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# **Homelessness in Metro Vancouver:** *A Comparative Community Profile*

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March 2010

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In March 2008, the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) completed a count of Metro Vancouver's homeless population. The final report on the count was released on September 16, 2008. A copy of the report is available online<sup>1</sup> or from the RSCH.

The 2008 count report, the third since 2002, provided an updated enumeration of people who were homeless in communities across Metro Vancouver, and identified changes in the homeless population since the first count in 2002. The demographic profile and analysis in the 2008 report was provided at the regional level rather than the municipal or community level.

This report is intended to complement the original report by providing an in-depth analysis of people who were homeless by community. These municipal profiles of the homeless population are intended to assist communities, governments, policy-makers, private foundations, and service providers in developing an appropriate mix of prevention and intervention strategies and measures to address the needs of people who are homeless, whether in the local or regional context.

### **Scope**

The analysis in this report is based on responses from people interviewed or enumerated on the day of the 2008 homeless count. A total of 2,660 people who were homeless were counted on March 11, 2008. Of those, 2,409 or 91% were enumerated<sup>2</sup> or interviewed for the purpose of obtaining their demographic and other vital statistics. The majority of the data presented in this report refers to the "enumerated homeless" population.

It should be stressed that this report is not intended to repeat or mirror the analysis offered in the final homeless count report. Rather, it is intended to complement the report by breaking down the regional data by municipality and providing analysis that cannot be found in the 2008 count report. Due to data constraints, the analysis is comparative in nature rather than a sequential and independent look at each community. However, a statistical profile and the key findings for each community are provided at the end of the report.

### **Organization of Report**

The framework for this analysis is a template developed by the Homelessness Secretariat in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee of the Metro Vancouver Housing Committee. In keeping with the template, the analysis is broken into eight major parts as follows:

1. Background and key findings

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<sup>1</sup> Go to <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/homelessness/Pages/Resources.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Several reasons account for the shortfall in enumeration. For example, in some cases interviewers were not able to complete interviews with shelter clients because the clients were admitted to the shelters before the interviewers arrived. As well, for parents with children under 18 years of age, there was a deliberate policy not to enumerate the children during the interview process, although they were included in the total count.

2. Geographic distribution
3. Sheltered and street/service homeless
4. Demographic profile
5. Reason for homelessness
6. Length of time homeless
7. Selected subpopulations (adults, children and youth, women, people who identify as Aboriginal, seniors, people who were homeless for at least one year)
8. Key municipal statistics and findings.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions are provided to add clarity and comprehension to the analysis:

1. *Shelter beds*: beds available in emergency shelters, safe houses and transitional houses for 365 days a year.
2. *Seasonal shelter beds*: beds previously referred to as cold wet weather beds. While most were converted to year-round beds in 2007, few remain for use on seasonal and local demand pattern basis. They open and close on specified dates.
3. *Extreme weather response shelter spaces*: extra spaces for people who were homeless during periods of extreme winter weather. They are a crisis response to extreme conditions that augment other shelter programs. The availability of these spaces depends on volunteers. As a consequence, the spaces provide limited services (usually just overnight accommodation) and open and close with changes in the weather.
4. *Enumerated homeless*: the segment of the homeless population that agreed to provide pertinent demographic information to interviewers during the count. In other words, it refers to homeless people who agreed to complete the demographic portion of the night-time or day-time questionnaire administered during the count. This includes unaccompanied children under the age of 18 who were found in shelters, safe houses, and transition houses. Except in very few instances, the analysis in this report is based on this population.
5. *Total homeless or counted homeless*: the absolute number of people who were homeless tallied under the guidelines of the 24 hour point-in-time count. The term “total homeless” refers to not only the population that was “enumerated”, but also to those who were known to be homeless because they used shelter beds but could not be administered the count questionnaire, and therefore for whom there is no vital information, such as how long they have been homeless, ethnicity, sources of income, or health status.
6. “*Count*”: used in its ordinary/common sense or context.

## **Known Issues**

The data from the count provides a “point in time” snapshot of homelessness in the region. Homelessness, by its very nature, is difficult to measure and all counts underestimate numbers because of the difficulty in finding people who do not use services or spend time where people who are homeless tend to congregate. For these reasons, in combination with the vast geographic scope of the region, the Homeless Count did not enumerate every homeless person in the region and is therefore considered an undercount. Notwithstanding these known limitations, information provided through the Homeless Count is the best available current data.

Totals in this report may differ from the totals provided in “Still on our Streets: the Results of the 2008 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count” (December 2008) based on minor discrepancies and the methodology used to sort data. Particulars of these discrepancies are as follows:

- For two enumerated homeless people, the municipality was either missing or not reported. As a result, there may be minor discrepancies between the totals provided in this report for various demographic characteristics compared to totals provided in “Still on our Streets: the Results of the 2008 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count”.
- In analyzing the data for this report, the RSCH found that there appears to be five people who were enumerated in West Vancouver, whereas the 2008 homeless count consultant reported four people. The original count number of 2,660 published in the 2008 report will not be revised because there is no strong basis to do so. For this reason, the total homeless are reported as 2,660 and 4 homeless people are shown under West Vancouver in sections *2.1 Community Where Homeless People Were Found* and *2.2 Community Where Enumerated Homeless People Were Found*. However, in all other sections of this report, the data from five homeless people enumerated in West Vancouver is used.

Additionally, survey questions with multiple or no responses resulted in some tables without total calculations, (see for example tables 5.1 Reason for Being Homeless and 5.6 Health Services Usage).

## **1 BACKGROUND AND KEY FINDINGS**

For years, the presence of many homeless people on the streets of Metro Vancouver has raised several concerns and questions for ordinary people, service providers and policy-makers alike. Questions are often raised about the adequacy of the emergency shelter system and the most appropriate programs to prevent and address homelessness. For example, are there enough shelter beds in the region? Are the emergency shelters less accommodating than they should be? Are there structural barriers that prevent or deter homeless people from using the shelter system? In light of these questions, it is useful to begin this analysis with a look at the region’s shelter capacity and shelter usage followed by the key findings of this report.

## **1.1 Shelter Spaces**

At the time of the 2008 homeless count, Metro Vancouver had approximately 1,141 shelter spaces, including beds and mats.<sup>3</sup> These included spaces funded by the provincial government's emergency shelter services program, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and non-profit societies (see Table 1.1). It is noteworthy that the 2007/08 spaces represented a 7% increase over the 2006/07 complement.

For the 2007/08 fiscal year, the spaces were distributed as follows:

- ❑ 71% were located in Vancouver,
- ❑ 9% in Surrey,
- ❑ 8% in New Westminster, and
- ❑ 12% spread across Richmond, North Vancouver and Maple Ridge.

Approximately 26% of the beds were for men only, 49.1% were for men and women or co-ed use, 17.7% were for women only and about 7.2% were for youth.

## **1.2 Shelter Usage**

At the time of the homeless count in March 2008, the overall occupancy rate in the Metro Vancouver shelter system was about 87%, however occupancy rates varied by shelter type. The occupancy rate was 99.8% in men only shelters, 86.1% in women only shelters, 82.4% in co-ed shelters, and 82.9% in youth hostels and safe houses. Thus, nightly excess capacity in the shelter system was severely limited at the time of the count, especially for men who preferred "men only" shelters.

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<sup>3</sup> These spaces do not include seasonal spaces that were made available during extreme weather conditions.

