

# STREET NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2018



**RESULTS** REPORT

# Table of Contents

- Introduction and Highlights ..... 1**
  - 2018 Street Needs Assessment..... 1
  - Overview of Methodology..... 1
  - Key Findings ..... 3
- Overview of Toronto's Homeless Population ..... 6**
  - Total Estimated Homeless Population ..... 6
  - Indoor Population ..... 7
  - Outdoor Population ..... 9
  - Comparison to Other Jurisdictions ..... 9
- Profile of Toronto's Homeless Population ..... 11**
  - Gender Identity..... 11
  - Age..... 12
  - Indigenous Identity ..... 14
  - Length of Time in Toronto ..... 16
  - Migration to Canada..... 18
  - Racial/Ethnic Identity..... 19
  - Language ..... 21
  - Family Homelessness ..... 22
  - Sexual Orientation..... 22
  - LGBTQ2S Identity ..... 23
  - Veteran Homelessness ..... 24
  - Health Conditions ..... 25
  - Sources of Income ..... 26
- Homeless History ..... 29**
  - Length of Homelessness..... 29
  - Frequency of Homelessness..... 29
  - Age of First Homeless Experience ..... 30
  - Reasons for Homelessness/Housing Loss..... 31
  - Service Use Patterns ..... 33
  - Overnight Use of Winter Respite Services ..... 35

Location before Using 24-Hour Respite Sites .....	35
<b>Service Needs of Toronto's Homeless Population.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Want Permanent Housing .....	36
Services and Supports to Help Find Housing.....	38
Interaction with the Health Care & Criminal Justice System.....	39
Experience with Foster Care .....	40
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix A: Implementation &amp; Methodology .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix B: Sample of 2018 SNA Survey, Outdoor Population .....</b>	<b>51</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Distribution of Homeless Individuals Staying in Indoor Sites and Outdoors on April 26, 2018 .....	7
Figure 2: Count of Indoor Homelessness in Toronto, 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2018 Street Needs Assessments .....	8
Figure 3: Comparison of Homeless Counts Among Other Major Urban Centres .....	10
Figure 4: Comparison of Outdoor Homeless Counts Among Other Major Urban Centres.....	10
Figure 5: Age of Respondents.....	12
Figure 6: Age of Respondents by Gender Identity .....	13
Figure 7: Indigenous Identity of Respondents.....	14
Figure 8: Distribution of Indigenous Versus Non-Indigenous Respondents by Gender .....	15
Figure 9: Comparison of Indigenous Homelessness Across Canada .....	16
Figure 10: Respondent Length of Time in Canada.....	19
Figure 11: Racial/Ethnic Identity of Respondents.....	20
Figure 12: Distribution of Respondents with Non-Adult Dependents.....	22
Figure 13: Respondents Identifying as LGBTQ2S .....	24
Figure 14: Health Conditions Identified by Respondents.....	25
Figure 15: Respondent Sources of Income .....	27
Figure 16: Respondent Top Five Sources of Income .....	28
Figure 17: Respondent Top Five Reasons for Homelessness .....	33
Figure 18: Respondent Movement Outdoors and Indoors.....	34
Figure 19: Respondent Use of Winter Respite Services Preceding the 2018 SNA .....	35

Figure 20: Respondent Location before Using 24-Hour Respite Services .....	36
Figure 21: Respondents Who Want Permanent Housing.....	37
Figure 22: Respondent Reasons for Not Wanting Permanent Housing .....	37
Figure 23: Respondent Interaction with the Health Care and Criminal Justice System .....	39
Figure 24: Respondents with Foster Care and/or a Group Home Experience .....	41

## List of Tables

Table 1: Total Estimated Homeless Population in Toronto on April 26, 2018.....	6
Table 2: Estimated Outdoor Homeless Population on April 26, 2018 by Community Council District in Toronto .....	9
Table 3: Gender Identity of Respondents.....	12
Table 4: Age of Respondents.....	13
Table 5: Indigenous Identity of Respondents .....	15
Table 6: Respondent Length of Time in Toronto .....	17
Table 7: Location Respondent Lived Before Coming to Toronto.....	17
Table 8: Respondents Who Migrated to Canada .....	18
Table 9: Respondent Length of Time in Canada.....	19
Table 10: Respondents Identifying as Members of Racialized Groups .....	21
Table 11: Language Respondent is Most Comfortable Speaking .....	21
Table 12: Sexual Orientation of Respondents.....	23
Table 13: Respondents Reporting Military or RCMP Service.....	25
Table 14: Health Conditions Identified by Respondents.....	26
Table 15: Length of Homelessness in the Past Year .....	29
Table 16: Respondent Frequency of Homelessness.....	30
Table 17: Respondent Age of First Homeless Experience .....	31
Table 18: Respondent Reasons for Homelessness .....	32
Table 19: Respondents who Slept Outdoors at Least Once in the Past Six Months .....	34
Table 20: Service and Support Needs of Respondents to Help Find Housing .....	38
Table 21: Respondent Interactions with Health Care & Criminal Justice Systems.....	40
Table 22: Respondent Length of Time Since Foster Care and/or a Group Home.....	41
Table 23: 2018 SNA Data Points .....	48
Table 24: 2018 SNA Response Rates for Surveyed Groups.....	50

# Introduction and Highlights

---

## 2018 Street Needs Assessment

Toronto's fourth homeless count and survey was conducted on the night of April 26, 2018. The Street Needs Assessment (SNA) is a needs assessment survey and point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. The results provide a snapshot of the scope and profile of the City's homeless population. Additionally, the results give people experiencing homelessness a voice in what services they need in order to find and keep housing.

This year, Toronto's homeless count was part of the federal government's national coordinated point-in-time count and was funded in part by the Government of Canada. Results will be included in the 2018 national snapshot of homelessness. In addition the provincial government has recently made local homeless enumeration on a bi-annual basis a legislated requirement for Ontario municipalities. Results will be provided to the Province to better understand the scale and nature of homelessness across Ontario.

The 2018 SNA was possible thanks to the participation of people experiencing homelessness who contributed their time and valuable input in completing the survey.

The SNA was also made possible by the participation of 378 trained volunteers and 166 team leads, with support from community partners and City of Toronto staff. New this year was the introduction of Indigenous team leads and Indigenous Cultural Safety training for all participants, led by the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC). Representatives from TASSC and Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) participated on the SNA steering committee overseeing the project.

During the course of the night, a 23 core question survey was completed with more than 2,000 individuals experiencing homelessness staying in shelters (including Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters which are administered by the Province), 24-hour respite sites, and outdoors. Occupancy data were collected from these sites as well as from health and treatment and corrections facilities for individuals identified as experiencing homelessness. The SNA includes individuals experiencing absolute homelessness (indoors and outdoors) but does not capture hidden homelessness (i.e., people couch surfing or staying temporarily with others who do not have the means to secure permanent housing).

The 2018 survey results provide a valuable source of information about the service needs of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. This information is used to improve the housing and homelessness programs provided by the City of Toronto and its partners to better serve our clients and more effectively address homelessness.

## Overview of Methodology

The SNA employs a point-in-time methodology for enumerating homelessness that is now the standard for most major US and Canadian urban centres. While a consistent

methodology and approach to the SNA has been used each year, changes were made in 2018, in part, as a result of Toronto's participation in the coordinated provincial and national point-in-time count. As a result, limited reference is made in the report to results from previous SNAs. The following section provides a brief overview of the 2018 SNA methodology. More detailed information is found in Appendix A.

## **Indoor Count**

An enumeration was conducted of individuals staying in emergency and transitional shelters (including VAW shelters administered by the Province), 24-hour respite sites, and individuals identified as experiencing homelessness staying in health and treatment facilities and correctional facilities. Occupancy data were collected from these sites as well as from health and treatment and corrections facilities for individuals identified as experiencing homelessness.

## **Outdoor Estimate**

To facilitate the outdoor count Toronto was divided into study areas based on the 2011 Statistics Canada census tracts. A sample of study areas that could be covered by study teams was selected. A total of 39% of Toronto's study areas (210 out of the 544 census tracts) were surveyed on the night of April 26, 2018.

Outdoor study teams completed either survey forms or tally sheets for each individual they encountered who was experiencing homelessness. Tally sheets were completed for individuals who were unable or unwilling to complete the survey, for example, because they were sleeping. Once validated, these surveys and tally sheets were used to derive the count of 'encountered' individuals experiencing homelessness for each outdoor study area.

Once the counts of encountered individuals experiencing homelessness were completed, a calculated adjustment was made to account for those individuals not encountered but experiencing homelessness on the night of April 26. In previous SNAs, two adjustments were made to account for: 1) the likelihood that individuals experiencing homelessness were visited and surveyed by study teams according to the correct methodology based on data collected from Control Group members, and 2) extrapolation to the remaining study areas that were not surveyed by study teams.

On the night of the SNA, a large number of the confirmed Control Group volunteers did not show up to participate (40%), resulting in a sample too small to provide a stable and precise adjustment. As a result, this year the outdoor estimate includes only an adjustment for non-surveyed areas of Toronto and does not include an adjustment based on Control Group data.

## Key Findings

### 1) The number of people homeless in Toronto is due, in large part, to a significant increase in refugee/asylum claimants

#### **In total, 82% of people are staying in City-administered sites**

There were an estimated 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 overnight Out of the Cold program (OOTC), and 1,028 people in provincial institutions (e.g., in VAW shelters and health facilities) on April 26, 2018. The number of people staying in City-administered sites increased largely due to the increased number of refugees accessing shelter services. 24-hour respite sites have also been added to Toronto's homeless service system since the 2013 SNA.

#### **40% of respondents staying in City-administered shelters are refugee/asylum claimants**

This is consistent with the recent increase in refugee/asylum claimants accessing emergency shelter services creating significant pressures on the shelter system in Toronto.

#### **94% of people are staying in indoors sites**

The number of people estimated to be staying outdoors increased to 533 in 2018. This represents 6% of the total homeless population in Toronto.

#### **There is significant movement between indoor and outdoor locations**

29% of people reported staying both outdoors and indoors (including shelters and 24-hour respite sites) in the past year. In total 70% of people stayed indoors only and 2% slept outdoors only.

#### **Almost half of all respondents report being homeless for six months or more**

A further 36% of respondents reported being homeless for more than one year. The share who reported being homeless for six months or more was highest among the outdoor population at 70%.

### 2) People who are homeless want housing and the key solutions are increasing income and housing affordability

#### **The vast majority of people experiencing homelessness want housing**

94% of those experiencing homelessness indicated a desire to get into permanent housing. This was lower among those outdoors (80%). Of those who said they did not

want housing, the most frequent reasons given were: they intended to leave Toronto, they had a negative perception of their housing options, they prefer their current living situation (in most cases, a shelter), or they didn't feel ready for housing.

### **The most important supports to help find housing are those that increase income and housing affordability**

76% of respondents reported one of the following services as being most important to help find housing: increased social assistance rates, more affordable housing available, subsidized housing or a housing allowance, help finding an affordable place, and help finding employment or job training.

### **3) There are multiple pathways into homelessness, but the primary causes are migration, the economy and the housing market**

#### **The primary reported causes of homelessness are migration, inability to pay the cost of housing and eviction**

Migration (e.g., moving from another country or community), inability to pay rent or mortgage, and eviction for a non-financial reason (e.g., sale or redevelopment of property) are the three most frequently reported causes of homelessness identified by respondents.

#### **15% of respondents have previous experience in foster care and/or a group home**

This was highest among respondents staying outdoors (35%) and in 24-hour respite sites (23%).

#### **Outdoor respondents are more likely to first experience homelessness as children or youth**

While one-third of all respondents reported their first homeless experience as children or youth, this was considerably higher among outdoor respondents (63%).

#### **More than half of people experiencing homelessness report at least one type of health condition**

57% of respondents reported having one or more type of health condition such as diabetes, arthritis, heart condition, physical disability or mental health issue. This was highest among outdoor respondents (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**

#### **Indigenous people continue to be overrepresented in the homeless population, especially individuals sleeping outdoors**

Indigenous homelessness continues to be a significant issue in Toronto. Indigenous people represent up to 2.5% of the Toronto population, compared to 16% of the overall homeless population. This is even more significant in the outdoor population (38%) and



at 24-hour respite sites (20%). A greater share of the Indigenous homeless population are men. Indigenous people also report longer durations of homelessness compared to non-Indigenous people.

### **Racialized individuals are overrepresented in the homeless population in Toronto**

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

### **One in four youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ2S**

In total, 11% of respondents identified as LGBTQ2S. This was higher among youth with 24% identifying as LGBTQ2S.

### **13% of people experiencing outdoor homelessness are veterans**

While 5% of respondents reported having any service in the Canadian military (i.e., Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force) or RCMP, veteran homelessness is higher among the outdoor population (13%). It is estimated that 1.7% of the population of Ontario are veterans.

### **Seniors and youth both represent 10% of the homeless population**

The average age of all respondents is 41 years, ranging from 16 to 85 years. The share of respondents who are youth (16 to 24 years) and seniors (60 years and older) is each 10%.

### **3% identify as transgender, Two-spirit and genderqueer/gender non-conforming**

The share of respondents who identify as transgender, Two-spirit, and genderqueer/gender non-conforming is approximately 1% each. Men represent over half (54%) of all respondents surveyed, and 73% of those surveyed outdoors. Women represent 42% of respondents surveyed, and 75% of those surveyed in family shelters.

# Overview of Toronto's Homeless Population

---

## Total Estimated Homeless Population

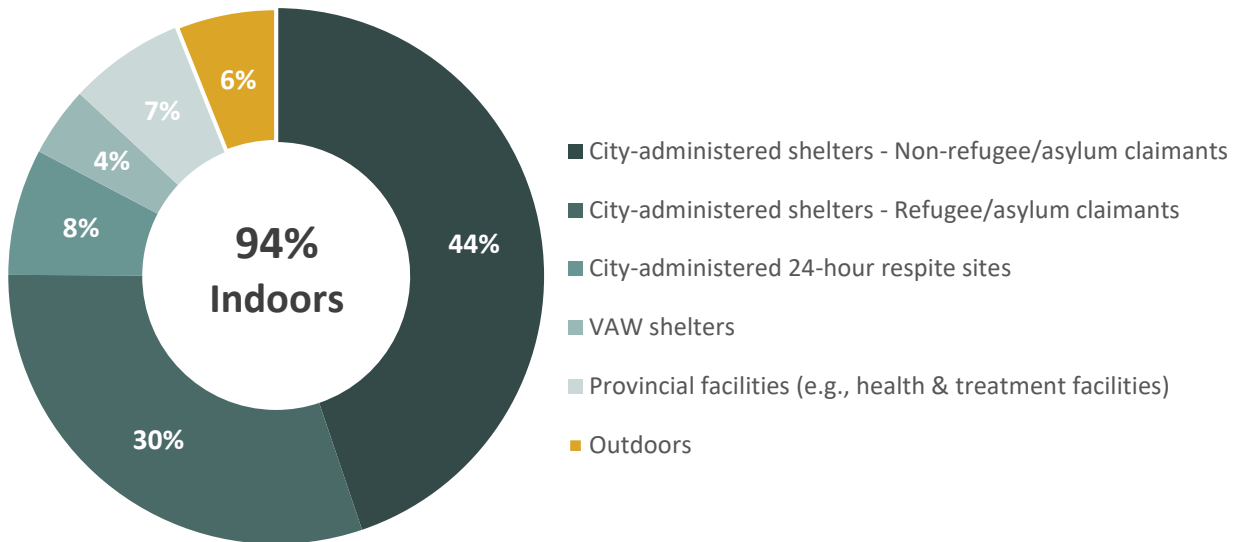
Based on the 2018 SNA, it is estimated that there were 8,715 people experiencing homelessness on April 26, 2018. This includes those outdoors, in City-administered shelters and 24-hour respite sites (including 24-hour women's drop-ins and the overnight Out of the Cold program), in VAW shelters, health and treatment facilities, and correctional facilities. These results are consistent with the increasing demand for homeless services over the past year, impacted particularly by the significant increase in refugee/asylum seekers.

