



**United Way**  
Kingston, Frontenac  
Lennox and Addington

**Canada**

## Results of the



## Acknowledgements

### Partners

- City of Kingston
- Housing & Homelessness Service Providers
- Emergency Services, Detox, Kingston Health Sciences Centre

### Advisory Committee

- Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Advisory Board
- Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Service Providers

### Supporters

- City of Kingston
- Kingston Police
- Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Advisory Board

### Project Team

- United Way Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington
- City of Kingston
- 80+ Community Point-in-Time Count Volunteer Surveyors



This project is funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.



**We acknowledge that this work took place on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory.**

To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived, and continue to live upon it.

The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community and there are First Peoples from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today.

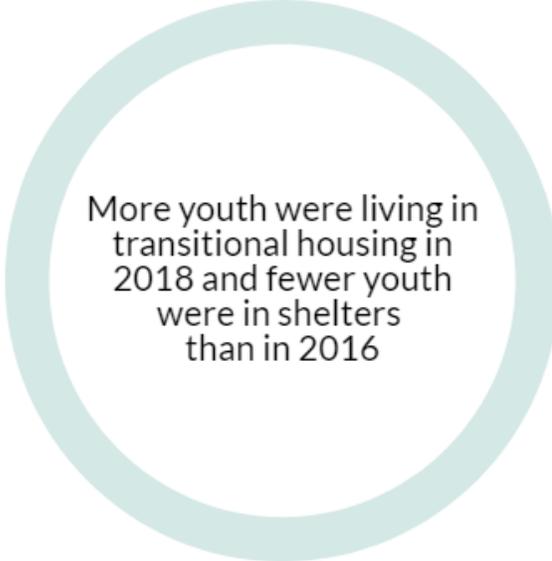
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## Key Findings of the 2018 Urban Kingston Point-in-Time Count



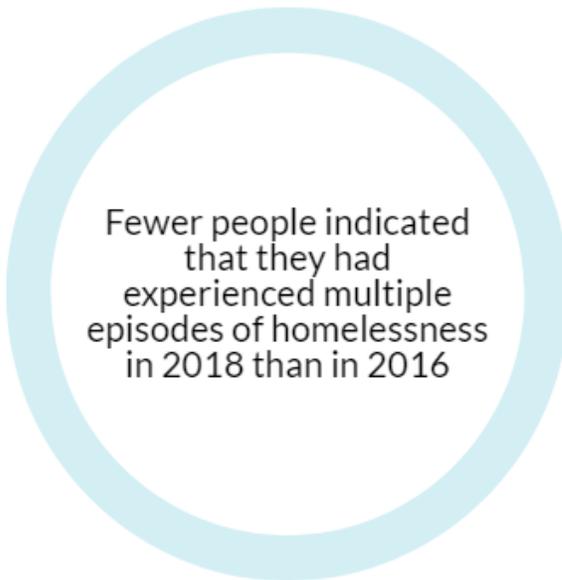
Fewer people were unsheltered and sleeping rough on the night of the 2018 PiT Count compared with 2016



More youth were living in transitional housing in 2018 and fewer youth were in shelters than in 2016



The perspectives of people experiencing hidden homelessness were better captured in 2018 than in previous counts



Fewer people indicated that they had experienced multiple episodes of homelessness in 2018 than in 2016

**2018****Results of the Urban Kingston  
Point-in-Time Count**Conducted on Wednesday, April 11, 2018  
7:00pm - 11:00pm**Overview**

On April 11, 2018, United Way KFLA, through a grant from Employment and Social Development Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), conducted a coordinated Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Count in urban Kingston as part of the nationally coordinated PiT count.

**81****Number of people experiencing absolute homelessness  
found in Kingston in 2018****152****Number of people encountered who were homeless in 2018**

A total of 81 people were found to be absolutely homeless on April 11, 2018. Absolute homelessness refers to those individuals who are unsheltered or "sleeping rough," and those who are emergency sheltered.

These individuals were staying in an emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter, an institution, or in public spaces on the night of the count. Employment and Social Development Council defines emergency shelters as:

Facilities providing temporary, short-term accommodation for homeless individuals and families. This may or may not include other services such as food, clothing or counselling.<sup>1</sup>

An additional 59 individuals were staying in transitional housing. The HPS defines transitional housing as:

Housing facilities that provide services beyond basic needs and that, while not permanent, generally allow for a longer length of stay than emergency housing facilities (up to three years). These facilities offer more privacy to residents than emergency housing. Transitional housing is targeted to those in need of structure, support, and/or skill-building to move from homelessness to housing stability, and ultimately to prevent a return to homelessness.<sup>2</sup>

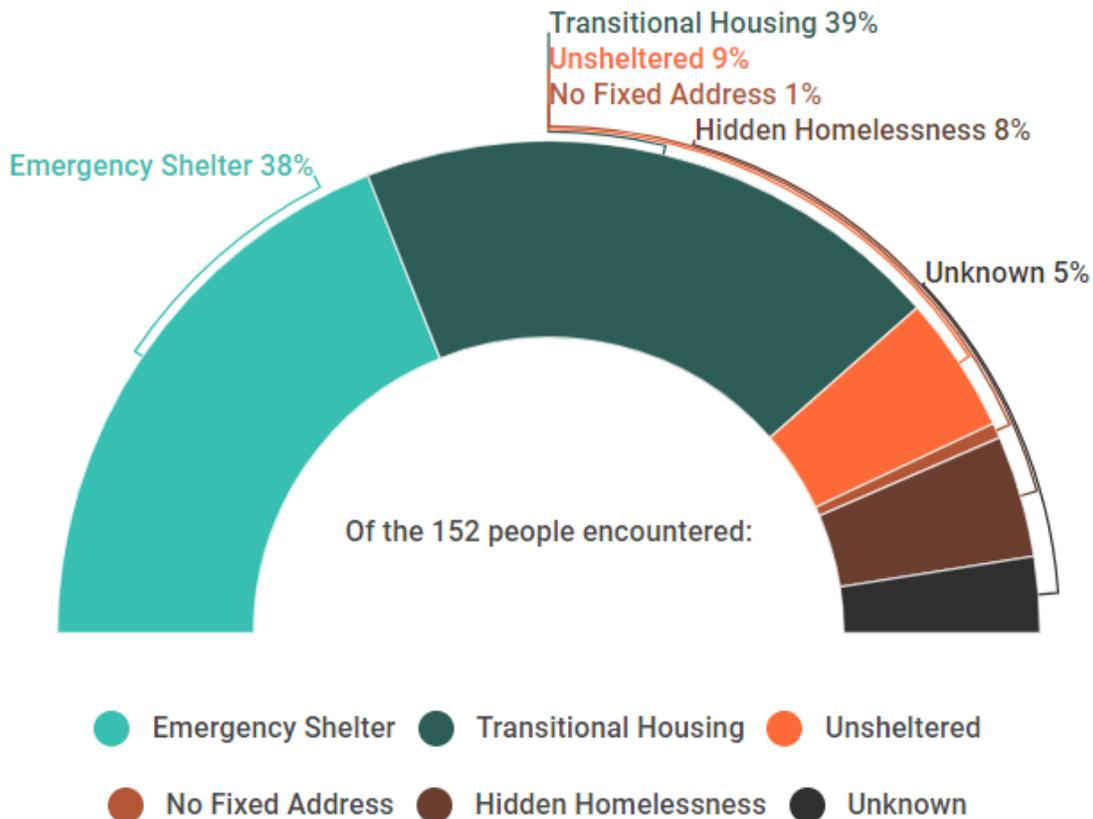
<sup>1</sup>Employment and Social Development Canada, "Shelter Capacity Report 2015"

<sup>2</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada, "Homelessness Partnering Strategy Directives 2014-2019"

A total of 12 survey respondents who did not have a permanent residence were sleeping at a motel or at someone else's place. These individuals are considered to be a part of the hidden homeless population, as they lack permanent housing but often do not interact with the homelessness system and service providers.

As is the case with any homeless count, this should be considered the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness on that night. Those who are precariously housed, living in motels, or "couch-surfing" are not all captured.

## Where were they found?



### Absolute Homelessness

Of the 152 people encountered, 81 were experiencing absolute homelessness. Of these 81 individuals, 60 or **74%** were sheltered, meaning they slept in an emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter, or an institution such as a detox centre, hospital, or remand centre on the night of the count. 13 or **16%** were unsheltered, meaning that they were sleeping in parks, tents, or on the streets on the night of April 11. 8 people or **10%** did not know where they would be sleeping that night.

## **Survey Results Highlights**

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness defines homelessness as “the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other.”<sup>3</sup>

A total of 152 people were encountered on the night of April 11, 2018 who meet the criteria of the Canadian definition of homelessness. Of these individuals, 98 agreed to complete brief surveys in order to capture demographic and experiential data. The statistics that follow represent those who were surveyed.

### **55% are women**

Kingston has a much higher rate of female homelessness than other Canadian cities

### **86% are sheltered**

48% were found in emergency or domestic violence shelters, 40% were living in transitional housing, 5% were staying at a motel, and 7% were couch surfing

### **183 days**

The median length of time people spent homeless within the past year

### **188 days**

The average length of time people spent homeless within the past year

### **31 years old**

The average age of people experiencing homelessness

### **50% are chronically homeless**

One half of respondents have been homeless for 6 months or more in the past year

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<sup>3</sup> Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, “Canadian Definition of Homelessness”

## 16% are episodically homeless

Almost one sixth of respondents have been homeless 3 or more times in the past year

## 78% receive income assistance

OW and ODSP are the main sources of income for people experiencing homelessness

## 49% say they don't have enough income to afford housing

44% say rents are too high to be affordable; 41% say housing is not available

## 12 families

12 families were found homeless, including 19 children

Population	Percent
Male	44%
Female	55%
Transgender	4%
Aboriginal identity	27%
Chronically homeless	50%
Episodically homeless	16%
Children (0-14)	16%
Youth (15-24)	26%
Adults (25-64)	58%
Seniors (65+)	0%

## **2018 PiT Count Background**

A Point-In-Time (PiT) Homeless Count is a snapshot of individuals and families experiencing homelessness that collects numerical and basic demographical information at a single point in time. There are two primary purposes of conducting a PiT count:

**A count of people experiencing absolute homelessness:** It is intended to identify how many people in a community experience homelessness in shelters and on the streets at a given time. Conducted over several years, PiT Counts can be used by the community to track progress in reducing homelessness.

**A survey of the homeless population:** Through an accompanying survey, the Count gives the community information on the demographics and service needs of their homeless population. This information can be used to target community resources to where they are most needed.<sup>4</sup>

Individuals enumerated include those staying in emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing, police custody, detox programs, and those staying outdoors in parks, makeshift shelters, on the streets, and in other public areas. A PiT Count is the best available method of obtaining an accurate picture of the number of people experiencing homelessness in urban centres, but its limitations must be considered. For example, a PiT Count is unable to capture all of those persons experiencing hidden homelessness, who may be staying at a friend's house or living in a motel room. Additionally, the unsheltered count relies on volunteers to find those experiencing homelessness in public areas, and some who may not appear to be homeless, who are well-hidden, or who are actively avoiding being counted may be missed. All PiT counts, due to their inherent limitations, underrepresent the total number of people experiencing homelessness in a given community. The findings from this PiT count should therefore be considered the minimum number of people that were homeless in Kingston on the night of April 11, 2018.

Through a grant from ESDC's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), United Way KFL&A in consultation with the City of Kingston conducted Kingston's third PiT homeless count as part of the second nationally coordinated count on the evening of April 11, 2018. Shelter and transitional housing occupancy totals were obtained from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), a city-wide database used by all homelessness service providers in KFL&A to track demographics and services accessed by people experiencing homelessness. A comprehensive outdoor enumeration and surveys were also conducted to capture the most accurate number possible of people experiencing homelessness. Surveys were administered at shelters and transitional housing units to obtain demographic and experiential data on those homeless individuals who are sheltered.

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<sup>4</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada, "Guide to Point-In-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy"

The City of Kingston, as Service Manager for the County of Frontenac, also conducted a separate enumeration of people living in rural areas of our community who were currently homeless or experiencing housing vulnerability. This was the second rural homelessness enumeration, the first being conducted in 2016, to better understand the extent of challenges associated with rural homelessness. In partnership with local social service providers, anonymous surveys were completed at three rural social services providers located in Sydenham, Verona and Sharbot Lake, between April 9 to April 13 and April 16 to April 20, 2018. The Frontenac and Rural Kingston Homelessness process was timed to intentionally coincide with the Urban Kingston Point-in-Time Count. A separate report has been developed by the City of Kingston on the findings of the 2018 rural homelessness study.

