

# Understanding the Numbers

*Working Together to  
Prevent, Reduce and  
End Homelessness  
in York Region*



**United Way**  
Toronto & York Region

  
**York Region**

## Message from York Regional Chairman and President and CEO of United Way Toronto & York Region

York Region is a vibrant and prosperous place to live and work. Yet, despite a growing economy, a number of families and individuals in York Region are struggling to find and maintain a safe and affordable place to call home. While the reasons are varied and complex, a common element is the growing gap between household income and the rising cost of housing.

The Regional Municipality of York and United Way Toronto & York Region have a long-standing partnership and share a commitment to creating healthy, safe and vibrant communities. Building on this, we have come together to share data and shed light on homelessness in York Region.

The data used in this report has been carefully collected through two methods:

- Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) – York Region emergency, transitional and seasonal sheltering staff actively use this to collect information on people who access services
- Point-in-Time Count, Count Me In – Dedicated United Way volunteers braved the January cold this year to count people experiencing homelessness in our community

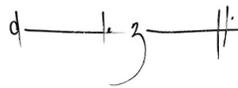
Without the efforts of the staff and volunteers involved in the data collection, this report would not be possible and our understanding of what homelessness looks like in York Region would be much more limited.

Data in this report shows homelessness in York Region impacts people from every walk of life and we all need to continue to work together to ensure there is a place for everyone.

We encourage you to read in greater detail the challenges before us and how we will be working to address homelessness in York Region.



**Wayne Emmerson**  
Chairman and CEO  
The Regional Municipality of York



**Daniele Zanotti**  
President and CEO  
United Way Toronto & York Region



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A joint report by The Regional Municipality of  
York and United Way Toronto & York Region

October 2016

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
Homelessness is Often the Result of a Number of Complex Issues.....	10
The Context in York Region.....	12
Low-income residents growing .....	12
Precarious employment growing.....	12
Increase in households at risk of homelessness.....	13
Low supply of affordable rental housing .....	13
Data is Key to Understanding Homelessness.....	14
A collaborative approach.....	14
Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).....	14
Point-in-Time (PiT) Count ( <i>Count Me In</i> ).....	15
Limitations.....	15
Understanding the Numbers.....	18
Characteristics of people experiencing homelessness.....	19
Gender.....	19
Age.....	20
Aboriginal.....	21
LGBTQ2.....	22
Citizenship and immigration status.....	22
Children and Families.....	23
Veterans.....	24
Education.....	25

Income .....	26
Migration .....	27
Services and System interactions .....	28
Interactions with healthcare and justice systems .....	28
Barriers to finding housing .....	29
Factors that contribute to homelessness .....	30
How people experience homelessness .....	32
Chronic homelessness .....	32
Episodic homelessness .....	32
Instances of homelessness .....	33
Length of stay in emergency housing .....	34
Moving Forward .....	35
Appendix A: Working in Partnership to Address Homelessness .....	39
Appendix B: HIFIS Data Tables .....	42
Appendix C: Point-in-Time Count Data Tables .....	45
Appendix D: Point-in-Time Count Planning .....	57
Appendix E: Point-in-Time Count Methodology .....	59
Appendix F: Point-in-Time Count Survey Instrument .....	65
Appendix G: Point-in-Time Count Tally Sheet .....	78
Appendix H: Notes .....	79
Appendix I: Bibliography .....	84

# Executive Summary

Safe, affordable, housing is a foundation for people's well-being. A home gives people the stability and emotional security to live, work and raise their families. This, in turn, builds strong and inclusive neighbourhoods and long-term social and economic growth for the region. Despite an important focus on housing affordability and progress in York Region on homelessness initiatives in recent years, demographic growth, economic trends and a shortage of affordable housing have increased the number of people who are at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness.

Accurate and reliable information on homelessness is essential to understanding the scope and nature of the issue in York Region and key to being able to measure the impact of programs and services. To this end, the Regional Municipality of York and United Way Toronto & York Region (United Way) collaborated to integrate data obtained from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and York Region's first-ever Point-in-Time Count, *Count Me In*, to develop a robust profile of homelessness in our community.

This report confirms that homelessness continues to exist in our community and indicates that much of homelessness in York Region remains invisible. Our data reveals that in York Region homelessness is caused by no single factor and exists across all demographics. It is not an issue exclusive to a particular group or demographic and could happen to anyone. While homelessness in York Region is most often a one-time, temporary situation, for some it is a more chronic issue with individuals cycling in and out of homelessness or staying homeless for lengthy periods of time.

In 2015, HIFIS reports that 1,103 individuals found themselves homeless and staying in emergency/transitional housing facilities and seasonal shelters in York Region throughout the year. Over two days, on January 20 and 21, 2016, *Count Me In* found 263 people experiencing homelessness throughout York Region. Taken together, key findings about the current profile of homelessness in York Region include:

- Chronic homelessness (individuals who are homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year) in York Region makes up anywhere from 21–33% of the total number of individuals who access homeless services and supports in York Region
- Youth aged 16 to 24 years of age are overrepresented in York Region's homeless population
- Aboriginal Peoples/people with Aboriginal ancestry are also overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness in York Region
- Males are overrepresented in York Region's homeless population
- 12% of emergency housing users in York Region are children aged 16 and under

- Homelessness among veterans, in HIFIS and *Count Me In*, is 1.5–3.5% in York Region
- Over three-quarters of people accessing homeless-related supports in York Region are born in Canada
- Having a postsecondary education and being employed does not necessarily protect someone from experiencing homelessness in York Region
- The top reported contributing factors to homelessness in York Region are: difficulty finding affordable housing, familial/relationship breakdown or conflict, issues with mental health, substance abuse and domestic abuse. A lack of affordable housing and adequate income, however, are the most frequently cited barriers to finding housing.

### **Moving Forward – Ongoing Commitments**

Homelessness is a pressing, urgent and costly issue. It is a problem that many communities across Canada are facing, and as this report confirms, it is an issue in York Region. With growing evidence and understanding about the critical importance of affordable housing for individuals, families, and communities,<sup>1</sup> the need for more integrated and collaborative solutions to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in York Region becomes that much more important.

Homelessness is not a new issue to York Region and both the Region and United Way have been developing solutions, making investments and are beginning to see results. The Regional Municipality of York developed a 10-Year Housing Plan in 2014 called *Housing Solutions* and set a goal to strengthen the homelessness and housing stability system. Since implementation of the plan, modern multi-service centers like Belinda’s Place, the Region’s first shelter for women experiencing homelessness, and the Richmond Hill Youth Hub for youth who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness have opened. In addition, critical programs focused primarily on preventing homelessness in the first place like the Short Term Assistance for Renters (STAR) program and the Housing Stability Program are up and running.

United Way engaged the community and built public awareness of homelessness through the Youth Homelessness Research Partnership and its associated Learning Series. In 2014, United Way hosted ‘Coming Together to Tackle Homelessness in York Region’, which kick-started the re-convening of the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (YRH CAB) and worked to establish York Region’s first Housing First collaborative, resulting in 20 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness being successfully housed to date.

Moving forward on the findings of this report ‘Our plan’ is a high level statement of recommended actions that York Region, United Way and other community partners are broadly committed to as we continue this work. The leadership on each of these actions, along with the details of what these actions would look like in implementation, are to be developed as part of our work moving forward.

**(1) Use data, best practice and research findings to build capacity and to engage the community**

<b>Our record:</b>	<b>Our plan:</b>
<p>A commitment to collect and share homelessness data with community partners to jointly work on new service priorities were made in York Region's 10-Year Housing Plan, <i>Housing Solutions</i> and United Way's Homelessness Partnering Strategy's, Community Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2014 <i>Emergency Housing Use in York Region</i> Report (York Region)</li> <li>➤ 2014 <i>Leaving Home: Youth Homelessness in York Region</i> report on youth homelessness (United Way/York University/Canadian Observatory on Homelessness)</li> <li>➤ First Point-in-Time Count, <i>Count Me In</i> (United Way)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to measure homelessness and collect data with a particular focus on finding opportunities to collect information and conduct research on identified needs and service gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to measure homelessness and collect data to track progress</li> <li>➤ Continue to enumerate the people experiencing homelessness in York Region</li> <li>➤ Focus efforts on improving our understanding of individuals experiencing homelessness that do not use the emergency shelter system</li> </ul> <p>Conduct research and consult with representatives from the Aboriginal community to understand the needs and service gaps for Aboriginal Peoples experiencing homelessness in York Region</p>

## (2) Partner with other levels of government in a shared commitment to address chronic homelessness

Our record:	Our plan:
<p>Continued investment in programs for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implemented a new service delivery model in emergency housing that ensures individuals and families receive individualized wrap-around supports (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Developed the Housing to Health Housing First initiative which has successfully housed 20 individuals so far (United Way with community partners)</li> <li>➤ Supported a network of agencies to deliver critical community programs and services addressing homelessness (United Way)</li> <li>➤ Established the Housing with Supports Program which provides funding for approximately 400 individuals who require supervision of daily activities (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Delivered a range of services through inter-departmental collaborations and community partnerships such as the Homelessness Prevention Program, Street Outreach Van, two seasonal shelters, and the Eviction Prevention Program (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Integrated Support Program which provides social work supports to individuals with very complex barriers to become more stable (York Region)</li> </ul> <p>Continued success in getting people experiencing homelessness to be rapidly re-housed and to getting those at risk to maintain housing stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 461 individuals and families were moved from emergency and transitional housing into long-term housing between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016 (York Region)</li> <li>➤ 85–90% of Housing Stability Program clients have maintained their housing for at least six months, resulting in \$1 million in savings (York Region)</li> <li>➤ 100% of households who have been a part of the Short-Term Assistance for Renters Program for at least six months have remained stably housed (York Region)</li> </ul>	<p>Build on current initiatives to develop supportive housing options for people experiencing chronic homelessness to meet the Provincial target of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years</p> <p>Meet the Federal target of successfully implementing Housing First programs to help people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness maintain their housing</p> <p>Invest in programs and services for youth who are experiencing chronic homelessness to prevent long term negative socio-economic consequences</p> <p>Continue to look for opportunities to invest in programs and initiatives that address service gaps and are demonstrated to work</p>

### (3) Work together with numerous sectors, institutions and agencies, to coordinate services as well as optimize and leverage resources

Our record:	Our plan:
<p>A commitment in the 10-Year Housing Plan to work with community partners to strengthen and better connect homelessness and housing stability programs and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expanded emergency, transitional and drop-in services to women and youth by opening two new multi-service centers (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Supported community partners in advocating for investment in mental health and addictions supports in York Region (York Region)</li> </ul> <p>The Outreach Services Program has been successful in building connections between individuals experiencing homelessness and community resources through crisis support and short-term, intensive case management (York Region)</p> <p>Participation in housing and homelessness-related planning tables such as the Human Services Planning Board of York Region and York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (York Region/United Way)</p> <p>A commitment to the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy to work with government and community partners to inform priorities in York Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reconvened the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board comprising regional, sector and community representation to address homelessness in York Region (United Way)</li> </ul>	<p>York Region’s 10-Year Housing Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continuing to build new affordable rental housing, and provide more rent subsidies</li> <li>➤ Taking steps to preserve existing housing and strengthen the social housing system</li> <li>➤ Working with community partners to find innovative approaches to addressing home ownership affordability</li> <li>➤ Supporting people who have difficulty finding and keeping housing</li> </ul> <p>Regular engagement with the community, including key community stakeholders, all levels of government, experts from other sectors, researchers and academics, and people with lived experience to ensure homelessness strategies are coordinated, measurable, and impactful</p> <p>Advocate and collaborate with all levels of government on identified challenges, needs, service gaps and resource requirements</p> <p>Continue to coordinate and convene the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board to find and address solutions to issues impacting homelessness</p>

## **Conclusion**

For the vast majority of residents, York Region is a vibrant and flourishing place to live and work. However, for some residents being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless is a daily reality. Engaging community, creating effective partnerships, as well as providing effective supports to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness will allow all in our community to live more fulfilling, prosperous lives. It will also help alleviate the growing costs that homelessness poses for our health, social services and criminal justice systems. A continued commitment to strong data and measures to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate homelessness will help York Region avoid the challenges faced by other jurisdictions who are grappling with severe issues of homelessness and the associated strains on local economies and overall resident quality of life.

# Homelessness is Often the Result of a Number of Complex Issues

Homelessness in Canada – estimated to affect as many as 235,000 Canadians<sup>2</sup> – is experienced by a diverse and wide variety of groups and demographics. While some data about the extent of homelessness is available at the national and provincial levels, the lack of high-quality data at the municipal level makes understanding homelessness in York Region a challenge.

Identifying who is homeless in York Region is not an easy task. Some people who experience homelessness sleep in ravines and parks; others seek emergency or transitional housing or stay in seasonal or Violence Against Women shelters. In addition, many people at risk of homelessness are temporarily sheltered in hospitals, jails and child welfare facilities but have no permanent housing to go to upon discharge/release.

**Homelessness** is defined as the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. Homelessness is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

## **People experiencing hidden homelessness are difficult to identify**

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of understanding homelessness is that much of homelessness is hidden. Estimates suggest that up to 80% of people who experience homelessness are not visible.<sup>4</sup> People experiencing hidden homelessness are living in:

- Temporary accommodations with no permanent housing
- Unsustainable conditions with friends and family (“couch surfing”)
- Motels to avoid shelters or living on the streets

## **Homelessness can be a chronic struggle**

For many, homelessness is an enduring or recurring struggle, often accompanied by severe challenges such as mental and physical health issues, addictions, legal and justice issues, or discrimination.<sup>5</sup> While people who experience chronic and episodic homelessness constitute a relatively small proportion of the total homeless population, they use more than half of the resources in the homelessness system.<sup>6</sup>

**Chronically homeless** refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e. have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation).<sup>7</sup>

## Many factors cause homelessness

Homelessness is usually the result of the cumulative impact of many factors, such as:

- Economic and societal issues, including a lack of adequate income, a lack of access to or difficulty finding affordable housing, a lack of timely access to health/social supports, and/or discrimination. Economic shifts nationally and locally can also create challenges for people to earn an adequate income or pay for food and/or housing
- Situations where vulnerable people become trapped in homelessness because of inadequate or non-existent care and support services. These may include difficult transitions from the child welfare system, inadequate discharge plans for people leaving hospitals, correctional, mental health and addictions facilities, and a lack of supports for new immigrants and refugees
- A crisis or traumatic event suffered by an individual or family such as house fire, job loss, family break-up, domestic violence, or physical or mental health problems or disabilities<sup>8</sup>

For people experiencing homelessness, the longer they remain without adequate housing and in crisis, the greater likelihood that the issues that put them into homelessness will become more difficult and costly to address.

### **Homelessness costs the Canadian economy billions each year**

The cost of homelessness is significant. It is estimated that homelessness costs the Canadian economy \$7.05 billion every year.<sup>9</sup> These costs are rooted in emergency services for individuals who are in crisis and the social, health care, and corrections services that people experiencing homelessness (or are at risk) typically access.<sup>10</sup>

The economic incentive for reducing and ultimately ending homelessness is very compelling. Use of emergency services (shelters, emergency healthcare, and incarceration) is substantially more expensive than housing-based responses to homelessness.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, the City of Toronto did an analysis of its Streets to Homes Program and found the cost of providing private, supportive or social housing to immediately remove someone from homelessness to be \$25-\$31 a day. In comparison, the daily costs to shelter the same person in emergency housing is \$69 per day, in a jail/detention centre is \$143 per day, in a psychiatric bed is \$655 per day, and in an acute inpatient hospital bed \$1,048 per day.<sup>12</sup> Emergency responses that involve emergency room visits and ambulance transport respectively costs \$212 per visit and \$785 per transport.