**Table 1: Total Estimated Homeless Population in Toronto on April 26, 2018**

Enumerated Groups	Number	Percent of Total
Outdoors	533	6%
City-administered sites (total)	7,154	82%
Shelters – non-refugee/asylum claimants	3,876	44%
Shelters – refugee/asylum claimants	2,618	30%
24-hour respite sites	497	6%
24-hour women's drop-ins	118	1%
Out of the Cold program	45	1%
VAW shelters	364	4%
Health & treatment facilities	279	3%
Correctional facilities	385	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,715</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1 shows the distribution of individuals experiencing homelessness staying in indoor sites and outdoors on April 26, 2018.

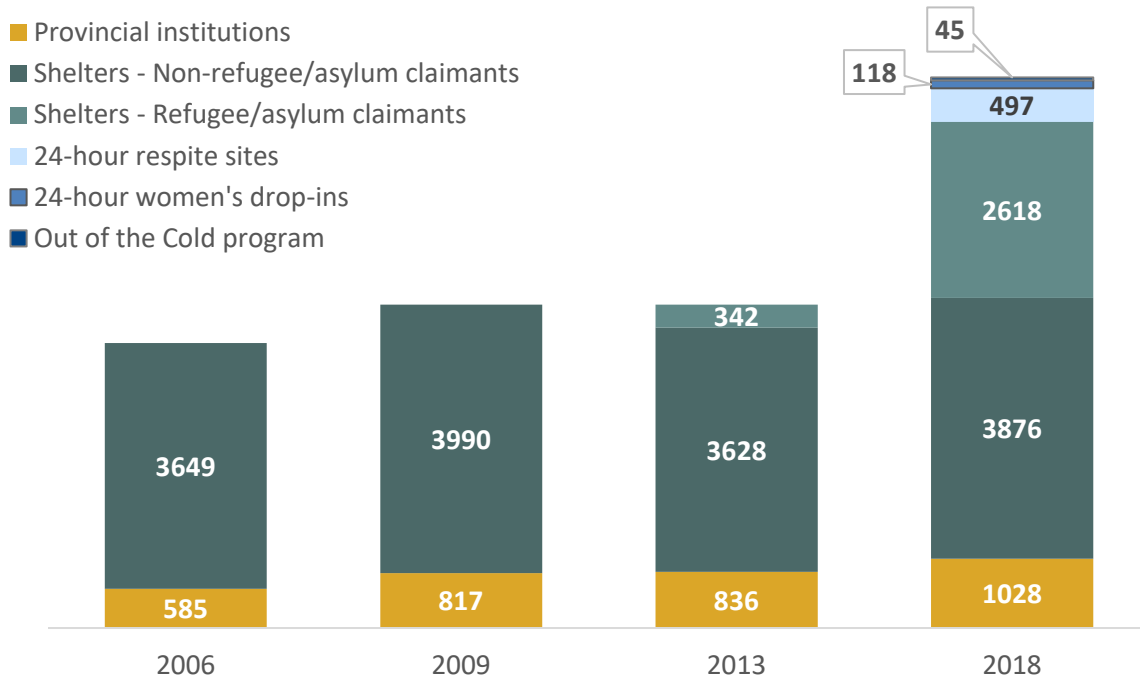
**Figure 1: Distribution of Homeless Individuals Staying in Indoor Sites and Outdoors on April 26, 2018**



## Indoor Population

The number of homeless people staying indoors has increased in 2018, primarily due to the increased number of refugee/asylum claimants staying in shelters. In total, 8,182 people were staying in shelters, 24-hour respite sites (which include the two 24-hour women’s drop-ins and the OOTC program open on April 26), and provincial institutions (which include VAW shelters and health and treatment and correctional facilities) on April 26, 2018 (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Count of Indoor Homelessness in Toronto, 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2018 Street Needs Assessments**



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).

The number of people staying indoors in City-administered sites represents 82% of the overall homeless population in Toronto in 2018. This is 1.8 times higher than 2013 (an increase from 3,970 to 7,154 in 2018).

While the number of shelter beds in Toronto remained relatively consistent for many years, over the past two years, more than 2,400 shelter/motel beds have been added, primarily to respond to increased demand from refugee/asylum seekers. In addition 24-Hour Respite Site spaces have been made available on an ongoing basis.

The number of people experiencing homelessness staying in provincial institutions (i.e., VAW shelters, health and treatment facilities, and correctional facilities) is 1.2 times higher than 2013 (an increase from 836 to 1,028 in 2018). The majority of this increase can be attributed to the increase in the number of people staying in correctional facilities which is 1.6 times higher than in 2013 (an increase from 244 to 385 in 2018).

# Outdoor Population

The number of people experiencing outdoor homelessness on April 26, 2018 is estimated at 533.

As described in Appendix A, the outdoor estimate has two components: 1) a count of individuals encountered and identified as experiencing outdoor homelessness, and 2) an estimated count of individuals not encountered based on extrapolation to non-surveyed areas of Toronto. Because the Control Group sample in 2018 was too small to provide a stable and precise adjustment, this year the outdoor estimate includes only an adjustment for non-surveyed areas of Toronto and does not include an adjustment based on Control Group data.

Table 2 presents the 2018 outdoor results by Community Council District (CCD) area. As in previous years, the majority of people experiencing outdoor homelessness were encountered in the Toronto-East York CCD which contains the downtown core of Toronto.

**Table 2: Estimated Outdoor Homeless Population on April 26, 2018 by Community Council District in Toronto**

Community Council District	Total Study Areas	Study Areas Surveyed	Outdoor Encountered (Counted)	Extrapolation to Unsurveyed Areas	Outdoor Total
Etobicoke-York	141	46	16	9	25
North York	125	39	12	28	40
Scarborough	123	20	1	8	9
Toronto-East York	155	105	387	72	459
<b>Total</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>533</b>

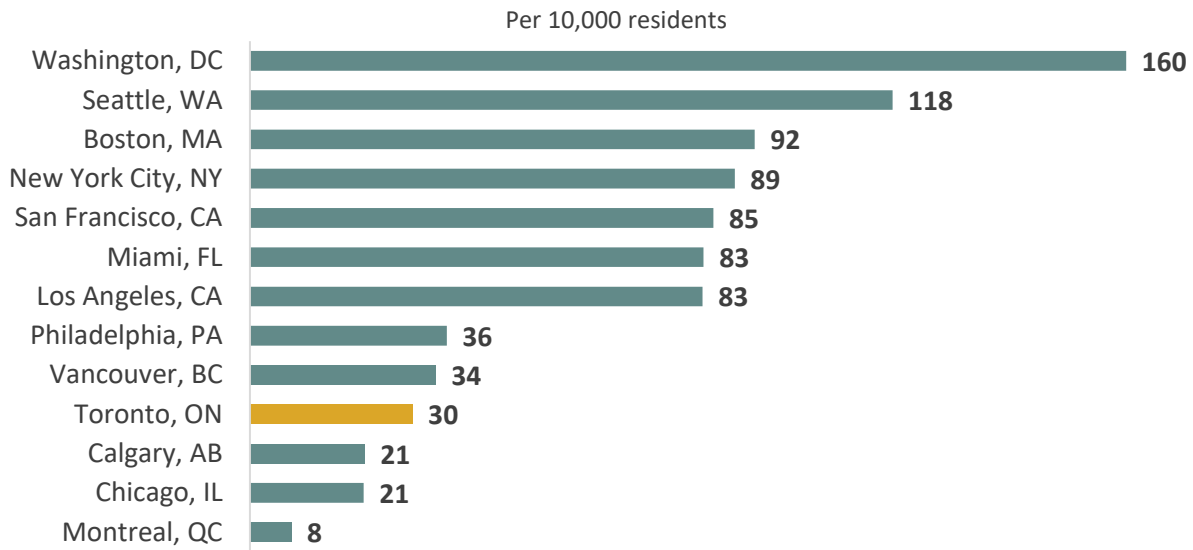
A total of 416 individuals identified as experiencing outdoor homelessness were encountered by study teams in the 210 study areas surveyed (which represents almost 40% of all study areas in Toronto). Extrapolation to the remaining unsurveyed areas yields an estimate of 117 individuals not encountered but sleeping outdoors on April 26, 2018. This provides a total estimate of 533 individuals staying outdoors on the night of the SNA.

## Comparison to Other Jurisdictions

Although the methods and definitions used to conduct homeless enumerations in other jurisdictions are somewhat different than those used in Toronto, and are therefore not directly comparable in absolute numbers, a comparison of general trends can provide some context for the results from Toronto's 2018 SNA.

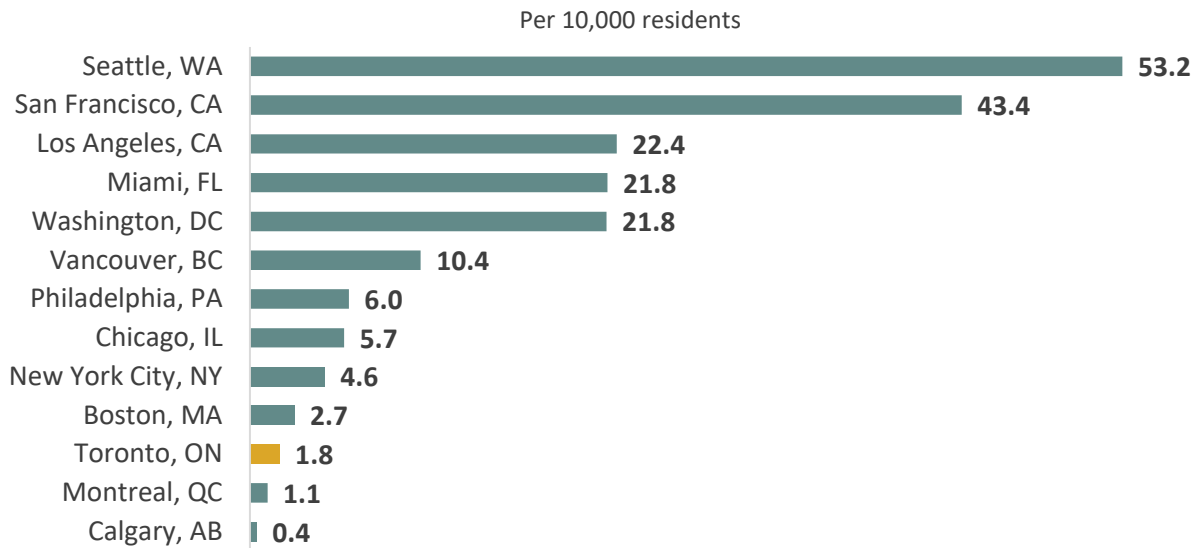
Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the results for homeless population counts and outdoor counts per 10,000 residents, available for Toronto and other major North American urban centres that have conducted recent enumerations of homelessness.

**Figure 3: Comparison of Homeless Counts Among Other Major Urban Centres**



Note: Numbers from Canadian cities are based on homeless enumerations conducted in 2018 with the exception of Montreal (2015). Numbers from US cities are based on enumerations conducted in 2017.

**Figure 4: Comparison of Outdoor Homeless Counts Among Other Major Urban Centres**



Note: Numbers from Canadian cities are based on homeless enumerations conducted in 2018 with the exception of Montreal (2015). Numbers from US cities are based on enumerations conducted in 2017.

# Profile of Toronto's Homeless Population

---

The primary purpose of the SNA is not only to understand the scope of homelessness in Toronto but also to learn more about the characteristics and service needs of the population to inform program and service delivery. This information is used by the City, community agencies and other groups to support service coordination, planning and advocacy. A total of 2,019 surveys were collected and determined as valid for the purposes of this analysis, representing an overall response rate of 51% of eligible individuals from the sites selected for surveying.

The results below are from the surveys administered outdoors and at indoor sites. The results are presented for surveyed groups based on where they indicated they would be staying that night: outdoors; in City-administered shelters; in City-administered 24-hour respite sites; and in provincially-administered VAW shelters. Results for respondents staying in City-administered shelters are disaggregated into three sub-groups: single adults; families; and youth (age 16 to 24 years). Percentages may not always total 100% due to multiple responses and non-valid responses (e.g., decline to answer, missing information), which are not listed in the tables and figures.

## Gender Identity

The 2018 SNA found that men represent over half (54%) of all respondents surveyed, while women represent 42% (Table 3). The share of respondents who identify as transgender, Two-spirit, and genderqueer/gender non-conforming is each approximately 1%. Less than 0.5% of respondents identified a response option not listed on the survey or reported "don't know". Gender identity refers to a person's subjective experience of their own gender; it may be the same or different from the sex assigned to them at birth.<sup>1</sup>

Men were overrepresented in the outdoor population with almost three-quarters of outdoor respondents identifying as men. Single adult respondents staying in shelters and respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites were also more likely to identify as men. Respondents with families and those staying in VAW shelters were more likely to identify as women. Youth respondents (age 16 to 24 years) staying in shelters were more likely to identify as transgender or genderqueer/gender non-conforming.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information about gender identities and their definitions, please see the [Glossary on Sexual Diversity](#).

**Table 3: Gender Identity of Respondents**

Surveyed Groups	Men	Women	Transgender	Two-spirit	Genderqueer/ Gender Non-Conforming
Outdoors	73%	19%	0%	2%	2%
City-administered shelters	55%	41%	1%	1%	1%
Single adults	67%	29%	1%	1%	1%
Families	24%	75%	Less than .5%	Less than .5%	0%
Youth	55%	31%	6%	1%	6%
24-hour respite sites	59%	37%	1%	1%	1%
VAW shelters	1%	93%	1%	2%	3%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

## Age

The average age of all respondents is 41 years, ranging from 16 to 85 years. The share of respondents who are youth (16 to 24 years) and seniors (60 years and older) is each 10% (Figure 5). It should be noted that this includes only adult survey respondents and not dependent children under the age of 16.

**Figure 5: Age of Respondents**

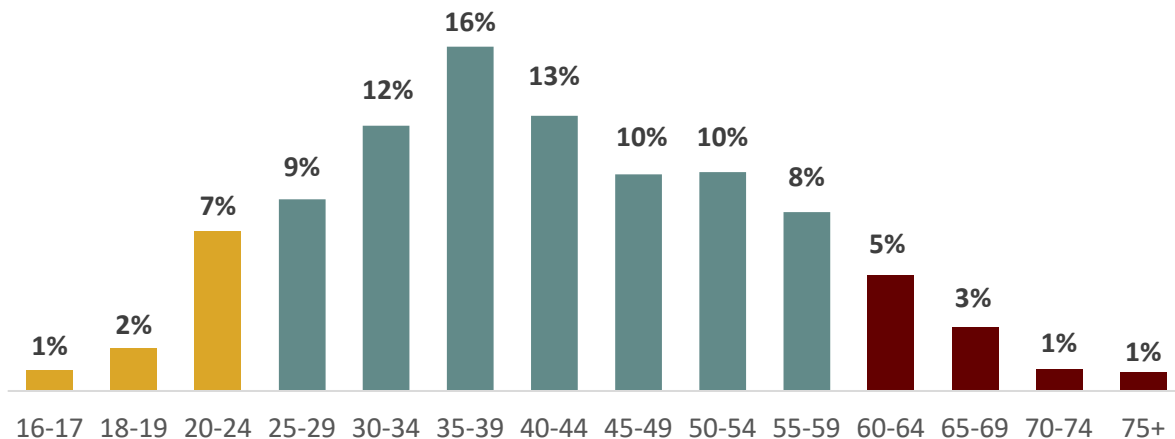


Table 4 presents the average age and percentage of respondents in various age groups by surveyed groups. Single adults staying in City-administered shelters and 24-hour respite site respondents had a higher average age than other surveyed groups. Further, there was a greater share of seniors staying in 24-hour respite sites as well as in City-administered shelters (single adults).

