

## Alberta Point-in-Time Homeless Count: Edmonton Preliminary Report

On October 16, 2014 Homeward Trust Edmonton worked with community partners to conduct the first ever provincial Point-in-Time Homeless Count. About 300 volunteers and 60 organizations participated in the local count.

### Alberta's Cities Leading the Way

This effort is part of a broader initiative led by the 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness to develop a harmonized approach to homeless counts nationally. Alberta is the first jurisdiction to implement measures towards a more standardized methodology, leading the way in Canada. Though counts across Alberta are becoming more aligned, this is the first time this effort has been undertaken and future counts will improve from ongoing learnings.

This count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of our overall homeless population and enables us to examine how this population changes over time. By aligning methods across Alberta's cities, we can examine trends using the same definitions. Ultimately, this helps us inform solutions to support the goal of ending homelessness in our communities.

### Edmonton's Homeless Population Snapshot

A total of **2,252** people were enumerated during the count. Preliminary results show:

- 48% of those counted were in an emergency shelter and 13% were in a short-term housing facility.
- Emergency shelter numbers include an estimate of families and individuals who cannot access shelters and were in hotel accommodation paid for by Alberta Works or Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped.
- 19% were sleeping rough (in parks, on the street, etc.).
- 20% were "provisionally accommodated," meaning they had no permanent residence and were either living temporarily with friends or family, at an addictions treatment facility or other temporary situations.

Population Enumerated	Total Number	Percentage
<b>Unsheltered (Rough Sleeper)</b>	417	<b>19%</b>
<b>Provisionally Accommodated</b>	442	<b>20%</b>
<b>Sheltered</b>	1393	<b>61%</b>
Emergency Shelter / Human Services-Funded Hotels	1086	48%
Short-Term Supportive Housing	307	13%

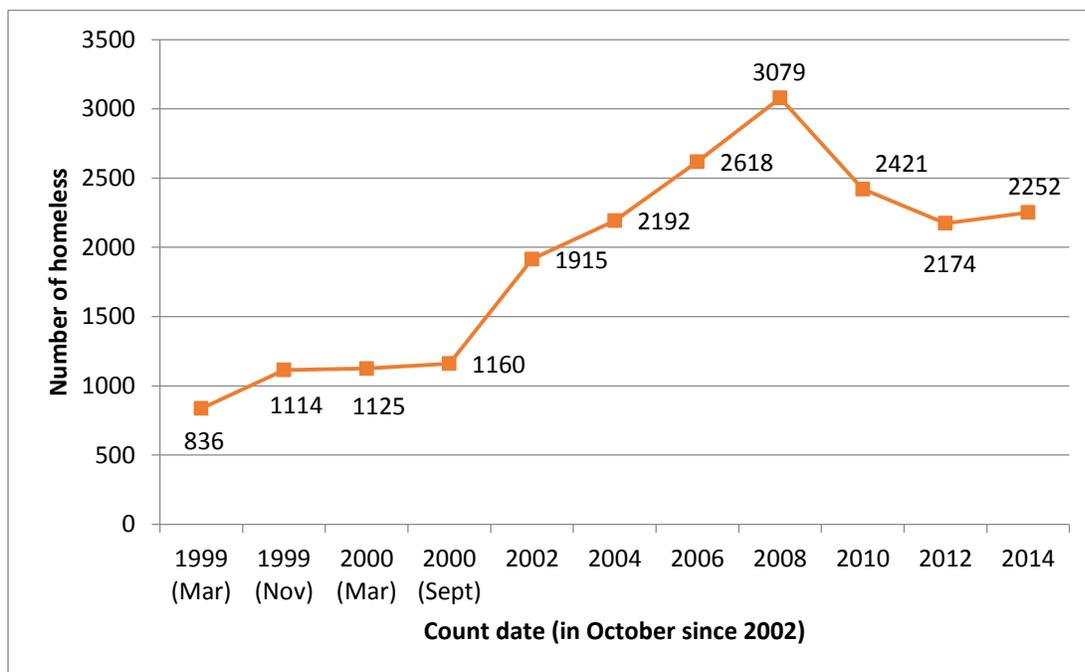
70% of those enumerated (1,574 people) participated in the survey portion of the exercise and the rest of those enumerated were counted at shelters and short-term housing facilities. The table below shows those who identified with a group, along with an estimate of the total population, accounting for non-responses and additional information from other sources.

