

Prince George Point-in-Time Homeless Count 2024

Community Report



Acknowledgements:

This Point-in-Time Homeless Count could not have been completed without the many organizations, community partners and service agencies who provided invaluable support throughout the process. A special thank-you is extended to the agencies, volunteers and survey respondents.

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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

The word "Canada" in a serif font, with a small Canadian flag (red maple leaf) positioned above the letter 'a'.

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REFLECTIVE PREFACE

This is the fourth National Point-in-Time Homeless Count that Prince George has participated in. We have now collected four data sets that allow us to potentially identify trends and changes. While the methodology and survey questions have been similar throughout the Counts, the issues facing communities and the unhoused population have changed significantly since the first two Counts in 2016 and 2018. Also, the 2021 Count was done during the Covid-19 Pandemic which required a somewhat modified methodology for surveying individuals.

Since 2021 we have seen a sharp rise in the number of individuals in encampments and spending the nights outdoors. There has been a noted increase in the opening of additional supportive housing through the purchase and renovation of motels/hotels and older apartment buildings as well as the construction of new builds. This started at the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic and has continued with more than 200 units of supported housing opening. We recognize the efforts made by BC housing to develop safe housing for those who are vulnerable - housing with wraparound services and supports. However, there are still many that do not find managed housing appropriate. We hear that there are too many rules, they can't be with pets and with partners or friends. This is evident in that a noticeable difference in this Count from previous ones was the number of individuals who responded to the survey that they were staying outdoors overnight. Also, there was a significant increase in the number of surveys completed by individuals on the street. This reflects changing behaviours and needs of the unhoused.

Reasons for homelessness include poverty, access to appropriate affordable housing, access to health supports, and ongoing discrimination. Also, there are gaps within the systems that are established to support vulnerable populations, including government care, mental health and substance use services and discharge planning from institutions such as hospitals and correctional facilities.

While it is tempting for many readers to look for the one figure – that of how many homeless we have in our community – this figure will always be an under-representation of the actual number due to a variety of factors. There are hidden homeless in every community. These can be individuals that may be staying temporarily with friends or family, patients in hospitals, those who are incarcerated, at locations that were not found, or just simply declining to take part in the Point-in-Time survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 12 - 14 Prince George took part in a nationally coordinated effort, directed by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home program, to measure homelessness in Canada. The Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count was conducted by the Community Entity, Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association, along with community agencies and partners, as directed by the Community Advisory Board.

The PiT counts were considered by many to be a critical starting point to establishing a national picture of Homelessness across Canada and they allow communities to engage in comparative studies based on national standards. This, in turn, strengthens and broadens homelessness data for the future. Participation in the Count provides an opportunity to assess how other funded Reaching Home Programs and priorities are potentially impacting the issue of homelessness over a period of time.

This was the fourth National coordinated PiT Count that Prince George participated in. While the first 2 Counts (2016 and 2018) utilized community volunteers, circumstances changed in the delayed Count during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and we chose to utilize outreach workers only for outdoor surveying. Again, this year, it was determined that outdoor surveys would only be done by agency outreach workers. Behaviours of those on the streets have changed, and safety is paramount, and the outreach teams are generally familiar to those on the streets and workers have built a trusted relationship. It allowed us to conduct street surveying during the late-night hours.

Over a period of 24 hours agency staff surveyed individuals in 10 agencies, including shelters, transitional housing facilities and drop-in centres. One location continued surveys for an additional day. From 6:00 pm November 12th to 2 am, November 13th, outreach workers surveyed individuals in outdoor locations, such as sidewalks and other public places. The surveys were completed with a total of 28 surveyors.

Also, to accurately get a number of those absolutely homeless on November 12th, 7 organizations provided enumeration data for overnight stays in 5 shelters and 10 transitional housing facilities. We also received estimates on the encampment numbers.

The PiT count, in and of itself, offers a "snapshot" of homelessness in Prince George on a particular date. The data results are limited from a number of perspectives; for instance, our community has a population base of approximately 80,000 and limited services/resources. Should one or two agencies be unable to participate in the PiT count, it can make a noticeable change in numbers and responses. It should never be considered as exact given that there are "hidden" homeless that were not able to be surveyed. For example, many are staying short term with acquaintances, friends or family or may be located in areas less visible to surveyors. The Prince George PiT count has been focused on the most populated area of homelessness which is the downtown area, where the vast majority of our social service agencies are located. By utilizing Outreach teams that have been providing evening outreach for the past couple of years, surveyors were able to travel to areas where the most vulnerable congregate.

Highlights

The Point-in-Time Count had two components: Enumeration data and Survey. The data collected from emergency shelter housing along with Survey responses allow us to conclude the following:

- A minimum of **206 individuals were experiencing absolute homelessness the night of November 12th**, including those responding by survey they stayed outdoors and/or in the encampment (72), and those that stayed in emergency shelter overnight (134 - using shelter stay data)
- Outreach workers observed 14 people outdoors that they identified as likely homeless, and 14 people were observed staying in the MF encampment that night
- An additional 125 individuals stayed in transitional housing (using transitional housing enumeration data)
- Corrections identified 49 individuals in custody from Prince George that had uncertain or precarious housing (No fixed address)

2024 Survey Response key findings:

- **65 of 213 respondents or 31% stayed outdoors unsheltered in a public space (13% in 2021)**
- **7 said they were staying in the encampment overnight (no encampment numbers for 2021)**
- **100 of 213 respondents or 47% stayed in emergency shelters (71% in 2021)**
- **75% self-identified as being of First Nations, Metis or of Indigenous ancestry (68% in 2021)**
- **64% of 208 respondents identified as male, 34% as female, 1% as gender diverse (similar in 2021)**
- **Ages ranged from 15 to 72 (18 to 74 2021)**
- **54% of respondents are between the ages of 25-44, 36% aged 45-64, 7% under 25, 3% older than 65**
- **6% had served in the Canadian Military or RCMP (4% in 2021)**
- **42% had previously been in foster care and/or group homes (48% in 2021)**
- **82% of the respondents are Chronically homeless (homeless for 6 months or more of the past year) (same in 2021)**
- **Age first homeless, 26% under the age of 18, 6% after the age of 54, while the median age was 27 (similar to 2021)**

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This report provides the background, the methodology and a summary of the data of the 2024 Prince George Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count. This is Prince George's fourth Homeless Count that has been conducted as part of a national coordinated initiative of the Government of Canada's Homelessness Strategy.

Communities across Canada use similar methods and similar questions in a nationally coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count that is conducted around the same time of year, which leads to a national picture of homelessness. This provides a benchmark against which progress in reducing homelessness can be measured. This goal has not changed to date and is, in fact, giving us opportunities to now consider trends and/or changes.

There are two components of a PiT Count: a one-night enumeration of homelessness and a survey of people experiencing homelessness.

Enumeration: The PiT Count produces an estimate of the number of people who experience homelessness on a single night within a defined geographical area. It identifies the locations where they spent the night, such as in shelters, transitional housing, unsheltered locations, and sometimes institutional settings like health or correctional facilities. Conducted over several years, PiT Counts help communities track progress in reducing homelessness and understand changes in where people experiencing homelessness spend the night.

The Survey on Homelessness: The survey collects standardized information about individuals' characteristics and experiences. This survey includes those in shelters, transitional housing, unsheltered locations, health and correctional systems, and hidden homeless situations (e.g., couch surfing). The data gathered supports community organizations and governments in better understanding and addressing homelessness.

Counts offer several key benefits for communities. They provide a snapshot of those experiencing homelessness, helping to track changes over time. The data collected informs community planning and resource allocation to target support effectively. Additionally, PiT Counts improve the national understanding of homelessness, which is important for informing the development of policies and strategies to address homelessness on a larger scale.

In general, there has been relative consistency in the characteristics and demographics of the homeless population over time. The numbers reflect the reality that each count indicates neither a noticeable increase, nor decrease in the population group surveyed. Where slight differences have occurred, there has been a rationale to explain the difference.

We have noted there is an increase in visible homeless – those staying on the street at night. We are starting to see more confidence in reporting why people become homeless and more importantly, the age at which they first experienced homelessness. This may, in turn, lead us to better target and plan resources and services.

The results of the Prince George PiT Count were reported to the Government of Canada via the PiT Count module of Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Lite. Access to HIFIS Lite was made available to facilitate data entry, analysis, and reporting. Each survey response was entered into the software and the data is stored for all survey questions.

The results of the PiT Count were reviewed with PiT Count partners to support the interpretation and communication of the results.

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

Canada's PiT Count approach includes Core Standards for consistency across communities, while allowing some flexibility for the approach to be tailored to each community's local context. The national approach guides how the enumeration and survey are conducted in participating communities, supporting a consistent data collection process across communities and over time. This allows communities and governments to compare data over time and across regions.

For more information on the PiT count standard methodology please access the Guide "*GUIDE TO POINT-IN-TIME COUNTS IN CANADA*" and the "*PiT Count Toolkit*" both of which are available through the Homeless Learning Hub.

Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the timing of PiT counts was generally aligned, with Counts being held in March or April. Most communities had to put the Count on hold in 2020 and Prince George proceeded with their count in March 2021.

With the goal to realign the timing of the nationally coordinated PiT Counts, fall (October 1 to November 30) has been chosen as the designated PiT Count period in 2024 and beyond due to several factors:

- A larger proportion of people experiencing homelessness tend to seek shelter in colder weather, facilitating a more accurate count during this period.
- Canadian winters can be extremely harsh, making counts in winter challenging and potentially dangerous to conduct.
- Spring tends to be a busy season in administration for organizations in the homeless-serving sector, as the fiscal year ends in March, and there is often reporting and planning associated with the change in the fiscal year.
- It is easier for communities to budget for a project that within one fiscal year (April 1-March 31).

Homelessness fluctuates through the seasons due to multiple factors, such as weather, seasonal fluctuations in employment and education opportunities, and others. Because of this, it is ideal to conduct counts during the same period each year. Future PiT Count activities will be held during this same fall period.

Another change is that surveying in communities could continue beyond a 24 hr period, although we chose to stick close to 24 hours for our surveying.

For this Count, with discussion from the Count coordinators and the Count advisory committee it was agreed that our PiT Count would be from 6 pm November 12th to 6 pm on the 13th. A youth drop in facility requested additional time to access individuals and the surveying was extended for an additional 24 hours. Enumeration systems data was collected for the night of November 12th.

In addition, it was agreed that shelters and other overnight emergency or transitional housing facilities could survey at any point the evening of November 12th and during the day November 13th. Surveys were conducted by staff at the participating facilities and agencies.

SURVEYING

Sheltered Surveying

Surveys were completed by agency or Count staff in temporary transitional housing facilities, emergency shelters, the Sobering Centre and Northern Health Addiction Withdrawal Management Unit (Detox).

It was agreed that shelters and other overnight emergency or transitional housing facilities could survey at any point the evening of November 12th and during the day November 13th.

Surveys were conducted by staff at the participating facilities and agencies.

Outdoor Surveying

The Count Advisory Committee agreed on the time of the outdoor – unsheltered count which took place from 6:00 pm to 2:00 am on November 12 – 13 and again in the morning hours on November 13th. This year, as was done in 2021, saw only trained agency outreach workers completing surveys with individuals encountered outdoors on sidewalks, in doorways, alleys and some park or treed locations. We were grateful to have the Association Advocating for Women and Community (AWAC) Evening Outreach teams partner with the BC Housing Outreach workers to carry out these surveys. They have experience working with the client base, having established relationships and direct knowledge of routes and habits of clients. The AWAC team and staff also surveyed within the Safety Site/Warming Centre that is located adjacent to the Moccasin Flats Encampment.

Other unsheltered Surveying

Surveys were conducted at meal gathering locations (Healing Fire) by Count volunteers and in ‘drop in’ facilities by agency staff, during the daytime on November 13th.

TRAINING

Surveyors were required to attend a mandatory training session prior to participating in the Count. Two training sessions were offered. There was a wide range of topics covered in these training sessions including basic information regarding the PiT Count and the role it would play in addressing homelessness in our community, as well as surveyor role and responsibilities and what was expected on the day of the Count from volunteers and from Count coordinators. A portion of the training sessions was focused on understanding the screening and survey questions. Surveyors were asked to pair up and do a mock one-on-one survey exercise. The purpose of the mock surveying was to ensure they understood the survey questions that they would be asking and to allow them to have the opportunity to consult with a count coordinator if they had any questions.

DATA COLLECTION

To collect information about individuals experiencing homelessness, the 2024 Point-in-Time Homeless Count used three methods. Tally sheets, survey data and systems enumeration.

Survey Data. The survey consisted of an introductory screening script, 15 core questions from Reaching Home, and additional questions suggested by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH). The screening questions were used to determine if the individual had previously taken the survey, was willing to participate, and if they were eligible to complete the survey (if they had no permanent home). The Screening sheet and the Survey are attached as Appendix B.

A total of 213 surveys were completed and screened in for data collection.

2024 - Location of survey completion	
Location	213 surveys completed
<i>Shelters / Transitional Housing</i>	88 total
AWAC Shelter and housing	9
ASAP Men and Women's Shelter	27
Ketso Yoh Men's Shelter	27
Phoenix Transition House	4
Northern John Howard Society	7
AWMU (Detox)	7
CSFS Sobering Centre	7
<i>Other Unsheltered locations (includes Drop-in)</i>	125 total
New Hope Society	5
Healing Fire	17
Friendship House	4
Youth Around Prince George	6
MF Safety Site	16
Various outdoor/street locations	77

Table 1 Location of Data Collection

Tally Sheets. Outreach workers surveying in unsheltered locations used tally sheets to record individuals that were observed but did not participate in the survey. They reported the reason the person was not surveyed (whether they declined, already responded, or were observed only). For individuals that were observed as homeless, outreach workers indicated the reasons why they perceived the individual as homeless.

Tally sheets were optional as a means of identifying homeless individuals. Since we had outreach workers conducting the outdoor surveys, and noting the information on tally sheets, we are comfortable that the assessment of those noted on the tally sheets as "Observed Homeless" is a number that we can use with some confidence. Some of those shown as homeless on the tally sheets may have later gone into a shelter or to a 'home'. We cautiously report that 17 individuals were observed as Homeless.

Systems Enumeration Data. Overnight stay numbers were collected from sheltered locations where homeless individuals may be residing, including emergency and temporary shelters, transitional housing and institutions. For this count, all shelters provided data, and some transitional housing facilities. Information was collected from the organizations regarding the total number of clients staying there the night of the count, November 12th. The Enumeration Data form used and the organizations that responded are available upon request.

The Enumeration systems data results gathered the following:

Enumerations Systems data – stays for night of November 12, 2024		
Type of facility	Occupants Adults and Unaccompanied Youth 19 +	Occupants Accompanied Children
Shelter (including temporary)	134	
Violence Against Women Shelter	9	7
Transitional Housing	116	5
Institutions	Adults No Fixed Address	
Corrections	49	

Table 2 Enumeration data

SECTION 3: PIT COUNT RESULTS

When one combines the enumeration data for those staying in shelters and the responses for where people stayed the night of November 12th, we are able to get a snapshot of the number of homeless.

A minimum of **206 individuals were experiencing absolute homelessness the night of November 12th**, including those responding by survey they stayed outdoors and in the encampment (72), and those that stayed in emergency shelter overnight (134 - using enumeration shelter stay data).