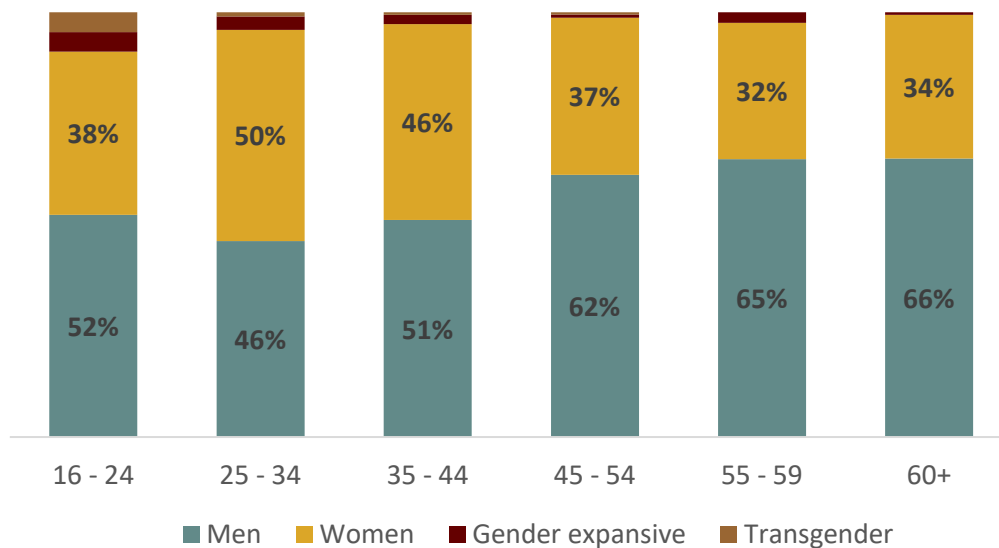


**Table 4: Age of Respondents**

Surveyed Groups	Average Age (Years)	16 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 59	60 and Older
Outdoors	40	11%	24%	26%	23%	4%	9%
City-administered shelters	41	12%	20%	29%	20%	8%	10%
Single adults	46	0%	20%	27%	25%	12%	14%
Families	37	9%	28%	46%	14%	1%	2%
Youth	21	99%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
24-hour respite sites	45	4%	18%	25%	25%	11%	14%
VAW shelters	34	10%	40%	37%	4%	3%	3%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Figure 6 presents age of respondents by gender identity. Women respondents were more likely to be younger, with a higher share of women respondents age 25 to 34. The share of respondents identifying as men was highest among adults age 45 and older. Youth respondents were more likely to identify as transgender or gender expansive (i.e., gender non-conforming or Two-spirit) than other age groups, which may be reflective of trends in the broader population of Toronto.

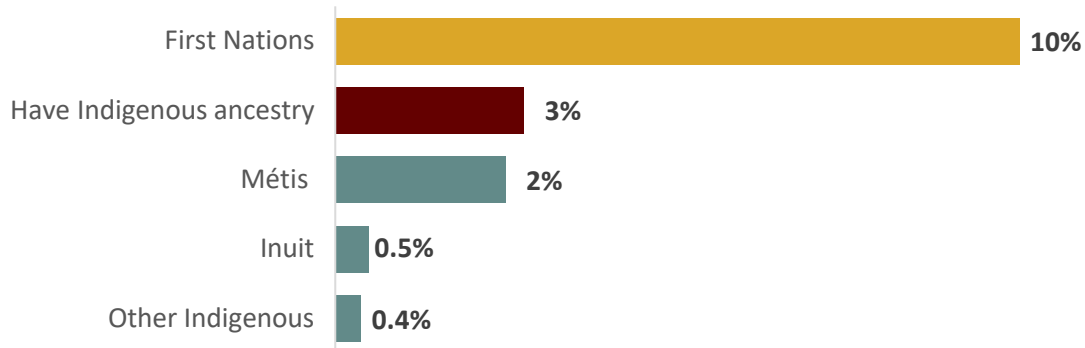
**Figure 6: Age of Respondents by Gender Identity**



## Indigenous Identity

Indigenous people, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis, or people who identify as having Indigenous ancestry, continue to be overrepresented in Toronto's homeless population relative to their share of the general population of Toronto. Indigenous people represent between one and 2.5% of the Toronto population<sup>2</sup>, yet 16% of the overall homeless population (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Indigenous Identity of Respondents**



The overrepresentation of Indigenous people continues to be greater among the outdoor population, with 38% of respondents identifying as Indigenous (Table 5). In addition 20% of respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites identified as Indigenous, which was higher compared with other indoor surveyed groups. Half of all respondents identifying as Indigenous reported sleeping outdoors for at least one night in the six months preceding the SNA, considerably higher compared to 28% of non-Indigenous respondents.

---

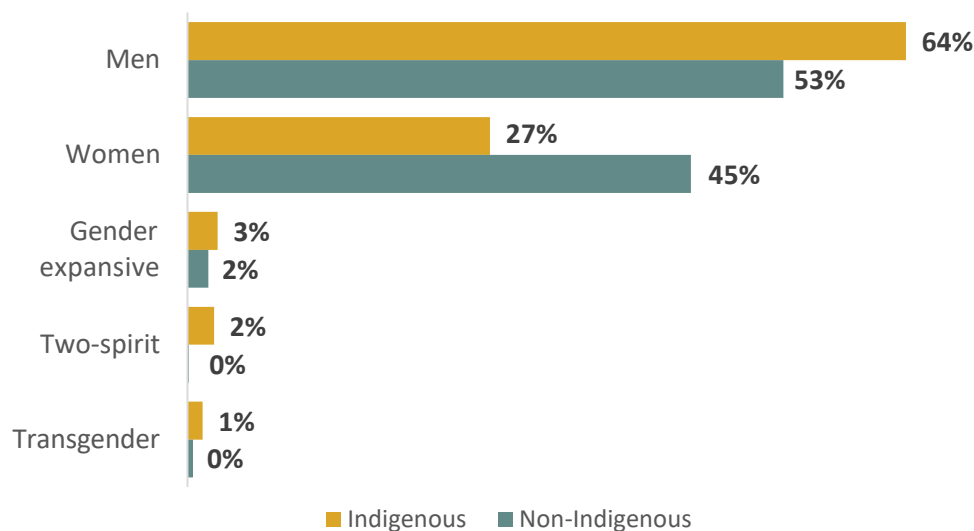
<sup>2</sup> The 2016 [Our Health Counts Toronto](#) study estimated that there were between 34,000 to 69,000 Indigenous adults in Toronto. The 2016 Census, which has been criticized for under-counting the Indigenous population, estimated that there are 23,065 Indigenous people in Toronto. By either estimate, Indigenous people are overrepresented in the homeless population of Toronto.

**Table 5: Indigenous Identity of Respondents**

Surveyed Groups	Indigenous (Total)	First Nations	Métis	Inuit	Indigenous Ancestry	Other Indigenous
Outdoors	38%	26%	7%	0%	4%	1%
City-administered shelters	13%	8%	2%	Less than .5%	2%	Less than .5%
Single adults	16%	10%	2%	Less than .5%	3%	Less than .5%
Families	3%	2%	Less than .5%	0%	Less than .5%	0%
Youth	14%	10%	2%	0%	2%	1%
24-hour respite sites	20%	11%	4%	1%	3%	Less than .5%
VAW shelters	11%	6%	1%	0%	3%	1%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>Less than .5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>Less than .5%</b>

The distribution of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous respondents by age was similar to the general population. There were differences in the distribution of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous respondents by gender identity (Figure 8). Men represent a larger share of Indigenous respondents experiencing homelessness compared with their non-Indigenous respondents (64% versus 53%). 2% of Indigenous respondents identified as Two-spirit. Indigenous respondents were slightly more likely than non-Indigenous respondents to identify as gender expansive and transgender.

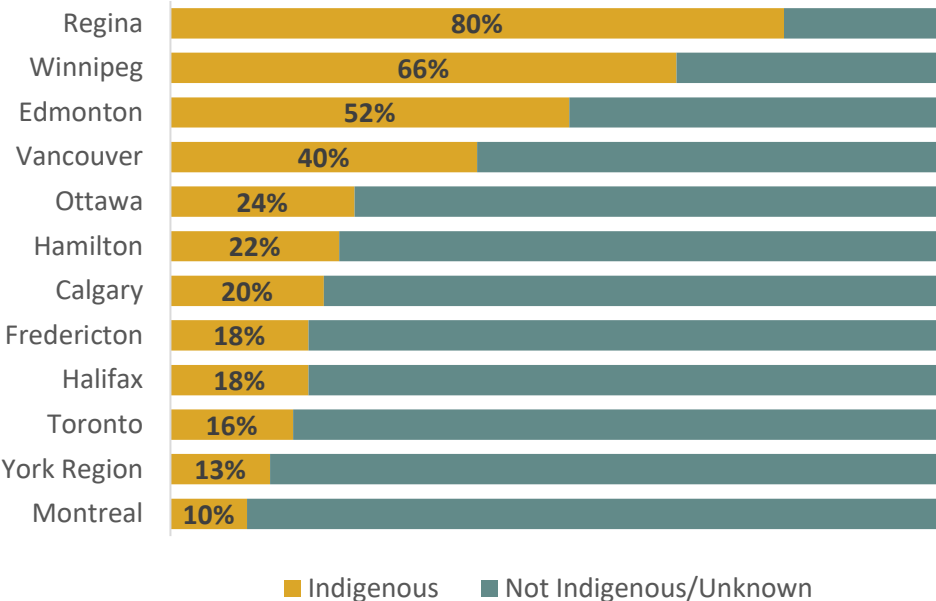
**Figure 8: Distribution of Indigenous Versus Non-Indigenous Respondents by Gender**



Length of homelessness in the past year was also higher among Indigenous respondents, with an average length of nine months (258 days) compared to seven months (210 days) homeless for non-Indigenous respondents. Further, 59% of Indigenous respondents reported experiencing homelessness for six months or more in the past one year, which was higher than for non-Indigenous respondents (47%).

Indigenous homelessness is a significant issue not only in Toronto but across Canada, as demonstrated in Figure 9. Indigenous homelessness should be understood as the direct outcome of ongoing colonization, structural and institutional racism, cultural genocide and the effects of intergenerational trauma. It is important to acknowledge that the definition of homelessness for the purposes of the SNA does not adequately capture the multi-dimensional nature of Indigenous homelessness as articulated in the recently released [Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada](#). Using this broader and culturally-based definition would likely yield an even greater overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the homeless population.

**Figure 9: Comparison of Indigenous Homelessness Across Canada**



Note: Percentages are based on homeless enumerations conducted in 2018, with the exception of Fredericton and York Region (2016) and Montreal and Halifax (2015).

### Length of Time in Toronto

61% of respondents reported having been in Toronto for one year or more, including those who have always been in Toronto (Table 6). 37% of respondents reported having been in Toronto for less than one year.

Families and youth staying in City-administered shelters were the most likely to report being in Toronto for less than one year. Almost three-quarters of families reported being in Toronto for less than six months. For families, this is related to the larger share of refugee/asylum claimant families staying in City-administered shelters.

**Table 6: Respondent Length of Time in Toronto**

Surveyed Groups	Up to 1 Month	1 to 3 Months	3 to 6 Months	6 to 12 Months	1 to 3 Years	More Than 3 Years	Always Been Here
Outdoors	4%	2%	2%	12%	6%	49%	21%
City-administered shelters	11%	11%	15%	8%	7%	30%	16%
Single adults	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	41%	19%
Families	20%	20%	33%	6%	3%	11%	8%
Youth	12%	14%	11%	14%	13%	13%	21%
24-hour respite sites	4%	6%	3%	5%	10%	39%	32%
VAW shelters	5%	7%	4%	6%	18%	44%	13%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>19%</b>

Table 7 presents the results for where respondents lived before coming to Toronto. The share of respondents who reported living in another Ontario community or another province/territory before coming to Toronto is approximately 20% each; 29% reported coming from another country. It is important to note that there was a high level of responses that were 'Decline to answer' for this question (14%) therefore percentages will not total to 100%. Respondents staying outdoors and in 24-hour respite sites were more likely to report living in another Ontario community before coming to Toronto. Families staying in City-administered shelters were more likely to report having lived in another province/territory or another country before coming to Toronto.

**Table 7: Location Respondent Lived Before Coming to Toronto**

Surveyed Groups	Always Lived in Toronto	Another Ontario Community	Another Province/Territory	Another Country
Outdoors	21%	26%	21%	12%
City-administered shelters	16%	17%	22%	32%
Single adults	19%	22%	17%	28%
Families	8%	4%	34%	45%
Youth	21%	22%	17%	27%
24-hour respite sites	32%	23%	15%	15%
VAW shelters	13%	15%	12%	46%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>

## Migration to Canada

In the last few years, Toronto has experienced an increase in refugee/asylum claimants accessing emergency shelter services creating significant pressures on the system.

While the City's Shelter Management and Information System collects information on the number of refugees accessing emergency shelters, SNA data provide an important source of information about the profile of this population, experience of homelessness, and service needs. This was a federally required question and was asked for the first time in the 2018 SNA. It is important to note that responses to the SNA survey question may or may not reflect respondents' current migration status.

The 2018 SNA results found that over half (52%) of respondents reported coming to Canada (at some point in their life) as an immigrant, refugee/asylum claimant, or temporary resident (Table 8).

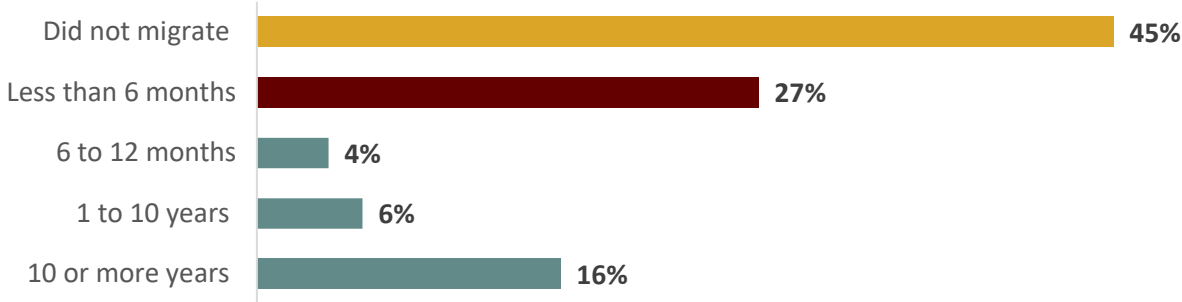
The largest share of respondents who reported coming to Canada as refugee/asylum claimants is found in City-administered shelters (40%) and, in particular, among families staying in these shelters (80%). The share is considerably smaller for respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites and outdoors.

**Table 8: Respondents Who Migrated to Canada**

Surveyed Groups	Did Not Migrate	Migrated (Total)	Immigrant	Refugee/Asylum Claimant	Temporary Resident
Outdoors	76%	19%	12%	6%	1%
<b>City-administered shelters</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Single adults	50%	49%	21%	24%	3%
Families	8%	90%	8%	80%	3%
Youth	49%	46%	14%	30%	2%
24-hour respite sites	68%	28%	21%	4%	3%
VAW shelters	31%	68%	42%	18%	8%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>3%</b>

Figure 10 presents the length of time in Canada for all respondents including those who did not migrate to Canada. 31% of all respondents reported coming within the past year (with the majority in the past six months). 16% of all respondents reported living in Canada for 10 or more years and would be considered long-term immigrants. Of those who migrated to Canada, the average length of time was nine years, ranging from two days to 66 years ago.

**Figure 10: Respondent Length of Time in Canada**



The largest share of newcomers in the past six months were families staying in City-administered shelters (Table 9). The largest share of long-term immigrants were single adults staying in shelters, and respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites and VAW shelters.

