

SNAPSHOT IN TIME

Risk Factors, Protective Factors and
Trends of Crime in Thunder Bay

September 2016





Like a ripple effect, the positive impact of each community safety effort spreads, and helps make Thunder Bay a safer, more inclusive and welcoming community for everyone.

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Executive Summary

This report identifies trends of several known risk and protective factors of crime and victimization in Thunder Bay. It tracks police-reported crime rates compared with selected Canadian cities, as well as Crime Severity Index and calls for service to the Thunder Bay Police Service. Rates of domestic violence in Thunder Bay are also included, along with measures for education, unemployment, income, homelessness, drug offenses, mental illness and early childhood development.

Although the overall rates for violent, property and youth crime are on a downward trend in Thunder Bay, they have remained amongst the highest in Canada for the last several years. This includes Crime Severity Index, which measures both the volume and severity of police-reported crime. Despite Thunder Bay having the greatest drop among all 33 Census Metropolitan Areas in Canada in Crime Severity Index from 2014 to 2015, it still ranked 2nd overall in the country.

The number of domestic violence incidents in Thunder Bay has more than doubled since 2004, and we know the actual numbers reported are far lower than the actual incidence.

The percentage of Thunder Bay residents without a high school diploma is higher than both the provincial and national averages. In a recent homelessness count, 489 individuals were identified as homeless. A disproportionate number of these individuals stated Aboriginal identity. Over 80% reported addiction/substance use as the reason for housing loss. Eighty percent also said they were new to Thunder Bay within the past year. Cannabis offenses continue to account for the majority of drug crimes in Thunder Bay; however, these numbers continue to decline. Nearly half of adults 19+ in the Thunder Bay District are drinking at levels that exceed the Low Risk Drinking Guidelines. This is significantly higher than the provincial average.

This report represents a starting point for tracking the risk factors of crime and victimization in Thunder Bay, and highlights the need for multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approaches to address and reduce these known risks.

Priorities for Action

The existing evidence on successful crime prevention efforts supports the Crime Prevention Council's approach to address the known risk and protective factors of crime and victimization in Thunder Bay. Keeping the above trends in mind, and additional targeted data, the evidence supports prioritizing the following:

- Building strong, vibrant neighbourhoods
- Reducing violence against women
- Increasing youth inclusion
- Revitalizing the South Core using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

This will inform the development of a new strategic plan. We will continue to monitor emerging evidence to evaluate and prioritize our efforts to reduce crime and victimization and improve community safety for everyone in Thunder Bay.

Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is twofold: to explain the crime prevention approaches used by the Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council, and to track the risk factors and trends associated with crime in Thunder Bay. By monitoring the risk factors and trends of crime, our community will, collectively, be better positioned to implement proactive solutions to reduce crime, victimization and fear of crime. It is also important to understand protective factors, and how these play a role in improving the lives of individuals and the safety of our community.

What is Crime Prevention?

The definition guiding crime prevention in Ontario reads as follows: *“The anticipation, recognition and appraisal of a crime risk and the actions taken – including the integrated community leadership required – to remove or reduce it.”*¹ The intent of this definition is to take an inclusive and preventative approach in order to predict, identify, prevent and reduce crime by addressing the risk factors associated with crime and victimization. Effective crime prevention strategies involve a multi-sectoral approach in an effort to build strong, cohesive, localized community capacity to effectively prevent crime.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are characteristics, conditions and/or influences present in the lives of individuals, families, communities or society. These may increase the presence of crime, victimization, or fear of crime in a community and may also increase the likelihood that individuals engage in crime and/or become victims of crime. It is important to note that these risk factors are multi-dimensional and may overlap with each other. Also, risk factors do not CAUSE crime; however, when several risk factors are combined, there is a higher probability of someone coming into conflict with the law.

RISK FACTORS			
INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY/PEERS	COMMUNITY	SOCIETY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age*• Gender*• Poor social skills• Behavioural problems• Poor educational achievement• Poor mental health• Problematic drug and alcohol use• Low sense of self-worth• Prior criminal behaviour• Experience of being bullied• Persistent unemployment/underemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiences of abuse and neglect• Exposure to violence in the home• Few economic resources• Inadequate housing• Neglect• Negative parenting• Poor peer influences• Parent/sibling criminality• Belonging to a delinquent peer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation or exclusion• Crime in area• Few social services• Racism/marginalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural norms supporting violence• Social disorganization• Negative media messaging

*Males between the ages of 15 and 24 tend to engage in more risk-taking behaviour than females and other age groups.
Data Source: Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. 2009. Crime Prevention in Ontario: A Framework for Action; Waterloo Crime Prevention Council. No date. RAP Sheet-Root Causes of Crime.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are positive characteristics, conditions and/or influences that can improve the lives of individuals and families, and the safety of a community. These may mitigate the effect of being exposed to risk factors, and decrease the likelihood that individuals engage in, or become victims of crime.

Protective factors can help foster healthier individuals, families and communities, thereby increasing the safety of a community.

General protective factors may decrease the likelihood of crime and victimization. Building on and improving protective factors makes individuals and communities stronger and better able to counteract risk factors.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS			
INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY/PEERS	COMMUNITY	SOCIETY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy personal coping strategies• Strong attachment to adult role model• Positive school experience• Healthy prenatal and early childhood development• Self-esteem and self-efficacy• Sense of responsibility• Stable housing• Steady employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good parenting• Parent(s)/guardians(s) engaged in child's life• Strong social supports• Positive peer influences/friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing in close proximity to services• Cohesive communities• Recreational facilities for youth• Opportunities for community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low social tolerance of violence• High awareness of the determinants of well-being

Data Source: Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. 2009. Crime Prevention in Ontario: A Framework for Action; Waterloo Crime Prevention Council. No date. RAP Sheet-Root Causes of Crime.

Levels of Crime Prevention

Crime prevention can be described in terms of three stages or levels: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

1

Primary Crime Prevention

is directed at stopping a problem before it happens. Primary prevention focuses on *social* and *situational* factors and could involve:

- strengthening community and social structures
- reducing opportunities for crime.

2

Secondary Crime Prevention

seeks to change behaviours, typically of those people at higher risk of coming into conflict with the law, and could involve:

- early interventions (for example, youth programs)
- programs in high-risk neighbourhoods.

3

Tertiary Crime Prevention

focuses on the operation of the criminal justice system and deals with offending after it has happened. The focus is on intervention in the lives of known offenders in an attempt to prevent them from re-offending.

Approaches Used by the Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council

Established in 2010, the Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council is a municipal approach to crime prevention and community safety. Municipalities are the order of government closest to the citizen. They are best positioned to understand the specific community context, and to help coordinate collaboration between municipal services, local agencies, community groups and the public to establish effective community-based programs that reduce crime.

Evidence-Based Approach

The Crime Prevention Council uses an evidence-based approach that is proven to be effective in addressing the many risk factors known to be at the roots of crime. The Crime Prevention Council's approach is based predominantly on Primary Crime Prevention approaches. Crime Prevention Through Social Development recognizes that the intersection of multiple, complex social, economic, health and environmental factors lead to criminality. Crime Prevention through Social Development involves long-term, sustainable, multi-agency, integrated actions that deal with the risk factors, divert people from the path of crime, and build protective factors that may mitigate those risks.²

Situational Crime Prevention is an approach that addresses the built environment, and uses methods to reduce opportunities for specific categories of crime by increasing the associated risks and difficulties of crime, and reducing the rewards.³ One example of this approach is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

Legacy of Colonial Assimilation Policies

This report identifies several risk factors in Thunder Bay. It is known that individuals who experience poverty, homelessness, mental health issues, problematic substance use and other known risk factors are at a higher risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system and also of being victimized. To demonstrate the impact of risk factors, Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay and Canada experience disproportionately high rates of many known risk factors; this experience has resulted in disproportionately high rates of crime and victimization, and their over-representation in the criminal justice system.^{4,5,6} These facts must also be understood within the context of the legacy of colonial assimilation policies, including residential schools and institutional racism. These policies, and the experience of colonialism, have resulted in sustained inequities that have kept Aboriginal people at a significant disadvantage, and generations of erosion of Aboriginal political, economic and social systems.⁷ The adverse impacts of this are seen today in the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of many Aboriginal people and nations.

