



Community & Neighbourhood Services Policy & Planning

Results of the 2006 Count of Homeless Persons in Calgary:

Enumerated in Emergency and Transitional Facilities, by Service Agencies, and On the Streets – 2006 May 10

Executive Summary

- The City of Calgary has conducted a census of absolutely homeless persons every two years since 1992. The *Biennial Count of Homeless Persons* provides a periodic snapshot of the size and characteristics of the “visible” homeless population in Calgary.
- **The 2006 Count of Homeless Persons was conducted on 2006 May 10. A total of 3,436 homeless persons were enumerated.**
- Included in the count are homeless persons who stay in emergency and transitional facilities, homeless persons who are served by non-shelter service agencies such as hospital emergency departments, police, transit, and emergency social services, and homeless persons who are living “on the streets” on the night of the count.
- The 2006 count surveyed 51 facilities and nine service agencies. A total of 157 volunteers conducted the street count.
- On the night of the count **82 percent (2,823) of homeless persons enumerated were staying in facilities, 5 percent (184) were counted by service agencies, and 12 percent (429) were staying on the streets.** Of those in facilities, 49 percent were staying in emergency beds and 51 percent were staying in transitional beds.
- **More male than female homeless persons were counted.** Male homeless persons represented over three-quarters of those counted (78 percent), though differences were seen depending on the location enumerated. In facilities, 77 percent of those enumerated were male and 23 percent were female. Of those enumerated by service agencies, 84 percent were male and 16 percent were female, and on the streets 81 percent were male and 19 percent were female.

- Overall, **the most common age group for homeless persons enumerated was 25 to 44** with 46 percent of all homeless persons counted observed to be in this age group. While the age distribution of those enumerated by service agencies is difficult to analyze due to the high percentage of those who could not be assessed by age, a comparison of persons enumerated in facilities and on the streets shows some notable differences. Though the majority of persons staying in *facilities* were working age adults aged 25 to 44, all age groups were represented. Among those counted *on the streets* an even greater majority were working age adults aged 25 to 44, while the rest of the homeless population staying on the streets was mainly in the young adult (ages 18 to 24) and middle-aged adult (ages 45 to 64) categories. Few children (3), youth (14), and seniors (8) were counted on the streets.
- **Homeless persons enumerated were most frequently Caucasian; over two-thirds of all persons counted were observed to be Caucasian.** However, Aboriginal persons were disproportionately represented among the homeless population compared to Calgary's population overall. Of the 3,436 homeless persons enumerated, 68 percent were Caucasian, 17 percent were Aboriginal, and 9 percent were members of a visible minority group (the remaining 6 percent could not be assessed by population group).
- **A total of 145 homeless families were enumerated** on the night of the count (families are defined as a couple, a couple with one or more children, or a lone adult with one or more children), with 83 percent of these staying in facilities, 1 percent counted by service agencies, and 16 percent counted on the streets.
- In terms of the shelter options currently available in Calgary, **the 51 facilities surveyed who are currently providing emergency and transitional housing for homeless persons have the capacity to house 3,077 individuals.** Over one-third of facilities surveyed indicated that they were operating at or over capacity on the night of the count.
- The number of homeless persons enumerated in Calgary on the night of the count indicates that homelessness continues to grow in the city, as it has for each subsequent count since the first in 1992. **There were 32 percent more homeless persons enumerated in 2006 than in 2004.**
- Cities across Canada (and more broadly in all of North America) continue to struggle to find solutions to prevent homelessness, to care for those who are homeless, and to assist those who are homeless in finding appropriate permanent housing options.
- In addition to the considerable efforts of the community serving homeless persons in Calgary, The City of Calgary operates affordable housing units and is working to create a greater number of units to allow those individuals and families who are currently or at risk of being homeless to move into housing that is more permanent. The City also supports the work of homelessness prevention through funding provided to social programs by the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program.