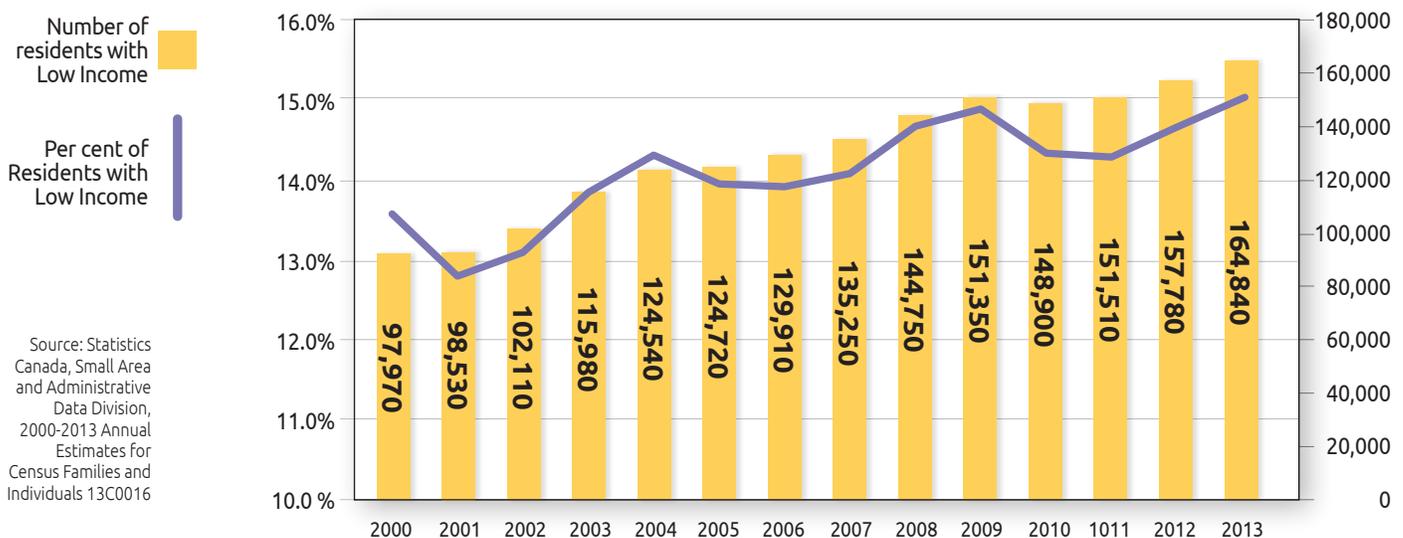
# The Context in York Region

York Region is the fastest growing large municipal jurisdiction in Canada, growing faster than Peel Region, Greater Vancouver, and the City of Toronto.<sup>13</sup> While this growth is a positive demonstration of York Region’s continued desirability as a place to live, work, learn, and play, it has resulted in certain pressures on the population.

## Low-income residents growing

The percentage of York Region residents with low incomes has grown to 15% of the total population (as of 2013), the highest since 2000. The number of low income residents continues to grow faster than the overall population, with an 8.8% increase since 2011 compared to 3.5% growth for the overall population.<sup>14</sup> Population growth is largely driving the number of low-income residents but changing demographics, government policy and movement in the labour market are also impacting this trend.

**Number and Percent of Low Income Residents in York Region, 2000 - 2013**



Source: Statistics Canada, Small Area and Administrative Data Division, 2000-2013 Annual Estimates for Census Families and Individuals 13C0016

## Precarious employment growing

Since the 1980s, temporary and contract work and self-employment have grown faster than permanent, full-time employment in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Nearly 43% of workers aged 25-65 years in York Region’s southern three municipalities (Vaughan, Markham, and Richmond Hill) who were surveyed on their employment reported to be working in jobs with some degree of precarity.<sup>15</sup> Ensuring residents can find and keep good quality, permanent jobs is a challenge in York Region and raises the risk that some residents may experience homelessness.

### **Increase in households at risk of homelessness**

As York Region's population has grown and housing costs have increased, so too have the number of households experiencing homelessness in the Region.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, while the costs of home ownership in York Region continue to rise,<sup>17</sup> more households (13% or 42,035 households) spend 50% or more of their total income on housing.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that some York Region individuals and families may be living in unaffordable housing, and could be 'at risk' of homelessness. When 'at risk' households experience a crisis, such as sudden job loss or major health issue, the people living within them are more likely to experience homelessness than those living in housing that is affordable.

### **Low supply of affordable rental housing**

The low supply of rental housing in York Region limits the housing options available to York Region's moderate and low-income residents. Currently, the overall vacancy rate of private sector rental units is 1.6% – well below a healthy vacancy rate of 3%.<sup>19</sup> In addition, rental housing construction accounted for only 1% of all new housing from 2003 to 2013.

This lack of rental options has increased the number of individuals and families waiting for social housing with more than 12,000 eligible applicants currently on the wait list for social housing in York Region.<sup>20</sup> This situation may force some households to seek accommodation in unregulated rental units, which could risk the health and safety of tenants. Since these dwellings are not protected by the Province's *Residential Tenancies Act*, sudden eviction could also occur. In addition, some individuals and families may be forced into buying homes beyond their budgets, potentially putting them at risk of homelessness.

# Data is Key to Understanding Homelessness

Obtaining accurate and reliable data on homelessness, including counting the homeless population and identifying key measures/indicators of homelessness, is important to:

- Increase understanding of who is homeless and contributing factors to homelessness
- Identify acute problems
- Identify service gaps
- Improve service planning
- Evaluate preventative strategies and the interventions that work best

## A collaborative approach

The Region and United Way embraced the opportunity to jointly report on homelessness in York Region out of a shared commitment to build healthy, vibrant communities and the longstanding partnership both organizations share in social service planning and community development.

## Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)

The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) is a federal software program used by organizations that provide services to those experiencing homelessness. Developed by Employment and Social Development Canada, HIFIS enables the collection of data from people experiencing homelessness, supports service providers to better understand their clients' needs, and helps researchers, funders and policymakers:

- Understand the issues underlying homelessness
- Get a sense of the size and location of the homeless population
- Analyze the effectiveness of programs and interventions<sup>21</sup>

In York Region, HIFIS is used by a number of agencies, primarily emergency housing facilities, who provide services to those experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. HIFIS reports anonymous information about clients in 38 specific areas and the services they receive. HIFIS is used by the federal government to create a national portrait of homelessness and to inform the development of policies and measures aimed at reducing and preventing homelessness across Canada.

The Region is responsible for reporting HIFIS data to the Federal government as well as for the training and oversight of service providers in York Region who use the information system.

## Point-in-Time (PiT) Count (*Count Me In*)

A Point-in-Time (PiT) Count is a method of measuring homelessness. It is used to count individuals who are, at a specific point in time, sheltered or unsheltered in order to provide a 'snapshot' of homelessness in a community.

Employment and Social Development Canada supported 31 communities from across Canada (including York Region) in conducting the first nationally-coordinated PiT Count which took place in the first quarter of 2016. By undertaking a coordinated PiT Count at the same time of year using a common approach, the data collected is intended to help build a better understanding of homelessness across Canada and help communities:

- Understand the characteristics and patterns of people experiencing homelessness
- Direct resources to support those in greatest need
- Connect individuals with targeted supports to help them achieve stable housing
- Establish a baseline to track change and measure progress<sup>22</sup>

In January, 2016, United Way, working with community partners and volunteers, conducted York Region's first-ever PiT Count, *Count Me In*.

## Limitations

Because both HIFIS and PiT Counts employ different methods of data collection, reflect different timeframes, and capture different samples of York Region's homeless population, directly comparing the data obtained between the two is not always possible.

The chart on the following page illustrates the different samples of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations captured by both datasets. The highlighted rows represent shared locations where data was collected by both HIFIS and *Count Me In*, and the remainder represents additional locations covered by the *Count Me In*.

## Sheltering Facilities included in HIFIS (2015) and/or *Count Me In* (January 20-21, 2016) data

Types of Sheltering Facilities	Program Captured (Agency)	Location
<b>Emergency Housing:</b> short term accommodation for people who are homeless or in crisis.	Belinda's Place Emergency Housing (The Salvation Army)	Newmarket
	Leeder Place Family Shelter (Blue Door Shelters)	East Gwillimbury
	Porter Place Men's Shelter (Blue Door Shelters)	East Gwillimbury
	Sutton Youth Shelter Emergency Housing (The Salvation Army)	Georgina
	York Region Youth Shelter (Blue Door Shelters)	Newmarket
<b>Violence Against Women:</b> shelters and supports women and dependents fleeing violence.	Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region	Georgina & Richmond Hill
	Yellow Brick House	Aurora & Markham
<b>Seasonal Shelter:</b> shelters people experiencing homelessness during extreme weather conditions.	INN From the Cold (INN From the Cold)	Newmarket
	Out of the Cold (Mosaic Interfaith)	Markham
<b>Transitional/Interim Housing:</b> supportive, temporary, accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing.	Belinda's Place Transitional Housing (The Salvation Army)	Newmarket
	Reta's Place Transitional Housing (Yellow Brick House)	Richmond Hill
	Supportive Transitional Apartments for Youth (360°kids)	Markham
	Sutton Youth Shelter Transitional Housing (The Salvation Army)	Georgina
<b>Other Facility:</b> facility whose primary purpose is not to provide services to those experiencing homelessness.	Institutional Care Facility	N/A – No Fixed Address
<b>Unsheltered:</b> living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation.	N/A	17 street routes canvassed

While HIFIS provides an accurate count of those who seek service or shelter at a housing facility, this method of counting homelessness is not without its limitations. Counting people does not necessarily reflect the characteristics of all people experiencing homelessness, but rather the characteristics of the service system in place. For example, when examining the emergency housing system as a whole, if most of a community's emergency housing facilities serve youth homelessness, the client data collected across the entire system will skew towards the characteristics of youth experiencing homelessness.

*Count Me In* used the common 'known-locations' PiT Count approach for finding unsheltered individuals on January 20, 2016. In this approach, *Count Me In* volunteers canvassed areas where people experiencing homelessness are known to frequent. Surveying large and geographically diverse areas such as York Region, which is spread across 1,762 km<sup>2</sup> and has a range of residential and non-residential areas, a mix of high-density residential and commercial corridors and low-density rural areas where individuals experiencing homelessness may dwell, is challenging, especially in the span of one night as is custom in PiT Count exercises. In addition, during *Count Me In*, areas that were deemed potentially unsafe, such as fields, ravines, or abandoned housing, were not canvassed. For this reason, the number of individuals found in an unsheltered situation was likely undercounted.

The accuracy of the information obtained through HIFIS and the survey instrument relies on the voluntary disclosure of information from individuals experiencing homelessness. At the same time, it is unknown if the information derived from both samples entirely reflects the characteristics of York Region's homeless population as a whole.

In addition, neither HIFIS nor *Count Me In* provides a measure of hidden homelessness in York Region. Research estimates that the vast majority of homelessness is hidden – up to 80% – indicating that the number of people known to be experiencing homelessness is just the 'tip of the iceberg'<sup>23</sup> of our understanding of the total homeless population.

The inclusion of HIFIS and *Count Me In* data in this report tells a complementary story about the nature of homelessness in York Region. Combining information from the two datasets provides a broader and more fulsome picture of homelessness in York Region and offers greater insight together than if each dataset was presented on its own.

# Understanding the Numbers

Based on information obtained through HIFIS for the reporting period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, at least 1,103 individuals accessed shelter services in York Region.

Over January 20-21, 2016, *Count Me In* counted 263 sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness throughout York Region.<sup>24</sup> The total number of *Count Me In* individual surveys from which analysis can be drawn is 143.<sup>25</sup>

## **Where were people experiencing homelessness found?**

The data in this report largely reflects sheltered clients in facilities used by individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region across the following shelter types:

- One men's
- One women's
- One family
- Two seasonal (open to all genders)
- Two Violence Against Women (VAW), across four locations
- Three youth

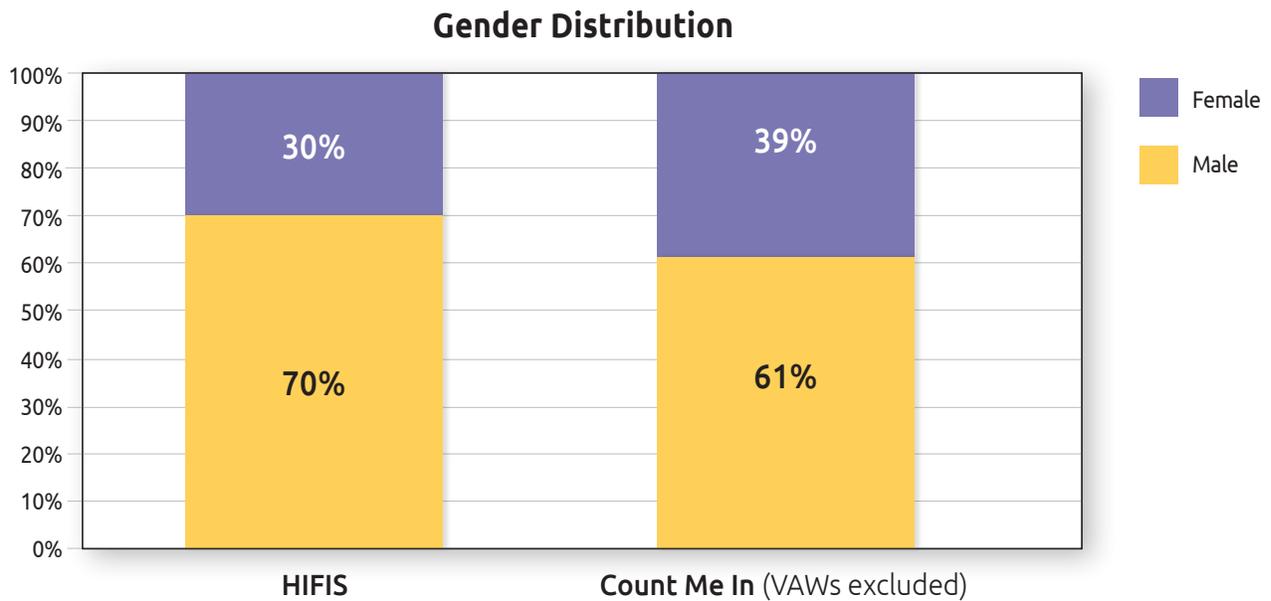
In addition to a sheltered count, *Count Me In* included unsheltered (street and service) counts. In total, 3% (seven people) of those counted during *Count Me In* were found to be unsheltered and homeless from January 20-21, 2016. All seven unsheltered individuals were adult men.

## Characteristics of people experiencing homelessness

### Gender

Of the 1,103 clients captured by HIFIS in 2015, 70% (775 clients) identified as being male and 30% (328 clients) identified as female.

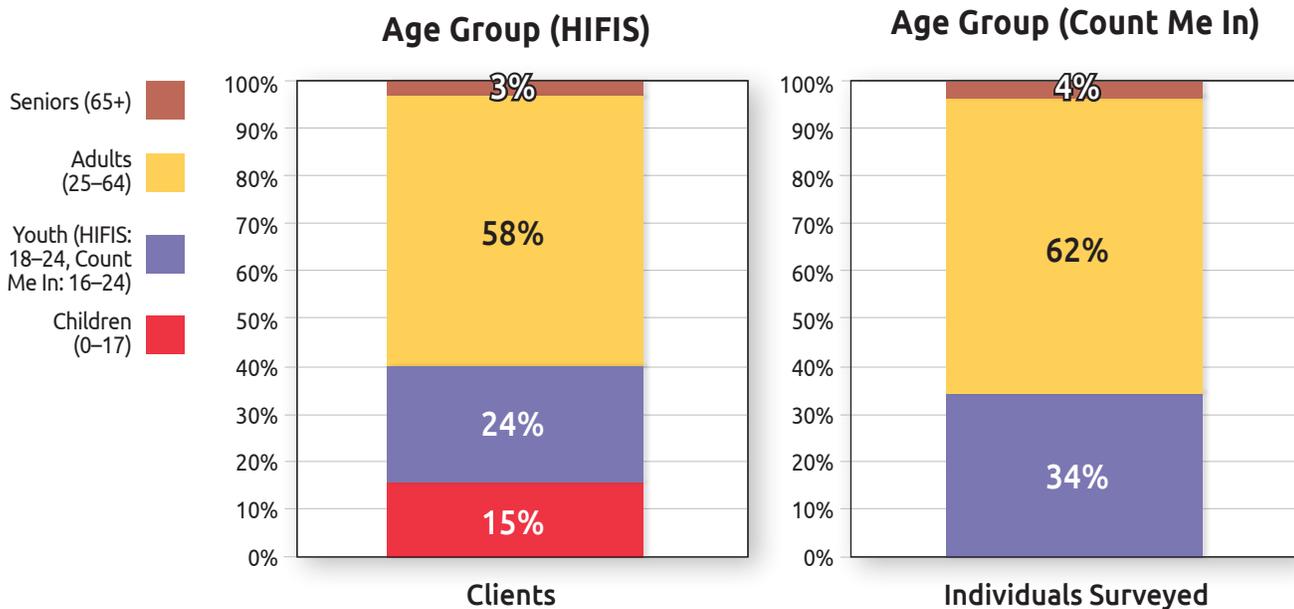
Of the 143 *Count Me In* survey respondents, 48% (69 respondents) identified as male and 52% (74 respondents) identified as female. Excluding the *Count Me In* surveys completed at VAW shelters (where men would not be seeking shelter), the gender distribution of *Count Me In* survey respondents is as follows: 61% male (69 male respondents) and 39% female (44 female respondents).



