

RED DEER 2022 POINT IN TIME

HOMELESS COUNT REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Point in Time (PIT) Homeless Count & Survey is a coordinated event where persons experiencing homelessness are counted and asked a number of questions to get a snapshot in time of those experiencing homelessness in the community. The City of Red Deer coordinated the 2022 PiT Count on September 29, 2022, in collaboration with community partners. This report summarizes the efforts and findings of the count.

In total, 334 people were identified as experiencing homelessness. This included individuals who were staying in shelters, transitional facilities, public institutions (hospitals or justice facilities) and those sleeping outside.

The number of people experiencing homelessness enumerated by the PiT count more than doubled since the last count in 2018, which identified 144 individuals. Homelessness is more visible in the community with five times as many people sleeping outside in 2022. The percentage of unhoused individuals sleeping outside and not within the shelter or public system has gone from 13% in 2018 to 29% in 2022.

The Point-in-Time Count is one of many tools communities use to collect data to support the identification of trends and key issues related to homelessness. Much of the value lies in the survey component. Data from survey responses is used to better understand factors contributing to homelessness and how to best target local supports.

Those identified as experiencing homelessness were invited to participate in a survey. In total, 156 people were surveyed. (A full detailing of demographics can be found within the Results section.)

Less people (25%) reported moving to Red Deer in the last 12 months in comparison to the 2018 count (51.2%). The vast majority of participants (70.1%) indicated that they moved from other communities within Alberta.

Lack of income was noted as the most common reason for the most recent loss of housing and the top barrier to finding new housing among respondents. Survey results indicated a significant increase from 2018 to 2022 in individuals reporting no income (11.3% in 2018 and 33.3% in 2022). There was also an increase in homelessness for individuals receiving disability benefits, from 12.4% of all participants in 2018 to 31.5% of all participants in 2022.

Emergency shelter services are being well utilized with 86% of survey respondents reporting that they used an emergency shelter in the last 12 months.

It should be noted that Alberta's 7 Cities coordinated efforts to establish similar methodology for the 2022 PiT Count; however, approaches vary based on local context. Each city makes every effort to connect with people experiencing homelessness by leveraging community-specific opportunities and access points. These unique community traits and approaches impact the ability to make direct comparisons between cities.

The PiT Homelessness Count

A PiT Homeless Count is a strategy to help determine the extent of homelessness in a community on a given night or at a single point in time. Red Deer's biennial PiT Homeless Count is one of the data sources used to plan services and programs to address local needs appropriately, measure progress in decreasing homelessness, and identify strengths and gaps in a community's current homelessness serving system¹.

Provincial Coordination

Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness represent the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local plans to end homelessness in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Wood Buffalo. The PiT homeless count is coordinated provincially by these organizations within a similar timeframe, thereby creating an understanding of homelessness across the province. In 2022, the 7 Cities selected the week of September 26 for the count.

Alberta's 7 Cities coordinated efforts to establish similar methodology for the 2022 PiT Count; however, approaches vary based on local context. Each city makes every effort to connect with people experiencing homelessness by leveraging community-specific opportunities and access points. These unique community traits and approaches impact the ability to make direct comparisons between cities.

Municipal Coordination

The Red Deer PiT count was coordinated by The City of Red Deer's Safe and Healthy Communities and Community Services Business Excellence Departments. The City worked in collaboration with community partners to conduct the count and methodology was approved by The City's Housing and Homelessness Integration Committee acting in The City's role as Community Based Entity for Reaching Home. Local shelters and transitional housing facilities enumerated and surveyed guests on a voluntary basis as part of the sheltered count. Street enumeration and surveying was carried out by professionals from local outreach teams and the homeless serving sector on the day and evening of September 29, 2022.

¹ Point in Time Homeless Count - The City of Red Deer. (2021, April 14). <https://www.reddeer.ca/about-red-deer/social-well-being-and-community-initiatives/housing-and-homelessness/point-in-time-homeless-count/>

PiT COUNT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Scope of the 2022 PiT Count

The scope of the 2022 PiT count was to enumerate sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. This count did not include an investigation of hidden homelessness. It was geographically bound to Red Deer, and as such did not include those who identify as residents but were sleeping outside of the city boundary on the night of the count, whether sheltered or unsheltered.

SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS	Refers to the state of being reliant on temporary housing, either emergency sheltered (staying within an overnight or short stay shelter), or those who are provisionally accommodated (within a system-based location such as a hospital, jail, prison, or remand centre).
UNSHeltered HOMELESSNESS	Refers to the state of lacking housing and not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation. It includes those who are rough sleeping, living in vehicles, and those in encampments.
HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS	Refers to the state of lacking permanent, appropriate housing and not being engaged in the housing system. This form of homelessness includes “couch-surfing,” engaging in survival sex, or being housed in inadequate or inappropriate housing.

