



United Way
Kingston, Frontenac
Lennox and Addington

Canada

2021

Results of the Urban Kingston
Point-in-Time Count



Acknowledgments

Partners

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

Advisory Committee

- Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy Community Advisory Board
- Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Service Providers

United Way of KFL&A would like to acknowledge this traditional territory's longer existence and its significance for the Indigenous people who lived and continue to live on Turtle Island.

We are situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee land. There are Métis and other non-status First People from many Indigenous Nations present in our community today. This acknowledgement symbolizes the United Way KFL&A's first step of many, along this path toward Indigenous reconciliation, in a respectful manner.

Project Team

- United Way, Kingston Frontenac, Lennox & Addington
- City of Kingston



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Canada 

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Key Findings of the 2021 Urban Kingston Point-in-Time Count

The perspectives of people experiencing hidden homelessness were better captured in 2021 than in the previous 2018 and 2016 counts.

More youth were living in transitional housing (23) than in 2018 (22) and 2016 (17) and more youth were in shelter (19) than in 2018 (13) and 2016 (4).

A smaller percentage of people indicated that they had multiple episodes of homelessness in 2021 (18%) than in 2018 (27%) and 2016 (28%).

Slightly fewer people were unsheltered and sleeping rough on the night of the count in 2021 (8%) compared with 2018 (9%) and 2016 (15%).



Results of the 2021 Urban Kingston Point-in-Time Count

Overview of 2021 Point-in-Time Count

On April 14, 2021, United Way KFLA, through a grant from Employment and Social Development Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy (RH), conducted a coordinated Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Count in urban Kingston as part of the nationally coordinated 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.¹

By comparison, a unique identifier list, or By Name List, is a registry process that collects real-time, person-specific data that tracks monthly inflow and outflow measures of homelessness. This data is much more specific and actionable for homeless individuals than the general, anonymous data collected by the PiT Counts, which is "valuable for policy making and research."²

Individuals enumerated in the PiT Count included those staying in emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing, service hubs, police custody, detox programs, hospitals 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

¹ Employment and Social Development Canada, "Everyone Counts: A Guide to Point-In-Time Counts in Canada"

² Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, "Why real-time data is the foundation for ending homelessness", May 19, 2018

unsheltered count traditionally 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 14, 2021.

Through a grant from ESDC's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy (RH), United Way KFL&A conducted Kingston's fourth PiT homeless count as part of the third nationally coordinated count on the evening of April 14, 2021. The nationally coordinated PiT Count is normally scheduled to take place bi-annually, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities, including Kingston, were unable to conduct the Count in 2020. Most communities opted to postpone their counts until the following spring, in 2021, to capture more comparable results in terms of the time of year, as weather conditions can impact where those experiencing homelessness may be found.

On April 14, 2021, while the COVID-19 pandemic was still present, the Kingston PiT Count was able to proceed through a modified process to ensure the health and safety of our community. Shelter occupancy totals were obtained from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), a city-wide database used by homelessness service providers in KFL&A to track demographics and services accessed by people experiencing homelessness. Surveys were administered at shelters and transitional housing units, data was collected from institutions, and a limited outdoor enumeration and surveys were conducted to obtain demographic and experiential data.

United Way KFLA had a dedicated PiT Count Coordinator who provided support to the planning phase of this initiative and was responsible for the implementation of the 2021 Urban Kingston Point in Time Count. United Way coordinated with frontline service providers within the homelessness services system to conduct both the enumeration and survey components for the count. Staff in 5 emergency shelters, 8 transition houses, 2 service 'hubs', and Street Outreach workers conducted interviews with clients and residents to provide survey data from these individuals on the night of the count.

To conduct the street portion of the count, a street outreach team of frontline staff enumerated and surveyed individuals only in areas they knew that people experiencing homelessness are usually found. A screening tool was used to determine whether individuals were experiencing homelessness and consent was obtained to proceed with conducting the survey. If the person was not homeless, the survey was discontinued, and the interaction was recorded on a tally sheet. If any person declined to participate in the survey, perceived evidence and information that the person was experiencing homelessness (i.e., carrying bag of belongings, sleeping bag, blankets, sleeping on a bench or vehicle, etc.) was recorded as "observed homeless" on a tally sheet.

In the past, the City of Kingston, as Service Manager for the County of Frontenac, has conducted a separate enumeration of people living in rural areas of our community who were currently

homeless or experiencing housing vulnerability to better understand the extent of challenges associated with rural homelessness. These enumerations were conducted in 2016 and 2018, with a separate report developed by the City of Kingston on the findings of the 2018 rural homelessness study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the separate rural homelessness count was not conducted in 2020 or 2021.

Enumeration Highlights

Absolute homelessness refers to those individuals who are unsheltered or “sleeping rough,” and those who are emergency sheltered. 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.³

The Reaching Home Strategy defines transitional housing as:

Housing intended to offer a supportive living environment for its residents, including offering them the experience, tools, knowledge and opportunities for social and skill development to become independent. It is considered an intermediate step between emergency shelter and supportive housing, and has limits on how long an individual or family can stay. Stays are typically between 3 months and 3 years.⁴

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.”⁵



134

Number of people experiencing absolute homelessness found in Kingston in 2021, as compared to 81 in 2018.



207

Total number of people encountered who were homeless in Kingston in 2021, as compared to 152 in 2018.

³Employment and Social Development Canada, “Shelter Capacity Report 2015”

⁴ Employment and Social Development Canada, “Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy Directives”

⁵ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, “Canadian Definition of Homelessness”

On the night of April 14, 2021, 134 people were found to be absolutely homeless. These individuals were staying in an emergency or overflow shelter, domestic violence shelter, an institution, service hub or in public spaces on the night of the count. Also included are people that were either unknown by the enumerator where they would be staying the night of the count, or respondents were unsure of where they were staying or declined to answer.

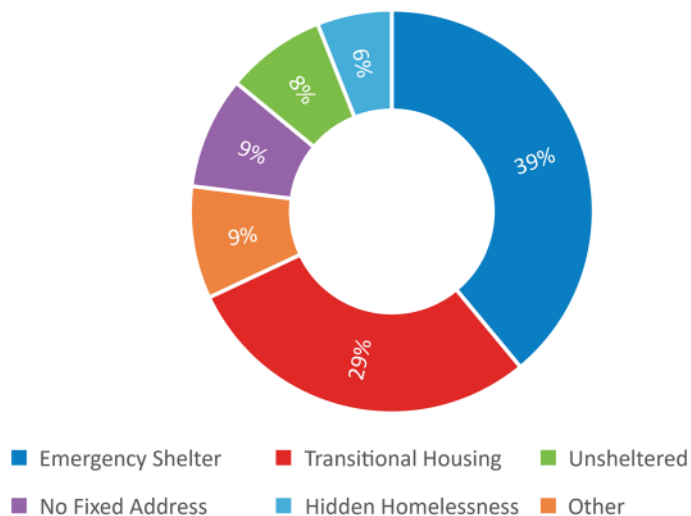
An additional 60 individuals were staying in transitional housing, including 5 children.

A total of 13 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.

A total of 207 people encountered on the evening of April 14, 2021 were experiencing homelessness. Of these, 67% were adults, 26% were youth ages 16-24 and 7% were children. 52% were identified as male, 40% as female, and 3% identified as transgender or non-binary/gender non-conforming. 5% are listed as gender unidentified.

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" may not all be captured.

Where were they found?



Survey Highlights

Of the 207 people counted on the night of April 14, 2021, meeting the criteria of the Canadian definition of homelessness, **176** individuals agreed to participate in brief surveys in order to capture demographic and experiential data.

The statistics that follow represent those 176 people who were surveyed.

40% identify as women

Kingston has a high rate of female homelessness than other Canadian cities. Female homelessness in Canada was 36% based on the 2018 National PiT Count.

4% identify as transgender or non-binary/genderqueer

A large proportion were youth aged 16-24.

31% identify as Indigenous

In Kingston, people who are indigenous make up approximately 3.4% of the city's population.

75% are sheltered

37% were found in emergency or domestic violence shelters, 29% were living in transitional housing, 3% were staying at a motel/hotel, and 6% were couch surfing.

270 days

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

230 days

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

37 years old

The average age of people experiencing homelessness

58% are chronically homeless

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

18% are episodically homeless

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

80% receive income assistance

Provincial Disability or Social Assistance benefits are the main sources of income for people experiencing homelessness.

53% say they don't have enough income to afford housing

53% say rents are too high to be affordable; 31% say housing is not available.

9 families

9 families were found homeless, including 16 children.

Population	Percent
Male	51%
Female	40%
Transgender	3%
Indigenous Identity	31%
Chronically Homeless	58%
Episodically homeless	18%
Children (0-15)	7%
Youth (16-24)	26%
Adults (25-64)	65%
Seniors (65+)	4%

Housing and Homelessness in Kingston

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.⁶

As of December 31, 2018, there were 1317 households on the City’s Social Housing centralized waitlist and 149 households were housed from the waitlist throughout 2018.⁷ The waitlist reached a high of 1344 in December of 2019, but dropped to its lowest number in several years, to 1109 in 2020, due to new program options being added to the Social Housing portfolio.⁸

Year	# of households on waitlist	# of applicants housed from waitlist
2020	1109	150
2019	1344	176
2018	1317	149
2017	1303	185
2016	1115	168



1109

Number of households on the social housing waiting list as of December 31, 2020.



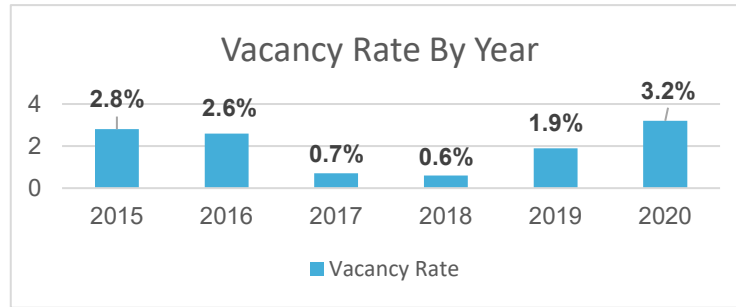
150

Number of households housed from the social housing waitlist in 2020.

