

2015 Thompson, Manitoba Homeless Point in Time Count



NORTHERN SOCIAL
WORK PROGRAM



FACULTY OF ARTS,
BUSINESS AND SCIENCE



COMMUNITY
ADVISORY
BOARD

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FOREWORD

Homelessness is a social issue that is complex and not unique to Thompson, Manitoba. For some, homelessness is simply caused by a shortage of affordable housing. While this is one component of the causes of homelessness, the north also has a long colonial history that has impacted Aboriginal peoples and communities. The legacy of residential schools, the 60's scoop of Aboriginal children being placed into care as well as relocation due to hydro development are all aspects of colonization in northern Manitoba. Interconnected with this colonial legacy are the poor housing conditions and overcrowding in some of the surrounding communities, as well as addiction and mental health conditions. Whatever the underlying reasons, homelessness clearly results in the exclusion and marginalization of some groups in in a community of enormous potential.

A number of initiatives have already begun and are working towards reducing the number of homeless in the community. This study is a first attempt to provide a more accurate count of homeless people currently in Thompson. Such data is a cornerstone to understanding the magnitude and complexity of the problem as well as providing insight into possible future action. The Thompson Point in Time Count 2015 is built on previous efforts of the Community Advisory Board, the City of Thompson, agencies, universities and the community.

This research has more importance than just gathering “numbers”. It is the outcome of working in partnership and community engagement around an issue that directly or indirectly touches us all. From the start this was a joint effort of local initiatives and the Federal Government to contribute to the development and wellbeing of a northern community. It is the result of directly working with homeless people and service providers in providing data for future development. With the engagement of different groups such as students and youth, this research will contribute to planting the seeds for future generations to continue finding venues to build a more inclusive and just society.

**This count is the tip of the iceberg in tackling poverty
and social issues in northern Manitoba**

Preface

This project was funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homeless Partnering Strategy. The City of Thompson is the Community Entity (CE) designated by the Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS) to report annually on the amount received. The 2014-2019 Community Plan of the Thompson Community Advisory Board (CAB) included the completion of the Homeless Point in Time (PiT) Count 2015 (Thompson Community Advisory Board for Homelessness, 2014).

This PiT count was conducted in collaboration with faculty members, staff and students, of the University of Manitoba, Northern Social Work Program and the University College of the North (UCN), Faculty of Arts, Business and Science, as well as the homeless, partners of this initiative and staff from other agencies & community members.

University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work, Northern Social Work Program

The Northern Social Work Program (NSWP) is an extension of the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work on the Fort Garry Campus. It has offered a bachelor in social work (BSW) degree to northern Manitobans for the last 30 years. The NSWP is designed for mature students who, without the support of the program, would be unable to successfully complete a university degree due to lack of financial resources, lack of academic qualifications, remote location, and cultural barriers.

University College of the North (UCN), Faculty of Arts, Business and Science

The Faculty of Arts, Business and Science, offers a variety of programs, including degrees in Aboriginal and Northern Studies, Business, English and History, as well as a minor in science. We also offer diploma and certificate programs, including Aboriginal Human Resource Management, Business Administration, Community Development Administration, First Nations Active Measures, Natural Resources Management Technology, and Office Administration. Programs are offered in a variety of locations in northern Manitoba, bringing education 'close to home', wherever possible.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) through the City of Thompson and the Thompson Community Advisory Board (CAB).

We would like to thank the CAB-PIT Count Subcommittee for their contribution in developing the original proposal for the Thompson Pit Count 2015. Also many service providers, local agencies and groups have contributed in a variety of ways such the Northern Regional Health Authority, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Men Are Part of the Solutions (MAPS), Boys and Girls Club - Youth Build Program, Youth Aboriginal Council (R. D. Parker High School), Thompson Homeless Shelter, 95 Cree Road, Hope House, Arrow's Path, Thompson Crisis Centre, YWCA Thompson, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, and the Ma Mow We Tak Friendship Centre.

Also, many thanks to the local volunteers who assisted with data collection including staff from agencies who completed the sheltered survey and those who completed the unsheltered survey: second year students from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work, Residents of Phoenix House (MAPS), the Boys and Girls Club - Youth Build, and community/agency volunteers. Your community connections and ability to make survey participants feel more at ease by speaking to someone from their community or in their preferred language was of great benefit to the study.

Also, special thanks and appreciation to the individuals experiencing homelessness for participating in the survey.

Thank you to each of the following agencies, who participated in the PIT count, met with the research team and completed the survey:

- Addictions Foundation Manitoba (AFM)
- Boys and Girls Club – Youth Build
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA):
 - o Hope House/Arrow's Path
 - o Project Northern Doorway
 - o Thompson Homeless Shelter
 - o 95 Cree Road
- Ma Mow We Tak Friendship Centre - Hostel
- Men Are Part of the Solution (MAPS) - Phoenix House
- RCMP
- Thompson Crisis Centre (TCC)
- Thompson YWCA

A special acknowledgement goes to Elder Jack Robinson who has always been a valuable part of the research team; he brings his wisdom and personal experience. Much appreciation goes to Becky Cook, the research assistant for this project for her enormous support and dedication to this project. Thanks to

Leanne Grenier, the Thompson Housing Agency Coordinator/Community Entity for her guidance and support in preparing the proposal and the PiT count planning and organization process. Special thanks to students and Madeline Ponask, YAC Advisor – R.D. Parker High School for their fundraising initiative that provided 32 filled backpacks which were distributed to the homeless on the day of the PiT Count. Special thanks go to Christina Moody, the Thompson Homeless Shelter co-ordinator and to CMHA for the healthy, warm lunch that was provided on the day of the count.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the support of our two universities to conduct this collaborative research: the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work, Northern Social Work Program and the University College of the North, Faculty of Arts and Science and Business. In particular we want to thank the Research Ethics Boards (REBs) for reviewing and approving the ethics applications in a timely manner, which allowed us to undertake the PiT count within a tight schedule.



Volunteers ready to go out to start the Point in Time Homeless Count

KEY FINDINGS

Total count results

- On March 4, 2015, 126 individuals were considered homeless

Sheltered Versus Unsheltered Homeless

- Roughly 37.3% of the participants were counted on the street (unsheltered: 47) and 62.7% were staying in transitional facilities (Sheltered: 79)
- 52 (41.2%) of the homeless people were considered chronic

Demographics

- 72 (57.1%) were male and 54 (42.9%) were female
- The mean age was 42.39 (range 15-76) and the majority (65) were between 36-55 years of age (52.9%).
- 119 (94.4%) identified themselves as Aboriginal.
- 38 (32.8%) stated they originated from Thompson while another 67 (57.8%) stated they came from another Northern Manitoba community.
- 30 (28.8%) had been homeless in another community
- 115 (91.3%) declared that they wanted permanent housing
- 88 (70.4%) were interested in referral

126
Homeless
People
Including:



“What is considered to be homeless might be different for different people”

-Stakeholder (cited in Vink et al., 2014, p.9)

DEFINITIONS

Community Advisory Board (CAB)

The CAB/Steering Committee should be representative of the community. It should include a range of partners, including representatives from public, private, not-for-profit organizations, Aboriginal groups, and other concerned community members. The CAB approves the priorities identified in the Community Plan and ensures they are met through the funding process. They are generally responsible for: developing committee terms of reference for the solicitation, review and recommendation of projects to the Community Entity, as well as assessing progress in addressing the community priorities and updating the community plan.

Community Entity Model

Under the Community Entity (CE) funding delivery model, the federal government entrusts a community body, often the community's municipal government, with the ability to implement the local HPS community plan. This includes developing the Community Plan in collaboration with the CAB, publishing Calls for Proposals (CFPs), approving projects recommended by a Community Advisory Board (CAB), contracting and monitoring of all agreements they hold with third party service providers (both financially and for results), reporting on their activities and disbursements, and reporting on the results and outcomes for these agreements.

Chronically Homeless

Individuals living on the street with no physical shelter of their own, including those who spend their nights in the Thompson Homeless Shelter. Chronically homeless also refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (chronic physical or mental illness and/or substance abuse problems), and who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year. For example, those who have spent more than 180 nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation.

Eligible to Participate

Those people who were approached and were identified as not having a permanent residence to return to the night of the count.

Emergency Shelter

Short term accommodation intended for individuals and families who have no shelter.

Episodically Homeless

Individuals, often with disabling conditions, who are currently homeless and have in the past year experienced three or more episodes of homelessness. Episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation for a certain period, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or place.

Homelessness

Those who do not have a safe, affordable, appropriate, permanent housing to which they can return whenever they choose.¹

HPS Designated Communities

This funding stream provides HPS funding to 61 communities, primarily major urban centres, identified as having a significant problem with homelessness and needing ongoing support to address the issue.

Housing First

An approach that focuses on moving people who are experiencing homelessness as rapidly as possible from the street or emergency shelters into permanent housing with support that varies according to client need. The supports are provided by a case management team and/or a case manager that serves as a main point of contact for the client from assessment to follow-up. The focus is primarily on the chronically and episodically homeless. The Housing First model, developed in New York City in 1992 by Dr. Sam Tsemberis, is premised on the notion that housing is a basic human right, and so should not be denied to anyone, even if they are abusing alcohol or other substances.²

Housing with Supports

These activities involve:

- Identifying permanent housing with supports for clients and working with them to secure permanent housing, with the expectation of a coordinated intake management system in place. Housing services staff would work with landlords to identify units, show possible units to clients, negotiate leases and follow-up with clients through regular visits to ensure that housing is maintained.
- Supports to ensure that those who benefit from Housing First remain permanently housed. These include: facilitating landlord-tenant relationships; offering training in life skills related to maintaining a stable home (e.g. cooking, household maintenance, health and financial literacy); bridging supports (e.g. short-term assistance with rent subsidies); and providing assistance with furnishing the apartment, utilities, first and last month's rent, security or damage deposits, cleaning, necessary repairs, and insurance. It would also include re-housing clients who may not be successful in maintaining their housing.

