



## **2018 Homelessness Point in Time Count & Registry Week**

Prepared by OrgCode Consulting:



Presented: July 2018

## Acknowledgements

*The City of Windsor and the Homeless Coalition of Windsor Essex County would like to extend their appreciation to the volunteers, community partners and staff that assisted in making the City's 2<sup>nd</sup> homelessness enumeration event a success.*

This project was funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy

Canada 

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

Les opinions et les interprétations figurant dans la présente publication sont celles de l'auteur et ne représentent pas nécessairement celles du gouvernement du Canada.

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 2018 Homelessness Point in Time Count & Registry Week .....                         | 5  |
| Introduction and Background .....   | 5  |
| Methodology .....   | 6  |
| Results of the Windsor Essex Point in Time Count and Registry Week Initiative ..... | 10 |
| Specific Insights for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness .....                      | 21 |
| Specific Insights for Indigenous People Experiencing Homelessness .....             | 22 |
| Specific Insights for All Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness .....             | 24 |
| Specific Insights for Youth Experiencing Homelessness .....                         | 32 |
| Specific Insights for Families Experiencing Homelessness .....                      | 41 |
| Concluding Comments .....   | 45 |

### Figures

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 1 Age Distribution .....   | 11 |
| Figure 2 Gender Identification .....                                    | 12 |
| Figure 3 Sexual Orientation .....                                       | 13 |
| Figure 4 Relationship with Windsor Essex .....                          | 13 |
| Figure 5 Residence Prior to Windsor Essex .....                         | 14 |
| Figure 6 Number of Times Temporarily Housed with Family/Friends .....   | 15 |
| Figure 7 Racial and Ethnic Identity .....                               | 16 |
| Figure 8 Source of Income .....   | 17 |
| Figure 9 Most Common Reasons for Loss of Most Recent Housing Loss ..... | 18 |
| Figure 10 Homeless Location Tonight .....                               | 19 |
| Figure 11 Reasons for Lack of Shelter Utilization .....                 | 20 |
| Figure 12 Social Determinates of Health .....                           | 21 |
| Figure 13 Veterans: Health Issues .....                                 | 22 |
| Figure 14 Single Adults: Age Distribution .....                         | 24 |
| Figure 15 Single Adults: Sexual Orientation .....                       | 25 |
| Figure 16 Single Adults: Gender Identification .....                    | 25 |
| Figure 17 Single Adults: Type of Homeless Experienced .....             | 26 |
| Figure 18 Single Adults: Chronic and Episodic Homelessness .....        | 27 |
| Figure 19 Single Adults: Risk Factors Impacting Housing Stability ..... | 28 |
| Figure 20: Single Adults: Interactions with Emergency Services .....    | 31 |
| Figure 21 Single Adults: Recommended Re-Housing Supports .....          | 32 |
| Figure 22 Youth: Age Distribution .....                                 | 33 |
| Figure 23 Youth: Gender Identity .....                                  | 33 |
| Figure 24 Youth: Sexual Orientation .....                               | 34 |
| Figure 25 Youth: Indigenous Ancestry .....                              | 34 |
| Figure 26 Youth: Length of Time in Windsor Essex .....                  | 35 |
| Figure 27 Youth: Source of Income .....                                 | 36 |
| Figure 28 Youth: Reasons for Current Homelessness .....                 | 37 |
| Figure 29 Youth: Current Homeless Location .....                        | 38 |



|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 30 Youth: Temporarily Stayed with Friends/Family ..... | 38 |
| Figure 31 Youth: Reason Lack of Shelter Utilization .....     | 39 |
| Figure 32 Youth: Recommended Housing Supports .....           | 41 |
| Figure 33 Families: Racial and Ethnic Identities .....        | 43 |
| Figure 34 Families: Reason for Most Recent Housing Loss ..... | 44 |

**Tables**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1 Overview of Homelessness in Windsor Essex.....                     | 10 |
| Table 2 Veterans: Reasons for Most Recent Experience of Homelessness ..... | 22 |
| Table 3 Indigenous: Location of Homelessness.....                          | 23 |
| Table 4 Indigenous: Social Determinant of Health .....                     | 23 |
| Table 5 Single Adults: Compromised Wellness.....                           | 29 |
| Table 6 Youth: Homelessness Experience .....                               | 36 |
| Table 7 Families: Characteristics .....                                    | 42 |
| Table 8 Families: Income Source .....                                      | 42 |

## 2018 Homelessness Point in Time Count & Registry Week

During Windsor's Point in Time (PiT) Count and Registry Week, enumeration volunteers engaged with 294 people to complete the homeless enumeration survey approved by the Ontario Ministry of Housing. Of these surveys, 197 people were experiencing homelessness (this included 8 families with a total of 19 dependent children). An additional 45 respondents identified that they were precariously housed<sup>1</sup>, likely with pending evictions. Although the overall number of people identified as experiencing homelessness in 2018 is basically unchanged from the 201 people identified in the 2016 PIT Count, it must be realized that given the number of people housed and supported by funded partners (over 150 people in the last 2 years), the inflow of additional individuals, families and youth experiencing homelessness is evident. Unfortunately, with the addition of 197 people experiencing homelessness in the region in 2018 minus the people successfully housed in the last two years, the City of Windsor and its community partners are no closer in achieving its goal of achieving functional zero than it was in 2016. To capitalize on the success already achieved locally in ending homelessness for the most vulnerable individuals and families, enhanced emphasis on homelessness prevention including discharge planning and shelter diversion will be required moving forward. Meeting the goals established for Windsor's long-term plan to end homelessness is indeed achievable but efforts regarding re-housing and prevention and diversion must be strategic and deliberate.

### Introduction and Background

The City of Windsor and the Homeless Coalition of Windsor Essex County share a vision of having sufficient access to appropriate and safe housing options for all people in Windsor Essex, and ensuring that support services are available to end homelessness for those that experience it to ensure that it is rare, infrequent and non-recurring. As a 20,000 Homes Campaign community, much work has been accomplished in Windsor Essex in recent years to enhance housing options and to improve service coordination amongst community based agencies to improve the system of care; identifying and assessing housing and stability needs of individuals and families, and developing programs and services to appropriately address these needs and permanently end homelessness for individuals and families.

In 2017, the Ministry of Housing identified the need for all Consolidated Municipal Service Managers throughout Ontario to conduct homeless enumeration projects before summer of 2018. Having completed its first Point in Time (PiT) Count and Registry Week in 2016, Windsor Essex was well positioned to build on their previous enumeration experience.

---

<sup>1</sup> These 45 households were residing in the own house/apartment but were unsure if this scenario was temporary or permanent. Since they were currently housed during the enumeration, these 45 people were not incorporated into the data analysis of homeless households.



In December 2017, the City of Windsor contracted with OrgCode Consulting Inc. to facilitate the development, implementation and analysis of a comprehensive mixed-methods Point in Time Count and 20,000 Homes Campaign Registry Event planned for April 16, 17 and 18, 2018. Once again, the goal established for this homelessness enumeration event was achieved. With amazing volunteer and community partner commitment – many of whom had participated in 2016 - this community initiative provided the second round of data and insights required to monitor progress and realign the benchmarks and strategic planning indicators to assist Windsor Essex in allocating future resources, to increase the number of households exiting homelessness into housing, and to further reduce the time individuals, families and youth experience homelessness and housing instability in the area.

## Methodology

Efforts were made to replicate the methodology used for the 2016 Point in Time Count and Registry Week initiative so that data results could be compared. Both street-based and location engagements with people were conducted to determine their housing status and to complete a survey of housing and support needs with those who self identified as being homeless. Although Point in Time Count and Registry Week events are carefully executed social science research projects, all homeless enumeration activities, by their inherent limitations, undercount the homeless population.

The City of Windsor, in partnership with the Homeless Coalition of Windsor Essex County, relied on a small planning committee (with support from internal City and Coalition staff) to work with the OrgCode team to coordinate key approaches and methodologies related to volunteer recruitment, survey building, route and location mapping and volunteer training. The City of Windsor staff also ensured that the coordination of all logistical issues for the event (including the booking of venues; recruitment posters; survey packages; media communications, etc.) was professionally addressed.

The Point in Time Count occurred over 3 shifts within a 24-hour period between April 17 (3-7 pm and 8-11 pm) and 18 (6-9 am), 2018. Registry Week activities began on April 16. The goal of this initiative was to gain information on and update the by-name registry of people experiencing homelessness (sheltered, unsheltered and hidden homelessness). Activities included such initiatives as a street count to engage with unsheltered individuals and families, location based surveying events including but not limited to emergency shelters and transitional housing units, as well as dedicated events to gather youth and Indigenous participants.

## Survey Tool

In addition to the screening questions and mandatory Point in Time Count questions provided by the Government of Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Housing, the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) pre-screen and local questions were included in the survey process.



Again to optimize the impact of this community development initiative, the inclusion of the VI-SPDAT elevated the enumeration process into an opportunity to conduct a needs assessment for the homeless population as a whole.

Again in 2018, 3 separate survey packages were administered during the Windsor Essex Point in Time and Registry Week events. Such an approach ensured that the VI-SPDAT survey for Single Adults, the TAY-VI-SPDAT for youth 24 years of age and under as well as the Family VI-SPDAT for households with children.

Trained community volunteers administered the survey tools over a 24-hour period. Over 240 volunteers participated in the Windsor Essex Point in Time Count and Registry Week Campaign. Volunteer roles included survey team member, survey team lead and command centre support. Volunteer training occurred prior to the first street count shift on April 17<sup>th</sup> and included such topics as campaign survey routes, effective engagement strategies, how to stay safe and an overview of completing the survey. Survey team leads had front line experience working with people experiencing homelessness and met separately to prepare for their role and responsibilities. Oaths of confidentiality were signed by all volunteers to ensure that information gleaned during the survey process would not be shared externally.

### *Survey Locations*

The planning committee and their community partners provided guidance on the survey locations to be included during the Campaign. Focus group discussions identified the following indoor locations where survey teams would engage with individuals and families. Every facility that operates as a homeless shelter was included as a site to survey and engage with people that are homeless. Arrangements were made with the shelter provider in advance of the Point in Time Count to expect and accommodate volunteers and surveyors. The following locations provide a sample of the locations identified as enumeration sites:

- City of Windsor, Ontario Works Office
- Transit Windsor, Downtown Terminal
- The Welcome Centre Shelter for Women & food bank
- The Salvation Army
- The Downtown Mission
- Housing Information Services
- ACCESS County Community Support Services
- Windsor Youth Centre
- South Essex Community Council
- St. Leonard's House
- Drouillard Place, Food bank
- Windsor Residence for Young Men
- Family Services Windsor-Essex, Voluntary Income Tax Clinic
- The Inn of Windsor
- New Beginnings

Focus groups also provided insight into the outdoor locations that should be surveyed. There were two general types of areas that were covered outdoors. The first were those areas where existing data indicated it was highly likely that people that are homeless would be encountered. Data for this came from intelligence provided by homeless serving organizations, especially those that do outreach. The second type of outdoor locations were areas that were randomly selected throughout the entire municipal boundaries, after consideration of what may be generally categorized as business, residential and rural in character. This is an important part of the overall methodology – to visit areas where people experiencing homelessness were not expected to be found – as it investigates the possibility of bias. Had persons been encountered in these areas where no homelessness was expected it could have been extrapolated across the entire City to consider the same possibility of encountering someone homeless in other un-surveyed areas.

Each of the areas surveyed included multiple blocks of terrain, with a few exceptions for places like the cemetery, waterfront trail, and other large park space. Every area was designed to be walked and completely covered within a three hour time period, which factored in stops for investigating and surveying possible homelessness. Survey teams were instructed to cover all public space within their study area and avoid trespassing on private property. They were also provided a map with clear instructions of the route to take.

Prior to the Point in Time Count and Registry Week event, flyers were posted throughout the community notifying people of the upcoming events and inviting people experiencing homelessness to participate in the Count/Registry. Survey sites, dates, and times were listed on the flyers. In addition, service providers within the various housing and homelessness programs were encouraged to let clients know about planned events.

### *Volunteer Recruitment*

The community mapping activities generated a list of survey areas and facilities/locations that would be included in the Point in Time Count and Registry Week events. For 100% coverage of the location and street survey sites, it was determined that approximately 100 volunteers would be required. The higher the number of volunteers, the higher proportion of the region and locations that can get covered; however, attrition occurs in all exercise of this nature where not every volunteer that signs up actually attends the count. At any Point in Time Count all volunteers are welcome, regardless of experience, so long as they are 18 years of age and consent to participate. It is important however, that all volunteers, regardless of their experience, undertake Point in Time Count training.

Volunteer recruitment included the distribution of recruitment posters, ads, social media and a specific Point in Time Count registration sign-up where community members could register for survey shifts. The City of Windsor and the Homeless Coalition personnel prepared and distributed the recruitment



materials and managed volunteer registration. The advanced registration activities generated a number of volunteers that far surpassed the initial proposed estimate with over 240 volunteers participating in this community event.

### *Engagement and Surveying*

Since stereotypical images of homelessness are abundant in social media, it is recognized that such stereotypes are indicative of a very small slice of the overall population experiencing homelessness. There are, no doubt, many people who are street involved who are actually housed. There are people that blend in every day with every other person and no one would ever know that they are a person with no fixed address. As such, surveyors were encouraged to engage with all people encountered to determine their housing status. If homeless, they were engaged with the survey portion of the Point in Time Count. Surveyors were trained and encouraged to not trust their stereotypical biases of what a person that is homeless may look like. Using survey teams of 3-4 people, including one Team Lead, volunteers were trained on how to engage with the public during their street and location-based survey shifts.

Participation in the surveys was voluntary with respondents able to participate, opt out of the process or refuse to answer any particular question at any time. Consent to participate was indeed gathered from respondents and non-identifying information was shared with the Government of Canada and Province of Ontario. Gift cards (\$5 value) for Tim Horton's stores were provided to individuals and families that completed the survey as a token of appreciation for their time.

### *Data Entry and Analysis*

The City of Windsor staff ensured responsible stewardship of the collected data by entering the data gathered during the Point in Time Count, including outdoor, location specific and Aboriginal Magnet event surveys into the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) so that the data gained from this initiative could add to the national initiative to increase our understanding of homelessness across the country. These data forms were then exported to OrgCode Consulting, Inc. for data scrubbing and further analysis.

Upon receipt, OrgCode then completed a comprehensive data analysis dedicated to producing evidence-informed insights and actionable findings. Using the data exports provided from HIFIS, three data sets were created to start the analysis, putting together the single adult, family and youth data into one analyzable group. Such a set-up provides a platform for examining duplication across population groups - which was the first step of "scrubbing" the data.

Next, data was scrubbed by addressing anomalies within the data set. For example, in comparing the length of homelessness data captured and the number of episodes of homelessness experienced, it was possible to isolate data entry errors. By locking in the excel spreadsheet capturing data entered, original data could be preserved while the analysis of duplication occurred.



Data scrubbing, essential for data integrity, is a time consuming and complicated procedure.

