

REPORT ON THE 2025

Point-in-Time Count Enumeration

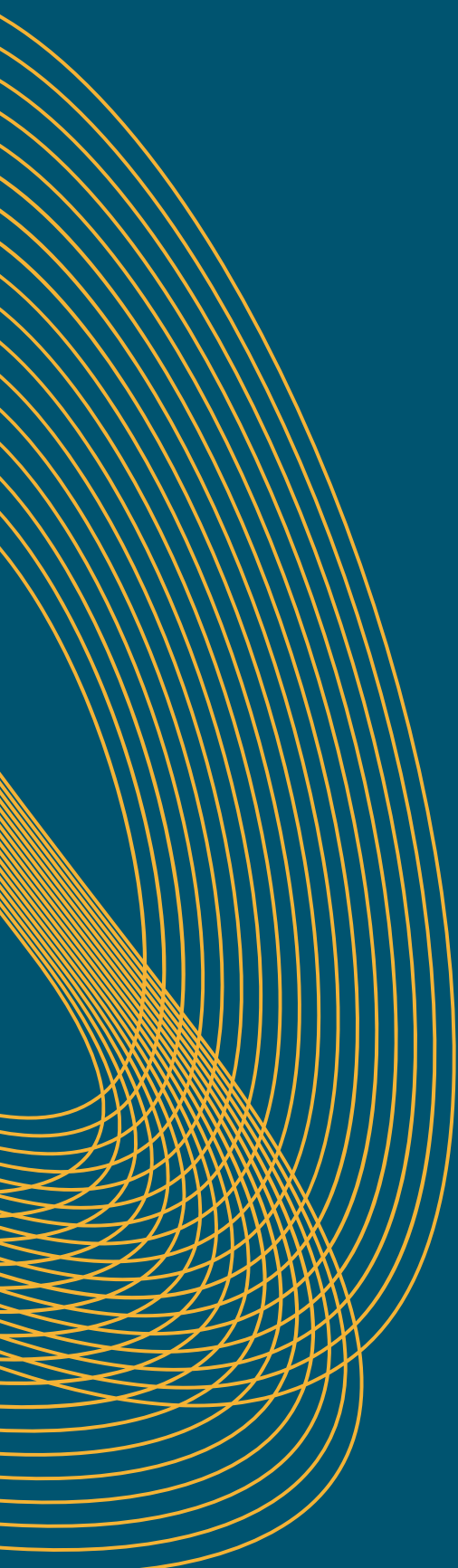
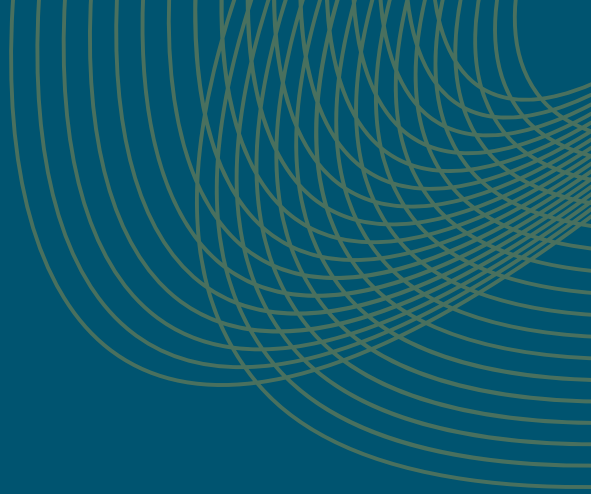


TABLE OF CONTENTS



Land Acknowledgement	3
Thank You	4
Executive Summary	6
Visual Summary	8
Context & Key Terms	9
Background	11
Unsheltered Count Scope and Methodology	13
Sheltered Count Scope and Methodology	16
Analysis & Discussion	17
Conclusion	23
Limitations to PiT Count	25
Different Tools to Count Homelessness	26
Appendix 1: Enumeration Zones	28
Appendix 2: Survey Forms	29

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The City of Lethbridge acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationships to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

THANK YOU

The City of Lethbridge report on the 2025 Point-in-Time (PiT) Enumeration was made possible through the collective efforts of many individuals and organizations, both in the time they dedicated to this initiative and through their continued work in the community. We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who shared their experiences during the count, as well as to individuals with lived and living experience of homelessness whose insight and leadership were essential to planning and data collection.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Many thanks to all the community partners that participated in the 2025 PiT Enumeration.

- Alberta Health Services (AHS)
- Blood Tribe Department of Health (BTDH)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Alberta South Region
- Fresh Start Recovery Centre
- Lethbridge Correctional Centre
- Lethbridge Housing Authority (LHA)
- Lethbridge Police Service
- Lethbridge Polytechnic
- McMan Youth, Family & Community Services Association of Southern Alberta
- Peak Support Services
- Recovery Alberta
- Streets Alive Mission
- University of Calgary – Faculty of Social Work
- University of Lethbridge – Faculty of Health Sciences
- Wood's Homes
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Lethbridge & District Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS

The facilitation of the 2025 PIT Count enumeration would not have been possible without the support and generosity of the volunteers from our community partners. There were 95 volunteers from these agencies and organizations. Volunteers varied from frontline staff, volunteers from the community, and post-secondary students.

This project is funded by
the Government of Canada.

Financé par le
gouvernement du Canada.

The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag icon above the letter "a".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Point-in Time (PiT) Counts are part of a nationally coordinated approach to measuring homelessness in Canada, using a standardized methodology that allows communities to collect consistent local data. PiT Counts provides a snapshot of homelessness on a single night and supports local planning, evaluation, and system coordination. Results from participating communities are compiled and published by the Government of Canada in the annual *Everyone Counts* report, supporting a shared understanding of homelessness at both the community and national levels.

Every three years, a full PiT Count is conducted, consisting of an enumeration of individuals experiencing homelessness within a defined geographic area and a standardized survey administered directly to individuals experiencing homelessness. In the years between full counts, PiT Count enumerations are conducted to update community enumeration data. Under the Reaching Home program, Designated Communities across Canada completed the 2025 PiT Count enumeration. The city of Lethbridge conducted the enumeration count on October 2, 2025, between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

On the night of the count, 504 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge, representing a decrease of just over 3% compared to 2024. Based on 2021 census data, this equates to approximately four individuals experiencing homelessness per 1,000 residents. While the overall number remains high, this is the first recorded decline since the PiT Counts began in 2014, indicating a significant shift after several years of consistent growth. This change suggests that coordinated local efforts, targeted investments, and strengthened partnerships are beginning to stabilize and reduce previously escalating homelessness trends in the community.

