Everyone Counts and Beyond

Past and Future PiT Counts in the Broader Landscape of Homelessness Data

Homelessness Policy Directorate

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada

May 2025

National Homelessness Data Sources

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) uses multiple homelessness data sources to monitor and address homelessness across the country. Strengths and benefits include:

- **Standardized measurement and comparison** (consistency across jurisdictions, benchmarking, clarity in definitions)
- **Informed policy and decision making** (evidence-based policies, resource allocation, trend analysis)
- **Accountability and transparency** (tracking progress, public reporting)
- **Enhanced collaboration and coordination** (alignment across levels, shared goals, knowledge sharing)

National Homelessness Data Sources

- Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts
- National Service Provider List (NSPL)
- Shelter Data and the National Shelter Study (NSS)
- Homelessness Indicator Project (HIP)
- Systems Map

What is a PiT Count?

Enumeration

How many people experience homelessness in a community on a given night

- Goal is to develop and estimation of how many people are experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period

Survey

Collects information on demographics and service needs

- Aim is to get information to better understand the population of people experiencing homelessness and their service needs
- It can be expanded to understand hidden homelessness

What data are collected in the enumeration?

- The number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night and their overnight location:
  - encampments
  - other unsheltered locations
  - emergency shelters and extreme weather shelters
  - domestic violence shelters
  - hotel/motel spaces that are being used in lieu of a shelter
- Individuals who are provisionally accommodated in transitional housing programs are also enumerated.

What data are collected in the survey?

- Overnight locations over the last year
- Chronicity (over one and 3 years)
- Reason for housing loss
- Time since last housing loss
- Age at first homeless experience
- Experience as a youth-in-care
- Immigration/newcomer question
- Migration from other communities
- Veteran status
- Age
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Indigeneity and racial identity
- Challenges related to health conditions
- Sources of income

Comprehensiveness of PiT counts

- All Designated Communities under Reaching Home conduct PiT counts, including both the enumeration and survey.
- A number of rural communities also conduct PiT counts
- Total coverage represents more than 80% of Canada's population

Comprehensiveness of PiT counts

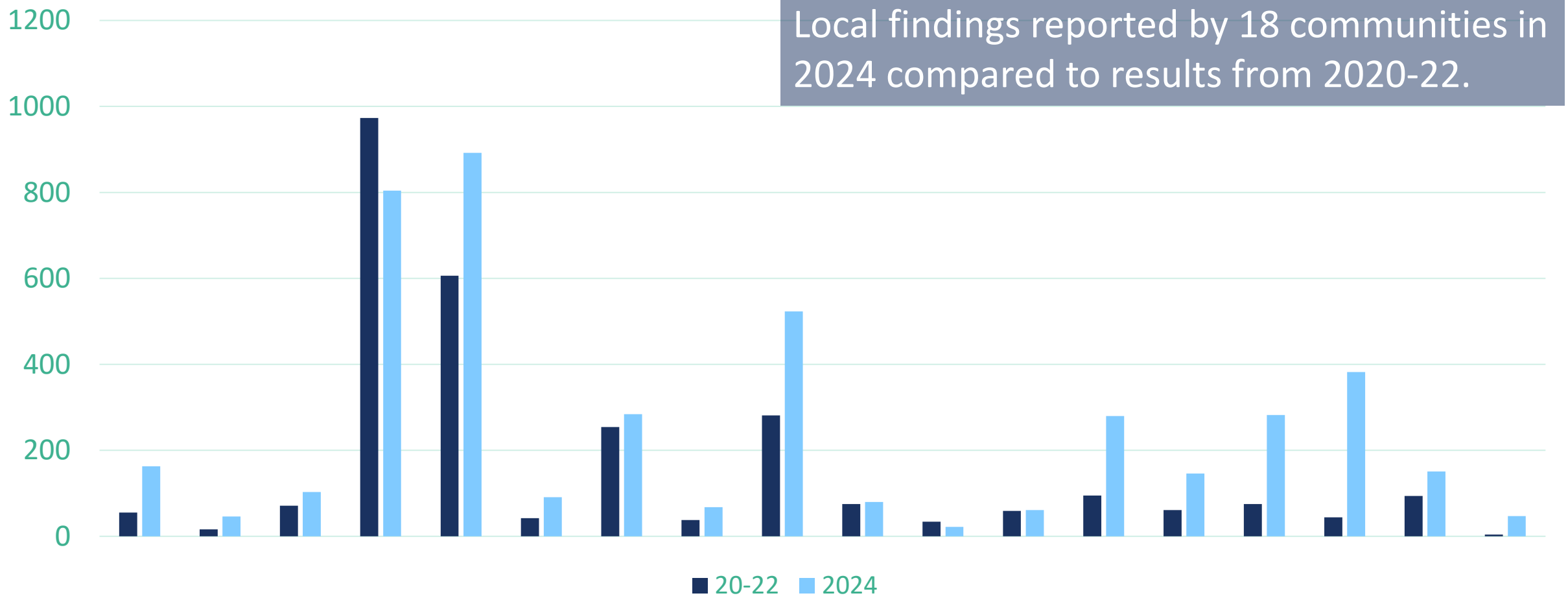
- Includes people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness
- Includes services regardless of whether they are covered by the community's common Homelessness Management Information System (e.g. HIFIS)
- Includes services not funded by the Community Entity
- 30,000+ (and counting) survey responses from 2024 counts

Everyone Counts 2024

- October to November 2024
- Over 70 communities participated
- Communities could administer surveys for up to one month
- Local reports being published now
- National reports on the Enumeration and Survey findings expected in the coming months.

Unsheltered Homelessness, 20-22 to 2024

Local findings reported by 18 communities in 2024 compared to results from 2020-22.



