



homeward trust
edmonton

opening doors. building hope.

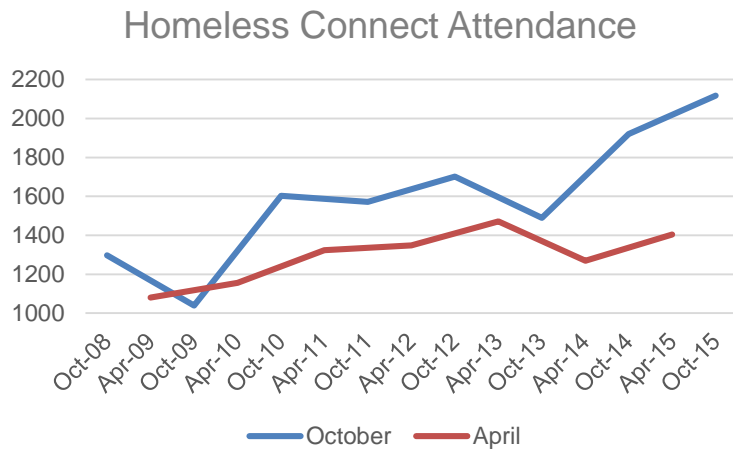
Homeless Connect Report

October 2015

Homeless Connect Edmonton is a broad-based community-inspired initiative, providing free appropriate services to people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless, on one day and at one location.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The October 2015 Homeless Connect drew 2,117 independent participants and 318 dependent children – a significant increase from the previous year.



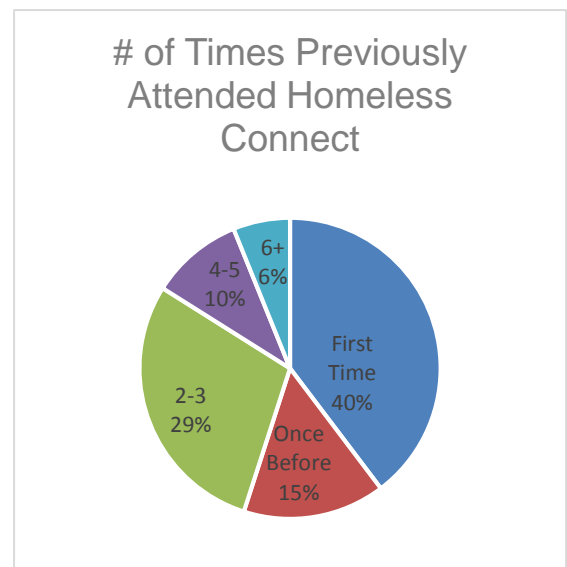
Based on registration numbers; excludes dependent children, as data not available for all years.

WHO COMES TO HOMELESS CONNECT

About 40% of participants are presently homeless and 60% have been previously homeless or are otherwise at risk of becoming homeless, excluding those who declined to participate in the survey. As with the previous year, 40% of attendees were there for the first time –one in six participants has attended at least four times previously.

Total Participants	2,435
Homeless Adults and Independent Youth	679
Homeless Children (dependents)	32
At-Risk Adults and Independent Youth	1004
At-Risk Children (dependents)	220
Did Not Answer Survey	434
Did Not Answer Survey (dependents)	66

The characteristics of Homeless Connect participants generally matched those of the broader homeless population, as reported in the Homeless Count, with a couple of exceptions, noted below. For instance, people who identified as aboriginal made up 48% of Connect participants and 47% of those in the Homeless Count. There is also some additional information from the Connect event not available in the Homeless Count, for example, differences between those experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness (as people at-risk of homelessness are not interviewed in the Homeless Count).

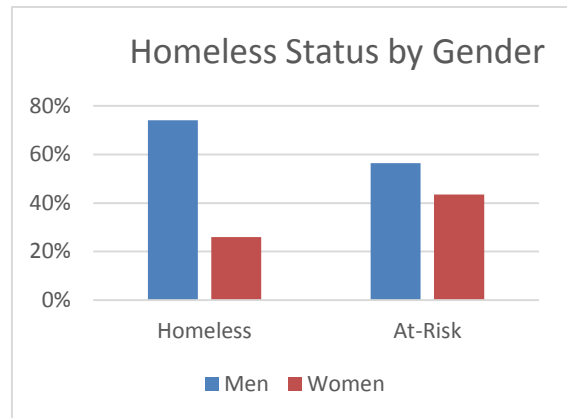


LGBTQ2S

6% of participants identified as members of the LGBTQ2S community, though this is likely a low estimate as this characteristic is typically under-reported. Women and youth were much more likely to identify with this group (10% of women, 20% of youth under 24, and 30% of females under 24).

GENDER

Women comprised 36% of participants, but were more likely to be at risk of homelessness than presently homeless. Just over a quarter of those presently experiencing homelessness were female (similar to results in the count), compared to 44% of at-risk participants.



