
NANAIMO COMMUNITY REPORT

Everyone Counts: 2023 Point-in-Time Count

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

January 2024



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in BC's
Interior, Lower Mainland, Central
& Northern Vancouver Island



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mid-Island
Mental health for all

This project is funded by
the Government of Canada.

Canada 

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment	4
Executive Summary	6
Context	8
PiT Count Methodology	10
<i>Limitations of the PiT Count</i>	10
<i>Magnet Event</i>	11
<i>Volunteers</i>	11
<i>What is Enumeration?</i>	12
<i>Nanaimo Enumeration 2023</i>	13
Survey Results Section 1: Responses to Reaching Home Core questions	14
<i>Where did you stay last night?</i>	14
<i>In the last year have you stayed at...?</i>	14
<i>What gender do you identify with?</i>	15
<i>Age and Gender distribution</i>	16
<i>How would you describe your sexual orientation?</i>	16
<i>Did you have family members or anyone else who stayed with you last night?</i>	17
<i>Duration of Homelessness</i>	17
<i>In total how much time have you been homeless in the last 12 months?</i>	17
<i>How long have you been homeless in the last 3 years?</i>	18
<i>What age were you when you first experienced homelessness?</i>	18
<i>How long have you been in Nanaimo?</i>	19
<i>What community did you come from?</i>	19
<i>Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?</i>	20
<i>Do you identify as First Nation, Métis Inuit or have Indigenous Ancestry?</i>	20
<i>In addition to your response what racial groups do you identify with (e.g. Black, South Asian, White, etc.)?</i>	21
<i>What are your sources of income?</i>	21
<i>What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?</i>	22
<i>Was your most recent housing loss related to an eviction?</i>	23
<i>How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing)?</i>	23
<i>As a child were you ever in foster care or a group home?</i>	24
<i>Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges?</i>	26
Survey Results Section 2: Responses to Optional Community specific questions	27
<i>What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?</i>	27
<i>Have you accessed the Emergency Room in the last 12 months/ How many times?</i>	28
<i>Have you accessed the hospital in the last 12 months?</i>	28
<i>In the past 12 months have you Interacted with Police (tickets, arrests, searches)?</i>	29

<i>In the past 12 months have you: been to prison or jail?</i>	30
<i>What is the highest level of education you completed?</i>	31
<i>Do you have a need for services related to...?</i>	31
<i>Do you want to get into permanent housing?</i>	32
<i>What are some of the ways we can solve homelessness?</i>	33
Summary & Conclusions of the Nanaimo 2020 Pit Count	33
Appendix A: Definitions of Homelessness	35
Appendix B: 2018 Age and Gender Distribution.....	36
Appendix C: Year-on-Year comparison: What are your sources of income?.....	37
Appendix D: What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?.....	38
Appendix E: What other services would be helpful to you? 2016 and 2018 Reponses	39
Appendix F Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have North American Indigenous ancestry?.....	40
Appendix G: Where did you live before you came here?.....	41
Appendix H: Unsheltered Survey.....	42

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this work took place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, the traditional lands of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. We recognize the relationship between the historical and ongoing colonization of these lands, and experiences of displacement and homelessness.

Since time immemorial, the Snuneymuxw People have resided in Snuneymuxw Territory as the first peoples, sustaining their lands, resources, culture, and spiritual way of life.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed their invaluable time, support, and expertise to the 2023 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count & Survey, including all the organizations, community partners, sponsors, supporters, and 80 volunteers. We would like to extend a special thank-you to all of those experiencing the challenges of homelessness who took the time to share their personal and often difficult experiences, to contribute to local, provincial, and national efforts to reduce homelessness.

The fourth consecutive Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count in Nanaimo was again funded by the Government of Canada's *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy* (now operating under the auspices of Infrastructure Canada) which is administered locally by United Way BC and the Nanaimo Community Advisory Board. PiT Counts are only possible through the efforts of a great many people. Local housing and homelessness partner agencies provided invaluable practical and technical support to the PiT Count.

This year's count was led by a Coordinating Committee headed by staff from CMHA Mid-Island including Ben Schell, Jennifer Garceau, Colleen Marchese, Dana Lester, Brittany Dean, Keilidh Muise and Sandra Eadie (CMHA Peer Worker) who provided invaluable input, as well as Emma Irving from the Ministry of Social development and Poverty Reduction, Andrew Thornton (Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization) and Mark Beaver (Unitarian Shelter), who was Indigenous Lead for the project.

And a very special mention to the entire team of Nanaimo Community Safety Officers (CSOs) who dedicated a huge amount of time and effort to help coordinate the PiT Count as well as conducting surveys with Nanaimo's unhoused: Special thanks to CSOs Andrew James, Adam Collishaw and Leah Monteith who participated in the Coordinating Committee.

We were also provided with extensive administrative and financial management support from CMHA Mid-Island with a special mention to Destiny Herman and Jason Harrison. And as always, the United Way BC as Community Entity for the Reaching Home program was instrumental in the coordination and implementation of the count. Thanks to UWBC staff and management Julie Rushton, Vicky Trill, Terra Kaethler and Kristin Lloyd. Thanks also to Stephen D'Souza (E.D., HSABC on Behalf of BC

Housing) for arranging the data input service that transferred the hard copy survey into a nice and neat excel spreadsheet.

And thanks, as well as to the steadfast support for this project from Senior CSO, Barry Hornby and Dave Laberge, Manager: Community Safety, City of Nanaimo. I'd also like to thank for a second consecutive time Ben Geselbracht and Erin Hemmens for their above the call of duty efforts and walking the talk. Thanks also to Hilary Eastmure, Christy Wood, and Lisa Bhopalsingh for volunteering on the day. Gael Foster and Wenxin Chen at Island Health graciously provided us with data to support our Administrative count of sheltered homelessness.

Over 80 volunteers from community and service agencies conducted surveys around the city and at our Magnet Event at St Paul's Church. A massive shout out to the folks from *Jonny's Barber Shop* who provided free haircuts to more than 30 individuals on the day. Thanks also to staff from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction who completed applications for replacement of government identification which enabled people's social assistance to start flowing again.

Many thanks for St Paul's generously allowing us to use their building for the Magnet Event on April 27th where a host of Volunteers provided food and supports to over 250 community members.

This report is dedicated to the achievable goals of preventing and ending homelessness in our community.

Executive Summary

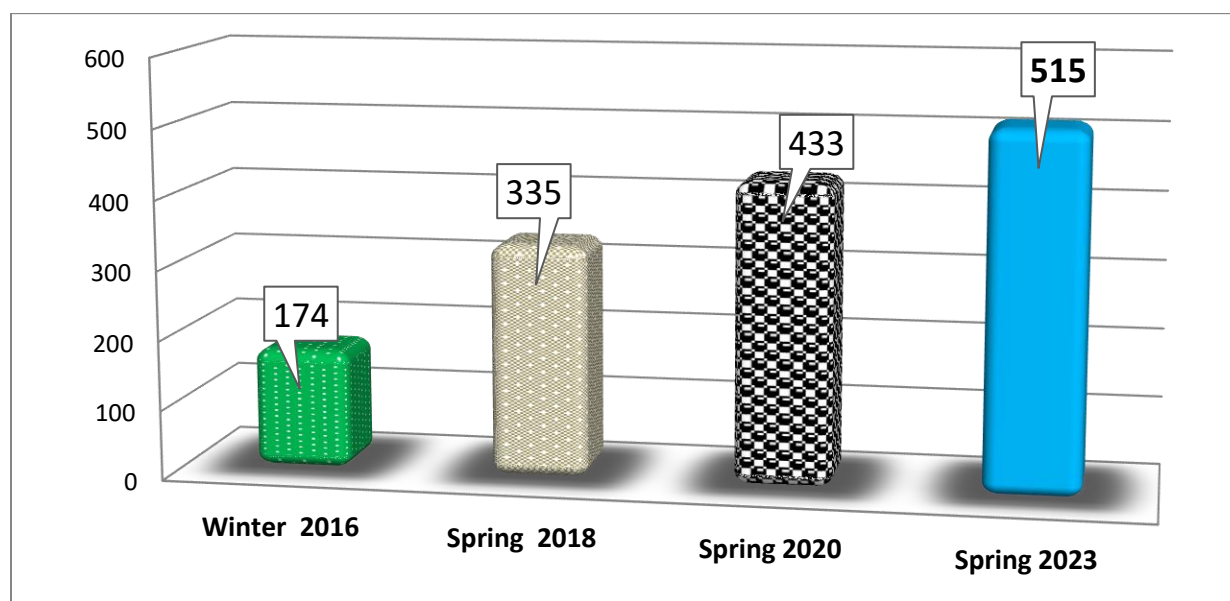
The nation-wide Reaching Home Coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count, conducted bi-annually, is intended to count the minimum number of people who are experiencing homelessness in a community over one 24-hour period.

SURVEY SHOWS ALMOST 20% INCREASE IN HOMELESSNESS

This year's PiT Count enumeration results in Nanaimo show that the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness on April 27th, 2023, was 515. This represents an increase of 18.9% from 2020.¹ The overall patterns of the Nanaimo 2023 data are largely consistent with those from the three previous Coordinated Point-in-Time Counts.

The Nanaimo 2023 Point-in-Time Count was once again funded by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy and made possible due to the efforts of a great many people. In particular, the local housing and homelessness partner agencies provided direct staff support and have been instrumental in advocating on behalf of the unhoused in Nanaimo for many years.¹

Nanaimo 2023 Homelessness Enumeration



The 2023 survey contained some new questions that will provide insights on issues affecting those experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo (See Appendix H). And some questions from previous surveys were dropped due to local and national feedback on previous PiT Counts.

ALMOST 80% HAVE NO ACCESS TO SHELTER OF ANY KIND

On the day of the 2023 Count 78.4% (404/515) of those enumerated were 'unsheltered', that is, staying in public spaces, encampments, vehicles, makeshift shelters or in places not intended for human habitation. The percentage of Unsheltered represents an increase from 2020 and a return to close to the 2018

¹ See the 2018 Community Report for Nanaimo here: https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/community-social-service-programs/nanaimo-pit-count-report-2018_final_june-6.pdf

level of 83% in the proportion of unsheltered. This figure is significant as it far higher almost any other designated community that conducts PiT Counts in Canada. For example, Victoria's 2023 PiT Count shows that only 14.5% (242/1665) of those enumerated were 'sleeping rough' or in places unfit for human habitation.² The high number of unsheltered homeless is one sign of the low number of emergency and or other types of shelter spaces in Nanaimo.

OVER 80% HAVE BEEN IN NANAIMO FOR A YEAR OR MORE

Respondents collectively reported that they have lived in Nanaimo anywhere from 5-50 years or for their entire lives. In fact, 82.5 % (374/453) of respondents said they had been in Nanaimo for more than 1 year.

Virtually none of the survey respondents in Nanaimo are immigrants to Canada, recent or otherwise. (Only 6 respondents in the 2023 Survey identified as being immigrants to Canada and those have been here anywhere from 10 to 50 years.) In short, people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo, are 'from Nanaimo'.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE CONTINUE TO BE OVERREPRESENTED IN THE DATA ON HOMELESSNESS

Exactly one-third, 33% (151/453) of those surveyed identified themselves as First Nations, Métis or having Indigenous Ancestry which is the same ratio as the 2020 data. Yet Indigenous, Metis, Inuit, First Nations individuals only make up about 6% of Nanaimo population. Though it should be acknowledged that the survey was not conducted on reserve, so these figures are also clearly an undercount. The Coordinating Committee recommends and will support an Indigenous led and focussed enumeration.

OVER ONE-THIRD REPORT MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS DUE TO AN EVICTION

When asked a specific question about eviction 35.1 % of respondents (or 159/453) reported that their most recent housing loss had been due an eviction. Reasons for eviction vary quite widely but obviously there needs to be more focus on eviction mitigation and or prevention given that the proportion reported is so high.

The Reaching Home Coordinated Point-in-Time Count, conducted bi-annually, is intended to count the *minimum* number of people who are homeless in a community over a 24-hour period. As the Reaching Home survey methodology identifies only the minimum numbers of those experiencing homelessness, we can assume that many more individuals were not located or were not able to come forward on the day of the count. The numbers of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo, over time, would likely be much higher. In fact, Island Health and Canadian Mental Health Association and other Outreach workers as well as Nanaimo Community Safety Officers all agree that, based on their ongoing work with homeless populations, the total number in Nanaimo is likely between 800-1000.

² Page 5, 2023 Greater Victoria Point-In-Time Homeless Count and Housing Needs Survey. Accessed At: <https://communitycouncil.ca/victoria-point-in-time-count-2023/>

Context

The fourth Nationally Coordinated PiT Count to be conducted in Nanaimo in 2023 was funded through *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy*. It's worth noting that Nanaimo was one of only 5 Designated Communities to be able to conduct a PiT Count in 2020. The 2020 Count was intended to involve the collaboration of over 60 Reaching Home funded 'Designated Communities' (DC) across Canada. Unfortunately, as COVID19 took hold and governments implemented public health and safety measures most communities in Canada were unable to conduct their PiT Counts.

In 2016, the Government of Canada conducted the first nation-wide Coordinated Point-in-Time Count (PiT Count). The count was used to identify overall trends, themes, challenges, and characteristics of homelessness in Canada. It helped to clarify service needs at a local, provincial, and federal level. The PiT Count, conducted bi-annually, is intended to count the minimum number of people who are homeless in a community over a 24-hour period. This year's count was led by staff from Canadian Mental Health Association Mid-Island Branch (CMHA), in partnership with staff from numerous service agency, City of Nanaimo Community Safety Officers (CSOs) and the United Way BC (UWBC).

A quick review of Reaching Home PiT Counts that were done in 2021, 2022 and 2023 shows that many communities used non-standardized approaches to accommodate public health restrictions during the height of COVID's spread. Thus, there's a high degree of variance in the data from those PiT Counts. However, it is also the case that in 2023 there was a harmonized effort to conduct both federally and provincially sponsored PiT Counts in BC at the same time to ensure, at least, provincially consistent data.

Because Nanaimo has conducted 4 consecutive and methodologically consistent PiT Counts, we have solid baseline data on homelessness that is not available in most other communities in Canada. (However, many communities do have good baseline data from *other* sources such as those that have managed to create 'quality By-Name Lists'³).

Previously the PiT Count was supported by The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition. The Coalition has been dormant since 2021 but the Nanaimo Community Advisory Board (NCAB) continues to fund and support Reaching Home programs and related activities.

The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, formed in 2015, includes several non-profit agencies, federal and provincial government representatives, faith groups and residents of the community. The Coalition was preceded by the 'Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness' which has been working to reduce homelessness in Nanaimo since 2001.

