



	REPORT No.: 2018-60
MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2018	DATE PREPARED: SEPTEMBER 26, 2018
SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS ENUMERATION REPORT	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2018-60, (CAO's Office and Housing Services Division) we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, endorse the recommendations resulting from the analysis of the data collected through the 2018 Homelessness Enumeration.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with an overview of the findings of the 2018 Homelessness Enumeration and to seek the Board's endorsement of the recommendations resulting from an analysis of the data.

BACKGROUND

As part of the Province of Ontario's efforts to end chronic homelessness by 2025 and the long-term goal to end homelessness, the Ontario Ministry of Housing (MHO) (now the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MMAH) introduced a provincial requirement to conduct local enumeration of people experiencing homelessness.

Through an amendment to the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA) and a Ministerial Directive, the Province required all Service Managers to conduct enumeration of those experiencing homelessness in their communities.

Local homeless enumeration, which is the measurement of the number of people experiencing homelessness over a specific period of time, assists Service Managers and the Ministry to better understand the scale and nature of homelessness across the province, as well as inform current and future policy and program design.

In September 2017, TBDSSAB approved a two pronged approach for the enumeration of the homeless in the District of Thunder Bay (Report No. 2017-63).

First, a Point in Time (PiT) count was conducted on April 21, 2018 and was followed by a Registry Week in the City of Thunder Bay to coincide with the Federal Government funded Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) enumeration slated for the same date.

Second, TBDSSAB Administration proposed that a Registry Week count be conducted in Greenstone, Terrace Bay, Oliver Paipoonge and Marathon to provide a clearer picture of homelessness across our entire District. For each of these communities, a Registry Week was established at a central location and was promoted through community partners including the municipality, Ontario Provincial Police and community service agencies.

In 2016, the Federal Government informed recipients of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy funding that homeless enumeration must occur every two years. The Lakehead Social Planning Council (LSPC) and the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) led the completion of the City of Thunder Bay's Homeless PiT count and Registry Week in 2016. The next HPS funded count was due to occur in the Spring of 2018. The federal and provincial levels of government encouraged the cooperation between Service Managers and the HPS funded Community Entity to fulfill their collective obligation for the enumeration of the homeless.

TBDSSAB held discussions with representatives of the TBIFC and the LSPC with the aim of coordinating efforts to conduct one unified count for the City of Thunder Bay.

The Point-in-Time (PiT) Count provided a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness on one day of the year. It is intended to capture numbers, basic demographics, reasons for homelessness, and service use of people experiencing homelessness at a single point in time.

This method counts unsheltered and emergency-sheltered populations. PiT Count data was collected by trained volunteer canvassers who physically located, counted, and collected survey data from people experiencing homelessness. Surveys were also carried out at emergency shelters, violence against women (VAW) shelters, service organizations and magnet events.

COMMENTS

Beginning on April 21, 2018, 474 people experiencing homelessness across the District of Thunder Bay were surveyed with the brief Point in Time questionnaire, with 265 people choosing to participate in the longer Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), providing information to allow for follow up to help find housing.

It is important to note that while surveys were conducted in Oliver Paipoonge, Marathon, Terrace Bay and Geraldton, the sample was too small to guarantee anonymity of the participants so this data has been suppressed in public reporting. However, attempts will be made to contact those that participated to assist in providing housing solutions. The Homelessness Enumeration Report focused on the following data categories for deeper analysis: Demographics, Place to Stay at Night, Chronic and Episodic

Homelessness, Foster Care, Mental Health and Addictions, Reasons for Homelessness, Sources of Income and Length of Time in the City of Thunder Bay.

From this analysis the following recommendations have been developed:

Advocacy: Support for Addictions Treatment

The PiT Count revealed that addictions were the most self-reported cause for homelessness (32.7%) among participants. Overall, 70.9% of participants reported having an addiction. This correlation between addictions and homelessness is serious cause for concern. It is known, for example, that opioid-related morbidity and mortality rates occur at a rate much higher in the District of Thunder Bay than the provincial average. In order to address homelessness, additional resources must be devoted to addictions treatment, prevention, and direct supports.