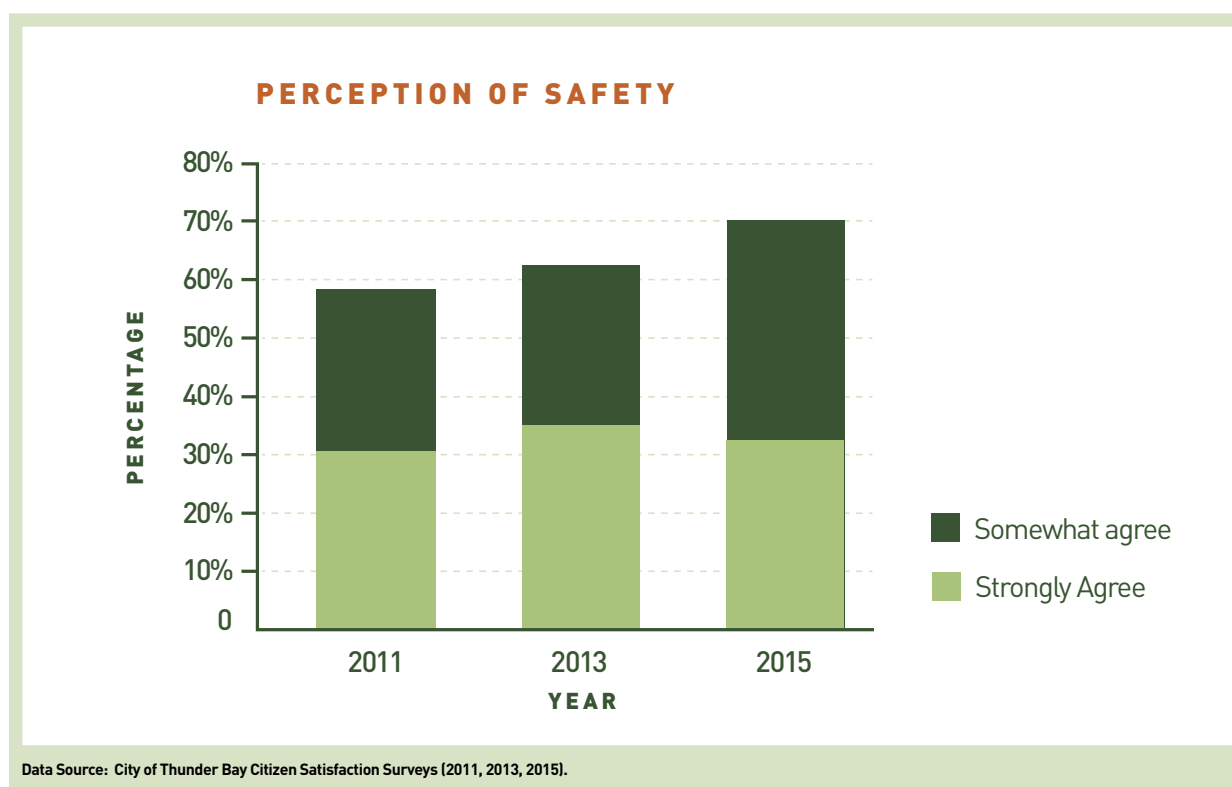
Fear of Crime

The Relationship to Crime

Fear of crime refers to the fear of being a victim of crime as opposed to the actual probability of being a victim of crime.⁸ Fear of crime is a significant stressor that can impact an individual's feelings, thoughts, behaviours, activities, habits and well-being, and drain community cohesion, trust and neighbourhood stability.⁹ Fear of crime can restrict personal activities, increase dissatisfaction, and reduce overall quality of life. Factors influencing the level of fear of crime include individual and public perceptions of safety, past experiences with crime, gender, age, and where one lives.¹⁰ Media can also significantly impact fear of crime.

Fear of crime, or perception of safety, is measured here as the percentage of respondents indicating they strongly agree or somewhat agree with the following statement: *"I feel safe walking alone in my own neighbourhood after dark."*

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

Since 2011, when the City of Thunder Bay first included the section on community safety in the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, the perception of safety has increased. In 2015, 70% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, compared with 59% of respondents in 2011. The Crime Prevention Council will continue to implement initiatives to reduce fear of crime and the City will continue to track this trend through the Citizen Satisfaction Survey.

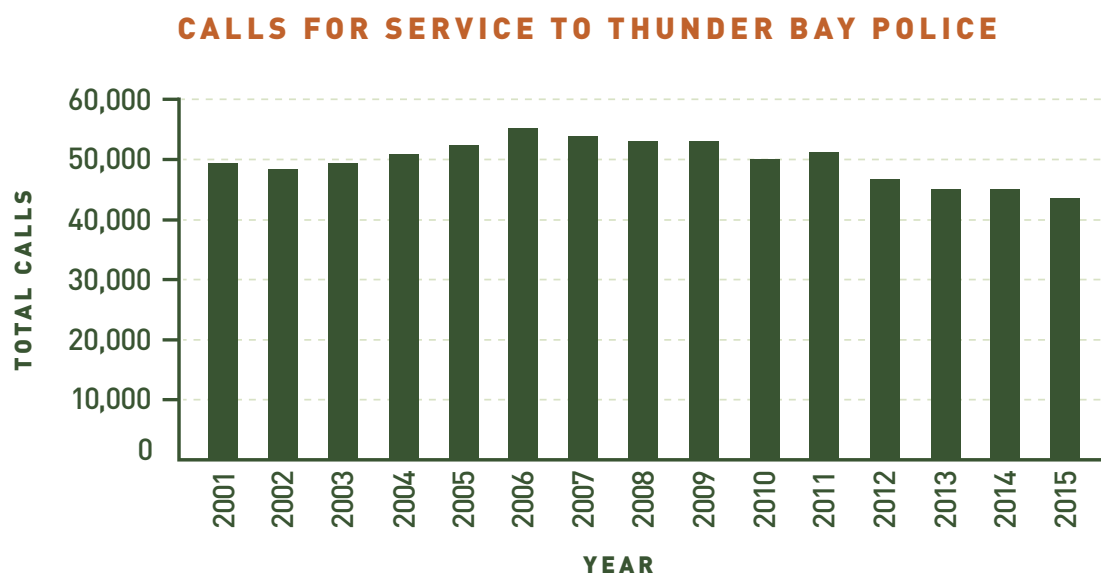
Police-Reported Crime

The Relationship to Crime

Crime is a complex issue, with the potential to impact not only victims, but also their families, friends, communities, and society more broadly. Police-reported crime statistics can help better track changes in the nature and amount of crime, which are important in the identification and development of programs, policies and strategies related to crime and prevention.¹¹

In this section, Calls for Service to Thunder Bay Police, Crime Rate (including Youth Crime, Violent Crime and Property Crime) and Crime Severity Index are reported.

THE STATISTICS



Data Source: Thunder Bay Police Service Annual Report 2004, 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Story Behind the Numbers

Calls for Service indicate instances which require a police response, and do not include general inquiries or calls transferred to an outside agency. Calls for Service have been on a downward trend in Thunder Bay since 2006. This trend should be communicated through public education materials, including this report.

