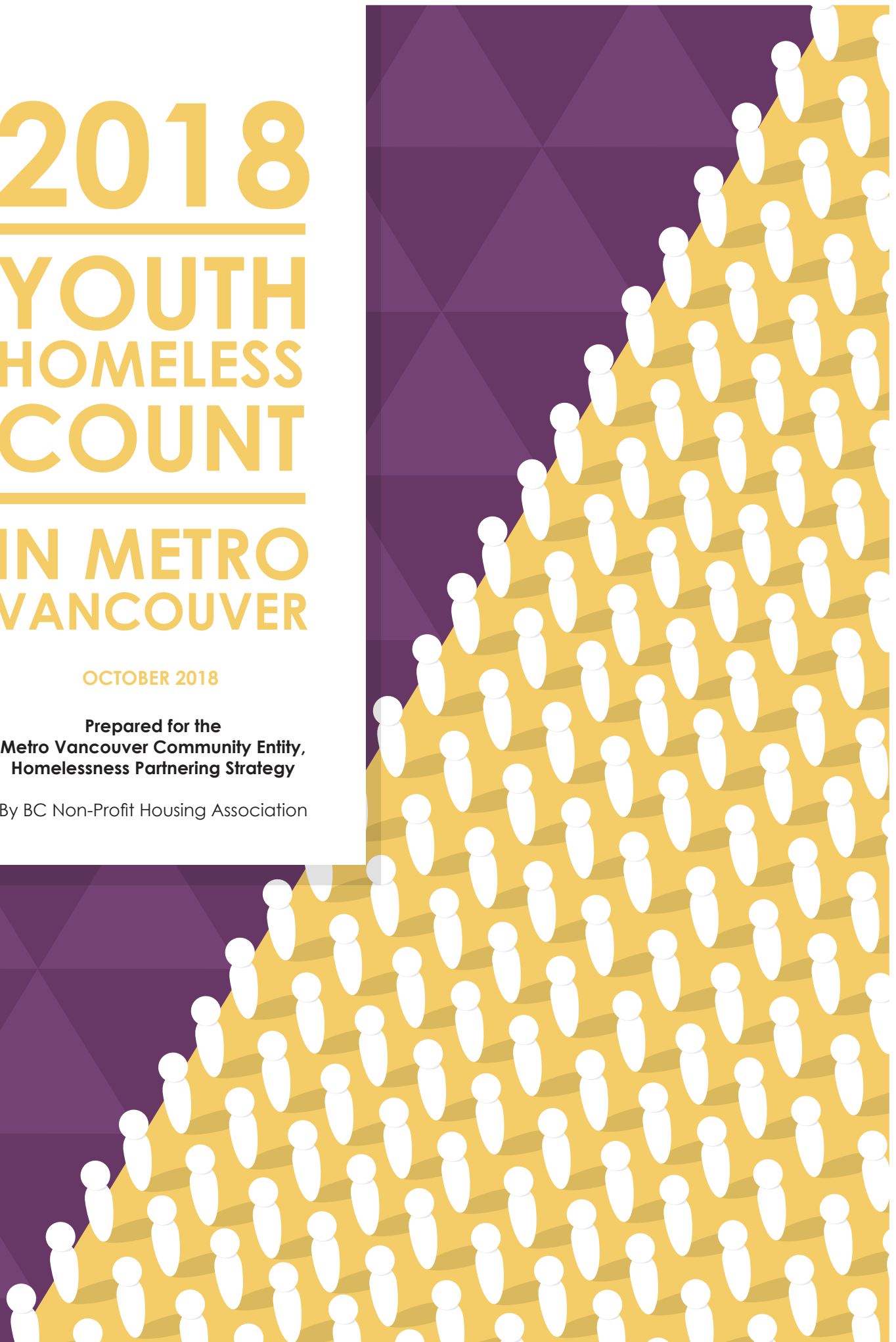# 2018

YOUTH HOMELESS COUNT

IN METRO VANCOUVER

OCTOBER 2018

**Prepared for the
Metro Vancouver Community Entity,
Homelessness Partnering Strategy**

By BC Non-Profit Housing Association

FOREWORD
BY METRO VANCOUVER COMMUNITY ENTITY

The Metro Vancouver Community Entity thanks all who contributed to the 2018 Youth Homeless Count, especially the youth who participated in the survey and the youth with lived experience of homelessness who participated in the planning and design of the project and survey questions. Thank you also to the members of the Project Team who gave their time, experience and expertise to the design and implementation of the project, and to all the staff of the youth-serving organizations and schools across the region that participated – all together your contributions have produced an unprecedented quality and quantity of reliable data.

Thank you to the BCNPHA consultants for the excellent community development and research skills brought to this research project that involved a large and complex regional scope, which aimed to reach a largely hidden population while applying new methodologies – well done!

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The methodology for the 2018 Youth Homeless Count differed from a traditional Point-in-Time (PiT) homeless count approach by carrying out data collection over the course of nine days, rather than 24 hours. This new method was designed to provide more opportunities to make contact with youth experiencing homelessness across the region. The focus of data analysis for the 2018 count was to explore the different circumstances of youth experiencing homelessness who identified as Aboriginal/Indigenous and those who did not, specifically to assist with funding allocation and service provision in the region.

There were two primary methods for data collection used in the 2018 Youth Homeless Count: (1) a paper-based survey and (2) an Excel-based service use spreadsheet. The survey instrument was intended to capture both the number of youth experiencing homelessness in the region and to provide a demographic profile of those youth. The service use spreadsheet was designed to supplement the enumeration process by recording youth who met the definition of youth homelessness, but who may not have wanted to answer a full survey.

When combined, these two methods of data collection produced the total number of youth experiencing homelessness that were engaged with during the count period. In addition to the total number of youth engaged, the survey then provided further details regarding the experiences of a percentage of those youth. **As such, readers will notice two different totals in the data presented below and throughout this report.** Basic information was obtained from a total of 681 youth by combining the survey and service use spreadsheet data. Within that group, 356 youth provided further details about themselves through their answers to the survey. Data presented in this report (unless otherwise specified; see Section 1) came solely from the 356 youth who answered the survey (see Section 2). The figures presented below represent a percentage of the total number of youth who responded to the associated survey question, not necessarily the overall number of youth who answered the survey, since some youth chose not to answer every question.

To explore the number of youth represented by the percentages below, please see the associated data tables in Sections 1 and 2 of this report. For more information on how to read the data collected through the 2018 Youth Homeless Count, see page 18.

Total Number of Youth and Children Experiencing Homelessness
As was determined by the survey and the service use spreadsheet, a total of 681 youth and children were found to be experiencing homelessness across Metro Vancouver between the 4th and 12th of April 2018. Of those, 643 youth aged 13 to 24 were found living independently of their parent(s) or guardian(s) and a further 38 children (under age 25) were found with their parent(s) or guardian(s) while experiencing homelessness.

Sheltered and Unsheltered Youth
On the night of April 4th, 35% of the 681 youth who responded to the survey or who were recorded through the service use spreadsheet were sheltered, indicating they were either staying in a shelter, safe or transition house, or in a detox facility/recovery house. The other 64% indicated that they were unsheltered on the night of April 4th, having stayed either outside in a vehicle, in a make shift shelter or tent, in an abandoned/vacant building, or were staying temporarily indoors (couch-surfing).

Gender Identity
Of the 681 youth who answered the question on gender, 52% identified as male, 44% identified as female, and 4% identified as another gender. An additional 121 youth did not provide an answer to the gender question in the survey or in the service use spreadsheet.

Indigenous Youth
Of the youth who answered the survey question on Indigenous identity, 42% self-identified as Indigenous. Of those Indigenous youth, 65% further identified as First Nations, 22% identified as Métis, and one youth identified as Inuit. Another 12% reported they were Indigenous but did not further identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit.

Sexual Identity
Through the survey question on sexual identity, 26% of youth identified themselves as lesbian, gay, transgender, queer or two-spirit (LGBTQ2S). A higher proportion of LGBTQ2S-identifying youth identified as female (48%), compared to the number of youth who identified as male (40%) or as another gender (22%).

Age When Homeless for the First Time
Just under two-thirds of survey respondents (64%) were between the ages of 13 and 18 when they experienced homelessness for the first time; another 7% reported being under 13 when they became

homeless for the first time.

More than one quarter (26%) of youth reported experiencing homelessness either at age 15 or 16 for the first time, representing the two ages youth most commonly reported as the first time they became homeless. Indigenous youth reported first becoming homeless at a younger age than non-Indigenous youth, with 75% of Indigenous youth becoming homeless for the first time under age 19, compared to 67% of non-Indigenous youth.

Family conflict was the most frequently reported reason for youth becoming homeless for the first time, with 52% indicating as such. Drugs and substance use/addiction was the second most common reason at 40%. A further 33% of youth survey respondents reported mental health challenges as one main reason for becoming homeless for the first time.

Main Barriers to Accessing Housing
More than half of youth who responded to the question on what was keeping them from finding a place of their own reported that rent was too high (58%), and/or that their income was too low or they had no income (55%).

Health, Mental Health and Addiction
51% of youth survey respondents reported having two or more health conditions while 17% indicated they had no health conditions. A high number, 72%, reported having a mental illness. Similarly, reports of addiction were also high with 53% reporting they were managing some form of addiction.

Sources of Income
"No income" was the most commonly selected answer on the question of income sources, with 28% of survey respondents selecting that answer. Welfare/income assistance was the second most common answer from survey respondents at 26%. One-fifth (20%) of youth reported that they received money from family/friends as a source of income. And at slightly more than one quarter, 27%, indicated that they held either a part-time or full-time job while experiencing homelessness from April 4th to 12th 2018.

School Attendance
More than one quarter of survey respondents (27%) indicated they were currently attending school, training or another educational program at the time of the count. Another 5% indicated that while they were enrolled in some type of educational program, they were not currently attending. The majority of youth attending school were aged 13 to 18 (86%). A higher proportion of Indigenous youth (30%) were attending school, training or another educational program, compared to their non-Indigenous peers (23%).

Foster Care, Group Homes, Independent Living
Half of respondents (50%) indicated they were currently or had been previously in foster care, a group home or under an independent living arrangement, and 11% of survey respondents indicated that aging out of care was one of the main reasons they experienced homelessness for the first time.

Please note: the 2018 Youth Count was the first of its kind, and therefore no directly comparable homeless count data exists for the information presented in this report. As the project included a new methodology for enumerating youth homelessness, it cannot be directly compared to past homeless count initiatives in the region. Instead, the data included should be treated as the baseline for youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver. The narrative that accompanies the data tables in the executive summary, and Sections 1 and 2, is purely descriptive in nature and does not presume to infer conclusions that are beyond of the scope of the data that was collected.
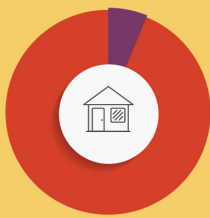
2018 YOUTH
HOMELESS COUNT

METRO VANCOUVER

The 2018 Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver was an extended homeless count that took place over 9 days from April 4th to April 12th 2018.
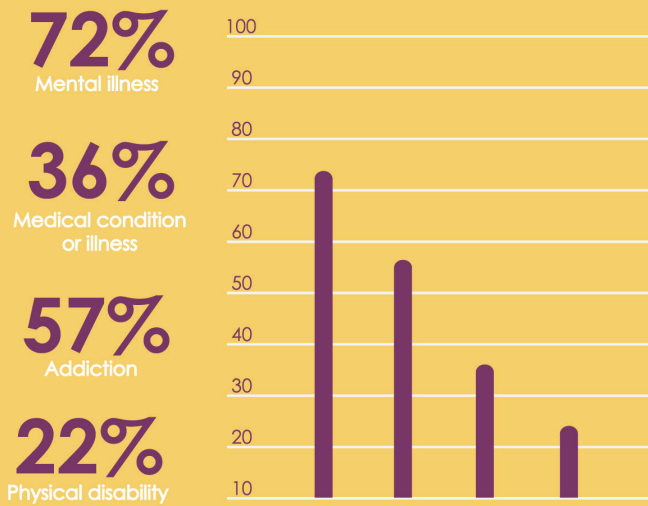
The purpose of the Youth Homeless Count was to employ a youth-specific methodology to determine

(a) the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver and

(b) to create a demographic profile of those youth.