Among those identified as experiencing homelessness, 54% were sheltered, while 46% were unsheltered. Findings from the count indicate a significant expansion in transitional housing, with capacity increasing by 113% and the number of individuals in transitional housing rising by 27%. At the same time, the number of individuals staying in unsheltered locations declined by 18%, reflecting the introduction of new community programs offering temporary housing options.

In 2025, adult emergency shelter capacity increased by 175%, from 129 beds to 355 beds in 2025, while youth emergency shelter capacity remained the same. Despite the increase in adult shelter capacity, overall shelter usage declined by 22%, suggesting changing patterns of service utilization. Additionally, a substantial 252% increase in individuals accessing treatment facilities, with no increase in capacity, suggesting more people accessing recovery supports.

Operational improvements were also implemented for the 2025 enumeration based on lessons learned from previous counts. This included the continued use of Lethbridge Police Service drone support to assist in identifying encampments in hard-to-access areas, such as the River Valley coulees.

The following report outlines the background, methodology, and findings of the 2025 PiT Count enumeration and provides insight into trends, system capacity, and opportunities for continued system improvement.

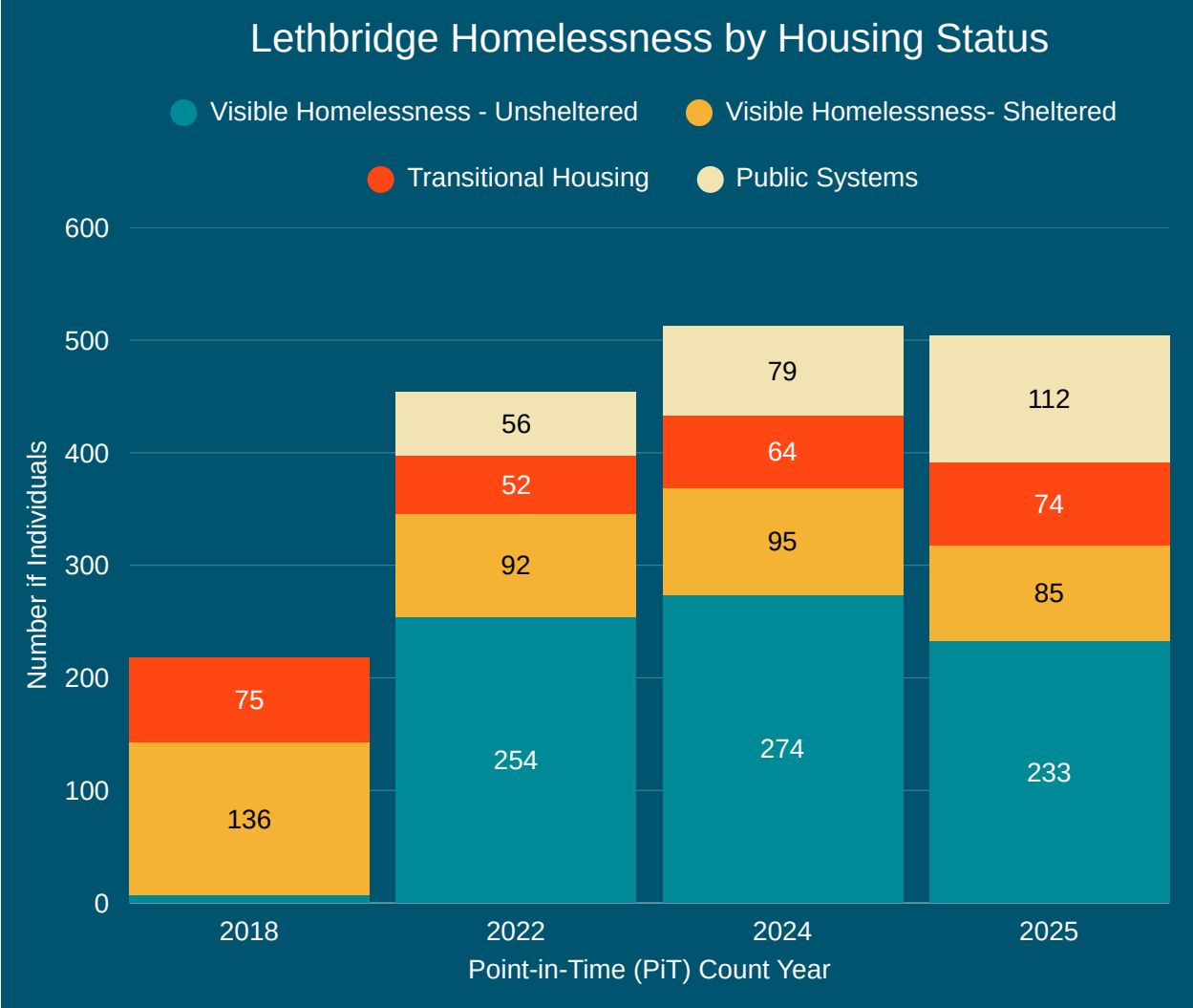


Figure 1: Homelessness by Housing Status: Lethbridge Point-in-Time Counts 2018, 2022, 2024, and 2025

Note 1: Visible Homelessness - Unsheltered includes people identified as experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations and in encampments.

Note 2: Visible Homelessness - Sheltered includes people in emergency shelters (including extreme weather shelters, and those staying in a hotel/motel facilities provided in lieu of shelters) as well as people in domestic violence shelters.

Note 3: Public Systems includes people with no fixed address in correctional facilities, juvenile detention centres, hospitals, and detox centres.

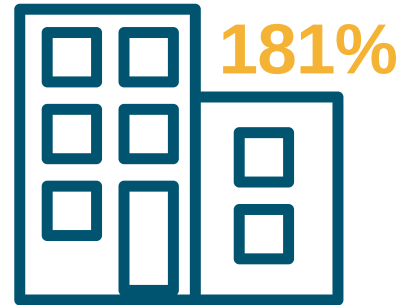
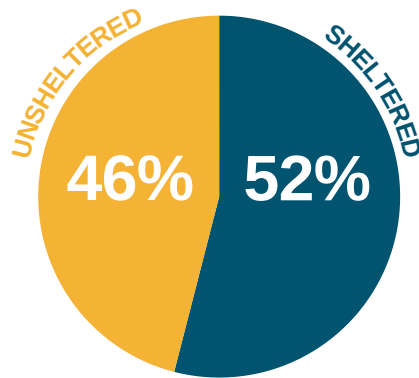
HOMELESSNESS IN LETHBRIDGE

504

INDIVIDUALS

↓ **BY 3%**

COMPARED TO 2024



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
CAPACITY INCREASED



↑ **27%**

NUMBER OF
INDIVIDUALS IN
TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING



↑ **252%**

INDIVIDUALS
ACCESSING TREATMENT
FACILITIES



↑ **113%**
SHELTER CAPACITY

129 BEDS
TO
363 BEDS



IN 2025

SHELTER USAGE
↓ **22%**

CONTEXT & KEY TERMS

The Government of Canada's Reaching Home program provides a set of definitions that can be adapted to each community's local approach, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to community needs.

