



# Conklin Homelessness Estimation Report

Prepared for the Conklin Resource Division Advisory Committee by the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN).

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## Executive Summary

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The ARDN was approached by the Conklin Resource Development Advisory Committee (CRDAC) to conduct a homelessness estimation and data analysis for the hamlet of Conklin.

Typically, the ARDN would use the steps outlined in the “Step-by-Step Guide to Estimating Homelessness,” but those directives require the participation of social service providers in the community. In the case of Conklin, no such services exist, so a customized approach was required.

In collaboration with CRDAC, ARDN created a new survey tailored to the community of Conklin and used door-to-door surveying to collect data. This tailored survey included questions regarding:

- Housing instability
- Job status
- Income
- Family demographics

A total of 54 people in Conklin were surveyed, most of whom were in vulnerable situations, at risk of losing their housing, or already homeless.

The data analysis portion attempted to connect the findings from the ARDN/CRDAC survey to already published secondary data. The ARDN identified the following data sources: the 2011 and 2016 National Census (Statistics Canada), and the 2015 Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) Census. However, comparing these datasets revealed that there were several inconsistencies across datasets, the most obvious being:

- Population estimates by the RMWB and National Census are not plausibly both accurate;
- Owner-dwelling values (home prices) when compared to the Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs) set by the Government of Alberta are incredibly low;
- The housing diversity in Conklin was severely under-reported in the 2016 National Census when compared to the 2015 RMWB Census.

Looking at the primary data collected in the community of Conklin, the ARDN observed the following:

- 92 people have been identified as living in inadequate or unstable housing situations.
- More than 35% of these people are between the ages of 0 to 20.
- 50% of respondents reported an annual income of between \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- 40 out of 54 survey respondents are unemployed.
- 42 out of 54 respondents said their current home is in need of major repair with many reporting mold, plumbing, heating, and other serious issues with their current housing.
- Based on the number of dependents in each household, the ARDN estimates that it would require an additional 40 to 45 units, 15 to 20 of which could house families of 3 or more, to safely house every resident counted in the survey.

## **Methodology**

This report consists of a review of available secondary data for Conklin, as well as a review of primary data collected in Conklin between August 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 26<sup>th</sup> 2018. While the secondary data review is a straightforward reporting of the available summary statistics published by Census Canada and the RMWB, it is important that the reader fully understands the process used in both collecting and interpreting the primary data in Section 5.

## **Data Collection and Summary**

Five volunteers of the Conklin Housing Committee collected the data using electronic tablets, by visiting households door to door. Household respondents were asked if they would be willing to take the survey, and then if they personally found their housing situation to be unstable or inadequate. The data was then physically stored on the tablet until an internet connection could be made, at which point the data was uploaded to a server.

It was not the goal for volunteers to identify respondents who felt their housing was only unstable, the goal of this study was to primarily characterize the vulnerable population of Conklin. It is not the intention of this report to:

- Make any stake or claim about government policies, corporate actions, or externalities in the area of Conklin, nor;
- Create any inferences about the general population of Conklin.

The data summarized in Section 5 is count data. While there is likely a small error in responses due to incorrect input or user error, there are no significance values, p-values, tests, or inferential statistics of any sort within this report.

## **Acknowledgements and Limitations**

Since this survey took place during the summer, it is possible that there were many residents away on vacation. Furthermore, volunteers were not explicitly instructed to re-visit homes if no residents were present at the time of their visit.

The Alberta Rural Development Network would like to thank the Conklin Resource Development Advisory Committee (CRDAC), The Conklin Housing, Land and Homelessness Committee, as well as Willow Springs Strategic Solutions Inc. for their help in completing this report. The ARDN would also like to thank the volunteers for their help in collecting data, as well as the residents who were kind enough to complete our surveys.

The information presented in this report is not to be re-transmitted without the written consent of either CRDAC or the ARDN.

## Section 1: Conklin Profile

Conklin is an unincorporated hamlet in Northern Alberta, Canada, within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), located on Highway 881, between Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche. The hamlet is named after John Conklin, a railroad employee<sup>1,2</sup>.

### Economy Overview

Much of the employment in Conklin is in the oil and gas or service related industries. Within the hamlet, the only stores or services available are a gas station, post office, general store, café, and school (serving K-9). There is employment for public administration, teachers, and hospitality workers, but otherwise, residents are required to commute for work<sup>3</sup>.

### Oil and Gas

Conklin is adjacent to Christina Lake, which since the year 2000 has been a successful oil sands project operated by Cenovus Energy. As per the 2017 Cenovus Annual Report, Christina Lake produced 167,727 barrels of crude oil per day. Moreover, the site employs over 2,300 workers. While it is uncertain as to how many residents of Conklin work at this site, this potentially serves as a large employment hub for the hamlet<sup>4</sup>.

### Economic Indicators

It is difficult to assess the current or historical unemployment in Conklin due to large discrepancies in different census data, as well as a very low sample size. For instance, in 2015, the RMWB Census estimated Conklin's population at well over 300, but Statistics Canada lists the population at 185 as of 2016. Thus the only information we have regarding unemployment is from the 2016 Household Census from Statistics Canada.

Indicator	Count (Conklin)	Rate (Conklin)	Count (WB)	Rate (WB)
<i>Labour Force</i>	70	45.2%	45,390	77.6%
<i>Employed</i>	45	29%	42,130	72%
<i>Unemployed</i>	20	28.6%	3,225	7.2%

There was a total of 155 residents surveyed, and from the 155, 70 responded that they were either working or looking for work, which is only 45.2% of those surveyed. 45 are employed, and 20 are unemployed, which gives an unemployment rate of 28.6%<sup>5</sup>. By comparison, in Wood Buffalo, the participation rate (the portion of residents in the labour force) is 77.6%, the employment rate is 72%, and the unemployment rate is 7.2%.

1. Canadian Board on Geographical Names. (1928). Place-names of Alberta.
2. Government of Alberta. (n.d.). Alberta Regional Dashboard. Retrieved from <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/>
3. Fort McMurray Tourism. (n.d.). *Conklin*. Retrieved from Fort McMurray Tourism: <http://www.fortmcmurraytourism.com/resident-info/communities/conklin>
4. Cenovus Energy. (n.d.). *Christina Lake*. Retrieved from Cenovus: <https://www.cenovus.com/operations/oilsands/christina-lake.html>
5. The employed and unemployed do not add up to the total labour force (i.e. 45 + 20 ≠ 70). This is due to rounding by Statistics Canada.

