

City of Grande Prairie
2016 Point in Time Count



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2016 Count Summary

On October 19, 2016, the City of Grande Prairie conducted its fifth bi-annual Point in Time Count of homelessness (Count). Grande Prairie coordinates the Count as part of its work supporting Grande Prairie's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness and participation in Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness Network. 2016 was Grande Prairie's most comprehensive Count to date, and the first year offering survey respondents follow-up support from Housing First programs and/or the Street Outreach Team. A Count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of the city's homeless population, and shows how homelessness changes over time, informing program and policy.

All members of Alberta's 7 Cities network conducted a Count on October 19th, 2016 between 7:00p.m. and midnight using a standard survey and harmonized definitions. Provincially, 5367 people were counted as experiencing homelessness. The majority of people experiencing homelessness were counted in Calgary (60%) and Edmonton (30%)¹.

How Many People Were Counted in Grande Prairie?

127 people were counted as experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie. 50% of people counted were experiencing chronic homelessness. A 23% decrease was seen in the number of people counted in comparison to 2014.

Where Were People Sleeping?

9% unsheltered
40% emergency sheltered
50% provisionally accommodated

Who Was Experiencing Homelessness?

32% indigenous (compared to 10% in the general population)
13% under age 18 (including dependents)
8 families
61% male
37% female

Changes in Method

2016 marked the first year that Grande Prairie's Count included organizations providing provisional accommodation to individuals experiencing homelessness, significantly increasing the scope of the Count. Administrative data was also used to develop the Count total, with survey data used as a complement. Finally, 2016 was the first year where individuals who completed the Count survey with volunteers were offered follow-up support from the Housing First program's Centralized Triage & Assessment team.

Introduction

On October 19, 2016, Grande Prairie conducted its fifth bi-annual Point in Time Count of homelessness (Count) since 2006. A Point in Time Count is a community effort, undertaken in order to yield rich information about individuals who are experiencing homelessness. On the night of the Count, volunteer surveyors raise awareness and gather knowledge by talking with everyone that they meet out on the streets, in shelters and in other Count locations about housing and homelessness.

The City of Grande Prairie coordinates its Count as part of its work supporting Grande Prairie's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness and its participation in Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness Network. 2016 was Grande Prairie's most comprehensive Count to date, and the first year offering survey respondents the opportunity to receive follow-up support from Housing First programs and/or the Street Outreach Team.

Grande Prairie's Point in Time Count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of the city's homeless population, and shows how homelessness might change over time. Ultimately, information from the Count is used to inform solutions to ending homelessness in Grande Prairie.

Alberta's 7 Cities Network, including the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, have collaborated on a province-wide Count methodology since 2014. Through weekly call-in meetings leading up to the Count all cities agreed upon a common methodology, timeframe, set of definitions and survey so that results could be compared and aggregated to provide a clear picture of homelessness in Alberta. A full report containing aggregate information from all of Alberta's 7 Cities members has been produced by the 7 Cities network².

This report focuses on the City of Grande Prairie's local results, and includes individuals staying with family and friends (excluded in the 7 Cities report). Comparisons with data from Grande Prairie's Housing First program and 2014 Point in Time Count have also been included.

Housing and Homelessness in Grande Prairie

Grande Prairie began to approach homelessness from a Housing First perspective in 2009, moving away from emergency services toward programming that helps to prevent and end homelessness. Individuals experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie access a Centralized Triage & Assessment team that will connect them to housing, financial support and case management to help them maintain housing in the long term. Individuals who are at risk of homelessness, but are not currently homeless, have access to housing loss prevention supports.

Organizations involved in Grande Prairie's Housing First programming are funded by the City of Grande Prairie, Homeless Initiatives. Homeless Initiatives acts as the Community-Based Organization (CBO) to provide funding from the Province of Alberta's Outreach Support Services Initiative (OSSI). Homeless Initiatives also acts as the Community Entity (CE) for the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). Between 2009 and 2016, 923 people have been housed in Grande Prairie through Housing First programs. During 2015-16, 207 people were housed.

¹ A 7 Cities Point in Time Count report can be found at www.7cities.ca/7-cities-pit-count. Grande Prairie's local total (127) differs from the total in the 7 Cities report due to the inclusion of individuals staying with family and friends in the local total.

² A 7 Cities Point in Time Count report can be found at www.7cities.ca/7-cities-pit-count.

Broader Trends: 2014 to 2016

Between mid-2014 and early 2016, Alberta's economy experienced decline due to falling oil prices (Government of Alberta, 2016). Although signs of improvement had begun to show in 2016, the effect of the downturn could still be felt locally in October 2016.

Employment: Unemployment had increased somewhat in Grande Prairie from 4.8% in 2014 to 5.6% in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Alberta-wide, unemployment in November 2016 was 8.5% (Alberta Treasury and Finance, 2016). In September 2016, 4% of Grande Prairie residents were receiving Employment Insurance (EI) benefits (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Rental Market: The vacancy rate in Grande Prairie increased from 1.2% in 2014 to 22% in 2016 (CMHC, 2016), significantly impacting the local rental market. The overall vacancy rate in Alberta in October 2016 was 8.4%.

Among 7 Cities members, vacancy rates varied substantially in October, from 5.2% in Medicine Hat to 22% in Grande Prairie. As expected with an increase in vacancy rate between 2014 and 2016, the average rental cost in Grande Prairie went down 15% (\$147) for a 1 bedroom and 13% (\$108) for a bachelor suite (CMHC, 2016).

Poverty: Over 17% of Grande Prairie residents were experiencing housing affordability challenges and about 1 in 10 were considered low income according to the most recent data (Statistics Canada, 2011). Grande Prairie's Poverty Profile (Haener, 2016) notes that 8.7% of households had incomes below LIM-AT in 2014³, and that in 2013, the overall child poverty rate in Grande Prairie was 12.9% (Haener, 2016).

Population: The City of Grande Prairie has grown 24.6% since the last available census data in 2011, to 68,556 people in 2015 (City of Grande Prairie, 2016).

Count Definitions

The following Canadian and Albertan definitions have been used in the collection and categorization of Grande Prairie's 2016 Count data:

Homelessness: The "situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination" (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

Chronic Homelessness: Includes people who have been continuously homeless for one year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (Human Services, 2012).

Episodic Homelessness: Includes people who have been homeless for less than a year and have had fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (Human Services, 2012).

Sheltered: Includes people who are accessing emergency shelters available at minimal or no cost. Shelters include emergency shelters for people who are homeless and emergency shelters for people affected by domestic violence (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

Unsheltered: Includes people who lack housing and are not accessing emergency shelter. Individuals in this group may be staying on the street, in abandoned buildings, stairwells, sheds, parks, tents, vehicles, etc (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

Provisionally Accommodated: Includes people who are technically homeless because their current housing offers no prospect of permanence. Individuals in this group may be staying in residential treatment facilities, health facilities, group homes, jail/prison, transitional housing/second stage/short-term supportive housing, rooming houses,

etc. (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012). For Alberta's 2016 Count, the 7 Cities further defined this category so that individuals were considered provisionally accommodated if their term of residency was limited by program parameters to two years or less. At a local level this category also includes individuals staying with family or friends.

At Risk of Homelessness: Includes people who are experiencing difficulty maintaining their housing and have no alternatives for obtaining subsequent housing. Circumstances may include: eviction, loss of income, unaffordable increase in the cost of housing, discharge from an institution without subsequent housing in place, irreparable damage or deterioration to residences, and fleeing from family violence (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012). At-risk individuals were not included in Grande Prairie's 2016 Count due to the difficulty in producing an accurate number.

