



# RESULTS REPORT



## Dufferin County 2018 Point-in-Time Homeless Count

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy



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## Executive Summary

### Overview

The Dufferin County 2018 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count included an enumeration of individuals experiencing homelessness living unsheltered, emergency sheltered, temporarily sheltered (i.e. couch surfing), and in public locations. The count was conducted by volunteers and staff from the homeless-serving system over a two day period, May 14<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> 2018, throughout the County of Dufferin.

This report provides important background information, covers the count methodology, including challenges and limitations, and shares the overall findings as well as findings from specific sub-populations. It includes a discussion section and some recommendations for next steps. This information is meant to be a snapshot of homelessness in Dufferin County at a specific point-in-time. It should be used to help inform service provision, resource allocation, and target setting toward ending homelessness in our community.

The results of the Count also fulfill provincial and federal reporting requirements, as well as to help create a Dufferin County By-Name List (BNL) which will inform referrals to housing supports and services within the region.

### Methodology

Dufferin County participated in a PiT and Registry Week combined count in May 2018. A PiT Count is meant to provide a 'snapshot', on one (1) day, of homelessness in the region during a specific point in time, while a Registry Week provides more detailed information over a longer timeframe, can be up to seven (7) days, about the individuals in a community who are experiencing homelessness.

Thirty-seven trained staff and volunteers were involved in this year's count, which took place from 8:00am Monday May 14<sup>th</sup> until midnight on Tuesday May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Participants were asked several screening questions to ensure that they met the Canadian definition of "homeless" before volunteers proceeded with the survey in its entirety. Survey questions, over the two (2) days focused on the respondent's experiences on May 14<sup>th</sup> only, in alignment with the methodology of a Point-in-Time Count. Survey results were captured in real time using iPads that were set up to link directly to a Google document monitored by the County of Dufferin.

### Key Findings

A total of 73 people were encountered during the Count, forty-five (45) of whom were found to be homeless. Of these individuals, 44 agreed to complete brief surveys in order to capture demographic and experiential data. This number represents a decrease of 43.6% since a homeless count was last completed in 2016, at which time 78 individuals were surveyed.

Of the 44 respondents, the majority were found to be "emergency sheltered", and a small number self-reported that they were sleeping in public places during the night of the Count. Youth were over-represented in this year's PiT Count, as were Veterans, Indigenous, and those individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S. A variety of causes were reported for current loss of housing, the most common cause being conflict with a parent.

The 2018 data was collected from nine different sources and locations, including; two emergency shelters, three survey sites, a dedicated phone line, the local hospital, and two different street survey routes. The data, statistics, and general information that follows in this report represents the 44 individuals who were surveyed.

## Background and Purpose

Dufferin County receives funding from the Federal Government under The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). One of the key HPS directives is to develop a portrait of homelessness in designated communities across Canada. In July 2016, furthering the partnership to end homelessness between Dufferin County and the Federal Government, Dufferin's Community Advisory Board (CAB) voted to join the 20,000 Homes Campaign.

The 20,000 Homes Campaign is a community-led nation-wide initiative that seeks to address the persistently high rates of homelessness in Canada. 20,000 Homes is supported by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), and has the goal of permanently housing 20,000 homeless people living in Canada by July 2020. As with the HPS, a key element in the 20,000 Homes Campaign is to develop a better understanding of the topography of homelessness in Canada's communities.

In 2016, 32 communities across Canada implemented a coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count using common methods and common questions.<sup>1</sup> It has been demonstrated that when a number of communities conduct counts at the same time of year using a common approach, the results can be used to build a better understanding of homelessness across a region<sup>2</sup>. In this regard, organized PiT Counts represent an important step towards developing a national picture of homelessness, as well as in better understanding homelessness at a local level.

In 2018, an opportunity to conduct a follow up PiT Count/Registry Week was presented by the Government of Ontario. As part of their efforts to end chronic homelessness by 2025, the Ontario Ministry of Housing required Municipal Service Managers to conduct a local enumeration of people experiencing homelessness as part of a Coordinated Count in 2018<sup>3</sup>. The Government of Canada supported this initiative, providing Community Entities, including the County of Dufferin, funding for this count through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. "Everyone Counts 2018", the second HPS Coordinated Point-in Time Count, was held primarily in March and April 2018 to continue to help communities in Canada measure their progress in reducing homelessness<sup>4</sup>. Dufferin County's PiT Count/Registry Week took place in May 2018.

The purpose of the Dufferin County 2018 Point-in-Time Count was to provide a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness on one day of the year. The PiT Count method is intended to capture an estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness, as well as basic demographics, reasons for homelessness, and service use of people experiencing homelessness at a single point in time. In Dufferin County, the PiT Count method was implemented in combination with a Registry Week. The Registry Week method is a coordinated, multi-day count of people experiencing homelessness in shelters, on the streets, and in other public spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada. *Everyone Counts – A guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada – 2nd Edition*. Available at : <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time-counts.html>

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada. *Everyone Counts – A guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada – 2nd Edition*. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time-counts.html>

<sup>3</sup> Government of Ontario (2018). Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Housing. *Guidelines for Service Manager Homeless Enumeration*. Available at: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page15239.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada. *Everyone Counts – A guide to Point-in-Time Counts in Canada – 2nd Edition*. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/communities/homelessness/reports/guide-point-in-time-counts.html>

It provides for opportunities to collect additional information on needs and demographics of those who are homeless, and can support the creation of a list of people by name, starting with the most vulnerable, in order to prioritize access to permanent housing and supports.

This report presents the results of the 2018 Homeless Count in Dufferin County. It provides information about people who were identified as homeless during the 24 hour PiT Count on May 14<sup>th</sup>, and compares the results with the previous 2016 Homeless Count where possible.

