National Homelessness Data

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CAEH | Hamilton, ON

November 5, 2018

Reaching Home

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy will replace the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and will launch April 1, 2019.

- The program aims to **reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% over 10 years.**

- The program is shifting to a **community outcomes approach** that will give communities more flexibility in how they use funds to prevent and reduce homelessness at the community level, all while working toward specific goals for which they will report publicly.

- It is introducing **Coordinated Access** to help communities shift towards more coordinated systems-based approach to addressing homelessness.

National Homelessness Data

- National Data Sources
- National Shelter Data 2005-2016
- 2018 Point-in-Time Count
- National Data Gaps
- Discussion

National data sources

Community-Level Shelter Data

National Shelter Data

Shelter Capacity

Point-in-Time Counts

Project Results

National Data Products

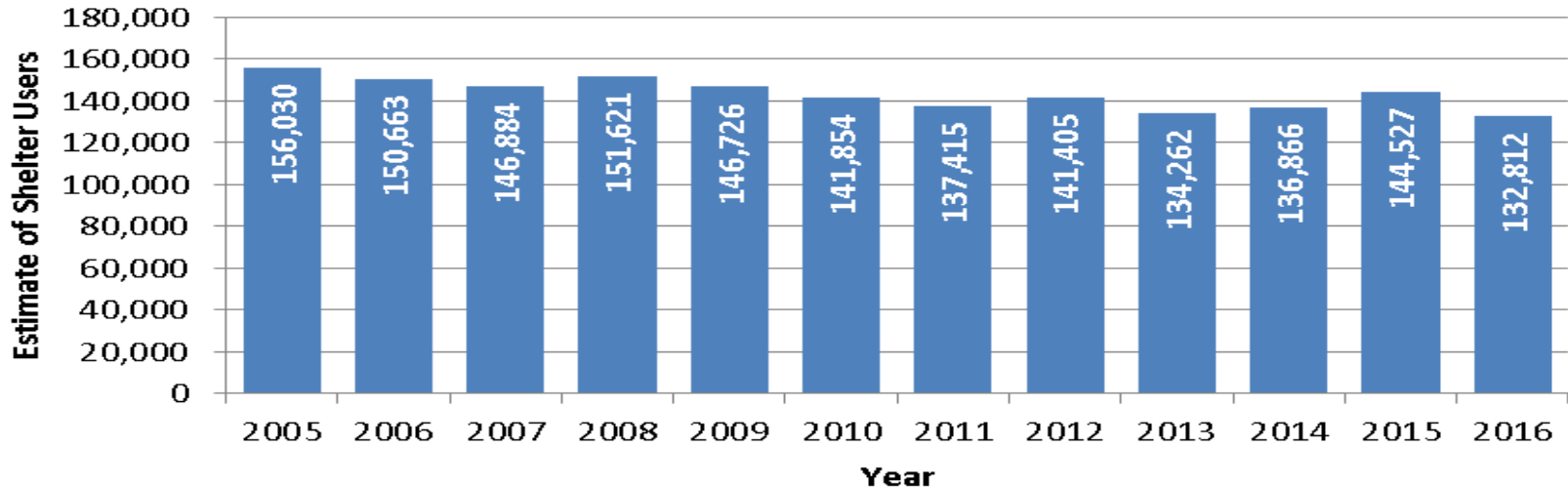|	
Shelter Capacity Report	• Estimated capacity across emergency shelters, violence against women shelters, and transitional housing
National Shelter Study	• Estimate of the number of emergency shelter users and their demographics.
Community Progress Indicators	• Community-level reports including shelter data, PiT counts, and contextual information.
Point-in-Time Counts	• Point-in-Time estimates of homelessness in 61+ communities, with survey data.

National Shelter Study

- The National Shelter Study is based on anonymous information from **1.9 million shelter stays** that occurred at over 230 of the 410 emergency shelters across Canada since 2005

- In 2016, the sample included most of the largest shelters in Canada, covering **61%** of the total emergency shelter beds in the country

- The study uses a stratified cluster sample of emergency shelters to ensure accurate estimates of the number and characteristics of shelter users

- The sample is based on emergency homeless shelters and does not include Violence Against Women shelters and transitional housing

- The study methodology takes into account people who use more than one shelter

Emergency Shelter Use in Canada

- An estimated **133,000** people experienced homelessness at an emergency shelter in Canada in 2016

