

I Count

York Region's 2021
Homeless Count Report



WORKING WITH
COMMUNITIES IN
PEEL, TORONTO &
YORK REGION



Land Acknowledgement

United Way Greater Toronto and York Region acknowledge that the land of York Region is the traditional territory of many First Nations, including the Anishnaabeg, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. These lands are now home to many diverse Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples.

We also acknowledge that York Region falls under Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaties signed by seven First Nations including the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island, and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, and Scugog Island. Respecting these Treaties, we honour the teachings of Indigenous peoples about the land we each call home, our responsibilities to the land and one another. We are committed to improving our relations and walking in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. From coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples.

Thank You and Acknowledgments

United Way Greater Toronto and York Region thank all the residents who participated in I Count for sharing their voice. As well, we thank our staff and community partners who helped with the enumeration, including emergency housing (shelters), COVID-19 transitional and isolation shelters, drop-bys, drop-in programs, transitional housing, Violence Against Women shelters, mental health and addiction agencies, hospitals, and York Regional Police, for working together to make the count a successful community event.

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Reader's Notes —

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The terms 'overrepresentation' and 'underrepresentation' are observations of descriptive statistics, and unless otherwise specified, over/under representations are not statistically validated. The terms used in the report are based on terms used in the PiT count survey, which included a set of common questions asked across all participating communities.

Message from York Region Chair and CEO and President and CEO of United Way Greater Toronto

For many residents, York Region is a wonderful place to live, work and play. A welcoming and prosperous community home to over 1.2 million people.

Despite a thriving economy, a number of individuals and families struggle to secure safe and affordable housing. Reasons for homelessness are varied and complex, often intersecting with other societal issues, including systemic discrimination and the growing gap between household income and the rising cost of housing.

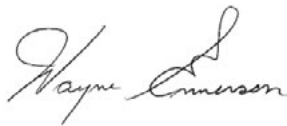
The Regional Municipality of York and United Way Greater Toronto have a long-standing partnership and a commitment to creating healthy, safe and vibrant communities, and have collaborated to share updated data on homelessness in York Region through the Point-in-Time I Count 2021.

Delayed by the pandemic and conducted under the constraints of COVID-19, this count overcame a number of obstacles, but they pale in comparison to the daily challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness during this crisis – tough lives made even more difficult.

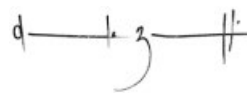
Together with the homelessness service sector, we have learned so much throughout the last few years. We've evolved our service provision, keeping pace with waves of COVID-19 and accompanying protocols to continue to meet urgent needs, even under these extenuating circumstances. We've understood what is possible when galvanized by this historic moment, working in closer collaboration than ever before. It is in this spirit we share the findings of I Count 2021 and commit to addressing the challenges before us, doing our part to move forward on recommendations in support of those facing homelessness.

We recognize and thank all the front-line staff and community partners who are engaged in this important work every day, who were involved in I Count 2021 data collection and who made this report possible. We thank the people who have shared their personal stories, strengthening our understanding of what homelessness looks like in York Region.

Homelessness impacts people from every walk of life. Together, we can help pave the path towards housing for all who call York Region home.



Wayne Emmerson
Chairman and CEO
The Regional Municipality of York



Daniele Zanotti
President and CEO
United Way Greater Toronto



Executive Summary

I Count 2021 was a 24-hour event where homelessness services sector staff across York Region conducted a count and survey of people who were homeless.

York Region's 2021 homeless count, I Count 2021, was conducted June 1 and 2, 2021. As part of the Point-in-Time (PiT) count, homelessness services sector staff across York Region conducted a count and voluntary survey of people in emergency housing (shelters), COVID-19 transitional shelters, Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, transitional housing, substance use beds, and people living outdoors. A PiT count provides a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness over a single 24-hour period. It focuses on people staying in sheltered and unsheltered conditions.

I Count 2021 was the third PiT count for York Region. Previous counts were conducted in 2016 and 2018. The 2021 count was a requirement of both the federal and provincial governments. The count was conducted as a partnership between United Way Greater Toronto, in its role of overseeing Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, and The Regional Municipality of York (the Region), in its role as the provincially designated Service System Manager for housing and homelessness.

In preparation for the count

- A working group of staff from United Way Greater Toronto and the Region planned the methodology and strategies for the count.
- Homelessness services sector staff were trained.
- A focused working group of frontline staff who work with individuals experiencing homelessness was formed to identify known locations of people sleeping outdoors.

During the count

- Trained staff from homelessness service organizations conducted the count and voluntary surveys at six emergency housing facilities, three COVID-19 transitional shelters, one COVID-19 isolation shelter, four VAW shelters, addictions beds, and one COVID-19 transitional VAW shelter.
- Homelessness service sector staff visited 10 outdoor locations across York Region where individuals experiencing homelessness are known to frequent.
- Three service locations had drop-in programs where surveys were conducted.
- Three locations, including a recreation centre and two emergency housing locations, were publicized as locations where people could drop-by specifically to complete surveys.
- Staff conducted counts in mental health crisis beds, two hospitals, and people in police custody.

The methodology of I Count 2021 was modified from previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adhere to public health guidelines. I Count 2021 consisted of a PiT count conducted over a 24-hour period and involved a limited number of unsheltered locations. In 2018, the count included a Registry Week, a multi-day count that also included a vulnerability assessment for each consenting respondent. The 2018 count also had an expanded unsheltered count.

Methodology Highlights 2016, 2018 and 2021 Counts

Count		Count Me In 2016	I Count 2018	I Count 2021
Time of Year		January	April	June
Duration		Over a 24-hour period	Over a four-day period	Over a 24-hour period
Count and Survey Location				
Unsheltered	Indoor locations	16	47	–
	Outdoor locations	17	44	10
Sheltered, addictions beds	Emergency housing program locations (shelters)	5	6	6 emergency housing facilities 3 COVID-19 transitional shelters 1 COVID-19 isolation shelter
	Violence Against Women shelters	4	4	4 VAW shelters 1 COVID-19 transitional VAW shelter
	Seasonal shelters	Open	Closed	Open
Provisionally accommodated	Transitional or second stage housing sites	6	2	3
	Youth magnet events	–	2	–
	Dedicated phone line for surveys	–	1	–
	Drop-in programs	–	–	3
	Drop-by survey locations	–	–	3
	Visits to hotels/motels	–	Yes	–
	Addictions beds	–	–	Yes
	Mental health crisis beds*	–	–	Yes
	Hospitals*	–	–	2
	Police custody*	–	–	Yes

* Count only

329 people were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2021 count.

The count offers important information about people experiencing homelessness in York Region, but cannot provide an exact number of people experiencing homelessness in York Region. For example, people who are provisionally accommodated or not connected with service agencies are less likely to be counted. The undercount is likely higher in I Count 2021 due to modifications made in accordance with Ontario Ministry of Health guidelines for physical distancing in congregate living settings during the pandemic.

The information gathered through the count provides an understanding of people experiencing homelessness and conditions contributing to homelessness. It assists with informing system level planning needed to move people experiencing homelessness into a stable housing environment and informs actions to foster and strengthen housing stability that could prevent homelessness for people who are at-risk of homelessness or precariously housed. This information should be paired with other data, such as administrative data from the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), to assist in system level planning.

The following are key highlights from the 2021 count.

The pandemic has impacted homelessness in York Region

The 2021 count was the first count during a pandemic

329 people were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2021 count. This number is not directly comparable to the 2018 count (389), as the 2021 count was limited due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Fewer people were found to be living temporarily with others (hidden) during the 2021 count and the count included a limited number of unsheltered locations.

The profile of people experiencing homelessness has changed

In 2021, a number of adults living on low income found themselves homeless for the first time during the pandemic. People seeking emergency housing (shelter) during the pandemic were required to first stay in a COVID-19 transitional shelter prior to entering the emergency housing system. Transitional shelter spaces were open to all age groups, with adults representing a larger proportion of people accessing these spaces.

Housing market pressures experienced during the pandemic are playing a role in homelessness

House prices and rents continued to increase during the pandemic. Almost one quarter (22%) of people reported being unable to pay rent/mortgage as one of the reasons for their homelessness in 2021 compared to 14% in 2018. Strong housing markets also tend to prompt more landlords to sell or renovate their housing. A slightly higher percentage of respondents reported that they lost their housing because the landlord sold or renovated the house/building in 2021 (7%) compared to 2018 (5%).

The pandemic is impacting the mental health of people experiencing homelessness

The rates of mental health issues among people experiencing homelessness have increased during the pandemic. Almost two-thirds (64%) of people surveyed through I Count 2021 reported having a mental health issue, compared to 48% in 2018. Mental health is an expansive category and supplemental data will be required to understand the needs further.

Homelessness affects people of many backgrounds, but specific groups are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in York Region

Indigenous peoples continue to be overrepresented among individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region

In 2021, 12% of survey respondents self-identified having Indigenous identity or ancestry. By comparison, less than 1% of the overall York Region population report Aboriginal identity¹. In 2016, 13% of survey respondents identified having Indigenous identity or ancestry, while in 2018, 17% reported Indigenous identity or ancestry.

¹ Statistics Canada, Census, 2016. Given the critical data gaps on urban Indigenous peoples and challenges around trust and data governance, this data should be interpreted with caution

Black peoples are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness

Ten percent (10%) of survey respondents self-identified as Black. However, less than 3% of York Region's general population identified as Black in the 2016 Census². In 2018, 13% of survey respondents identified as Black.

One in ten survey respondents, and more than one quarter of youth, identified as LGBTQ2S+

In total, 10% of survey respondents, and 27% of youth (16-24), identified as LGBTQ2S+. This compares to only 4% of the total Canadian population aged 15 and older and 5-10% of Canadian youth who identify as LGBTQ2S+³. In both 2016 and 2018, 8% of respondents identified as LGBTQ2S+.

The proportion of people identifying as non-binary is higher than the estimated proportion for the overall Canadian population

In total, 1% of survey respondents identified as non-binary. In comparison, the 2018 Survey on Safety in Public and Private Spaces found that trans or non-binary individuals represented approximately 0.24% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older⁴.

Youth represent one in seven people experiencing homelessness

In total, 14% of respondents to the I Count 2021 survey were youth. This is similar to the percentage (13%) of youth within York Region's overall population in 2016⁵. In 2021, youth represented a smaller proportion of survey respondents than 2016 (34%) and 2018 (26%). Fewer youth may have been identified in I Count 2021 because some youth chose not to stay in COVID-19 transitional shelters because of quarantine rules and youth drop-in programs were limited during the count due to public health requirements.

² Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

³ Statistics Canada, 2021, A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2+ communities, accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>, and Abramovich, Alex & Shelton, Jama. 2017. "Introduction: Where are we now?" in Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S. by Abramovich, Alex, & Shelton, Jama. (Eds.). Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, p.2. Available online: <http://homelesshub.ca/whereamigoingtogo>

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2021, A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2+ communities, accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>

⁵ Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

A higher percentage of people reported being long-term or chronically homeless

Over half (53%) of respondents reported experiencing long term or chronic homelessness, up from 45% in 2018 and 33% in 2016. Eighty-two percent (82%) of people experiencing long-term or chronic homelessness were single or did not have other family members staying with them on the night of the count and 60% were men. This is similar to 2018 when 84% were single or had no family members staying with them that night and 63% were men. People experiencing chronic homelessness were more likely to report multiple health issues (70%) than respondents who were not experiencing chronic homelessness (59%).

Recommendations to Address Homelessness in York Region

The count provides useful insights into the state of homelessness in York Region and can be used to guide improvement within the homelessness service system and related systems. The following findings point to areas of opportunity for York Region:

- The rates of homelessness among Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, including non-binary individuals, shows that there is more work to be done locally, provincially, and nationally to address systemic inequalities and discrimination that perpetuates homelessness for people from these groups who are experiencing physical, social and economic vulnerabilities. Within the local homelessness service system, there is a need for focused culture and safety analysis. Members of these communities should help lead the process and there should be commitment to act on the findings through the appropriate investments and training.
- Given the increase in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness since the 2016 count, substantial efforts will be required to understand and respond to the housing and support needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness. This includes continuing to be prioritized on the York Region By Name List, providing access to housing and supports to assist people in maintaining their housing. All levels of government have made commitments to end chronic homelessness.

- Further work is needed to better understand the barriers that may exist for people accessing emergency housing and potential solutions. More people living unsheltered and in provisional accommodations reported having substance use issues, mental health issues, physical limitations, and cognitive or intellectual limitations than people staying in emergency housing.
- Additional analysis is needed to understand whether older adults who were experiencing homelessness for the first time have been successfully re-housed, and how this group can be better served. There is also a need for deeper understanding of the social and economic conditions of seniors that are contributing to the increase in older adults found to be experiencing homelessness.
- Findings related to income sources of respondents suggest that there may be an opportunity to support people experiencing homelessness in accessing additional income sources that they may qualify for. HST refunds were not identified as an income source, none of the veterans reported receiving Veteran/Veterans Affairs Canada benefit, and only a few families reported receiving child and family tax benefits. A few respondents reported having no income.
- The count points to several areas where better systems integration is needed to encourage increased holistic approaches to responding to co-occurring issues, including with mental health and substance use, physical health, disability services, employment, child protection, income supports, and justice. Systems integration between the homelessness service system and other key systems and services is essential to addressing homelessness. This includes a need to develop better mechanisms of coordination among the various system components and within and between organizations. Inter-ministerial strategies between provincial and federal ministries are needed to improve coordination and resources and create a more seamless and comprehensive continuum of supports.^{6,7}

⁶ Provincial ministries: Attorney General; Solicitor General; Children, Community and Social Services; Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Labour, Training and Skills Development; Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; Education; Finance; Health; Indigenous Affairs; Long-Term Care; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Seniors and Accessibility

⁷ Federal ministries: Health; Mental Health and Addictions, Finance, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; Families, Children and Social Development; Indigenous Services; Housing and Diversity and Inclusion; Women and Gender Equality and Youth; Seniors; Justice and Attorney General of Canada; Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities; Veterans Affairs; Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

Rapid progress can be made on a number of these areas, while some require longer-term investments and service delivery enhancements. Future I Count data could be an indicator to demonstrate progress in preventing, reducing and ending homelessness in York Region.

The pandemic has provided an opportunity and created space for different organizations to work together. This has reduced silos, enhanced collaborations and improved coordination. There was also greater alignment of funding, messaging and problem-solving. The recommendations identified in this report provide further opportunities to continue to collaborate in taking steps to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.

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Introduction

I Count 2021 identified 329 people experiencing homelessness, including 192 who chose to complete the survey.

York Region's 2021 homelessness count, I Count 2021, was conducted June 1 and 2, 2021. As part of the Point-in-Time (PiT) count, homelessness services sector staff across York Region conducted a count and voluntary survey of people in emergency housing (shelters), COVID-19 transitional shelters, Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, transitional housing, substance use beds, and people living outdoors or places not designed for human habitation.

A Point-in-Time count provides a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness over a single 24-hour period, focusing on people staying in sheltered and unsheltered conditions. This information should be paired with other data, such as administrative data from Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), to assist in informing and planning system level interventions needed to move people experiencing homelessness into a stable housing environment and inform actions to foster and strengthen housing stability that could prevent homelessness for people who are at-risk of homelessness or precariously housed.

I Count 2021 identified 329 people experiencing homelessness, including 192 who chose to complete the survey.

United Way Greater Toronto (United Way) is the Community Entity (CE) for the federal Reaching Home Strategy. A CE is responsible for implementing and administering the federal strategy to address local homelessness issues through the federal designated communities funding stream. As the CE for the federal Reaching Home Strategy, United Way is required to conduct a PiT count every two years. The PiT counts are nationally coordinated, and communities across Canada use a common approach to conducting their count.

The most recent count was to take place in April 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, in the fall of 2020 the federal government informed CE's that they would be required to conduct a count by end of April 2021.

In March 2021, the province of Ontario announced that the 47 Ontario Service Managers were required to implement a homeless enumeration. The Regional Municipality of York (the Region) is the provincially designated Service Manager responsible for homelessness prevention and housing stability in York Region. As a result of the requirements for both United Way and the Region to conduct a count, it was decided that United Way and the Region would co-lead I Count 2021.

United Way received permission from the federal government to postpone the count to June 1 and 2, 2021 to allow for United Way and the Region to plan a co-led count.

The first PiT count in York Region, Count Me In, was conducted in 2016 by United Way. The second count, I Count, took place in 2018. It was led by the Region and supported by United Way.

I Count 2021 was guided by staff from various departments from United Way and the Region, frontline staff from community-based agencies serving individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region, the York Region Homelessness Community Advisory Board (YRHCAB) and YRHCAB Homelessness Cluster, which are comprised of community representatives who work with individuals experiencing homelessness, York Regional Police and Emergency Medical Services.

The Canadian definition of homelessness states that homelessness describes “the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.”⁸

“Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other. That is, homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations, organized here in a typology that includes:

Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living outdoors or in places not intended for human habitation;

Emergency Sheltered, including people staying in emergency housing (shelters) for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for people impacted by family violence;

Provisionally Accommodated, referring to people whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure, and;

At-Risk of Homelessness, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.”

⁸ Gaetz, S.; Barr, C.; Friesen, A.; Harris, B.; Hill, C.; Kovacs-Burns, K.; Pauly, B.; Pearce, B.; Turner, A.; Marsolais, A. (2012) Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf> (accessed March 14, 2019).

I Count 2021 Methodology

I Count 2021 took place over a 24-hour period beginning June 1, 2021, at 6:30 pm. It provides a snapshot of the minimum number of persons experiencing homelessness in York Region on June 1, 2021.