**Table 1:1 Metro Vancouver Shelter Spaces 2006-2009**

Community	Shelter Name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Community	Shelter Name	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Maple Ridge	Caring Place	48	54	54	Vancouver	Lookout Yukon Shelter	71	71	71
	Iron Horse Youth Safe House	5	5	5		Marc's Place Safe House	3	3	3
New Westminster	College Place	0	0	15		10th Avenue Alliance	4	4	4
	Elizabeth Gurney House	0	0	12		Aboriginal Safe House	7	7	7
	Fraserside Emergency Shelter	12	12	12		Anchor of Hope	50	50	50
	Garfield Hotel (The Way)	22	22	29		Beacon	60	60	60
	Stevenson House	16	16	16		Belkin House	69	69	70
Tri-Cities	Tri-Cities Women's Shelter	3	3	3		Bridge Women's Emergency Shelter	12	12	12
	Tri-Cities (CWW)	30	30	30		Catholic Charities	92	102	102
North Vancouver	Lookout North Shore Shelter	45	45	45		Covenant House/Crisis Shelter	22	22	22
Richmond	Richmond House Men's Shelter	10	10	10		Crosswalk	35	35	35
Surrey	All Nations Youth Safe House	6	6	6		Downtown Eastside Women's Centre	0	56	70
	Cynthia's Place	20	20	20		Powell Place Emergency Shelter	26	26	26
	Gateway	36	36	40		Rights of Passage Shelter	0	0	32
	Hyland House	35	35	35		St. Elizabeth Home Emergency Shelter	32	32	32
Vancouver	First Baptist Church	5	5	5		Triage Shelter	28	28	28
	Grandview Calvary Baptist Church	13	13	33		Union Gospel	36	36	36
	Haven	40	40	40		Vi Fineday Family Shelter	18	18	18
	Lookout Downtown Shelter	46	46	46		Walden Safe House	7	7	7
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>944</b>	<b>1,036</b>	<b>1,141</b>

### 1.3 Key Findings

Data compiled from the 2008 Homeless Count data, in combination with information and data from local service providers and shelter operators, can assist in local planning and decision making. Care should also be taken in interpreting data for individual municipalities. For example, if the count found only men in the community, this does not necessarily mean there were no homeless women in that community. Similarly, for communities where the number of homeless individuals is low, direct comparisons to the regional data could be misleading as the numbers are simply too small to draw meaningful conclusions.

Observations from across Metro Vancouver:

- All municipalities saw an increase in the number of people who were homeless in their communities since 2005.
- A significant number of homeless people in each community called that community “home.” In West Vancouver, every homeless person found indicated they were from West Vancouver. More than half of homeless people found in Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadow, Langley (City and Township), North Vancouver (City and District), and Richmond indicated they regarded the same community as home.
- Coquitlam and Surrey found a higher proportion of homeless women in their communities than others in the region.
- The transgendered population was found in only five communities Vancouver, Surrey, Port Coquitlam, New Westminster, Langley (City and Township)
- The highest incidence of youth homelessness (under 25) was seen in West Vancouver.
- The highest incidence of senior homelessness (55 and older) was seen in Richmond.
- People who were homeless in Burnaby, Langley (City and Township), Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows and New Westminster were much less likely to be alone than anywhere else in the region.
- Income assistance was the most commonly reported income source across the region.
- In the Tri-Cities and North Vancouver, homeless individuals were more likely to indicate income from full or part time employment than any other communities in the region.
- Across the region, lack of income, housing availability/condition/cost, and addiction issues were the most often cited reasons for homelessness.
- Across the region, the use of health clinics, emergency health services, ambulances and hospitals were reported more frequently than any other health service.

- In all communities except Coquitlam, Delta/White Rock and Richmond, nearly half or more of homeless people enumerated had been without a home for at least a year.

#### 1.4 Statistical Summary by Community

Table 1.2 below offers a quick overview of the information that was collected by the 2008 count at the community level. Detailed statistics and discussions are provided in sections 2 to 8 of this report.

**Table 1:2 Statistical Overview**

CHARACTER-ISTIC	INDICATOR	Burnaby	Coquitlam	Delta/White Rock	Langley (City / Township)	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	New Westminster	North Vancouver (City/District)	Port Coquitlam	Port Moody	Richmond	Surrey	Vancouver	West Vancouver	Total <sup>4</sup>
Distribution	Community found	84	37	17	77	85	123	115	52	2	50	388	1372	5	2407
	Home community	37	13	3	48	61	58	64	26	1	27	177	694	5	1214
	Sheltered	7	16	6	3	45	51	53	0	0	15	87	566	0	849
	Street/Service	77	21	11	74	40	72	62	52	2	35	301	806	5	1558
Demography	Male	63	20	14	57	61	88	97	40	2	32	252	948	5	1679
	Female	17	17	2	15	24	31	16	9	0	12	126	348	0	617
	Transgender	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	15	0	22
	Unaccompanied Children (<19)	0	14	0	2	3	1	1	0	0	1	14	19	4	59
	19 -24	5	3	3	7	4	3	8	1	0	1	39	135	0	209
	25 -54	69	15	13	57	69	100	86	46	2	34	287	1044	1	1823
	55 and older	6	4	0	6	9	16	13	2	0	7	35	114	0	212
Family Status	Alone	45	26	14	44	62	78	85	34	2	32	269	973	5	1669
	With Partner	14	4	0	16	16	17	15	6	0	1	43	111	0	243
	With $\geq 1$ Child	3	2	0	2	2	4	0	1	0	3	9	25	0	51
	With Family	15	6	0	18	18	21	15	7	0	4	52	131	0	287
Income Sources	Income Assistance	40	9	9	30	50	45	46	32	0	18	147	533	0	959
	Binning	33	4	6	25	12	29	29	14	0	12	86	212	1	463
	Disability	12	2	4	5	20	18	18	4	0	8	54	258	0	403

<sup>4</sup> As noted on page 2, totals in this column may differ slightly from totals reported in the 2008 count.

CHARACTER-ISTIC	INDICATOR	Burnaby	Coquitlam	Delta/White Rock	Langley (City / Township)	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	New Westminster	North Vancouver (City/District)	Port Coquitlam	Port Moody	Richmond	Surrey	Vancouver	West Vancouver	Total <sup>4</sup>
	Part-time/full-time work	7	16	0	7	10	14	30	15	1	7	72	242	0	421
	Illegal Activity	7	3	4	21	8	7	8	6	1	7	62	213	0	347
	Panhandling	15	2	1	9	2	13	12	8	0	3	49	163	0	277
	No Income	8	6	1	10	6	11	4	1	0	4	43	83	4	181
Health Conditions	No Health Issues	9	14	2	14	19	17	18	2	0	11	136	369	4	615
	One Health Issue	25	10	5	32	22	27	29	22	1	8	90	329	1	601
	Multiple Health Issues	44	13	10	27	43	57	63	26	1	22	153	556	0	1015
	Addiction	55	18	10	37	49	52	65	38	1	21	190	643	1	1180
	Mental Health	22	4	11	20	27	34	36	15	1	15	102	354	0	641
	Physical Disability	26	9	7	17	28	37	40	17	1	11	91	324	0	608
	Medical Condition	39	12	6	22	36	59	54	26	1	16	117	495	0	883
Length of Time Homeless	< 1 Month	7	8	4	8	7	16	20	3	0	9	43	145	2	272
	1 – 12 months	36	16	7	20	35	30	44	18	0	20	137	471	2	836
	> 12 months	42	11	4	34	41	48	42	29	2	11	167	585	0	1016
Reason for Homelessness	Low income/Lack of Income	21	7	7	19	23	29	30	11	0	14	98	262	1	522
	Housing Cost	12	9	1	15	25	16	13	22	0	8	71	215	0	407
	Addictions	15	5	3	6	14	10	27	16	1	6	72	190	0	365
	Abuse/Conflict Family Breakdown	6	9	1	9	12	13	8	2	0	11	32	112	1	216
	Poor Housing Conditions/infested	2	1	0	0	1	2	6	1	0	0	4	161	0	178
	Health	2	1	2	4	7	11	18	3	0	2	27	79	0	156
	Housing Availability	2	0	2	3	6	0	3	4	0	1	11	105	0	137
Aboriginal	Aboriginal Ancestry	21	6	1	18	15	26	27	4	0	5	108	456	0	687

## 2 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Understanding the spatial distribution of the homeless population is critical to ensuring that the region's homeless services address the needs of the various homeless populations in all geographic areas where homeless people live. This section looks at where people who were homeless were found throughout the region and what community they called "home."

