



# 2020

## HOMELESS COUNT IN METRO VANCOUVER

Final Data Report | November 2020

*Prepared by BC Non-Profit Housing Association  
for Reaching Home's Community Entity for Greater Vancouver*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver was conducted on the traditional and ancestral unceded territory of the: Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Kwikwetlem, Tsawwassen, Katzie, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, and Semiahmoo Nations. They have been custodians of this land for thousands of years and we would like to pay our respect to the elders and knowledge keepers both past and present. The count is a community-driven initiative of the Reaching Home Designated and Indigenous Community Entity, [Lu'ma Native Housing Society](#), in partnership with [Vancity Community Foundation](#) together with the Greater Vancouver Community Advisory Board and the Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee as well as the [Council of Community Homelessness Tables](#).

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy:

The word "Canada" in a large, black, serif font, with a small red and white Canadian flag icon positioned above the letter 'a'.

With support from:



# THANK YOU

The 2020 Homeless Count was made possible due to the ongoing and dedicated work of community members across the region.

## We would like to thank:

- All those experiencing homelessness who shared their time and experience with us.
- The 1,200 volunteers throughout the region who made the count possible.
- The Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee along with various community members who generously created and donated thousands of tobacco ties.
- Hogan's Alley Society for their advocacy around the importance of racial identity data and for their crucial support during the development of the survey and during data analysis. A special thanks to Stephanie Allen, Dr. June Francis, and Dr. Adam Rudder.
- TransLink for the donation of bus tickets for youth experiencing homelessness.
- The members of the 2020 Homeless Count Project Team for their wisdom in guiding this process.
- The Council of Community Homelessness Tables and all those who sit on local community homelessness tables across the region who are crucial in providing local support and guidance.
- Those who supported the development of the homeless count methodology and survey, especially Hajer Awatta, Jonquil Hallgate, Debbie Kraus, and Dustin Lupick.
- The implementation team for the count: James Caspersen, Dave Baspaly, Cheryl Hogg, Jeff Scheffel, Alice Sundberg, Averill Hanson, Brianna De Man, Carol Ann Flanagan, Cathy Wall, Chris Dickinson, Erin LaRocque, Graeme Beyer, Hasham Kamran, Ida Wang, Jackson Freedman, Jacob Taves, Jonquil Hallgate, Julie Andersen, Leya Eguchi, Sarah Thomas, Teresa Rossiello, and Paul Butler.
- Health care personnel from Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care, as well as RCMP and municipal police officers for providing data on people with no fixed address who were in their facilities during the count.

**This report can be found on the website for the Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity.**

**For further information or data requests, contact: [ReachingHome@vancity.com](mailto:ReachingHome@vancity.com)**

To cite this Greater Vancouver Community Entity report:

BC Non-Profit Housing Association (2020). *2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver*. Prepared for the Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity. Vancouver, BC: Metro Vancouver.

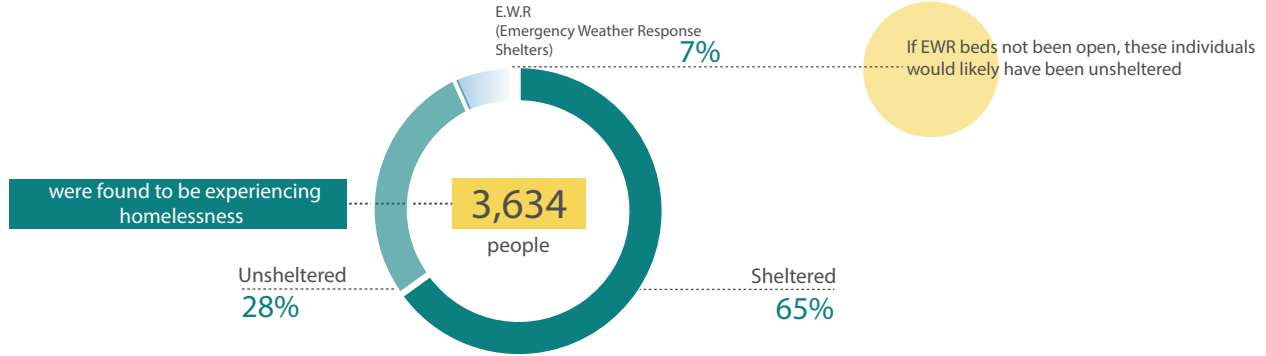
Or:

Author:	BC Non-Profit Housing Association
Year published:	2020
Title:	"2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver"
City:	Vancouver
Publisher:	Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity
Website(s):	<a href="https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/initiatives/2020-homeless-count">https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/initiatives/2020-homeless-count</a> <a href="http://lnhs.ca/community-entity/">http://lnhs.ca/community-entity/</a>

# Homeless Count 2020

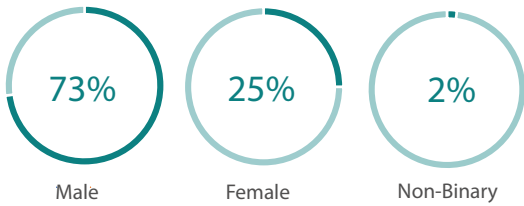
A Point-in-time homeless count has been conducted in Metro Vancouver since 2002. The data provided here was collected on the evening of March 3rd and throughout the day/evening of March 4th to give a snapshot of homelessness in the region. The count took place approximately two weeks before the Government of British Columbia declared a state of emergency due to the novel coronavirus. Although the pandemic did not markedly impact the implementation of the count, the state of homelessness in the region may have shifted significantly since March.

## The count

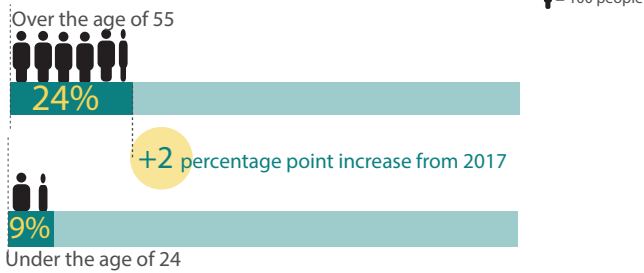


## Demographics

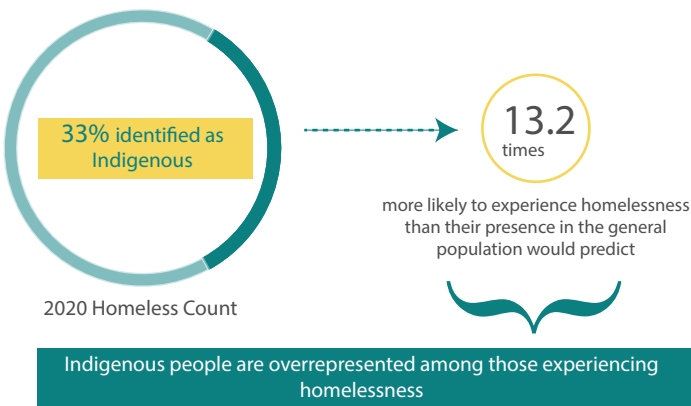
### Gender breakdown



### Age breakdown



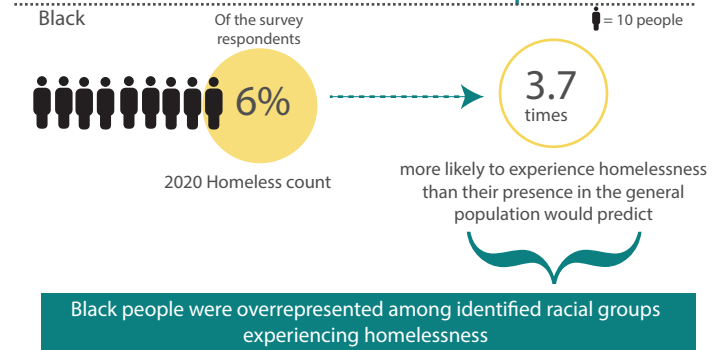
### Indigenous overrepresentation



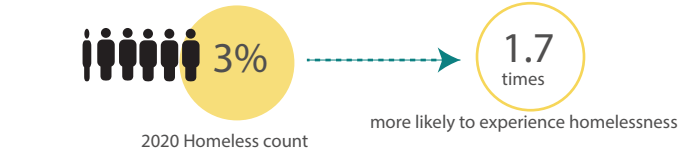
### Ministry Care 32%

had been previously or were at the time of the homeless count in foster care, in a youth group home, or on an Independent Living Agreement.

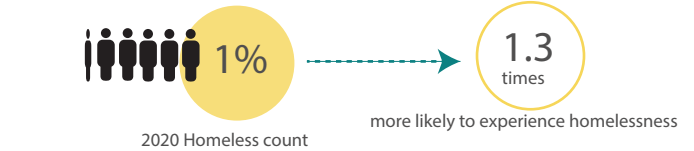
### Racial representation



### Latin American

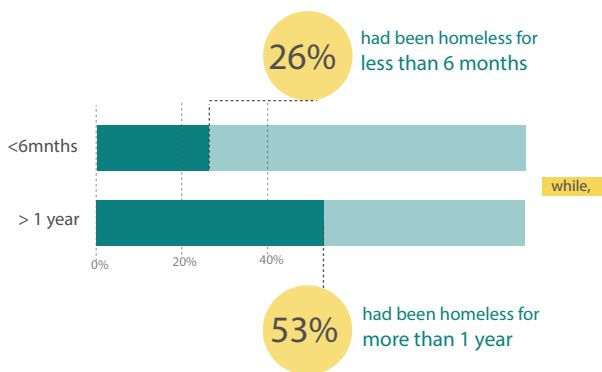


### Arab

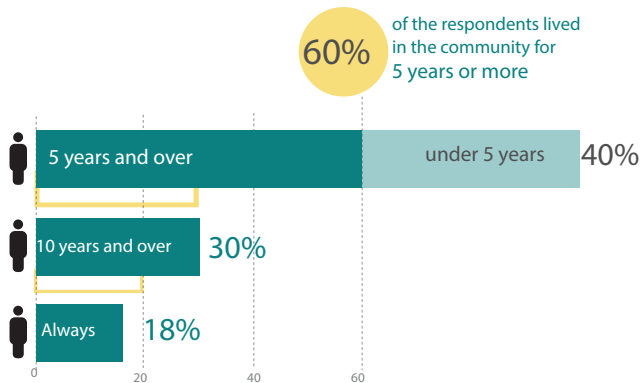


Arabs and Latin Americans were also overrepresented among identified racial groups experiencing homelessness

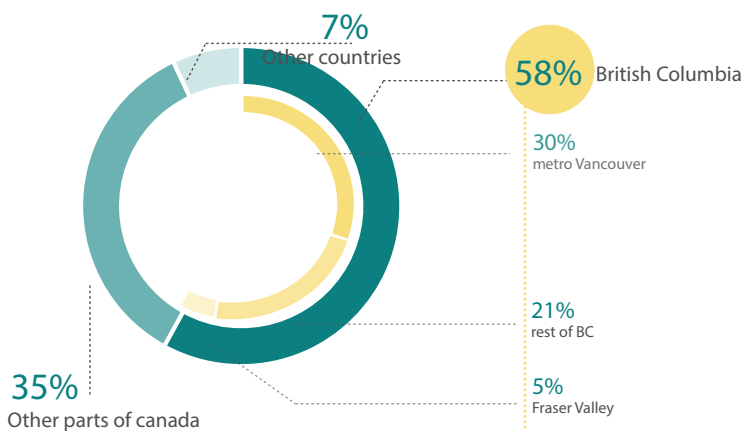
## Length of Time Experiencing Homelessness



## Long Time Community Residents



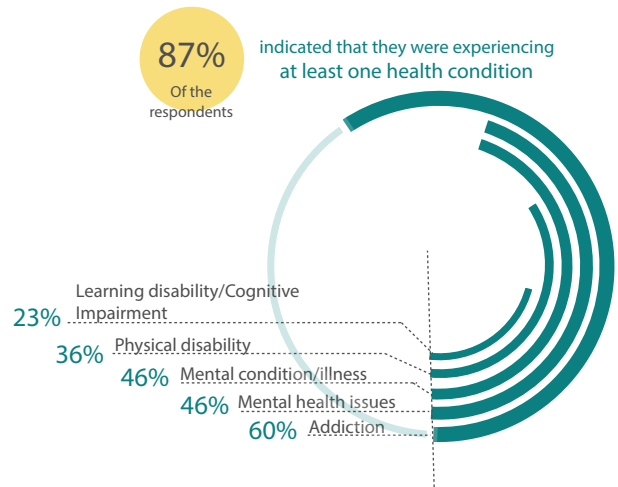
## Previous location if new to the community



Among the respondents who had not lived in the community, the majority of them had previously been somewhere in BC



## Health conditions

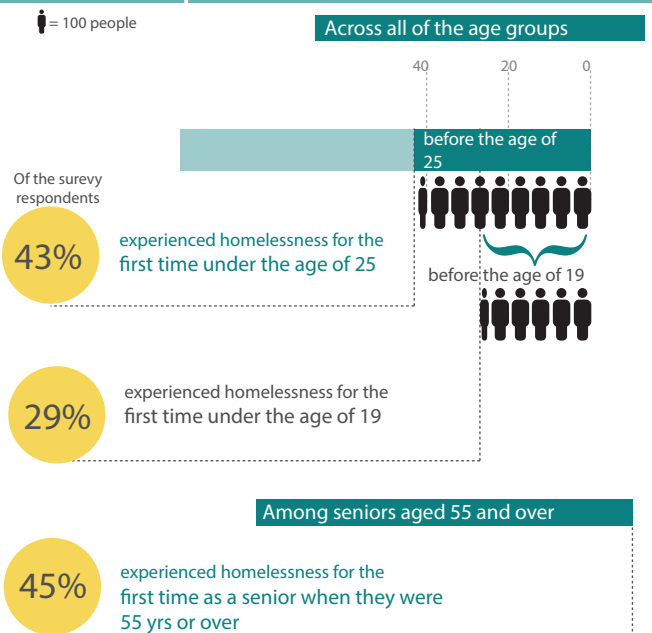


## Income Levels

Top three sources of income



## First Experiences of Homelessness



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Regionally Remains Relatively Consistent with Previous Counts

The 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver took place on the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup> and throughout the day/evening of March 4<sup>th</sup>, approximately two weeks before the Government of British Columbia declared a state of emergency due to the novel coronavirus. During the count period, no pandemic-related restrictions were in place and the implementation process was not affected. However, it is crucial to note that, at the time of this report's release, information collected through the count may no longer adequately reflect the actual state of homelessness in the region; this information does provide a valuable baseline for understanding homelessness in the region *prior* to the pandemic.

A total of 3,634 people were identified as experiencing homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region during the 2020 Point-in-Time (PiT) count. Of those, 1,029 were unsheltered (28%) and 2,605 were sheltered (72%). Among those who were sheltered, 241 stayed in Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters. Had EWR beds not been open on the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, these individuals would likely have been unsheltered. The majority of those who were sheltered, 2,413 individuals, were found staying in homeless shelters, transition houses and safe houses, while an additional 192 individuals were counted in jails, hospitals, and detox facilities. Overall, the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness were found in Vancouver (2,095), Surrey (644), and Langley (209).

Regionally, 29 more people were counted during the 2020 homeless count than during the 2017 count, representing a change of less than 1%. In contrast, from 2014 to 2017, homelessness in the region grew by 30%. This shows that the growth in regional homelessness had somewhat slowed prior to the pandemic, though thousands were still found without stable housing. Given the number of low-income individuals impacted by the pandemic and the number of jobs lost, it is likely that the situation has worsened regionally since March, despite government initiatives to support those affected by the pandemic. It is also important to note that homeless counts are inherently an undercount and are considered to produce the minimum number of people experiencing homeless over a 24-hour period of time.

## Indigenous People Continue to be Drastically Overrepresented

A total of 711 individuals self-identified as Indigenous through the 2020 count survey, representing 33% of survey respondents overall. Accordingly, Indigenous people continue to make up approximately one third of those included in the homeless count. In a continuing trend, Indigenous people are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver. When compared to what their presence in the general population would predict, Indigenous people are 13.2 times more likely to experience homelessness.

## Black, Latin American, and Arab Overrepresentation

For the first time, the count survey directly asked respondents whether they identified with any racialized minority group(s). Respondents were able to select more than one response to the question. Of those who responded and were found to be overrepresented, 98 people identified as Black (6%), 52 identified as Latin American (3%) and 19 identified as Arab (1%).

Black people were particularly overrepresented among identified racialized groups experiencing homelessness, as they were 3.7 times more likely to experience homelessness compared to what their presence in the general population would predict. Latin American and Arab respondents were also found to be overrepresented amongst those experiencing homelessness, with Latin Americans being 1.7 times and Arabs 1.3 times more likely to experience homelessness.

## Higher Proportion of Seniors and Fewer Youth Experiencing Homelessness Counted

A total of 513 seniors aged 55 years or older were found experiencing homelessness on the day of the count. Seniors aged 55 and over represented 24% of the homeless population overall, demonstrating an increase in the proportion of seniors, from 22% in 2017. This demonstrates a trend, with the proportion of seniors experiencing homelessness in the region continuing to grow each count year since 2002.

Another 193 youth, aged 24 and younger, were found during the 2020 homeless count, making up 9% of the population overall. This was a marked decrease in the number of young people found when compared to the 2017 homeless count, where 386 youth under age 25 were counted. The proportion of youth also decreased when compared to 2017, when 16% of those counted were under age 25. This continues a downward trend in the proportion of youth counted from 2011 to 2020. It should be noted that youth are often found experiencing hidden homelessness and may therefore be less likely to be found during the PiT count. More information on youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver can be found in the *2018 Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver* report.<sup>1</sup>

## Men Continue to be Majority of Those Found

Men continue to make up the majority of those found experiencing homelessness through the Point-in-Time (PiT) count method, with 1,570 men included or 73% of respondents overall. Women represented about a quarter (25%) of those included in the count, with a total of 546 women found on the day of the count. A total of 16 individuals identified as two-spirit, another 16 indicated their gender identity was not listed on the survey and 10 identified as non-binary for a combined total of 2% of survey respondents.

The homeless count survey also asked respondents if they identified as someone with trans experience. A total of 85 individuals, or 4% of those surveyed, identified as having had a trans

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on youth homelessness in the region and the challenges of adequately counting young people during a PiT count, see: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/HomelessnessPublications/2018MetroVancouverYouthHomelessCount.pdf>



experience. In 2017, 35 individuals identified as transgender (2%) through a differently worded question.

## Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community Experiencing Homelessness

The 2020 survey also asked respondents about their sexual orientation. The options respondents could choose from included whether they identified as “straight/heterosexual,” “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” “two-spirit,” “pansexual,” “asexual,” “questioning,” “queer,” or “not listed.” All categories besides “straight/heterosexual” were combined into a “2SLGBTQIA+” category. Of all survey respondents, 11% or 220 individuals identified as 2SLGBTQIA+. The proportion of respondents identifying at 2SLGBTQIA+ increased slightly from 8% in 2017.

## Health of Those Experiencing Homelessness Deteriorating

The majority of survey respondents (87% or 1,871) indicated they were experiencing at least one health condition, including a physical disability, medical condition/illness, addiction, mental health issue, and/or learning disability or cognitive impairment. The incidents of all types of health conditions increased in 2020 from 2017 (except for “learning disability or cognitive impairment,” which was included in the survey for the first time in 2020). Of those that responded to the question, 60% reported an addiction, 46% a medical condition/illness, 46% a mental health issue, 36% a physical disability and 23% a learning disability or cognitive impairment.

For the first time, respondents were asked if they had an acquired brain injury that happened after birth (i.e. from injury related to an accident, violence, an overdose, stroke or brain tumor). A total of 564 individuals or 27% indicated they had an acquired brain injury.

## Most People were Long-Time Community Residents

Questions related to movement between communities were included to determine whether people move from one area to another and how long they have been in an area. The majority of people experiencing homelessness were long-time residents of their community. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents, or 1,244 individuals, reported they had lived in the community where they were interviewed for five years or more, including 30% who had been there for 10 years or more and another 18% who said they had always lived there. Additionally, 70% of those surveyed were in their current community prior to experiencing their current episode of homelessness, dispelling the myth that people become homeless and move to Metro Vancouver for warmer weather or other reasons.

For those who indicated they had not always been in their current community, the majority (58% or 1,003 individuals) had previously lived somewhere else in British Columbia, with 30% from elsewhere in Metro Vancouver, 22% from the rest of B.C., and 5% from the Fraser Valley. A total of 604 individuals, or 35%, indicated they had lived somewhere else in Canada before coming to their current community and 7%, or 126 individuals, came from another country.

## First Experiences of Homelessness at a Young Age and as Seniors

Respondents were asked to indicate how old they were when they experienced homelessness for the first time. Some respondents may have been experiencing their first episode of homelessness at the time of the count, while others may have phased in and out of homelessness over many years. Across all age groups, 43% of respondents (884 individuals) experienced homelessness for the first time before the age of 25, with 29% (591 individuals) indicating their first episode was before age 19. For seniors aged 55 years and over, 45% (213 individuals) had experienced homelessness for the first time as a senior, meaning they were 55 years or over during their first (or current) experience of homelessness.

## Accessing Wide Range of Sources of Income Does Not Prevent Individuals from Experiencing Homelessness

There is a wide range of income sources accessed among survey respondents; 57% of respondents reported accessing more than one source of income. Most respondents received some income from Income Assistance (51%), followed by disability benefit (30%), and binning, bottle collecting (21%). A total of 458 respondents (21%) indicated they were working full-time, part-time, and/or casually while experiencing homelessness, including 239 respondents who were working a casual job, 176 (8%) who were employed part-time, and 103 (5%) who were employed full-time.

A map of the communities of the Metro Vancouver region throughout which the 2020 Homeless Count was conducted:



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Glossary of Terms and Definitions.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>I. About the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver .....</b>	<b>17</b>
The Challenge of Accurately Estimating Homelessness .....	17
<b>II. Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Total Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness .....	19
Changes in the Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness .....	20
Changes in Sheltered and Unsheltered Homelessness.....	21
Unsheltered Homelessness.....	21
Sheltered Homelessness .....	22
Changes in Shelter Capacity.....	22
<b>III. Profile of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Indigenous Identity.....	23
Racial Identity .....	25
Age .....	28
Gender Identity and Transgender Experience.....	30
Sexual Orientation.....	32
Length of Time Experiencing Homelessness .....	33
Chronic Homelessness .....	35
Length of Time in Community.....	35
Health Conditions .....	39
Age First Time Experiencing Homelessness.....	42
Sources of Income .....	42
Service Usage .....	44
Reasons for Experiencing Homelessness.....	46
Ministry Care.....	47
Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces or RCMP .....	48
Immigrants or Refugees to Canada.....	49
Accompanying People Experiencing Homelessness.....	50
Where the Unsheltered Respondents Stayed .....	51
If Unsheltered Respondents Had Recently Stayed in a Shelter.....	51

Sub-Region by Age Groups.....	52
<b>IV. Methodology and Limitations.....</b>	<b>53</b>
Point-In-Time Approach.....	53
Survey Design and Administration.....	54
Volunteer Interviewers.....	56
Survey Participation.....	57
Racial Disproportionality Index Calculation.....	58
Limitations.....	59
List of Shelters .....	60
List of No Fixed Address Sites.....	63
<b>V. Appendices.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Appendix A. Survey Instrument.....	65
Appendix B. Shelter Statistics Form .....	67
<b>Appendix C. A Pilot Project of the 2020 Homeless Count In Metro Vancouver: 2020 North Shore Extended Count.....</b>	<b>69</b>
Introduction.....	69
How Data Was Collected.....	69
Participating Agencies .....	71
Findings.....	71
Key Data Limitations.....	76
Agencies Participating in the Data Collection Process.....	77
Extended Count: North Shore Survey Instrument .....	79
Extended Count: Service Use Data Sheet .....	81
<b>VI. About the Author .....</b>	<b>83</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1.</b>	Total sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness by sub-region (2020) .....	19
<b>Table 2.</b>	Changes in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness by sub-region (2005-2020).....	20
<b>Table 3.</b>	Changes in unsheltered and sheltered homelessness (2008-2020) .....	21
<b>Table 4.</b>	Changes in unsheltered homelessness by sub-region (2017-2020) .....	21
<b>Table 5.</b>	Changes in sheltered homelessness by sub-region (2017-2020) .....	22
<b>Table 6.</b>	Changes in shelter capacity (2017-2020).....	22
<b>Table 7.</b>	Changes in homelessness by Indigenous identity (2008-2020).....	23
<b>Table 8.</b>	Indigenous homelessness by sub-region (2020).....	24
<b>Table 9.</b>	Indigenous identity by sub-region (2020) .....	24
<b>Table 10.</b>	Homelessness by racial identity in Metro Vancouver (2020) .....	26
<b>Table 11.</b>	Racial identity by racial disproportionality index (RDI) (2020) .....	27
<b>Table 12.</b>	Multi-racial identities analysis (2020).....	27
<b>Table 13.</b>	Age groups by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020) .....	28
<b>Table 14.</b>	Changes in homelessness by age groups (2008-2020) .....	29
<b>Table 15.</b>	Changes in homelessness by age (2011-2020).....	30
<b>Table 16.</b>	Gender identity by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	31
<b>Table 17.</b>	Changes in homelessness by gender identity (2011-2020) .....	31
<b>Table 18.</b>	Transgender experience by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	32
<b>Table 19.</b>	Sexual orientation by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	32
<b>Table 20.</b>	Changes in homelessness by sexual orientation (2017-2020).....	33
<b>Table 21.</b>	Length of time experiencing homelessness by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020) .....	33
<b>Table 22.</b>	Changes in length of time experiencing homelessness (2008-2020).....	34
<b>Table 23.</b>	Chronic homelessness by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	35
<b>Table 24.</b>	Length of time in community interviewed by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	36
<b>Table 25.</b>	Changes in length of time in community interviewed (2008-2020).....	37
<b>Table 26.</b>	Previous location if new to community by current community (2020).....	38
<b>Table 27.</b>	Health conditions by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	39
<b>Table 28.</b>	Changes in health conditions (2011-2020).....	40
<b>Table 29.</b>	Incidence of health conditions by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	40
<b>Table 30.</b>	Health condition by length of time homeless (2020) .....	41

<b>Table 31.</b> Acquired brain injury by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020) .....	41
<b>Table 32.</b> Age first time experiencing homelessness by age group (2020).....	42
<b>Table 33.</b> Sources of income by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	43
<b>Table 34.</b> Number of sources of income by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020) .....	44
<b>Table 35.</b> Services used by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	45
<b>Table 36.</b> Reason for most recent housing loss by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	46
<b>Table 37.</b> Ministry care as child or youth by age group (2020).....	47
<b>Table 38.</b> Ministry care child or youth by Indigenous identity (2020).....	47
<b>Table 39.</b> Veterans: Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020) .	48
<b>Table 40.</b> Immigrants and refugees by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	49
<b>Table 41.</b> Length of time in Canada by Immigrants and Refugees (2020) .....	49
<b>Table 42.</b> Anyone staying with you by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020).....	50
<b>Table 43.</b> Where unsheltered respondents stayed (2020).....	51
<b>Table 44.</b> Unsheltered respondents who stayed in a homeless shelter in the last 12 months (2020).....	51
<b>Table 45.</b> Sub-region by age groups (2020) .....	52
<b>Table 46.</b> Number of deployed volunteers (2011-2020).....	56
<b>Table 47.</b> Extended Count: Total number of data records across counts, by data source .....	71
<b>Table 48.</b> Extended Count: Total number of unique individuals across counts, by data source .....	72
<b>Table 49.</b> Extended Count: Individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore by gender identity...72	
<b>Table 50.</b> Extended Count: Individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore by age.....73	
<b>Table 51.</b> Extended Count: Individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore by age .....	74

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DESCRIPTION
<b>Indigenous Identity</b>	“Indigenous identity” refers to whether the person identified with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the <i>Indian Act</i> of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Indigenous peoples of Canada are defined in the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> , Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Children</b>	For the purposes of the count, the term “children” refers to “accompanied children” under the age of 19 who were with their parent or guardian during the homeless count. No personal survey record of these individuals exists, as they were not interviewed. In 2020, only those who were accompanied and sheltered were included as children in the count.
<b>Chronic Homelessness</b>	The Government of Canada defines “chronic homelessness” as individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness and have either been homeless for more than 180 days of the past year or have had “recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months.” <sup>1</sup> In this report, the term is applied only to those who had experienced homelessness for more than 180 days of the past year.
<b>EWR shelters</b>	Extreme Weather Response Shelters are activated “to provide time-limited, weather-responsive, temporary shelter spaces in communities where there is insufficient shelter capacity during periods of extreme weather.” <sup>3</sup> On the night of March 3, 2020 an EWR alert was called and all EWR shelters were open.
<b>2SLGBTQIA+</b>	Individuals who identify as two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual or questioning.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. “Aboriginal identity.” *Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016*. Last updated October 25, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm> (accessed October 7, 2020.)

<sup>3</sup> Homelessness Services Association of BC. October 2018. *Extreme Weather Response Program: Resource Guide 2018-2019*. <https://www.bchousing.org/publications/Extreme-Weather-Response-Program-Framework.pdf> (accessed October 7, 2020.)



<b>No Answer / Don't Know</b>	In many tables there is a line for "no answer/don't know." This includes both (a) individuals who declined to answer a single question but who may have completed other questions in the survey, and (b) those who did not answer the survey at all, but were counted through shelter statistics forms.
<b>No fixed address (NFA) locations</b>	Includes jails, detox centres and hospitals/short-term medical facilities; individuals with no fixed address are included as "sheltered" unless broken out differently in specific tables.
<b>Seniors</b>	Individuals aged 55 and older.
<b>Sheltered</b>	Sheltered refers to all individuals in the count who were identified as homeless and who stayed overnight in an emergency shelter, transition house for women and children fleeing violence, or a safe house for youth or seniors on the night of March 3. It also includes individuals with no fixed address who were staying temporarily in a hospital, jail or detox facility the night of March 3, unless this information is detailed differently in specific tables.
<b>Shelters</b>	Includes shelters (temporary nightly shelters, winter response shelters and other shelter programs), safe houses and transition houses, no fixed address locations and EWR shelters. Does not include prisons, penitentiaries and recovery houses or other locations that are not limited to stays less than 30 days.
<b>Unsheltered</b>	The unsheltered respondents include all individuals in the count who completed a street survey on March 4 and who had no physical shelter overnight on March 3 (i.e. were staying outside, in alleys, doorways, parkades, parks or vehicles). It also includes people who were staying temporarily at someone else's place (couch surfing) overnight on March 3, and who were interviewed on the street or at a homeless service on March 4.
<b>Youth</b>	For the purposes of the count, the term "youth" refers to young people under the age of 25 who were <i>not</i> accompanied by a parent during the count. Some youth were under the age of 16. "Children" includes anyone under the age of 19 who was accompanied by a parent (see definition).

# I. ABOUT THE 2020 HOMELESS COUNT IN METRO VANCOUVER

The 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver took place on the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup> and throughout the day on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Using a Point-in-Time count method (PiT), the 2020 count provides a **24-hour snapshot of the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver**. The purpose of the count is to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness, obtain a demographic profile of those individuals, and identify trends compared to previous counts.

The count included **people who did not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and did not pay rent**. This includes people who:

- stayed overnight, on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, in homeless shelters including transition houses for women fleeing violence and youth safe houses, people with “no fixed address” (NFA) staying temporarily in hospitals, jails or detox facilities;
- stayed outside or temporarily with others (couch-surfing) and/or those using homelessness services on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

PiT counts have been conducted in Metro Vancouver every three years since 2002 and annually in the City of Vancouver since 2010. Decision-makers, funders and community agencies have relied on the regional count to understand trends in visible homelessness. Due to the nature of the methodology, some people may be less likely to be included in the count such as women, youth, and those experiencing hidden homelessness.

## The Challenge of Accurately Estimating Homelessness

Point-in-time homeless counts seek to provide an estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period. This is not the same as estimating the number of people who move in and out of homelessness. Over the course of a year, some people will experience homelessness for the first time, some will find permanent housing, and others will find temporary housing and cycle in and out of homelessness.



1. The homeless count methodology is most effective at counting people that are sometimes referred to as the **“visible” homeless**. This population is shown above the waterline (image at left). Using the metaphor of an iceberg, the “visible homeless” represent just the tip of the iceberg — and the focus of this report.

2. The **“hidden” homeless** includes people who do not have a home of their own where they have security of tenure, and people who may be staying temporarily in another household — often called “couch surfing.” This population is considered to be “hidden” because they are less likely to access homelessness supports and services even though they are improperly or inadequately housed. During the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver, a total of 180 individuals<sup>4</sup> were identified as couch surfing.<sup>5</sup> The hidden homeless, for the purpose of the count, also includes people who are deep in forests or parks, in nooks and crannies or in abandoned buildings where volunteers may be less likely to find them. The count includes people if they are found during the count period and complete a survey, which is believed to be a small proportion of the total population experiencing homelessness.
  
3. Many more people are **at risk of experiencing homelessness**, which is not further discussed in this report. Based on 2016 census data, about 150,430 Metro Vancouver households were in core housing need<sup>6</sup> and spent at least 50% of their income on shelter — and are therefore considered to be at increased risk of homelessness through economic eviction. No numbers were available for 2020 at the time this report was written.

---

<sup>4</sup> This includes individuals who said they were staying at someone else’s place.

<sup>5</sup> A 2009 pilot study in the Metro Vancouver region estimated that about 9,000 individuals were hidden homeless at the time of the survey and about 23,500 persons had been hidden homeless in the previous year. (Margaret Eberle et al. 2009. Results of the pilot study to estimate the size of the hidden homeless population in Metro Vancouver.) Note: the margin of error is 7,650 at the 95% confidence level, which means that 95 times out of 100, the interval from 1,545 persons to 16,846 persons includes the actual number of hidden homeless individuals in Metro Vancouver.

<sup>6</sup> A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets both housing standards). See: Housing in Canada Online. Definitions of Variables. No date. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage037-eng.cfm> (accessed October 7, 2020).

## II. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

### Total Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

- On March 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> 2020, 3,634 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver. Of those, 1,029 individuals were unsheltered and 2,605 were sheltered.
- The sheltered total (2,605 people) includes 2,172 individuals who stayed in emergency shelters across the region and an additional 192 individuals who had no fixed address and stayed in jails, hospitals, and detox facilities.
- At least 241 individuals stayed in Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelter beds. Those staying in EWR beds would likely have been unsheltered if an Extreme Weather Alert had not been activated on count day.
- The unsheltered population includes 1,029 individuals who were staying outside or in makeshift accommodations, tents, warming centres, vehicles or temporarily indoors (couch-surfing).
- The largest number of individuals experiencing homelessness were counted in Vancouver (2,095), followed by Surrey (644) and Langley (209).

**Table 1.** Total sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness by sub-region (2020)

Sub-Region	Unsheltered Total	Sheltered			Total	Total Homeless
		EWR <sup>7</sup>	Shelters <sup>8</sup>	No Fixed Address <sup>9</sup>		
Burnaby	19	8	86	11	105	124
Delta	9	3	5	0	8	17
Langley <sup>10 11</sup>	108	n/a	93	8	101	209
New Westminster	41	11	62	9	82	123
North Shore <sup>12</sup>	46	18	53	4	75	121
Richmond	25	0	58	2	60	85
Ridge Meadows <sup>13</sup>	35	12	60	7	79	114
Surrey	173	68	375	28	471	644
Tri-Cities <sup>14</sup>	24	4	53	5	62	86
Vancouver	547	105	1,327	116	1,548	2,095
White Rock	2	12	0	2	14	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>2,172</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>3,634</b>

<sup>7</sup> Refers to Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters.

<sup>8</sup> Includes shelters (temporary nightly shelters, winter response shelters, and other shelter programs), safe houses and transition houses.

<sup>9</sup> Includes jails, detox facilities and hospitals.

<sup>10</sup> In this community it was not possible to distinguish between EWR and regular clients.

<sup>11</sup> Includes the Township of Langley and the City of Langley.

<sup>12</sup> Includes the District of West Vancouver, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and Bowen Island.

<sup>13</sup> Includes the Cities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

<sup>14</sup> Includes the Cities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody.

