

STREET NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

2009

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Introduction and Highlights

The objective of the Street Needs Assessment (SNA) is to determine the services that people who are homeless need in order to help them find and keep permanent housing. It is also to determine the number of people who are homeless and living on Toronto's streets and in its public spaces, or staying in shelters, health and treatment facilities and in correctional facilities for the purpose of assessing the location, scale and dimension of service needs, and in planning appropriate program responses.

Toronto's first Street Needs Assessment was conducted on April 19, 2006. On the evening of April 15, 2009 the City's second Street Needs Assessment was conducted using a consistent, statistically valid methodology to ensure that results would be comparable to those in 2006. The enumeration methodology and survey design were developed in 2006 through extensive research and consultation with experts from other jurisdictions, as well as with a range of local stakeholders.

As in 2006, the 2009 Street Needs Assessment was made possible through the partnership of a wide range of individuals, community agencies, City Divisions and provincial ministries, who contributed their time and effort to provide an up to date and comprehensive picture of homelessness in the City of Toronto. In particular, the 2009 Street Needs Assessment would not have been possible without the participation of more than 450 volunteers, along with 278 team leaders, who made it a success. With an overall response rate of almost 40%, people who were homeless in the City of Toronto once again took the opportunity to have their voices heard.

Outdoor homelessness cut in half

In 2005, City Council made a commitment to end street homelessness in Toronto. On April 15, 2009 the Street Needs Assessment demonstrated clear progress on this objective, with an estimated outdoor homeless population of 400. This represents a decrease of 51% over the 2006 outdoor homeless population estimate of 818.

In those service areas that are directly administered by the City of Toronto, street outreach and emergency shelters, there were an estimated 4,390 homeless individuals on April 15, 2009, a 1.7% decrease since 2006.

Family shelter use driven by federal immigration policy

Volatility in the number of families who are homeless in Toronto is a key characteristic of homelessness in Toronto. Although the average number of people staying in family shelters on a given night has decreased by 45% since the peak in 2001, occupancy in the family shelter system is subject to widely varying ups and downs - decreasing by 59% between 2001 and 2005, and increasing by 43% between 2005 and 2009. It is clear that the numbers of families staying in the family shelter system are largely determined by international geopolitical circumstances and federal immigration policy. This has contributed to a substantial increase in the number of refugee households in the family shelter system in recent years, which is reflected in the 9.3% increase in the number of people staying in shelters on the night of the Street Needs Assessment since 2006.

Aboriginal people still overrepresented in homeless population but fewer sleeping outdoors

While the overall proportion of homeless people identifying as Aboriginal has decreased since 2006, from 16.2% in 2006 to 15.4% in 2009, Aboriginal people remain disproportionately represented in the homeless population and also in the outdoor homeless population (28.7%). However, the estimated number of Aboriginal homeless people living outdoors has decreased significantly. Of the total population estimated to be outdoors in 2009 (400), it is estimated that 115 (28.7%) identify as Aboriginal. In 2006, 25.8% of the total estimated outdoor population (818) were identified as Aboriginal, equating to 211 individuals. This represents a 45% estimated reduction in the overall number of Aboriginal individuals staying outdoors on the night of the survey.

Panhandling down, employment up as reported sources of income

Panhandling has decreased as a reported source of income for 17.4% of all respondents in 2006 to 9.7% in 2009, and employment related income has increased from 23.2% of all respondents in 2006 to 28.8% in 2009.

More homeless people may be able to access ODSP

The survey found that of those who were not currently in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits, 34.5% believe they are eligible. However, nearly two-thirds of those who believe they may be eligible for ODSP benefits have never applied.

More work needed to get people on waiting lists for housing

One of the recommendations from 2006 was to increase the proportion of homeless individuals on a waiting list for housing, and this was achieved, from 36.6% in 2006 to 45.4% in 2009. For the outdoor homeless population the increase was from 29.7% to 42.6%. Although this demonstrates success in working toward this goal, more work needs to be done to ensure that all homeless people are on appropriate waiting lists for housing.

Overall number of Toronto homeless remains stable

Overall, there were a minimum of 5,086 homeless people staying outdoors, in shelters, in health care and treatment facilities, incarcerated in Toronto-area detention centres from a Toronto court, and in Violence Against Women shelters. This represents a 0.7% increase from the 5,052 homeless people in the same locations in 2006.

The number of homeless individuals in provincially administered health care and treatment facilities, incarcerated in Toronto area detention centres from a Toronto court, and in Violence Against Women shelters on the night of the survey was 696, a 19% increase over the total of 585 in 2006. These data were supplied by the appropriate Provincial government department. Improvements were made to the collection of these data in 2009, and therefore caution should be exercised when comparing results from 2006 and 2009.

Homeless people are frequent users of costly emergency services

Consistent with 2006 findings, the 2009 Street Needs Assessment once again shows that homeless people are frequent users of expensive emergency services like hospitals, ambulance, and the justice system. A comparison of the costs of housing and emergency services used by homeless people demonstrates that the use of emergency services (shelters, emergency health care, and incarceration) is substantially more expensive than housing-based responses to homelessness.

Homeless people want permanent housing

The Street Needs Assessment again shows in 2009 that overwhelmingly, homeless people want permanent housing. Approximately 9 out of every 10 individuals who are homeless want to live in permanent housing.

Other key findings include:

- The top five responses of what would help an individual find housing remain unchanged from 2006:
 - Help finding an affordable place;
 - More money;
 - Transportation to see apartments;
 - Help with housing applications;
 - Help getting identification.
- Although the survey did not ask people whether they have a mental health or addictions issue, 51.8% of homeless people self-identified that access to addiction, health and mental health services would help them to find housing.
- Overall, the average length of homelessness decreased from 3.4 years to 2.9 years. As in 2006, individuals outdoors had been homeless for the longest on average. However, overall the number of people homeless for more than 10 years has decreased, from 12.2% of those surveyed in 2006 to 6.7% of those surveyed in 2009.
- After shelters, drop-ins remain the service used most by homeless people (51.6%).

Overall, these findings demonstrate that between April 2006 and April 2009 progress has been made on Council's Housing First plan to end homelessness in the City of Toronto, as outlined in the Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT) Affordable Housing Strategy. Particularly in areas where strategic investments have been made to provide the assistance needed to help people to find and keep housing, these investments are achieving results. This is especially true for outdoor homelessness, where there was a 51% reduction in the number of people staying outdoors. This is despite the start of the recent economic downturn, and in contrast to other major Canadian cities where recent studies have found increasing numbers of homeless people.

Continued implementation of the Housing First approach throughout all housing and homelessness services provided by the City, including in shelters and through the Streets to Homes program, is needed to build on the clear progress made to end

homelessness and to continue to assist homeless people to find and keep housing with supports appropriate to their needs.

Background and Methodology

A method and approach consistent with that used for the Street Needs Assessment in 2006 was implemented in 2009 to ensure comparability of results. The enumeration methodology and survey design were developed in 2006 through extensive research and consultation with experts from other jurisdictions, as well as a range of local stakeholders. The survey method used is the US government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommended model for statistically valid survey methodologies. The quality assurance methodology is based on methods used in New York's Homeless Outreach Population Estimate, developed by Dr. Kim Hopper, a research scientist with the Nathan Kline Institute.

In addition to thorough research on practices in other jurisdictions, Toronto's survey was adapted to meet local needs through review by the Street Outreach Steering Committee, which provided direct input into the original design of the survey tool in 2006. When it was developed in 2006, the survey was also refined through focus groups and pre-testing with homeless and formerly homeless persons. The survey used in 2009 was nearly identical to the one used in 2006, with changes to only two questions to improve clarity of responses.

Purpose and Objectives

The Street Needs Assessment was first conducted in 2006, as part of the Streets to Homes strategy, at the direction of City Council. Five principles to guide the Street Needs Assessment were developed in 2006 by the Street Outreach Steering Committee (SOSC), an advisory group consisting of representatives from a variety of community agencies, shelter and supportive housing providers, business associations and private sector landlords, as well as various city departments. The five principles were approved by Toronto City Council in 2006. These principles also applied to the 2009 Street Needs Assessment:

(1) The purpose of the initiative is to determine the services that people who are homeless need in order to help them find and keep permanent housing, and in order to assist the City, community agencies and others with service co-ordination, service planning and advocacy. The number of people who are living on Toronto's streets and in its public spaces will be determined for the purpose of assessing the location, scale and dimension of service needs, and in planning appropriate program responses.

(2) Community agencies, volunteers and the City can work collaboratively to determine the service needs of people who are homeless and living on the streets and in its public spaces.

(3) The manner in which the Street Needs Assessment initiative is conducted will be respectful of homeless persons and the community agencies that serve them – it will use existing expertise that local agencies have, and it will not be used to "out" homeless persons in hiding, create a record of every individual unsheltered, or provide information to law enforcement.

(4) There are differences in homeless populations and their circumstances (e.g. people living in ravines compared to those living on streets; people living alone compared to those living in groups) and these differences will be respected when demonstrating the service needs of people who are homeless and living on the streets and in public spaces across the entire City.

(5) The methods used should be applied consistently across the City, even if the level of application is different, with sufficient techniques and measures for quality assurance and continuous learning integrated into the methodology, and recognizing that the results produced will likely understate the scale of need.

Definition

For the purposes of the survey, homelessness was defined as any individual sleeping outdoors on the night of the survey, in addition to those staying in emergency shelters, in Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, individuals in health or treatment facilities with no permanent address, as well as those in correctional facilities who were registered in a Toronto court as having no fixed address. This excludes the “hidden” homeless (e.g. couch surfers) and is the same definition used in 2006.

