

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE 2021 POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT



Government
of Canada

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would like to acknowledge that Portage la Prairie's Point-in-Time Count took place on Treaty One Territory, as well as the traditional territory of the Ojibway, Dakota, Cree Peoples and the historic homeland of the Metis Nation

We also acknowledge the people who shared their stories and completed the surveys we thank you for your participation, courage and strength.



We would also like to acknowledge the tremendous support of our Community Partners and local businesses.



Portage Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC)
Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC)
Government of Canada - Employment and Social Development
Reaching Home - Canada's Homelessness Strategy
Portage Urban Indigenous People's Coalition
Bear Clan
Canadian Mental Health Association
Family Abuse Prevention Centre/Portage Women's Shelter
Family Resource Centre
Heritage Coop / Indigenous Food Hamper Program
Portage Community Shelter
Portage la Prairie Soup Kitchen
Prairie Welcome House
RAAM Clinic
ROK Central
Salvation Army Food Bank
Dollarama
Great Canadian Dollar Store
Pharmasave
Portage Supermarket
Tim Hortons

The opinions and interpretations in this report are those of the Portage la Prairie 2021 PiT Count Committee and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

INTRODUCTION:

On Wednesday May 5th, 2021 Reaching Home held the first Point-in-Time Count of homelessness in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba amid Covid-19 Manitoba Public Health Restrictions.

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. The Reaching Home program is a direct result of Canada's National Housing Strategy which support the most vulnerable Canadians in maintaining safe, stable and affordable housing.

The 2021 Portage la Prairie PiT Count was funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy- Reaching Home, the Brandon Neighborhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) and Portage Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC).

A Point-in-Time (PiT) Count is a Survey/Strategy to help determine the extent of homelessness in a community on a given night, or at a single point in time. This one-day event in no way provides an exact number of homeless persons in our community, but it does give us a "snapshot" of the housing and support needs that exist in our community.

Because the PiT Count is completed over one 24hour period it is more likely to include people who experience long-term, chronic homelessness than those that experience only single episodes of homelessness. As such, it should not be used as the sole source of information on homelessness in Portage la Prairie.

A PiT Count gives a community a better understanding of the extent and types of homelessness that exist. From the PiT count we can better understand the "why" of our homeless population. This information will then allow Reaching Home to target community resources where they are most needed. The hope is to not simply enumerate those experiencing homelessness; it's about causing change at the local level to end homelessness.

What we want to achieve through the 2021 Portage la Prairie PiT (Point-in-Time) Count is to count and compile information on the demographics and service needs of those individuals/families in our Community who are experiencing homelessness.

- Identify the characteristics and housing needs of the local population
- Enhance our system planning and program development
- Measure our progress towards ending homelessness
- Increase public awareness about homelessness
- Enhance our ability to test the efficacy of programs and interventions aimed at ending homelessness





Definition of Homelessness

Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and people being insecurely housed at the other end. The 4 types of homelessness identified in Portage la Prairie are:

1. Unsheltered Homelessness, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;

2. Emergency Sheltered Homelessness, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence and addictions;

3. Provisionally/Temporary Homelessness, this includes situations in which people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, access accommodation that offers no prospect of permanence. Those who are provisionally accommodated may be accessing temporary housing provided by government or the non-profit sector, or may have independently made arrangements for short-term accommodation. “couch surfers”, hidden homelessness – people staying with friends,

family or even strangers, persons being released from penal/institutional care and Youth aging out of care who lack permanent housing upon release;

4. At-Risk of Homelessness, although not technically homeless, this includes individuals or families whose current housing situations are dangerously lacking security or stability, and so are considered to be at risk of homelessness. Those whose employment is precarious, those experiencing sudden unemployment, households facing eviction, housing with transitional supports about to be discontinued, people with severe and persistent mental illness, active addictions, substance use, and / or behavioural issues, breakdowns in family relations, people facing or living in direct fear of violence/abuse, those living in inappropriate housing due to overcrowding / housing affordability.

