



Duncan Winter Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Count

Community Report

March 2017



Canada



United Way
Central and Northern
Vancouver Island

Tze Tza Watul
Community Advisory Board

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BACKGROUND

In the winter of 2016, a coordinated Point in Time (PiT) homeless count was held in 32 Canadian communities. These counts were sponsored through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), a program funded by the federal government through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). In the spring of 2016, further funding became available for additional communities to undertake a PiT Count. Through this program, funding was secured and plans were made to conduct a winter PiT Count in Duncan, in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island.

This Duncan count builds on the winter 2016 national coordinated count as well as a homeless count held in the Cowichan Region in 2014. The latter Count followed the recommendations set out in the *BC Standardized Guide for Counting Homelessness*.¹

The winter 2017 PiT Count in Duncan was sponsored by the United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island in collaboration with the Tze Tza Watul Community Advisory Board and other community partners. Turning Times Consulting was contracted to coordinate the Count. A committee was formed to work with the Count Coordinator in shaping, planning and supporting the Count. Representatives of a dozen community agencies serving people who are homeless or providing support in other ways, participated on the committee. This included:

- Hiiye'yu Lelum – House of Friendship
- Cowichan Women Against Violence
- Salvation Army
- Cowichan Valley Basket Society
- Cowichan Housing Association
- Social Planning Cowichan
- Our Cowichan
- School Board – School District 79
- Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation
- The RCMP – Community Policing
- Cowichan Independent Living
- Canadian Mental Health
- CVRD Youth Outreach

¹ Prepared by: Policy and Practice Branch, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services. *Counting Homelessness – Guidelines for a Standardized Method for British Columbia Communities*. Prepared for: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General Housing Policy Branch.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of a Point in Time Count (PiT) is to get a snapshot of people who are absolutely homeless in a community during a set timeframe – usually limited to 24 hours to avoid counting some people twice. The Duncan winter PiT Count took place over a 24-hour period in February 2017. To encourage participation the Count was launched under the heading of *You Count! Count Yourself In*. Posters were put up at local agencies and around town to inform people that there would be a Homeless Count and survey done at participating locations on Tuesday February 21.

On the day of the Count, 27 volunteers and staff of local agencies conducted Homelessness and Housing Needs surveys at 7 locations. Two mobile teams were also engaged. In all, 196 surveys were done with people who were homeless or experiencing housing challenges. Ten doubles were later detected and 5 surveys were incomplete; 181 surveys were deemed to be complete and representing separate individuals.

- 73 people were counted as absolutely homeless – sleeping at Warmland emergency shelter, Somenos women’s shelter, or sleeping outside.
- 71 people were considered relatively homeless - staying in Warmland transitional housing units, or staying at someone else’s place - *couch surfing*, or staying at a motel.
- 37 people who were interviewed were at risk of homelessness. This group was composed of people living on a low income who were experiencing housing challenges. We know there is many more people than this. This was not intended as an accurate count of this population but a survey to learn more about their experience of housing insecurity.
- 29 people were being retained at the local hospital who no longer needed acute care but there was no home or bed for them to be released to. This number is in addition to the 181 surveys noted above, however, no data was gathered on this group.

The number of people living in Duncan over 5 years was 77% of the entire sample. Over half of the sample (55%) reported living with a sense of housing insecurity for over 5 years. Half of those who were absolutely homeless or experiencing hidden homelessness were experiencing chronic homelessness. Lack of affordable housing was the number one reason given as to why people were homeless. Abuse/conflict with a partner or a parent was among the top 3 reasons for loss of housing or housing insecurity in all three groups. This was followed by addictions and illness.

The number of people who were absolutely homeless (73) was higher than in 2014 (N = 56 for Duncan area). We know that both Counts are an undercount – there are always some people who will be missed; however, both counts are considered fairly close to the actual number of people in Duncan experiencing homelessness on those dates. The increase from 2014 to 2017 may reflect both an actual increase in the number of people homeless in the community and also be due to fluctuations in the weather causing more people to sleep indoors and thus be counted more easily. What is clear is that the number of people counted and sleeping outdoors doubled from 13 in 2014 to 26 in 2017. As there is a cap on the number of shelter beds, it may be that we will see the number of people sleeping outside continue to raise if the overall homeless population continues to grow.

**DUNCAN WINTER 2017
PiT HOMELESS COUNT & HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY
Total Surveys - 181**

Absolute Homelessness	Hidden Homelessness	Precariously Housed
Counted: 73 - 43 - Warmland - 2 - Somenos House - 26 – Sleeping Rough - 2 – Didn’t know where they would stay the night - Only one person had a child	Surveyed: 71 - 40 - Sleeping at someone else’s place - 26 - Transitional Units - 4 - Motels - 1 - Renting a Room - Plus 29 retained at hospital	Surveyed: 37 - All renters but experiencing insecure housing situations and challenges. - Eight people lived with a partner or other adult - 10 households had children
M – 75% (55) – F – 23% (17) No Response - 1	M – 65% - 46 F – 35% - 25	M - 36% – 14 F – 63% – 23
Average Age: 45 Age Range: 21 to 72	Average Age: 47 yrs Age Range: 20 to 68	Average Age: 50 yrs Age Range: 32 to 74
35% Aboriginal (N = 26)	43% Aboriginal (N – 31)	48% Aboriginal (N – 18)
Average time lived in Duncan - 24 less than one yr - 49 five yrs to always (67%)	Average time lived in Duncan: - 10 less than 1 year - 59 people 5 yrs+ (83%)	Average time lived in Duncan: - 4 less than one year - 33 lived in Duncan 2 plus yrs
Homeless for one year or longer 47 % (N = 34)	24 had stayed at an emergency shelter in the past year	12 had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year
25 people had experienced being in Foster Care	22 people had been in Foster care	11 people had been in Foster Care; + 2 in Residential School
Emergency care past year? 57% Yes (N =42) 30% of this group 3+ times (13) 39% Hospitalized past year 31% of this group 3 + times	Emergency Care past year? 53% Yes (N = 37) 37% of this group 3+ times (14) 39% Hospitalized past year (28) 32% of this group 3+ times (9)	Emergency Care past year? 45% Yes (N = 18) 33% of this group 3+ times (N -6) 36% Hospitalized in past yr (14) 22% of this group 3+ times (4)
How long living with homelessness or insecure housing? - One person – born into - 27 people by age 25 - 33 people between 26 & 55 - 5 people 55+	How long living with homelessness or insecure housing? - 4 people first time - 38 people (53%) 5 years or more - For 29 people (40%) it began before age 30.	How long living with homelessness or insecure housing? - For 15 people over 20 yrs - 9 people less than 5 yrs - 5 people first time now - 11 people said it began in their teens
Top 5 reason for loss of housing: - 22 Addiction - 21 Abuse/Conflict (spouse or parent) - 20 Job loss - 17 Illness - 16 Unable to Pay Rent	Top 5 reasons for loss of housing: - 20 Abuse/Conflict (spouse or parent) - 18 Illness - 18 Job Loss - 17 Addiction - 16 Unsafe Housing	Top reasons for loss of housing: - 10 Illness - 10 Abuse/Conflict (spouse or parent) - 7 Unsafe Housing - 7 Evicted
Income: 69% Income Assistance or Disability	Income: 73% Income Assistance or Disability	Income: 86% Income Assistance or Disability

THE COUNT

PURPOSE OF A HOMELESS COUNT

The purpose of a Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Count is to provide a snapshot of people who are homeless at a particular point in time. For this Count, that meant people who were homeless and accessing services in the community of Duncan during a 24-hour period between 4:30 pm Monday, February 20 and 4:30 pm Tuesday, February 22, 2017.

While the focus of the national Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Count was primarily on people who are absolutely homeless, community partners expressed an interest in also surveying people who are relatively homeless (also called provisionally housed or hidden homelessness) and people who may be at risk of homelessness (or precariously housed).

While it is possible to determine with a reasonable level of accuracy the number of people in a community who are absolutely homeless, it is recognized that undertaking a PiT Count is not a viable method for determining the number of people who are relatively homeless or those who are at risk of homelessness. Therefore, beyond counting the number of people who were absolutely homeless, it can only be claimed that a portion of people who were relatively homeless and some of those people who were at risk of homelessness were surveyed as well to learn more about their experience.

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

Absolutely Homeless: The focus of the national Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Point in Time Count was on people who were absolutely homeless. The HPS definition provided below of absolute homelessness was adopted for the Duncan Count.

- *Sheltered homelessness includes people sleeping in the following locations: emergency shelters (general and specific to men, women, youth, etc.), extreme weather shelters, Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, and [short-term] transitional housing. It may include people who receive hotel/motel vouchers in lieu of shelter beds. It does not include people in Housing First programs or in social or subsidized housing.*
- *Unsheltered homelessness includes people who are sleeping in places unfit for human habitation, including the following locations: streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.*

When applied to the Count in the community of Duncan, the above definition of homelessness includes:

- Warmland Emergency Shelter – Anyone staying in the emergency shelter beds; anyone housed for the night under the Extreme Weather protocol;

- Somenos Transition House – Any women and children staying at the emergency shelter for women fleeing domestic violence.
- People who are being temporarily housed in local motels under a voucher by one of the Ministries.
- People sleeping outside or in places unintended for human habitation.

The core count of people experiencing absolute homelessness in Duncan came from people staying in one of the above locations.

A count of people experiencing absolute homelessness is a minimal count of the number of people who are homeless in a community at a given time. Examining other types of homelessness helps provides more depth to the picture of homelessness in that community. Given that the local Planning Committee expressed an interest in gathering information from a broad spectrum of people experiencing housing insecurity, the Duncan winter homeless count included surveys with people who were relatively homeless (defined below as “Provisionally Housed”) and some people who were at risk of homelessness.

Relatively Homeless: The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness² (COH) defines people who are Provisionally Housed as:

- *This describes situations in which people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, access accommodation that offer no prospect of permanence. Those who are provisionally accommodated may be accessing temporary housing provided by government or the non-profit sector, or may have independently made arrangements for short-term accommodation.*

In the 2014 homeless Count in the Cowichan Region, people in the above groups were referred to as Relatively Homeless. Hidden homelessness is another term used for this population. These terms will be used inter-changeably here.

For the winter PiT Count in Duncan, people who were relatively homeless were:

- Living in transitional housing units on and off-site at Warmland under the care of Canadian Mental Health.
- People who were staying at someone else’s place—*couch surfing*. People temporarily staying with friends or family but who do not have security of tenure and could be required to leave at any time.
- People who were staying in temporary rental accommodation, such as a motel unit, where they were paying but there was no long-term prospects of housing.
- People staying at local institutions who could not be released because there was no home or appropriate place for them to reside. This includes such places as the hospital, an RCMP holding cell, or a youth detention centre.

² The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness is a recognized centre of expertise on homelessness in Canada. See: <http://homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition>

At Risk: Drawing on another COH definition, the guideline for identifying people at risk of homeless is:

- *[People] living in housing that is intended for permanent human habitation, and could potentially be permanent (as opposed to those who are provisionally accommodated). However, as a result of external hardship, poverty, personal crisis, discrimination, a lack of other available and affordable housing, insecurity of tenure and / or the inappropriateness of their current housing (which may be overcrowded or does not meet public health and safety standards) residents may be "at risk" of homelessness.*

For the Duncan PiT Count a partial list of people this may include is:

- People who are at risk of losing their housing because their household income is insufficient to cover their basic shelter and non-shelter costs. Members of these households may go month-to-month doing without certain basic necessities (such as heat or proper nutrition) and may rely on food banks to help cover monthly food costs.
- People who are living in sub-standard housing that is not being properly maintained by landlords and may be without heat, may have extensive issues with mold, or may not have proper cooking or washing facilities.
- People who are paying rent to live in nonconventional structures that are unheated and uninsulated and not generally intended as a permanent residence.

The Canadian Observatory of Homelessness further recognizes:

No matter the level of probability, all who can be categorized as being "at risk" of homelessness possess a shared vulnerability; for them, a single event, unexpected expense, crisis, or trigger is all it may take for them to lose their housing. As the risk factors mount and compound, so too does the possibility of becoming homeless.³

METHODOLOGY: HOW WAS THE COUNT CONDUCTED?

