

HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

NIAGARA COUNTS

*Public Health and Social Services Committee
June 15, 2021*

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What is a Point-in-Time Count?

- Provides a snapshot of homelessness at a single point in time
- The PiT Count is a provincial and federal requirement that supports Built For Zero-Canada (BFZ-C) objectives and A Home For All: Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP)
- On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the global outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic, triggering a number of measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of infection, which postponed the 2020 PiT Count to March 23, 2021

COVID-19 Context

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Count was modified by using community agency staff rather than volunteers and by implementing enhanced COVID-19 safety measures
- In order to try to mitigate the negative impact of not hosting an Indigenous magnet event, staff from the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre and Niagara Regional Native Centre joined agency staff to support the count
- This interim report recognizes that additional, critical input from the local Indigenous community is still needed
- Because of changes enacted to protect the health and safety of all parties involved, the results of the 2021 Count may not be directly comparable to those of years past

Overall Results: 2021 vs 2018

Overall results	2021	2021	2018	2018
Overnight Location on the night of the Count	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)	Surveys (#)	Individuals Counted (#)
Unsheltered/Unsure	47	75	20	38
Emergency and VAW shelters	219	351	226	350
Transitional housing	128	239	125	237
Hidden homelessness	35	0	29	0
Motel homelessness	10	0	8	0
Total Surveys	439	N/A	408	N/A
Total Homeless Enumeration	----	665	----	625

