

Ending Homelessness Advisory Committee
10-year plan to end homelessness

Part 1: Understanding homelessness in Oregon

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Understanding homelessness in Oregon

Defining homelessness

Oregon's Ending Homelessness Advisory Council adopted the definition of "homelessness" as being without a decent, safe, stable, and permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation.¹

People experiencing homelessness, under the broad EHAC definition, include more than people living on the street. They include those who:

- share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, personal safety, or a similar reason
- live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds because they lack adequate alternative housing
- live in emergency or transitional shelters
- have been abandoned in hospitals
- await foster care placement
- sleep in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping place for human beings
- live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- face impending eviction from a private dwelling unit and have not found a subsequent residence and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing
- face discharge within a week from an institution in which the person has been a resident for 30 or more consecutive days and for whom no subsequent residence has been identified and s/he lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing

Migrant children between the ages of 3 and 21² qualify as homeless when they live in the circumstances described above.

Homeless demographics

Elusive data

Many organizations report information about people experiencing homelessness. The resulting numbers vary dramatically and complicate the job of discerning trends and appropriately targeting resources.

The very nature of homelessness hampers accurate counting. Just finding homeless people can be problematic. Some homeless people live on the margins of society, avoiding contact with social service organizations. Many

¹ Appendix A provides the federal definitions of homeless used in federally financed homeless programs. Not explicitly identified in the EHAC definition: individuals fleeing a domestic violence situation. Elements of the EHAC definition not included in the HUD definition: persons sharing housing, those abandoned in hospitals, and those who await foster care placement.

² As defined under No Child Left Behind Title IC – Migrant Education.

homeless episodes are of short duration and therefore occur prior to or after the one-night-shelter count.³

System barriers also impede accurate counting. For example, the diverse network that serves homeless people has disparate financial support for data collection. Some providers target particular subsets of the homeless population—such as women with children—resulting in under-representation of other subgroups.

Another complicating factor is the lack of consensus on how to define homelessness. For example, as presented in Appendix A, the Housing and Urban Development operates with one definition of homelessness, while the federal No Child Left Behind Act offers yet another definition.

Some areas complete a street count of the homeless in conjunction with the annual one-night-shelter count. Some include the street count numbers in the one-night-shelter count report while others do not. In addition to these reporting differences, the counting methodology varies from area to area.

EHAC members acknowledge the limitations of these various sources and recognize the need to improve the quality of data available to policymakers. In the interest of creating a sketch of the homeless population, EHAC uses data from a variety of credible sources with the hope of creating a yardstick against which to measure future progress toward ending homelessness.

New homeless management information systems (HMIS) should soon provide data upon which to estimate more accurately the number of homeless people. The new system will generate real-time information about those served in emergency shelters, transitional housing and shelters, and unsheltered persons served by outreach programs.

The numbers

The National Alliance to End Homelessness used data collected by 463 continuums of care⁴ to report that a projected 744,313 individuals experienced homelessness in January 2005 across the country.⁵

On two important measures, Oregon fared poorly in the alliance's report: the percentage of homeless without shelter (52 percent versus 44 percent nationwide) (Figure 1) and the percentage of the total population experiencing homelessness (0.45 percent versus 0.3 percent nationally) (Figure 2).

According to the Alliance, more than half (8,446 people) of Oregon's estimated 16,221⁶ homeless individuals went without shelter.

³ The one-night-shelter count is described in greater detail beginning on page 9. The instructions for the data collection and trend data for the 2002 to 2007 counts appear in the appendices.

⁴ A continuum of care is a local or regional body that coordinates services and funding for homeless people and families, with a focus on permanent housing.

⁵ *Homelessness Counts*, National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 2007.

Sheltered and unsheltered
U.S. and Oregon
2005

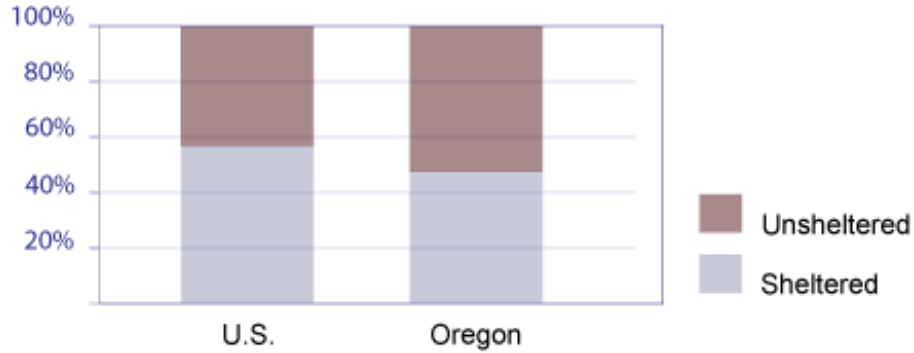


Figure 1

Source: Homelessness Counts, National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 2007 (2005 data).

Homeless persons
as a percent of total population
U.S. and Oregon
2005

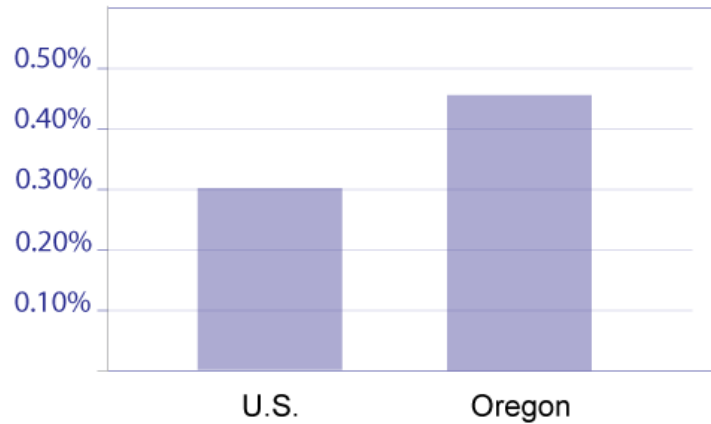


Figure 2

Source: Homelessness Counts, National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 2007 (2005 data).

Chronic homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness reported that nationwide chronically homeless people represented approximately one-quarter of homeless identified in the January 2005 count.

