

6th Homeless Count in City of Vancouver – March 2012
Significant changes since 2005

Final report

EBERLE PLANNING AND RESEARCH

MATT THOMSON

JIM WOODWARD

SHANDELLE BILLOWS

PETER GREENWELL

INFOCUS CONSULTING LTD.

JUNE 20, 2012

Acknowledgements

Eberle Planning and Research wishes to thank the many individuals and agencies that made the Vancouver Homeless Count 2012 possible. Staff of the City of Vancouver Liza Jimenez, Judy Graves, Celine Mauboules and Matt Bourke was instrumental in planning and conducting the count and producing this report.

The count team consisted of Area Coordinators: Shandelle Billows (downtown), Peter Greenwell (eastside), Jim Woodward (westside) and Matt Thomson (shelter coordinator). Infocus Management Consulting undertook recruitment of the Aboriginal interviewers.

The Vancouver Homeless Count 2012 would not have been possible without the enthusiastic efforts of the more than 350 volunteers who gave so generously of their time, both as interviewers and in other ways. I would also like to thank the emergency shelters, safe houses and transition houses and the many agencies across the region that participated in this year's count.

Thanks to BC Housing for providing aggregate client data. The Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness provided 2011 count data for Vancouver and the volunteer identification buttons. The Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy (GVSS) kindly allowed the City use of their logo once again.

Margaret Eberle
Eberle Planning and Research

Profile of a Typical Homeless Person in Vancouver

Bill

Bill lives in an alley in the West End where he guards his neighbourhood and knows his neighbours. Bill no longer drinks. He is a proud Aboriginal man in his late 40's who was raised in foster care and is hard working in nature. Bill limps because a car ran over his ankle and did not bother to stop to check on him. His face is scarred by the sun and has developed small cancer lesions. His back aches, he has diabetes and more disabilities than most people will suffer in their very old age. He continues to crawl in and out of dumpster to earn money recycling and pushes his heavy cart through back alleys.

Bill attributes his sobriety to staying out of the DTES. He was housed in the DTES but he relapsed with bad results. He continues to wait on several waitlists for housing across the City. The only type of housing he can afford is in such short supply that it is like musical chairs where if one moves in then another is out on the streets.

Alan

He's 50 now, tall, good looking (except for the missing teeth.) Sits on a little box when he panhandles, because he doesn't want his height to be intimidating. Smooth, sweet social skills, and a great memory for the names of the hundreds of people who pass his corner every day. Alan used to work as a car salesman, and it is easy to believe him when he said he did well. That was before a decade of living outside.

Says he lost his last few jobs because people were saying he was schizophrenic. Alan says "Yup, I do hear voices in my head, but I'm pretty sure it is God talking to me. The voices, they never get mean, they've been a great of help to me." Sometimes we see him downtown, walking along in a serious conversation. You'd think he was on a cell phone, but there are no ear-buds, no little mike. This fairly loud conversation is being held with the voice inside his mind.

The aches and pains of turning 50 this spring, and the end of Alan's hope that he'd find another good job in sales, gave him the courage to ask for housing. We found him a room in a City owned building, where he'd share the bathroom with only one other person. Alan is loving living inside. He was given a long bed, left over from the Olympics, and the bed has gone a long way to taking away his physical pain. He's treated himself to a nice haircut, some new clothes, and good soap to use when he showers every day.

Alan still panhandles because he needs money for food and books, and he still goes out and walks around the city most of the night. Says he walks at night, because that is when the voices want him to talk with them. He does not want to wake other tenants in his building with his conversations. "It is not like living outside" he says "I can sleep in the evening, now. If I have a newspaper, it does not get wet or blow away. I live like a normal human being."

Table of Contents

1	Key Findings	1
2	Introduction	2
	2.1 Purpose and objectives	3
	2.2 Definitions	3
	2.3 Method.....	4
	2.4 Limitations	6
	2.5 Report organization.....	7
3	Number and distribution of Vancouver’s homeless	7
4	Homeless trends 2005 - 2012	11
	4.1 Gender.....	11
	4.2 Age	12
	4.3 Aboriginal identity	13
	4.4 Income.....	13
	4.5 Health	14
	4.6 Where the unsheltered homeless stayed.....	16
5	Demographic profile	16
	5.1 Gender.....	17
	5.2 Age	18
	5.3 Aboriginal identity	18
	5.4 Accompanying the homeless	19
	5.5 Sources of income.....	20
	5.6 Health conditions	21
	5.7 The unsheltered homeless.....	22
	5.7.1 Where they stayed last night	22
	5.7.2 Reasons for not staying in a shelter	23
6	Profile of Heat and Winter Response shelter clients	24
	6.1 HEAT/Winter compared with Other Shelters and Unsheltered.....	25
	6.2 HEAT/Winter compared with Unsheltered	26

1 Key Findings

The Vancouver Homeless Count conducted on Mar 27, 2012 is the sixth homeless count measuring the number of homeless people in the City of Vancouver. While always an undercount, 1,602 homeless persons were counted, comprised of 306 unsheltered homeless persons and 1,296 sheltered homeless. Compared to 2011, this represents a 1% increase in the total number homeless and a large increase in the number of unsheltered homeless.

More informative are the changes that have occurred over several years, as annual figures may be affected by weather conditions. Between 2005 and 2012, the number of homeless people in Vancouver has increased by 17% or by 238 people. The City's population has grown by 10% over the same period so homelessness has grown at a faster rate. The composition of the homeless population has changed in that period: the number of unsheltered homeless has declined by 48%, and the sheltered homeless population has increased by 68%.

The count shows that Vancouver's homeless continue to be disproportionately male, Aboriginal, middle aged and older, and in poor health. They are in fact getting older and in worse health with each count.

The 2005 count is used in this report as the comparative baseline because significant policy changes were made in 2005 which significantly impacted future counts. Examples of these significant policy changes includes changes to the shelter system by BC Housing such as increasing operating hours to 24 hours, providing healthy meals and decreasing barriers to access for income assistance by the former Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOMELESS

Since the first homeless count in 2002 the number of people found homeless peaked in 2010 with 1,715 people, and has since declined to 1,602 persons by 2012. The 2011 and 2012 count results suggest a stabilization of the total number homeless in Vancouver. Since 2005, the total number homeless counted in Vancouver have grown faster than the general population. Especially different since 2005 is the composition of the homeless population: fewer are unsheltered, a decline of 48%, and more are sheltered, an increase by 68%. Notably, however it is the unsheltered population that has nearly doubled since 2011 while shelters, safe houses and transition houses reported 112 turnaways in 2012 compared to 64 in 2010.