I Count 2021 involved a count and surveys of:

- People who are emergency sheltered, including people staying in emergency housing (shelters) for people experiencing homelessness and shelters for Violence Against Women.
- People who are living in unsheltered conditions, or absolutely homeless, and living outdoors or in places not designed for human habitation.
- Provisionally accommodated, including people staying in transitional housing, couch surfing (living temporarily with others), in a hotel/motel, or in correctional, medical, mental health institutions or treatment programs who lack permanent housing arrangements.

The count included all emergency housing facilities, COVID-19 transitional shelters, isolation shelters, shelters for Violence Against Women, transitional housing, and second stage housing in the region.




COVID-19 transitional shelters provide individuals experiencing homelessness with a secure place to self-isolate before transitioning into longer-term or other temporary housing.

Isolation shelters provide people experiencing homelessness who are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 a place to self-isolate.

Second stage housing refers to transitional housing for women and their children fleeing domestic violence.

It also included all the locations where frontline staff identified individuals experiencing homelessness were most likely to be.

The count was conducted at:

	<p>Unsheltered locations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ten encampments and known locations determined by frontline homelessness serving staff and agencies
	<p>Sheltered locations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • six emergency housing program locations (shelters), three COVID-19 transitional shelters, and one COVID-19 isolation shelter • two shelters for Violence Against Women and one COVID-19 transitional shelter for Violence Against Women
	<p>Provisional accommodations locations and locations where people in provisional accommodations could visit:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three transitional and second stage temporary housing programs • three drop-in programs • a recreation centre and two emergency housing locations where people could drop-by to complete surveys • mental health crisis beds • addictions beds • two hospitals • corrections

Surveys were conducted in all locations except for mental health crisis beds, hospitals and corrections. Staff provided data related to the number of people in hospitals, mental health crisis beds, and correctional locations experiencing homelessness. Further information on the locations where the count and surveys were conducted can be found in **Appendix A**.

The Point-in-Time count methodology is primarily intended to count people who are living in emergency housing (shelter) or unsheltered conditions. People experiencing hidden homelessness are difficult to identify, making hidden homelessness difficult to quantify, and particularly challenging to understand. It requires a different methodology that includes a great deal of engagement, collaboration and planning across the system to understand and meet their needs.

Estimates suggest that up to 80% of people who experience homelessness in Canada are not visible and people experiencing hidden homelessness are significantly undercounted in PiT counts.⁹

The number of people identified during the count is much smaller than the number of people who experience homelessness over a longer period of time.

The methodology used did provide some opportunity to count and survey people experiencing hidden homelessness through the surveys conducted at the three drop-in programs and three drop-by survey locations. However, PiT count methodologies are known to significantly undercount people experiencing hidden homelessness. Therefore, the count should be considered the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in the community.

Drop-bys were created during the height of the pandemic to replace drop-ins that were closed, allowing individuals experiencing homelessness to access meals, showers, a place to rest and connect with resources. These locations were publicized so that individuals could visit to be counted and surveyed. One of the drop-by locations was a recreation centre and two were emergency housing (shelters).

Point-in-Time counts often indicate that the extent of homelessness is much smaller than the size suggested by data that looks at the number of people who have experienced homelessness within a specified longer period of time. Point-in-Time counts are also more likely to count and survey people who have been experiencing homelessness for a longer period of time than people who experience homelessness for shorter durations. If people who are homeless for varying durations differ in their characteristics, such as mental health, substance use, and household composition, Point-in-Time counts overemphasize the characteristics of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. The limitations to Point-in-Time counts are illustrated in the following scenario:

Imagine a survey conducted in an emergency housing location (shelter) on a given night in June. If individuals staying in the emergency housing come and go during the month, the number on the night of the survey will be smaller than the number of individuals over the month. If in addition, length of stay varies, longer term residents will be oversampled (e.g., a person who stays all month is certain to be sampled while a person who stays one night has a one in 31 chance of being sampled). Finally, if persons with certain characteristics (e.g., mental health conditions) stay longer than others, the prevalence of those characteristics will be overestimated¹⁰.

The tendency of Point-in-Time counts to undercount people experiencing hidden homelessness, also presents a limitation of generalizability of the individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region over a period of time.

⁹ Government of Ontario, A Place to Call Home: Report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness, 2015.
<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=11038>

¹⁰ Schwartz, Housing Policy in the United States, 2010

The count has evolved over time.

I Count 2021 was the first time staff conducted counts and surveys in addictions treatment beds. It was also the first time staff conducted counts in mental health crisis beds, two hospitals, and people in police custody.

The approach to I Count 2021 was modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure adherence to public health guidelines. Unlike previous years, when community volunteers were recruited to assist with the survey, this count only used staff from the homelessness service sector. Counts conducted across Canada took a similar approach. The decision was based on need to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness and community volunteers. Additionally, staff in the homelessness services sector are trained in the use of safety measures including personal protective equipment (PPE). Other adaptations due to the pandemic included: heightened safety protocols (i.e., COVID-19 screening, PPE, physical distancing, and verbal consents); virtual surveyor training and check-ins; a reduction in the number of unsheltered locations to the most essential (ie. locations where individuals experiencing homelessness have been known to be).

The 2018 homeless count was accompanied by a Registry Week, which is a multi-day count that also included a vulnerability assessment for each consenting respondent. The data collected formed a contact list of people experiencing homelessness and included information on their age, health, housing, duration of homelessness, and level of vulnerability that is used to refer individuals and families with the highest needs to housing. Vulnerability assessments were not completed as part of I Count 2021 to avoid the extra burden on homelessness serving sector staff, and many people staying in emergency housing had already completed a vulnerability assessment as part of regular assessment processes within emergency housing. The 2018 count also visited more indoor and outdoor locations.

Where possible, this report compares data to the 2016 and 2018 counts. The different methodologies are summarized below to help interpret the findings. The 2021 count was limited in scope due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. This includes visits to a limited number of outdoor locations. The count was conducted in June 2021 versus April 2018, which increased the likelihood of people experiencing homelessness not staying in emergency housing or accessing services during the 24-hour period of the 2021 count due to better weather.

One of the limitations of this report is that comparable Census breakdowns (e.g., age, racial identity) for 2021 were not yet available at the time of the writing of this report. References were made to Census data that is six years old and these proportions may have changed over time.

Methodology Highlights

Count	Count Me in 2016	I Count 2018	I Count 2021
Time of Year	January	April	June
Duration	Over a 24-hour period	Over a four-day period	Over a 24-hour period
	Count and Survey Location		
Unsheltered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers visited 16 indoor and 17 outdoor locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers visited 44 outdoor and 47 indoor locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness serving sector staff visited 10 outdoor locations.
Sheltered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency housing • Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers visited 5 emergency housing program locations. • Shelter staff surveyed participants across 4 VAW shelters. • 2 seasonal shelters were open during Count Me In. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers visited 6 emergency housing program locations. • Shelter staff surveyed participants across 4 VAW shelters. • The seasonal shelters were closed during I Count 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff surveyed participants at 6 emergency housing program locations, 3 COVID-19 transitional shelters, and 1 COVID-19 isolation shelter. • Staff surveyed participants at 4 VAW shelters and 1 COVID-19 transitional VAW shelter. • The seasonal shelters were open during I Count 2021.
Provisional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional housing • Temporarily with others (hidden) • Hotel or motel • Institutions and lacking permanent housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 transitional or second stage housing programs were counted. • During the 2016 Count Me In, there were no requirements to count hidden homelessness. • Volunteers did not visit hotels/motels. • No counts were conducted in institutional settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 transitional or second stage housing programs were counted. • During the 2018 I Count there were requirements to count hidden homelessness. • 2 youth magnet events were held and a dedicated phone line was available for surveys. • Volunteers visited hotels/motels. • No counts were conducted in institutional settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff counted and surveyed participants at three transitional and second stage temporary housing programs. • During I Count 2021 there were no requirements to count hidden homelessness. • 3 service locations had drop-in programs where surveys were conducted. • There were 3 locations where people could drop-by specifically to complete surveys. • Homelessness serving sector staff did not visit hotels/motels. • Staff conducted counts and surveys in addictions beds. • Staff conducted counts in 2 hospitals, mental health crisis beds and people in police custody.

How do people experience homelessness in York Region?

238 people in sheltered conditions.

17 people in unsheltered conditions.

74 people provisionally accommodated.

Homelessness in York Region takes many forms. It includes people staying in emergency housing for people experiencing homelessness and shelters for Violence Against Women, people living in temporary housing (such as transitional housing, and people living temporarily with others), and people who are living in public places.

I Count 2021 identified 238 people (72%) staying in an emergency housing (shelter) or shelter for Violence Against Women, 17 people (5%) who were unsheltered (including sleeping outdoors, places not designed for human habitation, and encampments), and 74 (23%) who were provisionally accommodated.

In York Region, like many communities, most experiences of homelessness are hidden. People living temporarily with others (hidden), who have largely not been counted through I Count 2021, are likely the largest group of people experiencing homelessness in York Region. Estimates suggest that up to 80% of homelessness is hidden in Canada¹¹. I Count numbers should be considered the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in York Region.




The percentage of people who were both staying in emergency housing (shelters) and experiencing chronic homelessness (51%) increased substantially since 2018, when it was 35%¹².

More people living unsheltered and in provisional accommodations reported having substance use issues, mental health issues, physical limitations, and cognitive or intellectual limitations than people staying in emergency housing. This is consistent with findings from 2018.

¹¹ Government of Ontario, A Place to Call Home: Report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness, 2015. accessed at: <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/place-call-home-report-expert-advisory-panel-homelessness>

¹² I Count: York Region's 2018 Homeless Count, page 13

Point-in-Time Count

Count	2016 Count Me In	2018 I Count	2021 I Count*	
Total experiencing homelessness	263 Individuals	389 individuals	329 individuals were experiencing homelessness in York Region	
Unsheltered 	7	44	17	Unsheltered: People living in public spaces, encampments or places unfit for human habitation. Includes people who started but did not complete a survey, and people self-identifying as homeless on June 1 at the time they were surveyed.
Sheltered 	221	221	238	Sheltered: People staying in emergency housing, or in Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters. Includes occupancy totals from emergency housing and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters on June 1. 198 in emergency housing 40 in Violence Against Women shelters
Provisionally accommodated 	35	124	74	Provisionally accommodated: People staying in transitional housing, living in institutions without permanent housing arranged for after their stay, couch-surfing (living temporarily with others), or in a hotel/motel. Includes occupancy totals from transitional housing, surveys for people couch surfing (living temporarily with others) and people living in a hotel/motel who were experiencing homelessness on June 1. 53 in transitional housing 17 living in institutions without permanent housing arrangements 2 staying temporarily with others 2 staying in a hotel/motel

*higher numbers in 2018 may be attributable to methodological differences

Different experiences of homelessness (based on survey data)

Who was living unsheltered?

(n=16)

Most (**88%**) were men;
13% were women

There were no youth (16-24)

One in five (**19%**) were age 55 years and over

75% were single or had no family members staying with them the night of the count. None reported children staying with them

Most (**88%**) had been homeless for at least six months out of the past year

Almost one in three (**31%**) first experienced homelessness at or before the age of 16; **13%** first experienced homelessness between the ages of 17 and 24

19% had experience living in foster care or in a youth group home

38% had an illness or medical condition

25% had cognitive or intellectual limitations

44% had a physical limitation

50% had a mental health issue

63% had a substance use issue

Who was staying in emergency housing?

(n=128)

53% were men, **45%** were women, **1%** were gender non-conforming, and 1% did not answer

One in six (**16%**) were youth

The majority (**74%**) were single or had no family members staying with them that night

About half (**51%**) had experienced homelessness for at least six months out of the past year (chronic)

11% first experienced homelessness at age 16 or before and **20%** were aged 17 to 24 years

17% had been in foster care or in a youth group home at some point in their lifetime

37% had an illness or medical condition

22% had cognitive or intellectual limitations

29% had a physical limitation

62% had a mental health issue

41% had a substance use issue

Who was staying in provisional accommodations?

(n=48)

(Transitional housing, staying temporarily with others (hidden), staying in a hotel or motel, staying in an institution and lacking permanent housing)

58% were women, **40%** were men, and **1%** were gender non-conforming

10% were youth

Almost all (**96%**) were single or had no family members staying with them that night

Almost half (**48%**) had experienced homelessness for at least six months out of the past year

42% experienced homelessness before the age of 25, including one-quarter (**25%**) at age 16 or before, and **17%** between the ages of 17 to 24 years

Almost one quarter (**23%**) had been in foster care or in a youth group home at some point in their lives

44% had an illness or medical condition

27% had cognitive or intellectual limitations

50% had a physical limitation

73% had a mental health issue

60% had a substance use issue

How has the economy and the COVID-19 pandemic impacted homelessness in York Region?

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to crises for many households.

York Region is a growing, prosperous community, with low unemployment, a growing economy, relatively high incomes, and a well-educated population.

Rental housing in York Region is in short supply, and finding affordable rent for low-to-moderate-income households is challenging. In October 2021, the vacancy rate in private apartments in York Region was 1.8% and average rent for a one-bedroom apartment unit was \$1,328¹³. This compares to a 1.2% vacancy rate in 2018 and an average rent of \$1,229 for a one-bedroom apartment¹⁴.

Rent assistance may be an option for some low-to-moderate-income households, but the supply of rent assistance does not meet the need. Waiting times for subsidized housing in York Region range from eight years or more for a seniors building to 15 years or more for a one-bedroom unit, not dissimilar to other regions¹⁵.

When housing is unaffordable, individuals and families can be at risk of homelessness. A crisis such as an income loss, family conflict/breakdown, or major health issue, is more likely to result in homelessness¹⁶.

For various reasons, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to crises for many households. Almost one in five (19%) survey respondents reported that their housing loss was related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has led to many job losses, which have disproportionately affected lower-income workers¹⁷. The proportion of I Count 2021 respondents with employment income was 13% in 2021 compared to 17% in 2018 and 21% in 2016.

There have been dramatic increases in house prices during the pandemic. Strong housing markets tend to prompt more landlords to sell or renovate their housing. In 2021, 7% of respondents indicated that they lost their housing because the landlord sold or renovated the house/building. This compares to 5% of respondents in 2018.

¹³Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Rental Market Survey 2021, 2022

¹⁴Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Rental Market Survey 2018, 2019

¹⁵Regional Municipality of York, Applying for Subsidized Housing, Nov. 11, 2021

¹⁶These are examples identified by survey respondents as factors contributing to their homelessness

¹⁷According to CIBC Economics, the jobs lost in the country in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic earned \$27.81 an hour or less. The average hourly wage rate for full- and part-time employees in 2020 was around \$31 an hour, according to Statistics Canada. (as cited at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/job-losses-pandemic-lower-income-1.5922401>)

While the pandemic has contributed to homelessness for some residents, the full impacts on homelessness may not be felt for some time.

With increases in market rents, when households lose their housing, it can be exceedingly challenging to find new housing that is affordable. The most commonly reported challenge survey respondents identified in trying to find housing was that their income was insufficient to afford housing (63%).

For people experiencing homelessness, the increases in rents can result in longer periods of homelessness. Over half (53%) of the people surveyed had experienced homelessness for six months or more of the past year (considered chronic homelessness). This is higher than in 2018 when 45% had experienced homelessness for six months or more of the past year. This trend may be because once people lose their housing it is increasingly difficult to obtain new housing.

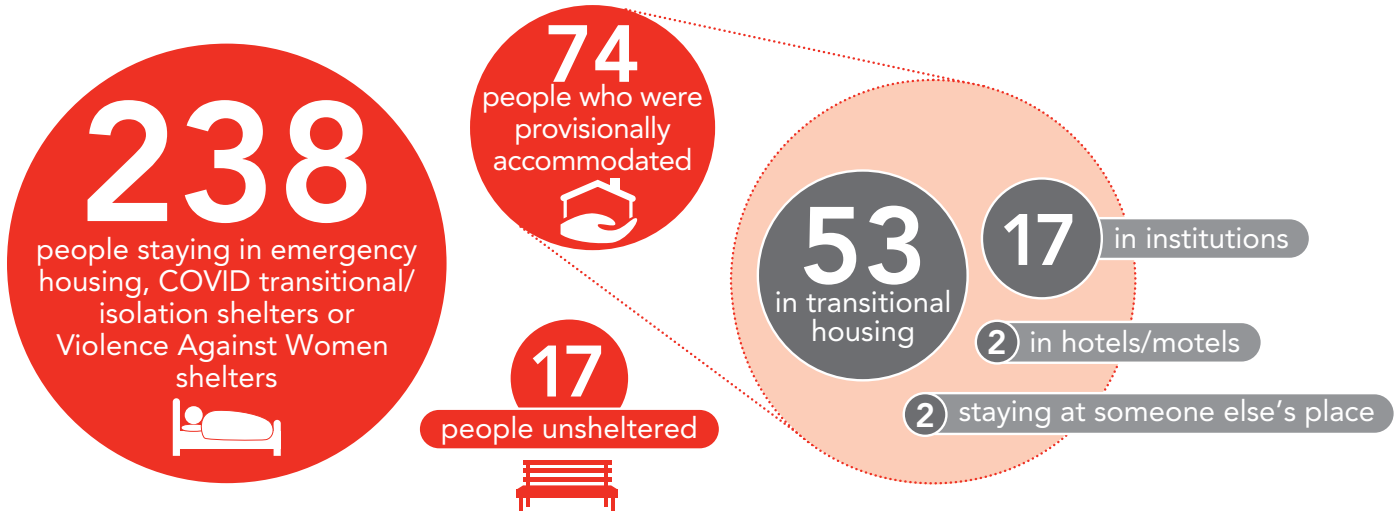
While the pandemic has contributed to homelessness for some residents, the full impacts on homelessness may not be felt for some time, as households will first max out government supports and exhaust their savings. Households would then fall behind on payments like rent, leading to evictions.

There are many factors that can contribute to someone becoming homeless. These are discussed further within the survey results presented below.

