

Cold Lake John Howard Society

Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project

April 1 - 30 2018

Report



Monday April 8, 2019

A Partnership with The Cold Lake John Howard Society, The City of Cold Lake, The Allard Foundation, Cold Lake Food Bank, Alberta Health Services - Addiction Services, Probation/Community Corrections, Cold Lake Family And Community Support Services, Lakeland Centre for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Second Floor Women's Recovery Centre, Kookum's House, Portage College, Dr Margaret Savage Women's Crisis Centre, WJS and Cold Lake Outreach School

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In January 2018 the Cold Lake John Howard Society initiated the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project.

General Project Aim:

The Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project aimed at a better and more comprehensive accounting of the number of homeless in the community of Cold Lake.

Support For the Project:

Financial support for the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project was provided through grants from the City of Cold Lake (Cold Lake Family and Community Support Services Strategy Grant) and the Allard Foundation.

Definition of Homelessness Used For This Estimation:

“Homelessness is the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing. Individuals who become homeless experience a range of physical living situations. These various living situations include:

- **Unsheltered:** Absolutely homeless, living on the street or in places not intended for human habitation.
- **Emergency Sheltered:** People who are staying in overnight shelters due to homelessness or family violence.
- **Provisionally Accommodated:** People with accommodation that is temporary or that lacks security for tenure.
- **At Risk of Homelessness:** People who are not yet homeless, but their current economic situation is precarious.”

Alberta Rural Development Network Rural Homelessness Estimation Project.

Data Collecting Approach Used For This Estimate:

The Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project used the Rural Homelessness Estimation Project developed by the Alberta Rural Development Network. See Appendix 1: Rural Homeless Estimation Project, Step-by-Step Guide to Estimate Rural Homelessness and Appendix 2: Estimation Survey.

The intention of the Homelessness Estimation Survey, conducted by the Cold Lake John Howard Society, from April 1 – 30th, 2018, was to raise awareness about housing and homeless issues in the community of Cold Lake. The report was intended to help to inform supports and services and potential future strategic directions in Cold Lake related to homeless interventions and prevention. The data compiled in the report would also serve as a quantitative baseline for further grant applications related to prevention and/or intervention in this area of focus.

The Alberta Rural Development Network endeavored to develop a cost-conscious, efficient, and reliable practice to estimate the number of homeless individuals in rural Canada.

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The results of the estimation project have been summarized by the CLJHS based on the shortcomings recognized by the Coordinator through the projects debrief process for surveyors. The results can be summarized through the following: more advance planning with organizational leads, which was unfortunately not the strategy with this initiative, thereby helping to ensure commitment to the process by being involved in the decision making as well as commitment and comfort with implementation; additionally, better preparedness of surveyors and their respective organizations; engagement of organizational leads to ensure adherence to protocols, support and follow through; and the involvement of Cold Lake First Nations and the Elizabeth Metis Settlement as partners; lastly, allegations by participants that they are being forced by agencies to participate as a condition of remaining as residents in temporary shelters in our community, must be followed up on.

It is the position of Cold Lake and District Family and Community Support Services that the completion of another community survey, whose process takes into consideration and additionally implements the recommendations made from the debrief, in search of a much more comprehensive picture of homelessness in our community is recommended. Further, these recommendations should be considered as imperative and not as optional to the host organization. Another round of funding may be possible through the ARDN or the FCSSAA in future, or by way of a Community Strategy Grant through Cold Lake and District FCSS.

Period of Estimation Project:

The Homelessness Estimation Survey was conducted from April 1 to 30, 2018

Total Number of Surveys Completed: 35

Agencies Who Participated in the Estimation of Homelessness:

1. Cold Lake Food Bank (8 surveys completed).
2. Alberta Health Services - Addiction Services (1 survey completed)
3. Probation/Community Corrections (3 surveys completed)
4. Cold Lake Family And Community Support Services (13 surveys completed)
5. Lakeland Centre for Fetal alcohol Spectrum Disorder (4 Surveys completed)
6. Second Floor Women's Recovery Centre (2 Surveys completed)
7. WJS Canada (0 surveys completed)
8. Alberta Supports (0 surveys completed)
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11. Cold Lake Outreach School (0 surveys completed)
12. Portage College Cold Lake Campus (0 surveys completed)
13. Cold Lake John Howard Society (1 survey completed)