2018 also marks the first provincially mandated homeless enumeration in Ontario. All Service Managers in the province of Ontario were required to perform an enumeration of homeless individuals in 2018. To meet this requirement, United Way KFL&A and the City of Kingston worked together to ensure that surveys for both the 2018 Urban Kingston PiT Count and Rural Homelessness Enumeration were designed to align with the national and provincial directives. Common procedures, tools, and timelines were implemented to ensure comparability of results and the reliability of aggregating regional, provincial, and national data.

United Way KFLA had a dedicated PiT Count Coordinator who provided support to the planning phase of this initiative, and who was primarily responsible for the implementation of the 2018 Urban Kingston Point in Time Count. United Way facilitated the recruitment and training of over 80 volunteers who canvassed 22 designated (high/medium) areas that were determined based on where homeless individuals are known to be. This included the elimination of one survey zone previously canvassed in 2013 and 2016, and the addition of two new survey zones due to migration of homeless individuals into our City's west end. Special teams were created to survey the "hot spots" in Kingston such as tent cities, abandoned buildings, forested areas, and public parks where people experiencing homelessness are known to frequent. These teams each included individuals with knowledge of and experience working with homeless populations, including front-line service providers. Support workers in 5 emergency shelters and 7 transition houses conducted interviews with clients and residents to provide survey data from these individuals on the night of the count.

All volunteers attended a training session immediately before deploying to their designated areas to conduct surveys on the night of the PiT Count. They were instructed to survey everyone they encountered, using questions from a screening tool to determine whether or not the person they were interviewing was experiencing homelessness. If the person was homeless, volunteers conducted the full survey after obtaining consent. If the person was not homeless, volunteers discontinued the survey process and recorded the interaction on a tally sheet. If any person declined to participate in the survey, but volunteers perceived evidence that the person was experiencing homelessness (i.e. carrying bag of belongings, sleeping bag, blankets, sleeping on a bench or vehicle, etc.), they recorded the person as "observed homeless" on a tally sheet, including their perceived age and gender.

## Housing and Homelessness Updates

Since 2013, there have been significant changes to the City of Kingston’s approach to housing and homelessness. These shifts in strategic direction and service provision align with the City of Kingston’s 10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan, adopted in 2013.

The City has adopted a Housing First approach to address the most vulnerable populations experiencing chronic homelessness. Housing First is defined as:

A specific type of intervention which seeks out homeless people that have complex and co-occurring issues, and serves those with the highest acuity first with minimal pre-conditions, such as “housing readiness”. The only real expectation that the person agrees to before starting the program is to have their support workers visit them in the home, to pay rent on time, and to work hard to avoid disrupting others that might lead to eviction.<sup>5</sup>

In 2017 alone, 122 highly vulnerable homeless households were housed through the Housing First program.

185 households were housed from the Social Housing Registry wait list in 2017.<sup>6</sup> An additional 89 households from the Social Housing Registry wait list have been housed as of July 31, 2018.

Year	# households on waitlist	# applicants housed from waitlist
2018*	1,275*	89*
2017	1,303	185
2016	1,115	168

\*2018 data represents statistics from January 1 to July 31, 2018.



1,275

Number of households on the social housing waiting list as of July 31, 2018

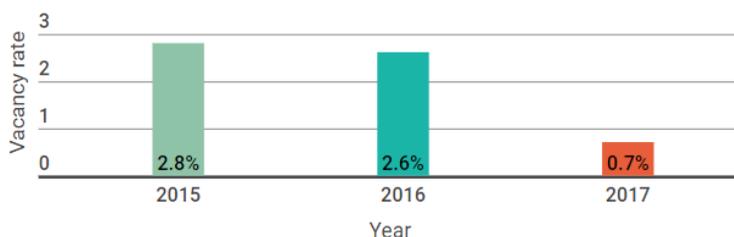


89

Number of households housed from the waitlist between January 1 and July 31, 2018

<sup>5</sup> City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan”

<sup>6</sup> City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “City of Kingston & County of Frontenac 2017 Report on Housing & Homelessness”



Kingston’s vacancy rate continues to fluctuate. In 2015 the vacancy rate was 2.8%, in 2016 it dropped slightly to 2.6%, and in 2017 it was the lowest in Ontario at 0.7%.

The average market rent in Kingston also continues to rise disproportionately to the housing allowances for social assistance.<sup>7</sup>

Year	Avg monthly rent for a 1 bedroom apartment	Max shelter allowance for a couple on Ontario Works (OW)	Max shelter allowance for a couple on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
2017	\$975	\$632	\$769
2016	\$942	\$609	\$753
2015	\$921	\$602	\$753

There have also been considerable changes to the shelter system since 2016. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston opened a 6-bed shelter for vulnerable women and women involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the justice system in July of 2015, which was expanded to an 8-bed capacity in March 2016.

During an operational review of homeless services beginning in August 2017, the Elizabeth Fry Society notified the City of Kingston that it no longer had the capacity to run the emergency shelter program, but agreed to deliver the program until April 30, 2018 to ensure continuation of services specific to women. An RFI was issued for the provision of emergency shelter beds for vulnerable women, and Kingston Home Base Non-Profit Housing was selected to operate 6 women’s emergency shelter beds. These beds will be co-located at In From the Cold, Home Base Housing’s co-ed adult emergency shelter, but renovations will be completed to provide a segregated women-only space for these clients. These beds are to become operational on May 1, 2018.

As of May 1, 2017, there was a reduction in the number of emergency shelter beds in Kingston from 86 to 71. Since the reduction, there has been a maximum monthly shelter bed utilization of 78% of capacity, and the City has developed a Service Standard to establish a protocol for motel stays in the case that shelters are at capacity.

<sup>7</sup> City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “2017 Report on Housing & Homelessness in the City of Kingston & County of Frontenac”

## **Methods**

To ensure a more accurate number and utilize resources most efficiently, the following techniques were used to enhance data quality:

1. Working with the City of Kingston housing staff to prioritize all neighbourhoods based on where people experiencing homelessness are known to frequent, as well as the density of the known homeless population (i.e. high priority [5+ individuals], medium priority [2-4 individuals], and low priority [0-1 individuals]).
2. Engaging with police, shelter staff, and social service agencies to identify specific “hot spots” such as camp sites, abandoned buildings, and forested areas where homeless individuals are known to be. Special teams were assigned to survey these areas.
3. Instructing volunteers to engage with everyone encountered, regardless of appearance (not just those that may “look” homeless).

During the planning stages, the PiT Count Coordinator worked to engage the local community and the homelessness services sector. The United Way Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Community Advisory Board (CAB) acted as the oversight committee. The Coordinator developed plans and organized logistics for survey development, community engagement, and volunteer recruitment.

The PiT Coordinator engaged in the creation and review of the survey with input from social service agencies, community stakeholders, and key informants. The unsheltered count locations were defined, logistics for the day of the count were determined, and volunteers were recruited from a variety of sources. The Coordinator then reviewed volunteer applications and assigned volunteers to appropriate teams. On the night of April 11, the PiT Count Coordinator led volunteer training and managed the base command centre, accounting for all documentation and returning volunteers. Following the Count, the Coordinator oversaw data cleaning, data entry into HIFIS, and the analysis of results.

The PiT Count survey was developed in consultation with the City of Kingston, which coordinated the first PiT Count in 2013. The 15 core questions recommended by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) were used, as well as several of the sub-set questions from the same source. The survey was also aligned with the provincially mandated homeless enumeration process. Additional community questions were added in consultation with key stakeholders. Follow-up meetings were scheduled with shelter and transitional housing providers and community agencies to seek their feedback on questions and methodology, and engage them in the PiT Count process. As a result, many front line staff volunteered to take part in the PiT Count. This facilitated the implementation of the plan and ensured that every survey team had at least one person with experience or knowledge in working with this population.

In addition to inviting volunteers from organizations and the community at large, the process included targeting individuals from specific groups such as City of Kingston Housing and Social

Services department staff, Queen's University and St. Lawrence College students (i.e. urban planning, policy studies, police foundations, behavioural science, community & justice, psychology, public health, medicine, nursing, social services, etc.), shelter and transitional housing staff, service providers, HPS CAB members, United Way board members and volunteers.

Volunteers were assigned to teams of 2-3 people, with at least one individual having experience working with homeless populations, and ensuring a mix of male and female volunteers. Two special teams were created that each included experienced front line staff to survey areas that had been identified as "hot spots." All high and medium priority neighbourhoods were thoroughly canvassed and surveyed. The majority of low priority neighbourhoods are suburban and geographically widespread. During Kingston's 2013 PiT Count, few to no individuals experiencing homelessness were encountered in these areas. As such, low priority neighbourhoods were not surveyed in 2016 or 2018.

Each volunteer was given a tally sheet on which they listed their name and indicated the survey zone number they were responsible for. Surveys were numbered so that they could be matched with the corresponding volunteer and tally sheet. These were reviewed to detect and correct omissions and inaccuracies (i.e. if the question "Where are you staying tonight?" was left blank, but the survey was conducted at an emergency shelter, "Emergency Shelter / Domestic Violence Shelter" was assumed during the data cleaning process).

Individuals who elected to participate in the survey were offered an honorarium consisting of a string backpack that contained a pair of socks, Tim Hortons gift card, 2-ride bus transit pass, granola bar and juice box, 211 card and other information pamphlets about community housing and homelessness services including services geared toward specific populations such as Aboriginal peoples and veterans.

Of the 152 people encountered, 98 consented to complete the survey. The experiential results in this report reflect the data collected through the 98 survey respondents.

## **Limitations**

Though a Point-in-Time Count is the most comprehensive methodology for enumerating and facilitating the collection of data on people experiencing homelessness, its limitations must be considered in full. When conducted over several years, PiT Counts can be used to measure community progress in reducing homelessness.

By focusing on a single day, the count will not include some people who cycle in and out of homelessness. What it will do, is provide an estimate of how many of these people are homeless at a given time.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada, "Guide to Point-In-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy"

It is important to note that any PiT Count under-represents the number of people experiencing homelessness, and that the results should therefore be taken as the minimum value. There are likely to be additional people experiencing homelessness who were not counted. However, through this process we know that there were at least 93 people who were homeless and an additional 59 people living in time-limited transitional housing on the night of April 11, 2018.

Homeless persons enumerated in outdoor spaces were only counted if they were encountered on public property, or in participating indoor locations (such as Kingston Street Mission). If people who are homeless are indoors in non-participating locations, they are not counted. This includes those who are couch-surfing, living in a motel, sleeping in ATM foyers, or other comparable arrangements.

Finally, it is also important to note the weather on the night of the count. On April 11<sup>th</sup> there was moderate rain prior to and during the time of the count which may have reduced the number of homeless people who were outdoors in public spaces. It is possible that some individuals took shelter in alternate locations to avoid the weather and were not encountered. It is possible that some people who would typically be “sleeping rough” were not counted on the night of April 11, 2018.

## **Results**

### **Homeless Populations**

152 homeless individuals were encountered during the Point in Time Count process. This total includes those who were unsheltered and those staying in emergency or domestic violence shelters (absolute homelessness) as well as individuals living in time limited transitional housing. Some of the individuals encountered and included were couch surfing or staying in a motel with no permanent residence to return to.

2018	Adults	Youth	Accompanied Children	Total	% of Total
Emergency Shelter	38	13	7	58	38%
Transitional Housing	27	22	10	59	39%
No Fixed Address	1	1	0	2	1%
Unsheltered	12	1	0	13	9%
Motel	4	0	1	5	3%
Couch Surfing	4	2	1	7	5%
Unknown	6	2	0	8	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### Absolute Homelessness

A total of 81 people were found to be absolutely homeless on April 11, 2018, with an additional 59 living in transitional housing and 12 staying at a motel or at a friend's place. Of the 81 people, 58 or **72%** were sheltered, meaning that they slept in an emergency shelter or a domestic violence shelter on the night of the count. Two additional people (**2%**) were found in a hospital, detox centre, or remand centre on the night of the count, and stated that they had No Fixed Address (NFA). 13 people, or **16%**, were unsheltered, meaning that they were found in parks, on the streets, or in other public spaces. 8 people, or **10%** did not know where they would be sleeping that night.

2018	Adults	Youth	Accompanied Children	Total	% of Total
Sheltered	38	13	7	58	72%
Unsheltered	12	1	0	13	16%
No Fixed Address	1	1	0	2	2%
Unknown	6	2	0	8	10%
Total	57	17	7	81	100%
% of Total	70%	21%	9%	100%	

### Precarious Housing

59 of the 152 people encountered on April 11, 2018 were living in transitional housing. An additional 5 were staying in a motel, and 7 were staying at someone else's place, or "couch surfing". According to the Canadian definition of homelessness, these individuals are considered to be homeless. Their tenure in transitional housing is time limited, and thus they cannot be considered to have attained stable, permanent housing. Similarly, individuals staying at a motel or with a friend who do not have a permanent residence to return to are also considered to be homeless.

