

2022 PIT COUNT: THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN HRM

Panelists

Eric Jonsson (Count Lead, Navigator Program)

Charlene Gagnon (Data Analyst)

Sheri Lecker (Adsum for Women and Children)

Meghan Oliver (Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre)

Moderated by Paul MacKinnon, Downtown Halifax

Business Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Point in Time Count took place in Kjipuktuk, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nations

We recognize and acknowledge that the system of colonization is a contributing factor to homelessness, economic marginalization, and systemic violence towards all Indigenous people

We would also like to recognize and acknowledge the historical African Nova Scotian communities which also played a significant role in the development of modern day Kjipuktuk

Both of these communities lost their land and homes in the name of Colonialism and Progress.



SPECIAL THANKS

**ADSUM FOR WOMEN
AND CHILDREN**

**BRUNSWICK STREET
MISSION**

BRYONY HOUSE

**CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES OF NOVA
SCOTIA**

**COVERDALE
COURTWORK SOCIETY**

**ELIZABETH FRY
SOCIETY OF
MAINLAND NOVA
SCOTIA**

**HALIFAX PUBLIC
LIBRARIES**

**THE JOHN HOWARD
SOCIETY**

**THE SALVATION ARMY
SHELTER NS**

MARGARET'S HOUSE

**THE MARGUERITE
CENTRE**

**MI'KMAW NATIVE
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE**

**NAVIGATOR STREET
OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

**NORTH END
COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTRE**

**NOVA SCOTIA
HEALTH**

OUT OF THE COLD

**PHOENIX YOUTH
PROGRAMS**

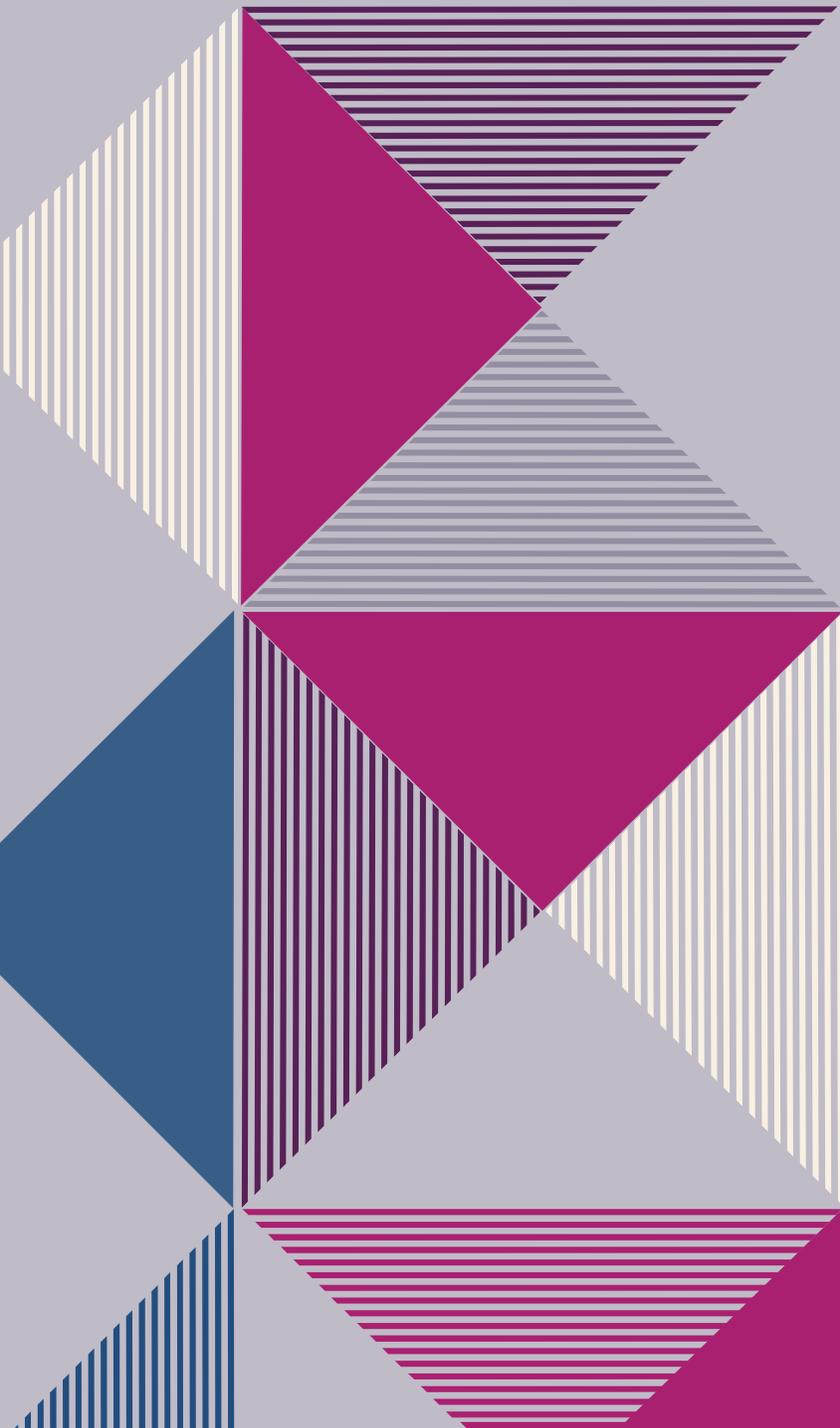
**PEER OUTREACH
SUPPORT SERVICES
AND EDUCATION
(POSSE)**

**SACKVILLE AREA
WARMING CENTRE**

SOUL'S HARBOUR

STEPPING STONE

YWCA HALIFAX



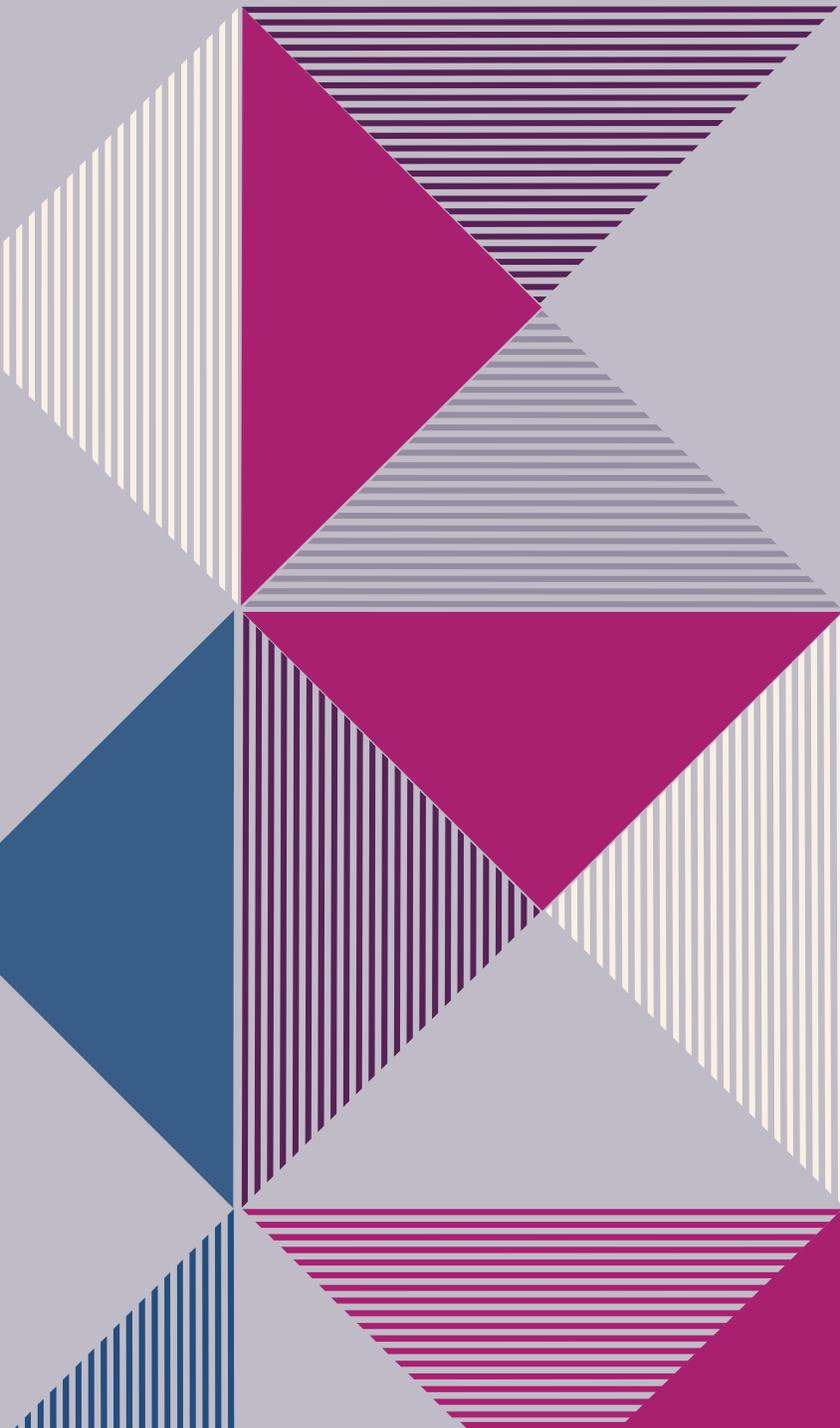
ABOUT THE 2022 PIT

DATE

- Single night count on April 7th, 2022
- Due to the volume of people in hotel rooms some hotel surveying took place on April 6th

COMMUNITIES COVERED

- Halifax Peninsula
- Clayton Park & Spryfield
- Downtown Dartmouth
- Dartmouth Crossing
- Bedford/Sackville



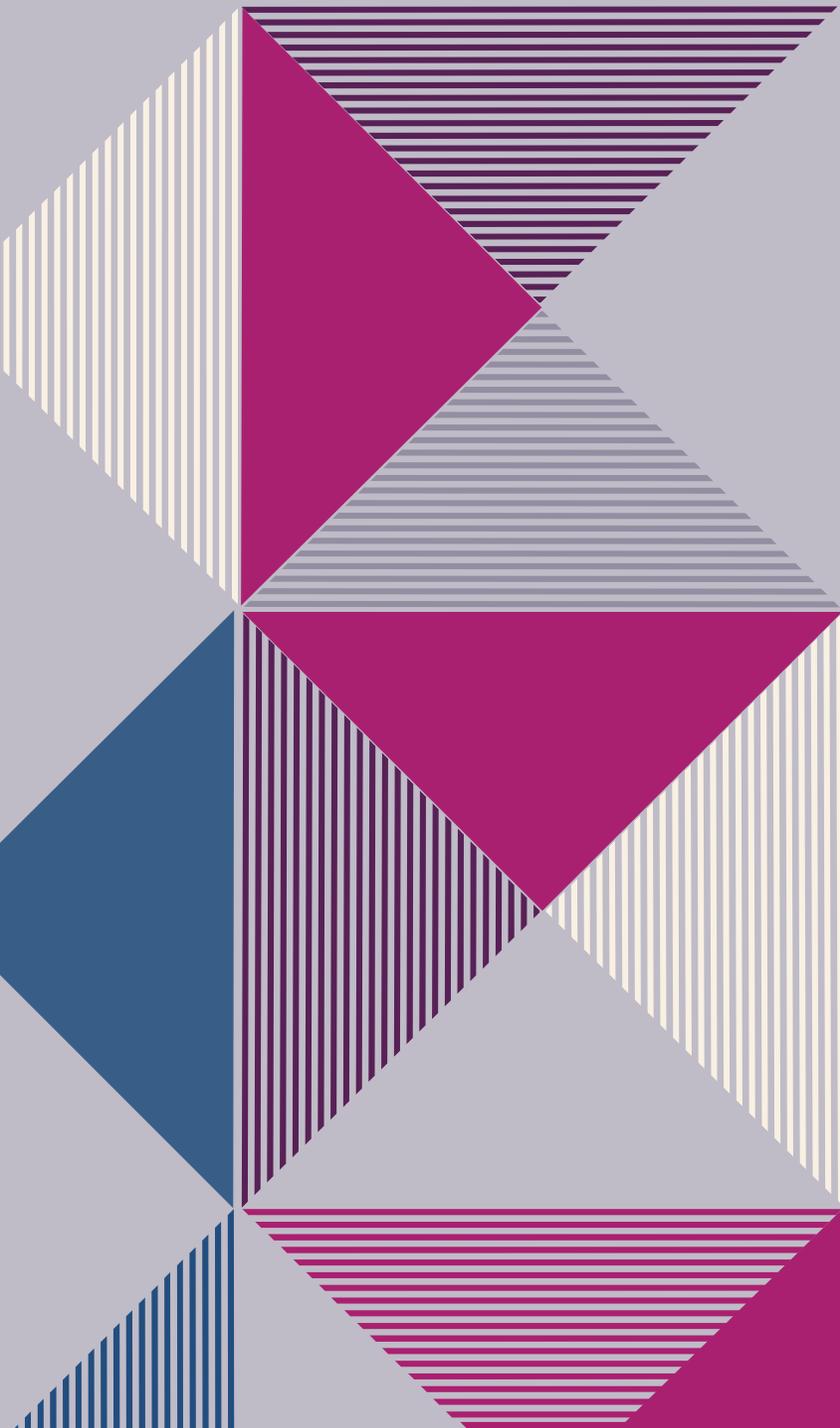
ABOUT THE 2022 PIT

SHELTERED LOCATIONS

- Emergency homeless shelters
- Hotels administered and supported by non-profit (Government and Non-Government funded)
- Transitional housing or residential recovery programs that were time limited (12 months or less)

UNSHELTERED LOCATIONS

- Food and drop-in programs in Halifax, Dartmouth and Sackville
- Libraries
- HMA and Church Crisis Shelters
- Encampments