The federal government defines “chronically homeless” as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been

⁶ This number is higher than that reported in the one-night-shelter count because it also includes some street counts. That is, the local continuum of care counts homeless people who did not seek shelter on that particular night.

continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

U.S. percentage of chronically homeless people

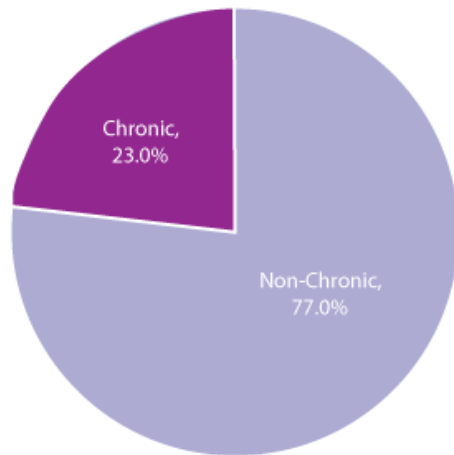


Figure 3

Source: Homelessness Counts, National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 2007 (2005 data).

Despite their diversity, homeless people share one characteristic: extreme poverty. Researchers find that people experiencing homelessness have incomes that are generally 50 percent or less of the federal poverty level.⁷

2006 Poverty Thresholds⁸

Household Size	Poverty threshold	50 percent of threshold
One person (under 65 years)	\$10,488	\$5244
One person (65 years and older)	\$9,669	\$4834
One adult and one child	\$13,896	\$6948
One adult and two children	\$16,242	\$8121

Table 1

⁷ Martha R. Burt, et al, *Homelessness Programs and the People They Serve: Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients*, Urban Institute, 1999.

⁸ <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh06.html>. As of August 2007, 2007 poverty thresholds had not been published.

Nationwide Family status of homeless

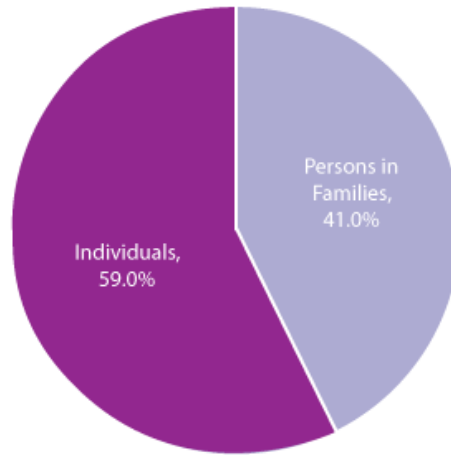


Figure 4

Source: Homelessness Counts, National Alliance to End Homelessness, January 2007 (2005 data).

People experiencing homelessness are diverse – representing every age, racial and ethnic group, and familial status (Figure 4).

The one-night-shelter count: another source of information

In addition to the continuum-of-care counts upon which the National Alliance to End Homelessness report depends, Oregon also collects information about the state's homeless population via the one-night-shelter count.

The one-night-shelter count instructions and data collection form appear in Appendix B.

Limitations of available data, discussed in further depth on pages 4 and 5, include inconsistent counting methodologies, inconsistent definitions of homelessness, fragmented and complex systems serving people experiencing homelessness, limited shelter capacity, and the very nature of homelessness.

Despite its limitations, the one-night-shelter count provides another valuable perspective on the problem of homelessness, including more detail about the demographics of this group.

Who experiences homelessness?
Oregon 2007

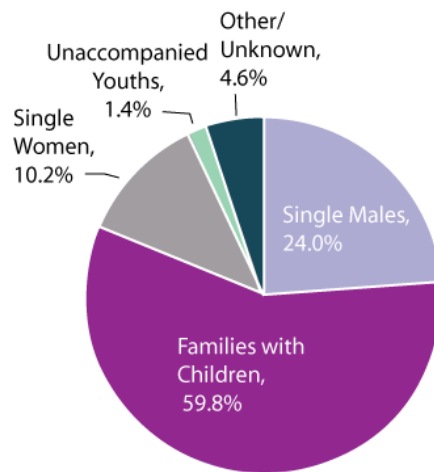


Figure 5

Source: One-night-shelter count, January 2007, Oregon Housing and Community Services

Analysis of data collected through Oregon's one-night-shelter count conducted in January 2007 (see Figure 5), reveals that:

- singles represented 39 percent of counted people experiencing homelessness
- adult males represented 62 percent of the single homeless population²
- families with children made up 60 percent of the counted homeless population

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- single women composed 10 percent of the homeless population
- unaccompanied youths made up nearly 1.5 percent of counted people without homes
- children and unaccompanied youths represented 32 percent of the homeless counted on that night

Among children in families and unaccompanied youth, 63 percent of those counted were sheltered.⁹ The remaining 37 percent did not receive shelter. A homeless child in a family is typically younger than age 11 based on the one-night-shelter count.

Age of children in homeless families

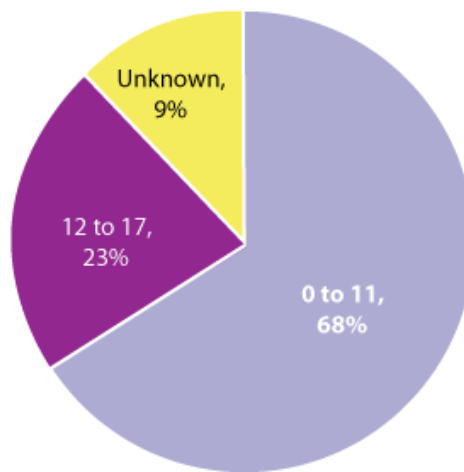


Figure 6

Source: One-night-shelter count, January 2007, Oregon Housing and Community Services

Age distribution

The number of very young children experiencing homelessness remains a troubling problem. Children age 5 and younger represented nearly 14 percent of people counted as homeless in the January 2007 one-night-shelter count.

Children age 11 and younger represented nearly 26 percent of the people counted. (Figure 7)

⁹ Shelter may include a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill) or a public or private place that provides a temporary residence for individuals pending institutionalization. In some areas, the number of sheltered persons included individuals receiving rental assistance.

Age distribution

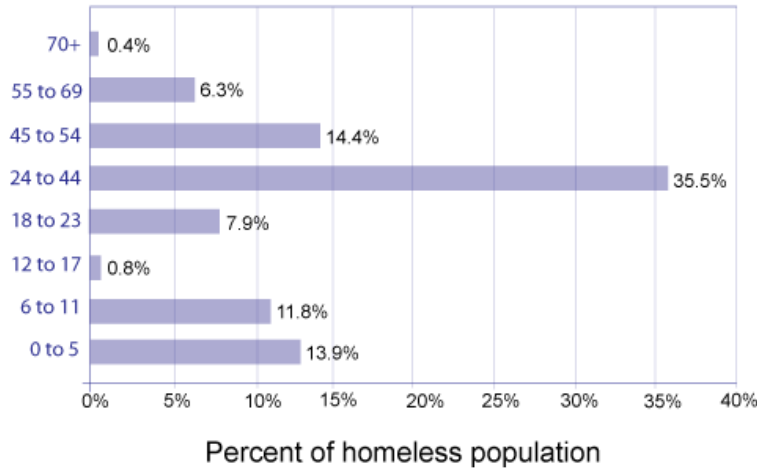


Figure 7

Source: One-night-shelter count, January 2007, Oregon Housing and Community Services.

