



Cowichan Valley Regional District

Summer Point-in-Time Homeless Count & Housing Needs Survey

Community Report

August 2017

Canada 



United Way
Central and Northern
Vancouver Island

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BACKGROUND

In 2016, resources became available to support in-depth community work around addressing homelessness. A collaborative effort on the part of local agencies in the Cowichan Region was successful in obtaining funding to undertake two homeless counts within a 12-month period (a summer and a winter count) and to develop a community plan for addressing homelessness. The funding was through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), a program of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

The winter count (February 2017) focused on the Duncan/North Cowichan core area while the summer count (August 2017) was expanded to a regional count. The results of the summer count are presented here along with a comparison to findings of earlier counts.

The summer and winter 2017 Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Counts were sponsored by the United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island in collaboration with the Tze Tza Watul Community Advisory Board and other community partners. Representatives of over a dozen community agencies serving people who are homeless or providing support in other ways, participated on the Planning Committee. This included:

- Hiiye'yu Lelum – House of Friendship
- Cowichan Women Against Violence
- Salvation Army
- Cowichan Valley Basket Society
- Cowichan Housing Association
- Social Planning Cowichan
- Our Cowichan
- Ladysmith Resource Centre
- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- School Board – School District 79
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- The RCMP – Community Policing
- Canadian Mental Health (Warmland)
- CVRD Youth Outreach
- Duncan United Church
- Cowichan Neighbourhood House
- Lake Cowichan Community Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of a Point-in-Time Count (PiT) is to obtain a snapshot of people who are absolutely homeless in a community during a set timeframe – usually limited to 24 hours to avoid counting some people twice. The summer 2017 homeless count took place in the Cowichan Valley Region on August 15 and 16 over a 24-hour period. Count sites were located in the Duncan-North Cowichan core area, Ladysmith, Chemainus, Lake Cowichan and Mill Bay. The Count was promoted under the heading of *You Count! Count Yourself In*. A Housing Needs survey was also undertaken with people who were experiencing Hidden Homelessness and people at risk of homelessness.

This was the third homeless Count in recent years in the Cowichan Valley. The first Count was undertaken in February 2014. The three counts provide us with a broad lens to look at this on-going, slowly increasing, social concern.

Key Findings:

- The number of Absolutely Homeless people in the CVRD has increased over 50% since the 2014 regional count (2014 – N = 58 people counted; summer 2017 - N = 89 people counted).
- Homelessness in the Duncan-North Cowichan core area has increased by 36% since 2014 (N = 56 in 2014; N = 76 in summer 2017).
- Homelessness is increasing around the Cowichan Valley. In the 2014 count only two individuals were counted outside the Duncan core area; in the summer 2017 regional count, 13 individuals were counted as Absolutely Homeless outside the core service area.
- As might be expected, the number of people sleeping rough in the summer was higher in the summer than the winter (60% of summer 2017 Count; 36% winter 2017).
- Men compose 2/3 or greater of the Absolutely Homeless population in Duncan and the CVRD. This trend has been relatively consistent across homeless counts.
- The number of Aboriginal people counted as homeless has been steadily increasing in the CVRD (2014 N = 15 or 26%; summer 2017 - N = 35 or 39%).
- The average age of people who are Absolutely Homeless in the CVRD continues to be in the late 40s; ranging over the three counts from 45 years to a high of 49 years.
- In the summer 2017 Count, one-third of people who were Absolutely Homeless had been in Foster Care. Over two-thirds of this group (67%) were Aboriginal. No data available for 2014.
- Youth Homelessness was more visible in the summer count than in the winter 2017. Three teens were included in the Count – one was Absolutely Homeless; two were experiencing Hidden Homelessness.
- Abuse and conflict remain at the top of the list as reasons for the loss of housing for all subgroups.

- For people experiencing Hidden Homelessness and people At Risk of Homelessness, there was an increase in the number of concerns expressed about the safety and quality of rental units and problems with landlords. (See Chp. 6 – You Count)
- Many of the people surveyed have experienced a chronic state of insecure housing. For many people this began before the age of 25.
- It is likely that the number of people experiencing homelessness and insecure housing will continue to increase in the CVRD in coming years. The impact of the housing shortage and poor quality of low-income housing is likely to bring increased social strains for the most vulnerable population in the region.

Table 0.1
Summer 2017 PiT Homeless Count – Cowichan Region

Total Number of People Surveyed – 189

ABSOLUTE HOMELESS	HIDDEN HOMELESS	AT RISK of HOMELESSNESS
Counted – 89 Adults and Youth	Surveyed – 61 Adults and Youth	Surveyed – 39 Adults
Where Stayed: 60 % (53) - Sleeping Rough 28 % (26) - Warmland 4 % (3) - Somenos House 8 % (7) - Other	28% (17) – Transitional Housing 64% (39) – Friend-Relative 7 % (4) – Substandard Housing 1% (1) - Trailer	69% (27) – Rent - Apartment 23% (9) – Rent – House 5% (2) – Rent – RV-Trailer 2% (1)– Boat
Age Range: 17 to 73 years Average Age: 45 7 people age 25 or younger	18 to 68 years Average Age: 43 13 people age 25 or younger	22 to 69 years Average Age: 48 2 people age 25 or younger
Gender: 69% (60) - Males 29% (28) - Females 2% (1) - Missing Data	51% (31) - Males 47% (29) - Females 2% (1) -Missing Data	41% (16)- Males 57% (22) - Females 2% (1) - Missing data
% Aboriginal: 39% Aboriginal (N = 35)	55% Aboriginal (N = 34)	54% Aboriginal (N = 21)
Been in Foster care? 31% (N = 28) 67% Aboriginal	39% (N = 24) 75% Aboriginal	28% (N = 11) 72% Aboriginal
How long lived here? 59% lived here 2 yrs to Always	75% lived here 2 yrs to Always	92% lived here 2 yrs to Always
Income: 39% (35) - Disability Allowance 31% (28) - Informal Economy 28% (25) - Income Assistance	49% (30) – Disability Allowance 38% (20) - Income Assistance 13% (8) - Employed	46% (18) – Disability Allowance 30% (12) – Income Assistance 20% (8) - Employed
How long homeless? 30% (27) – less than 1 year 15% (13) - 2 to 5 years 48% (43)– more than 5 years 7% (6) – Missing Data	How long insecure housing? 14% – Less than 1 year 30% - 2 to 5 years 48% - More than 5 years 8% - Missing Data	How long insecure housing? 13% - Less than 1 year insecure 5% - 2 to 5 years 67% - More than 5 years 15% - Missing Data
Reasons for loss of housing: 40% - Abuse/Conflict 31% - Addiction 28% - Mental Health	44% - Abuse/Conflict 37% - Unable to pay rent 22% - Addiction	38% – Abuse/Conflict 26% – Job Loss 23% – Unsafe Housing 23% – Mental Health

1. THE COUNT

Purpose

Is homelessness increasing in the Cowichan Region? Who is most vulnerable to homelessness? Who are the people in the community who are absolutely homeless? Is the population of people who are homeless in the summer significantly different than the winter time? Do people who are homeless migrate to the Cowichan Valley from the bigger cities or from other provinces? What can we learn about homelessness so that we can better address it as a community? These are a few of the questions on the table as the summer 2017, Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count got underway.

In 2017, two PiT Homeless Counts were conducted in the Cowichan Valley. The first was in February 2017. It provided a snapshot of winter homelessness. The focus of that Count was on homelessness in the Duncan/North Cowichan core area. The summer Count adopted a regional lens and expanded the Count to the entire CVRD. The second PiT Count took place in August 2017. The results of that Count are reported here.

Three years ago, in the winter of 2014, another regional homeless count was undertaken in the CVRD.¹ These reports offer three vantage points to reference in answering the questions above.

The purpose of a PiT Homeless Count is to provide a snapshot of people who are homeless at a particular point in time. For the summer Count, that meant people who were homeless throughout the Cowichan Valley Regional District during the timeframe of 4:00 pm Tuesday August 15 to approximately 4:00 on Wednesday, August 16, 2017. Count sites were located in the Duncan/North Cowichan core area, Ladysmith, Chemainus,² Lake Cowichan and Mill Bay.

As well as a count of people who were absolutely homeless, the initiative allowed for a survey of some people in the CVRD experiencing hidden homelessness and some people who were at risk of homelessness.

Who was Counted? Who was Surveyed?

Homelessness can be defined in different ways. Three main categories of homelessness are widely recognized and fall within the Homelessness Partnering Strategy guidelines.³ For this Count, homelessness was defined as follows:

¹ See: *Cowichan Region Homelessness Report, February 2014*. A Report of the Regional Affordable Housing Directorate, Social Planning Cowichan.

² In Chemainus the Count was extended over a 4-day period to allow time to connect with a rural, dispersed, vulnerable population serviced by a small town.

³ See: Canadian Definitions of Homeless, Homeless Hub: <http://homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition>

Absolute Homelessness: Absolute homelessness is perhaps the most visible form of homelessness and refers largely to people who are accessing emergency shelters (both emergency homeless shelters and shelters for women fleeing domestic violence) and street homelessness, such as: camping, sleeping in a vehicle, staying in an abandoned building or walking around all night. Overall, this group is composed of people who do not know where they are going to stay from one night to the next.

Hidden Homelessness: Hidden or Relative Homelessness refers to people who may be housed for the moment, but they do not have long-term security of tenure. Some may know how long they can stay at a given location but some never know when they might have to leave. There are several sub-groups. A) People living in transitional housing units where there is a predetermined timeframe for how long they can live there. B) Many people may be paying rent or exchanging services (including sex) but they are staying in the home of relatives or friends. This form of Hidden Homelessness is commonly referred to as “couch surfing.” C) People who may be renting but living in substandard accommodations where they may be asked to, or need to, leave on short notice. D) Seasonal homelessness is another form of Hidden Homelessness where people are only able to live in rented accommodation, such as cottages or cabins, in the “off season” and have to move out in the warmer, high season months. E) Finally, another sub-group are people who are being retained at local hospitals or in other institutional settings because there is no home or appropriate institutional housing/beds for them to go to.

At Risk: A third category of homelessness are those people who are Precariously Housed or “at risk” of becoming homeless. They may have accommodations for the apparent long-term but again, their circumstances may change quickly due to the conditions of the housing being substandard, unsafe, or inadequate. Or they may lose their housing due to other circumstances such as living on a very low-income, poor mental or physical health.

While it is possible to get a fairly accurate count of the number of people in a community who are absolutely homeless, it is recognized that a PiT Count is not a viable method for determining the number of people who are experiencing hidden homelessness or those who are at risk of homelessness. Therefore, beyond counting the number of people who were absolutely homeless, it can only be claimed that a portion of people who were relatively homeless and some people who were at risk of homelessness were surveyed to learn more about their experience.

Conditions Leading up to the Summer Count

PiT Counts are more commonly done in the winter than the summer months. The national Homelessness Partnering Strategy office only knew of one other community that undertook a summer homeless count.⁴ The reason given as to why there are so few summer counts is because warmer summer conditions encourage people to camp out rather than use shelter facilities. This means people are more dispersed, less visible and harder to locate.

⁴ Homelessness advocates in Calgary conducted a summer PiT Count in 2012.

The Planning Committee anticipated that more people would be camping out in the summer but we were not sure how difficult it would be to locate them. Based on observations of past summers in Duncan, local service providers anticipated that one or more homeless camps might spring up in community parks. The plan was to host an outdoor meal close by these camps in order to attract people to come and be surveyed.

In early July, the Count coordinator began to monitor summer homelessness activities in the Duncan/North Cowichan core area by meeting with local service providers to keep abreast of what they were observing. The coordinator also talked with by-law officers, the RCMP, local businesses, and other parties. The coordinator began to scout local parks to follow up on information and to determine where might be the best location to host the outdoor meals.

From early investigations, it became clear that there were two main camping areas near the Cowichan River where there were concentrations of people who were homeless.

Estimating Numbers

The numbers of people camped out in July was estimated to be fairly high. One local service person who regularly visited the camps estimated as many as 70 people might be camped out in or very near the Duncan core area. Another individual who also went to the camps confirmed that upwards of 50 people were camping on or near the river and Reserve lands.

Reports from other local agencies, seem to indicate a very busy summer with high levels of homeless services being provided. Warmland Emergency Shelter reported that they were running at 80% capacity or full on many nights. This was high for the summer months for them. Meals on the Ground, a local community dinner, reported having 80 people come out for meals whereas through the winter it was more in the range of 50 people. Another church community dinner counted 160 folks for their monthly meal. The Basket Society reported seeing an increase in people going without hydro over the summer. Bike Works, a youth outreach program run through Canadian Mental Health, was connecting with a high number of youth who were homeless or at risk.

Concerns Arise

In the planning stage, we had limited information to go on with regards to the numbers of homeless people in the Duncan core area or where they might be located come August; however, other concerns were surfacing.

In early July, the Breakfast Club at the House of Friendship closed for two weeks. This was related to inappropriate, aggressive behavior by some users of the service who were not known to staff. A homeless camp had set up close by and this was bringing new people into the Centre – some who did not come in friendship.

As the intense heat of August continued, being near the river was a good place for campers to locate. However, as the squatters' camp near the Silver Bridge (on the TransCanada Highway) continued to grow, its impact on services, local businesses and neighboring residents was being felt.

A Change in Plans

As the date for the summer homeless count approached, it was decided to locate the two outdoor meals at sites near the river and Cowichan Tribes land. In the end; however, it was not possible to use one of the sites we thought appropriate. Two weeks before the Count, we relocated the dinner to another park a bit further away from the "action" but one that was still a common hangout for many in the latter part of the day. This site, Centennial Park, proved to be a good location. The breakfast meal was confirmed for McAdams Park, which was near the river and the camps.

However, as concerns about homeless activities rose and the impact on local parties was being felt, a decision was made by local authorities to move people along from the main camp. Two days prior to the PiT Count, policing services worked with local agencies to move campers out of the main campsite.

Results

As mentioned above, a PiT Count is meant to be a snapshot of absolute homelessness. We know that things can change quickly on the ground and numbers can increase or decrease overnight. That said, even though we were not able to secure our first choice of site for one of the outdoor meals and a significant shift in camp sites happen right at the time of the Count, we were still able to connect with a high percentage of people who were homeless and sleeping rough in the Duncan/North Cowichan area. In total, we encountered 41 people sleeping rough in this community on the night of August 15, 2017. Considering early July estimates of the numbers sleeping out, it seems we encountered a good portion of outdoor summer homeless campers.

Regional Pre-Count Observations

Ladysmith: This past winter marked year two of operating an Extreme Weather Shelter in Ladysmith. Last winter they had a total bed count of 198 guests (with some individuals staying more than one night). The shelter was open for 5 months and had 1 to 7 guests per night. Service providers were aware of at least 5 people who could use the shelter beds right now if it was open.

Chemainus: Service providers at Cowichan Neighborhood House (CNH) saw a lot of homeless activity over the summer of 2017. When they were contacted in early August, they could think of 8 to 10 individuals whose housing situation was quite desperate. Several people were known to be living out of their cars, including two youth who were trying to work. Other people were "couch surfing" and needed to find new accommodations now. CNH staff were also aware of several people who were paying high rents for small rooms in a substandard living conditions.

Lake Cowichan: Although a few people in the area were observed to be homeless, homelessness is sometimes described as being “invisible” in this rural setting. People may camp along the Lake or in the woods, but they are not clearly known to service providers to be homeless. During the year, a couple of people may be observed to be living in their cars but in some cases, this is thought to be personal preference as a way to live. One such person is known around town as a “salvager” and he is sometimes offered part time work. On the other hand, a daily occurrence is requests for help from people desperately looking for affordable housing. That is increasingly difficult to find in Lake Cowichan.

Mill Bay: The manager of the local food bank was helpful in providing information on people who were homeless in the south end. Two people were known to be homeless at this time, both were men and both had been living for some time in the local area. One was sleeping in his car; the other on an old boat.

How was the Count Conducted?

In the winter of 2017, a Point-in-Time Homeless Count was conducted in the Duncan/ North Cowichan core area. A Count committee was set up to work with the Count coordinator. The same Committee worked again with the Count coordinator in planning the summer count. Preparatory meetings were held in the spring to set the date and lay out general plans for the Count. While the winter count was focused on the Duncan/North Cowichan area, the Committee determined that a regional count would be the best approach to support the ongoing homeless work in the community. Agencies in Ladysmith, Chemainus, Lake Cowichan and Mill Bay were contacted to participate in the Count.

The dates of Tuesday, August 15 to Wednesday, August 16 were chosen as this was one-week ahead of the release of monthly Social Assistance cheques and yet still in the high summer season.

In Duncan, count sites were similar to the winter count with the four primary agencies serving people who are homeless providing staff who had been trained to administer the questionnaire (Warmland, House of Friendship, Cowichan Women Against Violence, Cowichan Valley Basket Society). Support was also offered by the local RCMP who had a mobile Count team. Rather than an indoor magnet event as was held in the winter, the plan was to host two outdoor meals in different parts of the city to try and reach different pockets of homeless people. A dinner was hosted in Centennial Park and a breakfast was held at McAdams Park, both in Duncan.