When did the Count take place?

The winter PiT Count took place over a 24 hour-period beginning approximately 4:30 on Monday, February 20 to 4:30 Tuesday, February 21. These dates were chosen as they fell just prior to the release day for monthly Income Assistance cheques.

³ Canadian Definition of Homelessness – Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.
<<http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf?>>

Where did the Count take place?

Fixed sites for the Count were identified as these were known locations where people who are homeless or experiencing housing challenges could be encountered on that day. In addition, two outdoor mobile teams focused on locating people who were sleeping rough.

Fixed sites for the Count included: Warmland Emergency Shelter; House of Friendship, Breakfast Club; Somenos Transition House, Cowichan Women Against Violence main office and a Somenos House shelter, the Basket Society (food bank), Cowichan Independent Living, Island Savings Centre and a community event termed a “Magnet Event.” At the “Magnet Event” several services were offered for free along with a hot lunch and donated items.

Two mobile teams, lead by the RCMP were also involved. They were a great help in identifying people sleeping rough in the Duncan area.

In addition to the people surveyed directly (N = 181), the Count included people who could not be released from the hospital because there was no “home” for them to go to. Surveys were not done with this group.

How were the surveys conducted?

Local agencies who provide shelter or direct services for people who are homeless were asked if their staff or volunteers could survey their clients on the day of the Count. Four training sessions were held on-site with agency staff and volunteers. Honorariums were provided to surveyors.

Additional survey volunteers were recruited through community partner’s newsletters, through poster put up around the community, and through word-of-mouth. Volunteers were required to complete an application form and attend one of two, 2-hour training sessions.

At the training sessions, surveyors were given an introduction to the general plan for the count, an overview of arrangements at their particular site, and a detailed review of the Count questionnaire. Each question was reviewed and possible interpretations discussed. Survey procedures and matters of confidentiality were also discussed.

Three weeks prior to the Count a poster promoting the Count was released to local agencies and distributed around the community where homeless, at risk and low income people might be present. The Count was promoted under the slogan of *You Count! Count Yourself In!* (See Appendix C for Poster).

People who agreed to be surveyed were offered a \$10 gift card for participating in the Count. They received this at the end of the survey.

What questions were asked on the survey?

The survey for the count was largely a quantitative questionnaire developed by the Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS) team. Several additional questions were added. On page one of the

survey there was a set of screening questions to determine if the individual was homeless or at-risk. HPS identified a set of “core questions” as key areas to gather data on demographics and peoples’ experience of homelessness. Several additional questions were identified by local community agencies as important and relevant to their work. (See Appendix B for survey.)

What were the local conditions on the day of the Count?

While there had been several days of heavy snow in Duncan in early February, the weather leading up to the Count ranged between seasonal daytime highs of 8 degrees and night time lows of 4 with occasional showers.

On Monday evening as the Count began at Warmland, a light rain started to fall. The daytime high was 7.4 degrees Celsius; falling to 2.5 by morning with more light showers. Temperatures rose during the day of the Count to a balmy 8.8 degrees. People were out in their tea shirts and enjoying the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Given the high volume of homeless people who would be staying at Warmland, we began the Count here on Monday night to ensure there was adequate time to survey everyone. As it turned out, Warmland was hosting a foot clinic and lunch on the day of the Count which brought more people to their site. All toll, 69 surveys were done at Warmland. Surveys were conducted by part-time staff who were familiar with the clientele and who had received training for the count.

Cowichan Women Against Violence (CWAV) supported the Count by doing surveys at Somenos Transition House and at their main office with women attended various programs and accessing services during the day. 18 surveys were completed.

Shortly after 6:30 am on the 21st, two count “mobile teams” composed of RCMP officers, began combing the streets and trails in an effort to identify and survey people who were sleeping outdoors or in makeshift shelters. As it turns out, most of those people who were sleeping rough, were encountered indoors at some point during the day. All toll there were 26 people sleeping rough.

At Hiiye’yu Lelum – House of Friendship, extra staff came in to help conduct surveys during the morning breakfast club meal. 16 surveys were conducted. Across town, it was another busy day at the Basket Society, as people sauntered in for a morning coffee or a bowl of soup. Here volunteers who were familiar with the Basket Society clientele, conducted 45 surveys between 10 am and 4 pm on February 21st. One of the volunteers provided feedback on her experience saying: *Thank you for the opportunity to do this and meet so many interesting people.*

Although the Island Savings Centre can sometimes be a bit of a hub for people who are homeless or couch surfing, on the morning of the 21st there were few such people around and only two surveys were done here. The same was so at Cowichan Independent Living (CIL) – an active centre serving people with a range of disabilities. Two surveys were done here. We understand that the following day – *Cheque Day* – CIL was very busy.

Meanwhile, in the centre of the small town of Duncan, we hosted a “Magnet Event” – a community event offering free services, a hot lunch and donated goods along with doing surveys. This event allowed us a venue where local people living on a low income and struggling with their housing might show up in response to the *You Count!* slogan. Here people could access the free services of a hairdresser, a chiropractor and an acupuncturist. Forty-five haircuts were given and 60 bowls of soups were served throughout the day. 23 surveys were completed.

(See Appendix A for more information on where we encountered the people who were surveyed.)

How did we screening for doubles?

In one question, we requested the respondent’s mother’s initials. This information along with their year of birth was intended to help us identify and screen out anyone who might choose to do the survey twice - given the incentive of a \$10 gift card for completing the survey.

During analysis, 10 double surveys were identified. In these cases, it was not the mother’s initials and date of birth that helped identify doubles. During analysis certain unlikely common features were noted between some questionnaires (such as having two males, age 47 and who had served in the military). If at least 75% of the content of two questionnaires was similar, they were deemed to be a “double,” especially if there was other supporting evidence. In the end, 181 surveys were determined to be complete and representative of separate individuals.

Did we get an accurate count of people who were Absolutely Homeless in Duncan?

Warmland Emergency Shelter operated by Canadian Mental Health, runs the only co-ed homeless shelter in the community. They have 30 emergency beds and 15 extreme weather cots. While the low for overnight beds in February was 33, on 10 nights, they ran at full capacity (45 beds), and for three-quarters of the month they hosted 40 or more individuals per night. This was a total bed count of 1,162 “beds” (not separate individuals) out of a possible 1260 client nights in February.

On the evening of Sunday, February 19, Somenos Women’s Shelter was full (10 beds). On Monday night February 20, there were only two women needing shelter for the night.

Although the Count was timed to come ahead of the monthly Income Assistance cheques, it fell on the same days as Income Assistance cheques were distributed on Reserve Lands. The numbers for the Breakfast Club at the House of Friendship reflected this. On the morning of February 20 they feed over 35 people. On the day of the Count, this number fell to the high teens.

While it is possible to get a fairly accurate count of people in a community who are absolutely homeless, most PiT Counts are known to be an undercount. How close is the final Count number of 73 individuals as absolutely homeless to the actual number on that day? We feel it is a reasonably accurate count and we know we likely missed a few people.

We identified 45 people as absolutely homeless and staying indoors at a shelter on the night of February 20th. This is an entirely reasonable number and reflects nightly usage at the two emergency shelters.

The true number of people sleeping outdoors or temporarily housed somewhere else is much harder to know. We identified 26 separate individuals. While we likely missed some people, it is reasonable to assume we were able to connect with a high proportion of those people sleeping outside on this date. Interestingly, the number of people who were staying outdoors is where we find the biggest increase in homeless numbers from the 2014 Count.

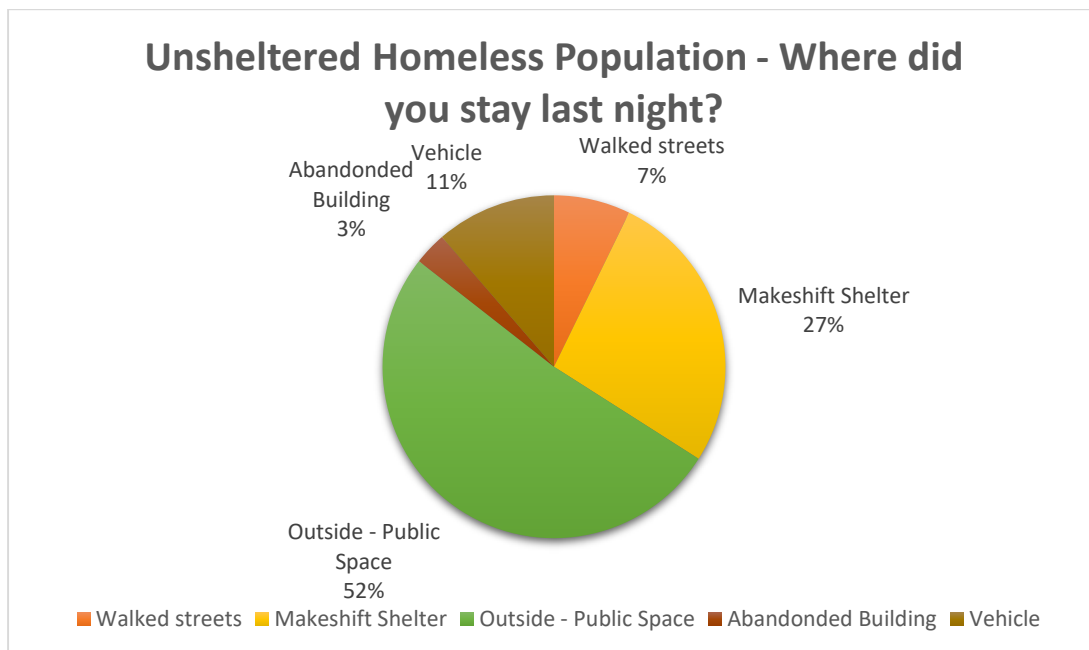
ABSOLUTE HOMELESSNESS

- 73 people counted as Absolutely Homeless
- 55 (75%) Males + 17 (23%) Females + 1 case – Missing Data
- 26 (35%) Aboriginal - 19 First Nations, 6 Metis, 1 Non-Status
- 68% Chronically Homeless
- 32% Episodically Homeless

The number of people surveyed during the Duncan Winter 2017 Point in Time Count who met the criteria of absolute homelessness was 73. While 46 of these individuals did find shelter indoors on the night of February 20th, 26 people slept outdoors or spent the night in unheated spaces.

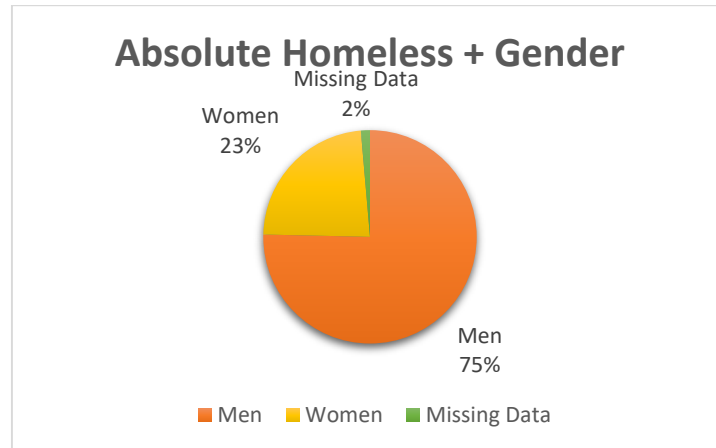
Where did you stay last night?

- 43 (58 %) - Warmland Emergency Shelter
- 2 (3%) – Somenos Women’s Emergency Shelter
- 26 (35%) – Sleeping Rough. This included: 1 person who stayed in an abandoned building, 2 people who walked the streets all night, 3 people sleeping in vehicles, 7 people who spent the night at a makeshift shelter or tent, and 13 people who spent the night “outside.” One person reported sleeping in a crawl space under a house.
- 2 (3%) People who did not know where they were going to spend the night.