2018	Adults	Youth	Accompanied Children	Total	% of Total
Transitional Housing	27	22	10	59	83%
Motel	4	0	1	5	7%
Couch Surfing	4	2	1	7	10%
Total	35	24	12	71	100%
% of Total	49%	34%	17%	100%	

## Demographics

### Gender

On the night of April 11<sup>th</sup>, **55%** of people experiencing homelessness in Kingston were women. If dependent children are excluded, the percentage of adult and independent youth who identify as women increases to **60%**. This is atypical to the national rate of the proportion of women experiencing homelessness, based on the results of PiT Counts elsewhere in Canada. Women are more likely to report domestic abuse and family breakdown or conflict as the reason they became homeless compared to men.



27%

Average proportion of people experiencing homelessness who identify as women



55%

Kingston's proportion of people experiencing homelessness who identify as women

Of the 98 surveys completed, 59 or **60%** of the respondents were women. The 98 survey respondents reported a total of 19 accompanied children. When accompanied children are included in the demographics, 65 (**55%**) of the 117 are female. Of the 59 adults and independent youth who were women, the average length of time spent homeless within the past year was 6 months. **75%** of all female survey respondents had stayed in an emergency shelter within the past year.

The average age of female survey respondents was 37 years. When accompanied children are included, the average age is 34 years.

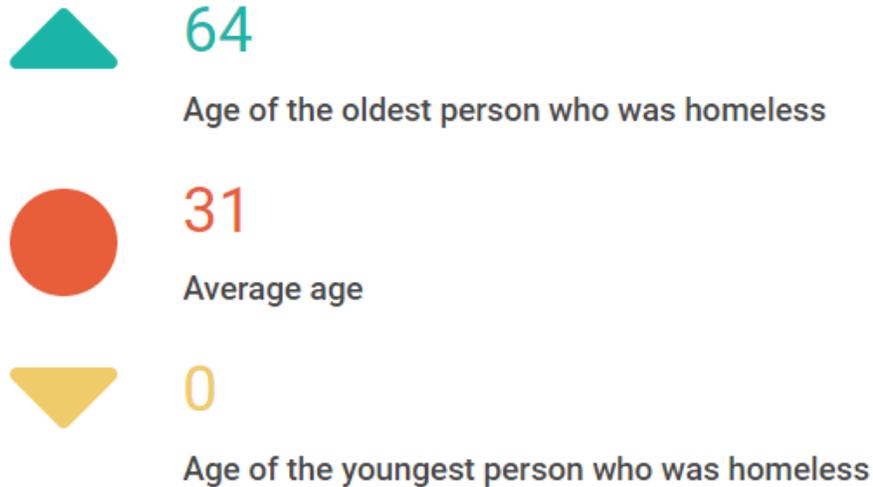
**4%** of adult / independent youth survey respondents identified as transgender. Of these, **75%** were trans women, and **25%** were gender non-conforming. People who identify as transgender disproportionately experience violence and discrimination when compared with the cisgender population.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Mark Cull, Hazel Platzer, & Sue Balloch, "Out On My Own: Understanding the Experiences and Needs of Homeless Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth"

## Age

The average age of people experiencing homelessness on the night of the PiT Count was 31 years. The most common age range was 25-44. The majority of people encountered were adults (**58%**).



## Indigenous / Aboriginal Communities

During the data collection process, individuals who were experiencing homelessness were asked, “Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry?” Respondents self-reported whether or not they were indigenous, or could opt not to answer the question. **24%** indicated that they were First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. A further **3%** said that they had Aboriginal ancestry, and **4%** were unsure whether they were Indigenous.

## Racial Identity

In 2018, a question was added to the PiT Count survey that asked respondents what racialized identity they identify with. Respondents were asked to indicate all identities that apply. The majority (**71%**) of respondents identified themselves as white. **14%** identified their race as Aboriginal or Indigenous, **4%** identified as Black, **4%** identified as Arab, **2%** identified as Hispanic or Latin American, **1%** identified as Asian, **3%** said they don't know, and **3%** declined to answer.

## Language

An additional question was added to the survey in 2018 that asked participants in what language they feel best able to express themselves. **89%** indicated that they were most comfortable communicating in English, **2%** in French, **3%** had no preference between English and French, **5%** were most comfortable expressing themselves in a language other than English or French, and **1%** declined to answer.

## Sexual Orientation

As a part of the PiT Count survey, individuals experiencing homelessness were asked how they self-identify in regard to sexual orientation. **17%** of survey respondents indicated that they identify as LGBQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer), **76%** identify as straight / heterosexual, and **7%** chose not to answer the question.

We know that youth who identify as LGBQ+ are more likely to become homeless than their heterosexual peers due to family conflict and homophobia in the home.<sup>10</sup> Preliminary research is also being conducted that suggests that adults who are LGBQ+ also disproportionately experience homelessness.<sup>11</sup>

Of the individuals who identified themselves as LGBQ+, **59%** were independent youth. Survey respondents were asked at what age they first experienced homelessness. The average age at which individuals who identified as straight / heterosexual first became homeless was 30 years, while the average age that LGBQ+ individuals first became homeless was 15 years.

## Veteran Status

A total of **5%** of respondents indicated that they were veterans who had served in the Canadian Armed Forces. There were no respondents who indicated they had served in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Less than 2% of Canadians are veterans, which tells us that the number of people experiencing homelessness within this population in Kingston is somewhat high.<sup>12</sup> However, in both Canada and the United States, veterans are known to be at higher risk of homelessness than the general population.

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, "Where am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S."

<sup>11</sup> Dr. John Ecker, "A Review of the Literature on LGBTQ Adults Who Experience Homelessness"

<sup>12</sup> Veterans Affairs Canada, "General Statistics"

### Foster Care

In 2018, a question was added to the PiT Count survey that asked respondents whether they had ever been in foster care or a group home. **30%** of participants indicated that they had been in foster care or a group home as a child. The average length of time respondents spent in care was 4.7 years.

**34%** of those who had been in foster care were youth on the night of April 11, 2018. Of the youth (ages 16-24) who completed surveys, **37%** had been in foster care. Across Canada, about 43% of homeless youth have been in foster care or group homes.<sup>13</sup> This includes foster youth who have aged out of the system, youth who have left their placement homes due to negative experiences, and youth who returned to their family home or lived with relatives.

### Physical and Mental Health

The 2018 survey included additional local questions that asked respondents about their physical and mental health. **39%** indicated that they had a chronic or acute medical condition, and **21%** indicated that they had a physical disability.

**46%** of respondents self-identified as having an addiction. When compared with the general population, a disproportionate percentage of the homeless population in Kingston indicate that they have poor mental health. **78%** of survey respondents self-identified as having mental health issues. We know that people with poor mental health are more likely to become homeless, and that experiencing homelessness amplifies symptoms of poor mental health. In general, 30-35% of people (up to 75% of women) experiencing homelessness have mental illnesses, and 20-25% have concurrent disorders (i.e. have severe mental illness and addictions simultaneously).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Stephen A. Gaetz, "Coming of Age: Reimagining the Response to Youth Homelessness in Canada"

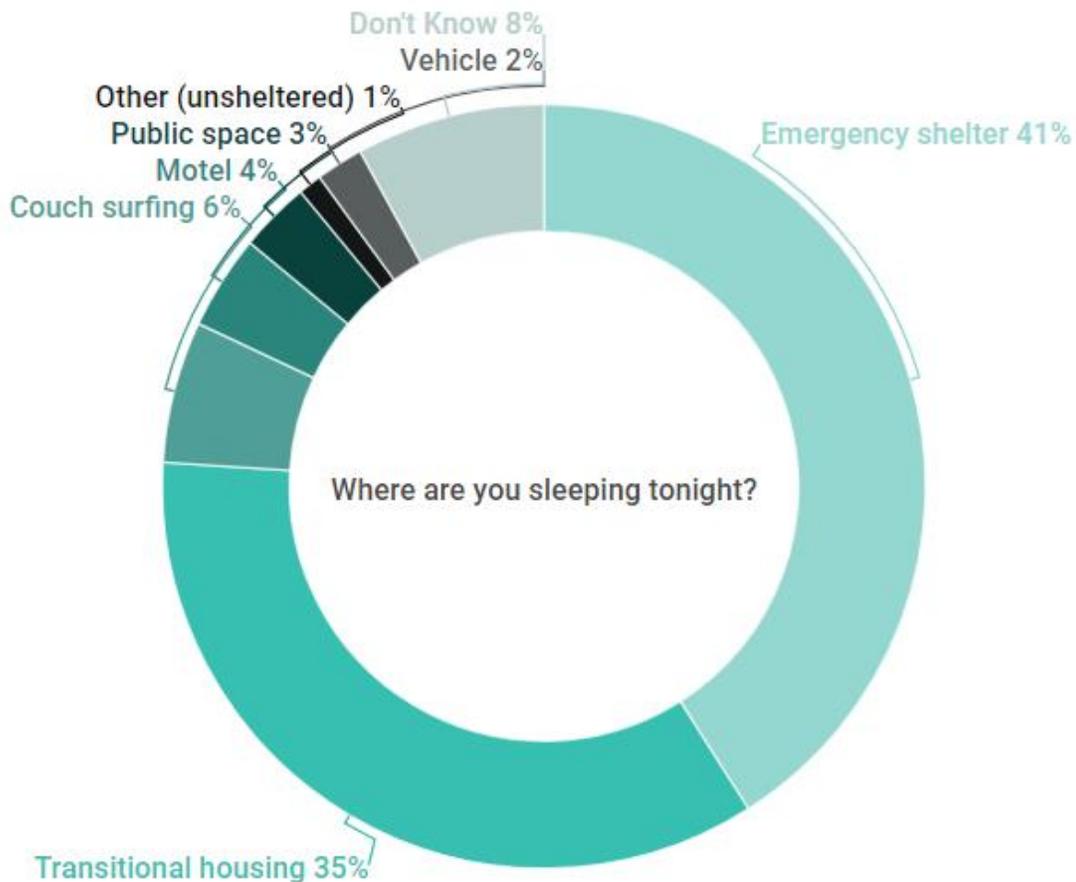
<sup>14</sup> Laura Munn-Rivard, "Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada: Homelessness and Access to Housing"

## Survey Data

### **Sleeping Arrangements**

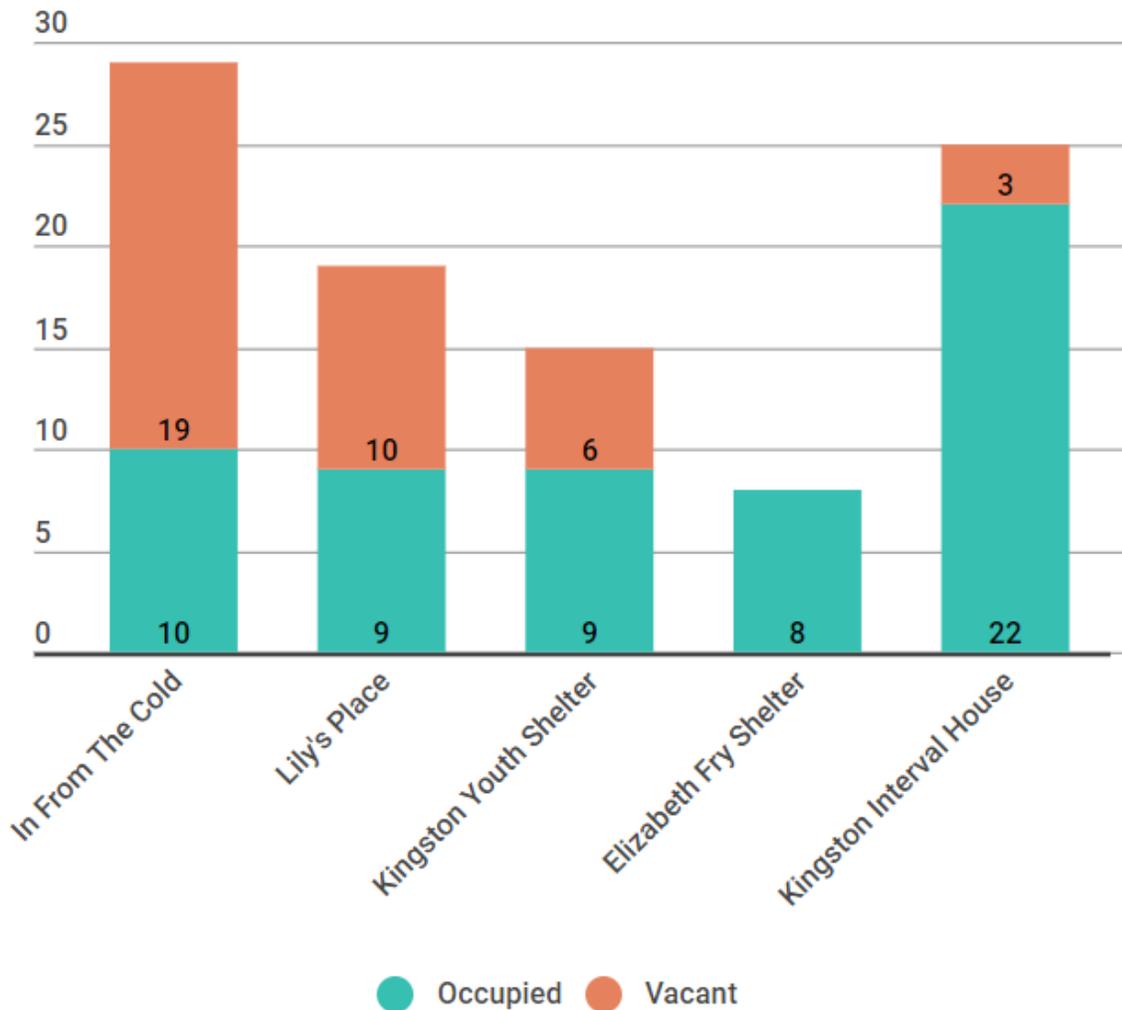
The 2018 PiT Count found that the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in Kingston are sheltered. Of the 98 people who completed surveys, the majority indicated that they were sleeping in an emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter, or transition house on the night of April 11, 2018. **41%** of respondents indicated that they would be sleeping in an emergency or domestic violence shelter, and **35%** were staying in transitional housing.

