'REPORT: FOURTH NATIONALLY COORDINATED POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT OF HOMELESSNESS'

Sydney, Nova Scotia

November – 2024

Submitted by:

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(*in consultation with PiT Count Committee)

PiT Count Report

Sydney, Nova Scotia
Dates: 2024/11/01 - 2024/11/30

1. ABOUT PiT COUNT

– Point-in-Time (PiT) Count is a community-level measurement of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, which provides the national picture of magnitude of homelessness.

– The results of these counts are used to demonstrate resource needs in communities and support the development of programs and policies that aim to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness.

1.1 Point in-Time Count 2024

– comprised of both an enumeration and a survey component.

a. <u>PiT Count Enumeration:</u> Count of how many people experienced homelessness in a community on a **single night**.

> ✓ November 21, 2024

b. <u>Survey on Homelessness:</u> a set of standardized questions administered directly to individuals experiencing homelessness. It collected the information on their demographics and experiences. Survey administration extended up to **one month**.

> ✓ November

1.2 Sheltered Locations:

– *Shelters & Transitional Housing* (based on length of stay): supporting stay less than one year

Cape Breton Community Housing Association Shelter •Emergency Shelter •Extreme Weather Shelter	**Every Woman's Centre: Almost Home** •Transitional Housing	**Cape Breton Transition House** •Violence Against Women Shelter
Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton •Transitional Housing	**Pallet Shelters** •Transitional Housing	**Ally Centre** •Extreme Weather Shelter

– *Systems:* Heath or Correctional Facilities

1.3 Unsheltered Homelessness

– Included people sleeping in places unfit for human habitation, such as, streets, alleys, parks, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines & other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.

– A further subset within the unsheltered enumeration was encampments, which are outdoor locations with a group of tents, makeshift shelters or other long-term settlement, where two or more individuals are staying. Encampments were reported separately due to their recent rise in visibility across the country, as well as the unique experiences of those staying there.

– *Observed homelessness:* To enumerate those that are apparently homeless but did not participate in the screening questions. It included people who are unable to respond, e.g., if they were sleeping or if there were language barriers. The criteria for including someone as observed homeless was identified. For example, if they were bedded down in an unsheltered location and had many belongings with them

1.4 Hidden Homelessness:

– It included people living temporarily with others without the guarantee of continued access to a safe and permanent residence.

– They were not currently experiencing homelessness but were at risk of it.

– Given that it was not possible to measure or count the extent of hidden homelessness using PiT Count methodology, it was not a core location. It was an optional location for Surveys only.

– The count of individuals experiencing hidden homelessness was not included in the total enumeration.
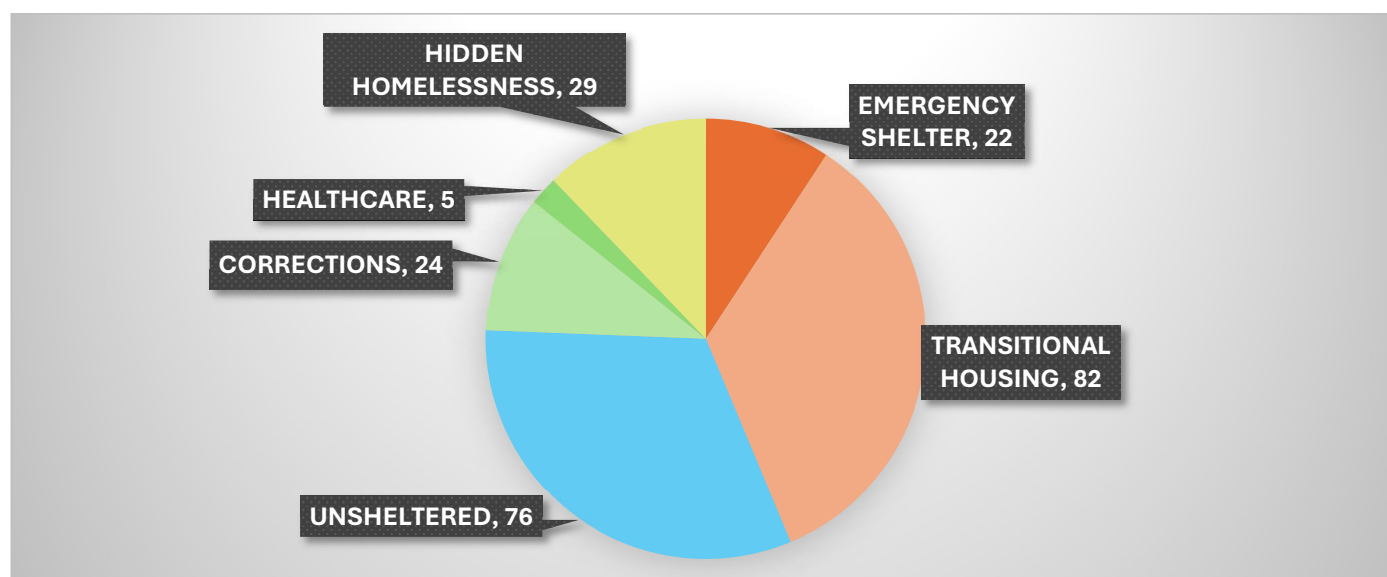
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ENUMERATION DATA

	LOCATION	FACILITY	COUNT
1.	**EMERGENCY SHELTER**	Cape Breton Community Housing Association Shelter	22
2.		Cape Breton Transition House (DV Shelter)	20
3.	**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**	Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton	22
4.		Every Women's Centre	06
5.		Pallet Village	34
		SHELTERED TOTAL	**104**
6.	**UNSHELTERED**	Unsheltered Count	[74]
7.		Observed	23
8.		Encampments	08
		UNSHELTERED TOTAL	**105**
9.	**CORRECTIONS**	Central Nova Scotia Women's Facility	07
10.		Cape Breton Correctional Facility	17
11.	**HEALTHCARE**	Mental Health and Addictions	05
		SYSTEMS TOTAL	**29**
		SUB-TOTAL	**238**
12.	**HIDDEN**	Someone else's place	(-)29
		GRAND-TOTAL	**209**

*Criteria to define Shelters and Transitional Housing may vary based on different methodologies.

— **As per PiT Count data, there is a 47.2% increase in homelessness from the previous count.**

SURVEY DATA

SCREENING QUESTION

A) Where are you staying tonight? / Where did you stay last night?

		Count	Percentage
SERVICES	**Homeless Shelter**	**37**	**23%**
	Transitional Shelter / Housing	**61**	**37%**
	Hotel / Motel Funded by City or Homeless Program	**4**	**2%**
HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS	**Hotel / Motel Self-Funded**	**2**	**1%**
	Someone Else's Place	**29**	**18%**
UNSHELTERED	**Unsheltered in a Public Space**	**13**	**8%**
	Vehicle	**2**	**1%**
	Encampment	**10**	**6%**
SYSTEMS	**Hospital**	**3**	**2%**
	Jail, Prison, Remand Centre	**1**	**1%**
	Unsure	**1**	**1%**
	Total	**163**	**100%**