Chronic homelessness

During the January 2007 one-night-shelter count, more than 40 percent of the people counted experienced homelessness as a chronic condition (Figure 8). This contrasts with the 23 percent chronically homeless in Figure 3; the two different definitions of “chronic” may partly explain the difference.¹⁰

Percent of chronically homeless Oregon 2007

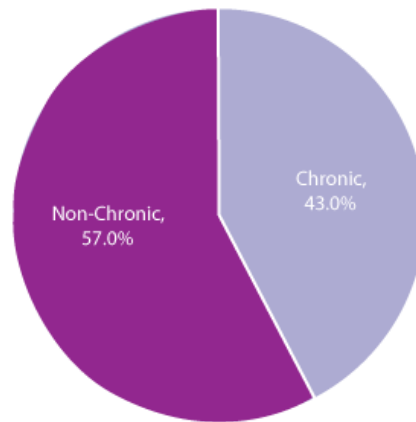


Figure 8

Source: One-night-shelter count, January 2007, Oregon Housing and Community Services.

¹⁰ The one-night shelter count asks, “Have you been continuously homeless for a year or more, or had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years?” Whereas the continuum of care relies on the federal definition that a chronically homeless person is “an **unaccompanied** homeless individual **with a disabling condition** who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years” (emphasis added).

Disparate impact

Like poverty, homelessness affects racial and ethnic minority populations disproportionately.

Census race and ethnicity categories ¹¹	Percent of Oregon population	Percent of homeless Oregonians
Black	1.8%	7.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.4%	5.0%
Asian	3.4%	0.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	1.0%
Other	2.3%	8.4%
Hispanic or Latino (can be any race)	9.9%	14.3%
White not Hispanic	81.6%	63.1%
	Two or more races	Unknown

Source: US Census Bureau for Oregon population 2005 (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41000.html>) and One-Night-Shelter Count, Oregon Housing and Community Services, 2007.

Table 2

Racial and ethnic composition Oregonians and homeless Oregonians

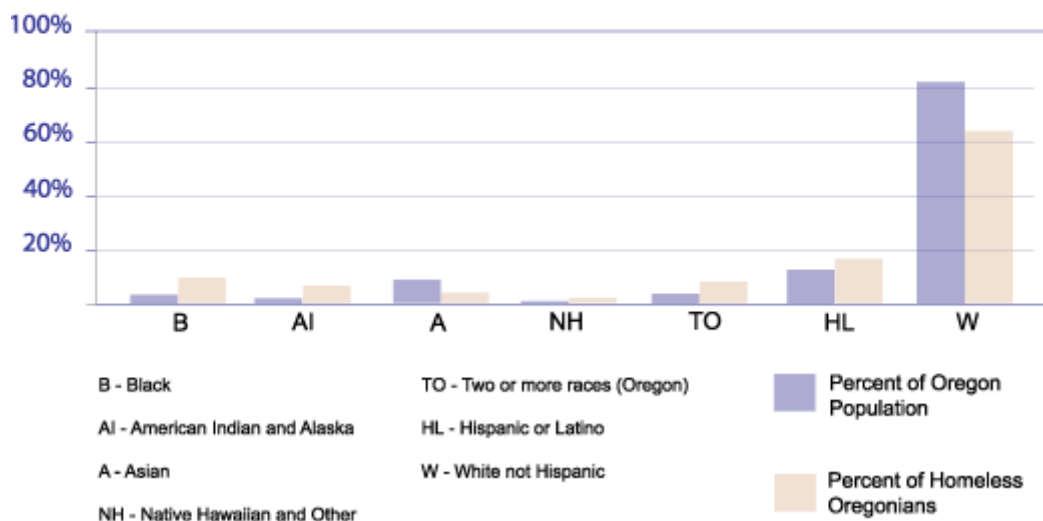


Figure 9

Source: US Census Bureau for Oregon population (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41000.html>), and One-Night Shelter Count, Oregon Housing and Community Services, 2005.

¹¹ Note: The US Census racial and ethnic categories and the one-night shelter count categories do not align (as noted in Table 2).

Family status

Oregon's one-night-shelter count found that single people represented 39 percent of those experiencing homelessness, while persons in families represented 61 percent.

A single parent heads nearly two-thirds of homeless families (see Figure 10). A typical homeless family includes a mother with two children younger than 5 years of age.

One- and two-parent families experiencing homelessness

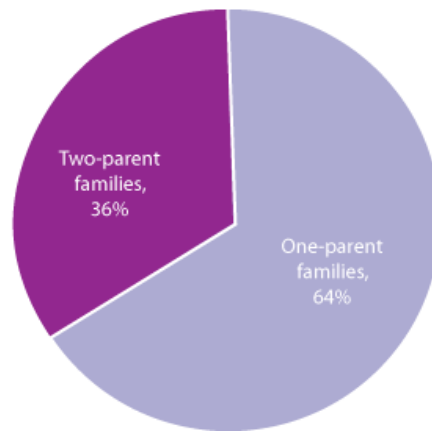


Figure 10

Source: One-night-shelter count, January 2007, Oregon Housing and Community Services.

Street counts

In addition to the one-night-shelter counts, some areas also conduct street counts of people experiencing homelessness. Like the one-night-shelter count, the street count is a point-in-time count. Therefore, people with episodes of homelessness that occurred before or after the street count do not appear in the count.

In some cases, the numbers collected during the street count also appear in the one-night-shelter count in the “turned away” category. Inconsistent definitions of homelessness and differences in data collection methods drive the differences in the following table. These definitions vary from continuum to continuum and sometimes within a continuum, making comparisons unreliable.

2007 street count results

Continuum of Care	Street count	Included in one-night-shelter count	Notes
Clackamas County ¹²	3,543	No	<i>9 percent sheltered</i>
Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties	---	Yes	
Jackson County	---	Yes	
Marion & Polk counties ¹³	1,921	No	<i>Includes 799 identified as sheltered (One-night-shelter count identified 814). Count affected by police sweep of areas where homeless people congregate.</i>
Portland, Gresham and Multnomah County ¹⁴	1,438	No	<i>Includes 61 individuals identified as “turned away” in one-night-shelter count.</i>
Remainder of state	No count conducted	No	
Washington County	---	Yes	

Source: local continuums of care, 2007.

Table 3

Geography

Painting a picture of homelessness presents particular challenges. In Oregon, the rural continuum of care¹⁵ does not conduct a street count, and capacity of shelters remains very small. (Table 4 shows the results of the one-night-shelter count for each of the state’s 36 counties.)

¹² Clackamas County Homeless Count 2007, <http://www.clackamas.us/cd/homeless.htm>

¹³ Pacific Policy and Research Institute, Inc., Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action, *TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS (Marion and Polk Counties, Oregon)*, <http://www.mwvcaa.org/crp/CRPhmlessRpt.pdf>

¹⁴ *Home Again: A 10-year plan to end homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County*, <http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=152049>

¹⁵ Baker, Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Lincoln, Linn, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler and Yamhill counties comprise Oregon’s rural continuum of care.

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Because poverty drives homelessness, the poverty rate can serve as an indicator of what the problem of homelessness may be in a particular part of the state where homeless counts reach few.

Poverty in rural Oregon—at 13.8 percent—stands well above the rest of the state’s rate of 11 percent.

Similarly, people in rural counties are more likely to be unemployed. In 2006, unemployment stood at 6.6 percent in rural counties, but was just under 5.1 percent in the rest of the state.

Rural and urban Oregon poverty, unemployment and rent burden

	Percent in Poverty	Unemployment Rate	Fair market rent ¹⁶ as a percent of average earnings	Percent of households rent-burdened ¹⁷
Rural counties ¹⁸	13.8%	6.6	26.16%	44.5%
Urban counties ¹⁹	11.0%	5.1	22.76%	44.7%

Table 4

One statistic worthy of future monitoring—renters’ housing burden—currently shows no significant difference between rural and urban Oregon. However, changes in the owner-occupied housing market may affect the housing burden for renters.

According to experts in rural homelessness, 9 percent of the homeless population lives in rural areas.²⁰

¹⁶ As defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁷ “Housing burdened” households pay more than 30 percent of income for housing.

¹⁸ Included in this list of rural Oregon counties: Baker, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Crook, Curry, Douglas, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Lincoln, Linn, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler, and Yamhill.

¹⁹ Included in this list of urban Oregon counties: Benton, Clackamas, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, and Washington.

²⁰ Martha R. Burt, et al., Urban Institute, *Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve, Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients*, 1999.

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Oregon's large size and undeveloped forestlands provide ample space for people to establish campsites and other living quarters while remaining undetected.

The long distances between communities in rural Oregon can impede access to treatment, therapy, other services, social services and supports necessary to maintain stable housing. These great distances also increase the cost of delivering services.

Oregon one-night-shelter count – January 2007

County	Sheltered					Turned Away					Total Homeless	Chronically Homeless		
	Singles	Persons in Families With Children	Less than 11 Years Old	12-17 Years Old	TOTAL Sheltered	Singles	Persons in Families With Children	Less than 11 Years Old	12-17 Years Old	TOTAL Turned Away	Sheltered & Turned Away	Sheltered	Turned Away	TOTAL
Baker	7	41	18	5	48						48	16	0	16
Benton	32	54	24	18	86	12	34	11	0	46	132	24	20	44
Clackamas	37	125	59	15	162	95	48	17	3	143	305	57	62	119
Clatsop	54	48	24	3	102	27	28	10	4	55	157	35	17	52
Columbia	17	121	46	24	138	37	60	22	12	97	235	53	53	106
Coos	49	113	35	19	162	29	39	12	6	68	230	87	12	99
Crook	0	26	8	7	26	109	264	62	56	373	399	13	200	213
Curry	5	3	0	2	8	6	0	0	0	6	14	3	2	5
Deschutes	111	113	52	20	224	224	955	293	157	1,179	1,403	114	603	717
Douglas	107	240	101	38	347	14	134	30	56	148	495	150	109	259
Gilliam	1	0	0	0	1	2	5	0	2	7	8	0	5	5
Grant	4	16	5	3	20	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
Harney	2	15	4	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	17	2	0	2
Hood River	2	10	2	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0
Jackson	164	187	73	31	351	57	5	2	0	62	413	92	52	144
Jefferson	7	32	9	6	39	24	71	26	3	95	134	33	44	77
Josephine	88	113	46	25	201	73	52	13	4	125	326	95	93	188
Klamath	6	11	7	1	17	85	272	90	98	357	374	3	240	243
Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lane	780	744	309	92	1,524	21	157	72	10	178	1,702	679	51	730
Lincoln	7	38	17	6	45	1	10	5	2	11	56	19	4	23
Linn	99	31	8	4	130	1	13	6	2	14	144	73	0	73
Malheur	4	26	13	1	30	40	33	11	1	73	103	13	35	48
Marion	332	355	157	38	687	36	22	5	0	58	745	96	34	130
Morrow	17	186	93	17	203	0	0	0	0	0	203	37	0	37
Multnomah	1,533	1,491	661	216	3,024	172	406	165	44	578	3,602	1,384	160	1,544
Polk	6	58	18	13	64	1	4	3	0	5	69	18	0	18
Sherman	1	7	3	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	0	1
Tillamook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Umatilla	66	35	19	4	101	13	63	18	11	76	177	37	14	51
Union	5	46	25	4	51	1	0	0	0	1	52	18	0	18
Wallowa	0	10	7	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	4	0	4
Wasco	10	13	7	4	23	0	0	0	0	0	23	4	0	4
Washington	87	189	91	24	276	442	443	163	98	885	1,161	58	508	566
Wheeler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yamhill	66	162	49	15	228	3	12	5	2	15	243	45	0	45
Total	3,706	4,659	1,990	659	8,365	1,525	3,130	1,041	571	4,655	13,020	3,263	2,318	5,581

Table 5

Causes of Homelessness

Insufficient income and low-paying jobs

In Oregon, the gap between the rich and the poor has grown steadily since the 1970s. This gap between rich and poor Oregonians saw the second largest increase among the states between the late 1980s and the late 1990s. When adjusted for inflation, income for the poorest fifth of the population actually fell more than 6 percent while income grew nearly 34 percent in the same period for the richest fifth.

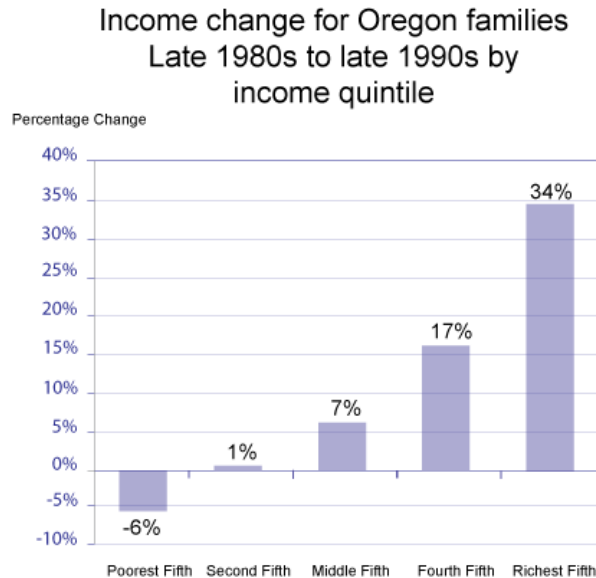


Figure 11

Source: Economic Policy Institute/Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Pulling Apart: A State-by-State Analysis of Income Trends, April 2002.

