



DURHAM - People are calling on all levels of government and asking the same question. Why is Canada giving billions to foreign countries to fight wars that should not be Canada's concern?" Meanwhile our sons and daughters working two three jobs can barely pay their bills. Durham Region has at least 3,500 people experiencing homelessness. Homelessness takes many forms. From a family member sleeping on your sofa for a long period of time. To people actually living on the streets. According to Durham Region: There are at least 1,871 people actively recorded as experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity on the Region of Durham's official By-Name List. Because this registry only counts individuals who have connected with municipal services or consented to be listed, community advocates and regional officials note that the actual total is likely higher. Key Statistics on Local Homelessness By-Name Registry: The count has risen sharply from about 811 individuals previously recorded, reflecting rapid growth in housing insecurity across the region. Point-in-Time (PiT) Count: Formal coordinated point-in-time enumeration previously identified over 1,300 unhoused individuals across Durham's municipalities,

showing a substantial multi-year increase. Demographics & Needs: The majority of affected individuals are working-age adults (ages 25 to 49), with significant reported needs regarding mental health support, physical accessibility, and affordable housing options. Toronto has the largest overall number of homeless people in Ontario, with over 15,000 individuals experiencing homelessness. However, when measuring by per capita rate (the proportion of the population experiencing homelessness), Northern and regional districts—such as Kenora, Sault Ste. Marie, and the Cochrane/Nipissing districts—record significantly higher per capita rates of homelessness than major urban centers like Toronto, Ottawa, or Hamilton. The leading and root cause of homelessness in Canada is poverty, driven heavily by a severe nationwide shortage of affordable housing and a wide gap between low incomes and high rental costs. While individual challenges like mental health, substance use, or family violence play significant roles, research from organizations like the Homeless Hub shows these issues interact with structural economic failures rather than acting as isolated causes. Lack of Affordable Housing: Surging rent prices and a critical deficit of low-cost

rental units leave many spending more than 50% of their income on shelter, creating extreme housing precarity. Poverty and Insufficient Income: Inadequate wages and low social assistance rates fail to keep pace with the rising cost of living and inflation. System Failures: Ineffective discharge planning from public systems—such as health care, child welfare, and correctional facilities—frequently discharges vulnerable individuals directly into homelessness. Interpersonal Violence: Domestic and family violence forces individuals, particularly women and youth, to leave their homes suddenly without immediate financial alternatives. Certain groups face a disproportionately higher risk due to systemic discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantages: Indigenous Peoples: Overrepresented across Canadian cities, making up a vastly higher percentage of the unhoused population. Unattached Adults and Single Men: Statistically account for a large portion of the shelter-using population. Women and Children: Frequently impacted by fleeing unsafe domestic environments. Homelessness: How does it happen? - Statistics Canada According to a 2021 survey, financial challenges were the leading cause of homelessness. Other factors that

180% HOMELESS LIST INCREASE

contribute to homelessness... Whitby Mayor Elizabeth Roy's made a statement on Ontario's Homelessness, Mental Health, and Addictions Crisis. This past week, I joined Ontario's Big City Mayors and the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario to collaborate on some of the most urgent challenges facing our communities - including the homelessness, mental health, and addictions crisis. This crisis is affecting municipalities across the province, including Durham Region, where the latest data shows at least 1,871 people experiencing homelessness, with 338 of them in Whitby. Municipalities have stepped up by investing in shelters, outreach, supportive housing, community safety initiatives, and partnerships with frontline organizations. But we can't solve a province-wide health and social services crisis on our own, and municipal property taxpayers can't continue carrying these growing costs. That's why Ontario's Big City Mayors has launched the next phase of the Solve the Crisis campaign: Reaction to Recovery. We are calling for:

Expanded and timely access to recovery and treatment programs
A dedicated Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, supported by appropriate funding
A review of the Mental Health Act and Health Care Consent Act
Expanded addiction treatment and rehabilitation programs in provincial and federal correctional institutions
A declaration of emergency recognizing the severity of the homelessness, mental health and addictions crisis
We know there are successful models across Canada. What Ontario needs now is the leadership, political will, and sustained investment to put effective solutions in place here. As mayor of Whitby and chair of Region of Durham's Health and Social Services Committee, I will continue to advocate strongly on this issue. The status quo is not an option. The human and financial costs of inaction are simply too high. I encourage Whitby residents to visit solve the crisis.ca and join our call to action. Certain groups face a dis-

proportionately higher risk due to systemic discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantages: Regional authorities and local support networks note that while vehicle homelessness is an increasing reality—with families and individuals frequently turning to cars or hidden encampments—overall homelessness numbers are grouped broadly rather than by specific vehicle-shelter type. Jeff and Nancy said, "I am 72 and my wife is 68. We lost everything. We could not afford taxes and utilities. We have no family so now we live in our mini van. I don't really see a way out...and pay every day that the van does not break down." Tim and Percy said, "I have a small child and I am afraid someone will call child services as we live in a car. We are trying to get work. But it is hard. Our car

is our shelter and we are saving to put a deposit down. Some night we head to the shelter but it is not safe. Other times we stay with family. It is scary now that winter is coming. My husband lost his job and we just can't pay rent. I am scared for my child and our future as a family." The picture to the left was taken on Simcoe St. North in front of Lakeridge Health Oshawa. Plain day light a man sleeping on the sidewalk. The problem is real. The numbers presented are only the reported individual reaching out for help. The real number are estimated to be in the thousands more. Many homeless have no access to the system other than when they have a run in with the law. Homelessness is an economic problem that in 2026 many candidates are taking seriously.



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