The key terms in the 2025 PiT Count enumeration align with the definitions used in the full 2024 PiT Count, except for the definition of encampment, and were confirmed with the 2025 PiT Count Planning Committee. The definition of encampment was altered to align with the City of Lethbridge Encampment Strategy. The following definitions were used to classify unsheltered homelessness, sheltered homelessness, transitional housing, and systems data for Lethbridge as part of the 2025 PiT count enumeration.

Unsheltered Homelessness



Unsheltered homelessness includes people who are sleeping in places not intended for human habitations. This includes:

- **Encampments:** Refers to temporary outdoor accommodation consisting of tents or makeshift shelters for unsheltered individuals who have been established without permission. This definition was altered to reflect the local definition and approved by the 2025 PiT Enumeration Planning Committee.
- **Other Unsheltered Overnight Locations:** These are public locations (e.g., streets, alleys, parks, or other green spaces), transit stations, abandoned buildings, vehicles; and other outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness are known to sleep

Sheltered Homelessness



Sheltered homelessness is divided into three subcomponents:

- **Emergency Shelters:** These are temporary, short-term accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. This includes shelters for general and population specific to men, women, youth, etc., extreme weather shelters, and drop-ins
- **Domestic Violence (DV) Shelters:** These provide temporary accommodation with support for individuals and families fleeing domestic abuse or the threat of violence.

- Hotel or Motel Spaces Provided in Lieu of Shelter: Overnight accommodations in a hotel or motel provided to people experiencing homelessness in lieu of shelter beds (e.g., through a voucher or arrangement with the operator). Stays are paid for by the service provider (e.g., through a voucher or arrangement with the operator), not privately (e.g., through income or savings).

Transitional Housing

This includes programs that are intended to offer a supportive living environment for their residents, including offering them the experience, tools, knowledge, and opportunities for social and skill development to become more independent and transition from homelessness to secure housing. It is considered an intermediate step between emergency shelter and supportive or independent housing and has limits on lengths of stay. People in transitional housing are considered to be provincially accommodated.

Public Systems

These may include facilities such as urgent care facilities; emergency departments; hospital in-patient wards; detox, treatment or rehabilitation centres; correctional facilities; or police holding cells. Only individuals who have no fixed address, are and are imminently going to be released, and have no discharge plan that includes housing should be included.

BACKGROUND

Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts are a nationally coordinated approach to understanding homelessness in Canada. The Government of Canada prepares and publishes an annual report titled *Everyone Counts*, which compiles results from PiT Counts conducted by participating communities across the country. These counts collect consistent local data to support a shared understanding of homelessness at both the community and national levels. Because access to public system data (including hospitals, corrections, and treatment facilities) varies across communities, individuals enumerated in these systems are excluded from national totals to ensure data consistency. As a result, 112 individuals enumerated in Lethbridge during the 2025 count are excluded from the national total and report.



Planning

All planning and operational decisions were aligned with previous PiT Counts conducted in Lethbridge and adhered to the guidelines set forth by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home program and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness' Homelessness Learning Hub.

In preparation for the 2025 PiT Count Enumeration, the City of Lethbridge coordinated with local agencies that interact with the homeless population. The coordinated effort involved establishing a Planning Committee for the 2025 PiT Count enumeration, bringing together representatives from the City of Lethbridge, Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta South Region (CMHA-ASR), Blood Tribe Department of Health, Woods Homes, Lethbridge Housing Authority, and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Lethbridge & District. The Planning Committee reviewed operational considerations, including hotspot locations, zone assignments, and strategies for covering outlying areas, to ensure a comprehensive enumeration. The committee also examined lessons learned from the 2024 full PiT Count, identifying strengths and opportunities to improve accuracy.

BACKGROUND

Based on these insights, adjustments were made for the 2025 Pit Count Enumeration:



The start time was changed from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm local time to avoid overlapping with the Soup Kitchen's dinner service.



A digital mobile-friendly Cognito form was used for data collection due to the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Lite not being ready for use.



Updating the approach to counting encampments to ensure alignment with the City of Lethbridge's Encampment Response Strategy.

To further improve operational effectiveness, the committee decided to continue utilizing the Lethbridge Police Service for drone support. This assistance is crucial for locating encampments in the River Valley coulees, improving coverage in otherwise difficult-to-access areas, and supporting overall enumeration efforts.

UNSHELTERED COUNT

Scope & Methodology

The unsheltered enumeration focused on known locations, including identified encampments and areas where individuals experiencing homelessness are commonly found. These sites were chosen using local data and insights from community outreach teams.



The count was carried out primarily by professionals and front-line workers from the homeless-serving sector, with additional support from City of Lethbridge staff and University of Lethbridge students. Volunteers were assigned to teams and given specific zones to survey systematically throughout the evening. Additionally, to better reflect trends observed within encampments, the Planning Committee agreed to assign the Encampment Response Team to the zone with the highest concentration of encampments, leveraging their established knowledge and rapport with encampment occupants.

**THE UNSHELTERED
ENUMERATION TOOK
PLACE ON OCTOBER 2,
2025 BETWEEN 7:00
P.M. AND 10:00 P.M.**

A Cognito Form–based survey tool was used to capture both direct enumeration and observational counts. When a team encountered someone, they would ask for their consent to answer questions regarding their housing status. Respondents were informed that their involvement was voluntary, personal names would not be collected, and they could choose to decline any or all questions. Those who agreed were asked where they were planning to stay that night, and their responses were recorded in the category that best aligned with their situation. Individuals who did not engage but were visibly identifiable as experiencing homelessness were counted as “observed only.”

