

Connecticut's Homeless Point in Time Count Brief 2011

Connecticut experiences significant increases in family, chronic and unsheltered homelessness



A one-night snapshot of homelessness¹ taken during the snowiest January ever recorded in Connecticut revealed an alarming rise in the number of people experiencing long bouts of homelessness. Chronic homelessness increased by more than one quarter (26%) among all adults without children. Among homeless adults sleeping in places unintended for habitation in particular, Connecticut saw a ninety-two percent (92%) increase in chronicity since 2009².

In addition, a startling number of individuals and families were found on the streets, in the woods, in abandoned buildings and other places not intended for human habitation. The six hundred ninety-five (695) unsheltered people counted that night represent a thirty-seven percent (37%) increase over the previous unsheltered count conducted in 2009 (n= 504). However, despite the marked increase in unsheltered homelessness, the number of veterans found sleeping outdoors across the state dipped a notable fifteen percent (15%) between 2009 and 2011.

The marked increase in unsheltered homelessness coincided with an eight percent (8%) growth in total homelessness between 2009 and 2011, with counts totaling 4,154 versus 4,451 respectively. Because Connecticut's emergency shelters have been filled to capacity each month for the past two and a half years³, any growth in total homelessness will necessarily push some who need beds out of doors.

Point in Time Counts since 2008 have tallied a high, albeit steady, number of families in emergency shelter. However, the number of families suddenly rose fifteen percent (15%) between 2010 and 2011, with a concurrent sixteen percent (16%) jump in the number of children in Connecticut's emergency shelters.



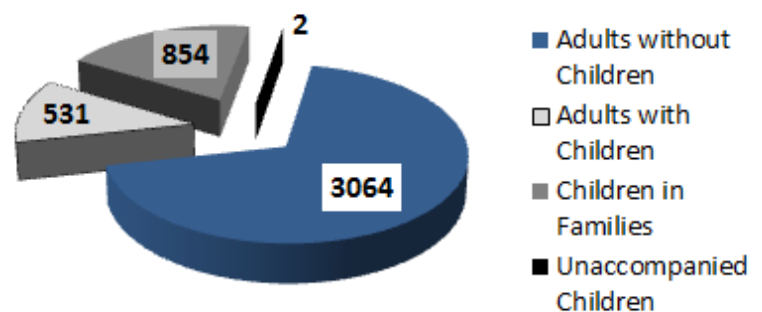
Family homelessness is usually part of a longer period of housing instability, frequent moves, doubling up with relatives or friends, and economic strife.

Of four hundred and eighty-two total homeless families, seventeen were living on the streets or in other places unintended for sleeping. Included in those families were five hundred and thirty one parents and eight hundred and fifty-four children⁴.

An alarming thirty-seven percent (37%) of Connecticut's parents counted in shelter and on the streets said that domestic violence directly contributed to their homelessness.

Families comprise one third of total people counted each year, and adults without children constitute the other two thirds of Connecticut's homeless population. This breakdown stays virtually unchanged year to year, as it reflects the capacity to serve both groups within the state's overflowing shelter system.

Homeless Persons in Connecticut, Sheltered & Unsheltered



Source: CT PIT 2011

Total Homeless: 4451



Around Connecticut: Data-Driven Solutions

Bridgeport

Supportive Housing Works, in partnership with its member agencies in the Greater Bridgeport area, has worked creatively with the Bridgeport Housing Authority toward the goal of housing approximately 200 high-need families by the end of 2012. By January 2011, seventeen families had entered permanent housing with supportive services, and an additional twenty-one families had been assigned units and were waiting for final approval to move into scattered-site housing. Since then, a total of 49 families have been placed in housing directly from area homeless shelters or other high risk situations through the Bridgeport Families First Program. The Bridgeport Continuum of Care saw the sharpest decrease in family homelessness in the state with twenty percent (20%) fewer families counted in 2011 from 2010.

New Haven

The Frequent Users Systems Engagement (FUSE) program began in 2010 with pilot programs located in New London, Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven and Bridgeport. FUSE provides permanent housing subsidies and intensive supportive services to individuals who have experienced numerous incarceration and shelter stays over a three-year period. New Haven's FUSE program, staffed by Columbus House, has housed twenty individuals. While *CT PIT 2011* revealed a 26% increase statewide in chronic homelessness among adults without children, New Haven achieved a 27% decrease.

Hartford

Casa De Francisco, a program run by Immaculate Conception Housing and Shelter Corporation, opened its doors in October 2010, becoming home to twenty-five formerly chronically homeless individuals and another twenty-five extremely low-income men and women. This Housing-First program serves those in Hartford who are often considered the most difficult to house, many of whom have lived in shelter for many years. Hartford's rate of chronic homelessness increased nineteen percent (19%) in 2011, seven percent (7%) lower than the statewide average.

^{1,4} *CT PIT 2011* was conducted by communities across Connecticut during the last week of January. The annual count represents a snapshot of persons who were staying in publicly-funded emergency shelters or transitional housing programs at the time of the Count. Point in Time Counts are useful for comparing trends over time, but their numbers represent only a portion of the total number of people experiencing homelessness over the course of the year. Point in Time Counts are mandated by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development every other year.

² Unsheltered counts are conducted during odd-numbered years only, in accordance with the mandated counting schedule set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Sheltered counts are conducted annually. Unsheltered data from the most recent count during which unsheltered numbers were collected are used for comparison during years in which the unsheltered count is not conducted.

³ *Connecticut Department of Social Services Emergency Shelter Utilization reports*, prepared by the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness.