



**NARRATIVE**  
RESEARCH

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## Homelessness a Serious and Growing Issue, Say NB Urban Residents

- A majority of residents in Moncton, and half of those in Fredericton and Saint John, call homelessness a critically serious problem in their cities.
- A notable share of residents believe the number of homeless people has increased over the past year.

**May 16, 2019:** Homelessness has become a critically serious problem in New Brunswick's three largest cities – that's the opinion held by a majority of residents in Moncton, and by one-half of those in both Fredericton and Saint John, according to a new survey by **Narrative Research** on homelessness in the three cities.

Adult residents in each location were asked how serious an issue they considered homelessness in their cities. Using a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is "not at all serious" and 10 is "extremely serious," a majority of Moncton residents, 61%, rated the issue at 8 or higher, *including one-third who rated it at 10*. In Fredericton, 52% of residents rated the issue at 8 or higher, including one-quarter who rated it at 10. And in Saint John 46% of residents rated homelessness at 8 or higher, including two in ten who rated it at 10.

In each city, only 5% or fewer residents rated the issue between 1 and 3, or not very serious.

In addition, residents were asked, based on their knowledge and observations, whether the number of homeless people living in their cities has changed over the past 12 months. In Moncton and Fredericton, more people think the homeless population has increased than think it has stayed the same. In Saint John, opinion is divided on the matter.

In Moncton, 62% believe the number of homeless people has risen (compared to 24% who believe the number has stayed the same). In Fredericton, 49% say the homeless population has increased (compared to 35% who say it is unchanged). In Saint John, 40% believe the number has risen (versus 41% who believe it is unchanged).

The **Narrative Research** survey follows months of public debate over what some community advocates and commentators have described as a "crisis of homelessness" in New Brunswick's cities – a situation that gained renewed attention with the closure in April and early May of certain temporary, cold-weather shelters in Moncton and Fredericton. The New Brunswick government has pledged additional funding towards shelters and services for homeless people in the three cities. Meanwhile, questions remain about how best to respond to the needs of homeless people, particularly before the onset of the next winter.

“Whatever the answers to those questions, our research shows clearly that residents of the province’s three main cities regard homelessness as a critically serious urban issue for New Brunswick, one fueled, the public believes, by an increasing number of people in need of shelter – most acutely in Moncton, but also in Fredericton and Saint John,” says Margaret Chapman, COO of Narrative Research.

The survey results are part of Narrative Research’s **Urban Report**, an independent quarterly telephone survey in the Maritimes’ major urban areas. The questions on homelessness were posed to 400 adult residents in each of Fredericton and Moncton, and 300 adult residents in Saint John, from April 17 to May 7, 2019. Results in Fredericton and Moncton are considered accurate to within +/- 4.9 percentage points, and in Saint John to within +/- 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

**Narrative Research** [narrativeresearch.ca](http://narrativeresearch.ca) (formerly Corporate Research Associates) is one of Canada’s leading public opinion and market research companies. Follow us on Twitter [@EveryNarrative](https://twitter.com/EveryNarrative).

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