To gain a regional perspective, Count sites were also hosted in the following locations: Ladysmith: Ladysmith Resource Center, Ladysmith food bank, a soup kitchen, a mobile team, and the extreme weather shelter was opened for part of the day. Chemainus: the Cowichan Neighborhood House. Lake Cowichan at the Community Resource Centre and in the south Cowichan at the Mill Bay Food Bank.

Overall, surveys were conducted by staff of local agencies. The rationale for staff over volunteers was that staff are already familiar with the clients and both have a comfort with each other that might make it more conducive to completing the survey.

The survey followed the basic template provided through the national Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). It is the same survey that has been used across the country in other HPS funded counts. Communities could add questions. The Planning Committee chose to add several questions at the time of the winter count. The PiT Count survey used in the summer Count was identical to the one used in the winter 2017 Count. The survey consisted of 4 screening questions, followed by 19 short answer questions, and 3 open-ended questions to complete the survey. These questions provided opportunities to gather socio-demographic data (such as age, gender, ethnicity), as well as questions related to the respondents' experience of homelessness or insecure housing. It took about 10 minutes to complete each survey. (See Appendix C for full survey.)

At most Count locations, a \$10 gift card was offered as an incentive and thank you to participants who completed the survey. One site chose to offer their own incentive/thank you package to their clients. Another site requested food bags over gift cards be provided to participants.

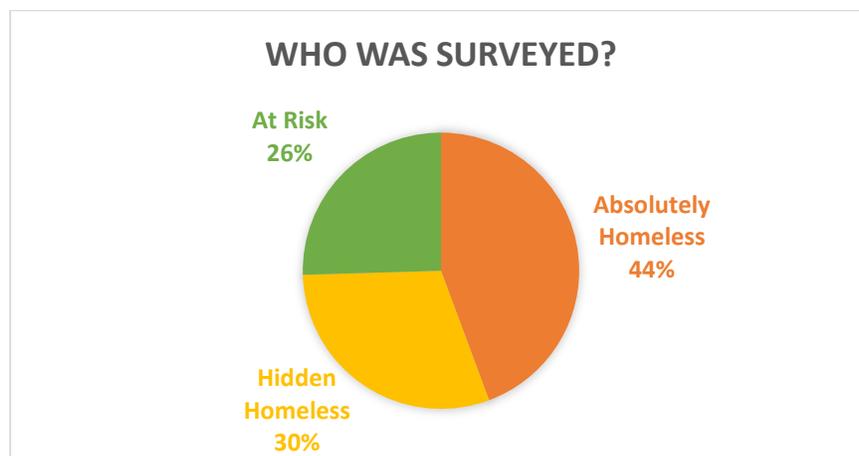
Who did We Miss?

No PiT Count will be perfectly accurate. There are always some people who will be missed. It must also be recognized the numbers can shift radically from one day to the next so a PiT Count is always a momentary snapshot. Who did we miss?

- As of August 18, 2017, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction had 128 cases across the Cowichan Valley of people receiving social assistance (either Income Assistance or Disability Allowance) who had no fixed address. We did not connect with all of these people during the Count.
- No Count sites were located on any reserve lands.
- Some people who were staying at one of the "squatters' camps" in the Duncan area, likely did not know about our outdoor meal and survey.
- Some youth who are homeless were likely missed. Homeless youth are "invisible" in many respects for if they are identified as being under 18, service providers are obligated to report them. This may result in youth being placed in foster care. In some cases, even though a youth may be on the streets all night, technically they are in "care" and are not "homeless."
- Given the size of the region and the extensive network of rural communities, it is quite likely that we missed some people who were sleeping rough in parks or wooded areas.
- We had very little contact with anyone homeless and residing on the Gulf Islands in the CVRD.
- Some people who may have experienced short-term homelessness and were sleeping in cars, camping for a week or two, or visiting with relatives may have been missed.

2. WHO WAS SURVEYED?

- 189 people were counted and/or surveyed
- 44% (N = 89) were Absolutely Homeless
- 30% (N = 61) were experiencing Hidden Homelessness
- 26% (N = 39) were At Risk of Homelessness



Socio-Demographics of the Total Sample (N = 189)

Gender: *Slightly more men than women were surveyed*

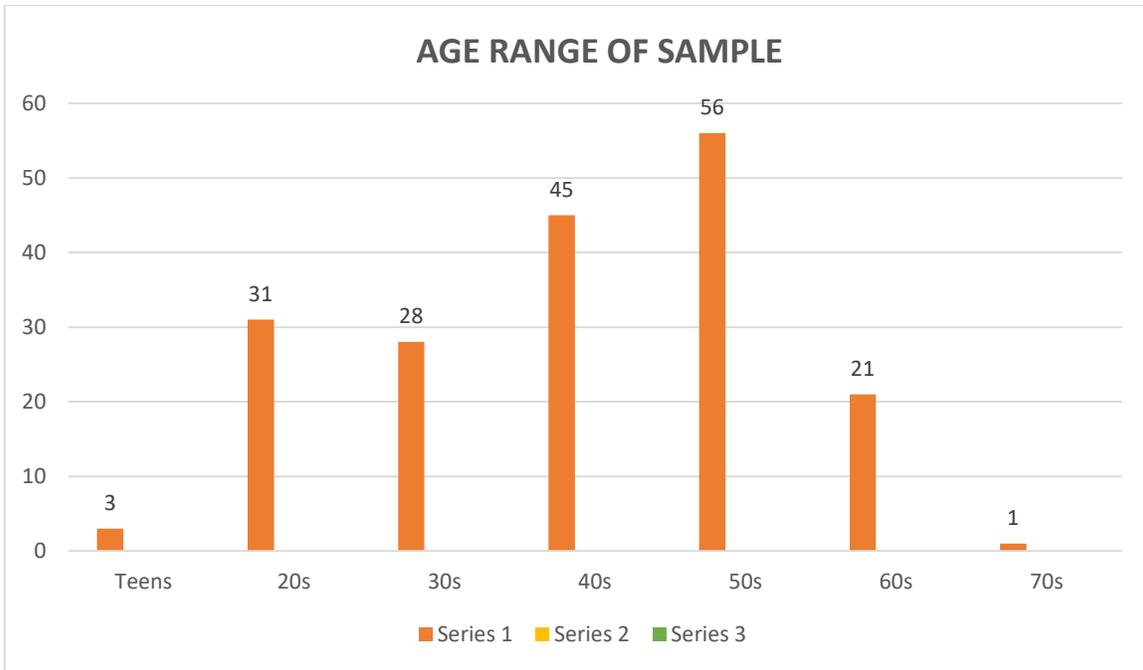
- 56% - Males (N = 107)
- 42% - Females (N = 79)
- 2% - Missing Data (N = 3)

Aboriginal Identity: *Almost 50% of the total sample was people of Aboriginal descent*

- 48% Aboriginal (N = 90)

Education: *Almost 50% had completed Grade 12 or higher*

Experienced Foster Care: *Over one-third had been in foster care*



Income:

- 64% Social Assistance
- 19% Informal Economy – Self-Employed
- 13% Employed
- 7 % Friends-Family
- 5% Child Tax Benefits
- 5% Seniors’ Benefits
- 2% Unemployed
- 12% Other
- 8% No Income

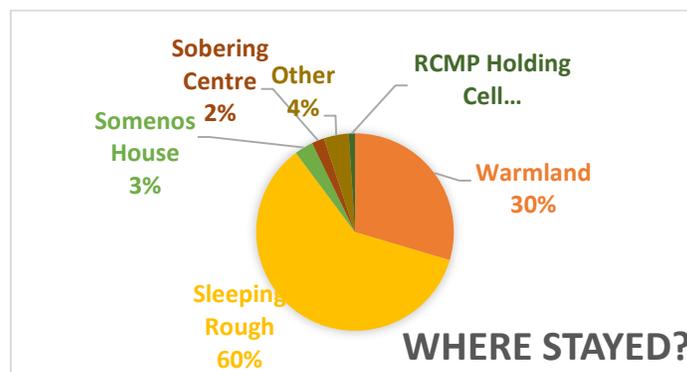
Note: Respondents could have more than one source of income.

3. ABSOLUTE HOMELESSNESS

- 89 people counted as Absolutely Homeless in CVRD
- 88 Adults + 1 Youth age 17
- Two adults (women) accompanied by a total of 4 children
- 76 people Absolutely Homeless in Duncan Core Area (August 2017)
- 73 people Absolutely Homeless in Duncan Core area (February 2017)
- 58 people Absolutely Homeless in regional Count (February 2014)

Where did you stay last night?

- 30% (26) – Warmland Emergency Shelter
- 60% (53) - Sleeping Rough (Duncan winter 36% - 26 individuals)
 - Outside/Camping - 42
 - Car-Truck - Trailer – 10
 - Abandoned Building - 1
- 3% (3) - CWAV/Somenos House – (+4 children)
- 2% (2) - Sobering Centre – (2 First Nations males)
- 1% (1) - RCMP Holding Cell (female – 20)
- 4% (4) – Other



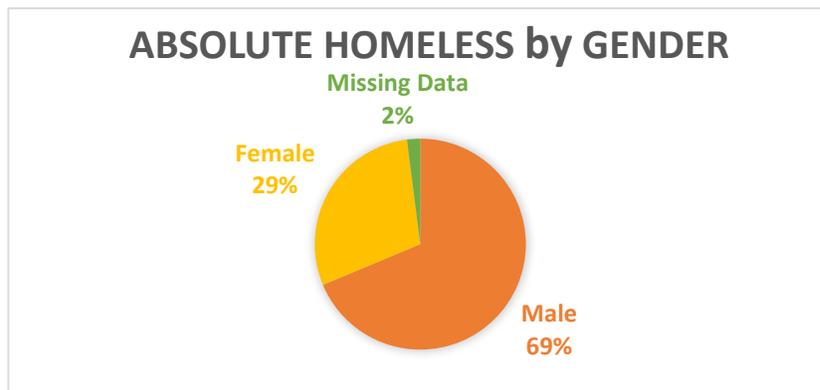
WARMLAND – Client Statistics for August 2017

- 893 clients used the shelter in August – Total number not unique individuals.
- Total number of men - 752
- Total number of women – 141
- Total number of nights over 75% full - 31 days in August
- Total turned away in August: Females - 6 turned away; Males - 30 turned away

3.1 Absolute Homeless - Demographics

Gender: *Almost 70% were males*

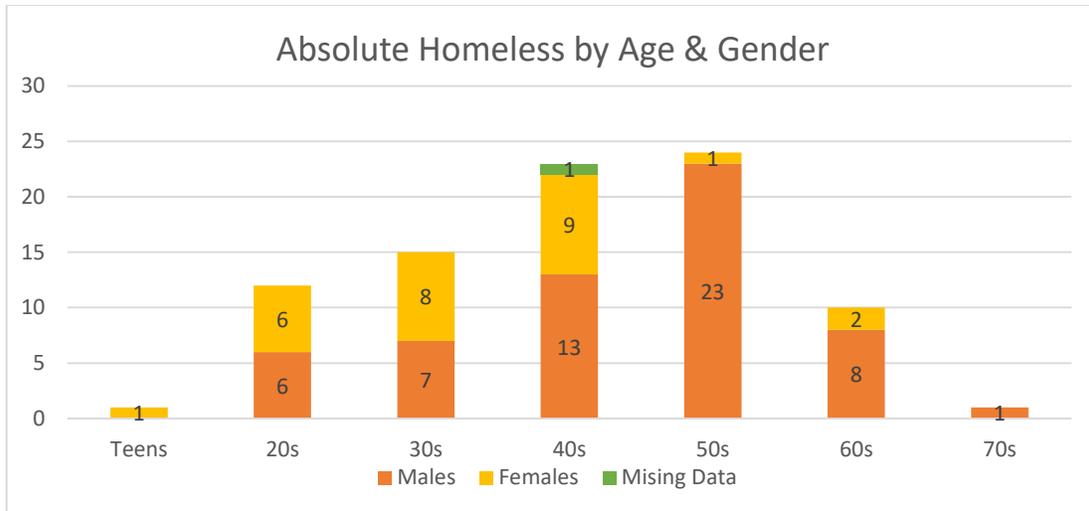
- 2017 – summer – 69% males (60); 29% females (28); 2% missing data (1)
- 2017 - summer (Duncan) - 65% males (50); 33% female (25); 2% missing data (1)
- 2017 - winter (Duncan) - 75% males (55); 23% females (17)



Age: *All age groups represented but highest percent in 40s and 50s*

The youngest person who was homeless was a female, age 17; the oldest person counted was a male, age 73. The average age was 45. Males accounted for 69% of the absolutely homeless population and dominate the age categories from the 40s onwards.

Interestingly, the majority of females who were absolutely homeless were under 40. For females the age range was 17 to 67; for males the range was 20 to 73.



Aboriginal Identity: 39% of those counted were of Aboriginal descent (N = 35)

- 39% of total AH population were Aboriginal people (N =35)
- 24 – First Nations; 9 – Metis; 2 – Non-status
- 43% of total AH population in Duncan core area were Aboriginal (N =33)

Age	Male	Female
Teens	0	1
20s	1	2
30s	3	2
40s	7	6
50s	9	0
60s	1	2
70s	1	0
Total	22 (62%)	13 (37%)

Family Status: Most people were alone but 15% were accompanied by other people

- 10 people reported that they were accompanied by a partner or other adult. Five people indicated they were with a partner, three people were accompanied by another family member (mother, brother); and two people simply reported they were with “another adult.” In all cases but one, the people were staying “outside” – camping.
- Three women staying at Somenos House on the night of August 15 were accompanied by 4 children - 3 males ages 11 months, 4 & 7 years and a female age 11.

Foster Care: *Almost one-third of the sample had been in Foster Care*

Twenty-eight people (32%) who were absolutely homeless had been in foster care at an earlier time in their lives. Ten were women, eighteen were men. Nineteen (67%) of these people were Aboriginal.

Education: *50% had Grade 12 or a higher level of education*

Fifty percent (N = 45) of those people who were Absolutely Homeless had completed high school or a higher level of education. Twenty-three of these people had gone on to do further education after Grade 12. Eighteen people reported having some post-secondary education with several having university degrees. Just over 40% had only completed grade 10 or less.

Immigration: *No cases*

None of the people surveyed indicated that they had immigrated to Canada in the past five years.

Military Experience: *Three veterans counted as absolutely homeless*

Three people indicated they had served in the military. All three were males. They were ages 45, 57 and 59; one was First Nations. Two other males reported being in cadets. A First Nations man, age 44, had been in sea cadets; while a young man, age 21, had been in air cadets.

Use of Emergency Services: *Almost 60% had accessed emergency medical services one or more time in the past year*

Use of Emergency Medical Services in Past Year	
Used Emergency Medical Services	57% of 89 (N = 51)
Used one or two times	59% of 51 (N = 30)
Used 3 to 12 times	37% of 51 (N = 19)
Was also hospitalized	37% of 51 (N = 19)
Total # hospitalized	25% of 89 (N = 23)
Hospitalized three or six times	17% of 23 (N = 4)

Income: Over two-thirds supported through Social Assistance

Sources of Income	
Disability Allowance	39% (35)
Income Assistance	28% (25)
Informal Economy – Self-Employed	31% (28)
Employed	9% (8)
Friends – Family	7% (7)
Child Tax Benefits	3% (3)
Seniors’ Benefits	3% (3)
Unemployment	2% (2)

Two women, ages 31 and 37, reported income from child tax benefits but neither indicated they were accompanied by a child. One slept in a trailer, the other slept outside. A third woman, age 50 who slept in a truck was thought to have a teen daughter accompanying her. She also reported child tax benefits but did not indicate anyone else was accompanying her.

Other sources of income included Workers’ Compensation and gardening. One person reported selling his house and is now living off the income. One male, age 42, stated honestly that he generates his income from odd jobs and “crime.” Four people reported having no income.

How Long Lived Here? Almost 60% lived in CVRD longer than two years.

Thirty people had been residing in the Cowichan Region for two years or less.

- Nine had moved to the Cowichan Region only a month before the Homeless Count. They were mostly coming from other Island communities: 4 from Victoria and one each from Nanaimo, Port Alberni, and Campbell River. Plus, two people who came from the mainland in the last month – one from Chilliwack, one from Kelowna.
- Five people, who had been here 2 to 6 months, came from Victoria (3 people), Surrey and Kelowna.
- In the 7 to 12 month time range, we encountered 3 people from out of province, two coming from Ontario and one from Manitoba, and a fourth person who came from Port Alberni.
- In the 1 to 2 year range, three people came from other Island locations (2 from Nanaimo and one from Victoria). Four other respondents had moved to the Cowichan over a year ago coming from Williams Lake, Vancouver and 2 from Kelowna.
- Missing data – 5 cases.