### 2.1 Communities Where Homeless People Were Found

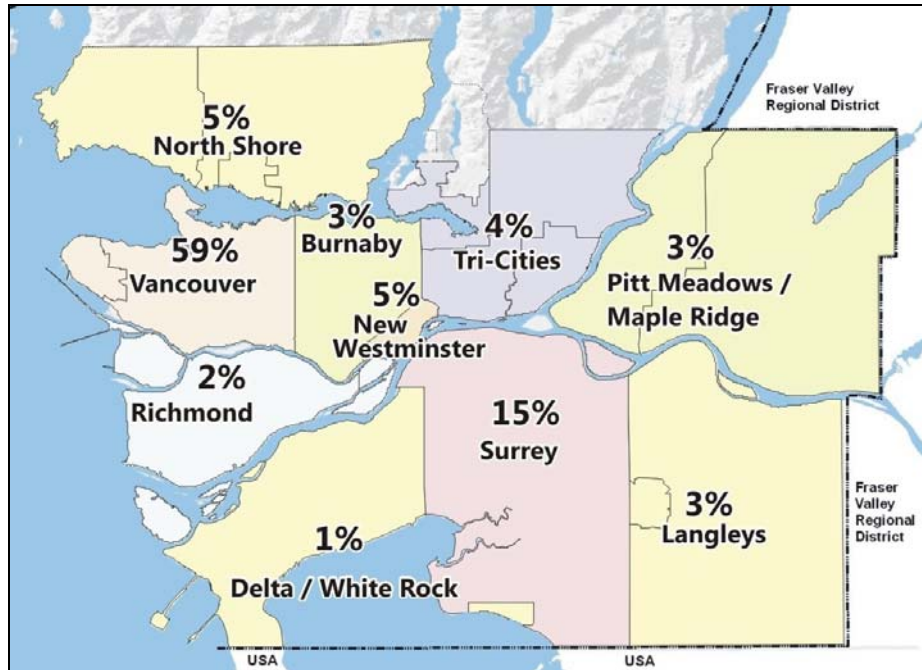
A total of 2,660 people who were homeless were counted on March 11, 2008. A person was considered homeless for the purposes of the count if they did not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and if they did not pay rent. This included: people who did not have physical shelter; people who were temporarily in emergency shelters, safe houses for youth or transition houses for women and their children fleeing violence; and people who were staying at a friend's place where they did not pay rent.

A majority (59%) of the total homeless population was found or counted in Vancouver, 15% in Surrey, and the rest spread across the balance of the region, with no more than 5% in any of the other communities. Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 below show the regional distribution of people who were homeless on March 11, 2008.

**Table 2:1 Distribution of Total Homeless Population**

<b>Municipality found</b>	<b>Total homeless</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Burnaby	86	3%
Delta / White Rock	17	1%
Langley (City and Township)	86	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	90	3%
New Westminster	124	5%
North Vancouver District/City	123	5%
Richmond	56	2%
Surrey	402	15%
Tri-Cities	94	4%
Vancouver	1,576	59%
West Vancouver	4	0%
Not stated	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,660</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 2.1: Distribution of Total Homeless in Metro Vancouver**



## 2.2 Communities Where Enumerated Homeless People Were Found

While a total of 2660 people were counted on count day, 2,409 of those individuals completed the demographic portion of the survey for the demographic profile. Table 2.2 shows the distribution of the enumerated homeless population in communities across Metro Vancouver.

**Table 2:2 Distribution of Enumerated Homeless Population**

Municipality found	Total homeless	
	#	%
Burnaby	84	4%
Delta / White Rock	17	1%
Langley (City/Township)	77	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	85	4%
New Westminster	123	5%
North Vancouver (District/City)	116	5%
Richmond	50	2%
Surrey	388	16%
Tri-Cities	91	4%
Vancouver	1,372	57%
West Vancouver	4	0 %
Not stated	2	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,409</b>	<b>100%</b>

With minor variations, the distribution of the enumerated homeless population mirrored that of the total homeless population – 57% of the population was found in Vancouver, 16% in Surrey, with none of the remaining communities accounting for more than 5%.

### 2.3 Community Called Home

In addition to documenting where people who were homeless were found, the count interviewers asked respondents where they called “home”. This question was meant to shed some light on where people considered their home to be, which might be related to where they were born or where they last had a permanent home. The responses provide insight into the tendency of homeless people to move from within the region. Proximity to “home” where there is familiarity with the local services, formal and informal places to stay and connections to friends is known to contribute to relative “comfort” on the street.

As seen in Table 2.3, overall, half (50%) of the people who were homeless in the region were found in their “home” communities, but there was significant variation among municipalities. All of the homeless people found in West Vancouver indicated they were from West Vancouver. More than half of people who were homeless in Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows, Langley (City and Township), North Vancouver (City and District) and Richmond” said they regarded the same community as “home”. At the other end of the spectrum, less than half of people found in White Rock/Delta, Coquitlam and Burnaby called those communities “home.”

**Table 2:3 Municipality Called Home**

Municipality Found	Total found in community	Total who called this community “Home”	
	#	#	%
Burnaby	84	37	44%
Coquitlam	37	13	35%
Delta/White Rock	17	3	18%
Langley (City/Township)	77	48	62%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	85	61	72%
New Westminster	123	58	47%
North Vancouver (District/City)	115	64	56%
Port Coquitlam	52	26	50%
Port Moody	2	1	50%
Richmond	50	27	54%
Surrey	388	177	46%
Vancouver	1,372	694	51%
West Vancouver	5	5	100%
Not Stated	2	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,409</b>	<b>1,214</b>	<b>50%</b>

### 3 SHELTERED AND STREET/SERVICE HOMELESS

Of the 2,660 people who were counted, 1,574 or 59% were found on the street or service centres (slept rough or sofa-surfed), while 1,086 or 41% were found in emergency shelters, transition houses, and youth safe houses. Of the 1,574 street/service homeless counted, 1,558 (99%) were interviewed. However, of the 1,086 that were sheltered, only 849 (78%) were interviewed. The distribution of these two sub-populations across Metro Vancouver is summarized in Table 3.1 below. It is likely that the distribution of shelter spaces in the region accounts in part for the distribution pattern of the sheltered and street/service homeless populations. In some communities such as Burnaby and Delta/White Rock, the count found sheltered homeless where there are no existing shelter spaces. This is likely due to the presence of transition houses.

- ❑ The street/service homeless population outnumbered the sheltered population in all communities in the region except Port Coquitlam.
- ❑ The majority of the street/service and sheltered populations were found in Vancouver.
- ❑ In West Vancouver, the Tri-Cities, Langley (City and Township) and Burnaby, virtually all the people who were homeless were street/service homeless.
- ❑ Surrey and North Vancouver appeared to have sheltered more people relative to their share of the shelter spaces in the region.

**Table 3:1 Distribution of Sheltered and Street/Service**

Municipality found	Sheltered		Street/service		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Burnaby	7	1%	77	5%	84	3%
Coquitlam	16	2%	21	1%	37	2%
Delta/White Rock	6	1%	11	1%	17	1%
Langley (City/Township)	3	0%	74	5%	77	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	45	5%	40	3%	85	4%
New Westminister	51	6%	72	5%	123	5%
North Vancouver City/District	53	6%	62	4%	115	5%
Port Coquitlam	0	0%	52	3%	52	2%
Port Moody	0	0%	2	0%	2	0%
Richmond	15	2%	35	2%	50	2%
Surrey	87	10%	301	19%	388	16%
Vancouver	566	67%	806	52%	1372	57%
West Vancouver	0	0%	5	0%	5	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2407</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Understanding the demographic profile of the homeless population is integral to matching services to their needs. This section of the report looks at the age and gender of people who were homeless and how these differ across the region, as well as sources of income and who homeless individuals were with on count day (family, partner, child).

## 4.1 Gender Distribution

Count interviewers were required to record the gender of people who agreed to be enumerated. Interviewers were also instructed to indicate “not known” if it was difficult to identify a person’s gender. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of homeless, men, women and transgendered individuals throughout the region. Interviewers had some difficulty identifying the gender of homeless people who agreed to be interviewed in about 4% of the cases. The following bullets summarize the key points about the distribution of male and female homeless in the region.

- ❑ The geographic distribution of males and females generally mirrored the distribution of the general homeless population. About 56% of both genders were found in Vancouver, while 15% of males and 20% of females were found in Surrey. Other communities had relatively smaller proportions of both genders, consistent with the pattern found in the general homeless population.
- ❑ The overall male to female ratio was about three to one; the ratio was notably lower in Coquitlam (1:1) and Surrey (2:1), and notably higher in Delta White Rock (7:1) and North Vancouver (6:1).
- ❑ The transgendered population was found in only five communities — Vancouver, Surrey, Port Coquitlam, New Westminster and Langley.

