

May 13, 2016

NEWS RELEASE

2016 Homelessness Count Shows Increase

For Immediate Release - Results from the 2016 Point-in-Time (PiT) Homelessness Count in Brandon, which took place on April 13, revealed that the number of homeless in our city has increased from the original count held in January 2015.

Surveys showed that 146 people in Brandon were found to be homeless; 28 of whom were unsheltered and 118 sheltered. In 2015, the number of people determined to be homeless was 117.

The Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) organized the count, along with a number of local organizations. Project Coordinator, Mark Anderson said that while the number has increased, part of the reason for this could be because of an improved process and other factors.

"With having the first count under our belt, we had the experience to improve our methodology. As well, there was increased community awareness prior to the event and there were additional partners involved, so in short we had more organizations involved and more volunteers out on the streets conducting surveys," said Anderson.

"However, it is important to note that all homeless counts are inherently undercounts. I've used the analogy before, but it is much like an iceberg. We only observe what's visible. Like in many other communities across Canada, what we know to be true here in Brandon is that many homeless people are hidden so the number could even be higher."

In addition to the 146 surveyed adults, 35 children and dependants were present and another 25 adults declined to be surveyed, but were identified as being homeless (80 per cent of whom were known to service providers).

Thirty-eight per cent of the surveyed respondents were under the age of 30, which means that Brandon is nearly twice the national average for youth. Nearly half of all respondents have been homeless for more than a year, however the vast majority indicated that they would prefer permanent housing.

The PiT Count, funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, provides various agencies with data to help understand the magnitude and complexity of homelessness in our community, with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of homelessness.

"In Brandon's Five Year Community Plan, researching and utilizing accurate data to drive program delivery was identified as a priority. The Point-in-Time Count collects vital local data that will allow the BNRC and our community partners to deliver meaningful and targeted programs and services. Continued data collection is not only important for understanding what homelessness looks like in our community, but also for evaluating the programs and services being made available," said BNRC General Manager, Carly Gasparini.

For more on the PiT Count, visit: www.imatter-bdn.ca.

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Contact: Mark Anderson, Project Coordinator
Email: info@iMatter-bdn.ca
Call: 204.720.2846

*Twitter: **@iMatterbdn***
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BrandonPiTCount