

NO FIXED ADDRESS

The Intersections of Justice
Involvement and Homelessness

PART ONE



ABOUT US

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

For more than 90 years, The John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) has been dedicated to creating safer communities by fostering more effective, just and humane responses to crime. Our 19 local offices deliver programs and services that build key life skills, support families and allow people leaving incarceration to achieve a more productive future. The Centre of Research & Policy specializes in bridging the gap between analysis and front-line service delivery. By collaborating closely with local offices, the Centre's team of analysts and researchers develops policy positions that truly reflect the needs of each community, advances those positions to governments and other organizations, educates the public on the critical issues, and evaluates program efficacy to guide future work. Through it all, they're committed to ensuring that innovative ideas can translate into real action.



SOCIAL RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION CORPORATION

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is a non-profit research organization, created specifically to develop, field test, and rigorously evaluate new programs. SRDC's two-part mission is to help policy-makers and practitioners identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of all Canadians, with a special concern for the effects on the disadvantaged, and to raise the standards of evidence that are used in assessing these policies.



CANADIAN OBSERVATORY ON HOMELESSNESS

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) is a non-partisan research and policy partnership between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness. Led by Stephen Gaetz, President & CEO, the COH works in collaboration with partners to conduct and mobilize research designed to have an impact on solutions to homelessness. The COH evolved out of a 2008 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded project called the Canadian Homelessness Research Network and is housed at York University.



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that the [John Howard Society of Ontario](#) is built on the Ancestral Traditional Territories of the [Ojibway](#), the [Anishinaabe](#) and, in particular, the [Mississaugas of the New Credit](#) whose territory we are gathering on today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place. We also recognize the contributions [Métis](#), [Inuit](#), and other [Indigenous Peoples](#) have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole. As settlers, this recognition of the contributions and historic importance of [Indigenous Peoples](#) must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of [Truth and Reconciliation](#) real in our communities.

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We would like to extend our thanks to [Mentor Canada](#) for allowing us to access the [National Youth Mentoring Survey](#) data for the secondary data analyses summarized in this research. We would also like to thank the [Canadian Observatory on Homelessness](#) for their assistance in the secondary analysis of the [Without a Home](#) dataset.

POSITIONING THIS REPORT AND ITS FINDINGS

This report presents and synthesizes information from literature on homelessness and justice-involvement, as well as from data describing the housing status of individuals who enter incarceration. The research team, and partner organizations, recognize and acknowledge that inherent in any discussion of justice involvement, housing access, and the identities of people whose experiences are described directly, or indirectly in this report, must be an acknowledgement that these experiences exist within social, political, and economic systems. These systems in Ontario, and Canada more broadly, favour certain groups, and are both actively and passively discriminatory towards others.

Understanding Determinants of Differential Representation and Experience

By necessity, individuals are grouped into categories based on demographics/components of their identities for certain forms of analysis presented in this report. However, we recognize that in everyday life, each person moves through the world holding multiple experiences, identities, and communities with which they *identify*. How a person's identities interact within their context must be considered when exploring barriers and facilitators to accessing housing, or likelihood of involvement with justice systems. Intersectionality refers to the concept that intersecting identities interact with privilege and discrimination at individual, community, and societal levels¹. Intersectionality informs our understanding of how gender, sexual identity, race, economic wellbeing, health, ability, and geographic location influence access to stable housing and justice involvement. In Canada, colonization and the colonial mindset impact differential access to social, health, and economic supports across the lifespan for Indigenous Peoples, as well as Black and other racialized people living in Canada. For many marginalized people, Canada's enduring legacy of colonialism influences access to housing, the probability of being targeted by justice systems, and experiences of violence within all systems.

Homelessness and justice involvement are symptoms, or manifestations, of multiple risk factors converging at the 'downstream' end of a continuum of healthy and culturally responsive supports. For many people, involvement with homelessness and justice involvement is a life-long journey. Some will be forced to utilize social services that are culturally inappropriate and insufficient for their needs, the result of inadequate funding of culturally appropriate and contextually responsive supports along this journey. Many groups are repeatedly noted as being overrepresented in the justice system. These groups experience less access to protective factors, including relational networks, high quality childcare and education systems, and community-based recreational activities. They also face barriers such as disproportionately higher levels of income insecurity and individual and systemic discrimination and oppression.

How Does it Apply to This Report?

Although we approach our work with an understanding of intersectionality, we were unable to apply intersectional analyses within this report. This is primarily because this is a high-level report with data from multiple sources, many of which were aggregated only by gender, Indigenous

identities, and age. This is reflective of the wider literature related to identity and homelessness, and incarceration, where data is often reported to be non-existent, sparse, of low-quality, and non-inclusive in terms of language and response options. This results in significant shortcomings with how data are collected, analyzed, and reported. Where we could (in the 'No Fixed Address' section), we report differences in age, gender, and Indigenous identity. However, it is important to understand that there are intersections that influence homelessness and justice involvement within the diversity and complexity held by each of these identities. When presenting findings, particularly those that highlight statistics, counts, and interpretations of data related to certain groups, we understand these within the context of historic policy and institutional legacies and current realities/manifestations thereof, resulting from colonization. This report does not provide a comprehensive exploration of the mechanisms by which individual and group identity and experiences intersect with systemic oppression across the lifespan.

Broad group-level representations do not show the full picture. They cannot explain the influences and barriers that lead to these disproportionate representations for some groups of people. In particular, but not exhaustively, these groups include Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, LGBTQ2S+ identified individuals, people with disabilities, people with mental health and substance use issues, and youth and emerging adults. In subsequent phases of our work, our advisory committee (comprised of practitioners, researchers, and people with lived experience) will guide the selection of areas of inquiry and research methods, such that we are able to purposively engage with intersectional analyses wherever possible.

What is Missing from This Report?

It is important to recognize the limitations of the current report. The data used in the report has significant gaps. In Ontario, a major issue in understanding the link between justice involvement and incarceration is the dearth of research and available statistics/data. The second half of the report utilizes a limited set of data collected from the Ministry of the Solicitor General through Freedom of Information requests, as well as survey data from the general population, and Point-in-Time counts of homelessness. Combined, this data, while limited, does provide a starting point to begin to understand the current context. The primary data used in this report details the number of admissions with **No Fixed Address (NFA)** to Ontario's correctional facilities between the years 2007 and 2021. This data provides an estimate of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness who are being admitted to correctional institutions.

In particular, the NFA data is presented as counts of admissions and not individuals, thus limiting both analysis and conclusions that can be drawn. The data, and therefore the report, is also limited in the discussion of the impacts of incarceration and homelessness on various communities, including Indigenous Peoples, Black Canadians, LGBTQ2S+, and people experiencing mental health and substance use issues. As a result, the report is limited in its ability to produce any intersectional analyses, exploring how gender, race, and other demographics may interact and influence homelessness and justice related outcomes. This is important to note, because a growing body of evidence documents the differential experiences and trajectories accessing housing *and* with respect to justice system processing and incarceration, by gender and race^{2,3,4,5}. The data is also limited when it comes to furthering a discussion of the experiences, challenges, and barriers faced by individual people. Finally, the NFA data only

accounts for the number of individuals who are experiencing homeless being admitted into corrections. The data does not speak to the major issue of how incarceration can lead to and perpetuate homelessness.

Throughout the report, we have included ‘spotlights’ as examples of how different groups experience and are impacted by homelessness and incarceration. These spotlights are not exhaustive. This data does not include a number of identities, such as those who are 2SLGBTQ+ or live with a physical or intellectual disability. These spotlights also cannot capture the depth of intersectionality that occurs across identities, or all aspects of homelessness and justice involvement that might be impacted.

How Does This Influence How You Should Read This Report?

This report is missing important pieces of data. The groups that are systemically excluded from this data (and responsive data gathering approaches) intersect with the most marginalized groups with respect to justice involvement and housing precarity. Therefore, this report provides a broad overview of how the justice system in general, and incarceration in particular, interacts with homelessness. The purpose of this report is to serve as a starting point for understanding the intersection between justice involvement and homelessness. The report, which is intended to be Part One of Two, begins with outlining the problem by presenting a summary of literature and a discussion of key issues. *How do individuals enter the cycle of incarceration and homelessness? Who is in the cycle? How is the cycle maintained and reinforced?* However, it is of equal importance to view the findings through an intersectional lens and consider how those experiences differ between groups. *How do people’s pathways into and through the cycle differ based on their combined identities/demographics, and why? Who is impacted most?*

These questions are not addressed within this report: when reading this report, readers should consider *who* is missing from the data. *How would different groups be impacted by key barriers and supports? How has the aggregation of data impacted or limited the interpretation of the findings?* To address these gaps, we have outlined the plans for Part Two of the research initiative in the [Next Steps](#) section of the report.

TRAPPED IN THE CYCLE: Homelessness and Justice Involvement in Ontario

People involved in the justice system often can become caught in a vicious cycle of homelessness and incarceration. **Incarceration can lead to homelessness, and homelessness can lead to incarceration.** People experiencing homelessness are more likely to come into contact with police and the justice system. They are more likely to face fines and incarceration. Incarceration can lead to severe disruptions in a person's life. People who are incarcerated often lose their jobs and housing. Few would argue that a goal of the legal system is to impose enduring economic hardship. Yet this is the reality for many Ontarians involved in the justice system.

Figure 1: The Cycle of Homelessness and Incarceration



This vicious cycle of justice involvement and homelessness is easier to enter than it is to exit. There are many factors that prevent a person living with homelessness from acquiring the housing and support that they need. Furthermore, the existence, experience, and impact of these barriers may be different based on one's race, gender, sexuality, Indigenous identity, age, and location, among other factors. Similarly, it is often very difficult for a person who has been incarcerated to reintegrate back into society. Homelessness and justice involvement are strongly linked to one another. A person living with homelessness is at an increased risk of incarceration. A person who has been incarcerated is at an increased risk of homelessness. These difficulties manifest due to a combination of social factors and restrictive policies that lock people into the cycle of poverty and justice involvement. People can transition through this cycle of incarceration,

homelessness, reoffence, and reincarceration many times. Without some support or intervention, some people will never break free.

ENTERING THE CYCLE: INCARCERATION

The following sections will outline how people enter the cycle of homelessness and incarceration, based on a review of the literature. This cycle has multiple entry points depending on the prior circumstances of the people involved. People with no prior history of incarceration who are experiencing homelessness can enter the cycle if they come into contact with law enforcement. Alternatively, people who have no history of homelessness can enter once they are incarcerated. This section will outline the two main entry points: incarceration, and then homelessness. It is important to note that homelessness and justice involvement each have many independent causes. Factors that lead to justice involvement may or may not directly predispose somebody to homelessness, and vice versa. However, justice involvement and homelessness are strongly linked.

Incarceration represents a severe disruption of a person's life. It can be very difficult to maintain employment or retain housing if one is incarcerated. The following section will describe how people enter into the vicious cycle of homelessness and justice involvement if they have been incarcerated in a correctional institution. How does incarceration place people at risk of future poverty, unemployment, and homelessness? And how do policies that surround incarceration serve to prevent people from recovering from incarceration?

Incarceration in Ontario Provincial Facilities

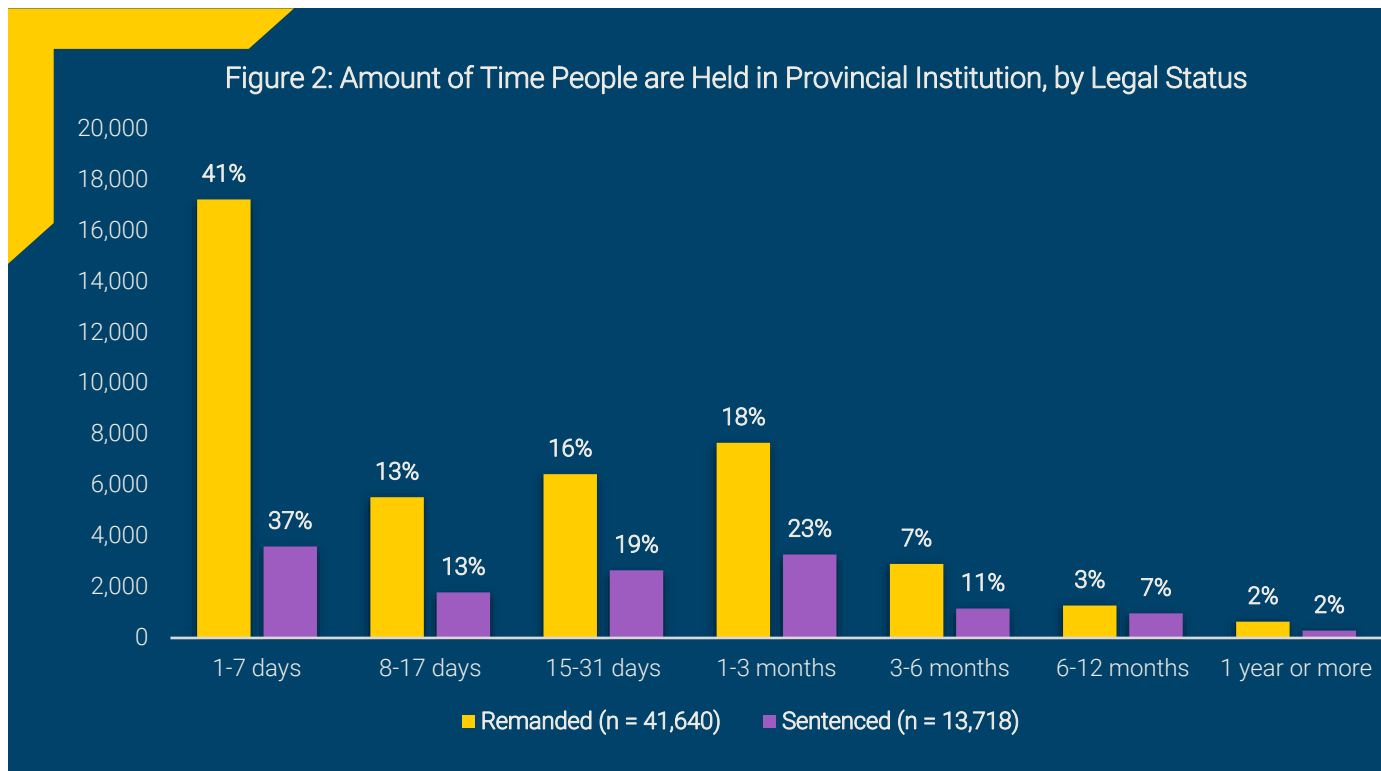
People who are incarcerated in Canada can be held in provincial or federal correctional facilities. Individuals who are sentenced to over two years are held in federal institutions.