TRENDS 2005-2012

The 2012 Count results show that Vancouver's homeless are in poorer health today than in any year prior. Eighty two percent of all homeless persons reported one or more health conditions in 2012, up from 74% in 2005. Similarly, the incidence of no reported or perceived health conditions dropped to 17% in 2012 from 26% in 2005. The incidence of self-reported mental illness among the homeless is higher at 40% in 2012 compared to 2005 when it was 28%. This unhealthy trend is consistent with an aging homeless population and overall, Vancouver's homeless population is aging. Seniors aged 55 and over now represent 15% of the homeless population, up from 2005 when they comprised 10%. The median age has risen significantly in 2012 to 48.5 years up from 43 years in 2010. The Aboriginal population among the homeless population has slightly declined to 32% from 2008 when it was 38%, and 2005 when it was 35% however it continues to be a significant overrepresentation compared to the general population of Vancouver.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Many homeless people have health issues. More than 80% of the homeless reported one or more health conditions and only 17% reported having no health conditions. The incidence of specific health conditions was more pronounced among the unsheltered homeless where two-thirds (66%) had an addiction, 47% had a medical condition and 40% had a physical disability. The exception was mental illness. Only 37% of the unsheltered homeless reported a mental illness, compared with 42% of the sheltered population. The median age of Vancouver's homeless population in 2012 was 48.5 years (half are younger, half are older), almost 10 years older than Vancouver residents in general (with a median age of 39 years). In 2012 the Aboriginal population is still overrepresented among the homeless, representing 32% of the homeless population and only 2% of Vancouver's population. The incidence of Aboriginal identity is significantly higher among the unsheltered homeless (42%) than the sheltered homeless (29%) in 2012.

WINTER/HEAT SHELTER CLIENTS

HEAT/Winter Response clients are similar to the unsheltered homeless in terms of their gender, age, Aboriginal identity and incidence of mental illness. In contrast to other shelter clients staying in year round shelters, Winter/HEAT shelter clients are more likely to be male, between the ages of 25 and 54 years, of Aboriginal identity and receiving income assistance or employed. They are less likely to report a mental illness than clients of Other Shelters.

2 Introduction

This document presents the findings of the 2012 Vancouver Homeless Count. It provides an estimate of the Vancouver's homeless population *on one day* - March 27, 2012, describes the population and reviews homeless trends in Vancouver since 2005.

The City of Vancouver commissioned the count so that it would have up to date information to assist with its priority to end street homelessness by 2015. There has been much effort and resources expended by the City, BC Housing, Streethome Foundation, non-profit housing organizations, the Mental Health Commission and others to tackle the problem of homelessness in Vancouver in recent years and counting the homeless is one way to understand the impact of these actions. In addition, looking ahead, a good understanding of the homeless population is critical for planning purposes.

In an attempt to streamline the count and prevent survey fatigue, this count focused on six key questions, and simplified the data collection process by using aggregate shelter data collected by BC Housing instead of interviewing at all shelters.

2.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the count is to provide:

- an updated enumeration of homeless persons in Vancouver;
- a demographic profile of those enumerated on the day of the count; and,
- an analysis of trends in homelessness since 2005.

2.2 Definitions

The count used the same definition of homelessness used in previous City and regional homeless counts. Someone was considered homeless for the purpose of this count if:

- they did not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and if they did not pay rent.

This included people who:

- had no physical shelter – staying on the street, in doorways, in parkades, in parks and on beaches, etc.; or,
- were temporarily accommodated in emergency shelters, safe houses for youth, or transition houses for women and their children fleeing violence; or,
- were staying at someone else’s place, (friend or family) where they did not pay rent, or
- people with no fixed address found at hospitals or jails.

For example, someone who stayed in a garage would be considered homeless if they do not pay rent, even if they considered the garage to be their home. Emergency shelters are not considered permanent housing, thus shelter clients are included in the homeless population. Someone who stayed at a friend’s place where they did not pay rent was also homeless for the purpose of this count, because they had no security of tenure.

People who were sofa surfing were included in the count if we found them (included as part of the unsheltered homeless population). Sofa surfers as a population are significantly undercounted in most homeless counts because they are difficult to find and enumerate. Similarly, families staying with other families and not paying rent would not be included in the count if they did not visit a place where they would be counted. Someone paying rent in an SRO is not considered homeless for the purpose of this count.

2.3 Method

The 2012 Vancouver Homeless Count used the same method as past City and regional homeless counts to ensure comparability. It measured homelessness from 12:01 am to 11:59 pm on March 27th, 2012, and consisted of two components to enumerate the sheltered homeless and the unsheltered homeless. The same survey questions were used to enumerate both the sheltered and unsheltered.

The sheltered component enumerated homeless individuals staying at emergency shelters, transition houses, safe houses and people with No Fixed Address staying in facilities like hospitals and jails overnight on March 26/27th. These individuals are referred to as the 'sheltered homeless'. Four approaches were used to gather information on people staying in shelters.

1. Transition house and safe house staff used the sheltered survey to gather the necessary information from clients.
2. BC Housing provided aggregate client data for the evening of March 26, 2012 for 16 shelters that provide regular reports to the agency.
3. Volunteers conducted interviews in nine shelters that do not regularly collect and/or provide detailed data to BC Housing. Included in this group are the HEAT and Winter Response shelters. Volunteers visited these shelters on the evening of March 26th to interview those staying overnight.
4. Agencies such as Vancouver Coastal Health, Providence Health Care and the Vancouver Police Department provided anonymous information on individuals staying in their facilities on count night who have No Fixed Address (NFA).

In addition, each shelter, transition house and safe house was asked to complete a shelter statistics form to provide the total number of occupants and turnaways on count night. This served as a cross check against the surveys, and helped ensure that all shelter clients were enumerated, including people who were missed by the survey or who refused to participate.

The unsheltered count took place in the daytime hours on March 27. Trained volunteers interviewed homeless people at pre-identified locations such as meal programs, drop in centres, some social services offices, parks, alleys and public spaces. People found in the daytime who stayed overnight in these places are referred to as the 'unsheltered homeless'. People who stayed in emergency accommodation the night before were screened out from completing the survey.

In advance of the count, the City's Tenant Assistance Coordinator in consultation with local advocacy groups, outreach staff and others knowledgeable about where the homeless may be found created a series of maps marking known homeless locations to guide interviewers in their assigned area.

Beginning early in the morning on March 27, volunteer interviewers approached people in their assigned areas to request an interview. If they agreed to participate, individuals at these locations were asked a series of screening questions to determine if:

- a) they had already answered the survey; or,
- b) they had a place they paid rent for; or,
- c) they had stayed in emergency accommodation covered by the sheltered component, including hospitals, jails etc.¹

The interview ended if individuals answered positively to any of the above questions. If the interviewee qualified for the survey, the interviewer proceeded to complete the survey with the interviewee.

Like in all previous years except 2011, volunteers were asked wake people to interview them.

In addition, some agencies in frequent contact with sofa surfers, particularly youth and women, were asked to complete interviews with these individuals on count day.