## Section 2: Population Demographics [RMWB Census 2015]

When describing Conklin demographics, the issue with unreliable census data once again surfaces. As previously shown, the 2016 National Census showed less than 200 residents in Conklin. The 2015 RMWB Census showed over 300 residents, while the 2011 National Census showed a population estimate of 211, and the 2012 RMWB Census estimate was 318. If these were all correct, the population would have grown from 211 in 2011 to 318 in 2012, to 376 in 2015, and then abruptly decreased to 185 in 2016. This rollercoaster in population estimates is in all likelihood impossible.

### RMWB Census 2015 Population and Age Demographics

The total population in 2015 as per the RMWB Census was 376, including the shadow population of 43. This an 18.24% increase from the 2012 estimate of 318, or roughly a 6% increase year to year between 2012 and 2015.

Year	Total	Perm.	Shadow
2012	318	N/A	N/A
2015	376	333	43
Increase	18.24%		

The following graph depicts the age breakdown between genders observed in Conklin, taken from the 2015 RMWB Census:

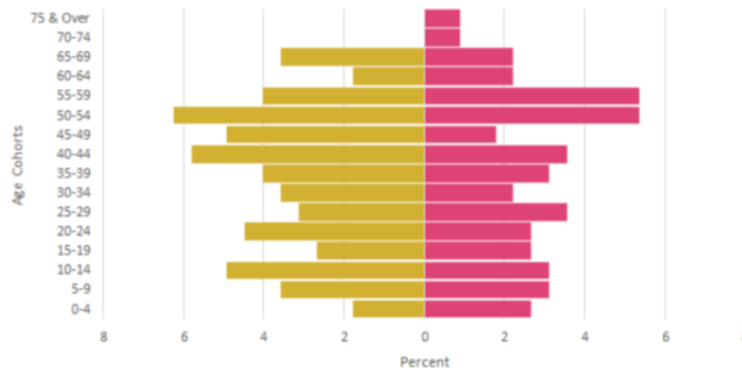


Figure 1, Source: RMWB Census 2015. Yellow represents males, bright red is females.

Most of the population is in the older (40+) age cohorts. The age distribution is similar between genders, but the population is male-dominated. Table 3 shows how the population of Conklin gradually skewed towards being male dominated between 2000 and 2015.

Year	Male	Female
2000	49.50%	50.50%
2002	N/A	N/A
2004	51.90%	48.10%
2005	55.70%	44.30%
2006	56.90%	43.10%
2008	55.10%	44.90%
2010	51.00%	49.00%
2012	58.80%	41.20%
2015	54.50%	45.50%

6. Shadow population refers to people who live in work camps or work in commercial and industrial sectors of the region for more than 30 days.

## Section 3: Housing Demographics [RMWB Census 2015]

The 2016 National Census listed nearly 0 diversity in the housing supply in Conklin (5 semi-detached dwellings and 65 single-detached dwellings), versus the 2015 RMWB Census which shows a complete picture of the housing in Conklin.

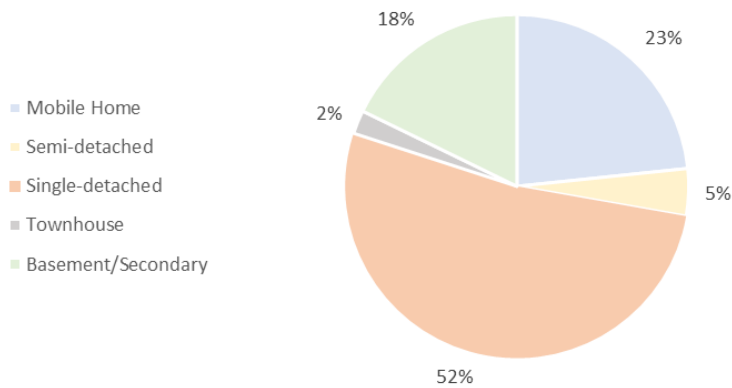
The total dwelling count as of 2015 was 122, a drop of 17 dwellings from 2012 (139 estimated).

**Table 4: Dwellings,  
Conklin, 2012-2015  
[RMWB]**

Year	Dwellings
2012	139
2015	122
<b>Change</b>	<b>-12.2%</b>

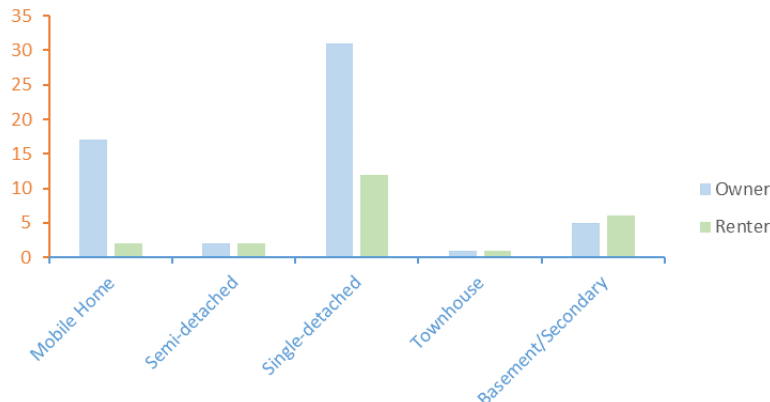
Interestingly enough, despite an increase in the total population of Conklin between 2012 and 2015, the number of dwellings decreased by 12.2%. Figure 2 shows the housing diversity in Conklin.

Figure 2: Dwelling Diversity, Conklin, 2015 [RMWB]



Much of the housing in Conklin is in the form of single-detached homes. Noticeable is the large number of basement and secondary suites, which makes up nearly a quarter of all housing in Conklin. The dwelling diversity can be further broken down by renter and owner, as in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Renter vs. Owner, Conklin, 2015 [RMWB]



There is an almost even number of residents in semi-detached homes, townhouses, and secondary suites that are renting and owning. The mobile home and single-detach housing supply are dominated by owners. However, in conversations with RMWB authorities and the Conklin Housing Committee, it becomes clear that “renter” and “owner” are complicated terms in Conklin due to land ownership. While an individual may own their home, the land it sits on could be owned by the government and leased to the resident. Therefore, the term renter and owner can cause confusion.