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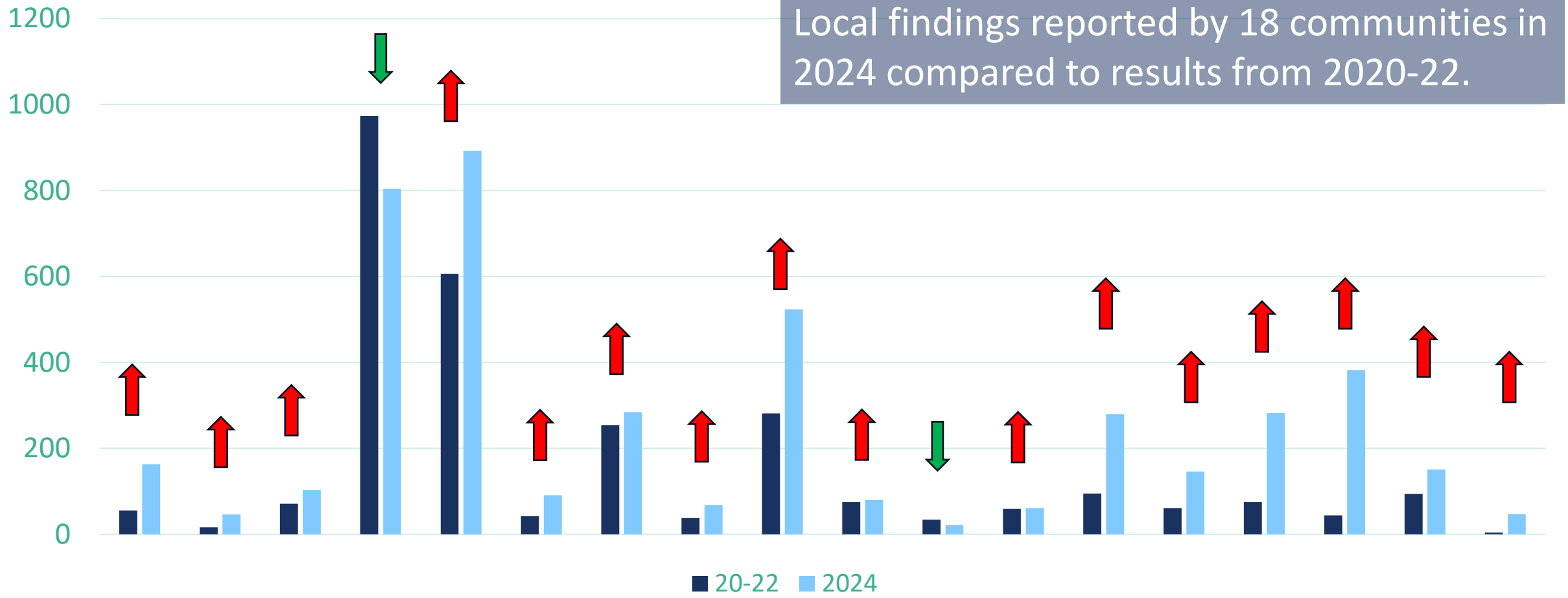

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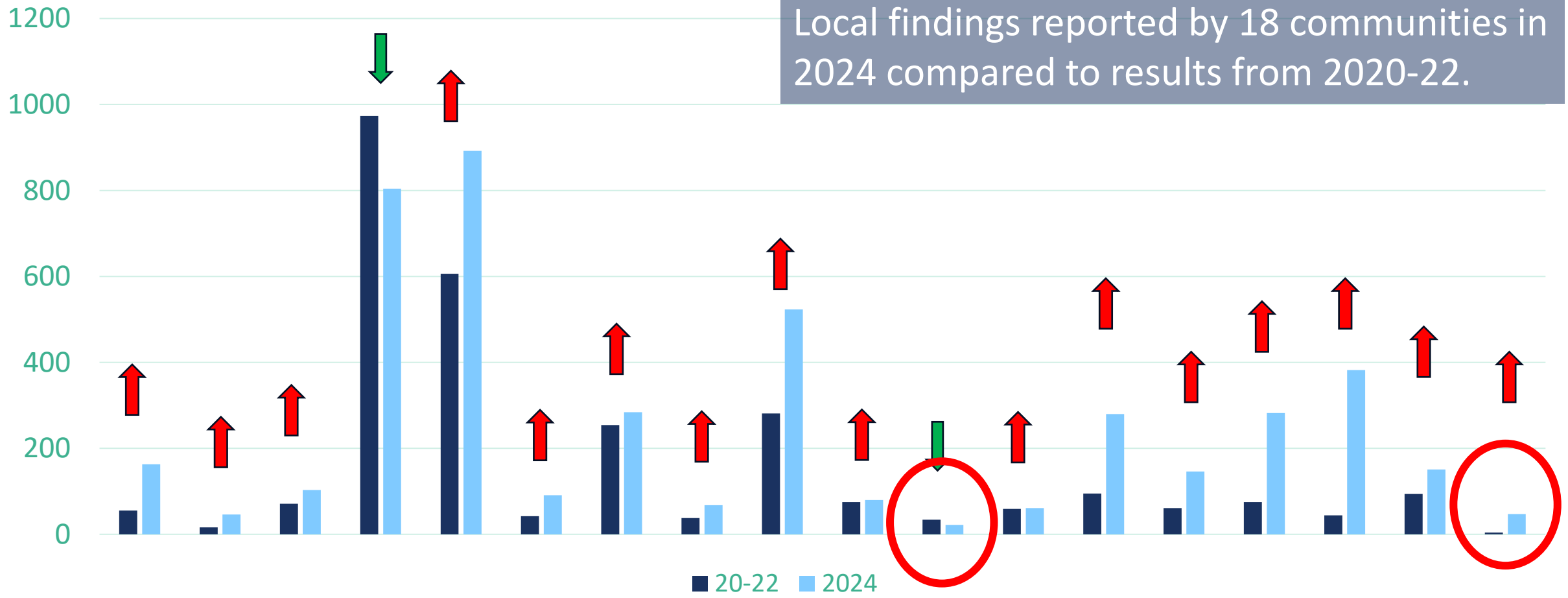

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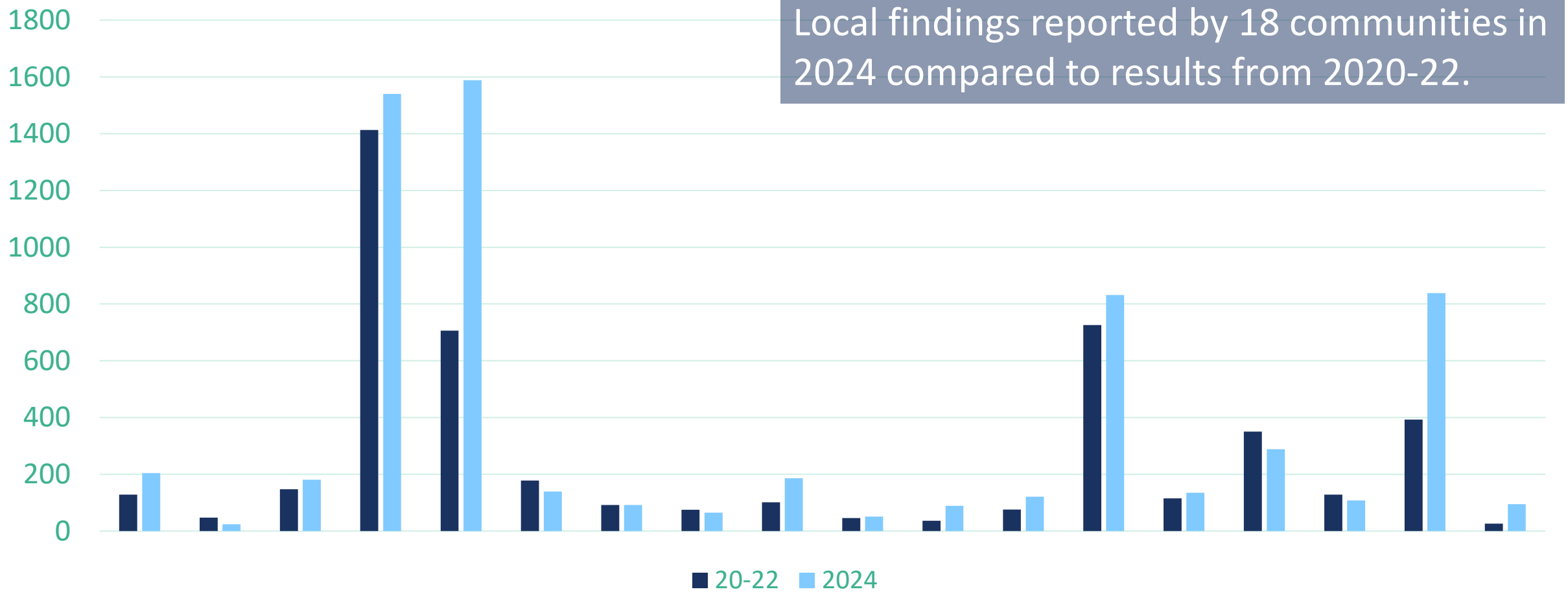

