



# The Knowledge for Action:

## Executive Summary

Hidden Homelessness in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo  
Research Report and Nanaimo SPARC BC JULY 2011

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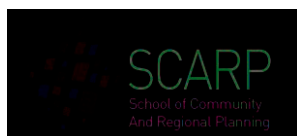
RESEARCH REPORT  
KNOWLEDGE FOR ACTION: HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS IN PRINCE GEORGE,  
KAMLOOPS, KELOWNA, NELSON AND NANAIMO

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SOCIAL PLANNING AND  
RESEARCH COUNCIL OF BC  
4445 NORFOLK STREET  
BURNABY, BC V5G 0A7

WWW.SPARC.BC.CA  
INFO@SPARC.BC.CA  
TEL: 604-718-7733

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# Executive Summary

## Objectives and Research Questions

The goal of this research project is to develop a better understanding of the hidden homeless populations in five (5) smaller urban centres in British Columbia: Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson, and Nanaimo.

The guiding questions for this study are:

- To what degree has homelessness been studied in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo?
- What is the estimated number of hidden homeless persons in the participating communities at a current time point and over the course of a year?
- What are the characteristics of people who house the hidden homeless and what are the characteristics of people who are part of, or have recently been part of, the hidden homeless population?
- What are the characteristics of a sample of services and programs available to people who are part of the hidden homeless population?
- What programs, services and supports would help end the problem of hidden homelessness?

## Methodology

This project used a mixed research method involving quantitative and qualitative approaches to study hidden homelessness. The methodology included: a review of literature on homelessness in each community, a telephone survey of 1,000 randomly selected households in each community, key informant interviews with service agencies, and face-to-face interviews with hidden homeless individuals.

The methodology for this project was based on the study by Eberle, et al., (2009), which estimated the size of the hidden homeless population in the Greater Vancouver CMA (Census Metropolitan Area).

The following definition of hidden homelessness was used in this study: Hidden homeless persons are people staying temporarily with another household and who do not have a regular address of their own where they have security of tenure. (Eberle, et al., 2009; p.6)

## Key Findings

### *Findings from review of homeless counts*

Formal homeless counts were done in four of the five (5) communities. Nelson did not have a formal homeless count. In Kelowna, 279 homeless were counted. Nanaimo had 115, Prince George enumerated 361 and Kamloops reported 103. Nelson reported 276 but this number is based on the number of individual clients in 2010 at Stepping Stones (a local community service) and at winter emergency bed shelters and should be compared with caution to the other communities.

Community-specific events such as RCMP sweeps and ‘clean-up’ efforts in Prince George and Kelowna may have displaced homeless populations prior to the count, which may have reduced the numbers in their respective counts. As in other homeless counts, men made up the majority of the homeless population and Aboriginal peoples were over-represented in all of the homeless counts.

There was no formal methodology used to identify the hidden homeless in any of these communities. However, Prince George, Kamloops and Nanaimo did report on the location where people said that they had spent the previous night, which provided some insight into hidden homelessness.

### *Findings from household telephone survey*

The household surveys were completed January 18-26, 2011. Random Digit Dialing (RDD) was used to obtain 1,000 surveys in each of the five municipalities. Forward Sortation Areas (FSA) were used in setting the quotas to ensure respondents were from the various geographical areas of their municipality.

The surveys found seven (7) current hidden homeless in Prince George, four (4) in Kamloops, two (2) in Kelowna, eleven (11) in Nelson and nine (9) in Nanaimo. Projections based on these samples indicate that there may have been between 75 current hidden homeless in Nelson to 299 in Nanaimo. Rare events such as the numbers of current hidden homeless also produce a wide range within the 95% confidence interval. For example, the range in Nanaimo was between 137-567 current hidden homeless.

The numbers were even larger when considering the number of hidden homeless within the past year. The surveys found twenty-two (22) hidden homeless in Prince George over the past year, thirty-four (34) in Kamloops, thirty-two (32) in Kelowna, forty-five (45) in Nelson and twenty-four (24) in Nanaimo. Projections based on these samples indicate that there may have been between 306 hidden homeless in Nelson to 1,167 in Kamloops over the past year. As with the current hidden homeless, there was a very wide range in the numbers based on the 95% confidence intervals.

Friends, rather than family, most frequently housed the hidden homeless over the past year. According to the survey, hidden homeless on average generally stayed 6-12 weeks with their host. Lack of income/lack of employment, lack of available housing, and low income/can't afford available housing were mentioned as top reasons for why the hidden homeless were not able to secure a place of their own.

An interesting result from the household surveys was that the majority of households housing the hidden homeless were home owners and a significant number of households were paying more than 30% of their income on housing. This suggests that many of the participating households are insecurely housed themselves.

The numbers clearly show that hidden homelessness is likely an issue in British Columbian communities. Based on the low estimate for past year hidden homeless in Kelowna (the lowest reporting city), there would have been 38,061 hidden homeless people over the past year in BC. That number is a similar size to the entire estimated population of the city of Vernon (38,895) in 2010 (BC Stats, 2010). In the worst case scenario (high estimate), there would be 78,550 hidden homeless people over the past year in BC. That number represents more people than the estimated total population of the city of Prince George (75,568) in 2010 (BC Stats, 2010).

#### *Findings from interviews with service agency representatives*

At least two (2) service providers were interviewed in each community. The organizations were typically quite large and provided a wide range of services such as addiction and counseling services, housing and housing support, etc.

Most of the respondents indicated that their communities had identified homelessness as a high priority issue and that poverty and homelessness was identified as an issue among Aboriginal peoples.

Although some respondents believe that progress in fighting homelessness was being made, many identified that there was a need for long-term solutions to deal with the barriers to ending homelessness.

#### *Findings from interviews with hidden homeless individuals*

Fifty (50) interviews were conducted with individuals who are currently or have recently experienced hidden homelessness.

While there were a larger proportion of female respondents, since one of the organizations referring candidates serves only women, the other characteristics of this sample was reflective of those that are commonly found in other research on the homeless. For example, there was a similar overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples as there has been in other studies.

There were also similar significant issues identified in this study and in other studies on homelessness. For example, health issues were prevalent in the hidden homeless individuals who were interviewed, with over half reporting a mental health challenge and/or a substance use challenge. Not surprising, low income and lack of affordable housing were the most often noted major barriers to obtaining stable housing.

While half of the hidden homeless were satisfied with their temporary housing, just over one third of participants felt a risk to their personal safety while living with others temporarily.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

If any homeless person in a community is too many, then each of the five (5) participating communities has a problem with homelessness.

There are three major complimentary strategies for ending homelessness: adequate income; appropriate, affordable and, where needed, supportive housing; and, client centered services that are responsive to and empowering of each individual's unique and diverse abilities. It is clear that each of these three ways to ending homelessness involves the collaboration of multiple levels of government, community based agencies and services providers as well as other key sectors including business and the academic community. This study provides conclusions and recommendations concerning homelessness research and programs and services to better address hidden homelessness.

### **Homelessness research**

Each community in this study had some type of approach to enumerating the homeless and such data was seen as important in creating public awareness about the issue of homelessness and the type of programs and services that are needed. At the same time, there was variability between the methodologies that were used in the homeless counts for either obtaining the data or for reporting on that data.

A central focus of this research was to develop a strategy that provided an estimate of the number of hidden homeless in each community. This research built on the work undertaken in the previous BC-based study on hidden homelessness (Eberle et al, 2009) with a focus on using/adapting that method to understand the specific needs and circumstances in smaller communities. While estimating "rare events" such as hidden homelessness has many challenges, we believe that the results of this approach have produced findings that are both credible and reliable.

Our review of existing homelessness studies and counts in the five (5) participating communities and the new data that has been generated through this study allows for important insights to be made about how to enhance how Canadian communities address homelessness. We believe that there are a number of improvements that can be made in this regard.

1. Greater understanding about the scope of homelessness at the regional, provincial and national levels would be improved if there were a more consistent approach used when studies of homelessness are undertaken. It is therefore recommended that the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada should develop a manual that provides a common methodology and templates for reporting the data for point-in-time homeless counts. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Secretariat establish a repository of homeless count data so that researchers can conduct secondary and comparative analysis of that data.
2. Given that the results from the household telephone surveys indicate a potentially very large number of hidden homeless, it is recommended that the Secretariat replicate the household survey in other communities in Canada in order to attain a better understanding of the scope and nature of the problem. If the survey is replicated, it is further recommended that the screening question be refined to obtain additional information on those who stay but are not considered hidden homeless for this study.
3. The study findings noted that a large percentage of those who provide housing support for the hidden homeless are themselves facing affordability challenges in their own housing situation. It is therefore recommended that future household surveys include questions about the nature of their current housing situation and their reasons for making their housing available to the hidden homeless. Such information could provide further insight into the income and housing dynamics of this population.

## **Programs/services and hidden homelessness**

Housing and income issues came up repeatedly in the telephone interviews with the households and from the interviews with the hidden homeless.

This study also identified that services and programs can provide major points of support for people who are experiencing a transition in their lives and who are experiencing hidden homelessness.

The fact that hidden homeless individuals have a place to stay suggests that their existing network as well as their available resources have been sufficient to allow them to avoid street or sheltered homelessness (at least for the time being). As such, it is important to consider ways to help these individuals to regain their stability and move to more permanent stable housing in order to prevent the 'drift' into street or sheltered homelessness that can sometimes occur. This would include investing in programs and services that would enable the hidden homeless to move from being temporarily housed to more stable, permanent and affordable accommodation - an address of their own.

While there are some unique situations in every community, respondents felt that expanded services were needed to better assist people experiencing hidden homelessness and to help prevent the 'drift' into absolute homelessness. This included enhanced access to housing and supports at all points along the housing continuum (from emergency shelters to independent accommodation). It also included mental health and addiction services, health services, food security programs, counseling and life skills training, as well as more accessible medical and dental services. We believe that there is a number of improvements that can be made in this regard.

1. Our study confirms lack of income is a barrier to securing an address of one's own. This reinforces the importance of public policy decisions and program related to income assistance and skills development and job training. The current maximum shelter allowance of \$375 is not sufficient to enable people receiving income assistance in British Columbia to access adequate shelter. As a result, to successfully prevent homelessness in the future and increase the housing stability of those that are at risk of homelessness, it is important for government to ensure that existing housing and support programs are structured in a way to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability for those that need it most.
2. The hidden homeless population had difficulty in obtaining employment, with only a few having full-time jobs. It is therefore recommended that skill training and job placement services be developed to assist the hidden homeless.
3. Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented among the hidden homeless populations to a similar extent as they are overrepresented in other counts of the homeless. It is therefore recommended that funding for housing and services targeted to Aboriginal homeless be directed to Aboriginal service providers as much as possible.
4. A significant percentage of the hidden homeless report dealing with mental health and substance use issues. People with concurrent disorders will need to have access to appropriate services if they are to become stable in their housing. The findings from this research suggest that the "housing first" approach now being adopted in many communities should be continued.

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# 1. Introduction

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) identifies five (5) types of homelessness: at risk, hidden, street, sheltered and supportively housed. While a great deal of information has been gathered about homelessness in large urban centres in Canada and world wide, less is known about homelessness in smaller urban centres. According to D. Bruce, the problems of homelessness, particularly at-risk homelessness, is that it is “often overlooked and underestimated in small town Canada. Very little has been written on this subject in the Canadian context.” (Bruce, 2006, p.63)

The limited research suggests that the nature of homelessness in smaller urban centres is different than in large urban centres since it tends to be hidden and families comprise a larger share. In one study of rural homelessness in the US, the homeless were more likely to be precariously housed with family or friends than living on the street.

“People who are homeless in rural America rarely fit the national stereotype. While some are literally homeless, the majority are living in extremely precarious housing situations. They are often moving from one overcrowded, or barely affordable, housing situation to another, often doubling up or tripling up with family or friends.” (Rollinson, 2007).

This study is based on the methodology of Eberle, et al., (2009) and aims to develop an understanding of homelessness, in particular hidden homelessness, in five (5) smaller urban centers in British Columbia (BC): Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo. Each of these communities receives funding through the federal program entitled Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and none of which have previously undertaken research about the hidden homeless. It is the lack of data about the hidden homeless in these five (5) smaller urban centres in BC that serves as the primary rationale for this research project. The guiding questions for this study are: To what degree has homelessness been studied in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo, British Columbia? What is the estimated number of hidden homeless persons in the participating communities at a current time point, and over the course of a year? What are the characteristics of people who house the hidden homeless and what are the characteristics of people who are part of, or have recently been part of, the hidden homeless population? What are the characteristics of a sample of services and programs available to people who are part of the hidden homeless population? What programs, services and supports would help end the problem of hidden homelessness in the five (5) focus communities?

A four (4) part research method was developed to address these questions. A review of literature on homelessness in each community was conducted. A random household telephone survey was undertaken in each of the five (5) communities. Interviews were conducted by community-based researchers with hidden homeless individuals in each of

the five (5) communities. Also, key informant interviews were conducted with service agencies to understand some of the characteristics of services and supports available to people who are in hidden homeless situations.

In addition to this introduction section, there are nine other sections. Next, the research methodology is explained, which is followed by a review of reports on homelessness in each of the five participating communities. The following three sections provide analytical treatments of the three new data sets generated by the research. Section four provides the analysis of the telephone results. In the fifth section, the results of the key informant interviews with service providers are presented. Section six offers a series of vignettes that were informed by the interview results with the hidden homeless and which illustrate some of the key defining characteristics of this population group. The seventh section consists of a discussion of the results, which is followed by the concluding section. A bibliography and the appendices are at the report's end.

It is also important to note that, in addition to this research report, *Resource Guide for Researching Hidden Homelessness* has been developed that aims to assist in the replication of this study. This resource guide can be downloaded on the SPARC BC website ([www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca)).

## 2. Definition and methodology

The overall approach of our study was patterned on the 2009 study of hidden homelessness in Metro Vancouver (Eberle, et al., 2009), which was itself modeled after a study with similar goals performed in Greater Los Angeles in 2007 (Los Angeles Homeless Survey Authority, 2007). We used the following definition of hidden homelessness: Hidden homeless persons are people staying temporarily with another household and who do not have a regular address of their own where they have security of tenure. (Eberle, et al, 2009; p.6)

Working in partnership with local agencies and local governments, this project employed a mixed research method involving quantitative and qualitative approaches to study hidden homelessness in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo. In the following sections, we explain our methods for data collection and analysis for the four (4) parts of our study: (a) literature review; (b) telephone survey with households who provide a place to stay for the hidden homeless (c) telephone interviews with service agencies; and, (d) face-to-face interviews with the hidden homeless.

### 2.1. Method for data collection and analysis of literature

The purpose of reviewing existing literature in the participating communities was to develop a response to the following guiding research question: To what degree has homelessness been studied in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo, and what comparisons regarding homelessness can be drawn between these five communities?

An internet search using the “community name + homelessness” was conducted to collect literature on homelessness in the participating communities. This was followed up with a search of each City’s official website, and searching the web sites of (or contacting) groups or organizations working around homelessness in each community.

The internet search provided some figures for the number of homeless people in each of the communities, but information regarding methodology was limited and full reports were not available. To obtain full Homeless Count reports associated with Prince George, Nanaimo, and Kelowna, City staff representatives were contacted and a copy of the documents requested. The Homeless Count for each of these three (3) communities was ultimately received electronically from City staff.

The subsequent procedure for obtaining homelessness data for Kamloops and Nelson varied. A key informant from a Kamloops service organization who was serving as a Project

Advisory Committee member provided a summary of the numbers from the most recent Homeless count, but not full reports because these were unavailable. Nelson has not conducted a homeless count in a manner similar to other communities. However, a 2011 Report Card on Homelessness for Nelson and Area was provided to the research team by and Advisory Committee member, which contains figures pertaining to the shelter homeless population in Nelson.

The central characteristics of the research methods employed in each community as well as findings regarding homelessness in each community are summarized in this section. A comparative analysis of homelessness in each community is presented at the end of the review of the literature.

## **2.2. Method for data collection and analysis of telephone survey with households who provide a place to stay for the hidden homeless**

What is the estimated number of hidden homeless persons in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, British Columbia, at a current time point, and over the course of a year? What are the characteristics of people who house the hidden homeless? These two questions provided the scope of inquiry for the survey component of the study.

The definition of the ‘hidden homeless’ employed for this study allowed for the capture of a broad range of people whose living situation is such that they do not have a home of their own, but excludes those whose current living situation is by choice, stable, or over which they have control. Foster children were considered to be outside this definition, as their housing needs would be secured by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Our survey instrument screened households to only include those with a person/couple/family either currently, or within the past year, who:

- Is staying with the household on a temporary basis;
- Does not have a regular home or address of their own; and,
- Is unable to stay at the household until they are able to establish a residence of their own.

Researchers used a modified and expanded version of the instrument used in the study by Eberle, et al., (2009). Changes that were made primarily included increasing the amount of information collected about the hidden homeless individuals. The study was conducted in English only. Consistent with previous work (i.e., Eberle, et al., 2009; Los Angeles Homeless Survey Authority, 2007), the time frames of interest are: a) the present time (e.g., current hidden homeless at the residence); and, b) within the past year (e.g., housed individuals within the past 12 months). In each of the five (5) municipalities, there were 1,000 surveys conducted, for a total of 5,000 surveys.

The field dates for all cities included in the survey were January 18 to January 26, 2011, inclusive. The survey was completed in the winter months because, in winter, people without a home of their own are more likely to seek shelter. As a result, they are more likely to stay with friends/family. This date range also corresponds with the Metro Vancouver hidden homeless survey done in 2009, allowing for the best possible comparisons across jurisdictions.

### **Sampling**

The Random Digit Dialing (RDD) sample was based on quotas described below and generated using industry standard methods. The methods remove potential bias of having a published number because they include both listed and unlisted numbers. All numbers were landline numbers. Limitations of not including cell phone numbers are discussed below.

The sample number lists were drawn from an electronic database of Canadian phone numbers that are regularly updated to ensure the inclusion of numbers that are newly assigned or have recently changed.

Within each household, the person in the household who is over 18 years of age and who makes final decisions regarding who lives in the home was asked to complete the survey. As the main focus of the research is to create the most accurate estimate of the number of hidden homeless, this approach was preferred over seeking a representative sample of the population in each municipality.

### **Methods to ensure representativeness of municipalities**

There were a total of 1,000 surveys in each of the five (5) municipalities. In order to best represent each of the municipalities covered in the scope of this research, the sample plan for this survey was created using Forward Sortation Areas (FSA) as the quota unit. FSA's are the first three digits of Canadian postal codes and represent specific geographical areas.

The sample framework for this study was designed using the most recent Statistics Canada information (2006) as a basis. For each municipality, the population and the number of occupied dwellings in each FSA was determined. For Kamloops, Kelowna, and Nanaimo these FSA's included only the city. As Nelson only has one FSA, which is slightly larger than the city limits, all numbers in the FSA for Nelson were included. Prince George FSA boundaries are somewhat smaller than the Census Agglomeration (CA) boundaries, however, the majority of the population is found within the FSA boundaries, making CA population numbers the best basis for quotas in the area. The proportion of occupied dwellings within each FSA was then used to create quotas for the number of households within each FSA that would be called. As a result, no weighting of the data was required. The following table shows the FSA quotas that resulted from this process.

**Table 1: Survey sample distribution**

Municipality	FSA	Population (2006)		Occupied Private Dwellings (2006)		Number of households interviewed	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Kamloops (City Only)							
	V1S	9,027	10.7%	3,430	10.0%	100	10.0%
	V2B	35,706	42.3%	14,350	41.8%	418	41.8%
	V2C	21,563	25.6%	9,670	28.2%	282	28.2%
	V2E	13,045	15.5%	4,945	14.4%	144	14.4%
	V2H	5,017	5.9%	1,935	5.6%	56	5.6%
Total		84,358	100.0%	34,330	100.0%	1,000	100.0%
Kelowna (City Only)							
	V1V	16,292	14.7%	6,315	13.6%	136	13.6%
	V1W	28,265	25.5%	11,535	24.8%	248	24.8%
	V1Y	29,934	27.0%	14,455	31.1%	310	31.0%
	V1P	5,761	5.2%	2,085	4.5%	45	4.5%
	V1X	30,548	27.6%	12,155	26.1%	261	26.1%
Total		110,800	100.0%	46,545	100.0%	1,000	100.0%
Nanaimo (City Only)							
	V9R	24,395	31.3%	10,590	31.9%	319	31.9%
	V9S	15,533	19.9%	7,265	21.9%	219	21.9%
	V9T	28,096	36.0%	11,570	34.9%	349	34.9%
	V9V	9,936	12.7%	3,760	11.3%	113	11.3%
Total		77,960	100.0%	33,185	100.0%	1,000	100.0%
Nelson (City and Area)							
	V1L	15,304	100.0%	6,795	100.0%	1,000	100
Total		15,304	100.0%	6,795	100.0%	1,000	100
Prince George (Census Amalgamation boundaries)							
	V2L	9,659	11.7%	4,290	13.1%	131	13.1%
	V2K	20,116	24.3%	7,610	23.3%	233	23.3%
	V2M	23,558	28.4%	9,790	30.0%	300	30.0%
	V2N	29,554	35.7%	10,940	33.5%	336	33.6%
Total		82,887	100.0%	32,630	100.0%	1,000	100.0%

## Limitations of survey

As is the case with all survey research, there are certain limitations that result from the methodology. Below, we address three key limitations: (a) exclusion of cell phone only and no phone households, (b) persons in institutions, and (c) English language only.

### *Exclusion of cell phone only and no phone households*

The list of phone numbers used for this survey was landline based. Nationwide, 3.7% of households are without telephone service, and 4.1% rely exclusively on cellular telephone service for their households (Statistics Canada, 2008). As such, the small percentage of households who do not have a landline were necessarily excluded from participating. However, exclusion of cell phone numbers also ensured there was no repetition of hidden homeless numbers which could occur if the same household responded to the survey from both a cell phone and a landline.

### *Persons in institutions*

Consistent with the Metro Vancouver study methods (2009), numbers for institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes were not included in the sample. However, any institution within these municipalities where tenants have a personal or shared land line would be eligible.

### *English language only*

There was consideration early in the planning phase regarding the feasibility of conducting the survey in more than one language. However, in the cities of interest between 94% and 97% of all households speak English in the home. It was decided that the survey would be conducted in English only, without fear of losing a large proportion of possible respondents. Of the 20,817 numbers dialed, only 260 (1.2%) had language issues which resulted in an inability to complete the survey.

The table below provides a summary of the results of survey calls.