Total surveys completed by participating agencies: 35

Unique Identifiers:

1. 35 unique identifiers, no repeat surveys.
2. 12 females,
3. 22 males,
4. 1 did not say

Data From The Survey:

1. Family Members Staying with Surveyed Person:

1. None	15
2. Decline	2
3. Sister	1
4. Brother	2
5. Uncle	2
6. Cousin	1
7. Son	1
8. Grandson	1
9. Grand Children	1
10. Children	3
11. Mother, Dad, Sister	1
12. Partner	1
13. Partner, 4 Children	1
14. Roommate, Uncle	1
15. Partner, Children	1
16. Children, Brother	1

2. Current living situation of people using service agencies:

1. Own Apartment / House (One paycheque from being homeless)	13
2. Someone Else's Place	5
a. Abandoned / Vacant Building	0
3. Motel / Hotel	0
4. Hospital	2
5. Jail, Prison, or Remand Centre	0
6. Emergency Shelter, Domestic Violence Shelter	3
7. Transitional Housing	0
8. Vehicle (Car, Van, or Truck)	0
9. Travel Trailer or RV	0
10. Makeshift Shelter, Tent, or Shack	1
11. Paid Campground	0
12. Public Space (e.g. Sidewalks, Squares, Parks, Forests, or Bus Shelter)	0
13. Other:	
a. Kokums House	3
b. Sisters House	1
c. Dad's Place	1
d. Uncertain	1
e. 2nd Floor	2
f. Family Member	1
i. Mom's	1
14. Decline to Answer	1

3. Length Of Time Surveyed Person has been in this situation:

1. No Answer	11
2. Decline	1
3. 2 days	1
4. 4 days	1
5. 2 Weeks	1
6. 4 Weeks	1
7. 1 month	4
8. 3 months	2
9. 5 months	1
10. 6 months	1
11. 34 months	1
12. 1 year	1
13. 2 years	3
14. 3 - 4 years	1
15. 4 years	2
16. 9 years	1
17. 11 years	1
18. 43 years	1

4. How many times the Surveyed Person has experienced this kind (or similar) situation over the past year:

1. No Answer	12
2. Decline	5
3. None	3
4. 1 time	6
5. 2 times	4
6. 3 times	1
7. 4 times	1
8. 100's	1
9. 365 days	1
10. 10 years	1 (May not have understood question)

5. Have you spent time in an emergency shelter in the past year?

1. Yes	8
2. No	26
3. Decline	1

6. Time Surveyed Person has spent in the Community:

1. Months	1
2. 1.5 months	1
3. 7 months	2
4. 10 months	1
5. 1 year	1
6. 1.5 years	1
7. 2 years	1
8. 3 years	2
9. 4 years	1
10. 5 years	1
11. 7 years	1
12. 8 years	1
13. 10 years	4
14. 11 years	1
15. 15 years	1
16. 18 years	1
17. 24 years	1
18. 27 years	1
19. 28 years	1
20. 30 years	1
21. 39 years	1
22. 42 years	1
23. 43 years	1
24. Always Been Here	6

7. Previous Residence of Surveyed Individuals:

1. Fort McMurray
2. Lac La Biche
3. Sundre
4. Vancouver
5. Bonnyville
6. Edmonton
7. Montreal
8. Prince Albert
9. Winnipeg
10. Courtney
11. Victoria
12. Wainwright
13. Grand Prairie
14. Calgary

8. Do they leave on a seasonal basis:

1. 20 no,
2. 6 yes,
3. 5 sometimes
4. 2 for work/school
5. 2 for weather

9. Born in Canada/immigrant/refugee:

1. 34 born in Canada,
2. 1 decline to answer

10. Ethnic group:

1. 10 Caucasian,
2. 15 First Nations,
3. 5 Metis,
4. 4 decline to answer,
5. 1 Egyptian/Asian

11. Service in the Canadian Military or Emergency Services:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 1. Emergency Services | 2 |
| 2. No | 32 |
| 3. Decline | 1 |

