

Nanaimo 2020 Point-in-Time Homelessness Count Results

Presented to: Nanaimo Health & Housing Task Force
September 16, 2020



Funded by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy



Acknowledgements

2020 Nanaimo PIT Count

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Made possible with the support of:

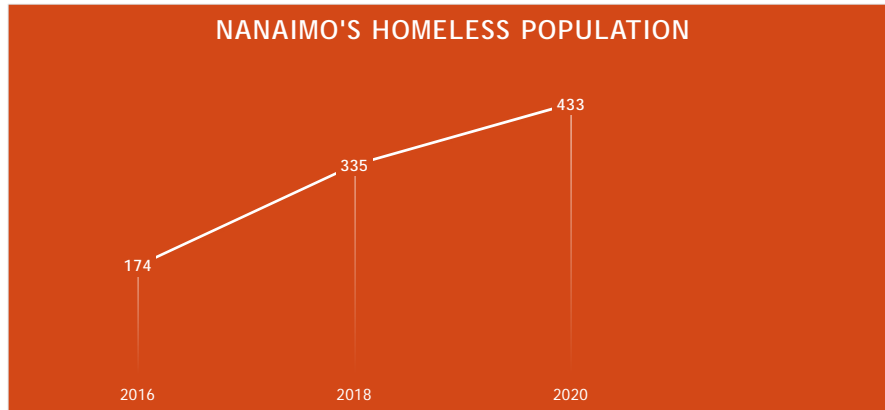
- Nanaimo Homeless Coalition
- United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island
- Nanaimo Region John Howard Society
- RCMP Bike Patrol Unit
- CMHA Community Outreach Team
- VIHA Community Outreach Response
- St Peter's Roman Catholic Church
- Volunteers from the community and service agencies



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2020 Nanaimo PIT Count Results



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Key Findings

- **People experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo, are from Nanaimo** (71.2% have lived here 5+ years)
- **Most identify as male** (68.3 %)
- **Nanaimo's homeless population is young** (54.4% are between 25 and 44 years old)
- **The number of First Nations, Métis or people with Indigenous Ancestry is increasing** (24% increase from 2016)



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Key Findings

- **The length of time people are experiencing homelessness is increasing** (77.1% are chronically homeless, a 5% increase from 2018)
- **The number of people staying in shelters is rising** (the number of people staying in shelters has risen by 40% since 2018)
- **The number of people sleeping on the streets is much higher in Nanaimo** than in other Canadian communities (61.9% are sleeping rough)



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Lack of Affordable Housing

- When asked how to solve homelessness, 71% agreed that we need more affordable housing
- 91% of people facing homelessness want to get into permanent housing
- **The top three issues that have caused people to lose their housing are:**
 - **not enough income** (34%)
 - **conflict with landlord or other tenant** (27.7%)
 - **conflict with partner/spouse** (18.4%)
- Mental health and/or substance use are NOT the greatest barriers to finding or maintaining housing



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Lack of Affordable Housing

- The greatest barriers to finding housing are low income and high rents.
- Intense competition for existing vacancies
- Non-desirable tenants due to the way they present, the absence of references and poor credit histories
- The pressure on the affordable housing supply and support systems in Nanaimo will only continue to increase



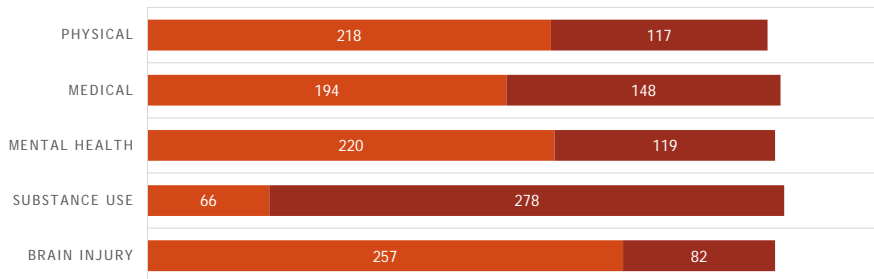
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Health Challenges

DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HEALTH CHALLENGES AT THIS TIME?

■ No ■ Yes



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Interactions with Law Enforcement

- When asked about their interactions with police, **less than 10% of respondents have regular interactions with police**
- According to police: most people experiencing homelessness do not engage in a negative fashion with them
- Data contradicts the common belief that people who live on the streets are criminals



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Education Levels

- **57% have completed high school or higher**
- Lower than all average high school graduation rates:
 - Canada – 77%
 - British Columbia – 86%
 - Nanaimo
 - 71.7% - all students
 - 62.5% - Indigenous students



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Current Response to Homelessness

- 150 total shelter spaces
 - Year-round shelters, including emergency shelter for women, co-ed emergency shelter beds, and safe shelter for women fleeing violence
- 110 supportive housing units
- BC Housing investment will create over 300 new units of supportive and social housing for individuals, seniors and families
- 5-year Health and Housing Action Plan (HHAP) to address health and housing priorities (City of Nanaimo's Health and Housing Task Force, the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, and United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island)
- Development of a Coordinated Access System



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Nanaimo is in crisis

- ▶ Increase in people facing homelessness
- ▶ Increase in the length of time people face homelessness
- ▶ Investments in affordable housing and supports are not enough
- ▶ Nanaimo's population is growing & the problem will only get worse
- ▶ More action is needed by senior levels of government



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Conclusion

- ▶ Thank you to the City of Nanaimo and the Health & Housing TaskForce for their work
- ▶ Development of the Health & Housing TaskForce has been essential in making progress
- ▶ The Health and Housing Action Plan is the next big step to address health and housing priorities
- ▶ Strong leadership will be required to put the plan into action
- ▶ We must continue to work together to see further progress and a decline in homelessness and the impacts on our community