Sheltered Count Methodology

The sheltered count was made up of a facilities count and a systems count. All Red Deer shelters participated in the facilities count and enumerated those who were emergency sheltered in a shelter location. The systems count enumerated those who identified as experiencing homelessness within publicly funded systems, such as hospitals, jails, remand centre, etc. Participating facilities completed an administrative form the morning after the count which indicated the number and demographics of occupants for the night. Those staying were invited to complete the PiT survey on a voluntary basis.

Facilities Participating in the Count

SHELTERED FACILITIES	Overnight Shelter Program (Safe Harbour Society) The Mustard Seed Shelter (The Mustard Seed) 49th Street Youth Shelter (Youth HQ) Central Alberta Women’s Emergency Shelter (CAWES) Horizon House (John Howard Society) Julietta’s Place (The Outreach Centre) Medically Supported Detox (Safe Harbour Society) Detox Isolation (Safe Harbour Society)
SYSTEM FACILITIES	<i>Data was accessed by HelpSeeker on behalf of 7 Cities for the following facilities:</i> Justice & Solicitor General (Remand Centre) People in RCMP holding cells with no fixed address on the night Hotel/motel funded by Alberta Works or AISH Alberta Health Services facilities

Unsheltered Count Methodology

The Red Deer unsheltered enumeration was carried out through the day and into the late evening by local agency staff. There were two units: the street enumerators and the encampment enumerators. The encampment enumerators were outreach team staff who were familiar with most encampment sleepers and had pre-existing relationships and extensive knowledge of encampment locations. They were dedicated to engaging encampment sleepers during daylight. In the evening they joined the other enumerators and switched to street enumeration.

All street enumerators were put into teams of two and given a neighbourhood to canvas and complete intercept interviews.

The teams did not canvas the entire city; they were assigned neighbourhoods that demonstrated the highest street sleeping activity based on staff knowledge and municipal work entry tickets. The count concluded when all priority neighbourhoods had been canvassed.

Individuals were approached for screening and survey inclusion as appropriate.

Those who were sleeping or unapproachable but appeared to be homeless were counted as “observed homeless” but not approached at the enumerators’ discretion. All unsheltered participants were asked screening questions to determine if they met the eligibility for inclusion in the ‘unsheltered’ category.

Public Systems Count Methodology

HelpSeeker was contracted by 7 Cities to pull data from provincial sources on the number of people who were provisionally accommodated for the night of the count. This data was provided back to 7 Cities, including Red Deer. These individuals were not surveyed.

Survey Tool and Administration

The primary survey tool used for the PiT count was developed federally and additional questions were provided by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. The survey began with screening questions to determine each individual's eligibility for inclusion. If the individual indicated that they were sleeping in their home that night or in another suitable location, they were not counted or surveyed. Those who passed screening were eligible to participate in the entirety of the survey, lasting 4-8 minutes. Participants received a \$5 gift card for their time.

Survey takers were trained before the PiT count and could choose to complete paper surveys or use a tablet provided by the City. Most chose to use paper surveys for ease of use as the survey application provided was cumbersome. For those who did complete the surveys on tablets, data was immediately available to City staff. For those who chose paper-based surveys, data was entered manually by City staff after the count.

Methodological Limitations

LIMITATIONS IN THE COUNT

A PiT count can only include those who are identified as experiencing homelessness. Therefore, the count does not include anyone experiencing different types of hidden homelessness, those who are temporarily or tenuously housed. Hidden homelessness includes those who are couch surfing, those engaged in survival sex (sex in exchange for a place to sleep), and others whose housing is not guaranteed. The count also does not include those who are in inadequate housing, including: housing in deep disrepair, condemned housing, etc. Individuals in these circumstances are not accessing the shelter system and are not sleeping outside therefore enumerating teams would not have identified them.

LIMITATIONS IN THE SURVEY

The survey tool was provided by federal funders and did not allow for changing the flow or wording in questions. Surveyors were able to skip or adapt questions to more appropriate language as they saw fit. A major limitation was that the survey data does not represent anyone provisionally accommodated in the public system on the night of the count as these facilities were not included in surveying.