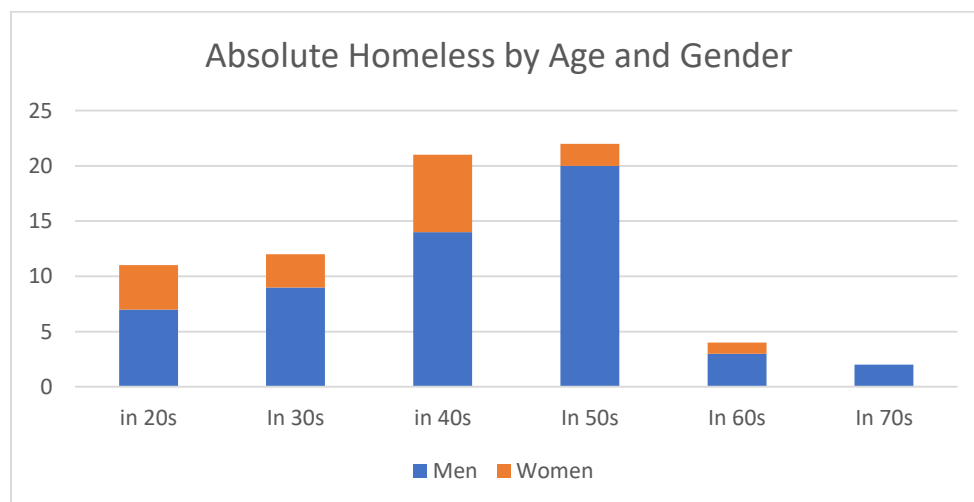


ABSOLUTE HOMELESS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Who were these men and women seeking a bunkbed and rest at Warmland; a quiet, safe room at Somenos House; or fending off the night elements in the outdoors on a cool but fairly dry winter night?



Seventeen people who were absolutely homeless were woman. The oldest female was a 61-year-old First Nations woman who was staying at Warmland. The youngest female was 21 years old. She reported spending the night on "the street." A 59-year-old man also said he spent the night "walking around town."



N = 71 – Missing data – 2 cases

The majority of these 73 people were between 40 and 60 years of age (N = 43 or 58 %). The average age was 45.

Aboriginal Identity: 35% of the sample was of Aboriginal descent

Overall, Aboriginal people made up 35% of those who were absolutely homeless. Thirteen of 55 men were Aboriginal and 12 of the women were of Aboriginal descent.

Table 1: Aboriginal and Absolutely Homeless by Age and Gender

Age	Aboriginal + Absolutely Homeless (N = 26) *	
	Males	Females
20s	3	3
30s	2	3
40s	3	5
50s	4	0
60s	0	1
70s	1	0
Total	13	12

Missing Data – 1 case

Family Status: Over 90% were single

There was one couple who was among those who were surveyed. They were First Nations, she was 34 and he was 40. They had spent the night outside. One other person, a woman, indicated she was accompanied by an adult partner.

Only one woman was accompanied by a young child. She was staying at Somenos House with her son of 6 months while her older son stayed with a family member.

LGBTQ: One individual

One woman self-identified as part of the LGBTQ community. She was 49-years old, a non-status Aboriginal woman. She spent the night outdoors at a “shelter.”

Foster Care: One-third had experienced foster care

Twenty-five people—one third of those who were absolutely homeless—had been in foster care. Seven of them were women, 18 were men. Nine people were Aboriginal.

Education: 65% had completed Grade 11 or a higher level of education

While 23 people had not completed high school (grade 10 or less), 30 individuals stated they had finished grade 11 or grade 12. Another 11-people completed high school and had some trade or college training after that. Nine people had some post-secondary education, 5 of these people had an undergraduate degree. Post-high school training included: nursing, ambulance, fire department, flagging, art school, BSW, SSW, journalism.

Military Experience: Five people

Five men identified that they had been in the military at some point. The oldest was a 68-year-old, First Nations man who had served in the US military. Another man indicated he had served in the Princess Patricia unit.

Use of Emergency Services: Over 50% had accessed Emergency Medical Services last year

Use of Emergency Medical Services	
Used Emergency Services	57% (41)
Used Once or twice	38% (28)
Used 3 to 7 times	17% (13)
Was also hospitalized	46% (34)

One person commented that he had to use emergency services for frost bite from sleeping outside.

Hospitalized: Over 1/3 had been hospitalized last year

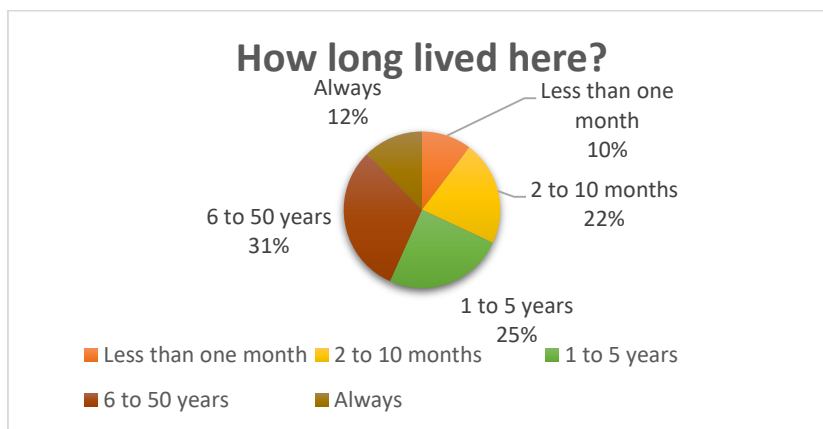
Twenty-nine people in the sample (39%) had been hospitalized in the past year. Twenty said this was at least once, while 9 people indicated they had been hospitalized 3 or more times.

Income: Disability and Income Assistance primary source of income

Sources of Income	
Disability Allowance	38 % (28)
Income Assistance	31 % (23)
Informal – Self-Employed	10% (8)
Employment Insurance	6 % (5)
Odd Jobs	5 % (4)
Seniors' Benefits	4 % (3)
Employment	2 % (2)

Other sources of income noted were: money from friends/family; penny stocks, RRSP, seasonal employment, family trust money. One person included stealing as a source of income. Three people reported having no income. Note: Respondents could identify more than one source of income.

How long lived here: 43 % of the sample lived here over 5 years



Eight people indicated they had been in Duncan for a week or less. They were all males ranging in age from 23 to 41. People who had lived in Duncan less than a year, indicated they had moved here from such places as: Victoria, Saanichton, Courtney, Vancouver, Surrey and as far away as Winnipeg. One person commented: *I have been going in and out of Duncan for years.*

EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

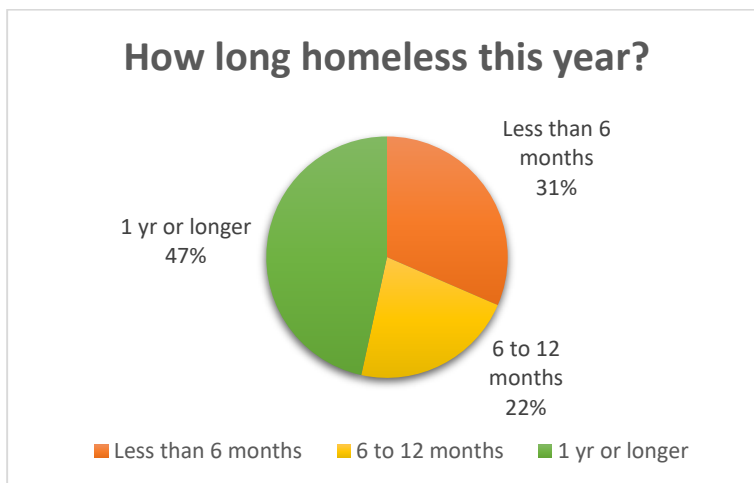
How old were you the first time you were without a secure place to live?

First experienced homelessness or insecure housing?	
From birth	1% (1)
Before age 25	36% (27)
Between 26 and 55	45% (33)
Senior Years	7% (5)
Missing Data	10 % (7)

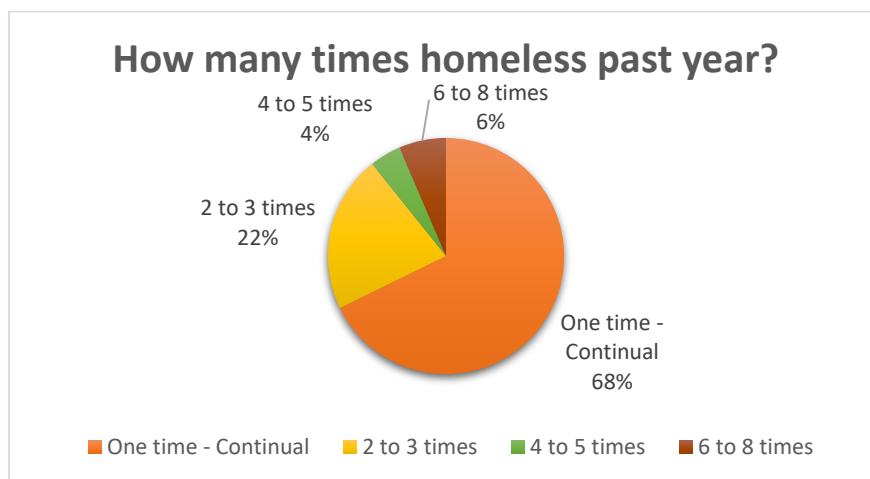
One person said he was born into homelessness. Twenty-seven people indicated they experienced housing insecurity before age 25. Fourteen of these people were of Aboriginal

ancestry. Sixteen people in this group had been in foster care. Some people remembered the exact date when they first experienced homelessness.

In the past year, how much time have you been without a secure place to live?



In the past year, how many different times have you been without a secure place to live?



When we compare the information presented in the above two charts we see that 68% of those people who were absolutely homeless had experienced homelessness on a continual basis since "it" began. This includes both people who were homeless a year or longer as well as some who became homeless during the last year. When we consider this information along with finding that 47% said they were homeless a year or longer, we can see that over half of this population

is experiencing a chronic state of homelessness. When we look at those who experienced homelessness multiple times in the past year (32%), we see that 10% of the sample said they experienced homelessness 4 to 8 times. This later group represents the “episodically homeless” population in Duncan.

Have you stayed in an emergency shelter any time in the past year?

Sixty-two people said they had used the services of an emergency shelter at some point in the past year.

What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?

Respondents could name as many factors as were relevant for their housing loss. For some it was a single factor but for most there were multiple factors that contributed to their loss of housing.

Reasons for Loss of Housing	
Addiction	30% (22)
Abuse &/or Conflict	28% (21)
Job loss	27% (20)
Illness	23% (17)
Unable to Pay Rent	21% (16)

Other reasons given for loss of housing included: mental health; house fire; conflict with roommates (mentioned three times); people they lived with passed away (a father, a roommate). Problems with the landlord or property were cited. This included: illegal eviction; lease was up; rental agreement ended; “horrible place”; “I gave up my place. It was too isolating.” The lack of available affordable housing and problems with personal finances were also noted.

Abuse, Conflict and Loss of Housing

Abuse, conflict and loss of housing deserves a more in-depth review given the number of times and ways it came up in the sample. If we bundle together abuse and/or conflict with a partner/spouse or with a parent/guardian, we find 21 separate people reported this affected their housing situation. In nine cases, there was a combination of conflict and abuse.

- Experienced Abuse – Parents/Guardian – 9 cases
- Experienced Abuse – Spouse/Partner – 9 cases
- Conflict Parent/Guardian – 6 cases
- Conflict Spouse/Partner – 13 cases

In 8 of 10 case where people cited being hospitalized contributed to their loss of housing, abuse was also cited as a contributing factor to homelessness. This included: abuse by parents (2 times) or by spouse (5 times), and in one case, both parties were cited. In seven of the 10 cases where people named “unsafe housing” as contributing to their loss of housing, they also identified abuse in the home. All three cases of incarceration and loss of housing were associated with violence or conflict in the home. Two cases cited separation from spouse as why they lost their housing.