Inflation adjusted wage gains of the 1990s lost ground during the 2001-03 recession. Wages increased for 98 percent of workers between 1990 and 2003. For the 2 percent who earned the lowest wages, wages stagnated or dropped.²¹

Housing burden

The percentage of renters in Oregon paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing increased from 45.5 percent in 2000 to 54.9 percent in 2005.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition calculated a weighted ranking using the following parameters: median gross rent, the ability of a renter at median renter income to afford a median-priced rental apartment, and the proportion of renters paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent. The

²¹ Moore, Eric and Peniston, Barbara E., Oregon Employment Department, *Wage Inequality in Oregon – Still Growing?* September 2004.

coalition ranked Oregon the third most unaffordable rental market among the states in 2003.²²

In 2006, a person working 40 hours a week in Oregon had to earn \$13.46 an hour to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair market rent. In contrast, the estimated mean (average) wage for a renter is \$11.44 an hour. Consequently, the average renter pays more than 30 percent of income on rent, making that renter housing-burdened.

Lack of affordable housing

During the 1990s, low-income Oregonians faced a growing shortage of affordable housing units. While the need for affordable housing grew, the number of affordable units per 100 extremely low-income renters dropped by four units—from 68 to 64 units per 100 extremely low-income households.²³

For traditional housing programs, such as Section 8, and for manufactured dwelling parks, Oregon's rising property values provide the financial incentive to convert properties to market-based structures. This trend places existing affordable housing stock at risk.

Federal support for affordable housing has dropped during the last 30 years. The federal housing assistance budget authority has decreased 48 percent since 1976. The Housing and Urban Development budget represented 7 percent of the 1976 federal budget, but just 2 percent of the 2004 federal budget.

Federal assistance for low-income renters continues to lag behind the need. In 2004, approximately five million households received rental assistance while nearly eight million households paid more than 50 percent of their income on housing.

Discontinuity or lack of services

As described in the following section of this report, many federal, state, and local programs target homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless. In addition, many private, not-for-profit, volunteer, and faith-based organizations operate social programs designed to respond to a particular need or problem. More often than not, each of these programs has its own objectives and client base, and lack connections to other programs serving similar populations.

Understanding clients is different than understanding systems. Despite the best efforts of many at the local level, the "system" lacks a client focus. As a result, it perpetuates poverty and homelessness by being difficult to navigate, fragmented, and/or restrictive.

²² National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Ranking the Most and the Least Unaffordable States for Renter Families," *Up Against a Wall: Housing Affordability for Renters, An Analysis of the 2003 American Community Survey*, November 2004.

²³ Oregon Housing and Community Services, *Report on Poverty 2004*.

Providers serving the homeless population expend much effort and energy to create structures for networking, referral, coordination, and collaboration to address the lack of integration among the systems.

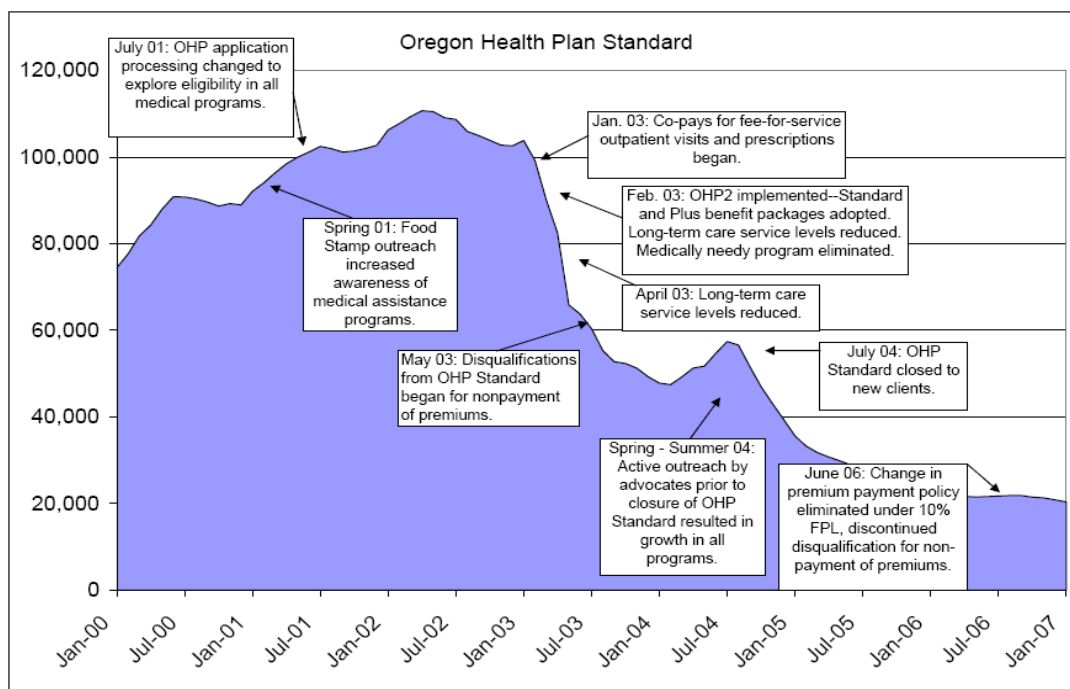
Budget reductions

During the state’s economic recessions, the Legislature trimmed human services budgets to bring spending within available revenues.

During the special sessions of the 2001 and 2002, many programs saw cuts that devastated systems serving people with mental health problems, developmental disabilities, and addictions.

The Oregon Health Plan standard program, which served people at or below 100 percent of the poverty threshold, provided a dramatic illustration of the impact of the revenue shortfalls.

After a series of benefit reductions—the elimination of dental, vision, prescription drug, mental health, and chemical dependency coverage—the Legislature eventually capped enrollment in the Oregon Health Plan standard program. The following chart illustrates the remarkable drop in the number of Oregonians covered under the “standard” program.²⁴



Source: Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance Program.

Figure 12

²⁴ Many people previously covered by Oregon Health Plan Standard successfully applied for coverage through other Medicaid programs, such as Aid to the Blind/Aid to the Disabled, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families medical, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, substitute care and adoption services, and assistance with Medicare premiums and co-payments.

