

PiT Count 2018

On Wednesday, April 18th, staff from Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS), Social Services – Sault Ste. Marie District, and more than ten (10) other organizations gathered throughout the City to participate in [PiT Count 2018](#).



Back Row (left to right): Wanda Chorney, Justin Marchand, Angie Kilby, Karen Benford, Paula Scoffield, Kristina Coulter, Pam Matthew, Danielle Cognigni, Racheal Spina, Paul McDonald (Social Services - SSMD), Kim Caldbick. Front Row (left to right): Sara Rowlinson, Kristy Jones, Debbie Sicoli, Lily Heika, Cathy Connor, Alyssa Hunter, Kelly Reynolds-Atkinson.

Volunteers gathered at Vincent Place, The Soup Kitchen, the Indian Friendship Centre and on foot in the community, to conduct surveys which will be analyzed to help determine the extent of homelessness in the community at a single point-in-time (PiT). This number gives a snapshot of homelessness, as defined by the *Canadian Homelessness Research Network*¹, currently being experienced in Sault Ste. Marie, which will be submitted as part of a national initiative aimed at measuring homelessness in Canada. The data will be entered into a national database, Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS).

Participating in events such as these, especially in our local community, allows the opportunity to speak face-to-face with those facing homelessness, hearing first-hand about the obstacles people are facing when trying to secure safe, affordable and culturally-appropriate housing. It is also an opportunity to listen to and document the self-determined definition of homelessness, outside of the one used for this particular PiT Count, as it has a much broader, and more personal scope that can be included when designing housing that will meet the self-identified needs of people who are experiencing homelessness.

¹ "Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it. Within this there are four categories of homelessness; sheltered, unsheltered, provisionally accommodated, and at risk of homelessness". – The Canadian Homelessness Research Network

Seeking to address critical gaps in the continuum of housing, OAHS has identified homelessness and risk of homelessness as an area of focus within our housing services portfolio. The Indigenous Supportive Housing Program (ISHP) will provide OAHS an opportunity to deliver much needed culture-based supportive housing and services (through partnerships) to the Indigenous community.

OAHS has been providing safe, affordable, and culturally-appropriate housing to Indigenous people living in urban and rural areas of Ontario for almost 25 years. OAHS also owns and administers more than 2,300 subsidized units across the province and has Regional Service Centres in Sault Ste. Marie, Dryden, Peterborough, and London.

About OAHS

Founded in 1994, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services provides safe and affordable housing to urban and rural First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people in Ontario. Our vision is to lead the design, development and delivery of a sustainable and culturally-appropriate continuum of housing. We are governed by representatives from three Indigenous organizations in Ontario – the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women’s Association, and the Métis Nation of Ontario. Learn more at ontarioaboriginalhousing.ca.