

COMMUNITY REPORT

2025 NANAIMO POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT

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STL'ILEP (DEPARTURE BAY)

St'ilep is more than a bay in motion. It is a village place and a waterway that holds arrival and return, work and rest, and the daily ways people move through Snuneymuxw territory. Ferries move on a steady rhythm, carrying people, goods, and livelihoods across the water. Small boats launch from the public ramp. Floatplanes lift off and land beside the terminal, linking the bay to coastal routes.

In recent years, house posts were raised at St'litlup to make this truth visible. They remind all who pass through that this is Snuneymuxw territory, and that presence here comes with responsibility. Facing the ocean, they speak to those who arrive by water and to those who live and work here each day.

On warm summer days, people swim near the docks and shoreline. Kids explore the beach at low tide, following the waterline where sand and eelgrass replace heavy rock. Beneath that is a nearshore ecosystem shaped by tides, shallow waters, and freshwater flows from nearby creeks and drainage channels. Those connections have changed over time. Fish runs that once moved more reliably through local systems have dropped significantly as shorelines and waterways have been altered, but the responsibility to restore what has been disrupted remains.

Like the bull kelp that shelters life beneath the surface, St'litlup makes interdependence visible. Business, recreation, and transit sit side by side here, along with the small gaps in safety that some people fall through. The same shoreline that welcomes travelers can also be a place where people experiencing homelessness pass through, pause briefly, or are moved along.

Recognizing St'litlup in this report is a reminder that homelessness is not separate from the places we rely on. It happens within the working landscapes of this community, in full view of the routes we travel and the waters we share. As Chief Michael Wyse (Xum'silum) affirmed in last year's report, Snuneymuxw continues to uphold its inherent rights and responsibilities to the land and the people connected to this territory, and stands firm in its commitment to ensure safe, stable, and culturally appropriate housing for all.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count was conducted on December 3, 2025, within a single 24-hour enumeration window. National guidance situates Point-in-Time counts between October 1 and November 30. The December 3 enumeration date was approved by the national PiT coordination team in recognition of local scheduling constraints. The count was led by United Way British Columbia as the Reaching Home Community Entity and formal reporting lead, and implemented through a cross-partner working group including Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, and community partners. The enumeration aligns with the federal Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide, 4th Edition.

The total should be read alongside the following methodological considerations. While the 2025 count followed federal standards, aspects of training and screening application affected how certain responses were interpreted in the field.

The 2025 count was the first cycle in which the streamlined annual survey instrument was administered under an expanded requirement for routine use outside nationally coordinated full-survey years. While aligned with federal Core Standards, this operational shift increased training demands and introduced early inconsistencies in screening interpretation that required manual reconciliation following the count.

Two factors in particular should be noted when reading the results:

1. Training and screening application relied heavily on the 2024 approach, and key definitions were not reinforced strongly enough to ensure uniform interpretation across teams. Of the 485 unique consenting respondents, 83 were excluded from the homelessness total on the basis of an out-of-scope overnight location on count night, consistent with the federal inclusion criteria applied throughout this count. The Enumeration Results section provides a full breakdown of inclusions and exclusions to show how totals were constructed. Updated training protocols and clearer screening guidance will be implemented in future counts.
2. Community context has shifted since the previous count, including the addition of new temporary housing units and service adjustments. These changes may influence how individuals understand and answer screening questions. Visibility near services does not in itself indicate unsheltered homelessness; inclusion is determined strictly by overnight location and screening criteria. As with all Point-in-Time counts, this enumeration represents a one-night snapshot and cannot capture hidden homelessness or the full extent of housing instability over time.

Taken together, these factors indicate that the Local Total should be interpreted as a conservative minimum based on the methodology used. Stronger training controls and clearer definitional guidance for screeners will be priorities for future enumerations.

The 2025 Local Total is 577 people identified as experiencing homelessness on the night of the count.

This total is comprised of two distinct components. The Core Enumeration Total of 523 combines 402 survey-confirmed individuals and 121 observed unsheltered individuals. The Local Total includes 54 youth identified through a separate key-informant snapshot methodology.

Survey-confirmed homelessness is determined by overnight location on count night, in alignment with federal inclusion criteria. The enumeration required substantial frontline engagement, with 529 screening interactions conducted across outreach zones and fixed participation sites during the 24-hour window. Of 529 screening interactions recorded during the enumeration window, 490 respondents provided consent, 485 were identified as unique consenting respondents, and 402 were confirmed as experiencing homelessness based on an in-scope overnight location. Overnight location is the primary inclusion criterion, consistent with the Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide. Housing access responses are recorded for descriptive purposes and are not used as the primary inclusion screen. The full breakdown of overnight locations and housing access responses is presented in the Enumeration Results section.

The 2025 Local Total of 577 represents a decrease of 44 from the 621 individuals identified in the 2024 count. Given the methodological considerations described above, year-over-year differences must be interpreted cautiously. Point-in-Time counts measure a single night and are sensitive to screening application and contextual conditions. The observed decrease should not be read as establishing direct cause-and-effect relationships between specific housing investments and changes in the total. The Local Total remains a conservative minimum. The count also reflects inherent limits on what a single-night enumeration can capture. People cycling in and out of housing over time, staying in informal or overcrowded arrangements, or not in contact with outreach services on the night of the count are unlikely to be included. The true extent of housing instability in Nanaimo over the course of the year is larger than what this figure reflects.