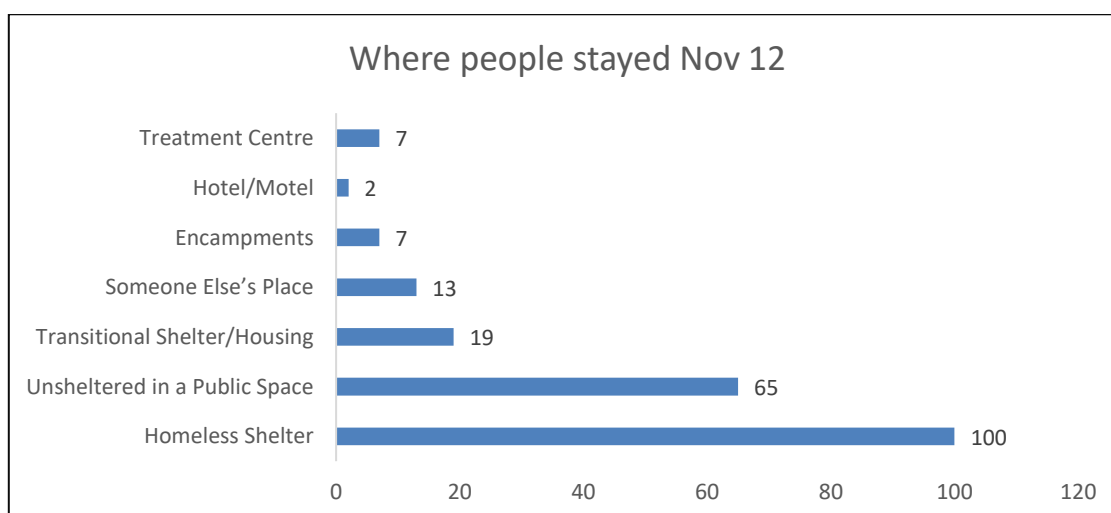
Hidden homeless is a number that is very difficult to determine. The surveys allow us to screen in those that do not have access to a permanent residence, a place they could stay as long as they want. At least 13 individuals could be categorized as hidden homeless as 13 individuals responded they were staying with family or friends, and could not stay there for as long as they want.

Places Stayed - Sleeping location

In order to be screened into the survey, respondents were asked where they were spending or spent the night of November 12, 2024. There were 213 individuals screened into the survey – this includes those that did not have a permanent residence that they could stay at for as long as they want.

Places stayed Nov 12th	2024		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Homeless Shelter	100	47%	87	71%
Unsheltered in a Public Space	65	31%	16	13%
Transitional Shelter/Housing	19	9%	14	11%
Someone Else's Place	13	6%	5	4%
Encampments	7	3%		
Hotel/Motel	2	Less than 1%		
Treatment Centre	7	3%		
TOTAL	213		122	

Table 3 Places Stayed Night of November 12



SECTION 4: SURVEY RESULTS

The following survey results are based on all surveys completed. Those who chose not to respond to a certain question or questions could still continue with other parts of the survey. For all results the number of surveys totaled for that question are referred to as (n=).

Respondent Demographics

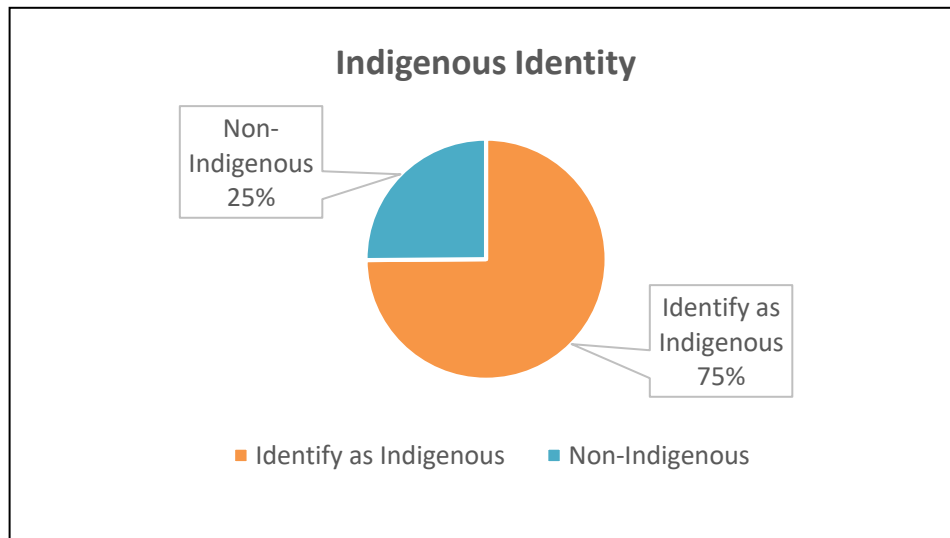
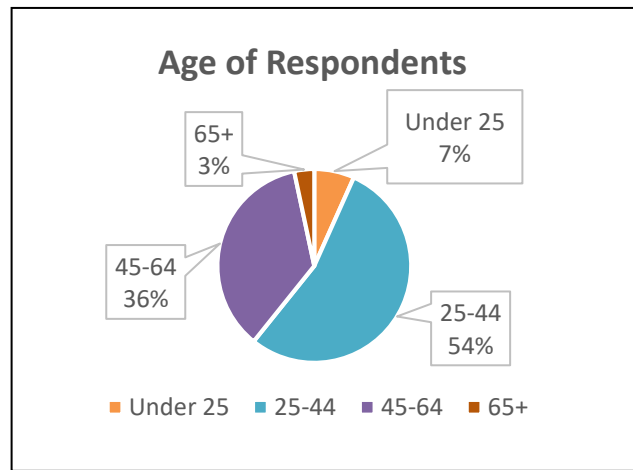
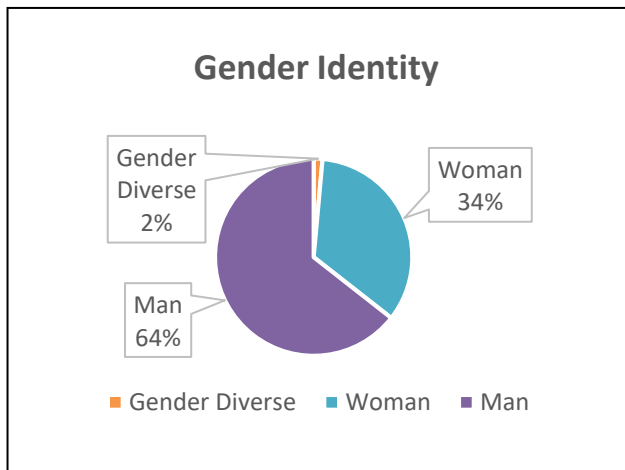
The median age of respondents of the 2024 Point-in-Time Homeless Count was 41 years old while the age range of respondents was from 15 to 72. 12 respondents were over the age of 60.

The gender of those experiencing homelessness continues to be 60-65% male. This is slightly increasing over time. The 2018 Count did see almost equal responses from male and female although that could have been explained by the location of survey completion.

A significant number (75%) self-identified as being Metis, First Nations or having Indigenous Ancestry. This over representation of Indigenous persons in our homeless population is consistent with previous Prince George Counts.

