

2024

Central Saskatchewan Point-In-Time Count Report



2024 Count Summary

In fall 2024, the communities (listed below) of Central Saskatchewan participated in a Point in Time (PiT) Count, an initiative led by Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) to capture information on the community's current homeless population. This inaugural effort is part of a broader project that encompasses many towns and small cities in Saskatchewan that have never conducting a count of the homeless population.

Initiatives like the PiT Count provide crucial data to inform policy decisions, planning, and the development of strategies to address homelessness in the province. The PiT Count is a coordinated effort to illustrate the state of homelessness in Saskatchewan and is conducted in collaboration with local communities and organizations.

This data is vital for understanding homelessness at a local and provincial level, guiding efforts to create meaningful change. This first MN-S led PiT Count adds to a larger provincial and national conversation about ending homelessness, and demonstrates MN-S's commitment to addressing this issue and ensuring no one is left behind.

How Many People Were Counted in Central Saskatchewan?

- 524 people were counted as experiencing homelessness in Central Saskatchewan communities.
- 601 individuals experiencing homelessness completed surveys between October 1 and November 30, 2024.
- 43% of people counted experiencing chronic homelessness.

Where Were People Sleeping?

- 63% were someone else's place
- 24% were unsheltered in a public place
- 23% were staying at a homeless shelter
- 15% were staying in a vehicle

Who Was Experiencing Homelessness?

- 50% Male
- 45% Female
- 19% Youth
- 44% First Nations
- 30% reported Indigenous Ancestry
- 15% reported no Indigenous Ancestry

Introduction

In the month of October 2024, a Point in Time (PiT) Count of homelessness was conducted in participating communities in Central Saskatchewan. The PiT Count was lead by local organizations within each community, and yielded rich information about individuals who are experiencing homelessness in the community.

A PiT Count serves an important function: it provides a current snapshot of the community's homeless population. Over time, future PiT Counts will show how homelessness might change over time, and help gauge the effectiveness of efforts to address homelessness in the community.

This analysis examines the key factors contributing to homelessness in Central Saskatchewan based on survey data from the local individuals experiencing homelessness. Ultimately, information from the PiT Count is used to inform solutions to ending homelessness in the community.

Methods

The data for this analysis was collected through an enumeration (a count of how many people are experiencing homelessness in a community on a single night, including in shelters, transitional housing, and unsheltered locations), and a survey aimed at understanding the scope and characteristics of homelessness. Survey administration occurred between October 1 and November 30, 2024. The survey captured responses from individuals experiencing homelessness, addressing factors such as demographics, housing history, and sources of income.

Once collected, the data was organized, analyzed, and interpreted by the Northern Research Group (NRG), ensuring a thorough examination of trends and key findings. NRG applied a systematic approach to categorize responses and identify patterns, providing actionable insights to inform community-driven solutions for homelessness.

Participating Communities in Central SK:

- Melfort
- Nipawin
- North Battleford
- Meadow Lake
- Lloydminster (Conducted independently from MN-S)

Count Results - Demographics

The Count

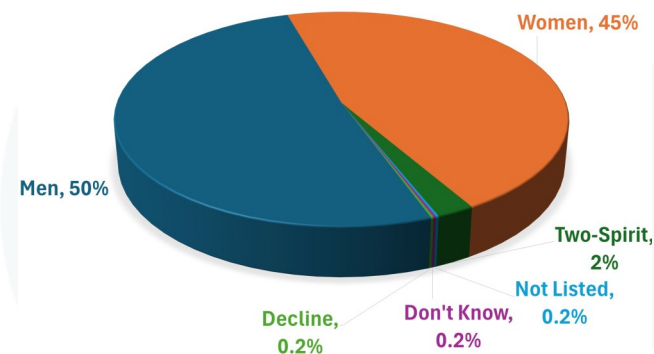
Table 1: Count of Homeless Individuals

Community	Enumerated (Single Night)	Surveyed (Oct/Nov 2024)
Meadow Lake	40	35
North Battleford	98	192
Melfort	42	30
Nipawin	98	98
Lloydminster	246	246
Total (Central SK)	524	601

Gender

50% of respondents identified as men and 45% as women, indicating a near even gender distribution among the homeless population (See Figure 1).

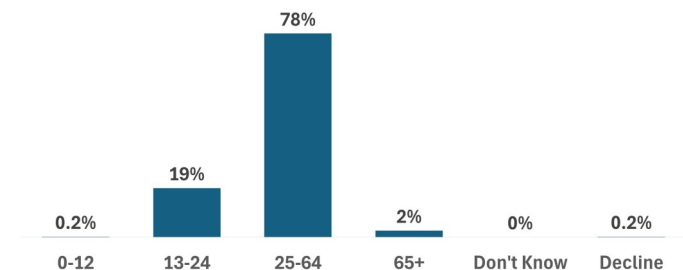
Figure 1: Gender



Age

Of individuals surveyed in 2024, the largest group experiencing homelessness are adults aged 25–64 (78%), with 19% youth (13–24), and 2% aged 65 or over.

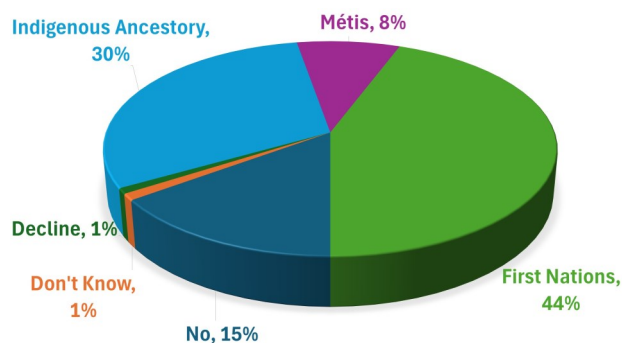
Figure 2: Age



Indigenous Identity

The data shows a majority representation of Indigenous peoples among the homeless population. The majority of respondents experiencing homelessness in Central Saskatchewan identify as First Nations (44%), followed by 30% with Indigenous ancestry, and 15% with no Indigenous identity.

Figure 3: Indigenous Identity



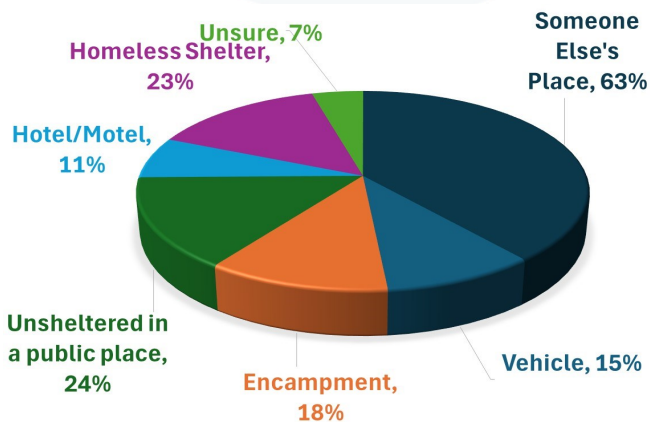
Count Results - Survey Data

Count survey contained five screening questions and 15 additional questions (See Appendix A). Results based on survey data are included in this section.

Shelter Type/Sleeping Location

Individuals who completed the 2024 Count survey were asked “Have you spent at least one night in any of the following locations in the past year?” as a screening question. The type of shelter people used most frequently is detailed in Figure 4.

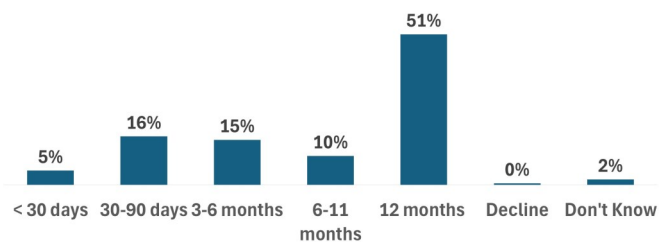
Figure 4: Shelter / Sleeping Location



Chronicity

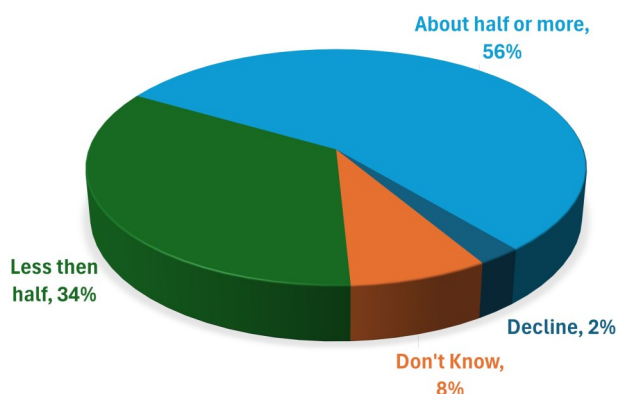
61% of individuals surveyed indicated that they experienced homelessness anywhere from 6 – 12 months over the past year, 2% said they were unsure.

Figure 5: Time spent homeless in the past year



When looking over a longer period, Figure 6 shows that 56% of respondents reported being homeless for about half or more of the past three years, while 34% experienced homelessness for less than half of that time.

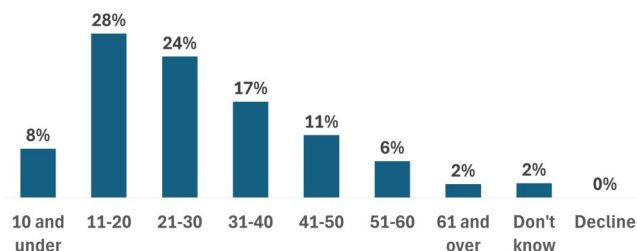
Figure 6: Time spent homeless past 3 years



Age First Homeless

About one half of the individuals surveyed indicated that their homelessness in Central Saskatchewan often began in their youth, with 60% of respondents first experience homelessness between the ages of 0 – 30 years old.

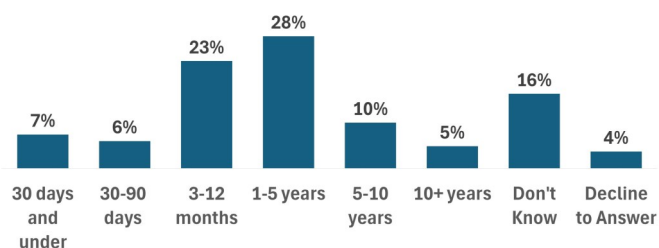
Figure 7: Age first homeless



Time Since Most Recent Housing Loss

As seen in Figure 8, 43% of individuals surveyed were had lost their housing at least one year ago. 15% had not had secure housing for over 5 years.

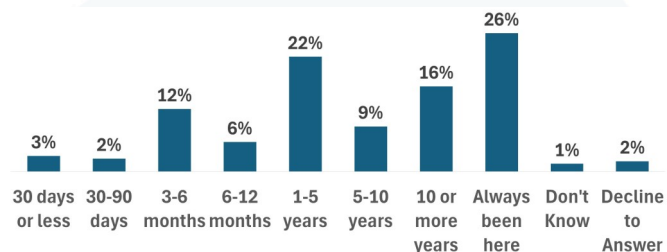
Figure 8: Time since most recent housing loss



Length of Time in Central Saskatchewan

Individuals who answered the 2024 Count were asked how long they had been in Central Saskatchewan. Figure 9 provides an overview of responses for the length of time in the community. 26% of individuals reported they had always been in Central Saskatchewan

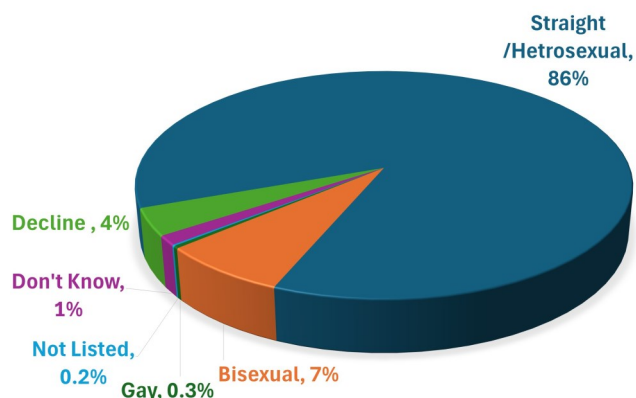
Figure 9: Time spent in Central Saskatchewan



Sexual Orientation

Data reveals that the majority of respondents (86%) identified as straight/heterosexual, while 7% identified as bisexual.

Figure 10: Sexual orientation



Housing Loss

Results showed that the primary cause of homelessness for respondents in Central Saskatchewan is not enough income for housing (30%), substance abuse issues (18%), conflict with spouse (14%) and unfit/unsafe housing (10%). Other notable causes include conflict with parent/guardian (10%), relocated (8%), and conflict with landlord (7%). Smaller proportions reported issues such as mental health issues (5%), complaint (3%), and building sold (2%).

