

## Point-in-Time Homelessness Count Survey 2024

On November 7th, Nelson conducted its fourth Point-In-Time Count, part of a national effort, led by [Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy](#), to measure homelessness in Canada.

### The two key takeaways are:

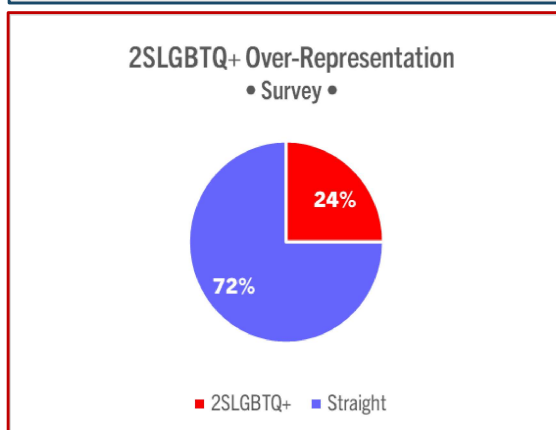
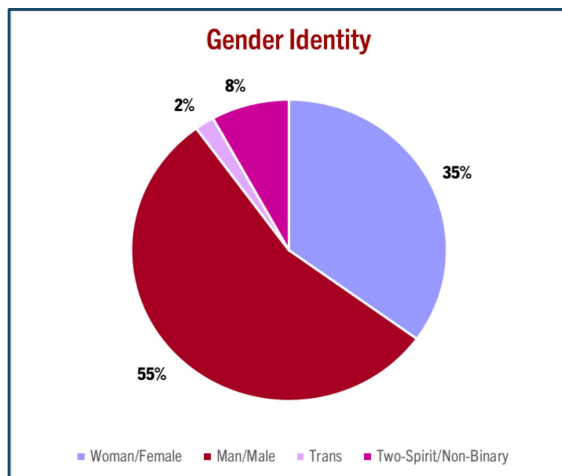
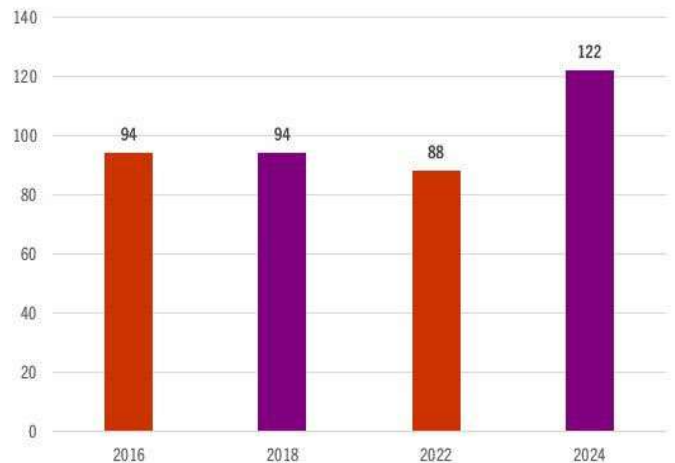
**1) Homelessness is on the rise, up from a high of 94 people in 2018 to 122 this year.**

**2) Unsheltered homelessness is on the rise, significantly outpacing all forms of homelessness.**

Fewer than 20 people stayed outdoors during the 2018 & 2020 years, whereas this year it doubled to 40 sleeping rough.

An additional 4 people were found to be staying in vehicles, while 59 people were provisionally housed. 19 people, primarily youth, were found to be "couch-surfing" or staying at someone else's place because they didn't have a safe home of their own.

Nelson PIT Count Totals 2016-2024



Where did you stay last night?



**It is important to consider when reading the #'s that the PiT Survey is an undercount,** because of the ongoing impacts of colonialism, racism, and gender-based violence alongside the iceberg of "hidden homelessness". Notably, there is an overrepresentation of 2SLGBTQ+, predominantly amongst youth due to discrimination and marginalization.