Conflict with roommates was also indicated as a problem. *“Roommate doing drugs – I moved out.” “Roommate was getting aggressive.”*

YOU COUNT! COUNT YOURSELF IN!

The final survey questions were qualitative, open-ended questions which provided an opportunity for the individual to share what they felt was important. Below is a summary of what Count participants had to say.

What is your biggest challenge now in trying to find housing?

Biggest Challenge to Finding Housing?	
Lack of affordable housing	44 mentions
Cost of housing	17 mentions
Finding work	7 mentions
Health Issues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical, drug addiction, mental emotional help • Getting and staying clean • Addictions, Lack of treatment 	
Other:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords: <i>“Landlords aren’t following the rules.” “Too many slum landlords.”</i> • Condition of Housing: Mould, Bugs, Infestation • No references. • Domestic problems • Ageism 	

It’s a beautiful community, but terribly expensive housing in the Cowichan Valley and zero availability.

Being homeless is very uncomfortable. You are locked in at certain times. It is not a free feeling.

It sucks with no housing, employment seems impossible.

Because I live in a tent, disability doesn’t give me a subsidy cause I don’t have a fixed address.

Are there services you wanted but were unable to get?

Housing Supports Needed
<p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individualized housing. ○ <i>Need cheaper, single person housing. Then [people] can support themselves and get jobs.</i> ○ <i>More housing – should have trailers and temporary housing.</i>
<p>Access to Health – Medical Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access to a doctor. ○ Access to specialized medical treatment. ○ Mental health services. ○ Assistance with addictions – Drug and alcohol treatment - Opiate treatment. ○ Counselling. ○ Clean, non-threatening peer group. ○ Physio therapy. ○ Needs assistance navigating medical system.
<p>Help with Forms and Such:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help with disability application. ○ Help obtaining ID . ○ <i>Unable to get help with filling out welfare [forms].</i> ○ <i>Legal Aid: Kicked out in winter! Landlord kept all items!</i>
<p>Food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Food on Sundays – food bank closed.</i> ○ <i>More places to get food – often full – none left.</i>
<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skilled Education. ○ Finances to complete training. ○ <i>Poor bus service in the Cowichan Valley and for getting to Nanaimo and Victoria for employment.</i> ○ <i>A shelter where dogs are allowed.</i> ○ <i>Benefits too low, need more housing with rent geared to welfare system.</i>

What was helpful?

- *Global Vocational [was] a real support. Bus passes, clothing, & up to \$1,000 in help finding work.*
- *Salvation Army has helpful but doesn't have a lot of funding (tents, clothes).*
- *Very happy with food at Warmland.*
- *Warmland should be a model of how things/shelters should be run.*
- *Good services at Warmland.*
- *No places to move to but I feel hope with support of Warmland staff. I'm here because Victoria shelters were too full and dangerous. Here there is less people and we have a chance of getting help with the people that work here to support us.*

RELATIVE OR HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS

- 71 people surveyed
- 46 (65%) Males + 25 (35%) Females
- 31 (43%) Aboriginal
- Average Age: 47

Where did you stay last night?

- 26 - Staying in transitional housing units at Warmland
- 40 - People staying at someone else's place - *couch surfing*
- 4 - People staying temporarily at a motel
- 1 - Person renting a room but uncertain for how long

People reported staying at:

- *Friend's camper.*
- *Someone's trailer.*
- *Brother's house.*
- *One night – different places.*
- *Couch surfing now. I don't sleep outside in the winter.*

Plus 29 people temporarily retained at the local hospital due to lack of beds/housing

On the night of the Count, 29 people were being kept at the local hospital who no longer needed the acute care services of a hospital. They could not be released; however, because there was no home or appropriate place (such as a long-term care facility) for them to reside.

- 18 people waiting for a bed in residential care.
- 11 people needing housing options for unique, hard to house situations such as: Community Living BC, hospice support or where there are financial or guardianship questions. If they had a home and supports they would have been discharged.

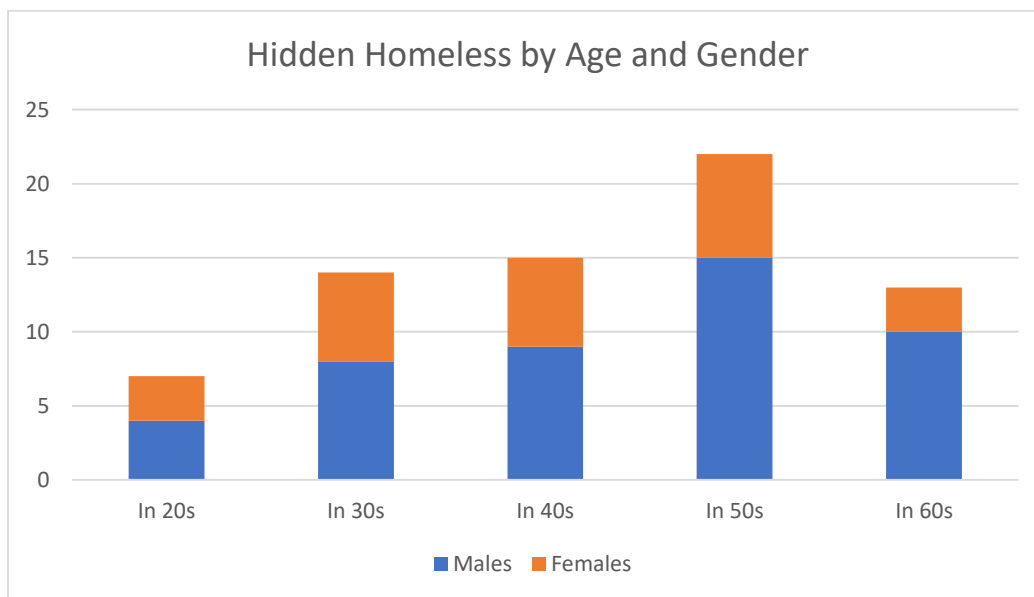
Note: No surveys were done with people in this group and their cumulative number has been left out of percentage calculations below.

RELATIVE HOMELESSNESS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Who were these individuals we surveyed who fit the criteria of relative or hidden homelessness? As we see above, this population is composed primarily of two groups: people who live in transitional housing units and people who are *couch surfing – staying for an indeterminate amount of time at a friend or family member's residence*. Those who live in transitional housing

are a minority in this group because there is a limited number of these units in the community. Although we surveyed 40 people who indicated they were staying at someone's place, we know the number of people living this way is much greater. It is a very difficult number to accurately determine.

We encountered most, but not all, of the people who lived in the transitional housing through the surveys done at Warmland. Some people who were couch surfing also accessed services at Warmland that day but we encountered most of them in other locations. Hiiye'yu Lelum's Breakfast Club is an important place for many First Nations residence to come in the morning and start their day. The Basket Society is another popular spot for many where they know they can get a coffee, snacks, lunch and more. One this occasion, the Magnet Event where there were free services and food was also one location where we encountered people who were relatively homeless. A slightly different sub-set of this population was reached through Cowichan Women Against Violence. Women who access their services are likely facing homelessness or housing challenges due to unresolved issues of conflict and violence in the home. Couch surfing for some of them, can be a long-term but temporary step in trying to get away from a difficult home situation. Six women who were surveyed at the main office of CWAV were staying at someone else's place. Only one woman was accompanied by children.



Aboriginal: Over 40% self-identified as Aboriginal

Thirty-one individuals or 43% of those surveyed, self-identified as Aboriginal; 24 were First Nations, 5 were Metis, 2 were non-status Aboriginal. 15 Aboriginal women, 16 Aboriginal men.

Family Status: *Ten people were accompanied by other family members*

There was one couple in the sample and six people who identified they were living with a partner or with other adults. One person shared that this was her mother.

There were two women with children. A 37-year-old mother of three children under 9 and a 38-year-old woman with three children under 10. They were both staying at “someone else’s place.”

LGBTQ: *One individual*

One person, a 57-year-old male, self-identified as part of the LGBTQ community.

Foster Care: *Just under one-third had lived in foster care*

Twenty-two people (30%) had lived in foster care. Fourteen of these people were Aboriginal. Eight were women; six of them were Aboriginal woman. Five of the men were Aboriginal. Non-Aboriginal - six males and two females.

Education: *66% had Grade 11 or higher education*

66% had completed grade 11 or higher. Twenty-eight people had finished grade 11 or 12 and 5 of them went on to do trade school. Nineteen individuals (26%) had some post-secondary education with 11 stating that they held an undergraduate degree from a university or college. Twenty-four people had less than grade 10 education.

Military Experience: *Four individuals.*

Four people had military experience. 3 males, ages 45, 48 and 62 and 1 female age 41.

Use of Emergency Services: *Over 50% had accessed Emergency Medical Services last year*

37 people (53%) used Emergency Medical Services in the past year. Twelve people only accessed emergency services once in the past year but eight of them were also hospitalized at some point in the year. Fourteen people used emergency health services multiple times ranging from 4 to as many as 20 times each.

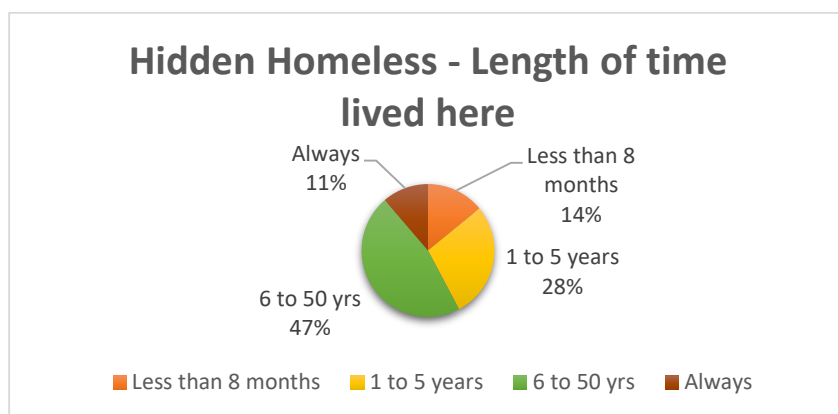
Hospitalized: 39% of sample had been Hospitalized at some point in past year

28 people were hospitalized at some point during the past year. For 9 individuals this ranged from 3 to 10 times. Most people who had been hospitalized had also used emergency services (n = 24).

Income: Disability Allowance and Income Assistance primary source of income

Sources of Income	
Disability Allowance	48% (34)
Income Assistance	25% (18)
Employed	18% (13)
Odd Jobs	15% (11)
Informal Work	5% (4)
Money from Family	5% (4)
Seniors' Benefits	4% (3)
Alimony	1% (1)
Child & Family Tax Benefits	1% (1)
No Income	2% (2)

How long lived here: 58% had lived in Duncan over 5 years



Ten people lived in Duncan a year or less. The youngest person in this group, a Metis, male, age 20, moved here from New Brunswick two months earlier. 58% of people experiencing Hidden Homelessness had lived here 5+ years. Eight people stated that they had lived here since birth.

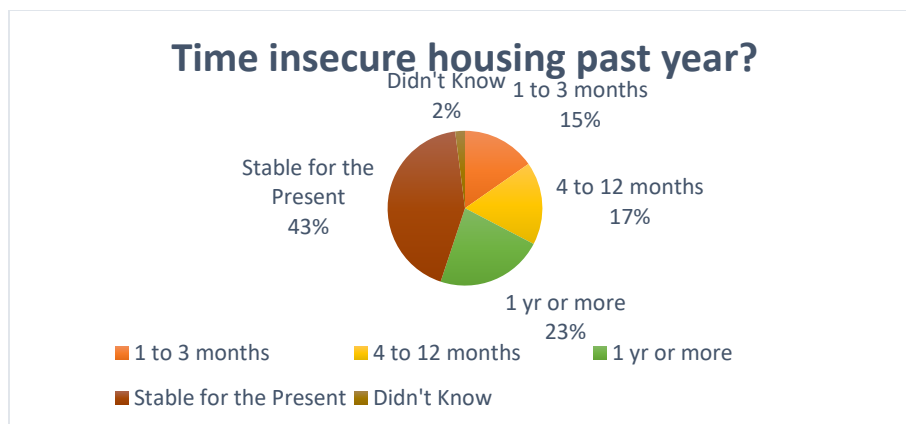
EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

How old were you the first time you became homeless or were without a secure place to live?

