

2010 Buffalo and Erie County State of Homelessness

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*photo courtesy of National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty.

HOMELESS ALLIANCE OF WESTERN NEW YORK
Spring 2011



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Chris Syracuse
Alliance Chairperson

June 27, 2011

Dale Zuchlewski
Executive Director

Dear Friend:

Irene E. Pijuan
Director of HUD Programs

The Homeless Alliance of Western New York is proud to release this Executive Summary of our 2009-10 data analysis. This summary is based upon a full data analysis completed by Kristin Cipollone and can be found on our web site. I would like to thank the Homeless Alliance staff for their hard work in assisting in our efforts.

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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, most of them for the very first time.

The Homeless Alliance has taken great strides over the past few years to improve our data quality 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

- According to Homeless Alliance HMIS Data there were 8,030 homeless people. We estimate another 470 were not entered into the system because some agencies were not required to enter data into the system and the street homeless are difficult to enumerate. **We estimate the total number of homeless in Erie County to be 8,500.**
- On any given night there are between 1,200 and 1,500 men, women and children who are homeless.
- 18% of the homeless population in Erie County are children under the age of 18.
- Males make up 59% of the homeless population; females make up 39%.
- 45% of the homeless population is Black and 32% are white.
- 60% or 3,792 people were homeless for the first time last year. (some data is missing from clients).
- 729 people were identified as being chronically homeless (person with a disabling condition that was homeless for more than a year or experienced 4 episodes of homelessness in 3 years).
- 434 Veterans were identified as being homeless.
- 42% of the homeless population does not have a high school diploma with 4% having no schooling at all.
- Poverty is the root cause of homelessness. 29% of the people in Buffalo and 14% of the people in the County live below the poverty level.

- 43% (11,110) of female head of households in Buffalo live below the poverty level, 30% (15,344) in Erie County.
- 58% (36,476) of renters in Buffalo pay more than 30% of their income for rent.
- 6,426 people in Erie County have been assisted with Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (**HPRP**) funds. **We will be facing an increase in homelessness once these funds are exhausted.**
- 59% of all HPRP funds went to single female head of households to prevent homelessness.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS :

1. We can end long term homelessness and manage situational homelessness. Study after study has shown it is more cost effective to house the chronically homeless than it is to leave them on the streets. **More safe havens and housing first options must be made available.**
2. Prevention is the key to ending homelessness. With the poverty levels we are facing in Erie County and Buffalo, especially among female head of households more must be done to provide **safe affordable housing.**
3. There appears to be a need for **Single Room Occupancy units** for men.
4. **Educational opportunities** must be increased for those living in poverty.
5. Jobs that pay a **living wage** must be more readily available.

2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Total Homeless	Adults	Children
8030	6568	1462

We estimate another 470 people are not reported in HMIS. **The total homeless in Erie County is 8,500**

Age

2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Age	Percentage	N-value
0-5 years of age	7%	582
6-17 years of age	11%	903
18-24 years of age	12%	955
25-34 years of age	20%	1607
35-44 years of age	19%	1511
45-61 years of age	26%	2042
62 years+	3%	267
Age unknown	2%	176

Gender Identity/Biological Sex

2008-2009 HMIS Data		2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Gender/Sex	Percentage	Gender/Sex	Percentage	N-value
Female	36%	Female	39%	3112
Male	56%	Male	59%	4727
Transgender	.03%	Transgender	0.05%	4
Unknown	.04%	Unknown	0.26%	22
Not recorded	8%	Not recorded	2.20%	177

Veteran Status

2008-2009 HMIS Data		2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Veteran Status	Percentage	Veteran Status	Percentage	N-value
Yes	9.4%	Yes	7%	434

Primary Race

2008-2009 HMIS Data		2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Race	Percentage	Race	Percentage	n-value
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	89
Asian	1%	Asian	6%	434
Black	51%	Black	45%	3550
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	12
White	33%	White	32%	2493
Multiracial	0.4%	Multiracial	0.3%	27
Other	14%	Other	16%	1228

Disability

2008-2009 HMIS Data		2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Disabling Condition	Percentage	Disabling Condition	Percentage	N-value
Yes	37.8%	Yes	43%	2571
No	58.9%	No	52%	4053
Refused	0.4%	Refused	1%	28
Unknown	2.9%	Unknown	4%	199

Chronic Homeless

2008-2009 HMIS Data		2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Gender/Sex	Percentage	Gender/Sex	Percentage	N-value
Female	22%	Female	28.3%	206
Male	77%	Male	70.8%	516
Transgender	0.1%	Transgender	0.3%	2
Unknown	0%	Unknown	0.1%	1
Gender not record	0.6%	Gender not record	0.5%	4

