

# Gathering Data on Housing Insecurity: Innovative Methods in a Post-pandemic World



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RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK PRESENTS

# OMSSA Exchange 2021 Collecting Data on Hidden Homelessness



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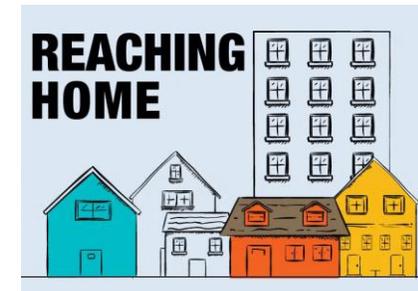
Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021



# The Rural Development Network

*“The RDN uses the combined expertise of our post-secondary members to support rural development in Alberta and to help communities grow through research & learning”*

# Our Members & Funding Partners



# The Rural Development Network

## Our Mission:

*"To facilitate, support and champion rural community development through collaboration, research and service provision."*

## Providing Resources



## Providing Capacity



# What is “Rural Homelessness”?

# What is “Rural Homelessness”?

Includes a spectrum of living situations:

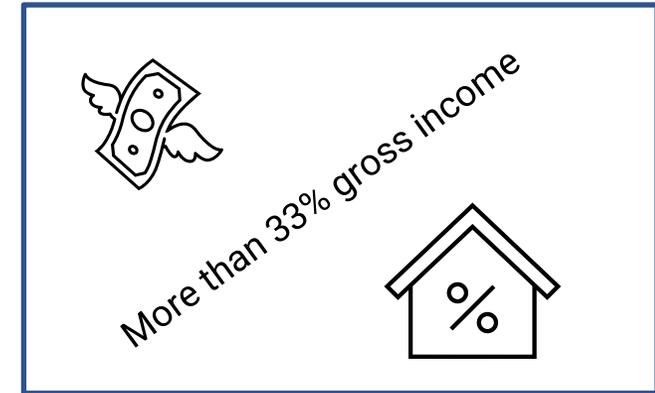


Image credits: 1,2 - Global TV Calgary; 3 - Hillbert College News; 4 - The Guardian

# Benefits to measuring homelessness

- Help inform municipal, provincial, and federal policies and practices on housing, support services, etc.
- Help secure funding to improve resources to help people who are homeless or at-risk.
- Improve organizational planning and program development that address homelessness and housing.
- Provide demographic information to better understand who is experiencing homelessness and to identify where community resources are most needed. (e.g. additional support for veterans, seniors, or youth).
- Provide data that will help service providers accurately project their own needs and allocate resources accordingly.
- Track progress in reducing and preventing Homelessness.
- Enhanced collaboration among service agencies

# Benefits to measuring homelessness

- Migration Rural communities without adequate resources download needs onto urban communities
- People from rural communities sent to large urban centres usually end up in worse circumstances
- It is much cheaper to address rural issues where they are
- We estimate if you spend \$1 in a rural community, you save \$10 in an urban centre

