

Annual Report on the State Of Homelessness in Western New York



2015

“Ending Homelessness does not mean that nobody will become homeless, but that effective systems will be in place to help people become housed again rapidly.”

-Nan Roman
President, National Alliance To End Homelessness

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Key Findings and Recommendations | 4 |
| Overall | 4 |
| Strengths | 5 |
| Challenges | 5 |
| Recommendations | 6 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| SECTION 1: Overall Homelessness in Western New York | 9 |
| Total Estimates _____ | 11 |
| Bed Inventory and HMIS Coverage Rate _____ | 11 |
| Point in Time _____ | 12 |
| HMIS Data _____ | 12 |
| Gender _____ | 13 |
| Age _____ | 13 |
| Ethnicity and Race _____ | 14 |
| Number of People Served by Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing _____ | 14 |
| The Indispensable Role of the Department of Social Services, and the Consequence for HMIS Data and Program Delivery | 15 |
| SECTION 2: Erie County | 16 |
| Erie County Poverty Brief | 18 |
| Percent of Income Paid Towards Rent by Income Bracket and Location _____ | 19 |
| Overview of Homelessness in Erie County | 21 |
| Point In Time Count (PIT) _____ | 21 |
| Comparison of Bed Inventory _____ | 22 |
| HMIS Coverage by Household Bed Type in Erie County _____ | 23 |
| Gender for Homeless Adults _____ | 24 |
| Age _____ | 24 |
| Race _____ | 25 |
| Ethnicity _____ | 26 |
| Prior Living Situation and Reasons of Homelessness _____ | 26 |
| Disabling Conditions _____ | 28 |
| Zip Code of Last Permanent Address _____ | 29 |
| Education _____ | 30 |
| Homelessness In The Schools _____ | 31 |
| Erie County Emergency Shelters | 33 |
| Overview _____ | 33 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Clients Served _____ | 34 |
| Emergency Shelter Entry by Month _____ | 34 |
| Length of Stay (excluding Code Blue stays) _____ | 35 |
| Length of Stay in days By Demographic _____ | 35 |
| Household Composition Type _____ | 37 |
| Code Blue Shelters _____ | 40 |
| <i>Housing Interventions.....</i> | 41 |
| Rapid Rehousing | 41 |
| Transitional Housing..... | 42 |
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 43 |
| <i>Section 3: Niagara County</i> | 46 |
| Niagara County Poverty Brief..... | 47 |
| Overview of Homelessness in Niagara County | 49 |
| Point In Time Count (PIT) _____ | 49 |
| Annual Homeless Count _____ | 49 |
| Comparison of Bed Inventory _____ | 50 |
| Household Composition (HMIS) _____ | 50 |
| Gender for Homeless Adults _____ | 51 |
| Age _____ | 51 |
| Race of All Homeless People in Niagara Falls _____ | 53 |
| Ethnicity of all Homeless People in Niagara Falls _____ | 53 |
| Disabling Conditions _____ | 54 |
| Zip Code of Last Permanent Address _____ | 55 |
| Homelessness Among Niagara County’s Schoolchildren _____ | 56 |
| Niagara County Emergency Shelters..... | 57 |
| Overview _____ | 57 |
| Clients Served _____ | 57 |
| <i>Section 4: Rural Counties Homelessness</i> | 59 |
| Genesee County | 61 |
| Homelessness Among Genesee County School Children _____ | 62 |
| Orleans County | 63 |
| Homelessness Among Orleans County Schoolchildren _____ | 63 |
| Wyoming County..... | 64 |
| Homelessness Among Wyoming County Schoolchildren _____ | 64 |
| <i>Section 5: Chronic Homelessness.....</i> | 65 |
| <i>Section 6: Veterans.....</i> | 67 |

Appendix..... 68

Appendix A: Homeless Count Methods68

The Entire CoC Homeless Count _____ 69

Erie County All Homeless Count _____ 70

Erie County Emergency Shelter Count _____ 70

Niagara County Homeless Count _____ 70

Genesee County Homelessness Tabulation _____ 71

Orleans County Homelessness Tabulation _____ 71

Wyoming County _____ 71

Appendix B: Zip Codes72

Erie County Homeless Clients _____ 72

Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Residents seeking assistance at HMIS participating shelters in Erie and
Niagara Counties _____ 75

Niagara County Clients Zip Code of Origin _____ 76

**Appendix C: Poverty Thresholds for 2015 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under
18 Years77**

Key Findings and Recommendations

Overall

| | 2015 HMIS | 2015 Estimated Total Count |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| NY-508 | 4769 | 7964 |
| Erie County | 4273 | 5455 |
| Niagara County | 469 | 1980 |
| Genesee County | - | 383 |
| Orleans County | - | 103 |
| Wyoming County | - | 35 |

Table 0.1: Total Homelessness

Nearly 8,000 people were homeless in the five-county area in 2015. This represents a decrease in homelessness from 2014 in Erie County and the same rate of homelessness in Niagara County from 2014. As this is the first year that statistics were gathered in Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties, we cannot ascertain if this is an increase or a decrease. The unsheltered count is down two-thirds since 2011.

| NY-508 Point-in-Time ¹ | Unsheltered Homeless Count | Sheltered Homeless Count | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| January 26, 2011 | 178 | 760 | 938 |
| October 26, 2011 | 135 | N/A | N/A |
| January 26, 2012 | 106 | 804 | 910 |
| July 26, 2012 | 131 | N/A | N/A |
| January 30, 2013 | 98 | 750 | 848 |
| January 29, 2014 | 64 | 784 | 848 |
| July 22, 2014 | 119 | N/A | N/A |
| January 28, 2015 | 61 | 858 | 919 |

Table 0.2 Point-in-Time

| Erie County Homeless Count and by Program | 2012 Estimated Total | 2013 Estimated Total | 2014 Estimated Total | 2015 Estimated Total |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Unique Homeless Persons | 5,681 | 5,754 | 5713² | 5455 |
| Emergency Shelter | 4,558 | 4,710 | 4,829 ⁸ | 4284 |
| Transitional Housing | 768 | 775 | 602 | 394 |
| Safe Haven | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 |
| SSO | 712 | 1,266 | 1,337 | 1,002 |
| Outreach | 137 | 223 | 389 | 553 |

Table 0.3: Erie County
Estimates of
Homelessness 2012-2015

¹ In 2011 and 2012, NY-508 included Erie County. In 2013-2015, it included Niagara County as well.

² Revised 2014 number based on better data after more providers entered HMIS: duplication across providers were found to be higher than previous AHAR calculations excluding the provider determined.

Strengths

- Homelessness in Erie County in 2015 is at its lowest levels since 2012: it decreased 258 people (4.5%) from 2014 and 226 (3.9%) from 2012.
- The unsheltered count is down two-thirds since 2011.
- Housing first works. 84% of new admittances to permanent supportive housing retain their housing, and 85% of all clients retained housing. Of those who left, 45% exited to a permanent housing destination, 7.75% exited to a higher-level therapeutic setting, and 10.56% of clients died.
- The unsheltered homeless point-in-time count has dropped by two-thirds since 2012.
- Unaccompanied youth (under 18) decreased in both Erie (10.8%) and Niagara (33%) Counties. This represents, in each area, 30 fewer unaccompanied youth seeking assistance. (Pages 23 & 50)
- HMIS coverage of beds is at the highest levels it has ever been, and thus the data is the most reliable.
- Chronically homeless clients averaged 49 days from permanent housing voucher referral to housed.
- Coordinated Entry, a process through which clients all receive the same assessment and are prioritized by highest acuity, appears to have ended previous white-bias racial disparities in Permanent Supportive Housing voucher recipients (see page 44).

Challenges

- Though homelessness decreased 4.5% in Erie County, 5455 people experienced homelessness in 2015. This is more than the population of the village of Williamsville³.
- Homelessness in Niagara County in 2015 increased 5% since 2014.
- 27% of people who experienced homelessness in Erie County were children.
- Homeless clients in Erie County overwhelmingly originate from the City of Buffalo. (page 29)
- Family homelessness disproportionately affects female householders: 79% of all families are single-mother headed, and while the general population of children are relatively evenly distributed, children 5 and under are over half of all homeless children. We suspect that a lack of affordable childcare for low-wage earners, or the struggle to find work that works with childcare responsibilities, is contributing to homelessness. (page 24)
- African-Americans are overrepresented in the homeless population relative to both the general population and the population of those in poverty. This is true in counties with higher African-American populations and those with small African-American counties.
- Housing affordability is usually considered to be no more than 30% of rent compared to a household's income. Approximately half (49%) of all of Erie County's renters live in the City of Buffalo, though Buffalo only has approximately a third of the county's population. In the city of Buffalo, 61% of renters earn less than \$35,000, and 78% of these renters pay more than 30% of their income on rent. Fifty-five percent of all renters in Erie County earn less than \$35,000 and 78% of them also pay more than 30% of income but 55% of these renters are in city of Buffalo. Based

³ According to the US Census, Williamsville has 5300 people living in the village.

on fair market rent reported by HUD, a two-bedroom apartment costs \$768 including utilities. A household with one wage-earner would need to earn at least \$16/hr, which is 78% more than the current NYS minimum wage of \$9.00 (as of January 1, 2015). A single parent working full time in a minimum wage job would need to work 71 hours a week in order to afford such an apartment and could easily fall into homelessness. As it is, presuming 40 hour work-weeks and 52 worked weeks per year, \$20,000-\$34,999 is \$9.61-\$16.81 per hour. Over half of the renting population in both Buffalo (53%) and Erie County (60%) are paying rents higher than what is considered affordable.