## Changes in the Number of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

- Since 2017, the data indicates that homelessness in Metro Vancouver has remained relatively consistent, with only a slight increase by 29 individuals from 3,605 to 3,634 individuals.
- Five communities saw an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness: Burnaby (55), Surrey (42), North Shore (21), Richmond (15), and Langley (3).
- Six communities saw a decrease in homelessness: Vancouver (-43) Tri-Cities (-31), White Rock (-11), Ridge Meadows (-10), New Westminister (-10), and Delta (-2).
- The largest increase in homelessness was found in Burnaby with an increase of 80%. It should be noted that in 2019 Burnaby opened its first year-round shelter and several warming centres, which allowed volunteers to identify and count individuals experiencing homelessness who otherwise may have remained hidden.

**Table 2.** Changes in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness by sub-region (2005-2020)

Sub-Region	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020	2017-2020 Change	
							#	%
Burnaby	42	86	78	58	69	124	55	80%
Delta/White Rock	12	17	14	19	46	33	-13	-28%
<i>Delta</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	19	17	-2	-11%
<i>White Rock</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	27	16	-11	-41%
Langley	57	86	103	92	206	209	3	1%
New Westminister	97	124	132	106	133	123	-10	-8%
North Shore	90	127	122	119	100	121	21	21%
Richmond	35	56	49	38	70	85	15	21%
Ridge Meadows	44	90	110	84	124	114	-10	-8%
Surrey	392	402	400	403	602	644	42	7%
Tri-Cities	40	94	48	55	117	86	-31	-26%
Vancouver	1,364	1,576	1,581	1,803	2,138	2,095	-43	-2%
Unspecified	1	2	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>2,660</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>2,777</b>	<b>3,605</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>

## Changes in Sheltered and Unsheltered Homelessness

- At 28% (1,029 people), the proportion of unsheltered individuals was comparable to 2017 (29%, 1,032 people). As in 2017, the proportion of unsheltered to sheltered individuals may have been impacted by both EWR shelters being open in all communities and an increase in shelter capacity in many communities across the region.

**Table 3.** Changes in unsheltered and sheltered homelessness (2008-2020)

Homeless Category	2008		2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Unsheltered	1,574	59%	758	29%	957	34%	1,032	29%	1,029	28%
Sheltered	1,086	41%	1,892	71%	1,820	66%	2,317	64%	2,364	65%
EWR							256	7%	241	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,660</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,777</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,605</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Unsheltered Homelessness

The unsheltered homelessness category includes individuals who answered the count survey and indicated that they stayed outside, such as in a makeshift shelter or tent, in a vacant building, in a vehicle, or were staying temporarily indoors (couch-surfing) on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- There were 1,029 individuals staying in unsheltered conditions on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020. This shows unsheltered homelessness in the region remained relatively consistent with 2017 (a slight decrease of 3 individuals).
- The largest number of unsheltered individuals were living in Vancouver (547), Surrey (173), and Langley (108).

**Table 4.** Changes in unsheltered homelessness by sub-region (2017-2020)

Sub-Region	2017 Unsheltered Total	2020 Unsheltered Total	Absolute Change (2017 to 2020)
Burnaby	49	19	-30
Delta	19	9	-10
Langley	79	108	29
New Westminster	30	41	11
North Shore	11	46	35
Richmond	29	25	-4
Ridge Meadows	30	35	5
Surrey	203	173	-30
Tri-Cities	41	24	-17
Vancouver	537	547	10
White Rock	4	2	-2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,032</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>-3</b>

## Sheltered Homelessness

The category of sheltered homelessness includes people who stayed in emergency shelters, transition houses for women fleeing abuse, and safe houses for youth on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The sheltered category also includes people with “no fixed address” (NFA) who stayed in jails and health or detox facilities on the night of the count. EWR shelters are also included separately.

- A total of 2,605 individuals were identified as sheltered on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, which is a slight increase from 2017 (by 32 individuals or 1%).
- The majority of communities saw a decrease in sheltered homelessness compared to 2017, with the exceptions of Burnaby (85 more individuals), Surrey (72), Richmond (19) and Delta (8).

**Table 5.** Changes in sheltered homelessness by sub-region (2017-2020)

Sub-Region	2017 Sheltered			2020 Sheltered			Absolute Change <sup>15</sup> (2017 to 2020)
	Shelters & NFAs	EWR	Total	Shelters & NFAs	EWR	Total	
Burnaby <sup>16</sup>	13	7	20	97	8	105	85
Delta	0	0	0	5	3	8	8
Langley	96	31	127	101	0	101	-26
New Westminster	76	27	103	71	11	82	-21
North Shore	78	11	89	57	18	75	-14
Richmond	25	16	41	60	0	60	19
Ridge Meadows	84	10	94	67	12	79	-15
Surrey	355	44	399	403	68	471	72
Tri-Cities	43	33	76	58	4	62	-14
Vancouver	1,537	64	1,601	1,443	105	1,548	-53
White Rock	10	13	23	2	12	14	-9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,317</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>2,364</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>32</b>

## Changes in Shelter Capacity

**Table 6.** Changes in shelter capacity (2017-2020)

Sheltered Category	2017 Capacity	2020 Capacity	Change in Capacity
Shelters/safe houses	1,891	2,134	243
EWR shelters	380	432	52
Transition houses	178	198	20
Detox facilities	100	64	-36
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,549</b>	<b>2,828</b>	<b>279</b>

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that changes in weather on the day of the count, as well as local shelter capacity, can affect these numbers from year to year.

<sup>16</sup> Burnaby provides sleeping mats at four warming centres. On the night of the count, 38 adults who spent a full night at one of the centres were counted as sheltered.

### III. PROFILE OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Section III provides further demographic details for individuals who answered a homeless count survey on March 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>. Given the limitations of the count methodology (see page 59) some groups may be underrepresented in the data tables below.

#### Indigenous Identity

Survey participants are asked if they identify as First Nations (with or without status, Treaty or Non-Treaty), Métis, or Inuit and whether they have other North American Indigenous ancestry.

- In total, 711 individuals identified as Indigenous, representing a slight decrease (-35) in the total number of Indigenous individuals who responded to the survey compared to 2017.
- As in previous years, Indigenous people represent one third (33%) of people experiencing homelessness in the region. At 33%, Indigenous people continue to be heavily overrepresented when compared to the proportion of people who identify as Indigenous in the general population. When compared to what their presence in the general population would predict, Indigenous people are 13.2 times more likely to experience homelessness.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 7.** Changes in homelessness by Indigenous identity (2008-2020)

Indigenous Identity	2008		2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indigenous <sup>18</sup>	688	32%	394	27%	582	31%	746	34%	711	33%
Non-Indigenous	1,453	68%	1,074	73%	1,282	69%	1,453	66%	1,417	67%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	2,141	100%	1,468	100%	1,864	100%	2,199	100%	2,128	100%
Unsure <sup>19</sup> /No Answer	519		1,182		913		1,406		1,506	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,660</b>		<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>17</sup> This was determined using a Racial Disproportionality Index calculation (see page 58). According to the 2016 census, 61,455 individuals out of 2,426,235 identified as Indigenous in Metro Vancouver, compared to 711 out of 2,128 in the 2020 Homeless Count.

<sup>18</sup> Those 711 individuals included in the data set reflect those who participated in the survey and self-identified as Indigenous. This number is in part a reflection of the participation rate. Indigenous homelessness is more accurately expressed as a share of the total number of people experiencing homelessness. Assuming that the share of 33% is reflective of the total population, then up to 1,214 individuals who identify as Indigenous were homeless.

<sup>19</sup> In consultation with the Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee, the Indigenous survey question was altered to include an “unsure/no answer” option instead of “Don’t Know/No Answer.”



- The majority of Indigenous respondents were living in Vancouver (58%), followed by Surrey (20%).
- The majority of Indigenous respondents were living in unsheltered conditions (366 individuals or 51%). This is a higher proportion than the population of people experiencing homelessness overall (28%).<sup>20</sup> Hence, Indigenous people are not only more likely to be homeless when compared to non-Indigenous people, but Indigenous people are also more likely to be unsheltered compared to non-Indigenous people.

**Table 8.** Indigenous homelessness by sub-region (2020)

Sub-region	Unsheltered Total	Sheltered Total	Total	
			#	%
Burnaby	6	13	19	3%
Delta	4	0	4	<1%
Langley	24	13	37	5%
New Westminister	12	10	22	3%
North Shore	5	15	20	3%
Richmond	4	10	14	2%
Ridge Meadows	7	15	22	3%
Surrey	70	71	141	20%
Tri-Cities	6	7	13	2%
Vancouver	227	188	415	58%
White Rock	1	3	4	<1%
<b>Total Indigenous Survey Respondents</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 shows the proportion of Indigenous respondents by sub-region. The table continues onto page 25.

**Table 9.** Indigenous identity by sub-region (2020)

Indigenous Identity	Burnaby		Delta		Langley		New Westminister		North Shore		Richmond	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Non-Indigenous	58	75%	5	56%	120	76%	49	69%	52	72%	52	79%
Indigenous	19	25%	4	44%	37	24%	22	31%	20	28%	14	21%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	77	100%	9	100%	157	100%	71	100%	72	100%	66	100%
Unsure/ No Answer	47		8		52		52		49		19	
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>209</b>		<b>123</b>		<b>121</b>		<b>85</b>	

<sup>20</sup> The total share of 28% of people living unsheltered includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

**Table 9 Continued** Indigenous identity by sub-region (2020)

Indigenous Identity	Ridge Meadows		Surrey		Tri-Cities		Vancouver		White Rock		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Non-Indigenous	58	73%	312	69%	45	78%	661	61%	5	56%	1,417	67%
Indigenous	22	28%	141	31%	13	22%	415	39%	4	44%	711	33%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	80	100%	453	100%	58	100%	1,076	100%	9	100%	2,128	100%
Unsure/ No Answer	34		191		28		1,019		7		1,506	
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>		<b>644</b>		<b>86</b>		<b>2,095</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Racial Identity

For the first time, the 2020 Homeless Count survey included a question specifically on race. Respondents were asked whether they identified with any racial minority group(s), were able to identify with one or multiple racial identities from the list provided and/or write in a response to the question under the “not listed” category.<sup>21</sup> Tables 10, 11, and 12 below examine responses to the racial identity question.

- Black people were particularly overrepresented among identified racialized groups experiencing homelessness as they were 3.7 times more likely to experience homelessness when compared to what their presence in the general population would predict (this was determined through a racial disproportionality index calculation, see Table 11).
- Latin American and Arab respondents were also found to be overrepresented amongst those experiencing homelessness. Latin Americans were 1.7 times and Arabs 1.3 times more likely to experience homelessness (also see Table 11).
- 132 respondents wrote in a response to the question under the “not listed” category. The majority of write-in responses referenced nationalities (87), while other responses included references to mixed or multiple racial/cultural identities (11), ethnicities or ethno-religious groups (10). Another 24 respondents did not specify their racial identity beyond selecting “not listed.”<sup>22</sup>

*[Refer to Tables 10, 11, and 12 on the following pages]*

<sup>21</sup> The racial identity question followed the question on Indigenous identity and a skip logic question. Responses to these questions indicated there was confusion during data collection and the skip logic was not always followed as intended. Some respondents (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) were erroneously asked (or not asked) the racial identity question. As such, it can be assumed that the skip logic potentially skewed the results in an unknown direction.

<sup>22</sup> As we continue to evolve the methodology of this question in future counts, the write-in responses will inform how the racial identity question is formulated to more accurately reflect some of the nuances from this data.

**Table 10.** Homelessness by racial identity in Metro Vancouver (2020)

Racial Identity (more than one response possible) <sup>23</sup>	Total	
	#	%
White	1,302	79%
Black	98	6%
<i>Black – Caribbean and Latin American</i>	23	1%
<i>Black – African</i>	42	3%
<i>Black – Canadian/American</i>	31	2%
<i>Black – Not specified</i>	2	<1%
South Asian	53	3%
Latin American	52	3%
East Asian	40	2%
South-East Asian	31	2%
West Asian	28	2%
Arab	19	1%
Asian – Not specified	1	<1%
Not Listed <sup>24</sup>	132	8%
<i>Nationality</i>	87	5%
<i>Mixed, multi-racial/cultural (not specified)</i>	11	<1%
<i>Ethnicity or ethno-religious group</i>	10	<1%
<i>Not specified</i> <sup>25</sup>	24	<1%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,652	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,982	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>23</sup> As respondents were able to select more than one answer, percentages may not add up to 100%.

<sup>24</sup> In total, 235 individuals selected the “Not Listed” category, 216 of whom provided a write-in response. Another 26 non-responses (e.g. “animal,” “plant”) were removed from the category and a further 68 references to indigeneity were removed as these respondents were already included as Indigenous respondents. Nine “Caucasian” references were recoded to “White.”

<sup>25</sup> This category includes 19 respondents who did not provide a write-in answer after selecting “Not Listed.”

Table 11 uses a racial disproportionality index (RDI) calculation to determine the extent to which groups were overrepresented or underrepresented amongst those experiencing homelessness. An RDI value of “1” indicates equal representation, a value of over “1” shows an overrepresentation, and a value of under “1” shows an underrepresentation. For further details on this analysis, see page 58 in the methodology section of this report.

**Table 11.** Racial identity by racial disproportionality index (RDI) (2020)

Racial Identity (more than one response possible)	Racial Disproportionality Index
Black	3.7
Latin American	1.7
Arab	1.3
West Asian	0.7
South-East Asian	0.2
South Asian	0.2
East Asian	0.1

Table 12 includes analysis of respondents that selected one or more categories in the racial identity question and provides a cross tabulation of Indigenous respondents who also responded to the racial identity question.

**Table 12.** Multi-racial identities analysis (2020)

Category	Number of Respondents
One racial identity only	1,499
One racialized identity (i.e. excluding white)	238
Two or more racialized identities	15
Racialized identity and white	41
Indigenous identity and one or more racialized identities	41
Indigenous identity and white	226
Not listed multi-racial identities <sup>26</sup>	17
<b>Total Respondents<sup>27</sup></b>	<b>1,652</b>

<sup>26</sup> An additional 17 respondents wrote in an answer to the “not listed” category indicating that they were multi-racial.

<sup>27</sup> Includes the total number of individuals that responded to the racial identity question.

## Age

Survey respondents were asked about their age or what year they were born.

- With 1,463 adults, 67% of respondents who were found to be experiencing homelessness on March 4 were aged 25-54 years.
- Seniors were the second largest group found with 513 individuals or 24% of respondents.
- Of all respondents, 193 or 9% were youth under the age of 25.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 13.** Age groups by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Age Groups	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Youth (under 25 years) <sup>29</sup>	83	7%	110	11%	193	9%
Adults (25-54 years)	766	64%	697	72%	1,463	67%
Seniors (55 years or over)	348	29%	165	17%	513	24%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,197	100%	972	100%	2,169	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,408		57		1,465	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>28</sup> The 2018 Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver found 681 youth experiencing homelessness and demonstrated the limitations of the PiT count methodology in terms of adequately capturing the experiences of precariously housed youth. The results can be found here: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/HomelessnessPublications/2018MetroVancouverYouthHomelessCount.pdf> Similarly, the 2020 Extended Count Pilot on the North Shore found youth were particularly underrepresented on the day of the PiT count. See page 73 of this report for more information.

<sup>29</sup> In 2017, the survey asked individuals if they had children staying with them and if so, these children were then included in the number of people found experiencing homelessness in the region (7 children were included in this manner). Due to a change in the survey question, this enumeration process could not be replicated in 2020. Specifically, the 2020 question changed to past tense and it could not be known whether these individuals were being double counted.

- Adults continue to make up the largest portion of those experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver at 67%, continuing an upward trend starting in 2011.
- Seniors homelessness continues to rise in the region, increasing from 22% in 2017 to 24% of respondents in 2020.
- Youth homelessness in the greater Vancouver area has continued to decrease since 2008, with a decline from 16% of respondents of those experiencing homelessness in 2017 to 9% in 2020.

**Table 14.** Changes in homelessness by age groups (2008-2020)

Age Groups	2008		2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Youth (under 25 years)	364	15%	397	24%	410	20%	386	16%	193	9%
Adults (25-54 years)	1,823	76%	1,000	60%	1,257	62%	1,509	63%	1,463	67%
Seniors (55 years or over)	212	9%	268	16%	371	18%	518	22%	513	24%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	2,399	100%	1,665	100%	2,038	100%	2,408	100%	2,169	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	261		985		739		1,197		1,465	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,660</b>		<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

- A total of 54 children under 19 years of age (2%)<sup>30</sup> and 139 youth between 19 and 24 years (6%) were found experiencing homelessness on March 4, for a total of 193. Young people under 25 years thereby represented 8% of respondents in 2020 compared to 16% in 2017 and 20% in 2014. Young people are the only age group where the count results showed a reduction, continuing a decreasing trend.
- Those over age 55 continue to represent about a quarter (24%) of respondents, which is a slight increase from 23% in 2017. This continues an upward trend in homelessness among seniors.

**Table 15.** Changes in homelessness by age (2011-2020)

Age Groups	2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 19 years	102	6%	191	9%	199	8%	54	2%
19-24 years	221	13%	219	11%	179	8%	139	6%
Youth - unknown age	74	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
25-34 years	275	17%	332	16%	419	18%	422	19%
35-44 years	328	20%	413	20%	504	21%	508	23%
45-54 years	397	24%	512	25%	524	22%	533	25%
55-64 years	210	13%	281	14%	380	16%	380	18%
65+ years	58	3%	90	4%	176	7%	133	6%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,665	100%	2,038	100%	2,381	100%	2,169	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	985		739		1,224		1,465	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Gender Identity and Transgender Experience

Those surveyed were asked what gender they identify with and whether they identify as someone with trans experience (meaning their gender identity is different than what they were assigned at birth).

- Individuals who identified as men made up the largest proportion of those experiencing homelessness in the region, with 73% of respondents overall, or 1,570 individuals, selecting that answer.
- Those who identified as women made up a quarter (25%) of those included in the count, or 546 individuals in total.

<sup>30</sup> Children refers to those who were under 19 years of age and accompanied. Due to changes in the survey questionnaire we were not able to include children under 19 who were found unsheltered with their parents. See footnote 29.

- There were 10 individuals (less than 1%) identified as “non-binary” and 16 individuals (1%) identified as “two-spirit.” Another 16 individuals (1%) selected the “not listed” category in reference to their gender identity.