Improvements

Based on feedback received from staff, team leaders and volunteers as well as a review of the planning, organization and implementation of the 2006 Street Needs Assessment, a number of improvements were made in 2009. These improvements included:

- Streamlined online application form for volunteers and team leaders;
- Improved communications to volunteers and team leaders prior to the event, including a welcome letter, ‘Dos and Don’ts’ information sheet, a copy of the survey, the safety plan, and their field office location;
- Increased engagement with external partners such as correctional services, VAW shelters, and health and treatment facilities;
- Use of existing census tracts as determined by Statistics Canada rather than a separate geographic unit for the outdoor survey;
- Different field office locations with professional audio visual capabilities for training which were tested thoroughly in advance;
- Revised and improved training materials;
- More time available for training at field offices and more time available for surveying;
- Redesign of the maps to improve readability;
- Providing water and granola bars to volunteers; and
- Availability of more supplies such as flashlights for survey teams.

Budget

The budget for the direct costs of the 2009 Street Needs Assessment was \$118,988. This was funded entirely by the federal Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI). The funding for the Street Needs Assessment covered all project supplies, \$5 gift certificates for individuals who completed the survey, advertisements, honoraria for Team Leaders

from community agencies, printing and supplies and costs associated with training and field offices. As in 2006, the budget was not intended to cover City staff time associated with the project.

The budget for the 2006 Street Needs Assessment was \$87,005 (see Appendix A). The increased budget in 2009 was used for rental of better field office locations with improved audio-visual capabilities for training, more supplies like flashlights as a result of feedback from volunteers, increased marketing for recruitment of volunteers, as well as the purchase of survey scanning software to automatically input responses from surveys into a database.

Figure 1: 2009 Street Needs Assessment Expenditures

Honoraria for Team Leaders	\$31,767
Honoraria for Decoys	\$5,600
Gift Certificates for Survey Participants	\$15,930
Sub-Total	\$53,297
Project Supplies (e.g., clipboards, name tags, flashlights, first aid kits, pens, etc.)	\$16,244
Advertising and Recruitment	\$9,129
Rental of Field Office Space	\$9,104
Equipment Rental	\$5,065
Meeting Expenses	\$685
Printing	\$8,047
Transportation	\$1,914
Software (Automated Survey Scanning)	\$15,503
Sub-Total	\$65,691
Total Expenditures	\$118,988

Volunteer Recruitment

More than 450 volunteers were recruited to conduct the survey, along with 278 team leaders from community agencies. Team Leaders were individuals who had experience working with homeless and/or marginally housed individuals. Volunteers were not required to have any previous experience, but were always under the direction of team leaders. Prior to being deployed to study areas, volunteers were provided with training at one of fourteen field offices on enumeration methods and sensitivity to issues related to interacting with homeless individuals.

In 2006, 750 volunteers and 336 team leaders and City staff participated in the Streets Needs Assessment. In 2009, in total 1598 people signed up online, and on the evening of the event 458 volunteers and 357 team leaders and City staff participated in the survey.

Although online registration of volunteers prior to the day of the survey was significantly higher than in 2006, the number of volunteers who turned up on the night of the survey

was less than in 2006. Those that registered to volunteer but did not participate will be surveyed to determine why this was the case. The number of volunteers who did participate was sufficient to form enough study teams to conduct the survey.

At the end of the evening, volunteers and team leaders were asked to complete a feedback form to rate various aspects of the Street Needs Assessment. The feedback survey found that 90% of team leaders and 82% of volunteers rated their overall experience as Good or Very Good. The effectiveness of the training received was rated as Very Good or Good by 74.7% of team leaders and 73.1% of volunteers. The organization of the Street Needs Assessment was described as Very Good or Good by 67.4% of team leaders and 60.6% of volunteers. Most team leaders (83%) and volunteers (80%) also said they would participate again if a similar initiative were held in the future. (See Appendix B for more information).

Outdoor Survey

The outdoor survey was conducted on April 15, 2009 between 7:30 pm and midnight. Teams were instructed to stop everyone they encountered to ask screening questions which established housing status and whether they had been encountered by another survey team. Teams were also instructed not to wake anyone they found sleeping. For those who refused or were unable to complete the survey, team leaders, based on their experience, made the determination to include the individual as being homeless and recorded their estimated age and gender.

For those who agreed to complete the survey, a series of ten questions were asked regarding the length of time they had been homeless, their income sources, emergency and social services they may have used, and what they felt they need in order to obtain permanent housing. Upon completion of the survey, participants were given a \$5 gift certificate for a food establishment. Survey teams also asked individuals if they needed assistance in finding shelter for the evening, and street outreach vans were on call to transport individuals to shelters if requested.

The City was divided into 529 study areas for the outdoor survey, based on Statistics Canada census tracts. All 73 study areas in the downtown core were surveyed, along with 27 study areas outside the core which had been identified by community partners as areas where homeless individuals were known to be staying. A further 189 study areas outside the downtown core were randomly selected, for a total of 55% of study areas surveyed. From a land area perspective, the outdoor areas surveyed covered 50.7% of the surface area of the City.

Teams were instructed to survey all public spaces within their study area systematically, so that every location was covered only once. Public spaces included all streets, laneways, parks, public squares, as well as quasi-public spaces such as the areas around major stadiums. Special teams of City staff were also deployed to hard to reach areas, such as in ravines and valleys, with known homeless encampments, as well as to any locations within survey areas not covered by regular teams because of logistical or safety reasons.

For quality assurance, there were 45 individuals posing as decoys positioned in various locations in the outdoor study areas being surveyed. Because the outdoor component of the Street Needs Assessment is predicated on stopping everyone, regardless of their appearance, to make a determination of whether or not they were homeless, the use of decoys allows for a measurement of whether study teams stop everyone as instructed, and whether study teams complete their study areas in the prescribed manner. The identification rate of decoys is also used to calculate the total estimated outdoor homeless population. This quality assurance methodology is based on the approach used in New York's Homeless Outreach Population Estimate, which is recognized by the US government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a model for statistically valid survey methodologies.

Shelters and Other Facilities

Surveys were also conducted at all City funded emergency shelter facilities, provincial Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters and nine health and treatment facilities. Individuals who were classified as being from a Toronto court with No Fixed Address at all five local correctional facilities were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey. This component of the survey was conducted with the assistance of the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society by individuals who already had security clearance at the institutions. The total number of individuals staying at shelters, correctional facilities, hospitals and treatment facilities was also provided by these institutions.

Weather

On the night of the survey the weather was conducive to surveying outside, with a mean temperature of 9 degrees Celsius and no precipitation. This was similar to the weather on the night of the survey in 2006, when there was a mean temperature of 13 degrees Celsius and no precipitation.

Limitations

While the overall survey approach has been a success, there are inevitably some limitations to any study of this magnitude, which must be noted to understand the results. These limitations remain the same as in 2006. These limitations provide a frame of reference for understanding the results; it does not mean the methods were flawed nor does it mean the results are not valid and reliable.

First, with any survey of homeless individuals, a decision must be made about how to define homelessness for the purpose of the study. The Street Needs Assessment included those individuals who were absolutely homeless – those sleeping in public spaces, emergency shelters, Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, hospitals, treatment facilities or correctional facilities – but did not include the 'hidden' homeless. As well, this was a survey of homeless individuals in public spaces, or those who could be readily observed, for example those camped out in an ATM vestibule, and did not therefore include people on private property, such as those staying in garages, in cars on private lots, or hidden behind private businesses.

As this was a point-in-time survey, individuals had the possibility to be surveyed if they were encountered by a study team outdoors at a particular point in time when the study team was surveying that area. However, if the homeless individual was moving throughout the area, or arrived in the study area after the study team had gone through, then they may not have been included in the survey.

It is also important to note that point prevalence counts reflect the number of homeless at one specific point in time. From available shelter statistics, we know that the homeless population is not a static group and that many individuals may experience homelessness over the course of a year. While there may be 4,000 people staying in Toronto shelters on any given night, over the course of a year more than 27,000 different individuals will use the shelter system. The number generated by a point prevalence survey then, is a reflection of the number of homeless on a given night; there is a much larger proportion of the population who experience homelessness in any given year than the number at one point in time would indicate, as people move into and out of homelessness.

Results

City Administered Services

In those service areas directly administered by the City of Toronto, street outreach and emergency shelters, there were an estimated 4,390 homeless individuals on April 15, 2009, which represents a 1.7% decrease since 2006. More than 78% of the total homeless population were staying in City administered shelters.

Figure 2: Number of Homeless Individuals in City-Funded Service Areas on the Night of April 15, 2009 with Comparison to 2006 Results

	2006		2009		Comparison from 2006 to 2009	
	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# Change	% Change
Outdoor	818	16.2%	400	7.9%	-418	-51.1%
Shelters	3,649	72.2%	3,990	78.5%	341	9.3%
City Administered Services Total	4,467	88.4%	4,390	86.3%	-77	-1.7%

Outdoor Homelessness

The number of homeless individuals estimated to be sleeping outdoors on April 15, 2009 is 400, a 51.1% decrease since 2006.

Figure 3: Homeless Individuals Estimated to Be Outdoors

	2006		2009		Comparison from 2006 to 2009	
	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# Change	% Change
Outdoor	818	16.2%	400	7.9%	-418	-51.1%

This result is a clear reflection of the success of Toronto's Streets to Homes program in assisting homeless people to move directly from the street into housing, and providing them with the supports they need to maintain their housing.

As noted above, because it uses a point prevalence methodology, the Street Needs Assessment results reflect the number of homeless on a given night; there is a much larger proportion of the population who experience homelessness in a year than the number at one point in time would indicate.

Figure 4: Estimated Number of Homeless People Outdoors by Community Council District

Community Council District	Total # of Study Areas	# of Study Areas Surveyed	# of Homeless Individuals Encountered	Adjustment for Non-Sampled Areas	Quality Assurance Adjustment for Decoys Not Identified	Final Estimate
Toronto-East York	151	111	193	8	66	267
North York	139	63	11	17	44	72
Etobicoke	131	64	8	9	25	42
Scarborough	118	51	3	4	12	19
Total	539	289	215	38	147	400

The outdoor total was calculated based on the number of individuals encountered and adjusted based on study area sampling and the probability rate of decoy identification. In all, 215 individuals were encountered in 289 study areas surveyed. The adjustment for extrapolation to the remaining 250 unsurveyed areas designated as low density was an additional 38, based on the sample areas surveyed. The quality assurance adjustment based on the number of decoys found is an adjustment of a further 147. This gave a total estimate of 400 individuals staying outdoors on the night of the survey. These calculations were reviewed by a third-party expert who confirmed the validity of the methods used and the results.