**Table 2: Results of calls for random household survey**

	Kamloops	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Nelson	Prince George
<b>Total Attempted</b>	23,688	19,984	18,776	5,453	20,270
<b>Out of scope</b>					
Not in service/number changed/out of area	92	53	55	1044	46
Modem/fax/business line	616	648	450	346	451
<b>Total potential</b>	<b>22,980</b>	<b>19,283</b>	<b>18,271</b>	<b>4063</b>	<b>19,773</b>
No answer/busy	13,444	11,983	10,553	553	12,447
Answering machine	4,306	2,529	3,033	1,068	3,036
Not available during survey period	130	120	111	124	99
<b>Contacts</b>	5,097	4,650	4,571	2,308	4,191
Refused/terminated partway	3,128	2,923	2,760	914	2,374
Hearing complications	43	70	63	30	27
Language complications	71	67	45	25	52
Incomplete callback	671	543	554	337	579
<b>Willing participants</b>	1,184	1,047	1,149	1,002	1,159
Disqualified/FSA quota full	184	47	149	2	159
<b>Total completions</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Completes (% of potential)</b>	4%	5%	5%	25%	5%
<b>Refusal (% of contacts)</b>	61%	63%	60%	40%	57%
<b>Willing (% of contacts)</b>	23%	23%	25%	43%	28%
<b>Completion rate (% of contacts)</b>	20%	22%	22%	43%	24%

### **2.3. Method for data collection and analysis of interviews with service agencies**

What are the characteristics of a sample of services and programs available to people who are part of the hidden homeless population? What programs, services and supports would help end the problem of hidden homelessness in the five (5) focus communities? These two questions guided the interview process with service agencies.

A total of eleven (11) telephone interviews with service providers who work with the hidden homeless were conducted: two (2) in Prince George, three (3) in Kamloops, two (2) in Kelowna, two (2) in Nanaimo, and two (2) in Nelson.

The data from the telephone interviews with service agency representatives was coded and thematically analyzed to develop an understanding of the service agency responses to hidden homelessness in the five (5) communities.

### **2.4. Method for data collection and analysis of interviews with hidden homeless**

The face-to-face interviews with the hidden homeless were conducted in order to address the following question: What are the characteristics of people who are part of, or have recently been part of, the hidden homeless population? Five (5) community based researchers (one in each community) who work with members of the hidden homeless population were recruited to conduct the interviews with the hidden homeless. Each researcher was provided basic training over the telephone regarding the use of the interview guide and how to transcribe the results. Excel data files were submitted by each of the researchers for inclusion in the analysis. Fifty (50) interviews were conducted; ten (10) in each participating community.

The data from the interviews with the hidden homeless was coded and a thematic analysis was undertaken. Profiles of the hidden homeless were also developed to put a human face on the problem of hidden homelessness.

### 3. Review of homeless count literature in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson and Nanaimo

The information summarized in this section is from Prince George's 2010 Homeless Count publication, Kelowna's April 2007 Homeless Count publication, Nanaimo's 2008 Homeless Count publication, a summary of Kamloops' 2010 Homeless Count numbers, as well as the City of Nelson's Affordable Housing Strategy and the 2011 Report Card on Homelessness in Nelson and Area. Members of the Advisory Committee reviewed materials for this section and provided supplementary information not available in the published literature.

There are two subsections featured below. First, a descriptive and critical discussion of each community's efforts to conduct homeless counts is provided. Second, a comparative analysis is conducted on select characteristics of each community's approach to homeless counts.

#### 3.1. Description of homeless count approaches in the five (5) communities

##### Prince George Homeless Count

The most recent Homeless Count in Prince George was conducted by the Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH) over a 24 hour period in May of 2010. The CPAH is a group that formed in response to the federal government's National Homelessness Initiative (NHI).

The 2010 count was the second homeless count for the community, with the first undertaken in 2008 also in May. The 2010 Count was held in May which allowed a count of those individuals using available shelter and who had not yet moved onto other communities which was common in the summer months. The Count occurred between 6 pm on May 16<sup>th</sup> and 6 pm on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Surveys were distributed to participating shelters, service agencies and community centres that homeless people in Prince George access. The outdoor portion of the count began at 4:30 am and included the downtown streets, various parks in the city, and locations near social service agencies such as the Salvation Army, and all other areas that had been previously identified and mapped in the 2008 Count.

Volunteers for the count were recruited from agencies and community organizations. A two hour volunteer information and training session was held in which volunteers received a detailed street count information package including respectful communication practices and information about rescue packs for distribution to the people approached to complete the survey.

The 2010 Prince George Homeless Count identified 361 homeless individuals, with 11 people, 3% indicating they had slept outdoors the night before and 110 respondents or 30.7% of the sample indicating that they had slept in a safe house, emergency shelter or transitional housing.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, some individuals could be defined as part of the hidden homeless population, with 62 respondents or 17.3% of the sample indicating they had stayed at someone else's place the night before.

There are several factors which may have impacted the results of the Prince George Homeless Count. As with any point in time count, there are inevitably some homeless people that are missed. Specifically in Prince George, the authors suggest that because the city is a key service centre in the North, many people come into the city to get service and then leave, so some homeless individuals may have been missed during the Count. Additionally, at the time of the Count, the most recent report notes that "cleanup" efforts had recently occurred, possibly displacing homeless people to less safe parts of the city, again causing them to be missed in the Count.

Another potential issue related to methodology may have resulted in an overestimation of the homeless population. A review of the interviews indicated that some homeless people likely completed the interview more than once. Even though screening questions were included in the survey to help volunteers identify previous participants, the rigor with which this was applied varied. It seems a small but significant percentage of interviews were continued even when the screening question was answered affirmatively.

The CPAH's rigor in the planning, survey design and subsequent analysis of the 2010 Count has established a set of materials and procedures that can be used effectively again. The CPAH expressed a desire to be a valid contributor to the development of standardized data gathering, methodology and results and engaged in activities to support this goal. A subcontractor worked with CPAH to provide insight and establish the methodology of the count and develop an effective survey instrument. In addition, the CPAH hired the Computer-Assisted Survey Research Laboratory of the University of Northern British Columbia to analyze the 2010 data and act as a credible third party to review and assist in further refining and developing the Prince George Count. Funding was also used to conduct community focus groups and agency discussions in which the validity, usefulness and applicability of the Count results were discussed.

## **Kelowna Homeless Count**

Through the activities of the Poverty and Homelessness Action Team (Central Okanagan) and their partners, a Homeless Count was conducted in Kelowna in April of 2007. The Count occurred over a 24 hour period from 4 pm on April 18<sup>th</sup> to 4 pm on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Because of safety concerns, no night time enumeration of street homeless occurred after 9:30pm. A shelter inventory was also conducted from 9:30 pm on the 18<sup>th</sup> to 8 am of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Ten shelters were provided with copies of the questionnaires and employees were asked to survey their clients.

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<sup>1</sup> Eighty respondents or 22.3% of the respondents indicated that they had stayed in a rented house or apartment the night before which suggests they could be marginally housed.

Volunteers for the street count received training from a retired RCMP officer and a youth worker who worked with the street homeless. The homeless were offered granola bars as an incentive to participate.

The areas surveyed included Kelowna, Rutland and Westbank. Some areas of focus were the downtown core in Kelowna and Westbank, areas near social service organizations such as the Kelowna Gospel Mission, and the Kelowna Drop In Centre, and geographic areas such as the Mission Greenway and Mill Creek. The Count also included Kelowna General Hospital and Kelowna City Cells.

The Homeless Count identified 279 homeless people with 119 counted in the shelters, 150 on the street, 5 in City Cells and 5 at Kelowna General Hospital.

There are several factors in the Kelowna April 2007 Count that may have affected the results. As with any point in time count, there is the possibility that some homeless people will be missed. Specifically in Kelowna, one major event with an impact was a RCMP sweep of the downtown core during both days of the survey, intended to clear sex trade workers. Although the RCMP was aware of the Count, evidently this sweep had been planned for some time and was not rescheduled.

Another factor which could have played a role were weather conditions on the particular day of the count which were reported to be dry and warm, ideal for homeless people to camp in the outlying areas and making it difficult for volunteers to reach all of them. In general, surveying in a warmer month such as April could increase that risk, but was selected because organizers were trying to avoid transient people skewing the data. April is before the peak fruit picking season when dozens of transient people enter the community. An informant in Kelowna also noted that mid-April was chosen in part because it fell before income assistance cheques are issued, a week in which many homeless persons rent motel rooms or other accommodation.

### **Nanaimo Homeless Count**

The Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness conducted the most recent homeless count in the community in September 2008. Four previous counts were conducted by the same group in September 2007, July 2006, November 2005, and April 2005, allowing for the examination of the homelessness trends in the community over many years.

The main portion of the count was conducted, on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 between 8 pm and midnight. The geographic focus was on the streets in the downtown core and outlying neighbourhoods identified as potential areas of living or congregation for homeless individuals. This night time interviewing was completed by volunteers group of up to three (3) persons.

Staff at shelters and resource centres were also involved in enumerating the homeless, but it is not specified in the Nanaimo 2008 Homelessness Report what methodology was

used at the shelters and resources centres with regards to counting. For example, the count hours were not explicit in the report, or the criteria that was used to count individuals. Interviews of the homeless were also conducted the Saturday following the count at an event called “Homeless Connect Day” held at Maffeo-Sutton Park in Nanaimo. The September 18<sup>th</sup> homeless count identified 115<sup>2</sup> people as homeless in Nanaimo, with 47% of the sample reporting sleeping rough and 28% in social agency facilities such as emergency shelters and transition houses when asked about their accommodations the night before.

One potential issue with the Nanaimo Homeless count is the separation of nighttime and daytime counting. Instead of counting over a single 24 hour period, counting took place in the evening on September 18<sup>th</sup>, and day counting occurred a week later at “Homeless Connect Day”. Presumably, procedures to eliminate double-counting of homeless individuals were included as part of the counting at the community event; however, it is possible that some homeless individuals were counted more than once. Additionally, the separation of the day and evening count introduces greater error into the counting. There may have been events on either day that were unusual or simply specific to that day such as the weather which could have impacted the number of homeless people counted. If the count occurs during one 24 hour period, the impact of factors can be minimized.

In addition to the Count undertaken by the Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness, another group called the Nanaimo Mental Health and Addiction Services’ Downtown Outreach Team also collected data regarding the homeless population in 2008. The Outreach Team is a mobile team of two (2) nurses who work out in the community with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This Count was collected over three (3) months from June to August 2008. The result of this count was 302 people, much larger than the 115 people identified by the Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness.<sup>3</sup> This number of 302 could be considered more accurate because it occurred over time, but at the same time could represent an overestimation because the caseload includes people who are marginally housed and are at risk of homelessness.

## **Kamloops Homeless Count**

At the time of writing this report, the results of the most recent Kamloops Homeless Count (2010) had not yet been integrated into a comprehensive report, and past year’s Counts were not compiled into a report.<sup>4</sup> As such, a key informant assisted in the development of this section, providing the Kamloops’ Homeless Count numbers from 2010 and general details regarding the methodology.

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2 This includes people who were approached for the interview but declined but were known or assumed to be homeless. It is also important to note that it is unclear if this number reflects both the street and shelter count. The number is referred to as accounting for people enumerated “on this census night” but does not specify if this is inclusive of both street and shelter homeless. See the Nanaimo Homelessness Report (2008), p.5, for more details.

3 A key informant from Nanaimo stated that the nurses were able to exclude any duplicates as they are extremely familiar with the homeless individuals involved.

4 A key informant from a Kamloops service organization provided this information in correspondence.

The most recent Kamloops Homeless Count occurred on October 22, 2010, from 9 am to 5 pm. The interviews were conducted by volunteers who were trained by local RCMP, and a social service organization called ASK Wellness. In addition, supervisory persons at shelters in the community were surveyed and asked to provide a count of the number of people staying the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup>. These numbers are part of the reported total. There were a total of 103 individuals identified as homeless from the Count. When asked where they had stayed the night before, of the 86 that answered, 22 (26%) had stayed outside, and 20 (24%) had stayed in a shelter. There is some evidence of the hidden homeless in the count with 16 (19%) indicating they had stayed with friends or family the night before. Another 6 were staying in treatment or recovery facilities, while another 22 were staying in locations not represented by the above 4 answers.

In explaining potential inaccuracies in the count, the key informant from the Kamloops service organization provided some details specific to the community. She explained that many people crossed the river into the neighboring First Nations communities and thus were missed during the count. In the upcoming years, it is hoped that neighboring First Nations communities will become part of the count. In addition, due to a lack of resources, new areas in which homeless people have been found could not be surveyed. Another potential weakness of the count is that a street count in the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> did not occur, so some individuals may have been missed.

### **Homelessness Studies in Nelson**

It is difficult to compare Nelson to the other communities in this report because no traditional homeless count was undertaken in Nelson.

The “2011 Homeless Card on Homelessness” provides the most up to date insights into the number of people assisted by service providers in Nelson, such as emergency shelters, food banks, and hot lunch programs. The information on the number of individual clients served by each service agency was provided by each service agency itself. This information was often tracked over the period of several years. Personal anecdotes from service providers throughout the report also provided insight into increases or decreases in the number of people served, the characteristics of people served, and the challenges faced by people served. Information is provided in the 2011 report on the total number of individual clients per year at Stepping Stones and the winter emergency bedshelter services, which serviced 222 individual homeless clients in 2007, 268 individual clients in 2008, 361 individual clients in 2009, and 276 individual clients in 2010.

### 3.2. Comparative analysis of five (5) components of homeless counts in Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo and Nelson

There is significant consistency but also interesting differences in the approaches to studying homelessness taken in each community. The homeless counts can be compared relative to their timing, duration, scope, identification of the hidden homeless and community events. As is noted above, Nelson has not undertaken a homeless count that is comparable to the other cities and is therefore only partially included in the foregoing comparative analysis.

#### Timing

Communities seemed to be split on conducting the Homeless Count in the Fall or the Spring. Both Prince George and Kelowna<sup>5</sup> conducted their counts in the Spring; May and April respectively. Nanaimo's 2008 count occurred in September<sup>6</sup>, and although not profiled in detail here, a recent 2010 count in Kamloops took place in October. There are advantages to both Fall and Spring Counts which may be associated with the specific communities in question.

For example, in the Prince George Homeless Count publication it was reported that May was selected because it allowed a Count of those individuals using available shelter and who had not yet moved onto other communities, something common in the summer months. The rationale for conducting the count in September was not clearly articulated in the Nanaimo 2008 Homeless Report Publication, but it could be for a complimentary reason; that is by the Fall, homeless people who may have left the city in the summer start to return.

#### Duration

The preferred strategy for the duration of point-in-time homeless counts appears to be counting during one consecutive 24 hour period, thus covering both day and night. This method was used both in Prince George and Kelowna, but not used in Nanaimo. In the 2008 Nanaimo count, the evening count was held on September 18th from 8 pm until midnight. A day count was held a week later on a Saturday at an event called "Homeless Connect Day" in Nanaimo. Holding a point-in-time count over two (2) days is a weakness of the Nanaimo approach. Separating the count increases the likelihood that individuals could be counted more than once, and that unusual event or everyday events specific to one day may impact the results (e.g., bad weather on one day and not the other). Kamloops showed a similar split with a 9-5 pm count, and then an evening Count at the shelters. Without conducting an evening street Count, some homeless people could have been missed or duplication with those who are sheltered could have occurred.

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5 At the time of the development of this report, Kelowna was planning a Fall count to assess the impact of time of year on enumeration.

6 Past homeless counts have occurred in the Spring and Summer in Nanaimo. There was one conducted in the Spring of 2005 and one in the Summer of 2006.

The Nanaimo publication also reports the results from a community organization called the Nanaimo Mental Health and Addiction Services' Downtown Outreach Team which collected data about the homeless population over 3 months from June to August of 2008. Having an additional count over time could be seen as more accurate, but the number of homeless people counted was significantly greater than the point-in-time homeless count likely because their caseload included people who are marginally housed and at risk of homelessness. Utilizing a method in which different types of homelessness could not be delineated minimizes the benefit that would have been gained by an over-time count. Although not much detail is available, it appears that the Nelson approach to studying homelessness occurs over extended periods of time and tracks repeat users of a shelter in the region. The advantage of this approach is that it helps identify the chronically homeless, but it does not adequately count those who have episodic homelessness, or those homeless people who do not use shelters.

## Scope

In general, all of the homeless counts included coverage of the downtown core in the communities, relevant outdoor areas such as parks, agencies that were utilized by homeless people, significant geographic locations such as creeks or rivers, places people may be camping, and any other location in which homeless people had been previously found.<sup>7</sup> The variety of locations and community specific locations are a strength of these Counts. One key difference among the communities was the inclusion of shelters and typically excluded locations such as hospitals and jails. Kelowna was the only community that included the actual counts from the shelters (e.g., who had stayed the night), and the counts of people present in the Kelowna General Hospital and the jail, or what they called City Cells.

Prince George and Nanaimo both distributed surveys to shelters but do not appear to report the actual shelter inventory. Instead, the proportion of shelter and street homeless is inferred from the question asking participants where they had stayed the night before, and hospitals or jails were also included in the responses. By contrast, Kelowna's homeless count does not rely on the self-report of the participants and does an actual shelter inventory. Nelson provides a similarly strong approach to the shelter count by conducting a physical count of shelter individuals; however, the merits of this approach are diminished by the fact that Nelson does not enumerate the street homeless.

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<sup>7</sup> One challenge is that there always may be new locations at which homeless people congregate which are missed by a focus on well-known areas. But devoting resources to conduct an exhaustive scan of all the parts of a community in the hopes of discovering new locations where the homeless congregate is not feasible.

## **Identification of hidden homeless**

None of the homeless counts reviewed in selected communities set out a methodology to specifically identify the hidden homeless, which is a weakness specifically noted in the Prince George Report. But Prince George and Nanaimo did report on the location people said they had spent the previous night, and 17% of respondents in Prince George and 20% of respondents in Nanaimo indicated that they had spent the night with someone, either friends or family. This suggests that indeed there is a small but significant group in the homeless population requiring further consideration – a research need partially addressed in this current study.

## **Community specific events**

Prince George and Kelowna in their homeless reports described incidents in their specific communities that may have impacted the accuracy of the homeless count results. In the Prince George publication, it was reported that recent “clean-up” efforts had possibly displaced homeless people, making it hard to identify them. Similarly, Kelowna reported that a recent RCMP sweep on the two (2) days of the count likely moved homeless people out of that core area, again reducing the accuracy of the count. These events are weaknesses of the two aforementioned Counts, but are difficult to predict and plan around in advance.

**Table 3: Results of homeless counts in Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops and Nelson**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson <sup>1</sup>
Total	279	115	361	103	276
Non-sheltered	150 (54%)	47 <sup>2</sup> (49%, n=96)	12 <sup>3</sup> (3%)	22 (25%, n=86)	N/A
Sheltered	119 (43%)	27 <sup>4</sup> (28%, n =96)	108 <sup>5</sup> (30%)	20 (23%, n=86)	276
Staying with someone	N/A	19 ( 20%, n=96)	62 (17.3%)	16 <sup>6</sup> (18%, n=86)	N/A
Hotel/Motel/Boarding House	N/A	1 (1%, n=96)	27 (8%)	N/A	N/A
Rented house/apt.	N/A	N/A	80 (22%)	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	3 <sup>7</sup> (3%, n=96)	52 <sup>8</sup> (15%)	22 (25%, n=86)	N/A
Hospital/ Emergency Room	5 (2%)	N/A	4 (1%)	N/A	N/A
Jail	5 (2%)	N/A	3 (0.8%)	N/A	N/A
Treatment/recovery facility	N/A	N/A	2 (0.6%)	6 (7%, n=86)	N/A
No Information Available on Where Homeless Individuals Stayed	0	18 <sup>9</sup> (16%, n=115)	11 <sup>10</sup> (3%, n= 361)	17 (16%, n=103)	N/A

1 An estimate of the homeless population in Nelson is based on the number of individual clients in 2010 at Stepping Stones and at winter emergency bed shelters, which had 276 individual clients. This number was not obtained using a point in time census approach to conducting a homeless count and therefore, comparisons between the homeless population in Nelson and the other communities should be made with caution.

2 Includes those who reported sleeping outside or rough; including cars, garages, and public buildings.

3 Non-sheltered includes outside/streets/parks and abandoned building/car/truck. As per Ameyaw and Kutzner (2010), p.19.

4 Called "Social Agency Facilities" (e.g., emergency shelters and transition houses).

5 Sheltered includes safe house/emergency shelter/transitional housing. As per Ameyaw and Kutzner (2010), p.19.

6 Indicated had stayed with "family or friends" the night before.

7 Other indicates all responses that did not fall into the categories of outdoors, transition house, car/garage/ public building/someone else's place, and emergency shelter on p.21 of Tubbs (2004).

8 List of places included in 'other' available in Table A.1 on P.40, Ameyaw and Kutzner (2010). Examples included didn't sleep; truck trailer, 3rd Ave etc.

9 Some of the individuals in this category include homeless individuals who declined participation in the homeless count, individuals known to be homeless but who did not participate in the count, and individuals who did not provide a clear answer to the question of where they stayed the night before Tubbs (2004).

10 Some of the individuals in this category gave ambiguous answers or did not answer the question. Refer to p.19, Ameyaw and Kutzner (2010).

In Nanaimo, Prince George, and Kamloops, less than 50% of the homeless population counted were non-sheltered; however, the majority of the homeless population counted in Kelowna (150 out of 279 homeless individuals counted) were non-sheltered (or ‘street homeless’). Prince George’s question of where people had slept the previous night yielded more detailed insight than the other counts, with 80 people having slept in a rented house/apartment the night before and 62 having stayed with someone. Nelson’s report did not identify how many people were non-sheltered, making it difficult to compare to the results of the other communities.

**Table 4: Demographics of homeless populations in Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George and Kamloops**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops
Men	198 (71%)	59 (61%, n = 97)	233 (65%)	79 (77%)
Women	81 (31%)	38 (39%, n = 97)	122 (34%)	24 (23%)
Aboriginal peoples	55 <sup>1</sup> (24%, n=258)	35 (36%, n=97)	238 (66%)	30 (29%)
Non-Aboriginal peoples	203 (85%, n=258))	6 (8%, n = 79)	107 (30%)	Unknown <sup>2</sup>

(Footnotes)

1 In the 1982 Constitution meaning of the term Aboriginal person includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

2 Information was not provided on whether the other homeless people enumerated had a non-First Nations identity or whether they refused to provide an ethnicity.

Men made up the majority of the homeless populations counted in Kelowna (71%), Nanaimo (61%), Prince George (65%), and Kamloops (79%). Aboriginal peoples were over-represented in the homeless counts, composing 21% of Kelowna’s homeless population (Aboriginal peoples composed 3.8% of the Kelowna CMA’s total population in 2006), 36% of Nanaimo’s homeless population (Aboriginal peoples composed 5.2% of Nanaimo’s total population in 2006), 66% of Prince George’s homeless population (Aboriginal peoples composed 11.3% of Prince George’s total population in 2006), and 29% of Kamloops’s homeless population (Aboriginal peoples composed 6.4% of Kamloops’s total population in 2006) (Statistics Canada, 2006). Nelson is not included in this table because it did not include a point in time homeless count.