Recommendations

- Increased HMIS coverage has improved accuracy of statistics, especially in Erie and Niagara Counties, though improved coverage in Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming counties would assist further.
- The county departments of social services are the first line assistance in most of the CoC. Best practices, such as diversion, are standard operating procedure in all Departments of Social Services. The DSS offices do not input data into HMIS. HMIS coverage in these offices would allow for an improved understanding of the experience of homelessness, effectiveness of diversion practices, and recidivism rates. To that end, the State of New York should provide additional administrative support for this data recording.
- 90% of homeless families originate in the city of Buffalo and over half have children that are school-age. The Buffalo Public Schools are required to keep track of McKinney-Vento homeless children (a category that includes at-risk in addition to HUD-defined homelessness). As the Buffalo Public Schools are identifying families as they become housing-unstable, a prevention program should be developed in partnership with them to assess which families are most likely to become homeless.
- Erie County has a lack of sufficient affordable housing stock, as demonstrated by the high numbers of people earning lower incomes who pay more than 30% of their income on rent. We recommend an increase in affordable housing through increased vouchers for low-income families, increased supportive housing beds for those with therapeutic needs, and full utilization of all housing authority units across all Erie County municipalities.
- There is a need for at least 500 single room or 1-bedroom affordable units in Western New York in addition to more affordable housing options for families.
- The Corporation for Supportive Housing issued a report in October of 2015 that said the Erie/Niagara regions needs 1209 units of Permanent Supportive Housing.

Introduction

The Homeless Alliance of Western New York is the designated Continuum of Care (CoC) agency for Erie County. As such, it is responsible for compiling the annual Continuum of Care grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In July 2013, the Niagara County CoC merged with the Erie County CoC. On March 30, 2015, the Erie and Niagara Counties CoC merged with the Orleans County CoC, which acquired Wyoming and Genesee Counties prior to merge. Therefore, NY-508 now covers Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties. This report covers only providers in Erie County for the time period of 10/1/14 to 9/30/15.

In 2014, this grant awarded **\$9.75 million for federal fiscal year 2015** (which increased to \$10.8 million in 2016) in funding for new and renewed projects to homelessness alleviation agencies throughout Erie County. All agencies awarded homeless funds from the Continuum of Care grant, or through the Emergency Solutions Grant funds awarded by Erie County, the City of Buffalo and the Town of Tonawanda, are required to input client data into a centralized Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that the Homeless Alliance of WNY maintains.

This report uses the 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) year (10/1/2014-9/30/2015) as the time frame and is mostly reliant on data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), known in Buffalo as Buffalo Area Service Network (BAS-Net). This timeframe corresponds to the federal fiscal year, used because many homelessness alleviation providers use funds from the federal government. This time period is also used because the annual Erie and Niagara County homelessness data is submitted to HUD to produce a national homelessness report for this time period.

Not all agencies in the community are required to use HMIS. Some choose to use it voluntarily and others choose not to participate in the system. As a result, estimation is necessary to discern some of the figures in this report. Estimations are noted where they appear. Additional data was gathered from the annual Point-in-Time count, Housing Inventory Chart, unsheltered street counts, non-HMIS participating providers, and the Erie and Niagara Counties' Departments of Social Services.

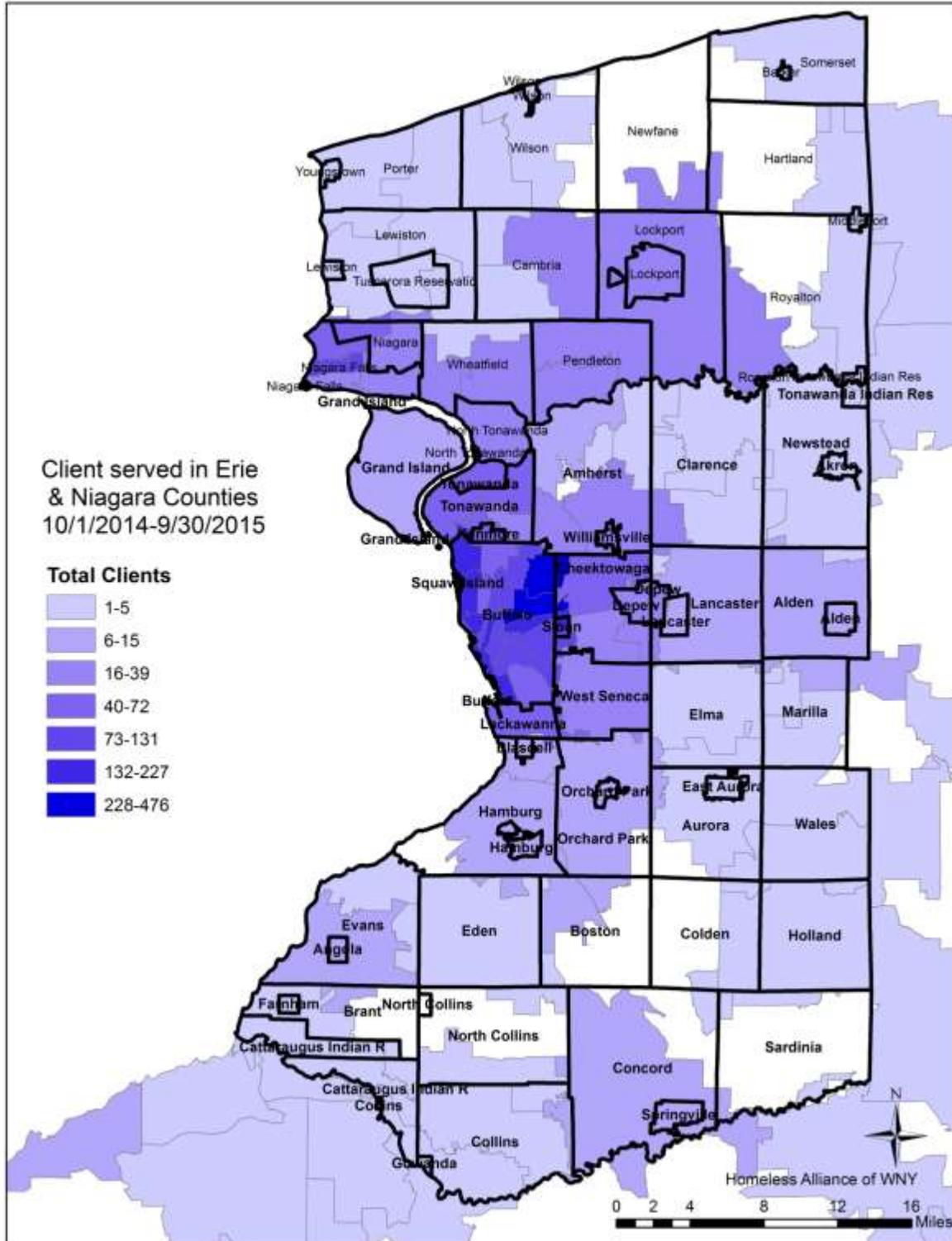
Definition of Key Terms

1. **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** HMIS is a software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons. In Erie County, this system is also called Buffalo Area System Network (Bas-Net).
2. **Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts:** One-night counts of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations. The one-night counts are reported on CoC applications and reflect a single night during the last week in January. In addition, we conducted a second Point-in-Time count on July 22, 2014.
3. **Children:** All persons under the age of 18.
4. **Unaccompanied Youth:** Unaccompanied individuals under the age of 25.
5. **Sheltered:** A homeless person who is in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or safe haven program for homeless persons.

6. **Unsheltered:** A homeless person who is living in a place not meant for human habitation, such as the streets, abandoned buildings, vehicles, parks, and train stations.
7. **Emergency Shelter (ES)** - Housing in which homeless persons can access shelter immediately and reside in for up to 30 days. The primary function is to assist individuals in identifying causes of homelessness, accessing services, and securing the next appropriate level of housing.
8. **Code Blue:** Seasonal shelter beds for days that are below 20 degree Fahrenheit.
9. **Transitional Housing (TH)** - Housing in which homeless persons can live for up to 24 months and receive supportive services that will enable them to move to permanent housing and to live independently. The program must include housing placement assistance.
10. **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** - Housing in which homeless persons with a disability live without a limit on the length of stay. Supportive services are provided and rent cannot exceed 30% of a person's monthly income. Programs may be a single site, scattered sites, or clustered units and includes rental assistance programs (formerly known as Shelter Plus Care).
11. **Safe Haven (SH)** –Safe Havens are specialized housing programs for the very hard to serve homeless and chronically homeless who are seriously and persistently mentally ill. A SH can be either transitional or permanent housing. It serves persons who may or may not be willing to engage in treatment.
12. **Chronic Homelessness:** A chronically homeless person is defined as a homeless adult (single or with family) with a disabling condition who has either been continually homeless for a year or more or who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years that totals a year. To be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been on the streets or in emergency shelter (e.g. not in transitional or permanent housing) during these episodes.
13. **Adult Only Household:** Single adult persons or adults with adult companions that do not have a
14. child in their household.
15. **Household with Children and Adults:** A person in any household with at least one adult and one child present regardless of whether the child(ren) is present for the full program stay.
16. **Household with only Children:** A person in any household in which all persons are younger than age 18.
17. **Unknown Household Type:** Households that cannot be classified in cases when one or more persons are missing dates of birth. Note that in instances when the household already contains at least one known adult and one known child, the household type can be determined and categorized as a Household with Children and Adults.