Housing First: Housing First is a philosophical approach to homelessness and housing. Adopting a Housing First approach means that permanent housing is provided along with needed support services. Support services may include intensive medical, psychiatric and case management services including life skills training, landlord liaison assistance and addictions counselling. Addressing these needs through support services helps people maintain their housing over the long term (Human Services, 2012). Alberta's 7 Cities, along with many other Canadian cities have adopted a Housing First approach to ending homelessness.

Youth: Individuals captured in the Point in Time Count who are 18-24 years old have been categorized as youth. Individuals under age 18 are also included as youth where data is available.

Indigenous: Individuals captured in the Point in Time Count who identified as First Nations, Metis, Inuit or as having indigenous ancestry have been categorized as indigenous.

³ The Low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT) is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of households observed at the person level, where 'adjusted' indicates that a household's needs are taken into account (Statistics Canada, 2016).



Methodology

Grande Prairie's 2016 Count was coordinated by two staff from the City of Grande Prairie, Homeless Initiatives Team in partnership with a Count Planning Committee. The Count coordinators collaborated with Alberta's 7 Cities Network in the months leading up to the Count to develop a harmonized methodology. An overview of major methods considerations is outlined below.

Data Sources

Two main sources of data were used for Grande Prairie's 2016 Count:

1. Administrative Data

Administrative data is the basic information that organizations routinely and systematically gather from the people that they support or serve.

Local: The City of Grande Prairie gathered administrative data from several local organizations that provided shelter or short-term housing to individuals experiencing homelessness. Information submitted by these organizations included the number of individuals residing at the organization on the night of the Count, age, gender, ethnicity and any accompanying dependents.

Provincial: The 7 Cities network liaised with Provincial contacts to facilitate sharing of administrative data with 7 Cities members from Human Services (Sponsored Hotel/Motel stays), Provincial Corrections facilities and Alberta Health Services facilities. Provincial contacts shared the age, gender and ethnicity of individuals identified as experiencing homelessness prior to residency or stay in a hotel/motel, corrections facility or health facility.

Appendix B contains an overview of locations that provided administrative data.

2. Surveys

Alberta's 7 Cities Network developed a standard survey consisting of 5 screening questions and 12 core questions. Each city also had the option of adding local questions from an approved list. Screening, core and optional questions were based on the survey used by Canadian cities during the national Point in Time Count in April 2016. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy supports the national Point in Time Count, in partnership with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Grande Prairie adopted the standard survey developed with the 7 Cities Network, with the addition of three approved questions about residential school experience, citizenship and age first homeless. The same survey was used in all of Grande Prairie's Count locations. 76 surveys were completed during the 2016 Count. See Appendix A for Grande Prairie's 2016 survey.

Data Entry and Analysis

Alberta's 7 Cities engaged a consultant to collect and analyze aggregate administrative and survey data from the Count, and to produce a 7 Cities report on homelessness in Alberta. As a result, all cities used survey monkey to input survey data, and were provided with excel output for local reports. In Grande Prairie, individuals staying with family or friends were added to the local list manually after submission to the 7 Cities consultant. Descriptive statistics were then generated using excel.

Developing the Count Number Using Administrative and Survey Data

The 7 Cities Network agreed that each city would collect and report administrative numbers wherever possible, and use survey data as a complement. For example, volunteers in Grande Prairie surveyed 35

people at emergency shelter locations, while emergency shelter locations reported a total of 51 people (includes 3 dependents) staying at shelters on the night of October 19th. The survey data (35 people) is used in this report to understand the people staying at shelters, and the admin number (51 people) is used to produce the total count and to report on major demographics (age, gender and ethnicity). *An overview of organizations that provided administrative data is included in Appendix B.*

Including Provisionally Accommodated Individuals

Grande Prairie's 2016 Count was the first to include provisionally accommodated individuals experiencing homelessness. The increase in scope to include provisionally accommodated individuals enabled the City to gain a more accurate picture of homelessness.

New Count locations in 2016 included:

- Aurora Home for Women
- RCMP Municipal Holding Cells
- Rising Above Residential Addictions Treatment
- Serenity Place Second Stage Housing for Women
- Provincial Corrections facilities (Provincial)

Data was also gathered for the first time from two units at the QEII hospital, from the Northern Addictions Centre and provincially from Alberta Health Services. However, due to differences in local and provincial data, the information from Alberta Health Services facilities was not included in analysis.

Street Coverage Zones

The Count coordinators divided the city into coverage zones in downtown core, parks and known areas with assistance from Grande Prairie's Street Outreach Team (HIV North) and a Count Planning Committee member with lived experience in homelessness. The coordinators also consulted maps from the 2014 Count. The Street Outreach Team recommended the level of experience that each volunteer team should have to cover each zone. The Planning Committee reviewed the coverage zones before finalization and mapping by the City of Grande Prairie's GIS team.

Coverage zones were divided into four categories:

1. General: covered by an experienced Team Leader and general public volunteers
2. Designated: covered by an experienced Team Leader and experienced volunteer team
3. Outreach Designated: covered by Street Outreach staff on duty
4. Quick Routes and Park Routes: covered by Street Outreach staff on duty using a van

Volunteer teams were assigned to coverage zones and instructed to approach everyone they met while on their route to discuss the Count and conduct the Count survey. Volunteer teams assigned to General and Designated Zones covered their zones between 7:00 and 10:00p.m. Street Outreach teams covering Designated, Quick and Park Routes covered their zones until 11:00 p.m.

Shelter and Provisional Housing Survey Locations

In addition to conducting surveys in street coverage zones, surveys were also conducted at shelters and provisional housing locations. The Count Planning Committee was consulted in order to develop a list of possible locations. The Count coordinators then met with each location to discuss the type of housing provided to individuals and the population supported to assess whether the location fit within the scope of the Count. *An overview of organizations that participated as survey locations is available in Appendix B.*



Volunteers

62 volunteers participated in the 2016 Count. Volunteers attended one mandatory training session where they were taken through the Count survey to discuss each question in detail, given an overview of Count purpose and provided with an intro to understanding homelessness.

Volunteers were placed in groups of 3-5 and assigned a street coverage zone or survey location. Teams wore high visibility vests and Point in Time Count identification, and carried flashlights, first aid kits and other supplies. Teams checked in with youth volunteers and a Count coordinator stationed at Count headquarters every 30 minutes on the night of the Count.

See Appendix E for volunteer feedback.

Response Rate/Representation

The overall response rate in 2016 (for surveys completed compared to total enumerated) was 60%. Note: It is not possible to calculate a response rate for the total population of individuals experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie, since the total population on the night of the Count is unknown.

Response rates (surveys completed: total enumerated) were also calculated for specific locations that provided 1) administrative data and 2) were identified in the survey options for "where are you sleeping tonight?" Table 1 contains an overview of response rate by location. Note: Dependents are not included in this table, since surveys were not completed with dependents during the Point in Time Count.

Table 1: Response Rates for Select Count Locations

Location	On Location Surveys	Street Surveys indicating location	Total	Admin	Response Rate
Rotary House Emergency Shelter	24*	4	28	38	73.6%
Odyssey House Women's Emergency Shelter	6	0	9	9	66.6%
Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter	1	0	1	1	100%
All the shelters	31	4	35	48	72.9%
Serenity Place	7	0	7	7	100%
Rising Above Residential Addictions Treatment	11	0	11	13	84.6%
Total	49	4	53	68	68

* Although 27 surveys were completed at Rotary House, 3 respondents indicated that they were not planning to sleep at Rotary House. These respondents were instead staying in unsheltered locations or unsure where they were going to stay.



