

# The 2002 Count of Homeless Persons

2002 May 15



THE CITY OF  
**CALGARY**  
COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Policy and Planning  
2002 June

## INTRODUCTION

On May 15, 2002, The City of Calgary completed the sixth in a series of biennial surveys of various downtown shelter and non-shelter services to determine both the numbers of homeless persons who were served by such services and observed sleeping on the street. Data are now available for the years 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002. For the purpose of these studies, *homeless persons are considered to be those who do not have a permanent residence to which they can return whenever they so choose.*

It is important to recognize that the counts tend to underestimate the actual number of homeless persons in downtown Calgary. For example, it is difficult to identify and include persons who stayed with friends or family on the night of the count, those who slept in vehicles or abandoned buildings where they would not have been seen, and those outside of the observation catchment area. The counts do serve two very useful functions however. They provide a current snapshot of our homeless population, its size and characteristics. And, they enable us to examine how this population changes over time.

Calgary's homeless population is unlike many Canadian cities. While psychosocial factors such as disruptive early childhood, domestic problems and emotional difficulties can lead to homelessness, a 1997 study of homeless shelter users in Calgary<sup>1</sup> found that structural barriers to housing (such as low minimum wage, job loss, housing availability, high rents and damage deposits) had a greater impact. Among those surveyed in 1997, 45% were employed. Average hourly wages earned varied from \$7.70 for part-time employment, \$7.50 for those employed full-time, and \$7.00 for casual employment.

## METHOD

Every two years, a count of Calgary's homeless persons is conducted in mid-May. In 2002, the count was conducted between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and midnight. The night chosen for the 2002 count was Wednesday, May 15. This night was selected as it fell close to the dates of previous counts and fell on a day that was both mid-week and mid-month when the effects of income receipt on the number of homeless persons are moderated.

Two separate methodologies are used to obtain the count. The first is a survey of shelters and services; the second is a count of individuals found spending the night outdoors or on the streets by teams of volunteers.

The weather was cool and clear on the night of 2002 May 15, with wet snow and wind in the morning tapering off to light rain in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

There were no media reports of the count prior to 2002 May 15. However, a media briefing was held at 4:00 p.m. the day of the count. It is unknown if early evening news reports influenced the results of the street count.

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<sup>1</sup> Arboleda-Flóres, J. & Holley, H.L. (1997). *Homelessness in Calgary.*

<sup>2</sup> The high and low temperatures for 2002 May 15 were 7°C and -2°C respectively (Environment Canada).

## **Shelter and Services Count**

Twenty-one organizations were invited and participated in the survey including men's hostels, women's shelters, youth shelters, emergency services (e.g., Calgary Rocky View Child & Family Services), police services, and hospitals. The 2002 count added two agencies not included in previous counts, a youth shelter (Wood's Homes) and a short-term residential facility offering detoxification services (Renfrew Recovery Centre).<sup>3</sup> Shelters that closed in 2000 due to the opening of the new Drop-In Centre and Salvation Army Centre of Hope were excluded.<sup>4</sup>

Participating organizations were asked to record the total number of homeless persons spending the night of 2002 May 15 in their facility. Information was gathered on the number of families (defined as a couple, a couple with children or a single adult with children) and clients' observed age, sex, and racial characteristics (i.e., Aboriginal, Visible Minority or Caucasian).

Agencies were also asked to note their maximum capacity, the number of persons to whom shelter was refused that evening, the reason for shelter refusal, and any unusual events or circumstances which may have affected the count (e.g., inclement weather, unusual numbers, etc.). The agencies returned their results to the City of Calgary for analysis.

## **Street Count**

A street count complemented the shelter count. Twenty-four teams of volunteers (two to five per team) were assigned to various geographic areas in the city – with a focus on the downtown core – from 9:00 p.m. until midnight to count the number of people whom they had observed spending the night on the streets. Volunteers were asked to observe and record the age, sex and racial characteristics of the homeless persons they encountered.

Using the participatory action research model, shelters and other service providers were consulted in the research planning process and included as enumerators. Additionally, efforts were made to engage homeless or formerly homeless people as active participants in the research process (e.g. to provide insight into living on the streets and to participate as enumerators). The invitation for volunteers was also extended to various business units at The City of Calgary and to relevant service providers. An effort was made to include an Aboriginal volunteer on each team to enhance the team's ability to identify Aboriginal homeless individuals. Outreach workers and others with street experience were also included.

