

APPENDIX B:

SUB-COMMUNITY RESULTS: ABBOTSFORD

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The 2023 FVRD Homelessness Point-in-Time (PiT) Count and Survey took place on March 7-8, 2023 within Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Chilliwack River Valley, Mission, Kent, Harrison Hot Springs, Hope, and Boston Bar. The first PiT Count and Survey for the region was in 2004, with subsequent undertakings in 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2020 (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic).

Although Point-in-Time counts and surveys are not able to, or intended to, enumerate every person experiencing homelessness, the consistent application of Point-in-Time Count and Survey methodology helps to uncover trends related to the extent of homelessness within a given area¹. Similar undertakings routinely occur in Metro Vancouver and across the Province.

The resulting data and survey findings help inform and improve supports for individuals experiencing homelessness, identify unmet housing needs, determine potential gaps in related health services, and support funding applications for local housing and homelessness initiatives.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Municipal and regional staff worked in collaboration with local service agencies and other partners to plan, prepare for, and administer the 24-hour point-in-time count and survey of individuals experiencing homelessness across the region.

As with past Point-in-Time homelessness counts and surveys, the 2023 project would not have been possible without the generous in-kind contributions of staffing resources, expertise, and other supports provided by a number of local service agencies and other partners across the region.

The following service providers, government agencies, and organizations contributed immensely to the undertaking of a 2023 Point-in-Time homelessness counts and survey within Abbotsford.

- City of Abbotsford
- Abbotsford Police Department
- Archway Community Services
- BC Housing
- Connective Support Society
- Cyrus Centre
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Fraser Health
- Fraser Valley Metis Association
- Ground Zero Ministries
- Lookout Housing and Health Society
- Matsqui-Abbotsford Impact Society
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction
- Pacific Community Resource Society
- Phoenix Society
- Raven's Moon Resources Society
- Salvation Army
- SARA for Women
- Sparrow Community Care Society
- The 5 & 2 Ministries
- Union Gospel Mission

¹ For more information about project methodology, limitations, and ethical considerations associated with PiT Counts and Surveys, refer to the Introduction of the regional report.

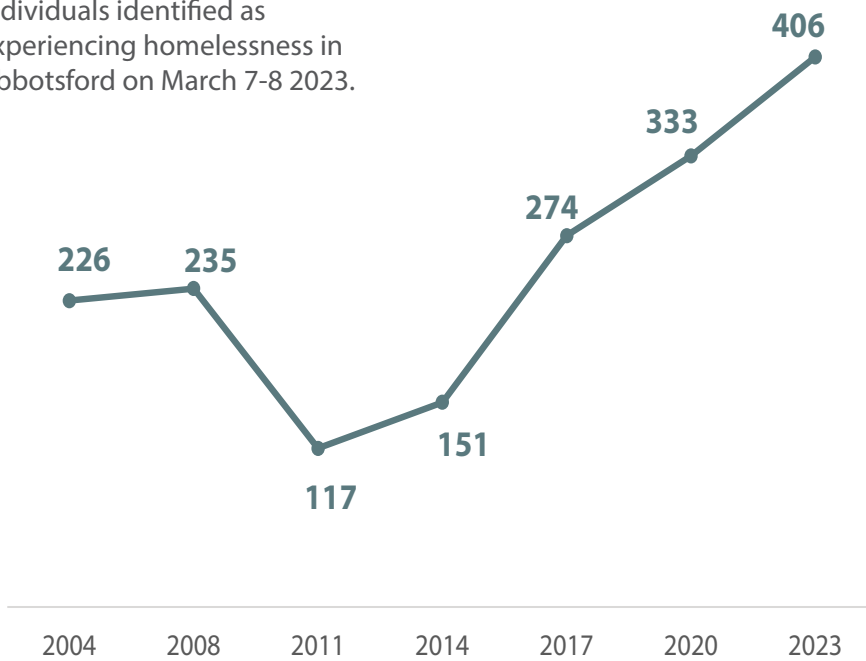
FVRD 2023 Point-in-Time (PiT) Homeless Count & Survey

Since 2004, communities in the FVRD have worked together to conduct a tri-annual Point-in-Time (PiT) Count and Survey of individuals experiencing homelessness within the region. The results provide critical information about the scope and nature of homelessness which is used to improve supports and services, as well as monitor homelessness prevention strategies.

ENUMERATION

406

individuals identified as experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford on March 7-8 2023.



- 73 additional people or an increase of 22% since 2020.
- Twice as many people experiencing homelessness than shelter beds available
- Increased rates of physical and mental health challenges reported.
- 42% had lived in Abbotsford for more than 10 years.



OVERNIGHT LOCATIONS

The increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford continues to outpace the increase in emergency shelter beds.



47%
Shelter



31%
Outside



5%
Couch-surfed



10%
Vehicle



7%
Hospital

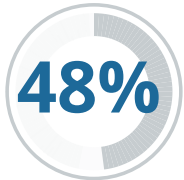
WHO IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?

Abbotsford saw an increase in older populations and fewer children and youth experiencing homelessness.



3%

are aged 19 or younger, a decrease from 7% in 2020.



48%

of those experiencing homelessness are between the ages of 30-49.



16%

aged 60 or older, an increase from 9% in 2020.