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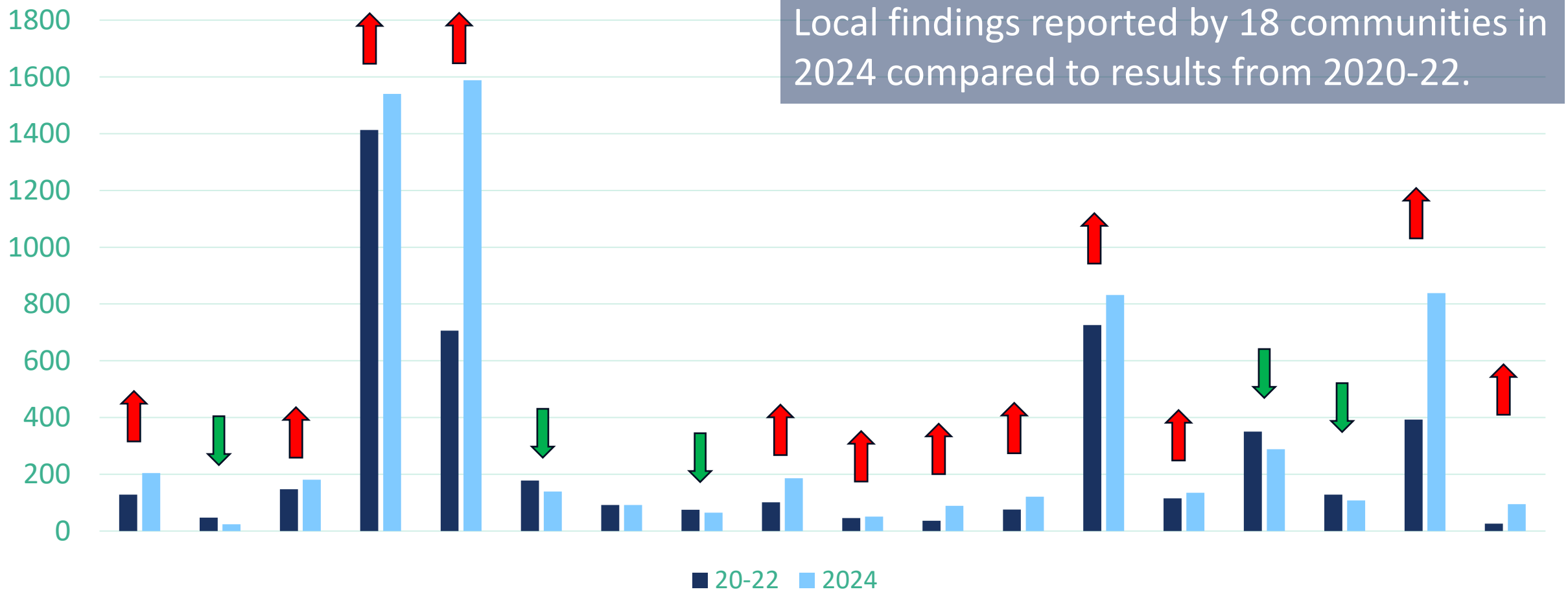

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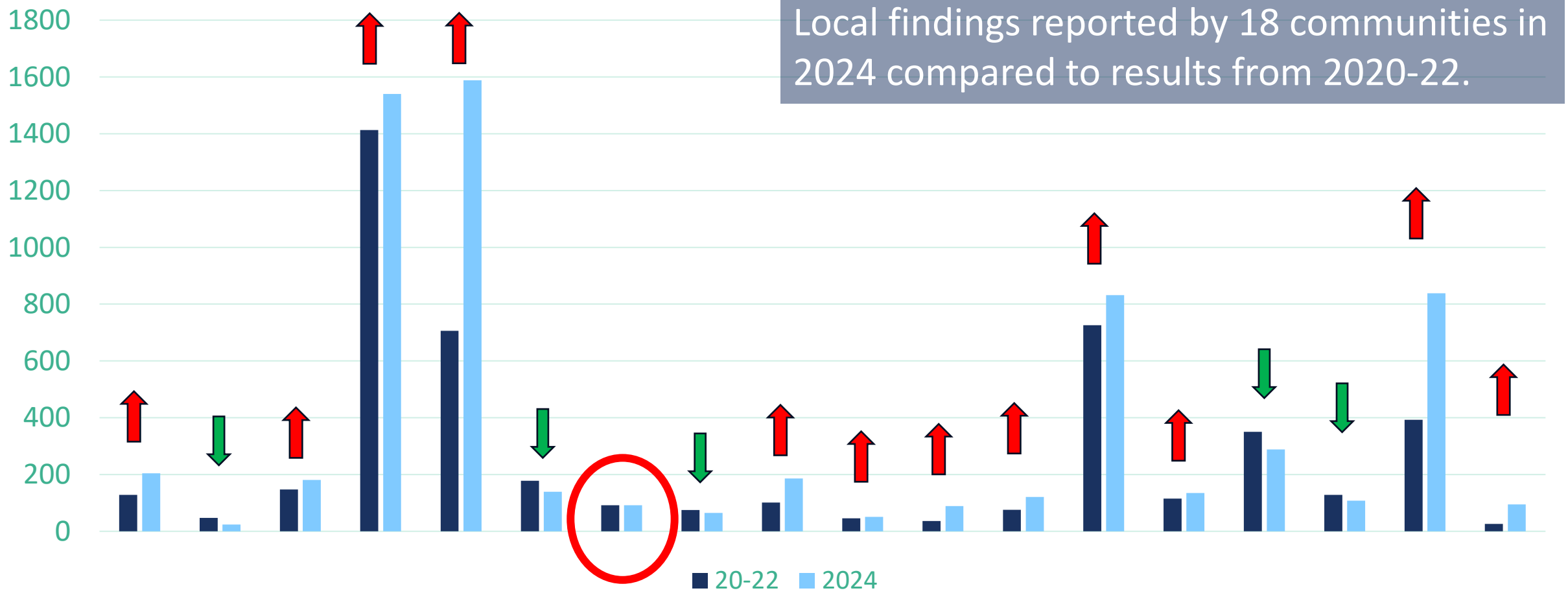