Crime Rate

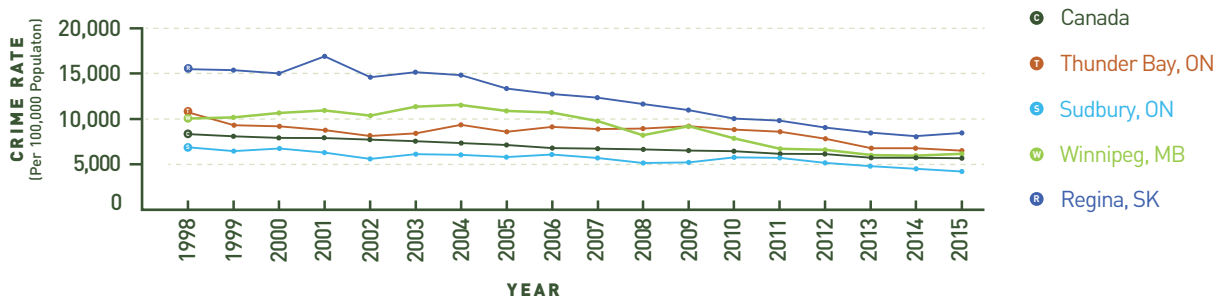
The overall crime rate has been used to measure crime in Canada since 1962, and provides information on the number of police-reported incidents that have occurred for a given population.¹² It measures the volume of crime coming to the attention of the police. Each criminal incident, regardless of the type or seriousness of the offense, counts the same in the crime rate.

The crime rate is based on the total number of Criminal Code incidents (excluding traffic incidents) reported to police per 100,000 population, and is used to make comparisons over time and among geographic areas with different populations. The crime rate does not include federal statutes such as drug offences.

THE STATISTICS

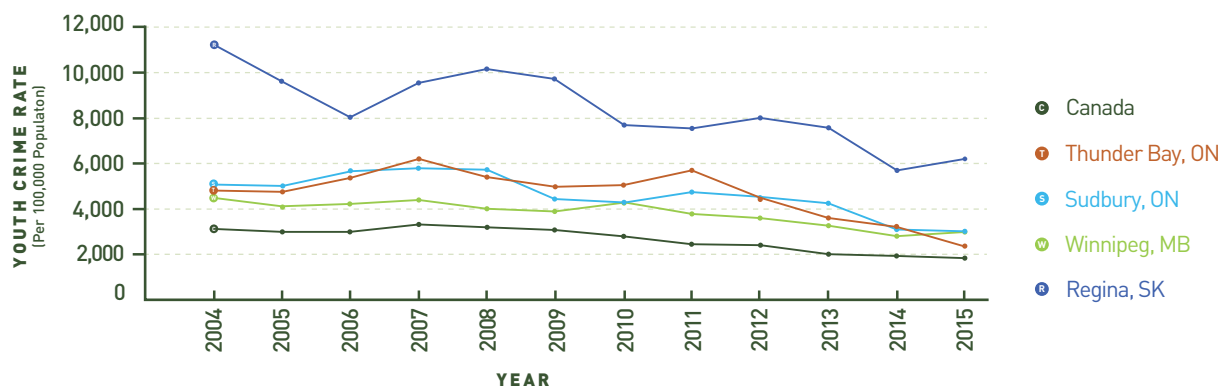
CRIME RATE - CANADA AND SELECTED CITIES 1998-2015

Violations = Total, all Criminal Code Violations (excluding traffic)



Data Source: 2. Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051-Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). Retrieved: 2016-07-30.

YOUTH CRIME RATE CANADA AND SELECTED CITIES 2004-2015

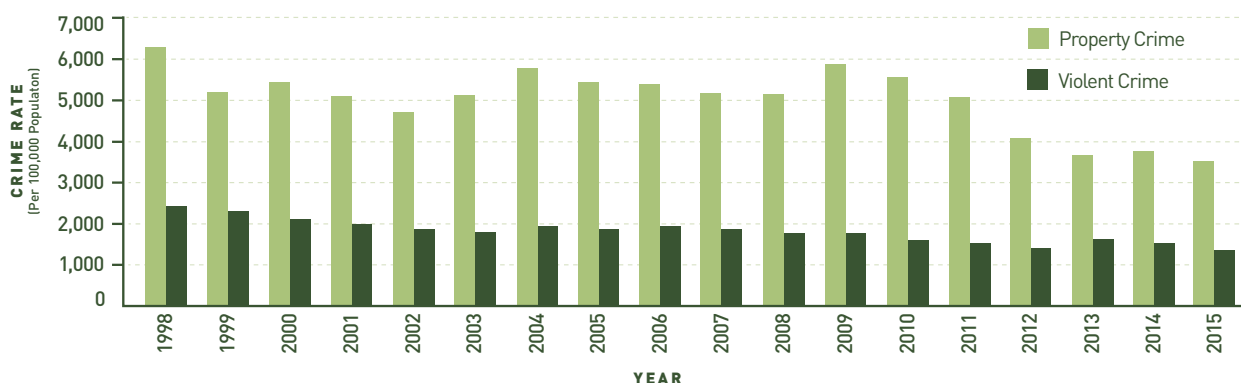


Data Source: 2. Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051-Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). Retrieved: 2016-07-30.

The Story Behind the Numbers

The overall crime rate in Thunder Bay has been trending downward since 1998. The overall youth crime rate in Thunder Bay peaked in 2007 and 2011 but has been declining steadily since. The overall youth crime rate declined 28% between 2014 and 2015. This trend should be communicated through public education materials, including this report.

THUNDER BAY PROPERTY CRIME VS. VIOLENT CRIME RATE, 1998-2015



Data Source: 2. Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051-Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). Retrieved: 2016-07-30.

THUNDER BAY YOUTH PROPERTY CRIME VS. VIOLENT CRIME, 2004-2015



Data Source: 2. Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051-Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). Retrieved: 2016-07-30.

Story Behind the Numbers

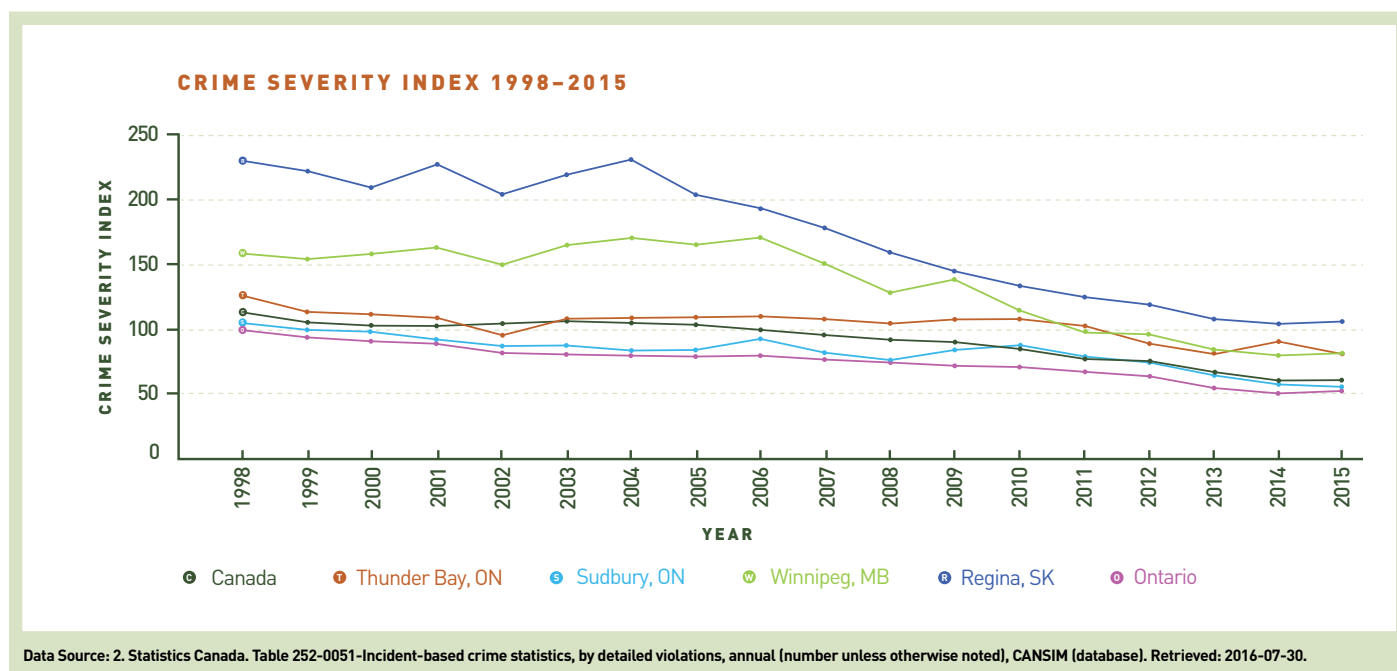
Property crime comprises the vast majority of crime in Thunder Bay. Overall violent and property crime rates have been trending down since 1998; however, rates of property crime are dropping at a greater rate than overall violent crime. Youth violent and property crime rates are both lower than the overall rates. Youth violent crime comprises a larger proportion of all youth crime, and youth property crime is also declining at a greater rate than violent crime. The rate of youth violent crime has surpassed the rate of youth property crime in the last two years. These trends point to the need for more opportunities for youth in Thunder Bay, programs to reduce violence, as well as partnership initiatives with the Thunder Bay Police Service that encourage personal responsibility for property, such as the Stop & Lock Program.