Figure 5: Decoy Identification

Community Council District	Total Decoys Deployed	Total Decoys Found	2009 Decoy Identification Rate	2006 Decoy Identification Rate
Toronto-East York	17	9	53%	88%
North York	10	4	40%	54%
Etobicoke	6	5	83%	100%
Scarborough	12	8	67%	75%
Total	45	26	58%	78%

The table above shows the decoy identification rate for 2009 and a comparison to 2006. The decoy identification rate is used to calculate the statistical probability that homeless individuals may have been missed by study teams, and to adjust the total accordingly for quality assurance purposes. This quality assurance methodology is based on the approach used in New York's Homeless Outreach Population Estimate, which is recognized by the US government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a model for statistically valid survey methodologies.

The distribution of where homeless individuals are most likely to be staying has changed since 2006. Although the total number of people estimated to be outdoors in the areas outside downtown has decreased (from 243 in 2006 to 133 in 2009), the relative proportion has increased, from 29.7% in 2006 to 33.3% in 2009.

Figure 6: Comparison of Distribution of Homeless Individuals Outdoors by Community Council District

Community Council District	2006		2009		# Change
	Estimate	% Distribution	Estimate	% Distribution	
Toronto-East York	575	70.3%	267	66.8%	-308
North York	17	2.1%	72	18.0%	55
Etobicoke	162	19.8%	42	10.5%	-120
Scarborough	64	7.8%	19	4.8%	-45
Total	818	100.0%	400	100.0%	-418

The top locations of where homeless people outdoors indicated they would be sleeping remained consistent between 2006 and 2009 as indicated below.

Figure 7: Type of Location Outdoor Homeless Individuals Were Going to be Staying

	2006		2009	
	#	%	#	%
Ravine/Park	54	24.3%	29	25.7%
Sidewalk/Grate/Doorway	52	23.4%	25	22.1%
Other	14	6.3%	18	15.9%
Don't Know	29	13.1%	12	10.6%
Stairwell	7	3.2%	10	8.8%
Under a Bridge	17	7.7%	7	6.2%
Transit Shelter	6	2.7%	3	2.7%
Coffee Shop	12	5.4%	3	2.7%
Parking Garage	4	1.8%	2	1.8%
Car/Truck/Van	1	0.5%	2	1.8%
Abandoned Building	7	3.2%	1	0.9%
Laneway/Alley	3	1.4%	1	0.9%
Internet Café	10	4.5%	0	0.0%
Work/Office	4	1.8%	0	0.0%
Bathhouse	2	0.9%	0	0.0%
All Survey Respondents	222	100.0%	113	100.0%

Sheltered Homelessness

Although the results show a 9.3% increase in homeless individuals staying in the shelter system compared to 2006, the majority of this increase is in the family and youth shelter system. The single adult sector has seen a 1.4% decrease since 2006.

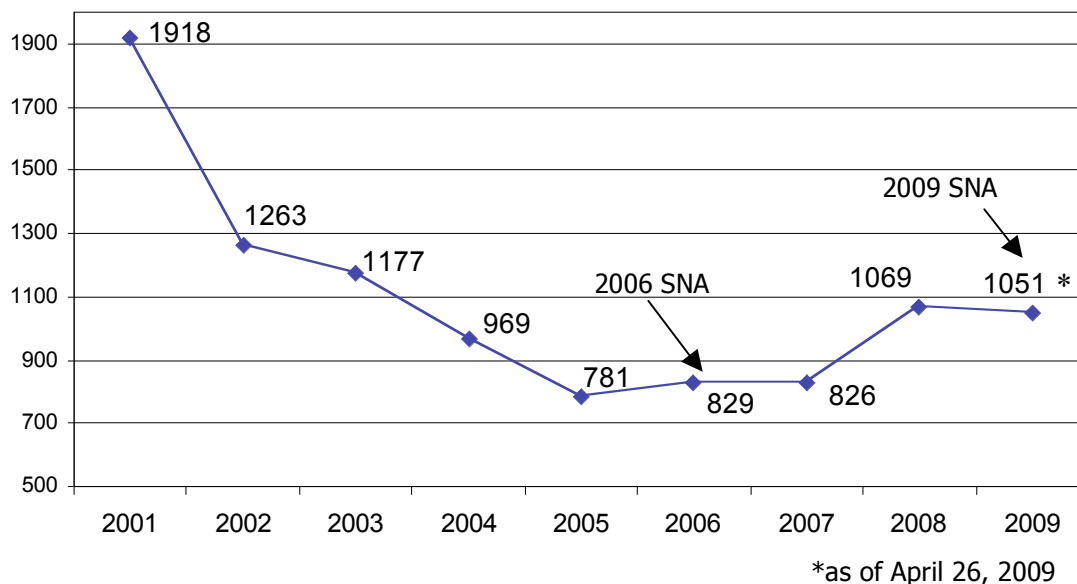
Figure 8: Homeless Individuals in the Shelter System

	2006		2009		# Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Single Adult	2443	66.9%	2408	60.4%	-35	-1.4%
Youth	421	11.5%	489	12.3%	68	16.2%
Family	785	21.5%	1093	27.4%	308	39.2%
Total	3649	100.0%	3990	100.0%	341	9.3%

Family Homelessness

Family homelessness has decreased significantly in the past ten years from a peak average occupancy of 1918 people per night in 2001 to 1051 at the time of the survey, a 45% decrease. However, in the past three years since the 2006 Street Needs Assessment was conducted, there has been an increase in the number of families staying in the shelter system. The majority of this increase is a result of an increasing number of refugee households staying in family shelters.

Figure 9: Family Shelter System Average Nightly Occupancy 2001-2009



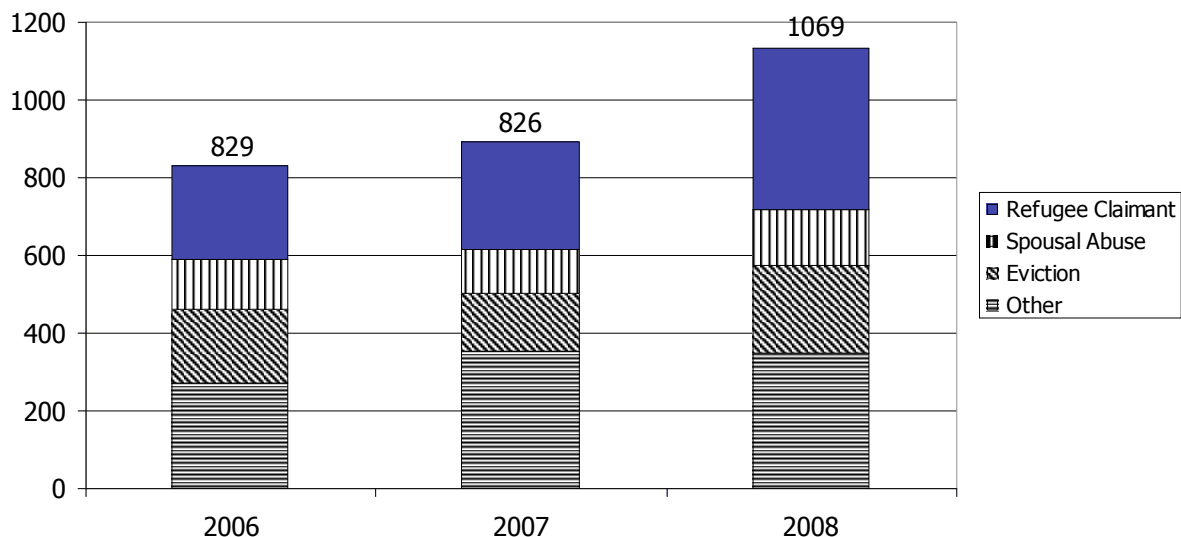
Occupancy in the family shelter system is primarily influenced by two external factors. First, many women and children are turned away from provincially administered Violence Against Women's (VAW) shelters because those shelters are full. These women and their children with no where else to go end up in City administered shelters. It is estimated that 13% of all admissions to the family shelter sector are women and

children who end up there because there is not adequate capacity in the provincially administered VAW shelters.

Federal immigration policy plays an even larger role in influencing family shelter occupancy, as refugee claimants often arrive in Canada with few resources and no place to stay. Because there are insufficient federally funded programs specifically aimed at sheltering and resettlement of refugee claimants, these families seek assistance at City administered emergency homeless shelters. Changes to geopolitical events and federal immigration and visa policies can result in dramatic changes in the number and nationality of families accessing shelter from year to year, and even from month to month. The family shelter system has the ability to expand to meet need through contracts with motel operators to accommodate these sudden changes in demand for shelter. In particular, increasing numbers of refugees from Mexico and the Czech Republic in the past two years has resulted in increased occupancy in the family shelter system.

Based on available information, it is estimated that on average, 39% of households using the family shelter system on any given night were refugees in 2008, an increase from 29% on average in 2006. Of the occupancy increase between 2006 to 2008 (from a nightly average of 826 to 1069), approximately 72% of this growth is attributable to the increase in the number of refugee families. The remaining increase is a result of other factors, including economic. Therefore, it is estimated that without the increase in refugee families, the average family shelter sector occupancy would have increased by 8.1%, rather than 29% between 2006 and 2008.

Figure 10: Average Nightly Occupancy by Reasons for Admission to Family Shelters



'Other' category includes family breakdown, fire/disaster, referral from hospital, jail or other institution, transient lifestyle, new to city, etc.