Variable	2024	2021	2018
Age	(n=209)	(n=120)	(n=144)
Under 25	7 %	10 %	7 %
25 - 44	54 %	51 %	48 %
45 - 64	36 %	35 %	43 %
65+	3 %	4 %	2 %
Gender Identity	(n=208)	(n=120)	(n=144)
Man	65 %	57 %	46 %
Woman	34 %	40 %	51 %
Gender Diverse	1 %	2 %	2 %
Indigenous Identity	(n=211)	(n=122)	(n=140)
First Nations	64 %	44 %	62 %
Metis	11 %	20 %	14 %
Indigenous Ancestry	<1 %	4 %	4 %
Non-Indigenous	25%	30 %	20 %

Table 4 Respondent Demographics

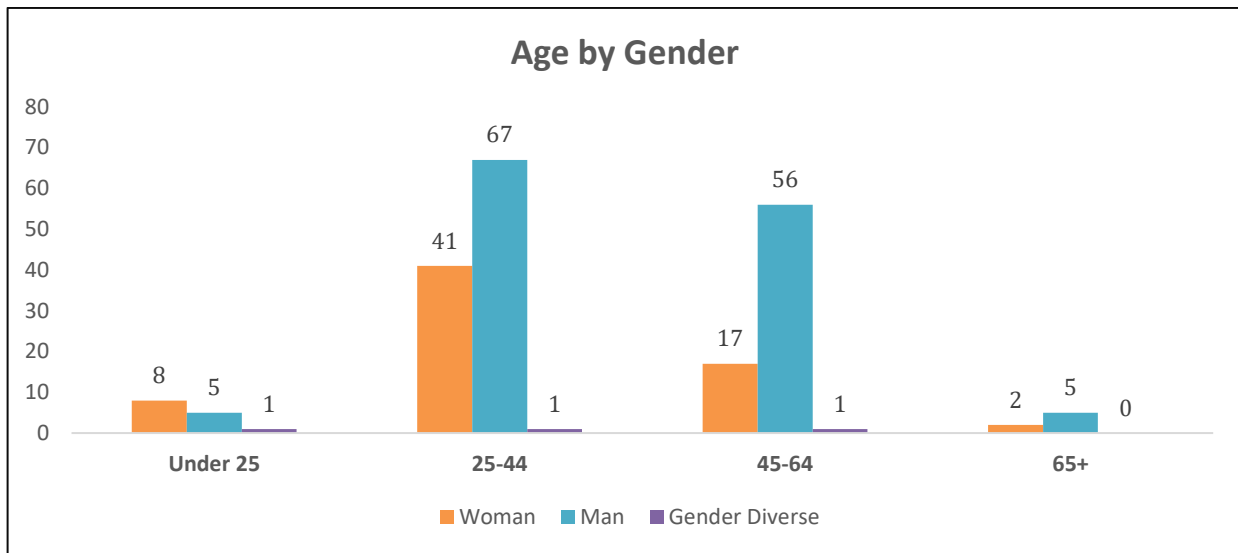


Respondents Age and Gender

When gender was cross-referenced with age the following was noted:

Age (n=204)	Woman	Man	Gender Diverse
Under 25	8	5	1
25-44	41	67	1
45-64	17	56	1
65+	2	5	0

Table 5 Respondents Age by Gender

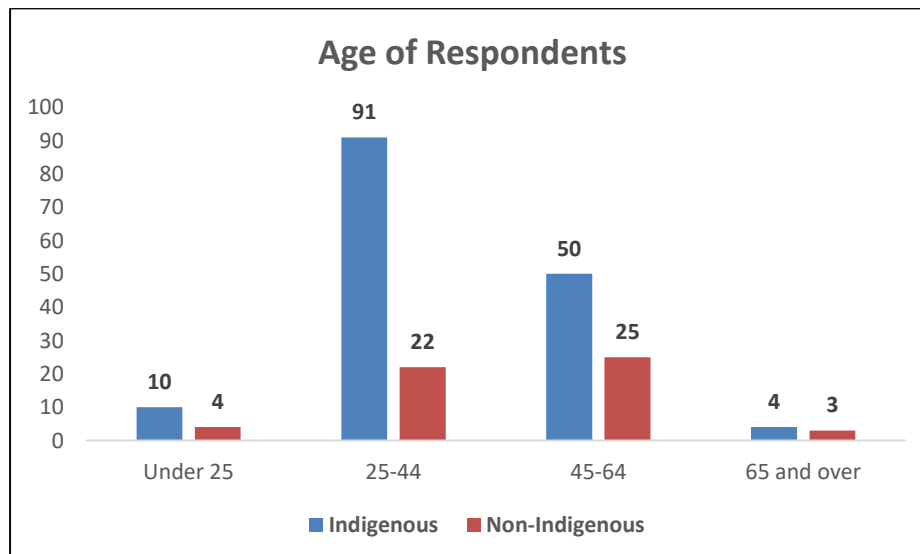


Respondents Age and Indigenous Status

When age was cross-referenced with self-identified Indigenous status, the following was noted:

Age	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Under 25	10	4
25-44	91	22
45-64	50	25
65 and over	4	3

Table 6 Respondents Age and Indigenous Identity

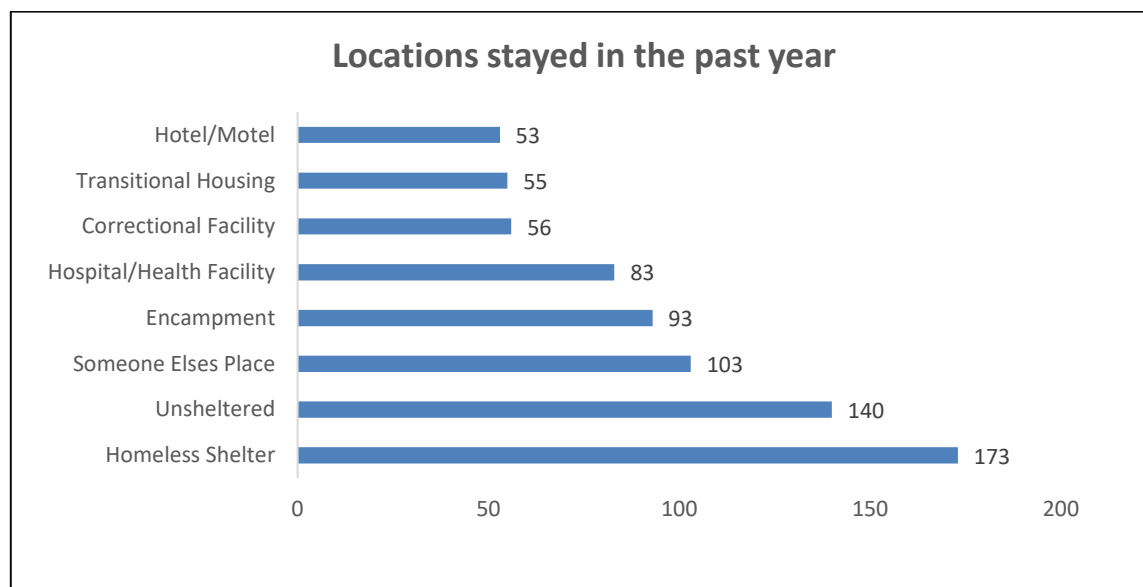


Where stayed within the past year

Survey respondents were asked if they had stayed in any of the following locations in the past year. *This question allowed respondents to select more than a single answer

Where Respondents stayed in past year	Number (n=211)	Percent
Homeless Shelter	173	82%
Unsheltered in a Public Space	140	66%
Someone Else's Place	103	49%
Encampment	93	44%
Hospital or other health facility	83	39%
Vehicle	60	28%
Jail, Prison, or other Correctional Facility	56	27%
Transitional Shelter/Housing	55	26%
Hotel/Motel	53	25%

Table 8 Respondents Age and Indigenous Identity 2024



Those that had not stayed in a shelter in the past year were asked what the main reasons were. n= 213 * This question allowed respondents to select more than a single answer. Several respondents did respond to the question, noting why they prefer not to stay in a shelter, however the results were not included in this table. This question was analyzed only if the previous response was that they had not stayed in a shelter.

However, the main reasons for not staying in a shelter were consistent with the 2021 PiT Count and the 2018 PiT Count, with 'Fear for safety' being the number one mentioned reason.