Crime Severity Index

The Crime Severity Index (CSI) measures both the volume and seriousness of police-reported crime in Canada. The CSI was developed to address the limitation of the crime rate being driven by high-volume, relatively less serious offences.¹³ The CSI, which is also based on the most serious violation in the incident, not only takes into account the volume of crime, but also the severity of crime.

In order to calculate the CSI, each violation is assigned a weight that is based on the violation's average sentence handed down by criminal courts. The more serious the average sentence, the higher the weight assigned to the offence, meaning that the more serious offences have a greater impact on the Index.¹⁴ Unlike the traditional crime rate, all offences, including Criminal Code traffic violations and other federal statute violations such as drug offences, are included in the CSI.

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

Nationally, the crime severity index has been trending down since 1998. A spike in the crime severity index occurred in Thunder Bay in 2014, when Thunder Bay ranked first nationally per capita for CSI. The high number of homicides per capita in 2014 impacted the index, contributing to this increase. As alcohol was a common denominator, this points to the need to continue the important work of the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy and partnership initiatives with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit to develop a plan to reduce alcohol-related harms. In 2015, Thunder Bay had the largest decline in CSI (-11%) of all 33 Census Metropolitan Areas in Canada.

Domestic Violence

The Relationship to Crime

The Thunder Bay Domestic Violence Unit was established in June 2013. The Domestic Violence Unit was created to allow for a more thorough investigation of domestic violence incidents where charges are to be laid. The Domestic Violence Unit also offers an enhanced investigation for the safety of domestic violence victims.

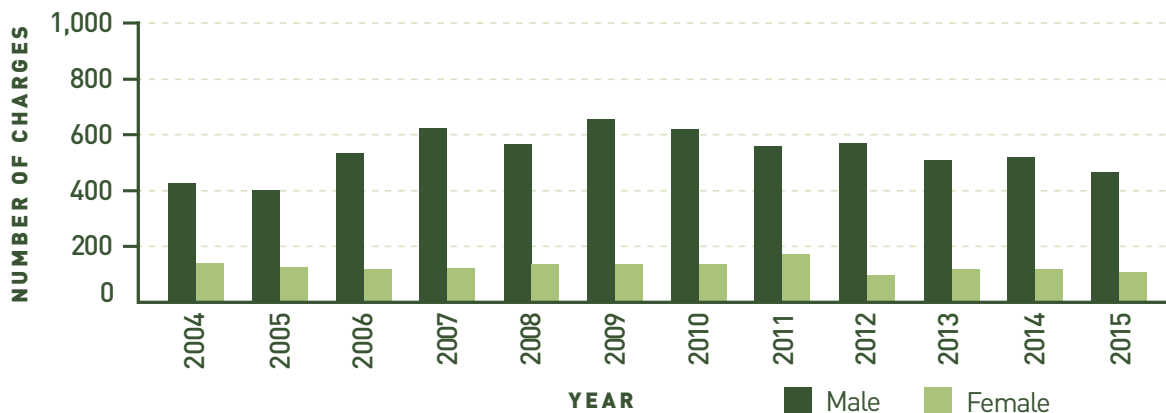
THE STATISTICS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS 2004-2015

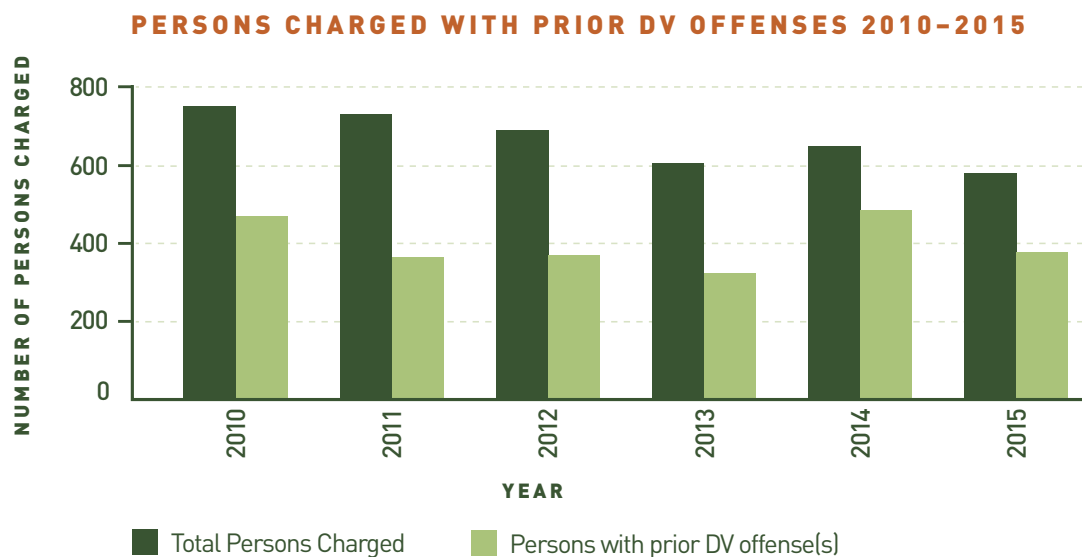


Data Source: Hauth, Sylvie. 2015. Domestic Violence Annual Statistic/Progress Report.

NUMBER OF CHARGES: MALE VS. FEMALE 2004-2015



Data Source: Hauth, Sylvie. 2015. Domestic Violence Annual Statistic/Progress Report.



Data Source: Hauth, Sylvie. 2015. Domestic Violence Annual Statistic/Progress Report.

Story Behind the Numbers

Domestic violence (DV) incidents have more than doubled in Thunder Bay since 2004, indicating a significant issue. The number of males charged is far greater than females. What is not reflected in the first two graphs is the number of individuals who have been charged with a previous domestic violence offense. The chart above reflects those numbers, and shows a decline between 2010 and 2013 in the number of individuals who were previously charged. This number rose again in 2014, and declined in 2015.