**Table 16.** Gender identity by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Gender Identity	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Man	859	72%	711	74%	1,570	73%
Woman	316	26%	230	24%	546	25%
Two-spirit	7	1%	9	1%	16	1%
Non-binary	7	1%	3	0%	10	<1%
Not listed	6	1%	10	1%	16	1%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,195	100%	963	100%	2,158	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,410		66		1,476	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

- A total of 546 individuals who answered the survey identified as women and 1,570 individuals identified as men. The proportions of those who identify as men (73%) and women (25%) remained relatively consistent with the past two counts when 72% identified as men and 27% as women.
- A further 42 individuals are included in the non-binary category, representing 2% of respondents.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 17.** Changes in homelessness by gender identity (2011-2020)

Gender Identity	2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Man	1,452	69%	1,419	73%	1,688	72%	1,570	73%
Woman	652	31%	527	27%	628	27%	546	25%
Non-binary <sup>32</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	25	1%	42	2%
Transgender <sup>33</sup>	8	0%	9	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Total Respondents</i>	2,112	100%	1,955	100%	2,341	100%	2,158	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	538		822		1,264		1,476	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>31</sup> For the 2020 data, “non-binary” includes 16 individuals who identified as “two spirit,” 10 individuals who identified as “non-binary” and 16 individuals who selected the “Not Listed” category as outlined in Table 16.

<sup>32</sup> The 2017 survey options for gender identity did not include “two spirit” or “non-binary” as categories, just “man/male,” “woman/female” and “another gender identity.” The 2020 survey included “man,” “woman,” “non-binary,” “two spirit” and “not listed.”

<sup>33</sup> Starting in 2017, a question on transgender identity was included separate from the gender identity question.



- Following a change implemented in the 2019 City of Vancouver homeless count survey, the 2020 Metro Vancouver homeless count survey asked respondents if they identified “as someone with trans experience” as opposed to whether they “identified as transgender,” which was the wording of previous iterations of the count survey.
- In 2020, 85 individuals or 4% of those surveyed identified as having had a trans experience. In 2017, 35 individuals identified as transgender. The increase in this population since 2017 may or may not reflect the change in the wording of the question. The intention of the 2020 question was to allow individuals who identify as men or women to also indicate they may have at one time identified with another gender or as transgender.

**Table 18.** Transgender experience by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Transgender Experience <sup>34</sup>	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No transgender experience	1,145	96%	890	96%	2,035	96%
Transgender experience	44	4%	38	4%	82	4%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,189	100%	928	100%	2,117	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,416		101		1,517	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Sexual Orientation

The survey asked respondents about their sexual orientation. The options respondents could choose from included whether they identified as “straight/heterosexual,” “gay,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” “two-spirit,” “pansexual,” “asexual,” “questioning,” “queer,” or “not listed.” All categories besides “straight/heterosexual” have been combined into a “2SLGBTQIA+” category.

- From all survey respondents, 11% or 220 individuals identified as 2SLGBTQIA+.

**Table 19.** Sexual orientation by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Sexual Orientation	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Straight/Heterosexual	1,051	91%	799	88%	1,850	89%
2SLGBTQIA+	109	9%	111	12%	220	11%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,160	100%	910	100%	2,070	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,445		119		1,564	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>34</sup> Following a question on gender identity, the 2017 survey asked whether individuals identified as “transgender.” Of 2,195 people surveyed, 35 identified as “transgender.” Of those 35 individuals, 19 were sheltered, while 16 were unsheltered.

- The proportion of respondents identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+ increased slightly from 8% in 2017 to 11% in 2020.

**Table 20.** Changes in homelessness by sexual orientation (2017-2020)

Sexual Orientation	2017 <sup>35</sup>		2020	
	#	%	#	%
Straight/Heterosexual	1,933	91%	1,850	89%
2SLGBTQIA+ <sup>36</sup>	173	8%	220	11%
Other	14	1%	n/a	n/a
<i>Total Respondents</i>	2,120	100%	2,070	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,485		1,564	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Length of Time Experiencing Homelessness

Table 21 shows the length of time that individuals had experienced homelessness.

- The duration of time respondents experienced homelessness is varied. The largest share, 38% of respondents, had been experiencing homelessness for 1 year to under 5 years.
- Another 26% had been homeless for less than 6 months.
- A higher proportion of the sheltered population had been homeless for less than six months (33%) compared to the unsheltered respondents (17%), who were more likely to have been homeless for a longer period of time.

**Table 21.** Length of time experiencing homelessness by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Length of Time Homeless	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 6 months	392	33%	156	17%	548	26%
7 days or less	44	4%	30	3%	74	3%
8 days to less than 1 month	59	5%	18	2%	77	4%
1 month to less than 6 months	289	24%	108	12%	397	19%
6 months to less than 1 year	263	22%	180	19%	443	21%
1 year to less than 5 years	395	33%	415	44%	810	38%
5 years or more	132	11%	187	20%	319	15%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,182	100%	938	100%	2,120	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,423		91		1,514	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>35</sup> Retroactive analysis was undertaken on the 2017 data set to verify that cases labelled "other" were self-identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+ as defined in 2020. As a result, the 2017 data as presented slightly deviates from the 2017 count analysis.

<sup>36</sup> Retroactive analysis was undertaken to verify that cases labelled other were self-identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+.

- The number of respondents considered newly homeless (less than one month) decreased from 190 in 2017 to 151 in 2020.
- The proportion of respondents who reported being homeless for one year or more remained relatively stable with 51% in 2017 and 53% in 2020, indicating an ongoing high prevalence of long-term homelessness.

**Table 22.** Changes in length of time experiencing homelessness (2008-2020)

Length of Time Homeless	2008		2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 6 months	828	39%	685	45%	921	51%	778	34%	548	26%
<i>Less than 1 month</i>	272		233		337		190		151	
<i>1 month to less than 6 months</i>	556		452		584		588		397	
6 months to less than 1 year	271	13%	222	15%	145	8%	331	15%	443	21%
1 year or more	1017	48%	610	40%	751	41%	1,153	51%	1,129	53%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	2,116	100%	1,517	100%	1,817	100%	2,262	100%	2,120	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	544		1,133		960		1,343		1,514	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,660</b>		<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Chronic Homelessness

For the first time in 2020, respondents were asked how much time they experienced homelessness over the course of the past year. The government of Canada defines “chronic homelessness” as individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness *and* have either been homeless for more than 180 days of the past year *or* have had “recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past 3 years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months.”<sup>37</sup> To provide a sense of chronic homelessness, the 2020 survey asked about the duration of homelessness over the past year to be used as a proxy for chronic homelessness in this report.

- Using this proxy of chronic homelessness, 74% or 1,494 individuals were found experiencing chronic homelessness in Metro Vancouver.

**Table 23.** Chronic homelessness by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Length of Time Homeless	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
More than 6 months over past year	764	67%	730	83%	1,494	74%
Less than 6 months over past year	377	33%	145	17%	522	26%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,141	100%	875	100%	2,016	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,464		154		1,618	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Length of Time in Community

Table 24 shows the length of time individuals had lived in the communities where they were interviewed.

- People experiencing homelessness are much more likely to be longer-term residents of a community than having moved recently; 60% of those surveyed indicated they had been living in their current community for 5 years or more (1,244 individuals). Of those, 12% had been there for 5 years to under 10 years, 30% for 10 years or more, and 18% had always lived in their community.
- 18% or 384 individuals had been in their current community for 1 year to under 5 years.
- 2% or 46 individuals had been in their community for less than 1 week, 3% or 54 individuals for 1 week to under 1 month, 9% or 180 individuals for 1 month to under 6 months, and 8% or 169 individuals for 6 months to under 1 year.

<sup>37</sup> To view the Government of Canada’s definition of chronic homelessness, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/homelessness/directives.html>

- Similarly, 70% of those surveyed were in their current community prior to experiencing homelessness.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 24.** Length of time in community interviewed by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Length of Time in Community	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 1 week	23	2%	23	3%	46	2%
1 week to under 1 month	44	4%	10	1%	54	3%
1 month to under 6 months	134	12%	46	5%	180	9%
6 months to under 1 year	95	8%	74	8%	169	8%
1 year to under 5 years	205	18%	179	20%	384	18%
5 years or more	663	57%	581	64%	1,244	60%
<i>5 years to under 10 years</i>	146	13%	106	12%	252	12%
<i>10 years or more</i>	341	29%	285	31%	626	30%
<i>Always lived here</i>	176	15%	190	21%	366	18%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,164	100%	913	100%	2,077	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,441		116		1,557	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>38</sup> This figure comes from analyzing the length of time individuals were in their current community and how long they had been experiencing homelessness. Given the wording of the two questions and how they may have been interpreted, this should be viewed as an approximation of whether an individual moved to their current community before or after becoming homeless.

- Those who had been in their current community for more than 10 years continue to represent approximately half of those experiencing homelessness in the region at 48% or 992 individuals.
- The proportion of individuals living in their current community for less than 1 year and from 1 year to under 5 years remained consistent from 2017 to 2020 at 22% and 18% respectively.
- Those who had been in their current community for 5 years to under 10 years rose slightly from 10% in 2017 to 12% in 2020.

**Table 25.** Changes in length of time in community interviewed (2008-2020)

Length of Time in Community	2008		2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than 1 year	416	20%	379	25%	373	21%	496	22%	449	22%
1 year to under 5 years	409	19%	296	19%	296	17%	401	18%	384	18%
5 years to under 10 years	312	15%	198	13%	189	11%	227	10%	252	12%
10 years or more	972	46%	645	42%	911	51%	1,138	50%	992	48%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	2,109	100%	1,518	100%	1,769	100%	2,262	100%	2,077	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	551		1,132		1,008		1,343		1,557	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,660</b>		<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

- A total of 1,711 respondents identified as being relatively new to the community they were interviewed, meaning they had not always lived in their current community.
- For those new to their current community in this sense, the majority (58% or 1,003 individuals) had previously been somewhere in British Columbia with 30% from elsewhere in Metro Vancouver, 22% from the rest of B.C., and 5% from the Fraser Valley.
- There were 604 individuals or 35% who indicated they had lived somewhere else in Canada before coming to their current community and 7% or 126 individuals who came from another country.
- Settlement patterns vary strongly by community. For the two largest communities in Metro Vancouver, of those who were interviewed in Vancouver, close to half (47%) reported coming from somewhere else in Canada, while those in Surrey were more likely to have resettled from within Metro Vancouver (43%).

**Table 26.** Previous location if new to community by current community (2020)

Previous Community	Current Community						Total Respondents	
	Respondents in Surrey		Respondents in Vancouver		Respondents in other communities			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Rest of Canada	85	24%	417	47%	102	20%	604	35%
Metro Vancouver	155	43%	110	12%	263	51%	528	30%
Rest of B.C. <sup>39</sup>	61	17%	238	27%	62	12%	361	21%
Another Country	27	8%	76	9%	23	4%	126	7%
Fraser Valley	26	7%	28	3%	65	13%	93	5%
B.C. Unknown	3	1%	16	2%	2	0%	21	1%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	357	100%	885	100%	517	100%	1,733	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	287		1,210		378		1,901	
<b>Total</b>	<b>644</b>		<b>2,095</b>		<b>895</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>39</sup> The "rest of B.C." category includes those who identified their previous community as a community within B.C., while the "B.C. Unknown" category includes those who specified B.C. but not the exact community. It is unknown if those included in the latter category were referring to Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, or somewhere else in B.C.

## Health Conditions

The survey asked respondents about their health, and specifically whether they had a medical condition, physical disability, addiction and/or mental illness. Included as an option for the first time in 2020, participants were also asked whether they had a “learning disability or cognitive impairment.” Medical condition refers to chronic problems like asthma and diabetes, while physical disability refers to a condition affecting mobility or movement. All health conditions were self-reported.

- Of all respondents, 60% indicated that they had an addiction<sup>40</sup>, 46% had a medical condition or illness, another 46% identified an issue with mental health and 36% noted they had a physical disability.
- There were 506 individuals, or 23% of respondents, who indicated they had a “learning disability or cognitive impairment.”
- Notable differences between the sheltered and unsheltered population were a higher reported prevalence of addictions (53% vs. 70%) and mental health issues (42% vs. 51%).

**Table 27.** Health conditions by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Health Conditions (more than one response possible)	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Addiction	632	53%	674	70%	1,306	60%
Medical condition/illness	571	48%	420	44%	991	46%
Mental health issue	499	42%	491	51%	990	46%
Physical disability	446	37%	340	35%	786	36%
Learning disability or cognitive impairment	259	22%	247	26%	506	23%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,200		960		2,160	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,405		69		1,474	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>40</sup> The category of addiction may include those who use cigarettes, alcohol or other substances.



- Incidences of health conditions across all four categories saw a slight increase in 2020 over the past two counts. The greatest increases were reported among those reporting a mental health issue (38% in 2017 to 46% in 2020) and addictions (53% in 2017 to 60% in 2020).
- No comparative data exists for the learning disability or cognitive impairment category as 2020 was the first year it was included in the survey.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 28.** Changes in health conditions (2011-2020)

Health Conditions (more than one response possible)	2011		2014		2017		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Addiction	608	46%	871	49%	1,172	53%	1,306	60%
Medical condition/illness	470	36%	723	41%	967	44%	991	46%
Mental health issue	463	35%	610	34%	848	38%	990	46%
Physical disability	712	54%	507	29%	742	33%	786	36%
Learning disability or cognitive impairment	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	506	23%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,314		1,775		2,221		2,160	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,336		1,002		1,384		1,474	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,650</b>		<b>2,777</b>		<b>3,605</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

- The following table outlines the incidences of multiple health conditions across respondents. The table includes all categories of health conditions, including the new category of “learning disability or cognitive impairment.”<sup>42</sup>
- The majority of those who responded to the health question identified as having two or more health conditions (63% or 1,350 individuals), followed by one health condition (24%).
- There were 289 individuals, or 13%, who indicated they had no health conditions at the time of the count.

**Table 29.** Incidence of health conditions by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Number of Health Conditions	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No health conditions	201	17%	88	9%	289	13%
One health condition	287	24%	234	24%	521	24%
Two or more health conditions	712	59%	638	66%	1,350	63%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,200	100%	960	100%	2,160	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,405		69		1,474	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>41</sup> It is unclear whether individuals who selected “learning disability or cognitive impairment” would have included this health condition under another category in the past (e.g. medical condition/illness) should the category of “learning disability or cognitive impairment” not have been provided.

<sup>42</sup> As the category of “learning disability or cognitive impairment” was added to the health question for the first time, the total number of health categories changed and therefore it was not possible to provide trend data for this analysis.

- Individuals who have been experiencing homelessness for a year or more are more likely to have a health condition than those who have been homeless for less than a year.
- While evident across all health conditions, this was most pronounced for individuals who had been homeless for a year or more and reported having an addiction (67%), compared with 53% of individuals who had been homeless for less than a year and also reported an addiction.

**Table 30.** Health condition by length of time homeless (2020)

Health Conditions (more than one response possible)	Length of Time Homeless					
	Less than a year		One year or more		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Addiction	513	53%	740	67%	1,253	60%
Medical condition/illness	437	45%	528	48%	965	46%
Mental health issue	420	43%	528	48%	948	46%
Physical disability	304	31%	461	42%	765	37%
Learning disability or cognitive impairment	199	20%	281	25%	480	23%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	976		1,107		2,083	
Don't Know/No Answer	15		22		37	
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>991</b>		<b>1,129</b>		<b>2,120</b>	

For the first time in the Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver, the survey included a question on acquired brain injury (e.g. from injury related to an accident, violence, an overdose, stroke or brain tumour).

- More than one in four (27%) respondents or 564 individuals identified as having an acquired brain injury.

**Table 31.** Acquired brain injury by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Acquired Brain Injury	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No acquired brain injury	866	75%	637	70%	1,503	73%
Acquired brain injury	287	25%	277	30%	564	27%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,153	100%	914	100%	2,067	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	1,452		115		1,567	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

## Age First Time Experiencing Homelessness

Individuals were asked what age they were when they first experienced homelessness. If this was someone’s first episode of homelessness, they would have provided their current age.

- Irrespective of their current age, 43% of respondents (884 individuals) experienced homelessness for the first time before the age of 25. Close to one third of all survey respondents (29%) indicated they had experienced homelessness for the first time before the age of 19.
- For respondents aged 55 years and over, 45% experienced homelessness for the first time as a senior.
- Age 16 was the most commonly listed age when respondents experienced homelessness for the first time, with 109 respondents indicating as such.

**Table 32.** Age first time experiencing homelessness by age group (2020)

Age First Time Homeless	Youth (under 25 years)		Adults (25-54 years)		Seniors (55 years or over)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 19 years	116	65%	412	30%	63	13%	591	29%
19-24 years	62	35%	200	15%	31	6%	293	14%
25-34 years	0	0%	327	24%	29	6%	356	18%
35-44 years	0	0%	265	19%	36	8%	301	15%
45-54 years	0	0%	175	13%	105	22%	280	14%
55-64 years	0	0%	0	0%	167	35%	167	8%
65+ years	0	0%	0	0%	46	10%	46	2%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	178	100%	1,379	100%	477	100%	2,034	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	15		84		70		169	
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>		<b>1,463</b>		<b>547</b>		<b>2,203</b>	

## Sources of Income

Respondents were asked to identify their sources of income and were encouraged to identify as many sources as apply. For the first time in 2020, surveyors were asked to read the full list of potential income sources rather than checking only those named unprompted by respondents (see footnote 43).

- There is a wide range of income sources accessed by those experiencing homelessness. The three most commonly cited sources of income included “welfare/income assistance” at 51% (1,098 individuals), “disability benefits” at 30% (637 individuals), and “binning, bottle collecting” at 21% (454 individuals).

- A total of 458 individuals<sup>43</sup> (21%) indicated they were working full-time, part-time, and/or casually at the time of the count. A total of 239 were working a casual job, 176 (8%) were employed part-time, and 103 (5%) were employed full-time.
- When comparing the sheltered and unsheltered populations, unsheltered individuals were more likely to source part of their income through informal means, such as retrieving recyclables from bins (binning) (30%) or panhandling (20%) than those found sheltered. Those who were sheltered were more likely to be part-time (10%) or full-time (7%) employed.