Limitations

Point in Time Count Method: A Point in Time Count is not intended to produce a complete picture of homelessness. Rather, a Count produces an indication of the nature of homelessness in a specific place at a specific point in time.

Comparability: Changes in Count methods make year-over-year comparisons difficult to navigate. Since 2014, the ability to make comparisons has been taken into consideration whenever changes are recommended. See Table 2 (page 6) for further information about changes in method that affect comparability.

Double Counting: Double counting can be difficult to control for the street portion of a Point in Time Count. However, the use of administrative data helps to ensure that individuals staying in shelters or provisional accommodation are not counted twice. Double counting of individuals who reported couch surfing or sleeping in unsheltered locations was controlled by instructing teams to cover only one assigned route for a limited timeframe of 3 hours. Double counting was also controlled via the screening question “have you answered this survey with a volunteer wearing a City of Grande Prairie Point in Time Count volunteer badge tonight?”

Counting unsheltered individuals: It is difficult to ensure that all individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness are found during a Point in Time Count. Safety for volunteers covering parks and secluded areas at night is a concern, and it can also be a challenge to find out where exactly to look. Finally, individuals experiencing homelessness may not want to be found by or may be suspicious of volunteers. Count coverage zones were designed with the support of Grande Prairie’s Street Outreach Team and a Planning Committee member who has experienced homelessness in Grande Prairie to ensure that important areas were included in the Count. The Street Outreach team also continued coverage of their zones until 11:00p.m. and covered areas where individuals who are particularly vulnerable, and who were already familiar with Outreach staff, frequent. Despite these efforts, it is possible that unsheltered individuals were missed in the Count.

Counting Individuals Staying with Family/Friends (Couch Surfers): Individuals couch surfing with family or friends do not generally access homeless supports or services, or congregate at designated Count locations. Couch surfers are often referred to as the “hidden homeless” and are included in the “Provisionally Accommodated” group in this report. The number of couch surfers in this report is likely lower than the actual number in Grande Prairie.

Survey Administration: Some survey responses were not recorded according to training instructions. However, all surveys were marked with a unique number corresponding to survey team and coverage zone and the Count coordinators were able to follow up with survey teams to resolve issues.

Survey Responses: All survey responses were self-reported and not otherwise verified. Respondents also had the option of declining to answer any question. Surveyor bias also affected the reliability of survey responses. Where possible, administrative data was used rather than survey data in analysis.

Administrative Data: Administrative data from local organizations was assumed to be correct and not otherwise verified. Administrative data from provincial organizations was flagged as possibly incorrect due to differences from locally gathered data, and follow-up was completed by representatives from the 7 Cities planning group. The numbers in this report include admin data provincial corrections facilities. Alberta Health Services admin data was excluded because differences between local and provincial data had not been resolved at the time of writing.

Response Rate/Representativeness: The total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie on the night of the Count is unknown – the Count provides only a snapshot and is not a comprehensive measure. As a result, it is difficult to assess how representative Count data is of the total population of individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of the Count. However, it was possible to assess the level of representativeness for specific locations that provided administrative data.

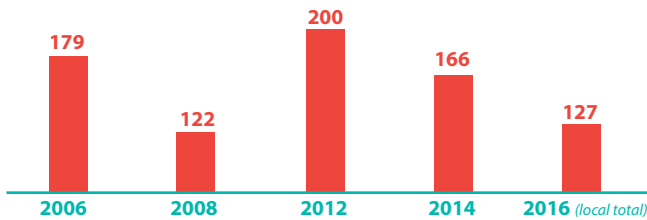
Count Results – Demographics

A blend of 2016 Count administrative and survey data was used to develop the total number of individuals counted and understand population trends and key demographics. Where possible, quarter two administrative data from Grande Prairie's Housing First programs (Q2 Housing First), along with 2014 Count data are included for comparison.

The Count

On October 19, **127 people** (0.18% of the total population in Grande Prairie) were counted as experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie showing a 23% reduction from the last Count in 2014. An overview of Point in Time Counts in Grande Prairie since 2006 is provided in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Individuals Counted in Grande Prairie: 2006-2016



Changes in Count method between 2006 and 2016 mean that year-over-year comparisons must be reviewed in context and used with caution. An overview of methodological factors affecting the Count total in each year is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Highlights in Methods Changes - 2006-2016

Year	Count	Date	Time	Hours	Notes
2006	179	June 29	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	11	Summer Count. 11-hour count.
2008	122	Dec. 11	4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	4	Winter Count
2012	200	Sept. 13	Various	24	24-hour Count
2014	166	Oct. 23	Street: 4 - 8:00 p.m. Shelters: 4:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.	4 8	First Count in collaboration with 7 Cities. Inconsistent use of admin & survey data.
2016	127	Oct. 19	7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	3	Broadened scope to include provisionally accommodated individuals.

Homeless Typology

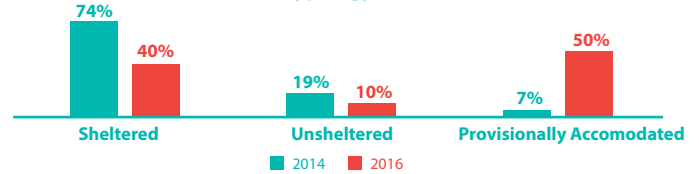
When placed into categories based on shelter type, 50% of individuals counted in 2016 were provisionally accommodated, 40% were emergency sheltered and 10% were unsheltered on the night of the Count. See Chart 2 for a comparison between 2016 and 2014 Counts.

The difference in the proportion of individuals who were sheltered, unsheltered and provisionally accommodated between 2014 and 2016 could be due to changes in Count coverage. For example, some of the increase in provisionally accommodated individuals between 2014 and 2016 is likely due to the expanded inclusion of provisionally accommodated individuals in the 2016 Count.

⁴ July 1 to September 30, 2016. Includes data for 34 individuals who were newly housed through Housing First programs in Grande Prairie during the quarter

⁵ The categories used during Grande Prairie's 2016 Point in Time Count are based on the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' "Canadian Definition of Homelessness". These categories were used consistently across the 7 Cities: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf>

Chart 2: Homeless Typology 2014 and 2016 Counts



Gender

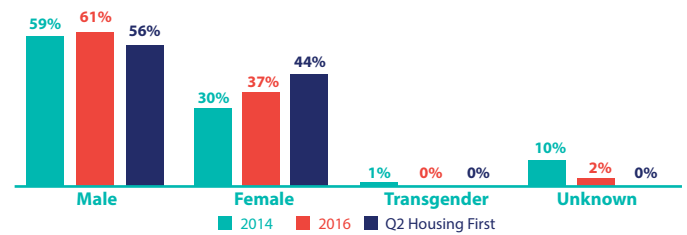
61% of individuals counted in 2016 were male, while 37% were female (2% unknown).

See Chart 3 for a comparison between 2014 and 2016 Count data, and administrative data from Q2 Housing First.

Chart 3 illustrates two noticeable trends:

- The percentage of women counted in 2016 increased 23% from 2014
- The percentage of women counted in 2016 Count was noticeably lower than the percentage of women involved in Grande Prairie's Housing First programs in Quarter Two.