Street teams asked people they encountered if they had a place to stay for the night. If people indicated they were going to a shelter or had already been counted that evening, they were not enumerated.

To draw on the expertise of outreach workers, the 2002 May 15 count added two new mobile street teams. The EXIT community outreach van enumerated those on the strolls. Calgary Urban Project Society's (CUPS) mobile crisis response staff enumerated people

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<sup>3</sup> Renfrew Recovery Centre counted only those with no fixed address.

<sup>4</sup> Not included in the 2002 count are Calgary Drop-In Centre facilities (Mayland and Centre 2032) and Salvation Army sites (Anchorage and House).

in the “Gauntlet” area between 9 Avenue SW and 12 Avenue SW, and 14 Street SW and 6 Street SE.

## RESULTS OF THE 2002 COUNT

A total of 1,737 homeless persons were counted on the night of 2002 May 15. 1,620 individuals were counted using shelters and services, while 117 were counted on the streets (Table 1). The 2002 street count was expanded to include Inglewood east to Pearce Estate where no one was found; the north Scarboro area where one person was found; and Mission, Lindsay Park and south Stampede Park where a total of six people were found.

**Table 1. Homeless Count Summary: Location and Sex by Age and Race, 2002**

2002 MAY 15 HOMELESS COUNT--TOTAL														
LOCATION	AGE									RACE <sup>1</sup>				
	(0-5)	(6-12)	(13-17)	(18-24)	(25-44)	(45-64)	(65+)	N/A	Total	A	V/M	C	N/A	Total
<b>STREET</b>														
Females	0	0	3	6	16	3	0	1	29	16	2	9	2	29
Males	0	0	1	25	43	18	1	0	88	29	5	43	11	88
<b>Total Street</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>SHELTERS &amp; SERVICES</b>														
<b>General Shelters</b>														
Females	8	12	8	43	115	53	5	0	244	70	46	126	2	244
Males	22	15	11	144	716	393	32	0	1333	135	138	1056	4	1333
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1577</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1577</b>
<b>Youth Shelters<sup>2</sup></b>														
Females	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	1	7	4	12
Males	0	2	21	0	0	0	0	0	23	1	3	11	8	23
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>In-Custody</b>														
Females	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Males	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	5	1	0	4	0	5
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Hospitals</b>														
Females	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Males	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total Shelters &amp; Services</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1620</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1620</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>1258</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1737</b>

<sup>1</sup> A = Aboriginal; V/M = Visible Minority; C = Caucasian; N/A = Not Available.

<sup>2</sup> Table 3 shows a breakdown of children and youth with and without Child Welfare Status.

Of the total individuals counted, 16.5% were females (n=286) and 83.5% were males (n=1,451) (Table 2). It should be noted that while women made up only 16.5% of the total count, they accounted for 25% (n=29) of the street count (Table 1).

Of the total number of homeless individuals counted, 52% (n=895) were between 25 and 44 years of age and 27% (n=468) were between 45-64 years of age, while 2% (n=38) were seniors aged 65 years or older (Table 2).

Of total number of individuals counted, the majority (44%, n=764) of persons were observed to be males between 25 and 44 years of age. Similarly, the majority of females were between the ages of 25 and 44 years (8%, n=131) (Table 2).

**Table 2. Age and Sex Distribution of Homeless Persons, 2002**

Age Group	Female		Male		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-5	8	0.5%	22	1.3%	30	1.7%
6-12	12	0.7%	17	1.0%	29	1.7%
13-18	23	1.3%	33	1.9%	56	3.2%
19-24	50	2.9%	170	9.8%	220	12.7%
25-44	131	7.5%	764	44.0%	895	51.5%
45-64	56	3.2%	412	23.7%	468	26.9%
65+	5	0.3%	33	1.9%	38	2.2%
Unknown	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>83.5%</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Forty-two homeless families were counted in shelters on the night of 2002 May 15. Of the total number of families counted, 60% (n=25) stayed in women's shelters. Shelters reported 30 children under the age of six and 29 children aged six to twelve. Fifty-six youth (aged 13-17) were counted in total with 19 counted in general shelters, 33 counted in youth shelters, and 4 counted on the streets. A total of 220 young adults (18-24 years) were counted either in shelters and services or on the streets (Table 1).

