

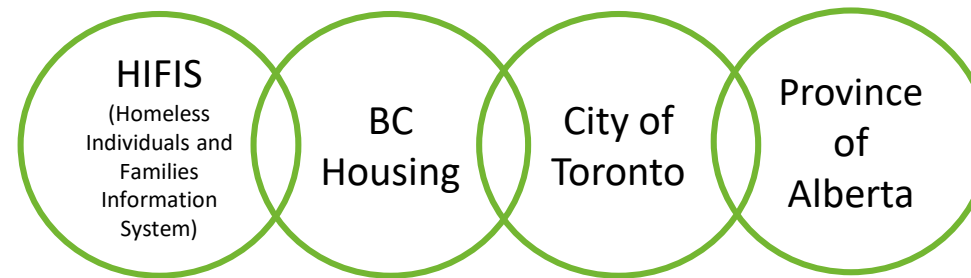
# National Shelter Study: Ten Year Trends in Homeless Shelter Use 2005-2014

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## The National Shelter Study: What is it?

- A **nationwide sample study** to:
  - Estimate the number of people in Canada using homeless shelters each year
  - Explore demographic characteristics of shelter users
  - Understand stay patterns and usage trends in Canada's shelter system
- Uses **emergency shelter data** collected between 2005 and 2014 from:



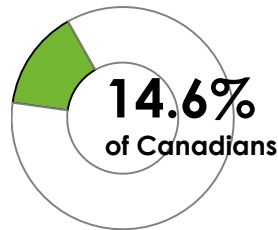
- Emergency shelter use is the **best available indicator** of large-scale trends in homelessness

## Methods

- The scope of the study is **emergency homeless shelters** across Canada
  - In total, there are 399 emergency shelters with 15,428 beds in Canada
  - Violence Against Women shelters and transitional housing are not included
- The study uses a **stratified cluster sample** of emergency shelters with eight strata based on the target clientele of shelters
  - The strata are: male youth, female youth, co-ed youth, male general, female general, co-ed general, women/women with children, and family
- Uses **data from over 200 shelters** and includes **1.9 million shelter stays** between 2005 and 2014 (sample size ranges from 24.3% of shelters in 2005 to 53.2% in 2014). For 2014, **71.5%** of all shelter beds are included
- Data for Aboriginal, Citizenship and Veteran status is only available for 2014, therefore no trend information for these variables
- Accounts for clients who use more than one shelter by adjusting the sampling weights based on the average rate of client duplication within strata

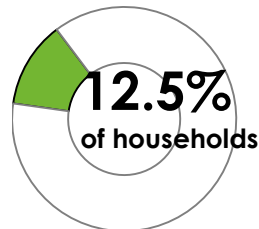


## Economic and housing-related risk of homelessness among Canadians



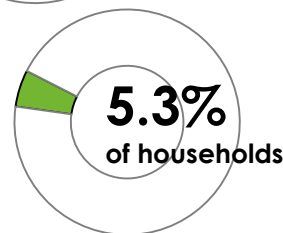
**4.9 million** Canadians are considered low income

The median after-tax income for this group is \$12,570  
(Statistics Canada: LIM-AT 2013)



Over **1.5 million** households are in “core housing need”

The average monthly shelter cost for these households is \$873 (CMHC)