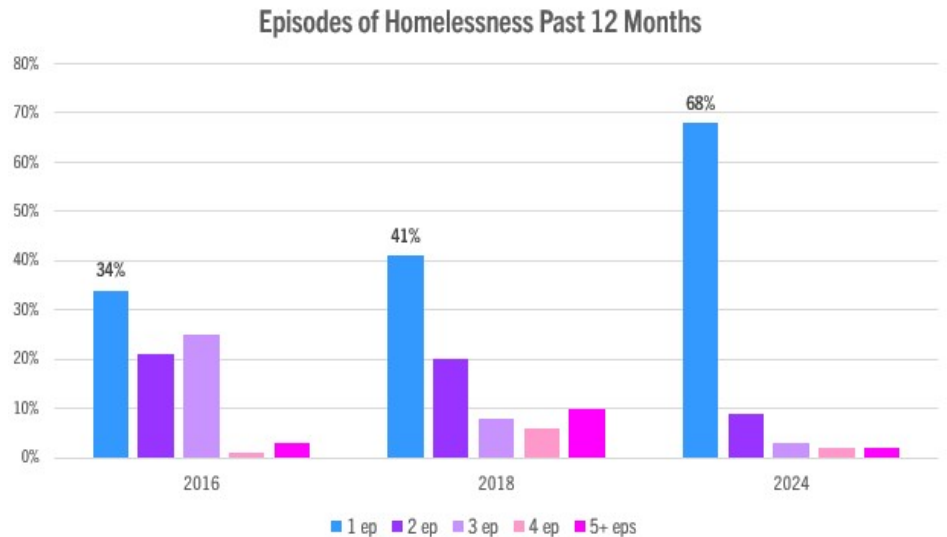
### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report Card on Homelessness

NCOH acknowledges our respect for, and deep gratitude to, all the ancestors and keepers of the land on whose traditional territories we are honoured to live and work.

**Homelessness is on the rise in Nelson**, and across BC, with 56% of those currently experiencing homelessness in our community having been without stable long-term housing for a year or longer, compared to just 24% in 2018. **The numbers are even higher for BC, with 70% of those experiencing**

**homelessness without safe,**

**permanent housing for more than one year, up from 53% in 2018.** On average, someone currently experiencing homelessness in Nelson has been without proper housing for 26 months, just over 2 years. We also see a corresponding decrease in the number of distinct episodes of homelessness people are experiencing, which suggests that people are no longer cycling in and out of homelessness. Once in, it is increasingly difficult to find a viable pathway out.



**26 Months =**

**Average time without stable, long-term housing in Nelson**

**14% indicated more than 5 years without proper housing**

***"We have seen trends of women who are experiencing homelessness trying to access Aimee Beaulieu services, as they do not feel safe going to a shelter or cannot be accommodated there. Nelson could really benefit from a low barrier women's shelter, as there is a gap in services for these women."*** ~ Milena Bieri

Program Manager, Aimee Beaulieu Transition House

***"There is rarely space for people to feel that they have autonomy and opportunity to be and do more than we have been. Belonging, community, and purpose bring stability."***

~ Drop-In Guest

## **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report Card on Homelessness**

NCOH acknowledges our respect for, and deep gratitude to, all the ancestors and keepers of the land on whose traditional territories we are honoured to live and work.

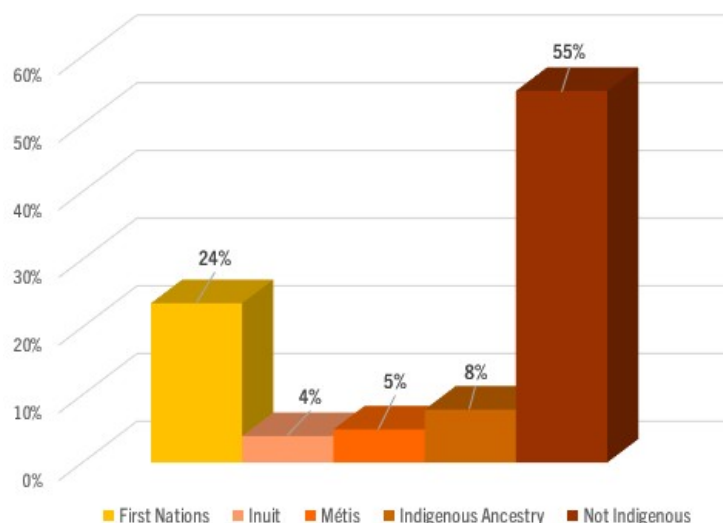
## Demographics: Indigenous people

**The most over-represented population in Homeless Counts all over Canada, continues to be Indigenous peoples. 41% of Nelson's point in time count identify as either First Nations, Metis, or Inuit or having Indigenous ancestry. These four groups combined make up only 6% of BC's total population. We need to recognize the [12 dimensions of indigenous houselessness](#) and that Indigenous people do not choose to be homeless. The experience is negative, stressful and traumatic.**

***"The most recent PiT Count results are sadly not shocking; however, at the same time this data and information continues to create significant concerns about the wellness of Indigenous people living in the Nelson area. The obvious over-representation of Indigenous people in the homeless/houseless community in our area needs to be addressed and must include culturally safe services and supports that are easily accessible."***

