

2024 Service-Based and Point-in-Time Homelessness Counts in Cape Breton County

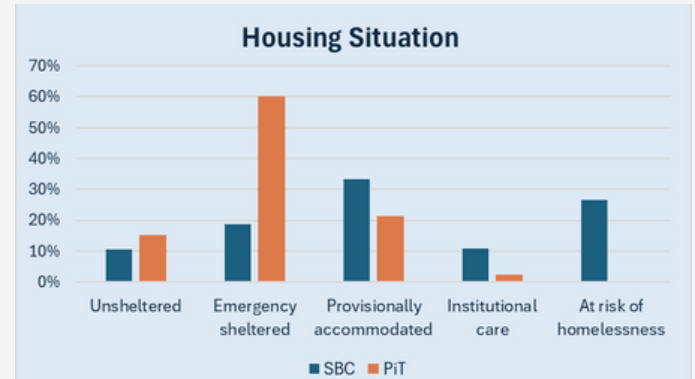
Different Scope and Methodology

The Service-Based Count (SBC) identified 557 individuals experiencing homelessness in Cape Breton County during the entire month of June 2024. This method uses an indirect approach, drawing on the knowledge of a wide range of service providers to capture visible and hidden homelessness, including those who are provisionally accommodated or at risk of homelessness. The broader scope and extended data collection period provide access to a larger population with this method.

In contrast, the Point-in-Time (PiT) Count with a narrower scope collects data directly from clients. 163 individuals were willing to be surveyed and an additional 75 people experiencing homelessness were counted but not surveyed, totaling 238 individuals on the night of November 21, 2024. The PiT count emphasizes those who were sheltered or unsheltered, providing a snapshot of homelessness during a 24-hour period.

Housing Situation

The PiT count focused on individuals who were unsheltered and emergency sheltered, accounting for 75% of respondents. Meanwhile, about 60% of clients in the SBC were provisionally accommodated or at risk of homelessness.

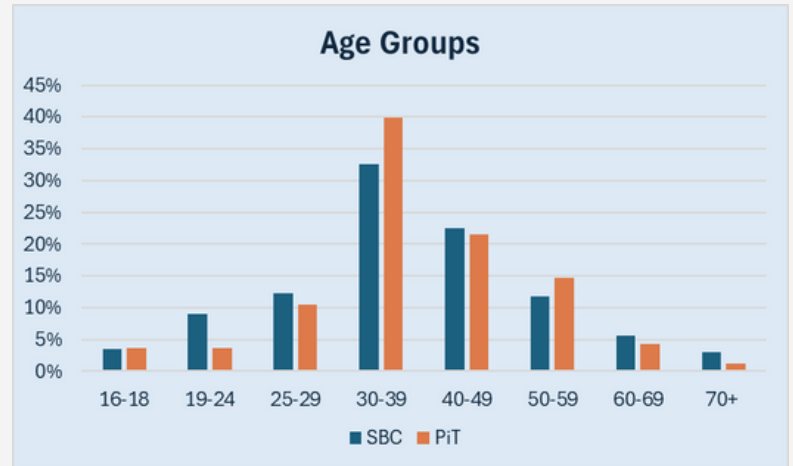


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Age

In both counts, the majority of people experiencing homelessness were between the ages of 30 and 49.

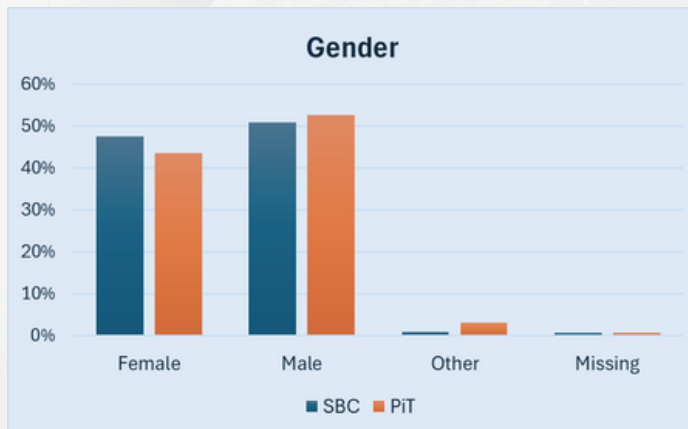
The most commonly reported age category was 30-39 years old, accounting for 32% in SBC respondents and 40% of PiT respondents.