## Section 4: Statistics Canada Profile

This section turns to the available National Census Data to help support the RMWB data and primary data review. Unfortunately, given Conklin’s small population and low response rate to the National Census, many results are subject to severe under-estimation or even misrepresentation.

### 4.1 Population, Age, and Household Types

As of 2016, the recorded population in Conklin (as per the census) was 185, a decrease of 26 from 2011.

Figure 4: Age Distribution, 2011 [StatsCan]

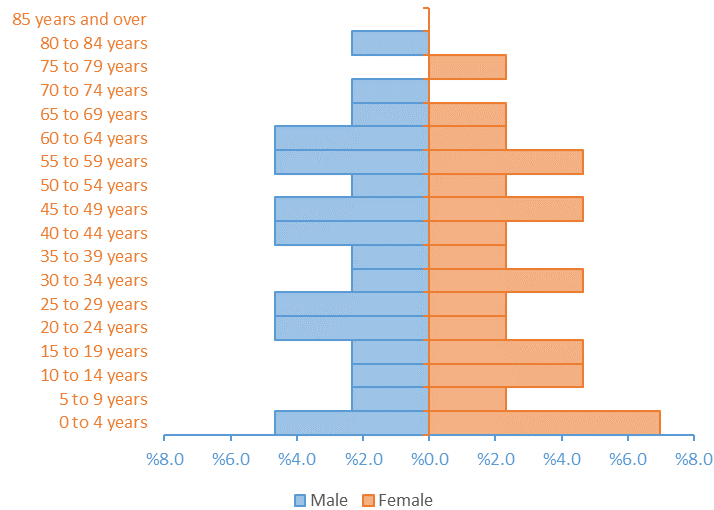
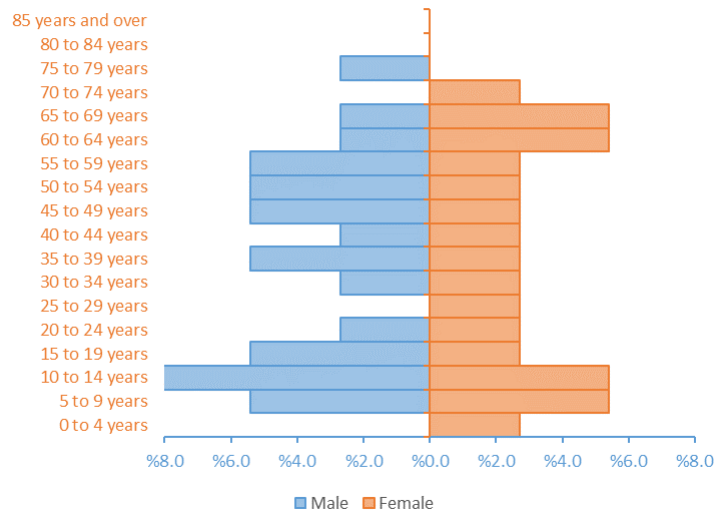


Figure 5: Age Distribution, 2016 [StatsCan]





Compared to the age pyramid published in the 2015 RMWB Census for Conklin, the Statistics Canada data reported very little variation in the age profile of Conklin, reporting that no males between 25 to 29 or 0 to 4 lived in Conklin as of 2016. The only takeaway here is that the census data suggests that Conklin is aging slightly, with the median age shifting from 33.7 in 2011 to 36.3 in 2016. Table 5 summarizes the household type changes between 2011 and 2016.

**Table 5: Household Types [StatsCan]**

Type	2011	2016	Change
<i>Couple w/o children</i>	5	10	100%
<i>Couple w/ children</i>	10	5	-50%
<i>Lone-parent-family</i>	20	35	75%
<i>Non-census family</i>	15	25	67%

StatsCan data from 2016 shows fewer couples with children than in 2011, with all other household types increasing between 2011 and 2016. Since couples with children decreased, and lone-parent-families increased, a shift in youth demographics is unlikely, though based on the age pyramids, it seems that the lone-parent families have children or dependents concentrated in the 5 to 19 years of age categories.

## 4.2 Education and Workforce Classification

Figure 6: Education, 2016 [StatsCan]

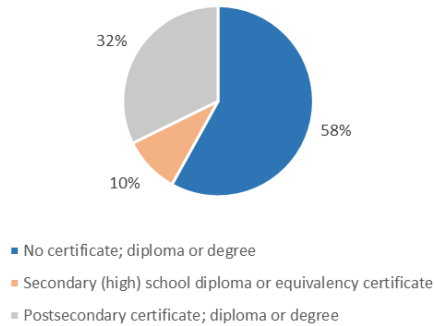


Figure 7: Post-secondary Education, 2016 [StatsCan]

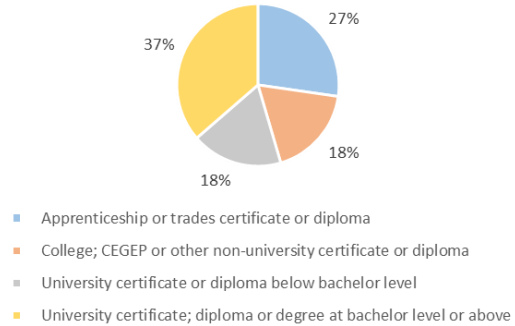


Figure 6 and Figure 7 summarize education levels in Conklin. In Figure 6, the data shows that over 55% of Conklin residents do not possess a high-school diploma, 10% have a high-school diploma, and 32% have the post-secondary training of some kind. Figure 7 breaks down the post-secondary training and shows that over a third of those with post-secondary education have bachelor degree.

Recall the following employment statistics for Conklin (as previously shown in Section 1).