32%

identified as **Indigenous** compared to 4.5% of the general population.

27%

had been in **government care** as a child or youth.



Women are underrepresented in PiT Count data as they are more likely to experience hidden forms of homelessness.



70%

Male



29%

Female



1%

Transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, other.

HEALTH CHALLENGES

59% reported experiencing at least one health challenge.



50%

Addiction or Substance Use

40%

Medical Condition

42%

Mental Health Issue

38%

Physical Disability

24%

Acquired Brain Injury

21%

Learning Disability

Of those experiencing addiction:

- 11% reported receiving treatment and 36% reported seeking treatment.
- 52% also identified as having a mental health issue.



DURATION AND CAUSE

57%

had experienced homelessness for 2 or more years.

74%



4%

<1mth

15%

1-6mnths

7%

7-11mnths

>1yr

30%

Housing and financial issues largely related to cost and income.



35%

Health Issues including physical, mental, and addiction or substance use.

31%

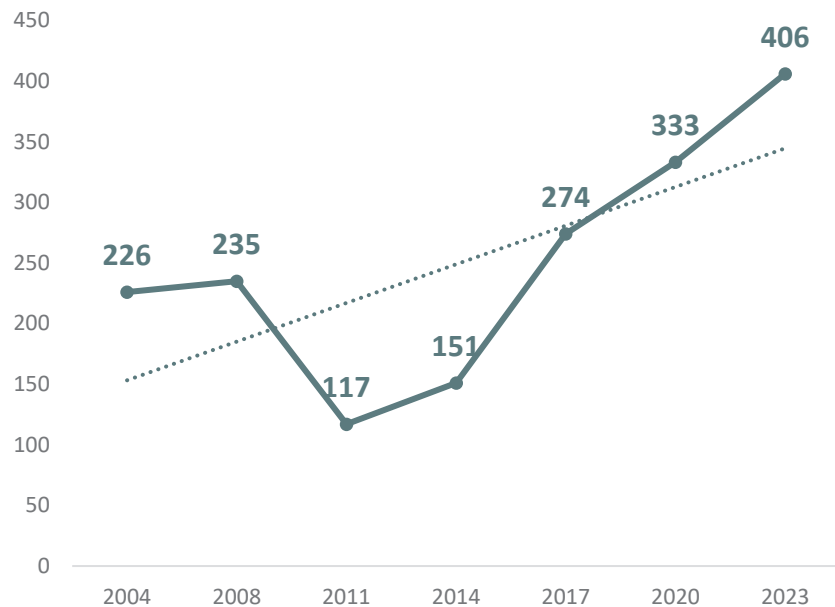
Interpersonal and family issues, largely with spouse or partner.

54% of respondents listed two or more reasons for their most recent housing loss.

POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT AND SURVEY RESULTS

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

FIGURE 1. TOTAL INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, ABBOTSFORD (2004-2023)



There has been an upward trend in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford since 2014.

The total number of individuals experiencing homelessness enumerated in Abbotsford during the 24-hour period on March 7 and 8, 2023 in Abbotsford was 406.²

Compared to 2020, there were an additional 73 individuals experiencing homelessness, which is an increase of 22%, the same rate of increase experienced by the region.

Since 2011, there are an additional 289 people experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford, which is a 247% increase in 12 years. Although considerable, other FVRD municipalities and the region as a whole, has experienced growth in populations experiencing homelessness, which are even more considerable.

TABLE 1: CHANGE IN NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, FVRD (2004-2023)

Community	2004-2008		2008-2011		2011-2014		2014-2017		2017-2020		2020-2023		2004-2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Abbotsford	9	4%	-118	-50%	34	29%	123	81%	59	22%	73	22%	180	80%
Chilliwack	11	13%	13	13%	-38	-34%	148	203%	85	38%	107	35%	326	375%
Mission	25	33%	-46	-46%	21	39%	-12	-16%	115	183%	-3	-2%	100	133%
Eastern FV ³	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	-	22	28%	100	-
Total	58	14%	-120	-26%	1	0%	260	75%	289	48%	199	22%	687	169%

² For more information on the methodology used, see Section 1 of this report.

³ The first PiT Count and Survey in Eastern Fraser Valley communities was in 2020.

The distribution of populations experiencing homelessness in the FVRD is largely reflective of the distribution of population within the region. That being said, Abbotsford is the only sub-community, to make up a smaller portion of the region's PiT Count and Survey totals (37%), than portion of the region's total population (52%).

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL POPULATION COMPARED TO PIT COUNT TOTALS, FVRD⁴ (2020-2023)

	2020				2023			
	PiT Count		Population		PiT Count		Population	
	Total	% of FVRD	Total	% of FVRD	Total	% of FVRD	Total	% of FVRD
Abbotsford	333	37%	152,267	51%	406	37%	172,488	52%
Chilliwack	306	34%	91,797	31%	413	38%	100,943	30%
Mission	178	20%	39,873	13%	175	16%	42,472	13%
Eastern FV	78	9%	15,635	5%	100	9%	15,635	5%
Total	895	100%	299,572	100%	1094	100%	331,538	100%

REASONS FOR EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Respondents were asked to identify the reason(s) for their most recent loss of housing. A total of 164 or 54% of those who responded to the question said their most recent loss of housing was due to reasons from two or more of the categories (listed in Table 3). This aligns with the understanding that homelessness is typically due to the accumulation of impacts caused by a combination of factors, not a single issue or event⁵.