Main reasons for not staying in shelter:

- Fear for safety
- Turned away (shelters full)
- Turned away (banned)

General Characteristics

Variable	2024	2021	2018
<i>Family members with them (or other adults)</i>	(n=213)	(n=122)	(n=139)
Yes	75%	4%	20%
<i>Came to Canada as an immigrant or refugee</i>	(n=175)	(n=122)	(n=126)
Yes, immigrant	2%	2%	2%
<i>Previously been in foster care and/or group home</i>	(n=206)	(n=122)	(n=139)
Yes	42%	48%	45%
<i>Service in the Canadian Military or RCMP?</i>	(n=210)	(n=122)	(n=138)
Yes	6%	4%	3%
<i>Length of time homeless in the past year</i>	(n=199)	(n=122)	(n=129)
Less than 3 months	16%	8%	15%
3 - 6 months	6%	5%	10%
6+ months (Chronically Homeless)	78%	82%	74%
Don't Know		4%	

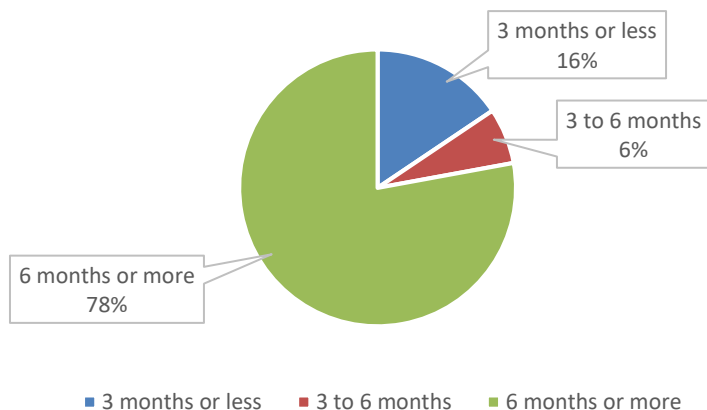
Table 8 General Characteristics

Time spent Homeless

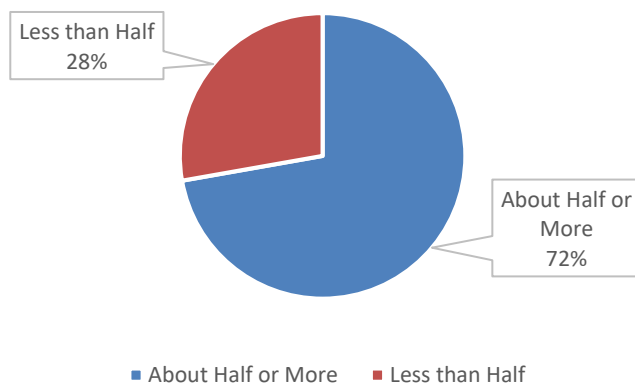
Respondents were asked how much time they experienced homelessness over the past year, and over the past 3 years.

The majority of respondents (78%) indicated they are chronically homeless, unhoused for more than 6 months in the past year. This is consistent with the past Counts where more than 70% have been homeless for more than 6 months.

Time spent homeless in the last year



Time spent homeless in the last 3 years



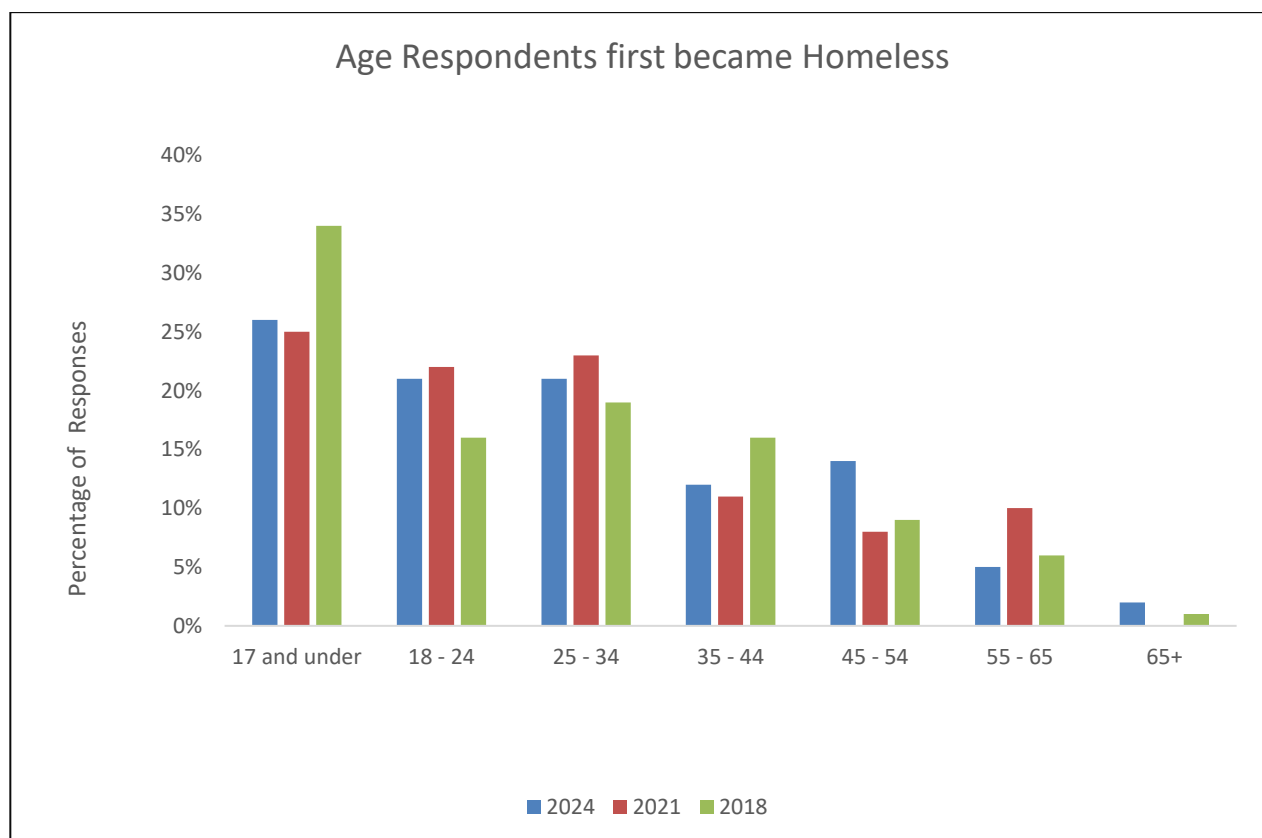
Age First Homeless

In 2024, a total of 196 respondents responded to the question, “How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?” The median age that respondents surveyed first became homeless was 27.5 years old. Table 5 provides a summary of the responses given along with a comparison of previous PIT count responses.

Those that became homeless prior to the age of 17 has dropped since 2018. However, it is evident that many of our older unhoused first experienced homelessness at a young age. This should direct us to better supports for our vulnerable youth.