**Table 6: Employment Indicators, 2016 [StatsCan]**

Measure	Conklin	RMWB
<i>In the labour force</i>	70	45,390
<i>Employed</i>	45	42,130
<i>Unemployed</i>	20	3,255
<i>Not in labour force</i>	85	13,120
<i>Participation rate</i>	45.2%	77.6%
<i>Employment rate</i>	29%	72%
<i>Unemployment rate</i>	28.6%	7.2%

These employment indicators show that a significant proportion of Conklin residents are not in the labour force. Comparing Conklin to the RMWB shows a 30 percent discrepancy between the participation rate in Conklin and the entire RMWB. However, those in the labour force face a 28.6% unemployment rate. Nearly one in three residents of Conklin who are looking for work are unable to find any employment (based on StatsCan data). For those who are in the labour force, occupation classifications are summarized below in Table 7, including those employed and unemployed.

**Table 7: Employment Classification, 2016 [StatsCan]**

<i>Occupation - not applicable</i>	10
<i>Management occupations</i>	0
<i>Business; finance and administration occupations</i>	10
<i>Natural and applied sciences and related occupations</i>	0
<i>Health Occupations</i>	0
<i>Occupations in education; law and social; community and government services</i>	15
<i>Occupations in art; culture; recreation and sport</i>	0
<i>Sales and service occupations</i>	10
<i>Trades; transport and equipment operators and related occupations</i>	0
<i>Natural resources; agriculture and related production occupations</i>	10
<i>Occupations in manufacturing and utilities</i>	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

There is an even divide in employment in Table 7 between natural resources, sales, public corporation, business, and other non-classified employment. Despite a major oil sands operation in the neighboring Christina Lake, StatsCan data shows that roughly only 18% of Conklin residents work in Oil & Gas (or natural resources). Furthermore, this classification table states that no residents are employed in the trades, an unlikely possibility in any community.

### **4.3 Housing Data**

From the 75 households surveyed in the National Census, 65 were owners, and 10 were renters, giving roughly a 90:10 split of owners to renters in Conklin. Table 8 summarizes the available Census data for house prices in Conklin.

**Table 8: Owner and Renter Overview, 2016 [StatsCan]**

<b>Housing Indicator</b>	<b>Value</b>
<i>% of owner households with a mortgage</i>	30.8%
<i>Median shelter costs for owned dwellings (\$)</i>	\$476
<i>Average shelter costs for owned dwellings (\$)</i>	\$780
<i>Median value of dwellings (\$)</i>	\$250,426
<i>Average value of dwellings (\$)</i>	\$289,874

The median shelter costs and average shelter costs are vastly different, which is not surprising given there are only 65 owner properties, creating a high variance in reported shelter costs for housing. However, these numbers are vastly different from the RMWB, as reported in Table 9.

**Table 9: Owner Overview w/ RMWB, 2016 [StatsCan]**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Conklin</b>	<b>RMWB</b>
<i>% of owner households with a mortgage</i>	30.8%	85.6%
<i>Median shelter costs for owned dwellings (\$)</i>	\$476	\$2,794
<i>Average shelter costs for owned dwellings (\$)</i>	\$780	\$2,696
<i>Median value of dwellings (\$)</i>	\$250,426	\$601,859
<i>Average value of dwellings (\$)</i>	\$289,874	\$619,344

Based on these estimates, and despite a very small sample size from the Conklin National Census, it is reasonable to assess that the housing market in Conklin is not similar to the overall RMWB market. While this may seem obvious from the data, the reported Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs) for 2016, which are re-adjusted every year by the Government of Alberta, are much higher.

**Table 10: CNITs, 2016 [GoA]**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Threshold(\$)</b>
<i>Bachelor</i>	N/A
<i>One-bedroom</i>	\$83,000
<i>Two-bedroom</i>	\$88,000
<i>Three-bedroom</i>	\$95,000
<i>Four-bedroom</i>	\$98,500
<i>Five+</i>	\$104,000

These CNITs show that in 2016, residents who were earning over \$7,333 a month were ineligible for subsidy payments, yet this number (the CNITs threshold) is over ten times greater than the median owner shelter cost reported in the National 2016 Census. Someone earning just below the “Two-bedroom” CNITs cut-off could effectively buy a house in Conklin, an indicator that these individuals are not in fact in need of subsidies. Thus, there are only two possible explanations:

1. The National Census 2016 data is very inaccurate, and given the data the GoA has, housing prices and the general cost of living in Conklin are much higher than reported in the Census data.
2. The GoA based their CNITs estimates on data from the RMWB, and not Conklin, and the Census data is relatively accurate.

However, this casts a certain degree of doubt on the reliability of the Census 2016 data<sup>7</sup>. If the data is inaccurate to the degree of under-reporting dwelling values by multiple factors, could figures regarding employment, age demographics, and family types be trusted? Unfortunately, data for this small rural community is both difficult to attain and difficult to compare, as shown by the comparison of available data for Conklin.

7. Community members have mentioned that the 2016 Census was an estimate due to wildfires, but Statistics Canada reports 10% NPR (non-response rate) for Conklin indicating that the census took place.

## Section 5: Primary Data Review

The review of primary data covers multiple metrics and questions, but of particular interest (and included in this report) is:

- Dwelling types;
- Adequacy and stability;
- Employed and unemployed;
- Income;
- Housing needs;
- Surveyor characteristics;
- Age distribution.

After removing incomplete survey responses, the dataset had 54 samples remaining (n = 54). Some respondents chose to skip certain questions, so the total responses for particular questions may be less than 54.

### 5.1 Dwelling Type, Adequacy, and Instability

Out of 54 respondents, 29 were living in a house, 21 were living in a trailer, and four were outright homeless. Table 11 breakdown adequacy and instability by type of dwelling. Many respondents gave multiple answers to the dwelling type (such as log cabin, log housing, or trailer and camper), which can be summarized as either house, mobile home (or trailer), and explicitly homeless (couch-surfing). However, houses can be make-shift homes, and could be poorly built. Mobile homes could be equally in poor condition. The pictures (next page) provide a clearer idea of what these accommodations look like. Moreover, responses for inadequate housing (shown later in Table 12 and Figure 9) describe for the most part the condition of these dwellings.

