Highlights

Team leads surveying a Toronto resident on the night of the 2018 Street Needs Assessment. Photo features Erwin from Native Men’s Residence and Belinda from the City of Toronto’s Streets to Homes program.
1. The number of people homeless in Toronto is due, in large part, to a significant increase in refugee/asylum claimants
Homelessness in Toronto on April 26, 2018

- 3,876 people in shelters (non-refugee/asylum claimants)
- 2,618 refugee/asylum claimants in shelters
- 497 people in 24-hour respite sites
- 118 people in 24-hour women’s drop-ins
- 45 people in the Out of the Cold program
- 1,028 people in provincial institutions (e.g., Violence Against Women shelters, health and treatment facilities)
- 533 estimated people sleeping outdoors
82% of people are staying in City-administered sites

Note: Data are not available on refugee/asylum claimants for 2006 and 2009 as this was prior to the implementation of the City’s Shelter Management Information System (SMIS).
40% of those in City-administered shelters were refugee/asylum claimants

- Refugee/asylum claimant: 39.7%
- Immigrant: 17.1%
- Temporary resident (e.g., temporary worker, international student): 2.7%
94% of people are staying in indoor sites
Movement between indoor and outdoor locations

70% stayed only in indoor locations (shelters and 24-hour respite sites)
29% slept both outdoors and in indoor locations
2% reported staying outdoors only
Half report being homeless more than 6 months

Higher among outdoor respondents (70%)

Average duration of homelessness in past year:

- 7 months (all respondents)
- 9 months (outdoor respondents)
2. People who are homeless want housing and the key solutions are: (1) increasing income and (2) housing affordability
The vast majority of individuals experiencing homelessness want permanent housing

94% of respondents indicated a desire for permanent housing
Top five most important supports are those that increase income and housing affordability

- Increased social assistance rates: 21.7%
- More affordable housing available: 20.6%
- Subsidized housing or a housing allowance: 16.2%
- Help finding an affordable place: 9.8%
- Help finding employment or job training: 7.0%
- Help with settlement and immigration issues: 4.5%
- Other housing help services: 3.1%
- Help to keep housing once you have it: 2.8%
- Help with housing applications: 2.0%
- Help getting identification: 1.3%
3. There are multiple pathways into homelessness, but the primary causes are: migration, the economy and the housing market
Top three reported causes of homelessness are migration, inability to pay the cost of housing, and eviction.

- Migration: 16.3%
- Unable to pay rent: 13.6%
- Eviction non-financial: 8.2%
  
e.g., sale or redevelopment of property
15% of people have experience in foster care

Higher for outdoor (35%) and 24-hour respite site respondents (23%)
63% of people outdoors first experienced homelessness as children/youth

1/3 of all respondents reported their first homeless experience as children/youth (up to 24 years)
This was considerably higher among outdoor respondents (63%)

- Outdoors: 63.4%
- City-administered shelters: 27.8%
- 24-hour respite sites: 35.6%
- VAW shelters: 28.6%
- All respondents: 31.5%
More than half reported having a health condition

57% of respondents reported having one or more type of health condition (e.g., diabetes, heart condition, mental health issue, physical disability)

Higher for outdoor (80%) and 24-hour respite site respondents (76%)
4. Homelessness affects people from different backgrounds but specific groups are overrepresented in Toronto’s homeless population
38% of outdoor respondents identify as Indigenous

16% of all respondents identify as Indigenous

Indigenous people represent between 1 to 2.5% of the Toronto population
Racialized individuals are overrepresented

Almost two-thirds of all respondents identified as members of racialized groups, with the largest percentage identifying as Black.
13% of outdoor respondents are veterans

5% of all respondents reported having service in the Canadian military (i.e., Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force) or RCMP

Higher among the outdoor population (13%)

- Canadian Military: 3.9%
- Military outside Canada: 0.8%
- RCMP: 0.6%
One in four youth identify as LGBTQ2S

11% of respondents identify as LGBTQ2S
This was even higher among youth respondents (24%)
Average age of respondents is 41.4

10% are seniors (60 and older); 10% are youth (16 to 24)
3% of respondents identify as transgender, genderqueer/non-conforming or two-spirit

54% of respondents identify as men (73% of those outdoors)
42% of respondents identify as women (75% of those in family shelters)

- Male/Man: 53.9%
- Female/Woman: 41.7%
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming: 1.3%
- Two-spirit: 0.8%
- Trans female/Trans woman: 0.6%
- Trans male/Trans man: 0.4%
- Additional response: 0.1%
Street Needs Assessment 2018 Overview

- Toronto’s fourth SNA – April 26, 2018 (previous: 2006, 2009, & 2013)
- Needs assessment survey and point-in-time count
- Provides scope and profile of homelessness in Toronto to inform service planning and give people a voice in services they need
- Part of the national and provincial coordinated point-in-time snapshot of homelessness
- Introduction of Indigenous cultural safety training for all participants, led and developed by Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)
Street Needs Assessment 2018 Methodology

• Surveys were completed outdoors and in 47 different City-administered shelter programs, 24-hour respite sites and Out of the Cold program open on April 26

• For the first time, surveys completed in 24-hour respite sites and refugee motel programs added to the system since 2013

• Surveys also completed in 10 Violence Against Women shelters

• Occupancy data collected from indoor sites and provincial institutions (including health facilities) for people with no fixed address

• More than 2000 surveys completed
Street Needs Assessment 2018 Acknowledgements

• City-wide initiative that would not be possible without participation and support from:
  • People experiencing homelessness
  • 378 trained volunteers and 166 team leads
  • 25 Indigenous team leads recruited by TASSC
  • Agency partners
  • City of Toronto staff

• Partnership with Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), the Indigenous Community Advisory Board and the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) to plan and deliver SNA