**Table 5: Street and shelter homeless population total and community population: Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George and Kamloops**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops
Homeless Population	279	115	361	103
Total Population	173,745	81,464	75,568	87,110
Homeless Population per 10,000 Residents	16.1	14.1	47.8	12.0

Source of population data: B.C. Stats, 2010<sup>8</sup>

As the homeless counts were done at different times of the year and used slightly different methodologies, it is difficult to compare the results of the different homeless counts to each other. In addition, as the communities all have different populations (see table 5), it is difficult to compare the numbers on a total basis. On a per-capita basis, however, Prince George had a much higher homeless population per 10,000 residents, with 47.8 homeless people counted per 10,000 residents, than the other communities. Nelson is not included in this table because it did not conduct a point in time homeless count.

<sup>8</sup> Kelowna's population is based on the estimated population of the Central Okanagan Regional District (also the same area as the Kelowna Census Metropolitan Area) for 2007 (the year of the homeless count), as the homeless count included other communities than the City of Kelowna (within the Kelowna Census Metropolitan Area). Nanaimo's population is based on the estimated population of Nanaimo City in 2008 (the year of the homeless count). Prince George's population is based on the estimated population of Prince George City in 2010 (the year of the homeless count). Kamloops's population is based on the estimated population of Kamloops City in 2010 (the year of the homeless count).

## 4. Analysis of household survey results

This section provides a comparison of the results of the survey of households housing the hidden homeless in the five (5) participating communities. Complete survey data for each municipality can be found in Appendix A.

### 4.1 Characteristics of current and past year hidden homeless

**Table 6: Current hidden homeless populations in Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops, and Nelson**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson
Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample of 1000 households	2	9	7	4	11
Projected Hidden Homeless Individuals in Community	93	299	228	137	75
95% Confidence Interval of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Community	11-336	137-567	92-471	37-352	37-134

The number of projected current hidden homeless varied from 75 in Nelson to 299 in Nanaimo. The confidence intervals were quite large for all communities, meaning that the actual number of current hidden homeless interval could have varied by several hundred. For example, there is a 95% chance that the current hidden homeless population in Nanaimo was between 137 and 567.

**Table 7: Past year hidden homeless populations in Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops, and Nelson**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson
Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample of 1000 households	32	24	22	34	45
Projected Hidden Homeless Individuals in Community	1,489	796	718	1,167	306
95% Confidence Interval of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Community	1,019-2,103	510-1,185	450-1,087	808-1,631	223-409

Kelowna and Kamloops both had an estimated population of over 1,000 that had been hidden homeless during some point in the past year: 1,489 in Kelowna and 1,167 in Kamloops. Numbers were slightly lower in Nanaimo (796) and Prince George (718) and much smaller in Nelson (306).

**Table 8: Relationship of hidden homeless individuals to households housing hidden homeless people in the past year and average length of stay**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson
Total Number in Sample	32	24	22	34	45
Staying with Family	11 (34%)	10 (41%)	9 (41%)	8 (24%)	9 (20%)
Not Staying with Family Members	19 (59%)	14 (59%)	13 (59%)	26 (76%)	36 (80%)
Refused to Answer	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Average Length of Stay (Weeks)	21	12	6.8	9	10.9

Most of the households that housed hidden homeless people during the past year were not relatives of the hidden homeless people. The percentage of households that were related to the hidden homeless people that they housed varied from 20% in Nelson to 41% in Nanaimo and Prince George.

The average length of stay for hidden homeless individuals in households that had housed hidden homeless individuals within the past year was between 6 weeks and 12 weeks for most communities. However, the average length of stay for hidden homeless individuals in Kelowna was much longer, at 21 weeks.

**Table 9: Major reasons for Hidden Homelessness as Identified by Survey Respondents (Percentage reporting)**

Reason for being homeless	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson
Lack of Income/ Lack of Employment	28%	24%	10%	12%	16%
Lack of Available Housing	28%	19%	45%	24%	16%
Low Income/Can't Afford Available Housing	25%	10%	15%	15%	21%
Family Breakdown/Abuse	9%	*	15%	*	*
Being in School total	9%	10%	*	15%	9%
Transition (Moving/Stranded)	*	29%	15%	18%	30%
Eviction from Previous Residence total	*	*	15%	*	*
Health and Other Issues	*	*	25%	*	*

Note: The percentages in each column may not add up to 100% as not all respondents provided an answer. There were also multiple responses in Prince George where the total is greater than 100%. The percentage of responses for reasons denoted with \* is unknown.

The top reasons for hidden homeless individuals' lack of home addresses varied across communities. Lack of income/lack of employment, lack of available housing, and low income/can't afford available housing were mentioned as top reasons in all communities. Lack of available housing was the top reason in two of the five communities and tied for the top reason in another community.

**Table 10: Comparison of hidden homeless population from local homeless counts and the random household survey**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson
Homeless Individuals Staying with family or friends in Homeless Counts	N/A	19	62	16	N/A
Projected estimate of current Hidden Homeless Individuals from Household Survey	93	299	228	137	75
Projected Lowest number of Current Hidden Homeless Individuals from Household Survey at 95% confidence level	11	137	92	37	37

As the homeless counts occurred during different years and time periods and used a different methodology from the survey of hidden homelessness, it is challenging to compare between the two population groups in communities. The findings, however, do show that even at the lowest range of the confidence level, the projected number of hidden homeless from the survey is greater than that found in the homeless counts in Nanaimo, Prince George, and Kamloops where such data was reported.

**Table 11: Projected current hidden homeless individuals and past year hidden homeless individuals in Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops, Nelson and Greater Vancouver**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson	Greater Vancouver CMA
Projected Current Hidden Homeless Individuals	93	299	228	137	75	9,196
Projected Hidden Homeless individuals Over Past Year	1,489	796	718	1,167	306	23,543

Comparisons with the study done for the Greater Vancouver CMA by Eberle, et al., (2009) provide a relative context of the size of the hidden homeless populations in the various communities. The Greater Vancouver study, done in January and February 2009, estimated 9,196 projected current hidden homeless individuals in 2009 and 23,543 projected individuals who had experienced hidden homelessness over the past year. Both of these numbers are more than 10 times larger than any of the totals for the other communities. However, the Greater Vancouver CMA also had a total population of 2,116,581 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006), more than 10 times larger than any of the studied communities.

**Table 12: Characteristics of households that currently house the hidden homeless and have housed the hidden homeless in the past year: Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kamloops and Nelson**

	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Prince George	Kamloops	Nelson
Currently housing the hidden homeless					
Employed full time	100.0%	42.9%	25.0%	-	14.3%
Employed part time	-	14.3%	50.0%	-	28.6%
Unemployed/on leave	-	14.3%	-	-	28.6%
Rent	50.0%	14.3%	50.0%	-	14.3%
Own	50.0%	85.7%	50.0%	100.0%	85.7%
Average no. of people/ bedroom	1.8	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.3
Paying more than 30% on housing	-	14.3%	50%	-	14.3%
Caucasian/Canadian	50.0%	85.7%	50.0%	100.0%	85.7%
Aboriginal and First Nations people	-	14.3%	50.0%	-	-
Recent immigrant	-	14.3%	-	-	-
Have housed the hidden homeless in the past year					
Employed full time	52.2%	41.2%	33.3%	57.1%	36.7%
Employed part time	-	23.5%	13.3%	9.5%	18.9%
Unemployed/on leave	13.0%	17.6%	13.3%	23.8%	7.9%
Rent	26.1%	-	40.0%	23.8%	36.7%
Own	73.9%	100.0%	60.0%	76.2%	63.3%
Average no. of people/bedroom	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.7	1.0
Paying more than 30% on housing	30.4%	17.6%	40%	33.4%	43.3%
Caucasian/Canadian	95.6%	88.2%	80.0%	95.2%	90.0%
Aboriginal and First Nations people	-	11.8%	20.0%	4.8%	6.7%
Recent immigrant	-	5.9%	6.7%	-	-

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to some variables not being included in this summary table. Full information is available in the appendices.

The majority of the households that housed the hidden homeless currently or in the past year were working either full time or part time. The one exception is Kamloops where the head of the household was retired.

The ratio of people/bedrooms for households currently housing the homeless was greater than a 1:1 ration, suggestion that the addition of another person in the home involves some degree of crowding. The ratio of households housing the hidden homeless in the past year was often less than 1:1 in favor of more bedrooms than people.

The majority of households housing the hidden homeless were home owners and a significant number of households were paying more than 30% of their income on housing, suggesting that many of the participating households are insecurely housed themselves. The majority of survey respondents identified as Caucasian Canadian. In all communities except Kelowna, Aboriginal and First Nations households had housed the hidden homeless at some point in the past year. Very few recent immigrants were identified as housing the hidden homeless.

#### 4.2 Characteristics of Households Housing Hidden Homeless People (both Past Year and Current) Compared to Households not Housing Hidden Homeless People

**Tables 13: Age of households housing and not housing the hidden homeless**

Characteristic	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
n	128		4,874	
Age				
18-24	5	3.9%	81	1.7%
25-34	17	13.3%	441	9.0%
35-44	28	21.9%	755	15.5%
45-54	27	21.1%	1,071	22.0%
55-64	27	21.1%	1,134	23.3%
65 years and over	23	18.0%	1,348	27.7%
Refused	1	0.8%	40	0.8%

Households that housed hidden homeless people currently or within the past year were less likely to be senior led households (18.0%) than households that had not housed hidden homeless people (27.7%). The households that housed hidden homeless people were generally younger than households that had not housed hidden homeless people, with higher percentages of households in the 18-24 age range, 25-34 age range, and 35-44 age range.

**Table 14: Employment of households housing and not housing the hidden homeless**

	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Employment				
Full Time	54	42.2%	1,787	36.7%
Retired	24	18.8%	1,715	35.2%
Part Time	21	16.4%	639	13.1%
Unemployed/on leave	20	15.6%	415	8.5%
Homemaker	7	5.5%	260	5.3%
Student	5	3.9%	95	1.9%
Refused	1	0.8%	65	1.3%

Households that housed hidden homeless people were much less likely (18.8%) to be retired than households that had not housed hidden homeless people (35.2%). Households that housed hidden homeless people were much more likely (15.6%) to be unemployed or on leave than households that did not house hidden homeless people (8.5%). The largest category for both households that housed hidden homeless people and households that had not housed hidden homeless people was the full-time employment category, composing 42.2% and 36.7% of these households respectively.

**Table 15: Home owner and renter households housing and not housing the hidden homeless**

	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Home				
Rent	33	25.8%	950	19.5%
Own	95	74.2%	3,841	78.8%
Refused	0	0.0%	83	1.7%

**Table 16: Life Stage of households housing and not housing hidden homeless**

	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Couple with no children/ no children at home	36	28.1%	1,718	35.2%
Two parent family with children at home	39	30.5%	1,412	29.0%
Single with no children	28	21.9%	1,098	22.5%
Single parent family with children at home	19	14.9%	350	7.2%
Widowed	0	0.0%	72	1.5%
Single parent, children live with other parent	1	0.8%	27	0.6%
Other	2	1.6%	60	1.2%
Refused	3	2.3%	138	2.8%
% with children under 18 years old in the home	43	33.6%	1,276	26.2%

Two parent families with children at home were the most common life stage type for households housing the hidden homeless, comprising 30.5% of all households housing the hidden homeless. This life stage type was the second most common type for households not housing the hidden homeless (29.0%), after couples with no children/no children at home (35.2%). One interesting phenomena noted was that households housing the hidden homeless were more than twice as likely (14.9% compared to 7.2%) to be single parent families with children at home as households that did not house the hidden homeless within the past year.

**Table 17: Household Size, Number of People per Bedroom**

	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Average household size	3.0	N/A	2.5	N/A
Average number of people/bedroom	1.0	N/A	0.9	N/A

Not surprisingly, given the higher percentages of households with children at home among households housing the hidden homeless (33.6% to 26.2%), the average household size was slightly larger for households housing the hidden homeless (3.0) than households not housing the hidden homeless (2.5). The larger household size translated into a slightly higher number of people per bedroom for households housing the hidden homeless (1.0) than households not housing the hidden homeless (0.9).

**Table 18: Income of households housing and not housing the hidden homeless**

	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Household income				
Less than \$15,000	14	10.9%	291	6.0%
\$15,000 – \$19,999	9	7.0%	282	5.8%
\$20,000 – \$29,999	12	9.4%	420	8.6%
\$30,000 – \$39,999	13	10.2%	426	8.7%
\$40,000 – \$49,999	18	14.1%	434	8.9%
\$50,000 – \$69,999	13	10.2%	607	12.5%
\$70,000 – \$79,999	6	4.7%	294	6.0%
\$80,000 or more	21	16.4%	901	18.5%
Don't Know/Refused	22	17.2%	1,215	24.9%

Approximately 1 in 6 households (17.2%) that housed the hidden homeless and approximately 1 in 4 households (24.9%) that didn't house the hidden homeless either didn't know the answer to this question or refused to answer this question.

Lower income brackets were a more significant feature of households housing the hidden homeless, with 10.9% of households housing the hidden homeless having household incomes of \$15,000 or less per year compared to 6.0% of households that did not house the hidden homeless. At the other end of the income spectrum, a slightly higher percentage of households that did not house the hidden homeless (18.5%) had household incomes of \$80,000 or more per year than households that did house the hidden homeless (16.4%).

**Table 19: Housing Cost/Income**

Housing cost/ income	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Less than 30%	63	49.2%	2,642	54.2%
30% - 39%	14	10.9%	323	6.6%
40% or more	26	20.3%	626	12.8%
Don't Know/ Refused	25	19.5%	1,281	26.3%

A significant percentage of respondents either did not know the answer to this question or refused to answer this question. Just under 1 in 5 (19.5%) of households that housed the hidden homeless and just over 1 in 4 (26.3%) of households that did not house the hidden homeless did not know the answer to this question or refused to answer this question.

Households housing the hidden homeless were more likely to have higher housing cost to income percentages than households not housing the hidden homeless. Approximately 1 in 5 (20.3%) of households housing the hidden homeless were spending 40% or more of their household income on housing costs, compared to approximately 1 in 8 (12.8%) of households not housing the hidden homeless.

**Table 20: Ethnicity and Immigration status of households housing and not housing the hidden homeless**

	Total Households Housing Hidden Homeless		Total Households Not Housing Hidden Homeless	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	128		4,874	
Ethnicity (Multiple mention)	-	-		
Caucasian/Canadian	113	88.3%	4,458	91.5%
Aboriginal peoples	11	8.6%	176	3.6%
Other	2	1.6%	142	2.9%
Refused	3	2.3%	140	2.9%
Recent Immigrant	3	2.4%	67	1.4%

Note: As multiple responses were allowed to this question, the total percentage of the ethnicities added together may exceed 100%.

In both households housing the hidden homeless and households not housing the hidden homeless, the ethnicities of the households were overwhelmingly Caucasian/Canadian, composing 88.3% and 91.5% of households respectively. Aboriginal peoples made up a higher percentage of households housing the hidden homeless (8.6%) than households not housing the hidden homeless (3.6%).

Recent immigrants made up very small percentages of households that housed the hidden homeless (2.4%) and households that did not house the hidden homeless (1.4%).

**Table 21: Estimates of Hidden Homeless Population Extrapolated to British Columbia**

Location	Population	Current Hidden Homeless (Low Estimate)	Current Hidden Homeless (High Estimate)	Past Year Hidden Homeless (Low Estimate)	Past Year Hidden Homeless (High Estimate)
Kelowna City	121,306	11	336	1,019	2,103
B.C.	4,530,960	411	12,550	38,061	78,550

Source: BC Stats, 2010 for population estimates.

Note: Hidden homeless extrapolations for B.C. were calculated using the following formula:  

$$\text{BC population} / \text{Kelowna population} \times \text{Hidden Homeless estimate for Kelowna}$$

Based on the low estimate for hidden homeless over the past year (i.e., the Kelowna estimate), there would have been 38,061 hidden homeless people over the past year in British Columbia. That number is a similar size to the entire estimated population of the city of Vernon (38,895) in 2010 (BC Stats, 2010).

In the worst case scenario (high estimate), there would be 78,550 hidden homeless people over the past year in B.C. That number represents more people than the estimated total population of the city of Prince George (75,568) in 2010 (BC Stats, 2010).

The estimated current hidden homeless in BC (low estimate) is 411. The high estimate of current hidden homeless in BC is 12,550.

## 5. Analysis of service agency key informant interviews

This section summarizes eleven (11) interviews conducted with representatives from organizations providing services to people who have been identified as hidden homeless. Respondents were asked about their perceptions regarding homelessness in general and hidden homelessness specifically. Questions also addressed specific topic areas such as issues relevant to Aboriginal peoples populations and the strengths and weaknesses of homelessness counts.

The eleven (11) service providers interviewed were based in the five (5) participating communities: Kamloops three (3), Kelowna two (2), Nanaimo two (2), Nelson two (2), and Prince George two (2). Interview results have been aggregated to preserve the anonymity of the interview participants.

### 5.1. Organizational profile of interviewees

The interview participants were employed at non-profit organizations that provided services to homeless people. Two (2) were Executive Directors, eight (8) were Managers or Program Coordinators, and one (1) was an Administrator.

When asked what role they played in the organization respondents provided a variety of answers. Some indicated they had overall responsibility for organizational operations. Others indicated they were responsible for coordinating specific programs, or took part in one-on-one work with clients. Several participated in community networks and partnerships. Interview respondents worked at mental health organizations, community health organizations, religious and/or secular service organizations of various sizes. Seven organizations employed thirty (30) or more full and part time staff while four (4) had less than thirty (30) full time and part time staff. All organizations provided at least some services related to poverty and homelessness. When asked about target populations served by the organization, ten (10) indicated they served all populations while one specified that they served “the marginalized and homeless.”

The services provided by the organizations ranged across a number of categories including:

- Clubhouses and drop-ins;
- Housing and housing support;
- Addiction and other counselling services;
- Facilitating connection to services and benefits through outreach, advocacy, information and referral;
- Health services;
- Employment services;
- Specialized programs and services for specific populations (e.g., sex trade workers, high risk youth, restorative justice, life skills, coaching, etc.)

Respondents identified a number of services related to poverty and homelessness that were needed in the community, but not available in their organization. These included:

- Housing (e.g., emergency shelters, supportive housing, transitional housing, affordable housing, rent subsidies, and programs based on the Housing First philosophy);
- Medical and dental services, including medical services for people without BC Medical because their place of residence is outside BC;
- Mental health services, addiction services, counseling and life skills training;
- Food security, including access to nutritious food, adequate income, and community meals;
- Legal aid services.

One respondent emphasized the importance of support services in preventing homelessness. “There is a reason that there is a population that is called hard to house. They have multiple barriers and unless we support them in that and help them overcome that the success rates drop.”

## 5.2. Homelessness as a high priority issue

Eight (8) respondents felt that their communities had identified homelessness as a high priority issue while two (2) suggested homelessness was a “very important” or “somewhat important” issue. One indicated they did not know.

Several respondents pointed to specific steps that were being taken at the community level to address homelessness, including the development of homelessness action plans and ongoing partnerships through community planning tables. Some pointed to specific examples of success. For example, one respondent said: “We’ve been able to generate a lot of success. We used to have a great number of visible homeless people in our downtown area and since our agency opened our office 2 years ago those numbers have completely disappeared. There are zero visible homeless people downtown these days.”

While pointing to commitments by individual agencies and community organizations, some respondents also noted that homelessness did not have a high profile as a public issue. These respondents expressed frustration that, for example, media only paid sporadic attention to the issue usually when the weather turned cold or an event such as a fire affected people that are precariously housed.

Nearly all respondents indicated that services needed to address poverty and homelessness were not available in their community. One suggested that it was “not that the services or resources aren’t available at all, it is that they are so inadequate that they don’t meet the need.”

Interviewees identified the following services as lacking or inadequate in their community:

- Housing (e.g., including accommodation at the \$375 shelter rate, low-barrier shelters, shelters free of bed bugs, supportive social housing for people with mental health challenges, etc.)
- Addiction services (e.g., affordable residential treatment, rehab, detox services, life skills support workers, “wrap-around” support for individuals involved in 12 step and other recovery groups, etc.)
- Outreach supports and services (e.g., for street and shelter homeless, for hidden homeless and those people that are precariously housed, as well as services and supports for youth and women, etc.)
- Transportation (e.g., low cost busses and cabs, alternatives to ambulance for those with minor injuries, etc.)
- Coordination of services (e.g., cooperation between agencies to address cracks in service infrastructure, collaborative research and advocacy, etc.)
- Service models (i.e., variety of mutually reinforcing service models along the continuum of human care and services such as harm reduction approach and Housing First models)

One interview participant noted: “I’m not a big fan of tons and tons of emergency service. I think that the tax dollar and individual are served better by helping to build a continuum care model that is seamless, that allows people to transition as far as they’re willing, into freedom.”

Participants were asked if they believed there were adequate services related to poverty and homelessness in their community. Eight (8) said no. Three (3) said that services were either adequate or somewhat adequate. One issue identified by a respondent who said no was related to the small number of agencies in each town. “Because some of the services, for whatever reason, are only allowed to be delivered from one agency and if your client is banned from that agency, doesn’t like the agency, can’t work with them they have no other agency that they are allowed to get that support from.”

Others pointed to lack of resources, unavailability of services at night, and difficulties for some staff in relating with their clientele. “Being able to talk to marginalized people is different from being able to talk to someone who is middle class. We perhaps find that there needs to be more counselors who can empathize with this type of person, to walk with them from A to B in their self-defined healing process.”

### **5.3. Aboriginal Peoples and homelessness**

Poverty and homelessness was identified as an issue among Aboriginal peoples by all of our eleven (11) respondents. One respondent said: “It seems to me, in my 14 years at the mission, that poverty and homelessness seem disproportionate for First Nations. And I think a lot of that goes back to the history, historically, the injuries that were done, and the healing that’s going on. You know, I am seeing a change, but of course it never happens as quickly as you’d like. Healing comes in stages and change comes in stages, so we’re just doing our part in what we can do to help facilitate that change.”

Most respondents identified Aboriginal peoples among their clientele. Three (3) indicated that more than 50% of their clients were Aboriginal peoples. Seven (7) indicated less than 50% were of Aboriginal ancestry. One indicated they did not know because they did not collect personal information on their clients. When asked what proportion of their clients were on-reserve Aboriginal peoples three (3) said none, two (2) said 5%, two (2) said 10% (2), one (1) said 25%, and one (1) said she/he did not know.

