Vancouver Homeless Count 2016

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Acknowledgements

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1 Key Findings

The Vancouver Homeless Count, conducted on March 10, 2016, is the tenth homeless count in Vancouver. In 2016, 1,847 homeless persons were counted: 539 unsheltered (29%) and 1,308 sheltered (71%). The total number of homeless persons counted in Vancouver this year is higher than last year (1,746 homeless persons) and it is the highest number of all previous years, though it does not represent the highest street count (both 2005 and 2008 were higher).

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND TRENDS

A homeless count survey was completed by 1,176 individuals of the 1,847 people who were counted as homeless on March 10th. The demographic profile examines the results from the 1,176 individuals who make up the sample.

Similar to previous years, the 2016 Homeless Count shows that Vancouver's homeless population over-represents men (76%), the middle-aged (between 35 and 54 years old) (48%), and people of Aboriginal identity (38%), and that health conditions are poor.

In terms of age, 15% of the survey respondents were under 25 years of age. This proportion is lower than in the previous three years. The proportion of homeless seniors has increased since 2005 (10%) and for the last three years has remained stable at around 18%.

The Aboriginal population remains over-represented amongst the homeless, representing 38% of total respondents. In comparison, Vancouver's population is about 2.5% Aboriginal.[1] Only in 2014 (36%), 2008 (38%) and 2010 (36%) were similarly high proportions measured, though Aboriginal respondents have consistently accounted for more than 30% of the total homeless population. The unsheltered homeless population in particular has a high proportion of Aboriginal individuals. Forty-four percent (44%) of all unsheltered individuals counted and 33% of all sheltered individuals identify themselves as Aboriginal.

The 2016 Count results show that the homeless population continues to remain in poor health, with 78% of individuals reporting one or more health conditions. Addiction/substance use remains the most prevalent health condition reported by the homeless population (53%), with 42% of respondents reporting a medical condition, 40% reporting a mental health issue and 31% reporting a physical disability.[2]

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[1] Statistics Canada. Community Profile. City of Vancouver. 2011 National Household Survey.
[2] In 2015, perceived health conditions accounted for between 8% and 16% across all health conditions. While health conditions appear to have slightly improved since 2015, in 2016 volunteers were asked not to report 'perceived' health conditions but to only account for self-reported conditions. Comparisons to previous years must be made with caution, as any improvements in health conditions are likely due to changes in said reporting procedures.

Thirty five percent (35%) of respondents reported receiving income assistance. This proportion has decreased from its peak in 2010 (47%). Reliance on disability benefits remained around 21% between 2008 and 2012; however, this year a greater proportion (27%) of homeless individuals reported receiving disability benefits. The overall proportion of the homeless population reporting income from OAS/GIS/CPP and other pensions has gradually increased since 2008 (<1% in 2008 to 7% in 2016).[3]

In 2016, thirty nine percent (39%) of respondents reported being homeless for 1 year or more and 61% for less than one year. Between 2008 and 2015 between 51% and 57% had been homeless for less than a year, so 2016 shows a higher proportion of recently homeless (less than one year) individuals in this timeframe. Only 2005 showed a higher proportion of individuals homeless for less than a year (63%). In 2016, the unsheltered population was more likely to have been homeless for 1 year or more, with nearly half that group (49%) reporting this duration of time being homeless, compared to 30% in the sheltered population this year.

HEAT/WINTER RESPONSE SHELTER CLIENTS
HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients tend to have a different profile than individuals in Other Shelters in terms of gender, age, Aboriginal identity, income, duration of homelessness and health conditions.

Clients in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters compared to clients in Other Shelters were:

- More likely to be men (+14%)
- More likely to identify as LGBTQ2+ (+5%)
- More likely to between the ages of 25-44 (+13%), while less likely to be between 45-64 (-9%)
- More likely to identify as Aboriginal (+11%)
- More likely to have been homeless for a year or more (+12%) and less likely to have been homeless for under 1 month (-11%)
- More likely to receive income assistance (+6%) or a disability benefit (+7%), and less likely to be employed (-5%) or have no income (-10%)
- More likely to have one or more health conditions (+11%)
- More likely to have an addiction/substance use issue (+23%) or a mental health issue (+6%)

The HEAT/Winter Response Shelter client population therefore resembles the unsheltered population profile more closely in terms of gender, age, Aboriginal identity, income sources and health issues than does the Other Shelter client population.

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[3] Old Age Security, General Income Supplement, Canada Pension Plan

2 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the 2016 Vancouver Homeless Count that was commissioned by the City of Vancouver to better understand the characteristics of the homeless population in 2016 and trends in Vancouver since 2005. The findings provide an estimate of Vancouver's homeless population *on one day* (March 10, 2016)*.* The homeless count is a 'point-in-time' count that provides a snapshot of people who are experiencing homelessness in a 24-hour period. Therefore, this picture can fluctuate over the course of the year. It should also be noted that the point-in-time count conducted each year is typically an undercount: the hidden homeless population is particularly difficult to enumerate as some individuals may choose not to be counted and perfect coverage of the city by volunteers is not possible. Despite this, the count represents a sound method for collecting data on homelessness at this single point in time.

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;
- an analysis of trends in homelessness since 2005; and,
- a profile of the difference between HEAT/Winter Shelter users and Other Shelter users.

2.2 Definitions

Homelessness - The 2016 Homeless Count uses 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 <u>and</u> if they did not pay rent.

This included people who are:

- without physical shelter – staying on the street, in alleys, doorways, parkades, vehicles, on beaches, in parks and in other public locations
- temporarily accommodated in emergency shelters, detox facilities, safe houses or transition houses for men, youth, women, and families with children
- staying at someone else's place (friend or family) where they did not pay rent (i.e. couch surfing)
- in hospitals or jails and had No Fixed Address (NFA)

For example, someone who stayed in a garage would be considered homeless if they did 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 (i.e. couch surfer) is also considered homeless as they do not have security of tenure. Individuals paying rent in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) building are not considered homeless.

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Unsheltered homeless - People who had no physical shelter and stayed outside, on the street, in doorways, parkades, parks and on beaches and in other public locations, as well as people who stayed at a someone's place where they did not pay rent (couch surfing).

Sheltered homeless – People who stayed in an emergency shelter, safe house, transition house, or detox facility as well as people with No Fixed Address (NFA) staying overnight in hospitals or jails.

Children - Young people under the age of 19 who were accompanied by a parent.

Youth - Young people aged 16-25 who were not accompanied by a parent during the count.

Seniors - People aged 55 years and older.

HEAT Shelters - Homeless Emergency Action Team (HEAT) 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. Most offer 24/7 service, meals and other services including case management.

Extreme Weather Response (Shelter) (EWR) - EWR shelters provide extra overnight shelter spaces during periods of extreme weather. They are dependent on volunteers and have limited support services. No EWR shelters operated on the night of the homeless count in 2016.

Other Shelters - The term 'Other Shelters' is used to group all non-HEAT/Winter Response Shelters (but does not include safe houses, transition houses, and detoxes). Normally this would include demographic data from all year-round, seasonal, and EWR shelters, though none of the EWR shelters were open on March 9th, 2016.

For a full list of shelters, their capacity and their occupancy rates on the night of the homeless count see Appendix 1.

2.3   Method

The 2016 Vancouver Homeless Count used the same methodology as past City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver regional homeless counts to ensure comparability. It measured homelessness from 12:01 am to 11:59 pm on March 10th, 2016, and consisted of two components to enumerate (1) the sheltered homeless and (2) the unsheltered homeless. For each component there was a questionnaire including screening questions and survey questions.

Screening Questions
Volunteers began by asking respondents three screening questions designed to avoid double counting the same individual. Screening questions for the sheltered homeless ensured they were staying in a shelter that night, and eliminated those who had already been interviewed or who paid rent. Screening questions for the unsheltered homeless eliminate those who had already been interviewed, paid rent, or stayed in a shelter, safe house, transition house or facility where they were included in the sheltered count the night before. People approached were offered a candy or cigarette prior to being asked the three screening questions regardless of whether or not they continued with the survey. Not having an incentive contingent upon completing the survey, this approach decreased the likelihood that people would be interviewed and counted more than once.

Survey Questions
Following the screening questions, the survey questions for both the sheltered and unsheltered components included six key variables from previous years and a number of additional questions that have been added since the first City of Vancouver Homeless Count in 2010. The six key variables from previous years are: age, gender[4], Aboriginal identity, income source, health conditions and duration of homelessness. New survey questions added more recently include:[5]

- Whether they had slept outside in the last 12 months (2015);
- Whether they had stayed in a shelter in the last 12 months (unsheltered only) (2015);
- Where else they had stayed in the last 12 months, including whether they had stayed somewhere where they paid rent (2015);[6]
- How long they had lived in Vancouver (2015);
- Where they lived previously (2015);[7]
- Whether they felt safe where they stayed the night before (unsheltered only, 2015);
- Whether they had served in the Canadian Forces (2015).[8]

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[4] In the past, the demographic analysis of gender has relied on responses from the unsheltered population and shelter statistics forms for the sheltered population to build data tables analyzing gender (e.g. Table 6). However, this year, in reviewing responses from the sheltered population through the survey and data provided through the shelter statistics forms, it was noted that a higher proportion of individuals were reporting another gender identity than man or woman through the survey responses than was reported by shelter staff on the shelter statistics form. To better reflect gender self-identity this year the gender data relies only on self-reported gender identity from survey respondents themselves both for unsheltered and sheltered respondents.