Ineligible to Participate

Those people who were approached and were identified as having a permanent residence to return to the night of the count.

Over-Crowding

Housing that does not have enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household.

¹ Calgary Homeless Foundation (2014) *Point in Time Count Report*.

² see <https://pathwaystohousing.org/housing-first-model>.

Sheltered

Individual staying overnight in an emergency homeless shelter, a family violence facility, or a safe house.

Survey Participants

Those people who identified themselves as chronically, episodically homeless or transitionally housed for purposes of the Thompson Homeless Point-In-Time Count.

Transitionally Housed

Housing facilities that provide services beyond basic needs and that, while not permanent, generally allow for a longer length of stay than emergency housing facilities (up to three years). These facilities offer more privacy to residents than emergency housing. Transitional housing is targeted to those in need of structure, support, and/or skill-building to move from homelessness to housing stability, and ultimately to prevent a return to homelessness. Transitional housing can be used with Housing First clients on a temporary basis (maximum 3-4 months) or on an extended basis (maximum 3 years) while permanent housing is being secured.

Undetermined Responses

This category was used for those survey questions that were left blank or the answer did not pertain to the question.

Unsheltered

Individuals staying in a place not meant to be housing, such as a shack, shed, tent or a public space.

95 Cree Road

This facility is part of the Project Northern Doorway initiative. It offers supportive housing to individuals with a history of chronic homelessness, with many residents having a mental illness with concurrent substance use. Staff there utilizes a “Housing First” and “Low Barrier” approach, meaning that they provide supported housing without length of residency restrictions to those with challenging behaviours, active & ongoing substance use, and for those who have minimal mental health support or are in need of support with medication compliance.³

³ Paulette Carriere Simkins (personal communication, April 16th, 2015).



Surviving

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Homelessness

The purpose of this Point in Time (PiT) survey was to count homeless adults in Thompson on March 4th 2015. For this PiT Count, homelessness is defined as those who do not have safe, affordable, appropriate, permanent housing to which they can return whenever they choose.⁴ For the Count, we were able to capture individuals classified as “chronically” and “episodically” homeless. Some of those who were counted were staying in transitional housing. Transitional housing offers service for a variety of needs. Some of those surveyed are living in transitional housing and identified themselves as chronic or episodically homeless individuals because these facilities are not their permanent residences.

Chronically homeless is understood as individuals living on the street with no physical shelter of their own, including those who spend their nights in the Thompson Homeless Shelter. Chronically homeless also refers to individuals, often with disabling conditions (chronic physical or mental illness and/or substance abuse problems), and who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year. For example, those who have spent more than 180 nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation.

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. Episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation for a certain period, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or place.

Transitional housing refers to short term programs such as 95 Cree Rd, the Ma-Mow-We-Tak Hostel, the Thompson Crisis Centre or MAPS (Men are Part of the Solution) (Appendix C). While people may stay at these facilities for months or even years, these are not permanent residences for the homeless.

Based on studies done in other northern locations, those who tend to be in these various states of homelessness are often single-parent women, youth, single men, those with mental health problems, those with addiction issues, and those who come from over-crowded housing conditions on reserve and come into a center like Thompson for work, independence, safety and social reasons.⁵

Situating Homelessness in Northern Manitoba⁶

The city of Thompson is the largest semi-urban center in northern Manitoba and is situated 750 kilometers north of Winnipeg. Thompson acts as an economic and service ‘hub’ for northern Manitoban

⁴ Calgary Homeless Foundation (2014) *Point in Time Count Report*.

⁵ Qullit Nunavut Status of Women (2007); Kidd et al. (2013); George and O’Neill (2011); Stewart and Ramage (2011).

⁶ “Situating Homelessness in Northern Manitoba” has been excerpted in part from Bonnycastle, M; Simpkins M.; Siddle, A. (2015) The Inclusion of Indigenous Voice in co-constructing “home”: A case of Indigenous Homelessness in a northern semi-urban community in Manitoba. In *Aboriginal Homelessness in Canada, New Zealand and Australia*. Evelyn Peters and Julia Christensen (Editors), University of Manitoba Press. Forthcoming 2015.

communities, including commercial, educational, recreational and medical services. Employment opportunities such as the Vale nickel mine or Manitoba Hydro also contribute to inward migration from outlying communities. The City of Thompson services an area that covers 396,000 square kilometers, which includes 32 communities and totals approximately 72,000 people. The average age of a Thompson resident is 30.6, well below the provincial median age of 38. Regionally, the area surrounding Thompson has a median age of only 24, and this trend is growing within the region's Aboriginal communities. In communities such as Garden Hill and Split Lake, the average age is under 20. Thompson's current population is estimated as 50% Aboriginal. The city is located on the territory of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation⁷.

Starting in 1956, the city of Thompson was built by Inco in order to have a stable workforce to work in the nearby nickel mine. The city has experienced wide population fluctuations over the decades, with an all-time population high of over 20,000 in the 1970s.⁸ At present, Thompson's population is estimated at closer to 12, 829. The economy, the unique demographic make-up of Thompson as well as its isolated northern location presents particular challenges in terms of access to housing and other core social goods for the vulnerable segments of the city's population.

For example, from 2006 to 2008, the average price of a home in Thompson increased, due to an economic boom and shortage of housing by 92%; \$126,292 in 2006 to \$243,391 in 2008. However, in 2009 the average price of a home dropped from \$243,391 to \$178,233 or 27%.⁹ The 2009 drop in housing prices has been observed as a balancing out of housing prices from the highs recorded in 2008, and the result of a slower local economy. As of November 2010, the average price is \$219,284, a 10% decrease from the 2008 high, and a 23% increase from 2009.¹⁰ By 2012, the average price of a house was \$199,998.¹¹

In Thompson, 58% of private dwellings are owned and 42% are rented.¹² Rental rates in Thompson are high in relation to the provincial average. As of April 2012, bachelor units rented for \$548 per month, 1-bedroom units for \$699 and 2-bedroom units for \$771. While these prices might be manageable for professionals, they remain restrictive for students moving to Thompson for higher education, migrants and Aboriginal families without secure employment including single mothers looking for larger units.¹³

Being homeless in Thompson is often depicted as a phenomenon of circular mobility generated by the movement of residents back and forth from outlying communities and reserves into Thompson in need of medical/rehabilitation treatment, education or other services and supports. Sometimes it is simply a matter of survival that brings people to the city—for example, fleeing a violent family member or being kicked out of an overcrowded house on reserve. The 2006 Canadian census showed that overcrowding and lack of major repairs remained a significant problem on reserves (Statistics Canada, cited in Peters &

⁷ Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group, 2012.

⁸ FemNorthNet Project 2012, 5

⁹ Manitoba Real Estate Association

¹⁰ Thompson Community Advisory Board for Homelessness (2011) *Community Plan 2011-2014*.p.3.

¹¹ Thompson Unlimited (2013) Thompson, Manitoba: A Community Profile 2013-2014.

¹² Ibid Thompson Unlimited (2013)

¹³ The Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group (2012) *Housing Action Plan*. Final Report.

Robillard, 2009). Lack of resources in the First Nations and northern communities reinforces such needs to move to Thompson. Mental health, domestic violence and social issues such as racism all intersect with housing needs in northern communities; and in the case of Aboriginal people, these issues are associated with colonization and relocation.¹⁴

City of Thompson's Homelessness Strategy

For many, the move from reserve communities into Thompson is one faced with many challenges and barriers upon arrival. For example, there is a lack of affordable housing, affordable child care, and accessible job training. According to the 2014, "Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Plan, "there is a near zero vacancy rental rate. Also for housing at the welfare support level there is a long waiting list as well as the threat of those units being sold off to develop yet more expensive market level rental units, leaving fewer available for the homeless".

Newcomers to Thompson often arrive with a lack of life skills and education, lack credit and housing references, and/or face mental health issues. Some within a short period of time become involved with alcohol and drug addiction. A number of positive initiatives and strategies have been developed to help with an easier transition into the city.

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) was formed in 2000 to make recommendations as to how resources from the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) can be invested most effectively in the community.¹⁵ In 2009, the City of Thompson in collaboration with the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy created the Aboriginal Accord. The Aboriginal Accord is a document that recognizes the role of Aboriginal People in the region's history and affirms the city's commitment to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal governments and peoples. The Thompson Aboriginal Accord is one of only two of its kind in Canada today. It is a living document with an ongoing responsibility adopted by signatories and partners to report on the success of the commitment in concrete ways such as in the observing of new programs and initiatives.¹⁶

In 2012 the City of Thompson, alongside and in collaboration with 25 community stake holders, announced a Downtown Strategy (DS) promoting a safe, clean, active city for all members in the community. The DS covers primary components such as emergency, transitional and supported housing, addictions and mental health. The DS also includes ancillary components such as addressing poverty, domestic violence, unemployment, limited life skills and gaps in education. The DS encompasses guidelines that include 1) a proactive rather than punitive approach; 2) using holistic ways to address social issues; 3) enhancing positive relationships; 4) promoting collaborative partnerships with community organizations¹⁷; and 5) addressing root causes of homelessness and promoting advocacy. Contrary to historical strategies, the DS is a long term commitment, which goes beyond 'band aid

¹⁴ Christensen 2012; MacKinnon 2010; Hart 2010; Fernandez, MacKinnon, and Silver 2010; Hart et al. 2015.