**Table 33.** Sources of income by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Sources of Income (more than one response possible) <sup>44</sup>	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Welfare/income assistance	583	49%	515	54%	1,098	51%
Disability benefits (e.g. PWD, PPMB)	372	31%	265	28%	637	30%
Binning, bottle collecting	166	14%	288	30%	454	21%
GST/HST refund	260	22%	138	15%	398	19%
Money from family/friends	150	13%	145	15%	295	14%
Panhandling	69	6%	191	20%	260	12%
Job casual (e.g. contract work)	151	13%	88	9%	239	11%
Vending	67	6%	142	15%	209	10%
Other sources <sup>45</sup>	90	8%	95	10%	185	9%
Job part time	119	10%	57	6%	176	8%
CPP or other pension	122	10%	47	5%	169	8%
No income	64	5%	71	7%	135	6%
Job full time	80	7%	23	2%	103	5%
Old age security (OAS)/guaranteed income supplement (GIS)	59	5%	35	4%	94	4%
Employment insurance	39	3%	6	1%	45	2%
Child and family tax benefits	32	3%	2	0%	34	2%
Youth agreement	6	1%	3	0%	9	0%
Veteran/VAC benefits	4	0%	1	0%	5	0%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,190		949		2,139	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,415		80		1,495	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>43</sup> As respondents could select more than one answer to the sources of income question, this number accounts for multiple responses and provides the number of unique individuals who were employed in some capacity.

<sup>44</sup> To align more closely with the federal methodology, this year surveyors read each item on the list to respondents and indicated which options applied. In past years, respondents were asked an open-ended question and surveyors selected the answers that best matched what was described. This may have skewed the data in an unknown direction.

<sup>45</sup> For those that wrote in an answer in the "other" income category, 14 individuals listed a form of sex work.

Table 34 identifies the number of income sources accessed by sheltered and unsheltered respondents. Some basic income supports are available to all British Columbians, but may not be accessed by all.

- Of respondents who reported income sources, 57% or 1,154 individuals were accessing more than one source and were still experiencing homelessness.

**Table 34.** Number of sources of income by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Number of Sources of Income	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
More than one source	547	61%	607	64%	1,154	57%
One source	350	39%	534	56%	884	43%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>120%</b>	<b>2,038</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Service Usage

Homeless count survey participants were asked what services they had used in the past 12 months. Individuals experiencing homelessness used a variety of services, including health, housing, addiction, employment and other services, over the course of the past year. However, the use of services is not only dictated by an individual’s needs but also the availability of services, which varies widely between communities.

For the first time in 2020 surveyors were asked to read the full list of services rather than checking only those named unprompted (see footnote 43).

- Health services were among the most commonly accessed services: 58% of the respondents had used an emergency room in the past year; 49% had used the hospital for non-emergencies; 44% had been in an ambulance; and, 51% had used a health clinic. In all cases, the sheltered population used these health services more than the unsheltered.
- Food services, which includes meal programs and food banks, were another highly accessed service, used by 60% of the respondents.
- Housing services, seeking to connect individuals to available housing, were used by 52% of respondents – a share notably higher among the sheltered (58%) than the unsheltered (44%).
- Overall people in the unsheltered population were less likely to use any of the listed services with the exception of supervised injection sites and other addiction services.

**Table 35.** Services used by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Services Used (more than one response possible) <sup>46</sup>	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Food services	629	55%	590	66%	1,219	60%
Emergency room	688	60%	485	55%	1,173	58%
Housing services	665	58%	387	44%	1,052	52%
Health clinic	620	54%	423	48%	1,043	51%
Hospital (non-emergency)	585	51%	411	46%	996	49%
Ambulance	519	45%	383	43%	902	44%
Employment and financial services	512	45%	319	36%	831	41%
Legal services	341	30%	261	29%	602	30%
Mental health services	350	31%	240	27%	590	29%
(Other) addiction services	291	25%	251	28%	542	27%
Supervised injection site	244	21%	279	31%	523	26%
Dental clinic or dentist	324	28%	148	17%	472	23%
Other	134	12%	73	8%	207	10%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,147		889		2,036	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,458		140		1,598	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>46</sup> There was a change to the survey regarding service usage whereby surveyors were asked to read each item on the list to survey respondents and indicate which services applied. This is a deviation from past years where respondents were asked an open-ended question and surveyors selected the answers on the list that best matched what the respondent described. This may have skewed the data in an upward direction across all categories.

## Reasons for Experiencing Homelessness

For the first time in 2020, respondents were asked the reason they lost their housing most recently.

- The three most common answers were “not enough income for housing” at 28%, “addiction/substance use” at 19%, and “landlord/tenant conflict” at 16%, with little difference between the sheltered and unsheltered populations.

**Table 36.** Reason for most recent housing loss by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Reason for housing loss (more than one response possible)	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Housing and financial issue</b>						
Not enough income for housing	352	30%	229	25%	581	28%
Landlord/tenant conflict	189	16%	140	15%	329	16%
Unfit/unsafe housing condition	136	12%	91	10%	227	11%
Left the community	65	6%	65	7%	130	6%
Building sold or renovated	59	5%	39	4%	98	5%
Complaint (e.g. pets, noise)	36	3%	35	4%	71	3%
Owner moved in	20	2%	6	1%	26	1%
<b>Interpersonal and family issues</b>						
Conflict with spouse/partner	155	13%	121	13%	276	13%
Conflict with other	113	10%	80	9%	193	9%
Conflict with parent/guardian	55	5%	80	9%	135	6%
Death or departure of family member	55	5%	59	6%	114	5%
Experienced abuse by spouse/partner	47	4%	40	4%	87	4%
Experienced abuse by other	33	3%	21	2%	54	3%
Experienced discrimination	38	3%	29	3%	67	3%
Experienced abuse by parent/guardian	25	2%	22	2%	47	2%
<b>Health or corrections</b>						
Addiction/substance use issue	201	17%	204	22%	405	19%
Mental health issue	99	8%	82	9%	181	9%
Physical health issue	97	8%	55	6%	152	7%
Incarceration (jail or prison)	47	4%	60	6%	107	5%
Hospitalizations or treatment program	41	3%	21	2%	62	3%
<b>Other reason<sup>47</sup></b>	174	15%	168	18%	342	16%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,173		931		2,104	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,432		98		1,530	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>47</sup> For those that wrote in a response in the “other” category, there were diverse answers provided, including loss of a loved one, home/community fires, violence, abuse, robbery and accidents. With 342 write-in responses, it is clear that the reasons why an individual may find themselves without a home are complex and greatly varied.

## Ministry Care

Survey respondents were asked whether they are or have in the past been “in foster care, in a youth group home, or on an Independent Living Agreement” – each of which constitute being “in Ministry care.” This question was intended to determine what proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness had spent time as children or youth in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (or a comparable Ministry in another province).

- Results showed that 32% of respondents (672 individuals) had been previously or were at the time of the homeless count in foster care, in a youth group home, or on an Independent Living Agreement.

**Table 37.** Ministry care as child or youth by age group (2020)

Ministry Care	Youth (under 25 years)		Adults (25-54 years)		Seniors (55 years or over)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not formerly/currently in Ministry care	105	55%	922	65%	402	82%	1,429	68%
Formerly/currently in Ministry care	85	45%	496	35%	91	18%	672	32%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	190	100%	1,418	100%	493	100%	2,101	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	3		45		54		102	
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>193</b>		<b>1,463</b>		<b>547</b>		<b>2,203</b>	

- While 53% of Indigenous respondents indicated they had been in Ministry care as a youth or child, 21% of non-Indigenous respondents had.
- There is an overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care, with more children in government care in this country now than when the residential school system was at its height.<sup>48</sup>

**Table 38.** Ministry care child or youth by Indigenous identity (2020)

Ministry Care	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not formerly/currently in Ministry care	324	47%	1,088	79%	1,412	68%
Formerly/currently in Ministry care	372	53%	288	21%	660	32%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	696	100%	1,376	100%	2,072	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	15		41		56	
<b>Total Indigenous Respondents</b>	<b>711</b>		<b>1,417</b>		<b>2,128</b>	

<sup>48</sup> For more information on Indigenous children in government care, see: [https://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/docs/fact%20sheets/child%20and%20youth/NCCAH\\_fs\\_childhealth\\_EN.pdf](https://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/docs/fact%20sheets/child%20and%20youth/NCCAH_fs_childhealth_EN.pdf)



## Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces or RCMP

Survey participants were asked whether they had served in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the RCMP, in order to better understand homelessness among veterans.

- A total of 5% of respondents or 103 individuals had served in the Canadian Armed Forces and 1% or 12 individuals had served with the RCMP.<sup>49</sup>

**Table 39.** Veterans of Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Canadian Armed Forces or RCMP (more than one response possible)	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No armed forces service	1,109	94%	876	95%	1,985	95%
Canadian Armed Forces	63	5%	40	4%	103	5%
RCMP	8	1%	4	0%	12	1%
<i>Total Respondents</i> <sup>50</sup>	1,178		920		2,098	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,427		109		1,536	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>49</sup> The question on veterans changed from 2017 to 2020 to the extent that a trend table could not be created. For comparison, in 2017, 94 individuals or 4% had experience in the Canadian Armed Forces and 3 individuals in the RCMP.

<sup>50</sup> Two respondents served in both, the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP.

## Immigrants or Refugees to Canada

An amended question on newcomers was introduced in 2020 to learn whether homelessness prevention services could better accommodate people who arrived as refugees or refugee claimants.<sup>51</sup> Respondents were asked whether they “came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or a refugee claimant.”

- Table 40 shows that 86% of respondents were not immigrants, refugees or refugee claimants, while 14% of survey respondents or 290 individuals came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or refugee claimant.

**Table 40.** Immigrants and refugees by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Immigrants and Refugees	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Not an immigrant or refugee	986	83%	865	91%	1,851	86%
Immigrants and Refugees	205	17%	85	9%	290	14%
<i>Immigrant</i>	145	12%	67	7%	212	10%
<i>Refugee</i>	25	2%	5	1%	30	1%
<i>Refugee claimant</i>	23	2%	2	0%	25	1%
<i>Did not further specify</i>	12	1%	11	1%	23	1%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,178		920		2,098	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,427		109		1,536	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

- Of those who came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or refugee claimant (see Table 40), the majority, or 77%, had been in Canada for 10 years or more.

**Table 41.** Length of time in Canada by Immigrants and Refugees (2020)

Length of Time in Canada	Immigrants and Refugees	
	#	%
Under 6 months	15	6%
6 months to under 1 year	5	2%
1 year to under 5 years	24	9%
5 years to under 10 years	15	6%
10 years or more	200	77%
<b>Total Respondents<sup>52</sup></b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>51</sup> A refugee claimant is someone who is applying for refugee status or is an asylum seeker.

<sup>52</sup> 259 out of 290 immigrants, refugees and refugee claimants provided a response to the follow-up question on length of time in Canada if “new” to Canada.

## Accompanying People Experiencing Homelessness

Respondents were asked if anyone had stayed with them on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>53</sup> If they were with someone, they were asked to identify who that person was.

- The majority, 83% or 1,792 individuals, had been alone, while 17% or 370 individuals had been with someone else.
- Of those who were not alone, 8% had been with a partner/spouse, 3% with their child/children, and 2% with a pet.

**Table 42.** Anyone staying with you by sheltered and unsheltered respondents (2020)

Staying with You on March 3rd	Sheltered		Unsheltered		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Alone	1,063	89%	729	76%	1,792	83%
Not alone (more than one response possible)	137	11%	233	24%	370	17%
<i>With partner/spouse</i>	59	5%	119	12%	178	8%
<i>Not listed</i>	19	2%	67	7%	86	4%
<i>With children</i>	44	4%	14	1%	58	3%
<i>With pet</i>	22	2%	29	3%	51	2%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1,200		962		2,162	
Don't Know/No Answer	1,405		67		1,472	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>		<b>1,029</b>		<b>3,634</b>	

<sup>53</sup> This was a shift to align with the federal wording for this question. The 2017 equivalent question asked if respondents had anyone with them at the time of the survey.

## Where the Unsheltered Respondents Stayed

As part of the unsheltered survey, respondents were asked where they had stayed the previous night and whether they had stayed in a shelter in the last 12 months

- Of those who indicated they were unsheltered on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the majority (55%) said they had stayed “outside.”
- Another 18% had stayed at “someone else’s place” i.e. were couch-surfing, and 14% said they stayed in a “makeshift shelter or tent.”

**Table 43.** Where unsheltered respondents stayed (2020)

Location on March 3rd	Unsheltered Total	
	#	%
Outside	538	55%
Someone else's place	180	18%
Makeshift shelter or tent	135	14%
Vehicle <sup>54</sup>	76	8%
Abandoned/vacant building	35	4%
Parent(s) or guardian's house	18	2%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	982	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	47	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,029</b>	

## If Unsheltered Respondents Had Recently Stayed in a Shelter

The unsheltered/street survey included a question asking respondents if they had stayed in a shelter in the last 12 months. This question helps determine whether the unsheltered respondents used shelter services.

- There were 487 of the unsheltered respondents, or 51%, who indicated that they had not stayed in a shelter in the last 12 months. This indicates gathering information on the homeless population using only shelter data would miss a large proportion of the homeless population.

**Table 44.** Unsheltered respondents who stayed in a homeless shelter in the last 12 months (2020)

Stayed in a Shelter in the Last 12 Months	Unsheltered Total	
	#	%
No	487	51%
Yes	465	49%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	952	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	77	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,029</b>	

<sup>54</sup> Of the 76 individuals who stayed in vehicles on the night of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 59 further specified what type of vehicle they stayed in; 20 stayed in an RV, 17 in a car, 9 in a van, 7 in a truck, and 6 on a boat.

## Sub-Region by Age Groups

**Table 45.** Sub-region by age groups (2020)

Sub-regions	Youth (under 25 years)		Adults (25-54 years)		Seniors (55 years or over)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Burnaby	2	1%	48	3%	25	5%	75	3%
Delta	2	1%	8	1%	2	0%	12	1%
Langley	25	13%	108	7%	31	6%	164	8%
New Westminster	3	2%	56	4%	12	2%	71	3%
North Shore	6	3%	43	3%	24	5%	73	3%
Richmond	4	2%	41	3%	23	4%	68	3%
Ridge Meadows	10	5%	54	4%	16	3%	80	4%
Surrey	33	17%	316	22%	111	22%	460	21%
Tri-Cities	4	2%	40	3%	16	3%	60	3%
Vancouver	104	54%	744	51%	248	48%	1,096	51%
White Rock	0	0%	5	0%	5	1%	10	0%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,169</b>	<b>100%</b>

## IV. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

This section describes the methodology of the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. It also provides an overview of the limitations of the data represented above.

### Point-In-Time Approach

The 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver followed the same basic methodology and protocols used in previous counts in the region. The count took place over a 24-hour period to provide a “snapshot” of homelessness during that time and included both a shelter and street count as described below. To ensure consistency with previous research, the count was conducted in early March.

### Shelter Count

The shelter count took place on the evening of Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020. This part of the count involved obtaining information from individuals staying overnight in emergency homelessness shelters, Emergency Weather Response shelters (EWRs), transition houses for women and children fleeing violence, safe houses, detox facilities, and people with no fixed address (NFA) staying in hospitals and jails.

EWR shelters were open across the region for the second time in the history of homeless counts in Metro Vancouver. As in 2017, EWR shelters were included in the count but represented challenges in terms of clearly delineating which clients were staying in EWR beds versus regular beds. The separation of surveys by shelter types was a bigger problem in some communities over others. As such, unlike in 2017, EWR survey responses were not analyzed separate from general shelter respondents. EWR respondents are included in the sheltered sample.

Volunteer interviewers were assigned to shelters unless a shelter wanted their own staff to conduct the interviews. As in past years, transition houses, youth safe houses and detox facilities had staff conduct the interviews.

To ensure that the count was as accurate as possible, each emergency shelter, transition house for women and children fleeing violence, youth safe house and detox facility was asked to complete a “shelter statistics form” to record the total number of people who stayed overnight on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Not all clients in the shelters agreed to or were available to be surveyed; however, because of the shelter statistics form, the total number of people staying in a shelter facility was available. The shelter statistics form includes information on the capacity and total number of occupants for adults, unaccompanied youth and accompanied children. The number of individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness is solely derived from the shelter statistics form to ensure no one is double counted if they are interviewed the day after the shelter count.

Similar to the shelter statistics form, jails and hospitals provided basic demographic data (age and gender) and a person-by-person tally of individuals with no fixed address (NFA) staying in jail cells on the night of March 3.

A complete list of shelter and “no fixed address” locations participating in the count is included on page 60.

### Street Count

The street count began early in the morning on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 and was implemented throughout the day and evening. The street count included interviews with individuals experiencing homelessness who were found that day and who were experiencing homelessness according to the definition used by the count, based on a set of screening questions.

The street count focused on finding people in public areas or locations where people who are homeless were likely to be found, including certain streets, alleys, parks, bottle depots, and places where services and programs were available, such as meal programs and drop-in centres. “Area Co-ordinators” identified these locations for each community in partnership with community agencies, outreach workers and municipal staff prior to the count.

Volunteer interviewers, working in teams of two, were assigned to specific locations and given maps and/or instructions to look for people experiencing homelessness and to conduct a survey with them. Most volunteer shifts ranged between two to three hours.

As part of the street survey, respondents were asked where they had stayed the previous night. The purpose was to determine if the individual met the definition of homelessness being used for the count and subsequently qualified for the rest of the survey. Individuals who reported staying in a shelter, safe house, transition house, detox, or hospital were asked if they had already completed a homeless count survey on the evening of March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Only if they had not already participated in the survey, were they given the opportunity to answer questions on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

People who stayed at someone else’s place, without a place of their own where they paid rent were also considered homeless and “screened in.” For those who indicated they had stayed at a “parent’s or guardian’s house” on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, respondents were asked a follow-up question to determine whether they could safely stay as long as they wanted at that location. For those who said the situation was temporary and they did not have a house or apartment they could safely return to, they were counted into the count.<sup>55</sup>

### Survey Design and Administration

Two survey instruments were used for the homeless count: a street survey and a shelter survey. They are similar and can be reviewed on page 65.

As in past years, some questions were altered, some removed and some new questions added to the 2020 survey. For the first time, all homeless counts in the province aligned in 2020. As a result, the committee placed additional emphasis on aligning methodologies in consideration of federal

---

<sup>55</sup> This is in contrast to 2017 where youth under the age of 25 who were living at home with a parent were not considered homeless, whereas an adult “couch surfing” at their parent’s home was considered homeless. This assumed that youth were more likely to be able to live at home with their parents than adults but did not consider whether a youth actually felt safe returning to their parent/guardian’s home.

guiding questions (Reaching Home), BC Count requirements and longitudinal consistency in Metro Vancouver, while responding to upcoming priorities.