## Definitions

**Homeless** - The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness defines homelessness as “the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing”<sup>5</sup>

**Unsheltered homeless** - Includes people who are sleeping in places unfit for human habitation, including streets, alleys, parks and other public locations, abandoned buildings, tents, vehicles and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep.

**Sheltered homeless** – Includes people sleeping in emergency shelters (general and specific to women or youth, etc.), and transitional shelters. It may include people who receive hotel/motel vouchers in lieu of shelter beds. It does not include people who have security of tenure, who are in Housing First programs or in social or subsidized housing.

**Emergency Sheltered** – Includes those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence. Emergency shelters are facilities that provide short-term temporary accommodations and essential services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

**Chronic homelessness** – Long term homelessness. For the purpose of this report, chronic homelessness has been defined as someone who has been homeless for 6 months or more over the past year.

**Episodic Homelessness** – For the purpose of this report, a person experiencing episodic homelessness has had three or more distinct episodes of homelessness in the past year.

**Hidden Homelessness** refers to people who live temporarily with others without the guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing, for example couch surfing.

**Housing First** – A recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing followed by provision of additional supports and services as needed<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Homeless Hub (2017). *The Canadian Definition of Homelessness*. Available at: <http://homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition>

<sup>6</sup> The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Homeless Hub (2017). *Glossary*. Available at: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/homelessness-glossary>

**Youth** – Includes those aged 16-24 years at the time of the survey. Dependent youth or children who were residing with their parents or guardians were not included in the overall proportion of youth and were not surveyed during the Count.

## Geographic Scope/Dufferin County

Dufferin County is home to almost 62,000 people<sup>7</sup> and is comprised of eight (8) local municipalities, including Orangeville, Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon, Mono, Mulmur, Shelburne, Grand Valley. Dufferin County is largely a rural community, the town of Orangeville is our community's largest municipality.

Key housing challenges facing the County include a growing senior population in need of retirement-appropriate housing, income disparity and housing affordability<sup>8</sup>. According to a recent report published by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, the housing needs of seniors within Dufferin County will likely continue to grow, as it is estimated that older adults in this region could make up approximately 36.6% of the population by the year 2041<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, the Public Health Report discloses that roughly 41% of those who rent rooms, houses, or apartments in the region currently spend 30% or more of their income on their shelter costs<sup>10</sup>. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), suggests that a household that spends more than 30% of before-tax household income on shelter costs is considered to be in unaffordable housing. As is the case in much of Ontario, because of high housing costs, even a bachelor apartment is considered unaffordable for someone working a full-time job at minimum wage and living in Dufferin County.

For the purpose of this Homeless Count, "Dufferin" was treated as one area. All areas within the County were covered with either a shelter count, a survey site, a street team, or access to a telephone survey during the hours of the count.

## Methodology and Implementation

This section describes the methodology for the Homeless Count in the County of Dufferin. It also provides an overview of the planning process, volunteer recruitment and training, survey methods and locations, and challenges and limitations of the homeless count.

### The Planning Process

Dufferin County is served by a steering committee called the Community Advisory Board (CAB). The Community Advisory Board includes a range of partners from the public, not-for-profit and private sectors.

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada (2017.) *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census*. Available at: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cd-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CD&GC=3522&TOPIC=1>

<sup>8</sup> The State of Homelessness in Dufferin (2013). Available at: <https://www.dufferincounty.ca/files/content-pdf/sate-of-homelessness-in-dufferin.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (2018) Older Adult Health Status Report. Available at <https://bi.wdgpulichealth.ca/reports/>

<sup>10</sup> Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (2018) Social determinants of Health Status Report. Available at <https://bi.wdgpulichealth.ca/reports/>

These partners work together to develop plans for ending homelessness in our community. For the Dufferin County 2018 PiT Count, the CAB created a smaller sub-committee (“Leadership Team”) to act as oversight for the event.

During the planning stages the PiT Count Leadership team worked to; engage the local community and the homelessness services sector, develop plans and organize logistics for the survey, and to recruit and train volunteers.

The leadership team consisted of representatives from the County of Dufferin (Housing Department), Services and Housing in the Province (SHIP), Choices Youth Shelter (Choices) and Family Transition Place (FTP). All committee members worked together to ensure consistency across the project.

### Volunteer Recruitment and Training

A variety of efforts were made in order to inform and engage the community in regards to the homeless count. Dufferin County and SHIP both updated social media accounts with the information, and messages were created and displayed on the communication board at Dufferin County Community Services. Members of the planning committee put up posters in several locations in the community including parks, grocery stores, gas stations, laundry mats, police stations and Headwaters Health Care Centre. In addition, two local radio stations were contacted and interviews were set up with a member of the PiT Count Leadership team during the week before the count.

A recruitment e-mail was sent out to all agencies and partners in the region to encourage staff to volunteer for the Count. Particular attention was given to actively recruit front-line shelter staff and outreach workers. The planning committee also reached out to members of the Dufferin County community via Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) to help recruit volunteers. Volunteers were directed to register online and to indicate their availability and which survey sites they would like to volunteer at. A schedule was created based on these preferences, typically on a four hour shift rotation.

A total of thirty-seven volunteers were recruited to participate in the count. Twenty-eight of the volunteers came from local service providers, including the Municipality, while nine volunteers were general community members.

All volunteers were required to attend a mandatory three hour training session during the week before the Point-in-Time Count. Three different sessions were offered, including a designated training session for internal volunteers from the Municipality. The mandatory training covered:

- The definition of Homelessness
- Overview of 20,000 Homes Campaign
- The logistics of the count
- Components of the 2018 survey
- The Introductory script and how to approach people
- Confidentiality and Informed Consent
- Safety precautions
- Data collection procedures: Using the iPad

During the training session, volunteers were required to sign an oath of confidentiality, a media release form, and a consent form.