**14%** of those who chose to complete a survey were unsheltered. **3%** reported that they would be sleeping in a public space, **2%** in a vehicle, **1%** in another unsheltered location, and **8%** did not know where they would be sleeping.



### Shelter Occupancy

On the night of April 11, 2018, emergency and domestic violence shelters were operating at **60%** capacity. This means that no one who was seeking shelter would need to be turned away due to lack of available beds. However, the Elizabeth Fry emergency shelter for vulnerable women was at capacity, so there is a potential that some women who would be most comfortable in a women-only space would not have had access to such a space. As previously noted, women are overrepresented in the homeless population in Kingston.

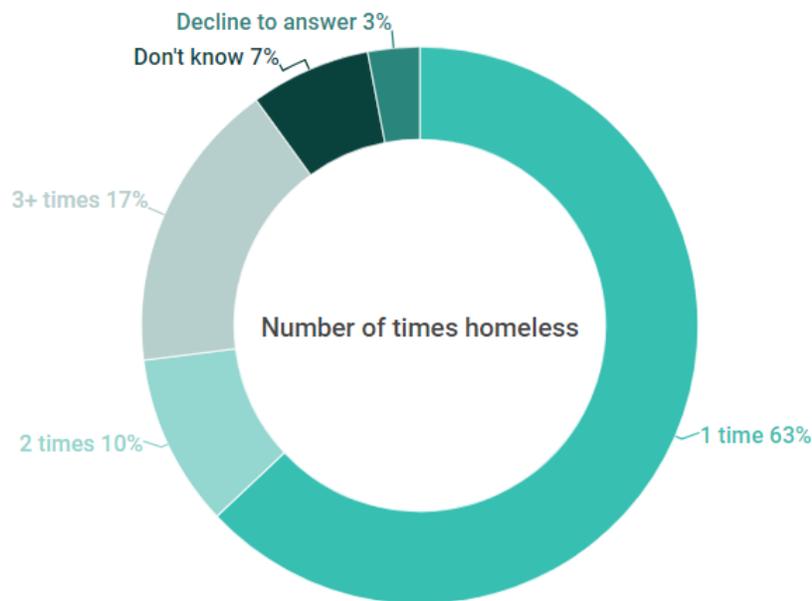


### Duration of Homelessness

Kingston's 2018 PiT Count found that **50%** of survey respondents had been homeless for 6 months or longer. **26%** had been homeless for 0-2 months, and **16%** had been homeless for 3-5 months. **5%** did not know how long they had been homeless, and **3%** declined to answer. The average length of time respondents had spent homeless in the past year was 188 days.



**63%** of survey respondents reported that they had been homeless only once within the past year. **10%** said they had been homeless twice, and **17%** said they had been homeless three or more times. **7%** did not know how many times they had been homeless, and **3%** declined to answer. **10%** of respondents had been homeless for 6 months or longer *and* had been homeless three or more times within the past year.



## Age of First Episode

Those who completed surveys were asked at what age they first became homeless in their lives. An alarming proportion of people experiencing homelessness as adults first became homeless as youth, which provides further evidence of the need to focus on both preventative and intervention-based solutions to end youth homelessness. **35%** of those surveyed said they were under 25 the first time they were homeless.



**1 year**

Lowest age first homeless



**64 years**

Highest age first homeless

**52%**

Were under the age of 25 the first time they were homeless

**42%**

Were between 25 and 55 the first time they were homeless

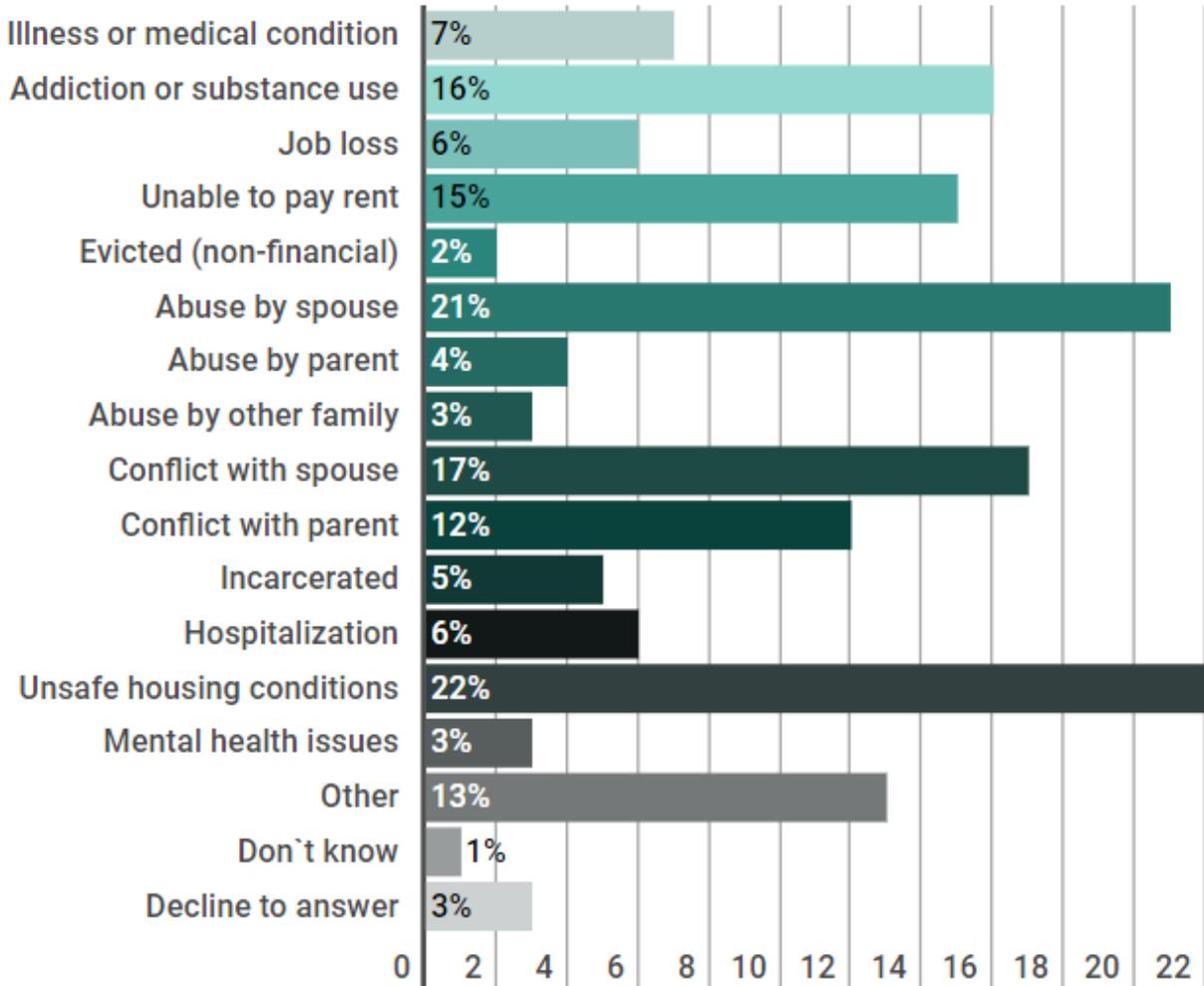
**2%**

Were over the age of 55 the first time they were homeless

The City of Kingston's 10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan hopes to address chronic homelessness. In January of 2015, the City began implementing changes to end chronic homelessness by moving toward a Housing First model through collaboration with community partners in both the public and private sectors in order to better address the housing needs of the chronically homeless population. The City has prioritized an integrated system of housing and individualized supports with coordinated access and service provision in an attempt to move people out of chronic homelessness.

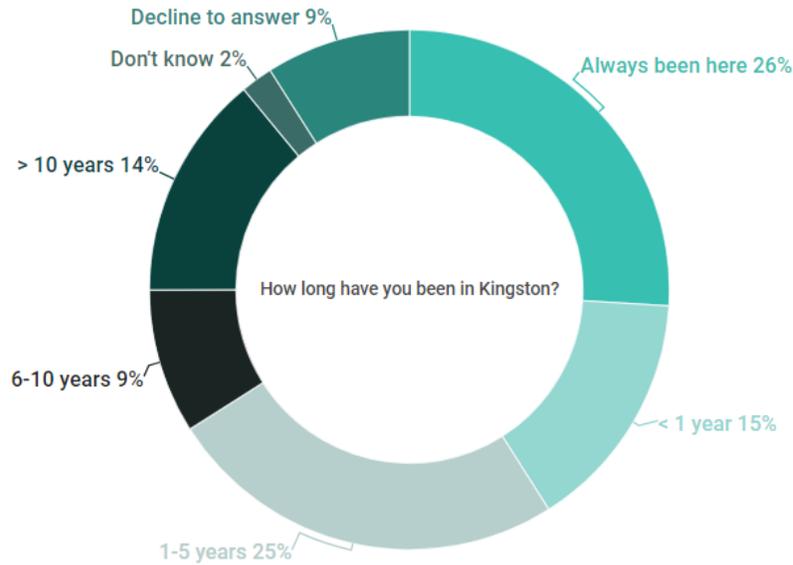
### Reasons for Housing Loss

The most common reasons that survey respondents said they became homeless were unsafe housing conditions (**22%**), abuse by spouse (**21%**), family conflict (**17%** conflict with spouse; **12%** conflict with parent), and addictions or substance use issues (**16%**).

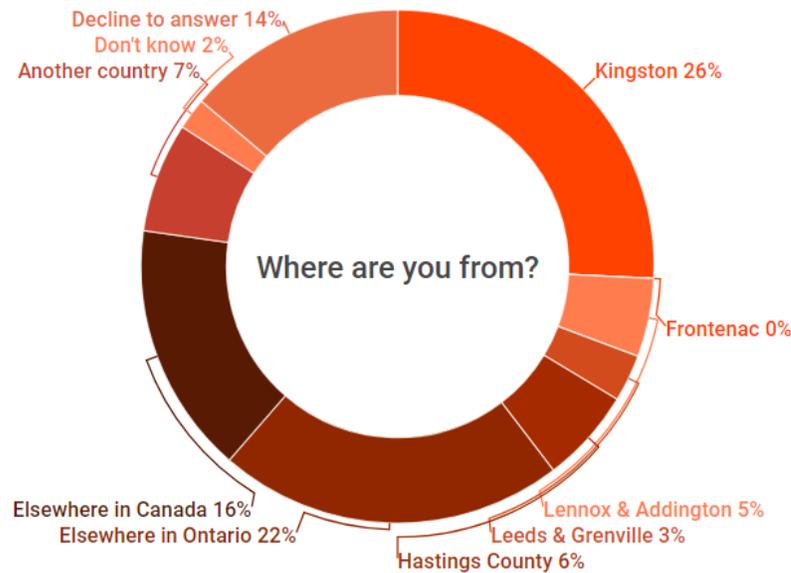


### Geography

When individuals were asked how long they had lived in the community, the majority indicated they had been living in the City of Kingston for at least one year. **26%** of respondents had lived in Kingston for the entirety of their lives.



If respondents indicated that they had not always lived in Kingston, they were asked where they moved from.



