

NIAGARA COUNTS

*Public Health and Social Services Committee
July 17, 2018*

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What is a Point-in-Time Count?

- Part of federal and provincial initiatives to measure the extent and characteristics of homelessness
- Mandatory as part of the provincial Housing Services Act, 2011
- Funding of \$50,000 was awarded by the Federal Government
- Provides a snapshot of homelessness at a single point in time

Purpose of a Point-in-Time Count

There are two elements to a Count:

- Homeless Enumeration: A count of individuals experiencing homelessness in Niagara at a given time
- Surveys: Information on the demographics, experience, and service needs of Niagara's homeless population (self-identified)

Volunteer Recruitment and Participation



- Volunteer recruitment was done primarily through social media
- 87 volunteers supported the Count as trained volunteer surveyors and base site volunteers
- Training: methodology, survey administration, logistics, safety

Overnight Location – March 27, 2018

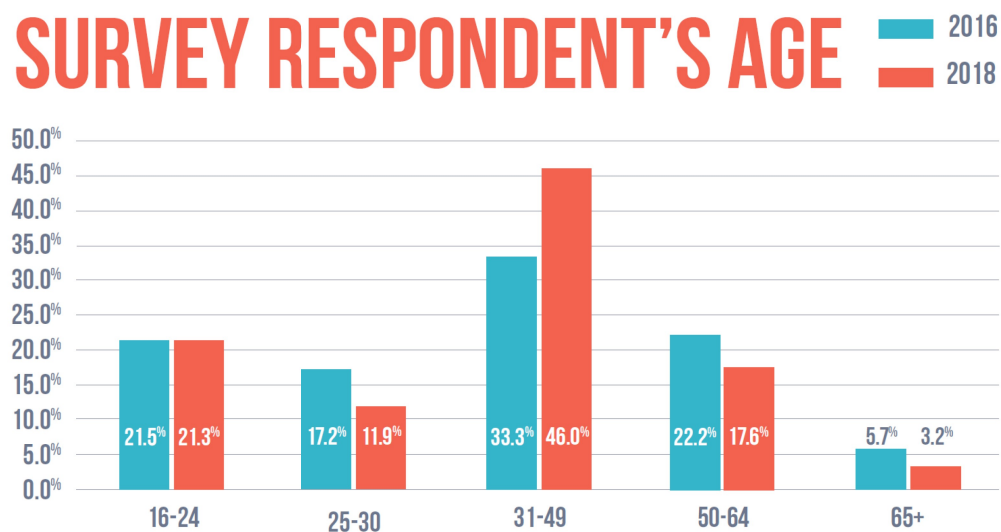
- 408 completed surveys
- Survey participation was based on responses to screening questions
- Survey responses were based on client's self-identification
- Most respondents were found in a sheltered location

WHERE ARE YOU STAYING TONIGHT?



Age Characteristics

SURVEY RESPONDENT'S AGE

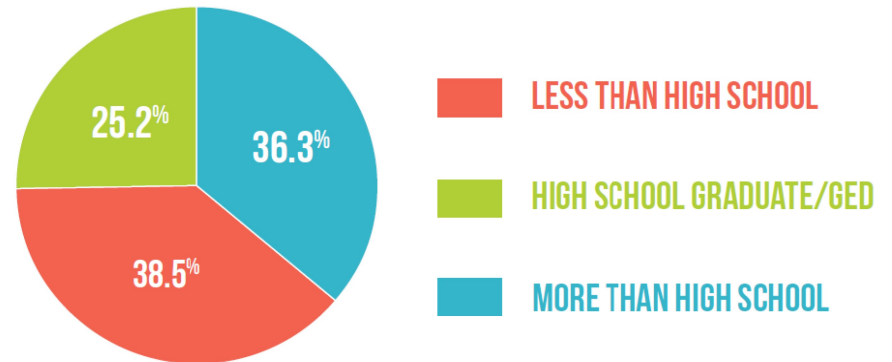


- More than 1 in 5 respondents (21.3%) were youth aged 16-24 years, which was similar to the proportion of youth among 2016 respondents.
- The 2018 respondent population was made up of proportionately fewer people in every age group than in 2016, except for the 31-49 year olds