To meet these requirements, the following questions were added (compared to 2017):

- "In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)?"
- "Do you have an Acquired Brain Injury?"
- "What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?"
- Added the category of "Learning Disability or Cognitive Impairment" as answer option on the health challenges question.
- The 2020 Homeless Count introduced a series of questions to capture the racial identities of people experiencing homelessness in the region. This was developed in partnership with Hogan's Alley Society and Dr. Carl James, Jean Augustine Chair in Education, Community & Diaspora at York University.

To keep the survey to a reasonable length the following questions were removed (compared to 2017):

- "Is this your first period of homelessness?"
- "How many times in the past year have you been homeless, incl. this time?"
- "What do you think is keeping you from finding a place of your own?"
- "If you did NOT stay in a shelter, safe house or transition house-last night, what is the MAIN reason why? Check only one."
- "What is your first language?"



## Volunteer Interviewers

There were 1,226 volunteers who participated in the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. Volunteers included some professional outreach staff who were able to participate in the count as part of their employment. Volunteers registered online. Table 46 shows the number of volunteers for each municipal sub-region for this and past counts. Lower volunteer numbers may have been offset by multiple or longer volunteer shifts.

**Table 46.** Number of deployed volunteers (2011-2020)

Sub-region	2011	2014	2017	2020
Burnaby	99	90	105	54
Delta	16	8	12	26
Langley	37	45	48	39
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	33	40	34	52
New Westminster	70	36	46	33
North Shore	19	51	42	50
Richmond	39	54	30	41
Surrey/White Rock	77	162	115	103
Tri-Cities	52	39	45	32
Vancouver	173	330	335	352
Indigenous Count	76	60	70	186
Shelter Count	<i>included above</i>	<i>included above</i>	172	258
<b>Total</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,226</b>

All volunteers were required to attend a two-hour training session to learn how to conduct the survey, how to approach people experiencing homelessness, and how to stay safe during the count. Volunteers were instructed to pick up their count package 30 minutes before their shift from their local volunteer hub. Packages included one button for each volunteer, a clipboard, plastic cover, at least 10 surveys, detailed instructions for completing the survey (which were reviewed during a training session), a pen, instructions about their route and/or a map, as well as icebreakers (to be used to initiate conversation).

People approached by volunteers were offered icebreakers prior to being asked to participate in a survey, rather than after completing a survey, to ensure nobody had an incentive to complete an interview more than once. For the first time during the homeless count in Metro Vancouver, volunteers were trained to use a combination of candies and tobacco ties as icebreakers. Tobacco ties are small pouches of ceremonial tobacco that are used traditionally by some Indigenous communities in Canada. In previous counts, cigarettes were utilized to establish a trusting relationship with those experiencing homelessness, but given the health risks associated with cigarette use, the decision was made to transition away from their inclusion in the count. Volunteers who were likely to encounter youth were provided with bus tickets to offer, instead of tobacco ties.

Volunteers were instructed to wear volunteer count buttons at all times during their shift so they could be identified as part of the count. Similar to homeless counts in previous years, other than 2011, volunteers were advised to try and wake up a person who was sleeping so the person would have the opportunity to be included in the count. Volunteers were also instructed to stop an interview immediately if they were approached by the media and to protect the privacy of the person they were interviewing.

### Additional Strategies

As in past years, InFocus Consulting led the Indigenous Homeless Count by working in partnership with the Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee (IHSC) and Indigenous service providers across the region. The 2020 Indigenous Count<sup>56</sup> was more expansive than previous counts as it included additional communities, agencies, volunteers, and routes.

Building on lessons learned from the 2017 Homeless Count and the 2018 Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver, the 2020 count included a broad school strategy whereby school districts across the region were included in the surveying process. Throughout February, counselors and youth workers were trained to use the survey instrument and on March 4<sup>th</sup> obtained information from youth experiencing homelessness in schools across Metro Vancouver.

## Survey Participation

### Shelter Count

The shelter response rate for the 2020 homeless count was 41%. A total of 2,444 individuals were found staying in a shelter facility including emergency shelters, transition houses for women and children fleeing abuse, safe houses and detoxes. A total of 997 individuals were surveyed.

This response rate of 41% was lower than the 2017 homeless count, when 55% of the sheltered respondents (1,354 out of 2,463) were surveyed. That is despite higher numbers of shelter volunteers than in past years. It has been suggested that finding ways to improve the response rate for the sheltered respondents should be a priority in planning for the next homeless count, including by reducing the number of questions to increase the survey frequency per volunteer, and the participation and survey completion rate.

### Street Count

It is not possible to provide a response rate for the unsheltered respondents because the total population is not known. A respondent was screened out if they provided some information, but did not provide explicit consent to use their information, reported that they had already answered a survey, or currently had a place to stay where they paid rent. These individuals are not included in the count.

---

<sup>56</sup> Data collected through the Indigenous Homeless Count is included in this report i.e. Indigenous respondents are included in the main dataset for the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. Additional analysis specifically focused on Indigenous respondents and their experiences will be released by the Community Entity for Greater Vancouver in a separate report.

## Racial Disproportionality Index Calculation

Table 11 of this report includes a racial disproportionality index (RDI) calculation. The intention of this calculation is to get a sense of a racial group’s overrepresentation or underrepresentation amongst those experiencing homelessness in the region compared to their presence in the general population in Metro Vancouver. To determine this, the calculation utilizes 2016 census data on the visible minority population in the Vancouver census metropolitan area (CMA).<sup>57</sup> An RDI value of “1” indicates equal representation, a value of over “1” shows an overrepresentation, and a value of under “1” shows an underrepresentation.

The racial disproportionality index is calculated as follows<sup>58</sup>:

$$\text{Disproportionality} = \frac{\left( \frac{\# \text{ of racial group homeless count respondents}}{\# \text{ of total homeless count respondents}} \right)}{\left( \frac{\# \text{ of visible minority group census respondents}}{\# \text{ of total visible minority group census respondents}} \right)}$$

Calculation of racial disproportionality index for homeless count survey respondents:

Racial Identity (more than one response possible)	Number of 2020 Homeless Count Respondents	Number of 2016 Census Respondents <sup>59</sup>	Racial Disproportionality Index
Black	98	29,830	3.7
Latin American	52	34,805	1.7
Arab	19	16,430	1.3
West Asian	28	46,010	0.7
South-East Asian <sup>60</sup>	31	168,075	0.2
South Asian	53	291,005	0.2
East Asian <sup>61</sup>	40	557,745	0.1
<b>Total Respondents<sup>62</sup></b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>2,426,235</b>	

<sup>57</sup> It should be noted that the census questions on Indigenous and racial identity differ from the equivalent homeless count survey questions in important ways. The census visible minority categories include only respondents who selected one racial identity. Those who select more than one answer option are included in a separate “multiple visible minorities” category. Conversely, the homeless count survey did not limit the number of racial groups the respondents could identify with.

<sup>58</sup> For more information about this analysis, see page 47 of the Government of Ontario’s guide: *Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism*, found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>

<sup>59</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. *Vancouver [CMA]. Census Profile*. Visible minority population. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Census data includes Filipino.

<sup>61</sup> Census data includes Chinese, Korean, Japanese.

<sup>62</sup> In the total number of visible minority respondents, the 2016 census includes people who reported “Yes” to the Aboriginal group question, as well as people who were not considered to be members of a visible minority group. In

## Limitations

While the homeless count methodology is generally considered to produce an undercount of those experiencing homelessness, various other factors may have also impacted the accuracy of the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver.

### Community Geography

Seventeen distinct communities participate in the Metro Vancouver homeless count and with a wide variety of local terrain, certain circumstances may impact a community's ability to locate and include all those experiencing homelessness in their community.

Low-density neighbourhoods, forests, shorelines, and park land are especially difficult for volunteers to cover even with teams being deployed in cars and on bicycles. Professional park rangers and by-law officers provide some support for the count in many communities, but even so, areas with more complex terrain may see lower count numbers purely given the nature of the space that needs to be covered.

### COVID-19

The 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver took place about two weeks before British Columbia declared a provincial state of emergency. While the pandemic did not directly impact the implementation of the count, the landscape of homelessness has changed significantly since March 2020. As a result, the data included in this report may no longer adequately reflect the realities of homelessness in the region. The data in this report does, however, provide a baseline for homelessness prior to the pandemic.

### Hidden Homelessness

Service providers have continued to express concern that certain populations are less likely to be found through the PiT count method given the nature of certain groups' experiences with homelessness. In particular, those who are couch-surfing might not be encountered on the streets or inside/near a service provider on count day and therefore would be less likely to be included in the demographics of the count. For this reason, service providers who work closely with youth and/or women have highlighted that those they serve may be disproportionately underrepresented by the format of the count.

### Length of Survey

Each year the homeless count survey is developed with competing demands. A balance must be struck between inclusion of questions related to important (often longitudinal) data points and keeping the length of the survey manageable for those who have to answer it. The longer the survey becomes, the longer the interview takes and the more likely respondents are to stop answering questions. As a result, questions towards the end of the survey see lower response rates and some people may choose not to engage with the survey at all. Additionally, more personal

---

order to align our analysis as closely as possible with the 2016 census, the total number of homeless count respondents in the RDI calculation includes those who responded to the question on Indigenous identity, racial identity, or both.

questions such as sexual orientation or reason for housing loss might be less likely to be answered due to the private nature of the response.

**Weather**

Weather can impact homeless counts in a variety of ways and can pose a challenge to the accuracy of longitudinal comparability between count years. For example, the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver took place during a rain/snow storm, while the 2020 Homeless Count took place on an unexpectedly sunny and relatively warm day, though it had been forecasted to be cold. While Extreme Weather Response shelters were open during both counts, providers in 2020 reported comparatively low shelter occupancies on the night of the count. Had the weather been different, more individuals may have been counted as sheltered (as opposed to unsheltered) and in general. It is not possible to fully account for the impact of weather.

**Willingness to Participate**

Each year that a homeless count is conducted, there are individuals who choose not to participate in the homeless count survey. While it is not possible to know the exact reasons why individuals might have chosen not to engage with the 2020 count, anecdotally we have been told that some people prefer to remain hidden, are not be comfortable sharing personal information with volunteer surveyors, and/or do not see the value in answering the survey due to doubts of its impact on supports and services.

Particularly in communities like Vancouver where homeless counts have taken place every year for a decade, some of those who have chosen not to participate in the survey have expressed frustration with continuing to be surveyed while not seeing their circumstances improve. The high non-response rate may be a testimony to that fact.

**List of Shelters**

SHELTER NAME	COMMUNITY	TYPE
Burnaby EWR Westminster Bible Chapel (Lookout Emergency)	Burnaby	EWR
Progressive Housing Society Emergency Shelter	Burnaby	Shelter
City of Burnaby - City Operations Centre - Beresford	Burnaby	Shelter
City of Burnaby-Kensington Pitch and Putt Fieldhouse	Burnaby	Shelter
City of Burnaby-Swangard Stadium	Burnaby	Shelter
Dixon Transition House	Burnaby	Transition House
Ladner United EWR Shelter (Options Community Services Society)	Delta	EWR
Azure Place	Delta	Transition House
Gateway of Hope - EWR Program (The Salvation Army)	Langley	EWR
Gateway of Hope – Year-Round Shelter Program (The Salvation Army)	Langley	Shelter
Gateway of Hope - Temporary Winter Shelter Program (The Salvation Army)	Langley	Shelter
Ishtar Transition house	Langley	Transition House

Libra Transition House (Ishtar)	Langley	Transition House
Cliff Block Residence (Lookout)	New Westminster	EWR
Elizabeth Gurney House (Elizabeth Fry)	New Westminster	Shelter
Fraserside Community Services, Family Shelter	New Westminster	Shelter
Russell Housing Centre (Lookout)	New Westminster	Shelter
Stevenson House For Men (Salvation Army)	New Westminster	Shelter
Monarch Place	New Westminster	Transition House
Northshore Shelter EWR (Lookout)	North Shore	EWR
Life Success Program (Hollyburn)	North Shore	Safe House
North Shore Senior Safe House (Hollyburn)	North Shore	Safe House
North Shore Youth Safe House (Hollyburn)	North Shore	Safe House
North Shore Shelter (Lookout)	North Shore	Shelter
Sage Transition House	North Shore	Transition House
Richmond House Emergency Shelter	Richmond	Shelter
Richmond House Temporary Shelter	Richmond	Shelter
Nova Transition House	Richmond	Transition House
Caring Place EWR (Salvation Army Ridge Meadows Ministries)	Ridge Meadows	EWR
Salvation Army Year-Round Shelter (Salvation Army Ridge Meadows Ministries)	Ridge Meadows	Shelter
Salvation Army Temporary Winter Shelter (Salvation Army Ridge Meadows Ministries)	Ridge Meadows	Shelter
Cythera Transition House	Ridge Meadows	Transition House
Fleetwood Christian Reform Church EWR (Lookout)	Surrey	EWR
FRAFCA EWR	Surrey	EWR
Guildford Shelter- EWR (Lookout)	Surrey	EWR
Nightshift Ministries, EWR	Surrey	EWR
Pacific Community Church EWR (Options Community Services Society)	Surrey	EWR
PCRS EWR Youth Shelter Program (Pacific Community Resources)	Surrey	EWR
Phoenix Centre EWR (Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery Centre)	Surrey	EWR
All Nations Youth Safe House (Kla-how-eya) (FRAFCA)	Surrey	Safe House
Bill Reid Place Cloverdale (Options Community Services Society)	Surrey	Shelter
Boulevard Shelter (Lookout)	Surrey	Shelter
Cynthia's Place (Elizabeth Fry Society)	Surrey	Shelter
Gateway Shelter (Lookout)	Surrey	Shelter
Guildford Shelter (Lookout)	Surrey	Shelter
Hyland House Newton (Options Community Services)	Surrey	Shelter
Parkway Shelter (Lookout)	Surrey	Shelter
Sheena's Place (Elizabeth Fry Society)	Surrey	Shelter
The Cove Shelter (Surrey Urban Mission)	Surrey	Shelter

Hyland House Newton (Options Community Services)	Surrey	Shelter
Surrey Urban Mission, Temp Shelter	Surrey	Shelter
Durrant House	Surrey	Transition House
Evergreen Transition House	Surrey	Transition House
Shimai House	Surrey	Transition House
Virginia Sam Transition House	Surrey	Transition House
Tri-Cities Extreme Weather Response Shelter	Tri-Cities	EWR
3030 Gordon Shelter (RainCity)	Tri-Cities	Shelter
Bridge Shelter	Tri-Cities	Shelter
Joy's Place Transition House	Tri-Cities	Transition House
Belkin House EWR (Salvation Army)	Vancouver	EWR
Directions Youth Services EWR (FSGV)	Vancouver	EWR
Evelyne Saller Centre	Vancouver	EWR
First Baptist Church	Vancouver	EWR
Tenth Church	Vancouver	EWR
Walton Hotel Amenity Space	Vancouver	EWR
Aboriginal Youth Safehouse	Vancouver	Safe House
Directions Youth Safe House (FSGV)	Vancouver	Safe House
412 Women's Emergency Shelter, DEWC	Vancouver	Shelter
Aboriginal Shelter (co-ed) (VAFCS)	Vancouver	Shelter
Beacon, Salvation Army Harbour Light	Vancouver	Shelter
Belkin House, Salvation Army (men)	Vancouver	Shelter
Belkin House, Salvation Army (women and children)	Vancouver	Shelter
Covenant House - female shelter (drake)	Vancouver	Shelter
Covenant House - male shelter	Vancouver	Shelter
Crosswalk (co-ed) (regular shelter) (Salvation Army)	Vancouver	Shelter
First United Church	Vancouver	Shelter
Haven (men's) (regular shelter) (Salvation Army)	Vancouver	Shelter
Lookout - Downtown (Al Mitchell Pl.),	Vancouver	Shelter
Lookout - Yukon Shelter	Vancouver	Shelter
Men's Hostel (Catholic Charities)	Vancouver	Shelter
New Fountain, PHS Community Service Society	Vancouver	Shelter
Powell Place (Bloom)	Vancouver	Shelter
Springhouse family shelter (Bloom)	Vancouver	Shelter
Triage Shelter, RainCity	Vancouver	Shelter
Union Gospel Mission (men's)	Vancouver	Shelter
Vi Fineday family shelter	Vancouver	Shelter
Harbour Light - Sutherland (Salvation Army)	Vancouver	Shelter
Sisterhood Shelter, Atira Women's Resource Society	Vancouver	Shelter
SisterShelter, Atira Women's Resource Society	Vancouver	Shelter
The Chapel / Cafeteria, Harbour Light (Salvation Army)	Vancouver	Shelter
The Metson (Community Builders)	Vancouver	Shelter
Gathering Place	Vancouver	Shelter

Men's Hostel (Catholic Charities)	Vancouver	Shelter
Anchor of Hope, Salvation Army Harbour Light	Vancouver	Shelter
Directions, Directions Youth Services	Vancouver	Shelter
First Ave Shelter - Community Builders	Vancouver	Shelter
Hornby - Community Builders	Vancouver	Shelter
Anderson Women's Healing Lodge	Vancouver	Transition House
Helping Spirit Lodge	Vancouver	Transition House
Kate Booth House	Vancouver	Transition House
Vancouver Rape Relief + Women's Shelter	Vancouver	Transition House
Peninsula United Church EWR (Options Community Services Society)	White Rock	EWR

## List of No Fixed Address Sites

SHELTER NAME	COMMUNITY	TYPE
Burnaby General Hospital	Burnaby	Hospital
Burnaby RCMP	Burnaby	Police/Jail
Delta Hospital	Delta	Hospital
Delta Police	Delta	Police/Jail
Langley Memorial Hospital	Langley	Hospital
Langley RCMP	Langley	Police/Jail
Royal Columbian Hospital	New Westminster	Hospital
New Westminster Police	New Westminster	Police/Jail
Magnolia House	North Shore	Health - Other
Lions Gate Hospital	North Shore	Hospital
North Shore RCMP	North Shore	Police/Jail
West Vancouver Police	North Shore	Police/Jail
Bridge House	Richmond	Health - Other
Richmond Hospital	Richmond	Hospital
Richmond RCMP	Richmond	Police/Jail
Ridge Meadows Hospital	Ridge Meadows	Hospital
Ridge Meadows RCMP	Ridge Meadows	Police/Jail
Creekside Withdrawal Management Centre (Fraser Health)	Surrey	Detox
Quibble Creek Sobering Assessment Centre	Surrey	Detox
Surrey Memorial Hospital	Surrey	Hospital
Surrey RCMP	Surrey	Police/Jail
Eagle Ridge Hospital	Tri-Cities	Hospital
Coquitlam RCMP	Tri-Cities	Police/Jail
North Fraser Pre-trial Centre	Tri-Cities	Police/Jail
Port Moody Police	Tri-Cities	Police/Jail
Directions Youth Detox (FSGV)	Vancouver	Detox



Harbour Light Detox (Salvation Army)	Vancouver	Detox
Vancouver Detox Centre	Vancouver	Detox
GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre	Vancouver	Health - Other
Onsite	Vancouver	Health - Other
Vancouver Community Transitional Care Team (CTCT)	Vancouver	Health - Other
Venture Mental Health	Vancouver	Health - Other
BC Children's and Women's Hospital	Vancouver	Hospital
Holy Family Hospital	Vancouver	Hospital
Mt. St. Joseph's Hospital	Vancouver	Hospital
St. Paul's Hospital	Vancouver	Hospital
UBC Hospital	Vancouver	Hospital
Vancouver General Hospital	Vancouver	Hospital
Vancouver Police	Vancouver	Police/Jail
Peace Arch Hospital	White Rock	Hospital

# V. APPENDICES

## Appendix A. Survey Instrument

Survey #:

STREET Survey | 2020 Homeless Count



Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART 1: SCREENING

1. Are you willing to participate in the survey?

- Yes (Go to Q.2)  
 No (END)  
 Don't know/No answer (END)

2. Have you already answered this survey today or last night (with someone wearing a yellow button)?

- Yes (END)  
 No (Go to Q.3)  
 Don't know/No answer (END)

3. Do you currently have a place to stay where you pay monthly rent?

- Yes (Go to Q.4)  
 No (Go to Q.4)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.4)

4. a. What year were you born?

b. What are the first two letters of your legal first name?

c. What day of the month is your birthday?