¹⁵ Thompson Community Advisory Board for Homelessness (2011) *Community Plan 2011-2014*.

¹⁶ City of Thompson 2013b.

¹⁷ Siddle, 2013.

solutions' and isolated initiatives to encourage collaboration and mobilize different sectors, institutions and communities to contribute to the wellbeing of Thompson and northern communities.

That said, there continue to be struggles for those moving to the city. Thompson's vacancy rate hovers at 0% , and its young population, combined with an aging/static housing stock and rising prices, together produce a major housing crisis.¹⁸ The emergency shelter beds are split between a homeless shelter, a women's crisis centre, and an addiction treatment centre and transition hostel. The Ma-Maw-We-Tak Friendship Centre and the Additions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) also provide transitional and emergency housing. As a last resort for those who cannot get into the homeless shelter, there are high numbers of person/days in the RCMP Intoxicated Person Detention cells .¹⁹ The City of Thompson also has an "Extreme Cold Weather Policy". Whenever the temperatures reach -35 and below, the city opens up alternative 'warm spaces' for those who cannot get into the homeless shelter.²⁰ What is not captured in the statistics are those bed nights provided by friends and families, those living in bush camps around the city and those sleeping rough on the street.

In 2014, new housing strategies were developed in Thompson to respond to the needs of different groups. For instance MAPS (Men Are Part of the Solution) created a sober housing living facility for men. This home provides a healing environment for men who have been involved in domestic violence, to use holistic approaches to become empowered and practice healthy relationships. Another new initiative is the 'Project Northern Doorway' (PND) which addresses the needs of the chronically homeless. A component of PND is 95 Cree Road, a 16-bed supportive (damp housing²¹) transitional house.

Current and future priorities identified by the Thompson Community Advisory Board (CAB) on Homelessness are: chronically and episodically homeless individuals, families and children, youth, Aboriginal people, people with mental health issues and people with addiction.²²

¹⁸ City of Thompson, 2014; FemNorthNet Project 2012.

¹⁹ Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group 2012, 15.

²⁰ City of Thompson 2013a

²¹ "damp housing" means that people who have been consuming alcohol or who are intoxicated can be accommodated (Project Northern Doorway, 2012).

²² City of Thompson (2014) *Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Plan 2014-2019*. P. 22.

METHOD

This study uses a Point-in-time (PiT) count methodology. This was the first time this was done in Thompson, Manitoba. A point-in-time count essentially counts the number of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2015) defines it as,

A point-in-time (PiT) count is a research strategy used to help determine the extent of homelessness in a community on a given night, or at a single point-in-time. Point-in-time counts allow you to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness in your community and the characteristics of the population.

The PiT count is the most commonly used method of counting homeless people (e.g., City of Calgary, 2014, 2006; Saskatoon, 2008, Edmonton, 2012). This methodology provides a “snap shot” of the homeless population at the time of the survey. Two types of surveys were used to enumerate individuals: Sheltered and Unsheltered. The Sheltered individuals were counted in the homeless shelter as well as in transitional housing. The Sheltered count was conducted by midnight staff in each of facilities and unsheltered surveys were conducted by volunteers. To prepare the proposal and develop the methodology, the research team consulted PiT counts from Calgary, Edmonton and the Canadian Point-in-Time Count – Methodology and Toolkit – A guide for participating communities (DRAFT) Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2014)

Ethics

Ethics approval was requested by the University of Manitoba and UCN and it was granted by the Ethics Board from the two universities (Appendix A).

Informed Consent

For the purpose of the PiT count, when enumerators (volunteers) approached a person who was, or appeared to be, experiencing homelessness, they used a verbal consent process, explained the purpose of the count, and asked for his/her voluntary participation (Appendix D8). If voluntary consent was given, the enumerator continued on to ask two screening questions.

As per the sample script, the enumerators recorded verbal consent from participants who agreed to participate in the survey. The enumerators recorded refusals and acceptances to participate in the tally sheet. This will help to gauge the participation rate in the Count.

Piloting the surveys

The surveys were reviewed by the CAB-PiT Count Subcommittee. This review included content and comprehension of the surveys. The surveys were then piloted with a group of youth in the Youth Build

Program from the Boys and Girls Club. From the feedback given the surveys were adapted for the day of the count. This was a great opportunity to confirm the comprehension of the survey.

Advertising the Point in Time Count

Three different initiatives were used to promote the PiT count:

1. A poster was distributed to the homeless shelter, transitional houses, agencies, universities and public places.
2. A radio interview was conducted by a member of the research team the week of the count.
3. An article was published by the Thompson Citizen the day before the count (Gibson Kirby, March 3, 2015).

Volunteer Training

Volunteers were recruited from the University of Manitoba, Northern Social Work program Second year Social Work Students, Youth from Boys and Girls Club - Youth Build Program, homeless people from MAPS and community/agencies volunteers. In total 41 volunteers worked in the recruitment of participants and completed the survey of unsheltered homeless individuals. Staff from the homeless shelter and transitional housing completed the survey for the sheltered enumerated people.

Two training sessions were completed on February 25 and 27, 2015. Each facility was visited and provided with a short explanation of the process and completion of the survey. Volunteers worked in teams of three including a student, a homeless person and youth or other volunteers.

The content of the training was comprised of a short background of the PiT count, ethics protocol and consent form, survey, team work and logistics. The training included an overview of the day of the count.

Description of Survey Forms

The 2015 Thompson PiT Count research team developed two surveys and several additional forms to be completed by volunteers working on the count. Both surveys and all other forms that were used are included in Appendix D.

The Sheltered Homeless People Survey (Appendix D1) was used within the different facilities participating in the count, and the Unsheltered Homeless People Survey (Appendix D2) was used when approaching people on the street. The two surveys included the same survey questions, with the only difference being the screening questions asked before starting the survey.

The questions included in the surveys were chosen from the Calgary and Edmonton Winter PiT Counts as well as those suggested questions for PiT count surveys by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2015). The questions focus on the demographics of the homeless and at-risk populations to help the community better understand their needs and aid future planning of services. In addition, researchers considered potential ethical issues of asking questions about sensitive information in a short period of time. The research team decided to not include questions about sensitive issues such as

addictions or mental health to reduce the emotional stress on participants and volunteers. Other forms used in the planning and execution of the PiT count are detailed in figure 1.

Form	Description
D3 - Volunteer Sign up Form	Filled out by volunteers
D4 - Volunteer Oath of Confidentiality	Filled out by volunteers
D5 - Volunteer Receipt of Honorarium	Signed by volunteers upon receipt of honorarium
D6 - Tally Sheet	To be filled out by volunteers conducting street count
D7 - Facility Bed Capacity Form	To be filled out by volunteers within participating facilities
D8 - Verbal Informed Consent Script	Provide necessary information for participants to give informed consent
D9 - Script for Debriefing with Participants	To thank survey participants
D10 - Community Counselling Resources	To provide to survey participants if requested
D11 - Important Numbers	Information for volunteers, includes emergency and research team contact numbers

Figure 1 - Other Forms Used for the 2015 Thompson PiT Count

Data Collection

Night Street Count (Unsheltered Homeless)

The night street count involved conducting surveys on March 3, 2015 from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Two volunteer teams visited known warm spots where homeless people were known to go; each team had 2 volunteers from MAPS, a community volunteer and a member of the research team. During the night street count a total of 5 people were approached and 0 surveys were filled out.

On the evening of March 3, 2015 the weather was cold and the visibility was reduced due to blowing snow. At 10 p.m., the recorded temperature was -23.2°C and with the wind-chill it felt like -34°C (Environment Canada, www.climate.weather.gc.ca).

The volunteer teams conducting the street count visited different places in the downtown area as well as other known warm places that homeless people use to stay (Appendix B).

Night Facility Count (Sheltered Homeless)

To capture the number of homeless people sheltered on the evening of March 3, 2015 various shelters and transitional housing facilities in town were asked to conduct a survey of all people in their facilities that night (Appendix C).

Day Street Count (Unsheltered Homeless)

The day street count involved conducting surveys on the street on March 4, 2015 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers were divided into 10 teams and an effort was made to create diverse volunteer teams which included one volunteer with lived experience of homelessness, one volunteer from the UM-NSWP second year students and one volunteer from the Youth Build program or a community agency. Some volunteer teams for the day count also included students from the R D Parker YAC.

The morning of March 4, 2015 was clear and cold. At 8 a.m., the temperature was -30.6°C and with the wind-chill it felt like -39°C (Environment Canada, www.climate.weather.gc.ca).

A volunteer base was set up in the community kitchen of the Thompson Clinic in the Plaza Mall. As it was such a cold day, survey participants were invited into the clinic to warm up while they answered the survey questions. In addition, the Thompson Homeless Shelter hosted a lunch for homeless people, volunteers and the staff involved in the count.

The ten volunteer teams conducting the street count on March 4, 2015 were concentrated in the downtown areas of Thompson (around Plaza Mall, Canadian Tire, the Homeless Shelter, and in and around the City Centre Mall). Volunteer teams also canvassed targeted areas out of the core area including the Thompson General Hospital, Juniper Park and Westwood areas.

During the day street count a total of 228 people were approached²³ and 55 people agreed to participate in the survey as reported on the tally sheets completed by volunteer teams (see figure 2).

