



# RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS IN THUNDER BAY



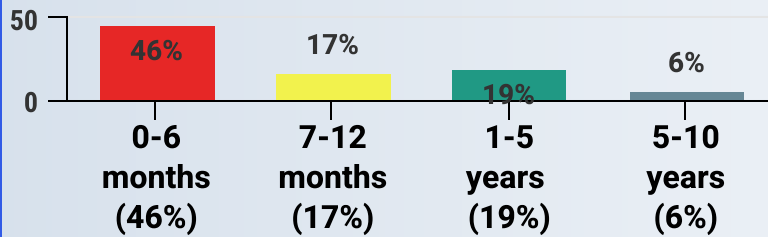
Discover information about responses to homelessness and issues surrounding homelessness. This issue examines the organizations and programs that help individuals and families through collective impact gain access to housing and housing supports and services in Thunder Bay.



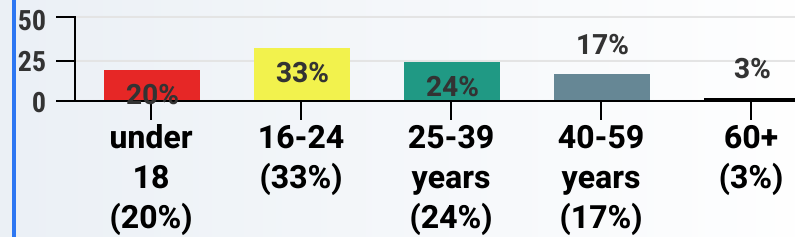
# A snapshot of homelessness in Thunder Bay

In 2016, 2018, and 2021, the Lakehead Social Planning Council led an enumeration of people experiencing homelessness in Thunder Bay. These enumerations are called Point in Time Counts. The following data is from the 2021 Point in Time Count. The next Point in Time Count will take place November 2024.

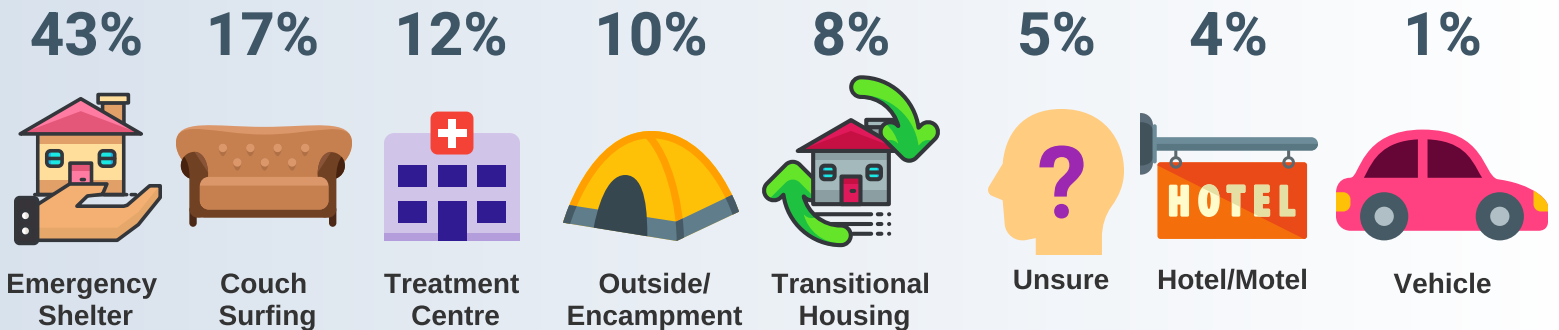
## We asked people how long they have been experiencing homelessness...