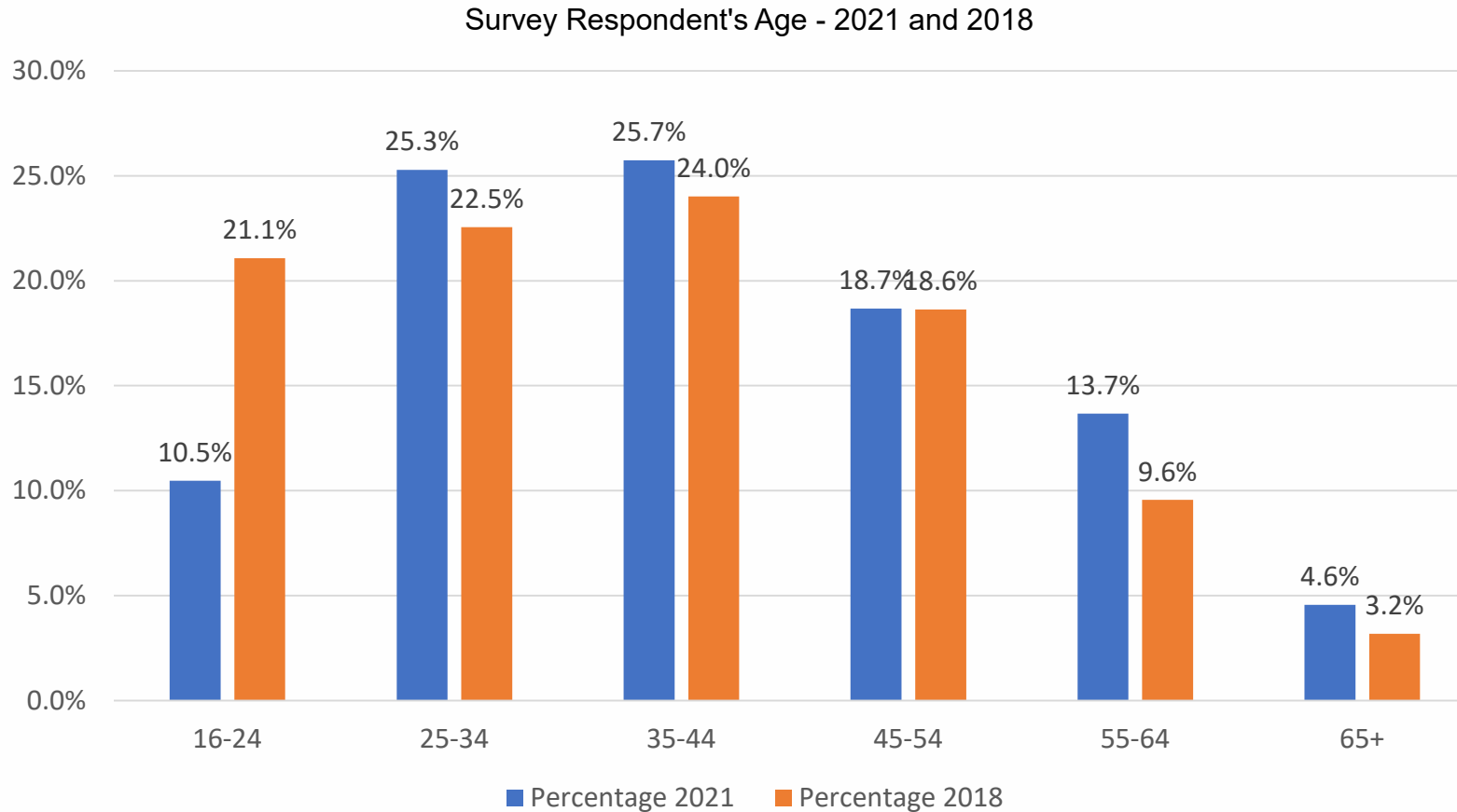
Enumeration Results

- Homeless Enumeration: A count of individuals experiencing homelessness in Niagara at a given time
- In 2021, at least 665 people were experiencing homelessness in Niagara on March 23rd, 2021 compared to 625 in 2018
- 121 children aged 0-15 years and 76 youth aged 16-24 years (144 children in 2018)
- 24 seniors (same as 2018)

Overnight Location – March 23, 2021

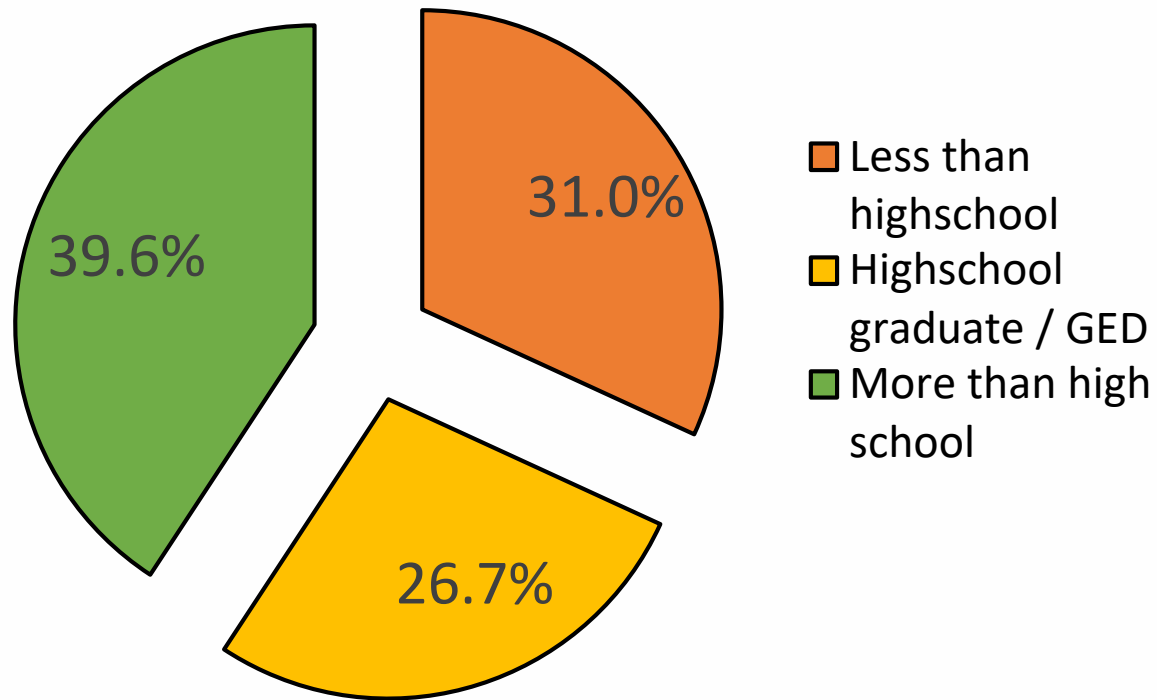
- 439 completed surveys - information on the demographics, experience, and service needs (self-identified)
- PiT Count supported by 70 agency staff including Niagara Region Native Centre and Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre staff
- 79% considered Niagara to be their home community
- Almost one quarter (22.6%) of respondents identified as Indigenous or as having Indigenous ancestry
- This is vastly disproportionate to the 2.8% of Niagara's overall population with Aboriginal identity.
- More respondents were staying in unsheltered locations or responded "I don't know" to the question of where they are staying overnight in 2021 vs. 2018 (47 vs. 20)