[5] Included in brackets is the first year these questions were included in the City of Vancouver Count; footnotes indicate when Metro Vancouver may have included them in previous years.

[6] The 2011 and 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Counts both asked this question, but 2012 and 2013 City of Vancouver counts did not.

[7] The 2011 and 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Counts both asked this question, but 2012 and 2013 City of Vancouver counts did not.

[8] The question about serving in the Canadian Forces was included in the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count surveys, and was included in Vancouver's 2015 and 2016 counts because recent data from communities

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- Whether they identify as a man, woman or other gender, rather than as male or female (2016);
- Whether they identify as transgender (2016);
- How they identify in terms of sexual orientation (2016).

Enumerating the Sheltered Homeless

The sheltered component of the count enumerated homeless individuals staying at emergency shelters, transition houses, detox facilities and safe houses overnight on March 9/10. These individuals are referred to as the 'sheltered homeless'. Three approaches were used to gather information for this group:

1. Staff at transition houses, safe houses and detox facilities staff and four emergency shelters, undertook the sheltered survey with clients.
2. Volunteers conducted the questionnaire in the remaining 20 emergency shelters that were open on the night of the count, March 9th. Included in this group are the HEAT/ Winter Response Shelters and year-round shelters.[9]
3. Vancouver Coastal Health, Providence Health Care, BC Women's Hospital 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, safe house and detox facility was asked to complete a shelter statistics form providing the total number of occupants and turnaways on count night. This form served as a cross check against the surveys, and helped ensure that all shelter clients were enumerated in the total count of homeless individuals, including people who were missed by the survey or who refused to participate.

On the evening of March 9th, interviewers obtained consent from guests staying in shelters and other facilities to proceed with the questionnaire. Individuals staying at these locations were asked a series of screening questions to determine if they were screened in, and if so then interviewers proceeded with the rest of the survey.

This year, as in 2013, 2014 and 2015, interviews were conducted in all Vancouver emergency shelters, including those funded directly by BC Housing. Prior to 2013, interviews for the homeless count did not occur in BC Housing funded shelters. Instead, analysis of those shelter guests was based solely on a data package provided by BC Housing. When interviews are conducted in all shelters, the BC Housing data package is used to cross-check survey data and to ensure there are no anomalous findings. This is the approach used by Metro Vancouver in 2014 and the City of Vancouver in 2013 and 2015.

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across Canada suggests that a small but consistent number of Canadian veterans are experiencing homelessness. Asking this question can provide a better understanding of what scope of services homeless veterans may require.

[9] No Extreme Weather Shelters (EWRs) were open on March 9th, 2016.

Enumerating the Unsheltered Homeless

The unsheltered count took place in the daytime hours on March 10th. People found in the daytime who stayed overnight outside without a physical shelter or who stayed at someone else's place without paying rent are referred to as the 'unsheltered homeless'. People who stayed in emergency accommodation the night before were screened out from completing the unsheltered survey.

Trained volunteers interviewed people who were homeless at pre-identified locations such as meal programs, drop-in centres, some social services offices, parks, alleys and public spaces. In addition, staff of some service agencies completed the survey with their clients on count day (e.g. organizations that preferred to have their staff fill out surveys, rather than have volunteers enter the space). In addition, some agencies in frequent contact with people who stay at someone else's place where they do not pay rent, particularly youth and women, were asked to complete interviews with these individuals on count day.

In advance of the count, the City's Housing Policy and Projects Department and the Carnegie Outreach Team, in consultation with other outreach teams and others knowledgeable about where the homeless may be found, created a series of maps marking known homeless locations to guide volunteers in their assigned area.

Beginning early in the morning on March 10th, volunteers approached people in their assigned areas to request an interview. If an individual agreed to participate, they were asked the series of screening questions. If the respondent qualified for the survey, the volunteer proceeded to complete the survey with the respondent.

Like in all previous years except 2011 (when volunteers were instructed not to wake homeless individuals), count volunteers on morning shifts were instructed to try to wake people carefully to request an interview.

Volunteer and Count Coordination

Skilled outreach workers, social service personnel, people with relevant experience, including participation in previous counts, and motivated individuals were recruited by the City of Vancouver as volunteer surveyors. All volunteers were required to attend training. This helped ensure that surveys would be completed as accurately as possible and that volunteers felt adequately prepared for their shift, both in terms of safety and their ability to approach individuals to complete the survey.

A Shelter Count Coordinator was responsible for the sheltered portion of the count, while the unsheltered portion of the count was coordinated by four Area Coordinators, each responsible for one of four areas of the city. The Shelter Coordinator and Area Coordinators managed training registration, assigned route locations and shifts, coordinated volunteers

on count night/day, and were responsible for ensuring that all materials were collected and returned to the City.

On the night of the shelter count (March 9th), shelter volunteers went to their assigned shelters, where they picked up count packages containing the questionnaires and other materials, and conducted interviews with shelter guests, with support from shelter staff. Interview packages were returned to shelter staff for safe storage overnight, and the following day were returned to the City.

During the day of the unsheltered/street count (March 10th), each Area Coordinator managed an Area Station in his/her area of the city. Volunteers signed in to their designated Area Station where they picked up their interview package, proceeded in pairs to complete their assigned route, and returned completed interview packages. Area Coordinators managed logistics, answered questions, and responded to last-minute emergencies or changes.

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 10, 2016. 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 or interview all homeless people. Some parts of the city were missed, some homeless people did not wish to be identified, and some were not possible to find. For example, this method does not count all people who are staying at someone else's place, as they are, by their very nature, hidden. This group is only included in the count if on the day of the count they visited a place where they could be identified and counted.

As well, 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.

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, allows for comparisons between years and provides the best available information on the size, composition and trends in the homeless population in Vancouver.

Another limitation in the data is that the analysis of sheltered clients is based on only a portion of shelter guests. The percentage of shelter guests who completed the survey (I.e. shelter response rate) in 2016 was 53% (Table 1). It is not known how the other 47% of shelter clients would have responded to the survey and affected the analysis. However, the shelter response rate for 2016 aligns with the response rates for Metro Vancouver and City of Vancouver counts historically. Shelter response rates for Metro Vancouver counts range from 51% in 2011 to 59% in 2014 (with an exception of 84% in 2008). In 2015 the shelter response rate for the City of Vancouver Homeless Count was 54%.

There are several reasons for low shelter response rates each year. Typically, volunteers are in the shelter for a two-hour shift. Depending on the shelter, a shift can start as early as 5:00pm and end as late as 10:00pm. Because of this limited window for interviews, volunteers miss any shelter clients who arrive after the volunteer shift is completed. These individuals are counted through the shelter statistics form, but they will not contribute survey responses to the data set. Additionally, some shelter clients may also refuse to be interviewed, meaning they are not counted.

Table 1 – Shelter survey response rates and total sheltered homeless

	Number	Percent
Survey respondents	637	53%
Survey non-respondents	575	47%
Total surveyed	1,212	100%
Not asked (children + NFAs)	96	
Total Sheltered	1,308	

The City of Vancouver works each year with shelters to strengthen shelter response rates. However, while the shelter response rate conforms to the rates common to other Metro Vancouver and City counts, the low response rate again this year is a limitation of the data.

Historically, when asking about health conditions, volunteers have been requested to observe any medical conditions not reported by individuals surveyed. These 'observed' or 'perceived' responses have been included in the totals for all health issues. This year, however, volunteers were not asked to include perceived health conditions in the final total. Volunteers are generally not trained health practitioners, so observed conditions may not be accurate. In 2015, depending on the health condition and sub-population (unsheltered or sheltered), observed conditions accounted for anywhere from 2% to 8% of the unsheltered population and 10% to 20% of the unsheltered population responses. For the total population, observed conditions account for 8% to 16% of total responses. Any trends around health conditions this year should be treated with caution. While the shift away from perceived health conditions may have led to greater accuracy in the rates of these health conditions for 2016, this shift may also mean that longitudinal comparisons are not reliable.

Another change to this year's questionnaire is a change in language around the gender of individuals being interviewed. In 2015 the survey question on gender read: "Do you identify as:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other (specify_____)"

This year, in consultation with the City of Vancouver's LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee, the question of gender was changed to "What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- No answer
- Another gender identity _____"

The survey then followed immediately with: "Do you identify as transgender?

- Yes

- No
- No answer
- If yes how do you self-describe your gender? _____ "

There are two reasons for this change. The first is that the terms male/female apply solely to an individual's biological sex, rather than their self-identified gender, which is defined as the socially constructed roles of what it means to be a man or a woman or another gender identity. By shifting to a question with the wording described above, individuals are better able to self-identify their own gender. The second is that individuals who identify as transgender can also identify as a man, woman or have another gender identity. This question was separated from the gender question to allow for transgender respondents to be able to clearly express their gender identity separate from their identity as a transgender person. While it is unlikely that this will have a large impact on gender trends (1%-2% of the homeless population in previous years has identified as transgender or another gender), some caution should be used when comparing this year's gender data to previous years.

2.5   Report organization

Section 3 examines the total number of people identified as homeless for all years the count has been conducted, the breakdown between sheltered and unsheltered type of homelessness, and overall changes to the homeless population in Vancouver. Section 4 describes the demographics and characteristics of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless and the homeless population as a whole in 2016. Section 5 discusses trends in the characteristics of the homeless population since 2005. Section 6 provides a profile of HEAT and Winter Response Shelters as compared to Other Shelters.