First experienced homelessness or insecure housing?	
Pre-Teens	2% (2)
Between age 10 and 25	32% (23)
Between 26 and 55	53% (38)
55+	7% (5)
Don't Know	4% (3)

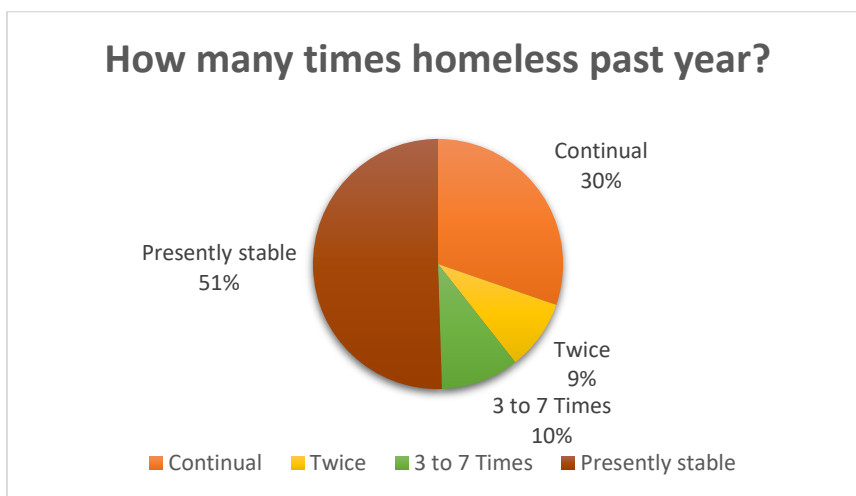
Four people were presently experiencing housing challenges for the first time.

In the past year, how much time have you been without a secure place to live?



Although some in this sub-group had a roof over their head for now, for many who experience hidden homeless it is hard to predict when things will change. The people who lived in the transitional housing units knew they had at least two years when they would have a place “of their own” to stay and so their housing was “stable at the moment.” However, many of them are aware that the clock is ticking. They must stay focused on overcoming their housing challenges and prepare to re-enter the private sector, rental market. For those who are staying at someone else’s place, housing stability can be more difficult to predict.

In the past year, how many different times have you been without a secure place to live?



As we see in the chart above, half of those surveyed who were experiencing hidden or relative homelessness were presently stable. This group was composed primarily of those people living in transitional housing units plus there were 10 people staying at “someone else’s place.” For the other half of the sample it was a different story. Twenty-two people indicated they have experienced insecure housing continually since a certain turning point. For seven people there had been multiple experiences of homelessness over the past year ranging from 3 to 7 different times.

Have you stayed at an emergency shelter in the past year?

Even though they may have a place to stay at the moment, 25 people said they had stayed at an emergency shelter sometime in the past year.

What happened that caused you to loss your housing?

Reasons for Loss of Housing?	
Abuse - Conflict	20
Illness	18
Job Loss	18
Addiction	17
Unsafe Housing	16
Unable to Pay Rent	15
Hospitalization	6
Incarceration	3

Once again when we look at the number of separate individuals who experience abuse or conflict and relate this to the loss of their housing (or housing stability) we see that conflict is a leading cause of why people are homeless. Reported: 8 cases abuse spouse/partner, 12 cases conflict spouse/partner, 4 cases abuse parent/guardian, 4 cases conflict parent/partner. In 10 of the 16 cases of unsafe housing, conflict and/or abuse with a house mate (parent or partner) was also noted.

Abuse and/or conflict with other people also surfaced in this group. In three instances, people spoke about conflict with people around them: other tenants, friends, and a daughter. A male, age 61 who is now living in transitional housing spoke of being evicted because of other tenants. Another male, age 57 referred to conflict with friends.

Other reasons noted as contributing factors to housing loss included: aging out of foster care, guardian died, renovations, illegal suite, house put up for sale, children taken by MCFD, victim of home invasion, was moving and rental fell through, mental health, inability to keep a job, stress, housing shortage, divorced – “Stranded on Island.”

You Count! Count Your Voice in!

What respondents told us.

What is your biggest challenge now in trying to find housing?

Biggest Challenge to Finding Housing?
<p>Expense & Lack of Affordable Housing – mentioned over 40 times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There definitely needs to be more low income housing. Rent goes up but disability and welfare stays the same. Minimum wage stays the same. Cost of living goes up.</i> • <i>Rent is too high for a single person.</i> • <i>Hydro too high.</i> • <i>Nothing available that is not extremely expensive.</i> • <i>Waiting for aboriginal senior housing to open in Kelowna.</i>
<p>Problems with Landlords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Landlords aren't following the rules. They are discriminatory, greedy and unfair toward renters. Crooks. They take cash only and are dishonest.</i> • <i>Communication is difficult with the landlord.</i> • <i>Poor landlords and poor rentals. Infestations. Quality poor!</i> • <i>Building management problems. Landlords not taking responsibility for safety of renters.</i> • <i>No trust in landlords. Discrimination. 3x</i> • <i>No references. 5x</i> • <i>Wait lists long!</i> • <i>Landlord tenancy issues. Substandard housing. Black mold.</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Landlord is becoming aggressive. Is also not paying the bills. Can't move out due to lack of housing.</i> • <i>Deposits.</i> • <i>Cockroaches, black mold, silver fish, bed bugs, asbestos.</i>
<p>Health and Well Being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of relapse into addictions. • Addictions. • Treatment for alcohol. • Chronic Illness. • Social anxiety (GAD). Sabotages himself. Really finds it difficult to pull his life together. Fearful. Addictions. • Mental health wellness. 3x • Looking after my health. • Dental services needed. 4x • Need message therapy – has hip, leg and ankle pain. • YWCA – <i>was hoping to use health club services.</i> • Access to Aquatic Centre. • Disability – ICBC • Has head injuries – short term memory loss.
<p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe transportation. • Transportation for work. (Does home care.) • Bus passes.
<p>Challenges with Roommates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable shared accommodations. • Finding a roommate. 2x • <i>Trying to find someone to share rental with but can't find anyone who is reliable. They spend their money and leave me with the rent.</i> • <i>Not happy to share with a roommate because of anxiety but too expensive to live on one's own. Difficult to find a place.</i> • <i>Finances, don't want to share. Don't want to be around drug community.</i> • <i>Twice a roommate has left without paying rent.</i>
<p>Safety Issues and Support for Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing safety. • Been robbed and lost ID so unable to use services. • Need more resources for men. Help seeking counselling. • Counselling. 4x • Anger management. • Support for men coming out of jail. Support for single men as fathers.
<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding employment. 3x

- Difficult to access services with no fixed address.
- Can't afford cell phone to communicate.
- Lack of information about services available. 2x
- *Having an advocate who can speak and represent me through the bureaucracy of both medical and financial benefits.*
- *Would like to have a pet companion.*
- Places that take pets.
- Education.
- Emergency funding.
- *I'm looking for work and may go back to school. I have two children in foster care and my daughter is with her dad. There are people with 2 or 3 jobs who just can't find anything.*
- Storing belongings.
- Sometimes the Shelter is full.
- Banned from shelter.
- *(Staying in a trailer.) It's cold! There is poor heating and sub-standard conditions. Unable to store food safely.*
- *Since couch surfing, I do not receive the shelter portion of benefits and my storage unit with all my belongings is not getting paid for.*
- *I'm living in constant survival mode. Feel a lack of security about family. Children could be taken away. Self-esteem. Social stigma. Feel like hiding! I can't afford a phone so no one can contact me.*
- *Day-to-day stress to come up with rent.*
- Lack of services and financial support for 55+

Housing Needs:

- Seniors Housing for women.
- Seniors housing. Extended care.
- 55+ would be nice. Safer.
- Housing for single people.
- Housing for single couples with no children.
- Low-income housing for non-drug addicts.
- Access to reasonable housing where you are respected.
- *Why not turn empty buildings into transitional housing units?*
- Need safer and more secure places.
- Safe affordable housing. Subsidized housing based on income.
- *When children are placed in Care you lose child benefits which are still necessary to maintain a family rental for when they are returned.*
- Second stage housing.
- *I fear going out and living on my own. I don't want to depend on people for help even though I need it. I'm trying to juggle 2 jobs just to afford my own place to stay and thrive on my own.*

What has been helpful?

- *Happy to be at Warmland, otherwise I would have no where to go.*
- *Foodbank saved my life. Hit on back of head. Hospital. Now on disability.*

AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

- 37 individuals surveyed
- Everyone was renting
- 14 Males - 23 Females

This was not intended as a count of everyone at risk of homelessness but an opportunity to survey people having a variety of housing challenges and living with housing insecurity in order to learn more about their experience.

Age:

- People ranged in age from 32 to 74. The average age was 50.5

Family Status:

- Two people were accompanied by a partner the previous night.
- 6 people lived with another adult who was not a partner
- 10 households with children

Aboriginal:

- 18 people: 14 people were First Nations, 4 were Metis

Education:

- 26 had completed Grade 11 or higher education

Immigration:

- Two people had immigrated to Canada in the past 5 years.

Military:

- One First Nations man had been in Cadets.

Foster Care:

- 11 people had been in Foster care – 7 of these individuals were Aboriginal
- 2 people noted they had been at Residential School

Emergency Services:

- 18 people had used Emergency Medical Services in the past year. 4 had been 4 to 6 times.

Hospitalized:

- 14 people had been hospitalized in the past year. 2 people 4 to 5 times

How long lived here:

- 75% of those surveyed had lived here 4 or more years. This included 6 people who have always lived here.

Factors contributing to insecure housing:

- Illness – 10
- Abuse and/or Conflict: 10 separate cases
- Unsafe Housing - 7
- Other: Addiction (1), Job Loss (2), Unable to pay rent (3), Incarcerated (1)

Stayed at Shelter past year:

- 12 people had stayed at an emergency shelter sometime in the past year.

YOU COUNT! COUNT YOUR VOICE IN

This small group of 37 individuals who were at risk of homelessness included ten households with children. These children represent the next generation of people in the community now growing up with a sense of insecure housing. We take the opportunity here to have a closer look at their lives and circumstances.

Eight people lived in a household with a partner or other adult (such as a family member). There were ten households with children: 6 had one child, 3 households had two children and 1 had three:

- 48-year-old First Nations female. Encountered at CWAV. Always lived here. Had son 16. First experienced insecure housing at age 45 – 3 yrs ago. Biggest challenge: *Utilities are too expensive! Rent cost - housing costs going up. Animals. Need rent subsidy.* Worked her whole life and is now on disability and will be homeless by March 1. Plans on living in her car. Can't afford anything and is unwilling to give up her pets. Needs affordable housing where pets are allowed.
- 34-year-old First Nations female encountered at CWAV. Son age 11. First experienced insecure housing age 21 – thirteen years ago. University grad. Reason for losing housing: Unsafe housing. Income: IA, student loan, child tax credit. Biggest challenge: affordable housing. Need: dental, medical coverage.
- 52-year-old female with two sons ages 11 and 13. First experienced insecure housing age 45 – seven yrs ago. Lived here all her life. Lived in foster care. College grad. Biggest challenge: Availability, affordability, Pets. Pet Deposits. Utilities costs. Conditions of

houses that are available. Currently living in low-income housing which is being taken down and being developed into new housing which won't be low income.