12. Consider Housing situation to be unstable:

- | | |
|------------|----|
| 1. Yes | 25 |
| 2. No | 8 |
| 3. Decline | 2 |

13. If / Why respondents feel their current housing situation is unstable or at risk of losing:

1. unable to pay rent,
2. hospitalized,
3. experienced abuse from guardian,
4. owner moving back in to rental,
5. cost of daycare,
6. mental health,
7. domestic violence,
8. separation/divorce
9. conflict with landlord,
10. too old,
11. addictions/substance use,
12. job loss,
13. incarcerated,
14. poor housing conditions,
15. conflict with parent,
16. no power

14. Reason for visit to service agency:

1. Child care,
2. Employment issues / Needs
3. Housing issues / Needs
4. physical health care issues / Needs
5. Landlord / tenant Issues,
6. Basic Needs (Food, Shelter, Medical, Shower, laundry)
7. Help with Government forms,
8. Help with Accessing government / other programs or services
9. Criminal or Misdemeanor issues,
10. Food,
11. Addictions,
12. Parenting / family issues,
13. Domestic Violence,
14. Social Needs / Isolation
15. Emotional / Mental health needs,
16. Taxes,
17. Spiritual / Cultural Needs
18. Training / Education Needs
19. Access to technology
20. Separation / Divorce / Custody
21. Relationship Issues
22. New To the Community
23. Transportation Needs
24. Cold Lake Family and Community Support Services

*most people checked off upwards of 5 issues/reasons for visit

15. Occupation and how they obtain money:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Welfare/Social Assistance, | 16 |
| 2. Child Benefit, | 2 |
| 3. Bottle Returns, | 1 |
| 4. Criminal Activities, | 1 |
| 5. Seniors Benefits, | 1 |
| 6. No Income, student, | 3 |
| 7. AISH, | 2 |
| 8. Pick and sell from landfill, | 1 |
| 9. Employment, | 4 |
| 10. Disability, | 2 |
| 11. Borrow from family and friends, | 1 |
| 12. EI | 1 |

A Selective Interpretation of Survey Data:

1. Number of Surveyed Community Members:

The number of community members surveyed by the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project is small (35 non repeating / duplicated surveys completed). The Project hoped to have 725 Surveys completed during the survey period. (See Evaluation of Survey Process)

2. Does The Project Estimate the Number of Community Members who are Homeless:

The number of completed surveys is likely too small for an accurate count of the number of Community Members that are homeless. Approximately 50% of the Respondents indicate that Basic Needs such as Shelter and Housing Issues / Needs are a concern for which they are seeking help. The survey results would indicate a minimum of 18 Community Members who are experiencing Homelessness as defined by the meaning of Homelessness used for this Project. The number is likely much higher. Provisionally Accommodated community members were not adequately represented by the survey. The number of unsheltered may only be partially surveyed. The Housing Situation / Needs of the Cold Lake First Nations and Elizabeth Metis Settlement communities is not represented in the survey. The wait list for assisted or low rent housing is not represented in the survey.

3. Unstable Housing Situation:

Respondents were asked, "Can you share with us the reasons you feel your housing situation is unstable or why you feel you could lose your home? 71% (25 of 35) of completed surveys indicated that their housing situation was unstable. 58% (7 of 12) females completing the survey considered their housing situation unstable. 73% (16 of 22) males completing the survey considered their housing situation unstable.

4. Job Loss and Housing Instability:

Job loss as a reason for housing instability was reported by 17% (2 of 12) of female respondents. 45% (10 of 22) of males reported that job loss contributed to housing instability.

5. Basic Needs:

The Homelessness Estimation Survey asked "What general areas or issues are you here to get support with? Basic Needs (food, shelter, medical, shower, laundry) was selected 16 times. 46% of the surveys completed indicated that respondents were seeking support for Basic Needs. 50% (6 of 12) females surveyed were seeking help with Basic Needs. 41% (9 of 22) males surveyed were seeking help with basic needs.

6. Housing Issues / Needs:

Housing Issues / Needs was another category Respondents could choose to indicate the support they were seeking. 40% (14 of 53) of Respondents indicated that they were seeking support with Housing Issues / Needs. 25% (3 of 12) of females completing the survey were seeking help with Housing Issues / Needs. 50% (11 of 22) of males completing the survey were seeking help with Housing Issues / Needs.