The increase in families staying in shelters for reasons other than being refugee claimants, including economic reasons, between 2006 and 2008 is estimated to be 67

individuals on average per night, or approximately 30 households. The increase in refugees equates to an estimated 173 individuals per night, or 79 households.

Provincially Administered Services

In addition to homeless people living outdoors and in City administered emergency homeless shelters, other locations where homeless people may be staying are included in the Street Needs Assessment to provide a more complete understanding of homelessness in the city. However, because these locations are facilities not directly administered by the City, their participation in the Street Needs Assessment relies on the continued partnership of the Province and their agency partners. The support and partnership of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Corrections and Community Safety in conducting the Street Needs Assessment is greatly appreciated.

In coordinating the participation of these external agencies, some improvements to data collection were introduced in 2009. To ensure the validity of results, only data obtained through methodology consistent with 2006 has been included for comparison in 2009. However, these improvements will be replicated in 2012 for comparison to 2009. The specific data collection improvements for VAW shelters and correctional facilities are described in each of the following sections.

Health and Treatment Facilities

The number of homeless individuals staying in health and treatment facilities decreased by 18.9% compared to 2006.

Figure 11: Homeless Individuals in Health and Treatment Facilities Comparison, 2006 and 2009

Location	2006		2009		Comparison from 2006 to 2009	
	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# Change	% Change
Health and Treatment Facilities	275	5.4%	223	4.4%	-52	-18.9%

Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters

The number of homeless women and children staying in provincially administered Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters increased by 8.2% since 2006.

Figure 12: VAW Shelter Occupancy Comparison, 2006 and 2009

	2006		2009		Comparison from 2006 to 2009	
	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# Change	% Change
VAW Shelters	171	3.40%	185	3.6%	14	8.2%*

*see explanation below

The VAW shelter system is directly funded and administered by the Province. The City does not have direct access to occupancy statistics for this sector. In 2006, the VAW shelter total provided to the City by the VAW sector was 171 individuals. In 2009, an issue with this 2006 number was reported to the City by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, as it was determined that this included only 8 of 13 total shelter locations. The total for all 13 locations was provided by the Province for the 2009 SNA. However, the Province cannot provide comparable data for all 13 locations for the night of the SNA in 2006. To ensure a consistent approach is applied to both 2006 and 2009 results, only the results for the same 8 locations are included in the total above. The total for 2009 for all 13 locations will be compared to the total for all 13 locations in the 2012 SNA.

Correctional Facilities

Figure 13: Individuals with No Fixed Address in Correctional Facilities Comparison, 2006 and 2009

	2006		2009		Comparison from 2006 to 2009	
Location	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# of Homeless Individuals	% of total estimated homeless	# Change	% Change
Correctional Facilities	139	2.80%	288	5.7%	149	107.2%*

*Caution should be exercised when comparing results from 2006 and 2009, see explanation below.

The number of individuals with No Fixed Address (NFA) from a Toronto Court staying in a Toronto area detention facility is provided by staff from the provincial Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS). In 2009 improvements were made to the collection of this data and caution should be exercised when comparing results from 2006 and 2009. The data is now reported from a centrally administered database rather than from individual facilities, and a list of all Toronto shelter addresses was provided to MCSCS staff to cross-reference in their database. Because only NFA addresses and not shelter addresses were collected in 2006, to ensure a more consistent comparison, only individuals with NFA addresses are included in the results for 2009. Those who reported a shelter address as their most recent address will be included in the total for comparison in the 2012 Street Needs Assessment.

Results Summary

On April 15, 2009 it is estimated that there were a minimum of 5,086 homeless people in shelters, in health care and treatment facilities, incarcerated in Toronto-area detention centres from a Toronto court, in Violence Against Women shelters and outdoors. This represents a 0.7% increase from the 5,052 homeless people in the same locations in 2006.

Figure 14: Number of Homeless Individuals on the Night of April 15, 2009 with Comparison to 2006 Results

	2006		2009		Comparison from 2006 to 2009	
	# of Homeless Individuals	% of estimated total homeless	# of Homeless Individuals	% of estimated total homeless	# Change	% Change
Outdoor	818	16.2%	400	7.9%	-418	-51.1%
Shelters	3,649	72.2%	3,990	78.5%	341	9.3%
City Administered Services	4,467	88.4%	4,390	86.3%	-77	-1.7%
VAW Shelters	171	3.4%	185	3.6%	14	8.2%*
Health and Treatment Facilities	275	5.4%	223	4.4%	-52	-18.9%
Correctional Facilities	139	2.8%	288	5.7%	149	107.2%**
Provincially Administered Services	585	11.6%	696	13.7%	111	19.0%
TOTAL	5052	100.0%	5,086	100.0%	34	0.7%

* See explanation on page 19.

** Improvements were made to the collection of this data and caution should be exercised when comparing results from 2006 and 2009. See note on page 19.

Comparison to Other Canadian Cities

Although the methods and definitions used to conduct homeless enumerations in other jurisdictions are different than those used in Toronto, and are therefore not directly comparable in absolute numbers, a comparison of general trends can provide a useful context. The table below illustrates the findings available from those Canadian major urban centres that have conducted recent homeless enumerations.

Figure 15: Trends in Canadian Jurisdictions

Location	Date Range of Most Recent Surveys	% change in total homeless population
Toronto	2006 to 2009	+ 0.7%
Metro Vancouver	2005 to 2008	+ 22%
Calgary	2006 to 2008	+18.2%
Edmonton	2006 to 2008	+17.6%

See Appendix C for sources and more information.

In comparison to the 51% reduction in outdoor homelessness in Toronto, in the same period from 2006 to 2009 in New York City, the only jurisdiction to use a similar enumeration methodology, there has been a 39.4% reduction in outdoor homeless, from 3,843 in 2006 to 2,328 in 2009.

Survey Findings

The Street Needs Assessment includes a ten question survey, to which all homeless individuals are asked to respond. Unlike most jurisdictions which attempt only to count the number of homeless individuals, the Street Needs Assessment's main objective is to provide valuable information that is used to determine the services that people who are homeless need in order to help them find and keep permanent housing, and in order to assist the City, community agencies and others with service co-ordination, service planning and advocacy.

Response Rate

As in 2006, the large number of surveys completed demonstrates that homeless people wanted to participate in the survey and have a direct voice in identifying their needs. The number of surveys completed provides a strong level of confidence in the results.

Figure 16: Survey Response Rates

	2009			2006
	Number of Homeless Individuals Encountered	Number of Surveys Completed	Response Rate	Response Rate
Outdoor	215	116	54%	51%
Shelters	3990	1342	34%	40%
VAW Sector	185	105	57%	N/A*
Health and Treatment	223	138	62%	47%
Corrections	288	187	65%	53%
Total	4901	1888	39%	42%

*Note: In 2006, only a small number of VAW shelters chose to participate in conducting surveys. The number of surveys completed was unfortunately not large enough to be representative so there is no comparable data for 2006 for this sector.

Demographics

Age

The table below outlines the age ranges of the homeless population on April 15, 2009. (Note, for families only the age of the head of household is represented in the table.)

Figure 17: Age Range of Homeless Population

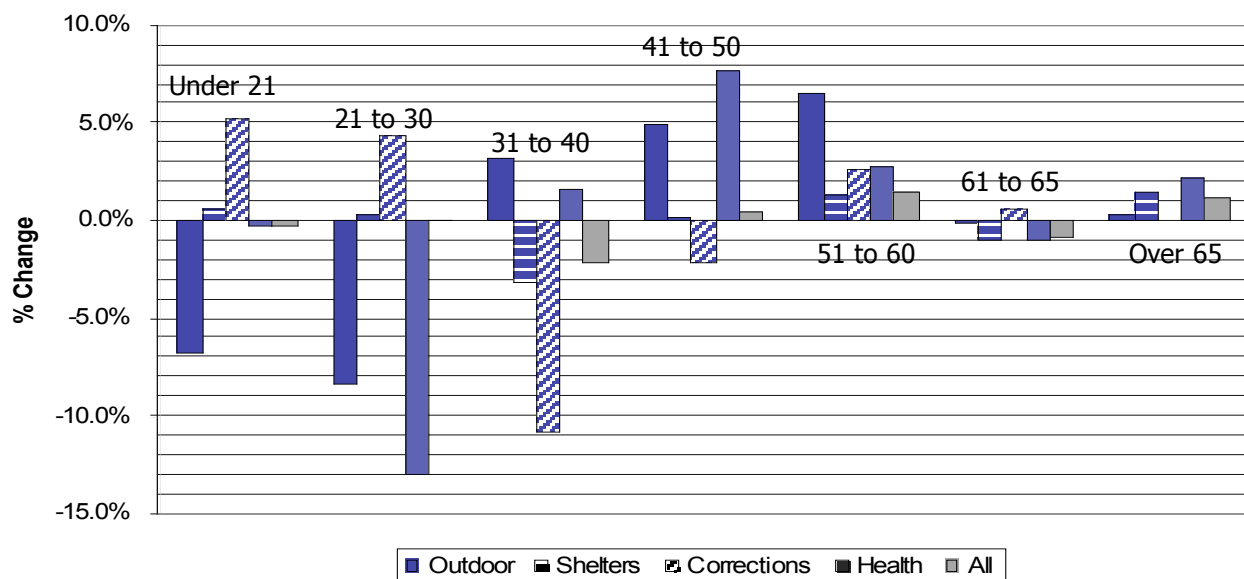
	Under 21		21 to 30		31 to 40		41 to 50		51 to 60		61 to 65		Over 65	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	3	2.7	19	17.3	32	29.1	37	33.6	15	13.6	2	1.8	2	1.8
Shelters	121	9.4	274	21.3	255	19.8	350	27.2	215	16.7	28	2.2	42	3.3
VAW Sector	1	1.3	33	41.8	23	29.1	14	17.7	7	8.9	1	1.3	0	0.0
Health and Treatment	2	1.6	29	23.0	35	27.8	38	30.2	16	12.7	1	0.8	5	4.0
Corrections	14	8.1	49	28.3	47	27.2	50	28.9	12	6.9	1	0.6	0	0.0
All Survey Respondents	141	8.0	404	22.8	392	22.1	489	27.6	265	14.9	33	1.9	49	2.8