Chart 3: Gender Comparison: 2014 and 2016 Counts; Q2 Housing First



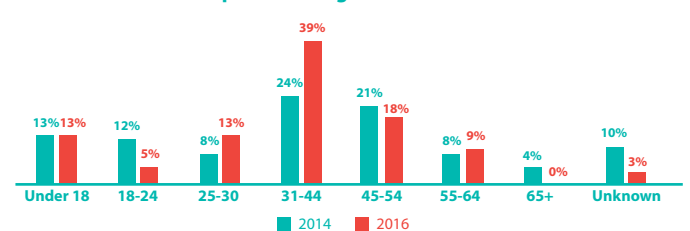
Age

Of individuals counted in 2016, the largest group was between age 31 and 44 (39%), followed by age 45-54 (18%). Chart 4 contains a comparison of age information for Grande Prairie's 2014 and 2016 Counts. Comparing age between 2014 and 2016 reveals some notable differences:

- 58% reduction in individuals aged 18-24
- 63% increase in individuals aged 25-30
- 63% increase in individuals aged 31-44
- 100% decrease in individuals over age 65

Note: the "Under 18" category in Chart 4 contains both dependents and unaccompanied youth. Looking at dependents only: dependents under age 18 made up 14% of those counted in 2016 compared to 10% in 2014.

Chart 4: Comparison of Age - 2014 and 2016 Counts



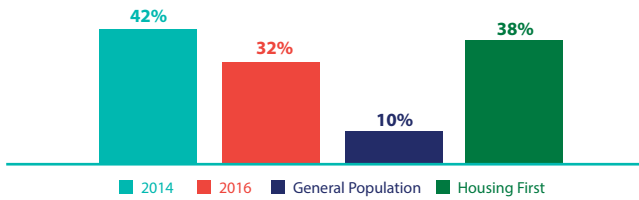
Indigenous Identity

32% of individuals counted in 2016 self-identified as indigenous, while 46% did not identify as indigenous. The ethnicity of 22% of those represented in 2016 Count data is unknown. Of those who identified as indigenous in the 2016 Count, 78% identified as First Nations, 5% identified as Inuit, 7% identified as Metis and 10% identified as having indigenous heritage.

Chart 5 contains a comparison between Count, general population (National Census) and Q2 Housing First administrative data, illustrating the overrepresentation of indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in Grande Prairie.

When 2016 Count data is compared to 2014 Count data the number of individuals who identified as indigenous is down 23%.

Chart 5: Indigenous Identity - Comparison Between 2014 & 2016 Counts, General Population and Q2 Housing Data



Count Results – Survey Data

Grande Prairie’s 2016 Count survey contained five screening questions and 18 additional questions (See Appendix A). Results based on survey data are included in this section. Where possible, Quarter Two administrative data from Grande Prairie’s Housing First programs (Q2 Housing First), along with 2014 Count data are included for comparison.

Sample Size: 76 valid surveys were completed with individuals experiencing homelessness during the 2016 Count, representing 60% of those counted overall.

Chronicity

50% of individuals surveyed in 2016 reported experiencing chronic homelessness, and 50% reported experiencing episodic homelessness. Chart 6 contains a comparison of chronicity between Grande Prairie’s 2014 and 2016 Counts, and Q2 Housing First data.

Chart 7 provides an illustration of chronicity of homeless experience by indigenous and non-indigenous identity. According to 2016 Count data, slightly more individuals who identified as indigenous were experiencing episodic homelessness, whereas slightly more individuals who did not identify as indigenous were experiencing chronic homelessness.

Shelter Type/Sleeping Location

Individuals who completed the 2016 Count survey were asked “Where are you staying tonight?” as a screening question. Respondents were screened out if they reported that they were staying at their own home on the night of the Count, and screened in if they reported that they were staying at/in a type of shelter indicating homelessness. An overview of the types of shelter s provided in Chart 8.

When 2016 responses for “Where are you staying tonight?” are compared with 2014 the following categories are notably different:

- Change from 0% in 2014 to 25% in 2016 for the proportion of individuals who reported staying in transitional housing
- Change from 15% in 2014 to 1% in 2016 for the proportion of individuals who reported staying in public spaces without shelter

Chart 6: Chronicity Comparison 2014 & 2016 Counts, Q2 Housing First

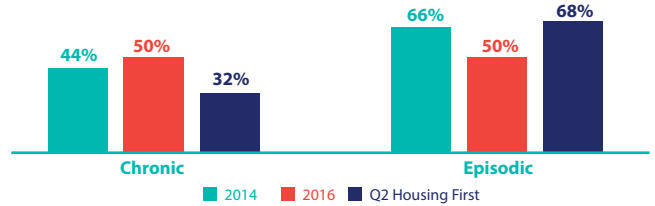
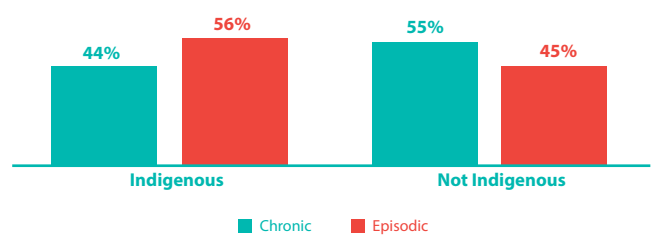


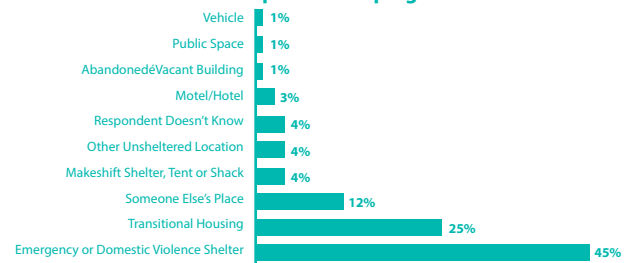
Chart 7: Chronicity & Indigenous Identity



Emergency Shelter Use

Only 66% of individuals who answered the Count survey reported that they had stayed at an emergency shelter in the past 12 months, while 45% reported planning to sleep at an emergency shelter on the night of the Count.

Chart 8: Reported Sleeping Location



⁶ Because women (and youth) are more likely to experience hidden homelessness than men (Gaetz, Gulliver, & Richter, 2014), it is possible that the difference in gender ratio between Grande Prairie’s Point in Time Counts and Housing First data from October 2016 is due to women being undercounted in the Point in Time Count. The difference in gender ratio between the 2014 and 2016 Count is possibly due to the inclusion of Serenity Place (second stage housing for women) in the 2016 Count.

⁷This is similar, though not directly comparable, to the age distribution shown in Q2 Housing Data: 44% age 36-50, followed by 26% age 51-64.

⁸This includes dependents reported in administrative data, for whom only age and gender were identified.

⁹ Individuals were categorized as chronically homeless if they had experienced homeless for 1 year or more during their most recent episode, or more than 4 episodes of homelessness within the past 3 years. Individuals were categorized as episodically homeless if they had experienced less than 1 year of homelessness during their most recent episode, and fewer than 4 episodes within the past 3 years.

Length of Time in Grande Prairie

Individuals who answered the 2016 Count survey were asked how long they had been in Grande Prairie and where they came from if they were not born in Grande Prairie. Chart 9 provides an overview of responses for length of time in Grande Prairie.

Over half of individuals reported being in Grande Prairie for a number of years, while 9% reported always being in Grande Prairie. 33% of individuals who reported being in Grande Prairie for a number of years, reported ten or more years. 37% of individuals surveyed reported being new to Grande Prairie within the past year.

Chart 9: Length of Time in Grande Prairie

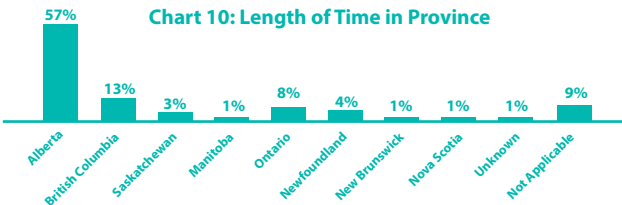


Origin and Citizenship

Chart 10 provides an overview of the locations that individuals reported living in immediately prior to living in Grande Prairie (all locations reported were within Canada). 68% of individuals who reported living in another Alberta community identified a northern Alberta community¹⁰, while nearly one quarter (22%) reported living in Edmonton immediately prior to living in Grande Prairie. A comparison with 2014 is not provided, since the amount of missing data makes it difficult to assign meaning to differences.

