

National Survey on Homeless Encampments

An **encampment** is often described as a place where two or more people are living outdoors for a sustained period of time. There is typically a visible structure, such as tents or tarps, and the presence of personal belongings (Homeless Hub, 2021) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2019). We encourage survey participants to keep this framing in mind while completing the survey.

* Required

Closing Questions

Estimated time to complete: 5 mins

Respondent Information

Estimated time to complete: 4 mins

1. Which community/region are you responding on behalf of? *

 

2. What is your name? *

3. What is the name of your organization? *

United Way BC

4. What is your position title? *

Reaching Home Manager

5. What is your email address? *

vicky@uwbc.ca

6. What is your phone number? *

2507396266

7. Are there currently homeless encampments in your community or were there homeless encampments in your community in the past? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

8. Does your community regularly (e.g. monthly, quarterly) track information about the number and size of encampments? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

9. Which of the following **data sources** (if any) have helped to inform your responses to this survey? *

Select all that apply.

- HIFIS or other Homelessness Management Information Systems data
- Point-in-Time (PIT) Count
- By-Name List (BNL)/Unique Identifier List (UIL)
- Reaching Home Community Homelessness Report (CHR)
- Shelter capacity data
- None of the above
-

10. Which of the following **community partners and individuals** (if any) have helped to inform your responses to this survey? *

Select all that apply.

- Front-line service providers (e.g. shelter and outreach staff)
- Other community service providers (e.g. meal program staff)
- Police
- Other emergency service providers (e.g. paramedics, fire department)
- Bylaw enforcement officers
- Local health authority or medical professionals (e.g. public health unit)
- Individuals with lived/living experience in homeless encampments
- None of the above
-

11. Are there any other sources of information that you consulted to help inform your responses to this survey?

Significant research was done and we found that these statistics are currently not being tracked. Completing this report is highlighting the need for tracking this data.

Current Status and Recent Trends

We recognize that information on those experiencing homelessness in encampments is difficult to capture. We encourage you to use the information you have access to in order to answer the following questions to the best of your ability. It is acceptable to provide a rough estimate. If there is insufficient information and/or you do not feel comfortable answering the question, you can leave the answer blank or select 'unsure.'

Estimated time to complete: 10 mins

12. Approximately how many individuals were experiencing homelessness in your community in August 2022?

200

13. Of those experiencing homelessness, approximately what percentage stayed in an **encampment** for at least one night during August 2022? *

- 0%
- 1-10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- 51-60%
- 61-70%

- 71-80%
- 81-90%
- 91-100%
- Unsure

14. Approximately how many small encampments (with 2-10 people) existed in your community in August 2022?

Leave blank if you are unsure.

The value must be a number

15. Approximately how many mid-sized encampments (with 11-49 people) existed in your community in August 2022?

Leave blank if you are unsure.

The value must be a number

16. Approximately how many large encampments (with 50 or more people) existed in your community in August 2022?

Leave blank if you are unsure.

The value must be a number

17. Where did encampments exist in your community in August 2022? *

Select all that apply.

- Rural and remote areas
- Outskirts of an urban area
- Urban areas, out of sight of the general public (e.g. abandoned properties, near waterways)

- Urban areas, within plain sight of the general public (e.g. town square/boulevard)
- Private property or government-owned property
- Unsure

18. Where did the **majority** of encampments exist in your community in August 2022?

*

Select one.

- Rural and remote areas
- Outskirts of an urban area
- Urban areas, out of sight of the general public (e.g. abandoned properties, near waterways)
- Urban areas, within plain sight of the general public (e.g. town square/boulevard)
- Private property or government-owned property
- Unsure

19. In the colder months, do encampments in your community typically: *

- Increase significantly
- Increase somewhat
- Stay about the same
- Decrease somewhat
- Decrease significantly
- Unsure

20. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the **number of encampments** in the community has: *

- Increased significantly

- Increased somewhat
- Stayed about the same
- Decreased somewhat
- Decreased significantly
- Unsure

21. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the **number of people staying in encampments** in the community has: *

- Increased significantly
- Increased somewhat
- Stayed about the same
- Decreased somewhat
- Decreased significantly
- Unsure

22. Where has addressing homeless encampments fallen within the priorities of your local **homeless-serving sector**? *

	Extremely urgent	High	Medium	Low	Unsure
Before the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Where has addressing homeless encampments fallen within **general public concerns** about homelessness in your community? *

	Extremely urgent	High	Medium	Low	Unsure
Before the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Drivers and Contributors

Estimated time to complete: 3 mins

24. How significant are each of the following (real or perceived) factors in contributing to **encampment usage rather than shelter usage** in general? *

For example, if shelters are at or over capacity most of the time, you might indicate this is a "very significant" contributor to encampment usage.

	Significant contributor	Somewhat of Contributor	a contributor	Not a contributor	Unsure
Shelters at or over capacity	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters have restrictive eligibility criteria and/or rules (e.g., sobriety requirement, curfews or mandatory check-out, pets not allowed)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelter type/bed availability doesn't match family makeup (e.g., no spaces for adult couples)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety and security concerns in shelters	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns about health in shelters (e.g., COVID or communicable diseases)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of privacy, autonomy and/or dignity/respect in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

shelters

Inadequate resources at shelter (e.g., case management, accessibility, pathways to housing, proximity to public transportation)



Emergency shelters perceived as culturally inappropriate by users



25. What other factors are contributing to encampment usage in your community?

Lack of actual shelters is a significant contributor to encampments. Government policies/ bylaws/ lack of will is a significant factor contributing to the development of shelters and therefore contributing to encampments.