POINT IN TIME RESULTS

Final Count

The final count total is made up of those who spent September 29th, 2022 in a shelter or transitional location, who were provisionally accommodated in a system-based facility, or were seen and enumerated by the unsheltered enumeration team, whether they were surveyed or not.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS COUNTED IN 2022	
Total number in emergency or transitional facilities	199
Total number unsheltered not in encampments	66
Total number in encampments	33
Total number provisionally housed in the public system	36
Total number enumerated	334

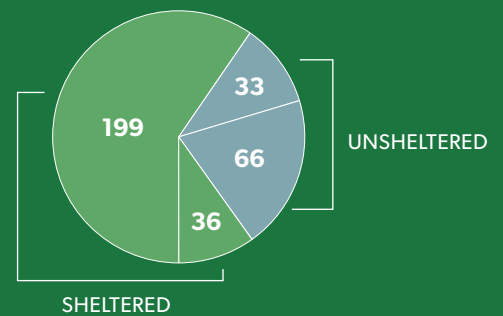


Table 1: Number of Individuals Counted in 2022

Figure 1: Sheltered and Unsheltered Count, 2022

The total number of people counted as experiencing homelessness in 2022 in Red Deer was 334, which is a 132% increase from the count in 2018 (144). Confirming outreach staff expectations that the number of people experiencing homelessness is increasing.

The 2022 PiT count identified 235 individuals in the shelter system or provisionally accommodated in the public system and 99 who were sleeping outside. This is an 88% increase in the number of those in shelter and more than five times increase in the number of those sleeping outside compared to 2018.

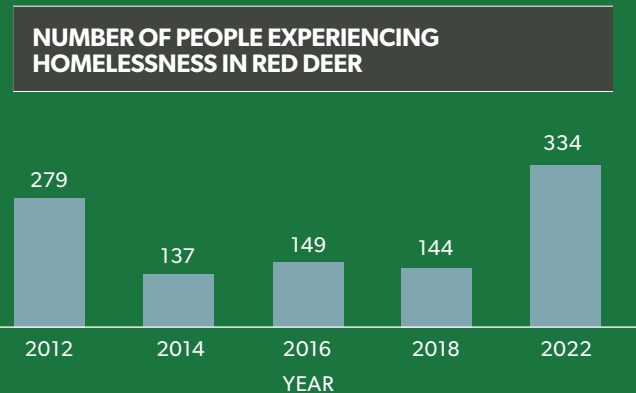


Figure 2: Number of People Experiencing Homelessness in Red Deer (Source: PiT Count Data, 2012-2022)

Survey Data

The survey data is comprised of responses from sheltered and unsheltered individuals who voluntarily participated in the survey with enumerating staff [Table 2]. The survey was offered in shelters by shelter staff and to unsheltered individuals by the unsheltered enumerators. There are less survey responses than the total number counted because survey participation was voluntary and did not affect representation in the count total.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SURVEYED IN 2022	
Number surveyed in emergency or transitional facilities	101
Number surveyed unsheltered not in encampments	26
Number surveyed in encampments	28
Number surveyed provisionally housed in the public system	1
Total number surveyed	156

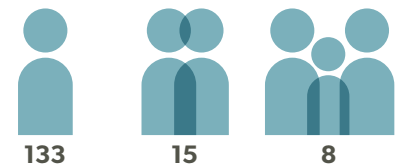
Table 2: Number of Individuals Surveyed in 2022

** those who complete the survey with a street enumerator and did not know where they were staying tonight or were staying with friends were included in the unsheltered total.

Respondent Demographics

FAMILY STATUS

The 2022 PiT Count identified 133 'single' participants, 15 participants 'with partner' and 8 participants 'with dependent/children' through surveying on streets and in shelters. All families with children/dependents reported in the 2022 PiT count were identified from sheltered survey data. Families are challenging to locate when doing surveys on streets because families (with children or with partner) may prefer to stay in their vehicles or temporarily live with other families or their friends. A research study conducted among provisionally accommodated homeless population in Canada, reported a higher proportion of experienced 'hidden homelessness' among people who live with their common law partners or have ever been married compared to people who are single or have never married.²



2 Rodrigue, S. (2016). Hidden Homelessness in Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2016001/article/14678-eng.htm>

GENDER

Among the participants who completed a survey, 64% (99) identified themselves as a 'man', 32% (50) identified as 'woman', 1% (2) identified as 'Two-Spirit' or gender 'not-listed'. A total of five (3%) participants did not provide any response or declined to answer the gender identifying question [Figure 3]. The proportion of men experiencing homelessness is comparatively higher than the proportion of women experiencing homelessness; a trend that is consistent over the past few PiT Counts (69% men and 31% women in 2018 PiT Count, 72% men and 25% women in 2016 PiT count, 75% men and 25% women in 2014 PiT count)¹. This statistic does not conclusively indicate that more men than women are experiencing homelessness in Red Deer. Available research on women experiencing homelessness indicates that women with dependent children are most likely to experience 'hidden homelessness' as they prefer not to report in shelters and social services and identify themselves as 'homeless'^{3,4}.

