



Alberta Point-in-Time Homeless Count: Calgary Preliminary Report

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 participated in the local count. During the period 10 pm to 1 am, of the following day, 25 teams of 3 to 4 people canvassed zones throughout the city to observe and count individuals and to survey those willing to participate. As in the past 3 Point-in-Time Counts, Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer sponsored the count.

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.

Alberta's Cities Leading the Way

This effort 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 harmonized approach to homeless counts nationally. Alberta is the first jurisdiction to implement measures towards a more standardized methodology, leading the way in Canada. Though counts across Alberta are becoming more aligned, this is the first time this effort has been undertaken and future counts will improve from ongoing learnings.

This count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of our overall homeless population and enables us to examine how this population changes over time. By aligning methods across Alberta's cities, we can examine trends using the same definitions. Ultimately, this helps us inform solutions to support the goal of ending homelessness in our communities.

Calgary's Homeless Population Snapshot

A total of **3,531** people were enumerated on the night of the count, and 442 of those individuals also completed a survey. Preliminary results show:

ENUMERATED POPULATION (N = 3,531) BY LOCATION

	Total Number	Percentage
Street Count*	158	5%
Confirmed (completed survey) rough sleepers	37	
Facility Count	3373	95%
Emergency Shelter	1766	50%
Short-Term Supportive Housing	1292	36%
Public Systems**	315	9%

*Conducting a street count is not precise. Many variables will affect whether someone observed outside at the time of the count will remain outside for the duration of the night or already have alternative shelter plans.

**Inclusive of hospitals, police and justice institutions, Alberta Works supported families in hotels, and others.



ENUMERATED POPULATION (N = 3,531) BY DEMOGRAPHIC

	October 2014	Comparison to January 2014 (n = 3,533)
Male	2,618 (74%)	2,632 (74%)
Female	868 (25%)	859 (25%)
Indigenous People (First Nation, Metis, Inuit)	723 (20%)	706 (21%)
Unaccompanied youth (up to 24 years)	364 (10%)	326 (9%)
Families	211	209
Children	329 (9%)	284 (8%)

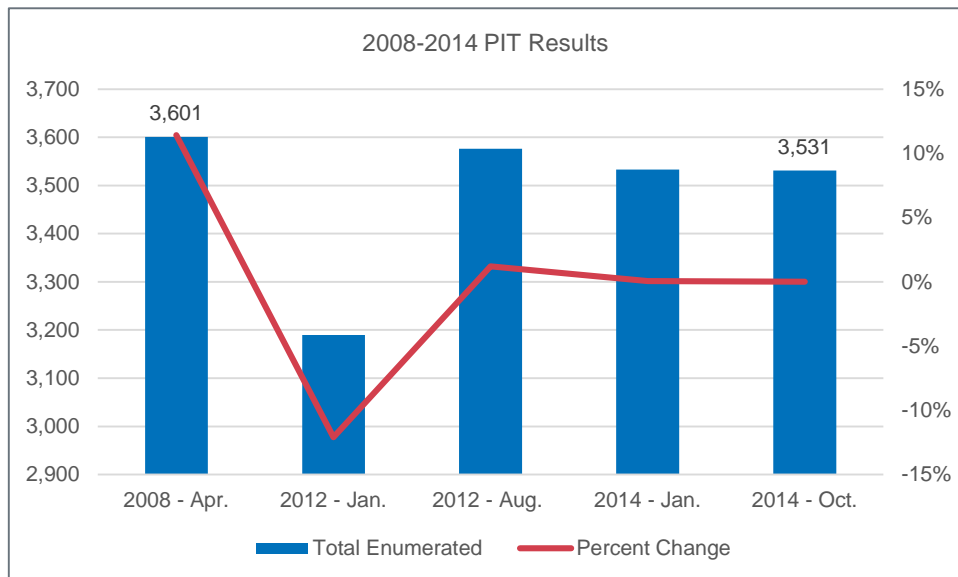
SURVEYED POPULATION (N= 442) BY DEMOGRAPHIC

Male	340 (77%)
Female	92 (21%)
Indigenous People (First Nation, Metis, Inuit)	142 (32%)
Migrants (new to Calgary in the past year)	81 (18%)
Immigrants	89 (20%)
Youth (up to 24 years)	149* (26%)

*This figure includes 123 accompanying minors and 26 unaccompanied youth surveyed.