Overnight Locations
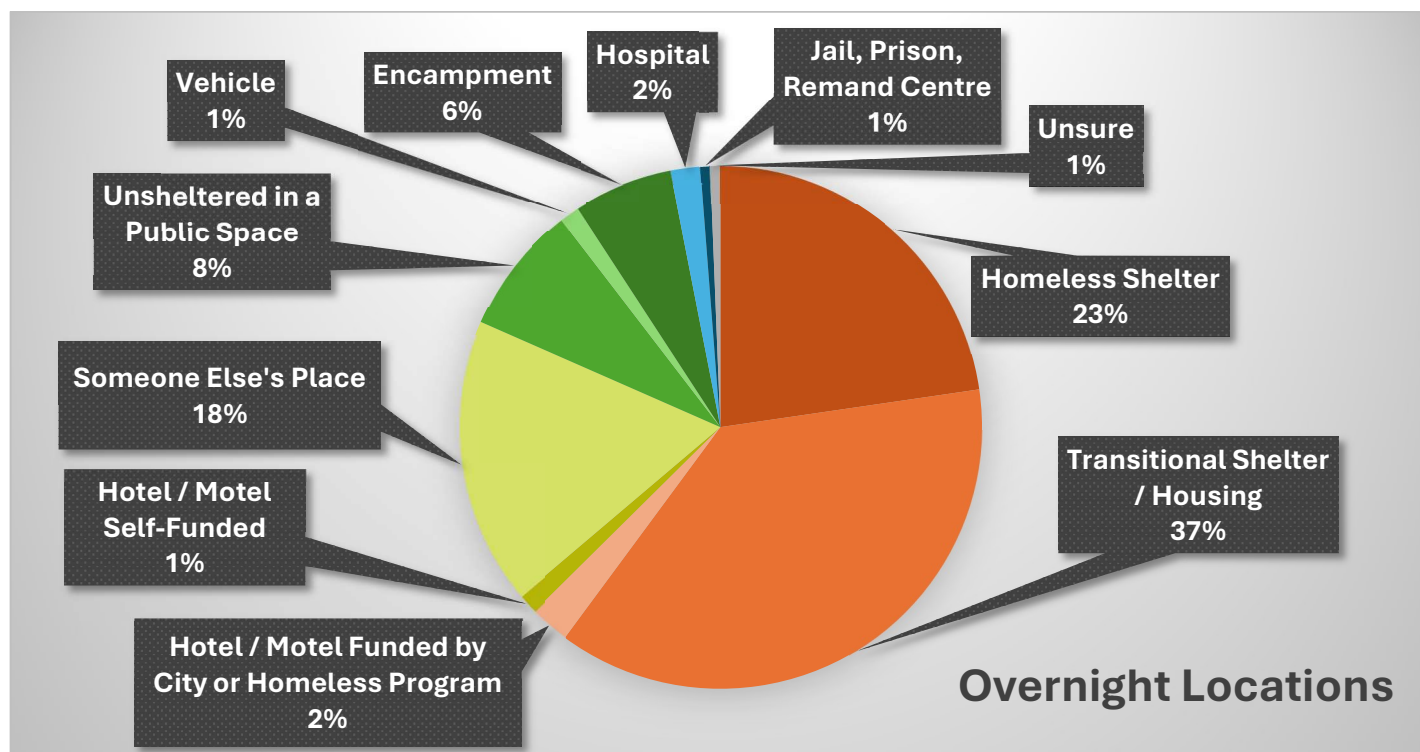
– Provides a picture of various overnight locations used by individuals experiencing homelessness, during the month of the PiT Count.

PiT Count Report

**Sydney, Nova Scotia**
Dates: 2024/11/01 - 2024/11/30

CORE QUESTION

1. **Have you spent at least one night in any of the following locations in the past year. (check all that apply)**

|		Count	Percentage		
Answered	Homeless Shelter	104	64%		
	Transitional Shelter / Housing	76	47%		
	Hotel / Motel Funded by City or Program	48	30%		
	Someone Else's Place	97	60%		
	Unsheltered in a Public Space	75	46%		
	Vehicle	55	34%		
	Encampment	66	41%		
	Hospital or Other Health Facility	71	44%		
	Jail, Prison, or Other Correctional Facility	51	31%		
	Total	**162**	**100%**	162	99%
Did Not Answer	Did Not Answer				
	SUB-TOTAL			**1**	**1%**
TOTAL				**163**	**100%**
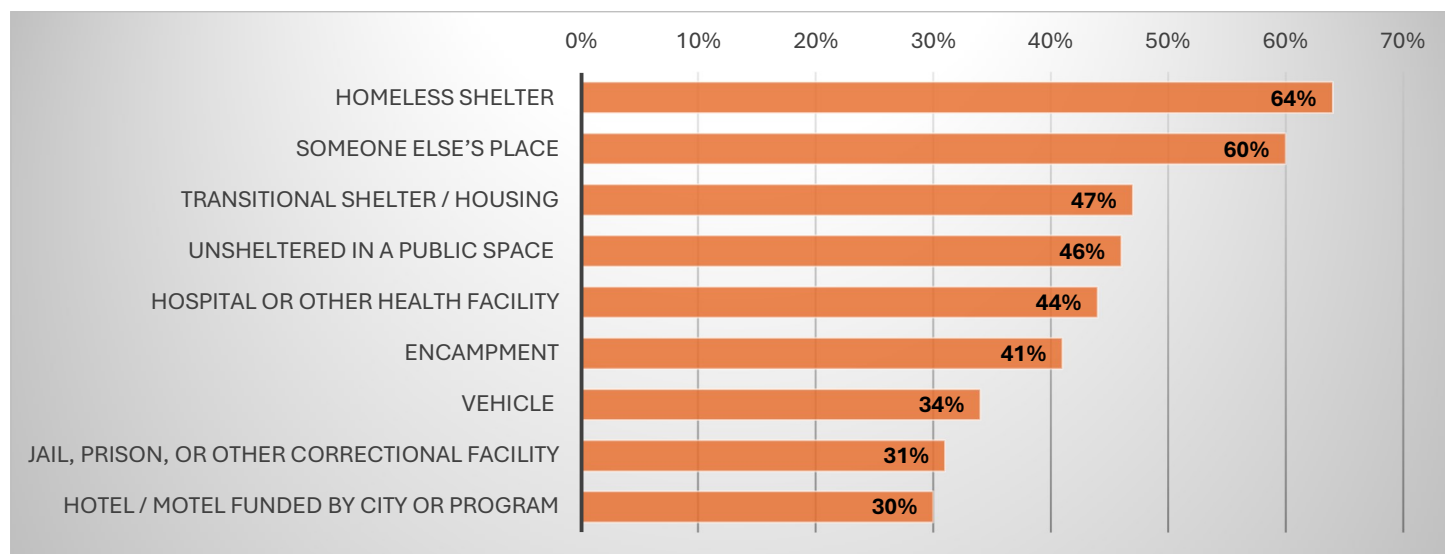
IN LAST ONE YEAR:

- **64 % individuals experiencing homelessness have used Shelter Services, and 36 % did not.**
- **47% individuals experiencing homelessness have used Transitional Housing services, and 53 % did not.**
- **At some point in time,**
  - **46% individuals have stayed overnight in an unsheltered in public space**
  - **41% individuals have stayed overnight in an encampment**
  - **34% individuals have stayed overnight in a vehicle.**
- **30% individuals were sent to Hotel/Motel funded by City/homelessness program.**
- **31% of Surveyed individuals experiencing homelessness have been to jail, prison, or other correctional facility.**

PiT Count Report

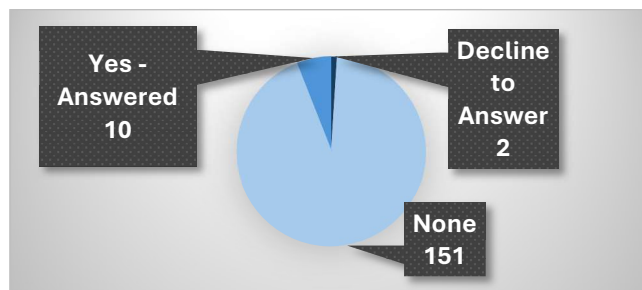**Sydney, Nova Scotia**
Dates: 2024/11/01 - 2024/11/30

1b. If you haven't stayed in a homeless shelter in the past year, what are the main reasons? (Do not read categories; check all that apply)

Reason		Count	Percentage		
Answered	Bed bugs & other pests	2	5%		
	Crowded	7	19%		
	Fear for safety	13	35%		
	Lack of transportation	1	3%		
	Other (not in list)	19	51%		
	Turned away - banned	2	5%		
	Turned away - shelters are full	3	8%		
	Total	**37**	**100%**	37	**23%**
Did Not Answer	Did Not Answer				
	Total			126	**77%**
	Total			163	**100%**
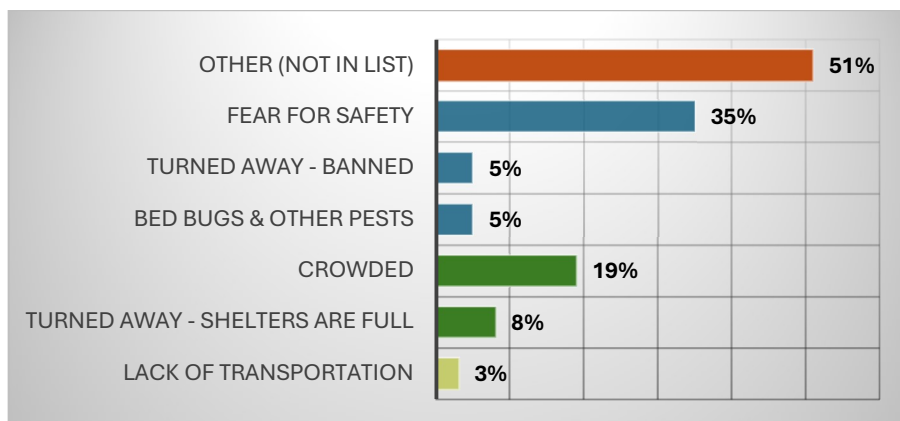
Other (not in list)	
Children and Pets	42%
Incarcerated/in jail	21%
independent living	05%
Staying away from it, theft, tortured, staying sober	21%
too far away	11%