Individuals were also asked if they had come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past 5 years. One individual reported having come to Canada within the past 5 years as an immigrant or refugee, though this individual was unsure of their status (e.g. citizen, permanent resident, refugee claimant, temporary foreign worker or international student). 2014 data also showed one individual that had come to Canada within the past 5 years.

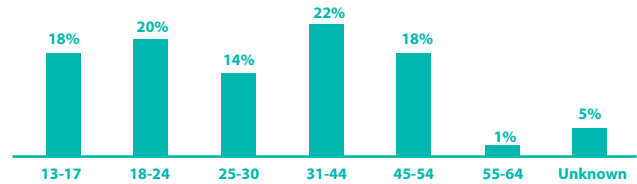
Chart 10: Length of Time in Province



Age First Homeless

57% of individuals surveyed in 2016 reported experiencing homelessness for the first time after age 24 and 38% reported experiencing homelessness for the first time before age 24 (the remaining 5% is unknown). The average age first homeless was 30 years. Chart 11 contains an overview of responses for age first homeless.

Chart 11: Age First Homeless



Families

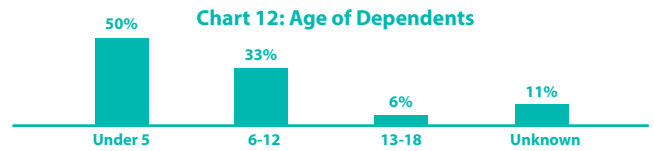
Eight families were identified on the night of the Count, all of which were headed by female lone-parents staying at an Emergency Shelter or in Transitional Housing. 50% of the dependents in these families were under age 5 (see Chart 12). Overall, adults and children in families made up 20% of those counted in Grande Prairie in 2016.

In 2014, five families making up 10% of the Count total were reported with the following characteristics:

- 11 accompanying dependents under age 18
- 4 of 5 staying in an emergency shelter
- 4 of 5 headed by female lone-parents

In addition to families that included children under age 18, 7% of individuals surveyed in 2016 reported a partner, and 7% reported another adult family member staying with them on the night of the Count. Note: If the partner or other adult was not surveyed or noted in administrative data during the Count, they were not included in the Count total due to lack of verification.

Chart 12: Age of Dependents



Residential School

Individuals who completed the 2016 Count survey and identified as indigenous were also asked if they, a parent or grandparent had attended residential school. Of indigenous survey respondents, 65% reported that they, a parent or grandparent had attended residential school. This question was not asked in 2014 and is not a data point for the Housing First program.

LGBTQ Community

5% of individuals surveyed in 2016 identified as part of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirited or Queer (LGBTQ) community. 1% of individuals surveyed did not know if they identified with an LGBTQ community and 2% did not answer this question. Of individuals who identified with an LGBTQ community:

- All identified family conflict as the/one of the reasons for their most recent homeless experience
- Majority were experiencing chronic homelessness
- Majority experienced homelessness for the first time before age 24

2014 Count data did not include a question about identification with an LGBTQ community.

¹⁰ For this figure, Northern Alberta is comprised of any communities in Alberta located North of Whitecourt

In general, 1.7% of Canadians age 18-59 identify with a gay or lesbian community, while 1.3% identify with a bisexual community (Statistics Canada, 2015).

Veterans

4% of individuals surveyed in 2016 had been members of the Canadian military or RCMP, compared to 8% in 2014.

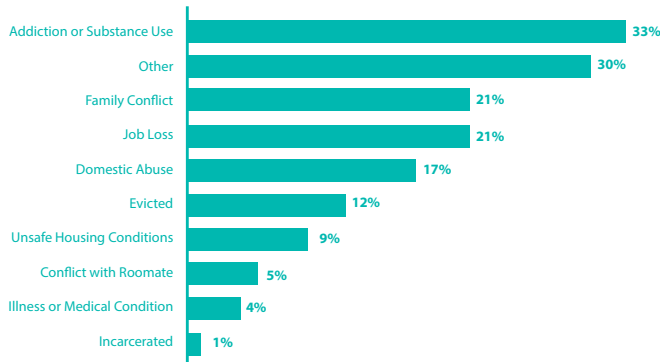
Housing Loss

Individuals who answered the 2016 Count survey were asked to identify what caused them to lose their housing most recently. An overview of responses is provided in Chart 13.

Responses for "Other" include moving by choice, family death or loss of custody of children, legal issue, break down of relationship, financial issue, conflict with landlord or breach of lease leading to eviction and forced move due to building or program change.

See Appendix D, Table D-2 for a comparison of cause of housing loss between 2014 and 2016.

Chart 13: Cause of Most Recent Housing Loss



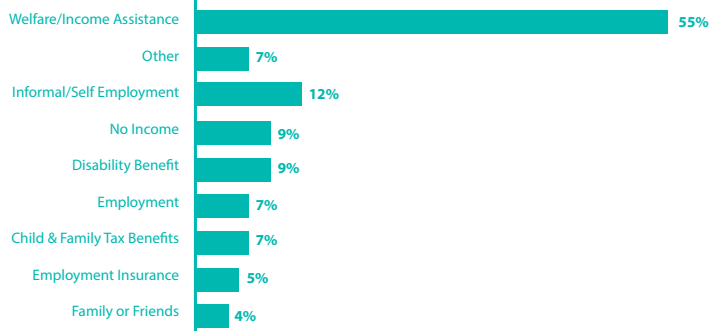
Income

Individuals who completed the Count survey were asked where they got their money (income) from. Responses for 2016 are illustrated in Chart 14. 91% of respondents reported receiving income from at least one source.

Income Categories: Welfare/Income assistance includes income from Alberta Supports (previously Alberta Works). Disability benefit includes Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH). Informal/Self-employment includes odd/cash jobs, dumpster diving, bottle picking and panhandling. Responses for "Other" include Supported Independent Living (SIL)¹¹, insurance money, survivor benefit, "annuity" and some illegal activities.

When compared to 2014 Count data, two changes stand out: an increase in the proportion of individuals receiving income support (17% in 2014 to 55% in 2016) and a decrease in the proportion of individuals receiving income from employment (22% in 2014 to 7% in 2016).

Chart 14: Income Source



¹¹ SIL/Supported Independent Living: Offers individuals (youth) involved with Child and Family Services support to live independently. Includes financial support for housing and daily needs, as well as life skills development.



Conclusion

The City of Grande Prairie coordinates the Point in Time Count as part of work supporting Grande Prairie's *Five Year Plan to End Homelessness*. 2016 marked Grande Prairie's most comprehensive Count to date, and the first year offering those who completed the Count survey the opportunity to receive follow-up support from Housing First programs and/or the Street Outreach Team.

The City of Grande Prairie will continue to collaborate with Alberta's 7 Cities Network to complete bi-annual Point in Time Counts. Collaboration between 7 Cities will produce increasingly accurate and comparable information. Grande Prairie's next Point in Time Count will be planned in 2018.

Acknowledgements

Grande Prairie's 2016 Point in Time Count benefited from the participation of a Count Planning Committee and community volunteers. Local organizations also contributed by providing advice, administrative data, survey locations and staff to cover routes designated for specialized survey teams.