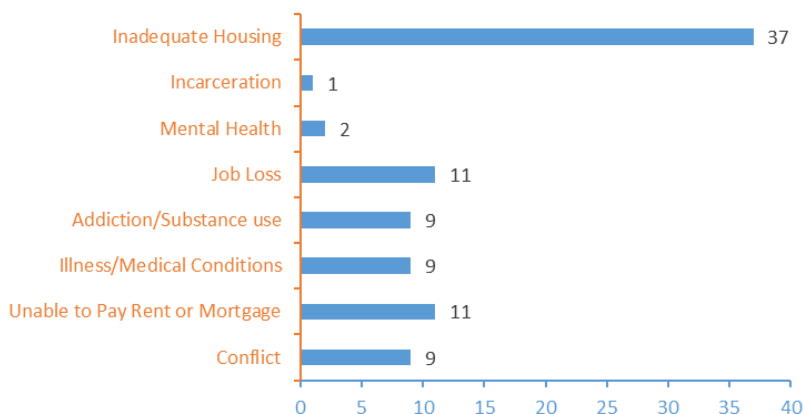
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**Table 11: Dwelling by Stability & Adequacy (n=54)**

Type	Unstable	Inadequate	Both
House	15	23	10
Trailer	9	20	8
Homeless	3	3	2

Note that this does not discern whether residents are renters or owners. From these above stats, 46 out of 54 respondents (85.19%) said their residence was inadequate. Figure 8 shows all the reasons why respondents were in their current unstable housing situation.

Figure 8: Reasons for Housing Instability (n=54)







Source: *How Much Longer: A Preliminary Assessment of Homelessness in Conklin*



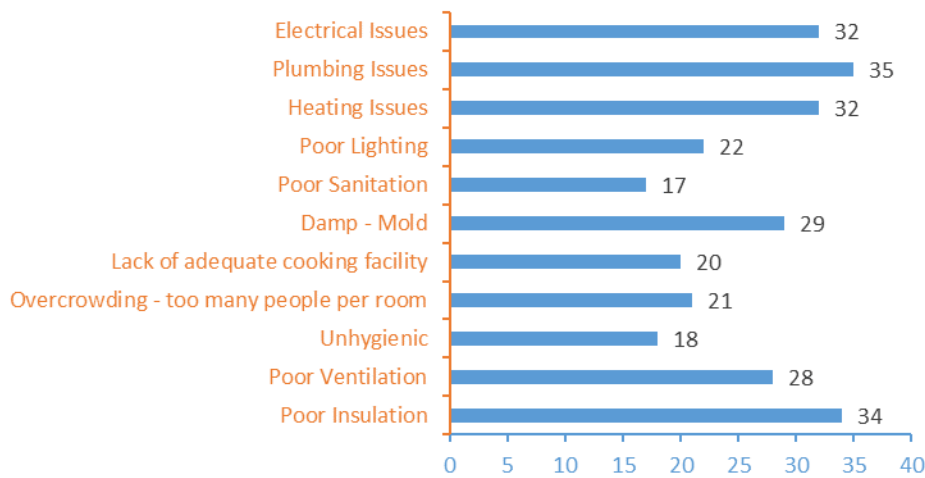
To further breakdown housing inadequacy, respondents also rated the condition of their dwelling between poor, neutral, and suitable, where poor indicated that the dwelling required major repairs. Furthermore, respondents detailed current issues with the dwelling that rendered it inadequate. Table 12 summarizes the condition of the dwelling.

**Table 12: Condition of Dwelling (n=54)**

Condition	Count	%
Poor; needs major repairs	42	77.8%
Neutral	11	20.4%
Suitable	1	1.9%

As the table shows, over 75% (42) of surveyed households consider their dwelling to be in poor condition. Only one of the 54 respondents said their dwelling is suitable. The remainder were neutral. Figure 9 shows issues respondents have with their housing. Issues include heating, plumbing, dampness or mold among others.

Figure 9: Inadequate Housing Issues (n=47)



The most frequently noted issues were plumbing, heating, electrical, and insulation. Many respondents noted that their housing was currently overcrowded. More than 50% of households surveyed said their homes contain mold. Other responses from respondents included leaky roof (1) and needing a fence for safety issues (1).

## 5.2 Income and Employment

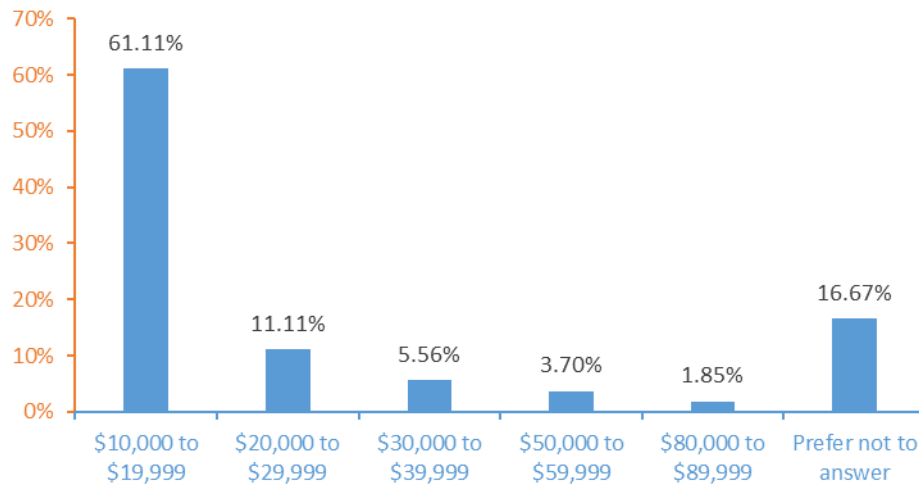
Out of the 54 respondents, 14 are employed, and 40 are unemployed. From the 40 unemployed, 34 listed job loss as a current reason for their unstable housing.