2. Do you have family members or anyone else who is staying with you tonight? / Did any family members or anyone else stay with you last night? (Indicate survey number for partners. Check all that apply)

– To link family data

	Count	%age
None	**151**	**93%**
Yes – Answered	**10**	**6%**
Decline to Answer	**2**	**1%**
Total	**163**	**100%**

- Compared to the survey data, enumeration data presented a greater proportion of children under services.
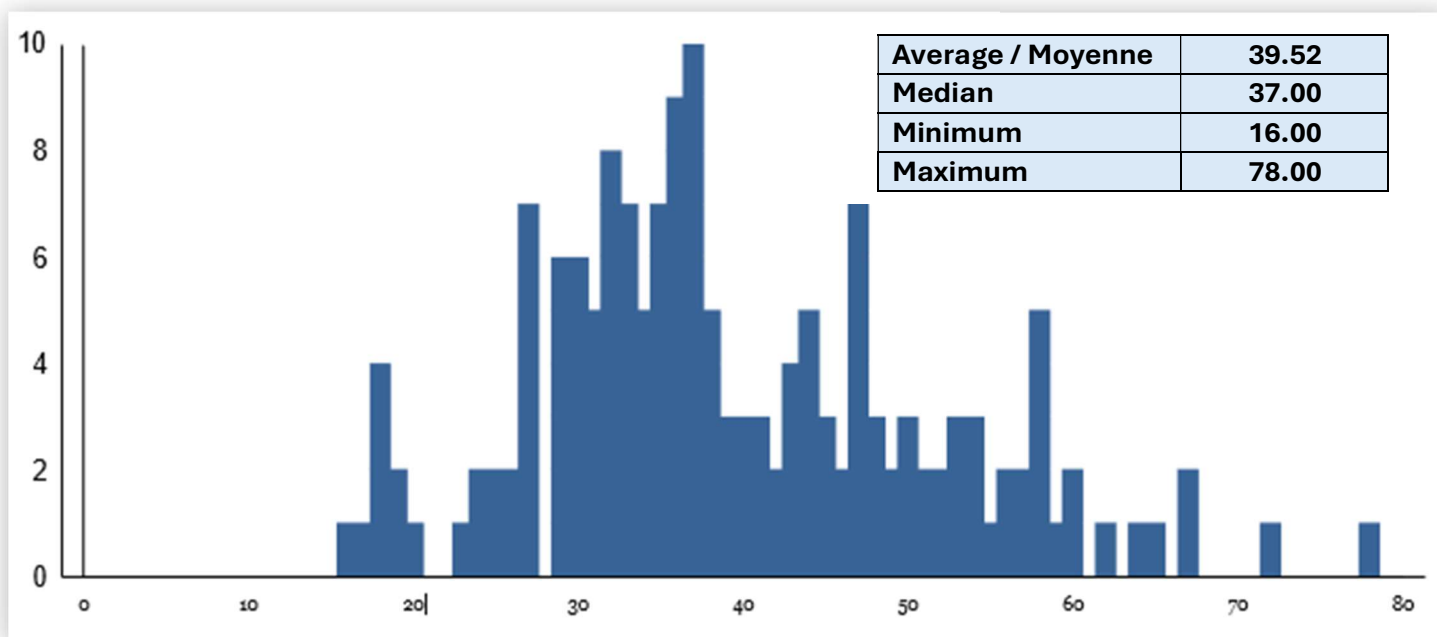
Sydney, Nova Scotia
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Youth, adult, seniors can have different service needs

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

Average / Moyenne	39.52
Median	37.00
Minimum	16.00
Maximum	78.00

4. In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? (Best estimate.)

First indicator of Chronic homelessness

	Count	%age		
Did Not Answer	14	9%	14	9%
7 days	1	1%		
14 days	5	3%		
21 days	3	2%		
30 days	6	4%		
60 days	8	5%		
75 days	1	1%		
90 days	13	8%	37	24%
105 days	2	1%		
120 days	5	3%		
150 days	6	4%		
180 days	11	7%	61	39%
210 days	4	2%		
240 days	6	4%		
270 days	3	2%		
300 days	3	2%		
330 days	1	1%		
335 days	1	1%		
360 days	1	1%	80	52%
365 days	69	42%	**69**	**42%**
Total	***163***	***100%***		

Average / Moyenne	241.17
Median	300.00

− **42% of surveyed individuals experienced homelessness for the entire year.**

4b. In total, for how much time have you experienced homelessness over the PAST 3 YEARS? (Best estimate.)

Second indicator of Chronic homelessness

	Count	%age
Less than Half	63	39%
About Half or More	82	50%
Don't Know	3	2%
Decline to Answer	7	4%
Unclear / Blank Response	8	5%
Total	163	100%
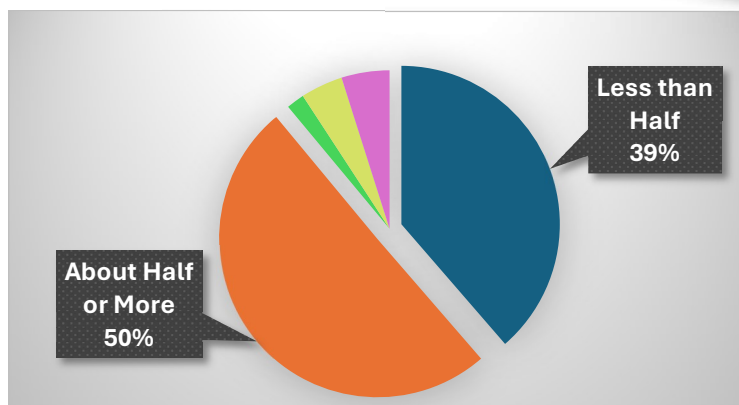
− **50% of surveyed individuals experienced homelessness for half or more time, over the past 3 years.**

4C. In total, how many different times have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? (Best estimate.)
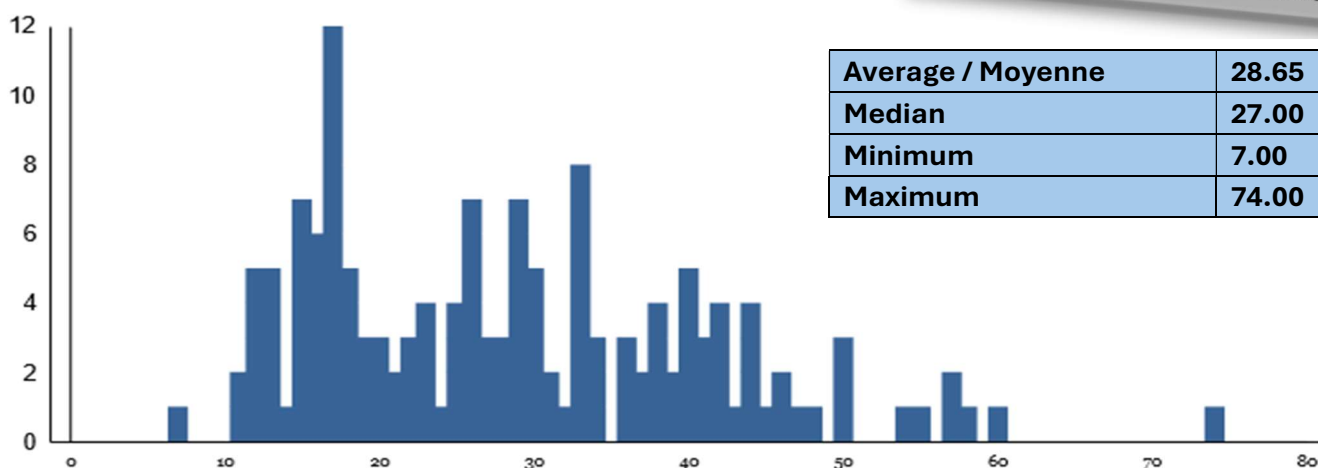
Indicator of Episodic homelessness

	Count	%age
Did Not Answer	36	22%
1	62	38%
2	24	15%
3	14	9%
4	6	4%
5	5	3%
6	3	2%
7	2	1%
8	3	2%
9	1	1%
10	5	3%
20	1	1%
21	1	1%
Total	163	100%