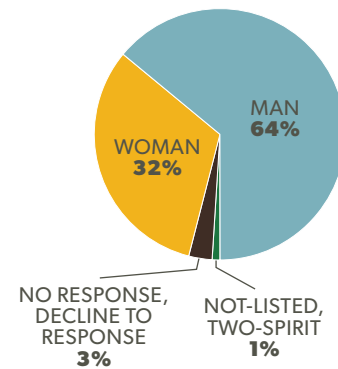


Figure 3: Demographic by Gender

AGE

Among the participants who completed the survey, the largest age group was 25 to 44 years of age (50%) [Figure 4]. The proportion of adult homelessness slightly increased from the 2018 count of 45%. The proportion of youth homelessness (15 to 24 years) went down from 13% in 2018 to 10% in 2022. It is in the elderly population that we see representation growing. Of survey respondents, 4% reported to be age 65 and above in 2022, compared to 1% in 2018. The age structure among those identified by the 2022 PiT count is closer to the age structure in Red Deer identified by the federal census in 2021, which reported that 54% of the population was between 25 and 64, and 15% was age 65 and over⁵.

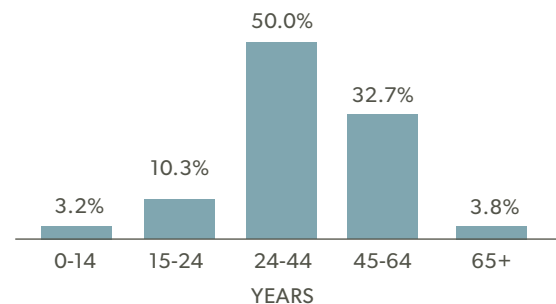


Figure 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

3 Women's National Housing & Homelessness Network. Women & Girls' Homelessness in Canada. <https://womenshomelessness.ca/women-girls-homelessness-in-canada/>
 4 Myrick, D. (2016). Why Are There More Homeless Men Than Women? - Cultural Daily. Cultural Daily - Independent Voices, New Perspectives. <https://culturaldaily.com/homeless-men-women/>
 5 Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released December 15, 2022. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 7, 2023)

VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

In the 2022 PiT count, 1.9% of all participants identified themselves as a veteran, slightly higher than the proportion documented in 2018 (1.2%) but much lower than the proportion recorded in 2016 (7%). Approximately 1.7% of Canadians are veterans⁶. The proportion of respondents identifying as veterans in 2022 is not disproportionately high compared to the total veteran population in Canada. Still, the issue of veteran homelessness is not insignificant - in 2016, 2.2% of the homeless population in Canada was veteran⁷. Another factor worth mentioning and reported in available research is that veterans are less likely to seek support in shelters^{5,6}.

Race and Ethnicity

INDIGENOUS RESPONDENTS

In the 2022 PiT count, 20.5% people identified themselves as 'First Nations', 7.7% as Métis and 3.2% reported having ancestry associated with Indigenous peoples in Canada. There has been a notable decrease in the proportion of people identifying as Indigenous overall from 44.3% in 2018 to 31.4% in 2022; however, the proportion reported in the 2022 PiT count was based on data collected on a single night. Regardless of the extent of homelessness documented among self-identified Indigenous people during the 2022 PiT count, Indigenous people have historically been overrepresented in people experiencing homelessness in Canada.⁸

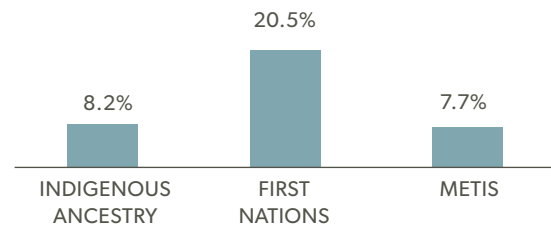


Figure 5: Homelessness among Indigenous population

6 Infrastructure Canada - Homelessness data snapshot: Veteran homelessness in Canada. (2022).

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/reports-rapports/data-veterans-donnees-eng.html>

7 Amon, E. & McRae, L. (2021). Is Veteran Homelessness a Problem in Canada? | The Homeless Hub. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/veteran-homelessness-problem-canada>

8 Uppal, S. (2022). A portrait of Canadians who have been homeless. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/75-006-x/2022001/article/00002-eng.pdf?st=ij67btqj>

NON-INDIGENOUS RESPONDENTS DISAGGREGATED BY RACE

Within 2022 PiT count participants, a significant majority (85.1%) identified as 'white,' followed by 4.5% of the participants who identified themselves as 'Black-African.' The leading visible minority groups in terms of proportion of the total population of Red Deer, according to Federal Census 2021, are Filipino, South-Asian, Black, Latin-American, and Chinese⁹.

