



Simcoe County Homeless Enumeration

November 17 - 23, 2021

General Information

Simcoe County Point-in-Time Count and Registry Week

The Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness is partnering with the County of Simcoe to conduct the 2021 Simcoe County Point-in-Time Count (PiT Count) and Registry Week from November 17 - 23, 2021. These activities will serve the purpose of counting and understanding the situations of people who are experiencing homelessness in Simcoe County, and identifying those who wish to be included on a By Name List (BNL) for prioritized housing and outreach services. Our goal is to end homelessness in Simcoe County.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Point-in-Time Count?

The Point-in-Time Count is done during a 24-hour period to provide an estimated snapshot of the extent of homelessness in Simcoe County on a given night. It will gather information on both the number of persons/families experiencing homelessness, as well as their demographic characteristics and service needs.

The methodology of the PiT Count has been used in many communities across Canada, making it possible to compare results across the country. Surveys take place across Simcoe County during the night of Wednesday, November 17 and will be strategically scheduled during timeframes that enables accurate counts, such as evenings when people are more likely to have settled down where they are planning to spend the night (in shelters or on the street).

Why is the PiT Count Important?

The PiT Count is funded by the Government of Canada through Reaching Home, formerly know as the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The goal of this strategy is to reduce homelessness by helping to move people who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or homeless shelters into permanent housing. It is about catalyzing change at the local and national levels to end homelessness.

Findings from the PiT Count will demonstrate housing and service needs specific to the Simcoe County area. It will also provide information to assist organizations, funders, and all levels of government to plan for the funding and service needs of people experiencing homelessness locally.



What is a Registry Week?

A Registry Week is a comprehensive check-in across Simcoe County to count and identify as many people as possible who are experiencing homelessness. A short health and housing survey will be completed with all people experiencing homelessness who are willing to participate.

Why are we doing both the PiT Count and the Registry Week?

The PiT Count provides a snapshot of homelessness (unsheltered, sheltered, and in transitional programs) in a 24-hour period. Registry Week is important to conduct in addition to the PiT Count because it is a way to reach those who are provisionally housed (the hidden homeless or “couch-surfers”) who are not included in the PiT Count. Service agencies estimate that this group is the larger group of people experiencing homelessness. We need more specific information about both groups to begin solving the problem of homelessness. Collecting person-specific data is the key to ending homelessness for our most vulnerable (and often anonymous) homeless neighbours. Registry Week will allow us to know every homeless individual by name and understand their specific needs. A coordinated outreach and triage assessment process will allow us to act on the community-wide information that the two approaches provide.

Not everyone will want to participate in Registry Week. We will want to be able to count people because this helps us to measure the need for shelter and services in Simcoe County. Where individuals consent, the PiT Count and Registry Week surveys will be administered together. By conducting both surveys, we hope to be able to reach and include as many people as possible who are in need of housing.

What kind of information will the survey collect?

The PiT count is a voluntary survey that asks participants questions on their age, gender identity, sexual orientation, aboriginal status, military status, immigration status, income sources, how long/how many times have they been homeless, whether they have accessed emergency shelter recently, whether they have migrated to Simcoe County recently, and what happened that caused them to lose their most recent housing option.

Participants in the Registry Week survey will be asked the same questions, along with their names and more personal information that will enable housing outreach workers to better find and match housing to meet their needs. Survey tools are designed nationally to collect information about individuals, families, and youth.



Who will count?

Surveys will be conducted by staff and outreach workers from social service providers, health care providers, outreach workers, and corrections agencies.

Where will they count?

Street teams will count in outdoor locations where it has been assessed, through a pre-count process, that people experiencing homelessness are likely to be. Encampments that have been previously identified will only be surveyed by experienced outreach workers to protect the integrity of their space and avoid any potential for voyeurism. Additional locations will be designated for Registry Week surveys. The methods for both surveys may include:

- **Indoor Shelter Surveys** - the sheltered surveys will include all emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, and transitional housing programs in Simcoe County.
- **Street Surveys** - the street surveys will reach people living in public/outdoor places that are not suitable for human habitation.
- **Service Counts** - these surveys will be in local public locations (ie, libraries and recreational centres) and non-profit service providers (ie, drop-in centres, food banks, and meal programs). (will be limited during COVID-19).
- **Data from Agencies/Government** - includes those residing in institutions (ie, hospitals, holding cells, detox clinics) who do not have a permanent address.

How will volunteers know what to do?

Volunteers will be trained in safety considerations, interviewing, consistent survey administration processes, confidentiality, and obtaining consent. Training will be provided online during COVID-19.

Why are we conducting enumeration during a pandemic?

Local community discussions have encouraged moving forward with an enumeration this fall, for the following reasons:

- To develop an understanding of the unique and unprecedented situations related to homelessness that people are currently experiencing, to which local responses can be developed;
- To gain insight into the experience of homelessness among people who are typically underrepresented in enumerations because they are staying with friends/family/acquaintances (the hidden homeless);



- To protect the safety of enumerators through implementation of safe enumeration guideline and procedures consistent with local public health recommendations which will be emphasized in remotely provided enumeration training sessions.

What safety measures will be in place?

All safety precautions recommended by public health will be in place and will be expected to be followed during conducting surveys. Protocols will be reviewed during training.

If a surveyor or survey participants feels their safety is being compromised during a survey interview, they are encouraged to end the interview.

The following changes will be implemented to ensure Enumeration process is safe for staff and participants during COVID-19:

- No magnet events (i.e., no events that would bring together large groups of people);
- No volunteers will be recruited to conduct surveys. Instead, surveys will be conducted by staff at community agencies, who already have an understanding of and experience in safe delivery of services during COVID-19;
- The implementation of a online survey, in addition to having paper surveys available;
- Verbal rather than written survey consent;
- No volunteers for data entry;
- Training will be done virtually through the use of videos;
- There will be no headquarter locations in local communities.

How is “homelessness” defined?

People are considered homeless if they are:

1. **Unsheltered** - this includes people living in public or private spaces without consent or contract and people living in places not intended for permanent human habitation.
2. **Emergency Sheltered** - this includes people using emergency shelters programs, including emergency motel accommodations, and Violence Against Women shelters.
3. **Provisionally Accommodated** - this includes people who are using interim housing, such as short-term transitional housing or who are staying in temporary accommodation or whose housing lacks tenure (ie, those commonly referred to as “hidden homeless” or “couch-surfing”).



Indigenous Homelessness Definition

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nation, Metis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common definition of homelessness, indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot cultural, spiritually or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

For more information, please visit:

www.scateh.com/enumeration

or

www.simcoe.ca/enumeration

