Fall 2014

Point-in-Time
Count Report

Calgary
Homeless
Foundation

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Background

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

This October count is part of a broader initiative led by the 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness to develop a more harmonized approach to homeless counts nationally. Alberta is the first jurisdiction to conduct a provincial point-in-time count, leading the way in Canada.

The 2014 Fall Provincial Point-in-Time Count

On October 16, 2014 the Calgary Homeless Foundation worked with community partners to conduct the first ever provincial Point-in-Time Homeless Count. Over 80 volunteers and 38 organizations representing over 60 facilities participated in the local count. During the period 10 pm to 1 am, of the following day, 25 teams of 3 to 4 people canvased zones throughout the city to observe and count individuals and to survey those willing to participate.

Mobile teams in vehicles led by Calgary Police Services, City of Calgary Animal and Bylaw Services, and street outreach teams covered seven remote areas, while public and private sector partners added an additional nine areas. Seventy-one organizations provided data and basic demographics in conjunction with the street count.

In addition to administrative data submitted by all participating agencies, this count also included a short survey administered to a portion of rough sleepers and emergency shelter users. As such, the survey was not consistently applied to all locations that were subject to enumeration, and thus provides a sub-sample of the overall enumerated population with which to conduct further analysis. The implementation of this survey, and the change in time of year, are the two methodological changes between this count and earlier counts (January 2014, Summer and Winter 2012). Given the impact of weather on Point-in-Time Counts, comparison to other counts should be done with caution. More information about the methodology of this count can be found in the Winter 2014 Point-in-Time Count Report, in Appendix A, and in the forthcoming 2014 Alberta Point-in-Time Homeless Count Provincial Report.

As in the past 3 Point-in-Time Counts, Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer sponsored the count.

Socio-Economic Context

The prevalence of homelessness, while not unique to any Canadian city, is impacted by geographic specific socio/economic factors that affect the number of people experiencing homelessness within each community:

- *Net migration increase in 2014*, with 28,017 people moving to Calgary (an increase from 2013's net migration of 26,201)[1] – 3.3% growth, the highest growth rate since 2006.

- *Rents continue to rise*, with average rents jumping 5.9% between October 2013 and October 2014, with an average two-bedroom apartment costing $1,322[2]

- *Vacancies continue to remain under 2% since October 2012*, with 1.4% vacancy rate as of October 2014.[3]

Key Findings

1. **Growth of the homeless population has stopped.**

   Overall, the October 2014 Point-in-Time Count found 0.6% more people – effectively no change – than the January Point-in-Time Count. Comparing October 2014 to the May 2008 count, homelessness has decreased by 1.3%. In total, 3,555 people were found to be homeless on the night of the count.[4]

   Before the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Calgary was implemented in 2008, data from the City of Calgary counts indicates an average growth rate of the homeless population enumerated in PIT counts of 35% every two years. If this same trend continued, this year's count would have seen 8,804 people homeless. Additionally, Calgary continues to grow, with a population increase of 3.3% indicated by the 2014 census.[5]

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[1] City of Calgary. (2014). 2014 Civic Census Results. Retrieved from http://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Election-and-information-services/Census2014/Final%202014%20Census%20Results%20book.pdf