Educational Attainment

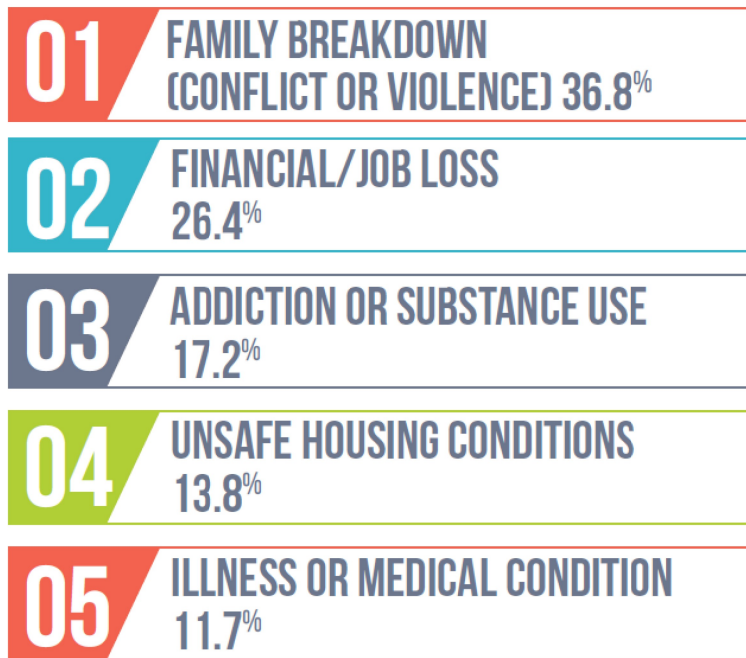
- The rate of having less than a high school education is more than twice that of the general Niagara population (18.2%, 2016 Census)

RESPONDENT'S HIGHEST EDUCATION



Reasons for Housing Loss

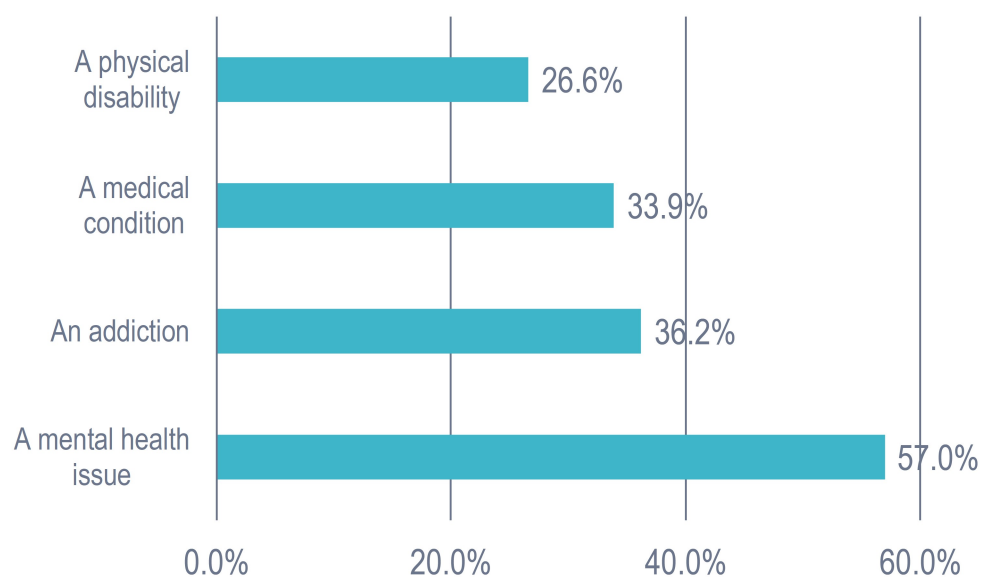
TOP FIVE REASONS FOR MOST RECENT HOUSING LOSS:



- Nearly 4 out of 5 respondents (78.4%) indicated their source of income as welfare/social assistance and/or disability benefit.
- Almost 80% of respondents indicated that rents being too high and/or a low income were challenges for them when trying to find housing.