Figure 18: Comparison of Age Range of Homeless Population 2006 and 2009

	Outdoor		Shelters		Corrections		Health and Treatment		All Survey Respondents	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
Under 21	9.4%	2.7%	8.8%	9.4%	2.8%	8.1%	1.8%	1.6%	8.2%	8.0%
21 to 30	25.6%	17.3%	21.0%	21.3%	23.9%	28.3%	36.0%	23.0%	22.7%	22.8%
31 to 40	25.9%	29.1%	23.0%	19.8%	38.0%	27.2%	26.1%	27.8%	24.2%	22.1%
41 to 50	28.6%	33.6%	27.0%	27.2%	31.0%	28.9%	22.5%	30.2%	27.1%	27.6%
51 to 60	7.1%	13.6%	15.4%	16.7%	4.2%	6.9%	9.9%	12.7%	13.4%	14.9%
61 to 65	1.9%	1.8%	3.1%	2.2%	0.0%	0.6%	1.8%	0.8%	2.7%	1.9%
Over 65	1.5%	1.8%	1.7%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	4.0%	1.6%	2.8%

The proportion of those under 21 and between ages 21 to 30 encountered outdoors decreased between 2006 and 2009, while these categories increased in shelters. There were more individuals 51 and older in all areas, indicating an older population.

Figure 19: Relative Change in Age Range of Homeless Population 2006 and 2009



Overall, the average age has increased slightly between 2006 and 2009 from 38.2 years to 39 years. In particular, the average age of homeless individuals staying outdoors increased from 26.8 to 40.7 and in health and treatment facilities from 37 to 40.1.

Figure 20: Comparison of Average Age 2006 and 2009

	2006	2009	Difference
Outdoor	36.8	40.7	3.9
Family Shelters	35	34.9	-0.1
Youth Shelters	20.2	20.2	0.0
Mixed Adult Shelters	40.6	41.1	0.5
Men's Shelters	43.9	45.7	1.8
Women's Shelters	41.9	43.6	1.7
All Shelters	39	39.4	0.4
VAW Sector	N/A	35.3	N/A
Health and Treatment	37	40.1	3.1
Corrections	36.2	35.6	-1.4
All Survey Respondents	38.2	39	0.8

The average age of a male was 40.2, for a female it was 36.1.

Gender

In both the 2006 and 2009 Street Needs Assessment survey, gender is self-identified. Respondents have the option of identifying as male, female, transgendered, transsexual or other. Males comprised 69.4 % of the homeless population. As in 2006, this was proportionally higher amongst the outdoor population where 80.5% of the population identified as male, and in corrections where 91.8% of the population identified as male.

Figure 21: Self-Identified Gender of Homeless Population, April 15, 2009

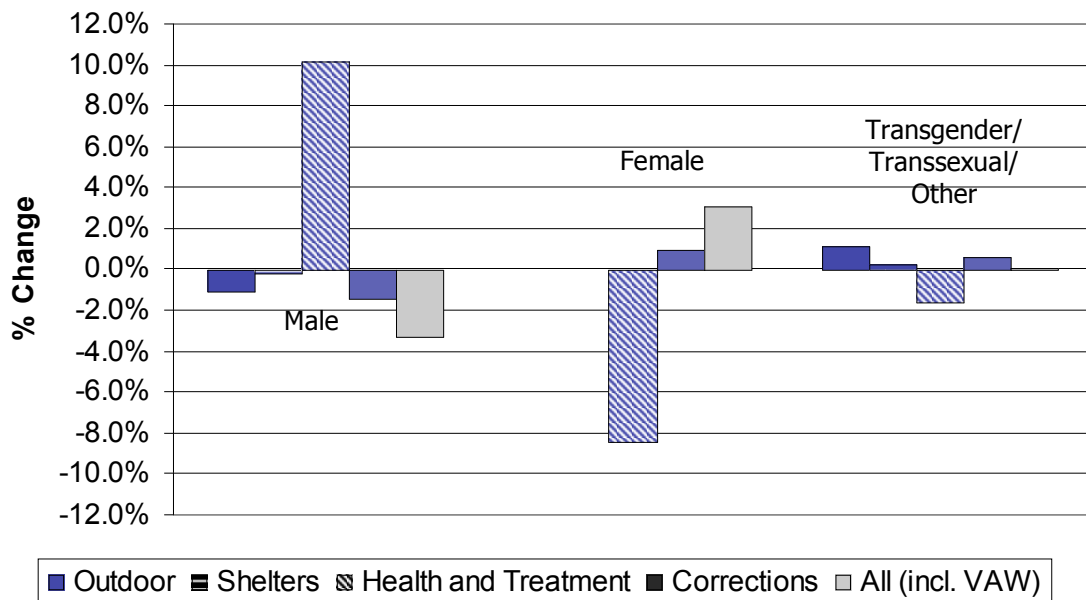
	Male		Female		Transgender		Transsexual		Other	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	91	80.5%	20	17.7%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Shelters	935	70.2%	384	28.9%	6	0.5%	1	0.1%	5	0.4%
VAW Sector	0	0.0%	105	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Health and Treatment	104	77.0%	30	22.2%	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Corrections	167	91.8%	14	7.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.5%
All Survey Respondents	1297	69.4%	553	29.6%	8	0.4%	1	0.1%	7	0.4%

The proportion of homeless individuals identifying as female has increased since 2006, from 26.5% to 29.6%. However, this is primarily because the VAW sector did not participate in the survey in 2006 and therefore data on women staying in VAW shelters was not included in the survey results. For comparison to 2006, the proportion of total homeless females, not including the VAW shelter sector, is 25.4% in 2009, slightly less than in 2006.

Figure 22: Comparison of Self-Identified Gender 2006 and 2009

	Male		Female		Transgender		Transsexual		Other	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
Outdoor	81.6%	80.5%	17.7%	17.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Shelters	70.5%	70.2%	28.7%	28.9%	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%
VAW	N/A	0.0%	N/A	100.0%	N/A	0.0%	N/A	0.0%	N/A	0.0%
Health and Treatment	66.9%	77.0%	30.7%	22.2%	0.0%	0.7%	1.6%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Corrections	93.2%	91.8%	6.8%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
All Survey Respondents	72.7%	69.4%	26.4%	29.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%

Figure 23: Relative Change in Self-Identified Gender 2006 and 2009



Length of Homelessness

Overall, the average length of homelessness decreased from 3.4 years to 2.9 years. As in 2006, individuals outdoors had been homeless for the longest on average.

Figure 24: Comparison of Average Length of Homelessness (in years)

	2006	2009
Outdoor	6	6.1
Family Shelters	0.6	0.5
Youth Shelters	1.2	1.2
Mixed Adult Shelters	3.8	2
Men's Shelters	4.1	3.6
Women's Shelters	2.1	2.7
All Shelters	3	2.5
VAW Sector	N/A	0.4
Health and Treatment	4.2	4.2
Corrections	4.5	4.7
All Survey Respondents	3.4	2.9

Across all groups surveyed, 27.8% had been homeless for more than 2 years (compared to 33.7% in 2006). For those outdoors 51.0% had been homeless more than two years (compared to 57% in 2006).

Figure 25: Length of Homelessness

LOCATION	30 days or less		> 30 days to 3 months		> 3 months to a year		> 1 to 2 years		> 2 to 5 years		> 5 years and < 10 years		10 years or more	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	10	9.8	10	9.8	16	15.7	14	13.7	17	16.7	17	16.7	18	17.6
Family	75	37.1	52	25.7	60	29.7	10	5.0	2	1.0	3	1.5	0	0.0
Youth	49	23.4	46	22.0	65	31.1	23	11.0	12	5.7	13	6.2	1	0.5
Mixed Adult	9	12.0	13	17.3	30	40.0	6	8.0	11	14.7	3	4.0	3	4.0
Men's	72	11.0	84	12.9	178	27.3	85	13.0	111	17.0	65	10.0	58	8.9
Women's	29	16.7	25	14.4	56	32.2	13	7.5	27	15.5	14	8.0	10	5.7
All Shelters	234	17.8	220	16.8	389	29.6	137	10.4	163	12.4	98	7.5	72	5.5
VAW Sector	28	27.5	34	33.3	37	36.3	2	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Health and Treatment	18	15.5	6	5.2	41	35.3	4	3.4	23	19.8	14	12.1	10	8.6
Corrections	12	9.5	11	8.7	31	24.6	16	12.7	26	20.6	13	10.3	17	13.5
All Survey Respondents	302	17.2	281	16.0	514	29.2	173	9.8	229	13.0	142	8.1	118	6.7

The number of people homeless for more than 10 years has also decreased, from 12.2% of those surveyed in 2006 to 6.7% of those surveyed in 2009.

Consistent with 2006, the older an individual is, the more likely they are to have been homeless longer. However, the average length of homelessness for those 65 and over has decreased from 11.3 years to 5.7 years.

Figure 26: Comparison of Age and Average Length of Homelessness 2006 and 2009

	2006	2009
<21	1.2	1
21-30	2.4	1.7
31-40	2.9	2.4
41-50	4.1	3.8
51-64	4.8	4.2
65 and >	11.3	5.7

Aboriginal Identity

In total, 15.4% of people surveyed identified themselves as Aboriginal, with 50.8% identifying as First Nations, 23.3% identifying as Metis, 2.4% identifying as Inuit, and 24.9% as something other.

Although the proportion of homeless people who self-identified as Aboriginal decreased slightly from 16.2% in 2006 to 15.4% in 2009, Aboriginal people remain over-represented in the homeless population.