Local organizations involved in the Count included:

Emergency Shelters

- Odyssey House Women's Emergency Shelter – Admin Data, Staff and Survey Location
- Rotary House Emergency Shelter – Admin Data and Survey Location
- Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter – Admin Data, Staff and Survey Location

Health, Residential Treatment, Justice, Transitional Housing

- Aurora Home – Admin Data and Survey Location
- Northern Addictions Centre – Admin Data and Survey Location
- Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (QEII) – Admin Data
- RCMP – Admin Data
- Rising Above – Admin Data and Survey Location
- Serenity Place – Admin Data, Staff and Survey Location

Homeless Initiatives Service Providers

- Accredited Supportive Living Services – Designated Routes Survey Team
- Centerpoint Facilitation Inc – Designated Routes Survey Team
- HIV North – Designated Routes Survey Team
- The Canadian Mental Health Association – Designated Routes Survey Team
- The YMCA of Northwestern Alberta – Designated Routes Survey Team

Other Contributors

- City of Grande Prairie, Crime Prevention
- City of Grande Prairie, Geographic Information Systems
- Grande Prairie PACT Team (Police and Crisis Team – on call support)
- Montrose Cultural Centre – Survey Location

Count Planning Committee members from:

- City of Grande Prairie, Crime Prevention
- Community Advisory Board on Housing and Homelessness
- Grande Prairie Friendship Centre
- HIV North Society
- Lived Experience in Homelessness Community member
- Salvation Army (Grande Prairie)
- Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter
- YMCA of Northwestern Alberta



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Appendix A: 2016 Survey



2016 PiT COUNT SURVEY

Core Screening Questions

Screening 1

Have you answered this survey with a person with this City of Grande Prairie tag?

- YES (*Thank and end survey*)
- NO (*continue*)

Screening 2

Are you willing to participate in this survey?

- YES (*continue*)
- NO (*Thank and end survey*)

Screening 3

Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Screening 4 – [If answered YES to screening 3]

What type of residence is your permanent residence? [select ONE]

If one of the following, thank and end survey

- OWN APARTMENT/HOUSE
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

If one of the following, continue survey

- SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE (FRIEND/FAMILY)
- HOSPITAL, JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE (**Specify by circling one**)
- MOTEL/HOTEL (sponsored by Alberta Works or AISH)
- MOTEL/HOTEL (not sponsored by Alberta Works or AISH)
- EMERGENCY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER (**Specify by circling one**)
1. Rotary House 2. Odyssey House 3. Sunrise House 4. Aurora Home
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (**Specify by circling one**)
1. Rising Above 2. Odyssey House Second Stage 3. Northern Addictions Centre 4. Aurora Home
- PUBLIC SPACE (E.G. SIDEWALKS, SQUARES, PARKS, FORESTS, BUS SHELTER)
- VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, RV, TRUCK)

- MAKESHIFT SHELTER, TENT OR SHACK
- ABANDONED/VACANT BUILDING
- OTHER UNSHELTERED LOCATION UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION: _____
- RESPONDENT DOESN'T KNOW [LIKELY HOMELESS]

Screening 5

Where are you staying tonight? [select ONE]

If one of the following, thank and end survey

- OWN APARTMENT/HOUSE
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

If one of the following, continue survey

- SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE (FRIEND/FAMILY)
- HOSPITAL, JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE (**Specify by circling one**)
- MOTEL/HOTEL (sponsored by Alberta Works or AISH)
- MOTEL/HOTEL (not sponsored by Alberta Works or AISH)
- EMERGENCY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER (**Specify by circling one**)
 - 1. Rotary House 2. Odyssey House 3. Sunrise House 4. Aurora Home
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (**Specify by circling one**)
 - 1. Rising Above 2. Odyssey House Second Stage 3. Northern Addictions Centre 4. Aurora Home
- PUBLIC SPACE (E.G. SIDEWALKS, SQUARES, PARKS, FORESTS, BUS SHELTER)
- VEHICLE (CAR, VAN, RV, TRUCK)
- MAKESHIFT SHELTER, TENT OR SHACK
- ABANDONED/VACANT BUILDING
- OTHER UNSHELTERED LOCATION UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION: _____
- RESPONDENT DOESN'T KNOW [LIKELY HOMELESS]

SURVEY

Survey Question 1A

What family members are staying with you tonight? [check all that apply]

- NONE
- PARTNER
- OTHER ADULT(S): _____
- CHILD(REN)/DEPENDENT(S) UNDER AGE 18

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gender										
Age										

- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 1B

If partner or other adult is with the respondent at the time of the survey, and completes their own survey, record the number of the survey here: _____

Survey Question 2

How old are you [OR] what year were you born? (if respondent is unsure, ask for best estimate)

- AGE IN YEARS: _____
- OR YEAR BORN: _____
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 3A

Do you identify as Aboriginal or do you have Aboriginal ancestry? This includes First Nations, Métis, Inuit, with or without Status

- YES (Follow up to specify using the options below. You can read these options out)
 - FIRST NATIONS
 - INUIT
 - MÉTIS
 - NON-STATUS OR HAVE ABORIGINAL ANCESTRY
- NO
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 3B

Have you, a parent/guardian or grandparent ever attended a residential school?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 4A

Did you come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past 5 years?

- YES (if yes, continue to 4B)
- NO
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 4B

If respondent answers yes to question 4A

Are you a: (read options. [select ONE])

- CANADIAN CITIZEN
- PERMANENT RESIDENT
- REFUGEE CLAIMANT
- TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

OTHER: _____

Survey Question 5A

How long have you been in Grande Prairie? [select ONE]

LENGTH: ____ DAYS / WEEKS / MONTHS / YEARS (**Circle one**)

ALWAYS BEEN HERE

DON'T KNOW

DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 5B

If length answered in 5A:

Where did you come from before you came to Grande Prairie?

COMMUNITY: _____

PROVINCE (in Canada): _____

COUNTRY (not in Canada): _____

DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 6

Have you ever served with the Canadian military or the RCMP? [select ONE]

YES, MILITARY

YES, RCMP

YES, MILITARY AND RCMP

NO

DON'T KNOW

DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 7

What gender do you identify with? [Do not read list, select ONE]

MALE

FEMALE

TRANSGENDER

OTHER RESPONSE: _____

DON'T KNOW

DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 8

Do you identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirited or Queer community?

YES

NO

DON'T KNOW

DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 9A

How long have you been homeless most recently? [if unsure, ask for best estimate]

- ____ # OF YEARS / ____ # OF WEEKS / ____ # OF MONTHS / ____ # OF DAYS
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 9B

How many different times have you been homeless in the past 3 years? [if unsure, ask for best estimate]

- _____ # of times
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 9C

How old were you the first time you became homeless? [if unsure, ask for best estimate]

- _____ YEARS OLD
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 10

Have you stayed in an emergency shelter in the last 12 months? [Prompt: For example, Rotary House, Odyssey House, Sunrise House or Aurora House].

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 11

What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? [Do not read all the options. **Select all that apply.** "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g. couch surfing) or shelter stays.]

- ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION
- ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE
- JOB LOSS
- EVICTED
- DOMESTIC ABUSE
- FAMILY CONFLICT
- CONFLICT WITH ROOMMATE
- LEFT CARE (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
- INCARCERATED (JAIL/PRISON)
- HOSPITALIZATION OR TREATMENT PROGRAM
- UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS
- OTHER REASON: _____

- DON'T KNOW
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

Survey Question 12

Where do you get your money from? [May give examples from list. **Select all that apply**].