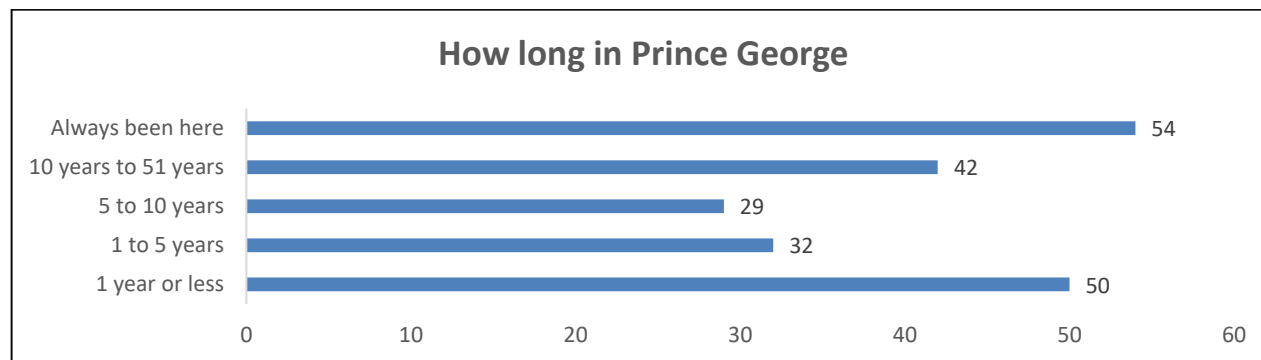
Age First Homeless	2024	2021	2018
17 and under	26%	25%	34%
18 - 24	21%	22%	16%
25 - 34	21%	23%	19%
35 - 44	12%	11%	16%
45 - 54	14%	8%	9%
55 - 64	5%	10%	6%
65+	2%	0	1%
Total Respondents	196	115	134

Table 9 Age When First Homeless



How long in Prince George

Survey respondents were asked how long they have been in Prince George, a total of 207 responses were received. A common comment is that many homeless are newcomers to Prince George when about 46% have either always been here or have lived here more than 10 years.



Length of time in Prince George	2024 (n=207)	2021 (n=120)	2018 (n=140)
Always been here	26 %	26 %	17 %
More than a year	49 %	65 %	66 %
Less than a year	24 %	8 %	15 %

Table 10 How Long In Prince George

Although we ask this question, we must also recognize that every individual has the right to live and reside in any province and any community they wish, regardless of origin, status, gender, religion, sexual orientation etc., and further, be entitled to benefits of every individual in that specific community. As a Northern capital of the top two thirds of the province, we are fortunate to have multiple services available. Our local service agencies are called to respond regardless of where someone has come from.

Respondents were asked where they had lived before they came to Prince George. Of the 159 that responded they had not always lived here, the majority come to Prince George from elsewhere in Northern BC. A detailed listing of communities is in Appendix A.1.

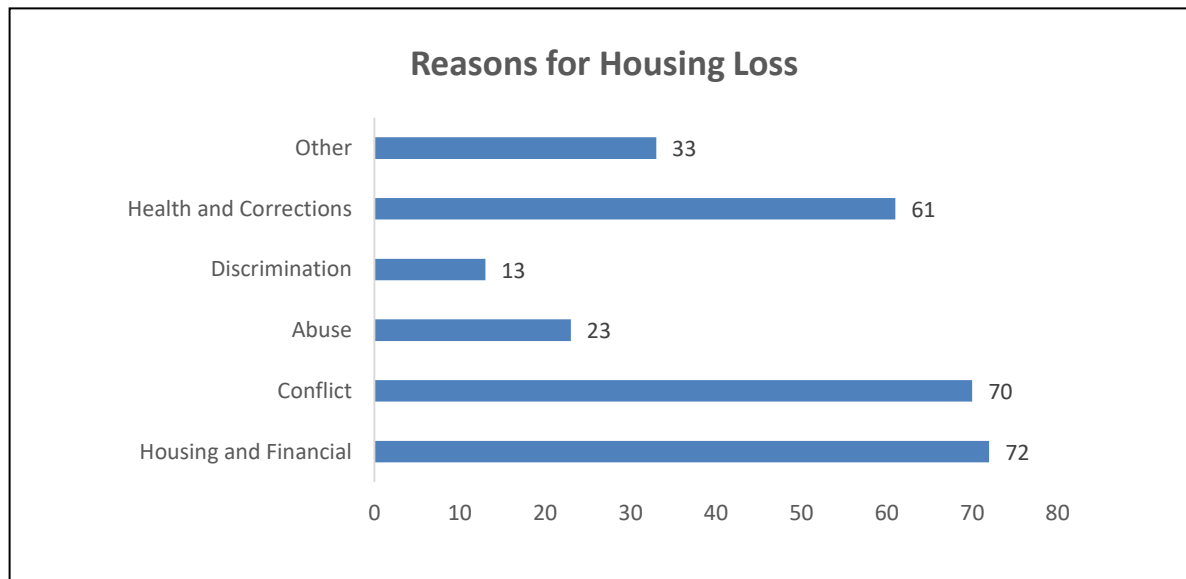
Moved to Prince George from	2024		2021	
	(n=159)	Percent	(n=85)	Percent
Northern BC	81	51%	40	47%
Interior BC	11	7%	3	4%
Lower mainland and Vancouver Island	17	11%	11	13%
Alberta	13	8%	16	19%
Rest of Canada	9	6%	6	7%
Other, city not specified, don't know	6	4%	6	7%

Table 11 Lived prior to coming to Prince George

Reason for Housing Loss

Respondents were asked the question, “What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?”. While the categories were slightly different for each PIT count and direct comparisons were not possible, we were able to identify a stark consistency. The most common reasons for housing loss have been the same through all four Homeless Counts. They include:

- Not enough Income
- Conflict with partner or landlord
- Substance use issue



* Respondents were able to choose more than one reason for housing loss

Reason for Housing Loss	Number (n=186)*	Percent
Housing and financial Issues:		
Not enough income for Housing	46	25%
Unfit/Unsafe Housing	19	10%
Building Sold or renovated	7	4%
Owner moved in	0	0%
Conflict With:		
Spouse/Partner	36	19%
Parent/Guardian	7	4%
Landlord	27	15%
Experienced Abuse by:		
Spouse/Partner	15	8%
Parent/Guardian	4	2%
Landlord	4	2%

Experienced Discrimination by:		
Spouse/Partner	2	1%
Parent/Guardian	2	1%
Landlord	9	5%
Health or Corrections:		
Physical Health Issue/Disability	4	2%
Mental Health Issue	10	5%
Substance Use Issue	35	19%
Hospitalization or Treatment Program	3	2%
Incarceration	9	5%
Other:		
Complaint (e.g. noise/damage)	8	4%
Left the community/ relocated	4	2%
Death or Departure of a Family Member	21	11%

Table 12 Reason for Housing Loss

Respondents were further asked if their most recent housing loss was related to an eviction.

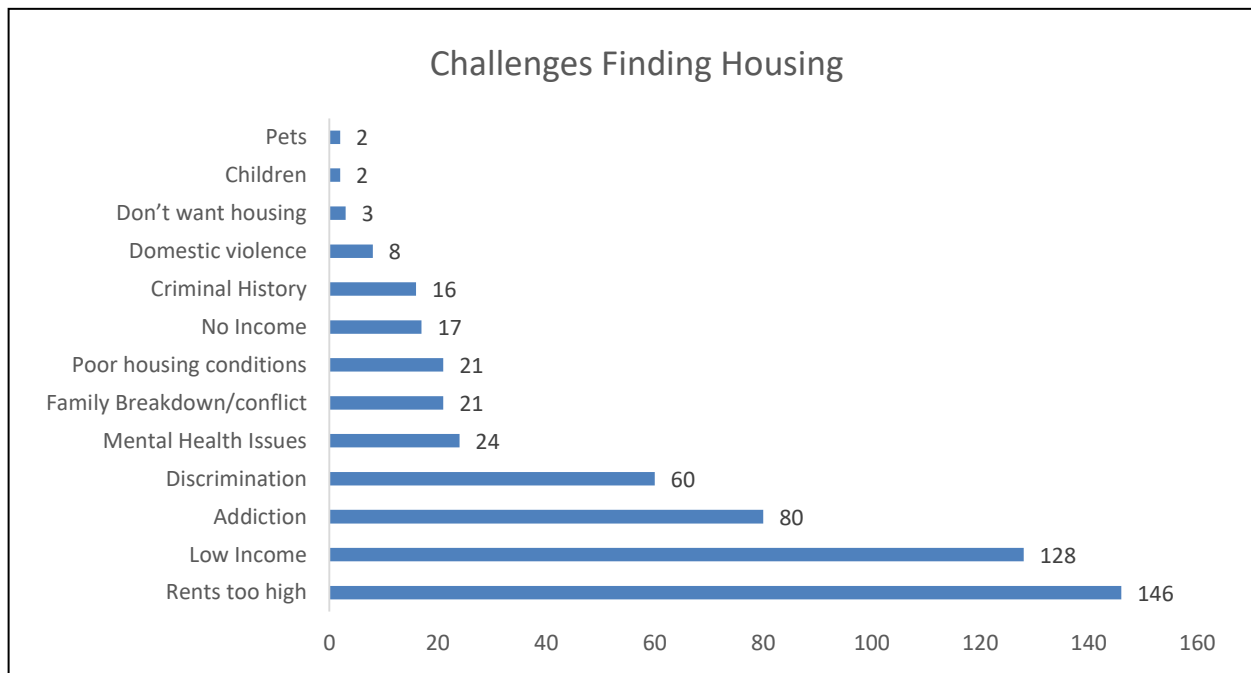
61 % of 197 respondents did not lose their housing due to an eviction.