Provisionally Accommodated

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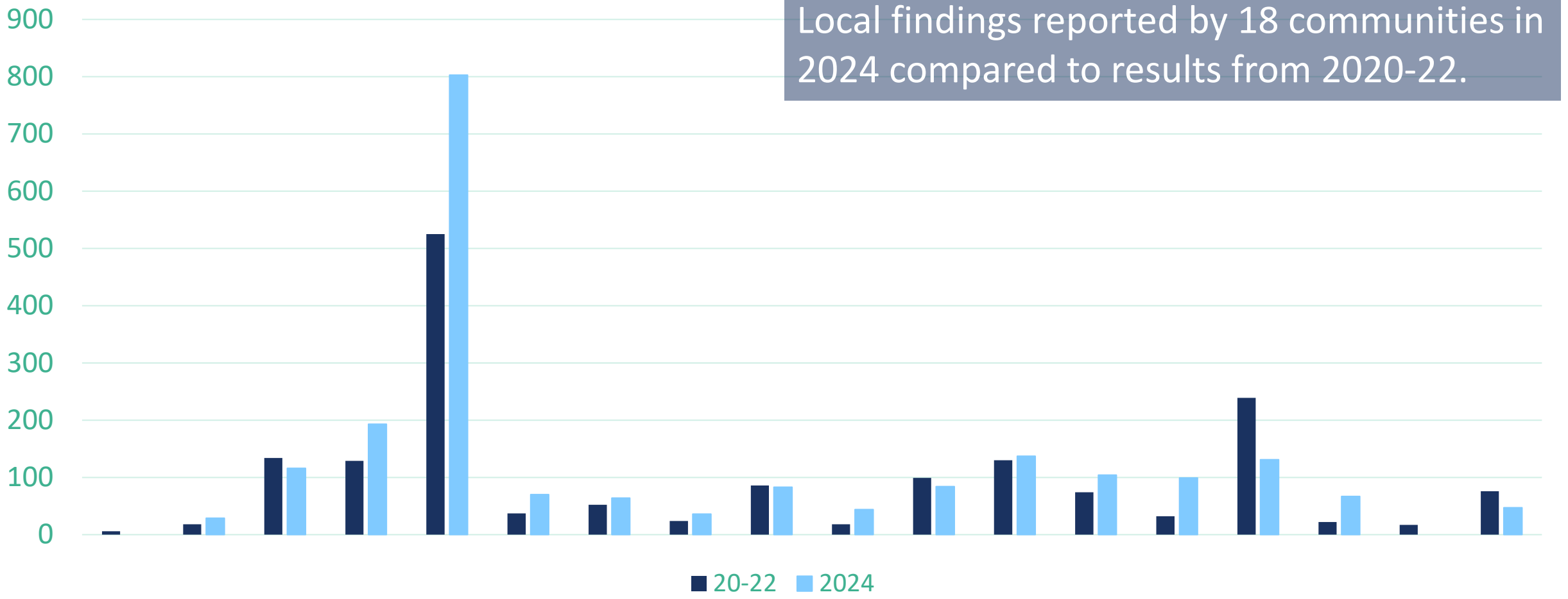

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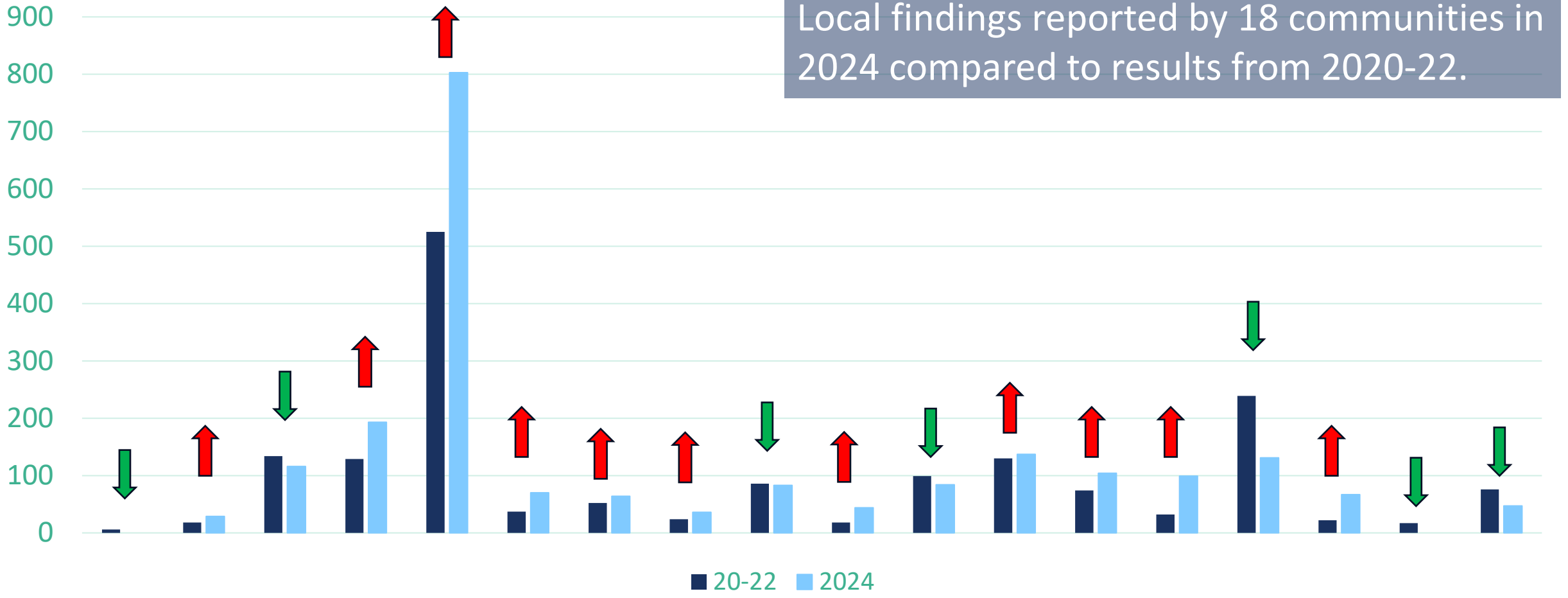

