



960 Main St.
Buffalo, NY 14202
Telephone (716) 853-1101
FAX (716) 853-1750
www.wnyhomeless.org

Chris Syracuse
Alliance Chairperson

April 6, 2012

Dale Zuchlewski
Executive Director

Connie Sanderson
Continuum of Care Coordinator

Rebecca Detlef
HMIS Coordinator

Kexin Ma
Research Coordinator

Suckie Smith
Operations Manager

Alecia Zimmerman
Community Analyst

Michael Knott
AmeriCorps/VISTA Staff

On behalf of the Homeless Alliance of WNY and members of our Alliance, I am pleased to present our 2011 Annual Report on the State of Homelessness in Erie County. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Alliance staff that worked diligently to put this report together.

While reading this report please keep in mind that while you are reading statistics and comparing numbers, these numbers represent PEOPLE. These are people in Erie County who have or are facing the very traumatic experience of being homeless, many of them for the very first time.

The Homeless Alliance has taken great strides over the past few years to improve the data quality of participating agencies and those efforts will be ongoing.

We hope this report helps to generate a genuine community discussion on homelessness and its root cause; poverty. This report will serve as the basis for the update to our PRISM Plan (Prevention, Resources, Independence, Services & Maintenance), our 10-year plan to end homelessness.

We also hope this report helps to educate the general public and those in a decision-making position on homelessness and ignites the community will to end homelessness.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and we hope you will be part of the continuing discussions on homelessness and poverty.

Sincerely,

Dale Zuchlewski
Executive Director

2011 Annual Report on the State of Homelessness in Erie County

Executive Summary

- ▶ In 2011 there were an estimated 5,050 people who experienced homelessness in Erie County. 492 people spent at least part of the year sleeping in places not meant for human habitation such as homeless camps, under bridges, abandoned buildings etc. This number is likely to be under reported because this only counts those entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) system.

Program Type	2010 HMIS Count	Estimated Total Count	2011 HMIS Count	Estimated Total Count
Emergency Shelter	2887	4565	2595	4282
Transitional Housing	506	581	546	662
Safe Haven	20	20	25	25
Code Blue	N/A	N/A	88	88
Unsheltered	692	692	492	492
Total Unique Homeless Person	3715	5331	3399	5050

- ▶ Point in time numbers are a one day snapshot of the homeless population. HUD requires that the point in time counts be conducted during the last ten days in January. Due to the severity of the weather conditions in the winter in Western New York, January is probably not the best time of the year to do a count in Erie County. The number of unsheltered homeless in January is most likely to be lower than during other times of the year. Knowing this, **it is estimated that there are approximately 1,000 homeless persons on any given night in Erie County.**

135 people were found to be living on the streets in October of 2011 and 106 in January 2012. This number is likely to be under reported because it is difficult to encounter all of the unsheltered on any one day.

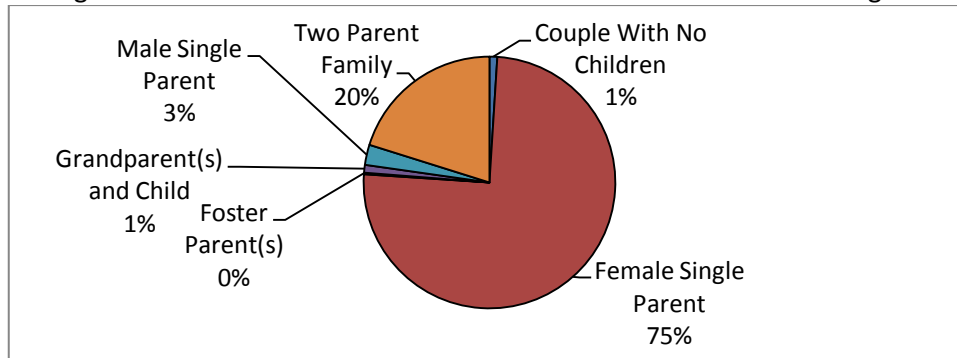
The number of unsheltered homeless during our annual Point-in-Time count has dropped dramatically from 201 in January of 2010 to 106 in January of 2012 due to the added beds for the chronically homeless, Code Blue and the coordinated efforts of the Street Outreach Workers. We plan to do another unsheltered count in the summer of 2012 to see if there are seasonal variations in this population.

	Unsheltered Homeless Count	Sheltered Homeless Count	Total
January 27, 2010	201	724	925
January 26, 2011	178	760	938
October 14, 2011	135	N/A	N/A
January 26, 2012	106	804	910

- ▶ There were 483 chronically homeless people entered into HMIS last year a decrease of 31 from last year.

2011 Annual Report on the State of Homelessness in Erie County

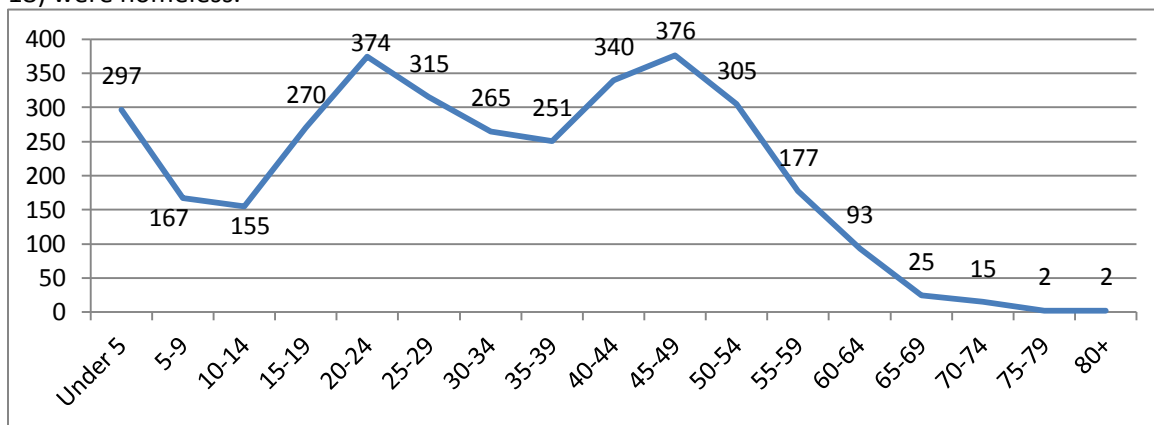
- ▶ An estimated 1,746 people in families experienced homelessness last year. 75% of the homeless families are single mothers. Almost 40% of the homeless children are under the age of 5.