3   Change in Vancouver's Homeless Population

On March 10, 2016, 1,847 individuals were counted as experiencing homelessness in Vancouver. This reflects an increase of nearly 8% or 132 persons since 2010, and an increase of 6% or 101 persons compared to 2015.

Figure 1 and Table 2 show the number of homeless individuals counted in Vancouver in 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. After an initial decrease between 2010 and 2013, from 1,715 in 2010 to 1,600 in 2013, the total number has increased to 1,847 in 2016.

Homelessness grew by 15% between 2005 and 2008, and by 9% between 2008 and 2010, then decreased by nearly 8% between 2010 and 2011. Between 2011 and 2013 the total number of homeless stayed relatively stable. Since 2013 the number has climbed again, at an average of 5.2% annually. Figure 1 also shows a sharp decline in the number of unsheltered homeless and corresponding rise in the number of sheltered homeless between 2008 and 2011, and then a subsequent rise in unsheltered homeless between 2013 and 2014. Though the unsheltered population declined between 2014 and 2015, it rose again in 2016. Between 2013 and 2016 the total number of sheltered population stayed relatively stable.

Figure 1 - Vancouver homeless population trends 2005 to 2016
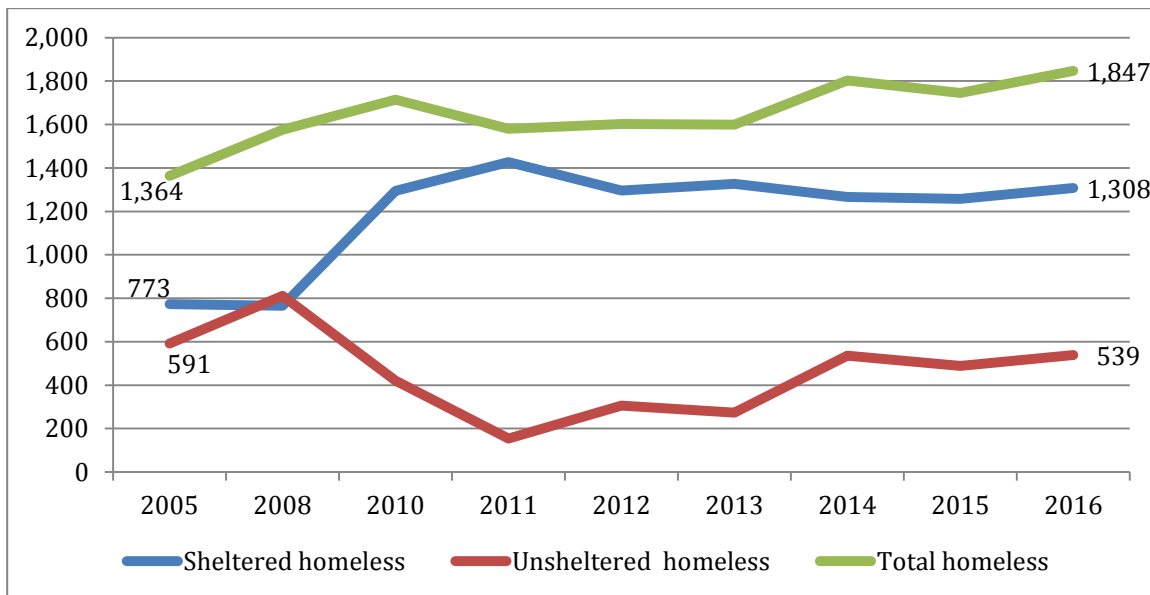
The most significant change since 2011 is the number of unsheltered homeless, which grew from the lowest number of 154 individuals in 2011 to a recent high of 539 in 2016. This constitutes an increase of 250% relative to its lowest point. In the same time period, the number of sheltered individuals decreased by 8%.

Table 2 - Vancouver homeless population trends 2005 to 2016

Number of homeless	2005	2008	2,010	2011	2,012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Sheltered homeless	773	765	1,294	1,427	1,296	1,327	1,267	1,258	1,308
Unsheltered homeless	591	811	421	154	306	273	536	488	539
Total homeless	1,364	1,576	1,715	1,581	1,602	1,600	1,803	1,746	1,847

Figure 2 depicts the distribution of Vancouver's homeless population in terms of its sheltered and unsheltered status between 2005 and 2016. Between 2011 and 2013 a high proportion of the homeless population in Vancouver was sheltered (90% in 2011, 81% in 2012 and 83% in 2013). This declined somewhat in 2014, where 70% of the homeless population was sheltered. Since 2014, the proportion of the homeless population that is sheltered has remained stable, at 72% in 2015 and 71% in 2016. Though this represents a decline in the proportion of sheltered homeless since 2013, this is due to an overall increase in the homeless population, and still represents a decrease in the proportion of unsheltered homeless since 2008, when it was 51%.

Figure 2 – Sheltered and unsheltered homeless population trends 2005-2016
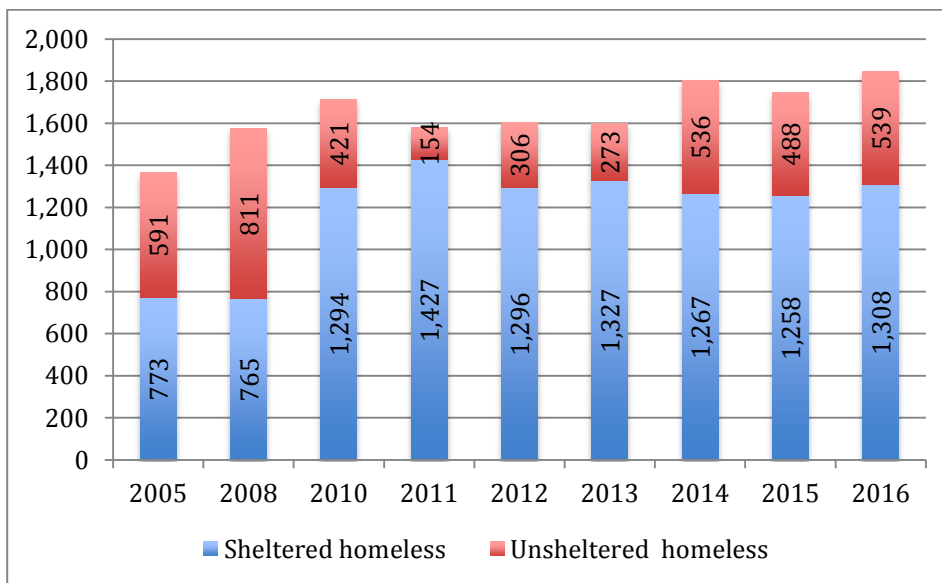
Table 3 shows the changes in homelessness that occurred over four time periods: 2005 to 2010, 2010 to 2013, and 2013 to 2016 and 2005 to 2016. In the first time period the total homeless population increased by 26% from 1,364 to 1,715 individuals, with the sheltered population increasing by two-thirds (67%) and the unsheltered population decreasing by 29%. For the period between 2010 and 2013, the total homeless population decreased by 7%. During this time the sheltered population remained stable, while the unsheltered population decreased by 35% (148 individuals).

The period between 2013 and 2016 shows an increase of 63% (266 individuals) for the unsheltered population. Trends in homelessness shifted toward growth again in the homeless population as a whole, with an increase in the total population of 14% (247 individuals). Between 2005 and 2016 homelessness in Vancouver increased by 35% (483 individuals). The sheltered population grew by 69% (535 individuals), while the unsheltered population decreased by 9% (52 individuals).

Table 3 – Change in homelessness by time period

Change in homelessness	Change 2005-2010		Change 2010-2013		Change 2013-2016		Change 2005-2016	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Sheltered homeless	521	67%	33	3%	-19	-1%	535	69%
Unsheltered homeless	-170	-29%	-148	-35%	266	63%	-52	-9%
Total homeless	351	26%	-115	-7%	247	14%	483	35%

4 Demographics and Characteristics of Vancouver's Homeless Population

The following section presents the demographics and characteristics of the 1,176 homeless adults and youth in Vancouver who were surveyed on the night of March 9th and during the daytime of March 10th and completed a questionnaire. The total homeless population sample of survey respondents, organized by sheltered and unsheltered homeless, are described along the dimensions of gender, sexual orientation, age, Aboriginal identity, duration of homelessness, income sources, health conditions, military service, previous place of residence, alternative sheltered locations they have used, as well as indicators specific to the unsheltered population.

A total of 1,847 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness on March 9th/10th. The survey was completed by 1,176 of these individuals. People who were counted but did not complete the questionnaire were individuals who stayed at a shelter but chose not to complete the survey or were not surveyed by volunteers. Because shelter staff completed a client shelter statistics form, these individuals were counted, but not included in the demographic analysis. With the exception of Tables 4 and 5, which describe the whole population, this section therefore describes the demographic profile of the 1,176 homeless individuals who completed the survey.

4.1 Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Individuals in Vancouver

Twenty-nine percent (29%), or 539 of the 1,847 individuals counted in 2016, were unsheltered, while 71% were sheltered homeless (Table 4). Most of the homeless individuals were adults or unaccompanied youth (1,815 or 98% of the total). Thirty-two accompanied children (under 19 years of age, with a parent or guardian) were counted. Of these children, 17 stayed in a year-round shelter, 14 stayed in transition houses and one was counted at a hospital.

