



**HOW MANY?**

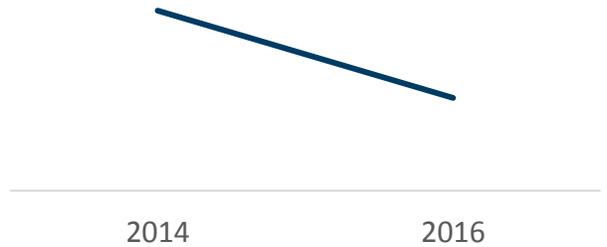
**33**

people were counted as experiencing homelessness in Medicine Hat

24% of these are chronically homeless

52% decrease

in the number of people counted experiencing homelessness from 2014 to 2016



**WHERE?**



**6%**

UNSHELTERED



**67%**

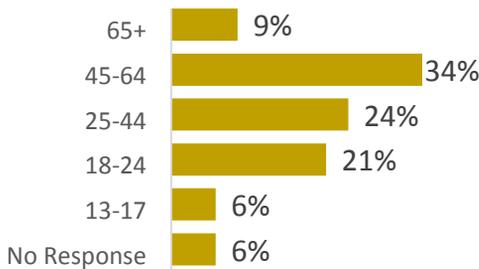
EMERGENCY SHELTERED



**27%**

PROVISIONALLY ACCOMMODATED

**WHO?**



# Overview

## Introduction

On October 19, 2016, Medicine Hat conducted its second Homeless Count. The Medicine Hat Community Housing Society coordinates the Homeless Count as part of our work supporting At Home in Medicine Hat – Our Plan to End Homelessness.

This count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of our overall homeless population and enables us to examine how this population changes over time. Ultimately, this helps us inform solutions to support the goal of ending homelessness in our communities.

Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness are the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local Plans to End Homelessness in Calgary, Edmonton, Wood Buffalo, Grand Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Red Deer. The 7 Cities coordinate local plans at a systems level and align funding resources for greater impact and progress toward ending homelessness.

Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness all conducted their Homeless Counts at the same time. By aligning methodology across Alberta's cities, we can examine trends over time, creating a clearer picture of homelessness across Alberta.

## Methods

Following on the successes and learnings from 2014, the 7 Cities increased methodological alignment across the province.

The cities agreed to conduct the count on the street and in facilities accommodating the homeless (emergency shelters, short term supportive housing and hotels used as emergency shelters). On October 19, 2016, Medicine Hat Community Housing Society worked with community partners to conduct the second Medicine Hat Homeless Count. Approximately 50 volunteers and 10 organizations participated in the Count, which occurred from 7pm – 10pm.

In order to count someone as experiencing homelessness, a survey had to be completed. Volunteers were not asked to count based on what they assumed or guessed about someone.

### Historical Comparability

To maintain comparability over time, the numbers included in this report vary slightly from those in the 7 Cities report: individuals encountered during the day count are included, as are those who had no permanent residence and were staying with someone else.

For the first time, provincial government ministries also provided administrative data across the province for people experiencing homelessness who were institutionalized. This information from provincial correctional facilities and health facilities is not included in this report, however will be available in the 7 Cities report.

# Characteristics

Characteristic	#	%
Gender		
Male	16	48%
Female	17	52%
Transgender	0	0%
Indigenous		
First Nations	6	18%
Metis	1	3%
Inuit	0	0%
Non-status	4	12%
Recent (within past 5 years) immigrant or refugee	0	0%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirited or queer	2	6%
Canadian Military or RCMP	1	3%
Dependent children	13	

# Broader Trends

## Unemployment

There has been a 6.9% increase in the unemployment rate from 2015 to 2016. The 6.2% unemployment rate in Medicine Hat is lower than in Alberta overall (8.0%).

## Population Growth

It is important that results of the count be contextualized in the broader economic trends impacting Medicine Hat. The region continues to experience population growth increasing 3% from 2012 to 2015.

## Housing Affordability

The vacancy rates remained stable from 2.7% in 2014 to 2.8% in 2015. The average rental costs increased by about 11 % for a 1 bedroom and bachelor suite, according to CMHC (2015). Over 16% of residents are experiencing housing affordability challenges and over 13% are considered low income.

## Indigenous people over-represented

Only about 4.6% of Medicine Hat’s general population self-identified as Indigenous, about 24% of those surveyed in the homeless count self-identified as Indigenous.

Socioeconomic Indicators	Most recent	Comparator Year
Unemployment [1]	6.2% (2016)	5.8% (2015)
Population growth [2]	63,018 (2015)	61,180 (2012)
Housing Affordability [3] (% of owner households spending 30% or more of household total income on shelter costs)	16.8% (2011)	-
Rental vacancy rates [4] (Private Apartment Vacancy Rates - Total)	2.8% (2015)	2.7% (2014)
Rental costs [4]	\$719 (1 bed) \$607 (Bach) (2015)	\$649 (1 bed) \$545 (Bach) (2014)
Low Income [3] (Prevalence of low income based on LIM-AT)	13.1% (2011)	-
Indigenous People [3] (% of population self-identify as Indigenous)	4.6% (2011)	-
Immigrants [3] (% of population who was foreign-born)	7.2% (2011)	-

# References

- [1] Statistics Canada. (2016). *Labour force characteristics, unadjusted, by economic region (3 month moving average)(Alberta, British Columbia)*. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/lfss05f-eng.htm>
- [2] City of Medicine Hat. (2015). *City of Medicine Hat Everybody Counts: 2015 Census Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.city.medicine-hat.ab.ca/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=9819>
- [3] Statistics Canada. (2015). *NHS Profile, Medicine Hat, CA, Alberta, 2011*. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMA&Code1=805&Data=Count&SearchText=Medicine%20Hat&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>
- [4] Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2015). *Housing market information: rental market statistics*. Retrieved from [https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64483/64483\\_2015\\_B01.pdf](https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64483/64483_2015_B01.pdf)