NUMBER OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS	Number of Female Households	Percentage Below Poverty
No children	6,779	20.0%
1 or 2 children	14,171	49.1%
3 or 4 children	3,848	65.2%
5 or more children	643	92.1%

Female household by number of children- ACS 2008-2010 3-year estimates for Buffalo

- ▶ Over 22 % of the homeless are children under the age of 18, with another 11% in the 20-24 age group. A total of 374 unaccompanied young adults (age 18 to 24) and 149 unaccompanied youth (age under 18) were homeless.

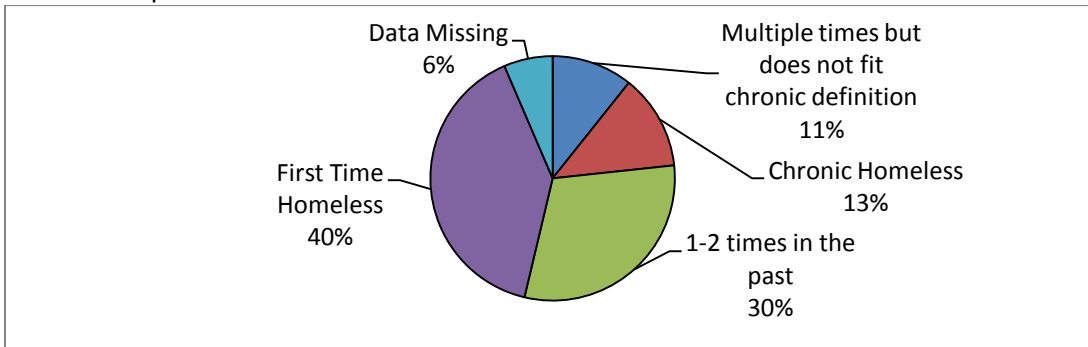


- ▶ 54% of the homeless are African American, 31% are white and 12% are Latino.

Race	Count	Percentage
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	1619	54%
Black or African American, Hispanic	50	2%
White, Non-Hispanic	913	31%
White, Hispanic	99	3%
Other Hispanic	201	7%
Other Non-Hispanic	105	4%

2011 Annual Report on the State of Homelessness in Erie County

- ▶ 40 % of the clients were homeless for this first time and another 30% that were homeless once or twice in the past.



- ▶ 33 % lived with family or friends prior to becoming homeless and 29% said Family Issues were the reason for their homelessness.

Prior living situation	Count	Percentage
Doubled up	1245	33%
Emergency Shelter	634	17%
Rental by Client	544	15%
Institutions	475	13%
Place not meant for habitation	466	12%
Others	368	10%

Self-reported Reason of Homeless	Count	Percentage
Family Issues: Household Disputes/ Domestic Violence /Conflict with Legal Guardian or Parent/Double up/Divorce or Separation/ Death of Family Member	1056	29%
Health: Mental Health/ Health and safety/Medical Condition/Substance Abuse	753	21%
Economic Reasons: Loss of Job or income/ loss of public assistance/ loss of transportation/ mortgage foreclosure/ no affordable housing/unemployment/utility shutoff	408	11%
Eviction	399	11%
Release from Institution	210	6%
Other: Relocation/ Fire Disaster/ Criminal Activity/Data Missing etc.	837	23%

- ▶ 67% of clients stayed in emergency shelter less than 30 days.

Length of Stay	Client Count	Percentage
Less than 30 days	1888	67.12%
30 to 60 days	472	16.78%
60 to 90 days	168	5.97%
3 months to 6 months	159	5.65%
6 months to one year	87	3.09%
More than 1 year	39	1.39%

- ▶ 223 Veterans were homeless last year a decrease of 82 from last year. About 10% of the homeless Veterans are female.

2011 Annual Report on the State of Homelessness in Erie County

COMMUNITY CHECKLIST TO END HOMELESSNESS

- We must develop the community and political will to end homelessness.
- A Single Point of Entry into the homeless system must be developed.
- We need to have all homeless service providers participate in data collection through HMIS. HUD & the VA have to fully implement shared data. Non-mandated HMIS shelters need to be convinced of the value of participating.
- We need to coordinate available resources from federal, state, local and the private sector to end homelessness. CDBG, HOME, general fund and tax credits must be utilized.
- New allocations of Emergency Solutions Grant funds should be focused on Rapid Re-housing. Any Prevention funds should be narrowly focused to ensure they are given to those with the most housing barriers, especially single mothers with children under the age of 5.
- More Housing First units need to be developed for the Chronically Homeless.
- More Single Room Occupancy or Efficiency units need to be provided for single men and women who are homeless.
- All Public Housing Authorities in Erie County need to assist in the effort to end homelessness.
- Every decision in government should have an “Impact Statement” discussing how the decision alleviates poverty and homelessness.
- More living wage jobs must be created and jobs skills need to be taught to help people fill those jobs.
- A coordinated community-wide effort must commence to identify and provide services to those who are repeatedly entering the shelter system, as well as other high cost service systems such as the health care and criminal justice systems.