Table 4 – Sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals in Vancouver

	Adults and youth		Children		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sheltered homeless	1,276	70%	32	100%	1,308	71%
Year-round Shelters	789	43%	17	53%	806	44%
Winter & HEAT shelters	373	21%	0	0%	373	20%
Transition houses	24	1%	14	44%	38	2%
Detox Centres	17	1%	0	0%	17	1%
Safe houses	9	<1%	0	0%	9	<1%
No fixed address	64	4%	1	3%	65	4%
Unsheltered homeless	539	30%	0	0%	539	29%
Total homeless	1,815	100%	32	100%	1,847	100%

4.2 Turnaways from Shelters

Shelter, safe house, transition house and detox facility providers were asked to report how many people were turned away on the night of March 9th, either because the facility was full or the individual seeking shelter did not meet the facility's requirements. In total the facilities reported 315 turnaways on March 9, 2016 (Table 5). This represents an increase of 65% over the 191 individuals turned away in 2015. Individuals turned away are not included in the total count figures, as they may have found accommodation in another shelter where they were counted or they may have been enumerated as unsheltered homeless in the daytime component of the count. The number of turnaways does, however, provide some indication of the volume of individuals that shelters are turning away on the night of the count.

Table 5 – Turnaways, night of March 9, 2016

Shelter category	Total Turnaways	
	Number	**Percent**
Winter Response / HEAT shelters	92	29%
Year-round shelters	217	69%
Transition houses	5	2%
Safe houses	1	0%
Detox	0	0%
Total turnaways	315	100%

4.3 Gender Identity[10]

The majority of respondents (76%) identify as men and 23% identify as women (Table 6).[11] The proportion of men is greater among the unsheltered population compared to sheltered population (80% vs. 73%), while the proportion of women is greater among the sheltered population than the unsheltered (26% vs. 19%). A small number of individuals reported another gender identity (<1% for both sheltered and unsheltered populations).

Table 6 – Gender identity

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Women	166	26%	100	19%	266	23%
Men	455	73%	413	80%	868	76%
Another gender identity	6	<1%	3	<1%	9	<1%
Total respondents	627	100%	516	100%	1,143	100%
Not known	10		23		33	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

In total, 22 people, representing 2% of the homeless population, identify as transgender and they are evenly split among the sheltered and unsheltered populations (Table 7).

Table 7 – Individuals identifying as transgender

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Not transgender	597	98%	480	98%	1077	98%
Transgender[12]	11	2%	11	2%	22	2%
Total respondents	608	100%	491	100%	1,099	100%
Not known	29		48		77	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

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[10] While in the past the Count has drawn upon shelter statistics forms to increase the response rate to the gender question, this year due to the change in the question only survey responses were used. While this means a lower sample size for the gender question than has been obtained in the past, it also means greater accuracy in self-reporting of gender identity for this question (rather than relying on shelter staff to report gender identity through the shelter statistics form).

[11] Women may be under-represented in the sample as they tend to be part of the hidden homeless.

[12] 14/22 of those individuals who are transgender identify as man, 4 as woman and 4 have another gender identity.

4.4   Sexual Orientation

While the majority of respondents in the total homeless population identify as straight (87%), 13% identify as LGBTQ2+. Of the 13% of respondents who identify as LGBTQ2+, 17 of them reported multiple sexual orientations (e.g. an individual could identify as both queer and lesbian). Seven percent (7%) identify as bisexual and 3% as gay. The remaining 7% identify as queer, lesbian, Two-Spirit and/or other undefined sexual orientations. Responses were similar for the sheltered, unsheltered and total homeless populations.

Table 8 - Sexual orientation

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Straight	533	87%	412	86%	945	87%
Bisexual	39	6%	33	7%	72	7%
Gay	16	3%	17	4%	33	3%
2-Spirit	11	2%	8	2%	19	2%
Lesbian	4	1%	10	2%	14	1%
Queer	2	<1%	4	1%	6	1%
Other[13]	22	4%	12	3%	34	3%
Total respondents	611		480		1,091	
Not known	26		59		85	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

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[13] Other as a term encompassed a number of responses, including asexual, bi-curious, no identification, open-minded, pansexual, and trisexual.

4.5   Age

Table 9 shows that 48% of the homeless population sample was middle-aged (between 35-54 years), with the 35-44 and the 45-54 age cohorts each representing 24% of the total.

The data shows some noticeable differences between the sheltered and unsheltered populations. Of the sheltered population, a higher proportion is under 19 (6% sheltered vs. 0% unsheltered) or aged 19-24 (12% sheltered vs. 9% unsheltered). This is primarily because the shelter spaces are available for youth (in safe houses) and children (in family shelters). Of the 44 individuals under age 19 who are homeless, 32 were defined as children accompanied by a parent or guardian (these individuals were not surveyed, just counted), while the remaining 12 were youth (age 16 or older) unaccompanied by a parent or guardian (these individuals were surveyed). Only two unaccompanied youth spent the previous night outside.

While the young (under age 25) are more likely to be sheltered, younger adults (age 25-34) represent a higher proportion of the unsheltered population (25%) than the unsheltered population (15%). Seniors (age 55+)[14] represented a higher proportion of the sheltered population than the unsheltered population on the night of the count (19% sheltered vs. 15% unsheltered). In total, 204 people representing 18% of the homeless population are over the age of 55 in the City of Vancouver.

While the prevalence of the young and the old, both vulnerable groups, is less common in the unsheltered population than in the sheltered population, they nonetheless together represent a third of all respondents who are homeless and nearly a quarter of the unsheltered population.

Table 9 - Age[15]

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
Years of Age	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Under 19	42	6%	2	<1%	44	4%
19-24	80	12%	47	9%	127	11%
25-34	102	15%	127	25%	229	20%
35-44	151	23%	129	25%	280	24%
45-54	155	24%	130	25%	285	24%
55-64	93	14%	56	11%	149	13%
65+	36	5%	19	4%	55	5%
Total respondents	659	100%	510	100%	1,169	100%
Not known	10		29		39	
Total surveyed	669		539		1,208	

[14] Seniors, among the homeless population, are people who are aged 55 years and older.
[15] This table includes data of 32 accompanied children counted at shelters and NFA sites. These children were not interviewed but are counted and included in the age table. This approach remains consistent with the inclusion of accompanied children in previous City and Metro Vancouver Homeless Counts.

As in 2015, the median age of Vancouver's homeless population was 42 years. This is only somewhat older than the median age of 39.7 years in Vancouver residents in general according to the 2011 Census. The youngest person who responded to the questionnaire was 16 years old (although 32 accompanied children were counted) and the oldest person counted was 80 years of age.

4.6   Aboriginal identity

Table 10 highlights the prevalence of Aboriginal people among the homeless population in Vancouver. In total 420 respondents identify as Aboriginal, representing a total of 38% of the sample population. In comparison, Aboriginal people represent about 2.5% of the City of Vancouver's the overall population. The percentage of Aboriginal people who are unsheltered (44%) is higher than the proportion of sheltered population identifying as Aboriginal (33%).

Table 10 – Aboriginal identity

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aboriginal	198	33%	222	44%	420	38%
Non-Aboriginal	411	67%	281	56%	692	62%
Total respondents	609	100%	503	100%	1,112	100%
Not known	28		36		64	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

4.7   Duration of homelessness

Table 11 shows the duration of homelessness for the sheltered and the unsheltered homeless. Of the total sample, 39% have been homeless longer than one year, 42% report being homeless within the last six months, while 19% have been homeless between 6 months and one year. Fifteen percent (15%) of those counted report being homeless for under one month. All in all, 61% (686 people) of the total respondents have experienced homelessness for less than a year.

Variation is evident between sheltered and unsheltered populations. With 50% of the sheltered population and 33% of the unsheltered population homeless for under six months, the sheltered homeless tend to have experienced homeless for a shorter period. More of the unsheltered population has been homeless for a period of more than one year (49% vs. 30%).

Table 11 – Duration of time homeless

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 1 month	114	18%	60	12%	174	15%
1 month to under 6 months	203	32%	108	21%	311	27%
6 months to under 1 year	119	19%	93	18%	212	19%
1 year or more	189	30%	248	49%	437	39%
Total respondents	625	100%	509	100%	1,134	100%
Not known	12		30		42	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

4.8   Sources of income

Survey respondents were asked to indicate all their current sources of income (Table 12). Across all possible sources three are most prevalent: income assistance or welfare (35%), disability benefits (27%), and employment (23%). A higher percentage of, the unsheltered population (40%) receives income assistance than sheltered homeless (32%). Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the unsheltered homeless receive disability benefits vs. 24% of the sheltered homeless.

The proportion of those who are sheltered who have an employment income (29%) is higher than the proportion of unsheltered population (15%), while the sheltered population is also more likely to receive CPP or another pension than the unsheltered population (4% vs. 1%).

The unsheltered homeless population is more likely than the sheltered population to gain income from activities such as binning and bottle collecting (7% vs. 2%), panhandling (8% vs. 1%), and sex work (2% vs. <1%). Twelve percent (12%) of Vancouver's homeless population reported having no income source.