7. Possible Indications:

1. This select interpretation of the survey data points to the need for a reduction in housing instability and increase of stable residences for community members who are experiencing homelessness on the homeless spectrum.
2. This select interpretation of the survey data suggests that an additional daytime drop-in / resource centre such as a Community Hub may prove helpful for supporting community members in unstable housing situations and working with those who do not have a residence to find and stable housing situation.
3. Because of the limited data provided by the survey it is inconclusive that an additional short term stay facility for community members currently unsheltered is needed.

Brief History of the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project:

As part of the vision of the Cold Lake John Howard Society to develop a Community Hub and Temporary Accommodation for community members who are experiencing homelessness, a decision was made to conduct a Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Survey to ascertain the homeless count of the City.

Preparations for the Estimation Survey began in January of 2018 and were carried out through March 2018. A Project Coordinator was hired. The plan was introduced to the Cold Lake Interagency and at Elizabeth Metis Settlement. Attempts at providing training for agencies were made. Support for agencies was offered. One on one training was provided. Advertising and materials were published and provided.

The data of the survey was collected by the Project Coordinator, processed and given to the Executive Director of the Cold Lake John Howard Society on July 11, 2018

The data of the survey was given to the President of the Cold Lake John Howard Society on February 2, 2019. Further information from the Project Coordinator was provided through email and an interview was conducted on February 18, 2019. A draft of the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project April 1 - 30, 2018 Report was completed on February 18, 2019. The Board of the Cold Lake John Howard Society reviewed and edited the draft report on Wednesday April 3, 2019. The report was accepted on Friday April 5, 2019.

Evaluation of the Homelessness Estimation Survey Process:

A meeting of the Partnering Agencies was held on May 22, 2018 to evaluate the Homelessness Estimation Survey Process that was conducted.

Partner Agencies present at the meeting were:

1. ~~Cold Lake John Howard Society~~
2. Probation/Community Corrections
3. Cold Lake Food Bank
4. Lakeland Centre for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
5. Second Floor Women's Recovery Centre
6. Cold Lake Family and Community Support Services

The following evaluations of the Survey process were presented at the meeting.

1. The survey was too long for clients.
2. The survey was too complicated for clients.
3. There was not enough time made available to complete the survey adequately.
4. There were not enough staff to do the survey with clients.
5. Clients were too uncomfortable to respond to certain questions.
6. Staff conducting the survey were uncomfortable surveying clients.
7. April may have been a poor choice for conducting the survey missing conditions in the colder months of January to March: people living on less resources, people who are cold. An agency suggested September would be a good time for a homelessness survey because it would connect with individuals who are "Provisionally Accommodated".
8. One of the agencies considered the survey a privacy violation. (In the presentations and training CLJHS staff tried to make clear that conducting the survey would not be a violation of privacy. The topic kept surfacing during the estimation process.)
9. Probations reported having no issues with clients and observed that could have benefitted from a bigger time span.
10. The meeting observed that agencies seemed to be too selective with who was surveyed.
11. Agency wanted to be compensated for providing surveys.
12. More training may have aided in the survey process.

13. There was a difference of philosophy in who should complete surveying that may have affected the outcome. The Cold Lake John Howard Society believed that clients of different agencies would be less stressed by a survey if it was conducted by staff they already had a relationship with. Some agency partners thought the surveys would be done by Cold Lake John Howard Society Staff. The CLJHS chose to partner with agencies in Cold Lake to conduct the survey. Some partners believed that CLJHS staff should have been surveying apparent homeless community members on the street.
14. An invitation to all agency partners was given to call the CLJHS team for help with the survey. Food Bank staff called for assistance several times.
15. The “Provisionally Accommodated” (transient, couch surfing, constantly moving around) community members were inadequately represented.

Overall the Agencies represented considered the information valuable.

Considerations for Future Estimations of Homelessness:

1. Review use of Alberta Rural Development Network Estimation Survey and choose instrument thought best for our Community.
2. Planning and training to be done further in advance to allow for buy in and adequate training.
3. Increase agency involvement in the survey process.
 - a. Ascertain that the survey is not a violation of privacy. Provide details to each partner agency.
 - b. Determine the length of time completing a survey requires and negotiate for this staff time with partner agencies.
 - c. Work directly with Directors and Managers to create effective agency partnering.
4. Seek to include Cold Lake First Nations and Elizabeth Metis Settlement as partners in the survey process.
5. Seek to include Lakeland Housing and Habitat For Humanity.
6. Consider developing a trained homelessness estimation survey team to conduct the survey at various agencies and locations in Cold Lake.
7. Develop a better public and agency information campaign to promote the project.
8. Seek ways to survey the transient population.

9. Evaluate times of the year that would provide good information about homelessness.
 - a. Seek advice from Alberta Rural Development Network.
 - b. Consider the possibility of a winter and a summer survey.
 - c. Consider a survey if January, February, March.
 - d. Consider a survey in September.
10. Training of agency staff for doing survey:
 - a. Work with clients at clarification of answers.
 - b. Address the issue of client and staff embarrassment.
11. Identify alternate / additional locations for conducting the survey.

Follow Up Estimation of Homelessness:

The Alberta Rural Development Network Rural Homelessness Estimation Project recommends that “each community should repeat the entire estimation process once every two years. It is important to estimate homelessness on a regular basis to identify the homelessness trends and to provide support in order to reduce homelessness in the community.”

Following this recommendation, a repeat estimation of homelessness in Cold Lake might be sometime in 2020 Or 2021. Due to the economic nature of our area it may be beneficial to administer a repeat survey in 2020.

Thank You!

The Cold Lake John Howard Society would like to express it's thanks to the City of Cold Lake and the Allard Foundation for funding this Project. And we would like to thank the Agencies and their staff the contributed to the Project.

Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project April 1 - 30 2018

INCOME	Proposed Budget	Actual Budget				
FCSS Community Strategy Grant	2,000.00	2,000.00				
Cold Lake John Howard Society	4,000.00	0.00				
Allard Foundation		3,000.00				
TOTAL	6,000.00	5,000.00				
EXPENSES						
Fascilitator	4,000.00	3,000.00				
Administrative Expenses	500.00	500.00				
Program Expenses	900.00	900.00				
Report	600.00	600.00				
TOTAL	6,000.00	5,000.00				
BALANCE	0.00	0.0				

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7. Montreal
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- | | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 1. Emergency Services | 2 |
| 2. No | 32 |
| 3. Decline | 1 |

12. Consider Housing situation to be unstable:

- | | |
|------------|----|
| 1. Yes | 25 |
| 2. No | 8 |
| 3. Decline | 2 |

13. If / Why respondents feel their current housing situation is unstable or at risk of losing:

1. unable to pay rent,
2. hospitalized,
3. experienced abuse from guardian,
4. owner moving back in to rental,
5. cost of daycare,
6. mental health,
7. domestic violence,
8. separation/divorce
9. conflict with landlord,
10. too old,
11. addictions/substance use,
12. job loss,
13. incarcerated,
14. poor housing conditions,
15. conflict with parent,
16. no power

14. Reason for visit to service agency:

1. Child care,
2. Employment issues / Needs
3. Housing issues / Needs
4. physical health care issues / Needs
5. Landlord / tenant Issues,
6. Basic Needs (Food, Shelter, Medical, Shower, laundry)
7. Help with Government forms,
8. Help with Accessing government / other programs or services
9. Criminal or Misdemeanor issues,
10. Food,
11. Addictions,
12. Parenting / family issues,
13. Domestic Violence,
14. Social Needs / Isolation
15. Emotional / Mental health needs,
16. Taxes,
17. Spiritual / Cultural Needs
18. Training / Education Needs
19. Access to technology
20. Separation / Divorce / Custody
21. Relationship Issues
22. New To the Community
23. Transportation Needs
24. Cold Lake Family and Community Support Services

*most people checked off upwards of 5 issues/reasons for visit

15. Occupation and how they obtain money:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Welfare/Social Assistance, | 16 |
| 2. Child Benefit, | 2 |
| 3. Bottle Returns, | 1 |
| 4. Criminal Activities, | 1 |
| 5. Seniors Benefits, | 1 |
| 6. No Income, student, | 3 |
| 7. AISH, | 2 |
| 8. Pick and sell from landfill, | 1 |
| 9. Employment, | 4 |
| 10. Disability, | 2 |
| 11. Borrow from family and friends, | 1 |
| 12. EI | 1 |