THE
COUNT

681
Total youth experiencing homelessness

94%
643 Unaccompanied Youth without parents

6%
38 Accompanied Children with parents

GENDER IDENTITY

44% Female

52% Male

4% Other Gender Identity

WHERE YOUTH STAYED

37%	Someone else's place (couch-surfing)
33%	Shelter/Safe House/Transition House
26%	Outside (incl. in vehicles (car, van, RV, truck), makeshift shelter or tent, abandoned/vacant building)
2%	Detox/Recovery House
1%	Other

AGE GROUP

57% 19-24 Years

37% 13-18 Years

6% Under 13

ABORIGINAL INDIGENOUS **42%**

NON-ABORIGINAL INDIGENOUS **58%**

NOT LGBTQ2S **74%**

LGBTQ2S **26%**

Health Conditions (more than one response possible)

72%
Mental illness

36%
Medical condition or illness

57%
Addiction

22%
Physical disability

51% of youth reported 2 or more health conditions

TOP 3 BARRIERS TO HOUSING

58% Rent too high

55% Income too low or no income

33% Mental health challenges

28% OF YOUTH REPORTED NO SOURCES OF INCOME:

TOP 3 SOURCES OF INCOME
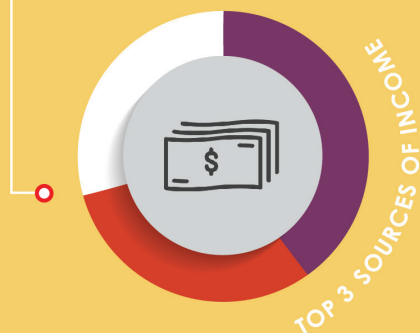
26%
Welfare/ income assistance

20%
Money from family/friends

19%
Part-time or casual employment

more than one response possible

REASONS FOR FIRST TIME HOMELESSNESS:

52% Family conflict

41% Drugs and substance use/ addiction

33% Mental health conditions

AGE 16
16 was the most common age youth first became homeless

59% of youth aged 13 to 18 were homeless and attending school

59%

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LIST OF TABLES

GLOSSARY
OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Aboriginal / Indigenous	Refers to persons who identified with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered (under the Indian Act of Canada), or Treaty Indians and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.[1] The total number of Indigenous People is a count of those who participated in the survey and self-identified as Indigenous/Aboriginal.

Throughout this report "Indigenous" and "Indigenous Peoples" is used in keeping with the federal government terminology. |
Accompanied Children	For the purposes of the count, the term "accompanied children" refers to those under the age of 19 who were found experiencing homelessness with their parent(s) or guardian(s) during the count. No survey record of these youth exists, as they were not interviewed.
Don't Know/No Answer	Many tables contain a line for "Don't Know/No Answer." The number in this line summarizes the number of individuals for whom we did not obtain an answer to the question, either because they did not know what response to give or did not provide a response to the survey question.
Hidden Homelessness	According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, "hidden homelessness" refers to the circumstance of "people who stay with friends, family, or even strangers. They are typically not paying rent, their duration of stay is unsustainable in the long term, and they do not have the means to secure their own permanent housing in the future."[2]
Individual	Refers to persons included in the count's total number, including those who participated in the survey and those whose information was provided through a service use data form. (see Respondent)
LGBTQ2S	Refers to youth who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit or questioning.

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[1] Statistics Canada. No date. "Aboriginal identity of person." Definitions, data sources and methods, variables. Last updated August 15 2018. http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DECI&Id=246617 (accessed September 20, 2018).

[2] Gaetz, S., Barr, C., Friesen, A., Harris, B., Hill, C., Kovacs-Burns, K., Pauly, B., Pearce, B., Turner, A., Marsolais, A. (2012). Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. For more information on hidden homelessness and other forms of homelessness, see: http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf

TERM	DEFINITION
No Fixed Address (NFA)	Refers to a youth that does not have a permanent place to live and was staying in a facility at the time of the count (e.g. a detox centre) with no registered address to return to upon discharge.
Refugee Claimant	Refers to a youth who has fled their country and is seeking refugee status in Canada. A refugee remains a claimant until their case has been ruled on by the Government of Canada. The survey did not distinguish between refugee claimants who were homeless and Government Assisted Refugees who became homeless after government resources expired.
Respondent	Refers to a person who participated in the survey and answered questions in the survey. (see Individual)
Unaccompanied Youth	Refers to young people aged 13 to 24 who were not accompanied by a parent(s) or guardian(s) during the Count and were found to be experiencing homelessness as per the 2018 Youth Count definition of youth homelessness.

INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver took place over nine days from April 4th to April 12th 2018. The purpose of the Youth Count was to employ a youth-specific methodology to determine:

(a) the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver; and

(b) to create a demographic profile of those youth.

Since 2002, the Government of Canada has funded triennial homeless counts in the Metro Vancouver region. In 2016, a biannual national Point–in-Time (PiT) homeless count initiative was announced by the federal government. With the introduction of this new nation-wide homeless count, 2018 was the first year that the regional count in Metro Vancouver was conducted in alignment with other communities across Canada. Since the 2017 triennial count had already commenced prior to the announcement of the nation-wide count, the Council of Community Homelessness Tables (CHTs) of Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley advocated for adequate recovery time between the 2017 and 2020 triennial region-wide counts. Specifically, the council recommended conducting a smaller-scale count, focused on one particular subpopulation, to take place in lieu of another full-scale regional count just one year after the 2017 count.

The council carefully considered which populations would be more effectively captured through a tailored methodology and recommended the 2018 count pilot a youth-focused methodology, which would use minimal volunteer engagement and target youth-serving agencies. In response, the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Advisory Board directed the Metro Vancouver Community Entity to conduct a regional youth homeless count as its participation in the national count initiative. Although the data from the 2018 Youth Homeless Count would not be expected to merge with the longitudinal triennial count data for Metro Vancouver, its design and implementation aimed to give a better understanding of the causes and conditions of youth homelessness and to offer a more accurate number of youth who were without a home.

Given BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) led the implementation of the 2017 Homeless Count on behalf of the Metro Vancouver Community Entity, and in order to build on the knowledge and partnerships created through that count, BCNPHA was re-engaged to conduct the 2018 Youth Homeless Count. Design, methodology and implementation lessons learned from the triennial all-ages count, as well as strategies utilized by youth-focused counts conducted elsewhere, were used to create a unique youth-specific methodology, including a tailored survey. For more information on the methodology, see page 38.

Through discussions with local stakeholders, it became apparent that the number of youth counted through past homeless counts was particularly low relative to the number of youth that were actually being served in the region. Accordingly, the main challenge in designing the new youth count was to identify an approach that would help to overcome the undercount inherent in the 24-hour Point-in-Time (PiT) methodology and specifically address the hidden conditions of youth experiencing homelessness. Traditional PiT homeless counts, including Metro Vancouver's triennial counts, occur over a 24-hour period, with volunteers surveying as many people experiencing homelessness as can be found within a predetermined service area. Youth experiencing homelessness are often found couch-surfing, not necessarily sleeping on the streets or in shelters, and "those who are provisionally accommodated or disconnected from homeless-serving agencies"[3] are generally less likely to be surveyed/counted through a typical PiT count methodology. As such, it was reasonable to assume that even a tailored 24-hour PiT count would still deliver only the minimum number of youth experiencing homelessness in the region and would struggle to reach youth most disconnected from services.

In response to this concern, an extended count period was adopted for the 2018 Youth Homeless Count. For the first time, in recognition of the difficulties inherent in achieving widespread uptake by youth completing surveys, organizations that serve youth were invited to participate in the count by surveying

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[3] For more information on the Point-in-Time Count methodology see the Canadian Observatory of Homelessness' Point-in-Time Count Toolkit: http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Point-in-Time_Count_Toolkit.pdf

Please note: As the 2018 Youth Count was the first of its kind, no comparative homeless count data exists for the information presented in this report. As the project included a new methodology for enumerating youth homelessness, it cannot be directly compared to past homeless count initiatives in the region. Instead, the data included in this report should be treated as the baseline for youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver.

The narrative that accompanies the data tables in Sections 1 and 2 is purely descriptive in nature and does not presume to infer conclusions that are beyond of the scope of the data that was collected.

youth accessing their services, and by recording the number of youth that accessed their facility during each of the nine days of the count period. Therefore, in addition to counting youth through the number of surveys being collected, youth were also tracked through a separate but related client intake system. Together, these two methods were anticipated to generate data that would give new and deeper insights into youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver and, importantly, produce a more accurate number of youth experiencing homelessness than had been found through traditional PiT count methods.

Context of Youth Homelessness in Metro Vancouver

The 2018 Youth Homeless Count provided an opportunity to explore particular populations of youth that tend to be found in disproportionate numbers in the overall youth homeless population in Metro Vancouver. This includes but is not limited to Indigenous youth, youth in care, and LGBTQ2S youth.

Given their overrepresentation amongst their peers, a brief context of each population is warranted. It should be noted that these groups of youth often overlap, creating complex experiences of marginalization and discrimination. For example, studies have shown that Indigenous youth continue to make up a disproportionate number of children in government care[4] and that LGBTQ2S youth are also more likely to be involved with child protection services than their straight peers.[5]

Indigenous Youth

Indigenous Peoples of all ages continue to make up a disproportionate number of people experiencing homelessness across Canada. According to the Homeless Hub:

> Homelessness amongst Indigenous Peoples can be traced back to historical trauma, oppression, racism and discrimination. Homelessness amongst Indigenous Peoples should be considered as a consequence resulting from Canada's history of colonization and exploitation of Indigenous land and populations. Significant abuse and cultural trauma occurred through the use of residential schools to house and educate Indigenous children… Many of the personal issues (including familial dysfunction, substance use, addictions, health issues, community violence) faced by Indigenous Peoples and that act as contributors to homelessness can be directly linked to various types of historical trauma. Structural issues can include transitions from reserves to urban living, racism, landlord discrimination, low levels of education and unemployment.[6]

The Aboriginal population of Metro Vancouver is also considerably younger than the population at large. In 2016, the national census showed that 28% of those in the Metro Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (Metro Vancouver) were under the age of 25, compared to 38% of those in the same region who were of Indigenous ancestry.[7]

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[4] For more information on Indigenous overrepresentation in government care, see the Aboriginal Children in Care: Report to Canada's Premiers, July 2015: https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Aboriginal%20Children%20in%20Care%20Report%20%28July%202015%29.pdf

[5] Stephen Gaetz, Bill O'Grady, Sean Kidd & Kaitlin Schwan. (2016). Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/WithoutAHome-final.pdf

[6] For more information see, visit the Homeless Hub: http://homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/indigenous-peoples

[7] Data from Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2015.

Youth in Care

The link between youth in government care and homelessness is also well founded. In a 2016 study, it was determined that "homeless youth are 193 times more likely to have been involved with the child welfare system than the general public."[8] Specifically, the Without a Home (2016) study found that 58% of the 1,103 youth with lived experience of homelessness involved in their study "had some kind of involvement with child protection services in the past."[9] The reasons why youth come into government care and how they then transition to homelessness are complex. The link between the two is attributed to a variety of factors, including housing instability that has shown to produce poor outcomes for youth, the transition out of care where youth aged 19 are no longer eligible for government care but have nowhere else to go, and early experiences of homelessness either as individuals or with parents/guardians.[10]

LGBTQ2S Youth

While there have been fewer empirical studies on the topic of LGBTQ2S youth homelessness, researchers have found that LGBTQ2S youth are also overrepresented in the homeless population of Canada.[11] LGBTQ2S youth homelessness is likely caused by multiple intersections of discrimination and marginalization (as is all youth homelessness). Experiences with homophobia, racism and poverty may all be contributing factors. For example, family rejection/conflict is frequently referenced as a cause of LGBQT2S youth homelessness (and youth homelessness more broadly speaking).