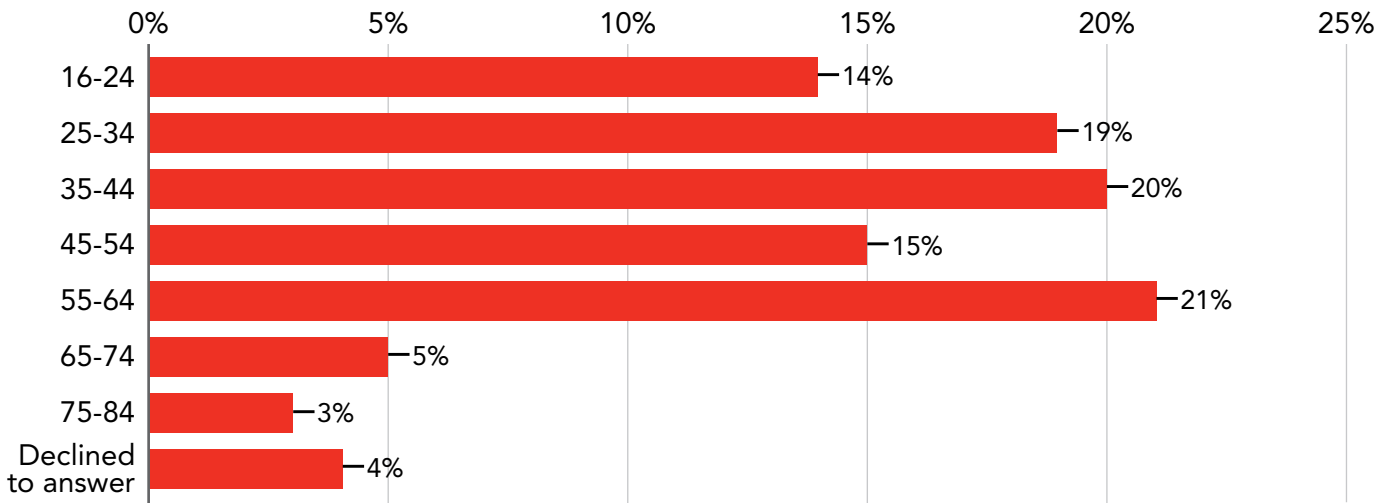
Snapshot of Homelessness in York Region

329 people identified in the count were experiencing homelessness in York Region

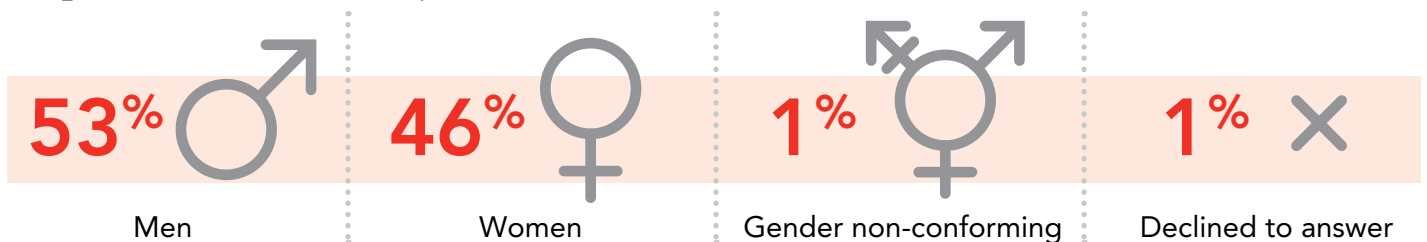
Sleeping Arrangements (count data)



Respondents' Age Groups (survey data n=192)



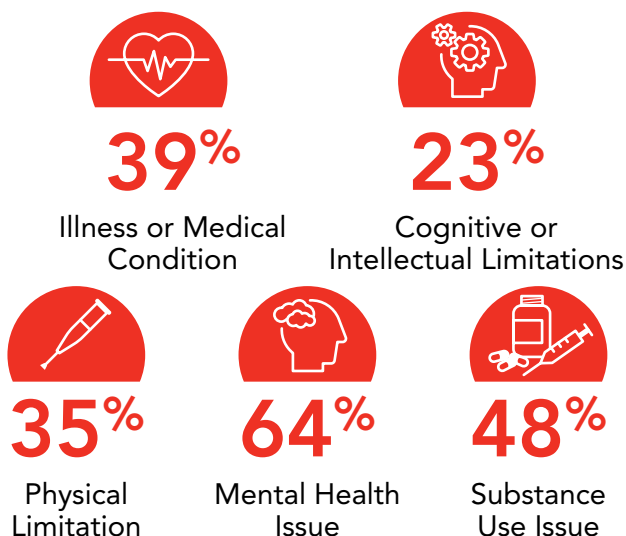
Respondents' Gender (survey data)



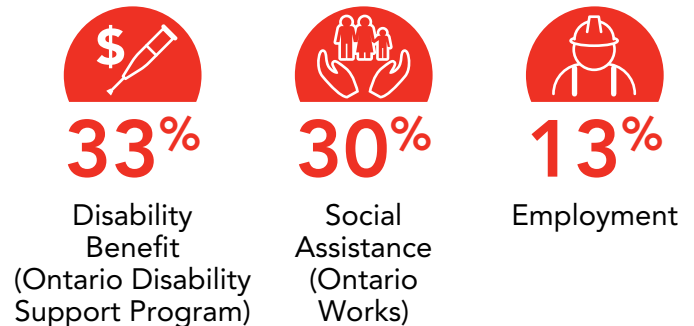
Other Key Characteristics

87% Heterosexual	10% Non-heterosexual
12% Identified as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry	10% Identified as Black
18% Immigrants	4% Refugees or refugee claimants
4% Veterans	34% Experienced homelessness before the age of 25
36yrs Average age of first homelessness	19% Had been involved in the child welfare system

Self-Identified Health Conditions



Top Income Sources

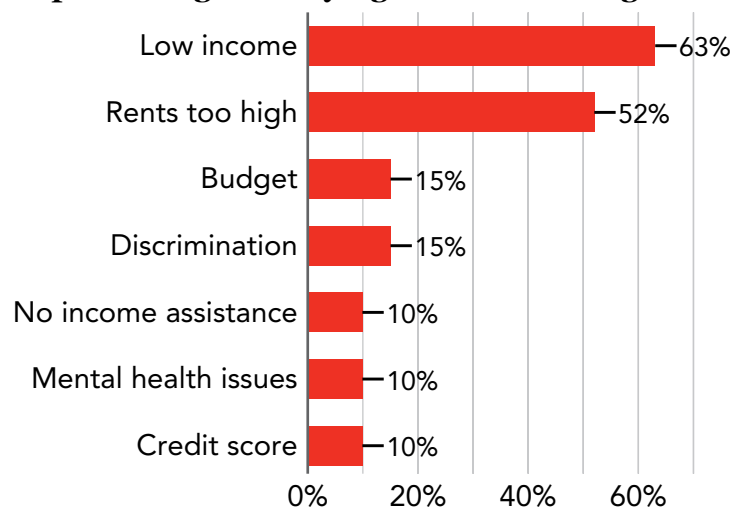


53% had been homeless for six months or more out of the past year (chronic homelessness)

Top five reasons for homelessness

- 22%** Not Enough Income for Housing
- 11%** Unfit/Unsafe Housing Condition
- 9%** Landlord/Tenant Conflict
- 9%** Conflict With Spouse/Partner¹⁸
- 9%** Experienced Abuse by Spouse/Partner

Top Challenges in Trying to Find Housing



¹⁸ Note that in 2018 family conflict was reported as a group, so this number is not directly comparable to the number reported in the 2018 report

Comparison of Key Characteristics Count of Survey Participants, 2016-2021

	2016	2018	2021
Youth (16-24)	34%	26%	14%
65+	3%	4%	8%
Men	48%	56%	53%
Women	52%	42%	46%
Gender Non-conforming	N/A	2% ¹⁹	1%
LGBTQ2S+ Identity	8%	8%	10%
Veterans	N/A	3%	4%
Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	33%	45%	53%
Indigenous Identity or Ancestry	13%	17%	12%
Black peoples	N/A	13%	10%

Notes: Gender totals for 2021 do not sum to 100% as people who declined to report their gender are not shown in the table.

¹⁹This percentage includes declined to answer, as gender non-conforming was grouped with declined to answer in 2018

I Count 2021 Survey Findings

Older adults represented a larger proportion of survey respondents in 2021 than in previous counts.

The following findings are based on the 192 responses to the I Count survey.

Refer to *Appendix B* for the survey questions and *Appendix C* for detailed data tables. Note that percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Characteristics

Age

The majority (54%) of respondents were adults aged 25 to 54. One in seven (14%) were aged 16 to 24. Older adults aged 55 and over made up 29% of respondents, including 8% who were aged 65 and over.

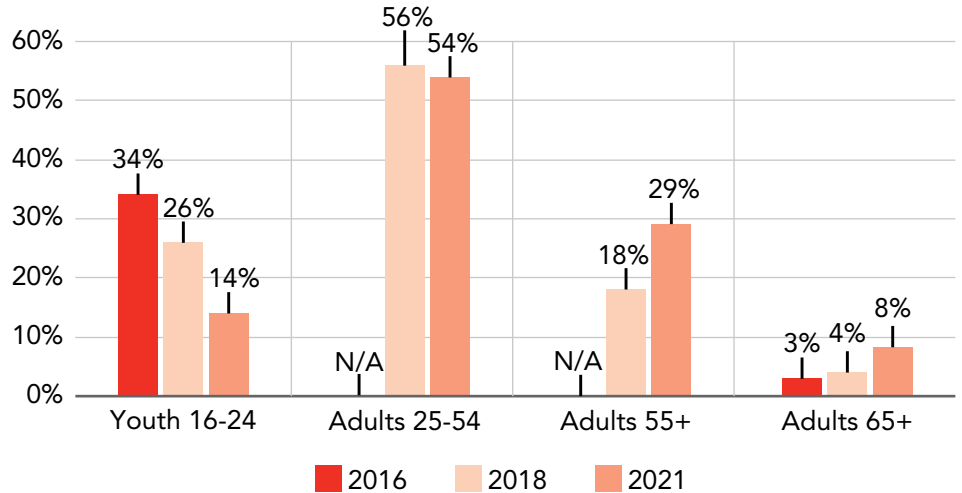
The chart below shows survey respondents and excludes dependent children aged 15 and under.

Respondents' Age Groups, 2021 (n=192)

16-24	14%
25-34	19%
35-44	20%
45-54	15%
55-64	21%
65-74	5%
75-84	3%
Declined to answer	4%

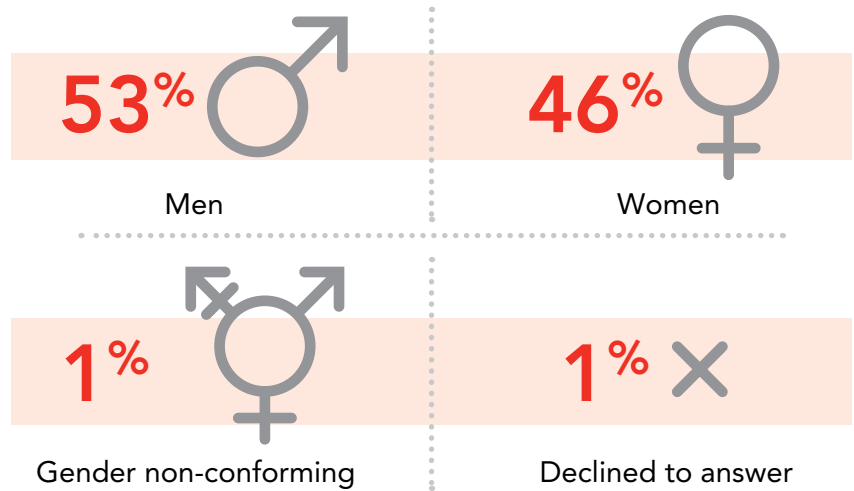
Older adults represented a larger proportion of survey respondents in 2021 than in previous counts. The percentage of adults aged 55 and over was 11 percentage points higher than in I Count 2018, and four percentage points higher for adults aged 65 and over. Youth aged 16 to 24 represented a smaller proportion of respondents in 2021 (14%) compared to 2018 (26%).

Respondents' Age Groups, 2016, 2018, and 2021



Gender

Over half (53%) of survey respondents were men, 46% were women, 1% self-identified as gender non-conforming and 1% declined to answer. In comparison, the 2018 Survey on Safety in Public and Private Spaces, found that trans or non-binary individuals represented approximately 0.24% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older²⁰.

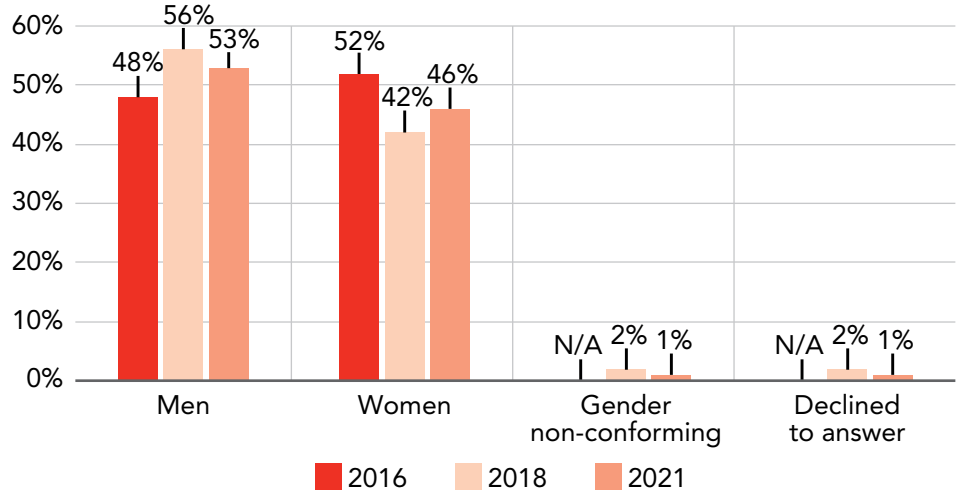


Note: Numbers do not sum to 100% due to rounding (n=192)

²⁰Statistics Canada, 2021, A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2+ communities, accessed at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>

1 in 7 respondents were youth.

In 2018, men accounted for 3% more respondents and women accounted for 4% fewer respondents than in 2021. In both counts fewer than five individuals self-identified as gender non-conforming and fewer than five individuals declined to answer.

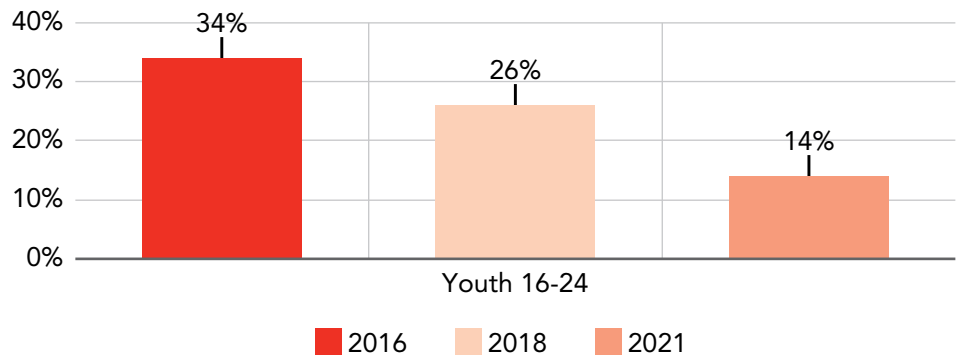


Youth

One in seven (14% or 26) respondents to the I Count 2021 survey were youth (16-24 years). This is similar to the percentage (13%) of youth within York Region’s overall population in 2016²¹.

In 2021, youth (16-24 years) represented a smaller proportion of survey respondents than 2016 (34%) and 2018 (26%). Reasons why fewer youth were identified may have included that many youth found the COVID-19 transitional shelter beds challenging due to quarantine rules and youth drop in programs were very limited due to public health requirements.

Youth Respondents, 2016-2021



²¹ Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

27% of youth identified as LGBTQ2S+.

Over half (58%) of youth were men, 38% were women, and 4% self-identified as gender non-conforming.

Most (85%) were single or had no family members staying with them that night.

Over one quarter (27%) identified as LGBTQ2S+. This compares to only 5-10% of Canadian youth who identify as LGBTQ2S+²².

LGBTQ2S+ identities were much higher among youth than people experiencing homelessness who were aged 25 and over. Only 8% of that group identified as LGBTQ2S+. Conflict with family members related to sexual orientation is a common reason for homelessness among youth²³.

Ten youth (38%) reported that they had been involved in foster care or in a youth group home at some point in their lives.

Forty-two percent (42%) had been homeless for six months or more of the past year. This is lower than the 50% of youth respondents in 2018 who had been homeless for at least six months of the past year.

Four respondents (15%) came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant.

Youth were much more likely to report having cognitive or intellectual limitations and mental health issues than adults aged 25 to 54.

Fifty-eight percent of youth reported having cognitive or intellectual limitations and 81% reported a mental health issue. Whereas 21% of adults aged 25 to 54 had cognitive or intellectual limitations and 67% had a mental health issue.

Youth health conditions:

15%	58%	12%	81%	42%
illness or medical condition	cognitive or intellectual limitations	physical limitation	mental health issue	substance use issue

²²Abramovich, Alex & Shelton, Jama. 2017. "Introduction: Where are we now?" in Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S. by Abramovich, Alex, & Shelton, Jama. (Eds.). Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, p.2. Available online: <http://homelesshub.ca/whereamigoingtogo>

²³Source: Homeless Hub, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S), accessed at <http://homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-transsexual-queer>

Almost 1 in 3 respondents were aged 55 and over.

Older Adults

Seniors aged 65 and over accounted for 8% of survey respondents. This group was underrepresented among survey respondents. Seniors aged 65 and over made up 15% of the overall York Region population in 2016²⁴.