**Table 9: Respondent Length of Time in Canada**

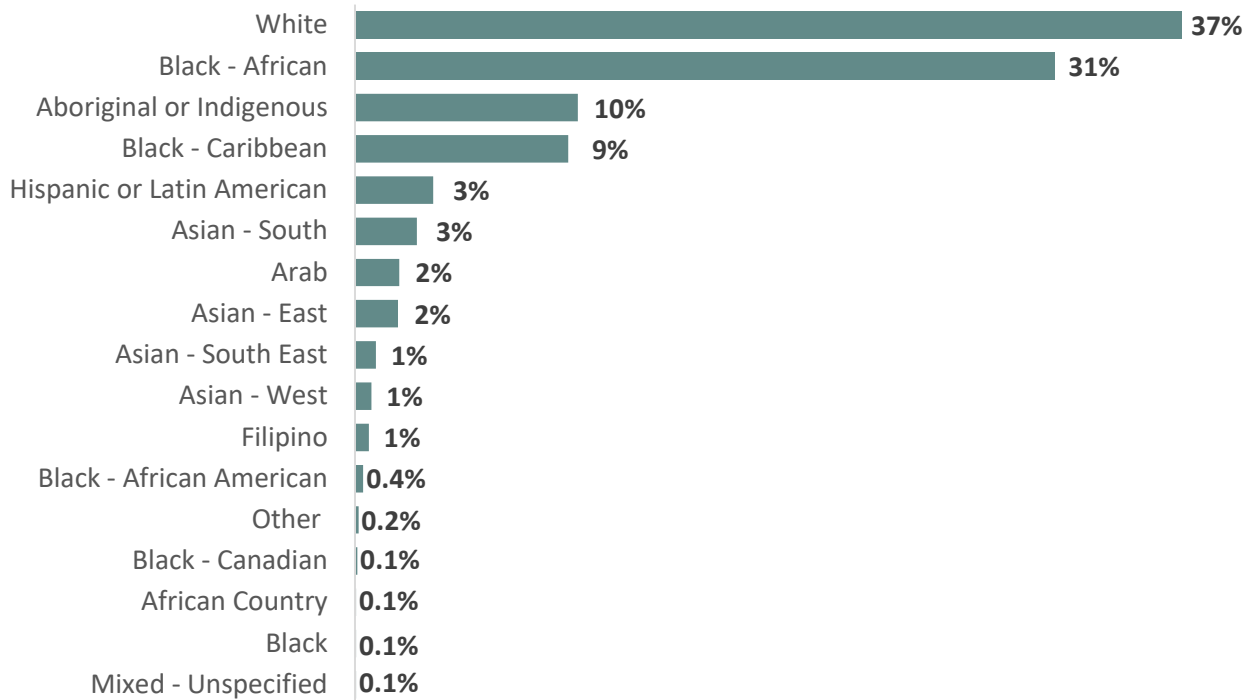
Surveyed Groups	Did Not Migrate	Migrated Less Than 6 months Ago	Migrated 6 to 12 Months Ago	Migrated 1 to 10 Years Ago	Migrated 10 or More Years Ago
Outdoors	76%	4%	0%	4%	12%
City-administered shelters	38%	34%	5%	5%	15%
Single adults	50%	22%	2%	3%	22%
Families	8%	68%	12%	6%	5%
Youth	49%	24%	8%	10%	5%
24-hour respite sites	68%	6%	0%	3%	19%
VAW shelters	31%	14%	4%	32%	18%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>16%</b>

### Racial/Ethnic Identity

The 2018 SNA found that almost two-thirds of all respondents identified as members of racialized groups, with the largest percentage identifying as Black. This finding demonstrates that racialized groups are overrepresented in the homeless population relative to their share of the general population in Toronto. Visible minorities represent

52% of the Toronto population<sup>3</sup>, compared to 63% of the overall homeless population (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Racial/Ethnic Identity of Respondents**



The share of racialized respondents was highest among families staying in City-administered shelters, followed by respondents staying in VAW shelters (Table 10). Within City-administered shelters, the highest share of racialized respondents were families staying in shelters. The large share of refugees in the family shelter sector in Toronto, in part, accounts for this greater share of racialized respondents compared to other groups. The outdoor and 24-hour respite site populations had a lower share of respondents who identified as members of racialized groups. Overall, 51% of non-refugee respondents (compared to 94% of refugee respondents) identified as a member of a racialized group.

<sup>3</sup> City of Toronto. 2017. Backgrounder. 2016 Census: Housing, Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity, Aboriginal peoples.



**Table 10: Respondents Identifying as Members of Racialized Groups**

Surveyed Groups	White	Racialized
Outdoors	55%	45%
City-administered shelters	31%	69%
Single adults	42%	58%
Families	8%	92%
Youth	26%	74%
24-hour respite sites	56%	44%
VAW shelters	20%	80%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>63%</b>

This question was asked for the first time in the 2018 SNA and respondents could self-identify their race/ethnicity rather than choose from a list of fixed responses. It is important to note that racial/ethnic identity can be challenging to measure as the concepts are not well understood and people experience and express their race and ethnicity in many different and intersecting ways including their country of origin, nationality, and ancestry.

## Language

Just over three-quarters of respondents reported feeling most comfortable speaking English. This was highest among respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites and lowest among respondents staying in VAW shelters. Respondents who reported "neither English nor French" were most likely to report feeling comfortable speaking both English and another language.

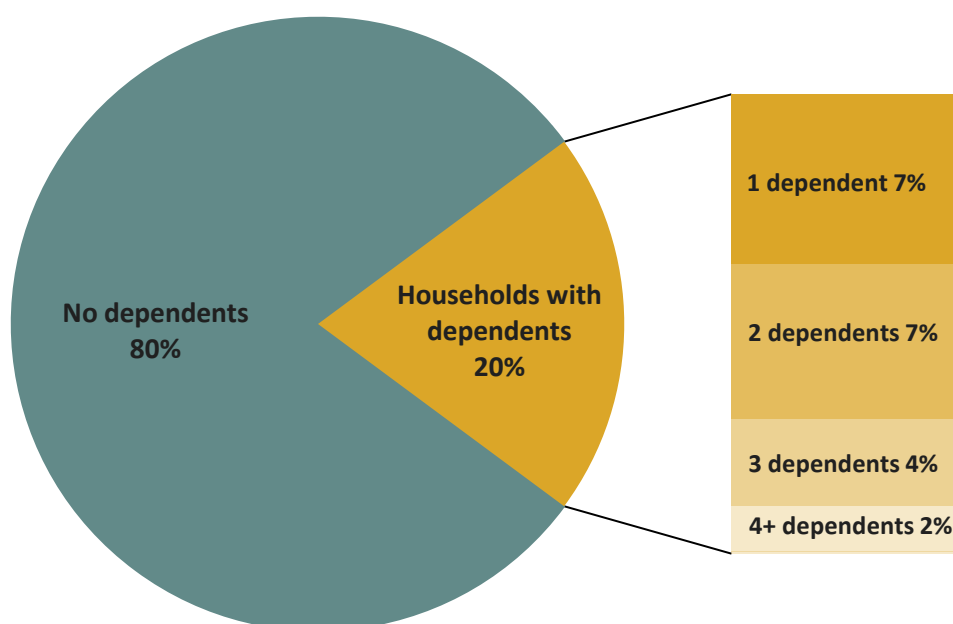
**Table 11: Language Respondent is Most Comfortable Speaking**

Surveyed Groups	English	French	Neither	No Preference
Outdoors	79%	2%	14%	3%
City-administered shelters	75%	2%	21%	2%
Single adults	78%	2%	19%	2%
Families	71%	2%	26%	1%
Youth	73%	3%	21%	2%
24-hour respite sites	85%	1%	10%	4%
VAW shelters	59%	9%	29%	3%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>2%</b>

## Family Homelessness

The results for families with non-adult (child) dependents are shown in Figure 12. Overall, 20% of all respondents reported that their children and/or other dependents were staying with them that night. Of these households, 71% had either one or two dependents, while 29% had three or more dependents. Families reported having an average of two non-adult dependents; the average age of non-adult dependents was six years old.

Figure 12: Distribution of Respondents with Non-Adult Dependents



## Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to how individuals identify to whom they are sexually and romantically attracted (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual).<sup>4</sup> The 2018 SNA found that the majority (84%) of respondents identified as straight or heterosexual. The percentage of respondents who identified as lesbian/gay or bisexual is each 4%. The percentage of respondents who identified as Two-spirit, queer/questioning, don't know, or a response option not listed on the survey was each 1%. Youth respondents staying in City-administered shelters and respondents staying outdoors were more likely to identify as non-heterosexual.

<sup>4</sup> For more information about sexual identities and their definitions, please see the [Glossary on Sexual Diversity](#).

**Table 12: Sexual Orientation of Respondents**

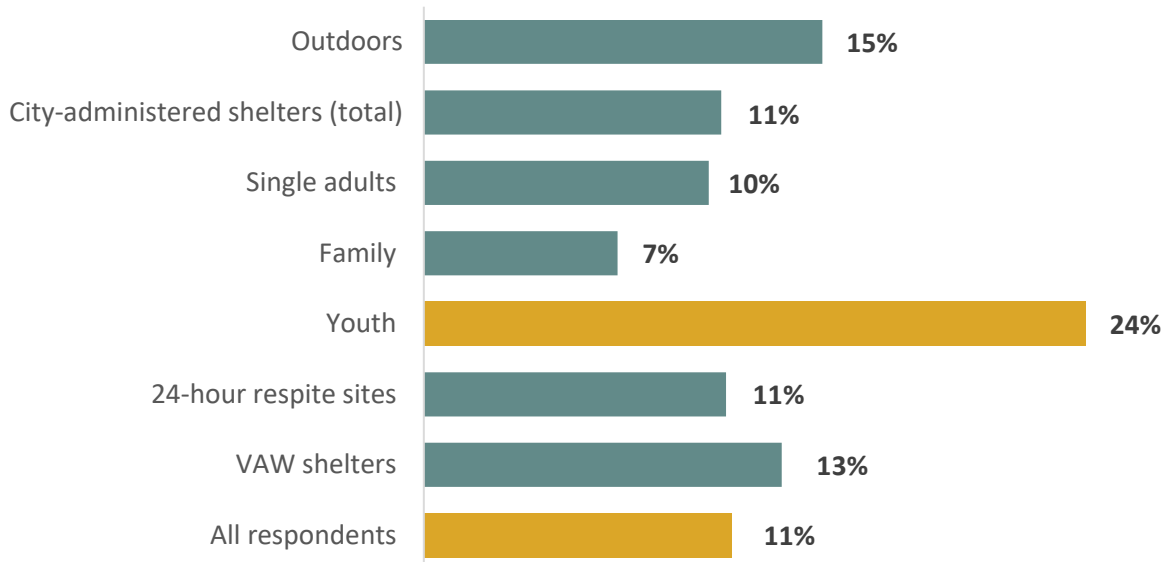
Surveyed Groups	Straight/ Heterosexual	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Two-Spirit	Queer/ Questioning	Additional Response	Don't Know
Outdoors	78%	4%	2%	4%	4%	0%	2%	2%
City-administered shelters	84%	1%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Single adults	84%	1%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Families	89%	1%	0%	4%	Less than .5%	1%	1%	1%
Youth	75%	2%	5%	6%	1%	4%	5%	2%
24-hour respite sites	85%	3%	1%	4%	1%	Less than .5%	1%	1%
VAW shelters	84%	3%	0%	4%	2%	2%	1%	0%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

## LGBTQ2S Identity

While the 2018 SNA survey did not include a specific question about LGBTQ2S identity, sexual orientation and gender identity responses were combined in order to report the overall breakdown of LGBTQ2S respondents.

In total, 11% of respondents surveyed identified as LGBTQ2S (Figure 13). This was higher among youth, with 24% of respondents 16 to 24 years of age identifying as LGBTQ2S. Outdoor respondents were also slightly more likely to identify as LGBTQ2S compared to other surveyed groups.

**Figure 13: Respondents Identifying as LGBTQ2S**



## **Veteran Homelessness**

The 2018 SNA found that 5% of respondents reported service in the Canadian military (i.e., Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force) or RCMP. An additional 1% reported military service outside of Canada. Veteran homelessness is higher among the outdoor population with 13% of outdoor respondents reporting service in the Canadian military or RCMP.

There is limited information about the prevalence of veteran homelessness overall in Canada for comparison. A 2015 study estimated that 2.7% of annual shelter users in Canada were veterans.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada. 2015. The Extent and Nature of Veteran Homelessness in Canada.

**Table 13: Respondents Reporting Military or RCMP Service**

Surveyed Groups	Canadian Military	RCMP	Military Outside Canada
Outdoors	11%	2%	1%
City-administered shelters	3%	1%	1%
Single adults	5%	1%	1%
Families	1%	0%	0%
Youth	1%	0%	0%
24-hour respite sites	5%	0%	Less than .5%
VAW shelters	0%	0%	0%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

## Health Conditions

Respondents reported whether they had any of the following four types of health conditions: chronic/acute medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, arthritis, heart condition); physical disability; mental health issue; or addiction. Figure 14 presents the results for all respondents. Overall, 57% of respondents reported having one or more type of health condition.

**Figure 14: Health Conditions Identified by Respondents**



This varied significantly by surveyed group with 80% of outdoor respondents and 76% of 24-hour respite site respondents reporting one or more type of health condition (Table 14). Among sheltered respondents, the share reporting one or more type of condition was highest for single adults and youth. Families staying in City-administered shelters were the least likely to report one or more type of health condition.

Regarding the type of health condition, almost one third of respondents identified having a mental health issue and/or chronic/acute medical condition (Table 14). 27% reported having an addiction and 23% reporting having a physical disability. The share of respondents who reporting having a chronic/acute medical condition, physical disability and/or addiction was higher among outdoor respondents, 24-hour respite site respondents, and single adults staying in City-administered shelters. The share of respondents reporting mental health issues was higher for outdoor respondents, 24-hour respite site respondents and youth staying in City-administered shelters.

Health conditions is a provincially required question for Ontario communities and is intended to better understand the health and health service needs of the homeless population, who often have poorer health outcomes compared to the general population. This question was asked for the first time in the 2018 SNA.

**Table 14: Health Conditions Identified by Respondents**

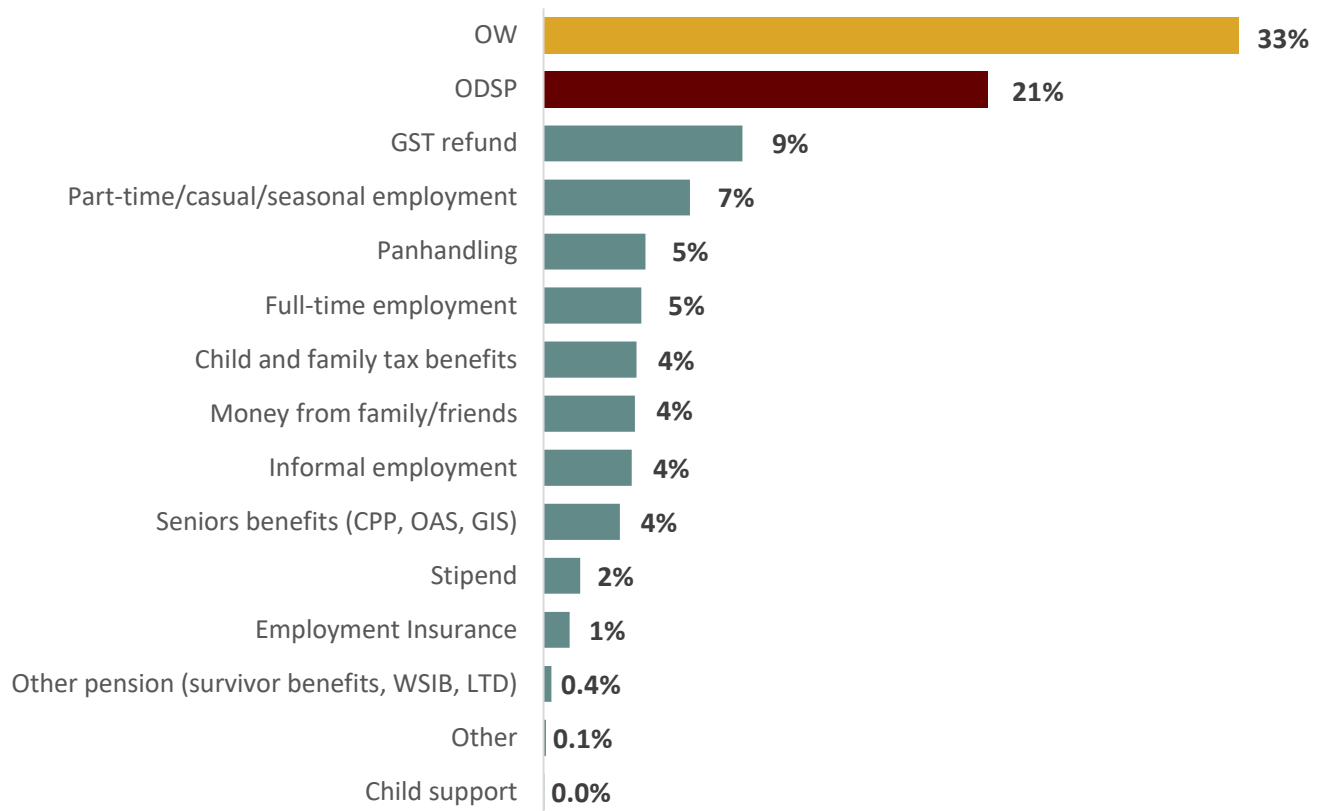
Surveyed Groups	One or More Type of Health Condition	Chronic/ Acute Medical Condition	Physical Disability	Addiction	Mental Health Issue
Outdoors	80%	38%	37%	57%	56%
City-administered shelters	52%	29%	20%	22%	26%
Single adults	64%	37%	29%	30%	32%
Families	20%	13%	4%	2%	6%
Youth	52%	18%	12%	18%	39%
24-hour respite sites	76%	42%	31%	42%	48%
VAW shelters	41%	21%	12%	7%	26%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>32%</b>

\* Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple responses.