However, the pathways into homelessness are complex, rarely linear and are usually influenced by both individual and systemic factors. Some other factors contributing to youth homelessness may include physical, emotional or sexual abuse, intervention from child services, challenges with mental health and misuse of substances. It is important to note that these dynamics may also be more prevalent in certain populations, such as LGBTQ2S youth. As one example, Without a Home found that rates of trauma and abuse were particularly high among all youth in their study,

but where 57% of straight youth reported experiencing some manner of physical, sexual, or other form abuse in their past, the rate was higher at 76% for their LGBTQ2S peers. Similar statistics are available for Indigenous youth and youth in government care.

Challenges with Enumerating Youth Homelessness

Homeless counts attempt to navigate this complexity and enumerate as many individuals as possible, over the course of one day, often in a vast geographic space. Homeless counts are most successful at capturing those who are sleeping rough, staying in shelters, or frequently accessing homelessness services. This often means that older men are most likely to be counted, as they are the population typically found in those spaces. While many youth experiencing homelessness may sleep outdoors and access homelessness services, anecdotally we know that many youth also find temporary shelter with family or friends (referred to as couch-surfing) and that there are a limited number of youth-specific homeless service agencies for youth to visit (relative to the number of agencies tailored to adults). These realities pose a challenge to enumerating youth homelessness through the typical PiT count method.

To account for this, the 2018 Youth Count used an extended count period as well as a unique client code in pursuit of more accurately capturing the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver. The methodology was intended to provide youth with more contact points for being counted. Youth-serving agencies were invited to survey clients and/or record them through a service use spreadsheet. Table 1 provides an overview of the two major methods for data collection that were used in the youth count.

Even with this alternate methodology, the figures presented in this report are likely to be an undercount of the total number of youth who experienced homelessness in the region, given that some youth still may not have accessed services or participated in the survey, even over the extended count period. Additionally, it is important to note that not all

[8] Nichols, N., Schwan, K., Gaetz, S., Redman, M., French, D., Kidd, S., O'Grady, B. (2017). Child Welfare and Youth Homelessness in Canada: A Proposal for Action. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/ChildWelfare-Policy-Brief-final_0.pdf

[9] Stephen Gaetz, Bill O'Grady, Sean Kidd & Kaitlin Schwan. (2016). Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/WithoutAHome-final.pdf

[10] Nichols, N., Schwan, K., Gaetz, S., Redman, M., French, D., Kidd, S., O'Grady, B. (2017). Child Welfare and Youth Homelessness in Canada: A Proposal for Action. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

[11] Abramovich, A., & Shelton, J. (Eds.). (2017). Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Where_Am_I_Going_To_Go.pdf

Table 1. Overview of the Data Collection Methods Used in the 2018 Youth Homeless Count

Survey	Detailed demographic data was collected through a paper survey that was conducted by service providers, school youth workers, and youth peers/experts across Metro Vancouver.
Service Use Spreadsheet	Service providers filled in high-level information about youth accessing their services into encrypted Excel spreadsheets. While both methods collected information on unaccompanied youth, the service use data form also captured information on accompanied children found with their parent(s) or guardian(s) in shelters or transition houses during the count period.[12] No children (under the age of 13) were surveyed for the count.

schools or service organizations in Metro Vancouver participated in the count, potentially resulting in some youth being missed.

As a result, the figures presented in this report must be interpreted as a baseline figure for the number of youth experiencing homelessness in the the region, rather than an absolute figure.

Types of Homelessness

To better understand how youth homelessness was enumerated through the 2018 Youth Count, three forms of homelessness must be considered.

1. Visible Homelessness
"Visible homelessness" is a term often used to refer to the most visually apparent form of homelessness, i.e. the circumstance of individuals who are sleeping rough and most likely to be accessing homeless services. PiT counts are most effective in enumerating this form of homelessness. As the iceberg figure to the right demonstrates, visible homelessness is only one part of the overall extent of homelessness.

2. Hidden Homelessness
A far more difficult form of homelessness to enumerate is sometimes referred to as "hidden homelessness" or "couch-surfing." These individuals "stay with friends, family, or even strangers," "are typically not paying rent, their duration of stay is unsustainable in the long term, and they do not have the means to secure their own permanent housing in the future."[13] Anecdotally, we know that youth often experience this form of

homelessness.
While PiT homeless counts may strategize to capture those experiencing hidden homelessness, this methodology targets spaces where individuals experiencing homelessness are most likely to be found and, as such, this population is less likely to be fully enumerated. The methodology in the 2018 Youth Count was designed to better enumerate those who may be more likely to visit a homelessness-serving agency over an extended period of time, rather than within a 24-hour period. By focusing on youth-serving agencies and not deploying volunteers on street routes, the count intended to better capture youth experiencing hidden homelessness.

3. At Risk of Homelessness
Not addressed through the 2018 Youth Count are those youth who may be at risk of homelessness, meaning their present circumstances are not adequate or considered to be sustainable. This group includes youth living in poverty or on the brink of poverty.

Visible Homelessness

Hidden Homelessness

At Risk

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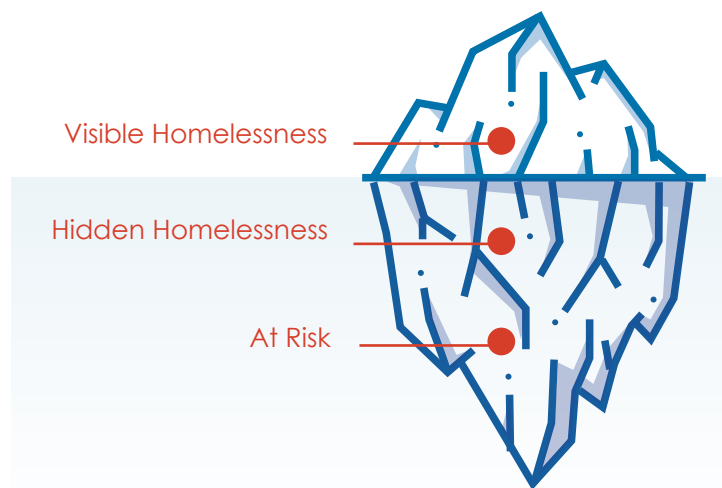
[12] For more information on the differences between these two groups of young people, see the definition of youth homelessness on page 17.

[13] Gaetz, S., Barr, C., Friesen, A., Harris, B., Hill, C., Kovacs-Burns, K., Pauly, B., Pearce, B., Turner, A., Marsolais, A. (2012). Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. For more information on hidden homelessness and other forms of homelessness, see: http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhome-lessdefinition.pdf

"

Youth homelessness is a complex social issue because as a society we have failed to provide young people and their families with the necessary and adequate supports that will enable them to move forward with their lives in a safe and planned way.

In addition to experiencing economic deprivation and a lack of secure housing, many young people who are homeless lack the personal experience of living independently and at the same time may be in the throes of significant developmental (social, physical, emotional and cognitive) changes. As a result, they may not have the resources, resilience, education, social supports or life skills necessary to foster a safe and nurturing transition to adulthood and independence.

Few young people choose to be homeless, nor wish to be defined by their homelessness, and the experience is generally negative and stressful. Youth homelessness is the denial of basic human rights and once identified as such, it must be remedied. All young people have the right to the essentials of life, including adequate housing, food, safety, education and justice.

[14] Stephen Gaetz, Bill O'Grady, Sean Kidd & Kaitlin Schwan. (2016). Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Definition of Youth Homelessness

During the 2018 Youth Homeless Count, information was collected from youth who met the following definition of youth homelessness, drawn from the Canadian Observatory to End Homelessness and the definition of homelessness used in the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver[15]:

"Youth" referred to young people aged 13 to 24 who were living independently of parents and/or legal caregivers during the count period. This included people who stayed overnight on any of the nights between April 4th and April 12th 2018, in accommodation like homeless shelters, transition houses for women fleeing violence, youth safe houses, as well as youth with no fixed address staying temporarily in detox facilities, as well as outside or temporarily indoors with others (couch-surfing).

"Children" referred to youth under the age of 19, and including those less than 13 years of age, who were not living independently of parents and/or legal caregivers during the count period but were experiencing homelessness. While children were not the focus of the 2018 youth count, they were included in the overall count to remain consistent with past homeless counts.

"Youth Homelessness" refers to the situation and experience of young people who:

    a. did not have a stable, safe or consistent residence **of their own**;

    b. had no place where they could expect to **stay for more than 30 days**; and,

    c. **were not paying rent.**

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[15] Canadian Observatory of Homelessness, Canadian Definition of Youth Homelessness: http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Definition_of_Youth_Homelessness.pdf

B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association and M. Thomson Consulting. (2017). 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. Prepared for the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Entity. Burnaby, BC: Metro Vancouver.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This section is intended to assist readers in understanding data collected through the 2018 Youth Homeless Count. Due to the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Metro Vancouver's homeless population, the project team decided it was important to explore any differences in the circumstances of youth who were Indigenous and those who were not. Particularly for organizations that serve Indigenous youth, this data is crucial for advocating for adequate funding and services. Accordingly, most of the data tables included in this report contain at least one cross tabulation to draw out any points of interest.

Please note: the data highlighted in the example table includes actual youth count survey response data. For the full analysis of the tables, see Table 4 in Section 1 and Table 8 in Section 2.

Tables with Cross Tabulation

In *Example Table A*, two pieces of data are presented simultaneously. Survey responses are divided into two categories, by (1) gender identity and (2) Indigenous identity. To understand what is shown in *Example Table A*, see the annotations below.

Example Table A explores the differences in gender identity within the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations of youth experiencing homelessness. Each red number on the table refers to an explanation of the associated rows or columns. See below.

1. These rows detail the number of survey respondents who identified as male, female, or another gender further subcategorized by Indigenous identity when available. For example, according to the data in *Example Table A*, 144 respondents out of 274 youth respondents identified as male (53%). Of those 144 male respondents, 56 also identified as Indigenous, 75 identified as non-Indigenous and 13 did not answer the question on Indigenous identity.

2. This row shows the total number of respondents, i.e. all those who answered the question on gender identity.

3. This row highlights the number of survey respondents who did not provide an answer to the question on gender identity. The majority of questions in the survey contained a "Don't Know/No Answer" check box. It is unknown how many respondents did not know the answer to the question or how many chose not to answer the question, just the combined total of both.

Example Table A. Gender Identity by Indigenous/Aboriginal Identity

Gender Identity	Indigenous Identity							
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total		
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
Male	56	54%	75	51%	13	144	53%
Female	42	40%	65	44%	8	115	42%
Another Gender	6	6%	8	5%	1	15	5%
Total Respondents	**104**	**100%**	**148**	**100%**	**22**	**274**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	2		1		79	82	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

1 (Male, Female, Another Gender rows)
2 (Total Respondents row)
3 (Don't Know/No Answer row)
4 (Total row)
5 6 7

4. This row outlines the total number of all survey respondents, including those who answered the gender identity question and those who did not. This number remains consistent throughout all the data tables, as it captures the total number of "completed"[16] surveys.

5. These columns include the total number of respondents who identified as Indigenous or non-Indigenous, further subcategorized by gender identity when available. In *Example Table A*, two respondents who identified as Indigenous did not provide an answer to the gender identity question.

6. This column shows the number of survey respondents who may have provided their gender identity but did not provide an answer to the Indigenous identity question.

7. This column provides the total number of respondents who identified as each gender and those who did not provide their gender identity. *Example Table A* shows that 82 respondents did not answer the question on gender identity or the question on Indigenous identity.

Tables for Mandatory Questions

As *Example Table B* demonstrates, for some tables, the data presented was collected through a mandatory question, meaning all survey respondents had to provide an answer to the question to be included in the youth count. For example, all survey respondents needed to provide their age so that the consultant could be sure they did in fact meet the project's definition of youth homelessness. This means that the total number of responses included in the table represents all youth included in the youth count. For these tables, the data is not broken out by number of respondents and non-answers (as there were none), only the total is recorded.

Example Table B. Age by Indigenous/Aboriginal Identity

Age Group	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
19-24	66	62%	95	64%	54	215	60%
13-18	40	38%	54	36%	47	141	40%
Total	**106**	**100%**	**149**	**100%**	**101**	**356**	**100%**

[16] Not every respondent provided an answer to each question in the survey. A survey respondent was screened into the data set and counted for the youth count if they met the definition of youth homelessness. This was determined by their answers to the screening questions. The remaining survey questions were not mandatory for participation in the youth count.