Older adults aged 55 and over made up 29% of survey respondents. They represented a similar proportion of survey respondents as in York Region's overall population (28%)²⁵.

The proportion of older adults was up 11 percentage points from the 2018 survey. Everyone seeking emergency shelter had to first stay in a COVID-19 transitional shelter prior to entering regular emergency housing (shelter). These shelter spaces were open to all population groups, and adults represented a larger proportion of people accessing these spaces.

As a percentage of all respondents, seniors doubled their proportion in 2021, accounting for 8% of respondents, compared to 4% in 2018.

Among adults aged 55 and over, 53% were men and 47% were women.

The majority (58%) had been homeless for six months or more of the past year.

Many (67%) people aged 55 and over experiencing homelessness became homeless for the first time later in life (after the age of 55).

Health conditions among adults aged 55 and over:

67%	13%	58%	49%	44%
illness or medical condition	cognitive or intellectual limitations	physical limitation	mental health issue	substance use issue

²⁴Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

²⁵Source: Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

20% of respondents had family members with them.

Families with Children

Of the respondents surveyed, 6% were families with children (11 families). Families without children (couples) accounted for 3% of respondents (6 families). Another 11% of the respondents (21) were families, where the family members were not specified.

All families with children were led by single parents. All of these were headed by mothers.

Information was reported on 17 dependents (in 11 families), including 16 aged 15 and under. Of the children aged 15 and under, 12 were with respondents at a Violence Against Women shelter, 3 were with respondents staying in an emergency housing location, and one was unknown.

Most (80%) survey respondents were single or had no family members staying with them that night.

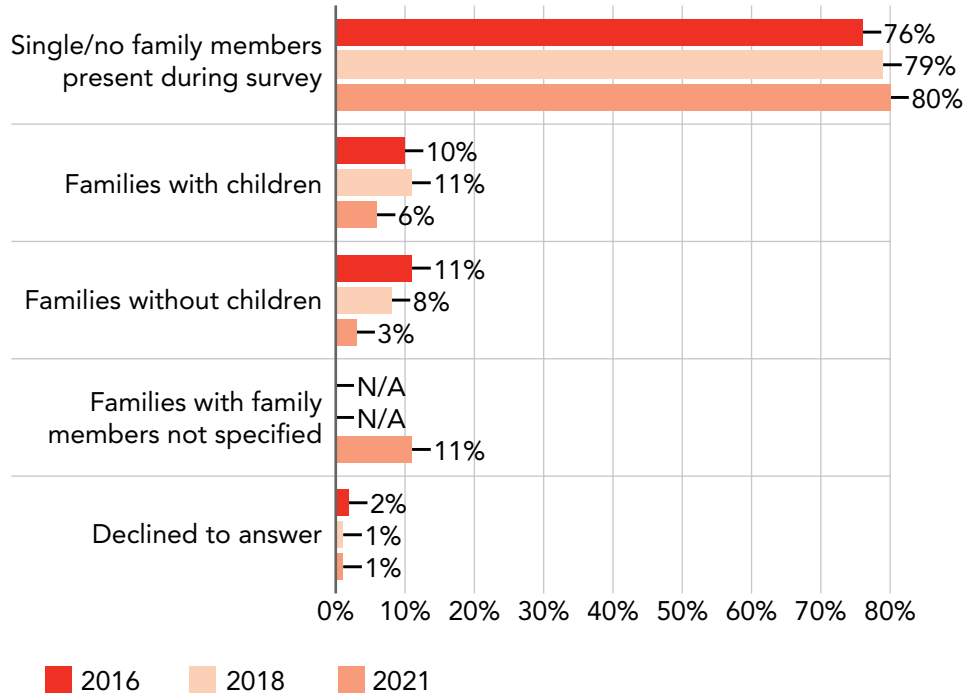
Singles

Most (80%) survey respondents were single or had no family members staying with them that night.

In comparison, 11% of York Region’s population aged 15 years and over were not in census families in 2016²⁶.

Singles represented a similar proportion of respondents in the 2021 survey (80%) compared to the surveys in 2018 (79%) and 2016 (76%).

Household Composition, 2016-2021



²⁶ Statistics Canada, Census, 2016. Census family is defined as a married couple (with or without children of either or both spouses), a common-law couple (with or without children of either or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status (with at least one child living in the same dwelling). A couple may be of opposite or same sex. ‘Children’ in a census family include grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present.

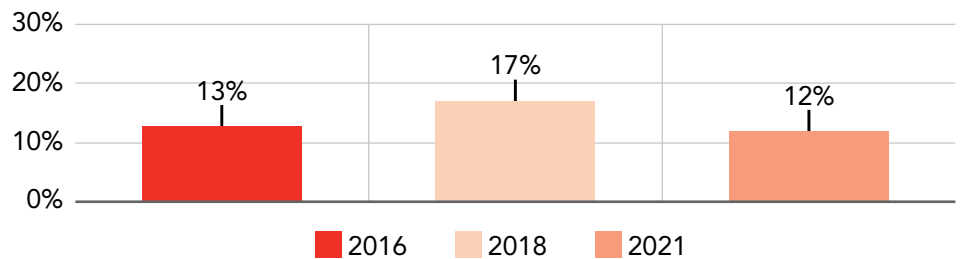
12% self-identified as having Indigenous identity or ancestry.

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples continue to be over-represented among individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region. In 2021, 12% (23) of survey respondents identified having Indigenous identity or ancestry. This compares to 17% (37) in 2018 and 13% (19) in 2016. This decrease may be attributable to the restrictions on the count as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. By comparison, less than 1% of the overall York Region population report Indigenous identity²⁷.

People identifying as Indigenous includes 14 individuals of First Nations identities (with or without status) and six individuals having Indigenous ancestry. Fewer than five people reported as Métis and Inuit.

Indigenous Identity or Ancestry Respondents, 2016-2021



The majority of Indigenous peoples (61%) who responded to the survey were women; 39% were men.

Most (83%) were aged 25 and over; 13% (3) were youth (aged 16 to 24).

Seventy percent (70%) were single or did not have family members staying with them on the night of the survey.

Ten (43%) had experienced homelessness for six months or more out of the past year.

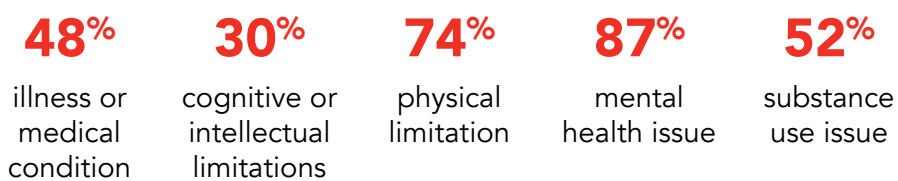
Almost 48% (11) reported experiencing homelessness at or before 24 years of age, including 35% (8) at or before 16 years of age. More Indigenous peoples (48%) reported experiencing homelessness at or before 24 years of age than non-Indigenous people (36%).

There are strong links between having lived in foster care or a youth group home and homelessness among Indigenous peoples; 43% of Indigenous peoples surveyed in I Count reported that they have been involved in foster care or in a youth group home at some point in their lives.

²⁷ Statistics Canada, Census, 2016 Given the critical data gaps on urban Indigenous peoples and challenges around trust and data governance, this data should be interpreted with caution

Forty-three percent (43%) had experienced homelessness for more than six months in the past year.

Health conditions among respondents of Indigenous identity or ancestry:



Indigenous peoples had higher rates of physical limitations, mental health issues, chronic illness and cognitive limitations, pointing to the need for Indigenous-focused services that incorporate physical, mental, etc. supports.

87%	heterosexual
10%	non-heterosexual
3%	don't know/ declined to answer

(n=192)

LGBTQ2S+ People

Most (87%) respondents identified as being heterosexual; 10% identified as having a non-heterosexual sexual orientation, and 3% didn't know or declined to answer.

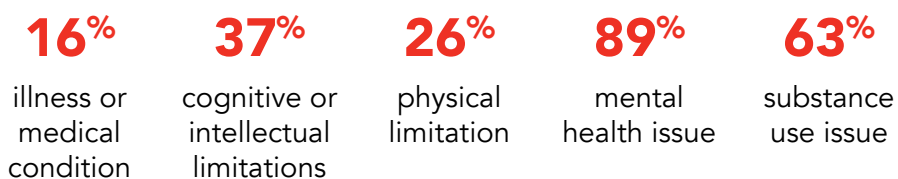
The percentage of respondents identifying as LGBTQ2S+ was two percentage points lower in 2018 (8%).

More than one quarter (27%) of youth identified as LGBTQ2S+.

Almost two-thirds (63%) reported experiencing homelessness at or before 24 years of age, including 26% who reported becoming homeless at or before 16 years of age.

People identifying as LGBTQ2S+ reported very high rates of mental health issues and high rates of substance use issues.

Health conditions among people identifying as LGBTQ2S+:



Almost one in five, or 18% of respondents were immigrants, 4% were refugees or refugee claimants, and 2% did not answer.

Immigrants and Refugees

Almost one in five, or 18% of respondents were immigrants, 4% were refugees or refugee claimants, and 2% did not answer.

Respondents included nine individuals who came to Canada in the past five years; three were refugees, two are refugee claimants, four are immigrants. The top countries of origin of respondents who came to Canada in the past five years were Iran and Jamaica.

Immigrants were underrepresented among survey respondents. The 2016 Census reported that 47% of York Region residents were born in countries other than Canada²⁸.

As a proportion of total respondents, immigrants increased their proportion by six percentage points between 2018 (12%) and 2021 (18%). The proportion of refugees and refugee claimants remained constant at 4%.

²⁸Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

10% of respondents self-identified as Black.

Ethnocultural Diversity and Language

Almost half (48%) of respondents identified as white (e.g., European, Euro-Latinx). After white, the most common racial identity was Indigenous peoples, followed by Black peoples. Both Indigenous and Black peoples were overrepresented among survey respondents compared to York Region’s overall population. Less than 3% of York Region’s general population identified as Black in the 2016 Census²⁹. Respondents of Asian identities were underrepresented compared to York Region’s overall population.

Racial and Ethnocultural Identities, 2021 Respondents Versus 2016 Census (2021 n=192)

	2016 Census	2021 Survey
White	No comparable data	48%
Black (e.g., Black Canadian/American, African, Afro-Caribbean or Afro-Latinx)	2.5%	10%
Indigenous	0.9%	8%
Asian-West (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)	7.6%	3%
Arab (e.g., Syrian, Egyptian, Yemeni)		0%
Asian-East (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese)	28.7%	2%
Asian-South-East (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian)		2%
Asian-South or Indo-Caribbean (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian)	13.4%	1%
Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Chilean, Cuban)	2.2%	1%
Blank, Don't know, Declined to answer		26%

Note: The percentage of respondents who identified as being Indigenous was lower than the percentage that reported Indigenous identity or ancestry.

²⁹Statistics Canada, Census, 2016

In 2021, a smaller percentage of respondents identified as Indigenous or Black.

A smaller percentage of respondents identified as Indigenous (8%) and a smaller percentage identified as Black (10%) in 2021 than in 2018 (when 10% identified as Indigenous and 13% identified as Black).

Racial Identities of Respondents, 2018 and 2021

	2018	2021
White	66%	48%
Black or African Canadian	13%	10%
Indigenous	10%	8%
West Asian	3%	3%
Asian	3%	2%
South-East Asian, Filipino	0%	2%
South Asian	2%	1%
Hispanic or Latin American	2%	1%
Arab	2%	0%

Note: The percentage of respondents who identified as being Aboriginal or Indigenous was lower than the percentage that reported Indigenous identity or ancestry.

Despite the range of racial identities, most (95%) respondents identified English as the language that they feel best able to express themselves. Other languages were Parsi, Farsi, Urdu, French, and Mandarin.

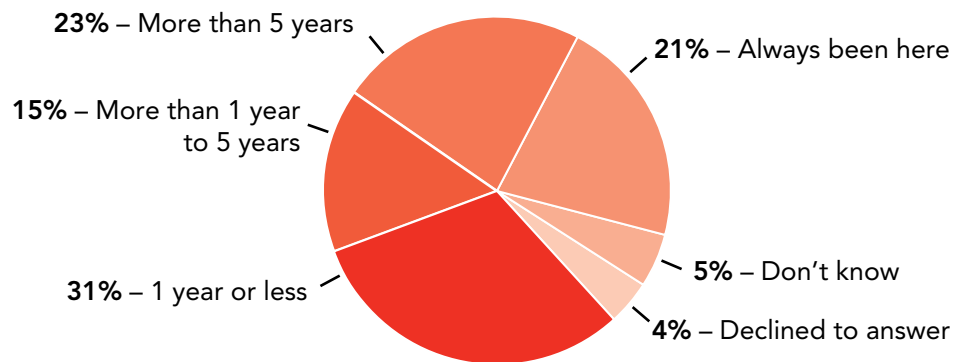
Length of Time in York Region

The majority (60%) of I Count 2021 respondents reported that they had lived in York Region for over a year, including 21% who had always lived in York Region, 23% who had lived in York Region for more than five years, and 15% who had lived in York Region for between one and five years. The remaining 9% either reported that they did not know or they did not answer.

Almost one third (31%) of respondents had lived in York Region for one year or less. The majority (83%) of people who had lived in York Region for one year or less had moved from elsewhere in Ontario, 2% (one individual) had moved from another province in Canada, 7% had moved from another country, and 9% did not answer or the answer was unclear. The largest group of people self-identified as being new to York Region were from Simcoe County. This was followed by the City of Toronto, then Durham Region and the City of London.

Over half (51%) of respondents who had lived in York Region for one year or less had moved to access emergency housing (shelters).

Respondents by Length of Time in York Region, 2021 (n=192)



Movement from one community to another is contributing to the number of people experiencing homelessness in York Region. In 2021, 31% of respondents had lived in York Region for one year or less, compared to 25% in 2018 and 33% in 2016.

Over half (51%) of respondents who had lived in York Region for one year or less had moved to access emergency housing (shelters)³⁰.

Reasons for Move Among Respondents Who Have Lived in York Region for One Year or Less, 2021 (n=59)

To access emergency housing (shelter)	51%
To access services and supports	9%
To find housing	5%
Family moved to York Region	5%
To visit family/friends	5%
Employment that was secured	2%
Fear for safety	2%
Don't know, Declined to answer	19%

4%

reported that they were veterans of the Canadian Military

Veterans

Of the I Count 2021 survey respondents, 4% reported that they were veterans of the Canadian Military (Canadian Army, Navy, or Air Force). None had served in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). In 2018, 3% reported they were veterans of the Canadian Military or had served in the RCMP.

³⁰This analysis excludes individuals who reported moving to York Region in the past year, but also identified a York Region municipality as the community they lived in prior to coming to York Region

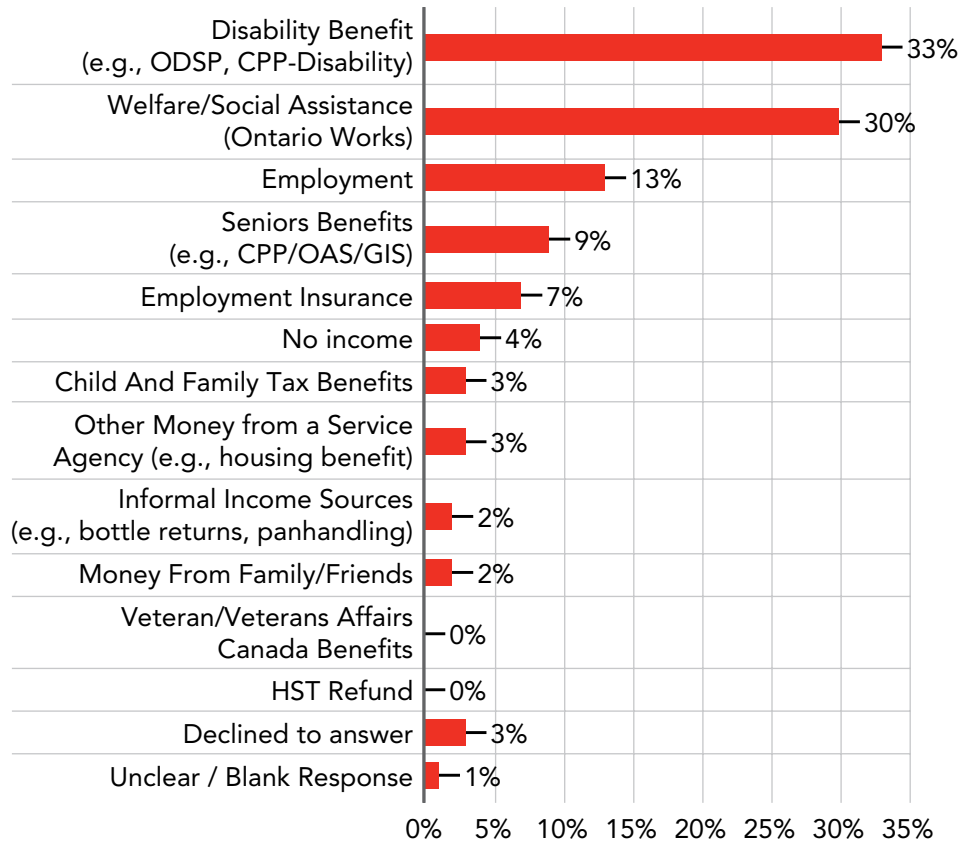
There are some income sources that respondents may be eligible for but did not identify receiving.

Income

I Count 2021 respondents receive their income from a variety of sources, with the majority receiving disabilities or social assistance benefits.

There are some income sources that respondents may be eligible for but did not identify receiving. No one reported HST refund as one of their income sources. None of the veterans reported receiving Veteran/Veterans Affairs Canada benefits. Only 3% (6 families) reported receiving child and family tax benefits. For example, it could be that respondents are not receiving this income because they have not filed their income taxes or these may not have been explored as income sources.