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will advocate to the Northwest Local Health Integration Network (NWLHIN), the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to encourage additional addiction support services.

Advocacy: Address the Service Gaps in Child Welfare Systems and Individuals Aging out of Foster Care

Over one third of PiT count participants (37.6%) responded that they had been in foster care. That number was significantly higher with participants under the age of 25 (52%). For indigenous participants, experience in the foster care system was higher both in overall responses (43.2%) and for those under age 25 (55%). Alarming, 77.4% of respondents who had first experienced homelessness before the age of 25 had experience in the foster care system. Given this correlation between homelessness and a history of foster care – a correlation well-supported by other research into homelessness – additional resources must be devoted to address service gaps in child welfare systems, particularly to those aging out of foster care.

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will advocate to the Ministry of Community and Social Services to address the service gaps in the child welfare system.

Coordinated Access System

In order to make the best use of existing resources, and to ensure that housing needs are being met across the social housing continuum, the development and operation of a Coordinated Access System to assist persons experiencing homelessness to access housing and supports should be explored. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness defines Coordinated Access System as a “community-wide system that streamlines the process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing and supports and is an essential step to smarter, faster, more coordinated housing system.” Furthermore, the utilization of Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) for the Coordinated Access System should be considered for such an undertaking. There are currently a number of organizations that provide support to homeless and vulnerable individuals in the District of Thunder Bay. These organizations have overlapping mandates and receive funding from a variety of sources resulting in some individuals receiving support from multiple channels while others cannot access the system. The

Coordinated Access system will address the current issues in coordinating the support services system. As part of this move to coordinate support services, the TBDSSAB should also advocate for the alignment of the financial resources provided for homelessness services including the Community Homelessness Partnering Strategy (CHPI), the Ontario commitment for increased resources dedicated to mental health and addictions support services, as well as the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and its successor programs under the National Housing Strategy. This alignment of resources will result in a more coordinated, efficient homelessness prevention system.

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will advocate to the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for funding to develop a community-wide Coordinated Access System that streamlines the process for persons experiencing homelessness to access housing and appropriate supports.

Expansion of the High Needs Homeless and Home for Good systems

Chronically homeless individuals utilize a disproportionate amount of bed nights at emergency shelters and often require wrap-around supports to ensure successful tenancies when housed. Rapidly housing chronically homeless individuals, with supports, is an essential step to relieving pressure on overburdened emergency shelter services. As such, there is a need to explore opportunities to expand the High Needs Homeless and Home for Good systems to assist a greater number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Through the High Needs Homeless system emergency shelter resident needs are assessed using the Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT). Individuals are placed in the High Needs Homeless social housing waitlist prioritization category if their SPDAT score is in excess of a predetermined level. Through this, individuals who are placed in the High Needs Homeless category are housed much quicker than if they remained on the chronological waitlist.

The Home for Good program provides intensive case management support for individuals that are placed in the High Needs Homeless waitlist category.

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will explore funding opportunities to expand the High Needs Homeless and Home for Good systems to assist a greater number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Research on Migratory and Transient Homelessness

Data collected in the PiT Count demonstrates that a considerable number of homeless individuals migrate to the City of Thunder Bay from remote communities in northern Ontario (23.6%) as well as from the City of Winnipeg (6.1%). Very little is known about the reasons for migratory and transient homelessness in the City of Thunder Bay beyond anecdotal accounts. As such, partnerships should be formed to research the correlation between migration of individuals from remote communities in northern Ontario and the City of Winnipeg and the numbers of people experiencing homelessness, to inform solutions to homelessness in the District of Thunder Bay. Possible areas of concentration may include substandard housing in remote communities, travel to the City of Thunder

Bay to access services and the impacts of insufficient transportation infrastructure linking urban and rural communities.

Recommendation: TBDSSAB will explore opportunities to establish research partnerships to determine the causes of migratory and transient homelessness in order to inform the development of adequate social policy interventions.