1 OVERVIEW
OF YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The first section of this report features data captured through both the service use spreadsheet and the survey components of the 2018 Youth Homeless Count. Section 2 features data derived solely from survey responses.

1.1 Total Number of Youth and Children Experiencing Homelessness Included in the Count

The combined data from the survey and service use spreadsheet shows that a total of 681 unique unaccompanied youth and accompanied children were found experiencing homelessness during the count period. Of these 681 young individuals, 643 were unaccompanied youth (94% of the total) and 38 (6%) were accompanied children.

Table 2. Total Number of Unaccompanied Youth and Accompanied Children [17]

Unaccompanied Youth		Accompanied Children [18]		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%
643	94%	38	6%	**681**	**100%**

1.2 Where Youth Stayed on April 4, 2018

The 2018 Youth Homeless Count asked youth where they stayed on the night of April 4th.[19] Table 3 shows a total of 462 youth answered this question and most responded that they were couch-surfing (174 respondents, or 38%), followed by a large share of youth who stayed in shelters, safe houses, and transition houses (154 respondents, or 33%).

Responses showed that 295 respondents (64%) had stayed in unsheltered locations such as doorways, alleys, and parks, or temporarily indoors (couch-surfing) on the night of April 4th 2018.

An additional 43 youth (not included in Table 3) indicated that they stayed with their parents on the night of April 4th and were subsequently screened out of the count during the data cleaning process. Of the youth who stayed with their parents on the night of April 4th, 14 youth (33%) had stayed with their parents for five days or less over the course of the previous week. In addition, 13 (30%) of these youth identified as Indigenous, 10 (23%) identified as LGBTQ2S, 12 (28%) were currently or had previously been in foster care, a group home, or independent living arrangements and 32 (74%) of these 43 youth were under the age of 19.

[17] This table combines data collected through survey responses and the service use spreadsheet. Unless otherwise specified all other tables contain survey data only. For all tables, the number of total respondents varies depending on how many individuals chose to provide an answer to the associated questions in the service use spreadsheet or the survey.

[18] "Accompanied Children" refers to children under 19 who were found with their parent(s) or guardian(s) during the youth homeless count. No individual survey records of these children exist, as they were not interviewed. 70% of these children were found in transition houses.

[19] The reference to a single day was chosen to ensure comparability between the amended youth count methodology and the traditional PiT count methodology.

Table 3. Total Sheltered and Unsheltered Unaccompanied Youth [20]

Where youth stayed on the night of April 4th 2018	Total	
	#	%
Unsheltered	295	64%
Someone else's place (couch-surfing)	*174*	
Outside (incl. in vehicles, makeshift shelter or tent, abandoned/ vacant building)	*121*	
Sheltered	164	35%
Shelter/Safe House/Transition House	*154*	
Detox/Recovery House	*10*	
Other [21]	3	1%
Total Respondents	**462**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	219	
Total	**681**	

1.3 Age of Survey Respondents and Service Use Data Clients

Of the 681 youth and children counted, 296 (43%) were aged 18 or younger, and 390 (57%) were between the ages of 19 and 24 inclusive.

The target demographic of the 2018 Youth Homeless Count was youth aged 13 to 24 who were experiencing homelessness and living independently of their parent(s) or guardian(s). This group is referred to throughout this report as "unaccompanied youth." These youth were tracked through survey responses and through client records listed on service use spreadsheets. The service use spreadsheets also identified children experiencing homelessness who were accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian(s) in shelters or at other homelessness service locations. The majority of these children were found in transition houses. In this report, children with their parent(s) or guardian(s) are referred to as "accompanied children" and were captured solely through the service use data spreadsheet as supplementary data. No further demographic information is available for these children as they were not interviewed by staff for the purposes of the count.

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[20] This table combines data collected through survey responses and the service use spreadsheet.

[21] Three youth that selected the "other" category for this question did not provide a write-in answer explaining where they stayed on the night of April 4th.

Table 4. Unaccompanied Youth and Accompanied Children by Age Group [22] [23]

Age Group	Total	
	#	%
19-24	390	57%
13-18	253	37%
Under 13	38	6%
Total [24]	**681**	**100%**

1.4 Gender

Youth that responded to the question on gender totaled 560 and over half (290, or 52%) identified as male; 248 (44%) identified as female, and 22 youth (4%) identified as another gender identity.

Table 5. Unaccompanied Youth and Accompanied Children by Gender Identity [25]

Gender Identity	Total	
	#	%
Male	290	52%
Female	248	44%
Another Gender Identity	22	4%
Total Respondents	**560**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	121	
Total	**681**	

1.5 Youth Homelessness by Metro Vancouver Sub-Region

The following map shows the communities across Metro Vancouver that participated in the 2018 Youth Homeless Count and the total number of unaccompanied youth and accompanied children counted in each community.

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[22] This table combines data collected through survey responses and through the service use spreadsheet and includes information on 38 accompanied children under the age of 13; age was derived in reference to the unique anonymous code of each respondent. See the methodology section for more information.

[23] Age was identified for all respondents, as youth were required to provide their year of birth for the creation of their unique anonymous code.

[24] This number includes accompanied children.

[25] This table combines data collected through survey responses and data received through the service use spreadsheet.

TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS IN THE METRO VANCOUVER YOUTH HOMELESS COUNT: 681

The count captured responses from youth in most of the 21 municipalities of the Metro Vancouver region. The majority of youth and children experiencing homelessness were found in Vancouver (349). This figure represents 51% of all unaccompanied youth and accompanied children who were counted. In addition to the City of Vancouver, a large number of youth were also counted in Surrey (106), which represents 16% of the total counted, while the North Shore had 64 individuals (9%) as the third highest number of youth.
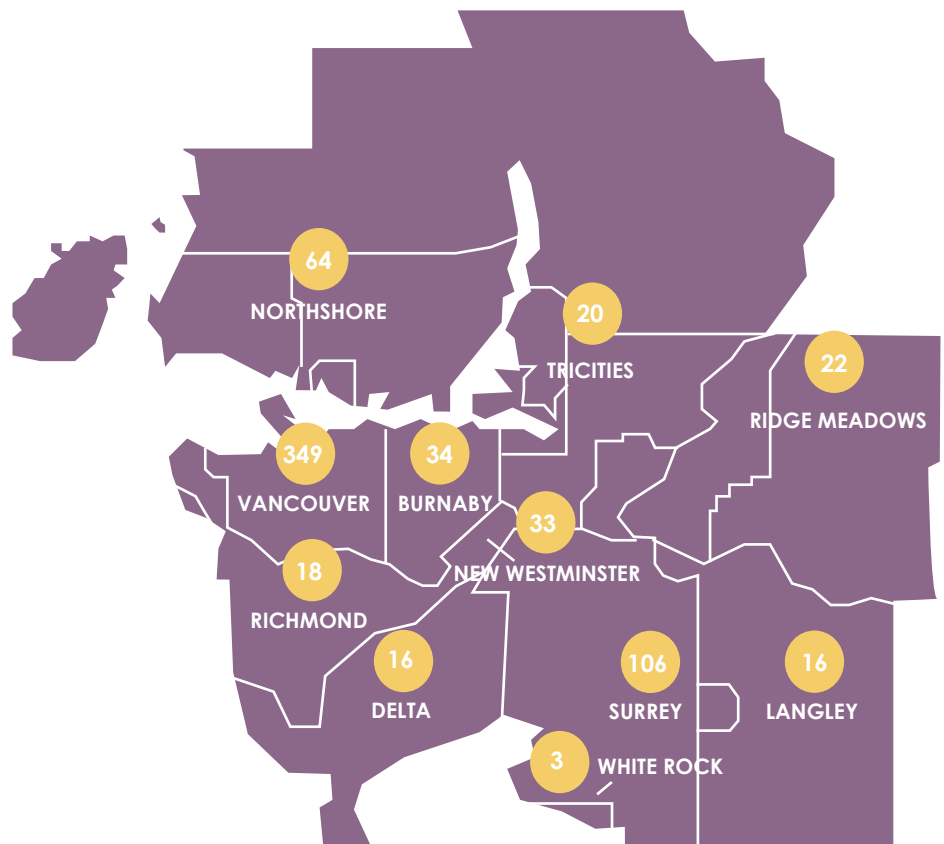
Table 6. Unaccompanied Youth and Accompanied Children by Municipal Sub-Region [26]

Sub-region	Total	
	#	%
Burnaby	34	5%
Delta	16	2%
Langley	16	2%
New Westminster	33	5%
North Shore	64	9%
Richmond	18	3%
Ridge Meadows	22	3%
Surrey	106	16%
Tri-Cities	20	3%
Vancouver	349	51%
White Rock	3	<1%
Total [27]	**681**	**100%**

[26] This table combines data collected through survey responses and the service use spreadsheet.

[27] This table includes accompanied children (under age 19, found with parents/guardians).

2 PROFILE
OF YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Section 2 of this report features data captured solely through the survey component of the 2018 Youth Count. This section of the report does not include information on accompanied children[28] or youth who were captured solely through the service use spreadsheet.

A total of 82 youth provided answers to the mandatory questions that qualified their surveys to be screened-into the count and allowed them to be included in the total number of youth found experiencing homelessness. Another 274 youth provided an answer to at least one additional question beyond the basic screening questions.

All previous homeless counts in the Metro Vancouver region found a disproportionately high percentage of Indigenous homelessness overall – adults and youth. As such, the data presented in the tables in Section 2 of this report was analyzed by Indigenous identity to assist with service provision and allocation of funding. Where the sample size was too low for a meaningful representation, the data was not separated between Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities.

The total number of respondents varies by table depending on how many youth chose to answer that question in the survey.

2.1. Age of Survey Respondents Only

Out of all respondents, 215 or 60% of youth were over the age of 19, while 141 youth surveyed (40%) were between the ages of 13 and 18.

Table 7. Age Distribution of Youth Who Participated in the Survey [29]

| Age Group | Indigenous Identity | | | | | | |
| | Indigenous | | Non-Indigenous | | Don't Know/ No Answer | Total [30] | |
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
19-24	66	62%	95	64%	54	215	60%
13-18	40	38%	54	36%	47	141	40%
Total	106	100%	149	100%	101	356	100%

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[28] No children accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian(s) were interviewed as part of the survey component of the count.

[29] The age group table combines survey and service use spreadsheet data. There are slight differences between the survey responses in Table 5 and the responses shown in Table 8. These are accounted for by the exclusion of children under age 13 who were not surveyed and are not included in Table 8. As a result, the proportion of youth over the age of 19 was slightly higher in the survey responses (60% compared to 57%).

[30] Data used in this table was derived solely from survey responses, which is why the total number included is lower than in Table 4.

[31] When compared to Table 5 above, which combined the two data sets, the proportion of youth identifying with each gender varies only slightly. 52% of combined respondents identified as male, compared to 53% of survey respondents only, while 44% of combined respondents identified as female compared to 42% of survey respondents only. Four percent of the combined respondents identified as another gender compared to 5% of survey respondents only.

2.2 Gender Identity of Survey Respondents Only

Table 8 below shows youth by their responses to the question of gender identity on the survey.[31] In total, 144 respondents identified as male (53%) compared to 115 female (42%). By percentage, the proportion of Indigenous youth (54%) who identified as male was marginally higher than for non-Indigenous youth (51%). It was the opposite for those youth who identified as female; among Indigenous youth 40% identified as female compared to 44% of the non-Indigenous youth. Of those who responded to this question, 15 youth, or 5%, identified as another gender.

