



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Collaborative solutions for a promising future

WASHTENAW COUNTY
Point in Time Count Data Report
2013

WASHTENAW
HOUSING ALLIANCE

A Home for Everyone:
Building a Way



On Tuesday, January 29, 2013, Washtenaw County joined more than 3,000 cities and counties across the country to participate in a national effort to measure the scale of homelessness in our community. Called the Point in Time Count, or PIT Count, this snapshot reveals the number of people experiencing homelessness in our shelters and on our streets. These one-day counts also provide local planners with data they need to understand the number and characteristics of persons who are homeless so they, in turn, can develop a thoughtful response. This effort allows communities to find out not just *how many* people are homeless, but *who* is homeless and more importantly, *why* they are homeless. Being able to answer these important questions is critical if we ever hope to end homelessness.



The **Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA)** and **Washtenaw County Government** once again coordinated the Point-in-Time count to ensure we know as much as possible about the level of homelessness in our community. Because the PIT Count only occurs once a year, human service providers and government departments partnered together to make a concerted effort to perform a census of those who are experiencing homelessness. The Point in Time count gives us the opportunity to look at what is happening at a global level and compare it to our efforts.

The PIT Count provides vital insight to our system of care, but it is important to note that this report captures only a single day of those experiencing homelessness on the streets and in shelters. It does not account for the thousands of households experiencing homelessness and needing services throughout Washtenaw County each year. Over the course of a year, we know that the true number of homeless children, families, and individuals is **3,000 to 4,000**. We will release a year-long report that details this annualized data in the coming months.

For questions related to homelessness data, please contact the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development by phone at (734) 622-9025. For more information about homelessness in Washtenaw County, please go to the Washtenaw Housing Alliance website at: www.whalliance.org.

Together, we *can* end homelessness,

Julie A Steiner
Washtenaw Housing Alliance Executive Director

Verna McDaniel
Washtenaw County Administrator

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The PIT Count data provides a snapshot of the face of homelessness in Washtenaw County. During the count, individuals and families experiencing homelessness were approached and asked to complete an anonymous demographic survey. Completion of the survey was voluntary. People conducting the surveys were trained about the most sensitive and appropriate ways to collect the information. The following is a brief highlight of the data collected.

The data reveals a total of **510** persons experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County on the day of the 2013 PIT Count (see Figure 1). While this total value is consistent with numbers of past PIT Counts, this is an increase of 123 unsheltered persons compared to the 2011 count. In the 2011 PIT Count, 469 people were experiencing homelessness, either in a shelter or unsheltered, on the streets; while in 2013, 510 people were experiencing homelessness.