[1] Canadian Definition of Homelessness.
www.homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition



METHODOLOGY

Surveys

All completed Surveys and Tally Sheets are to be entered into the Reaching Home - Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). This is a comprehensive data collection and case management system. HIFIS has a Point-in-Time count module to assist with the national collection of data on homelessness across Canada.

The surveys used for the Portage la Prairie 2021 PiT Count were provided as part of the Reaching Home ... Everyone Counts Guide utilizing the federal standardized questions. They were designed to be as brief as possible, while being clear about the purpose of the survey and how the information would be used. Participants were advised that the surveys were voluntary and their name would not be recorded. They were also advised that they could choose to skip any question and/or stop the survey at any time.

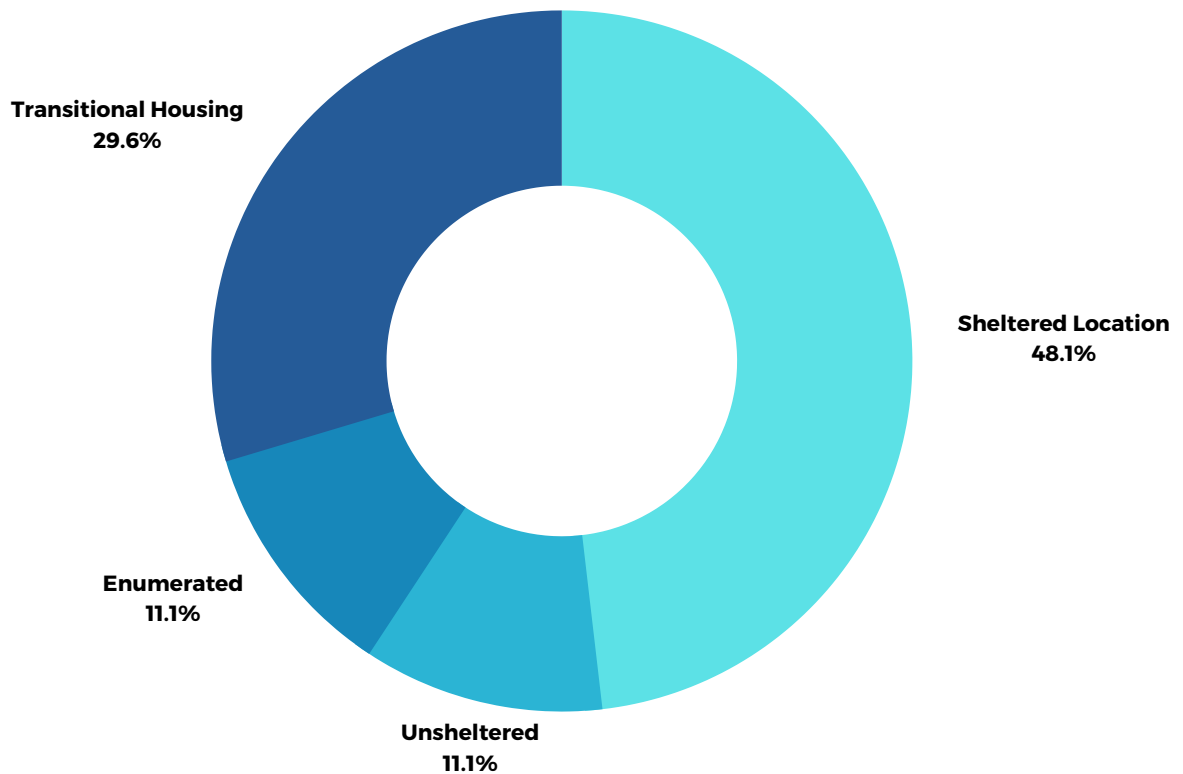
The PiT Count was conducted from 12:01 PM on Wednesday, May 5th through to 12:01 PM Thursday, May 6th, 2021.