When asked about the implications for service delivery of on-reserve Aboriginal peoples, respondents identified jurisdictional issues as important – many identified that they cannot provide services to on-reserve Aboriginal peoples in their area. “If we’re feeling frustrated on our end, they would be feeling even more so frustrated. You know, they come to us hoping to get some assistance and all they get is a sympathetic ear... We refer them all over the place, but realistically we know that, for example, if they are dealing with welfare on reserve there’s not a whole lot they can do. I imagine that they walk away feeling pretty helpless, pretty overwhelmed by the system they live under.”

When asked to identify service areas where improvements were required to meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples, some respondents identified the need for specific services such as counseling, housing and acute health services. Others pointed to the need for decision-making processes that involved Aboriginal people themselves in the design of services. One offered the view point that the Aboriginal clients already have access to adequate services.

Finally, respondents were asked to identify other populations for which culturally relevant services were needed. Some mentioned specific groups such as youth, LGBT, people living in poverty, and the local “hippy” community. Others pointed to the need to develop organizational policies and practices including non-discrimination policies, referral to outside agencies, and the development of partnerships with organizations serving specific population groups.

## **5.4. Homeless counts**

Most communities (except Nelson) had undertaken homeless counts at some point in time, which is confirmed by the review of homeless literature in each community. Many organizations had participated in the most recent Counts. Respondents identified a number of strengths and weaknesses in the approaches taken and some identified populations that may have been missed.

Some noted the Count results were a valuable tool in communicating with municipal government, funders, media, boards of directors, and outside organizations such as BC Housing. They identified a number of strengths of the approach used in their community including the partnerships involved and logistical elements (e.g., planning, timing, volunteers, incentives, etc.).

Weaknesses identified included the issue of completeness. “Unless you are very openly homeless, you are not going to be counted,” said one participant. Others identified issues related to timing, suggesting that factors such as the weather and the proximity of the Count to Income Assistance cheque issue day would have an impact on the results. One respondent noted that a local correction agency was not included in the Count and that may have affected the results. Another stated that: “The weakness in the approach has always been the same weakness for me, and that is trying to gather the stats for hidden homelessness. I don’t know how you would go about doing that. How you engage those people in the Count, I have no idea.”

Three participants suggested that they felt the last Count had not accurately captured the homeless population in their community. Some suggested specific groups had been missed such as women, children, people with mental illness, sex trade workers, and people who do not make use of services.

Others suggested refinements to the approach of their homeless count by adjusting the timing and by fully involving outreach workers and street nurses on the day of the count. Others noted problems of evaluation and variable results from count to count. One respondent said, “anyone who is adept at not wanting to be counted because of the pre-event publicity . . . are going to relocate. . . . A lot of the homeless population have mental illness and a degree of paranoia where they don’t want interaction with do-gooders like us. That’s why the slow, steady relationship building is so key.”

Another suggested “it certainly captured those people who are visibly on the street. That it did, for sure. But, who knows who’s staying with a partner because they have to. Who knows how many sex trade workers sleep with, you know, stay overnight with johns. Who knows how many teenagers are camped on someone’s couch. I have no idea.” Some suggestions for improvement included: Improve the methodology by increasing the frequency (e.g. two times per year) and including a late night drop-in centre. One suggestion was to use local media to invite people to (confidentially) identify people staying in their homes. Others suggested looking for more sources of information including correction agencies, low-income housing complexes, and spending time identifying day camp-sites. Another suggestion was to have a consistent methodology across the province so that results could be compared. Others suggested structural changes including a community level forum or committee that could work with a smaller group to implement the Count.

## **5.5. Services and hidden homelessness**

About half of those surveyed indicated that their organizations had identified a definition of hidden homelessness. Although most identified hidden homelessness as a major concern, many identified the difficulty of determining accurate numbers. One implication is that a significant population of homeless people who are accessing services may not be reflected in the statistics used to determine allocation of resources.

Four (4) respondents indicated their organization had a definition of hidden homeless. Two indicated their organization had a partial definition (i.e., answered “yes and no” or “kind of”). Six (6) indicated their organizations did not have a definition of hidden homelessness. Of those that had a definition, some said it was similar to the definition offered by researchers in this study. Others referred to definitions used by other organizations such as BC Housing or the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (now Ministry of Social Development).

Several participants identified issues with definitions and were unclear of various situations. For example, one said: “We have a lot of people who live in rooming houses, who get housed and then leave because it’s not safe. They have people kick down their doors, and banging all night, you know, where it is just unsafe. I would call that person homeless too, because at any time they’ll flee their apartment.”

“We have to follow the different interpretations of the Federal and Provincial description of homelessness. So for instance, with income assistance, their interpretation is different than our interpretation, but we have to follow theirs in order to help our clients get housing... For our agency, if a person is temporarily housed in a motel, we would consider that hidden homeless, the ministry doesn't. If a person is in treatment and has no housing options when they get out, they're not considered homeless...If you are temporarily housed somewhere, their interpretation suggests that you're not homeless.”

Ten (10) respondents identified hidden homelessness as a major concern especially for their organizations. Some indicated that this population ought to be a higher concern for decision-makers in government for a number of reasons. For example, numbers of hidden homeless people had impacts on the health and safety of the entire community. In addition, one pointed to increasing numbers of seniors among the hidden homeless population. Increasing numbers of hidden homeless people also had impacts on the ability of service providers to provide services to the community.

When asked where hidden homeless people could be found, respondents identified the following:

#### Indoor locations

- i. Derelict buildings
- ii. Motels / Hotels / Hostel
- iii. Drug houses
- iv. Treatment facilities
- v. Regional Correctional Centre
- vi. Sleeping rough
- vii. Couch surfing
- viii. Living with friends, family

#### Outdoor locations (Summer, Fall, sometimes winter)

- i. Under bridge
- ii. Alley ways
- iii. By heat vents
- iv. Empty U-Haul Trailors
- v. Parks (away from downtown core)
- vi. Parks
- vii. Backyards
- viii. Campgrounds
- ix. Sheds, Garages
- x. Sleeping in specific neighbourhoods

#### Service locations

- i. Service centres

- ii. Soup kitchens
- iii. Hospital Emergency Wards
- iv. Shower and laundry services (e.g., Salvation Army)

Several respondents spoke about finding hidden homeless people among groups in the community. For example, women working in the sex trade or for escort services who were involved with criminal gangs, and women or children in dangerous short-term relationships with men.

Eight (8) respondents said that the hidden homeless population poses a challenge for services. These included access to services, funding for services, and communication. All respondents indicated that the hidden homeless population accessed their services. Some indicated hidden homeless clients needed essentials such as food, showers, clothing, etc. Others indicated that hidden homeless people were looking for support (e.g., case workers, referrals, etc.), or help in finding appropriate housing situations when they had worn out the welcome where they were staying.

When asked what services were needed, respondents provided a number of ideas. One suggested that access to discretionary funding was vital. The respondent told a story of a client who needed \$10 to get a replacement copy of the food safety certificate she had earned sometime earlier and another \$10 to have the full amount of her damage deposit. These funds did not fall in any category available through the Ministry, but were provided by the service provider. “So with \$20 she got a job and a house. When we followed up with her six months later, she was still working, still living in her place, doing very well thank you very much. But she couldn’t get that \$20 dollars anywhere. She couldn’t get a job to get that \$20 and there was no flexible money out there for \$20. Now, she could have gone into the back lane and provided oral sex to somebody for \$20 so technically she did have a choice. We think those small amounts of money with no strings attached...have made a world of difference in either keeping people housed or in getting them housed.”

Other services mentioned by interview participants include advocacy, mental health, medical, addictions treatment, food, and drop-in. Some mentioned housing services based on specific models such as the Harm Reduction model.

Respondents were asked to identify features of their community that affected the number of hidden homeless. Factors identified included rental housing availability, availability of services, geographical location of community, local economy and the weather.

Additional information needed about the hidden homeless population, according to respondents, included accurate information about the number of people who are experience hidden homelessness as well as information about specific groups affected by the problem (i.e., youth, seniors, women, etc.). The relationship of hidden homelessness to trauma, exploitation and street entrenchment was also considered an

important issue. Another issue mentioned was the development and sustainability of models such as the Housing First model.

## **5.6. Homelessness is exacerbated by holes in our social safety net**

Respondents identified a number of issues in their final comments. Some acknowledged that some progress is being made. Others identified the need for long-term solutions, individual care plans, and approaches that would lead to employment. Many barriers to accessing support were identified including access to income support, mental health and addictions support, and housing. Some suggested that there needed to be better coordination between front line workers and decision-makers. Many raised the issue that criteria for some programs are too strict and many clients fall between the cracks.

Said one respondent: “There are too many roadblocks for our clients when we are trying to help them get income, or mental health support, or addictions support, and the lack of housing. And sometimes there’s a lack of coordination with front line workers and decision-makers, those above us. We don’t see eye to eye. Some of the criteria for our clients, in order to be eligible for the different services in the community, the criteria are overwhelmingly strict. They don’t fall into mental health or CLBC, because they don’t have that assessment, and then they fall through the cracks. There are no supports for them at all.”

## 6. Analysis of interviews with the hidden homeless

Community-based researchers completed in-person interviews with individuals who are currently or have recently experienced hidden homelessness. Fifty (50) interviews were conducted; ten (10) in each participating community.

The results of interviews are used to further illustrate the characteristics of the hidden homeless population in participating communities. Profiles are described through two means: real data drawn from the population of interview participants and vignettes illustrating the lives of people experiencing hidden homelessness. The vignettes use fictional names and are based in the realities of people experiencing hidden homelessness. The table on the following page provides some key facts about the hidden homeless people that participated in the interview process.

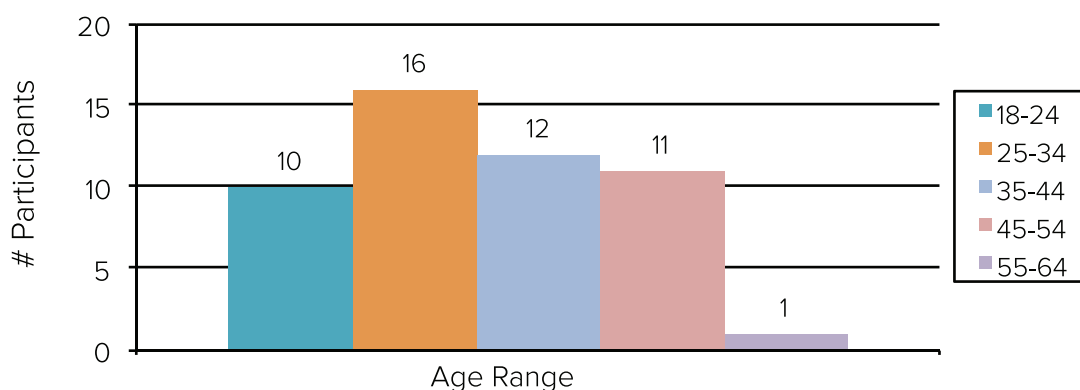
**Table 22: General characteristics of hidden homeless interview participants**

Income and employment	
Most common sources of income	Social assistance (22 out of 50) and/or provincial disability benefits (15 out of 50)
Most common employment status	Unemployed or on leave
Those with jobs are most likely to be...	Self employed and making less than \$500 per month
Number of people on Employment Insurance, retirement income or private pensions	Zero
Housing and living arrangement	
Most common hosts (relatives or friends)	Friends and acquaintances (80%)
Most common types of housing	Staying at a house (50%) or apartment (28%)
Other types of accommodation	Hotels, garages, trailers
Most common length of time to stay with others	Between one to three months
Per cent of people who stayed one week or less	26%
Ratio of residents to bedrooms	3.3 people to 2.2 bedrooms (or 1.5)
Most common living arrangement	Sleeping on the couch in a living room (32%)
Second most common living arrangement	Sleeping in a bed in a spare room (18%)
Top four (4) most common other housing arrangements in the last year	Couch surfing, camping, a rental suite and/or sleeping in the streets
Other housing in the last year has included	Emergency shelter or transition house for 64%
Support and services	
How people pitch in financially	72% help with rent food maintenance costs
How people help in other ways	92% help with cleaning, cooking, babysitting
Ways to reach out for help	82% have used community or government services to try and help get their own place

The table shows that 37 of the 50 hidden or previously hidden homeless (74%) rely on income assistance. The maximum shelter allowance for a single person on income assistance is \$375 per month. Information from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's October 2010 rental market survey shows that the average rent for a bachelor unit is \$501 per month in Prince George; \$519 in Nanaimo; \$587 in Kelowna and \$588 in Kelowna. No rental information was available for Nelson.

## 6.1. Identity and hidden homelessness

Participant gender was relatively even, with 53% female respondents and 47% male. Community-based researchers in Nanaimo work out of a women's society, and therefore all participants from that community were women. No recent immigrants participated in the interviews.



**Figure 1: Age ranges of hidden homeless interview participants**

As shown in Figure 1, participants were generally in their middle adult years, with only one participant over 55 years old. Youth under 18 were not included in this study.

Just 10% of the interview participants had children or grandchildren who were living with them at the time of the interview. Participants were more likely to have children under 18 who were not living with them. Children still living with the participants tended to be toddlers, whereas those who lived away were generally somewhat older.

The most noticeable identity characteristic of respondents was that over one third (38%) identified as Aboriginal. This presents a significant over-representation given that the average Aboriginal population of the five sites is six percent (6%). The prevalence of Aboriginal respondents is comparable to over-representation of Aboriginal persons in homeless counts.

### **Sean's Story**

*Sean is 25 and grew up in a village on the Central Coast. After 21 years in a pretty remote place, Sean decided to leave. Sean was not the only one in his village to move away, as opportunities for employment were scarce. With an interest in nature and science, Sean enrolled in environmental studies in a new, bigger city. Moving into his new life, Sean didn't have much money and the cost of living was higher than he anticipated. With some funding support and loans he was able to get himself through school – but at a high cost. After graduating though, Sean found himself deep in debt and unable to find work. For a while, Sean moved back to his village to live with family, but there was even less work there and his friends had all left. Frustrated, he moved back into the city and doesn't get any support from family members. He now pays \$200 a month to sleep on the living room floor of an acquaintance's place in town. It has been over a month now in this arrangement. He can't stay there during the day – it is just a place to sleep. He has accessed multiple services in town to get support. Moving home is not an option. Sean feels frustrated with his inability to improve his life.*

## **6.2. Health and hidden homelessness**

Over 65% of participants stated having mental health challenges. Over 52% of participants had substance use challenges. A similar share (48%) had physical challenges. A sizeable share of participants (22%) dealt with three types of challenges (mental health, substance use and physical health) concurrently. About half of participants felt that their health challenges were limiting the kind and amount of activities they could do.

### **Maureen's Story**

*Maureen has advanced scoliosis and is living with her best friend Dawn. Making ends meet on a disability income is difficult for Maureen, who is also dealing with both her alcohol issues and her friend's. Though she dearly loves her friend and feels supported, she is not the only one staying with Dawn and it is getting crowded. She's had many awful sleeps on the couch. Her physical disability has worsened night after night. Because of her drinking, Maureen feels judged during medical appointments or when accessing services relating to her physical disability, but she still attempts to access services as she is able. At the age of 48, with a high school education and an inability to walk or stand for long periods of time, Maureen cannot realistically hold down a job. With limited mobility and strength, and she doesn't feel safe in a shelter or group home. As long as she has somewhere else to go, she won't settle for those options. She is thankful for the emotional support and shelter provided by her friend.*

### 6.3. Substance use and hidden homelessness

Over half of all participants (52%) were dealing with substance use challenges at the time of the interview. Not everyone wanted to talk about what type of substance they were using, but amongst those mentioned were alcohol, marijuana, crack, cocaine and crystal meth. A handful of participants were also in recovery. The impacts of addiction and substance use on participants are varied, particularly as a significant number of participants were dealing with multiple health challenges and life crises. For instance, half of those who indicated a substance use challenge also had physical challenges. Significantly, almost three quarters of those stating substance use challenges also stated mental health challenges (73% of those with substance use challenges).

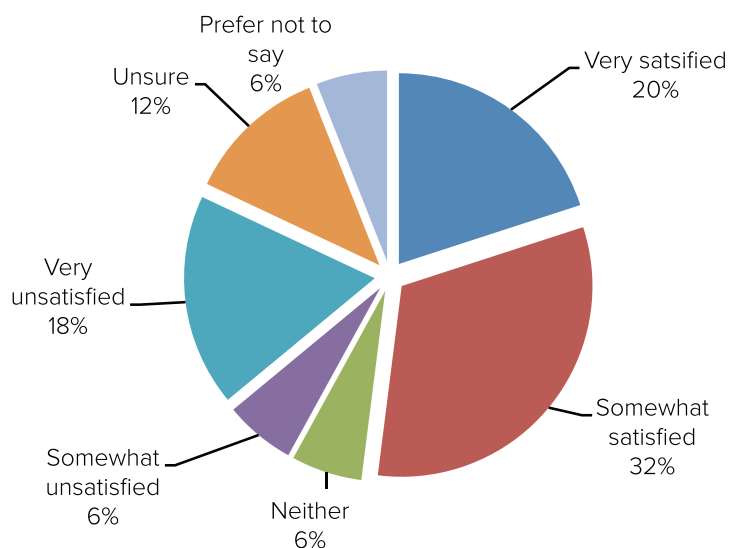
#### Sigmund's Story

*Sigmund is 32 years old and has been dealing with addictions for a third of his life. As a teenager, Sigmund was serious about football. He played steady through high school and was offered a scholarship to continue playing for a university in Vancouver. It was there that Sigmund was introduced to steroids. Sigmund popped pills to train better, eat more and gain weight. His football career didn't get far. As his athletic prospects closed, his drug use ramped up – from locker room drugs to alcohol and street drugs, Sigmund rode a dangerous path into serious addiction. For a while, Sigmund was capable of playing both games – working and using. Eventually the drugs took over. He still uses regularly and has lost any stability he once had. Sigmund has moved well over 20 times in the last year. He's spent many nights in emergency shelters and on friend's couches. Sometimes he sleeps in the back of a truck. Despite severe anxiety issues, Sigmund's size and strength have protected him this far in life. Recently though, Sigmund found himself sleeping on a spare mattress in the apartment of a friend who deals drugs. He knew that was extremely risky. Sigmund recently found some stability and peace in a boarding house and is seeing a drug counselor. He needed to get away from drugs and find a safe place before he could begin to tackle these serious issues.*

## 6.4. Sense of home and hidden homelessness

One third of participants who were currently in temporary housing considered their housing “home”. This relatively small share of positive responses makes sense in the context of those who have been in such situations in the recent past. Participants who recently experienced hidden homelessness spent, more often than not, less time at their temporary home than they had anticipated (70% of past hidden homeless population participants). They either chose or were forced to leave before they were ready to go. Participants experienced little stability in past housing.

With regards to participants’ current sense of satisfaction with their living situation, responses were split with several participants.



**Figure 2: Hidden homeless interview participants’ satisfaction with living situation**

Figure 2 illustrates the wide range of responses from participants. Those who were very satisfied noted feeling comfortable, welcomed, grateful and supported by good friends. Those who felt anything less than very satisfied noted a range of issues including crowding, drug and alcohol use, feeling like a burden or in the way, lack of safety, physically and socially uncomfortable.

### **Suzanne's Story**

*At age 34, Suzanne is a single mom and a past homeowner. Suzanne knew she would lose her home because of financial stress and it was hard. What she didn't know was the impact it would have on the well-being of her family. Suzanne and her daughter live in a college town where low vacancy rates and high rents are the norm. Renting isn't much cheaper than her mortgage payments, and with child care costs what they are, Suzanne can't keep up financially. Since losing her home, Suzanne has taken shelter in the homes of friends and sometimes, when her daughter is at sleepovers, spends the night in her car. She does not want to consider her most recent place home though she's been here almost a year. Her sense of dignity is eroded. She is embarrassed to be living like this with a child.*

## **6.5. Safety and hidden homelessness**

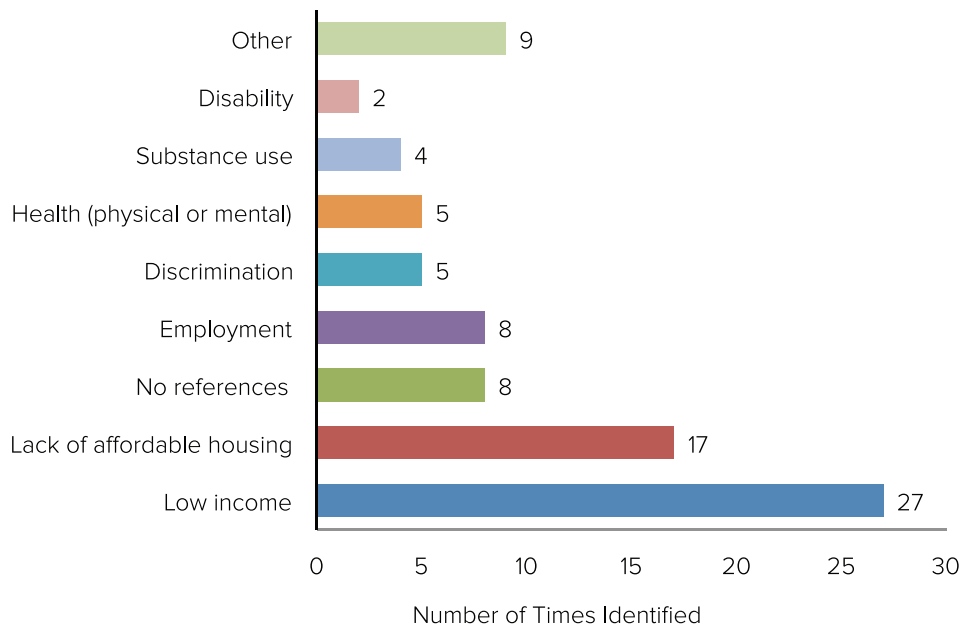
Just over one third of participants felt a risk to their personal safety as a result of their current living arrangements. Male and female respondents noted similar degrees of risk in their situations. Participants stated a wide variety of fears, including the unstable mental health of a roommate, the presence of strangers, being surrounded by drug use and violence, fear of being physically and sexually assaulted and the fear of having to sleep on the streets if anything happened.

### **Tanya's Story**

*Tanya just finished college. Though she's got a full time retail job, she has no savings and lots of student debt. Anxiety and depression, issues she's dealt with in the past, are setting in once again. To make ends meet before she gets a job with better pay, Tanya has decided to live temporarily with her boyfriend's family. She contributes as much as she can – babysitting, cooking, cleaning and other household chores. The situation with his family is okay. As for the situation with the boyfriend, it is getting worse and worse. Tanya's boyfriend is treating her badly. He is drinking more and comes home late and often angry. At first verbally abusing her, he has started to act out his aggression physically. She wants to get away from him but depends on his family for support. Tanya feels trapped in this dangerous relationship just to keep a roof over her head.*

## 6.6. Income security and hidden homelessness

Interview participants identified low income and lack of affordable housing as the two most significant barriers preventing them from getting their own place to live. Figure 3 illustrates the barriers that were identified by interview participants. There were more than 50 responses recorded as many participants identified more than one barrier.