**Where does the data come from?**

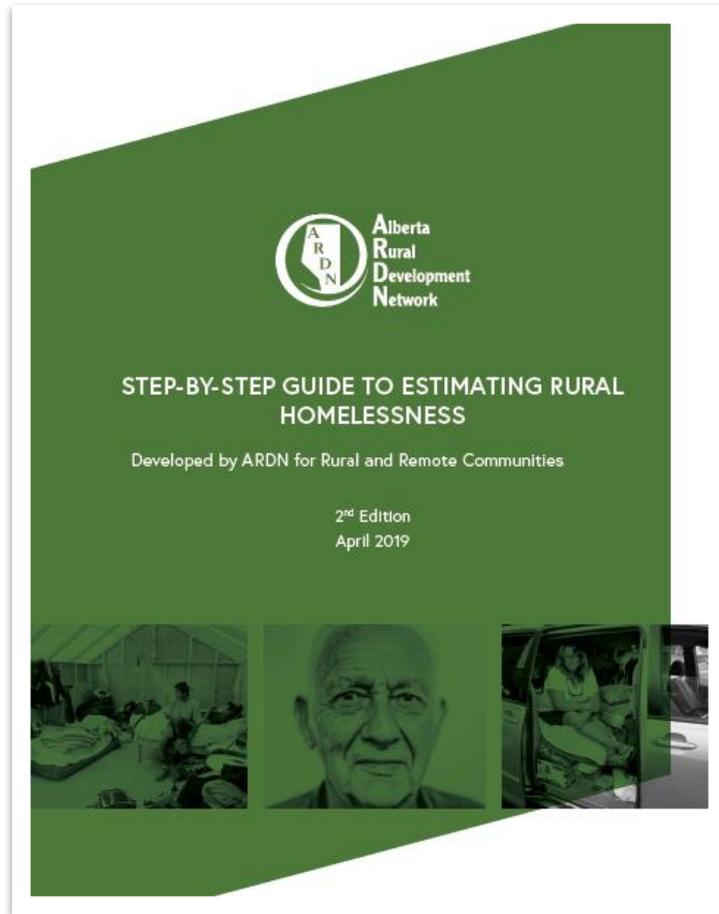
# Where does the data come from?

*We have data on homelessness in large cities because we can conduct Point-in-Time counts. In small communities, this method isn't as effective.*

## Two general ways of measuring:

- Point-in-Time (PiT) counts
  - Groups of volunteers go out into the community and shelters for a 24-hr period
  - Conduct a “headcount” of visible homeless
- Population (or Service-Based) Estimation
  - Community services (Service Ontario, food banks, shelters, libraries, clergy, etc)
  - Locations deliver a survey over 30 days to all clients

# Guide to Estimating Rural Homelessness



[ruraldevelopment.ca](http://ruraldevelopment.ca)

- Second Edition published April 2019
  - Funded by Economic and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Download for free from [ruraldevelopment.ca](http://ruraldevelopment.ca)
- Available in English & French



2020 CMHC Gold Roof Award  
for Knowledge to Action



# Pilot Study - 2017

Rocky Mountain House, AB (pop. 6,429)

## PiT

- 11 potential counts
- 2 out of 11 in unstable situation
- 700 volunteer hours

## Estimation

- 57 surveys conducted
- 44 out of 57 in unstable situation
- 39.13% due to Mental or Physical Health
- 34.78% due to Family Conflict
- 13.04% due to addictions
- 8.70% due to Unsafe Housing and Job Loss

# The Process

# Step-by-Step

Do you have an Estimation Coordinator designated and have they read and understood the estimation guide?