In 2018/2019, there were **51,000** people admitted to one of the 25 correctional institutions in Ontario⁶. On any given day, there are approximately **7,400** inmates incarcerated in a provincial correctional facility⁷.

There are two groups of individuals admitted to provincial correctional institutions:

1. individuals who are convicted of a crime and sentenced to less than two years.
2. those who are accused of a crime, but who have not been convicted. This group is typically remanded to custody while they either await trial, or until they provide bail to secure their release.

This second group—those who have been remanded to custody—is by far the larger of the two groups. In 2018/2019, about **71%** of individuals in provincial custody were those awaiting trial who could not secure bail for their release. The remand rates have seen a drastic increase in the last 15 years. This means that Ontario is jailing an increasing number of people who have not been convicted of a crime.

Length of Stay in Custody in Provincial Institutions, 2018/2019⁸

Remanded individuals are held in custody until their trial or sentencing (or until they are released on bail). The figure above shows the number of people held in remand compared to those inmates who were convicted of a crime and who were sentenced to incarceration. It also lists the length of time each group was incarcerated. This graph demonstrates that people being remanded to custody can be held for long periods of time. On average, remanded individuals were in custody for 43 days (compared to 59 days for those convicted of a crime and sentenced to custody). Individuals remanded to custody were held for a median of 12 days, compared to 23 for those formally sentenced. This means that 50% of all people being held in pre-trial custody are held for over 12 days. Many are held even longer; 30% were held for over a month. Even if they are later released with no conviction, for many people, enduring damage will have been done.

Who is At Risk of Homelessness due to Incarceration? Precariously Housed People

Many people are at risk of homelessness due to a lack of affordable housing. In Canada, “affordable” housing has been defined as a household that spends less than 30% of its pre-tax income on housing costs⁹. People who spend more are sometimes considered “precariously” housed. This means that they can currently afford shelter, but they might be unable to continue to do so if their financial situation changes. If precariously housed people lose their job, have an interruption in their earnings, or a large, unexpected financial obligation, then their risk of homelessness can increase substantially.

Incarceration is one example of an interruption to earnings that can result in homelessness for precariously housed people. Even a week or two of incarceration can lead to missed shifts and lost wages, and as a result, missed rent payments that can jeopardize housing. A person experiencing longer periods of custody will be more likely to experience a loss of housing and employment¹⁰. It should be emphasized that people remanded to custody have *not been convicted of a crime*. Legally, they are presumed innocent. However, they may still suffer the loss of employment and housing, even if they are later released.

How Incarceration Places People in Poverty

Many Ontarians released from correctional institutions are in a much worse economic position as a direct result of their incarceration. Jobs and housing lost due to a period of incarceration are not easily replaced, even in ideal conditions. Many people released from a correctional facility have few financial resources and few means to acquire more. Finding a job and a place to live after incarceration will take time, and many people need services and housing immediately after release.

Discharge/release plans are intended to ease individuals' transition into post-incarceration life¹¹. These release plans are meant to connect people with supports related to things like housing, transportation, employment, and social assistance. However, release planning has often been focused on sentenced individuals. Remanded individuals present additional challenges to release planning. It can be difficult to construct plans for people held for less than three months or who might be released on short notice. They may be released from courthouses rather than from the correctional institution¹². This results in a lack of support for a majority of individuals leaving custody. Many people are at a risk of falling through the cracks. A large number of people who are released have a dire financial situation due to incarceration. They may not have received the necessary support to avoid falling into poverty.

Many will end up returning to prison. The recidivism rate for people in Ontario provincial correctional centres was **37%** in 2015/2016¹³, the last year data was made available (it should be noted that the recidivism rate provided by Ontario only includes those who are reconvicted within two years of serving a sentence of six months or more). The causes of recidivism are complex. However, there is broad agreement that a lack of economic opportunities is a strong predictor of future recidivism. The economic hardship caused by incarceration does not promote public safety. It is a negative consequence of justice system involvement that serves to punish and harm people beyond any legally imposed sentence.

How Incarceration Keeps People in Poverty

Those who have been convicted and who have served a sentence face additional barriers to reintegration. People who have experienced a long period of incarceration often exit correctional institutions with few financial resources and will likely be unemployed.

Securing employment is of primary importance, as a steady income is a strong protective factor against future reincarceration. However, finding employment can be challenging. Incarceration can create gaps in resumes. Many releasees have deficits in employable skills due to interrupted education/work experience and a lack of suitable supplementary programs in correctional facilities. Finding employment quickly can be very challenging, even in the best of times. With the burden of incarceration, it can be impossible.

A substantial barrier to employment for people released from correctional facilities is the presence of a criminal record¹⁴. Individuals with a criminal record are less likely to receive job interviews or be extended job offers, even when their qualifications are otherwise sufficient¹⁵. Having a criminal record can also hurt a person's ability to work even when the offense has nothing to do with the job in question.

Researchers studied the economic outcomes of over 10,000 federal offenders released between the years 1999 and 2001 in Canada¹⁶. They tracked the economic outcomes of these releasees for 14 years after their release. The researchers found that only about half of these 10,000 releasees found employment and filed income taxes. The released individuals had less participation in the labour market, earned less income, and received more social assistance than those who had never been incarcerated. Furthermore, these barriers were more prevalent for women, older Canadians, and Indigenous Peoples. The authors of the report concluded that a major reason for these poor outcomes was that employers were biased against hiring those with a criminal record. In many cases, the presence of a criminal record can restrict access to valuable training opportunities that could lead to future employment¹⁷. Based on this research, it was recommended that more be done to help people with a criminal record find and retain employment.

Canadian Housing Costs as A Systemic Barrier

Securing housing is becoming increasingly difficult for Canadians, even for those who do manage to gain employment. Housing prices have been steadily increasing in Canada for a generation. Wages have not kept pace with the increase in housing prices. According to the Ministry of Housing in Ontario, rent prices have increased 2.3% a year for the last decade¹⁸. However, from 2000 to 2013, wages have only increased 0.4%. Recent data suggests that this trend has continued across Canada. Statistics Canada found that the median after-tax income in Canada was "virtually unchanged" between 2017 and 2018¹⁹. As housing prices exceed wage growth, affordable housing becomes increasingly rare, especially for those on the lower-income brackets²⁰. An increasing number of people will spend 30% or more of their income on housing, leaving them "precariously" housed and at risk of homelessness. Many will be priced out of the housing market entirely.

For individuals with criminal records, the housing problem is compounded by interacting barriers. A lack of financial resources means that they often need to seek affordable housing. Affordable housing can capture a wide array of housing options, which can include community housing,

supportive housing, and purpose-built affordable housing²¹. Affordable housing can sometimes be of low quality. Much of this housing in urban settings is located far away from the city centres where many social and mental health services that many releasees require are located²². A number of Ontario landlords are also performing their own criminal record checks on potential tenants²³. Thus, even if a person with a criminal record manages to secure employment, they may still have difficulty securing housing due to the presence of record checks. The barriers created by criminal records compound the discrimination faced by many people at individual and community levels. This includes the discrimination often faced by groups such as Indigenous Peoples, Black people, LGBTQS2+ people, among others.

The difficulties associated with justice involvement and homelessness thus interact to create a vicious cycle. A person who is experiencing homelessness is much more likely to come into contact with law enforcement and is much more likely to face incarceration. Incarceration can and does lead to poorer economic and housing outcomes, and subsequent homelessness. Once a person enters the legal system, homelessness becomes more difficult to avoid. A person can enter this system from either direction: either as a person living with homelessness facing incarceration, or an incarcerated person facing homelessness. Once trapped in this cycle, the resulting outcomes are the same.

Key Takeaways: Incarceration Often Leads to Homelessness

1. Most people held in custody in provincial institutions have not been convicted of a crime. However, they will suffer the same negative effects of incarceration as people who have been convicted.
2. **50%** of people remanded to custody will be incarcerated for 12 days or more. Many will be incarcerated for months.
3. Incarceration can and will often result in lost jobs and housing. People are often released with nowhere to go.
4. The presence of a criminal record is a huge barrier to finding employment. These records make it difficult to find well-paying work. Many people suffer the economic effects of incarceration for years after release.
5. A person who is released from prison into homelessness, and with few job prospects, is very likely to stay homeless.

ENTERING THE CYCLE: HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is one of the starkest outcomes of severe economic hardship. While anybody can be at risk of homelessness, researchers have identified a few specific risk factors that could lead to homelessness. These are broadly categorized as:

- I. **Structural and systemic barriers** that impact specific populations, such as discrimination due to a person's ethnicity, gender, and age.
- II. **Economic factors**, such as the employment rate and housing availability of the region.
- III. **Health factors**, such as mental health and substance use issues and treatment options.

Homelessness can take many forms. The most recognizable form is people “sleeping rough”—people who are “absolutely homeless” or unsheltered who sleep on the streets. However, there are other kinds of “hidden homelessness”. These include people who are “couch surfing”—those who have no permanent address, but who are staying with family or friends. This type of homelessness is often considered “hidden” or “invisible” because it is missed by most methods that attempt to count the number of people living with homelessness. Others live in supportive, temporary, or transitional housing²⁴.

Incarceration is only a single risk factor for homelessness. People can be homeless for many reasons. Many of these factors are beyond the ability of a person to reasonably control, such as broad economic factors. Many are tied to experiences of discrimination due to a person's identity, such as ethnicity, age, and gender, as noted above. These structural factors impacting certain populations place a person at risk of homelessness. Once a person is experiencing homelessness, a person is at increased risk of justice involvement.

Why Are People Living with Homelessness Being Incarcerated?

People living with homelessness are more likely to face incarceration than those with stable housing. In Ontario, researchers have found that:

22% of people are living with homelessness at the time of their incarceration²⁵.

85% of Ontarians who were experiencing homelessness when they went into prison expected to remain homeless when they were released²⁶.

1/3 of all people leaving correctional facilities are released with **No Fixed Address**.

Prisons are a poor environment for a person who does not have, and is looking to find and maintain, stable housing after release. Some people who have been incarcerated will find family or friends to stay with, or some other kind of temporary accommodation. The rest will be released directly into homelessness. Once homeless, reoffence and reincarceration are likely to follow.

Figure 3: Why Are People Living with Homelessness More Likely to Be Incarcerated?



People Living with Homelessness Are at A Greater Risk of Incarceration and Justice Involvement

People living with homelessness are more likely to face incarceration than the general population. Some researchers have suggested that some kinds of criminal activity can be a necessary survival act for people living with homelessness. A lack of employment and a reduction in social programs can cause people living with homelessness to lack the basic resources required to survive, leading them to turn to criminal behavior to make up the gap²⁷. In support of this claim, some studies have indicated that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be incarcerated for property crimes, such as theft, vandalism, or shoplifting²⁸, and are less likely to commit violent crimes (when controlling for mental health status)²⁹. Some of these acts are called “survival” crimes because it is theorized that they comprise acts that are a necessary part of life for people living with homelessness.

Many Laws Target People Living with Homelessness

In many cases, the mere act of existing as a person experiencing homelessness can lead to run-ins with the law. Many jurisdictions have enacted laws that essentially criminalize homelessness³⁰. This means that these jurisdictions have laws that are easy for housed people to follow, but which are difficult or impossible for people experiencing homelessness to obey. For example, a law that prohibits loitering or sleeping in public spaces is easy for people to follow, provided they have access to housing. People experiencing homelessness cannot easily follow such laws. They need to sleep somewhere. If they cannot find a shelter, sleeping in public spaces is their only option. Laws that prohibit solicitation—for example, squeegeeing or asking passersby for money—are similarly easy for employed individuals to follow³¹. However, an unemployed person experiencing homelessness may have few other sources of income.

These laws do nothing to address the core issues of homelessness. Often, these laws are likely to make the problems worse for people experiencing homelessness. For example, breaking these laws is likely to result in fines³². A person experiencing homelessness and unemployment is unlikely to be able to pay such fines. Instead of helping to combat the problem, these laws tacitly criminalize poverty and homelessness.

People Living with Homelessness Have More Contact with Police

As people experiencing homelessness attempt to access resources needed for survival, thereby committing infractions, they come into contact with police and other law enforcement officials. Police can adopt many different approaches to resolve a situation with a person who has committed an infraction. Some of these approaches involve taking a person into custody, while many do not. Often, when faced with a person experiencing homelessness who has committed an infraction, police officers will deem custody as the quickest means to get that person access to basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical care. However, these short-term advantages can lead to the longer-term disadvantages brought with incarceration and subsequent criminal

records. Police officers are able to remand people experiencing homelessness to alternative forms of treatment, such as mental health settings—provided such alternatives exist in the community. In the absence of alternative treatment programs, incarceration may be seen by law enforcement officials as the only viable alternative to homelessness³³.

Fines constitute the penalties for many laws targeting people living with homelessness. This means that interactions between police and people experiencing homelessness can result in fines for loitering, solicitation, and other such acts. For people living with homelessness, contact with police and law enforcement will often result in financial indemnity³⁴. People living in the kind of poverty that those living with homelessness experience are unlikely to be able to pay fines. Indeed, very few fines doled out to people living with homelessness will ever be paid³⁵. This has negative consequences for the credit scores of the people affected, creating another barrier to the acquisition of housing. In many jurisdictions, these fines generate a substantial debt for those living with homelessness³⁶. For many people living with homelessness, contact with police and law enforcement serves to reinforce the systemic barriers that keep them in homelessness and poverty.

Not all groups of people experiencing homelessness are equally at risk of justice involvement due to homelessness. Certain groups, such as Indigenous Peoples and Racialized Peoples living in Canada, are at a heightened risk of contact with police and law enforcement. Indigenous Peoples (as well as other Racialized Canadians) are more likely to be the target of police stops in certain jurisdictions³⁷, suggesting that police use profiling to specifically target Indigenous Peoples, as well as other Racialized Canadians. Canada's legacy of colonialism—and current colonial practices³⁸—are reflected in a tendency for Indigenous Peoples to have less confidence in police compared to Non-Racialized Canadians³⁹. As communities lose trust in police, law enforcement tends to become less effective and increasingly punitive in communities with a large proportion of Indigenous and Racialized Canadians.⁴⁰

SPOTLIGHT: BLACK/AFRICAN CANADIAN HOMELESSNESS AND JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

Black Canadians are overrepresented in populations experiencing homelessness and incarceration^{41,42}. Black Canadians face all of the same risk factors that predispose people to both homelessness and justice involvement. However, Black Canadians also face unique challenges. Canada has a history of segregation, oppression, and violence against Black Canadians, as well as anti-black policies, and structural and institutional forms of discrimination⁴³. These policies still have resonant effects that affect Black Canadians to this day. For example, unemployment rates amongst Black workers are nearly two times higher than among non-Black workers. This disparity has been attributed to continuing discrimination from employers in the Canadian labour market^{44,45}. This lack of equitable employment opportunities contributes to disproportionate levels of poverty and homelessness among Black Canadians.