## Sources of Income

Consistent with previous SNAs, the most common sources of income were Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) (Figure 15). 7% of respondents reported having no income. GST refund, part-time/casual/seasonal employment and panhandling were other frequently reported sources of income.

**Figure 15: Respondent Sources of Income**

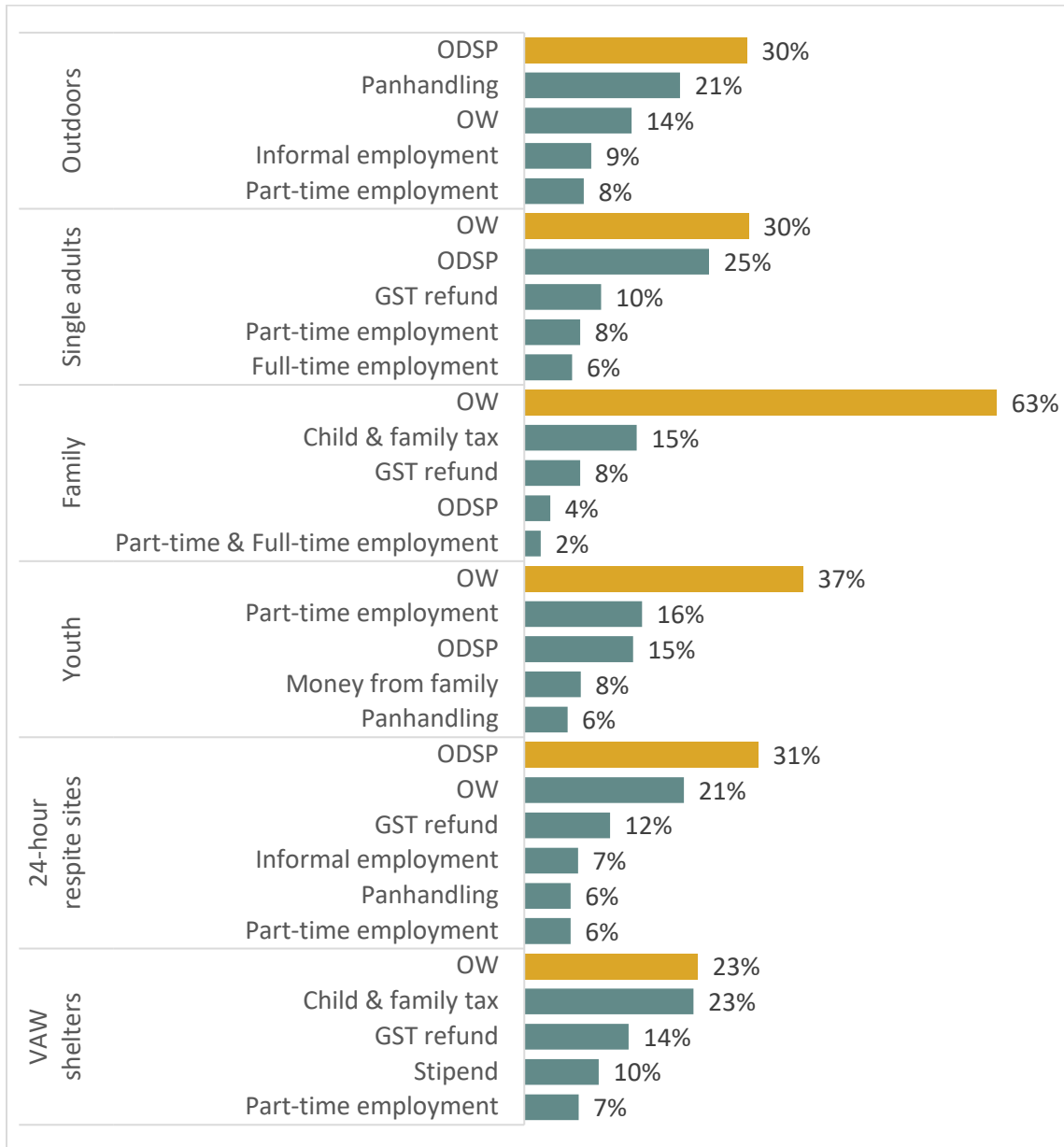


The top five primary sources of income reported by respondents vary considerably across different groups surveyed, as shown in Figure 16. For example, OW, ODSP and part-time/casual/seasonal employment were primary sources of income reported by all groups, with the exception of VAW respondents who did not report ODSP as a primary source of income.

The primary sources of income reported by respondents staying outdoors and in 24-hour respite sites were the same, with the exception of GST refund, which was reported more frequently by respondents in 24-hour respite sites. The primary sources of income reported by youth staying in shelters were similar to outdoor respondents, however, youth were more likely to report receiving money from family and friends as a primary source of income. Outdoor respondents were more likely to report receiving income through informal employment.

Single adults and families staying in shelters reported the same primary sources of income with the exception of families who also reported child and family tax benefits.

**Figure 16: Respondent Top Five Sources of Income**





# Homeless History

## Length of Homelessness

The average reported length of homelessness in the past one year was 217 days (approximately seven months for all respondents, ranging from one day to more than one year. The federal definition of chronic homelessness is being homeless for six months or more in the past year. 48% of all respondents reported being homeless for six months or more. Further, over one-third (36%) of respondents reported being homeless for more than one year.

Table 15 presents the length of time respondents experienced homelessness in the past one year by surveyed groups. The share reporting being homeless for six months or more was highest among the outdoor population at 70% with an average duration of nine months homeless in the past one year. Chronic homelessness was also high among respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites, with 57% reporting being homeless for six months or more and an average duration of just over eight months in the past year. Among the sheltered population, single adults were the most likely to be chronically homeless, with an average duration of just over seven and a half months homeless in the past year.

**Table 15: Length of Homelessness in the Past Year**

Surveyed Groups	Average Duration (Days)	Less than six months	6 to 12 Months	More than 12 Months
Outdoors	275	27%	17%	53%
City-administered shelters	207	51%	11%	33%
Single adults	229	44%	11%	41%
Families	157	70%	12%	13%
Youth	201	52%	10%	33%
24-hour respite sites	249	39%	10%	47%
VAW shelters	150	61%	11%	17%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>36%</b>

## Frequency of Homelessness

Episodic homelessness is defined as having experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past one year. The majority (70%) of respondents reported only one episode of homelessness and an average of 1.7 times homeless in the past one year (Table 16). It is important to note that a respondent could report a single episode of homelessness in the past one year but have experienced homelessness for much longer than one year.

Respondents staying in VAW shelters were more likely to report more than one episode compared to other surveyed groups, which may be related to the multi-episodic nature of intimate partner violence.

The percentage of respondents who reported three or more episodes of homelessness in the past one year, meeting the definition of episodic homelessness was, 14%.

**Table 16: Respondent Frequency of Homelessness**

Surveyed Groups	Average Number of Episodes	One Episode	Two Episodes	Three or More Episodes (Episodic)
Outdoors	2.3	72%	6%	16%
City-administered shelters	1.6	70%	11%	13%
Single adults	1.6	74%	9%	12%
Families	1.7	61%	15%	16%
Youth	2.0	66%	13%	15%
24-hour respite sites	1.9	72%	6%	15%
VAW shelters	1.5	59%	20%	10%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>14%</b>

## Age of First Homeless Experience

The average age that respondents reported first experiencing homelessness was 33 years, ranging from zero (potentially indicating since birth) to 81 years of age (Table 17).

While one-third of all respondents reported their first homeless experience as children or youth, this was considerably higher among outdoor respondents (63%). Indigenous respondents were much more likely to report first experiencing homelessness as children or youth compared with non-Indigenous respondents (58% versus 35%). The average age Indigenous respondents reported first experiencing homelessness was 25 compared with 31 for non-Indigenous respondents. People who experience homelessness as youth are at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness later in life.

**Table 17: Respondent Age of First Homeless Experience**

Surveyed Groups	Average Age (Years)	24 and Younger	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 59	60 and Older
Outdoors	22	63%	19%	4%	8%	1%	0%
City-administered shelters	34	28%	21%	22%	13%	4%	5%
Single adults	36	24%	21%	20%	16%	6%	7%
Families	35	14%	29%	36%	10%	1%	1%
Youth	18	100%					
24-hour respite sites	33	36%	18%	18%	14%	5%	5%
VAW shelters	31	29%	32%	27%	5%	2%	1%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>

## Reasons for Homelessness/Housing Loss

Migration (e.g., moving from another country or community), inability to pay rent or mortgage, and eviction for a non-financial reason (e.g., sale or redevelopment of property) were the three most frequently reported causes of homelessness identified by respondents (Table 18).

For respondents who reported coming to Canada as refugee/asylum claimants, migration, inability to pay rent or mortgage, and unsafe housing conditions were the three most frequently reported causes of homelessness. For respondents who are not refugee/asylum claimants, conflict with a spouse/partner (rather than migration) was one of the primary causes of homelessness.

These findings are consistent with the key drivers of homelessness: the rapid increase in rents over the past ten years and the increased demand in the past two years from refugee/asylum claimants seeking shelter services in Toronto.

**Table 18: Respondent Reasons for Homelessness**

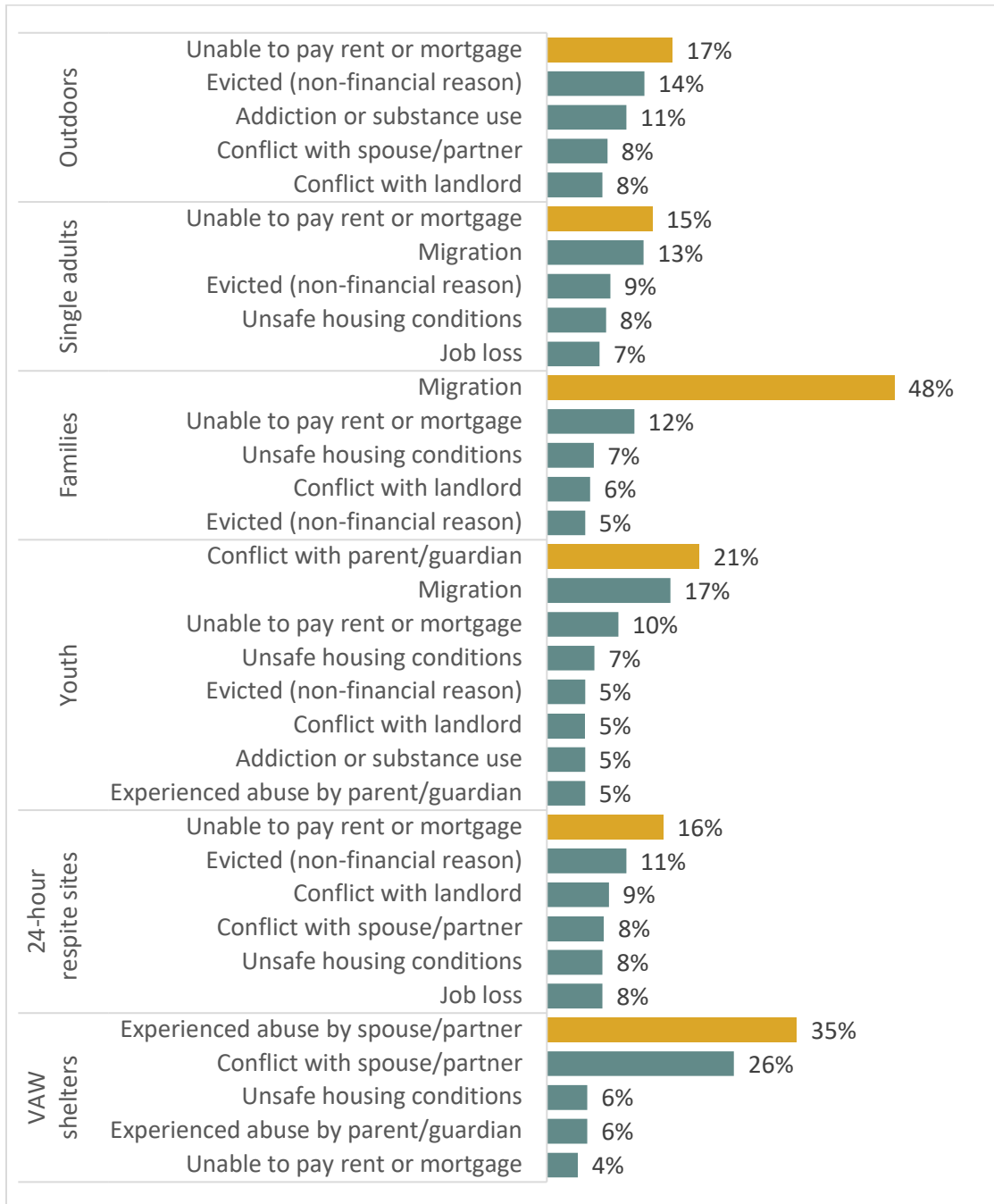
Reasons	Percentage
Migration	16%
Unable to pay rent or mortgage	14%
Evicted (non-financial reason e.g., sale or redevelopment of property)	8%
Conflict with spouse/partner	8%
Unsafe housing conditions	7%
Conflict with landlord	6%
Job loss	6%
Addiction or substance use	5%
Illness or medical condition	5%
Conflict with parent/guardian	4%
Conflict with roommates/neighbours	4%
Experienced abuse by spouse/partner	4%
Incarcerated (jail or prison)	3%
Conflict with other	2%
Loss of cohabitation (e.g., death, divorce, arrests of others)	2%
Hospitalization or treatment program	1%
Experienced abuse by parent/guardian	1%
Legal issues	1%
Evicted (landlord interests)	1%
Experienced abuse by other	1%
End of housing program	Less than .5%

Figure 17 shows the five primary reasons for homelessness reported by surveyed groups. While the inability to pay rent and eviction were among the top five reasons reported by most respondents, there is variation in the reasons by surveyed groups. For example, among those staying in shelters, reasons for homelessness were the same for single adults and families with the exception of job loss which was more common among single adults, and conflict with landlord which was more common among families.

Youth respondents staying in shelter differed from other sheltered respondents in that conflict with a spouse/partner or parent/guardian and addiction/substance use were among the top reasons for homelessness. For respondents in the VAW sector, family conflict and abuse were among the top reported reasons.

The top five reasons reported by respondents staying outdoors and in 24-hour respite sites were the same with the exception of addiction/substance use reported more frequently by outdoor respondents, and unsafe housing conditions and job loss reported more frequently by 24-hour respite site respondents.