The response categories with the most significant number of responses were Health Issues (34.8%), Interpersonal and family issues (31%), Housing and Financial Issues (30%). An analysis of individual responses identified the most commonly reported reason for housing loss was addiction or substance use (14.4%), a lack of income (12.5%), spousal conflict or abuse⁶ (13%), mental health issues (8.3%), and physical health issues (8.2%).

TABLE 3. DETAILED LIST OF REASONS FOR EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS⁷, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Reasons for Experiencing Homelessness	2023	
	N of Responses	% of Responses
Housing and Financial Issues (total)	257	30.0%
Not enough income	107	12.5%
Rental support stopped	3	0.4%
Unfit/Unsafe housing	35	4.1%
Building sold/renovated	19	2.2%
Owner moved in	2	0.2%
Landlord/tenant conflict	47	5.5%
Guest policy	10	1.2%

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

⁵ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Homeless Hub (website), Causes Of Homelessness <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/causes-homelessness>

⁶ Analysis combines responses from "Conflict with spouse/partner" and "Experienced abuse by spouse/partner".

⁷ Respondents could check off or listed as many reasons as what apply to them having lost their housing. Therefore, numbers and percentages reflect all responses and not the total of respondents. In addition, respondents may also have provided multiple responses from a single category.

Complaint	7	0.8%
Place not physically accessible	4	0.5%
Left the community/relocated	23	2.6%
Interpersonal and family issues (total)	265	31.0%
Conflict with spouse/partner	71	8.3%
Conflict with parent/guardian	41	4.7%
Conflict with other	27	3.2%
Experienced abuse by spouse/partner ⁸	25	2.9%
Experienced abuse by parent/guardian/caregiver	15	1.8%
Experienced abuse by child/dependent	5	0.6%
Experienced abuse by other	12	1.4%
Death or Departure of family member	39	4.6%
Experienced discrimination	30	3.5%
Health issues (total)	299	34.8%
Physical health issue	70	8.2%
Mental health issue	71	8.3%
Addiction/Substance use issue	124	14.4%
Hospitalization or treatment program	26	3.0%
Covid-19 Pandemic	8	0.9%
Incarceration (total)	20	2.3%
Release from Incarceration (jail or prison)	20	2.3%
Other (total)	16	1.9%
Other personal circumstance/events	13	1.5%
Don't know why	3	0.4%
Total Responses (all categories)	857	100.0%

DURATION OF EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Of those surveyed, 81% are experiencing chronic homelessness as defined by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness,⁹ which is a significant increase compared to under 65% in 2020 and 73% in 2017.

Chronic Homelessness refers to the experience of individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance use), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year and is associated with increased difficulty in getting back into housing and is often associated with long or repeated episodes of homelessness¹⁰.

⁸ The analysis of individual responses combines the number of response associated with "Conflict with spouse/partner" and "Experienced abuse by spouse/partner."

⁹Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Homeless Hub (website), Addressing Chronic Homelessness, <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention/addressing-chronic-homelessness>

¹⁰ National Alliance to End Homelessness, End Homelessness (website), Chronically Homeless, <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/chronically-homeless/>

In 2023, 234 or 74% of respondents reported experiencing homeless for more than one year, a significant increase compared to 52% of respondents in 2020. However, perhaps most alarming, is that 180 or 57% reported experiencing homelessness for more than 2 years¹¹.

TABLE 4. LENGTH OF TIME EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, ABBOTSFORD (2017- 2023)

Length of Time	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 1 month	20	9%	14	6%	13	4%
1-6 months	44	19%	51	22%	46	15%
7-11 months	45	20%	31	13%	22	7%
More than 1 year	122	53%	121	52%	234	74%
Total	231	100%	233	100%	315	100%

HEALTH CHALLENGES

Survey respondents were invited to share information about personal health challenges, including medical conditions, physical disabilities, mental health issues, addiction, acquired brain injuries, and learning disabilities.

In 2023, 236 or 59% of survey respondents reported at least 1 health challenge and 89 or 22% reporting three or more health challenges. Trends in historical data shows an increase in all categories of self-reported health challenges, with the largest rate of increase being physical disabilities. In 2023, 42% of respondents identified as having a medical condition, 38% a physical disability, 24% an acquired brain injury, and 21% a learning disability.

202 or 50% of survey respondents in Abbotsford responded “yes” to the question, “Do you identify as having an addiction at this time?” Of those who identified as having an addiction, 106 or 52% also reported experiencing mental health challenges. This is referred to as a concurrent disorder, which further compounds the complexity of care, supports, and housing solutions required.

Of the 202 respondents who identified as currently experiencing addiction, 23 or 11% indicated they were receiving treatment and 72 or 36% indicated they were seeking treatment. Of those who reported experiencing addiction, using a combination of substances was most common (54%), followed by crystal meth (13%), opiates (11%), other (7%), alcohol (4%), and cocaine (2%).