The 2025 count introduced a dedicated youth key-informant snapshot, providing a first-year baseline for youth homelessness data in Nanaimo. The 54 young people identified were primarily in hidden or temporary arrangements, including couch surfing and short-term accommodations. This baseline will inform future enumeration design and prevention planning. Indigenous homelessness continues to require focused attention. Figures from 2024 reporting indicated that Indigenous people represented approximately 35 percent of the counted population while comprising roughly 8 percent of Nanaimo's general population. Sixty percent of respondents with foster care histories in 2024 identified as Indigenous. The 2025 enumeration used a streamlined survey instrument and did not collect Indigenous-specific demographic data at a comparable level of detail; these figures are drawn from prior reporting and are included here for context only.

Detailed methodology, enumeration results, and interpretive analysis are presented in the sections that follow.

DEFINITIONS & TERMINOLOGY

Snuneymuxw First Nation people have lived on and cared for these lands and waters since time immemorial. In this context, homelessness is not only the absence of housing. It is also the result of disrupted relationships to land, family, identity, safety, and community, shaped by colonization and ongoing systems of displacement. The definitions below are provided to support shared understanding in this report and to reflect the lived realities of people experiencing homelessness within Snuneymuxw territory and in Nanaimo today.

Homelessness More than just the absence of a house, homelessness is a loss of land, culture, safety, and connection. In the context of Indigenous peoples, it is deeply tied to the impacts of colonization, residential schools, and systemic displacement.

Indigenous Homelessness A distinct experience of homelessness that includes not only the loss of physical housing but also the disconnection from land, family, identity, and traditional ways of life. Many Indigenous people experiencing homelessness are guests on the lands of other Nations, seeking safety and stability within an imposed colonial system.

Unsheltered Homelessness People living outside, in encampments, vehicles, or public spaces because they have no secure place to stay. In Snuneymuxw territory, this often includes people living along waterways, parks, and urban spaces that were once village sites.

Sheltered Homelessness Those staying in emergency shelters, safe houses, or temporary transitional housing but still without permanent, stable housing. Many in this category remain at risk of returning to homelessness due to a lack of affordable options.

Encampments Community-formed spaces where people without housing come together for safety and survival. These spaces exist because colonial systems have failed to provide adequate housing, and they reflect the resilience of those who have been left without options.

Overdose Crisis An ongoing emergency disproportionately affecting Indigenous and unhoused people due to the toxic drug supply, criminalization, and systemic neglect. The crisis is fueled by a lack of culturally safe health supports, stable housing, and decolonized approaches to healing.

Housing First A principle that recognizes housing as a basic human right, not something that must be earned. This approach provides permanent housing without conditions and ensures that people have the support they need to remain housed.

Harm Reduction A way of reducing harm caused by colonial drug policies and criminalization. This includes access to safe supply, supervised consumption sites, naloxone, and culturally grounded supports that do not punish people for substance use.

Supportive Housing Permanent housing that includes wraparound supports such as mental health care, cultural healing programs, and peer-led initiatives. Supportive housing should be designed with Indigenous leadership to ensure it is safe and accessible for all.

These definitions provide a foundation for interpreting the data and themes discussed throughout the report. They are not abstract categories. They describe real experiences and the systems that shape them. Local conditions also matter. Housing costs, limited supply of deeply affordable homes, gaps in income supports, and population change all affect who becomes homeless and how long people remain without stable housing. These pressures intersect with health needs, discrimination, child welfare involvement, and the toxic drug supply, which can deepen harm and make exits from homelessness harder to sustain. Keeping both the terminology and the local context in view is essential for understanding the findings in this report and for shaping responses that address immediate safety while also changing the conditions that drive homelessness in Snuneymuxw territory.

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count is an enumeration of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo on a single night. It was conducted on December 3, 2025, within a 24-hour window, in alignment with the federal Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide, 4th Edition. The count was led by United Way British Columbia as the Reaching Home Community Entity and formal reporting lead, and implemented through a cross-partner working group that included Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, and community-based organizations. This report presents the methodology, findings, and analysis derived from that enumeration.

Point-in-Time counts are a nationally standardized tool for measuring the minimum extent of homelessness in a community on a given night. They do not capture the full scope of housing instability over time, nor do they reflect the experiences of people who are hidden from outreach or who cycle in and out of homelessness between count periods. The figures reported here are conservative minimum estimates based on the methodology used. They provide a consistent reference point for tracking change over time and for informing local planning and resource allocation decisions.

The 2025 enumeration identified a Local Total of 577 people identified as experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. This figure is composed of a Core Enumeration Total of 523, derived from survey-confirmed and observed unsheltered streams, and a youth key-informant snapshot of 54 young people identified through schools and youth-serving partners. These components are reported and analyzed separately throughout the report to preserve the integrity of each enumeration method.

Snuneymuxw First Nation's participation in the 2025 count reflects an ongoing commitment to Indigenous-informed, culturally grounded data practices. The enumeration takes place within Snuneymuxw territory, and the involvement of Snuneymuxw First Nation as a core working group member strengthens both the credibility of the data collection process and the reach of outreach activities, particularly among Indigenous community members who may be less likely to engage with institutional processes.