Community agencies provide a range of services for those experiencing homelessness; Emergency Shelter beds for men and women, and for extreme weather conditions, transitional and supportive housing, free or low-cost meal programs at breakfast, lunch and dinner, outreach support to homeless individuals, harm reduction services such as a needle exchange program, rent subsidies, and more. The Provincial Government through BC Housing, the Federal Government through Service Canada, and the local government through the City of Nanaimo, Island Health, the Regional District, and local non-profit organizations provide funding for the above noted programs and services, complemented by the charitable donations of Nanaimo residents.

³ See *Community Progress* Built for Zero Canada: <https://bfzcanada.ca/community-progress/>

Reaching Home funded communities conducted PiT Counts across Canada from March 1 to April 30 of 2023 to apply a national lens to the issue of homelessness. The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition has, since 2005, attempted to track the number of homeless. However, the methods employed have varied over time and, as such, comparison with numbers prior to the 2016 HPS PiT Count should be made with caution, though they do provide some context for analysing the longer-term trends in homelessness.

“A CITY AT A CROSSROADS...”

The City of Nanaimo is experiencing sustained population growth and was the fifth fastest growing city in Canada between 2016-2021.⁴ Recent estimates put its 2022 population at around 103,500 people and forecasts anticipate Nanaimo will reach 140,000 by 2046.⁵

Housing prices in Nanaimo peaked in 2022 and retreated a bit in 2023 but remain out of reach for many. The average price for a single-family home in Nanaimo was \$892,811 in December 2023, up 10 per cent from the previous month and 15 per cent from December 2022.⁶ The rental market continues to be as equally unaffordable. Among purpose-built rental units, Nanaimo’s total median rent *increased by 86%* over the past ten years – from \$725 (2012) to \$1,350 (2022). Rents for two-bedroom units experienced the greatest increase during this period – doubling from \$800 to \$1,600 between 2012 and 2022.⁷ And ‘affordability’ is not only an issue for those on the lower end of income scales. A recent report by the National Housing Advocate makes clear that across Canada even households with an annual income more than \$100,000 are struggling to maintaining housing stability and housing ownership is essentially out of reach for many millions of Canadians.⁸

While strides have been made in the development of non-market, supportive and or affordable housing Nanaimo’s recent Housing Needs Report recommends that about 500 non-market units be built each year in Nanaimo over the next 10 years.⁹ However, this provincially mandated assessment does not include homelessness numbers in its calculation of need. This approach to assessing housing need is not unique to Nanaimo. While non-market housing may address issues of affordability there may be some need to reconcile homelessness data within the Housing Needs Assessment.

Net migration to Nanaimo is part of the city’s growth story :27% of the population (24,770 people) moved to Nanaimo between 2016 and 2021 – a greater share than the previous five-year period when only 21% had recently moved to Nanaimo. Among the migrants, the majority moved to Nanaimo from elsewhere in BC (64%), 24% from another province, and 13% internationally.¹⁰

⁴ Page 1: *Nanaimo State of The Economy Report 2023*. Accessed at:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjIxbiA-faDAXVVCTQIHVpCCogQFnoECBUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nanaimo.ca%2Fdocs%2Fdoing-business%2Feconomic-development%2F2023-NanaimoStateEconomy-Web&usg=AOvVaw2SDcoOeaaC6nSbl38_-L_N&opi=89978449

⁵ <https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR220211CensusDataHighlightsRecordGrowthInNanaimo.html>

⁶ <https://nanaimonewsnow.com/2024/01/15/nanaimo-real-estate-market-report-december-2023/>

⁷ Page 28: *City of Nanaimo Housing Needs Report (2023)*. Accessed at:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjiz-iQ-_aDAXWgMDQIHsXDBoIQFnoECBEQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nanaimo.ca%2Fdocs%2Fsocial-culture-environment%2Fhousing-needs-report-may-2023.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2F-Y3QKFAFO1kp08uv3y5d&opi=89978449

⁸ *A Human Rights-Based Calculation of Canada’s Housing Shortages (2023)*

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/human-rights-based-calculation-canada%E2%80%99s-housing-shortages>

⁹ Op cit. Page 38: *City of Nanaimo Housing Needs Report*.

¹⁰ Op cit. Page 18: *City of Nanaimo Housing Needs Report*.

While housing and homelessness are affecting all corners of the country Nanaimo has one of the highest ratios of homelessness per capita of any community in Canada, especially among ‘medium-sized’ communities of 100,000. Using the figure of 103,500 and this year’s PiT Count Enumeration of 515 Nanaimo’s per capita ratio is 497/100,000. By comparison, and often cited as having the most severe homelessness issues, the City of Vancouver’s ratio for 2023 is reported as 364/100,000.¹¹

PiT Count Methodology

The National PiT Count methodology was used to determine the minimum number of individuals experiencing homelessness within a 24-hour period (Appendix A: Definitions of Homelessness). These include ‘sheltered’ and ‘unsheltered’ individuals. ‘Unsheltered’ homeless includes anyone living in public spaces, parks, vehicles, and any other place unfit for human habitation. ‘Sheltered’ homeless can include anyone in emergency shelters, transitional shelters, safe houses with no stable or long-term residence to return to. (Individuals experiencing ‘hidden homelessness’ are categorized as those in temporary or precarious housing e.g. ‘couch surfing’). We also draw from Systems data in corrections and medical health facilities.

Surveys were conducted at multiple unsheltered locations where people are known to habituate, including encampments and parks. And we conducted well over 200 surveys at our ‘Magnet Event’ at St Paul’s Church. In addition to the count, community agencies involved in serving the homeless were invited to submit their observations and comments to provide further background on the homelessness situation in Nanaimo.

Limitations of the PiT count

PiT counts are designed to measure the *minimum* number of those experiencing homelessness in a community on a given day. It is not possible to identify the exact number of people experiencing homelessness from a Point-in-Time survey. PiT Counts are not able to measure those individuals who may be temporarily housed on the specific day of the count, but who may be cycling in and out of homelessness. This includes precariously housed individuals who do not have any kind of secure housing contract, yet they are able to find means of temporary shelter for uncertain periods of time (e.g. “couch surfing”, “staying with a friend”).

Furthermore, while every effort was made to locate and survey individuals throughout the downtown core and other parts of Nanaimo, it is not possible to cover every location, and there will be many more individuals who were not surveyed. As our understanding increases of the homeless situation in Nanaimo, our ability to identify the conditions and related needs of people experiencing homelessness will improve.

¹¹ Slide 6: 2023 Homeless Count Data: Vancouver. *Data from the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count Report -Luma Native Housing Society –Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy (2023)* Accessed at: https://council.vancouver.ca/20231031/documents/regu20231031p1_2023_Homeless_Count.pdf And, Page 19: Homelessness Services Association of BC (2023). *2023 Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver*. Prepared for the Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity. Vancouver, BC. Accessed at https://hsa-bc.ca/_Library/2023_HC/2023_Homeless_Count_for_Greater_Vancouver.pdf

The PiT count survey provides *a picture of general trends* of homelessness and the characteristics of those who experience homelessness in a community. The data provided should be read as such, as identifying various *trends in the composition and backgrounds* of the homeless population. Thus, it becomes possible to compare with some confidence the 2023 PiT Count numbers with the previous count, to make comments about what is going on. This in turn provides a basis upon which we can compare our data with other communities across BC and Canada where PiT counts have been done.

In British Columbia considerable effort has been put into harmonizing the Federal and Provincial PiT Count survey questions and data collection methodology. The BC and Federal Survey, questions and methodology are now almost identical though still contain some differences.

Magnet Event

A magnet event is a strategy used to draw people to a common place on a given day to share information and carry out the PiT Count enumeration for those willing to participate. On the day of the Nanaimo PiT Count we were lucky enough to have clear skies and warmth. To create awareness of the event the PiT Count Coordinating Team posted flyers around Nanaimo to advertise the Magnet Event and we provided information flyers to agency staff to distribute directly to encampments around Nanaimo. We made our partner agencies aware of the upcoming event and provided advertising to raise awareness of the event among service users. This year we had the support of United BC's "Ivolunteer" platform to recruit and manage volunteers. While not without some issues this method made the management of volunteers much more straightforward than previously.

Our Magnet Event at St. Paul's Church had the intended effect of drawing people to a key survey site where they could receive free services and participate in the survey. The Magnet Event was very well attended and we provided food for and some access to services to over 250 community members. Survey respondents and anyone who chose to attend had access to various services including a donations table (which had clothing, and other life necessities), hot food and beverages. Service Canada and Revenue Canada provided direct service to many individuals on the day. And most importantly we were able to conduct over 200 surveys with community members.

Volunteers

PiT Counts cannot be conducted without volunteer labour from the local community, and people in Nanaimo were more than generous with their time. We held two training sessions for volunteers to provide guidance in conducting the survey and to prepare volunteers for their support roles in the 2023 Point in Time Count. More than 40 volunteers attended our training sessions. Several volunteers from various academic programs at Vancouver Island University donated their time. The entire team of Nanaimo Community Safety Officers as well as VIHA and CMHA conducted surveys at encampments, hard to reach areas, and known areas of homeless habitation around the city.

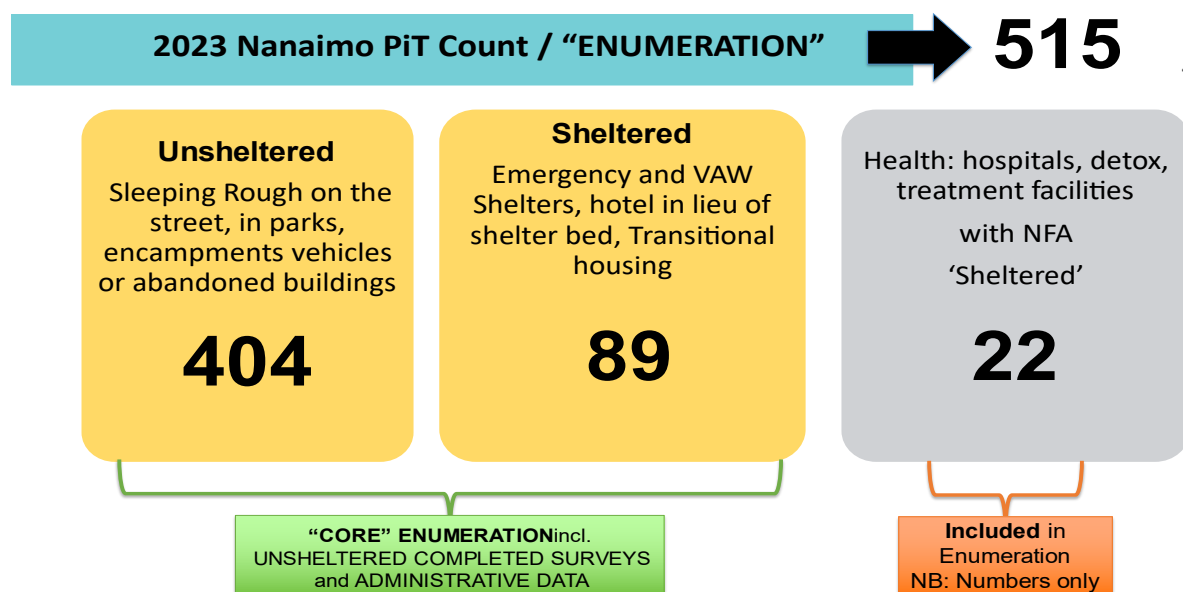
The survey is composed of, in essence, two sections: The first contains Standardized Questions drawn from the Reaching Home National database. The second contains several optional questions that address community specific interests. The responses to the Community Questions are discussed in Section 2 of the report. Everyone who completed a survey was provided with a 'care package' or a gift card for food.

What is 'Enumeration'?

A Point-in-Time Count is based on an 'enumeration' which provides a minimum estimate of the numbers of people experiencing homelessness on a single day. It is not reflective of every experience of homelessness throughout the year, as homelessness is a fluid state that people may move in and out of over time. Furthermore, these numbers are representative only of those reached by the PiT Count efforts, rather than reflective of all experiences of homelessness. The Point-in-Time Count enumeration data come from two places:

1. **Administrative data** from service providers: This includes only basic demographic data on individuals staying in emergency shelters (Cold Weather and Violence Against Women), Transition Houses, and 'systems' data, e.g. Hospitals and Corrections.
2. **The Housing Needs Survey:** Survey respondents who indicated they were staying in public spaces, parks, vehicles, and other conditions unfit for human habitation. This means only those reached by the PiT Count efforts were "counted," which was neither a comprehensive nor completely accurate count of all individuals who stayed in these specific types of living situations the night of April 27th.

The housing needs survey was conducted throughout the community on April 27th the *day after* the Administrative Data was gathered on April 26th. This means that some of the individuals surveyed were likely already enumerated. (This is why the Enumeration figure is always different from the total number of Survey Respondents in any given category). In the Reaching Home methodology any respondent who indicates that they stayed in a 'sheltered' situation is removed from the enumeration total. However, their *survey responses* are part of the data base *that describes the conditions of* homelessness. As such the Enumeration total is based upon the Administrative Data Totals added to the Number of Survey Respondents who indicated they had stayed in a public space, vehicle or other place unfit for human habitation plus Systems data which this year includes fifteen accompanying children (18 and under). The Enumeration does not include the Hidden Homeless, but the data from these survey respondents *is* included in the analysis of the trends and patterns of those experiencing homelessness.



Therefore, the total for the 2023 Nanaimo PiT Count 'Enumeration' was 515. This is the figure that should be cited when identifying the *minimum* number of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo. This figure is 18.9 % greater than 2020 (and almost 3 times the number of 174 from the 2016 PiT Count). It is important to note that *most* of the calculations, charts, and figures in the report (especially below) are based on the data from the 453 completed hard copy surveys.

Results Section 1: Responses to Reaching Home Core questions.

In total over five hundred Surveys were filled out on April 27th, but after removing duplicates and ineligible surveys ('data cleaning') the final number of completed valid surveys was 453.

Where did you stay last night? (n = 453)

Location	2023	2020	2018
Unsheltered: vacant building, makeshift shelter, tent, or shack, other unsheltered location unfit for human habitation, public spaces, or a vehicle, don't know	276	253	243
Note: plus ENCAMPMENTS (new for 2023)	123	n/a	n/a
TOTAL UNSHELTERED	399		
Sheltered: (Transitional Shelter / Housing, Emergency Shelter, Domestic Violence Against Women Shelter, Hotel Paid by City Program)	26	84	46
Jail, Prison, Hospital,	3	4	n/a
Hidden Homeless (Staying at someone else's place)	21	17	n/a
Unsure	4	n/a	n/a
TOTAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS	453	358	289

It is not surprising that a very high proportion 88.1% (399/453) of *survey respondents* reported that they had stayed outside in locations unfit for human habitation on the night before the Survey given that 80% of those *Enumerated* reported the same. Also, we were unable to conduct surveys in shelters this year as staff reported that it was often beyond their capacity to both run the shelters and conduct surveys (And many Shelter staff suggested that conducting a survey in a shelter was inappropriate and or traumatizing for shelter guests). However, we do have data on occupancy of shelters from Administrative data to support the enumeration.