Kris Salkin, Executive Director for Circle of Indigenous Nations (COINS)

Indigenous Identity



The 12 dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness as articulated by Indigenous Peoples across Canada:



Understanding that homelessness is racialized by design means that we will need to change the design if we want to change the results. We need

to make space for Indigenous led solutions and work together to dismantle systemic housing barriers and heal historical injustices. **This means that responding strictly in terms of housing without addressing the need for cultural and spiritual connection is inadequate and may even reproduce colonial dynamics and harms.**

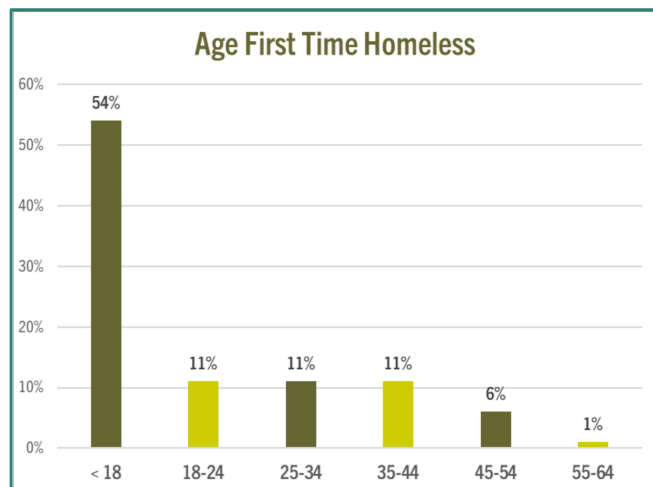
### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report Card on Homelessness

NCOH acknowledges our respect for, and deep gratitude to, all the ancestors and keepers of the land on whose traditional territories we are honoured to live and work.

## Demographics: Youth

***"Young adults are two hundred times more likely to experience homelessness if they have a child welfare experience. That is why it is important and that is why we need to shift the outcomes."***

~ Catherine Talbott, Strategic Initiatives, MCFD



***"We know that we need to prevent youth entering homelessness to prevent a lifelong pattern of being unhoused, and in Nelson we desperately need more dedicated youth housing".***

~ Joyce Dahms-Whiffen,  
Program Director for Nelson  
Community Services

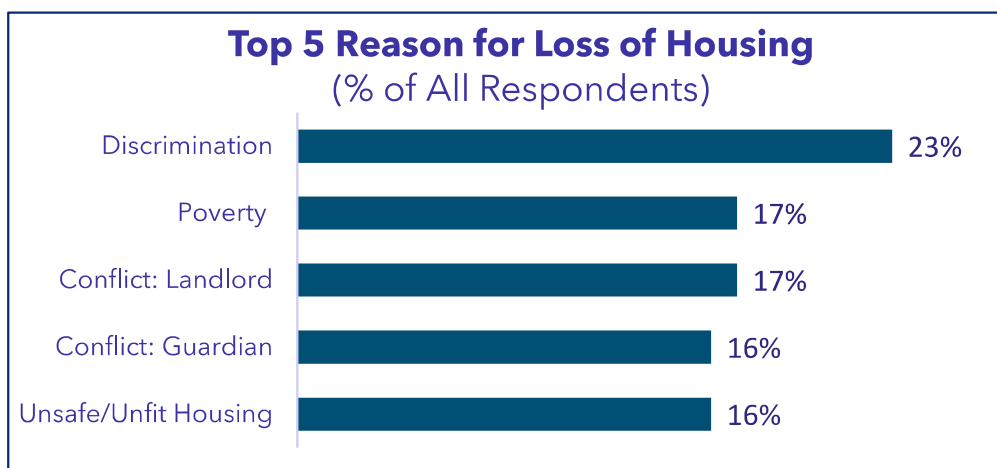
During the Point-in-Time Count surveys across eighty-seven communities from 2020-2022 in Canada, **12% of respondents experiencing homelessness were youth, aged 13 to 24.**

The representation of women and 2SLGBTQI+ respondents was higher among

youth than among older age groups. **Importantly - 65% experienced homelessness for the first time when they were less than 25 years of age.** Over

half of youth reported interpersonal reasons as the source of their most recent housing loss, particularly conflict with a parent or guardian. Youth were also more likely to report challenges related to learning or cognitive limitations, and mental health.