This report is organized to support clear, sequential reading. The Methodology section explains how enumeration was conducted and how totals were derived. The Enumeration Results section presents counts and distributions without interpretation. The Analysis section provides interpretive context for the results. The Conclusion identifies key findings and their implications for continued planning. An appendix containing the unsheltered enumeration screening tool is included at the end of the report.

All numerical figures in this report have been verified through the working group's finalized data reconciliation process. Where data could not be confirmed at the time of publication, a notation has been included.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the 2025 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count was designed in alignment with the federal Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide, 4th Edition. The enumeration was conducted on December 3, 2025, within a single 24-hour period, with all surveys and observations completed within that same window. The count was led by United Way British Columbia as the Reaching Home Community Entity and formal reporting lead, and implemented through a cross-partner working group that included Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, and community-based organizations. All figures and reconciliation rules in this report align with the finalized data reconciliation framework for the 2025 Point-in-Time Count.

Enumeration Design

The 2025 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count was conducted on December 3, 2025, within a single 24-hour enumeration window. The enumeration was designed in alignment with the federal Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide, 4th Edition. National guidance situates Point-in-Time counts between October 1 and November 30; the December 3 date reflects local scheduling accommodations.

The count was led by United Way British Columbia as the Reaching Home Community Entity and formal reporting lead, and implemented through a cross-partner working group that included Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, Nanaimo Family Life Association, Island Crisis Care Society, Island Health, and NARSF. The working group was responsible for confirming outreach routes, aligning fixed survey locations, coordinating volunteer and staff deployment, and ensuring geographic coverage across the enumeration area.

The Local Total of 577 is composed of two distinct components: a Core Enumeration Total of 523, derived from survey-confirmed and observed unsheltered streams, and a youth key-informant snapshot of 54 young people identified through a separate process. The youth stream is included in the Local Total but excluded from the Core Enumeration Total. Each component was governed by distinct enumeration methods and reconciliation rules, which are described in the subsections that follow.

Outreach enumeration activities were organized using assigned geographic zones supported by ArcGIS mapping provided by the City of Nanaimo's Public Safety and GIS teams. A centralized operations hub enabled real-time coordination of outreach teams throughout the day. As coverage progressed, staff updated the map by marking known locations and identifying completed zones to support full geographic coverage and reduce duplication of effort. In total, 185 locations were visited during the enumeration window.

Fixed participation sites were established at the Snuneymuxw First Nation community barbecue at One Port Drive, The Hub at 55 Victoria Road, and a shower program at 110 Wall Street. These locations were promoted in advance to encourage individuals to come forward and participate. Mobile outreach teams conducted early morning and evening coverage of known areas where

individuals often stay, including forested spaces, public alleys, and parking areas used for vehicle dwelling.

A single training session was held in late November for outreach staff. Training covered engagement practices, trauma-informed approaches, and culturally safe interactions, including uniform application of screening definitions across all teams. Snuneymuxw First Nation supported this preparation to ensure the count reflected local relationships and facilitated safer participation, particularly among Indigenous community members who may be less likely to engage with institutional processes.

Survey & Screening Logic

The 2025 count used a streamlined survey instrument focused on core screening questions and housing status. This approach differed from the extended demographic and service-use questionnaire administered in the 2024 count. The streamlined instrument prioritized broad community coverage and operational feasibility for frontline teams while maintaining alignment with national reporting requirements.

The 2025 count also marked the first year in which the streamlined instrument was required for routine annual implementation rather than only during nationally coordinated full-survey cycles. This shift altered operational expectations for local teams and required adaptation in screening application and field interpretation during the enumeration window.

Homelessness is defined in this count strictly by overnight location on count night, in alignment with the federal Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide. In-scope overnight locations are limited to: emergency shelter, transitional housing, funded hotel or motel placement, unsheltered public space, encampment, and vehicle habitation. Housing access responses are recorded for descriptive purposes only and do not govern inclusion in the survey-confirmed homelessness total.

Consistent application of screening definitions across outreach teams is essential to the integrity of the survey-confirmed total. Definitions for overnight location categories, including the distinction between permanent housing and informal or precarious arrangements such as RV living, land-based setups, and temporary supportive housing, were covered in pre-count training. Overnight location, as reported by the respondent, is the sole basis for inclusion determinations.

A completed survey was defined as a staff member or outreach worker directly administering the screening questions and recording responses suitable for data entry. Participants received a ten dollar gift card honorarium in recognition of their time. The survey window was not extended beyond the 24-hour count period.

The following table governs all survey-confirmed figures in this report:

	#	Notes
Screening interactions logged	529	Total surveys received on December 5 th 2025
Consenting respondents	490	Respondents providing informed consent (-39)
Already surveyed (duplicate risk)	14	Individuals identified as previously surveyed (-14)
Unique consenting respondents	485	Net unique consenting individuals
In-scope overnight location	402	Not staying in permanent housing, own home, or private residence on the night of the count (-83)
Survey-confirmed homelessness	402	Verified via survey responses
Observed unsheltered	121	Individuals observed but not surveyed (+121)
Core total	523	Survey-confirmed (402) + observed (121)
Youth enhancement	54	Youth-specific supplementary count (+54)
Local total	577	Core total with youth enhancement

Of 529 screening interactions captured during the enumeration window, 490 respondents provided consent. Fourteen self-reported as having already participated; of those, 5 were confirmed as duplicates within the consenting pool and removed, leaving 485 unique consenting respondents. Of those 485, 402 reported an in-scope overnight location on count night and are confirmed as experiencing homelessness. This figure of 402 constitutes the survey-confirmed homelessness total.