The homeless count is explicitly designed to avoid double counting. Screening questions eliminate those who have already been interviewed, who paid rent, or who stayed in a shelter, safe house, transition house or facility where they were included in the sheltered count. People approached are offered a candy or cigarette prior to being asked the three screening questions. This approach ensures there is no incentive for homeless people to complete an interview more than once.

<p>Glossary</p> <p>Unsheltered homeless - People who had no physical shelter, but stayed outside, on the street, in doorways, parkades, parks and on beaches and people who stayed at a someone's place where they did not pay rent (sofa surfing).</p> <p>Sheltered homeless - Stayed in an emergency shelter, safe house or transition house for women and children fleeing violence. Includes one recovery house and people with No Fixed Address staying overnight in hospitals or jails.</p> <p>Children - Young people under the age of 19 who were accompanied by a parent during the count.</p> <p>Youth - Young people under the age of 25 who were not accompanied by a parent during the count.</p> <p>Seniors - People aged 55 years and older.</p>

¹ People who stayed in an overnight location covered by the sheltered component (shelter, safe house or transition house or participating NFA facility) were not interviewed.

Only skilled outreach workers, social service personnel or people with relevant experience, including participating in previous counts, were recruited as volunteer interviewers. This helped ensure surveys would be completed as accurately as possible, reduce training requirements, and limit the number of volunteers needed.

The City was divided into three areas with an Area Coordinator responsible for each, and a Sheltered Count Coordinator. The City recruited volunteers and the count team managed training registration, assigned locations, coordinated volunteers on count night/day, and collected and returned completed packages at the end of their shifts. An “area station” was set up in each area on count day allowing for volunteer sign in, pick up and return of completed packages, and the ability to shift volunteers around in case of “no shows”.

The survey was shortened from previous counts and focused on six key variables - age, gender, Aboriginal identity, income source, health conditions and whether they were alone or with others. It is attached in Appendix A.

2.4 Limitations

All homeless counts underestimate the number of people who are homeless at any one time. The Vancouver count is no different. It did not enumerate every homeless person in the city on March 27, 2012. Although every effort was made to enumerate all homeless people, it was not possible to assign volunteers to all parts of the city for an entire day; some would be missed and some homeless people did not wish to be identified. In particular, people who stayed in detox facilities and most recovery houses that do not have a place to go when they leave were not part of the sheltered count, and were included in the count figures only if they were found during the daytime. This method does not count all people who were sofa surfing, as they are by their very nature, hidden.

It should also be noted that a point-in-time count, such as this, does not reflect the number of people who move in and out of homelessness over a longer period of time, for example, one year. However, the point in time approach is consistent with past counts and allows for comparisons.

People who refuse to be interviewed are not included in the reported number of homeless people found on the day of the count, as these people may decide to participate later in the day (and would therefore be double counted) or they may not, in fact, be homeless. If they are homeless, then they are missed, emphasizing that the count is an undercount.

There were 86 people who were observed to be homeless but who were not interviewed. That being said, the count provides the best available information on the size, composition and trends in the homeless population in Vancouver. Those observed but not interviewed are not counted in the total homeless count.

2.5 Report organization

Section 3 provides the total number of people identified as homeless, the breakdown by type of homelessness, and overall growth trends in Vancouver. Section 4 describes the characteristics of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless in 2012. Section 5 describes trends in the characteristics of the homeless population since 2005. Section 6 profiles clients of HEAT and Winter Response shelters.

3 Number and distribution of Vancouver's homeless

There were 1,602 homeless people counted in Vancouver on March 27, 2012, a decrease of 7% or 113 persons since 2010, and a small increase since 2011 (21 people or 1%).

Figure 1 and Table 1 show the number of homeless counted in Vancouver in 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012. After increasing each year since 2005, and reaching a high point in 2010 of 1,715 homeless persons, the total number of homeless people in Vancouver has declined to 1,602 persons in 2012. While there is some variability, the 2011 and 2012 count results suggest a stabilization of the total number homeless in Vancouver.

Figure 1 also shows the sharp decline in the number of unsheltered homeless counted in 2010 and 2011 followed by a subsequent rise in the number of unsheltered homeless counted in 2012.