**Table 4:1 Gender Distribution**

Municipality Found	Observed Gender										Total	
	Male		Female		Male to Female Ratio	Trans-gender		Not known				
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%	#	%	
Burnaby	63	4%	17	3%	3.7	0	0%	4	5%	84	3%	
Coquitlam	20	1%	17	3%	1.2	0	0%	0	0%	37	2%	
Delta/White Rock	14	1%	2	0.3%	7	0	0%	1	1%	17	1%	
Langley (City/Township)	57	3%	15	2%	3.8	1	5%	4	5%	77	3%	
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	61	4%	24	4%	2.5	0	0%	0	0%	85	4%	
New Westminster	88	5%	31	5%	2.8	1	5%	3	3%	123	5%	
North Vancouver (City/District)	97	6%	16	3%	6.1	0	0%	2	2%	115	5%	
Port Coquitlam	40	2%	9	1%	4.4	2	9%	1	1%	52	2%	
Port Moody	2	0.1%	0	0%	NA	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%	
Richmond	32	2%	12	2%	2.7	0	0%	6	7%	50	2%	
Surrey	252	15%	126	20%	2	3	14%	7	8%	388	16%	
Vancouver	948	56%	348	56%	2.7	15	68%	60	68%	1,372	57%	
West Vancouver	5	0.3%	0	0%	NA	0	0%	0	0%	5	0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>100</b>	

## 4.2 Age Distribution

The count interviewers asked respondents for their age, and where a direct interview was not possible, interviewers were asked to estimate the age of the respondent. Table 4.2 below shows the age distribution of the region’s homeless population, with the key observations being the following:

- ❑ Overall, 79% of Metro Vancouver’s homeless population was age 25-54, while 12% was youth (under 25 years of age), and 9% was senior (aged 55 and older), although there is some variation, particularly with youth homelessness across the region.
- ❑ The highest incidences of youth homelessness were seen in West Vancouver (80%), followed by Coquitlam (47%) and Delta/White Rock (19%).
- ❑ Richmond had the highest incidence of senior homelessness (16%), followed by New Westminster (13%).

**Table 4:2 Age Distribution**

Municipality Found	Children and Youth (less 25)		Adult (25-54)		Seniors (55 plus)		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Burnaby	5	6%	69	86%	6	8%	80	3%
Coquitlam	17	47%	15	42%	4	11%	36	2%
Delta/White Rock	3	19%	13	81%	0	0%	16	1%
Langley (City/Township)	9	13%	57	79%	6	8%	72	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	7	8%	69	81%	9	11%	85	4%
New Westminster	4	3%	100	83%	16	13%	120	5%
North Vancouver (District/City)	9	8%	86	80%	13	12%	108	5%
Port Coquitlam	1	2%	46	94%	2	4%	49	2%
Port Moody	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2	0%
Richmond	2	5%	34	79%	7	16%	43	2%
Surrey	53	14%	287	77%	35	9%	375	16%
Vancouver	154	12%	1,044	80%	114	9%	1,312	57%
West Vancouver	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	5	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>1,823</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>2,303</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4.3 Social Isolation

One of the greatest risks facing people who are homeless is social isolation, especially for the long-term homeless and those recently discharged from institutions. To gauge the level of social isolation among the region’s homeless population, the count interviewers asked respondents “who they were with” on count day. The purpose of the question was to determine if people who were homeless were alone or with a partner, family member or child. Overall, 76% of people who responded to this question were alone, and the sheltered population was more likely to be alone than the street/service population.

Table 4.3 provides a summary of who homeless people were with on count day across the region:

- ❑ On average, 76% of homeless people in shelter were alone or unaccompanied. Only 13% were accompanied either by a partner, a child or both.
- ❑ People who were homeless found in Langley (City and Township) and Burnaby were much less likely to be alone than anywhere else in the region, with more than two in five in those communities reporting they were not alone.
- ❑ In Port Moody and West Vancouver, all of the enumerated homeless were alone.
- ❑ People who were homeless in Burnaby, Langley (City and Township) and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows were more likely to report being accompanied by a partner or family than people who were homeless in other communities.

**Table 4:3 Social Isolation**

Municipality Found	Alone		With Partner		With Child		With Family		Total #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Burnaby	45	58%	14	18%	3	4%	15	19%	78
Coquitlam	26	72%	4	11%	2	6%	6	17%	36
Delta/White Rock	14	88%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	16
Langley (City /Township)	44	59%	16	22%	2	3%	18	24%	74
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	62	75%	16	19%	2	2%	18	22%	83
New Westminster	78	75%	17	16%	4	4%	21	20%	104
North Vancouver (City/District)	85	77%	15	14%	0	0%	15	14%	110
Port Coquitlam	34	68%	6	12%	1	2%	7	14%	50
Port Moody	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2
Richmond	32	80%	1	3%	3	8%	4	10%	40
Surrey	269	72%	43	12%	9	2%	52	14%	373
Vancouver	973	79%	111	9%	25	2%	131	11%	1,227
West Vancouver	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>2,198</b>

#### 4.4 Source of Income

Given the level social isolation shown above, the question arises as to how people who were homeless were able to maintain themselves; specifically, whether they relied on family, government, or themselves for their livelihood. To provide insight into this question, the count survey asked people to identify all their sources of income, with the results shown in Table 4.4, below.

- ❑ By far the most prevalent source of income for people who were homeless was income assistance, followed by binning or bottle collection.

- ❑ In all but three of the communities surveyed (Coquitlam, Port Moody, and West Vancouver), income assistance was the most often stated source of income.
- ❑ Binning was the second most common income source in all communities except Coquitlam, Port Moody, Vancouver, and Delta/White Rock.
- ❑ Additional sources of income varied from community to community, and included employment, panhandling, work in the sex-trade and theft.
- ❑ In the Tri-Cities, homeless individuals were more likely to indicate income from full or part time employment than in any other community in the region.
- ❑ Coquitlam was the only community where full-time employment was the most commonly stated source of income.

**Table 4:4 Sources of Income**

Municipality Found	Income Assistance	Binning	Disability	Other Activity <sup>5</sup>	Employment		Panhandling	No Income	Family	EI	OAS/GIS
					Full-time	Part-time					
Burnaby	40	33	12	7	2	5	15	8	2	0	1
Coquitlam	9	4	2	3	6	10	2	6	1	1	0
Delta/White Rock	9	6	4	4	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
Langley (City and Township)	30	25	5	21	2	5	9	10	3	2	0
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	50	12	20	8	6	4	2	6	0	0	0
New Westminster	45	29	18	7	6	8	13	11	2	0	0
North Vancouver City/District	46	29	18	8	11	19	12	4	2	0	2
Port Coquitlam	32	14	4	6	4	11	8	1	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Richmond	18	12	8	7	3	4	3	4	1	2	2
Surrey	147	86	54	62	15	57	49	43	24	7	6
Vancouver	533	212	258	213	79	163	163	83	23	13	4
West Vancouver	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>

## 5 REASONS FOR BEING HOMELESS

One of the persistent questions that the public asks about people who are homeless is why they are homeless or in such difficult situations. Isolating the cause of homelessness is difficult, given its complex and multi-dimensional nature. It is particularly difficult to capture the causes in a brief questionnaire such as the one used for the count. Nonetheless, the count interviewers asked people to identify the “main reasons why they did not have their own place.” In the past, the

<sup>5</sup> The majority of people reporting income from other activity typically includes income gained from work in the sex-trade.

question included pre-identified codes for the interviewer to check off during the interview. For the 2008 count, the question was open-ended and was coded by the research team.

While the reasons that people who were homeless gave for not having their own place were wide ranging, the most common responses were fairly consistent across the region:

1. Low income/lack of income,
2. High cost/availability/poor condition of housing
3. Addictions
4. Family breakdown/abuse

- Table 5.1 shows the responses from people who were homeless across the region by community.