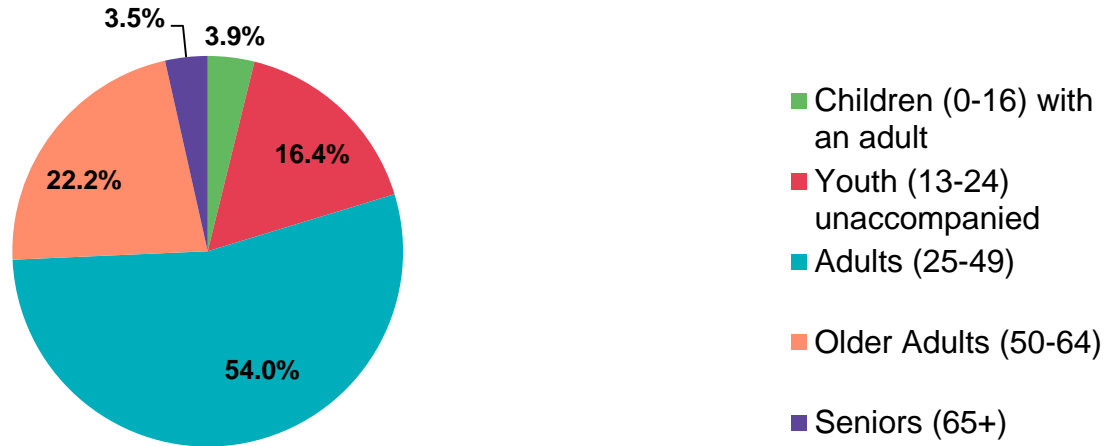- This represents a decrease of about **15%** from 2005

Figure 2: Estimated Number of Shelter Users per Year (2005-2016)

Year	Estimate of Shelter Users
2005	156,030
2006	150,663
2007	146,884
2008	151,621
2009	146,726
2010	141,854
2011	137,415
2012	141,405
2013	134,262
2014	136,866
2015	144,527
2016	132,812

Shelter Use by Age Group

- The majority of shelter users are adults (aged 25-49), followed by older adults (aged 50-64) and youth
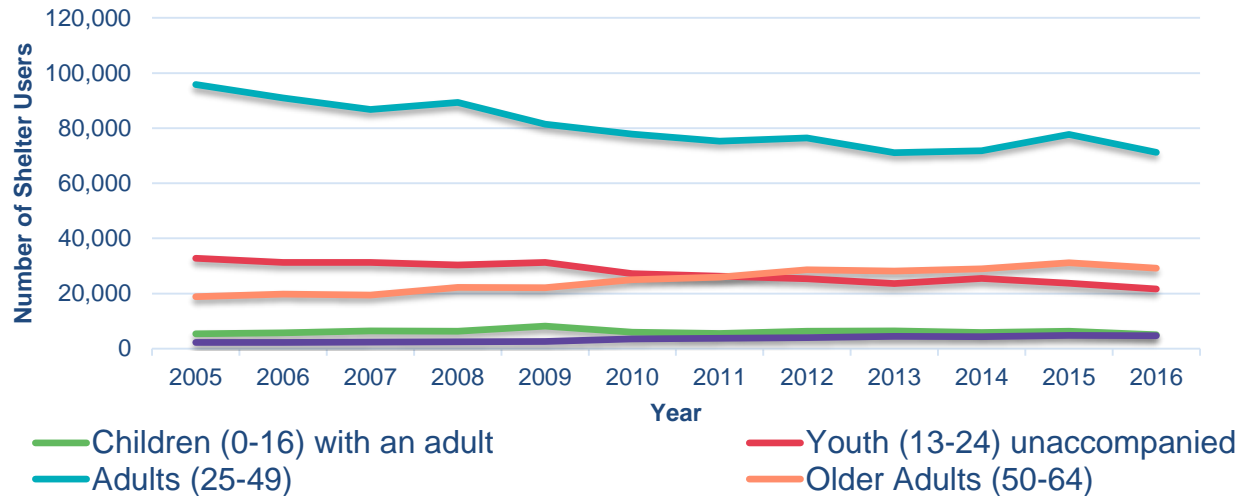- Age distribution among shelter users have not changed much since the last National Shelter Study

Figure 5: Distribution of Shelter Users by Age Group (2016)

- Children (0-16) with an adult
- Youth (13-24) unaccompanied
- Adults (25-49)
- Older Adults (50-64)
- Seniors (65+)

