



## 2017 Durham PiT Count Report Released, Measuring the Scope and Nature of Homelessness in Durham

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

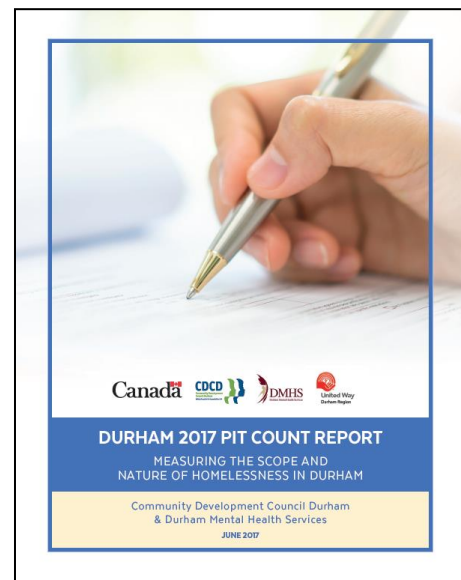
**WHITBY, ON (November 30, 2017)** - In February 2017, Community Development Council of Durham (CDCD), Durham Mental Health Services (DMHS) and the United Way of Durham Region partnered to conduct Durham Region's first Point-in-Time homelessness count.

Over 150 volunteers canvassed all parts of the region to identify individuals experiencing homelessness. The result of their efforts will help government and service organizations recognize the extent of local homelessness and plan appropriate services and supports.

Findings from this count have been released in a report that was presented to Regional Council by DMHS CEO Rob Adams, CDCD Executive Director Kate Bird and The Refuge Executive Director Clarence Keesman, who also chairs the Durham Region Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Advisory Board (CAB). This CAB oversees the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy program at the local level.

The findings provide a snapshot of how many people are homeless in Durham Region as well as providing some insight into their demographics and circumstances. Key findings include:

- 271 individuals were found to be experiencing sheltered or unsheltered PIT homelessness
- 34 families, accounting for 98 unique individuals, were found to be experiencing homelessness
- 26% of survey participants identified as Indigenous or as having Indigenous ancestry, a stark contrast to the 1.5% of Durham residents who identify as Indigenous



DMHS Program Manager Marni Bell served as the lead for DMHS on this project. “This was a community-driven effort,” she explains. “The steering committee involved representation from many service organizations, from the academic sector, from police and from a person who has experienced homelessness.”

CDCD Community Development Manager Vanessa Bilenduke took the lead for CDCD. “This first local Point-in-Time count of homelessness now provides us with a baseline of homelessness in our community. The next count, taking place in April 2018, will allow us to see if we are making significant changes in homelessness in Durham.”

DMHS Quality Coordinator Doreen Hume McKenna helped organize the count and the volunteer drive that made it possible. “There was extensive participation by students from both UOIT and Durham College; and significant participation by staff from the Region of Durham, CDCD and DMHS; other helping agencies; and a teachers group from the Durham Catholic District School Board. We were strongly supported by faith groups and a local business in each of the communities that we surveyed. They provided a warm gathering place for volunteers, hot drinks and nourishment, all of which were donated. The PIT Count would not have happened if it hadn’t been for our communities coming together in a volunteer surge, united in their desire to contribute to ending homelessness in Durham Region.

To learn more about the next Point-in-Time Homelessness Count in April 2018 or to volunteer, please contact Doreen Hume McKenna at [dhumemckenna@dmhs.ca](mailto:dhumemckenna@dmhs.ca).

To obtain a copy of the 2017 report, please visit <http://www.cdcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Durham2017PiTReportFINAL.pdf>.

### **About Community Development Council Durham:**

As a leading organization in Durham, CDCD has engaged and supported thousands of individuals and families for over 45 years. The organization prides itself on being active participants and partners in many community initiatives that support the social, economic and cultural development in our community. CDCD strives to promote community engagement and sharing in all of our work, ensuring that members of the community are connected and supported. For more information, please visit [www.cdcd.org](http://www.cdcd.org).

### **About Durham Mental Health Services:**

Serving Durham Region for 30 years, Durham Mental Health Services (DMHS) offers a range of programs to help individuals and families manage the impact of mental illness and work towards recovery. Services include immediate crisis support, longer-term supportive housing, case management, mental health court support and specialized services for families. DMHS works in partnership with local healthcare and human

service providers to deliver accessible, coordinated, and person-centred care. For more information, visit their website at [www.dmhs.ca](http://www.dmhs.ca).

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