Average / Moyenne	2.81
Median	2.00

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

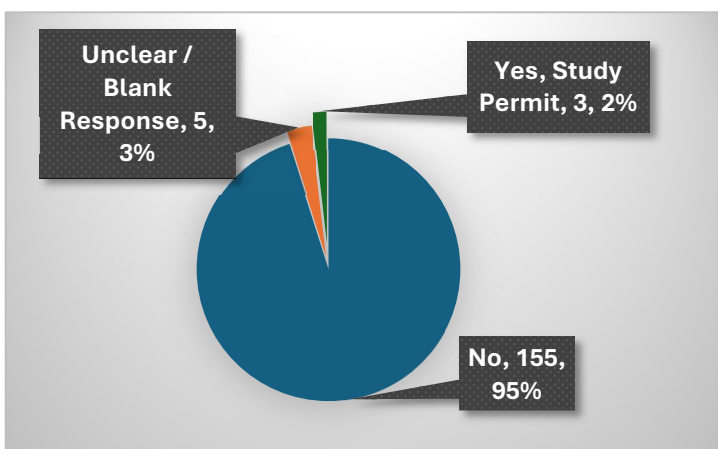*To understand respondent's history and pathways into homelessness.*

Average / Moyenne	28.65
Median	27.00
Minimum	7.00
Maximum	74.00

6. **Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, asylum claimant (i.e., applied for refugee status after coming to Canada), or through another process?**
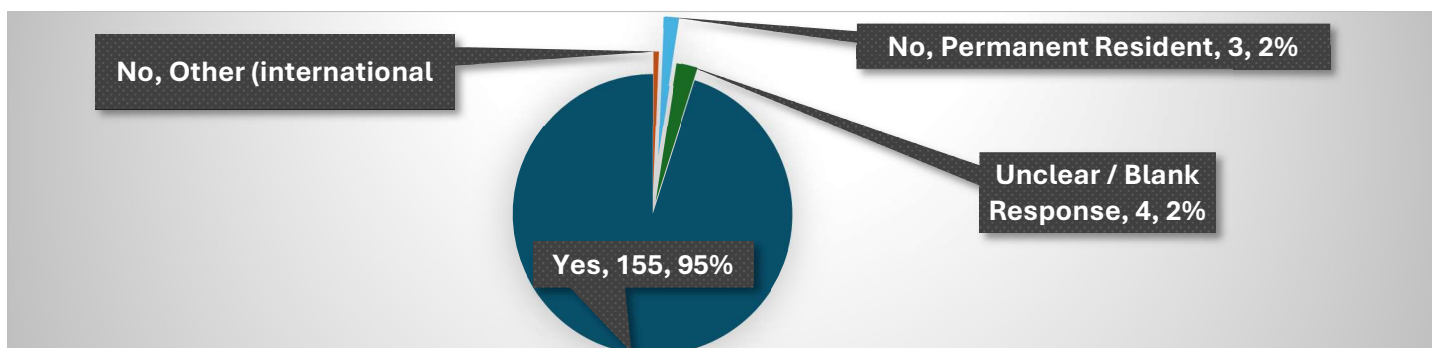
Unclear / Blank Response, 5, 3%

Yes, Study Permit, 3, 2%

No, 155, 95%

To shed light on homelessness in newcomers and if they need support with resettlement
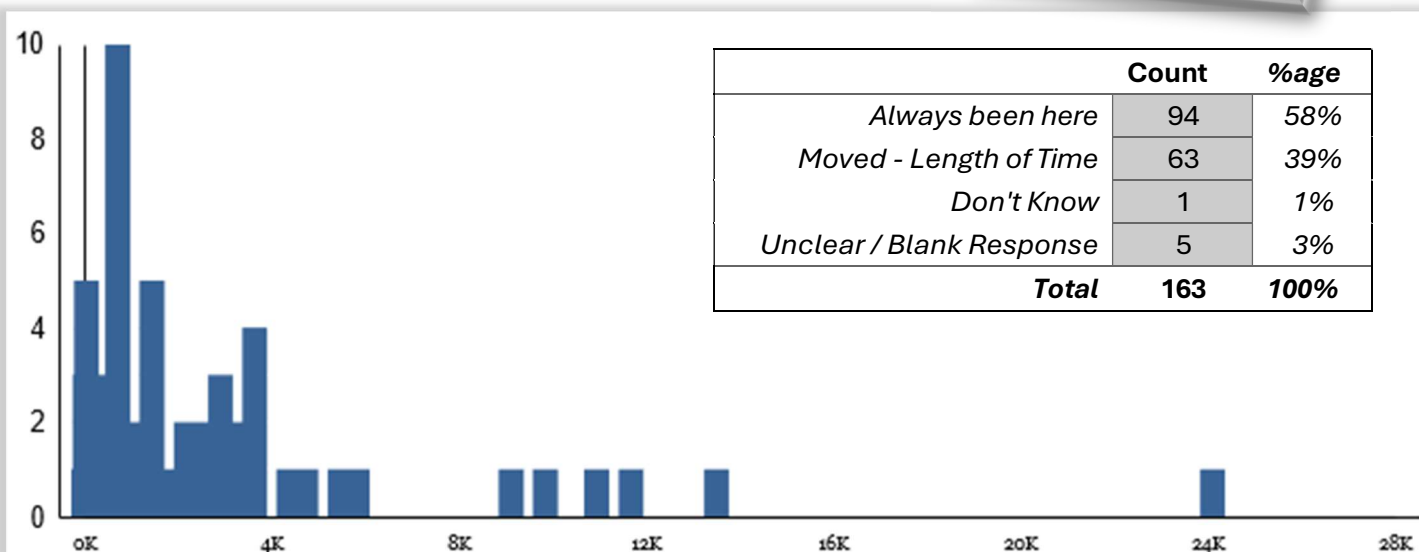
➔ <u>If yes:</u> **How long have you been in Canada?**

Duration
− **545 days**
− **2,555 days**
− **5,840 days**

6b. **Are you a Canadian Citizen?**

No, Other (international

No, Permanent Resident, 3, 2%

Unclear / Blank Response, 4, 2%

Yes, 155, 95%

7. **How long have you been in Sydney/Cape Breton?**

To address the rate of homeless in-migration

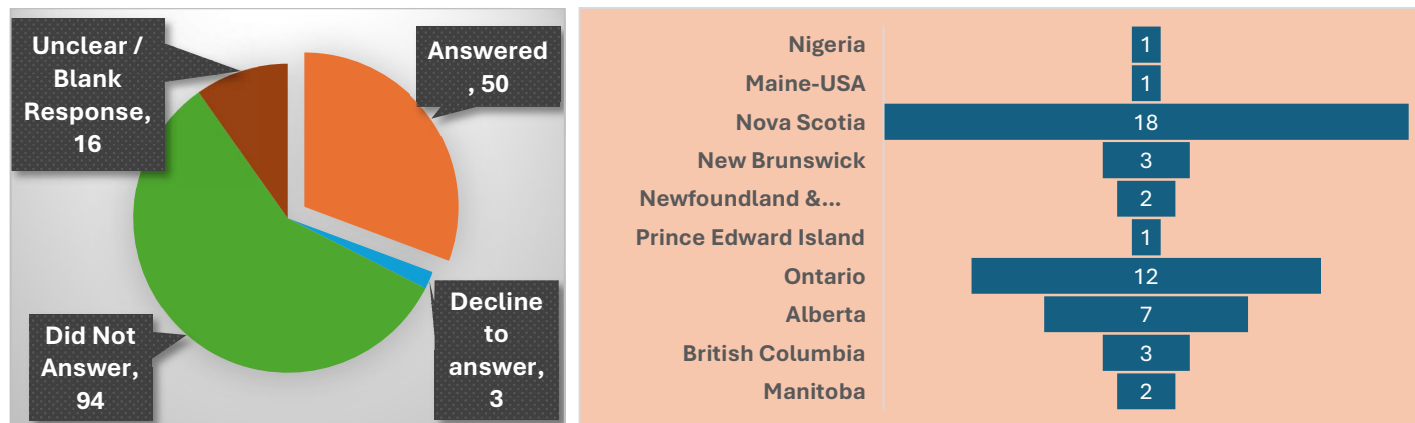|	Count	%age
Always been here	94	58%
Moved - Length of Time	63	39%
Don't Know	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	5	3%
Total	**163**	**100%**

Moved - Length of Time (in days)

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7a. Where did you live before you came here?

