



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	January 13, 2022
Subject / Report No:	HDR-CW-01-22
Title:	Homelessness Enumeration and Housing Supports for Chronic Homelessness
Prepared by:	Josh Gibson, Housing Programs Manager
Reviewed by:	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing Kim Wingrove, CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

- 1. That Report HDR-CW-01-22 on Homelessness Enumeration and Housing Supports for Chronically Homeless be received; and**
- 2. That Grey County Housing implement a homelessness priority for housing 1 in 10 households off the Grey Bruce By-Name List into Grey County Housing units.**

Executive Summary

The findings of the enumeration held October 18, 2021 have identified opportunities for Grey County Housing to better support individuals and families experiencing homelessness by prioritizing households experiencing homelessness who have been referred and verified through the Grey Bruce By-Name List process.

This report will provide information around the enumeration results as well as providing information for terms commonly used when building a homelessness response system.

Background

The Province mandated that each Service Manager hold an enumeration of individuals and families experiencing homelessness by way of a Point in Time (PiT) count method by December 15, 2021. Grey County in partnership with Bruce County held an enumeration jointly on October 18, 2021.

By-Name List (BNL)

Grey Bruce By-Name List is a real-time list of those that are experiencing homelessness in a community at a given time. Residents who are experiencing homelessness can attend a common entry point, which consists of front-line service agencies who with the client's consent complete a referral and information submission to the BNL. The BNL's primary function is to connect individuals to appropriate supports & housing programs as they come available, this is called support & vacancy matching.

This list also plays a significant role in providing the system with data that enables the community to pivot to better meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness. The information obtained through the BNL provides an up to date understanding of who is actively homeless in Grey and Bruce Counties with the goal of knowing individuals and family's names and unique needs. This information enables the system to evaluate performance to advocate for change to policies and the creation of resources that will enable Grey and Bruce Counties to work towards reducing and ending homelessness.

Point in Time Count (PiT)

A Point-in-Time (PiT) Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families on a single night. It is intended to capture numbers and basic demographics of people experiencing homelessness at a single point in time.

In addition to the enumeration survey, Grey County staff and partners referred individuals to the Grey Bruce By-Name List to prioritize people into supportive options for housing which will provide the best opportunity for successful tenancies.

We conducted the enumeration count on October 18th, 2021 in partnership with Bruce County and many service providers who staffed hub sites across the region. Survey Monkey was utilized to allow electronic entry of data and paper copies were also available widely to service users.

Enumerators were provided with gift cards to properly compensate survey respondents for their time in completing the survey. Questions were sensitive and triggering in nature, training was provided to enumerators in advance to support these conversations happening in a safe and supportive way.

Measuring with Previous Enumeration

Grey and Bruce County undertook a Period Prevalence Count in 2018 to capture homelessness data. Many lessons were learned during that scan of homelessness which were applied to this year's enumeration. Due to the length of time passed, the pandemic implications and the change from Period Prevalence to Point in Time count it would be inaccurate to draw any comparisons between these two counts.

Enumeration Findings

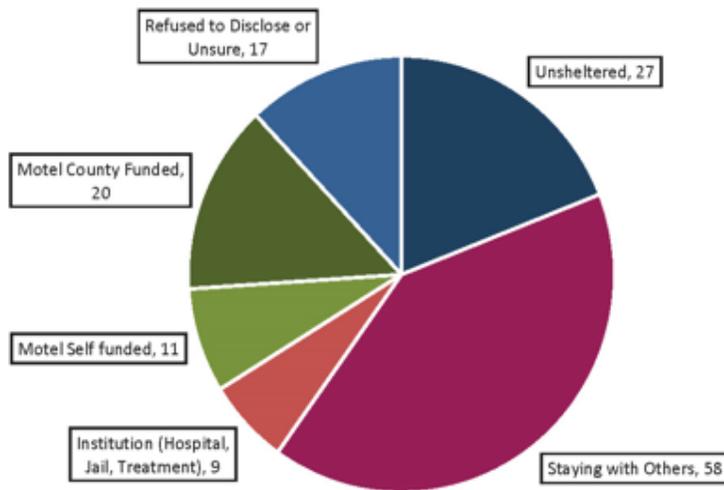
Grey County received a total of 142 submissions from households indicating they were experiencing homelessness on October 18, 2021. 74 of the respondents, or 52% indicated they have been without safe, permanent housing for more than 6 months in a 12 month period this meets the definition for what is referred to as chronic homelessness. Chronic homelessness is a priority for the Grey Bruce By-Name List

27 individuals indicated they were unsheltered, staying in an encampment or sleeping rough. This makes up the priority group of unsheltered individuals which is a primary focus for the Grey Bruce By-Name List.

Respondents provided information identifying their accommodations on the day of the PiT count. The largest category is staying with others which includes family, or friends and is also commonly referred to as “couch surfing”.