3.5% 3.9%
16.4%
22.2%
54.0%

Shelter Use by Age Group

- Shelter use by adults (aged 25-49) increased in 2015 before decreasing in 2016, remaining significantly below the level observed in 2005
- General trends in shelter use by older adults (aged 50-64) and seniors (aged 65+) continue to increase
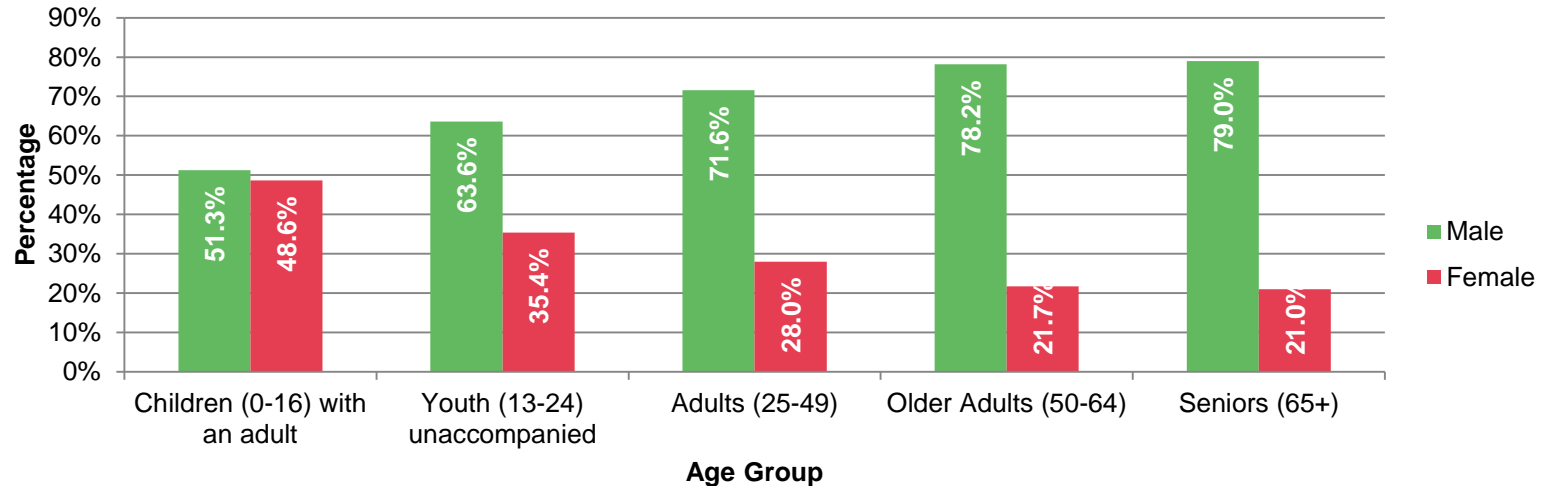- The number of youth using shelters decreased in 2015 and 2016

Figure 4: Estimated Number of Shelter Users by Age Group (2005-2016)

Shelter Use by Gender

- In 2016, **71.8%** of shelter users were male and **27.8%** were female. This has not changed considerably between 2005-2016
- The proportion of male shelter users increases with age

Figure 8: Shelter Use by Gender by Age Group*

Chart showing Percentage (y-axis, 0% to 90%) by Age Group (x-axis):

Age Group	Male	Female
Children (0-16) with an adult	51.3%	48.6%
Youth (13-24) unaccompanied	63.6%	35.4%
Adults (25-49)	71.6%	28.0%
Older Adults (50-64)	78.2%	21.7%
Seniors (65+)	79.0%	21.0%

Shelter Use: Indigenous Peoples

- Indigenous Peoples continue to be overrepresented in Canada's emergency shelters

- While Indigenous Peoples represent about **5%** of the Canadian population, the percentage of shelter users reporting Indigenous ancestry is approximately **31%**

- Indigenous shelter use varies widely by region, from less than 5% in some suburban communities to over 90% in many northern communities. In each of the communities where data are available, Indigenous Peoples are over-represented in homeless shelters compared to the overall population

Shelter Use: Veterans

- Shelter use by Veterans was first collected in 2014

- In 2016, **1.5%** of shelter users—an estimated 2,000 people—reported having served in the military

- This is down from nearly 3,000 (2.2%) in 2014

Shelter Use: Immigrants, Refugees and Temporary Residents

- In 2016, over 5,000, or **4.4%**, of shelter users reported that they were not Canadian citizens. This includes:
    - 3,609 permanent residents or immigrants
    - 1,460 refugees
    - 717 temporary residents (student, work or visitor visa)

- Compared to 2014 , the number of permanent residents or immigrants using shelters decreased by 1,400 while the number of refugees increased by almost 400