Total Approached Individuals	
Already participated	145
Ineligible to participate	5
Refused to participate	23
Agreed to participate	55
Total	228

Figure 2 - Tally from Day Count

The tally indicates that 55 people agreed to complete the survey, although only 53 surveys were turned in to the research team at the end of the day.

²³ The number of people approached is based on the tally sheets filled out by volunteer teams and may include repetition if one person was approached multiple times by different volunteer teams.

NUMBER OF HOMELESS

Facility Bed Capacity

A minimum of 195 beds were available as temporary housing for potentially homeless according to the data reported on the Facility Bed Capacity Forms supplied to each facility (Figure 3).

Facility Name	Total Licensed Beds	# of Beds for Individuals	# of Beds for Families	# of beds used by Individuals	# of beds used by Families
Homeless Shelter	24	24	0	23	0
95 Cree Road	16	16	0	not specified	0
Hope House	4	4	0	2	0
Arrow's Path	8	8	0	4	0
Phoenix House	12	12	0	11	0
TCC	41	13	28	2	31
YWCA	80	60	20	28	5
Ma Mow We Tak Hostel	7	7	0	7	0
RCMP Holding Cells*	3	3	0	3	0
AFM	not specified	not specified	not specified	not specified	not specified
Totals	195	147	48	80	36

Figure 3 - Summary of Beds Available

A total of 85 Sheltered Homeless People Surveys were completed by the participating facilities in the evening of March 3, 2015 or in the morning of March 4, 2015.

Five surveys received from the YWCA were filled out by participants that indicated they were not staying at the YWCA so we count these participants as unsheltered unless the participant indicated where they were staying on the night of March 3, 2015. At the Ma Mow We Tak Hostel staff administered one survey, and a volunteer team was sent to the hostel in the morning of March 4, 2015 to finish administering the survey. The people who were surveyed by the volunteer team in the morning at the Ma Mow We Tak Hostel were also included in the unsheltered count.

On Sheltered Surveys filled out within the different facilities some participants indicated they have had no episodes of homelessness in the last year. We opted to include these surveys in the results because the participants were staying in transitional or temporary housing. The exception to this was people staying in AFM who indicated they were previously staying in their own home or apartment, these surveys we did not include in our results.

Number of Days Homelessness in the Last Year

Number of Days Homeless In Last Year	Frequency	Percentage
2	5	6.3
7	6	7.5
10	1	1.3
14	1	1.3
21	1	1.3
28	1	1.3
30	6	7.5
60	4	5.0
90	1	1.3
150	2	2.5
180	5	6.3
210	2	2.5
240	3	3.8
270	1	1.3
300	1	1.3
330	2	2.5
360	1	1.3
365	37	46.3
Total	80	100
Missing Data	46	-
Total	126	-

Figure 4 - Number of Days Homeless in Last Year

In the above table, it shows that of the 126 individuals that are considered homeless, 80 gave a specific number of days. **Chronic Homelessness** is defined here as those participants who stated that they had been homeless for 180 days or more in the last year. Fifty two individuals (41.2%) fit into this category.

Agency Stay In	Frequency	Percentage
Street/Undetermined	47	37.3
Homeless Shelter	19	15.1
MMWT Hostel	2	1.6
YWCA	9	7.1
TCC	11	8.7
AFM	11	8.7
Hope House/Arrow Path	6	4.8
95 Cree Road	8	6.3
Phoenix House	9	7.1
RCMP Holding Cells	1	0.8
With Family/Friends	3	2.4
Total	126	100

Figure 5 - Where Participants Stayed on Night of Count

Figure 5 shows where participants stayed on the night of the PiT Count. Information from the first category (Street/Undetermined) was gathered on the street the day of the count. Data from the other 10 categories were gathered in the facilities named the night before. From this table we can deduct that **70 people were homeless** on the day of the count. This number includes 47 from the Street/Underdetermined, 19 from the Homeless Shelter, 1 from the RCMP Holding Cells, and 3 who were staying temporarily with family or friends. In addition, we can see that 62.5% of the chronic homeless were living on the street on the day of the count.

Agency Stay In	1 – 30 days	31 – 89 days	90 - 179 days	180 – 364 days	365 days	Total
Street/undetermined	9 (28.1%)	2 (6.3%)	1 (3.1%)	6 (18.8%)	14 (43.8%)	32 (100%)
Homeless Shelter	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	3 (18.8%)	2 (12.5%)	9 (56.3%)	16 (100%)
MMWT Hostel	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
YWCA	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
TCC	7 (77.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.7%)	9 (100%)
AFM	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Hope House/Arrow Path	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
95 Cree Road	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	8 (100%)
Phoenix House	2 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4(66.6%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)
With Family/Friends	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (66.6%)	3 (100%)
Total	22	4	4	14	37	81

Figure 6 - Relationship between Where Participants Stayed and Duration of Homelessness in Last Year

Figure 6 shows in more detail the number of days 81 participants stated they were homeless in the last year. Note some data is missing from this table due to participants not providing a specific number of days for this question or answering don't know or declined to answer.

Demographics

Age

Category	Frequency	Percent
Under 25 years	16	13.1
26-35 years	24	19.5
36-45 years	29	23.6
46-55 years	36	29.3
56 + years	18	14.6
Total	123	100
Mean: 42.39 years	Range: 15 years – 76 years	

Figure 7 - Age of Participants

For the PIT Count it was our intention to only survey individuals over the age of 18. This was done to protect ethical concerns regarding age of consent. Figure 7 shows one individual under the age of 18 who did complete the survey by mistake. It was a decision of the research team to include that persons data here. From data on the 123 participants who gave their age, the mean (average) age was 42.39 years. The range of ages went from 15 to 76 years.

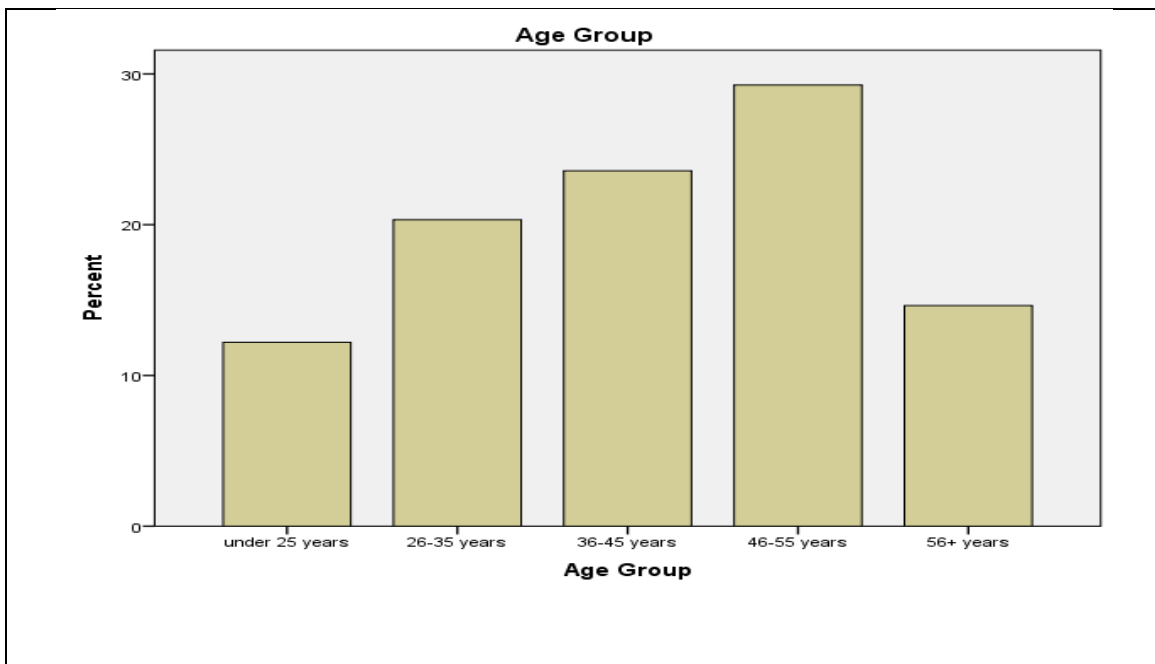


Figure 8 - Participant Age Groups

The age groups are further illustrated in the above graph (Figure 8). From the illustration you can see a correlation between the number of participants and age. As you move up through the age categories, more participants are captured. These peaks in the 46-55 age category (29.3%) and then drops off for the last age group.

Gender

Although the question had other gender options, the participants only answered under these two categories, female and male (figure 9).

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Female	54	42.9
Male	72	57.1
Total	126	100

Figure 9 - Gender of Participants

The approximate 60/40 split of male to female is generally reflective of findings in similar studies done on homelessness (Vink, 2014).

Agency Stay In	Female	Male	Total
Street/undetermined	19 (40.4%)	28 (59.6%)	47 (100%)
Homeless Shelter	6 (31.6%)	13 (68.4%)	19 (100%)
MMWT Hostel	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
YWCA	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	9 (100%)
TCC	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)
AFM	2 (18.2%)	9 (81.8%)	11 (100%)
Hope House/Arrow Path	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.6%)	6 (100%)
95 Cree Road	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	8 (100%)
Phoenix House	0 (0%)	9 (100%)	9 (100%)
RCMP Holding Cells	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
With Family/Friends	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3)	3 (100%)
Total	54 (100%)	72 (100%)	126

Figure 10 - Relationship Between Where Participants Stayed and Gender

The number of men and women staying on the street/undetermined is consistent with the overall 60/40 split of the participants. That said there were twice as many men staying at the Homeless Shelter and at Hope House/Arrow Path, while four times as many men at AFM on the day of the count. Twice as

many females stayed with family/friends. Though most of the facilities are mixed, it is important to take into consideration that one facility is male only (Phoenix House) and one female only (TCC).