- 39-year-old woman with two children both girls ages 6 and 7. First experienced insecure housing at age 17. Always lived here. Has a BA. Reason for loss of housing: Abuse spouse, conflict with parents, unsafe housing. Biggest Challenge: Price! Availability. *"Duncan is in desperate need of housing. There are not enough resources if you have a 'history.' Not enough shelters for the homeless. Why not convert buildings to housing (Malaspina)? Don't just provide a bed but need next steps for people – like employment skills, (special needs level 1)."* Services needed: Access to legal counsel, legal aid, employment or wage subsidy, family maintenance.
- 54-year-old First Nations male - living with another adult and his 14 yr old son. First experienced problems with housing at age 18. Has lived here 20 yrs. Was in military - Cadets. Loss of housing: Incarcerated, unsafe housing. *"Nothing available."*
- 60-year-old First Nations man – living with 83-year-old father and 26-year-old son. First experienced insecure housing 2 yrs ago. Lived here 17 yrs. Was in residential school. Biggest Challenge: *"No housing. Costs too high. Need more housing with locals having first choice."*
- 33-year-old First Nation woman with three sons ages: 14, 10, 1.5 yrs. Mental health treatment required. Leaving home and kids for a period. Lived here 30 years. Street kid while growing up. Grade 10. Used emergence services twice, hospital once in past year. Illness and hospitalization contributed to loss of housing. *"Need addict-free housing options. Support within. Need more women only shelters for woman not going through abuse."* For her it is post-partum psychosis. *"Need rent increased for people on Income assistance. Medical conditions and treatments all need to be covered in full. Bias toward methadone program."* Services needed: Housing for people with temporary mental health conditions. *"Had to stay away from children. Overwhelming experience. Felt alone. Had to go to Vancouver solo for a medical treatment. Foodbank, Colleen helped her a lot!"*

ABORIGINAL HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING CHALLENGES

The total number of people of Aboriginal descent surveyed in the February 20-21 Count was 75.

- 26 (34%) - Absolutely Homeless
- 31 (41%) – Hidden Homeless
- 18 (24%) – At Risk of Homelessness

Does this represent an accurate picture of the number of Aboriginal people who are homeless and/or dealing with housing challenges in Duncan? The simple answer is: no. The number of Aboriginal people in the sample who were considered to be Absolutely Homeless (n = 26) may be best viewed as a minimal number of Aboriginal people who were experiencing homelessness on the day of the Count. We know that it was “*Cheque Day*” on the Reserve and this may have affected the number of people who accessed services such as at Hiiye’yu Lelum’s Breakfast Club, the Basket Society (food bank), and even the Magnet Event. As stated earlier, this survey was not intended to get an accurate count of all those people who are among the hidden homeless or at-risk population. That is a difficult and different task. This survey of people within those populations still provides for many insights as to their background and challenges.

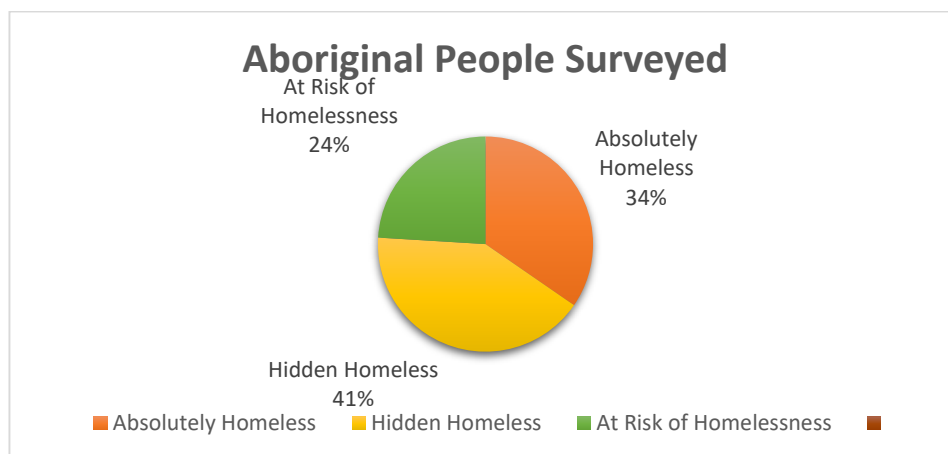


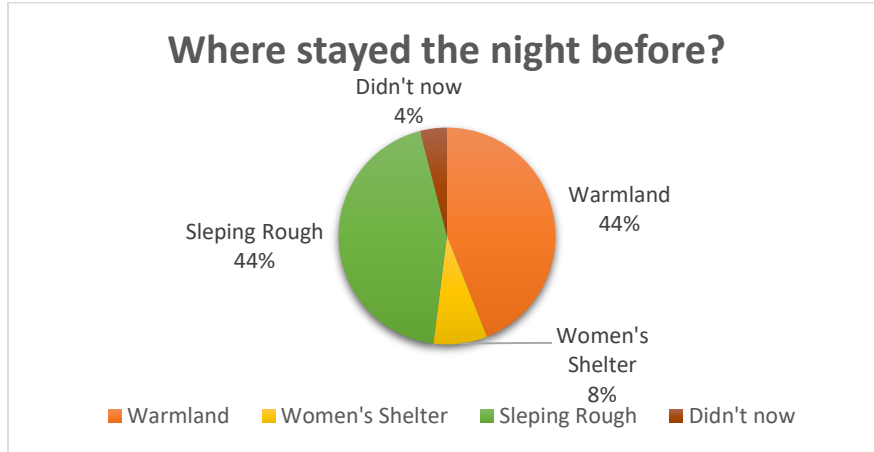
TABLE: Aboriginal People surveyed by Type of Homelessness, Age and Gender.

Age	Absolute Homeless (n = 26) *		Hidden Homeless (n = 31)		At-Risk of Homelessness (n = 18)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
20s	3	3	2	2	0	0
30s	2	3	5	3	0	2
40s	3	5	2	3	1	3
50s	4	0	4	4	4	5
60s	0	1	3	3	1	1
70s	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	13	12	16	15	6	12

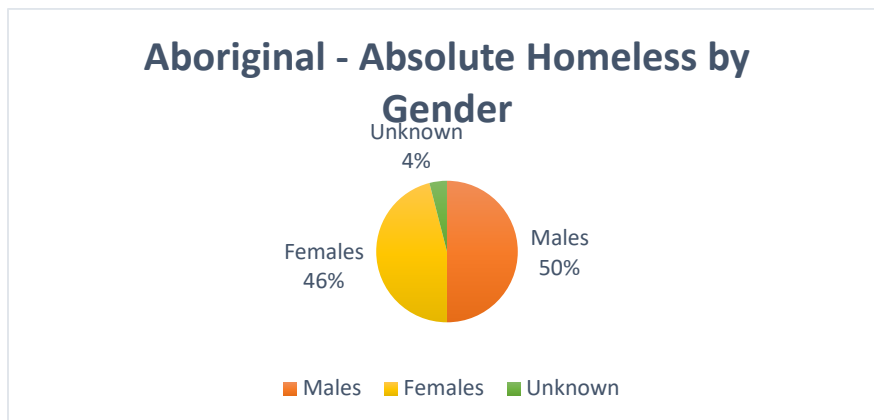
* One No response to gender question N = 75

ABORIGINAL & ABSOLUTELY HOMELESS - DEMOGRAPHICS

➤ 26 People: 19 – First Nations; 6 – Metis; 1 – Non-status



Eight Aboriginal men and three Aboriginal women accessed shelter at Warmland Homeless Shelter. Two women took shelter at the women's transition house. Six women and five men spent the night sleeping rough. (Women: 3 makeshift shelter or camp, 1 sleeping in a car, 1 an abandoned building, and one young woman walked the streets all night.) (Men: 5 sleeping outside in a public space.)



Of the 26 Aboriginal people who were absolutely homeless, 13 were men, 12 were women. One person did not respond to this question.

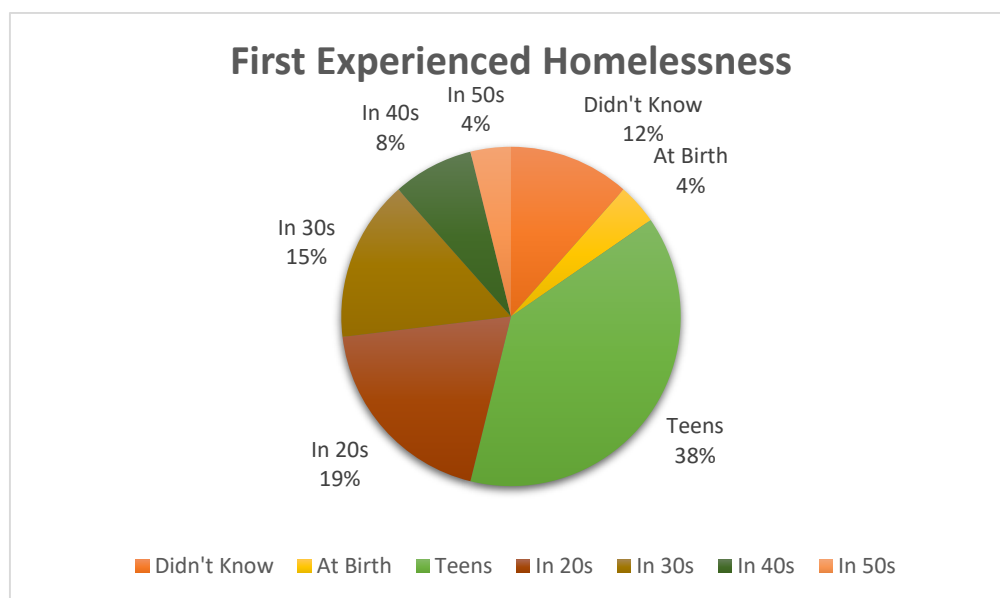
Foster Care: 9 people of 26 (34%). This is similar to the non-Aboriginal absolutely homeless population which was also at 34%.

Used Emergency Services: 14 said Yes. 7 indicated 1 or 2 times; 7 indicated 4 to 7 times.

Was Hospitalized: 16 said Yes. 10 indicated 1 or 2 times; 6 said 3 to 7 times.

Income: The primary source of income was government assistance in the form of Income Assistance (12) and Disability Allowance (9). Two people were accessing seniors' benefits and one person was receiving employment insurance payments. Four people reported work in the informal economy.

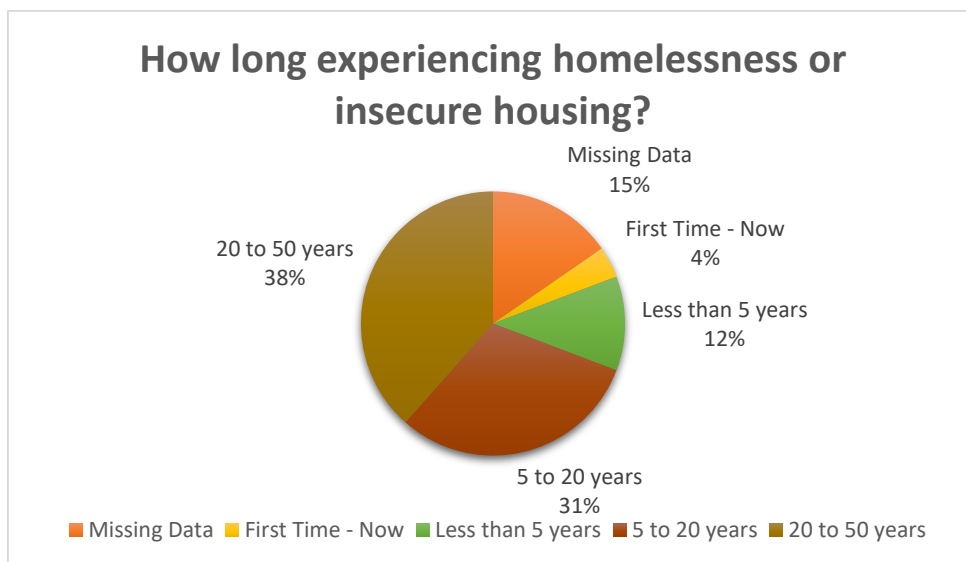
ABORIGINAL, ABSOLUTELY HOMELESS & EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS



Length of Time Homeless this year?		Number of Times Homeless this year?	
All Year	61% (16)	Continuous	77% (20)
4 to 6 months	23% (6)	2 to 6 times	16% (4)
Less than 2 months	15% (4)	Didn't Know	7% (2)

The purpose of the above few questions was to uncover the depth and duration of homelessness and distinguish the number of people who are chronically and episodically homeless. From the above information, we can see that a high percentage (61%) of Aboriginal people who were identified as absolutely homeless experienced homeless throughout the year. Whether one was

homeless for the entire year or a shorter period, over 75% of absolutely homeless Aboriginal people experienced homelessness continuously (chronic homelessness). When we look at the chart below as to how long people have experienced homelessness or insecure housing, we see that almost 70% of these people have lived with insecure housing for over 5 years.