All volunteers received a red 20,000 Homes T-shirt to wear during the Count, a paper copy of the PiT Count schedule and a tour of the PiT Count/Registry Week Headquarters. Headquarters were located at 30 Centre Street in Orangeville (Dufferin County Community Services). This is where all volunteers were instructed to meet to pick up their survey kit at the start of their shift. It is also where they returned with their completed survey forms, leftover gift bags and any other supplies.

Survey kits included a volunteer badge, a clipboard, 10 paper copies of the survey, two pens, copies of the participant consent form, “thank you” gift bags for participants and an iPad. Volunteers were instructed to wear their red T-shirts and their volunteer badges at all times during their shift, so that they could be identified as being with the count.

## Survey Methods

Surveys were administered with individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of May 14<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers used survey questions loaded onto iPads. They were instructed to survey everyone they encountered on Monday and Tuesday, using questions from a screening tool to determine whether or not the person they were interviewing was experiencing homelessness. As part of the screening, respondents surveyed on Monday were asked where they were staying on Monday night. On Tuesday, the screening question became “Where did you stay last night?” to ensure that all data was reflective of just one point in time. The purpose of this question was to determine if the individual “screened in” (i.e. met the definition of homeless being used for the count). Individuals who reported being unsheltered, or staying in an emergency shelter or a transitional shelter, were screened in and included in the survey. Respondents who reported staying at their own home or were staying long term at someone else’s place were screened out. These individuals were thanked for their time, but were not further surveyed. If any person declined to participate in the survey, but volunteers perceived evidence that the person was experiencing homelessness (i.e. carrying bag of belongings, sleeping bag, blankets), volunteers recorded the person as “observed homeless” on a tally sheet, including their perceived age and gender, and any indicators of homelessness.

The 2018 Dufferin County 2018 Point-in-Time Count survey included two sections;

1. **Federal/Provincial Enumeration Survey** – an anonymous survey provided by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. A number of optional questions provided by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness were added in by the County of Dufferin to gain additional information.
2. **VI-SPDAT** – a common assessment tool that uses a standardized scoring system to establish level of need, to assist communities in determining the appropriate level of intervention for the homeless individual or family.

Individuals experiencing homelessness (screened in) were invited to complete both sections of the survey. To ensure participants remained anonymous, no identifying information was collected for the Ontario Enumeration Survey. Participants were asked to provide their name and contact information for the VI-SPDAT. Information collected from the VI-SPDAT will be added to the Dufferin County By-Name List, which will inform referrals to housing supports and services within the Region.

Care was taken by volunteers to ensure that respondents felt comfortable, regardless of where the survey took place. During the interviews, volunteers reminded participants that they could skip any questions or withdraw from the survey at any time. All participants were provided with a gift bag upon completion of the survey.



Gift bags included cookies, socks, hats and mitts, and toiletries supplied by Family Transition Place, as well as a \$25 grocery store gift card.

Of the 73 people encountered during the Count, 44 individuals screened in and consented to complete the survey. The experiential results in this report reflect the data collected through the 44 survey respondents.

### iPads

As one of the smallest Service Manager areas and with one of the smallest Community Advisory Boards (CAB), resources in Dufferin County are often limited.

The decision was made that similar to the 2016 count, remote devices would be used as part of the 2018 survey process. The County of Dufferin rented iPads to use for the Count from Computer Rentals.ca, a supplier in Mississauga Ontario<sup>11</sup>.

The iPads were rented for a period of one week so that the planning committee could use them during the volunteer training sessions, as well as during the two day PiT Count/Registry Week. On the day of the Count, paper copies of the survey were also provided to volunteers just in case the iPad malfunctioned. The iPad came pre-loaded with their own Wi-Fi 4G (so that other Wi-Fi connections were not required while surveying on the street). A shortcut was added to each iPad so that each one that had a direct link to a Google form survey. An iPad was given to each volunteer stationed at a shelter, a survey site, the hospital, overseeing the dedicated telephone line, or walking on a street survey team. All survey responses were recorded “live” on the iPad and data collected was immediately submitted to the Dufferin County Google form.

### The Point-in-Time Count

A PiT Count is a method used to measure sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. It aims to enumerate individuals in a community who are, at a given time, staying in shelters or are unsheltered (e.g., on the street, in parks), providing a “snapshot” of homelessness in a community. PiT Counts include a survey that can provide communities with information on the characteristics of their homeless population. This information can be used by communities to direct resources to areas of greatest need, and to connect individuals to targeted supports to help them achieve stable housing. When completed on subsequent years, it can also be used to track changes in the homeless population over time and measure progress in reducing it.

### Registry Week

The County Of Dufferin chose to combine the Homelessness PiT Count with a Registry Week. A Registry Week shares a lot of the features of a PiT count in that volunteers conduct surveys with people experiencing homelessness; however the purpose of a Registry Week is also to begin to assess the needs of people experiencing homelessness and develop a by-name list to prioritize people for housing interventions.

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<sup>11</sup> 20 iPads were rented for one week from Mississauga based company *Computer Rentals.ca*  
<https://www.computerrentals.ca/cities/mississauga-computer-rental.html>

The Registry Week, not only provides a point-in-time estimate of the population size, it also collects data on the level of need for supports, and it can be carried out over a number of days in a week.

### Survey Locations

**Shelter Count-** Choices Youth Shelter (Choices) and Family Transition Place (FTP) conducted a shelter count on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. This part of the count involved surveying individuals staying overnight in either shelter on the Monday night.

The surveys were conducted by PiT/Registry Count volunteers who work at the shelters and who had attended the mandatory training the week before. Not all clients in the shelters agreed to, or were available to be surveyed. Clients who were not surveyed, but were perceived to be homeless, were recorded on a tally sheet, along with their perceived age, gender, and indicators of homelessness.