Table 8. Gender Identity of Youth Who Participated in the Survey

| Gender Identity | Indigenous Identity | | | | | | |
| | Indigenous | | Non-Indigenous | | Don't Know/ No Answer | Total [32] | |
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
Male	56	54%	75	51%	13	144	53%
Female	42	40%	65	44%	8	115	42%
Another Gender	6	6%	8	5%	1	15	5%
Total Respondents	**104**	**100%**	**148**	**100%**	**22**	**274**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	2		1		79	82	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

2.3 Indigenous Identity

A total of 106 youth surveyed identified as Indigenous, which accounted for 42% of all unaccompanied youth found through the survey.[33]

Table 9. Indigenous Identity

| Indigenous Identity[34] | Total | |
	#	%
Indigenous	106	42%
Non-Indigenous	149	58%
Total Respondents	**255**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer [35]	101	
Total	**356**	

As the next table shows, of the youth who identified as Indigenous, a majority of 65%, identified as First Nations, followed by Métis at 22% and one youth identified as Inuit. The survey did not include a list of other Indigenous

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[32] Data used in this table was derived solely from survey responses, which is why the total number included is lower than in Table 5.

[33] In the 2018 City of Vancouver Homeless Count, 46% of youth under 25 identified as Indigenous/Aboriginal. See: City of Vancouver: Staff Presentation to Council (2018). Slide 20. URL: http://council.vancouver.ca/20180501/documents/rr1presentation.pdf (Last Accessed: June 21, 2018)

[34] This table was derived from survey data only. Service use data for this question was not consistently available.

identities; the table shows that 12 youth indicated they were of an Indigenous identity not listed in the survey. This category may have included Indigenous youth from other countries as well as Canada.

Table 10. Indigenous – First Nation, Métis, Inuit

Indigenous Identity, by Sub-category	Total	
	#	%
First Nations	63	65%
Métis	21	22%
Not Listed	12	12%
Inuit	1	1%
Total Respondents	**97**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	9	
Total	**106**	

2.4. Sexual Identity

This question was also posed in the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver and was included on feedback from service providers seeking data on anecdotal information suggesting a higher number of non-heterosexual youth were experiencing homelessness or at greater risk of becoming homeless. Table 11 shows that 65 youth (26% if respondents) identified as LGBTQ2S.

Additional analysis was undertaken to determine if there were any differences in the age and gender of LGBTQ2S youth compared to non-LGBTQ2S youth. LGBTQ2S youth were slightly younger than their heterosexual peers with 45% under age 19, compared to 34% of youth who did not identify as LGBTQ2S. A higher proportion of LGBTQ2S-identifying youth identified as female (48%), compared to 40% as male or as another gender (22%).

Table 11. Sexual identity

Sexual Identity	Indigenous Identity							
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#		#	%
LGBTQ2S[36]	28	28%	33	24%	4		65	26%
Not LGBTQ2S	72	72%	107	76%	4		183	74%
Total Respondents	**100**	**100%**	**140**	**100%**	**8**		**248**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	6		9		93		108	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**		**356**	

[35] A total of 101 youth respondents were included under the "No Answer" category for the question on Aboriginal/Indigenous identity. Out of the 101 youth, 48 were included because the question was not filled out on their survey form. The remaining 53 youth were included because "Don't Know/No Answer" was selected on the survey form as their answer choice. Of the 53 respondents who selected "Don't Know/No Answer," it is unknown how many did not know the answer to the question and/or whether it was selected by the surveyor due to non-response. It is possible that some respondents may not have known whether they were of Aboriginal/Indigenous ancestry/identity and would have chosen "Don't Know" had it been a separate answer category.

[36] Three respondents identified their sexuality as "other": one as pansexual, one as bisexual and one as "does it matter." The former two were coded as LGBTQ2S and the latter as "don't know/no answer."

2.5. First Time Experiencing Homelessness

Table 12 shows the age when youth first experienced homelessness. Of the 244 respondents to the question, 156 youth (64%) were between the ages of 13 and 18 when they experienced homelessness for the first time. The survey also found 16 or 7% of youth were under the age of 13 when they became homeless for the first time.

There was a negligible difference between ages 15 and 16 as the age most youth became homeless for the first time. 31 youth reported they were 15 when they first became homeless and 32 reported they were 16. Together, these two age groups represented 26% of youth who responded to this question. Overall, Indigenous youth reported they first became homeless at a younger age than their non-Indigenous peers, with 75% of Indigenous youth experiencing homelessness for the first time before age 19 compared to 67% of non-Indigenous youth.

Table 12. Age When Youth First Experienced Homelessness

Age First Time Homeless	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
19-24	24	25%	45	33%	3	72	30%
13-18	65	68%	86	62%	5	156	64%
Under 13	7	7%	7	5%	2	16	7%
Total Respondents	**96**	**100%**	**138**	**100%**	**10**	**244**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	10		11		91	112	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

Table 13 shows there are many reasons why youth become homeless for the first time. Of the 303 responses to the question, the three most commonly cited reasons were family conflict (159 or 52% of respondents), drugs and substance use/addictions (125 or 41%) and mental health challenges (100 or 33%).

Income was also a factor in youth experiencing homelessness for the first time, with 80 (26%) reporting they had no income or what they had was too low. The high cost of rent was also reported as a reason for homelessness by 65 youth (21%). However, it remains unclear whether too little income and too high rent were the catalysts for youth experiencing homelessness for the first time or, for example, youth left the family home due to conflict and because they had no means to pay rent they then became homeless. As Table 12 shows, the majority of youth were under 19 years of age when they first became homeless, which may indicate limited capacity to earn an income sufficient to support themselves living independently. As such, it is not clear whether income might be a secondary factor to the primary cause of first becoming homeless.

Table 13. Reason for First Time Homeless[37]

Reason for First Time Homeless[38] (more than one response possible)	Total	
	#	%
Family conflict[39]	159	52%
Drugs and substance use/addiction	125	41%
Mental health challenges	100	33%
Income too low or no income	80	26%
Rent too high	65	21%
Poor housing conditions	45	15%
Discrimination	37	12%
No housing available that meets my needs	37	12%
Aged out of care	32	11%
Other	26	9%
Total Respondents	**303**	
Don't Know/No Answer	53	
Total	**356**	

2.6 Length of Time Homeless

Table 14 provides an overview of the length of time youth had experienced homelessness when they were surveyed. Of the 216 respondents, 44% (96) youth had become homeless less than six months ago and 44% (95) had been homeless for more than one year. Another 8 respondents indicated they did not know how long they had been homeless.

A higher proportion of Indigenous youth had been homeless for more than 1 year (51%) compared to Non-Indigenous youth (39%). 36% of indigenous youth reported being homeless for less than 6 months, which is lower than the proportion of Non-Indigenous youth (50%).

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[37] Where sample size was low, data was not broken out by Indigenous/non-Indigenous identities.

[38] Youth were asked what they think the main reasons were for the first time they became homeless. As the question asks for one or more responses, percentages may not add to 100%.

[39] Twenty youth who selected this answer opted to write in that the "family conflict" they experienced was related to some form of emotional or physical abuse, often noting the abuse came from a parent.

Table 14. Length of Time Homeless

Length of Time Homeless	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
1 year or more	46	51%	46	39%	4	96	44%
6 months to under 1 year	12	13%	12	10%	1	25	12%
Under 6 months	33	36%	59	50%	3	95	44%
Under 1 month	*11*		*10*		*3*	*24*	
1 month to under 6 months	*22*		*49*		*0*	*71*	
Total Respondents	**91**	**100%**	**117**	**100%**	**8**	**216**	
Don't Know/No Answer	15		32		93	140	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

2.7. Health Conditions – Incidence and Types

Table 15 provides an overview of youth who reported having health conditions. Of 241 respondents to the question, 122 youth (51%) reported two or more health conditions, while 78 (32%) reported one health condition. A further 41 youth (17%) reported no health conditions. Of those who reported no health conditions, 24 (65%) had been homeless for less than a year and the other 13 youth (35%) had been homeless for more than a year. The remaining four youth who reported no health conditions did not answer the question on the length of time they had been experiencing homelessness.

53% of indigenous youth reported two or more health conditions, which is slightly higher than their non-Indigenous peers, 47% of which reported multiple health conditions.

Table 15. Incidence of Health Conditions

Incidence of Health Conditions	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
No health conditions	18	19%	23	17%	0	41	17%
One health condition	27	28%	47	35%	4	78	32%
Two or more health conditions	51	53%	63	47%	8	122	51%
Total Respondents	**96**	**100%**	**133**	**100%**	**12**	**241**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	10		16		89	115	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

Table 16 shows the types of health conditions youth reported. Of the 215 respondents to the question, a high proportion of youth (154 respondents, or 72%) had a mental illness, 123 respondents (57%) had an addiction, 77 respondents (36%) identified having a health condition or illness, and 47 respondents (22%) identified having a physical disability.

Table 16. Types of Health Conditions[40]

Health Conditions (more than one response possible)[41]	Total	
	#	%
Mental illness	154	72%
Addiction	123	57%
Medical condition/illness	77	36%
Physical disability	47	22%
Total Respondents	**215**	
Don't Know/No Answer	141	
Total	**356**	

2.8. School Enrollment

Table 17 shows the educational attendance and enrollment for youth experiencing homelessness. Of the 266 respondents, 27% or 72 said they were currently attending school, and another 5%, or 13 youth, said that they were enrolled in school, but were not attending school at the time of the youth count.

A higher proportion of Indigenous youth (30%) were attending school, training or another educational program than their non-Indigenous peers (23%). While 59% of youth aged 13 to 18 reported they were currently attending school, only 6% of youth aged 19 to 24 indicated they were attending school or another educational program.

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[40] Where sample size was low, data was not broken out by Indigenous/non-Indigenous identities.

[41] Youth were asked to identify any health conditions they were experiencing. As the question asks for one or more responses, percentages may not add to 100% of respondents.

Table 17. Educational Attendance and Enrollment by Indigenous Identity

Currently going to school, training, or another educational program	Indigenous Identity							
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#		#	%
Yes	31	30%	32	23%	9		72	27%
No	71	70%	107	77%	16		194	73%
but currently enrolled	*3*		*9*		*1*		*13*	
and not currently enrolled	*45*		*66*		*12*		*123*	
and no answer/not known if currently enrolled	*23*		*32*		*3*		*58*	
Total Respondents	**102**	**100%**	**139**	**100%**	**25**		**266**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	4		10		76		90	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**		**356**	

Table 18. Educational Attendance and Enrollment by Age Group

Currently attending school, training, or other educational program	Age Group					
	13-18		19-24		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	62	59%	10	6%	72	27%
No	43	41%	151	94%	194	73%
but currently enrolled	*9*		*4*		*13*	
and not currently enrolled	*22*		*101*		*123*	
and no answer/not known if currently enrolled	*12*		*46*		*58*	
Total Respondents	**105**	**100%**	**161**	**100%**	**266**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	36		54		90	
Total	**141**		**215**		**356**	

2.9. Barriers to Housing

Of 257 total respondents, the top four reasons why youth felt they were unable to obtain a place of their own were that: rent was too high (148 respondents or 58%); income was too low or they had no income (142 respondents or 55%); that they had mental health challenges (85 respondents or 33%); or that they had drug and substance use/addiction (79 respondents or 31%).

Table 19. Barriers to Housing[42]

Barriers to Housing (more than one response possible)[43]	Total	
	#	%
Rent too high	148	58%
Income too low or no income	142	55%
Mental health challenges	85	33%
Drugs and substance use / addiction	79	31%
No housing available that meets myneeds	65	25%
Family conflict	49	19%
Other	46	18%
Discrimination	40	16%
Poor housing conditions	30	12%
Aged out of care	18	7%
Total Respondents	**257**	
Don't Know/No Answer	99	
Total	**356**	

2.10. Sources of Income

Most youth reported they had no source of income (73 youth or 28%). Of those who reported an income, most (68 youth or 26%) indicated welfare/income assistance, followed by money from family and/or friends (52 youth or 20%). A number of youth also reported employment as an income source: 50 youth (19%) reported income from a part-time or casual job and 19 youth (17%) were working full-time jobs at the time of the count.

Of the 19 youth who indicated that they were working full-time, 14 were over the age of 19 and 5 were under 19. The majority, 14 youth, had been homeless for less than 8 months. 5 of the youth working full-time had been homeless for more than a year.

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[42] Where sample size was low, data was not broken out by Indigenous/non-Indigenous identities.

[43] Youth were asked to identify what they perceived to be barriers to finding housing. As the question asks for one or more responses, percentages may not add to 100% of respondents.