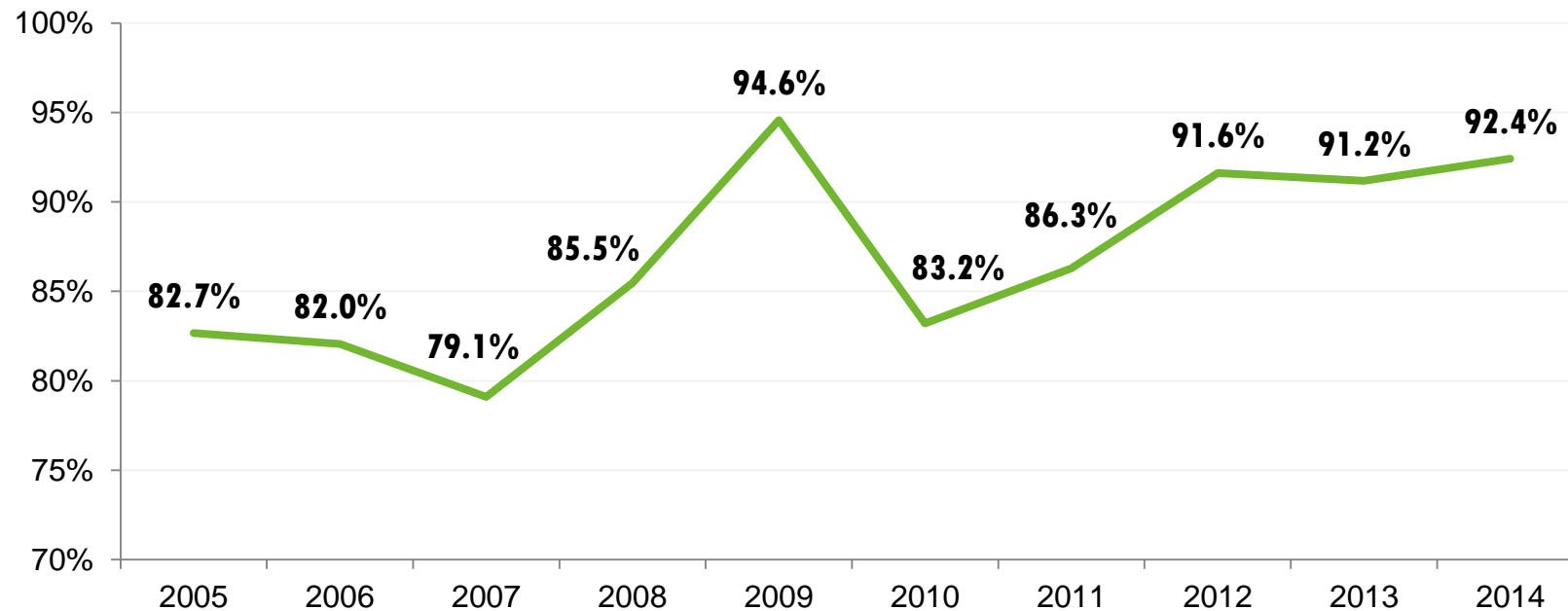
**655,380** households are in “severe housing need”

These households spend more than 50% of their income on housing (CMHC)

## Canada's emergency shelter system is operating at over 90% capacity

- On an average night in 2014, **13,857** Canadians slept in an emergency shelter
- The number of shelters and beds has changed very little between 2005 and 2014

