2020 Simcoe County Homeless Enumeration

Presentation of Findings

COUNTY OF SIMCOE

SCATEH
Simcoe County Alliance to
End Homelessness

BUILT FOR ZERO.
SIMCOE COUNTY

Co-ordinated by the David Busby Street Centre

Acknowledgements

The 2020 Homeless Enumeration would not be possible without the many supporters and partners who contributed time, effort, and resources to this project.

- A total of 37 agencies who provide a range of programs and services helped make the 2020 Homeless Enumeration possible.

- Most of all, we would like to thank the 377 people experiencing homelessness in Simcoe County who participated in the enumeration survey – the information shared informs planning and work to end homelessness across Simcoe County, Ontario, and Canada.

Acknowledgements

Regional Enumeration Advisory Committee (REAC) Organizations:

- CONTACT Community Services, County of Simcoe, David Busby Street Centre, Elizabeth Fry Society, Empower Simcoe, Gilbert Centre, Orillia Light House, Shelter Now and Youth Haven.

Regional Planning Team Leads:

- **Barrie:** Sara Peddle & Meaghan Chambers

- **North Simcoe:** Sonia Ladouceur

- **Orillia and Area:** Linda Goodall

- **South Georgian Bay:** Laurie Straughan

- **South Simcoe:** Jennifer Fleury & Nicole Savini

Partners:

- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), County of Simcoe, Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness (SCATEH)

Funders:

- The 2020 Homeless Enumeration was funded through Reaching Home, Canada's Homelessness Strategy.

- The 2020 Homeless Enumeration data was analyzed by Victoria Chapman, Research Analyst, County of Simcoe, and the final report was co-authored by Victoria Chapman, Research Analyst, and Irena Pozgaj-Jones, Program Supervisor, County of Simcoe.

Methodology

Introduction:

- Since 2016, the Simcoe County community has conducted a Homelessness Enumeration every two years.

- **The information collected helps connect people to the appropriate programs and services in the community, informs policy and program development, and raises awareness about homelessness in Simcoe County.**

- The 2020 Homeless Enumeration included a Point-in-Time Count (PiT Count) and Registry Week, PiT reference night is Tuesday, November 17, 2020.

Point in Time (PiT) Count and Registry Week:

- The Point-in-Time Count is carried out over a 24-hour period to provide an estimated snapshot of the extent of homelessness in Simcoe County on a given night.

- Registry Week is a count and survey/assessment of people experiencing homelessness carried out over a few days to a week

- Joint PiT and Registry week: PiT is the first day of the registry week, and data collected through the registry week references where people stayed PiT night

Methodology

The data collected represents the **minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in Simcoe County on November 17th, 2020** and provides a key snapshot of homelessness for that point in time.

Source: https://bloggingx.com/how-to-write-product-comparison-posts/

Direct comparisons between the three enumeration results should not be made, as several changes to the methodology and definitions have resulted in fundamental differences in the data gathered.

Data Notes:

- **Data Collection:** 2020 Homeless Enumeration surveys and counts were conducted by staff and outreach workers from social service providers, health care providers, outreach workers, and corrections agencies.

- **Surveys and counts were conducted through**:
  - Indoor Shelter Surveys and agency utilization data
  - Surveys by outreach teams
  - Observational Counts
  - Data from Agencies/Government including those residing in institutions

Limitations:

- Underrepresenting people:

  - experiencing hidden homelessness,

  - temporary homelessness, and

  - those experiencing homelessness in rural areas.

- To combat these known limitations, the 2020 Enumeration included participation from 37 agencies across the five enumeration areas within Simcoe County, which provide services to varying groups along the homeless spectrum from those living rough, in emergency shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, rent-geared-to-income, and affordable rent programs.

Other Limitations:

- Weather (first snow fall of the season, usual hot spots were not hot),

- Response fatigue (people did not want to participate as they had participated in previous enumerations and felt nothing had changed)

- The COVID-19 pandemic possibly making participants less willing to engage with surveyors due to provincial safety guidelines.

Methodology

The enumeration is only one source of data used to support planning for services. Other sources of data such as HIFIS data can show the number of people who experienced homelessness over the course of a longer period of time such as the whole year.