Location	Count
Nigeria	1
Maine-USA	1
Nova Scotia	18
New Brunswick	3
Newfoundland &...	2
Prince Edward Island	1
Ontario	12
Alberta	7
British Columbia	3
Manitoba	2

Pie chart: Answered, 50; Unclear / Blank Response, 16; Did Not Answer, 94; Decline to answer, 3

7b. What is the main reason you came to Sydney/Cape Breton? (Do not read categories; select one)

Pie chart: Family Moved Here, 17; Unclear / Blank Response, 9; Don't Know, 1; Did Not Answer, 94; To Visit Friends / Family, 6; To attend school, 3; Employment (seeking), 4; To access Emergency Shelter(s), 6; To access Services and Supports, 7; To Find Housing, 3; Fear for Safety, 1; Other (please specify), 12

Pie chart: Retiree, away from city, 2; to get away from drugs, 2; Eviction, homelessness, 3; Family, 6
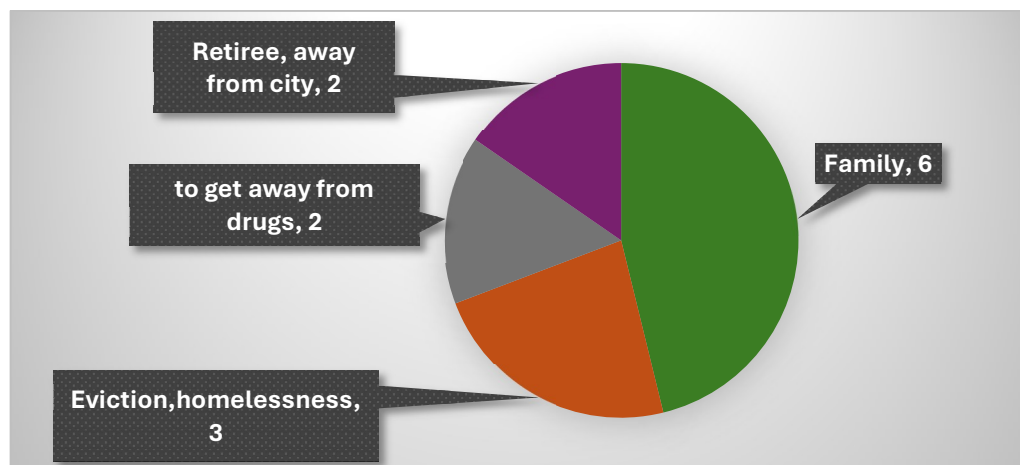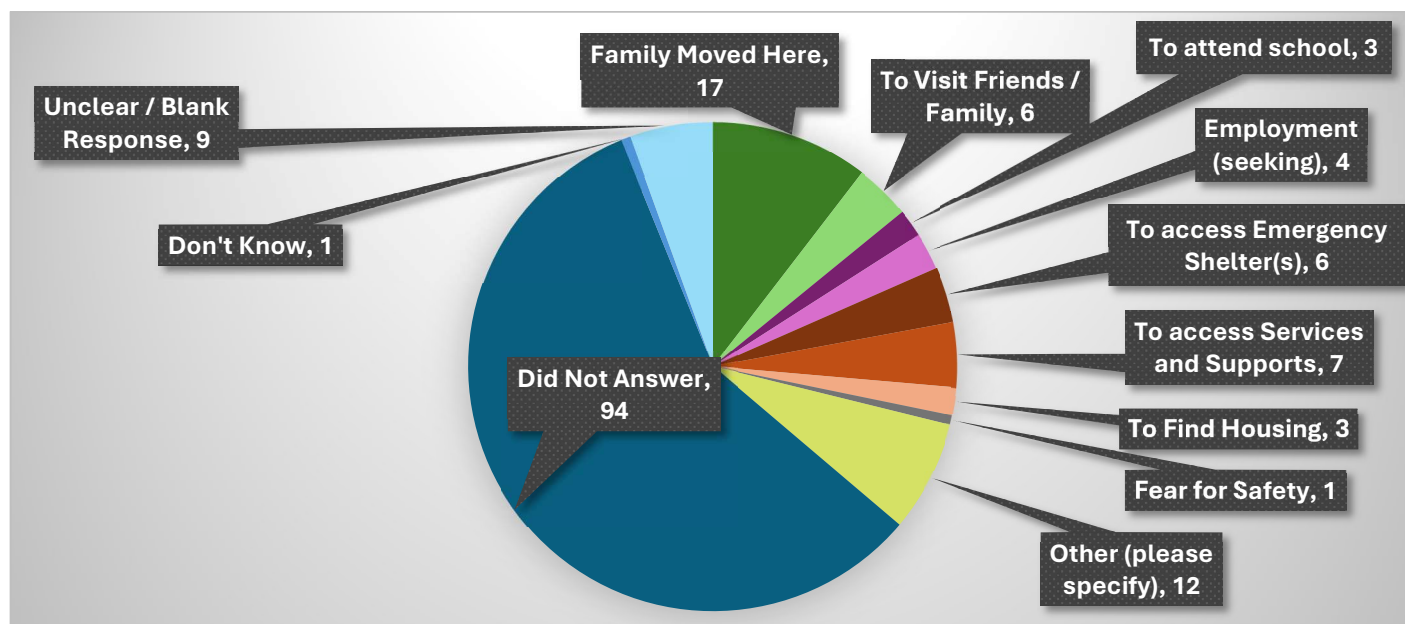
— **Out of 50, 19 individuals indicated to have migrated due tor homelessness or to access services.**
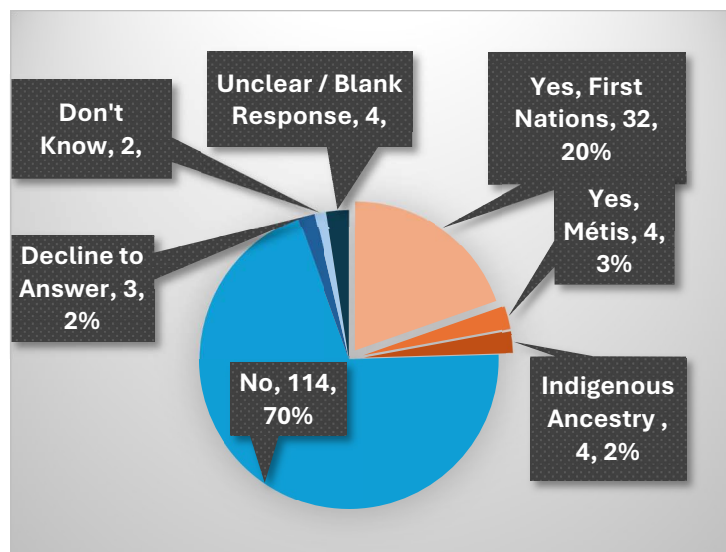
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To track progress in addressing their needs.

8. Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit?
(If yes, please specify)

	Count	%age
Yes, First Nations	32	20%
Yes, Métis	4	2%
Indigenous Ancestry	4	2%
No	114	70%
Decline to Answer	3	2%
Don't Know	2	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	4	2%
Total	**163**	**100%**

8a. Community / reserve name

	Count
Did Not Answer	139
Eskasoni	17
Labrador City	1
Membertou	2
Red Bank	1
Whycocomagh	1
Brokenhead Ojibway Nation	1
Conne River	1
Total	**163**

8b. In addition to your response in the question above, do you identify with any of the racial identities listed below? (Select all that apply)

To better understand the intersections between experience of homelessness and racialized identities.

