



# **Windsor-Essex 2021 Homelessness Enumeration Report**

Prepared by  and presented October 2021

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## Executive Summary



Preventing and ending homelessness begins with knowing who experiences it, in order to connect them to resources and supports, better understand the scope of homelessness, and strategically invest in solutions to overcome housing barriers. Counts like those conducted on March 24 and March 25, 2021 by the City of Windsor in partnership with its community partners demonstrate continued commitment to reduce homelessness and build upon the 2018 and 2016 enumerations to generate the data critical to identifying trends among people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Much has changed since the last count in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic has offered new opportunities to engage people experiencing already heightened vulnerability as they struggle to meet their basic needs. The 2021 count involved trained community volunteers deployed throughout the city and county to ensure that individuals, families and youth experiencing homelessness received an opportunity to be counted and surveyed. Engagements occurred in shelters, on the streets and in various facilities that serve people experiencing homelessness, including COVID-19 isolation and recovery centres. This Point-in-Time count event, which again included a housing and support needs survey known as the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), provides new, critical information for Windsor to continue ending homelessness. At the time of the Point in Time Count in 2021, COVID-19 outbreaks impacted shelter-based surveying so administrative data complemented the enumeration survey results. This report provides an overview of the insights and findings of the 2021 Point-in-Time count and Registry Week in Windsor.

**On any given night, 251 people experience homelessness across Windsor-Essex, reflecting a 27% increase from the 197 people counted during 2018, and a 25% increase from the 201 people in 2016. During the Point-in-Time count, 157 people completed the enumeration survey and an additional 94 were sheltered in one of the emergency shelter and isolation options available:**

2021 Count	2018 Count	2016 Count
251 people experiencing homelessness overall	197 people experiencing homelessness overall	201 people experiencing homelessness overall
198 single adults (79% of all people)	129 single adults (62% of all people)	166 single adults (83% of all people)
14 families with 26 dependent children (40 people in families, reflecting 16% of all people)	8 families with 19 dependent children (27 people in families, reflecting 14% of all people)	7 families with 10 dependent children (17 people in families, reflecting 8% of all people)
13 youth (5% of all people)	51 youth (26% of all people)	34 youth (20% of all people)

Single adults increasingly represent the face of homelessness across Windsor-Essex: growing from 62% of all people in 2018 to 79% in 2021. This stems from a corresponding



drop in youth homelessness, from 26% of all people in 2018 to 5% in 2021. Families continue to represent 16% of all homelessness (a 2% increase from the 14% in 2018). Given the limitations of any single point-in-time enumeration, this number should be considered the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in the City of Windsor and County of Essex on any given night.

The City of Windsor's ongoing commitment to strengthen the homelessness prevention and housing stability system continues moving away from focusing upon expensive crisis interventions to prioritizing prevention, diversion and housing stability. These critically important enumeration results will help community partners to better understand the needs and barriers of people experiencing homelessness or who are at-risk of homelessness. Well-understood, simply described and powerfully communicated data will help create better services for vulnerable community members, while highlighting opportunities to refine investments to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.

Communities frequently view enumeration activities including Period Prevalence counts, Registry Weeks and Point-in-Time counts as requirements for funding rather than opportunities for learning. But when completed effectively, an enumeration event is one of the single greatest tools to implement change in service delivery and orientation towards ending homelessness in a community. Homelessness enumeration activities provide an important opportunity to elevate the community's understanding of the reality of homelessness in the area and to create momentum for collective action and impact dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness.

The 2021 results contained within this report provide the data analysis and emerging trend identification to assist Windsor-Essex in the quest to enhance local understanding of housing instability and homelessness and to ensure that the information gathered enhances strategic planning and service delivery. These results demonstrate continuous improvement, accountability and transparency in practice that build on the insights gleaned from the 2018 and 2016 homeless counts and further enhance the ability of the local system of care to respond effectively to the needs of vulnerable neighbours experiencing homelessness.

In the years ahead, the findings of this Point-in-Time and Registry Week initiative demonstrate that local efforts dedicated to ending homelessness in Windsor must remain the primary focus of all service providers and represent the foundation for strategic investments for re-housing. Survey results show that 42% of the people experiencing homelessness need some time-limited assistance to get back into stable housing, and an additional 35% need highly intensive supports to stay housed. The remaining need a service delivery system that empowers them to end their own homelessness, including but not limited to improved diversion practices and rapid resolution practices for those that enter shelter.

Comparing results to the enumeration activities completed in 2018 and 2016 offers multiple opportunities for additional improvement. As the count of people experiencing homelessness during the global pandemic and the resulting economic crisis demonstrates an increase in homelessness locally, the vulnerabilities and length of homelessness demonstrate the urgency of this work. We hope that the data demonstrated from the 2021 Point-in-Time enumeration and Registry Week here will bring targeted specificity to those important efforts.



# Introduction



Windsor-Essex, in the pursuit of preventing and ending homelessness, has vastly improved its data collection and processes for responding to homelessness since the 2018 Point-in-Time count. The community possesses both a By-Name Priority List, which allows for analysis of homelessness across flexible reporting periods, as well as data from its 2021 Point-in-Time count. Windsor-Essex has emphasized housing as the solution to homelessness, with appropriate supports based upon need. Point prevalence -- the number of people experiencing homelessness over a 24-hour period and their stated needs -- allows for comparisons to previous Point-in-Time enumerations that occurred in 2018 and 2016. This is the first time the community has had strong period prevalence data -- the number of people experiencing homelessness over both one month and three-month periods -- which helps put the Point-in-Time enumeration in context, but does not, at this juncture, allow for comparison to previous period prevalence analysis.

This report provides commentary and analysis on:

- Administrative data of unique individuals sheltered in the community that did not complete the enumeration survey with amplified analysis of the 2021 Point-in-Time enumeration survey findings;
- Comparison of the 2021 Point-in-Time enumeration survey responses to 2018 and 2016 survey results;
- The By-Name Priority List during the Point-in-Time enumeration in 2021; and
- How the 2021 Point-in-Time enumeration relates to the By-Name Priority List.