Across the country males represent about 72% of adult shelter users<sup>26</sup> and, as the above data suggests, the gender distribution of York Region's homeless population is consistent with national trends.<sup>27</sup>

## Age

Both HIFIS and *Count Me In* demonstrate that homelessness in York Region is experienced across all age groups.



*Note: HIFIS and Count Me In use different age parameters when collecting data on the Age Group of clients/survey respondents. Also, Count Me In did not receive survey responses from Children (16 years of age or under).*

While HIFIS and *Count Me In* use different age groups, both report that:

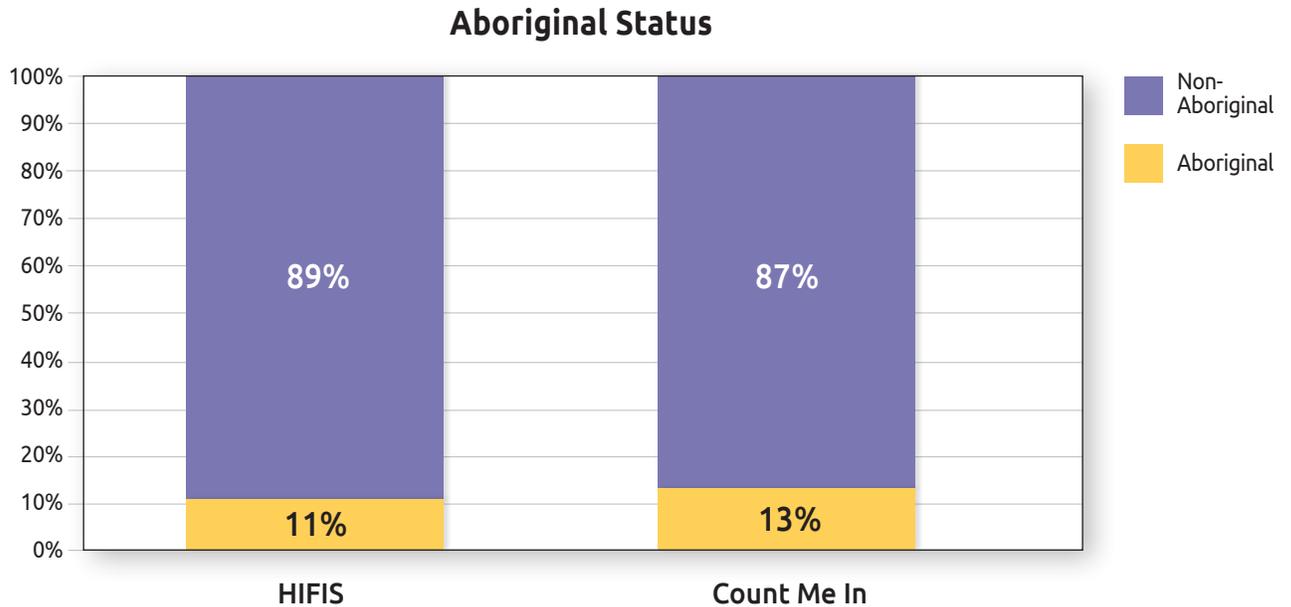
- Adults make up the majority of people experiencing homelessness
- Youth as being strongly represented across both sets of data:
  - With 18 to 24 year olds represented about 24% (269 clients) of all individuals captured by HIFIS
  - 16 to 24 year olds represented 34% (48 survey respondents) of those enumerated through *Count Me In*

This may be influenced by York Region's shelter infrastructure with 40% of York Region's emergency housing facilities that were included in this analysis providing service to those experiencing homelessness who are aged 16 to 26. *In Count Me In*, for instance, youth represented only 12% of those staying at sites serving all ages which is more aligned with the proportion of youth in York Region's overall population (12%).<sup>28</sup> Nationally, the latest reported figure for youth aged 16 to 24 identifies that this group comprises approximately 21% of shelter users across the country.<sup>29</sup>

*[I'm] so young, people think I'm just spoiled or seeking attention and believe what they hear from older people – Youth respondent*

## Aboriginal

According to HIFIS, in 2015, 11% (116 clients) of those experiencing homelessness reported to have an Aboriginal Identity. Of the *Count Me In* survey respondents, 13% (19 respondents) identified as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry.



Aboriginal Peoples are overrepresented in homeless populations across the country<sup>30</sup> and, as the above data suggests, this is the case in York Region as well. Less than 1% of York Region's population (4,565 residents) report having an Aboriginal identity<sup>31</sup> yet HIFIS reports and *Count Me In* survey results indicate that Aboriginal Peoples make up anywhere from 11–13% of York Region's homeless population.

Research has shown that many personal issues facing Aboriginal Peoples experiencing homelessness can be linked to various types of historical traumas.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the common issues faced by homeless populations, such as low levels of educational attainment and unemployment, Aboriginal Peoples may face unique structural issues such as transitions from reserves to urban living, systemic racism, and landlord discrimination.<sup>33</sup>

## LGBTQ2

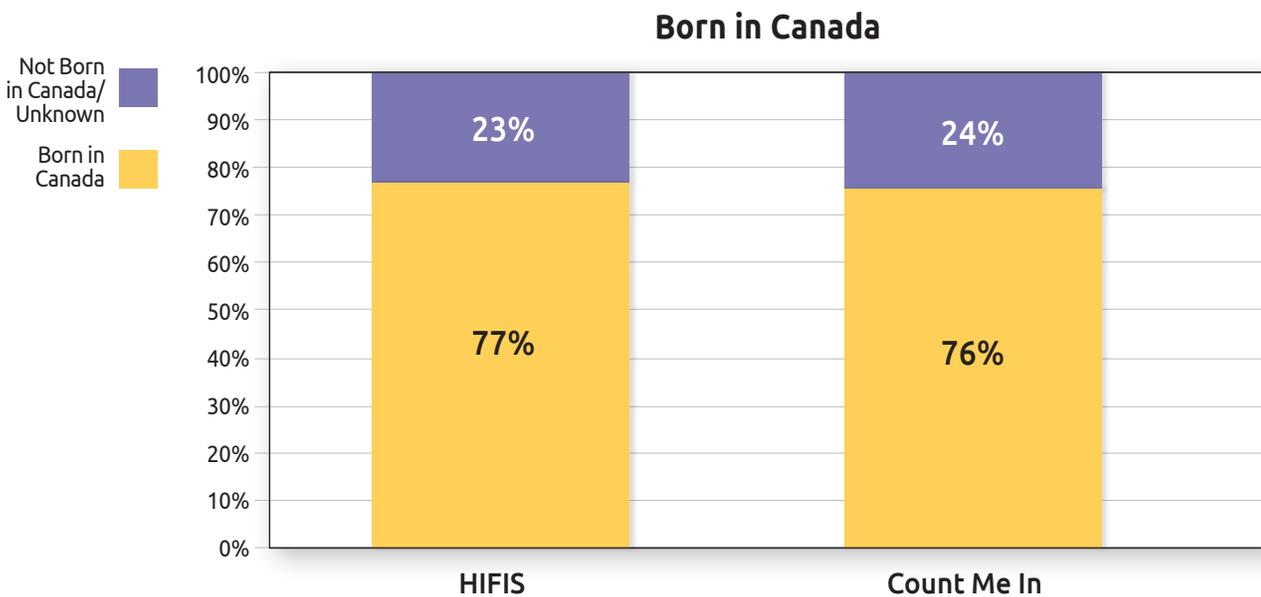
Currently, HIFIS does not collect substantive information on the sexual orientation of clients. HIFIS data collection focuses on gender identity, in which two clients identified as being transgendered or 'other'. *Count Me In* provides deeper insight. Of the 143 survey respondents: 8% (11 respondents) self-identified as being a part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and 2-spirited community. Of these 11 respondents, 64% (seven respondents) were youth (between the age of 16 to 24).

Many LGBTQ2 individuals may not choose to self-identify as Queer or Transgendered due to concerns about personal safety or concerns about homophobia and transphobia in housing facilities and drop-in programs<sup>34</sup> Because of these concerns, researchers have suggested that a large portion of LGBTQ2 individuals experiencing homelessness avoid housing facilities and support services, choosing to instead remain unsheltered.<sup>35</sup>

## Citizenship and immigration status

Of the 1,103 individuals experiencing homelessness counted by HIFIS in 2015, 87% (955 clients) reported being a Canadian citizen, with 77% (846 clients) of these citizens having been born in Canada.

Of the 143 people surveyed through *Count Me In*, 76% (109 respondents) stated they were born in Canada. Of the 32 respondents who were not born in Canada, 31% (10 survey respondents) were Canadian citizens and 38% (12 survey respondents) were a permanent resident, refugee claimant, or had immigrated to Canada through some other means. Of the 143 people surveyed, 6% (eight survey respondents) indicated they came to Canada as an immigrant or refugee in the past five years.



While immigrants and non-permanent residents make up about half of York Region’s total population (46%) they are underrepresented in the homeless population.

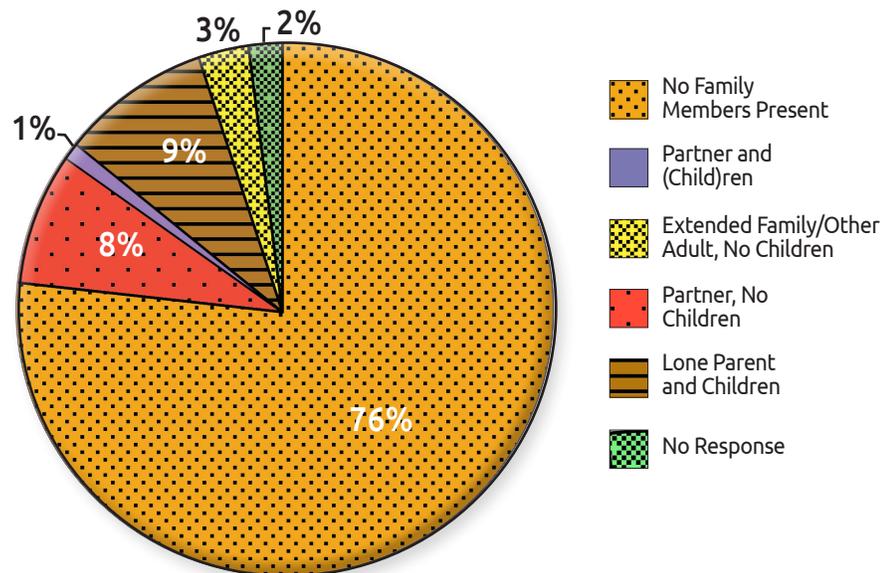
While immigrants represent a smaller proportion of individuals who accessed emergency/transitional housing or shelter services in York Region, research has shown that newcomers face some unique challenges upon settling in Canada. Many struggle with housing affordability, fall into hidden homelessness, or face discrimination due to the size of their families, accent, skin colour, income source, and temporary or refugee status.<sup>36</sup>

### Children and Families

Of the 1,103 individuals counted by HIFIS in 2015, 12% (135 clients) were children aged 16 and under, 125 (11% of total population) of which were accompanied by an adult upon intake at an emergency housing facility.

Of the 143 individuals surveyed in *Count Me In*, 22% (31 respondents) reported having some family members present (a partner, children, or a member of their extended family). Respondents that had children present were located either in a family emergency housing facility or VAW shelter.

**Household Composition by Family Type (Count Me In)**



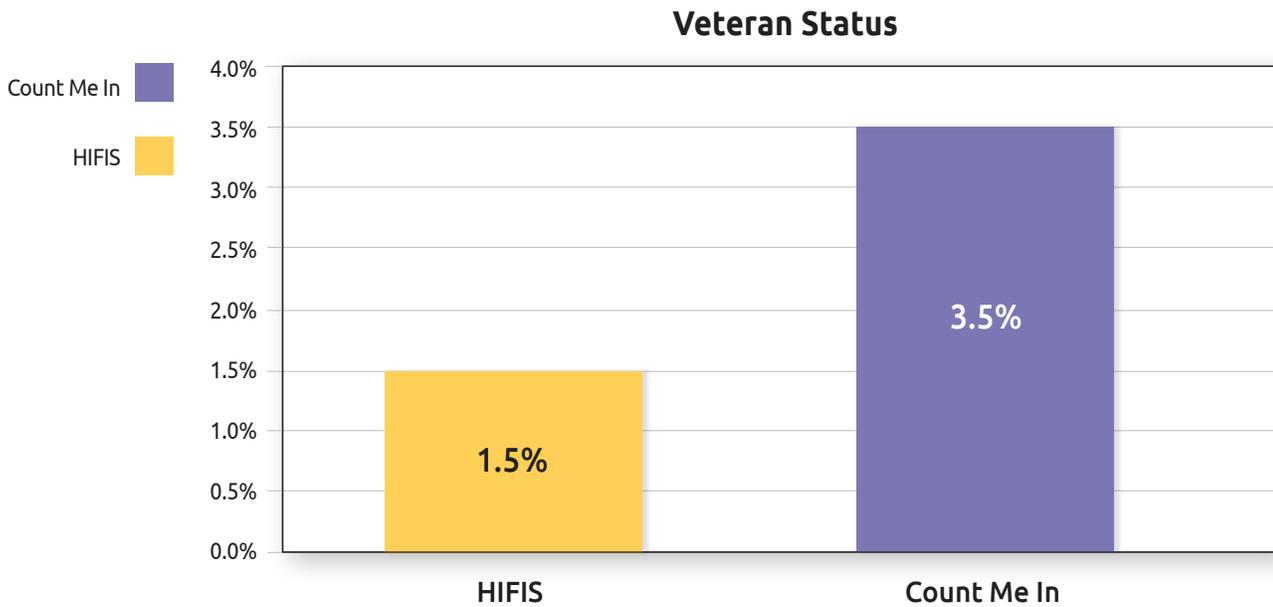
Of those who completed a *Count Me In* survey, 10% (14 respondents) were parents who were accompanied by 20 dependent children. 93% of parents surveyed (13 parents) were lone parents, 69% (nine parents) of which were seeking housing in a VAW shelter.

The true extent of homelessness in Canada for children and families remains largely invisible as familial homelessness is largely led by single mothers who are more likely to experience ‘hidden homeless’ as some families avoid accessing shelter services – choosing to instead

live in temporary accommodations with families or friends, or stay in motels.<sup>37</sup> Despite what is not known, however, the data available clearly shows that familial homelessness exists in York Region. Of additional concern is that the percentage of children who were accompanied by an adult that were captured by HIFIS in York Region is nearly triple (11%, 122 children) the latest reported national average (4%).<sup>38</sup>

### Veterans

Of the 1,103 individuals counted by HIFIS in 2015, 1.5% (17 clients) identified as being a veteran. Meanwhile, of the 143 individuals who completed the *Count Me In* survey, 3.5% (five respondents) self-declared as being a veteran of the Canadian military. Their average time of service was 5.7 years.



In March 2015, the Government of Canada estimated that at least 2,250 Canadian veterans experience homelessness in Canada, representing about 3% of the country's total homeless population that uses temporary lodging.<sup>39</sup> As such, the combined range of 1.5–3.5% demonstrates that veteran homelessness in York Region largely aligns with national averages.

## Education

Of the 143 *Count Me In* survey respondents:

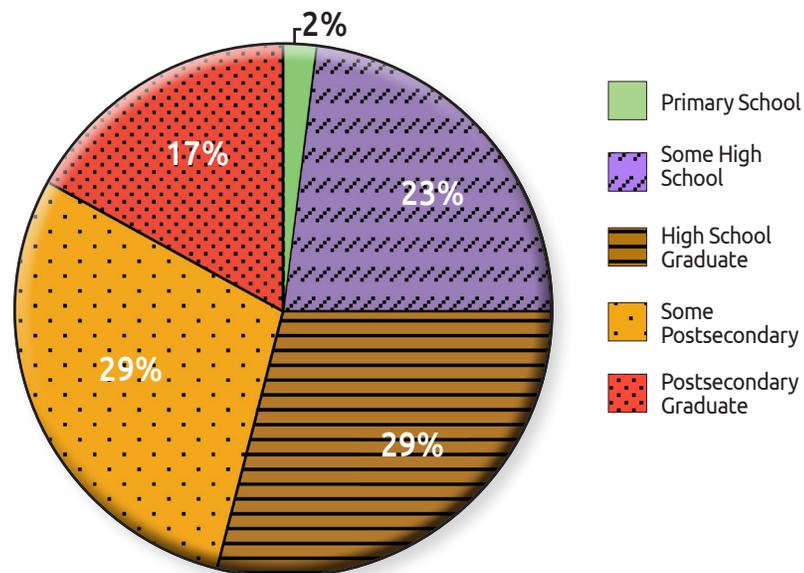
- 46% (43 respondents) aged 25 and over had at least some postsecondary education (defined as apprenticeship/trades, college, or university education)
- 54% (50 respondents) aged 25 and over had a high school education or less

Female respondents were more likely than males to be enrolled in school or to have at least some form of postsecondary education:

- 67% (29 respondents) of adults aged 25 and over with at least some postsecondary education were female, and 33% (14 respondents) were male
- Of those youth surveyed who were enrolled in school, 63% (12 respondents) were female and 37% (seven respondents) were male

Among youth (aged 16 to 24) that were surveyed, 40% (19 survey respondents) were currently enrolled in school.