Many cities have experienced increasing economic inequality in the last few decades. As a result, many low-income neighborhoods have been increasingly segregated based on ethnic background. These segregated areas often have less access to social services and infrastructure such as public transit⁴⁶. In Canada, Black Canadians are more likely to live in such disadvantaged neighbourhoods. When considering community strengths and protective factors in Black communities, funding for social supports is often inadequate, even when successful, culturally responsive programming is available. Many Black communities have programs that provide resources, wrap-around supports, educational supports, employment supports, and provide assistance to those living in poverty. However, compared to law enforcement groups, they are severely underfunded^{47,48}. As a result of the relative lack of support for social programs, these neighborhoods tend to see higher rates of crime and therefore a higher concentration of enforcement-oriented policing. It is likely no coincidence that Black Canadians are also more likely to face incarceration when compared to non-Black Canadians. Racial profiling and discrimination from police officers may explain why Black individuals are overrepresented in police stops, searches, and arrests contributing to higher rates of Black individuals in Canadian prisons⁴⁹.

In a study of 195 Americans of colour, many Black research participants felt that criminal justice involvement was a significant barrier to accessing housing and employment. Black people and other people of colour with past histories of justice involvement explained that they were discriminated against by employers and landlords because of their history of criminal justice involvement, which made it difficult to avoid

homelessness⁵⁰. The barriers faced by Black Canadians from past justice involvement interact with the unique barriers faced by systematic discrimination to create further disadvantages.

Key Takeaways: Incarceration Leads to Homelessness

- I. Homelessness is caused by a variety of factors, many of which are beyond a person's control.
- II. While incarceration causes homelessness, people living with homelessness are also more likely to be incarcerated.
- III. People living with homelessness are more likely to come into contact with the law. They are more likely to commit what researchers call "survival" crimes involving property crimes or theft, as these acts are often done to secure basic necessities.
- IV. Certain laws criminalize homelessness. These include laws prohibiting loitering and solicitation, acts that people living with homelessness find difficult or impossible to avoid.
- V. Homelessness often brings people into contact with police and law enforcement officials. This leads to increased incarceration, as in many cases police see this as a primary way to ensure that people living with homelessness get their basic needs met.
- VI. Certain groups, such as Black/African Canadians and Indigenous Peoples, are more likely to come into contact with police and law enforcement officials, due in large part to specific policing practices targeting these groups.
- VII. The act of living as a person living with homelessness is likely to bring them into contact with police and law enforcement, and puts them at increased risk of incarceration.



ONTARIO'S INCARCERATION OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

This report will utilize information from a variety of sources to outline the scope of the problem of Ontario's incarceration of people living with homelessness. There is little literature on the issue of province-wide homelessness in Ontario, and only a few sets of data that help to contextualize the problem. This section provides a brief outline of the various primary data sources analyzed in this report.

No Fixed Address Data

The true number of people experiencing homelessness in Ontario can only be estimated. This is also true for the number of people living with homelessness who have been incarcerated. There is little research on incarceration rates of homeless populations in Ontario, or on the experiences of people with lived experience of both homelessness and justice involvement. However, the number of people being incarcerated in Ontario is tracked by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. When people enter a correctional facility, the Ministry of the Solicitor General tracks various demographic information on them. One such piece of information is their address at the time of admittance. Many of those admitted report that they have “**No Fixed Address**” (NFA). This means that they have no stable, permanent address at the time that they were admitted to a correctional institution.

NFA status is often used as a rough proxy for homelessness. By counting the number of admissions of people who report NFA, it is possible to keep a rough tally of the number of times people currently living with homelessness are admitted to Ontario correctional facilities. For the purposes of this report, a count of the admissions of individuals with NFA was acquired from the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General via a Freedom of Information request. In response to this request, the Ministry of the Solicitor General provided a count of the number of people being admitted to Ontario correctional institutions with NFA for the years 2007-2018. An additional request was submitted for the years 2019-2021.

The information provided by this Freedom of Information request gave the number of individuals admitted to each Ontario correctional facility who had NFA upon admission⁵¹. The Freedom of Information request also asked the Ministry to provide information on certain demographic characteristics, including:

- **Indigenous status** of the person being admitted (Indigenous, Non-Indigenous)⁵²
- **Age** of the person being admitted (divided into five-year age categories)
- **Gender** of the person being admitted (categorized by the Ministry as either “Male” or “Female”)⁵³.

NFA data was provided for each of the provincial correctional institutions in Ontario. The research team categorized the data according to four geographic regions (Central, Eastern, Northern, Western).

Figure 4: Map of Ontario Regions



The information provided also counted two different kinds of admissions. The first was instances of admissions of people with No Fixed Address to Ontario Correctional Facilities in a given year⁵⁴ (henceforth known as *Single Admissions* data). The Ministry also provided Multiple Admissions data for cases in which the same person with No Fixed Address was admitted to a correctional institution more than once in a given year (henceforth known as *Multiple Admissions* data).

Without a Home: National Youth Homelessness Survey

The *Without a Home* survey, developed by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada, was a national survey that was designed to capture the experiences of homeless youth. 1261 young people completed the survey across Canada, with 751 responses coming from Ontario. It contains questions about specific experiences of homelessness, as well as justice involvement, in addition to various demographic questions such as ethnicity, gender identity, and Indigenous status. The *Without a Home* survey is a cross-sectional survey that has been run twice, with the most recent iteration occurring in 2019.

National Youth Mentoring Survey

The *National Youth Mentoring Survey* was developed by SRDC through a partnership with Mentor Canada. It was administered to a representative sample of over 2,838 young people, aged 18 to 30, across Canada. Of relevance to this report, the survey included questions relating to justice

involvement and homelessness in youth below 18 years of age, as well as youth’s experiences after reaching adulthood at 18. Demographic questions relating to ethnicity, gender identity, education, employment, income, and Indigenous identity were also included.

Point-In-Time Counts

In 2018, the second nationally coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) count in Canada was conducted. PiT counts provide a one-day snapshot of homelessness in a community. The counts are used as one way to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and unsheltered locations. As part of this enumeration effort, PiT counts also include survey questions that attempt to better understand the population of people experiencing homelessness. In 2018, 61 communities in Canada participated in the coordinated PiT count. The major advantage of PiT counts is that they count people living with homelessness that other methods might miss, such as people who are “sleeping rough” and couch surfing.

Research Highlight: Ontario’s Incarceration of People Experiencing Homelessness

Ontario's Incarceration of People with No Fixed Address	Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ontario is seeing a rise in the number of people living with homelessness being incarcerated in the last 15 years.• This trend reversed in the year 2020 – 2021, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.• The total number of people being admitted to Ontario correctional institutions has steadily declined since 2007 - however, the proportion of individuals with NFA has increased substantially.• Not only is there an increase in the number of people with NFA entering correctional institutions, but also an increase in the number of people with NFA being admitted multiple times over the course of the year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most people living with homelessness at the time of incarceration are from the highly urbanized Central region of Ontario.• The proportion of incarcerated individuals living with homelessness in other, less heavily urbanized, regions of Ontario (Eastern, Northern, and Western) has increased in the last 15 years.• Correctional institutions in the Northern region have higher numbers of individuals with NFA relative to its population. Correctional institutions in the Western region have the fewest people with NFA relative to its population.

Figure 5: Number of Admissions to Ontario Correctional Facilities Who Report No Fixed Address

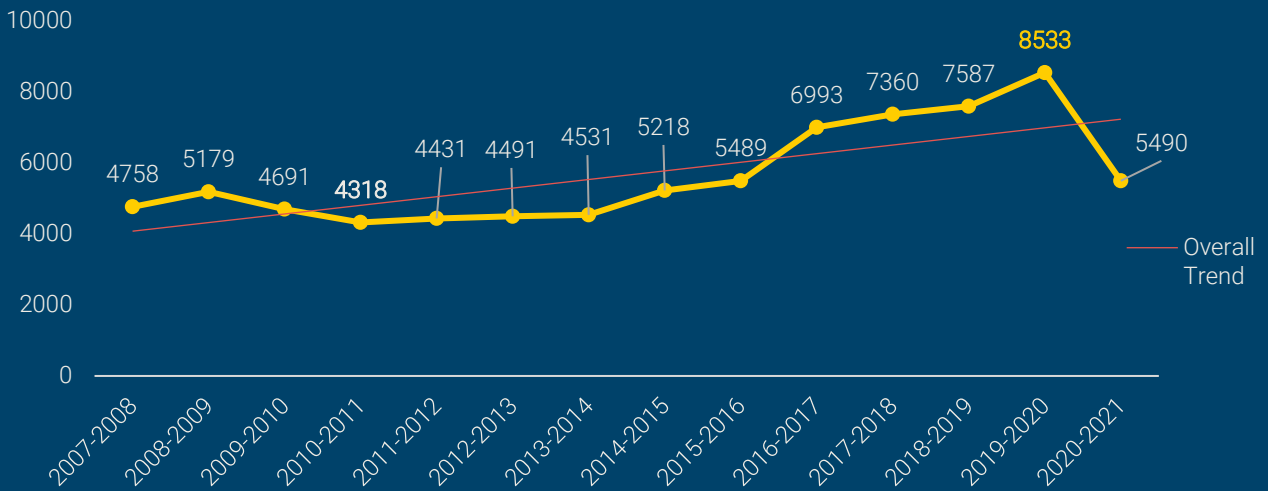


Figure 5 above tracks the number of NFA admissions to correctional facilities in Ontario between March 2007 and March 2021. The trends suggest a relatively stable number of admissions from the years 2007 to 2014. After 2014, there was a steady increase in the number of admissions, peaking in 2019 – 2020. While there were year-to-year fluctuations in the number of admissions, the overall trend suggests an increase in the number of instances of incarcerations during the 14-year period. **In short, Ontario is seeing more instances of people being incarcerated with NFA now than it was seeing 14 years ago.**

Figure 6: Number of Admissions to Ontario Correctional Facilities Who Report No Fixed Address Multiple Times in the Same Year

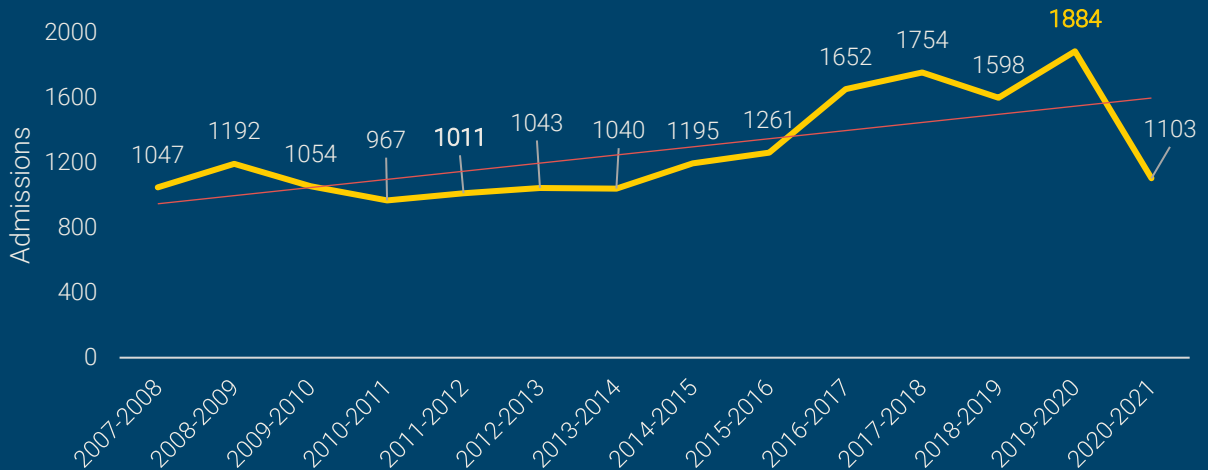


Figure 6, above, lists the instances in which a person was incarcerated multiple times in the same year and reported NFA. The trend for the Multiple Admissions data was the same as it was for the Single Admissions data; a moderate decline, followed by a rapid increase in admissions after 2014 which lasted until 2020. After 2020, admissions declined precipitously to 2014 levels. The trend of incarcerations suggests an overall increase in the number of admissions of people experiencing homelessness between the years 2007 and 2021 for both single admissions and multiple admissions data. **In short, not only is there an increase in the number of admissions of people with NFA in Ontario correctional institutions, but also a substantial increase in the number of admissions of people with NFA to an institution multiple times over the course of the year. This suggests that those experiencing homelessness are increasingly being trapped in the cycle of re-incarceration.**

The decline after 2020 is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, correctional facilities were high-risk environments. The nature of correctional institutions made safety measures like social distancing difficult to achieve and many institutions had COVID-19 outbreaks. Due to this, drastic steps were taken to rehouse prisoners in community settings⁵⁵ whenever possible. These measures resulted in an overall lower incarceration rate, which likely explains the drop in NFA admissions in 2020 – 2021. It remains to be seen whether this trend will continue, or whether numbers will rebound back to their previous levels.

The data above tracks the number of admissions with NFA to Ontario correctional facilities. The trend suggests more incarcerations of people experiencing homelessness over the years of data looked at in this research. However, it is important to look at these numbers in context. How many incarcerations were there in Ontario overall? Did incarcerations of people with NFA make up a larger *proportion* of total incarcerations over the same period? Or were there simply more incarcerations in Ontario during this period overall?