Table 12 – Sources of income

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Government Transfers						
Income assistance or welfare	198	32%	200	40%	398	35%
Disability benefits	152	24%	149	29%	301	27%
Employment insurance	19	3%	12	2%	31	3%
OAS/GIS	31	5%	13	3%	44	4%
CPP or other pension	26	4%	7	1%	33	
Other sources						
No income	81	13%	55	11%	136	12%
Employment	179	29%	78	15%	257	23%
Binning, bottle collecting	14	2%	34	7%	48	4%
Panhandling	4	1%	40	8%	44	4%
Sex work	2	<1%	9	2%	11	1%
Family and friends	7	1%	7	1%	14	1%
Self-employment	2	<1%	4	1%	6	1%
Other[16]	51	8%	57	11%	108	10%
Total respondents	624		506		1,130	
Not known	13		33		46	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

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[16] Includes: Child Tax Benefits/Support, Sale of Metal, Reserves, WCB, Busking, Sales, Savings/Trust Funds, Insurance claim, Job Training Programs, Foster Care/Social Services, Student Loan, Government Grants, Taxes, Hosting/Volunteering, by 'Any methods.'

4.9   Health conditions

Survey respondents were asked whether they had a medical condition or illness, physical disability, addiction/substance use, and/or mental health issue. Medical condition refers to chronic problems like asthma and diabetes, and physical disability refers to an impairment affecting mobility. An important difference this year is that only self-reported health conditions were counted, while in the past volunteers had been asked to mark down unreported but perceived health conditions. Surveyors' perceptions of a homeless individual's health were not reported in 2016.[17]

Table 13 shows the incidence of health conditions for the sheltered, the unsheltered and the total homeless population. In 2016, 27% of the homeless population had one health condition and 51% had two or more health conditions, resulting in 78% of the homeless population reporting at least one health condition.

The majority of both the sheltered population (75%) and the unsheltered population (83%) has one or more health conditions, with a greater proportion of the unsheltered population having two or more health conditions (56% vs. 47%). Conversely, a greater proportion of the sheltered population (25%) has no health condition compared to the unsheltered population (17%).

Table 13 – Incidence of health conditions[18]

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No health conditions	157	25%	84	17%	241	21%
One health condition	171	28%	136	27%	307	27%
Two or more conditions	292	47%	284	56%	576	51%
Total respondents	620	100%	504	100%	1,124	100%
Not known	17		35		52	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

All health conditions (medical condition/illness, physical disability, addiction/substance use and mental health issues) are pronounced in the homeless population (Table 14). In 2016, addiction/substance use was the most common health issue for people who are homeless. Fifty-three (53%) percent of respondents had an addiction/substance use issue. The next most common health problem was a medical condition (reported by 42% of respondents), closely followed by mental health issues (reported by 40% of respondents).

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[17] While perceptions offer an opportunity to offset under-reporting of health conditions, observations are limited and volunteers are not trained as health practitioners and therefore are not in the position to assess a person's health.

[18] In this year's study perceived conditions were not accounted for. Only self-identified responses were included in the analysis.

Differences are evident between the sheltered and the unsheltered populations with the unsheltered population showing a greater likelihood of having any of the various health conditions. Addictions/substance use issues are higher among the unsheltered population (65%) compared to the sheltered population (44%).

Table 14 – Type of health conditions

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Medical condition/illness	253	41%	226	45%	479	42%
Physical disability	181	29%	164	32%	345	31%
Addiction/substance use	272	44%	331	65%	603	53%
Mental health issue	230	37%	220	43%	450	40%
Total respondents	624		507		1,131	
Not known	13		32		45	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

4.10 Military Service

Table 15 details the prevalence of veterans among the homeless population. In 2016 a total of 100 people (9%) who responded to the survey said they had served in the Canadian Forces. A slightly higher proportion of the unsheltered population (10%) has served in the Canadian Forces compared with the sheltered population (8%). Two percent of the overall population served in the armed forces of another country.

Table 15 – Military Service in the Canadian Forces

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	52	8%	48	10%	100	9%
No	557	89%	442	89%	999	89%
Other Armed Forces	18	3%	9	2%	27	2%
Total respondents	627	100%	499	100%	1,126	100%
Not known	10		40		50	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

4.11 Length of Time in Vancouver

Respondents were asked how long have they have been living in Vancouver (Table 16). The majority of the homeless population (72%) has been in Vancouver for one year or more and 7% percent have been in Vancouver for under 1 month. The majority of the sheltered population (67%) and the unsheltered population (79%) have been in Vancouver 1 year or more.

Table 16 – Length of time in Vancouver[19]

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 1 month	54	9%	25	5%	79	7%
1 month to under 6 months	92	15%	42	8%	134	12%
6 months to under 1 year	62	10%	39	8%	101	9%
1 year or more	414	67%	398	79%	812	72%
Total respondents	622	100%	504	100%	1,126	100%
Not known	15		35		50	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

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[19] Total proportions in sheltered homeless column do not total 100% due to rounding error.

4.12 Newcomers' place of residence prior to Vancouver

Table 17 shows where 79 homeless individuals who have been in Vancouver for less than one month were living prior to their arrival in Vancouver. Of the 79 homeless individuals residing in Vancouver for less than one month, 28% came from the a part of BC outside Metro Vancouver, 22% came from Alberta, 17% came from another Canadian province other than Alberta, 16% came from a part of Metro Vancouver that is not the City of Vancouver, and 11% came from outside Canada. People from Alberta who were new to Vancouver were more likely to be sheltered (30%) versus unsheltered (4%). Fifty-five percent (55%) of the newcomers in the sheltered population came from outside BC (including outside Canada) compared to 40% of the unsheltered population. The unsheltered population was more likely than the sheltered population to come from within BC (32% vs. 26%) or Metro Vancouver (20% vs. 15%).

Table 17 – Where new arrivals are from

	Sheltered Homeless		Unsheltered Homeless		Total Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Metro Vancouver	8	15%	5	20%	13	16%
Rest of BC	14	26%	8	32%	22	28%
Alberta	16	30%	1	4%	17	22%
Ontario	1	2%	3	12%	4	5%
Saskatchewan	3	6%	3	12%	6	8%
Manitoba	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Quebec	2	4%	1	4%	3	4%
Other Province[20]	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Outside Canada	7	13%	2	8%	9	11%
Multiple Responses	3	6%	2	8%	5	6%
Total respondents	54	100%	25	100%	79	100%
Not known	0		0		0	
Total Surveyed	54		25		79	

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[20] Includes Labrador/Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI, Yukon, Northwest Territories

4.13 Where the Homeless Stay

Seventy-four percent (74%) of the total homeless population has spent at least one night without shelter in the last year (Table 18). Sixty-two percent (62%) of sheltered homeless individuals have also slept outside in the last 12 months. This means that the night of the homeless count was the first night without shelter for 11% of the unsheltered population.

Table 18 – Homeless who slept outside in the last 12 months

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	391	62%	449	89%	840	74%
No	237	38%	58	11%	295	26%
Total respondents	628	100%	507	100%	1,135	100%
Not known	9		32		322	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

Table 19 shows where sheltered and unsheltered individuals have also stayed in the last twelve months other than shelters and outside. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer. More than half (55%) said they slept at someone else's place in the last 12 months.[21] Second most prevalent are incidences where people have slept at their own place inside (23%).[22] Add that 14% slept at a detox facility and another 14% at the home of a parent or guardian. Forty-six percent (46%) of respondents indicated that they slept at 'other' location. These include hotels and hostels, jail, a vehicle, outside, restaurants, drop-in centers or with family and friends.

Table 19 – Where else the homeless slept in the last 12 months

	Sheltered homeless		Unsheltered homeless		Total homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Someone else's place	292	50%	293	62%	585	55%
Detox	75	13%	72	15%	147	14%
Parent/guardian's	78	13%	68	14%	146	14%
Safe house	54	9%	19	4%	73	7%
Transition house	46	8%	23	5%	69	6%
Own place inside	149	25%	92	19%	241	23%
Other	316	54%	172	36%	488	46%
Total respondents	588		475		1,063	
Not known	49		64		322	
Total surveyed	637		539		1,176	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

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[21] In a sub-question, these individuals were asked whether any type of payment was involved and 45% (130 people) said they did not pay any rent, 14% paid daily rent, 21% paid some combination of barter/trade, daily rent or no rent payment, and 21% were unclear on whether they paid any form of rent.
[22] Respondents indicated through a sub-question that of those who had had their own place, 81% paid some form of rent, 12% did not pay rent and 7% were unclear about whether they paid rent.

4.14 The unsheltered homeless

4.14.1 Where they stayed the night previous to the count

For the unsheltered homeless only, individuals were asked where they stayed the previous night. Of the 539 respondents, 70% stayed outside or in a vehicle, 22% of the unsheltered homeless spent the night at someone else's place where they did not pay rent and had no security of tenure. Some people did not sleep the night before but chose to stay awake (often moving between locations).

Table 20 - Where the unsheltered homeless stayed the night of the count

	Number	Percent
Outside or in a vehicle	377	70%
Someone else's place	119	22%
Parent or guardian[23]	4	1%
Did not sleep[24]	8	1%
Other	31	6%
Total respondents	539	100%
Not known	0	
Total surveyed	539	

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[23] The screening questions screen in individuals who are over 25 and living with their parent/guardians as homeless, with individuals under 25 living with their parent/guardian as not homeless. This is consistent with the age cut offs for social service agencies serving youth.
[24] Includes: awake, didn't sleep, don't sleep, stayed awake, stayed up all night, walked around

4.14.2 Reasons for not staying in a shelter

Homeless individuals who did not stay at a shelter the night of the count were asked in the questionnaire for their reasons. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents answered that they dislike shelters because of, among other reasons, bedbugs, crime, and noise. Twenty-six (26%) of respondents (or 127 individuals) were turned away from a shelter – either because the shelter was full (22%) or because they were considered inappropriate for the shelter (4%).[25] Twenty five percent (25%) of respondents indicated 'other reasons,' which included preferring to sleep outdoors, the rules in place at shelters, and not being able to access a shelter because of being with a partner or pet. In some cases (27%) of these 'other reasons' are for reasons similar to the reasons survey respondents dislike shelters; however, in order to remain consistent with how this question has been coded in past years these responses were not re-coded as 'dislike'. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents said they were able to stay with a friend for the evening and therefore did not need to stay in a shelter. Further, a total of 57% out of 504 respondents said they slept in a shelter in the last 12 months.