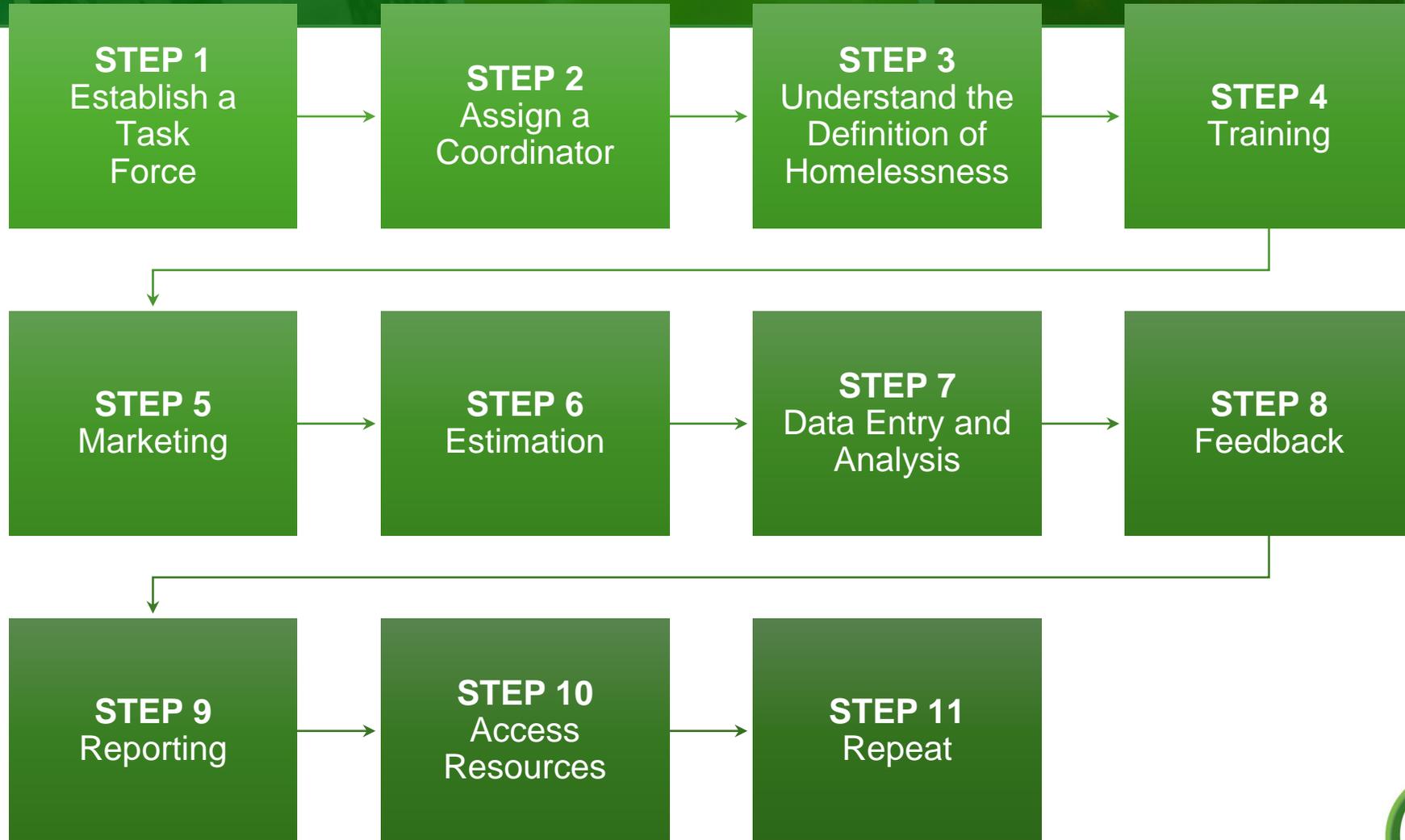
YES	Move to Step 3.
NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find a designated Estimation Coordinator who will manage and assume responsibility for the entire project;</li><li>• If possible, ensure the chosen Coordinator isn't someone who works directly in the frontline with individuals experiencing homelessness and doesn't know the identity of the clients; and</li><li>• Ensure that the Coordinator reads this guide thoroughly and understands the entire process.</li></ul>

**Note:** The Coordinator will be responsible for managing the estimation, training participants, gathering data for analysis, and reporting to the community.

## The Guide breaks the whole process into manageable steps

- At the end of each step is a checkpoint, which will allow you or your organization to assess whether you are heading in the right direction.

# Step-by-Step



# Step 1: Establish a Task Force

## Implementation Timeline: >2 months before the start of the Estimation

- It is **essential** to secure the participation of as many service agencies as possible
  - The more agencies understand about the benefits of doing an estimation, the more likely they are to be willing to participate
  - Participating agency buy-in
  - Task Force creation



# Step 2: Assign a Coordinator

## Implementation Timeline: 2 months before the start of the Estimation

- Assign an Estimation Coordinator who will manage the entire Estimation project for the community

The Coordinator will:

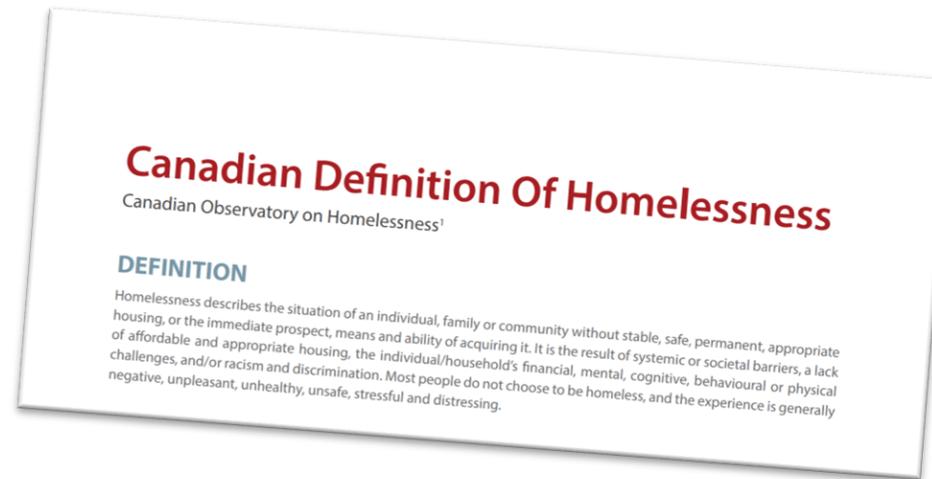
1. Manage the entire estimation for the community;
2. Be responsible for ensuring service agency representatives are trained; and
3. Gather and collate all collected data for analysis and report to the community.



# Step 3: Understand the Definition of Homelessness

## Implementation Timeline: 1 month before the start of the Estimation

- Rural communities should ensure all service agencies and their representatives understand the standard definitions of Homelessness, Youth Homelessness and Indigenous Homelessness in Canada as per the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (as shown on pages 1 - 2 of the Guide).



# Step 4: Training

## **Implementation Timeline: 1 month before the start of the Estimation**

**Training is paramount to the success of the estimation.**

Training will focus on:

1. Common language and definitions
2. The purpose of the estimation;
3. The approach and methodology, by introducing this step-by-step guide;
4. The survey provided with this guide;
5. The process of administering the survey to the participants;
6. LGBTQ2S inclusion;
7. Cultural competency, and
8. The process and timeline for returning completed surveys back to the coordinator

# Step 5: Marketing

## Implementation Timeline: 1 month before the start of the Estimation

- Marketing creates awareness and encourages people to access services during the estimation period
- Rural communities usually do this very well!



# Step 6: The Estimation

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Q24. What is the main reason(s) for visiting the office today? (choose as many options as it applies to you)

- Basic Needs - food, shelter, clothing, etc.,
- Crisis Financial Support – eviction notice, utility bill problems, damage deposits, etc.
- Family/Parenting - child care, parenting/family issues, relationship issues, child developmental assessment tools/referrals etc.
- Financial - employment, housing, training/education, etc.
- Health and Wellness - addictions, mental health, physical health care, spiritual/cultural, etc.
- Legal - separation/divorce/custody, wills/estates, employment/labour standards, landlord/tenant issues, immigration issues, criminal/misdemeanor, etc.
- Support Services– help with government forms, help with accessing government/other programs or services, access to technology, etc.
- Transportation Needs– access to basic services/education/employment, medical transportation
- All of the Above
- Not Listed: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

## Implementation Timeline: 30-day period ideally in October/November

- During the Estimation, frontline staff will invite people visiting their service agency to complete the survey.