**Table 13: Job Loss by Industry (n=34)**

Industry	Total	%
Total	34	
Oil and Gas	24	70.59%
Retail/Hospitality	2	5.88%
Education	1	2.94%
Forestry	2	5.88%
Prefer not to say	5	14.71%

Twelve respondents listed physical disability as a reason for their current housing instability. Each of those respondents also listed job loss as a reason for their housing instability. It is uncertain whether ‘physical disability’ is a prominent reason why those residents lost their job, i.e. workers injured on the job. Of those twelve, nine are from Oil and Gas. Furthermore, roughly 70% of those living in unstable housing situations also reported losing a job in the Oil and Gas industry. Combining the data from Table 13 with respondents who work in Oil and Gas gives a total of 29 respondents who either worked in Oil and Gas or are currently working in Oil and Gas, which represents more than 50% of the total survey sample. The income distribution for the respondents is listed below in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Income Distribution (n=45)



The vast majority of the respondents are earning between \$10,000 to \$19,999 pre-tax – though at those incomes levels pre-tax and post-tax income are almost the same. Out of the 33 individuals (61.11%) who reported incomes in the bottom rung, 30 are unemployed. Out of those 30 unemployed, 15 are receiving some form of assistance. This data is summarized in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Summary of Unemployment and Assistance (n=45)

Earnings Group	Employed w/ no assistance	Unemployed w/ no assistance	Employed w/ assistance	Unemployed w/ assistance
1	3	15	0	15
2	2	2	1	1
3	2	0	0	1
4	1	0	1	0
5	1	0	0	0

In the above table, ‘Earnings Group’ refers to the income groups as listed in Figure 10, where ‘1’ is \$10,000 to \$19,999, and ‘5’ is \$80,000 to \$89,999.

### 5.3 Housing Types and Amenities Wanted

Respondents listed their preferred type of housing, as well as any amenities, wanted in the community. Figure 11 summarizes the ideal housing types, and Figure 12 summarizes amenities wanted in Conklin per the survey.

Figure 11: Ideal Types of Housing (n=54)

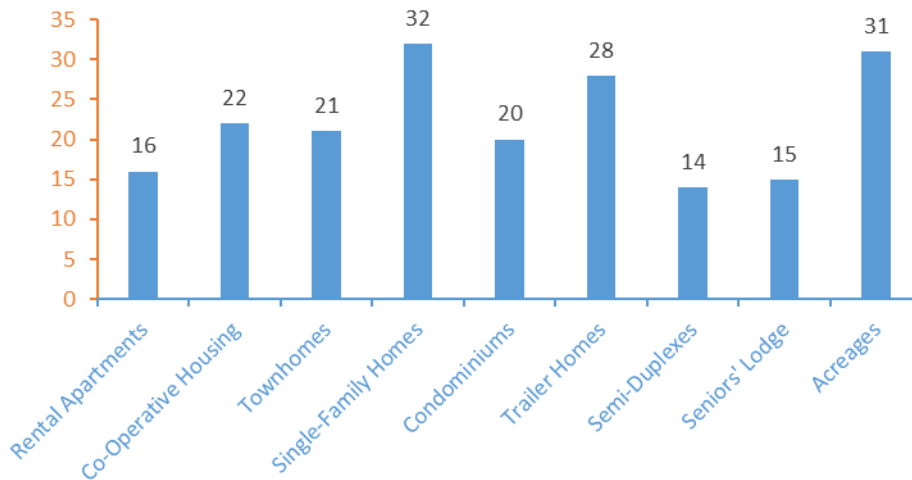
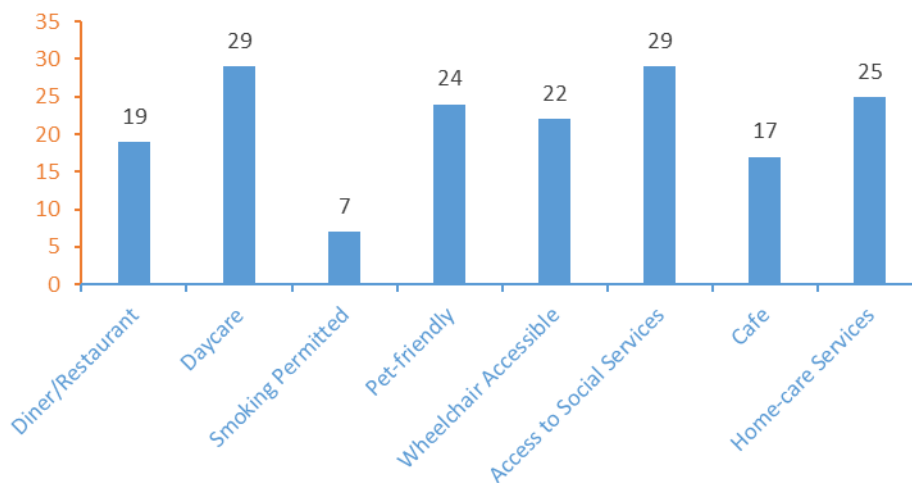


Figure 12: Preferred Ammenities (n=54)



The most wanted type of housing in Conklin among the survey respondents was single-family homes and acreages (respectively the first and second most popular choice). Trailer homes were also popular among respondents, with 28 residents saying they would prefer trailer homes. Amenities such as daycares and social services were the most requested, with home-care services, pet-friendly housing options, and wheelchair accessible amenities rounding out the list.

#### **5.4 Age and Gender Distribution**

Respondents provided their birth year, and those years create approximate resident ages by subtracting their birth year from the current year (2018). This method would at most incorrectly overstate a respondent's age by one year assuming their birthday is in November or December, after the writing of this report.

Many respondents are between the ages of 31 and 40. The actual number of respondents in each category is shown in Table 15. Also note that the total count of people identified is 92. This number represents the total number of respondents plus all dependents within each household. Given population estimates of Conklin being roughly 300, this survey captured the housing situation of between a quarter to a third of the residents of Conklin. Moreover, 35.7% of the people captured in the survey are between the ages of 0 and 20 which represents a significant number of youth in the survey sample.