Table 20. Sources of Income[44]

Sources of Income (more than one response possible)[45]	Total	
	#	%
No income	73	28%
Welfare/income assistance	68	26%
Money from family/friends	52	20%
Job part-time or casual	50	19%
Disability benefit	29	11%
Panhandling	28	11%
Other	25	10%
Job full-time	19	7%
Not comfortable disclosing	17	7%
Binning/bottles	16	6%
Youth/young adults agreement	13	5%
Vending	13	5%
Honoraria/stipends	7	3%
Skills Link program	6	2%
Student loans	6	2%
Total Respondents	**260**	
Don't Know/No Answer	96	
Total	**356**	

[44] Where sample size was low, data was not broken out by Indigenous/non-Indigenous identities.

[45] Youth were asked to identify all their sources of income. As the question asks for one or more responses, percentages may not add to 100% of respondents.

2.11. Newcomers to Canada

Table 21 shows that twenty-two youth or 8% of respondents indicated that they were newcomers to Canada[46], including four who reported they were also Indigenous[47]. 256 respondents (92%) were not new to Canada at the time of the homeless count.

Table 21. Newcomers to Canada and Refugee Claimants

Newcomers to Canada and Refugee Claimants	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
Born in Canada	100	96%	129	88%	27	256	92%
Not Born in Canada [48]	4	4%	18	12%	0	22	8%
Refugee claimant [49]	0		4		0	4	
Refugee with refugee status	0		6		0	6	
Permanent resident/ Canadian citizen	1		1		0	2	
Other	1		6		0	7	
No further details provided	2		1		0	3	
Total Respondents	**104**	**100%**	**147**	**100**	**27**	**278**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	2		2		74	78	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

2.12 First Language

Table 22 provides information on the first language of youth experiencing homelessness. Of 270 respondents, 250 (93%) spoke English as their first language, 5 (2%) spoke French, while 15 (6%) spoke a language other than English or French[50].

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[46] One of these youth identified as a Canadian who was born abroad.

[47] Four youth indicated that they were First Nations but not born in Canada.

[48] Out of the 22 people who were not born in Canada: 10 had been in Canada for six or more years, six had been in Canada for two to five years, four had been in Canada under two years, and two did not indicate how long they had been in Canada.

[49] The Government of Canada defines refugees as "people who have fled their countries because of a well-founded fear of prosecution… We don't know whether a [refugee] claimant is a refugee or not until their case has been decided." A refugee claimant is therefore someone seeking refugee status. For more information: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/canada-role.html

[50] Of the youth who indicated that English was not their first language, three respondents indicated their first language was Spanish, two Arabic, two Punjabi, two Russian, one Cree, one Dari, one Greek, one Inuinuktan, one Japanese, and one Tagalog.

Table 22. First Language

First Language	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
English	96	94%	128	90%	26	250	93%
French	1	1%	4	3%	0	5	2%
Other	5	5%	10	7%	0	15	6%
Total Respondents	102	100%	142	100%	26	270	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	4		7		75	86	
Total	106		149		101	356	

2.13. Length of Time Lived in Sub-Region of Metro Vancouver

Table 23 shows the length of time youth experiencing homelessness stayed in their respective municipality before the day they were enumerated in this count. Of 126 respondents, 70 (56%) had been in the same municipality for more than a year, while 40 youth (32%) had been in the municipality for less than six months. An unusually high number of youth (230) did not respond to the question. It is possible that youth did not understand the question and/or were reluctant to reveal/estimate the exact amount of time they had been staying in their current community.

Table 23. Length of Time Lived in Sub-region of Metro Vancouver

Length of Time Spent in Sub-region	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
1 Year or More	33	62%	37	53%	0	70	56%
6 Months to Under 1 Year	8	15%	8	11%	0	16	13%
Under 6 Months	12	23%	25	36%	3	40	32%
Total Respondents	53	100%	70	100%	3	126	100%
Don't Know/No Answer	53		79		98	230	
Total	106		149		101	356	

2.14 Foster Care, Group Home or Independent Living Arrangement

Table 24 provides information on youth experiencing homelessness who have lived in foster care, a group home, or a government sponsored independent living arrangement. This measure is used as a proxy to being in "Government Care".[51]

Of the 252 respondents, 125 (50%) had previously been or were currently in foster care, a group home, or in an independent living arrangement. A larger proportion of Indigenous youth reported having been in government care (65%) compared to their non-Indigenous peers (38%).

Table 24. Foster Care, Group Home, or Independent Living Arrangement

Youth living in Foster Care, Group Homes or Independent Living Arrangements	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
Currently or Previously	64	65%	55	38%	7	126	50%
Currently	7		5		1	13	
Previously	44		36		4	84	
Don't Know/No Answer	13		14		2	29	
No	34	35%	89	62%	3	126	50%
Total Respondents	**98**	**100%**	**144**	**100%**	**10**	**252**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	8		5		91	104	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

2.15. Time Lived in Canada

Of the 276 responses to this question, 266 youth (96%) indicated they had been living in Canada for more than six years, while 10 respondents (3%) had been in Canada fewer than six years.

Table 25. Time lived in Canada

Length of Time Lived in Canada	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
1 Year or More	103	99%	136	94%	27	266	96%
6 Months to Under 1 Year	1	1%	5	3%	0	6	2%
Under 6 Months	0	0%	4	3%	0	4	1%
Total Respondents	**104**	**100%**	**145**	**100%**	**27**	**276**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	2		4		74	80	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

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[51] More information on how the survey asked respondents about being in government care can be found in the limitations section of this report on page 42.

2.16. Where Youth Had Previously Lived

Survey respondents were asked to indicate where they lived before they came to the current community where they were counted. Of the 166 respondents, 62 (37%) had previously lived in Metro Vancouver, and 40 youth (24%) had lived in another location in B.C., while 43 (26%) had previously lived elsewhere in Canada.

Table 26. Previous Location

Previous Location[52]	Indigenous Identity						
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Don't Know/ No Answer	Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%
Metro Vancouver	18	26%	42	45%	2	62	37%
Rest of Canada	20	29%	22	24%	1	43	26%
Rest of B.C.	24	35%	14	15%	2	40	24%
Fraser Valley	4	6%	5	5%	0	9	5%
Another country	2	3%	10	11%	0	12	7%
Total Respondents	**68**	**100%**	**93**	**100%**	**5**	**166**	**100%**
Don't Know/No Answer	38		56		96	190	
Total	**106**		**149**		**101**	**356**	

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[52] For this question, survey respondents were asked to indicate where they lived before they came to their current community. This refers to the most recent previous community before relocating to their current community, where they were counted.

METHODOLOGY

Project Structure

The Metro Vancouver region is 2,882.68 km^2 in size and consists of 21 municipalities, of which 17 usually participate in triennial homeless counts. Regional counts are necessarily large in scale and logistically complex. The planning and implementation of the 2018 Youth Count relied on stakeholders across the region to be successful.

The Project Team for the 2018 Youth Count consisted of representatives from key stakeholder organizations and met four times over the course of planning and implementation to advise and oversee the count process.

In recognition of their expertise on the topic, youth with lived experience were also engaged at key points in the project, particularly in the development of the survey and to provide feedback on the implementation process. Youth with lived experience of homelessness were integrated into the count early in the planning phase with the aim of conducting a count that would be likely to achieve its research objectives and have relevance for participating youth. The planning and design phases involved youth service providers working directly with youth experiencing homelessness to pilot the survey questions and to provide feedback on the methodology and implementation. Many youth experts with lived experience also served as "peer" interviewers during the count period, surveying other youth. All youth who assisted with the implementation and planning process were provided with honoraria and funding for travel.

Community Homeless Tables (CHTs) were also a critical part of the count process. Ten CHTs in the region have been essential to every homeless count since 2002. CHTs provide crucial support for homeless counts by working with count coordinators who manage the scale and logistics of the project in their respective communities. The CHTs' involvement in the 2018 Youth Homeless Count was largely through the Chair of the Council of CHTs who participated on the project team, and through a number of the CHT coordinators who connected the consultants with youth-serving organizations and other resources and supports in their area.

The count also included a communications and media campaign, led by the Metro Vancouver Community Entity and supported by corporate external relations and multimedia.

Data collection

There were two primary systems used to collect data for the 2018 Youth Homeless Count: a survey and a service use spreadsheet.

Survey

The 2018 youth survey was developed using input from service providers and youth with lived experience of homelessness. The survey tool was an adaptation of the survey used in the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver that includes federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy core questions and other regional specific items. The key changes to the survey from 2017 to the 2018 Youth Homeless Count included removing questions that were inappropriate given the age of the target survey population (e.g. are you a veteran?) and adding questions that were specific to the age demographic (e.g. are you currently attending an educational program?).

The survey was deployed in service agencies, shelters, and schools across Metro Vancouver. Due to the sensitive nature of youth homelessness, only staff and peers of participating organizations were asked to survey youth experiencing homelessness, as opposed to outside volunteers as is done in the triennial count.

Service Use Spreadsheet

In pursuit of tapping into existing data on youth experiencing homelessness in the region, a service use spreadsheet was developed. While the survey had 20 questions and took around 15 minutes to complete, the service use spreadsheet only had eight questions and could be completed in five minutes. The primary function of the service use spreadsheet was to enumerate youth, whereas the survey was intended to provide additional data to create a more detailed demographic profile of youth experiencing homelessness. Table 27 describes the relationship between the survey and the service use spreadsheet.

Table 27. Overview of the Service Use Spreadsheet and Survey Instrument

Overview of the Service Use Spreadsheet and Survey Instrument	
Service use spreadsheet	In the initial stages of planning the count, service providers articulated that many youth experiencing homelessness would not be available and/or willing to participate in a detailed survey. As a result, the 2018 Youth Count also relied on service providers to input high-level information about their clients into a service use spreadsheet. The use of the service use spreadsheet required service providers to fill in details regarding clients accessing their services over the course of the count period. Some agencies were able to use existing client management software to streamline the data collection process, while others collected entirely new data. The minimum requirement for youth to be included in the spreadsheet (and subsequently the Count) was that they had accessed a service within the timeframe of the count, provided enough details to create their unique client code, and that they met the count's definition of youth homelessness (see page 17). The service use data form included five mandatory questions (year of birth, day of birth, first two letters of the legal first name, considered to be homeless under the count definition, and gender) and an additional four optional sections (Indigenous identity, previous community, where youth stayed on April 4th, and a comment section). The first three questions formed the youth's client code, which in turn facilitated the de-duplication process that took place once all the data was aggregated.
Survey	The second method for data collection was a paper-based survey, which was conducted with youth by staff or peers at service agencies and in schools across the region. The goal of the survey was to gather a more in-depth understanding of homeless youth across the region. The survey had 21 questions (Appendix I) ranging from sexual identity to sources of income. The questions were a combination of core Homelessness Partnering Strategy PiT count questions[53] as well as other youth-specific questions crafted through an iterative process with input from local service providers and youth with lived experience. The survey consisted of two main sections. The first section asked the interviewer to create the youth's unique client code and screened out any youth who did not meet the count's definition of youth homelessness[54]. The second section consisted of 18 optional questions on a range of topics. There were 274 youth who provided an answer to at least one additional question in the survey and another 82 youth provided information to complete section one, which was enough for their inclusion in the total number of youth found experiencing homelessness.

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[53] Employment and Social Development Canada. (2017). Everyone Counts: A Guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time-counts.html#TOC2

[54] One of the questions in the screening section of the survey asked whether a youth had already answered a survey during the count period. Fifteen youth did not provide an answer to the question or replied with no answer. As these youths also provided personal details which created their unique anonymous code, and as they were not found to be in duplication with any other records in the database, they were screened in to the count. While the youth could have responded to another count survey, the unique anonymous code would have been flagged in the database.

Magnet Events

The final key piece of the data collection process was the organizing of magnet events by count coordinators and partner organizations (and schools on the North Shore). Fifteen magnet events took place across the region as part of the effort to create opportunities for youth to be counted. These events were hosted in partnership with service agencies and schools that provided staff and/or space, which was then used to conduct surveys with youth. Some service providers were able to train and support youth with lived experience to attend the events and interview their own peers. Staff and youth who conducted surveys or hosted events were offered honoraria as compensation for their expertise and time.