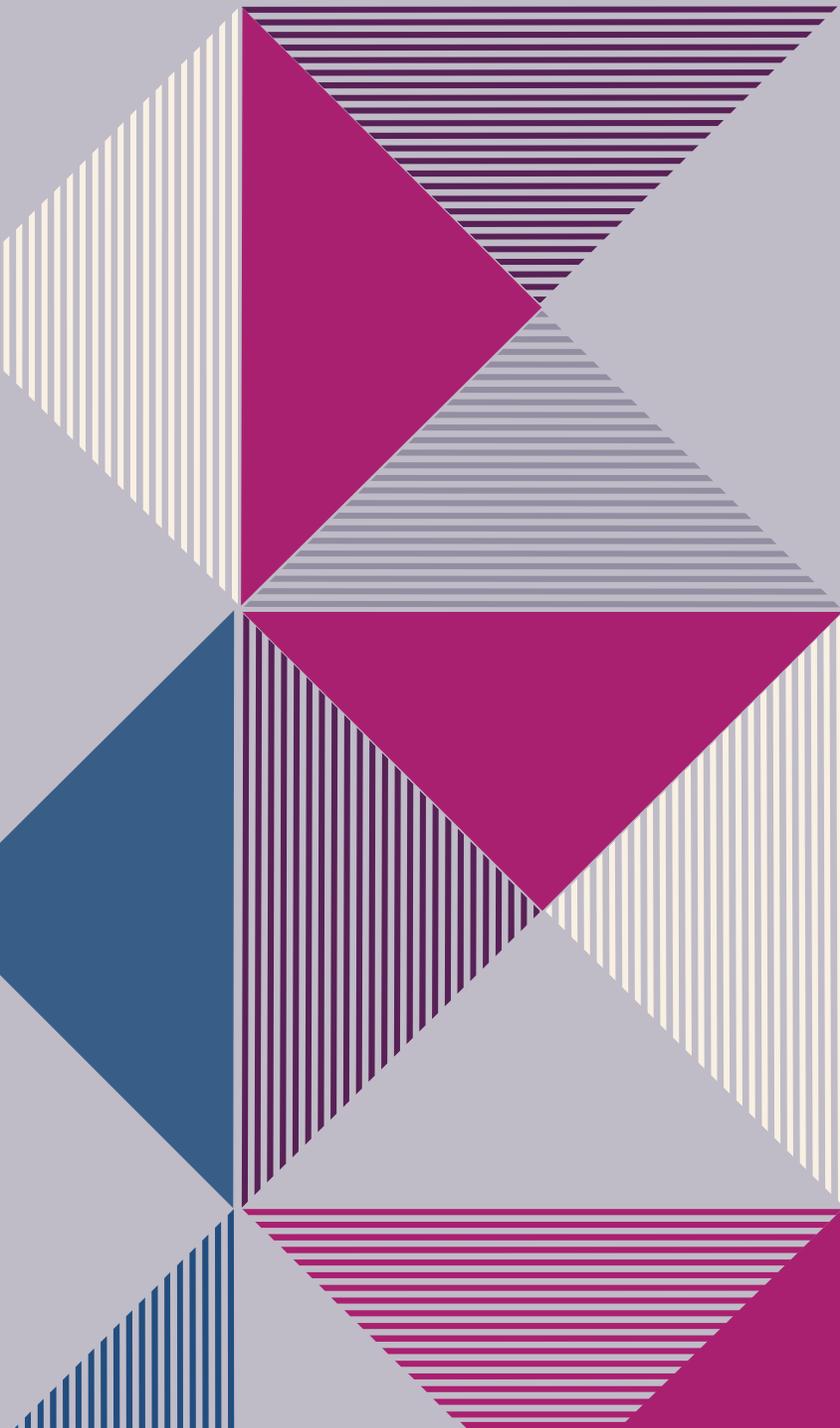
ABOUT THE 2022 PIT

CORRECTIONS

- People “housed” in the Burnside Correctional Facility who identified as being homeless in the 2 weeks prior to their incarceration
- This population is rotating in and out of the homeless population in community

NOT INCLUDED

- People couch surfing or staying with friends & family
- People in hotels self-funded by employment or sex work
- People living in unsafe homes with intimate partner violence
- People in rural, isolated locations living in trailers, sheds, tents or vehicles



ABOUT THE 2022 PIT

FOCUS GROUPS

- In addition to the Count itself, 3 focus groups were convened to assist in analysis and to contextualize the statistics
 - First Voice Group - unsheltered people who participated in the survey
 - Front Line Service Providers - people who conducted the surveys with people
 - ED's and Managers at Non-Profit Agencies responsible for housing people

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of geometric shapes and patterns. It features a grid of squares and triangles in shades of blue, pink, and purple. Overlaid on these are various patterns: concentric circles, parallel lines, and a halftone dot pattern. A white line with a circular end extends from the left side of the image towards the text.

CAUTION!
THE EXACT NUMBER
OF PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS IN
HRM IS CHANGING
EVERY DAY

THE PIT PROVIDES
BEST ESTIMATE ON
THE DAY OF THE
COUNT ONLY

ENUMERATION

586 INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT A SAFE, PERMANENT ADDRESS

195* sheltered with non-profits in hotels

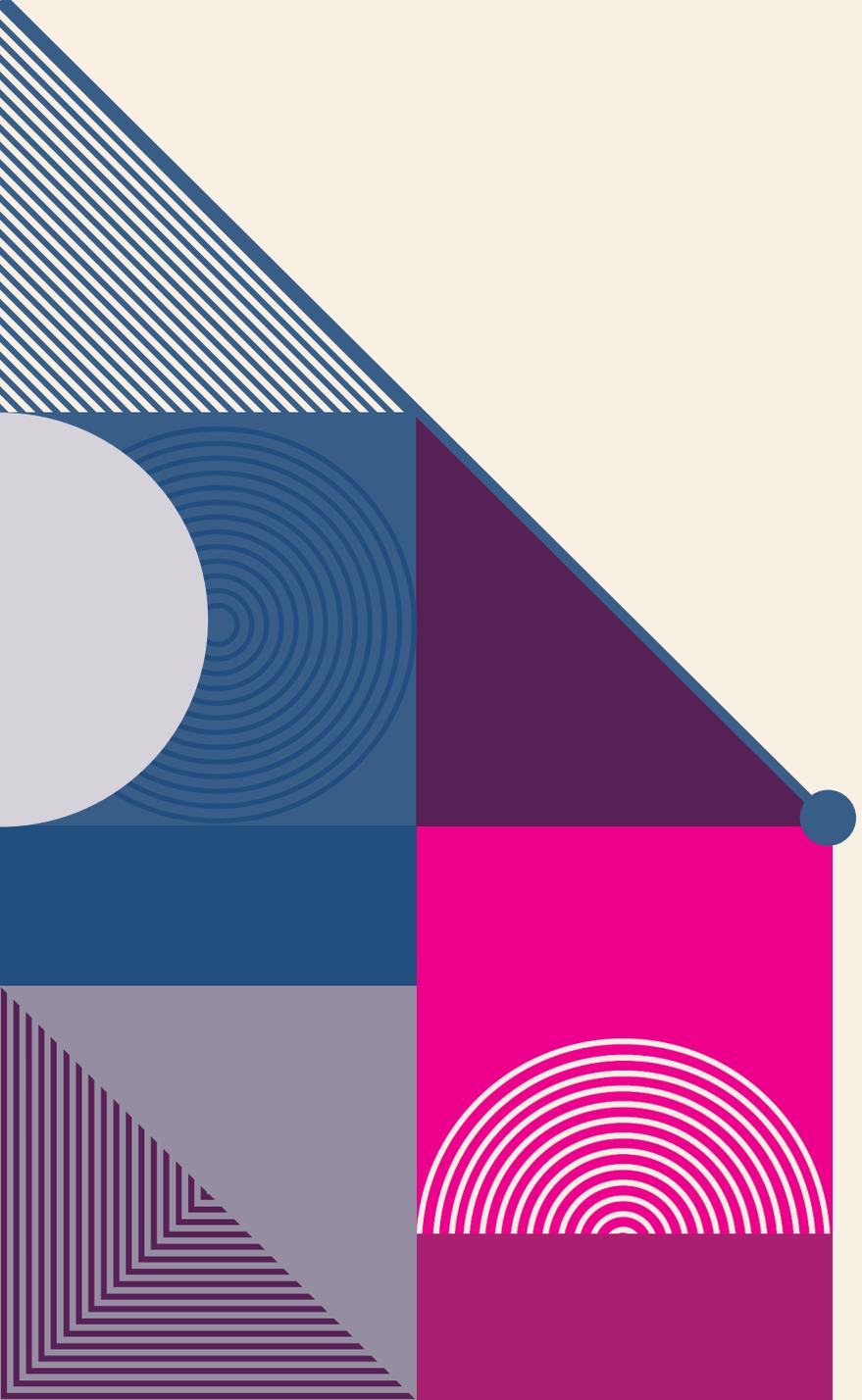
215 sheltered in non-profit locations

91 unsheltered in tents, encampments on public land and places unfit for permanent human habitation