Of the total number of children under age 13 and youth aged 13-17 (n=35), 25 had Child Welfare Status and 10 were without Child Welfare Status (Table 3).

**Table 3. Youth Shelters, With and Without Child Welfare Status, 2002**

Shelters	YOUTH WITH CHILD WELFARE STATUS				YOUTH WITHOUT CHILD WELFARE STATUS				Total
	(0-5)	(6-12)	(13-17)	Subtotal	(0-5)	(6-12)	(13-17)	Subtotal	
Avenue 15	0	0	8	8	0	0	3	3	11
Safe House	0	0	9	9	0	0	0	0	9
Wood's Homes	0	2	6	8	0	0	7	7	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35</b>

With respect to observed racial characteristics (Table 4), the majority of persons counted were observed to be Caucasian (72%, n=1,258), followed by Aboriginal persons (15%, n=252), and visible minorities (11%, n=196). The observed racial characteristics of 31 persons (2%) were unknown. Of the total number of persons observed to be Aboriginal, a disproportionate number were found to have been on the streets (18%, n=45) as compared to Caucasian persons (4%, n=52) (Table 5). This study found that 38% (n=45) of all individuals counted on the streets were Aboriginal.

**Table 4. Observed Race of Homeless Persons, 2002**

Location	Aboriginal		Visible Minority		Caucasian		Unknown		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Street	45	2.6%	7	0.4%	52	3.0%	13	0.7%	117	6.7%
Shelter	207	11.9%	189	10.9%	1206	69.4%	18	1.0%	1620	93.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>1258</b>	<b>72.4%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 5. Percentage of Observed Race by Location Counted of Homeless Persons, 2002**

Race	Street		Shelter		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Aboriginal	45	17.9%	207	82.1%	252	100.0%
Visible Minority	7	3.6%	189	96.4%	196	100.0%
Caucasian	52	4.1%	1206	95.9%	1258	100.0%
Unknown	13	41.9%	18	58.1%	31	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>1620</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Refusals

On 2002 May 15, most shelters were filled or nearly filled to capacity and a few were over capacity. Agencies reported that ninety-three homeless persons were refused shelter that night. Eighty were refused because the shelters were full; another seven persons were refused due to intoxication; four people were refused because appropriate beds were unavailable and two because they fell outside the shelter's target group (e.g. male turned away at women's shelter). Agencies reported that they had referred the majority of persons refused shelter (n=61) to other agencies. It is not known if those individuals were successful in obtaining shelter that evening.

Persons refused shelter were not included in the total count for 2002 May 15; however, some of them may have been counted as part of the street count. Of the ninety-three persons refused shelter, some of these individuals may have been counted as refusals more than once if they were refused shelter by more than one agency.

## TREND ANALYSIS

In comparing the 2000 (n=1,296) and 2002 (n=1,737) total counts, there has been an increase of 441 homeless persons counted, representing a 34% increase over two years.

The street component of the count in 2000 found 168 homeless individuals, whereas the 2002 count identified 117 homeless individuals, a 30% decrease. Although the 2002 street count methodology was expanded geographically, only 7 individuals were counted in these new areas. Unseasonable weather in the weeks leading up to the count may have contributed to a lower street count in 2002, forcing homeless persons into shelters

and less visible street accommodations. On the night prior to the count, 2002 May 14, the city experienced high winds and wet blowing snow that continued into the morning. On 2002 May 6, the week prior to the count, 40 centimeters of snow fell in a 24-hour period, the largest one-day snowfall since 1981.<sup>5</sup>

In 2000, the shelter and services part of the count identified 1,128 homeless individuals. In the 2002 count, 1,620 homeless individuals were identified in emergency shelters, shelters for victims of domestic violence, hospitals and police services. This represents a 44% increase (n=492). Part of this increase can be attributed to the inclusion of two agencies not included in the 2000 count, Wood's Homes (n=15) and Renfrew Recovery Centre (n=17) as well as the opening of two new shelters.

In October 2001, the Calgary Drop-In Centre opened a new larger facility and closed two smaller shelters, resulting in a net increased capacity of approximately 150.<sup>6</sup> The Salvation Army expanded their capacity as well. In the same month, Anchorage and House locations closed and the new Centre of Hope opened, resulting in a net increased capacity of 138.<sup>7</sup> Together, this produced a net increased capacity of approximately 288.