**Survey Sites** - Teams of 1-3 volunteers were assembled to conduct surveys in designated hub survey sites. A primary survey site was set up at 30 Centre Street at the County of Dufferin Community Services Office. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey between the hours 8:00 am and 8:00 pm on Monday and Tuesday. A satellite survey site was set up in Shelburne at 167 Centre Street at the County of Dufferin Employment Resource Centre. This site was open for surveys between 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Monday and Tuesday. In addition, a satellite hub site was created in Grand Valley at the Early On Centre 90 Main St. West. This survey location was open from 10:00 am - 11:30 am on Monday and Tuesday morning.

**Phone Line** - A dedicated phone line was set up for participants to call in to complete the survey. This phone line was monitored by a trained volunteer from the County of Dufferin between the hours of 8:30 am – 4:30 pm on Monday and Tuesday.

**Hospital** – A volunteer surveyor was placed at Headwaters Health Care Centre, 100 Rolling Hills Drive, in Orangeville to interview potential patients in the emergency department with no fixed address on the night of Monday May 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Unsheltered Street Count** - The street count focused on finding people in public areas or locations where homeless individuals were likely to be found, including certain streets, alleys, parks, coffee shops, and community centers. These locations had been identified by community agencies, outreach workers and municipal staff prior to the count. Volunteer interviewers, working in teams of 2-3, were assigned to routes or locations and given maps and instructions to look for people who were homeless to conduct a survey. Street surveying teams operated in four hour shifts from 8:00 am Monday until Midnight on Tuesday evening, with the exception of the hours between 12am - 4am on Tuesday morning (due to shortage of volunteers).

As with the shelter count, the survey sites and the phone line, participants were required to “screen in” before completing the survey. In addition, if a volunteer approached someone on the street who they thought might be homeless and the person declined to be interviewed, volunteers recorded this information on a tally sheet, including the perceived age, gender, and location. These individuals were not included in the total count number.

### Challenges and Limitations

There are a number of challenges in any homeless count. Though a Point-in-Time Count is a comprehensive methodology for the collection of data on people experiencing homelessness, its limitations must be considered in full.

The most important limitation to keep in mind is that a PiT Count inherently undercounts the homeless population in a community.<sup>12</sup> A PiT Count is not intended to be a measure of everyone who experiences homelessness in a community over time. By focusing on a single day, the count will not include people who may cycle in and out of homelessness, and will not provide information about the number of people who experience homelessness over the course of a week, month, or year. What it will do is provide an estimate of how many people are homeless on a given night.

PiT Counts are also unable to capture all persons experiencing hidden homelessness, who may be staying at a friend's house, couch surfing, or living in a motel room.

Additionally, the unsheltered count relies on volunteers to find those experiencing homelessness in public areas, and some who may not appear to be homeless, who are well-hidden, or who are actively avoiding being counted may be missed.

For a variety of reasons, some individuals experiencing homelessness generally do not want to be located, and make efforts to avoid detection. Regardless of how successful outreach efforts are, an undercount of those experiencing homelessness will persist.

Consideration must be given to the fact that the relatively small sample of Dufferin County's homeless population was not randomly selected. Although significant efforts were made to reach out to homeless individuals throughout the County, there were still limitations in our survey methods. The opportunity to participate in the survey was only possible for individuals who called into the phone line, or were present at; the two emergency shelters on the evening of May 14<sup>th</sup>, the local hospital or any of the three survey sites, and those identified by qualified staff and trained volunteers on validated walking routes.

With these limitations in mind, the findings from the Dufferin County 2018 PiT Count should therefore be considered the minimum number of people that were homeless in Dufferin County on the night of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The numbers presented in this report may just scratch the surface of the true extent of homelessness in Dufferin County.

## Results/Findings

### Survey Response Rate

The 2018 PiT Count has been designed by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy to allow through the first four questions the ability to "screen out" all participants who are not considered unsheltered, or emergency sheltered on the night of the Count. Respondents were screened out if they reported that they had already answered a survey, if they currently had a place to stay, or if they were unwilling to participate in the survey. On May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, volunteers initiated a survey with 29 individuals who were screened out, and 44 who were screened in and completed the survey in its entirety.

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<sup>12</sup>National Law Center on Homeless (2017). *Don't Count on it: How the HUD Point-in-Time Count Underestimates the Homelessness Crisis in America*. Available at: <https://www.nlchp.org/documents/HUD-PIT-report2017>

The 44 surveys were received from the following survey locations:

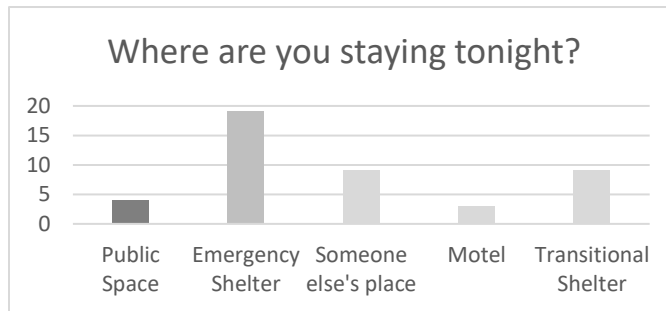
- Sheltered surveys (Choices and FTP) – 23 respondents
- Survey sites – 11 respondents
- Dedicated Phone Line - 2 respondents
- Unsheltered count at the hospital - 0
- Unsheltered Street surveys – 8 respondents
- Talled but not surveyed - A total of 8 individuals were observed but not interviewed in the 2018 Homeless Count. Observations were collected on tally sheet but were not included in results.

### 2018 Results

A total of 44 individuals were found to be homeless in Dufferin County on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2018. Of these, 4 individuals (9%) reported being completely unsheltered, meaning they were staying in parks, on the streets, in coffee shops, or in other public spaces.

Nineteen (43%) of the respondents were emergency sheltered, nine (20.5%) were staying at someone else’s place, three (7%) were staying at a motel, and nine individuals (20.5%) were staying at a transitional shelter.

There were two family households experiencing homelessness during the count. These households included at least one parent or guardian and one or more dependent children under the age of 18. In total, there were five dependent children found to be homeless during the survey, however details of these dependents were not included for the purposes of the 2018 Count. Both family households were staying at an emergency shelter on the night of May 14th.