**Table 5:1 Reason for Being Homeless**

Municipality Found	Lack/low income	Cost of housing	Addiction	Abuse family break-down	Poor housing condition/infested	Health	Housing availability	Evicted	No income Assistance	Don't want	Moved	Released from jail	Other	Total
Burnaby	21	12	15	6	2	2	2	5	6	5	0	1	12	75
Coquitlam	7	9	5	9	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	35
Delta/White Rock	7	1	3	1	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	15
Langley (City/Township)	19	15	6	9	0	4	3	4	1	3	0	1	16	70
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	23	25	14	12	1	7	6	2	0	2	0	0	10	83
New Westminister	29	16	10	13	2	11	0	4	4	5	1	0	21	95
North Vancouver (City/District)	30	13	27	8	6	18	3	8	1	3	2	2	16	106
Port Coquitlam	11	22	16	2	1	3	4	1	2	0	0	0	5	48
Port Moody	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Richmond	14	8	6	11	0	2	1	5	0	0	0	3	6	40
Surrey	98	71	72	32	4	27	11	12	8	13	2	0	55	347
Vancouver	262	215	190	112	161	79	105	65	56	58	30	10	200	1178
West Vancouver	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5
<b>Total Region</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>364</b>	
<b>Percent</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>17%</b>	

While the responses in most communities reflected the common reasons noted above, there are some differences among communities:

- ❑ In Langley, Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadow, New Westminster and Vancouver, the top two reasons for homelessness were lack of/low income and high housing cost.
- ❑ In North Vancouver and Burnaby, low income/lack of income and addictions were the most commonly cited reasons followed by loss of housing due to health.

In Richmond, abuse/family breakdown/conflict was the second most often cited reason for homelessness after lack of /low income.

## 5.1 Health Conditions

The 2008 Homeless Count interviewers asked people who were homeless to identify which of four health conditions (medical condition, physical disability, addiction, and mental illness) they had. Table 5.2 summarizes the responses across the region. Medical condition refers to chronic problems like asthma and diabetes, and physical disability refers to an impairment affecting mobility or movement. While a health condition might not lead directly to homelessness, there is a body of research documenting a strong connection between homelessness and health conditions including substance abuse. As seen in the previous section, addiction is among the top four reasons that people gave for being homeless. The preceding two homeless counts showed a strong correlation between mental illness, physical disabilities and chronic poor general health and homelessness.

**Table 5:2 Prevalence of Addiction, Mental Health, Physical Disability**

<b>Municipality Found</b>	<b>Addiction</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Physical Disability</b>	<b>Medical Condition</b>
Burnaby	55	22	26	39
Coquitlam	18	4	9	12
Delta/White Rock	10	11	7	6
Langley (City and Township)	37	20	17	22
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	49	27	28	36
New Westminster	52	34	37	59
North Vancouver (City and District)	65	36	40	54
Port Coquitlam	38	15	17	26
Port Moody	1	1	1	1
Richmond	21	15	11	16
Surrey	190	102	91	117
Vancouver	643	354	324	495
West Vancouver	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>883</b>

## 5.2 Multiple Health Conditions

As Table 5.3 below shows, nearly half (45%) of people who were homeless have at least two health conditions, the other half was split nearly evenly between people with no health condition and those with one health condition. Across the region:

- ❑ Nearly three out of four homeless people (72%) reported at least one health condition.
- ❑ In most municipalities, people who were homeless were most likely to report that they had two or more health conditions. The key exceptions were in West Vancouver where four of the five people reported no health condition. This exception may be explained by the young age of the people who were homeless.
- ❑ In Langley, people who were homeless were more likely to report one health condition (44%) than multiple health conditions (37%).

**Table 5:3 Number of Health Conditions**

Municipality Found	Reporting No Condition		Reporting 1 Condition		Reporting 2+ Conditions		Total Response #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Burnaby	9	12%	25	32%	44	56%	78
Coquitlam	14	38%	10	27%	13	35%	37
Delta/White Rock	2	12%	5	29%	10	59%	17
Langley (City and Township)	14	19%	32	44%	27	37%	73
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	19	23%	22	26%	43	51%	84
New Westminster	17	17%	27	27%	57	56%	101
North Vancouver City/District	18	16%	29	26%	63	57%	110
Port Coquitlam	2	4%	22	44%	26	52%	50
Port Moody	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	2
Richmond	11	27%	8	20%	22	54%	41
Surrey	136	36%	90	24%	153	40%	379
Vancouver	369	29%	329	26%	556	44%	1,254
West Vancouver	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>2,231</b>

Table 5.4 takes a closer look at people who were homeless with multiple health conditions or “co-occurring” health conditions and provides a comparison between the sheltered and street/service homeless populations by community. Generally, incidence of co-occurring health conditions is significantly higher among people who were street/service homeless than those who were sheltered.

- ❑ The majority (68%) of people who were homeless that reported multiple health conditions were street/service homeless.

- ❑ Coquitlam (62%), Delta/White Rock (60%) and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows (53%) were the only communities where the majority of people who were homeless and reporting multiple health conditions were sheltered homeless.
- ❑ In Langley (City and Township), Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, all of those who reported multiple health conditions were street/service homeless.

**Table 5:4 Co-occurring Health Conditions among the sheltered and street/service homeless populations**

Municipality Found	Sheltered		Street/Service		Total
	#	%	#	%	
Burnaby	2	5%	42	95%	44
Coquitlam	8	62%	5	38%	13
Delta/White Rock	6	60%	4	40%	10
Langley (City and Township)	0	0%	27	100%	27
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	23	53%	20	47%	43
New Westminster	9	16%	48	84%	57
North Vancouver City/District	26	41%	37	59%	63
Port Coquitlam	0	0%	26	100%	26
Port Moody	0	0%	1	100%	1
Richmond	5	23%	17	77%	22
Surrey	40	26%	113	74%	153
Vancouver	204	37%	352	63%	556
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1015</b>

The most closely associated co-occurring health conditions among people who were homeless were mental illness and addiction. As shown in Table 5.5 below, this association was also found among Metro Vancouver’s homeless population. In general, the distribution of people who were homeless with multiple health conditions in Metro Vancouver was consistent with the distribution of the overall homeless population. Approximately 55% were in Vancouver, 15% in Surrey, and 6% or less were found in other municipalities across the region.

- ❑ Of the 1,015 homeless that reported multiple health conditions, nearly half (45%) reported both mental health and addiction problems.
- ❑ Mental health issues were also associated with physical disabilities with approximately 25% of people who were homeless reporting both of these conditions.
- ❑ About 19% reported mental illness, addiction and physical disability.

**Table 5:5 Incidence of Mental Health, Addictions and Physical Disability among those Reporting Multiple Health Conditions**

Municipality Found	Mental Health & Addictions		Mental Health & Physical Disability		Mental Health, Addictions & Physical Disability		Total reporting multiple health conditions	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	% of regional total
Burnaby	18	41%	9	20%	8	18%	44	4%
Coquitlam	2	15%	3	23%	1	8%	13	1%
Delta/White Rock	6	60%	5	50%	3	30%	10	1%
Langley (City and Township)	12	44%	5	19%	2	7%	27	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	19	44%	13	30%	12	28%	43	4%
New Westminster	24	42%	12	21%	10	18%	57	6%
North Vancouver City/District	28	44%	17	27%	13	21%	63	6%
Port Coquitlam	11	42%	8	31%	7	27%	26	3%
Port Moody	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1	0%
Richmond	10	45%	4	18%	3	14%	22	2%
Surrey	74	48%	44	29%	34	22%	153	15%
Vancouver	251	45%	131	24%	100	18%	556	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>1015</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 5.3 Health Services Usage

Several research papers report that people who are homeless use government services including health care services more frequently and at a higher cost to the public purse than average. A 2001 study by the government of BC suggested that it costs the BC government 33% more to provide health care, criminal justice and social services to a homeless person than to an unemployed individual in social housing. A recent study in Kenora, Ontario suggested that homelessness is responsible for a 422% increase in hospital admissions. In light of these experiences, and to inform local planning and decision making, it is important to understand what services are being used most frequently by people who were homeless in the region. The 2008 count interviewers asked respondents a new question about which health services they had used in the preceding 12 months. Table 5.6 below summarizes the responses across the region.

- ❑ The use of health clinics, emergency health services (including ambulance) and hospitals were reported more frequently than any other health services.
- ❑ Over half of those who responded to the question (53%) said that they had used a health clinic, approximately 44% said they had accessed emergency care services, while about 32% reported a hospital visit.