⁶ City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “10-Year Municipal Housing & Homelessness Plan”

⁷ City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “City of Kingston & County of Frontenac 2018 Housing & Homelessness Report”

⁸ City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Report 2020”, 36.



While a healthy vacancy rate is 3%, Kingston’s vacancy rate has fluctuated over the last several years. 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%. It dropped again in 2018, to 0.6%. In 2019 we saw the vacancy rate increase to 1.9%, and again in 2020 to 3.2%; however, this was not followed by a decrease in rental prices.⁹

The average market rent in Kingston in 2017 and 2018 was higher than the average for communities of similar size and rental rates are disproportionate to the housing allowances for social assistance.¹⁰ By early 2020, the average monthly rent had increased to around \$1,101 then up to \$1,145 by year’s end.¹¹

Year	Avg monthly rent for 1bdm apartment	Max shelter allowance for a couple on Ontario Works (OW)	Max shelter allowance for a couple on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
2020	\$1,145	\$642	\$781
2019	\$1,101	\$642	\$781
2018	\$1,008	\$642	\$781
2017	\$975	\$632	\$769
2016	\$942	\$609	\$753
2015	\$921	\$602	\$753

There have also been changes to the shelter system since 2018. 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. The Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston’s 8-bed shelter for women closed in May 2018.

⁹ Alexandra Mzur, Global News, “Kingston’s Vacancy rate jumps to 1.9 percent but rents continue to skyrocket: CMHC.” 2020; City of Kingston, “Kingston’s vacancy rate increases to 3.2 per cent.”

¹⁰ City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “City of Kingston & County of Frontenac 2017 Housing & Homelessness Report”; “City of Kingston & County of Frontenac 2018 Housing & Homelessness Report”

¹¹ City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, “City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Report 2020”, 41.

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 are co-located at In From the Cold, Home Base Housing's co-ed adult emergency shelter, with renovations completed to provide a segregated women-only space for these clients. These beds became operational on May 1, 2018.

At the time of the Point in Time Count, the number of emergency shelter beds in Kingston was 67, down from 96 in 2018. Overall shelter capacity was down to 71% of the pre-COVID capacity of 94 beds. An additional 6-bed Overflow shelter, operated by the Kingston Youth Shelter at their Brock Street location, was opened in December 2020 to address the reduction of beds at the adult shelter. The Kingston Youth Shelter relocated during the pandemic to a building that could accommodate social distancing and they also increased their capacity to take in high acuity youth.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase in need of the communities most vulnerable, and the awareness of gaps in services, the Integrated Care Hub (ICH) was opened. The Hub is a full-service hub for vulnerable populations, primarily for those experiencing homelessness. This site offers a meal program, counselling, crisis support, overnight spaces, a safe consumption site and access to a registered nurse and some healthcare services. It also offers opportunities to connect to housing services with other community partners. The ICH is operated by HIV/AIDS Regional Services (HARS) Kingston and Street Health and is funded by the City of Kingston and United Way KFLA.

The Street Outreach program at Home Base Housing was expanded during the pandemic to cover 7 days a week with multiple partners.

In 2020, the City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department and the Housing and Homeless system worked to implement the By-Name List, a unique-identifier list which gathers real time data on those experiencing homelessness in Kingston. This Built For Zero Canada initiative serves to "better support individuals and understand the system of care".¹² The community met the criteria for Quality By-Name List status in 2020 and will utilize this data to identify and address gaps and challenges in service delivery, as well as highlight what the system is doing well.

¹² City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Department, "City of Kingston Housing and Social Services Report 2020."

Methods

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

1. Obtaining shelter occupancy totals from the City of Kingston's Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), a city-wide database used by homelessness service providers in KFL&A to track demographics and services accessed by people experiencing homelessness.
2. Engaging with the Street Outreach Team through Home Base Housing, to identify specific "hot spots" such as camp sites, abandoned buildings, and forested areas where homeless individuals are known to be, and enumerate and survey individuals in these areas as the team is familiar with those who are often found there.
3. Working with staff at shelters, transitional housing programs, and service hubs to enumerate and survey individuals staying at these locations.
4. Gathering counts from institutions such as hospitals, detox, police regarding individuals with no fixed address.

During the planning stages, the PiT Count Coordinator worked to engage the local community and the homelessness services sector. The United Way Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy (RH) Community Advisory Board (CAB) acted as the oversight committee.

The Coordinator worked with frontline agency staff to develop the survey, identify the sheltered and unsheltered count locations and logistics for agencies and institutions to conduct the Count. Following the Count, the Coordinator oversaw data cleaning, data entry into HIFIS, and the analysis of results.

The PiT Count survey included 15 core questions recommended by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH), as well as several of the sub-set questions from the same source. 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 to engage them in the PiT Count process. As a result, many frontline staff agreed to take part in the PiT Count. This facilitated the implementation of the plan, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in keeping our local Public Health guidelines and restrictions, community volunteers were not asked to participate in the 2021 PiT Count, as they have in previous years. For the street count portion of the count, we relied on Home Base Housing's Street Outreach team, who have experience with the homeless population and having knowledge of where those experiencing homelessness can be found, particularly those that are unsheltered or 'sleeping rough'.

Each surveyor was given a tally sheet on which they listed their name and indicated the location for which they were responsible. Surveys were numbered so that they could be matched with the corresponding surveyor 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).

Of the 207 people counted, 176 (aged 16 and over) consented to participate in the survey. Respondents could end their participation at any time or could opt out of any question(s) in the survey. The demographic and experiential results in this report reflect the data collected through the 176 survey respondents. Individuals who elected to participate in the survey were offered an honorarium consisting of a dry bag that contained a grocery gift card.

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.¹³

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 207 people who were homeless and an additional 60 people living in time-limited transitional housing on the night of April 14, 2021.

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. As previously mentioned, the outdoor/street portion of the count was reduced in terms of the number of people conducting the enumeration and surveys due to the inability to onboard community volunteers to the process.

Though weather can often impact the count in terms of who may be found outdoors, on the night of the 2021 count, April 14th, the weather was moderate spring temperatures.

¹³ Employment and Social Development Canada, “Guide to Point-In-Time Counts in Canada of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy”

2021 Point-in-Time Results

Homeless Populations

207 homeless individuals were encountered during the Point in Time Count process, including children under 16. 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, staying in a motel, or in a treatment facility with no permanent residence to return to.

2021	Adults	Youth	Accompanied Children	Total	% of Total
Emergency Shelter	54	19	7	80	39%
Transitional Housing	32	23	5	60	29%
No Fixed Address	14	2	2	18	9%
Unsheltered	15	2	0	17	8%
Motel	0	2	2	4	2%
Couch surfing	5	4	0	9	4%
Unknown	18	1	0	19	9%
Total	138	53	16	207	100%
% of Total	67%	26%	7%	100%	

Absolute Homelessness

A total of 134 people were found to be absolutely homeless on April 14, 2021, with an additional 60 living in transitional housing and 13 staying at a motel or at a friend's place. Of the 134 people, 80 or **60%** were sheltered, meaning that they slept in an emergency shelter or a domestic violence shelter on the night of the count. 18 additional people (**13%**) were found in a hospital, detox or treatment centre, or isolation motel on the night of the count, and stated that they had No Fixed Address (NFA). 17 people, or **13%**, were unsheltered, meaning that they were found in parks, on the streets, encampments, or in other public spaces. 19 people encountered (**14%**) are counted in absolute homelessness as staying in an unknown overnight location.

2021	Adults	Youth	Accompanied Children	Total	% of Total
Sheltered	54	19	7	80	60%
Unsheltered	15	2	0	17	13%
No Fixed Address	14	2	2	18	13%
Unknown	18	1	0	19	14%
Total	101	24	9	134	100%
% of Total	75%	18%	7%	100%	

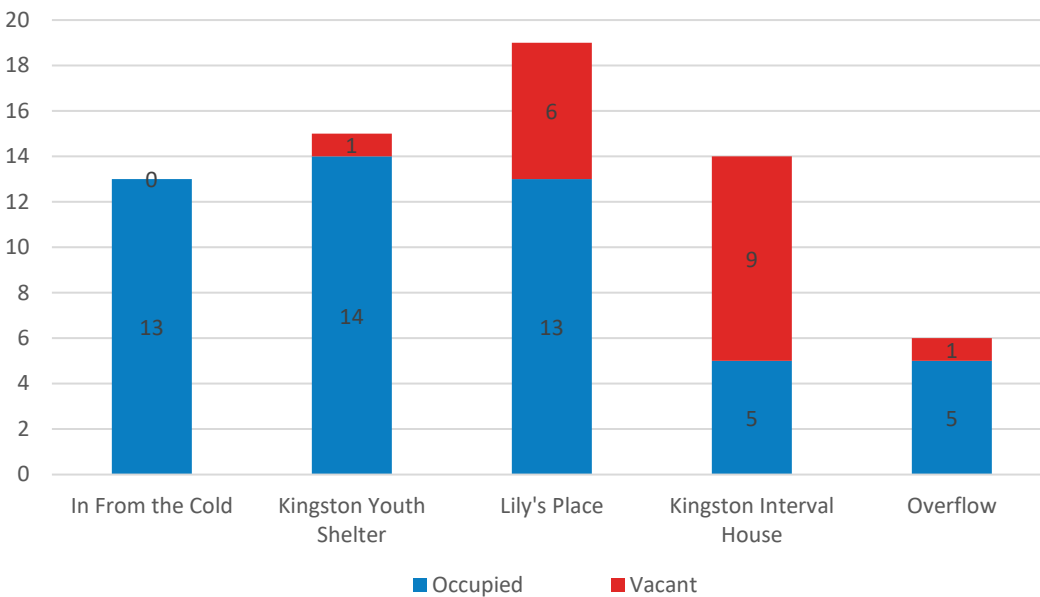
Precarious Housing

60 of the 207 people encountered on April 14, 2021 were living in transitional housing. An additional 4 were staying in a motel, and 9 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.

