

November 15, 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

2421: Edmonton's Homeless Count Shows a Decrease for the First Time

(Edmonton) – Edmonton's first Homeless Count was held in 1999; the subsequent seven counts showed an increase every time. Now, with the ninth count - the first count since the municipal and provincial ten year plans were adopted – we are seeing a decrease in Edmonton's homeless population for the first time.

Conducted on October 5, the 2010 Homeless Count found 2421 homeless Edmontonians. This is a decrease from the 3079 found in 2008, and lowest number since the 2004 Count of 2192. Mayor Stephen Mandel, who championed the creation of Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, joined Susan McGee, Executive Director of Homeward Trust Edmonton, to make the announcement.

"Edmontonians have said that homelessness is unacceptable" said Mayor Stephen Mandel. "With the adoption of the ten year plan and its implementation through Homeward Trust, working with the Homeless Commission and our city's agencies and service providers, we are already seeing tremendous results in the first two years."

"We've seen signs of success in implementing the provincial and civic plans to end homelessness" said Susan McGee, Executive Director of Homeward Trust Edmonton. "Over 1000 people have found homes through Housing First, and overnight shelter use is decreasing. But the need for services and programs remains high, and with over 2400 Edmontonians still without a home, there is still a lot of work to be done."

The accompanying backgrounder provides more detail about the results of the 2010 Homeless Count.

The full report can be found at www.homewardtrust.ca/homeless-counts/

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Homeward Trust Edmonton is a not for profit organization that uses a community-based approach toward the goal of ending homelessness in Edmonton. Our primary role is to coordinate response to housing needs by working together with local agencies and all orders of government

Homeless Count 2010 Backgrounder

On October 5, 2010:

- 2421 individuals were identified as being homeless.
- This number represents 1533 absolute homeless individuals, and 888 sheltered homeless individuals.
- This is the first time since 1999 that there has been a decrease in the number of homeless individuals counted. This accounts for 21% reduction from the 2008 numbers.

Key aspects of the count day itself:

- The count methodology has remained consistent for the every count in order for the data to be comparable across the years.
- Just under 300 volunteers covered 350 volunteer shifts throughout the city of Edmonton.
- The street count took place between the hours of 5am and 10pm.
- The weather on October 5th was clear, with a high of 16 degrees, and a low of 8 degrees Celsius.
- Volunteers counted at agencies, bottle depots, and mapped routes in the downtown, north east, Kingsway, west Jasper Place, west central, and the Strathcona area.
- The shelter count was done by shelter staff when clients registered for the night of October 5th.

Definitions:

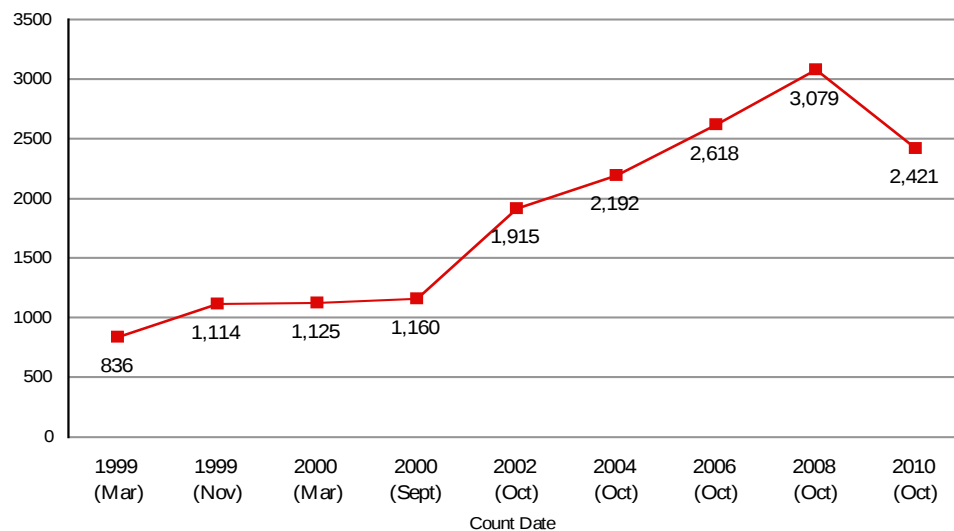
- **Absolute Homeless:** Individuals and families who have no housing alternatives (may sleep 'on the street' or in a stairwell that night, or alternatively they may stay with a friend or find an emergency shelter space).
- **Sheltered Homeless:** Individuals and families who are living in emergency accommodations or condemned housing and do not have a permanent place to live.