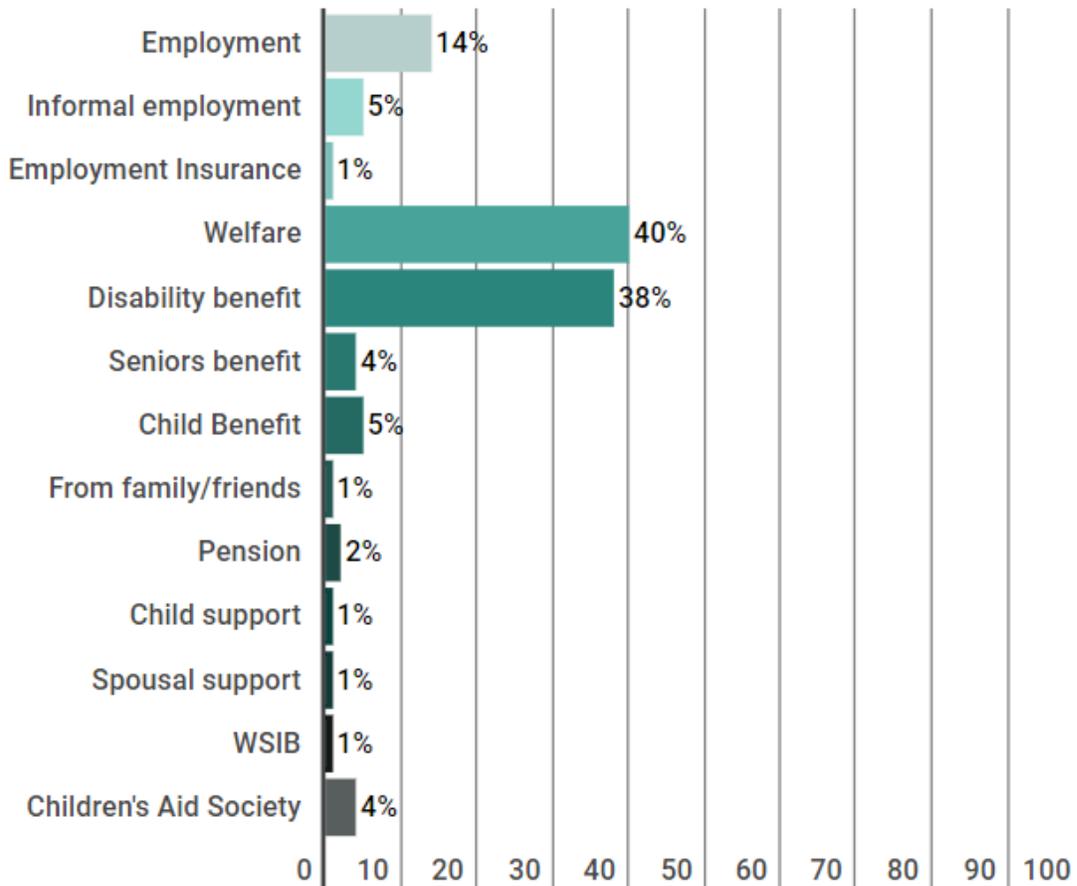
### Immigrant and Refugee Status

If respondents indicated that they previously lived in a different country, they were asked if they came to Canada as an immigrant or refugee. **3%** of respondents indicated they were immigrants, and **1%** indicated they had refugee claimant status.

### Sources of Income

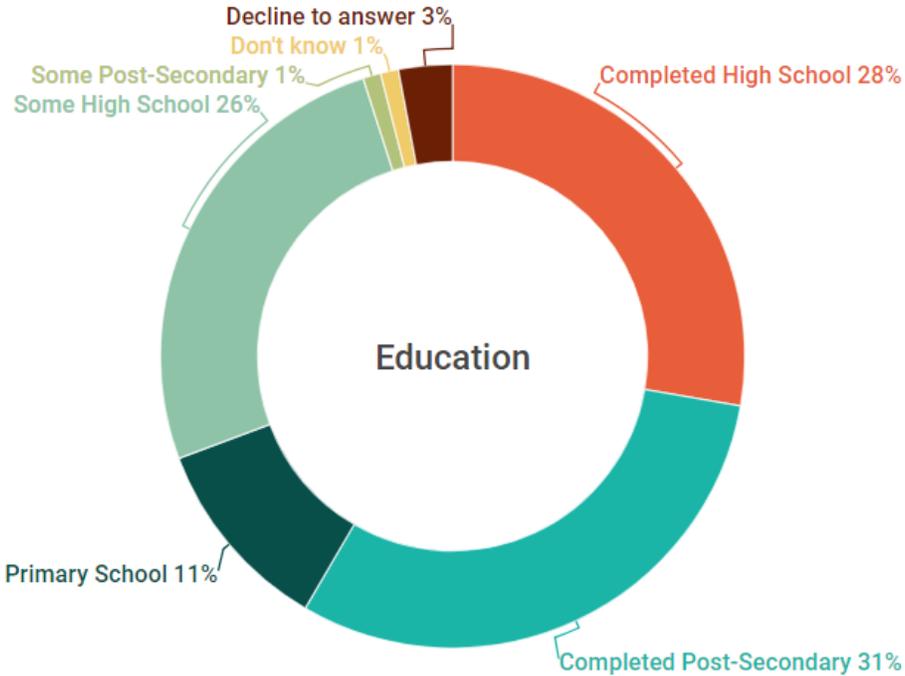
The most common method through which people experiencing homelessness obtain money is social assistance such as Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program.

**78%** of survey respondents reported that they rely on these programs, with **40%** receiving support from OW and **38%** from ODSP. **2%** said they had no sources of income whatsoever. **14%** said they obtain money through formal employment. It is important to note that some respondents indicated more than one source of income, as represented in the data below.



**Level of Education**

Of the 98 survey respondents, **58%** had completed high school or post-secondary school.



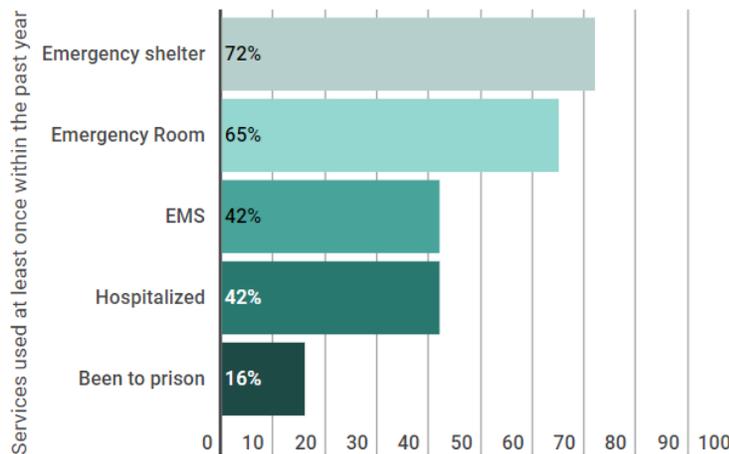
**Service Usage**

The programs/and or services most frequently used by people experiencing homelessness in Kingston include emergency shelters and emergency health services. In the past year, **72%** of those surveyed had stayed in an emergency shelter at least once, and **65%** had been to the Emergency Room.



72%

Proportion of respondents who had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year



## Barriers to Housing

People who have become homeless face many barriers to obtaining and maintaining affordable permanent housing. Survey respondents were asked what they felt was preventing them from finding a permanent place to live, and could provide as many answers as necessary to represent their situation. The most common responses were overwhelmingly that they did not have enough income and that rents were too high for them to afford.

Close to **50%** of respondents reported that they were homeless because they did not have enough income to afford rent, **44%** because rents were too high to be affordable, and a further **41%** indicated that housing was not available. There are a number of factors that could have contributed to these results.



### Not enough income

49% said they do not have enough income to afford permanent housing



### Rents are too high

44% identified the cost of rent as a barrier to ending their homelessness



### Affordable housing is not available

41% said that affordable housing is not available in Kingston

It is important to note that neither Ontario Works nor Ontario Disability Support Program (the two most commonly reported sources of income) provides a housing allowance that is adequate to cover the average cost of rent in Kingston. In addition, the rental vacancy rate in Kingston was the lowest in Ontario in 2017 at 0.7%,<sup>15</sup> making it even more difficult for low-income individuals and families to secure affordable permanent housing. A healthy vacancy rate is considered to be around 3%.

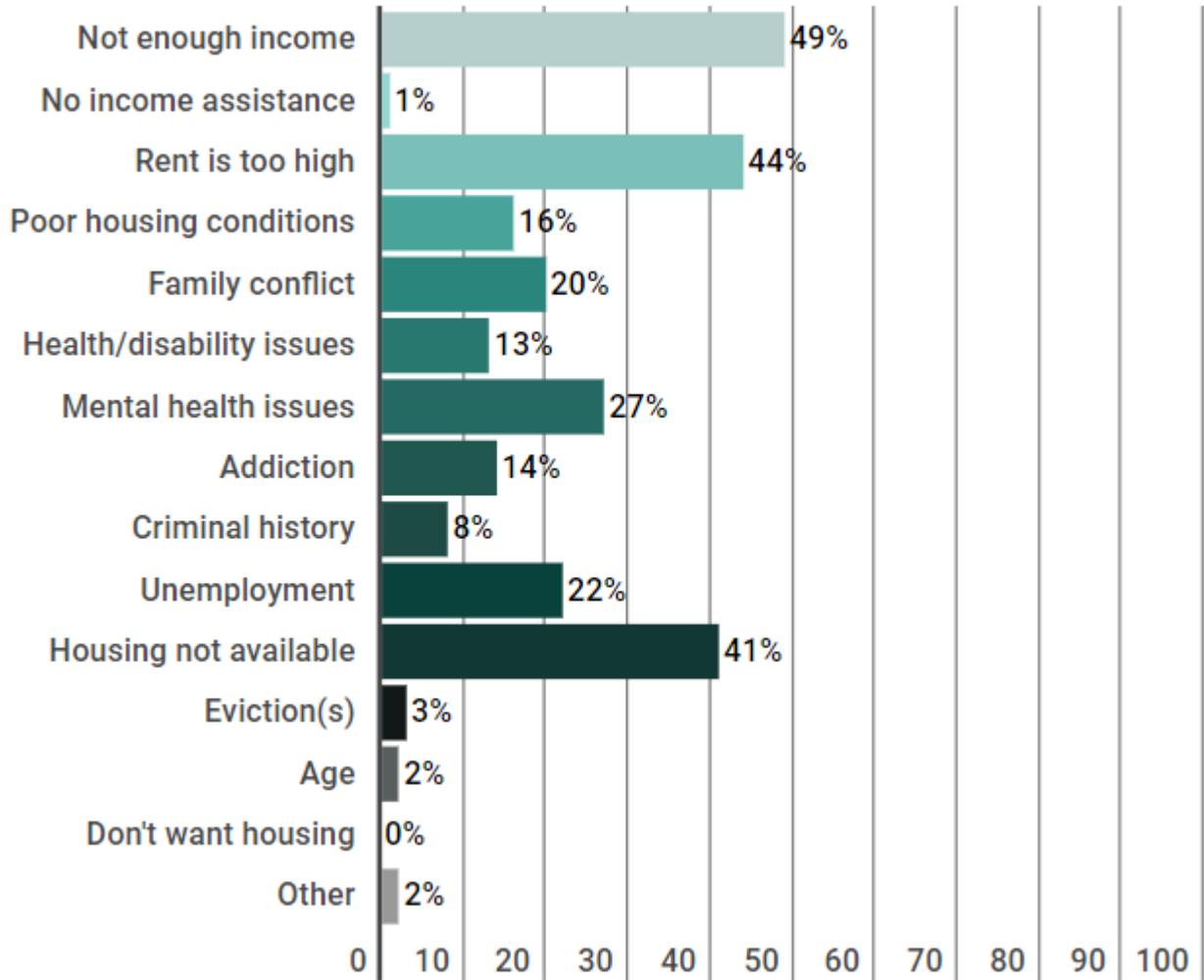
Women face specific barriers in comparison with the general population of people who are homeless. Over one third of women reported that the reason for their housing loss was domestic abuse inflicted by a spouse or partner. 19% of women lost their housing due to conflict with a spouse or partner, and a further 32% reported unsafe housing conditions. As with the general population, women cited a lack of financial resources and the cost of rent as their most immediate barriers to housing.

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<sup>15</sup> City of Kingston & County of Frontenac, "2017 Housing & Homelessness Report"



## Barriers to housing



## Youth-Specific Data and Demographics

We know that youth have a unique experience of homelessness, and that their needs are not always met within adult systems. The following survey findings reflect the experiences and demographics of young people between the ages of 16-24 who are homeless.