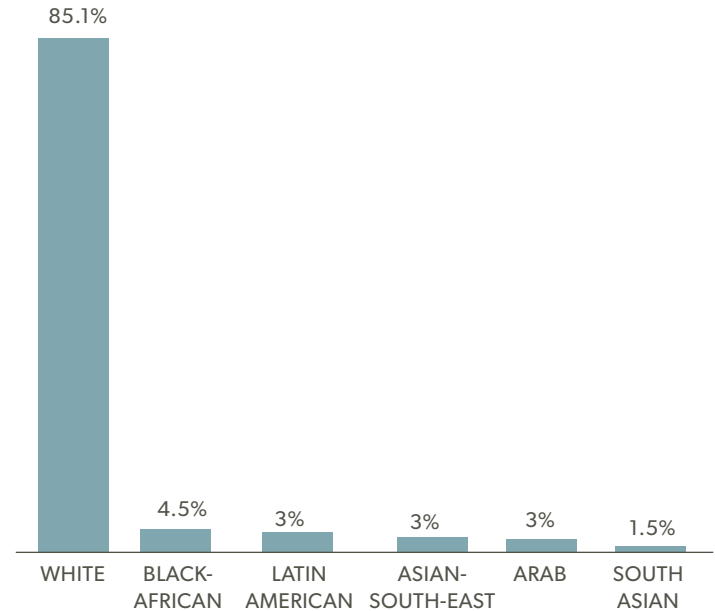


Figure 6: Homelessness Disaggregated by Race

HOMELESSNESS AMONG IMMIGRANTS

The PiT count survey asked participants if they came to Canada as an Immigrant/Refugee/Refugee claimant. Of 156 survey respondents, 4.5% identified themselves as immigrants compared to the 8.5% of Red Deerians who have immigrated in the last 10 years. Recent immigrants have distinct service needs compared to the Canadian-born population that are often challenging to meet depending on the setting (urban/rural) and accessibility of services (e.g.: language, employment, housing, physical & mental health, cultural adaptability, etc.)¹⁰. In addition, immigrants are more vulnerable to poverty, discrimination and violence which put them at an elevated risk of homelessness¹¹.

9 Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released December 15, 2022. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 7, 2023)

10 Newcomers | The Homeless Hub. (n.d.). <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/newcomers>

11 Tabibi, J., & Baker, L.L (2017). Exploring the intersections: immigrant and refugee women fleeing violence and experiencing homelessness in Canada. London, Ontario: Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. ISBN # 978-1-988412-10-8. https://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/reports/report_17_1.html

Income

INCOME STATUS

Out of 156 survey respondents, 33.3% reported having 'no income' and 62.2% reported having income [Figure 7]. The proportion for 'no income' has increased substantially compared to the proportion recorded in the 2018 PiT count (11.3%)¹.

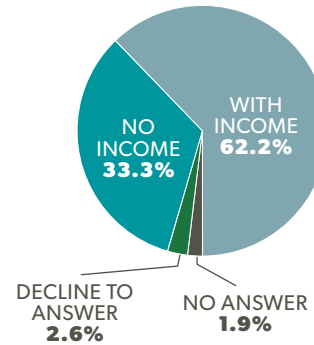


Figure 7: Income Status of PiT Survey Participants

INCOME SOURCE

The top four sources of income were- 'Welfare/Social Assistance' (44.6%), 'Disability Benefit' (31.5%), 'Seniors' benefit' (9.8%), and 'Child and Family Tax Benefits' (9.8%) [Figure8]. The proportion of respondents receiving 'Disability Benefit' was much higher in 2022 than in previous years (31.5% in 2022 vs 12.4% in 2018)¹.