Note that data from immigrant/refugee shelters are not included in this analysis
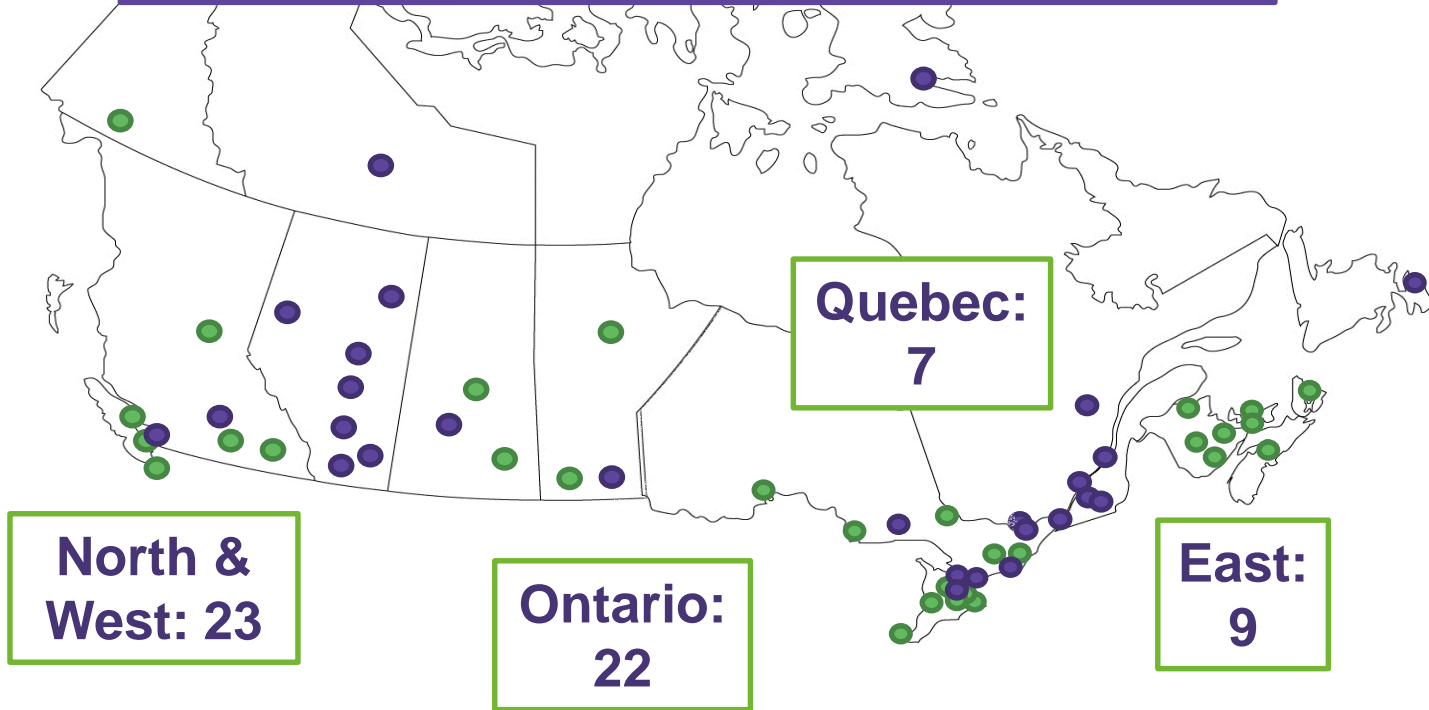
PIT COUNT 2016
32 Participating Communities

North & West: 11

Ontario: 13

East: 8

PIT COUNT 2018
61+ Participating Communities

Quebec: 7

North & West: 23

Ontario: 22

East: 9

National PiT Results

Are not available yet…

Data from all communities is expected by the end of 2018.

Some local results are available.

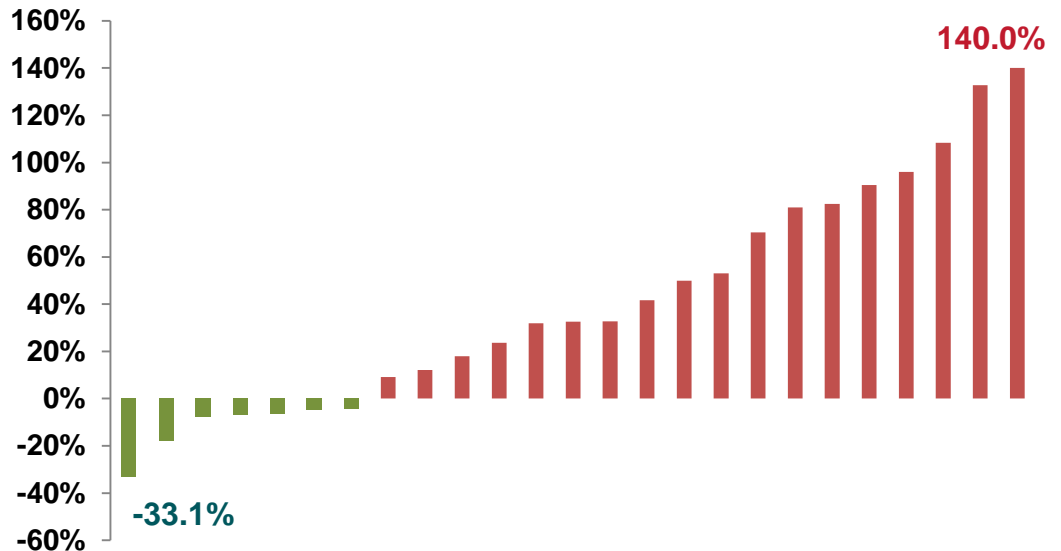Reviewed public reports on counts done in 24 communities. Where the data were reported and comparable, some trends emerge.