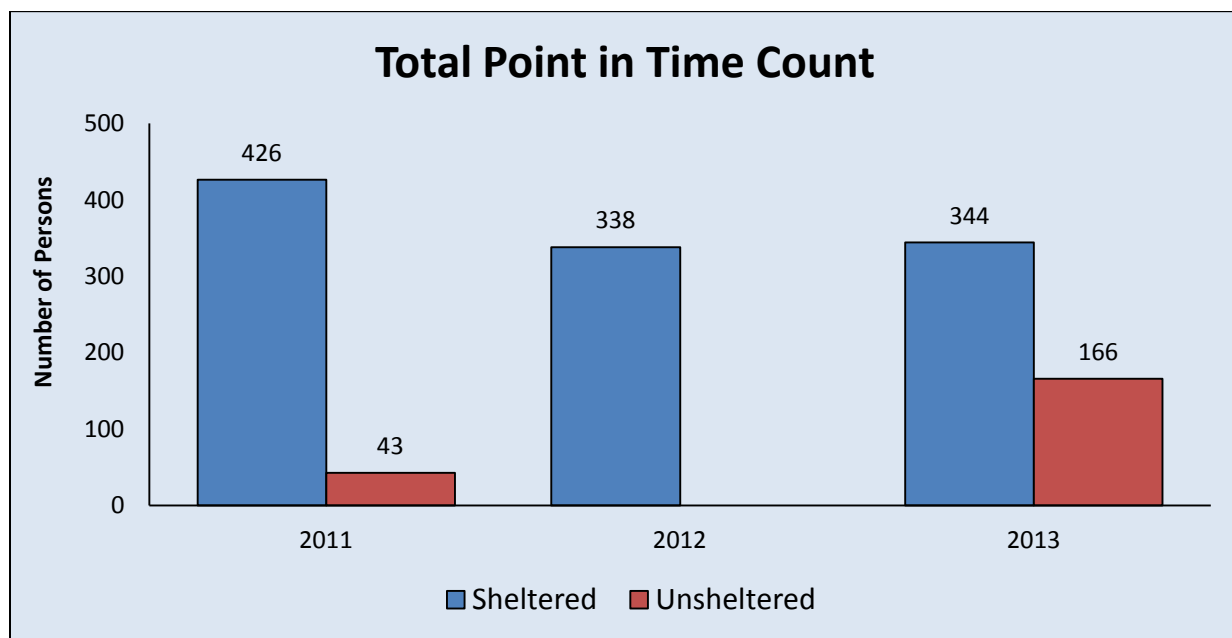


Figure 1. Total Point in Time Count (note: no data collected for unsheltered homeless in 2012)

It is difficult to explain the increase in unsheltered people experiencing homelessness with complete confidence. One factor could be that a more all-encompassing methodology was utilized this year than in past years. Multiple teams of interviewers were deployed to more locations than in the past and some locations were surveyed multiple times. Another factor could be a significant difference in the weather. The 2011 PIT Count occurred when the average temperature for the day was 24 degrees, causing most individuals and households to seek out locations off the streets (perhaps doubling up with others with housing). On the day of the 2013 PIT, however, the average temperature was 46 degrees, a difference of 22 degrees. This warm day may have influenced the higher unsheltered count.

Currently, the largest demographic of individuals experiencing homelessness is adult males, with over two-thirds of the homeless population being male and over four-fifths being over the age of 18 (see Figures 2 and 3). Over 79 percent of those experiencing homelessness are White or African-American (see Appendix).

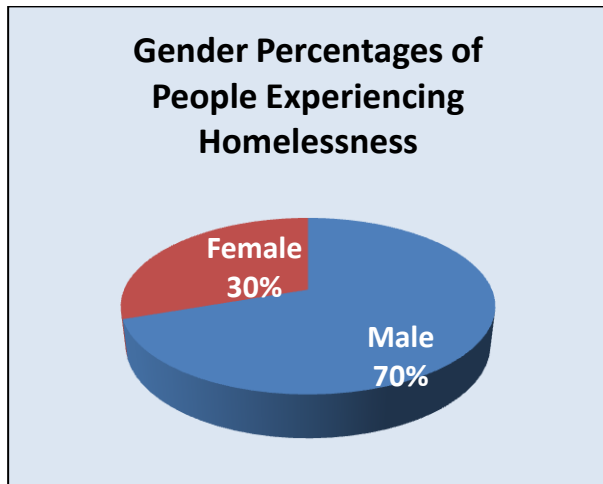


Figure 2. 2013 PIT Percentages for Gender

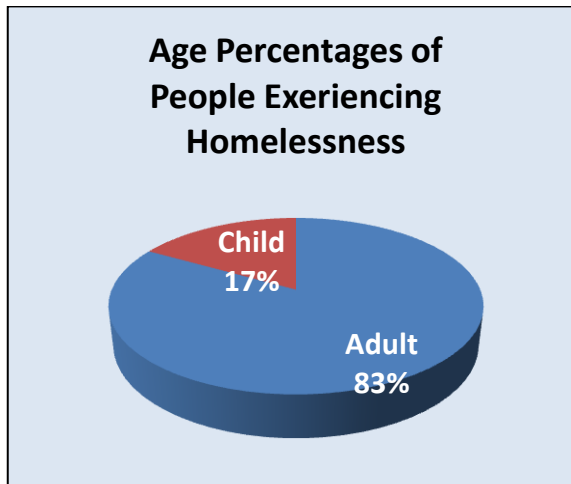


Figure 3. 2013 PIT Percentages for Age

There were a total of **48** households with children experiencing homelessness on the day of the PIT Count. **152** adults and children comprised these 48 households, representing 30 percent of the total 2013 PIT Count of 510. Compared to 2011, both the total number and percentage of persons in households experiencing homelessness decreased from 165 to 151, representing 35% of 2011 PIT and 30% of 2013 PIT, respectively (see Figures 4 and 5).