85 "housed" at Burnside Correctional Facility

SURVEY RESULTS REFLECT RESPONSES FROM 357 INDIVIDUALS UNHOUSED IN COMMUNITY

*** This number includes the total number of adults counted in hotel rooms on April 7, does not include children**



GENDER AND AGE

65% MALE

33% FEMALE

2% GENDER NON-CONFORMING

15% WERE 60 YEARS OR OLDER

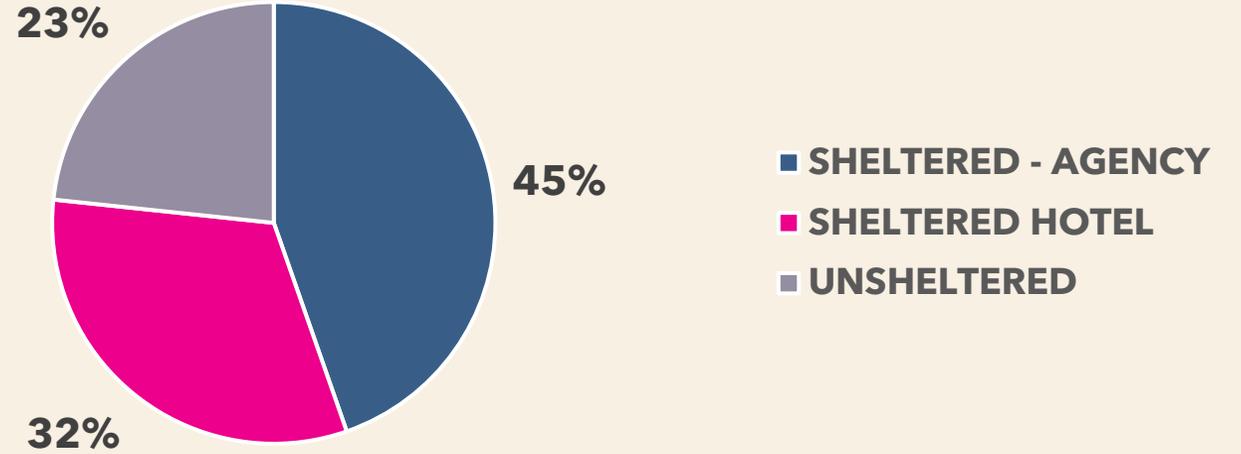
AVERAGE AGE OF RESPONDENTS

43 YEARS OLD

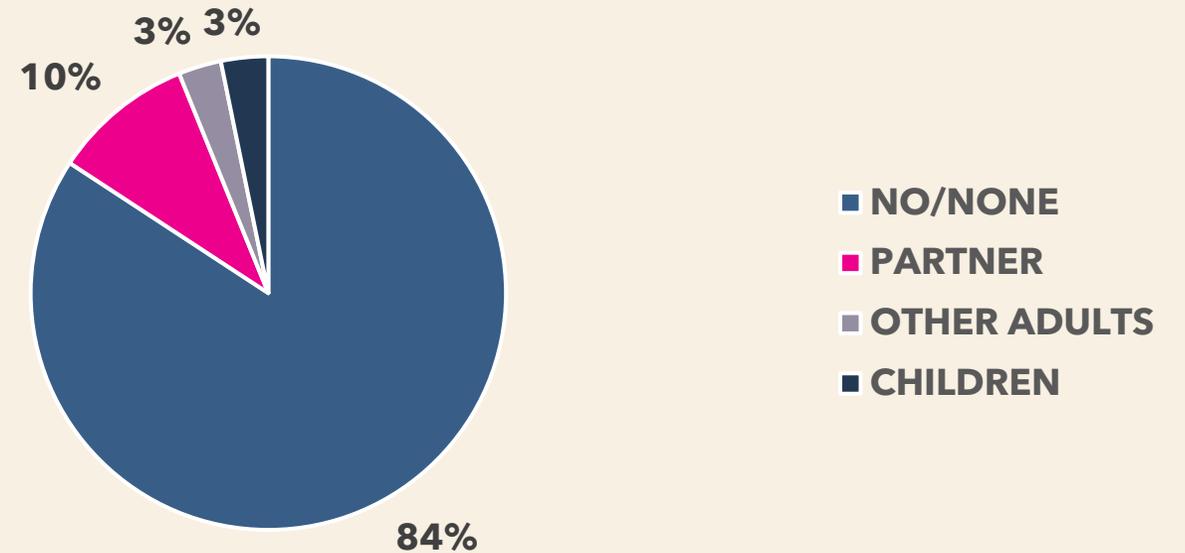
**AVERAGE FIRST AGE OF
HOMELESSNESS**

32 YEARS OLD

WHERE ARE YOU SLEEPING TONIGHT?



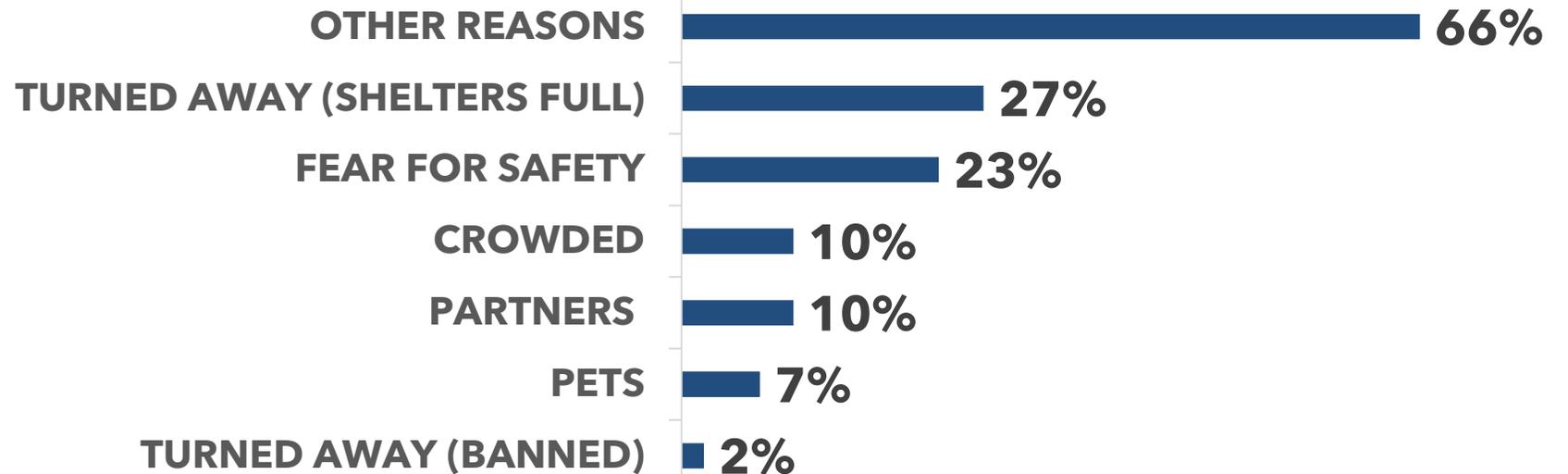
IS ANYONE STAYING WITH YOU?

