



## SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND SOCIAL PLANNING</b>
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>Sarah Churchill, Program Supervisor Lorri Kerrigan, Social Planner Ian Hanney, Manager</b>
<b>REVIEWED BY:</b>	<b>Valerie Colasanti, General Manager Stéphane Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>May 21, 2025</b>
<b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>	<b>Lambton County 2024 Homelessness Enumeration</b>

### **BACKGROUND**

The County of Lambton's Social Services Division participates in *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy*, administered by Housing and Infrastructure Communities Canada. In 2024, all Reaching Home Communities were asked to complete Point in Time Counts ("**PiT**") and Enumeration Surveys between October 1 and November 30 of 2024. Data collected through these surveys is used to inform a national profile of homelessness. Lambton's data from this exercise can be found in the attached community report. The information presented in this report is time-bound and limited to individuals visibly experiencing homelessness during the survey period. For comprehensive, real-time data, please refer to the County's [By-Name List](#) ("**BNL**").

Counting and surveying individuals experiencing homelessness presents considerable challenges. These individuals are transient, tend to couch surf, and avoid public spaces and some public services. These challenges are amplified in small, semi-rural communities like Lambton. The three most common "count methods" include:

1. **By-Name List:** An ongoing, regularly updated list of every known person experiencing homelessness in a community. This is the gold-standard data collection methodology for homelessness counts. It includes names, service interactions, and housing history. This helps service providers offer the right support to each person on the list, and track progress in reducing homelessness over time.
2. **Enumeration Surveys:** A several-day survey event where volunteers talk to people experiencing homelessness to learn their needs, service-use patterns, and places they frequent for resources or shelter.

3. **Point in Time Counts:** A one-day tally conducted annually or bi-annually to count people who are homeless. Volunteers go to shelters and the streets to see how many people are without homes. This provides a snapshot of homelessness at the time but may miss some people who are hard to find or don't want to be counted.

The Social Services Division utilizes all three of these data collection methods to identify who is experiencing homelessness in our community. Bi-annual data from PiT Counts and Enumeration is used to complement and add to the BNL, which is our most comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of local homelessness. Every time a person experiencing homelessness interacts with the service system (e.g., accesses a shelter bed, contacts their worker, visits the resource centre, etc.) their status is updated on the BNL.

## **DISCUSSION**

The division conducted Homelessness Enumeration during the week of October 7-11, 2024. Data was collected using an Enumeration Survey and a PiT Count. In Lambton, the PiT Count occurred on Wednesday, October 9, 2024.

The federal government provided a standardized set of 15 questions that were to be included in every Enumeration Survey across the country. Locally, seven questions were added to the end of this survey to capture trends and use of services specific to Lambton. Staff from the Social Services Division, the Inn of the Good Shepherd, the North Lambton Community Health Centre, and a broad group of community partner agencies worked throughout the week to conduct tallies and administer surveys.

### **Enumeration Highlights**

Numbers represent data collected from October 7-11, 2024.

#### **Total Count**

- **228** unique surveys
- **83** people observed to be experiencing homelessness
- **18** children experiencing homelessness

#### **Demographics**

- **61%** male
- **35%** female
- **31%** identified as First Nations/North American Indigenous
- **48%** were sheltered (shelter, transitional housing, motel)
- **32%** were unsheltered (encampment, vehicle, abandoned building)

## **Local Findings**

### Access of Community Services (Top Three)

- **81%** of individuals accessed local food banks
- **51%** of individuals accessed the Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre
- **45%** of individuals received services from the Homelessness Outreach Team

### Barriers to Permanent, Stable Housing (Top Three)

- **81%** identified needing help to get affordable housing
- **66%** identified needing higher social assistance rates
- **31%** identified needing help securing a job

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Staff from the Homelessness Prevention and Social Planning, Housing Services, and Ontario Works departments participated in planning this enumeration. Consultations included the following community partners: A Better Tomorrow Committee, The Good Shepherd's Lodge, Sarnia-Lambton Rebound, the Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship Centre, Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society and Lambton Emergency Medical Services.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Conducting Homelessness Enumeration aligns with the work of the Social Services Division's mandate to deliver programs and services that support the County of Lambton's Vision - Caring, Growing, Innovative - to create a better future for all.

Homelessness Enumeration also supports the Strategic Plan's Community Development Area of Effort #3, specifically:

- Strengthening the County's advocacy and lobbying efforts with other levels of government to raise the profile of the County and its needs to secure improved senior government supports, funding, grants, and other resources to meet emerging infrastructure and service needs;
- Consulting with the community and stakeholders on ways to increase housing options and affordability, and innovative programs and initiatives that focus on poverty reduction and promote social belonging;
- Supporting the development of a variety of affordable housing to meet demand;

- Implementing, monitoring and updating community health and wellness-related plans and priorities, including, but not limited to, the *Housing and Homelessness Plan*, *Community Safety & Well-Being Plan*, the Long-Term Care division's mission, vision, and values, *Age Friendly Community Planning* framework, Lambton Public Health's strategic priorities, *Lambton Drug & Alcohol Strategy*, *Lambton EMS Master Plan*, and *Child Care and Early Years 5-Year Service System Plan*; and
- Advocating for, and supporting access to, mental health and addiction services.

## **CONCLUSION**

Information obtained during the 2024 Enumeration Survey provides insight into the experiences and needs of those experiencing homelessness in Lambton County. This data can be utilized locally to support programs and services that meet the needs of those who are experiencing homelessness and complement our current data. For robust monthly data and demographics on how many individuals are experiencing homelessness in Lambton, please continue to access the Homelessness Prevention Team's [By-Name List](#).