Respondents who reported an overnight location outside the in-scope categories were excluded from the homelessness total. Housing access responses collected through the survey are presented separately in the Enumeration Results section as descriptive context.

Observed Unsheltered Enumeration

The observed unsheltered component captured individuals who were not engaged through the survey process. These individuals were identified by trained outreach teams using strict visible indicators consistent with national criteria for unsheltered homelessness, including encampment presence, vehicle habitation, and outdoor sleeping setups. Proximity to services does not constitute an indicator of unsheltered homelessness; inclusion is determined solely by visible evidence of overnight habitation at an out-of-doors or vehicle location.

A screening question was used during observation to reduce duplication. Where possible, outreach teams asked individuals whether they had already participated in the survey. No unique identifier system was in place, and no statistical deduplication was performed. Coordinated deployment and real-time field communication through the centralized operations hub served as the primary controls for managing duplication risk. The working group applied a conservative standard for observed enumeration, recording individuals only where visible indicators of unsheltered overnight habitation were present and housing status was not ambiguous.

Youth Enhancement Method

The 2025 count included a youth key-informant snapshot designed to capture youth homelessness through schools and youth-serving partners, including the Ministry of Children and Family Development. On the day of the count, designated contacts were asked to report the number of youth they were aware of as experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

Youth were not surveyed directly. Identification was based on professional knowledge held by school staff, youth-serving organizations, and child welfare contacts, rather than on in-person enumeration.

The youth identified through this process are included in the Local Total but are excluded from the Core Enumeration Total. They are reported as a distinct component to preserve the integrity of each enumeration stream and to avoid conflating data collected through different methods. Overlap risk between the youth snapshot and the survey-confirmed stream is assessed as low, given that identification occurred primarily through school-based and child welfare channels and that limited magnet event participation was observed among this age group.

The youth key-informant snapshot is a first-year method and represents a baseline rather than a complete enumeration of youth homelessness in Nanaimo.

Data Cleaning and Deduplication

Data reconciliation followed the controls established in the finalized reconciliation framework for the 2025 count. Blank and unusable surveys were removed prior to reconciliation. Respondents identified as presenting a duplicate risk were flagged and removed from the unique consenting respondent pool, reducing 490 consenting respondents to 485 unique consenting respondents.

No statistical deduplication was applied across the survey and observed unsheltered streams. The primary controls for managing cross-stream duplication were coordinated geographic deployment, real-time field communication through the centralized operations hub, and the use of a screening question during observation interactions.

Exclusion rules were applied conservatively. Respondents were removed from the homelessness total only where an in-scope overnight location was not confirmed. Respondents with missing consent or housing access responses were not automatically excluded; each record was assessed against the reconciliation rules before a determination was made.

Administrative overnight occupancy data was collected from shelters and facility-based programs as contextual information only. These figures are not additive to the Core Enumeration Total or the Local Total, as individuals in those programs may have been captured through the survey-based enumeration. Occupancy data was not obtained for all programs operating on the night of the count; specifically, figures for domestic violence shelters, the youth safe house, and funded hotel and motel placements were not confirmed at the time of

publication. Administrative occupancy figures are excluded from all homelessness totals presented in this report.

Limitations

The 2025 enumeration provides a minimum estimate of homelessness in Nanaimo on a single night. It cannot capture the full extent of housing instability in the community. Individuals who are couch surfing, staying in overcrowded or unsafe conditions, or who actively avoid contact with outreach services are unlikely to be counted. The true number of people experiencing homelessness over the course of the year is higher than what a single-night snapshot can reflect. The introduction of annual survey administration also contributed to a learning curve in screening application, requiring post-count reconciliation to ensure consistent application of federal inclusion criteria.

Duplication risk exists across both the survey and observed unsheltered components. No unique identifier system was in place, and no statistical deduplication was performed. While operational controls were used to minimize the risk of individuals being counted more than once, some degree of duplication cannot be ruled out.

Administrative occupancy data is incomplete. Figures were not obtained for domestic violence shelters, the youth safe house, or funded hotel and motel placements operating on the night of the count. The administrative occupancy total recorded across seven programs is therefore an undercount of total sheltered system use on count night.

Weather conditions on December 3, 2025 may have affected enumeration coverage. Cold and wet conditions can cause individuals to move into less visible locations or seek temporary indoor arrangements that reduce contact with outreach teams, contributing to undercounting of the unsheltered population.

Comparability with prior year counts is affected by methodological differences. The 2025 enumeration used a streamlined survey instrument rather than the full demographic questionnaire administered in 2024, and was conducted on December 3, outside the standard October to November national guidance window. These differences do not invalidate year-over-year comparison but should be considered when interpreting changes in the Local Total.

The youth key-informant snapshot is a first-year method and likely underrepresents the true scale of youth housing instability in Nanaimo. The approach relies on professional knowledge held by a limited number of designated contacts and cannot capture youth who are not connected to schools, youth-serving organizations, or child welfare systems.