Figure 13: Age and Gender Distribution (92)

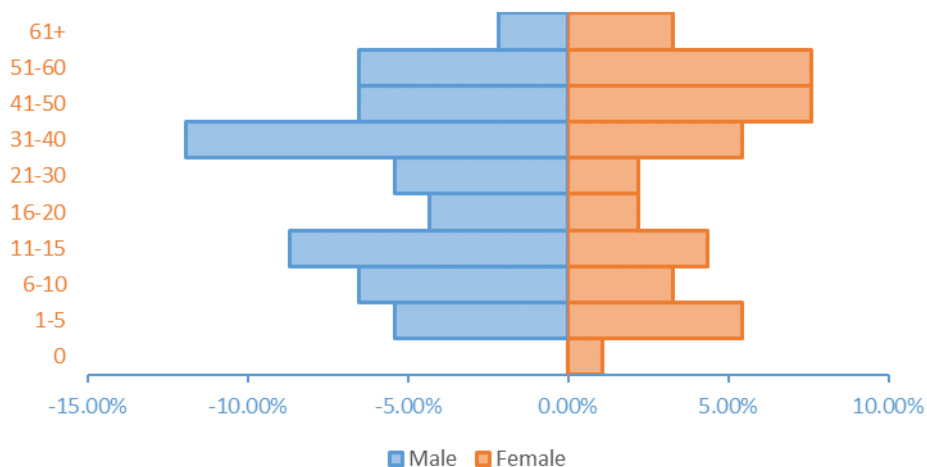


Table 15: Age and Gender (n=92)

Group	Male	Female
0	0	1
1-5	5	5
6-10	6	3
11-15	9	6
16-20	4	2
21-30	5	2
31-40	11	5
41-50	6	7
51-60	6	7
61+	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>

## Section 6: Issues Review

### Conclusions based on primary and secondary data review

The vulnerable population’s income distribution reveals that these residents are not able to afford market housing at any level. Over 60% of the residents who responded to the survey are earning below \$20,000 a year, many of which are unemployed and suffering from physical disabilities. While a significant portion of residents stated that mental illness and personal conflicts were reasons for their unstable housing, 37 out of 54 respondents cited inadequate housing as a causal factor in their housing instability.

Based on these findings and in conjunction with census level data obtained from RMWB and Statistics Canada, the following issues are of the greatest priority in Conklin:

- Inadequate or non-suitable housing for the current residents of Conklin.
- The inability for Conklin residents to seek out and use social services in the event of job loss.
- Vulnerable population is predominantly young (between 1 and 20 years of age).

These issues are summarized and addressed in the following table.

<b>1. Non-suitable housing</b>	
<i>1.1 Increase suitable, or adequate housing for residents of Conklin</i>	The data show there is a serious lack of suitable housing in Conklin, meaning many households are overcrowded. Many households are equally living in dwellings exhibiting multiple issues (electrical, plumbing). In order to house these people, 40-45 units would need to be added to Conklin in the immediate future.
<i>1.2 Increase availability of 3 and 4-bedroom + accommodations in Conklin</i>	Given the large proportion of youth to adults, and observed number of large households, 3 and 4-bedroom units are required to house these households. The data shows that 15-20 new unit additions should be able to accommodate the families in need of housing.
<b>2. Job Loss</b>	
<i>2.1 Match unemployed residents of Conklin to essential services</i>	Given that most vulnerable residents are unemployed, they should match with relevant services.
<i>2.2 Increase education for services available to residents of Conklin and the RMWB</i>	Where services are unable to reach residents, education for resources provided to RMWB residents should be provided to residents of Conklin.
<b>3. Young Vulnerable Population and Families</b>	
<i>3.1 Ensure families have services required to reduce conflict in a vulnerable population</i>	Over 35% of the sample respondent population is between the ages of 1 and 20; if there are prominent conflicts and issues within these households, these youth will be severely impacted.

## **Section 7: Review of How Much Longer: A Preliminary Assessment of Homelessness in Conklin**

How Much Longer: A Preliminary Assessment of Homelessness (Fortna 2018) in Conklin gives an extensive qualitative account of the current housing situation in Conklin using focus groups and with careful attention to historical context. The first portion of the report, “Conklin Homelessness Understood within Historic and Contemporary Context”, explains housing in Conklin with respect to its history and with special attention to indigenous homelessness. This portion gives a very in-depth explanation of the history and socio-economic attributes which lead to the current housing situation in. The full report including the aforementioned section is attached in the appendix. The below will briefly discuss the findings of the second section of this report, “The Conklin Homelessness Crisis”. Unless otherwise specified, all page references are with regard to Fortna’s report (2018).

### **How Much Longer: A Preliminary Assessment of Homelessness in Conklin, (Fortna, 2018)**

Peter Fortna (operating under Willow Springs Strategic Solutions) released a report on homelessness in Conklin in February of 2018, offering a more qualitative and descriptive summary of the current housing situation in Conklin.

First, to contextualize the current homelessness crisis in Conklin, the report borrows from Jesse Thistle's "Definition of Indigenous Homelessness In Canada"<sup>8</sup>:

*"natural disasters, large-scale environmental manipulation, and acts of human mischief and destruction, along with bureaucratic red tape, combining to cause Indigenous people to lose their homes because the system is not ready or willing to cope with an immediate demand for housing."*

The community members frequently said corporate and government activity largely contributed to the current housing situation in Conklin. A community member who attended the adult focus groups held by Willow Springs Strategic Solutions claimed that "housing and land is [a] well-worn topic in this community and it has been from some time ago...Like, we had our own housing, they took that away and took it to Fort McMurray" (pp. 25-26). The survey respondent continues to say how when those houses were moved, land was left vacant and was purchased not by residents, but by groups looking to profit (likely due to the proximity to oil sands operations).

Continuing through the report, land (or rather, the lack thereof) becomes a more prominent issue for residents. One respondent said that "...definitely land, and land is the biggest thing," and that "they need Wood Buffalo to give back the land, that they took from this community," (pp. 29). Another attendant said "if you want to come back and get your own place, there's no place to rent," (pp. 29).

Further to the land ownership issues are transformation to the land issues. Conklin is located in a remote portion of Northern Alberta, on highway 881 over 150 kilometers from the nearest major urban centre (Fort McMurray).

*"You can't fill your freezer anymore and it's been hard if you can't work . . . I know a lot of the guys in this area, they're not educated to the point where they can get a decent job. Now, you can't hunt and stuff like that" (pp.30).*

Whereas 10-20 years ago residents were able to hunt and gather, the developments in and around the Conklin area (such as Christina Lake) have caused this lifestyle to become less feasible (pp. 30). The same panel member said, "they're taking a lot of our hunting and trapping areas. I feel like they should compensate us a little bit more. In terms of employment and stuff like that. Business opportunities and that" (pp. 31).