Table 21 – Reasons for not staying in a shelter

	Number	Percent
Dislike	169	35%
Bedbugs and other pests	27	6%
Crime	31	6%
Noise	0	0%
Drugs and alcohol are present	4	1%
Overcrowded	4	1%
Other dislike	40	8%
Other Reason	120	25%
Turned away – full	106	22%
Turned away - inappropriate	21	4%
Able to stay with friend	51	11%
Didn't know about shelters	7	1%
Couldn't get to it/None in area	10	2%
Total respondents	484	100%
Not known	55	
Total surveyed	539	

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[25] An individual is considered 'inappropriate' for a shelter if they do not meet the requirements of the shelter, for example, because they are too young to stay in an adult shelter, they have a pet and the shelter does not accept pets, or there are no beds available for their gender. Someone can also be considered inappropriate if they are intoxicated.

4.14.3 Personal Sense of Safety

This question was on the unsheltered survey only. When asked whether they felt safe where they were staying the night before, 21% of men and 19% of women in the unsheltered population said they did not feel safe. Respondents were not asked why they did or did not feel safe; this remains an area where further research is required.

Table 22 – Personal sense of safety[26]

	Men		Women		Not known	Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Percent
Did not feel safe	85	21%	18	19%	1	104	21%
Felt safe	314	79%	78	81%	2	397	79%
Total respondents	399	100%	96	100%	3	501	100%
Not known	14		4		20	38	
Total surveyed	413		100		23	539	

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[26] Due to the low number of responses from unsheltered transgender individuals (3 responses), only men and women were included in this table. All unsheltered transgender individuals who responded to this question felt safe the night before.

5 Homelessness trends 2005 - 2016

This section reports on the demographic and other trends of homeless individuals in Vancouver as enumerated in the Metro Vancouver and City of Vancouver Homeless Counts since 2005.[27]

5.1 Gender

In 2016 the City changed the phrasing of the gender question to reflect input from the City's LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee. Responses on the survey regarding gender were changed from 'male/female/transgender' to 'man/woman/another gender' with a question about transgender identity asked as a follow up. The terms male and female denote biological differences between opposite sexes, while gender denotes the things a person says or does to disclose their gender status as a man, woman or another gender. Therefore in order to better capture an individual's gender identity, the terms used in the question were changed. While this change is not likely to significantly impact a majority of survey responses, it would have an impact on individuals whose gender identity differs from their biological sex, and therefore some caution should be used in longitudinal comparisons.

Men continue to comprise the majority of homeless persons counted, 76% (Table 23). This represents a higher proportion of the homeless population than most other years except 2014 (also 76%) and 2010 (78%). Women tend to comprise about 26-27% of the homeless counted, except in 2010 (when they represented only 22%), 2014 (24%) and 2016 (23%). Individuals reporting another gender identity represented 1% of the homeless population, or 9 individuals. Historically, transgender individuals and individuals with another gender have represented approximately 1% of the total homeless population.

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[27] Data provided by the City of Vancouver.

Table 23 – Gender trends in the homeless population[28]

	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Men	928	73%	948	72%	1,155	78%	901	73%	960	73%	1,017	73%	907	76%	1,057	74%	868	76%
Women	330	26%	348	27%	333	22%	327	27%	347	26%	361	26%	282	24%	356	25%	266	23%
Transgender	8	1%	15	1%	n/a	n/a	5	<1%	6	<1%	7	<1%	7	<1%	15	1%	n/a	n/a
Other	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	<1%	9	1%
Total respondents	1,266	100%	1,311	100%	1,488	100%	1,233	100%	1,313	100%	1,385	100%	1196	100%	1,436	100%	1,143	100%
Not stated	25		61		21		264		21		40		10		310		33	
Total surveyed	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,497		1,334		1,425		1,206		1,746		1,176	

[28] In the past the Count has drawn upon shelter statistics forms to develop the analysis of gender. However, a comparison of shelter statistics forms and survey responses showed a lower proportion of individuals identifying as an 'other gender' in the statistics form than those individuals when self-reporting through the surveys. In order to better reflect respondents' self-reported gender identity this year only survey responses were used in the analysis. See *Limitations* for a further discussion of 2016 changes.

5.2 Age

The two largest age groups amongst the homeless population are middle-aged adults aged 35 to 44 years and aged 45 to 54 years. Each represents 24% of the total population and as a group represents 48% of the population. This proportion is down from 2008, when those aged 35-54 represented 60% of the total population. Seniors (aged 55 and up) represent 18% of the total population in 2016, representing a higher proportion of the total population than in 2005 (10%), and remaining relatively stable since 2013.

Children and youth (aged 24 and under) represent a lower proportion of the population in 2016 (15%) than in 2014 (21%) and 2015 (17%), with the absolute number of children and youth totalling 171 individuals in 2016. This number includes 32 children accompanied by parents, and 139 unaccompanied youth. Generally, the count is less successful in finding youth who tend to couch surf and avoid services, thus remaining hidden.

Table 24 – Age groups trends[29]

	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 19[1]	30	2%	19	1%	25	2%	44	4%	57	4%	36	3%	93	8%	59	5%	44	4%
19-24	149	12%	135	10%	159	11%	146	13%	137	10%	139	10%	162	13%	140	12%	127	11%
25-34	273	22%	258	20%	264	18%	197	17%	267	20%	256	19%	224	18%	228	19%	229	20%
35-44	402	33%	425	32%	363	25%	251	22%	316	24%	358	26%	251	20%	250	21%	280	24%
45-54	260	21%	361	28%	445	30%	250	22%	339	26%	324	24%	300	24%	285	24%	285	24%
55-64	98	8%	95	7%	163	11%	122	11%	163	12%	195	14%	162	13%	164	14%	149	13%
65+	23	2%	19	1%	41	3%	33	3%	40	3%	69	5%	43	3%	58	5%	55	5%
Total respondents	1,235	100%	1,312	100%	1,460	100%	1,133	100%	1,319	100%	1,377	100%	1,235	100%	1184	100%	1,169	100%
Not stated	56		60		84		114		45		48		14		20		39	
Total surveyed	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,176		1,364		1,425		1,249		1,204		1,208	

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[29] This sub-total differs from other tables as it includes 32 children counted through the shelter statistics form and NFAs, in addition to the sample data.

5.3   Aboriginal identity

Table 25 shows the results of the Aboriginal identity question for 2005 to 2016. The proportion of Aboriginal people among the homeless population has been at least 31% since 2005. In 2016, however, the proportion of individuals identifying as Aboriginal represent 38% of the total homeless population, on par with 2008.

Table 25 - Aboriginal identity trends

	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Aboriginal	352	35%	456	38%	448	36%	268	31%	362	32%	369	30%	415	36%	342	32%	420	38%
Non-Aboriginal	658	65%	749	62%	805	64%	594	69%	768	68%	867	70%	738	64%	731	68%	692	62%
Total respondents	1,010	100%	1,205	100%	1,253	100%	862	100%	1,130	100%	1,236	100%	1,153	100%	1,073	100%	1,112	100%
Not stated	281		167		291		290		204		189		53		40		64	
Total surveyed	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334		1,425		1,206		1,113		1,176	

5.4   Income

Table 26 shows the results for income sources between 2008 and 2016. This year saw a continued decline of individuals reporting income assistance or welfare as a source of income, from a peak of 47% in 2010 to a low of 35% in 2016. However, a higher proportion of individuals are claiming some form of disability benefit (27%) than any other count year. Employment insurance in 2016 (3%) is up as a source of income from 2014 (1%) and 2015 (2%). OAS, GIS and CPP are also a source of income for a greater proportion of the population this year (7%) than the period of 2008-2012. Since 2013, OAS/GIS/CPP have accounted for between 6% and 8% of reported income sources. Employment (both part- and full-time) is also a source of income for nearly one-quarter (23%) of the homeless population, representing the greatest proportion of the population that has employment as a source of income since 2008 (19%) and up slightly from 2014 (22%) and 2015 (21%). Twelve percent (12%) of the homeless population reports no source of income, down from 2012 and 2013 (16% each) and 2015 (14%), though up overall since 2008 (7%). One-fifth of respondents reported an 'other' form of income such as binning, panhandling, or sex work, as a source of income, down from 2008 (49%) and 2011 (50%).