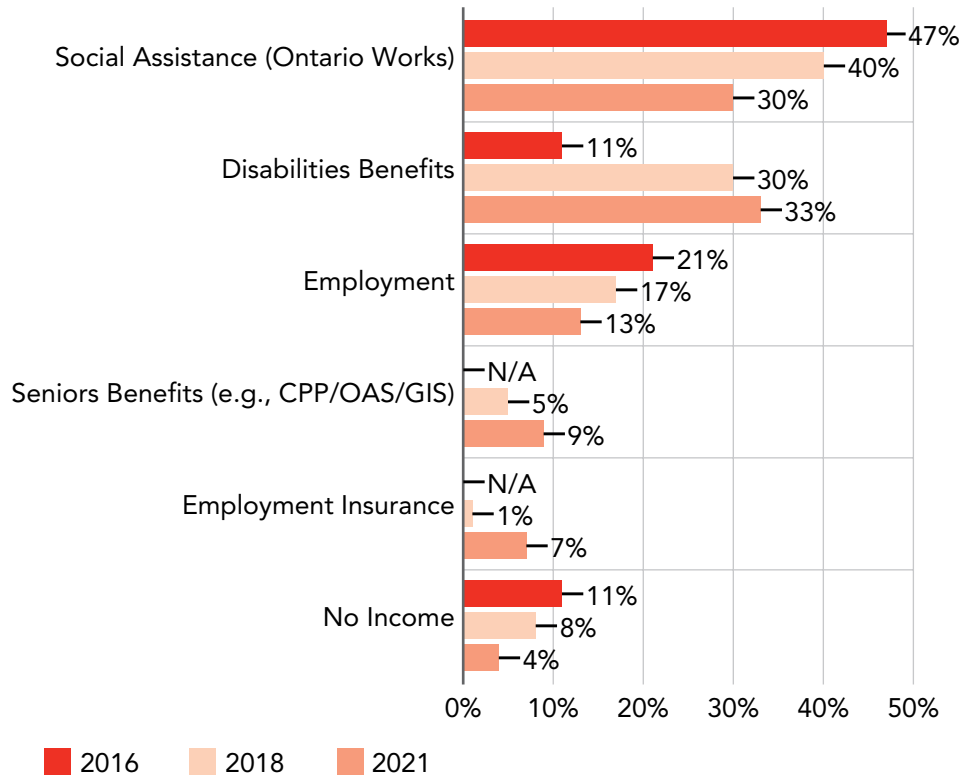
Respondents' Self-Reported Income Sources, 2021 (n=192)



There has been a declining trend in the proportion of respondents reporting social assistance and an inclining trend in reporting disability benefits.

The proportion of respondents reporting social assistance provided by the Ontario government as one of their income sources was 10 percentage points lower in 2021 (30%) than 2018 (40%). This is consistent with decreased numbers for Social Assistance (OW) and Disability Benefits (ODSP) provincially³¹. One possible reason for this could be that a greater proportion of people were accessing COVID-19 benefits, rather than social assistance. The proportion of respondents with employment income was also lower in 2021, at 13%, compared to 17% in 2018 and 21% in 2016. When looking across the three counts, there are declining trends in the proportion of respondents reporting social assistance, employment and no income, and an inclining trend in disability benefits.

Respondents' Self-Reported Income Sources, 2016-2021



³¹ Source: <https://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/open/sa/index.aspx>

Among I Count 2021 survey respondents, 85% (164) had some form of illness, medical condition, physical or cognitive limitation, mental health or substance use issue.

Health Conditions

Among I Count 2021 survey respondents, 85% (164) reported some form of illness, medical condition, physical or cognitive limitation, mental health or substance use issue³², while 11% (22) reported no health conditions, and 3% (6) did not respond. A breakdown of self-identified health conditions is provided in the following table.

Respondents Self-Identified Health Conditions, 2021 (n=192)

Mental Health Issue	64%
Substance Use Issue	48%
Illness or Medical Condition	39%
Physical Limitation	35%
Cognitive or Intellectual Limitations	23%

The rates of mental health issues among people experiencing homelessness have increased during the pandemic. Almost two-thirds (64%) of people reported having a mental health issue in 2021 compared to 48% in 2018.

Emergency Housing (Shelter) Stays

Most (81%) respondents were currently staying or had stayed in emergency housing (shelter) in the year prior to the survey; 17% (32 respondents) reported that they had not stayed in emergency housing in the past year, 1% did not know and 2% did not answer.

Reasons for not accessing emergency housing (shelter) ranged from staying with family or friends (14 respondents), did not need to access emergency housing (shelter) (3), fear for safety (3), turned away because emergency housing (shelters) were full (2)³³, lack of transportation (2), and emergency housing (shelters) are crowded (1)³⁴.

³²Substance use issue includes tobacco, alcohol, and opiates

³³If emergency housing (shelters) are full, efforts are made to link individuals with other services and/or resources

³⁴Respondents could choose more than one response

Reasons Why People Experience Homelessness in York Region

Almost one in five (19%) reported that their housing loss was related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents' Top Reasons for Housing Loss, 2021

22% Not Enough Income for Housing (e.g., Loss of Benefit, Income, or Job)

11% Unfit/Unsafe Housing Condition

9% Landlord/Tenant Conflict

9% Conflict With Spouse/Partner³⁵

9% Experienced Abuse by Spouse/Partner

A greater proportion of respondents reported not enough income for housing as a reason for their housing loss in 2021 (22%) than in 2018 (14%). More respondents identified conflict with a spouse or partner as one of the reasons for their housing loss in 2021 (9%) than 2018 (8%).

Almost one in five (19%) reported that their housing loss was related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adults aged 55 and over were more likely to report not enough income as a reason for their housing loss (29%). Whereas the top reasons Indigenous peoples gave for their housing loss were unfit housing conditions (17%) and building sold or renovated (17%). Indigenous peoples were also more likely to report abuse by a spouse or partner (13%) and the owner moving in (9%) as a reason for their housing loss. Black peoples were also more likely to report having experienced abuse by their spouse or partner (26%) or conflict with their spouse or partner (21%) as a reason for their housing loss. People with LGBTQ2S+ identities were more likely to report conflict with their parent/guardian (21%) as a reason for their housing loss.

Further details on top reasons for housing loss for various population groups can be found in *Appendix C*.

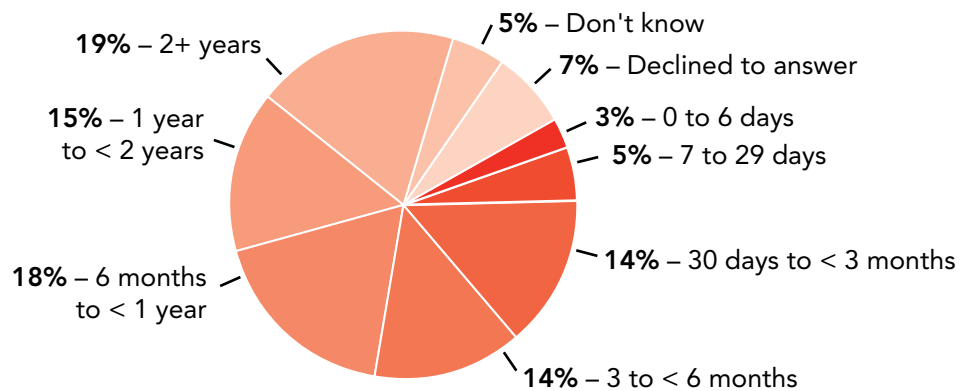
³⁵Note that in 2018 family conflict was reported as a group, so this number is not directly comparable to the number reported in the 2018 report

History of Homelessness

52% of respondents had most recently lost their housing at least 6 months prior to the survey.

Over half (52%) of respondents had most recently lost their housing at least six months prior to the survey; 3% had lost their housing within the week of the survey, 5% had lost their housing between seven and 29 days prior to the survey, 14% had lost their housing between 30 days and three months prior, and 14% had lost their housing between three and 6 months prior.

Time Since Loss of Housing Most Recently, 2021 (n=192)



9% reported experiencing episodic homelessness.

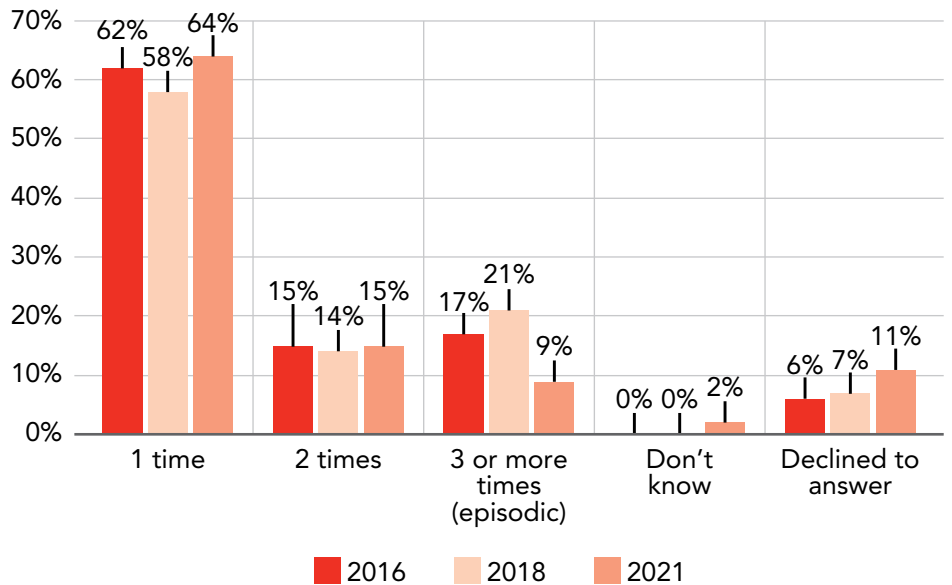
Episodic Homelessness

The majority (64%) of survey respondents reported that they experienced one episode of homelessness in the past year. Another 15% reported that they experienced homelessness twice in the past year. Fewer than one in ten, 9%, reported experiencing homelessness three or more times, which is considered episodic homelessness.

All of the people who reported experiencing episodic homelessness had also experienced homelessness for six months or more of the past year, which is considered chronic homelessness.

Respondents who reported that this was their first-time experiencing homelessness in the past year accounted for a larger proportion of respondents in 2021 (64%) than 2018 (58%). Fewer I Count 2021 respondents reported three or more experiences of homelessness in the past year (9%) than in 2016 (17%) or 2018 (21%).

Number of Times Respondents Experienced Homelessness in Past Year, 2016-2021



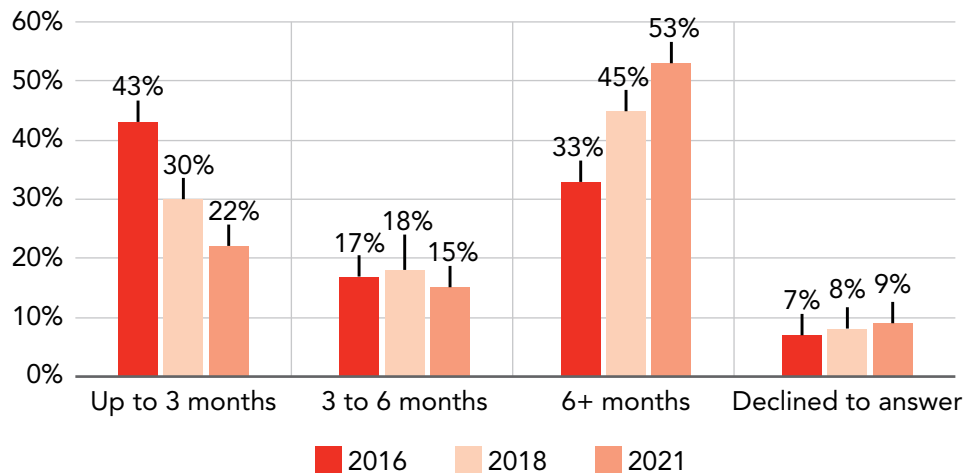
53% of respondents reported experiencing chronic homelessness.

Long-Term or Chronic Homelessness

Among I Count 2021 respondents, 8% had been homeless for between zero and six days in the past year. Another 4% had been homeless for between seven and 29 days; 21% had been homeless for between 30 days and three months; 10% had been homeless between three and six months. Over half (53%) of respondents had experienced homelessness for six months of the past year, which is considered chronic homelessness.

In I Count 2021, people who had experienced homelessness for at least six months of the past year represented a larger proportion of respondents (53%) than they did in 2018 (45%) or 2016 (33%). This may in part be due to the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Length of Time Respondents Had Experienced Homelessness Over the Past Year, 2016-2021



Most (82%) people experiencing long-term or chronic homelessness were single or did not have other family members staying with them on the night of the count. Sixty percent (60%) of people experiencing long-term or chronic homelessness were men.

People experiencing chronic homelessness were more likely to report multiple health issues (70%) than respondents who were not experiencing chronic homelessness (59%).

On average, respondents first experienced homelessness at 36 years of age.

There are multiple drivers of chronic homelessness in York Region. People who reported being chronically homeless included:

- York Region residents who lost their housing and have been unable to regain housing within six months (44%).
- York Region residents who had lost their housing more than once over the past year and had cumulatively spent more than six months of the past year experiencing homelessness (4%).
- Movement of people into the community, including:
 - people who were homeless before or at the same time as coming to York Region (31%), including:
 - people who have lived in York Region for more than a year (6%), and
 - people who came to York Region in the past year (25%).
- 19% of people experiencing chronic homelessness either did not respond or didn't know either how long they had lived in York Region and/or when their current experience of homelessness began.

Age of First Experience of Homelessness

Among I Count 2021 respondents, 16% reported they first experienced homelessness at or before the age of 16 and another 19% reported being between the ages of 17 and 24 when they first experienced homelessness.

On average, respondents first experienced homelessness at 36 years of age.

As mentioned above, many (67%) people aged 55 and over experienced homelessness for the first time later in life (after the age of 55). Many older adults, and 55-to-65-year-olds in particular, pointed to a lack of income to pay for housing (low government assistance, insufficient or delayed ability to access pensions, low wages or savings) as a contributing factor to their homelessness.

Barriers to Finding Housing

Only 1 in 7 respondents reported that they were currently on the waitlist for York Region subsidized housing.

Desire to Get Into Permanent Housing

Almost all (94%) of respondents reported wanting to get into permanent housing.

Waitlist for York Region Subsidized Housing

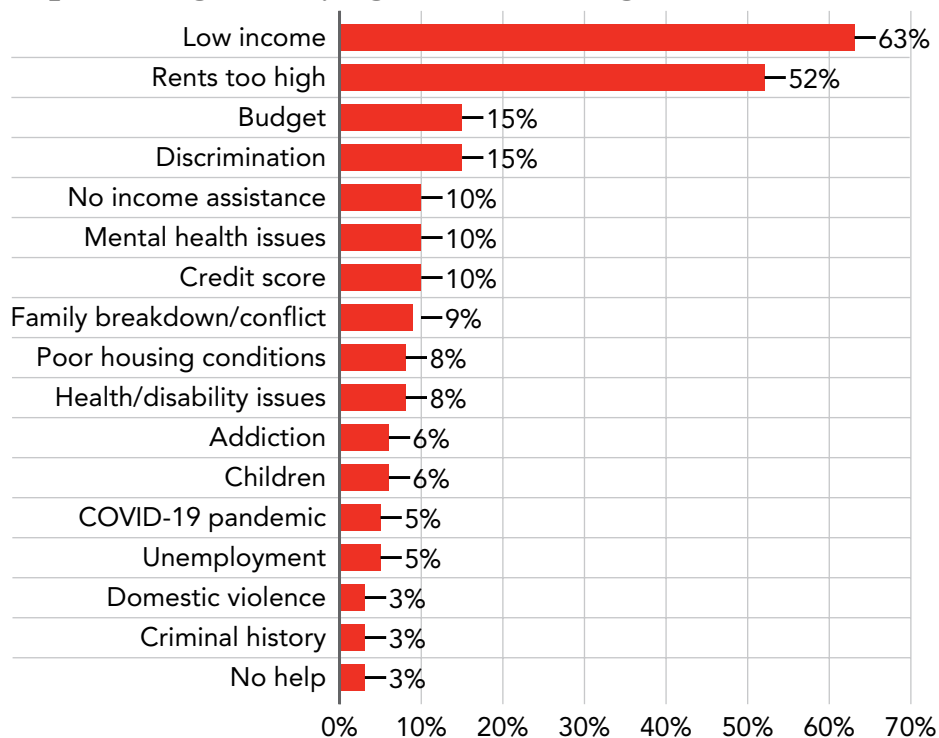
Only 13% reported that they were currently on a waitlist for York Region subsidized housing, including only 8% of respondents staying at a shelter for Violence Against Women who may be eligible for priority access to subsidized housing. York Region can explore why there are not more respondents registered on the subsidized housing waitlist.

The three top challenges reported in trying to find housing were all income related.

Challenges in Trying to Find Housing

The top three challenges I Count 2021 respondents identified in trying to find housing were all income related. By far the most commonly reported challenge was having a low income. Almost two thirds (63%) reported low income as one of the challenges they've experienced in trying to find housing. Over half (52%) reported rents being too high as one of their challenges and 15% reported budget as a challenge. Discrimination was also cited as a reason among 15% of respondents. Other common reasons were not having income assistance (10%), mental health issues (10%), and credit scores (10%).

Top Challenges in Trying to Find Housing, 2021 (n=192)



Different groups reported different challenges in trying to find housing.

