



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD



MEDIA RELEASE

Point in Time Homeless Count kicks off April 21st in Thunder Bay

April 18, 2018 – Community partners are coordinating a Point in Time (PiT) Count and Registry Week in the District of Thunder Bay to enumerate and identify individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The PiT Count begins on Saturday April 21, 2018 at 6 pm, and will run for 24 hours.

The PiT Count will provide vital information to participating communities about individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and contribute to the understanding of homelessness in the District of Thunder Bay. A PiT Count is a method used to measure sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. It aims to anonymously enumerate individuals in a community who are, at a given time, staying in shelters or sleeping outside providing a "snapshot" of homelessness in a community. PiT Counts include a survey that can provide communities with information on the characteristics of individuals and families experiencing homelessness (e.g. age, gender, Veteran status, Indigenous identity). This information can be used by communities to direct resources to areas of greatest need and to connect individuals to specific supports to help them achieve stable housing.

The Registry Week will take place in conjunction, and will continue until April 27, 2018. The Registry Week count will be conducted in Thunder Bay, Greenstone, Terrace Bay, Oliver-Paipoonge, and Marathon to provide a representative sample of homelessness across our entire District.

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB), the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) and the Lakehead Social Planning Council (LSPC) are leading the initiatives along with support from the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy and the Thunder Bay Poverty Reduction Strategy, both of which have housing as a key area or pillar of focus.

In 2016, the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funded community entities (TBIFC and LSPC) to complete an enumeration of individuals experiencing homelessness. The Province of Ontario currently requires all Service Managers (TBDSSAB) to conduct an enumeration of those experiencing homelessness in their communities. Service Managers and the HPS funded community entities are currently working together to complete a second enumeration of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.



Quotes:

“This year’s homeless count is the shared responsibility of TBDSSAB and our community partners, LSPC and TBIFC. We are eager to support our homeless people and make a difference in their lives, and the community as a whole. “

Lucy Kloosterhuis, Board Chair, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

“The success of the 2016 PIT Count and Registry Week was built on a ‘community up’ model that saw service delivery agencies, local organizations, municipal, provincial, federal partners and volunteers sharing in leadership and decision making. Again, through an enhanced collective capacity, the 2018 PIT Count will not only provide a second data point to measure progress but will specifically indicate what advancement has been made towards addressing homelessness in the last 2 years. We applaud and thank everyone who in the spirit of collaborative leadership and action will help provide a better life for people experiencing homelessness in our community.”

Marie Klassen, Executive Director, Lakehead Social Planning Council

“We have a responsibility to care for all of our brothers and sisters in the circle; especially our most vulnerable- those of us who don’t have a home.”

Charlene Baglien, Executive Director, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre

Additional Information:

PiT count data is collected by trained volunteer canvassers who physically locate, count, and collect survey data from people experiencing homelessness.

As this method provides information for a single point in time, it is not intended to be a measure of everyone who experiences homelessness in a community over time and will not include some people who cycle in and out of homelessness. In addition, as this method focusses on unsheltered and emergency-sheltered populations, this method is not intended to provide a count of people experiencing different forms of homelessness (couch surfing, temporary accommodations, etc.).

The Registry Week method is a coordinated, multi-day count of people experiencing homelessness on the streets and in other community-identified spaces frequented by people that may be experiencing homelessness. It also involves a coordinated outreach and assessment process to collect information pertaining to an individual’s situation.

Volunteers will administer a survey that collects personal data and ranks participants on a vulnerability index. The information collected can be used to inform decisions about how best to refer individuals experiencing homelessness to housing resources, as well as to prioritize individuals for accessing rapid rehousing and other supports.