**Figure 17: Respondent Top Five Reasons for Homelessness**



## Service Use Patterns

The 2018 SNA found that while 6% of the total homeless population was estimated to be sleeping outdoors on the night of April 26, almost one-third (32%) of all respondents including those staying in indoor locations reported spending at least one night outdoors during the preceding six months (Table 19). This was even higher among respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites, with just over half reporting sleeping outdoors at least

once in the past six months. At the same time, 65% of 24-hour respite site respondents and 60% of outdoor respondents indicated that they had used an emergency shelter in the past year.

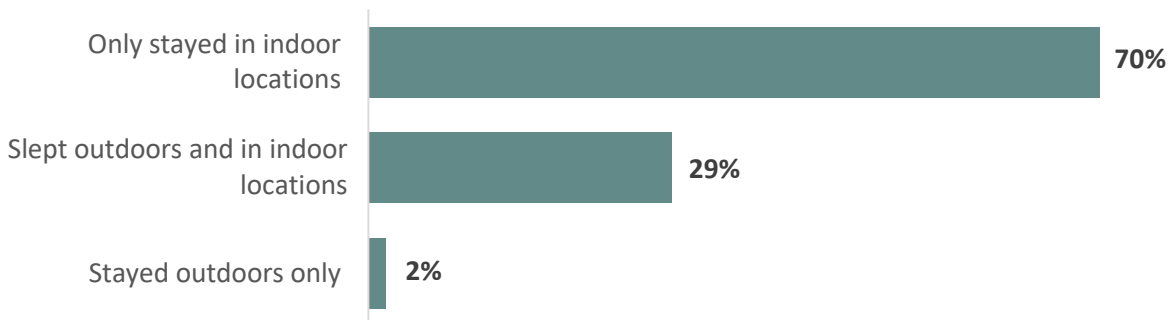
**Table 19: Respondents who Slept Outdoors at Least Once in the Past Six Months**

Surveyed Groups	Slept Outdoors
Outdoors	100%
City-administered shelters	22%
Single adults	26%
Families	11%
Youth	34%
24-hour respite sites	51%
VAW shelters	7%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>32%</b>

Figure 18 presents the results for respondents who reported staying only in indoor locations (i.e., shelters and 24-hour respite sites) and only outdoors and well as respondents who reported moving between staying outdoors and indoors. 70% of respondents reported staying in indoor locations only, while 29% reported moving between staying outdoors and indoor. A very small percentage (2%) of outdoor respondents reported staying outdoors only (and not staying in shelters or 24-hour respite sites).

This clearly demonstrates that shelter services are being used among these populations. Overall, these findings point to the fluidity of homelessness and the change in an individual's living circumstances within a relatively short period of time.

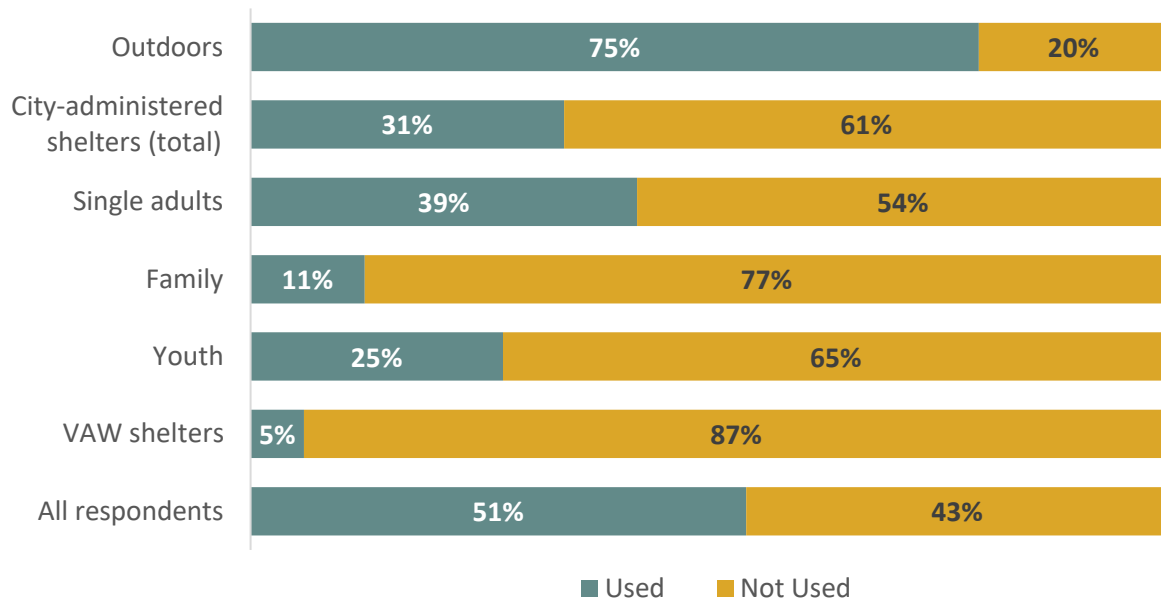
**Figure 18: Respondent Movement Outdoors and Indoors**



## Overnight Use of Winter Respite Services

Figure 19 presents the results for overnight use of winter respite services during the winter preceding the 2018 SNA. 51% of all respondents reported using one or more of the winter respite services during the winter preceding the 2018 SNA; 43% reported not using these services. Use of winter respite sites was highest among outdoor respondents, with three-quarters reporting using these services.

**Figure 19: Respondent Use of Winter Respite Services Preceding the 2018 SNA**

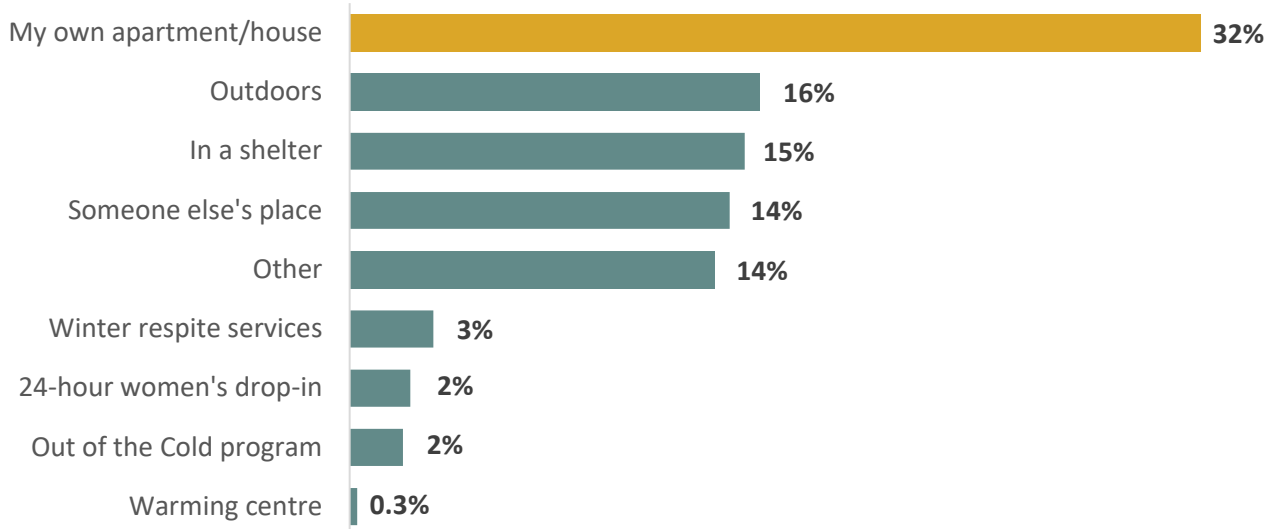


## Location before Using 24-Hour Respite Sites

Respondents who were staying in 24-hour respite sites on April 26 were asked where they were staying before they started using this service.

Almost one-third of 24-hour respite site respondents reported staying in their own apartment or house (Figure 20). Approximately 15% reported staying outdoors, in a shelter, with someone else, or another location. Other responses provided included staying in a hotel/motel, incarcerated, staying in a hospital or treatment centre, or another community/province/country.

**Figure 20: Respondent Location before Using 24-Hour Respite Services**



## Service Needs of Toronto's Homeless Population

---

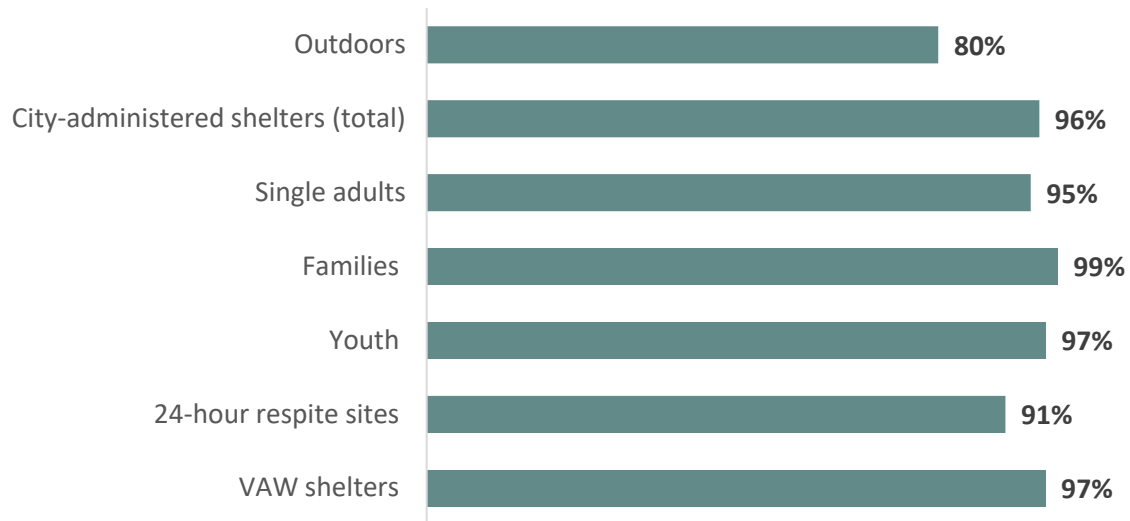
One of the most valuable aspects of conducting a regular SNA is that it provides detailed information about the nature of service needs of people experiencing homelessness. The following section provides a summary of service-related responses from the 2018 SNA, including service needs and use of various surveyed groups.

### Want Permanent Housing

Consistent with previous SNA results, the overwhelming majority (94%) of respondents indicated a desire for permanent housing (Figure 21). While outdoor respondents were more likely to say they didn't want permanent housing, 80% indicated a desire for housing. These findings challenge a common misconception that homelessness is a personal choice rather than the result of structural factors, system failures, or individual circumstances.

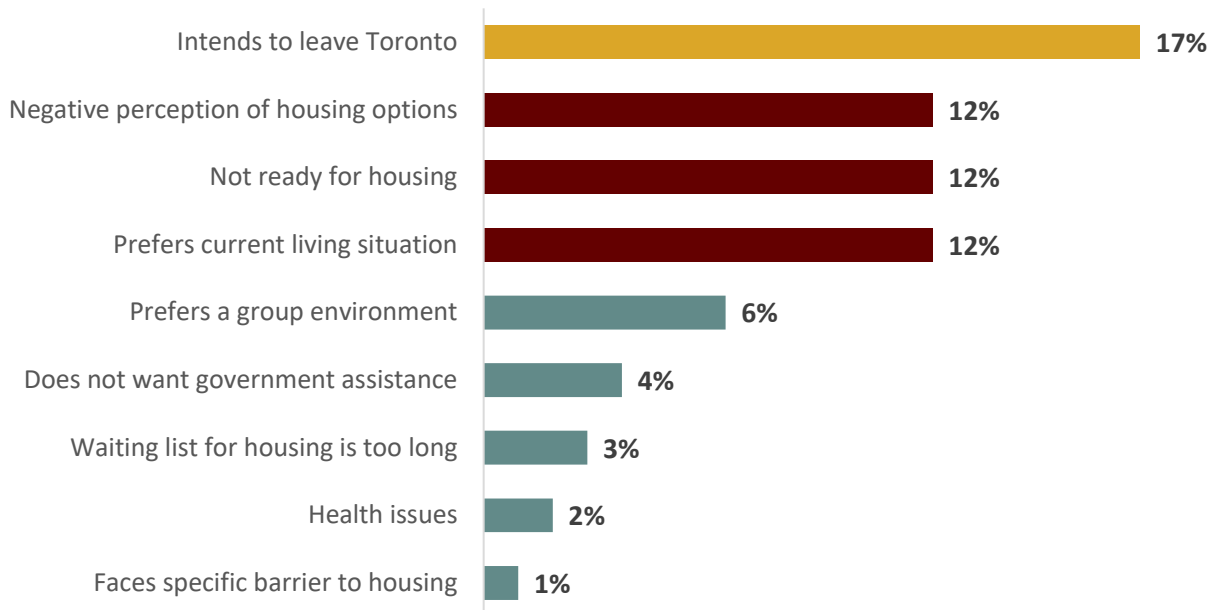


**Figure 21: Respondents Who Want Permanent Housing**



Respondents who indicated they did not want/know if they wanted permanent housing were asked their reasons for their response. The most frequent response, reported by 17% of respondents, was that they intended to leave Toronto (Figure 22). Other frequent responses reported by just over 10% of respondents were that they prefer their current living situation (in most cases, a shelter), they didn't feel ready for housing, or that they had a negative perception of their housing options.

**Figure 22: Respondent Reasons for Not Wanting Permanent Housing**



## Services and Supports to Help Find Housing

Respondents were asked what services and supports would help them to find housing and which of these they would find most helpful. The results, ranked by the number of respondents indicating them as "most important" are listed in Table 20.

The services and supports that respondents reported as being most important to help find housing were those that increase income and housing affordability. The top five supports include: increased social assistance rates, more affordable housing available, subsidized housing or a housing allowance, help finding an affordable place, and help finding employment or job training.

**Table 20: Service and Support Needs of Respondents to Help Find Housing**

Service/Support (ranked by most important)	Percentage Who Indicated the Support was <u>Most Important</u>	Percentage Who Indicated the Support <u>Would Help</u>
Increased social assistance rates	22%	64%
More affordable housing available	21%	80%
Subsidized housing or a housing allowance	16%	75%
Help finding an affordable place	10%	75%
Help finding employment or job training	7%	52%
Help with settlement and immigration issues	5%	26%
Something else*	3%	9%
Help to keep housing once you have it	3%	55%
Help with housing applications	2%	61%
Help getting identification	1%	39%
Mental health supports	1%	25%
Help getting alcohol or drug treatment	1%	15%
Transportation to see apartments	1%	61%
Help addressing your health needs	1%	41%
Cultural supports	Less than .5%	22%
Help getting detox services	Less than .5%	15%
Harm reduction supports	Less than .5%	11%
Services in a language other than English	Less than .5%	17%

\* Includes responses such as: more housing workers and housing programs; landlord support/mediation services; less discrimination; guaranteed income support; and legal services.

Other services and supports that respondents reported frequently as being helpful, even if not the most important, were those related to accessing housing, in particular help with housing applications (61%), transportation to see apartments (61%), and help to keep housing once you have it (55%).