## Pathways into Homelessness

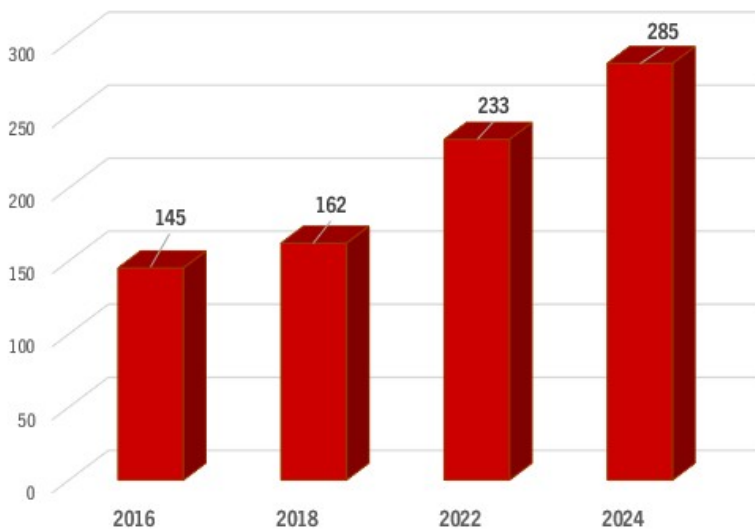


**Breaking down this data by sub-groups, we see a greater frequency of housing loss due to discrimination, interpersonal conflict, and intimate partner/family abuse among women and Indigenous, and even more strikingly among youth, almost half of whom cited conflict with parents/guardians as the primary cause of their most recent loss of housing.**

### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report Card on Homelessness

NCOH acknowledges our respect for, and deep gratitude to, all the ancestors and keepers of the land on whose traditional territories we are honoured to live and work.

Average # of Days Homeless in Past 12 Months



While Nelson is very much in line with provincial trends, one of the things that stood out is individuals' perceptions of stigma and discrimination. **Almost a quarter (23%) of survey respondents indicated that discrimination contributed to their most recent loss of housing**, compared to just (6%) in BC, while over a third identified stigma and discrimination as barriers to accessing both housing (32%) and services (31%).

## Residency

**Who gets to call Nelson Home?**

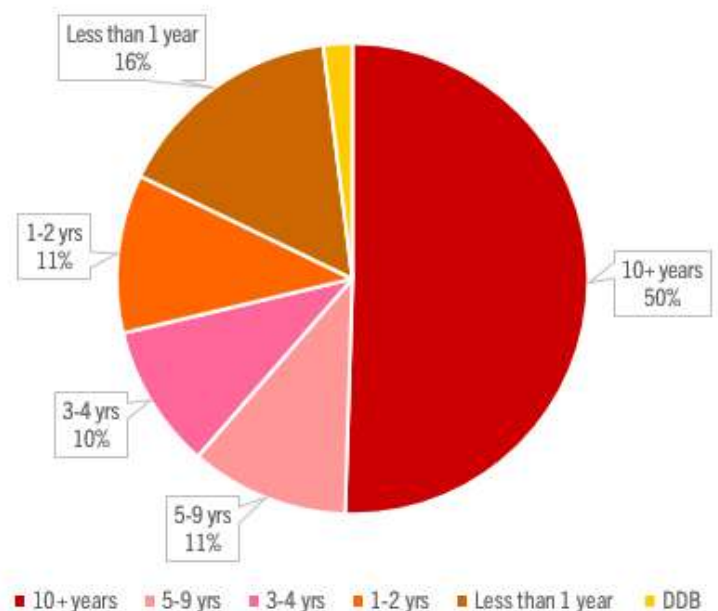
Fifty percent of Nelson's unhoused residents have lived here for a decade or more. **Family connections in Nelson and the surrounding area remain the #1 reason people have moved here.**

*"The stigma on the visible vulnerable folks in this town, like the hate and rumors spread by the Neighborhood Network, treating opinions like facts, creates a false reality and puts a target on our backs. It is harder and harder to feel safe when it seems like everyone is afraid of me for something I had nothing to do with"*  
~ Unhoused resident.