Methodology

Main methodological differences between the 2016 and the 2018 enumeration:

1. **Methodology:** Addition of the Point-in-Time Count

2. **Reach:** Increased community and stakeholder participation in the 2018 enumeration

3. **Definitions:** Separate analyses of people who were precariously housed in 2018 while they were included in the main findings report in 2016

4. **Survey Tool:** Use of youth and family VI-SPDAT's in addition to the single adults VI-SPDAT

5. **Time Frame:** a shift in time frame from January to April affects the location homeless people are found and services they seek.

Main methodological differences between the 2018 and the 2020 enumeration:

1. **Time Frame:** a shift in time frame from April to November affects the location people experiencing homelessness are found and services they seek.

2. **Survey Tool:** Some changes were made to the PiT questions and options used in 2020 compared to 2018. Updated versions of the Single Adult, Youth, and Family VI-SPDATs were used in 2020.

3. **Reach:** Without the reach of community volunteers and the presence of surveyors around community spaces such as libraries, community centers, parks, streets, and retailers, the 2020 enumeration is likely an undercount compared to the 2018 enumeration.

4. **Data Collection Tool:** In 2018 a paper survey was used while in 2020 paper and an online survey tool were used

5. **Survey Method:** More surveys were conducted over the phone in 2020

Benefits of Conducting the 2020 Enumeration

- **Access to people experiencing homelessness:** Greater numbers of people experiencing homelessness were staying in shelter and/or using the motel system implemented in Simcoe County in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Data:** Results will provide an understanding of the unique and unprecedented situations of homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Momentum:** Priority to support people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Compliance:** with Federal and provincial requirements to conduct enumeration every 2 years

PiT Count Findings

563 individuals were found to be experiencing homelessness in Simcoe County on November 17th, 2020. This represents a rate of 10.5 / 10,000. Individuals were identified through survey participation, agency occupancy, and observation tally counts.

How Many?

Core Enumeration Count			
Location	Source	Count	Percentage
Unsheltered Location			
Unsheltered and Unknown Location– Surveyed	Survey	49	9%
Unsheltered – Observed	Tally	29	5%
Total		**78**	**14%**
Emergency Sheltered			
Emergency Shelter	Agency	226	40%
Violence Against Women Emergency Shelter	Agency	34	6%
Winter Overflow and Motel Voucher	Agency	7	1%
Total		**267**	**47%**
Provisionally Accommodated			
Transitional Housing	Agency	103	18%
Hidden Homeless ("couch surfing" stayed with family/friends/acquaintances)	Survey	79	14%
Motel/Hotel (paid by participant or participants' friends/family)	Survey	28	5%
Institutions (Health and/or Corrections)	Survey	8	1%
Total		**218**	**39%**
Grand Total		**563**	**100%**

Of the **563** individuals identified as experiencing homelessness on November 17th, 2020, **377** individuals shared their demographic information and experience of homelessness through survey participation

Gender Identity

57% Male/Man

42% Female/Woman

2% Additional Respondents (including those who selected trans-female, two spirited, or don't know)

Age of Survey Participants

18% 16-24 years old

60% 25-54 years old

22% 55 years and over

Family Type

82% Single

11% Single with children/dependent(s)