NEWCOMERS TO EDMONTON

Approximately 30% of participants were born in Edmonton, 30% moved from elsewhere in the province (especially smaller communities) and 30% came from other parts of the country. Just under 10% were born in other countries, though many had lived here for a long time. Participants who had been in Edmonton for less than three years (30% of the total) were twice as likely to be homeless as participants who had been in the community for more than three years, with probability of homelessness being highest for the most recent arrivals.

AGE

Youth and children experiencing homelessness were underrepresented at Connect, using the results of the Homeless Count as a proxy for the homeless population. However, there were a large number of children at risk of homelessness present. Seniors and older adults were much more likely to be at-risk than homeless: this is likely due to a combination of increased income around age 65 (OAS, GIS, pensions) and a shortened life expectancy for older people on the street.

Age	Homeless Connect		Homeless Count
	At-risk	Homeless	Homeless
<18	19%	5%	15%
18-24	7%	7%	13%
25-30	7%	7%	7%
31-44	18%	29%	23%
45-54	23%	32%	25%
55-64	20%	16%	13%
65+	7%	3%	4%

AGE WHEN FIRST HOMELESS

The median age of first homelessness was 36, but a quarter of participants (presently experiencing homelessness) became homeless for the first time by the age of 19. While the number of youth attending was relatively low, many of the adults started their cycle of homelessness as youth.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

More than 70% of those who were homeless reported being chronically homeless: either being without a permanent residence for all of the last year or having had four spells of homelessness in the last three years.

ETHNICITY AND INDIGENOUS STATUS

55% of respondents identified as Indigenous. While just over one quarter of non-Indigenous participants were female, 45% of Indigenous respondents were. The settlements, reserves or communities with the most participants were (note that some respondents named Maskwacis and others mentioned the nation):

Saddle Lake Cree Nation	62
Bigstone Cree Nation	25
Samson Cree Nation	24
Maskwacis	20
Cold Lake	19
Sturgeon Lake	18
Buffalo Lake Settlement	17
Kehewin	16

Whitefish Lake	16
Athabasca Chipewyan	14
Alexander First Nation	13
Fishing Lake	13
Saskatchewan	13
Frog Lake	12
Manitoba	10
Mikisew	10

TRANSPORTATION

Most participants arrived by foot or by public transit, though 10% arrived by car or bike. Of those presently experiencing homelessness, walking was significantly more likely than taking transit. The opposite was true for those not presently experiencing homelessness.

ADVERTISING

62% of participants noted hearing about the event by word of mouth and 22% from posters or advertisements. Service providers (7%), Drop-in centres (6%), and Media (4%) were less common methods.

SERVICES USED

On the exit survey, more than half of respondents mentioned accessing clothing and food. These were the most common services named (357 respondents):

Clothing	232	Photos	33
Food	214	Tax Return	23
Haircut	72	Internet-Phone	20
Eye Care/Glasses	69	Addiction	18
Medical Care	60	Aboriginal Services	18
Books	59	Education-Literacy	18
Housing Resources	58	Child Care	17
Employment	40	Counselling	15
Library	40	Benefits/Financial Services	11
Legal Assistance	37	Animal Care	10
Dental	35		

EXCESS DEMAND

Food and (winter) clothing were also the services most named that people did not get access to – many cited the food running out before they ate or clothes being picked over or not available in a size that fit. Haircuts and dental work were the next most desired services that were booked up before the end of the day.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

A reasonable number of participants agreed with the statement that events should happen more often (70) and there should be more advertising (71). A full list of participant suggestions for improvement follows. The larger open comment section is not included here.

- Advance notice from housing workers
- Affordable housing
- Banking
- Bulletin board, bus for advertising
- Chairs or something to sit on while waiting in line
- Could use flyers
- Cranberry sauce
- Education info (college, City Centre high)
- Escalator not working
- ETS "Did not know", hassled people
- ETS not aware
- Food bank
- Get people off streets
- Help for physically challenged
- Hold event in rural communities - what applies in Edmonton should apply elsewhere
- Housing agencies need to work together
- Inadequate housing for age group (50's)

- Jobs
- Later lunch / Meals spaced out
- Less crowded space (x4)
- Longer hours / full weekend (x8)
- Metro paper
- More booths
- More direct assistance
- More food (x3)
- More registration volunteers
- More services
- More space for handicapped in dining area
- Music
- Non-aboriginal counselling, children's counselling
- Number system for lines (x2)
- Organize clothing – even just men's/women's/children's (x3)
- Politician/government involvement, let them know people are on the street (x3)
- Politicians kicked out
- Personal first aid kits, medical supplies
- Places to submit resumes for a job.
- Ration clothing/food/items to make sure everyone gets a turn (x4)
- Renters rights
- Shorter lines (x8)
- Showers
- Tax return = information about how to go about it. Person doing service was quite sarcastic
- Water bottles (x2)