



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Advocate for the Federal Government to Provide Adequate Housing and Support Services on First Nation Communities in Ontario

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## POSITION PAPER

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Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

# Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) urges the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to establish a working table to address migration into homelessness, including the Federal Minister of Indigenous Service and the Federal Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, to promote adequate housing and support services in Ontario's First Nations communities.

## Summary

The TBDSSAB recognizes the complexity involved with establishing services in remote First Nation communities in Ontario. However, more needs to be done to provide for individuals and families to ensure an adequate level of service exists. A recent study into homelessness shows a high percentage of individuals that are homeless in the District of Thunder Bay have migrated here, and of those that have migrated a high percentage are from a First Nations community in Ontario. The Government of Canada needs to do more to provide for individuals living in First Nations communities in Ontario and provide assistance to ensure that those who leave do not become homeless in Ontario's urban centres.

## Background

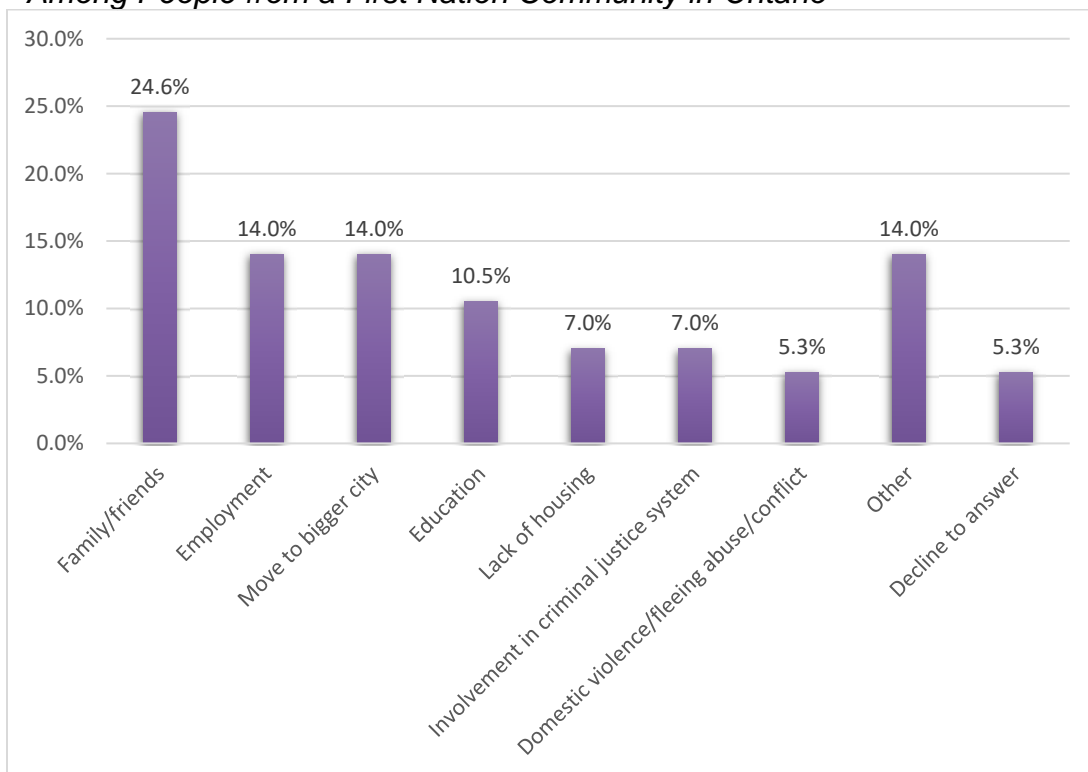
In 2021, the TBDSSAB partnered with faculty from Lakehead University to conduct a mixed methods research study that sought to better understand the following:

1. From which home communities are people migrating?
2. Why do people leave their home communities in the first place?
3. Why do people choose to come to Thunder Bay?
4. Why do people choose to remain in Thunder Bay?
5. What factors predict if someone stays or leaves Thunder Bay?
6. If a person does stay, how long are they likely to stay?
7. What factors predict how long someone stays?

The research questions were inspired by findings from the 2018 District of Thunder Bay Point in Time (PiT) Counts that showed that a high percentage of homeless individuals had migrated.