2021	Adults	Youth	Accompanied Children	Total	% of Total
Transitional Housing	32	23	5	60	82%
Motel	0	2	2	4	6%
Couch surfing	5	4	0	9	12%
Total	37	29	7	73	100%
% of Total	51%	40%	9%	100%	

Shelter Occupancy

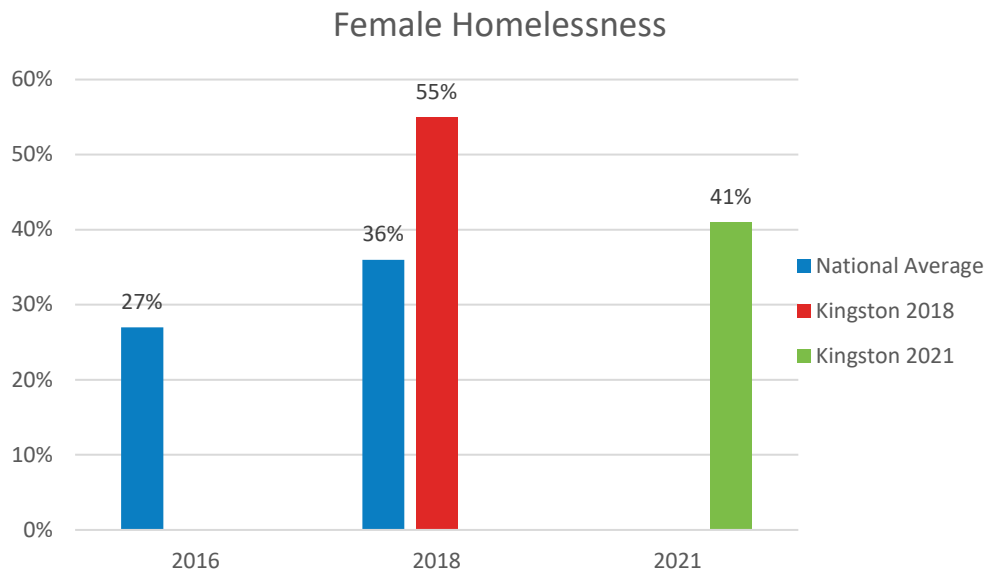
On the night of April 14, 2021, the overall shelter capacity was at **75%**. The In from the Cold emergency was operating at 100% capacity (only 37% of its usual capacity of 35 beds), the Kingston Youth Shelter was at 93% capacity, the family shelter was at 68% capacity and the overflow shelter was at 83% capacity the night of the count. Shelter capacity and usage has been considerably impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the guidelines around social distancing and screening. Beyond this, there can often be a variety of other factors that can affect shelter occupancy.



Survey Demographics

Gender

On the night of April 14th, **41%** of people experiencing homelessness in Kingston were women. If dependent children are excluded, the percentage of adult and independent youth who identify as women is **39%**. This is a decrease from the 2018 results, though still atypical to the national rate of the proportion of women experiencing homelessness. However, the national average of female homelessness does appear to be trending upwards.



Of the 176 surveys conducted, 73 or **41%** of the respondents were women. The 176 survey respondents reported a total of 16 accompanied children. There is an additional 5 females when accompanied children are included in the demographics. Of the 73 adults and independent youth who were women, the average length of time spent homeless within the past year was 6.5 months. 60% 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 34.5 years.

3% of adult / independent youth survey respondents identified as transgender. Of these, 60% were trans women. **1%** of respondents identified as non-binary. People who identify as transgender disproportionately experience violence and discrimination when compared with the cisgender population.¹⁴ Of those that identified as transgender or non-binary, 83% were youth aged 16-24.

¹⁴ 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 33 years. Excluding accompanied children, the average age is 37. The most common age range was 25-64. The majority of people encountered were adults (**69%**).



69

Age of the oldest person who was homeless



33

Average age



3 months

Age of the youngest person who was homeless



7%

were children



24%

youth aged 16-24



69%

were adults 25+

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. **23%** indicated that they were First Nations (14%), or Métis (9%). A further **8%** said that they had Indigenous 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 if they identified with any of the listed racialized identities. Respondents were asked to indicate all identities that apply. Of the 176 surveyed, **34%** did not answer this question, **3%** said they don’t know and **3%** identified as Indigenous only. Of those that answered yes, the majority (**92%**) of respondents identified themselves as white. **4%** identified as Black, **2%** identified as Latin American, **2%** identified as Asian.

Immigrant and Refugee Status

Respondents were asked if they had come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant. **5%** of respondents indicated they were immigrants, and **2%** indicated they had refugee or refugee claimant status.

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, **1%** in French, **3%** were most comfortable expressing themselves in a language other than English or French, and **7%** did not provide an answer.

Sexual Orientation

As a part of the PiT Count survey, individuals experiencing homelessness were asked how they self-identify regarding sexual orientation. **15%** of survey respondents indicated that they identify as LGBQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual), **73%** identify as straight / heterosexual, and **10%** did not provide an answer to the question.

Of the individuals who identified themselves as LGBQ+, **38%** were independent youth. 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.¹⁵ Preliminary research is also being conducted that suggests that adults who are LGBQ+ also disproportionately experience homelessness.¹⁶ 14% of adult respondents identified as LGBQ+. 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 26 years, while the average age that LGBQ+ individuals first became homeless was 19 years.

Veteran Status

A total of 6 (**4%**) respondents indicated that they were veterans who had served in the Canadian Armed Forces and 1 indicated they had service in the military and 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. However, in both Canada and the United States, veterans are known to be at higher risk of homelessness than the general population.

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 and was once again asked on the 2021 survey. **25%** of participants indicated that they had been in foster care or a group home as a child. The median length of time between the respondents leaving foster care and becoming homeless was 120 days.

¹⁵ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, "Where am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S."

¹⁶ Dr. John Ecker, "A Review of the Literature on LGBTQ Adults Who Experience Homelessness"

36% of those who had been in foster care were youth on the night of April 14, 2021. Of the youth (ages 16-24) who completed surveys, **35%** had been in foster care. Across Canada, about 43% of homeless youth have been in foster care or group homes.¹⁷ 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 2021, as in previous years, the survey included additional local questions that asked respondents about their physical and mental health. A large portion of respondents that identified as having any of the listed health challenges indicated at least 2 or more.

38% indicated that they had an illness or medical condition (e.g diabetes, arthritis), and **27%** indicated that they had a physical limitation. **34%** indicated that they had learning or cognitive limitations, which could include dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder or ADHD, while 20% indicated an acquired brain injury (46% of those were women).

46% of respondents self-identified as having a substance use issue. **65%** of survey respondents self-identified as having mental health issues, a disproportionate percentage compared with the general population in Kingston. 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).¹⁸

¹⁷ Stephen A. Gaetz, "Coming of Age: Reimagining the Response to Youth Homelessness in Canada"

¹⁸ Laura Munn-Rivard, "Current Issues in Mental Health in Canada: Homelessness and Access to Housing"

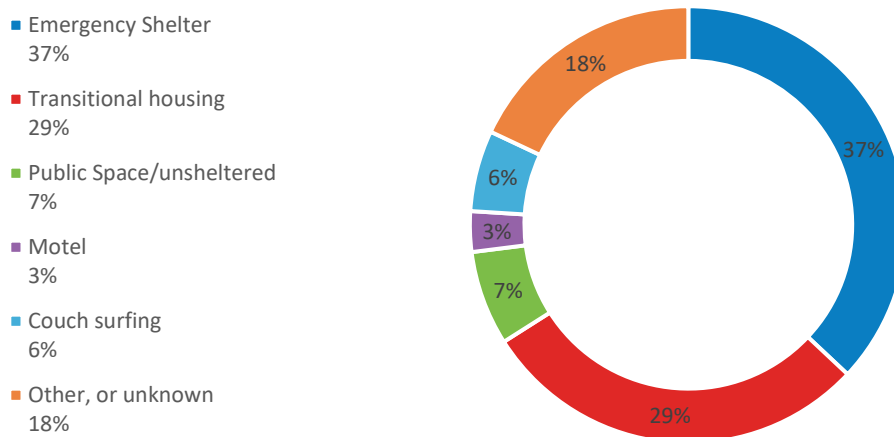
Experiential Survey Data

Sleeping Arrangements

The 2021 PiT Count found that the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in Kingston are sheltered. Of the 176 people who completed surveys, the majority indicated that they were sleeping in an emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter, or in transitional housing on the night of April 14, 2021. **37%** of respondents indicated that they would be sleeping in an emergency or domestic violence shelter, and **29%** were staying in transitional housing.

7% of those surveyed were staying in a public space; 4% reported that they would be sleeping in a public space unsheltered, and 3% were sleeping in encampments. 12% indicated that they would be sheltered in some capacity, but with no fixed address (e.g. motel, with a friend, treatment centre or safe bed).

Where are you sleeping tonight?

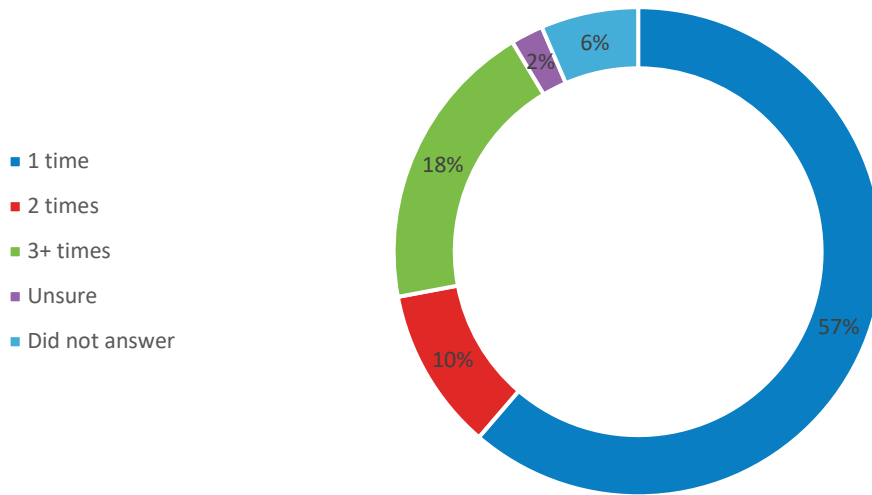


Duration of Homelessness

Kingston's 2021 PiT Count found that **58%** of survey respondents had been homeless for 6 months or longer, with the largest portion of that reporting they'd been homeless for a year. **20%** had been homeless for 0-2 months, and **10%** had been homeless for 3-5 months. **2%** did not know how long they had been homeless, and **6%** did not provide an answer. The average length of time respondents had spent homeless in the past year was 230 days.