TABLE 5. SELF-REPORTED HEALTH ISSUES, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023) ¹²

Health Issue	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Addiction	183	67%	164	49%	202	50%
Mental Health Issue	126	46%	119	36%	169	42%
Physical Disability	82	30%	62	19%	153	38%
Medical Condition	136	50%	97	29%	162	40%
Acquired Brain Injury	-	-	50	15%	99	24%
Learning Disability	-	-	-	-	84	21%

¹¹ Data on individuals experiencing homelessness for more than two years was not captured in previous PIT Counts, thus comparable data is not available.

¹² Acquired brain Injury was not asked in 2017 and learning disability was not asked in 2017 and 2020.

“SHELTERED” AND “UNSHELTERED” HOMELESSNESS

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness who stayed at emergency shelter in Abbotsford was 190, or 47% of all individuals included in the Point-in-Time Count, which is an increase compared to 124 or 37% in 2020. The remaining 216 or 53% of individuals were considered unsheltered the night of the count.

TABLE 6. RATIO OF “SHELTERED” AND “UNSHELTERED” INDIVIDUALS, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023)

Sheltered and Unsheltered	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sheltered	112	41%	124	37%	190	47%
Unsheltered	162	59%	209	63%	216	53%
Total	274	100%	333	100%	406	100%

Of those who were considered unsheltered on the night of the count, 31% had stayed outside, 5% had couch surfed, 7% were in the hospital, 9% stayed in a vehicle, and 0.5% had been in jail.

Compared to 2020, there was an increase in the number of individuals who had stayed in a shelter, vehicle, or the hospital on the night of the count, and a decrease in those who had couch surfed and stayed outside.

TABLE 7. ACCOMMODATION ON THE NIGHT OF THE SURVEY, ABBOTSFORD (2020-2023)

Place Stayed	2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%
Shelter	124	37%	190	46.8%
Jail	1	0%	2	0.5%
Hospital	13	4%	27	6.7%
Outside	138	41%	126	31.0%
Car, van, or camper	18	6%	40	9.8%
Someone else's place	39	12%	21	5.2%
Total	333	100%	406	100%

SHELTER BEDS

TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF AVAILABLE EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS, FVRD (2017-2023)

Community	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Abbotsford	230	58%	166	34%	213	35%
Mission	45	11%	87	18%	98	16%
Chilliwack	109	28%	203	41%	243	40%
Agassiz-Harrison*	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Hope-Boston Bar*	12	3%	36	7%	48	8%
Total	396	100%	492	100%	602	100%

*Sub-Communities of Eastern Fraser Valley

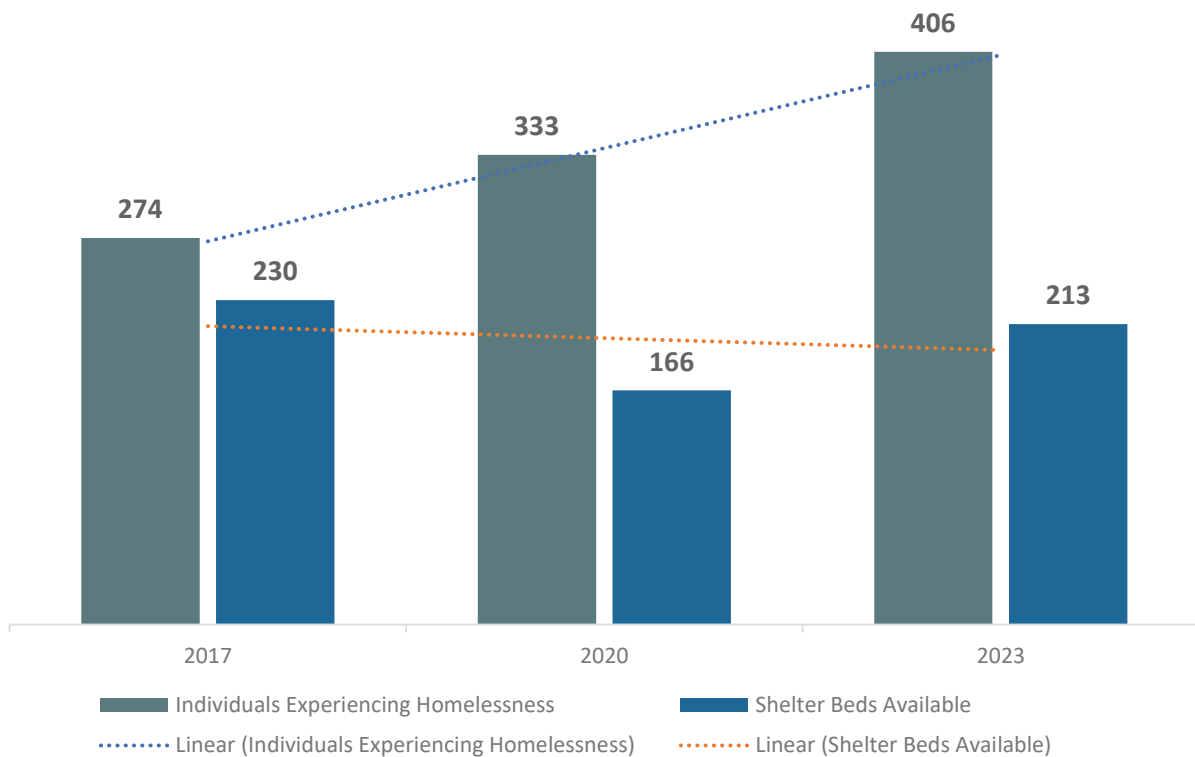
On the night of the count, 213 shelter beds were available in Abbotsford, making up 35% of the region's shelter inventory. From 2020 to 2023, the FVRD's shelter inventory increased by 110 beds; however, Abbotsford's shelter

inventory decreased by 47 beds. Despite the reduced number of shelter beds available in 2023 compared to 2020, the percentage of the region’s shelter beds located in Abbotsford remained about the same.