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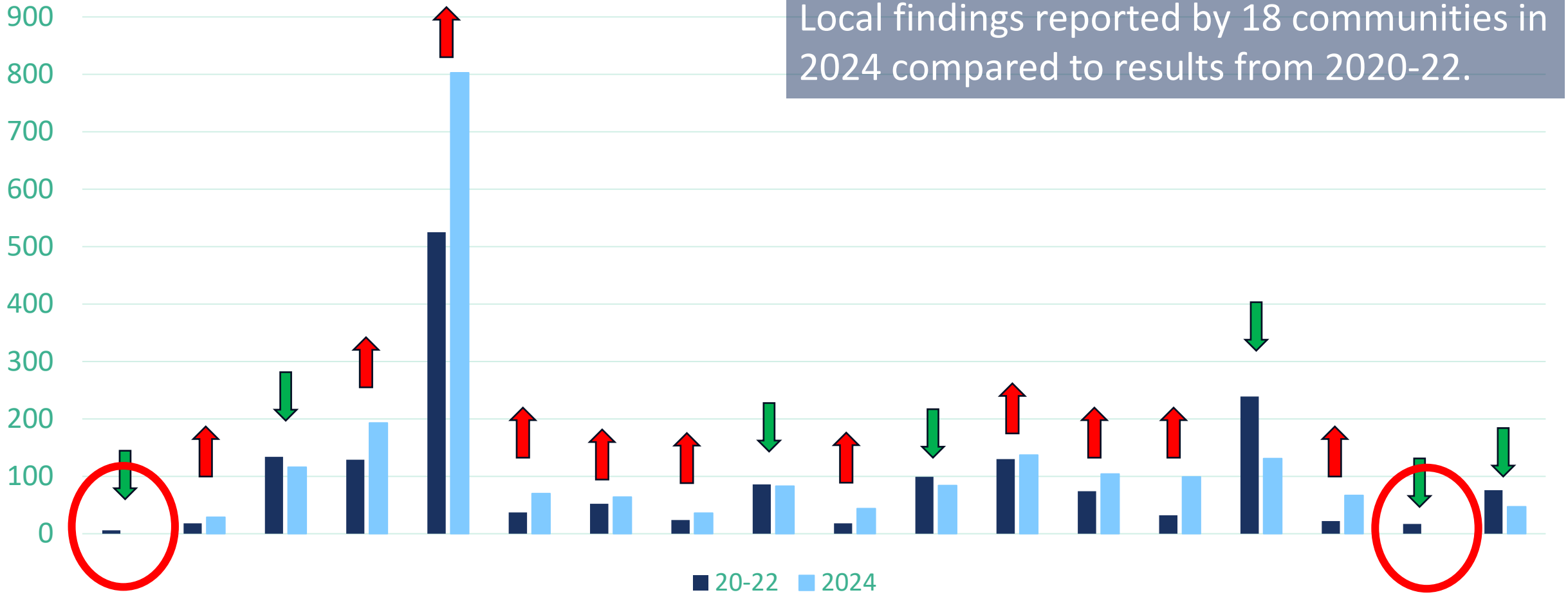
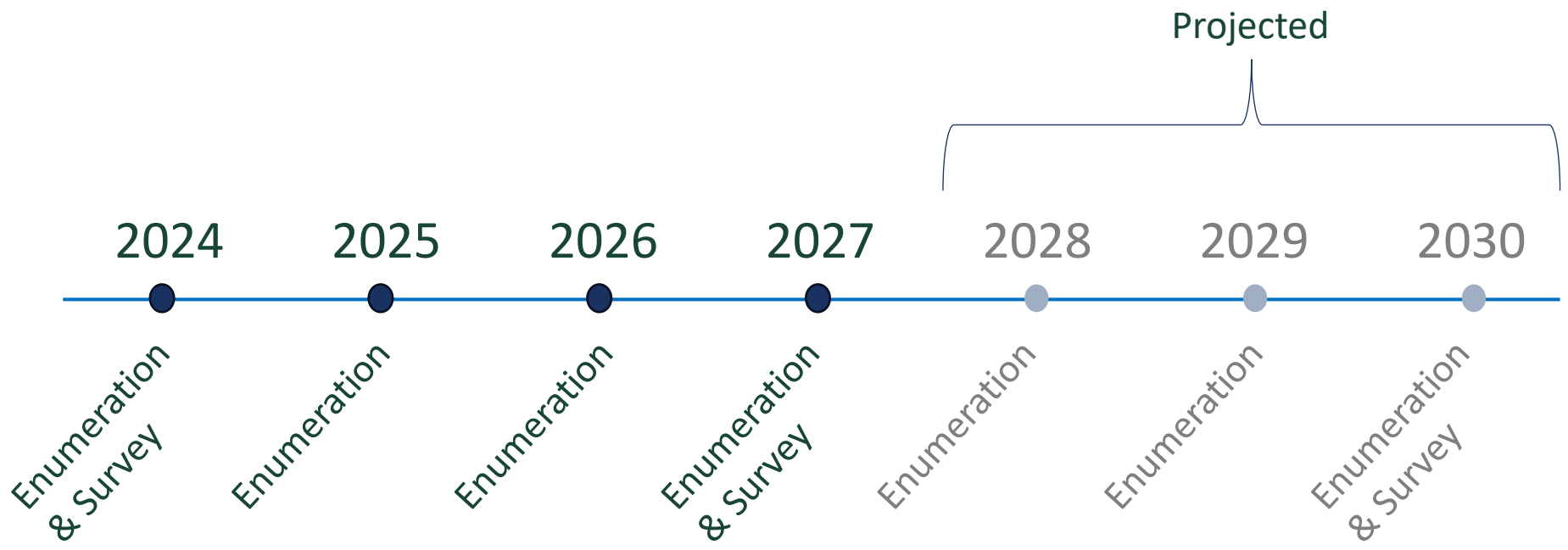