57% of survey respondents reported that they had been homeless only once within the past year. **10%** said they had been homeless twice, and **18%** said they had been homeless three or more times. **2%** did not know how many times they had been homeless, and **6%** did not provide an answer. **12%** 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. **53%** of those surveyed said they were under 25 the first time they were homeless.



7 years
Lowest age first homeless



69 years
Highest age first homeless

53% Were under the age of 25 the first time they experienced homelessness.

28% Were between the age of 25 and 55 the first time they experienced homelessness.

8% Were over the age of 55 the first time they experience homelessness.

The City of Kingston’s 10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan hopes to address chronic homelessness. In January of 2015, the City of Kingston 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.

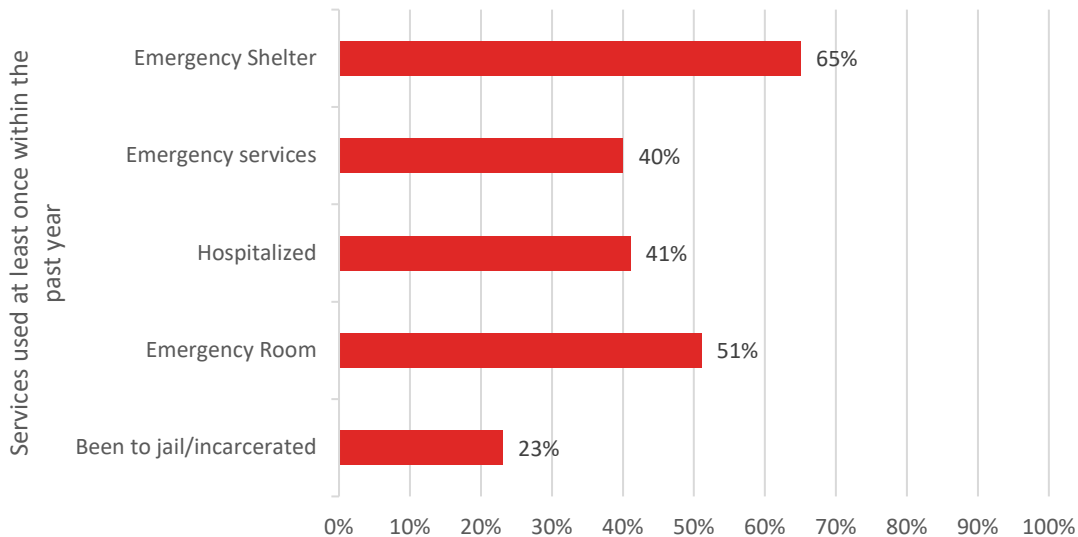
Service Usage

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, **65%** of those surveyed had stayed in an emergency shelter at least once. **51%** had been to the Emergency Room, with 38% of those having gone 2 or more times and **41%** had been hospitalized.



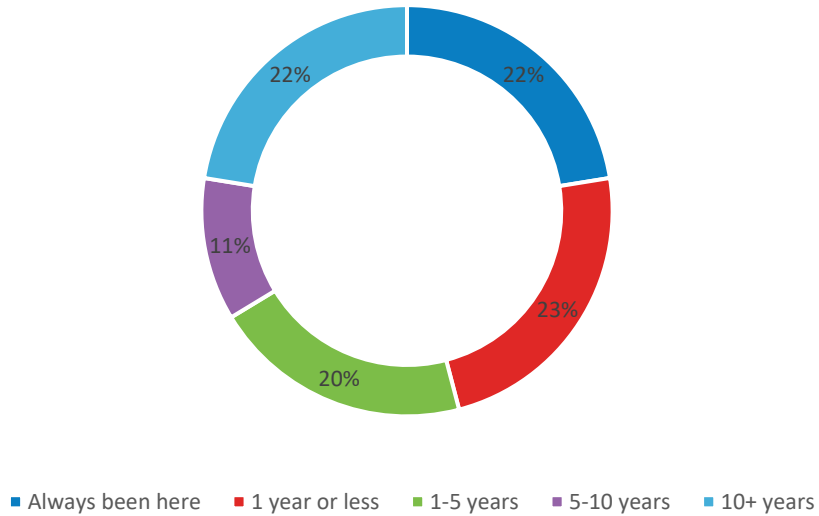
65%

of respondents have stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year.



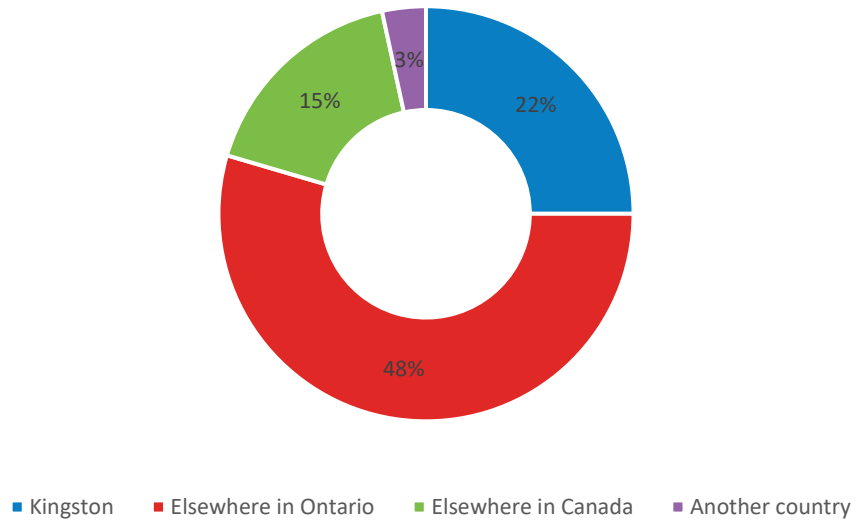
Geography

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. **22%** of respondents had lived in Kingston for the entirety of their lives.



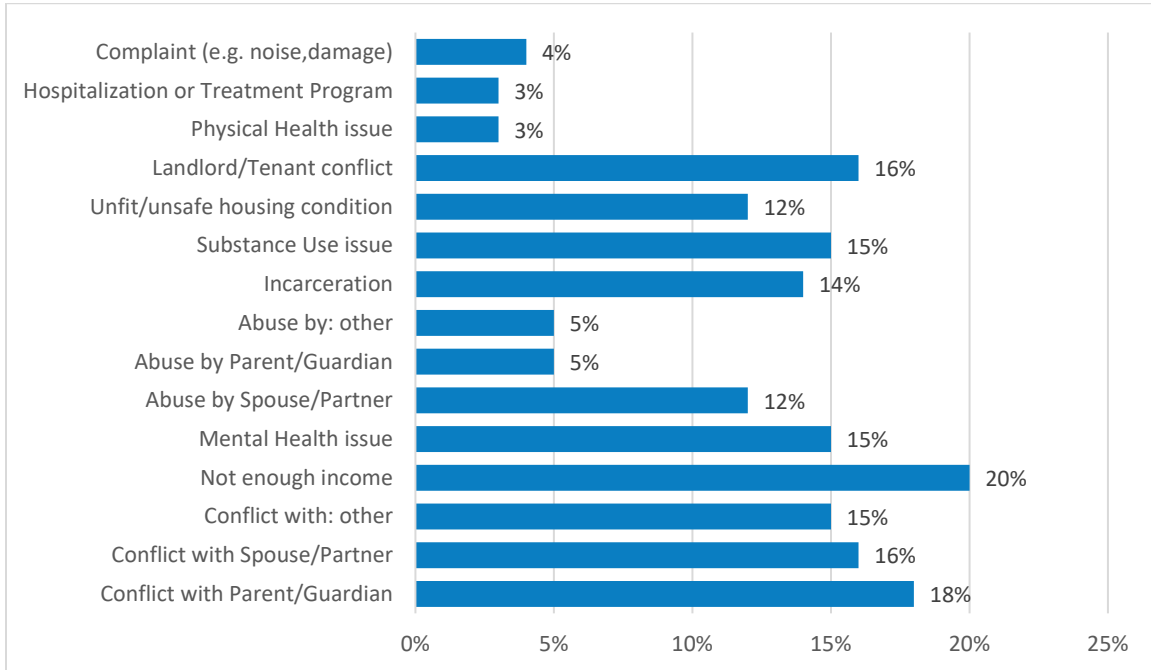
If respondents indicated that they had not always lived in Kingston, they were asked where they moved from.

Where are you from?



Reasons for Housing Loss

The most common reasons that survey respondents said they became homeless were the following: not enough income for housing (**20%**), family conflict (**34%** - 18% conflict with parent/guardian, 16% conflict with spouse/partner), abuse (**22%** - 12% by spouse/partner, 5 % by parent/guardian, 5% other), landlord/tenant conflict (**16%**), mental health issue, and substance use (each **15%**). Some respondents may have indicated more than one reason for their housing loss.