In Abbotsford, the increase in individuals experiencing homelessness who were “sheltered” on the night of the count was due to an increased utilization of shelter beds, not an increase in the number of beds available. With 190 of 213 shelter beds occupied, Abbotsford had a shelter utilization rate of 89% on the night of the count compared to the utilization of 75% of available shelter beds on the night of the count in 2020¹³.

The total number of shelter beds available in Abbotsford has not kept up to the increases in individuals experiencing homelessness as identified by PiT count and survey methodology. With every shelter bed utilized, Abbotsford’s current shelter inventory could only accommodate 52% of those identified as experiencing homelessness¹⁴. Since PiT count figures can only provide an undercount of actual populations experiencing homelessness, the gap between Abbotsford’s capacity to provide shelter and the need for shelter is likely even greater.

FIGURE 2. SHELTER BEDS COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023)



¹³ The utilization of shelter inventory is calculated by dividing the number of sheltered individuals on the night of the count by the total number of shelter beds available obtained from shelter and municipal staff.

¹⁴ The potential capacity to provide shelter is calculated by dividing the number of shelter spaces available on the night of the count by the number of people identified as experiencing homelessness.

GENDER IDENTITY

Individuals who identify as male consistently account for roughly two-thirds of all individuals who experience homelessness in the region as per Point-in-Time counts. However, PiT Count methodology does not capture all persons experiencing homelessness, especially those in hidden forms of homelessness noted in section one of this report.

TABLE 9. GENDER OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023)

Gender	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	166	63.1%	212	70.2%	252	70.0%
Female	95	36.1%	87	28.8%	104	28.8%
Transgender	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	2	0.8%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Two-Spirit	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Non-binary	0	0.0%	3	1.0%	3	0.8%
Total	263	100%	302	100%	360	100.0%

Women make up a more significant proportion of those experiencing hidden homelessness, and are therefore undercounted in Point-in-Time counts and surveys¹⁵ Individuals who identify as male account for 70% of Abbotsford's PiT count figures and survey findings. Those who identified as female made up 29%, and less than 1% identified as transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, or other gender not listed.

TABLE 10. TRANS EXPERIENCE, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Trans Experience	2023	
	N	%
Can Identify with trans experience	11	2.7%
Cannot identify with trans experience	298	74.0%
No Response	94	23.3%
Total	403	100%

Survey respondents were asked, "Do you identify as someone with a trans-experience? (your gender is different than what was assigned at birth)" A total of 11 or 2.7% respondents yes to this question. In comparison, the 2021 Census of Population reports that 0.19% of Canada's population aged 15 and older identify as transgender¹⁶.

These figures suggest an over-representation of individuals that identify as transgender within populations experiencing homelessness, which reflects research findings, which note more significant rates of homelessness among LGBTQ+ populations¹⁷.

¹⁵ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. "The Pan-Canadian Women's Housing & Homelessness Survey." Homeless Hub. 2021. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/EN-Pan-Canadian-Womens-Housing-Homelessness-Survey-FINAL-28-Sept-2021.pdf>

¹⁶ Statistics Canada "Canada is the first country to provide census data on transgender and non-binary people" April 27, 2022. Census of Population 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/220427/dq220427b-eng.pdf?st=JB7Vb5sN>

¹⁷ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. "Creating LGBTQ2S Inclusive, Affirming and Safe PiT Counts" Homeless Hub. 2019. www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/LGBTQ2S-PiT-Count.pdf

AGE

In 2023, the largest age category of individuals experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford is 40-49 years of age (24.3%), followed by 30-39 (23.7%), and when combined, individuals aged 30-49 make up nearly half (48%) of survey respondents. The age categories 40-49, as well as those 60 and older increased between 2020 and 2023; while those 30 and under decreased, and those 50-59 increased only slightly.

TABLE 11. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023)

Age	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 15	5	1.9%	1	0.3%	0	0%
15-19	34	13.0%	22	7.0%	12	3.4%
20-29	41	15.5%	64	20.4%	46	13.0%
30-39	56	21.2%	93	29.6%	84	23.7%
40-49	45	17.1%	49	15.6%	86	24.3%
50-59	59	22.3%	58	18.5%	70	19.8%
60 or older	24	9.1%	27	8.6%	56	15.8%
Total	264	100%	314	100%	354	100.0%

Compared to the general population of Abbotsford, those 29 and under and over 60 were underrepresented among individuals experiencing homelessness as identified in the PiT Count, while adults, especially those 30-59 were overrepresented. It should be noted that youth homelessness is often more hidden, which is known to result in an under-representation of young people within PiT Counts¹⁸.