These recommendations will build upon the various programs, initiatives and funding that TBDSSAB has established to address and prevent homelessness. The following funding, programs, and initiatives impact homelessness within the District of Thunder Bay: Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH), Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), High Needs – Homeless Social Housing Waitlist category, and Home for Good (HFG).

The Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Program provides funding through a partnership of the Federal and Provincial Governments and allows Service Managers the opportunity to choose how to invest from a prescribed list of services. Through the IAH program the TBDSSAB has addressed homelessness through the Ontario Renovates Program and through the Rental Housing component.

The Ontario Renovates Program is designed to assist low to moderate income homeowners to make urgent home repairs. Through this, individuals that would otherwise have to give up their homes are able to make necessary repairs and remained housed. The TBDSSAB has invested an average of approximately \$1,000,000 per year over the last four years in the Ontario Renovates program. Approximately 700 households from across the District of Thunder Bay have been assisted under the Ontario Renovates and the predecessor Northern Home Repair program since 2008. This contribution is significant as many of those assisted would have had to leave their home and apply to the social housing waitlist and find themselves in a precarious housing or homeless situation if not for this program.

The IAH Rental Housing component is intended to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for households on, or eligible to be on, social housing wait lists. Since the 2014/15 IAH funding year the TBDSSAB has completed/approved:

- 16 units - City of Thunder Bay (TBDSSAB)
- 4 units - Kakabeka Falls (Kay Bee Seniors)
- 4 units - Nipigon (Township of Nipigon)
- 24 unit - City of Thunder Bay (Northern Linkage Community Housing)
- 20 units - City of Thunder Bay (Salvation Army)
- 6 units - Kakabeka Falls (Kay Bee Seniors)
- 8 units - City of Thunder Bay (Matawa)

This represents the addition of 82 one bedroom units throughout the District of Thunder Bay.

These additions build upon two previous projects funded by the TBDSSAB. In 2009, TBDSSAB signed an agreement with St. Joseph's Care Group to develop a Rental and

Supportive Housing project under the Affordable Housing Program Extension (2009). \$6,600,000 was allocated to St. Joseph's Care group for the development of 132 one-bedroom supportive housing units for low to moderate income seniors. In order to provide deeper affordability, the TBDSSAB also provides rent supplements for 30 units within this project. In 2012, the TBDSSAB provided Habib Enterprises with \$1,467,765 for the development of 20 affordable one bedroom units. The TBDSSAB has also provided rent supplements on a limited number of units to provide deeper affordability.

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) is a 100% provincially funded program. The TBDSSAB invests this funding in services that fall within one of the following approved service categories: Emergency Shelter Solutions, Housing with Related Supports, Other Services and Supports and Homelessness Prevention. The following services were in receipt of CHPI funding in 2018:

- Shelter House Thunder Bay – Emergency Shelter
- Shelter House Thunder Bay – Street Outreach Service (SOS)
- Salvation Army – Emergency Shelter
- Salvation Army – Habitat Program
- Lutheran Community Care – Not for Profit Housing Tenant Support
- TBDSSAB - Housing Security Fund
- TBDSSAB - Tenant Support Coordinators
- TBDSSAB - Homelessness Prevention Officer
- TBDSSAB - District EHOW (now TOSW or Transitional Outreach and Support Worker)

The High Needs Homeless Social Housing Waitlist category was approved by the Board in March 2016. Through this system, individuals are placed in the *High Needs – Homeless* prioritization category if their Service Prioritization and Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) score is in excess of a predetermined level. When an individual rises to the top of the *High Needs – Homeless* prioritization category TBDSSAB staff ensure that the appropriate community supports are organized to ensure successful tenancy for people placed into the social housing system. Since its inception there have been a total of 74 individuals successfully housed through this initiative. The success and innovation of this program was recognized in the Spring of 2018 by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) as the TBDSSAB received the Local Municipal Champion Award for this initiative.