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
Under 25 years	10 (19.2%)	6 (8.5%)	15
26-35 years	9 (17.3%)	15 (21.1%)	24
36-45 years	14 (26.9%)	15 (21.1%)	29
46-55 years	12 (23.1%)	24 (33.8%)	36
56+ years	7 (13.5%)	11 (14.6%)	18
Total	52 (100%)	71 (100%)	123

Figure 11 - Relationship between Gender and Age Groups

From this table one can calculate that 63.5% of the female participants were 36 years or more in age. For men it was slightly higher at 69.5%. The numbers are further illustrated in the following graph.

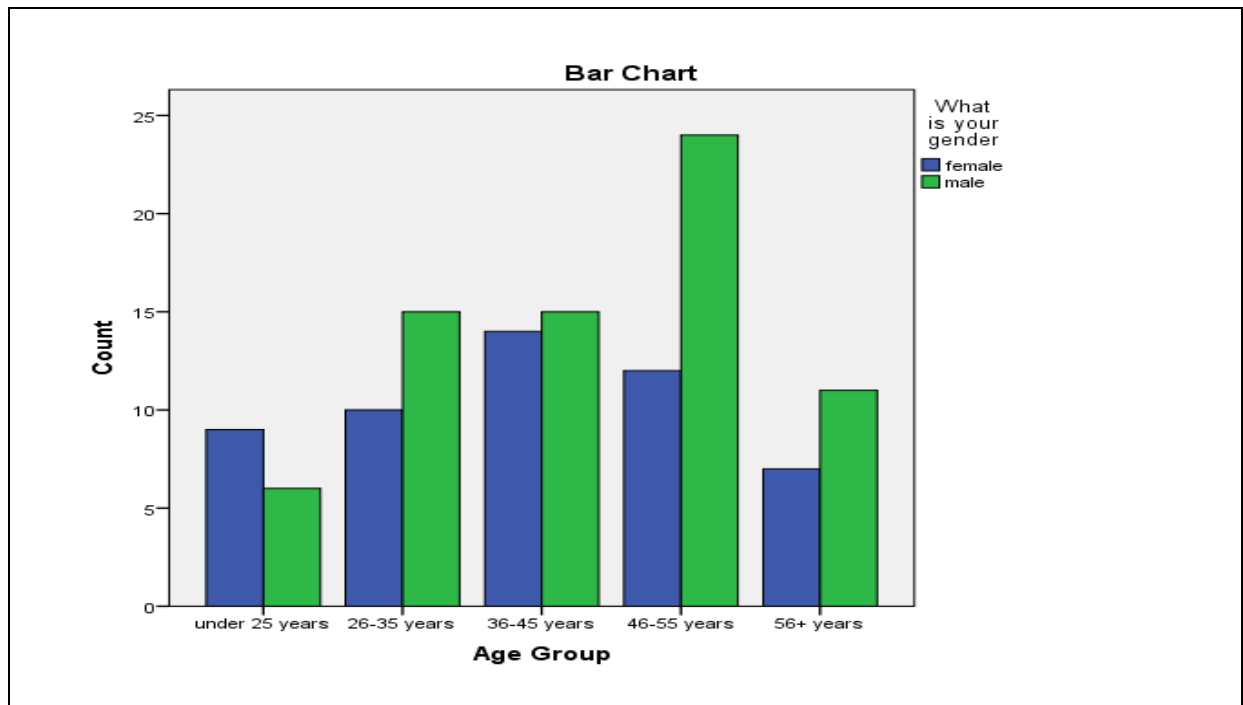


Figure 12 - Relationship between Gender and Age

In the graph you can see that there are almost twice as many men as women in 46-55 years group. The only group showing a higher percentage of women is in the under 25 years group

Ethnicity

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Aboriginal	119	94.4
Non-Aboriginal	6	4.8
Don't Know	1	0.8
Total	126	100

Figure 13 - Ethnicity of Participants

Although a number of categories were provided in the questionnaire, the participants generally answered in the three categories shown in figure 13.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Served in Armed Forces	12	9.5
Did not Serve in Armed Forces	114	90.5
Total	126	100

Figure 14 - Served in Armed Forces

Six (50%) of the 12 participants who stated that they had been in the armed forces were also listed under chronic homeless. One (8.3%) was listed under episodically homeless.

Original Place of Participants

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Thompson	38	32.8
Other Northern Community	67	57.8
Southern Manitoba	5	4.3
Out of Province	4	3.4
Bush camp/Trapline	1	0.9
Prison	1	0.9
Total	116	100

Figure 15 - Where Did You Come From?

In terms of the Other Northern Community category shown in figure 15, most participants listed Nelson House (17), followed by Split Lake (7), Shamattawa (6), Oxford House (6), York Landing (5), and Lac Brochet (4). A number of other northern communities were listed by single participants. Examples of Southern Manitoba were Winnipeg and Brandon while examples of out of province were Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Age Group	Thompson	Other		Out of Province	Bush		Total
		Northern Community	Southern Manitoba		Camp/ Trapline	Prison	
Under 18 years	1 (2.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
18-25 years	0 (0%)	13 (19.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13
26-35 years	6 (16.7%)	15 (22.7%)	1 (20 %)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	23
36-45 years	9 (25.0%)	13 (19.7%)	1 (20%)	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	25
46-55 years	12 (33.3%)	19 (28.8%)	2 (40%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	35
56+ years	8 (22.2%)	6 (9.1%)	1 (20%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16
Total	36 (100%)	66 (100%)	5 (100%)	4 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	113

Figure 16 - Relationship Between Where You Came From and Age Categories

In terms of age, the table shows that almost all of the under 25 years of age participants, originally come from Thompson, whereas there are more than twice as many participants originally from other northern communities in the 26-35 age group.

Experiences With Homelessness

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Born in Thompson	9	7.1
Less than 1 year	45	35.7
Between 1-4 years	34	27.0
Between 5-19 years	21	16.7
20 or more years	11	8.7
Don't know	3	2.4
Declined to answer	3	2.4
Total	116	100

Figure 17 - Length of Time Living in Thompson

Seventy nine (62%) of the 116 participants who answered this question stated that they have lived in Thompson for less than 5 years. Another 32 (25.4%) stated that they have lived here for more than 5 years. The numbers are further illustrated in the following graph.

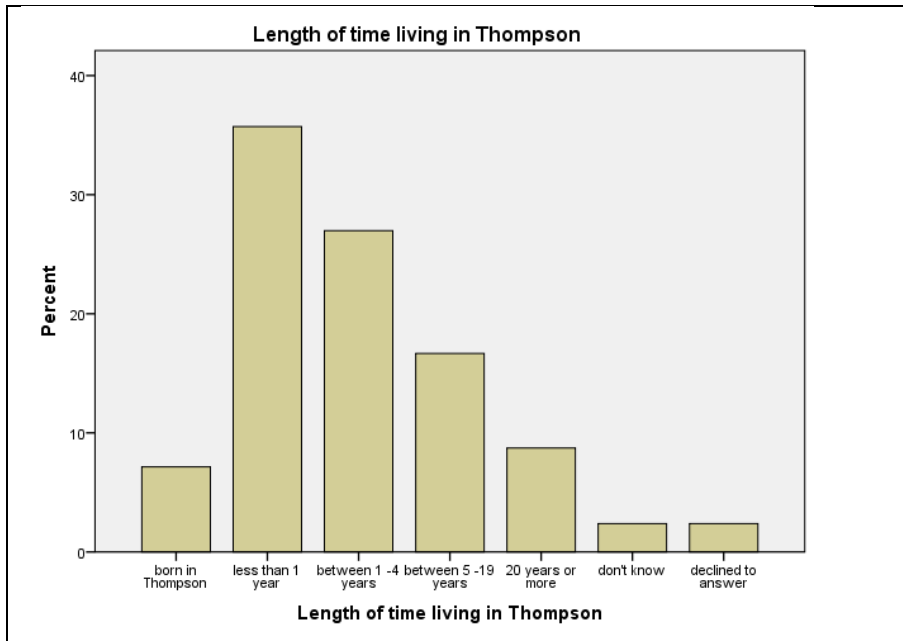


Figure 18 - Length of Time Living in Thompson

Length of Time Living in Thompson	Female	Male	Total
Born in Thompson	3 (5.6%)	6 (8.3%)	9
Less than 1 year	19 (35.2%)	26 (36.1%)	45
Between 1-4 years	13 (24.1%)	21 (29.2%)	34
Between 5-19 years	12 (22.2%)	9 (12.5%)	21
20 years or more	6 (11.1%)	5 (6.9%)	11
Don't Know/Decline to answer	1 (1.9%)	5 (7%)	6
Total	54	72	126

Figure 19 - Relationship Between Time in Thompson and Gender Categories

Males and females were close in percentage numbers except that about twice as many males are found in the Born in Thompson and the Between 1-4 years categories. Females outnumbered males in the between 5-19 years category.

Category	Frequency	Percent
1 - 30 days	22	27.2
31 - 89 days	4	4.9
90 - 179 days	4	4.9
180 – 364 days	14	17.3
365 days	37	45.7
No answer	45	N/A
Total	126	100

Figure 20 - Length of Time Homeless in Last Year

It must be noted that only 64.5% of the participants answered this question. It must be also noted that the numbers for chronic (180 days or more) are slightly higher than shown in Figure 1a. That is because this table includes those currently living in transitional housing who were homeless in the last year for more than 180 days. Two length of time categories stand out. In the category 1-30 days, about a quarter (27.2%) of the respondents answered affirmatively. In the category 365 days, almost half (45.7%) of the respondents answered affirmatively. These numbers are reflected in calculation of the mean (average) number of days for all those that answered at 180 days homeless in the last year.