Avoidance of Double Counting & Duplication

Efforts were made to reduce the risk of double-counting individuals during the count. Enumeration areas were clearly defined, and teams were assigned to specific locations to avoid overlap. Individuals were asked if they had been surveyed that evening, and surveyors were instructed not to survey individuals who indicated prior participation. To maintain accuracy and further reduce duplication, a standardized honorarium backpack was provided to all survey participants, enabling volunteers to identify those who had already been surveyed.

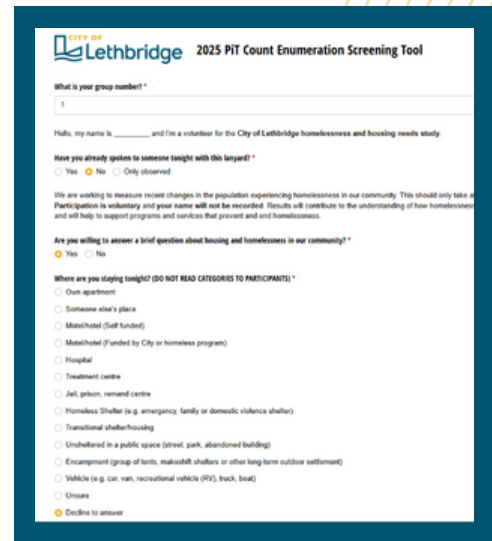
The City’s Encampment Response Team (ERT) conducted the count near the shelter coordinated closely with shelter staff. Shelter staff counted individuals within the facility, while the ERT enumerated those outside the shelter and in the surrounding area.

Although these measures help reduce double-counting, it is acknowledged that PiT Counts have inherent methodological limitations. Individuals experiencing homelessness often move between locations, which could result in double-counting during the count.

Data Collection Tools and Forms

The Government of Canada’s Reaching Home program and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness’ Homelessness Learning Hub provided a customizable template to assist communities in administering the survey in unsheltered areas. This template included a script, screening questions, and instructions on who to include or exclude based on the responses provided.

The City of Lethbridge adapted this template and incorporated the questionnaire into a streamlined, user-friendly interface for volunteers. Cognito Forms was chosen as the data collection platform, as HIFIS Lite was not ready for use during the enumeration count. This approach was highly effective at capturing data, providing real-time access to results, and improving overall efficiency.



During the 2024 count, volunteers encountered technical challenges with the HIFIS Lite platform. However, feedback from volunteers for the 2025 count indicated that the Cognito Forms interface was intuitive and reliable, with no reported technological issues.

Volunteers

Volunteers for the street count were primarily selected from organizations that work in the homeless-serving sector. On the night of the enumeration, the City of Lethbridge's Community and Social Development (CSD) department delivered an orientation session covering the purpose and scope of the PiT Count Enumeration, guidance on safe and respectful engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness, and instructions on using the data collection tools. Training content included:

- **Data collection tools**
- **PiT enumeration procedures**
- **Observed count methodology**
- **Administrative count process**

Participation

41

Sector Workers

Volunteers from the homeless-serving sector who volunteered to support the Pit Count.

32

Community Volunteers

Volunteer students from the University of Lethbridge Nursing Program and the University of Calgary Social Work Program who volunteered their time to support the PiT Count.

9

Sector Professionals

Professionals who participated in the PiT Count as part of their professional duties.

SHELTERED COUNT

Scope & Methodology

Emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing facilities, treatment centers, and public system facilities were included in the sheltered count. Prior to the count, facilities were contacted and provided with a data collection form to complete on the night of the count. Participating facilities submitted enumerated data for individuals staying at their location who were identified as experiencing homelessness.



The following facilities were included in the 2025 sheltered count:

- **Lethbridge Wellness Shelter (operated by Blood Tribe Department of Health)**
- **CMHA Community Crisis Beds**
- **Streets Alive Exodus & Genesis programs**
- **Wood's Homes Youth Connections: the CORE**
- **YWCA Harbour House**
- **Fresh Start Recovery Centre**
- **Lethbridge Police Services Holding Cells**

In addition, the Lethbridge Correctional Centre provided enumerated data for individuals in custody or on remand.

The PiT Coordinator worked with each facility to collect the required data and determine appropriate timing for enumerating. In these facilities, only individuals identified as being at imminent risk of homelessness upon discharge were included in the count. As a result, not every individual in each facility was enumerated, as only those who met the local criteria for imminent risk of homelessness were counted.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The 2025 PiT enumeration shows a combined total of 504 individuals experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge. As shown in **Figure 2: Overall Distribution**, 271 individuals (53.8%) were staying in sheltered locations, while 233 individuals (46.2%) were unsheltered, resulting in an overall decrease of 3.4% from the 2024 count.

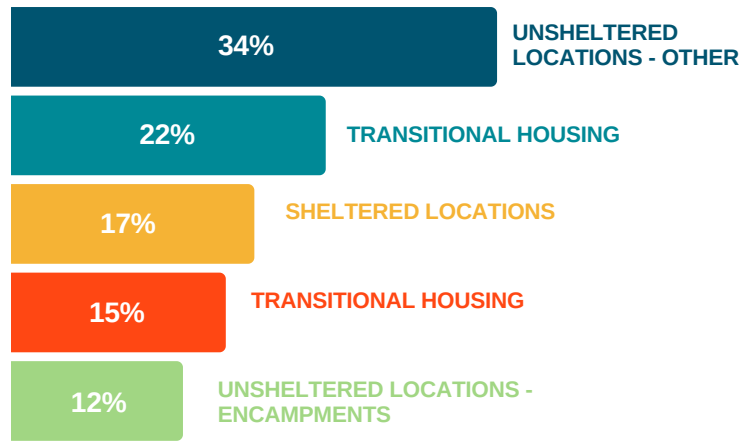


Figure 2: Overall Distribution

Since the 2018 baseline PiT Count, which identified 233 individuals experiencing homelessness, the total enumeration has increased significantly, reaching at least 522 individuals in 2024 and 504 in 2025. This growth reflects a combination of broader system and community-level pressures. Since the 2018 count, improvements in enumeration methodology, expanded geographic coverage, and enhanced efforts to identify unsheltered individuals have contributed to a more accurate and comprehensive count. While overall numbers remain elevated relative to the 2018 baseline, the stabilization and modest decline observed in 2025 may indicate early progress resulting from recent investments in transitional housing and homelessness prevention initiatives supported through community partnerships.



This section will analyze the key findings from the 2025 count and examines key trends, shifts, and patterns observed across sheltered and unsheltered populations. The results are considered in the context of previous counts, local system changes, and service capacity, with a focus on understanding what the data suggests about the current state of homelessness in the community.