- ❑ Despite the high incidence of mental health and addiction among the street/service homeless population, accessing mental health and addiction services was not reported as frequently as other health care services.

**Table 5:6 Health Services Usage**

<b>Municipality Found</b>	<b>Health Clinic</b>	<b>Emergency Department</b>	<b>Hospital (non-emergency)</b>	<b>Ambulance</b>	<b>Addiction Services</b>	<b>Dental Services</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Burnaby	28	27	22	22	17	14	10	24	4	77
Coquitlam	19	9	10	4	10	10	2	5	9	36
Delta/White Rock	6	7	5	5	4	6	7	5		16
Langley (City and Township)	30	25	16	9	11	8	7	20	5	72
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	47	44	31	30	33	24	17	9		80
New Westminster	48	41	25	25	22	12	13	26	9	101
North Vancouver City/District	60	59	42	24	35	16	21	16	6	104
Port Coquitlam	25	28	19	18	11	8	3	4	9	50
Port Moody	1		1		1	1				2
Richmond	19	23	12	7	7	2	11	5	7	40
Surrey	200	161	124	113	99	62	56	68	25	374
Vancouver	659	512	392	325	305	225	172	217	120	1196
West Vancouver								3		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>194</b>	
<b>Percent of total responses</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>9%</b>	

## 6 LENGTH OF TIME HOMELESS

The length of time a person is homeless is recognized as a function of shelter limits on stay and availability of subsidised housing.<sup>6</sup> It is accepted as a predictor of future homelessness as well as having implications for service delivery. For these and other reasons, the count interviewers asked people who were homeless how long they had been homeless. Overall, and in nearly every community, almost half of the population (48%) was homeless for one year or more. Medium term homelessness was also significant, as more than one out of every three had been homeless for between 1 month and one year. Table 6.1 below shows a summary of the regional responses:

- ❑ With the exception of Coquitlam, Delta/White Rock and Richmond, those homeless for at least one year make up the largest portion of people who were homeless in each community.

<sup>6</sup> “Getting off the streets: Economic resources and residential exists from homelessness”, Journal of Community Psychology, Vol. 27, Issue 2, pp. 209 to 224.

- ❑ In Coquitlam, Delta/White Rock and Richmond, the largest portion of the homeless population had been homeless for 6 months to 1 year.
- ❑ West Vancouver had the highest incidence of short-term homelessness (less than 1 month). Most of people who were homeless were youth.

**Table 6:1 Length of Time Homeless**

Municipality Found	Short-term				Medium-term				Long-term		Total
	Less than 1 wk		1 wk to <1month		1month to <6month		6month to <1 year		1yr or longer		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Burnaby	2	3%	5	7%	15	20%	11	15%	42	56%	75
Coquitlam	4	11%	4	11%	15	43%	1	3%	11	31%	35
Delta/White Rock	1	7%	3	20%	6	40%	1	7%	4	27%	15
Langley (City and Township)	5	8%	3	5%	14	23%	6	10%	34	55%	62
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	3	4%	4	5%	20	24%	15	18%	41	49%	83
New Westminster	9	10%	7	7%	19	20%	11	12%	48	51%	94
City/District of North Vancouver	5	5%	15	14%	31	29%	13	12%	42	40%	106
Port Coquitlam	0	0%	3	6%	8	16%	10	20%	29	58%	50
Port Moody	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2
Richmond	0	0%	9	23%	14	35%	6	15%	11	28%	40
Surrey	15	4%	28	8%	94	27%	43	12%	167	48%	347
Vancouver	61	5%	84	7%	319	27%	152	13%	585	49%	1,201
West Vancouver	0	0%	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>2,114</b>

## 7 SELECTED SUBPOPULATIONS

Examination of homeless subpopulations provides a perspective on these subgroups that may not have been captured in the overall analysis. As well, such examinations can highlight previously unnoticed characteristics and trends in these subpopulations. For these reasons, this section of the report takes a closer look at six subpopulations within the general homeless population: adults (25 and older), children and youth (under 25), women, people who identify as Aboriginal, seniors (55 and older), and people who were homeless for a year or more (long-term homeless).

### 7.1 Adult Homeless (25 and older)

Table 7.1 shows the distribution of the adult homeless population in the region and the breakdown between sheltered and street service homeless by community. The distribution of the adult homeless population mirrored the distribution of the general homeless population,

with 57% of the adult homeless population being in Vancouver and 16% in Surrey, and no more than 6% located in other communities in the region. Similar to the general homeless population, the majority (64%) of adult homeless people were street/service homeless compared to 36% who were in shelters. This ratio varies significantly across the region, which is likely due to the distribution of shelter facilities and services in the region.

- ❑ Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadow and Coquitlam were the only communities where the majority of homeless adults were in shelter.
- ❑ In Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and West Vancouver all of the homeless adults were street/service homeless. This is likely a reflection of the absence shelter spaces and services in those communities.

**Table 7:1 Distribution of Adult Homeless Population (25 years and older)**

Municipality Found	Sheltered		Street/Service		Total	% of Regional Total
	#	%	#	%	#	
Burnaby	5	7%	70	93%	75	4%
Coquitlam	15	79%	4	21%	19	1%
Delta/White Rock	5	38%	8	62%	13	1%
Langley (City and Township)	3	5%	60	95%	63	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	43	55%	35	45%	78	4%
New Westminster	47	41%	69	59%	116	6%
City/District of North Vancouver	45	45%	54	55%	99	5%
Port Coquitlam	0	0%	48	100%	48	2%
Port Moody	0	0%	2	100%	2	0%
Richmond	14	34%	27	66%	41	2%
Surrey	72	22%	250	78%	322	16%
Vancouver	487	42%	671	58%	1,158	57%
West Vancouver	0	0%	1	100%	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>1,299</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>2,035</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 7.2 Homeless Children and Youth

Homeless youth are difficult to find, and particularly vulnerable. The count enumerated 268 unaccompanied youth (under age 25). Unaccompanied youth and children are individuals under the age of 25 who were not accompanied by an adult and who were found either as part of the sheltered or street/service homeless populations. A total of 94 children who were in the company of a parent or family member on the day of the count were identified but not enumerated. These children were found in both the sheltered and street/service homeless populations. Both unaccompanied and accompanied children and youth will be discussed in this section.

## 7.2.1 Unaccompanied Children and Youth (under 25)

Table 7.2 below shows the distribution of the 268 unaccompanied youth and children who were found in the region.

- ❑ Like the adult homeless population, the youth homeless were concentrated in Vancouver (57%) and Surrey (20%).
- ❑ Coquitlam (6%) had the third largest number of homeless youth in the region
- ❑ While youth make up 11% of the homeless population in the region, youth made up a higher proportion of people who were homeless in several communities such as the Tri-Cities (20%), Delta/White Rock (18%) and Vancouver (11%)
- ❑ Also like the adult homeless population, unaccompanied youth were mainly found in the street/service population, except in Vancouver, where there were more sheltered than street/service youth.
- ❑ In West Vancouver all of the youth were street/service homeless.

**Table 7:2 Distribution of Unaccompanied Children and Youth (under 25)**

Municipality Found	Number	Percent	Youth as a Percent of homeless population
Burnaby	5	2%	6%
Delta/White Rock	3	1%	18%
Langley (City and Township)	9	3%	12%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	7	3%	8%
New Westminster	4	1%	3%
North Vancouver City/District	9	3%	8%
Richmond	2	1%	4%
Surrey	53	20%	14%
Tri-Cities	18	7%	20%
Vancouver	154	57%	11%
West Vancouver	4	1%	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>11%</b>

## 7.2.2 Unaccompanied Children age 14 to 18

Included in the 268 unaccompanied homeless youth discussed above were 59 children aged 14 to 18. Table 7.3, below, shows the regional distribution of these children.

- ❑ Nearly 80% of the children were found in cities of Vancouver, Surrey and Coquitlam.
- ❑ In West Vancouver, four of the five people who were homeless found were children under 19.
- ❑ There were no homeless children in either Port Coquitlam or Port Moody.