Different groups were more likely to report particular challenges in trying to find housing. Youth were more likely to report rents too high (62%) and mental health issues (19%) among their challenges. Adults aged 55 and over were more likely than other groups to report low incomes (73%) and COVID-19 (9%) as being issues. Indigenous peoples were more likely to report discrimination (26%), credit score (26%), no income assistance (17%), family breakdown (17%), budget (17%), poor housing conditions (17%), and health/disability issues (17%) as challenges in accessing housing. Women were more likely than men to report discrimination (20%), budget (19%), family breakdown/conflict (17%), and no income assistance (15%). Families with children were also more likely to report rents too high (73%) and discrimination (45%) as challenges they faced in accessing housing. People with LGBTQ2S+ identities were more likely to report rents being too high (68%) as a challenge in trying to find housing. Black peoples were more likely to report discrimination (32%) as a challenge in trying to find housing.

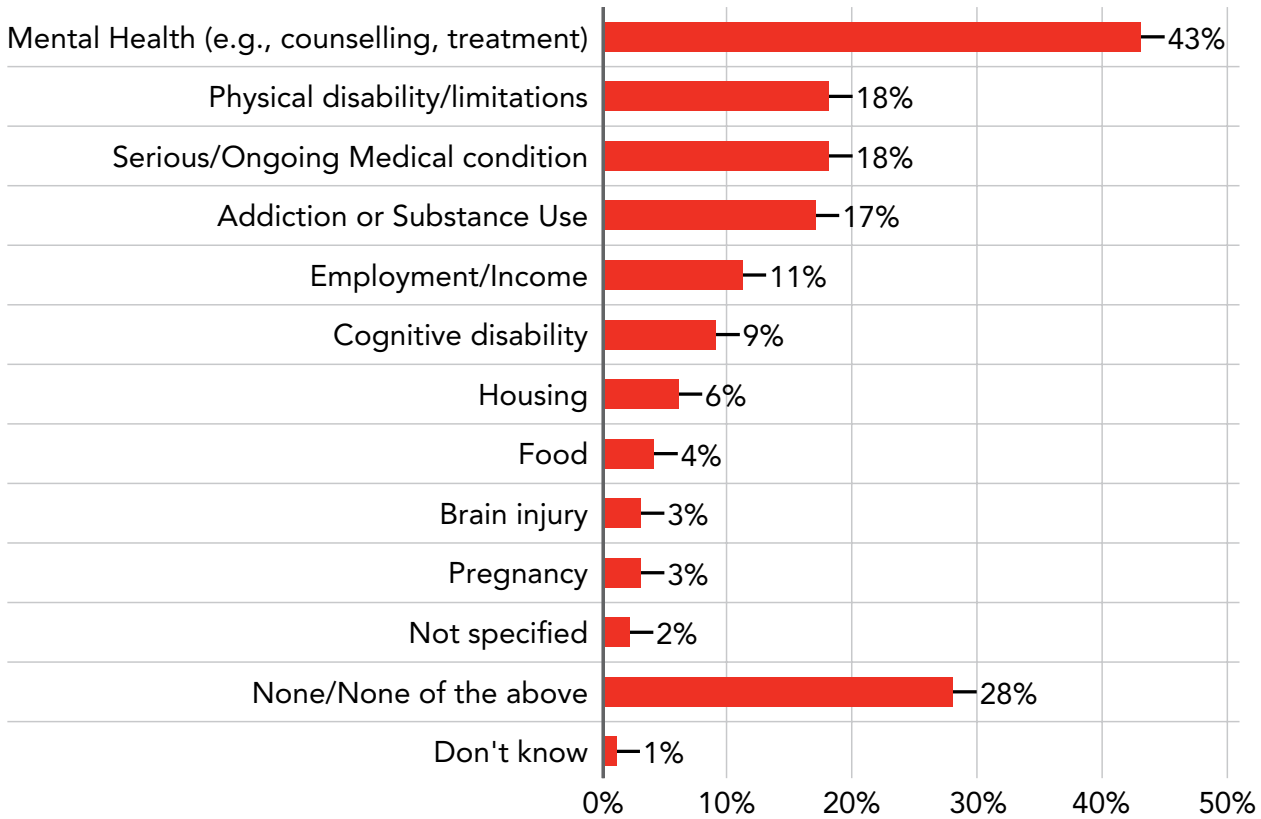
The different barriers reported by different population groups in accessing housing reinforces the need for targeted approaches to preventing and addressing homelessness.

Further details on top challenges in trying to find housing for various population groups can be found in **Appendix C**.

Service Needs

Respondents were read a list of services that they may or may not need and were asked which ones they had a need for. The most identified service need was related to mental health (counselling, treatment, etc.) (43%). This was followed by services related to a serious/ongoing medical condition (18%), physical disability/limitations (18%), and addiction or substance use (17%). The number of people identifying the need for health-related services suggests that there is a need for investment in and connections to additional health services.

Respondents Self-Identified Service Needs, 2021 (n=192)



Interactions with Services and Systems

Interactions with Health and Justice Services

Respondents were asked if they used an emergency health care service, such as visiting an emergency room, were hospitalized, or interacted with police or spent time in jail in the past 12 months. If so, they were asked to estimate the number of times/days.

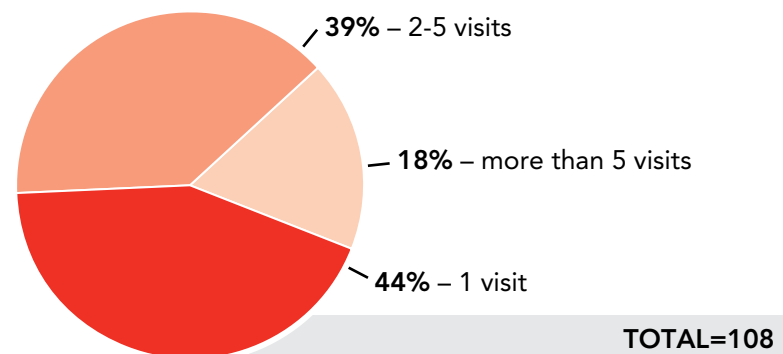
It is important to note that there is a range of reasons why respondents may interact with the health care and criminal justice system. In some cases, the interactions are related to the causes of homelessness (e.g., intimate partner violence), while in other cases they are a consequence of homelessness (e.g., increased emergency health care use as a result of health issues or barriers to accessing primary health care, interaction with law enforcement as a result of increased visibility in public spaces).

Respondents estimated that they had the following service interactions in the past year.

- 108 people (56%) reported that they had been to an emergency department.
- 80 people (42%) interacted with the police.
- 53 (28%) had been hospitalized.
- 18 people (9%) spent time in jail.

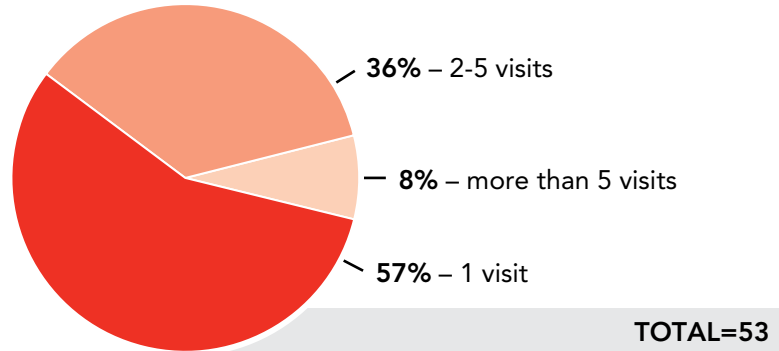
Of the individuals who had been to an emergency department, 44% estimated that they had one visit, 39% estimated they had two to five visits, and 18% estimated that they had more than five visits.

Number of Emergency Department Visits (past 12 months) of Respondents at the Time of the Point-in-Time Count



The majority (57%) of respondents who had been hospitalized reported being hospitalized once. Over one third (36%) had been hospitalized between two and five times, and 8% (four people) had been hospitalized more than five times.

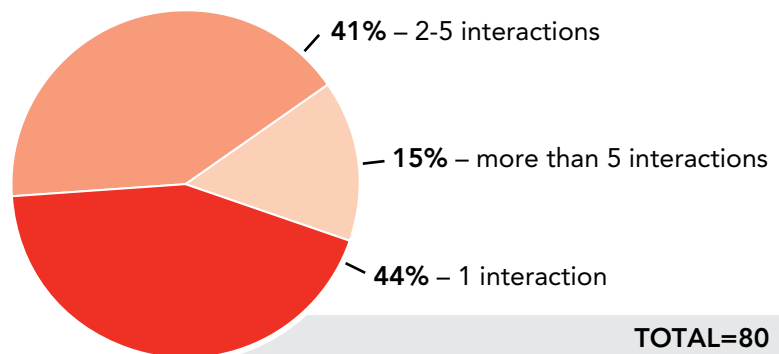
Number of Hospital Visits (past 12 months) of Respondents at the Time of the Point-in-Time Count



Of the survey respondents who reported being hospitalized in the past 12 months, one in ten (11%) were hospitalized for one day.

The largest group (44%) of respondents that had interacted with police in the past 12 months had one interaction. Another 41% had between two and five interactions and 15% had more than five interactions.

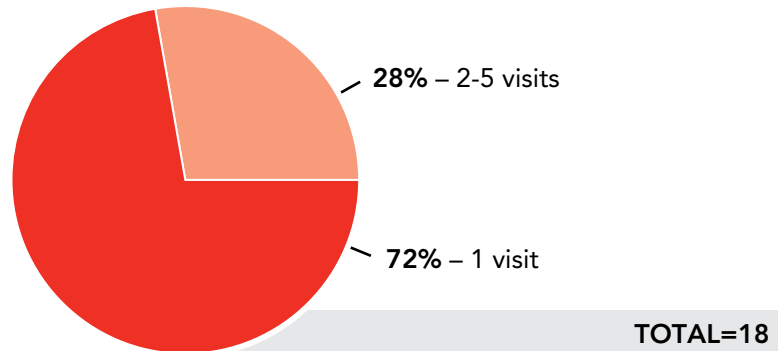
Number of Interactions with Police (past 12 months) of Respondents at the Time of the Point-in-Time Count



Of the 18 survey respondents who spent time in jail in the past 12 months, 13 spent time in jail once, and five spent time in jail two to five times.

Almost one in five (19%) respondents reported that they had been in foster care or a youth group home at some point in their lives.

Number of Times in Prison/Jail (past 12 months) of Respondents at the Time of the Point-in-Time Count



Of the survey respondents who spent time in jail in the past 12 months, three people spent one day in jail, six people spent between two and 30 days in jail, and five people spent more than 30 days.

Previous Involvement in Foster Care/Group Homes

Almost one in five (19%) of respondents reported that they had been in foster care or a youth group home at some point in their lives.

In comparison, among the general population in Canada, roughly 0.3% have had child welfare involvement³⁶.

Of the individuals who had been in foster care or a youth group home, two thirds (67%) experienced homelessness in one year or less after leaving foster care/group home. Another 8% experienced homelessness between one and five years from leaving foster care/group home, and 25% became homeless more than five years after leaving foster care/group home.

Six out of seven youth aged 17 to 21 that indicated that they had been in foster care or a youth group home reported becoming homeless in one year or less after leaving foster care/group home. The other youth did not know.

³⁶Source: Nichols, N., Schwan, K., Gaetz, S., Redman, M., French, D., Kidd, S., O'Grady, B. (2017). Child Welfare and Youth Homelessness in Canada: A Proposal for Action. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press

Conclusion

Results of the Point-in-Time count help determine the extent of people experiencing homelessness in York Region living in unsheltered and sheltered conditions at a single point in time. However, caution should be used when comparing the results of the 2021 count to previous counts, due to limitations to methodology as a result of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

While the count offers important information about homelessness in York Region, it does not provide an exact number of people experiencing homelessness in the community. The 329 people counted should be considered the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in York Region.

The count provides some insights into how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted homelessness in York Region:

- The profile of people experiencing homelessness has changed during the pandemic. Fewer youth and more adults and seniors were found to be experiencing homelessness.
- Housing market pressures experienced during the pandemic are playing a role in homelessness. The dramatic increases in house prices as well as increases in rents have led to more people being unable to pay their rent or mortgage. Homelessness service providers have also found that access to affordable units has decreased during the pandemic.

Almost one in five survey respondents reported that their housing loss was related to the pandemic.

The limited availability of affordable housing can result in longer periods of homelessness. Over half (53%) of the I Count 2021 survey respondents had experienced homelessness for six months or more of the past year (considered chronic homelessness). This is a higher percentage than in 2018 (when 45% had experienced homelessness for six months or more of the past year). This will be an important trend to continue to monitor.

The count also shines a light on the fact that certain population groups are over-represented among people experiencing homelessness in York Region:

- Indigenous people continue to be overrepresented among individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region.
- Black peoples are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness.
- One in ten survey respondents, and more than one quarter of youth, identified as LGBTQ2S+.
- The proportion of people identifying as non-binary is higher than the estimated proportion for the overall Canadian population.

York Region will continue to explore ways to address overrepresentation of certain demographic groups among people experiencing homelessness.

Data on income sources suggest the need to reduce barriers to access to incomes assistance. It also suggests that there may be an opportunity to support people experiencing homelessness in accessing additional incomes sources that they may qualify for, such as HST refunds, Veteran/Veterans Affairs Canada benefits, and child and family tax benefits.

Self-identified health issues and service needs of people experiencing homelessness suggest that supports related to mental health, substance use, physical limitations, and ongoing medical conditions are also critical for some people to permanently end their experiences with homelessness.

While a PiT Count provides useful insights into individuals experiencing homelessness in York Region, it is just one data collection strategy among many. This information should be augmented with data from HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) and other data to provide complementary information.

Recommendations to Address Homelessness in York Region

The count provides useful insights into the state of homelessness in York Region and can be used to guide improvement within the homelessness service system and related systems. The following findings point to areas of opportunity for York Region:

- The rates of homelessness among Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, including non-binary individuals, shows that there is more work to be done locally, provincially, and nationally to address systemic inequalities and discrimination that perpetuates homelessness for people from these groups who are experiencing physical, social and economic vulnerabilities. Within the local homelessness service system, there is a need for focused culture and safety analysis. Members of these communities should help lead the process and there should be commitment to act on the findings through the appropriate investments and training.
- Given the increase in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness since the 2016 count, substantial efforts will be required to understand and respond to the housing and support needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness. This includes continuing to be prioritized on the York Region By Name List and providing access to housing and supports to assist people in maintaining their housing. All levels of government have made commitments to end chronic homelessness.
- Findings related to income sources of respondents suggest that there may be an opportunity to support people experiencing homelessness in accessing additional income sources that they may qualify for. HST refunds were not identified as an income source, none of the veterans reported receiving Veteran/Veterans Affairs Canada benefit, and only a few families reported receiving child and family tax benefits. A few respondents reported having no income.
- Systems integration between the homelessness serving system and other key systems and services, including housing, mental health, physical health, disability services, employment, child protection, income supports and justice is essential to addressing homelessness. This includes a need to develop better mechanisms of coordination among the various system components and within and between organizations. Inter-ministerial strategies between the provincial and federal ministries are needed to improve coordination and resources and create a more seamless and comprehensive continuum of supports.³⁷ Mapping should be conducted of how individuals are engaging across each intersecting point of the various systems to identify gaps and inefficiencies that perpetuate risk for individuals.

³⁷Provincial ministries: Attorney General; Solicitor General; Children, Community and Social Services; Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Labour, Training and Skills Development; Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; Education; Finance; Health; Indigenous Affairs; Infrastructure; Long-Term Care; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Seniors and Accessibility

Integrated strategies should be implemented that centre the safety, health and wellbeing of the individual³⁸. The count points to several areas where systems integration is needed to encourage a more holistic approach to responding to co-occurring issues:

- Further work is needed to better understand the barriers that may exist for people accessing emergency housing and potential solutions. More people living unsheltered and in provisional accommodations reported having substance use issues, mental health issues, physical limitations, and cognitive or intellectual limitations than people staying in emergency housing.
- Additional analysis is needed to understand whether older adults who were experiencing homelessness for the first time have been successfully re-housed, and how this group can be better served. There is also a need for deeper understanding of the social and economic conditions of seniors that are contributing to the increase in older adults found to be experiencing homelessness.
- Ongoing work should continue to explore the need for a senior-focused housing framework and services that concentrate on physical disabilities, mobility supports and health services. The number of older adults experiencing homelessness is likely to continue to increase with the aging of baby boomers, making improving service delivery to this population important.
- There is a need for the homelessness serving system, disability service system, and health systems to continue to collaborate to better serve individuals with cognitive disabilities and intellectual limitations. Learning and cognitive disabilities was a newly added question in 2021. In total, 23% of respondents, and 58% of youth, reported cognitive or intellectual limitations. Among all respondents, 9% reported they had a need for services related to a cognitive disability, and 3% reported the need for services related to brain injuries.

³⁸ Federal ministries: Health; Mental Health and Addictions, Finance, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; Families, Children and Social Development; Indigenous Services; Housing and Diversity and Inclusion; Women and Gender Equality and Youth; Seniors; Justice and Attorney General of Canada; Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities; Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence; Crown-Indigenous Relations; Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

- There are financial benefits available to youth “aging out” of care, but strategies, plans and resources are needed between child protection agencies, the Region, United Way and homelessness serving agencies to support better access to these benefits. It is estimated that between 80 and 160 youth “age out” of care each year in York Region³⁹. The count results show that transitions from the child protection system continue to contribute to homelessness among youth in York Region.
- Additional investments in, and connections to, both clinical and non-clinical mental health supports and partnerships between the health sector and human services could improve the service system. This includes in areas such as data sharing, resources, and infrastructure. Additional investment in mental health supports is needed both as a preventative measure to help people avoid homelessness in the first place and to help people who have experienced homelessness succeed in maintaining their housing once re-housed. The rates of mental health issues among people experiencing homelessness have increased during the pandemic.
- The findings show the importance of additional investments in, and connections to, both clinical and non-clinical mental health supports and partnerships between the health sector and human services. Almost one in five, or 18%, of respondents reported the need for services related to a serious/ongoing medical condition, 18% reported the need for services related to physical disability/limitations, and 17% identified the need for addiction or substance use services.