## Results of the Windsor Essex Point in Time Count and Registry Week Initiative

A Point in Time Count represents the *minimum* number of people that are homeless in roughly a 24 hour period that could be located while receiving services, as found in public spaces, or at a facility/event. Recognizing that the information gathered during this community event represents just a glimpse into the scope and magnitude of homelessness and housing instability in the region, the findings of this initiative demonstrate that the “face of homelessness” in Windsor Essex remains unchanged from 2016 - most often male between the ages of 35 and 45 who is currently stuck in homelessness with frequent shelter visits mixed with infrequent stays with friends or family, when possible. He does not self-identify as Indigenous or a veteran but he is likely experiencing a serious medical condition and he avoids getting help even when he is feeling unwell. He is also likely to be experiencing compromised mental wellness and substance use issues, with survival activities consuming most of his days. Violence, trauma and harm are more common to him than it should be for anyone living in Windsor Essex and access to health care is limited primarily to emergency service use.

Here is an overview of homelessness in Windsor Essex, as it existed on April 16-18, 2018:

*Table 1 Overview of Homelessness in Windsor Essex*

|  | Singles (without dependents) | Families (at least one head of household and one or more children under 18) | Youth (24 years or younger) |
|--|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Number**</b>  | <b>129</b>                   | <b>8 households with 19 dependents</b>                                      | <b>51</b>                   |
| Percentage Chronically Homeless  | 50%                          | 13%   | 51%                         |
| Percentage Episodically Homeless   | 24%                          | 0%  | 35%                         |
| Percentage Aboriginal  | 26%                          | 0%  | 16%                         |
| Percentage Reporting a Mental Health Condition                                     | 39%                          | 22%   | 55%                         |
| Percentage Reporting a Chronic Health Condition                                    | 33%                          | 11%   | 22%                         |
| Percentage Reporting Being Attacked or Victims of Violence Since Becoming Homeless | 29%                          | 0%  | 30%                         |



\*\* In addition to the survey respondents identified above, there was an additional 9 people that did not provide their age and are therefore not included in the above numbers.

### Age Distribution

Similar to the characteristics of the people experiencing homelessness in 2016, 99 of the respondents (50%) were between the ages of 25 and 49. Of the 37 respondents that were 50 years of age or older, 5 people identified being 65 years or older. The number of youth experiencing homelessness did increase from 2016 to 2018 with 51 or 26% surveyed that were 24 years of age or younger.

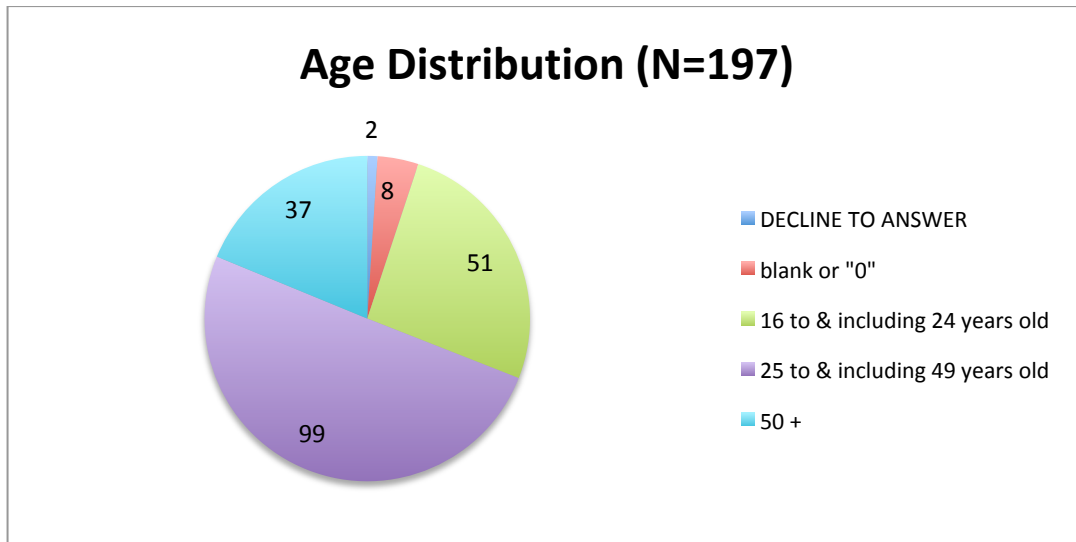
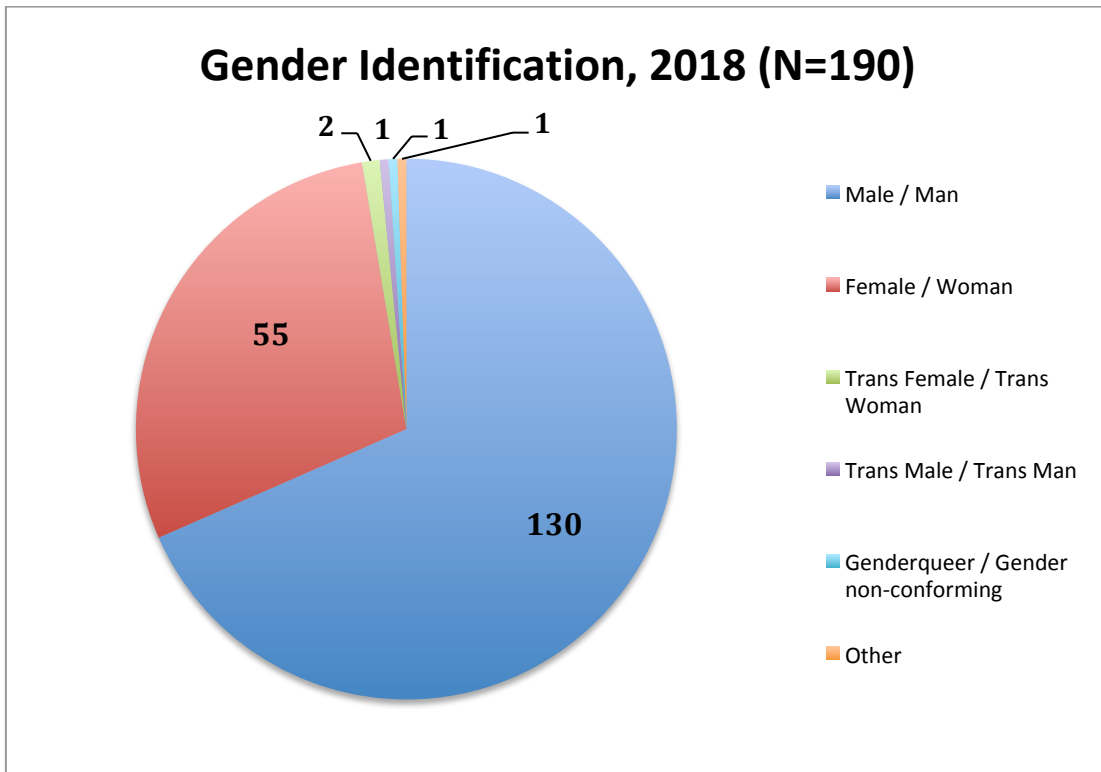


Figure 1: Age Distribution

### Gender Identification

In Windsor, males outnumbered other genders experiencing homelessness with 68% of those surveyed identified as male, 29% identified as female and 3% of the surveyed population identifying transgender or “other”. It is important to mention that the number of females experiencing homelessness has increased since the 2016 enumeration.



*Figure 2: Gender Identification*

Women experiencing homelessness in Windsor are likely to be younger (average age is 32 years of age) than their male counterparts (average age is 37 years) and are more likely to experience sheltered and hidden homelessness. Twenty nine percent of women experienced chronic homelessness (6 + months) and 28% experienced 3 or more separate episodes of homelessness in the past year.

### Sexual Orientation

Of the 185 respondents that provided a response to the question “How do you describe your sexual orientation?” 161 identified that they were heterosexual, 3 identified that they were gay and 2 identified as lesbian. Fifteen identified that their sexual orientation was bisexual and 2 identified as two-spirited.

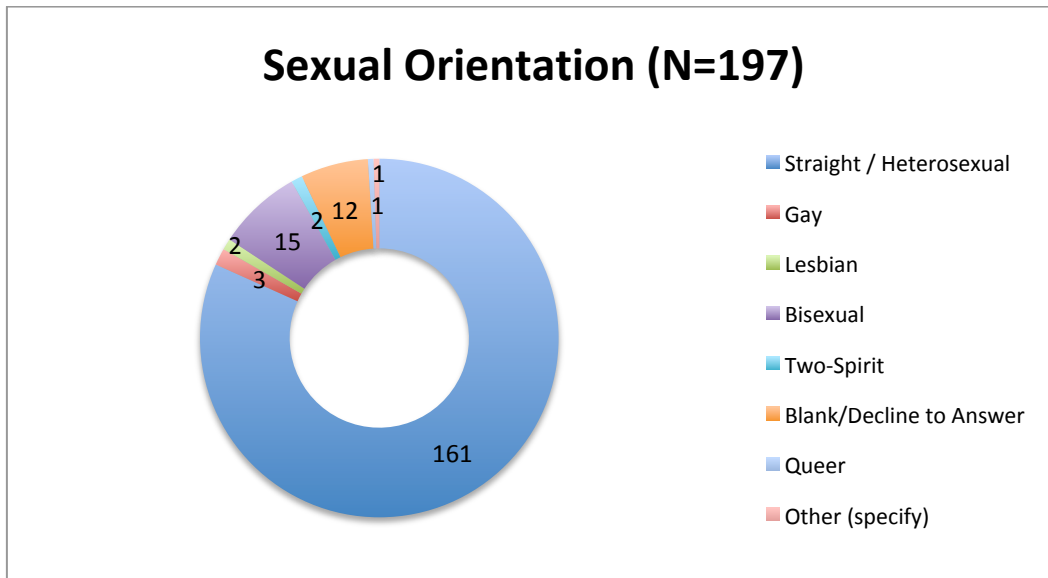


Figure 3: Sexual Orientation

### Relationship with Windsor Essex

Of the 183 people that responded to the question about how long they had been in Windsor Essex, 42% (N=77) are from the area and have resided here their entire lives. Thirty-eight respondents (21%) however have been in the area for less than 1 year. An additional 18% of the people experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex have resided in the area for 10 or more years. The majority of the people experiencing homelessness in the area are indeed long-standing members of the local community.

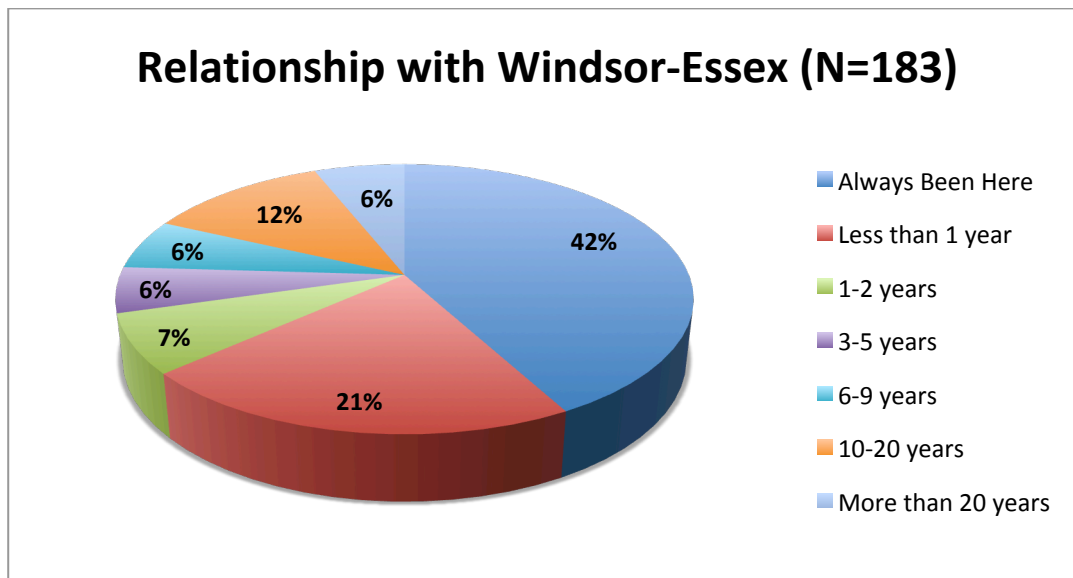


Figure 4: Relationship with Windsor Essex

Of the 55 survey respondents that provided details on where they lived prior to coming to Windsor Essex, it is apparent that migration patterns reflect intra-Canadian migration primarily with the majority coming to the region from other parts of Ontario.

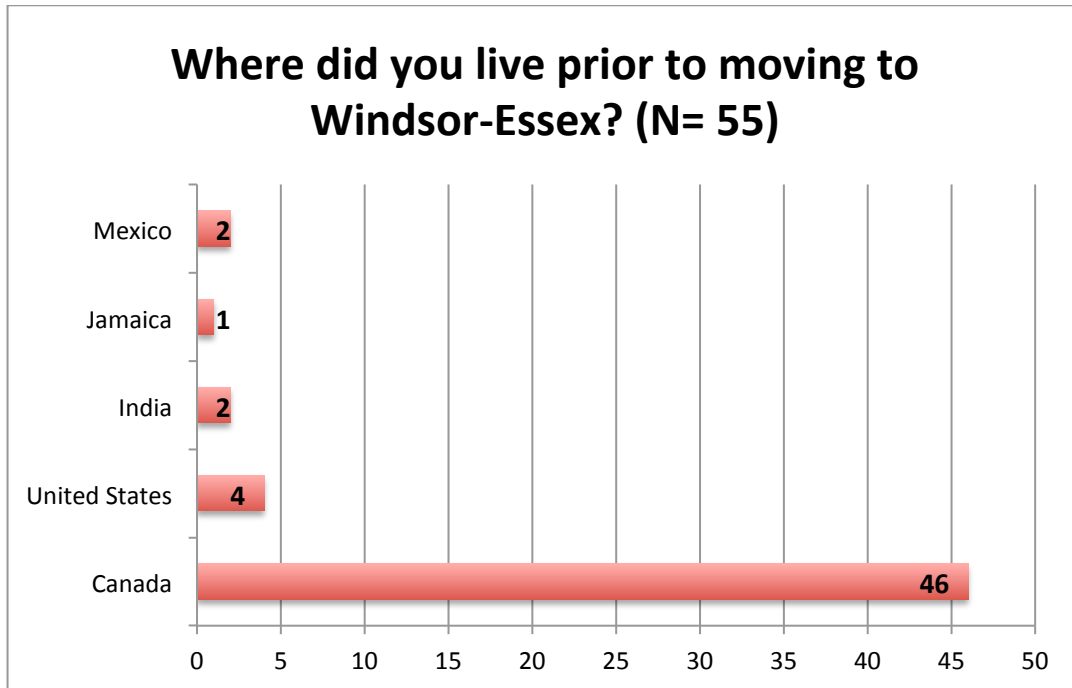
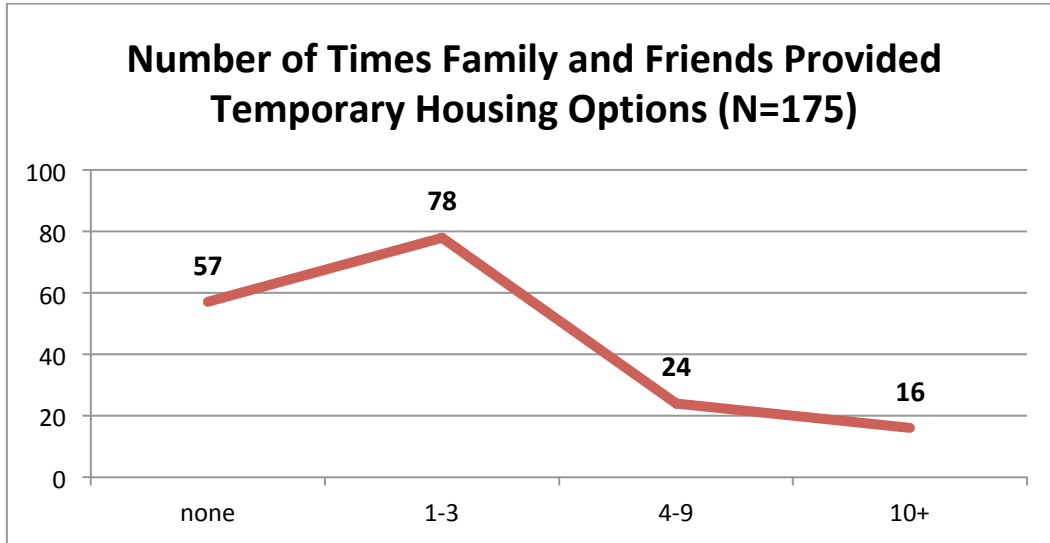