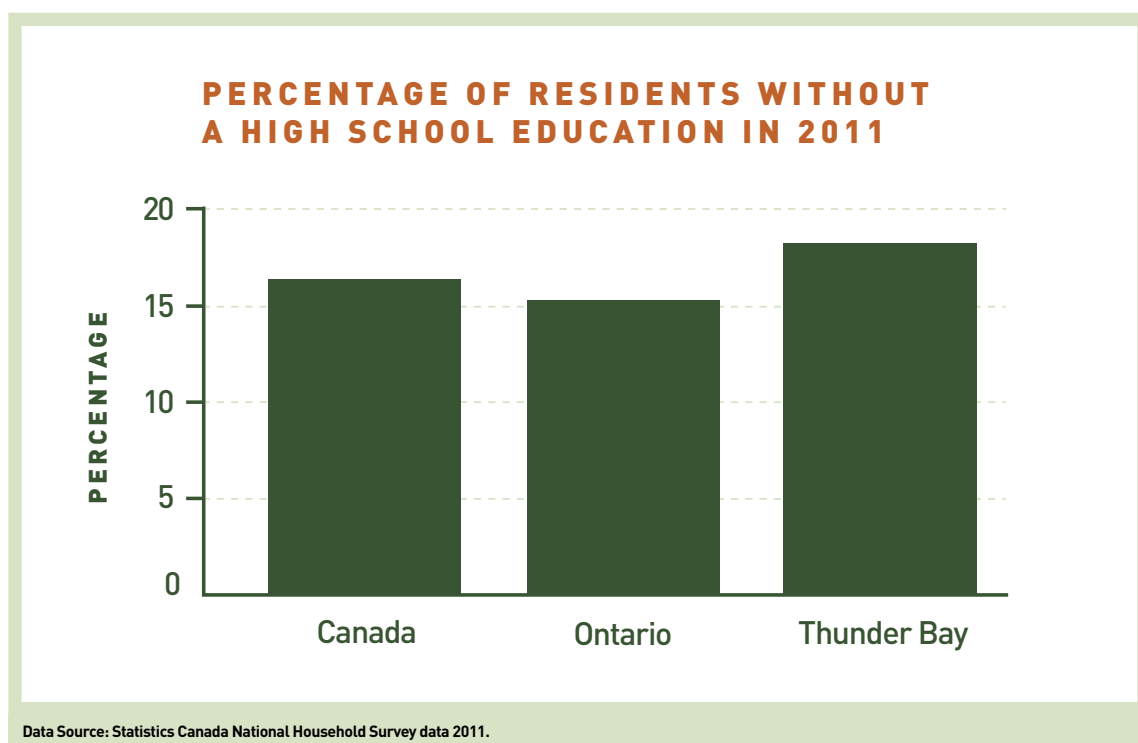
It is important to note that domestic violence incidents are known to be underreported; in the 2009 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, less than one third (30%) of female victims indicated that the incident of spousal victimization was reported to police.¹⁵ This points to the need for initiatives to identify barriers to reporting, to encourage and support increased reporting of domestic violence to police, and to support survivors.

Residents without a High School Education

The Relationship to Crime

Level of educational attainment impacts participation in criminal activity and the probability of involvement in the criminal justice system.¹⁶ The chart below compares the percentage of residents in Thunder Bay who do not have a high school diploma to provincial and national averages.

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

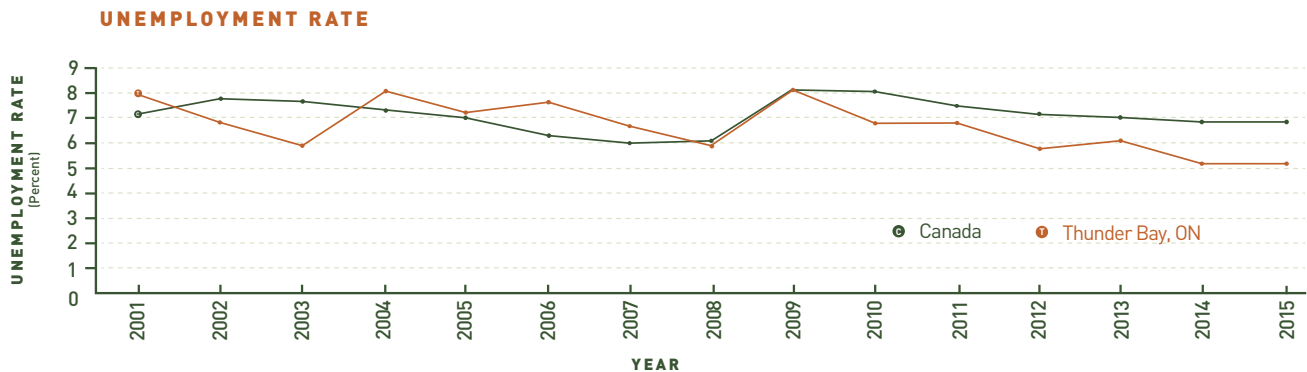
In 2011, 18.5% of residents in Thunder Bay did not have a high school diploma. This is above both the provincial and national averages of 15.4% and 16.7%, respectively. This is a cause for concern, as low educational attainment is a known risk factor for crime and victimization. This speaks to the need to develop and support more initiatives which raise high school completion rates.

Unemployment Rate

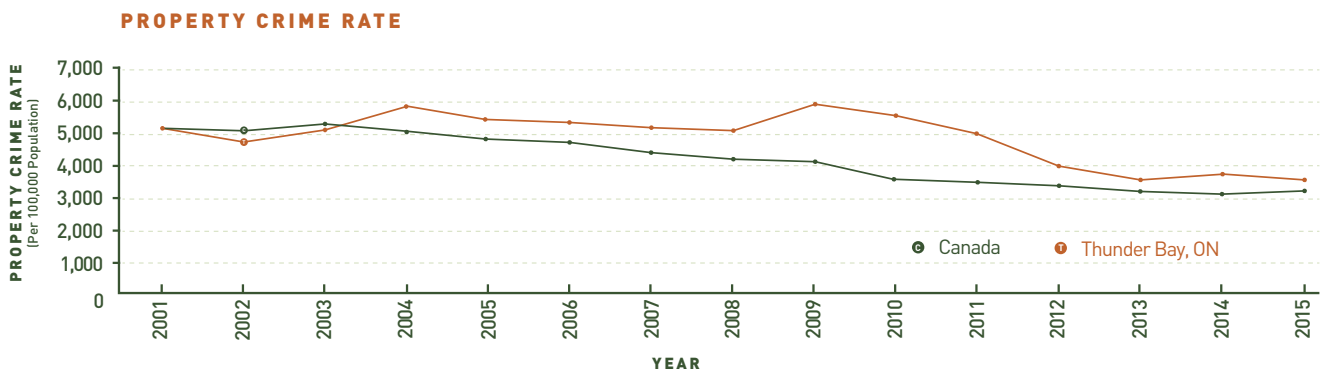
The Relationship to Crime

The relationship between unemployment and property crime is well established in the academic literature. Generally, a 1% drop in unemployment rates leads to approximately a 1% drop in property crime.¹⁷ Violent crime and unemployment, on their own, tend to be unrelated.¹⁸ However, when high levels of unemployment are combined with high levels of alcohol consumption it is believed to cause an increase in the homicide rate.¹⁹

THE STATISTICS



Data Source: Statistics Canada. Table 282-0129 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by census metropolitan area based on 2011 census boundaries, sex and age group, annual (persons unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). Retrieved: 2016-07-30.



Data Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051-Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). Retrieved 2016-07-30.

Story Behind the Numbers

It appears the spikes in the property crime rate in 2004 and 2009 coincide with the spikes in unemployment rate in Thunder Bay in the same years. The unemployment numbers show a continuous improvement since the significant economic downturn in 2008-2009. Correspondingly, property crime rates are on a continuous downward trend. Creating economic development opportunities in Thunder Bay is key to reducing this risk factor. The Thunder Bay Poverty Reduction Strategy includes recommendations for income and community economic development to help alleviate poverty.