Local Responses

Estimated time to complete: 10 mins

26. In general, how does your community respond to encampments? *

Select all that apply.

- Clearance/closure with little or no support offered
- Clearance with temporary support offered
- Clearance with long-term support offered
- Tacit acceptance (lack of enforcement)
- Formal sanctioning (publicly managed encampments)
- Formal sanctioning (self-governed with public and/or private assistance provided)
- Unsure

27. Which community organizations/agencies are actively involved in encampment responses? *

Select all that apply.

- Front-line service providers (e.g. shelter and outreach staff)
- Municipality
- Police
- Other emergency service providers (e.g. paramedics, fire department)
- Bylaw enforcement officers
- Local health authority or medical professionals (e.g. public health unit)
- Encampment residents
- Unknown
- Other

28. Which factors contribute to the approach used by your community when responding to encampments? *

Select all that apply.

- Location – visibility to the general public
- Location – environmental or infrastructural impact
- Physical size of encampment
- Number of people staying in encampment
- Health and safety concerns for encampment residents
- Reports/complaints to emergency services (e.g. police, fire) or bylaw officers
- Reports/complaints to municipal government staff
- Reports/complaints to elected officials
- Unknown (response and/or rationale not communicated to homelessness sector)

Other

29. Does your community have a plan with protocols for responding to homeless encampments? *

Select all that apply.

- Yes, there is an official plan with protocols in place
- Somewhat, there are unofficial agreements among partners on protocols
- Somewhat, protocol(s) exist but are not shared among various actors
- There is no encampment response plan
- Responses are developed on a case-by-case basis
- Unsure

30. Does your community receive funding from any of the following to support encampment responses/strategies? *

Select all that apply.

- Municipal funding
- Provincial funding – Homelessness
- Provincial funding – Other
- Federal funding – Reaching Home
- Federal funding – Other
- Local funders (e.g., United Way, Community Foundation)
- Not applicable
- Unsure
- Other

31. Since the start of the pandemic, how has your community's ability to develop and implement strategies to respond to encampments changed? *

- Increased significantly
- Increased somewhat
- Stayed about the same
- Decreased somewhat
- Decreased significantly
- Not applicable
- Unsure

32. Since the start of the pandemic, how significant of a barrier have the following issues been in responding to encampments in your community? *

	Significant barrier	Barrier	Somewhat of a barrier	Not a barrier	Unsure
Lack of funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of community partner collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of data on encampment usage	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of guidance/support with response development	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. What other barriers has your community experienced in responding to encampments?

The sheer volume is overwhelming!

34. If your community has implemented any of the following strategies, indicate if it reduced the number of encampments and/or the number of people staying in encampments: *

	Implemented AND reduced encampment numbers	Implemented, but did NOT reduce encampment numbers	Strategy not implemented	Unsure
Increasing capacity of existing shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing resources/facilities of existing shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Converting existing buildings to COVID shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating new shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating/transitioning to low-barrier shelters	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adding/increasing case management services (related to housing, occupation, family, rehabilitation and recovery, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing availability of public and/or transitional housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing availability of housing programs (e.g. Housing First, rapid rehousing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Referrals to shelter/housing programs for encampment residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Referrals to treatment programs for encampment residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Expanding outreach activities or increased outreach workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engagement with encampment residents to help inform local responses	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanded health supports	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal assistance/representation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Harm reduction services	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relocation support services (e.g., transportation, storage)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased coordination amongst service providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. Has your community implemented other strategies that have reduced encampment numbers?

none

36. Since the start of the pandemic, has your community offered **onsite or on-call services and facilities** for encampment residents (e.g., mental/physical healthcare, storage, food service, potable water, sanitation and hygiene services, pest control, solid waste disposal, etc.)? *

- Yes (services provided were reasonably thorough and consistent)
- Somewhat (services provided were basic or inconsistent over time)
- No
- Unsure

37. Is your community planning to implement any new strategies to address encampments within the next 6-12 months? *

Select all that apply.

- Increasing affordable housing supply; supportive and transitional housing
- Increasing shelter capacity
- Increasing outreach capacity
- Transitioning from high-barrier to low-barrier shelters
- Increasing case management capacity
- Establishing sanctioned encampments
- Clean-up efforts
- Developing a coordinated local encampment response plan
- Training staff
- Physical equipment and infrastructure
- Partnership-building (e.g., with first responders)
- Engagement with encampment residents
- Information and communication systems
- Unknown
- Other

Closing Questions

Estimated time to complete: 5 mins

38. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about encampments in your community?

Housing and shelter capacity is desperately needed.

39. Are there any resources that you have found useful in informing your community's response to encampments?

Data would be useful, but we could not find any! There is no direct source of information currently to inform or monitor.

40. If we have further questions about encampments and/or wish to discuss your responses, do we have your permission to contact you? *

Yes

No

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

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