A Selective Interpretation of Survey Data:

1. Number of Surveyed Community Members:

The number of community members surveyed by the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project is small (35 non repeating / duplicated surveys completed). The Project hoped to have 725 Surveys completed during the survey period. (See Evaluation of Survey Process)

2. Does The Project Estimate the Number of Community Members who are Homeless:

The number of completed surveys is likely too small for an accurate count of the number of Community Members that are homeless. Approximately 50% of the Respondents indicate that Basic Needs such as Shelter and Housing Issues / Needs are a concern for which they are seeking help. The survey results would indicate a minimum of 18 Community Members who are experiencing Homelessness as defined by the meaning of Homelessness used for this Project. The number is likely much higher. Provisionally Accommodated community members were not adequately represented by the survey. The number of unsheltered may only be partially surveyed. The Housing Situation / Needs of the Cold Lake First Nations and Elizabeth Metis Settlement communities is not represented in the survey. The wait list for assisted or low rent housing is not represented in the survey.

3. Unstable Housing Situation:

Respondents were asked, "Can you share with us the reasons you feel your housing situation is unstable or why you feel you could lose your home? 71% (25 of 35) of completed surveys indicated that their housing situation was unstable. 58% (7 of 12) females completing the survey considered their housing situation unstable. 73% (16 of 22) males completing the survey considered their housing situation unstable.

4. Job Loss and Housing Instability:

Job loss as a reason for housing instability was reported by 17% (2 of 12) of female respondents. 45% (10 of 22) of males reported that job loss contributed to housing instability.

5. Basic Needs:

The Homelessness Estimation Survey asked "What general areas or issues are you here to get support with? Basic Needs (food, shelter, medical, shower, laundry) was selected 16 times. 46% of the surveys completed indicated that respondents were seeking support for Basic Needs. 50% (6 of 12) females surveyed were seeking help with Basic Needs. 41% (9 of 22) males surveyed were seeking help with basic needs.

6. Housing Issues / Needs:

Housing Issues / Needs was another category Respondents could choose to indicate the support they were seeking. 40% (14 of 53) of Respondents indicated that they were seeking support with Housing Issues / Needs. 25% (3 of 12) of females completing the survey were seeking help with Housing Issues / Needs. 50% (11 of 22) of males completing the survey were seeking help with Housing Issues / Needs.

7. Possible Indications:

1. This select interpretation of the survey data points to the need for a reduction in housing instability and increase of stable residences for community members who are experiencing homelessness on the homeless spectrum.
2. This select interpretation of the survey data suggests that an additional daytime drop-in / resource centre such as a Community Hub may prove helpful for supporting community members in unstable housing situations and working with those who do not have a residence to find a stable housing situation.
3. Because of the limited data provided by the survey it is inconclusive that an additional short term stay facility for community members currently unsheltered is needed.

Brief History of the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project:

As part of the vision of the Cold Lake John Howard Society to develop a Community Hub and Temporary Accommodation for community members who are experiencing homelessness, a decision was made to conduct a Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Survey to ascertain the homeless count of the City.

Preparations for the Estimation Survey began in January of 2018 and were carried out through March 2018. A Project Coordinator was hired. The plan was introduced to the Cold Lake Interagency and at Elizabeth Metis Settlement. Attempts at providing training for agencies were made. Support for agencies was offered. One on one training was provided. Advertising and materials were published and provided.

The data of the survey was collected by the Project Coordinator, processed and given to the Executive Director of the Cold Lake John Howard Society on July 11, 2018

The data of the survey was given to the President of the Cold Lake John Howard Society on February 2, 2019. Further information from the Project Coordinator was provided through email and an interview was conducted on February 18, 2019. A draft of the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project April 1 - 30, 2018 Report was completed on February 18, 2019. The Board of the Cold Lake John Howard Society reviewed and edited the draft report on Wednesday April 3, 2019. The report was accepted on Friday April 5, 2019.