Unsheltered Count

Unsheltered Location Distribution	2022 Count	2024 Count	2025 Count	% Change
Encampments	0	10	62	520%
Outdoor Locations	254	274	171	-38.60%
Total	254	284	233	-18.00%

Table 1: Unsheltered Comparison to Previous Counts (2022, 2024, and 2025)

The 2025 PiT Count indicates a decline in unsheltered homelessness, with the number of individuals in unsheltered locations decreasing by 18% from 2024 and remaining below the 2022 count. This reduction suggests progress in reducing unsheltered homelessness overall; however, changes within the unsheltered population highlight important shifts in how individuals are identified and where they reside.

Encampments

In 2025, the increase in the number of individuals identified in encampments is a reflection of operational adjustments and a change in the definition of encampments, rather than a sudden rise in prevalence. In October 2024, encampments within the shelter area accounted for 63% of all identified encampments, increasing to 75% in 2025.

During the 2024 count, the Encampment Response Team (ERT) focused exclusively on remote locations, while a separate team conducted the count within the shelter area and surrounding vicinity, including nearby concentrated encampments. In 2025, the ERT continued to attend remote encampment sites and was assigned to the shelter area. This adjustment increased awareness of encampments and improved identification of individuals residing within them, while also supporting efforts to minimize double counting.

The increase of encampments reflects improved enumeration practices, not a surge in encampment prevalence.

As a result of this operational shift, a greater proportion of encampments were identified within the shelter area. Although encampments appear more prominent in the 2025 data, this trend reflects improved coverage and consistency in enumeration practices rather than a significant increase in the number of individuals residing in encampments.

Overall, the unsheltered data indicates that while a portion of the unsheltered population resides in more visible and sustained make-shift shelters, a significant number of individuals remain dispersed across less visible locations throughout the community.

Sheltered Count

Facility Type Comparison to Previous Counts (2022, 2024, and 2025)

Overnight Location	Data Source	2022 Count	2024 Count	2025 Count	% Change
Emergency Shelters/ Stabilization	Systems data/Occupancy/ Surveys	73	85	63	-25.88%
Domestic Violence Shelters	Systems data/Occupancy/ Surveys	19	7	19	171.43%
CMHA Stabilization Funds (Hotels)	Systems data	-	3	3	0.00%
Transitional Housing	Systems data	52	64	74	15.63%
Treatment Facilities	Systems data/Occupancy/ Surveys	18	21	74	252.38%
Police Holding Cells	Systems data	2	6	1	-83.33%
Alberta Correctional Services	Systems data	32	40	36	-10.00%
Alberta Health Services (AHS)	Systems data	4	12	1	-91.67%
Total		200	238	271	35.50%

Sheltered homelessness, including individuals in public systems, accounted for 271 individuals on the night of the count and spanned facility types across the community. As outlined in **Table 2: Facility Type Compared to Previous Counts**, individuals were enumerated across emergency shelters, transitional housing, domestic violence shelters, treatment facilities, correctional facilities, police holding cells, hospital or other health facilities, and program-funded hotel or motel spaces. Since the 2018 baseline, the number of individuals enumerated in sheltered locations has increased by 35.5%, rising from 200 individuals in 2018 to 271 in 2025.

Transitional Housing & Treatment Facilities together accounted for

55%

of all sheltered individuals

A closer examination of the sheltered count shows that transitional housing and treatment facilities together accounted for 55% (148 individuals) of all sheltered individuals enumerated. Notably, there was a substantial increase in the number of individuals enumerated in treatment facilities, alongside a decline in those staying in emergency shelters. These shifts may reflect changes in service availability, expanded transitional housing

options, or system-level policy and program responses, rather than changes in homelessness prevalence alone. The data suggests growing access to programs that are service-intensive and longer-term options within the broader system.

Shelter Capacity Over the Years

Facility	2022	2024	2025	% Change
Emergency Shelter	126	129	355	175.19%
Youth Shelter	8	8	8	0.00%
Domestic Violence Shelter	24	24	24	0.00%
Transitional Housing	63	52	111	113.46%
Total	213	205	498	142.93%

Table 3: Capacity Comparison to Previous Counts (2022, 2024, and 2025)

Sheltered Capacity on the Night of the Count

In February 2024, the Government of Alberta announced funding to support the expansion of the Lethbridge Wellness Shelter and Stabilization Unit. This expansion was completed in May 2025, increasing overall capacity from 121 beds to 230 beds, with renovations for stabilization beds still underway. In addition, transitional housing capacity increased due to new programs introduced by the Lethbridge Housing Authority and the YWCA of Lethbridge & District. Collectively, these investments resulted in 498 sheltered spaces available in Lethbridge on the night of the count.

Facility	Target Population	# of Bed/Units	Overflow
Lethbridge Wellness Shelter & Stabilization Unit	Adults, 18 Years and Older	230	125
Woods Homes Youth Emergency Shelter	Youth Under 18 Years	8	
YWCA Harbour House Women’s Emergency Shelter	Women & Children	24	
Transitional Housing	Individuals transitioning from homelessness to secure housing	111	
Total		377	Total including overflow: 498

Table 4: Sheltered Capacity on the Night of the Count

Shelter Occupancy

Despite expanded capacity, overall utilization across the sheltered system remained relatively low. On the night of the count, the adult emergency shelters were operating at 16.9% capacity, peaking at 27.8% at 5:00 a.m. on October 3, compared to the average capacity utilization of 31.5% across October. In contrast, the youth shelter was operating at 37.5% capacity, domestic violence shelters at 79.2% capacity, and transitional housing at 66.7% capacity, with an overall system utilization rate of 31.9%. The gap between capacity and occupancy highlights the importance of examining barriers to accessing resources, diversifying shelter options, and aligning individual needs and system resources when interpreting trends in sheltered homelessness.