Length of Time Homeless in Thompson in Last Year	Female	Male	Total
1 - 30 days	9 (26.5%)	13 (27.7%)	22
31 - 89 days	3 (8.8%)	1 (2.1%)	4
90 - 179 days	2 (5.9%)	2 (4.3%)	4
180 - 364 days	5 (14.7%)	9 (19.1%)	14
365 days	15 (44.1%)	22 (46.8%)	37
Total	34	47	81

Figure 21 - Relationship Between Time in Thompson and Gender

It must be noted that the total number of participants described here is only 81. That number is low because 45 participants did not give an answer to the question regarding the total number of days homeless in the last year. The percentage differences between males and females in all categories are similar except in the 31-89 days where females seem slightly over represented. This is further illustrated in the following graph.

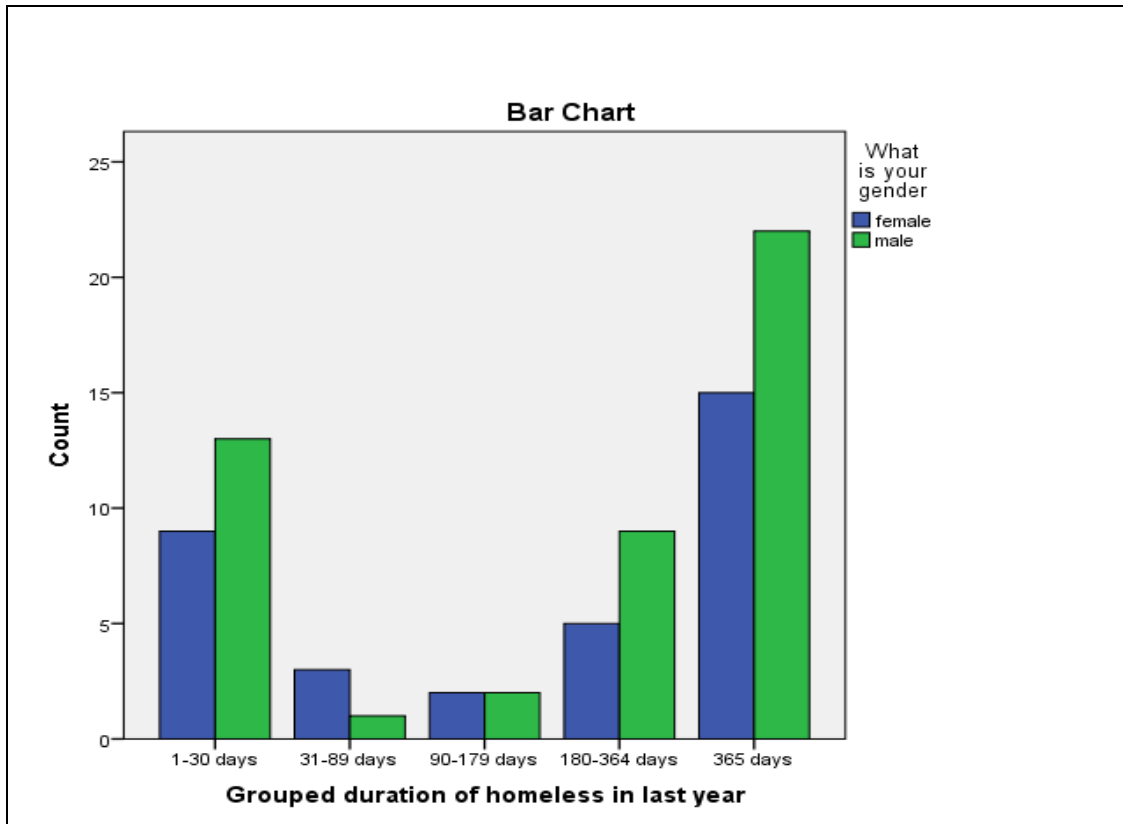


Figure 22 - Relationship Between Length of Time Homeless in Last Year and Gender

The graph illustrates the two extremes, in the 1-30 days category and in the 365 days category.

Number of Episodes	Frequency	Percent
1	46	55.4
2	21	25.3
3	6	7.2
4	5	6.0
5	3	3.6
7	1	1.2
12	1	1.2
Total	83	100

Figure 23 – Episodes of Homelessness in Last Year

The table shows the declared number of episodes of homelessness in the last year for 83 (65.9%) of the participants. The low number of participants was the result of 43 not answering this question. That said, the mean (average) was 1.93 episodes, with a range from 1 episode to 12 episodes in the year. It is

important to state that the high number stating one episode should be understood as reflecting the high number of participants who were homeless for the entire year.

Episodes of Homelessness	Female	Male	Total
1	20 (58.8%)	26 (53.1%)	46
2	7 (20.6%)	14 (28.6%)	21
3	2 (5.9%)	4 (8.2%)	6
4	2 (5.9%)	3 (6.1%)	5
5	1 (2.9%)	2 (4.1%)	3
7	1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	1
12	1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	1
Total	34 (100%)	49 (100%)	83

Figure 24 - Relationship Between Declared Episodes of Homelessness and Gender

This table shows that there is no real distinction between male and female in regard to the number of episodes they declared. Over 50% of each had one episode of homelessness in the last year.

Homeless in another community	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	23.8
No	95	75.4
Don't Know	1	0.8
Total	126	100

Figure 25 - Homeless in another Community

Just under a quarter of the participants stated that they had been homeless in another community. Those giving actual days in the last year (n = 16; 8 female/8 male) had answers ranging from 1 to 365 with 10 (62.5%; 4 female/6 male) answering 365 days.

Homeless in another community	Thompson	Other Northern Community	Southern Manitoba	Out of Province	Bush Camp/ Trapline	Prison	Total
Yes	9 (23.7%)	17 (25.4%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	28
No	29 (76.3%)	49 (73.1%)	3 (60%)	4 (100%)	1(100%)	1 (100%)	87
Don't know	0(0%)	1 (1.5%)	(0 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Total	38 (100%)	67 (100%)	5 (100%)	4 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	116

Figure 26 - Relationship Between Homeless in Another Community and Where You Came From

The above table shows that 23.7% of people from Thompson have been homeless in another community. Similar percentage can be found with those who stated that they were from another northern community and had been homeless in another community besides Thompson.

Want Permanent Housing

Want Permanent Housing	Frequency	Percent
Yes	115	91.3
No	7	5.6
Don't Know/Declined to answer	4	3.2
Total	126	100

Figure 27 - Want Permanent Housing

It is clear by the answers to this question that vast majority of the participants (91.3%) want permanent housing.

Specialized Housing	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	17.5
No	97	77.6
Don't Know	6	4.8
Total	125	100

Figure 28 - Need for Specialized Housing Accommodation

A small but significant number of participants (17.5%) stated that they needed specialized housing. There were no further questions in the survey to help to flesh out what those needs might be. It does show that there is a need for further investigation into this area.

Interest in Referral	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	70.4
No	33	26.4
Don't Know/Declined to answer	4	3.2
Total	126	100

Figure 29 - Interest in Referral

The significant affirmative answers to this question easily translate into people wanting help with their current situation. As with the responses to the question regarding specialized housing, this may show a need for further research into determining what specific forms of services may be needed.



95 Cree Road House

DISCUSSION

The Thompson Point in Time Count 2015 is the first of its kind conducted in the City of Thompson. Based on the results, 47 (37.3%) of the participants were counted on the street and 52 individuals were considered chronic.

Only one person was counted at the RCMP holding cells the day of the PiT Count. A few years ago the RCMP holding cells were often used by the homeless. In a 2013 photovoice research project conducted in Thompson with homeless people, one participant took a picture of the RCMP building and commented, “You don’t have to pay when you stay there” (Bonnycastle, 2013). It was further commented that RCMP cells often became a “second hotel” for them when the weather is very cold. It was easier to get in trouble, be picked up and taken to the RCMP cell then stay on the street under such conditions. Overall lower uses of cells in the last months are a sign that things are changing (Graham, Feb 24, 2015).

In the last few years, significant efforts have been made to provide shelter and increase the capacity of beds for homeless people or people at risk of becoming homeless. Some of those initiatives have been the development of the city’s “extreme cold weather” policy, the opening of 95 Cree Road and Phoenix House as well as the increase of beds in other facilities. These initiatives have all directly provided sheltered places for people to stay overnight or temporarily. Paulette Simkins, Executive Director of the Thompson Homeless Shelter and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Thompson, reflected on these additions by stating, “Despite the recent bitterly cold weather, with overnight temperatures and wind chill reaching the -35 Celsius threshold that brings the city’s cold weather policy into effect, far fewer people have stayed overnight in the warmup buildings at the city’s outdoor rinks this winter than last” (Graham, February 24, 2015).

The fact that only a single homeless person was counted at the RCMP cells and that the cold weather policy was not needed on the night of the count (it was a very cold night and day) is encouraging. It confirms the positive impact of providing more places for homeless people to stay and consequently it may be contributing to decreases in crime rates in Thompson. Graham (Feb 24, 2015) commented, “RCMP Thompson detachment Inspector Will Tewnion has credited initiatives such as Project Northern Doorway and the deployment of city by-laws enforcement officers with reducing crime in our city and they certainly have played a role. Whatever the cause, lower crime is welcome.”