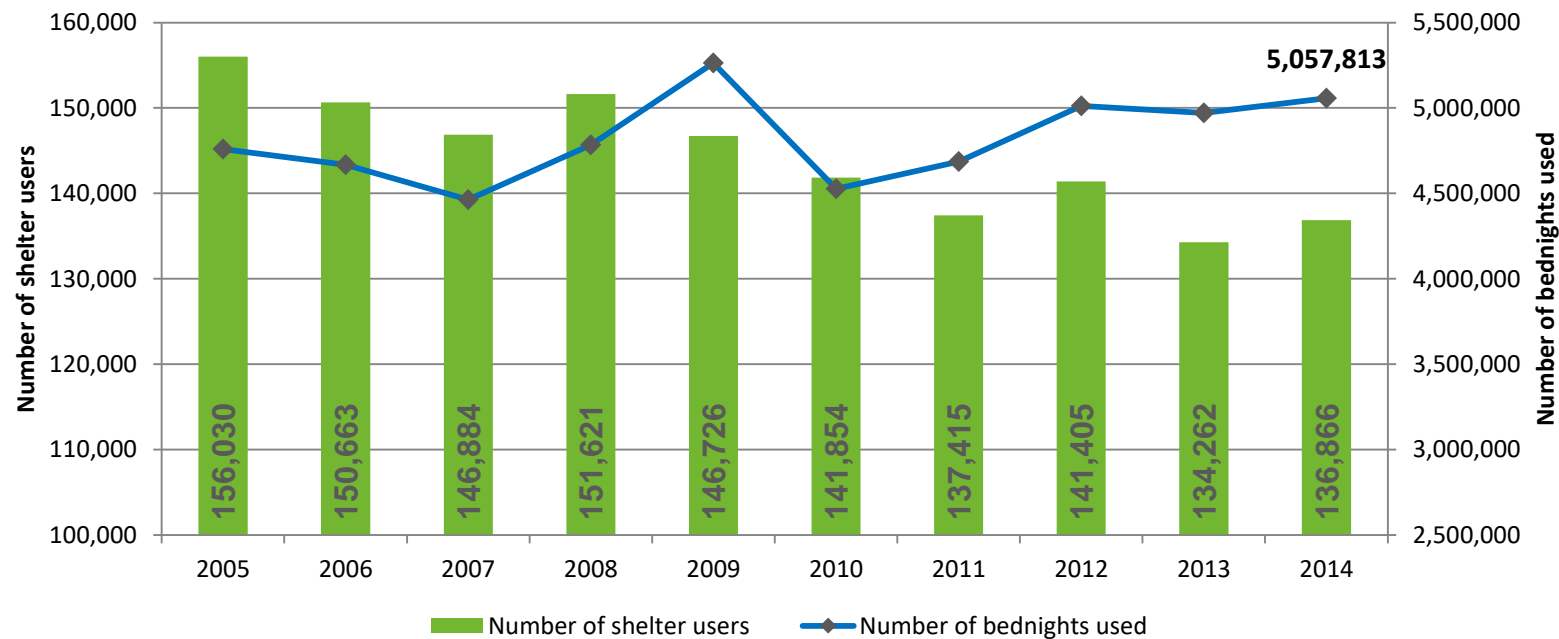
NATIONAL SHELTER OCCUPANCY RATE



## More bednights are being used by fewer people

- The annual number of bednights used has increased over the study period, to over 5 million in 2014
- However, the annual number of shelter users has fallen from 156,000 in 2005 to 136,000 in 2014
- Emergency shelters served an average of 800 more people per night in 2014 compared to 2005

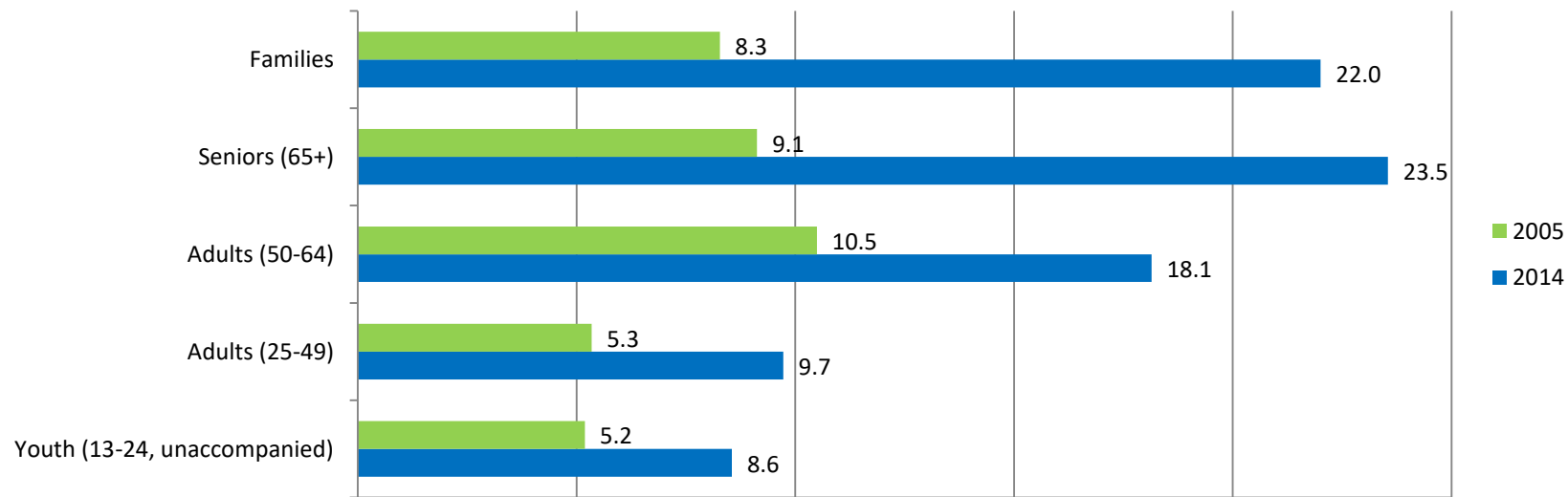
### SHELTER USERS VS. BEDNIGHTS USED



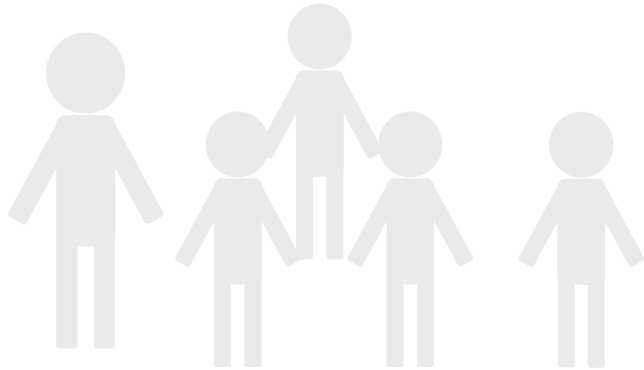
## Duration of shelter stays has increased, especially among families and people 50 and over

- Demand for shelter beds has increased due to longer stays
- A typical shelter stay by a family was over 20 days in 2014, twice as long as a stay by individuals
- People over 50 typically spend eight or nine more days in shelter than people under 50

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF DAYS IN SHELTER**



An estimated **450,000**  
Canadians used an  
emergency shelter during the  
five year period 2010 to 2014



**Most shelter users do  
not have repeat stays**

Around **70%**  
of shelter users had a stay in  
only one year of the five year  
period...