Occupancy at Shelters

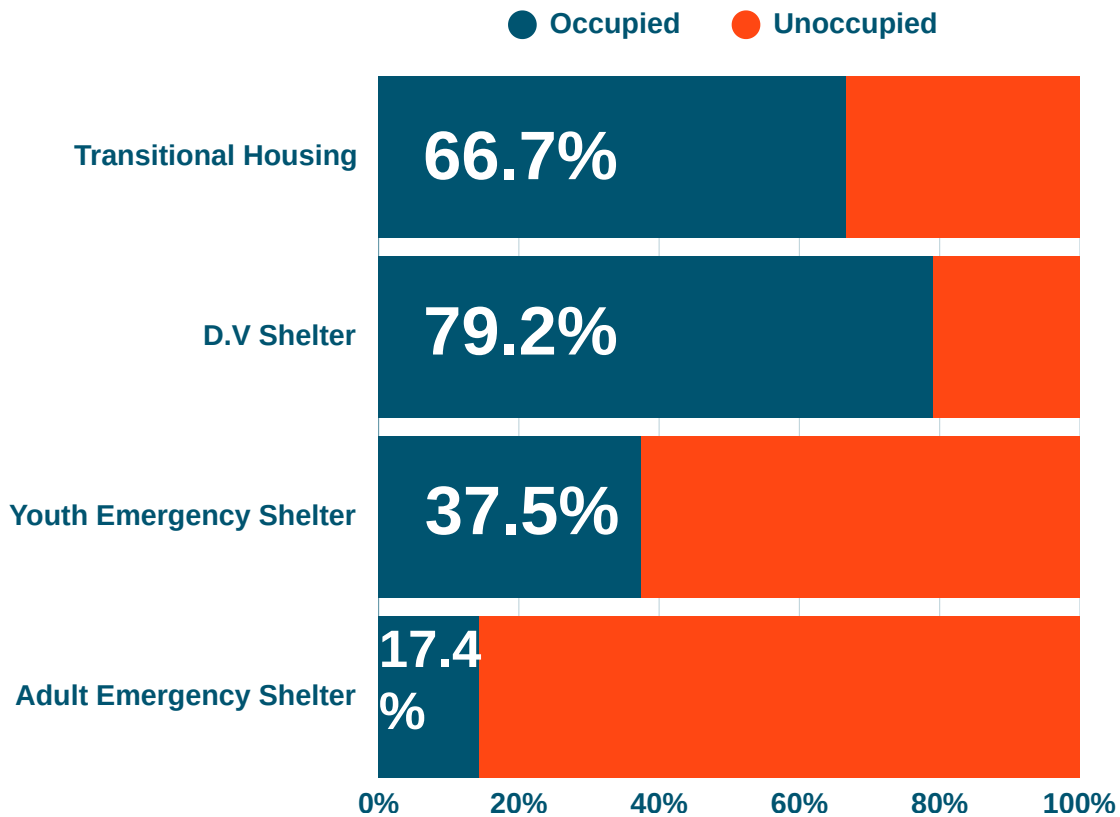
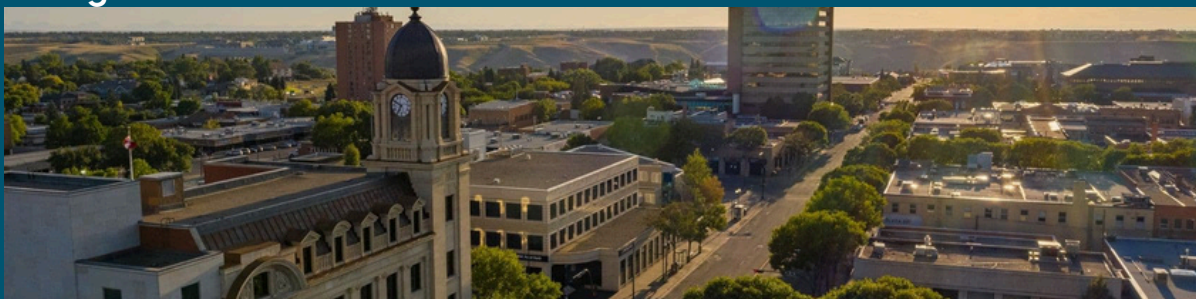


Figure 3: Shelter Capacity and Utilization



CONCLUSION

The 2025 PiT Count enumeration shows a period of stabilization in homelessness in Lethbridge, following several years of growth. A total of 504 individuals were enumerated as experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, representing a modest decrease compared to 2024 and marking the first recorded decline since PiT Counts began in 2014. While overall levels of homelessness remain high compared to the baseline count, the 2025 results indicate that changes in service availability, system coordination, and housing pathways are affecting where individuals stay and how they receive support. In turn, the data has shown the importance of yearly updates as there are consistent changes in the homeless population in Lethbridge.