An additional Freedom of Information request was made to the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General for the total number of individuals who were incarcerated in Ontario between the years 2007 and 2021⁵⁶. The number of individuals incarcerated with NFA were compared to the total number of people who were incarcerated in Ontario correctional facilities based on the figures provided by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Figure 7 presents data representing total admissions to Ontario correctional institutions from 2007 – 2008 to 2020 – 2021. The data suggests an overall decrease in the total number of individuals being admitted to correctional institutions. The number of admissions peaked in 2008 – 2009 with almost **79,000** admissions. Since that date there has been a steady decline, with 2019 – 2020 admissions being slightly over **51,000**. It should be noted that in 2020 – 2021 the admissions data, similar to NFA data, shows a drastic decrease. Again, this is possibly a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and not a long-term trend. **Comparing admissions data to NFA data suggests that despite the decline in the total number of admissions, the proportion of admissions that were NFA has continued to increase. While there are fewer total admissions to correctional institutions, the number of NFA and the proportion of admissions that are NFA have continued to increase.**

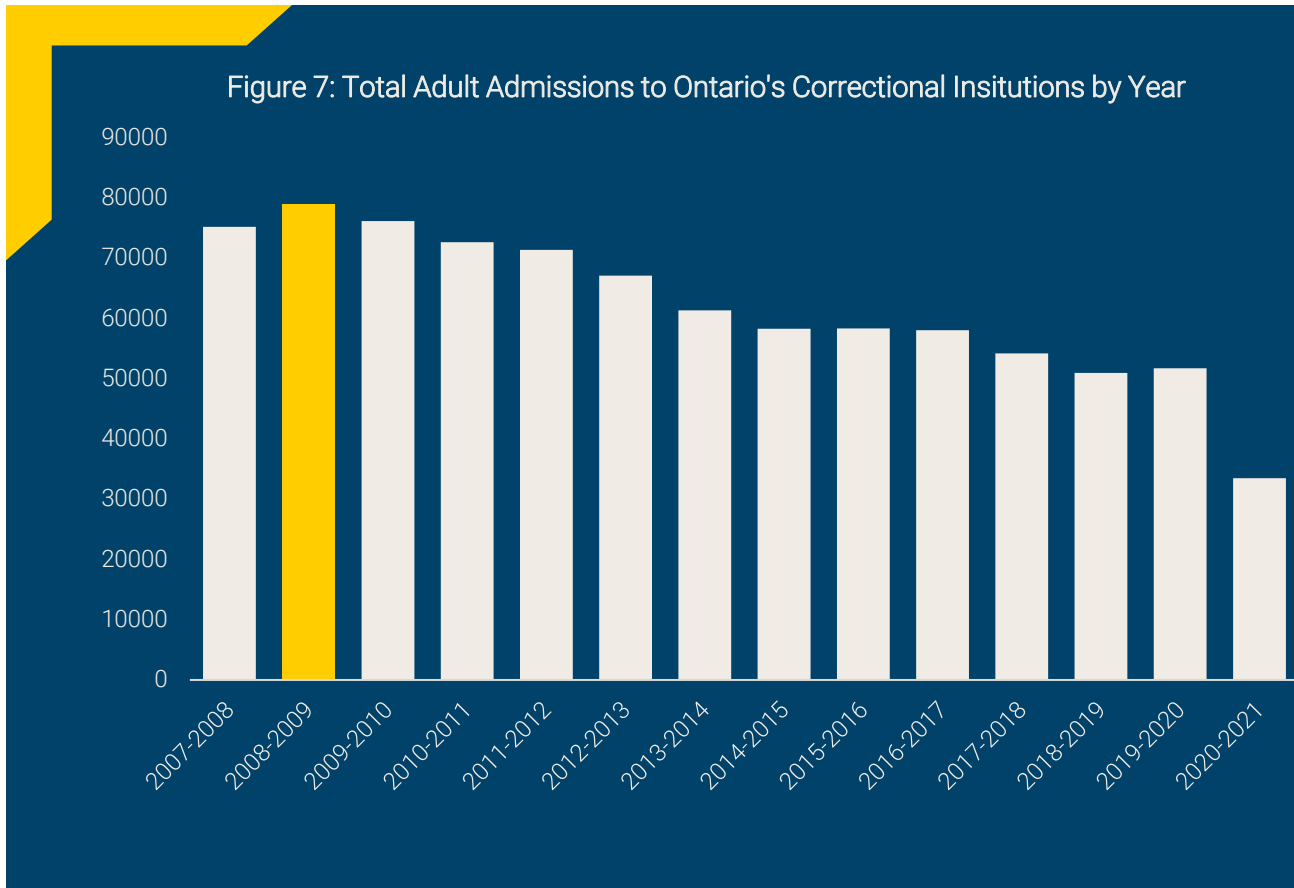
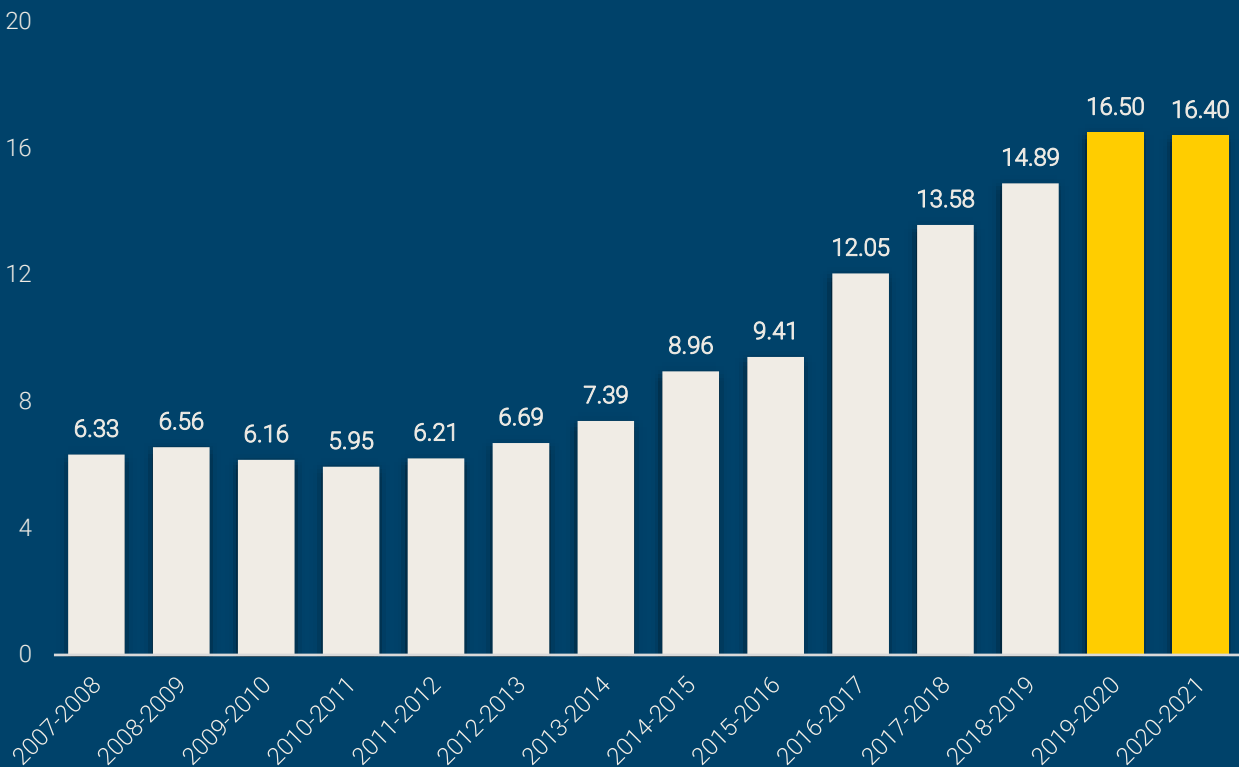


Figure 8 tracks the percentage of total incarcerations that entered correctional facilities with NFA. In 2007–2008, **6.33%** of people admitted to Ontario correctional facilities had NFA. This proportion was fairly steady until 2014, when it began to increase substantially. In 2021, approximately **16.4%** of all admissions were people with NFA. A major reason for the increase in this proportion is that the raw number of people being incarcerated in Ontario has steadily declined since 2007–2008, while the number of incarcerations of people with NFA has held steady or increased. Even 2020–2021, when the number incarcerations of people with NFA dropped sharply, the total number of people being incarcerated dropped by an even larger amount. So, while the *raw number* of incarcerations of people living with homelessness in 2021 decreased, the *proportion* of incarcerations of people with No Fixed Address remained steady.

Figure 8: Percentage of Admissions to Ontario Correctional Institutions With No Fixed Address



These numbers suggest the problem of homelessness among justice-involved people has grown worse in Ontario over time. In 2007, 6.33% of admissions to Ontario correctional facilities were people who were experiencing homelessness. This equates to approximately 1 in 16 people being homeless at the time of admission. In 2021, the most recent year that data was available, this number had increased to 16.4%. This means that approximately 1 in 6 people admitted to Ontario correctional facilities in 2021 were living with homelessness at the time of admission.

SPOTLIGHT: HOMELESSNESS IN ONTARIO

An enduring image of homelessness often shows people who are sleeping on the streets, in parks, on benches, or in other public spaces. This depiction of homelessness—people “sleeping rough”^{57,58}—is an accurate representation for some of what it is to live without a home. However, there are many people who are living with homelessness in less visible ways. Many people live in temporary shelters, such as homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, or transitional houses. These people do have a shelter, but it is not a permanent housing solution. Many others stay with friends, family, or other acquaintances, often moving from place to place (“couch surfing”). These people also have no permanent housing of their own. They avoid absolute homelessness—sleeping on the streets—by tapping into their social networks.

Researchers and policy makers have put together an estimate of the number of people living with homelessness in Ontario. These estimates suggest that there are between **8,000**⁵⁹ to **16,000**⁶⁰ people experiencing homelessness in Ontario on any given night. The range of possible values is indicative of the different strategies that researchers use to count people living with homelessness. Some count the number of people in homeless shelters and other kinds of temporary housing. Others will focus on Point in Time counts, where the number of people living with homelessness in selected communities are counted by researchers on a given day. Others focus on administrative data, such as those collected by health and court databases. Each of these techniques miss important segments of the population of people experiencing homelessness and likely understate the number of people living with homelessness in Ontario. The true number of people experiencing homelessness in Ontario is almost certainly higher.

Regional Trends

The No Fixed Address data includes admission counts from individual correctional institutions. For the purposes of this report, the correctional institutions are divided into four regions based on their location: **Eastern**, **Central**, **Northern**, and **Western**. Whenever possible, people are incarcerated in a provincial institution near to where they live⁶¹. Tracking the rates of incarceration by region over time allows an understanding of which regions are incarcerating more—and less—people⁶².

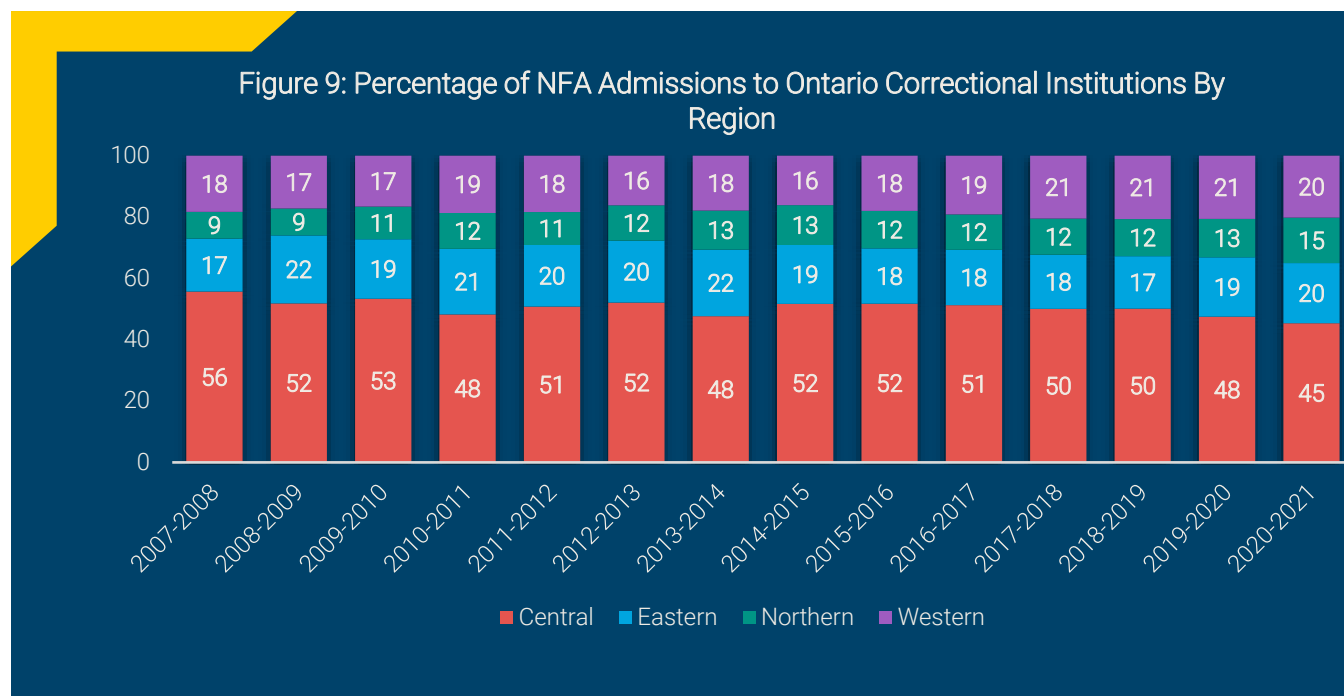
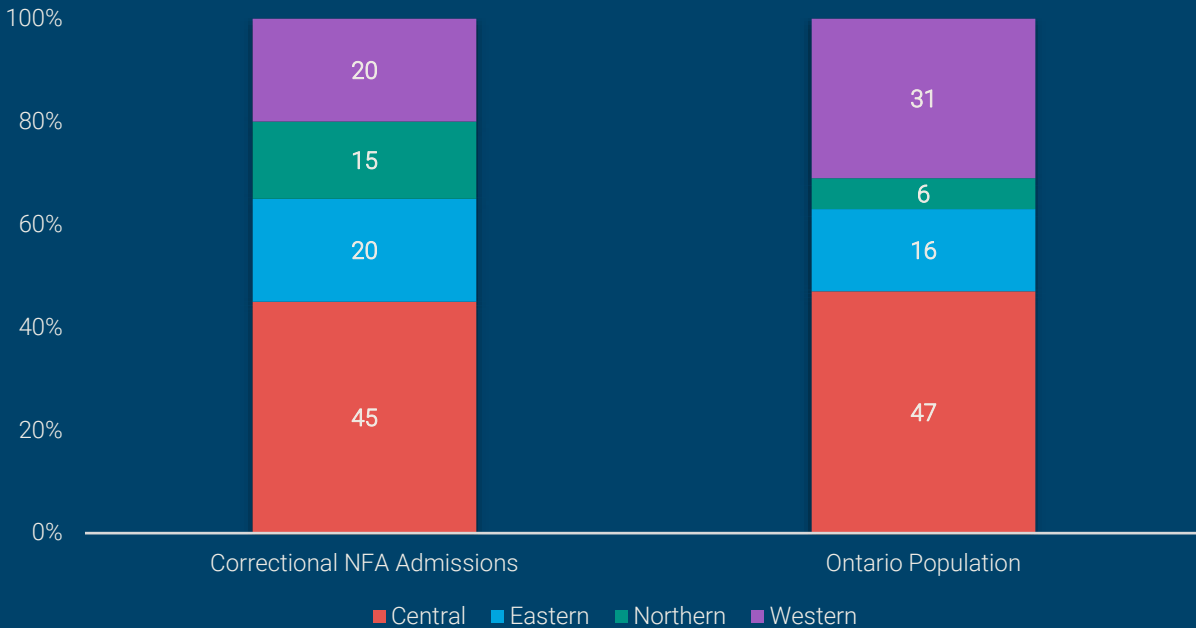


Figure 9, above, outlines the regional distribution of incarcerated people with NFA in Ontario from 2007 to 2021. Each bar represents the percentage of people who were incarcerated in a given region for that year. In general, people are more likely to be incarcerated in the Central region, the region with the largest concentration of population in Ontario. However, over time, there were fewer incarcerations from the Central region with NFA. In 2007–2008, about **56%** of all people living with homelessness being incarcerated were from the Central region. The most recent year, 2020–2021, saw that number fall to **45%**. These numbers suggest that incarceration rates in the heavily urbanized Central region are declining, and all other regions in Ontario are seeing relatively more incarceration of people experiencing homelessness. **The region with the largest gain was the Northern region. In 2007–2008, 9% of incarcerated people experiencing homelessness were from the Northern region; in the most recent year, that number had increased to 15%.**

Figure 10: Percentage of Admissions in Ontario Correctional Institutions Compared to Ontario Population, 2021



The Figure above compares the proportion of people being admitted to correctional facilities in a region to the approximate population of that region of Ontario. These values are for the year 2021, the most recent year that population data for Ontario was available⁶³. The urbanized Central region (containing Toronto, York region, etc.) of Ontario held **47%** of the province's population, and comprised **45%** of all NFA admissions to Ontario correctional facilities in 2021. These numbers suggest the Central region, along with the Eastern (Ottawa, Peterborough, etc.) region, have more NFA admissions to correctional facilities at a rate proportionate to the population of those regions.