- EMPLOYMENT
- INFORMAL/SELF-EMPLOYMENT (E.G. Bottle returns, panhandling)
- EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
- WELFARE/INCOME ASSISTANCE (E.G. Alberta Works/Income Support)
- DISABILITY BENEFIT (E.G. AISH, CPP-D)
- SENIORS BENEFITS (E.G. CPP, OAS, GIS, Pension)
- CHILD AND FAMILY TAX BENEFITS
- OTHER SOURCE: _____
- NO INCOME
- DECLINE TO ANSWER

FOLLOW-UP – LAST QUESTION

Would you like us to get in touch with you to talk about community supports and housing? This wouldn't guarantee that you would receive housing or support, but it would start the conversation.

IF YES >> Go to separate sheet to collect information
IF NO >> thank and end survey

Appendix B: Count Locations

An overview of organizations acting as survey locations or sharing administrative data for Grande Prairie's 2016 Count is included below in Table B-1.

Table B-1. Participating Organizations – 2016 Count				
Organization	Category	New in 2016	Surveys	Admin Data
Rotary House	Emergency Shelter	No	Yes	Yes
Odyssey House	Emergency Shelter	No	Yes	Yes
Sunrise House	Emergency Shelter	No	Yes	Yes
Serenity Place	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aurora House for Women	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Northern Addictions Centre (AHS)	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	Yes	Yes*
QEII Hospital (AHS)	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Municipal Holding Cells – RCMP	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	No	Yes
Provincial Corrections	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	No	Yes
Alberta Health Services (AHS)	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	No	Yes*
Alberta Human Services	Provisional Accommodation	Yes	No	Yes

*Admin data from Alberta Health Services (AHS) locations was not included in the 2016 Count due to conflicting numbers from local and provincial sources.

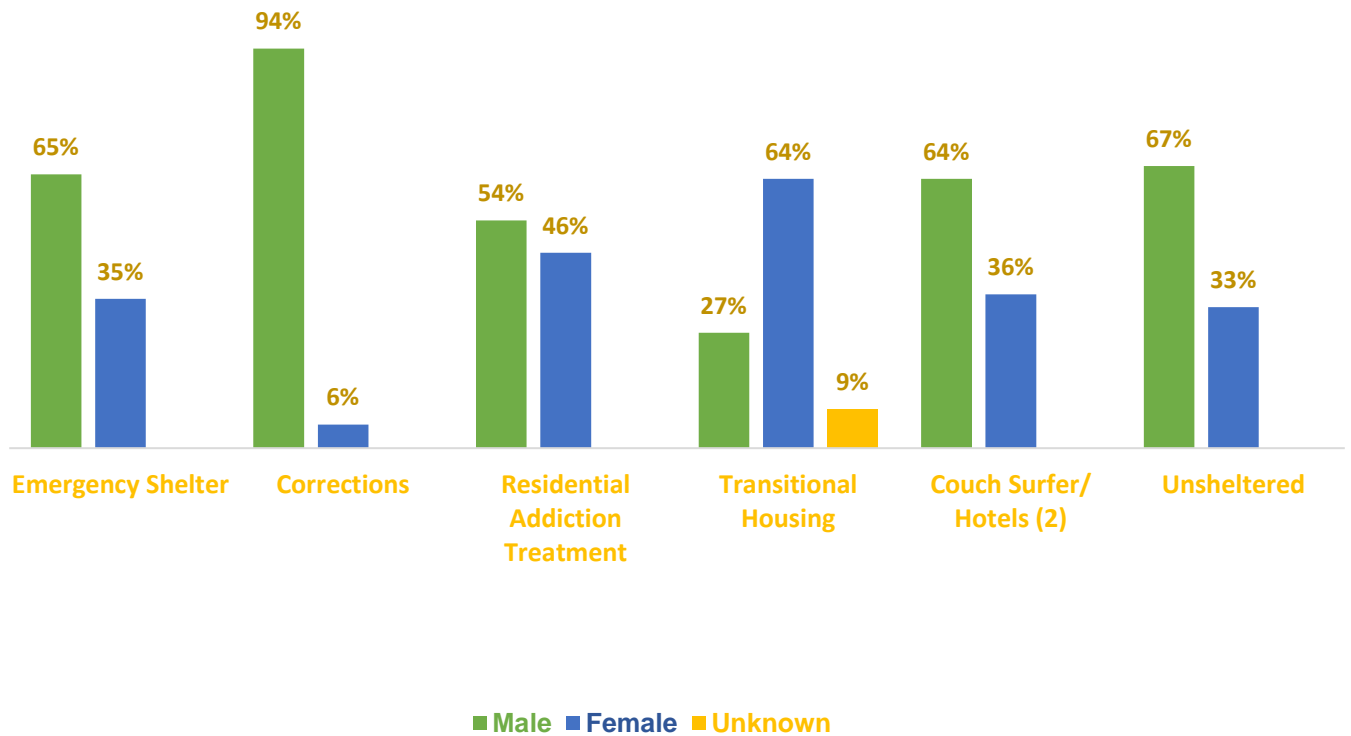
Appendix C: Demographic Comparisons Across Shelter Types

Demographic comparisons across shelter types are provided in this section. The information for these comparisons is derived from administrative data for all categories, except Couch Surfing/Hotel and Unsheltered, for which data is derived from surveys. All 127 individuals included in Grande Prairie’s 2016 Count are represented in Table C-1 and Charts C-1, C-2 and C-3 for this section.

Table C-1: Sample Sizes by Shelter Type	
Emergency Shelter	51
Corrections	18
Residential Addiction Treatment	13
Transitional Housing	22
Couch Surfing/Hotel	11
Unsheltered	12
Total	127

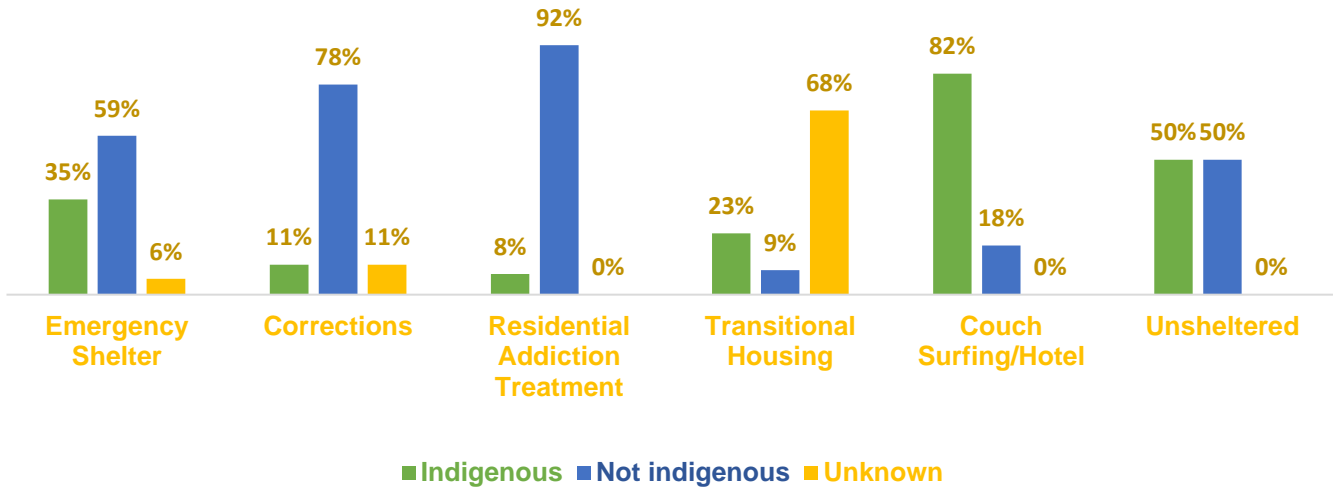
Chart C-1 illustrates how dramatically the gender ratio varied across 2016 Count locations - three new locations show even or inverse gender ratios in comparison to locations, such as emergency shelters and unsheltered locations, included in previous Counts. Notes: 1) Transitional Housing data (Serenity Place) is women and children only – the male and “unknown” individuals represented in this category are dependents 2) all individuals counted in 2016 (127) are represented in Chart C-1.