	Adults	Youth	Total
Unsheltered (Public Space)	2	2	4 (9%)
Emergency Sheltered	8	11	19 (43%)
Temporarily Sheltered	13	8	21 (48%)
			44 respondents

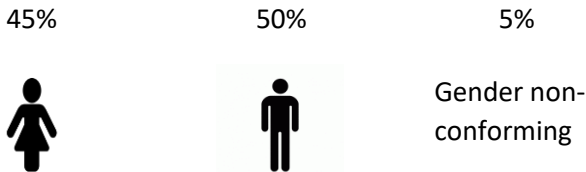
2016
9%
43%
48%
78 respondents

In the 2018 Count, ratios of those sheltered/temporarily sheltered/unsheltered were found to be very similar to the data collected in 2016. In 2016, 48% of respondents also reported being temporarily sheltered on the night of the count (staying with someone else, at a motel, or at a transitional shelter. Forty-three percent (43%) were emergency sheltered, and 9% were unsheltered, or staying in a public place for the night.

## Demographics

- Gender**

On the night of the 2018 PiT Count, 50% of respondents (22 individuals) experiencing homelessness in Dufferin County were men. 45% (20) were women, and 5% (2 respondents) identified as being gender non-conforming. The average age of male respondents was 25.4, while the average age of female respondents was 38.6 years.



Since the 2016 Count, the proportion of women to men has dropped somewhat, with men now making up a larger percentage of those experiencing homelessness. In 2016, the number of women counted exceeded the number of men involved in the homeless count by more than 10%.

Year of Count	Women	Men	Transgender/Gender non-conforming
2018	20 (45%)	22 (50%)	2 (5%)
2016	42 (54%)	34 (43.5%)	2 (2.5%)

- Sexual Orientation**

Eighty-six percent (86%) of survey respondents within Dufferin County identified their sexual orientation as straight. Two respondents (4.5%) identified as bi-sexual and two respondents (4.5%) identified as queer. One respondent identified as “other” (pansexual), and one individual declined to answer the question. In total, the percentage of those respondents who identify as LGBTQ2S in the 2018 Count was 11%, and four out of these five respondents were youths. It is well documented that LGBTQ2S youth are overrepresented in the homeless population across Canada<sup>13</sup>.

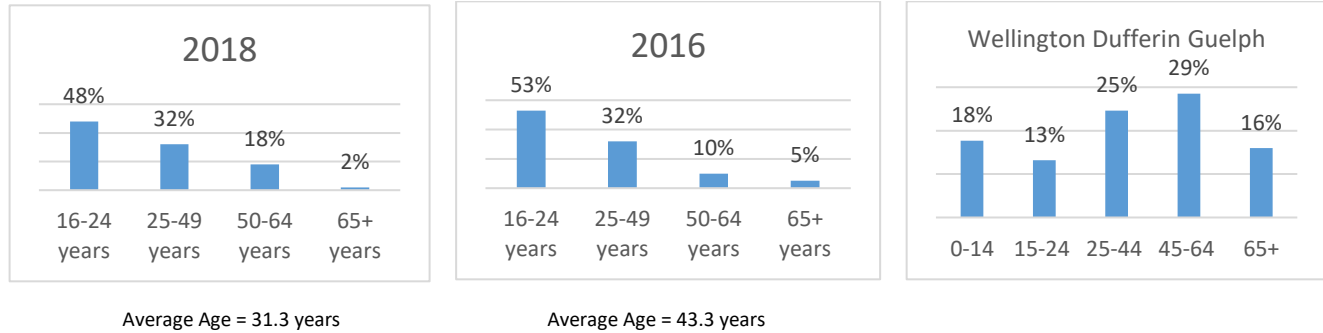
- Age**

The average age of people experiencing homelessness on the night of the Dufferin County 2018 PiT Count was 31.3 years. The most common age range was 16-24, with 21 respondents (48%) falling into this category. Fourteen respondents (32%) were between the ages of 25-49, eight respondents (18%) were aged 50-64, and one respondent (2%) was over the age of 65. More than half (64%) of survey respondents reported that they had first experienced homelessness as a child under the age of 18, with the most common age being 16 years.

In 2016, youths aged 16-24 also comprised the largest group among the homeless in Dufferin County, with 41 respondents falling into this age category. It is worth noting that the average age of respondents in 2016 was significantly higher at 43.3 years.

<sup>13</sup> The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Homeless Hub (2013). *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2013*. Available at: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/state-homelessness-canada-2013>

According to the 2018 Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Report, the most common age range for the population in this region is 45-64 years old. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of individuals fall into this category, while only 13% of residents in the area are youths between the ages of 15-24<sup>14</sup>. From these Public Health figures, it can be concluded that youths were significantly over-represented during both homeless counts in Dufferin County.



- **Indigenous Status**

During the data collection process, individuals who were experiencing homelessness were asked “Do you identify as Indigenous or do you have Indigenous ancestry”? Eighteen percent (18%) self-reported that they were First Nations, Inuit, Metis, or had Indigenous ancestry. As reported in 2011 by Statistics Canada, Indigenous individuals represent approximately 4.3% of the total Canadian population,<sup>15</sup> meaning that the number of participants who identified as Indigenous during the Dufferin County PiT Count was over four times the national average. On a more local level, this figure is even more significant, as recent Public Health Reports suggest that only 1.5% of the general population in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph identify as Indigenous.<sup>16</sup>

During the local Count, Indigenous respondents reported a significantly higher prevalence of history in foster care (75% > 36%), as well as both chronic homelessness (50% > 45.5%) and episodic homelessness (50% > 34%) as compared to non-indigenous respondents.

According to Public Health’s *2018 Social Determinants of Health Status Report*, Indigenous in this community commonly experience lower income levels and higher rates of unemployment than the general population<sup>17</sup>.