...while fewer than **2%** had a  
stay during every year of the five  
year period

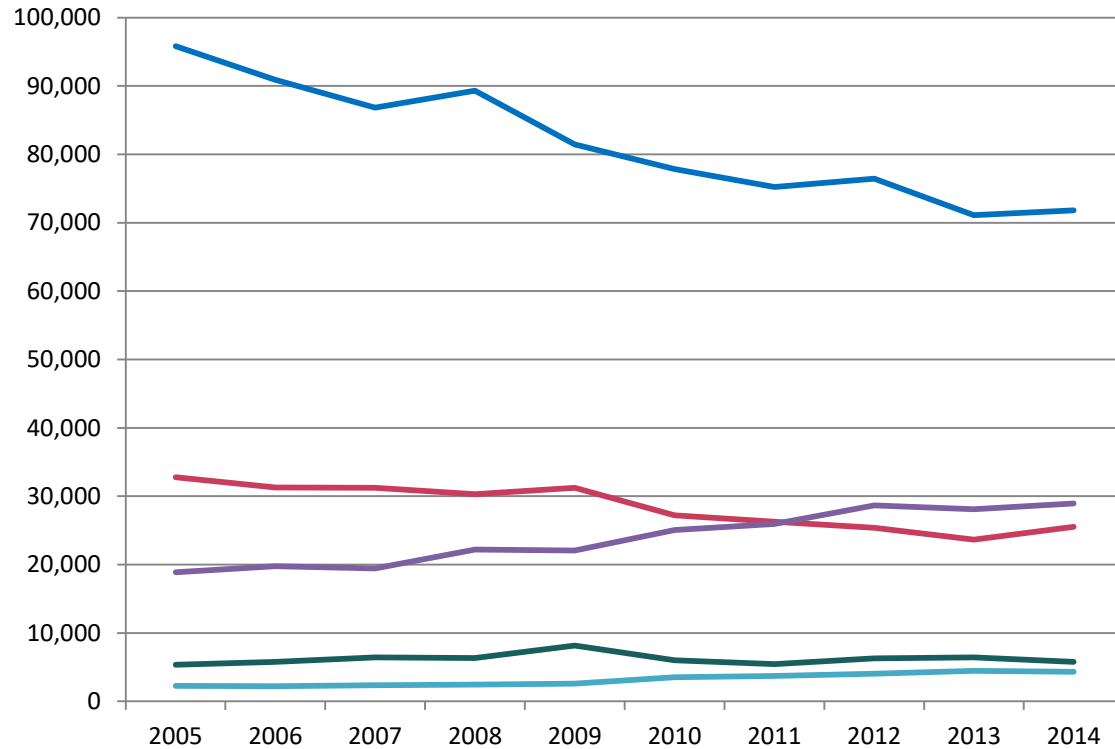


## The number of shelter users under age 50 is down while the number of individuals over age 50 is up

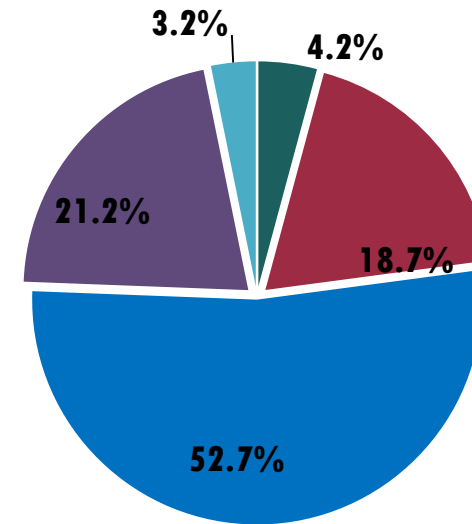
- The number of children using shelters has been stable since 2010, with an average of 6,000 each year
- The number of shelter users between 25 and 49 dropped by more than 20,000 between 2005 and 2014 and accounts for the overall decrease in shelter users
- The number of youths using shelters decreased from 32,757 in 2005 to 25,501 in 2014, a 20 percent decline. By contrast, the number of shelter users aged 50 and over increased by more than 50 percent, from 18,856 in 2005 to 28,951 in 2014. There are now more 50- to 64- year-olds using shelters than youth
- There are relatively few shelter users aged 65 and over, comprising just 3.2 percent of all shelter users. However, the number of seniors using shelters has nearly doubled from 2,244 in 2005 to 4,332 in 2014.



