Rural Homelessness Estimation: When Counting and Guessing is not feasible

31st JANUARY 2019
What is ARDN?
Not-for-Profit Organization
Founded in 2009 by 21 Albertan PSIs
The ARDN uses the combined expertise of Alberta’s post-secondary institutions to support rural development in Alberta and to help communities grow through research & learning.
WE ACT AS A PROJECT FACILITATOR BY:

- Providing innovative solutions
- Supporting new partnerships
- Leveraging existing resources

ARDN strives to be Alberta’s premiere rural development organization
Our Partners & Collaborators:
1\textsuperscript{st} symposium was held in October 2018
- 250+ attendees
- Representation from all across Canada
  10 provinces and 3 territories

2\textsuperscript{nd} symposium in 2\textsuperscript{nd} quarter of 2020
The ARDN under its Sustainable Housing initiative helps communities develop affordable housing

- Pre-development Work
- Potential Funding
- Project Management

- Toolkit to develop Affordable Housing
The ARDN is the rural and remote community entity for the federal government’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)

- We focus on funding homelessness projects that fall outside the 7 cities
- Through HPS, we have funded approximately 32 projects to date for a total investment of $4 Million
- New funding announced
OPIOID OUTREACH PROGRAM

ARDN has partnered with 13 organizations to raise awareness within their local communities about how opioids are affecting rural Alberta

- These projects focus on reducing stigma, direct people to where they can access life-saving resources
- Education sessions run from July 2018 to March 2019
MISSION
We speak with one united voice to increase information sharing, access to affordable housing and services to address rural homelessness

VISION
An affordable home for every rural Albertan

PRINCIPLES
- Committed to improving the lives of rural Albertans
- Dedicated to speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves
- Providing rural solutions to solve rural issues
Step-by-Step Guide
Rural Homelessness Estimation
Published in June 2017

- Extremely limited data on rural homelessness
- “Living document” of best practices developed in consultation
- Free to download for anyone, in both English and French
- Developed for Rural Canada!
Develop cost-conscious, efficient, and reliable practices to estimate the number of homeless individuals in rural Canada.
INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE RURAL AND URBAN HOMELESSNESS
METHODS TO ESTIMATE HOMELESSNESS

- Point-in-Time Count
- Population Estimation
POINT-IN-TIME (PiT) COUNT

- Count Sheltered or Unsheltered homeless in a single night
- Volunteers on the streets conduct surveys
- Surveys provide the information and characteristics of the homeless
- This helps communities develop strategies and implement resources
LIMITATIONS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Visibility and Buy-in Challenges

Logistical Challenges

Limited Resources

Uniformity and Consistency

Limited Training

Data and Statistical Analysis
Homeless population estimated based on data from service agencies

Number of people who used the service in a pre defined time frame (e.g. one month)

Used when there are limited resources or when population is scattered over a large area
The number of homeless using service agencies for support over a period of time

Additionally, if the community has enough resources then estimate the number of homeless in known locations as well

Service agencies complete a survey and develop unique identifiers for each of their clients over a period of time, report the data and an analysis reveals the number
John Smith, Male born on 15th November 1960 – JOSM660M

First Two Letters of the First Name: JO
First Two Letters of the Last Name: SM
Sum of the Numbers in the Birth Day: 1+5 = 6
Last Two Numbers of the Year of Birth: 60
‘M’ for Male, ‘F’ for Female, ‘T’ for Transgender, and ‘O’ for Other: M
**ESTIMATION CONDUCTED AT A CONFERENCE**

**Unique Identifiers**

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11 STEPS TO ESTIMATE HOMELESSNESS

STEP 1 Establish a Task Force
STEP 2 Understand the Definition of Homelessness
STEP 3 Assign a Representative
STEP 4 Training
STEP 5 Marketing
STEP 6 Estimation
STEP 7 Data Entry and Analysis
STEP 8 Feedback
STEP 9 Reporting
STEP 10 Access Resources
STEP 11 Repeat
BENEFITS OF KNOWING THE NUMBERS

- Track progress in reducing homelessness
- Identify places where resources are most needed
- Direct public attention to the homelessness issue
- Improve service agencies’ planning programs
- Inform local, provincial, and federal policies
- Establish standards for performance measurement
- Provide data for community and service agencies
- Secure funding to help the homeless
- Target intervention for communities experiencing the most homelessness
Step-by-Step Guide
Practical Application
Pilot Project: Funded by ARDN

PiT
- 11 potential counts
  - 2 out of 11 in unstable situation
  - 700 volunteer hours

Estimation
- 57 surveys conducted
- 44 out of 57 in unstable situation
  - 39.13% due to Mental or Physical Health
  - 34.78% due to Family Conflict
  - 13.04% due to addictions
  - 8.70% due to Unsafe Housing and Job Loss
Customized Project – Preliminary Results

- 54 surveys conducted
- **92 individuals in unstable situation**
  - Inadequate housing supply
  - Unemployment (40 unemployed)
  - 35% of vulnerable residents b/w the ages of 1 & 20

Inconsistencies in National Census, RMWB and primary data
ALBERTA RURAL HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATION PROJECT

In conjunction with Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA)

- 20 communities
  - 14 communities HPS funded
  - 5 self-funding
  - Plus Kainai First Nation
  - Online survey platform

Spruce Grove & Stony Plain to present next
RESOURCES

Developed for Rural Canada!

- Download for Free from www.ardn.ca
- English & French
- Customized Estimation Surveys
- Data Analysis & Research Support
- Recommend Solutions
- Provide Overall Support
THANK YOU!

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