Future PiT Counts



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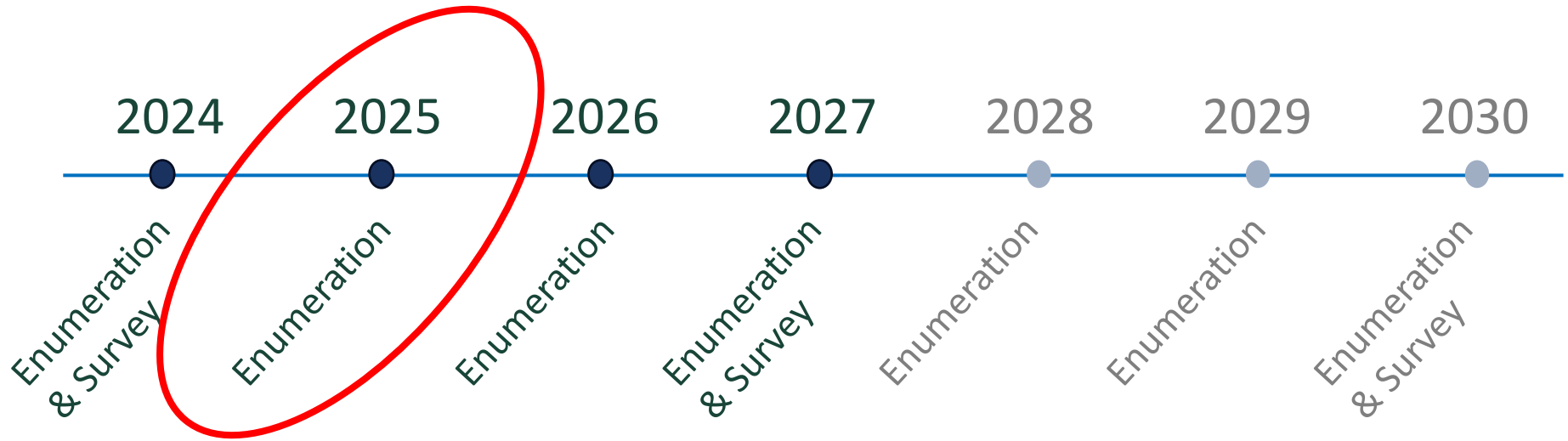
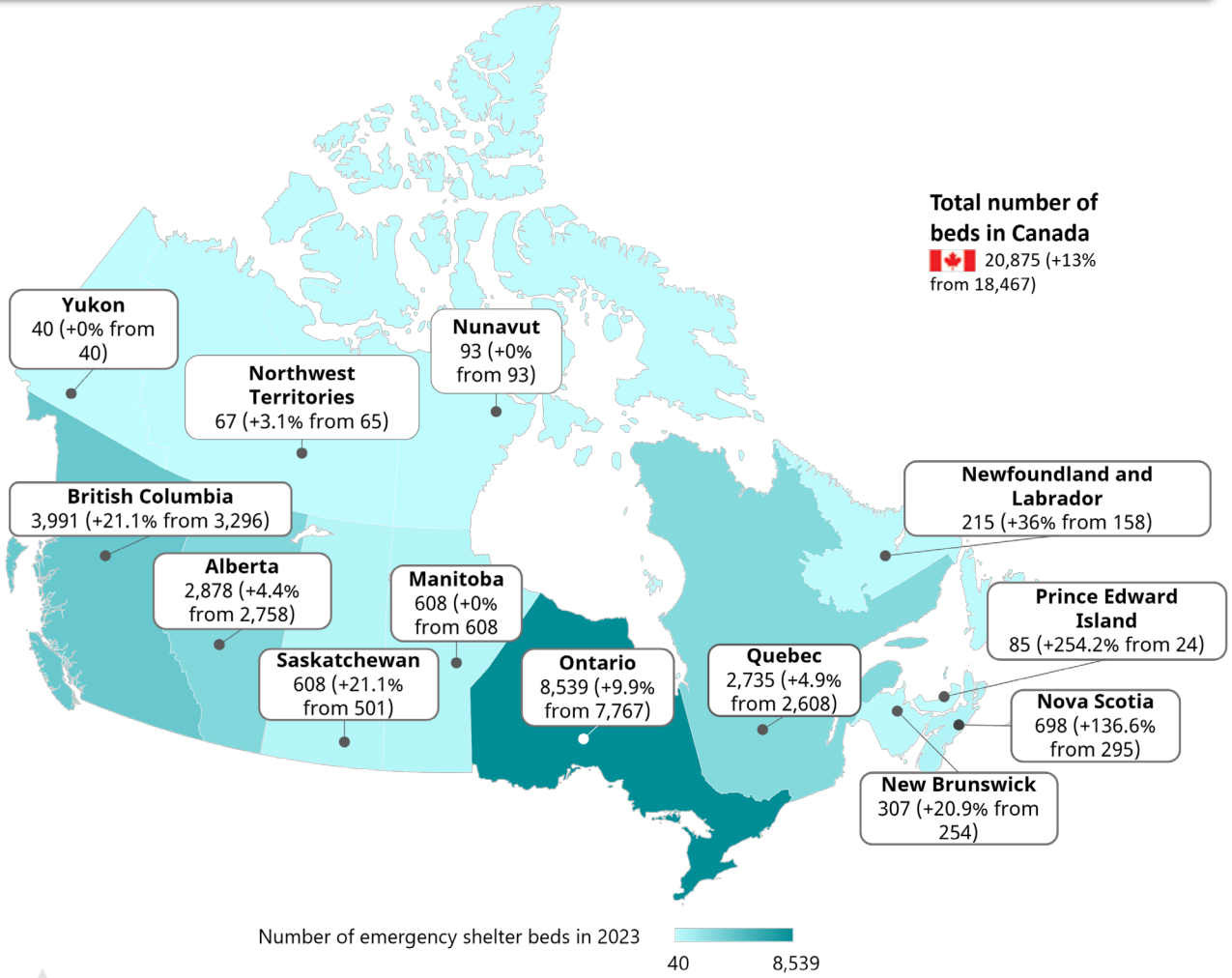


