	33%	6,650	2,265	34%
North Vancouver City	10,315	3,490	34%	11,615	4,315	37%
West Vancouver	3,580	1,565	44%	4,260	1,825	43%
Bowen Island	380	205	54%	265	75	28%
Lions Bay	70	10	14%	45	25	56%
Pitt Meadows	1,465	435	30%	1,615	500	31%
Maple Ridge	5,440	2,110	39%	6,085	2205	36%

Source: Statistics Canada—2011 National Household Survey and 2016 Census



Moving Forward

MOVING FORWARD

Continuing to support the work of the Council of Community Homelessness Tables

The Council of Community Homelessness Tables for Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley focuses on sharing ideas and bringing people and communities together to address the issue of homelessness in their community. In working together, the focus of the Council of Community Homelessness Tables is to build capacity at the local level to address homelessness by building partnerships and by promoting and supporting local innovation. The Council of Community Homelessness Tables also seeks to build coalitions and partnerships to strengthen the response to homelessness across the Lower Mainland.

Building on the current efforts of the HPS-CAB and Metro Vancouver CE

Metro Vancouver has been the community entity for the delivery of the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy since 2012 and has played an active role in working on issues of homelessness since 2001. Metro Vancouver has expressed an interest in continuing to serve as the community entity for the next funding cycle (2019-2024). Metro Vancouver continues to show leadership at the community level through regional dialogues, sustainability breakfasts and other strategies and initiatives designed to build a deeper understanding of existing and emerging needs and to work toward solutions. This has included sharing ideas and working collaboratively with CEs in other parts of the Province.

Working together with others to realize the opportunities created through the expanded Federal Program

In June 2018, Minister Duclos, the federal Minister responsible for Families, Children and Social Development provided details around the redesigned Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy—*Reaching Home*. Under the new program design, the Federal government has made a strong commitment to reinforcing the community-based approach to addressing homelessness as well as expanding the program's reach to other communities. This provides an opportunity to continue to learn from each other as well as build on the opportunities and successes of the current HPS initiatives and the Housing First approach.

The Meaning of Home

In late 2017, SPARC BC, Metro Vancouver and Lu'ma Housing Society launched an initiative called "The Meaning of Home." Through this initiative our goal is to use the community voice mail system to reach out to Indigenous individuals from across the Lower Mainland to learn more about their experiences of homelessness as well as to learn more about "the meaning of home." The stories and insights gathered through this initiative will help to guide and inform our understanding of Indigenous homelessness in the Lower Mainland as well as help to identify meaningful solutions.

The Voice of Lived Experience Advisory Committee (VLEAC)

Recently the MV HPS CAB and MV HPS CE have established a Voice of Lived Experience Advisory Committee to provide opportunities for persons with lived experience to share their insights about their experience and the many different pathways which can lead into and out of homelessness. This Committee will play an important role in providing advice and guidance to the HPS CAB and CE in the implementation of the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy

and in administering and managing HPS activities. Through establishing the VLEAC, not only will it lead to better outcomes and a better understanding of homelessness from the perspective of those with lived experience but it will also help to provide additional opportunities for community leadership, empowerment, peer support and inclusion.

Homelessness Services Association Conference—Working Together to End Homelessness

Members of the Council of Community Homelessness Tables will be participating in the inaugural conference of the Homelessness Services Association which will take place in the Lower Mainland from September 19th to 21st, 2018. The conference will provide an important opportunity to share ideas and build connections. One of the ideas that we have been working on is the organization of a session that brings together homelessness tables from across the Province to share ideas about the different types of initiatives that are helping to address the needs across communities as well as explore opportunities to build and strengthen connections Province-wide.

Release of the results of the first-ever Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver

In April 2018, working with the BC Non-Profit Housing Association and other key regional partners and stakeholders, Metro Vancouver engaged in the development and implementation of the first-ever Youth Homeless Count. The survey was conducted over a nine-day period in partnership with youth centres and youth serving organizations, high schools, shelters and others in order to develop a better understanding of the specific dimensions and characteristics of youth homelessness across the region. The results from the count are expected to be released in late September/early October.