Figure 1 - Vancouver homeless population trends 2005 to 2012

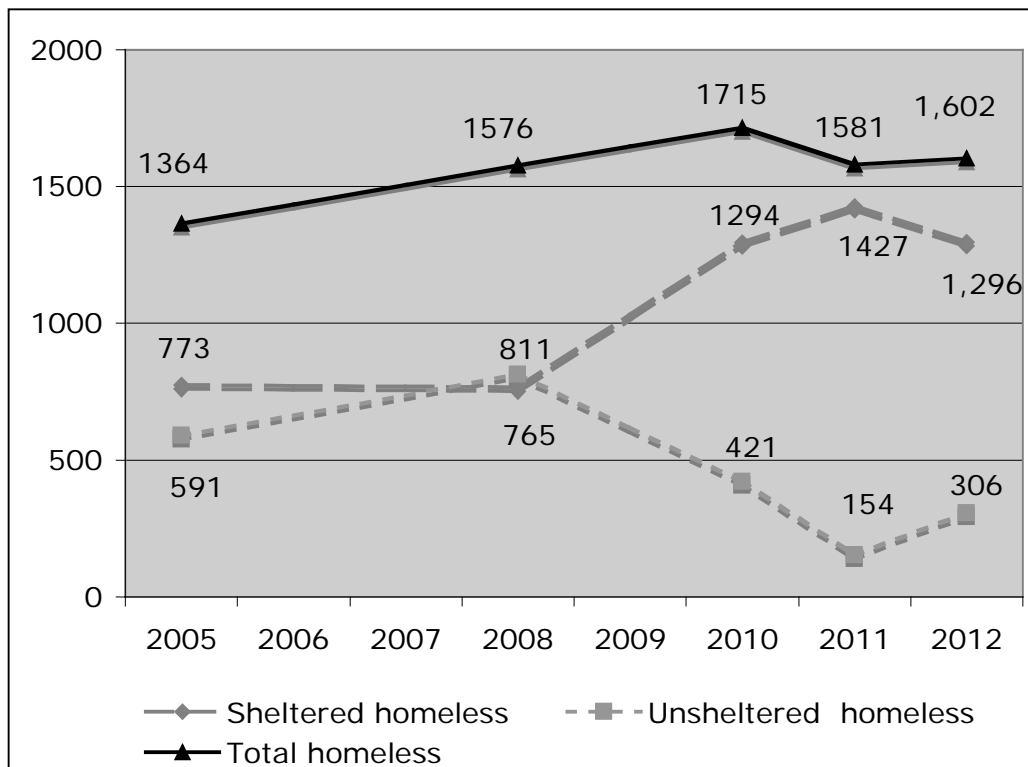


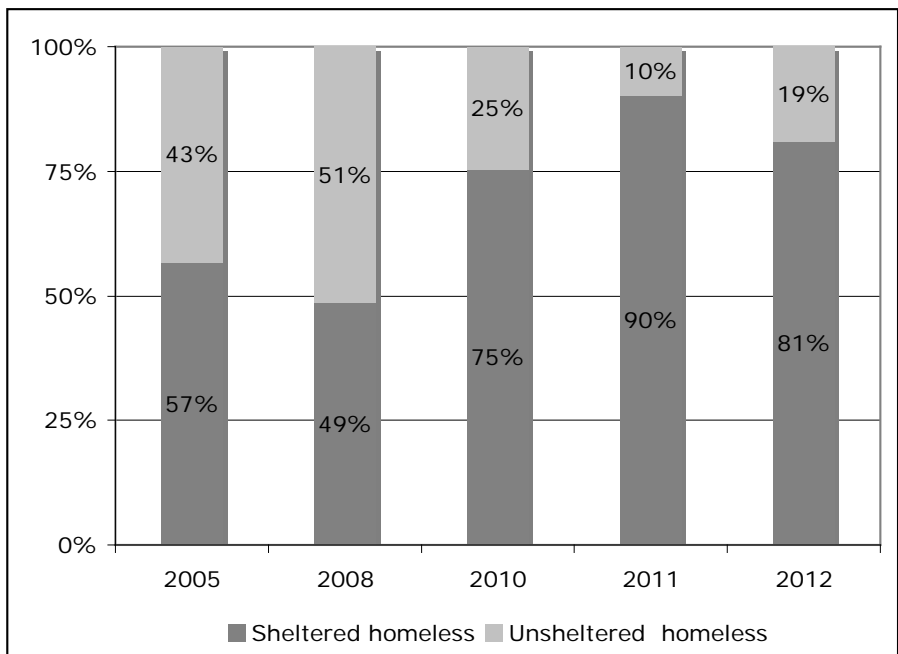
Table 1 - Vancouver homeless population trends 2005 to 2012

Year	Sheltered homeless	Unsheltered homeless	Total homeless
2005	773	591	1,364
2008	765	811	1,576
2010	1294	421	1,715
2011	1427	154	1,581
2012	1296	306	1,602
% Change 2005-2012	68%	-48%	17%

In 2011, 154 people were counted who were unsheltered the evening before the count, whereas in 2012, there were more (306 people). In fact, the 2012 Count shows a distribution of homelessness similar to that found in 2010, with 27% fewer unsheltered homeless individuals, but only two more sheltered homeless than in 2010. Nonetheless, there were fewer unsheltered homeless persons counted this year than all previous years except 2011.

Figure 2 depicts the changing distribution of Vancouver’s homeless population. Over 80% of the homeless stayed in shelters, safe houses and transition houses on count night 2012, as compared with 90% in 2011 and 75% in 2010. The reduction in sheltered homeless individuals between 2011 and 2012 corresponds with an increase in unsheltered individuals.

Figure 2- Distribution of the homeless population 2005-2012



This variability in the location where the homeless are counted from year to year suggests that there is a population of homeless individuals able to find a place indoors when it rains. Annual counts can increase the likelihood of measuring changes in weather on count day as opposed to actual trends in homelessness. Research done by the City of Calgary found that the share of unsheltered homeless counted during their street count varied predictably according to the weather on count night. During wet weather, friends and family may be more willing to allow a homeless person to sleep over, than they might during better weather.

This may have been a factor in the small number of unsheltered homeless counted in 2011. Rain was present at intervals throughout the day on March 15, 2011 including from 7-9 pm and at 11pm the night before the count, and 1am on the morning of March 16.² In contrast, the 2012 count experienced mostly cloudy conditions on the evening of the 26th, when the sheltered count was conducted and cloudy conditions during the unsheltered count on March 27th. This can have a significant impact on the ability to enumerate unsheltered homeless individuals as individuals move from their usual location outdoors to a location indoors. If they are able to stay in a shelter they will be counted, but if they stay with a friend or acquaintance, count interviewers may not find them.

Longer-term changes are more indicative of overall trends than year-to-year figures. From 2005 to 2012 the number of homeless people in Vancouver has increased by 17% or by 238 people. The City's population has grown by 10% over the same period so homelessness grew at a faster rate. However, the number of unsheltered homeless persons counted declined by 48% from 2005 to 2012 while the sheltered homeless population increased by 68%.

Table 2 shows the changes that have occurred within two time periods - 2005 and 2008, and 2008 and 2012. In the first period, the three years from 2005 to 2008, there was an increase in total homelessness of 16% (over 5% per year) and this included a significant increase in the number of unsheltered homeless (37%) while the sheltered population remained constant. The second period, from 2008 to 2012, reveals a different picture. In the four years from 2008 to 2012, the total homeless figure increased by only 26 persons (with some variability), for a total of just 2% over the four years or 0.5% per year. In that same period, the number of unsheltered homeless decreased by 69%, roughly the same as the increase in sheltered homelessness (62%).

² National Climate Data and Information Archive.
http://www.climate.weatheroffice.gc.ca/climateData/hourlydata_e.html?timeframe=1&Prov=XX&StationID=889&Year=2011&Month=3&Day=15 Retrieved May 14, 2012.

Table 2 - Change in homelessness by time period (2 similar sized periods)

Time Period	Change 2005 - 2008		Change 2008 - 2012	
	Number	Percent Change	Number	Percent Change
Homeless population				
Sheltered homeless	-8	-1%	531	69%
Unsheltered homeless	220	37%	-505	-62%
Total homeless	212	16%	26	2%

Nearly 20% (306) of the 1,602 individuals counted slept outside or sofa surfed on the night of March 26th. Most of the homeless were adults and youth (1,572 or 98%). Thirty accompanied children and youth (under 25 years) were counted. Of these, 18 stayed in a shelter, 11 stayed in transition houses and one was found at a hospital. There were no overnight placements in hotels by the Ministry of Social Development.³

Table 3 - Homeless by Unaccompanied and Accompanied in Vancouver, March 27, 2012

Homeless category	Adults and Unaccompanied Youth (<25 years)		Accompanied Youth and Children		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sheltered homeless	1,266	81%	30	100%	1,296	81%
Other Shelters	755	48%	18	60%	773	48%
Winter & HEAT shelters	425	27%	0	0%	425	27%
Transition houses	20	1%	11	37%	31	2%
Safe houses	16	1%	0	0%	16	1%
Recovery houses	10	1%	0	0%	10	1%
No fixed address	40	3%	1	3%	41	3%
Unsheltered homeless	306	19%	0	0%	306	19%
Total homeless	1,572		30		1,602	

Shelter, safe house and transition house providers were asked to report how many people were turned away the night of March 26th, either because the shelter was full or the individual seeking shelter was not appropriate for their facility. In total they reported 112 turnaways in 2012 on March 26th. Individuals turned away are not included in the total count figures, as they may have been enumerated as unsheltered homeless in the daytime component or may have found accommodation in another shelter.