Select Community PiT Results: Enumeration

- Most communities have seen an increase over 2016, however…

  – Some of this may be a result of increased capacity to conduct counts. For many, 2016 was their first count.

  – Some communities moved from a January or February count to March or April.

Percent change in core enumeration 2016 to 2018 across 25 communities

140.0%
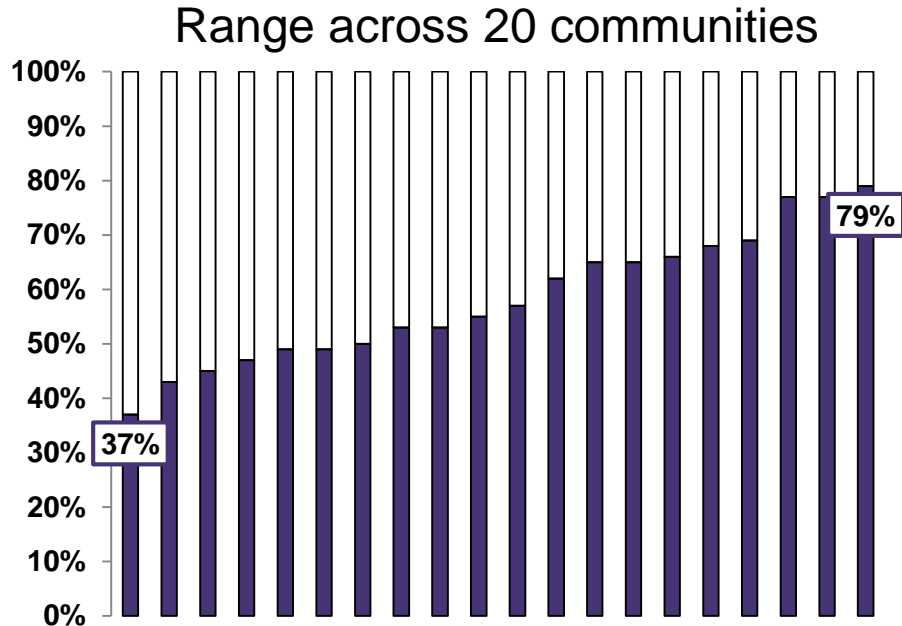
-33.1%

Point-in-Time Survey Data

A review of community results on:
- Chronic homelessness
- Shelter use in the past year
- Indigenous identity
- Newcomers
- Sexual Identity (Orientation)
- Age of first homelessness
  - Experience with foster care / group home

Select Community PiT Results
% experiencing chronic homelessness

Range across 20 communities

Chart showing percentage experiencing chronic homelessness across 20 communities, ranging from **37%** to **79%**.
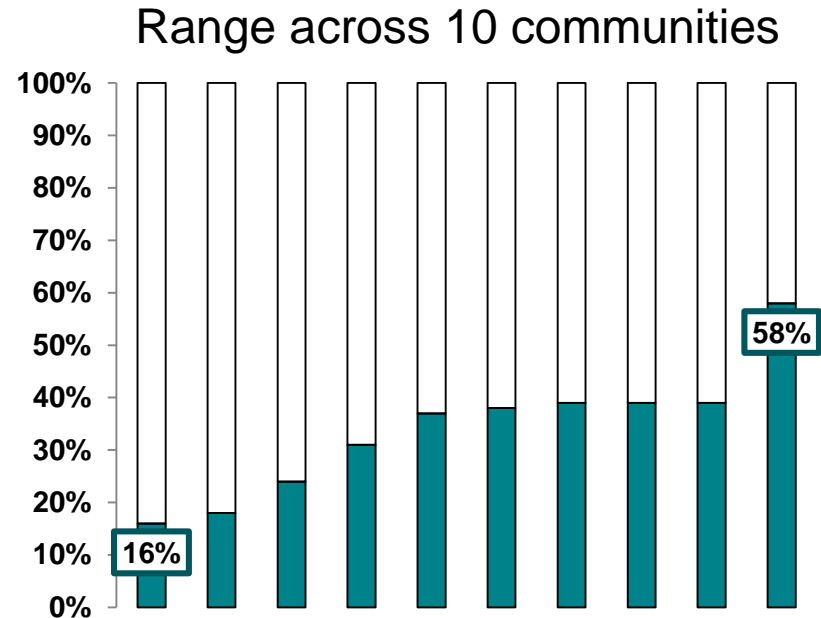
- Similar to 2016, most communities had over half of survey respondents reporting chronic homelessness (median = 56% across 20 communities)