Table 26 - Income source trends

	2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Government transfers																
Income assistance or welfare	533	43%	632	47%	286	44%	339	41%	381	38%	459	41%	403	37%	398	35%
Disability benefit	258	21%	286	21%	132	20%	176	21%	239	24%	218	20%	282	26%	301	27%
Employment Insurance	13	1%	35	3%	17	3%	16	2%	15	2%	15	1%	24	2%	31	3%
OAS GIS and CPP	4	<1%	48	4%	28	4%	38	5%	56	6%	89	8%	67	6%	77	7%
Other sources																
Part-Time Employment	163	13%	151	11%	97	15%	96	12%	135	14%	59	5%	229	21%	257	23%
Full Time Employment	79	6%		0%							191	17%				
No income	83	7%	130	10%	71	11%	135	16%	157	16%	107	10%	150	14%	136	12%
Other	611	49%	409	30%	329	50%	160	19%	148	15%	120	11%	227	21%	231	20%
Total Respondents	1242		1344		655		834		999		1,107		1,084		1,130	
Not stated	130		200		506		500		426		99		29		46	
Total surveyed	1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334		1,425		1,206		1,113		1,176	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

5.5   Health

Tables 27 and 28 show the incidence and types of health conditions amongst the homeless population over time. As noted in the limitations, in 2016 surveyors were asked to note only self-reported health conditions, and not those they perceive. This is an important shift in approach, and means that both reports and incidence of health conditions are lower than in past years of the homeless count. This change may have resulted in fewer reported health conditions in 2016 compared with previous years. In looking at longitudinal trends, caution should therefore be exercised in comparing 2016 data with health data from years past.

The 2016 survey results show that a high proportion of individuals (78%) have one or more health conditions. Over half of the population (51%) have 2 or more health conditions. Individuals with 2 or more health conditions have been the largest of the three groups in Table 27 since 2008; however, only in 2010, 2011 and 2016 did this group represent half or more of the homeless population. It is also worth noting that there would likely have been a higher proportion of individuals with 2 or more health conditions if this year's analysis included perceived health conditions, as in years past. The proportion of the homeless population in 2016 with no health conditions represents only about one-fifth (21%) of the homeless (21%), and has historically fluctuated from a high of 29% (2008). The proportion of the population with one health condition is also down to 27%, from 2015, though this figure tends to fluctuate over time.

Table 27 – Incidence of health conditions trends

	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No health conditions	263	26%	369	29%	277	21%	55	10%	156	17%	179	16%	237	22%	207	19%	241	21%
One health condition	396	39%	329	26%	415	32%	208	38%	290	32%	289	26%	358	33%	397	36%	307	27%
2 or more health conditions	349	35%	556	44%	622	47%	289	52%	451	50%	636	58%	481	45%	489	45%	576	51%
Total respondents	1,008	100%	1,254	100%	1,314	100%	552	100%	897	100%	1,104	100%	1,076	100%	1093	100%	1,124	100%
Not stated	283		118		230		605		437		321		130		20		52	
Total surveyed	1,291		1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334		1,425		1,206		1,113		1,176	

Table 28 shows trends in specific types of health conditions. In 2016, addiction/substance use represents the health condition reported most often, by 53% of the homeless population. While this represents a lower proportion of the homeless population reporting an addiction/substance use issue than in all years past (except 2008, 51%), the shift away from reporting perceived health conditions means that this number is likely lower than it would have been with perceived responses included. An addiction or substance use issue is typically the most highly reported health condition.

In 2016, 42% of the homeless population reported a medical condition/illness. The proportion of individuals reporting a medical condition has ranged from 30% (2011) to 46% (2015), with 2016 toward the upper end of that range. Again, this likely represents an undercount when compared with previous years' approach. In 2016 physical disabilities were reported by 31% of the homeless population, putting this year near the middle of the historical range of 25% (2011) to 35% (2015). Mental health issues were reported by 40% of the population, down from the peak in 2013 (46%).

Table 28 – Type of health conditions trends

	2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Addiction/substance use	643	51%	721	55%	344	56%	532	59%	694	63%	519	48%	632	58%	603	53%
Physical disability	324	26%	368	28%	157	25%	265	30%	375	34%	302	28%	386	35%	345	31%
Medical condition/illness	495	39%	503	38%	186	30%	325	36%	469	42%	439	41%	508	46%	479	42%
Mental health issue	354	28%	471	36%	251	41%	361	40%	512	46%	361	34%	459	42%	450	40%
Total respondents	1,254		1,314		n/a		897		1,104		1,076		1093		1,131	
Not stated	118		230		n/a		437		321		130		20		45	
Total surveyed	1,372		1,544		1,157		1,334		1,425		1,206		1,113		1,176	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

5.6   Duration of Homelessness

The 2016 survey results show that a significant proportion of the homeless population (39%) have been homeless for a year or more (Table 29). However, individuals who have been homeless for less than a year (i.e. recently homeless) represent 61% of the total homeless population, a higher proportion than any year previous except 2005 (66%). While the proportion of individuals reported to be newly homeless (less than 1 month) is the smallest group in the homeless population (15%), it is up from 2015 (11%). Individuals reporting being homeless for between 1 month and 6 months has been proportionally high in recent years (34% in 2013, 33% in 2014, 30% in 2015), and has declined in 2016 to 27%, comparable to 2005-2011. The proportion of individuals reporting being homeless for 6 months to under 1 year is higher than any year in the past (19%).

Table 29 – Duration of homelessness

	2005		2008		2010		2011		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 1 month	253	24%	145	12%	177	13%	145	12%	76	10%	180	16%	114	11%	174	15%
1 month to 6 months	271	26%	319	27%	371	28%	319	27%	268	34%	365	33%	325	30%	311	27%
6 months to under 1 year	134	13%	152	13%	173	13%	152	13%	93	12%	91	8%	148	14%	212	19%
1 year or more	376	36%	585	49%	595	45%	585	49%	363	45%	473	43%	483	45%	437	39%
Total respondents	1,034	100%	1,201	100%	1,316	100%	1,201	100%	800	100%	1,109	100%	1,070	100%	1,134	100%
Not stated	257		171		228				52		97		43		42	
Total surveyed	1291		1372		1544				852		1206		1,113		1,176	

5.7 Where the unsheltered homeless stayed

As in previous years, most of the street homeless slept outside or in a car/garage/public building (71%) overnight on March 9, 2016 (Table 30). Twenty-three percent (23%) stayed at someone else's place, comparable to most years except 2013 (32%) and 2014 (34%). Six percent (6%) reported staying at 'other' places, lower than 2005 (12%), but up from 2014 (2%). Examples of other locations include drop-in centres, fast food restaurants, hostel/hotel, or not sleeping.

Table 30 – Where unsheltered homeless stayed trends

	2005		2008		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Combined outside and car/garage and public bldg	411	70%	548	71%	284	69%	49	33%	205	69%	180	66%	339	64%	338	69%	385	71%
Someone else's place	111	19%	129	17%	101	25%	69	47%	74	25%	87	32%	181	34%	123	25%	123	23%
Other	69	12%	90	12%	24	6%	29	20%	17	6%	6	2%	13	2%	27	6%	31	6%
Total respondents	591	100%	767	100%	409	100%	147	100%	296	100%	273	100%	533	100%	488	100%	539	100%

5.8   Why the unsheltered did not stay in shelters

In 2016, 35% of the unsheltered homeless population did not go to shelters because they disliked them. In 2016 both a higher proportion and a greater number of individuals (22%, or 106 individuals) reported being turned away from shelters because they are full than in any year previous. This likely corresponds to the high total number of turnaways reported by shelters (Table 5). An additional 21 individuals (4%) were turned away for another reason.

Table 31 – Why the unsheltered did not stay in shelters[30]

	2010		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dislike	131	37%	109	40%	109	42%	97	23%	143	33%	169	35%
Bedbugs and other pests	n/a	n/a	13	5%	18	7%	10	2%	21	5%	27	6%
Noise	n/a	n/a	10	4%	1	0%	15	4%	4	1%	0	0%
Crime	n/a	n/a	16	6%	10	4%	37	9%	35	8%	31	6%
Drugs and alcohol are present	n/a	n/a	5	2%	6	2%	1	0%	3	1%	4	1%
Overcrowded	n/a	n/a	24	9%	11	4%	20	5%	5	1%	4	1%
Other dislike	n/a	n/a	15	6%	35	13%	19	5%	49	11%	40	8%
Turned away – full	29	8%	36	13%	33	13%	58	14%	63	14%	106	22%
Able to stay with friends	49	14%	24	9%	42	16%	101	24%	51	12%	51	11%
Turned away - other reason	5	1%	5	2%	8	3%	18	4%	7	2%	21	4%
Didn't know about	6	2%	2	1%	2	1%	6	1%	5	1%	7	1%
Couldn't get to it	10	3%	13	5%	12	5%	3	1%	16	4%	10	2%
Other reasons	123	35%	81	30%	56	21%	89	21%	154	35%	120	25%
Total respondents	353	100%	270	100%	262	100%	419	100%	439	100%	484	100%
Not stated	67		36		11		114		49		55	
Total surveyed	420		306		273		533		488		539	

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[30] No data available for 2011

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6   Profile of Heat and Winter Response Shelter clients

Clients of two different groups of shelters operating in Vancouver on the day of the count are profiled in the following tables:[31] low barrier shelters operating on a temporary basis beginning in 2008 called HEAT and Winter Response Shelters, and Other Shelters composed of year-round and seasonal shelters. The unsheltered homeless are included for comparison.

On March 9, 2016, 190 people responded to the survey in HEAT and Winter Response Shelters, while 414 undertook the survey in Other Shelters (see Table 4 for total occupancy in different shelter types). With a total of 373 and 789 individuals staying in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters and Other Shelters respectively, the response rate for HEAT/Winter Response Shelters was 51% and the response rate for Other Shelters was 53%. For a further discussion of shelter response rates see the Limitations section.

Table 32 shows that HEAT and Winter Response Shelter clients were 84% men, compared with 70% in Other Shelters. Other Shelters accommodated a greater proportion of homeless women (29%) than HEAT/Winter Response Shelters (15%). Eighty percent (80%) of the unsheltered homeless identified as men, and 19% identified as women.