³ Dave Jagpal, Manager, Integration Services, Ministry of Social Development, Vancouver Coastal Region, BC Ministry of Social Development.

Table 4 - Turnaways, March 26, 2012

Shelter category	Total Turnaways	
	Number	Percent
Other Shelters	73	65%
Winter Response / HEAT shelters	26	23%
Transition houses	4	4%
Safe houses	9	8%
Total turnaways	112	100%

4 Homeless trends 2005 - 2012

This section reports on the demographic and other trends of homeless individuals in Vancouver as enumerated in the 2005, 2008 and 2011 Metro Vancouver homeless counts and the 2010 and 2012 Vancouver homeless counts.⁴

4.1 Gender

Men continue to comprise the majority of homeless persons counted. The share of men among the homeless has been similar in all counts (73-72%) except 2010. In 2010 the number and share of men counted increased by 207 persons to 78% of the total homeless. Women have comprised about 26-27% of the homeless counted, however, more homeless women were counted in 2012 (347) than in 2010 (333) or 2011 (327).

Table 5 - Gender trends in the homeless population

Gender	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Men	928	73%	948	72%	1,155	78%	901	73%	960	73%
Women	330	26%	348	27%	333	22%	327	27%	347	26%
Transgendered	8	1%	15	1%	n/a	n/a	5	<1%	6	<1%
Total respondents	1,266	100%	1,311	100%	1,488		1,233		1,313	
Not known	25		61		21		264		21	
Total	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,497 ⁵		1,334	

⁴ SPARC. 2005. *On our streets and in our shelters: Results of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count*. RSCH. 2008. *Still on our streets: Results of the 2008 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count*. City of Vancouver. 2010. *Vancouver Homeless Count 2010. Off the street and into shelters*. RSCH 2011 *One step forward: Results of the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count*.

⁵ Demographic totals for this table differ from other trends tables as BC Housing was able to provide gender data for HEAT/Winter shelters.

4.2 Age

Overall, Vancouver's homeless population is aging. Seniors age 55 and over now represent 15% of the homeless population, up significantly from 2005 when they comprised 10% of the homeless.

In 2011 when there was a special youth enumeration strategy for the count, children and youth accounted for 17% of all homeless persons in Vancouver. In other years it has ranged between 12 and 14%. The absolute number of children and youth under age 25 has increased slowly from 179 in 2005 to 194 in 2012. Generally, the count may be less successful in finding youth who tend to sofa surf and avoid services, thus remaining hidden. In 2012 there were 57 homeless individuals under age 19. Thirty of these persons were children accompanied by parents, while 27 were unaccompanied youth (<25 years).

Table 6 - Age groups trends

Age groups	Total homeless 2005		Total homeless 2008		Total homeless 2010		Total homeless 2011		Total homeless 2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 19	30	2%	19	2%	25	2%	44	4%	57	4%
19-24	149	12%	135	10%	159	11%	146	13%	137	10%
25-34	273	22%	258	20%	264	18%	197	17%	267	20%
35-44	402	33%	425	32%	363	25%	251	22%	316	24%
45-54	260	21%	361	28%	445	30%	250	22%	339	26%
55-64	98	8%	95	7%	163	11%	122	11%	163	12%
65+	23	2%	19	1%	41	3%	33	3%	40	3%
Total respondents	1,235		1,312		1,460		1,133		1,319	
Not stated	56		60		84		114		45	
Total	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,176		1,364	

4.3 Aboriginal identity

Table 7 shows the results from the Aboriginal identity question for 2005 to 2012. The share of homeless people with Aboriginal identity has ranged from a high of 38% in 2008 to 31% in 2011 and 32% in 2012. When compared to the counts from 2005 to 2010, the share of Aboriginal persons within the homeless population is down in 2011 and 2012.

Table 7 - Aboriginal Identity trends

Aboriginal ID	Total homeless 2005		Total homeless 2008		Total homeless 2010		Total homeless 2011		Total homeless 2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aboriginal	352	35%	456	38%	448	36%	268	31%	362	32%
Not aboriginal	658	65%	749	62%	805	64%	594	69%	768	68%
Total respondents	1,010	100%	1,205	100%	1,253	100%	862	100%	1,130	100%
Not stated	281		167		291		290		204	
Total	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334	

4.4 Income

Table 8 displays the results for income sources for the 2008 to 2012 counts. There have been some changes since 2008. Fewer people reported income assistance as a source in 2012 (41%) than at any other time since 2008. The portion reporting disability benefit in 2012 was about the same as all other years. A higher proportion also reported income from OAS/GIS/ CPP, which may be related to the aging of the homeless population. Fewer people reported income from employment in 2012 (12%) compared to 2008 (19%), either full or part-time or casual. A larger proportion of the population reported no income (16%), more than double the share in 2008 (7%) and significantly more than 2010 (11%).

Table 8 - Income source trends

Sources of income (more than 1 possible)	Total homeless 2008		Total homeless 2010		Total homeless 2011		Total homeless 2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Government transfers								
Income assistance or welfare	533	43%	632	47%	286	44%	339	41%
Disability benefit	258	21%	286	21%	132	20%	176	21%
Employment Insurance	13	1%	35	3%	17	3%	16	2%
OAS GIS and CPP	21	2%	48	4%	28	4%	38	5%
Other sources								
Employment	242	19%	151	11%	97	15%	96	12%
No income	83	7%	130	10%	71	11%	135	16%
Other	611	49%	409	30%	329	50%	160	19%
Total Respondents	1,242		1,344		655		834	
Not stated	130		200		506		500	
Total	1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334	

4.5 Health

The 2012 Count results show that Vancouver’s homeless are in poorer health today than they were in any count prior to this year. This trend is consistent with an aging homeless population. Eighty percent of respondents reported one or more health conditions in 2012, up from 74% in 2005. Similarly, the incidence of no reported or perceived health conditions dropped to 17% in 2012 from 26% in 2005.

Table 9 - Incidence of health conditions trends

Health condition	Total homeless 2005		Total homeless 2008		Total homeless 2010		Total homeless 2011		Total homeless 2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No health conditions	263	26%	369	29%	277	21%	55	10%	156	17%
One health condition	396	39%	329	26%	415	32%	208	38%	290	32%
2 or more health conditions	349	35%	556	44%	622	47%	289	52%	451	50%
Total respondents	1,008	100%	1,254	100%	1,314	100%	552	100%	897	100%
Not stated	283		118		230		605		437	
Total	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334	

Table 10 reports on trends in specific types of health conditions. It shows that the incidence of reported and suspected mental illness among the homeless is much higher in 2012 at 40% compared to 2008 when 28% reported mental illness. The incidence of addictions is also higher, from 51% in 2008 to 59% in 2012, as is the incidence of physical disability among the homeless.