The Sheltered Counts were completed the evening of Wednesday, May 05, 2021. Staff at Portage Community Shelter, The Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre, and Canadian Mental Health Association assisted in completing the Sheltered and Transitional Counts as per Manitoba Covid-19 Public Health Restrictions.

The Unsheltered Surveys were conducted by Kathy Regular and Alescha Anderson and were completed from 12:01 PM to 8:30 PM Wednesday May 5th and again from 09:00 AM to 11:59AM on Thursday May 6th.

The Unsheltered Tally's were conducted by Kathy Regular and Alescha Anderson. During our drive around on Wednesday May 5th from 5:00pm to 8:30pm we surveyed two homeless individuals. Another drive around was conducted by Kathy Regular on Thursday May 6th from 09:00 am to 11:30am, from that one more homeless individual was surveyed. Alescha Anderson did enumerate three individuals who identified as homeless at the Glesby Centre Urban Indigenous Vaccine Clinic on Wednesday May 5th.

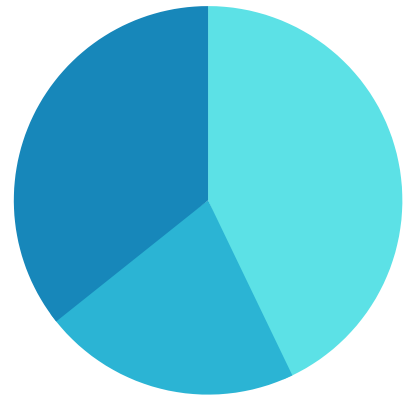
Minimum # of people experiencing homelessness on May 05, 2021



Sheltered Homelessness

There were 6 Females, 2 Males and 5 Children staying in Shelters

Children
35.7%



Female
42.9%

Males
21.4%



Homeless Children in Shelters
2 Female under 12 years
3 Males under 12 years

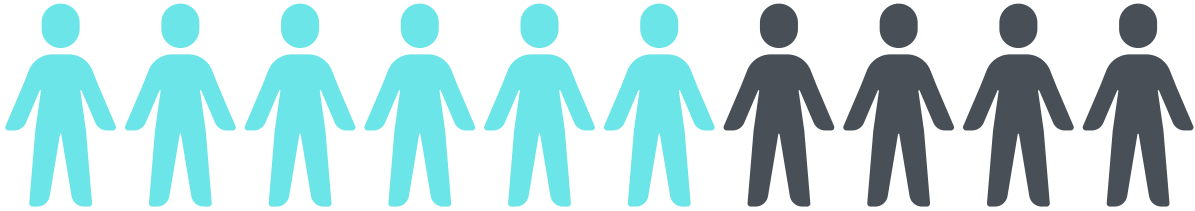
50% of Males identified as Indigenous / First Nations



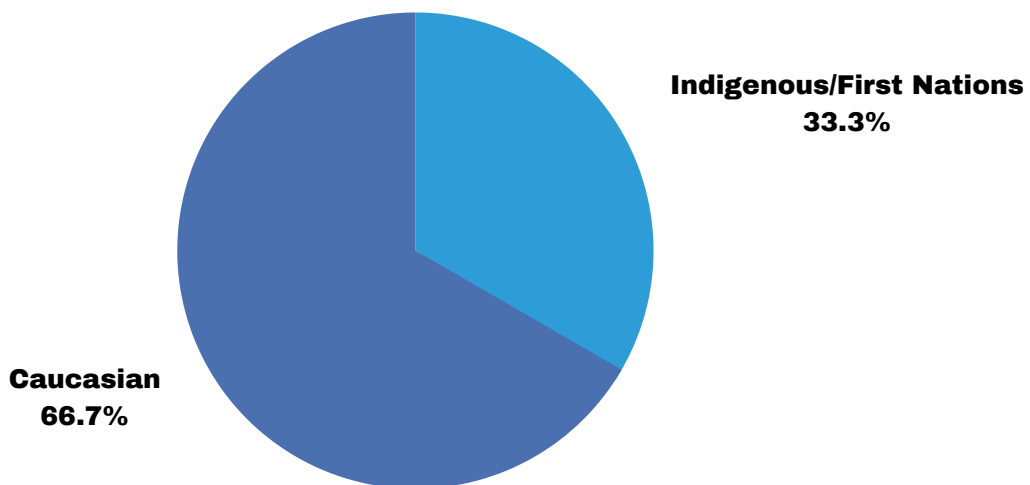
100% of Females identified as Indigenous / First Nations