[2] Canada Mortgage and Housing Company. (Fall 2014). Rental Market Report: Calgary CMA.
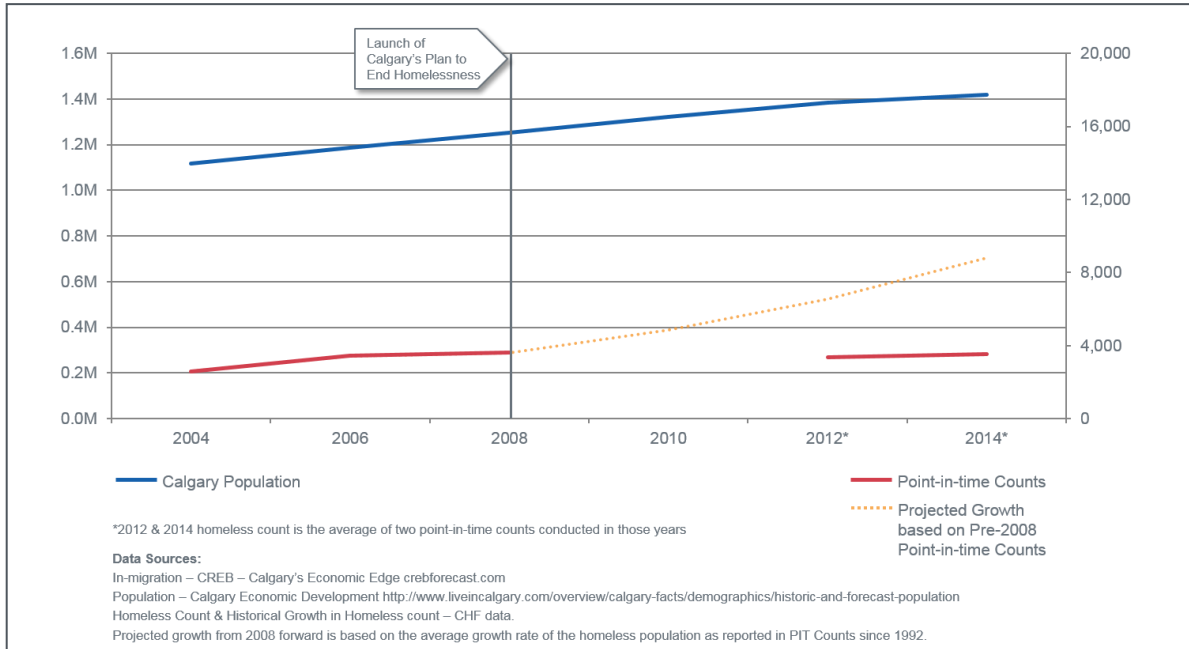
[3] Ibid.

[4] Comparing the October 2014 count with previous counts should be done with caution as seasonal variations and weather patterns impact the count.
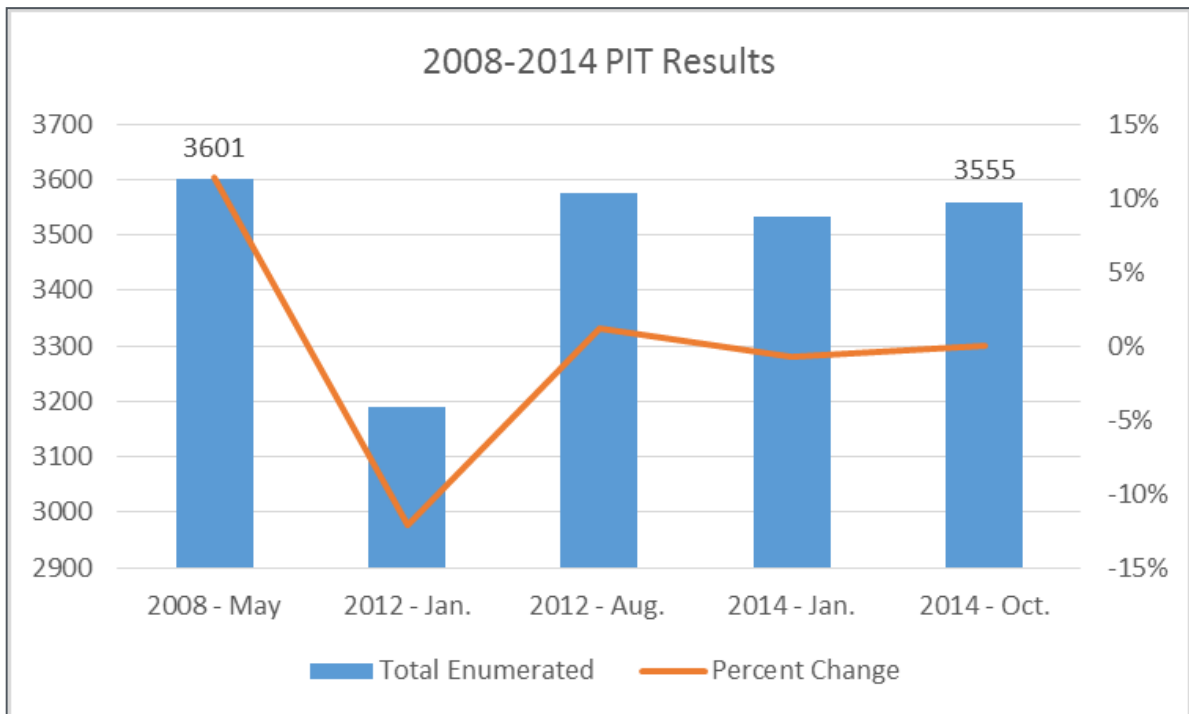
[5] City of Calgary. (2014). 2014 Civic Census Results.