Table 32 - Gender (by Shelter Type)

	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Men	157	84%	286	70%	413	80%
Women	27	15%	118	29%	100	19%
Another gender identity	2	1%	4	1%	3	1%
Total respondents	186	100%	408	100%	516	100%
Not known	4		6		23	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

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[31] There were no EWR shelters operating on March 9th.

HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients between 25 and 54 years of age (Table 33) represent 71% of the client group, compared with 62% in Other Shelters. Twelve percent (12%) of HEAT/Winter Response Shelters were under 25 compared with 15% of Other Shelter clients (excluding accompanied children) and 10% of unsheltered homeless. Older homeless persons (55 and over) also represented a smaller proportion of HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients (17%) in comparison with Other Shelters (23%).

Table 33 – Age (by Shelter Type)

Age groups	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 19	1	<1%	2	<1%	2	<1%
19-24	20	11%	57	14%	47	9%
25-34	40	21%	53	13%	127	25%
35-44	51	27%	91	22%	129	25%
45-54	44	23%	108	27%	130	25%
55-64	21	11%	70	17%	56	11%
65+	11	6%	25	6%	19	4%
Total respondents	188	100%	406	100%	510	100%
Not stated	2		8		29	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

A total of 84% of HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients identified as straight, compared to 89% of clients in Other Shelters and 86% of the unsheltered homeless.

Table 34 - Sexual Orientation (by Shelter Type)

	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Straight	155	84%	353	89%	412	86%
Lesbian	1	1%	3	1%	33	7%
Gay	4	2%	12	3%	17	4%
Bisexual	15	8%	18	5%	8	2%
2-Spirit	3	2%	7	2%	10	2%
Queer	0	0%	2	1%	4	1%
Other	10	5%	12	3%	12	3%
Total respondents	184		395		480	
Not known	6		19		59	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients were more likely to be of Aboriginal identity (40%) compared to Other Shelter clients (29%) (Table 35), though this remains lower than the unsheltered homeless population (44%).

Table 35 - Aboriginal identity (by Shelter Type)

	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
Aboriginal identity	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Aboriginal	72	40%	116	29%	222	44%
Non-Aboriginal	108	60%	281	71%	281	56%
Total respondents	180	100%	397	100%	503	100%
Not known	10		17		36	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

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HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients were less likely to report having been homeless for 1 year or more when compared with the unsheltered population (Table 36). However, a higher proportion of HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients reported being homeless for 1 year or more (39%) than clients in Other Shelters (27%). A higher proportion of clients in Other Shelters were likely to be newly homeless with 21% reporting homelessness for less than a month, compared to only 10% of clients in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters.

Table 36 – Duration of homelessness (by Shelter Type)

Time Homeless	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 1 month	19	10%	86	21%	60	12%
1 month to under 6 months	58	31%	134	33%	108	21%
6 months to under 1 year	37	20%	77	19%	93	18%
1 year or more	74	39%	109	27%	248	49%
Total respondents	188	100%	406	100%	509	100%
Not known	2		10		30	
Total surveyed	190		416		539	

A higher proportion of HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients reported income assistance as a main source of income (35%) than clients of Other Shelters (29%), although the proportion of income assistance within the unsheltered homeless is the largest of the three groups (40%) (Table 37). The incidence of disability benefits in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters was also higher (29%) than in Other Shelters (22%). Clients in Other Shelters were more likely to report no income (16%) than those in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters (6%). Clients in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters were more likely to report income from activities such as binning (7%) or panhandling (2%) than the clients in Other Shelters.

Table 37 – Sources of Income (by Shelter Type)

Source of Income	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Government Transfers						
Income assistance or welfare	66	35%	119	29%	200	40%
Disability benefit	54	29%	89	22%	149	29%
Employment Insurance	4	2%	14	3%	12	2%
OAS/GIS	7	4%	23	6%	13	3%
CPP or other pension	6	3%	19	5%	7	1%
Other sources						
No income	11	6%	64	16%	55	11%
Employment	49	26%	124	31%	78	15%
Binning, bottle collecting	13	7%	1	<1%	34	7%
Panhandling	4	2%	0	0%	40	8%
Sex work	0	0%	2	<1%	9	2%
Family and Friends	3	2%	4	1%	7	1%
Self-employment	1	1%	1	0%	4	1%
Other	25	13%	20	5%	32	6%
Total respondents	186		406		506	
Not known	4		8		33	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

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Forty-eight percent (48%) of HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients reported having two or more health conditions, compared to a 46% incidence in Other Shelters and 56% of the unsheltered population (Table 38). A lower proportion of HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients reported no health conditions (18%) making them more comparable to the unsheltered homeless (17%) in terms of proportion, than to clients in Other Shelters, who were more likely to report no health conditions (29%).

Table 38 – Incidence of health conditions (by Shelter Type)

Health condition	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No health conditions	33	18%	116	29%	84	17%
One health condition	63	34%	101	25%	136	27%
Two or more conditions	90	48%	187	46%	284	56%
Total respondents	186	100%	404	100%	504	100%
Not known	4		10		35	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients also had a higher rate of addiction/substance use (59%) than the Other Shelter population (36%), closer to the unsheltered population (65%) (Table 39). The rates of mental health issues were higher in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters (41%) than in Other Shelters (35%) and closer to the rates of the mental health issues in the unsheltered population (43%). Incidence of medical conditions and physical disability were comparable for both shelter populations.

Table 39 – Type of health conditions (by Shelter Type)[32]

Health condition (more than 1 possible)	HEAT/Winter Shelters		Other Shelters		Unsheltered Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Medical condition	74	40%	169	42%	226	45%
Physical disability	54	29%	119	29%	164	32%
Addiction/substance use	109	59%	145	36%	331	65%
Mental health issue	76	41%	142	35%	220	43%
Total respondents	186		404		516	
Not known	4		10		23	
Total surveyed	190		414		539	

*Multiple responses mean percentages do not total to 100%.

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[32] Health conditions include only self-reported figures.

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HEAT/Winter Response Shelter clients tend to have a different profile than individuals in Other Shelters in terms of gender, age, Aboriginal identity, income, duration of homelessness and health conditions than clients of Other Shelters.

Clients in HEAT/Winter Response Shelters compared to clients in Other Shelters were:

- More likely to be men (+14%)
- More likely to identify as LGBTQ2+ (+5%)
- More likely to between the ages of 25-44 (+13%), while less likely to be between 45-64 (-9%)
- More likely to identify as Aboriginal (+11%)
- More likely to have been homeless for a year or more (+12%) and less likely to have been homeless for under 1 month (-11%)
- More likely to receive income assistance (+6%) or a disability benefit (+7%), and less likely to be employed (-5%) or have no income (-10%)
- More likely to have one or more health conditions (+11%)
- More likely to have an addiction/substance use issue (+23%) or a mental health issue (+6%)

The HEAT/Winter Response Shelter client population therefore resembles the unsheltered population profile more closely in terms of gender, age, Aboriginal identity, income sources and health issues, than does the Other Shelter client population.

Appendix 1: Shelter Capacity & Occupancy Rates on March 9, 2016[33]

Shelters[34]	Capacity - Total # beds	Occupancy March 9th
Catholic Charities Men's Shelter (ESP)	102	102
Lookout Society Al Mitchell Shelter (ESP)	47	47
Lookout Society Yukon Shelter (ESP)	72	72
RainCity Triage Shelter (ESP)	28	28
Salvation Army Belkin House Men's Shelter (ESP)	45	45
Salvation Army Belkin House (Women's) (ESP)	29	26
Salvation Army The Haven (ESP)	40	40
Salvation Army The Crosswalk (ESP)	34	34
Salvation army The Beacon (ESP)	60	58
Salvation Army Belkin House Downtown Community Court Beds (ESP)	9	6
412 Women's Emergency Shelter (ESP)	46	56
The Bloom Group Powell Place Shelter (ESP)	52	52
The Bloom Group Spring House Shelter (ESP)	32	25
Vi Fineday Family Shelter (ESP)	18	15
Covenant House (male) (ESP)	30	28
Covenant House (female) (ESP)[35]	24	20
First United Church (ESP)[36]	60	60
Union Gospel Mission (Privately funded)	72	72
Union Gospel Mission (Overflow)	20	20
RainCity 900 Pacific (TWRS)	40	42
RainCity 1648 E. 1st (TWRS)	40	42
Directions Youth Service Centre (TWRS)	10	10
PHS Winter Response (TWRS)	39	42
Salvation Army Anchor of Hope (TWRS)	40	46
Salvation Army Sutherland (TWRS)	30	30
Aboriginal Shelter / 201 Central (HEAT Shelter)	100	100
PHS New Fountain (HEAT Shelter)	60	61
Total	**1,179**	**1,179**

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[33] Safe houses, transition houses, detox centres and NFA sites (hospitals and jails) are not included in this list.
[34] ESP stands for Emergency Shelter Program, year-round shelters funded through BC Housing. TWRS stands for Temporary Winter Response Shelters, seasonal shelters that operate between November and March, funded in a partnership between the City of Vancouver and BC Housing, and operated by a non-profit society.
[35] Covenant House has 33 beds funded by BC Housing and 21 beds funded through other means.
[36] First United Church was a HEAT shelter until April 1, 2015 and is no longer included in the HEAT/Winter shelter analysis.