Table 10 - Type of health conditions trends

Health condition (more than 1 possible)	Total homeless 2008		Total homeless 2010		Total homeless 2011 ⁶		Total homeless 2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Addiction	643	51%	721	55%	344	56%	532	59%
Physical disability	324	26%	368	28%	157	25%	265	30%
Medical condition	495	39%	503	38%	186	30%	325	36%
Mental illness	354	28%	471	36%	251	41%	361	40%
Total respondents	1,254		1,314		n/a		897	
Not stated	118		230		n/a		437	
Total	1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334	

⁶ Number of total respondents to each health condition differed. Addiction (628 responses). Physical disability (606 responses), medical condition (616 responses), and mental illness (617 responses).

4.6 Where the unsheltered homeless stayed

As in 2005 to 2010, most of the street homeless stayed outside or in a car/garage or public place (70%) on March 26, 2012. The share staying at someone else’s place was 25%, similar to most years. However, the year 2011 appears to have been an unusual year with a very high proportion staying at someone else’s place, and a small proportion outside. However, in 2012, fewer reported staying at “other” places (5%) compared to other years. Examples of other locations reported include hostels/hotels, walking and halfway houses.

Table 11 - Where unsheltered homeless stayed trends

Location	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Outside	381	64%	512	67%	263	64%	36	24%	197	67%
Someone else's place	111	19%	129	17%	101	25%	69	47%	74	25%
Car/garage/public building	30	5%	36	5%	21	5%	13	9%	8	3%
Other	69	12%	90	12%	24	6%	29	20%	17	5%
Total Respondents	591		767		409		147		296	

5 Demographic profile

The following profile presents a demographic picture of the homeless adults and youth counted in Vancouver on March 26th, 2012. Each table shows results for the sheltered and unsheltered homeless as well as for the total homeless population.

While the total number of homeless enumerated in Vancouver on count day was 1,602 persons, the demographic profile provides information on 1,334 people for whom we obtained some demographic data. Profile data in the following tables excludes accompanied children under 19 years of age with a parent or guardian for whom separate demographic information was not collected,⁷ and 238 individuals who were enumerated on count night, for whom no corresponding demographic data is available.⁸

⁷ Interviews were not conducted with children under the age of 19 years if they were with a parent on count day. Demographic information is available for unaccompanied youth (< 19 years), and is included in the demographic profile.

⁸ This occurs for many reasons, including individuals who did not wish to be interviewed, or were not present when interviewing took place. Nonetheless, as the shelters provide occupancy statistics for that evening, we know that beds were used and the individuals would have reported being in a shelter the night before and thus not interviewed had they been approached during the daytime count.

Table 12 - Difference between total homeless and demographic totals

Type of data	Sheltered homeless	Unsheltered homeless	Total homeless
Demographic data (Survey or database record)	1,028	306	1,334
No demographic data available (No survey or database record)	238	0	238
Not applicable (Accompanied children not surveyed) (No survey or database record)	30	0	30
Total homeless	1,296	306	1,602

As in past counts, response rates varied by question, particularly among the sheltered homeless. Age and gender questions had high response rates overall (97% to 98%), but other variables including income source and health conditions had lower response rates overall, ranging from 85% to 63%.

5.1 Gender

Men represented nearly 75% of the homeless population counted in Vancouver, and women about 25%. Women comprised a larger share of the sheltered homeless population (28%) compared to the unsheltered homeless (20%). There were five transgendered persons sleeping in shelters, while only one slept outdoors.

Table 13 - Gender⁹

Gender	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Men	721	71%	239	80%	960	73%
Women	288	28%	59	20%	347	26%
Transgender	5	<1%	1	<1%	6	<1%
Total respondents	1,014	98%	299	100%	1,313	100%
Not known	14		7		21	
Total	1,028		306		1,334	

⁹ Interviewers were instructed to record gender based on observation.

5.2 Age

Adults aged 45-54 years comprised the largest group of the homeless counted (26%) followed by those age 35-44 years (24%). Overall, adults aged 25-54 years represented slightly less than three quarters of the city's homeless. There were 194 children and youth under age 25 years enumerated during the count, representing 14% of the total. Fifty-seven of these young people were under age 19. Of these 57 youth, 30 were found accompanied by a parent or guardian. These 30 children were found in shelters or transition houses. Over 200 homeless people enumerated on count day were age 55 years or older and most of them were between the ages of 55 and 64 years.

The unsheltered homeless were comparable in age to the sheltered homeless. Forty two percent of the unsheltered were age 45 or older, compared to 40% of the sheltered.

Table 14 - Age

Age groups	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-18	49	5%	8	3%	57	4%
19-24	100	10%	37	12%	137	10%
25-34	203	20%	64	21%	267	20%
35-44	254	25%	62	21%	316	24%
45-54	248	24%	91	30%	339	26%
55-64	132	13%	31	10%	163	12%
65+	33	3%	7	2%	40	3%
Total respondents	1,019	100%	300	100%	1,319	100%
Not stated	39		6		45	
Total	1,058		306		1,364	

The median age of Vancouver's homeless population was 48.5 years (half are younger, half are older), almost 10 years older than Vancouver residents in general (with a median age of 39 years according to the 2006 Census). The youngest unaccompanied person counted in 2012 was 15 years old and the oldest person counted was 82 years of age.

5.3 Aboriginal identity

Table 15 shows that nearly a third (32%) of Vancouver's homeless population identified as Aboriginal. Persons of Aboriginal identity are over-represented among the city's homeless population, compared with the Vancouver population (2%).¹⁰ The incidence of Aboriginal identity is significantly higher for the unsheltered homeless (42%) than the sheltered homeless (29%).

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. Community Profile. City of Vancouver. 2006 Census.

Table 15 - Aboriginal identity

Aboriginal Identity	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aboriginal	239	29%	123	42%	362	32%
Not Aboriginal	598	71%	170	58%	768	68%
Total respondents	837	100%	293	100%	1,130	100%
Not stated	191		13		204	
Total	1,028		306		1,334	

5.4 Accompanying the homeless

The purpose of this question was to determine if homeless people are alone or accompanied by others on count day or night. It is not used to determine marital status or family status. Overall, 76% of the Vancouver homeless population who responded to this question reported that they were alone. Eleven percent reported they were with friends, 9% reported they were with a partner, and some were with relatives (3%), children (2%), a pet (1%) or another person.

The sheltered homeless were more likely to be alone (79%) compared to the unsheltered homeless who were alone (72%). A significant share (23%) of the unsheltered population reported being accompanied by someone other than their partner/spouse or child, such as friends, relatives or a pet compared to the sheltered homeless (8%).