Comparing Point-in-Time Counts with Migration and Population Changes (2004 – 2014)

Launch of Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness

*2012 & 2014 homeless count is the average of two point-in-time counts conducted in those years

Data Sources:
In-migration – CREB – Calgary's Economic Edge crebforecast.com
Population – Calgary Economic Development http://www.liveincalgary.com/overview/calgary-facts/demographics/historic-and-forecast-population
Homeless Count & Historical Growth in Homeless count – CHF data.
Projected growth from 2008 forward is based on the average growth rate of the homeless population as reported in PIT Counts since 1992.

Calgary Population — Point-in-time Counts — Projected Growth based on Pre-2008 Point-in-time Counts

Comparing Point-in-Time Counts Against 2008 and 2012 Baseline Counts

2008-2014 PIT Results

3601 3555

2008 - May | 2012 - Jan. | 2012 - Aug. | 2014 - Jan. | 2014 - Oct.

Total Enumerated — Percent Change

2. **The distribution of the enumerated population remained roughly consistent (within 10%) in emergency shelters and short-term supportive housing; has increased in systems homeless; and decreased in the rough sleeping population.** Populations utilizing domestic violence facilities are up slightly (increase of 11.8%) and addictions treatment facilities have remained roughly consistent.

Comparing Total Population, January 2014 and October 2014:

Homeless Numbers	January 2014	% of Total	October 2014	% of Total	Change in population	Change in Percentage Share of Total
Total number homeless people	**3,533**	**100.0%**	**3,555**	**100.0%**	**+0.6%**	**–**
Emergency shelter numbers	1,892	53.6%	1,766	49.7%	-6.7%	↓3.9%
Short-term supportive housing	1,224	34.6%	1,292	36.3%	+5.6%	↑1.7%
Systems	202	5.7%	315	8.9%	+55.9%	↑3.2%
Rough sleeping	215	6.1%	182	5.1%	-15.3%	↓1.0%

Individuals in Facilities Serving Specific Sub-population, By Classification

	Shelter	Short Term Supportive	Systems	Total
Domestic Violence	91	240	–	**331**
Addictions Treatment	44	298	6[6]	**348**

3. **Aboriginal people continue to be disproportionately represented among the homeless population.**
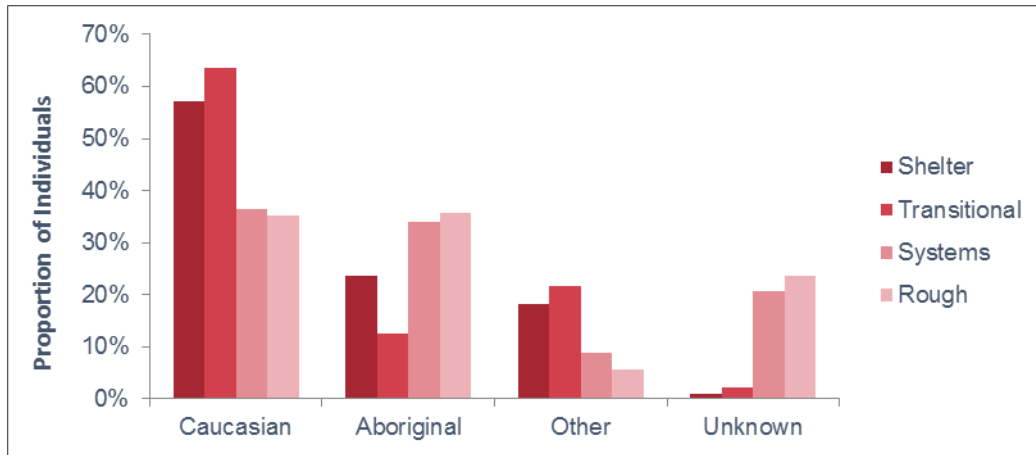   - Aboriginal people still make up less than 3% of Calgary's population[7] but make up 21.1% of its homeless population (consistent with January 2014's count).
   - 8.7% of Aboriginal people counted sleep rough, as compared to 3.2% of Caucasian persons. 14.2% of Aboriginal persons enumerated were found in systems homelessness, compared to 5.7% of Caucasians; and, 21.6% of Aboriginal persons enumerated were in transitional housing, compared to 40.8% of their Caucasian counterparts.
   - Aboriginal persons are younger than their non-Aboriginal counterparts – 3 in 4 Aboriginal persons counted were 44 or younger, as compared to 1 in 2 Caucasian persons.