Respondents were asked the question, “How long ago was your most recent housing loss?”

Length of Time since loss of housing	Number (n=173)	Percent
1 year or less	71	41%
1 to 5 years	62	36%
5 years or more	40	23%

Challenges Finding Housing

Survey respondents were asked what challenges or problems they experience when trying to find housing. Each respondent was able to indicate more than one answer.



The top 4 identified challenges when trying to find housing have been consistent through multiple Homeless Counts. They include:

- Rents too high
- Low Income
- Discrimination
- Addiction

High rents and low incomes have consistently been a major factor preventing access to safe and affordable housing. Rents and the cost of living continue to rise. There is a growing recognition that more housing is essential in almost all communities across Canada, but this housing has to be designated and designed for those on benefits, and requiring substantial resources to assist with keeping people housed.

Prince George has been fortunate to see BC Housing engaging in efforts to address appropriate, affordable housing with the necessary wrap round services, and many new projects have been opened in the past 4 years. It is apparent that housing alone is not the answer. Too many individuals are not open to staying in managed housing with rules. They require assistance with life skills and/or supports for their medical issues. This is something the community is dealing with.

Challenges finding housing	2024 (n=202)	2021 (n =120)	2018 (n=137)
Rents too high	146	73	95
Low income	128	56	77
Discrimination	60	27	50
Addiction	80	27	52
Mental health issues	24	17	29
Health/disability issues		16	26
Poor housing conditions	21	13	34
Family breakdown, conflict	21	13	26
Criminal history	16	9	20
No income assistance	17	7	24
None of the above	1	5	
Decline to answer	1	4	
Domestic violence	8	2	11
Pets	2	2	12
Children	2	1	8
Other: _____		29	14

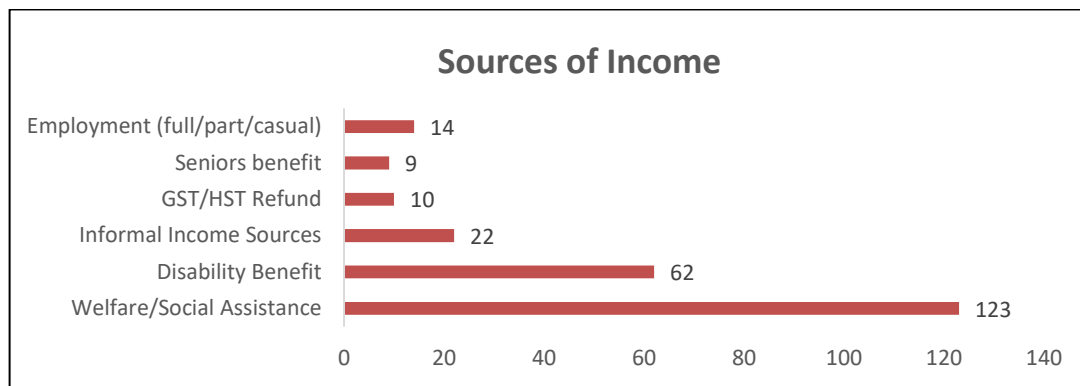
Table 13 Challenges Finding Housing

Income and Homelessness

Homeless count respondents were asked, “What are your sources of income?” There were 199 respondents and each was able to indicate more than one source.

Sources of Income	2024 (n=199)	2021 (n=118)	2018 (n=137)
Welfare/social assistance	123 (62%)	46 (39%)	71 (41%)
Disability benefit	62 (31%)	65 (55%)	41 (24%)
Informal & from family/friends	22 (11%)	16 (13%)	28 (16%)
Employment (part time, full time and casual)	14 (7%)	9 (8%)	7 (4%)
Gst/hst refund	10 (5%)	13 (11%)	10 (6%)
Seniors’ benefits (e.g. Cpp/oas/gis)	9 (5%)	8 (7%)	8 (5%)
No income	6 (3%)	6 (5%)	8 (5%)

Table 14 Sources of Income

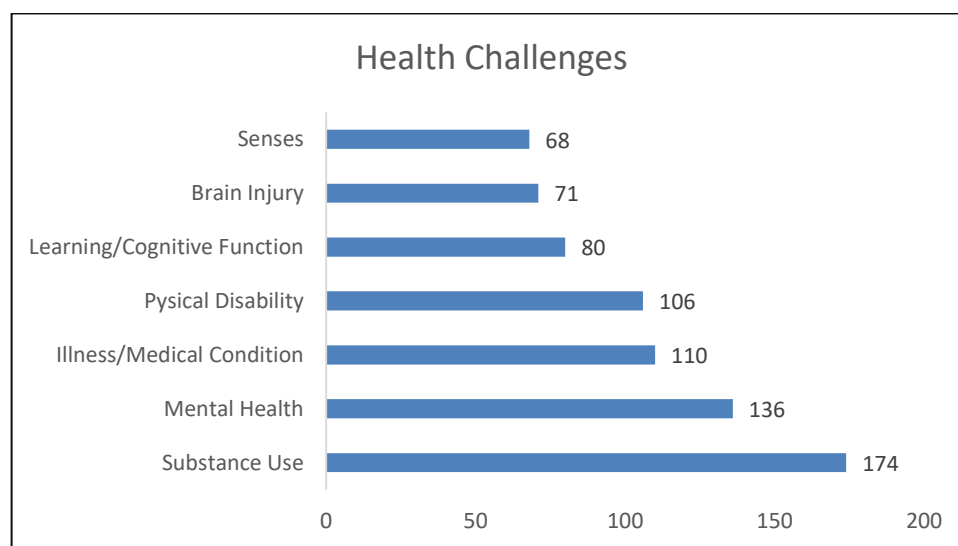


Current Health Challenges

Survey respondents were asked to identify if they were experiencing difficulties related to any of the following noted in the table below. 2021 was the first PiT count that asked this question, and the wording has slightly changed. Substance use and mental health issues remain the top two conditions that many are experiencing difficulties with.