**Figure 3: Hidden homeless interview participants views on barriers on getting a place to live**

Despite their limited financial means, almost all participants tried to help with the cost of living in their temporary situations. Almost three quarters (72%) of interview participants helped financially with household expenses by paying rent and/or contributing to the cost of groceries or utilities. For a number of participants, their temporary living arrangement did not allow them to save money and gain some financial independence. For many, this was not a transitional housing situation, but rather the only one they could afford. The vast majority of those who are unable to contribute financially helped in other ways, such as cleaning, cooking, caring for children and pets, gardening and helping with yard work and household repairs.

### Alice's Story

*Alice is dealing with a lot of financial stress. At the age of 27, she has already accumulated significant debt. Alice self-identifies as an urban Aboriginal woman and she has been attempting to enjoy an urban lifestyle. Alice completed some college courses but found a good job working for a local Band Council before she completed her post-secondary education. Alice was living comfortably in a place of her own and was making payments on a new car. Losing her job changed a lot for Alice. Thinking she would save some money by staying with a friend, Alice gave up her apartment. Months have passed and Alice has been depending of the generosity of friends for housing. Every now and then she would sleep in her car. With no luck on the job front, severance running out and no way to cover car payments, Alice's car got repossessed. Her credit is ruined and she has no housing references. She now finds herself unable to get an apartment. She feels overwhelmed by the situation. She has hopes of going back to school for a certificate course to become more employable, but she doesn't want to take on any new debt and may not be eligible for a loan. She feels any job she can get now won't be enough to cover it all; it is a monthly toss-up between rent and groceries.*

## 6.7. Employment and hidden homelessness

Unemployment was a common experience amongst the interview participants. Just 14% of participants indicated that they were employed at the time of the interview and 4% had a full time job. Of the small number of participants who were employed, the jobs were largely part-time or they considered themselves self-employed. Those who had income from employment were not earning much – often less than \$500 dollars per month.

Employment was identified as a barrier to finding permanent housing, but it is important to consider the number of individuals who are receiving financial support through other means – including social assistance and disability benefits. Employment is only part of the picture for those who are experiencing hidden homelessness – other barriers that prevent them from participating in the traditional workforce are considerable.

### **Blue's Story**

*Blue is Métis, originally from Manitoba. Blue is not his real name, just something he picked up through a string of coincidences. Those coincidences might have also been what got him where he is now – sleeping on a friend's couch when the kids are not home, staying in a shelter when necessary and spending lengthy periods in rooming houses. Blue is a brain injury survivor. At the age of 24 he was working in a very large meat warehouse when a few boxes went missing. To search for the missing boxes from above, Blue stepped onto a wooden pallet that was raised 13 feet in the air by a forklift. The forklift operator accidentally bumped the switch, jolted the pallet and caused Blue to lose his balance and fall head first into the floor. It took two months for Blue to come out of the coma and a further two years to "recover." While Blue is highly functioning, he can drive and is a skilled painter, cognitive challenges mean he is only capable of functioning "on the job" two hours a day. Far away from the support of family, Blue relies on the support of friends, the local band and BC Disability Benefits to get through life. With significant social anxiety, Blue is uncomfortable in crowd settings and has been screened out of some group home options. He struggles to navigate housing wait lists and is overwhelmed by the task of finding suitable affordable housing. Unable to work, Blue lives on a fixed income that provides him with few options.*

## 7. Discussion

In this discussion section, we address two major themes that emerge from and intersect with this study. First, we discuss the defining characteristics of the hidden homeless population identified in this study. Second, we discuss the characteristics of those who house the hidden homeless.

### 7.1. Hidden Homelessness

The conventional view of homelessness focuses on people that are roofless (i.e., living on the streets) and people that are houseless (i.e., living in shelters). Generally, it is this two part concept of homelessness that organizes most research on homelessness, especially homeless count methodologies.

In our review of homelessness literature in each of the five (5) communities, the aforementioned two part concept of homelessness played a framing role in how each community looked at their homeless population. Four (4) of the five (5) communities looked at in this study have undertaken homeless counts and three (3) of these communities have produced formal homeless count reports (i.e., Nanaimo, Kelowna, and Prince George). All four (4) of the communities that have completed homeless counts have made important refinements to their respective approach to enumerating and understanding the homeless in their community over time.<sup>9</sup> The homeless counts undertaken in each of the four (4) communities provide useful insights into some of the characteristics of the local homeless population and the types of opportunities, services and supports needed to help people that are homeless break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

At the time of our study, we found that there are still some limitations in the methods employed in local homeless counts. Of interest to this study was the fact that the existing homeless count methodologies are limited in their capacity to enumerate and characterize the hidden homeless population - an important sub-population within the broader homeless population.

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<sup>9</sup> Nelson was the only community of the five (5) communities without a conventional homeless count, which perhaps may be indicative of limited community capacity due to the much smaller size of the city of Nelson. Nelson is not alone in BC as a community that has not undertaken a homeless count. Other communities of similar size (i.e., non-metropolitan cities of less than 25,000 but more than 5,000) have not completed a homeless count, including but not limited to: Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Merritt, Cranbrook, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Whistler, etc. An interesting exception to the trend of smaller BC communities not completing homeless counts is the work undertaken in Sechelt and Cranbrook, both of which have conducted homeless counts. The work in Sechelt and Cranbrook offer an important precedent for other smaller communities to consider.

Furthermore the hidden homeless population represent an important sub-group that is often cited in anecdotes as potentially as large or larger than the street and/or shelter homeless.

As was noted in the introduction section of this report, the lack of local data about hidden homelessness served as the primary rationale for undertaking this study. To the best of our knowledge, this research project was the first of its kind in these smaller urban centres and provides one method of enumerating the hidden homeless and understanding their unique qualities and needs as well as the characteristics of the households that house the hidden homeless. The design of this study drew upon best practices in mixed methods research regarding rare events such as hidden homelessness and sought to conform to high ethical standards when studying hidden homelessness by working to minimize the degree of intrusion on people experiencing homelessness.

In section 4, we presented the findings from the household survey and provided a series of comparative data tables containing the total estimated hidden homeless individuals at the time of the survey and over the past year. In the 'best case scenarios' (i.e., fewest number of estimated hidden homeless people), the estimated number of both current and past year hidden homeless people in each community was significant. Based on the estimates, every community had at least 200 individuals who had been hidden homeless during some point in the past year, ranging from the low estimate of 223 in Nelson to the low estimate of 1,019 in Kelowna.

The significant number of hidden homeless in each community is corroborated by the perceptions of the service providers that were interviewed in each community - the majority of which stated that hidden homeless individuals were a major concern for their organizations and the community overall. The result of the interviews with hidden homeless individuals in each community provides additional evidence that hidden homelessness exists in each of the participating communities.

All three data sources in this study point directly and/or indirectly to the important role that income, accessible and appropriate housing and support services play in assisting the hidden homeless secure a home address. In the household survey component of our study, the top reasons for hidden homeless individuals' lack of home addresses varied across communities.

Lack of income and/or lack of employment, lack of available housing, and low income/ can't afford available housing were mentioned as top reasons in all communities. Lack of available housing was the top reason in two of the five communities and tied for the top reason in another community.

Low income and lack of affordable housing were identified as the top reasons for having no home address among the hidden homeless in this study. Mental health and substance use challenges compounded the difficulty of the homeless situation for many of the interview respondents. Over 65% of participants stated having mental health challenges at the current time, compared to the 20% of Canadians that will experience a mental illness during their lifetime (Health Canada, 2002). Just over half (52%) of the participants had substance abuse challenges. Almost half (48%) had physical challenges. 22% of the participants dealt with three types of challenges concurrently. These trends in the sample of the hidden homeless in our study fit into the general profile of the homeless population in Canada, which sees homeless individuals often reporting mental health challenges, health illnesses and disabilities (Hwang, 2001).

Service provider interviews confirmed that the barriers to securing an appropriate home address for the hidden homeless are simple to identify and difficult to address. The majority of service providers repeatedly noted that low income, lack of appropriate housing and inadequate services and/or strict criteria for government support constitute major barriers to the hidden homeless in their efforts to secure an address of their own.

With respect to who the hidden homeless are staying with, the household survey component of this study revealed that less than half of the individuals who were hidden homeless over the past year were staying with relatives, ranging from 20% in Nelson to 41% in Nanaimo and Prince George. In total, just 29% (or 47 out of 157 individuals) of the individuals who were hidden homeless over the past year stayed with relatives. The in-person interviews with the hidden homeless population also indicated that most hidden homeless individuals stayed with friends and acquaintances (80%) as opposed to relatives. The interviews with the hidden homeless indicated that hidden homeless individuals often tried to help out their friends/acquaintances in some way, with almost three-quarters (72%) of the interview participants helping out financially with household expenses such as groceries, while other participants helped out with household chores such as childcare and gardening.

In other studies of and with the homeless, it is noted that Aboriginal peoples are over-represented in the street and shelter homeless population (Homeward Trust Edmonton, 2008; Metro Vancouver, 2009; Jim Ward Associates, 2008). With regard to the heritage/ancestry of the hidden homeless, we know very little from this study since the household survey did not ask a question about the heritage/ancestry of hidden homeless individuals. However, the results of the interviews with the hidden homeless and the interviews with service providers in our study suggests that Aboriginal peoples also appear to be overrepresented in the hidden homeless population (36% of the hidden homeless population across the five sites was of Aboriginal heritage).

## 7.2. Households that house the hidden homeless

The characteristics of the households that housed hidden homeless individuals over the past year varied in our study. The hosts were of many different ages, but there was a significant proportion of hosts 65 years and over in some communities (33.5% of Prince George's hosts and 30.4% of Kelowna's hosts). These proportions were above the proportion of local populations that were 65 and over: 9.4% of Prince George Census Agglomeration's population and 19.4% of Kelowna City's population in 2006 were 65 and over (Statistics Canada, 2006). Given that many of the hidden homeless individuals were helping out with household chores, perhaps having someone around to help was an incentive for the elderly population to house the hidden homeless.

The incomes of the households housing hidden homeless individuals over the past year varied considerably from centre to centre. A high percentage of households housing hidden homeless individuals over the past year in Prince George (33%) and Nelson (27%) had incomes of \$20,000 or less, with much lower percentages occurring in Kamloops (14%), Kelowna (13%), and Nanaimo (6%). It is unclear why such a percentage of households housing hidden homeless people in Prince George and Nelson have lower incomes than the other centres.

Many of the households housing hidden homeless individuals over the past year were living in 'unaffordable' housing themselves. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), a household is likely to experience affordability challenges if it is spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs (CMHC, 2011). Based on the findings to emerge from the research, approximately 34% of the households housing those who fit the definition of hidden homeless were spending 30% or more of their household incomes on their housing costs.

In looking at this outcome, one may make the observation that although these households may be helping out the hidden homeless individuals by providing them with a place to stay, the hidden homeless individuals themselves may also be providing some financial assistance which is needed by this household to help pay their rent or mortgage or other basic household costs and therefore represents some benefit to the households that are making their housing available.

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

If any homeless person in a community is too many, then each of the five (5) participating communities has a problem with homelessness.

There are three major complimentary strategies for ending homelessness: adequate income; appropriate, affordable and, where needed, supportive housing; and, client centered services that are responsive to and empowering of each individual's unique and diverse abilities. It is clear that each of these three ways to ending homelessness involves the collaboration of multiple levels of government, community based agencies and services providers as well as other key sectors including business and the academic community.

This study provides conclusions and recommendations concerning homelessness research and programs and services to better address hidden homelessness.

### 8.1 Homelessness research

Each community in this study had some type of approach to enumerating the homeless and such data was seen as important in creating public awareness about the issue of homelessness and the type of programs and services that are needed. At the same time, there was variability between the methodologies that were used in the homeless counts for either obtaining the data or for reporting on that data.

A central focus of this research was to develop a strategy that provided an estimate of the number of hidden homeless in each community. This research built on the work undertaken in a previous study on hidden homelessness (Eberle et al, 2009) with a focus on using/adapting that method to understand the specific needs and circumstances in smaller communities. While estimating "rare events" such as hidden homelessness has many challenges, we believe that the results of this approach have produced findings that are both credible and reliable.

Our review of existing homelessness studies and counts in the five (5) participating communities and the new data that has been generated through this study allows for important insights to be made about how to enhance how Canadian communities address homelessness. We believe that there are a number of improvements that can be made in this regard.

1. Greater understanding about the scope of homelessness at the regional, provincial and national levels would be improved if there were a more consistent approach used when studies of homelessness are undertaken. It is therefore recommended that the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada should develop a manual that provides a common methodology and templates for reporting the data for point-in-time homeless counts. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Secretariat establish a repository of homeless count data so that researchers can conduct secondary and comparative analysis of that data.
2. Given that the results from the household telephone surveys indicate a potentially very large number of hidden homeless, it is recommended that the Secretariat replicate the household survey in other communities in Canada in order to attain a better understanding of the scope and nature of the problem. If the survey is replicated, it is further recommended that the screening question be refined to obtain additional information on those who stay but are not considered hidden homeless for this study.
3. The study findings noted that a large percentage of those who provide housing support for the hidden homeless are themselves facing affordability challenges in their own housing situation. It is therefore recommended that future household surveys include questions about the nature of their current housing situation and their reasons for making their housing available to the hidden homeless. Such information could provide further insight into the income and housing dynamics of this population.

## **8.2 Programs/services and hidden homelessness**

Housing and income issues came up repeatedly in the telephone interviews with the households and from the interviews with the hidden homeless.

This study also identified that services and programs can provide major points of support for people who are experiencing a transition in their lives and who are experiencing hidden homelessness.

The fact that hidden homeless individuals have a place to stay suggests that their existing network as well as their available resources have been sufficient to allow them to avoid street or sheltered homelessness (at least for the time being). As such, it is important to consider ways to help these individuals to regain their stability and move to more permanent stable housing in order to prevent the 'drift' into street or sheltered homelessness that can sometimes occur. This would include investing in programs and services that would enable the hidden homeless to move from being temporarily housed to more stable, permanent and affordable accommodation - an address of their own.

While there are some unique situations in every community, respondents felt that expanded services were needed to better assist people experiencing hidden homelessness and to help prevent the ‘drift’ into absolute homelessness. This included enhanced access to housing and supports at all points along the housing continuum (from emergency shelters to independent accommodation). It also included mental health and addiction services, health services, food security programs, counseling and life skills training, as well as more accessible medical and dental services. We believe that there are a number of improvements that can be made in this regard.

1. Our study confirms lack of income is a barrier to securing an address of one’s own. This reinforces the importance of public policy decisions and program related to income assistance and skills development and job training. The current maximum shelter allowance of \$375 is not sufficient to enable people receiving income assistance in British Columbia to access adequate shelter. As a result, to successfully prevent homelessness in the future and increase the housing stability of those that are at risk of homelessness, it is important for government to ensure that existing housing and support programs are structured in a way to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability for those that need it most.
2. The hidden homeless population had difficulty in obtaining employment, with only a few having full-time jobs. It is therefore recommended that skill training and job placement services be developed to assist the hidden homeless.
3. Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented among the hidden homeless populations to a similar extent as they are overrepresented in other counts of the homeless. It is therefore recommended that funding for housing and services targeted to Aboriginal peoples experiencing homelessness be directed to Aboriginal service providers as much as possible.
4. A significant percentage of the hidden homeless report dealing with mental health and substance use issues. People with concurrent disorders will need to have access to appropriate services if they are to become stable in their housing. The findings from this research suggest that the “housing first” approach now being adopted in many communities should be continued.

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## 10. Appendices

### Appendix A: Technical analysis of household survey results by municipality

It is possible to estimate the range in which the actual number of hidden homeless will fall both at the time the survey was conducted and over the course of the previous year by using the numbers of hidden homeless found through speaking with 1000 households in each of the five communities.

Once the incidence is established (in this case, by projecting the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals to the municipal population of homes) it is possible to estimate the margin of error around that estimate by creating a confidence interval. As discussed in previous studies of hidden homelessness, the low incidence of hidden homelessness requires the use of the correct distribution to set the confidence intervals around the population estimates. For rare events, the normal distribution does not provide an accurate margin of error because it does not successfully mimic the binomial distribution.

The Poisson distribution is used with probabilities and incidences of small numbers – also referred to as “rare events.” It produces the appropriate margin of error for this type of research because it best approximates the binomial distribution if the data in question meet four criteria. First, the event can be counted in whole numbers. Second, the occurrences are independent. Third, the rate of event occurrence is known. Finally, it is possible to count how many events have occurred, but is meaningless to ask how many of such events have not occurred. This topic meets all criteria (whole numbers of households and hidden homeless individuals, independent occurrences, the rate of hidden homelessness is known from the survey and it is meaningless to ask how many hidden homeless have not occurred). The Poisson distribution was used to calculate the 95% confidence intervals around the estimates for the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals in the municipality. This was done for both the estimate at the time the survey was conducted and the annual estimate. The way to interpret this range is as follows: if a survey of the entire population of households was conducted 20 times, 19 times out of 20 the number of households housing hidden homeless and number of individuals would fall in this range.

## A.1. Hidden homelessness in Prince George

Of the 1,000 households interviewed in Prince George, 73 (7.3%) reported having at least one person currently staying with the household on a temporary basis. This number dropped to 4 households when the Hidden Homeless qualification “the person or persons can NOT stay with you until they are able to establish a residence of their own” was applied. Between these households there were a total of 7 individuals; five were on their own, the remaining 2 were a family of one adult and a 15 year old child. This is an average of 1.8 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 23: Current hidden homeless in Prince George**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Prince George Households (estimate of number of households housing hidden homeless across 32,630 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Prince George Population (estimate of number of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 32,630 households)
At time of survey	n	%	131	n	%	228
	4	0.4%		7	0.7%	
Staying with family	-	-	-	6	0.6%	195
Not with family	-	-	-	1	0.1%	33

The households were also asked to report anyone staying at the house over the past year on a temporary basis. A total of 105 households had people staying with them, of which 15 met the Hidden Homeless criteria. Within these households there were a minimum of 22 individuals of which 18 were individuals and 4 comprised two couples. Eight households had a single individual, four households had two individuals, one household sheltered six hidden homeless and two households declined to answer how many people had stayed with them over the course of the year. This is an average of 1.5 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 24: Past year hidden homeless in Prince George**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Prince George Households (estimate of number of households housing hidden homeless across 32,630 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Prince George Population (estimate of number of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 32,630 households)
	n	%		n	%	
Over past year	15	1.5%	489	22	2.2%	718
Staying with family	-	-	-	9	0.9%	294
Not with family	-	-	-	13	1.3%	424

### Estimate of actual number of hidden homeless

Using the numbers of hidden homeless found by calling 1,000 households, we projected to the population of households in Prince George and estimated the range in which the actual number of hidden homeless in Prince George will fall both at the time the survey was conducted and over the course of the previous year. It is estimated that there would have been 131 households housing 228 hidden homeless in Prince George at the time of the survey. Over the course of the year it is estimated there were 489 homes housing 718 individuals who met the hidden homeless criteria. These estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As discussed in previous studies of hidden homelessness, the low incidence of hidden homelessness requires the use of the correct distribution to set the confidence intervals around the population estimates. The Poisson distribution is used with probabilities and incidences of small numbers – also referred to as “rare events.” This distribution was used to calculate the confidence intervals around the estimates for the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals in the municipality. This was done for both the estimate at the time the survey was conducted and the annual estimate.

At the time the survey was conducted, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Prince George who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 36 and 334 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time

would fall between 92 and 471. This means that if a survey of the entire population of households was conducted 20 times, 19 times out of 20 the number of households housing hidden homeless and number of individuals would fall in this range.

For the projection of the number of hidden homeless over the course of the year, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Prince George who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 274 and 807 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 450 and 1,087.

**Table 25: Hidden homeless projected estimates in Prince George**

	Hidden Homeless Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Current</b>		
Household level	131	36-334
Individual level	228	92-471
<b>Past Year</b>		
Household level	489	274-807
Individual level	718	450-1,087

### Description of hidden homeless people and situations

Five of the six hidden homeless units at the time the survey was conducted are family members (grandparents, parents, siblings or niece/nephew of the head of household). One individual was staying with friends. The average length of stay was 12.8 weeks, although half of the hidden homeless had stayed at the household for less than a month. The five reasons given for the hidden homeless individual's lack of a home address included: lack of income/loss of employment (33%), lack of available housing (33%), health or other issues (33%), in transition (moving/stranded, 33%), and low income/can't afford the housing available (17%). Individuals were encouraged to mention all possible reasons. One-third of the hidden homeless were under the age of 34 while two-thirds were over the age of 55. The average monthly financial contribution was \$10; however five units did not contribute financially.

Of the 22 hidden homeless over the past year, 18 were singles and 4 were couples – there were no families. These individuals covered almost all age categories (none were below 18 or over 65) but the most common were 25-34 years (30%) or 35-44 years (45%).

Less than half (40%) were staying with family members; other arrangements included staying with friends (25%) or in a household with which they had no prior relationship (35%). The average length of stay was 6.8 weeks, ranging from less than a month (70%) to a year (5%). The top four reasons given for the hidden homeless individual's lack of a home address included: lack of available housing (45%), health or other issues (25.0%), low income/can't afford the housing available (15%), lack of income/loss of employment (10.0%). Three other issues – Abuse/family breakdown, eviction and being in transition (moving/stranded, 15%) – were mentioned. Individuals were encouraged to mention all possible reasons. The mean monthly financial contribution was \$42.00. However, 16 of the 20 units of individuals (80%) did not provide the host household with any financial compensation for their stay.

### **Characteristics of those who house hidden homeless**

As a part of the survey protocol, we spoke with the head of the household. This necessarily influenced some of the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, employment, etc.) and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. However, most of the data presented below should not have been greatly affected by the individual reporting it. All percentages are based on the household level except age.