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[6] These are addictions treatment beds operated directly by Alberta Health Services.

[7] Statistics Canada. (2011). *National Household Survey.* Data retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/.

Ethnicity Distribution for Total Enumerated Population, By Classification

4. Homelessness occurs across the lifespan.

Age distributions for the fall count remained consistent with the January 2014 count: the majority of clients were between 25-44 (39.2%) or 45-64 (36.1%).

There was a slight increase of children enumerated in the count: 434 children under the age of 17 were counted, or 12.2% of the total.[8]

Both 2014 counts have enumerated more homeless seniors (defined as 65+) than in previous counts: 122 were counted in October 2014 (compared to 134 in January 2014), as compared to 84 seniors enumerated in 2012. The majority of seniors (68.9%) were located in emergency shelters.

Age Distribution for Total Enumerated Population

	January 2014	% of Known Ages	October 2014	% of Known Ages	Change in Percentage Share of Total
Preschoolers (0 – 5)	149	4.3%	198	5.6%	↑1.3%
School Age (6 – 12)	99	2.9%	124	3.5%	↑0.6%
Youth (13 – 17)	84	2.4%	112	3.2%	↑0.8%
Young Adults (18 – 24)	339	9.8%	271	7.7%	↓2.1%
Working Age (25 – 44)	1,329	38.4%	1395	39.8%	↑1.4%
Middle Aged (45 – 64)	1,329	38.4%	1284	38.6%	↑0.2%
Seniors (65+)	134	3.9%	122	3.5%	↓0.4%
Unknown Age	70	-	49	-	
Total	**3,533**		**3,555**		

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[8] Note that this analysis considers age in isolation of other variables such as family structure or location of numeration, so numbers will differ from reported figures for children in families or unaccompanied youth.

Further, age distribution is impacted by facility type. For example, shelters and transitional facilities have a roughly even distribution of persons within the 25-44 and 45-64 age cohorts (in shelter, 39.4% are 25-44 and 40.7% are 45-64; in transitional facilities, 34.6% are 25-44 and 36.2% are 45-64). Shelters also have a sizeable number of persons over 65 (84 people, or 4.8% of the total). But, by comparison, systems and rough sleeper populations tend to be younger, with the majority of their populations (49.8% and 52.7% respectively) are 25-44.

5. **182 individuals were rough sleeping on the night of the count.**

    Because rough sleeping is at least partially informed by weather conditions, rough sleepers found in the October 2014 count were slightly decreased from those found in January, and the weather between both dates was comparable and relatively moderate. The October 2014 count enumerated 182 rough sleepers, as compared to 215 in January 2014. Historically, counts enumerated 333 rough sleepers during the Summer 2012 count, and 64 rough sleepers in Winter 2012 (with temperatures of -33 with windchill).

    While gender distribution among rough sleepers has a slightly lower proportion of women (19.2% of rough sleepers are women, compared to 24.8% of the total population), there are substantially more people between 25-44 rough sleeping (52.7% of total rough sleepers) when compared to the entire population (39.2% of all persons counted were 25-44). Both the 45-64 and 65+ age groups are underrepresented in rough sleepers, compared to the age distribution across the enumerated population.

    The distribution of ethnicities among rough sleepers demonstrates an over-representation of Aboriginal individuals, where 35.7% of rough sleepers are Aboriginal (compared to 21.1% of the total population as Aboriginal).

6. **Women continue to be underrepresented in the homeless population.**

    Consistent with previous years, women constituted 24.8% of the enumerated population (882 women counted). Aboriginal women are over-represented within the female population, where 30.4% of all homeless women counted identified as Aboriginal (as compared to 21.1% of the whole population). Likewise, women were over-represented within the Aboriginal population, with 35.7% of Aboriginal persons counted identifying as women (versus 19.5% of the Caucasian female population). This is consistent with data in previous counts.