Health

RESPONDENTS self-IDENTIFIED AS HAVING:



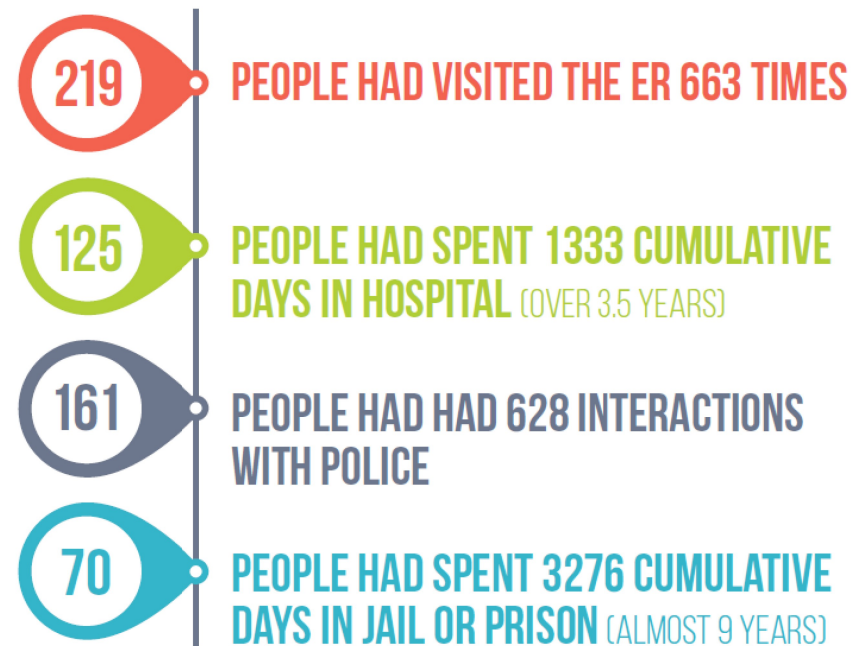
Self-reported need for services related to:

- Mental health (54.3% of respondents)
- Addiction or substance use (29.2%)
- Serious or ongoing medical condition (26.9%)
- Physical disability (19.4%)
- Learning disability (19.1%)
- Culture (12.4%)
- Brain injury (8.5%)
- Developmental disability (5.7%)

System Interactions

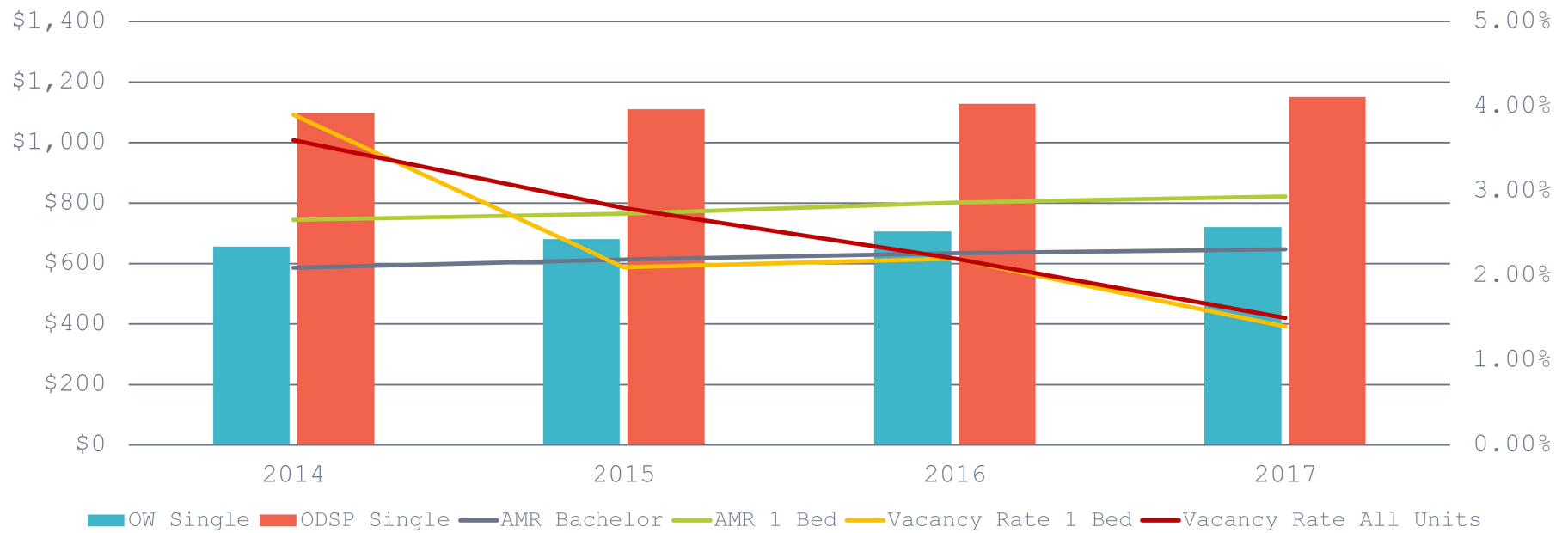
- Over the past year, 55% of respondents had been homeless 6 or more months (i.e., chronically homeless)
- 16% had been homeless 3 or more times (i.e., episodically homeless) in the past year.