SECTION 1: Overall Homelessness in Western New York

This section details homelessness in the entire NY-508 geography, including Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties.



Map 1.1: Zip Code of Origin of All Homeless Clients in NY-508

NY-508 Total Estimates

| | 2015 HMIS | 2015 Estimated Total Count |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| NY-508 | 4769 | 7978 |
| Erie County | 4273 | 5455 |
| Niagara County | 469 | 1980 |
| Genesee County | - | 383 |
| Orleans County | - | 103 |
| Wyoming County | - | 35 |

There were an estimated 7969 people who experienced homelessness NY-508 Continuum of Care region. This includes Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Wyoming and Orleans Counties in a de-duplicated count imputing. 66 people received services in both counties with HMIS-participating providers (Erie and Niagara). 21 people in the Erie County HMIS report last permanent address in Genesee, Orleans, or Wyoming Counties.

Table 1.1: Total Homelessness in NY-508

Bed Inventory and HMIS Coverage Rate

| | Current Bed Inventory | HMIS Beds | HMIS coverage Rate* | Dedicated Chronically Homeless Beds |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Emergency Shelter | 611 | 371 | 67%* | N/A |
| Rapid Rehousing | 306 | 306 | 100% | N/A |
| Transitional Housing | 494 | 337 | 79%* | N/A |
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 1248 | 894 | 72% | 178 |
| Safe Haven | 16 | 16 | 100% | N/A |
| TOTAL | 2675 | 1924 | 76%* | 178 |

Table 1.1: Homeless Provider Coverage

*Denominator does not include statutory exclusions from HMIS, such as domestic violence shelters.

**The only provider that is not participating in HMIS is the HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing), which has 354 beds. This program varies year to year in the number of beds it has, thus our HMIS coverage rate for PSH also varies.

Data input into the Homeless Management Information System is required as a condition of HUD Emergency Solutions Grants and HUD Continuum of Care Program funding, though the Violence against Women Act prohibits input of clients in domestic violence-specific programs. Erie County now has 100% coverage of family shelters, though there are several religiously-affiliated shelters serving exclusively single people who are not currently participating.

Point in Time

| | Unsheltered Homeless Count | Sheltered Homeless Count | Total |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| January 30, 2013 | 98 | 886 | 984 |
| January 29, 2014 | 64 | 936 | 1,000 |
| January 28, 2015 | 61 | 858 | 919 ⁴ |

Table 1.2: Point in Time Counts

HUD requires each CoC across the nation to conduct an annual point in time count of both the sheltered and unsheltered homeless during the last ten days of January. Homeless outreach workers and community volunteers went to soup kitchens, homeless encampments, under bridges and other places where the homeless are known to congregate to conduct the counts. The data collected was entered into HMIS to ensure an unduplicated count.

Point in time numbers are a one day snapshot of the homeless population. 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. The number of unsheltered homeless in January is most likely to be lower than during other times of the year. We estimate that, on any given day, there are an average 900 people homeless in Erie County, 130 people homeless in Niagara County, 80 people combined in Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming counties.

HMIS Data⁵

| Individuals who experienced Homelessness recorded in HMIS | Total |
|---|-------------|
| Adults | 3406 |
| Unaccompanied Children | 295 |
| Accompanied Children | 995 |
| Missing Information | 71 |
| TOTAL | 4769 |

Table 1.3: Homeless Client Coverage 2015

Of those who experienced homelessness in the Erie Niagara Metro area, we recorded a total of 4769 clients, 3,474 households (both with and without children) which included 3,406 adults and 1,292 children in our HMIS system, including 295 people under the age of 18 who were unaccompanied. 514 families, defined as a household with both a child and a custodial adult, experienced homelessness in 2015. Not all shelter and service providers input data into HMIS, so we consider this the minimum of people who experienced homelessness.

⁴ This number only includes Erie and Niagara Counties as Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming did not enter the CoC until March 30, 2015.

⁵ HMIS data only references participating providers. There are no HMIS-participating providers in Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties.

Gender

| Adults experiencing homelessness | Total | % | Without Children | % | With Children and Adults | % |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|------------------|--------|--------------------------|-----|
| Male | 1944 | 57% | 1858 | 66% | 85 | 15% |
| Female | 1455 | 43% | 979 | 34% | 472 | 85% |
| Transgendered | 6 | <.01% | 6 | <.001% | 0 | |
| Total | 3406 | | 2844 | | 557 | |

Table 1.4: Adults Experiencing Homelessness 2015

Gender is not evenly distributed among those experiencing homelessness among adults. A homeless adult with children is significantly more likely to be female. A homeless adult without children is significantly more likely to be male.

Age

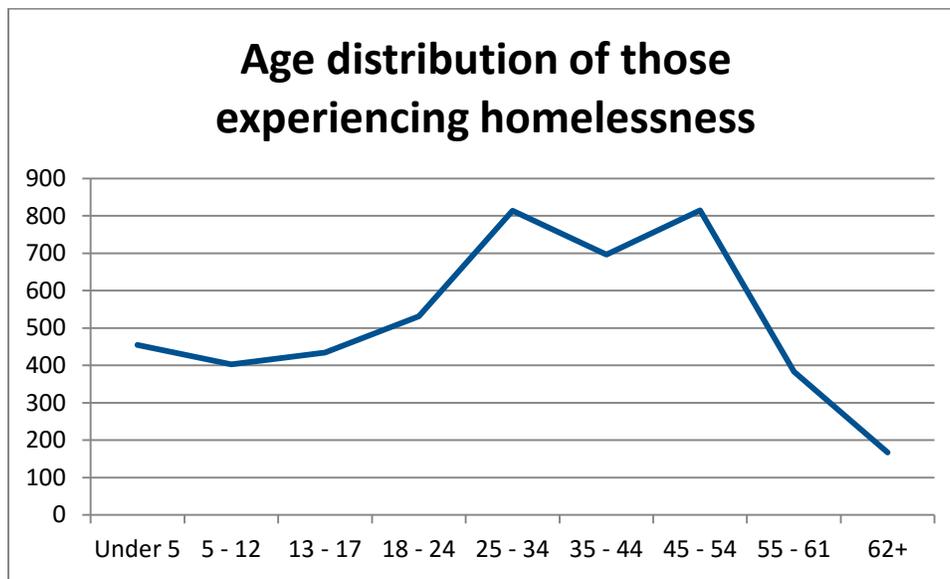


Figure 1.1: Age distribution of all people experiencing homelessness in NY-508

We notice two peaks in the homeless population: 25-34 and 45-54. This population distribution has been consistent in Erie County since 2012.

Just under half of all homeless children in adult-child households are not yet school age (0-4), but if one counts all children 0-5, that is more than half of all children.

Ethnicity and Race

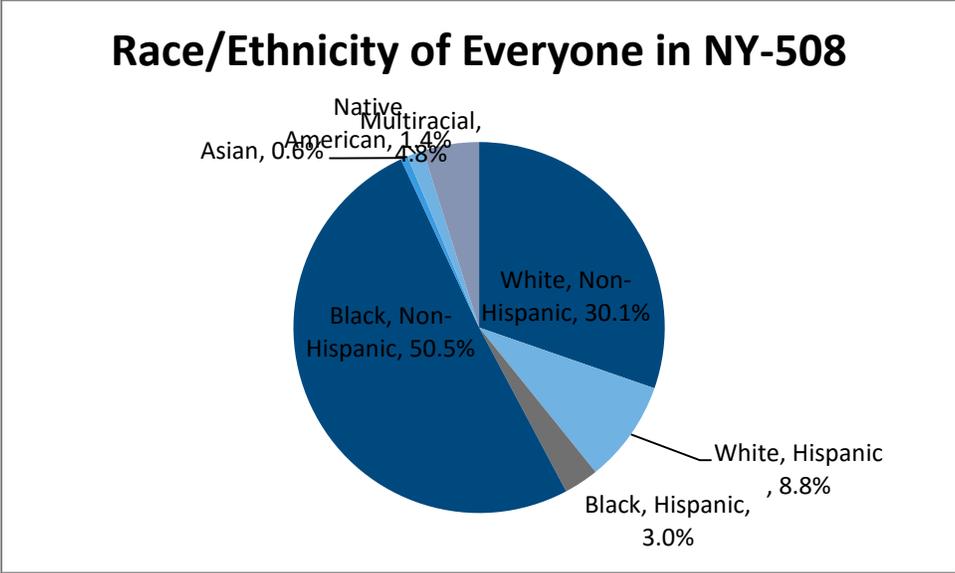


Figure 1.2 Race/Ethnicity of Everyone in NY-508

13.8% of all homeless people were Hispanic in ethnic origin. 8.8% of all homeless people were Hispanic White, 3% were Hispanic Black, 1.6% were multi-racial and Hispanic. 53.5% of all homeless people were Black or African American.