These findings are consistent with previous SNAs and confirm that affordability is the most significant challenge in helping move people out of shelters. In the past ten years, average market rent for a one bedroom unit has increased 33%, while OW shelter benefit rates have increased only 10%. The gap between OW shelter benefits and rent

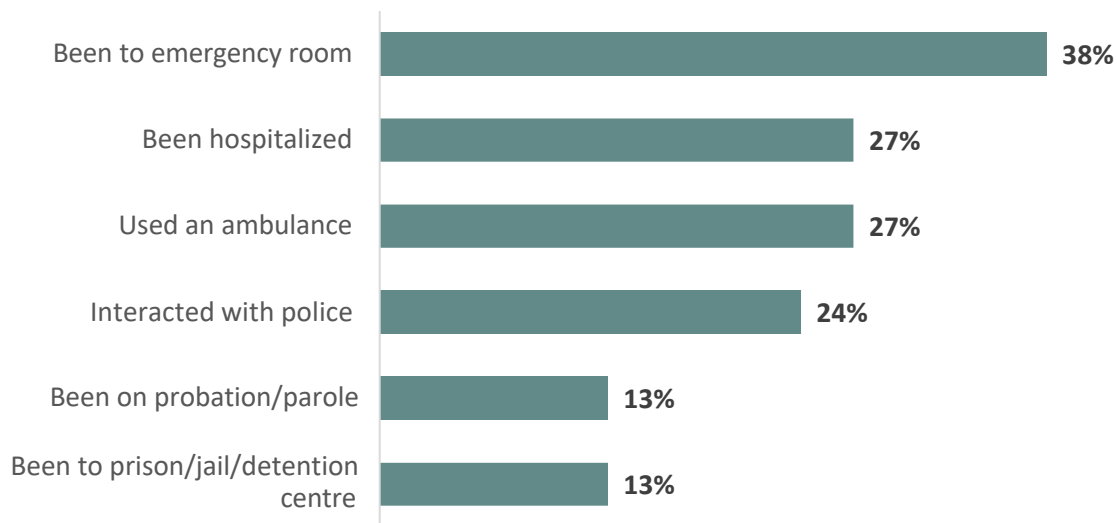
has increased from \$553 in 2007 to \$818 in 2017. This is compounded by low vacancy rates (currently 1.1%) and a lack of new rental and affordable housing.

## Interaction with the Health Care & Criminal Justice System

Respondents were asked about six different types of interactions with the health care and criminal justice system during the six months preceding the 2018 SNA.

Overall, the largest share of respondents reported interacting with the health care system, with emergency room visits being the most reported type (38%) (Figure 23). About one-quarter of all respondents reported interactions with the police. 55% of respondents reported one or more type of interaction.

**Figure 23: Respondent Interaction with the Health Care and Criminal Justice System**



Interaction with the health care and criminal justice system varied considerably by surveyed group, as shown in Table 21. Families staying in shelters were least likely to report one or more type of interaction. Outdoor respondents and respondents staying in 24-hour respite sites were more likely to report one or more type of interaction.

It is important to note that there is a range of reasons why respondents may interact with the health care and criminal justice system. In some cases, the interactions are related to the causes of homelessness (e.g., intimate partner violence), while in other cases they are a consequence of homelessness (e.g., increased emergency health care use as a result of health issues or barriers to accessing primary health care; interaction with law enforcement as a result of increased visibility in public spaces).

**Table 21: Respondent Interactions with Health Care & Criminal Justice Systems**

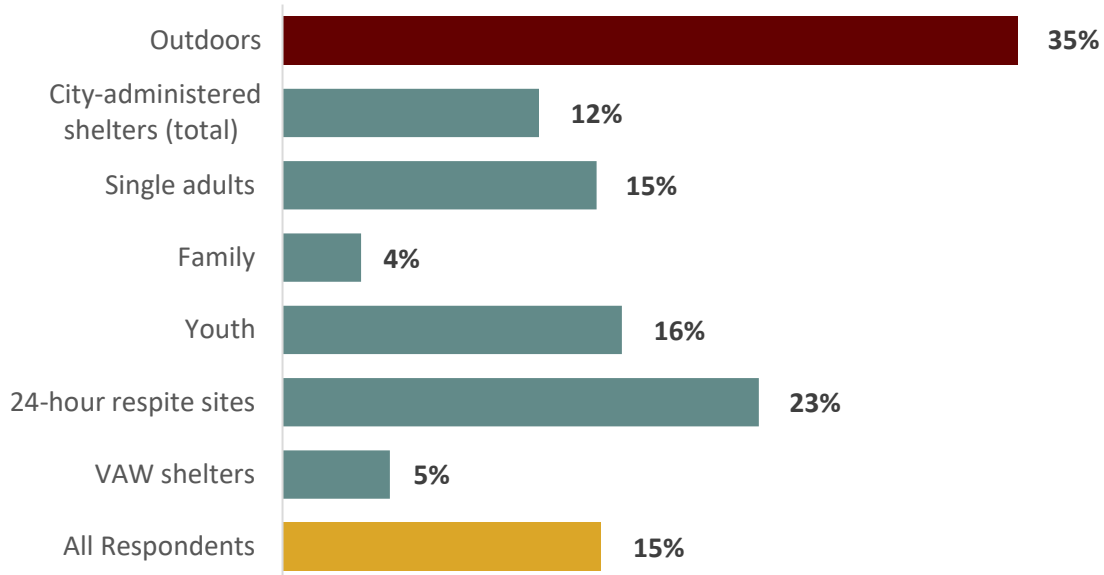
Surveyed Groups	One or More Interaction Type	Been to an Emergency Room	Been Hospitalized	Used an Ambulance (as a patient)	Interacted with Police	Been on Probation/Parole	Been to Prison/Jail/ Detention Centre
Outdoors	74%	48%	41%	38%	50%	26%	28%
City-administered shelters	50%	35%	25%	23%	18%	11%	11%
Single adults	58%	41%	29%	28%	22%	15%	14%
Families	30%	19%	17%	10%	6%	2%	1%
Youth	48%	35%	24%	23%	25%	15%	13%
24-hour respite sites	69%	48%	31%	41%	36%	19%	19%
VAW shelters	57%	37%	14%	16%	33%	3%	2%
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>

\* Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple responses.

## Experience with Foster Care

15% of respondents indicated that they had previous experience being in foster care and/or a group home (Figure 24). This was higher for respondents staying outdoors (35%) and in 24-hour respite sites (23%). Individuals who have had previous experiences with foster care are at a higher risk for experiencing homelessness, particularly when transitioning from foster care.

**Figure 24: Respondents with Foster Care and/or a Group Home Experience**



Respondents who indicated they had been in foster care and/or a group home reported how long ago it had been since the experience (Table 22). It is important to note that length of time since being in foster care is related to the age of respondents. While respondents with previous foster care experience had reported being in a foster care and/or group home an average of 20 years ago, youth respondents staying in shelters reported being in a foster care an average of five years ago. Indigenous respondents were more likely to report having been in foster care compared with non-Indigenous respondents (37% versus 11%).

**Table 22: Respondent Length of Time Since Foster Care and/or a Group Home**

Surveyed Groups	Average Number of Years Since Foster Care
Outdoors	19
City-administered shelters	22
Single adults	24
Families	13
Youth	5
24-hour respite sites	21
VAW shelters	11
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>20</b>

## Conclusions

---

The 2018 SNA is a City-wide initiative that would not be possible without the participation and support from people experiencing homelessness, volunteers, City staff, community partners, and the public. The results are critical to both Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA) and stakeholders including the federal and provincial governments, City of Toronto divisions, and community members, including community agencies, advocates, and the general public.

The increased number of people staying outdoors, in emergency shelters, 24-hour respite sites, and in correctional and health care facilities on the night of April 26, 2018 is consistent with increasing pressures on the emergency shelter system over the past year. Results show that certain groups are disproportionately impacted by homelessness, including Indigenous people, racialized groups, and LGBTQ2S youth.

The key drivers of homelessness in Toronto are the economy, housing market and increased number of refugee/asylum claimants accessing shelter services. This was confirmed by the 2018 SNA which found that migration, inability to afford rent, and eviction were the top three reported causes of homelessness. Further, the top five most important services respondents reported would help them to find housing are those that increase income and housing affordability.

The SNA results provide a better understanding of trends in homelessness in Toronto, as well as the particular needs and experiences of different groups. Previous SNA results have helped to improve program and service delivery, such as the creation of an LGBTQ2S youth shelter and funding to organizations serving Indigenous people experiencing homelessness. The results help inform service planning and ongoing service system transformation efforts as they provide a valuable source of feedback on the services that people experiencing homelessness find useful in helping them to get into permanent housing and remain in their homes. In particular, the results will inform SSHA's new five-year service plan and the City of Toronto's Housing Strategy 2020-2030, both of which will guide the City's homelessness initiatives, policies, and programs.

**This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.**

# Appendix A: Implementation & Methodology

---

## Implementation

The 2018 SNA was conducted on Thursday, April 26 – consistent with both time of year and day of the week of the previous SNAs. The indoor survey took place between 5:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., while the outdoor count/survey took place between 6:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. The temperature was slightly higher than the 2013 SNA with an average temperature of 10.7 degrees Celsius and no rain between 7:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m.

## Changes to the 2018 SNA

A number of new components were added to the 2018 SNA, including:

- Funding for community partners to support team lead, Indigenous team lead recruitment, and specialized Indigenous Cultural Safety training.
- Dedicated volunteer outreach lead to increase volunteer participation.
- Selecting a representative sample of shelter sites from each sector and assigning volunteer teams to those sites to ensure that survey completion targets were met.
- The addition of 24-hour respite sites and refugee motel programs to the homelessness service system, which represents an opportunity to learn about the service needs of these populations.
- New or improved survey questions (more information is found in the Survey section of this Appendix).
- Translation of the indoor survey into four languages and use of interpreters at indoor sites where a need was pre-identified.
- Use of car teams of City staff to survey lower density and large outdoor study areas and assigning volunteer teams to higher density areas.
- Hiring a third-party event planner for the night-of logistics coordination and a third-party research company to process survey data.
- Increased amount for honoraria for survey respondents (\$10 food gift card).

## Community Participation

The SNA received overwhelming support from interested community members. A total of 544 people participated in the event: 378 volunteers recruited from across the Greater Toronto Area and 166 team leads, recruited in partnership with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (Toronto's Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Advisory Board). In addition 25 of the 166 were Indigenous team leads recruited by the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council. To ensure the cultural safety of participants involved in the SNA, Indigenous team leads were strategically assigned to outdoor study areas with a known concentration of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness identified based on consultation with outreach staff from Native Men's Residence, as well as indoor sites with a higher number of Indigenous clients based on 2013 SNA results.

Comprehensive outreach, engagement and retention strategies ensured that there was no shortage of team leads and volunteers to conduct the count. Team leads were recruited who had experience working with individuals experiencing homelessness or other vulnerable individuals, conflict resolution and people management skills and experience conducting surveys and interviews. Volunteers were not required to have any previous experience, but were always under the direction of qualified team leads. Team leads received in person training and an honorarium of \$125 in the form of a grocery card upon completion of all their responsibilities.

Training for the SNA used a 'Train the Trainer' model to deliver training to internal staff, external partners, team leads, and volunteers. Team leads received one three-hour session of training during the week and a half leading up to the SNA and a booklet with training materials focusing on four modules: SNA overview, methodology, health and safety, and night-of logistics. Volunteers were sent specific training material that was a condensed version of the team lead training. On the night of the SNA, refresher training was provided in all Field Offices before teams left to begin surveying.

### **Team Lead and Volunteer Feedback**

At the end of the evening, volunteers and team leads were asked to complete a feedback form to rate various aspects of the SNA and offer suggestions for future improvements. Feedback on the experience was overwhelmingly positive, with 90% of respondents reporting having a positive experience of the event. Volunteers and team leads also reported positive experiences in all key aspects of the event, including:

- 92% reported satisfaction with the registration process
- 83% reported satisfaction with the communication from the SNA team
- 89% reported having a positive training experience
- 79% reported a positive experience conducting the survey

### **Engagement with Indigenous Partners**

Indigenous homelessness is a significant issue in Toronto, as it is across Canada, and a critical priority for the housing and homelessness sector. The City of Toronto is committed to reconciliation and supporting Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination by working inclusively with Indigenous communities to achieve equitable outcomes within their communities and day to day lives.

In recognition of this and the need for Indigenous-led solutions, the City collaborated with the Indigenous Community Advisory Board (CAB) throughout the planning, implementation and reporting stages of the SNA. The City provided funding to the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (the Indigenous Community Entity for Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding in the Greater Toronto Area) to implement various measures to ensure the cultural integrity of the 2018 SNA. At their recommendation, TASSC led the outreach and recruitment of Indigenous team leads and volunteers and the development and delivery of online and in-person cultural safety training for all team leads and volunteers.



In addition to ongoing engagement, leadership from TASSC and the Indigenous CAB participated on the SNA Steering Committee. The SNA project team also had an engagement lead to ensure alignment with its broader Divisional [Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan](#), co-developed with Indigenous partners in the housing and homelessness sector to more meaningfully address Indigenous homelessness in Toronto. The guidance and advice from our Indigenous partners as well as the participation of Indigenous team leads in the SNA was critical to the success of the initiative and is greatly appreciated.

## **Support from Community Partners**

The SNA would also not be possible without the support of City-administered shelters and provincially-administered VAW shelters, the Ministry of Community and Social Services who coordinated occupancy counts for VAW shelters, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services who coordinated occupancy counts for correctional facilities in Toronto, and participating hospitals and treatments centres.

## **Methodology**

In February 2017, the Government of Canada announced the second Homelessness Partnering Strategy Coordinated Point-in-Time Count, to be conducted between March and April 2018. This year also marked the introduction of a provincially legislated requirement for all Service Managers in Ontario to conduct homelessness enumeration every two years. Both federal and provincial governments have guidelines and a standard set of survey questions that communities were required to follow to ensure comparability. Communities are required to share these data with the federal and provincial governments to be included in a national and provincial snapshot of homelessness.

## **Definition of Homelessness**

For the purposes of the SNA, homelessness is defined as any individual sleeping outdoors on the night of April 26, 2018, as well as individuals staying in emergency and transitional shelters (including motel/hotel shelter programs), VAW shelters, 24-hour respite sites (including 24-hour women's drop-ins and the Out of the Cold overnight program open on April 26, 2018), individuals in health, crisis or treatment (including post-treatment) facilities identified as homeless, as well as individuals in correctional facilities who listed their previous residence as 'no fixed address' or a known shelter location. This definition of homelessness excludes the "hidden" homeless (e.g., staying temporarily with family or friends).

## **Point-in-Time Count**

The SNA employs a point-in-time methodology for enumerating homelessness that is now the standard for most major US and Canadian urban centres. While a consistent methodology and approach to the SNA has been used each year, changes were made in 2018, in part, as a result of participation in the coordinated point-in-time count. As a result, limited reference is made in the report to survey results from previous SNAs.

## **Indoor Count**

For the 2018 SNA, occupancy data were collected on the number of individuals staying in indoor sites (emergency/transitional shelters and 24-hour respite sites). Occupancy data were provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services on the number of individuals staying in provincially-administered VAW shelters. Occupancy data were collected from health, crisis, and treatment (including post-treatment) facilities (provided by staff contacts in each facility) for individuals staying overnight with no fixed address. Two sites also provided occupancy data for individuals with a shelter address. Occupancy data were collected from correctional facilities (provided by the provincial Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services) for individuals coming from a Toronto court with no fixed address or a shelter address.

## **Estimating the Outdoor Homeless Population**

The approach for Toronto's outdoor count follows both the national coordinated point-in-time count standards developed in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, as well as the New York City's Department of Homeless Services approach to the annual Hope Outreach Population Estimate. Specifically, Toronto employs a direct count method for the count of the outdoor homeless population. While this method is more resource intensive, it is also considered to be more comprehensive and accurate than the alternative – which strictly relies on service interactions.

In order to facilitate the point-in-time count for the outdoor homeless population, Toronto was divided into study areas based on the 2011 Statistics Canada census tracts. A sample of study areas that could be covered by volunteer study teams was selected, representing 295 out of the 544 census tracts or 54%. A combination of full coverage, selection of known locations, and random sampling approaches was used to select outdoor study areas. All “high density” areas were surveyed which includes full coverage of 91 study areas in the “downtown core” and 55 areas outside the downtown core with a known concentration of people experiencing homelessness identified based on consultation with City and community partner outreach staff. 149 study areas outside the downtown core were randomly selected to be surveyed, stratified to ensure proportional distribution across Toronto's four Community Council Areas. A total of 39% of Toronto's study areas were actually surveyed on the night of April 26, 2018.

At the end of the night, outdoor study teams (both volunteer and City staff) provided either survey forms or tally sheets for each for each individual they encountered who was experiencing homelessness. Tally sheets were completed by study teams for individuals who were observed to be homeless but were unable to participate in the survey for various reasons (e.g., sleeping in an outdoor location, no time to participate in the survey). Tally sheets were reviewed independently multiple times by the SNA methodology team and outreach leads in order to determine whether to include an individual as observed homeless. Individuals were only included as observed homeless when there was agreement among all reviewers. Once surveys and tally sheets were reviewed for validity, these forms were used to derive the count of 'encountered' homeless individuals for each study area.