A budget was allocated to each participating organization to host the event and provide food and other items of interest draw youth to the location where they could be surveyed if they were willing to participate. The magnet events showed mixed success, with events held in established youth spaces proving to be more successful in getting youth counted than those held in standalone venues.

The Survey and Service Use Spreadsheet Combined

The various methods of data collection were intended to complement one another and ensure optimal coverage. Each method provided an opportunity for youth to provide basic information about themselves, such as their year and day of birth, their gender and whether they were homeless as per the count definition. In addition, the youth's location was determined by the location at which the youth was surveyed or accessing a service.

In order to track and remove duplicates from the compiled data set (i.e. the survey and the service use spreadsheet combined), interviewers were asked to create a unique client code for each youth being counted. The unique client code allowed data to be collected without the risk of compiling duplicate information from youth who had accessed multiple services across different municipalities and multiple service organizations and/or schools throughout the count period.

Most of the information in this report is based on the detailed survey data. Table 28 emphasizes the distinctions between the two sets of data.

Table 28. Structure and Intent of the Service Use Data Form and the Survey

	Service Use Data Form	Survey
Data Categories Included		
Location, Age, Gender, Where Youth Stayed	Yes	Yes
Additional (barriers to housing, sources of income, etc.)	No	Yes
Goal of the Collection Method		
Identify the number of youth experiencing homelessness	Yes	Yes
Create a demographic profile of youth experiencing homelessness	No	Yes
Participants Involved		
Service Providers	Yes	Yes
Schools	No	Yes
Populations Included		
Unaccompanied youth (aged 13 to 24)	Yes	Yes
Accompanied children (under age 19)	Yes	No

Data Analysis

Preventing Duplicate Records Through the Use of a Unique Client Code

The all-ages regional homeless counts that take place in Metro Vancouver triennially screen out duplicate survey respondents by asking a series of screening questions at the start of the interview, including: "Have you already answered a survey today?" As the youth count took place over nine days, it was critical to create a method for screening out duplicate participants that served the same purpose as part one of the all-ages survey. The extended timeframe of the youth count only made it more likely that youth may be counted more than once.

To prevent duplication, a unique client code was assigned to each count participant to enable the consultant to screen the surveys and data spreadsheets for matching information. The client code also served to protect personal information obtained from youth. Specifically, the codes prevented double counting youth who had accessed multiple services across different municipalities, multiple service organizations and/or schools during the extended count period.

The Project Team discussed coding used in homeless count surveys in other jurisdictions and, after feedback from local service providers, decided on the following method:

Last two digits of birthday year: i.e. 20**01**
First two letters of the legal first name: i.e. **Fr**ed
Birthday day: **27**
Unique client code = **01FR27**

Through this technique, there was still a small chance that two youths may end up with the same unique identifier code. For example, if Dave and Dana were both born on July 23rd 2000, their code would be 00DA23. In this case, their client records were de-duplicated using other pieces of data collected from those youth. For example, if Dave indicated he was an Indigenous male and Dana identified herself as a non-Indigenous female, they were both included in the count based on variables not contained within in their client code.

Age Calculation

Youth were not asked directly about their age, but instead the respondent's age was calculated using the birth year that they were required to provide in order to create their unique client code.

The age of participants was determined using the maximum and minimum ages possible given their year of birth, the date of the count on April 4th to 12th 2018 and the age that they were most likely to be. For example, someone born on January 1st 1994 would have been 23 years and three months old during the count period. Conversely, someone born on December 31st 1994 would have been 24 years and three months old. It is more likely that someone born in 1994 would have been 23, rather than 24. Accordingly, the age assigned to those born in 1994 was age 23.

For the years on either end of the age range, representing ages 13 and 24, the cap was set where youth were most likely to be within the age range of the Youth Count. For example, while some youth born in 1993 may have been over the age of 25, the majority were likely to have been 24 years old. We acknowledge that this conversion from year to age means that a minimal number of youth over the age of 24 or under the age of 13 may have been included in the total number of youth found to be experiencing homelessness. See Table 29 for more details on how the age of respondents was determined.

Table 29. 2018 Youth Homeless Count Age Calculator

	Year of Birth											
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Maximum Age (years) Born Jan 1	25.25	24.25	23.25	22.25	21.25	20.25	19.25	18.25	17.25	16.25	15.25	14.25
Minimum Age (years) Born Dec 31	24.25	23.25	22.25	21.25	20.25	19.25	18.25	17.25	16.25	15.25	14.25	13.25
Age for Count Analysis (Years)	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13

Table 30 shows how many records were deleted from the aggregated data set due to suspected duplication or other reasons why they did not meet the criteria to be "counted in" to the process.

Table 30. Overview of the Data Screening Process

		Number of Youth	
Data Source	Service Use Spreadsheet	Survey	Total
Pre-screening	394	454	**848**
Post-screening	325	356	**681**

LIMITATIONS

The methodology for the 2018 Youth Homeless Count was designed through feedback from youth with lived experience of homelessness and service providers working directly with youth experiencing homelessness. Due to the transient nature of youth homelessness, it was unlikely that all youth would be able to be counted over the course of just one day. As such, youth were counted over a nine-day period, from April 4th to 12th 2018, so as to ensure a wide window for participation.

Two methods for enumerating youth were used to maximize coverage of service organizations and schools that would come into contact with youth during the nine-day count period:

Survey	Detailed demographic data was collected through a paper survey that was conducted by service providers, school youth workers, and peers across Metro Vancouver.
Service Use Data Form	Service providers filled in high-level information about youth accessing their services into encrypted Excel data forms. While both methods collected information on unaccompanied youth, the service use data form also captured information on accompanied children found with their parent(s) or guardian(s) in shelters or transition houses during the count period. No children (under the age of 13) were surveyed for the count.

The characteristics of the design and/or methodology of a research project can affect the results and analysis. For example, the Metro Vancouver 2017 PiT Count had 386 surveys completed by youth under age 25, which represented 16% of the total homeless population of 3,605 individuals at that time. By comparison, one year later the 2018 Youth Count identified 257 more youth using different methodologies, finding 643 homeless youth aged 13-24 years were experiencing homeless during the count (which would account for 18% of the 2017 total homeless population of 3,605).

An objective of this research was to obtain a total number of completed surveys sufficient to provide reliable in-depth analysis of the experiences of youth homelessness and the pathways into homelessness. Greater credibility can be attributed to information and analysis derived from 643 individuals. Yet, there are limitations in the research, described in Table 31.

Table 31. Primary Limitations

Primary Limitations	
Hidden homeless	Those who were hidden homeless and did not access services were not necessarily captured through the methodology, potentially resulting in a sampling bias and undercount.
Institutional non-participation: education, health, corrections	No schools in the City of Vancouver participated in the youth count and a limited number of schools participated in the City of Surrey. In contrast, schools in other cities in the Metro Vancouver region did participate in the count. No jails or health-related institutions agreed to participate in the 2018 count.
Location	The Project Team identified the lack of a survey question asking which city the youth considers as "home" as a limitation. For example, a youth surveyed in Vancouver may not necessarily be "from" Vancouver, and is potentially accessing services there because they are not able to in their home community. The risk of identifying that youth as "from Vancouver" is that other municipalities are thought to have "less homeless youth" which could prevent them from receiving support for additional services, etc.
Omitted service use data	The following additional information was collected from service providers through the service use data form, but ultimately was not included in the data analysis: Indigenous identity, previous location they lived, and where youth stayed the night before. The decision to exclude this information was made in order to maintain data integrity, as it was not clear whether the data collected was self-reported or provided by the service provider. Particularly with questions like Indigenous identity, it is critical that youth were able to self-identify.
Sampling bias	Some individuals may not have accessed services or participated in the survey over the extended count period. This is particularly true for the most street-entrenched youth and youth who may have felt stigmatized by the surveying process, resulting in a potential sampling bias.
Sexual identity and mental health	Youth may be more likely than older adults to disclose their sexual identity or experience with mental health issues. This is an important consideration when comparing the youth count data to other homeless count data.
Survey completion rate	The length of the survey was mentioned as a barrier for obtaining a complete survey from youth. Also, some questions included in the survey were said to be triggering and may have precluded some youth from answering all the questions, as all but the screening questions were not mandatory.
Timing of the Youth Count	The count took place after spring break, which service providers and schools identified as an obstacle to staff adequately preparing to participate in the count. The City of Vancouver Homeless Count occurred a month prior to the youth count involving organizations and youth who may have participated in the youth count if there had been enough recovery time for volunteers and staff prior to the event. The impact on the youth count results by spring break and the Vancouver count can be assumed but cannot be fully determined.

Undercount	The figures presented in this report must be interpreted as a baseline for youth experiencing homelessness in the region, rather than an absolute figure. See notes in this table: - Hidden Homeless - Non-Participation - Timing of the Youth Count Further, the availability of youth-specific services in a community likely directly correlates to the success of connecting with youth during the count. Youth are known to access services in other municipalities, as well as their own. There are more youth services in the city of Vancouver which could account for it having the highest population of youth experiencing homelessness and correspondingly, its higher count results.
Ministry care question	In 2017, for the first time, survey respondents were asked whether they are or have in the past, been "in Ministry care." This question was intended to determine what proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness had spent time as children in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) or a comparable ministry in another province. "The Ministry" was not clearly defined in the way the question was asked. When asked, people would interpret it to mean "being in the care system," which can extend to other, past forms of Ministry care, including Ministry care in other provinces. As a result, and based on feedback from service providers, the 2018 Youth Count included an amended question on government care. It is important to note that the question still may not have been totally clear to all survey respondents. "Independent living" could (a) refer to "Independent Living Agreements" (youth permanently in care who have an independent living arrangement instead of a foster home) – as was intended, but also (b) a "Youth Agreement" (youth not in care, but who live independently and have an agreement with MCFD that supports this). This being said, in both years, between (minimum) 38% (2017, 19-24 years) and (maximum) 50% (2018, total respondents) positively responded to this question, indicating a strong correlation between government care and homelessness.
Non-response to survey questions	It is unknown how many respondents actively chose not to answer a survey question or how many did not know the answer to the question. The categories of "don't know/no answer" were combined in the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver as surveyors were inconsistently and synonymously using the don't know/no answer categories already. For consent purposes, youth are told prior to being surveyed that they can skip any question(s) they choose and/or stop the interview at any time. A youth may have chosen not to answer the question for a variety of reasons. For example, it is possible that they did not wish to share their answer with the individual interviewing them, that they may not have wanted their answer to be included in the data of the youth count, or that they might have felt triggered by the question. It should also be noted that staff conducting surveys were instructed to use their best judgement (based on their experience with the youth being surveyed) to determine whether or not they should ask the more sensitive questions on the survey form to avoid further traumatizing the youth being interviewed.

Survey #: _____

| **Survey 2018** |
| **Youth Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver** |

Location (i.e.agency, city, etc.): _____ Interviewer Name (for follow up): _____ Date: _____

PART 1: SCREENING

1. A) What year were you born? □□□□ **(if born earlier than 1993, (END))**

B) What are the first two letters of your *legal* first name? □□

C) What day of the month is your birthday? □□

2. Have you already answered a survey today / last couple of days?
- □ **Yes (END survey)**
- □ No **(continue survey)**
- □ No answer **(END survey)**

3. Do you currently have a place to stay where you pay monthly rent?
- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ No answer

4. Where did you stay on Wednesday, April 4?
- □ Someone else's place (couchsurfing)
- □ Outside (incl. in vehicles (car, van, RV, truck), makeshift shelter or tent, abandoned / vacant building)
- □ Parent(s)'/ guardian's house **(Go to Q. 4a)**
- □ Shelter/Safe House / Transition House
- □ Detox/Recovery house/Hospital/Jail
- □ Own place inside where you pay rent (please describe:_____)
- □ Other   (please describe:_____)
- □ No answer

PART 2: SURVEY

4a. In the last 7 days, how many days have you stayed at your parent(s)'/guardian's house?