**Table 26: Characteristics of households housing hidden homeless in Prince George**

Characteristic	Current n=4	Past Year n=15	None n=981
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	-	-	2.5%
25-34	-	20.0%	10.8%
35-44	25.0%	6.7%	16.6%
45-54	75.0%	20.0%	23.1%
55-64	-	20.0%	22.1%
65 years and over	-	33.5%	23.6%
Refused	-	-	1.1%
<b>Employment</b>			
Full Time	25.0%	33.3%	41.1%
Retired	-	40.0%	28.7%
Part Time	50.0%	13.3%	10.6%
Unemployed/on leave	-	13.3%	10.1%
Homemaker	25.0%	-	7.3%
Student	-	-	3.2%
Refused	-	6.7%	1.4%
<b>Home</b>			
Rent	50.0%	40.0%	15.6%
Own	50.0%	60.0%	83.1%
Refused	-	-	1.3%
<b>Life stage</b>			
Couple with no children/no children at home	25.0%	26.7%	35.3%
Two parent family with children at home	50.0%	26.7%	32.8%
Single with no children	25.0%	13.3%	19.0%
Single parent family with children at home	-	20.0%	7.7%
Widowed	-	-	0.8%
Single parent, children live with other parent	-	6.7%	0.1%
Other	-	-	1.2%
Refused	-	6.7%	3.1%
<b>% with children under 18 years old in the home</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>

Characteristic	Current n=4	Past Year n=15	None n=981
<b>Average household size</b>	5.8	2.6	2.7
<b>Average number of people/bedroom</b>	1.5	1.0	0.8
<b>Household income</b>			
Less than \$15,000	-	20.0%	4.7%
\$15,000 – \$19,999	-	13.3%	4.7%
\$20,000 – \$29,999	25.0%	13.3%	9.0%
\$30,000 – \$39,999	-	6.7%	6.4%
\$40,000 – \$49,999	50.0%	13.3%	9.8%
\$50,000 – \$69,999	-	-	13.1%
\$70,000 – \$79,999	-	-	6.5%
\$80,000 or more	25.0%	13.3%	21.1%
Don't Know/Refused	-	20.0%	24.7%
<b>Housing cost/income</b>			
Less than 30%	50.0%	40.0%	59.7%
30% - 39%	25.0%	13.3%	6.1%
40% or more	25.0%	26.7%	8.1%
Don't Know/Refused	-	20.0%	26.0%
<b>Ethnicity (Multiple mention)</b>			
Caucasian/Canadian	50.0%	80.0%	88.7%
First Nations	50.0%	20.0%	6.9%
Other	-	-	2.0%
Refused	-	-	2.4%
<b>Recent Immigrant</b>	-	6.7%	1.1%

## A.2. Hidden homelessness in Kamloops

Of the 1000 households interviewed in Kamloops, 81 (8.1%) reported having at least one person currently staying with the household on a temporary basis. This number dropped to 2 households when the Hidden Homeless qualification “the person or persons can NOT stay with you until they are able to establish a residence of their own” was applied. Between these households there were a total of 4 individuals; one was on their own, the remaining 3 are a family of two adults and a 3 year old child. This is an average of 2 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 27: Current hidden homeless in Kamloops**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Kamloops Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless across 34,330 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Kamloops Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 34,330 households)
	n	%		n	%	
<b>At time of survey</b>	2	0.2%	69	4	0.4%	137
Staying with family	-		-	4	0.4%	137
Not with family	-		-	0	0	0

The households were also asked to report anyone staying at the house over the past year on a temporary basis. A total of 116 households had people staying with them, of which 21 met the Hidden Homeless criteria (2.1%). Within these households there were a total of 34 individuals (none of which were couples or family units). Eleven households had a single individual, seven households had two individuals over the course of the year, and three households sheltered three hidden homeless. This is an average of 1.6 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 28: Past year hidden homeless in Kamloops**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Kamloops Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless across 34,330 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Kamloops Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 34,330 households)
	n	%		N	%	
<b>Over past year</b>	21	2.1%	721	34	3.4%	1167
Staying with family	-		-	8	0.8%	275
Not with family	-		-	26	2.6%	892

### Estimate of actual number of hidden homeless

Using the numbers of hidden homeless found by calling 1,000 households, we projected the population of households in Kamloops and estimated the range in which the actual number of hidden homeless in Kamloops will fall both at the time the survey was conducted and over the course of the previous year. It is estimated that there would have been 69 households housing 137 hidden homeless in Kamloops at the time of the survey. Over the course of the year it is estimated there were 721 homes housing 1,167 individuals who met the hidden homeless criteria. These estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As discussed in studies of hidden homelessness, the low incidence of hidden homelessness requires the use of the correct distribution to set the confidence intervals around the population estimates. The Poisson distribution is used with probabilities and incidences of small numbers – also referred to as “rare events.” This distribution was used to calculate the confidence intervals around the estimates for the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals in the municipality. This was done for both the estimate at the time the survey was conducted and the annual estimate.

At the time the survey was conducted, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Kamloops who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 8 and 248 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 37 and 352. This means that if a survey of the entire population of households was conducted 20 times, 19 times out of 20 the number of households housing hidden

homeless and number of individuals would fall in this range.

For the projection of the number of hidden homeless over the course of the year, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Kamloops who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 446 and 1,102 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 808 and 1,631.

**Table 29: Hidden homeless projected estimates in Kamloops**

	Hidden Homeless Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Current</b>		
Household level	69	8-248
Individual level	137	37-352
<b>Past Year</b>		
Household level	721	446-1,102
Individual level	1,167	808-1,631

### Description of hidden homeless people and situations

All of the hidden homeless at the time the survey was conducted are family members (children or grandchildren of the head of household). The individual, aged 45-54, stayed for 30 weeks due to a family breakdown involving abuse or conflict and contributed \$400 per month. The family stayed for 20 weeks as a result of being in transition (either moving or stranded) and did not contribute financially to the host household.

Of the hidden homeless over the past year, all 34 were singles – there were no couples or families. These individuals covered all age categories but the most common were 25-34 years (38%) or 35-44 years (21%). Just under a quarter (24%) were staying with family members; the remainder were staying with friends (53%), were unrelated students (12%), or had no prior relationship with the household (12%). The average length of stay was 9 weeks, ranging from less than a month to a year. The top five reasons given for the hidden homeless individual's lack of a home address included: lack of available housing (24%), in transition (moving/ stranded, 18%), low income/can't afford the housing available (15%), being in school (15%) and lack of income/loss of employment (12%). Individuals were encouraged to mention all possible reasons. The mean monthly financial contribution was \$50.00. However, 25 of the 34 individuals (74%) did not provide the host household with any financial compensation.

## **Characteristics of those who house hidden homeless**

As a part of the survey protocol, we spoke with the head of the household. This necessarily influenced some of the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, employment, etc.) and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. However, most of the data presented below should not have been greatly affected by the individual reporting it. All percentages are based on the household level except age.

**Table 30: Characteristics of households housing hidden homeless in Kamloops**

Characteristic	Current n=2	Past Year n=21	None n=977
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	-	4.8%	1.2%
25-34	-	19.0%	9.5%
35-44	-	14.3%	15.0%
45-54	-	42.9%	22.6%
55-64	-	19.0%	22.7%
65 years and over	100%	-	28.1%
Refused	-	-	0.7%
<b>Employment</b>			
Full Time	-	57.1%	39.7%
Retired	100%	4.8%	35.2%
Part Time	-	9.5%	10.5%
Unemployed/on leave	-	23.8%	8.5%
Homemaker	-	4.8%	4.8%
Student	-	-	1.4%
Refused	-	-	1.5%
<b>Home</b>			
Rent	-	23.8%	15.8%
Own	100%	76.2%	82.7%
Refused	-	-	1.5%
<b>Life stage</b>			
Couple with no children/no children at home	-	42.9%	34.3%
Two parent family with children at home	-	19.0%	31.6%
Single with no children	50.0%	23.8%	20.8%
Single parent family with children at home	-	14.3%	7.2%
Widowed	-	-	1.6%
Single parent, children live with other parent	-	-	0.8%
Other	50.0%	-	1.1%
Refused	-	-	2.6%
<b>% with children under 18 years old in the home</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>

Characteristic	Current n=2	Past Year n=21	None n=977
Average household size	3.5	2.3	2.6
Average number of people/bedroom	1.4	0.7	0.9
Household income			
Less than \$15,000	-	9.5%	5.3%
\$15,000 – \$19,999	-	4.8%	5.5%
\$20,000 – \$29,999	100.0%	9.5%	7.8%
\$30,000 – \$39,999	-	9.5%	8.2%
\$40,000 – \$49,999	-	9.5%	9.2%
\$50,000 – \$69,999	-	14.3%	11.5%
\$70,000 – \$79,999	-	9.5%	6.7%
\$80,000 or more	-	14.3%	20.4%
Don't Know/Refused	-	19.1%	25.3%
Housing cost/income			
Less than 30%	100.0%	47.6%	55.2%
30% - 39%	-	14.3%	7.2%
40% or more	-	19.1%	11.2%
Don't Know/Refused	-	19.0%	26.4%
Ethnicity (Multiple mention)			
Caucasian/Canadian	100.0%	95.2%	89.9%
First Nations	-	4.8%	4.0%
Other	-	-	4.9%
Refused	-	-	3.8%
Recent Immigrant	-	-	1.3%

### A.3. Hidden homelessness in Kelowna

Of the 1,000 households interviewed in Kelowna, 53 (5.3%) reported having at least one person currently staying with the household on a temporary basis. Two of these households met the Hidden Homeless qualification stipulating “the person or persons can NOT stay with you until they are able to establish a residence of their own”. Between these households there were a total of 2 individuals. This is an average of 1 hidden homeless person per household.

**Table 31: Current hidden homeless in Kelowna**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Kelowna Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless across 46,545 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Kelowna Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 46,545 households)
	n	%		n	%	
<b>At time of survey</b>	n	%	93	n	%	93
	2	0.2%		2	0.2%	
Staying with family	-		-	1	0.1%	46
Not with family	-		-	1	0.1%	46

The households were also asked to report anyone staying at the house over the past year on a temporary basis. A total of 107 households had people staying with them, of which 23 met the Hidden Homeless criteria (2.3%). Within these households there were a total of 32 individuals (none of which were couples or family units). Seventeen households had a single individual, four households had two individuals, one household had three individuals, and one household sheltered four hidden homeless over the course of the previous year. This is an average of 1.4 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 32: Past year hidden homeless in Kelowna**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Kelowna Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless across 46,545 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Kelowna Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 46,545 households)
	n	%		n	%	
<b>Over past year</b>	23	2.3%	1071	32	3.2%	1,489
Staying with family	-		-	11	1.1%	512
Not with family	-		-	19	1.9%	884
Refused relation	-		-	2	0.2%	93

### Estimate of actual number of hidden homeless

Using the numbers of hidden homeless found by calling 1,000 households, we projected to the population of households in Kelowna and estimated the range in which the actual number of hidden homeless in Kelowna will fall both at the time the survey was conducted and over the course of the previous year. It is estimated that there would have been 93 households housing 93 hidden homeless in Kelowna at the time of the survey. Over the course of the year it is estimated that there were 1,071 homes housing 1,489 individuals who met the hidden homeless criteria. These estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As discussed in studies of hidden homelessness, the low incidence of hidden homelessness requires the use of the correct distribution to set the confidence intervals around the population estimates. The Poisson distribution is used with probabilities and incidences of small numbers – also referred to as “rare events.” This distribution was used to calculate the confidence intervals around the estimates for the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals in the municipality. This was done for both the estimate at the time the survey was conducted and the annual estimate. Thus, at the time the survey was conducted, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Kelowna who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 11 and 336 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would also fall between 11 and 336. This means that if a survey of the entire population of households was conducted 20 times, 19 times out of 20 the number of households housing hidden homeless and number of individuals would fall in this range.

For the projection of the number of hidden homeless over the course of the year, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Kelowna who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 679 and 1,606 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 1,019 and 2,103.

**Table 33: Hidden homeless projected estimates in Kelowna**

	Hidden Homeless Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Current</b>		
Household level	93	11-336
Individual level	93	11-336
<b>Past Year</b>		
Household level	1071	679-1,606
Individual level	1489	1,019-2,103

### Description of hidden homeless people and situations

One of the hidden homeless at the time the survey was conducted is a sibling of the head of the household; the other is staying with a friend. Both have been staying in their current location for under a month. Lack of income/lack of employment, abuse/family breakdown or conflict, eviction and health issues all contributed to their current housing situation. One individual was between the ages of 18 and 24, the other was between the ages of 45-54. Neither contributed financially to the household.

Of the hidden homeless over the past year, all 32 were singles – there were no couples or families. These individuals covered all age categories but the most common were 18-25 years (19%), 25-34 years (25%) and 35-44 years (16%). One third (34%) were staying with family members; the remainder were staying with friends (47%), had other, non-family relationships (6%) or no prior relation to the household (6%). The average length of stay was 21 weeks, ranging from less than a month (28%) to a year (22%). The top five reasons given for the hidden homeless individual's lack of a home address included: lack of income/loss of employment (28%), lack of available housing (28%), low income/can't afford the housing available (25%), family breakdown/abuse (9%), and being in school (9%). Individuals were encouraged to mention all possible reasons, thus the percentages will not necessarily sum to 100. The mean monthly financial contribution was \$128.50. Six households didn't know how much the individual was contributing, and 15 of the 32 individuals (46.9%) did not provide the host household with any financial compensation.

### **Characteristics of those who house hidden homeless**

As a part of the survey protocol, we spoke with the head of the household. This necessarily influenced some of the demographic characteristics (e.g. age, employment) and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. However, most of the data presented below should not have been greatly affected by the individual reporting it. All percentages are based on the household level except age.

**Table 34: Characteristics of households housing hidden homeless in Kelowna**

Characteristic	Current n=2	Past Year n=23	None n=975
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	-	-	1.1%
25-34	50.0%	13.0%	6.2%
35-44	50.0%	17.4%	15.2%
45-54	-	17.4%	20.9%
55-64	-	17.4%	24.4%
65 years and over	-	30.4%	30.8%
Refused	-	4.3%	1.4%
<b>Employment</b>			
Full Time	100%	52.2%	33.1%
Retired	-	26.1%	39.7%
Part Time	-	-	13.4%
Unemployed/on leave	-	13.0%	7.6%
Homemaker	-	4.3%	5.5%
Student	-	4.3%	1.0%
Refused	-	-	1.7%
<b>Home</b>			
Rent	50.0%	26.1%	19.9%
Own	50.0%	73.9%	78.1%
Refused	-	-	2.1%
<b>Life stage</b>			
Couple with no children/no children at home	-	17.4%	39.2%
Two parent family with children at home	50.0%	39.1%	27.6%
Single with no children	50.0%	34.8%	20.4%
Single parent family with children at home	-	8.7%	5.4%
Widowed	-	-	1.2%
Single parent, children live with other parent	-	-	0.7%
Other	-	-	2.0%
Refused	-	-	3.5%
<b>% with children under 18 years old in the home</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>39.1%</b>	<b>23.4%</b>

Characteristic	Current n=2	Past Year n=23	None n=975
<b>Average household size</b>	4.0	2.8	2.5
<b>Average number of people/bedroom</b>	1.8	0.9	0.9
<b>Household income</b>			
Less than \$15,000	-	8.7%	5.2%
\$15,000 – \$19,999	-	4.3%	5.3%
\$20,000 – \$29,999	-	8.7%	7.1%
\$30,000 – \$39,999	50.0%	8.7%	9.3%
\$40,000 – \$49,999	-	13.0%	8.3%
\$50,000 – \$69,999	-	13.0%	11.9%
\$70,000 – \$79,999	-	8.7%	6.2%
\$80,000 or more	50.0%	21.7%	18.4%
Don't Know/Refused	-	12.9%	28.1%
<b>Housing cost/income</b>			
Less than 30%	100%	52.2%	50.4%
30% - 39%	-	17.4%	6.8%
40% or more	-	13.0%	13.1%
Don't Know/Refused	-	17.4%	29.6%
<b>Ethnicity (Multiple mention)</b>			
Caucasian/Canadian	50.0%	95.6%	93.1%
First Nations	-	-	1.7%
Other	50.0%	4.4%	1.9%
Refused	-	-	3.3%
<b>Recent Immigrant</b>	-	-	1.0%

## A.4. Hidden homelessness in Nelson

It is important to note that two weeks prior to the survey, a fire gutted the Kerr Apartments in Nelson. The building was uninhabitable following the fire. One hundred people were evacuated from the building, and it can be assumed that at least a portion of these individuals were staying with family and friends and could have qualified as hidden homeless.

Of the 1,000 households interviewed in Nelson, 76 (7.6%) reported having at least one person currently staying with the household on a temporary basis. This number dropped to 7 households when the Hidden Homeless qualification “the person or persons can NOT stay with you until they are able to establish a residence of their own” was applied. Between these households there were a total of 11 individuals. Four households had one individual staying with them, two households had 2 individuals (two singles in one house, a family in another), and one household had three people at the time of the survey. This is an average of 1.6 people per household.

**Table 35: Current hidden homeless in Nelson**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Nelson Households (estimate of number of households housing hidden homeless across 6795 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Nelson Population (estimate of number of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 6795 households)
	n	%		n	%	
<b>At time of survey</b>	7	0.7%	48	11	1.1%	75
Staying with family	-		-	2	0.2%	14
Not with family	-		-	9	0.9%	61

The households were also asked to report anyone staying at the house over the past year on a temporary basis. A total of 150 (15%) households had people staying with them, of which 30 met the Hidden Homeless criteria. Within these households there were a total of 45 individuals (of which were 2 were a couple and 2 were a family unit). Twenty two households had a single individual, six households had two individuals, three households had three individuals, and one house sheltered 4 individuals over the course of the year. This is an average of 1.5 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 36: Past year hidden homeless in Nelson**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Nelson Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless across 6795 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Nelson Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 6795 households)
	n	%		n	%	
<b>Over past year</b>	30	0.3%	204	45	4.5%	306
Staying with family	-		-	9	0.9%	61
Not with family	-		-	36	3.6%	245

### Estimate of actual number of hidden homeless

Using the numbers of hidden homeless found by calling 1,000 households, we projected to the population of households in Nelson and estimated the range in which the actual number of hidden homeless in Nelson will fall both at the time the survey was conducted and over the course of the previous year. It is estimated that there would have been 48 households housing 75 hidden homeless in Nelson at the time of the survey. Over the course of the year it is estimated there were 204 homes housing 306 individuals who met the hidden homeless criteria. These estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As discussed in the previous studies of hidden homelessness, the low incidence of hidden homelessness requires the use of the correct distribution to set the confidence intervals around the population estimates. The Poisson distribution is used with probabilities and incidences of small numbers – also referred to as “rare events.” This distribution was used to calculate the confidence intervals around the estimates for the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals in the municipality. This was done for both the estimate at the time the survey was conducted and the annual estimate.

Thus, at the time the survey was conducted, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Nelson who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 19 and 98 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 37 and 134. This means that if a survey of the entire population of households was conducted 20 times, 19 times out of 20 the number of households housing hidden homeless and number of individuals would fall in this range.

For the projection of the number of hidden homeless over the course of the year, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Nelson who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 138 and 291 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 223 and 409.

**Table 37: Hidden homeless projected estimates in Nelson**

	Hidden Homeless Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Current</b>		
Household level	48	19-98
Individual level	75	37-134
<b>Past Year</b>		
Household level	204	138-291
Individual level	306	223-409

### Description of hidden homeless people and situations

Of the 10 hidden homeless units at the time the survey was conducted, three (30%) are family members (children or grandchildren of the head of household). The others are friends (30%), students (20%), have other connections to the household (20%) or have no connection to the household (10%). On average, the hidden homeless had been staying at the house for 6.6 weeks, with 40% having been in the residence for a month or less and 30% for between one and two months. The individuals covered age categories up to 54, with the most common being 18-24 (30%) and 25-34 (30%). The four most frequently mentioned reasons for needing temporary shelter included: lack of income/loss of employment (30%), lack of available housing (30%), low income/can't afford the housing available (20%), and school (20%). The average monthly financial contribution to the host household was \$200, with individual amounts ranging from \$0 (from 3 hidden homeless individuals) to more than \$450. Two households (28.6%) did not disclose how much the hidden homeless contributed.

Of the 45 hidden homeless over the past year, 41 were singles, 2 were a couple and 2 were a single parent family with one 12 year old child. These individuals covered all age categories but the most common were 18-24 years (23%) and 25-34 years (30%). Fewer than a quarter (21%) were staying with family members; the remainder were staying with friends (58%), were unrelated students (9.3%), or had various non-family relationships with the household (12%). The average length of stay was 10.9 weeks, ranging from less than a month (56%) to a year (7%). The top five reasons given for the hidden homeless individual's lack of a home address included: in transition (moving, stranded, 30%), low income/can't afford the housing available (21%), lack of income/loss of employment (16%), lack of available housing (16%), and being in school (9%). Individuals were encouraged to mention all possible reasons. The mean monthly

financial contribution was \$114.30. Of those who stayed over the past year, 22 of the 43 units (51.1%) did not contribute any money to the household.

### **Characteristics of those who house hidden homeless**

As a part of the survey protocol, we spoke with the head of the household. This necessarily influenced some of the demographic characteristics (e.g. age, employment) and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. However, most of the data presented below should not have been greatly affected by the individual reporting it. All percentages are based on the household level except age.

**Table 38: Characteristics of households housing hidden homeless in Nelson**

Characteristic	Current n=7	Past Year n=30	None n=965
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	-	6.7%	2.6%
25-34	-	13.3%	11.1%
35-44	28.6%	30.0%	17.1%
45-54	14.3%	10.0%	22.4%
55-64	57.1%	26.7%	23.8%
65 years and over	-	13.3%	22.6%
Refused	-	-	0.4%
<b>Employment</b>			
Full Time	14.3%	36.7%	37.5%
Retired	14.3%	13.3%	30.5%
Part Time	28.6%	26.7%	18.9%
Unemployed/on leave	28.6%	13.3%	7.9%
Homemaker	14.3%	6.7%	4.7%
Student	-	6.7%	2.1%
Refused	-	-	0.8%
<b>Home</b>			
Rent	14.3%	36.7%	28.4%
Own	85.7%	63.3%	69.9%
Refused	-	-	1.7%
<b>Life stage</b>			
Couple with no children/no children at home	-	30.0%	30.9%
Two parent family with children at home	57.1%	20.0%	27.0%
Single with no children	28.6%	23.3%	28.8%
Single parent family with children at home	14.3%	26.7%	8.3%
Widowed	-	-	1.6%

Characteristic	Current n=7	Past Year n=30	None n=965
Single parent, children live with other parent			0.8%
Other			0.7%
Refused			1.9%
% with children under 18 years old in the home	28.6%	36.7%	28.7%
Average household size	4.1	2.6	2.4
Average number of people/bedroom	1.3	1.0	0.9
Household income			
Less than \$15,000	14.3%	13.3%	7.9%
\$15,000 – \$19,999	14.3%	13.3%	7.5%
\$20,000 – \$29,999	-	10.0%	9.9%
\$30,000 – \$39,999	14.3%	10.0%	10.8%
\$40,000 – \$49,999	14.3%	20.0%	7.8%
\$50,000 – \$69,999	28.6%	6.7%	14.0%
\$70,000 – \$79,999	-	3.3%	5.6%
\$80,000 or more	-	16.7%	15.8%
Don't Know/Refused	14.3%	6.7%	20.8%
Housing cost/income			
Less than 30%	57.1%	46.7%	54.1%
30% - 39%	-	13.3%	6.4%
40% or more	14.3%	30.0%	17.8%
Don't Know/Refused	28.6%	10.0%	21.7%
Ethnicity (Multiple mention)			
Caucasian/Canadian			
First Nations	85.7%	90.0%	93.1%
Other	-	6.7%	2.4%
Refused	-	-	2.4%
	14.3%	3.3%	1.1%
Recent Immigrant	-	-	2.2%

## A.5. Hidden Homelessness in Nanaimo

Of the 1000 households interviewed in Nanaimo, 60 (6.0%) reported having at least one person currently staying with the household on a temporary basis. This number dropped to 7 households when the Hidden Homeless qualification “the person or persons can NOT stay with you until they are able to establish a residence of their own” was applied. Between these households there were a total of 9 individuals; five houses had one hidden homeless, 2 homes were housing 2 individuals. There were no couples or families. This is an average of 1.3 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 39: Current hidden homeless in Nanaimo**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Nanaimo Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless 33,185 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Nanaimo Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 33,185)
	n	%		n	%	
<b>At time of survey</b>	7	0.7%	232	9	0.9%	299
Staying with family	-		-	2	0.2%	66
Not with family	-		-	7	0.7%	233

The households were also asked to report anyone staying at the house over the past year on a temporary basis. A total of 109 households had people staying with them, of which 17 met the Hidden Homeless criteria (1.7%). Within these households there were 18 individuals and six were couples (three couples), for a total of 24 hidden homeless. Eleven households had a single individual, five households had two individuals, and one household sheltered three hidden homeless in the past 12 months. This is an average of 1.4 hidden homeless per household.