**56%**

Percentage of surveyed youth who identify as female



**41%**

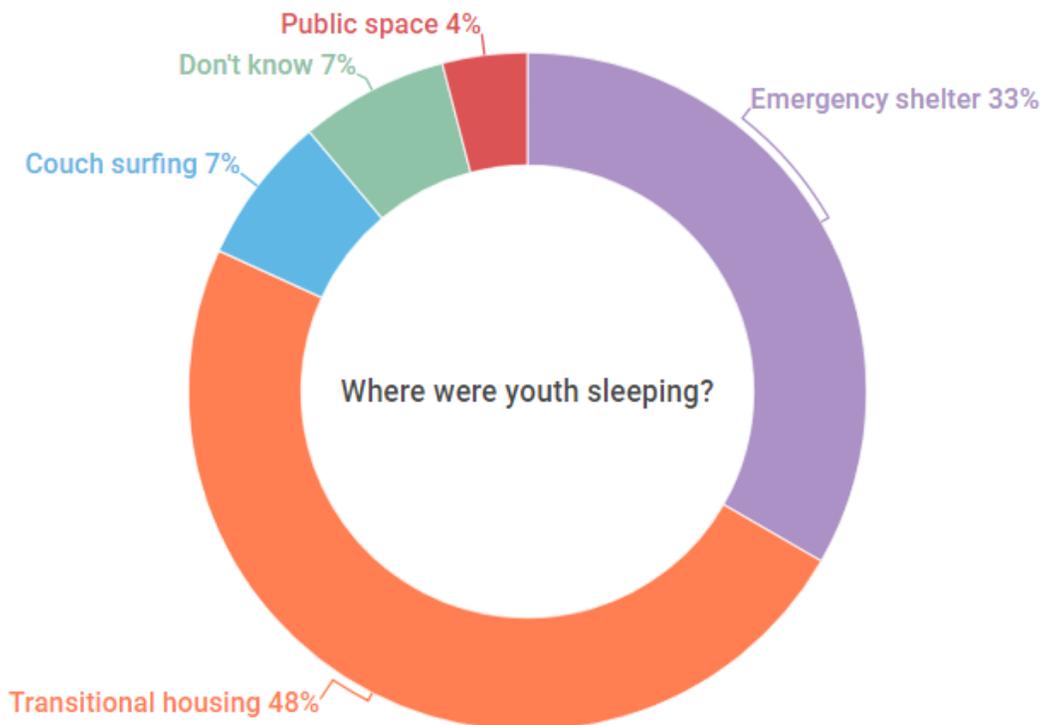
Percentage of surveyed youth who identify as male

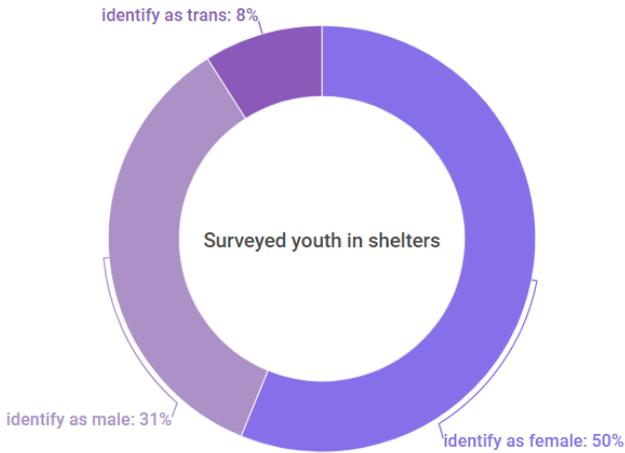


**11%**

Percentage of surveyed youth who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming

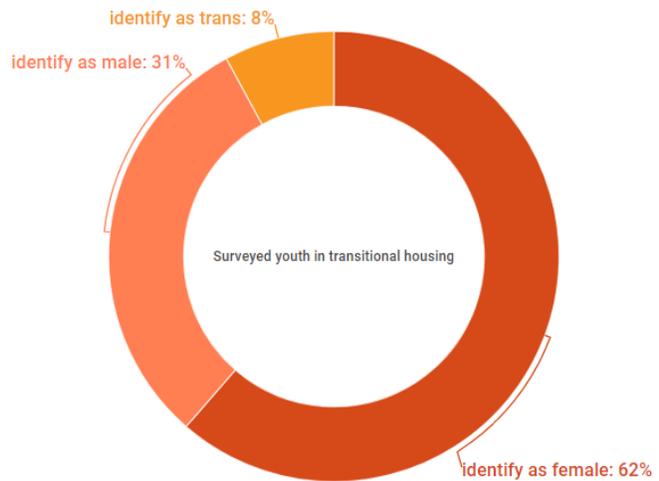
The majority of youth surveyed on the night of April 11, 2018 were sheltered. **33%** were staying in an emergency or domestic violence shelter, **48%** were staying in transitional housing, **7%** were couch surfing, **7%** did not know where they would be sleeping. **4%** were unsheltered and sleeping in a public space.





**33%** of surveyed youth were staying in an emergency shelter or domestic violence shelter on the night of April 11, 2018. Of these, **50%** identify as female, **40%** identify as male, and **10%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.

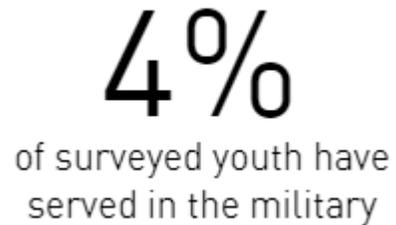
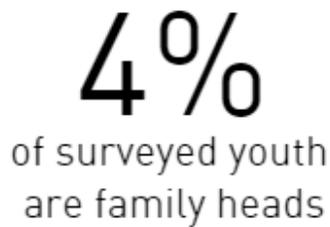
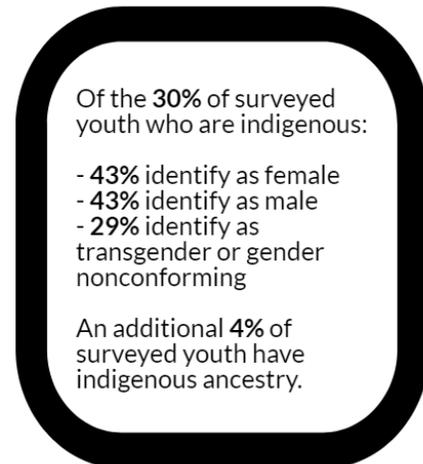
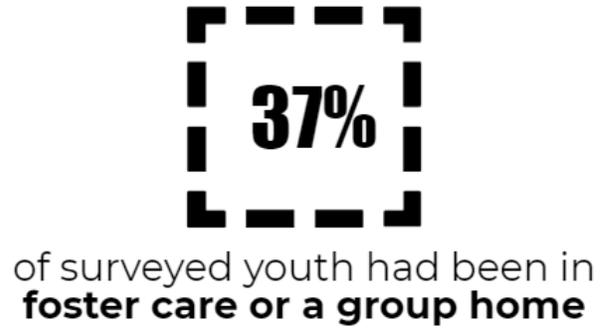
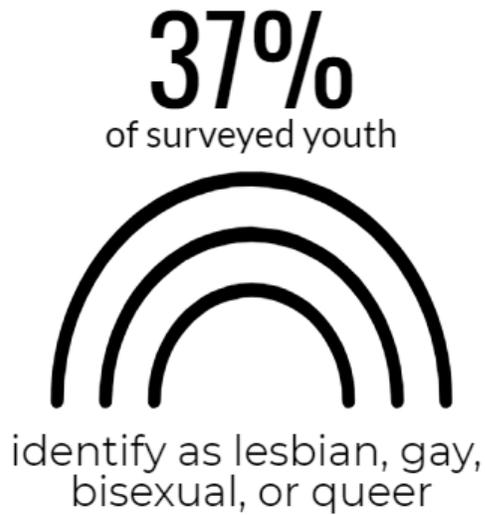
**48%** of surveyed youth were staying in transitional housing on the night of April 11, 2018. Of these, **62%** identify as female, **31%** identify as male, and **8%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.



**7%** of surveyed youth were couch surfing on the night of April 11, 2018  
 Of these, **50%** identify as female  
**50%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming

**4%** of surveyed youth were sleeping in a public space on the night of April 11, 2018  
 Of these, **100%** identify as male

**7%** of surveyed youth did not know where they would be sleeping on the night of April 11, 2018  
 Of these, **100%** identify as male





the average age surveyed youth became homeless

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**4.6**  
**months**

the average length of time surveyed youth had spent homeless in the past year

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**52%**

of surveyed youth had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year

compared with 80% of surveyed adults

**33%**



of surveyed youth were born in  
**Kingston**

**22%**

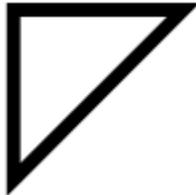
of surveyed youth came to Kingston from the surrounding areas

- 7% are from Lennox & Addington
- 7% are from the Ottawa area
- 4% are from Leeds & Grenville
- 4% are from Quinte



**89%** of surveyed youth self-identified as having mental health issues

Of these, **50%** identify as female  
**46%** identify as male  
**13%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming



**48%** of surveyed youth self-identified as having an addiction



**22%** of surveyed youth self-identified as having a chronic/acute medical condition

## 2016-2018 Comparative Data

The following charts and graphics provide a comparison between the data collected in Kingston in 2016 and 2018 as a part of the first and second nationally coordinated PIT Counts.

### Absolute homelessness



91

Number of people experiencing absolute homelessness found in Kingston in 2016



81

Number of people experiencing absolute homelessness found in Kingston in 2018

### Number of people experiencing homelessness



137

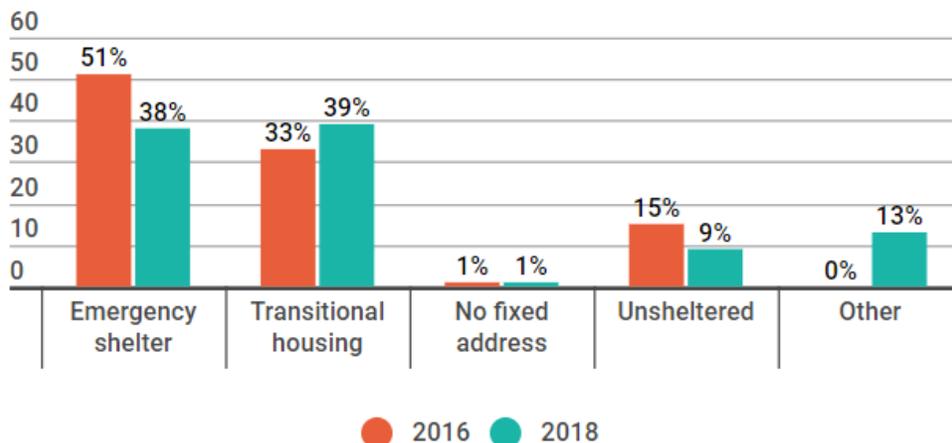
Number of people encountered who were homeless in Kingston in 2016