Homelessness Action Week

Finding and keeping housing that is affordable is a challenge for many residents across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. The most recent rental market data for Metro Vancouver continues to show a market vacancy rate of less than one (1) per cent region-wide and an average monthly rent of more than \$1,000 per month for a bachelor unit. Rents at this level make it impossible to find an affordable place to live for \$375/month. Homelessness Action Week is always held in late fall and helps to 'kick off' the winter season, when it is the most difficult for people to be homeless. This year the theme for Homelessness Action Week—*in my ideal world you would be my neighbour*—focuses on the connection between the housing affordability crisis and homelessness and the need to bring community leaders, members of the public and civil society together to ensure that no one lacks a roof over their head. Ideally, as part of Homelessness Action Week, the Council would like to hold a follow-up 2H Forum to look at the areas where progress is being made and to identify those areas where opportunities have not yet been realized.

Homeless Comfort Kits

Homelessness Action Week also provides an opportunity to stand up and declare support for those who do not have a place that they can call home. As part of SPARC BC's work during Homelessness Action Week, in addition to helping with the printing and the distribution of posters and materials, SPARC BC provides fundraising support for homeless comfort kits which are made available to the community homelessness table to distribute through their outreach activities and their different homeless connect events. Homeless comfort kits typically include basic toiletries such as toothpaste, a toothbrush, razor, soap and other essentials. Comfort kits for both men and women are available. Since SPARC BC first introduced this idea in 2016, more than \$33,000 in funding has been generated and almost 7,000 homeless and at risk individuals have been helped.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August	Launch of the Voice of Lived Experience Advisory Committee and PhotoVoice Project
September	Next regular meeting of The Council of Community Homelessness Tables
September	Homelessness Services Association Conference
September	Quarterly Meeting of the HPS-CAB
October	Homelessness Action Week and 2nd Annual 2H Forum
October	Launch of the Meaning of Home: Community Voice Mail Project

THE COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS TABLES OF METRO VANCOUVER AND THE FRASER VALLEY

Organization	First Name	Last Name	Title
Fraser Valley Regional District	Alison	Stewart	Manager of Strategic Planning
District of North Vancouver	Annie	Mauboules	Social Planner
North Shore Homelessness Task Force	Brianne	De Man	Coordinator
Homelessness Services Association—BC	Celine	Mauboules	Executive Director
Tri-Cities Homelessness Task Group	Cristina	Pereira	Co-Chair
Tri-Cities Homelessness Task Group	Patricia	Sonier	Co-Chair
Salvation Army Ridge Meadows Ministries	Darrell	Pilgrim	Executive Director
Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee	David	Wells	Chair
Richmond Poverty Response Committee	De	Whalen	Chair
City of Abbotsford	Dena Kae	Beno	Homelessness Coordinator
Stepping Stone Community Services Society	Fraser	Holland	Program Manager
City of Delta	Gillian	McLeod	Corporate Social Planner
City of Vancouver	Jennifer	Hales	Planner
City of Richmond	Jennifer	Dieckmann	Executive Secretary
Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force	Jonquil	Hallgate	Co-Chair
Deltassist	Julie	Chadwick	Executive Director
The Society to End Homelessness in Burnaby	Karen	O'Shannacery	President
Hollyburn Family Services Society	Leya	Eguchi	Director of Services
City of Abbotsford	Lynda	Brummitt	Research Analyst
New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	Martha	Kerr	Coordinator
Semiahmoo Seniors Planning	Pat	Petralla	Outreach Coordinator
Peninsula Homeless to Housing Task Force	Rick	Bayer	Chair
MCC Community Enterprises	Ron	Van Wyk	Executive Director
District of Maple Ridge	Shawn	Matthewson	Social Planning Coordinator

Supporting Partners

Social Research and Planning Council of BC	Lorraine	Copas	Executive Director/HPS-CAB
Metro Vancouver Community Entity	Theresa	Harding	Manager
Vancity Community Foundation	Vera	LeFranc	Manager, Community Programs & VCF HPS

Other Partners

Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee	David	Wells	Chair
BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA)	Marika	Albert	Policy Director
BC Non-Profit Housing Association	Peer-Daniel	Krause	Policy Manager
HomeFront	Sandy	Burpee	Co-Founder
Lu'ma Native Housing Society, Aboriginal CE	Linda	Lavallee	Manager
Service Canada	Crystal	Williamson	Senior Development Officer (Acting)



I've made myself a house.
I call it a house **in a box.**

—Homeless Individual