As we see in the table below, the most common cause reported for the loss of housing had to do with conflict and abuse by a partner or a parent/guardian. The Cowichan Region has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the province.

Reasons for Losing Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abuse by Spouse/Partner – 6 Conflict with Spouse – 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illness – 5 Evicted – 5 Unsafe Housing – 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abuse by Parent/Guardian – 8 Conflict with Parent - 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incarceration - 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addiction 6 Job Loss – 6 Unable to Pay Rent – 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't Know – 7 Other – 3 Hospitalized – 2 No Response – 1

Accessed Emergency Shelter: 20 of the 26 people surveyed had accessed an emergency shelter in the past year.

ABORIGINAL & HIDDEN HOMELESS

Where did the 31 Aboriginal people who were classified as among the hidden homeless population stay?

Three individuals spent the night at a motel as a temporary measure, 4 people were housed at Warmland Transitional housing units and 24 people were *couch surfing*. 16 of these people had accessed an emergency shelter at some point in the past year.

Eighty percent of this group had experienced homelessness or insecure housing for over 5 years. Nine people from this group (29%) seemed to have a fairly stable housing situation at present, but fourteen of them indicated they were homeless from one to ten months of the previous year, while eight people reported experiencing insecure housing throughout the entire year.

YOU COUNT! COUNT YOUR VOICE IN!

What Aboriginal people who were surveyed had to share and recommend.

What is your biggest challenge in trying to find housing?

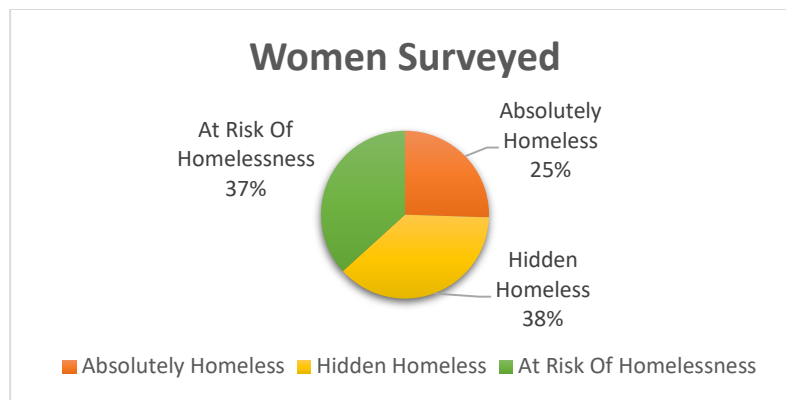
Biggest Challenge Finding Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can't afford rent. Can't even afford to get pain medication." 52-year-old Metis man. "I can't work because I'm not well and thus I can't afford housing."• Unaffordable.• Unsafe.• Bugs.• Trying to get son back.• Lack of employment.• Health issues.• Stigma against single males.

Are there services you wanted but were unable to get?

Housing Supports Needed
<p>Medical – Health Related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Proper medical care.” Individual who has had difficulty with the system.</i> • <i>“Mental – emotional support needed. Have anxiety.”</i> • <i>Physio therapy, opiate treatment.</i> • <i>Drug and Alcohol treatment.</i>
<p>Access to Food and Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More places to get food. Often full (at the Basket Society) and none left.</i> • <i>Hungry during the day. Would be good to have more access to food.</i>
<p>Help with Finding and Keeping Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I don’t know how to look for it. I can’t read that well.</i> • <i>I don’t have enough rental references.</i> • <i>Not enough child care available for programs such as Rent Smart. They offered child care for toddlers and older children but they didn’t have care for babies. Another program didn’t have any childcare. – 27 yr old, First Nations, woman. Mother of 2 children ages 6 months and 4 years. Accessing shelter at Somenos House.</i>
<p>Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of affordable housing – number one issue named.</i> • <i>Affordability of non-drug infested rentals.</i> • <i>Needs some privacy. Wants own place. Unaffordable.</i> • <i>Need single person housing. “Then [people] can support themselves and get a job.”</i> • <i>More 2nd and 3rd stage housing.</i> • <i>“Employers are having a difficult time hiring employees for trades because there’s nowhere for them to stay. Motels are full. No rentals.” - 39-year-old First Nations Male, has high school plus some trades school education.</i> • <i>I would like to see more low income housing especially for those who are trying to better themselves by going to school and seeking an education. – 42-year-old First Nations woman, Grade 10 education. Was in foster care.</i> • <i>Lack of two-bedroom units that are affordable.</i> • <i>There needs to be more low-income housing. Even with two incomes it is extremely unaffordable to find a decent place to live. I’m renting one room for \$650 in a rooming house that is known to be unsafe. I’m jeopardizing my safety just to have a place to sleep. - 37-year-old First Nations female. Encountered at Somenos House. Had used Emergency medical services 7 times in the past year – abuse related.</i>

WOMEN AND HOMELESSNESS

Over one-third of the people interviewed on the day of the homeless count were women (N = 65).



Absolutely Homeless

- 17 women – 12 Aboriginal
- They ranged in age from 21 to 61.

Where did you stay last night?

- Six at Warmland
- Two at Somenos House
- One woman didn't know where she would spend the night
- Nine women sleeping Outside – 2 in cars, 3 makeshift shelter, 3 outdoors, 1 abandoned building

On the night of February 20, 2017, woman made up 24% of the absolute homeless population in Duncan. We encountered five of these woman at the Basket Society. All of these five women were among the homeless people who were sleeping rough that night. The youngest woman was 21 and spent the night walking the streets.

Five of the women sought shelter for the night at Warmland. One woman was 49, one was 46, the youngest was 42, the oldest were 54 and 61. Two of these women were Aboriginal, three were not. They had all made at least one trip to Emergency Services in the past year – one woman indicates she went at least 4 times. They all cite only one factor that contributed to them becoming homeless. For one it was as simple as the rental agreement ended and she couldn't find anything else that she could afford. For another divorce made the difference. Two others could not afford to pay the rent based on the shelter allowance of Income Assistance. Job loss

was what made the difference for another woman. She is working again but says: *“Build something for people who are trying and have put something back together but its still a struggle. [I’m] working but still can’t afford housing.”*

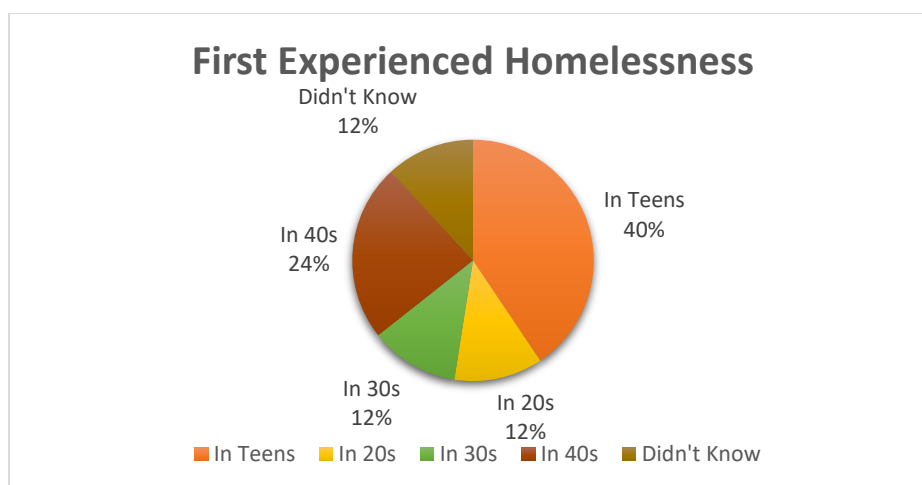
Foster Care: 7 women had experienced living in foster care; 5 were Aboriginal women.

Accessed Emergency Services: 11 of 17 women had accessed emergency services in the past year; 3 were there 3 or more times

Hospitalized: 9 women who were Absolutely Homeless said they had been hospitalized in the past year. 3 woman reported being hospitalized 4 to 7 times. In each of these three cases abuse was indicated as a contributing factor to loss of housing. All three women were First Nations.

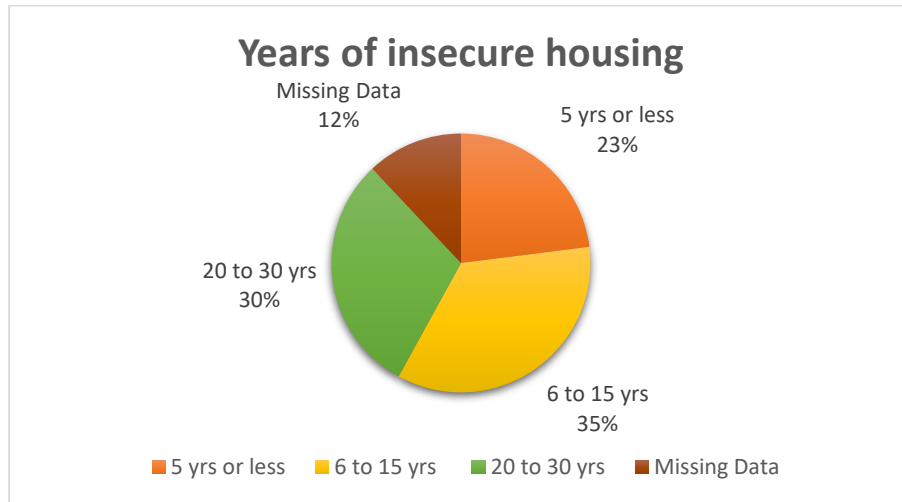
Income: Income Assistance and Disability Allowance provided a source of income for 82% of these women.

EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS



- 10 women indicated they had been experiencing homeless and/or insecure housing all year. Another 7 women indicated they had been homeless for 6 months or less in the past year.
- 11 women stated the experience of homelessness had been continual since it began (Chronic Homelessness).
- 5 women indicated they had experienced episodes of homelessness ranging from 2 to 6 times over the past year. (Episodic Homelessness).
- 15 of 17 women had stayed in a shelter sometime in the past year.

Whether the women had experienced homelessness for part or all of last year, most of them had experienced insecure housing for many years. The lowest time period named was 2 years. Six of the eight women who said they experienced homelessness in their teens had been in foster care. Five of those 6 women were First Nations.



Reasons for Loss of Housing (N = 17)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Abuse Spouse + 5 Conflict Spouse • 4 Abuse Parent + 2 Conflict Parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 - Illness • 2 – Job Loss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 – Evicted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 - Incarcerated • 3 – Hospitalized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 - Unable to Pay Rent • 5 – Unsafe Housing • 5 – Addiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 – Other Reasons

Six women identified more than four factors that had contributed to their housing loss.

YOU COUNT! COUNT YOUR VOICE IN

Biggest Challenge? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug addiction - heroin• Mould
Services Needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unable to get help with filling out welfare [forms].• Homeless shelter that accepts couples. Have been turned down.
Help Finding or Keeping Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Can't get rent deposit or damage deposit back from landlord. Kicked out in winter! Landlord kept everything. Need legal aid services!</i>• <i>Feel unsafe in building – worried about CO.</i>• <i>Too many slum landlords.</i>• <i>Just not enough rentals!</i>• <i>Housing for single person. Don't want room mate. Gets messy.</i>• <i>Hydro is so expensive! A place may seem affordable until you factor in the hydro.</i>
Health and Medical Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Addiction services. "There is not much in town for youth. Addiction services are hard to access."</i>• <i>[Drug] Treatment – detox needed.</i>• <i>Rehab.</i>

CONCLUSION AND COMPARISON TO 2014 COUNT

When we compare the results of the 2014 Homeless Count to the current results, what might jump out right away is that the number of people counted as absolutely homeless increased from 59 to 73. The 2014 study was a regional count. The number of people in the Duncan area who were recorded as absolutely homeless was actually 56. On the night of the Count in 2014, 31 people were staying at Warmland and 4 at Somenos House. In 2017, we counted 43 people staying at Warmland and 2 at Somenos. While this may represent an overall increase in the number of people in Duncan who are homeless, it may also be accounted for by fluctuations in the weather causing more people to be sleeping indoors. In 2014, the number of people counted who were sleeping outdoors was 13 for the region. In 2017, that number rose to 26 individuals. As there is a cap on the number of shelter beds for those who are absolutely homeless, it may be that we will see the numbers of people sleeping outside continues to raise if the overall homeless population continues to grow.