Unsheltered Homelessness



of Unsheltered people surveyed were Male

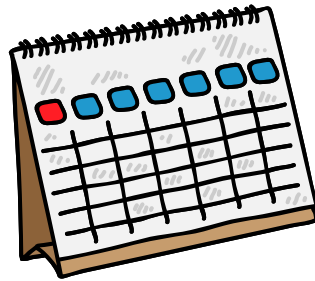


Female
35
Average Age

**How old
are you?**

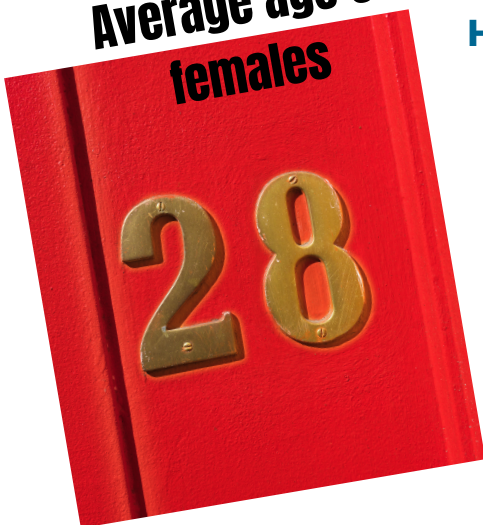
Male
43
Average Age

**How much time have you been homeless
over the past year?**