- Much higher than is seen in shelter data and suggests that a shelter-based measure undercounts chronicity.
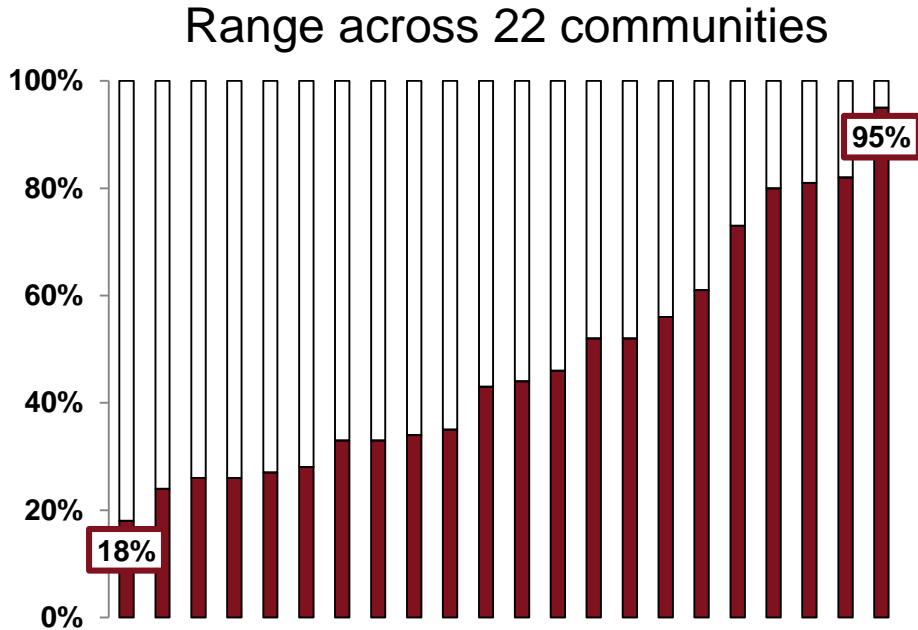
Select Community PiT Results
% who did not use a shelter in the past year

- As in 2016, a sizeable minority of respondents reported not using a shelter over the past year (median = 38% across 10 communities).

- Some are experiencing hidden homelessness and may not be captured in systems data if they do not rely on other services.

Range across 10 communities

Select Community PiT Results
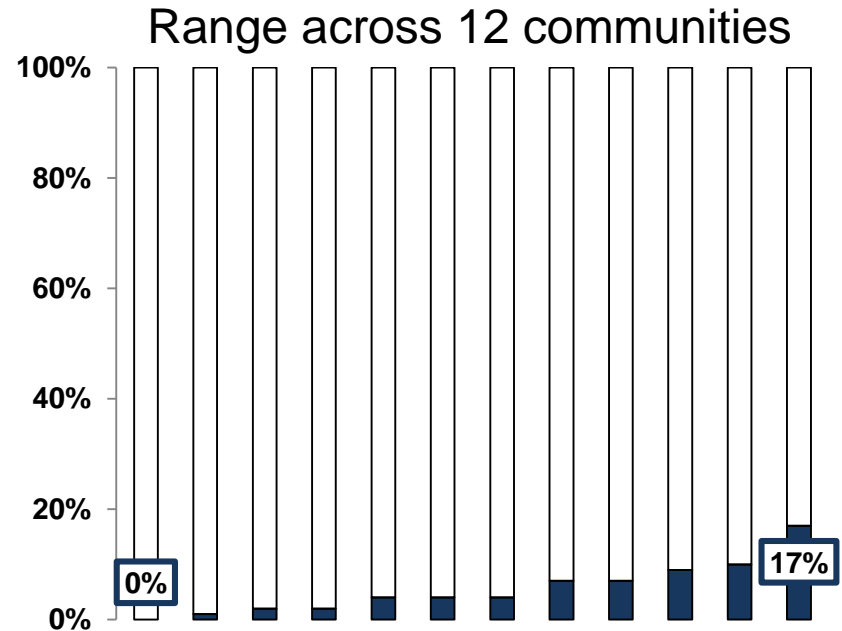## % who identify as Indigenous

Range across 22 communities

- Respondents who identify as Indigenous represent a significant proportion of people experiencing homelessness across the country (median = 44% across 22 communities)