Age Characteristics



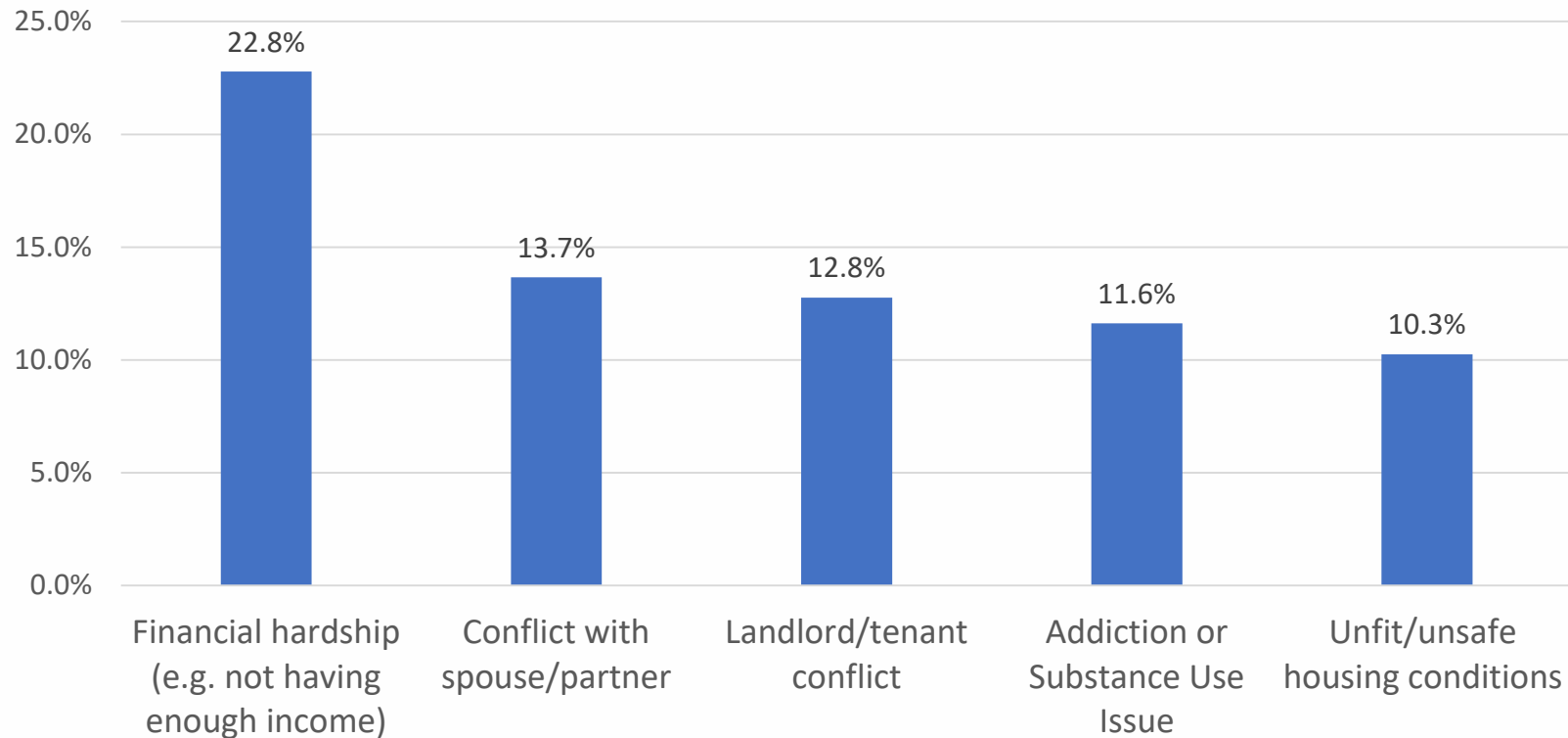
- There has been a decrease in youth aged 16-24 years experiencing homelessness, when compared to 2018 (21.1%)
- There has been an increase in older adults (65+) experiencing homelessness (4.6%)
- In 2021, 24% had experienced homelessness for the first time before 18 years of age compared to 36% in 2018

Educational Attainment



- The data suggests that more survey respondents indicated having received higher education levels than in the past
- In 2021 66.3% had high school or greater compared to 61.5% in 2018.