TABLE 12. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS COMPARED TO POPULATION, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Age	Population (2021 Census) ¹⁹		2023 PiT Count		% Difference
	N	%	N	%	%
Younger than 15	26,655	17.4%	0	0.0%	- 17.4%
15-19	9,265	6.0%	12	3.4%	- 2.6%
20-29	20,640	13.4%	46	13.0%	- 0.4%
30-39	21,735	14.2%	84	23.7%	+ 9.5%
40-49	19,335	12.6%	86	24.3%	+ 11.7%
50-59	18,505	12.1%	70	19.8%	+ 7.7%
60 or older	37,380	24.4%	56	15.8%	- 8.6%
Total	153,520	100.0%	354	100.0%	0.0%

¹⁸ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. "Point-in-Time Count Toolkit." 2018. Homeless Hub. www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/download-chapter/PiT%20Count%20Toolkit%202020%20Final.pdf

¹⁹ Statistics Canada. 2023. Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

In 2023, those who identify as heterosexual accounted for 92.8% of all respondents in Abbotsford, which is consistent with previous survey results, while 7.2% of respondents described their sexual orientation as bisexual, pansexual, two-spirited, gay, and other.

Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ account for 4% of Canada's total population aged 15 and older²⁰, which suggests an over-representation of individuals who do not identify as heterosexual or straight within populations experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford and throughout the region. This is consistent with research findings, which note higher rates of homelessness among LGBTQ+ populations²¹.

TABLE 13. SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023)

Sexual Orientation	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Heterosexual/Straight	199	86.5%	206	92.0%	295	92.8%
Bisexual	21	9.1%	8	3.6%	12	3.8%
Two-Spirited	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Gay	3	1.3%	3	1.3%	1	0.3%
Other	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	5	1.6%
Questioning	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%	6	2.7%	0	0.0%
Pansexual	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	4	1.3%
Lesbian	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	230	100.0%	224	100.0%	318	100%

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Based on 2021 Census data, there is an overrepresentation of Indigenous populations within populations experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford. In 2023, 31.8% of respondents identified as Indigenous in Abbotsford, compared to 4.5% of Abbotsford's general population²².

TABLE 14. INDIGENOUS IDENTITY COMPARED TO POPULATION, FVRD (2023)

Community	2021 Census		2023 PiT Count		Difference
	N	%	N	%	%
Abbotsford	6,850	4.5%	88	31.8%	+ 27.3%
Chilliwack	7,250	7.9%	134	39.6%	+ 31.7%
Mission	3,380	8.3%	59	35.8%	+ 27.5%
Eastern Fraser Valley	1,425	10.0%	22	31.9%	+ 21.9%
FVRD	24,010	7.6%	303	35.7%	+ 28.1%

²⁰ Statistics Canada. "A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2+ communities" June 15, 2021. 2018 Canadian Community Health Survey. www.150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.pdf?st=72rw-AmE

²¹ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. "Creating LGBTQ2S Inclusive, Affirming and Safe PiT Counts" Homeless Hub. 2019. www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/LGBTQ2S-PiT-Count.pdf

²² Statistics Canada. Indigenous Population Profile, 2021 Census of Population. www.12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/ipp-ppa/index.cfm?Lang=E

A total of 88 or 32% of respondents in Abbotsford identified as Indigenous (including First Nations, Metis, Inuit, or other Indigenous ancestry) compared to 77 or 34.4% of respondents in 2020. Of the 88 individuals who identified as Indigenous, 63 identified as First Nation or Indigenous, 20 as Metis, and 2 as Inuit.

TABLE 15. INDIGENOUS IDENTITY BY RESPONSES, ABBOTSFORD (2020-2023)

Indigenous Identity	2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%
First Nations	56	25.0%	55	19.9%
Indigenous/Aboriginal Ancestry	0	0.0%	8	2.9%
Metis	16	7.1%	20	7.2%
Inuit	1	0.4%	2	0.7%
Not listed (other)	4	1.8%	3	1.1%
Don't Know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Does Not Identify as Indigenous	147	65.6%	189	68.2%
Total	224	100%	277	100%

LENGTH OF TIME IN ABBOTSFORD

Survey results show individuals experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford are most likely to be long-term residents. A total of 231 or 84.3% have lived in Abbotsford for more than one year, while 115 or 42% had lived in Abbotsford for more than 10 years.

TABLE 16. LENGTH OF TIME IN CURRENT COMMUNITY, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Length in Abbotsford	2023	
	N	%
Less than 6 months	31	11.3%
6-11 months	12	4.4%
12-23 months	26	9.5%
2-5 years	56	20.4%
6-10 years	34	12.4%
11+ years	86	31.4%
Always lived in the community	29	10.6%
Total	274	100%

COMMUNITY LIVED IN PREVIOUSLY

TABLE 17. COMMUNITY LIVED IN PRIOR, ABBOTSFORD²³ (2017-2023)

Previous Community	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Within the FVRD	56	33.5%	57	33.5%	50	21.1%
Within Metro Vancouver	14	8.4%	46	27.1%	86	36.3%
Another Part of BC	60	35.9%	35	20.6%	46	14.8%
Another Part of Canada	27	16.2%	27	15.9%	50	21.1%
Another Country	10	6.0%	5	2.9%	5	2.1%
Total	167	100.0%	170	100.0%	237	100.0%

²³ Table excludes respondents who indicated always living in Abbotsford.