In the last year have you stayed at (more than one answer possible)?

Location	n =	%
Outside/Sleep Rough	368	81.2
Emergency Shelters	265	58.5
Someone Else's place	222	49.0
Hospital	113	24.9
Vehicle	111	24.5
Hotel	89	19.6
Transitional Housing	57	12.6
Prison/Jail	52	11.5

This new question for 2023 replaces a previous one on Shelter use and draws attention to the reality that 'homelessness' is a complex and fluid process and not a static category or way of being. As can be seen by the responses over 80% of respondents had in the last 12 months spent some time 'sleeping

rough’ which matches almost exactly with the 2023 Enumeration ratio for the same category. This finding suggests a high degree of ‘internal validity’ for this PiT Count’s overall data set: Responses to different questions about the same phenomena are producing congruent and consistent results. In other words, the data from this survey, at least, is sound and not just a bunch of random responses.

The total number of shelter spaces of any description available on a given night in Nanaimo is approximately 110-120 between April 1 and October 31 and 150-160 in the colder months between November 1 and March 31. This seasonal variation is caused by the opening and closing of a temporary winter Emergency Shelter in Nanaimo which has for the last few years been run by the Nanaimo Family Life Association and Connective Nanaimo. It sheltered 40 individuals on most nights but closed on March 31st, which was a month before this year’s PiT Count. Nanaimo’s shelter capacity continues to be far below demonstrated need. Taking this year’s Enumeration figure of 515 we can see there is a short fall of about 350-400 shelter spaces on a nightly basis.

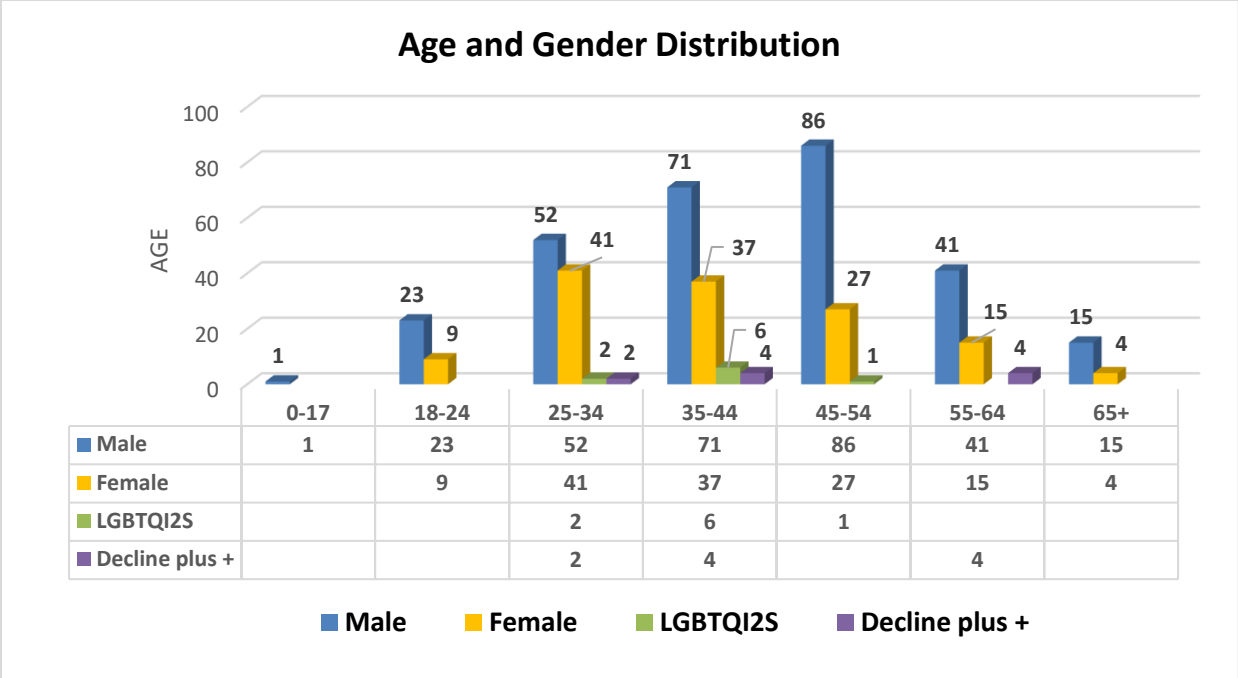
In contrast Victoria, a city four times the size of Nanaimo, reports from their 2023 PiT Count that only about 230 individuals sleep rough on a nightly basis.¹² Given this reality there are simply no options for many homeless individuals except to stay or sleep or camp in parks, doorways, and other public spaces.

What gender do you identify with?

	2023 (n=453)	%	2020 (n=375)	%	2018 (n=300)	%
Male	293	64.7	256	68.3%	205	68.3%
Female	133	29.4	107	28.5	87	29.0
Gender non-conforming	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
Trans man	1	0.2	0	0	0	0
Non-Binary	5	1.1	2	0.5	-	-
Two Spirit	1	0.2	3	0.8	1	0.3
Trans Female / Woman	3	0.7	1	0.3	1	0.3
Not Listed	2	0.4	1	0.3	-	-
Don’t know /Decline/ Blank	12	2.6	5	1.3	5	1.7

In terms of age and gender the outcomes of the 2023 survey are consistent with surveys from previous years and other communities administering the Reaching Home PiT Count.⁸ Approximately 65% of the respondents identified as male (a slight drop from previously), and 29% identified as female. Despite general trends across Canada of increasing homelessness for young people, only 7.3% (33/453) of survey respondents were under the age of 25 in Nanaimo (10% were under 25 years of age in both 2020 and 2018).

¹² Page 5, 2023 Greater Victoria Point-In-Time Homeless Count and Housing Needs Survey. Accessed At: <https://communitycouncil.ca/victoria-point-in-time-count-2023/>



In the 2023 Count 47.5 % of survey respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 which is a notable drop from 2020’s figure of 54.4%. And a further 21.7% (114/453) of respondents were found to be in the 45-54 age cohort suggesting the average age is increasing. This is borne out in the data on average age of all respondents. Since 2016, the first Canada-wide Coordinated Point-in-Time count, the *average* age of all respondents in Nanaimo has risen steadily from 39.7 years to 42.5 in 2023 (based on survey respondent’s age and *not* including dependent children).

The only notable shift in the overall age and gender distribution is the number of males between the ages of 45-54 which rose from 58 in 2020 to 86 in 2023. Otherwise, the age and gender distribution are almost identical to the 2020 survey data (See Appendix B).

**How would you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, lesbian, gay?
(Respondents shown a list)**

	2023	2020
Straight/Heterosexual	384	309
Gay	2	5
Lesbian	0	2
Bisexual	18	10
Two Spirit	1	1
Pansexual	-	4
Asexual	1	2

Queer	1	2
Not Listed	3	4
Multiple responses	-	1
Verbal Response/Other	4	-
Don't know	10	1
Decline to Answer	14	16
(blank)	10	1

In 2023 most respondents (84.8%), identified as straight / heterosexual and overall, 4.9% (22/453) identified as LGBTQI2S. This pattern is consistent with previous years. It has been demonstrated that the number of LGBTQI2S experiencing homelessness is underreported in PiT Count enumerations. And

LGBTQI2S youth are at a higher risk of homelessness and commonly experience homophobia and transphobia within the shelter and homeless serving systems.¹³

Did you have family members or anyone else who stayed with you last night?

	2023	2020	2018	2016
Stay with Family or Someone else	64	48	41	10
Alone	359	309	248	144
Blank/Decline/Unclear	30	1	0	20

Stay With...	Another adult	Partner	Children
2023	41	22	1
2020	19	25	14

Categories are overlapping and not exclusive.

There is a slight rise in the number of individuals staying together who represent about 13% of the total respondents. This data correlates with the expressed need in later responses for more couples and family- friendly shelters and or housing as one potential method for decreasing homelessness.

Duration of homelessness

One important measure of homelessness is the proportion of time in the previous year that people do not have access to safe and consistent accommodation.

In total how much time have you been homeless in the last 12 months?

	0 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	12 months +	No answer
2023 (n=453)	40	11	92	276	34
	8.8%	2.4%	20.3%	60.9%	7.5%
2020 (n=358)	37	36	63	213	6
	10.3%	10.1%	17.6	59.5	2.5%

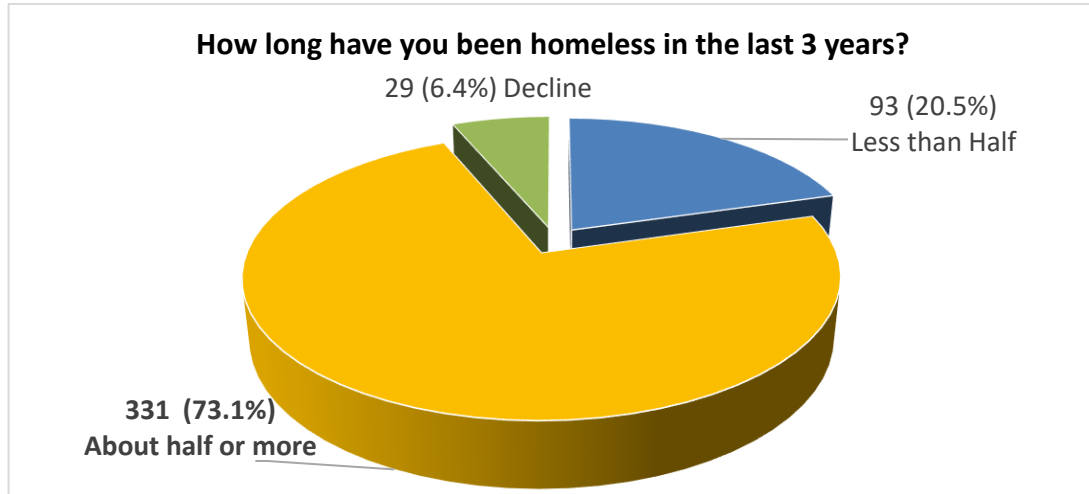
As we can see from the table above 81.2% of the respondents (368/453) in 2023 reported being homeless for six or more of the last 12 months. This is about a 4 % increase from the 2020 figure and importantly also represents an increase in the *absolute* number of chronically homeless from 276 to 368 (or a 33.3% increase). Continuing the trend from previous PiT Counts a *very high* percentage of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo would be considered “chronically” homeless:

Individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in

¹³ Page 388, Abramovich, A. (2013). No Fixed Address: Young, Queer, and Restless. In Gaetz, S., O’Grady, B., Buccieri, K., Karabanow, J., & Mar-solais, A. (Eds.), *Youth Homelessness in Canada: Implications for Policy and Practice* (387-403). Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press

the past year (i.e., have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation) and or have been homeless for 18 of the last 36 months.¹⁴

The 36-month measure is a new component of the Nanaimo PIT Count survey. We can see from the chart below that data from the broader definition of ‘chronically’ homeless produces similarly bleak results.



These two pieces of data, especially clearly, reaffirm the trend that homelessness in Nanaimo is worsening year on year.

What age were you when you first experienced homelessness?

	17 or less	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	No answer
2023 (n=453)	97	74	77	87	51	27	40
2020 (n=358)	80	60	84	61	43	20	10
2018 (n=289)	80	46	56	46	35	12	14

The data for 2023 shows that 37.7% of respondents report first experiencing homelessness under the age of 25 (21.4% in the 0-17 years’ cohort and 16.3 % in the 18-24 years’ cohort). This finding is consistent with the 2020 figure of 39.1%. The need for youth based and “upstream” interventions is an established focus in homelessness serving and prevention systems.¹⁵ It is likely that the number of youths is under counted as homeless youth tend to avoid engagement with mainstream agencies and systems.¹⁶ It seems advisable that a specific method and or mechanism(s) of counting youth who are experiencing homelessness is created in Nanaimo. Many communities employ separate surveys or events to count the number of youths who may be experiencing homelessness.¹⁷

¹⁴ See Employment and Social Development Canada. Homelessness Partnering Strategy Directives 2014-2019. Accessed at: <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/Eng/Communities/Homelessness/Funding/Directives.Shtml>. The definition of chronic homelessness was expanded to include those who have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days). See *National Housing Strategy* – adapted from the Canadian Definition of Homelessness developed by the Canadian Observatory of Homelessness.

¹⁵ See for example Making the Shift: Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab at <https://makingtheshiftinc.ca/>

¹⁶ Page 12, BC Non-Profit Housing Association. (2018). *2018 Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver*. Prepared for the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Entity. Burnaby, BC: Metro Vancouver.

¹⁷ Op cit., Page 4

How long have you been in Nanaimo?

- **72.0 % more than 5 years (326 / 453)**
- 79.5 % more than 2 years (360 / 453)
- **82.5 % more than 1 year (374 / 453)**

A very high percentage of respondents reported that they had lived in Nanaimo for most or all their lives. Indeed, the data amply demonstrates that most of the respondents report being “from Nanaimo”.

	0 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	1-5 years	5–50+ years	Always been here	Decline/no answer
2023	37	5	16	48	192	134	21
2020	17	7	10	63	132	123	6
2018	23	9	8	50	96	87	16

	Less than 1 Year	More than 1 year	No answer
2023 (n=453)	58	374	21
2020 (n = 358)	34	318	6
2018 (n=289)	40	233	16
2016 (n=174)	48	122	4

The evidence is entirely clear: People experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo are in large part *from* Nanaimo. This finding debunks the popular (and derogatory) myth that “homeless people come to Nanaimo for the weather, public services, free accommodation etc. ...”.

Significantly, there is no one community (in the 60 plus identified) or region, except Vancouver Island, that is the overwhelming source of inflow to Nanaimo¹⁸ and the highest single number coming from any one other individual community was Vancouver at 20.