Total Enumeration

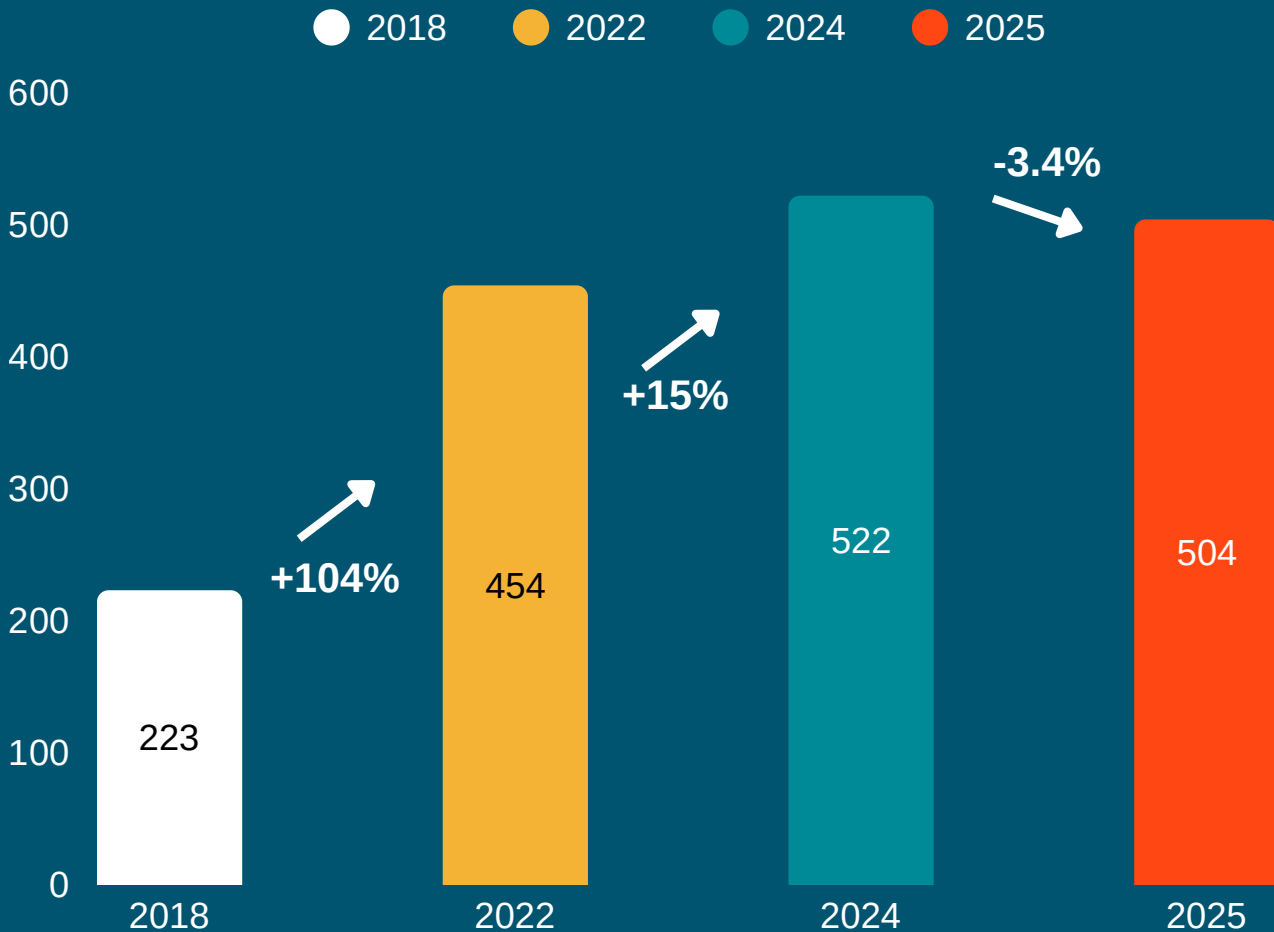


Figure 4: Total PiT Count Enumeration 2018, 2022, 2024, and 2025

Key Findings



3% DECREASE IN TOTAL HOMELESSNESS

Early signs of stabilization after years of increase.



INCREASE IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Driven by new programs from LHA & YWCA.



UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS DOWN

Compared to both 2022/2024 -progress in outreach efforts.



HEALTH CONNECTION

More individuals identified in treatment centers showing the link between homelessness and health priorities.



SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Homelessness influenced by housing, system constraints, and service pathways - not just shelter capacity.

Limitations of the PiT Count

Homelessness is characterized by housing instability, loss of housing, and frequent movement, which can make it difficult for individuals to be located during a single-night PiT Count or within a national census. Consistent with the federal *Everyone Counts* methodology, the 2025 PiT enumeration results should be interpreted as a snapshot of homelessness on a single night rather than a comprehensive measure of homelessness in the community. Some populations may be underrepresented in the findings, and these limitations should be considered when interpreting the results in this report.

Unsheltered: Individuals experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations are among the most difficult populations to identify and engage during a PiT Count. People staying in outdoor or informal settings may relocate frequently or remain out of sight, limiting visibility during enumeration. In addition, it is not feasible to access all areas of the city. For safety and privacy reasons, volunteers were instructed not to enter private property or abandoned buildings to verify occupancy. As a result, individuals living in these circumstances may be underrepresented in the count.

Hospital Systems: Data from hospital settings were not included in the 2025 PiT Enumeration. Therefore, individuals experiencing homelessness who were admitted to hospitals on the night of the count were not accounted for in the results. This omission contributes to an underestimation of the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Lethbridge.

Hidden Homelessness: Individuals staying temporarily with friends or family, couch-surfing, or otherwise accessing informal or precarious housing arrangements are difficult to identify during a single-night count and are therefore not included in the results.

Finally, PiT enumeration data alone does not capture the longitudinal experiences of individuals interacting with the homelessness-serving system. The PiT Count enumeration's effectiveness is hindered without integration with the unique identifier data collected through the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). This limitation affects its ability to accurately reflect the duration, recurrence, and pathways into and out of homelessness. Federal guidance emphasizes that PiT Count data should be used alongside HIFIS data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness and to inform system planning and performance measurement.

Different Tools to Count Homelessness

There are several mechanisms used in Lethbridge to measure homelessness, including the Point-in-Time (PiT) Count and the Unique Identifier List (UIL), formerly known as the By-Names List. The UIL is managed through the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and functions as a real-time, dynamic record of individuals experiencing homelessness who are actively accessing services within the community. Unlike the PiT Count, which provides a snapshot of homelessness on a single night, the UIL is continuously updated and allows for tracking service engagement over time. While the UIL supports ongoing system monitoring and service coordination, the PiT Count captures individuals who may not be connected to services. Together, these tools provide a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness in Lethbridge and help inform service planning and resource allocation.

Unique Identifier List

The Unique Identifier List (UIL) is a real-time record of individuals experiencing homelessness who are actively accessing homelessness sector services in Lethbridge. Individual-level data is maintained by service providers within the Lethbridge Integrated Coordinated Access (ICA) network and stored in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS). Each individual is assigned a unique, non-identifying identifier, allowing records to be accurately linked across programs and over time without relying on personally identifying information.

Before the implementation of HIFIS, homelessness data was commonly managed through a By-Name List (BNL), maintained using shared spreadsheets among service providers and the City of Lethbridge. With the introduction of HIFIS, there is a transition away from the standalone BNL and toward the use of a centralized UIL generated within the system. This transition will improve data consistency, reduce duplication, strengthen the reliability of system-level tracking and reporting, and enhance privacy protections.

Like the former BNL, the UIL only captures individuals who are currently accessing homelessness services. As a result, it does not account for individuals experiencing hidden homelessness or those not engaged with services, reinforcing the importance of the Point-in-Time Count as a complementary tool for understanding the full scope of homelessness in the community.