# Step 6: The Estimation

## **Implementation Timeline: 30-day period ideally in October/November**

- It is designed to be filled out by the client, however front-line staff should help if the person requires assistance
- The survey starts and ends by asking for informed consent the willingness to anonymously share their information
- Individuals should only be surveyed once during the 30-day period, regardless of how many visits they make to different agencies.
- *The “**Unique Identifier**” is the method which ties everything together*

# Step 6: The Estimation

## Implementation Timeline: 30-day period ideally in October/November

- The Unique Identifier is a generated character sequence that is assigned to each participant to accomplish three things: conceals true identities, reduces duplications, and can identify trends over time

Unique Identifier	
First Two Letters of the First Name First Two Letters of the Last Name Sum of the Numbers in the Birth Day Last Two Numbers of the Year of Birth 'M' for Male, 'F' for Female, and 'X' for Non-Binary	
<b>Example:</b> John Smith, Male born on 15th November 1960 – JOSM0660M <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Two Letters of the First Name – JO</li><li>First Two Letters of the Last Name – SM</li><li>Sum of the Numbers in the Birth Day – 1+5 = 06*</li><li>Last Two Numbers of the Year of Birth – 60</li><li>'M' for Male – <b>M</b></li></ul>	<b>Example:</b> Mary Robert, Female born on 29th June 1978 – MARO1178F <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Two Letters of the First Name – MA</li><li>First Two Letters of the Last Name – RO</li><li>Sum of the Numbers in the Birth Day – 2+9 = 11*</li><li>Last Two Numbers of the Year of Birth – 78</li><li>'F' for Female – <b>F</b></li></ul>

# Step 6: The Estimation

## Implementation Timeline: 30-day period ideally in October/November

- The Unique Identifier is a generated character sequence that is assigned to each participant to accomplish three things: conceals true identities, reduces duplications, and can identify trends over time

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY** (please fill in completely)  Survey conducted by Staff Member  Survey filled out by Client

Date Completed: MM/DD/YYYY  
Service Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please create the **unique identifier** based on the information on **page 2** of this survey and as shown in the guidelines below.

*Unique Identifier Guidelines*

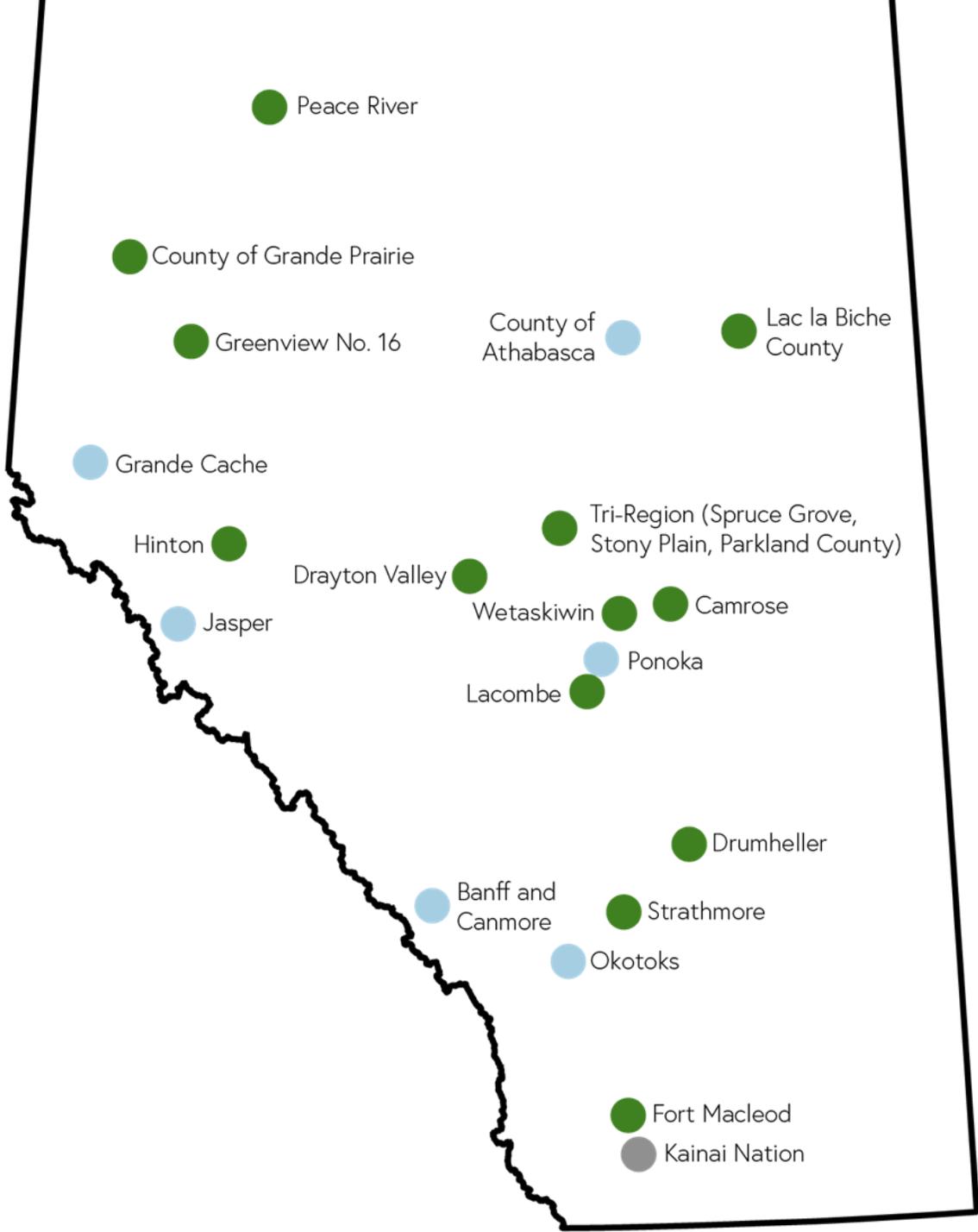
To safeguard respondents' identity and ensure their anonymity, please fill in the unique identifier box located at the bottom of this page as follows:

[Ex. John Smith, born on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1964]

J	O	S	M	0	6	6	4	M
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2	E

(A1, A2) First Two Letters of the First Name  
(B1, B2) First Two Letters of the Last Name  
(C1 + C2) Sum\* of the Numbers in the Birth Day  
(D1, D2) Last Two Numbers of the Year of Birth  
(E) 'M' for Male, 'F' for Female, and 'X' for Non-Binary

# Past Projects



# Community Partners in the 2018 Homelessness Estimation

# 2018 Homelessness Estimation

## 20 Individual Community Reports



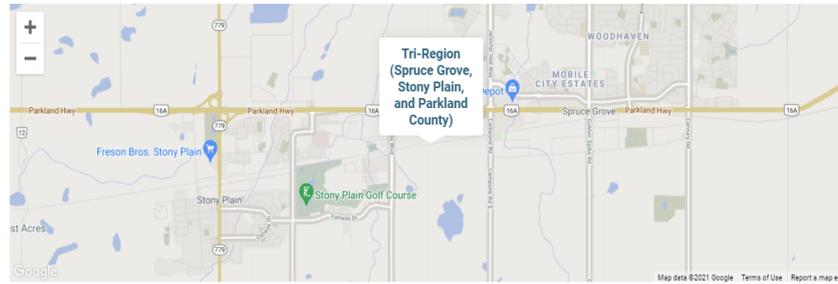


# National Database – ruralhomelessness.ca



- Home
- Database
- Alberta
  - Athabasca County
  - Towns of Banff and Canmore
  - City of Camrose
  - Town of Drayton Valley
  - Town of Drumheller
  - Town of Fort Macleod
  - Town of Grande Cache
  - County of Grande Prairie
  - Municipal District of Greenview
  - Town of Hinton
  - Municipality of Jasper
  - City of Lacombe
  - Lac La Biche County
  - Town of Okotoks
  - Town of Ponoka
  - Town of Peace River
  - Town of Strathmore
  - Tri-Region (Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Parkland County)
  - City of Wetaskiwin
- Upcoming Events
- Resources
- Contact

## Tri-Region (Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Parkland County)

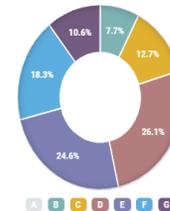


Show Category: - All Categories -  
Compare Region with: - None -  
Apply Clear Filter