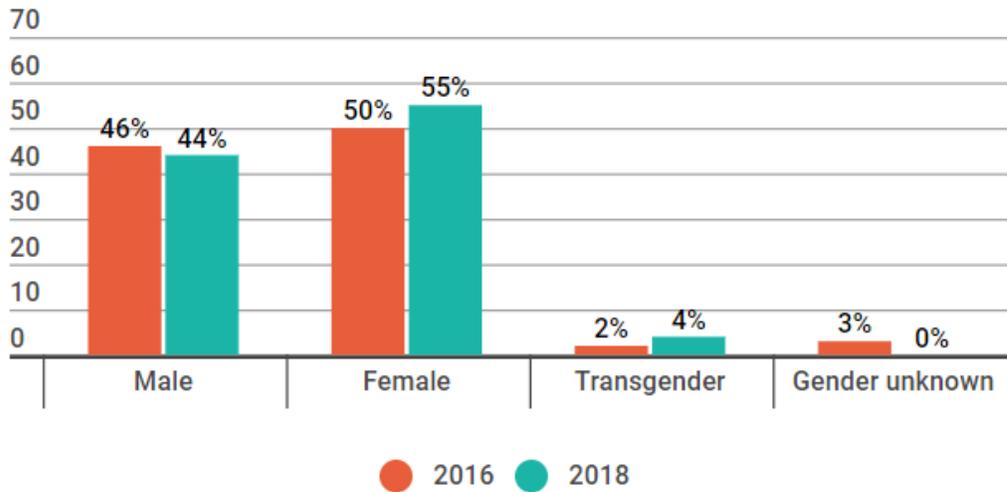
152

Number of people encountered who were homeless in Kingston in 2018

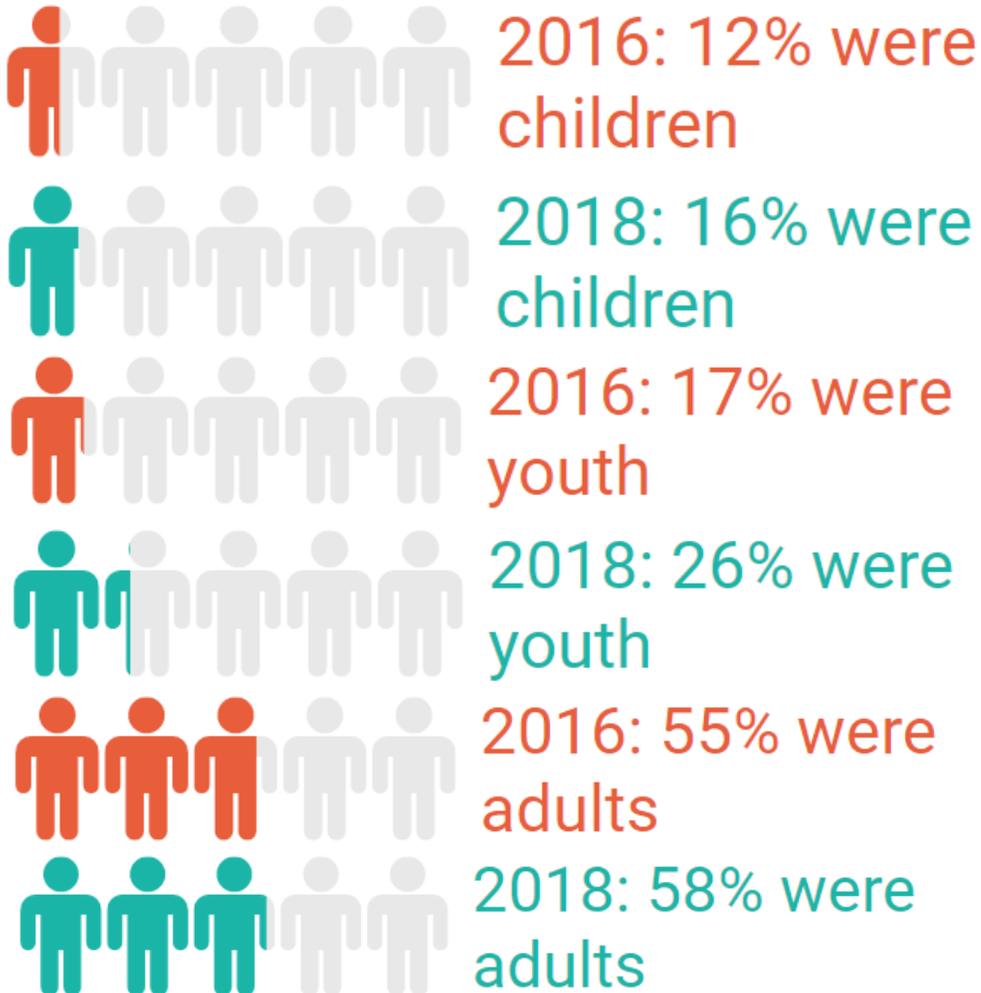
### Where were they found?



## Gender identity



## Age





### Indigenous / Aboriginal communities



13%

Proportion of respondents who indicated that they were First Nations, Métis, or Inuit in 2016



24%

Proportion of respondents who indicated that they were First Nations, Métis, or Inuit in 2018

### Veteran status



13%

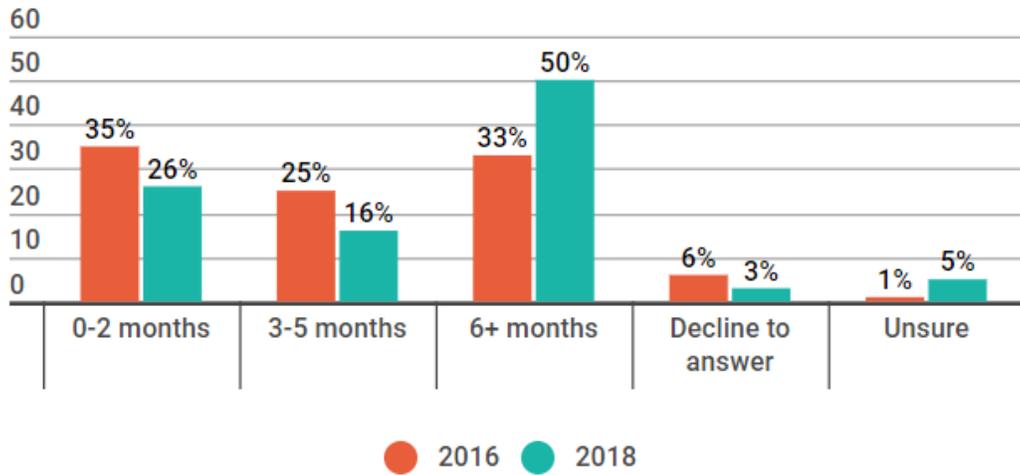
Proportion of respondents who indicated that they had served in the Canadian Armed Forces or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 2016



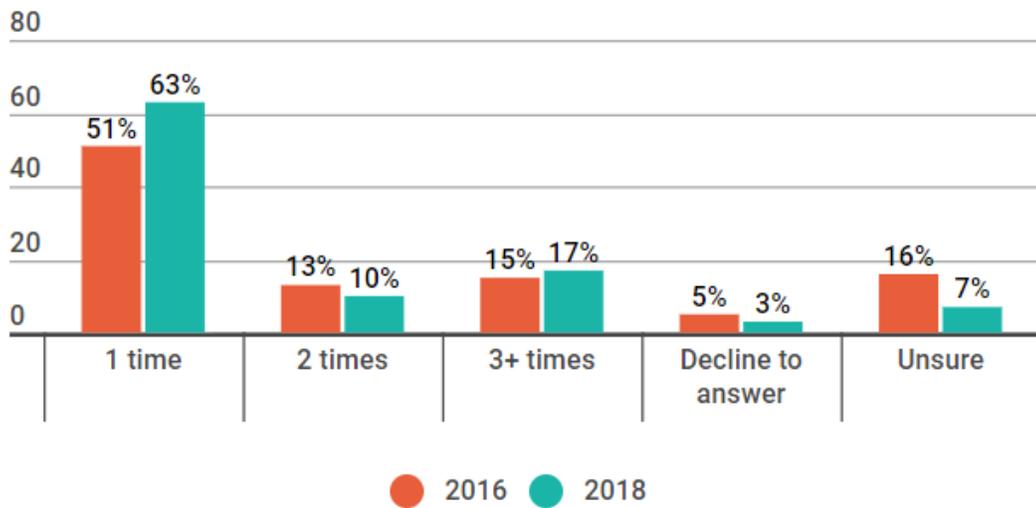
5%

Proportion of respondents who indicated that they had served in the Canadian Armed Forces or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 2018

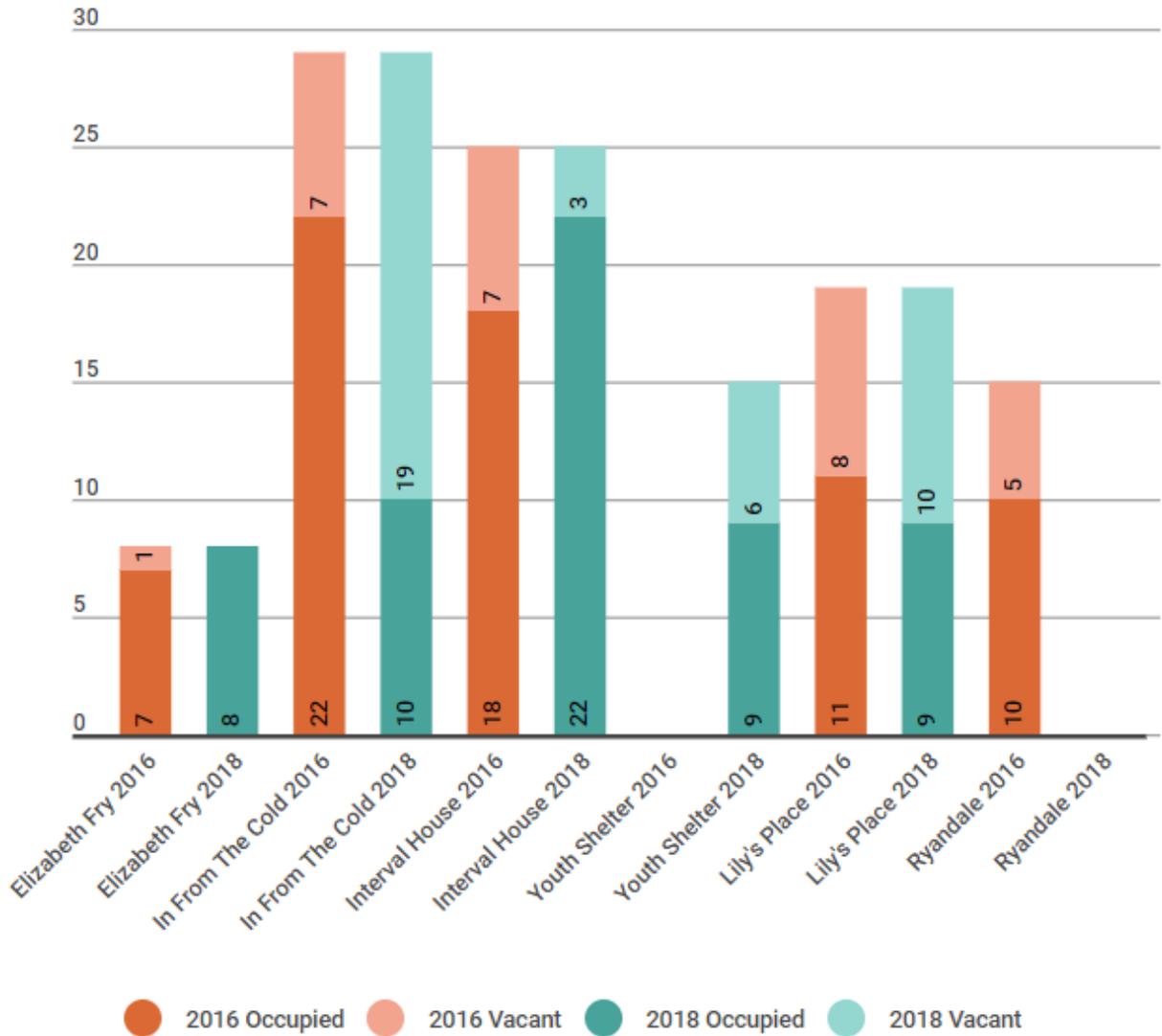
### Duration of homelessness



### Number of times homeless



## Shelter occupancy



During the 2016 PiT Count, Kingston Youth Shelter was closed for repairs after a fire. Ryandale emergency shelter ceased operations in April of 2017.



**71%**

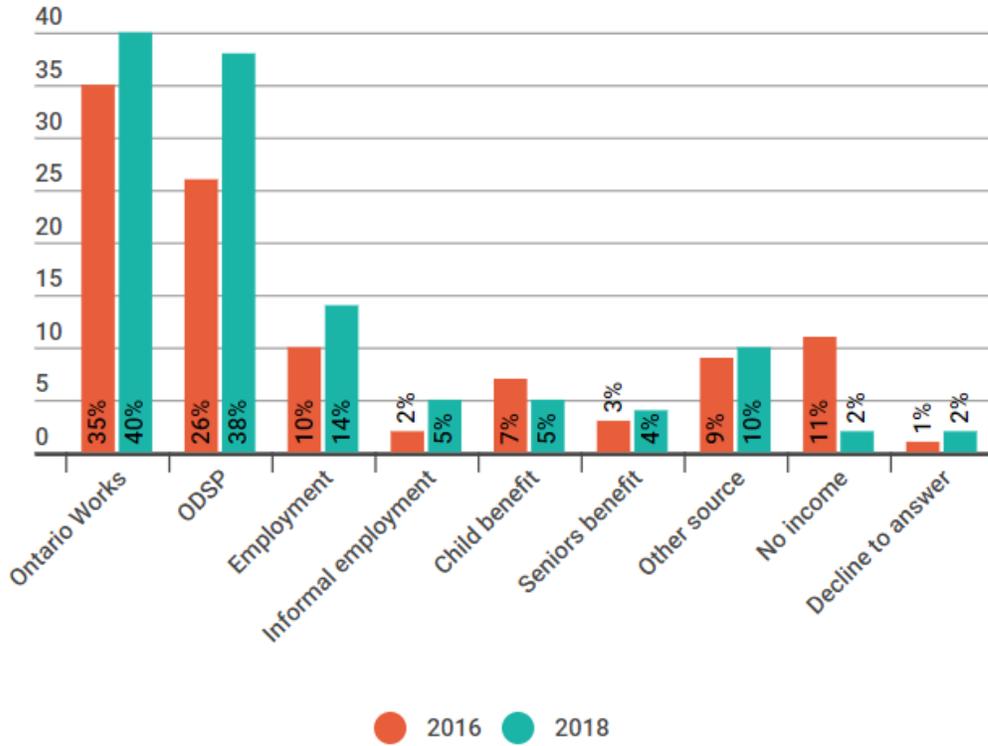
Shelters were operating at 71% of capacity on April 6, 2016