*"Everyone has a story. Without kindness and compassion, we are all vulnerable. I want to encourage my community to have more reason, intelligence, and caring. I want to be proud of our ability to look after each other. We must do better; we must care more."*

~ Paula Kiss, Business Owner & former Nelson City Councillor

Years Living in Nelson



## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report Card on Homelessness

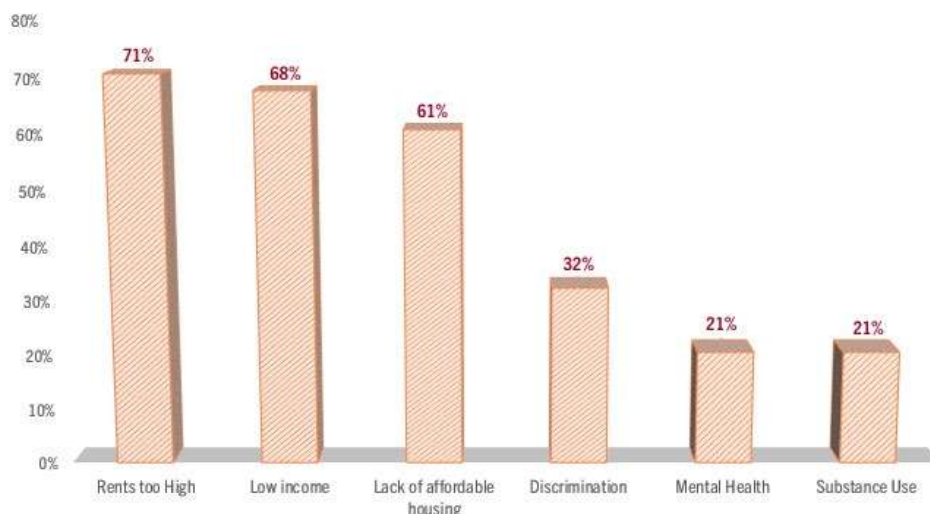
NCOH acknowledges our respect for, and deep gratitude to, all the ancestors and keepers of the land on whose traditional territories we are honoured to live and work.



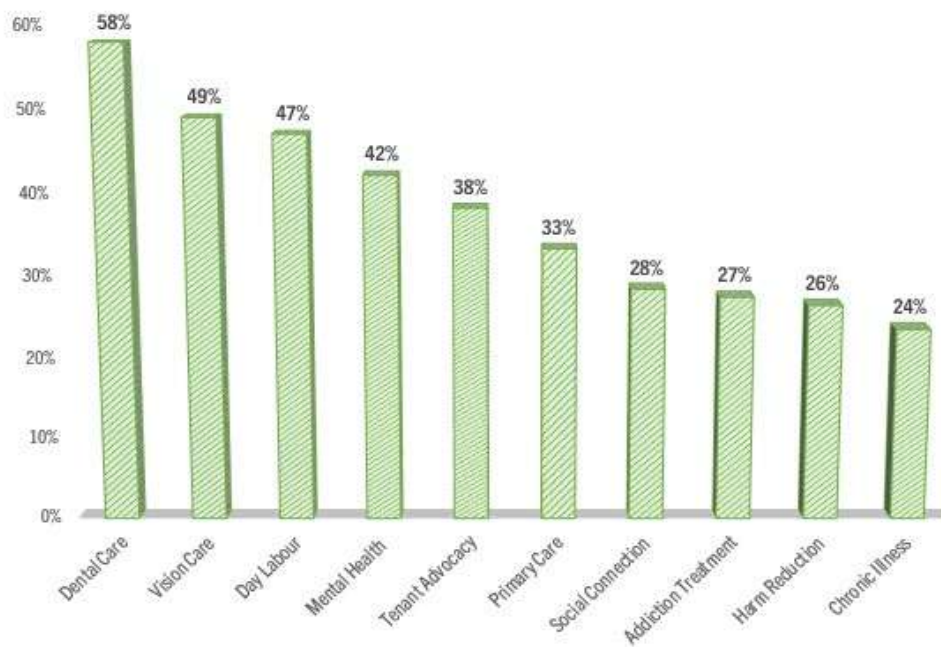
## Barriers to Access & Service Needs

High rents, low incomes, and the lack of affordable housing options were the most often cited barriers to securing stable, long-term housing across all demographics, as they were in 2018.

TOP 5 BARRIERS TO SECURING LONG-TERM HOUSING



TOP 10 UNMET SERVICE NEEDS



*"The majority of people who are homeless are children we fail, and they have been failed by systems of support all along the way. And we have a situation now where what we're seeing is people are entering homelessness more easily and having much, much more difficulty getting out."*

~ Dylan Griffith,  
Point In Time Survey Coordinator

**The services most needed but were unavailable to access are dental care, eye care, mental health supports, and tenant advocacy.** Services for which (unmet) demand increased the most in 2024 were for day work and primary care & programs supporting community connection.

### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report Card on Homelessness

NCOH acknowledges our respect for, and deep gratitude to, all the ancestors and keepers of the land on whose traditional territories we are honoured to live and work.