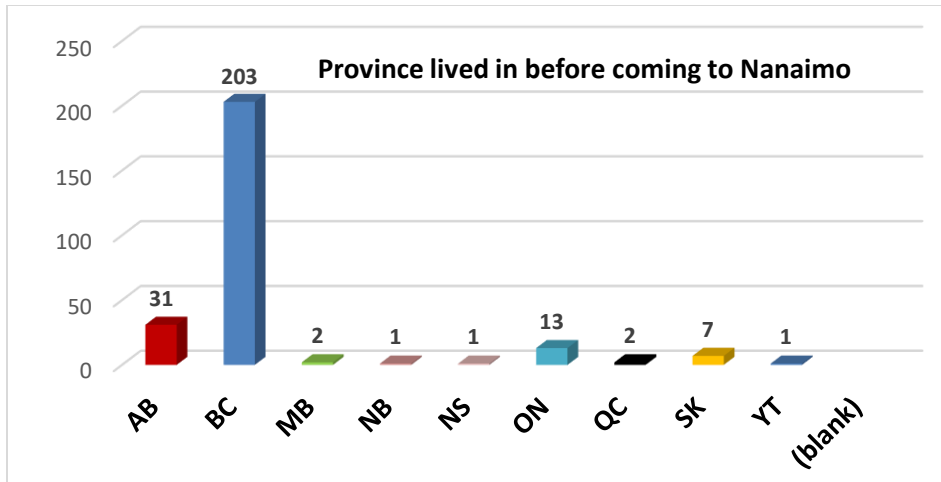
What community did you come from before you lived in Nanaimo? (top responses)

Community	2023	2020
Calgary	4	8
Campbell R.	7	-
Duncan	10	8
Edmonton	11	14
Kelowna	3	6
Ladysmith	5	6

Community	2023	2020
Nanaimo	23	6
Parksville	13	7
Port Alberni	8	-
Vancouver	20	14
Victoria	10	14

And not surprisingly most respondents who had not lived their entire lives in Nanaimo (n = 134) reported coming from other communities in British Columbia (see below graph). While the paths into or causes of homelessness are complex and driven by large-scale social and economic forces, homelessness is realized or manifest in the immediate locale.

¹⁸ See Appendix G for full list of responses from 2020: What community did you come from?



Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

	2023	2020	2018	2016
No	416	330	275	167
RCMP	1	(1)	3	0
Military	15	14	8	6
Both	0	(1)	0	0
Decline plus +	21	14	3	1

The number of respondents in the 2023 survey that reported service in the military or RCMP was 3.5% (very similar to 2020) and continues to remain low compared to national figures. The 2022 *Everyone Counts* Canada wide data shows that 5% of those experiencing homelessness had prior RCMP or military service experience.¹⁹

Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have North American Indigenous ancestry?

	First Nations	Inuit	Metis	Indigenous Ancestry	Not-Indigenous	Don't Know	Unclear / blank	Decline
2023 (n = 453)	107	2	20	22	279	3	12	8
%	23.6	0.4	4.4	4.9	61.6	0.7	2.6	1.8
2020 (n = 358)	56	1	33	29	231	5	1	2
%	15.6	0.3	9.2	8.1	64.5	1.4	0.3	0.6

The number of Indigenous respondents in the 2023 count represents exactly one third of all respondents (151/453) experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo. This figure is consistent with the 2020 and 2018 survey data. (See data from previous Nanaimo Reaching Home PIT Counts in Appendix F). Given that Indigenous and First Nations populations represent about 6% of Nanaimo's population they are highly

¹⁹ *Everyone Counts 2020-2022: Preliminary Highlights Report* Accessed at: <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/reports-rapports/pit-counts-dp-2020-2022-highlights-eng.html>

(statistically) overrepresented among the homeless population. The high levels of Indigenous homelessness are based on a combination of structural factors that are only beginning to be addressed at local, national, and provincial levels.

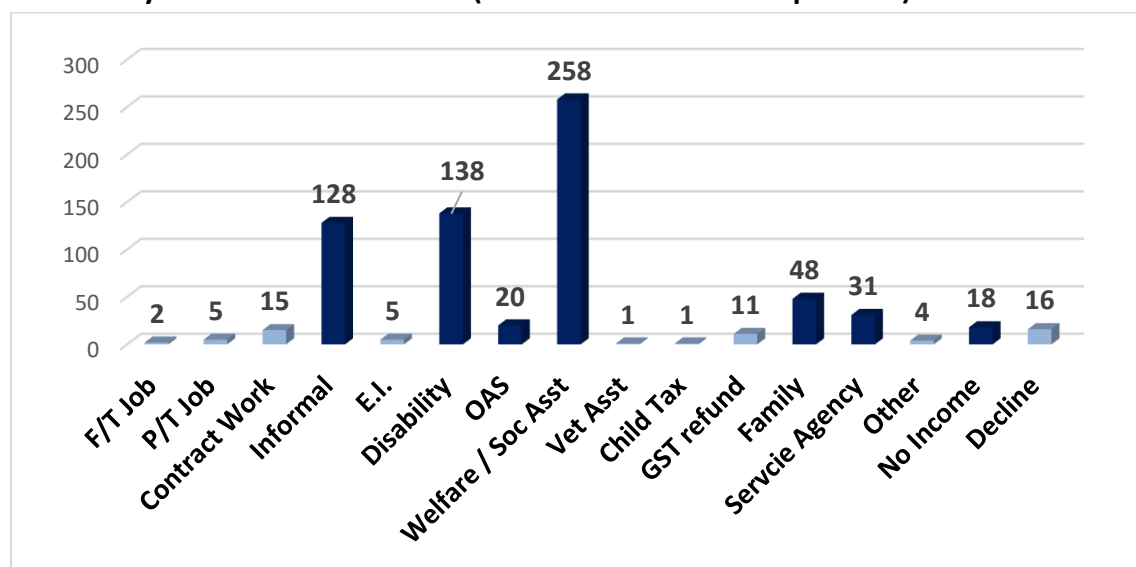
In addition to your response what racial groups do you identify with (e.g. Black, South Asian, White, etc.)?

Indigenous only	76
Asian	4
East Asian	4
Southeast Asian	4
South Asian	2
Black African	2
Black Canadian	3

Latin X	1
White	273
Not listed	8
Don't know	22
No Answer	22
Blank	32

While the general proportions of Black, East, Southeast and South Asian ethno-racial groups are low in Nanaimo it's worth noting that very few individuals from non-indigenous groups or non-white ethno-racial groups appeared in our survey.²⁰

What are your sources of income? (More than one answer possible)



Top Responses	2023	2020
Social Assistance	258	203
Disability Benefit	138	106
Informal	128	70
Money Family Friends	48	24

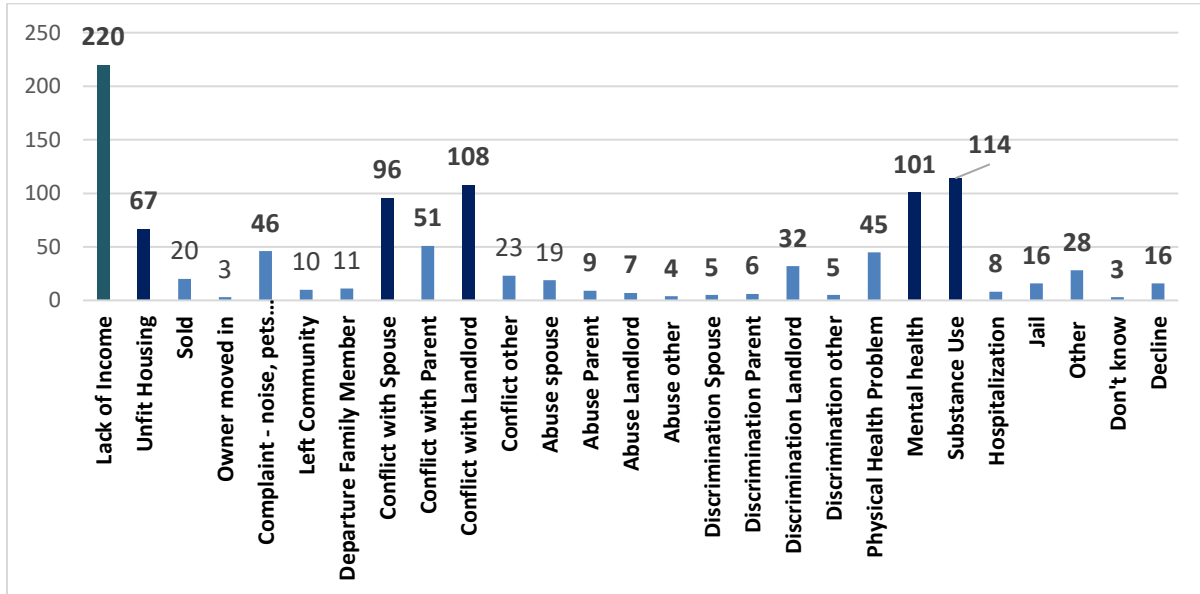
Service Agency	31	1
OAS	20	11
No Income	18	24
Other	4	17

The most common sources of income for respondents in 2023 largely reflected previous surveys in Nanaimo (See Appendix C for full list and previous PiT Count data). Matching almost exactly the 2020 data about 57% of 2023 survey respondents reported that one source of income was social assistance and

²⁰ Op cit. Page 15, *Nanaimo State of The Economy Report 2023*.

a further 30% Disability Benefits (though there is some overlap in these categories). However, they also reported that these supports were entirely inadequate to meet rent and basic subsistence needs in Nanaimo. In total 18 of 2023 respondents reported that they had *no income at all*. And reflecting the data from all previous PiT Counts very few reported receiving GST Refunds to which all Canadians, regardless of income, are entitled if they file an income tax return. Canada Revenue Service was present at the PiT Count Magnet Event and did assist many individuals with filing income tax returns to enable many to receive GST Refunds from previous years.

What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? ²¹

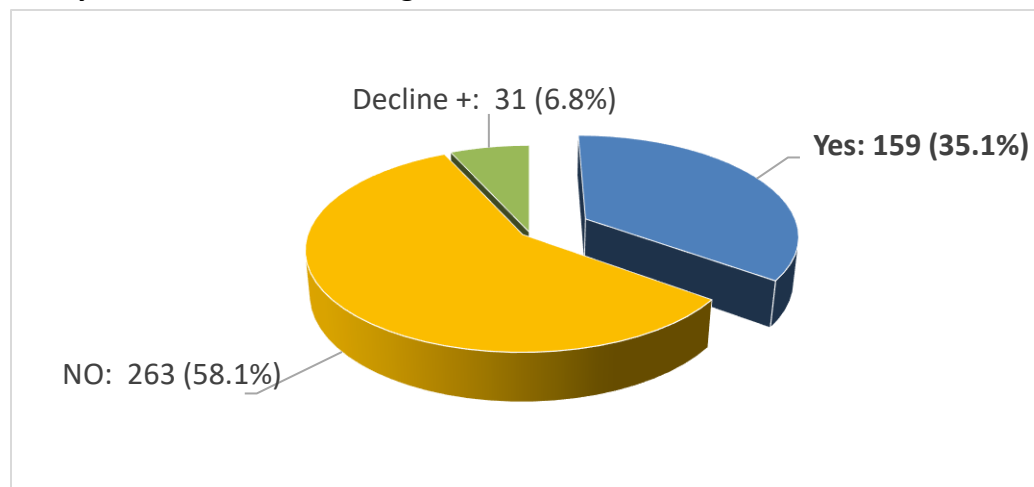


Top Responses	2023	2020	2018	2016
Not Enough Income	220	122	61	70
Landlord/Tenant Conflict	108	99	0	0
Conflict: Partner/Spouse	96	66	40	0
Addiction/Substance Use	114	64	90	59
Mental health	101	52	-	-
Physical Health Problem	45	5	-	-
Conflict with Parent	51	14	12	3
Unsafe Housing Conditions	67	50	40	0
Other	28	47	98	0
Complaint (noise, pets)	46	35	0	0
Discrimination Landlord	32	-	-	-
Building Sold / Renovated	20	21	0	0

²¹ The question on the 2023 survey concerning respondent’s reasons for losing housing most recently has had several options added to it that were not present on the 2018 & 2020 survey. While this gives a greater breadth of data it also limits solid comparison of data across the years.

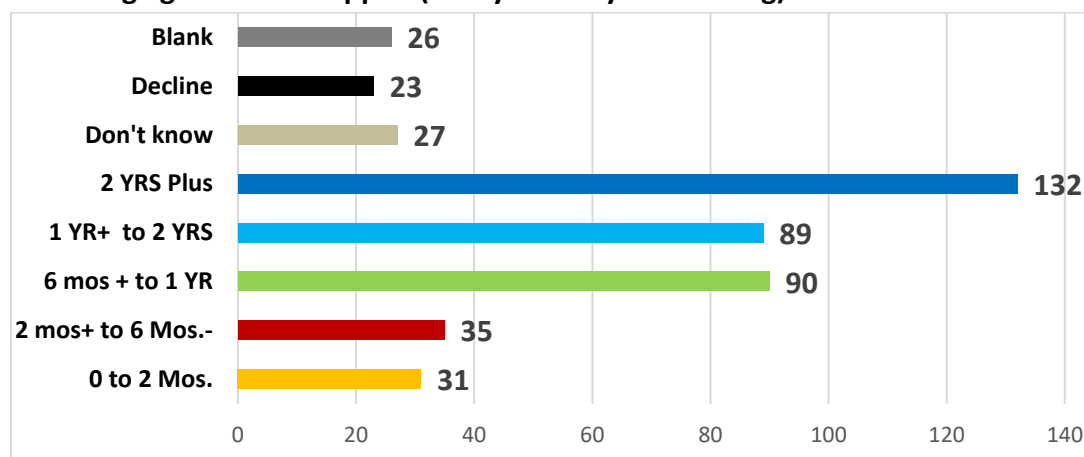
In the 2023 survey the major issues that have caused people to lose their housing most recently²² have been not enough income (48.6%), conflict with Landlord or other Tenant (23.8%), conflict with Partner/Spouse (21.2%), addictions or substance use (25.2%), mental health issues (22.3%) and unsafe housing conditions (14.8%). As the data suggests many respondents had multiple issues affecting the stability of their housing. (Respondents were able to give more than one response to this question).

Was your most recent housing loss related to an eviction?



As reflected in the graphic above 35 % of respondents (or 159/453) most recent housing loss had been due an eviction. This is the first time this question has been included as a specific question in the Reaching Home standardized survey. Reasons for eviction may vary but obviously there needs to be more focus on eviction mitigation and or prevention given that the number reported is so high. Many respondents verbally commented that they were evicted for one or more of the reasons above, including conflicts with landlords in relation to several issues.