Concerns must be noted regarding the over representation of self-declared Aboriginal respondents (94.4%). As mentioned earlier in the report it is estimated that 50% of the general population in Thompson are Aboriginal. In addition, while 32% of those surveyed stated they were originally from Thompson, 57.8% stated they came from another northern Manitoba community. Both these findings should be considered when addressing homelessness issues in Thompson. At a minimum any way forward must include a more comprehensive understanding of the Northern Manitoba region.

In conducting the study it became clear that discrepancies exist regarding the definitions used. A clear example is with the designation given to 95 Cree Road. To some, this facility is seen as transitional housing and, therefore the occupants are considered to be without permanent housing. Because there is no end date for occupancy, others perceive 95 Cree Road as permanent supportive housing. Such discrepancies can lead to uncertainties as to whether the occupants should be counted as homeless or not. It is suggested that future surveys must make sure that clear definitions are established.

In a similar tone, the survey had a number of questions regarding the self-declaration of homelessness. Individuals had varying ideas as to what “being homeless” meant and whether they saw themselves as such. Such interpretations were not necessarily consistent with the definitions given in this report. This may have caused some discrepancies in the number given here and may show a need to work on the way questions are posed in future surveys.

A final concern is with the findings related to age. As you move up through the age categories, more participants are captured with 29.3% in the 46-55 age group. They also tend to be the most chronic. Another group that, though lower in numbers, still represent a concern is the under 25 age category. Preventive programming and services are clearly needed in order to make sure that young people do not get caught up in a life of homelessness. In both cases there may be a need to look specifically at creating services and programs that are targeted to these age groups.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations to Point-In-Time Count Method

This was the first time that a Point-In-Time count of homelessness has been conducted in Thompson, Manitoba. As such, this preliminary data probably raises more questions than produces answers. This Count will serve as a base-line and a framework that future counts can adjust and refine the questions based on the experience of this count.

It is well known that there are limitations to a method that measures over a 24 hour period. This methodology tends to underestimate the number of individuals experiencing homelessness because this is generally a difficult population to contact. For example this count does not count:

- “Couch-surfers” those staying with family and friends and constantly moving around.
- Those not using services such as the Thompson Shelter.
- Youth who don’t tend to congregate in public places, but who could be categorized as episodically homeless.
- Those who simply do not want to participate.

This method provides a “snap shot” of what homelessness looks like on one day and therefore does not account for seasonal differences in the number of individuals staying in places not meant to be housing. The Thompson PiT Count took place on March 4th, which happened to be a very cold day. It is likely that some people who are typically homeless rely on friends and family for shelter in extreme cold.

Limitations to the survey

While we based the survey questions on other PiT count surveys done in other Canadian cities, there are some questions that were not self-evident for the volunteers and the participants. Even with some training, there were some questions that were left blank. This is something that can be remedied in the future with simpler language and more interview training.

How widely the surveys were distributed within organizations and the skill of the interviewer was out of our control. Many people working in shelters and transitional housing are extremely busy which may have resulted in not everyone being surveyed as the residents are coming and going throughout the evening and the next day.

Geographical Areas

We originally thought that because Thompson is a small town we did not think it necessary to send volunteers to distinct geographical areas. This caused some people to be approached a number of times. For future PiT counts we recommend sending volunteers to distinct areas within Thompson.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the 2015 Thompson Homeless PiT Count demonstrate that homelessness continues to remain a significant problem in the City of Thompson. The count provides essential information to government, organizations, and agencies providing services and supports to homeless individuals. It also gives clear information to help the Thompson community find positive solutions to address social problems. This information can also help to promote initiatives with children such as a Westwood School teacher's activity with grade 2/3 students to help the homeless (Gibson Kirby, February 24, 2015).

Over the last few years Housing First Initiatives in Thompson were able to move some homeless into more permanent housing. This is an approach that has been quite successful in Winnipeg²⁴.

It is the research team's hope that the 2015 PiT Count data will inform future development strategies and action plans, and allow the CAB to continue their collaborative work with members of the social service and business communities, as well as society at large. The aim of more permanent housing is still at the forefront of the CAB and the information provided in this report supports this.

Questions that arose from the 2015 PiT Count and that still need to be addressed are:

- Youth - how to address the issues of youth homelessness and aging out of care. This is reflected in the data; particularly that 13.1% of the homeless captured in the survey were under the age of 25.
- Specialized Housing – the need for a better understanding of what this may mean in terms of housing needs. 17.7 % stated that they needed specialized housing.
- Interest in referral – There was a high interest in getting referrals. What is missing is what specific categories of referral are needed. Future surveys may need to include a check list in order to better capture the specificity of this need.
- The need and interest in doing another PiT Count in the future. The research team believes that a future PiT Count, besides providing comparisons to this count, might also be able to address some of the limitations discussed above.
- Future counts might include questions about health issues, causes of homelessness and access to services.

²⁴ Distasio, Sareen & Isaak 2014.

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APPENDIX A - Response form Research Ethics Board

University of Manitoba




Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Fax +204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

January 27, 2015

The City of Thompson

TO: Marleny Bonnycastle
Principal Investigator

FROM: Jacquie Vorauer, Chair 
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)

Re: Protocol #P2015:013
"Thompson Point in Time homeless Count 2015"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). It is the researcher's responsibility to comply with any copyright requirements. **This approval is valid for one year only.**

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, please mail/e-mail/fax (261-0325) a copy of this Approval (identifying the related UM Project Number) to the Research Grants Officer in ORS in order to initiate fund setup. (How to find your UM Project Number: <http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/mrt-faq.html#pr0>)
- If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/orec/ethics/human_ethics_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.

umanitoba.ca/research

University College of the North



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204.677.6450
Toll Free: 1.866.677.6450
WWW.UCN.CA

PROTOCOL REFERENCE# UCN 2014/15-INT-06

February 11, 2015

Dr. Maureen Simpkins
Professor, Aboriginal and Northern Studies
University College of the North
Thompson, Manitoba
msimpkins@ucn.ca

Dear Dr. Simpkins:

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "Thompson Point in Time Homeless Count 2015"

ETHICS APPROVAL

Approval Date: February 11, 2015
Expiry Date: February 11, 2016

We are writing to advise you that you have been granted annual ethics approval for the above-referenced research protocol through the UCN Research Ethics Board (REB) full review process.

Please contact us before the expiry date of February 11, 2016 if you plan to involve human participants in your research past that date.

Any substantive changes in methodology or project design must be reviewed and approved by the UCN REB prior to implementation.

Adverse events (unanticipated negative consequences or results affecting participants) must be reported to the UCN REB Chair, as soon as possible and in any event, no more than 3 days subsequent to their occurrence.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Oredogbe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Abayomi Oredogbe
UCN REB Chair

Regional Centres

Flin Flon, Churchill, Swan River, Pimicikamak (Cross Lake), Tataskweyak (Split Lake), Chemawawin (Easterville), Nisichawayasihk (Nelson House), Bunibonabee (Oxford House), Mathias Colomb (Pukatawagan), Mispawistik (Grand Rapids), Norway House, and St. Theresa Point

APPENDIX B- Homeless Count 2015

Survey Areas

- Downtown Area: hotel lobbies and lounges (Thomson Inn, Regal Beagle and Trappers);
- Homeless Shelter Safeway
- Outside lots at shopping Malls in downtown: Plaza Mall, Canadian Tire, City Centre Mall
- Bank ATM locations (Royal Bank and Assiniboine Credit Union)
- Various locations in and around the Thompson General Hospital
- Other warm places that volunteers knew homeless people known to go (warm vents on the outside of building, waiting rooms and chapel)
- The Laundromat and
- One private home known to let homeless sleep in basement

APPENDIX C - List of Shelters and Transitional Housing

- Addictions Foundation Manitoba (AFM)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
 - o Hope House/Arrow Path
 - o 95 Cree Road
 - o Thompson Homeless Shelter
- Ma Mow We Tak Friendship Centre - Hostel
- MAPS - Phoenix House
- RCMP
- Thompson Crisis Centre (TCC)
- Thompson YWCA

APPENDIX D – Surveys and Forms

Sheltered Homeless People Survey	D1
Unsheltered Homeless People Survey	D2
Volunteer Sign up Form.....	D3
Volunteer Oath of Confidentiality	D4
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D1 - Sheltered Homeless People Survey



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 SHELTERED HOMELESS PEOPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

DATE: _____ FACILITY: _____ CODE # _____

Screening questions (Verbal)

1. Have you been approached yet today to do this survey?

- Yes (end survey and record on tall sheet)
- No (go to next question)

2. Are you staying in this emergency shelter tonight?

- Yes (go to next question)
- No (end survey and record in tally sheet)

Survey Questions (Check/Fill in correct response)

1. What is your date of birth? (If client doesn't know/remember their date of birth, fill in approximate date of birth if available, i.e. year)

(____) (____) (____)
 mm dd yyyy

- Don't know
- Declined to answer

2. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Transsexual
- Don't know
- Declined to answer

3. What is your ethnicity?

- _____ Don't know
 Declined to answer

3a. If Aboriginal ethnicity, which group do you belong to?

- First Nations (Status) First Nations (Non-Status)
 Métis Inuit
 Don't know Declined to answer

3b. If non-Aboriginal ethnicity, what is your current citizenship and immigration status?

- Canadian Citizen Permanent Resident/Landed Immigrant
 Refugee – claimant Refugee – permanent resident
 Temporary Foreign Worker International student
 Other – please specify _____
 Don't know Declined to answer

4. Have you ever served in the Canadian Forces?

- Yes No
 Don't know Declined to answer

4a. If yes, what group did you serve with?