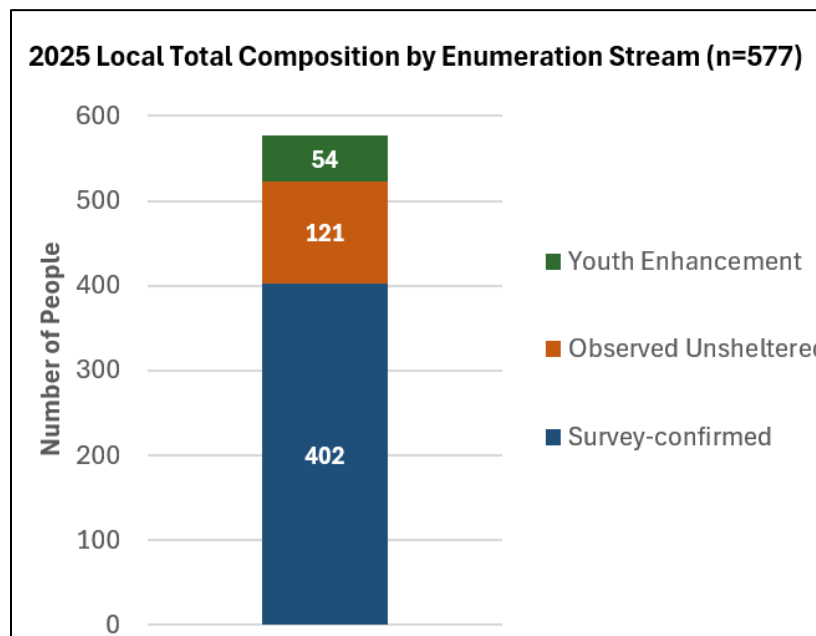
ENUMERATION RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the 2025 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count conducted on December 3, 2025. All figures reflect reconciled totals across the survey-confirmed, observed unsheltered, and youth key-informant enumeration streams. Data is presented without interpretation; analysis of findings appears in the subsequent section.

Total Identified on Count Night

The 2025 count identified a Local Total of 577 people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo on the night of December 3, 2025.

This total is composed of two distinct components. The Core Enumeration Total of 523 combines 402 survey-confirmed individuals and 121 observed unsheltered individuals, both recorded within the 24-hour enumeration window. A youth key-informant snapshot identified 54 young people through schools, youth-serving partners, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The youth stream is included in the Local Total but excluded from the Core Enumeration Total, and is reported separately throughout this section to preserve the integrity of each enumeration method.



Administrative Overnight Occupancy

Administrative overnight occupancy data was collected from shelters and facility-based programs as contextual information only. These figures are not additive to the Core Enumeration Total or the Local Total, as individuals staying in those programs may have been captured through the survey-confirmed enumeration stream.

The following table presents confirmed administrative occupancy for the night of December 3, 2025:

Program	Confirmed Occupancy
Samaritan Place	14
Nanaimo Unitarian Shelter	25
New Hope Transitional Shelter	24
St. Peter's Winter Shelter	40
Risebridge Overnight Shelter	24
NFLA Hub Temporary Shelter	20
Sobering & Assessment Centre	6
Total	153

Occupancy data was not obtained for domestic violence shelters, the youth safe house, or funded hotel and motel placements operating on the night of the count. The total of 153 recorded across seven programs represents an incomplete picture of total sheltered system use on count night.

Survey-Confirmed Homelessness

Survey-confirmed homelessness is determined by overnight location on count night, in alignment with the federal Everyone Counts Point-in-Time Guide. A total of 529 screening interactions were logged during the 24-hour enumeration window. Of those, 490 respondents provided consent. Fourteen self-reported prior participation; five were confirmed duplicates and removed from the consenting pool, resulting in 485 unique consenting respondents. Of those 485, 402 reported an in-scope overnight location on count night. The survey-confirmed homelessness total is 402.

Respondents who reported an overnight location outside the in-scope categories were excluded from the homelessness total. The full overnight location and housing access distributions are presented in the tables below.

Observed Unsheltered

The observed unsheltered component recorded 121 individuals who were not engaged through the survey process. These individuals were identified by trained outreach teams using visible indicators of unsheltered overnight habitation, including encampment presence, vehicle habitation, and outdoor sleeping setups, consistent with national criteria for observed enumeration.

The 121 observed unsheltered individuals are combined with the 402 survey-confirmed individuals to produce the Core Enumeration Total of 523.