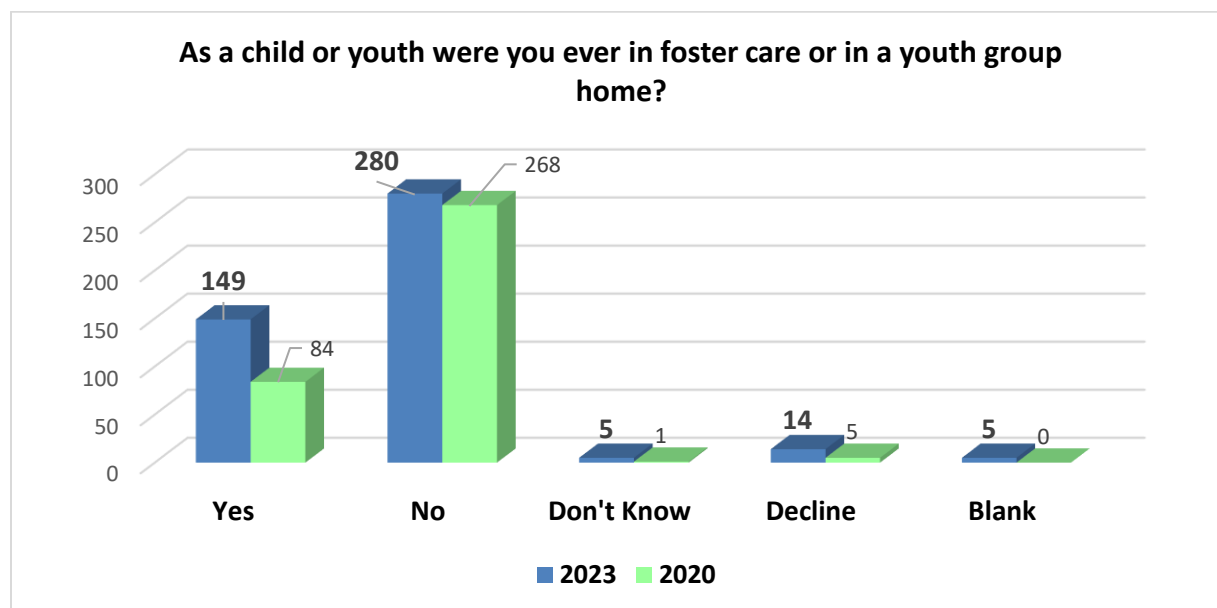
How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing)?



One important pattern that emerges from this data is that 156 or 34.4% of all respondents report losing their housing in the last 12 months in Nanaimo (some of which may or may not have been

²² See Appendix D for full list.

permanent housing). In other words, on average 13 Individuals a month are entering homelessness in Nanaimo. This is important to note as inflow into homelessness needs to be prevented if we are to put an end to homelessness.



The question addressing involvement with foster care was added to the National Survey in 2020 as it has been demonstrated that involvement with foster care is a precipitating factor and highly correlated to ending up in homelessness.

The number of respondents in the youth age cohort continues to be comparatively low in Nanaimo and service providers suggest that this is so because many youths are wary of engaging with social service systems. In the first pan-Canadian study on youth homelessness, *Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey* (2016), it was reported that 57.8% of homeless youth have histories of child welfare involvement; 73.3% of youth who became homeless before the age of 16 reported child protection involvement; and homeless youth were 193 times more likely to have been involved with the child welfare system than the general public.²³ Supporting youth as they transition to adult status and out of youth care systems is vital to turning off this conduit for homelessness.

It's also important to note that almost exactly 50% (75/149) of respondents who reported having been in foster care identified as Indigenous and by the same measure 50% (75/151) of all Indigenous respondents reported having been in foster care. The relationship between Canadian colonialist practices, Indigenous homelessness and foster care has been well documented and points to the need to generate new and Indigenous led interventions.²⁴

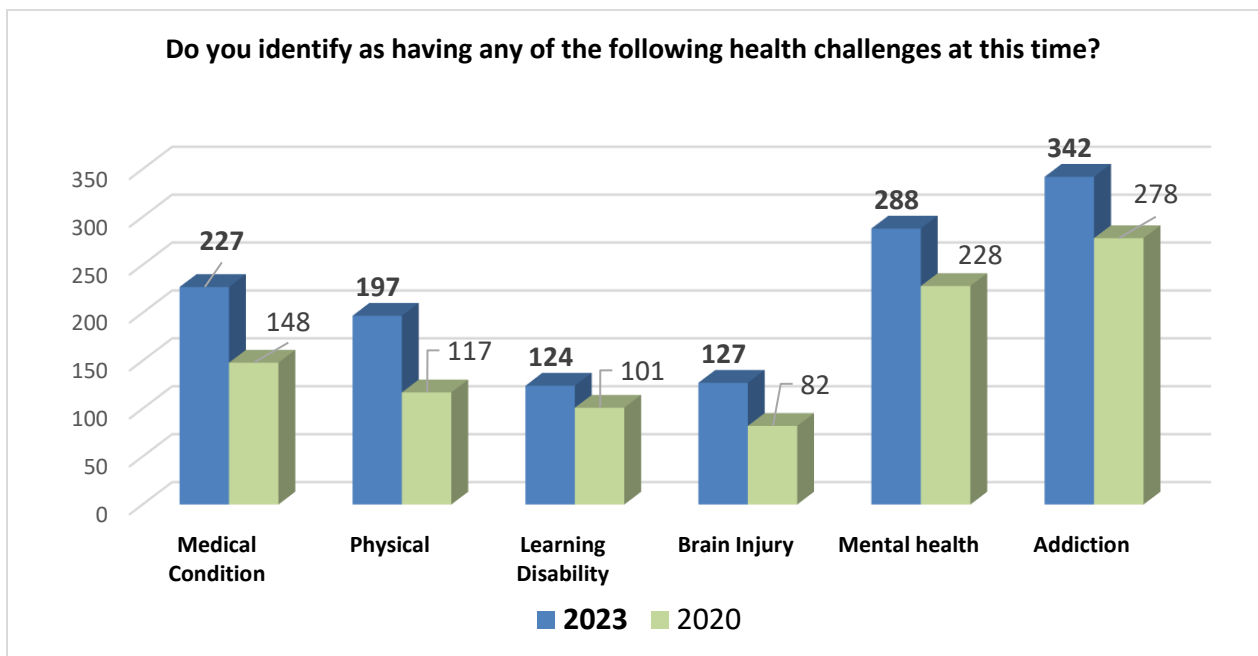
²³ Nichols, N., Schwan, K., Gaetz, S., Redman, M., French, D., Kidd, S., O’Grady, B. (2017). *Child Welfare and Youth Homelessness in Canada: A Proposal for Action*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

²⁴ Amy M. Alberton, G. Brent Angell, Kevin M. Gorey, Stéphane Grenier, (2020) Homelessness among Indigenous peoples in Canada: The impacts of child welfare involvement and educational achievement, *Children and Youth Services Review*, Volume 111 (104846) Accessed at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740919312654>

As a child or youth were you ever in foster care or in a youth group home?

	2023	%	2020	%
Yes	149	32.9	84	23.5
No	280	61.8	268	74.9
Don't Know	5	1.1	1	0.2
Decline	14	3.9	5	1.4
Blank	5	1.1	0	0

While there is a high level of reported mental health and substance use challenges (see graph below) we do not have data on the severity or types of issues being reported. Nor do we have any evidence of how these issues may or may not affect respondent’s everyday life. As identified by other survey responses relatively few respondents report that mental health or substance use issues are the greatest barriers to finding or maintaining housing. The greatest barrier to finding housing, not surprisingly is low income and high rents.



What the data for all these health issues points to is the considerable range of health needs that those experiencing homelessness face. The data here shows on average respondents faced about 3 Health challenges.

Health Challenge	2023	%	2020	%
Medical Condition	227	50.1	148	41.3
Physical	197	43.5	117	25.8
Learning Disability	124	27.4	101	28.2
Brain Injury	127	28.0	82	22.9
Mental health	288	63.6	228	63.7
Addiction	342	75.5	278	77.6

The focus on the acquired brain injury was a new question that was added to the National Reaching Home PiT Count Survey in 2020 and subsequently integrated into the general question on Health Challenges.²⁵ There is mounting evidence that those experiencing homelessness have a high incidence of acquired traumatic brain injury. Recent studies have reported that up to 50% of those experiencing homelessness have an acquired brain injury.²⁶ This study also suggested that acquired traumatic brain injury is consistently associated with poorer self-reported physical and mental health, suicidality and suicide risk, memory concerns, increased health service use and higher criminal justice system involvement.

As has been noted in research, the relationship between homelessness and health is complex and one does not necessarily precede the other. It has, however, been demonstrated that homelessness does have direct impacts on health outcomes.²⁷ For example, crowded shelters can expose individuals to communicable diseases and long periods of walking or standing and prolonged exposure of feet to moisture and cold can lead to infections. Additionally, obtaining medication and adhering to medical recommendations for physical or mental illness (e.g., dietary restrictions or rest requirement) is often difficult.²⁸ Treatment and prevention of health issues are often neglected due to competing needs for food and shelter. Also outreach staff in the sector report that unhoused people often face prejudice and discrimination in the medical system.²⁹ It has been reported that many medical staff assume that unhoused individuals are drug seeking rather than health seeking and as a result may leave hospital early and or not be provided with appropriate or adequate pain management.³⁰ Overall individuals who are homeless are at risk for a range of adverse health outcomes.

²⁵ Thanks to Kix Citton, Executive Director of the Nanaimo Brain Injury Society for being the driving force behind inclusion of this important question on the national survey.

²⁶ Stubbs, Jacob & Thornton, Allen & Sevic, Jessica & Silverberg, Noah & Barr, Alasdair & Honer, William & Panenka, William. (2019). *Traumatic brain injury in homeless and marginally housed individuals: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. 10.1016/S2468-2667(19)30188-4.

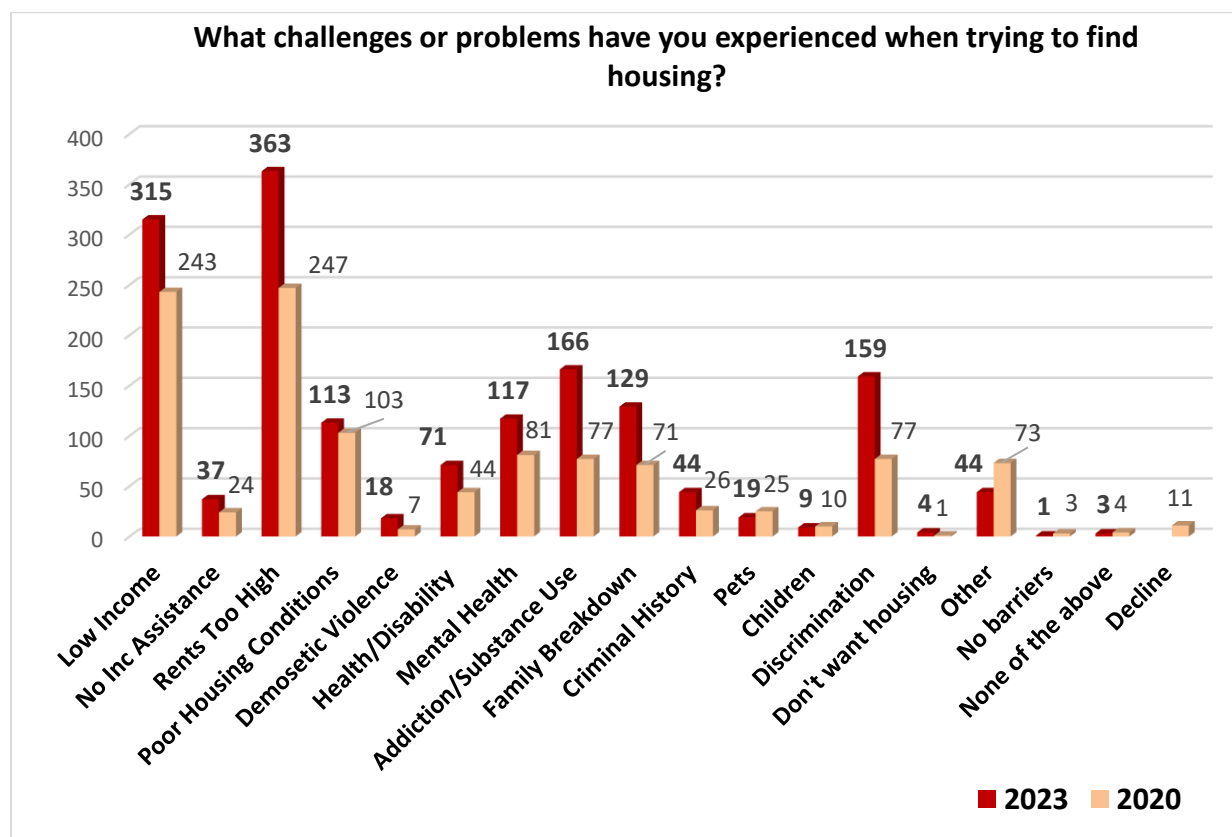
²⁷ Page 2, Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Berenbaum E. *Evidence Brief: homelessness and health outcomes: what are the associations?* Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2019. Accessed at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/E/2019/eb-homelessness-health.pdf?la=en>

²⁸ Reilly, J., Ho, I., & Williamson, A. (2022). A systematic review of the effect of stigma on the health of people experiencing homelessness. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30, 2128–2141. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13884>

²⁹ Liu, M., Hwang, S.W. Health care for homeless people. *Nat Rev Dis Primers* 7, 5 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41572-020-00241-2>

³⁰ Mayer S, Langheimer V, Nolan S, Boyd J, Small W, McNeil R (2023) Emergency department experiences of people who use drugs who left or were discharged from hospital against medical advice. *PLoS ONE* 18(2): e0282215. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282215>

Survey Results Section 2: Responses to Optional Community specific questions



Increasingly high rents and low income continue to be the most frequently cited *barriers to finding housing*. Also, the things that *cause* a loss of housing, such as substance use, and unsafe or poor housing conditions, were also reported as *barriers* to finding housing. These trends are consistent with the previous surveys where high rents and other financial reasons were barriers for a very high proportion of respondents.

In the “Other” reasons category a high number of people surveyed also reported that they had difficulty getting references from previous landlords. There is also a notable increase in the Discrimination category for 2023. This includes both racial discrimination and or discrimination from landlords based on bias against anyone with prior housing challenges.

People also said that conflict with *previous* landlords were significant barriers to housing. It is worth noting that while a high number of respondents reported ongoing mental health issues (288/453 or 63.6%), or substance use issues (342/453 or 75.5%) a comparatively low number report these as a perceived barrier to finding housing. For example, (166/453 or 36.6%) reported mental health issues and (129/453 or 28.5%) reported substance use issues as barriers to find housing (see “Health Issues” graph, page 26).

It is likely that the interaction between variables that makes it challenging for individuals to find housing. A closer look at the specific individual histories of those experiencing homelessness would reveal

much in this regard. There needs to be much more research done to understand how structural barriers to housing interact with individual’s histories and experiences. Otherwise, we tend to produce research and interpretations that blame the individual and minimize the social and historical forces that constrain human action. The data presented here also suggests that greater support for both landlords and tenants might help resolve or ameliorate many of these issues.

Have you accessed the Emergency Room in the last 12 months / How many times?