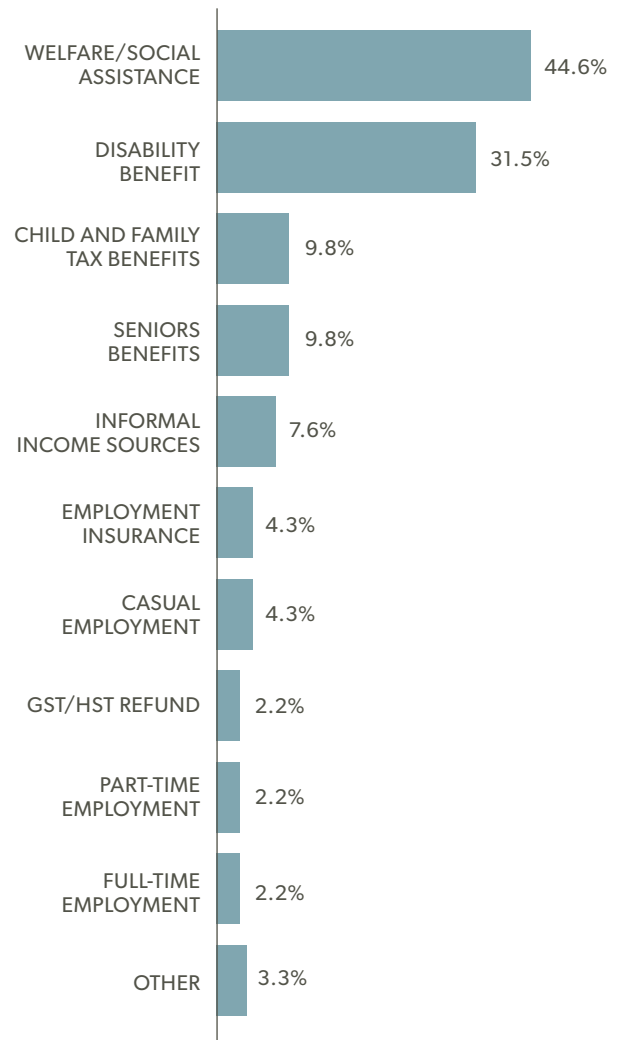


Figure 8: Sources of Income

Migration and History of Homelessness

COMING TO RED DEER

Out of 156 participants 25.0% reported that they moved to Red Deer within the last 12 months and 29.5% moved to Red Deer with the last 24 months [Figure 9].

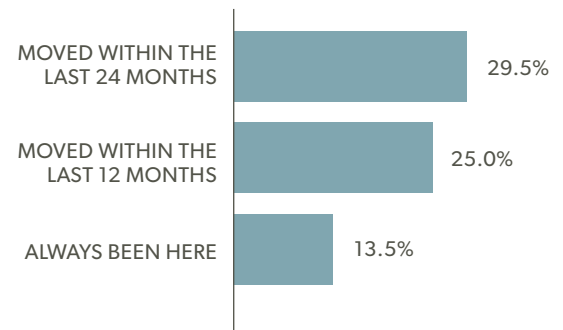


Figure 9: Migration and Residence

PERCENT REPORTING MIGRATING IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

This proportion of 'moving to Red Deer within the last 12 months' varied substantially over the last few PiT counts, ranging from a high of 51.2% in 2018 to a low of 25.0% in 2022¹. [Figure10]. The proportion here should be carefully considered since the sample size in PiT Count is relatively small compared to the overall homeless population in Red Deer.

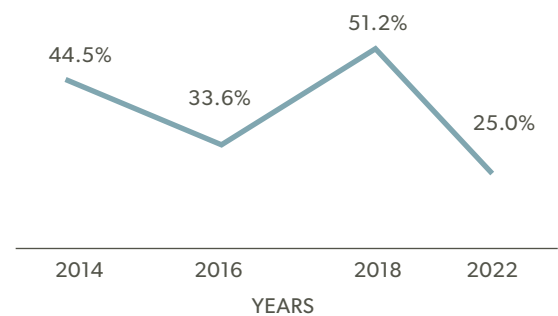


Figure 10: Migration in the Last 12 Months

Of those surveyed, 25% (39) indicated that they moved to Red Deer within the last 365 days. Of those, 84.6% (33) moved from different cities within Alberta into the community. Of participants who responded that they have been living in Red Deer for a 'length of time' but not 'always been here' (127 of 156), 70.1% moved to Red Deer from other communities within Alberta (intra-provincial migration) and 18.9% moved to Red Deer from other provinces in Canada (inter-provincial migration). Participants were asked 'where did you live before you came here?' Of the 91 respondents who reported coming from other communities in Alberta, only 15% responded to this question. Similar to previous years' results, Calgary and Edmonton are the frequently referred communities; other small communities in Alberta cited as responses include- Kinuso, Lacombe, Olds, Ponoka, Rimbey, Rocky Mountain House, and Spruce View. The average proportion of intra-provincial migration based on the 2018 and 2016 PiT Count was 64.6% and the proportion of inter-provincial migration in the 2022 PiT count was 29.4%. This can be hypothesized as more intra-provincial migration compared to inter-provincial migration.

REASONS FOR MIGRATING

The top five cited reasons for moving to Red Deer are 'family moved here' (16.3%), 'secured employment' (10.6%), 'don't know' the reason (8.8%), 'to access emergency shelter' (8.8%), and 'to access services and supports' (6.3%). Research utilizing evidence from available PiT count reports also presented similar findings concerning reasons for moving; employment opportunities, family support, and accessing services¹². A unique factor that should be considered here that may contribute to a higher proportion of intra-provincial migration in the 2022 PiT count data compared to previous years, is that the recent pandemic created varied and distinct needs among Canadians for relocation or migration within and outside of provinces¹³.

12 Woodmass, K. (2022, March 17). Migration & Homelessness in Canadian Communities: A Summary of Evidence. Kelowna Homelessness Research Collaborative (KHRC). <https://khrc.ok.ubc.ca/2022/03/11/migration-homelessness-in-canadian-communities-a-summary-of-evidence/>

13 Davis, E. N. (2022, March 22). Interprovincial Migration Peaked During the Pandemic. That's a Challenge for Local Real Estate. Storeys. <https://storeys.com/interprovincial-migration-peak-pandemic-market-challenges/>

PATTERN OF HOMELESSNESS

Among 2022 PiT Count participants, the **median age** of respondents experiencing homelessness for the first time is 28 years. Half of the survey participants (50%) reported having their first experience with homelessness by the age of 28.

