

## Preliminary homeless count numbers drop in Edmonton

November 29, 2016

Despite low oil prices and the province's economic downturn, Edmonton's homeless numbers are decreasing.

The 2016 Homeless Count found 1752 people without a home, a 24 per cent decrease from 2014 and a 43 per cent decrease from 2008 when the highest number of homeless Edmontonians was recorded. Edmonton's overall population has increased 2.5 per cent from 2014 to 2016.

"The number of people without a home has been steadily trending down since the launch of Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in 2009," says Jay Freeman, Executive Director of Housing and Homelessness at the City. "The preliminary 2016 Count numbers show we are still on the right track, but we need to continue to work together in our community to bring an end to homelessness in our city."

"We see that we are making a difference for those experiencing homelessness in our city," said Susan McGee, Chief Executive Officer of Homeward Trust Edmonton. "But we cannot become complacent. Despite the numbers dropping, there are still 1752 Edmontonians without a home, with 70 per cent of those identified as chronically homeless. We know this count does not reflect the growing number of people and families are struggling to make ends meet, and to keep a roof over their heads."

Of those counted:

- 48 per cent identified as Indigenous. 5.4 per cent of Edmonton's overall population identifies as Indigenous.
- Three per cent were recent immigrants or refugees.
- 70 people were veterans of the military or RCMP.

The 2016 Count found an 11 per cent decrease in the number of people using emergency shelters and a decrease in the number of those sleeping outdoors. Fewer people who were provisionally housed – or couchsurfing – were counted.

"In 2014, we identified a shocking number of families experiencing homelessness," said McGee. "We took action with the province and created the Urgent Families Initiative. That number has now dropped by 51 per cent. We must continue to work together to bring an end to homelessness and to address the need of affordable housing in our city and in our province."

This year was the first time that Alberta's seven largest cities – the 7 Cities on Housing and Homelessness – conducted their point in time count on the same day, October 19. Across Alberta, 5373 people were counted as experiencing homelessness. That number represents a 19.2 per cent decrease in the number of people without a home from 2014 to 2016, and a 31 per cent decrease in homelessness across the province since 2008.

Homeward Trust is holding a Community Update Wednesday, November 30 to delve deeper into these preliminary numbers as well as to provide updates on progress towards the goals of [Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness](#), and our community's participation in the national 20,000 Homes Campaign. It will be happening at "The Heart" in the Robbins Health Learning Centre at MacEwan University from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.

A full report, including analysis, will be available in the new year.

Edmonton's 10 year plan to End Homelessness was developed in partnership with the City of Edmonton, Homeward Trust Edmonton along with input from a number of organizations across the city, including social service agencies, housing providers, community groups, developers and local businesses. Homeward Trust manages the implementation of the plan, including the delivery of the Homeless Count, and the Housing First program by a number of agencies.

Edmonton was Canada's second city to create a plan to end homelessness, and Alberta was the first province.

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### For more information:

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

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

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