

Alberta's Preliminary Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness down 31% from 2008

Calgary remains epicentre of homelessness in province.

CALGARY, ALBERTA – Nov. 29, 2016. In the second bi-annual province-wide Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness (Count), the number of people in Alberta staying in emergency shelters, short term supportive housing and hotels used as emergency shelters as well as correctional facilities was 5373, down 19% from the previous Count in October 2014 and 31% from 2008 when Alberta's Plan to End Homelessness was launched.

In Calgary, the total Count was 3222, an almost 11% decrease from its peak in 2008 when Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness (Calgary's Plan) was launched. Calgary's Count includes data collected by over 100 volunteers on the streets conducting surveys of those they encountered. This report does not include Alberta Health Services (AHS) data and observational tallies by volunteers of those they counted as homeless but were unable to survey. The Final Report, to be released in early 2017, will include more comprehensive demographic data as well as numbers from AHS.

Year-over-year growth in homelessness stopped

Prior to 2008, when Calgary's Plan was launched, the city was experiencing a biennial increase in homelessness of 35%. Since 2008, over 8,000 people have been housed, growth in homelessness has halted and is on a downward trend. This year's count shows a decline in overall homelessness on a per capita basis of 26% since 2008.

"Calgary has done what no other urban city has- reversed our past trend of increasing homelessness by 35% every two years to an astounding decline of 9% this year," says Krecsy. "Calgary's Plan is working because of local sector leadership, continued rigor, focus and collaboration. But make no mistake, Calgary remains in harm's way. We need greater systems integration between Health, Alberta Health Services and Justice with the Homeless Serving System and enhanced community based supports for our cities most vulnerable (health, mental health, addictions, affordable housing)."

Calgary remains epicentre of homelessness in province

As in the 2014 Count, Calgary continues to be the epicentre of homelessness in the province. Whereas the 2014 Count showed Calgary accounting for 54% of the total Provincial Count, this year's Count shows Calgary represents 60% of the total provincial Count of 5373. "The good news is, homelessness is down across the province," says Diana Krecsy, President and CEO, the Calgary Homeless Foundation. "What we are doing is working. The challenge is, in spite of continued progress throughout the homeless-serving sector, Calgary continues to not have enough appropriate housing for its vulnerable citizens."

Calgary's position as the epicentre is attributable to socio-economic factors unique to Calgary, primarily, one of Canada's highest unemployment rates for a major urban centre (10.2%) and continued high cost of rental housing despite increased vacancy rates, particularly for those with lower incomes. "Calgary does a great job of serving people experiencing homelessness and with providing a strong network of services and supports to move people quickly into appropriate housing at the right time," says Krecsy.

“But it’s not enough for the number of people who continue to need our support because of economic factors over which they have no control.”

Second province-wide Count shows strength of coordinated approach to ending homelessness.

The province-wide Count dropped by 19.2% from 2014 to 2016. Since 2008 this represents a 31% decrease in homelessness across the province and a decrease of approximately 11% in Calgary since Calgary’s Plan to End Homelessness was launched in 2008.

The Count was coordinated by the 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The 7 Cities represent the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local Plans to End Homelessness within each city. They coordinate at a systems level and align funding resources for greater impact and progress towards a shared vision of ending homelessness in Alberta.

In the first province-wide Count, 7 Cities members conducted their individual Counts over a week long period. This year’s Count was held on the same evening, October 19th, between 7pm to midnight in all 7 Cities with some cities counting on the morning of October 20th as necessary.

The Count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of the demographics and number of people experiencing homelessness in the province as well as individual cities, and provides a snapshot of changes in homelessness over time. By aligning methods across Alberta, the 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness can examine trends using similar definitions. Ultimately, this helps to inform solutions, policies and best practices to support the goal of ending homelessness in Alberta.

A Snapshot of Calgary’s Count

A total of **3,222** people were enumerated on the night of the count. Preliminary results show:

- Unsheltered 5%
- Emergency Sheltered 45%
- Justice System 6%
- Interim Housing & Other (ie. hotels/motels used as emergency shelter/short-term housing) 44%
- 75% male; 25% female
- Indigenous 20%; Non-indigenous 80%
- 45 years of age and over 44%
- 25-44 years of age 36%
- 24 years of age and under 20%

In addition to the numbers reported in this document, Calgary counts individuals encountered outside who are not able to give consent to volunteers to complete surveys as part of the Count. This requires volunteer teams to use their discretion as to who is, or is not, homeless. We also collect data from emergency and inpatient services at Calgary facilities. These numbers were not complete at time of this preliminary report and will be included in a forthcoming final report in early 2017.



All 7 Cities Reports can be viewed [HERE](#).
Calgary's report can be viewed [HERE](#).

About CHF

The Calgary Homeless Foundation is a catalyst and enabler for Systems and Service Agencies to optimize client success. CHF focuses on four strategic pillars of work; Research and Development, Community Mobilization, Funder of Outcomes and Impact, and Public and Political Will. CHF addresses gaps and identifies best practices to improve the system of care. Through mobilization of collective impact, CHF is committed to moving forward in partnership with the many homeless-serving agencies, the private sector, government partners, the faith community, other foundations and all Calgarians to end homelessness in Calgary. For more information, visit calgaryhomeless.com.

For more information:

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