Where AH people moved from if lived in the CVRD less than two years (N = 30)	
Victoria	8
Kelowna	4
Nanaimo	3
Port Alberni	2
Other Provinces (Ontario, Manitoba)	3
One from each of the following communities: Campbell River, Williams Lake, Vancouver, Surrey, Chilliwack	5
Missing Data	5 cases

When we look at the segment of the homeless population who had lived here over two years we find: five people (5%) indicated they had lived here 3 to 5 years, twenty people (22%) said they had been here anywhere from 6 to 25 years, and 28 people (31%) have lived in the CVRD over 28 years.

Overall, almost 60% of the absolutely homeless population in the CVRD had lived here over 2 years.

3.2 Absolute Homeless + Experiences of Homelessness

How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness or insecure housing?

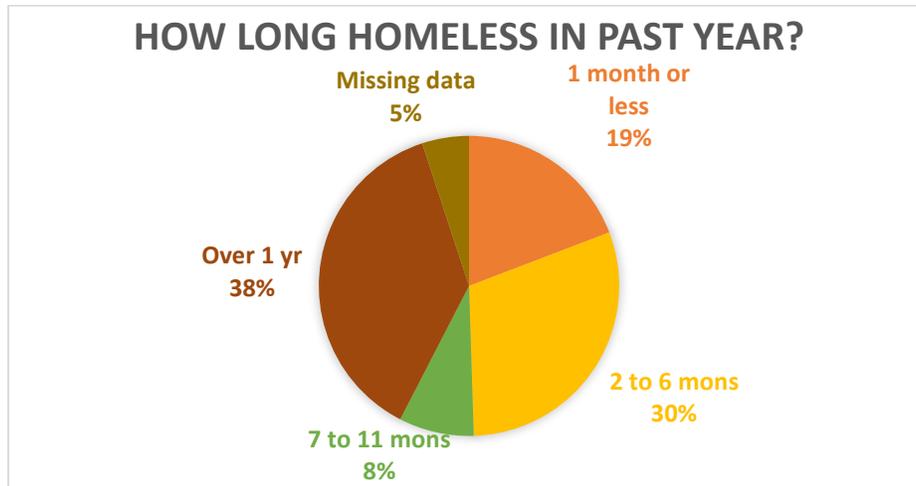
Most people could clearly identify the age at which they first experienced insecure housing or homelessness. Thirty-three people (37%) indicated they experienced homeless or insecure housing when they were between the ages of 12 and 25 yrs. Fourteen of those people (42%) had been in foster care.

First experienced homelessness or insecure housing	
Age 12 to 19	25% (23)
In 20s	13% (12)
In 30s	19% (17)
In 40s	14% (13)
In 50s	16% (15)
In 60s	4% (3)
Missing Data	7% (6)

Accessed Shelter in Past Year: *Two in three had accessed emergency shelter*

Sixty people (67%) who were absolutely homeless indicated they had stayed at an emergency shelter sometime in the past year.

In this past year, how much time have you been without a secure place to live?

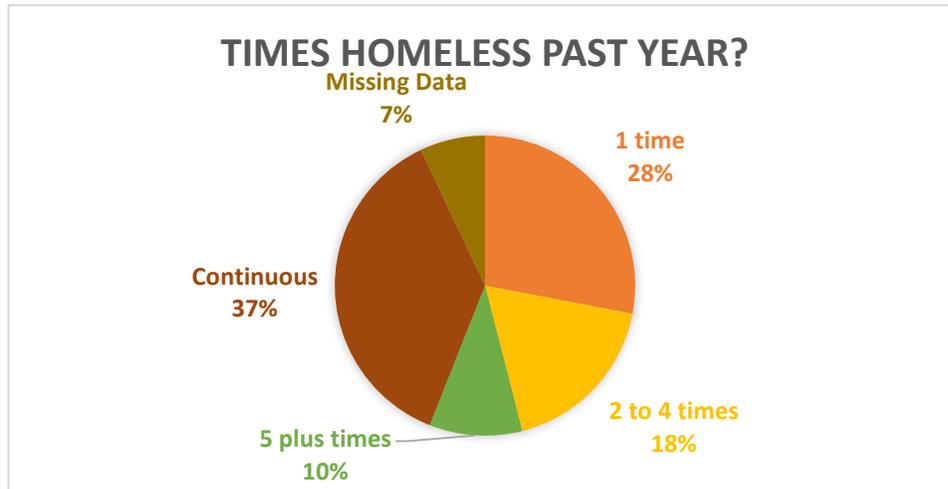


Over half of the people counted (57%) indicated they had been homeless for a part of the year. Seventeen of those people were homeless this year for one month or less; for four of them, this appears to be the first time they were ever homeless.

- A 43-year-old, First Nations female, staying at Warmland, reported she had a conflict with the landlord and was evicted.
- A 60-year-old Metis female, sleeping in a car, indicated loss of housing due to conflict.
- A 47-year-old female, surveyed at Basket Society, experienced spousal abuse, first time homeless this year.
- A 58-year-old First Nations male stated he has experienced insecure housing since age 16. He has never stayed at an emergency shelter but is now sleeping in an abandoned building. Loss of housing due to: abuse, conflict, mental health and addiction leading to eviction.

Thirty-two people (38%) indicate they have been continually homeless for over a year. For 3 people this past year seems to be the first time they experienced homelessness but unfortunately, they have been continually homeless for the whole year. Twelve people indicated they have been homeless 2 to 15 years, while 17 people indicate their homeless status has been continual for anywhere from 16 to 44 years.

In the past year, how many different times have you been without a secure place to live?



Some people who indicated they were homeless “one time,” were homeless for anywhere from 1 week to 10 months. The majority (72%) of this group; however, were homeless this past year for less than 6 months. For many of these people, being homeless for part of the year is an on-going, long-term experience.

What happened that caused you to lose the last stable housing your had?

Abuse and/or conflict was found to be the primary factor leading to loss of housing (N = 30).

Instances of abuse were cited 18 times. In 7 cases a parent was identified as the abuser; in 6 cases a spouse was reported as the abusive party.

In 28 cases, conflict was cited as a key factor in their loss of housing. Conflict with various family members were noted along with conflicts with roommates and landlords.

Top Reasons for Loss of Housing	
Abuse and/or Conflict	40% (36 cases)
Addiction	31% (28 cases)
Mental Health	28% (25 cases)
Unable to Pay Rent	23% (21 cases)
Evicted	23% (21 cases)
Job Loss	16% (15 cases)

In addition to the reasons noted above for loss of housing, people identified several other factors that affected their housing status; this included: a family member dying, separation, problems with welfare, residential school, roommate on drugs, and a fire.

4. HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS

- 61 people surveyed – 59 Adults + 2 teens age 18 & 19
- Five people accompanied by 11 children
- Plus 34 people counted at Cowichan District Hospital

While people who are absolutely homeless are often quite visible in a community, people experiencing hidden homelessness may be more difficult to identify. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness⁵ (COH) defines people who are experiencing hidden homelessness (also called provisionally housed or relative homelessness), as:

"... people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, accessing 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."

Where did you stay last night?

- 64% (39) - Friend-Family (Couch Surfing)
- 27% (17) – Warmland Transitional Housing Units
- 7% (4) – Substandard Rooming House
- 2% (1) - Trailer

Plus 34 people temporarily retained at local hospital due to lack of beds or housing

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness includes people in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements as part of the provisionally housed (or Hidden Homeless) population. This includes people who are temporarily without a permanent home (bed) or people who may transition into homelessness upon release from penal institutions; medical / mental health institutions; residential treatment programs or withdrawal management centers; children's institutions and group homes.

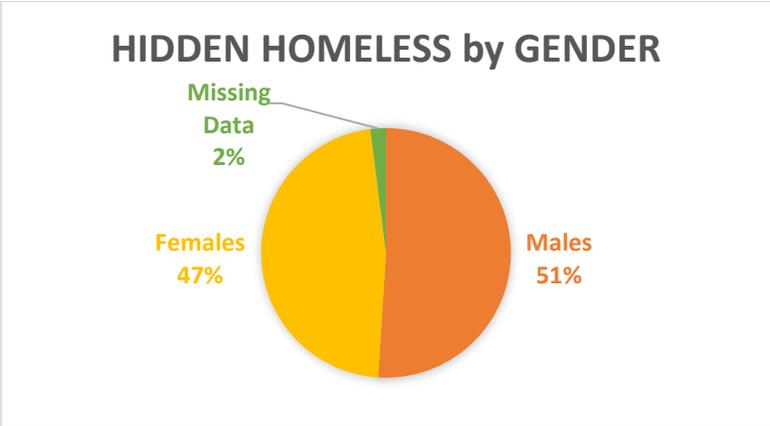
⁵ The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness is a recognized centre of expertise on homelessness in Canada. See: <http://homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition>

In addition to the 61 hidden homeless people surveyed, on the night of August 15, another 34 people who no longer needed the acute care services of a hospital stayed at the Cowichan District Hospital as there was no home or residential care facility for them to go to.

- 2 people did not have a home to go to
- 32 people were “alternate level care patients” waiting to be transferred to long-term care beds in other facilities.

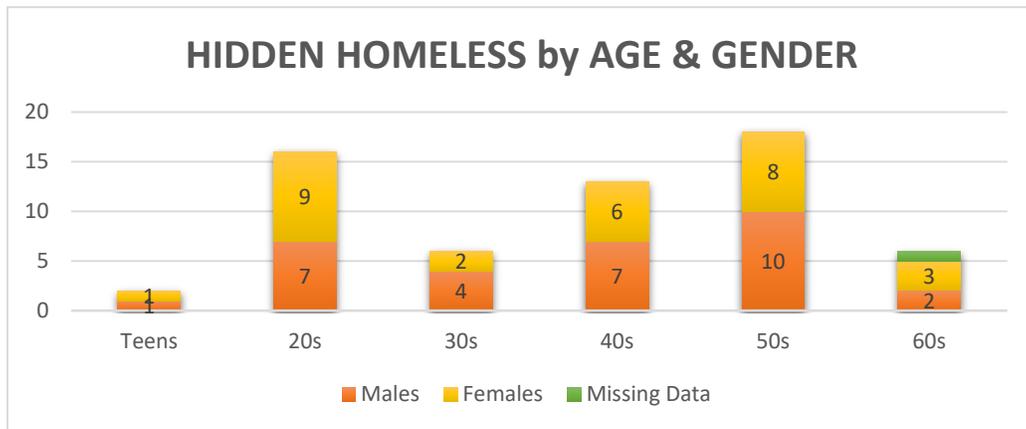
4. 1 Hidden Homeless - Demographics

Gender: Half were males and almost half females



As we see in the above chart, the number of males and females surveyed who were experiencing hidden homelessness was almost equal. It is important to note; however, that this is not viewed as a representative sample from which we can generalize to the larger hidden homeless population. Given the size of that population is not known and is much larger, we cannot determine how representative this sample is. That said, the sample is a good size and having both males and females equally represented as well as 57% being Aboriginal, this group can provide some insights into the experience and characteristics of people experiencing Hidden Homelessness.

Age and Gender:



The age range was 18 to 68; 2 people surveyed were in their teens (ages 18 and 19). The average age in this group was 42, slightly younger than for the Absolutely Homeless population. Thirteen people (22%) were 25 or younger – 5 males and 8 females. All of these people were couch surfing (staying with friends-relatives) and all but two were Aboriginal. Two of the young adults who were Aboriginal had children.

Aboriginal Identity: *One in every two people surveyed was Aboriginal*

As in past Homeless Counts, we find a large percentage of the Hidden Homeless population is Aboriginal. Thirty-four people (55%) were Aboriginal; 31 – First Nations; 1 – Metis; 2 – Non-Status. Over half of this group were female – 58% (N = 20). There were 13 First Nations men (38%). One person declined to answer the gender question.

When we look at the surveys done in the Duncan core area, the percentage rises slightly to 58% of those surveyed in this area, which is higher than the winter 2017 count.

- 58% (33) Aboriginal - Duncan core area - Summer 2017
- 43% (31) Aboriginal – Duncan core area - Winter 2017

Family Status: *11 people accompanied by another adult and/or children*

Six people indicate they were accompanied by a partner. Two of these individuals, both First Nations, also indicated they had children – 3 each, and they were staying with friends-relatives. Three women, all First Nations, appear to be single parents and were staying with friends-relatives. In terms of reasons for loss of housing, all three of these women report that conflict played a part in the loss of housing. One young First Nation male, age 20, indicated he was staying with his grandmother along with an uncle and a younger brother.

Three people indicated they were accompanied by another adult; one person indicated this was a cousin. Three males staying in Transitional Housing units at Warmland indicate they had children who were not living with them.

Foster Care: *Over one-third had been in foster care*

24 (39%) people had previously been in foster care. Seventy-five percent (18) of this group was First Nations. Nine of the 24 (37%) were still under age 25.

Education: *Almost half completed Grade 12 or a higher level of education*

Twenty-nine people (47%) had completed grade 12 education or higher. Three people indicated they had a trade; 11 people had gone on to take some university or college. Two people indicated they had completed their degree program.

Fifty-four percent of those surveyed had not completed high school and had grade 11 or lower. Fifteen people reported the highest grade completed as between Grade 4 to Grade 9.

Immigration: *No Cases*

None of the people surveyed indicated that they had immigrated to Canada in the past five years.

Military Experience: *One Cadet*

One First Nations male reported being in cadets but he was the only person to report any military experience.

Use of Hospital and Emergency Services: *Almost 20% used emergency services 3 to 9 times*

Slightly more than half of those surveyed, 55% (N = 34), had used emergency medical services in the past year. One third of this group (33% or 11 people) indicated they had used the services anywhere from 3 to 9 times over the past year.

Nine people (26%) in this group also indicated they had been hospitalized at some point in the past year. Two of those people had been hospitalized numerous times.

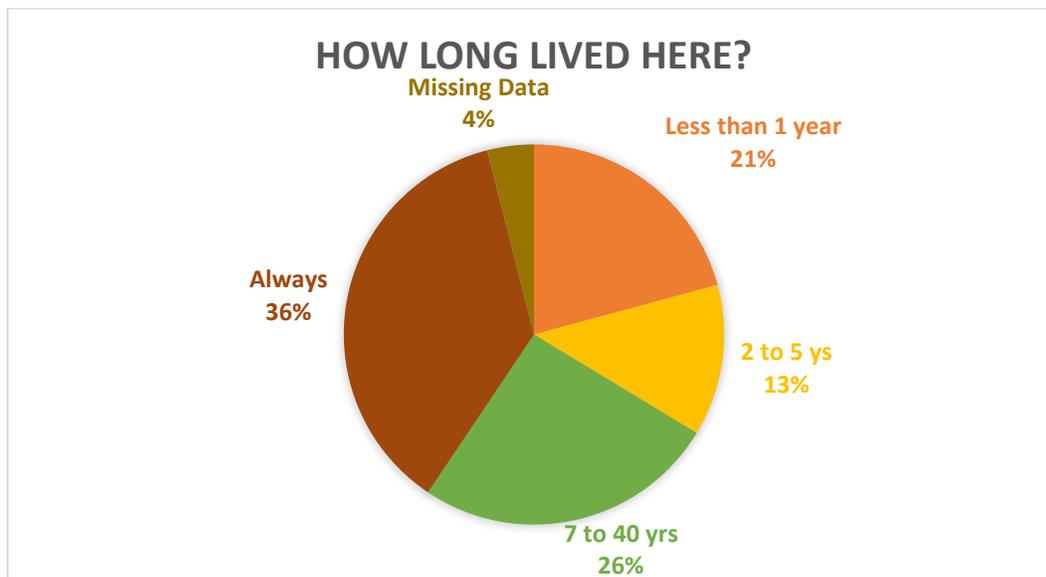
Income: *Over eighty percent supported through Social Assistance*

Twenty people (32%) indicated their primary source of income was Income Assistance and thirty (49%) reported their income as coming from Disability Allowance. In total this was 81% of the Hidden Homeless population surveyed.

Other Sources of Income	
Employed	8 people
Self-employed – Informal Economy	7 people – one was a carver
Seniors' Benefits	4 people
Friends - Family	3 people
Partner has income	2 people

- Two people reported having no income.