Rapid progress can be made on a number of these opportunities, while some require longer term investments and service delivery enhancements. Future I Count data could be an indicator to demonstrate progress in preventing, reducing and ending homelessness in York Region.

The pandemic has provided an opportunity and created space for different organizations to work together. This has reduced silos, enhanced collaborations and improved coordination. The recommendations identified in this report provide further opportunities to continue to collaborate in taking steps to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.

³⁹It is estimated that between 1,000 to 2,000 youth “age out” of care in Ontario is each year (Adoption Council of Ontario (2016). Everything changes with a forever family [Brochure]. Toronto, ON. Retrieved from https://www.adoption.on.ca/uploads/File/Everything_Changes_with_a_Forever_Family_AC_O.pdf; Monsebraaten, L. (2020, July 6). Their lives have been defined by trauma. Why kick kids out of foster care and group homes when they turn 18? The Star.)

Appendix A: Count and Survey Locations and Incentives

The Point-in-Time count was conducted over a 24-hour period beginning at 6:30pm on June 1, 2021.

The weather on June 1 was mix of sun and cloud during the day. Clear night. High of 25. 23 degrees at 6pm on June 1, eight degrees at midnight, three degrees at 6am on June 2⁴⁰.

The count was co-led by United Way and the Region. United Way and the Region each had one Project Coordinator, who facilitated the planning and implementation of the count. Additionally, United Way and the Region both had one Project Manager, who provided direction and decision making for planning and implementation of the count. These four individuals provided overall management support and coordination on June 1-2.

Twelve community partners from homelessness service, community services (children, youth and family services, mental health drop-ins), justice (police), health (hospital, mental health, and addictions services) collaborated in the count.

Each participating agency had a lead staff person who communicated virtually with I Count 2021 project coordinators on the progress of the count.

The count and surveys were conducted by staff from the homelessness services sector who received specific training to conduct the count and surveys.

Survey respondents were provided with a gift bag as a honoraria for their participation.

The counts and surveys were conducted in the following locations:

Unsheltered

Counts and surveys were conducted during the day on June 2, 2021, in ten encampments and known locations determined by frontline homelessness serving staff and agencies. Locations have not been disclosed to protect the safety and privacy of the respondents.

Sheltered

The sheltered count and surveys were conducted from 6:30pm – 11:59pm on June 1, 2021. There were 238 people counted and 128 people who completed a survey who were staying in emergency housing (shelters), COVID-19 isolation shelters, and Violence Against Women shelters.

⁴⁰Source: timeanddate.com

Transitional Housing

The count and surveys in transitional housing were conducted from 6:30pm – 11:59pm on June 1, 2021.

On June 1, 53 people were counted and 42 people staying in transitional housing completed a survey.

Health and Corrections Systems

The two locations providing mental health and addictions beds participated in the systems count. Surveys were conducted at one of these two locations. Counts were also conducted at two hospitals and counts were conducted of individuals in police custody.

Drop-In and Drop by Locations

Surveys were conducted at three service locations that provide drop-ins: Krasman Centre (consumer/survivor drop-in), Community Connections CMHA (mental health and wellness drop-in) and 360°kids Home Base (youth drop-in). These surveys were conducted on June 2, 2021 from 6am-4pm.

Drop-bys were created during the height of the pandemic to replace drop-ins that were closed allowing individuals experiencing homelessness to access, meals, showers, a place to rest and connect with resources. These locations were also publicized for individuals to visit to be counted and complete the survey.

Drop-by survey locations included a recreation centre (Ray Twinney Centre), and two emergency housing locations (shelters) (Salvation Army Sutton Youth Shelter, and Salvation Army Belinda's Place). These surveys were conducted on June 2, 2021 from 6am-4pm.

Location: _____

Time: _____ AM/PM

Interviewer: _____

Contact #: _____

BEGIN SURVEY

1. Do you have family members or anyone else who is staying with you tonight? [Indicate survey number for partners. Check all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> NONE									<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Can include other family or friends)
<input type="checkbox"/> PARTNER - Survey #: _____									<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
<input type="checkbox"/> CHILD(REN)/DEPENDENT(S) [indicate gender and age for each]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
GENDER									
AGE									

2. How old are you? [OR] What year were you born? [If unsure, ask for best estimate]

AGE _____ OR YEAR BORN _____ DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

➔ **For this survey, “homelessness” means any time when you have been without a permanent and secure place to live, including sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or living temporarily with others without having your own permanent housing (e.g. couch surfing).**

3. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

AGE _____ DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

4. In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? [Does not need to be exact. Best estimate.]

LENGTH _____ DAYS | WEEKS | MONTHS DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

4.b In total, how many different times have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR? (the last 12 months) [Best estimate.]

_____ NUMBER OF TIMES DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

5. Have you stayed in a homeless shelter in the past year? For example, (COMMUNITY NOTE: Include examples of emergency shelters, seasonal shelters, and hotels for interviewers to provide).

YES NO DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

6. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or a refugee claimant (i.e. applied for refugee status after coming to Canada)?

<input type="radio"/> YES, IMMIGRANT -----> <input type="radio"/> YES, REFUGEE-----> <input type="radio"/> YES, REFUGEE CLAIMANT-----> <input type="radio"/> NO, CANADIAN CITIZEN <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER	If YES: How long have you been in Canada? <input type="radio"/> LENGTH: _____ DAYS WEEKS MONTHS YEARS OR DATE: ____/____/____ DAY / MONTH / YEAR <input type="radio"/> BORN IN CANADA <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
---	--

7. How long have you been in York Region? (Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, and Whitchurch-Stouffville)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LENGTH _____ DAYS / WEEKS / MONTHS / YEARS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALWAYS BEEN HERE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DON'T KNOW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DECLINE TO ANSWER
--	--	--	---

↪ **Where did you live before you came to York Region?**

- CITY: _____ | PROVINCE/TERRITORY/COUNTRY: _____
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

↪ **Were you homeless in the community you lived in PRIOR to coming to York Region or did you become homeless AFTER arriving in York Region?**

- Yes, was homeless PRIOR to coming to York Region
 - No, became Homeless AFTER arriving in York Region
 - Don't know
 - Decline to Answer

↪ **Did you stay in a homeless shelter in your previous community in the year prior to coming to York Region?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Decline to Answer

↪ **What is/are the main reason(s) you came to York Region?**

- To access emergency shelter(s)
- Could not access shelter in previous community
- To access services and supports
- Family moved here
- To visit friend/family
- To find housing
- To seek employment
- To secure employment (received job offer)
- To attend school
- Incarceration (jail, prison or detention centre)
- Fear for safety
- Was barred from a shelter in previous community
- Was evicted from my housing in previous community
- Other reason(s): _____
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

8. Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have North American Indigenous ancestry? [If yes, please specify] (COMMUNITY NOTE: The wording of this question can be adapted to what makes sense in your community, for example by listing specific First Nations)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ YES, FIRST NATIONS ○ YES, INUIT ○ COMMUNITY/RESERVE NAME: _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ YES, MÉTIS ○ YES, INDIGENOUS ANCESTRY ○ YES, CHIPPEWAS OF GEORGINA ISLAND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NO ○ DON'T KNOW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DECLINE TO ANSWER
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8.b In addition to your response in the question above, do you identify with any of the racialized identities listed below? [Show or Read list. Select all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> ARAB (e.g., Syrian, Egyptian, Yemeni)	<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK-AFRO-CARIBBEAN OR AFRO-LATINX (e.g., Jamaican, Haitian, Afro-Brazilian)
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN-EAST (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese)	<input type="checkbox"/> LATIN AMERICAN (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Chilean, Cuban)
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN- SOUTH-EAST (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian)	<input type="checkbox"/> WHITE (e.g. European, French, Ukrainian, Euro-Latinx)
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN-SOUTH OR INDO-CARIBBEAN (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian)	<input type="checkbox"/> NOT LISTED (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN-WEST (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)	<input type="checkbox"/> IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS ONLY
<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK-CANADIAN/AMERICAN	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK-AFRICAN (e.g., Ghanaian, Ethiopian, Nigerian)	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

9. Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

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

<input type="radio"/> YES, MILITARY	<input type="radio"/> BOTH MILITARY AND RCMP	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> YES, RCMP	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

10. As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care or in a youth group home (COMMUNITY NOTE: include any other Provincial child welfare programs)? [Note: This question applies specifically to child welfare programs.]

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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10.b → If yes, approximately how long after leaving foster care/group home did you become homeless?

<input type="radio"/> LENGTH _____ DAYS / WEEKS / MONTHS / YEARS	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
--	----------------------------------	---

11. Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time:

ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION [e.g. diabetes, arthritis, TB, HIV]	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
PHYSICAL LIMITATION [e.g. challenges with mobility, physical abilities or dexterity]	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
LEARNING OR COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS [e.g. dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, or as a result of ADHD or an acquired brain injury]	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE [diagnosed/undiagnosed] [e.g. depression, Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bipolar disorder]	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
SUBSTANCE USE ISSUE [e.g. tobacco, alcohol, opiates]	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

12. What gender do you identify with? [Show list.]

<input type="radio"/> MAN	<input type="radio"/> TRANS WOMAN	<input type="radio"/> NOT LISTED: _____
<input type="radio"/> WOMAN	<input type="radio"/> TRANS MAN	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> TWO-SPIRIT	<input type="radio"/> NON-BINARY (GENDERQUEER)	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

13. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian? [Show list.]

<input type="radio"/> STRAIGHT/HETEROSEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> BISEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> ASEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> NOT LISTED: _____
<input type="radio"/> GAY	<input type="radio"/> TWO-SPIRIT	<input type="radio"/> QUESTIONING	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> LESBIAN	<input type="radio"/> PANSEXUAL	<input type="radio"/> QUEER	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

14. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? [Do not read the options. Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays. Follow up for the reason if the respondent says "eviction" or that they "chose to leave".]

A: HOUSING AND FINANCIAL ISSUES	B: INTERPERSONAL AND FAMILY ISSUES	C: HEALTH OR CORRECTIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> NOT ENOUGH INCOME FOR HOUSING (E.G. LOSS OF BENEFIT, INCOME, OR JOB) <input type="checkbox"/> UNFIT/UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITION <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING SOLD OR RENNOVATED <input type="checkbox"/> OWNER MOVED IN <input type="checkbox"/> LANDLORD/TENANT CONFLICT <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLAINT (E.G. PETS/NOISE/DAMAGE) <input type="checkbox"/> LEFT THE COMMUNITY/RELOCATED	<input type="checkbox"/> CONFLICT WITH: SPOUSE / PARTNER <input type="checkbox"/> CONFLICT WITH: PARENT / GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> CONFLICT WITH: OTHER (_____) <input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED ABUSE BY: SPOUSE / PARTNER <input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED ABUSE BY: PARENT / GUARDIAN <input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED ABUSE BY: OTHER (_____) <input type="checkbox"/> DEPARTURE OF FAMILY MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION	<input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANCE USE ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALIZATION OR TREATMENT PROGRAM <input type="checkbox"/> INCARCERATION (JAIL OR PRISON)
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER REASON: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

14.b Was your most recent housing loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

YES NO DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

14.c How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing most recently)? (Best estimate)

LENGTH _____ DAYS | WEEKS | MONTHS | YEARS DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

15. What are your sources of income? [Reminder that this survey is anonymous. **Read list** and check all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> CASUAL EMPLOYMENT (E.G. CONTRACT WORK) <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL INCOME SOURCES (E.G. BOTTLE RETURNS, PANHANDLING) <input type="checkbox"/> MONEY FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS	<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE <input type="checkbox"/> DISABILITY BENEFIT [Name of PROV. DISABILITY BENEFIT] <input type="checkbox"/> SENIORS BENEFITS (E.G. CPP/OAS/GIS) <input type="checkbox"/> WELFARE/SOCIAL ASSISTANCE [Prov. Benefit] <input type="checkbox"/> VETERAN/VAC BENEFITS	<input type="checkbox"/> CHILD AND FAMILY TAX BENEFITS <input type="checkbox"/> GST/HST REFUND <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER MONEY FROM A SERVICE AGENCY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER SOURCE: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NO INCOME <input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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16. What is the highest level of education you completed?

PRIMARY SCHOOL SOME POST SECONDARY NO FORMAL EDUCATION
 SOME HIGH SCHOOL POST SECONDARY GRADUATE DON'T KNOW
 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE/GED GRADUATE DEGREE (E.G., MASTERS, Ph.D.) DECLINE TO ANSWER

17. In the past year (12 months) have you: [Ask respondents to give their best estimate]

USED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (2016 SURVEY) BEEN TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM	Y ___ N ___	# _____ Times
BEEN HOSPITALIZED	Y ___ N ___	# _____ Times
→DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT HOSPITALIZED		_____ Days Total
INTERACTED WITH POLICE (Tickets, arrests, searches)	Y ___ N ___	# _____ Times
BEEN TO PRISON/JAIL	Y ___ N ___	# _____ Times
→DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT IN PRISON/JAIL		_____ Days Total

18. Do you want to get into permanent housing?

YES NO DON'T KNOW DECLINE TO ANSWER

19. What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing? [Select all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> LOW INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES	<input type="checkbox"/> DISCRIMINATION
<input type="checkbox"/> NO INCOME ASSISTANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> ADDICTION	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T WANT HOUSING
<input type="checkbox"/> RENTS TOO HIGH	<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY BREAKDOWN/CONFLICT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> YORK REGION HOUSING WAIT LIST	<input type="checkbox"/> CRIMINAL HISTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> NO BARRIERS TO HOUSING
<input type="checkbox"/> POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> PETS	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THE ABOVE
<input type="checkbox"/> DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	<input type="checkbox"/> CHILDREN	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
<input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH/DISABILITY ISSUES		

20. In what language do you feel best able to express yourself?

<input type="radio"/> ENGLISH	<input type="radio"/> NO PREFERENCE	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> FRENCH	<input type="radio"/> NEITHER (please specify) _____	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

21. I'm going to read a list of services that you may or may not need. Let me know which of these apply to you. Do you have a need for services related to: [Read categories, select all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> SERIOUS/ONGOING MEDICAL CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL DISABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> PREGNANCY
<input type="checkbox"/> ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE	<input type="checkbox"/> LEARNING DISABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THE ABOVE
<input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH (<i>Counselling, treatment, etc.</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> BRAIN INJURY	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

22. Are you currently on a waitlist for York Region subsidized housing?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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23. Are you currently enrolled in school?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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24. Have you answered this survey with a person with this lanyard?

[YES: Thank and end survey – to be excluded from count] [NO: Thank and tally]

Thank you. Your input is valuable and insightful.

Appendix C: I Count 2021 Survey Data Tables

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Location of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Location	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Homeless Shelter*	115	60%
Transitional Shelter / Housing	42	22%
Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelter	13	7%
Unsheltered in a Public Space (e.g., Street, Park, Bus Shelter, Forest or Abandoned Building)	8	4%
Encampment (e.g., Group of Tents, Makeshift Shelters or Other Long-Term Settlement)	7	4%
Hotel/Motel	2	1%
Someone Else's Place**	2	1%
Treatment Centre	2	1%
Vehicle (Car, Van, RV, Truck, Boat)	1	1%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: For Sheltered Locations; Where are you staying tonight? For Unsheltered Locations; Where did you stay last night?

*Includes Seasonal Shelters

** Two respondents in this category indicated that they did not have access to a permanent residence where they could safely stay as long as they wanted

Location of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
Emergency Shelter	73	33%
Someone Else's Place	53	24%
Transitional Housing	33	15%
Outdoor/Public space	31	14%
Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelter	22	10%
Hotel/Motel	4	2%
Own place*	2	1%
Declined to answer	6	3%
Total	224	100%

Survey question: Where are you staying tonight?

*Own place refers to 2 respondents who had their own place on Tuesday but became homeless later during Registry Week

**Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding

Household Composition of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Staying/Stayed With Family Members	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Single/no family members staying with respondent the night of survey	153	80%
Multi-person family, family members not specified*	21	11%
Multi-person family with children Includes partner with child(ren), another adult with child(ren), and lone parent	11	6%
Multi-person family without children Includes with partner, with another adult, with partner and another adult families	6	3%
Declined to answer	1	1%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: Do you have family members or anyone else who is staying with you tonight?

* An additional category of respondents was added to reflect responses for which family member details were not provided

Household Composition of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
Single/no family members staying with respondent the night of survey	177	79%
Multi-person family with children Includes partner with child(ren), another adult with child(ren), and lone parent	25	11%
Multi-person family without children Includes with partner, with another adult, with partner and another adult families	19	8%
Declined to answer	3	1%
Total	224	100%

Survey question: What family members are staying with you tonight?

*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding

Age of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Age Group	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
16-24	26	14%	58	26%
25-64	143	74%	154	69%
65+	15	8%	9	4%
Declined to answer	8	4%	3	1%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Age at first homeless experience of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Age Group	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
0-14	14	7%	21	9%
15-24	51	27%	77	34%
25-34	27	14%	32	14%
35-44	22	11%	27	12%
45-54	30	16%	34	15%
55+	39	20%	25	11%
Don't know	2	1%	8	4%
Declined to answer	7	4%	0	0%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?

*Percentages from 2018 do not add to 100 due to rounding

Length of time homeless in the past year of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Length of time	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Up to 3 months	43	22%	67	30%
3 months to under 6 months	29	15%	40	18%
6 months to under 12 months	54	28%	40	18%
1 year	48	25%	60	27%
Don't know	4	2%	0	0%
Declined to answer*	14	7%	17	8%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)?