Top 5 Reasons for Most Recent Housing Loss

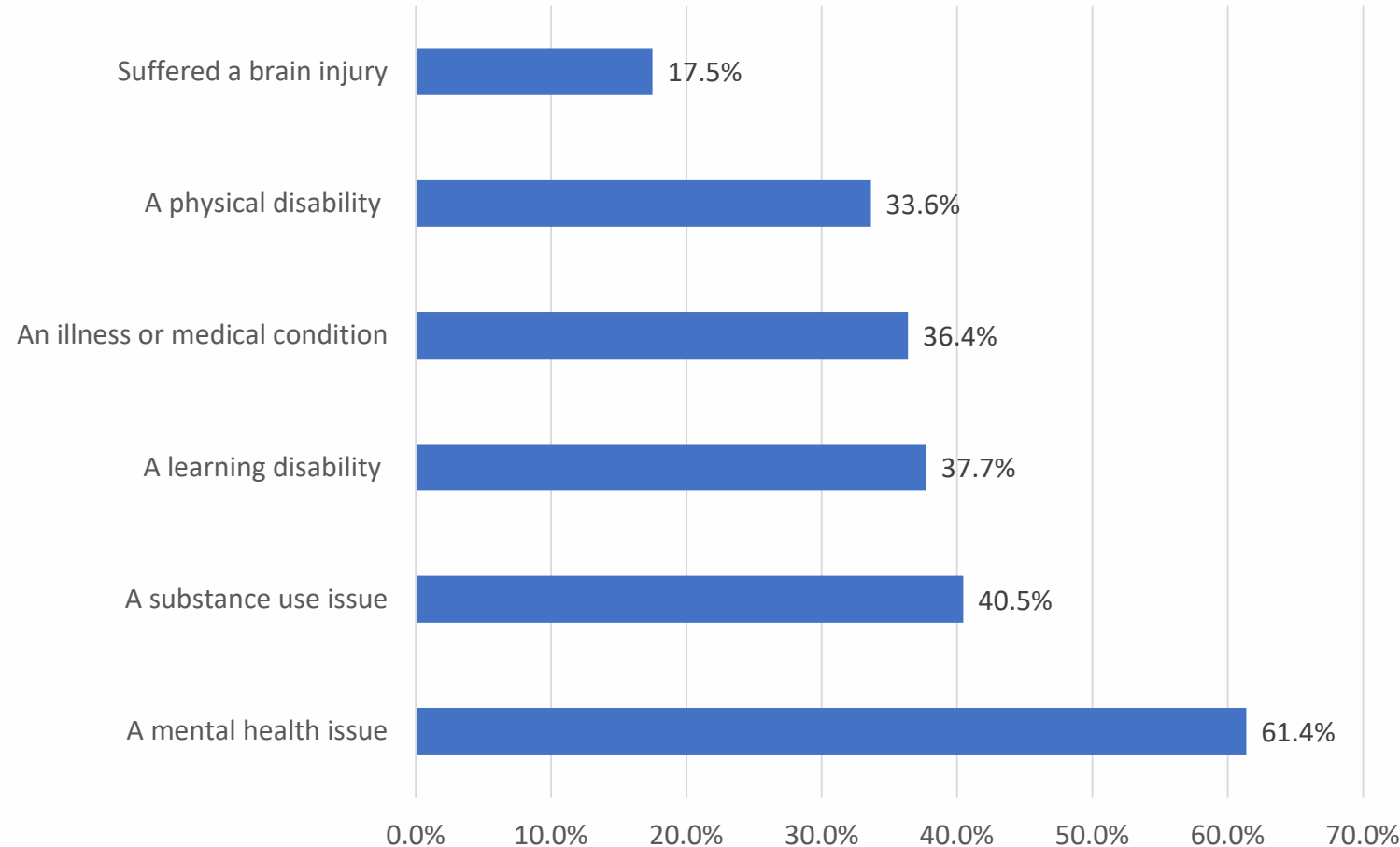


- 22.8% of respondents indicated that financial hardship (e.g. not having enough income) was the most common reason for housing loss in 2021
- 35 respondents indicated their most recent housing loss was COVID-19 related
- Over 70% of respondents indicated that rent being too high was the biggest challenge when trying to find housing

System Interactions

Number of Systems Interactions	2021	2018
Number of emergency room (ER) visits	231 individuals had visited ER for a total of 801 visits.	219 people had visited ER for a total of 663 visits.
Number of days in hospital	120 individuals had spent a total of 1,727 days in hospital.	125 people had spent a total 1,333 days in hospital.
Number of interactions with police	171 individuals had a total of 1,250 interactions.	161 people had had a total 628 interactions.
Number of days in jail	83 individuals had spent a total of 4,600 days in jail.	70 people had spent a total of 3,276 days in jail.
Total number of survey respondents	439	408

Health – Respondents Self-Identified as having:



- More than 60.0% (compared to 53.9% in 2018) of survey respondents self-identified as having a mental health issue and 40.5% (compared to 34.3% in 2018) of respondents self-identified as having a substance use issue
- Learning disability option added to 2021 survey

Questions?