Experiencing Difficulties	2024 (n=209)	2021 (n=122)
Substance use issue	174	83
Mental health	136	75
Illness or medical condition	110	45
Physical mobility	106	45
Learning, Intellectual or Cognitive Function	80	49
Acquired Brain Injury	71	30
Senses, such as seeing or hearing (new 2024)	68	

Table 15 Health Challenges



Need for Services

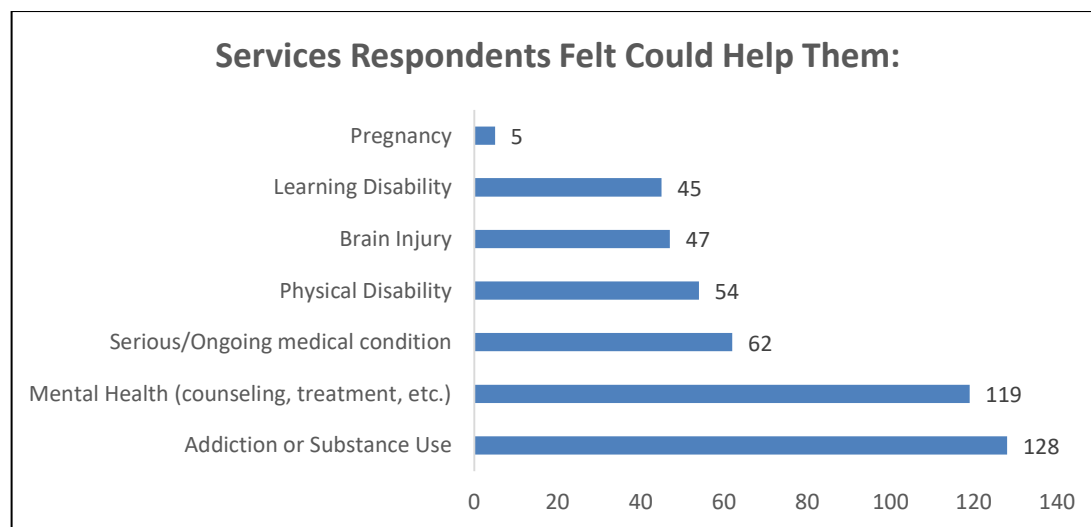
Respondents commented on their need for various services in Prince George. Each respondent was asked if they had a need for services related to services listed below. They were able to indicate the need for one or more service; the top 3 were consistent with those identified in 2018 and 2021:

- Need for services related to Addiction or Substance Use (75% of respondents)
- Need for services related to Mental Health (71%)
- Need for services related to Serious or Ongoing Medical Condition (37%)

Services Required	2024 (n=167)	2021 (n=63)	2018 (n=113)
Addiction or substance use	128	57	84
Mental health	119	46	67
Serious/ongoing medical condition	62	31	51
Physical disability	54	23	42
Learning disability	45	24	30
Brain injury	47	21	19
Pregnancy	5	1	1

Table 16 Need for Services

The responses here are very clear there is a distinct indication (over a six year span) that we are not meeting the critical health needs of our vulnerable population.



CONCLUSION

The 2024 Prince George Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count, conducted November 12-14 as part of Canada's Reaching Home Strategy, provided a snapshot of homelessness in the community. Led by the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association, the count identified a minimum of 206 individuals experiencing absolute homelessness on November 12, including 72 staying outdoors or in encampments and 134 in emergency shelters. An additional 125 were in transitional housing, and 49 incarcerated individuals, who indicate Prince George is their home, had no fixed address.

The survey of 213 respondents revealed that 31% stayed outdoors (up from 13% in 2021), 47% in shelters (down from 71%), and 75% self-identified as Indigenous. Chronic homelessness, those homeless for more than 6 months of the past year, affected 82% of respondents, with 42% having been in foster care. Almost half of the respondents first experienced homelessness before the age of 24.

Key reasons for housing loss included insufficient income, conflict, and substance use, while high rents and low income were top barriers to finding housing. The count highlighted a rise in visible homelessness, with more individuals opting for staying outdoors over managed housing.

Despite increased supportive housing efforts by BC Housing, gaps in mental health, substance use, and affordable housing services persist, underscoring the need for tailored solutions to address evolving needs.

With comparative data available over four Counts, the results point to the need for further community research. Already, additional work has started with both the youth serving organizations and seniors, both of which have been identified as being more hidden and voiceless than other sectors. In addition, results from those that self-identified as Indigenous will be provided to our Indigenous partners.

It is evident to our community that much more still needs to be done. We see changing circumstances and we are acutely aware that it is a huge challenge to reach the point where we eradicate homelessness or serve every single individual in need. However, the PiT Count goes a long way to increase our ability to recognize and react to the myriad issues related to homelessness.

None of this work would happen without the many service agencies, volunteers, and front-line workers tirelessly engaged in this field and of course, the Provincial and Federal Governments, along with local government support.

We sincerely thank all those involved in the count.

APPENDIX A: List of communities

APPENDIX A.1 Lived prior to Prince George

Table A.1 “Where did you live before you came to Prince George?”

Moved to Prince George from:	(n=153)
Fort St. James	15
Burns Lake	8
Dawson Creek	8
Terrace	6
Vancouver	6
Edmonton	5
Vanderhoof	5
Prince Rupert	4
Smithers	4
Surrey	4
Calgary	3
Fort Nelson	3
Fort St. John	3
Lake Babine Nation	3
Mackenzie	3
Quesnel	3
Tachie	3
Houston	2
Moricietown	2
Penticton	2
Takla Lake First Nation	2
Toronto	2
Victoria	2
Williams Lake	2
Abbotsford	1
Bear Lake	1
Bella Coola	1
Cold Lake	1
Drayton Valley	1
Hazelton	1
Hixon	1
Kamloops	1
Kelowna	1
Kitimat	1
Lax-kw'alaams	1
Lillooet	1
Maple Ridge	1

McBride	1
Medicine Hat	1
Merritt	1
Mission	1
North Vancouver	1
Peterborough	1
Poundmaker	1
Red Deer	1
Shippagan	1
Slave Lake	1
Stone	1
The Pas	1
Tofino	1
Tsay Keh Dene	1
Ulkatcho	1
Waterloo	1
Whitehorse	1
Winnipeg	1

APPENDIX A.2 Indigenous Community

Table A.2 “Which Indigenous community are you from?”

The survey question did not specify whether a respondent should indicate which nation they were a member of, simply asked which indigenous community they were from. It is acknowledged that respondents may have answered this question differently.

More than 50% are from communities in northern BC.

Indigenous Community:	(n=121)	Percent:
Lake Babine Nation	18	15%
Tl'azt'en Nation	14	12%
Nak'azdli	10	8%
Takla Lake First Nation	6	5%
Saik'uz First Nation	5	4%
Greenville	4	3%
Yekooche	4	3%
Lax-kw'alaams	3	2%
Lheidli T'enneh	3	2%
Moricietown	3	2%
Tsay Keh Dene	3	2%
Beaver First Nation	2	2%
Duck Lake	2	2%

Fort Nelson First Nation	2	2%
Fort St. James	2	2%
Hazelton	2	2%
West Moberly First Nations	2	2%
Ahousaht	1	1%
Bridge River	1	1%
Colwood	1	1%
Gitanyow	1	1%
Gitxaala Nation	1	1%
Green Lake	1	1%
Hagwilget Village	1	1%
Halfway River First Nation	1	1%
Kehewin Cree Nation	1	1%
Kitselas	1	1%
Mathias Colomb	1	1%
Meath Park	1	1%
Moose Cree First Nation	1	1%
Nadleh Whuten	1	1%
Nisga'a Village of Laxgalt'sap	1	1%
Nuxalk Nation	1	1%
Opaskwayak Cree Nation	1	1%
Poundmaker	1	1%
Provost	1	1%
Siksika Nation	1	1%
Skwah	1	1%
Slave Lake	1	1%
Spuzzum	1	1%
Sucker Creek	1	1%
Sunchild First Nation	1	1%
Tachie	1	1%
Tahltan	1	1%
Terrace	1	1%
Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation	1	1%
Turnor Lake	1	1%
Ulkatcho	1	1%
Watson Lake	1	1%
Wet'suwet'en First Nation	1	1%
Williams Lake	1	1%
Woodland Cree First Nation	1	1%
Yellow Quill	1	1%

APPENDIX B: SURVEY