The same cannot be said for the Western and Northern regions. The Western region (containing Halton, Hamilton, Waterloo, etc.) comprised **31%** of the population of Ontario. However, only **20%** of NFA admissions were to correctional facilities in the Western region. On the other hand, the Northern region (Thunder Bay, Sudbury) comprised about **6%** of the population of Ontario. In 2021, **15%** of admissions to correctional facilities with NFA were admitted to facilities in the Northern region.

Figure 11: Percentage of Total Admissions By Region Admitted With No Fixed Address

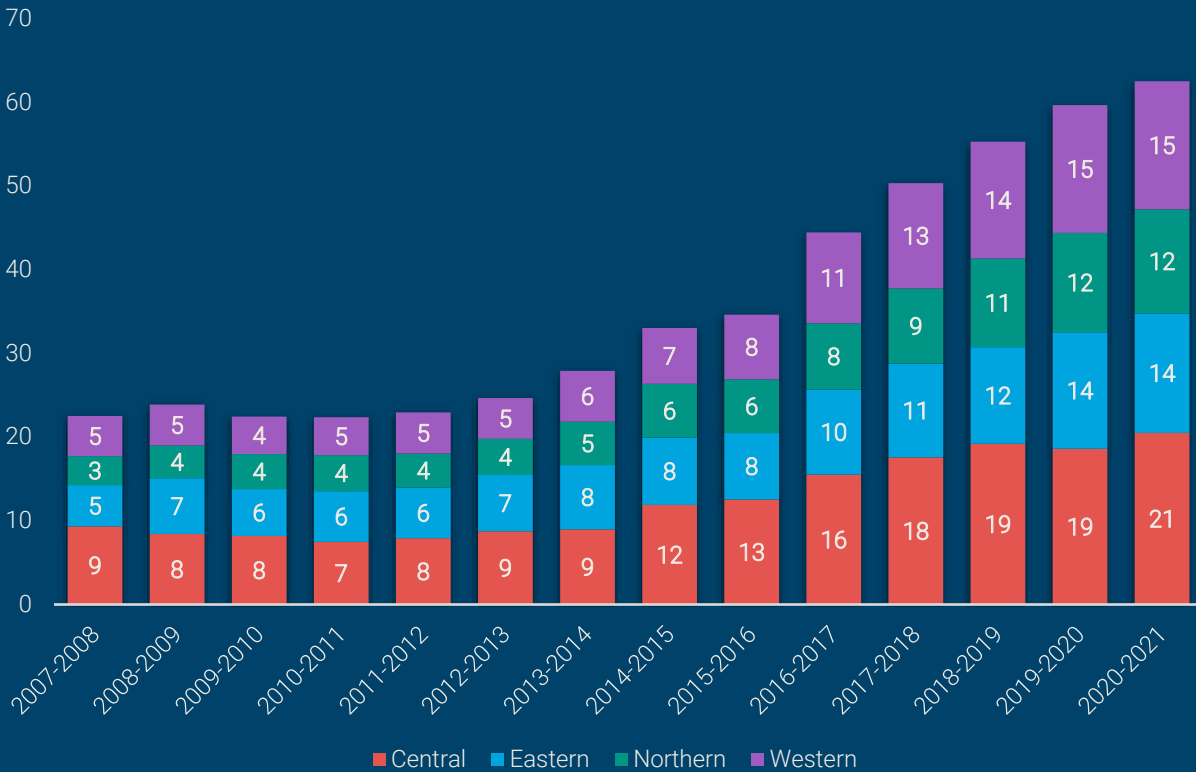


Figure 11, above, provides a breakdown of the proportion of total admissions in each region that were admitted with NFA. The numbers suggest that each region reported a substantial increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness admitted to correctional facilities in their region. For example, in the Central region, in 2007– 2008, **9%** of people being admitted to correctional facilities reported NFA. In 2020– 2021, **21%** of people admitted to Central region correctional facilities reported NFA. The other regions featured even more dramatic proportional increases. **The proportion increased approximately threefold in the Eastern and Western regions, and approximately fourfold in the Northern region.** This suggests that the incarceration of people experiencing homelessness is not restricted to a particular region in Ontario; it is a trend that is happening all across the province.

SPOTLIGHT: RURAL HOMELESSNESS

Canadian northern and rural homelessness has rarely received the attention it deserves, as the focus of most assessments and research has centered around urban areas⁶⁴. Urban areas have a high concentration of population and resources, making research on people experiencing homelessness more feasible. In contrast, the population in rural and northern Ontario is very spread out. Northern Ontario is made up of **150** municipalities with most having less than **7,000** inhabitants, and around **811,000** residents spread out across 90 percent of Ontario's land⁶⁵. Furthermore, Northern Ontario has seven First Nations treaties, and is home to **105 Indigenous communities**⁶⁶. The large area and relatively sparse population make research challenging, and so relatively little is known about the experiences of justice-involved people experiencing homelessness in rural areas. Rural communities might have fewer social programs and may lack homeless shelters. Tighter-knit rural communities might stigmatize homelessness and justice involvement to a higher degree. There may be fewer economic opportunities in rural areas, meaning that it can be more difficult to acquire employment and shelter.

Understanding regional variations in homelessness is important because experiences of homelessness can differ dramatically based on location. Most essential homelessness services are centralized around urban areas. Rural and northern communities have relatively few services, and those services are spread out over greater distances, making access difficult^{67,68}. Most rural homelessness services are not offered regularly, including those that provide access to food such as food banks and soup kitchens, as well as mental health services, and legal/court services. In Ontario, trends suggest that more people living with homelessness are being incarcerated in less urbanized, more rural, and northern areas. It is imperative that the experiences of rural homelessness among justice-involved people be examined, so the unique challenges they face can be better understood.

RESEARCH FOCUS: WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

The mechanisms that link homelessness to criminal justice involvement are tied to broad economic factors, such as employment rates and housing availability. Previously incarcerated people face systematic economic disadvantages. However, these disadvantages are not evenly distributed amongst all incarcerated people. Some groups of people are overrepresented in both homeless populations and incarcerated populations. They often face unique systemic barriers that place them at risk of homelessness, incarceration, or both. Many people face multiple layers of marginalization – intersectionality explains how one’s social location, including race, class, gender, sexuality, and other individual characteristics, “intersect” with one another to confer various advantages and disadvantages⁶⁹.

As mentioned previously, the NFA data included a breakdown based on Indigenous status, gender and youth. The following section provides an overview of the findings for the three aforementioned groups. However, it is important to note that there are many at risk groups including Black Canadians, individuals experiencing mental health issues, and individuals from LGBTQ2S+ communities that are not represented by the NFA data.

Research Highlight: NFA and Underserved Populations

Indigenous Peoples	Gender	Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Peoples living with homelessness are more likely to be incarcerated compared to non-Indigenous People living with homelessness • Northern Ontario communities are incarcerating people living with homelessness at a faster growing rate than other regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate of incarceration of homeless men and women is growing over time • The rate of homeless men who have been incarcerated multiple times in a year is growing at a disproportionate rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many youth experiencing homelessness have reported varying degrees of contact with the criminal justice system • Many youth who are incarcerated are released directly to homelessness • Youth who experience homelessness and justice-involvement felt disconnected from communities, had less social capital, and a lower sense of self-worth

SPOTLIGHT: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous Peoples in Canada face numerous systemic barriers that place them at risk of both homelessness and justice involvement. Indigenous Peoples represent only **4.1%** of Canada's adult population, yet they comprise about **30%** of correctional custody admissions⁷⁰. Indigenous Peoples are similarly overrepresented in the homeless population in Canada⁷¹. Statistics show that the rate of emergency shelter use for Indigenous Peoples is **10 times higher** than for non-Indigenous Peoples⁷². Meanwhile, outside the shelter system, Indigenous Peoples are more than twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness (such as couch surfing and staying with family/friends) than non-Indigenous Peoples⁷³.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada are impacted by Canada's legacy of colonization. Past and present Canadian laws, policies, and practices are underpinned by colonial values which place Indigenous Peoples at increased risk of involvement in the criminal justice system⁷⁴. As an extension of colonization, the criminal justice system has played a distinctly harmful role in Indigenous communities in Canada. The criminal justice system has contributed to the social, cultural, and economic disadvantages faced by Indigenous Peoples⁷⁵. As indicated in this report, Ontario has seen a larger number of incarcerations of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness in the last 14 years, a trend that has only recently been temporarily reversed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While incarceration is highly damaging to most people, it is likely to be exceptionally damaging to Indigenous Peoples, who face even more barriers to subsequent employment and housing acquisition due to systemic prejudice and colonial policies.

Indigenous Peoples also tend to experience worsened outcomes in the criminal justice system. They are more likely to be placed in maximum security, more likely to be involved in use of force and self-injury incidents, less likely to be granted conditional release, and more likely to reoffend or be returned to custody⁷⁶. These findings underscore the ways in which the justice system itself is perpetuating systematic bias and contributing to the problem of overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian criminal justice system⁷⁷.

Indigenous Peoples' homelessness is a distinct experience that extends beyond a simple lack of shelter⁷⁸. These experiences combine deeper connections to the land, people, community, and a focus on relationships. Indigenous homelessness has been defined as:

"a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or

the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships."⁷⁹

The reasons for the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in homeless and justice-involved populations in Canada are varied and complex. These factors span across structural and individual levels, and contain political, historical, economic, and cultural dimensions. As previously mentioned, homelessness in Indigenous Peoples has dimensions unique to the culture and historical experiences of Indigenous Peoples. Some of these dimensions include historic displacement, contemporary geographic separation, cultural disintegration and loss, and others relating to the experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Canada⁸⁰. To underscore the Indigenous perspective on homelessness, the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada does not make any reference to the term 'homelessness'. It instead includes the term 'home' 146 times, most commonly in reference to loss and enforced separation⁸¹.

Despite the long-standing and worsening problem of Indigenous overrepresentation in both homeless and justice-involved populations, a lack of research on the causal factors of Indigenous homelessness persists⁸². Researchers have noted that the issue of overrepresentation is prominent, troubling, and has been left largely unexamined⁸³. The impact of colonization is at the root of the issue. Colonial practices have contributed to structural inequity, systemic discrimination, community breakdown, cultural oppression, and dispossession of lands^{84,85}.

Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented in the child welfare system and in foster care. Many Indigenous youth pass directly from the child welfare system into homelessness^{86,87,88}. Current and historic traumas, including intergenerational trauma traced back to the residential school era, combined with a disproportionate degree of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, contribute to compromised mental health and the use of substances as a coping mechanism^{89,90,91,92,93}. Stigma and discrimination impact service utilization, especially in the case of healthcare, where instances of racism are widely reported⁹⁴. Involvement with the criminal justice system is often precipitated by substance misuse, with many people being charged while intoxicated⁹⁵. Within the criminal justice

system, Indigenous Peoples are subjected to over-policing, as well as discriminatory laws and law enforcement ⁹⁶.

Homelessness itself is a factor that pushes a disproportionate number of Indigenous Peoples into contact with the justice system⁹⁷. The loss of traditional territories, geographic displacement, a lack of funding for housing, and limited resources in home communities all contribute to homelessness in Indigenous Peoples^{98,99}. When searching for housing off-reserve, Indigenous Peoples encounter racism and housing discrimination. They are more likely to receive poor-quality housing¹⁰⁰. On-reserve, housing is often described as unsafe, inadequate, and overcrowded¹⁰¹. Indigenous Peoples are more likely, then, to be justice-involved, as well as to experience homelessness. They are often at a higher risk of entering into the cycle of homelessness and justice involvement.

Approaches that focus on restoring and rebuilding Indigenous culture and rights are key to overcoming the problem of Indigenous homelessness and justice involvement. Any effort to address Indigenous overrepresentation in both homeless and justice-involved populations must account for Canada's history of colonization. As stated above, government policies have often exacerbated—or directly caused—many of the issues facing Indigenous Peoples in Canada. To address these issues, current policies must avoid “caretaking” in favour of meaningful power-sharing with Indigenous communities, including an acknowledgement of Indigenous self-determination and self-governance^{102,103}.

In its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 18 recommendations regarding justice for Indigenous Peoples, including a call to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Indigenous Peoples in custody. Some recommendations called to provide community sentences as alternatives to imprisonment where possible for Indigenous offenders, and for all levels of government to address the needs of offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)¹⁰⁴. To achieve these goals, interventions must come from a perspective of cultural safety and trauma-informed practice¹⁰⁵. To date, initiatives have included alternative sentencing procedures, improved transitional support, restorative justice, and healing and land-based programming that involve the outdoors, traditional activities, and teachings^{106,107}.