HOUSING ENUMERATION

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS ON OCTOBER 18, 2021



TOTAL RESPONSES:

142

CHRONIC: 74

NON-CHRONIC: 66

Numbers reflect a snapshot in time and do not capture all individuals experiencing homelessness in Grey County.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

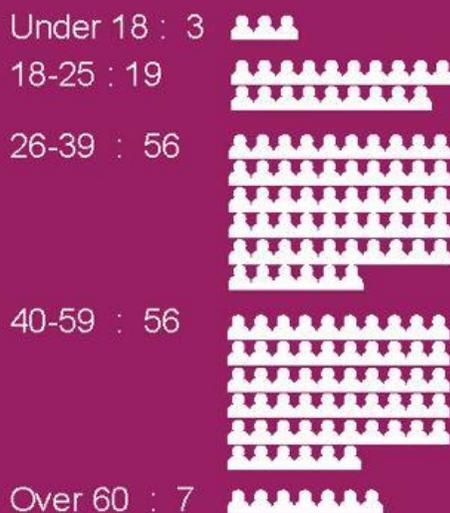
Contributing factors that increase vulnerability and need when experiencing homelessness:

- **39%** of respondents Identified as having a Medical Illness or Condition
- **37%** of respondents Identified as having a Physical Limitation
- **44%** of respondents Identified as having a Learning or Cognitive Limitation
- **58%** of respondents Identified as having a Mental Health Concern
- **50%** of respondents Identified as having a Substance Misuse/Use concern

We are thankful that so many survey respondents were open about sharing personal information including struggles that lead to additional vulnerability and need when experiencing homelessness. Using this information shared from clients we were able to identify a list of contributing factors which amplify a person's vulnerability while experiencing homelessness.

Morbidity - The categories identified above can further be attributed to vulnerability and is described as morbidities. The categories above are summarized to three categories Medical/Physical Health, Mental Health and Substance Use. If an individual is identified as having concerns with all three categories it is referred to as tri-morbidity which describes a severe vulnerability especially when experiencing homelessness, we had 26 respondents who matched this definition. If a respondent is identified as having two of the three categories of concern it is referred to as dual-morbidity, 91 respondents identified in this category.

AGE OF RESPONDENT



Age - We received enumeration responses from 3 youth under the age of 18 who were experiencing homelessness on the day of the survey. They are prioritized based on the current model. The largest age group was our 26-39 and 40-59 who matched each other at 56 responses, combined they made up 79% of the survey respondents. 7 individuals over the age of 60 were identified on the day of enumeration.

Ethnicity - Respondents were asked what ethnicity they identified with, 110 identified as White/Caucasian, 1 as Black/African Canadian, 1 as West Asian, and 17 as Indigenous. 9 respondents indicated they were unsure of their ethnicity and 6 declined to answer.

Gender Identity - The largest demographic was cis-gender males with 98 respondents, cis-gender females measured 40 respondents and 1 respondent indicated they do not identify as cis-gendered, 4 respondents declined to answer.

Income - Respondents were primarily in receipt of social assistance (57) or disability support income (47) representing 73% of all respondents. 10 respondents reported having no income, 6 responded they are employed full time, 5 part time. Other government assistance Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), HST/GST, Canada Child Benefits (CCB), was being provided in 24 cases.

The Canada definition of homelessness includes all persons and families without safe, permanent housing. In many cases when conducting an enumeration people who are staying with friends, family or others do not consider themselves to be experiencing homelessness as they presently have a roof over their head. During our enumeration we did work with service providers to provide information to the community around the definition of homelessness to obtain more accurate responses. There are many who still consider themselves housed which is not captured in this Point in Time count.

Highlighted and Priority Demographics

1. Unsheltered & Chronic Homelessness

- The highest need and most vulnerable group are highest priority for the Grey Bruce By-Name List to intensively support and house.
- The enumeration identified 27 individuals in need of intensive housing supports who were currently unsheltered/sleeping rough.

2. Indigenous Homelessness

- It is important to recognize that Indigenous homelessness is defined differently than the Colonial Canadian definition and includes individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, each other, culture, language, and identity. It is important to recognize that Indigenous people experiencing this type of homelessness cannot culturally, emotionally, or spiritually reconnect with their Indigeneity and lost relationships.
- 22 respondents identified as Indigenous; this represents 16% of the total survey respondents.
 - Enumerators recognize in consultation with Indigenous service providers that this number is very low compared to the actual number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness due to a history of strained relationships, colonialism, distrust in government and the differences in the definition of homelessness.
 - This enumeration did not include Reserves and is not reflective of additional homelessness experienced on Neyaashiinigmiing and Saugeen First Nation.
- The over-representation of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness has led the steering committee to add Indigeneity to the prioritization model to address this need.
- Two Indigenous service providers supporting primarily Urban Indigenous Peoples sit on the Homelessness Response Steering Committee to support the systems work taking place in the homelessness response locally.

3. Dual-Morbidity & Tri-Morbidity

- Over 90 respondents experience at minimum two risk factors related to physical health, mental health, or substance use.
- 26 Respondents were identified as having tri-morbidity which when added to a homelessness situation creates vulnerability that requires a significant level of supports
- The BNL will prioritize individuals who have tri-morbidity, additional supports are needed in this case and the Homelessness Response

Steering Committee will be working towards onboarding additional support opportunities to meet this need.