Survey respondents were asked to identify the community they lived in prior to living in Abbotsford. 36.30% of respondents had previously lived in Metro Vancouver, 21.1% had lived in the FVRD, 14.8% elsewhere in B.C., 21.1% elsewhere in Canada, and 2.1% outside of Canada. In 2023, there was a notable increase in respondents who had previously lived within Metro Vancouver and elsewhere in Canada.

SOURCE OF INCOME

Similar to 2017 and 2020 PiT Count and Survey results, income assistance (both standard income assistance and disability allowance) was the most commonly reported source of income. In 2023, the proportion is 66% compared to 45.6% in 2020. In 2023 income from disability allowance reached 36.5%, surpassing income assistance (29.5%) as the most commonly reported source of income. In 2023, 5.9% of responses reflect formal employment compared to 6.8% in 2020.

TABLE 18. SOURCE OF INCOME, ABBOTSFORD (2020-2023)²⁴

Source of Income	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Income Assistance	102	22.7%	94	23.8%	110	29.5%
IA (Disability Allowance)	73	16.2%	86	21.8%	136	36.5%
Binning/Bottles ²⁵	57	12.7%	45	11.4%	6	1.6%
No Income	40	8.9%	5	1.2%	20	5.4%
Other ²⁶	22	4.9%	41	10.4%	29	7.8%
Panhandling	31	6.9%	35	8.8%	0	0.0%
Family/Friends	20	4.4%	22	5.5%	5	1.3%
Part-time Job	26	5.8%	23	5.8%	12	3.2%
Vending (Sex work)	24	5.3%	11	2.7%	4	1.1%
Disability (CPP)	12	2.7%	9	2.2%	10	2.6%
Canadian Pension Plan	11	2.4%	9	2.2%	13	3.5%
Honoraria/Stipend	15	3.3%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%
Youth Agreement	3	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%
Other Types of Pension	6	1.3%	2	0.5%	4	1.1%
Old Age Security	4	0.9%	6	1.5%	10	2.7%
Full-time Job	1	0.2%	4	1.0%	10	2.7%
Employment insurance	3	0.7%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	394	100.0%	373	100.0%

²⁴ Respondents could select more than one sources of income that apply to them, therefore, the number in the “N” column accounts for multiple responses, and provides the number of unique individuals.

²⁵ In 2023 the option was informal employment which was captured under binning.

²⁶ Includes GST/HST refund and Child and Family tax refund.

SERVICE USAGE

Respondents in Abbotsford indicated accessing various services as outlined below. Service usage reported in 2023 is largely similar to 2020. In Abbotsford, respondents were most likely to report using emergency shelter, harm reduction, meal program/soup kitchen, emergency room, or ambulance services.

TABLE 19. SERVICES USED, ABBOTSFORD (2020 - 2023)²⁷

Service Used	2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%
Ambulance	91	6.2%	104	7.8%
Cultural Services ²⁸	0	0.0%	2	0.2%
Dental Services	35	2.4%	36	2.7%
Emergency Room	132	9.0%	130	9.7%
Emergency Shelter²⁹	281	19.3%	308	23.0%
Employment Services	43	2.9%	26	1.9%
Financial Services ³⁰	-	-	26	1.9%
Food Bank	88	6.0%	57	4.3%
Harm Reduction	135	9.3%	144	10.8%
Health Clinic	93	6.3%	83	6.2%
Hospital (Non-Emergency)	72	4.9%	7	0.5%
Housing Help/ Eviction Prevention	29	2.0%	12	0.9%
Meal Program/Soup Kitchen	133	9.1%	137	10.2%
Mental Health Services	57	3.9%	47	3.5%
Newcomer Services	3	0.2%	1	0.1%
None	5	0.3%	0	0.0%
Other	7	0.5%	6	0.4%
Other Addiction Services	59	4.0%	6	0.4%
Outreach	124	8.5%	95	7.1%
Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) ³¹	0	0.0%	70	5.2%
Probation/Parole	49	3.4%	28	2.1%
Transitional Housing	22	1.5%	13	1.0%
Total Responses	1458	100.0%	1338	100.0%

²⁷ Respondents could check off all that applied, hence the number column represents all respondents and not individual respondents.

²⁸ Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) was not included in 2020 list of services

²⁹ Cultural Services was not included in 2020 list of services.

³⁰ Includes both emergency shelter and extreme weather shelter

³¹ Financial Services was not included in 2020 list of services

BARRIERS TO SERVICES

In total 133 respondents indicated that they experience barriers to accessing available services while 121 respondents answered no to the question: “Are there any barriers preventing you from accessing services?”

Of the types of barriers to accessing services reported, transportation issues was most commonly reported (24.1%), followed by health and mental health issues (9.0%), mobility challenges (7.5%), lack of knowledge/information about services (7.5%), and substance use issues (6.0%).

TABLE 20: BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Barriers to Accessing Services	2023	
	N	%
Transportation issues	32	24.1%
Mobility issues (difficulty walking or access using a wheelchair)	10	7.5%
Not having required identification	4	3.0%
Not having knowledge or information about services	10	7.5%
Substance use issues	8	6.0%
Health and Mental health issues	12	9.0%
Other	57	42.9%
Total	133	100.0%

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Individuals experiencing homelessness were asked to identify what additional services might be meaningful or helpful to them. Although responses related to a range of services, the largest proportion of responses were linked to affordable housing, including supportive housing, rent support, etc.