Figure 12: Number of Admissions of Indigenous Peoples to Ontario Correctional Facilities Who Report No Fixed Address

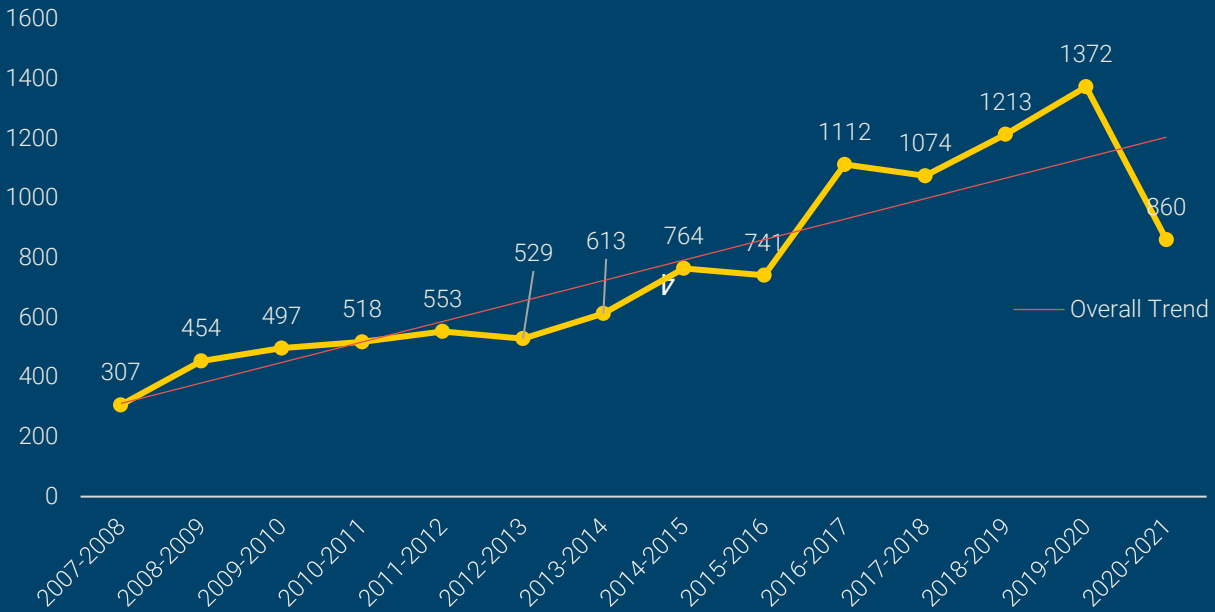


Figure 12, above, represents the number of Indigenous Peoples who were admitted to Ontario correctional institutions who reported NFA upon admission. This is a proxy for the number of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness who are admitted to institutions. The incarceration trend for Indigenous Peoples with NFA differs from the NFA incarceration rate of the general population. For the total population, the number of admissions of people with NFA was generally flat until 2013/2014, after which the rate of incarceration began to increase. For Indigenous Peoples with NFA, the incarceration rates increased fairly steadily between 2007 and 2020, before declining in 2020–2021. **Overall, there was more growth in the incarceration of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness than there was growth in the number of Non-Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness.**

Figure 13: Proportions of Admissions to Ontario Correctional Institutions With No Fixed Address

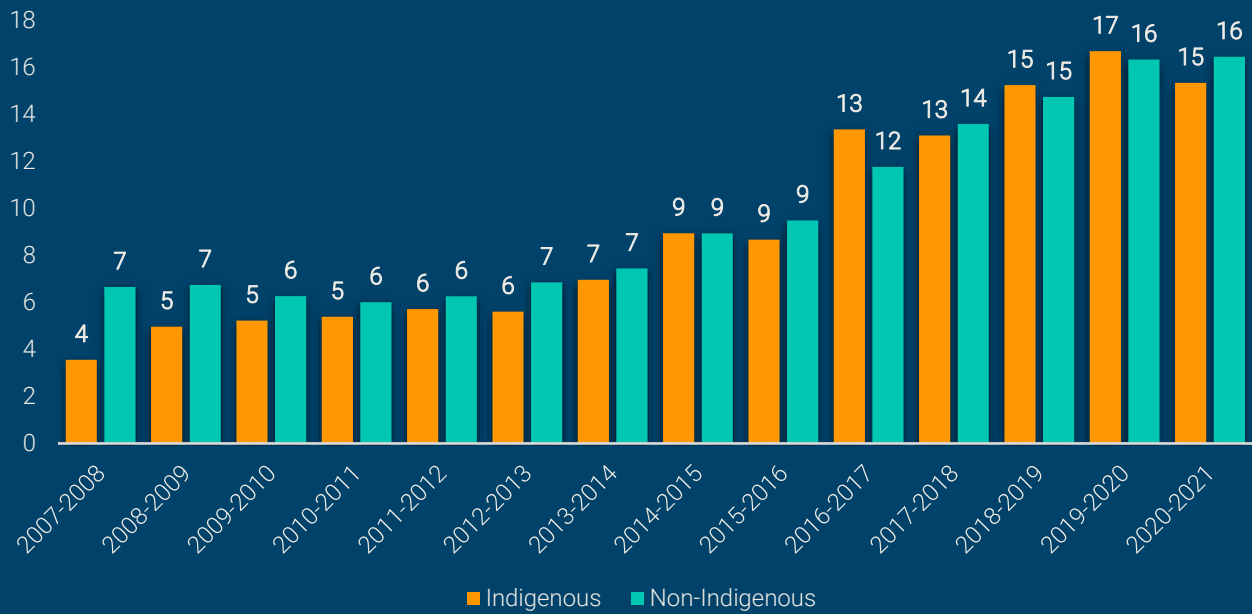


Figure 13, above, lists the proportion of admissions to Ontario correctional institutions of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples who had NFA on admission. In 2007–2008, approximately **7%** of all admissions of Non-Indigenous Peoples had NFA on admission. In 2020–2021, the most recent year data was available, that number had increased to **16%** of Non-Indigenous Peoples who were experiencing homelessness upon incarceration. Indigenous Peoples had a similar trend. In 2007–2008, approximately **4%** of Indigenous Peoples admitted to Ontario correctional institutions had NFA, while in 2020–2021, that number had increased almost fourfold to **15%**.

SPOTLIGHT: GENDER AND THE EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS AND JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

Gender is a critical factor in understanding experiences of homelessness and justice involvement. Men are overrepresented in populations experiencing both homelessness and incarceration in Canada. The majority of people experiencing homelessness are men. Some samples suggest that men make up between 60% to 85% of the homeless population^{108,109}. However, these estimates vary by region and the definition of homelessness used. For example, women and gender-diverse people are likely to be affected by the types of homelessness that are often missed in counts of people living with homelessness. These types of homelessness include couch surfing, living with friends, or living in temporary housing. In addition, women may be more likely to be precariously housed. There is also a dearth of data on gender-diverse (e.g., non-binary individuals) populations experiences of homelessness. These groups might experience more “hidden” homelessness (e.g., couch surfing, staying with friends/family)¹¹⁰. They might also be reluctant to disclose their gender identity to avoid discrimination¹¹¹. Even if they are willing to disclose such information, they might not have the opportunity. For example, the No Fixed Address data outlined in this report did not release data on diverse gender identities. Therefore, the data in this report conflated sex and gender, did not disclose non-binary options, and did not disclose data on whether those with binary genders were cisgender or transgender. It is unknown whether this data was simply not collected, or whether it was collected but not disclosed as part of the Freedom of Information request.

Men represent a larger portion of those accused of crimes, are overrepresented in incarcerated populations, and also spend longer amounts of time remanded to custody¹¹². However, women are the fastest-growing population in Canadian federal prisons, with a rate increasing 50% in 20 years¹¹³. Race and Indigenous identity are intersecting factors in risk of incarceration; both Black men and women are overrepresented in provincial correctional facilities compared to their white counterparts¹¹⁴. Despite the rate of women accused of crimes falling 15% in 2010, the number of incarcerated Black women more than doubled¹¹⁵. Indigenous women spent more time on remand than both Indigenous men and white men¹¹⁶. This is despite the fact that men, on average, are remanded to custody for longer periods of time than are women. This suggests that Indigenous identity intersects with gender,

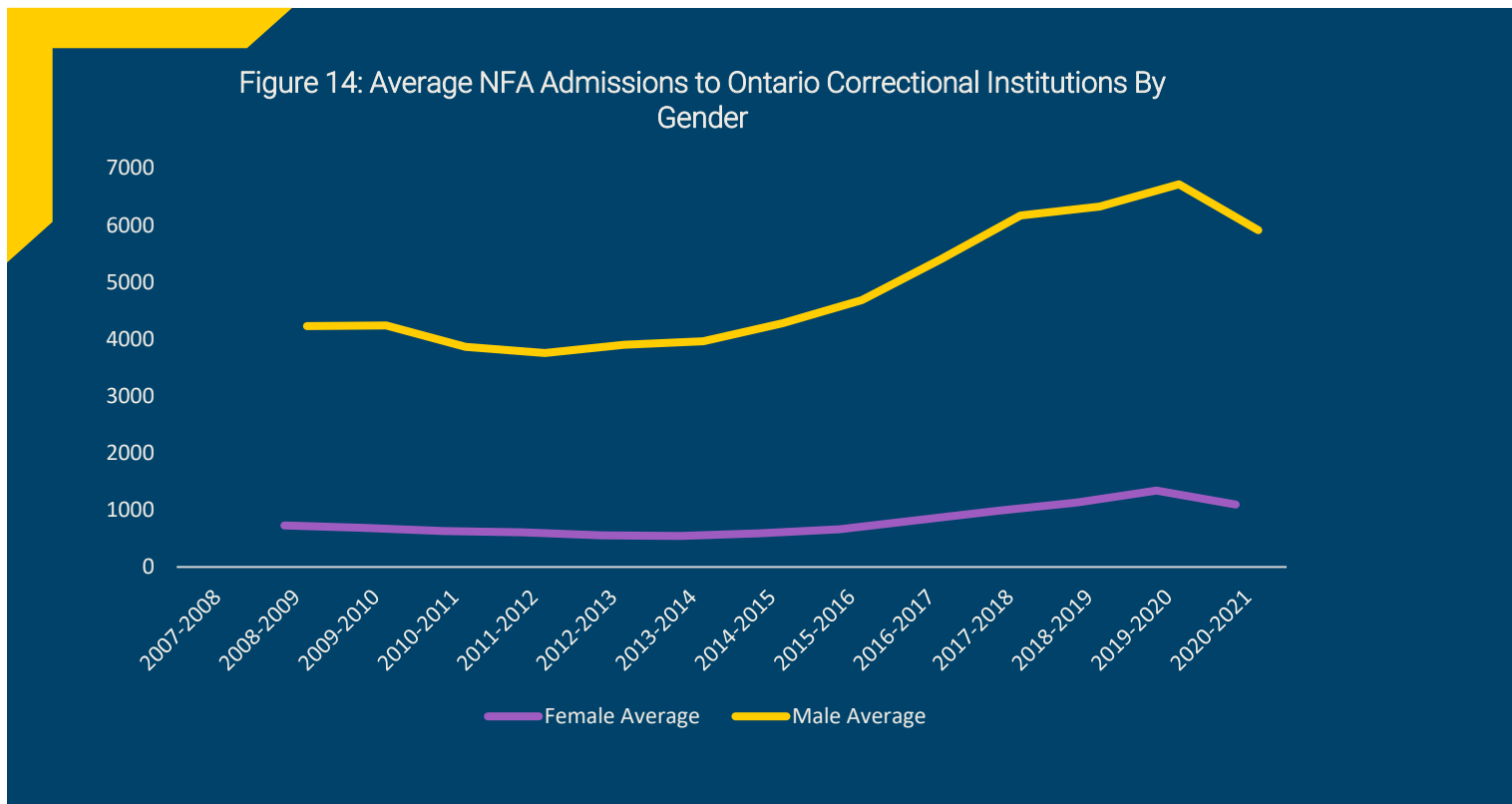
resulting in a higher risk of incarceration for Indigenous women in particular.

Men and women demonstrate some differences in their vulnerability to certain factors that place one at risk of future incarceration. Past experiences of victimization can be a predictor of future criminalization¹¹⁷. Cisgender women and transgender people experience higher rates of victimization and domestic violence¹¹⁸. These rates are higher for Indigenous women and women of colour¹¹⁹. Women tend to be more vulnerable to socio-economic factors that are related to criminal justice system involvement, such as single parenting, lack of affordable childcare, access to employment, unstable housing, and poverty¹²⁰.

Men, women, and gender non-conforming people face scrutiny for different criminalized behaviour, especially when they are homeless and/or justice-involved. Homeless men are more likely to encounter police compared to homeless cisgender women or transgender people. This is due in large part to the fact that men are disproportionately represented in both the homeless and justice-involved populations. Cisgender women and transgender people are more likely to engage in survival sex work, which places them at increased risk of contact with police and law enforcement and subsequent harassment¹²¹.