Income of Low Income Families

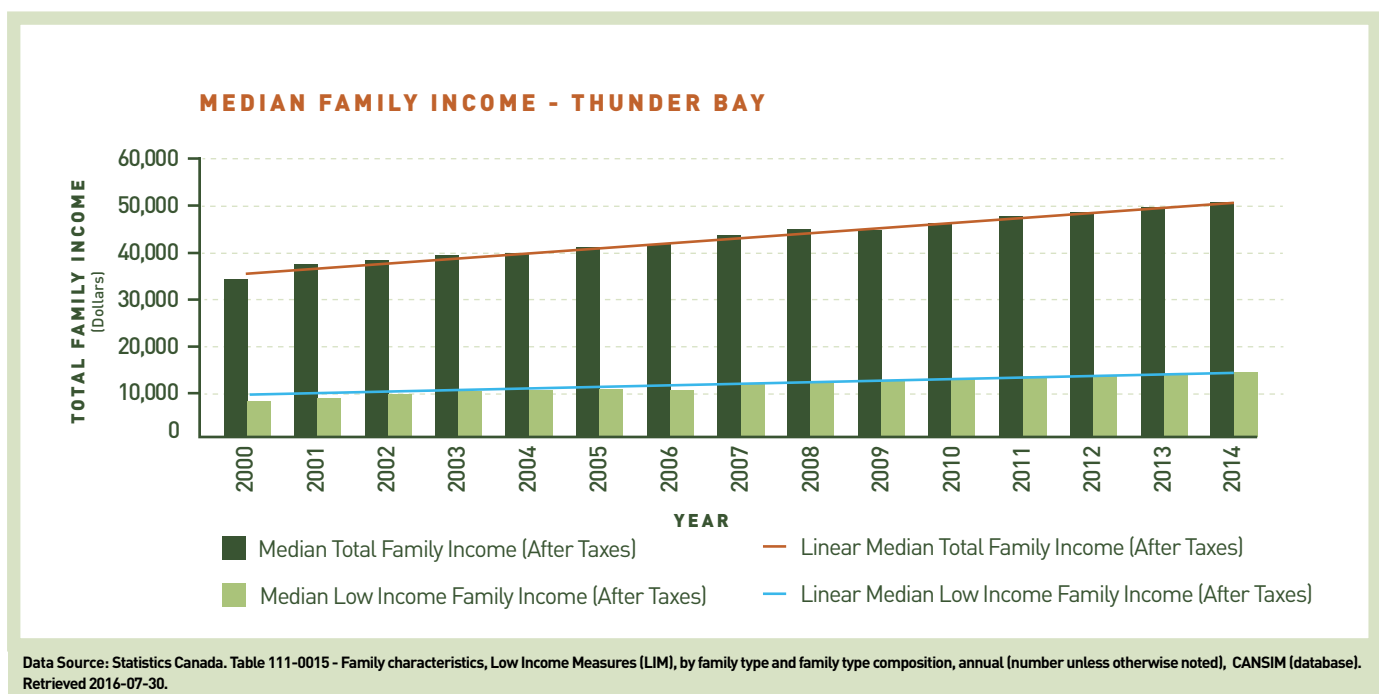
The Relationship to Crime

Poverty is a significant risk factor for crime and victimization.²⁰ Certain groups are at greater risk of living in poverty, including: children, single-parent families, women, unmarried individuals, seniors, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, recent immigrants, visible minorities, and low-wage workers.²¹

Low-income individuals greatly outnumber wealthier individuals in the criminal justice system. They are more “at risk” of participating in criminal activity because of the social and economic challenges they face.²² They are also more likely to face significant barriers once they are involved in criminal justice processes.

While there is no officially recognized poverty line calculation in Canada, the Low Income Measure is one of the most frequently used metrics to determine how many people in a community live in poverty. The Low Income Measure is calculated as 50% of the median income, adjusted for family size.

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

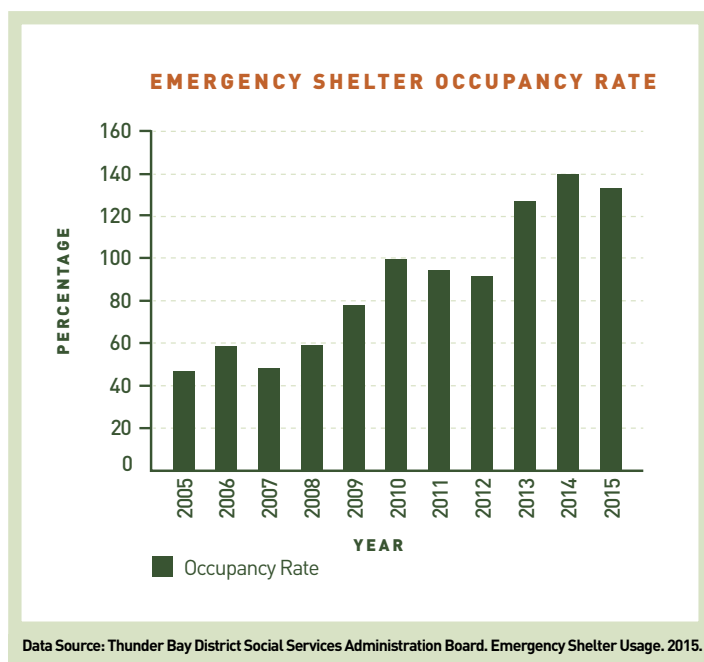
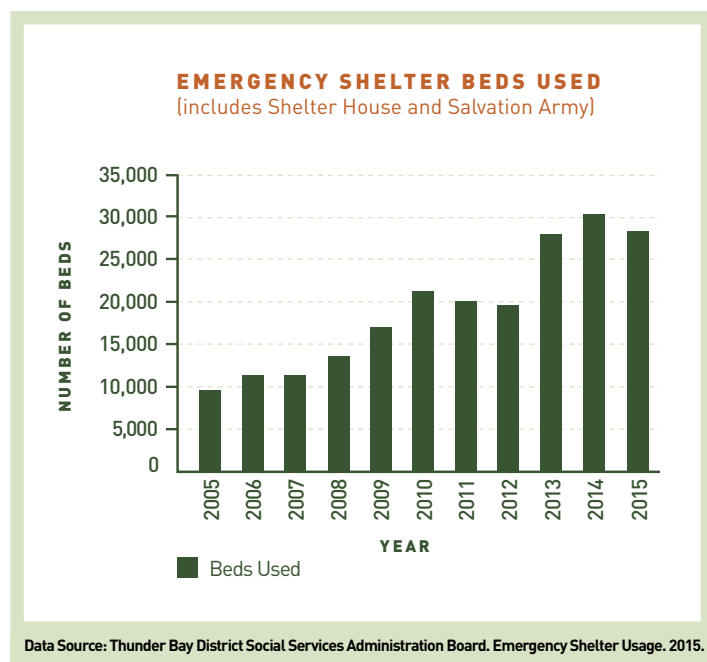
The gap between low income families and middle income families is growing in Thunder Bay. This gap is largely the by-product of stagnant incomes for low income individuals, and demonstrates the importance of Commitment 6 of the Thunder Bay Poverty Reduction Strategy to calculate and promote living wages in Thunder Bay.

Homelessness

The Relationship to Crime

Individuals facing homelessness are more likely to become victims of crime and/or engage in criminal activity than individuals with stable housing.^{23,24} Many individuals and families experiencing homelessness often face complex and concurrent challenges related to mental health, addictions, trauma and poverty.^{25,26}

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

The need for emergency shelter has increased significantly over the last several years; the number of stays has more than doubled since 2008. The number of individuals on the waitlist for subsidized housing has also increased in that same time. As of December 31, 2015, there were 782 people on the Social Housing Waitlist at Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board. The vacancy rate increased from 2.3% in 2014 to 4.6% in 2015; this is expected to decline again in 2016²⁷, which could lead to additional pressure on emergency shelters in Thunder Bay.