SYSTEM INTERACTIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR



Contextual Data

CHANGES IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES, VACANCY RATES, AND AVERAGE MARKET RENTS - SINGLES



Homeless Services System Data

Indicator	2015	2016	2017
Shelter occupancy rate	86.4%	98.2%	107.6%
Avg. length of stay per admission (days) – all households	11.3	12.9	19.0
Avg. length of stay per admission (days) – singles	10.4	11.9	16.4
Avg. length of stay per admission (days) – 3+ member families	30.6	36.3	67.8
Number of unique households that accessed shelter	1607	1682	1641
Number of unique households placed in housing through HF	45	41	83
Number of Housing Stability Plan benefit issuances	6748	6634	5528

Niagara's Response

Contract with 21 agencies to deliver a range of services:

- Prevention services
- Outreach
- Supported transitional housing
- Shelters

Housing First Program

- Internationally recognized best practice model

Home for Good Program

- Assist people who are chronically homeless and facing multiple barriers to housing

Doing Business Differently

Innovation

- Landlord engagement
- Mental Health and Addictions services

Modernization

- Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- Common data base
- Shelter system review
- Policy review

Questions?

Subject: Homelessness Point-in-Time Count Report
Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee
Report date: Tuesday, July 17, 2018

Recommendations

That Report COM 16-2018 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- Niagara Counts 2018, Niagara's second homelessness Point-in-Time (PiT) Count, was conducted in late March 2018. Niagara's inaugural PiT Count took place in early April 2016.
- Homeless Enumeration is a bi-annual mandatory requirement of municipal Service Managers by the Ministry of Housing (MHO) following an amendment to the Housing Services Act, 2011, in December 2016.
- In 2018, over 60 communities throughout Canada conducted a PiT Count. By using a common methodology, Niagara contributed to measuring the extent of homelessness on a local, provincial and national level.
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) awarded Niagara \$50,000 (the maximum available) to assist with the costs associated with participating in the coordinated PiT Count.
- Niagara's PiT Count found 625 people to be experiencing homelessness on March 27th, 2018, in emergency and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, in transitional housing programs, and in unsheltered locations. This number includes 144 children aged 0-15 years.
- As part of the Count, 408 surveys were completed, providing valuable information on the demographics, experience and service needs of Niagara's homeless population.

Financial Considerations

Niagara Region received \$50,000 in federal funding to conduct "Niagara Counts 2018." The majority of this funding was allocated towards agency administrative costs and honoraria for volunteers and survey participants.

Analysis

Niagara's PiT Count, termed Niagara Counts 2018, was planned by a steering committee comprised primarily of community agency staff from across the region, with representation from emergency and Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, homelessness prevention and outreach services providers, transitional housing