**Table 7:3 Distribution of Homeless Children Aged 14 to 18**

Municipality Found	Age					Total
	14	15	16	17	18	
Burnaby	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coquitlam	1	2	3	5	3	14
Langley (City and Township)	0	0	1	0	1	2
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	0	0	2	1	0	3
New Westminster	0	0	0	0	1	1
North Vancouver (City/District)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Port Coquitlam	0	0	0	0	0	0
Port Moody	0	0	0	0	0	0
Richmond	0	0	0	0	1	1
Surrey	0	1	5	3	5	14
Vancouver	0	2	6	5	6	19
West Vancouver	1	2	1	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>59</b>

## 7.2.3 Accompanied Children under 18

The presence of homeless families with children is a persistent and troubling situation because shelters and homeless services are not generally equipped to handle families with children. The count found 94 children in the company of at least one parent or family member on the day of the count. While these children were not enumerated, there is some limited information that can be drawn from the count data.

- ❑ About 80% percent of the accompanied children were found in shelters, while the remaining 20% were found with the street/service homeless population.
- ❑ About 40% of the children were aged one to five years.
- ❑ About 40% were aged six to twelve years.
- ❑ The remaining 20% of children were either infants or teenagers.

### 7.3 Women

As with the general homeless population, the majority (76%) of homeless women were found in Vancouver and Surrey, with about 5% in New Westminister, and the rest spread across the other communities (see Table 7.4.

- ❑ Homeless women were not found in either Port Moody or West Vancouver.
- ❑ More homeless women were found on the street than in shelters in all communities, except Vancouver and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows.

**Table 7:4 Distribution of Homeless Women**

Municipality Found	Homeless Women		Enumerated homeless
	#	%	%
Burnaby	17	3%	3%
Coquitlam	17	3%	2%
Delta/White Rock	2	0%	1%
Langley (City and Township)	15	2%	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	24	4%	4%
New Westminister	31	5%	5%
North Vancouver (City/District)	16	3%	5%
Port Coquitlam	9	2%	2%
Port Moody	0	0%	0%
Richmond	12	2%	2%
Surrey	126	20%	16%
Vancouver	348	56%	57%
West Vancouver	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 7.4 Aboriginal Identity

Table 7.5 shows the distribution of Aboriginal people who were homeless in the region. Of the 687 homeless Aboriginal people identified:

- ❑ Two out of every three (66%) were found in Vancouver, while one out of every six (16%) was found in Surrey.
- ❑ In every community except Richmond, there were more Aboriginals on the street than in shelters.

**Table 7:5 Distribution of Aboriginal Homeless**

Municipality Found	Aboriginal Identity		Enumerated Homeless
	#	%	%
Burnaby	21	3%	3%
Coquitlam	6	1%	2%
Delta/White Rock	1	0%	1%
Langley (City and Township)	18	3%	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	15	2%	4%
New Westminster	26	4%	5%
North Vancouver City/District	27	4%	5%
Port Coquitlam	4	0%	2%
Port Moody	0	0%	0%
Richmond	5	0%	2%
Surrey	108	16%	16%
Vancouver	456	66%	57%
West Vancouver	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 7.5 Seniors

Over 200 homeless people who were 55 years and older were found throughout the region, which accounts for about 9% of the enumerated homeless population. As Table 7.6 shows, the distribution of older homeless people mirrors that of the general homeless population. Over seven out of ten people in this age group (71%) were found in Vancouver and Surrey, while Delta/White Rock, Port Moody, and West Vancouver had none. New Westminster had a higher proportion of seniors than expected (8%) based on the proportion of the general homeless population (5%).

**Table 7:6 Distribution of Homeless Seniors**

Municipality Found	Seniors (55 and older)		Enumerated Homeless
	#	%	%
Burnaby	6	3%	3%
Coquitlam	4	2%	2%
Delta/White Rock	0	0%	1%
Langley (City and Township)	6	3%	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	9	4%	4%
New Westminster	16	8%	5%
North Vancouver City/District	13	6%	5%
Port Coquitlam	2	1%	2%
Port Moody	0	0%	0%
Richmond	7	3%	2%
Surrey	35	17%	16%
Vancouver	114	54%	57%
West Vancouver	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 7.6 Long-term Homeless

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of people experiencing homelessness for at least one year was their number. Nearly half (1,016 people or 48%) of all the people who were enumerated in the 2008 Count had been without a home for at least one year (see Table 7.7). More than three quarters (78%) of the long term homeless population were street/service homeless (Table 7.8), compared to 59% of the enumerated homeless population. Long-term homelessness was seen across the region:

- ❑ Nearly three quarters (74%) of people experiencing homelessness for at least a year were found in Vancouver and Surrey, with no more than 5% in any of the other communities in the region.
- ❑ No one found in West Vancouver had been homeless for a year.
- ❑ The vast majority (78%) were street/service homeless.
- ❑ In Burnaby, Langley, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody all of the people who were experiencing long term homelessness were found in the street/service homeless population.
- ❑ Coquitlam was the only community where more people experiencing long-term homelessness were found in shelters than with the street/service population.

**Table 7:7 Distribution of Long-term Homeless**

Municipality Found	Long term homeless		Enumerated Homeless
	#	%	%
Burnaby	42	4%	3%
Coquitlam	11	1%	2%
Delta/White Rock	4	0%	1%
Langley (City and Township)	34	3%	3%
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	41	4%	4%
New Westminster	48	5%	5%
North Vancouver City/District	42	4%	5%
Port Coquitlam	29	3%	2%
Port Moody	2	0%	0%
Richmond	11	1%	2%
Surrey	167	16%	16%
Vancouver	585	58%	57%
West Vancouver	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7:8 Number of Long-term Homeless in Shelter and Street/Service populations**

Municipality Found	Sheltered		Street/service		Total #
	#	%	#	%	
Burnaby	0	0%	42	100%	42
Coquitlam	9	82%	2	18%	11
Delta/White Rock	1	25%	3	75%	4
Langley (City and Township)	0	0%	34	100%	34
Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	19	46%	22	54%	41
New Westminster	5	10%	43	90%	48
North Vancouver (City/District)	10	24%	32	76%	42
Port Coquitlam	0	0%	29	100%	29
Port Moody	0	0%	2	100%	2
Richmond	2	18%	9	82%	11
Surrey	20	12%	147	88%	167
Vancouver	152	26%	433	74%	585
West Vancouver	0	NA	0	NA	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>1,016</b>

## **8 KEY MUNICIPAL STATISTICS AND FINDINGS**

### **8.1 Burnaby**

#### *Overview*

- 86 homeless counted and 84 enumerated
- 86 represented an increase of 105% over the 2005 count
- Of the 84 enumerated, 7 were sheltered while 77 were street/service homeless

#### *Demographic profile*

- 3 accompanied children under age 19
  - 5 unaccompanied youth aged 19 to 24
  - 69 aged 25 to 54
  - 6 aged 55 and over
- Gender
- 17 women
  - 63 male
  - No transgender

#### *Health conditions*

- 9 reported no health problems
- 25 reported a single condition
- 44 reported two or more conditions

#### *Top community findings*

- 92% street/service homeless
- 6% homeless youth under 25 years (lower than 12% regional average)
- 29% accompanied by family (partner or child), higher than the regional average
- 44% called the City home, which is below the regional average of 50%
- All long-term homeless (one year or more) lived on the street

## **8.2 Delta /White Rock**

### ***Overview***

- 17 homeless counted and enumerated
- 17 represented a 42% increase over the 2005 count
- Of the 17 enumerated, 6 were sheltered while 11 were street/service homeless

### ***Demographic profile***

#### *Age*

- 0 accompanied children under 19 years reported
- 3 unaccompanied youth age 19 to 24
- 13 aged 25 to 54
- 0 aged 55 and over

#### *Gender*

- 2 women
- 14 male
- No transgender

### ***Health conditions***

- 2 reported no health problems
- 5 reported a single condition
- 10 reported two or more conditions

### ***Top community findings***

- No homeless children
- No homeless seniors

### **8.3 Langley (City and Township)**

#### ***Overview***

- 86 homeless counted and 77 enumerated
- 86 represented a 51% increase over the 2005 count
- 3 of 77 sheltered
- 74 of 77 street/service homeless