### General Information

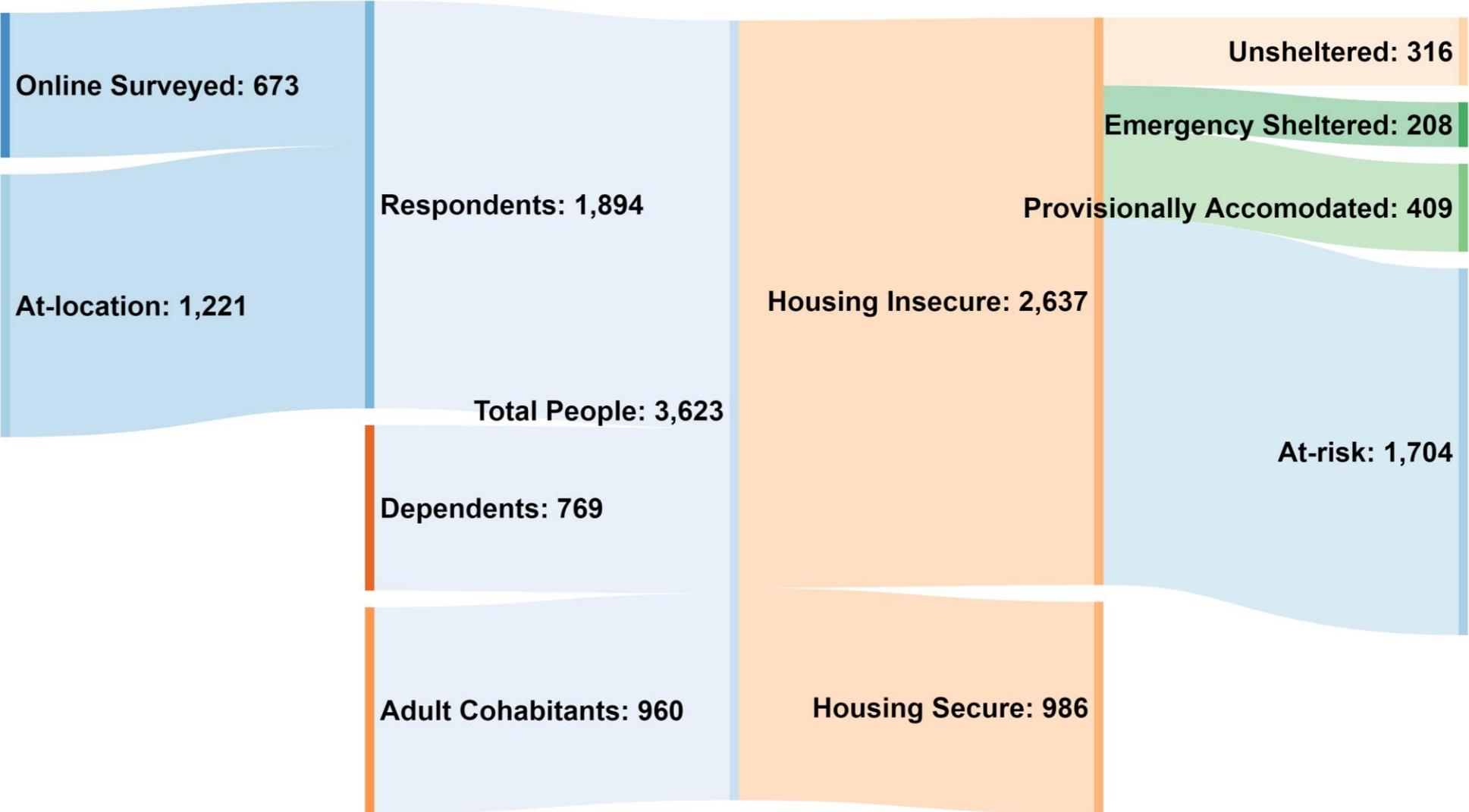
#### Age (in Years)