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Another casualty of the state's budget woes: the state's medically needy program, which provided critical support to approximately 8,000 people with disabilities and extraordinary medical expenses was eliminated.

Budget cuts totaling nearly \$842 million affected programs and providers across human services, including:

- child welfare foster program payments
- community mental health and addictions treatment programs
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families grants (welfare)
- emergency assistance for very low-income families
- Safety Net Clinics, the provider of last resort for any low-income Oregonians
- long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities

Other factors contributing to homelessness

Among the social and economic factors contributing to homelessness:

- inadequate resources for people leaving institutions and services such as corrections, mental health hospitals, short-term housing, and the foster care system
- eligibility restrictions (past criminal activity or alcohol and drug use) in government or privately sponsored services
- poor rental and credit histories
- unexpected emergencies, such as a major health issue, or loss of a job, housing, or public assistance
- domestic violence, including unfriendly separations and divorces
- unstable family and home environments
- overcrowded or inadequate housing
- natural disasters
- displacement as the result of eviction or closure of housing, problems with landlords, or conflicts with other tenants

Among certain populations other factors play into the risk of an individual or family becoming homeless.

Among families

In addition to the causes of homelessness noted above, younger parents with young children face a greater incidence of homelessness. Of families headed by single mothers with children younger than age 5, a shocking 56.5 percent live in poverty.²⁵ Often, the mother is a victim of domestic violence.²⁶

²⁵ 2005 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

²⁶ National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Fact Checker: Accurate Statistics on Homelessness*, "Family Homelessness, February 2007.

Among people with mental illness or addiction disorders

People with mental health problems and those who abuse alcohol and other drugs—or who simultaneously confront substance abuse *and* mental illness—represent a disproportionate share of homeless Oregonians. More than half of people counted reported needing such services

One-night-shelter count
service eligibility

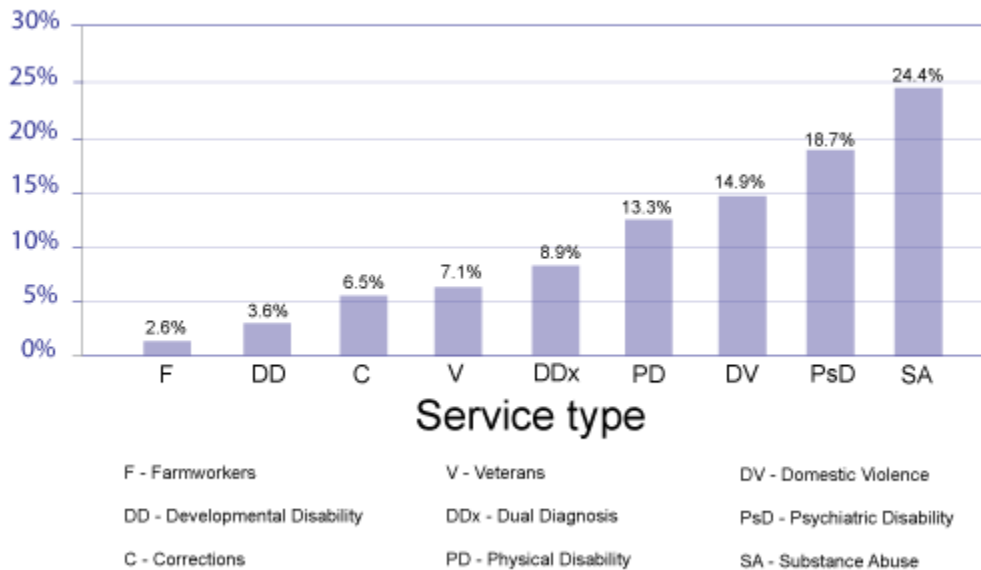


Figure 13

Source: One-night-shelter count, January 207, Oregon Housing and Community Services

In addition to the common thread of poverty, causes of homelessness in this population include:

- limited ability to work and live independently
- lack of treatment for such disorders, either because individuals fail to seek treatment or because public and private insurance fail to cover treatment services adequately
- lack of affordable housing coupled with limited or non-existent services

Mental illness and addiction represent the greatest causes of chronic homelessness. Such individuals also use a disproportionate share of emergency room and hospital care and experience incarceration at a greater rate than the rest of the population.

Among youth

The most common factors contributing to homelessness among youth:

- running away
- family breakdown

- parental neglect and abandonment
- economic stress
- limited alternatives after leaving foster care or other state custody
- physical and sexual abuse
- mental illness
- addiction disorders in the individual or family

Among single adults

Again, poverty drives growth in the homeless population. The government provides minimal support to single, childless adults in poverty.

A person with physical disabilities, permanent or temporary, also faces greater risk of homelessness.

Between 1955 and 1991, Oregon's general assistance program provided a safety net for adults with short- and long-term disabilities who were unable to work. The program provided medical and financial benefits. In 1991, the Legislature limited access to the program to individuals with severe physical or mental impairments expected to last at least 12 months.

In 2003, the Legislature eliminated the program as the result of the state's general fund budget shortfall. A modified and restricted version operated in the state between fall of 2003 and fall 2005. However, in October 2005, budget problems led to the total elimination of the general assistance program, leaving unemployable adults with few options.

Many homeless people have jobs. Community Action of Washington County reported that, "among homeless families seeking shelter at Community Action, 30 percent were working."²⁷

Many families and individuals lose housing because wages have not kept pace with housing cost inflation. In some cases, having outside income can make an individual ineligible for other benefits.

Effects of homelessness on youth

Compared to housed children of the same economic status, homeless children experience a greater range of physical, academic, and emotional problems. Such children are more likely to have:

- poor and inadequate nutrition
- health problems, such as infections, asthma, and gastro-intestinal disorders
- developmental delays
- anxiety, depression, and behavior problems
- increased risk of substance abuse
- poor school attendance

²⁷ <http://www.caowash.org/povertyinfo.php>

- poor academic performance²⁸

The Oregon Department of Education compared the performance of homeless students to the average performance of all students. Only 74 percent of homeless students met the benchmark on the third-grade reading test, compared to the statewide average of 85.5 percent. The gap widens among older students, with just 16 percent of homeless students meeting the tenth-grade math benchmark versus 43 percent statewide. This significant achievement gap may lead to higher dropout rates for homeless students.