#### ***Demographic profile***

##### Age

- 2 accompanied children under 19 years
- 2 unaccompanied children under 19 years
- 7 unaccompanied youth aged 19-24
- 57 aged 25 to 54
- 6 aged 55 and over

##### Gender

- 15 women
- 57 male
- 1 transgender

#### ***Health conditions***

- 14 reported no health problems
- 32 reported a single condition
- 27 reported more than one condition

#### ***Top community findings***

- 96% street/service homeless
- 62% called Langley (City and Township) home — one of the highest ratios in the region
- 29% accompanied by family (partner or child)
- All 27 reporting concurrent health issues lived on the street
- All 34 long-term homeless lived on the street
- One of only five communities with a transgender homeless population

## 8.4 Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows

### *Overview*

- 90 homeless counted and 85 enumerated
- 90 represented a 105% increase over the 2005 count
- 45 of 85 sheltered
- 40 of 85 street/service homeless

### *Demographic profile*

#### Age

- 5 accompanied children under 19 years
- 3 unaccompanied children under 19 years of age
- 4 unaccompanied youth aged 19 to 24
- 69 aged 25 to 54
- 9 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- 24 were women
- 61 were male
- No transgender

### *Health conditions*

- 19 reported no health problems
- 22 reported a single condition
- 43 reported more than one condition

### *Top community findings*

- 72% called community home — one of the highest ratios in the region
- Roughly the same number of homeless in shelters and on the street.
- More women sheltered than on the street
- 23% reported being in the company of a child or partner

## **8.5 New Westminster**

### ***Overview***

- 124 homeless counted and 123 enumerated
- 124 represented a 27% increase over the 2005 count
- 51 of 123 sheltered
- 72 of 123 street/service homeless

### ***Demographic profile***

#### Age

- 6 accompanied children under 19 years
- 1 unaccompanied child under 19 years
- 3 unaccompanied youth aged 19 to 24
- 100 aged 25 to 54
- 16 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- 31 women
- 88 male
- 1 transgender

### ***Health conditions***

- 17 reported no health problems
- 27 reported a single condition
- 57 reported more than one condition

### ***Top community findings***

- One of five communities in the region with transgender population
- 5% of region's homeless women
- 4% of region's Aboriginal homeless
- Relatively low levels of social isolation with 21% reporting being in the company of a child or partner

## **8.6 North Vancouver (City and District)**

### ***Overview***

- 123 homeless counted and 115 enumerated
- 123 represented a 41% increase over the 2005 count
- 53 of 115 sheltered
- 62 of 115 street/service homeless

### ***Demographic profile***

#### Age

- 0 accompanied children under 19 years
- 1 unaccompanied child under 19 years of age
- 8 unaccompanied youth aged 19 to 24
- 86 aged 25 to 54
- 13 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- 16 women
- 97 male
- 0 transgender

### ***Health conditions***

- 18 reported no health problems
- 29 reported a single condition
- 63 reported more than one condition

### ***Top community findings***

- 56% called City and District home
- 4% of region's Aboriginal homeless
- No accompanied children

## **8.7 Richmond**

### ***Overview***

- 56 homeless counted and 50 enumerated.
- 56 represented a 60% increase over the 2005 count
- 15 of 50 sheltered
- 35 of 50 street/service homeless

### ***Demographic profile***

#### Age

- 6 accompanied children under 19 years
- 1 unaccompanied under 19 years of age
- 1 unaccompanied youth aged 19 to 24
- 34 aged 25 to 54
- 7 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- 12 women
- 32 male
- 0 transgender

### ***Health conditions***

- 11 reported no health problems
- 8 reported a single condition
- 22 reported more than one condition

### ***Top community findings***

- 54% called City home
- 16% seniors compared to 9% regional average
- Small Aboriginal population, but more sheltered than on the street
- One of only five communities with a transgender homeless population

## 8.8 Surrey

### *Overview*

- 402 homeless counted and 388 enumerated
- 402 represented a 3% increase over the 2005 count
- 87 of 388 sheltered
- 301 of 388 street/service homeless

### *Demographic profile*

#### Age

- 9 accompanied children under 19 years
- 14 unaccompanied child under 19 years
- 39 unaccompanied youth aged 19 to 24
- 287 aged 25 to 54
- 35 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- 126 women
- 252 male
- 3 transgender

### *Health conditions*

- 136 reported no health problems
- 90 reported a single condition
- 153 reported more than one condition

### *Top community findings*

- Surrey had a relatively higher proportion of region's homeless females (20%) than homeless males (15%); 2:1 male to female split, lower than overall 3:1 average for the region
- 53 unaccompanied homeless youth, representing 20% of region's total
- 16% of region's homeless Aboriginals (108)
- 16% of region's homeless seniors (114) compared to 9% regional average
- 16% or 167 of region's long-term homeless (one year or more with own place)
- One of only five communities with a transgender homeless population

## **8.9 Tri-Cities**

### ***Overview***

- 94 homeless counted and 71 enumerated
- 94 represented an increase of 135% over the 2005 count
- Of the 91 enumerated, 16 were sheltered while 75 were street/service homeless

### ***Demographic profile***

#### Age

- 2 accompanied children under 19 years.
- 14 unaccompanied children under 19 years of age
- 4 aged 19 to 24,
- 63 aged 25 to 54
- 6 aged 55 and over
- 4 unknown

#### Gender

- 26 women
- 62 male
- 2 transgender
- 1 unknown

### ***Health conditions***

- 16 reported no health problems
- 33 reported a single condition
- 40 reported more than one condition

### ***Top community findings***

- 82% street/service homeless
- 65% called Tri-Cities home
- 21% youth homelessness, the highest outside West Vancouver
- 23% of region's unaccompanied homeless youth
- Employment income was second leading source of income for homeless after income assistance
- 80% with more than one health condition street/service homeless
- 79% of long-term homeless (one year or more) street/service homeless
- One of only five communities with a transgender homeless population

## 8.10 Vancouver

### *Overview*

- ❑ 1,576 homeless counted and 1,372 enumerated
- ❑ 1,576 represented a 16% increase over the 2005 count
- ❑ 566 of 1,372 sheltered
- ❑ 806 of 1,372 street/service homeless

### *Demographic profile*

#### Age

- ❑ 34 accompanied children under 19 years reported, 48% of region's total
- ❑ 19 unaccompanied child under 19 years of age
- ❑ 135 aged 19 to 24, including
- ❑ 1,044 aged 25 to 54
- ❑ 114 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- ❑ 348 women
- ❑ 948 male
- ❑ 15 transgender

### *Health conditions*

- ❑ 369 reported no health problems
- ❑ 329 reported a single condition
- ❑ 556 reported more than one condition

### *Top community findings*

- ❑ 59% of region's total homeless and 57% of those enumerated
- ❑ 52% of region's service/street and 67% of sheltered homeless
- ❑ 56% of region's male and female homeless
  - 3 to 1 male/female split
  - More homeless women sheltered than on the street
- ❑ Over 50% of City's homeless call it home
- ❑ 66% of region's Aboriginal homeless
- ❑ 54% of region's homeless seniors
- ❑ 58% of region's long-term homeless
- ❑ 57% of region's unaccompanied youth, including 19 unaccompanied children under 19
  - More unaccompanied youth sheltered than in any other community
- ❑ 48% of region's accompanied children, including 21 under 6
- ❑ 63% of region's transgender population (15 of 24)
- ❑ One of only five communities with a transgender homeless population

## 8.11 West Vancouver

### *Overview*

- 5 homeless counted and enumerated
- 5 represented a 150% increase over the 2005 count
- 0 of 5 sheltered
- 5 of 5 street/service homeless

### *Demographic profile*

#### Age

- 0 accompanied children under 19 years
- 4 unaccompanied children under 19 years
- 1 aged 25 to 54
- 0 aged 55 and over

#### Gender

- 0 women
- 5 male
- 0 transgender

### *Health conditions*

- 4 reported no health problems
- 1 reported a single condition

### *Top community findings*

- All people who were homeless street/service homeless
- All people who were homeless alone
- All people who were homeless called West Vancouver home
- No homeless seniors (aged 55 years and over)
- No homeless females
- 80% were unaccompanied children under 19 years
- 75% reported short-term homelessness (largely due to youth)