Figure 5: Residence Prior to Windsor Essex

### Reliance on Natural Supports for Temporary Accommodations

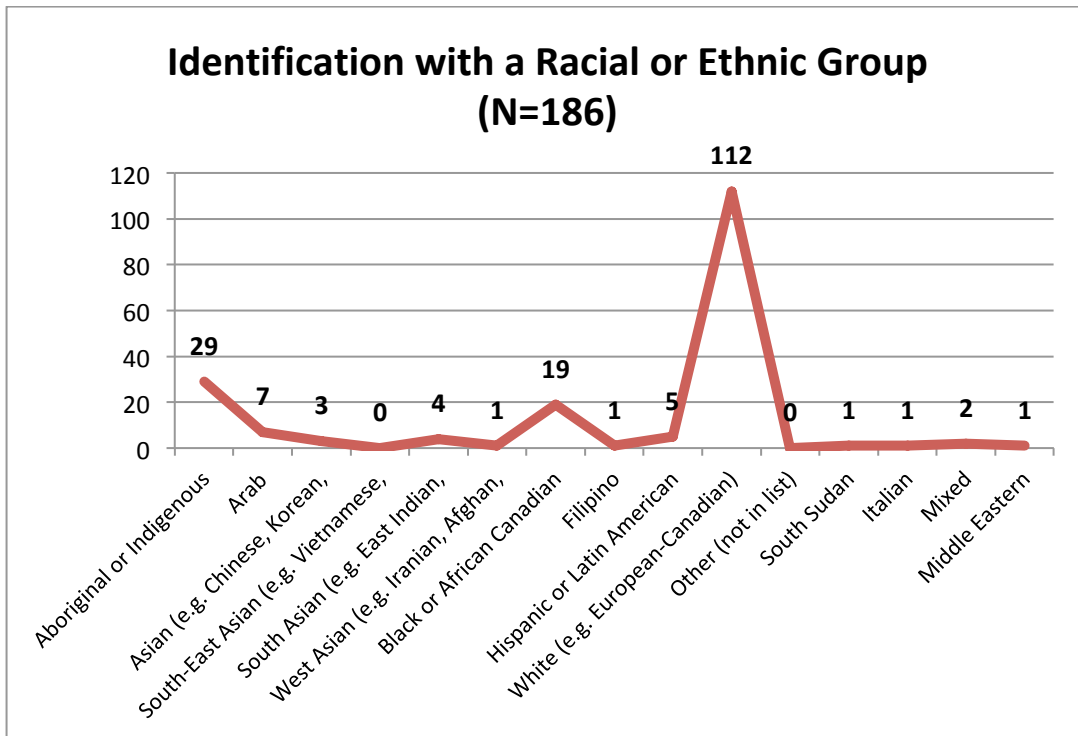
The connection to the Windsor Essex community is further illuminated for the 118 of the people experiencing homelessness (60% of the 197 surveyed) that relied on family or friends over the past year for access to temporary lodging. Of these 118 respondents, 14% (N=16) relied on their natural supports 10 or more times for emergency accommodation. Thirty-three percent of respondents to this question did not rely on family or friends with the majority of these staying in local emergency shelters.



*Figure 6: Number of Times Temporarily Housed with Family/Friends*

*Identification with Racial and Ethnic Groups*

As can be seen in the chart below, the vast majority of people (N=112) experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex identify as White (European-Canadian) with 29 people identifying as Indigenous and an additional 19 identifying as Black or African-Canadian. It must be noted that respondents to this questions could provide multiple responses to their racial and ethnic identification.

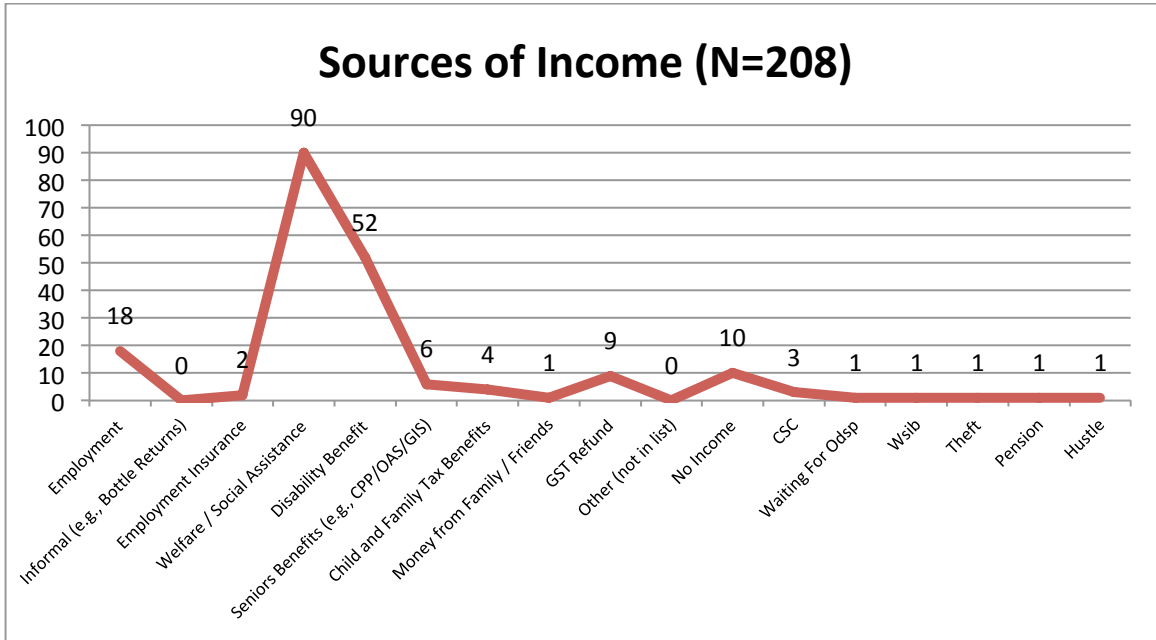


*Figure 7: Racial and Ethnic Identity*

### Sources of Income

As identified in 2016, the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness have access to formal and/or informal sources of income. Ontario Works (N=90) and Ontario Disability Support Program (N=52) continue to be the primary sources of income with employment and self-employment earnings accounting for 13% of the responses and 3% receiving Seniors Benefits such as Old Age Security and Canadian Pension Plan.





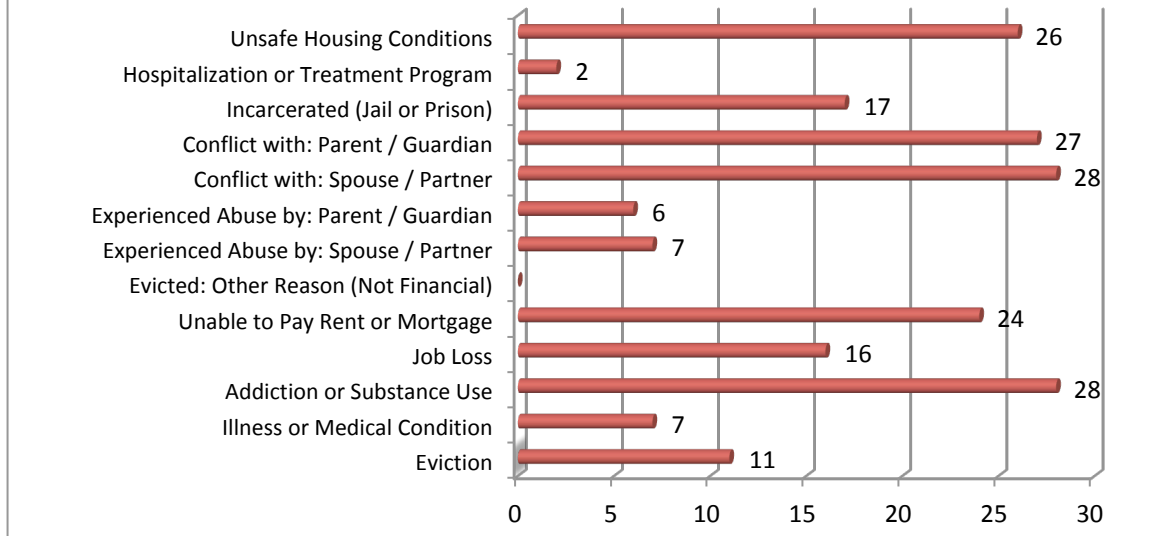
*Figure 8: Source of Income*

Note: Respondents could provide multiple responses for this question.

### *The Experience of Homelessness*

When examining the most recent reason for homelessness, 178 respondents provided insights as to why they lost their recent housing. Respondents could provide multiple responses and the figure below highlights the most common reasons provided by the survey respondents. As can be seen conflict within the household (either with partner/spouse or parent/guardian) tops the reasons for housing breakdown with 31% of the responses identifying social relationship breakdown as the primary reason. Addiction/substance use was identified for 16% of the respondents and unsafe housing was identified by 15% of the respondents as contributing factors to their current incident of homelessness.

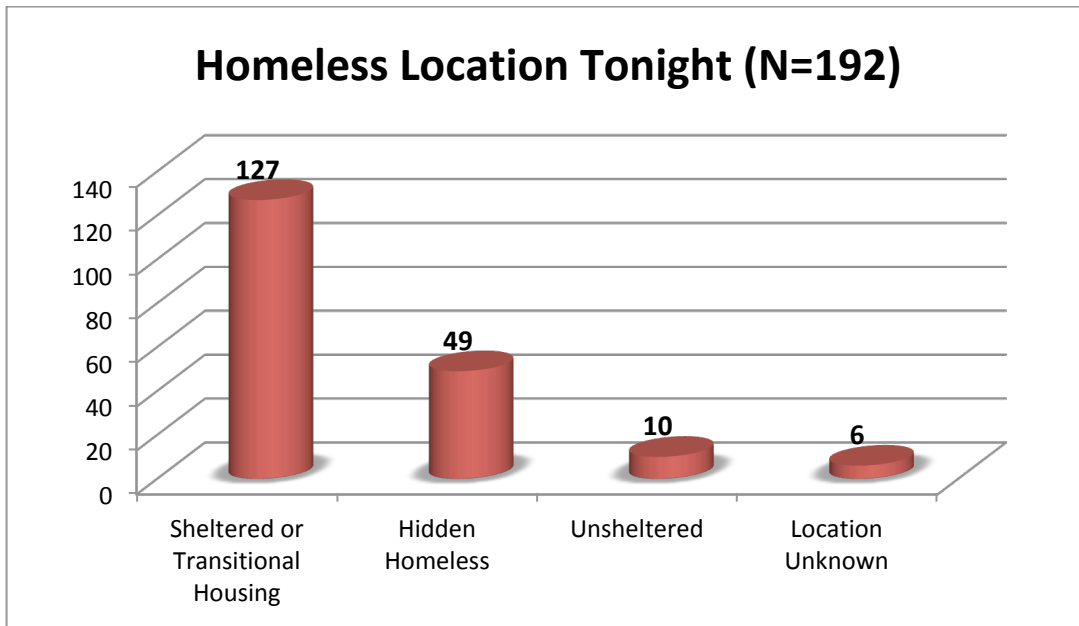
## Most Common Reasons for Loss of Most Recent Housing



*Figure 9: Most Common Reasons for Loss of Most Recent Housing Loss*

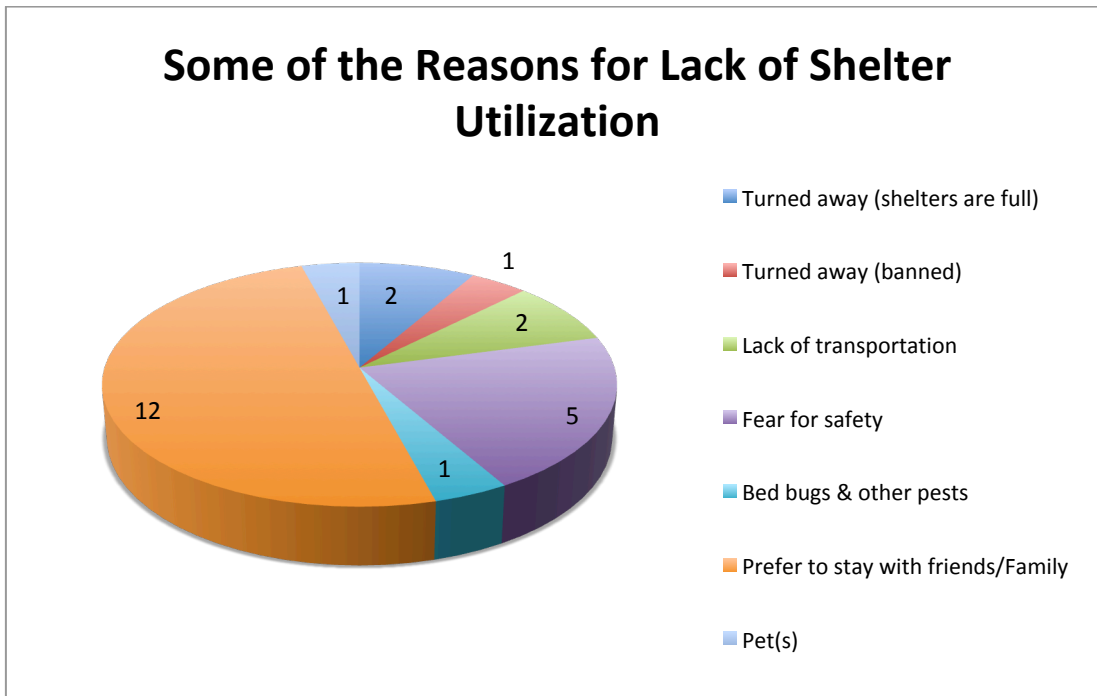
Note: each of the 178 respondents could provide multiple reasons for housing loss.

Of the 197 people that identified as experiencing homelessness in 2018, 192 identified where they were the night of the enumeration. Of these, the majority (66%) were staying in an emergency shelter or a transitional housing location. Five percent (N=10) identified that they were staying outside or in a location not fit for human habitation with 26% (N=49) planning on staying with friends or families.



*Figure 10: Homeless Location Tonight*

In examining the interaction of people experiencing homelessness with local emergency shelters, 144 people identified that they had stayed in a shelter over the past 12 months. This confirms that shelters provide an important access point for many people struggling with homelessness locally. For the people that provided reasons why they had not accessed shelter in the area, the primary rationale provided was that they would prefer to stay with family or friends than stay in a shelter alone. The majority of people that responded to this question were experiencing hidden homelessness. When responding to this question, respondents could provide more than one answer.