Table 16 - Accompanying the homeless¹¹

Accompanied by (more than 1 possible)	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alone	260	79%	210	72%	470	76%
With Partner/spouse	35	11%	21	7%	56	9%
With children	7	2%	0	0%	7	1%
With friends	20	6%	47	16%	67	11%
With pet	2	1%	10	3%	12	2%
With relatives	6	2%	13	4%	19	3%
With other	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
Total respondents	328		290		618	
Not stated	46		16		62	
Total	374		306		680	

¹¹ This table represents shelter responses from survey respondents only, primarily HEAT and Winter Response shelters.

5.5 Sources of income

Respondents were asked to identify their sources of income, with more than one being possible. Income assistance was the most frequent response (41%), followed by disability benefit (21%). Other common income sources were employment “other”. Examples of other income sources include sex work, selling drugs, theft, Workers Compensation, non-CPP pensions (e.g. union and military pensions), selling things and window cleaning. Sixteen percent of Vancouver’s homeless population reported no income at all.

The sheltered homeless were less likely to report income assistance (36%) compared to the unsheltered homeless (49%) and more likely to report disability benefits (22% versus 17%). It is not known whether the lower share of the sheltered homeless reporting income assistance than unsheltered is the result of actual changes to policy or access to income assistance or the low response rate to this question among the sheltered homeless.

- Employment (full, part-time and casual) was a source of income for 17% of the sheltered homeless enumerated, compared to only 6% of the unsheltered homeless.
- Other sources of income were cited by 19% of the homeless and these included binning and bottle collecting, panhandling, sex work and criminal activity.

Table 17 - Sources of Income

Sources of income (more than 1 possible)	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Government transfers						
Income assistance or Welfare	196	36%	143	49%	339	41%
Disability benefit	128	24%	48	17%	176	21%
Employment Insurance	15	3%	1	0%	16	2%
OAS/GIS/ CPP	30	6%	8	3%	38	5%
Other sources						
No income	93	17%	42	14%	135	16%
Employment	78	14%	18	6%	96	12%
Other	64	12%	96	33%	160	19%
Total Respondents	544		290		834	
Not stated	484		16		500	
Total	1,028		306		1,334	

5.6 Health conditions

The 2012 Vancouver Homeless Count survey asked about people’s health, specifically whether they had a medical condition or illness, physical disability, addiction, and/or mental illness. Medical condition refers to chronic problems like asthma and diabetes, and physical disability refers to an impairment affecting mobility or movement. The numbers presented in Table 18 and Table 19 include both self-reported health conditions, as well as the perceived health conditions identified by interviewers.¹² In these cases, the interviewer's perception was coded for the homeless individual.

More than 80% of the homeless had one or more health conditions. Table 18 shows that 32% of the homeless population had one health condition and 50% had two or more health conditions, meaning that 82% of those counted had one or more health conditions. Only 17% were reported to have no health conditions.

The unsheltered homeless were more likely to have a health condition than the sheltered homeless. As many as 87% of the unsheltered homeless had one or more health conditions, compared to 81% of the sheltered population. Those who were sheltered were more likely to report not having a health condition (19%) than those who were unsheltered (13%).

Table 18 - Incidence of health conditions

Number of health conditions	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No health conditions	118	19%	38	13%	156	17%
One health condition	203	33%	87	31%	290	32%
Two or more conditions	292	48%	159	56%	451	50%
Total respondents	613		284		897	
Not stated	415		22		437	
Total	1,028		306		1,334	

Note: High non-response rate amongst sheltered homeless may limit representativeness.

Table 19 shows that addiction was the most common health issue. Fifty nine percent of those who responded had an addiction. The next most common health problem was mental illness (40%).

The incidence of specific health conditions was more pronounced among the unsheltered homeless, where two-thirds (66%) had an addiction, 47% had a medical condition and 40% had a physical disability. The exception was mental illness. Only 37% of the unsheltered homeless had a mental illness, compared with 42% of the sheltered population.

Table 19 - Type of health conditions

¹² Perceived conditions account for a small share of total positive answers, mostly among unsheltered homeless.

Health condition (More than 1 response possible)	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Medical condition	192	31%	133	47%	325	36%
Physical disability	152	25%	113	40%	265	30%
Addiction	344	56%	188	66%	532	59%
Mental illness	255	42%	106	37%	361	40%
Total respondents	613		284		897	
Not stated	415		22		437	
Total	1,028		306		1,334	

5.7 The unsheltered homeless

5.7.1 Where they stayed last night

One of the screening questions asked the unsheltered homeless where the individual stayed the previous night. Of the 306 unsheltered respondents who were found in Vancouver, 296 provided a specific answer. The largest share (70%) reported staying outside including in cars, garages, public buildings, vehicles and other places that are not considered fit for human habitation. One quarter of the unsheltered homeless (74 people) stayed temporarily at someone else's place (where they did not pay rent and had no security of tenure). Other places reported included cafes or fast food restaurants and hostels. Some people did not sleep the night of the count, but wandered around or worked (prostitution or binning).

Table 20 - Where the unsheltered homeless stayed

Location	Number	Percent
Outside	197	67%
Friend or family	74	25%
Car/garage/public building/camper/truck/shed	8	3%
Other	17	6%
Total respondents	296	100%
No answer	10	
Total	306	

5.7.2 Reasons for not staying in a shelter

Some unsheltered homeless did not stay in a shelter because they disliked them (40%). Reasons for this include bedbugs, crime, overcrowded conditions, and the presence of drugs and alcohol. Thirteen percent said they were turned away from a shelter because it was full; an additional five individuals (2%) noted that they did try to stay in a shelter, but were turned away because they were considered inappropriate for the shelter.¹³ Nine percent said they were able to stay with a friend for the evening and therefore did not need to stay in a shelter. “Other reasons” was selected by 30% of street homeless, often citing similar concerns as those individuals who dislike shelters. However, shelter facilities reported 112 turnaways on count night and 39 vacant spaces within the City.

Table 21 - Why unsheltered homeless did not use a shelter

Reason (select only one)	Number	Percent
Dislike	109	40%
Overcrowded	24	9%
Crime	16	6%
Other dislike	15	6%
Bedbugs and other pests	13	5%
Noise	10	4%
Drugs and alcohol are present	5	2%
Turned away – full	36	13%
Able to stay with friends	24	9%
Turned away - inappropriate	5	2%
Didn't know about	2	1%
Couldn't get to it	13	5%
Other reasons	81	30%
Total respondents	270	
No answer	36	
Total	306	

¹³ An individual is considered 'inappropriate' for a shelter for example, if they are too young to stay in an adult shelter, or there were no beds available for their gender.

6 Profile of Heat and Winter Response shelter clients

Clients of two different groups of shelters operating in Vancouver at count time: low barrier shelters operated on a temporary basis beginning in the winter of 2008 called HEAT and temporary 4-5 month Winter Response shelters, and Other Shelters (year-round and seasonal) are profiled in the following tables.^{14 15} The unsheltered homeless are included for comparison. This information has been included in this report to obtain a better understanding of the population using the HEAT and Winter Response shelters and compare this population to the population in Other Shelters and the unsheltered homeless.