	No	One	Two	3 to 5x	6 plus	No answer/blank
2023	165	45	54	78	38	20 (+ 53 Yes Blank)
2020	150	63	37	48	25	35

Have you accessed the hospital in the last 12 months?

Year	Yes	No	Blank	n =
2023	165	259	27	453
2020	112	229	17	358

How many Times?

	2023	2020
One x	71	49
Two x	31	13
Three x	8	12
Four x	2	5
Five x	2	2
6 x +	9	4
Blank	42	27

Number of days in hospital

	2023	2020
1 day or less	11	14
2 days	5	12
3 days	5	8
4 days	4	4
5 days	3	8
6 days	0	2
7 days	13	4
8-14 days	26	10
14 days +	16	20
Blank/ Unknown	43	2

A high percentage of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo make use of some or most of the health and community services available to them. However, it seems evident that the highest number of visits to hospitals and emergency room visits are made by relatively few individuals. This repeats the pattern of engagements with police (see below) in that it is a comparatively small proportion of the population that uses these resources most intensively.

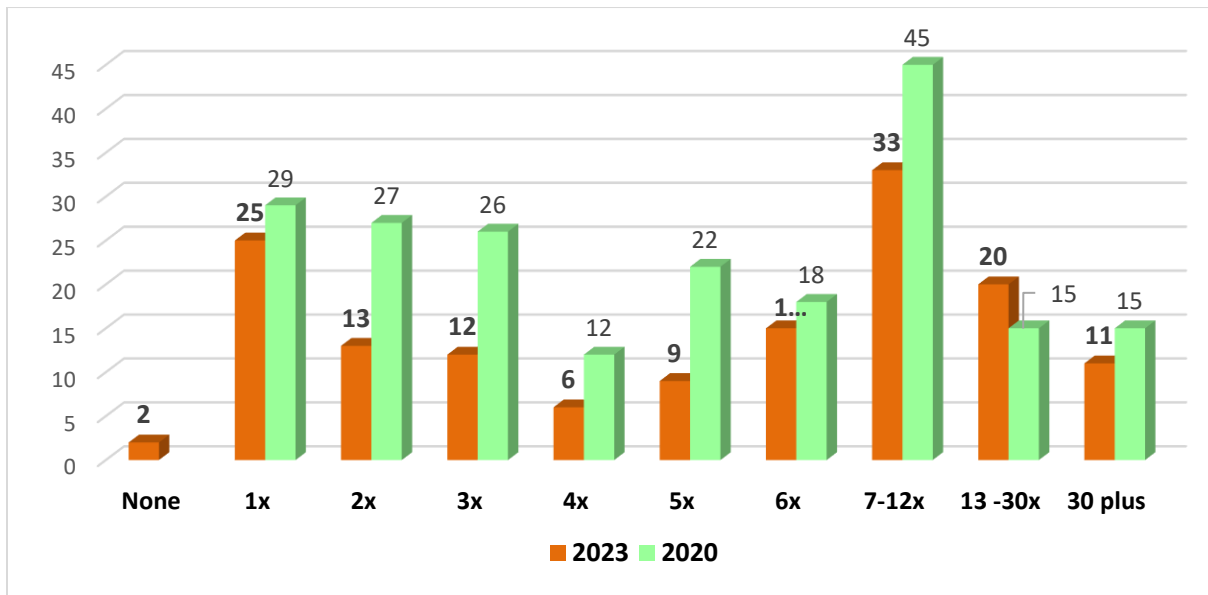
In fact, 52 of 126 (43.1%) reported having been in hospital more than twice in the last year, but most stays that is 55 of 83 (for which we have data) were seven days or more. This data suggests that hospitalizations for unhoused individuals are likely to be for longer periods of time which indicates quite serious health problems.

In the context of the data from this and other survey questions and given the generally poor health outcomes linked to homelessness it is reasonable to suggest that those experiencing homelessness *under use these systems* compared to their actual need and likely less than their fellow citizens.

In the past 12 months have you interacted with Police (Tickets, arrests, searches)?

	2023	2020
Yes	232	239
No	193	115
Blank	28	4

How many Times have you interacted with Police in the last 12 months?



The 2023 evidence shows that the number of individuals engaging with Police is almost identical to the number reported in 2020. However, the proportion of individuals engaging police has dropped from 66.8 % (239/358) to 51.2% (232/453). And significantly it appears as though the average frequency of engagement has dropped as well. This may reflect an improvement in general relations between police and unhoused individuals in Nanaimo and or a shift in approach by local law enforcement *and unhoused* individuals. This finding might also serve as a rebuttal of ongoing targeting of homelessness by some factions as a main cause of social disorder in Nanaimo.

Police and Community Safety Officers report that most people experiencing homelessness do not ‘cause trouble’ or engage in a negative fashion with them. If we add together the categories of responses with the two highest number of interactions (13 to 30 times, and 30 times plus) we end up with a total of 31 respondents out of 453. Like 2020 this data suggests that less than 10% of the respondents have regular (and or negative) interactions with police.

This data seems to reflect what is reported by police in Nanaimo and elsewhere. It is precisely this small group that absorbs most of the police’s energies. One policy response locally has been the formation

of ‘Nanaimo Acute Response Table’ that produces a focussed and collective response to support individuals deemed to be in a heightened state of need.³¹ Though based on principles of public safety (and not necessarily as an intervention into homelessness) the situation table in Nanaimo regularly supports unhoused individuals with non-law enforcement approaches.

In the past 12 months have you: been to prison or jail?

	2023	2020
YES	74	57
No	344	288
Blank	35	13

How many times?

	2023	2020
Zero	2	-
1 x	25	24
2x	5	8
3x	3	5
4x	0	1
5x	0	2
6-20x	6	1
20 Plus	1	1
Blank	-	15

Number of days in jail?

	2023	2020
0-1 Days	10	8
2 to 7 days	15	12
8-60 days	17	8
61-179 days	2	8
180-365 +	1	11
blank	-	6

Young and De Jong point out that people who are homeless are often inappropriately criminalized, especially those with a lack of mental wellness, a history of substance use and with a dual diagnosis. This occurs most often in two forms, hospitalization, and incarceration.³²

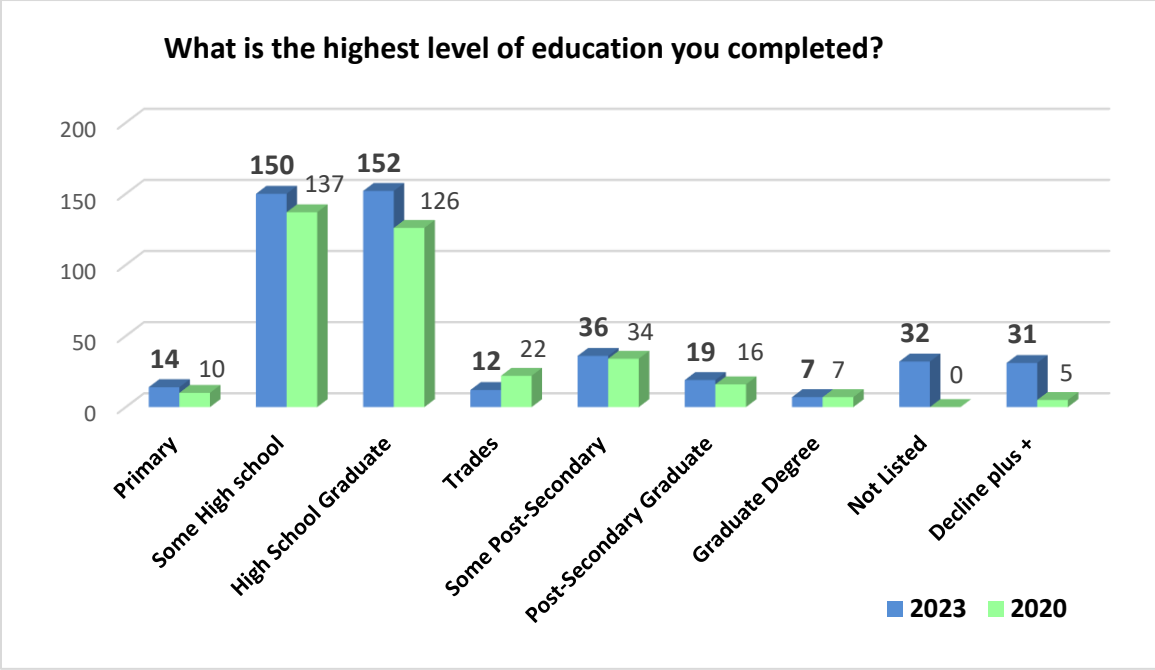
Again, the data from the survey respondents suggests it is a small group of individuals who have the heaviest engagements with corrections. However, this is not to suggest that ‘it is a few bad apples’ that are most responsible. Rather as many observers have pointed out it is the criminalization of homelessness and its relationship with the justice system that needs to be examined.³³

³¹ See details of the Acute Response Table here: <https://www.nanaimo.ca/your-government/projects/situation-table>

³² Op Cit. Page 14

³³ Page 14, Young, L. and De Jong, I. (2015) *A Research and Discussion Paper: How Involvement in the Criminal Justice System Affects Stable Housing*, Accessed at:

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/orgcode/pages/293/attachments/original/1478810207/How-legal-issues-impede-access-to-housing-FINAL.pdf?1478810207>



This is the second time a question about education level has appeared on the Nanaimo PIT Count Survey. If we add together all respondents who have completed high school or higher and include trades, we get a figure of 226 (of 453 responses) which equals 49.9% of all respondents. This represents a drop from the 2020 percentage of those who have completed high school or above. And the figure of 50% is substantially below provincial and national rates. On time High school completion rates are about 84% in Canada as a whole³⁴ and approximately 91 % in British Columbia.³⁵ In 2021, Statistics Canada found that 57.5 % of Canadians (aged 25–64) were college or university graduates.³⁶ The number of respondents who had graduated from university or had some post-secondary education was 74/453 or 16.3%% (if we include trades). Again, this is far below national averages.

Highest Level Completed	2023	2020
Primary	14	10
Some High school	150	137
High School Graduate	152	126
Trades	12	22
Some post-secondary	36	34

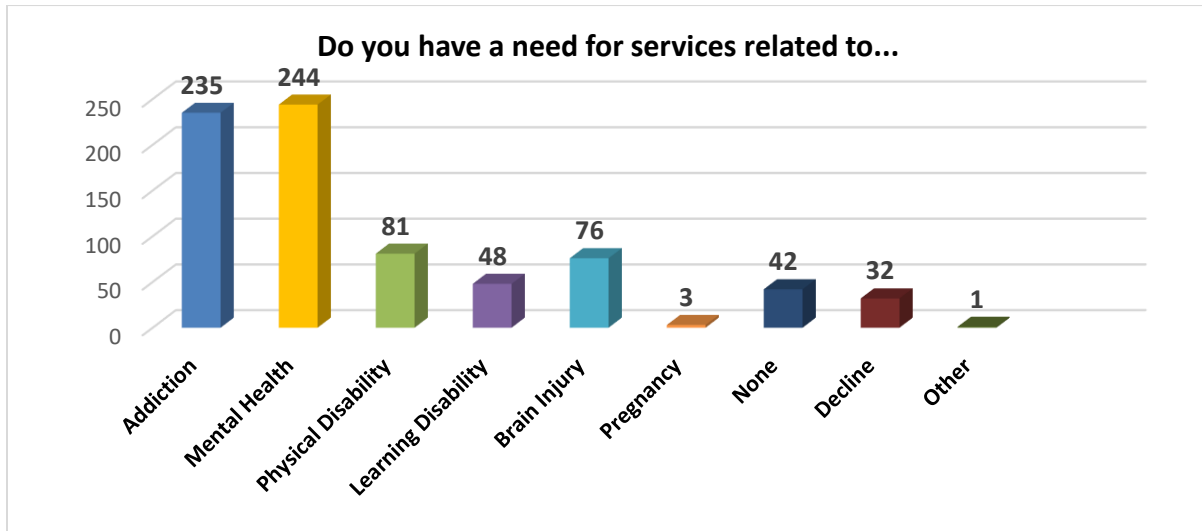
Post-Secondary Graduate	19	16
Graduate Degree	7	7
Not Listed	32	-
Don't Know	1	-
Decline	19	5
Blank	11	-

³⁴ High school graduation rates in Canada, 2016/2017 to 2019/2020 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2022002-eng.htm>

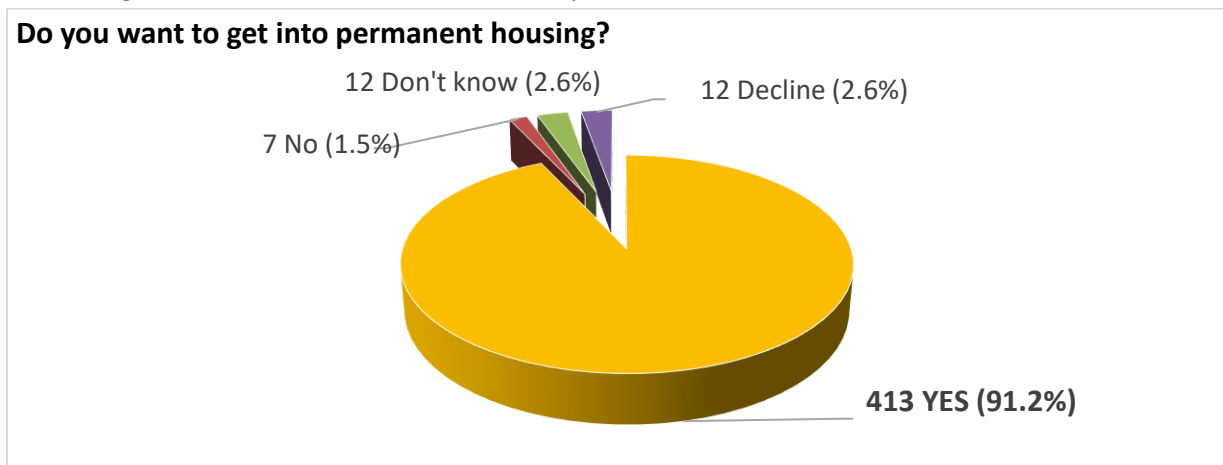
³⁵ *Education by the numbers*. Accessed at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/education-by-the-numbers>

³⁶ *Canada leads the G7 for the most educated workforce, thanks to immigrants, young adults and a strong college sector, but is experiencing significant losses in apprenticeship certificate holders in key trades*. Accessed at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221130/dq221130a-eng.htm>

While it is only one measure, individuals who do not have formal education are at a higher risk for unemployment or underemployment than their counterparts with higher educational attainment. Barriers are often created in obtaining employment, or even accessing services, for those with low levels of literacy or who speak English/French as a second language. For many people (especially youth) their homelessness caused them to leave the educational system.