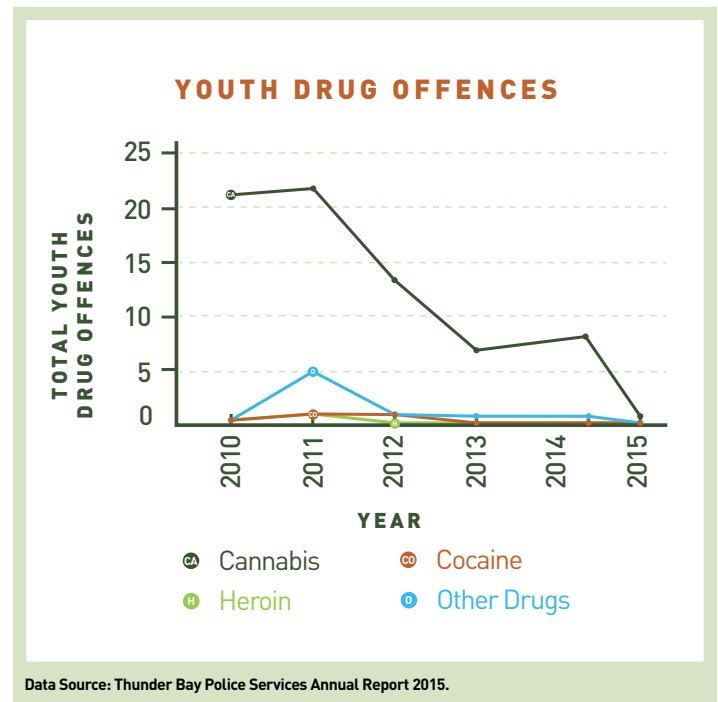
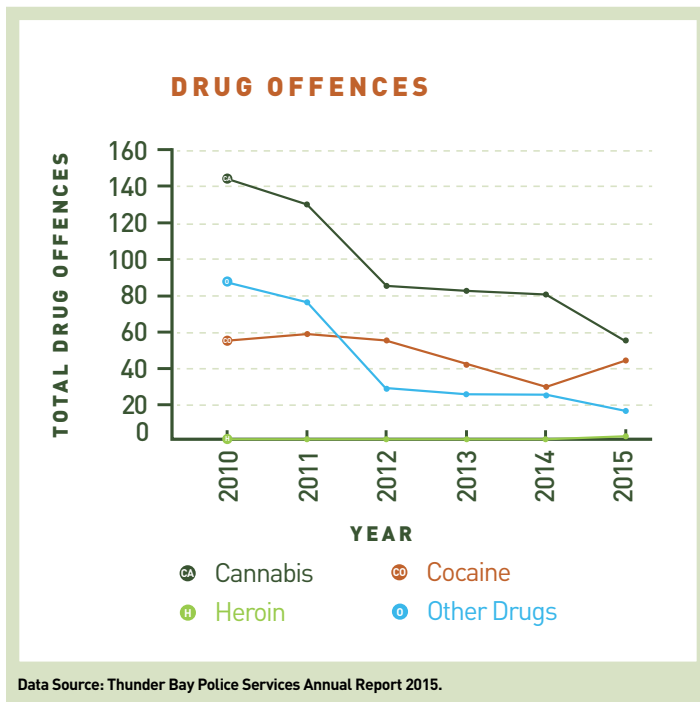
These numbers are a cause for concern and warrant ongoing attention, as they impact quality of life, and could signal an increase in victimization and crime. These numbers also point to the need for initiatives to reduce homelessness in our community. The first comprehensive homelessness Point in Time (PIT) Count was conducted in Thunder Bay in January 2016. Results of the PIT Count show that a total of 289 homeless people were interviewed and an additional 200 homeless people were counted. Of the 289 individuals interviewed, 73% stated Aboriginal identity. Over 80% reported addiction/substance use as the reason for housing loss. Eighty percent said they were new to Thunder Bay within the past year.

Substance Use

The Relationship to Crime

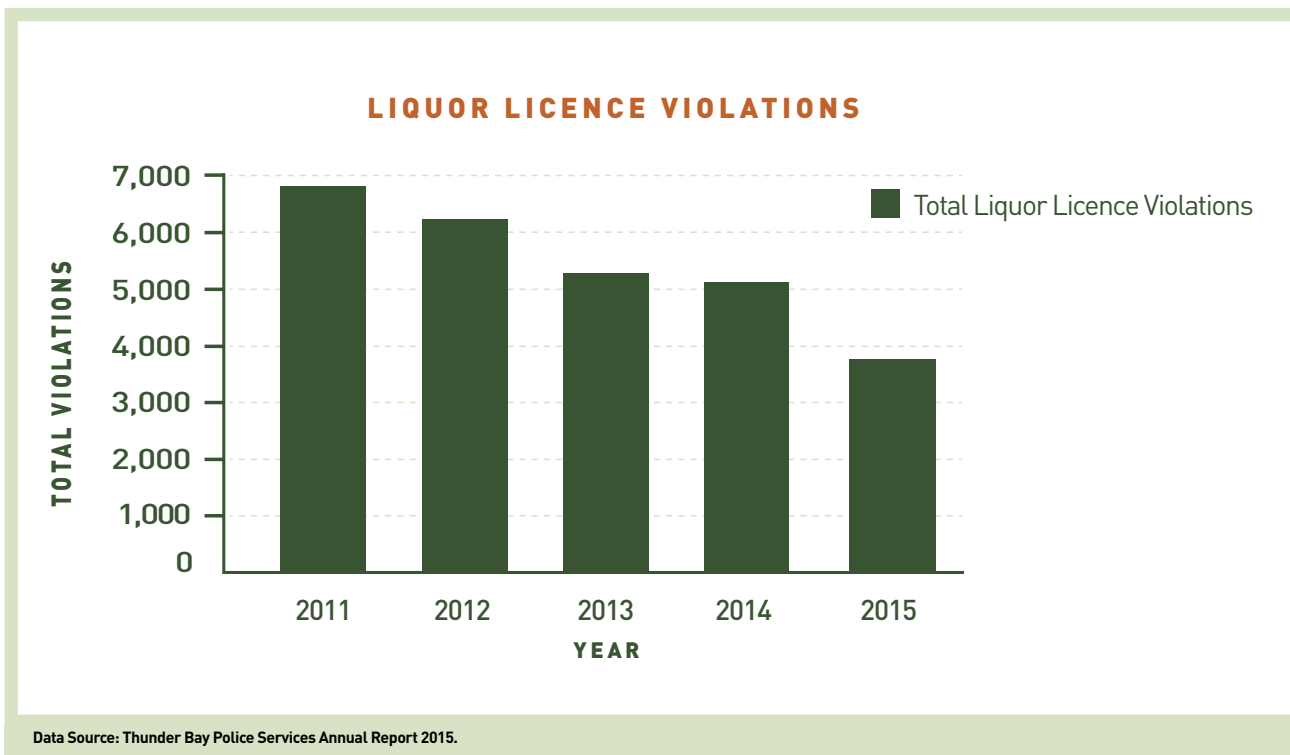
The strong association between substance use (i.e. drugs and alcohol) and crime in general has been well established by criminological researchers in Canada and elsewhere around the world.²⁸ Research has shown that not only are many crimes committed by individuals under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, but crime, particularly property-related crime, is often committed to obtain money to purchase drugs.²⁹

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

Cannabis offenses continue to account for the majority of drug crimes in Thunder Bay; however, the rate of cannabis offenses has been declining. Not captured in the Annual Police Reports is prescription drug trafficking, which is a growing concern in Thunder Bay. Prescription drug trafficking poses a particular challenge to law enforcement officials trying to contain the illicit use of a legal substance. Local police officials point out that illicit drug trafficking is correlated to violent crime (i.e. competition between rival dealers, robberies to obtain funds for purchases) and also to property crimes (i.e. break and enters).³⁰ This issue speaks to the importance of implementing the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy to help reduce harms associated with problematic substance use.



Story Behind the Numbers

Although total liquor licence violations are on a downward trend in Thunder Bay, problematic alcohol use continues to be a significant issue in Thunder Bay. There is also a high level use of other intoxicants in our community, such as unpalatable forms of alcohol, which is very problematic and difficult to quantify. The rate of arrests for public intoxication in Thunder Bay remains among the highest in Ontario, and continues to be one of the leading reasons for arrest. The reduction in liquor licence violations is more so a reflection of additional options (other than arrest and charges) available to individuals who are struggling with problematic alcohol use. These include improved detox services, and Shelter House's Street Outreach Program (SOS), which helps to transport intoxicated individuals and reduces their contact with emergency services, including police.

Alcohol-related harms are significant, widespread and standing in the way of optimal health and success for residents of Thunder Bay District.³¹ Research by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit shows that nearly half of adults 19+ in Thunder Bay District report drinking at levels that exceed the Low Risk Drinking Guidelines. This is significantly higher than the provincial average. These trends and data point to the importance of initiatives to reduce the harms associated with alcohol and problematic substance use in our community. Thunder Bay Drug Strategy includes efforts to address alcohol-related harms in Thunder Bay, and supports the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's report recommendations to reduce alcohol-related harms.