Returning to land ownership, the report discusses how in 2001, the Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation (WBHDC) was created to address moderate and low-income housing shortages in the Wood Buffalo area. The WBHDC provided 6 new housing units as a stop-gap measure in Conklin (pp. 40), with intentions to provide an additional twenty housing units. For "reasons that remain unclear", despite the necessary land being transferred to the WBHDC, these housing units remain non-existent. To further compound these issues, the housing operated by the WBHDC is (anecdotally) in poor condition.

Focus group responses voiced concerns regarding the condition of housing. Recall that the data collected in section 6 showed that many households were living in "inadequate housing". Whereas prior issues such as land ownership are difficult to assess with the available data, these reports of inadequate housing are in line with results from the Conklin Housing survey<sup>9</sup>. The following graphs summarize the inadequacy and dwelling status of the Conklin Housing survey (presented as tables in Section 5).

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8.Thistle, J. (2017). *Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

9. The examples span multiple pages, so the reader is encouraged to view the community member responses on pp. 26 (Fortna, 2018) of the attached report.

Figure 14: Inadequate Housing Issues (n=54)

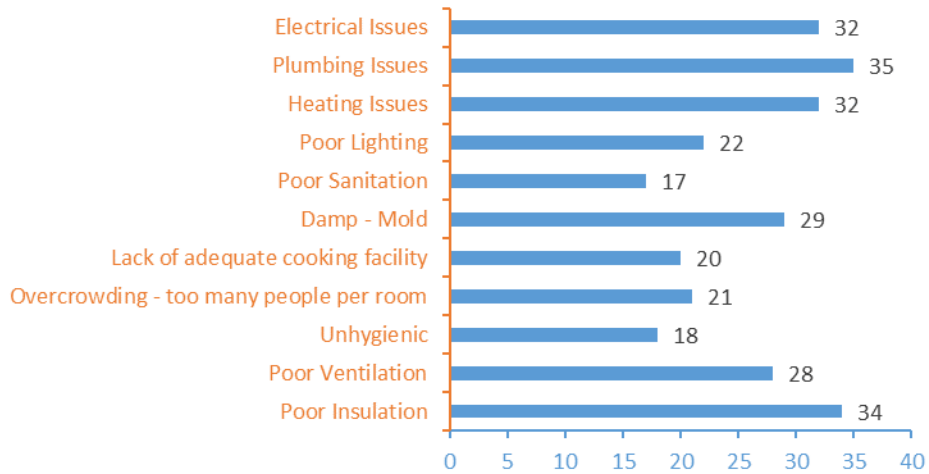
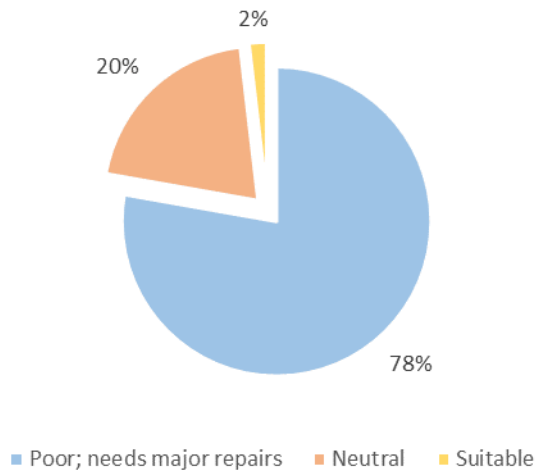


Figure 15: Dwelling Conditions (n=54)



As Figure 14 and Figure 15 show, 78% of the Conklin Housing survey respondents said their housing was in poor condition and required repairs. The most frequently mentioned issue was plumbing, but dampness and mold was reported 29 times, representing over half of the households surveyed. To summarize:

- Several accounts from community members say that land ownership and land transformation is central to the housing situation in Conklin.
- The accounts of inadequate housing by community members in the Homelessness Report is similar to the data collected in the Conklin Housing survey.

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## Conclusion

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The primary data collection of Conklin residents revealed several results regarding the vulnerable population. The primary data showed a mixed demographic of vulnerable residents, many of which are between the ages of 1 and 20. Furthermore, many of these residents were in inadequate and unstable housing situations. The secondary data from Statistics Canada showed that employment could be a major issue in Conklin right now, but that reported owner statistics do not match with the established CNITs in 2016.

When comparing datasets, there were many discrepancies between the National Census data, RMWB data, and the primary data collected. For instance, the National Census data underestimated the population by over 100 compared to the RMWB Census. Furthermore, the Census data showed almost no diversity in housing, whereas the RMWB stated that several types of housing existed in Conklin. Overall, the National Census data provided some insight into the employment setting in Conklin but failed to support any of the findings detailed in the RMWB Census.

Further to that, when again talking about housing diversity, despite over 20 responses in the primary dataset stating that the resident lived in a trailer, Census 2016 only estimated five households in trailers. Again, using the National Census 2016 data to support the primary data findings is very difficult, since with every indicator it is a guess to understand just *how* inaccurate the data collected in the 2016 National Census is.

Regardless, using the available datasets and primary data created some meaningful conclusions, the most important being:

- 92 people have been identified as living in inadequate or unstable housing situations, of which over 35% are between the ages of 0 and 20. 29% (or 32) of the people counted within the survey are between the ages of 0 and 15.
- Based on the number of dependents in each household, the ARDN estimates that it would require an additional 40 to 45 units to house every resident counted in the survey.
- Services (with special attention paid to employment services) should be extended to Conklin based on the current unemployment data.

The survey also showed a large number of households in inadequate housing, with over 85% of households reporting their homes are in need of major repair. As well, 40 respondents (out of 54) reported being unemployed, and 27 of the respondents reported an income of between \$10,000 to \$20,000. The primary data was able to reveal several trends regarding the more vulnerable residents of Conklin, but certainly, more data would be valuable in establishing a full picture of the community of Conklin.

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## Appendix 1: How Much Longer (attached separately)

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