*Figure 11: Reasons for Lack of Shelter Utilization*

***Additional Social Determinants of Health for the Population Experiencing Homelessness***

As was identified in the 2016 Point in Time Count and Registry Week event, the population of people experiencing homelessness continues to struggle with compromised wellness, trauma resulting from past placements in foster care and exposure to violence and harm. When examining the 197 respondents identified as experiencing homelessness, 37% identified substance use issues, 51% identified mental health concerns, 34% identified having chronic medical conditions and 56% identified that violence and conflict in their previous home resulted in their entry into homelessness. For 30% of these respondents, their exposure to violence and trauma continues during their homelessness experience, with 30% reporting that they have been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless. Much work is needed to provide supports to enhance safety and wellness for the population of people experiencing homelessness. Research and experience tells us that this support is best provided to individuals and families from the safety and dignity of a home. Formalized connections with such mainstream systems as health, justice and community services will remain an important focus for the housing and homelessness system of care in Windsor Essex in the future.

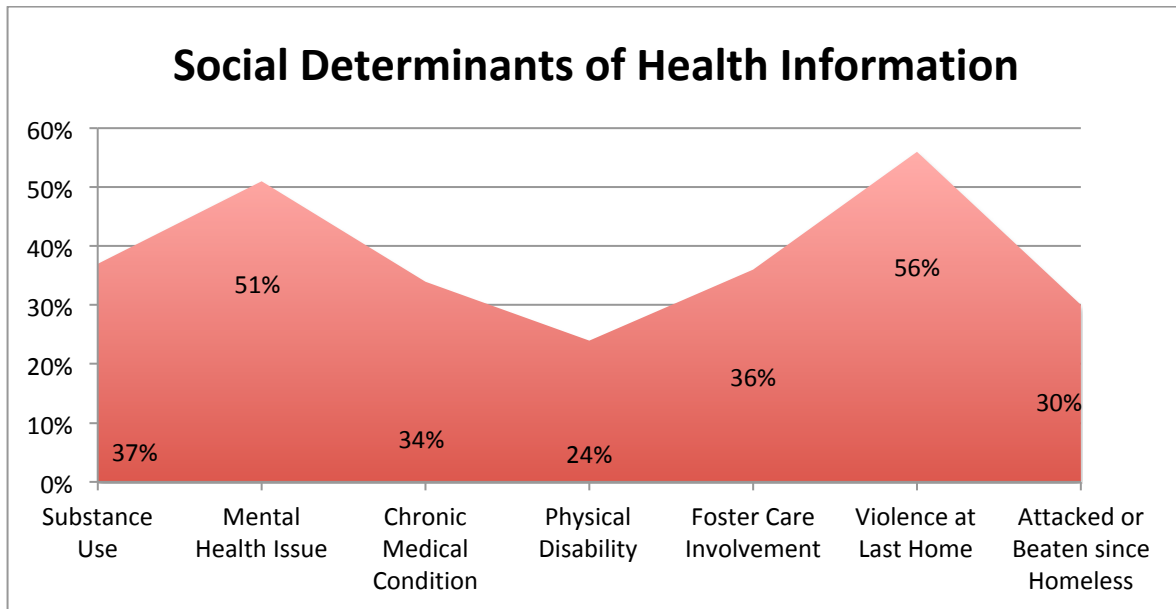


Figure 12: Social Determinates of Health

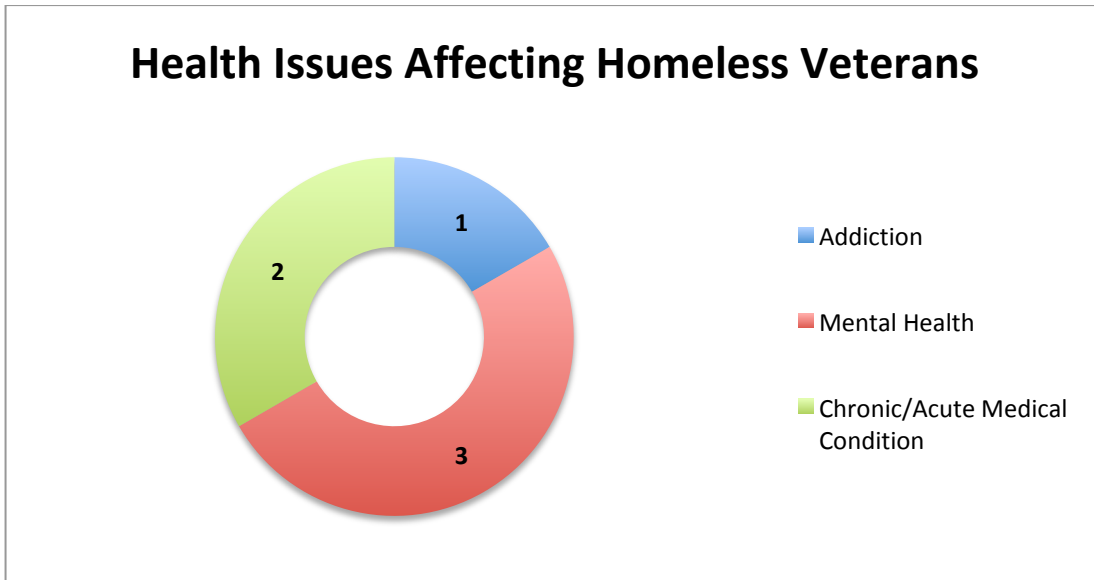
### Specific Insights for Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

Six respondents identified that they had served in the military and/or RCMP (3% of the population of people experiencing homelessness in 2018). This proportion is slightly lower than identified for Windsor Essex in 2016 and is also lower than identified in such urban centres as Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa in recent years. Interestingly, 3 of the Veterans identified as youth. Half of these respondents were sheltered, 3 veterans were experiencing hidden homelessness and 1 was staying in an abandoned/vacant building.

For the veterans experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex, 2 had experienced 6 or more months of homelessness in the last 12 months and 3 had experienced 3+ episodes of homelessness. Only 1 veteran experiencing chronic homelessness also experienced episodic homelessness.

Fifty percent of the veterans identified as Indigenous (2 identified as First Nations and 1 identified as Metis). One veteran also came to Canada as an Immigrant and another came as a Refugee but both have lived in Canada for over 16 years. All 6 veterans identified as male and 5 of the 6 identified as straight/heterosexual. In terms of income sources, 4 veterans receive Ontario Works 2 receive Disability Benefits and 2 identified formal and informal employment.

When exploring risk of harm, 1 veteran identified that he had been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless as well as had threatened to harm himself or someone else. In terms of health concerns, 2 of the veterans identified mental health concerns, 3 identified chronic or acute medical conditions and 1 identified addiction issues.



*Figure 13: Veterans - Health Issues*

Reasons for their most recent experiences of homelessness were identified as shown below (multiple responses were possible):

*Table 2: Veterans - Reasons for Most Recent Experience of Homelessness*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Addiction or Substance Use</b>             | 1 |
| <b>Job Loss</b>                               | 1 |
| <b>Unable to Pay Rent or Mortgage</b>         | 1 |
| <b>Experienced Abuse by: Spouse / Partner</b> | 1 |
| <b>Conflict with: Parent / Guardian</b>       | 2 |
| <b>Incarcerated (Jail or Prison)</b>          | 1 |
| <b>Unsafe Housing Conditions</b>              | 1 |
| <b>Death In Family</b>                        | 1 |

In terms of the journey back to housing stability, 2 of the veterans would benefit from a high intensity support program.

### Specific Insights for Indigenous People Experiencing Homelessness

Of the 197 people experiencing homelessness during the 2018 Homelessness Enumeration, 22% identified as Indigenous (N= 43). As was identified in the



2014 Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Plan, the Aboriginal population continues to grow and in the 2016 Census it accounted for 1.4% of the population<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately in Windsor Essex, the Point in Time Count and Registry Week event again confirmed that Aboriginal peoples are over-represented in the homeless population. As is the case in urban centres across the country - and in all major urban centres across Ontario - homelessness is disproportionately represented amongst Aboriginal persons (First Nation, Metis, Inuit). The poor living conditions on Reserves across the country, bleak employment prospects, experiences of discrimination and racism, and rates of trauma and abuse because of the legacies of colonization and Residential Schools have been well documented. It is perhaps no wonder that there are so many Aboriginal people that are homeless across the country. The available information does not provide a detailed housing history of the Aboriginal people surveyed. However, it is highly probable that stable housing has existed at some point in each of their lives, and it is also possible they were stably housed for some period of time in Windsor Essex.

The majority of Indigenous people experience homelessness are sheltered or stay temporarily with family or friends, as can be seen in the below table:

*Table 3: Indigenous - Location of Homelessness*

| Location of Homelessness | Number of Indigenous Respondents |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sheltered                | 28                               |
| Unsheltered              | 3                                |
| Hidden Homeless          | 10                               |
| Location Unknown         | 2                                |

Forty-four percent of the Indigenous people experiencing homelessness have past involvement in foster care and a large percentage of them are struggling with health, violence and trauma.

*Table 4: Indigenous - Social Determinant of Health*

| Social Determinant of Health                       | Number of Indigenous People |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Addiction Issues                                   | 50%                         |
| Mental Health                                      | 50%                         |
| Chronic or Acute Medical Condition                 | 49%                         |
| Been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless | 27%                         |

<sup>2</sup> As identified at <https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/planning/Plans-and-Community-Information/About-Windsor/Demographics/Pages/Demographics.aspx?PageView=Shared&InitialTabId=Ribbon.WebPartPage&VisibilityContext=WSSWebPartPage&#table9>

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Threaten to or tried to harm themselves or someone else | 18% |
| Involvement in risky behaviour                          | 21% |
| Forced or tricked to do things you do not want to do    | 21% |
| Current homelessness caused by abuse or trauma          | 41% |

In examining the journey back to housing stability for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, 11 (32%) of the 34 that completed the VI-SPDAT would benefit from the highest intensity supports available, 17 or 50% would benefit from a moderate intensity program such as Rapid Re-Housing and 6 would benefit from housing assistance.

### Specific Insights for All Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness

During the 2018 Point in Time Count and Registry Week event, 129 single adults were identified as experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex. Of these, 71% were between the ages of 25 and 49 years of age, 25% were between 50 and 64 years of age and 4% were 65 years of age or older. Ages ranged from 25 to 71 years of age.

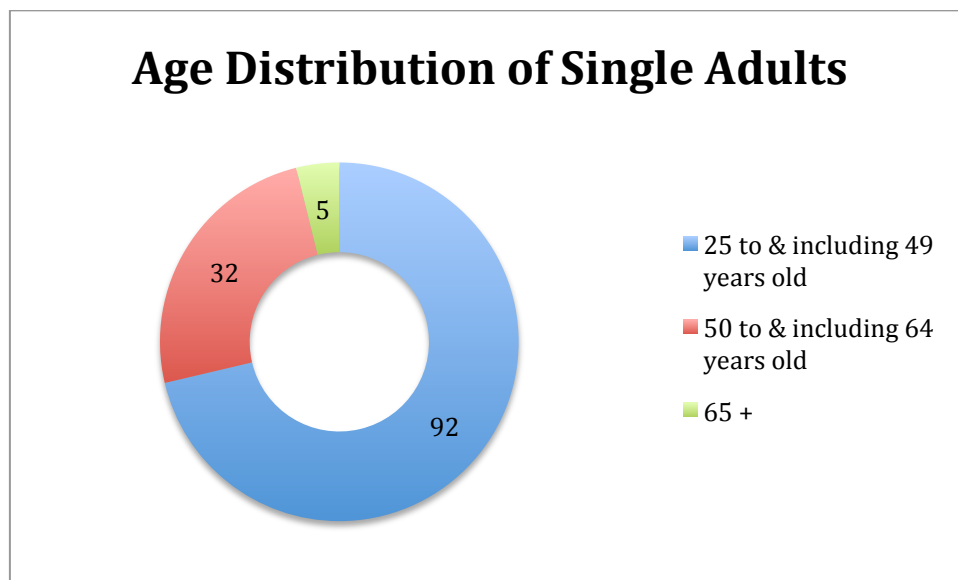
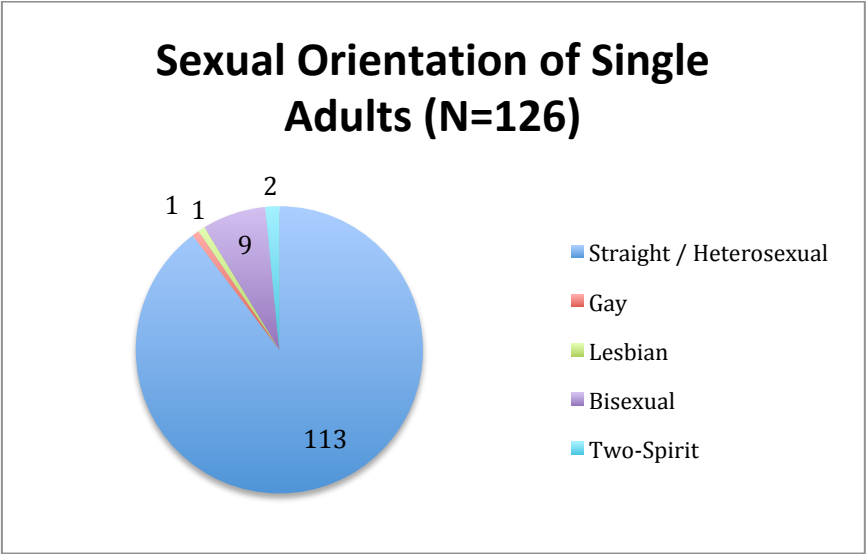


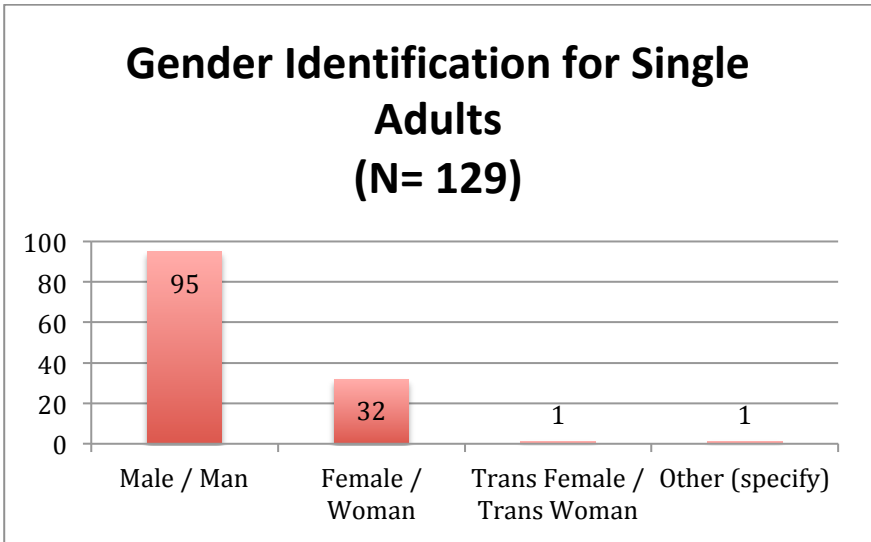
Figure 14: Single Adults- Age Distribution

As expected, the vast majority of single adults experiencing homelessness identified as male (74%) and almost 25% identifying as female. Ninety percent of respondents also identified as straight or heterosexual while 7% identified as bisexual.