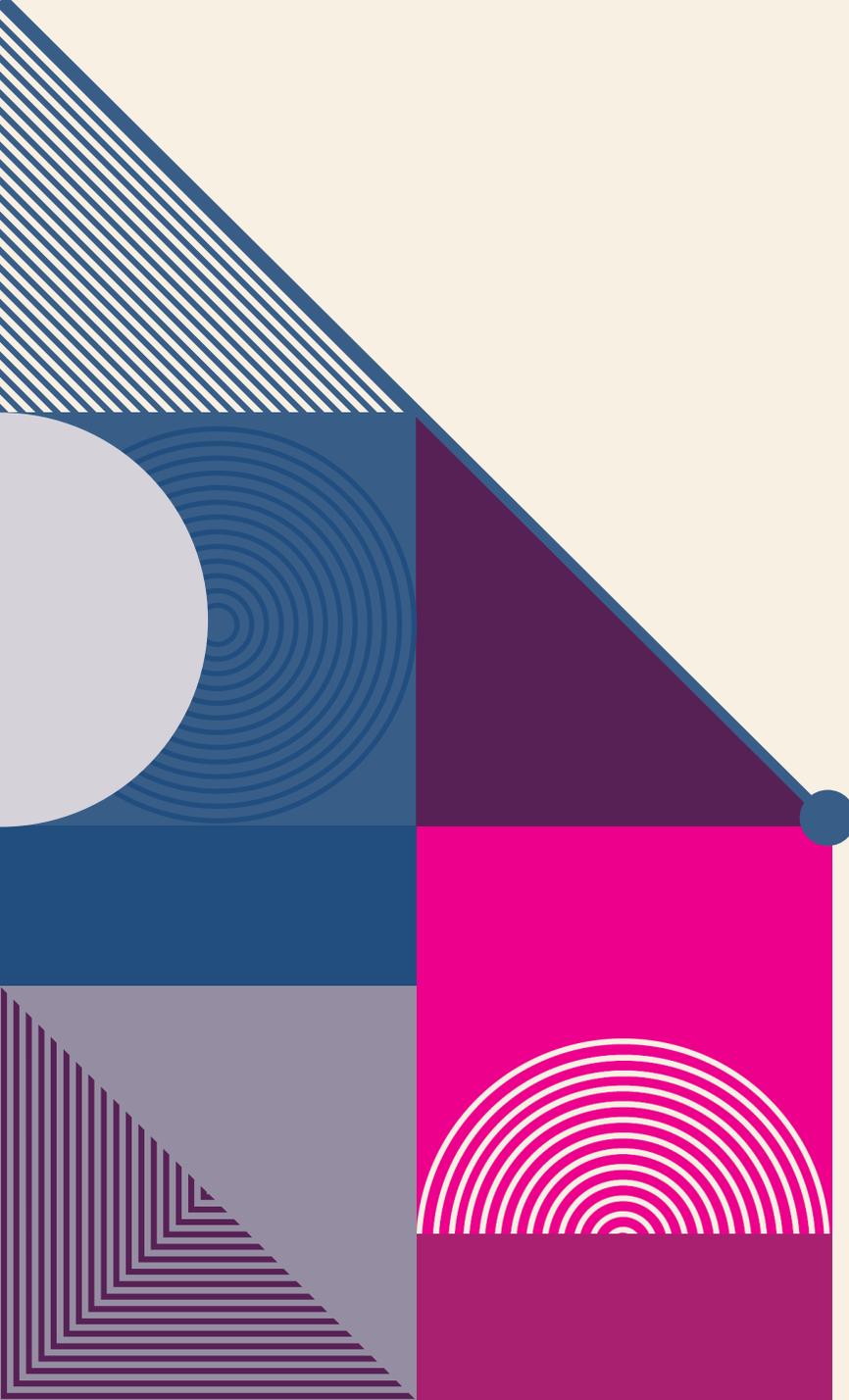


HOMELESSNESS IS BECOMING MORE VISIBLE

WE TALKED TO **120 PEOPLE (34%)** WHO HAD NOT ACCESSED AN EMERGENCY SHELTER IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

THESE ARE THE REASONS WHY:





OTHER REASONS INCLUDED:

- **COVID-19/IMMUNOCOMPROMISED**
 - **DIVERTED STRAIGHT TO HOTEL**
 - **TOO MANY DRUGS**
- **DISCOMFORT/UNCOMFORTABLE**
 - **NO WHERE TO STORE STUFF**
 - **SHELTER STAFF UNSAFE**
 - **JUST DON'T LIKE SHELTERS**

**"THERE IS NO
APPROPRIATE SPACE
FOR EVERYBODY"**



MIGRATION TO HRM

18% MOVED TO HALIFAX, OR MOVED BACK TO HALIFAX OVER THE PANDEMIC

23% 2-10 YEARS AGO

20% MORE THAN 10 YEARS AGO

39% HAVE BEEN HERE THEIR WHOLE LIFE

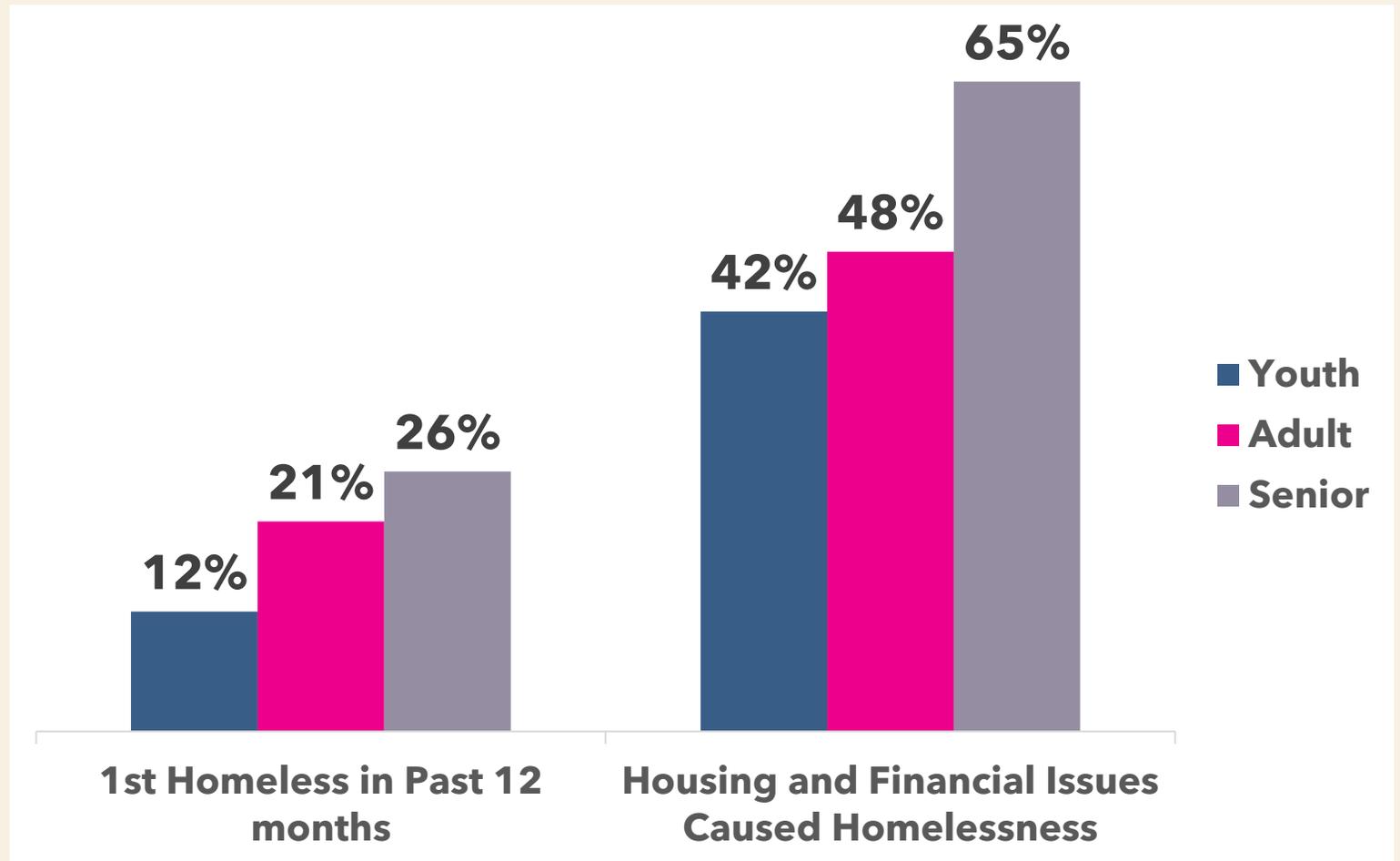
THE TOP REASONS WHY PEOPLE MOVED (OR MOVED BACK) HERE:

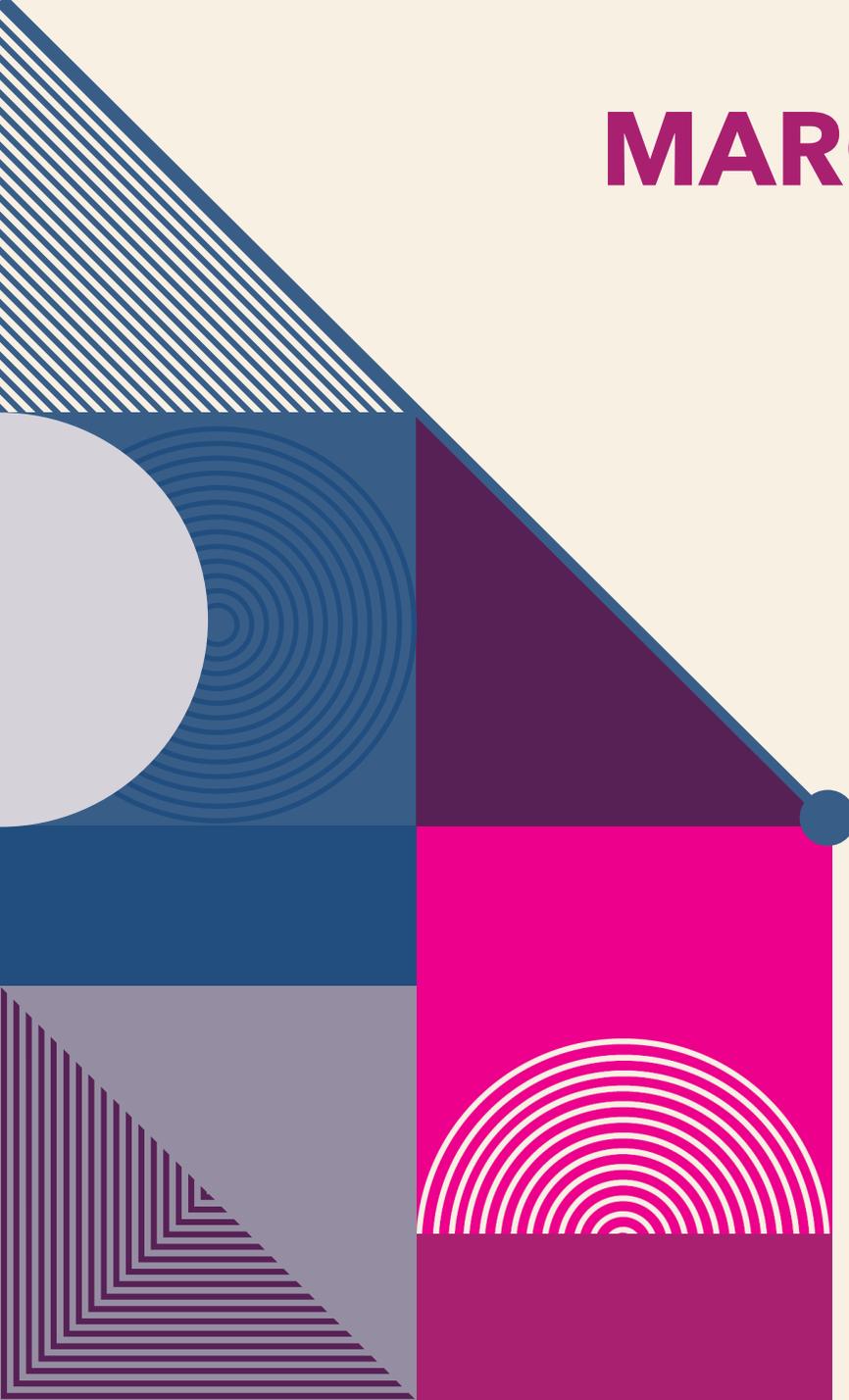
21% FOR FAMILY REASONS

19% SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

18% SEEKING SHELTERS, SERVICES, OR HOUSING

AGE COMPARISONS

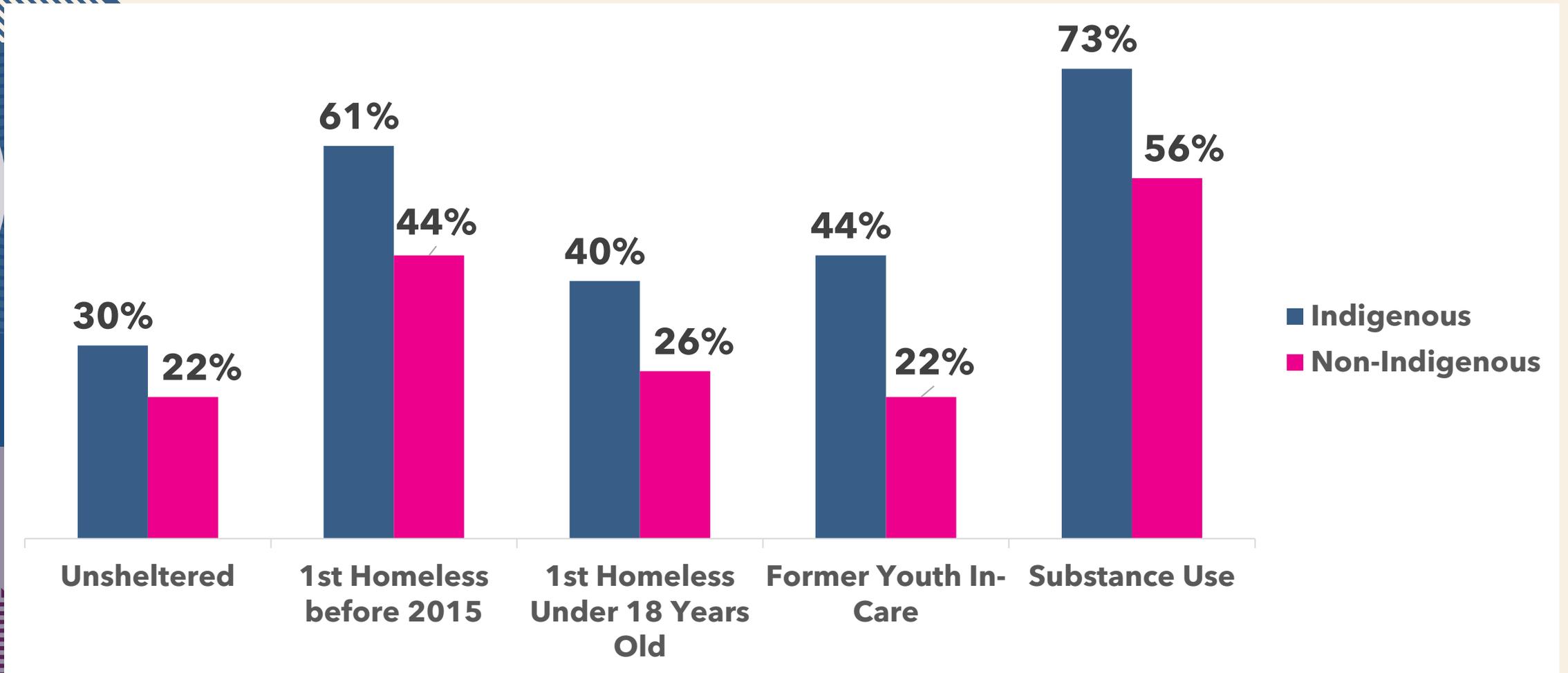




MARGINALIZED PEOPLE ARE OVER-REPRESENTED:

- **22% SELF-IDENTIFICATION AS FIRST NATIONS, METIS, INUIT OR INDIGENOUS ANCESTRY (compared to 4.0% of total HRM population)**
- **15% AFRICAN NS, BLACK, CARIBBEAN, OR AFRICAN DESCENT (compared to 3.8% of total HRM population)**
 - **15% 2SLGBTQ+**
- **27% FORMER YOUTH IN CARE**

NOTABLE DIFFERENCES OF INDIGENOUS RESPONDENTS





PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES & HEALTH ISSUES ARE OVER-REPRESENTED:

63% MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

59% SUBSTANCE USE

37% PHYSICALLY DISABLED

36% LEARNING OR COGNITIVE DELAYS

22% AFTER BIRTH BRAIN INJURY



41% (138 people) experienced homelessness for the first time in their life during the pandemic (past 2 years)

48% (162 people) first experienced homelessness before 2015 (when the PIT count started)

THE NUMBER OF NEW PEOPLE ACCESSING SERVICES IS ON PAR WITH THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO ARE "CHRONICALLY HOMELESSNESS"

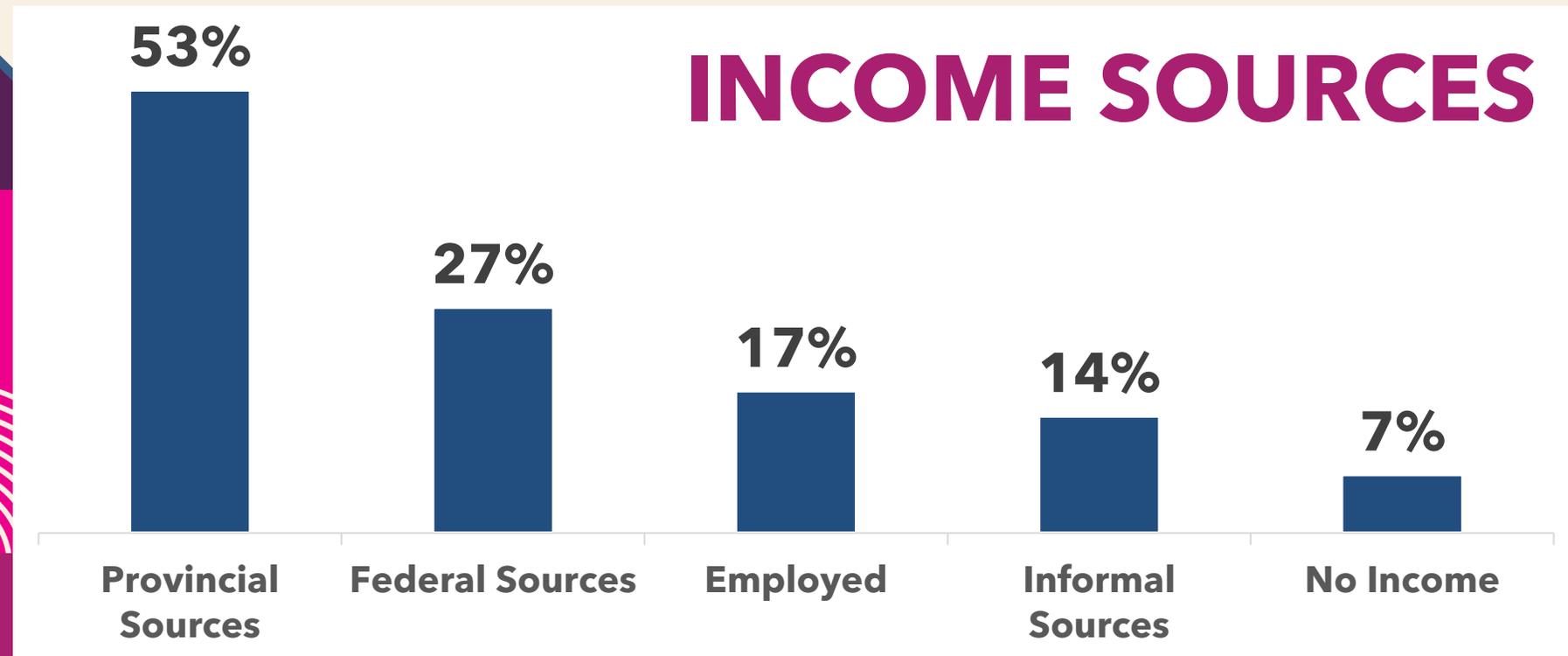
ECONOMIC TENSION

86% (283 people) most recently lost their housing since the start of the pandemic

55% (179 people) of them in the **PAST 6 MONTHS**

14% have been unhousted for more than 2 years

INCOME SOURCES



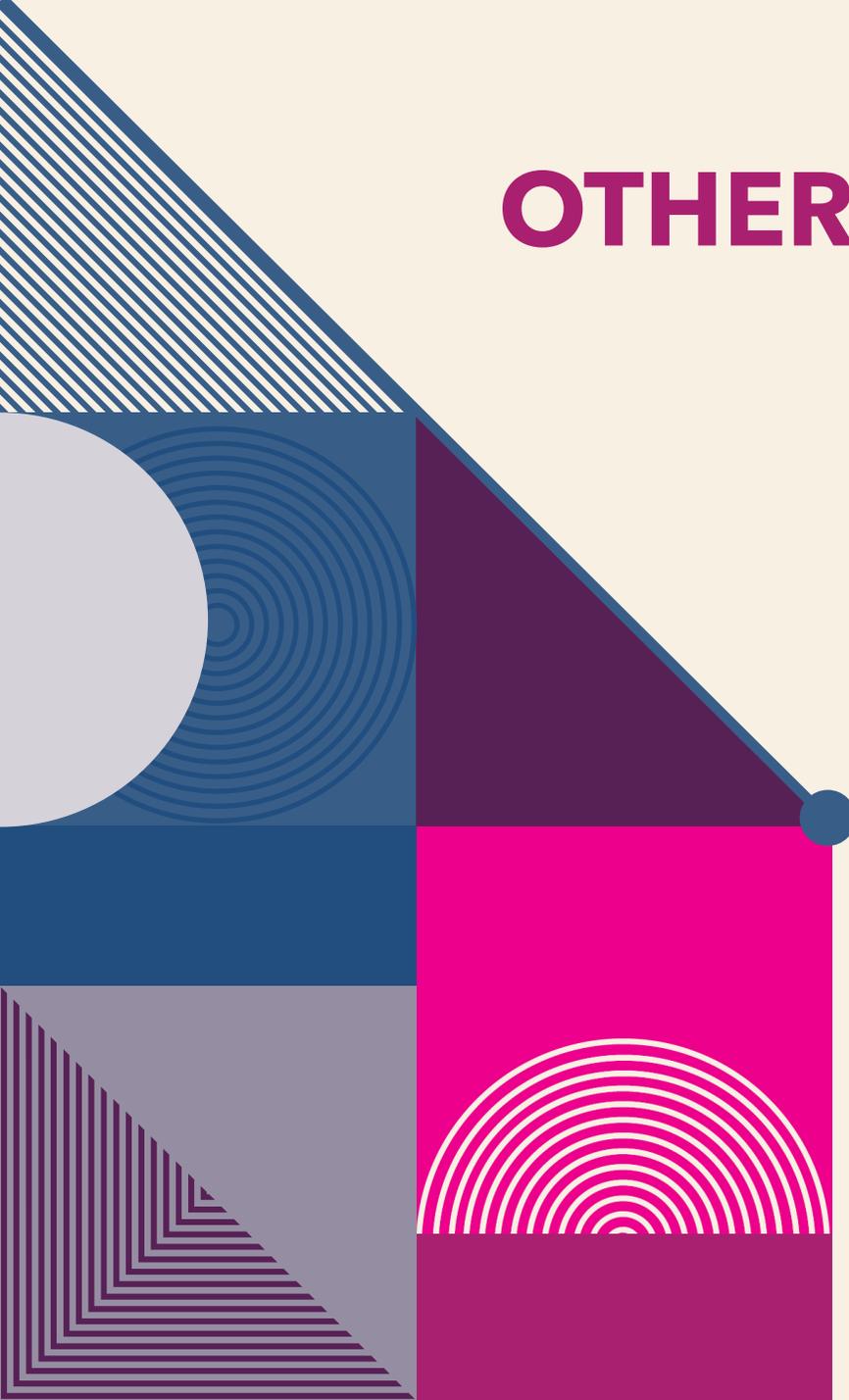


THE RENTAL MARKET

50% lost housing due to housing and financial issues such as eviction, renoviction, complaints from neighbors and landlords, and not having enough income for rent