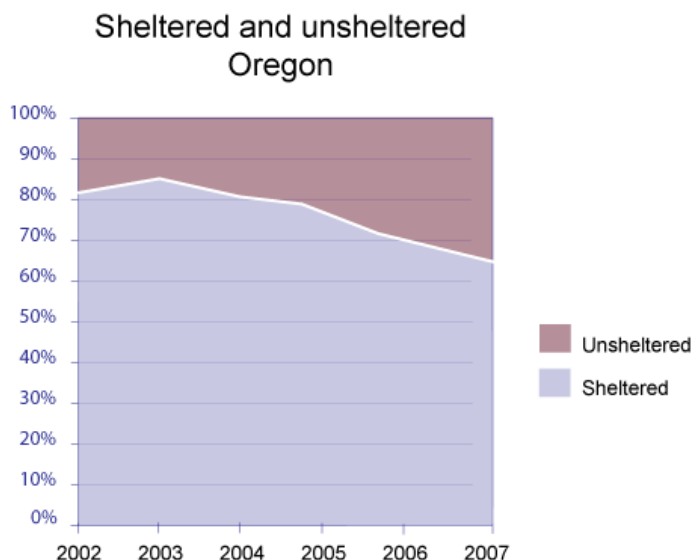
Homelessness presents serious risks for youth, especially older youths who often lack family support. Youths who live on the streets or in shelters face high risk of physical and sexual assault or abuse, and physical illness including HIV/AIDS.

Homelessness and extreme poverty contributes to the dissolution of family units as children end up placed with relatives who have homes or are placed in the foster care system.²⁹

Trends in homelessness

Oregon’s one-night-shelter count continues to identify more and more homeless people, with 7,433 counted in 2002, growing to 13,020 in 2007, an increase of 75 percent over 5 years.

Since 2002, the number of unsheltered individuals identified during the count has increased 271 percent (see Figure 14).



Source: One-Night Shelter Count, January 2007, Oregon Housing and Community Services

Figure 14

²⁸ Ellen L. Bassuk and Steven M. Friedman, et al, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Homelessness and Extreme Poverty Working Group, *Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children*, 2005.

²⁹ *Characteristics of the Homeless Population*, Federal Interagency Council on the Homeless, July 17, 2001.

Other groups counted at much higher rates between 2002 and 2007 include:

- people with physical disabilities increased 166 percent
- people with substance abuse problems increased 171 percent
- people with co-occurring mental illness and substance-abuse disorder increased 122 percent
- people who identified themselves as American Indian increased 170 percent

Other sources of information

More long-term data comes from programs with clientele that includes homeless persons. Eligibility requirements and data gathering techniques vary by program.

The following data are collected by several systems in the state of Oregon.

Education

During the 2005-2006 school year some 13,159 children and youth enrolled in K-12 from our public schools identified themselves as homeless. These children lived in shelters, had shared living arrangements, lived in motels or simply had no shelter.³⁰ This represents an increase of nearly 2,000 homeless students from the previous year.³¹ Oregon's homeless student population for the 2006-07 school year was 15,517, a 10 percent increase over the 2005-06 school year.³²

Unaccompanied minor youth comprise approximately 14 percent of the total number of homeless students. This group of students typically lacks parents or legal guardians. In those instances, district homeless liaisons and counselors often act as an emergency contact for the student on issues of absenteeism, school performance, and behavior.

Homeless and runaway youth

The Oregon Homeless and Runaway Youth Workgroup reported that 823 youths received services between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006.

Addiction treatment and mental health programs

During the 2005-2006 fiscal year, 4,469 adults were homeless when they enrolled in addiction treatment services funded through the Addictions and Mental Health Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services. Similarly,

³⁰ For the purpose of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, homeless children and youth are minors who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

³¹ Oregon Department of Education. Press Release, November 16, 2006.

³² Oregon Department of Education, Press Release *State's Homeless Student Report: Homeless student population grows 18% as federal funding decreases 10%*, September 12, 2007.

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4,807 adults were homeless when they enrolled in mental health services during this period.³³

Veterans

In Oregon, the US Department of Veteran's Affairs counted 6,940 homeless veterans in 2005 while at the same time only 159 beds were available through its Homeless Providers Grant.³⁴

Hunger and homelessness

Finally, we also know that many homeless people face food and hunger difficulties. In the Oregon Food Bank Network, 9 percent of clients receiving emergency food boxes report themselves as homeless.

³³ Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Oregon Department of Human Services, April 18, 2006.

³⁴ VA's Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program is offered annually (as funding permits) by the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Programs to fund community agencies providing services to homeless veterans. The purpose is to promote the development and provision of supportive housing and/or supportive services with the goal of helping homeless veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income, and obtain greater self-determination.

Appendix A – Federal government definitions

Housing and Urban Development definition of homelessness

HUD defines homelessness using the following definition: A homeless person is someone who is living on the street or in an emergency shelter, or who would be living on the street or in an emergency shelter without HUD's homelessness assistance. A person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the places described below:

- in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, on the street;
- in an emergency shelter;
- in transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters;
- in any of the above places but is spending a short time (up to 30 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution;
- is being evicted within a week from a private dwelling unit and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing or their housing has been condemned by housing officials and is no longer considered meant for human habitation;
- is being discharged within a week from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 30 consecutive days and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing; or
- is fleeing a domestic violence housing situation and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.

McKinney Vento/No Child Left Behind definition of homeless children and youth³⁵

Section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Act defines the following terms:

- a. Homeless children and youth means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes--
 - 1. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
 - 2. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - 3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - 4. Migratory children (as defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended) who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in this definition.

³⁵ <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2002-1/030802a.html>

Appendix B–One-night-shelter count instructions and data collection form

2007 ONE NIGHT SHELTER COUNT SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

Please return ALL completed Surveys to your Lead Agency. If you have any questions, please contact your CAA or Lead Agency, Homeless Survey Coordinator, or Rainy Gauvain at 503-986-6702.

Thank you for participating in the statewide ONSC Survey. The information collected from this survey will be compiled in a report and made available for grant writing and planning purposes.

A form must be completed for each household receiving or trying to access services on the date of the survey. You may give it to the household/individual to complete and then you review the form for completeness, or you can complete the form for them during intake. It is preferred that you complete the survey for quality purposes. Please inform the homeless household/individual that the information provided in the survey is confidential and will be used strictly for providing statistical data only.

Have you either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years? Please mark either *yes* or *no*.

Please select your household type: ... Please *check one* box for each household.

Unaccompanied Pregnant Youth – A *pregnant* person age 17 or under not accompanied by an adult or parent or guardian who is age 18 or older.

Unaccompanied Youth – A person age 17 or under not accompanied by an adult or parent/guardian who is age 18 or older.

Single Adult – A person age 18 and over that is not accompanied by another adult or parent/guardian.

Couple without Children – 2 adults related by marriage or domestic partnership without children.

One Parent Family with Children – 1 adult parent/guardian with at least one child age 17 or under with them.

Two Parent Family with Children – 2 adults related by marriage or domestic partnership with children age 17 or under with them.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: One column should be completed for each individual in the household. If there are more than 6 individuals, attach a second survey.