## How Does the 2021 Point-in-Time Enumeration Relate to the By-Name Priority List?

Beyond the 94 unique individuals sheltered locally, an additional 157 people were surveyed during the 2021 Point-in-Time enumeration. Of these 157 respondents, 86% were already on the By-Name Priority List (n=135). Higher than many other communities when it comes to inclusion and coverage, this demonstrates strong evidence that Windsor-Essex excels among other Canadian communities in the work of identifying, engaging, assessing and serving people experiencing homelessness comprehensively. Windsor-Essex knows the population of people experiencing homelessness quite well.

	2021 Point-in-Time Count	2021 By-Name Priority List
Length of reporting period	24 hours	90 days
Count of people experiencing homelessness	157	476
By-name priority list coverage rate of people experiencing homelessness during PIT	86%	NA
Chronic homelessness (singles / families / youth)	75% / 86% / 77%	77% (overall)
Episodic homelessness (singles / families / youth)	5% / 0% / 0%	8% (overall)
Gender		
• Male/man	70%	65%
• Female/woman	29%	33%
• Non-binary/two-spirit/transgender	1%	1%



Age 60+	8%	9%
Indigenous	22%	8%
Veterans (count)	0	1

### **The Dynamic Nature of the By-Name Priority List:**

#### **Why Point-in-Time Enumeration Will Never Exactly Match a By-Name Priority List**

A By-Name Priority List provides an accurate understanding of homelessness over a *period* of time. In Windsor-Essex, By-Name Priority List data was comprehensive and available for the three-month period leading up to and including the Point-in-Time count.

A Point-in-Time enumeration provides a reasonable understanding of homelessness at a *point* in time. Consider the Point-in-Time enumeration to provide a snapshot of March 24-25, which fall within the 90-day period captured through the By-Name Priority List.

A By-Name List is likely to be more accurate than a Point-in-Time enumeration because:

- It provides access coverage for inclusion at multiple physical locations throughout the community, as well as through street outreach on a daily basis; households may use services one day, but not others -- because engagement happens over time, as opposed to a tighter window, there is a greater likelihood of capturing people
- It provides greater opportunity to capture “hidden homelessness” through people that are couch-surfing; people that may use services within the homelessness response system, but not every day
- It is better at capturing fluctuations in the population of people experiencing homelessness, such as people in and out of hospital or correctional facilities.

A Point-in-Time enumeration reflects the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness over a fixed point -- in the case of Windsor-Essex, from March 24-25, 2021. It allows for investigation, when placed in the context of the By-Name Priority List, of things like:

- What volume of people on the By-Name Priority List access services on a daily basis, as opposed to over a longer period of time
- Generally, are the needs of people encountered on a daily basis reflective of all people experiencing homelessness over a period of time
- The needs for services on a daily basis
- How good the community is doing at ensuring people experiencing homelessness are on the By-Name Priority List.

The Point-in-Time snapshot of people experiencing homelessness captures 33% of people that experience homelessness across 3 month, leading to several important conclusions:

- Homelessness is dynamic over a period of time. Being homeless one day and using services does not mean services will be used every day. When not using services on the day of the Point-in-Time enumeration (perhaps temporarily staying with a friend or relative; short term hospitalization; etc.) people experiencing homelessness may be underrepresented in the overall weekly, monthly and quarterly understanding of homelessness across Windsor-Essex;



- By-Name Priority Lists record everyone experiencing homelessness over a period of time, but are unlikely to be as accurate at knowing everyone experiencing homelessness in real-time as some purport it to be (often reflecting substantial counts of people recently “inactivated” due to infrequent or recently ended system engagement);
- Point-in-Time enumerations likely cannot be replaced with just using a By-Name Priority List as an estimation of people experiencing homelessness and their needs;
- Matching people from the Point-in-Time enumeration to the By-Name Priority List provides a reliable window of investigation into the By-Name Priority List as a whole.

### **What Does the By-Name Priority List Show that the Point-in-Time Count Does Not?**

One of the advantages of having By-Name Priority List information in addition to Point-in-Time enumeration information is that other aspects of the homelessness response system can be put into context. For example:

Of the 476 people experiencing homelessness as quantified by the By-Name Priority List from January 1 through March 31, 2021, 57% were contacted in March (n=273), 19% during February (n=89) and 24% in January (n=114).

One of nine people on the By-Name Priority List were added on March 31 specifically, the last day of its reporting period (54 people). Another 56 people were added during earlier days in March, 22 in February and 37 in January. The remaining 307 people -- 64% of those on the By-Name Priority List -- were added from 2018 to 2020. Of those, 31% were added in 2018 (95 people), 30% in 2019 (93 people) and 39% in 2020 (119 people). This means that once households reach the By-Name Priority List, they may continue to experience months, if not years, of homelessness before securing permanent housing.

Administration data for the 94 unique shelter stayers that did not complete the 2021 enumeration survey did not provide the information required for more detailed analysis. The following sections of the report will therefore incorporate the information gathered for the 157 PIT Count and Registry Week survey respondents encountered on March 24-25, 2021.



## Homelessness Demographics for Survey Respondents

### COVID-19

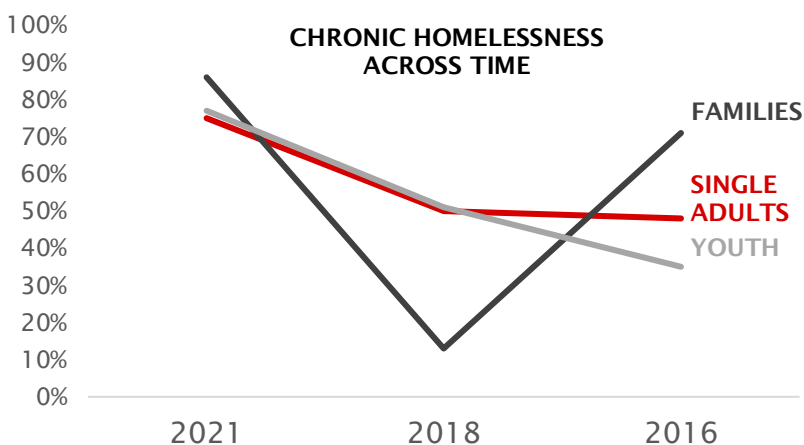
Despite the considerable challenges that COVID-19 has caused everyone surviving this ongoing global pandemic, very few people experiencing homelessness identified coronavirus as the cause of their most housing loss:

86% - 100% of all households surveyed did not identify COVID-19 as the cause of their most recent housing

- 10% of single adults identified COVID-19 as the cause (n=12) -- or 1 in 10
- 14% of families identified COVID-19 as the cause (n=1) -- or 1 in 7
- 0% of youth identified COVID-19 as the cause (n=0)

### Chronic Homelessness

Homelessness has grown increasingly chronic. While 50% of single adults, 13% of families and 51% of youth met the federal definition of chronic homelessness (6 months or more of homelessness in the last 12 months) in 2018, this count increased considerably during the 2021 count: 75% of single adults (n=90), 86% of families (n=6) and 77% of youth (n=10). This reflects more than a 25% increase in representation among both single adult and youth experiencing chronic homelessness, and a more than sixfold increase in family proportionality.



75% of single adults, 86% of families and 77% of youth are experiencing chronic homelessness in 2021 (6 months or more of homelessness in the last 12 months), substantially higher than 2018 results

Among single adults, 26% report experiencing homelessness during every month of the last three years. On average, it has been over two years (26 months) since single adults have lived in permanent housing, ranging from less than 1 month to 17 years (204 months). Families report over one year average (13 months) since living in permanent housing, ranging from less than one month to 2 years (24 months). Youth report 10 months since living in permanent housing on average, ranging from less than 1 month to over 2 years (28 months). This represents a cumulative 262 years (3,142 months) of uninterrupted homelessness for single adults, almost 8 years (90 months) for families and 11 years (129 months) for youth. The number of days experiencing homelessness also rose significantly among those meeting the definition of chronic homelessness: almost 300 days on average since the 2018 count.

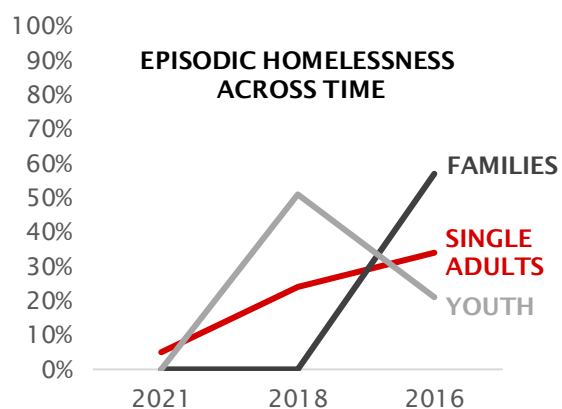


While all youth not experiencing chronic homelessness resided in shelter, chronically homeless youth couch surfed and resided in transitional housing. Amongst those engaged in the Point-in-Time Count, only chronically homeless youth go to the emergency room, ride in an ambulance, are hospitalized, use crisis services and have contact with the police. Among all households experiencing chronic homelessness, 70% identified mental health concerns.

## Episodic Homelessness

While at least 75% of homelessness across Windsor-Essex is chronic, most homelessness is not episodic (reflecting three or more distinct episodes in the past 12 months).

Only 5% of single adults (n=6), and neither families nor youth experienced episodic homelessness (n=0). All single adults whose homelessness was episodic were also chronically homeless, and 2/3 of those individuals had 3 episodes (n=4) while 1/3 had 4 episodes (n=2).



## Sheltered or Unsheltered Sleeping Locations

Homelessness remains predominantly sheltered, reflecting 85% of single adults (n=100), 100% of family homelessness (n=7) and 100% of youth (n=13).

Approximately half (47%) of single adults reported staying at emergency shelter or domestic violence shelters (n=56), with another 21% staying at someone else's place (n=25) and 9% staying at motel or hotel (n=11). All but one family reported staying in transitional shelter/housing (86%; n=6) with the remaining family reporting staying in someone else's place. No family slept in unsheltered locations. Youth responses varied; most frequently reporting staying at transitional shelter/housing (54%; n=7), followed by emergency shelter or domestic violence shelters (31%; n=4) and someone else's place (15%; n=2).

**89% of people experiencing chronic homelessness are unsheltered, compared to 11% of non-chronically homeless**

Those who are sheltered have experienced homelessness longer on average, although they report experiencing less risky behaviour and coercion than those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Those who are unsheltered had significantly more police contacts, almost 10 on average compared to less than 2 for those sheltered, as well as jail nights. Those who are unsheltered are attacked more, but have threatened or harmed themselves or someone else less than those who are sheltered. Unsheltered people are much less likely to seek help with healthcare, more likely to have a head injury, and experience much more abuse (greater than 25% more people than sheltered homelessness).



## Recent Shelter Utilization

A total of 73% of households identified that they had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year (n=102). Of the remaining 27% of respondents who said that they had not (n=37), 89% identified at least one reason for not staying in shelter (n=33):

Reason for not staying in shelter	Percentage	Count
Fear for safety	12%	4
Fear of being exposed to COVID-19	9%	3
Other	33%	11
Pet(s)	9%	3
Politics	3%	1
Prefer to stay with friends/family	24%	8
Turned away (banned)	9%	3

“Other” responses that people identified for not staying in shelter offer additional insight:

- Bed bugs
- COVID-19 protocols
- Dirty
- Don't like people there
- Embarrassed
- Hotel
- Living in car
- New to homelessness
- Persecution/war
- Theft
- Too crowded

## Age

Single adults average 44 years old, family heads of household average 47 years old and youth average 19 years old. A substantial majority of single adults -- 92% -- are less than 60 years old (n=110), while 71% of families (n=5) also reflect that age range.

## Foster Care History

When asked, “As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care or in a youth group in this community or some other community?” (n=113), 19% of single adults (n=21) and 23% of youth (n=3) identified foster care history. No families reported time spent in foster care.

Single adults with foster care history identified the length of that experience in 76% of engagements (n=16), averaging 21 years, ranging from 4 years to 45 years. Since 45 years of self-reported foster care history may reflect age rather than years of involvement, OrgCode also differentiated the five respondents that identified lengths of time over 30 years, ranging from 31 to 45. When examining lengths of time in the foster care system lasting less than 30 years (n=11), responses range from 4 to 16 years, averaging 13 years. Of the 3 youth who identified foster care history, responses ranged from 2 to 6 years, averaging 4 years.