Number of People Served by Transitional Housing and Rapid Rehousing

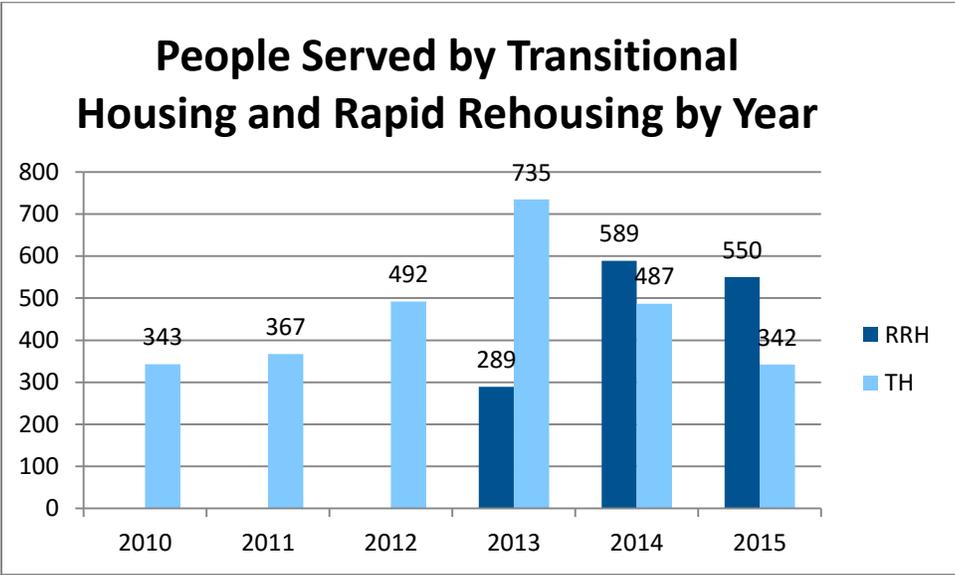


Figure 1.3 Number of people served by intervention type: Rapid Rehousing and Transitional Housing

In 2015, there were more people served in Erie County by Rapid-Rehousing providers than there were by transitional housing. Rapid Re-housing is a relatively new innovation in homelessness alleviation

services that involves providing clients with a time-limited housing voucher that they are weaned off. This is in contrast with transitional housing which has a specific term – usually two years. People in transitional housing retain their “homeless” designation, but those receiving help from rapid rehousing programs are not consider homeless because they are housed in their terminal housing destination. As a consequence, the shift has lead to a decrease in homeless numbers, and the shorter-time frame has permitted more people to be served in rapid rehousing than the decrease in transitional housing inventory. It is not just replacing beds, it is expanding the assistance capacity of the Continuum of Care.

The Indispensable Role of the Department of Social Services, and the Consequence for HMIS Data and Program Delivery

New York State is a right-to-shelter state by virtue of the New York State Supreme Court’s interpretation of Article XVII of the New York State Constitution in Callahan vs. Carey (1979)⁶. Simply stated, this ruling established that the State and City of New York have a legal obligation to provide shelter to those experiencing homelessness. In Western New York, the county departments of social services fulfill this state obligation.

In Erie County, families experiencing homelessness are placed into shelter by the Department of Social Services. The Department of Social Services thus acts as a single point of entry, and homeless best practices such as diversion are standard practice there. As a consequence, the shelters are thus used as single points of entry for rapid rehousing programs as all families who are HUD category 1 defined homeless⁷ are presumed to be sheltered. These shelters receive County ESG funds are all in HMIS. Single adults are placed both through the department of social services and by showing in person – while family shelters receive per-diems for placements, single shelters often do not. The vast majority of clients receiving services are in HMIS; however, the department of social services places families in hotels and those families were not entered into HMIS in 2015. In 2016, the DSS Afterhours program was transferred from Crisis Services to Western New York 211 (operated by the Olmsted Center for Sight). WNY211 already relies upon our HMIS implementation for its database, and is relying on the ServicePoint (homelessness case manager portal) for recording hotel stays. That gap is closed in 2016 but it is omitted in this report.

Niagara County’s HMIS covers many of the beds, however the numbers are a very small fraction of the total number of people experiencing homelessness. In Niagara County, the department of social services serves the overwhelming majority of homeless people. It is common for the Niagara County Department of Social Services to directly place clients in available apartments; this is a consequence of extremely low rents in Niagara Falls and unusually high vacancy-rates (even by Western New York standards) which allow the DSS shelter-allowance to cover the full cost of housing, if the landlord is willing to accept a

⁶ For more information, we recommend reading <http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/our-programs/advocacy/legal-victories/the-callahan-legacy-callahan-v-carey-and-the-legal-right-to-shelter/>

⁷ See Appendix for the definition

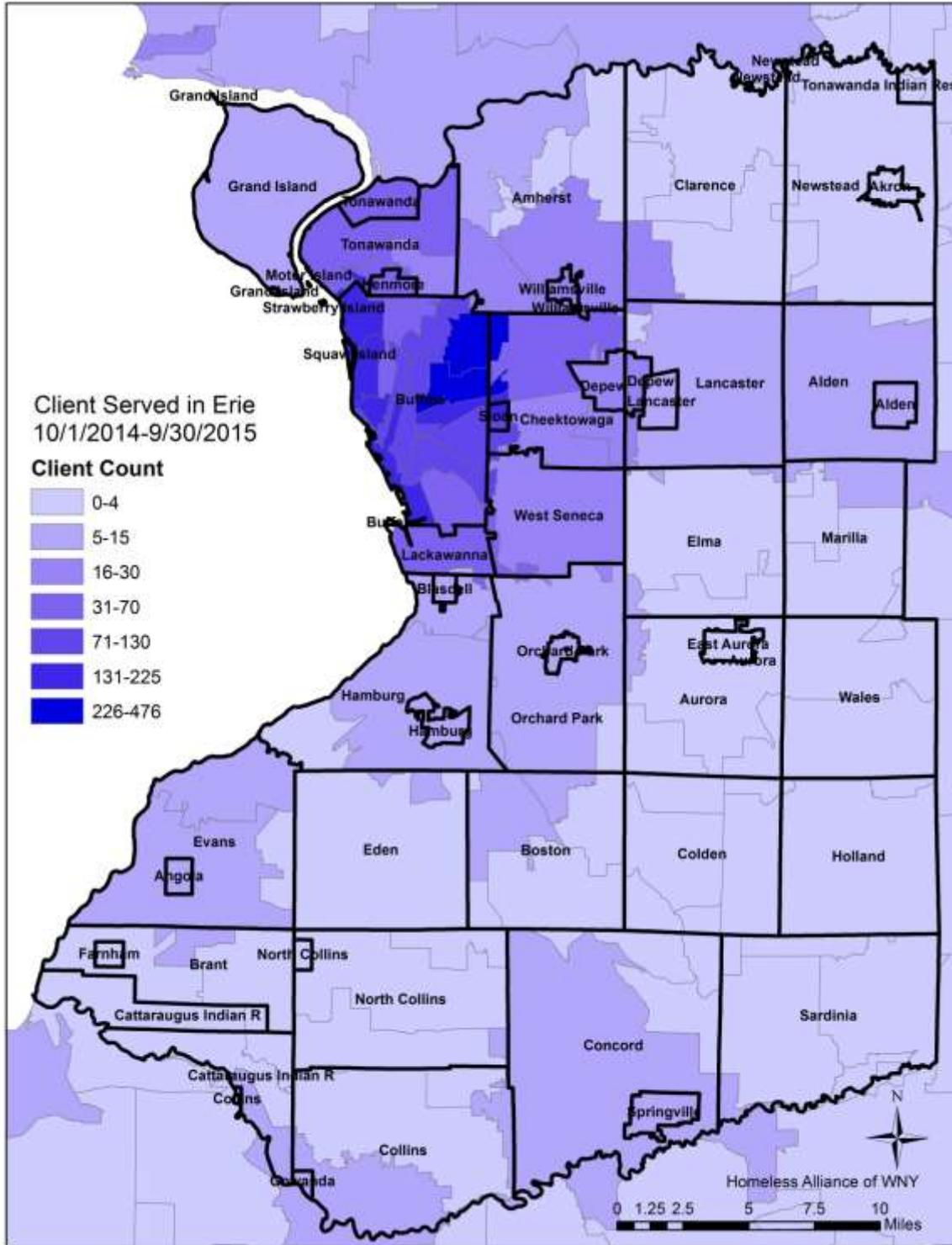
security agreement. The number of clients in the shelters that were also DSS clients are subtracted from the total (as best as it is reported to us). While all agencies are diligent in their record keeping, privacy agreements prevent the exact duplication rate from being known. A shared secure database, such as HMIS, would allow for a better understanding of how people experience homelessness in Niagara County in the aggregate. Fortunately, more programs are signed on for 2016.