Priority for Community Housing

Using the information from the enumeration as well as the expansion of the By-Name List in Grey County staff are recommending the addition of a homelessness prioritization for the Grey County Housing waitlist to better serve this vulnerable population.

Presently, the only priority on the Grey County housing waitlist is for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. When a unit is available it is given to the first prioritized household on the waitlist, if there is not a prioritized household it would be offered chronologically to the household who has been on the waitlist for the longest period.

According to the Housing Services Act, Grey County as the Service Manager can add local priorities to address service needs for Rent Geared to Income Housing.

This prioritization will be a necessary step in moving towards Functional Zero within our community as this level of affordability is unmatched in the community. To qualify for this prioritization individuals would be required to be included on our By-Name List for Grey & Bruce as well as be eligible for Rent Geared to Income housing which means meeting income restrictions, not owing arrears to a community housing provider and not having a tenancy history with community housing that resulted in eviction due to impairment of safety towards other tenants resulting in conviction on site.

The following change will support the by-name list and providing deeply affordable housing to those in our community experiencing chronic homelessness or unsheltered homelessness:

- 1 in 10 offers of housing for Grey County Housing be provided to a household experiencing homelessness
- This offer would alternate evenly between households without dependents and households with dependents
- Households must be on the Grey Bruce By-Name List and properly prioritized
- Vacancy Meeting to determine the individual's suitability would occur with the prospective Tenant(s), their required supports, and Grey County Housing staff

Next Steps for the By-name List & Coordinated Access

Homelessness Response Steering Committee is a group of service providers who directly support the creation of improved policies and procedures around the By-Name List and Coordinated Access. This group includes representatives from Grey County, Bruce County, CMHA, YMCA, Safe N Sound (OS), Grey Bruce Health Services, M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre, and Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre. This group is tasked with reviewing gaps and barriers as well as working to onboard additional housing options and support organizations to the system.

Next Steps for the Steering Committee – Utilizing the enumeration results we will continue to strengthen our BNL and its processes. It is important to continue to identify and onboard possible housing providers and to increase the stock of units available to the By-Name List. In addition, the steering committee will work towards a Coordinated Access system which means faster more seamless access to supports.

Vacancy Matching is the formal process by which individuals from the By-Name List are prioritized and connected to available units, supports, and resources as they become available. This stage allows for filtering of service users as some programs may have requirements such as gender specifications and the life stage which the person is at in terms of need.

Next Step Vacancy Matching – Addition of additional support resources for the By-Name List so that individuals who are housed from the vacancy matching process are well supported leading to more successful tenancies and a lower chance of transitioning back into homelessness due to a lack of supports.

Prioritization Model - Communities are using the real-time data obtained through the By-Name List and Enumeration to identify the population in need for prioritization. The prioritization is based on the understanding of who is the most vulnerable when experiencing homelessness. **In Grey and Bruce, the current system has identified those with the greatest need as those who are chronically homeless, sleeping rough, Indigenous, youth and are facing barriers due to their physical and mental health or substance use.**

Next Steps for Prioritization – We continue to review the demographics of the By-Name List to better understand populations which could be underserved by supports and available housing. By prioritizing the most vulnerable with coordinated effort the system will be better equipped to support all homelessness by triaging services for individuals based on their needs.

Functional Zero of Chronic Homelessness speaks to the goal all communities with a well-built homelessness response system are aiming to get to. Functional Zero means that the inflow into the homelessness system matches the outflow to housing monthly, if you meet this target for 3 months in a row with fewer than 3 people experiencing chronic homelessness on the BNL you have reached Functional Zero.

Next Steps for Functional Zero – Building on the work of the Homelessness Response Steering Committee we will continue to prioritize chronically homeless individuals to secure housing faster. The recommendation in this report for the prioritization of people experiencing homelessness on the Rent Geared to Income waitlist is one tool to support this goal.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Grey County Housing is governed by the Housing Services Act, 2011, S.O. 2011, c. 6, Sched. 1 pertaining to how waitlists are managed and the eligibility of households for Rent Geared to Income Housing.

This also covers priority households and allows the Service Manager (Grey County) to implement different priorities based on area needs with Council Approval.

Financial and Resource Implications

No change to current Housing budget in the operation of Grey County Housing units.

Provincial funding of the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) provides funding for the current Homelessness Response Coordinator working for Grey and Bruce Counties. CHPI funding also provides funding for staffing with Canadian Mental Health Association Grey Bruce, YMCA Community Initiatives and Safe N Sound. This staffing provides direct outreach and housing supports attached to the By-Name List.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal:
- External: Service Providers, Enumerators, Service Users (Individuals experiencing homelessness)

Appendices and Attachments

[Coordinated Access Roadmap Poster](#)

[HDR-CW-1-22 Homelessness Enumeration PPT](#)