Broader Trends

Comparing the October 2014 count with previous counts should be done with caution¹ as seasonal variations and weather patterns impact the count; however, overall the October 2014 count showed no change (-0.05%) compared to the January 2014 count. Comparing this to the May 2008 count suggests a small decrease of about 1.9%.



¹ While the efforts driving the Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness have had impact on stabilizing these figures, the full methodology also shifted which makes demographic comparison difficult. The full report will explore this in further detail.



POPULATION GROWTH It is important that results of the count must be contextualized in the broader economic trends impacting Calgary. The city is experiencing significant population growth year over year: in 2014 there were 38,508 new residents added to the population reaching almost 1.2 million. This is in part related to the economic opportunities presented by the city, whose unemployment decreased to 4.5% in October 2014.

MOBILITY Net migration brought in 28,017 people, about 77 people per day according to the 2014 Civic Census. We see a considerable level of mobility among the homeless population surveyed as well – about 18% reported being new to Calgary within the past year – this is notably higher than the general population at about 6% reported to have moved from outside Calgary within the last year in the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY Though vacancy rates increased from 1.2% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2014, the average rental costs grew by 8% (\$84) according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC, 2014). About one-quarter of Calgarians are experiencing housing affordability challenges and about 1 in 10 are low income according to Statistics Canada (2011).

OVER-REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES The over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the homeless population remains an ongoing concern. While 2.8% of Calgary's general population self-identified as Aboriginal, 20% of those enumerated in the homeless count were reported to be Aboriginal. The survey results show that 32% of surveyed participants (442) self-identified as Aboriginal.

IMMIGRANTS Notably, about 20% of the surveyed population (442) self-identified as having been born outside Canada. This is about 6.2% lower than the general Calgary population reported in the 2011 NHS, though a notable portion of the population.

Socio-Economic Indicators	Calgary	Sources
Unemployment	4.5% down from 4.7%	Reported in October 2013-14, Statistics Canada
Net Migration	28,017	City of Calgary 2014 Civic Census
Mobility (resided outside Calgary 1 year ago)	6.1%	NHS, 2011, Refers to the status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day, May 10, 2011, in relation to the place of residence on the same date one year earlier
Population growth	3.2%	Difference between total population reported in City of Calgary by 2013 and 2014 Civic Census
Housing Affordability	25.0%	NHS 2011, Percent of households spending more than 30% of 2010 total income on shelter
Rental vacancy rates	1.4% up from 1.2%	Comparing April 2014 to April 2013 form CMHC Rental Market Statistics Spring 2014, Vacancy and Availability Rates (%) in Privately Initiated Rental Apartment Structures of Three Units and Over
Rental costs	\$1162 up from \$1078	
Low Income	10.6%	NHS 2011 Percent of persons in households in low income based on LIM-AT
Aboriginal People	2.8%	NHS 2011 Percent of population self-identify as Aboriginal.
Immigrants	26.2%	NHS 2011 Percent of population who was foreign-born



Full Report

The data from the count will then be tabulated, and analyzed with the assistance of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. A full report on the provincial count will be produced in January 2015, which will show the data trends, and break down the results. As the data presented here is preliminary, final results may change in the full report.

For more information about the count, please contact Aaron Galenzoski at aarong@calgaryhomeless.com or 403-999-6337.

SOURCES

CMHC (2014) CMHC Rental Market Statistics Spring 2014, Vacancy and Availability Rates (%) in Privately Initiated Rental Apartment Structures of Three Units and Over. Retrieved from: <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/catalog/productDetail.cfm?lang=en&cat=59&itm=17&fr=1415816805835>.

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