## Gender

People identifying as male/man represent 70% of all people experiencing homelessness (n=108), with female/woman representing 29% (n=44), and single responses for both non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit, each representing 0.6%.



Since single adults represent 76% of homelessness across Windsor-Essex, the gender percentages for all homelessness are identical for single adults specifically: male/man represent 70% of all people experiencing homelessness (n=83), with female/woman representing 29% (n=34), and single responses for both non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit, now each representing 0.8%.

Among families, 1/3 of female-led households and 1/4 of male-led households identified abuse or trauma causing their homelessness

When surveyed with VI-SPDAT, women identified several unique vulnerabilities:

- 1 in 5 women believe substance use will affect future housing opportunities, compared to only 1 in 10 men
- 50% of women identified experiencing abuse, which is 17% more than men
- Women primarily couch surfed and slept in shelters, although 15% slept outside and even less in transitional housing

## Sexual Orientation

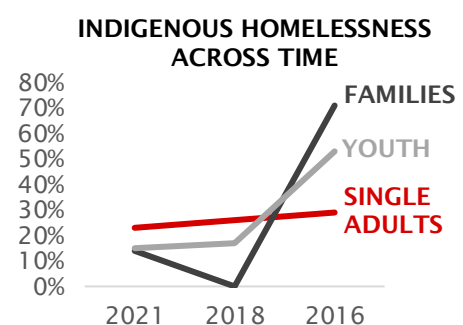
While 90% of single adults identified being heterosexual (n=108), 6% identified being bisexual (n=7), one person identified being gay (0.8%) and one person identified being lesbian (0.8%). Only one single adult declined to answer, and one response was left blank.

All families identified being heterosexual (n=7). While 85% of youth identified being heterosexual (n=11), 15% identified being bisexual (n=2).

Across all populations, no one reported that their sexual orientation was not included from the provided list with “straight,” “gay” and “lesbian” given as example options.

## Indigenous Identity

Of all people experiencing homelessness during the 2021 Point-in-Time count, 22% identify as Indigenous (n=31). That reflects the same percentage as the 2018 count, and less than the 29% of people identifying as Indigenous during the 2016 count. With the most recently completed 2016 Census showing Aboriginal people as 1.4% of the total population<sup>1</sup>, Indigenous people continue to be significantly overrepresented within homelessness. These percentages have varied by household configuration type, across each of the three Point-in-Time counts, especially among families and youth, due to those household configurations’ small proportion within overall homeless across Windsor-Essex (i.e. a single household shift among only seven family households counted in 2021 can swing results by 14% from the 0% Indigenous counted in 2018):



<sup>1</sup> As identified at <https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/planning/Plans-and-Community-Information/About-Windsor/Demographics/Pages/Demographics.aspx?PageView=Shared&InitialTabId=Ribbon.WebPartPage&VisibilityContext=WSSWebPartPage&#table9>



2021 Count	2018 Count	2016 Count
22% Indigenous overall (n=31)	22% Indigenous overall	29% Indigenous overall
Single Adults: 23% Indigenous (n=28)	Single Adults: 26% Indigenous	Single Adults: 29% Indigenous
Families: 14% Indigenous (n=1)	Families: 0% Indigenous	Families: 71% Indigenous
Youth: 15% Indigenous (n=2)	Youth: 17% Indigenous	Youth: 53% Indigenous

In 2021, among people identifying as Indigenous, 42% identified as First Nations (n=13), 35% identified as Métis (n=11) and 23% identified as having North American Indigenous Ancestry (n=7).

Among single adults, greater than 50% of First Nations and those with Indigenous ancestry identified experiencing abuse, and First Nation and those with Indigenous ancestry were significantly more likely to have a medical condition, mental health concern or report problematic substance use.

## Racial Identities

When asked to identify from a list of racial identities, 21% of households experiencing homelessness either declined to answer (n=11) or left the response blank (n=19). Three respondents said their racial identity was not listed, and they selected “Mixed,” “French Native” and “Chaldean” as responses. One additional person initially declined to answer, but also identified “Blackfoot” as their response.

Of single adults who gave responses (n=92), the following choices were selected:

Racial Identity Name	Percentage	Count
Arab	3%	3
Asian South and Indo Caribbean	2%	2
Asian South-East	1%	1
Black African	3%	3
Black Canadian or American	4%	4
Black-Afro-Caribbean or Latinx	4%	4
Indigenous only	7%	6
Latin American	3%	3
Not Listed	3%	3
White	68%	63

Most families identified being Black African (86%; n=6), with the remaining family identifying as being Indigenous. Among youth, 38% identified as White (n=5), with one youth (8%) identifying each of the following five categories: Asian South-East, Black African, Black Canadian or American, Indigenous Only, Latin American and Not Listed (self-selecting the previous mentioned “Mixed” response). One youth declined to answer, and one left their response blank (included in the count of all people listed above).



## Immigrant, Refugee and Refugee Claimants

91% of households experiencing homelessness answered the question, “Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant?” (n=127). Of all possible responses, 20% said “yes” (n=28):

Response	Percentage	Count
Yes (Immigrant)	10%	14
Yes (Refugee)	1%	2
Yes (Refugee claimant)	9%	12
No	70%	98
Don't Know	1%	1
Decline to answer	1%	1
Blank	9%	12

Those rates varied widely by household configuration:

- 16% of single adults (n=19) identified being an immigrant (10%; n=12), refugee claimants (4%; n=5) or refugees (2%; n=2).
- 71% of families identified being refugee claimants (n=5).
- 31% of youth (n=4) identified being an immigrant (n=2) or refugee claimant (n=2).