### Highest Level of Education Attained by Adults aged 25 and over (Count Me In)



Individuals who lack formal education are at a higher risk of unemployment or underemployment, which increases their risk of becoming homeless.<sup>40</sup> Attaining a high school education is an expectation in Canadian society, and there is a general acknowledgement that postsecondary education can help people secure employment in an increasingly competitive labour market. As the data obtained via *Count Me In* demonstrates, however, having a postsecondary education is not necessarily a guarantee against experiencing homelessness.

A lack of education and incidence of homelessness is a cyclical phenomenon. Research has shown that many youth experiencing homelessness struggle to gain continuous access to education due to interruptions to regular school attendance. These interruptions could be caused by unstable housing, practical issues related to shelter life including proximity to schools, and health issues including (but not limited to) stress. In addition, financial circumstance may prohibit youth experiencing homelessness from pursuing an education as the income obtained from employment for day to day living may take precedence over school attendance.<sup>41</sup>

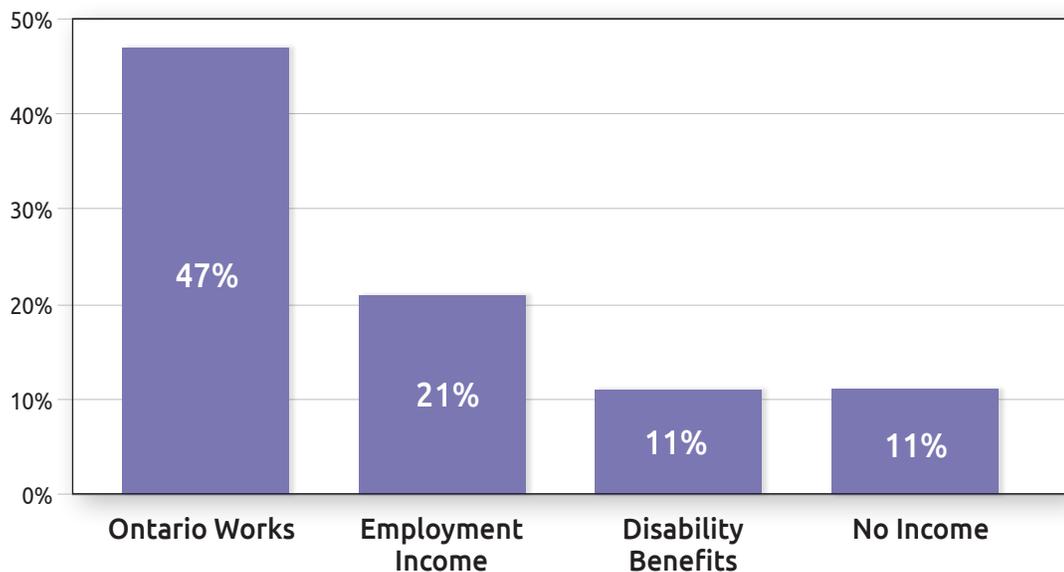
### Income

Of the *Count Me In* survey respondents, 47% (67 respondents) identified Ontario Works as a source of income, making it the most commonly reported income source. 77% (110 survey respondents) reported relying on one source of income.

Employment was the second most commonly identified income source:

- 21% (30 survey respondents) reported employment income
- 11% (16 survey respondents) reported disability benefits such as Ontario Disability Support Program, Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit, and/or military benefits indicating that these respondents may have a substantial and verified physical or mental impairment that restricts their ability to work and/or take part in community life<sup>42</sup>
- 11% (16 survey respondents) reported no income at all. Of those who had no income, 63% (10 survey respondents) were female

**Income Source (Count Me In)**



Broken down by gender, males were more likely than females to rely on employment as a source of income, yet females were more likely to have earned some form of postsecondary education. Females were also more likely to rely solely on Ontario Works.

The fact that one in five *Count Me In* survey respondents were employed and yet still homeless contradicts the popular notion that having employment means that a person has the financial resources to afford housing. Research has shown that for many people experiencing homelessness, the instability of temporary employment with respect to geography (where they will be working) and in opportunity (if they will be working) can facilitate situations of homelessness.<sup>42</sup>

Income and homelessness are closely linked as declining wages and reduced benefits levels have put more Canadians at risk of homelessness.<sup>44</sup> For people experiencing homelessness, a vicious cycle can emerge where their homelessness perpetuates an inability to find work. Being homeless might mean not having an address to put on a resume or a phone number for job call backs, let alone a safe and peaceful place to prepare for job interviews.<sup>45</sup>

### **Migration**

Of the *Count Me In* survey respondents, 33% (47 respondents) had just moved to York Region in the last year. Of this group, 79% (37 respondents) moved to York Region from another part of Ontario with 11% (five respondents) moving from another province. Five people did not answer the survey question.

It is noteworthy that one-third of the individuals surveyed in *Count Me In* reported to have relatively recently arrived to York Region.<sup>46</sup> People experiencing homelessness have different migration patterns that are influenced by a variety of factors such as the presence and accessibility of services, availability of affordable housing, and job opportunities.<sup>46</sup> The migratory and transient aspect of homelessness underscores the notion that while homelessness may be experienced locally, it is an issue that does not strictly adhere to municipal and provincial boundaries.



***Homelessness can happen to anyone,  
no matter what the situation***

## Services and System Interactions

### Interactions with healthcare and justice systems

Of the 143 *Count Me In* survey respondents, within the past year:

- 62% (88 respondents) had accessed emergency medical services
- 52% (74 respondents) had an interaction with police services
- 26% (37 respondents) were hospitalized at some point with an average hospitalization time of 28 days
- 22% (32 respondents) were in a jail or holding cell

Interaction with police here does not necessarily mean the person committed a crime. It can also refer to conversations or aid from police as the term does not distinguish between perpetrator and victim.

It is common among people experiencing homelessness, especially those experiencing long-term homelessness, to have poor or declining health that requires frequent and/or intensive use of healthcare services. Research has shown that negative health effects associated with homelessness can be diminished and even resolved once housing stability is achieved.<sup>48</sup>

Inmates across Canada are discharged from prison without adequate access to housing, employment, and health-based supports.<sup>49</sup> In addition, people experiencing homelessness may find themselves in jail or correctional facilities due to a combination of mental health and substance abuse issues as well as a reliance on illegal survival strategies such as aggressive panhandling and sleeping in public places. As identified by researchers at The Homeless Hub, this situation results in a “revolving door scenario whereby incarceration and experiences of homelessness are an individual’s only two realities.”<sup>50</sup>

***[I] Just got out of jail.  
No place to stay.  
I need some time  
to get my ID pulled together  
...and look for a job***

## Barriers to finding housing

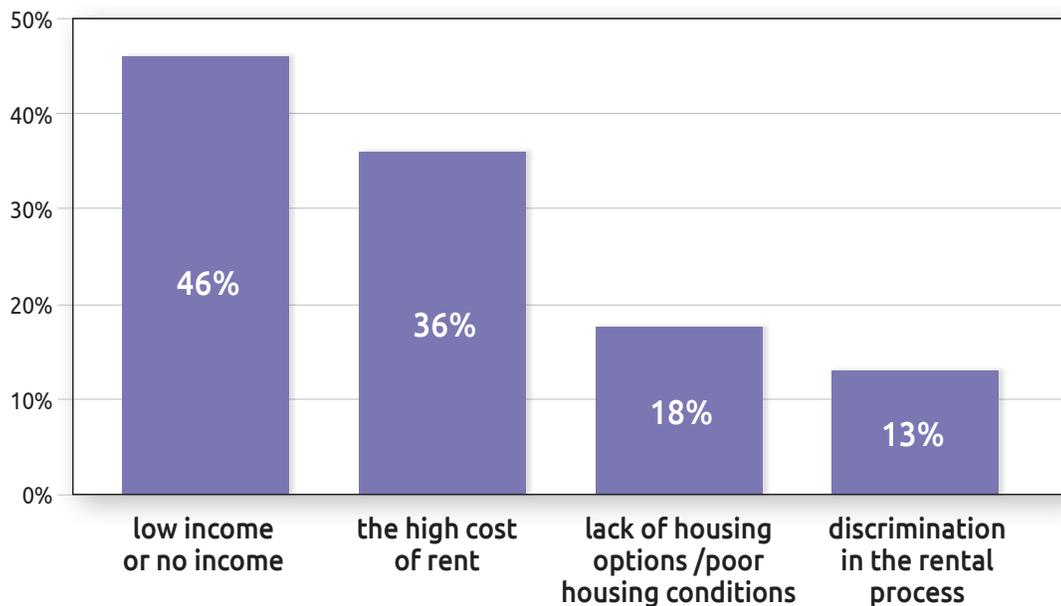
*Count Me In* survey respondents were asked what barriers they currently face in finding permanent housing. Adequate income, housing availability and affordability, and discrimination in the rental process were the most frequently reported obstacles to permanent housing:

- 46% (63 respondents) identified low income or no income
- 36% (50 respondents) reported the high cost of rent
- 18% (25 respondents) reported the lack of housing options/poor housing conditions
- 13% (18 respondents) reported discrimination in the rental process

When asked what would help them obtain permanent housing, the barriers faced by respondents to permanent housing mirrored what they said would help them secure permanent housing – income 32% (42 respondents), affordable/subsidized housing 19% (25 respondents), job/job quality 18% (23 respondents), or assistance with rental process or landlord acceptance 14% (18 respondents) were the most needed supports identified. About 34% (48 survey respondents) were on a waiting list for subsidized housing. Also, during *Count Me In*, some respondents reported feeling vulnerable to landlord discrimination because they were recipients of Ontario Works.

41% (58 survey respondents) reported at least two barriers preventing them from accessing permanent housing. 32% (23 survey respondents) of female respondents were more likely to report three or more barriers compared to 6% (four survey respondents) who were male.

### Barriers Faced to Finding Housing (Count Me In)



Changes in the labour market, gaps in income support and issues with housing supply and affordability have placed more Canadians at risk of homelessness. It is common for respondents across Point-in-Time counts in Toronto, Red Deer, Winnipeg and other cities to report relying on social assistance, similar to Ontario Works, where rates were significantly cut in the 1990s and have not kept up with the cost of living or market housing rates. Ontario Works currently provides just under \$700 per month for a single person, while in 2015 the average cost of a bachelor apartment in York Region was \$833 and 1-bedroom was \$1,091.<sup>51</sup>

### **Factors that contribute to homelessness**

HIFIS enables service providers to collect data on self-reported client attributes and situations that are believed to be a contributing reason for the client's state of homelessness.<sup>52</sup> In addition, upon intake at a housing service provider, HIFIS collects information on the reasons clients are in need of immediate service. Taken together, HIFIS provides insight into what the drivers are of homelessness in York Region. The categories below from both HIFIS and *Count Me In* are not mutually exclusive as some factors and attributes could be interrelated. For example, family conflict could lead to mental health/addictions, which could lead to homelessness.

According to HIFIS, the most common factors that contributed to people experiencing homelessness are:

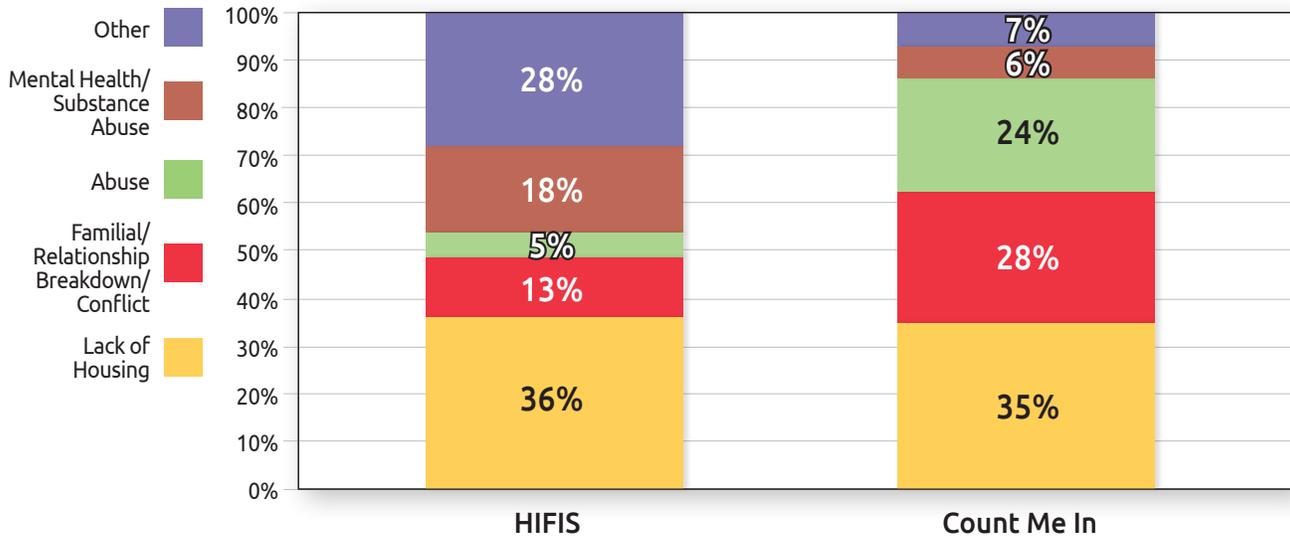
- 36% (534 clients) identified lack of housing (due to eviction, fire/flood, or unsafe conditions)<sup>53</sup>
- 8% (253 clients) identified mental health/substance use<sup>54</sup>
- 13% (193 clients) identified familial/relationship breakdown

During *Count Me In*, individuals were asked what happened that caused them to lose their housing most recently:

- 35% (49 survey respondents) identified a lack of housing due to eviction or unsafe housing conditions as a reason for their loss of housing
- 28% (39 survey respondents) of respondents reported family conflict as a reason for their current loss of housing
- 24% (34 survey respondents) of respondents reported domestic abuse as a reason for their current loss of housing

*My father used to hit me and my mom,  
she is homeless right now too*

## Top Factors Contributing to Homelessness



For youth *Count Me In* survey respondents who have experienced homelessness more than once, abuse and family conflict were the most common reasons reported for their loss of housing, both the first time these youth found themselves homeless and at the time of the survey. 25% (12 survey respondents) of youth reported abuse as the reason for the first time they became homeless and this was the second most common response for why they lost their housing at the current time.

Among youth respondents who identified abuse as their reason for becoming homeless, 38% (nine survey respondents) were female and 13% (three survey respondents) were male. Male youth (33% or eight survey respondents) were more likely to report family conflict as the reason for becoming homeless compared to their female counterparts (8% or two survey respondents).

Among 16 to 24 year olds, the most frequently reported age at which youth first left home was 16 years old (21% or 10 survey respondents).

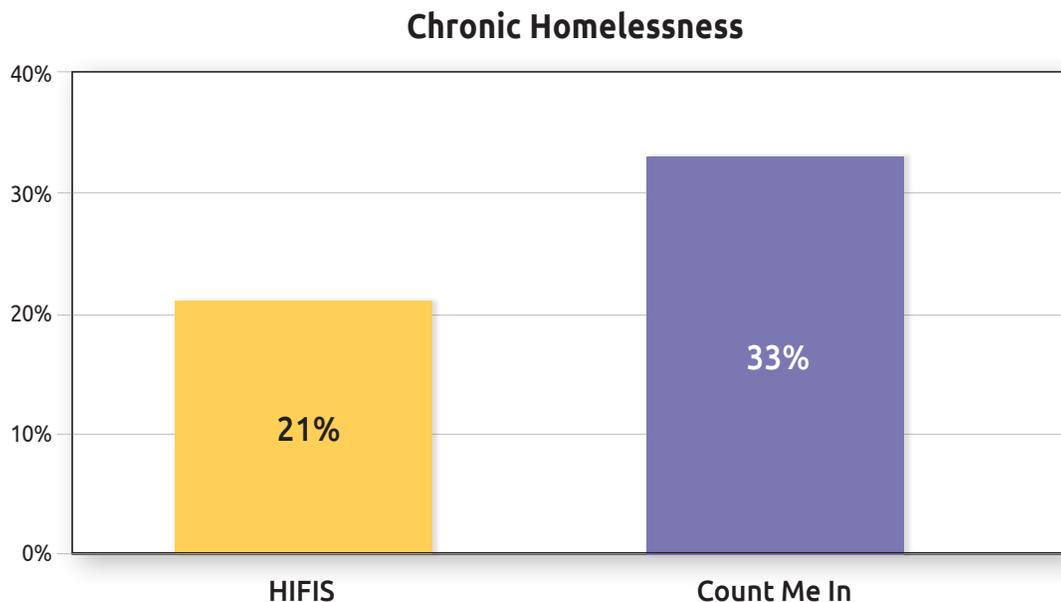
## How people experience homelessness

### Chronic homelessness

People who are experiencing chronic and/or episodic homelessness are more likely to be transient than others experiencing homelessness and may not necessarily spend the duration of their homelessness sheltered in one location. As such, in order to accurately measure chronic and episodic homelessness in York Region, the HIFIS data below includes clients that received services at a housing facility or shelter (such as drop-in services, diversion, and outreach services, etc.) but may not have stayed overnight.