**Table 40: Past year hidden homeless in Nanaimo**

Hidden Homeless	No. of Households with Hidden Homeless in Sample		Projected to Nanaimo Households (estimate of no. of households housing hidden homeless 33,185 households)	No. of Hidden Homeless Individuals in Sample		Projected to Nanaimo Population (estimate of no. of hidden homeless individuals housed temporarily across 33,185
	n	%		n	%	
<b>Over past year</b>	17	1.7%	564	24	2.4%	796
Staying with family	-		-	10	1.0%	332
Not with family	-		-	14	1.4%	464

### Estimate of actual number of hidden homeless

Using the numbers of hidden homeless found by calling 1,000 households, we projected to the population of households in Nanaimo and estimated the range in which the actual number of hidden homeless in Nanaimo will fall both at the time the survey was conducted and over the course of the previous year. It is estimated that there would have been 232 households housing 299 hidden homeless in Nanaimo at the time of the survey. Over the course of the year it is estimated there were 564 homes housing 796 individuals who met the hidden homeless criteria. These estimates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As discussed in the previous studies of hidden homelessness, the low incidence of hidden homelessness requires the use of the correct distribution to set the confidence intervals around the population estimates. The Poisson distribution is used with probabilities and incidences of small numbers – also referred to as “rare events.” This distribution was used to calculate the confidence intervals around the estimates for the number of households with hidden homeless and the number of hidden homeless individuals in the municipality. This was done for both the estimate at the time the survey was conducted and the annual estimate.

Thus, at the time the survey was conducted, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Nanaimo who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 93 and 479 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 137 and 567. This means that if a survey of the entire population of households was conducted 20 times, 19 times out of 20 the number of households housing hidden homeless and number of individuals would fall in this range.

For the projection of the number of hidden homeless over the course of the year, the 95% confidence interval for the total number of households in Nanaimo who were accommodating hidden homeless people is between 329 and 903 households. The number of hidden homeless individuals at that time would fall between 510 and 1,185.

**Table 41: Hidden homeless projected estimated in Nanaimo**

	Hidden Homeless Estimate	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Current</b>		
Household level	232	93-479
Individual level	299	137-567
<b>Past Year</b>		
Household level	564	329-903
Individual level	796	510-1185

### Description of hidden homeless people and situations

The hidden homeless at the time the survey was conducted are friends (56%), students (22%) or relatives (22%) of the head of the household. On average, the individuals had been staying at the residence for 7.4 weeks, with one third staying a month or less, and another third staying between one and two months. Reasons for needing to stay with friends and family include being in transition (moving or stranded, 44%), health or other issues (22%), school (22%) or being unable to afford available housing because of low income (11%). Over half are under the age of 25 (56%), the others are between the age of 35 and 55 years of age (44%). The average financial contribution is \$200 per month; however one individual did not contribute any money and for three hidden homeless individuals, the person housing them did not provide an amount.

There were 24 hidden homeless in the past year, of which 18 were singles and 6 were couples (three couples). Couples were described by the head of the household as a unit, and therefore figure into calculations as a 'unit', thus percentages are based on 21 units. These individuals and units covered all age categories but the most common were 18-24 years (38%) or 25-34 years (29%). One third (33%) were staying with family members; the remainder had no prior relationship with the household (29%), were staying with friends (24%) or were unrelated students (14%). The average length of stay was 12 weeks, ranging from less than a month (29%) to a year (5%). The top five reasons given for the hidden homeless individual/unit's lack of a home address included: in transition (moving/stranded, 29%), lack of income/loss of employment (24%), lack of available housing (19%), low income/can't afford the housing available (10%), and being in school (10%). Individuals were encouraged to mention all possible reasons. The mean monthly financial contribution was \$206.40. At the high and low ends of the range, 8 of the 21 units (38%) did not provide the host household with any financial compensation and 3 provided the household with more than \$450.00 per month.

## Characteristics of those who house hidden homeless

As a part of the survey protocol, we spoke with the head of the household. This necessarily influenced some of the demographic characteristics (e.g. age, employment) and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. However, most of the data presented below should not have been greatly affected by the individual reporting it. All percentages are based on the household level except age.

**Table 42: Characteristics of households housing hidden homeless in Nanaimo**

Characteristic	Current n=7	Past Year n=17	None n=976
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	14.3%	5.9%	0.9%
25-34	14.3%	5.9%	7.6%
35-44	14.3%	35.3%	13.6%
45-54	14.3%	17.6%	20.9%
55-64	-	23.5%	23.3%
65 years and over	42.9%	11.8%	33.2%
Refused	-	-	0.5%
<b>Employment</b>			
Full Time	42.9%	41.2%	31.9%
Retired	28.6%	11.8%	41.8%
Part Time	14.3%	23.5%	12.2%
Unemployed/on leave	14.3%	17.6%	8.5%
Homemaker	-	5.9%	4.4%
Student	-	11.8%	2.0%
Refused	-	-	1.3%
<b>Home</b>			
Rent	14.3%	-	17.9%
Own	85.7%	100%	80.1%
Refused	-	-	1.9%
<b>Life stage</b>			
Couple with no children/no children at home	28.6%	41.2%	36.5%
Two parent family with children at home	14.3%	47.1%	25.8%
Single with no children	14.3%	-	23.7%
Single parent family with children at home	14.3%	5.9%	7.3%
Widowed	-	-	2.2%

Characteristic	Current n=7	Past Year n=17	None n=976
Single parent, children live with other parent	-	-	0.4%
Other	-	5.9%	1.2%
Refused	28.6%	-	3.0%
% with children under 18 years old in the home	28.6%	29.4%	23.7%
Average household size	3.7	3.3	2.5
Average number of people/bedroom	1.2	0.9	0.9
Household income			
Less than \$15,000	14.3%	5.9%	6.8%
\$15,000 – \$19,999	-	-	6.0%
\$20,000 – \$29,999	-	-	9.3%
\$30,000 – \$39,999	28.6%	5.9%	9.0%
\$40,000 – \$49,999	14.3%	5.9%	9.4%
\$50,000 – \$69,999	-	17.6%	11.8%
\$70,000 – \$79,999	14.3%	-	5.2%
\$80,000 or more	-	23.5%	16.7%
Don't Know/Refused	28.6%	41.2%	25.7%
Housing cost/income			
Less than 30%	57.1%	41.1%	51.6%
30% - 39%	-	-	6.6%
40% or more	14.3%	17.6%	14.1%
Don't Know/Refused	28.6%	41.2%	27.7%
Ethnicity (Multiple mention)			
Caucasian/Canadian			
First Nations	85.7%	88.2%	92.6%
Other	14.3%	11.8%	3.0%
Refused	-	-	3.4%
	14.3%	-	3.7%
Recent Immigrant	14.3%	5.9%	1.3%

## Appendix B: Telephone Interview Survey

Hello, my name is [Name] of NRG Research Group, calling on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC. sToday we're talking with people in your community to learn more about the issue of people living with others because they do not have a place of their own. The survey will only take 4 or 5 minutes to complete.

May I please speak to the person in your household 18 years of age or over, who makes the final decisions regarding who lives in your home?

**If necessary, read:** This research is being conducted on behalf of SPARC BC, with funding support from the Federal government. This research is important because it will help us to understand more about how people are coping with housing pressures and help to identify needs in the community which may be going unmet. Please be assured we are not selling or soliciting anything.

**Note:** If R wishes to verify the validity of the survey, they can contact Antoinette Semanya at 604-718-7740 during regular business hours.

### RECORD GENDER DO NOT ASK

1. MALE
2. FEMALE

Just to make sure we're speaking a good cross section of people in your community, can you please confirm that your postal code begins with: **(insert from sample)**?

If no: What are the first 3 letters/digits of your postal code?

**If not on the list, thank and terminate.**

Kamloops	Kelowna	Nanaimo	Nelson	Prince George
V1S	V1V	V9R	V1L	V2L
V2B	V1W	V9S		V2K
V2C	V1Y	V9T		V2M
V2E	V1P	V9V		V2N
V2H	V1X			

#### **A. Qualifiers:**

A1. Is there anyone currently staying with this household on a temporary basis who does not have a regular home or address of their own?

1. Yes
2. No >> **GO TO Q.A3**
3. Don't know/Refused

A2. Can this person or persons stay with you until they are able to establish a residence of their own?

1. Yes
2. No >> **Qualified as Current HH**
3. Some can and others cannot >> **Qualified as Current HH**
4. Don't know / not sure

A3. Was there anyone (else) who stayed with this household on a temporary basis in the past year who did not have a regular home/address of their own?

1. Yes
2. No >> **Go to Instructions**
3. Don't know/Refused

A4. Did this person or persons stay with you until they were able to establish a residence of their own?

1. Yes >> **Go to instructions**
2. No >> **Qualified as Past HH**
3. Some did and others did not >> **Qualified as Past HH**
4. Don't know / not sure

**If BOTH A1 AND A3 are Code 3 – DK/Ref – Thank and Terminate**

**Instructions to categorize respondents as follows:**

1. Current HH only – Ask section B
2. Past HH only – Go to section C
3. Both Current and Past HH – ask section B, then ask section C
4. No HH – Go to section D

*Note: Everybody gets asked section D*

**B. Person(s) staying currently (Current HH) – Ask only if Category 1 or 3**

The next part of the survey is about the person or people who ...

**If Category 1, insert:** ... *are temporarily staying with you*. This might take another 1-2 minutes depending on your answers.

**If Category 3, insert:** ...*are currently temporarily staying with you and those who temporarily stayed with you in the past year*. This might take another 2-3 minutes depending on your answers. These first questions are about the person or people who are currently temporarily staying with you.

B1. How many people are currently staying with you on a temporary basis and who are without a regular home of their own?

\_\_\_\_\_ # p; Range 1-10

**If B1 = 1, Go to B4.**

B2. Of these (insert # of people from B1) people, please tell me how many are: ...  
**If B1 = Refused, read:** Can you tell me how many of the people who are temporarily stay with you are: ... **(Note: no checking with B1 response required)**

... a) single, b) how many are a couple with no kids and c) how many are part of a family which can be a person or couple with at least one child living with them.

**Note: one couple is recorded as 2 people.**

	<u>B2</u>
a. Independents/Singles	_____ Range: 0, 1+
b. Couples, no kids	_____ Range: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8
c. Families with children	_____ Range: 0, 2+ (cannot be 1)
Total (Sum must = B1)	_____

**If Refused, go to B4 and insert “person or people”**

**If B2c family = 4 or more people, ask:**

B3a. How many families do those (insert B2c #) people make up?

# of families: \_\_\_\_\_

**For each family, ask B3b:**

B3b. What are the ages of the children in the family (ies)?

**If Respondent says don't know/unsure of person's age, ask for best guess.**

Family 1: \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ years

Family 2: \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ years

Family 3: \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ years

Questions B4-B8 are to be asked of each person/unit of people (i.e. for each single person, each family, each couple). If more than 1 of the same unit, ask Respondent for a name reference. If refused, reference them as A, B, C, etc.

Ask B4-B8 for each person/unit, then continue with next person/unit.

	Person/Unit 1	Person/Unit 2	Person/Unit 3	4,5,6 etc.
B4-relation				
B5-time				
B6-reason				
B7-age				
B8-contribution				

**B4.** What is this (**insert:** person's/couple's/family's) relation to you?

1. Family member, (specify relation) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Friend
3. Other non-family member (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**B5.** How long has this (**insert:** person/couple/family) been staying with you?

\_\_\_\_\_ (weeks) **Note: If just moved in/less than a week, record as 0.**

**B6.** What is the main reason for this (**insert:** person/couple/family) to be staying with you on a temporary basis? **Do not read. Can be multiple responses.**

1. Lack of income/Loss of employment
2. Low income –Can't afford the housing available
3. Lack of housing available
4. Health or other issues
5. Abuse/family breakdown or conflict
6. Evicted
7. In transition (moving/stranded)
8. Unable to get income assistance

- 9. Discrimination
- 10. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Don't know

- B7. **Singles ask:** Into which of the following age categories does this person fall?  
**For a couple ask:** Into which of the following categories does the average age of the couple fall?  
**For families, ask:** Into which of the following categories does the average age of the parents fall?

**If Respondent says don't know/unsure of person's age, ask for best guess.**

- 1. < 18
- 2. 18 to 24
- 3. 25 to 34
- 4. 35 to 44
- 5. 45 to 54
- 6. 55 to 64
- 7. 65 years and over
- 8. Don't know

- B8. What, if any, amount does this (**insert:** person/couple/family) who is temporarily staying with you contribute to the household financially (i.e. for rent, food, etc)?  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Persons who temporarily stayed in the past year (Past Year HH)**  
– Ask only if Category 2 or 3

The next part of the survey is about the person or people who ...

**If Category 2, insert:** ... *temporarily stayed with you in the past year*. This might take another 1-2 minutes depending on your answers.

**If Category 3, insert:** ... temporarily stayed with you in the past year.

- C1. How many people stayed with you on a temporary basis who were without a regular home of their own?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ # p; Range 1-10

If C1 = 1, Go to C4.

- C2. Of these (insert # of people from C1) people, please tell me how many were: ...  
**If C1 = Refused, read:** Can you tell me how many of the people who temporarily stayed with you were: ... **(Note: no checking with C1 response required)**

... a) single, b) how many were a couple with no kids and c) how many were part of a family which can be a person or couple with at least one child living with them.

**Note: one couple is recorded as 2 people.**

	<b>C2</b>
a. Independents/Singles	___ Range: 0, 1+
b. Couples, no kids	___ Range: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8
c. Families with children	___ Range: 0, 2+ (cannot be 1)
Total (Sum must = C1)	___

**If Refused, go to C4 and insert “person or people”**

**If C2c family = 4 or more people, ask:**

- C3a. How many families did those (insert C2c #) people make up?  
 # of families: \_\_\_\_\_

**For each family, ask C3b:**

- C3b. What were the ages of the children in the family (ies)?  
**If Respondent says don't know/unsure of person's age, ask for best guess.**

Family 1: \_\_\_ years    \_\_\_ years    \_\_\_ years  
 Family 2: \_\_\_ years    \_\_\_ years    \_\_\_ years  
 Family 3: \_\_\_ years    \_\_\_ years    \_\_\_ years

Questions C4-C8 are to be asked of each person/unit of people (i.e. for each single person, each family, each couple). If more than 1 of the same unit, ask Respondent for a name reference. If refused, reference them as A, B, C, etc.

Ask C4-C8 for each person/unit, then continue with next person/unit.

	Person/Unit 1	Person/Unit 2	Person/Unit 3	4,5,6 etc.
B4-relation				
B5-time				
B6-reason				

B7-age				
B8-contribution				

C4. What was this (**insert:** person's/couple's/family's) relation to you?

1. Family member, (specify relation) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Friend
3. Other non-family member (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

C5. How long did this (**insert:** person/couple/family) stay with you?

\_\_\_\_\_ (weeks) **Note: If less than a week, record as 0.**

C6. What was the main reason that this (**insert:** person/couple/family) stayed with you?  
**Do not read. Can be multiple responses.**

1. Lack of income/Loss of employment
2. Low income –Can't afford the housing available
3. Lack of housing available
4. Health or other issues
5. Abuse/family breakdown or conflict
6. Evicted
7. In transition (moving/stranded)
8. Unable to get income assistance
9. Discrimination
10. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Don't know

C7. **Singles ask:** Into which of the following age categories did this person fall?  
**For a couple ask:** Into which of the following categories did the average age of the couple fall?  
**For families, ask:** Into which of the following categories did the average age of the parents fall?

**If Respondent says don't know/unsure of person's age, ask for best guess.**

1. < 18
2. 18 to 24
3. 25 to 34
4. 35 to 44
5. 45 to 54
6. 55 to 64
7. 65 years and over

8. Don't know

- C8. What, if any, amount does this (**insert:** person/couple/family) who is temporarily staying with you contribute to the household financially (i.e. for rent, food, etc)?  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D. Demographics of Phone Participant**

Finally, I have a few questions for classification purposes.

- D1. Into which of the following age categories may I place you? **Read**

1. 18 to 24
2. 25 to 34
3. 35 to 44
4. 45 to 54
5. 55 to 64
6. 65 years and over
7. Refused – **Do not read**

- D2. What is your current employment status?  
**Read if necessary. Can be multiple response.**

1. EMPLOYED FULL TIME (35+ hours/week)
2. EMPLOYED PART TIME (<35 hrs/weeks)
3. STUDENT
4. HOMEMAKER
5. RETIRED
6. UNEMPLOYED/ON LEAVE
7. Refused – **Do not read**

- D3. How many people in total, including yourself, are currently living in your home?  
**If Category 1 or 3, insert:** Please include all temporary residents as well.  
\_\_\_\_ people

- D4. Do you rent or own your home?

1. Rent
2. Own
3. Refused

- D5. How many bedrooms are there in your home? \_\_\_\_ (Range 1-20)

- D6. Into which of the following categories does your monthly housing costs fall, that is, your rent or mortgage? **READ**

1. Zero
2. \$1 to \$499
3. \$500 to \$999
4. \$1000 to \$1499
5. \$1500 to \$1999
6. \$2000 to \$2499
7. \$2500 or more
8. Don't know – Do not read
9. Refused – Do not read

D7. What would you say is your ethnic or cultural background? **Do not read list. Can be multiple response.**

1. White/Caucasian/European descent
2. Chinese
3. South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc)
4. Southeast Asian (e.g. Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc)
5. First Nations/ Aboriginal
6. Korean
7. Hispanic/ Latino
8. West Asian (e.g. Afghan, Iranian, etc)
9. Black/ African Canadian
10. Filipino
11. Arabic
12. Japanese
13. OTHER – Specify \_\_\_\_\_
14. REFUSED

D8. Are you a new immigrant who's been in Canada for less than 5 years or a refugee?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Refused

D9. Which of the following best describes your current life stage? **READ**

1. single with no children >> **go to D11**
2. couple with no children, or no children at home >> **go to D11**
3. single parent family with children at home
4. two parent family with children at home
5. OTHER Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Refused – **do not read**

D10. And do you have children less than 18 years of age living at home?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Refused

D11a. Lastly, is your total household income before taxes for 2010 less than \$40,000 or \$40,000 or more? **READ**

1. Less than \$40,000
2. \$40,000 or more
3. Don't know – **go to close**
4. Refused – **go to close**

If code 1: <\$40k, ask: Is it..

1. Less than \$15,000
2. \$15,000 to \$19,999
3. \$20,000 to \$29,999
4. \$30,000 to \$39,999
5. Unsure/Don't know
6. Refused

If code 2: \$40k+, ask: Is it..

1. \$40,000 to \$49,999
2. \$50,000 to \$69,999
3. \$70,000 to \$79,999
4. \$80,000 or more
5. Unsure/Don't know
6. Refused

**Close:** Those are all the questions I have. Thank you very much for your time.

## Appendix C: Service Agency Representative Interview Guide

### Preamble

SPARC BC has been awarded a grant from HRSDC to conduct an investigation of hidden homelessness in smaller urban centres in BC – Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson and Prince George. For the purposes of this project, hidden homeless persons are “people staying temporarily with another household and who do not have a regular address of their own where they have security of tenure”. Homelessness is more likely to be hidden in small urban centres because there are few emergency shelters and in northern locations where sleeping rough is limited because of severe weather, but little is known about this population in such communities. Interviews with key stakeholders are included as part of this investigation in developing a picture of hidden homelessness in these communities.

You have been selected to participate in this interview because of your involvement in and/or knowledge of service agencies and issues around homelessness in your community. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Your responses will be treated anonymously and confidentially. The results of this interview will be used to characterize the nature of hidden homelessness in smaller urban centers and to develop a homeless count guide book for these communities.

In order to make sure your responses are reflected accurately in our findings, we would like to record this interview. Do we have your permission to record this interview? (If no, then state the interview will not be recorded and summary notes will be taken instead.)

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential and will be reported in a way that protects your identity and privacy. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may end the interview at any time.

Do you agree to participate?

Could you please confirm your verbal consent?

### Organization and Respondent

Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Position in the organization \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Role: Can you generally describe the activities associated with your role in the organization?

---

A. Community and Service Agency Characteristics

1. How many full and part time staff work in your organization?  
Full-time \_\_\_\_\_Part time\_\_\_\_\_
2. What types of social services does your organization offer? And approximately how many different clients would your organization serve in a *month*?

Type of Program (e.g.)	Number of different clients seen each month	How often clients use the program in a month

3. Which of the above services are related to poverty and homelessness?

\_\_\_\_\_

If none -> Go to A5

4. **(If some services related ask)**, What proportion of your services are dedicated to poverty related issues and homelessness? \_\_\_\_\_%

5. How much of a priority is addressing homelessness is in your community?

Very important; Why?\_\_\_\_\_

Somewhat important; Why?\_\_\_\_\_

Not at all important; Why?\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Comments\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are there specific target populations that your agency is mandated to serve?

No (all populations)

People living on low income

People who are homeless (persons who do not have a permanent residence to which they can return whenever they so choose)?

Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis people, and Inuit)

Immigrants and Newcomers to Canada

Children

Transition-aged youth (i.e. 16-24)

Women

Seniors

Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are there services related to poverty and homelessness that your clients need which are not available from your organization?

Yes - if yes what are these client needs and what are the lacking services?

\_\_\_\_\_  
No

8. Are there services related to poverty and homelessness that your clients need which are not available in your community? In your region?

Yes - if yes, what are these client needs and what are the lacking services?