Many responses reflected the types of services already offered in Abbotsford, which may reflect barriers to accessing these services, or the need to increase, improve, or expand existing services, as well as the high value placed on these service types.

Common responses to the question, “What additional services might be meaningful or helpful to you?” from respondents in Abbotsford include, but are not limited to the following types of services or service improvements:

- Housing
- Counseling including trauma counseling and therapy
- More health care services
- More outreach services
- Transportation
- More shelter beds

GOVERNMENT CARE

A total of 108 or 26.6% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford had previously been in government care, which is a decrease from 31.8% in 2020 and 41.6% in 2017³². Despite this decrease, these figures still suggest an overrepresentation of adults previously in government care within populations experiencing homelessness.

Of respondents who reported previously being in government care, 84 had lived in foster care, 11 in youth group homes, and the remaining 13 had youth or independent living agreements.

TABLE 21: GOVERNMENT CARE, ABBOTSFORD (2017-2023)

Government Care	2017		2020		2023	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government Care	114	41.6%	106	31.8%	108	26.6%
Total	274	100%	333	100%	406	100%

TABLE 22. TYPES OF GOVERNMENT CARE, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Type of Government Care	2023	
	N	%
Foster Care	84	20.7%
Youth Group Care	11	2.7%
Youth Agreement	9	2.2%
Independent Living Agreement	4	1.0%
Total	108	26.6%

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

A total of 78 or 19% of all individuals experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford, responded “yes” to the question “Were you, your parents, or grandparents ever in a residential school? This was the first time this question had been asked in the PIT Count and Survey; however, personal experience in residential school was previously captured within the survey question on government care.”³³

Of the 78 respondents who identified as having a personal connection to residential school, 16 had personally attended residential school, 33 had a parent attend residential school, and 29 had a grandparent attend residential school.

TABLE 23. RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Residential School Experience	2023	
	N	%
Personally attended	16	20.5%
Parent attended	33	42.3%
Grandparent attended	29	37.2%
Total	78	100%

³² In 2017 and 2020, the examples of government care included “residential school”.

³³ Interviewers were instructed to ask the question with sensitivity and to request consent prior to asking the question.

RACE

Most respondents in Abbotsford identified as White/Caucasian/European (78.9%) or Indigenous (11.9%), with the remaining 9.2% of respondents identifying with a range of other racial categories. This was the first time this question had been asked in the PIT Count and Survey.

TABLE 24. RACIAL GROUP IDENTIFICATION, ABBOTSFORD (2023)

Racial Identity	2023	
	N	%
White	186	78.9%
Indigenous	28	11.9%
Multi-racial	9	3.8%
Black	5	2.1%
Metis	0	0.0%
South Asian	3	1.3%
Metis/white	0	0.0%
Middle Eastern	0	0.0%
Hispanic	2	0.8%
East Indian	1	0.4%
Eurasian	0	0.0%
Jewish	1	0.4%
Mexican	0	0.0%
Latino/white	0	0.0%
Asian	0	0.0%
West Indian	1	0.4%
Total	236	100.0%

BARRIERS TO HOUSING

The number one barrier reported in Abbotsford in response to the question, “What barriers, if any, have you experienced when trying to find housing?” was the unavailability of affordable housing.

A total of 233 or 58% of the total respondents indicated experiencing at least one barrier in attempting to find housing. The most common barrier stated was a lack of affordable housing (56.2%), followed by stigma and prejudice (15.2%).

TABLE 25: BARRIERS TO HOUSING, ABBOTSFORD (2023)³⁴

Barriers to Housing	2023	
	N	%
Lack of affordable housing	131	56.2%
Insufficient income in relation to cost of living	0	0.0%
Stigma or prejudice	35	15.2%
Lack of references	5	2.1%
Criminal record	15	6.4%
Poor credit score	18	7.7%
Other	29	12.4%
Total	233	100.0%

³⁴ The total represents total number of responses.

FAMILY MEMBERS AND PETS

A total of 56 or 13.8% of respondents in Abbotsford said they had company with them at the time of the survey; of which, 33 were accompanied by a spouse or partner, 4 had a child/children with them and 19 had a pet.

AREAS FREQUENTED

Respondents were asked to identify where they spent most of their time. For privacy reasons, detailed responses will not be identified in this report.

The largest proportion of Individuals experiencing homelessness in in Abbotsford spent most of their time in the downtown areas of Abbotsford. As far as location types, indoor and outdoor public spaces, such as parks, natural areas and retail malls, as well as shelters and outreach centres were common types of places that people reported frequenting.

REASONS FOR RELOCATING TO ABBOTSFORD

Respondents were asked to identify the reason they moved to the community where they were interviewed. The following are the most common reasons provided for relocating to Abbotsford:

- To be with or closer to family
- Employment
- To be with significant other
- Safer community
- Better place to get clean/stay clean and start over

“DIRECTED/INSTRUCTED” TO RELOCATE TO ABBOTSFORD

Respondents were asked: “Did a worker, counselor, officer, official, etc. of an organization send or direct you to come to Abbotsford?” In total, 40 or 10% of those surveyed stated that they were “directed/instructed” to relocate to Abbotsford, 184 or 46% responded “no” to this question, and the remaining 179 or 44% did not respond to the question.