Note: Nine respondents who reported 'Answered' but did not provide a response were classified as 'Declined to answer'

*Percentages from 2018 do not add to 100 due to rounding

Number of times homeless in the past year of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Length of time	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
1 time	122	64%	129	58%
2 times	28	15%	32	14%
3 or more times	17	9%	47	21%
Don't know	4	2%	0	0%
Declined to answer	21	11%	16	7%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: In total, how many different times have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR? (the last 12 months) [Best estimate.]

History of homeless shelter stay(s) in the past year of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Homeless Shelter Stay in Past Year	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	156	81%	169	75%
No	32	17%	53	24%
Don't know/Declined to answer	4	2%	2	1%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Immigration status of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Immigration Status	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes, Immigrant	34	18%	26	12%
Yes, Refugee or Refugee Claimant	7	4%	10	4%
No	148	77%	180	80%
Don't Know	0	0%	3	1%
Declined to answer	3	2%	5	2%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or a refugee claimant (i.e. applied for refugee status after coming to Canada)? (examples of emergency shelters, seasonal shelters, and hotels for interviewers to provide).

*Percentages from 2018 do not add to 100 due to rounding

Length of time in York Region among respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Length of time in York Region	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
1 year or less*	59	31%	57	25%
More than 1 year to 5 years	29	15%	41	18%
More than 5 years	45	23%	58	26%
Always been here*	41	21%	56	25%
Don't know/Declined to answer**	18	9%	12	5%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

*The response of one client who indicated that they had "always been here" was excluded from this category

**One respondent did not specify their length of time in York Region

*Percentages from 2018 do not add to 100 due to rounding

Indigenous status of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Indigenous Status	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	23	12%	37	17%
No	164	85%	177	79%
Don't Know	2	1%	7	3%
Declined to answer	3	2%	3	1%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit, or do you have North American Indigenous ancestry?

Ethno-cultural groups of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Ethno-cultural group	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
White*	92	48%
Black (e.g., Black Canadian/American, African, Afro-Caribbean or Afro-Latinx)**	19	10%
Aboriginal or Indigenous [^]	16	8%
Asian-West (e.g., Iranian, Afghan) or Arab (e.g., Syrian, Egyptian, Yemeni)	6	3%
Asian-East (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese)	3	2%
Asian-South-East (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian)	3	2%
Asian-South or Indo-Caribbean (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian)	2	1%
Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Mexican, Chilean, Cuban)	2	1%
Don't know	22	11%
Declined to answer	27	14%

Survey question: In addition to your response in the question above, do you identify with any of the racialized identities listed below?

Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

*Excludes two clients which also replied "Declined to answer" and "No, Identify As Indigenous Only"

**Includes one client who identified as "other" and specified "Black"

[^]The percentage of respondents who identified as being Aboriginal or Indigenous in this table was lower than the percentage that reported Indigenous identity or ancestry

Note: Two respondents identified with more than one racial group

Ethno-cultural groups of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
White	148	66%
Black or African Canadian	30	13%
Aboriginal or Indigenous [^]	23	10%
Other (Hispanic or Latin American, Arab, or South Asian, e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)	13	6%
Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)	6	3%
West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)	6	3%
South-East Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)	0	0%
Filipino	0	0%
Don't know	2	1%
Declined to answer	5	2%

Survey question: What racial group do you identify with?

*Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

Note: 14 respondents (6%) identified with two racial groups

[^]The percentage of respondents who identified as being Aboriginal or Indigenous in this table was lower than the percentage that reported Indigenous identity or ancestry (Table 8)

Responses have been merged to maintain respondent anonymity

Canadian Military status of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Served in Canadian Military	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	8	4%
No	180	94%
Don't Know	1	1%
Declined to answer	3	2%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: Have you ever had any military service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

Canadian Military status of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
Yes, Military or RCMP	6	3%
No	212	95%
Don't Know	3	1%
Declined to answer	3	1%
Total	224	100%

Survey question: Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

Foster Care history of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

History of Foster Care	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	36	19%	42	19%
No	154	80%	177	79%
Don't Know	0	0%	2	1%
Declined to answer	2	1%	3	1%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care or in a youth group home?

Time since leaving Foster Care, 2021

Length of time	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
One year ago or less	14	39%
1 to 5 years ago	3	8%
Over 5 years ago	9	25%
Declined to answer	10	28%
Total	36	100%

Survey question: If yes, approximately how long after leaving foster care/group home did you become homeless?

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Illness or medical conditions of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Illness or Medical Condition	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	74	39%	83	37%
No	110	57%	116	52%
Don't Know	2	1%	4	2%
Declined to answer	6	3%	21	9%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time: ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION [e.g., diabetes, arthritis, TB, HIV] in 2018, the survey question was: Do you identify with having any of the following: Chronic/acute medical condition?

Physical limitations of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Physical Limitation	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	68	35%	69	31%
No	115	60%	126	56%
Don't Know	2	1%	3	1%
Declined to answer	7	4%	26	12%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time: PHYSICAL LIMITATION [e.g., challenges with mobility, physical abilities or dexterity]

Learning or cognitive limitations of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Learning or Cognitive Limitations	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	45	23%
No	134	70%
Don't Know	4	2%
Declined to answer	9	5%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time: LEARNING OR COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS [e.g., dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, or as a result of ADHD or an acquired brain injury]

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Mental health issues of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Mental Health Issue	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	122	64%	107	48%
No	61	32%	97	43%
Don't Know	1	1%	9	4%
Declined to answer	8	4%	11	5%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time: MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE [diagnosed/undiagnosed] [e.g., depression, Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bipolar disorder]

Substance use issues of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Substance Use Issue	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	92	48%	77	34%
No	93	48%	128	57%
Don't Know	0	0%	1	0.5%
Declined to answer	7	4%	18	8%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question in 2021: Do you identify as having any of the following health challenges at this time: SUBSTANCE USE ISSUE (e.g., tobacco, alcohol, opiates)

Survey question in 2018: Do you identify with having any of the following: Addiction

*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding

Gender of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Gender	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Man	101	53%	125	56%
Woman	88	46%	95	42%
Gender non-conforming	2	1%	4*	2%*
Declined to answer	1	1%	0	0%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: What gender do you identify with?

*Responses from 2018 were merged to maintain respondent anonymity. Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming, Don't Know, or Decline to answer

Sexual orientation of respondents at the time of the Point-in-Time Count, 2021 and 2018

Sexual Orientation	I Count Total 2021		I Count Total 2018	
	#	%	#	%
Straight / Heterosexual	167	87%	197	88%
LGBTQ2S	19	10%	17	8%
Don't know or Declined to answer	6	3%	10	4%
Total	192	100%	224	100%

Survey question: How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian?

Reason for current loss of housing of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Reason for Homelessness	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Unable to pay rent/mortgage	43	22%
Family conflict (conflict with parent/guardian/spouse/partner)	32	17%
Unsafe housing conditions	22	11%
Domestic abuse (abuse by parent/guardian/spouse/partner)	19	10%
Conflict with landlord/tenant/housemate	17	9%
Home sold, foreclosed, or no longer available	14	7%
Addiction or substance use or mental health	13	7%
Left the community/relocated	6	3%
Incarcerated (jail or prison)	5	3%
Abuse by other (e.g., roommate)	4	2%
Illness/medical condition, hospitalization, or treatment program	4	2%
Other (e.g., conflict with other, death/departure of family member, discrimination)	34	18%
Declined to answer	10	5%

Survey question: What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?

Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

Reason for current loss of housing of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
Family conflict (conflict with parent/guardian/spouse/partner)	55	25%
Job loss	35	16%
Illness/medical condition, hospitalization, or treatment program	33	15%
Unable to pay rent/mortgage	31	14%
Addiction or substance use or mental health	30	13%
Domestic abuse (abuse by parent/guardian/spouse/partner)	30	13%
Unsafe housing conditions	24	11%
Home sold, foreclosed, or no longer available	12	5%
Conflict with landlord	11	5%
Incarcerated (jail or prison)	11	5%
Eviction	8	4%
Abuse by other	6	3%
Other (e.g., conflict with others, conflict with law / legal issues, death of family member, others)	22	10%
Don't know	2	1%
Declined to answer	6	3%

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

Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

Respondents' top reasons for housing loss by population group, 2021

	Total	Youth	People Aged 55+	People Aged 65+	Indigenous Peoples	Women	Men	Families with Children	LGBTQ2S+	Black Peoples
Not Enough Income for Housing (e.g., Loss of Benefit, Income, or Job)	22%	19%	29%	20%	4%	19%	21%	0%	21%	26%
Unfit/Unsafe Housing Condition	11%	12%	11%	7%	17%	15%	9%	0%	16%	5%
Building Sold or Renovated	7%	12%	9%	7%	17%	6%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Owner Moved In	2%	0%	4%	7%	9%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Landlord/Tenant Conflict	9%	15%	5%	7%	13%	5%	13%	0%	0%	5%
Conflict with: Spouse / Partner	9%	12%	7%	0%	0%	7%	9%	9%	5%	21%
Conflict with: Parent / Guardian	7%	15%	2%	0%	9%	6%	9%	0%	21%	0%
Experienced Abuse by: Spouse / Partner	9%	0%	2%	0%	13%	8%	2%	9%	5%	26%
Substance Use Issue	6%	12%	2%	0%	0%	3%	9%	0%	11%	0%
Experienced Abuse by: Roommate	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	9%	0%	5%

COVID-19 pandemic-related housing loss of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Housing Loss related to COVID-19 pandemic	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	37	19%
No	148	77%
Don't Know	3	2%
Declined to answer	2	1%
No response	2	1%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: Was your most recent housing loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Time since recent housing loss of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Time since loss of housing	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
1 year or less	119	62%
More than 1 year to 3 years	27	14%
More than 3 years to 5 years	9	5%
More than 5 years	10	5%
Don't know/Declined to answer	27	14%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing most recently)?

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Income source(s) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Income Source(s)	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Disability Benefits (e.g., ODSP, CPP-D, WSIB, etc.)	64	33%
Welfare/Social Assistance (Ontario Works)	58	30%
Employment	25	13%
Seniors Benefits (e.g., CPP/OAS/GIS)	18	9%
Employment Insurance*	14	7%
No income	7	4%
Child and Family Tax benefits	6	3%
Informal employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling)	3	2%
GST Refund	0	0%
Other (including money from family and friends, and Other money from a service agency)	10	5%
Declined to answer	7	4%

Survey question: What are your sources of income?

Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

*Employment Insurance is listed as a separate category compared to 2018, based on the number of responses

Income source(s) of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
Welfare/Social Assistance (Ontario Works)	89	40%
Disability Benefits (e.g., ODSP, CPP-D, WSIB, etc.)	67	30%
Employment	39	17%
No income	19	8%
Informal employment (e.g., bottle returns, panhandling)	12	5%
Seniors Benefits (e.g., CPP/OAS/GIS)	12	5%
Child and Family Tax benefits	11	5%
GST Refund	8	4%
Other (including Employment Insurance, money from family and friends, and other)	12	5%
Declined to answer	7	3%

Emergency room visits (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	108	56%
No	84	44%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: In the past year (12 months) have you: BEEN TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Number of emergency room visits (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
1 visit	47	44%
2 to 5 visits	42	39%
More than 5 visits	19	18%
Total	108	100%

Survey question: # _____ Times

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Hospitalizations (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	53	28%
No	139	72%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: In the past year (12 months) have you: BEEN HOSPITALIZED

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Hospital visits (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
1 visit	30	57%
2 to 5 visits	19	36%
More than 5 visits	4	8%
Total	53	100%

Survey question: # _____ Times

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Total days hospitalized (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
One day	6	11%
2 to 7 days	20	38%
More than 7 days	23	43%
Not specified	4	8%
Total	53	100%

Survey question: DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT HOSPITALIZED

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Interactions with police (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	80	42%
No	112	58%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: In the past year (12 months) have you: INTERACTED WITH POLICE (Tickets, arrests, searches)

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Interactions with police (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
1 interaction	35	44%
2 to 5 interactions	33	41%
More than 5 interactions	12	15%
Total	80	100%

Survey question: # _____ Times

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

History of being to prison/jail (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	18	9%
No	174	91%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: In the past year (12 months) have you: BEEN TO PRISON/JAIL

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Number of times in prison/jail (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
1 visit	13	72%
2 to 5 visits	5	28%
More than 5 visits	0	0%
Total	18	100%

Survey question: # _____ Times

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Total days in prison/jail (past 12 months) of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
One day	3	17%
2 to 30 days	6	33%
More than 30 days	5	28%
Not specified	4	22%
Total	18	100%

Survey question: DAYS YOU HAVE SPENT IN PRISON/JAIL

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Desire to get into permanent housing among respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Wants to get into permanent housing	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	181	94%
No	4	2%
Don't Know	6	3%
Declined to answer	1	1%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: Do you want to get into permanent housing?

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

**Challenges or problems experienced by respondents when Trying to Find to Housing,
2021 Point-in-Time Count**

Barrier	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Low income	120	63%
Inability to pay rent	99	52%
Budget	29	15%
Discrimination	29	15%
No income assistance	20	10%
Mental health issues	20	10%
Credit Score	19	10%
Family Breakdown/Conflict	17	9%
Health/Disability Issues	17	9%
Poor housing conditions	16	8%
Children	11	6%
COVID-19 pandemic	9	5%
Unemployment	9	5%
Domestic Violence	6	3%
Criminal History	5	3%
Other (e.g., pets, not specified)	5	3%
No Barriers to Housing	5	3%
Don't want housing	2	1%
Don't know	3	2%
Declined to answer	2	1%

Survey question: What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing?

Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Challenges in trying to find housing by population group, 2021

	Youth	55+	Indigenous Peoples	Women	Men	Families with Children	LGBTQ2S+	Black Peoples
Low Income	46%	73%	65%	66%	60%	64%	58%	63%
Rents Too High	62%	42%	43%	58%	47%	73%	68%	58%
No Income Assistance	12%	5%	17%	15%	6%	0%	21%	11%
Poor Housing Conditions	8%	5%	17%	7%	10%	9%	16%	5%
Domestic Violence	0%	2%	9%	7%	0%	9%	16%	5%
Health/Disability Issues	0%	9%	17%	9%	7%	0%	11%	11%
Mental Health Issues	19%	4%	13%	8%	13%	0%	16%	5%
Addiction	4%	2%	9%	5%	7%	0%	11%	0%
Family Breakdown/Conflict	4%	7%	17%	17%	2%	0%	21%	5%
Children	4%	2%	9%	9%	3%	36%	0%	21%
Discrimination	4%	9%	26%	20%	8%	45%	11%	32%
Budget	8%	18%	17%	19%	11%	9%	16%	32%
COVID-19 pandemic	0%	9%	4%	5%	5%	9%	0%	11%
Credit Score	4%	9%	26%	11%	9%	9%	26%	16%
Unemployment	0%	5%	9%	3%	6%	0%	5%	5%
No Help	0%	2%	9%	1%	4%	0%	0%	5%

Preferred language of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Preferred language	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
English	182	95%
French	3	2%
Other languages (e.g., Farsi, Cantonese and Urdu)	7	4%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: In what language do you feel best able to express yourself?

Preferred language of respondents at the time of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count

Response	I Count Total 2018	
	#	%
English	204	91%
Another language other than English or French	9	4%
English and another language other than French	8	4%
No preference between English or French	1	0%
French	0	0%
Declined to answer	2	1%
Total	224	100%

Service needs of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Service	I Count Total 2021
	%
Mental Health (e.g., counselling, treatment)	43%
Physical disability/limitations	18%
Serious/Ongoing Medical condition	18%
Addiction or Substance Use	17%
Employment/Income	11%
Cognitive disability	9%
Housing	6%
Food	4%
Brain injury	3%
Pregnancy	3%
Not specified	2%
None/None of the above	28%
Don't know	1%
Declined to answer	7%

Survey question: I'm going to read a list of services that you may or may not need. Let me know which of these apply to you. Do you have a need for services related to:

Percentages will not add to 100 because respondents could select more than one answer

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Subsidized housing waitlist status of respondents at the time of the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Subsidized housing wait list status	I Count Total 2021	
	#	%
Yes	24	13%
No	167	87%
Declined to answer	1	1%
Total	192	100%

Survey question: Are you currently on a waitlist for York Region subsidized housing?

Note: This question was not asked in 2018

Appendix D: Definitions

At-Risk of Homelessness

Refers to persons who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious and/or does not meet public health, or safety standards.

Chronic Homelessness

Refers to people, often with disabling conditions (e.g., chronic physical or mental illness, substance abuse problems), who are currently experiencing homelessness 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 designed for human habitation).

Emergency Housing/Shelter

A facility designed to meet the immediate needs of people who are experiencing homelessness. Emergency housing/shelters may target specific sub-populations, including women, families, youth, or Indigenous persons. These shelters typically have minimal eligibility criteria, may offer shared sleeping facilities and amenities, and may expect clients to leave in the morning. They may offer food, clothing, and/or other services.

Emergency Sheltered

People staying overnight in emergency housing (shelters) for people who are experiencing homelessness, including extreme weather shelters such as Out of the Cold programs and crash beds, and shelters for people impacted by violence. This would include people who have received hotel/motel vouchers where no emergency shelters exist or in overflow situations.

Hidden Homelessness

People living temporarily with others with no guarantee of continued residence or with no immediate prospect of permanent housing—sometimes referred to as ‘couch surfing’ (e.g., when people stay with family, friends or even strangers).

Homelessness

The situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.

Known Locations

Public spaces where people experiencing homelessness are known to congregate.

Provisionally Accommodated

Refers to people who are experiencing homelessness and whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure. Provisional accommodations may include staying with/at friends/acquaintances, correctional facilities, hospitals, and residential treatment centres. This does not include emergency housing (shelters), group homes, retirement homes, long-term care homes, and crown ward facilities.

Transitional Housing

Supportive, yet temporary, type of accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering elements such as structure, supervision, support, life skills, and education.