    Consistent with previous counts, Aboriginal women are over-represented among rough sleepers. When looking only at gender, 78.6% of rough sleepers are men and 19.2% are female (the remainder are unknown because of rough count methodology) – similar to the distribution of the overall homeless population. However, evaluating ethnicity and gender indicates Caucasian women represent 10.9% of all Caucasian rough sleepers while Aboriginal women represent 30.8% of all Aboriginal rough sleepers. This is consistent with data in previous counts.

    Of the surveyed population (n=437), 12 women identified as being pregnant.

7. **Over 200 families were experiencing homelessness on the night of the count.**

211 families were enumerated in the October 2014 count, compared to 209 captured in January 2014 (a change of 1%). There were 378 children (under 17 years of age) within those 211 families. 79 families were utilizing emergency shelters, 112 were staying in STSH facilities, and 20 families utilizing Alberta Works funded shelter vouchers for hotel/motel stays.

8. **286 unaccompanied youth were counted in both youth and adult serving facilities.**

In total, 286 unaccompanied youth were enumerated on the night of the count.
98 unaccompanied youth were counted in youth-specific shelters or short-term supportive housing.

Unaccompanied Youth by Facility Type

Age	Youth Shelter	Youth STSH	Adult Shelter	Adult STSH	Systems	Rough	Total Unaccompanied
13-17	24	14	–	–	21	1	60
18-24	4	56	65	44	42	15	226

9. **Survey data provides insight into immigration and migration rates among the homeless population. 17.8% of the surveyed population was born outside Canada; 18.4% of survey respondents were new to Calgary in the past year.**

The surveys (N = 437) also captured data related to immigration and migration.

17.8% of Calgary's surveyed population reported being born outside Canada – the highest rate in the province, compared to a provincial average of 11.4%. The rates of immigrants within the general population (measured using the National Household Survey from 2011) state that 26.2% of households in Calgary were born outside Canada – substantially higher than the rate among the homeless population. Of those foreign-born survey respondents, 56.3% had spent 5 or more years in Canada, and 9.2% had been in Canada for 5 years or less.

Across the province, an average of 18.4% of survey respondents reported being new to their community within the past year. In Calgary, 18.1% of survey respondents were new to Calgary in the past year, as compared to lows of 2.4% in Edmonton, and highs of 46.5% in Red Deer.[9] Among the general population in Calgary, 6.1% of households report having moved in the past year – in Calgary, then, the ratio of recent migration among the surveyed homeless population to the general population is 3.0:1.

Of survey respondents in Calgary, 13.5% reported being born in the community, and 44.4% of people not born in Calgary had moved here 5 or more years ago.

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[9] Responses in these communities may be impacted by low response rates for this specific question, or higher 'don't know/declined to answer' rates.

10. **Survey data also gives insights into when and for how long surveyed respondents experience homelessness.**

In its survey sample of 437, Calgary found 28% of its survey respondents to report their first time experiencing homelessness before the age of 18; 39% of the survey respondents were homeless before the age of 24. The majority of participants (52%) reported experiencing their first episode of homelessness between ages 24 and 55.

When asked how long they had been homeless most recently, survey respondents indicated that the majority had been homeless less than 3 years in their most recent episode, with 11.0% having been homeless one month or less in their most recent episode. 15.3% of survey respondents had been homeless five or more years.

	1 month or less	1-6 months	6-12 months	1-3 years	3-5 years	5+ years
Length of current episode of homelessness	11.0%	20.4%	15.6%	20.1%	5.7%	15.3%

11. **Some Calgarians experiencing homelessness in Calgary are veterans.**

At least 26 homeless veterans live in Calgary – 5.9% of the surveyed population indicated they had military service in the Canadian Forces. 22 survey respondents also reported that they had had military or police service in another country. The rate of veterans among the entire Canadian population is estimated to be approximately 1.7%.[10]

Conclusions

While comparative analysis always must consider changing variables and methodologies, the learnings outlined above reflect important knowledge about the demographics of people experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. As Calgary moves forward with future counts, close attention will be paid to integrate learnings from each count, improve methodology to gain better insight into specific trends, and maximize the analysis in a way that informs our community planning going forward.

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[10] Estimated veteran population as of March 2013 (594,300/35,158,300. (Veterans Affairs Canada online at http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/news/general-statistics).