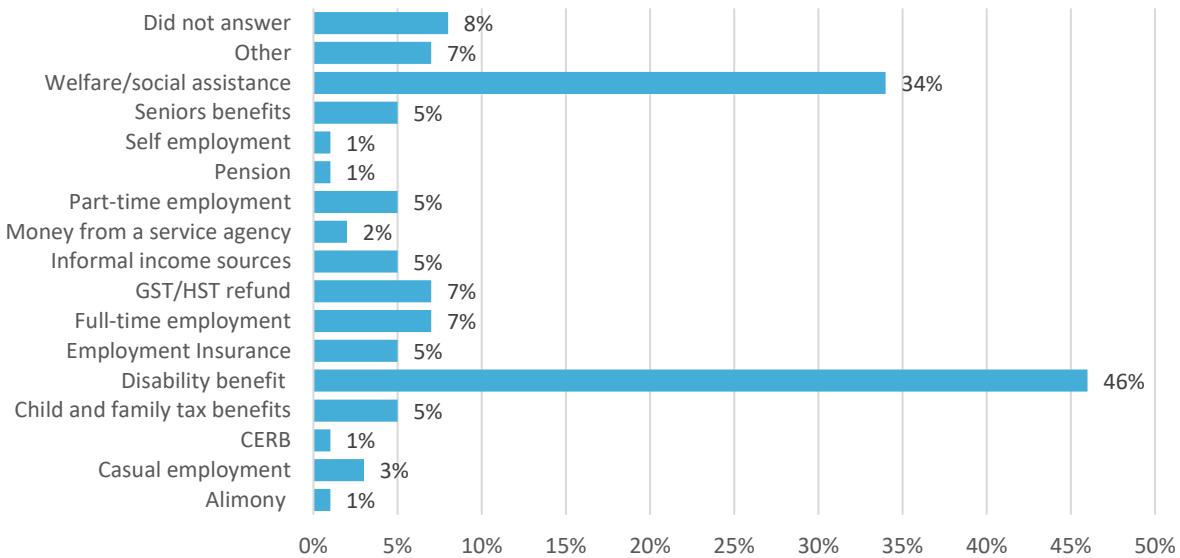
In a separate question, only **6%** of respondents indicated that their most recently housing loss was related to the *COVID-19 pandemic*.

When accounting for gender, or more specifically female homelessness, reporting conflict with or abuse by a partner/spouse as the reason for housing loss is higher for woman than for men. Of the respondents that reported conflict with a partner/spouse, women make up **56%**; for abuse by a partner/spouse women were **83%** of respondents. 20% of women reported that the reason for their housing loss was conflict with a spouse/partner and 22% reported it was due to experiencing abuse by a spouse/partner; this is a higher rate than the overall results, at 16% and 12%. Women were 42% of respondents that indicated unfit/unsafe housing condition as a reason for housing loss. As with the overall results, women often indicated more than one reason for their loss of housing.

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.

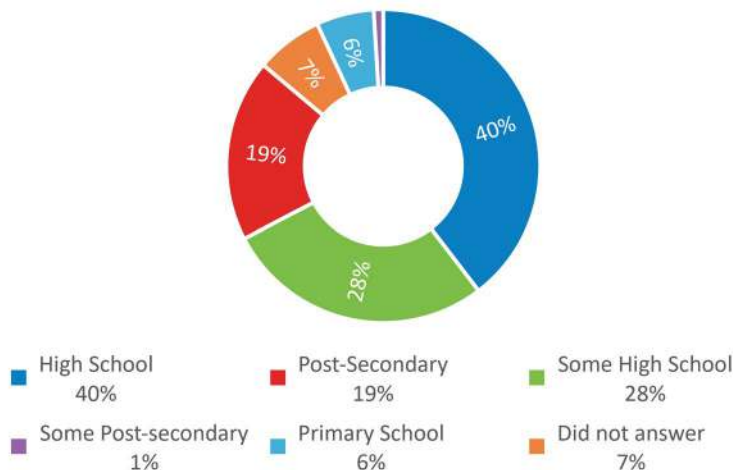
80% of survey respondents that provided a source of income reported that they rely on these programs, with **34%** receiving support from provincial welfare/social assistance programs and **46%** from disability benefits. **6%** said they had no sources of income whatsoever. **16%** said they obtain money through formal employment. It is important to note that some respondents indicated more than one source of income, as represented in the below data.



Level of Education

Of the 176 survey respondents, **40%** had completed high school and **20%** had taken at least some post-secondary schooling.

Education Level Completed



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; only 1% reported that they did not have any barriers to housing. The most common responses were overwhelmingly that they did not have enough income and that rents were too high for them to afford.

53% of respondents reported that they were homeless because they did not have enough income to afford rent, and **53%** because rents were too high to be affordable. Further, **31%** indicated that housing was not available and **19%** said housing options were undesirable or not suitable. There are a number of factors that could have contributed to these results.

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.



Not enough income

53% said they do not have enough income to afford permanent housing



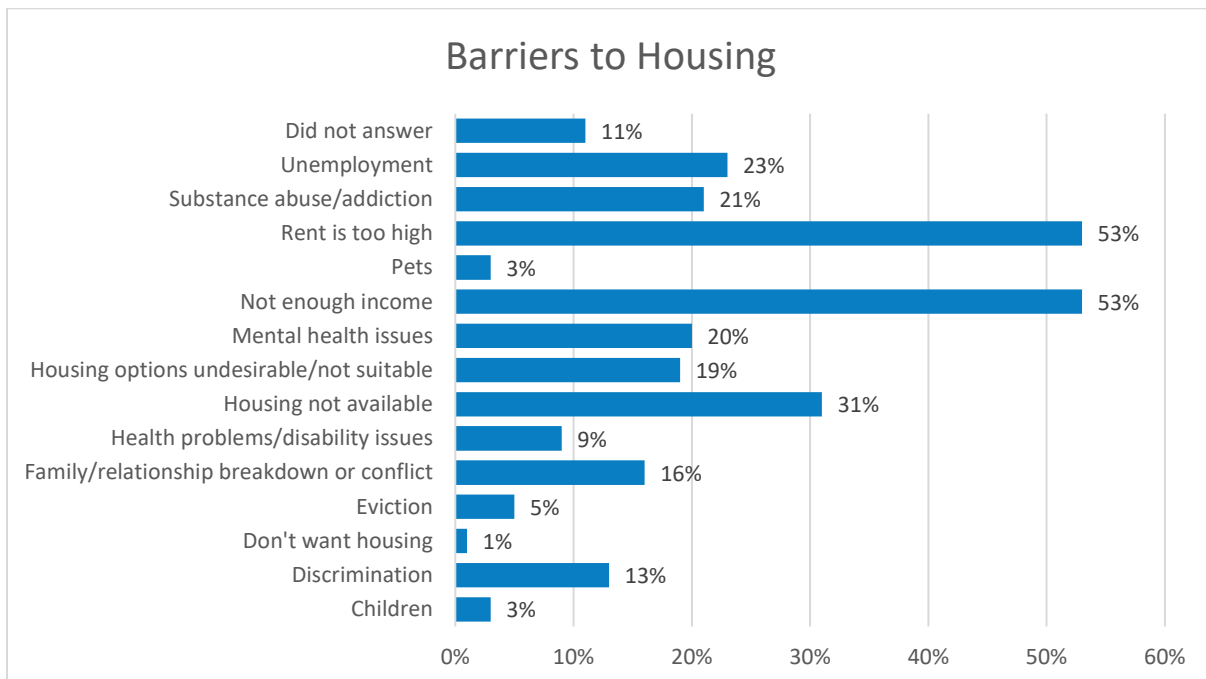
Rents are too high

53% identified the cost of rent as a barrier to housing




Housing not available


31% said that permanent housing options are not available in Kingston




Youth-Specific Data and Demographics

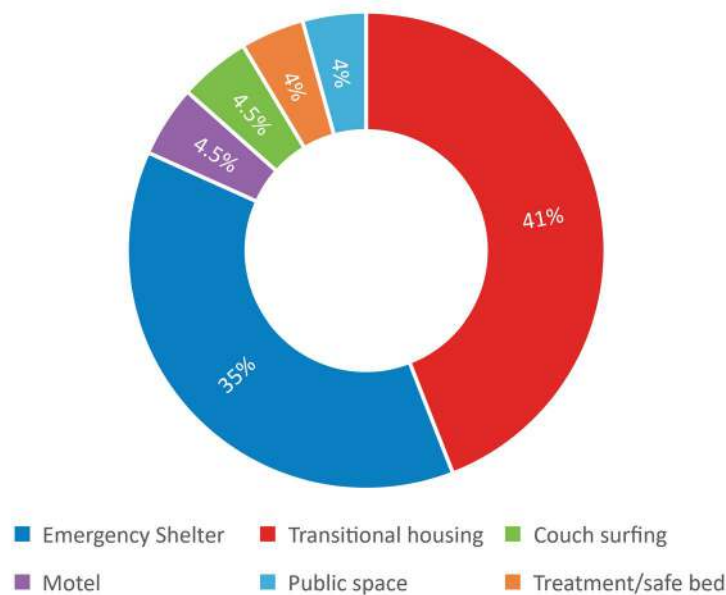
We know that youth have a unique experience of homelessness, and that their needs are not always met within adult systems. The following survey findings reflect the experiences and demographics of young people between the ages of 16-24 who are homeless.

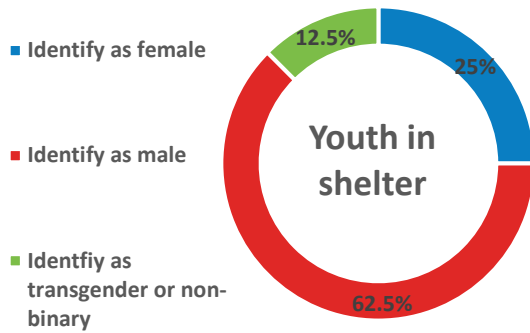
 **37%**
of surveyed youth identified as female

 **52%**
of surveyed youth identified as male

 **11%** of surveyed youth identified as transgender
or non-binary/genderqueer

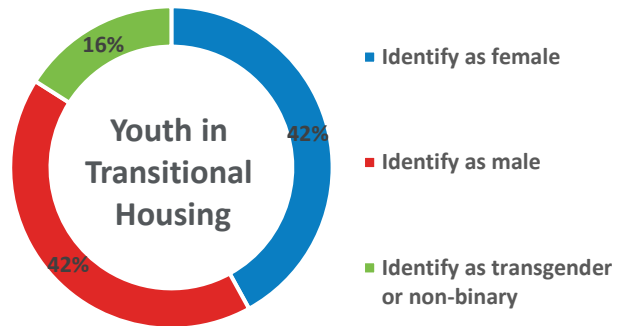
The majority of youth surveyed on the night of April 14, 2021 were sheltered. **34-35%** were staying in an emergency or domestic violence shelter, **41%** were staying in transitional housing, **8-9%** were couch surfing or staying in a motel, **4%** were sleeping in a public space (unsheltered) or in an encampment.