In Genesee County, there are two shelters and one transitional housing program. In 2016, we anticipate almost all of these programs to be on HMIS; however, the department of social services, which records the highest number of clients, is not. Orleans and Wyoming Counties lack formal emergency shelters, and thus the departments of social services fulfill this role. They either facilitate a doubled-up situation, rent a room in a motel for a homeless person, or provide them with transportation to a shelter in either Buffalo or Rochester. These agencies serve relatively low numbers of clients per year compared to Niagara or Erie Counties, however these departments are also significantly smaller. HMIS coverage in the DSSes would allow us to understand how these individuals and families experience homelessness, and in the cases of clients transported to Buffalo, what happened next. New York State should provide departments of social services more administrative support. This would facilitate entry of information into a state-wide data warehouse and allow for better regional planning. While we repeatedly find that the overwhelming majority of Erie and Niagara County's homeless clients last had a permanent address in the counties they are accessing services in, we do not yet see exactly how clients in the rural sections of the CoC experience homelessness and we do not have any mechanisms to track recidivism in Genesee, Orleans, or Wyoming Counties.

The New York State right-to-shelter statute creates a condition where some of HUD's best practices, such as single-point of entry, become five points of entry as each county is legally responsible for the activities within each county. The right-to-shelter statute also means that part of coordinated entry's goals – best matches for shelter placement – become “everyone”. It also guarantees a warm place to sleep during cold winter months. We consider this legal circumstance to be an indispensable tool in aiding homeless people get back on their feet.

We repeatedly find that the county departments of social services play an crucial role in assisting Western New Yorkers find shelter and end their episode of homelessness. Being a right-to-shelter state means that we do not have some problems of other regions in needing to create wait-lists for clients for shelters. We do not have families with children sleeping on the streets. The departments of social services are to be commended for their work and we should continuously find ways to better collaborate to effectively end homelessness in Western New York.

SECTION 2: Erie County



Map 2.1: Zip Code of Origin of All Homeless Clients in Erie County

Erie County Poverty Brief

Below is a brief overview of general poverty in Buffalo and Erie County. The population of the very poor serves as a comparison group to those experiencing homelessness as many demographic characteristics are very similar. While the City of Buffalo has only 28% of Erie County's total population, 59% of Erie County's population who lives below the poverty threshold is a Buffalo resident⁸. Of those reporting a zip code, 87% of homeless people originated in Buffalo. 91% originated from Erie County. 4.7% originated from Erie County but outside of Buffalo. Poverty is concentrated in the City of Buffalo, and the experience of homelessness is even more concentrated there.

Poverty is the Root Cause of Homelessness

- ▶ 30.9% of people in Buffalo and 14.7% of people in Erie County live below the poverty line⁹.
- ▶ 53% of female-headed households with minor children in Buffalo live below the poverty level, 42% in Erie County.¹⁰
- ▶ 26.2% of families live below the poverty level in Buffalo and 10.9% in Erie County.
- ▶ 52.2% of the children who live in poverty in Buffalo are young children (age below 5), 26.5% in Erie County.
- ▶ 13.6% of the civilian workforce (11.6% male and 15.6% female) in the city of Buffalo live below the poverty threshold (compared to 6.2% of all and 5.2% male and 7.3% of female of Erie County's population – Buffalo is 53% of Erie's total).

| Percent of Poverty Line | Percent of Buffalo Residents at or Below % of Poverty Line | Percent of Erie County Residents at or Below % of Poverty Line |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| 50 | 14.76% | 6.94% |
| 100 | 30.9% | 18.71% |
| 125 | 37.82% | 23.00% |
| 150 | 43.77% | 28.92% |
| 185 | 51.50% | 31.24% |
| 200 | 54.23% | 38.18% |

Table 2.1: Percent of Erie County and Buffalo Residents below the Poverty Line

⁸ Computed from 2015 US Census

⁹ Data shown in this section is from American Community Survey 2009-2013 5 years estimates except where stated

¹⁰ 66% of Erie County's female-headed households with minor children live in the city of Buffalo

Table 2.2 illustrates the extent of poverty among Buffalo's women and children:

| NUMBER OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS | Percent Below Poverty, Erie County ¹¹ | Percent Below Poverty, City of Buffalo |
|---|--|--|
| No children | 9.3%* | 15.4% |
| 1 or 2 children | 36.9%* | 46.9% |
| 3 or 4 children | 62.7%* | 70.8% |
| 5 or more children | 70.9%* | 81.8% |

Table 2.2: Female Households by Number of Children- ACS 2009-2013 5-year Estimates

- ▶ 51.6% (33,619) of renters in Buffalo and 46.7% of renters in Erie County overall pay more than 30% of their income for rent.

Percent of Income Paid Towards Rent by Income Bracket and Location

| Renter Household Income/% of Income As Rent | Erie County | | Buffalo | |
|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Estimate | Percent | Estimate | Percent |
| Total Renter-occupied housing units: | 133,059 | | 65,108 | |
| Less than \$20,000: | 45,983 | 34.56% | 27,695 | 42.54% |
| <20% of income | 1,155 | 2.51% | 739 | 2.67% |
| 20 to 29 % of income | 4,007 | 8.71% | 2,240 | 8.09% |
| ≥ 30 % of income | 40,821 | 88.77% | 24,716 | 89.24% |
| \$20,000 to \$34,999: | 27,603 | 20.74% | 12,969 | 19.92% |
| < 20% of income | 2,297 | 8.32% | 1,331 | 10.26% |
| 20 to 29 % of income | 8,733 | 31.64% | 4,528 | 34.91% |
| ≥ 30 % of income | 16,573 | 60.04% | 7,110 | 54.82% |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999: | 18,193 | 13.67% | 7,324 | 11.25% |
| < 20% of income | 4,681 | 25.73% | 2,119 | 28.93% |
| 20 to 29 % of income | 10,043 | 55.20% | 3,777 | 51.57% |
| ≥ 30 % of income | 3,469 | 19.07% | 1,428 | 19.50% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999: | 18,514 | 13.91% | 7,607 | 11.68% |
| < 20% of income | 13,058 | 70.53% | 5,982 | 78.64% |
| 20 to 29 % of income | 4,452 | 24.05% | 1,260 | 16.56% |
| ≥30 % of income | 1,004 | 5.42% | 365 | 4.80% |
| \$75,000 or more: | 14,458 | 10.87% | 5,708 | 8.77% |
| < 20% of income | 13,142 | 90.90% | 5,404 | 94.67% |
| 20 to 29 % of income | 1,084 | 7.50% | 304 | 5.33% |
| ≥30 % of income | 232 | 1.60% | 0 | 0.00% |

Table 2.3: Proportion of Renters with an Income, proportion of that income bracket affording rent

Housing affordability is usually considered to be no more than 30% of rent compared to a household's income. Approximately half (49%) of all of Erie County's renters live in the City of Buffalo. In the city of Buffalo, 61% of renters earn less than \$35,000, and 78% of these renters pay more than 30% of their income on rent. Fifty-five percent of all renters in Erie County earn less than \$35,000 and 78% of them also pay more than 30% of income but 55% of these renters are in city of Buffalo. Based on fair market

¹¹ Being that the city of Buffalo is included in Erie County, these percentages include Buffalo's poor. 37% of the single female headed households without children, 50% of those with 1 or 2 children, 65% of those with three or four children, and 68% of those with five or more children live in the city of Buffalo.

rent reported by HUD, a two-bedroom apartment costs \$768 including utilities. A household with one wage-earner would need to earn at least \$16/hr, which is 78% more than the current NYS minimum wage of \$9.00 (as of January 1, 2015). A single parent working full time in a minimum wage job would need to work 71 hours a week in order to afford such an apartment and could easily fall into homelessness. As it is, presuming 40 hour work-weeks and 52 worked weeks per year, \$20,000-\$34,999 is \$9.61-\$16.81 per hour. Over half of the renting population in both Buffalo (53%) and Erie County (60%) are paying rents higher than what is considered affordable.

