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The 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness release final Homeless Count Report

Edmonton, Alberta - February 4, 2015 - Between October 15 and 23, 2014, the 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness conducted the first ever provincial Point-in-Time Homeless Count. The count was part of an initiative led by the 7 Cities in collaboration with the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness to develop a harmonized approach to homeless counts nationally. The final report has been released, following a release of the preliminary results in November.

The 2014 Alberta Point-in-Time Homeless Count enumerated 6,663 individuals experiencing homelessness across seven cities.

The 2014 provincial count shows that since 2008, the last counts before the 10 Year Plan, homelessness has decreased by 16% across the Alberta's seven cities. This confirms the preliminary report released November 21, 2014.

The unique dynamics impacting each local context reinforce the importance of community-based planning and delivery in our efforts to end homelessness. Each community's local report assesses methodological changes and their impact on comparability in fuller detail.

"The impacts of these efforts have stemmed the growth in homelessness despite the pressures added by a growing economy and housing crunch," says Susan McGee, Chair of 7 Cities and CEO of Homeward Trust Edmonton. "The data collected in the 2014 Homeless Count reflect that our efforts are needed more than ever before. Community leadership and government support continue to be essential to ending homelessness."

The report provides the full analysis across each community regarding key demographics. The following is a brief overview at the provincial level.

- While demographic breakdowns varied from community to community, overall there were more males (73%) than females (26%) in the sample. There was a consistent under-representation of women across the province
- About 7% of respondents had children with them at the time of the count
- Both seniors and youth are under-represented relative to the general population, with youth under the age of 24 accounting for 20%, and seniors 65 and over accounted for 3.6% of the population in the sample

- Aboriginal people were consistently over-represented relative to the general population, averaging about 30%. Some communities showed considerably higher rates of over-representation
- About 11% were immigrants, and some communities showed over-representation of this group relative to their general population
- About 18% had been in the community for less than 1 year, which is considerably higher than rates reported in the general population
- Respondents who reported serving in the Canadian Forces totaled 6%, which is about 3 times higher than the national average for veterans in the general population

The 7 Cities are developing and implementing strategies to deal with specific populations and needs as highlighted by the data. For instance, some communities will be focusing on pressing needs such as youth and families. Additionally, the 7 Cities are committed to further research and evaluation, and will continue to collaborate on research for these initiatives.

The full report on the provincial count is available at www.7cities.ca

Each community is developing and releasing their own comprehensive local report as well.

For more information on the specific cities, please contact the representative as marked on page 1. For any inquiries on the report itself, please contact:

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About 7 Cities on Housing & Homelessness

Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness are the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local Plans to End Homelessness, working together since 2001. The 7 Cities coordinate local plans at a systems level and align funding resources for greater impact and progress towards ending homelessness.

The 7 Cities provides a forum for dialogue with the federal and provincial representatives on housing and homelessness. The 7 Cities have long-standing histories of delivering strategic planning and service delivery in

communities, along with administering and aligning funds, with accountabilities to several provincial or federal funders, including Alberta Human Services and the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.