In terms of the characteristics of the two samples, there are three differences to note in demographics. First, there were ten people in the 2017 sample who indicated they had been in the military at some point. In 2014 there were no cases reported. This was the first year we inquired if people self-identified with the LGBTQ community. Two individuals indicated they did identify with this population. This was also the first year we asked about immigration status. There were two people who reported immigrating to Canada in the last five years.

Beyond this we find only minor differences in the two samples. Again, these differences may be accounted for by daily fluctuations in the size and make-up of this population. However, when we look at the length of time people have lived here and how long they have been homeless while living here, we find evidence in both samples that there is a chronic resident homeless population in Duncan comprised of people who have lived here for a considerable time.

Comparison of 2014 and 2017 Homeless Counts

	2014 Absolutely Homeless Population	2017 Absolutely Homeless Population
Average Age	49	45
Gender	79% Male – 21% Female	75% Male – 23% Female
Aboriginal	26%	35%
Income	46% Income Assistance /PWD	69%
Homeless 1 yr or longer	60%	47%
Lived 5 yrs of longer in area	61%	67%
Reasons for loss of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Couldn't afford rent • Addiction • Relationship breakdown • Family Conflict • Eviction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction • Conflict/Abuse Parent or Partner • Job Loss • Illness • Unable to pay rent

APPENDIX A: WHERE WE ENCOUNTERED PEOPLE

WHERE ENCOUNTERED?

	Absolutely Homeless 73	Hidden Homeless 71	At Risk Population 37
Warmland – 69 surveys	38 - Warmland (35 - Shelter + 3 sleeping rough)	31 people (24 – transitional units, 6 couch surfing; 2 motel)	0
House of Friendship 16	5 (1 -Warmland + 4 sleeping rough)	9 (all couch surfing)	2
CWAV - 18	3 (2 at Transition House, 1 – Don’t Know)	7 people (4 – couch surfing; 1 motel, 1 transitional, 1 renting room)	8
Basket Society - 45	15 (12 – sleeping rough, 2 Warmland, 1 person Don’t Know)	13 (1 transitional; 11 - couch surfing, 1 motel)	17
Mobile Team- 5	4 – sleeping rough	1 couch surfing	0
Magnet Event - 23	7 (4 - Warmland, 3 sleeping rough)	7 couch surfing	9
Island Savings Centre - 2	1 - Warmland		1
Cowichan Independent Living - 2	0	2 – couch surfing	
Total -181	73	71	37

APPENDIX B: THE SURVEY

Duncan PiT Homelessness and Housing Needs Survey
February 20 – 21, 2017

Survey # _____ Location: _____

Interviewer’s Initials: _____ Time: AM / PM _____

Hi. We are doing a confidential survey with people who are experiencing homelessness, or who are having trouble finding housing that feels safe and secure, or people who may be facing other housing challenges. The information will help identify programs and services that are needed in our community.

Participation is voluntary and your name will not be recorded.

- A. Would you be willing to complete the survey? It should take about 10 minutes. You can skip any question or stop the survey at any time.
 - Yes (CONTINUE)
 - No (END)

- B. Are you experiencing homelessness or any challenges with housing?
 - Yes (CONTINUE)
 - If No or No Response END.

- C. Have you already answered this survey with anyone?
 - Yes or No Response END. - Thank You.
 - No (CONTINUE)

- D. Where did you stay last night? *[Do not read categories]*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DECLINE TO ANSWER b. APARTMENT (Renting) / OWN HOUSE / own RV / own trailer / own camper van c. SOMEONE ELSE’S PLACE (family or friend) d. MOTEL/HOTEL e. HOSPITAL, HOLDING CELL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. EMERGENCY SHELTER or TRANSITION HOUSE (Such as Warmland or Somenos House) g. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (Warmland long-term transitional) h. Outside: park, lane, woods, marsh, by the river i. Vehicle: Car / Truck j. Makeshift Shelter, Tent, Shack k. Abandoned building l. Other _____ m. Doesn’t know
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1. Did any family members also stay with you last night? If
 so, who? Can you tell me the age and gender of the children?

<input type="radio"/> NONE	<input type="radio"/> PARTNER	<input type="radio"/> OTHER ADULT			<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER			
<input type="radio"/> CHILD(REN)/DEPENDENT(S)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>[Indicate gender and age for each]</i>	GENDER							
	AGE							

The next few questions are about your experience of homelessness - meaning any time you have been without a secure place to live, this could include staying in a shelter (like Warmland or Somenos House), sleeping on the streets, or living temporarily with others.

2. How old were you the first time you became homeless or were without a secure place to live?

<input type="radio"/> AGE _____	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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3. In the past year, *how much time* have you been homeless or without a secure place to live?
[Best estimate]

<input type="radio"/> LENGTH _____ DAYS WEEKS MONTHS	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
--	----------------------------------	---

4. In the past year, *how many different times* have you experienced homelessness or not having a secure place to live? *[Best estimate.]*

<input type="radio"/> NUMBER OF TIMES ____ <i>[Includes this time]</i>	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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5. Have you ever stayed in an emergency shelter any time in the last year? (In Duncan or elsewhere)

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
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6. How long have you been in (lived in) Duncan?

<input type="radio"/> LENGTH ____ DAYS / WEEKS / MONTHS / YEARS <input type="radio"/> ALWAYS BEEN HERE <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER	Where did you live before you came here? <input type="radio"/> COMMUNITY <input type="radio"/> PROVINCE <input type="radio"/> OR COUNTRY
--	--

The next few questions are about you and your background.

7. To help us avoid duplicate surveys, can you please tell me your mother's initials? _____

8. Do you have First Nations, Métis, or Inuit ancestry? If so, how do you identify yourself?

YES <input type="radio"/> FIRST NATIONS <input type="radio"/> INUIT <input type="radio"/> MÉTIS <input type="radio"/> NON-STATUS / HAVE ABORIGINAL ANCESTRY	<input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER <input type="radio"/> OTHER _____
--	---

9. (Skip this question, if the response was yes to question 7.) Did you come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past five years?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
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10. Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

<input type="radio"/> YES, MILITARY	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> YES, RCMP			

11. What year were you born?

<input type="radio"/> YEAR BORN _____	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
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12. What gender do you identify with?

<input type="radio"/> MALE	<input type="radio"/> TRANSGENDER	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> FEMALE	<input type="radio"/> TWO-SPIRIT	<input type="radio"/> OTHER:

13. Do you identify as part of the gay – lesbian community? *(Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questions, Two-Spirited, Other)*

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
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14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
----------------------------------	--

15. Have you ever been in foster care or a group home?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
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16. In the past 12 months, have you:

- a. Used emergency medical services Yes: _____ No: _____
 - (If yes) How many times? _____
- b. Been hospitalized? Yes: _____ No: _____
 - (If yes) How many times? _____

Last couple of questions

17. There can be many reasons why people are without their own place to live. What happened that caused you to lose the last stable housing you had? (Here we are not referring to temporary housing arrangements – such as, couch surfing or staying at a shelter.)

[Check all that apply.]

<input type="checkbox"/> ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> CONFLICT WITH: PARENT / GUARDIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE	<input type="checkbox"/> CONFLICT WITH: SPOUSE / PARTNER
<input type="checkbox"/> JOB LOSS	<input type="checkbox"/> INCARCERATED (JAIL OR PRISON)
<input type="checkbox"/> UNABLE TO PAY RENT OR MORTGAGE	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALIZATION OR TREATMENT PROGRAM
<input type="checkbox"/> EVICTED: OTHER REASON (NOT FINANCIAL)	<input type="checkbox"/> UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED ABUSE BY: PARENT / GUARDIAN	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER REASON
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED ABUSE BY: SPOUSE / PARTNER	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER

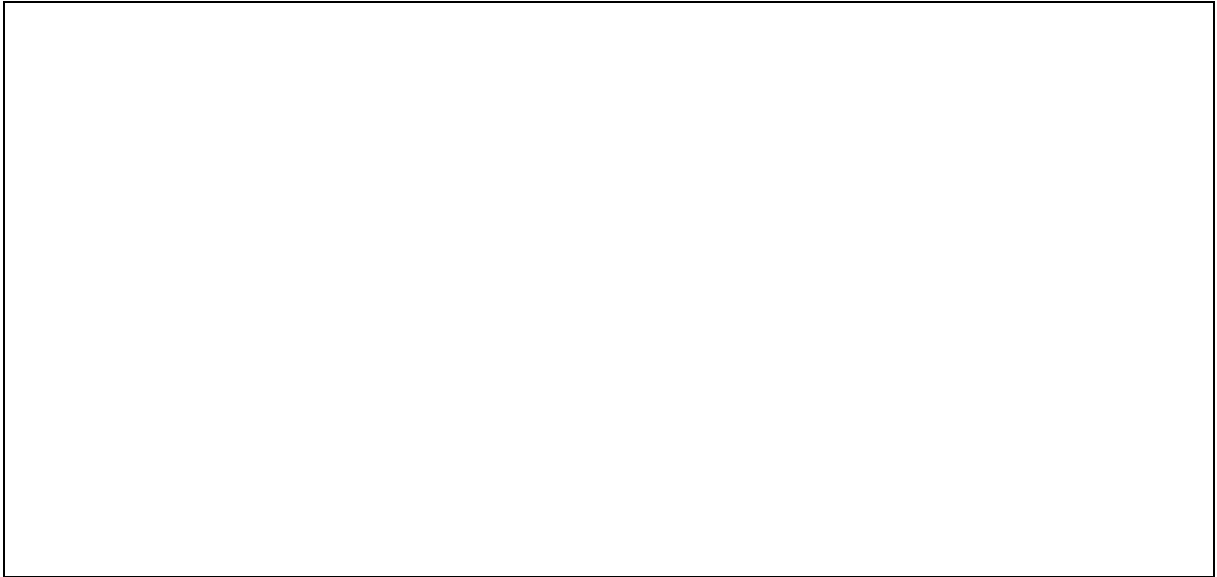
18. What is your biggest challenge now in trying to find housing?

19. Are there any services you wanted but were unable to get?

20. We are interested to know how people are supporting themselves. Will you tell me how you support yourself? For example, are you working or receiving EI or Income Assistance or supporting yourself through some other means? [Check all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DISABILITY BENEFIT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER SOURCE:
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL/SELF-EMPLOYMENT (E.G., BOTTLE RETURNS, PANHANDLING)	<input type="checkbox"/> SENIORS BENEFITS (E.G., CPP/OAS/GIS)	<input type="checkbox"/> NO INCOME
<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> CHILD AND FAMILY TAX BENEFITS	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
<input type="checkbox"/> WELFARE/SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> MONEY FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS	

21. Last Question. Is there anything else you would like to share about the housing challenges you have had or are having now?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to the question above.

Thank you for doing this survey!

(Give gift card.)

APPENDIX C: YOU COUNT! POSTER

YOU COUNT! COUNT YOURSELF IN!



- Are you homeless or worried that you might be soon?
- Are you couch surfing?
- Come take this survey!
- We want to hear from you!
- Your answers will help figure out what services are needed in the community.

Homelessness & Housing Needs Survey

Tuesday, February 21st

10:00 am to 3:30 pm

St John's Church Hall – 486 Jubilee St, Duncan

Warm Lunch – Donated Goods – Free Services Haircuts –
Chiropractic Treatments - Acupuncture

This project is funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnership Strategy.