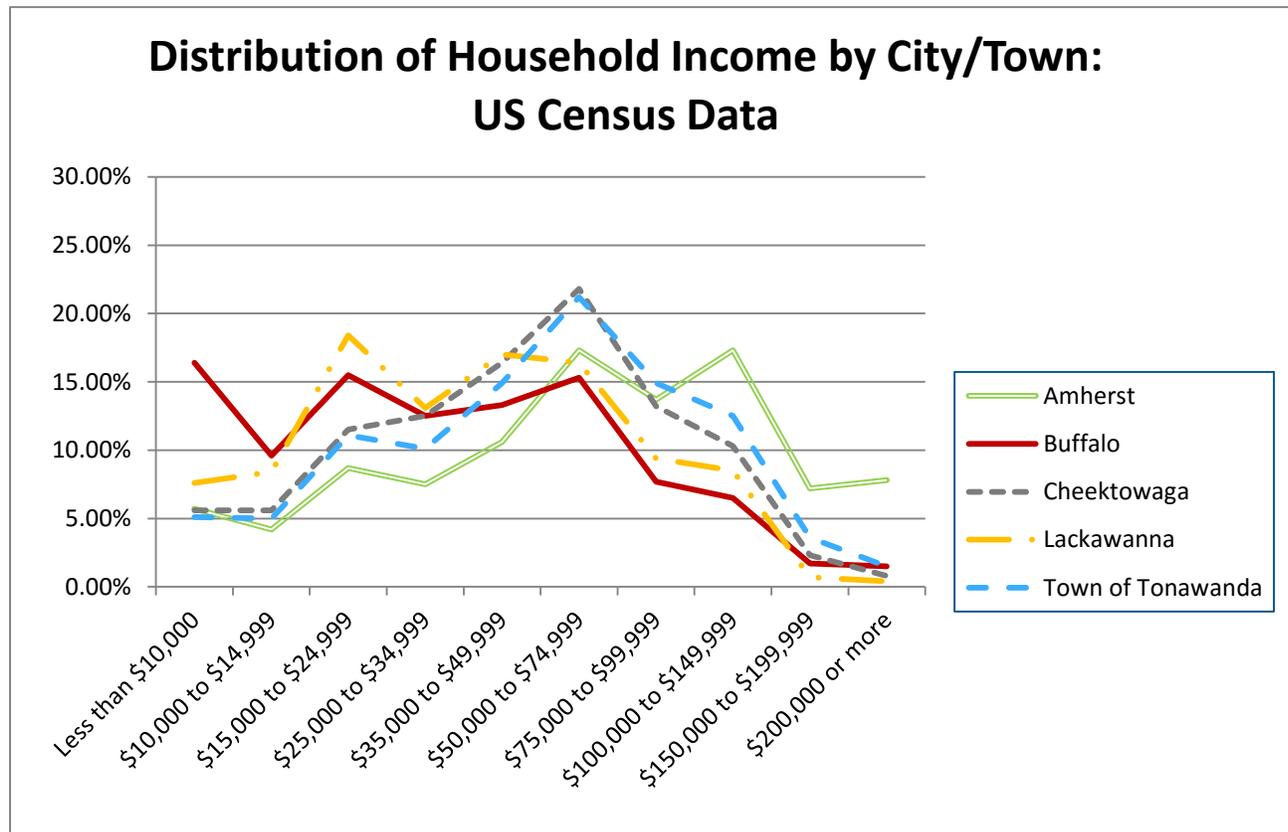


Figure 2.1: Distribution of Household Income in 5 select Erie County Municipalities

Income is not similarly distributed throughout the region – a higher proportion of residents of the suburbs earn more than those of the regions cities. For this reason, it is not surprising that most of Erie County’s homeless population originate in the City of Buffalo.

Overview of Homelessness in Erie County

A Note on Data:

There is increased HMIS coverage in Erie County from 2014 to 2015. As a result, increases in HMIS numbers do not mean overall increases in homelessness but more comprehensive coverage. For instance, the number of families recorded in HMIS increased; however one of the family shelters came online in HMIS this year that had not been previous. The number of families served this year is fewer than what they reported to us last year.

This chapter presents the 2015 estimates of homelessness as well as the capacity of homeless services for sheltering and housing those who experience homelessness in Erie County. The latest point-in-time count was conducted on January 28th, 2015. The annual count is based on both HMIS data and count of

| Program Type | 2012 Estimated Total | 2013 Estimated Total | 2014 Estimated Total | 2015 Estimated Total |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Unique Homeless Persons | 5,681 | 5,754 | 5713¹² | 5455 |
| Emergency Shelter | 4,558 | 4,710 | 4,829 ⁸ | 4284 |
| Transitional Housing | 768 | 775 | 602 | 394 |
| Safe Haven | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 |
| SSO | 712 | 1,266 | 1,337 | 1,002 |
| Outreach | 137 | 223 | 389 | 553 |

Table 2.4: Estimated Counts of Homelessness in Erie County

homeless persons in non-participating programs. The numbers include clients recorded in HMIS-participating programs and an estimate for those that are not participating in HMIS, with reductions to take into consideration duplication. Thus, the overall number takes into consideration people who use multiple program types and counts them once, while program-type counts take into consideration those who use multiple providers of the same type.

For example, if someone used the emergency shelter and later was admitted to transitional housing, he/she will be counted in both ES and TH categories. However, he/she will only be counted as one person in the total number and in that particular category. For example if someone used one emergency shelter then went to another emergency shelter, it will only be counted as one person in the ES category. This is why adding all of the program types ends up a higher number than the overall estimate.

Point In Time Count (PIT)

HUD requires each CoC across the nation to conduct an annual point in time count of both the sheltered and unsheltered homeless during the last ten days of January. On July 22, 2014, the CoC chose to voluntarily count unsheltered clients. Homeless outreach workers and community volunteers went to soup kitchens, homeless encampments, under bridges, and other places where the homeless are known

¹² Revised 2014 number based on better data after more providers entered HMIS: duplication across providers were found to be higher than previous AHAR calculations excluding the provider determined.

to congregate to conduct the counts. The data collected was entered into HMIS to ensure an unduplicated count.

| | Unsheltered Homeless Count | Sheltered Homeless Count | Total |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| January 26, 2011 | 178 | 760 | 938 |
| October 26, 2011 | 135 | N/A | N/A |
| January 26, 2012 | 106 | 804 | 910 |
| July 26, 2012 | 131 | N/A | N/A |
| January 30, 2013 | 98 | 750 | 848 |
| January 29, 2014 | 64 | 784 | 848 |
| July 22, 2014 | 119 | N/A | N/A |
| January 28, 2015 | 61 | 684 | 745 |

Table 2.5: Point in Time Counts in Last 3 Years

Point in Time numbers are a one day snapshot of the homeless population. Outreach teams, volunteers, and shelter staff interview every homeless person that they can find in an attempt to construct a one count. 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, we estimate there to be 900 people homeless on any given night in Erie County.**

Comparison of Bed Inventory¹³

There are five types of housing programs in the Erie County.

| | Total Beds | HMIS coverage Rate | Dedicated Chronically Homeless Beds |
|--------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ES | 463 | 87% | 0 |
| RRH | 304 | 100% | 0 |
| TH | 393 | 81% | 0 |
| PSH | 1229 | 71% | 178 |
| Safe Haven | 16 | 100% | 0 |
| TOTAL | 2405 | 80% | 178 |

Table 2.6: Bed Inventory Comparison- HMIS Participation

Domestic Violence providers are not allowed to enter data into HMIS currently. HAWNY is working with them in an effort to obtain as much information as possible.

¹³ These are numbers of beds in the CoC by housing type; this is not a count of people. HMIS coverage is the percentage of beds that are entered into HMIS of those which are eligible to be entered. Domestic violence specific beds are not HMIS eligible and thus not included in the coverage rate calculation.

HMIS Coverage by Household Bed Type in Erie County

| Year | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children |
|------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2013 | 75.80% | 66.60% | 84.70% | 100% |
| 2014 | 74.80% | 64.60% | 84.70% | 100% |
| 2015 | 83.40% | 67.70% | 100% | 100% |

Table 2.7 HMIS Bed Coverage by Family Type since 2013

The below charts are how many people of what family type were recorded in HMIS, and the above chart shows the total coverage of bed type in HMIS.

| 2013 | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children | Unknown HH Type |
|------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Households | 2,909 | 2,233 (76%) | 422 (14%) | 198 (7%) | 56 (2%) |
| Persons | 3,844* | 2,248 (58%) | 1,340 (35%) | 199 (5%) | 57 (2%) |

Table 2.8: Homeless Persons Household Composition 2013

| 2014 | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children | Unknown HH Type |
|------------|-------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Households | 3,393 | 2,492 (74%) | 481 (14%) | 274 (8%) | 146 (4%) |
| Persons | 4,448 | 2,510 (56%) | 1,481 (34%) | 277 (6%) | 180 (4%) |

Table 2.9: Homeless Persons Household Composition 2014

| 2015 (HMIS recorded) | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children | Unknown HH Type |
|----------------------|-------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Households | 3268 | 2480 (75.6%) | 476 (14.5%) | 246 (7.5%) | 60 (1.8%) |
| Persons | 4273 | 2508 (58.6%) | 1451 (34%) | 247 (5.6%) | 67 (1.6%) |

Table 2.10: Homeless Persons Household Composition 2015

Household composition has not changed in percent, but it has changed the number of people experiencing homelessness as recorded in our HMIS system:

- The overall number of persons in families experiencing homelessness has decreased. This decrease is more notable because we have 100% HMIS coverage for family shelters in Erie County in 2015 whereas 2014's HMIS numbers reflect four of five shelters.
- 30 fewer unaccompanied youth (10.8%) experienced homelessness

A majority of homeless households are adult-only (75.6%). When the unit of measure changes from household to person, it remains a majority but a smaller one (56%) as families have more people in them to weigh the percentage.

Figure 9: Homeless Persons by Household Type 2012, 2013, 2014

Gender for Homeless Adults

| | Total | % | Without Children | % | With Children and Adults | % |
|--------------------|-------------|-----|------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| Male | 1699 | 56% | 1626 | 65% | 73 | 14% |
| Female | 1319 | 43% | 877 | 35% | 438 | 86% |
| Transgendered | 5 | <1% | 5 | <1% | 0 | |
| Don't Know/Refused | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | |
| Subtotal | 3023 | | 2508 | | 511 | |

Table 2.11: Homeless Adults- Gender 2015

Females were likely to be under counted because there are a significant number of beds that serve only women and/or female heads of households, such as domestic violence programs that do not report into HMIS. The majority of homeless individual adults are males and the majority of homeless families are female heads of household.