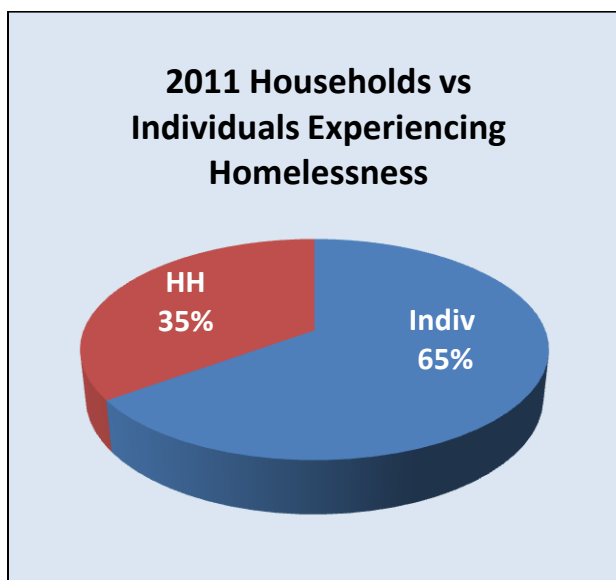


Figure 4. 2011 PIT Percentages for Households (HH) vs. Individuals (Indiv)

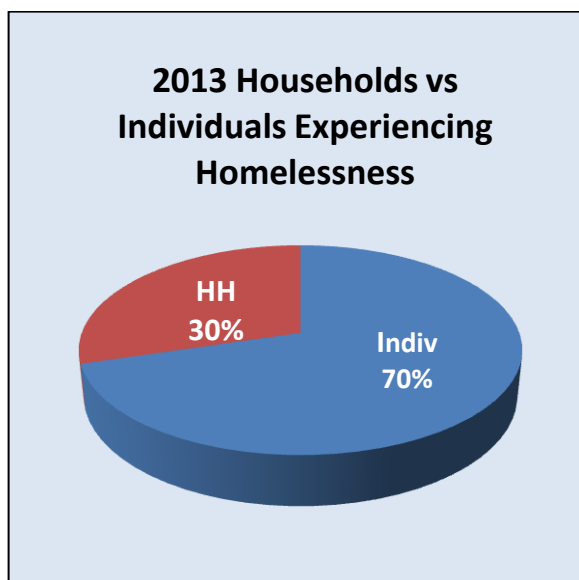


Figure 5. 2013 PIT Percentages for Households (HH) vs. Individuals (Indiv)

A note on special populations:

People in sub-categories also experienced an increased total from 2011 to 2013, with people considered chronically homeless¹ and people suffering from serious mental illness showing the largest increases of 59 and 55 people, respectively (see Appendix). The number of people considered chronically homeless has nearly doubled as a percentage of the total of people experiencing homelessness from 2011 to 2013 (12 to 23 percent), while people with serious mental illness grew by roughly 10 percentage points (22 percent in 2011 to 31 percent in 2013) (see Figures 6 and 7).