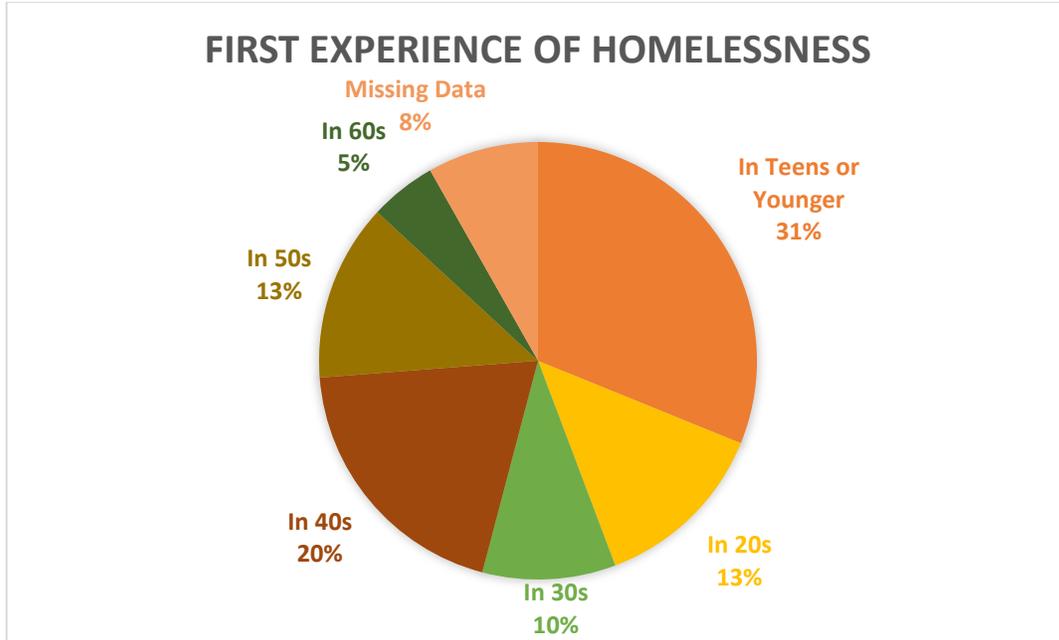
How Long Lived Here? *Over 75% of those surveyed lived in CVRD more than 2 years*



- 9 people (21%) had lived here less than one year. They moved here from: 3 from Victoria, 2 from Nanaimo, 1 from Williams Lake and 1 had moved here from Ontario. (Missing data – 2 cases.)
- 8 people (13%) lived here 2 to 5 years.
- The remaining 64% (39) indicated they had lived here over 7 years with 23 people saying they had always lived here.

4.2 Hidden Homeless + Experiences of Homelessness & Insecure Housing

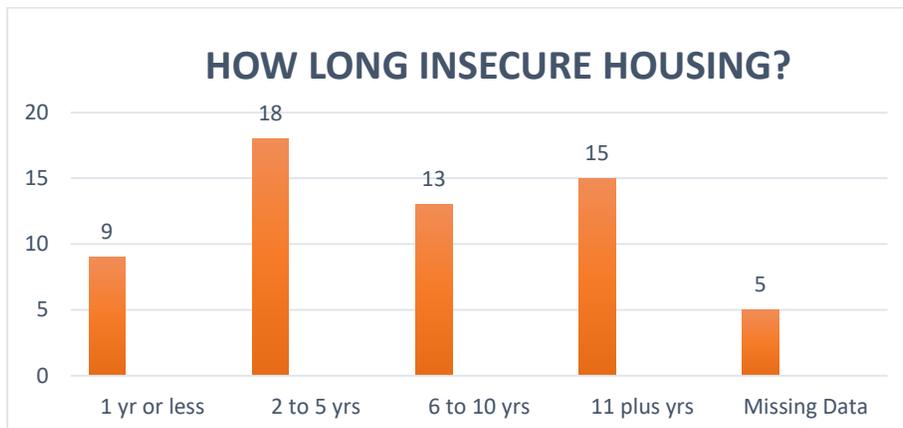
How old were you the first time you became homeless or were without a secure place to live?



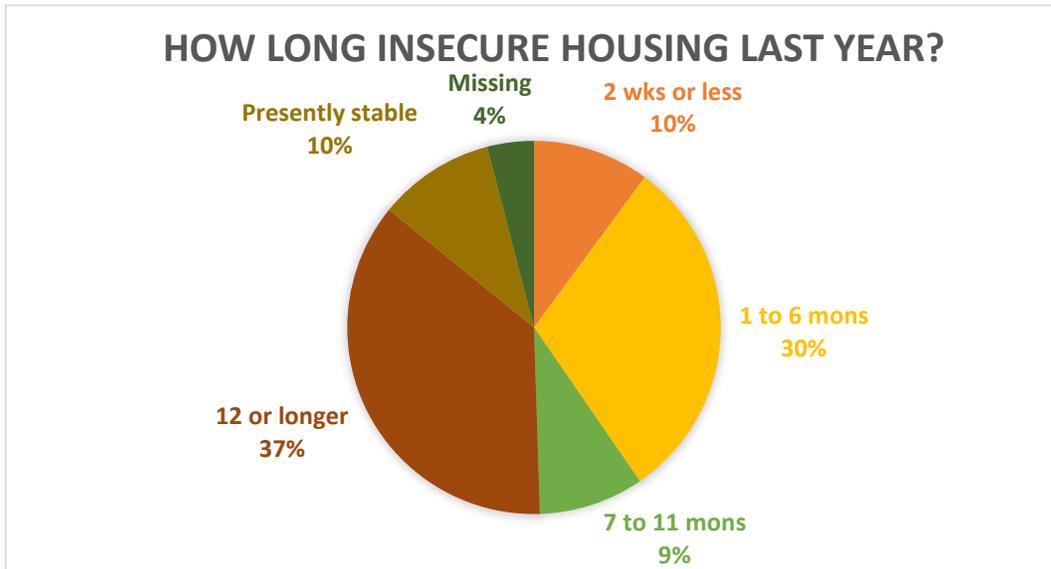
Fifty percent of those surveyed had experienced homelessness or insecure housing but their mid-30s.

How long experienced insecure housing?

If we deduct the age of when an individual first experienced homelessness or insecure housing from the age they are now, we see the following pattern:



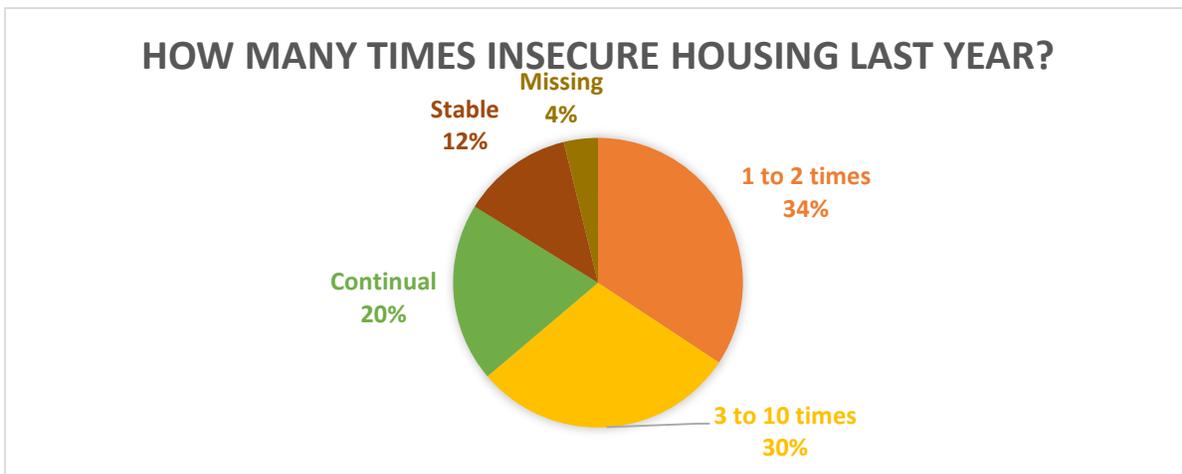
In the past year, how much time have you been without a secure place to live?



For six people housing insecurity this past year was less than 2 weeks. Eighteen people indicated housing was insecure for up to 6 of the past 12 months. For another six people, housing challenges lasted most of the year, 7 to 11 months. For 22 adults housing was unstable for the entire year and in some cases longer.

Eight people staying in Transitional Housing units at Warmland indicated their housing was stable for now; however, within the next two years they will be required to move on and will most likely have to go into market rental housing.

In the past year, how many different times have you been without a secure place to live?



While 22 people (34%) said they had only had 1 or 2 times when housing was insecure in the past year, 19 people (30%) said they experienced insecurity around their housing 3 to 10 different times last year.

Another 13 people (20%) said they were dealing with insecure housing continually through out the year. Half of those who were continually facing housing challenges were couch surfing year-round. Some were dealing with inadequate housing and landlords who are not maintaining the upkeep of residences.

Have you stayed at an emergency shelter at any time in the past year?

More than 50% of people surveyed who were experiencing hidden homelessness had stayed at a shelter in the last year. (N = 33 or 54%)

Foster Care: Over one-third had been in foster care

Twenty-four people (40%) had formerly been in foster care; 11 females and 13 males. 75% (N = 18) were First Nations. Eight of these people were still under the age of 25.

What happened that caused you to lose the last stable housing you had?

Top Reasons for Loss of Housing	
Abuse and/or Conflict	44%
Unable to Pay Rent	37%
Addiction	22%
Job Loss	21%

Other reasons offered included: Ex stopped paying mortgage, roommate got drunk, foster care ended, no extended family; mother sold house, conflict with the law, and poor choices.

5. AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

- 39 Adults surveyed
- 57% Aboriginal

Where did you stay last night?

- 69% (27) – Rented apartment
- 23% (9) – Rented house
- 5% (2) – Rented RV - Trailer
- 2% (1) – Boat

5.1 At Risk - Demographics

Gender:

- 40% (16) Males; 57% (22) Females; 1 No Response.

Age:

- People ranged in age from 22 to 69. Two people were under 25. Average age was 48.

Aboriginal Identity:

- 21 people (57%) identified as Aboriginal.

Education:

- 17 people (44%) had grade 12 education or higher. Eight had post-secondary degrees. Seven people had less than grade 9 education.

Foster Care:

- 11 people had previously been in foster care. 72% of this group was Aboriginal.

Income

- 77% supported on Social Assistance – 18 on Disability Allowance; 12 Income Assistance
- 8 people were employed
- 6 people received child tax benefits
- 3 people received seniors' benefits
- 4 people reported having no income

How long lived here?

- 5% (2) people had lived here less than 2 years.
- 51% (20) had lived in the Cowichan Region somewhere between 2 and 25 years.
- 38% (15) people said they always lived here.

5.2 At Risk + Experiences of Homelessness & Insecure Housing

How long Experienced Insecure Housing?

- 8 people reported having a stable housing situation at the present time.
- 5 people had experienced some housing insecurity in the past 2 years
- For two-thirds of those surveyed who were experiencing hidden homelessness, housing insecurity had been long term, ranging from 5 to 55 years!

Stayed at Emergency Shelter in the past year?

- 12 people (31%) reported accessing an emergency shelter in the past year.

Reasons for Loss of Housing:

- As with other groups, Abuse and/or Conflict was the number one reason for loss of housing. Fifteen individuals (38%) identified abuse or conflict as a key factor in the loss of their last stable housing.
- In addition to the above concerns, 9 people (23%) reported unsafe housing as a contributing factor in their loss of housing.
- Job loss played a role in the loss of stable housing for 10 people (26%).
- Nine people reported mental health as a contributing to their loss of housing.
- Other concerns included: Landlord had family members moving in, pet problems, and hydro being too expensive.

Some of Their Stories:

- Female – Age 45 with 2 teens – rents house. Concerned about loss of income from Child Tax Benefits when oldest child turns 18. “Can’t find an affordable 3-bedroom place. Landlords not fixing things that are damaged and broken.”
- Male – Age 22 – rents. “Building is full of bugs. Multiple issues wrong with apartment that are not getting fixed.”

- Female – Age 59. Renting now but lost last housing because of high hydro rates. “Hydro bill! I can either pay rent or hydro – not both! I eat at the food bank. Hydro uses up most of my income. Cheap housing with mold and pest is all I can afford.”
- Female – Age 57. “Landlord takes advantage of me. I am at the mercy of a greedy landlord.”
- Female – Age 37 – First Nations. “I need safe accommodations. For example, lights need replacing. I have been after the landlord for four months to do so.”
- Male – First Nations – Age 55 – Rents. “There are pests in the house and a hole in the wall from previous renter. It has never been fixed.”
- Female – Metis – Age 47. “It is too difficult and stressful to move. I was forced into an old folks’ home for shelter but had to wait 2 years to get housing. They took all my income and I had no independence. So, I left. It took me a year to find my present home.”
- Female – Age 58 – Rents RV. “I need affordable and safe housing for women. Some apartments at Warmland are unsafe and inappropriate.”
- Female – First Nations – Age 25 – 6 children. “With 6 children you need safe, affordable housing.”

6. YOU COUNT! COUNT YOURSELF IN!

Three open-ended questions were offered at the end of the homelessness and housing needs survey to give respondents an opportunity to share any further thoughts on their experience of homelessness or housing needs.

- What would help you find more permanent housing?
- Are there any services you wanted but were not able to get?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the housing challenges you have had or are having now?

Below is a summary of their responses with quotes and stories to fill out the picture. We begin with a few stories to give the reader a better feel for some of the life circumstances of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Their Stories

- Where did you stay last night? "Mainly, I will be in the bush except nights when somebody lets me stay overnight."
- "I was evicted from my home. I stayed on a friend's boat, then in the bush. I still have no where to live. My belongings were hauled away to the dump. Friends attempted to get my clothes and belongings back but were not permitted."
- What would have been helpful? "Less discrimination and more support. There is not enough mental or drug addiction support. I feel anxious being alone and do not feel safe sleeping in my car in public areas."
- "My Ex is living in my trailer with her 2 kids. They can't afford to move and if I kick them out there will be 3 homeless people. So, for now, I live in my car." (Male – Age 45)
- "My husband is unable to work at this time. I attempted to return to work on Income Assistance but could only do casual work. That was not sustainable. It interfered with steady Income Assistance resulting in our inability to pay rent and utilities. We also need mental health support for my husband to aid him in being able to return to work." (Female – First Nation – 3 children – low income – staying with Friends-Relatives)

What would help you find more permanent housing?

The number one response to this question was, not surprisingly, affordable housing. Eighty percent of respondents identified the lack of affordable housing as a prime factor contributing to their homelessness or near homeless status. Beyond stating that more housing is needed, respondents provided many suggestions as to the kind of housing and some basic features that would be important to them.

TYPE OF HOUSING/SHELTER NEEDED:

- A lower barrier shelter.
- Low barrier affordable housing. Safe & accessible.
- Assisted living where meals are provided.
- Assisted Living Care Home for First Nations where meals are provided.
- More low-income housing for First Nations.
- Subsidized housing.
- Recommend more subsidized housing over low income housing. It reduces the stigma over a concentration of low income people living together and could be available sooner than building housing.
- We need sustainable housing! Paying rent is a challenge for a single person. I can't afford the rents living on Social Assistance.
- Many rents are priced just above the Income Assistance range.
- I find it difficult to work and to maintain a bed at the Shelter.
- Housing for single people. Small cabins for single people.
- It would be good to be able to rent just a room on its own.
- Childless women are the lowest priority in our system.
- Close to town. Clean.
- More housing! The few that are affordable are not safe or adequate. They are infested and/or run down. (Twenty cases.)
- SAFE housing (no drugs).
- Finding security.
- There are limited safe housing resources.
- There is no affordable housing available in Duncan. I had to go and live in Victoria for a while. (Single mother.)
- Affordability, availability, low cost housing.
- Housing in the Cowichan Valley is extremely expensive – unaffordable. There is nothing available.
- A place I could afford, but none are available.
- A place with a kitchen and bathroom that I could afford. I'm tired of a bare room that costs a fortune. I need an affordable home.
- There is no housing for people on very low incomes.
- Housing is way too expensive. It is hard to work when you can't stay at the same location to sleep or eat.
- What would help? Any available places that are affordable – less than \$650 a month.

Help Needed with Finding and Keeping Clean, Safe, Affordable Housing

People asked for support to help find housing, to help deal with poor landlords, and assistance with advocacy and legal advice. They acknowledged the need for reliable, trustworthy roommates. Pets, transportation, employment and assistance accessing other services were also named as important services that were needed.

ASSISTANCE FINDING HOUSING:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Having a list of housing [vacancies]. (5 cases).➤ Housing posts at Global or somewhere we can see them. A lot of people cannot use the internet. It makes it harder to get a place.➤ More resources for helping someone find housing.➤ More advertising [of housing vacancies] (4 cases).➤ More support to help a person find a place, arrange viewings, explain situation to landlord.➤ Classes to learn how to obtain rentals. Rental course, rental ads.➤ Rent Smart to be accepted more widely.➤ More help finding housing!➤ Housing outreach.➤ Housing support.
ADVOCACY & LEGAL SUPPORT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Advocacy! Advocacy! (10 cases)➤ Advocacy! The stress of moving and looking increases my health problems.➤ Funding and advocacy for independent living.➤ Disability benefits that co-exist with housing costs.➤ Tenants advocate for rental and welfare.➤ Legal Aid, Housing Advocate.
BETTER HOUSING AND MORE RESPONSIBLE LANDLORDS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Better landlords. (12 cases)➤ Need for references [on who is a good landlord] because of safety issues.➤ [Landlords] taking better care of property. Better maintained,➤ Better upkeep of property. Better maintained, repaired, updated.➤ There is not much housing available and many landlords are taking advantage of the situation.➤ Landlords have all the power.➤ Landlords con you now.➤ More support needed against awful landlords.➤ Don't let affordable places get run down or infested. (7 cases)➤ Places in Duncan have big problems. They are unsafe for children. If houses do not have bugs, they have drugs.➤ Safety re-drugs in buildings.