The Home for Good (HFG) Program is the most recent initiative designed to address homelessness in the District of Thunder Bay. Through HFG, TBDSSAB received a 100% provincially funded investment in order to provide case management support, rent supplements, and to support the development of 30 supportive housing beds.

The aim of the TBDSSAB HFG initiative is to significantly reduce chronic homelessness and expand homelessness prevention measures by providing enhanced supports to at-risk tenants in the District of Thunder Bay through a collaborative, multi-faceted approach addressing all four priority target populations: chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, Indigenous homelessness and homelessness following transition from provincially-funded institutions and service systems.

Through the HFG program, TBDSSAB has partnered with Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group for tenant supports while augmenting proven in-house supports through the creation of an additional Tenant Support Coordinator (TSC) position within the TBDSSAB.

Through the HFG funding, TBDSSAB works with these community partners to identify individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, determine their individual needs for housing and supports, and attentively address the unique needs of this population. It is proposed that a variety of housing models will be used, including independent living with basic supports, independent living with in-depth supports, transitional supportive housing arrangements, and long-term live-in supports for those with the greatest need.

In addition to the operational funding, HFG provides a capital construction funding component. TBDSSAB, partnering with St. Joseph's Care Group, received funding for the development of transitional housing for people who require a supported residential environment to stabilize complex conditions that will allow them to successfully transition to more independent living.

The HFG funding received will allow for the development of a 30 bed residential facility with a home-like environment where staff provide 24 hour on site supports with other clinical services and programs provided by specialized resources in collaboration with other agencies.

Through the HFG program there are currently 47 individuals receiving case management support. Of this total, 22 individuals have been housed with an additional eight slated to be housed in October, 2018.

In addition to these initiatives, the TBDSSAB endorsed (Report No. 2017-97) a successful Ontario Aboriginal Housing Service (OHAS) proposal for a supportive housing program in Thunder Bay, with an allocation from Ontario under the Indigenous Supportive Housing Program (ISHP). OHAS proposed the construction and operation of a 20 unit apartment facility with common space for on-site services and support services delivered through a partnership with the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre. Construction is slated to begin in 2018. This project, similar to the TBDSSAB Home for Good initiative, will lead to a reduction in emergency shelter usage and to better outcomes for people living in the facility.

Finally, the TBDSSAB is in the process of updating the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. Through this update new recommendations will be developed through input from our community partners in order to establish new initiatives to address and prevent homelessness. The recommendations highlighted in this report will become part of the updated 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with an overview of the findings of the 2018 Homelessness Enumeration and provides detailed recommendations resulting from an analysis of the data.

REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED

Attachment #1 – [Thunder Bay Point-in-Time Count 2018 Infographic](#)

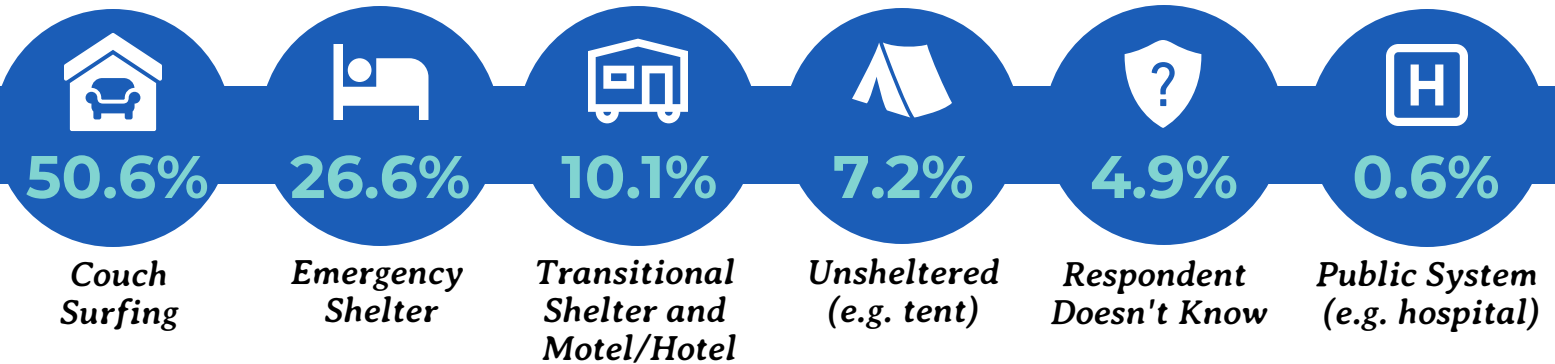
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THUNDER BAY POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2018