73% said that a lack of safe and affordable housing options and availability were their main barriers to finding housing

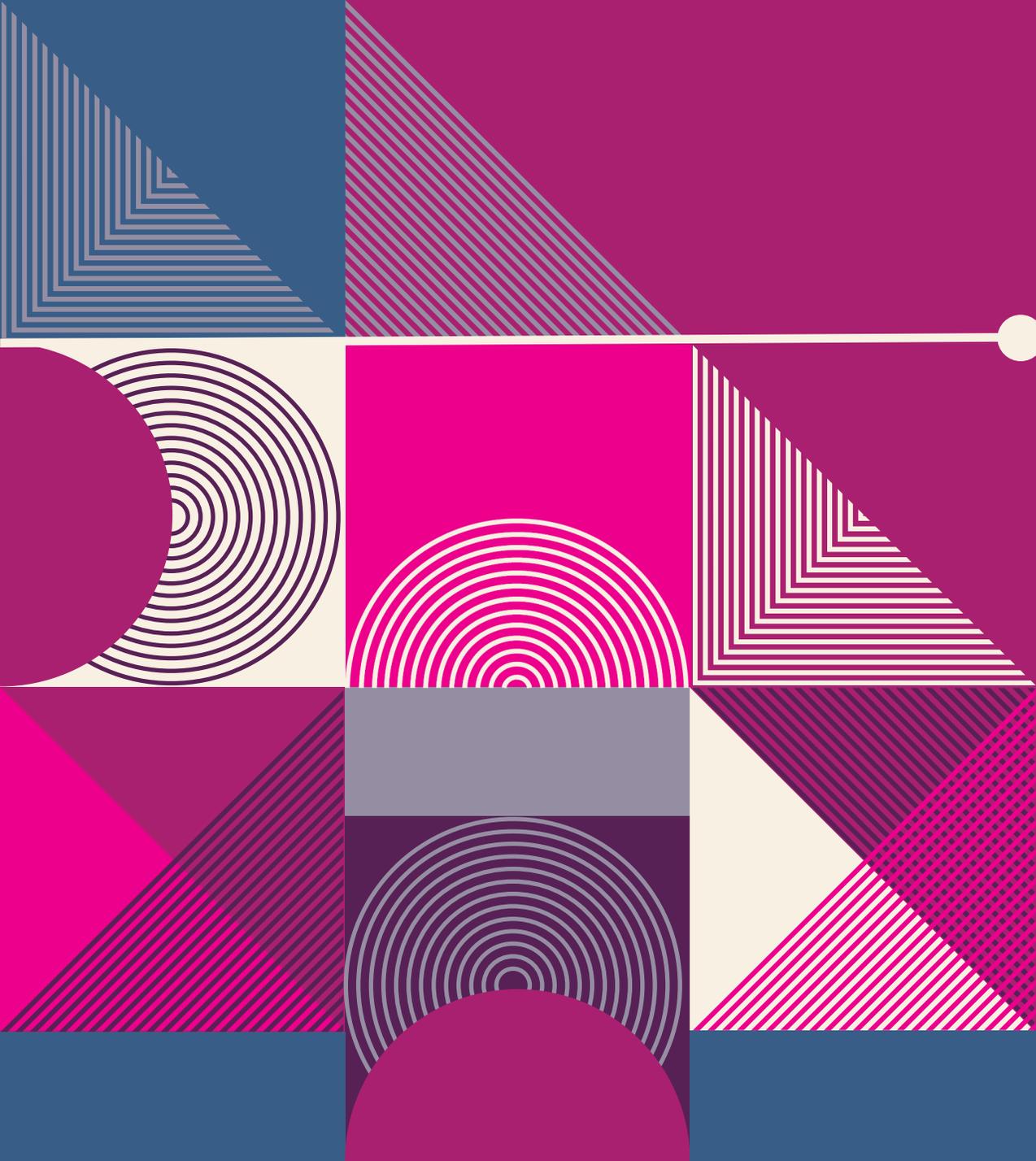
57% said that low income and credit history were their main barriers



OTHER REASONS FOR HOUSING LOSS

39% said they lost housing due to interpersonal and family issues such as conflict with and abuse from partners, parents, roommates, and neighbors

27% said they lost housing due to health and justice issues such as substance use, physical and mental health issues and incarceration



**WHERE DO
WE GO
FROM HERE?**

BETTER IMMEDIATE SOLUTIONS

- **The Shelter Diversion program is FULL**
- **Investments made in the past 2 years are still 2-5 years away**
- **Hotel rooms are not sustainable and vulnerable to tourism and private sector interests**
- **The number of unsheltered people sleeping in public spaces will continue to increase as the weather gets warmer**
- **There is no plan or leadership to deal with the problems of now**



**COST OF HOTELS
RANGE FROM
\$115-\$197
/NIGHT PER ROOM**

**=\$805-\$1379
/WEEK PER ROOM**

**X APPROXIMATELY
150 ROOMS
= \$121K-\$207K
PER WEEK***

***This calculation comes from anecdotal
information on what service providers are paying
for hotel usage**

MARKET INTERVENTIONS

- **We need immediate regulations and legislation to address:**
 - **Predatory landlord practices and the systemic commodification of housing**
 - **Discriminatory and illegal practices within an unregulated rental market**
 - **The impact of the short-term and vacation rental market on affordable housing**
 - **Protections for long-term tenants against renovictions and new ownership of housing**



**ACCORDING TO
CMHC, AS OF
OCTOBER 2021**

**HRM VACANCY RATE
1%**

**HRM AVERAGE RENT
FOR A 1 BDRM APT
\$1084**

SYSTEMIC PREVENTION

- **Think bigger! Homelessness is a problem that intersects with Health, Justice, Municipal Affairs, Community Services and Child Welfare - An Interdepartmental Approach is needed!**
- **Policies and programs to address the systemic factors that increase a person's risk of homelessness**
- **Provincial and Federal income supports are not keeping up with inflation**

NEW GAPS ARE OPENING FASTER THAN OLD ONES HAVE BEEN CLOSED

NEW PRESSURES

- Vacancy rates
- The housing market
- Effects of pandemic isolation on individuals
- Cost of living increases

OLD SYSTEMS

- Mental Health and Addictions
- Criminalization of Poverty
- The Child Welfare System
- The Emergency Shelter System

**A FULL REPORT AND ANALYSIS WILL BE
AVAILABLE AFTER JUNE 30, 2022**



**THE FINANCIAL
AND SOCIAL
COSTS OF
DOING NOTHING
(AND/OR
MAINTAINING
STATUS QUO)
ARE ENORMOUS**



**TO SOLVE THIS
PROBLEM, WE
NEED MORE
INNOVATION,
STRATEGIC
GOVERNMENT
INVESTMENTS, AND
PRIVATE SECTOR
PARTNERS**