- Safety. Fear of thieves and irresponsible tenants regarding fire and tenant insurance.
- There is no bylaw enforcement or health inspectors. There is no help for tenants. No rentals available. Housing is too expensive.
- More landlord monitoring and more bylaw enforcement.
- Hydro is insane! We need affordable hydro.

THE NEED FOR GOOD ROOMMATES: (14 mentions)

- What would help? Living with someone – rents are too high.
- Finding a trust worthy roommate, can't afford to live alone.
- A trustworthy roommate (dependable) and reasonable rent (difficult to find). Financially unable to find anything.
- Difficult roommate right now. Doesn't have adequate references for renting in apartment. Financial strain. (Person At Risk)

PLACES THAT ACCEPT PETS: (9 mentions)

- Pet friendly.
- Place to have an assistance dog.
- Its very difficult to find housing that accepts pets.
- Pets allowed in rentals.
- Laws about no pets or no children have created barriers.
- Keeping pets.

HELP WITH TRANSPORTATION: (17 mentions)

- Transportation for living outside of Duncan.
- Bus Passes. (7 mentions)
- Coach lines bus pass to Vancouver.
- Bus pass and bus stops on Reserve. (Chemainus)
- Better transit system.

ASSISTANCE WITH ACCESSING SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS:

- Assistance with applying for Old Age pension.
- Help applying for services.
- Help with getting registered.
- [Information] better access to services. I don't know where they are.
- Access to a phone.
- Phone for messages. Internet.
- Place to use telephone.
- Access to a computer.
- Computer access.
- Income Tax support so I can get gst cheque.
- Support with applying for welfare that is NOT on computers. Keep having to do it again and staff say they are not allowed to help do paperwork. Barriers to accessing support and applying to get birth certificate and ID.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: (14 cases)

- Opportunities for employment.
- Job opportunities.
- Training for work programs.
- More opportunities for finding work.
- Need a job bank.
- Job fair.
- A program to help people find work and housing.
- Job finding services.

OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE SKILLS:

- More computer skills and better access to computers.
- Computer skills.

Health and Medical Services Needed

Finding and accessing various forms of medical services and counselling was also named as important and very helpful.

HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES NEEDED:

- Medical and dental assistance; eye glasses.
- Being able to afford glasses. (8 cases)
- Dental and eye care looked after.
- Dental after 65 and hearing aids, dentures, glasses, mental health support.
- Pharmacare – high barrier – unable to do paper work.
- Non-prescription medication (like Graval) are not being covered even if recommended by doctor.
- Medical Care & money back for prescriptions.
- Doctor – medical help.
- Local doctor.
- Medical services – need anxiety meds.
- Stress counselling.
- Access to physio and chiropractor for low income.
- More MDs better trained to provide assistance to homeless people.
- Medical for homeless people, dentist, addictions help.
- No Rehab here.
- Rehab stability.
- Help getting to and from medical appointments.

COUNSELLING SUPPORT:

- Need a 1-on-1 worker to assist me in making a solid plan and finding secure housing.

- More places for people with mental health issues. Supported housing with counselling.
- Alcohol Counselling.
- More support with mental health & addictions.
- Drug and Alcohol Counselling.
- Mental health and addiction support, counselling, legal aid.
- Counselling for addictions.
- Not enough mental or drug addiction support.
- Substance abuse counselling.
- Counselling for people dealing with depression.
- Classes on "how to work – motivation."
- Shorter than 2-week wait time for counselling services.
- Mental health only helps those with addictions, nowhere for others to get counselling.
- Counselling is too expensive. Long waits for help.

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS: (4 Mentions)

- Get off drugs.
- Quit drinking.

A host of other services were also identified as needed and important for basic survival.

OTHER:

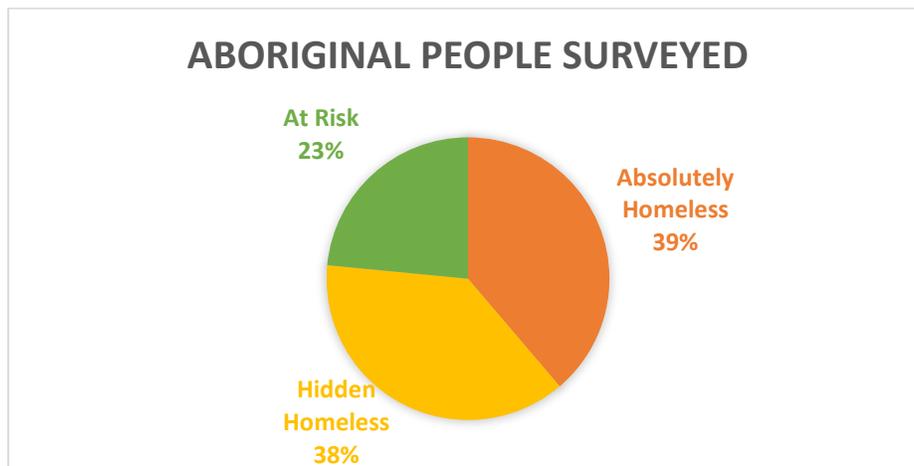
- Don't have car insurance. I'm sleeping in an uninsured car. (2 cases)
- Less discrimination, more support.
- Help moving. (2 cases)
- Swim pass so I can take showers.
- Places to shower.
- Services without ID. I don't want to provide ID.
- Emergency financial support; hardship situation.
- Financial services.
- ID replaced. (3 cases)
- Food, clothing and household items.
- Storage.
- Security Deposit.
- Ministry to help with clothing allowance and laundry. Now they are separate from other things.
- Allowed to access food bank hampers more than once a month.
- An electric cart to get to and from my home.
- Worried about what will happen when my scouter breaks down and needs replacing.
- Have a designated area where people can set up tents and camp and have access to showers and bathrooms after hours.
- Help with reconnection fees.

7. Aboriginal Off-Reserve Homelessness

- 48% (90) of total sample (N = 189) self-identified as Aboriginal
- 72 – First Nations; 13 – Metis; 5 – Non-Status

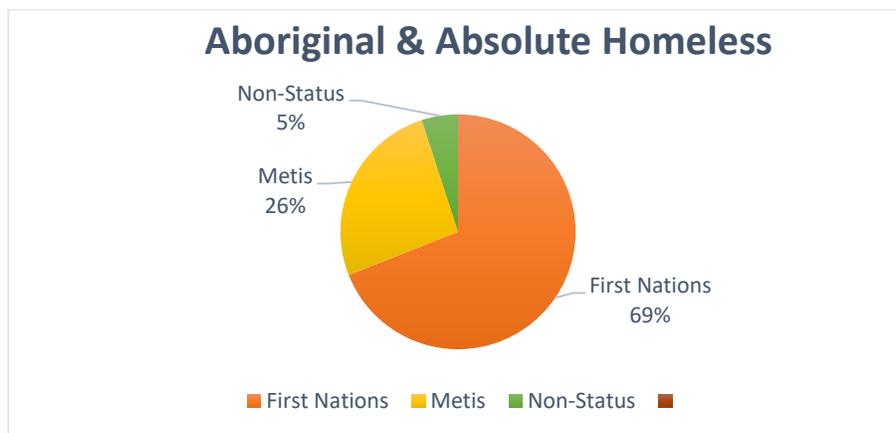
The summer homeless count was not specifically focused on Aboriginal people but was intended as a survey of anyone in the CVRD who was homeless at a specific time. While Aboriginal homelessness and housing challenges on and off-reserve cannot be separated, no count sites were held on reserve lands. That said, some Aboriginal people surveyed did live on reserve.

Who did we encounter?

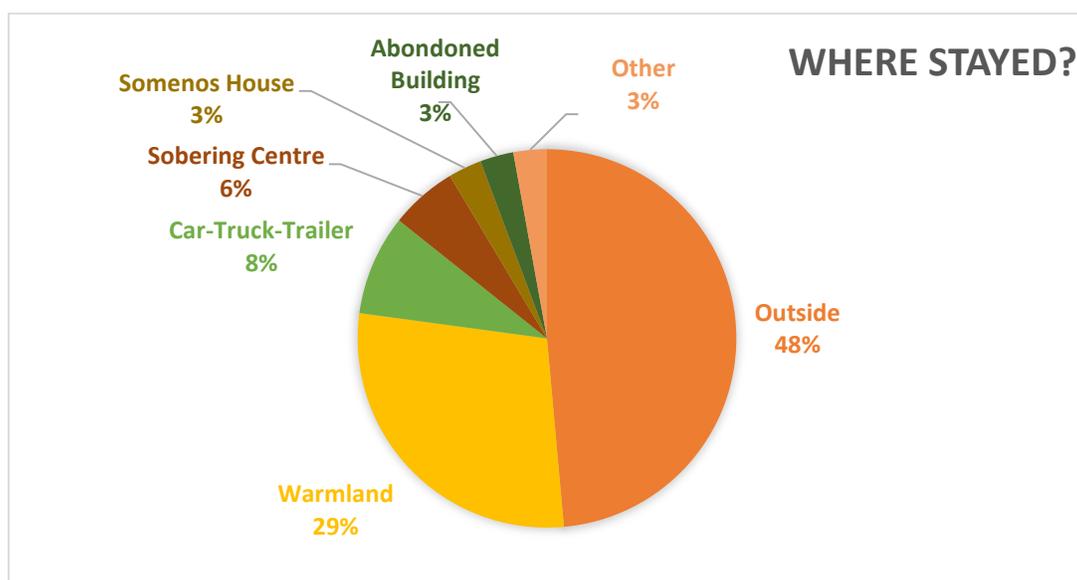


7.1 Aboriginal & Absolute Homelessness

- 35 Aboriginal people were Absolutely Homeless
- 40% of total absolute homeless population counted in CVRD (n = 89)
- 43% (33) of 76 absolute homeless people counted in Duncan/NC core area (Summer 2017)



Where did you stay last night?



**Table 3.1
PiT Comparison of Aboriginal Absolute Homelessness**

	Summer 2017 PiT Count (Regional)	Winter 2017 PiT Count (Duncan)	Winter 2014 PiT Count (Regional)
Total surveys done	189	181	259
Total # Aboriginal	90 (47%)	75 (41%)	119 (45%)
Total # of people AH	89	73	58
# Aboriginal people Absolutely Homeless	35 (39%)	26 (35%)	15 (26%)
# in Duncan/NC core	33 (94%)	26 (100%)	15 (100%)
Gender	63% (22) – Male 37% (13) - Female	50% (13) - Male 46% (12) - Female 4% (1) - Missing Data	❖
Age Range	17 – 73 Average age: 45 yrs 2 people under 25 10 people over 55	Range: 22 to 70 Average age: 42 2 people under 25 5 people over 55	❖
# who had been in foster care	22 (62%)	10 (34%)	❖
# of children	3 children with mother at SH	1 child with mother at SH	❖
How long lived here	9 – less than 2 yrs 15 – 2 to 49 yrs 11 - Always	5 – less than 2 years 14 – 2 to 30 yrs 7 - Always	❖
# of years insecure housing	Average 15 yrs Range: 6 mon - 42 yrs 14 – insecure housing began in teens	Average 20 yrs Range: 3 to 68 yrs 10 – insecure housing began in teens	❖
Used emergency shelter in past year	27 (77%)	20 (76%)	❖
# Continuously homeless	51% (18) continuously	38% (10) continuously	❖
# homeless 2 or more times in past yr	28% (10)	15% (4)	❖
Top reasons for loss of housing	48% – Abuse – Conflict 34% – Addiction 28% – Unable to Pay Rent	38% – Abuse – Conflict 30% – Eviction 23% - Addiction	❖
Income	43% (15) – Disability 32% (11) - Informal Economy 26% (9) - IA	46% (12) – IA 35% (9) – Disability 15% (4) – Informal Economy	❖

❖ No further data breakdown available for 2014

Where from if less than 2 years in Cowichan?

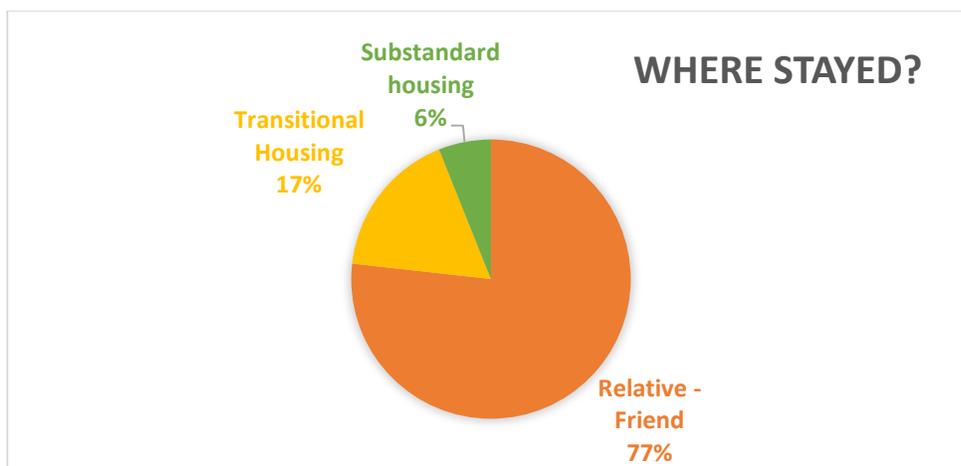
Summer 2017		Winter 2017	
3 people	Kelowna	4 people	Victoria
2 people from each of	Port Alberni Victoria		
1 person from each of	Nanaimo Ontario	1 person from each of	Parksville Vancouver

7.2 Aboriginal & Hidden Homelessness

- 61 total number of Hidden Homeless people surveyed
- 55% (34) of Hidden Homeless population was Aboriginal
- 32 – FN; 1 – Metis; 2 – Non-status

Where did you stay last night?

- 77% (26) - With relatives or friend
- 17% (6) – Warmland Transitional Housing
- 6% (2) – Substandard rooming house



Gender:

- 20 Females; 13 Males; 1 Missing Data

Age:

- Ages ranged from 19 to 68 years
- 12 people age 25 or younger
- 5 people over 55

Family Status:

- 4 families with 11 children

How long insecure housing?

- 18 people were homeless or experienced insecure housing for 1 to 7 months of the past year.
- Twelve people said they experienced insecure housing for all of last year.
- 17 (50%) had experienced homelessness or insecure housing longer than 5 years.

Accessed Emergency Shelter:

- Over half of the 34 Aboriginal people surveyed had accessed an emergency shelter in the past year. (N = 19)

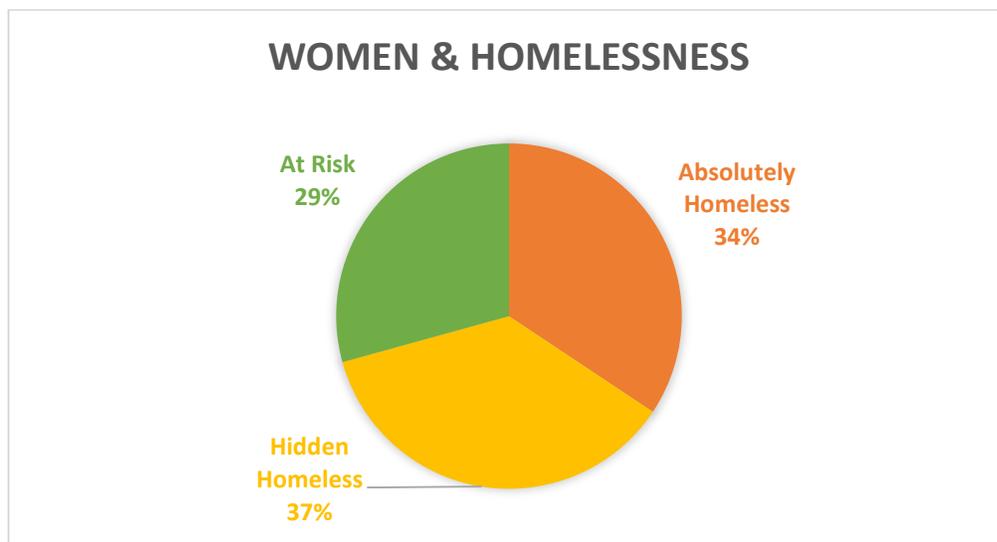
7.3 What would help you find more permanent housing? What services are needed?

<p>MORE LOW-INCOME HOUSING: (number one comment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finding something affordable. Everything is too expensive. There is nothing available at the right price.• I never had a house of my own. Not enough houses on reserve.• Not enough housing for First Nations.• Subsidized housing not low-income housing.• We need sustainable housing! Paying rent is a challenge. Being a single person, I can't afford rent on Social Assistance.• Assisted living care home for First Nations people where meals are provided.• Housing close to town.