_____# Days

- □ Don't know / No answer

5. How do you identify your gender?
- □ Man/Male
- □ Woman/Female
- □ Another gender identity (please describe:_____)
- □ Don't know / No answer

6. Do you identify as LGBTQ2S? (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or two-spirit)
- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Other (please describe:_____)
- □ Don't know / No answer

7. Do you identify as Indigenous/Aboriginal? This includes First Nations, Metis, Inuit, with or without status.
- □ Yes - specify (**check only one**)
  - □ First Nations
  - □ Inuit
  - □ Métis
  - □ Not listed (please describe:_____)
  - □ Don't know / No answer
- □ No
- □ Don't know / No answer

8. How long have you been without a place of your own?

_____ _____ _____ _____
 # Days   **# Weeks**   **# Months**   **# Years**
- □ Don't know / No answer

9. How old were you the first time you became homeless?

Age _____
- □ Don't know / No answer

10. What do you think are the <u>main reasons</u> you became homeless the <u>first time</u>? Check <u>all that apply</u>.
- □ Rent too high
- □ Income too low or no income
- □ Family conflict (please describe: _____)
- □ Discrimination (please describe: _____)
- □ Mental health challenges
- □ Drugs and substance use / addiction
- □ Aged out of care
- □ Poor housing conditions (please describe: _____)
- □ No housing available that meets my needs (please describe: _____)
- □ Other   (please describe: _____)
- □ Don't know / No answer

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11. What do you think is keeping you from finding a place of your own? **Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Rent too high
- ☐ Income too low or no income
- ☐ Family conflict (please describe: _____)
- ☐ Discrimination (please describe: _____)
- ☐ Mental health challenges
- ☐ Drugs and substance use / addiction
- ☐ Aged out of care
- ☐ Poor housing conditions
          (please describe: _____)
- ☐ No housing available that meets my needs
          (please describe: _____)
- ☐ Other   (please describe: _____)
- ☐ Don't know / No answer

12. Have you ever lived in foster care or in a group home or in independent living?

- ☐ Yes - follow up:
    - ☐ Currently (since when: _____)
    - ☐ Previously (for how long: _____)
    - ☐ Don't know / No answer
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / No answer

13. Have you been, or are you currently under a youth/ young adults agreement?

- ☐ Yes - follow up:
    - ☐ Currently (since when: _____)
    - ☐ Previously (for how long: _____)
    - ☐ Don't know / No answer
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know / No answer

14. How long have you been in [community name]?

- ☐ Always been here (**go to Q.16**)
- ☐ Length

_____ _____ _____ _____
 # Days   # Weeks   # Months   # Years

- ☐ Don't know / No answer

15. Where did you live before you came here (i.e. what community)?

- ☐ Community name_____
                AND province _____
- ☐ OR country _____

- ☐ Don't know / No answer

16. What are your sources of income? **Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Youth/Young adults agreement
- ☐ Skills Link program
- ☐ Money from family / friends
- ☐ Job full-time
- ☐ Job part-time or casual
- ☐ No income
- ☐ Student loans
- ☐ Welfare/income assistance
- ☐ Panhandling
- ☐ Disability benefit
- ☐ Binning/bottles
- ☐ Honoraria/stipends
- ☐ Vending
- ☐ Other (specify:_____)
- ☐ Not comfortable disclosing
- ☐ No answer

17. Do you have the following health challenges? **Check all that apply.** (Read list.)

	Yes	No	No answer/ Don't Know
Medical condition/illness	○	○	○
Physical disability	○	○	○
Addiction	○	○	○
Mental illness	○	○	○

18. Are you currently going to school, training, or another educational program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No - follow up: Are you currently **enrolled** in school or a vocational program?
    - ☐ Yes, currently enrolled
    - ☐ No, not currently enrolled
    - ☐ Don't know / No answer
- ☐ Don't know / No answer

19. Were you born in Canada?

- ☐ **Yes**, I was born in Canada (**Go to Q.21**)
- ☐ **No** - follow up. **Check only one** (read list):
    - ☐ I am a refugee claimant from
        _____ (please name country)
    - ☐ I am a refugee with refugee status from
        _____ (please name country)
    - ☐ I am a permanent resident/Canadian citizen
    - ☐ Other _____ (please describe)
    - ☐ Don't know / No answer
- ☐ Don't know / No answer

20. How long have you lived in Canada? **Check only one.**

- ☐ 6 or more years (including all my life)
- ☐ 2 to 5 years
- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ Don't know / No answer

21. What is your first language? **Check only one.**

- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Other (please specify:_____)
- ☐ No answer

End

APPENDIX II:
SERVICE USE SPREADSHEET

Unclear? Questions? ... See Info and Help Card (next spreadsheet tab) for the definition of Youth Homelessness and other explanations and details.

Step 1 : Enter your program's information

Program / Service Agency Name:	
Type of Program/Agency:	
Service Location Address:	
Municipality:	
Staff First Name & Last Name:	
Comments:	

Step 2: Anonymous client information: Enter the following information for each homeless client who uses services between Apr 4 - 12 2018

Categories	Year of Birth	First Two Letters of Legal First Name	Day of Birth	Client Code (A)	Homeless by Definition (B)	Gender Identity of Client (C)	Does client identify as Indigenous/Aboriginal? (D)	Where did the client live before they came to this community? (E)	Where did client stay on date of data entry? (F)	Comments (G)
	Required information						**Requested if available**			
How to/Instructions	What **YEAR** (between 1993-2005) were they born?	What are the first two letters of their **legal FIRST name?**	What **DAY of the month** is their birthday?		Select appropriate answer from list	Select appropriate answer from list	Select appropriate answer from list	Select appropriate answer from list	Select appropriate answer from list	See Info and Help card
Examples	2000	ty	05	00ty05	Yes	Another gender identity	Yes - Métis	Metro Vancouver Regional District	Other (Specify in comment section)	slept at their cousin's for a couple of days
	2005	jh	01	05jh01	Yes	Woman/Female	Yes - First Nations	Fraser Valley Regional District	Someone else's place (couchsurfing)	Identifies with the Nisga'a Nation
	1998	fa	22	98fa22	Yes	Man/Male	No	Rest of BC	Outside (including in vehicles, makeshift shelter or tent, or abandoned/vacant building)	N/A
#1				00						
#2				00						
#3				00						
#4				00						
#5				00						
#6				00						
#7				00						
#8				00						
#9				00						
#10				00						

APPENDIX III:
LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

COUNT COMMUNITY	ORGANIZATION
Burnaby	Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC
Burnaby	Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, City of Burnaby
Burnaby	Dixon Transition Society
Burnaby	Burnaby Youth Clinic, Fraser Health
Burnaby	Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families
Burnaby	School District 41
Burnaby	St Leonard's Youth and Family Services
Delta	Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC
Delta	Pacific Community Resource Society
Delta	School District 37
Langley	Encompass Support Services Society
Langley	Ishtar Transition Housing Society
Langley	Libra Transition House, Ishtar Transition Housing Society
Langley	Gateway of Hope Shelter, Salvation Army
Langley	School District 35
Langley	Stepping Stone Community Services Society
New Westminster	Aunt Leah's Place
New Westminster	Elizabeth Gurney House, Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
New Westminster	Emergency Family Shelter, Fraserside Community Services Society
New Westminster	Lookout Society
New Westminster	Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families
New Westminster	Parks & Recreation, City of New Westminster
New Westminster	Stevensen House for Men, The Salvation Army
New Westminster	School District 40

COUNT COMMUNITY	ORGANIZATION
New Westminster	Spirit of the Children Society
New Westminster	Monarch Place, W.I.N.G.S Fellowship Ministries
North Shore	Bowen Island Youth Centre
North Shore	Homeless Outreach, Canadian Mental Health Association
North Shore	Capilano Community Services Society
North Shore	District of West Vancouver
North Shore	Hollyburn Family Services
North Shore	Adult Shelter, Lookout Emergency Aid Society
North Shore	North Shore Community Resource
North Shore	North Shore Crisis Services Society
North Shore	North Shore Neighbourhood House
North Shore	Parkgate Community Services Society
North Shore	School District 44
North Shore	School District 45
North Shore	Foundry North Shore, Vancouver Coastal Health
North Shore	YWCA, WorkBC
Richmond	CHIMO Community Services
Richmond	Youth Services, City of Richmond
Richmond	Richmond Addiction Service Society
Richmond	Richmond Food Bank Society
Richmond	Richmond Public Library
Richmond	School District 38
Richmond	Children and Youth Mental Health Services, Vancouver Coastal Health
Ridge Meadows	Alouette Addictions Services
Ridge Meadows	The CEED Centre Society
Ridge Meadows	Coast Mental Health
Ridge Meadows	Cythera Transition House Society
Ridge Meadows	Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Community Services

COUNT COMMUNITY	ORGANIZATION
Ridge Meadows	Parks, Recreation and Culture, City of Maple Ridge
Ridge Meadows	RainCity Housing
Ridge Meadows	Shelter, The Salvation Army Ridge Meadows Ministries
Ridge Meadows	School District 42
Ridge Meadows	Greg Moore Youth Centre
Surrey	Alexandra Neighbourhood House
Surrey	Maxine Wright Shelter and Shemai Shelter, Atira Women's Resource Society
Surrey	Sheena's Place, Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
Surrey	Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association
Surrey	Lookout Emergency Aid Society
Surrey	Options Community Services
Surrey	Pacific Community Resources Society
Surrey	School District Learning Centres
Tri-Cities	Outreach Services, Access Youth
Tri-Cities	Youth Progams, City of Port Moody
Tri-Cities	Tri-Cities Youth Clinic, Fraser Health
Tri-Cities	3030 Gordon Shelter, RainCity Housing
Tri-Cities	School District 43
Tri-Cities	Joy's Place Transition House, Tri-City Transitions Society
Vancouver	Imouto Housing for Young Women, Atira Women's Resource Society
Vancouver	Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC
Vancouver	Gathering Place Community Centre, City of Vancouver
Vancouver	Covenant House Vancouver
Vancouver	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
Vancouver	Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Vancouver	Inner Hope Youth Ministries
Vancouver	Lookout Society
Vancouver	MOSAIC

COUNT COMMUNITY	ORGANIZATION
Vancouver	Network of Inner City Community Services Society
Vancouver	Pacific Community Resources Society (
Vancouver	PLEA Community Services
Vancouver	QMUNITY
Vancouver	Supporting and Connecting Youth, Vancouver School Board
Vancouver	Sheway
Vancouver	Urban Native Youth Association
Vancouver	Watari Counselling and Support Services Society
Vancouver	Wish Vancouver
Vancouver	YWCA Strive
Vancouver	Directions
White Rock	Alexandra Neighbourhood House
White Rock	Sources Community Resource Centres

HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT

About the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS):

The federal government has provided resources to address homelessness since the 2000s - including the triennial Metro Vancouver regional Homeless Counts 2002 to 2017. Under an agreement with the Government of Canada, the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Community Entity (MV CE) administers funding and manages projects awarded HPS funds. The MV CE works closely with the local HPS Community Advisory Board (CAB) in the funding awards process. Within the parameters of the HPS Community Plan, the CAB sets the annual funding priorities and targets, and sets the terms of reference for each call for proposals, reviews and recommends proposals. The CAB allocated funds and set the Terms of Reference for the 2018 Youth Homeless Count.

This report can be found on the Metro Vancouver Community Entity website along with previous regional Homeless Counts:
http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/homelessness/homelessness-taskforce/youth-homeless-count/Pages/default.aspx

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BC Non-Profit Housing Association

BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) is the provincial umbrella organization for the non-profit housing sector, providing programs, services, research and education to strengthen the capacity of non-profit housing providers. Together, non-profit housing societies manage more than 60,000 units of long-term, affordable housing in over 2,500 buildings across the province. BCNPHA's research arm was established in 2008 to conduct evidenced-based research that supports the non-profit housing sector and demonstrates the need and value of affordable housing in communities across the province. Our research mandate includes issues impacting the whole housing spectrum and has helped to inform planning and policy decisions that affect the supply of affordable housing for a broad range of BC residents.

Find more information at http://bcnpha.ca/programs-and-services/research-consulting/ or contact us at: research@bcnpha.ca