
For Information

REPORT TITLE: 2024 Homelessness Point-In-Time Count Results

FROM: Steve Jacques, MScPI, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To inform Regional Council of the results of the 2024 Homelessness Point-In-Time (PiT) Count.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Region of Peel, in partnership with homelessness-serving agencies, conducted the 2024 PiT Count to assess the scope of homelessness and housing needs in Peel.
 - Overall, the count reveals that including asylum claimants, there was a 223% increase in homelessness in Peel compared to the 2021 Count, with 2,799 individuals experiencing homelessness on November 13, 2024.
 - When asylum claimants are removed from the analysis, the count identified a 93% increase in local homelessness compared to the 2021 PiT Count.
 - The enumeration results include a breakdown of sheltered homelessness (2,593 individuals, including 1,125 individuals within the asylum response system), unsheltered homelessness based on survey respondents (141 individuals), and observed homelessness and/or individuals who declined to answer the survey (65 individuals).
 - When comparing Peel's 2021 Census data, individuals that identified as Indigenous are overrepresented in the homeless population. Individuals that identified as Black are over-represented in the homeless population for both asylum respondents and non-asylum respondents based on these survey results.
 - Data from the 2024 PiT Count should be interpreted with some caution, as the results underrepresent the full scope of homelessness in Peel.
 - Despite this limitation, the information is used for future housing and homelessness system planning, to inform policy decisions, and the development of targeted interventions to improve housing stability and service delivery.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The PiT Count is a federally mandated initiative conducted every two years to provide a snapshot of homelessness in Canada. The count is an essential tool for understanding trends, identifying service gaps, and shaping policies aimed at reducing homelessness. However, the PiT Count alone does not provide a full picture of homelessness in Peel. It serves as one method among several used to track trends and identify service needs but does not capture all individuals experiencing homelessness—especially those in hidden

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homelessness situations such as couch-surfing or temporarily staying with friends or family.

To ensure consistent and accurate tracking of homelessness in Peel, the Region relies on multiple sources of data, including:

- **The By-Name List (BNL):** A real-time, continuously updated list of individuals experiencing homelessness in Peel.
- **Administrative Shelter Data:** Collected from Peel's emergency shelters, transitional housing, and overflow sites.
- **Outreach and Encampment Data:** Capturing information from unsheltered individuals not accessing the shelter system.
- **The PiT Count:** Conducted every two years to provide a snapshot of homelessness and demographic insights.

In late 2023, Peel along with other communities experienced an influx of asylum claimants in our community. In October 2024, staff were successful in creating two separate systems to support our homeless population, the local homeless system and the asylum claimant homeless system. The 2024 PiT Count includes individuals within the asylum claimant response system, capturing a more comprehensive picture of homelessness in the region. The inclusion of asylum claimants reflects the increasing number of individuals relying on Peel's shelter and social support system due to displacement and the broader housing crisis.

To better understand these distinct populations, overall findings are supplemented with separate snapshots highlighting responses from individuals identifying as asylum claimants or refugees and responses from the broader homeless population. This distinction helps capture unique demographic profiles and needs, informing the development of two tailored response systems.

This report provides Council with the findings from the PiT Count conducted in November 2024.

2. 2024 PiT Count Approach

In compliance with both Federal and Provincial requirements, Peel conducted a PiT Count on November 13, 2024, as well as a Housing Needs Survey between November 13th- 15th, 2024.

The 2024 PiT Count was comprised of two sets of data:

- **Administrative Data:** An occupancy count of everyone staying at an emergency shelter, victim of violence shelter, and transitional housing facility.
- **Housing Needs Survey:** A confidential and anonymous core set of screening questions on the homeless population and their needs (e.g., age, gender, Indigenous identity, veteran status, income sources, reasons for housing loss, etc.). In addition, a couple of Peel-specific questions were added into the survey to inform system planning efforts.

The survey was administered over a three-day period, allowing staff greater flexibility and time to administer the survey. Both sheltered and unsheltered individuals were surveyed. Sheltered surveys were administered at shelters, transitional housing facilities, and drop-in centres. Unsheltered surveys were administered at all known homelessness hotspots by the

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Canadian Mental Health Association Peel Dufferin Outreach Team.

The PiT Count enumeration relied heavily on Peel's administrative data of shelter occupancy. In addition, unsheltered surveys that were completed on November 13th counted towards the enumeration if individuals confirmed they were not spending the night at a sheltered location.

3. Findings

The 2024 PiT Count provides critical insights into homelessness trends in Peel Region. The PiT Count results include (1) enumeration and (2) survey finding results.

a) Enumeration

- Total Homeless Population: 2,799 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness. Of these, 2,593 were staying in shelters or transitional housing (including 1,125 individuals within the asylum response system). In addition, 141 were unsheltered, residing in encampments or public spaces (based on survey respondents) and 65 individuals were observed homelessness and/or declined to answer the survey.
- Compared to 2021 PiT Count, this represents a 223% increase in Peel compared to the 2021 PiT Count. Recognizing the significant surge in asylum claimant response, a 93% local homelessness increase is still observed when asylum claimant occupancy is excluded from the count, highlighting that homelessness is on the rise in Peel.

b) Survey Findings

i) Demographics

- The average age of individuals experiencing homelessness was 39 years old.
- 40% of responses were women. This is a 12% increase compared to 2021.
- 37% of respondents identified as refugee or asylum claimant.
- 20% of respondents identified as LGBTQ2S+, reinforcing the need for inclusive and safe housing options.
- Black individuals are over-represented in the homeless population among both asylum and non-asylum respondents.
 - An overall 34% increase in Black-African respondents compared to 2021.
 - 81% of asylum respondents identified as Black-African. Non-asylum respondents had a more diverse racial distribution, including 37% identifying as White, 20% as Black-Afro-Caribbean and 16% as Black-African.
- 5% of respondents identified as Indigenous (including Indigenous Ancestry), which is significantly higher compared to the 0.52% population statistics recorded in Peel's 2021 census.
- 18% of respondents were parents or guardians experiencing homelessness with children, representing a total of 383 children in need of stable housing.

ii) Causes of Housing Loss

- 34% of respondents cited insufficient income or unaffordable housing costs as the primary cause of their homelessness.

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- 17% of respondents reported relocating due to external factors, such as asylum processes or loss of previous housing.
- 11% of respondents cited household conflict as a contributing factor, with 27% of women specifically identifying conflict or abuse as the primary reason.
- 22% of respondents stated eviction as the leading cause of their housing instability.

c) Asylum Claimants vs. Local Homeless Population

- Compared to 2021 PiT Count, respondents identifying as asylum claimants increased by 33% indicating that Peel's shelter infrastructure is being increasingly relied upon by new arrivals.
- A significantly lower percentage of asylum respondents (0.8%) reported being unsheltered in a public space, compared to 16% of non-asylum respondents.
- Asylum seekers exhibited higher educational attainment than the broader homeless population, with 37% holding post-secondary degrees. This underscores the importance of targeted employment and settlement supports to facilitate integration.

A comprehensive final report with the results from the 2021 Count is attached which provides an overview of the Count, methodology, data analysis and recommendations (see appendix I). The final report also includes data from the previous counts conducted in 2016, 2018 and 2021.

4. Next Steps

- The findings will inform program enhancements to ensure housing and homelessness services align with Peel's evolving needs.
- The Region will continue to advocate for sustainable funding and policy measures to support both local residents and asylum claimants facing homelessness.
- Targeted interventions, including culturally responsive services, will be explored to address the unique needs of subpopulations, including women, families, and asylum claimants.
- Future PiT Counts will incorporate enhanced methodologies, including improved real-time data collection strategies, to improve the accuracy of homelessness measurements.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

The PiT Count provides valuable insight, but there are some limitations to the data:

- **Hidden Homelessness:** The count does not include those who are couch-surfing or living in unstable housing conditions, meaning the actual number of people experiencing homelessness may be higher.
- **Snapshot Limitations:** As the PiT Count is conducted on a single night, it may not capture cyclical or intermittent homelessness.

There are several risks associated with the challenges of accurately counting these populations. The PiT Count provides a snapshot but does not fully capture the scale of homelessness in Peel. When senior levels of government rely on the PiT Count alone to make funding decisions,

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there is a risk of underfunding, as the count may underrepresent the size of the problem in Peel.

Therefore, the findings of the Count should be interpreted with caution, as the numbers most likely represent the minimum number of people who may be experiencing homelessness on any given night in Peel.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

The 2024 PiT Count has revealed a significant rise in homelessness in Peel, driven by both an increase in women experiencing homelessness and a growing representation of asylum claimants. These results will be used to guide future housing and homelessness planning, ensuring that services are responsive to the needs of these diverse populations. The Region of Peel, together with its partners, remain committed to preventing and reducing homelessness in the community.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - 2024 Everyone Counts Peel Community Report



Steve Jacques, MScPI, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner of Human Services

Authored By: Alison Mackey, Specialist, Housing Business Operations