Gender

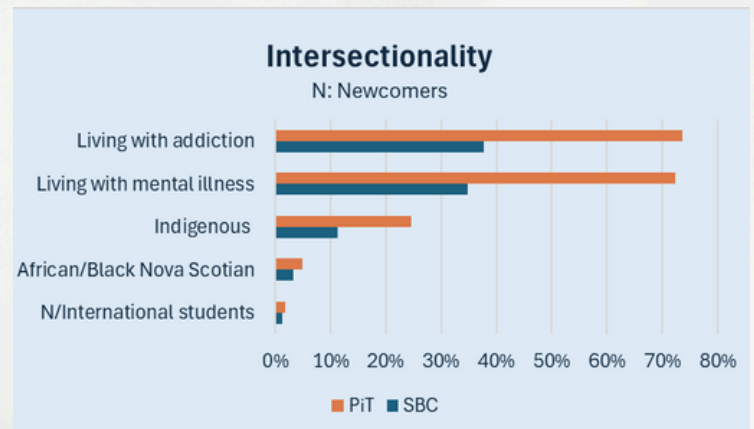
Men represented a slightly higher percentage than women:

- SBC: 51% men versus 48% women
- PiT: 53% men versus 44% women



Intersectionality

- Indigenous people are overrepresented in both counts, constituting 25% in the PiT count and 11% in the SBC.
- A significant proportion of clients reported living with mental illness or addiction - major challenges for securing and maintaining stable housing.



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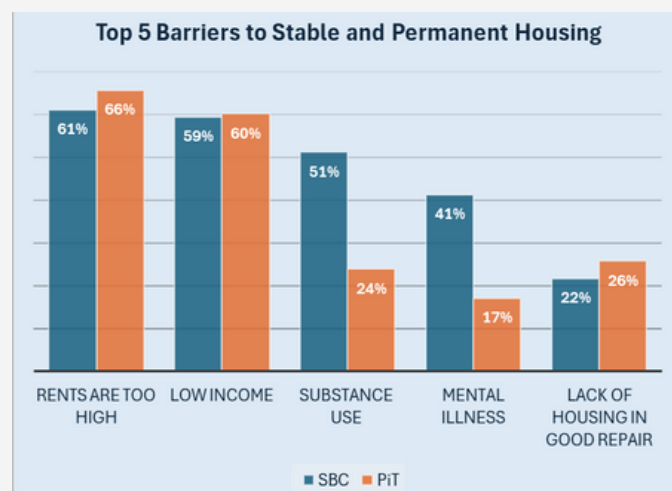
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Key Barriers to Housing

High rent was the most common barrier (61% in SBC vs. 66% in PiT), followed by low income, despite receiving Government Assistance (59% in SBC vs. 60% in PiT).

Income

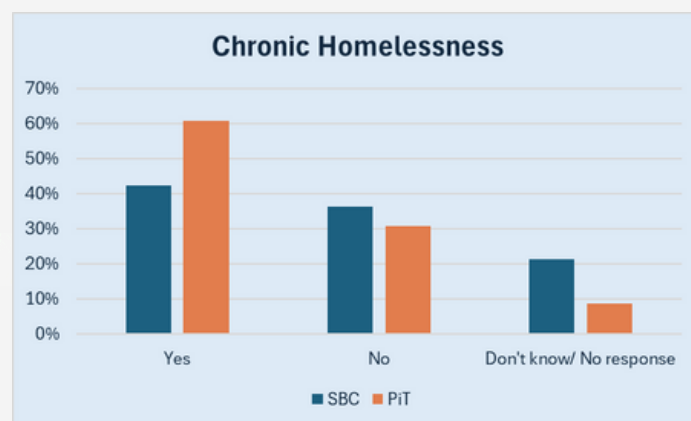
The primary source of income for individuals in both the SBC and PiT counts was Income Assistance, reported by 62% of participants.



Chronic Homelessness

It was reported that 61% of clients were chronically homeless in the PiT count, which was much higher than that of 42% in the SBC.

* Both counts use the same definition of chronic homelessness from *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy Directives*. Chronic homelessness is defined as being unsheltered and/or temporarily housed for a total of six months over the past year or having recurrent experiences of homelessness for a total of 18 months over the past three years.



Implications

The PiT count identified the urgency of assisting individuals who are unsheltered or in emergency shelters. The findings call for immediate interventions and access to safe and stable housing.

The SBC indicates that housing insecurity is more widespread than what the PiT count captures since it reported visible and hidden homelessness.

It underscores the need for large-scale preventative measures and long-term investments in new social housing to address the growing homelessness crisis in Cape Breton County.

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Sources:

- Service-Based Count 2024 Report
 - Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness 2024 Report
- Available at: www.endhomelessnesstoday.ca