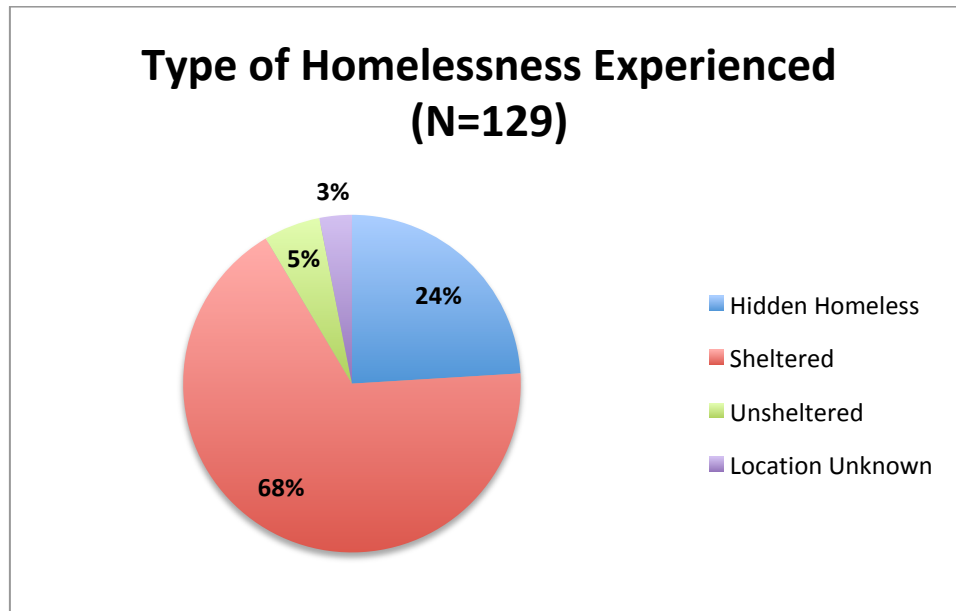
*Figure 15: Single Adults- Sexual Orientation*



*Figure 16: Single Adults- Gender Identification*

***The Homelessness Experience for Single Adults***

Sixty eight percent of single adults experiencing homelessness were sheltered (N=87), 24% experienced hidden homelessness as they stayed with family or friends on a temporary basis, 5% were experiencing unsheltered or outdoor homelessness. An additional 3% (N=4) were unable to identify where their homeless location would be that night.



*Figure 17: Single Adults - Type of Homeless Experienced*

### *Length of Time & Episodes of Homeless*

When examining Point in Time Count results, it is expected that there will be a range in the amount of time spent homeless by individuals and families. In the past year, 49% of the 129 single adults (N=64) indicated they had been homeless for 6 months or more. Length of time homeless ranged from a couple of days up to four consecutive years with the overall average length of time estimated at 176 days.

When asked “How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness, ages ranged from the young age of 5 to 70 years of age before entering homelessness. The average age for the onset of homelessness for single adults in Windsor Essex is 30 years of age. The impact of generational homelessness cannot be underestimated for people in Windsor Essex.

For those that completed the VI-SPDAT pre-screen tool, it is important to note that 77% of the respondents identified that homelessness was still a relatively new experience for them since it had been less than 1 month since they had last been housed and an additional 21% had been without permanent housing between 1-6 months.

In examining the number of single adults that met the definitions of chronic and episodic homelessness established by the Government of Canada, over 50 singles had not experienced 6 or more months of homelessness nor had they experienced 3 or more episodes of homelessness in the past year. To be chronically homeless in Canada, the person would have to be homeless for six or more consecutive months<sup>3</sup>. To meet the definition of “episodically homeless”

<sup>3</sup> Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) provides the following definition: Chronically homeless refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse

in Canada, the person would have to experience 3 or more episodes over the last 12 months<sup>4</sup>. The following Venn diagram demonstrates that 52% of the single adult respondents (a slight increase from the 2016 results) met the definition of Chronic Homelessness and 24% (an 11% decrease in the 2016 statistic) identified that they had experienced Episodic Homelessness. Interestingly, 13% of those that had experienced 6+ months of homelessness in the past year also experienced 3 or more separate episodes of homelessness demonstrating a cycling of housing to homelessness scenarios.

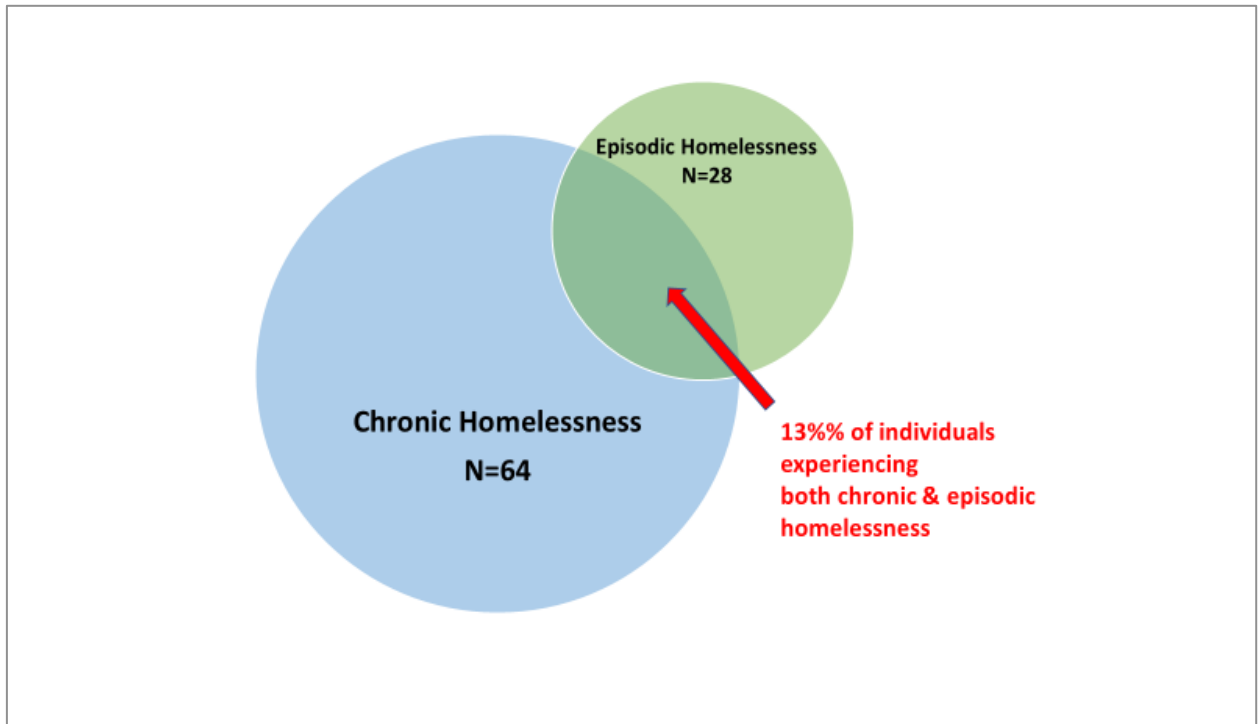


Figure 18: Single Adults -Chronic and Episodic Homelessness

Using the definitions currently established for Canadian communities, however, may create a distorted view of actual homeless history and depth of need within regions. On the surface, for example, Windsor Essex would appear to have about two times as much chronic homelessness as is experienced in the largest urban centres across the United States. But to be labeled as chronically homeless in the USA a person must have been homeless for 12 or more months consecutively (twice as long as in Canada), the three or more episodes of homelessness are examined over three years and must equal 12 months or more cumulatively, and, the person must have a diagnosed disability.

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>4</sup> ESDC: Episodically homeless refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (of note, episodes are 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).

### Risk Factors Impacting the Ability to Return to Housing

When asked about the key challenges impacting their ability to return to housing, single adults identified that high rental costs, poor housing conditions and low incomes were the primary reasons for their continued homelessness, followed by such wellness concerns as their physical and mental health as well as substance use issues impacting their ability to return to housing.

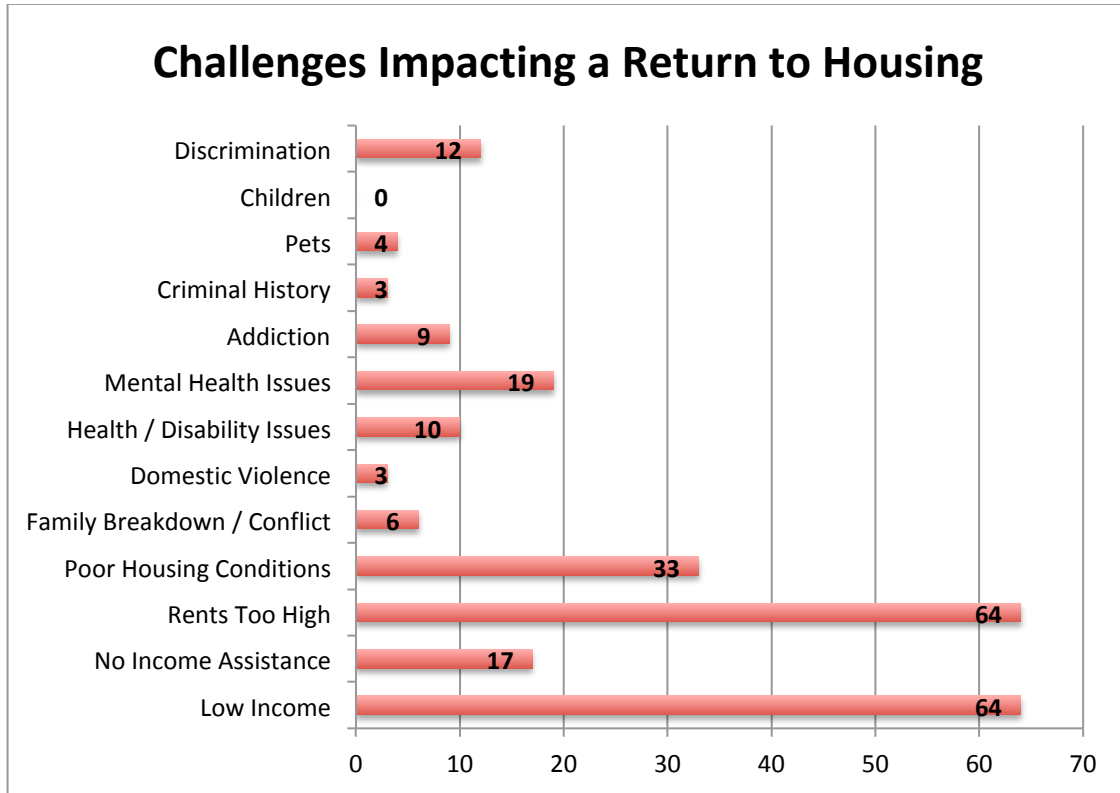


Figure 19: Single Adults- Risk Factors Impacting Housing Stability

### Risk of Harm and Exposure to Exploitation

Twenty-nine percent of single adults experiencing homelessness had been attacked or beaten up since they had become homeless, 19% had threatened to or tried to harm themselves or someone else and 22% self reported that they are tricked or forced to do things that they do not want to do. In addition to these indicators of risk, 20% identified that they do things that may be considered to be risky such as exchange sex for money or run drugs for others. Fleeing abuse and violence was also a key factor in the lives of single adults experiencing homelessness with 39% of the respondents identifying that their current period of homelessness was caused by physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse or trauma that they had experienced.

### Compromised Wellness & Its Impact on Homelessness

Generally, compromised wellness and the propensity for poor health outcomes impact people that are homeless in Windsor Essex. The table below outlines a series of indicators that demonstrate the health issues within the VI-SPDAT pre-screen reported by survey respondents (N=121) in Windsor Essex.

*Table 5: Single Adults- Compromised Wellness*

| Wellness Issue  | 2016 Result<br>(N= 128)  | 2018 Result<br>(N=121)   |
|---|--|--|
| Percentage reporting a mental health, brain injury, or developmental disability condition | 34%  | 37%  |
| Percentage reporting a chronic health condition   | 35%  | 25%  |
| Percentage reporting a substance use condition  | 31%  | 30%  |
| Physical Disability   | 15%  | 13%  |
| Tri-morbidity   | 12%  | 16%  |
| Number of emergency room visits in the last six months                                    | 62 visits by 62 different people – or 1 visit per person in the last six months                  | 147 visits by 51 people – 2.9 visits per person in the last 6 months                   |
| Number of ambulance trips to the hospital in the last six months                          | 48 ambulance trips by 48 different people- or 1 ambulance trip per person in the last six months | 81 ambulance trips by 35 different people – 2.3 visits per person in the last 6 months |

In examining the above statistics, there is a subset of those surveyed that are at greatest risk. Twenty-four percent (N=31) of all those surveyed are experiencing tri-morbidity. This means they have a physical health issue, a mental health issue, and problematic substance use all co-occurring. Research shows these are the people at extremely elevated risk of death.

Thirty-five percent of the respondents to the VI-SPDAT reported having chronic health conditions with their liver, kidneys, stomach, lungs or heart. A review of recent Point in Time Count reports reveal that these findings are similar to the health of other populations experiencing homelessness in Canada. For example, Halifax (2015) identified 42% and Hamilton (2016) identified 39% of their singles experiencing homelessness reported a chronic health condition. Looking backwards, 16% of those surveyed indicated that a physical health condition has been the reason why they have had to leave accommodation of any sort in the past and 13% indicate physical disabilities would limit the type of housing they could move into in the future or would find it hard to live independently because they would need extra help.

Forty-four percent of all respondents avoid getting help when they are unwell, which may account for the lower than expected use of emergency room visits and ambulance trips identified above. Furthermore, ongoing care and treatment appears to be problematic. For example, 26% of all those surveyed are not taking a medication prescribed to them by a doctor, and 17% are not taking their medicine the way that it was prescribed.

Women represented less than a quarter of all people surveyed experiencing homelessness, but 9% (4 women) of those women reported being pregnant at the time of the Count. Prenatal care for women that are homeless can be difficult to organize and deliver. For healthy babies, early detection and supports are necessary.