The overall pattern of response to the question of general service needs remains the same as in 2020.³⁷ When asked what additional types of services would be useful to respondents, the patterns described in the health questions are repeated as demonstrated by the graphic above. In essence what emerges from this report and from much research on homelessness is that health and housing are intricately connected. The now widely accepted principles and practices of Housing First illustrates that access to safe and secure housing is the basis of physical and mental well-being.³⁸ However the principles of Housing First are not realizable unless we are provided with the local resources to turn them into action.

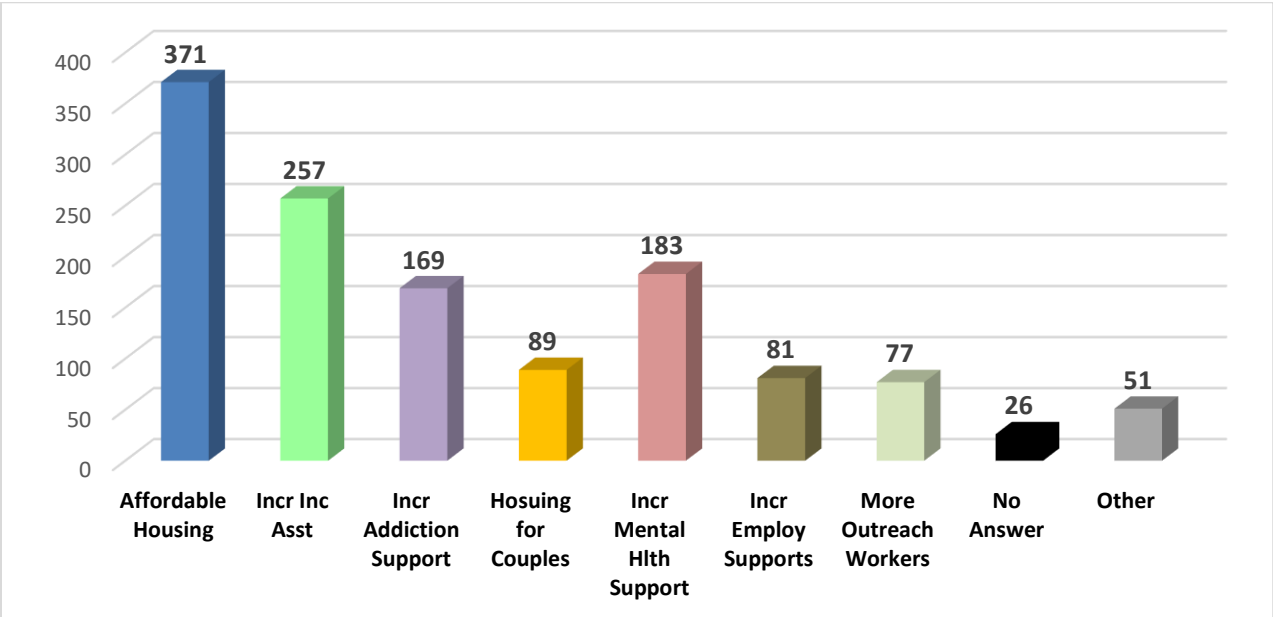


³⁷ See Appendix E for chart with 2018, 2020, 2023 Responses to this question.

³⁸ *Housing First*. Accessed at: <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/resources-ressources/housing-first-logement-abord-eng.html>

The pie chart above shows that 91% of respondents reported they do want to get into permanent housing and only 1.5 said they do not. In fact, if we exclude the non-Responses almost 100% of respondents would like to have permanent housing. Not surprising, but worth pointing out.

What are some of the ways we can solve homelessness?



The responses to this question suggest that respondents are aware that there is a range of efforts required to effectively address homelessness in Nanaimo.

Not surprisingly respondents understood that income assistance rates are largely inadequate to secure and maintain housing. When asked how to solve homelessness, 71% of respondents agreed that it was necessary to have more affordable housing. Comments suggested that it is not just affordable housing that is needed, but access to housing of any kind. Homelessness exists on a continuum and as such will require a continuum of responses. As is reflected in the health question reviewed earlier many report the desire for more substance use/addictions and mental health supports including outreach workers.

Summary & Conclusions of The Nanaimo 2023 PiT Count

The 2023 Nationally Coordinated PiT Count in Nanaimo shows that the numbers of people experiencing homelessness has been steadily increasing and since 2016 has almost tripled. According to the data reviewed herein the length of their homelessness experience is getting longer and the profound lack of access to affordable housing and adequate supports is *keeping more and more people on the streets for longer periods of time.*

A major concern that emerges from the data is that similar previous data over 80% of our 2023 survey respondents would be categorized as ‘chronically’ homeless and equally about 80% of respondents have no access to shelter on daily/nightly basis.

In preliminary reviews of the data with local commentators they expressed concern that the number identified in the count was "too low". Their concern was no doubt based on the belief that higher numbers will matter enough to decision makers to make them act with an appropriately higher degree of urgency. One response to this concern is to remind everyone that PiT Counts are *always* undercounts: They are designed that way. It is the content and patterns of the responses that provide us with the most insight on what demands we need to make of funders and decision makers.

All sectors of society and all levels of government are awake to the issues though not as much nor as intensely as is needed. The concerns of our commentators are perhaps suggesting a greater need to take seriously the ancient adage "The best time to act was yesterday, but the second-best time to act is today."

Appendix A: Definitions of Homelessness

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness³⁹ defines variations of homelessness as the following:

Absolute Homelessness: Individuals who are living in public spaces, emergency shelters or public facilities and do not have a stable residence to return to.

The Nanaimo PiT Count included those who were considered unsheltered as well as emergency sheltered. In both cases, persons are considered to be absolutely homeless, as they do not have secure or permanent housing:

Unsheltered: Includes people who lack housing and are not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation, except during extreme weather conditions. In most cases, people are staying in places that are not designed for or fit for human habitation.

- a. People living in public or private spaces without consent or contract.
- b. People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation.

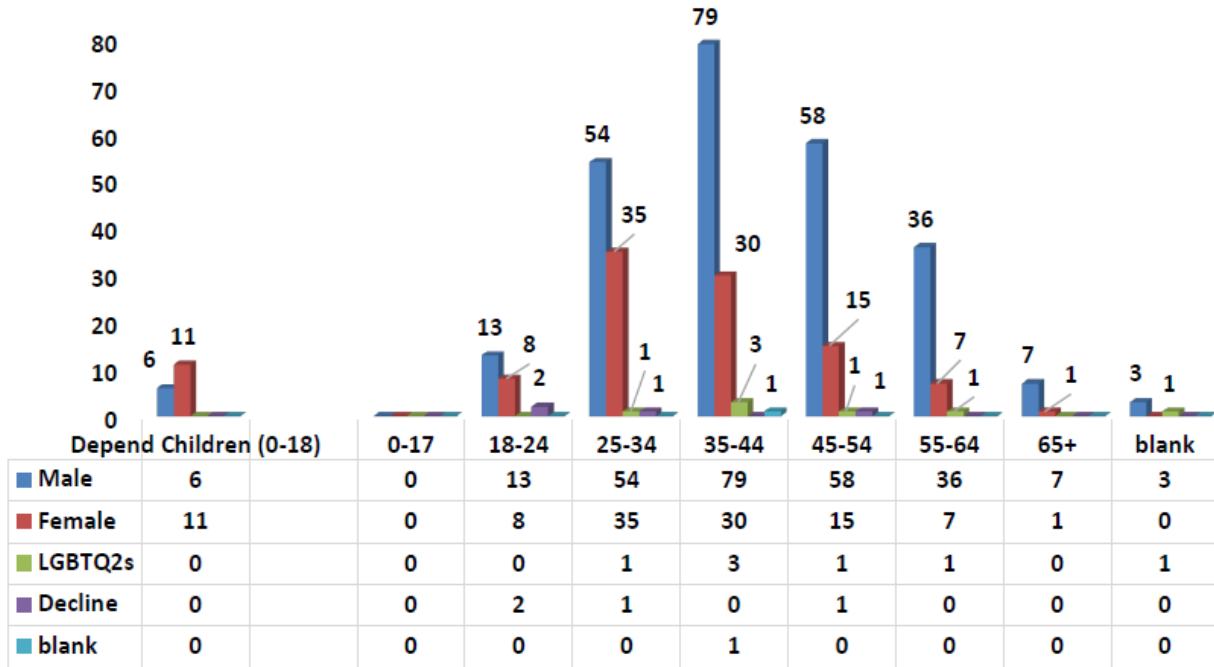
Emergency Sheltered: This refers to people who, because they cannot secure permanent housing, are accessing emergency shelter and system supports, generally provided at no cost or minimal cost to the user. Such accommodation represents a stop-gap institutional response to homelessness provided by government, non-profits, faith-based organizations and / or volunteers.

Often referred to as the Hidden Homeless the 'Enumeration' does not, but the Survey Data and analysis does, include those who are temporarily or uncertainly housed at the time of the PiT Count:

Hidden Homelessness: includes those who are living in temporary accommodations, time-limited housing or whose tenancy is to be terminated. This describes situations in which people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, access accommodation that offers no prospect of permanence. Those who are provisionally accommodated may be accessing temporary housing provided by government or the non-profit sector or may have independently made arrangements for short-term accommodation.

³⁹Canadian Definition Of Homelessness Accessed At: [Http://Homelesshub.ca/Sites/Default/Files/Cohhomelessdefinition.Pdf](http://Homelesshub.ca/Sites/Default/Files/Cohhomelessdefinition.Pdf)

Appendix B: 2020 Age and Gender Distribution



NB: This figure and chart include a count of 17 accompanying dependent children aged 0-18 (not surveyed) making the sample size n = 375.

Appendix C: Year-on-Year comparison: What are your sources of income?

Sources of Income	2023	2020	2018	2016
Social Assistance	258	203	137	92
Disability Benefit	138	106	93	35
Informal (Bottle Returns etc.)	128	70	49	37
Money from Family Friends	48	24	12	9
No Income	18	24	19	12
Other	4	17	44	0
Contract Work	15	13	0	0
Seniors Benefits / OAS	20	11	11	3
F/T Employment	2	6	0	0
P/T Employment	5	5	0	0
Employment	-	0	15	10
Child Benefit	1	5	0	0
GST/HST Refund	11	5	0	2
EI	5	4	4	3
Decline	16	3	6	9
Veterans/VAC Benefits	1	1	0	0
Service Agency	31	1	0	0

Appendix D: What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? Full List

	2023	2020	2018	2016
Not Enough Income	220	122	61	70
Landlord/Tenant Conflict	108	99	0	0
Conflict: Partner/Spouse	96	66	40	0
Addiction/Substance Use	114	64	90	59
Mental health	101	52	-	-
Unsafe Housing Conditions	67	50	40	0
Other	28	47	98	0
Complaint	46	35	0	0
Conflict Other	23	24	0	0
Building Sold / Renovated	20	21	0	0
Conflict: Parent	51	14	12	3
Abuse: Partner/Spouse	19	11	14	10
Discrimination		9	-	-
Discrimination Spouse	5	-		
Discrimination Parent	6	-		
Discrimination Landlord	32	-		
Left the Community	10	8	-	-
Hospitalization	8	8	9	16
Departure of Family Member	11	7	-	-
blank	-	7	0	0
Physical Health Issue	45	5	-	-
Don't Know	3	4	3	5
Jail or Prison	16	3	26	17
Abuse: Other	4	1	-	-
Owner Moved in	3	1	-	-
Abuse: Parent	9	0	5	5
Illness/Medical	-	-	26	49
Job Loss	-	-	32	42
Decline	16	-	9	2

**Appendix E: What other services would be helpful to you?
2023 and 2020**

	2023 (n=453)	%	2020 (n=358)	%
Ongoing Medical	173	38.2	106	29.6
Addiction	235	51.9	216	60.3
Mental Health	244	53.9	210	58.7
Physical Disability	81	17.9	75	20.9
Learning Disability	48	10.6	59	16.5
Brain Injury	76	16.8	50	14.0
Pregnancy	3	0.7	3	0.8
None	42	9.3	43	12.0
Decline	32	7.1	13	3.6
Other	1	0.2	6	1.7

Appendix F: Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have North American Indigenous ancestry?

	First Nations	Inuit	Metis	Indigenous Ancestry	Not-Indigenous	Don't Know	Unclear / blank	Decline
2023 (n = 453)	107	2	20	22	279	3	12	8
%	23.6%	0.4%	4.4%	4.9%	61.6%	0.7%	2.6%	1.8%
2020 (n=358)	15.6%	0.3%	9.2%	8.1%	64.5%	1.4%	0.3%	0.6%
2018 (n = 289)	25%	0%	4.2%	2.1%	64.7%	2.8%	1.2%	-
2016 (n= 174)	18.4%	0.6%	2.9%	1.7%	74.1%	1.2%	1.1%	-

Appendix G: Where did you live before you came here? 2020 - Full list (n = 186)

Abbotsford	3
Ahousat	2
Aldergrove	1
All over	2
Barrie	1
Barrier	2
Bowser	1
Burnaby	2
Cal-Edm	1
Calgary	8
Campbell River	2
Castlegar	1
Chemanius	1
Chilliwack	1
Comox	2
Courtenay	1
Cowichan Lake	1
Cranbrook	1
Cremona	1
Cumberland	2
DTES	1
Duncan	8
East Van, Ladysmith	1
Edmonton	14
Ft St John	1
Gabriola	2
Gabriola island	1
Grand Prairie	1

Greater Vancouver	1
Haida Gwaii	1
Halifax	1
Hazelton	2
Island	1
Kamloops	4
Kelowna	6
Kootenays	1
Ladysmith	6
Leduc	1
Lindsay	1
London	1
Lower Mainland	1
Maple Ridge	4
Courtenay	1
McBride	1
Mill Bay	2
Nanaimo	6
Nanaimo/Edson	1
North Burnaby	1
Ottawa	1
Parksville	7
Pembroke	1
Penticton	1
Port Alberni	3
Port Coq	1
Port Hardy	3
Port Renfrew	1

Prince George	1
Qualicum	3
Regina	1
Reserve Cooper Isle	1
Richmond	2
Saltspring Isl	1
Saskatchewan	1
Scarborough	1
Sooke	1
Spider Lake	1
Surrey	1
Tofino	2
Toronto	3
Ucluelet	2
Van, Utah, Texas	1
Vancouver	14
Vernon	2
Victoria	14
Victoria, Kimberly	1
West Van	1
Weyburn	1
White Rock	1
Windsor	1
Winnipeg	1
WPG	1
Yellowknife	1

APPENDIX H: Unsheltered Survey Questions 2023

UNSHELTERED SCREENING TOOL [OVERNIGHT]

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a volunteer for the **Nanaimo 2023 housing needs survey**. We are conducting a survey to provide better programs and services to people experiencing homelessness. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

- **Participation is voluntary and your name will not be recorded.**
- You can choose to **skip any question** or to **stop the interview at any time.**
- Results will contribute to the understanding of homelessness across Canada, and will help with research to improve services.