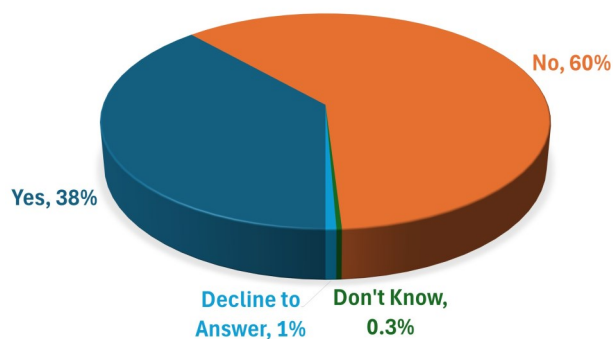
Figure 11: Housing loss reason



Foster Care

While a majority of individuals surveyed did not grow up in foster care, 38% had experience with the foster care system.

Figure 12: Foster care



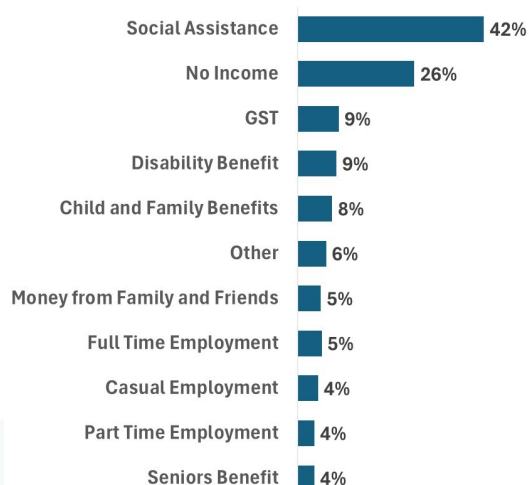
Origin and Citizenship

The survey data showed that 8 individuals that were part of the homeless population in Central Saskatchewan were an asylum seeker, refugee, or immigrant.

Income

The primary source of income for respondents was social assistance (42%), while 26% indicated they had no income. Other sources of income included GST (9%), disability benefit (9%), other (6%), and money from family and friends (5%). Smaller portions rely on part time employment (4%), and seniors benefit (4%). It is important to note that while some respondents had full-time employment (5%), they were still experiencing homelessness.

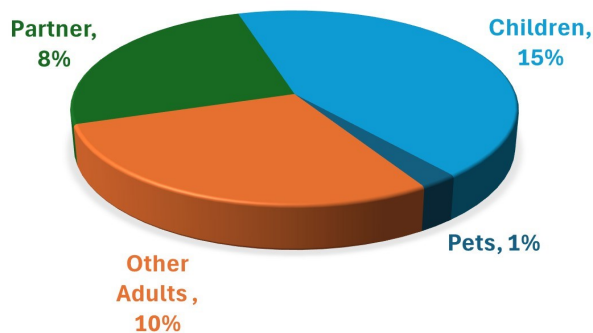
Figure 13: Main source of income



Families

Challenges are compounded when individuals experiencing homelessness have dependents, particularly children. 34% of the respondents had a dependent of some sort, with 15% noting that they had children relying on them.

Figure 14: Dependents



Veterans

Data gathered on veterans' status indicates that 18 of the respondents reported having a history of service in the military or RCMP.

Conclusion

The inaugural 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count in Central Saskatchewan has provided critical baseline data about homelessness in the area. With 534 individuals (approximately 0.9% of the total population) identified as experiencing homelessness, this count offers valuable insights into a previously undocumented issue.

Several key findings stand out from this first count:

- **Indigenous overrepresentation:** 82% of individuals experiencing homelessness identified as Indigenous (44% First Nations, 30% reporting Indigenous ancestry, and 8% Métis), highlighting the continued impacts of systemic barriers facing Indigenous communities.
- **Economic challenges:** The primary cause of housing loss was insufficient income for housing (30%), with 42% of respondents relying on social assistance as their main income source. Notably, 5% of those experiencing homelessness reported having full-time employment, indicating that employment alone does not guarantee housing security in the community.
- **Chronic homelessness:** 61% of individuals counted were experiencing chronic homelessness, suggesting long-term barriers to stable housing that require comprehensive intervention strategies.