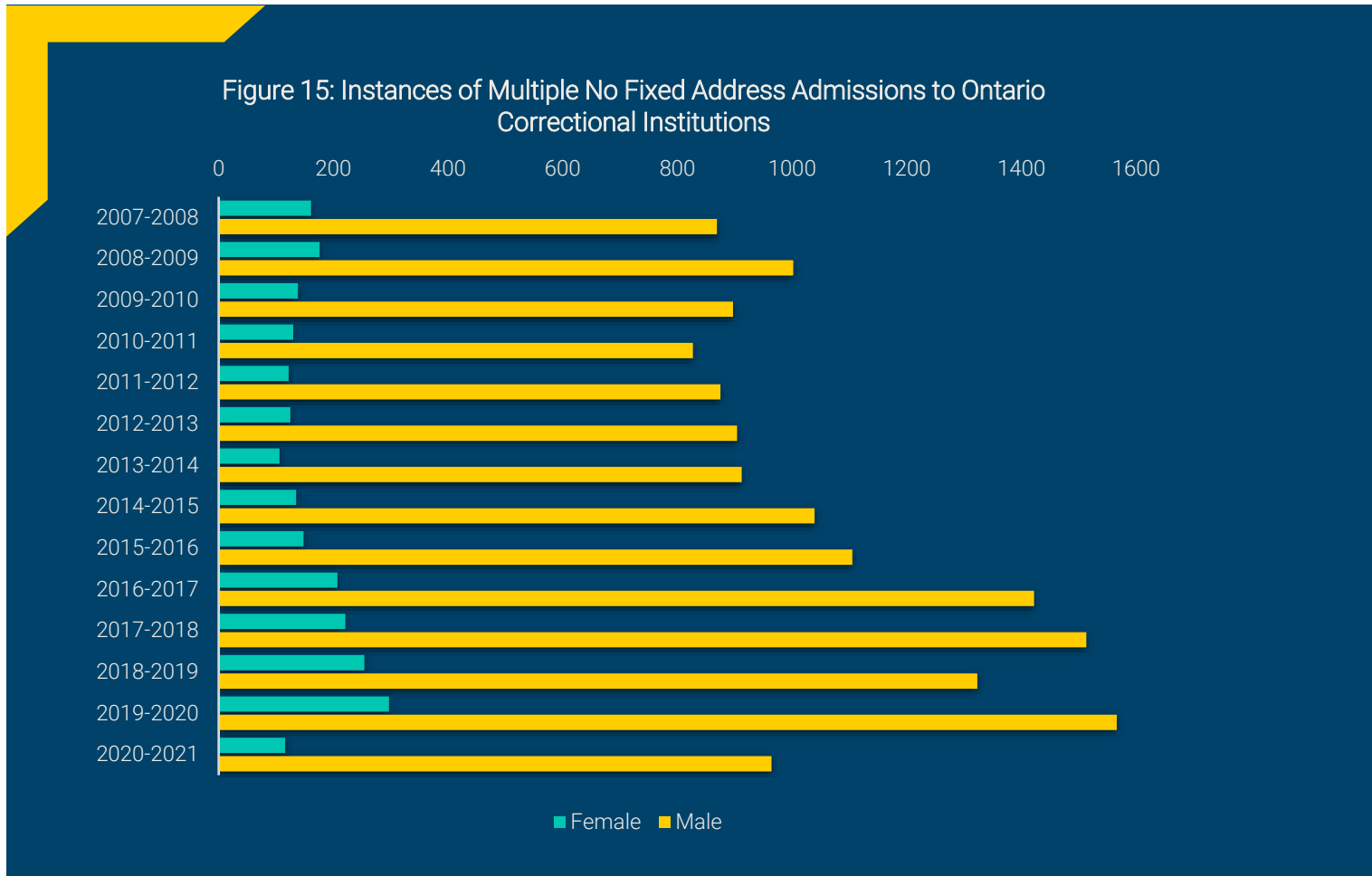
Once incarcerated, men and women face different obstacles to safe and stable housing upon release. For example, remanded individuals are at greater risk of homelessness upon release if they have not secured employment or housing. Women are more likely to have entered the criminal justice system without employment or a high school education¹²². Federally incarcerated women are also less likely to have secured post-incarceration employment compared to men. Housing is difficult to secure for people with criminal justice system involvement in general, in part due to criminal records and low paying jobs or unemployment. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that women face unique forms of discrimination. Women fleeing domestic violence (a group that is overrepresented in the incarcerated population) face discrimination from some landlords, and may have subsequent difficulties securing housing¹²³. This may lead to their return to unsafe housing situations, where they may be at an increased risk of victimization and re-offense¹²⁴. Women may also have a difficult time accessing shelters or social supports, especially if they are single parents (as is more likely, compared to their male counterparts) or are immigrants/refugees^{125,126}.

Gender



The figure above shows the rolling 2-year average of the number of males and females with NFA incarcerated in Ontario correctional facilities. More men than women are incarcerated in Ontario. However, both men and women have similar trends. The averages above suggest that the rates of incarceration of both men and women have been increasing in the last 15 years. **While the rates have been increasing somewhat faster for men, more women have also been incarcerated in the past few years compared to a decade ago.**

Multiple Admissions Data by Gender



The above figure tracks the instances in which individuals, male or female, were admitted with NFA to Ontario correctional institutions multiple times in one year. The trend for the multiple NFA data suggests that both men and women experiencing homelessness are being re-incarcerated in increasing numbers as time goes on. The trend for men is increasing somewhat faster than that for women. This suggests that the rate at which men experiencing homelessness are being incarcerated, released, and then reincarcerated has been increasing rapidly compared to the rate for women. However, this cycle of incarceration, release, and reincarceration has become increasingly common for both men and women throughout the years covered by the study.

SPOTLIGHT: PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND/OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES

The rate of mental health and/or substance use issues among justice-involved individuals and people experiencing homelessness is known to be much higher than that of the general population¹²⁷. However, it is difficult to determine precise estimates of prevalence¹²⁸.

Mental health, substance use, and homelessness are closely related. Between **20%** and **50%** of people experiencing homelessness are also living with severe mental health issues. Between **20%** and **40%** have a dual diagnosis of a mental health issue and substance use disorder¹²⁹. For some people, mental health issues may cause or contribute to homelessness. As a result of the deinstitutionalization movement that began in the 1960s, people with mental health issues were released from psychiatric hospitals into the community. However, there was not an adequate reinvestment in community-based social services to help these people once they were released^{130,131}. The result was that many became homeless. People living with severe mental health issues often face numerous challenges that perpetuate the cycle of homelessness. They may have difficulties finding and maintaining employment, be disproportionately affected by poverty, and experience unmet housing needs¹³².

While mental health issues can result in homelessness, homelessness also causes or contributes to mental health issues and substance use. People who are experiencing homelessness commonly experience stigma, discrimination, risk, and stress-related feelings of fear, anxiety, isolation, and poor sleep, all of which contribute to deteriorating mental health and the use of substances as a coping mechanism¹³³. Individuals experiencing homelessness are at a high risk of victimization and violence, leading to pervasive rates of trauma that further compromise mental well-being¹³⁴. Without housing, it is very challenging to achieve stable recovery from mental health issues^{135,136}.

Research has consistently shown that people with mental health issues are more likely to have police contact than people without a mental illness^{137,138}. Substance misuse and antisocial tendencies are the most likely mental health symptoms to predict justice system involvement^{139,140}. Mental health issues are treated as a criminal justice matter both in terms of public safety (through police involvement in wellness checks, suicide threats, missing persons, and mental health

apprehension) and crime prevention (through police encountering people with mental health as victims or suspects of crime)¹⁴¹. Research suggests **5%** of police encounters involve people with mental health issues, with only half of those interactions involving alleged criminal behaviour¹⁴². Once in contact with police, people with mental health issues are more likely to be cited and arrested than others, contributing to the criminalization of mental health issues^{143,144}.

Just as mental health issues and homelessness lead to an increased risk of justice involvement, so too can justice involvement lead to the development of mental health issues and homelessness. The deeply stressful experience of being arrested and detained can trigger anxiety and other mental health problems¹⁴⁵. Prisons are a high-stress environment subject to overcrowding, isolation, and separation from social supports. As a result, imprisonment can cause or worsen mental health problems^{146,147,148}. Upon release, many people face discrimination in housing not only due to their justice involvement but due to complex needs related to mental health issues and substance use that may lead them to be 'banned' from shelters or other housing options^{149,150}. At the same time, without stable housing, engagement in treatment is a challenge¹⁵¹.



Youth

Approximately **20%** of those experiencing homelessness in Canada are youth between the ages of 13 and 24¹⁵². A variety of socio-economic factors make youth particularly vulnerable to homelessness. Once living with homelessness, youth are highly at risk of criminal justice involvement. According to some estimates, more than half of youth experiencing homelessness in Canada end up incarcerated, or on probation¹⁵³. Some policies specifically target the activities that youth living with homelessness engage in to earn money, such as laws prohibiting solicitation¹⁵⁴. Banning such activities leaves many youth living with homelessness feeling like they have with no choice but to engage in criminal activities as a means of survival while living on the street¹⁵⁵.

Figure 16: Percentage of No Fixed Address Admissions to Ontario Correctional Institutions By Age at Time of Admission

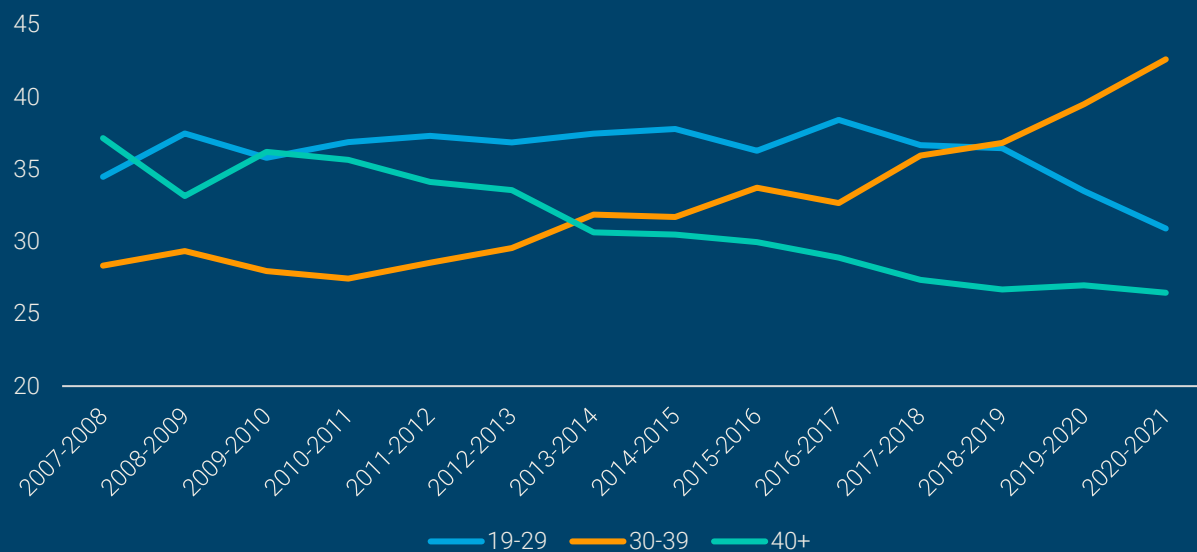


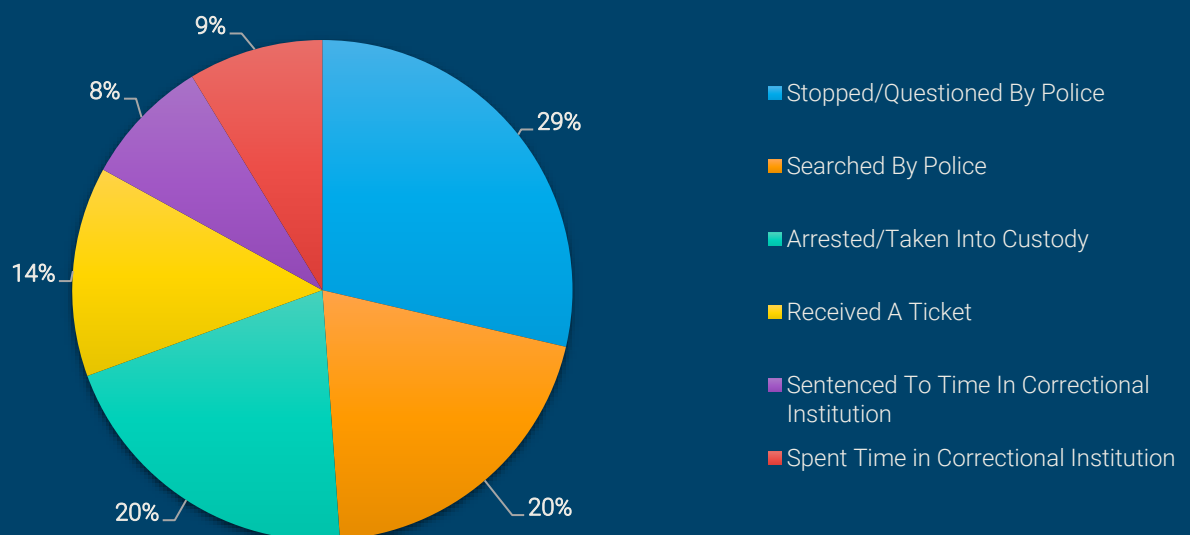
Figure 16, above, shows the age groups of the admissions of people with NFA to Ontario correctional facilities. Each point shows the relative proportions of admissions for each of the three age groups: younger people (19-29 years of age), adults (30-39), and older adults (40+). The graph above shows a few trends. First, adults (30-39 years of age) comprised the smallest number of admissions in 2007. As time went on, this proportion increased substantially, until this group represented the highest proportion of admission in the most recent year. Conversely, the proportion of admissions of older adults (40+ years) steadily declined as time went on, with the most recent year featuring a low proportion of older adults being admitted to correctional institutions with NFA. **The youngest age group, aged 19-29, represented the bulk of admissions for much of the study period. It is only in the last three years that this age group was overtaken in the proportion of admissions.**

Examining the age-based trends is important because the cycle of homelessness and justice involvement is something that a person can be trapped in for long periods of time. It is likely that many of those people being admitted to correctional institutions are the same people being admitted multiple times over the years. A person who enters this cycle as a youth is likely to still be trapped in the cycle as an adult. The data supports this notion, as the younger age groups are more likely to be incarcerated in the early years covered by the data. While the adult age group (30-39 years) initially comprises a relatively small proportion of the admissions, it increases sharply over the years. At the same time, the proportion of younger people being incarcerated remains steady¹⁵⁶. A person who is in the cycle at ages 28-29 is still in the cycle when they are 30 years and older. **Youth who are at risk of homelessness and/or incarceration become adults trapped in the cycle.**

Without a Home Survey: Justice Involvement Experiences of Youth Who Had Experienced Homelessness

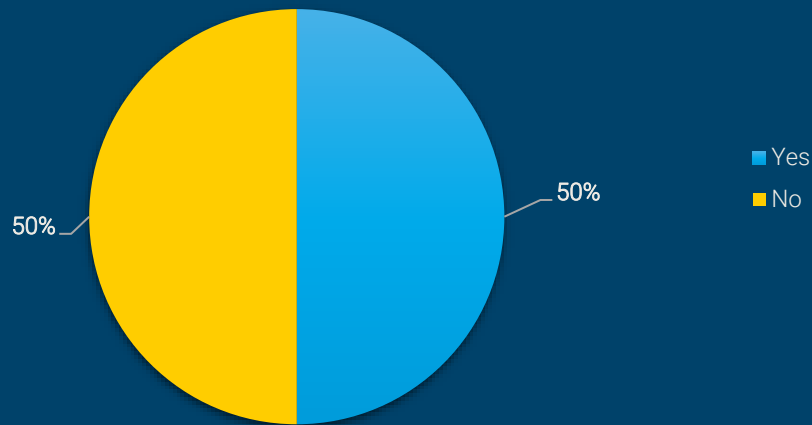
A strong family unit is a protective factor against youth homelessness. When there is familial instability, a higher risk of youth homelessness follows. The *Without a Home* survey captured responses from over 1200 youth across Canada who were either currently or who had experienced homelessness in the past. The survey asked these youth about their experiences with homelessness and justice involvement. Data from the *Without a Home* survey was analyzed for the purposes of report. The *Without a Home* survey indicated that **63.1%** of youth experiencing homelessness across Canada had experienced childhood trauma and abuse¹⁵⁷. Additionally, **77.5%** reported that they left home due to an inability to get along with their parents. When youth leave home, they are left to their own resources to find housing and employment. When these resources are insufficient, a higher risk of homelessness follows.