<b>A</b> Under 18	0% (0/142)	<b>B</b> 18 to 24	7.7% (11/142)	<b>C</b> 25 to 34	12.7% (18/142)
<b>D</b> 35 to 44	26.1% (37/142)	<b>E</b> 45 to 54	24.6% (35/142)	<b>F</b> 55 to 64	18.3% (26/142)
<b>G</b> 65 and over	10.6% (15/142)				



[View Change Over Time](#)

# 2020 Estimation Project



# 2020 Estimation Project

## Overall results

- Almost two thirds of the people who responded to the survey were women.
- Almost half of the people (48%) who filled out the survey were living in unstable housing conditions.
- **769** dependents were noted to be living with people who were analyzed as living in unstable housing conditions.
- **960** co-habiting adults (roommates, family, co-workers, etc.)
- Total of **2,637** people in just 24 communities

# 2020 Estimation Project

## Facts of Note:

- Out of the 908 people that were identified as living in housing unstable conditions, 211 of them reported that they felt that their housing situation was in fact stable. This could be due to a variety of reasons and factors.
- Contrary to some belief, most of the respondents who were analyzed as living in unstable housing conditions were in fact educated with most people reporting completing high school (27%) or having a college certificate or diploma (16%).

# Common Respondent Profiles

Averaged across the province of Alberta:

- A woman, in her mid 40s, who has lived in the community for more than a year.
- She feels like she doesn't make enough money and notes that she is spending more than 30% of her income on shelter.
- She is part-time employed, and there's over a 45% chance she is supporting at least one dependent.

# Outcomes

# Conklin, AB (pop 185-375)\*

## Customized Project – Preliminary Results

54 surveys conducted

**92 individuals in unstable situation**

Inadequate housing supply

Unemployment (40 unemployed)

35% of vulnerable residents b/w the ages of 1 & 20

**\*Inconsistencies in National Census, RMWB and primary data**

# Conklin, AB (pop 185-375)\*



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 Local News

## Cenovus' five-year, \$50 million housing program will include Janvier, Conklin and Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation

Vincent McDermott  
Jan 30, 2020 · February 4, 2020 · 4 minute read · [Join the conversation](#)



A bus that has been converted into a home in Conklin, Alta. on Sunday, September 22, 2019. Vincent McDermott/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network SunMedia

Cenovus Energy is spending \$50 million over five years on improving housing in six Indigenous communities, including Janvier, Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation and Conklin.



# Next Steps

Monitor our most recent coronavirus (COVID-19) updates.



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What can we help you find?

MENU

[Home](#) > [National Housing Strategy](#) > [National Housing Strategy Project Profiles](#) > [Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Affordable Housing](#)



## Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Affordable Housing

A clear and easy-to-follow guide from the Alberta Rural Development Network

The Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Affordable Housing shows how to create and plan affordable housing. It takes users from the start to the end of affordable housing development in a series of clear steps. Even small or inexperienced groups can use the bilingual guide to understand industry jargon and develop their own projects.

The free guide was created with input from experts from across the country. Their knowledge helps reduce the mystery around affordable housing for organizations that are planning their own projects. This ensures they are capable of creating sustainable housing for those in greatest need.

### Key Findings / Key Goals

- ✓ The guide outlines a standard process for creating and planning affordable housing that non-experts can use.
- ✓ It demystifies industry jargon and practices so that organizations can do more of the planning themselves.
- ✓ It helps users create and plan housing that is both environmentally and financially sustainable.

### Project scope and expected outcomes

It can be challenging for small or inexperienced groups to plan and create affordable housing projects. They may not have industry knowledge or experience with the process, and it may be confusing to them. This can result in projects that stall or unnecessary expenses, such as unneeded consultants or assessments.

ALBERTA RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Thank you!  
**Questions?**



Scott Travis  
Director,  
Research and Programs



Azam Khattak

Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021