	Count	%age
Decline to answer	6	4%
Don't Know	6	4%
Identify as Indigenous Only	26	16%
Unclear / Blank Response	25	15%
YES	100	61%
Total	**163**	**100%**

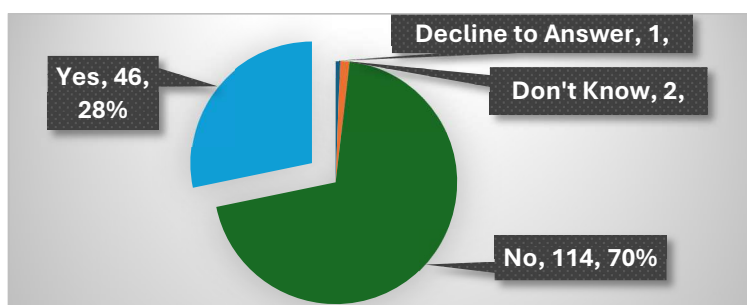| ➔ *YES*	*Count*
White (e.g. European, French, Ukrainian	91
Black-African (e.g., Ghanaian, Ethiopia	5
Black-Canadian/American	3
Latin American (e.g., Brazilian, Mexica	1
Asian-East (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Ja	1
Total	**100**

9. **Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP? (Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, and Air Force, Regular and Reserve, Army Rangers including completing basic training)**

Yes, Military, 9,

No, 154,
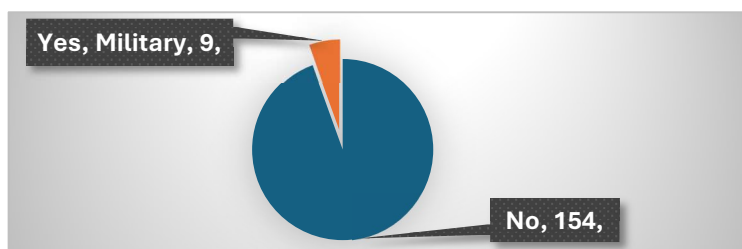
Eligible for support through Veterans groups

10. **As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care or in a youth group home? (Note: This question applies specifically to child welfare programs.)**

Yes, 46, 28%

Decline to Answer, 1,

Don't Know, 2,

No, 114, 70%

To understand if programs have been beneficial or need improvement

10a. **Approximately how long after leaving foster care/group home did you become homeless?**

	Count
Did Not Answer	134
Answered	29
0 days	1
1 days	1
7 days	2
14 days	1

21 days	1
30 days	2
60 days	1
180 days	1
240 days	1
365 days	2
540 days	1

1,460 days	2
1,825 days	1
2,190 days	1
3,650 days	1
4,015 days	1
4,380 days	1
5,475 days	2

6,205 days	1
7,300 days	1
8,395 days	1
9,125 days	1
10,950 days	1
11,315 days	1
Total	**163**

Average / Moyenne	2,933.79
Median	1,460.00

Minimum	0.00
Maximum	11,315.00

10b. **Do you feel that Child Protection Services was helpful in transitioning you to independence after leaving foster care/group home?**

	Count	%age
Yes	11	7%
No	30	18%
Don't Know	2	1%
Decline to Answer	3	2%
Did Not Answer	117	72%
Total	**163**	**100%**

Yes, 11, 7%

No, 30, 18%

11. Have you been experiencing difficulties related to any of the following:

To identify prevalence of barriers in populations experiencing homelessness

a. Illness or Medical Condition (e.g. Diabetes, tuberculosis (TB) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV))

	Count	%age
Yes	69	42%
No	85	52%
Decline to Answer	1	1%
Don't Know	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	7	4%
Total	**163**	**100%**
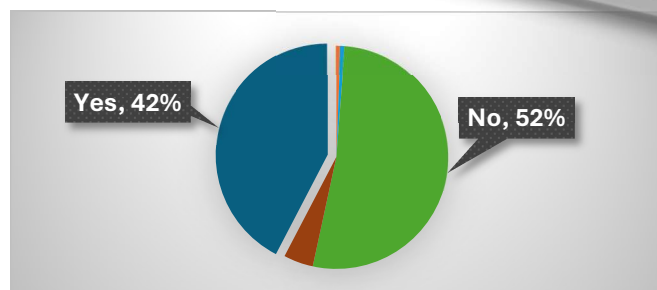
b. Physical Mobility (e.g. spinal cord injury, arthritis, or limited movement or dexterity)

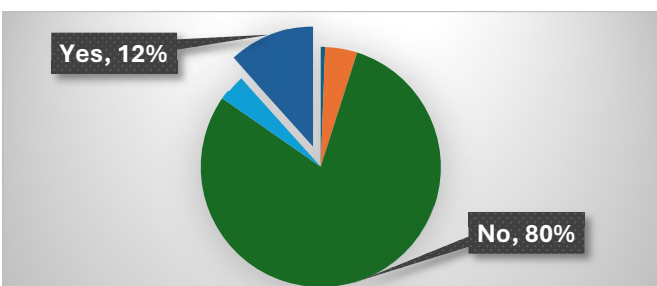|	Count	%age
Yes	72	44%
No	86	53%
Don't Know	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	4	2%
Total	**163**	**100%**
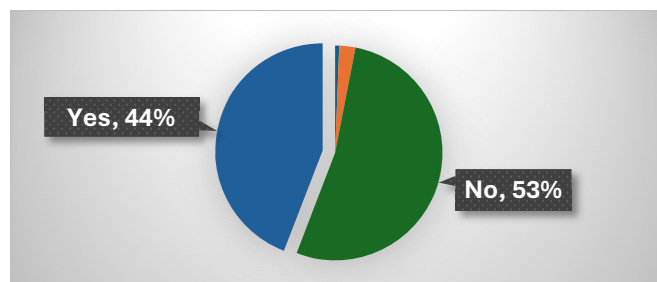
c. Learning, Intellectual/Developmental, or Cognitive Function (e.g. fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia or dementia)

	Count	%age
Yes	62	38%
No	95	58%
Don't Know	2	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	4	2%
Total	**163**	**100%**
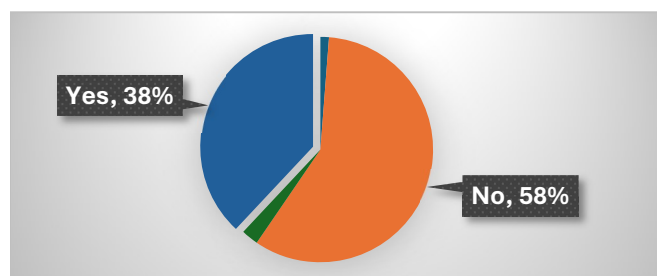
d. Acquired Brain Injury (e.g. due to an accident, violence, overdose, stroke, or brain tumour)

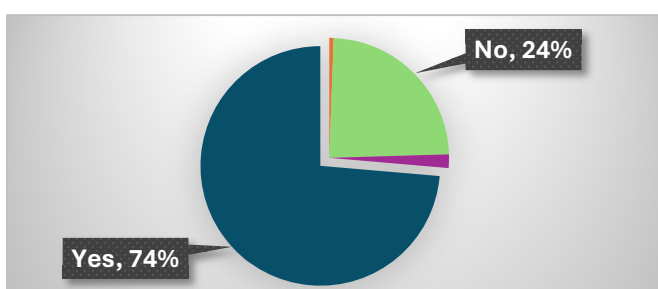|	Count	%age
Yes	19	12%
No	130	80%
Decline to Answer	1	1%
Don't Know	7	4%
Unclear / Blank Response	6	4%
Total	**163**	**100%**

e. **Mental Health [diagnosed/undiagnosed] (e.g. depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bipolar, or schizophrenia)**

	Count	%age
Yes	118	72%
No	42	26%
Don't Know	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	2	1%
Total	163	100%
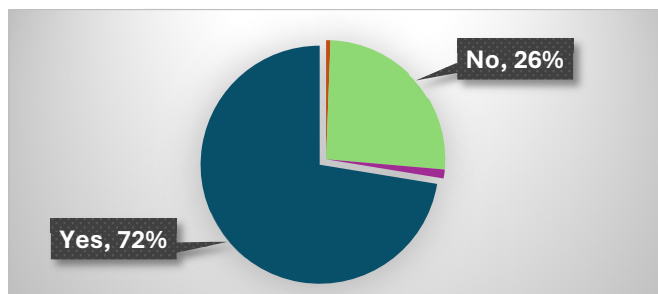
f. **Substance Use (e.g. alcohol or opiates)**

	Count	%age
Yes	120	74%
No	39	24%
Don't Know	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	3	2%
Total	163	100%

g. **Senses, such as seeing or hearing (e.g. blindness or deafness)**

	Count	%age
Yes	43	26%
No	113	69%
Decline to Answer	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	6	4%
Total	163	100%
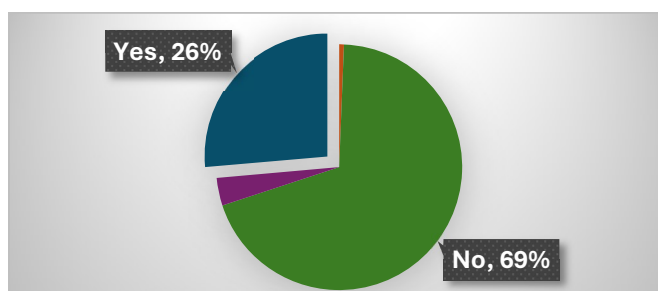
−   **Mental health and addictions are the most prevalent barriers amongst the individuals experiencing homelessness.**

12. **What gender do you identify with? (Show list or read list.)**

	Count	%age
Man	86	53%
Woman	71	44%
Non-binary	2	1%
Trans Man	1	1%
Trans Woman	1	1%
Two-Spirit	1	1%
Unclear / Blank Response	1	1%
Total	163	100%

− *Provides demographic information on gender*

13. **How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian?**

	Count	%age
Straight	137	84%
Bisexual	16	10%
Gay	1	1%
Lesbian	1	1%
Pansexual	1	1%
Asexual	1	1%
Two-Spirit	1	1%
Decline to Answer	3	2%
Don't Know	1	1%
Unclear	1	1%
Total	163	100%

− *For unique experiences of homelessness in gender diverse population*

14. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? (Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays.