**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ANNUAL SHELTER USERS BY AGE GROUP**

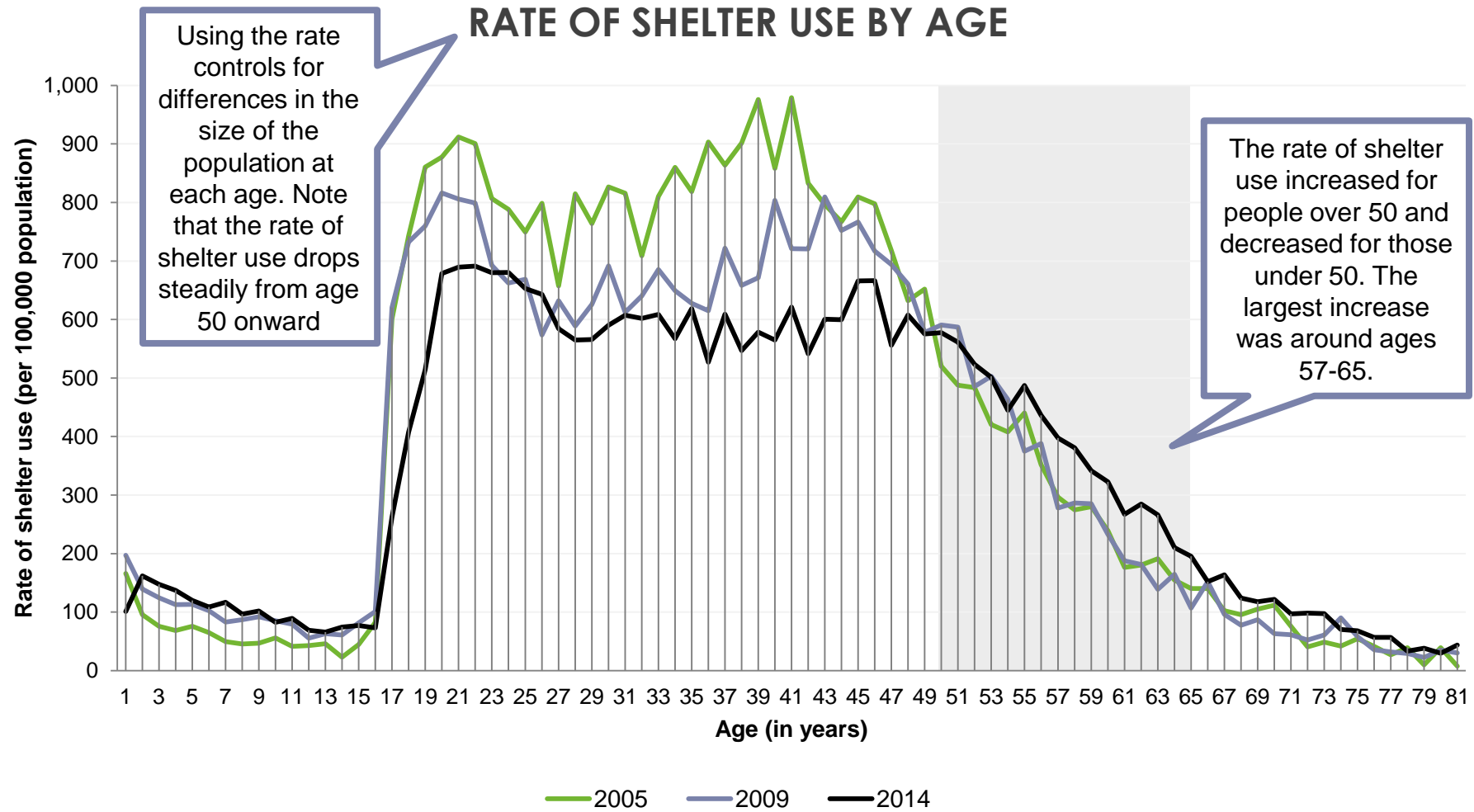


**PERCENTAGE OF SHELTER USERS BY AGE GROUP (2014)**



— Children (0-16) with an adult — Youth (13-24) unaccompanied — Adults (25-49) — Older Adults (50-64) — Seniors (65+)