Of this broader population of people accessing homeless services and supports,<sup>55</sup> HIFIS reports that 21% (263 clients) were experiencing chronic homelessness.

Of those counted during *Count Me In*, 33% (47 survey respondents) identified themselves as being chronically homeless with 17% (24 survey respondents) having experienced chronic homelessness for the entire year.



As evidenced through both datasets, chronic homelessness in York Region makes up anywhere from 21–33% of the total homeless population. Chronic homelessness in Canada is estimated to be 2–4%,<sup>56</sup> indicating that the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness in York Region is high. However, it should be noted that the Canadian figure cited refers to chronic homelessness as being homeless for one full year compared to the HIFIS and *Count Me In* definition where chronic homelessness means being homeless for a full six months or more.

### Episodic homelessness

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) defines episodic homelessness as individuals who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness

in the past. An episode is defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or inhabitable location.

Of those individuals who accessed housing, shelter, and other supports such drop-in services, diversion, and outreach services captured by HIFIS in 2015,<sup>57</sup> 12% (32 clients) were experiencing episodic homelessness.

17% (24 respondents) surveyed during *Count Me In* identified that they have experienced homelessness at least three times in the past year. Although the *Count Me In* survey question was not exactly the same as the HPS definition, this recurrence suggests that this group of respondents are having difficulty finding and keeping housing and may be experiencing episodic homelessness.<sup>58</sup>

Nationally, episodic homelessness is estimated to account for 3–11% of Canada’s homeless population<sup>59</sup> and the above data indicates that episodic homelessness in York Region is generally aligned with national averages.

Despite people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness accounting for less than 15% of Canada’s total homeless population, they use more than half of the resources in Canada’s homelessness system, including housing facility beds and day programs.<sup>60</sup>

### **Instances of homelessness**

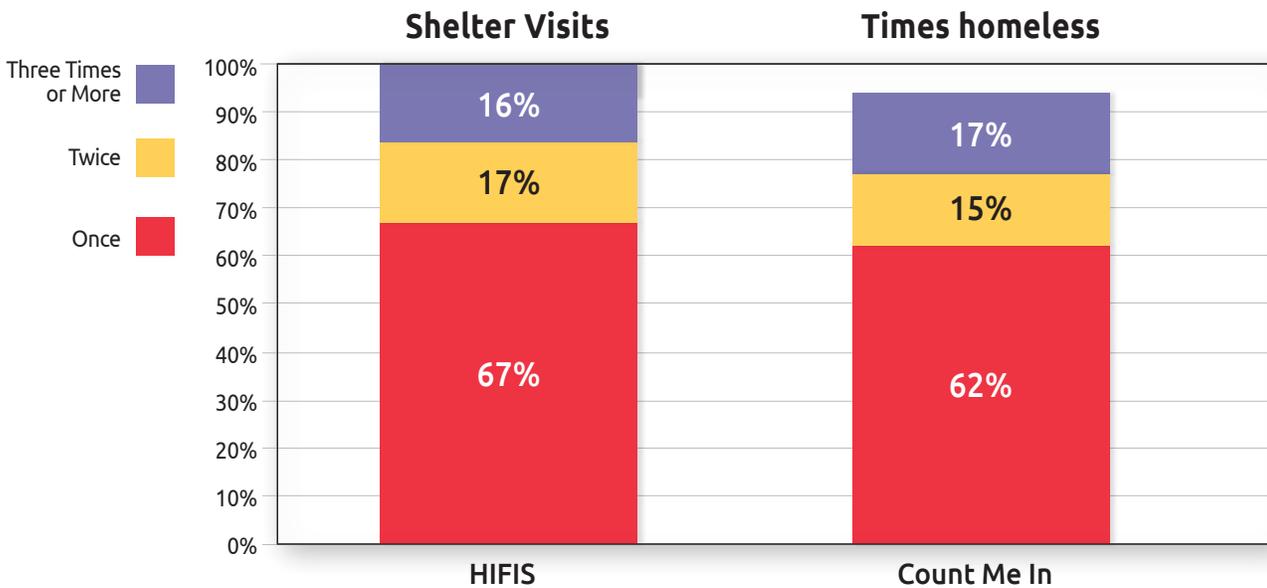
Of the 1,103 sheltered individuals counted by HIFIS in 2015:

- 67% (742 clients) visited a shelter once
- 17% (182 clients) visited a shelter twice
- 16% (179 clients) visited a shelter three times or more, with 2% (26 clients) visiting 10 times or more

Of the 143 *Count Me In* survey respondents:

- 62% (89 respondents) experienced homelessness once over the past year
- 15% (22 respondents) experienced homelessness twice over the past year
- 17% (24 respondents) experienced homelessness three times or more over the past year

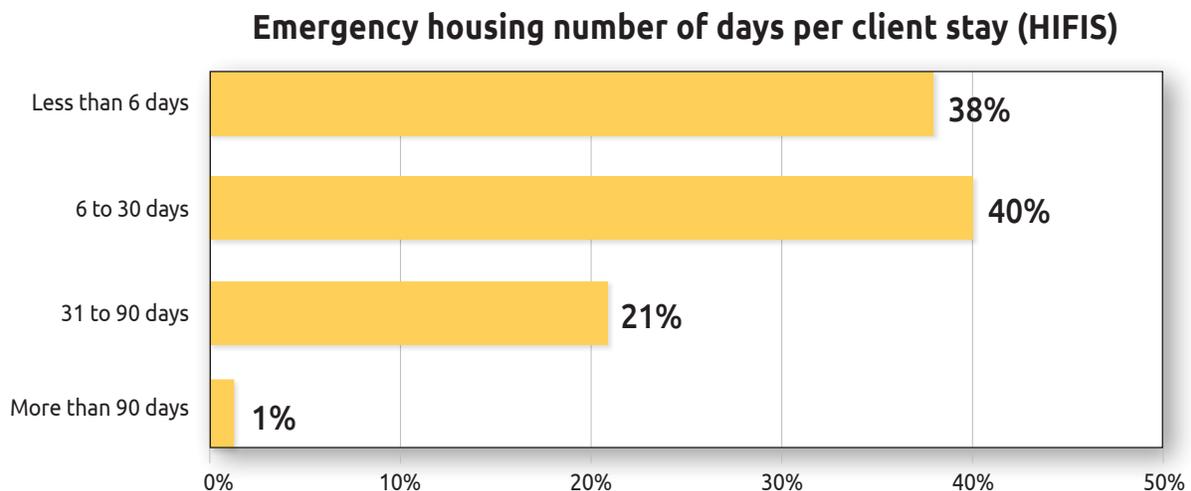
*We get help from the shelter but it is temporary.  
What am I going to do after?*



27% (13 respondents) of *Count Me In* youth respondents experienced homelessness three or more times compared to 12% (11 respondents) of adults. While youth represented about a third of those surveyed in *Count Me In*, they made up more than half of those that reported experiencing homelessness three or more times in the past year.

#### Length of stay in emergency housing

HIFIS reports that of all admissions into York Region’s emergency housing facilities in 2015, 78% of clients stayed in emergency housing for less than 30 days, with 38% of clients staying less than six days. The average length of stay was 19 days.



For most people experiencing homelessness in York Region, homelessness is a short, often one-time event. There are, however, a number of residents who struggle with long-term homelessness or are in and out of homelessness.

# Moving Forward

Homelessness is a pressing, urgent and costly issue. It is a problem that many communities across Canada are facing, and as this report confirms, it is an issue in York Region. With growing evidence and understanding about the critical importance of affordable housing for individuals, families, and communities,<sup>61</sup> the need for more integrated and collaborative solutions to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in York Region becomes that much more important.

Homelessness is not a new issue to York Region and both the Region and United Way have been developing solutions, making investments and are beginning to see results. The Regional Municipality of York developed a 10-Year Housing Plan in 2014 called *Housing Solutions* and set a goal to strengthen the homelessness and housing stability system. Since implementation of the plan, modern multi-service centers like Belinda's Place, the Region's first shelter for women experiencing homelessness, and the Richmond Hill Youth Hub for youth who are experiencing homelessness at risk of homelessness have opened. In addition, critical programs focused primarily on preventing homelessness in the first place like the Short Term Assistance for Renters (STAR) program and the Housing Stability Program are up and running.

United Way engaged the community and built public awareness of homelessness through the Youth Homelessness Research Partnership and its associated Learning Series. In 2014, United Way hosted 'Coming Together to Tackle Homelessness in York Region', which kick-started the re-convening of the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (YRH CAB) and worked to establish York Region's first Housing First collaborative, resulting in 20 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness being successfully housed to date.

Moving forward on the findings of this report 'Our plan' is a high level statement of recommended actions that York Region, United Way and other community partners are broadly committed to progressing as we continue this work. The leadership on each of these actions, along with the details of what these actions would look like in implementation, are to be worked out as part of our work moving forward.

**(1) Use data, best practice and research findings to build capacity and to engage the community**

<b>Our record:</b>	<b>Our plan:</b>
<p>A commitment to collect and share homelessness data with community partners to jointly work on new service priorities were made in York Region's 10-Year Housing Plan, <i>Housing Solutions</i> and United Way's Homelessness Partnering Strategy's, Community Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2014 <i>Emergency Housing Use in York Region</i> Report (York Region)</li> <li>➤ 2014 <i>Leaving Home: Youth Homelessness in York Region</i> report on youth homelessness (United Way/York University/Canadian Observatory on Homelessness)</li> <li>➤ First Point-in-Time count, <i>Count Me In</i> (United Way)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to measure homelessness and collect data with a particular focus on finding opportunities to collect information and conduct research on identified needs and service gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to measure homelessness and collect data to track progress</li> <li>➤ Continue to enumerate the people experiencing homelessness in York Region</li> <li>➤ Focus efforts on improving our understanding of individuals experiencing homelessness that do not use the emergency shelter system</li> </ul> <p>Conduct research and consult with representatives from the Aboriginal community to understand the needs and service gaps for Aboriginal Peoples experiencing homelessness in York Region</p>

## (2) Partner with other levels of government in a shared commitment to address chronic homelessness

Our record:	Our plan:
<p>Continued investment in programs for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implemented a new service delivery model in emergency housing that ensures individuals and families receive individualized wrap-around supports (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Developed the Housing to Health Housing First initiative which has successfully housed 20 individuals so far (United Way with community partners)</li> <li>➤ Supported a network of agencies to deliver critical community programs and services addressing homelessness (United Way)</li> <li>➤ Established the Housing with Supports Program which provides funding for approximately 400 individuals who require supervision of daily activities (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Delivered a range of services through inter-departmental collaborations and community partnerships such as the Homelessness Prevention Program, Street Outreach Van, two seasonal shelters, and the Eviction Prevention Program (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Integrated Support Program which provides social work supports to individuals with very complex barriers to become more stable (York Region)</li> </ul> <p>Continued success in getting people experiencing homelessness to be rapidly re-housed and to getting those at risk to maintain housing stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 461 individuals and families were moved from emergency and transitional housing into long-term housing between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016 (York Region)</li> <li>➤ 85–90% of Housing Stability Program clients have maintained their housing for at least six months, resulting in \$1 million in savings (York Region)</li> <li>➤ 100% of households who have been a part of the Short-Term Assistance for Renters Program for at least six months have remained stably housed (York Region)</li> </ul>	<p>Build on current initiatives to develop supportive housing options for people experiencing chronic homelessness to meet the Provincial target of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years</p> <p>Meet the Federal target of successfully implementing Housing First programs to help people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness maintain their housing</p> <p>Invest in programs and services for youth who are experiencing chronic homelessness to prevent long term negative socio-economic consequences</p> <p>Continue to look for opportunities to invest in programs and initiatives that address service gaps and are demonstrated to work</p>

### (3) Work together with numerous sectors, institutions and agencies, to coordinate services as well as optimize and leverage resources

Our record:	Our plan:
<p>A commitment in the 10-Year Housing Plan to work with community partners to strengthen and better connect homelessness and housing stability programs and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expanded emergency, transitional and drop-in services to women and youth by opening two new multi-service centers (York Region)</li> <li>➤ Supported community partners in advocating for investment in mental health and addictions supports in York Region (York Region)</li> </ul> <p>The Outreach Services Program has been successful in building connections between individuals experiencing homelessness and community resources through crisis support and short-term, intensive case management (York Region)</p> <p>Participation in housing and homelessness-related planning tables such as the Human Services Planning Board of York Region and York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (York Region/United Way)</p> <p>A commitment to the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy to work with government and community partners to inform priorities in York Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reconvened the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board comprising regional, sector and community representation to address homelessness in York Region (United Way)</li> </ul>	<p>York Region’s 10-Year Housing Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continuing to build new affordable rental housing, and provide more rent subsidies</li> <li>➤ Taking steps to preserve existing housing and strengthen the social housing system</li> <li>➤ Working with community partners to find innovative approaches to addressing home ownership affordability</li> <li>➤ Supporting people who have difficulty finding and keeping housing</li> </ul> <p>Regular engagement with the community, including key community stakeholders, all levels of government, experts from other sectors, researchers and academics, and people with lived experience to ensure homelessness strategies are coordinated, measurable, and impactful</p> <p>Advocate and collaborate with all levels of government on identified challenges, needs, service gaps and resource requirements</p> <p>Continue to coordinate and convene the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board to find and address solutions to issues impacting homelessness</p>

#### Conclusion

For the vast majority of residents, York Region is a vibrant and flourishing place to live and work. However, for some residents being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless is a daily reality. Engaging community, creating effective partnerships, as well as providing effective supports to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness will allow all in our community to live more fulfilling, prosperous lives. It will also help alleviate the growing costs that homelessness poses for our health, social services and criminal justice systems. A continued commitment to strong data and measures to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate homelessness will help York Region avoid the challenges faced by other jurisdictions who are grappling with severe issues of homelessness and the associated strains on local economies and overall resident quality of life.

# Appendix A: Working in Partnership to Address Homelessness

## **Federal Direction**

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a community-based strategy aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and funding to designated communities and organizations across Canada.<sup>62</sup> The Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013 announced nearly \$600 million over five years (2014-2019) starting in April 2014 to renew and refocus the HPS using a Housing First approach.

As an approach, Housing First under the HPS will primarily involve moving individuals who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or homeless shelters directly into permanent housing. Permanent housing is accompanied by services to assist clients to sustain their housing and work towards recovery and/or reintegration into the community.

A total of 61 communities across Canada have been selected to receive ongoing support through the designated communities funding stream to address local homelessness issues. These designated communities are referred to as "Community Entities". United Way is the designated Community Entity (CE) in York Region and is responsible for implementing and working towards the ultimate goals of HPS.

The National Homeless Information System (NHIS) is an initiative of the HPS designed to facilitate the collection of data from homeless service providers to support the creation of a portrait of homelessness in Canada. The NHIS initiative aims to prevent and reduce homelessness by increasing knowledge and understanding of homelessness issues across the country. The NHIS funding stream supports the implementation and deployment of HIFIS software, HIFIS training at the community level, and projects related to community shelter data coordination. The Regional Municipality of York is responsible for HIFIS and the management, implementation and reporting of HIFIS homelessness data in York Region.

Another component of HPS is a Point-In-Time (PiT) Count which is a method used to measure unsheltered and sheltered homelessness. United Way, as the designated CE is required to conduct and report on the findings of PiT Counts for York Region.

## **Provincial Direction**

Through *Realizing Our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2014-2019* and Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update, a commitment was made to end homelessness in the province. As a first step, it has set a target of ending chronic homelessness within ten years (by 2025-2026). The Province has put the responsibility

of achieving this goal onto Ontario's 47 Service System Managers (Service Managers), of which The Regional Municipality of York is one.