Average
109
Days

**Average age of
females**

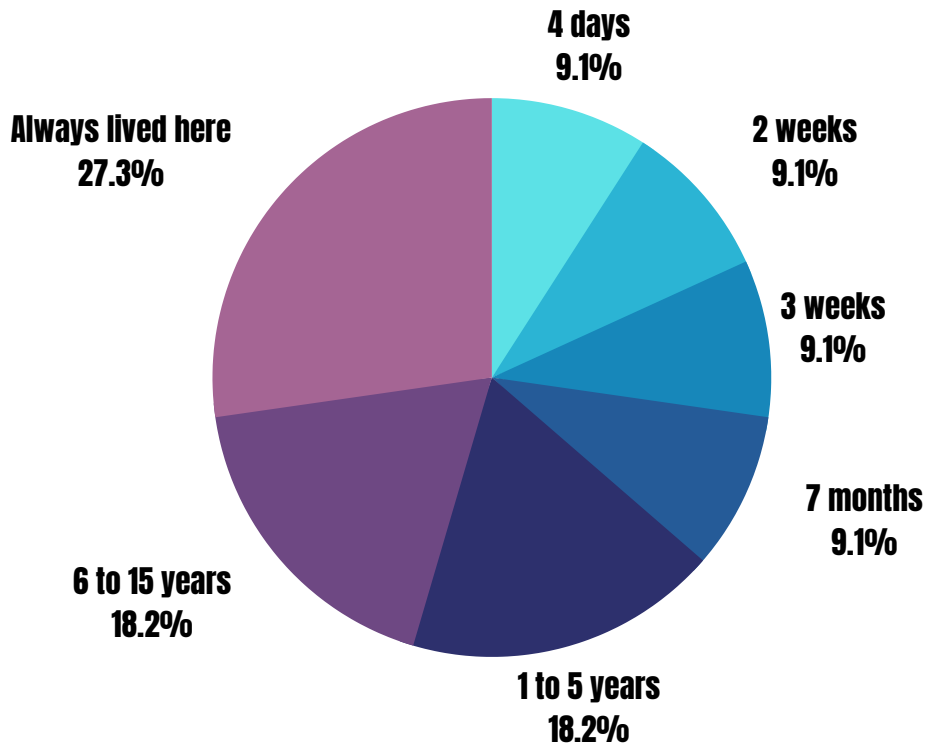


**How old were you the first time you
experienced homelessness?**

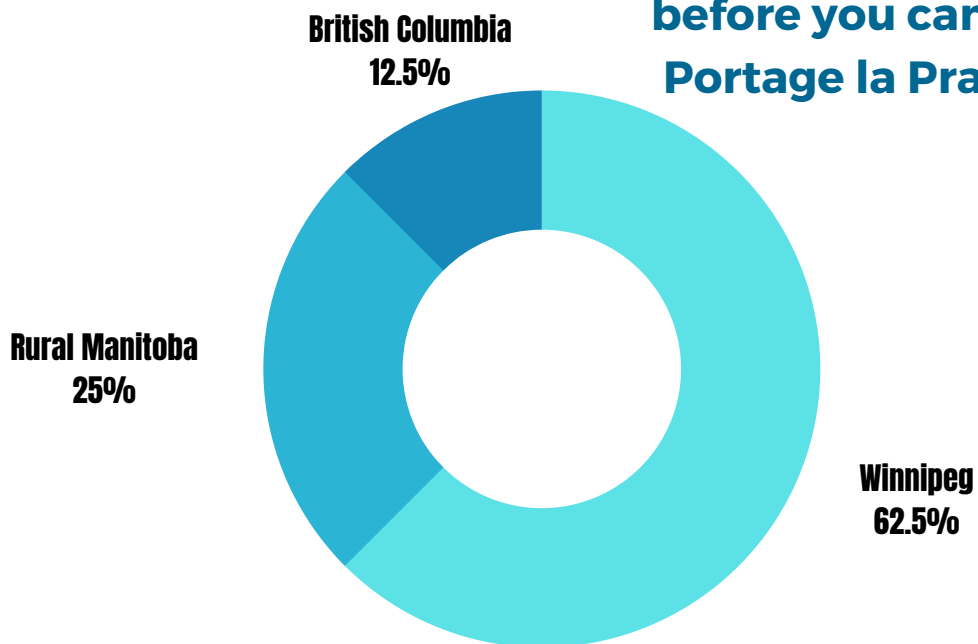
**Average age of
males**



How long have you been in Portage la Prairie?