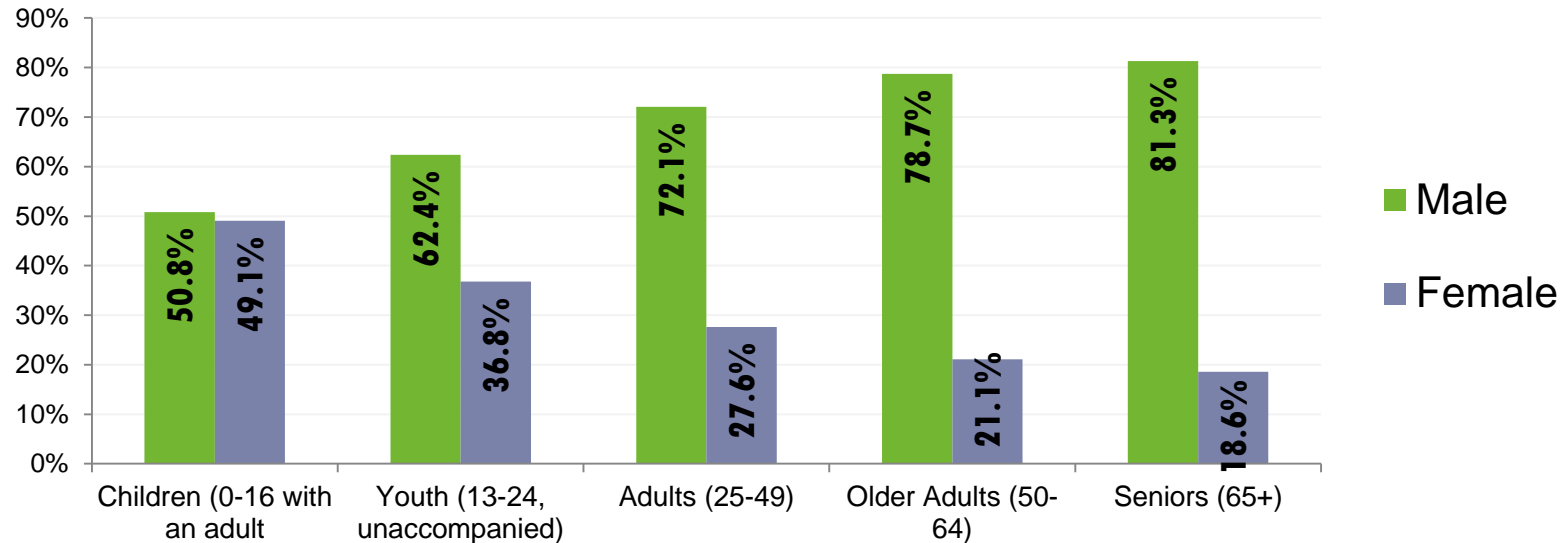




## The gender breakdown of shelter users has not changed

- Gender proportions have not changed over the 2005-2014 period
- In 2014, 72.4% of shelter users were male and 27.3% were female
- The percentage of female shelter users decreases for older age groups. Fewer than one in five seniors using shelters are women

GENDER BY AGE GROUP\*



\*percentages are shown for male and female responses only



## Indigenous people are 10 times more likely to use a shelter than non-Indigenous people

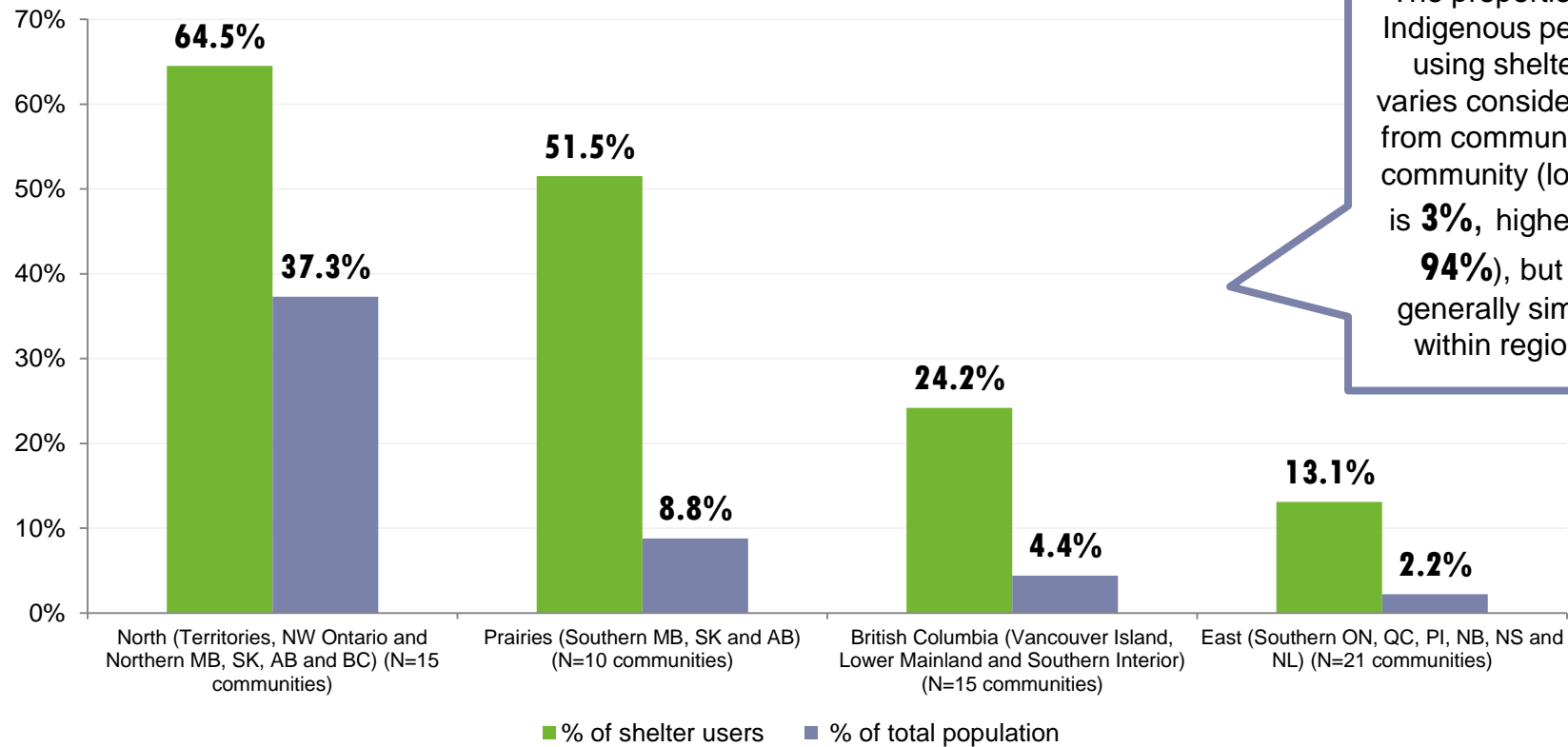
- It is estimated that between **38,080** and **45,820** Indigenous people used a shelter in 2014
- Overall, Indigenous people are over **10 times more likely** to use a shelter than non-Indigenous people
- When compared with rates of shelter use by non-Indigenous people, shelter use is 20 times higher for Indigenous seniors and 13 times higher for Indigenous adults