Age

1,175 children under the age of 18 were homeless last year, comprising 27% of the homeless population. 36% of the homeless children were young children who were less than 5 years old. The numbers of homeless adults aged 55 or above dramatically drop off, especially those aged 62 and older. This may be due to becoming eligible for social security benefits such as senior and subsidized housing, or the increased likelihood of death on streets. HUD and CoC now define homeless youth as being up to the age of 24. HUD defines homeless youth ages 13-17 as households with only children or as people 18-24. These groups combined totaled 583.

| Age | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children | Unknown HH Type |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Under 5 | 429 | 0 | 424 | 5 | 0 |
| 5 – 12 | 382 | 0 | 372 | 8 | 2 |
| 13 – 17 | 377 | 0 | 143 | 234 | 0 |
| 18 – 24 | 462 | 336 | 124 | 0 | 2 |
| 25 – 34 | 699 | 475 | 223 | 0 | 1 |
| 35 – 44 | 614 | 501 | 112 | 0 | 1 |
| 45 – 54 | 750 | 704 | 46 | 0 | 0 |
| 55 – 61 | 346 | 340 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 62+ | 152 | 152 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Don't Know/Refused | 17 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| Information Missing | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| Age Error (Negative Age or 100+) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 4273 | 2508 | 1451 | 247 | 67 |

Table 2.12: Homeless Population- Age by Household Types 2015

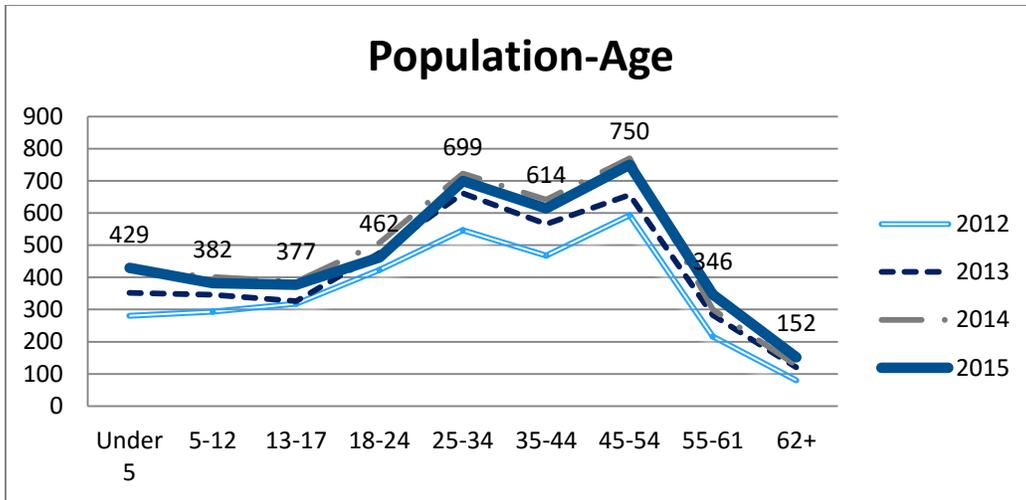


Figure 2.2 Homeless Population- Age (2012-2015 comparison)

Single adults or households with two adults were evenly distributed between 18-54, slightly leaning towards the 45-54 age group with a fair drop off after the age of 54. However, families with children were most likely to be young single mothers aged between 18-34, with children under 12.

Race

The racial composition of those experiencing homelessness differs significantly from both the population of Erie County residents and those residents experiencing poverty. Notably, African Americans are overrepresented, being 50% of the homeless population, 33% of the population in poverty, and 13.9% of the general population. This is worth considering when making broader policies for the region at large as different racial groups experience very different levels of affluence.

| | All ¹⁴ | In Poverty ¹⁵ | Homeless ¹⁶ |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| White | 79.6% | 50.3% | 36.0% |
| Black or African American | 13% | 32.0% | 53.0% |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 0.48% | 0.81% | 1.0% |
| Asian | 2.7% | 5.9% | 1.0% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.02% | 0.01% | <0.01% |
| Other race | 1.8% | 6.2% | 4.0% |

Table 2.13: Overall, Poverty, and Homeless Population Comparison by Race

¹⁴ American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2009-2014

¹⁵ American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2009-2014

¹⁶ Buffalo Area Service Network Data, 10/1/2014-9/30/2015

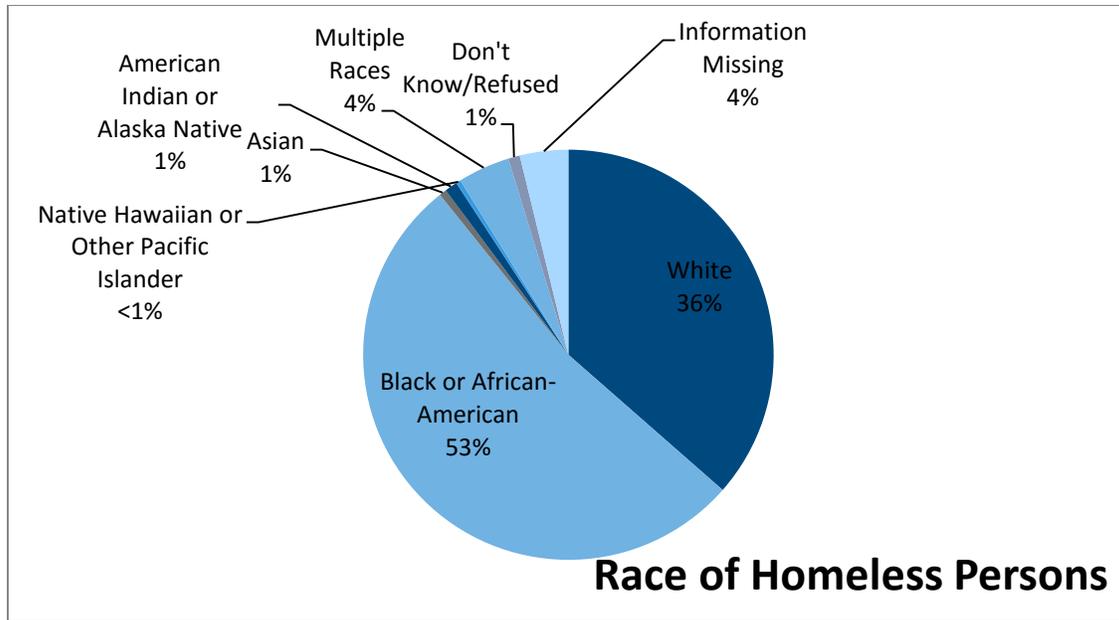


Figure 2.3: Homeless Population- Race
 Note: Hispanic/ Latino is considered an ethnicity, not a race

Ethnicity

Of those in Erie County who live below the poverty line, 11.9% are Hispanic. This approximately matches the ethnic composition of the homeless population. Hispanics are over-represented in the homeless population compared to the general population of Erie County, whose ethnic background is 4.9% Hispanic.¹⁷

Prior Living Situation and Reasons of Homelessness

The reasons for homelessness are computed by people who cited those listed below as a cause. If a person experienced multiple episodes of homelessness with different causes, they would count twice. If all episodes of homelessness had the same cause, it would count in the category once.

| Top 5 Reasons Cited For Homelessness | Percent Citing |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Eviction or Foreclosure | 20.73% |
| Household Disputes (not DV) | 20.34% |
| Loss of Job/Income | 14.98% |
| Domestic Violence | 8.88% |
| Mental Health | 8.11% |

Table 2.14: Homeless Population-Prior Living Situation

¹⁷ American Community Survey 5 year estimates 2009-2013

| Prior Living Situation | 2013 | % | 2014 | % | 2015 | % |
|--------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|
| Stay with family or friend | 903 | 31% | 889 | 29% | 1035 | 34% |
| Emergency Shelter | 626 | 21% | 752 | 24% | 772 | 26% |
| Rental by Client | 488 | 17% | 489 | 16% | 529 | 17% |
| Place not meant for habitation | 354 | 11% | 454 | 15% | 424 | 14% |
| Institutions | 281 | 10% | 311 | 10% | 271 | 9% |
| Other* | 304 | 10% | 211 | 7% | 305 | 10% |

Table 2.15: Homeless Population- Reason for Homelessness

The chart above details the prior living situations of people seeking assistance in HUD-funded facilities. It is worth noting that the prior living situation often means the circumstances of the night immediately preceding the shelter stay. For instance, if a client was staying with their sister as a result of an eviction, it would be recorded as “Staying with family or friend.” It is common for people in doubled-up situations to need to leave as a result of clauses in leases preventing over-occupancy of dwellings. In addition, it’s not uncommon for clients to transfer between shelters during an episode of homelessness. Thus, this chart glosses over some of the complexities of individual homelessness situations, but also reveals the way that social networks are used to cope with homelessness.

*Other includes: owned by client, permanent housing, transitional housing, don’t know, refused and missing data.

Veteran Status

7% of all homeless adults in Erie County were Veterans. Most of these were single adults, and most of these were male. (See section devoted to Veterans on page ____.)

| | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | Unknown HH Type |
|----------------|-------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Veteran | 222 | 209 | 13 | 0 |

Table 2.16: Veteran Status by Household

Disabling Conditions

Overall, 47% of homeless persons (33% of adults) do not have a disability and 47% (61% of adults) have one or more disabling conditions (6% data errors/missing both groups). The most common disability types were mental illness (33%) and substance abuse (30%). Percentages do not add up to 100% as 30% of homeless people had more than one disability. Disability is often presumed to be a co-occurring circumstance for homeless persons, and while it is more represented than in the general population, it is not deterministic.