Figure 27: Comparison of Self-Identified Aboriginal Identity 2006 and 2009

	2006		2009	
	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	72	25.8%	33	28.7%
Family	11	5.9%	15	7.4%
Youth	36	19.5%	34	16.6%
Mixed	37	19.1%	16	20.8%
Men's	107	15.7%	96	14.8%
Women's	30	14.3%	22	12.6%
All Shelters	221	15.2%	183	14.0%
VAW Sector	N/A	N/A	11	11.6%
Health and Treatment	14	11.7%	14	10.6%
Corrections	5	7.0%	42	23.5%
All Survey Respondents	312	16.2%	283	15.4%

The proportion of individuals identifying as Aboriginal was greater in the outdoor population where 28.7% of individuals identified themselves as Aboriginal, which compares to 25.8% in 2006. However, as the absolute number of homeless people outdoors has decreased significantly, the number of Aboriginal homeless people living outdoors has also decreased significantly. Of the total population estimated to be outdoors in 2009 (400), it is estimated that 115 (28.7%) identify as Aboriginal. In 2006, 25.8% of the total estimated outdoor population (818) were identified as Aboriginal, equating to 211 individuals. This equates to a 45% reduction in the overall number of Aboriginal individuals staying outdoors on the night of the survey.

Housing Needs and Service Use

Help Needed to Find Housing

The Street Needs Assessment again shows in 2009 that overwhelmingly, homeless people want permanent housing. Approximately 9 out of every 10 individuals who are homeless want to live in permanent housing.

Figure 28: Whether an Individual Wants Permanent Housing, 2006 and 2009

	2006	2009
Outdoor	85.8%	82.1%
Family Shelters	96.9%	97.0%
Youth Shelters	86.2%	90.6%
Mixed Adult Shelters	87.9%	96.1%
Men's Shelters	83.9%	86.6%
Women's Shelters	90.7%	85.5%
All Shelters	87.4%	89.2%
VAW Sector	N/A	93.0%
Health and Treatment	90.4%	85.6%
Corrections	95.8%	91.5%
All Survey Respondents	86.0%	88.9%

When people were asked what would help them find housing, the answers most frequently provided were the same as those in 2006: Help finding an affordable place (87.6%) More money (87.0%); Transportation to see apartments (74.0%); Help with housing applications (65.8%); and Help getting identification (46.6%). Demand for services to assist people to find housing remains strong.

Figure 29: What Would Help to Find Housing

	Help finding an affordable place		More money		Transportation to see apartments		Help with housing applications		Help getting identification	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	91	87.5	91	87.5	79	76.0	60	57.7	51	49.0
Family	184	91.1	180	89.1	150	74.3	155	76.7	89	44.1
Youth	190	91.3	192	92.3	167	80.3	160	76.9	90	43.3
Mixed Adult	66	86.8	68	89.5	57	75.0	54	71.1	23	30.3
Men's	569	87.8	565	87.2	480	74.1	384	59.3	305	47.1
Women's	154	88.0	155	88.6	129	73.7	114	65.1	85	48.6
All Shelters	1163	88.8	1160	88.6	983	75.1	867	66.2	592	45.2
VAW Sector	78	78.8	76	76.8	67	67.7	70	70.7	25	25.3
Health and Treatment	113	90.4	106	84.8	99	79.2	91	72.8	67	53.6
Corrections	152	81.3	154	82.4	121	64.7	113	60.4	115	61.5
All Survey Respondents	1597	87.6	1587	87.0	1349	74.0	1201	65.8	850	46.6

Figure 30: Comparison of What Would Help to Find Housing 2006 and 2009

	2006	2009
Help finding an affordable place	84.5%	87.6%
More money	84.4%	87.0%
Transportation to see apartments	70.3%	74.0%
Help with housing applications	62.5%	65.8%
Help getting identification	41.8%	46.6%
Help addressing your health needs	37.1%	37.6%
Cultural supports	26.5%	28.8%
Help with legal issues	28.3%	27.4%
Mental health supports	26.5%	24.0%
Services in a language other than English	16.1%	19.2%
Help with immigration issues	15.9%	17.7%
Something else	14.3%	17.2%
Help getting alcohol or drug treatment	20.6%	15.8%
Harm Reduction supports	14.4%	11.6%
Help getting detox services	14.2%	11.3%

One of the key findings from 2006 was that despite indicating a strong desire to have permanent housing, most individuals surveyed reported that they were not on a waiting list for housing. One of the recommendations arising from the 2006 SNA was to review with shelter operators and community agencies the status of all housing applications to ensure that people who are homeless are on an appropriate waiting list for housing.

The results from 2009 show that there has been some improvement in ensuring homeless people are on appropriate waiting lists for housing. This is particularly the case for outdoor homeless, where the proportion reporting being on a waiting increased from 29.7% to 42.6%. Overall, 45.4% of people reported being on a housing waiting list, compared to 36.6% in 2006. Although this demonstrates success in working towards achieving this goal, there is still more work to be done to ensure that all homeless people are on appropriate waiting lists for housing.

Figure 31: Whether the Individual is on a Housing Waiting List

	2006	2009
Outdoor	29.7%	42.6%
Family	57.3%	62.1%
Youth	28.3%	31.9%
Mixed	41.7%	36.8%
Men's	33.2%	44.1%
Women's	46.5%	60.3%
All Shelters	38.8%	46.7%
VAW Shelters	N/A	71.6%
Health and Treatment	34.4%	39.1%
Corrections	21.9%	28.1%
All Survey Respondents	36.6%	45.4%

Service Use

As in 2006, after shelters, drop-ins are the service most commonly used by homeless people, followed closely by ID services, health clinics and hospitals.

Figure 32: Most Frequently Used Services in the Past Six Months

	Dropins		ID Services		Health Clinics		Hospital Emergency Room		Food Bank/Community Kitchen		OOTC meals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	67	63.2	56	52.8	53	50.0	46	43.4	42	39.6	68	64.2
Family	27	14.4	64	34.2	100	53.5	81	43.3	50	26.7	11	5.9
Youth	121	59.6	118	58.1	121	59.6	83	40.9	63	31.0	33	16.3
Mixed	41	57.7	35	49.3	29	40.8	35	49.3	34	47.9	31	43.7
Men's	407	65.6	334	53.9	265	42.7	275	44.4	249	40.2	291	46.9
Women's	102	59.0	78	45.1	93	53.8	102	59.0	68	39.3	38	22.0
All Shelters	698	55.7	629	50.2	608	48.5	576	45.9	464	37.0	404	32.2
VAW Sector	12	13.0	27	29.3	48	52.2	44	47.8	24	26.1	6	6.5
Health and Treatment	40	35.1	50	43.9	49	43.0	68	59.6	39	34.2	39	34.2
Corrections	68	45.3	82	54.7	73	48.7	64	42.7	71	47.3	56	37.3
All Survey Respondents	885	51.6	844	49.2	831	48.4	798	46.5	640	37.3	573	33.4

The top six most commonly used services in the past six months remain relatively the same as in 2006, although the ranking of these services is slightly different.

Figure 33: Comparison of Most Frequently Used Services, 2006 and 2009

	2006		2009	
	%	Rank	%	Rank
Drop-ins	60.0%	1	51.6%	1
ID Services	49.8%	4	49.2%	2
Health Clinics	51.1%	2	48.4%	3
Hospital/ER	50.9%	3	46.5%	4
Food Bank or Community Kitchen	40.1%	6	37.3%	5
Out of the Cold Meals	40.6%	5	33.4%	6

Of the survey respondents who indicated they had used one or more services in the past six months, 56.8% indicated that at least one of these services was helping them get housing. The three services that were most frequently helping people get housing were similar to 2006 - housing help centres (55.7%), shelters (42.6%), and drop-in centres (20.9%).

In total, 35.3% of individuals who said they had a housing plan indicated they planned to move into housing in one month or less, compared to 30.7% in 2006.

Service Use Patterns of Outdoor and Sheltered Populations

As noted in 2006, there are some differences between the outdoor and shelter populations' service use patterns. The outdoor population is more likely to use detox (substance use withdrawal management), drop-in centres, harm reduction services, and Out of the Cold programs, while the shelter population is more likely to use employment and job training services.

Figure 34: Service Use Patterns of Surveyed Outdoor and Sheltered Populations

	Detox Services (Withdrawal Management)		Dropins		Harm Reduction		Employment/ Job Training		Out of the cold meals		Out of the cold beds	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	27	25.5	67	63.2	27	25.5	12	11.3	68	64.2	47	44.3
Shelters	140	11.2	698	55.7	176	14.0	346	27.6	404	32.2	269	21.5
Total	251	14.6	885	51.6	264	15.4	442	25.8	573	33.4	395	23.0

Moving between Indoor and Outdoor Environments

The 2009 survey demonstrates again that many people who are homeless move between indoor and outdoor environments. Of those staying indoors on the night of the survey, 36.5% had slept outside one or more nights in the last six months.

Figure 35: Individuals Surveyed Indoors Who Had Slept Outside One or More Nights in the Last Six Months

	2006	2009	
	%	#	%
Family Shelters	13.2%	27	13.4%
Youth Shelters	35.0%	60	28.7%
Mixed Adult Shelters	46.7%	33	42.9%
Men's Shelters	42.9%	296	44.5%
Women's Shelters	24.9%	41	22.9%
All Shelters	36.0%	457	34.3%
VAW Sector	N/A	20	20.0%
Health and Treatment	35.5%	41	30.8%
Corrections	87.8%	116	67.4%
All Survey Respondents	38.3%	634	36.5%

While many people sleeping outdoors had also stayed indoors at some point in the past six months, fewer of those outdoors had used a shelter bed than in 2006. Of the individuals surveyed outdoors, 41.5% had stayed in a shelter one or more nights in the past 6 months (compared to 58.1% in 2006) and 44.3% had stayed in an Out of the Cold bed (compared to 53.9% in 2006). In total, 40.6% said they had not used a shelter bed or an Out of the Cold bed in the past six months (compared to 27.2% in 2006). This indicates that those who remain homeless outdoors are more likely to be sleeping outdoors more often and are less likely to be accessing services available in a shelter or Out of the Cold program.