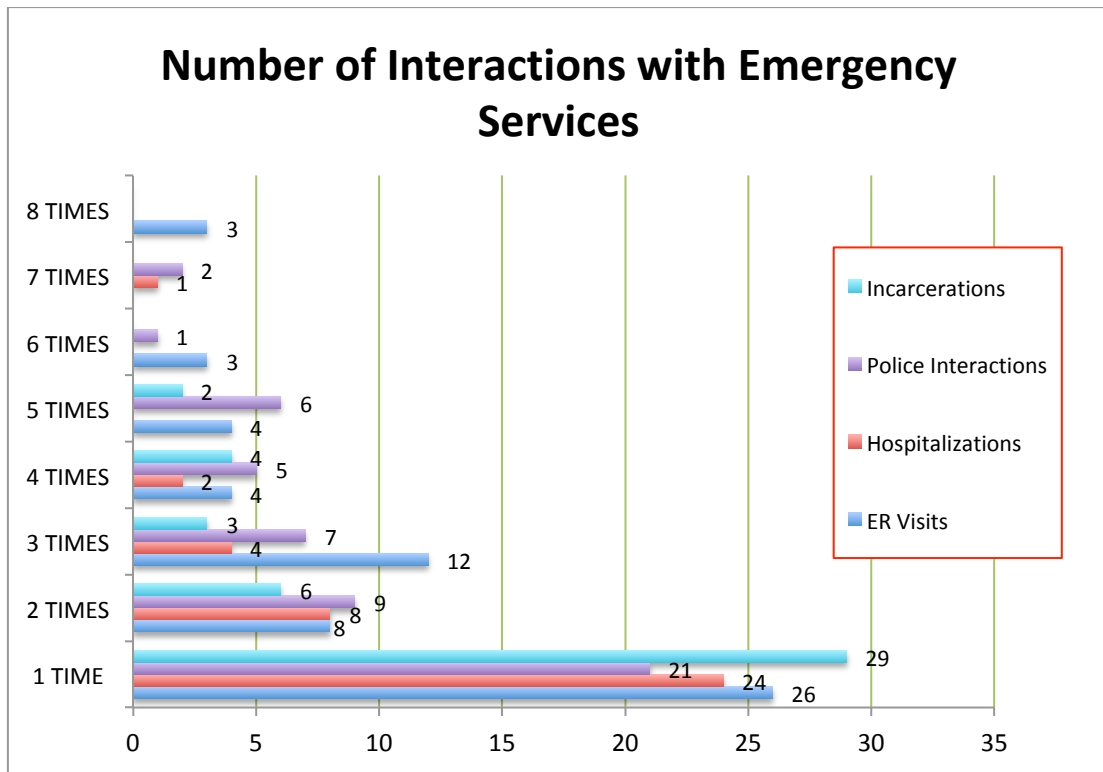
As identified in the chart above, substance use has proven to be an issue impacting housing for 43% of the survey respondents in Windsor Essex. In our cross-city comparison of recent Point in Time County reports, 38% of homeless Hamiltonians (2016), 25% of Kingston's homeless population (2013) and 32% of homeless singles in Winnipeg (2015) also reported substance use issues. Survey respondents in Windsor Essex readily acknowledged when substance use had been the reason why they had to leave a previous place they were staying; just over a quarter (27%) indicated this was the case. Moving forward, 12% indicate that drinking or drug use will make it difficult to maintain or afford a home. Given that most substance users in society are housed and not homeless, this is entirely plausible.

A history of losing a place to live because of a mental health concern, developmental disability or brain injury accounted for over half (51%) of all survey respondents. Moving forward, 14% indicated that additional assistance would be required to help them maintain housing because of these concerns.

Money Management is another risk factor impacting many people experiencing homelessness. Approximately 74% of single adults identified that they received some formal and/or informal income. As previously reported, the majority of singles experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex are receiving Ontario Works (36%) or Ontario Disability Support Program (33%). Currently, income assistance rates in the province continue to be well below the rates required to offset the high cost of living. In addition to the income being received however, single adults experiencing homelessness also struggle with financial debt. Thirty-six percent indicated that there is a person, past landlord, business, bookie, dealer or government group like the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) that thinks they are owed money.

Interactions with Emergency Services is a key factor impacting people experiences with homelessness and the challenge of quickly resolving their homelessness. Thirty-seven respondents identified having 4 or more interactions with emergency services such as Emergency Room visits, police interactions, incarcerations and hospitalization. Research has demonstrated that, upon housing, peoples' interactions with emergency services will dramatically decrease ensuring cost savings and immediate social return on the investment of housing with supports.

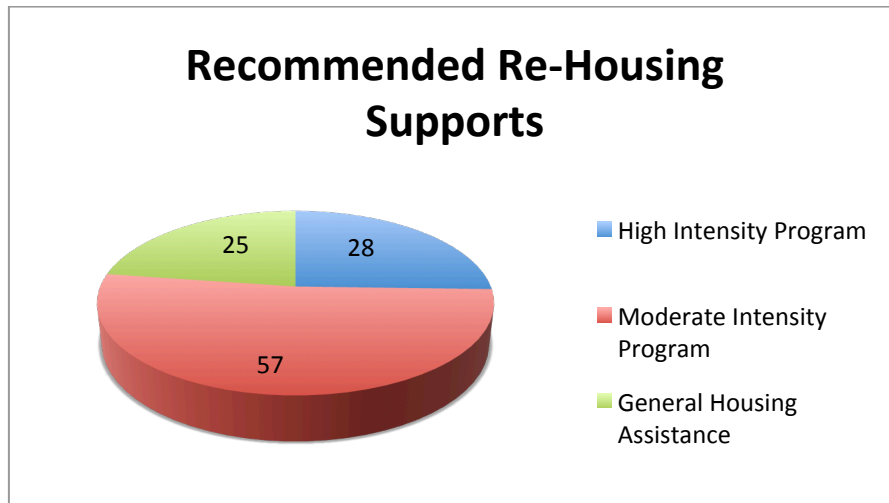




*Figure 20: Single Adults- Interactions with Emergency Services*

### *The Journey Back to Housing Stability for Single Adults – Housing Assistance Required in Windsor Essex*

Using insights gleaned from the VI-SPDAT pre-screen incorporated into the enumeration campaign in Windsor Essex provided insights into the housing and support needs facing individuals currently experiencing homelessness and highlights the intensity, duration and frequency of supports required to assist individuals in their journey back to housing stability. Data analysis into the 121 single adults that completed the VI-SPDAT reveal that the vast majority of these individuals (77%) will require professionalized support services to permanently end their homelessness. Fifty-two percent would benefit from time limited, moderate intensity housing stabilization supports, similar to the services provided in a Rapid Re-Housing program model. Twenty-five percent of the respondents will actually benefit from intensive, long term (perhaps permanent) housing stabilization supports. *In examining the 2016 to the 2018 Enumeration Results, it is important to acknowledge that the number of households requiring the most intensive housing supports to return to housing stability has decreased, demonstrating that the community has been diligent in prioritizing the most vulnerable individuals in their re-housing efforts in the past two years.* The remaining 13% of the respondents, although still struggling with housing affordability issues, would seem to be in a position to self-resolve their current homelessness with some assistance, based on a review of their risks and needs.



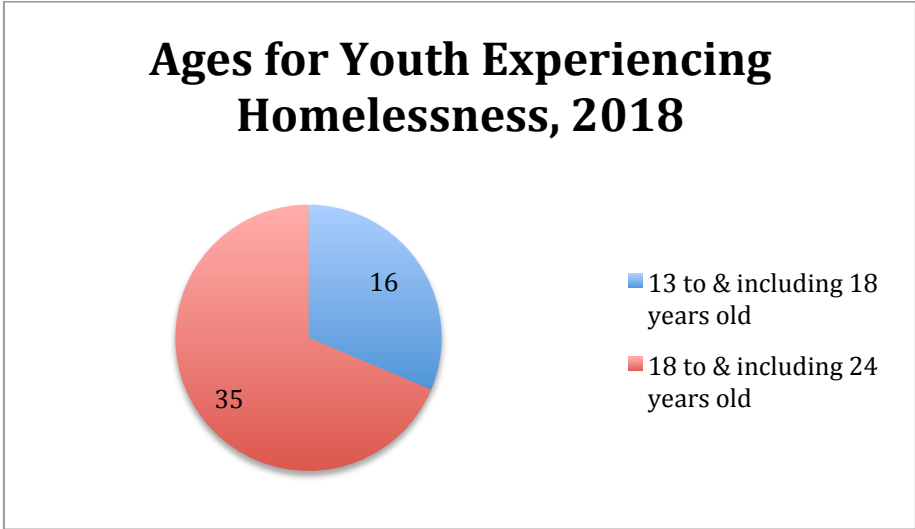
*Figure 21: Single Adults- Recommended Re-Housing Supports*

## Specific Insights for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Fifty-one youth (aged 16-24) were among the unaccompanied singles surveyed during the 2018 Point in Time Count and Registry Week event. Youth represented 26% of the total homeless population surveyed during the Count – this percentage is higher than the expected youth homeless population (20% of the homeless population) identified in other Canadian communities<sup>5</sup>. Six of the youth were 16 or 17 years of age while the remaining 45 were between 18 and 24 years of age. Youth were surveyed during the street count as well as location based survey sites throughout Windsor Essex. Ten youth also completed the TAY-VI-SPDAT and this section will highlight some of the insights gleaned for this small population of respondents.

<sup>5</sup> The State of Homelessness in Canada 2014. Gaetz, S., Gulliver-Garcia, T. & Richter, T. (2014)

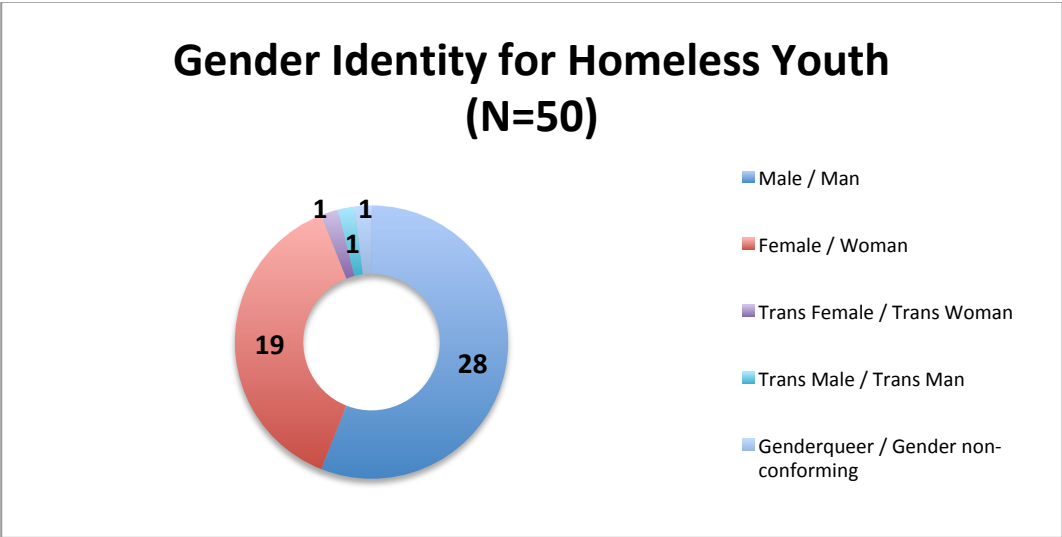




*Figure 22: Youth- Age Distribution*

**Identity - Gender and Sexual Orientation**

With 23% of the youth respondents of the TAY-VI-SPDAT identified that their current period of homelessness was caused by conflict over gender identity and/or sexual orientation, it is important to explore the needs of youth identifying as LGBTQ2S. Fifty-six percent of the youth experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex identified as male while 38% identified as female. Four percent of the youth identified as transgender (1 trans-female and 1 trans-male) and 2% identified as gender-queer.



*Figure 23: Youth- Gender Identity*

Thirty-seven or 77% of the youth that identified their sexual orientation in the PIT Count survey reported that they were straight or heterosexual while 6 youth identified as bisexual, 2 identified as gay. Recognizing that LGBTQ2S youth

have additional challenges in accessing homeless and re-housing services in communities across North America, youth outreach will be essential in ensuring that all youth are included in efforts to end homelessness.

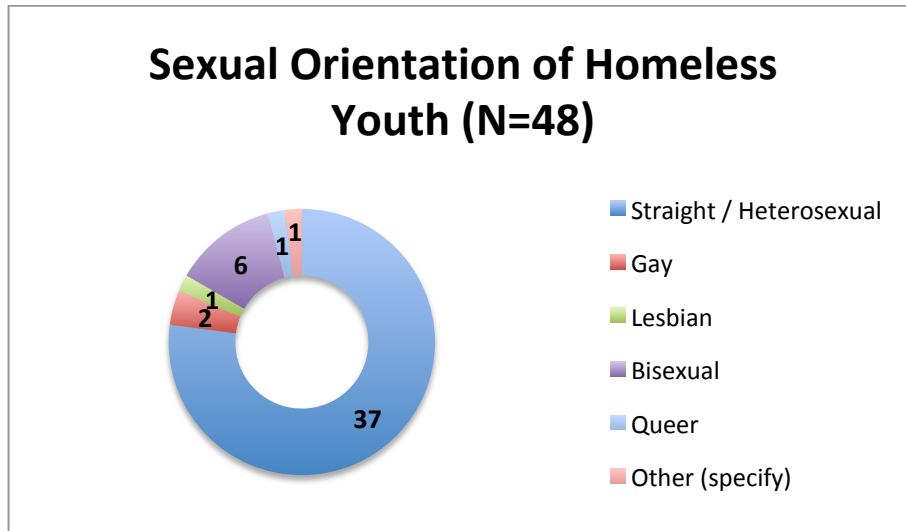


Figure 24: Youth- Sexual Orientation

#### Indigenous Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Of the 46 youth that responded to this question, eight of the youth (17%) experiencing homelessness identified that they are Indigenous. The following figure identifies the results for these Indigenous youth.

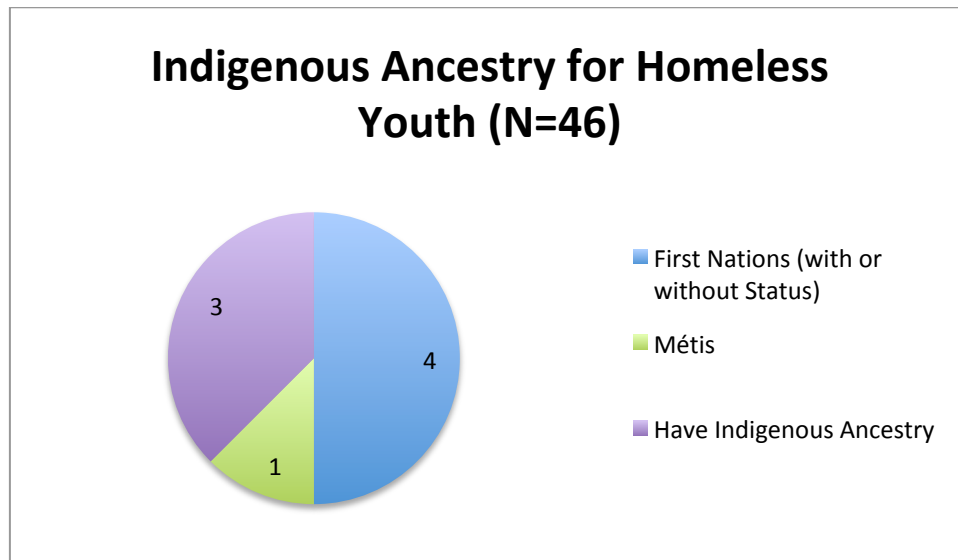


Figure 25: Youth - Indigenous Ancestry

### Relationship to Windsor Essex

Of the 49 respondents, 51% of the youth (N=25) have lived in Windsor Essex all of their lives with an additional 14% (N=7) having lived here for 10-20 years. Only 12% of the youth experiencing homelessness are new to the Windsor Essex area, having been here for less than 1 year. Eighty eight percent of youth that moved to the Windsor area came from other communities in Ontario or surrounding provinces. Only 2 youth lived outside of Canada (1 in the United States and 1 in India) prior to moving to Windsor Essex.