\_\_\_\_\_  
No

9. Overall, do you believe the services related to poverty and homelessness in your community are adequate?

Yes, they are adequate \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, they are somewhat adequate \_\_\_\_\_

No, they are inadequate \_\_\_\_\_

B. Clientele

1. What proportion of your clients would you estimate are First Nations? \_\_\_\_\_%  
**If none go to QB5**

2. What proportion of all your clients are On-Reserve First Nations? \_\_\_\_\_%

(if 5% or more) Does having a number of On-Reserve First Nations clients have implications for your organization's service delivery? If so, what are these impacts?

3. What proportion of all your clients are Off-Reserve First Nations? \_\_\_\_\_%

(if 5% or more) Does having a number of Off-Reserve First Nations clients have implications for your organization's service delivery? If so, what are these impacts?

4. Are there any challenges associated with meeting the needs of your First Nations clients? Please elaborate.

5. Is poverty and homelessness an issue among First Nations peoples in your community?

6. Is hidden homelessness an issue among First Nation peoples in your community?

7. In what service areas do you feel more culturally relevant services are required to meet the needs of First Nations peoples?

8. For what other populations does your organization provide culturally relevant services?

### C. Homeless Count

1. Has a homeless count been conducted in your community?

**Yes -> go to Q3**

**No -> go to Q2**

If no homeless count has been conducted in \_\_\_\_\_, ask:

2. Do you believe conducting a homeless count in your community would be useful?

Yes - Why? \_\_\_\_\_

No - Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**Go to section D**

If yes, a homeless count has been conducted, ask:

3. Were you or your organization involved with the last count?

If yes, how were you and or your organization involved? (Probe for planning the count, volunteering on the day, using the results of the count, involved in follow-up planning to act on the findings)

4. What were the strengths of the approach used in the last homeless count?

5. What were the weaknesses of the approach used in the last homeless counts?

6. Did the methodology used in the homeless count accurately capture the homeless population in your community?

Yes,

No. If no, what population(s) was missed?

---

7. What would you suggest be done to improve the previous homeless count conducted in your community?

#### D. Hidden Homelessness

As I mentioned in our introduction, we define the hidden homeless as “people staying temporarily with another household and who do not have a regular address of their own where they have security of tenure”. It has also been noted that homeless counts often have difficulty measuring the actual size of this population.

1. Does your organization have a definition of hidden homelessness, if so what is it?
2. Do you have a sense of the number of hidden homeless in your community?
3. To what extent is this population a priority/of concern?
4. Where are some of the places that the hidden homeless in your community could be found?
5. Does the hidden homeless population pose a service challenge for your organization?

If yes, what are these challenges?

6. Does this population access the services provided by your organization?

Yes – If yes, what types of services do they access?

---

No

7. What types of services do you believe would best assist people who are among the hidden homeless?
8. Are there features of your community (a smaller urban centre) that affect the number of hidden homeless? (versus other homeless population groups such as the street homeless and the homeless who mostly use shelters)
9. Finally, what do you believe we need to know about the hidden homeless in \_\_\_\_\_?
10. Any final comments?

## Appendix D: Hidden Homeless Interview Guide

### Approach and Consent

#### 1. Introduction

Hello. My name is X. I am part of a research team conducting surveys in communities in British Columbia to find out more about people who stay temporarily with others and who don't have a place of their own. I would like to ask you some questions – which should take about 20 – 35 minutes of your time.

#### 2. Protection of your privacy

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential and will be reported in a way that protects your identity and privacy. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may end the interview at any time. This also means that if there are specific questions in the interview that you don't wish to answer, we can skip these questions. Do you agree to participate?

Could you please check here? And also provide your initials to show your agreement?

Yes                      No ; \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Initials

#### 3. Signatures

I will also sign my name to indicate that you have agreed to participate as we just talked about. We are not going to use your real name so would you like to make up a name (pseudonym) to put on your survey so that we can both identify you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Initials                      Interviewers Signature                      Date

**(Provide participant with the gift card.)** Please initial here to indicate that you have received a gift card:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Initials (pseudonym acceptable)

## Interview Instrument

### Screening

1. Are you currently living temporarily with another household?

Yes

No -> **Go to Q4**

2. Do you think you can stay where you are now as long as you need to; until you get your own place?

Yes -> **Go to Q4**

No

3. How long do you think you will be able to stay where you are?  
(Interviewer: Read options)

A few more days

About a week

About a month

Until they won't let you stay any longer

(How much longer do you think that will be? \_\_\_\_\_)

Don't know

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*Go to Current Interview on pg. 5\***

4. Thinking back over the last year was there a time that you stayed temporarily with another household?

Yes

No -> **Interview Ends (Not part of population)**

\*Thank you for your willingness to participate, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in the interview\*

5. Were you able to stay at that place as long as you needed to get your own place?

Yes -> Interview ends **(Not part of population)**

No

6. How long did you stay at that place?

A few days  
About a week  
About a month  
Until they wouldn't let me stay with them any longer  
(After what length of time did that happen?\_\_\_\_\_)  
Don't know

7. Where did you go when you had to leave that place?

Went to a shelter  
Went to a boarding house  
Another friends / family place to stay/crash  
Slept on the street, park, abandoned building, etc.  
Can't remember  
Other ->\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Go to Past Interview, pg. 14\*\*\*

**“Current Hidden Interview”**

A. Current Household

1. How long have you been staying with the current household?
2. Do you consider this place home? Why or why not?
3. How long are you planning on staying?
4. Are you related to anyone in the household where you are staying?

Yes - If yes, in what way are you related?

---

No -> How do you know them?

---

(e.g. How long have you known them, how did you meet them?)

5. What type of housing do you currently live in? (**Interviewer: Please read responses**)

A private apartment (low rise/high rise)  
A house (single detached, semi-detached, town house or row house)  
A private suite in a house (garden, basement or other)  
Subsidized housing (non-profit, co-op or public housing)  
Other

---

Prefer not to say

6. Including you, how many people total are currently living in this household?
7. How many bedrooms are in this place?
8. What part of the house do you sleep in? (e.g. living room, spare bedroom)
9. What are your sleeping arrangements (e.g. do you sleep on a couch, extra mattress, some cushions, etc.?)
10. Given your current living arrangements do you feel any risks to your personal safety?

Yes – Please explain

---

No  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

11. Do you help financially to the household expenses? (e.g. help with the rent, or groceries, utilities)
12. Do you help in other ways (e.g. clean up the house, cook, take care of children, etc.?)
13. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with your current housing/ living situation? Why? **(Interviewer: Read responses)**

Very satisfied

---

Somewhat satisfied

---

Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied

---

Somewhat unsatisfied

---

Very unsatisfied

---

Unsure

---

Prefer not to say

14. Thinking about your basic needs (food, clothing, transportation and shelter) do you feel that your basic needs are currently being met? **(Interviewer: Read responses)**

Fully met  
Mostly met  
Adequately met  
Not really met  
Not at all met  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

15. What kinds of things might make you decide to move? (e.g. arguments with host, don't feel welcome, overcrowding, finding own place? etc.)

16. If you were to leave, where do you think you would go?

B. Service Use

1. In the last year, have you used any community or government services to try and help you get your own place? **(Prompt with - could include income assistance...)**

No

Yes

Prefer not to say

If yes, what kind of services?

---

What services would you say were helpful? Less helpful?

---

2. In the last year, have you ever stayed in an emergency shelter or transition house?

No

Yes

Prefer not to say

If yes, how many nights was that for? Weeks? \_\_\_\_\_

How long ago was that? \_\_\_\_\_

3. In the last year, aside from staying temporarily with others, or staying in shelters, what other types of housing arrangements have you lived in? (e.g. boarding house, sleeping in car, sleeping on street, camping?)

C. Barriers

1. What would you say are the current barriers/issues that keep you from getting your own place to live now?
2. What do you think would help you to get your own place to live?
3. Do you believe there are enough services in \_\_\_\_\_ to help people like yourself deal with issues related to housing?

No - If no, what types of services are missing?

---

Yes – If yes, why?

---

D. Previous Housing Arrangements

**Now let's talk about what your past housing situations.**

1. Where did you live before this place?

(Want to find out if person had their own place where they paid rent or a mortgage - could include sharing OR living at home with their parents OR couch surfing OR in a shelter)

2. How long did you live there?

3. Why did you move out?

4. How long has it been since you had your own place? And when I say your own place, I mean a place where you paid rent or mortgage, or stayed for 3 months or more?

**(staying in primary family home is considered their “own place”)**

**Now thinking back through the past year,**

5. How many times have you moved in the past year? **(Interviewer: Prompt if needed)**

None  
Once  
2-3 times  
More than 3 times  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

6. In the past year, how many times have you stayed with someone because you did not have a place of your own?

None  
Once  
2-3 times  
More than 3 times  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

7. In the past year, what was the main reason that you needed to stay with someone else?
8. In the past year, what kind of assistance or services might have helped you to keep your housing or find another place of your own to live?

#### E. Social Network

1. Do you have family members that live in this community?

No -> Go to E3  
Yes

2. Are you able to rely on these family members for support?

No -> Go to E3  
Yes - If yes, what type of support? (e.g. emotional, financial, housing)

3. Do you have friends that live in this community?

No -> Go to E5  
Yes

4. Are you able to rely on these friends for support?

No -> Go to E3  
Yes  
If yes, what type of support? (e.g. emotional, financial, housing)

5. Would you say that the number of people you know in the community is,  
**(Interviewer: Read responses and description)**

*Adequate* – You're satisfied with the number of people you know in the community .

Why is that? \_\_\_\_\_

*Inadequate* – You're dissatisfied with the number of people you know in the community.

Why is that? \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

6. Other than family and friends are there other people or places which provide you with emotional support, economic support or housing support? If yes, please explain.
  
7. Are you satisfied with the social service support available in this community? Why or why not?
  
8. Are you originally from \_\_\_\_\_?(community in which interview occurring)
  - No
  - If no, where are you originally from? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Do you consider \_\_\_\_\_ your home? (Y/N)
  
  - Yes
  - Prefer not to say

#### F. Demographics

I have just a few last questions about your age and background. We are asking everyone these questions so we can describe the range of different people we are interviewing in this study. Again, this information will be anonymous.

1. Gender:    Male    Female **(Do not ask, but fill in)**
  
2. How old are you? **(Do not prompt with categories; Ask age and then place check in category independently)**
  - 18-24yrs
  - 25-34yrs
  - 35-44yrs
  - 45-54yrs
  - 55-64
  - 65+
  - Prefer not to say
  
3. Do you have any children under 18 who are living with you right now?
  - No
  - Yes – If yes, what are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

4. Do you have any children under 18 who are not living with you right now?

No

Yes – If yes, what are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

5. What is your marital status? **(Do not prompt with categories unless needed)**

Single

Married

Common Law

Separated

Divorced

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

6. Do you consider yourself to be an Aboriginal person?

No

Yes -> Go to F8

Prefer not to say

7. What would you say is your ethnic/cultural background? **(it is up to each individual to self-identify)**

8. Are you a new immigrant or a refugee?

New immigrant

Refugee

Not applicable

No response

Prefer not to say

9. What is your current employment status?

Employed

Student -> Go to F 12

Homemaker -> Go to F 12

Retired -> Go to I 25

Unemployed/On leave -> Go to F12

Prefer not to say

10. If employed, what type of job do you have? **(Read responses; Can select more than one response)**

Full time

Part time

Through 'labour ready'/temp agencies  
On call  
Volunteer  
Self employed  
Squeeging, panhandling, binning, and/or collecting bottles and cans  
Prefer not to say

11. If employed, what was your before tax monthly income from this work last month? **(Do not prompt with categories; Ask question and then place check in correct category; Use prompt only if necessary)**

Less than 500/month  
Less than \$1000/month  
Less than \$1600/month  
1600 - \$2500/month  
\$3000/month or more  
Prefer not to say

12. What is your current source of income? **(Interviewer: Read response options; They can select more than one)**

Income from employment  
Employment insurance  
Social Assistance (Regular Income assistance / welfare)  
BC Disability Benefits  
GAIN/Federal Disability Pension  
Student loans  
Retirement income and private pensions  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Prefer not to say

13. What is the highest level of education you completed? **(Interviewer: Prompt if necessary)**

Elementary school (Grades 1-7)  
High school  
Trade or vocational school  
College  
University  
Have not completed any schooling  
Prefer not to say

14. Do you have any specific\_\_\_\_\_?

a) *Health challenges* (e.g. diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure)

No

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific health challenges?)**

Prefer not to say

b) *Mental health challenges*

No

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific mental health challenges?)**

Prefer not to say

c) *Substance abuse challenges*

No

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific substance abuse challenges?)**

Prefer not to say

d) *Physical Challenges* (referring to physical disabilities in this case)

No

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific physical challenges?)**

Prefer not to say

15. Are you limited in the kind or amount of activities you can do because of a long-term health problem, mental condition, or physical condition?

No, not limited

Yes, limited –if yes, please describe how you are limited

\_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure

Prefer not to say

**We have reached the end of the interview.  
I appreciate your time and thank you very much.**

"Past Interview"

A. Past Household

You indicated that over the last year there was a time that you stayed temporarily with another household (and that you were unable to stay at this place as long as you needed to get your own place). Thinking back to this household and keeping it in mind,

1. How long did you stay with that household?
2. Did you consider that place home? Why or why not?
3. Did you stay as long as you had planned in that household?

Yes – If yes, how long did you stay? \_\_\_\_\_

No

Not sure

Prefer not to say

4. Were you related to anyone in the household where you were staying?

Yes - If yes, in what way were you related?

\_\_\_\_\_  
No -> How did you know them?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. How long have you known them, how did you meet them?)

5. What type of housing was this place you were temporarily living?

**(Interviewer: Please read responses)**

A private apartment (low rise/high rise)

A house (single detached, semi-detached, town house or row house)

A private suite in a house (garden, basement or other)

Subsidized housing (non-profit, co-op or public housing)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

6. Including you, how many people were living in that household?
7. How many bedrooms were in that household?

8. What part of the house did you sleep in? (e.g. living room, spare bedroom)
9. What were your sleeping arrangements (e.g. did you sleep on a couch, extra mattress, some cushions, etc.?)
10. Given those living arrangements did you feel any risks to your personal safety?

Yes – Please explain

---

No  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

11. Did you help financially to the household expenses at that time?  
(e.g. help with the rent or groceries, or utilities?)
12. Did you help in other ways (e.g. clean up the house, cook, take care of children, etc.?)
13. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with that temporary housing situation? **(Interviewer: Read responses, and then prompt for explanation)**

Very satisfied

---

Somewhat satisfied

---

Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied

---

Somewhat unsatisfied

---

Very unsatisfied

---

Unsure

---

Prefer not to say

14. Thinking back about your basic needs (food, clothing, transportation and shelter) did you feel that your basic needs were met? (Interviewer: Read responses)

Fully met

Mostly met

Adequately met

Not really met

Not at all met

Unsure

Prefer not to say

15. What kinds of things caused you to leave this household? (e.g. decided to leave, arguments with host, didn't feel welcome, overcrowding, finding own place? etc.)

16. After you left that place, where did you go?

#### B. Service Use

1. In the last year, have you used any community or government services to try and help you get your own place? **(Prompt with - could include income assistance...)**

No

Yes

Prefer not to say

If yes, what kind of services?

---

What would you say is helpful? Less helpful?

- 
2. In the last year, have you ever stayed in an emergency shelter or transition house ?

No

Yes

Prefer not to say

If yes, how many nights was that for? Weeks? \_\_\_\_\_  
How long ago was that? \_\_\_\_\_

3. In the last year, aside from staying temporarily with others, or staying in shelters, what other types of housing arrangements have you lived in? (e.g. boarding house, sleeping in car, sleeping on street, camping?)

#### C. Barriers

1. In the last year, what would you say were the barriers/issues that kept you from getting your own place to live ?
2. What do you think would have helped you to get your own place to live?
3. Do you believe there are enough services in \_\_\_\_\_ to help people like yourself deal with issues related to housing?

No - If no, what types of services are missing?

\_\_\_\_\_

Yes – If yes, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### D. Current Housing Arrangement

**I would also like to ask you some questions about your current living situation.**

1. What are your current living arrangements?

**(If person has no current address, does not live in what you would call “typical housing”, is living rough on the street/car/camping etc., Go to D4)**

2. What type of housing do you currently live in? **(Interviewer: Read responses)**  
**Not applicable if identified as homeless**

A private apartment (low rise/high rise)

A house (single detached, semi-detached, town house or row house)

A private suite in a house (garden, basement or other)

Subsidized housing (non-profit, co-op or public housing)

A room in a place shared with others

Boarding house  
Shelter  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Prefer not to say

3. If living in a private apartment, a house, a private suite in a house, subsidized housing or in a room in a place shared with other,

Other than yourself, how many people are living in this household?

How many bedrooms are in this household?

What part of the house do you sleep in? (e.g. living room, spare bedroom)

What are your sleeping arrangements (e.g. did you sleep on a couch, extra mattress, some cushions, etc.?)

4. How long have you been in this current living arrangement? **(Interviewer: Prompt if necessary)**

Less than 1 month  
Less than 3 months  
Less than 6 months  
between 1 and 2 years  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

5. How long are you planning on staying in this current living arrangement?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

6. Given your current living arrangements do you feel any risks to your personal safety?

Yes – Please explain

\_\_\_\_\_  
No  
Unsure

Prefer not to say

7. Thinking about your basic needs (food, clothing, transportation and shelter) do you feel that your basic needs are being met?

Fully met  
Mostly met  
Adequately met  
Not really met  
Not at all met  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

8. In general, how would you rate your satisfaction with your current housing situation? **(Interviewer: Read responses, then ask for explanation)**

Very satisfied

---

Somewhat satisfied

---

Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied

---

Somewhat unsatisfied

---

Very unsatisfied

---

Unsure

---

Prefer not to say

9. What kinds of things would make you decide to move? (e.g. overcrowding, finding own place? etc.)

10. If you were to leave this place, where would you go?

**Now thinking back again through the past year,**

11. How many times have you moved in the past year? **(Prompt if necessary)**

None  
Once

2-3 times  
More than 3 times  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

12. In the past year, how many times have you stayed with someone because you did not have a place of your own? (other than the once incident we have spoken about)

None  
Once  
2-3 times  
More than 3 times  
Unsure  
Prefer not to say

13. What was the main reason that you needed to stay with someone else during the past year?

E. Social Network

1. Do you have family members that live in this community?  
No -> Go to E3  
Yes
2. Are you able to rely on these family members for support?  
No -> Go to E3  
Yes - If yes, what type of support? (e.g. emotional, financial, housing)
- 

3. Do you have friends that live in this community?  
No -> Go to E5  
Yes
4. Are you able to rely on these friends for support?  
No -> Go to E3  
Yes - If yes, what type of support? (e.g. emotional, financial, housing)
5. Would you say that the number of people you know in the community is,
- Adequate* – You're satisfied with the number of people you know in the community .

Why is that? \_\_\_\_\_

*Inadequate* – You're dissatisfied with the number of people you know in the community.

Why is that? \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prefer not to say

6. Other than family and friends are there other people or places which provide you with emotional support, economic support or housing support? Please explain

7. Are you satisfied with the social service support available in this community? Why or why not?

8. Are you originally from \_\_\_\_\_? (community in which interview occurring)

No

If no, where are you originally from? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider \_\_\_\_\_ your home? (Y/N)

Yes

Prefer not to say

#### F. Demographics

I have just a few last questions about your age and background. We are asking everyone these questions so we can describe the range of different people we are interviewing in this study. Again, this information will be anonymous.

1. Gender:    Male    Female (**Do not ask, but fill in**)
2. How old are you? (**Do not prompt with categories; Ask age and then place check in category independently**)

18-24yrs

25-34yrs  
35-44yrs  
45-54yrs  
55-64  
65+  
No response  
Prefer not to say

3. Do you have any children under 18 who are living with you right now?

No  
Yes – If yes, what are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_  
Prefer not to say

4. Do you have any children under 18 who are not living with you right now?

No  
Yes – If yes, what are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_  
Prefer not to say

5. What is your marital status? **(Do not prompt with categories unless needed)**

Single  
Married  
Common Law  
Separated  
Divorced  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prefer not to say

6. Do you consider yourself to be an Aboriginal person?

No  
Yes -> Go to F8  
Prefer not to say

7. What would you say is your ethnic/cultural background? **(it is up to each individual to self-identify)**

8. Are you a new immigrant or a refugee?

New immigrant

Refugee  
Not applicable  
Prefer not to say

9. What is your current employment status?

Employed  
Student -> Go to I 12  
Homemaker -> Go to I 12  
Retired -> Go to I 25  
Unemployed/On leave -> Go to I 12  
Prefer not to say

10. If employed, what type of job do you have? **(Read responses; Can select more than one response)**

Full time  
Part time  
Through 'labour ready'/temp agencies  
On call  
Volunteer  
Self employed  
Squeeging, panhandling, binning, and/or collecting bottles and cans  
Prefer not to say

11. If employed, what is your before tax monthly income from this work for the last month?

**(Do not prompt with categories; Ask question and then place check in correct category; Use prompt only if necessary)**

Less than 500/month  
Less than \$1000/month  
Less than \$1600/month  
1600 - \$2500/month  
\$3000/month or more  
Prefer not to say

12. What is your current source of income? **(Interviewer: Read responses; They can select more than one)**

Income from employment  
Employment insurance  
Social Assistance

BC Benefits  
Retirement income and private pensions  
GAIN/Federal Disability Pension  
Student loans  
Other\_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

13. What is the highest educational level you have completed? **(Interviewer:  
Prompt if necessary)**

Elementary school (Grades 1-7)  
High school  
Trade or vocational school  
College  
University  
Have not completed any schooling  
Prefer not to say

14. **Do you have any specific\_\_\_\_\_?**

a) *Health challenges*

No  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific health challenges?)**  
Prefer not to say

b) *Mental health challenges*

No  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific health challenges?)**  
No response  
Prefer not to say

c) *Substance abuse challenges*

No  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific health challenges?)**  
No response  
Prefer not to say

d) *Physical Challenges*

No  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_

**(If yes, what are your specific health challenges?)**

No response

Prefer not to say

15. Are you limited in the kind or amount of activities you can do because of a long-term physical condition, mental condition, or health problem?

No, not limited

Yes, limited –if yes, please describe how you are limited


---

Unsure

No response

Prefer not to say

**We have reached the end of the interview.  
I appreciate your time and thank you very much**



Hidden homelessness is often overlooked and underestimated in homeless population estimates. The goal of this research project is to develop a better understanding of the hidden homeless populations in five smaller urban centres in British Columbia: Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nelson, and Nanaimo.

The research was completed by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) in collaboration with the School for Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia and the Centre for Native Policy and Research (CNPR). It was made possible with funding from the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).



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