The Province set four priority areas to guide action in preventing, reducing and ending homelessness by the Service Managers in their respective communities. These are:

- 1 Chronic homelessness
- 2 Youth homelessness
- 3 Aboriginal homelessness
- 4 Homelessness following transition from provincially funded institutions and service systems

To support the development of evidenced-based, innovative local strategies aimed to prevent and reduce homelessness at the local level, the Province endorsed the collection and use of data by community partners.

Launched on January 1, 2013, Ontario's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) combines funding from formerly separate housing and homelessness programs into a single flexible program. Through CHPI, local service system managers can use allocated funding to address local priorities and better meet the needs of individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in their communities.

CHPI has the following objectives:

- To enable Service Managers to better support a full range of services that aim to prevent, reduce and address homelessness at the local level
- To connect individuals and families to community resources
- To assist households at risk of or experiencing homelessness to obtain and retain affordable housing by facilitating the development of seamless support services programming
- To promote a culture of policy, planning and service delivery that is focused on an outcome-based and people-centered approach, while recognizing the complexity of homelessness and issues related to homelessness
- To create and support opportunities for Service Managers to develop creative and innovative approaches
- To increase flexibility at the local level to prevent, reduce, and address homelessness

### **The Regional Municipality of York**

In 2012, York Region Council endorsed a new vision for homelessness prevention, shifting investments and service planning from a focus on crisis management to the active promotion of housing stability. The goal of this vision is to prevent homelessness in the first place and to help residents who become homeless with the supports they need to find and keep housing.<sup>63</sup> The key element of this new vision is the provision of 'wrap-around' support services tailored to the specific needs of residents to assist them in searching for and/or retaining housing. This may include immediate financial assistance to pay rent or utility arrears, but can also include help with finding housing, life skills, education/training, employment, access to mental health or addictions services or transportation.

In 2014, York Region Council approved a 10-year Housing Plan that builds on the work the Region has already done and proposes a total of 49 actions to increase the rental housing supply, sustain the existing rental housing supply, support affordable home ownership, and strengthen the homelessness and housing stability system.<sup>64</sup> Since the approval of the Housing Plan, The Regional Municipality of York has made progress in making housing more affordable in York Region including the approval of over 400 new affordable units and opening two new emergency and transitional housing facilities for homeless and at risk women and youth.

### **United Way Toronto & York Region**

In its role as the Community Entity of HPS, United Way reconvened the local homelessness Community Advisory Board to provide a venue for community members and sector representatives to address homelessness collaboratively.<sup>65</sup> This voluntary board is referred to as the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (YRH CAB). Guided by the YRH CAB, United Way leads the implementation of the 5-year HPS Community Plan which includes:

- A primary focus on Housing First, which includes moving those experiencing chronic and/or episodic homelessness into safe and affordable housing
- The flexibility to invest in other proven approaches that complement Housing First
- The collection and dissemination of data to better understand and respond to those experiencing homelessness in York Region

United Way continues to address the root causes of social issues and meet immediate needs. The new Community Services Sector strategy focuses on helping people who live in poverty and those at risk of falling into poverty. In 2012, with the endorsement of the local homelessness Community Advisory Board, United Way (formerly United Way of York Region) assumed authority for being the federally designated Community Entity<sup>66</sup> in York Region. It became responsible for administering and implementing federal funding provided through the Government of Canada's HPS to address homelessness in York Region. During the same year, United Way released *Leaving Home: Youth Homelessness in York Region*, which revealed that a more integrated, systems approach to homelessness would be needed to prevent youth from becoming homeless and to stop the flow of young people leaving institutional care into homelessness. *Leaving Home* had a major focus on prevention and is informing United Way's role as Community Entity.

### **Partnerships and Homeless-Related Service Delivery**

Collaboration is key to homeless-related service delivery in York Region. A vast array of local service providers, private and non-profit organizations, charities, local health networks, legal clinics and other agencies provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness and support service delivery in the community.

# Appendix B: HIFIS Data Tables

(Reporting Period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015)

**Table 1: Age Group**

Age Group	Clients	Percentage
Children (0 – 16)	135	12.2%
Youth (17 – 18)	52	4.7%
Adults (19 – 59)	845	76.6%
Seniors (60+)	71	6.4%

**Table 2: Age Bracket**

Age Group	Clients	Percentage
Under 18	162	14.7%
18 to 24	269	24.4%
25 to 34	195	17.7%
35 to 44	169	15.3%
45 to 54	181	16.4%
55 to 64	96	8.7%
65 to 67	15	1.4%
68 and over	16	1.5%

**Table 3: Gender**

Gender	Clients	Percentage
Female	328	29.7%
Male	775	70.3%

**Table 4: Citizenship and Immigration Status**

Citizenship/Immigration Status	Clients	Percentage
Unspecified	3	0.3%
Canadian Citizen – Born Outside of Canada	109	9.9%
Canadian Citizen – Born in Canada	846	76.7%
Permanent Resident / Immigrant	55	4.9%
Refugee	8	0.7%
Refugee Claimant	8	0.7%
Visitor Visa/Student Visa	4	0.4%
Undeclared / Refused	75	6.8%

*Note: clients are able to identify under more than one category and may be represented in the data more than once; i.e. be an immigrant to Canada and have since acquired citizenship.*

**Table 5: Aboriginal Peoples**

Aboriginal Indicator	Clients	Percentage
Unspecified	3	0.3%
First Nations: Off-reserve/On-reserve	35	3.2%
Non-Status/Inuit	58	5.3%
Métis	20	1.8%
Non-Aboriginal	888	80.5%
Unknown / Not Asked	114	10.3%

Note: where applicable, clients are able to identify under more than one category and may be represented in the data more than once; i.e. identify as Métis and Non-Status.

**Table 6: Veteran Status**

Veteran Status	Clients	Percentage
Unspecified/Veteran – Civilian	5	0.5%
Canadian Armed Forces	12	1.1%
Not a Veteran	1,024	92.8%
Unknown / Not Asked	66	6.0%

Note: where applicable, clients are able to identify under more than one category and may be represented in the data more than once; i.e. identify as Métis and Non-Status.

**Table 7: Special Needs – Top Contributing Factors to Homelessness**

Contributing Factor	Clients Affected	Percentage
Housing Loss <sup>67</sup>	534	36.2%
Mental Health/Substance Use/Harm Reduction <sup>68</sup>	253	18.2%
Family/Relationship Breakdown	193	13.1%
Interaction with Criminal Justice System/Law <sup>69</sup>	103	7.0%
Financial Crisis	66	4.5%

**Table 8: Shelter Visits Per Client During Reporting Period (January 1 – December 31, 2015)**

Number of Times Visiting A Shelter	Clients	Percentage
1 Visit	742	67.3%
2 Visits	182	16.5%
3 Visits	67	6.1%
4 Visits	35	3.2%
5 Visits	22	2.0%
6 Visits	8	0.7%
7 Visits	9	0.8%
8 Visits	5	0.5%
9 Visits	7	0.6%
10 Visits	26	2.4%

**Table 9: People experiencing chronic homelessness**

Chronic Homelessness	Clients	Percentage
Aboriginal	11	4.2%
Veteran	6	2.3%
<b>Age Group</b>		
Child (0 – 16)	18	6.8%
Youth (17 – 18)	13	4.9%
Adult (19 – 59)	223	84.8%
Senior (60+)	15	5.7%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	184	70.0%
Female	79	30.0%

**Table 10: People experiencing episodic homelessness**

Episodic Homelessness	Clients	Percentage
Aboriginal	4	12.50%
Veteran	1	3.3%
<b>Age Group</b>		
Child (0 – 16)	2	6.3%
Youth (17 – 18)	5	15.6%
Adult (19 – 59)	26	81.3%
Senior (60+)	2	6.3%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	31	96.9%
Female	1	3.1%

**Table 11: Length of Stay in Emergency Housing**

Length of Stay in Emergency Housing	Admissions	Percentage
Less than 6 days	699	37.8%
6 to 30 days	741	40.1%
31 to 90 days	380	20.6%
More than 90 days	28	1.5%

# Appendix C: Point-in-Time Count Data Tables

**Table 12: Location of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count**

Typology	Location	CMI total sample		Male		Female		Youth 16-24		25 & over	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Emergency sheltered	Emergency Shelter or Seasonal overnight shelter	91	64%	57	83%	34	46%	29	60%	60	65%
	VAW Shelter	30	21%	0	0	30	41%	6	13%	24	26%
Provisionally Accommodated	Transitional Housing or Institutional care, NFA	17	12%	7	10%	10	13%	13	27%	4	4%
Unsheltered	Street / Public space	5	3%	5	7%	0	0	0	0	5	5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 13: Gender distribution**

	CMI total sample		Youth 16-24		25 & over	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	69	48%	24	50%	43	46%
Female	74	52%	24	50%	50	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** What gender do you identify with?

**Table 14: Age distribution**

Age group	CMI total sample	
	#	%
16-24	48	34%
25-64	88	62%
65+	5	3%
No response	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** How old are you? Or What year were you born?

**Table 15: Self-identified as LGBTQ2**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	11 [7 youth]	8%
No	125	87%
No Response	7	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ2 community? [LGBTQ2 refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-Spirited]

**Table 16: Self-identified as Indigenous or have Indigenous ancestry**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	19	13%
No	124	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 17: Born in Canada**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%*
Yes	109	76%
No	32	22%
No Response	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>99%</b>

**Survey question:** Were you born in Canada?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 18: Citizenship status**

	CMI sub-population of those not born in Canada	
	#	%
Canadian citizen	10	31%
Permanent Resident, Refugee Claimant, or Other	12	38%
No response	10	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** If not born in Canada, are you a:

**Table 19: Self-declared as a Veteran**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	5	3%
No	138	97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Have you ever had any military service in the Canadian Military or RCMP? [Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force]

**Table 20: Household composition**

	CMI total sample		Male		Female	
	#	%	#	%*	#	%
No family members present	109	76%	58	84%	51	69%
Partner no children	12	8%	7	10%	5	7%
Partner and child(ren)	1	1%	0	0	1	1%
Lone parent and children	13	9%	2	3%	11	15%
Extended family/Other adult, no children	5	3%	1	1%	4	5%
No response	3	2%	1	1%	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** What family members are with you today?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 21: Moved to York Region in the last year**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	47	33%
No	96	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Did you move to York Region in the past year? [York Region includes anywhere in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham, King, Newmarket, Aurora, Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury, or Georgina]

**Table 22: Where respondents lived before moving to York Region**

	CMI sub-population of those who moved in the past year	
	#	%*
Within Ontario	37	79%
Another province	5	11%
No response	5	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>101%</b>

**Survey question:** Where were you living before coming to York Region?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 23: Highest level of education**

	CMI total sample		25 & over		Youth 16-24		Male 25 & over		Female 25 & over	
	#	%*	#	%	#	%*	#	%	#	%
Primary School	3	2%	2	2%	1	2%	1	2%	1	2%
Some High School	47	33%	21	23%	25	52%	15	35%	6	12%
High School Graduate	43	30%	27	29%	16	33%	13	30%	14	28%
Some Postsecondary	31	22%	27	29%	4	8%	8	19%	19	38%
Postsecondary Graduate	18	13%	16	17%	1	2%	6	14%	10	20%
No response	1	1%	0	0	1	2%	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** What is the highest level of education you completed?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 24: Youth currently enrolled in school**

	Youth 16-24		Male 16-24		Female 16-24	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	19	40%	7	29%	12	50%
No	25	52%	15	63%	10	42%
No response	4	8%	2	8%	2	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question for youth 16-24:** Are you currently enrolled in school?

**Table 25: Source(s) of income**

	CMI total sample		Male		Female		Youth 16-24		25 & over	
	#	%*	#	%*	#	%*	#	%*	#	%*
Ontario Works	67	47%	27	39%	40	54%	21	44%	46	50%
Employment	30	21%	20	29%	10	14%	18	38%	12	13%
Disability benefits	16	11%	9	13%	7	9%	0	0%	15	16%
No income	16	11%	6	9%	10	14%	5	10%	10	11%
Other	29	20%	17	25%	12	16%	9	19%	19	20%
No response	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%

**Survey question:** Where do you get your money from?

\*NB: This is a multiple response question and percentages do not add up to 100%

**Table 26: Number of source(s) of income**

	CMI total sample		Male		Female		Youth 16-24		25 & over	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%*
1 source	110	77%	52	75%	58	78%	35	73%	75	81%
2 sources	15	10%	10	15%	5	7%	6	13%	8	9%
3 sources	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
No income	16	11%	6	9%	10	14%	5	10%	10	11%
No response	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>101%</b>

**Survey question:** Where do you get your money from?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

*I panhandle to pay for food.  
I have no choice and it is humiliating.*

**Table 27: One source of income by gender and age groups**

	CMI sub-population who relied on one source of income		Male sub-population who relied on one source of income		Female sub-population who relied on one source of income		Youth 16-24 sub-population who relied on one source of income		25 & over sub-population who relied on one source of income	
	#	%	#	%*	#	%	#	%	#	%
Ontario Works	56	51%	21	40%	35	60%	17	49%	39	52%
Employment	21	19%	14	27%	7	12%	12	34%	9	12%
Disability benefits	15	14%	8	15%	7	12%	0	0%	15	20%
Other	18	16%	9	17%	9	16%	6	17%	12	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Where do you get your money from?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 28: Number of times respondents experienced homelessness in the past year**

	CMI total sample		Youth 16-24		25 & over	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 time	89	62%	24	50%	64	69%
2 times	22	15%	8	17%	14	15%
3+ times	24	17%	13	27%	11	12%
No response	8	6%	3	6%	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Over the past year, how many different times have you experienced homelessness? [Includes this time. Best estimate]

**Table 29: Length of time respondents experienced homelessness in the past year**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
0-3 months	62	43%
3-6 months	24	17%
Chronic: 6 months+ (1 year)	47 (24)	33% (17%)
No response	10	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Over the past year, how much of the time have you been homeless? [Includes this time. Best estimate]

**Table 30: Incidence of chronic and/or episodic homelessness**

	CMI total sample		Youth 16-24		25 & over	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Chronic or episodic	55	39%	22	46%	33	35%
Not chronic or episodic	86	60%	26	54%	58	62%
No response	2	1%	0	0	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** Over the past year, how many different times have you experienced homelessness? [Includes this time. Best estimate], and, Over the past year, how much of the time have you been homeless? [Includes this time. Best estimate]

**Table 31: Reasons for current loss of housing**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%*
Family conflict	39	28%
Domestic abuse	34	24%
Evicted or 'kicked out'	27	19%
Unsafe housing conditions	22	16%
Illness/medical condition, hospitalization, or treatment program	14	10%
Job loss	13	9%
Mental health/addiction or substance use	9	6%
Incarcerated	3	2%
Conflict with roommate or friend	3	2%
Other	14	10%
No response	8	6%

**Survey question:** What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? ['Housing' does not include temporary arrangements (e.g. couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

\*NB: This is a multiple response question and percentages do not add up to 100%

**Table 32: Reasons for current loss of housing among youth**

	Youth 16-24 current loss of housing	
	#	%*
Family conflict	16	35%
Domestic abuse	10	22%
Unsafe housing conditions	7	15%
Evicted or 'kicked out'	5	11%
Illness/medical condition, hospitalization, or treatment program	4	9%
Job loss	2	4%
Mental health/addiction or substance use	2	4%
Incarcerated	1	2%
Conflict with roommate or friend	1	2%
CAS/Foster care involvement	0	0%
Turned 18	0	0%
Other	4	9%
No response	4	9%

**Survey question:** What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? ['Housing' does not include temporary arrangements (e.g. couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

\*NB: This is a multiple response question and percentages do not add up to 100

**Table 33: Number of reasons for current housing loss**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
1 reason	94	66%
2 reasons	28	20%
3+ reasons	9	6%
No response	12	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? ['Housing' does not include temporary arrangements (e.g. couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

**Table 34: Reasons for first loss of housing among youth by gender**

	Youth 16-24		Male youth 16-24		Female youth 16-24	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Abuse	12	25%	3	13%	9	38%
Family conflict	10	21%	8	33%	2	8%
Evicted or 'kicked out'	8	17%	4	17%	4	17%
CAS/foster care involvement	4	8%	2	8%	2	8%
Turned 18	3	6%	3	13%	0	0%
Other	3	6%	2	8%	1	4%
No response	8	17%	2	8%	6	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question for youth 16-24:** Why did you first leave home?