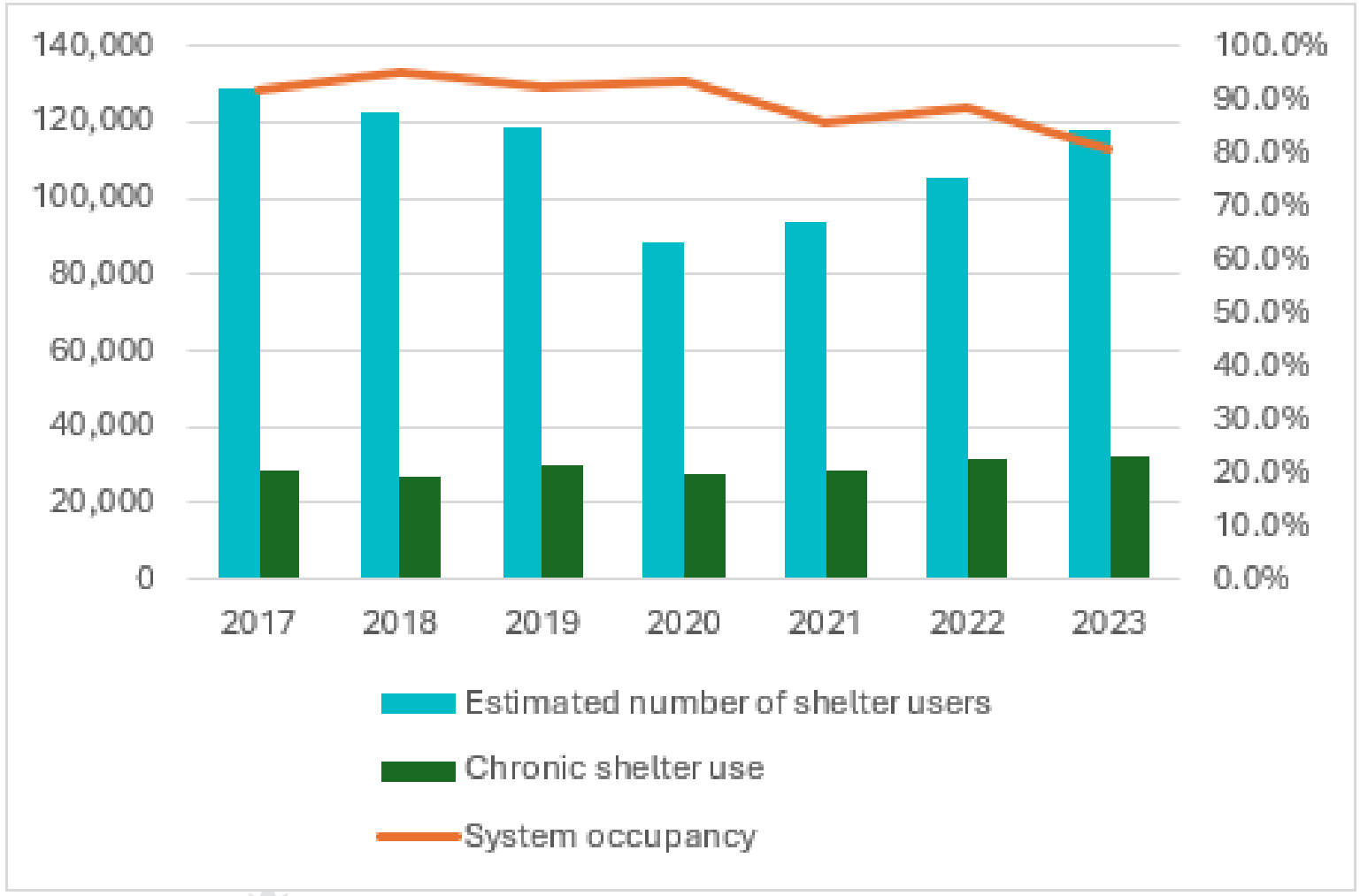
NSPL: National Service Provider List

- HICC inventories the permanent shelter landscape through annual updates to the National Service Provider List
- This list is updated in collaboration with UW/CA Canada via 211 networks
- It includes all known **year-round** emergency, transitional and domestic violence shelters across Canada.
- Temporary or extreme weather shelters, and hotels/motel spaces used in lieu of shelters are *not included.* In most communities, the changing capacity and usage of these services remains a data gap.



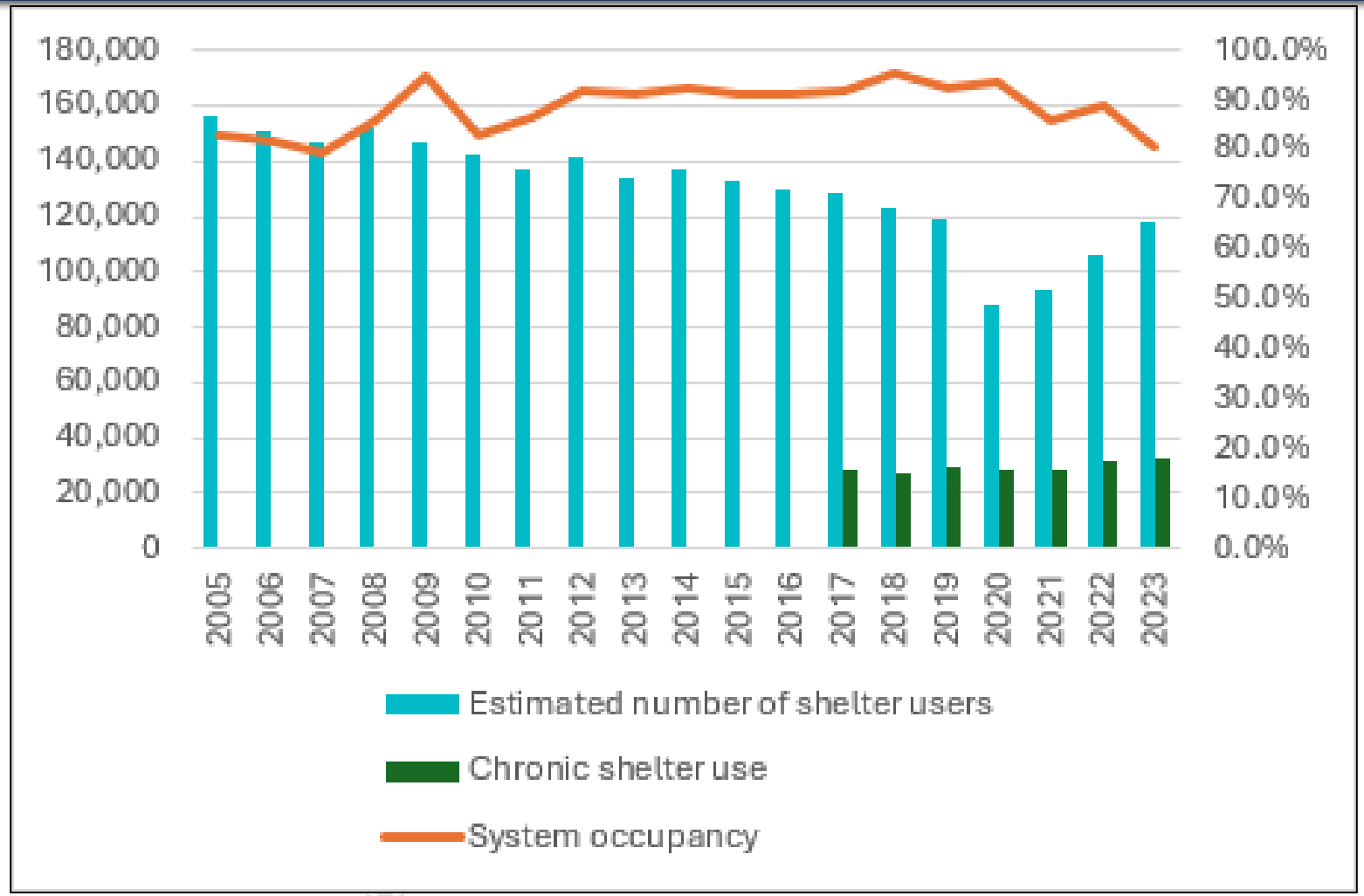
Shelter Data and the National Shelter Study

- The National Shelter Study cross-references the NSPL with the data received through Data Provision Agreements to develop weights and estimate the number of permanent emergency shelter users per year as well as occupancy.
- Both capacity and population served are important to calculate the study weights.