Youth Enhancement

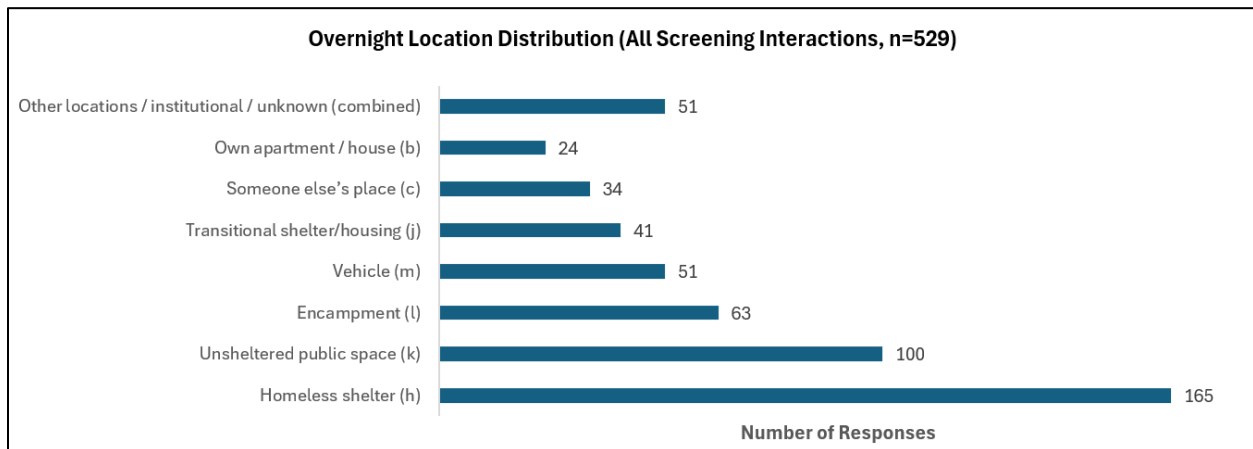
The youth key-informant snapshot identified 54 young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability through schools, youth-serving partners, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Youth were not surveyed directly. Identification was based on professional knowledge held by designated contacts at the time of the count.

The 54 youth are included in the Local Total of 577 and excluded from the Core Enumeration Total of 523. The following table presents the age group breakdown of the 54 youth identified:

Where Youth Are Staying	AGE			Total
	<15	15–18	19–24	
Outside / public spaces	1	1	2	4
Vehicle	4	3	1	8
Couch surfing / staying with others	3	22	2	27
Motel / hotel / Airbnb / rooming house	4	5	6	15
Total	12	31	11	54

Overnight Location Distribution

The following table presents the full distribution of overnight location responses across all 529 screening interactions recorded during the enumeration window. Percentages are calculated against the total of 529 screening interactions.



Overnight location response	Count
Homeless shelter (e.g. emergency, warming centre, drop-in)	165 (31.2%)
Unsheltered in a public space (e.g. street, park, forest)	100 (18.9%)
Encampment (e.g. group of tents, makeshift shelters)	63 (11.9%)
Vehicle (e.g. car, van, RV, truck, boat)	51 (9.6%)
Transitional shelter/housing	41 (7.8%)
Someone else's place	34 (6.4%)
Own apartment / house	24 (4.5%)
Unsure	13 (2.5%)
Decline to answer	12 (2.3%)
Blank / no response	11 (2.1%)
Motel / hotel (self funded)	7 (1.3%)
Jail, prison, remand centre	3 (0.6%)
Treatment centre	2 (0.4%)
Hotel / motel funded by city or homeless program	2 (0.4%)
Hospital	1 (0.2%)

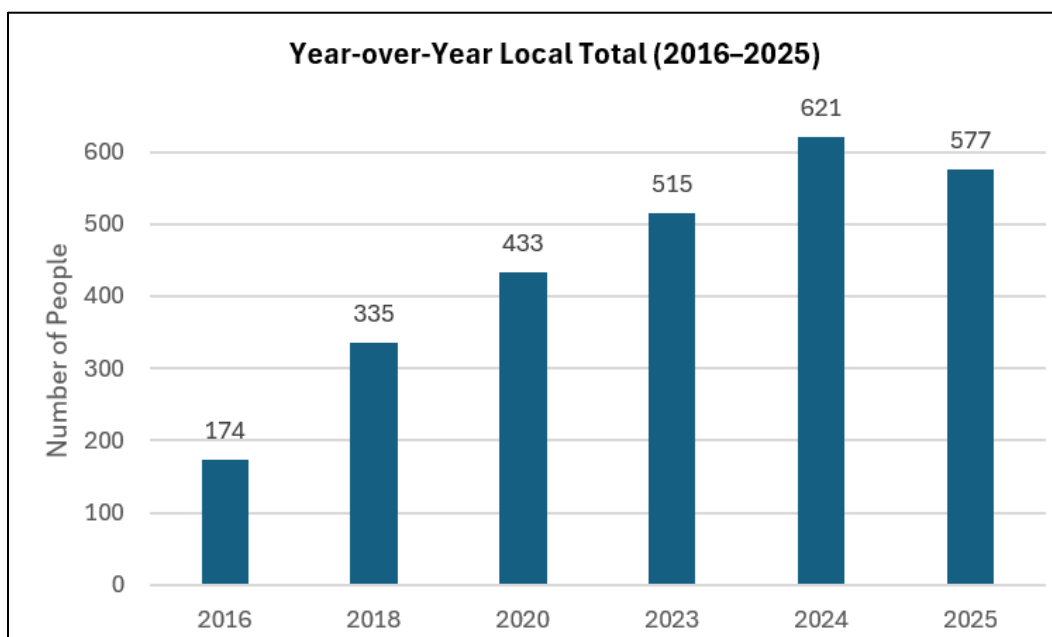
In-scope overnight locations for the purposes of survey-confirmed homelessness are limited to: emergency shelter, transitional housing, funded hotel or motel placement, unsheltered public space, encampment, and vehicle habitation. Overnight locations outside this set were excluded from the homelessness total through the reconciliation process.

ANALYSIS

This section provides interpretive context for the enumeration results presented above. All figures reference the reconciled totals established in the Enumeration Results section. No new figures are introduced here.