57% of immigrants, refugees or refugee claimants identified where they lived before arriving in Canada (n=16), with wide-ranging responses (including at least 6 responses identifying parts of Canada):

- Angola
- Burundi
- Chatham (1)
- El-Salvador
- Kuwait
- Montreal (2)
- Niagara Falls (1)
- Nigeria
- Philippines
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Toronto (2)
- USA
- Venezuela

## Length of Time in the City of Windsor and/or Essex County

When all households experiencing homelessness (including those who did not identify being an immigrant, refugee or refugee claimant) were asked, “How long have you been in Windsor and/or Essex County?” half identified either “I have always been here” (19%; n=27) or 20+ years (31%; n=44). Only 9% stated that they have resided in Windsor-Essex for less than one year (n=13), further outlined below:

Length of Time in Windsor-Essex	Percentage	Count
<1 year	9%	13
1 year	4%	6
2 years	5%	7
3 years	4%	5
4 years	4%	5
5-9 years	9%	12
10-14 years	7%	10
15-19 years	5%	7



20+ years	31%	44
Always been here	19%	27
Blank	3%	4

Of everyone experiencing homelessness, households identified the following “main reason” for coming to Windsor-Essex:

Reason for Coming to Windsor-Essex	Percentage	Count
Employment (seeking)	4%	5
Employment (secured)	1%	2
Family moved here	14%	20
Fear for safety	2%	3
School	1%	1
To access emergency shelter	3%	4
To access services and supports	2%	3
To find housing	6%	8
Visit friends/family	9%	12
Other	24%	34
Blank	32%	45
Don't know	2%	3

Of “Other” reasons, people identified the following:

- Better life
- Clarity
- English language
- Family
- Medical
- New experience
- Pregnancy
- Refuge
- Rehabilitation
- Sobriety

## Veterans

Of all people experiencing homelessness, no one identified service in the Canadian Armed Forces or Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Three people identified being unsure of whether they were veterans, with one response left blank.

This represents further reductions from the count in 2018, when 3% of people experiencing homelessness identified military service, which represented a reduction from the 6% of people in 2016. This represents admirable work in effectively ending veteran homelessness across Windsor-Essex, at least as measured during the 2021 Point-in-Time count.

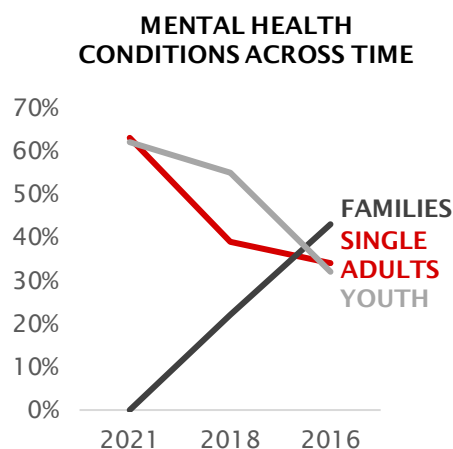
As measured during the 2021 Point-in-Time count, no veterans -- zero -- were experiencing homelessness across Windsor-Essex.

## Health Conditions

In addition to the vulnerabilities inherent in experiencing homelessness itself, households also identified frequently occurring disabilities that demonstrate elevated risk:



	Single Adults	Families	Youth
Chronic illness or medical condition	44% (n=53)	29% (n=2)	8% (n=1)
Physical condition	33% (n=40)	29% (n=2)	0% (n=0)
Learning or cognitive condition	31% (n=37)	29% (n=2)	46% (n=6)
Mental health condition	63% (n=75)	0% (n=0)	62% (n=8)
Substance use	67% (n=80)	0% (n=0)	31% (n=4)



Almost 2/3 of single adults and youth experiencing homelessness also identified mental health conditions: 63% and 62% respectively. Another 2/3 of single adults identified substance use challenges, and about 1/3 of youth did the same. About 1/3 of single adults live with chronic illness or medical conditions, physical conditions, or learning or cognitive conditions. Almost half of youth live with learning or cognitive conditions (46%).

Families identified equal frequency of chronic illness or medical conditions, physical conditions, or learning or cognitive conditions (29%) but no instances of mental health conditions or substance use.

This remarkably high level of vulnerability, even beyond the challenges of homelessness alone, shows the importance of the existence of resources to meet these complex and often co-occurring needs, as well as reliable access to those resources. For Windsor-Essex, streamlined access to primary health, mental health and addictions supports would be beneficial for households receiving housing stability supports.

### Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss (All Households)

Identifying the “cause” of homelessness proves challenging for the people experiencing it, the staff that serve them as well as social scientists and statisticians. However inadvertently, behind this question is a belief that if communities could simply understand why the homelessness occurred, they could better resolve it or prevent future occurrences. Amidst complex and frequently overlapping reasons for homelessness, one factor remains the same: a loss of housing caused their crisis. As evidenced below, people identified as many as four reasons for their homelessness. Rather than spend too much time struggling to understand what caused each housing crisis, Windsor-Essex should continue to urgently help people secure housing first, and to invest time in the proven strategies that expedite the process. From the safety of having secured housing, then support service staff can work with people to identify the risk factors and nature of their previous housing crisis (by utilizing assessment tools including but not limited to the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) in order to prevent returns to homelessness.



## Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss (Single Adults)

People often identified multiple reasons for their most recent housing loss; among single adults:

60% of people experiencing chronic homelessness identified family or friends as causing their homelessness, compared to 0% of people not experiencing chronic homelessness

First reason identified for homelessness	Percentage	Count
Conflict with other	5%	5
Conflict with parent or guardian	3%	3
Conflict with spouse or partner	9%	10
Experienced abuse by spouse or partner	6%	7
Incarceration (jail or prison)	2%	2
Job loss	2%	2
Landlord and tenant conflict	14%	15
Left the community or relocated	1%	1
Mental health concern	2%	2
Not enough income for housing	13%	14
Substance use concern	10%	11
Unable to pay rent or mortgage	6%	6
Unfit or unsafe housing conditions	5%	5
Unsafe housing conditions	6%	7
Other reason	11%	12

Of second identified reasons for homelessness among single adults:

Second reason identified for homelessness	Percentage	Count
Experienced abuse by spouse or partner	1%	1
Job loss	1%	1
Landlord and tenant conflict	2%	2
Mental health concern	2%	2
Unfit or unsafe housing conditions	2%	2
Other reason	1%	1

Of third identified reasons for homelessness among single adults:

Third reason identified for homelessness	Percentage	Count
Conflict with spouse or partner	1%	1
Other reason	2%	2

Additional reasons identified among single adults include the following:

- Accident/personal injury (2)
- COVID-19
- Crowding
- Death (2)
- Eviction
- Fire (4)
- Landlord sold unit
- Relocation
- Temporary
- Work



## Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss (Families)

Of the first identified reasons for homelessness among families:

First reason identified for homelessness	Percentage	Count
Experienced abuse by spouse or partner	14%	1
Landlord and tenant conflict	14%	1
Not enough income for housing	14%	1
Other reason	57%	4

Of second identified reasons for homelessness among families:

Second reason identified for homelessness	Percentage	Count
Experienced abuse by spouse or partner	1%	1
Job loss	1%	1
Landlord and tenant conflict	2%	2
Mental health concern	2%	2
Unfit or unsafe housing conditions	2%	2
Other reason	1%	1

For “other” reasons, families only identified “being unable to pay rent” (n=1).

## Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss (Youth)

Of the first identified reasons for homelessness among youth:

First reason identified for homelessness	Percentage	Count
Complaint (pets, noise, damage, etc.)	8%	1
Conflict with parent or guardian	23%	3
Experienced abuse by: spouse/partner	15%	2
Mental health issue	8%	1
Not enough income for housing	8%	1
Unsafe housing conditions	8%	1
Conflict with other (fear of safety)	8%	1
Other reason	23%	3

Additional reasons identified among youth include the following:

- Eviction (1)
- Relocation (1)
- Stress (1)

## Income Sources

Of all households experiencing homelessness, 87% (n=122) identified at least one source of income. The most frequently occurring income source was the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) held by 43% of households (n=60) followed by Ontario Works (OW) held by 36% of households (n=50). 11% of households reported no source of income (n=16) and only 1% did not respond (n=2).



The remaining income sources are as follows:

- 4% of households with Canada Pension Plan (CPP) (n=5)
- 3% of households with employment income (EI) (n=4)
- 1% of households with “other” income (n=2)
- 1 household with Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) (1%)

Most people experiencing chronic homelessness (51%) receive ODSP, which provides more money for rent but often not enough to escape homelessness

Four households (3%) identified more than one source of income: 3 households claimed Old Age Security pension (OAS) in addition to their Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and 1 household claimed self-employment in addition to receiving Ontario Works (OW).

60% of households experiencing chronic homelessness have income. More of those who are unsheltered have an income as well as debts.

### Temporary Accommodations with Friends or Family

Households were asked “over the past 12 months, how many different friends or family members have temporarily permitted them to stay”, recorded within the following ranges:

Times Family Temporarily Accommodated	All Households	Single Adults	Families	Youth
10+ different places	18% (n=24)	20% (n=24)	0% (n=0)	8% (n=1)
4-9 different places	13% (n=18)	14% (n=17)	14% (n=1)	8% (n=1)
1-3 differed places	37% (n=52)	33% (n=39)	43% (n=3)	69% (n=9)
0 times (none)	31% (n=43)	32% (n=38)	43% (n=3)	15% (n=2)
Decline to Answer	1% (n=2)	2% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)

For both single adults and families, households were just as likely to have never had temporary accommodations with friends or family as to have stayed with them 1-3 times (31% and 37% for single adults, 32% and 33% for families respectively).

Single adults were more than twice as likely (20%) as youth (8%) to have stayed with friends or family 10 or more times.

Youth were approximately twice as likely (69%) as both single adults (33%) and families (43%) to have stayed 1-3 times.

### Emergency Service Utilization (Overall)

People experiencing homelessness often engage other systems of care at disproportionately high rates, from how frequently they utilize emergency rooms,



receive hospitalizations, interact with police or law enforcement and stay in prison or jail. These additional vulnerabilities make it increasingly difficult to escape homelessness, when moments of reprieve from sleeping in shelters or outdoors are more likely to involve hospitalization and incarceration than permanent housing:

### Emergency Room Utilization

Of all households experiencing homelessness, 56% identified staying in an emergency room at least once in the last six months (n=78):

ER Visits	All Households	Single Adults	Families	Youth
0 times	43%	42%	100%	23%
1 time	15%	15%	0%	23%
2 times	11%	12%	0%	8%
3 times	7%	7%	0%	15%
4 times	6%	6%	0%	8%
5 times	2%	3%	0%	0%
6 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
7 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
8 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
9 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
10+ times	4%	4%	0%	8%
General “yes” response	9%	9%	0%	15%

Of all households, 4% identified staying in an emergency room at least ten times within the last six months; indicating high health costs related to the experience of homelessness across Windsor-Essex, which continue to increase. According to the Canadian MIS Database (current as of June 18, 2020) from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the direct cost per emergency department visit has risen from \$96 in 2005–2006 to \$158 in 2018–2019. At that rate, the 271+ times in emergency rooms over the last six months for people experiencing homelessness have cost Windsor-Essex at least \$42,818.

The estimated 271 times in emergency rooms over the last six months for those experiencing homelessness have cost Windsor-Essex at least \$42,818.

### Hospitalizations

Of all households experiencing homelessness, 32% identified staying in a hospital at least once in the last six months (n=44):

According to the Canadian MIS Database (current as of June 18, 2020) from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the average cost of hospital stay in Ontario is \$5,642 per stay, ranging between \$4900 and \$10,100. At that rate, the 93+ hospitalizations over the last six months for people experiencing homelessness have cost Windsor-Essex at least \$524,706.



Hospitalizations	All Households	Single Adults	Families	Youth
0 times	68%	67%	100%	62%
1 time	9%	9%	0%	15%
2 times	9%	10%	0%	8%
3 times	2%	3%	0%	0%
4 times	2%	3%	0%	0%
5 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
6 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
7 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
8 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
9 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
10+ times	1%	1%	0%	8%
General “yes” response	6%	6%	0%	8%

The estimated 93 hospitalizations over the last six months for people experiencing homelessness have cost Windsor-Essex at least \$524,706.