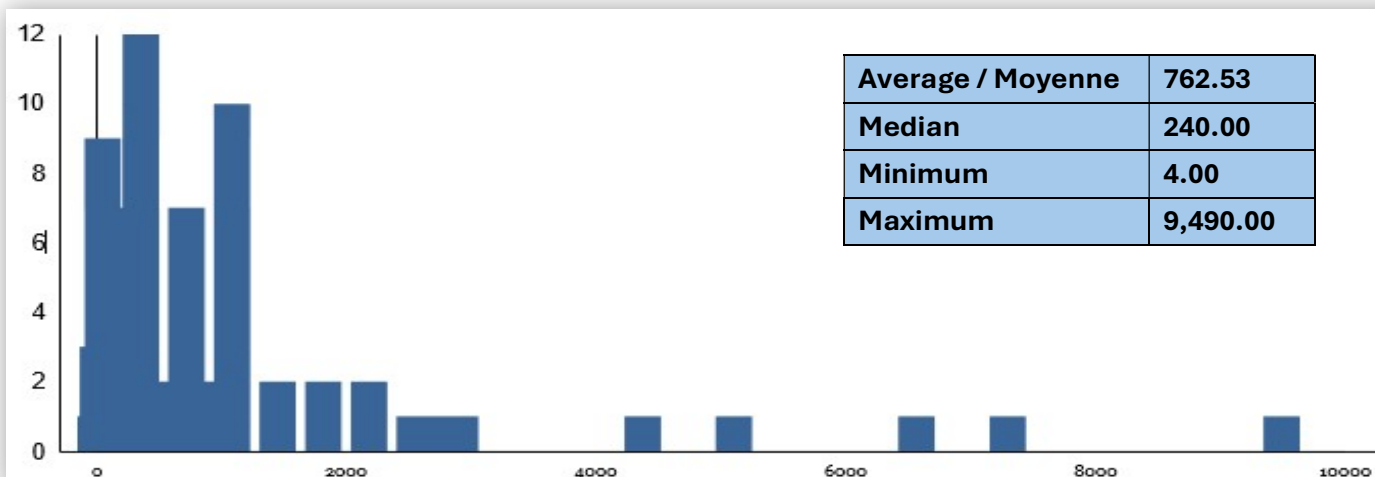*Open question that shed light on pathways into homelessness*
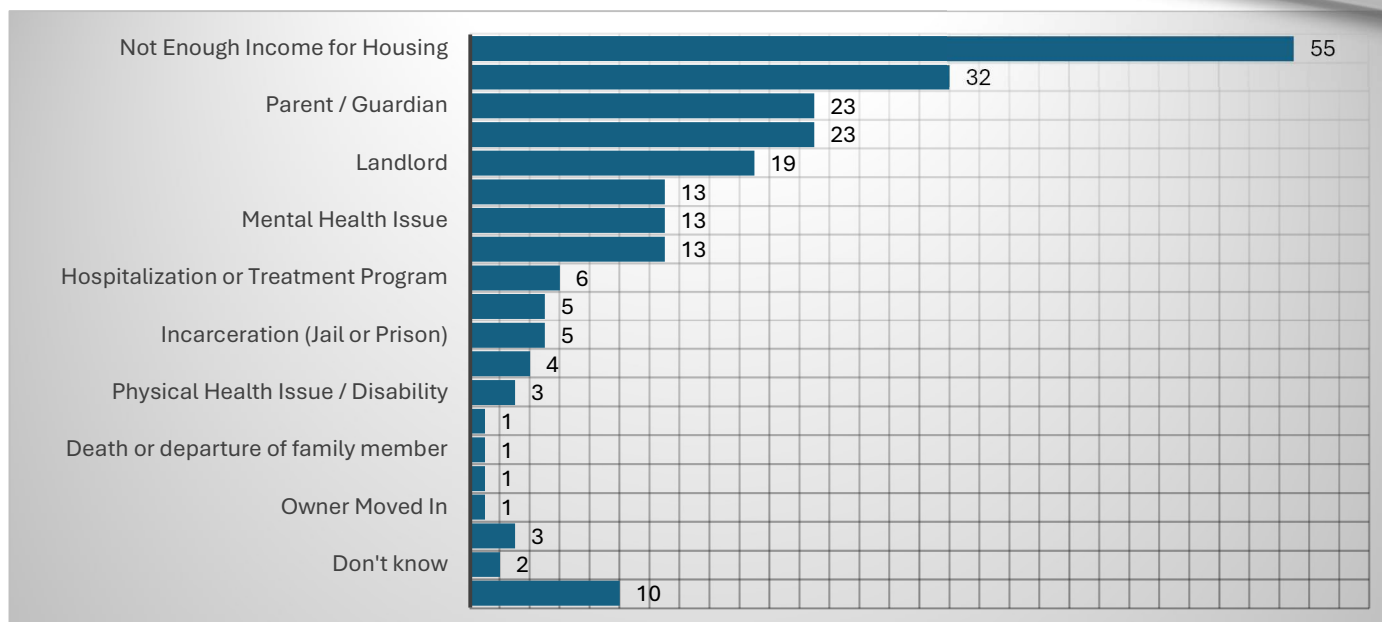
14b. Was your most recent housing loss related to an eviction?

	Count	%age
Yes	46	*28%*
No	105	64%
Decline to answer	4	*2%*
Did Not Answer	1	*1%*
Don't Know	4	*2%*
Unclear / Blank Response	3	*2%*
Total	**163**	**100%**

Yes, 46, 28%

No, 105, 64%
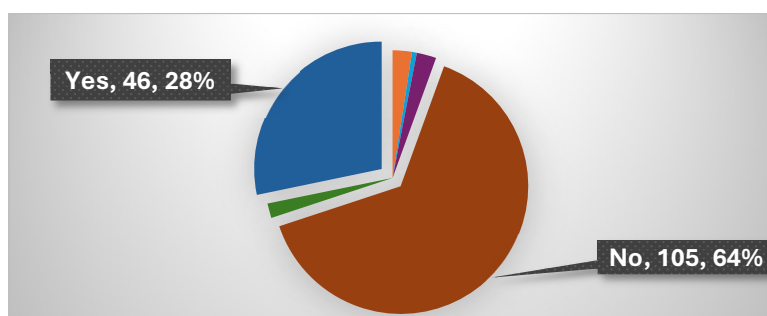
14c. How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing most recently)? (Best estimate.)