Year-Over-Year Comparison

The 2025 Local Total of 577 represents a decrease of 44 from the 621 individuals identified in the 2024 count. This is the first recorded decline since enumeration began in 2016. Prior count totals provide the following trajectory: 174 in 2016, 335 in 2018, 433 in 2020, 515 in 2023, and 621 in 2024. The 2025 figure interrupts a period of sustained year-over-year growth spanning nearly a decade.



This decline warrants careful interpretation. Both the 2025 and 2024 figures are conservative minimum estimates produced through single-night enumeration methodology. They reflect who was visible or reachable on the night of each respective count. The decrease indicates that the visible and reachable population on the night of December 3, 2025 was smaller than on the night of the 2024 count. It should not be interpreted as confirmation that fewer people overall experienced homelessness in Nanaimo during 2025.

Comparability between the two counts is also affected by methodological differences. The 2025 enumeration used a streamlined survey instrument and was conducted on December 3, outside the national October to November guidance window. The 2025 count also introduced a dedicated youth key-informant snapshot not present in prior years. The 54 youth identified through that process are included in the 2025 Local Total of 577 but have no equivalent component in the 2024 total of 621. These differences do not invalidate year-over-year

comparison at the Local Total level, but they should be held in view when interpreting the magnitude and direction of change between the two counts.

System Capacity and Inflow

The relationship between housing units introduced during the period between counts and the net reduction of 44 in the Local Total cannot be reduced to a direct causal link. Point-in-time methodology does not track individual housing placements or exits from homelessness. The change in the Local Total may reflect any combination of housing placements, seasonal movement, weather conditions, shifts in service availability, changes in outreach reach, and differences in where and how individuals were staying on the night of December 3. The available data does not allow any single factor to be isolated.

Administrative overnight occupancy data provides some contextual indication of sheltered system use on count night. A total of 153 individuals were recorded across seven programs on the night of December 3, 2025. This figure is contextual only and is not additive to the Core Enumeration Total or the Local Total. Occupancy data was not obtained for domestic violence shelters, the youth safe house, or funded hotel and motel placements, meaning the administrative total of 153 underrepresents total sheltered system use on count night.

What the data does indicate is that the 2025 Local Total breaks the steep upward trajectory recorded across every prior enumeration since 2016. Whether this represents a durable shift in the scale of homelessness in Nanaimo or an outcome shaped by specific conditions on the night of the count cannot be determined from a single year of data.

Shelter and Unsheltered Profile

The distribution of overnight locations recorded during the enumeration window demonstrates the presence of both sheltered and unsheltered forms of homelessness across the 529 screening interactions. Records in sheltered settings include emergency shelter, transitional housing, and funded hotel placements. Records in unsheltered settings include public spaces, encampments, and vehicles. Vehicle habitation and encampments together represent a substantial portion of unsheltered overnight locations within the screened population.

Responses to the permanent residence question provide additional context. Among the 485 unique consenting respondents, the majority indicated that they did not have access to a permanent residence where they could safely stay as long as they wished. This response pattern reflects the distinction between overnight location and longer-term housing security.

Indigenous Context

The 2025 enumeration used a streamlined survey instrument and did not collect Indigenous-specific demographic data at a level of detail comparable to the 2024 full count. As a result, 2025-specific figures on Indigenous identity are not available. The data in this subsection is drawn from 2024 reporting and represents the most recent detailed reference point available.

It is included because the structural conditions it describes remain relevant to the 2025 findings and have not changed in the intervening period.

In the 2024 count, approximately 35 percent of survey respondents identified as First Nations, Metis, or Inuit, while Indigenous people represent approximately 8.2 percent of Nanaimo's general population according to the 2021 Census (2024 reporting). This overrepresentation is consistent across multiple count years and reflects the cumulative effects of colonial displacement, systemic inequity, and the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land, family, and community.

Prior year data also documented a pathway from child welfare involvement into long-term housing instability. In 2024, 60 percent of respondents who reported a history of foster care, group home, or independent living placements identified as Indigenous (2024 reporting). Among Indigenous respondents who reported an age at first homelessness, 44 percent became homeless before the age of 25, compared to 28 percent of non-Indigenous respondents (2024 reporting). These figures describe a pattern in which inadequate transition supports following child welfare involvement contribute to early and often sustained housing instability.

Prior year reporting also confirmed that homelessness in Nanaimo is predominantly a local experience. In 2024, 75 percent of respondents had lived in the city for five years or more, and only 9 percent had arrived within the past year (2024 reporting). This pattern held across Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents.

The absence of comparable Indigenous-specific data in the 2025 count does not diminish the relevance of these findings. The structural conditions identified in prior reporting, including the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system, overrepresentation in the child welfare system, and barriers to culturally safe housing and health services, remain active forces shaping Indigenous homelessness in Snuneymuxw territory. Snuneymuxw First Nation's continued participation as a core member of the enumeration working group reflects an ongoing commitment to ensuring that data collection and response planning are grounded in Indigenous leadership and self-determination.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Nanaimo Point-in-Time Count recorded a Local Total of 577 people experiencing homelessness on the night of December 3, 2025. This figure comprises a Core Enumeration Total of 523 individuals identified through survey-confirmed and observed unsheltered enumeration streams, and 54 young people identified through a separate youth key-informant snapshot. As with all Point-in-Time counts, the Local Total is a conservative minimum estimate. It reflects who was visible or reachable on a single night and does not represent the full scope of housing instability experienced in Nanaimo over the course of the year.

