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Social Development
and Housing

Développement social
et Logement

Trivers
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Bureau du ministre
C.P. 2000, Charlottetown
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November 5, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

The PIT Count document provided by the John Howard Society as the *Community Entity* (responsible for delivering the Federal Government's Homelessness Strategy) for 2021 is attached.

The information contained in this report (2021) was collected through a slightly different model this year due to continuing COVID concerns. For 2021 - a file count was carried out by community and government partners who are involved in the delivery of shelter and transitional housing all on the same day. All organizations providing emergency or transitional housing support were asked to provide file counts that organizations have open on that particular day.

It is important to note that the **2021 PIT Count** document is a snapshot in time and does not provide consistent long-term data that is best used for evidence-based decisions.

Normally, the information contained in the PIT Count is collected through night time street counts and surveys carried out during a "magnet event" the following day. The magnet event is a day where community organizations, volunteers and local businesses would come together to offer services including haircuts, "free shopping" events, information sessions and other services to individuals experiencing homelessness. The 2019 magnet event had approximately 75 people attend.

Looking closely at the 147 file reviews completed by community and government partners for the **2021 PIT Count** you should note:

- 4 individuals were counted as "unsheltered"
- 26 individuals were staying in "emergency shelters" (includes: Bedford MacDonald House, Deacon House, Blooming House and Chief Mary Bernard)
- 24 individuals were staying with family/friends/couch surfing
- 18 individuals were either incarcerated or in hospital
- 75 individuals were staying in transitional housing (this includes: Talbot/Lacey and St. Eleanor's Houses. All recovery homes operated by HPEI, Canadian Mental Health Association transitional housing, PEI FVPSI (includes: Anderson House and 2nd stage housing), Smith Lodge supportive, and Lennon House



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Important to note that we (government and community) have been working together to improve data collection and information sharing in order to improve the accuracy of reporting and understanding of our homelessness population. To this end, we are moving forward with:

- implementation of Coordinated Access (no wrong door approach to accessing housing)
- implementation of HIFIS (Homeless Individual and Families Information System) – a shared data collection tool – which is used across the country to support the homeless population, and
- making improvements in our community partner contract reporting requirements

Thank you,

Hon. Brad Trivers
Minister of Social Development and Housing

Point-in-Time Count, 2021

John Howard Society PEI

Reaching Home

In April, Charlottetown & Summerside took part in a nationally coordinated effort, led by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, to measure homelessness in Canada. The third PiT count was scheduled to take place in 2020 but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was postponed. Some communities have opted to postpone until the fall of 2021, some into 2022 depending on the situation in their region. In the interest of protecting everyone's health and safety during the ongoing COVID pandemic, we did not engage community volunteers. Instead, staff from the John Howard Society of PEI conducted the street surveys and staff from various departments, agencies, health institutions and housing programs were asked to do a file review one day during this week to identify clients housing situation. Shelters were asked to count numbers on one day during the week and were given surveys for guests to complete, on a voluntary basis.

Unfortunately, the Magnet event could not be held in conjunction with the PiT count this year. The event provides a connection opportunity for service providers to have attendees to complete surveys and for the attendees to access service providers offering information and services, for example income tax preparation, health services such as blood pressure, blood sugar, free hair cuts, clothing, a hot meal, etc.

The count offers a "snapshot" of homelessness in Prince Edward Island. We did include some rural housing projects numbers in this year's count. The results of the count will produce the *minimum* number of people experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness in our community. In addition to a count of absolute homelessness, individuals who were couch-surfing, staying temporarily with friends or family, were given the option to participate in the survey. The results will also improve our understanding of the needs and circumstances of the people who are affected by homelessness in our community. The PIT Count is an essential element in our effort to end homelessness, as the data gathered shows us so much more than how many people are homeless in our community – we also learn more about who is homeless and why. The PIT Count presents a great opportunity to raise awareness of the myriad challenges our homeless citizens face and hear personal experiences from those experiencing homelessness.

Results

Number of people identified through street count, file review and surveys:

Total 147

Surveys completed: 59

- 4 people were identified as being unsheltered.
- A total of 59 people were surveyed, all were presently sheltered in either emergency shelters, transitional housing, health or correctional institutions.
- Of surveys completed, 57% reported as male (53% in 2018) and 41% as female (47% in 2018), 2% as Two-Spirit.
- 93% of people surveyed fall between the ages of 18-54, (86% in 2018) 2% between 16-18 years of age (7% in 2018) 5% in the 55+ category, (7% in 2018). Of the 93% in the 18-54 age group, 33% were between the ages of 20-29.
- There was a mixed demographic inclusive of people who identified as Indigenous (9%), immigrant or refugee (1%), veteran (1%).

From the surveys completed and file reviews completed: (147)

- 52 % were staying in transitional housing, (2018- 49%)
- 18% were staying in an emergency shelter, (2018 -15%)
- 13% were staying in systems (hospital, jail, etc.) (2018- 13%)
- 17% were considered hidden homeless (people staying with a friend, couch surfing, etc. (2018 23%)

Homelessness is an ongoing problem in PEI and is not typically resolved in the short term. 52% of participants experiencing homelessness indicated they have been homeless for more than 3 months total. This number was 59% in 2018. Further statistics showed that 32% indicated being homeless for a total of 6+ months.

30 out of the 59 individuals who completed the surveys had stayed in an emergency shelter in the past year.

Factors that led to homelessness

- 52 % of participants that completed surveys indicated issues with addictions and mental health
- 19 % experienced domestic violence
- 17 % indicated landlord/ tenant issues
- 9% had been incarcerated
- 3 % indicated lack of income/ not suitable housing

Question new to the survey: “Was your most recent housing loss related to the Covid – 19 pandemic?” 8 % responded YES (no follow up question attached to this)

Successive counts will allow us to measure progress towards our goal of ending chronic homelessness in Prince Edward Island. As of April 1, 2023, we will have implemented Coordinated Access and HIFIS, (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) which will give us real time, quantifiable data, and a more comprehensive, systems-based approach, to addressing homelessness. The process will help to streamline the steps individuals or families need to take to access community resources on the path to stable housing.