Chart C-1: Gender Across Shelter Types



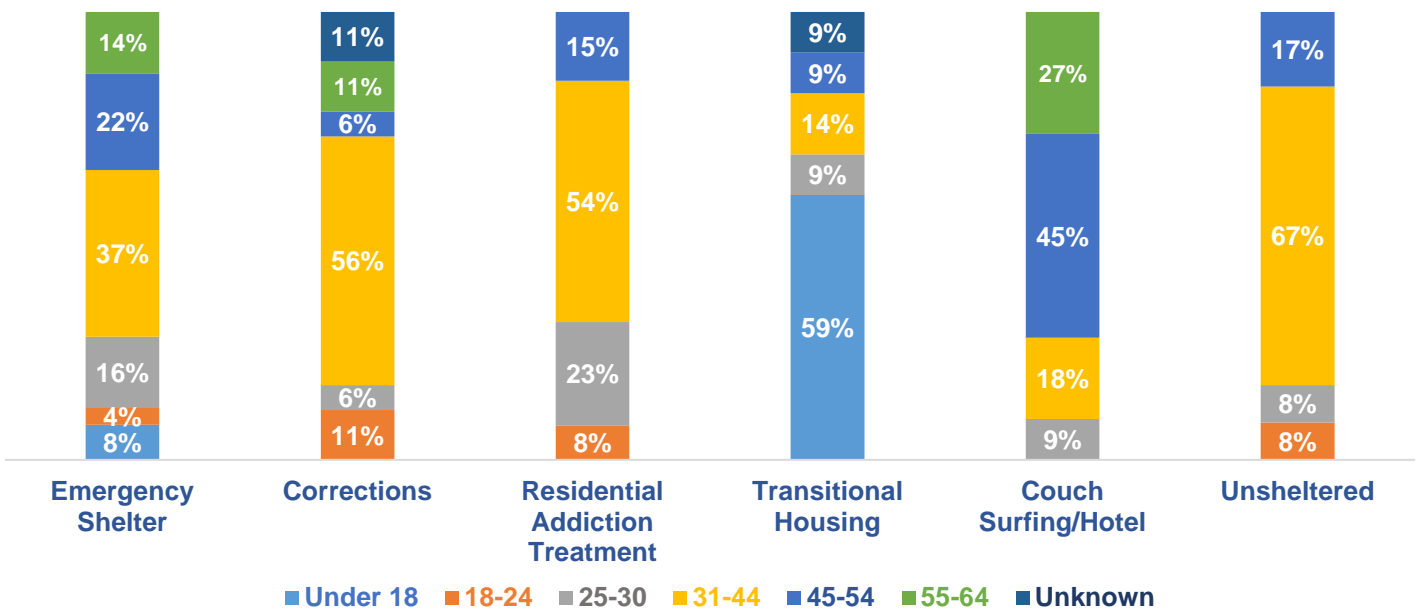
An overview of indigenous identity by shelter type is provided in Chart C-2. Notably, the majority of individuals who reported staying with family or friends identified as indigenous, while half of individuals who were unsheltered identified as indigenous. Note: All individuals counted in 2016 (127) are represented in Chart C-2.

Chart C-2: Indigenous Identity by Shelter Type



An overview of age by shelter type is provided in Chart C-3 below. The categories for Transitional Housing and Couch Surfing/Hotel show age breakdowns that vary significantly from the breakdown of other categories. Note that Transitional Housing represents individuals *and dependents* staying in Serenity Place second stage housing for women.

Chart C-3: Age by Shelter Type



Appendix D: Point in Time Count and Housing First Data Comparisons

1. Demographic comparison between 2015-16 Housing First admin data; 2014 and 2016 Counts:

Table D-1. Comparison of Point in Time Counts and Housing First Data	2015-16 Housing First Admin Data	2014 Count	2016 Count
Chronically Homeless	22%	44%	50%
Episodically Homeless	78%	56%	50%
Indigenous	37%	42%	32%
Male	45%	59%	61%
Female	55%	30%	37%
Age 18-24	10%	10%	5%
Families	25%**	7%**	6%**
Sheltered	39%*	62%	40%
Unsheltered	10%*	26%	9%
Provisionally Accommodated	29%*	9%	50%

*Indicate reported residence immediately prior to gaining housing through participation in a Housing First program, and do not equal 100% due to values categorized as “other”.

**Does not include dependents.

2. Comparison for “cause of most recent housing loss” responses between 2014 and 2016 Counts:

The options available for cause of most recent housing loss on Grande Prairie’s 2014 Count survey differ from options available in 2016, making it difficult to compare overall. However, comparison can be made for the following:

Table D-2: Comparison of Cause of Most Recent Housing Loss: 2014 and 2016	2014	2016
Domestic violence	3%	17%
Poor housing conditions	4%	9%
Addictions and Substance Abuse	17%	33%
Family Breakdown	5%	21%
Income	65%	21%*

*In 2016, “Job Loss” was the only option related to income.

Appendix E: Volunteer Feedback

All volunteers who participated in the 2016 Point in Time Count were asked to complete a feedback survey. The survey was created using Google forms and sent to volunteers by email within two weeks of the Point in Time Count.

Response Rate: 44%

Table E-1. Volunteer Feedback		
Question	Majority Response Value	Majority Response
Was this the first time you participated in a Point in Time Count?	93%	Yes
Would you participate again?	96%	Yes
How useful was volunteer training for you?	56%	5 of 5 (Very Useful)
	30%	4 of 5
What was most useful for you at the training session?	82%	Going through survey questions
	11%	Information about understanding and approaching people experiencing homelessness
	7%	Meeting other volunteers
Is there anything you wish there had been more or less of at training?	56%	No
To what extent did you feel informed as to the purpose of the Point in Time Count?	74%	5 of 5 (Very Informed)
Did participating in the Point in Time Count enable you to network with staff from other community agencies/other community volunteers?	96%	Yes
Was your team's zone map useful in helping you to understand and cover your zone?	74%	Yes
Of the people you saw while out on your route, about how many do you think you approached to discuss the Point in Time Count survey? This includes everyone, regardless of appearance.	56%	Almost everyone – nearly 100%
	26%	More than half, but less than 100%
	7%	Less than half
	7%	Other
	4%	About half
How safe did you feel while out on your route?	70%	5 of 5 (Very safe)
	30%	4 of 5
Did the Point in Time Count meet your expectations as a volunteer?	57%	Yes

Appendix F: Number of Surveys By Coverage Zone

Volunteer teams covered 17 zones on October 19th, 2016. The majority of volunteer teams returned with fewer than 5 surveys (see Table F-1).

Table F-1. Number of Surveys Completed by Each Volunteer Team (2016 Count)	
Route Name	Number of surveys
Route 1	4
Route 2	0
Route 3	2
Route 4	3
Route 5	3
Route 6	1
Route 7	1
Route 8	2
Route 9	0
After-Hours Route	5
Muskoseepi (Parks) Route	2
Odyssey House Women's Shelter Route	6
Serenity Place Route	7
Rotary House Emergency Shelter Route	27
Rising Above (Residential Addiction Treatment) Route	11
Railways Route	1
Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter Route	1
Mobile Routes	0
Total	76