5. Where did you stay last night?

- Outside (Go to Q.6)  
 Makeshift shelter or tent (Go to Q.6)  
 Abandoned/vacant building (Go to Q.6)  
 Vehicle (car, van, RV, truck, boat). Specify vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Shelter, Safe House, Transition House. Specify name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Detox/Hospital/Jail. Specify name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Someone else's place or couch-surfing (Go to Q.6)  
 Parent(s) or guardian's house  
 I can safely stay as long as I want (END)  
 This is a temporary situation and I have a house or apartment I can safely return to (END)  
 This is a temporary situation and I do not have a house or apartment I can safely return to (Go to Q.6)  
 Own place inside where you pay rent. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (END)  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Don't know/No answer (END)

### PART 2: SURVEY

Please read: For the next questions, homeless means: "you don't have a place of your own where you pay rent and can stay for 30 days".

6. How long have you been without a place of your own?

\_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years  
 Don't know/No answer

7. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

8. What gender do you identify with? **[Show or read list & check one]**

- Woman  
 Non-binary  
 Two-spirit  
 Man  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

9. Do you identify as someone with trans experience (your gender identity is different than how you were born)?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know/No answer

10. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or a refugee claimant? (e.g. applied for refugee status after coming to Canada)

- Yes. Check one:  
 Immigrant (Go to Q.10a)  
 Refugee (Go to Q.10a)  
 Refugee Claimant (Go to Q.10a)  
 No (Go to Q.11)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.11)

10a. How long have you been in Canada?

\_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years

Or date of arrival: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

- Don't know/No answer

11. Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status, Treaty or Non-Treaty), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have other North American Indigenous ancestry?

- Yes. **Check all that apply:**  
 First Nations. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Inuit. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Métis. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Indigenous Ancestry. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 No (Go to Q.13)  
 Unsure/No answer (Go to Q.13)

12. In addition to your response to the previous question, do you identify with any racial groups (e.g. Black, South Asian, White, etc.)?

- Yes (Go to Q.13)  
 No (Go to Q.14)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.13)

13. Thinking of race, how would you identify yourself? **[Check all that apply]**

- Arab (e.g., Syrian, Egyptian, Yemeni)  
 Asian – East (e.g. Chinese, Korean, Japanese)  
 Asian – South-East (e.g. Vietnamese, Filipino)  
 Asian – South (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)  
 Asian – West (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, Turkish)  
 Black – Caribbean and Latin America (e.g. Jamaican)  
 Black – African (e.g. Ghanaian, Ethiopian, Nigerian)  
 Black – Canadian/American  
 Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Mexican)  
 White (e.g. European – English, Ukrainian, French)  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

14. Do you have family members or anyone else who stayed with you last night?

- Yes. **Check all that apply:**  
 Partner/Spouse  
 Child(ren)/Dependents: How many? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pets  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No  
 Don't know/No Answer

**PART 2: SURVEY (CONTINUED)**

15. Do you identify as having the following health challenges at this time? **[Read list & Check all that apply]**

	Yes	No	Don't know/ No Answer
Medical Condition/illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Disability or Cognitive Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Do you identify as having an acquired brain injury that happened after birth? (e.g. from injury related to an accident, violence, an overdose, stroke or brain tumour)

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know/No answer

17. How long have you been in (city name)?

- Days \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs (Go to Q.17a)  
 Always been here (Go to Q.18)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.18)

17a. Where did you live before you came here (i.e. city)?

Community: \_\_\_\_\_ AND province: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OR country: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

18. As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care, in a youth group home or on an Independent Living Agreement?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know/No answer

19. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example gay, straight, lesbian? **[Show or read list]**

- Straight/heterosexual  
 Gay  
 Lesbian  
 Bisexual  
 Two-spirit  
 Pansexual  
 Asexual  
 Questioning  
 Queer  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

20. Have you stayed in a homeless shelter in the last 12 months?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know/No answer

21. What services have you used in the past 12 months? **[Read list & Check all that apply]**

- Ambulance  
 Emergency room  
 Hospital (non-emergency)  
 Dental clinic or dentist  
 Mental health services  
 Supervised Injection Site  
 (Other) addiction services  
 Health clinic  
 Food Services  
 Legal Services  
 Employment and Financial services  
 Housing Services  
 Other Services. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

22. Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Forces? (Includes army, navy, airforce, RCMP). **[Check all that apply]**

- Yes, Canadian military (army, navy, airforce)  
 Yes, RCMP  
 No  
 Don't know/No answer

23. What are your sources of income? **[Read list & Check all that apply]**

- Welfare/income assistance  
 Job full time  
 Job part time  
 Job casual (e.g. Contract work)  
 Binning, Bottle collecting  
 Panhandling  
 Vending  
 Money from family/friends  
 Employment insurance  
 Disability benefit (e.g. PWD, PPMB)  
 Old age security (OAS)/ guaranteed income supplement (GIS)  
 CPP or other pension  
 Youth agreement  
 Veteran/VAC benefits  
 Child and family tax benefits  
 GST/HST refund  
 Other source(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 No income  
 Don't know/No answer

24. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? **[Do not read list & Check all that apply]**

A. Housing and Financial Issue:

- Not enough income for housing (e.g. Lost benefit, Income, or job)  
 Unfit/unsafe housing condition  
 Building sold or renovated  
 Owner moved in  
 Landlord/tenant conflict  
 Complaint (e.g. Pets/noise/damage)  
 Left the community

B. Interpersonal and Family Issues

- Conflict with: spouse / partner  
 Conflict with: parent / guardian  
 Conflict with: other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Experienced abuse by: spouse /partner  
 Experienced abuse by: parent /guardian  
 Experienced abuse by: other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Death or departure of family member  
 Experienced discrimination

C. Health or Corrections

- Physical health issue  
 Mental health issue  
 Addiction/substance use issue  
 Hospitalization or treatment program  
 Incarceration (jail or prison)

D. Other

- Other reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

25. In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? **(Best Estimate.)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_\_ Months  
 Don't know/No answer

**End**

## Appendix B. Shelter Statistics Form

### 2020 Homeless Count Metro Vancouver SHELTER AND NFA STATISTICS FORM March 3 - March 4, 2020



**Important:** if you have more than one program/location, please use more than one form!

Full Organization Name:

Program/Location Name:

Community/Municipality:

 in 

Type of program (please select one)

Emergency Shelter (including Temporary Winter Shelter)

EWR Shelter (opened in inclement weather, as per BC Housing guidelines)

Safe House

Transition House

Detox Centre

Other:

Staff Contact Name:

Staff Phone Number:

Staff Email Address:

Please complete the following for your night-time facility/ies on **the night of March 3, 2020**. This includes individuals who entered your facility before midnight on March 3 and remained there until at least 6:00 a.m. on March 4.

**Note:** This information is confidential and anonymous. Responses will be aggregated and presented in a way so as not to identify an individual facility.

**TURN PAGE →**

**It is important that all information is completely and accurately filled.**

For the purpose of the Homeless Count, please use the following definitions to provide the information requested:

- **Adult:** 25 years of age or older
- **Unaccompanied Youth:** age 16-24 years of age and **unaccompanied** by guardian or parent
- **Accompanied Children:** 18 years of age or younger and **accompanied** by guardian or parent
- **Capacity:** Number of beds/mats/spaces available as per your operational guidelines. Some facilities may have dedicated youth/children’s beds/spaces. Please indicate dedicated spaces below

The total capacity of this program is  beds/mats/spaces.

Of these  are reserved only for Adults (if applicable)

Of these  are reserved only for Accompanied Children (if applicable)

Of these  are reserved only for Unaccompanied Youth (if applicable)

- **Occupants:** Number of people who entered your facility on the above evening **AND** stayed overnight. In some extreme circumstances the number could exceed your capacity.

	Occupants	Notes (Anything of interest)
Adults (>25)		
Unaccompanied Youth		
Accompanied Children		
Total		

Were there any unusual events or circumstances that might have affected your operations this evening?

**If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact**

**Please include this form with the surveys in the envelope for pick-up by Homeless Count Project Team members on MARCH 4.**

# Appendix C. A Pilot Project of the 2020 Homeless Count In Metro Vancouver: 2020 North Shore Extended Count

## Introduction

### Why an Extended Count Pilot on the North Shore?

The tri-annual Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver provides an important regional snapshot and longitudinal data on homelessness. At the same time, it is recognized that every homeless count is an undercount, constituting the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in a single day.

The Point-in-Time approach is known to be less successful at counting couch-surfers and other individuals experiencing hidden homelessness (e.g. youth and women) who may access services less frequently or are less easily identifiable as “homeless” to count volunteers.

While service providers consistently estimate that the number of homeless individuals is actually far above the number identified in the count, there is little data to support this assertion. The lack of reliable data on homeless individuals is a significant gap, which fundamentally affects planning responses to homelessness.

Given the North Shore’s experience with the 2016 Service Use Data Report<sup>63</sup> and the 2018 Youth Homeless Count<sup>64</sup> the community was identified as an appropriate pilot for an extended count project to explore how to establish more accurate estimates on local homelessness. A key goal for the extended count pilot was to test an approach locally that could be adapted and replicated at the regional scale in the future.

## How Data Was Collected

North Shore agencies, schools, shelters and service providers participate in both the 24-hour Point-in-Time (PiT) Count (March 3 to March 4) and the five-day (March 5 to March 9) extended service use data collection process.

### THE GOALS OF THE EXTENDED COUNT WERE TO...

- a. Collect data that more accurately reflects the number of people experiencing homelessness and,
- b. if successful, to open the door for this methodology to be used as an enhanced method for homelessness data collection in the region.

<sup>63</sup> <https://northshorehomelessness.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/north-shore-homelessness-data-report.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/HomelessnessPublications/2018MetroVancouverYouthHomelessCount.pdf>

During the PiT Count, staff and volunteers surveyed people in shelters or outside with the help of a survey instrument. After March 4, data was also collected on the North Shore through a service use spreadsheet on each client accessing services in one of the participating agencies if they met the same definition of homelessness as the PiT count.

	PiT Count	Extended Count Pilot
<b>Timeline</b>	March 3-4, 2020	March 5-9, 2020
<b>Participants</b>	All agencies, schools, shelters and volunteers	All agencies, schools, shelters
<b>Instrument</b>	PiT Count Survey <sup>65</sup>	Service Use Spreadsheet

Both instruments – the PiT count survey and a service use spreadsheet – include a personal identifier code (PIC) that is used to keep personal information protected and remove duplicates. It consists of a person’s year of birth, the first two letters of the legal first name, and the day of birth. The protection of individuals’ privacy rights was strongly considered during this process. No client was personally identified beyond the agency in which they accessed services or the survey they answered. Once the dataset has been cleaned to ensure no one has been included more than once, the personal identifier codes are no longer used.

The service use spreadsheet is a standardized Excel spreadsheet that collects data in an anonymous, de-personalized format. The spreadsheet includes line-by-line records for each client accessing services. It was only accessible to individual staff in an organization and the consultant. The spreadsheets were password protected at all times. Before entering data, staff were asked to establish personal contact with each client to confirm that they were in fact homeless (as per our definition). This allowed staff to include clients they were knew currently experiencing homelessness, but might not visit a service provider during the strict timeframe of the homeless count and therefore otherwise not be included in the count.

The consultant combined data sheets and survey data, and duplicate records were removed to attain the total number of people counted in the extended count pilot. Throughout the process it was emphasized that the extended count only provides supplementary data and that focus is not taken away from the 24-hour PiT count through the extended count pilot. Only the PiT count number was included in the regional totals representing the North Shore, as it was collected through the same process as all other communities involved in the 2020 Homeless Count.

---

<sup>65</sup> In the PiT Count, to arrive at the total number of people experiencing homelessness in a community, survey data is combined with data from shelters collected through a shelter stats form. This data does not include personal identifier codes and cannot be used in an extended count process.

## Participating Agencies

All known non-profit service and shelter providers serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness on the North Shore were contacted and asked to participate in the process. This also included schools, police and relevant community-based health providers and food banks.

In total 29 out of 34 organizations and programs that were identified as potentially serving people experiencing homelessness participated in the extended count pilot. Of the 29 agencies, only seven had active clients during the collection period and returned filled-in spreadsheets.

## Findings

### Total Number of People Experiencing Homelessness on the North Shore

Tables 46 and 47 below provide the main findings of the extended count pilot.

During the PiT count alone (i.e. March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), 121 unique individuals were counted through the street and shelter survey forms (a total of 101 respondents answered the survey), as well as a shelter statistics form (accounting for the additional 20 individuals counted). The shelter statistics form counts the total number of occupants in safe houses, transition houses, shelters and jails, including the 20 individuals who did not fill a survey form.<sup>66</sup> Data collected through a service use spreadsheet during the extended count provided a total of 146 records that were unique within this data set.

**Table 47.** Extended Count: Total number of data records across counts, by data source

Data Source	PiT Count	Extended Count
Street Survey	46	n/a
Shelter Survey	55	n/a
Shelter Statistics Form	20	146
<b>Total Records</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>146</b>

<sup>66</sup> See page 67 for a copy of the shelter stats form.



With the help of the personal identifier code duplicate records between both count methodologies were removed, resulting in a total of 66 unique records in the PiT count and 146 in the Extended Count. A combined total of **212 unique individuals** were therefore found homeless on the North Shore<sup>67</sup> between March 3 and 9, 2020 using the extended count methodology. This is a 75% higher number counted over six days than over 24 hours.

**Table 48.** Extended Count: Total number of unique individuals across counts, by data source

	PiT Count	Extended Count	Combined Total
All Records	101	157	258
Duplicate Records	-35	-11	- 46
<b>Unique Records</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>212</b>

### Gender Identity

Table 49 below shows how individuals self-identified or were identified by staff in regards to their gender identity.<sup>68</sup> In total, 132 respondents were identified as male (72%) compared to 49 as female (27%). Of those who responded to this question in the survey, three people identified as non-binary.

- Samples in each methodology were similar, but the inability of those included in the service use spreadsheet to self-identify their gender identity (during the extended count) may prevent people who are non-binary from being accurately identified, likely skewing the sample towards binary gender identities.

**Table 49.** Extended Count: Individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore by gender identity

Gender Identity	PiT Count		Extended Count		Combined Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Man	50	71%	109	75%	132	72%
Woman	17	24%	37	25%	49	27%
Non-binary	3	4%	0	0%	3	2%
<i>Total respondents</i>	70	100%	146	100%	184	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	31		0		28	
Not surveyed	20		0		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>		<b>146</b>		<b>212</b>	

<sup>67</sup> Due to the nature of homelessness and service provision on the North Shore, it is not possible to reliably represent those counted by sub-geography i.e. number of individuals by municipality. However, given the isolation of Bowen Island, it was determined that at least 5 individuals included in the North Shore total were living on Bowen Island at the time of the count/extended count period.

<sup>68</sup> See *Limitations* section for a discussion of data validity related to external attribution of identity.

## Age

Age data was obtained for everyone included in the sample since the unique identifier contained the year of birth. Out of all 212 included respondents, 38 or 18% were under the age of 25. Vice versa, 55 people (25%) were over 55.

- Samples in each methodology were similar, except for a higher share of youth between 19-24 years in the extended count (14%) than in the PiT count (6%), indicating an undercount of youth in particular during the PiT Count.

**Table 50.** Extended Count: Individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore by age

Age Groups	PiT Count		Extended Count		Combined Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 19 years	4	4%	7	5%	10	5%
19-24 years	6	6%	21	14%	28	13%
25-34 years	18	18%	25	17%	38	18%
35-44 years	15	15%	26	18%	34	16%
45-54 years	28	28%	30	21%	47	22%
55-64 years	17	17%	25	17%	37	17%
65+ years	13	13%	12	8%	18	8%
<i>Total respondents</i>	101	100%	146	100%	212	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	0		0		0	
Not surveyed	20		0		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>		<b>146</b>		<b>212</b>	

## Indigenous Homelessness

Table 51 summarizes the prevalence of those identifying as Indigenous (i.e. First Nations [with or without status, Treaty or Non-Treaty], Métis, or Inuit, or with other North American Indigenous ancestry) in both samples. Indigenous people among individuals found to be experiencing homelessness was reported as 25% across the North Shore across both methodologies.

- Samples in each methodology were similar, with the PiT count showing a slightly higher share (28%) of people identifying as Indigenous than in the extended count (24%).