On March 26, 2012, 425 people stayed overnight in HEAT and Winter Response shelters, but only 241 completed interviews providing demographic information, so the following tables are based on 241 clients (57% of all HEAT/Winter Response clients). There was a low response rate for Other Shelters on certain questions, including income and medical conditions.

Table 22 shows that HEAT and Winter Response shelter clients were more likely to be male than Other Shelter clients. Other Shelters accommodated a greater proportion of homeless women than HEAT/Winter shelters. Overall the gender distribution in HEAT/Winter shelters more closely resembled the unsheltered population.

HEAT Shelters

Homeless Emergency Action Team shelters are temporary low barrier shelters in place until planned permanent supportive housing is opened.

Winter Response Shelters

Winter Response shelters are temporary low barrier winter shelters operating in the City of Vancouver from November to April each winter.

Year-round Shelters

Permanent shelters funded by BC Housing and others, open year-round. Offer 24/7 service, meals and other services including case management.

Seasonal Shelters

Formerly known as 'cold/wet weather' services, these beds and mats typically open from November through March. Support services are on a more limited basis than in year-round service.

Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Shelters

EWR shelters provide extra overnight shelter spaces during periods of extreme weather, often mats. They are dependent on volunteers and have limited support services.

¹⁴ In some tables Other Shelter data is unavailable due to poor response rates.

¹⁵ There were no EWR shelters operating on count night.

6.1 HEAT/Winter compared with Other Shelters and Unsheltered

Table 22 - Gender

Gender	HEAT/Winter		Other Shelters		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Men	205	87%	516	66%	239	80%
Women	30	13%	258	33%	59	20%
Transgender	0	0%	5	1%	1	0%
Total respondents	235		779		299	
Not known	6		8		7	
Total	241		787		306	

HEAT/Winter Response shelter clients tended to be between 25 and 44 years. Very few clients under 25 used the HEAT/Winter shelters (6%), while they accounted for 14% of the Other Shelter clients (excluding accompanied children) and 15% of unsheltered homeless. Older homeless persons (55 and over) also represented a smaller proportion of HEAT/Winter shelter clients (14%) in comparison with Other Shelters (17%).

Table 23 - Age

Age groups	HEAT/Winter		Other Shelters		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 19 ¹⁶	0	0%	49	3%	8	3%
19-24	14	6%	83	11%	37	12%
25-34	62	26%	142	19%	64	21%
35-44	67	28%	187	25%	62	21%
45-54	59	25%	188	25%	91	30%
55-64	27	11%	105	14%	31	10%
65+	8	3%	25	3%	7	2%
Total respondents	237		779		300	
Not stated	4		35		6	
Total	241		814		306	

HEAT/Winter Response shelter clients were more likely to be of Aboriginal identity (36%) compared to Other Shelter clients (26%). Aboriginal identity was highest among the unsheltered homeless (42%).

¹⁶ Includes accompanied children

Table 24 - Aboriginal identity

Aboriginal identity	HEAT/Winter		Other Shelters		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aboriginal	85	36%	154	26%	123	42%
Not Aboriginal	152	64%	446	74%	170	58%
Total respondents	237		600		293	
No answer	4		187		13	
Total	241		787		306	

6.2 HEAT/Winter compared with Unsheltered

Responses from Other Shelters are excluded from the next set of tables due to the low number of responses.

Heat/Winter shelter clients are more likely to be alone (80%) than the unsheltered homeless (72%) and less likely to be with friends (7%) compared to 16%.

Table 25 - Accompanying the homeless

Accompanied by (more than 1 possible)	HEAT/Winter		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alone	187	80%	210	72%
With Partner/spouse	26	11%	21	7%
With children[1]	0	0%	0	0%
With friends	16	7%	47	16%
With pet	2	1%	10	3%
With relatives	6	3%	13	4%
With other	0	0%	1	0%
Total respondents	235		290	
Not stated	6		16	
Total	241		306	

A smaller proportion of HEAT/Winter Shelter clients reported income assistance as an income source (41%) than the unsheltered population (49%). The incidence of disability benefits in HEAT/Winter shelters was greater than the unsheltered population. HEAT/Winter clients and the unsheltered population was comparable in the proportion reporting no income (12% and 14% respectively) and employment income was more prevalent among HEAT/Winter shelter clients (19%) than unsheltered population (6%). The unsheltered was twice more likely to claim other sources of income (e.g. binning, panhandling, illegal activity) than HEAT/Winter shelter clients.

Table 26 - Sources of Income

Sources of income (more than 1 possible)	HEAT/Winter		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Government transfers				
Income assistance or welfare	94	41%	143	49%
Disability benefit	54	23%	48	17%
Employment Insurance	2	1%	1	0%
OAS/GIS/ CPP	15	6%	8	3%
Other sources				
No income	28	12%	42	14%
Employment	43	19%	18	6%
Other sources	36	16%	96	33%
Total Respondents	231		290	
Not stated	10		16	
Total	241		306	

HEAT/Winter shelter clients were less likely than the unsheltered population to report having two or more health conditions, with 52% of clients having two or more health conditions, compared to a 56%. There was also a higher proportion of HEAT/Shelter clients with no health conditions compared with the unsheltered population. HEAT/Winter shelter clients reported to be in better health than the unsheltered populations with fewer health conditions.

Table 27 - Incidence of health conditions

Health condition	HEAT/Winter		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No health conditions	54	23%	38	13%
One health condition	60	25%	87	31%
Two or more conditions	122	52%	159	56%
Total respondents	236		284	
Not stated	5		22	
Total	241		306	

The unsheltered homeless had a higher incidence of every type of health condition than HEAT/Winter shelter clients. However, HEAT/Winter shelter clients had similar incidence of medical conditions as the unsheltered population.

Table 28 - Type of health conditions¹⁷

Health condition (more than 1 possible)	HEAT/Winter		Unsheltered homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Medical condition	106	46%	133	47%
Physical disability	78	34%	113	40%
Addiction	129	56%	188	66%
Mental illness	71	31%	106	37%
Total respondents	229		284	
Not stated	12		22	
Total	241		306	

In summary, compared with Other Shelter clients, individuals counted in the HEAT/Winter Response shelters were more likely to:

- Be Male
- Between the ages of 25 and 54 years
- Of Aboriginal identity
- Receiving income assistance or employed
- Have no health conditions or two or more health conditions, though it is less likely that one of these is a mental illness

HEAT/Winter Response clients fit the unsheltered profile more closely in terms of gender, age, Aboriginal identity and incidence of medical condition.

¹⁷ Health conditions include self-reported and perceived figures.