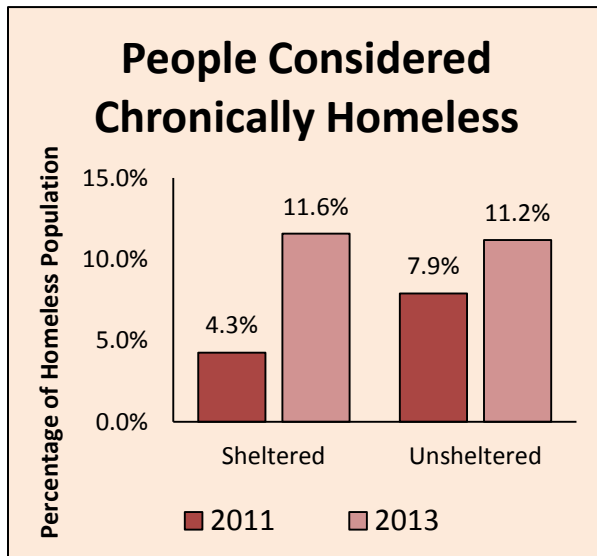


Figure 6. PIT Percentages for Chronically Homeless

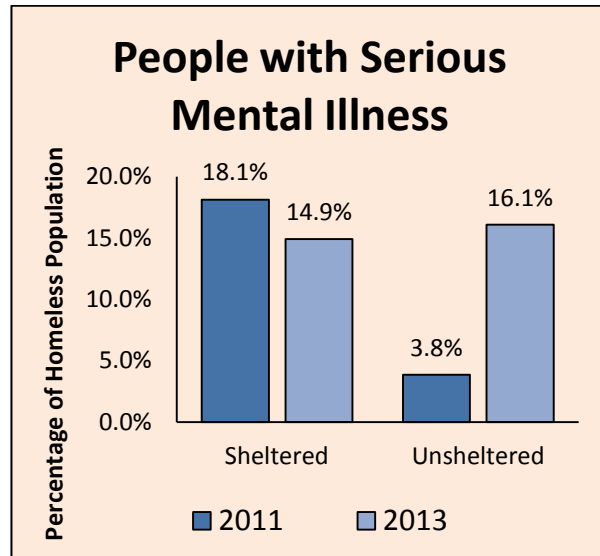


Figure 7. PIT Percentages for Seriously Mentally Ill

This year, HUD requested that special attention be given to unaccompanied youth (persons under the age of 18 living without an adult). As a result, the WHA worked closely with Ozone House, our premier organization for runaway and homeless youth, to coordinate peer-led street outreach efforts. Despite the increased and improved methodology, 0 unaccompanied youth were considered unsheltered per HUD's standards. HUD's definition of homelessness excludes people who are living day-to-day doubled-up with friends or family members. While one might celebrate this apparent lack of youth who are homeless, most youth do not have a permanent place of their own and will find places to stay temporarily rather than stay on "the streets." As a result, while they are not included in the report to HUD, the local community still considers them homeless.

¹ HUD defines Chronically Homeless as either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years

Deviating from the trend of other sub-population increases, the number of unsheltered veterans decreased this year compared to 2011 (see See Figure 8). Veterans represent only two percent of the unsheltered population and only twelve percent of the county's total population of people experiencing homelessness, the lowest percentages of HUD-prioritized sub-populations. This encouraging outcome can be attributed to increased collaboration between the Veteran Affairs Medical Center and our shelter programs.

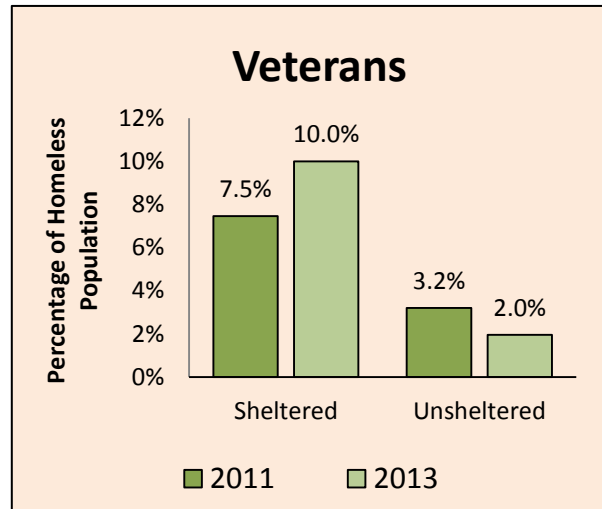


Figure 8. PIT Percentages for Veterans

Why an Increase in Homelessness?