An historical analysis of the percentages of homeless individuals by sex, age and racial characteristics indicates that there have been a few changes in the composition of the total population from previous counts. The following outlines some of the variances observed between previous counts and 2002 May 15.

- In 1996, males accounted for 76% (n=468) of the total number of homeless individuals counted. The percentage increased to 86% (n=850) in 1998 and then decreased to 80% (n=1,040) in 2000. In 2002, the percentage of males counted increased to 83.5% (n=1,451) (Table 6).
- Females made up 24% (n=147) of the total homeless count in 1996. In 1998, that number dropped to 14% (n=138) and then increased in the 2000 count to 20% (n=256). In 2002, the percentage of females decreased to 16.5% (n=286) (Table 6).
- Males (age 25-64) represented 60% (n=369) of the counted homeless population in 1996. In 1998, this group increased to 71% (n=705) and then decreased in 2000 to 63% (n=814). In 2002, the percentage increased to 68% (n=1,176) (Table 6).
- In 1996, children and youth (age 0-24) accounted for 23% (n=143) of the total number of homeless individuals counted. That percentage decreased to 19% (n=189) in 1998 and then increased to 24% (n=317) in 2000. This percentage decreased to 19% (n=335) in 2002 (Table 6).
- 1.5% (n=20) of individuals were observed to be seniors (65 years and over) in 2000, 1.6% (n=16) in 1998 and 2.6% (n=16) in 1996. In 2002, seniors accounted for 2% (n=38) of the total number of homeless persons counted (Table 6).
- In 1996, 20% (n=121) of persons counted were observed to be Aboriginal. This percentage decreased in 1998 to 18% (n=182) and increased again in 2000 to 19% (n=251). In 2002, the percentage decreased to 14.5% (n=252) (Table 7).

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<sup>5</sup> Environment Canada.

<sup>6</sup> Since shelter capacity varies, this number is a conservative estimate.

<sup>7</sup> In inclement weather, in addition to the 138 capacity, the Centre of Hope puts down 50 emergency mats.

- Visible minorities accounted for 6% (n=37) of all persons counted in 1996 and decreased in 1998 to 3% (n=28). In 2000, the percentage increased to 7% (n=85). Observed visible minorities increased to 11% (n=196) in 2002 (Table 7).
- The percentage of observed Caucasian persons has remained fairly steady over time. In 1996, 73% (n=448) of the total counted were observed to be Caucasian. The percentage increased slightly in 1998 to 77% (n=760), decreased in 2000 to 72.1% (n=934), and then increased very slightly in 2002 to 72.4% (n=1,258) (Table 7).
- In 1996, there were 28 families using emergency shelters on the night of the count. The 2000 count found 30 families using an emergency shelter, a 17% decrease from the number (n=36) counted in 1998. In 2002, the number of homeless families increased to 42, a 40% increase over the previous count.

**Table 6. Age and Sex of Homeless Persons, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002**

Age Group	Sex	1996		1998		2000		2002	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-24	Female	59	9.6%	59	6.0%	108	8.3%	93	5.4%
	Male	84	13.7%	130	13.2%	209	16.1%	242	13.9%
25-64	Female	87	14.1%	75	7.6%	136	10.5%	187	10.8%
	Male	369	60.0%	705	71.4%	814	62.8%	1176	67.7%
65+	Female	1	0.2%	3	0.3%	3	0.2%	5	0.3%
	Male	15	2.4%	13	1.3%	17	1.3%	33	1.9%
Unknown	Female	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	9	0.7%	1	0.1%
	Male	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	Female	147	23.9%	138	14.0%	256	19.8%	286	16.5%
	Male	468	76.1%	850	86.0%	1040	80.2%	1451	83.5%
	<b>Both Sexes</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1296</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 7. Observed Racial Characteristics of Homeless Persons Counted, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002**

RACE	1996		1998		2000		2002	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Aboriginal	121	19.7%	182	18.4%	251	19.4%	252	14.5%
Visible Minority	37	6.0%	28	2.8%	85	6.6%	196	11.3%
Caucasian	448	72.8%	760	76.9%	934	72.1%	1258	72.4%
Unknown	9	1.5%	18	1.8%	26	2.0%	31	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1296</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

On the next page, Table 8 provides a breakdown of the total number of persons counted by the participating agencies and street team enumerators for all six homeless counts.