- Armed Forces Rangers
 Cadets

5. Where were you living prior to staying on the streets?

- _____ Don't know
 Declined to answer

6. How long have you been in Thompson?

- Born in Thompson Between 5-19 years
 Less than 1 year 20 years or more
 Between 1–4 years Don't know
 Declined to answer

7. If new to Thompson, where are you coming from?

8. How many episodes of homelessness have you had in the last year?

- _____ Don't know
 Declined to answer

9. In the last year, how long have you been homeless in Thompson? (Days, months or years)

- _____ Don't know
 Declined to answer

10. In the last year, have you been homeless in another community?

- Yes Don't know
 No Declined to answer
If yes, how long _____

11. Do you want permanent housing?

- Yes Don't know
 No Declined to answer

12. Do you require specialized housing accommodations due to a disabling condition?

- Yes Don't know
 No Declined to answer
If yes, please give an example of such need _____

13. Would you be interested in a referral for outreach services?

- Yes Don't know
 No Declined to answer

IF CLIENT IS INTERESTED IN A REFERRAL, PLEASE HAND OUT COMMUNITY COUNSELLING RESOURCES SHEET

THANK PERSON FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY

D2 - Unsheltered Homeless People Survey



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 UNSHeltered HOMELESS PEOPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

DATE: _____

CODE # _____

Screening questions (Verbal)

3. Have you been approached yet today to do this survey?

- Yes (end survey and record on tall sheet)
- No (go to next question)

2. Do you currently have a permanent residence that you can return tonight?

- Yes (end survey and record on tally sheet)
- No (go to next question)

Survey Questions (Check/Fill in correct response)

2. What is your date of birth? (If client doesn't know/remember their date of birth, fill in approximate date of birth if available, i.e. year)

(_____) (_____) (_____)
mm dd yyyy

- Don't know
- Declined to answer

2. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Transsexual
- Don't know
- Declined to answer

3. What is your ethnicity?

- _____ Don't know
 Declined to answer

3a. If Aboriginal ethnicity, which group do you belong to?

- First Nations (Status) First Nations (Non-Status)
 Métis Inuit
 Don't know Declined to answer

3b. If non-Aboriginal ethnicity, what is your current citizenship and immigration status?

- Canadian Citizen Permanent Resident/Landed Immigrant
 Refugee – claimant Refugee – permanent resident
 Temporary Foreign Worker International student
 Other – please specify _____
 Don't know Declined to answer

4. Have you ever served in the Canadian Forces?

- Yes No
 Don't know Declined to answer

4a. If yes, what group did you serve with?

- Armed Forces Rangers
 Cadets

5. Where were you living prior to staying on the streets?

- _____ Don't know
 Declined to answer

6. How long have you been in Thompson?

- Born in Thompson Between 5-19 years
 Less than 1 year 20 years or more
 Between 1–4 years Don't know
 Declined to answer

7. If new to Thompson, where are you coming from?

8. How many episodes of homelessness have you had in the last year?

_____ Don't know

Declined to answer

9. In the last year, how long have you been homeless in Thompson? (Days, months or years)

_____ Don't know

Declined to answer

10. In the last year, have you been homeless in another community?

Yes Don't know

No Declined to answer

If yes, how long _____

11. Do you want permanent housing?

Yes Don't know

No Declined to answer

12. Do you require specialized housing accommodations due to a disabling condition?

Yes Don't know

No Declined to answer

If yes, please give an example of such need _____

13. Would you be interested in a referral for outreach services?

Yes Don't know

No Declined to answer

IF CLIENT IS INTERESTED IN A REFERRAL, PLEASE HAND OUT COMMUNITY COUNSELLING RESOURCES SHEET

THANK PERSON FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY

D3 - Volunteer Sign up Form



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Thompson PiT Count Volunteer Form

Please fill out this form to help us keep our volunteers organised. All information provided will be confidential.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Will you be able to attend the mandatory volunteer training session on Friday Feb 27 (11 a.m.-1 p.m.)?

Yes No

If you are not available please provide alternate dates and we will try to arrange an alternative training session.

What times are you available for the PiT count period (please check all times you are available)?

- 10-12 p.m., March 3rd
 8-10 a.m., March 4th

- 10 a.m.-12 p.m., March 4th
- 12-2 p.m., March 4th
- 2-4 p.m., March 4th
- 4-6 p.m., March 4th
- 6-8 p.m., March 4th
- 8-10 p.m., March 4th

To help us organise diverse volunteer teams, please answer the following optional questions.

What age group are you?

- under 18 18-25 26-35 36-50 51-65 65 +

What ethnicity are you? (Please check all that apply)

- European Cree Other Indigenous Asian African Other

D4 - Volunteer Oath of Confidentiality



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015

Research Assistant, student, volunteer Agreement Oath of Confidentiality

I _____
(Print name)

understand that all of the information I have access to related to the study entitled: *Thompson PiT count 2015* must be kept confidential. In order to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality of information I agree that I will not disclose or discuss any information disclosed by study participants. My signature below indicates my pledge to maintain the confidentiality of all information revealed to me through the interviews and/or transcription of participant interviews.

(Signature)

(Date)

D5 – Volunteer Receipt of Honorarium



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF HONORARIUM

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received a \$_____ honorarium for my collaboration with the research project titled: *Thompson Pit Count 2015*

(Recipient's signature)

(Date)

(Witness signature)

D6 - Tally Sheet



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 TALLY SHEET

Zone/Shelter: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Number Approached	Already participated in Count	Ineligible to participate	Refused to Participate	Agreed to Participate
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
Sub-total				

Use this sheet to tally the total number of people approached, number of people who were ineligible, number who refused to participate, and number of those who agreed to participate.

D7 - Facility Bed Capacity Form



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 FACILITY BED CAPACITY FORM

FACILITY NAME	TOTAL LICENSED BEDS	# OF BEDS FOR INDIVIDUALS	# OF BEDS FOR FAMILIES

DATE OF THE PIT COUNT

NUMBER OF BEDS USED BY INDIVIDUALS:

NUMBER OF BEDS USED BY FAMILIES:

NUMBER OF TURNAWAYS:

D8 - Verbal Informed Consent Script



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT

Hello, would you like a _____ (engagement gift)? (Offer gift: granola bars, blanket, backpack, cigarette, etc.)

My name is _____ (first name only) and I am a volunteer working on the 2015 Thompson Homeless Count.

We are counting and surveying people in Thompson who don't have their own place. The survey is being done to improve housing and support for people who have no housing. We will also use the data to raise awareness about homelessness, but without any identifiable information, in media, presentations, publications, reports, etc.

Your name will not be recorded and you are free to end the survey at any time.

May I ask you a few questions?

- Questions are short and easy.
- It will take 10 minutes to complete the questions
- You can choose not to answer any question or you can stop the interview at any time.
- Your participation does not affect your use of services in any way.
- Participation is completely voluntary and confidential.
- You can stop at any time, you can choose not to answer a question, and you can even change your mind and ask us to destroy your form in front of you.
- Data will be stored in a locked cabinet for five years.

Important Note: Please know that we will have to share what you tell us in the following circumstances: if you disclose information about plans to harm yourself or others, information concerning any unknown emotional, physical or sexual abuse of children, or information about any other criminal activities not already known to authorities. In these cases, we are required to report this information to the appropriate authorities.

The Thompson homeless PiT count 2015 is sponsored by the University of Manitoba and the University College of the North and funded by the Employment and Social Development Canada. If you want more information or have concerns about this project, feel free to contact Dr. Marleny Bonnycastle at 204 677 1455, Colin Bonnycastle at 204 677 1552 or Dr. Maureen Simpkins at 204 677 6659.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

DO YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE: YES _____ NO _____

If yes, proceed with screening questions.

If no, thank the person for their time and record refusal in the tally sheet.

D9 - Script for Debriefing with Participants



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 SCRIPT FOR DEBRIEFING WITH PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for doing this survey. If there are any questions that you would like to ask me, please feel free to do so. You have participated in the Thompson homeless PiT count 2015. This count will help to improve housing and support for people who have no housing.

The answers that you gave today will be combined with those of other homeless people, to write a report that summarizes all of the findings. A summary of the results from the interviews will be prepared for the Community Action Board, and a more detailed summary will be distribute among service providers, government offices and local universities. These summaries will be available in May 2015.

Once again, thank you for participating in this interview. Your time and the information that you shared is very valuable.

D10 -Community Counselling Resources



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THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 COMMUNITY COUNSELLING RESOURCES

Rhonda Heskin

Self Help Coordinator

Canadian Mental Health Association, Thompson

Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, Northern Outreach Coordinator

P: XXX XXX XXXX

Cynthia Lathlin

Aboriginal Liaison Worker

Thompson Clinic

Northern Health Region

P: XXX XXX XXXX

Lori Oberdorfer

Instructor / Student Counselor

Faculty of Social Work

University of Manitoba

University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work

P: XXX XXX XXXX

D11 - Important Numbers



NORTHERN SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM



FACULTY OF ARTS BUSINESS AND SCIENCE

THOMPSON POINT-IN-TIME COUNT 2015 IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

AMBULANCE (204) 677-7911
RCMP (204) 677-6911
CRISIS CENTRE (204) 778-7273

RESEARCH TEAM:

Marleny Bonnycastle XXX XXX XXXX
Colin Bonnycastle XXX XXX XXXX
Maureen Simpkins XXX XXX XXXX
Mark Matiasek XXX XXX XXXX