## **Calculated Adjustment for Non-Surveyed Areas**

Once the counts of encountered individuals experiencing homelessness were completed for each study area, a calculated adjustment is made to account for those individuals not encountered but experiencing homelessness on the night of April 26. In previous SNAs, two adjustments were made to account for: 1) the likelihood that individuals experiencing homelessness were visited and surveyed within the sampled study areas based on data collected from Control Group members, and 2) areas in Toronto that were not surveyed by study teams. On the night of the SNA, a large number of the confirmed Control Group volunteers (40%) did not show up to participate, resulting in a sample too small to provide a stable and precise adjustment. As a result, this year the outdoor estimate includes only an adjustment for non-surveyed areas of Toronto and does not include a quality assurance adjustment based on Control Group data.

## **Survey Development**

As part of participation in the national and provincial coordinated point-in-time counts, communities were required to use a standard set of survey questions to ensure comparability (see Table 23). As a result, new survey tools were created for the 2018 SNA, including the refinement and removal/addition of limited local questions to improve the survey and keep its length to a minimum to prevent respondent burden.

**Table 23: 2018 SNA Data Points**

Data Points	Federally Required	Provincially Required	New for 2018 SNA
Location staying on night of SNA	Yes	Yes	
Gender identity	Yes	Yes	
Age/Year of birth	Yes	Yes	
Indigenous identity	Yes	Yes	
Family homelessness	Yes	Yes	
Military/RCMP service (veterans)	Yes	Yes	
Sources of income	Yes	Yes	
Length of time homelessness	Yes	Yes	
Sexual orientation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Frequency of homelessness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reasons for homelessness/housing loss	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emergency shelter use, past year	Yes		
Migration to Canada	Yes		
Length of time lived in community	Yes		
Age of first homeless experience	Yes		
History of foster care		Yes	Yes
Health conditions		Yes	Yes
Racialized identity		Yes	Yes
Language		Yes	Yes
Use of winter respite services			Yes
Location stayed before using 24-hour respite sites			Yes
Slept outside at least once, past six months			
Want permanent housing			
Services to help find housing			
Interactions with health and criminal justice systems			

Five different versions of the survey were developed with slight changes to local questions to ensure applicability to various groups: outdoor, shelter, family shelter, VAW shelter, and 24-hour respite sites. A copy of the outdoor survey is found in Appendix B. Surveys were developed through consultation and input from the SNA Steering Committee which was composed of divisional management staff, many of whom played leadership roles in previous SNAs, as well as staff from key community partners including TASSC, the Indigenous CAB and TAEH. Some local questions had been used in previous SNA surveys and were developed through extensive research and consultation with experts from other jurisdictions and local stakeholders.

The survey was also pilot tested during the Community and Indigenous Magnet Events conducted in spring of 2017. Based on feedback from the Magnet Events, survey questions were refined and additional locally specific response options were added. The SNA questionnaire was also refined based on pilot testing in February 2018 with service users. Shelter surveys were translated into four different languages (French, Arabic,

Amharic, and Tigrinya) and interpreters were used at sites where a need had been pre-identified.

### **Administering the Survey Outdoors**

Volunteer teams consisting of one team lead and three to four volunteers were assigned to roughly equal sized study areas (one survey team per study area) and instructed to survey on foot all public spaces within those study areas systematically so that every location is covered only once. Public spaces included all streets and public squares. This year, ten teams of four City staff in vehicles covered multiple lower density areas in the inner suburbs of Toronto where, in previous SNAs, few people experiencing homelessness were encountered. Six special teams of outreach staff were assigned to 37 hard-to-reach areas, such as ravines, parks, valleys and areas surrounding expressways (such as on-ramps and viaducts) with known homeless encampments.

Study teams were instructed to engage every person encountered outdoors within their study area boundaries with the exception of individuals who were sleeping, exhibiting behaviour perceived as unsafe, and/or on private property. Study teams administered the survey to individuals who were eligible and consented to participate in the survey based on their responses to a screening tool. Tally sheets were completed for individuals who were unable or unwilling to complete the survey but study teams believed may be staying outdoors.

All individuals who participated in the survey received a \$10 gift card to acknowledge their time and contribution. Individuals encountered outdoors were also given a card with housing resources and were asked if they needed help to find shelter that evening.

### **Administering the Survey in Indoor Facilities**

Surveys were conducted in a sample of 47 emergency and transitional shelter programs. The sample was rigorously selected to balance both resource constraints and to ensure a sufficient sample size that is representative of the diversity of shelters and service users across Toronto's shelter system. As 24-hour respite sites were a new service added to the system since the 2013 SNA, surveys were conducted in all twelve 24-hour respite sites (including nine 24-hour respite sites, two 24-hour women's drop-ins, and one overnight Out of the Cold program open on April 26, 2018) to permit a more fulsome analysis of their service needs. Provincially-administered VAW shelters participated on a voluntary basis, with 10 out of 13 shelters taking part in the survey. This year, surveys were not conducted in health and treatment facilities and correctional facilities due to resource constraints; occupancy data only were collected.

In City-administered shelters and 24-hour respite sites, teams of three to four volunteers led by a team lead with experience in the sector administered the survey to clients who were eligible and consented to participate in the survey based on their responses to a screening tool. For safety and privacy reasons, staff in the VAW shelters administered the survey to eligible and consenting clients. All individuals who participated in the survey received a \$10 gift card to acknowledge their time and contribution.

## Response Rates

Indoor response rates were calculated as the number of completed surveys divided by the total number of eligible people who were staying in the sites. Individuals 16 years and older were eligible to participate in the survey. Outdoor response rates were calculated as the number of surveys completed with individuals staying outdoors divided by the total number of individuals encountered outdoors who were identified as homeless.

The overall response rate for the 2018 SNA survey was 51% which was higher than in 2013 (40%) (Table 24). Response rates were highest among respondents in VAW shelters and City-administered 24-hour respite sites.

The large number of surveys completed (2,019) demonstrates that people experiencing homelessness want to participate in the survey and have a direct voice in identifying their service needs. In addition the large sample size provides a strong level of confidence in the integrity of the results.

**Table 24: 2018 SNA Response Rates for Surveyed Groups**

Surveyed Groups	2018 Response Rate	Number of Surveys Completed
Outdoors	31%	130
City-administered shelters	52%	1,420
24-hour respite sites	56%	370
VAW shelters	75%	99
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>2,019</b>

# Appendix B: Sample of 2018 SNA Survey, Outdoor Population

---

**\*\*\*DO NOT WRITE ANY INDIVIDUALS' NAMES/ADDRESSES ON SURVEY\*\*\***

**Outdoor Survey**

**Study Area Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. [Record Response from Screening Question B]**

- h.** Emergency shelter
- i.** Motel/hotel (shelter program)
- j.** Violence Against Women (VAW) shelter
- k.** Transitional shelter
- l.** 24 hour women's drop-in
- m.** Winter respite service
- n.** Other sheltered location (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- o.** Public space (e.g., sidewalks, squares, parks, forests, bus shelters)
- p.** Vehicle (car, van, RV, truck)
- q.** Abandoned/vacant building
- r.** Other unsheltered location (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- s.** Respondent doesn't know (likely homeless)

## **Begin Survey**

### **1. What family members are staying with you tonight? [Check all that apply] [Do not record name of any individuals]**

- None
- Partner
- Child(ren)/Dependent(s) **[Go to 1b]**
- Other adult family (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

**1b. Can you tell me the age and gender of the child(ren)/dependent/s staying with you tonight?**

Child/Dependent #	Age (specify below)	Male	Female	Gender Not Listed (specify below)	Decline to answer
1		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. How old are you? [OR] What year were you born? [If unsure, ask for best estimate]**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ **[Terminate survey if 15 years or less – Follow protocol]**

OR:

Year Born: \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know **[Go to Q2b]**

Decline to answer **[Go to Q2b]**

**2b. [If DON'T KNOW or DECLINE TO ANSWER, estimate by these age ranges]:**

24 years or younger

25 to 49 years

50 years or older

**[Read Script] For the next questions, "homelessness" means any time when you have been without a secure place to live, including sleeping in shelters, on the streets, or living temporarily with others.**



3. How old were you when you first experienced homelessness?
- Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
4. Over the past 12 months, how much time in total have you experienced homelessness? *[Best estimate]*
- Length \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks/months *[Circle unit]*
  - Entire 12 months or more
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
5. Over the past 12 months, how many different times in total have you experienced homelessness? *[Best estimate] [This refers to going back and forth between homelessness and being housed]*
- Number of times \_\_\_\_\_ *[Include this time]*
  - Continuously homeless for 12 months or more
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
6. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? *[Do not read categories. Check all that apply based on person's response. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays.]*
- Unable to pay rent or mortgage
  - Evicted: other reason (not financial) (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Unsafe housing conditions
  - Job loss
  - Conflict with landlord
  - Conflict with: spouse/partner
  - Conflict with roommates/neighbours
  - Conflict with: parent/guardian
  - Experienced abuse by: parent/guardian
  - Experienced abuse by: spouse/partner
  - Illness or medical condition
  - Addiction or substance use
  - Incarcerated (jail or prison)
  - Hospitalization or treatment program
  - Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer

7. **Have you stayed in an emergency shelter in the past 12 months?**  
***[Emergency shelter does not include drop-ins, winter respite services, warming centres, and Out of the Cold programs]***
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
8. **Did you stay overnight at any of the following Winter Services this past winter? *[Read list and check all that apply]***
- Winter Respite Services
  - Warming Centre
  - Out of the Cold program
  - 24 Hour Women's Drop-in
  - Used none of the above
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
9. **How long have you been in Toronto? *[If person has been living off and on in Toronto, ask about most recent time]***
- Always been here
  - Length \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks/months/years ***[Circle unit] [Go to Q9b]***
  - I don't live in Toronto
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
- 9b. **Where did you live before you came here? *[Specify the location, if provided]***
- Community/City \_\_\_\_\_ OR
  - Province \_\_\_\_\_ OR
  - Country \_\_\_\_\_ OR
  - Decline to answer
10. **Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, or refugee claimant?**
- Yes, Immigrant ***[Go to 10b]***
  - Yes, Refugee ***[Go to 10b]***
  - Yes, Refugee claimant ***[Go to 10b]***
  - Temporary resident (i.e. temporary worker, international student) ***[Go to 10b]***
  - Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ ***[Go to 10b]***
  - No
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer

**10b. How long have you been in Canada? [Write number and circle unit]**

Length \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks/months/years **[Circle unit]**

OR:

Date came to Canada: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ day/month/year

Don't know

Decline to answer

**11. Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry? This includes First Nations, with or without status, Aboriginal, Native, Indian, Inuit, and Métis.**

Yes **[Go to Q11b]**

No

Don't know

Decline to answer

**11b. Do you identify as: [Read categories]**

First Nations (with or without status)

Inuit

Métis

Having Indigenous/Aboriginal ancestry

Not listed (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

Decline to answer

**12. People may identify as belonging to a particular racial or ethnic group such as South Asian or White. How would you describe your racial or ethnic group? [Do not list categories unless asked. Check all that apply.]**

Aboriginal or Indigenous (i.e., First Nations, Native, Indian, Métis, Inuit)

Arab

Asian – East (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)

Asian – South-East (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)

Asian – South (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)

West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)

Black – Caribbean (e.g., Jamaican, Trinidadian)

Black – African (e.g., Ethiopian, Somali, Nigerian)

Filipino

Hispanic or Latin American

White (e.g., European-Canadian)

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

Decline to answer

13. **What language are you most comfortable speaking? [Check only one response]**
- English
  - French
  - No preference between English and French
  - Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
14. **Have you ever had any service in the Canadian Military or RCMP? Military includes Canadian Navy, Army, or Air Force.**
- Yes, Canadian military
  - Yes, RCMP
  - Military outside Canada
  - No
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
15. **What gender do you identify with? [Show list. Do not read categories unless asked. Check all that apply]**
- Male/Man
  - Female/Woman
  - Trans female/Trans woman
  - Trans male/Trans man
  - Two-spirit
  - Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
  - Not listed (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer
16. **How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian? [Show list. Do not read categories unless asked. Check all that apply]**
- Straight/Heterosexual
  - Gay
  - Lesbian
  - Bisexual
  - Two-spirit
  - Questioning
  - Queer
  - Not listed (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't know
  - Decline to answer

**17. I'm going to read you a list of income sources. Please tell me what your current sources of income are. [Read list and check all that apply. Do not record specific employer or work location]**

- Full-time employment
- Part-time/casual or seasonal employment
- Informal employment (e.g., bottle returns, under the table work)
- Panhandling
- Employment Insurance
- Ontario Works (OW)
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Seniors Benefits (e.g., Canadian Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Military Pension)
- Child and family tax benefits
- GST refund
- Money from family and friends
- Other source (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- No income
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

**18. Have you ever been in foster care and/or a group home?**

- Yes **[Go to Q18b]**
- No
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

**18b. How long has it been since you left foster care and/or a group home?**

- Length \_\_\_\_\_ months/years **[Circle unit]**
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

19. Do you identify as having any of the following health conditions: *[Read list below]*

	Yes	No	Don't know	Decline to answer
a. Chronic/Acute Medical Condition (e.g. diabetes, heart condition, arthritis, liver disease)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Addiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Mental Health Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*[Surveyor: Do not ask Q20 – Check 'Yes']*

20. Have you slept outside for one or more nights in the past 6 months?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

21. Do you want to get into permanent housing?

- Yes
- No *[Go to Q21b]*
- Don't know *[Go to Q21b]*
- Decline to answer

21b. Why not/don't know? *[Do not read categories. Check all that apply based on person's response]*

- Intends to leave Toronto
- Prefers current living situation/being homeless
- Not ready for housing
- Prefers a group environment
- Negative perception of housing options
- Waiting list for housing is too long
- Faces specific barrier to housing (e.g., legal issues, age, ID)
- Health issues (physical and/or mental health)
- Does not want government assistance
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

**22. I'm going to read a list of services that could help you find housing. Please tell me which ones would help you *personally* find housing. [Read categories. Check all that apply based on person's response.]**

- 1. More money from Ontario Works/Ontario Disability Support Program (OW/ODSP)
- 2. Subsidized housing or a housing allowance
- 3. More affordable housing available
- 4. Help finding an affordable place
- 5. Help with housing applications
- 6. Transportation to see apartments
- 7. Help to keep housing once you have it (e.g., housing supports/housing worker)
- 8. Help addressing your health needs
- 9. Help getting detox services
- 10. Help getting alcohol or drug treatment
- 11. Mental health supports
- 12. Harm reduction supports (e.g., methadone, safer crack kit, needle exchange)
- 13. Help finding employment or job training
- 14. Help getting identification (e.g., health card or birth certificate)
- 15. Cultural supports (e.g., healing circles/sweat lodges for Indigenous people)
- 16. Services in a language other than English
- 17. Help with settlement and immigration issues
- 18. Something else (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know
- Decline to answer

**22b. Of the things you just listed, what do you think is the ONE most important thing that would help you get housing? [If necessary, read back list of items where the response was "Yes"]**

**[Write number from list above] \_\_\_\_\_**

- Don't know
- Decline to answer

**23. In the past 6 months, have you: *[Read list below]***

	Yes	No	Don't know	Decline to answer
a. Been to an emergency room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Been hospitalized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Used an ambulance (as a patient)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Interacted with police (e.g., tickets, arrests, searches)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Been on probation/parole	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Been to prison/jail/detention centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Closing Script *[Read]***

- That is the end of our survey – **thank you** for participating!
- **Your answers will help the City of Toronto** better plan programs and services.
- *[Give gift card to individual]*
- **Do you need help getting shelter tonight?**
  - *[If Yes: Team Lead requests outreach assistance for individual. Give individual yellow resource card]*
  - *[If No: Here is some information if you would like help to find housing at a later point. Give individual yellow resource card. Wish individual a good evening.]*