The 2025 Local Total represents the first recorded decline since enumeration began in 2016, following a sustained trajectory of growth from 174 in 2016 to 621 in 2024. The change in the Local Total may reflect any combination of factors present on the night of the count. Point-in-time methodology does not track individual placements or exits, and no single contributing factor can be isolated from the available data. What the data confirms is that 577 people were experiencing homelessness as defined by overnight location criteria on a single night in Nanaimo, and that the conditions producing homelessness in this community remain present. A single year of decline does not indicate that the underlying pressures have been resolved.

The 2025 count introduced a dedicated youth key-informant snapshot for the first time, identifying 54 young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. This first-year baseline confirms that youth homelessness in Nanaimo is occurring primarily in arrangements that are hidden from standard enumeration methods, including couch surfing, short-term motel stays, and vehicle habitation. This baseline provides a foundation for future enumeration design and for coordinated planning between schools, youth-serving agencies, and child welfare partners.

Indigenous homelessness in Snuneymuxw territory continues to be shaped by structural conditions documented across multiple count years. As noted in the Analysis section, 2024 reporting indicated that Indigenous people represented approximately 35 percent of the counted population while comprising approximately 8.2 percent of Nanaimo's general population. The 2025 enumeration did not collect Indigenous-specific demographic data at a comparable level of detail; 2024 figures remain the most recent available reference. Snuneymuxw First Nation's continued role as a core member of the enumeration working group reflects an ongoing commitment to ensuring that data collection and community response are grounded in Indigenous leadership, cultural safety, and self-determination.

The working group identified several opportunities to strengthen future enumerations, including refining training protocols, improving consistency in how screening definitions are applied across teams, and expanding administrative data collection from shelter and facility partners. These refinements are part of standard quality assurance practice in Point-in-Time enumeration, aligned with the federal Everyone Counts framework, and reflect the working group's commitment to continuous improvement across each count cycle.

The cross-partner working group that planned and delivered the 2025 enumeration, led by United Way British Columbia and including Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, and community partners, demonstrated the organizational capacity required to conduct a methodologically rigorous count across a geographically diverse area. This foundation of partnership is essential to the credibility and reach of future enumerations. The scale of homelessness in Nanaimo also reflects pressures that extend beyond the local level. Sustained commitment from provincial and federal levels of government remains necessary to support the community-level work already underway.

This report is a record of what was observed on December 3, 2025. The data confirms that 577 people were experiencing homelessness as defined by overnight location criteria on a single night in Nanaimo, and that the sustained commitment of all partners involved remains necessary to make progress toward stable and dignified housing for every person counted.

APPENDIX A : Unsheltered Enumeration Screening Tool

UNSHeltered Enumeration Screening Tool	
Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a volunteer for the (<i>Community Name</i>) homelessness and housing needs study.	
A. Have you already spoken to someone tonight (/last night/this morning) with this (identification e.g., button)? [YES: Thank and end] [NO: Continue script]	
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.	
B. Are you willing to answer a brief question about housing and homelessness in our community? [YES: Go to C] [NO: Thank and record on enumeration sheet, if applicable]	
C. Where are you staying tonight? (/Where did you stay last night?) (DO NOT READ CATEGORIES) (Circle appropriate letter)	
a. DECLINE TO ANSWER b. OWN APARTMENT / HOUSE c. SOMEONE ELSE'S PLACE d. MOTEL / HOTEL (SELF FUNDED)	[THANK and record on enumeration sheet if community is including observed homelessness and surveyor believes individual is experiencing homelessness.] [THANK and END SURVEY]
[Continue to C1 if including systems. Otherwise THANK and END SURVEY]	
e. HOSPITAL f. TREATMENT CENTRE g. JAIL, PRISON, REMAND CENTRE h. HOMELESS SHELTER (e.g. emergency, family or domestic violence shelter, warming centre, drop-in) i. HOTEL / MOTEL FUNDED BY CITY OR HOMELESS PROGRAM j. TRANSITIONAL SHELTER/HOUSING k. UNSHELTERED IN A PUBLIC SPACE (e.g. street, park, bus shelter, forest or abandoned building) l. ENCAMPMENT (e.g. group of tents, makeshift shelters or other long-term outdoor settlement) m. VEHICLE (e.g. car, van, recreational vehicle (RV), truck, boat) n. UNSURE: INDICATE PROBABLE LOCATION (b. – m.)	[THANK and END SURVEY] [THANK, RECORD, and END SURVEY] [Proceed with instructions for probable location response]
C1. Do you have access to a permanent residence where you can safely stay as long as you want?	
a. YES b. NO c. DON'T KNOW d. DECLINE TO ANSWER	[THANK and END SURVEY] [THANK, RECORD, and END SURVEY]
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.	

This report was prepared on behalf of United Way BC and Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation, the City of Nanaimo, and other key partners.

Our hands are raised in gratitude to the many individuals and organizations, including the City of Nanaimo, community partners, outreach workers, volunteers, and everyone who generously contributed their time, knowledge, and spirit to this important work.