

NEWS RELEASE

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Waterloo Region presents survey findings identifying most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness

**Waterloo Region** –The Region of Waterloo shared results today from our first Registry Week, part of the Canadian 20,000 Homes Campaign. On Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, over 60 staff and volunteers canvassed Waterloo Region shelters and streets to conduct short surveys with more than 300 individuals experiencing homelessness. Further information about the Registry Week and initial results can be found on the Region’s website: <http://tinyurl.com/WRRegistryWeekDebrief>

**Here are a few key findings:**

* 339 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness (over Nov. 30 – Dec. 1, 2014)
* 88% of individuals experiencing homelessness completed a short health and housing survey

**Demographics**

* 68% male and 32% female
* 28% youth (ages 16 – 24), 69% adults (ages 25-64), 3% ages 65+

**Years of homelessness**

* 178 (63%) would be considered chronic homeless with an overall average of 3.5 years homeless
* Five individuals identified having experienced homelessness for 20 years or more

**Background**

* 24% reported a history of foster care
* 66% did not complete high school, while almost 20% had post-secondary education
* 5% had served in the Canadian Armed Forces

**Health**

* 127 (45%) were found to have health conditions associated with a high mortality risk
* 85% reported mental health issues and 83% identified substance use issues
* 41% reported being a victim of a violent attack since becoming homeless
* Costs for hospital emergency room visits and ambulance transfers over the last six months for survey a respondent is estimated at over $300,000.

Waterloo Region is the first Canadian community to pilot the 20,000 Homes Campaign, which aims to permanently house 20,000 of our country’s most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness by 2018. The goal for Waterloo Region is to house up to 40 individuals over the 2014/2015 winter season.

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**For more information, please contact:**

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