



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Homeless count in Lethbridge down 68 per cent since 2008 *Homelessness in Alberta continues downward trend*

Lethbridge, AB – Since 2008, the City of Lethbridge has seen an overall decrease of 68 per cent in the number of people experiencing homelessness, according to preliminary numbers from a recent Homeless Count completed by the City of Lethbridge and Social Housing in Action (SHIA).

Lethbridge's one-night Homeless Count for 2016, completed on Oct. 19, indicated the local homeless population is 89, a decrease from the 140 in October 2014. The 2016 count involved 165 volunteers from local agencies, Lethbridge College, the University of Lethbridge, and community members, up significantly from 135 volunteers in 2014. The greater number of volunteers also enabled SHIA to increase the number of areas within Lethbridge that were enumerated.

"Point-in-Time Counts are a snapshot of homelessness in Lethbridge on any given night," says Diane Randell, Manager, Community and Social Development for the City of Lethbridge. "Our efforts and plan to prevent and end homelessness has resulted in a significant reduction in our community and improved the quality of life for many people. This is the direct result of the dedicated and visionary leadership of 'Bringing Lethbridge Home' and the skilled compassionate teams and supports in our community."

Homelessness is impacted by socio-economic factors unique to each municipality

The data shows that homelessness is impacted by unique socio-economic factors within each of the seven Alberta cities that participated in the 2016 Homeless Count. The Count was undertaken by the 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness which include Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The 7 Cities represent the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local Plans to End Homelessness within each city. They coordinate at a systems level and align funding resources for greater impact and progress towards a shared vision of ending homelessness in Alberta.

This year's Count was the second province-wide Count of Homelessness to be held in the province. It involved more than 800 volunteers, agencies, and public service providers. As in 2014, the Count was conducted on the street with facilities providing emergency shelter, short-term supportive housing, and other forms of emergency shelter providing data. In addition, to further align methodology, all 7 Cities conducted the Count on the same night (October 19, 2016) utilizing similar methodology. Provincial government ministries also provided administrative data across the province for people experiencing homelessness who were institutionalized. This preliminary report includes data from correctional facilities. Health facilities data will be included in the final report.

This Count serves two important functions: it provides a current snapshot of the demographics and number of people experiencing homelessness in the province and enables us to examine changes in homelessness over time. By aligning methods across Alberta's cities, we can examine trends using similar definitions. Ultimately, this helps us inform solutions to support the goal of ending homelessness in our province.

A Preliminary Snapshot of the Lethbridge Homeless Count

A total of 89 people were enumerated on the night of the count:

- 64 were males
- 19 were females
- 1 was Transgender/Transsexual/Other
- 69% were emergency sheltered
- 9% were unsheltered
- 54% were Indigenous
- 46% were non-Indigenous
- 8% were Canadian Military or RCMP
- 0% were dependent children

A Preliminary Snapshot of the Provincial Homeless Count

A total of 5,373 people were enumerated on the night of the count. Preliminary results show:

- 76% male, 24% female, 0.1% other
- 2537 emergency sheltered
- 240 unsheltered
- 1907 interim housing & other
- 650 justice system
- 20% youth
- 28% Indigenous
- 72% non-Indigenous
- 41% were over 45 years of age

*These are preliminary numbers and do not include Health Services as well as some numbers unique to

specific cities' counts. These numbers will be included in the Final Report which will be released in the spring of 2017.

An independent consultant along with research teams from the 7 Cities compiled and analyzed the 2016 Point-In-Time Count data. Findings will be compared with previous reports to determine trends and changes in demographics over time. The final report to the Province of Alberta will be released in the spring of 2017.

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Additional Background

About 7 Cities

Working together to end homelessness since 2001, Alberta's 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness (7 Cities) is made up of the lead organizations responsible for the implementation of local Plans to End Homelessness. The seven cities coordinate local plans at a systems level and align funding resources for greater impact and progress towards ending homelessness.

7 Cities provides a forum for dialogue with the federal and provincial representatives on housing and homelessness. These seven 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.