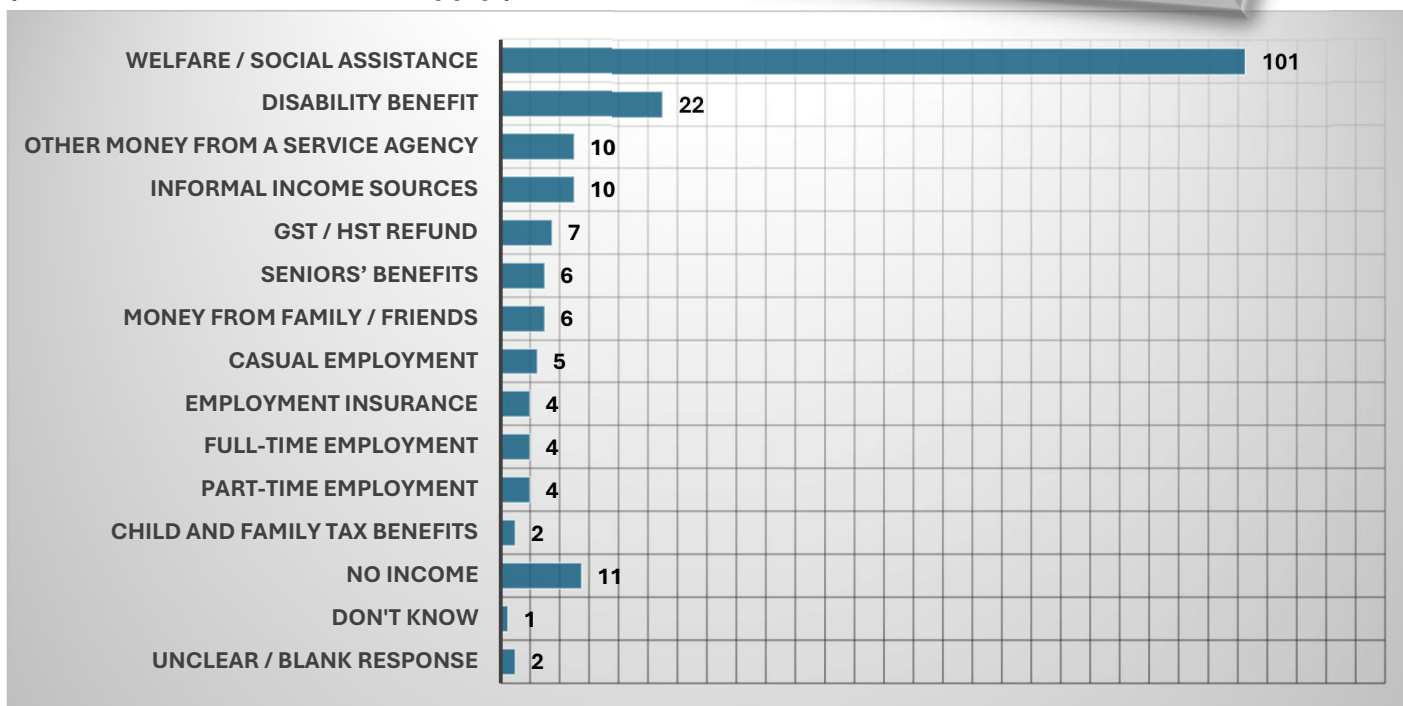| Average / Moyenne	762.53
Median	**240.00**
Minimum	**4.00**
Maximum	**9,490.00**

PiT Count Report

Sydney, Nova Scotia
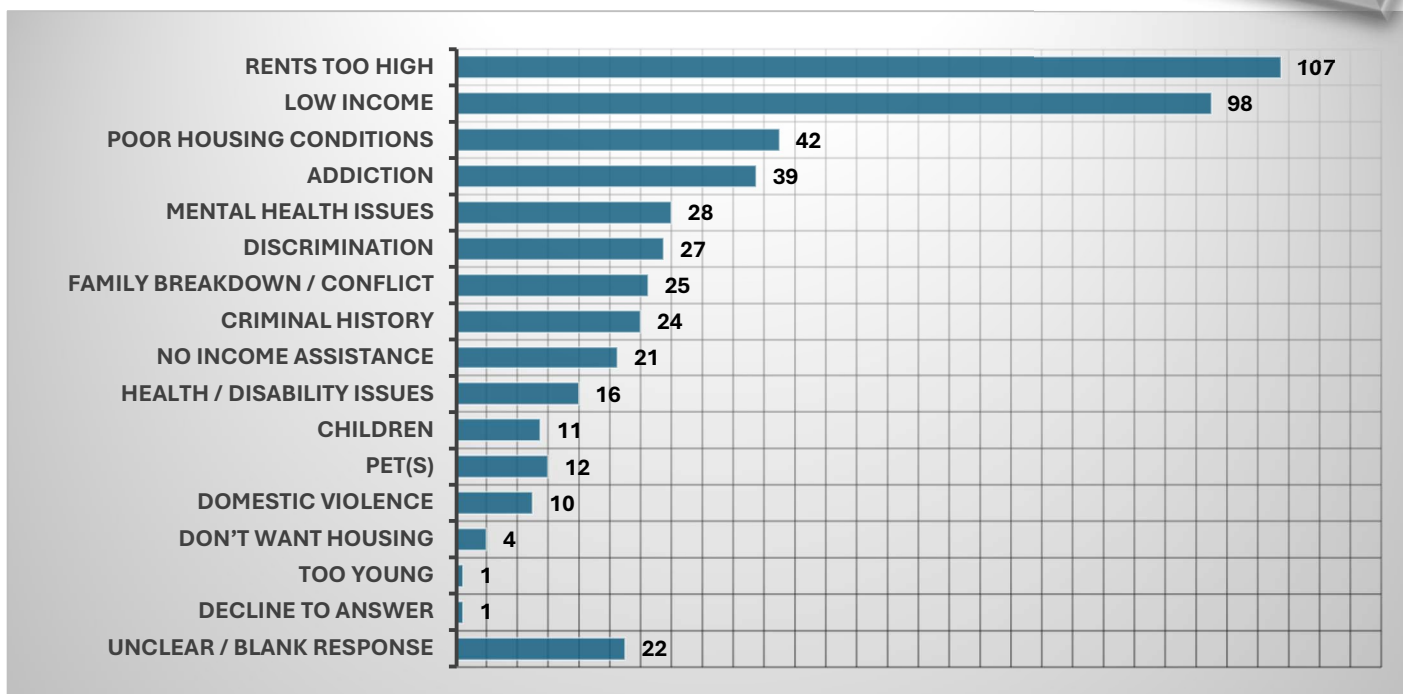**Dates:** 2024/11/01 - 2024/11/30

15. What are your sources of income?
(Read list and select all that apply.)

Open question that shed light on supports being accessed and which are underutilized

Source	Count
WELFARE / SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	101
DISABILITY BENEFIT	22
OTHER MONEY FROM A SERVICE AGENCY	10
INFORMAL INCOME SOURCES	10
GST / HST REFUND	7
SENIORS' BENEFITS	6
MONEY FROM FAMILY / FRIENDS	6
CASUAL EMPLOYMENT	5
EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	4
FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT	4
PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT	4
CHILD AND FAMILY TAX BENEFITS	2
NO INCOME	11
DON'T KNOW	1
UNCLEAR / BLANK RESPONSE	2

16. What challenges or problems have you experienced when trying to find housing? (Select all that apply.)

Barriers to find housing

Challenge	Count
RENTS TOO HIGH	107
LOW INCOME	98
POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS	42
ADDICTION	39
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES	28
DISCRIMINATION	27
FAMILY BREAKDOWN / CONFLICT	25
CRIMINAL HISTORY	24
NO INCOME ASSISTANCE	21
HEALTH / DISABILITY ISSUES	16
CHILDREN	11
PET(S)	12
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	10
DON'T WANT HOUSING	4
TOO YOUNG	1
DECLINE TO ANSWER	1
UNCLEAR / BLANK RESPONSE	22

Recommendations:

I. **Prioritize Vulnerable Populations**: Focus on chronic homelessness, youth, and families with children. Expand outreach for unsheltered individuals and provide tailored interventions such as mental health support and substance use.

II. **Expand Shelter and Transitional Housing**: Increase shelter capacity and promote diversion programs. Invest in youth-specific shelters with services including trauma-informed care, education support, and pathways to employment. Strengthen eviction prevention programs with rental assistance, legal aid, and mediation services. Develop more transitional housing options with case management to help individuals move toward permanent housing.

III. **Invest in Long-Term Housing Solutions**: Design and implement "supportive living villages" or communities that are specifically designed for people with personalized needs (physical mobility, mental health, substance abuse). These could be self-contained neighborhoods or apartment complexes providing permanent housing with integrated services that address health, employment, and other social needs Ensuring access to affordable housing and long-term support services, making housing stability a priority.

IV. **Housing First Approach**: Prioritize stable housing first, with enhanced funding for targeted outreach and resources to address underlying issues like affordability and safety. Develop more positions in housing support services to help individuals navigate complex systems, ensuring they can maintain stable housing and move toward long-term stability. Ensure comprehensive case management to address barriers and to connect individuals with housing, health services, and job opportunities.

V. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Build strong partnerships with local governments, nonprofits, healthcare providers, schools, meal providers, and harm reduction centers to ensure a coordinated, community-wide response. Engage landlords to create affordable housing opportunities and offer support to both tenants and landlords throughout the rental process.

VI. **Track Progress and Evaluate Outcomes**: Strengthen Coordinated Access Systems to match individuals with appropriate services and resources. Use regular PIT counts and data tracking to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and adjust strategies as needed.

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