Sub-Population	Percent of surveys	Estimate of Population
Male	66%	72%
Female	26%	27%
Transgender / Transsexual	0.5%	0.5%
Aboriginal	40%	47%
New to Edmonton in past year	13%	16%
Immigrants	9%	11%
Youth, 24 & under	23%	30%
Youth surveyed on their own	14%	14%
Accompanying minors	9%	16%

There were 562 youth, age 24 or under: 241 surveyed youth and 321 minors accompanying adults (151 children reported by survey respondents and approximately 170 children in emergency hotels sponsored by Alberta Human Services).

### Changes Between 2012 and 2014

The most important use of the count is to track how the homeless population changes over time. Comparing the October 2014 count with previous counts should be done with caution as the methodology used changed – the full report will explore this in further detail. However, overall the October 2014 count showed an increase of 3.5% compared to the 2012 count, which is still a decrease of 27% since 2008.



When comparing the 2012 and 2014 counts:

- Unsheltered and provisionally housed (previously grouped together) declined 20%.
- The number of people in shelters continues to increase, up 26% from 2012.
- The number of youth increased from 481 to 562 (17%).
- The number of homeless people with accompanying minors was up by an estimated 25%.
- 47% of respondents self-identified as Aboriginal, up from 46%.

## Broader Trends

**Population Growth.** It is important that results of the count must be contextualized in the broader economic trends impacting Edmonton. The city is experiencing significant population growth year over year: the city grew in population by about 7.4% from 2012 to 2014 reaching almost 1 million. This is in part related to the economic opportunities presented by the city, whose unemployment was 5.4% in October 2014.

**Migration.** There were 35,842 people who came from outside the city within less than 1 year according to the 2014 Civic Census. We see a considerable level of migration among the homeless population surveyed as well – about 16% reported being new to Edmonton under 1 year – this is notably higher than the general population at about 6% reported to have moved from outside Edmonton within the last year in the 2011 NHS as well.

**Housing Affordability.** Though vacancy rates increased from 1.2% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2014, the average rental costs grew by 9% (\$87) according to CMHC (2014). About a quarter of Edmontonians are experiencing housing affordability challenges and about 1 in 10 are in low income according to Statistics Canada (2011).

**Aboriginal people over-represented.** The over-representation of Aboriginal people remains an ongoing concern. While 5.4% of Edmonton’s general population self-identified as Aboriginal, about 48% of those surveyed in the homeless count self-identified as Aboriginal.

Socio-Economic Indicators	Edmonton	Sources
Unemployment	5.4% up from 5.2%	Reported in October 2013-14, Statistics Canada.
Migration	35,842 (4.2% of total pop.)	City of Edmonton 2014 Municipal Census residents living in dwelling < 1 year from outside Edmonton
Mobility (resided outside 1 year ago)	6.1%	NHS, 2011, Refers to the status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day, May 10, 2011, in relation to the place of residence on the same date one year earlier
Population growth	7.4% over 2 years	Difference between total population reported in City of Edmonton by 2012 and 2014 Municipal Census
Housing Affordability	24.6%	NHS 2011, Percent of households spending more than 30% of 2010 total income on shelter
Rental vacancy rates	1.4% up from 1.2%	Comparing April 2014 to April 2013 form CMHC Rental Market Statistics Spring 2014, Vacancy and Availability Rates (%) in Privately Initiated Rental Apartment Structures of Three Units and Over
Rental costs	\$1061 up from \$974	
Low Income	10.8%	NHS 2011 Percent of persons in households in low income based on LIM-AT
Aboriginal People	5.4%	NHS 2011 Percent of population self-identify as Aboriginal.
Immigrants	20.4%	NHS 2011 Percent of population who was foreign-born.

## Full Report

The data from the count will be analyzed more extensively with the assistance of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. A full report will be produced in January 2015, which shows the data trends, and breaks down the results. As the data presented here is preliminary, final results may change in the full report.

For more information about the count, please contact Homeward Trust at (780) 496-2630 or [info@homewardtrust.ca](mailto:info@homewardtrust.ca). Media inquiries can be sent to Alex Abboud at [aabboud@homewardtrust.ca](mailto:aabboud@homewardtrust.ca).

## Sources

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