Of the surveyed youth who were staying in an emergency shelter or domestic violence shelter on the night of the count, **25%** identify as female, **62.5%** identify as male, and **12.5%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.

Of the surveyed youth who were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count, **42%** identify as female, **42%** identify as male, and **16%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.

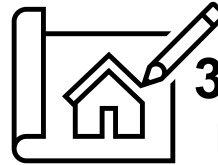


4% of surveyed youth were couch surfing on the night of April 14, 2021
 Of these, **50%** identify as female
50% identify as male

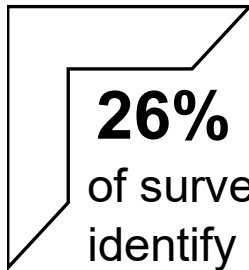
4% of surveyed youth were sleeping in a public space on the night of April 14, 2021
 Of these, **100%** identify as male



Of surveyed youth identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer



35% of surveyed youth have been in foster care or a group home

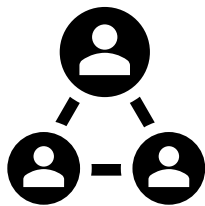


of surveyed youth identify as Indigenous (First Nations or Métis)

Of the surveyed youth who are Indigenous:

- **25%** identify as female
- **58%** identify as male
- **17%** identify as transgender or gender non-conforming

An additional **11%** of surveyed youth have indigenous ancestry.



10%

Of surveyed youth are family heads

(20)

the average age of surveyed youth

15

the average age surveyed youth became homeless



52%

of surveyed youth had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year compared with 74% of surveyed adults

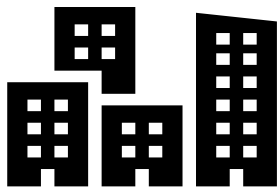


218 days
(7 mos)

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



28%



Of surveyed youth are from Kingston



52% of surveyed youth came to Kingston from elsewhere in Ontario



83% of surveyed youth self-identified as having mental health challenges

Of these, 42% identify as male, 42% as female and 13% as transgender or non-binary



52% of surveyed youth self-identified as having a substance use issue



17% of surveyed youth self-identified as having an illness or medical condition

2018-2021 Comparative Data

The following charts and graphics provide a comparison between the data collected in Kingston in 2018 and 2021 as a part of the second and third nationally coordinated PIT Counts.

Absolute Homelessness in Kingston



81

people experiencing absolute homelessness found in 2018



134

people experiencing absolute homelessness found in 2021

Homelessness in Kingston



152

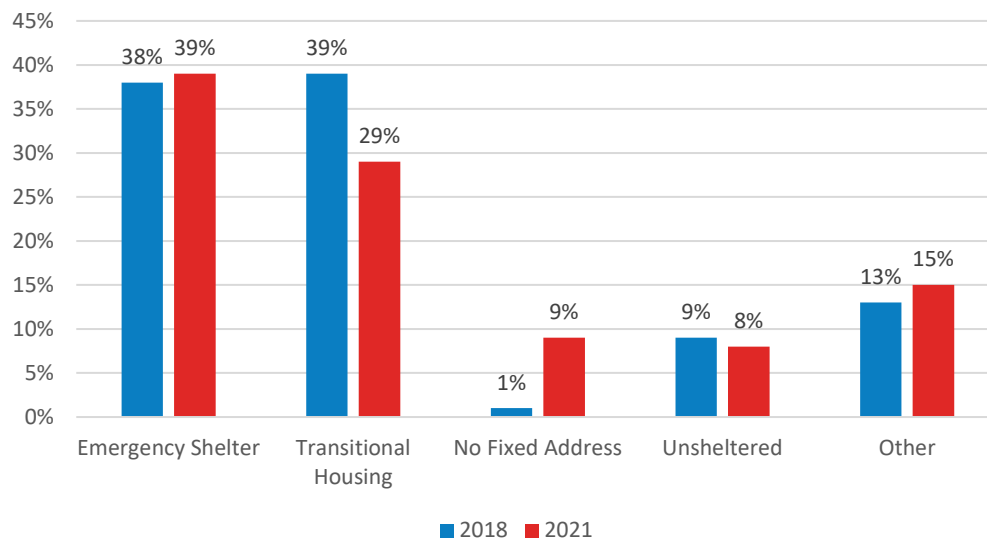
people encountered who were homeless in 2018



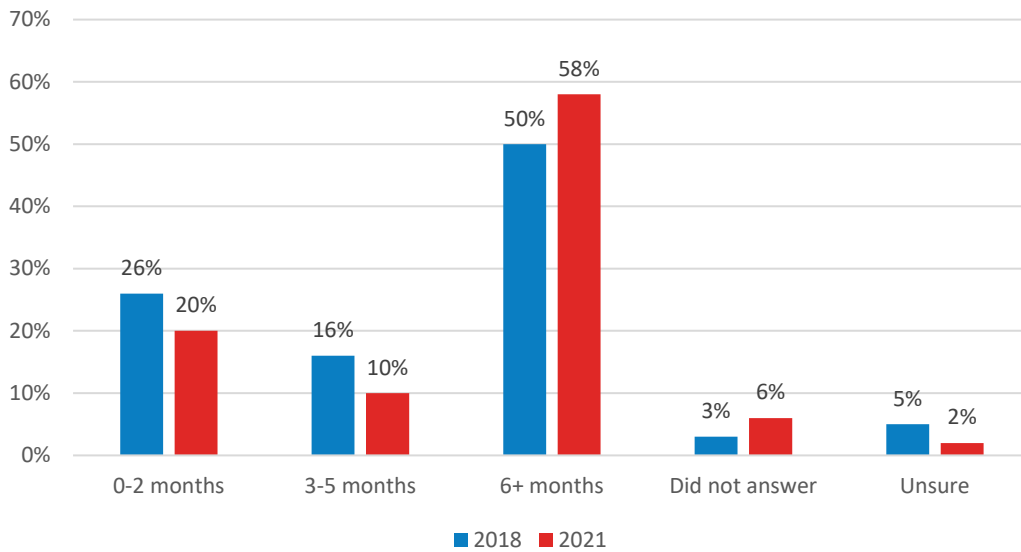
207

people encountered who were homeless in 2021

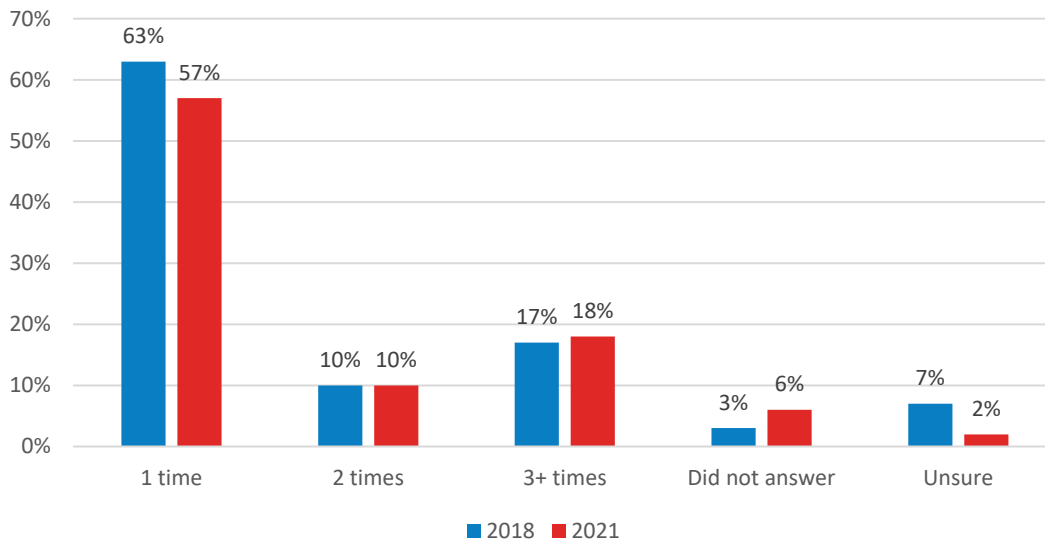
Where they were staying



Duration of Homelessness within the past 12 months



Number of Times Homeless in the past 12 months



Shelter Occupancy



60%

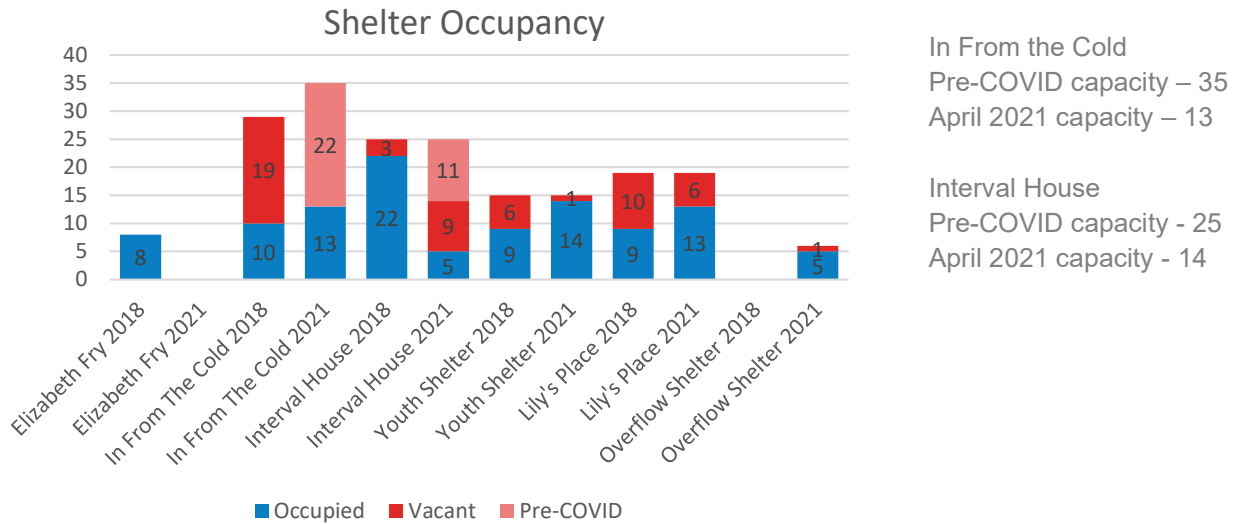
Shelters were at 60% occupancy on April 11, 2018
Of 96 available beds, 58 were utilized.