**Table 35: Barriers to permanent housing**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%*
No income assistance or low income	63	46%
Rents too high	50	36%
No housing available or poor housing conditions	25	18%
Discrimination/children/pets	18	13%
Domestic violence	15	11%
Family issues	12	9%
Mental health/addiction or substance use	10	7%
Legal issues	9	7%
Health or disability	8	6%
Age (too young)	6	4%
Lack employment	6	4%
Bad credit	4	3%
Trying to get into housing/lost priority housing list	4	3%
Unable to work or lack paperwork/documents	4	3%
Don't want housing	2	1%
Other	9	7%
No response	2	1%

**Survey question:** What do you think is keeping you from finding a place of your own?

\*NB: This is a multiple response question and percentages do not add up to 100%

**Table 36: What would help secure permanent housing**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%*
Money/income	42	32%
Affordable/subsidized housing	25	19%
Job/job quality	23	18%
Help with rental process or landlord acceptance	18	14%
Caseworker or support worker to navigate system	8	6%
Mental health	6	5%
Awareness of services	5	4%
More rental apartments	5	4%
Shorter wait list	4	3%
"Time"	4	3%
Internet	3	2%
Transportation	3	2%
Youth-specific barriers ('to be 19', 'turning 18')	3	2%
Other	21	16%
No response	2	2%

**Survey question:** What would help you find permanent and stable housing?

\*NB: This is a multiple response question and percentages do not add up to 100%

**Table 37: Number of barriers to permanent housing**

	CMI total sample		Male		Female	
	#	%*	#	%	#	%*
1 barrier	78	55%	40	58%	38	51%
2 barriers	31	22%	20	29%	11	15%
3 barriers	14	10%	2	3%	12	16%
4 or more barriers	13	9%	2	3%	11	16%
No response	7	5%	5	7%	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>101%</b>

**Survey question:** What would help you find permanent and stable housing?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 38: On a waiting list for housing**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	48	34%
No	91	64%
No response	4	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>101%</b>

**Survey question:** Are you on a waiting list for housing?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 39: Use of ER or EMS in the past year**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%*
Yes	88	62%
No	54	38%
No response	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>101%</b>

**Survey question:** In the past year, have you used Emergency Medical Services (e.g. ambulance, paramedics)? and, In the past year, have you been to a hospital Emergency Room?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 40: Hospitalized in the past year**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	37	26%
No	104	73%
No response	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>28 days</b>	

**Survey question:** In the past year, have you been hospitalized as an inpatient?, and If yes, how many days in total have you spent hospitalized?

**Table 41: Interacted with police in the past year**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%*
Yes	74	52%
No	68	48%
No response	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>101%</b>

**Survey question:** In the past year, have you had interactions with the police?

\*NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 42: Were in a jail or a holding cell in the past year**

	CMI total sample	
	#	%
Yes	32	22%
No	110	77%
No response	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Survey question:** In the past year, have you been to jail?

*I lost my job working in the oil sands  
and have been homeless since*

# Appendix D: Point-in-Time Count Planning

United Way struck a cross-departmental internal planning committee to plan and execute all aspects of the Point-in-Time Count, including survey and methodology planning, volunteer recruitment and deployment, marketing, and a communications strategy.

United Way also convened an External Advisory Committee consisting of 10 members representing agencies<sup>70</sup> who worked directly with people experiencing homelessness in York Region. The committee identified known-locations of people sleeping rough, i.e. sleeping on the streets or places not meant for human habitation, also called “hot spots”, and which locations were safe for the public to visit. As members of agencies that served people experiencing homelessness, the External Advisory Committee also promoted the Point-in-Time Count within their networks, and provided feedback on the wording and order of survey questions.

The York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board provided advice, direction, and feedback throughout the planning process, particularly in the areas of methodology, risk management and volunteer recruitment. As members of the YRHCAB, they supported and promoted the Point-in-Time Count within their organizations and networks.

## **Point-in-Time Count Volunteer Recruitment, Training, Deployment and Safety Plan**

### **Recruitment and training**

Two months before the Point-in-Time Count, United Way launched an online platform to register and recruit volunteers.

Volunteers who administered the survey were recruited as Team Leads or Counters. For safety and sensitivity, Team Leads were required to have direct lived or working experience with people who experienced homelessness. Depending on where teams were deployed, Team Leads partnered with up to three different Counters, some of whom also had lived or working experience of homelessness.

Because of the large geography of York Region and the scope of the Point-in-Time Count, the Town of Georgina, the City of Markham, the Town of Newmarket, the Town of Richmond Hill and the Canadian Mental Health Association each provided spaces that served as Field Offices during the night of the Point-in-Time Count. Field Offices were the administrative and logistics bases for all survey volunteers. Volunteers who were recruited as Field Office Leads or Assistants and trained in administrative duties, safety management, and were responsible for organizing volunteers the night of the Point-in-Time Count.

Throughout the two weeks preceding the Point-in-Time Count, United Way trained all volunteers during three 3-hour training sessions. All volunteers were oriented to United Way, and were trained on safety protocols and the overall logistics for the Point-in-Time Count. United Way also trained survey volunteers on survey ethics and administration.

### **Deployment**

A total of 130 trained volunteers were deployed for the Point-in-Time Count. One volunteer who attended training did not show up for the count. 114 volunteers conducted the count and administered the surveys; the remainder were based at headquarters or administrative centers to manage logistics.

A staff member from 360°kids, an agency dedicated to serving youth in the region, was stationed at headquarters and ready to respond to calls if volunteers encountered youth who seemed to be at risk. Staff were ready to meet the youth at their locations to offer assistance and further assess the situation. No youth were found to be at risk during the Point-in-Time Count.

Separate, dedicated staff from Blue Door Shelters were also at headquarters and ready to transport any person sleeping rough to a shelter, if the respondent desired. None of the respondents wished to be transported to shelter during the night of the Point-in-Time Count.

### **Safety plan**

Volunteer safety was a priority. All volunteers were placed in teams of two or more for the entirety of their shift, and at least one person in each team was required to have a cell phone for safety. All volunteer teams were tracked and accounted for just before, during, and after their shift.

*Count Me In* adapted the City of Toronto's Point-in-Time Count 2013 safety plan to the York Region context, with additional input from York Regional Police Major Incident Management. During the mandatory training sessions, volunteers were trained to safely respond to various situations that might have occurred during the Point-in-Time Count, such as potential disruptions and/or odd behaviours or lost volunteers, etc. An officer from York Regional Police Major Incident Management department also volunteered his time at headquarters to respond to any incidents. Fortunately, no major incidents or emergencies occurred during *Count Me In*.

# Appendix E: Point-in-Time Count Methodology

**Table 43: Enumeration of people experiencing homelessness**

Term	Category	Living situation	Number of people enumerated
"Sheltered count"	Emergency Sheltered	Emergency overnight emergency housing facilities for people who are homeless, and  Emergency housing facilities for individuals/families impacted by family violence	221
	Provisionally Accommodated	Interim Housing for people who are homeless, and  Institutional care, no fixed address	35
"Unsheltered (street) count"	Unsheltered	People living in public or private spaces without consent or contract	5
"Service Count"		People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation	+2
			<b>Total: 263</b>

## *Sheltered count*

### **Emergency sheltered**

A total of 221 people were counted in emergency housing facilities and 121 people completed a survey.

With the exception of one Violence Against Women (VAW) shelter, *Count Me In* reached sixteen different sites and covered the Region's emergency shelter system as it existed at the time of the Point-in-Time Count. Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold did not participate in the survey portion of the Point-in-Time Count, but provided administrative data for the night of January 20th, 2016. Thirty-two people were staying at Out of the Cold; 30 were men, two were women. 360kids opened the Richmond Hill Housing & Community Hub containing both emergency beds and transitional units for youth during the spring of 2016, thus were not included in the Point-in-Time Count.

### **Provisionally accommodated**

There were 35 people that were provisionally accommodated the night of January 20th, 2016, staying either in interim housing units or in institutional care. Seventeen individuals who were provisionally accommodated completed a survey.

### **Interim Housing**

For the purposes of the Point-in-Time Count, *Interim Housing*, including transitional and second-stage housing units, was characterized by the following:

- 1 Clients do not pay rent or low cost rent
- 2 Clients stay for a fixed term and are required to leave by the end of the term, usually less than one year
- 3 Supports are offered through the program with the intention of transitioning people to permanent housing

### **In hotel or motel in lieu of emergency shelter**

On occasion, a referral to a hotel or motel will be made if, for example, emergency housing facilities are filled to capacity. During the Point-in-Time Count, no individuals were staying in a hotel or motel that were referred by an emergency shelter. Given that *Count Me In* did not acquire administrative data from hotels or motels, it is possible that these establishments housed people with no fixed address or who were otherwise homeless at the time of the Point-in-Time Count. These individuals are not captured in our results.

### **Institutional Care**

During the Point-in-Time Count, one person was encountered on the street that was staying in a remand centre (halfway house), with no housing outside the facility. Because the individual was without shelter when not at the halfway house, this living situation was considered to be provisionally accommodated for the purposes of the Point-in-Time Count.

**Table 44: Emergency housing facilities, interim housing, and seasonal sites visited on January 20, 2016**

Agency	Emergency beds	Emergency bed capacity	Interim Housing (includes Transitional or second-stage housing units)	Transitional or second-stage units capacity	Enumeration	Survey
The Salvation Army York Housing and Support Services – Sutton Youth Shelter ★	♂, ♀	16	♂, ♀	10 beds	✓	✓
The Salvation Army York Housing and Support Services – Belinda’s Place	♀, single	28	♀, single	9 beds	✓	✓
360°kids Residential Program ★			♂, ♀	13 beds	✓	✓
360°kids Kids STAY Program ★			♂, ♀	6 beds	✓	✓
York Region Youth Shelter, Blue Door Shelters ★	♂	10			✓	✓
INN From the Cold	♂, ♀, 17+	28			✓	✓
Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold	♂, ♀, 17+	30			✓	
Porter Place Blue Door Shelters	♂, 18+	29			✓	✓
Leeder Place Blue Door Shelters Family shelter - any unit of 2 or more in familial relationship. Must have a defined head of household who is 18+	♂, ♀	60			✓	✓
Sandgate	♀	30	♀	4 apartments	✓	✓
Yellow Brick House	♀	42	♀	8 units	✓	✓

♂ Male

♀ Female

★ Youth-specific agency; serves youth 16-26

### **1.1.1 Unsheltered (street) count**

Seven people were found to have slept on the street, in a public space, or a place not meant for human habitation the night of January 20th, 2016. All seven unsheltered individuals were adult men. Five of the seven individuals completed a survey.

For safety, volunteers canvassed only safe spaces identified by the External Advisory Committee, which included the street, parking lots, and parkettes. Areas deemed potentially unsafe, such as fields or ravines, or abandoned houses, were not covered during *Count Me In*. For this reason, the number of individuals found unsheltered is likely an undercount, though impossible to know how much of an undercount. The timing of *Count Me In* during January may have increased the chances of encountering normally transient, unsheltered individuals at seasonal overnight emergency housing facilities as they sought shelter from the cold.

### **Service count**

The service count occurred the next day on January 21, 2016, from 9:00 am-7:30 pm, at five different agencies known to serve people experiencing homelessness. Agencies included The Newmarket Public Library, Krasman Centre Drop-in, Belinda's Place Drop-in, Sutton Youth Drop-In, and 360°kids Drop-in. Two people found to have slept on the street/public space the night before were found during the service count, and are part of the seven reflected in the unsheltered count.

Six individuals found during the service count had stayed at an emergency shelter or transitional housing the night before and completed a survey. Their surveys were included in the analysis because these individuals reported that they did not complete the survey night before, and no duplicate answers were found among the surveys collected. The six were not added to the enumeration however, as they were captured through the occupancy total of the shelter night before.

### **1.1.2 Survey and tally sheet**

#### **Survey**

The York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board, External Advisory Committee and United Way Internal Advisory Committee provided guidance and feedback on the wording and order of the survey questions. United Way also pilot tested the survey with 10 people experiencing homelessness to hear direct feedback from the intended respondents, and to ensure it took less than 15 minutes to complete.

The survey consisted of 20 questions: 12 were written by the Government of Canada Homelessness Partnering Strategy and aligned with the national coordinated Point-in-Time Count, six from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, and four locally-specific questions informed by United Way. The minimum age to participate in the survey was 16.

Volunteers were instructed to approach everyone they encountered, whether they 'looked' homeless or not, and to determine eligibility in the survey through a series of screening

questions. The screening questions asked where the respondent was staying that night (or the night before if they were part of the service count), if the respondent was at the age of consent of 16 or older, and if the respondent had already taken the survey. Volunteers also read aloud an informed consent statement written on the survey, which explained its purpose, that respondents could skip any question or stop the survey at any time, that respondents could not be individually identified, and all surveys would be secured in a locked space. Staff that administered surveys to their clients (e.g. in VAW emergency housing facilities) also stated that participation in the survey did not in any way affect respondents' use of services in the agency.

A \$20 Tim Horton's gift card was provided as honoraria to all survey respondents. Volunteers were trained to mention the honoraria only after the respondent had agreed to the survey to avoid any possible actual or perceived sense of coercion of vulnerable respondents. In addition, any individual who was found to be homeless but declined the survey received a care package that contained warm socks, toque, gloves, chap stick, a round-trip bus ticket in York Region, and a thank you card that contained phone numbers to 24-hour services in the region. The External Advisory Committee advised on the items in the care package and honoraria.

One hundred forty-four surveys were collected from *Count Me In*. Any surveys that indicated the respondent had their own permanent residence were discarded. One additional survey was not included in the analysis in order to protect the identity of the individual, who, because of one unique answer, could easily be traced in the reported data and potentially identified. The total number of surveys included in the analysis is therefore 143.

In partnership with the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, United Way created a data cleaning and entry protocol to manage ambiguous or unclear survey answers. All surveys were cleaned and entered into the federal government Homelessness Partnering Strategy's Homelessness Individual and Families Information System (HIFIS) database. HIFIS contains features to flag suspect entries such as duplicates or unlikely scenarios (e.g. 16-year old veteran). The HIFIS database did not flag any entries. The data was transferred to SPSS for analysis, and was examined again for duplicate entries across multiple demographic variables and responses. No duplicate surveys were found.

#### **b) Tally sheet ('observed homelessness')**

As part of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy's methodology for in the Point-in-Time Count, each team of volunteers had a tally sheet to count anyone who appeared to be homeless but declined to participate in the survey, or were not approached but observed to be homeless. Volunteers were instructed not to approach anyone asleep or anyone exhibiting odd behaviour for safety and sensitivity. Volunteers had to provide clear indicators for why they believed the person to be homeless on the tally sheet.

As a result of the tally sheets, two people that were on the street or in a public space were observed to be homeless, and added to the enumeration portion of the Point-in-Time Count.

**Table 45: Where surveys were collected from**

Surveys were classified according to category	Living situation	When surveys were completed			Total surveys collected
		During sheltered Count	During unsheltered (street) count	During service Count	
Emergency Sheltered	Emergency overnight housing facilities for people who are homeless, and  Emergency overnight shelters for individuals/families impacted by family violence	117	0	4	121
Provisionally Accommodated	Interim Housing for people who are homeless, and  Institutional care, no fixed address	14	1	2	17
“Unsheltered (street) count”	People living in public or private spaces without consent or contract, and  People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation	0	3	2	5
					<b>Total: 143 surveys</b>

# Appendix F: Point-in-Time Count Survey Instrument

## Unsheltered Screening Tool

### SCRIPT:

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a volunteer for *Count Me In*. We are counting the number of people who are homeless living in York region, and conducting a survey to better understand their service needs. The information will be used to inform programs and services needed in York Region for those experiencing homelessness. Can you answer a few screening questions about housing for us?

- Participation is **voluntary** and **your name will not be recorded**
- You can choose to **skip any question** or to **stop the interview at any time**.
- Everything you say will be confidential. Your identity is protected any data will only ever be presented in aggregate form. All data will be kept in a locked, secure space.
- Results will contribute to the understanding of homelessness across Canada, and will help with research to improve services.