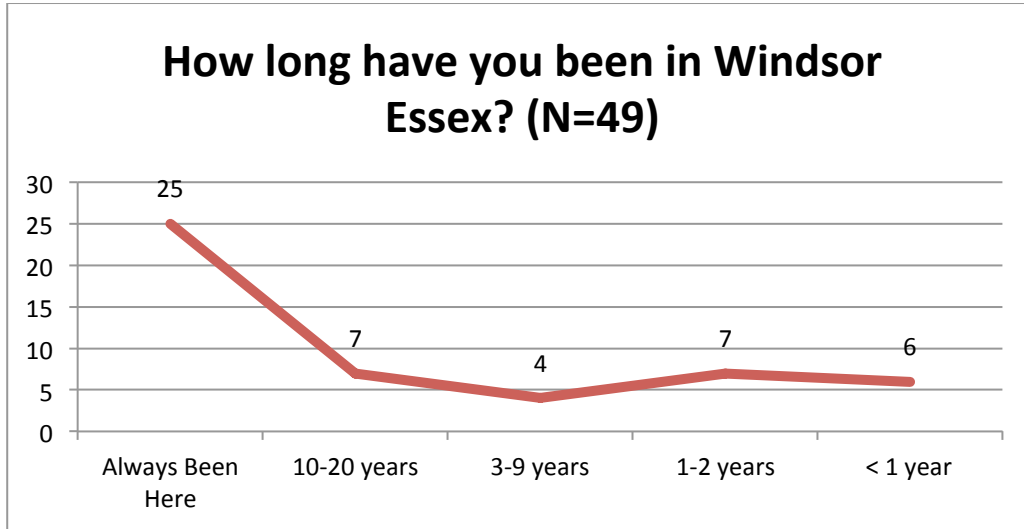
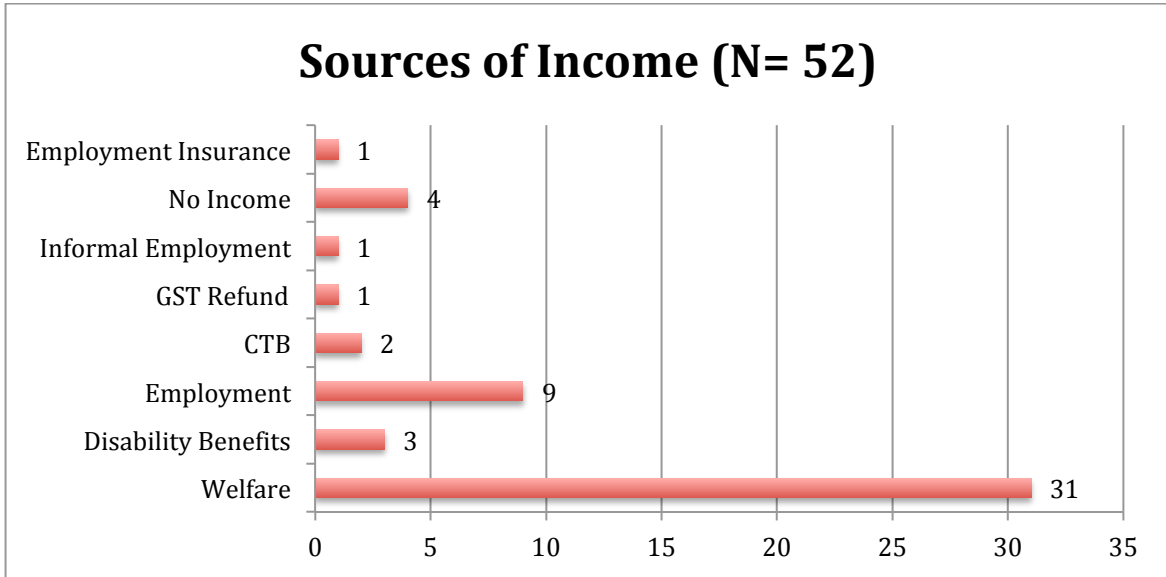


Figure 26: Youth - Length of Time in Windsor Essex

### Income

In exploring where youth get their money from, 52 different responses were provided with the majority of youth (60%) identifying Ontario Works as their primary source of income while employment (including informal employment such as binning and panhandling) provided 19% of the income sources for youth. Eight percent of youth experiencing homelessness have no income that would greatly increase their vulnerability as they attempt to get their basic needs met.



*Figure 27: Youth - Source of Income*

Note: Multiple responses were possible for this question.

### Homelessness Experiences for Youth in Windsor Essex

When examining the young people’s first experience with homelessness, the majority of respondents identified that they were 13 and 18 years of age (N= 38) while only 1 identified that they were younger than 12 when they first experienced homelessness.

*Table 6: Youth - Homelessness Experience*

| How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness? | Number of Respondents |
|---|-----------------------|
| 0 to & including 12 years old                                 | 1                     |
| 13 to & including 18 years old                                | 38                    |
| 18 to & including 24 years old                                | 12                    |

### Reasons for Current Homelessness

When asked what caused their current homelessness, the primary reasons identified conflict at home, including unhealthy or abusive environment, violence amongst family members and involvement with substances. Other reasons identified included being evicted for other reasons such as lease violations, as well as involvement in the corrections system. Family breakdown is a predominant theme for a large majority of youth experiencing homelessness and the figure below demonstrates this reality for Windsor Essex youth experiencing homelessness. Twenty-three youth identified unhealthy or abuse relationships, while 19 additional responses identified that family and/or friends caused the youth to lose their housing. Fourteen responses identified the prevalence of violence in the family home with an additional 10 youth identifying that they ran away from their previous housing situation.

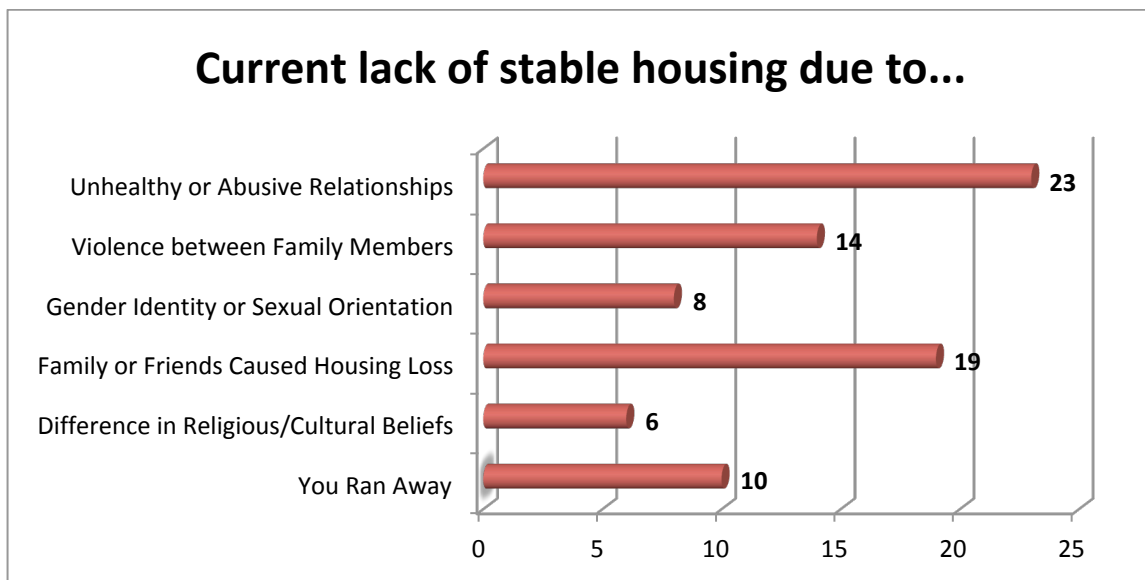


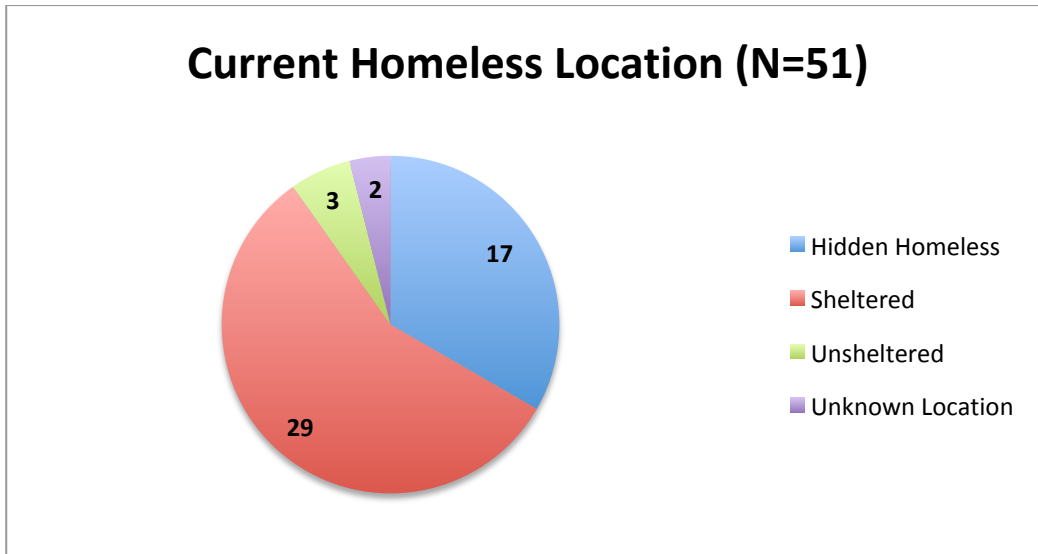
Figure 28: Youth - Reasons for Current Homelessness

Note: Respondents could provide multiple reasons for the lack of stable housing.

An additional 47% of youth respondents identifying that their current period of homelessness was caused by an experience of emotional, psychological, physical, sexual or other type of abuse, or by any other trauma they experienced. Obviously, negative social relations and experiences of trauma are common amongst the individuals experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex.

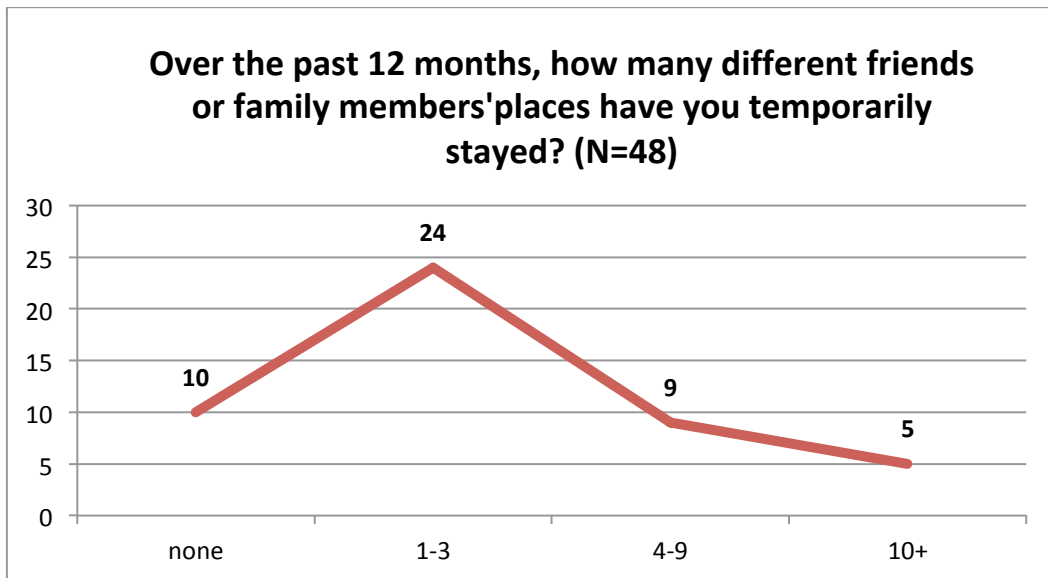
### Homeless Locations for Youth on the Night of the Point in Time Count

Twenty-nine or 57% of the youth respondents experience sheltered homelessness in the City of Windsor and an additional 17 identified hidden homelessness - 16 youth identifying that they stay with family or friends temporarily and 1 identifying that they will stay at a local motel. Three youth (6%) identified that they would be staying in parks, abandoned buildings or other places not meant for human habitation.



*Figure 29: Youth - Current Homeless Location*

Given the experience of hidden homelessness amongst youth, it is also important to explore this situation further. Without being able to identify how safe youth are when staying with other people, couch surfing cannot always be considered an appropriate location (for example, they may be exploited in return for having a couch to sleep on). Five of the youth experiencing homelessness identified that over the last 12 months, they had stayed in 10 or more different places with friends and/or family members and an additional 9 stayed in 4-9 different couch surfing locations.



*Figure 30: Youth - Temporarily Stayed with Friends/Family*

This pattern of frequent moves was also demonstrated in 18 youth (36%) identifying that they experienced episodes of homelessness 3 or more times in the past year – thereby meeting the criteria for “episodic homelessness”. It would seem that youth experience considerable instability in their homelessness rather than being in a location where they can receive consistent services and a focus on housing stability (which may include family reunification when safe and appropriate to do so).

Explorations into the length of time homeless in the past year for youth experiencing homelessness revealed a range of responses from 14 to 365 days with the average length of homelessness being 190 days. Twenty-six youth or 51% experienced 6 or more months of homelessness, meeting the definition of chronic homelessness established by the Government of Canada. This represents a 16% increase in the number of youth experiencing chronic homelessness from 2016 to 2018.

Sixty-three percent of the youth respondents identified that they had stayed in an emergency shelter over the past year. For the 19 youth that did not access shelter, they identified the following primary reasons:

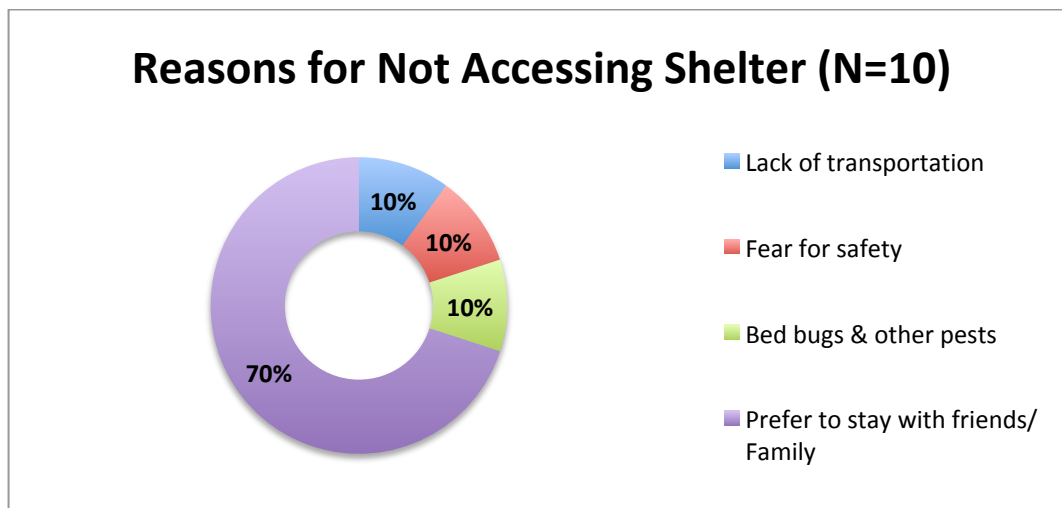


Figure 31: Youth - Reason Lack of Shelter Utilization

### Violence, Risk and Harm

Beyond the abuse and/or trauma that preceded the experience of homelessness for these youth (as described above), 30% of the youth that completed the TAY-VI-SPDAT identified that they have been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless and 60% youth identified that they had threatened to, or tried to harm themselves or others. Additionally, these youth, as often demonstrated in other statistics related to youth homelessness, 35% of the respondents identified as being at risk of exploitation with 3 youth stating that people trick or force them to do things they do not want to do and 4 youth stating that they do things that may be considered to be risky like exchange sex for money, run drugs for someone, have unprotected sex with someone you don't know, share a needle,

or anything like that. This exposure to violence further complicates the cognitive, emotional and social development of youth.