75%

Shelters were at 75% occupancy on April 14, 2021
Of 67 available beds, a reduction from 94 pre-COVID, 50 were utilized.

Results of the Urban Kingston 2021 Point-in-Time Count



Elizabeth Fry closed their 8-bed shelter for women in May 2018. 6 additional beds were added at In From the Cold Emergency Shelter to offset that reduction. In From The Cold & Kingston Interval House had lowered capacity in 2020/2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic social distancing guidelines. The Overflow Shelter was opened in December 2020.

Service Usage



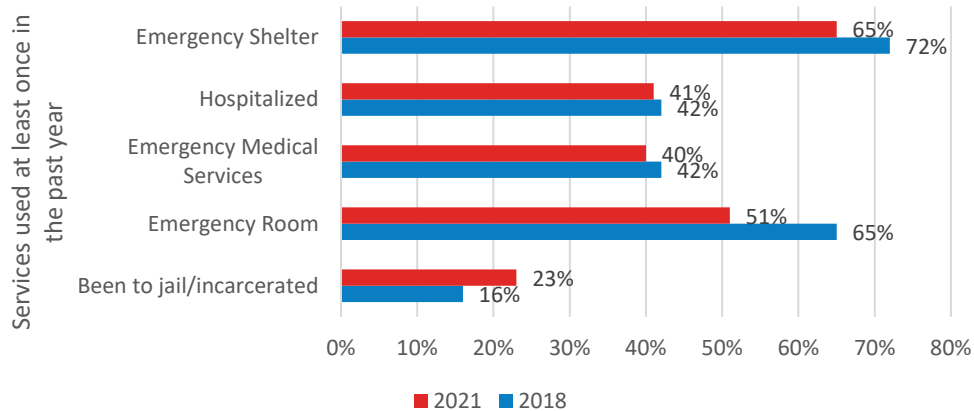
72%

Proportion of respondents who stayed in an Emergency Shelter in 2018

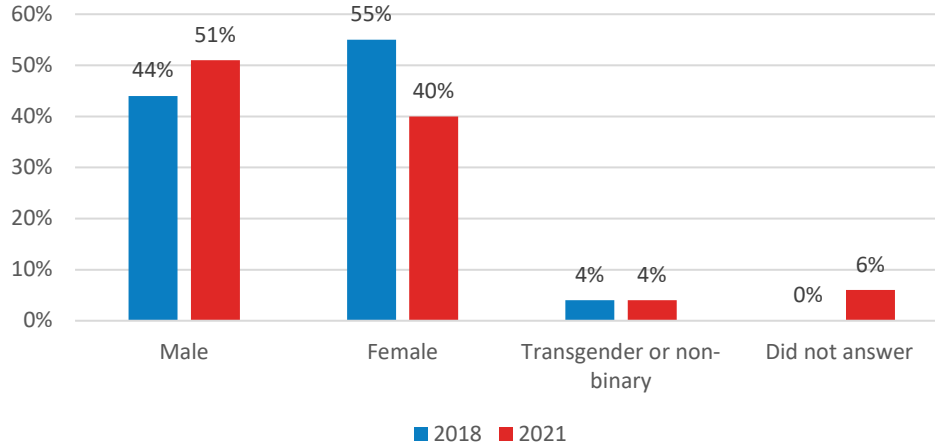


65%

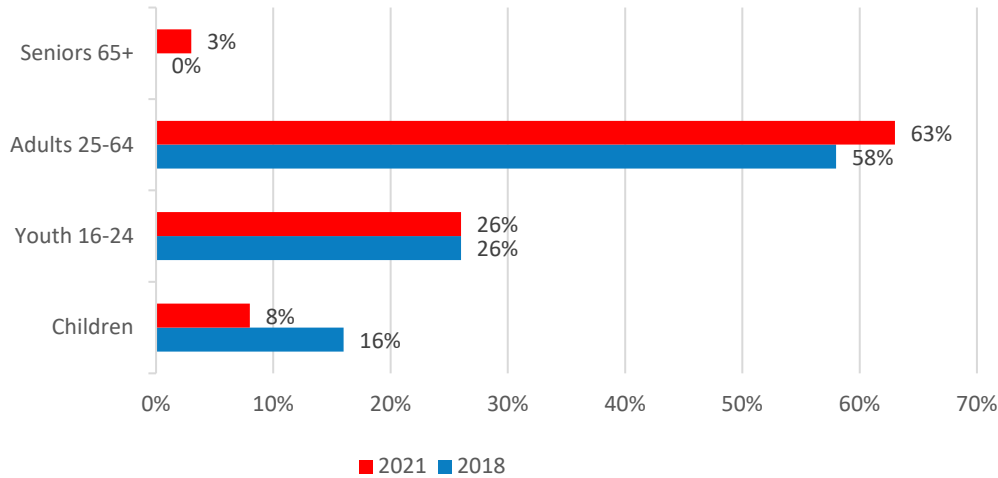
Proportion of respondents who stayed in an Emergency Shelter in 2021



Gender Identity



Age



Indigenous Population



24%
of respondents identified as
First Nations, Métis or Inuit in 2018



32%
of respondents identified a
Indigenous in 2021, including 23%
First Nations or Métis, and 9% who
claimed Indigenous ancestry.

Veteran Status

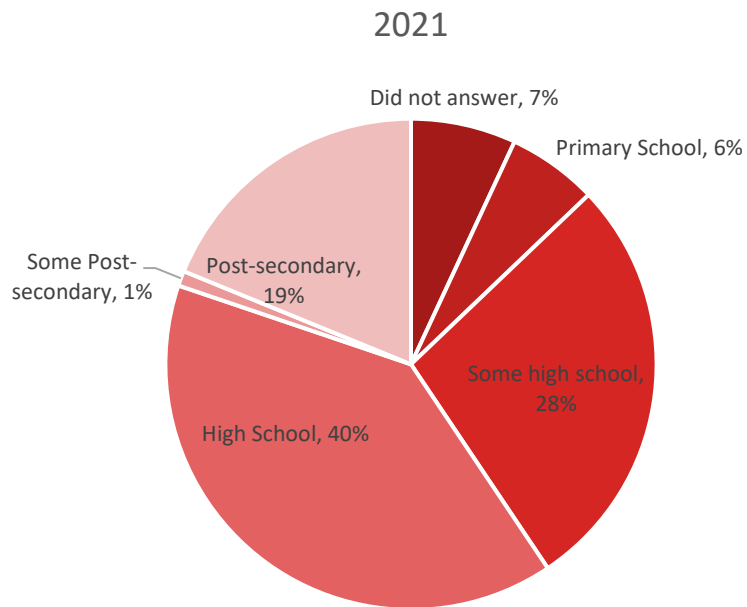
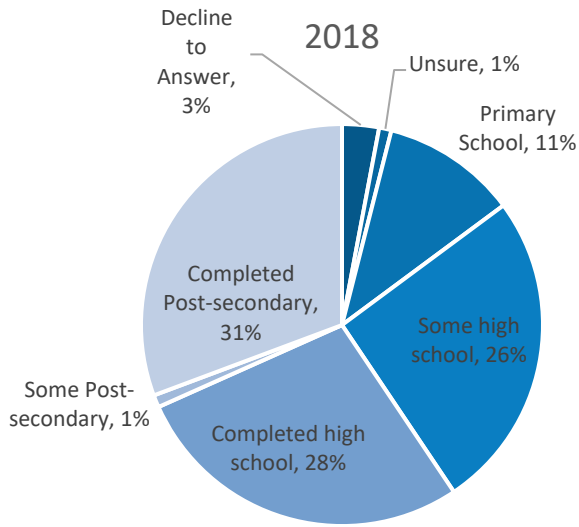


5%
of respondents indicated that they had
served in the Canadian Armed Forces
or Royal Canadian Mounted Police in
2018

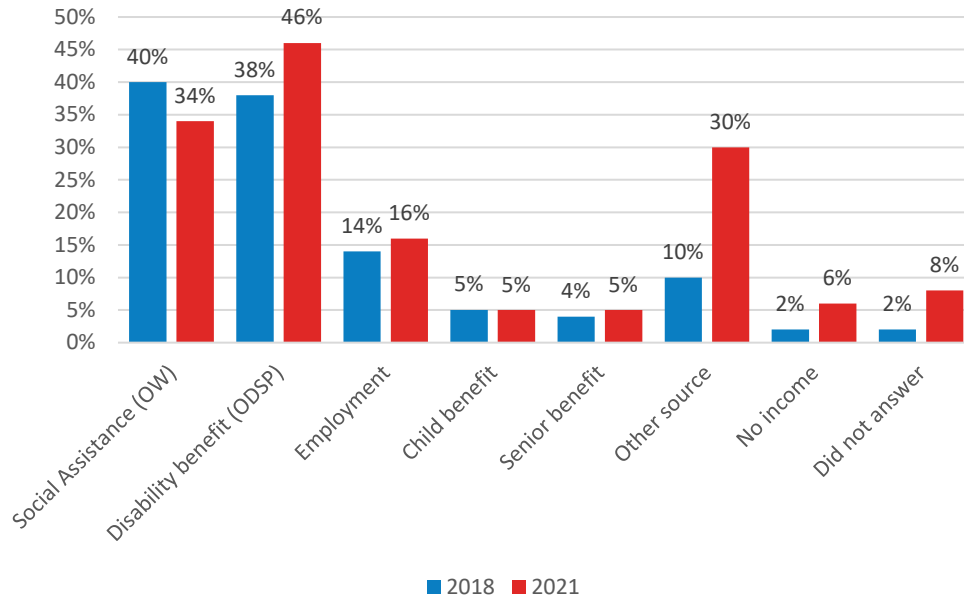


4%
of respondents indicated that they had
served in the Canadian Armed Forces
or Royal Canadian Mounted Police in
2021