### Hospitalization Days

Of all households experiencing homelessness, 29% identified staying in a hospital at least one day in the last six months (n=41):

Hospitalization Days	All Households	Single Adults	Families	Youth
0 days	51%	57%	100%	38%
1 day	4%	5%	0%	8%
2 days	3%	3%	0%	0%
3 days	1%	2%	0%	0%
4 days	1%	2%	0%	0%
5 days	0%	0%	0%	0%
6 days	1%	1%	0%	0%
7 days	3%	3%	0%	8%
8 days	0%	0%	0%	0%
9 days	0%	0%	0%	0%
10+ days	8%	8%	0%	31%
General “yes” response	4%	6%	0%	0%

### Police Interactions

Of all people experiencing homelessness, 42% identified interacting with police or law enforcement at least once in the last six months (n=58):

Police Interactions	All Households	Single Adults	Families	Youth
0 times	50%	53%	100%	69%



1 time	10%	11%	0%	15%
2 times	6%	8%	0%	0%
3 times	3%	3%	0%	0%
4 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
5 times	1%	2%	0%	0%
6 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
7 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
8 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
9 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
10+ times	8%	10%	0%	0%
General “yes” response	7%	8%	0%	8%

### Prison/Jail Utilization

Of all households experiencing homelessness, 20% identified going to jail or prison at least once in the last six months (n=32):

Times in Jail/Prison	All Households	Single Adults	Families	Youth
0 times	76%	73%	100%	85%
1 time	9%	9%	0%	8%
2 times	5%	6%	0%	0%
3 times	2%	3%	0%	0%
4 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
5 times	1%	2%	0%	0%
6 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
7 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
8 times	0%	0%	0%	0%
9 times	1%	1%	0%	0%
10+ times	3%	3%	0%	0%
General “yes” response	1%	2%	0%	0%

According to the most recent “Update on Costs of Incarceration” from Ottawa’s Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, while “the cost of incarceration varies substantially depending on the type of inmate,” the average institution-specific expenditure associated with each person was \$314 per day. At that rate, the 100+ times in jail or prison over the last six months for people experiencing homelessness have cost Windsor-Essex at least \$31,400.

As part of the system of care beyond homeless services alone across the City of Windsor and Essex County, each of these engagements reflect opportunities to address the acuity of people at elevated risk from not only experiencing homelessness, but from the additional vulnerabilities that accompany interactions with emergency services, hospitals and law enforcement. Housing-focused conversations across the entire system offer opportunities to explore diversion and rapid resolution as a resource, connection to Coordinated Access processes and assessment, and permanent housing resources to ultimately end homelessness and the inherent vulnerabilities that accompany it.

## Special Population Profile: Gender



Of all 140 households experiencing homelessness as recorded during the 2021 Windsor-Essex Point-in-Time count, people identifying as male/man represent 71% of those counted (n=99), with female/woman representing 27% (n=38), and non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit representing 1% (n=2). While gender was one of the questions for which responses were recorded for children and accompanying household members, most additional questions (chronicity and episodic homelessness, indigenous and racial identity, health conditions, foster care, etc.) were asked of heads of household only. As a result, the following profile examines gender-specific results for households, rather than by person. Since 85% of all people counted were unaccompanied individuals, either single adults (76%) or youth (8%), this ensures the maximum data reportability for the most potential fields. Results, differentiated by gender, follow:

### Chronic Homelessness

For the federal definition of chronic homelessness (6 months or more of homelessness in the last 12 months), the 2021 count saw 75% of single adults (n=90), 86% of families (n=6) and 77% of youth (n=10) who met its criteria overall. Overall, 76% of all homelessness is chronic in nature, across 106 of 140 households.

Gender-specific results compare closely to the average, with the exception for non-binary/gender queer and two spirit households, who due to their small sample size, will vary widely based on whether one or both members identify as a given category, automatically causing 0%, 50% or 100% representation among only two households.

When compared to the 76% average of households identifying as chronically homeless, 75% of men/males meet the federal definition of chronicity (n=74), as do 76% of women/females (n=29) and 100% of non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit individuals (n=2).

### Episodic Homelessness

Only 6 of 140 households met the federal definition of episodic homelessness: 4% overall.

Of those, 2/3 of households were men/males (n=4) and 1/3 of households were women/females (n=2). Among men/males, 4% of homelessness is episodic in nature. Among women/females, 5% of homelessness is episodic. No homelessness is episodic among non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit individuals, as recorded during the Point-in-Time count.

### Age

Overall, 91% of homelessness across Windsor-Essex is among households less than 60 years old (n=128), and 9% is among older adults (n=12).

By gender, men/males are slightly more likely to be older adults (11%; n=11) than average (9% overall). Only 1 woman/female household included an older adult (3%). No one 60 years of age or older identified as non-binary/gender queer or two-spirit.



## Foster Care History

Among all people experiencing homelessness, 17% of households identified foster care history as a child or youth, (n=24), including 19% of single adults (n=21) and 23% of youth (n=3). No families reported time spent in foster care.

Among men/males, 13% identified foster care history (n=13). Women/females were almost twice as likely to report foster care history: 24% (n=9).

100% of non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit spent time in foster care (n=2).

## Sexual Orientation

Among all households experiencing homelessness, 90% identified being heterosexual (n=126), 6% as bisexual (n=9), and single households identified being gay or lesbian (<1%).

Men/males were half as likely as average to identify being bisexual (3%), women/females were more than twice as likely than average (13%). One of the woman/female households identified as lesbian (3%). Among the two non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit households, one identified as bisexual and one identified as gay.

## Indigenous

Of all people experiencing homelessness during the 2021 Point-in-Time count, 22% identify as Indigenous (n=31).

20% of men/male households identify as Indigenous (n=20), as do 24% of women/female (n=9) and 100% of the two non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit households.