Evaluation of the Homelessness Estimation Survey Process:

A meeting of the Partnering Agencies was held on May 22, 2018 to evaluate the Homelessness Estimation Survey Process that was conducted.

Partner Agencies present at the meeting were:

1. Cold Lake John Howard Society
2. Probation/Community Corrections
3. Cold Lake Food Bank
4. Lakeland Centre for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
5. Second Floor Women's Recovery Centre
6. Cold Lake Family and Community Support Services

The following evaluations of the Survey process were presented at the meeting.

1. The survey was too long for clients.
2. The survey was too complicated for clients.
3. There was not enough time made available to complete the survey adequately.
4. There were not enough staff to do the survey with clients.
5. Clients were too uncomfortable to respond to certain questions.
6. Staff conducting the survey were uncomfortable surveying clients.
7. April may have been a poor choice for conducting the survey missing conditions in the colder months of January to March: people living on less resources, people who are cold. An agency suggested September would be a good time for a homelessness survey because it would connect with individuals who are "Provisionally Accommodated".
8. One of the agencies considered the survey a privacy violation. (In the presentations and training CLJHS staff tried to make clear that conducting the survey would not be a violation of privacy. The topic kept surfacing during the estimation process.)
9. Probations reported having no issues with clients and observed that could have benefitted from a bigger time span.
10. The meeting observed that agencies seemed to be too selective with who was surveyed.
11. Agency wanted to be compensated for providing surveys.
12. More training may have aided in the survey process.

13. There was a difference of philosophy in who should complete surveying that may have affected the outcome. The Cold Lake John Howard Society believed that clients of different agencies would be less stressed by a survey if it was conducted by staff they already had a relationship with. Some agency partners thought the surveys would be done by Cold Lake John Howard Society Staff. The CLJHS chose to partner with agencies in Cold Lake to conduct the survey. Some partners believed that CLJHS staff should have been surveying apparent homeless community members on the street.
14. An invitation to all agency partners was given to call the CLJHS team for help with the survey. Food Bank staff called for assistance several times.
15. The "Provisionally Accommodated" (transient, couch surfing, constantly moving around) community members were inadequately represented.

Overall the Agencies represented considered the information valuable.

Considerations for Future Estimations of Homelessness:

1. Review use of Alberta Rural Development Network Estimation Survey and choose instrument thought best for our Community.
2. Planning and training to be done further in advance to allow for buy in and adequate training.
3. Increase agency involvement in the survey process.
 - a. Ascertain that the survey is not a violation of privacy. Provide details to each partner agency.
 - b. Determine the length of time completing a survey requires and negotiate for this staff time with partner agencies.
 - c. Work directly with Directors and Managers to create effective agency partnering.
4. Seek to include Cold Lake First Nations and Elizabeth Metis Settlement as partners in the survey process.
5. Seek to include Lakeland Housing and Habitat For Humanity.
6. Consider developing a trained homelessness estimation survey team to conduct the survey at various agencies and locations in Cold Lake.
7. Develop a better public and agency information campaign to promote the project.
8. Seek ways to survey the transient population.

9. Evaluate times of the year that would provide good information about homelessness.
 - a. Seek advice from Alberta Rural Development Network.
 - b. Consider the possibility of a winter and a summer survey.
 - c. Consider a survey if January, February, March.
 - d. Consider a survey in September.
10. Training of agency staff for doing survey:
 - a. Work with clients at clarification of answers.
 - b. Address the issue of client and staff embarrassment.
11. Identify alternate / additional locations for conducting the survey.

Follow Up Estimation of Homelessness:

The Alberta Rural Development Network Rural Homelessness Estimation Project recommends that “each community should repeat the entire estimation process once every two years. It is important to estimate homelessness on a regular basis to identify the homelessness trends and to provide support in order to reduce homelessness in the community.”

Following this recommendation, a repeat estimation of homelessness in Cold Lake might be sometime in 2020 Or 2021. Due to the economic nature of our area it may be beneficial to administer a repeat survey in 2020.

Thank You!

The Cold Lake John Howard Society would like to express it's thanks to the City of Cold Lake and the Allard Foundation for funding this Project. And we would like to thank the Agencies and their staff the contributed to the Project.

Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project April 1 - 30 2018

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