Gender – Check **M** for male or **F** for female.

Age - Enter the age of each individual or member of the household

Race/Ethnicity - Each person should **only mark one** category.

- **Asian:** A person having origin in any of the original people of the Far East, South East Asia, or the India subcontinent; i.e., Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origin in any of the original people of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central America, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term “Spanish origin” can be used in addition to “Hispanic or Latino.”
- **American Indian or Alaskan Native:** A person having origin in any of the original people of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment

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- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origin in any of the original people of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. In addition to Native Hawaiian, Guamanians and Samoan, this category would include the other natives from any Pacific Island.
- **White:** A person having origin in any of the original people of Europe, the Middle East or North America.
- **Unknown:** Use this if a person can not or chooses not to identify his or her race/ethnicity.

Characteristics continued: Check **all** that apply for each individual or member of the household.

- **Veterans:** Any adult males/females that have served in the U.S. Armed Services.
- **Farmworker:** Farmworker or farm laborer is defined as a person working in connection with cultivating the soil, raising or harvesting any agriculture or aquaculture commodity; or in catching, netting, handling, planting, drying, packing, grading, storing, or preserving in its natural state.
 - Record adult males/females who **are farm workers** (age 18 and over).
 - Record children who **are farm workers** (age 0-17).
- **Domestic Violence:** All household members who are receiving shelter as a result of domestic violence.
- **Corrections Release in Last 90 Days:** Anyone in the household who has been released from any Corrections facility within the last 90 days.
- **Physical Disability:** Anyone in the household who has physical disability (i.e., mobility impaired, blind, deaf, etc.).
- **Developmental Disability:** Anyone in the household who has developmental disability (i.e., mental retardation, down syndrome, autism, etc.).
- **Mental or Emotional Disorder:** Anyone in the household who has a mental or emotional disorder (i.e., bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia, etc.).
- **Substance Abuse:** Anyone in the household who has a substance abuse problem (i.e., alcohol and/or drug/substance addiction).
- **Dual Diagnosis (MH and Sub. Abuse):** Anyone in the household who has any mental or emotional disorder, AND a substance abuse problem.

Children's Grade Level in School - Check the appropriate grade range (K-5, 6-8, or 9-12), of each child in the household even if the child is not presently attending school. Do **NOT** include Pre-School.

Children's attendance in school: Check **Y** for Yes if the child is attending school and **N** for No if the child is not attending school.

FOR PROVIDER USE ONLY

What service is being provided? Please *check one* box for each household.

Is the Service McKinney-Vento Funded? Circle Yes or No

- **Service was not available:** Check this box if services are not available for the client, and they were *Turned Away (If services were not available please check where the individual or family will stay in the next question)*
- **Emergency Shelter:** A facility providing short-term (30-days stay), emergency accommodation for homeless persons.
- **Hotel/Motel/Campground Vouchers:** Vouchers used to provide temporary shelter in a hotel, motel or campground.
- **Rent or Mortgage Assistance:** Homeless prevention program that provides short-term financial assistance to prevent eviction or foreclosure for people at risk of being homeless to prevent eviction or foreclosure.

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- **Transitional Housing:** A housing program that provides temporary stabilized housing with supportive services up to two years for persons who are transitioning to community living after being homeless.
(Section 8 and HUD subsidized housing are not included.)

If services are not provided where will you stay tonight? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

For individuals or families who were turned away from shelter accommodation or services please check where they will stay tonight.

What caused you and/or your family to leave your last living arrangement? Household may **mark as many categories as applicable**. Some providers ask the household what issues contributed to their becoming homeless. Other providers list each category and let the household identify those that pertain to their situation. (Please notice some categories are directed more towards teens, such as: kicked out, pregnant, and runaways.)

FOR CAA OFFICE USE ONLY:

CAA or LEAD AGENCY: Name of the Community Action Agency/Lead Agency who will collect all forms.

SHELTER/PROVIDER NAME & I.D. NUMBER: This is a drop down box which gives the shelter name and I.D. number assigned to each shelter or service provider by OHCS. **DO NOT HAND WRITE IN, UNLESS THIS IS A NEW SHELTER**

If you have a new participant, please type in their name. An ID Number will be provided at a later date.

TYPE OF SHELTER: This is a **drop down box**, which gives the choice of Emergency, Vouchers, Rent/Mortgage, or Transitional Shelter.

STREET ADDRESS OF SHELTER/PROVIDER: Street address, city and zip code of the shelter or service provider. (P.O. Box only for Domestic Violence Shelter address) **THIS SECTION MUST BE HAND WRITTEN OR TYPED IN, please be sure to include the address, this helps us in reducing the number of duplicate shelters in the system.**

Check box if provider is a Domestic Violence Shelter.

****If you have a unique situation, please explain on the back of the form.****

Appendix C - One Night Shelter Count Summary

May-07

	2007 #	2006 #	2005 #	2004 #	2003 #	2002 #	5 year-trend
Totals							
Sheltered	8365	8242	8169	7014	6039	6178	35%
Turned Away	4655	3267	2359	1653	1003	1255	271%
Total	13,020	11509	10528	8667	7042	7433	75%
Total Individuals							
Adult Male	4169	3252	2948	2368	1813	2455	70%
Adult Female	3548	3280	2888	2391	1978	2309	54%
Children	4261	3978	3881	3064	2694	2612	63%
Unknown	1042	999	811	844	557	57	1728%
Total	13,020	11509	10528	8667	7042	7433	75%
Service Eligibility							
Veterans	649	563	448	384	298	362	79%
Farmworkers	234	155	149	139	142	206	14%
DV	1358	1117	918	1067	824	723	88%
Corrections	592	442	360	319	184	295	101%
Physical Disability	1212	874	753	623	462	455	166%
Mental Health	1709	1437	1104	208	657	117	1361%
Substance Abuse	2221	1806	1336	1199	844	821	171%
Mental Health & Substance Abuse	810	638	572	465	263	365	122%
	8,785						
Ethnicity							
Asian	105	115	74	62	106	50	110%
Black	964	1008	965	662	605	539	79%
Hispanic	1855	1574	1526	1194	1108	1107	68%
American Indian	655	484	344	367	212	243	170%
Pacific Islander	131	116	128	89	69	88	49%
White	8216	7502	6630	5955	4549	4842	70%
Unknown	1094	710	863	338	0	562	95%
	13,020						
In School (<18)							
Chronic	2717	2479	2440	1785	1516	1219	123%
	2827	2254	1575	1356	N/A	N/A	108%

Data for 2002-2003 reflect counts done in March; 2004-2007 data reflect January counts. Separate counts for the chronically homeless are not available for 2002-2003.