TRUSTWORTHY ROOMMATE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a trust worthy roommate. I can't afford to live alone. • Can't find a trustworthy roommate. They all drink too much. • Someone to live with. Rent cost is too high. I'm struggling, trying to find a place on my own.
EMPLOYMENT & HELP FINDING A JOB (5 comments)
REFERENCES AND ID (2 comments)
PET ISSUES (4 comments)
NOT SURE WHERE TO LOOK FOR HOUSING (5 comments)
COMPUTER CHALLENGES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to computer. • Barriers to accessibility support in system. Have to have mailing address and apply on-line to get a birth certificate or ID.
TRANSPORTATION: (6 comments)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation for living outside of Duncan. • Transportation to another place that is more affordable. I need car insurance; sleeping in uninsured vehicle.
OTHER:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swim pass to take showers. • Food, blankets, clothing, shoes, telephone, water, places to shower. • I am starting with a camper. Have land but no water or electricity. • Knowledge of building toward owning everything in my name or family. My "owner rights."
MEDICAL – DENTAL (6 comments)
COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling • Alcohol counselling
ADVOCACY (4 comments)
DISCRIMINATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination due to 3 children and being a single mom = Issues. (2 comments) • Discrimination due to Income Assistance = Issues. • Treat people equal – no favoritism. • Ministry not helpful. Discrimination based on age. (F – Metis – 17)
OTHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords have all the power. Damage deposits held. • Help transferring social assistance file from Victoria to Duncan. • Phone for messages or internet. • Storage. • Security deposit. • There needs to be laws in place to prevent women living on reserve from being unlawfully evicted.

8. WOMEN AND HOMELESSNESS

- 79 women surveyed
- 41% of total surveys
- 34% were Absolutely Homeless



8.1 Women & Absolute Homelessness

- 30% (n = 28) of the total Absolute Homeless population – Summer 2017.
- 33% of Absolute Homeless population counted in Duncan/NC core -Summer 2017.
- 23% of Absolute Homeless population counted in Duncan/NC core -Winter 2017.
- 21% of Absolute Homeless population in regional count – Winter 2014.

The number of women and the percentage they form of the absolute homeless population was higher in the summer count than the winter 2017. This may be because milder weather is more acceptable for sleeping outdoors. As we look at the above stats we can also see a steady increase in the numbers of women who are absolutely homeless in the CVRD.

Where did you stay last night?

- 50% (14) - Outside
- 18% (5) – Warmland
- 18% (5) – Car-Truck – Trailer
- 11% (3) – Somenos House
- 3% (1) – RCMP Holding Cell

We encountered 10 of these women at one of the outdoor meals in Duncan. Six women were surveyed at Warmland and another 5 were encountered at the Cowichan Valley Basket Society. Three women were staying at Somenos House – 1 of whom chose not to be surveyed. A 22 year old female spent the night in an RCMP holding cell. Two women in Chemainus slept outside, one in a vehicle possibly with her teen daughter. A female in Lake Cowichan who was surveyed, spent the night outside.

8.2 Women & Absolute Homelessness - Demographics

Age:

The age range was 17 to 67 with the average age being 39. Three women were under the age of 25. Two were over the age of 60.

Aboriginal:

Almost half of the women who were absolutely homeless were Aboriginal; 13 women or 46%. The youngest was 17, the oldest was 67.

Family Status:

Five women were accompanied by a partner. One 17-year-old stated that she was accompanied by her mother but her mother was not with her at the time she was surveyed. Two women staying at Somenos House were accompanied by a total of four children. One other woman was thought to be travelling with a teen daughter and sleeping in a car.

Foster Care:

Ten women (36%) had experienced living in foster care. Six of those women were Aboriginal.

Accessed Emergency Health Services:

Twenty-one (75%) had accessed emergency medical services in the past year. Just over 60% of these women had accessed services one or two times; one-third reported using emergency services 3 to 12 times. Six of these women had also been hospitalized in the past year. One 48 year-old female reported being hospitalized up to 6 times.

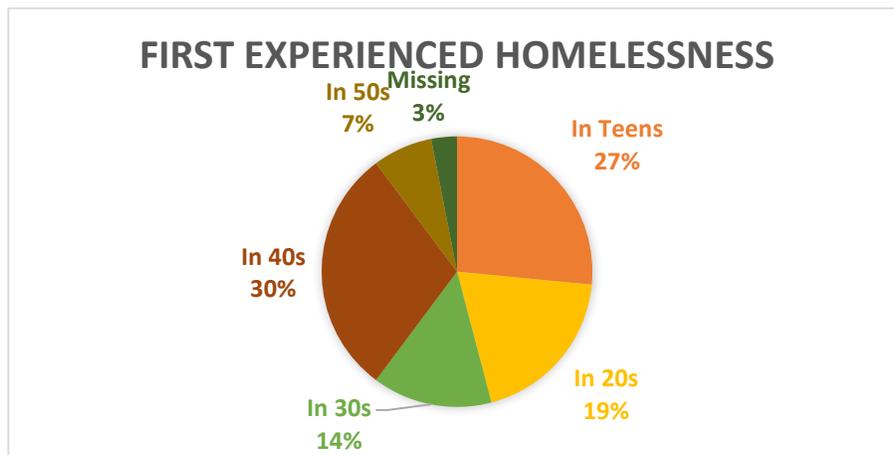
Income:

Self-Employed or Informal Economy	36% (10 cases)
Disability Allowance	28% (8 cases)
Income Assistance	25% (7 cases)
Friends - Family	21% (6 cases)
Child tax Benefits	10% (3 cases)

N = 28

Two women, ages 31 and 37, reported income from child tax benefits but neither indicated they were accompanied by a child. One slept in a trailer, the other slept outside. A third woman, age 50 who slept in a truck was thought to have a teen daughter accompanying her. She also reported child tax benefits but did not indicate anyone else was accompanying her.

8.3. Women, Absolute Homelessness + Experiences of Homelessness



For four women being homeless was relatively new with their first experiences being in the past 2 to 6 months. Eight women said they first experienced homelessness about a year ago. Seven women report first being homeless 2 to 3 years ago. For seven women, being homeless has been a long-term experience unfolding over the past eleven to thirty years.

Reasons for Loss of Housing:

Reasons for Loss of Housing	
Abuse and/or Conflict	57% (16)
Addiction	43% (12)
Unable to pay rent	36% (10)
Mental Health	32% (9)
Eviction	32% (9)

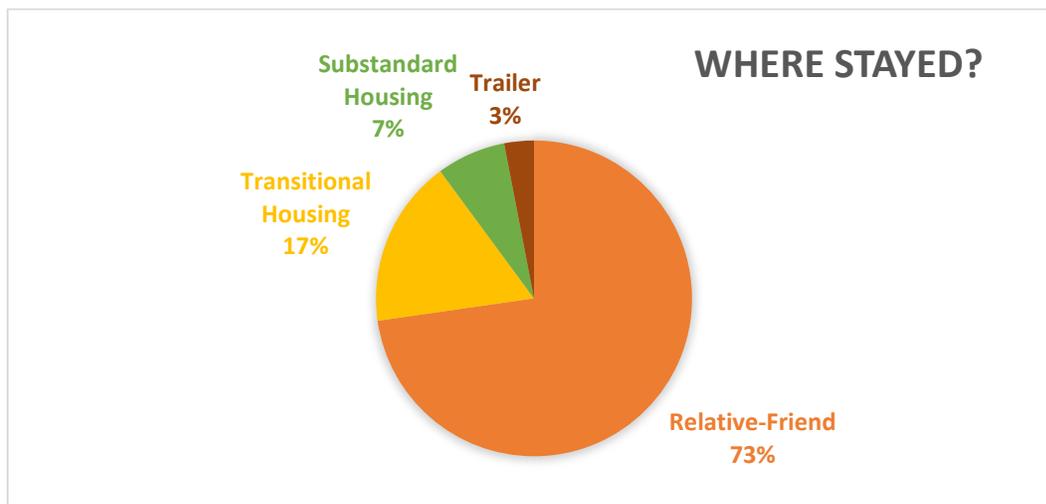
Sixteen women reported abuse and or conflict contributed to the loss of their housing. In 4 cases parents are named as the abusive party, in 5 cases a spouse was identified. Conflicts were also identified with landlords, roommates and strangers.

8.4 Women & Hidden Homelessness

- 29 of 79 women surveyed were experiencing Hidden Homelessness

Where did you stay last night?

- 73% (21) – Friends-Relatives – Couch Surfing
- 17% (5) – Warmland Transitional Housing Units
- 7% (2) – Sub-standard Rooming House
- 3% (1) – Trailer



Age:

- Ages range from 18 to 68
- Average age was 43.
- 8 women were 25 or under
- 8 women were over age 55

Family Status:

Six women said they were accompanied by a partner or other adult. Three women indicated they had children; the three women were all Aboriginal. In total they had 6 children. All three women reported staying with a friend or family member.

How long lived here?

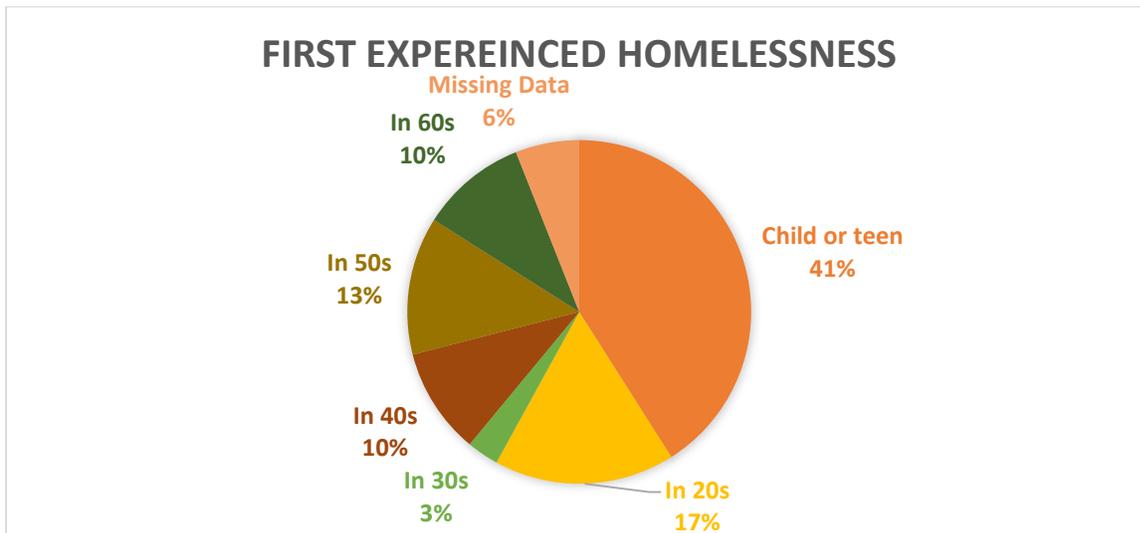
Four women lived in the CVRD less than 2 years. Twelve women said they had always lived here. The other women lived here between 2 and 40 years.

Income:

- 80% (23) were supported through Social Assistance: Income Assistance (9); Disability Benefits (14)
- 3 were employed
- 3 received seniors' benefits
- 2 received child tax benefits.
- Other sources of income were noted as: partner & workers compensation.

8.5 Women, Hidden Homelessness + Experiences of Homelessness

When did you first experienced homeless or insecure housing?



Foster Care:

- Eleven women (37%) said they had formerly been in foster care. 72% of these women were Aboriginal (n = 8).

How Long Homeless or Insecure Housing?

- 6 women experienced homelessness or insecure housing less than one year.
- 5 women indicated their housing had not been secure over the past 2 to 4 years.
- 8 women reported insecure housing over 5 to 10 years.
- 13 women indicated insecure housing has been long term over the past 11 to 40 years.

8.6 Women At Risk of Homelessness

- 23 women of 79 surveyed who were At Risk of Homelessness
- 43% of these women had children
- 24 children in all

Aboriginal:

- 10 women

How long lived in CVRD?

- 1 person had lived here less than 1 year. She came from the Okanagan.
- 15 lived here 2 to 25 years
- 7 had always lived here

First Experienced Homelessness or Insecure Housing:

- 11 in teens
- 5 in 20s
- 3 in 40s
- 3 – missing data

How long insecure housing?

- 2 - less than 2 years
- 2 - 5 to 6 years
- 14 - reported experiencing insecure housing 12 to 55 years
- 5 - missing data

Used Emergency Shelter

- 5 of the 23 “at risk” women had used an emergency shelter in the past year.

What services needed?

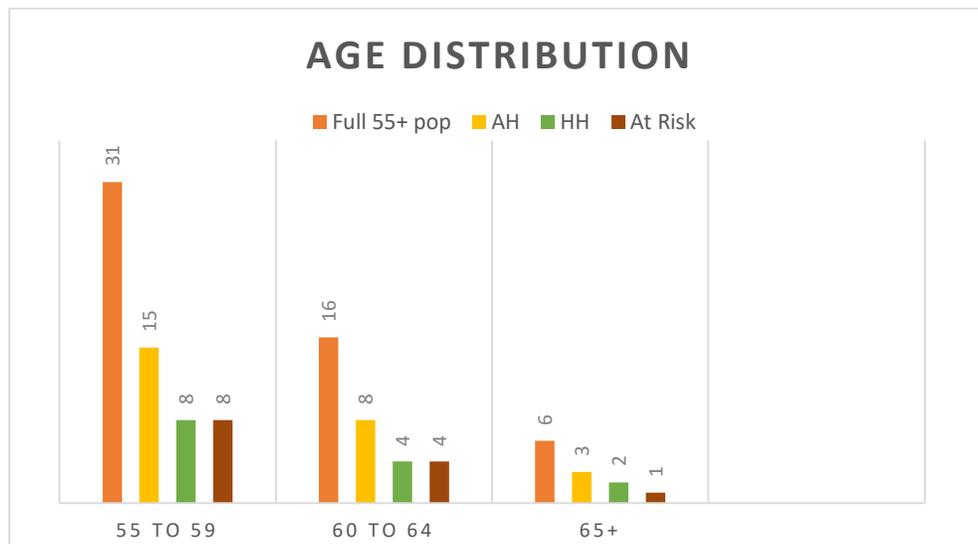
Somenos House:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ More support to help find a place, arrange viewings and explain the situation to landlords.➤ A person to do supervised visits with daughter – 18 months.➤ Need for references [on who is a good landlord] because of safety issues.
CWAV:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Police Protection➤ Child Care Support➤ Parenting Program

9. SENIORS (55+) HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING CHALLENGES

- 53 – seniors (55+) surveyed
- 26 (49%) were Absolutely Homeless

Who We Encountered:

- 49% (26) were Absolutely Homeless
- 26% (14) were experiencing Hidden Homelessness
- 24% (13) were At Risk of Homelessness



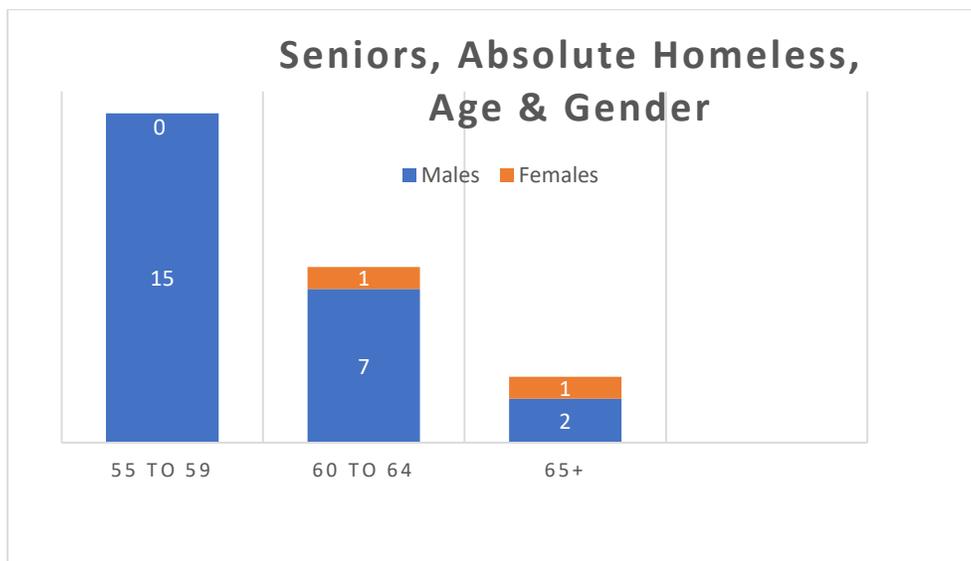
Seniors & Absolute Homelessness

- 26 Seniors were Absolutely Homeless
- 24 Males, 2 Females
- 10 were of Aboriginal Descent

Where did you stay last night?

- 54% (14) – Warmland
- 27% (7) – Outside
- 12% (3) - Car/Truck
- 3% (1)– Abandoned Building
- 3% (1) – Other

Age & Gender:



Family Status:

- One person was with a partner, two were with another adult.

How long Insecure Housing?

- 8 – people reported insecure housing 5 years or less.
- 5 – people reported insecure housing 6 to 10 years.
- 2 – people reported insecure housing 11 to 20 years.
- 8 – people reported insecure housing over 20 years.