Figure 17: Percentage of Youth Experiencing Type of Justice Involvement



Youth who are living with homelessness report frequent contact with police and law enforcement. The *Without a Home* survey asked youth with past or current experience of homelessness about the contact they had with police or law enforcement. About half of the sample reported some manner of contact with the justice system. Figure 17 above lists the percentage of youth who had experienced different types of justice system involvement. Almost half of youth (46%) who reported contact indicated that they were stopped or questioned by police, and a third (32.5%) had been searched by police or taken into custody (33%). Many received a fine, and/or were incarcerated. These numbers illustrate the high likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system faced by youth living with homelessness.

Figure 18: Without a Home Survey Question: Did You Have a Place to Live When You Left Jail/Prison or Detention Center?



The *Without a Home* survey shows how early in life many people enter into the cycle of homelessness and incarceration. The median age of the youth in this study was 20 years of age. This means that half of the youth in the sample were under 20 years old; they were already experiencing homelessness, and many were already involved with the justice system. Youth who become justice-involved at such an early age are highly at risk of educational disruption and poorer economic and social outcomes^{158,159}. Incarceration is unlikely to fix these problems, and in fact may exacerbate them. Youth who were incarcerated were asked if they had a place to live when they were released from their correctional facility. A full 50% of youth reported that they did not have a place to go upon release. Many of these youth are likely to be released straight into homelessness.

The National Youth Mentoring Survey: Youth Who Had Experienced Both Justice Involvement and Homelessness

The *National Youth Mentoring Survey* was a survey of youth, between 18 to 30 years old, across Canada that covered issues relating to homelessness and justice involvement, conducted by SRDC through a partnership with Mentor Canada. The *National Youth Mentoring Survey* included questions about demographics, housing status, and past and present justice involvement. Of the youth surveyed, about 200 youth had experienced both homelessness and criminal justice involvement, comprising **8%** of the survey respondents. The survey also contained questions about psychological health, feelings of self-worth, and assessed a person's feelings of social connectedness to the world around them.

Youth who were both justice-involved and had experienced homelessness (past and/or present) in the *National Youth Mentoring Survey* tended to be Indigenous and male. They were more likely to have had some manner of physical or psychological disability. In general, they were less likely to have a university education, or be currently involved in employment, education, or other forms of training. In addition, youth who had experiences living with homelessness and justice involvement reported lower levels of psychological well-being, and an overall lower sense of personal self-worth. These youth felt a lower sense of belonging to their communities, and believed themselves to have less social capital.

Figure 19: Percentage Endorsement of Demographic Variables From the National Youth Mentoring Survey

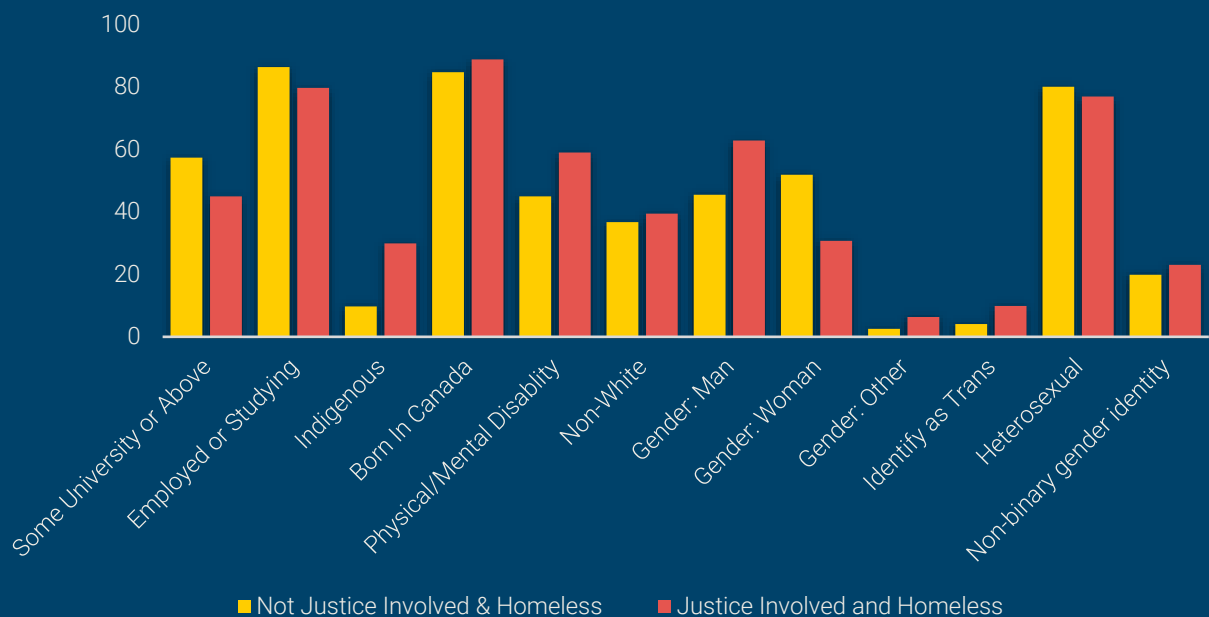
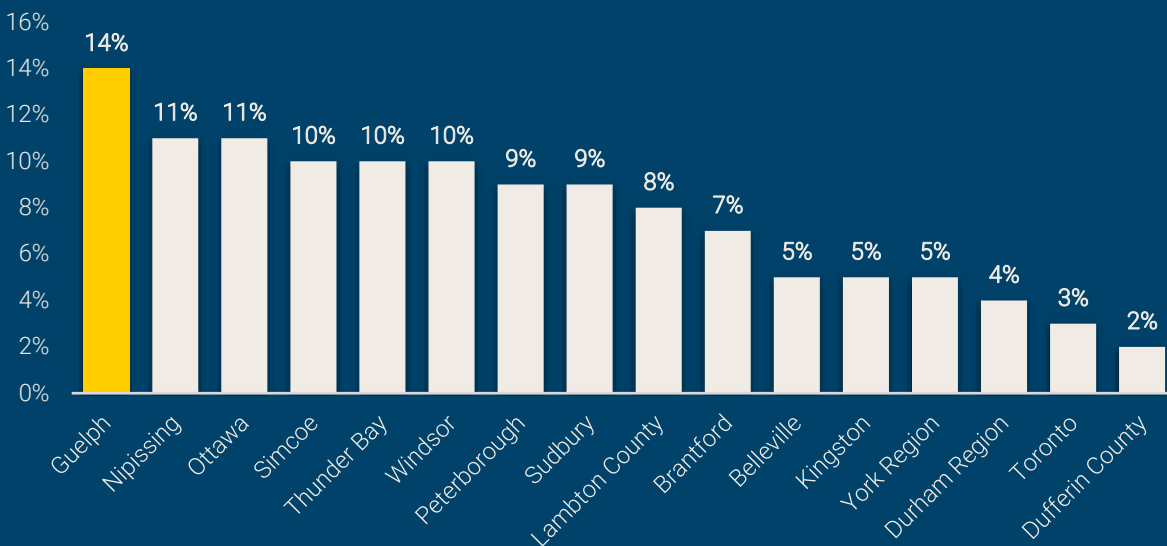


Figure 20: Justice Involvement as a Barrier to Housing



Point in Time Counts of People Living with Homelessness Listing Justice Involvement as a Barrier to Housing

In Ontario, Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts were conducted in 2018 to gauge the numbers of people living with homelessness in different communities throughout the province. These counts also asked people living with homelessness if prior justice involvement was a barrier to them acquiring housing. The table above lists the number of individuals in various Ontario communities who cited justice involvement as a contributor to their current homelessness. These numbers make it clear that justice involvement is a stronger contributor in some communities than it is in others. There is no clear pattern regarding which communities report high levels of justice-involved homelessness. Some areas are large urban centres, others are moderately sized communities, and some are more rural. Understanding the source of this regional variation is important. It helps to ensure that programs aimed at helping people living with homelessness are tailored to the specific needs of the person and community.

CONCLUSION

The consequences of incarceration persist long after a person has completed their sentence. Many incarcerated people are at risk of losing their jobs and their housing. Many have no place to go when they are released. Criminal records pose a significant barrier, making employment and housing difficult to find. These problems can accrue from any form of incarceration. This is especially concerning considering most people held in provincial facilities are held on remand; these people have not been convicted of a crime. Even so, they may suffer the lasting economic consequences of incarceration.

The data summarized in this report suggests that there have been more incarcerations of people living with homelessness in Ontario in the last 15 years. The numbers of people being admitted to correctional institutions with No Fixed Address has steadily increased, year after year, for over a decade. In contrast, total incarcerations in Ontario have steadily decreased in the same period of time. The proportion of incarcerated people living with homelessness has increased substantially over the time period covered by the data. In 2007, approximately **1 in 16 people** in provincial correctional institutions were living with homelessness at the time of admission. In 2021, this number had increased to approximately **1 in 6** people incarcerated in Ontario correctional facilities. This is a trend that is happening to many diverse people, across all regions of the province. Indigenous Peoples and Non-Indigenous Peoples living with homelessness are being incarcerated at higher rates compared to past years. It is happening in heavily urbanized areas, as well as more rural areas of Ontario. It is a problem that is getting worse, not better, as time goes on.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are at increased risk of contact with the criminal justice system. The lack of basic necessities of life incentivises crimes such as theft and property crimes. Many jurisdictions have laws that specifically prohibit the types of activities that are unavoidable parts of homelessness, such as loitering or solicitation. People experiencing homelessness are charged and incarcerated at higher rates than the general public. In many cases, the intent of many law enforcement officials who elect incarceration is to hopefully ensure that people living with homelessness will have their basic food, shelter, and healthcare needs met. However, incarceration carries its own risks, and the lack of post-release supports means that incarceration ensures that many will return to homelessness upon release. They will also face the additional barriers to securing employment and housing that incarceration brings.

NEXT STEPS

As discussed earlier, the current report is intended to be Part One of a two-part research initiative. The aim of the research project is to capture the very real barriers faced by justice-involved Ontarians as they attempt to escape the cycle of homelessness and incarceration. While this phase provided a high-level overview of data describing how individuals experiencing homelessness interact with the justice system, there are significant gaps in our current understanding of the issues. To address these gaps, the project team aims to conduct extensive qualitative research over the next year to provide a fuller picture of the intersections of homelessness and justice-involvement.

The next phase in the research plan is to understand the lived experiences of those who have recently been incarcerated and are now in the process of attempting to re-establish their lives after their incarceration. In this phase, specific Ontario communities will be selected, and in-depth interviews will be conducted with people with lived experience with homelessness and justice involvement from those communities. What are their experiences with finding housing after having been justice-involved? What barriers and challenges do they face in trying to re-establish themselves after release? Many justice-involved people have intersecting identities due to gender, Indigenous identity, mental health, etc. How do these identities impact their lived experience of homelessness?

In addition, the project also aims to collect in-depth data from frontline service providers and other professionals working to support people experiencing homelessness and justice involvement. After hearing from the lived experiences of justice-involved people across Ontario, the project team will create a series of recommendations for programs and policy. How could Ontario help to create housing stability in justice-involved individuals? What are some key programs that have been effective, and what makes these programs effective?

Incarceration and homelessness are parts of a cycle that can be very difficult to escape. Homelessness leads to incarceration and incarceration leads to homelessness. The longer a person is trapped in this cycle, the more difficult it is to break free. There are many factors that can put a person at risk for entry into this cycle. Many are systemic factors, such as economic conditions and housing prices. Others are related to discrimination, suggesting that certain groups are more vulnerable to either homelessness, incarceration, or both. These risk factors are beyond the ability of an individual person to reasonably control. For many, the solution is also beyond their ability to reasonably control as well. Understanding the complex factors involved could help break the cycle and improve the lives of many Ontarians struggling with homelessness and justice involvement.

LIMITATIONS

The data acquired from the Ministry of the Solicitor General via the Freedom of Information requests has various limitations that should be noted. A primary limitation is that the data tracks instances of admissions, not individuals who are being admitted. It is unclear how many unique individuals are being admitted to facilities over the years covered by the data. For the data on multiple admissions, which tracks the number of times a person was admitted to a correctional institution more than once, it is unclear how many times an individual was admitted in the same year. As such, these numbers should be treated as an approximate count of the number of people living with homelessness being incarcerated in Ontario.

The data was also disaggregated to protect the privacy of the people being admitted. Each of the categories (age, Indigenous status, gender) was presented independently. This means that the numbers represented a count of the number of times a person from a particular age or a particular gender were incarcerated. It does not provide a count of the number of times a person from a particular age and a particular gender were incarcerated. It is unclear whether these trends are, for example, the same for Indigenous men and Indigenous women. Many of the systemic disadvantages faced by the groups focused on by this research intersect. The NFA data does not allow for the type of analyses that could address intersecting systemic barriers.

The groups that were the focus of this report's analyses are not an exhaustive list of the groups that are at risk of homelessness and/or justice involvement. Gender analyses were limited to comparisons between men and women (referred to as "males" and "females" in our report because of the way the Ministry collected and reported the data). Data on other forms of gender expression were either not collected, or else were not considered to be within the scope of the FOI request. Other groups identified by the literature as at risk of homelessness and/or justice involvement include people with mental health issues, LGBTQ2S+ people, newcomers to Canada, among many others. The broad, population-level data provided by the FOI request is unlikely to provide an accurate assessment of, for example, a person's mental health status. As such, the focus of this research was on demographic variables and regional distributions.

Individuals may also have experienced a change in their housing status while incarcerated. A person who has an address while admitted to a correctional facility may lose their housing during their incarceration. Thus, the NFA data counts the number of people living with homelessness being incarcerated, but does not track the number of incarcerated people who become homeless. The address provided by people is also self-reported. A person being incarcerated, and who has no identification, could choose not to disclose their address. They could provide an address that is not their own, such as a friend or relative's, or potentially the address of a shelter. These people might still be homeless, but will not be captured by the No Fixed Address data.

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- ⁵³ We recognize that this categorization conflates gender with sex, and is not inclusive of non-binary and gender diverse individuals. These are shortcomings in the way the data is collected and/or reported by the Ministry.
- ⁵⁴ Note that the above values are the number of *instances* of people being incarcerated, not the number of *individuals* being incarcerated. An individual person could be incarcerated multiple times in a year, with each incarceration

counting as a single separate instance. Thus, while it is possible to assess the number of *incarcerations*, it is not possible to assess the number of *people* being incarcerated during any given year.

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