Homelessness is caused by many factors: lack of jobs, lack of affordable housing, mental illness, substance abuse disorders, domestic violence and sudden financial crises. While it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions about why the number of people experiencing homelessness is increasing, the 2013 PIT Count data clearly shows that much remains to be done to end homelessness in our community. Even as the recession recedes, the impact of the worst economic crisis since the great depression continues to have devastating impacts. Washtenaw County continues to be the most expensive rental market in the state, and waiting lists for affordable housing are between 3 and 5 years long. In fact, the rental market is now as tight as it was before 2007 meaning that there are fewer apartments available at any cost. The WHA, its 32 partner agencies and Washtenaw County continue to use this data and other indicators to address the needs of those people in our community who are most vulnerable.

In closing, we thank the teams of staff that started the day at 6am by fanning out across the county to various locations to interview people and conduct counts in shelters and transitional housing programs. Partners included: Department of Human Services – Washtenaw, Faith in Action, Manchester Community Resource Center, Home of New Vision, Ozone House, Washtenaw County Project Outreach Team (PORT), Shelter Association of Washtenaw County, SOS Community Services, Michigan Ability Partners, SafeHouse Center, Peace Neighborhood Center, Washtenaw County Community Support and Treatment Services, Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) @ Alpha House, the Salvation Army, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, Ann Arbor Police Department, St. Andrews Breakfast Program, Education Project for Homeless Youth, Messias Temple, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor, Dawn Farm, and the Washtenaw County single point of entry for housing crises, Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC). In particular, special appreciation goes to PORT, who developed a plan for reaching the most number of people possible based upon their experience with outreach every day of the year.

APPENDIX

Overview of Total Count				
Total Count	Persons in Emergency Shelters	Persons in Transitional Housing	Unsheltered Persons	Total Count
Total Households	197	56	154	407
Total Persons	241	103	166	510

	Persons	Persons in HH² with Children	Persons in HH W/O Children
Adults	425	54	374
Children	86	89	
Unaccompanied youth	1	0	1

Basic Demographics	
	Persons
Male	347
Female	156
Refused/Unknown	10
Race	Persons
Black/African American	219
White	186
American Indian/Alaska Native	3
Asian	3
Other	11
Refused/Unknown	88
Ethnicity	Persons
Non Hispanic	397
Hispanic/Latino	26
Unknown	87

² HH= Household

Persons in Households with at least one Adult and one Child				
Category	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing		
Number of Households	27	16	5	48
Number of Persons (Adults and Children)	71	63	17	151
Number of Persons (Under Age 18)	44	42	5	91
Number of Persons (Age 18-24)	7	7	2	16
Number of Persons (Over Age 24)	20	14	10	44

Persons in Households without Children				
Category	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing		
Number of Households	169	40	149	358
Number of Persons (Adults)	169	40	149	358
Number of Persons (Age 18-24)	7	6	12	25
Number of Persons (Over Age 24)	162	34	137	333

Persons in Households with Only Children				
Category	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing		
Number of Households	1	0	0	1
Total Number of One-Child HH	1	0	0	1
Total Number of Multi-Child HH	0	0	0	0
Number of Children in Multi-Child HH	0	0	0	0

Total Households and Persons				
Category	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing		
Total Households	197	56	154	405
Total Persons	241	103	166	510

Subpopulation Information				
Category	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing		
Individuals considered Chronically Homeless ³	59	n/a	57	116
Families considered Chronically Homeless	0	n/a	0	0

Other Subpopulations of People Experiencing Homelessness				
Category	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing		
Veterans	25	26	10	61
Female Veterans	1	0	0	1
People with Severe Mental Illness	58	18	82	158
People with Substance Abuse Disorders	38	7	63	108
Persons with HIV/AIDS	0	0	1	1
Survivors of Domestic Violence	45	10	13	67

³ HUD defines Chronically Homeless as either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years