For defining and estimating ‘chronic’ and ‘episodic’ homelessness among 2022 PiT count participants, we used the following federal definitions.

Chronic homelessness¹⁴: Chronic homelessness refers to individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness AND who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- they have a total of at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year
- they have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days)

Episodic homelessness¹⁵: Episodic homelessness refers to individuals, who are currently homeless, have been homeless for less than a year and have experienced **fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past year** (of note, episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or inhabitable location).

Transitional homelessness¹⁵: Those who are experiencing transitional homelessness are without housing short-term, usually less than a month, and not on a recurring basis as with episodic.

Utilizing these federal definitions, we identified that 72.4% of respondents were chronically homeless, 12.2% were episodically homeless, and 4.5% were transitionally homeless [Figure 11].

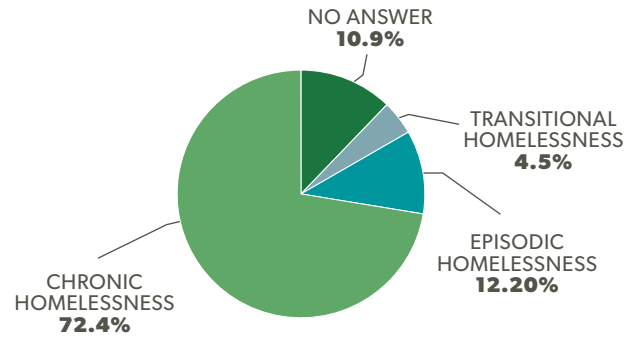


Figure 11: Proportion of Chronic, Episodic and Transitional Homelessness

Exploring the pattern of chronic, episodic, and transitional homelessness over the last four PiT counts in Red Deer reveals a steady rise in the proportion of people reporting chronic homelessness in 2022 compared to previous PiT count years [Figure 12]. 86% of all participants in 2022 reported accessing an emergency shelter within past 12 months compared to 82% in 2018 PiT count.

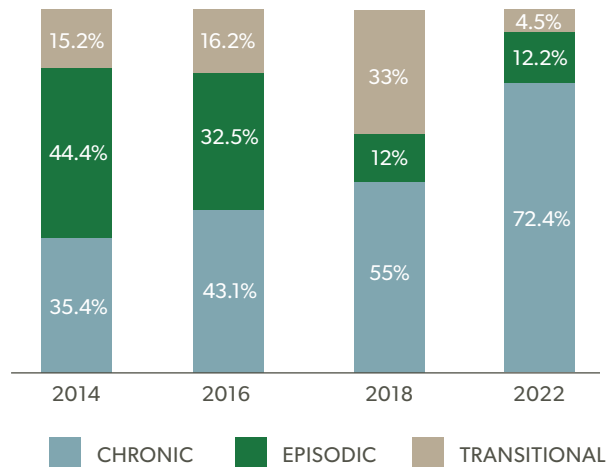


Figure 12: Pattern of Homelessness

14 Infrastructure Canada - Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy Directives. (2022). <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/directives-eng.html>
 15 Addressing Chronic Homelessness | The Homeless Hub. (2014). <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention/addressing-chronic-homelessness>

REASON FOR HOUSING LOSS AND BARRIERS TO NEW HOUSING

The most common reason for the most recent loss of housing was the respondent did not have the income to maintain their housing. More than one third (36%) of all respondents listed this cause. The next most frequently cited reason was landlord conflict (22%), followed by conflict with partner (17%), substance use issues (12%), other conflict (9%) and mental health issues (9%) [Figure 13].

When respondents were asked what barriers existed to finding new housing, the top three cited reasons were all financial in nature: low income (65.1%), rents are too high (46.5%), and the respondent lacked income assistance (36.4%). The cost of housing both causes and prolongs the individuals state of homelessness [Figure 14].