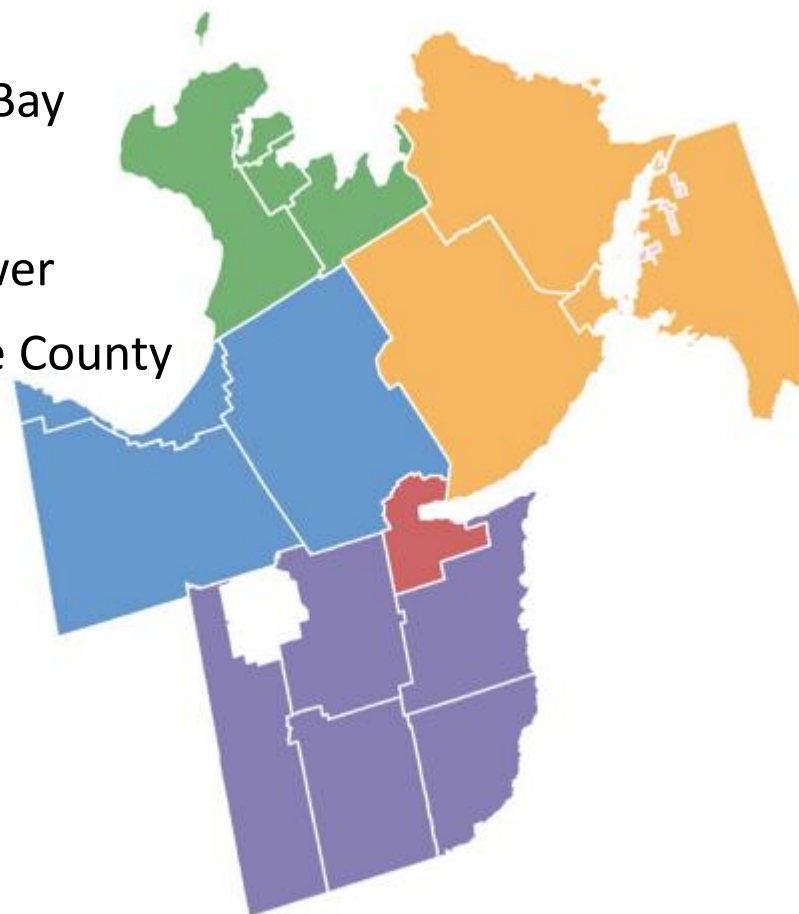5% Couples

1% Couples with children/dependent(s)

Children/Dependent(s)

12% of participants were accompanied by a total of 72 child(ren)/dependent(s) ranging in age between 0-30 PiT Night

PiT Survey Results

Where Participants Currently Lived

47% Barrie

23% North Simcoe

17% Orillia and area

6% South Georgian Bay

4% South Simcoe

3% Declined to answer

or outside of Simcoe County

Where Participants Stayed PiT Night

49% Emergency shelter

16% Someone else's place

13% Unsheltered in a public space, vehicle or unsure

10% Transitional shelter/housing

6% Motel/hotel (self funded)

3% Hotel/motel (funded by City or Homeless Program)

2% Hospital, Jail, Prison, Remand Centre, Treatment Centre

PiT Survey Results

Top 5 Reasons for Homelessness

20% Not enough income for housing

18% Conflict with spouse/partner

16% Substance use issue

15% Landlord/tenant conflict

13% Conflict with parent/guardian

In a follow up question 10% reported their most recent housing loss was related to the COVID-19 pandemic

Age First Experienced Homelessness

17% 15 or younger

29% 16-24

41% 25-54

12% 55 and over

Experience

64% were experiencing chronic homelessness

67% stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year

Other Attributes

31% self identified as Indigenous

22% have been in foster care or a youth group home as a child or youth

11% identified as 2S-LGBTQ+

45% have always been in Simcoe County

3% served in the Canadian Military and/or RCMP

3% came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or a refugee claimant

PiT Survey Results

Health Challenges

67% Mental health issue

61% Substance use issue

41% Illness or medical condition

41% Learning disability or cognitive limitation

34% Physical disability

Only 11% of participants did not report any health challenges

    23% reported 1
    34% reported 2
    21% reported 3
    12% reported 4 health challenges

Top 5 Sources of Income

36% Welfare/social assistance

34% Disability benefit

13% Seniors benefits

11% GHT/HST refund

10% Employment

In addition to the PiT Count survey, the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) was used as part of the Registry Week to assess vulnerability and prioritize participants for services.

Of the 377 participants who completed a survey, 343 completed a VI-SPDAT.

- 67% (230) completed an Adult VI-SPDAT

- 17% (60) completed a Family VI-SPDAT

- 15% (53) completed a Youth VI-SPDAT

Acuity

The term acuity is used to describe the complexity of the situation that an individual is facing, which is likely to influence their housing stability. For the purpose of this report, acuity score is calculated based on participants' answers to VI-SPDAT questions. The VI-SPDAT also provides a recommendation of housing intervention based on the acuity score. **A higher acuity score indicates a greater need for affordable housing and stable supports.**

59% High

34% Moderate

8% Low

VI-SPDAT Survey Results

Safety

49% reported having been threatened with violence or made to feel unsafe by someone else