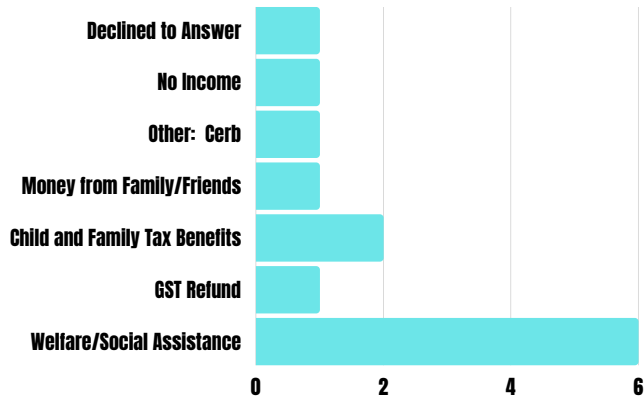
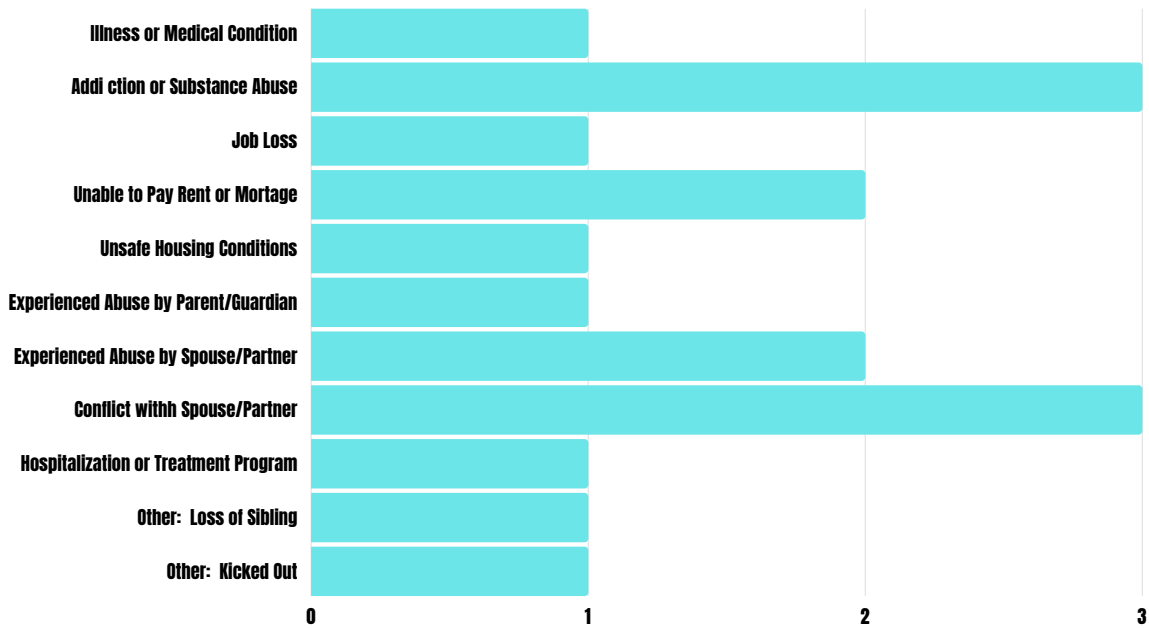


Where did you live before you came to Portage la Prairie?





What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently?



Income Sources?



Conclusion

Conducting a PiT Count during a Pandemic did have its challenges. As provincial constraints increased on public gatherings both indoors and outdoors we were not able to hold the Magnet event or conduct surveys through a number of community locations.



Our original PiT Count date of March 26, 2020 was changed to March 04, 2021 and then changed again to May 05, 2021 due to Manitoba Public Health Orders closing nonessential businesses and banning gatherings indoors, and outdoor gatherings being limited to 5 persons.

After discussions with Shelter Administrators we made the decision to go ahead with the Sheltered Surveys and that the Shelter Staff would conduct the Surveys.

PiT Count Limitations due to Covid-19 Pandemic

The Magnet event at Herman Prior Centre was planned for Thursday, May 06, 2021. This event was to capture those who are provisionally accommodated as well as those who are at-risk of homelessness and those who are homeless. This event was to provide access to local community support groups, a hot meal, nonperishable food and Covid-19 PPE supplies

Portage la Prairie Soup Kitchen operates Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:30am to 1:00pm. We did not conduct survey's at this location, as our original thought was that we would be able to survey these individuals through the Magnet Event on Thursday May 6th.

We were not able to connect/survey people visiting Prairie Welcome House. This is a local community gathering place where many people who experience homelessness go to during the day to enjoy a coffee, get a snack and engage with others whether in conversation, a game of cards or a board game.

Youth homelessness is an area of homelessness that is difficult to survey and therefore missed through traditional PiT Count methods. During discussions with local youth groups in November 2020 the staff did indicate there were a few Youth that they knew were "couch surfing". We were hopeful that these individuals would take part in the surveys at Youth for Christ and Eagle's Fire Youth Centre, however both of these centers were closed to indoor/outdoor activities.