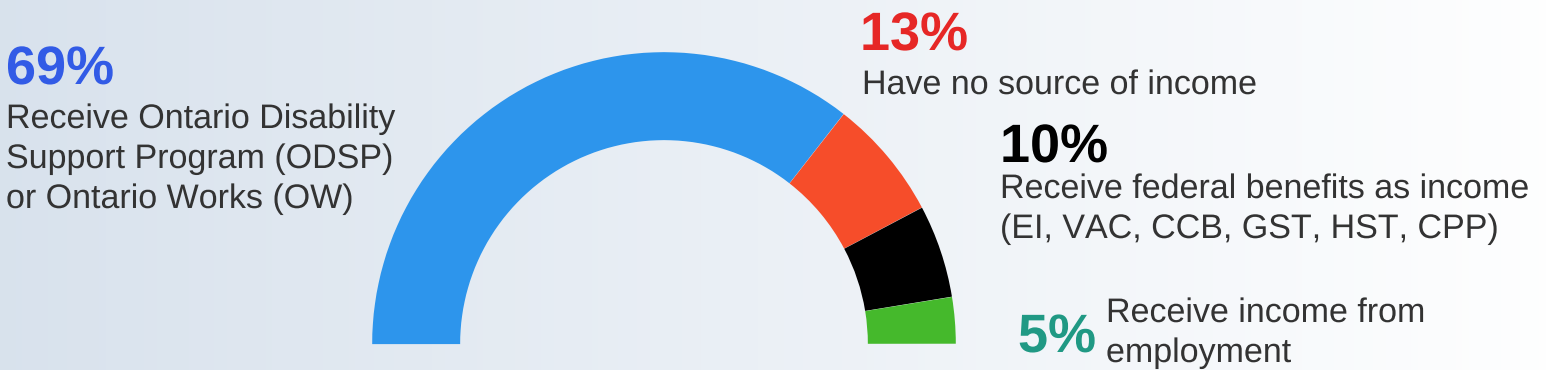
## We asked people their age when they first experienced homelessness...



## We asked people where they were staying that night...



## We asked people about their main source of income...



**58%** of participants Identified needing help with addictions and/or substance use issues

**53%** of participants First experienced homelessness before the age of 25

**51%** of participants Reported that the high cost of rent is the biggest challenge when trying to find housing

# How are we solving homelessness in Thunder Bay?

## 1. Coordinated Housing Access

### A Coordinated Housing Access System:

1. is a community-wide system that streamlines the process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing and supports
  2. is an essential step to a smarter, faster, more coordinated housing system
  3. uses a standardized intake and assessment process and allows sharing of information in real-time within a community
  4. includes uniform prioritization policies and a coordinating referral processes
  5. connects people to the right housing and supports as efficiently as possible based on their preferences and level of need.
- ~~~~~

## 2. Coordinated Housing Access Table (CHAT)

### Coordinated Housing Access Table (CHAT)

1. is a group of service providers who offer housing and/or housing support services and resources to individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness
2. will support any individual or family who is experiencing homelessness and not actively working with an organization to obtain housing
3. supports all organizations that offer support services, resources and housing

## 3. Reaching Home Funding

### Designated Reaching Home Funding

1. Supports the Care Bus, Out of the Cold, Social Navigators at John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society, support and housing for those living in encampments, emergency shelter supports
2. Supports the management of **HIFIS**, the housing and homelessness data management system used in Thunder Bay.

# Collective Impact to Help Reduce Homelessness

Confronting homelessness poses an urgent and complex challenge that demands an unwavering, devoted, and united team for viable solutions. In Thunder Bay, while we've gleaned valuable insights from successful collaborations, there remains a pressing need to avert a worsening crisis. The reduction in the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, achieved through these efforts, is a fragile success in the face of an escalating problem.

The Thunder Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition meets monthly, drawing together a diverse range of members to address the various aspects of local homelessness. Coalition members strive to formulate innovative initiatives, allocate funding, anticipate upcoming housing trends, and advocate with governmental bodies. The Lakehead Social Planning Council and the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, acting as the crucial Community Entities for funding, have urgently united forces to administer the federal funding stream, Reaching Home. However, the 2019-2028 Reaching Home Funding Stream, amounting to nearly \$20 million, is being strategically deployed amidst a backdrop of heightened desperation in Thunder Bay.

Achieving absolute effectiveness now hinges on immediate and imperative collaboration among municipal, provincial, and federal authorities to prevent an impending catastrophe. This is paramount to ensuring that housing goals are met and the safety of community members is assured, granting them swift and unrestricted access to secure housing. Flexibility in policy changes, bylaws, and mandates are imperative to address this dire situation.

For decades, exclusionary zoning has effectively banned new and innovative building on the vast majority of residential land, reserving it for the lowest density housing like detached homes, meanwhile land sits vacant for years without any building progress. We need to change these entrenched municipal policies that drive up the price of the scarce parcels of land where multifamily housing is allowed, making new homes more difficult and expensive to build for public, non-profit and private developers alike. The gravity of this situation demands a swift and comprehensive reevaluation of these policies to address the pressing crisis of limited, expensive housing options.

For more information about Housing and Homelessness please visit the LSPC website: <https://www.lspc.ca/what-we-do/housing-and-homelessness/housing-and-homelessness/>