### AGE-ADJUSTED RATE OF SHELTER USE FOR INDIGENOUS COMPARED TO NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

CHILDREN (0-15)	YOUTH (16-24)	ADULTS (25-64)	SENIORS (65+)
<b>9.2X</b>	<b>6.4X</b>	<b>12.9X</b>	<b>20.5X</b>
<b>HIGHER</b>	<b>HIGHER</b>	<b>HIGHER</b>	<b>HIGHER</b>



### AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF SHELTER USERS WITH FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, INUIT OR OTHER ABORIGINAL ANCESTRY BY REGION



The proportion of Indigenous people using shelters varies considerably from community to community (lowest is **3%**, highest is **94%**), but is generally similar within regions



## Over 6,000 non-citizens used a shelter in 2014

- About **5%** of shelter users are *not* Canadian citizens:
  - **5,036** permanent residents/immigrants
  - **1,095** refugees or refugee claimants
  - **562** temporary residents (student, work or visitor visa)
- Typical shelter stays for non-citizens were about five days longer than for shelter users with Canadian citizenship
- Top 20 countries of origin for non-citizens:
  - Jamaica, United States, United Kingdom, Somalia, India, Congo, Haiti, Poland, Iran, Pakistan, Philippines, Nigeria, Guyana, Vietnam, Iraq, Ethiopia, Trinidad, Sudan, Ghana, Hungary



## In 2014, nearly 3,000 shelter users reported having served in the Military

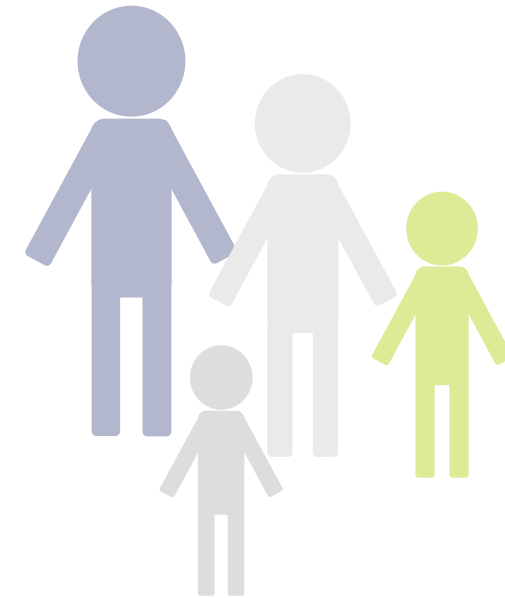
- In 2014, 2.2 percent of shelter users—an estimated 2,950 people—reported having served in the Military. This is similar to the proportion of Veterans in the general population
- Shelter users reporting military service were more likely to be male
- Over half of females reporting military service were under age 30. Males reporting military service tended to be older on average than other shelter users