**Table 51.** Extended Count: Individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore by age

Indigenous Identity	PiT Count		Extended Count		Combined Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indigenous	20	28%	31	24%	42	25%
Non-Indigenous	52	72%	98	76%	127	75%
<i>Total Respondents</i>	72	100%	129	100%	169	100%
Unsure/No Answer	29		17		43	
Not surveyed	20		0		0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>		<b>146</b>		<b>212</b>	

## Conclusion

As stated above, the goals of the extended count were to:

- a. collect data that more accurately reflects the number of people experiencing homelessness on the North Shore and,
- b. if successful, to open the door for this methodology to be used as an enhanced method for homelessness data collection in the region.

In terms of the first goal, the extended count pilot indeed illuminated the undercount that is inherent in the Point-in-Time (PiT) count methodology. By continuing the enumeration process on the North Shore for six days rather than one, 75% more people (91) were counted than during the 24-hour PiT count alone. This increase cannot solely be explained by people entering into homelessness during this period.

As for the second goal of the pilot, while the samples were similar, the results showed that each method for data collection had benefits and drawbacks. The key differences between the service use data collected through the extended count process and the survey responses received through the PiT count include:

- More youth being counted in the extended count, reflecting the known difficulty of surveying youth through the PiT count method;

- More women, who may otherwise have remained hidden, but less people who are non-binary being counted during the extended count – potentially reflecting the inability of staff to sufficiently identify gender identity on behalf of a client.

These results suggest that if an extended count process were to be rolled out across the region in the future, it may in fact produce a higher number of people experiencing homelessness overall, but due to the challenges with self-identification inherent in the service use data collection method, the demographic profile that would be produced may not be entirely reliable. Before any enhanced method of data collection were to be rolled out regionally, these factors would need to be carefully considered.

## Key Data Limitations

### What is measured?

- The data set does not provide information on all people who were experiencing homelessness on the North Shore, but rather those who were approached to be interviewed during the PiT Count and those who actively access available shelter and support services and were recorded in the spreadsheet in the days following. While stronger than the PiT Count in connecting with less frequent service users, the approach is still biased towards those who are visibly homeless and/or those who are accessing services.

### How reliable is the data collection across participating organizations?

- Some organizations have a standardized intake process for clients that asks for personal information and consent to share this data. This facilitates easy data collection and ensures almost complete coverage for the extended count period. Clients are not required to provide this information to receive services.
- Other programs serve clients in a more informal setting and have less standardized processes. Outreach services are focused on establishing relationships with clients in stress. This context may make it more difficult for data to be collected from all clients. While information on many clients was recorded, factors such as the above hint at a shortfall in reaching all persons experiencing homelessness.

### How valid is the data analysis?

- With 212 unique individuals, the sample size is small for the data set as a whole. Accordingly, the analysis has to be treated with caution. No confidence tests were undertaken due to the small sample size.
- The type and number of organizations who participate in the data collection process can skew the demographic profile of the sample (i.e. the characteristics may be skewed in the data and therefore not be reflective of the total population of people experiencing homelessness). As we received strong coverage across the North Shore's service providers, this may not be a strong factor.

### Indigenous and Gender Identity Attribution

- As staff may have provided some demographic details on behalf of clients when filling out the service use spreadsheet, this may also impact data quality.
- Specifically, when staff are filling out information for clients, it is possible that conclusions may be made about someone's identity that are not accurate and therefore that element of the client's identity may be misrepresented in this dataset. This is most likely to occur for items such as Indigeneity and gender.

## Agencies Participating in the Data Collection Process

Bowen Island Municipality (BIM), City of North Vancouver (CNV), City of West Vancouver (CWV), District of West Vancouver (DWW)

Full Name	Main Service Location	PiT Participation	Extended Participation
Argyle Secondary School	CNV	✓	✓
Bowen Island Bylaw	BIM	✓	✓
Cap Community Services Society	DNV	✓	✓
Carson Graham Secondary School	CNV	✓	✓
City Library	CNV	✓	✗
CMHA Outreach / Agency	CNV	✓	✓
Handsworth Secondary School	DNV	✓	✓
Harvest Project	CNV	✓	✓
Health Connections Clinic	CNV	✓	✓
Inglewood Secondary School	DWV	✓	✓
JBCC Youth Centre/Outreach (North Shore Neighbourhood House)	CNV	✓	✓
Life Success Program (Hollyburn)	DNV	✓	✓
Mountainside Secondary School	DNV	✓	✓
North Shore Crisis Services Society Outreach (HPP)/Agency	CNV	✓	✓
North Shore Neighbourhood House Food Bank	CNV	✓	✗
North Shore Senior Safe House (Hollyburn)	DNV	✓	✓
North Shore Shelter - Emergency Shelter Program (Lookout)	CNV	✓	✓
North Shore Shelter - Extreme Weather Response Program (Lookout)	CNV	✓	✓
North Shore Youth Safe House (Hollyburn)	DNV	✓	✓
North Vancouver RCMP (Jail)	DNV/CNV	✓	✗
Parkgate Community Services	DNV	✓	✓
Rockridge Secondary School	DWV	✓	✓
Sage Transition House (North Shore Crisis Services Society)	DNV	✓	✓
Salvation Army	CNV	✓	✗
Sentinel Secondary School	DWV	✓	✓
Seycove Secondary School	DNV	✓	✓
Sutherland Secondary School	CNV	✓	✓
The Foundry	CNV	✗	✓
Victim Services (Hollyburn)	CNV	✗	✓
West Van Youth Services (Community Centre)	DWV	✓	✓
West Vancouver Secondary School	DWV	✓	✓

Windsor Secondary School	DNV	✓	✓
WORK BC	CNV	✗	✓
West Vancouver Police (Jail)	DWV	✓	✗

# Extended Count: North Shore Survey Instrument

Survey #:

**STREET Survey | 2020 Homeless Count**



Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 1: SCREENING

1. Are you willing to participate in the survey?

- Yes (Go to Q.2)  
 No (END)  
 Don't know/No answer (END)

2. Have you already answered this survey today or last night (with someone wearing a yellow button)?

- Yes (END)  
 No (Go to Q.3)  
 Don't know/No answer (END)

3. Do you currently have a place to stay where you pay monthly rent?

- Yes (Go to Q.4)  
 No (Go to Q.4)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.4)

4. a. What year were you born?

b. What are the first two letters of your legal first name?

c. What day of the month is your birthday?

5. Where did you stay last night?

- Outside (Go to Q.6)  
 Makeshift shelter or tent (Go to Q.6)  
 Abandoned/vacant building (Go to Q.6)  
 Vehicle (car, van, RV, truck, boat). Specify vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Shelter, Safe House, Transition House. Specify name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Detox/Hospital/Jail. Specify name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Someone else's place or couch-surfing (Go to Q.6)  
 Parent(s) or guardian's house  
 I can safely stay as long as I want (END)  
 This is a temporary situation and I have a house or apartment I can safely return to (END)  
 This is a temporary situation and I do **not** have a house or apartment I can safely return to (Go to Q.6)  
 Own place inside where you pay rent. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (END)  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.6)  
 Don't know/No answer (END)

## PART 2: SURVEY

Please read: For the next questions, homeless means: "you don't have a place of your own where you pay rent and can stay for 30 days".

6. How long have you been without a place of your own?

\_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years  
 Don't know/No answer

7. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

8. What gender do you identify with? [Show or read list & check one]

- Woman  
 Non-binary  
 Two-spirit  
 Man  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

9. Do you identify as someone with trans experience (your gender identity is different than how you were born)?

- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know/No answer

10. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or a refugee claimant? (e.g. applied for refugee status after coming to Canada)

- Yes. Check one:  
 Immigrant (Go to Q.10a)  
 Refugee (Go to Q.10a)  
 Refugee Claimant (Go to Q.10a)  
 No (Go to Q.11)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.11)

10a. How long have you been in Canada?

\_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years

Or date of arrival: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

- Don't know/No answer

11. Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status, Treaty or Non-Treaty), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have other North American indigenous ancestry?

- Yes. Check all that apply:  
 First Nations. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Inuit. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Métis. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Indigenous Ancestry. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_ (Go to Q.12)  
 No (Go to Q.13)  
 Unsure/No answer (Go to Q.13)

12. In addition to your response to the previous question, do you identify with any racial groups (e.g. Black, South Asian, White, etc.)?

- Yes (Go to Q.13)  
 No (Go to Q.14)  
 Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.13)

13. Thinking of race, how would you identify yourself? [Check all that apply]

- Arab (e.g., Syrian, Egyptian, Yemeni)  
 Asian – East (e.g. Chinese, Korean, Japanese)  
 Asian – South-East (e.g. Vietnamese, Filipino)  
 Asian – South (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)  
 Asian – West (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, Turkish)  
 Black – Caribbean and Latin America (e.g. Jamaican)  
 Black – African (e.g. Ghanaian, Ethiopian, Nigerian)  
 Black – Canadian/American  
 Latin American (e.g. Brazilian, Mexican)  
 White (e.g. European – English, Ukrainian, French)  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know/No answer

14. Do you have family members or anyone else who stayed with you last night?

- Yes. Check all that apply:  
 Partner/Spouse  
 Child(ren)/Dependents: How many? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pets  
 Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No  
 Don't know/No Answer



**PART 2: SURVEY (CONTINUED)**

15. Do you identify as having the following health challenges at this time? **[Read list & Check all that apply]**

	Yes	No	Don't know/ No Answer
Medical Condition/illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Disability or Cognitive Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Do you identify as having an acquired brain injury that happened after birth? (e.g. from injury related to an accident, violence, an overdose, stroke or brain tumour)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/No answer

17. How long have you been in (city name)?

- \_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_ Yrs (Go to Q.17a)
- Always been here (Go to Q.18)
  - Don't know/No answer (Go to Q.18)

17a. Where did you live before you came here (i.e. city)?

Community: \_\_\_\_\_ AND province: \_\_\_\_\_  
OR country: \_\_\_\_\_

- Don't know/No answer

18. As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care, in a youth group home or on an Independent Living Agreement?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/No answer

19. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example gay, straight, lesbian? **[Show or read list]**

- Straight/heterosexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Two-spirit
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Questioning
- Queer
- Not listed. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know/No answer

20. Have you stayed in a homeless shelter in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/No answer

21. What services have you used in the past 12 months?

**[Read list & Check all that apply]**

- Ambulance
- Emergency room
- Hospital (non-emergency)
- Dental clinic or dentist
- Mental health services
- Supervised Injection Site
- (Other) addiction services
- Health clinic
- Food Services
- Legal Services
- Employment and Financial services
- Housing Services
- Other Services. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know/No answer

22. Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Forces? (Includes army, navy, airforce, RCMP). **[Check all that apply]**

- Yes, Canadian military (army, navy, airforce)
- Yes, RCMP
- No
- Don't know/No answer

23. What are your sources of income? **[Read list & Check all that apply]**

- Welfare/income assistance
- Job full time
- Job part time
- Job casual (e.g. Contract work)
- Binning, Bottle collecting
- Panhandling
- Vending
- Money from family/friends
- Employment insurance
- Disability benefit (e.g. PWD, PPMB)
- Old age security (OAS)/ guaranteed income supplement (GIS)
- CPP or other pension
- Youth agreement
- Veteran/VAC benefits
- Child and family tax benefits
- GST/HST refund
- Other source(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- No income
- Don't know/No answer

24. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? **[Do not read list & Check all that apply]**

A. Housing and Financial Issue:

- Not enough income for housing (e.g. Lost benefit, income, or job)
- Unfit/unsafe housing condition
- Building sold or renovated
- Owner moved in
- Landlord/tenant conflict
- Complaint (e.g. Pets/noise/damage)
- Left the community

B. Interpersonal and Family Issues

- Conflict with: spouse / partner
- Conflict with: parent / guardian
- Conflict with: other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Experienced abuse by: spouse /partner
- Experienced abuse by: parent /guardian
- Experienced abuse by: other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Death or departure of family member
- Experienced discrimination

C. Health or Corrections

- Physical health issue
- Mental health issue
- Addiction/substance use issue
- Hospitalization or treatment program
- Incarceration (jail or prison)

D. Other

- Other reason: \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know/No answer

25. In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? (Best Estimate.)

- \_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_ Weeks \_\_\_\_ Months
- Don't know/No answer

**End**

## Extended Count: Service Use Data Sheet

Unclear? Questions? ... See Info and Help Card (next spreadsheet tab) for the definition of homelessness and other explanations and details.

**Step 1 : Enter your program's information**

Program / Service Agency Name:	
Type of Program/Agency:	
Service Location Address:	
Municipality:	
Staff First Name & Last Name:	
Comments:	

**Step 2: Anonymous client information: Enter the following information for each homeless client who uses services between March 5 - 9, 2020**

Categories	Required information						Requested if available		Comments (F)
	Year of Birth	First Two Letters of Legal First Name	Day of Birth	Client Code (A)	Homeless by Definition (B)	Gender Identity (C)	Does person self-identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit? (D)	Where does the person currently live (community)? (E)	
How to/Instructions	What YEAR were they born?	What are the first two letters of their legal FIRST name?	What DAY of the month is their birthday?		Select answer from list	Select answer from list	Select answer from list	Select answer from list	See Info and Help card
Examples	2000	ty	05	00ty05	Yes	Don't know / No Answer	No	BIM - BOWEN Island Municipality	slept at their cousin's for a couple of days
	2005	jh	01	05jh01	Yes	Two-spirit	Yes - First Nations	DWV - District of WEST Vancouver	Identifies with the Nisga'a Nation
	1998	fa	22	98fa22	Yes	Man/Male	Yes - First Nations	DWV - District of WEST Vancouver	N/A
#1				00					
#2				00					
#3				00					
#4				00					
#5				00					

**Instructions and definitions for agency staff to fill in the Service Use Data Spreadsheet for the 2020 North Shore Extended Count Pilot**

**Step 1 : Enter your organization's information**

- Please use a separate spreadsheet for each of your programs.
- In addition to the basic information about your organization, please indicate the type of service agency you represent/work for.
- If you are unclear which type of agency your organization represents, please connect with your coordinator or enter "Other" and describe your agency in as much detail as possible in the "comments" field.
- Leave the address line blank if you do not want to disclose your address for safety.

Type of Program/Service Agency
Date:
Drop-in Program
Hospital
Jail
Other (provide comment)
Outreach
Safe House
School
Shelter
Transition House

**General considerations for filling in the spreadsheet/form:**

- How data will be used:
- Through the use of this spreadsheet, agencies across the North Shore are collecting anonymized data on each person accessing services during any day of the extended court period.
  - In the end, all sheets are combined and the final data will be presented in an aggregate form. No one person will be personally identified.
- Important for staff:
- Attention to detail matters!
  - Without the client code we cannot use the data due to the risk of duplication.
  - Each line represents one person (regardless of age) who is currently homeless.
  - The more accurate each line is filled in, the better the overall data set and the more accurately we will be able to understand homelessness in the community.
  - Your local coordinator and BCNPHA (project manager) are each bound by respective confidentiality agreements. Please contact research@bcnpha.ca for more information.

**Step 2: Anonymous client information: Enter the following information for each homeless person who uses services between March 5 - March 9**

**(A) Information to generate Client Code**

- The Year of Birth, two First Letters of the legal First Name, and the Day of Birth form a unique code that is used to de-duplicate information and to keep the client's information anonymous.
  - This is the most important part of the information gathered as it will establish the number of homeless people courted. Only a person with the full code can be courted (since we don't know whether someone has been duplicated otherwise)
- Details:
- For the Year of Birth, please enter the full year of birth.
  - For the First Two Letters of the first name, please use the legal first name. If only a street or preferred name is known, please use two letters of such and indicate in the comments that this may not be the legal name (i.e. "not legal name").

**(B) Homeless by definition**

- Please indicate whether the client is homeless per definition:
- "A person is homeless if they don't have a place of their own where they pay monthly rent and can expect to stay for 30 days or more".
  - Emergency shelters are not considered permanent housing, thus all shelters are included in the homeless count.
- Important for Transition and Safe Houses:
- Children of any age under the age of 19 who are with or without parents or caregivers during the court period (i.e. incl. unaccompanied youth), without a safe place to return to, are included. Please collect each indiv. in separate line.
- Homeless by definition?
- Yes  
No  
Don't know / No answer

**(C) What gender do they identify with?**

- Please indicate the gender the client identifies as.
- This includes the following options:
- Gender Identity
- Women/Female  
Non-binary  
Two-spirit  
Man/Male  
Not listed. Specify in comments  
Don't know / No answer

**(D) Do they identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit?**

- Please indicate whether the client self-identifies as First Nations (with or without status, Treaty or Non-Treaty), Métis, or Inuit, or has other North American Indigenous ancestry.
- This includes the following options:
- Indigenous/Aboriginal Status
- No  
Yes - First Nations  
Yes - Inuit  
Yes - Métis  
Yes - Indigenous Ancestry  
Yes - Not Listed. Specify in comments  
Don't know / No answer

**(E) Where do they currently live (community)?**

- Please indicate the community where the client identifies as living or is known to be currently living (as person experiencing homelessness). This may or may not be the location of your agency or the location the information was collected.
- Includes the following options:
- Where does the client currently live (community)?
- BIM - BOWEN Island Municipality  
CNV - CITY of NORTH Vancouver  
DNV - District of NORTH Vancouver  
DNW - District of WEST Vancouver  
DI/NA - Unspecified North Shore Location (Specify in comments)  
NOT on North Shore - (Specify in comments)  
Don't know / No answer

**(F) Comments**

- Enter any additional comments for this person. All information entered will be reviewed.
- Please do not include any names or information that could identify the person.
  - If there are any complicating circumstances, consider including some non-identifying descriptions for this person's situation.
  - These points of data will be coded and included in the analysis where relevant/appropriate.

## VI. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) is the provincial umbrella organization for the non-profit housing sector, providing programs, services, research and education to strengthen the capacity of non-profit housing providers. Together, non-profit housing societies manage more than 100,000 units of long-term, affordable housing in over 2,500 buildings across the province.

BCNPHA's research arm was established in 2008. BCNPHA develops and delivers research projects that generate meaningful information and innovations for the non-profit housing sector. We conduct research that supports BCNPHA's mandate of service, education, and advocacy while supporting and advancing the work of BC's non-profit housing sector.

Find more information at <https://bcnpha.ca/research/> or contact us at [research@bcnpha.ca](mailto:research@bcnpha.ca).