Shelter Data and the National Shelter Study

Estimated shelter users in Canada, 2005-2023



Shelter Data and the National Shelter Study

Reaching Home's National Shelter Study annual estimate of homelessness includes only the total number of individuals using homeless shelters in Canada. This methodology excludes several key locations.

- ✓ Year-round emergency shelters
- × Seasonal/Temporary/Emergency response sites
- × Domestic Violence shelters
- × Transitional housing/provisional housing
- × Unsheltered locations
- × Hidden homelessness

HIP: Homelessness Indicator Project

To improve understandings of local and national homelessness trends based on timely and comprehensive data

Collect Monthly Outcome Data	Convene a Community of Practice	Develop National Homelessness Indicators

Launched in April 2024 and collected back data from January 2024 onwards

HIP: Homelessness Indicator Project

HIP Minimum Data Quality Standards

1. No duplicates (uniqueness)
2. Includes current homelessness (timeliness)
3. Includes all household types (completeness/comprehensiveness)
4. Includes emergency shelters (comprehensiveness)
5. Includes unsheltered (comprehensiveness)
6. Updated monthly, at minimum (timeliness)
7. Must generate outcomes from HIFIS/HMIS (consistency)

Reaching Home Core Outcomes

Measures reductions in 5 key indicators:

1. Overall homelessness
2. Indigenous homelessness
3. Chronic homelessness
4. New inflows to homelessness
5. Returns to homelessness

HIP: Homelessness Indicator Project

Local level:

- Analyze trends in inflow, outflow, and active homelessness over time
- Identify system bottlenecks
- Monitor the impact of new programs or policies
- Examine disparities across population groups
- Enable operational decisions, such as adjusting resources, improving service coordination, and evaluating progress toward local goals like reducing chronic homelessness

National level:

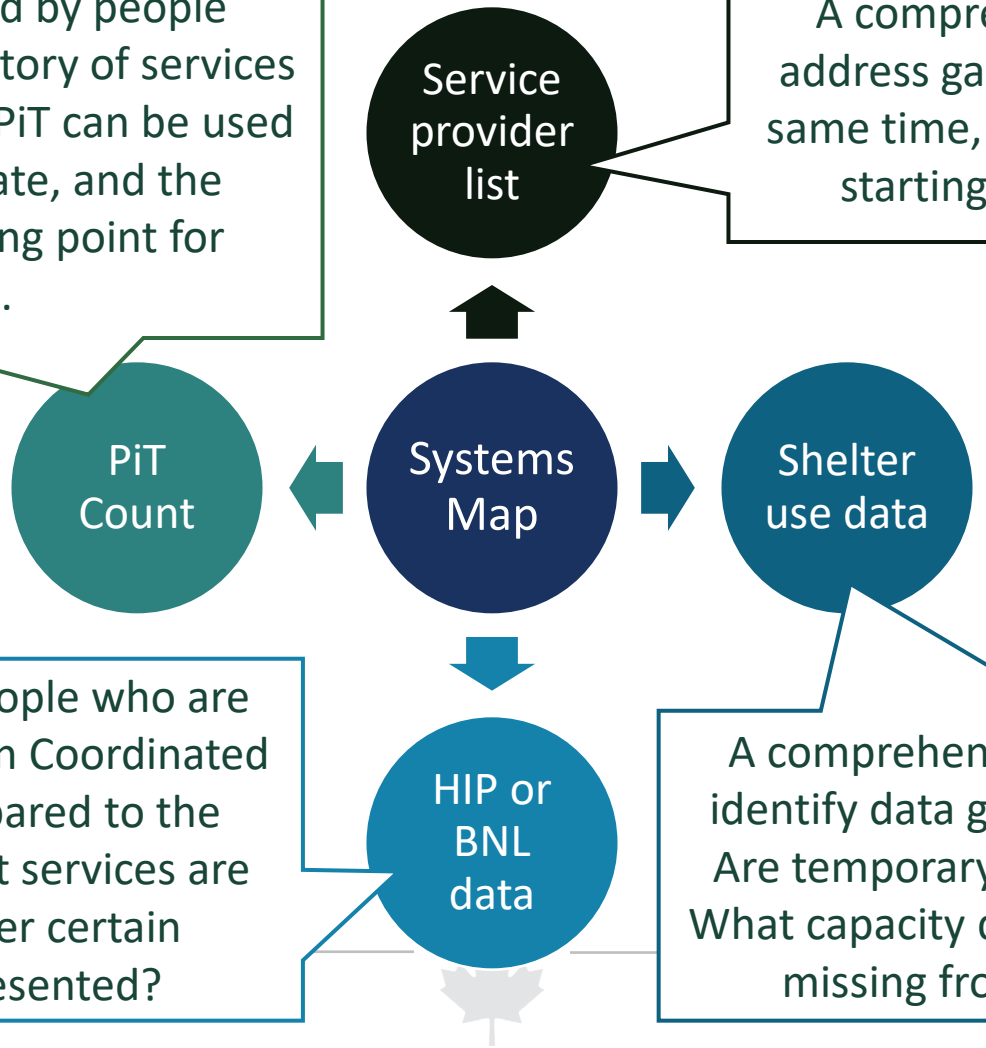
- Provides insight on regional and national trends
- Benchmarking
- System-wide trend analysis

Systems Map

- Systems Mapping is a process used by communities to develop a comprehensive understanding of a local network of community services, such as a homeless-serving system, as well as connections between these service providers and broader, inter-related service systems.
- A Systems Map includes all of the organizations and/or service providers within a community that directly interact with clients or participants experiencing or at-risk of homelessness
- A community Systems Map provides the framework for determining coverage for a PiT enumeration
- Under Reaching Home, communities must create a Systems Map by April 2026

Systems Map

A PiT Count should capture as broad a picture possible of services being accessed by people experiencing homelessness. An inventory of services is a by-product of the PiT count. The PiT can be used to keep the Systems Map up to date, and the Systems Map can serve as a starting point for planning the PiT Count.



A comprehensive Systems Map can help to address gaps in the service provider list. At the same time, the service provider list can serve as starting point for a comprehensive Map.

HIP/BNL data represent only people who are accessing services participating in Coordinated Access. Coverage can be compared to the system map to understand what services are not participating and whether certain populations are underrepresented?

A comprehensive Systems Map can help to identify data gaps in shelter use information. Are temporary shelter spaces not reporting? What capacity do they account for that may be missing from local and national data?

Systems Map

The homeless serving system

Emergency Shelters

Domestic Violence shelters

Transitional housing programs

Outreach

Hotel/motel shelter programs

Extreme weather shelters

Housing programs

What's Next?

- PiT Enumeration report based on 2024 Counts
- PiT Results page on the Homelessness Learning Hub
- Report on PiT survey results based on 2024 Counts
- Homelessness Data Improvement Toolkit, developed by the HIP community of practice
- Data snapshots based on data from 2024 Counts
- Launch of 2025 Enumeration

Questions?