Figure 36: Individuals Surveyed Outdoors Use of Shelters and Out of the Cold Beds

	2006	2009
Used shelters	58.1%	41.5%
Used OOTC beds	53.9%	44.3%
Had not used a shelter or OOTC bed	27.2%	40.6%

Impacts of Length of Homelessness

As in 2006, the results of the survey indicate that the longer an individual has been homeless, the less likely they are to say they are interested in permanent housing. The average length of homelessness of a person who wants permanent housing is 2.8 years. The average length of homelessness of a person who does not want housing is 4.0 years.

People who are homeless longer also continue to rely more on services that assist with substance use, health and mental health, as well as Out of the Cold programs.

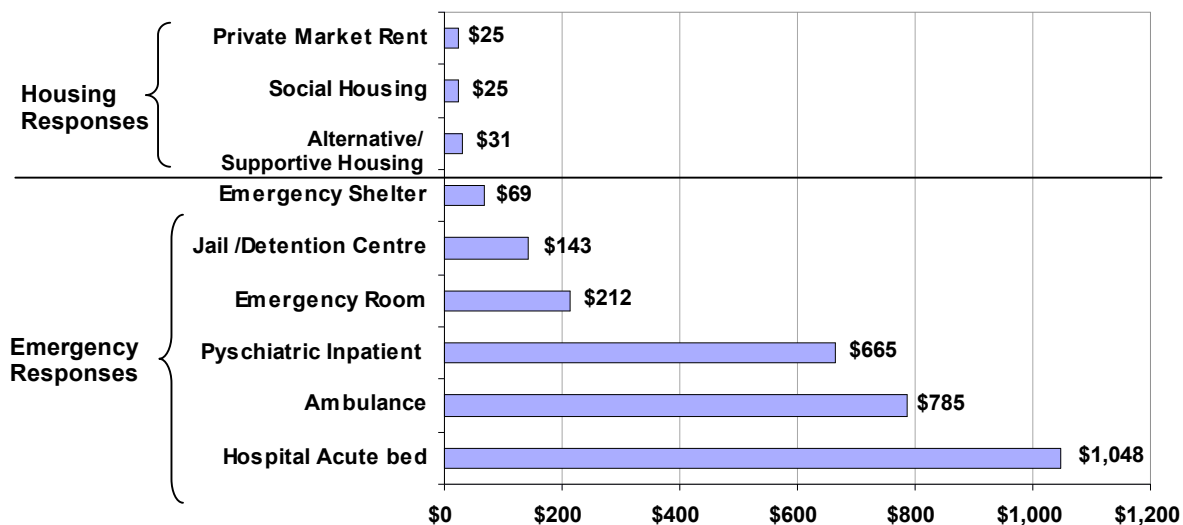
Figure 37: Length of Homelessness and Service Usage

Services Used in the Past 6 Months	Average Number of Years Homeless of Service User	
	2006	2009
Harm Reduction Program	5.1	5.2
Detox (Withdrawal Management)	4.8	4.9
OOTC beds	5	4.8
OOTC meals	4.7	4.6
Street Outreach	4.2	4.3
Drop-ins	4.1	3.8
Street Helpline	4.2	3.6
ID Services	3.7	3.3
Hospital Emergency Room	3.7	3.2
Food Bank or Community Kitchen	3.6	3.2
Health Clinics	3.4	2.8
Housing Help Centre	3.1	2.5
Legal Clinics	3.6	2.4
Job Training Supports	2.8	2.1

Health, Emergency and Correctional Services

Consistent with 2006 findings, the 2009 Street Needs Assessment shows that homeless people are frequent users of expensive emergency services like hospitals, ambulance, and the justice system. A comparison of the costs of housing and emergency services used by homeless people demonstrates that the use of these emergency services is substantially more expensive than housing-based responses to homelessness.

Figure 38: Daily or Per Use Cost of Services¹



¹ Cost Savings Analysis of the Streets to Homes Program, January 2009
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-18574.pdf>

Previous evaluation of the Toronto Streets to Homes program has shown that individuals who are housed through Streets to Homes are less likely to use costly emergency services such as ambulance and emergency hospital care, police services and jails once they are housed and that these savings to other service systems can offset the cost of providing housing and supports.

Interactions with Police and Correctional Services

The Street Needs Assessment survey asked all individuals about their interactions with police and corrections over the past six months. Of all survey respondents, other than those in a correctional facility, 32.1% indicated they had had an interaction with police, 12.4% indicated they had an interaction with corrections, and 12.6% indicated they had an interaction with probation or parole. As in 2006, those staying outdoors were more likely to interact with police and corrections.

Figure 39: Interactions with Police and Jail

	Police		Jail		Probation	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
Outdoor	50.7%	57.8%	21.8%	21.6%	19.3%	15.5%
All Shelters	36.9%	32.8%	17.0%	13.2%	16.2%	14.2%
VAW Sector	N/A	50.5%	N/A	3.8%	N/A	3.8%
Health and Treatment	30.4%	33.3%	19.6%	21.0%	14.4%	18.1%
All Survey Respondents	37.1%	32.1%	17.9%	12.4%	16.0%	12.6%

Use of Health Services

As in 2006, across all groups surveyed, there was strong evidence of interaction with various health care services. Of all survey respondents, 17.8% had an interaction with an ambulance at least once in the past six months (compared to 18.5% in 2006). Use of health clinics and hospitals was also high, with 49.1% having used a health clinic (compared to 51.1% in 2006) and 48.4% having used a hospital in the last six months (compared to 50.9% in 2006).

Figure 40: Interactions with Health Services

	Hospital Emergency Room		Ambulance		Health Clinic	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
Outdoor	47.5%	43.4%	22.6%	15.5%	53.5%	50.0%
All Shelters	51.4%	45.9%	18.4%	19.3%	52.1%	48.5%
VAW Sector	N/A	47.8%	N/A	15.2%	N/A	52.2%
Health and Treatment	60.6%	59.6%	20.8%	22.5%	38.5%	43.0%
All Survey Respondents	50.9%	46.5%	18.5%	17.2%	51.1%	48.4%

Mental Health and Addictions Services

Although the survey does not ask people whether they have a mental health or addictions issue, it does show that a significant number of homeless people self-identify that access to addiction and mental health services would help them to find housing. The table below outlines the proportion of each group that indicated help with a health-based or treatment related service would help them achieve housing.

Figure 41: Health and Treatment Services that Would Help Individuals Achieve Housing

	Alcohol or drug treatment		Detox services (withdrawal management)		Harm Reduction supports		Mental health supports		Addressing your health needs	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	21	20.2%	16	15.4%	20	19.2%	29	27.9%	40	38.5%
Family	6	3.0%	7	3.5%	7	3.5%	20	9.9%	79	39.1%
Youth	15	7.2%	12	5.8%	11	5.3%	44	21.2%	57	27.4%
Mixed	10	13.2%	6	7.9%	12	15.8%	14	18.4%	23	30.3%
Men's	113	17.4%	79	12.2%	84	13.0%	127	19.6%	237	36.6%
Women's	19	10.9%	16	9.1%	16	9.1%	60	34.3%	83	47.4%
All Shelters	163	12.5%	120	9.2%	130	9.9%	265	20.2%	479	36.6%
VAW Sector	4	4.0%	2	2.0%	2	2.0%	15	15.2%	26	26.3%
Health and Treatment	44	35.2%	32	25.6%	23	18.4%	73	58.4%	60	48.0%
Corrections	57	30.5%	41	21.9%	31	16.6%	56	29.9%	80	42.8%
All Survey Respondents	289	15.8%	211	11.6%	206	11.3%	438	24.0%	685	37.6%

In total, 51.8% of those surveyed indicated that they needed at least one addiction, health or mental health related service in order to help them find housing (compared to 54.3% in 2006).

Figure 42: Individuals Who Indicated that One or More Health and Treatment Related Service Would Help Them to Achieve Housing

	2006		2009	
	#	%	#	%
Outdoor	130	58.6%	61	58.7%
Family	87	46.3%	85	42.1%
Youth	74	40.7%	83	39.9%
Mixed	109	58.0%	32	42.1%
Men's	367	55.4%	330	50.9%
Women's	123	62.8%	105	60.0%
All Shelters	760	53.7%	635	48.5%
VAW Sector	N/A		31	31.3%
Health and Treatment	88	76.5%	98	78.4%
Corrections	48	65.8%	120	64.2%
All Survey Respondents	1026	54.3%	945	51.8%

Income and Employment

In addition to income from formal sources such as Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) (21.2%), Ontario Works (24.3%), Personal Needs Allowance (40.9%), and Street Allowance (13.5%), individuals also reported income from friends or family (14.6%) and panhandling (9.7%). As in 2006, panhandling income was reported more frequently by those living outdoors (50.0%).

Figure 43: Selected Sources of Income

	Friends/ family		Panhandling		ODSP		Ontario Works		Personal Needs Allowance*	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
Outdoor	21.6%	11.2%	57.2%	50.0%	15.9%	25.5%	40.9%	48.0%	3.8%	7.1%
Family	9.1%	13.8%	2.7%	1.7%	5.4%	9.9%	20.4%	15.5%	60.8%	57.5%
Youth	30.9%	28.7%	9.0%	3.5%	10.7%	5.9%	21.3%	23.8%	54.5%	54.5%
Mixed	13.1%	12.5%	14.3%	4.2%	25.0%	18.1%	31.5%	36.1%	25.0%	41.7%
Men's	18.4%	11.2%	12.7%	9.0%	24.8%	23.4%	24.7%	25.2%	34.1%	32.4%
Women's	10.4%	9.0%	9.8%	3.6%	29.5%	31.1%	9.8%	15.6%	44.6%	42.5%
All Shelters	17%	14.2%	10.7%	6.0%	21.0%	19.3%	22.4%	22.8%	40.7%	41.6%
VAW Sector	N/A	10.6%	N/A	0.0%	N/A	4.3%	N/A	31.9%	N/A	37.2%
Health and Treatment	14.4%	16.0%	14.4%	12.1%	48.3%	59.7%	22.9%	22.6%	11.9%	23.4%
Corrections	16.2%	21.8%	36.8%	17.3%	7.4%	13.3%	55.9%	57.3%	7.4%	11.3%
All Survey Respondents	17.3%	14.6%	17.4%	9.7%	21.4%	21.2%	24.4%	27.8%	36.5%	35.4%

*Personal Needs Allowance individuals who are staying in shelters or other institutions to cover incidental costs.