Mental Illness

The Relationship to Crime

In any given year, one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health problem or illness.³²

More than 6.7 million Canadians are living with a mental illness today. Although the majority of people with mental health conditions rarely come into contact with the law, there has been an upward trend of individuals with mental health conditions in the criminal justice system. Studies show that persons with mental health issues experience disproportionate contacts with police, higher levels of arrests, criminal charges and custodial rates.³³

Mental health issues are estimated to be around two to three times more common in Canadian prisons than in the general population.³⁴ Where calls for service involve a person with mental illness as the “offender”, research suggests that the majority of those contacts involve less serious offences.³⁵

According to 2014 data from the Northwest LHIN (Local Health Integration Network):

65.1% of respondents in Northwestern Ontario perceived their mental health as excellent or very good, compared to 70.9% on Ontario; the suicide and self-inflicted injury rate (per 100,000 population) was 20.6 compared to 7.7 for Ontario.³⁶

Public opinion survey results have identified that many people believe mental illness and violence are closely related. In fact, research suggests that this public perception does not reflect reality. Most individuals with psychiatric disorders are not violent. Although a subset of people with psychiatric disorders commits assaults and violent crimes, findings are inconsistent about the extent mental illness contributes to criminal behaviour and the impact of other factors, including substance use.

In 2013, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services identified mental health issues as a significant risk factor that can lead individuals to engage in crime, social disorder incidents or activities and/or become victims of crime.³⁷

Research suggests that appropriate treatment of mental illness and substance misuse may help reduce rates of violence. Communities across Ontario have highlighted the need for more services, such as enhancing emergency response and expanding services for youth, especially early on in their lives. As with psychiatric treatment in general, medication treatment alone is unlikely to reduce the risk of violence in people living with a mental illness. Clinical treatment and interventions ideally should be long-term and include a range of approaches. It is also critical to build community capacity to understand and acknowledge mental illness and eliminate stigma.

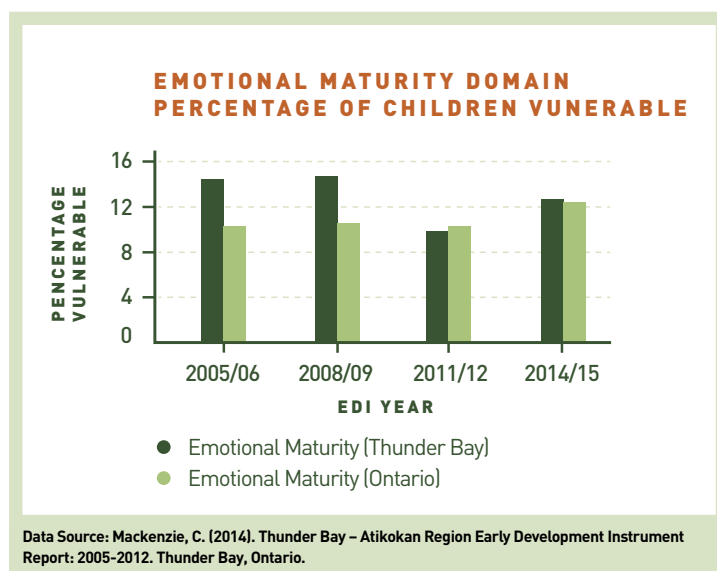
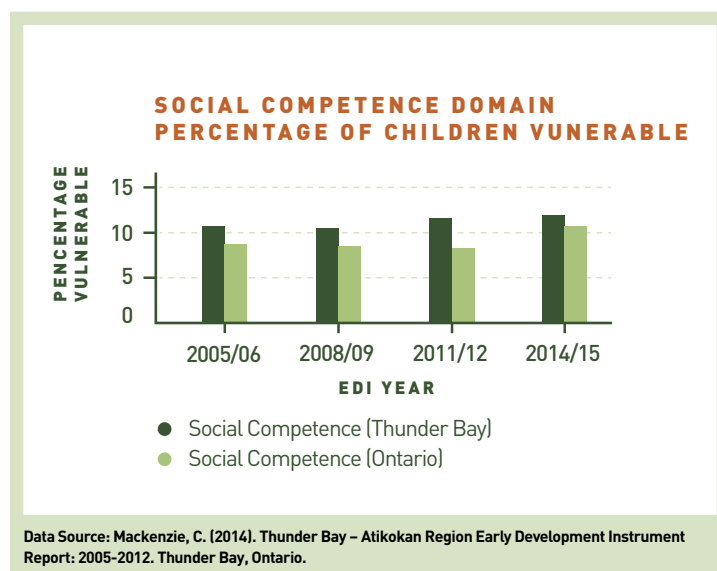
Early Childhood Development Indicators

The Relationship to Crime

Every three years, senior kindergarten children in the Thunder Bay area are surveyed by their teachers using a tool called the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI is used across Canada and in other countries as a population health tool, allowing aggregation of data at a group or community level.³⁸ The EDI measures developmental health of children in five domains: Physical Health and Well-being, Emotional Maturity, Communication Skills and General Knowledge, Social Competence, and Language and Cognitive Development. Two of the EDI domains relate directly to crime prevention: Social Competence and Emotional Maturity.

Social Competence measures a child's social skills, social awareness and self confidence, as well as their ability to control their own behaviour, and cooperation with others. Emotional Maturity measures a child's ability for impulsivity control, ability to deal with feelings, and empathy for others. The designation "Vulnerable" for EDI data indicates a child who is unable to meet certain school expectations and is at higher risk of experiencing difficulties in school and later in life.³⁹ Vulnerability for these domains in Thunder Bay and Ontario is shown below.

THE STATISTICS



Story Behind the Numbers

The percentage of children identifying as vulnerable is noteworthy because antisocial behaviour among children is associated with an increased risk of persistent delinquency and criminal involvement later in life.⁴⁰ The percentage of children vulnerable in Thunder Bay on the social competence domain has remained consistently higher than the provincial average over the last decade, and has increased from 10.5% to 11.9%. The percentage of children vulnerable in Thunder Bay on the emotional maturity domain has also remained higher than the provincial average over the same time, with the exception of the 2011/2012 testing year, when the Thunder Bay numbers dipped slightly below the provincial numbers.

These numbers suggest that prevention opportunities exist through a focus on improving children's emotional and social readiness for school.

Conclusion

Individual risk factors, taken in isolation, show in some cases positive or in other cases negative outlooks for crime and victimization in Thunder Bay. When multiple pieces of data are combined, the outlook for crime and crime prevention in Thunder Bay becomes more difficult to interpret.

A number of statistics look positive for Thunder Bay. Calls for service to the Thunder Bay Police Service are declining. Property crime rate, overall youth crime rate, and unemployment rate in Thunder Bay are declining. The perception of safety in Thunder Bay is increasing, which means that Thunder Bay residents are feeling safer.

This report represents a starting point for tracking the risk factors of crime in Thunder Bay. As the Crime Prevention Council updates its Strategic Plan, the evidence supports continued focus on:

- developing initiatives to reduce fear of crime
- tracking attitudes towards community safety through the Citizen Satisfaction Survey
- communicating through public education materials, including this report, the downward trends in police calls for service, crime rates overall, and youth crime
- creating more opportunities for youth in Thunder Bay
- partnering on initiatives with the Thunder Bay Police Service that encourage personal responsibility for property, such as the Stop & Lock program
- implementing the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy and partnership initiatives with Thunder Bay District Health Unit to reduce the harms associated with alcohol and drug misuse in our community
- developing initiatives to reduce gender-based violence and support reporting of domestic violence to police
- raising high school completion rates
- calculating and promoting living wages in Thunder Bay
- monitoring vacancy rates, shelter use and homeless numbers and supporting initiatives to reduce homelessness
- supporting mental health services such as enhancing emergency response and expanding services for youth, especially early in their lives
- supporting initiatives to improve children's emotional and social readiness for school

Attention to these areas should be made through multidisciplinary, multiagency approaches to community safety and well-being.

A continued effort to monitor the risk factors of crime and victimization in Thunder Bay will help identify persistent and/or emerging community safety concerns, and help our community prioritize proactive initiatives to address these concerns. Future reports may add more information as data becomes available.

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