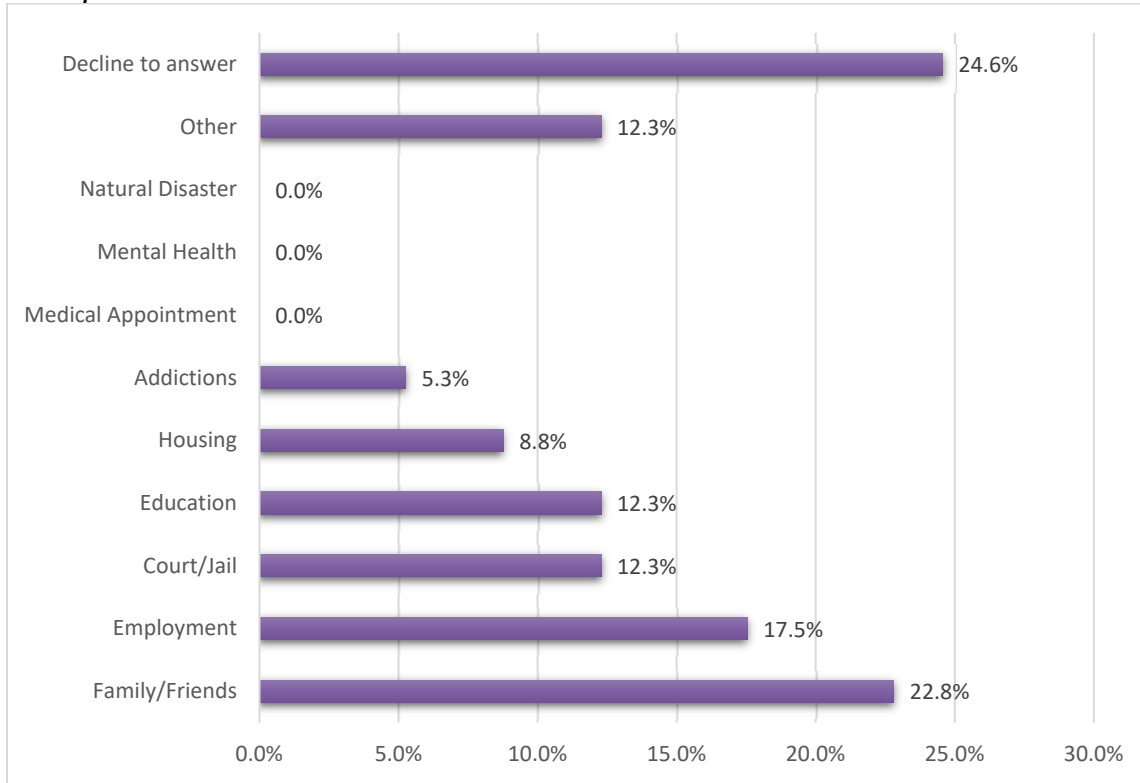
During the data analysis stage of the study the research team created a subset of responses that represented individuals from First Nation communities in Ontario. In total, 68.4% of the individuals that had migrated to Thunder Bay and are now homeless indicated that their home community is a First Nation community in Ontario. The responses to why an individual left their home community are shown in the graph below.

*Figure 1. Why Did You Leave Your Home Community? Frequency of Response Among People from a First Nation Community in Ontario*



From these responses, it can be seen that 43.8% of participants stated that they left their home community for socio-economic reasons. Similarly, when asked what brought an individual to Thunder Bay, 56% of homeless individuals from a First Nation community in Ontario indicated that it was for socio-economic reasons.

*Figure 5: What Brought You to the City of Thunder Bay? Frequency of Response by People from First Nation Communities in Ontario*



The follow-up question regarding housing among the individuals from a First Nation community in Ontario shows that 71.9% reported having a home before coming to the City of Thunder Bay, 21.1% did not have a home before moving, and 7% are unsure if they had a home.

When people were interviewed, responses found only a handful of clues about why people left their home or previous communities. But the most salient observation here is that most people interviewed reported having unstable housing or unsafe housing of some kind in their previous or home communities.

More needs to be done to ensure individuals living in First Nations communities in Ontario enjoy a better quality of life with access to stable and safe housing, employment, and social services to prevent migration into homelessness in Ontario's urban centres.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing establish a working table to address migration into homelessness, including the Federal Minister of Indigenous Service and the Federal Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, to promote adequate housing and support services in Ontario's First Nations communities.