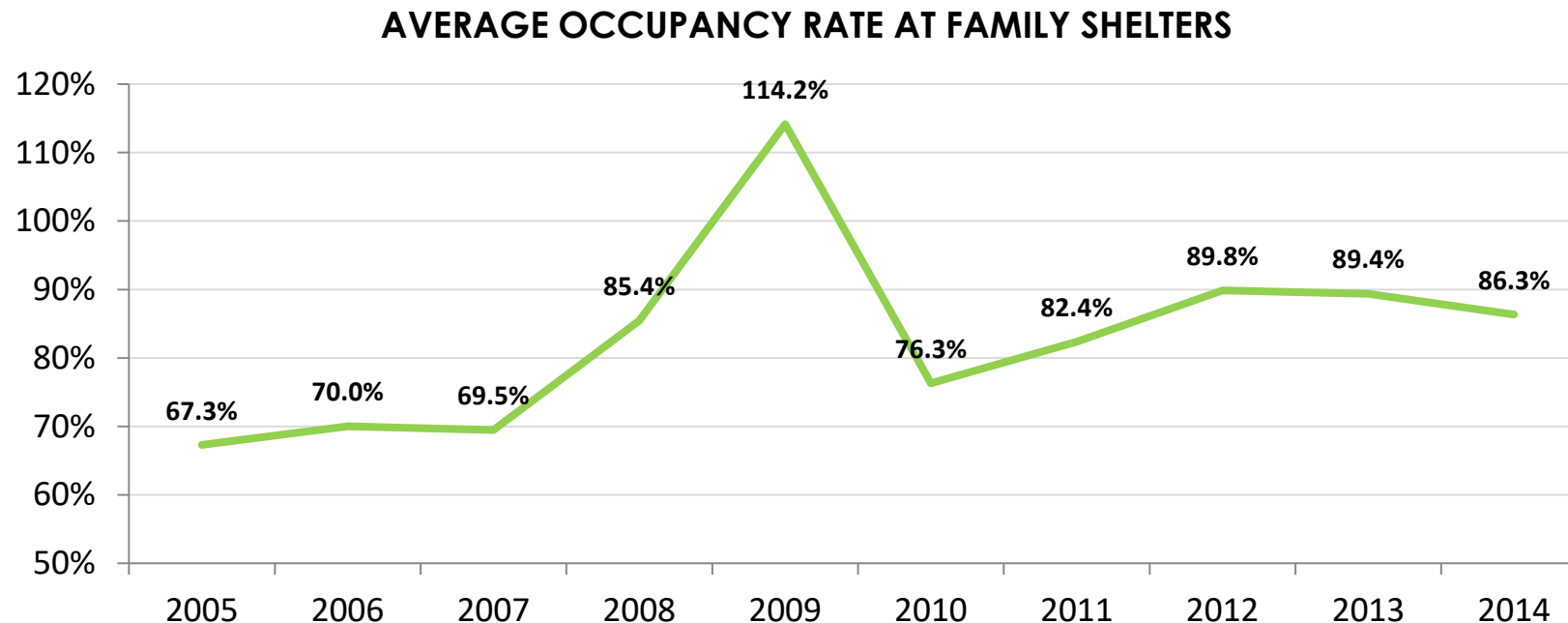
## Shelter use by families

- Nearly **90%** of families using shelters are headed by single females
- On average, families stay in shelter **twice as long** as individuals
- Although families tend to experience much longer shelter stays than individuals, they are less likely to use shelters repeatedly, with only **8.9%** using a shelter more than once in 2014



## Family shelters continue to operate at high capacity

- The average occupancy rate at family shelters exceeded 100 percent in 2009. This peak use did not continue beyond 2010. However, the average occupancy rate at family shelters was 86.3 percent in 2014, much higher than the 67.3 percent occupancy rate reported in 2005



## Key Findings: Rising demand for shelter beds in the face of static capacity

- As of 2014, the average occupancy rate at Canada's emergency shelters had risen to over 90 percent—an increase of almost 10 percentage points since 2005. During this time, the overall capacity of Canada's emergency shelter system has not changed significantly
- Although the annual number of individuals using shelters has fallen over the 2005 to 2014 study period, shelters are being used more intensely. Overall demand for shelter beds has increased due to longer shelter stays
- While stay lengths have increased since 2005 for all shelter users, there has been an especially marked increase in stay lengths for families and seniors
- The age composition of the shelter-using population has also changed. The number of youths and adults aged 25-49 using shelters has fallen while the number of adults aged 50 and over has increased