- **Veterans and Newcomers to Canada**

A total of 4.5% (2 respondents) indicated that they were veterans or had previous service in the RCMP. In Canada, it is estimated that 1.79% of the general population are veterans<sup>18</sup>, signifying that veterans are over-represented in the Dufferin County 2018 PiT results.

<sup>14</sup> Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (2018) Social determinants of Health Status Report. Available at <https://bi.wdgpulichealth.ca/reports/>

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada (2016). *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit*. Available at: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>

<sup>16</sup> Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (2018) Social determinants of Health Status Report. Available at <https://bi.wdgpulichealth.ca/reports/>

<sup>17</sup> Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (2018) Social determinants of Health Status Report. Available at <https://bi.wdgpulichealth.ca/reports/>

<sup>18</sup> Estimated Veteran population as of March 2017 (658’300/36681’943). Data collected from Veterans Affairs Canada online at <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/news/general-statistics>

Three survey respondents (7%) reported that they came to Canada as an immigrant, refugee or refugee claimant. All three respondents reported being in Canada for at least 10 years.

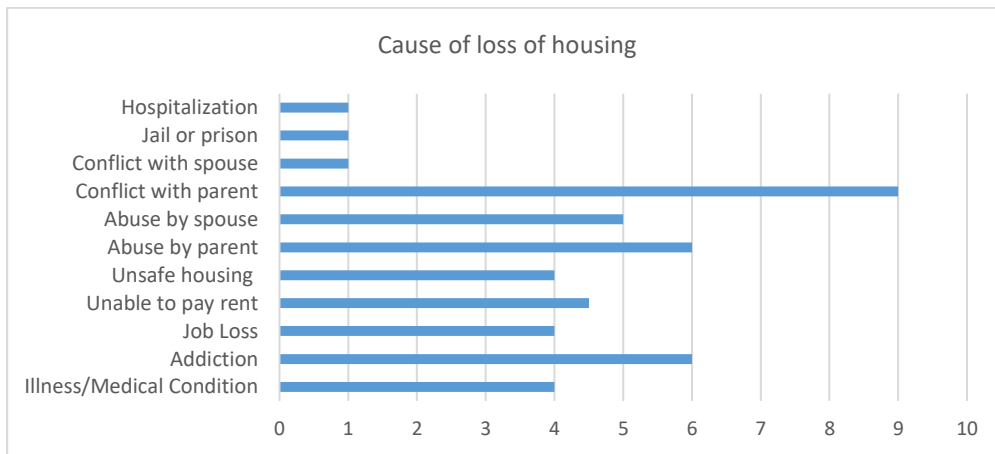
- **Newcomers to Dufferin County**

When asked the question “How long have you been in Dufferin County”? Only three respondents (7%) reported living in the community their whole life. Nearly half of the participants (21 respondents) have lived in Dufferin County for at least one year, while 20 respondents (45.5%) have been in this community less than one year. Thirty-six respondents reported coming to Dufferin County from another community in Ontario, four came from another Province in Canada, and one participant declined to answer this question.

### Barriers to Housing

People who are experiencing homelessness generally face many barriers to obtaining and maintaining affordable, permanent housing. Survey respondents in the 2018 Dufferin County PiT Count were asked what caused them to lose their housing most recently. Over 22% indicated that conflict with a parent lead to their current homelessness.

Twenty percent (20%) reported that they were homeless because they did not have enough income to afford rent. Other top responses included abuse by a parent or abuse by a spouse. Four individuals each reported illness or medical condition, job loss or unsafe housing conditions as the primary cause of their homelessness.



Women often face additional barriers in obtaining and maintaining safe, affordable housing. Nearly 50% of female respondents in this PiT Count (9 of 20) reported that the reason for their housing loss was either domestic abuse by a spouse or partner, or abuse by a parent. Male respondents were most likely to report conflict with a parent or addiction as the reason for their current homelessness (27% and 22% respectively).

### Duration of Homelessness

“Chronic Homelessness” refers to individuals who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year. Nearly half of survey respondents (45%) in Dufferin County’s 2018 PiT Count reported evidence that they are chronically homeless. Seven participants (16%) have been homeless for 3-6 months, and 17 participants (39%) report being homeless for less than 3 months. The average length of time respondents have spent homeless in the past year was 6 months.

“Episodically Homeless” refers to individuals who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year. Thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents in the 2018 Count reported that they have been homeless at least 3 times in the past year. Five respondents (11%) have been homeless two times in the past year, and the majority (52%) reported that they have been homeless one time in the past year. This one time may have lasted the entire year.

Nine respondents (20%) have been homeless for 6 months or longer AND have been homeless three or more times within the past year, making them both chronically and episodically homeless. These findings are quite consistent with results from 2016, at which time 21% of respondents reported being both chronically and episodically homeless.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of those experiencing homelessness on the night of the 2018 PiT Count reported not having had permanent housing in at least 12 months. Overall, only 14% (6 survey respondents) indicated that they had first experienced homelessness in the past year. Of these individuals, half were over the age of 55 at the time (3 respondents).

### Sources of Income

As reported during the 2018 PiT Count, the most common method through which individuals experiencing homelessness obtain money is social assistance such as Ontario Works or Social Assistance Programs. Forty-one percent (41%) of survey respondents reported that they rely on these programs for income. An additional 30% (13 respondents) receive support from Disability Benefits, and 6 respondents (13%) said that they gain money through employment or informal/self-employment. Additional sources of income include Seniors Benefits (2%), GST refund (4.5%), and Child and Family Tax Benefits (4.5%). Eight individuals (18%) reported that they had no sources of income whatsoever. It is important to note that some respondents indicated more than one source of income.