Extent of Homelessness

2008-2009 HMIS Data		2009-2010 HMIS Data		
Extent of Homelessness	Percentage	Extent of Homelessness	Percentage	N-Value
1 st time	56%	1 st time	60%	3792
1-2 times	27%	1-2 times	24%	1540
Multiple times but does not fit chronic description*	5%	Multiple times but does not fit chronic description	7%	420
Chronic: 4 times in the last 3 years	6%	Chronic: 4 times in the last 3 years	7%	412
Long-term: 2 years or more	4%	Long-term: 2 years or more	3%	170

Sheltered Homeless Snapshot Data

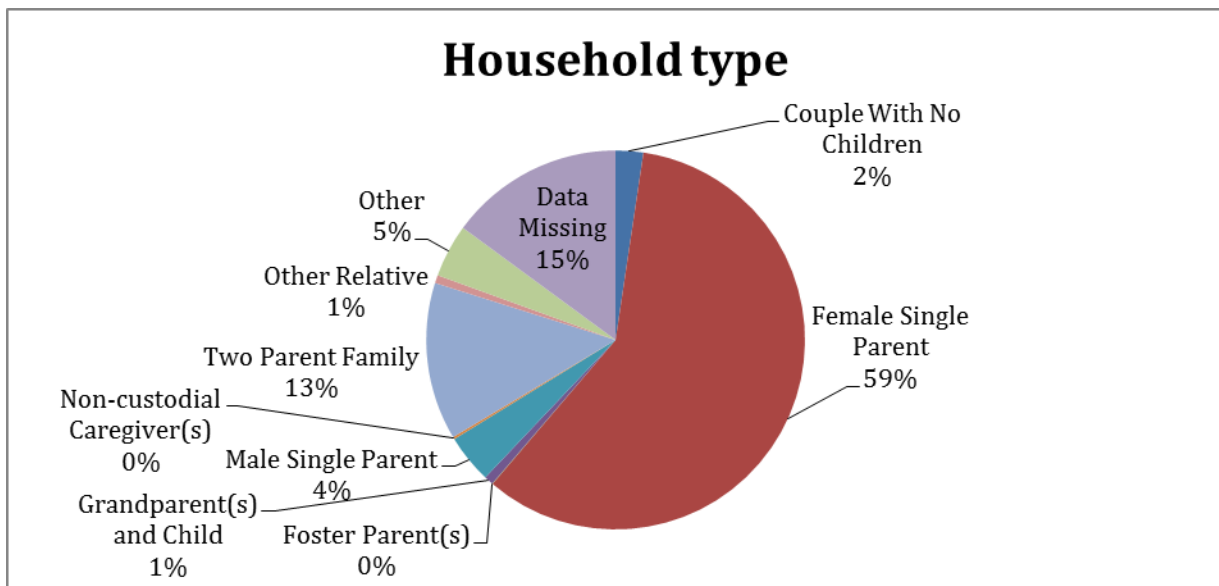
	PIT Count 2011	PIT Count 2010	Monthly Data 2010	Monthly Data 2009	Monthly Data 2008
Totals:	1299	1582	1184	1199	1202

In addition to the numbers reported in PIT and Monthly Data Counts, outreach workers estimate that there are between 100 and 200 unsheltered homeless, plus an additional 100 people residing in hotels/motels with DSS vouchers and/or squatters—a population that is difficult to track and quantify. This total number is certain to fluctuate over the year. For instance, service providers often report an uptick in family homelessness during the summer months, a phenomenon often attributed to landlords not wanting to turn families out during the school year.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing in Buffalo, Erie County, and Town of Tonawanda

Buffalo – BHOP
 Erie County – ECHO
 Town of Tonawanda - TTAP

	BHOP	ECHO	TTAP	TOTAL
Couple With No Children	89	39	23	151
Female Single Parent	3,044	501	241	3786
Foster Parent(s)	2	0	0	2
Grandparent(s) and Child	28	11	11	50
Male Single Parent	181	60	26	267
Non-custodial Caregiver(s)	8	5	0	13
Two Parent Family	509	179	175	863
Other Relative	35	5	4	44
Other	223	20	48	291
Data Missing	799	120	40	959
TOTAL	4918	940	568	6426



What can you do to help end homelessness in Buffalo and Erie County?

Community Checklist to End Homelessness

- ✓ Participate in our planning efforts to end homelessness.
- ✓ Every decision made by government should have an “impact statement” discussing how the decision alleviates poverty and homelessness.
- ✓ Help us gain the support of those in positions of power to assist in the efforts to end homelessness including the City, County, Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, State of NY and the United States.
- ✓ Help us to educate the public on homelessness.
- ✓ When housing is being developed help us to educate the neighbors and to resist the Not In My BackYard mentality.
- ✓ More CDBG, HOME and general fund revenue must be dedicated to the effort to eliminate poverty and homelessness. Study after study has shown it is more cost effective to invest in housing for the long term homeless than it is to let them live on the streets.
- ✓ When redesigning Buffalo’s zoning codes do not make it more difficult to provide service and housing for the homeless.
- ✓ If your agency is assisting the homeless and NOT using HMIS for data collection, please contact us to get your agency involved.