40% reported someone tried to control them through violence or threats of violence

38% reported having been beaten up or assaulted

27% reported having threatened to harm themselves or harmed themselves

22% reported having threatened to beat up or assault someone else

28% reported having someone trick, manipulate, exploit, or force them to do things they do not want to do

24% reported having done things that may be considered to be risky or harmful like run drugs, share a needle, exchange sex for money, drugs, protection or a temporary place to stay or anything like that

Emergency Service Usage

80% of participants using a total of 3,354 emergency services in the past 6 months representing an average of 12.2 services per participant in the past 6 months. Of participants who accessed a service:

- 60% had gone to the emergency room/department
- 50% had talked to police because they witnessed a crime, were the victim of a crime, were the alleged perpetrator of a crime, or because they were asked to move along because of loitering, sleeping in a public place or anything like that
- 36% had taken an ambulance
- 29% had been hospitalized as an inpatient
- 25% used a crisis service or hotline
- 17% stayed one or more nights in jail, a holding cell or prison

VI-SPDAT Survey Results

54% reported their homelessness has been caused by recent or past trauma or abuse

31% experienced **three or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years.**

66% have lived in a home they owned or an apartment in their name.

45% reported not having access to at least one basic need (food, water, bathroom, place to sleep, laundry, shower, storage)

13% reported having a **pet**

42% reported having planned activities, other than for survival, at least four days per week that make them feel happy and fulfilled

77% of Youth VI-SPDAT participants reported they and/or their family **spent a lot of time without stable housing**

Self Reported Racial Identity

78% identified as White

15% identified as Aboriginal or Indigenous

5% were Bi-racial meaning individuals who identified with more than one race

2% identified as Black or African Canadian, Hispanic or Latin American, Filipino or Arab (grouped to maintain participant anonymity)

Number of Friends' or Family Members' Places Participants Have Temporarily Stayed in the last year

37% had not stayed temporarily with any friends or family members in the last year because they didn't have a place of their own,

41% had stayed with 1-3 friends or family members

10% had stayed with 4-6 friends or family members

5% had stayed with 7-10 friends or family members

7% had stayed with over 10 friends or family members in the last year because they didn't have a place of their own

Other Attributes

23% identified as having an intellectual disability

14% identified as having a brain injury

5% identified as having autism

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

65% selected access to community services

46% selected access to health services

20% selected loss of housing

12% selected caused homelessness

27% reported other responses

14% left the question blank

Other responses provided by participants included:

6% emotional

5% finding housing

5% employment

5% no impact

3% specific services

2% financially

79% reported currently working with an agency to find housing

Some Next Steps

Subsequent reports will be released that explore the following population groups of interest:

- Enumeration area
- Age group (youth, adults, seniors)
- Participants with children/dependent(s)
- Gender identity
- Indigenous identity
- Those experiencing chronic homelessness
- Acuity score
- History of foster care
- Where participants stayed pit night
- Participants who identified as 2S-LGBTQ+.

These reports will be uploaded to:

www.simcoe.ca/enumeration and www.scateh.com/enumeration

Some Next Steps

1. Share and discuss information from enumeration with community and stakeholders.

2. Use enumeration data for planning for local programs, services, and policy.

3. Collaborate with other key sector partners, such as corrections and hospitals.

4. Connect enumeration to other local initiatives, such as Built For Zero (BFZ), Coordinated Access, and the By Name List (BNL).

Understanding those who stayed at a motel/hotel (self funded) PiT night

- **6% of survey participants** and 5% of all individuals counted were staying at a motel/hotel (self funded) PiT night
- Considered **provisionally accommodated** using the federal definition of homelessness
- Service providers explained some people **stay at motels/hotels temporarily** when they are looking for housing or because motels/hotels can be **more affordable than the rental options available**

Understanding the breakdown of where participants were currently living

- 47% Barrie
- 23% North Simcoe
- 17% Orillia and area
- 6% South Georgian Bay
- 4% South Simcoe
- 3% Declined to answer or outside of Simcoe County
- **Population distribution** and **access to services** available such as shelters, public transit
- Methodological **challenges accessing and counting people experiencing homelessness in rural areas**

Questions?

www.simcoe.ca/enumeration and www.scateh.com/enumeration