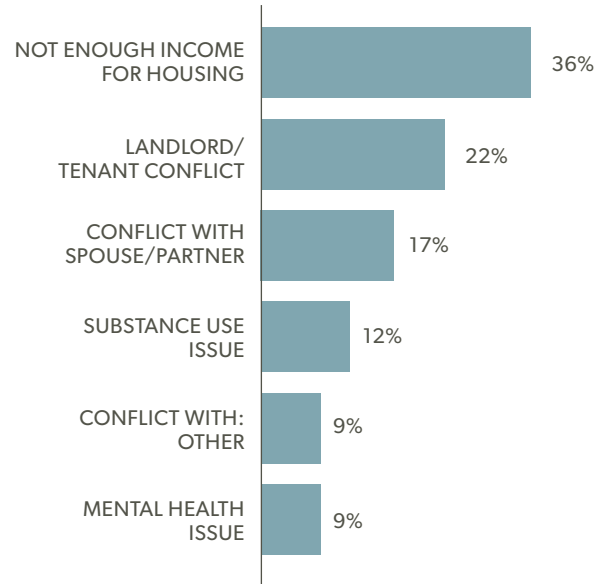


Figure 13: Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss

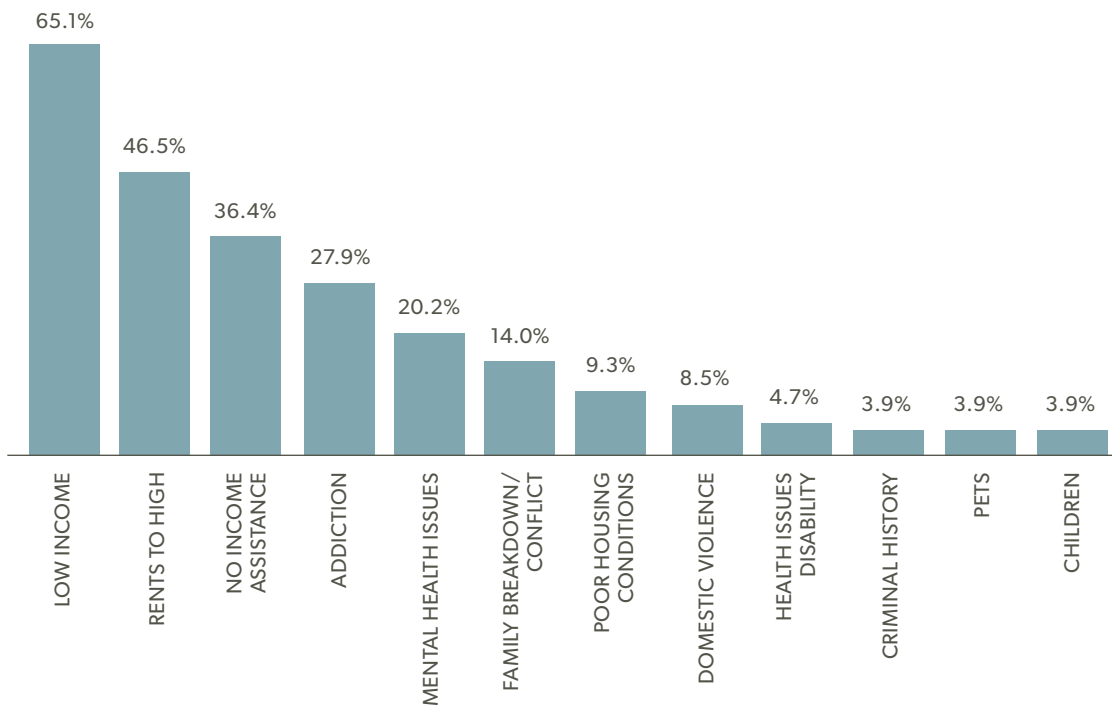


Figure 14: Barriers to Housing

Health and Health Services

HEALTH CHALLENGES

The most cited health challenge faced by respondents was substance abuse (78%), followed closely by mental health issues (62%) [Figure 15].

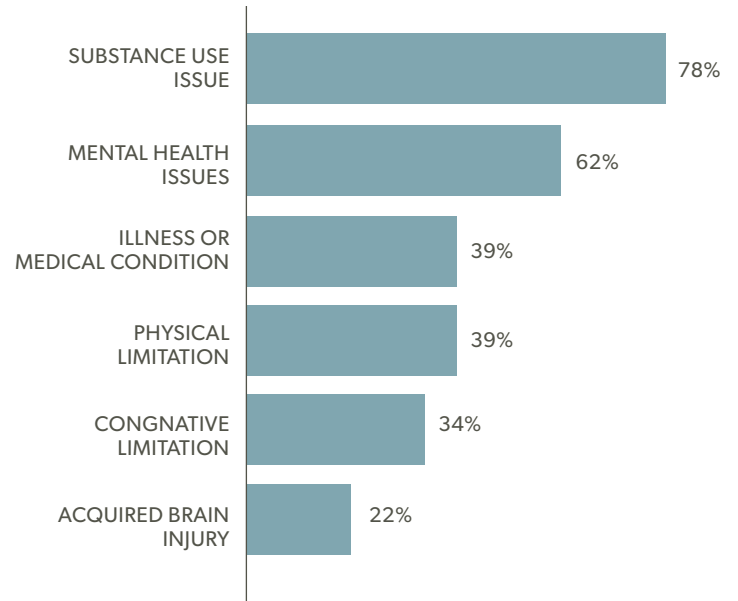


Figure 15: Health Challenges Experienced by Participants