Sources of Income	Number	Percentage	2016
Employment	5	11%	5%
Informal/Self-Employment	1	2%	2.5%
Welfare/Social Assistance	18	41%	31%
Disability Benefit	13	30%	29%
Seniors Benefits	1	2%	5%
GST Refund	2	4.5%	0
Child and Family Tax Benefits	2	4.5%	4%
No Income	8	18%	10%

### Service Usage

- **Foster Care**

A total of 16 survey respondents (36%) reported having lived in foster care and/or a group home setting. Survey respondents with past experiences in foster care/group home were significantly higher (75%) among Indigenous respondents.

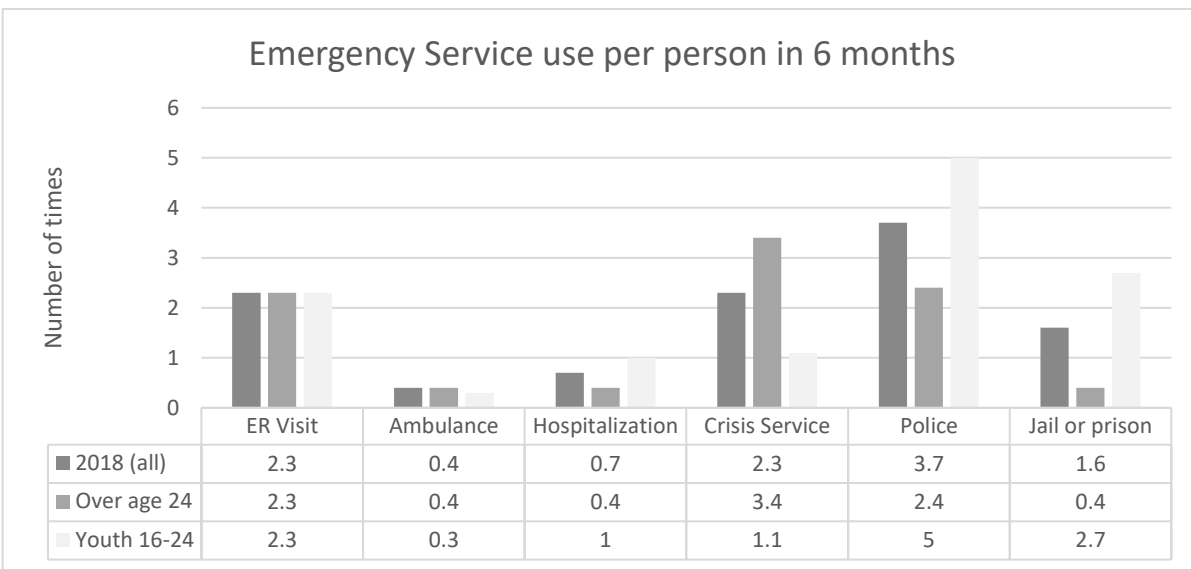


- **Emergency Shelters**

38 individuals (86%) who were surveyed reported that they had stayed in an emergency shelter at least once in the past year, including 18 out of 20 female respondents (90%), and 100% of those identifying as gender non-conforming. These numbers are somewhat higher than those gathered in 2016, when 74% of those surveyed (58 respondents) reported staying at an emergency shelter in the last year.

- **Emergency Services**

Of those individuals experiencing homelessness on May 14<sup>th</sup>, twenty-five individuals (57%) reported having used some type of Emergency Services at least one time during the last 6 months, with an average of 11 instances per person. The most commonly accessed service was contact with police, followed by visits to an Emergency room, and use of a crisis service. Youth used Emergency Services an average of 12.4 times each in the last 6 months, which is about 25% higher than respondents from other age categories. Eighty-one percent (81%) of youths reported using Emergency Services at least one time in the last 6 months.



Data available from a number of sources suggests that the general population in the Province of Ontario uses significantly less Emergency Services than those experiencing homelessness in our region. More attention needs to be given to this variance, but to illustrate the concern further, statistics suggest that the proportion of residents in Ontario who are hospitalized overnight in a 12 month period is around 9%<sup>19</sup>. Eleven out of Dufferin County’s 44 of respondents reported hospitalization in the last 6 months. Extrapolated, this figure suggests that in a 12 month period, it is possible that 50% of the homeless in Dufferin County may require hospitalization, meaning that they are:

- 6 x as likely to be hospitalized

<sup>19</sup> Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (2012). Emergency Health Services – Fact Sheet. Available at: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ehs/ehs\\_dt.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ehs/ehs_dt.html)

Furthermore, Ontario residents have an emergency department utilization rate of 45 per 100 citizens per year<sup>20</sup>. Our respondents in Dufferin County had 100 visits to the Emergency room in a six month period. This means that in one year, homeless individuals in our community may be:

- 10 x as likely to visit an ER (454 visits yearly per 100 individuals)

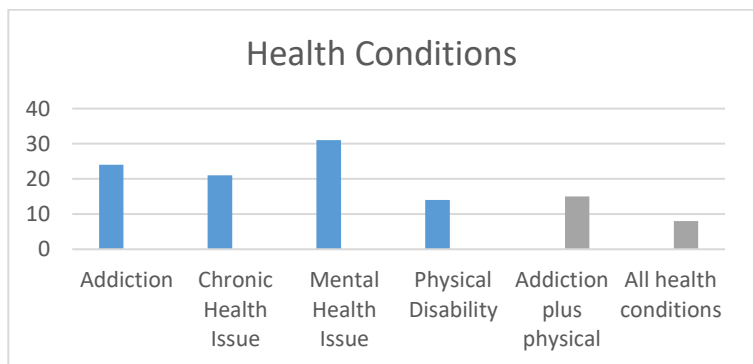
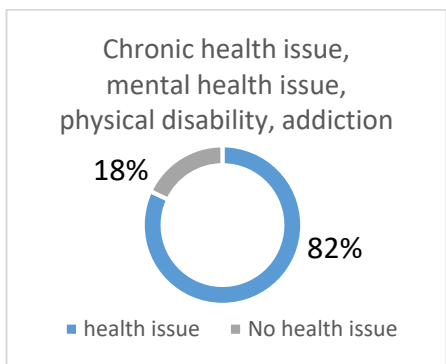
In addition, it has been reported that the general population in Ontario requires approximately 6.6 ambulance transfers per 100 people on a yearly basis<sup>21</sup>. The 44 respondents in the Dufferin County PiT Count reported 16 ambulance transfers in the last 6 months. Extrapolated over a 12 month period, that would suggest that these individuals are:

- 11 x as likely to require ambulance transfer

General Population in Ontario	Projections for homeless individuals in Dufferin County	Comparisons
6.6 transfers yearly for every 100	72.6 transfers yearly for every 100	11 x as often
45 ER visits yearly for every 100	454 ER visits yearly for every 100	Over 10 x as often
9% hospitalized overnight yearly	50% hospitalized overnight yearly	5.7 x as likely

- **Health Services**

Respondents were also asked if they have any chronic/acute medical conditions, physical disabilities, addictions, or mental health issues. Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents reported at least one type of health condition. A high number of participants (70%) reported that they have a mental health issues, 48% have an acute or chronic medical condition, 55% reported having an addiction, and 14 respondents (32%) reported having a physical disability. Fifteen respondents (34%) reported having both an addiction and a physical disability or chronic health-related issue, and a small, but significant number (18%) reported having all four health issues.



<sup>20</sup> Ontario Local Health Integrations Network, Central West LHIN (2016). *Supporting Evidence-Informed Sub-Region Planning: Common Data Deck for Central West LHIN Sub Regions.*

<sup>21</sup> Ontario Local Health Integrations Network, Central West LHIN (2016). *Supporting Evidence-Informed Sub-Region Planning: Common Data Deck for Central West LHIN Sub Regions.*

## Conclusion

The Dufferin County Point-in-Time Homeless Count met both Federal and Provincial requirements to conduct a local enumeration of people experiencing homelessness as part of a Coordinated Count in 2018. The PiT Count was designed to capture a snapshot of people in the community who were experiencing homelessness during the night of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Dufferin County identified 44 individuals as being homeless, and an additional five dependents under the age of 18, whose information was not recorded.

Furthermore there were 29 individuals who were screened out, and an additional eight people who were “observed homeless” and may be considered at risk for homelessness in this area.

Some interesting statistics were gathered during the Homeless Count, from which some general observations can be made:

- It can be concluded that just under half of those experiencing homelessness in the community of Dufferin County are youths aged 24 years or younger.
- The majority of respondents reported that they had first experienced homelessness as a teenager.
- Those individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S and/or as Indigenous are both over-represented in Dufferin County’s homeless population, which is a common pattern across the Country.
- There is a significant correlation between individuals who had spent time in foster care and those who are now experiencing homelessness.
- The majority of people who are homeless in Dufferin County have used an Emergency Shelter at some point over the last year.
- Homeless individuals in our community use Emergency Services at a much higher rate than the general population in the Province.
- The majority of those individuals surveyed are in need of services related to addiction, mental health, an ongoing medical condition, or physical disability.
- There is a need to look at changing/improving services related to abuse and conflict in the home as both were leading causes as to why those surveyed had lost their housing most recently.

The number of homeless individuals counted in 2018 was significantly lower than those reported during the 2016 Count, at which time 78 individuals were found to be homeless. There may be several explanations for this decrease. To begin with, since the PiT Count in 2016, there have been significant changes to Dufferin County’s approach to housing and homelessness. These shifts in strategic direction and service provision align with the County of Dufferin’s “10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan”<sup>22</sup> which was introduced in 2013.

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<sup>22</sup> Dufferin County 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan: A long-term plan to address Housing and Homelessness issues in the County of Dufferin (2013). Available at: <https://www.dufferincounty.ca/files/content-pdf/10-year-plan.pdf>

There are a number of programs within the County of Dufferin Housing Services Program that continue to focus on helping people maintain or obtain housing, specifically the Homeless Prevention Program (HPP), Special Priority Placement (SPP), and Housing Access Dufferin (HAD).

Dufferin County continues to have strong community collaborations, as well as ongoing leadership and support from the Community Advisory Board (CAB). The region has adopted a “Housing First” approach to address the most vulnerable populations experiencing chronic homelessness. Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness.

Housing First focuses on supporting high needs individuals, and centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing. Since October 2016, more than 20 highly vulnerable individuals have been housed through the Housing First program in the County of Dufferin.

In the 2018 Count, every opportunity was made to reach out to those who are homeless, even more so than in 2016. The 2018 Homeless Count was advertised using posters, on-site bulletin boards, social media, and radio commercials for several weeks leading up to the Count. Nine different survey locations were established, including a dedicated telephone line as an option for participants. Efforts were made to ensure that data was collected only on those individuals who met the Canadian definition of homeless, which involved well-trained volunteers, and a more successful screening process.

## Next Steps

The results of this Count will be used to inform objectives, targets, outcomes and future Housing and Homelessness Plans in the County of Dufferin.

A Dufferin County By-Name list (BNL) will be created from information captured during the count, and will be analyzed and updated regularly using new dedicated software called “Homeless Individuals and Families Information System” (HIFIS 4). The By-Name list (BNL) will contribute to a Coordinated Access System for those experiencing homelessness.

Dufferin County will continue to work with people with lived experience of homelessness, community partners and government (federal, provincial and municipal) in line with the National Housing Strategy to set priorities for action as we work toward long-term solutions to homelessness.

Dufferin County will continue to conduct homeless counts as needed, and will use the lessons learned from both the 2016 and 2018 counts to improve the methodology for any and all future counts. It is possible that successive counts will be less likely in future, as the By-Name list and HIFIS 4 will support the analysis of data and trends in the region, and provide ongoing current data on those experiencing homelessness in the community.

The *Results Report, Dufferin County 2018 Point-in-Time Count* will be made available to other organizations, government, and the public.

*Thank you to all who made this report possible.*