**Table 8. Number of Homeless Persons Counted by Surveyed Agencies and Street Teams, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002**

AGENCIES	NUMBER OF PERSONS COUNTED					
	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
<b>General Shelters</b>						
Calgary Alpha House Society	26	41	50	82	58 <sup>1</sup>	78
Calgary Drop-In Centre	120	110	182	139	159	691
Calgary Drop-In Centre/Mayland (closed by Dec 2000)				54	72	
Calgary Drop-In Centre/Centre 110				88	48	NA <sup>2</sup>
Calgary Drop-In Centre/Centre 2032 (closed for 2002 count)					150	
Connection Housing (no longer in operation)			18			
Harbour Light (no longer in operation)	38					
Inn From the Cold					25	57 <sup>3</sup>
Mustard Seed		5	14	103	111	119
Renfrew Recovery Centre						17
Salvation Army – Anchorage (closed Oct 2001)			18	62	49	
Salvation Army - Booth Centre	139	160	176	269	256	184
Salvation Army - Centre of Hope (opened Oct 2001)						305
Salvation Army - House (closed Oct 2001)				13	17	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>1451</b>
<b>Youth Shelters<sup>4</sup></b>						
Alberta Safe House Society	4	8	8	10	9	9
Avenue 15	13	15	16	10	9	11
Wood's Homes						15
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Women's Shelters</b>						
Calgary Native Women's Shelter			20	23	20	21
Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter	27	32	28	24	37	33
YWCA - Mary Dover House		0	26	8	54	34
YWCA - Sheriff King	30	21	20	25	17 <sup>5</sup>	31
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Non-Shelter Agencies</b>						
Alberta Family & Social Services	2	2	0			
Calgary Rocky View Child & Family Services <sup>6</sup>				9	6	7
Calgary Police Service (in custody, no fixed address)	16	5	9	25	11	6
Calgary Urban Projects Society (CUPS) (no overnight housing)	0	34	15	0	0	0
Foothills Hospital		0	0	4	1	2
General Hospital (no longer in operation)	3	0	0			
Holy Cross Hospital (no longer in operation)	0	0	0			
Latour Centre (no overnight housing)		3				
Peter Lougheed Hospital		0	0	0	0	0
Red Cross (no overnight housing)		0	0	0	0	0
Rockyview Hospital		0	0	0	0	0
Sonshine Centre (N/A: long-term housing)	24	18				
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Agencies Total</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>1128</b>	<b>1620</b>
<b>Street Count</b>						
Community Vitality and Protection	5	7	15	38	168	117
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>1296</b>	<b>1737</b>

<sup>1</sup> Alpha House admitted 58 individuals on May 17, 2000; however, not everyone stayed overnight.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Included in Drop-In Centre figure (n=691) noted above.

<sup>3</sup> Includes four families (4 adults, 7 children) who came to the centre and then stayed with friends for the evening.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 3 for the 2002 breakdown of youth with and without Child Welfare Status.

<sup>5</sup> YWCA Sheriff King reported that they were undergoing renovations and were operating under capacity.

<sup>6</sup> In 1998, Alberta Family & Social Services turned over the delivery of child welfare services to regional authorities. As such, Calgary Rocky View Child & Family Services became the agency responsible for reporting these figures.

## **CONCLUSION**

Findings from the 2002 Count of Homeless Persons suggest that the numbers of homeless individuals and families in downtown Calgary continue to increase. While the rate of increase between 1998 and 2000 slowed somewhat from that observed between 1996 and 1998, it rose again between 2000 and 2002.

When comparing the total homeless population by observed racial characteristics, age and sex to previous counts, the most notable trends observed were the increase in total percentage of visible minorities accompanied by the decrease in total percentage of Aboriginal persons, the decrease in the total percentage of children and youth, and the decrease in total percentage of females.

The number of Aboriginal persons found on the street portion of the count was disproportionately higher than in the total count, with over one third of the total street population counted being identified as Aboriginal.

It was also observed that women were over-represented on the street count as compared to the shelter and services count.

A striking finding was the large increase in the number of families without permanent a residence to which they can return whenever they choose.