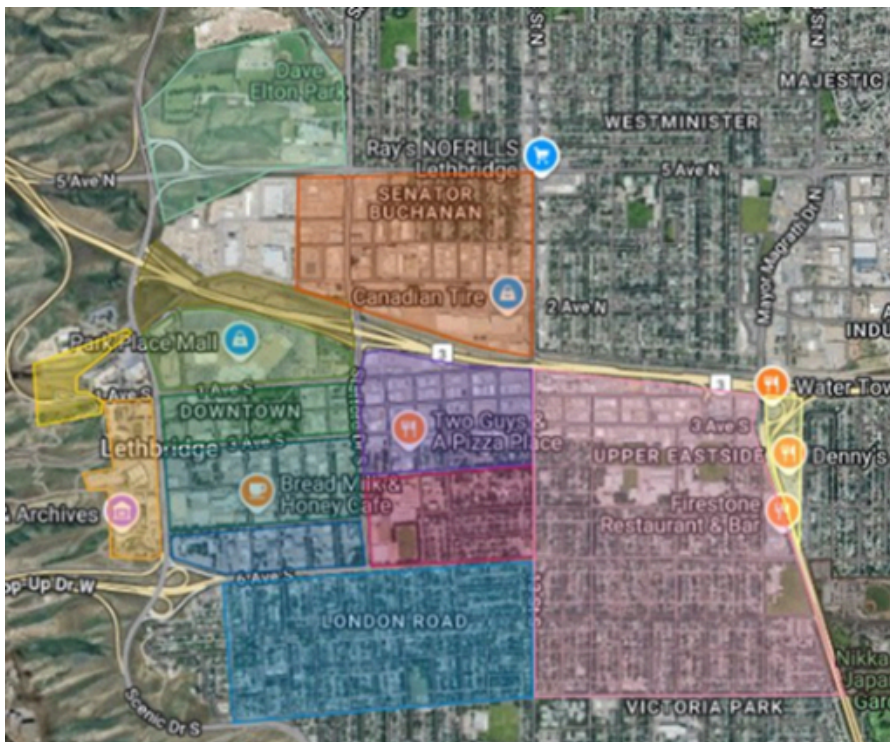
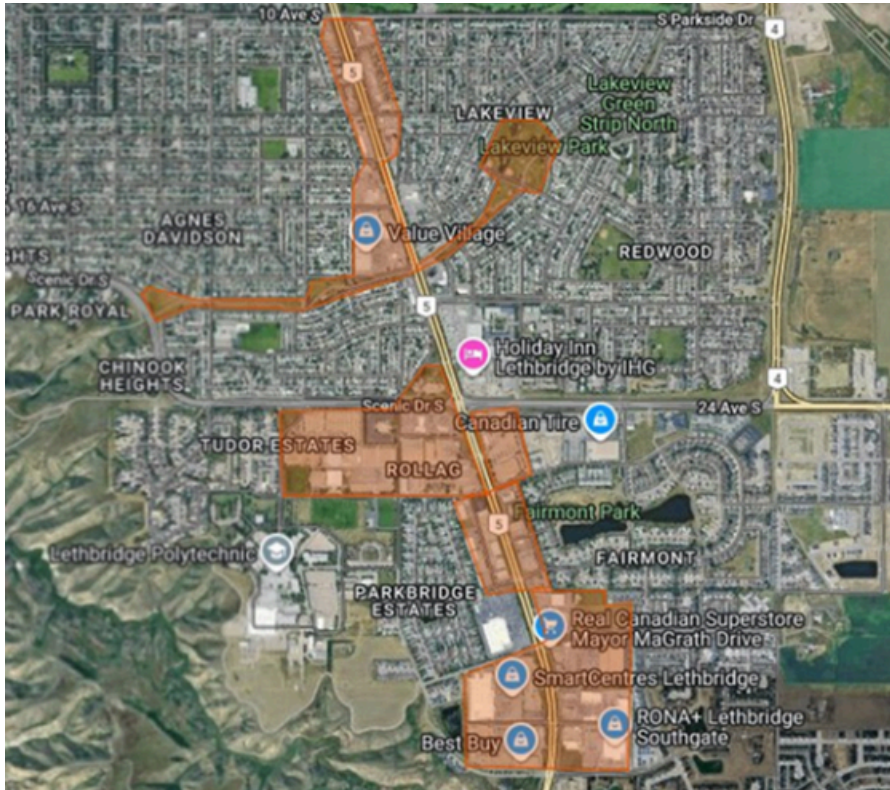
Point-in-Time Count (PiT)

The PiT Count is a nationally organized event that occurs over a single night to survey the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, providing a snapshot of those in both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Conducted annually, alongside a survey every three years, PiT Counts should be interpreted alongside other up-to-date data and resources, like the Unique Identifier List (UIL), to gain a comprehensive understanding of individuals experiencing homelessness. One significant function of a PiT Count is its ability to identify those not engaged with local services. The data gathered contributes to local, provincial, and national trends over time and, when combined with other resources, enhances our overall comprehension of homelessness, aiding in the formulation of plans, programs, and services aimed at preventing and ending homelessness.

Evaluation of Tools

The PiT Count and the UIL data are critical tools for evaluating effectiveness and coverage of social services within the community, as well as identifying gaps in service delivery. Comparing PiT Count results with the UIL data provides insight into how individuals experiencing homelessness are being supported; the greater alignment between these figures, the more effectively the community's service system is reaching and engaging those in need.

Appendix 1: Enumeration Zones



Appendix 2: Survey Forms

 **2025 PiT Count Enumeration Screening Tool**

What is your group number? *

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a volunteer for the City of Lethbridge homelessness and housing needs study.


Have you already spoken to someone tonight with this lanyard? *

- Yes No Only observed

We are working to measure recent changes in the population experiencing homelessness in our community. This should only take about 1 minute to complete. **Participation is voluntary and your name will not be recorded.** Results will contribute to the understanding of how homelessness is changing across Canada, and will help to support programs and services that prevent and end homelessness.

Are you willing to answer a brief question about housing and homelessness in our community? *

- Yes No

 **2025 PiT Count Enumeration Screening Tool**

What is your group number? *

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a volunteer for the City of Lethbridge homelessness and housing needs study.

Have you already spoken to someone tonight with this lanyard? *

- Yes No Only observed

We are working to measure recent changes in the population experiencing homelessness in our community. This should only take about 1 minute to complete. **Participation is voluntary and your name will not be recorded.** Results will contribute to the understanding of how homelessness is changing across Canada, and will help to support programs and services that prevent and end homelessness.

Are you willing to answer a brief question about housing and homelessness in our community? *

- Yes No

Where are you staying tonight? (DO NOT READ CATEGORIES TO PARTICIPANTS) *

- Own apartment
- Someone else's place
- Motel/hotel (Self funded)
- Motel/hotel (Funded by City or homeless program)
- Hospital
- Treatment centre
- Jail, prison, remand centre
- Homeless Shelter (e.g. emergency, family or domestic violence shelter)
- Transitional shelter/housing
- Unsheltered in a public space (street, park, abandoned building)
- Encampment (group of tents, makeshift shelters or other long-term outdoor settlement)
- Vehicle (e.g. car, van, recreational vehicle (RV), truck, boat)
- Unsure
- Decline to answer