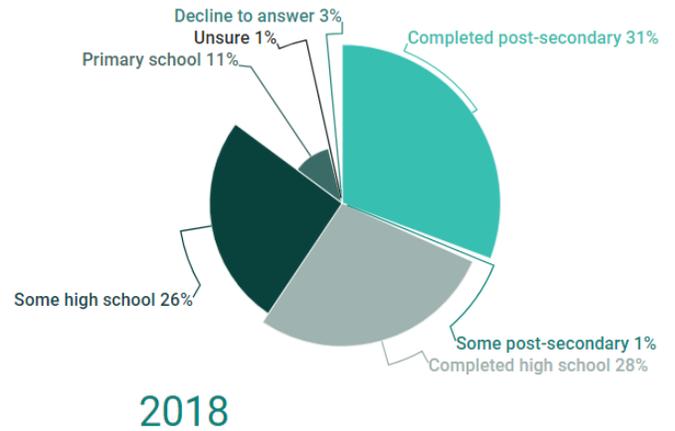
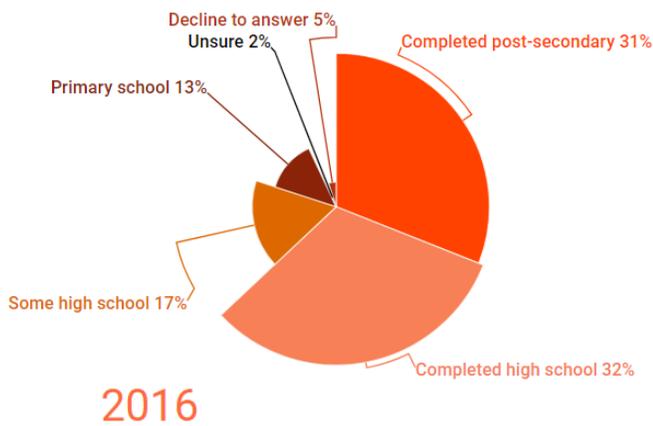
**60%**

Shelters were operating at 60% of capacity on April 11, 2018

## Sources of income



## Level of education



## Service usage



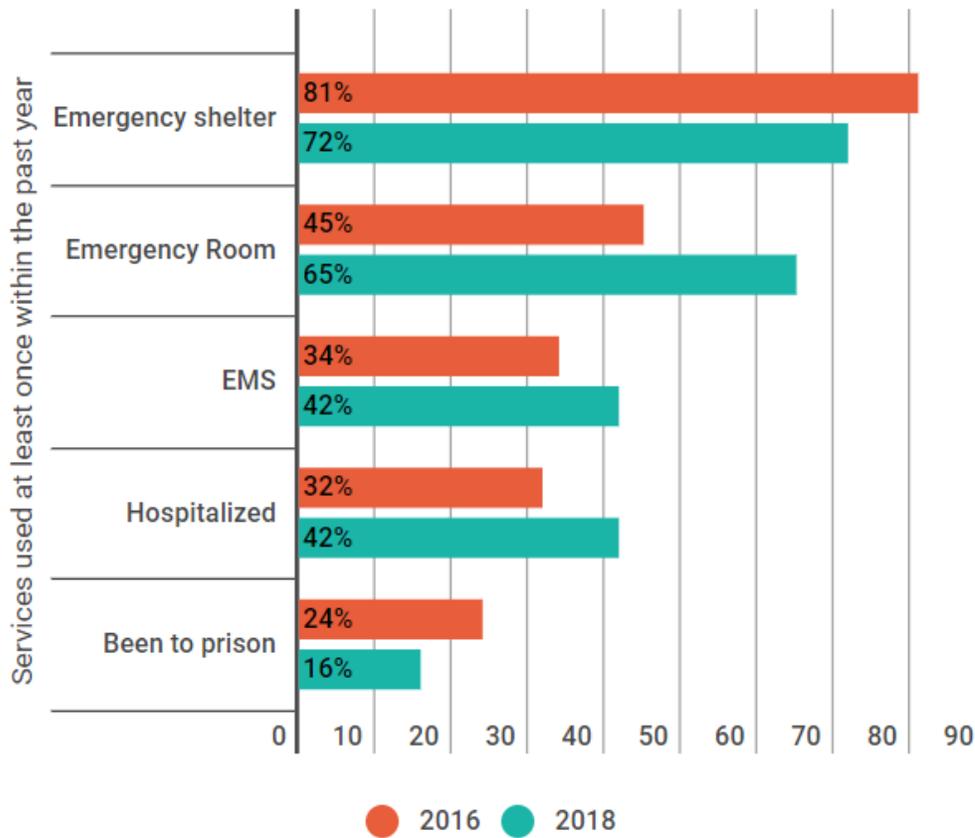
81%

Proportion of respondents who had stayed in an emergency shelter in 2016

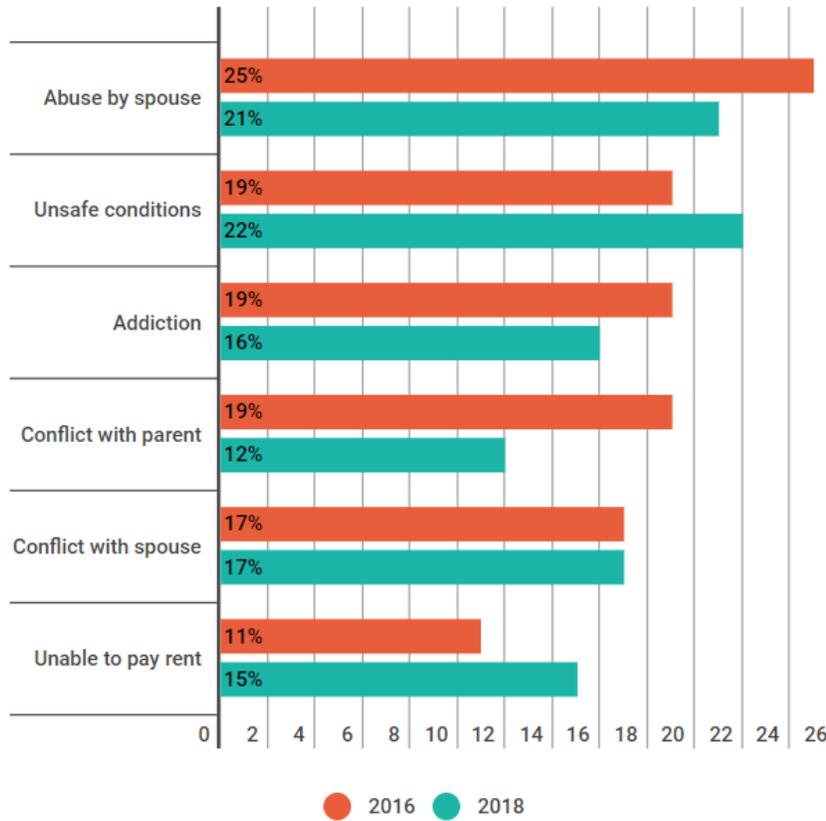


72%

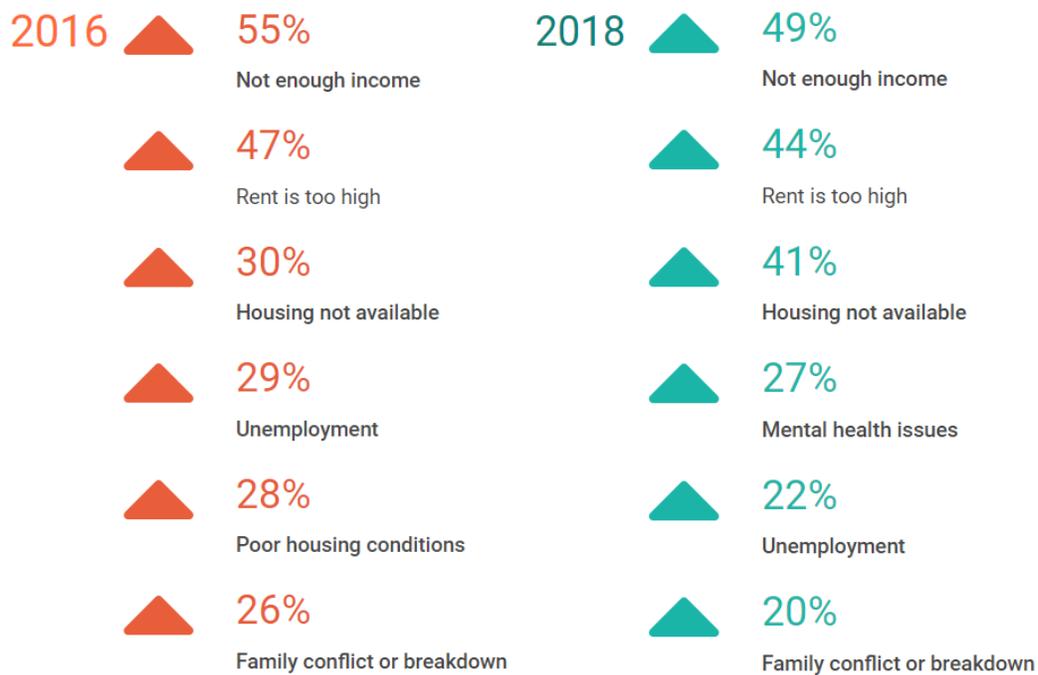
Proportion of respondents who had stayed in an emergency shelter in 2018



## Top six reasons for housing loss



## Top six barriers to permanent housing



## **Conclusion**

The Point in Time Count conducted on April 11, 2018, marks the third community-wide urban PiT Count that has taken place in the city of Kingston. Kingston's results will contribute to the second nationally coordinated PiT Count in order to gain better insight into the realities of homeless populations across Canada. A third nationally coordinated PiT Count is scheduled to take place in 2020 to measure national and community-level progress towards the goal of ending homelessness.

As compared with the results of the 2016 PiT Count, the data collected in 2018 shows some improvements in the state of homelessness in Kingston. There were fewer unsheltered individuals in 2018 than in 2016. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness who are staying at emergency shelters has decreased, while the proportion of people staying in transitional housing has increased. The demand for emergency shelter beds has decreased proportionally with the number of available shelter beds within the system.

There has been an increase in the number of youth counted between 2016 and 2018, but it is important to note that the Kingston Youth Shelter was closed for repairs due to a fire during the time of the 2016 Point in Time Count. Some youth who were homeless may have found alternate arrangements (such as couch surfing) in order to avoid staying at an adult shelter.

The number of people who identify as Indigenous or Aboriginal has increased since the last PiT Count in Kingston. In 2018, 24% of survey respondents identified themselves as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, as compared with 13% in 2013. This overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples is consistent with results from across Canada, and suggest that there is much work to be done in meeting the housing needs of these populations.

The proportions of people who identify as women and who identify as transgender have increased since 2016. In 2018, 55% of people experiencing homelessness were female identified, compared with 50% in 2016. The emergency shelters with the highest occupancy rate on the night of April 11, 2018 were the Elizabeth Fry women's shelter at 100% and Kingston Interval House at 88%. These are the only two women-only shelters in the city. The percentage of people who identified as transgender doubled between 2016 (2%) and 2018 (4%). Transgender and gender non-conforming people are more likely to experience discrimination, both in general and within the shelter system. Emergency shelter beds are almost exclusively segregated by sex, which may pose difficult situations for individuals who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.

The majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in Kingston on April 11, 2018 were sheltered, with a total of 38% staying in emergency shelters and 39% living in transitional housing, compared with 51% staying in emergency shelters and 33% living in transitional housing in 2016. Emergency shelter usage has decreased since the last PiT Count was conducted. In 2018, 72% of respondents had used an emergency shelter within the past year, compared with 81% in 2016. The shelter occupancy rate on the night of the PiT Count has decreased from 71% in 2016 to

60% in 2018. These reductions in shelter usage and occupancy rate are consistent with the objectives of the City of Kingston's 10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan.

The most common barriers to housing have remained consistent between 2016 and 2018. The majority of respondents in both years stated that they do not have enough income and rents are too high for them to afford permanent housing.

Overall, the Point in Time Count conducted on April 11, 2018 was a success, and the results reflect the progressing stages of the implementation of the City of Kingston's 10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan. The data obtained through the PiT Count will be well-utilized by the community in planning, implementing, and monitoring service provision for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness in Kingston.

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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.



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