Count Definitions

Chronic Homelessness: An individual must have spent a total of at least six months (180 days) as homeless over the past year or have had recurrent episodes in the past three years with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months staying in unsheltered locations, in emergency shelters, or staying temporarily with friends or family members. (Statistics Canada (2023))

Dependents: Individuals who rely on the respondent for financial, emotional, or physical support. This includes children, partners, or other adults.

Episodic Homelessness: Includes people who have been homeless for less than a year and have had fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (Human Services, 2012).

Sheltered: Includes people who are accessing emergency shelters available at minimal or no cost. Shelters include emergency shelters for people who are homeless and emergency shelters for people affected by domestic violence (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

Homelessness: 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 finances mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or

- **Early onset:** 60% of respondents first experienced homelessness between the ages of 11-30, pointing to the need for youth-focused prevention strategies.

This initial PIT Count, led by the community organizations in collaboration with MN-S, establishes a foundation for tracking changes in homelessness over time and evaluating the effectiveness of future interventions. The data gathered will be essential for developing targeted, community-specific solutions that address the unique needs of Central Saskatchewan residents experiencing housing instability.

As part of MN-S's broader initiative to document homelessness across Saskatchewan communities, this count contributes to provincial and national understanding of rural and central homelessness. By continuing to conduct regular counts and expanding data collection efforts, communities in Central Saskatchewan will be better positioned to develop evidence-based strategies that can effectively reduce homelessness and improve housing security for all community members.

racism and discrimination.” (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012)

Indigenous: Individuals captured in the Point in Time Count who identified as First Nations, Metis, Inuit or as having indigenous ancestry have been categorized as indigenous.

Point-in-Time Count: A method used to measure homelessness by conducting a survey or count on a specific day to capture a snapshot of individuals experiencing homelessness at that time.

Provisionally Accommodated: Includes people who are technically homeless because their current housing offers no prospect of permanence. Individuals in this group may be staying in residential treatment facilities, health facilities, group homes, jail/prison, transitional housing/second stage/short-term supportive housing, rooming houses, etc. (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

Unsheltered: Includes people who lack housing and are not accessing emergency shelter. Individuals in this group may be staying on the street, in abandoned buildings, stairwells, sheds, parks, tents, vehicles, etc. (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

Youth: Individuals captured in the Point in Time Count who are 18-24 years old have been categorized as youth. Individuals under age 18 are also included as youth where data is available.

Appendix A - Survey Questions

1. Have you spent at least one night in any of the following locations in the past year? (check all that apply)
2. Do you have family members or anyone else who is staying with you tonight? / Did any family members or anyone else stay with you last night? (Indicate survey number for partners. Check all that apply)
3. How old are you? [OR] What year were you born? (If unsure, ask for best estimate)
4. In total, for <i>how much time</i> have you experienced homelessness over the PAST YEAR (the last 12 months)? (Does not need to be exact. Best estimate.)
4b. In total, for <i>how much time</i> have you experienced homelessness over the PAST 3 YEARS? (Does not need to be exact. Best estimate.)
5. How old were you the first time you experienced homelessness?
6. Did you come to Canada as an immigrant, refugee, asylum claimant (i.e. applied for refugee status after coming to Canada), or through another process?
7. How long have you been in (<i>community name</i>)?
8. Do you identify as First Nations (with or without status), Métis, or Inuit? (If yes, please specify) (<i>COMMUNITY NOTE: The wording of this question can be adapted to what makes sense in your community, for example by listing specific First Nations</i>)
8b. In <i>addition</i> to your response in the question above, do you identify with any of the racial identities listed below? (Show or Read list. Select all that apply)
9. Have you ever served in the Canadian Military or RCMP?
10. As a child or youth, were you ever in foster care or in a youth group home (<i>COMMUNITY NOTE: include any other Provincial child welfare programs</i>)? (Note: This question applies specifically to child welfare programs.)
11. Have you been experiencing difficulties related to any of the following?:
12. What gender do you identify with? (Show list or read list.)
13. How do you describe your sexual orientation, for example straight, gay, lesbian? (Show list or read list.)
14. What happened that caused you to lose your housing most recently? (Do not read the options. Check all that apply. "Housing" does not include temporary arrangements (e.g., couch surfing) or shelter stays. Follow up for the reason if the respondent says "eviction" or that they "chose to leave".)
14b. Was your most recent housing loss related to an eviction?
14c. How long ago did that happen (that you lost your housing most recently)? (Best estimate)
15. What are your sources of income? (Reminder that this survey is anonymous. Read list and check all that apply)