## Racial Identities

Among all genders, the following choices were selected:

Racial Identity Name	Percentage (All)	Men/Male Households	Women/Female Households	Non-Binary/Gender Queer/Two Spirit Households
Arab	2%	2%	3%	0%
Asian South and Indo Caribbean	1%	2%	0%	0%
Asian South-East	1%	2%	0%	0%
Black African	7%	5%	13%	0%
Black Canadian or American	4%	5%	5%	0%
Black-Afro-Caribbean or -Latinx	3%	2%	0%	0%
Blank	14%	8%	24%	50%



Decline to answer	8%	7%	11%	0%
Indigenous only	6%	7%	3%	0%
Latin American	3%	4%	0%	0%
Not Listed	3%	3%	3%	0%
White	49%	53%	39%	50%

## Health Conditions

In addition to the vulnerabilities inherent in experiencing homelessness itself, households also identified frequently occurring disabilities that demonstrate elevated risk, further differentiated by gender:

	Percentage (All)	Men/Male Households	Women/ Female Households	Non-Binary/ Gender Queer/ Two Spirit Households
Chronic illness or medical condition	40%	38%	47%	0%
Physical condition	30%	33%	24%	0%
Learning or cognitive condition	32%	35%	26%	0%
Mental health condition	59%	56%	68%	100%
Substance use	60%	61%	58%	100%

## Income Sources

Of all households experiencing homelessness, 87% (n=122) identified at least one source of income. The most frequently occurring income source was the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) held by 43% of households (n=60) followed by Ontario Works (OW) held by 36% of households (n=50). 11% of households reported no source of income (n=16) and only 1% did not respond (n=2).

By gender, 87% of men/males identified at least one source of income (n=86) as did 82% of women/females (n=31) and 100% of non-binary/gender queer and two-spirit individuals (n=2).

The most frequently occurring income source among all genders was the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), followed by Ontario Works (OW).

11% of men/male households reported no source of income (n=11) and 13% of women/female households did as well (n=5).



## Special Population Profile: Indigenous



In 2021, of all 140 households experiencing homelessness as recorded during the 2021 Windsor-Essex Point-in-Time count, people identified as Indigenous 22% of the time (n=31). As previously stated, with the most recently completed 2016 Census showing Aboriginal people representing 1.4% of the total population, Indigenous people continue to be significantly overrepresented within homelessness. Among people identifying as Indigenous, 42% identified as First Nations (n=13), 35% identified as Métis (n=11) and 23% identified as having North American Indigenous Ancestry (n=7).

### Chronic Homelessness

Across Windsor-Essex, while 76% of all homelessness is chronic in nature, among people who identified as Indigenous, First Nations or Métis, 90% of their homelessness was 6 months or more in the last year.

Among people identifying as Indigenous, between 85% and 100% of their homelessness was chronic:

- 100% of households with North American Indigenous Ancestry (n=7)
- 85% of households identified as First Nations (n=11) and
- 91% of households identifying as Métis (n=10)

### Episodic Homelessness

While only 6 of 140 households met the federal definition of episodic homelessness, 4% overall, two of those 6 households were Indigenous. In other words, of the limited instances in which homelessness across Windsor-Essex is episodic in nature, 33% of those times are from First Nations (n=1) or Métis (n=1) people. This further represents Indigenous overrepresentation among people experiencing episodic homelessness.

### Age

While 91% of homelessness across Windsor-Essex is among households less than 60 years old (n=128), and 9% is among older adults (n=12), 94% of homelessness across people identifying as Indigenous is among households less than 60 (n=29) with 6% among older adults (n=2).

### Foster Care History

Among all people experiencing homelessness, 17% of households identified foster care history as a child or youth (n=24). People identifying as Indigenous are almost twice as likely to report foster care history, as they do in 32% of households overall (n=10), with more than 1 in 2 households with North American Indigenous Ancestry and 1 in 3 households identifying as Métis identifying time in foster care:

- 57% of households with North American Indigenous Ancestry (n=7)
- 15% of households identified as First Nations (n=2) and
- 36% of households identifying as Métis (n=4)



## Gender

Both non-binary/gender queer (n=1) and two-spirit (n=1) households were Indigenous, each reflecting 3% of Indigenous genders. Another 65% of Indigenous households were men/male (n=20) and 29% were women/female (n=9).

## Sexual Orientation

Indigenous households were three times more likely to be bisexual (19%; n=6) than average (6%; n=9) and represent 2/3 of all bisexual households surveyed (6 of 9 households). Of Indigenous men/males, 15% identified as bisexual (more than twice as frequently than average), while 22% of Indigenous women/females did the same (almost four times more frequently than average).

The only person who identified as gay during the Point-in-Time count was also Indigenous.

While 90% of all households experiencing homelessness identified being heterosexual (n=126), 74% of Indigenous households did so (n=23).

## Racial Identities

Among all racial identities, the following choices were selected among (A) all households combined, with an additional focus upon (B) all Indigenous households combined, then (C) First Nations specifically, (D) North American Indigenous specifically and (E) Métis specifically:

Racial Identity Name	All Households (Combined)	Indigenous Households			
		All (Combined)	First Nations	North American Indigenous Ancestry	Métis
Arab	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian South and Indo Caribbean	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian South-East	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Black African	7%	3%	0%	0%	9%
Black Canadian or American	4%	10%	23%	0%	0%
Black-Afro-Caribbean or -Latinx	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Blank	14%	19%	15%	14%	27%
Decline to answer	8%	3%	8%	0%	0%
Indigenous only	6%	26%	38%	29%	9%
Latin American	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not Listed	3%	6%	0%	29%	0%
White	49%	32%	15%	29%	55%



## Health Conditions

Beyond the vulnerabilities inherent in experiencing homelessness itself, households also identified frequently occurring disabilities that demonstrate elevated risk. While Indigenous rates of chronic illness or medical conditions and physical conditions remain close to that of the overall population of those experiencing homelessness, Indigenous households demonstrated significantly higher frequency of learning or cognitive conditions, mental health conditions and substance use, all of which bring heightened levels of vulnerability:

	Percentage (All)	Indigenous
Chronic illness or medical condition	40%	39%
Physical condition	30%	29%
Learning or cognitive condition	32%	48%
Mental health condition	59%	71%
Substance use	60%	81%

## Income Sources

Among all households experiencing homelessness, 87% (n=122) identified at least one source of income. The most frequently occurring income source was the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) held by 43% of households (n=60) followed by Ontario Works (OW) held by 36% of households (n=50).

This mirrors the 87% frequency with which Indigenous households experiencing homelessness identified at least one source of income, with the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) continuing to represent the most frequently occurring source of income (61%), followed by the 23% of Indigenous households with Ontario Works (OW).

Similar to the 11% of all households experiencing homelessness that reported no source of income, 10% of Indigenous households reported none (n=3).