Top Reasons Why Lost Last Stable Housing?

- 8 – Abuse - Conflict
- 7 – Mental Health
- 7 – Addiction
- 5 – Unable to Pay Rent

- 4 - Evicted

Table 9.1
Comparison Seniors 55+ - Absolute – Hidden – At Risk

	Absolute Homeless	Hidden Homeless	At Risk of Homelessness
Total # Surveyed	26	14	13
% of sub-group	29% (n = 89)	22% (n = 61)	33% (n =39)
Age	15 - 55 to 59 yrs 8 - 60 to 64 yrs 3 - 65 to 73 yrs	8 – 55 to 59 yrs 4 – 60 to 64 yrs 2 – 65 to 68 yrs	8 – 55 to 59 yrs 4 – 60 to 64 yrs 1 – 65 to 69 yrs
Gender	2 – female 24 - male	8 – female 5 - male 1 – missing data	6 - female 6 - male 1 – missing data
# Aboriginal	38% (10)	36% (5)	46% (6)
Where Stayed?	14 - Warmland 7 - Outdoors 3 - Car/Truck/Trailer 1 - Shack 1 - Other	7 – Relative-Friends 5 – Transitional Housing 1 – Trailer 1 – Substandard Room	9 – Rent - Apartment 2 – Rent – House 1 – Rent - RV 1 – Lives on Boat
Stayed at Emergency Shelter in past year	80% (21)	42% (6)	30% (4)
How Long Lived Here	6 – less than 2 yrs 6 – 3 to 10 yrs 14 – 11 yrs to Always	3 – Less than 2 yrs 5 – 3 to 10 yrs 6 – 6 yrs to Always	2 – Less than 2 yrs 4 – 3 to 10 yrs 6 – 5 yrs to Always 1 – missing data
Top Reasons why lost last stable housing	8 – Abuse or Conflict 7 – Mental Health 7 - Addiction	6 – Abuse or Conflict 6 – Unable to pay rent 2 - Addiction	7 – Mental Health 5 – Abuse - Conflict 5 – Job Loss
In Foster Care	5 people - 4 were FN	2 – people - both FN	3 people – 1 FN
Income	12 – Disability 6 – IA 8 – Informal Economy	9 – Disability 4 – Seniors’ Benefits	9 – Disability 3 – Senior’s Benefits
Other:	Two served in military		3 people had others living with them including 4 children under 18

Table 9.2
Comparison of Seniors Absolutely Homeless – Duncan/NC Core Area
Summer & Winter PiT Counts 2017

	Summer 2017	Winter 2017
# 55 Plus Counted	26	20
% of AH Pop	29% (of 89)	27% (of 73)
% of Duncan/NC Core Count	34% (n = 76)	27% (n = 73)
Gender	2 – female 24 - male	1 – female (61 yrs old, FN) 18 – Males 1 – Missing data
First Nations	10	5
Age Range	15 - 55 to 59 yrs 8 - 60 to 64 yrs 2 - 65 to 73 yrs	13 – 55 to 59 yrs 2 - 60 to 64 yrs 4 – 65 to 72 yrs

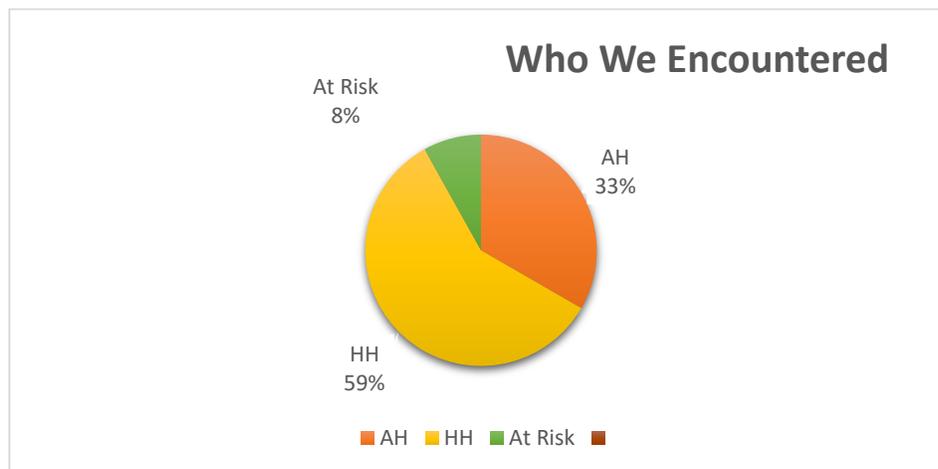
A breakdown of the data for the 2014 winter Count is not available for comparison purposes; however, we do know that 60% of the CVRD homeless population surveyed at that time was over 50 years of age. The average age was 49 and 45% of those surveyed were between the ages of 50 and 59. The oldest person surveyed was 68.

10. YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS & HOMELESSNESS

- 24 individuals between the ages of 17 and 25

Who We Encountered:

- 33% (8) – Absolutely Homeless
- 59% (14) – Hidden Homeless
- 8% (2) – At Risk



Where did we meet these youth and young adults?

- 7 – Outdoor Meals
- 5 – Warmland
- 5 – Basket Society
- 1 – CWAV
- 1 – RCMP Holding Cell
- 5 – Chemainus

Table 10.1
Youth, Young Adults & Homelessness

	Absolute Homeless	Hidden Homeless	At Risk
Number	8	14	2
Age Range	17 to 24	18 to 25	22 to 25
Gender	4 – Males 4 - Females	6 – Males 8 - Females	1 – Male 1 - Female
Aboriginal	2 - Metis	11 – First Nations 1 – Non-Status	1 – First Nations
Education	Grade 10 to 1 yr University	Grade 8 to 12	Grade 8-9
Foster Care	5 – had been in FC	9 – Foster Care	1 – Foster Care
Income	3 – employed 3 – Informal – self- employed 3 – IA & Disability 2 – Friends Family 2 – No Income	6 – Disability 6 – Income Assistance 4 - Other	1 – Disability 1 – Income Assistance
How Long lived Here	1 person - one month, 6 lived here 5 yrs to always	2 people 7-9 months 2 people 7 to 22 yrs 10 always lived here	2 – Always lived here
First Experienced Insecure Housing	Between ages 15 & 22 How long: 1 to 6 yr Average: 2.4 yrs	Between ages 7 & 21 How Long: 1 to 17 yrs Average: 16.6	Between ages 21 & 24 How Long: 1 yr Average: 1 yr
Why Lost Housing	Conflict/Abuse – 4 Mental Health – 4 Evicted - 2	Conflict/Abuse – 8 Unable to pay rent – 7 Addiction – 6 Mental Health – 4 Unsafe - 4	2 – Unsafe 1 – Unable to pay rent

- Missing Data for 1 individual – Absolute Homeless

What would have Helped?

- More support for those with disabilities and mental health issues.
- Substance abuse counselling and income assistance.
- More services. I don't know where they are.
- No where to go after foster care.
- Mental health services, detox centre for youth that is continued on.
- Foster system better overseen and extend age of help. (2 cases)
- Its either food or a home.
- Experienced prejudice.
- Landlords con you.
- Landlords not renting to people who have children.

Services Needed?

- Youth advocate. (3 mentions)
- Was cut off meds at 18.
- Assistance with housing and getting children back.

More on Housing Challenges

- Ministry not helpful. Discrimination based on age. (17 yr old – in foster care)
- Need youth rental units with support.
- People take advantage of you when you are homeless. Sister – stay here if you do sex.
- Longer time in supportive housing.

Their Stories:

- 17-year old female – Metis - surveyed at McAdams Park – spent night outside/camping – accompanied by her mother (not with her when surveyed) – homeless: 2 years – always lived here – Why lost housing: evicted, conflict – was in foster care
- Male - First Nations – 19 - Experienced prejudice. Would like to see an advocate for youth. Cut off meds at 18. Need youth rental units with support. Better transit needed. Nothing on reserve. Need better transit so people can live on reserve and go to work. People take advantage of you when you are homeless. My sister – You can stay here if you do sex.

- 20-year old male – Warmland -insecure/homeless 1 year – insecure housing 3 times over 3 months in the past year – Gr 12 – unable to find work - no income.
- Female 20 – First Nations – Couch surfing – What would help? Affordable housing; on-going support; mental health services; youth addiction services and detox center for youth that is continued on. Q. Services wanted and not available? “No family. No Help. No place to live. Foster care better over-seen [supervised]; and extended age of help [support].” Q- Anything else? “Longer time in supportive housing.”
- 21-year old male – Warmland – insecure housing 1 year – continuous concern – Why housing loss? Conflict family, mental health – previously in foster care – now Income Assistance and informal work.
- 22-year old female - RCMP Holding Cell – homeless/insecure housing 3 years – formerly in foster care.
- 22-year old male – Warmland – Metis – insecure housing 6 years – always lived here – has stayed at shelter in past year – reasons for loss of housing: job loss, abuse, mental health. Had been in foster care – now living on Income Assistance.
- 22-year old female – reported using emergency services up to 12 times in past year. No where to go after foster care – not enough money on disability – its either food or a home – there is no third choice.

11. HOMELESSNESS BY COMMUNITY

11.1 Duncan – North Cowichan Core Area

Table 11.1
Summer Pit Homeless Count 2017 – Duncan/North Cowichan

ABSOLUTELY HOMELESS	HIDDEN HOMELESS	AT RISK
Counted - 76	Surveyed - 47	Surveyed - 28
Where Stayed: 53% (41) – Sleeping Rough 34% (26) – Warmland 3% (3) -Somenos House 8% (6) - Other	36% (17) – Warmland – TH units 61% (29) – Friends – Family 2% (1) - Trailer	All Renting
Age Range: Average: 45 Range – 17 to 73	Average: 43 Range – 18 to 68	Average: 46 Range – 22 to 69
Gender: 65% (50) - Male 33% (25) – Female 2% (1) – Missing Data	53% (25) - Males 44% (21) – Females 2% (1) – Missing Data	32% (9) -Males 64% (18) - Females 3% (1) - Missing Data
% Aboriginal: 43% Aboriginal (N = 33)	58% Aboriginal (N = 28)	57% Aboriginal (N = 16)
Been in Foster care? 35% (N = 27)	39% (N = 19)	32% (N = 9)
How long lived here? 60% (N = 46) lived here two years to Always	79% lived here two years to Always	92% lived here two years to Always
How long Homeless? 33% (25) - 1 year or less 15% (11) - 2 to 5 years 49% (37) - over 5 years 2% (2) – Missing Data	11% (5) - 1 year or less 32% (15) - 2 to 5 years 53% (25) - over 5 years 4% (2) - Missing Data	17% (5) - 1 year or less 7% (2) - 2 to 5 years 68% (19) - over 5 years 7% (2) - Missing Data

11.2 - Ladysmith

- 17 Surveys Completed
- 5 - Absolutely Homeless
- 1 - Hidden Homeless
- 11 - At Risk

In the winter of 2013, a 55 year old male froze to death in a city park. He had been a long time resident of Ladysmith but had become homeless in recent years. Following this tragic loss and aware of other people in the community who were homeless (including a squatters' camp), local residents came together to form a Homeless Action Committee. After 2 years of hard work, they opened an Extreme Weather Shelter in 2015. Operating through Ladysmith Resource Centre, service providers have worked hard to provide shelter to those in need.

Even though some residents were aware of an on-going, but fluctuating, homeless population, when the 2014 homeless count took place, only one person was identified as absolutely homeless in Ladysmith. In 2017, we can see more evidence of homelessness in the community with 5 people counted as absolutely homeless.

For the 2017 summer homeless count in Ladysmith, count sites were located at the Ladysmith Resource Centre, the food bank, a local soup kitchen and the Extreme Weather Shelter was open for part of the Count day. Seventeen surveys were completed.

Some Stories - Ladysmith:

- I am happy with my current rental but it was hard to find housing. I am providing temporary housing for another person who is homeless. The shelter at Ladysmith should be available full-time. We built a shelter in Ladysmith. It should be open. Should be a contact number on the door for sleeping. There are 6 people in Ladysmith sleeping outside.
- Male 45 – I own a mobile but can't remove it. Ex-lady friend and kids live in it. I live in my car until I can take possession of my trailer." What would help? "A place a low income family could afford. My Ex is living in my trailer with her 2 kids. They can't afford to move and if I kick them out there will be 3 homeless people. So, for now, I live in my car."
- There is no bylaw enforcement or health inspectors. There is no help for tenants. No rentals available. Housing is too expensive.

Services Needed:

- Male – 30 – Metis. What would help you find more permanent housing? “I need support from a mental health worker. I also need an advocate for re-establishing my ID.”
- Male 58 – has a camper. Needs it moved. Has no place to put camper. Services needed: Medical for homeless, dentist, addictions help.
- Legal Aid, housing advocate, child care support, parenting program, counselling.
- Drug and Alcohol Counselling, Housing Outreach, Advocacy.
- Advocacy, housing support, [Landlords] taking better care of property. Mental health and addiction support. Counselling. Legal Aid. Help with reconnection fees.
- Housing support; better upkeep of property. Better maintained, repaired, updated.
- Income Assistance office, Advocate, better transit system.
- Counselling for addictions
- An electric cart to get to and from boat.
- A place to anchor my boat.
- Renovations and upgrading [of rentals].
- More landlord monitoring and Bylaw enforcement.

11.3 - Chemainus

- 14 surveys completed – Aug 14 to Aug 21
- 3 people Absolutely Homeless
- 11 people Hidden Homeless

In 2014, service providers were aware of several people who were homeless and/or struggling with their housing. However, when the 2014 winter homeless count happened, no one who was homeless was encountered in Chemainus. For the summer 2017 count, we agreed to extend the timeframe for the Count in Chemainus and allowed four days. Fourteen surveys were conducted and 3 people were identified as absolutely homeless. A few days after the Count, service providers were still encountering people who were struggling with their housing, including several youth sleeping in an old boat.

Some Stories - Chemainus:

- Chemainus does not have much for services – except for the Neighbourhood House. There is not much housing available and many landlords are taking advantage of the situation.
- What would be helpful? Less discrimination, more support; not enough mental or drug addiction support; laundry facilities. Being alone, I do not feel safe sleeping in my car in public areas.
- 50 year old female. What would help? “A place with a kitchen and bathroom that I could afford. I’m tired of a bare room that costs a fortune. I need an affordable home.”
- Housing is way too expensive. It is hard to work when you can’t stay at the same location to sleep or eat.
- What would help? “To get disability allowance, welfare said I had to have a family doctor. I don’t. So, I wasn’t able to get disability benefits. I was married. I had an accident – fell off a roof. Had an injury, lost sight in one eye and some vision from the other eye. Now I can’t take lots of people. I get panic attacks. I lost everything. I am not married any more.”
- Experienced prejudice. Advocate for youth. Cut off meds at 18. Need youth rental unit with support. Better transit needed. Nothing on reserve. Need better transit so people can live on reserve and go to work
- What services needed? Local doctor. Poor bus services. Computer Access. Laundry facility.

11. 4 - Lake Cowichan

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 Surveys Completed• 2 people Absolutely Homeless• 2 people Hidden Homeless |
|---|

- Male – 44 – Spent night outside – Accompanied by partner. Insecure housing 9 years.
- Female – 34 – Spent night outside – Accompanied by partner. Insecure housing 12 years.
- Male – 31 – Stayed at someone else’s place – Insecure housing 14 years (started at age 17). Was in foster care. What happened that caused you to lose the last stable housing you had? “Conflict with MCFD.”
- Male – 50 – Stayed at someone else’s place – Insecure housing 10 years. Accessed emergency shelter 2 times in past year.

11.5 - Mill Bay

- 2 people identified as Absolutely Homeless
- 1 survey completed

- Male – 64 – homeless over 10 years. Known in the community. Lives on old boat. Income Assistance. Does odd jobs for people.
- Male – 50 – Homeless on and off for many years. Stayed in Assisted Living for some time but “does not like rules.” Mental Health issues. Lives outside. Does odd jobs. Known to local RCMP.