- While the proportion of Indigenous respondents is higher in the west and north, an overrepresentation is seen across all communities.
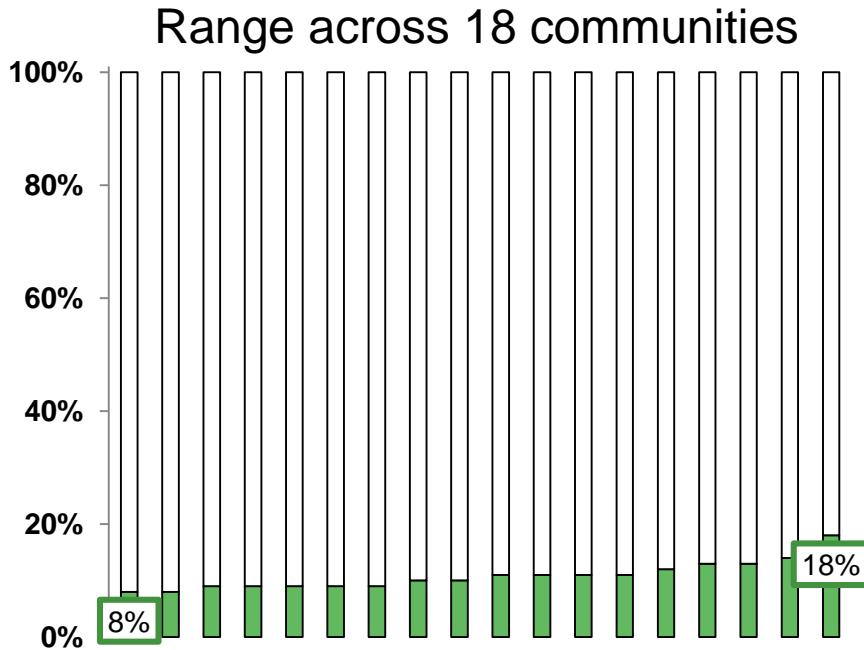
Select Community PiT Results
% Newcomers

- There is significant variability in the proportion of newcomer respondents (median = 4% across 12 communities).

- While the absolute numbers are small, newcomers are overrepresented in some larger communities located in southern areas.

Range across 12 communities

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

0%

17%

Select Community PiT Results
% LGBQ2S

Range across 18 communities
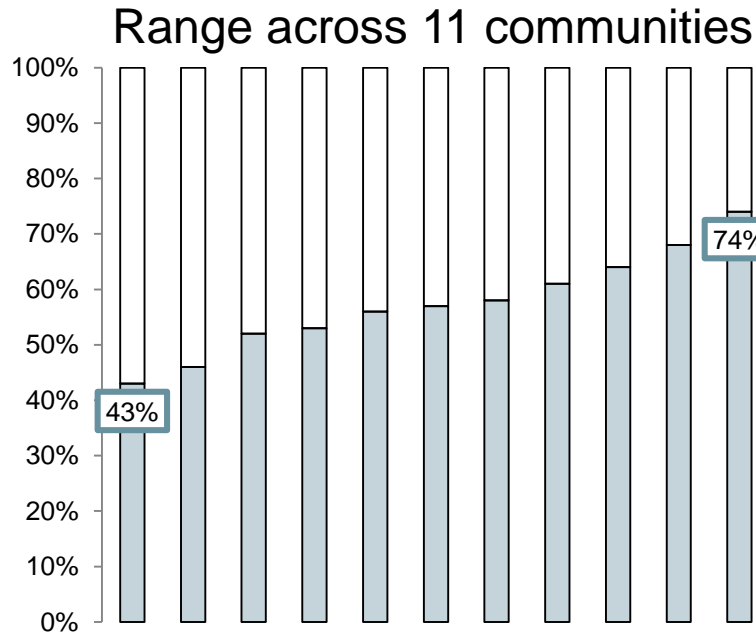

- Proportion of respondents was fairly consistent across communities (median = 11% across 18 communities). Some, but not all, noted that the proportion was higher among youth.

- This points to an overrepresentation. Statistics Canada (2015) estimated that 1.7% of the general population would identify as gay or lesbian and 1.3% as bisexual.

- Note, the core PiT count survey had a separate question on gender identity, which included transgender as a response option. The results are not presented here.

Select Community PiT Results
First homeless as youth (< 25)
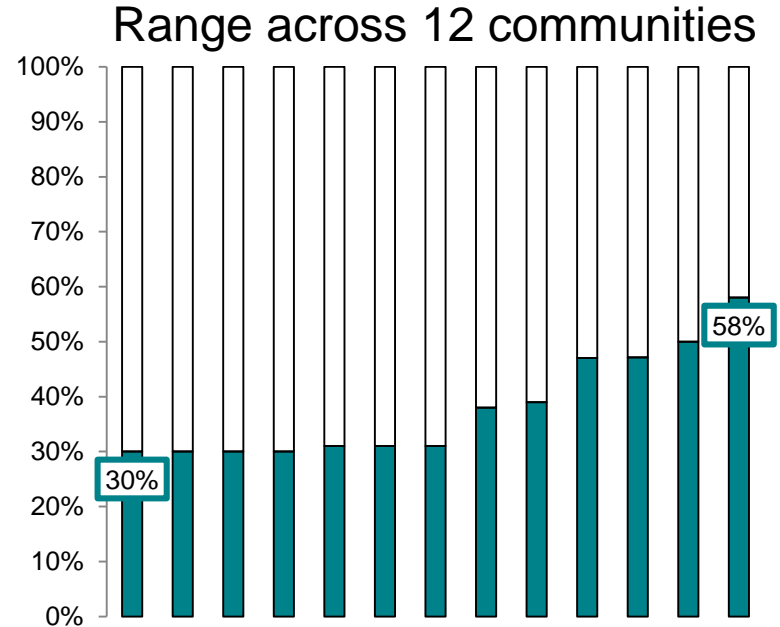
Range across 11 communities