474

people experiencing homelessness were surveyed during a 24 hour period on April 21st & 22nd

Where are they staying?



Who are they?

63.5% are male and 35.2% are female (0.9% did not respond*)



6.5% identify as LGBTQ (2.3% did not respond*)

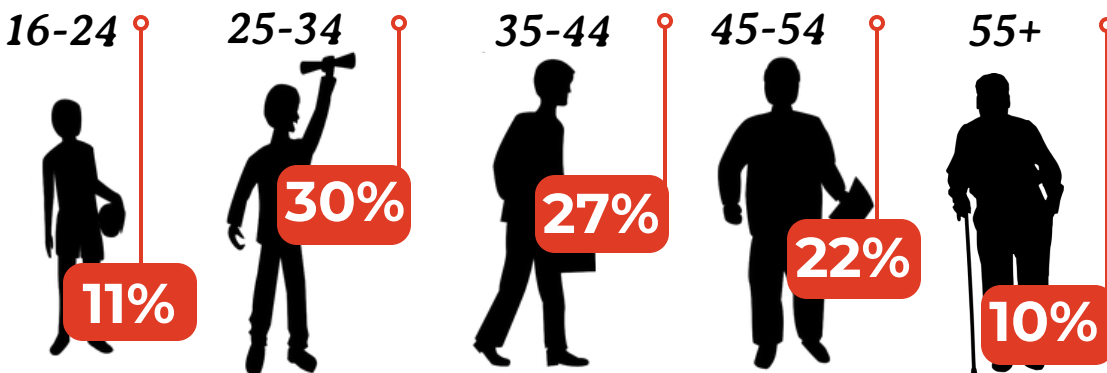


7.0% are veterans (0.8% did not respond*)



*Non-responses include don't know, decline to answer and unclear/blank responses

How old are they?



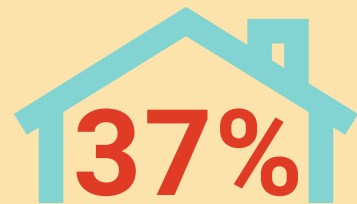
66%

identify as Indigenous



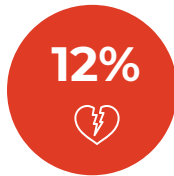
61%

of respondents first experienced homelessness before turning 25



37% spent time in foster care and/or a group home

Why are they homeless?



The most common factors identified as contributing to recent housing loss include:

- **Addiction or substance use**
- **Conflict with spouse/partner**
- **Unable to pay rent or mortgage**

How long and how many times are they experiencing homelessness?



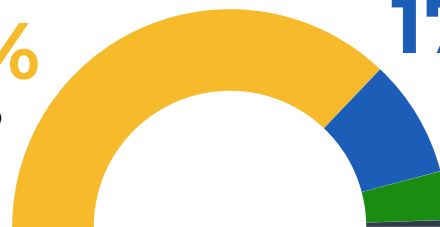
59% of respondents were chronically homeless - homeless for 6 months or more in the past year



21% of respondents were episodically homeless - homeless 3 or more times in the past year

What are their sources of income?*

72% receive social assistance: Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)



17% have no source of income

7% receive income from employment (formal and self)

(*1% did not respond)

Where are they from?

26% of respondents have always lived in Thunder Bay



Of the people who have moved here, 62% are from other communities in Ontario and 19% are from outside Ontario. 19% have lived in Thunder Bay for less than 1 year.