A. Have you answered this survey with a person with this (*identifier*)?
[YES: Thank and tally] [NO: Go to B]

B. Are you willing to participate in the survey?
[YES: Go to C] [NO: Thank and tally]

C. Where did you stay last night?

a. DECLINE TO ANSWER b. OWN APARTMENT / HOUSE	}	[THANK & END SURVEY]
c. SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE d. MOTEL/HOTEL (SELF FUNDED) e. HOSPITAL f. TREATMENT CENTRE g. JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE	}	C1. Do you have access to a permanent residence where you can safely stay as long as you want? a. Yes [THANK & END] b. No (not permanent AND/OR not safe) [BEGIN SURVEY] c. Don't Know [BEGIN SURVEY] d. Decline to answer [THANK & END]
h. HOMELESS SHELTER (EMERGENCY, FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER) i. HOTEL/MOTEL (FUNDED BY CITY OR HOMELESS PROGRAM) j. TRANSITIONAL SHELTER/HOUSING k. UNSHELTERED IN A PUBLIC SPACE (E.G. STREET, PARK, BUS SHELTER, FOREST OR ABANDONED BUILDING) l. ENCAMPMENT (E.G. GROUP OF TENTS, MAKESHIFT SHELTERS OR OTHER LONG-TERM OUTDOOR SETTLEMENT) m. VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, RV, TRUCK, BOAT) n. UNSURE: INDICATE PROBABLE LOCATION _____ (b. - m.)	}	[BEGIN SURVEY]

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in the survey. Please note that you will receive a care package or gift card as a thank you for your participation.

UNSHELTERED SURVEY

Survey Number: 0000

Location: _____

Time: _____ AM/PM

Interviewer: _____

Contact #: _____

C. Where did you stay last night?

o. DECLINE TO ANSWER p. OWN APARTMENT / HOUSE	}	[THANK & END SURVEY]
q. SOMEONE ELSE’S PLACE r. MOTEL/HOTEL (SELF FUNDED) s. HOSPITAL t. TREATMENT CENTRE u. JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE	}	C1. Do you have access to a permanent residence where you can safely stay as long as you want? e. Yes [THANK & END] f. No (not permanent AND/OR not safe) [BEGIN SURVEY] g. Don’t Know [BEGIN SURVEY] h. Decline to answer [THANK & END]
v. HOMELESS SHELTER (EMERGENCY, FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER) w. HOTEL/MOTEL (FUNDED BY CITY OR HOMELESS PROGRAM) x. TRANSITIONAL SHELTER/HOUSING y. UNSHELTERED IN A PUBLIC SPACE (E.G. STREET, PARK, BUS SHELTER, FOREST OR ABANDONED BUILDING) z. ENCAMPMENT (E.G. GROUP OF TENTS, MAKESHIFT SHELTERS OR OTHER LONG-TERM OUTDOOR SETTLEMENT) aa. VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, RV, TRUCK, BOAT) bb. UNSURE: INDICATE PROBABLE LOCATION _____ (b. - m.)	}	[BEGIN SURVEY]

BEGIN SURVEY

1. Have you spent at least one night in any of the following locations in the past year? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> HOMELESS SHELTER (emergency, family or domestic violence shelter) <input type="checkbox"/> HOTEL/MOTEL (funded by city or homeless program) <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSITIONAL SHELTER/HOUSING <input type="checkbox"/> UNSHELTERED IN A PUBLIC SPACE (e.g. street, park, bus shelter, forest, or abandoned building) <input type="checkbox"/> ENCAMPMENT (e.g. group of tents, makeshift shelters or other long-term outdoor settlement) <input type="checkbox"/> VEHICLE (Car, van, RV, truck, boat) <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEONE ELSE’S PLACE BECAUSE YOU HAD NOWHERE ELSE TO GO	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITAL OR OTHER HEALTH FACILITY <input type="checkbox"/> JAIL, PRISON, OR OTHER CORRECTIONAL FACILITY <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DON’T KNOW <input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2. Do you have family members or anyone else who is staying with you tonight? / Did any family members or anyone else stay with you last night? [Indicate survey number for partners. Check all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> PARTNER - Survey #: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> CHILD(REN)/DEPENDENT(S) [indicate age for each child/dependent]	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHERS (Can include other family or friends) <input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER																
AGE	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="width: 12.5%; text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8										

3. How old are you? [OR] What year were you born? [If unsure, ask for best estimate]

AGE _____ **OR** YEAR BORN _____ DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

➔ For this survey, "homelessness" means any time when you have been without a permanent and secure place to live, and includes sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or living temporarily with others without having your own permanent housing (e.g. couch surfing).

4a. In total, for *how much time* have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? [Does not need to be exact. Best estimate.]

LENGTH _____ DAYS | WEEKS | MONTHS DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

4b. In total, for *how much time* have you experienced homelessness over the PAST 3 YEARS? [Does not need to be exact. Best estimate.]

LESS THAN HALF ABOUT HALF OR MORE DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

5. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

AGE _____ DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

6. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, refugee claimant (i.e. applied for refugee status after coming to Canada), or on another type of visa?

<input type="radio"/> YES, IMMIGRANT -----> <input type="radio"/> YES, REFUGEE -----> <input type="radio"/> YES, REFUGEE CLAIMANT IN CANADA ----> <input type="radio"/> YES, TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER ----> <input type="radio"/> YES, OTHER WORK PERMIT -----> <input type="radio"/> YES, STUDY PERMIT -----> <input type="radio"/> YES, TEMPORARY RESIDENT -----> <input type="radio"/> YES, OTHER (including undocumented) --> <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER	If YES: How long have you been in Canada? <input type="radio"/> LENGTH: _____ DAYS WEEKS MONTHS YEARS OR DATE: ____/____/____ DAY / MONTH / YEAR <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

7. How long have you been in (*community name*)?

LENGTH _____ DAYS / WEEKS / MONTHS / YEARS ALWAYS BEEN HERE DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

↪ **Where did you live before you came here?** CITY: _____ | PROVINCE/TERRITORY/COUNTRY: _____
 DECLINE TO ANSWER

8a. Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit? [If yes, please specify] (COMMUNITY NOTE: The wording of this question can be adapted to what makes sense in your community, for example by listing specific First Nations)

YES, FIRST NATIONS YES, MÉTIS NO DECLINE TO ANSWER
 YES, INUIT INDIGENOUS ANCESTRY DON'T KNOW

8b. In addition to your response in the question above, do you identify with any of the racial identities listed below?

[Show or Read list. Select all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK-AFRICAN (e.g., Ghanaian, Ethiopian, Nigerian)
<input type="checkbox"/> ARAB (e.g., Syrian, Egyptian, Yemeni)	<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK-AFRO-CARIBBEAN OR AFRO-LATINX (e.g., Jamaican, Haitian, Afro-Brazilian.)
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN-EAST (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese)	<input type="checkbox"/> LATIN AMERICAN (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Chilean, Cuban)
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN- SOUTH-EAST (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian)	<input type="checkbox"/> WHITE (e.g. European, French, Ukrainian, Euro-Latinx)
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN-SOUTH OR INDO-CARIBBEAN (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian)	<input type="checkbox"/> NOT LISTED (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN-WEST (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK-CANADIAN/AMERICAN	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

9. Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

[Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, and Air Force, Regular and Reserve, including Army Rangers]

<input type="radio"/> YES, MILITARY	<input type="radio"/> BOTH MILITARY AND RCMP	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> YES, RCMP	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

10. As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care or in a youth group home (COMMUNITY NOTE: include any other Provincial child welfare programs)? [Note: This question applies specifically to child welfare programs.]

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
---------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

11. Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time:

HEALTH CHALLENGES	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	DECLINE TO ANSWER
ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION [e.g. diabetes, arthritis, TB or HIV]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PHYSICAL LIMITATION [e.g. challenges with mobility, physical abilities or dexterity]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LEARNING OR COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS [e.g. dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, or as a result of ADHD]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY [e.g. from injury related to an accident, violence, an overdose, stroke or brain tumour]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE [diagnosed/undiagnosed] [e.g. depression, Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or bipolar disorder]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SUBSTANCE USE ISSUE [e.g. alcohol or opiates]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. What gender do you identify with? [Show list or read list.]

<input type="radio"/> MAN	<input type="radio"/> TRANS WOMAN	<input type="radio"/> NOT LISTED: _____
<input type="radio"/> WOMAN	<input type="radio"/> TRANS MAN	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> TWO-SPIRIT	<input type="radio"/> NON-BINARY (GENDERQUEER)	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

13. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian? [Show list or read list.]

<input type="radio"/> STRAIGHT/HETEROSEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> BISEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> ASEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> NOT LISTED: _____
<input type="radio"/> GAY	<input type="radio"/> TWO-SPIRIT	<input type="radio"/> QUEER	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> LESBIAN	<input type="radio"/> PANSEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> QUESTIONING	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

14a. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? [Do not read the options. Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays. Follow up for the reason if the respondent says "eviction" or that they "chose to leave".]

<p>HOUSING AND FINANCIAL ISSUES</p> <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ENOUGH INCOME FOR HOUSING (E.G. LOSS OF BENEFIT, INCOME, OR JOB) <input type="checkbox"/> UNFIT/UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITION <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING SOLD OR RENNOVATED <input type="checkbox"/> OWNER MOVED IN	<p>CONFLICT WITH:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE / PARTNER <input type="checkbox"/> PARENT / GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> LANDLORD <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (_____)	<p>EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION BY:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE / PARTNER <input type="checkbox"/> PARENT / GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> LANDLORD <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (_____)
<p>OTHER</p> <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLAINT (E.G. PETS/NOISE/DAMAGE) <input type="checkbox"/> LEFT THE COMMUNITY/RELOCATED <input type="checkbox"/> DEATH OR DEPARTURE OF FAMILY MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER REASON _____ _____ _____	<p>EXPERIENCED ABUSE BY:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE / PARTNER <input type="checkbox"/> PARENT / GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> LANDLORD <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (_____)	<p>HEALTH OR CORRECTIONS</p> <input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANCE USE ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALIZATION OR TREATMENT PROGRAM <input type="checkbox"/> INCARCERATION (JAIL OR PRISON)
	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

14b. Was your most recent housing loss related to an eviction? [Can be either a formal or informal eviction]

YES NO DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

14c. How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing most recently)? (Best estimate)

LENGTH _____ DAYS | WEEKS | MONTHS | YEARS DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

15. What are your sources of income? [Reminder that this survey is anonymous. **Read list** and check all that apply]

<p>Formal or Informal Work</p> <input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> CASUAL EMPLOYMENT (E.G. CONTRACT WORK) <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL INCOME SOURCES (E.G. BOTTLE RETURNS, PANHANDLING, SEX WORK)	<p>Benefits</p> <input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE <input type="checkbox"/> DISABILITY BENEFIT [Name of PROV. DISABILITY BENEFIT] <input type="checkbox"/> SENIORS BENEFITS (E.G. CPP/OAS/GIS) <input type="checkbox"/> WELFARE/SOCIAL ASSISTANCE [Prov. Benefit] <input type="checkbox"/> VETERAN/VAC BENEFITS <input type="checkbox"/> CHILD AND FAMILY BENEFITS <input type="checkbox"/> GST/HST REFUND	<p>Other</p> <input type="checkbox"/> MONEY FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER MONEY FROM A SERVICE AGENCY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NO INCOME <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

CO16b. What is the highest level of education you completed?

<input type="radio"/> PRIMARY SCHOOL	<input type="radio"/> SOME POST SECONDARY	<input type="radio"/> NO FORMAL EDUCATION
<input type="radio"/> SOME HIGH SCHOOL	<input type="radio"/> POST SECONDARY GRADUATE	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE/GED	<input type="radio"/> GRADUATE DEGREE (E.G., MASTERS, Ph.D.)	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> TRADES: (eg. Apprenticeship, Red Seal)		<input type="radio"/>

CO17b. In the past year (12 months) have you: [Ask respondents to give their best estimate]

BEEN TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM	Y ___ N ___	# _____	Times
BEEN HOSPITALIZED	Y ___ N ___	# _____	Times
→DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT HOSPITALIZED		_____	Days Total
INTERACTED WITH POLICE (<i>Tickets, arrests, searches</i>)	Y ___ N ___	# _____	Times
BEEN TO PRISON/JAIL	Y ___ N ___	# _____	Times
→DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT IN PRISON/JAIL		_____	Days Total

CO18b. Do you want to get into permanent housing?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
---------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

CO19b. What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing? [Select all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> LOW INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES	<input type="checkbox"/> DISCRIMINATION
<input type="checkbox"/> NO INCOME ASSISTANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> ADDICTION	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T WANT HOUSING
<input type="checkbox"/> RENTS TOO HIGH	<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY BREAKDOWN/CONFLICT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> CRIMINAL HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> NO BARRIERS TO HOUSING
<input type="checkbox"/> DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	<input type="checkbox"/> PETS	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THE ABOVE
<input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH/DISABILITY ISSUES	<input type="checkbox"/> CHILDREN	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

CO20b. I'm going to read a list of services that you may or may not need. Let me know which of these apply to you.

Do you have a need for services related to: [Read categories, select all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> SERIOUS/ONGOING MEDICAL CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL DISABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> PREGNANCY
<input type="checkbox"/> ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE	<input type="checkbox"/> LEARNING DISABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THE ABOVE
<input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH (<i>Counselling, treatment, etc.</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> BRAIN INJURY	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

CO21b. What are some of the ways we can solve homelessness? (Do not read list. Check all that are mentioned).

<input type="checkbox"/> AFFORDABLE HOUSING	<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS
<input type="checkbox"/> INCREASE INCOME ASSISTANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> INCREASE # OUTREACH WORKERS
<input type="checkbox"/> INCREASE ADDICTIONS SUPPORT	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
<input type="checkbox"/> HOUSING FOR COUPLES	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
<input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS	

UNIQUE IDENTIFIER REQUEST

To help us avoid duplicate surveys, we'd like to make a unique id for this survey.

THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE ENTERED INTO ANY DATABASE OR USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.

This is optional, but will really help us out.

Could you please provide me your first and last initials? _____ [2 Letters only!]

What day of the month were you born? _____

[e.g. 17 for April 17th birthday / 07 for the 7th of April).

Report prepared on behalf of United Way BC
and
Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

by:

Andrew Thornton (PhD)

Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead,
Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization

(January 2024)

Access the report:

<https://nanaimospo.com/research-and-knowledge-mobilization/>

This project is funded by
the Government of Canada.

Canada 