11.6 - Cowichan Valley Regional Areas

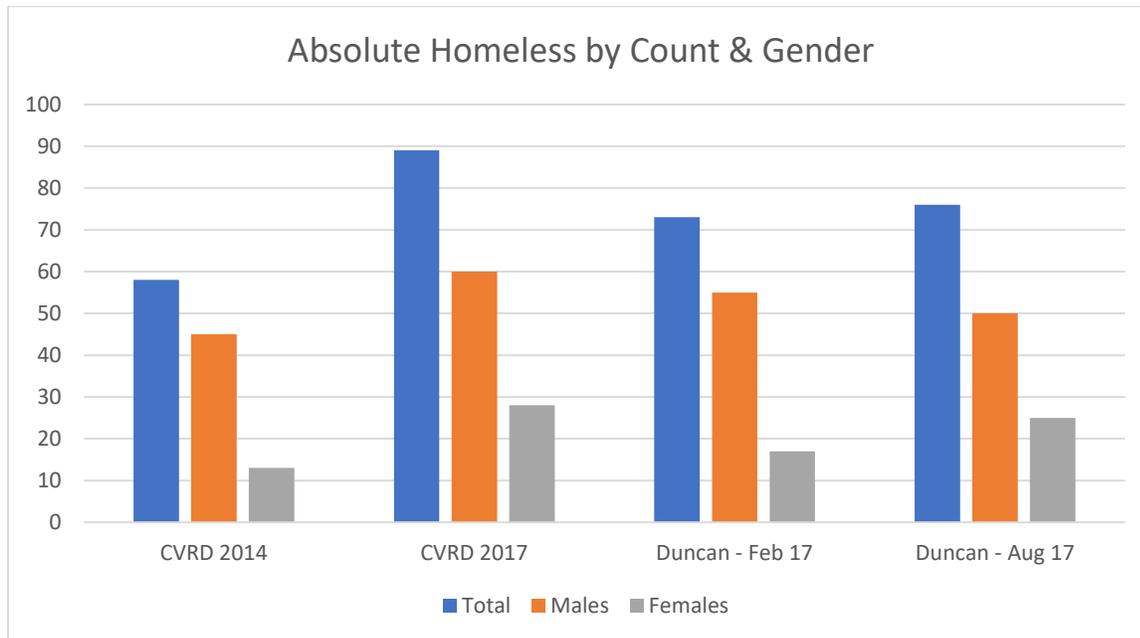
From insights gained through earlier homeless counts, we know that many people who are homeless throughout the CVRD tend to stay close to a community hub where they can access vital services – at the very least, a food bank. This does not mean homelessness in the CVRD is limited to larger communities; however, it is hard to locate and Count people in the rural areas. To compensate for this, we did a brief scan of the rural areas by reaching out to key informants living in the regional districts. These were people who might know if there was someone who was homeless and sleeping rough in their area. We also asked for their impressions of the housing need in their community. Unfortunately, the response was not high and does not reflect a representative sampling of regional districts. That said, a few themes emerged that may resonate with many rural neighbourhoods in the CVRD.

- Not many observations of people sleeping rough but from time to time it does happen.
 - “There was a fellow sleeping in an derelict trailer for a time. But he has moved on now.”
 - “There was a person camped on a property but he was kicked out by the owner and is gone now.”
 - “We found blankets and an old fort behind the centre but never observed anyone staying there.”
- Concern raised that housing and facilities in some mobile home & RV parks is not well maintained. Some “slum” conditions noted; such as a 75-year old female whose home is not hooked up to sewer.
- Live aboard boats were noted as being “problematic.”

- The option of secondary suites was mentioned as a way to create more housing. However, it was also noted that in some cases people are charging well over a \$1000 for rent in secondary suites making these units unaffordable for many people.
- “There are some difficult rental situations. I am aware of a couple that fixed up their rental accommodations and then the landlord decided to move back in. People are moving into rental units that are not in the best shape but they do it so they can have somewhere secure to stay. They may be taking places that are not ideal.”
- Aware of need for affordable housing in the rural communities.
 - “I know of two local families that may have to leave the community because they can’t find housing.”
 - “Younger people can’t afford to buy homes here.”

CONCLUSIONS

Is the number of people who are absolutely homeless in the CVRD increasing?



- Looking at the above chart, we can see there has been over a 50% increase in the number of people counted as homeless in the CVRD from the winter of 2014 (n = 58) to the summer of 2017 (n = 89). Increase = 53%.
- The 2014 report indicates that 96% (n = 56) of those who were absolutely homeless were encountered in the Duncan-North Cowichan core area. In the summer of 2017 the number of absolutely homeless people was 76 individuals. This is a 36% increase.
- In 2014, only 2 people were counted as Absolutely Homeless outside of Duncan. In the 2017 summer count, 12 people outside the core area were identified as Absolutely Homeless. This is a substantial increase.
- By the results of the summer Count, there does not appear to be a substantial increase from winter to summer in the numbers of people who are Absolutely Homeless and residing in the Duncan core area (winter N = 73; summer N = 76).
- When we look at the population of people who are Absolutely Homeless by gender we see minor fluctuations with an overall trend that men are twice as likely as women to be Absolutely Homeless.
- The number of Aboriginal people counted as Absolutely Homeless has increased 50% from 26% in 2014 to 39% in 2017.

Table C.1
A Comparison CVRD & Duncan PiT Homeless Counts
Absolute Homelessness - Winter & Summer, 2014 & 2017

	ABSOLUTE HOMELESS CVRD Winter 2014	ABSOLUTE HOMELESS CVRD Summer 2017	ABSOLUTE HOMELESS DUNCAN Winter 2017	ABSOLUTE HOMELESS DUNCAN Summer 2017
Counted -	58	89	73	76
Where Stayed	58% – Emergency Shelter 14% – camping 14% – Motels on vouchers 6% – Somenos House 6% – Cars, Truck 2% – Abandoned Building	60% - Sleeping Rough 29% - Warmland 3% - Somenos House 7% - Other	59% – Warmland 36% – Sleeping Rough 3% – Somenos House 3% – Didn't know where would sleep that night	34% – Warmland 53% - Sleeping Rough 3% – Somenos House 8% - Other
Age Range	Average Age: 49 Age range: 22 to 68	Average Age: 45 yrs Age Range: 17 to 73	Average Age: 45	Average Age: 45 Range: 17 to 73
Gender	79% - Male 21% - Female	69% (60) - Male 29% (28) - Female 2% (1) - Missing Data	75% (55) – Male 23% (17) – Female 2% (1) – Missing Data	65% (50) - Male 33% (25) – Female 2% (1) – Missing Data
% Aboriginal	26% Aboriginal	39% Aboriginal (N = 35)	35% Aboriginal (N = 26)	43% Aboriginal (N = 33)
Been in Foster care?	Not Available	31% (N = 28) 67% Aboriginal (N = 19)	34 % (N = 25) 36% Aboriginal (N = 9)	35% (N = 27) 66% Aboriginal (N = 18)
How long lived here?	61% in Cowichan longer than 5 yrs	59% over 2 years	24 – less than one yr 67% (49) – five yrs to always	60% (N = 46) longer than 2 years
Income	- 46% in Income Assistance - 24% working	39% - Disability Allowance 28% - Income Assistance 31% - Informal Economy	69% Income Assistance & Disability Income	
Stayed at Shelter	Not Available	67% (60)	85% (62)	76% (58)
How long Insecure Housing?	60% homeless for 1 yr or longer	30% (27) homeless less than 1 yr 15% (13) – 2 to 5 yrs 48% (43) – more than 5 yrs	Not Available	33% (25) homeless less than 1 yr 15% (11) homeless 2 to 5 yrs 49% - over 5 yrs

		6% (5) missing data		2 – missing data
Top Reasons for loss of housing	72% - Could not pay rent 24% - Addiction 18% - Relationship Breakdown 16% - Conflict	40% - Abuse/Conflict 31% - Addiction 28% - Mental Health	30% – Addiction 29% – Abuse/Conflict 27% – Job loss 23% - Illness	37% - Abuse/Conflict 24% - Addiction 23% - Unable to Pay Rent 22% - Mental Health

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Definitions of Homelessness

Appendix B: You Count Poster

Appendix C: Homelessness & Housing Needs Survey

APPENDIX A

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

Absolutely Homeless: The focus of a 2016 national Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Point in Time Count was on people who were absolutely homeless. The HPS definition provided below of absolute homelessness was used in this Count.

- ***Sheltered homelessness** includes people sleeping in the following locations: emergency shelters (general and specific to men, women, youth, etc.), extreme weather shelters, Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, and [short-term] transitional housing. It may include people who receive hotel/motel vouchers in lieu of shelter beds. It does not include people in Housing First programs or in social or subsidized housing.*
- ***Unsheltered homelessness** includes people who are sleeping in places unfit for human habitation, including the following locations: streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles, ravines and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.*

When we apply this definition to the summer Count, the above definition of homelessness includes:

- Warmland Emergency Shelter – Anyone staying in the emergency shelter beds;
- Somenos Transition House – Any women staying at the emergency shelter for women fleeing domestic violence.
- People who are being temporarily housed in local motels under a voucher by one of the Ministries.
- People sleeping outside or in places unintended for human habitation.

Hidden Homeless: The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness⁶ (COH) defines people who are Provisionally Housed as:

- *This describes situations in which people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, access accommodation that offer 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 [with friends or relatives].*

In the 2014 homeless Count in the Cowichan Region, people in the above groups were referred to as Relatively Homeless. Hidden homelessness is another term used for this population. These terms will be used inter-changeably here.

⁶ The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness is a recognized centre of expertise on homelessness in Canada. See: <http://homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition>

For the summer PiT Count, people who were relatively homeless were:

- Living in transitional housing units on and off-site at Warmland under the care of Canadian Mental Health.
- People who were staying at someone else's place—*couch surfing*. People temporarily staying with friends or family but who do not have security of tenure and could be required to leave at any time.
- People who were staying in temporary rental accommodation, such as a motel unit, where they were paying but there was no long-term prospects of housing.
- People staying at local institutions who could not be released because there was no home or appropriate place for them to reside. This includes such places as the hospital or a youth detention centre.

At Risk: Drawing on another COH definition, the guideline for identifying people at risk of homeless is:

- *[People] living in housing that is intended for permanent human habitation, and could potentially be permanent (as opposed to those who are provisionally accommodated). However, as a result of external hardship, poverty, personal crisis, discrimination, a lack of other available and affordable housing, insecurity of tenure and / or the inappropriateness of their current housing (which may be overcrowded or does not meet public health and safety standards) residents may be "at risk" of homelessness.*

For the summer PiT Count a partial list of people this may include is:

- People who are at risk of losing their housing because their household income is insufficient to cover their basic shelter and non-shelter costs. Members of these households may go month-to-month doing without certain basic necessities (such as heat or proper nutrition) and may rely on food banks to help cover monthly food costs.
- People who are living in sub-standard housing that is not being properly maintained by landlords and may be without heat, may have extensive issues with mold, or may not have proper cooking or washing facilities.
- People who are paying rent to live in nonconventional structures that are unheated and uninsulated and not generally intended as a permanent residence.

The Canadian Observatory of Homelessness further recognizes:

No matter the level of probability, all who can be categorized as being "at risk" of homelessness possess a shared vulnerability; for them, a single event, unexpected expense, crisis, or trigger is all it may take for them to lose their housing. As the risk factors mount and compound, so too does the possibility of becoming homeless.⁷

⁷ Canadian Definition of Homelessness – Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.
<<http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf?>>

YOU COUNT! COUNT YOURSELF IN!



- Are you homeless or worried that you might be soon?
- Are you couch surfing?
- Come take this survey!
- We want to hear from you!
- Your answers will help figure out what services are needed in the community.

Homelessness & Housing Needs Survey

Free Breakfast

Wednesday, August 15

McAdams Park by the Tennis Courts

This project is funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnership Strategy.

**Cowichan Region PiT Homelessness and Housing Needs Survey
August 15 - 16, 2017**

Survey # _____

Location: _____

Interviewer's Initials: _____

Time: AM / PM

Hi. We are doing a survey with people who are experiencing homelessness or who are having other housing challenges. The information will help identify services that are needed in our community AND it may help in getting funding for these programs.

The survey is confidential.

A. Would you be willing to complete the survey? It should take 10 minutes. You can skip any question or stop any time.

- Yes (CONTINUE)
- No (END)

B. First, I just want to check, have you already answered this survey with anyone today (or yesterday)?

- Yes – *(Thank them and end survey.)*
- No. Great! Let's get started.

C. Are you experiencing homelessness or any challenges around housing?

- a. Yes *(Continue)*.
- b. If No *(End Survey)*.

D. Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?

- a. Yes
- b. No

E. Where did you stay last night? *(You do not need to read categories, but you can. Please probe to be sure you have the right response for the individual.)*

A. Warmland EMERGENCY SHELTER	F. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING (such as Warmland long-term transitional units)
B. Somenos WOMEN'S TRANSITION HOUSE	G. SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE (family or friend) (Probe)
C. OUTSIDE in a park, a wooded area, by the river • Probe: In a tent, makeshift shelter	H. MOTEL/HOTEL
D. VEHICLE: Car / Truck	I. APARTMENT (Renting)
E. ABANDONED BUILDING OR A SHACK	J. OWN RV / TRAILER
	K. OWN HOUSE

1. Did any other family members accompany you last night? (Or if renting: Do any other family members live with you?)

- A. None B. Partner C. Other Adult D. Children

➤ Can you tell me the ages and gender of the children?

CHILDREN	1	2	3	4
Age				
Gender				

The next few questions are about your experience of homelessness meaning anytime you have been without a secure place to live.

2. How old were you the first time you became homeless? (Or: When you first experienced insecure housing?)

<input type="radio"/> FIRST EXPERIENCED INSECURE HOUSING:	<input type="radio"/> FIRST BECAME HOMELESS:	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
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3. In the past year, have you stayed at an emergency shelter at any time? (In Duncan or elsewhere.)

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW	<input type="radio"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
---------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------------	---

4. In the past year, how many different times have you experienced homelessness or not having your own, secure place to live? (Best estimate.)

<input type="radio"/> NUMBER OF TIMES _____ (Including this time)	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
---	----------------------------------

5. In the past year, how much time have you been homeless? Or been without your own secure place to live? (Best estimate)

<input type="radio"/> LENGTH _____ DAYS WEEKS MONTHS	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
--	----------------------------------

6. How long have you been in this community?

<input type="radio"/> LENGTH ~ # of <i>DAYS / WEEKS / MONTHS / YEARS</i>	<input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW
<input type="radio"/> ALWAYS BEEN HERE	

7. (If person has been here less than 2 years, ask:) **Where did you live before you came here?**

- COMMUNITY?
- PROVINCE?
- OR COUNTRY?

8. **There can be many reasons why people are without their own place to live. What happened that caused you to lose the last stable housing you had?**

(Show list and check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> JOB LOSS	<input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS
<input type="checkbox"/> UNABLE TO PAY RENT OR MORTGAGE	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONDITION
<input type="checkbox"/> EVICTED FOR OTHER REASON (NOT FINANCIAL)	<input type="checkbox"/> ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE
<input type="checkbox"/> UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INCARCERATION (JAIL OR PRISON)
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED ABUSE:	<input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALIZATION OR TREATMENT PROGRAM
➤ BY PARENT / GUARDIAN	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER REASON (<i>Probe</i>):
➤ BY SPOUSE / PARTNER	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPERIENCED CONFLICT:	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
➤ WITH ROOMMATE(S)	
➤ WITH OTHERS? WHO?	

The next few questions are about you and your background.

9. **First, can you please tell me your mother's initials?** _____

10. **Do you have any First Nations, Métis, or Inuit ancestry?** *(If yes, please follow up to specify.)*

YES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> FIRST NATIONS <input type="radio"/> INUIT <input type="radio"/> MÉTIS <input type="radio"/> NON-STATUS / HAVE ABORIGINAL ANCESTRY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/> DON'T KNOW <input type="radio"/> OTHER <hr/>
---	---

11. (Skip if the response was yes to last question.) Did you come to Canada as an immigrant or refugee within the past five years?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
---------------------------	--------------------------	--

12. Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP?

<input type="radio"/> YES, MILITARY	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
<input type="radio"/> YES, RCMP		

13. How old are you?

<input type="radio"/> AGE _____	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER
---------------------------------	--

14. Do you identify as being male, female, gay, lesbian, transgender, or other?

<input type="radio"/> MALE	<input type="radio"/> GAY	<input type="radio"/> OTHER:
<input type="radio"/> FEMALE	<input type="radio"/> LESBIAN	
	<input type="radio"/> TRANSGENDER	<input type="radio"/> DECLINED TO ANSWER

15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

--

16. Have you ever been in foster care or a group home?

<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
---------------------------	--------------------------

17. In the past 12 months, have you:

a. Used emergency medical services Yes: _____ No: _____

➤ (If yes) How many times? _____

18. In the past 12 months have you been hospitalized for more than 2 days?

Yes: _____ No: _____

➤ (If yes) How many times? _____

19. We are interested to know how people are supporting themselves. Will you tell me how you support yourself? (Show list and check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYED	<input type="checkbox"/> DISABILITY BENEFITS	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER SOURCES:
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMAL/SELF-EMPLOYMENT (E.G., BOTTLE RETURNS, PANHANDLING)	<input type="checkbox"/> SENIORS BENEFITS (e.g., CPP/OAS/GIS)	<input type="checkbox"/> NO INCOME
<input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> CHILD AND FAMILY TAX BENEFITS	<input type="checkbox"/> DECLINE TO ANSWER
<input type="checkbox"/> INCOME ASSISTANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> MONEY FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS	

Last couple of questions

20. What would help you find more permanent housing?

21. Are there any services you wanted but were unable to get?

22. Last question. Is there anything else you would like to share about the housing challenges you have had or are having now?

Thank you for doing this survey! (Give gift card.)