Highest Level of Education Completed

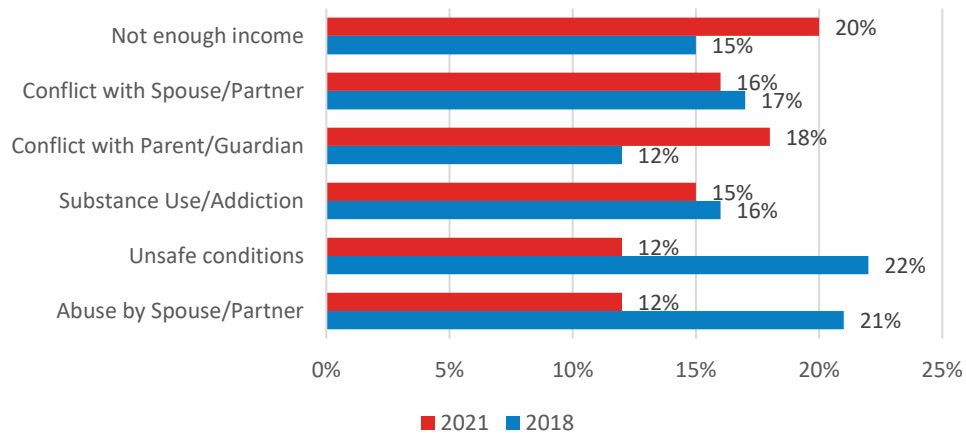


Sources of Income



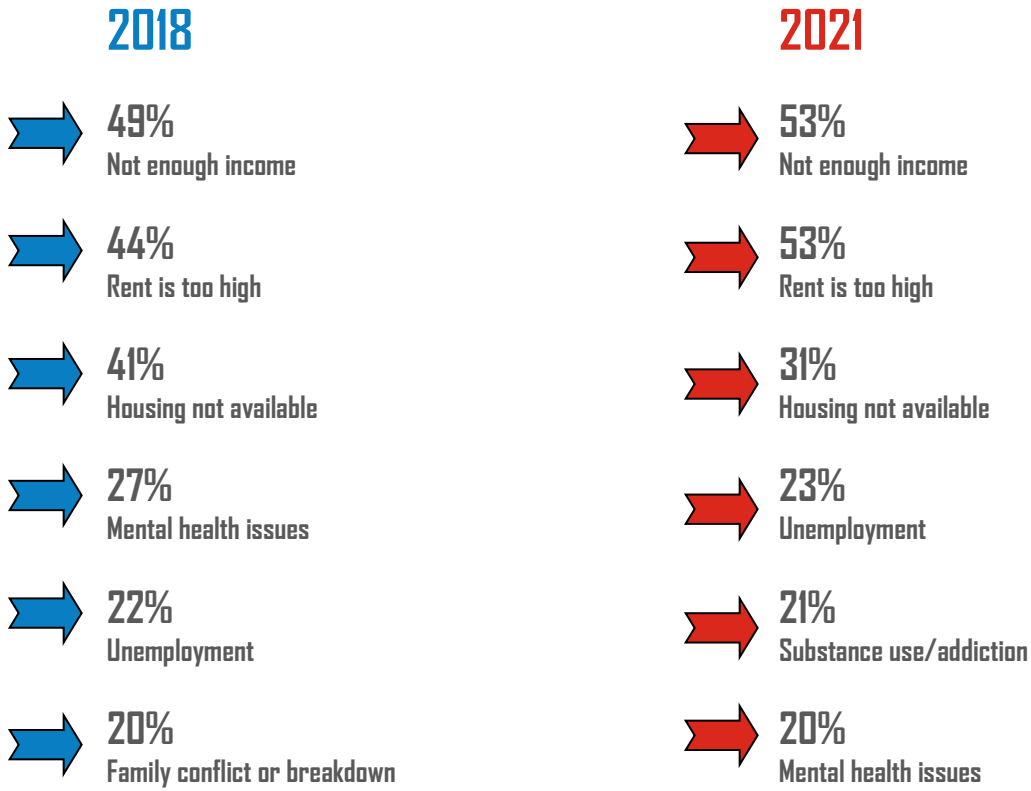
Reasons for Housing Loss

The comparison below is based on the Top 6 Reasons for Housing Loss in 2018.

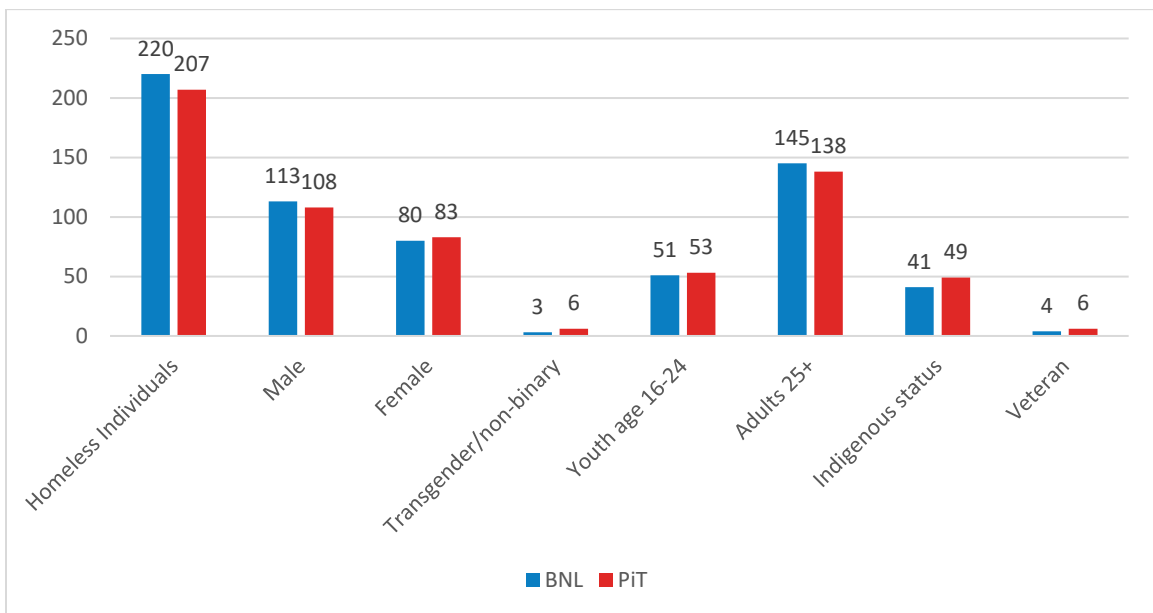


However, the Top 6 Reasons identified in 2021 were: not enough income (**20%**), conflict with parent/guardian (**18%**), conflict with spouse/partner (**16%**), Landlord/tenant conflict (**16%**), mental health issue (**15%**), and substance use (**15%**).

Top 6 Barriers to Permanent Housing



By-Name List Comparison



Conclusion

The Point in Time Count conducted on April 1, 20, marks the fourth community-wide urban PiT Count that has taken place in the city of Kingston. Kingston's results will contribute to the third nationally coordinated PiT Count in order to gain better insight into the realities of homeless populations across Canada. The next nationally coordinated PiT Count has not yet been scheduled; the bi-annual schedule would have had it taking place in 2022, but due to the pandemic the normal schedule has been interrupted.

As compared with the results of the 2018 PiT Count, the data collected in 2021 shows some changes. However, several of the results remained fairly consistent. There were fewer unsheltered individuals in 2021 than in 2018. The number of individuals experiencing homelessness who are staying at emergency shelters in 2021 is comparable to 2018, while the proportion of people staying in transitional housing has decreased, for youth and overall.

The percentage of youth counted has remained the same between 2018 and 2021.

The number of people who identify as Indigenous is about the same as the last PiT Count in Kingston. In 2018, 24% of survey respondents identified themselves as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, as compared with 23% in 2021. However, if you include those who identified as having Indigenous ancestry (9%), the number has an increase of 8% over 2018.

The proportions of people who identify as women has decreased since 2018. In 2021, 40% of people experiencing homelessness were female identified, a decrease compared with 55% in 2018. The decrease in the proportion of children who are homeless, from 16% in 2018 to 8% in 2021, may correspond with this decline. The percentage of those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming has stayed the same.

The majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in Kingston on April 14, 2021 were sheltered with 37% staying in emergency shelter, and 29% in transitional housing, though a decrease when compared with the 38% staying in emergency shelters and 39% living in transitional housing in 2018.

Emergency shelter usage has decreased since the last PiT Count was conducted. In 2021, 65% of respondents had used an emergency shelter within the past year, compared with 72% in 2018. However, the shelter occupancy rate on the night of the PiT Count was greatly increased from 60% in 2018 to 75% in 2021, presumably due to the lowered capacity of the adult shelter and the women's shelter.

The most common barriers to housing have remained fairly consistent between 2018 and 2021. 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 14, 2021 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 PiT Count results are also comparable to the By-Name List (BNL), a real-time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in a community, created and managed by and for the community's housing & homelessness system. The count recorded 207 people experiencing homelessness, while the BNL reporting 220 as of April 14, 2021. 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.

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.

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

 Canada