*Health, Mental Wellness & Substance Use*

Regardless of their young ages, health concerns also impact the youth experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex. In examining the 51 youth that completed the initial survey, the following health concerns were identified.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| # of youth reporting a mental health concern                     | 55%  |
| Percentage reporting a substance use issue                       | 29%  |
| Percentage reporting a chronic or acute medical condition        | 22%  |
| Percentage reporting a physical disability                       | 10%  |
| Number of emergency room visits in the last six months           | 52 visits by 45 different people - or 1.15 visit per youth that is homeless in the last six months   |
| Number of ambulance trips to the hospital in the last six months | 26 ambulance trips by the 40 different youth that responded to the question - or 0.65 ambulance trip per youth that is homeless in the last six months |

Even amongst the youth respondents in Canadian communities, there is a subset of those surveyed that are, in fact, the sickest and at greatest risk. Five of the 51 youth (10%) surveyed identified having a physical health issue, a mental health issue, and problematic substance use all co-occurring. Research shows such tri-morbidity identifies that these youth are at an extremely elevated risk of death.

Fifty percent of all respondents (5 of the 10 youth to complete the TAY-VI-SPDAT) avoid getting help when they are unwell. In addition to this, 2 of the youth (20%) of all those surveyed are not taking a medication prescribed to them by a doctor, and 10% are not taking their medicine the way that it was prescribed.

As identified above, 33% of the homeless youth identified substance use as an issue for them with 31% of youth also identifying that their substance use has made it difficult to maintain housing and/or afford rent. 26% of the youth respondents indicated that they had used marijuana at age 12 or younger.

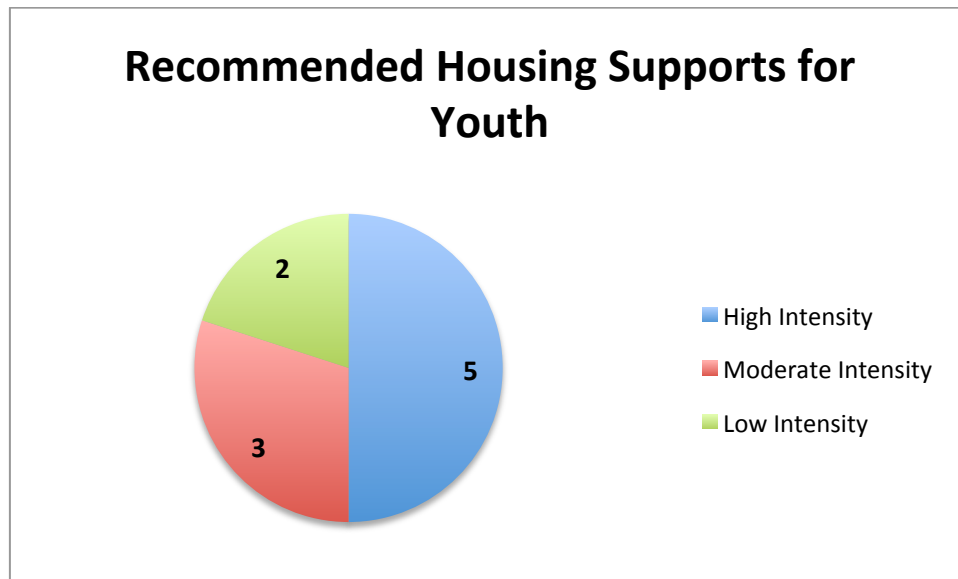
A history of losing a place to live because of a mental health concern, developmental disability or brain injury accounted for 4 of the respondents. Moving forward, 11% indicate that additional assistance will be required to help them maintain housing because of these concerns.



The TAY-VI-SPDAT also asks youth if they have ever been pregnant or gotten someone else pregnant and 12 of the 35 youth that responded to this question said “yes”. During the Point in Time Count, however, no youth identified as currently being pregnant.

*The Journey Back to Housing Stability for Youth – Housing Assistance Required for Youth in Windsor Essex*

Based on the TAY-VI-SPDAT pre-screen surveys completed with the 10 youth, 50% of them were identified as demonstrating higher acuity, 30% were demonstrating moderate acuity and 20% of the youth identified lower depth of need where housing assistance and financial supports are recommended.



*Figure 32: Youth - Recommended Housing Supports*

**Specific Insights for Families Experiencing Homelessness**

Replicating the 2016 Registry Week methodology ensured that family-specific locations were identified for on-site surveying. During the specified survey times, 8 families were interviewed, including completion of the Family VI-SPDAT pre-screen. To be considered a family-household, there was at least one head of household and one or more dependent children under the age of 18 years. Since the number of families surveyed is small and there was no deliberate attempt to ensure they were representative of all families experiencing homelessness in Windsor Essex, assuring these results are representative in a generalized manner is not possible.

Of the 8 households surveyed, all of the families had children with them and all households identified as being one-parent households. The total number of dependent children identified in the surveys was 19 with a range in ages from infants to 17 years of age. The average age for the heads of household was 33 years.

*Table 7: Families - Characteristics*

| <b>Characteristics</b>                                       | <b>Families (at least one head of household and one or more children under 18)</b> |
|--|--|
| Number   | 8  |
| Percentage Chronically Homeless                              | 13%  |
| Percentage Aboriginal  | 0%   |
| Percentage of Refugee Claimant                               | 60%  |
| Average Length of Homelessness (in last 12 months)           | 2.9 months   |
| Number Reporting a Mental Health Condition                   | 1  |
| Number Reporting a Chronic Health Condition                  | 1  |
| Number of Families where Homelessness due to Abuse or Trauma | 1  |

*Sources of Income*

The sources of income (respondent may have reported more than one source of income) that people identified when surveyed are as follows:

*Table 8: Families - Income Source*

| <b>Source:</b>                     | <b># of households</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Employment                         | 1                      |
| Ontario Works                      | 6                      |
| Ontario Disability Support Program | 1                      |
| Child & Family Tax Benefits        | 2                      |
| GST Refund                         | 1                      |

Two of the 8 households indicated that there is a person, past landlord, business, bookie, dealer or government group like the CRA that thinks they are owed money. Rate of indebtedness may create challenges for re-housing for these households.

*Relationship to Windsor Essex*

Three of the 8 families identified that they have lived in Windsor Essex all of their lives while 2 families have been here less than 3 months and 2 have been here for 4-6 years.



### Racialized Identity

Four of the 8 families identified as Black or African Canadian, 2 identified as White, 1 identified as Arab, 1 as Middle Eastern and 0 families identified as Indigenous.

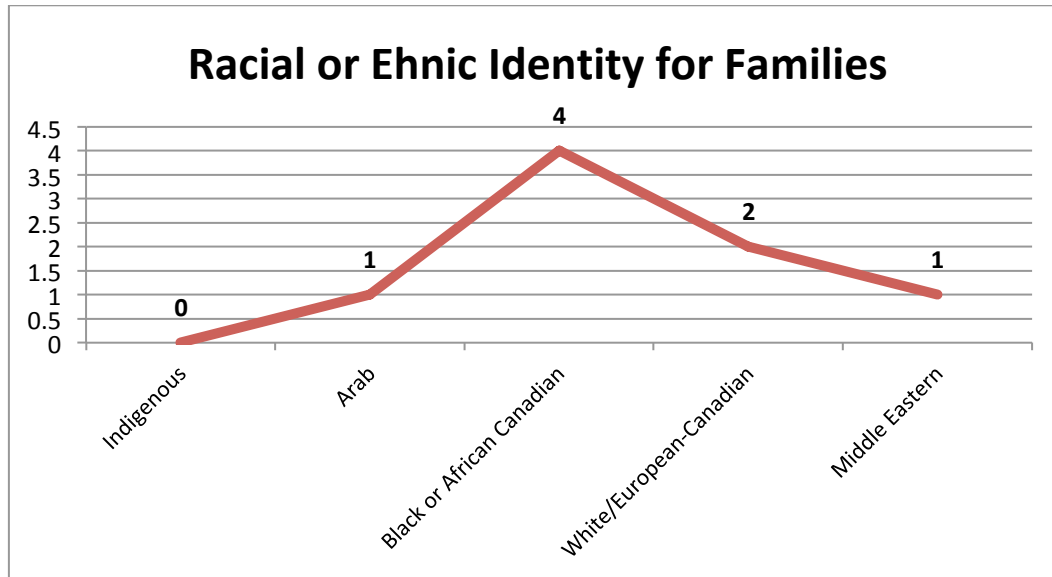


Figure 33: Families - Racial and Ethnic Identities

### Current Place of Homelessness

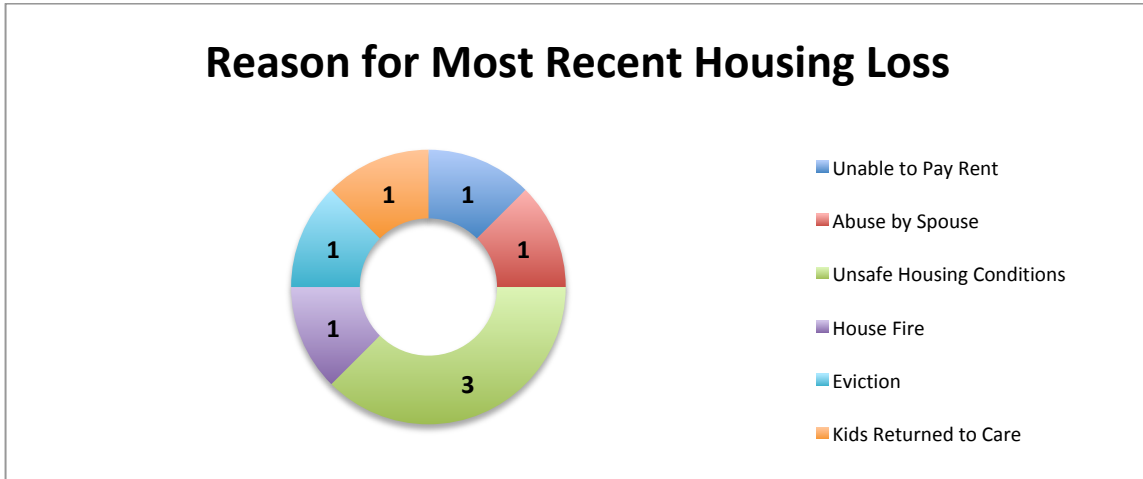
When identifying where these families stayed while homeless, all 8 of the households identified that they had stayed in a shelter over the past year. When examining where these families sleep most frequently, 6 families identified shelter, 1 identified couch surfing and another identified their own home. Experiencing homelessness outdoors does not appear to be a common occurrence for families in Windsor Essex. This is consistent with most other jurisdictions, especially those in Canada and northern parts of the United States.

### Experience of Homelessness - Duration and Episodes

Based on the Canadian Government's definition, 1 family out of 8 interviewed identified being homeless for 6+ months and 0 families experienced 3+ episodes of homelessness in the past year. The average length of time since they last lived in permanent stable housing was 21 months.

### Why did They Leave Their Last Residence?

The reasons for leaving previous housing for the 8 households are included below (respondent could have provided more than one reason):



*Figure 34: Families - Reason for Most Recent Housing Loss*

It should also be noted that 1 of the family respondents (13%) indicated that their homelessness was caused by a relationship that broke down, an unhealthy or abusive relationship, or because family or friends caused them to become evicted.

#### Health, Mental Wellness and Substance Use

To the question “Does anyone in your family have any physical disabilities that would limit the type of housing you could access, or would make it hard to live independently because you’d need help?” 1 of the 8 families responded “yes”. One household also identified that someone in their family had a chronic health issue with the liver, kidneys, stomach, lungs or heart. Health concerns, obviously, are further complicated with the experience of homelessness. A return to stable housing will assist in addressing these health concerns that are empirically connected to an increased risk of death if homelessness is not addressed.

In terms of interactions with emergency services, a review of the Family VI-SPDAT pre-screens identified that there had been 4 visits to the emergency room by 3 households over the past 6 months (1.3 visits per person), 2 inpatient hospitalizations by 2 households and 2 interactions with the police for 2 of the households.

#### Violence, Risk, Harm and Trauma

Families that responded to the Family VI-SPDAT did not identify many experiences of exposure to violence, risk and harm. However, 1 households identified that their current homelessness was caused by an experience of emotional, physical, psychological, sexual, or other type of abuse, or by any other trauma one or more family members experienced. None of the families identified engagement in behaviours that might be considered risky such as sex work, drug running or sleeping outside without proper equipment.

### *Journey Back to Housing Stability for Families – Recommended Re-Housing Supports for Families Experiencing Homelessness in Windsor Essex*

Based on the Family VI-SPDAT pre-screens completed, 5 of the 8 households identified as being in a position to self-resolve their homelessness with housing assistance. Based on depth of need, an additional 3 families would benefit from an assessment for a time limited rental and case management supports through a Rapid Re-Housing intervention.

## **Concluding Comments**

The 2018 Windsor Essex Point in Time Count and Registry Week successfully provided a valuable community-based initiative dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness. The insights gleaned from the data analysis will enhance system planning, investments and program development into the future. As homeless enumeration projects are repeated in the future, the region will continue to measure its progress in reducing homelessness, identify pressure points in the plan to end homelessness and test the effectiveness of currently funded programs dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness.

Although the task of ending homelessness in the region may appear daunting, it must be remembered that homelessness will be ended one person/household at a time with the assistance of dedicated support professionals committed to implementing strategies, approaches and tools that have proven to provide the outcomes and impacts to end chronic homelessness. This shift from managing homelessness to preventing and ending it however must be enhanced with real-time data that reflects the realities of homelessness and precarious housing throughout Windsor Essex – not simply what we believe it to be based on anecdotal information and our desire to assist all households that connect with us for assistance.

The Windsor Essex enumeration event once again ran smoothly and professionally. To the community partners and staff that committed their time for this important community event, we thank you. For the service providers that shared your expertise, insight and approach, we acknowledge your commitment to the 197 individuals (and the 19 dependents) identified as experiencing homelessness in the area and trust that with your continued dedication to evidence-informed strategies, homelessness can indeed be prevented and ended. Given the work that has been accomplished since the 2016 Point in Time Count and Registry Week, the Windsor Essex partners have much to be proud of with the households that have returned to housing stability and improved wellness.

The 2018 enumeration illuminates the opportunity to continue focusing on re-housing and supporting those households that are the most vulnerable but to also introduce professionalized homelessness prevention and shelter diversion activities to reduce the inflow of new households into the homelessness system

of care. Much hope exists that in the future, shelter diversion strategies will decrease the large number of individuals and families that entered homelessness for the first time. Ensuring that those households that have the ability to resolve their own housing challenges are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible will assist in returning emergency services to their original intent – short term and infrequent use. Locally, continuing efforts to strengthen local partnerships and enhance professional practice will foster an environment where all sectors of service are dedicated to a Housing First philosophy. With the continued leadership of the City of Windsor and the Homeless Coalition of Windsor Essex County, progress will be made to end chronic and episodic homelessness, with future homeless enumeration initiatives demonstrating this success.