### **A. Have you already answered this survey with a person with this touque?**

[Yes: Thank and tally] [No: Go to B]

### **B. Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?**

[Yes or No: Go to C]

### C. Where are you staying tonight? [Do not read categories]

a. Decline to answer	<p>If someone says they are staying at a friend, family member, or someone else's place; ask clarifying questions to better understand their situation.</p> <p>1. "Do you live with your parents?"  <b>Yes:</b> Mark as 'own apartment/house'. End the survey, thank and Tally  <b>No:</b> Proceed below</p> <p>2. "Do you pay rent there?"  <b>Yes:</b> Mark as 'own apartment/house'. End the survey, thank and Tally  <b>No:</b> Proceed below</p> <p>3. "Is it a temporary arrangement?"  <b>No:</b> Mark as 'own apartment/house'. End the survey, thank and Tally  <b>Yes:</b> circle 'g' below and continue</p> <p>g. Staying at someone else's place temporarily/ 'couch surfing'</p>	h. Public space (e.g., sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, bus shelter)
b. Own apartment/house		i. vehicle (car, van, RV, truck)
c. Motel/Hotel		j. Makeshift shelter, tent or shack
d. Remand centre (halfway house)		k. Abandoned/vacant building
e. Emergency shelter, Domestic violence shelter		l. Other unsheltered location unfit for human habitation
f. Transitional housing	m. Respondent doesn't know (likely homeless)	
Thank and note responses to B and C on tally sheet. Do not continue	<p>If circle: Continue to D.</p> <p>OFFER AN ENERGY BAR SO THEY CAN EAT ON THE SPOT</p>	<p>Continue to D.</p> <p>OFFER AN ENERGY BAR SO THEY CAN EAT ON THE SPOT</p>

### D. How old are you? Or, what year were you born?

<p>a. Age (in years) _____ →</p> <p><b>OR</b> Year born _____</p> <p>b. Don't know</p> <p>c. Decline to answer</p>	<p><b>If necessary, refer to script- see next page</b></p> <p><b>If respondent is 24 or younger and may proceed, remember to ask <u>7b and 10b</u></b></p>
--	--

**SCRIPT:** for youth 16 or under and sleeping on streets:

**"We want to help and support you; can we connect you to getting services through 360 Kids? Staff from 360 Kids can be dispatched right now to help you."**

If they say 'yes': make the call to headquarters/360 Kids, continue with survey while you wait if they are 16 or older.

If they say 'no': **"I have to inform you that by law I will still be calling 360 Kids who will come and determine if follow up is needed with other services"** (Duty to Report)

Call headquarters and let them know youth's location.

**E. What family members are with you today?** [Indicate survey numbers for adults, only if applicable]

a. None b. Partner - <b>Survey #</b> (if applicable) _____	c. Other adult - <b>Survey #</b> (if applicable): _____ d. Decline to answer
---	--

Indicate any **dependent** children and their ages below

	Age									
Male										
Female										

**F. Will you participate in a 10-15 min survey?**

[Yes: survey] [No: Thank and tally]

**Thank you for participating. The survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete. Please note that you will receive a \$20 Tim Horton's gift card for completing the survey.**

**Note: If respondent is willing to participate, note responses to B, C, D, and E onto the beginning of the survey**

## Unsheltered Survey

**Area:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?**

[Yes: survey] [No: Thank and tally]

**C. Where are you staying tonight?** [Do not read categories]

a. Decline to answer	<p>If someone says they are staying at a friend, family member, or someone else's place; ask clarifying questions to better understand their situation.</p> <p>1. "Do you live with your parents?"  <b>Yes:</b> Mark as 'own apartment/house'. End the survey, thank and Tally  <b>No:</b> Proceed below</p>	h. Public space (e.g., sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, bus shelter)
b. Own apartment/house		i. vehicle (car, van, RV, truck)
c. Motel/Hotel		j. Makeshift shelter, tent or shack
d. Remand centre (halfway house)		k. Abandoned/vacant building
e. Emergency shelter, Domestic violence shelter		l. Other unsheltered location unfit for human habitation
f. Transitional housing	<p>2. "Do you pay rent there?"  <b>Yes:</b> Mark as 'own apartment/house'. End the survey, thank and Tally  <b>No:</b> Proceed below</p> <p>3. "Is it a temporary arrangement?"  <b>No:</b> Mark as 'own apartment/house'. End the survey, thank and Tally  <b>Yes:</b> circle 'g' below and continue</p> <p>g. Staying at someone else's place temporarily/ 'couch surfing'</p>	m. Respondent doesn't know (likely homeless)
Thank and note responses to B and C on tally sheet. Do not continue	<p>Continue to D.</p> <p>OFFER AN ENERGY BAR SO THEY CAN EAT ON THE SPOT</p>	<p>Continue to D.</p> <p>OFFER AN ENERGY BAR SO THEY CAN EAT ON THE SPOT</p>

**D. How old are you? Or, what year were you born?**

<p>a. Age (in years) _____ →</p> <p><b>OR</b> Year born _____</p> <p>b. Don't know</p> <p>c. Decline to answer</p>	<p><b>If necessary, refer to script</b></p> <p><b>If respondent is 24 or younger and may proceed, remember to ask <u>7b and 10b</u></b></p>
--	---

**E. What family members are with you today?** [Indicate survey numbers for adults, only if applicable]

<p>a. None</p> <p>b. Partner - <b>Survey #</b> (if applicable) _____</p>	<p>c. Other adult - <b>Survey #</b> (if applicable): _____</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>
--	--

Indicate any **dependent** children and their ages below

	Age									
Male										
Female										

*I'm 28 years old  
and haven't had a bed of my own  
since I was 14*

# Begin Survey

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**1. What gender do you identify with?** [Do not read categories]

a. Male b. Female c. Transgender d. Other response → e. Don't know f. Decline to answer	If Other, Please specify _____ Decline to answer
--	--

**2. Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ2 community?** [LGBTQ2 refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-Spirited]

a. Yes b. No	c. Don't know d. Decline to answer
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**3. Do you identify as Indigenous or have Indigenous ancestry?** [This includes First Nations, Métis, Inuit, with or without status]

a. Yes → b. No c. Don't know d. Decline to answer	<u>If Yes:</u> 1. First nations: off-reserve 2. First nations: on-reserve 3. Inuit 4. Métis 5. Non-status or have aboriginal ancestry 6. Unknown 7. Decline to answer
--	--

**4. Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?**

[Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force]

<p>a. Yes, military</p> <p>b. Yes, RCMP</p> <p>c. No</p> <p>d. Don't know</p> <p>e. Decline to answer</p>	<p><b>If yes, How long did you serve?</b></p> <p>1. # of months _____</p> <p>2. # of years _____</p> <p>3. Don't Know</p> <p>4. Decline to answer</p>
---	---

**5. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past 5 years?]**

<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. No</p>	<p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>
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**6. Were you born in Canada?**

<p>a. Yes</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>	<p><u>If no (1 of 2),</u> If not born in Canada, are you a:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Canadian Citizen</li> <li>2. Permanent Resident</li> <li>3. Refugee Claimant</li> <li>4. Temporary Foreign Worker</li> <li>5. International Student</li> <li>6. Other</li> <li>7. Don't know</li> <li>8. Decline to Answer</li> </ol>	<p><u>If no (2 of 2), ask</u> What is your country of birth?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Decline to answer</p>
---	---	--

### 7a. What's the highest level of education you completed?

a. Primary school	e. Postsecondary graduate
b. Some high school	f. Don't know
c. High school graduate	g. Decline to answer
d. Some postsecondary (includes college, university, trades schools, apprenticeships)	

If respondent is youth 16-24 years old, ask 7b below

### 7b. Are you currently enrolled in school?

a. Yes	c. Don't know
b. No	b. Decline to answer

### 8. Where do you get your money from? [Do not read aloud. Select all that apply]

a. Employment	f. Seniors benefits (e.g., CPP/OAS/GIS)
b. Informal/self-employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling)	g. Child and family tax benefits
c. Employment insurance	h. Money from family/friends
d. Ontario Works/OW/Welfare/income assistance	i. Other response _____
e. Disability benefit/Ontario Disability Support Benefit/ODSP	j. No income
	k. Decline to answer

**9. Did you move to York Region in the past year?** (York Region includes anywhere in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham, King, Newmarket, Aurora, Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury, or Georgina)

<p>a. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>b. No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>c. Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d. Decline to answer <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><u>If yes</u>, ask</p> <p>Where were you living before coming to York Region?</p> <p>1. Community, city, province/territory or country name</p> <hr/> <p>2. Don't know</p> <p>3. Decline to Answer</p>
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## HOMELESSNESS

**10a. How old were you when you first became homeless in your life?**

<p>a. Age _____</p> <p>c. Decline to answer <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>b. Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p>
--	---

**If respondent is 16-24 years old, ask 10b below:**

**10b. Why did you first leave home?**

---



---

Don't know

Decline to answer

**11. Over the past year, how many different times have you experienced homelessness?** [includes this time. Best estimate]

<p>a. Number of times _____</p> <p>b. Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>c. Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d. Decline to answer <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>IF UNSURE: circle one:</b></p> <p><b>0-2 months</b></p> <p><b>3-5 months</b></p> <p><b>6-12 months</b></p>
--	--

**12. Over the past year, how much of the time have you been homeless?**

[includes this time. Best estimate]

a. Length _____ days/weeks/ months	
b. Unsure →	<b>IF UNSURE: circle one:</b>
c. Don't know	<b>0-2 months</b>
d. Decline to answer	<b>3-5 months</b>
	<b>6-12 months</b>

**SERVICES & SYSTEMS INTERACTIONS**

**13. Have you ever been in foster care and/or group home?**

a. Yes	c. Don't know
b. No	d. Decline to answer

**14. Have you stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year?**

[if in shelter, circle yes without asking]

a. Yes	c. Don't know
b. No	d. Decline to answer

*I want to be a social worker  
so I can help others*

**15. In the past year, (12 months):**

<p>A. Have you used Emergency Medical Services? (e.g. ambulance, paramedics)</p> <p>a. Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>	<p><u>If yes:</u></p> <p>How many times have you used Emergency Medical Services?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Don't know      Decline to answer</p>
<p>B. Have you been to a hospital Emergency Room?</p> <p>a. Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>	<p><u>If yes:</u></p> <p>How many times have you been to a hospital Emergency Room? _____</p> <p>Don't know      Decline to answer</p>
<p>C. Have you been hospitalized as an inpatient?</p> <p>a. Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>	<p><u>If yes (1 of 2 questions):</u></p> <p>How many times have you been hospitalized? _____</p> <p>Don't know      Decline to answer</p>
<p>D. Have you had interactions with the police?</p> <p>a. Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>	<p><u>If yes:</u></p> <p>How many times have you had interactions with the police?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Don't know      Decline to answer</p>
<p>E. Have you been to jail?</p> <p>a. Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> →</p> <p>b. No</p> <p>c. Don't know</p> <p>d. Decline to answer</p>	<p><u>If yes, (1 of 2):</u></p> <p>How many times have you been to jail? _____</p> <p>Don't know      Decline to answer</p> <p><u>If yes (2 of 2):</u></p> <p>Days in total have you spent in jail? _____</p> <p>Don't know      Decline to answer</p>

## HOUSING

### 16. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?

[Do not read the options. Select all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

a. Illness or medical condition	j. Left care (Child protection/(Prov. Term)
b. Addiction or substance use	k. Incarcerated (jail or prison)
c. Job loss	l. Hospitalization or treatment program
d. Evicted: Unable to pay rent	m. Unsafe housing conditions
e. Evicted: Other reason	n. Don't know
f. Domestic abuse: Spouse or partner	o. Decline to answer
g. Domestic abuse: Parent or guardian	p. Other reason/Notes
h. Family conflict: Spouse or partner	
i. Family conflict: Parent or guardian	

### 17. What do you think is keeping you from finding a place of your own?

[Check all that apply]

a. No housing available	i. Legal issues
b. No income assistance	j. Pets
c. Rents too high	k. Children
d. Poor housing conditions	l. Discrimination
e. Family issues	m. Don't want housing
e. Domestic violence	n. Don't know
f. Health/disability	o. Other (specify) _____
g. Mental health	p. Decline to answer
h. Addiction or substance use	

**18. Are you on a waiting list for housing?**

a. Yes	c. Don't know
b. No	d. Decline to answer

**19. What would help you to find permanent and stable housing?**

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**20. Thank you. Your input is valuable and insightful. Is there anything we missed that you wanted to say?**

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**21. Do you want shelter for the night? We can call our van who can pick you up and drive you to shelter for tonight.**

Give the respondent the honoraria and care package and thank them.

# Appendix G: Point-in-Time Count Tally Sheet

## Unsheltered Tally Sheet

Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** For those who are not surveyed, fill in the sheet below indicating the reason. For those who DECLINE or are OBSERVED only, but who are clearly homeless, please indicate their gender, approximate age, and the reason you believe they are homeless (e.g. asleep outside with belongings).

#	Location (e.g., building, nearest intersection)	Reason not surveyed					*Observed Homelessness				
		*Declined	Already responded	Screened out; enter response to			*Observed only (not approached)	Observed Homeless	Approximate age	Observed gender	Indicators of homelessness
				B	C	D (15 or younger)					
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
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# Appendix H: Notes

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- 2 Stephen Gaetz, Tanya Gulliver, and Tim Richter, *The State of Homelessness in Canada: 2014*, Toronto, The Homeless Hub Press, 2014.
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- 24 Of the 263 counted on the night of January 20, 2016, 136 individuals agreed to answer the 20-question voluntary survey. Eight surveys were collected during the service count on January 21, 2016. One survey was removed from analysis in order to protect the identity of the individual who, because of one unique answer could easily be traced in the reported data and potentially identified.
- 25 The completion of the survey was voluntary and not all individuals identified as homeless through *Count Me In* agreed to complete the survey, therefore the number of completed surveys is lower than the number of people identified as being homeless.
- 26 Government of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, *Homelessness Partnering Strategy, 2005-2014 Highlights of the National Shelter Study*, Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2016.
- 27 In this report we sometimes compare York Region data to national data to offer readers an understanding of the similarities and differences. However, it should be understood that when York Region data is similar to national trends, this is not to suggest that the problem is minimized, it is simply a comparison for information purposes.

- 28 Statistics Canada, *NHS Profile, York, RM, Ontario, 2011*, last modified November 27, 2015, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=3519&Data=Count&SearchText=York&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&TABID=1> (accessed July 8, 2016).
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- 46 The data does not indicate if those who arrived in York Region in the past year were new to York Region or people from the Region returning after living in another place.
- 47 Carol Kauppi and Henri Pallard, "Migratory and Transient Homelessness in Northern Ontario, Canada: Pathways to Homelessness in Sudbury and Its Related Impacts," *AIDS International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8 (2015): 95.
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- 53 Includes Housing – Eviction by Landlord, Housing – Eviction by Other, Housing – Fire/Flood, Housing – Lack of, Housing – Loss of, Housing – Unsafe.
- 54 Includes Mental Health, Substance Use – Alcohol, Substance Use – Drugs, Substance Use – Other, and Harm Reduction.
- 55 HIFIS data used in the reporting of chronic and episodic homelessness includes both those clients that stayed in one of York Region's HIFIS-using emergency/transitional housing facilities and seasonal shelter as well clients that received services at one of these facilities (such as drop-in services, diversion, and outreach services) but did not necessarily stay overnight (total population: 1,242).
- 56 The Homeless Hub, *Addressing Chronic Homelessness*, <http://homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention/addressing-chronic-homelessness> (accessed August 8, 2016).
- 57 Total population: 1,242.
- 58 For purposes of the Point-in-Time Count, the national standardized question asked how many times the respondent experienced homelessness in the past year, without specifying a 30-day break in between episodes. The deviation from the standard HPS definition for *Count Me In* is due the challenges obtaining respondents' precise historical information on experiences of homelessness during a brief survey.
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- 64 Regional Municipality of York, Community and Health Services, *Housing Solutions: A place for everyone: York Region 10 Year Housing Plan*, 2014.
- 65 The YRH CAB is a 16 member local organizing committee comprised of volunteers with the mandate to work collaboratively with partners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of York Region's community plan to end homelessness. Other activities of the YRH CAB include: monitoring and analyzing the status of homelessness in York Region, updating the community plan, reporting to the community on the progress made towards ending homelessness, building government, business, and public support for ending homelessness through public education and advocacy, providing advice to The Regional Municipality of York and other funders in the coordination and allocation of homelessness funding, providing a forum for networking among and between government and community representatives engaged in issues of homelessness, and ensuring an inclusive community planning process in which the diverse voices and experience of people with lived experience of homelessness are embedded.
- 66 A "Community Entity" is normally an incorporated organization that is responsible for the implementation of a community plan, in whole or in part. Based on recommendation from the Community Advisory Board (CAB), Canada entrusts a community body, often the community's municipal government or a not-for-profit local community organization, such as United Way, with the ability to develop, plan, select and manage Homelessness Partnering Strategy projects in their area based on the Community Plan.
- 67 Includes Housing – Eviction by Landlord, Housing – Eviction by Other, Housing – Fire / Flood, Housing – Lack of, Housing – Loss of, and Housing – Unsafe.
- 68 Includes Mental Health, Substance Use – Alcohol, Substance Use – Drugs, Substance Use – Other, and Harm Reduction.
- 69 Includes Conflict with Law, Court Ordered Out of Address, Court Ordered Out of Service, and Discharge from Correctional / Jail.
- 70 The agencies that were part of the External Advisory Committee are: 360°kids, Blue Door Shelters, Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe, INN From the Cold, Krasman Centre, LOFT Community Support Services, The Salvation Army Sutton Youth Shelter, and York Support Services Network.

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