The question regarding ODSP was refined for the 2009 survey to improve the clarity of the question and usefulness of responses. The survey found that of those who were not currently on ODSP, 34.5% believe they are eligible for ODSP benefits. However, of those who believe they are eligible, only 15% have an application currently in process while a further 25% indicated that they had applied for benefits in the past. This means that nearly two-thirds of those who believe they may be eligible for ODSP benefits have never applied.

The question regarding employment was also changed slightly for the 2009 survey to better reflect the nature of employment income that individuals were reporting. In 2009, 8.8% of those surveyed reported having full-time employment, 16.8% had part-time employment and 11.7% reported informal employment. In total, 28.8% of individuals reported some form of employment income.

Figure 44: Employment Income, 2006 and 2009

	Full time formal employment		Part time/ Casual employment		Informal employment		Total 2009 Employment		Employment 2006
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
Outdoor	6	6.1%	11	11.2%	15	15.3%	24	24.5%	23.1%
Family	13	7.2%	8	4.4%	5	2.8%	22	12.2%	15.1%
Youth	20	9.9%	47	23.3%	21	10.4%	74	36.6%	38.8%
Mixed	5	6.9%	15	20.8%	13	18.1%	25	34.7%	23.2%
Men's	52	8.6%	137	22.5%	97	16.0%	223	36.7%	27.4%
Women's	8	4.8%	13	7.8%	10	6.0%	29	17.4%	11.9%
All Shelters	98	8.0%	220	17.9%	146	11.9%	373	30.3%	24.5%
VAW Sector	9	9.6%	11	11.7%	4	4.3%	22	23.4%	N/A
Health and Treatment	5	4.0%	34	27.4%	29	23.4%	14	11.3%	12.7%
Corrections	31	20.7%	9	6.0%	5	3.3%	55	36.7%	16.2%
All Survey Respondents	149	8.8%	285	16.8%	199	11.7%	488	28.8%	23.2%

Conclusions

The success of the Toronto Street Needs Assessment is the result of the collaborative efforts of City staff, community agencies, provincial ministries, and volunteers. The City would like to thank everyone who contributed to this effort to better understand the needs of homeless people.

The methodology used in the Street Needs Assessment is recognized as the standard for statistically valid surveying of outdoor homeless populations by the US federal government. For Toronto's 2009 Street Needs Assessment, the methodology used was consistent with the method used in 2006 in order to ensure that 2009 results are comparable to 2006.

The findings from the Street Needs Assessment provide an invaluable tool for understanding the needs of homeless individuals and for service planning and coordination. The results of the Street Needs Assessment from 2006 have been used in numerous ways, including: enhancements to Streets to Homes services; changes to grant funding applications; allocation of 20% of federal homelessness funding (HPI) to address Aboriginal homelessness; increases in funding to the drop-in sector to improve quality and accessibility of service; determining target groups for programs like the Canada-Ontario-Toronto Housing Allowance Program and the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Toronto research demonstration project; as well as a variety of other program adjustments. The findings also provide a baseline of information from which to measure the outcomes of programs and particular service interventions.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that between April 2006 and April 2009 progress has been made on Council's Housing First plan to end homelessness in the City of Toronto, as outlined in the Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT) Affordable Housing

Strategy. Particularly in areas where strategic investments have been made to provide the assistance needed to help people to find and keep housing, these investments are achieving results. This is especially true for outdoor homelessness, where there was a 51% reduction in the number of people staying outdoors. The reduction in street homelessness demonstrated by the 2009 Street Needs Assessment provides further evidence to support a Housing First approach and demonstrates that overwhelmingly, homeless people want permanent housing. The 2009 Street Needs Assessment survey found once again that 9 out of 10 homeless people reported that they want permanent housing.

The results also demonstrate once again that homeless people are frequent users of expensive emergency services like hospitals, ambulance, and the justice system. Previous evaluation of the Toronto Streets to Homes program has shown that the costs of providing housing and supports is often less than the costs of emergency services used by people living on the streets. The findings also point to the need for continued coordination with health and correctional services to provide more integrated access to housing and supports for individuals leaving these facilities. The other findings and results of the survey will be used to make further program adjustments and service improvements to better meet the needs of homeless people and help them to find and keep permanent housing.

While the investments in street outreach and follow-up supports through the Streets to Homes program have clearly paid off, continued implementation of the Housing First approach throughout all housing and homelessness services provided by the City, including in shelters and through the Streets to Homes program, is needed to build on the clear progress made to end homelessness and to ensure that everyone in the City of Toronto has access to the safety, stability and dignity of a home.

Appendix A: 2006 and 2009 Street Needs Assessment Budget

2006 Expenditures	
Honoraria for Team Leaders and Decoys	\$35,400
Gift Certificates for Survey Participants	\$30,000
Sub-Total	\$65,400
Project Supplies (e.g., clipboards, name tags, flashlights, first aid kits, pens, etc.)	\$2,797
Advertising and Recruitment	\$4,535
Rental of Field Office Space	\$552
Meeting Expenses	\$781
Outreach Services	\$1,938
Printing	\$7,281
Transportation	\$3,720
Sub-Total	\$21,605
Total Expenditures	\$87,005

2009 Expenditures	
Honoraria for Team Leaders and Decoys	\$37,367
Gift Certificates for Survey Participants	\$15,930
Sub-Total	\$53,297
Project Supplies (e.g., clipboards, name tags, flashlights, first aid kits, pens, etc.)	\$16,244
Advertising and Recruitment	\$9,129
Rental of Field Office Space	\$9,104
Meeting Expenses	\$685
Equipment Rental	\$5,065
Printing	\$8,047
Transportation	\$1,914
Software (Automated Survey Scanning)	\$15,503
Sub-Total	\$65,691
Total Expenditures	\$118,988

Appendix B: Team Leader and Volunteer Feedback

How would you rate your overall experience?

	Team Leaders		Volunteers		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Very Good	100	42.4%	84	23.5%	184	31.0%
Good	112	47.5%	209	58.4%	321	54.0%
Fair	24	10.2%	58	16.2%	82	13.8%
Poor	0	0.0%	7	2.0%	7	1.2%
Very Poor	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

If the City of Toronto were to conduct a similar initiative in the future, would you volunteer again?

	Team Leaders		Volunteers		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	213	82.6%	344	80.4%	557	81.2%
No	23	8.9%	19	4.4%	42	6.1%
Maybe	22	8.5%	65	15.2%	87	12.7%

Please rate the effectiveness of the training you received.

	Team Leaders		Volunteers		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Very Good	85	31.1%	131	29.0%	216	29.8%
Good	119	43.6%	192	42.6%	311	43.0%
Fair	60	22.0%	103	22.8%	163	22.5%
Poor	9	3.3%	22	4.9%	31	4.3%
Very Poor	0	0.0%	3	0.7%	3	0.4%

Based on your experience tonight, how would you rate the organization of the Street Needs Assessment?

	Team Leaders		Volunteers		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Very Good	70	30.0%	96	22.6%	166	25.2%
Good	87	37.3%	146	34.4%	233	35.4%
Fair	54	23.2%	119	28.0%	173	26.3%
Poor	19	8.2%	49	11.5%	68	10.3%
Very Poor	3	1.3%	15	3.5%	18	2.7%

Appendix C: Comparison to Surveys in Other Jurisdictions

Still on our streetsResults of the 2008 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count

Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/homelessness/ResourcesPage/HomelessCountReport2008Feb12.pdf>

"The 22% growth rate in the number of people counted as homeless in 2008 represents a significant increase in the homeless population region wide. It suggests that much remains to be done to stem the tide of rising homelessness, particularly among the street/service homeless. While the policy of focusing new shelter beds only in areas with gaps in supply make sense from a 'housing first' perspective, the number of new permanent supportive housing units built has clearly not been adequate to meet growing demand.

There were 1,574 street/service homeless on March 11th, which represents 59% of the total homeless population in the region. This is the first Metro Vancouver homeless count where the street/service homeless significantly outnumbered the sheltered homeless."

Biennial Count of Homeless Persons in Calgary 2008

City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services Research Unit

http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/homelessness/2008_count_full_report.pdf

"Although Civic Census data are not yet available for 2008, the population growth rate for Calgary from 2006 to 2007 was 2.8% (City of Calgary, 2007). As a general trend, the growth of point-in-time homelessness still far exceeds overall population growth in Calgary. Nonetheless, even though homelessness in Calgary increased in 2008, it only grew by 18%. This is a reversal of the 'over 30 percent' growth rate for point-in-time homelessness seen for most previous counts. Something that may have begun to shift the balance is the effect of two pilot projects that began in late 2007 as part of Calgary's 10-year Plan to End Homelessness."

A Count of Homeless Persons in Edmonton 2008

Homeward Trust Edmonton Homeless Count Committee

http://www.homewardtrust.ca/uploads/2008_Final_Homeless_Count_Report.pdf

"As in the 2006 Count of Homeless Persons there is an increase in the number of homeless people in Edmonton. A total of 3079 people were counted in 2008. This reflects an increase of 18% or 461 people in the total number of homeless counted. The number of absolute homeless increased by almost 5% or 88 to 1862 and the number of sheltered homeless increased by approximately 44% or 373 to 1217."