Key Findings:

- Six in ten of the absolute homeless were counted in the downtown area, and six in ten were counted at agencies and services.
- 71 families accounting for 123 dependent children, and 94 caregivers were counted. Of these, 43 youth under the age of 16 were also counted without a caregiver.

- Of the absolute homeless counted, 61% were counted at agencies and service providers, 30% were counted as a part of the walking routes, and 9% were counted at bottle depots.
- The Edmonton homeless adult population is most likely to be between the ages of 31 and 54 (comprising 61% of the total adult population).
- On October 5, 2010, 939 individuals were staying at shelters that had a combined capacity of 1,217 spaces for an overall occupancy rate of 77%.
- In 2010, there were fewer individuals than in previous years who were turned away from a shelter because of ineligibility, client behaviour, or because no spaces were available that night.
- The number of individuals discharged (or ready for discharge) into homeless from temporary residential institutions also decreased since 2006.

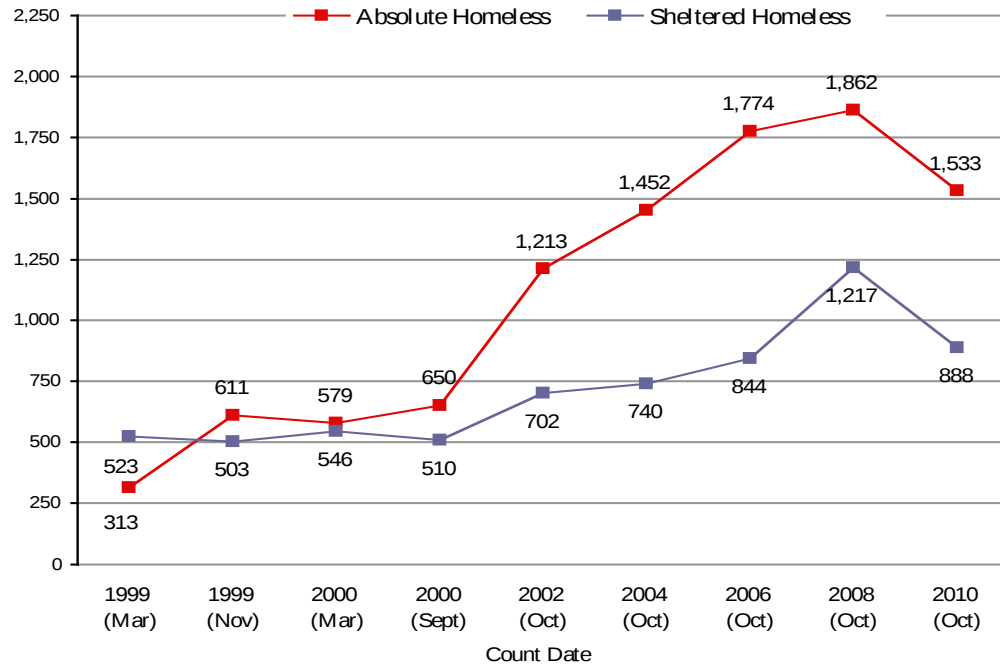
Figure 1: Total Number of Homeless¹ by Count Date



Source: Edmonton Homeless Counts

¹ The number of homeless is defined as the total number of individuals approached who reported not having a permanent place to stay on the night of count day.

Figure 2: Type of Homelessness¹ by Count Date



Source: Edmonton Homeless Counts

¹ Absolute Homeless includes homeless individuals counted on the street or at service agencies. Sheltered Homeless includes homeless individuals counted at an emergency shelter.

Demographics

Regarding the 2421 clients that were counted (this data excludes the demographics of 146 cases whose demographic information was not reported):