- In all but two of eleven communities, a majority of respondents first became homeless as youth under the age of 25 (median = 57% across 11 communities).

- Some also noted that the proportion was still high among older adults and seniors, raising the possibility of a lifetime of insecure housing and homelessness.

Select Community PiT Results
% with experience in child welfare

- While this is not a national question, it was included by many communities.

- Experience in foster care or group homes was cited by 30 to 58% of respondents across 12 communities (median = 31%).

- Some reports noted that the experience was more common among respondents who identified as Indigenous.

Range across 12 communities

National PiT Results
Findings to come

- Examining the range across communities reinforces the importance of a community-based approach, as in many cases the findings in each community differ.
- A national PiT Report is expected in early 2019 after all of the community data is received.
- In addition to the analyses discussed during this presentation, it is expected to include findings related to:
  - Changes between 2016 and 2018
  - Findings by community type and region
  - Patterns of homelessness experienced by different populations (e.g. Indigenous peoples, youth, families, veterans)
  - Migration between communities and across provinces and territories
  - More information about homelessness experienced by refugees and refugee claimants
  - Reasons for housing loss and sources of income
  - And more!

Enhancing national data

How many people experience homelessness over the course of a year, particularly those **outside of the shelter system** who do not access services.

Annual estimates of **chronic homelessness**, with an **agreed-upon definitions/measurement**

Fluctuations in shelter capacity, including seasonal changes and extreme weather shelters/out-of-the-cold programs

Experiences that precede or follow homelessness: What happens to individuals before they experience homelessness and after they exit? Are there common factors that predict homelessness or those that predict housing stability?

Enhancing national data

Migration across the country: Understanding drivers and outcomes of migration. Are people experiencing homeless upon arrival or before leaving their home community?

Defining the Homelessness Sector: Understanding the sector in a community as a community of care. How are systems organized and are there best practices that can be shared?

Labour data on the sector: How many people work in the sector and in what positions? What are the human resource challenges? What are the needs for training and skills development (e.g. financial, IT literacy, emerging needs)?

Reaching Home and Data

Coordinated Access

- A key shift will be the move away from data held by organizations to **data held at a community level**, including the use of coordinated data systems (e.g. HIFIS).
- With greater coverage within a community, it is possible to have a **more comprehensive picture of the system**. It will provide communities with tools to support system planning, track progress, and identify inflows to homelessness to inform prevention efforts.

Community Progress Reports (Outcomes)

- There will also be a move away from funding targets and restrictions to a **community-wide outcomes** model that focuses on the performance of the system as a whole, with elements that are reported publicly.
- These local-level data portraits will contribute to the national portrait.

Discussion

Discussion 1: National Data

- What should be included in the national portrait of homelessness?
- What data do we need to be able to paint that portrait? What is available now and what is missing?

Discussion 2: Local Data

- What data do communities need to work towards an end to homelessness? E.g. for planning, providing services, measurement, etc.
- What data-related challenges do communities experience?

Bridging the gaps: Possible ways forward

Cross-system data sharing

- Much of the data needed to fill the knowledge gaps at a local level are held by other systems.
- Is it possible to share data across systems in a way that protects individual privacy rights and legislation?

Open data

- Access to federally-held homelessness data is currently limited to a small number of analysts at ESDC.
- Statistics Canada Research Data Centres offer a means to make the data more available, while keeping restrictions in place to protect individual privacy

Bridging the gaps:
Possible ways forward

Data linkages

- Statistics Canada has the capacity to link administrative data sets to build an understanding of how individuals interact with other systems

- Crucially, this includes interactions *before* a person experiences homelessness. This would enable a range of analyses:
  - Identifying risk factors in order to work upstream to resolve them. Where are there opportunities to intervene early to prevent homelessness?
  - Understanding system exits: when people disappear from shelter data, are they housed, are they sleeping outside, did they move to another community, are they incarcerated or hospitalized, or have they died?
  - Using system interactions to get a more complete picture of the cost of homelessness

Thank you

Questions?

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