For instance, approximately one in 25 people (4.2%) will experience a serious, life-interfering episode of mental illness¹⁸ within a year. In Erie County, with a population of 919,064¹⁹, one could estimate that 38,600 people would experience such an episode. Only 3.6% of that potential population appeared in HMIS-participating shelters.

| | All Persons | Adults | Children | Unknown |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Mental Illness | 1415 | 1352 | 55 | 8 |
| Alcohol Abuse | 622 | 619 | 2 | 1 |
| Drug Abuse | 698 | 692 | 5 | 1 |
| Chronic Health Condition | 231 | 228 | 3 | 0 |
| HIV/AIDS and Related Diseases | 26 | 25 | 0 | 1 |
| Developmental Disability | 266 | 174 | 92 | 0 |
| Physical Disability | 708 | 697 | 10 | 1 |

Table 2.17: Homeless Population-Disability Types

¹⁸ Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2016 <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

¹⁹ Source: US Census 2010

Zip Code of Last Permanent Address

The zip code of their last permanent address refers to the last address where the client lived for more than 90 days. To use the previous example of a client who was evicted and then stayed with their sister, this would be the zip code of their former apartment, not their sister's domicile. Maps reflecting the homeless count based on Zip Codes can be found in Appendix Four-Map 1 and Map 2. Full tables

| Total Clients | Zip Code of Last Permanent Address(976) | County | City |
|---------------|---|--------|-----------|
| 478 | 14215 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 406 | 14211 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 223 | 14213 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 217 | 14212 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 202 | 14203 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 162 | 14207 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 145 | 14201 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 127 | 14208 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 101 | 14206 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 101 | 14210 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 101 | 14214 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 91 | 14209 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 87 | 14202 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 87 | 14204 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 71 | 14220 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 65 | 14225 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 60 | 14216 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 57 | 14222 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 49 | 14218 | Erie | Buffalo |
| 45 | 14150 | Erie | Tonawanda |

Table 2.18: Zip Code of Last Permanent Address

Education

The educational attainment of homeless persons is similar to the educational attainment of the part of Erie County's general population living in poverty (see Page 15). With that said, the less educated are over-represented, especially those who did not graduate high school. There is a slightly higher risk of becoming homeless for those who finished less schooling. Only 51% of homeless clients completed high school, and 6% have a bachelor degree. To compare, according to the US Census, 90.2% of Erie County completed high-school level education and 31.2% completed a bachelor's degree. In the City of Buffalo, 82.5% completed high school and 24.7% completed college.

| Highest Level of Education | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| No schooling completed (HUD) | 0.41% |
| Nursery school to 4th grade (HUD) | 0.23% |
| 5th grade or 6th grade (HUD) | 0.70% |
| 7th grade or 8th grade (HUD) | 2.70% |
| 9th grade (HUD) | 3.78% |
| 10th grade (HUD) | 7.63% |
| 11th grade (HUD) | 9.62% |
| 12th grade, No diploma (HUD) | 4.63% |
| GED (HUD) | 10.97% |
| High School Diploma (HUD) | 17.69% |
| Some Technical School | 0.62% |
| Technical School Certification | 1.58% |
| Some College | 14.20% |
| College Degree | 4.99% |
| Graduate/Professional Degree | 0.94% |
| Client doesn't know (HUD) | 8.98% |
| Client refused (HUD) | 1.11% |
| Blank | 9.21% |

Figure 2.19: Homeless Population- Adult's Highest Education Attained

Homelessness In The Schools

| School District | 11- Oct | 12- Nov | 12- 13 | 13-14 | 14-15 |
|--|------------|------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| AKRON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 4 | 2 | <4 | 0 | 0 |
| ALDEN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| AMHERST CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 10 | 13 | <4 | 12 | 5 |
| BUFFALO CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 810 | 1,033 | 909 | 1,391 | 2,125 |
| CHEEKTOWAGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 32 | 37 | 41 | 47 | 54 |
| CHEEKTOWAGA-MARYVALE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT | 16 | 20 | 17 | 26 | 21 |
| CHEEKTOWAGA-SLOAN UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT | 2 | 10 | 12 | <4 | 17 |
| CLARENCE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 15 | 12 | 20 | 16 | 15 |
| CLEVELAND HILL UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT | 18 | 23 | 26 | 28 | 28 |
| DEPEW UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT | 23 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 16 |
| EAST AURORA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT | 0 | 0 | <4 | <4 | 0 |
| EDEN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 20 | 10 | 15 | 30 | 13 |
| EVANS-BRANT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (LAKE SHORE) | 25 | 22 | 48 | 69 | 31 |
| FRONTIER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 23 | 9 | 12 | 14 | 5 |
| GRAND ISLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 3 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 13 |
| HAMBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 3 | 1 | <4 | <4 | 5 |
| HOLLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 5 | 11 | <4 | <4 | 7 |
| IROQUOIS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 6 | 7 | 116 | 22 | 10 |
| KENMORE-TONAWANDA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT | 122 | 131 | <4 | 104 | 93 |
| LACKAWANNA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 2 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 14 |
| LANCASTER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 3 | 16 | 0 | 5 | 10 |
| NORTH COLLINS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 0 | 0 | 39 | 0 | <4 |
| ORCHARD PARK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 28 | 21 | 8 | 17 | 10 |
| SPRINGVILLE-GRIFFITH INSTITUTE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 12 | 6 | 6 | <4 | 7 |
| SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 8 | 7 | 30 | 33 | 31 |
| TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 10 | 19 | 61 | 42 | 51 |
| WEST SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 53 | 66 | 18 | 39 | 48 |
| WILLIAMSVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 11 | 7 | <4 | 19 | 18 |

Table 2.20: McKinney-Vento Defined Homelessness as Reported by School District

The above chart shows the number of students who were designated as homeless using McKinney-Vento's definition since 2011 in Erie County's school districts. McKinney-Vento has a more expansive definition of homelessness than the HUD definition used in the rest of the report: couch surfers, unstably housed, and imminently homeless count for McKinney Vento though they do not count under the HEARTH act. It is worth noting that while the majority of those who were homeless as defined by the

HEARTH act came from Buffalo, the number does not match the number reported by the city of Buffalo school district. The district's number is much larger. For every 1 child who is HUD homeless, approximately 4 meet the McKinney-Vento definition. For this reason, a prevention program partnering with the Buffalo public schools has a great deal of promise to be successful, as this is the only population of couch-surfers and doubled-up persons who are regularly tracked.

Erie County Emergency Shelters

Overview

New York State is a right-to-shelter state, which means, at least in Western New York, that Emergency Shelter statistics are the best ones to ascertain a picture of homelessness as it is happening. While transitional housing and Safe Haven participants are also defined as “homeless” by HUD, these are longer term interventions with long lengths of stay and thus the characteristics of the population are not necessarily reflective of those immediately experiencing homelessness in that year.

Erie County’s emergency shelters are listed below. An asterisk indicates that it is recorded in our HMIS system. Haven House is a domestic violence shelter and is statutorily exempt from HMIS participation. Little Portion Friary and St. Luke’s Good Shepherd house are entirely privately-funded and have opted not to participate in HMIS. The Homeless Alliance contacts non-HMIS participating shelters for aggregate client counts and imputed using the HMIS return rate for the final total. All shelters are single site with two exceptions: The Erie County Department of Social Services pays for hotel rooms in privately operated hotels, and Family Promise of Western New York utilizes space in places of worship on a weekly-rotating basis.

In addition to the shelters, three italicized shelters were operating from 11/1/2014 to 3/15/2015 as Code Blue Shelters, open any time the wind-chill lows dipped below 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

| Shelter Name | Serving | Beds |
|--|---|----------|
| Buffalo City Mission* | Single Men | 94 |
| Buffalo City Mission – Cornerstone* | Single women, women with children | 38 |
| Children & Family Services – Haven House | Single women, women with children | 36 |
| Compass House* | Youth all sexes | 13 |
| Erie County Department of Social Services Hotel Placements | All | Variable |
| Faith-Based Fellowship | Single Women | 6 |
| Family Promise of Western New York* | Adults with children | 10 |
| Lt. Col. Matt Urban Hope Center – Hope House* | Single women, women with children | 50 |
| Little Portion Friary ²⁰ | Single Men & Single Women | 27 |
| My Place Home (aka Temple of Christ)* | Single women, women with children | 30 |
| Salvation Army* | Adults with children; couple without children, single women | 66 |
| St. Luke’s Good Shepherd House | Single Men & Single Women | 5 |
| Transitional Services Inc. Emergency Shelter* | Single Men & Single Women | 10 |
| <i>City Mission Code Blue</i> | Single Men | 50 |
| <i>City Mission – Cornerstone Code Blue</i> | Single women, women with children | 10 |
| <i>St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy Code Blue</i> | Single men & single women | 15 |

Table 2.21 Emergency Shelters in Erie County

²⁰ Little Portion Friary reports that they turned away people on 2,650 occasions, though there is no way to know what the duplication rate is.

Clients Served

There were 3,179 people served in HMIS shelters (total estimate of all shelters: 4284).

| Household type | HMIS recorded Households |
|--|--------------------------|
| Adult only | 1670 (1684 persons) |
| Unaccompanied Youth | 235 (235 persons) |
| Families (Adult head of household with children) | 385 (1209 persons) |

Table 2.22: Household Type in Erie County Shelters

Emergency Shelter Entry by Month

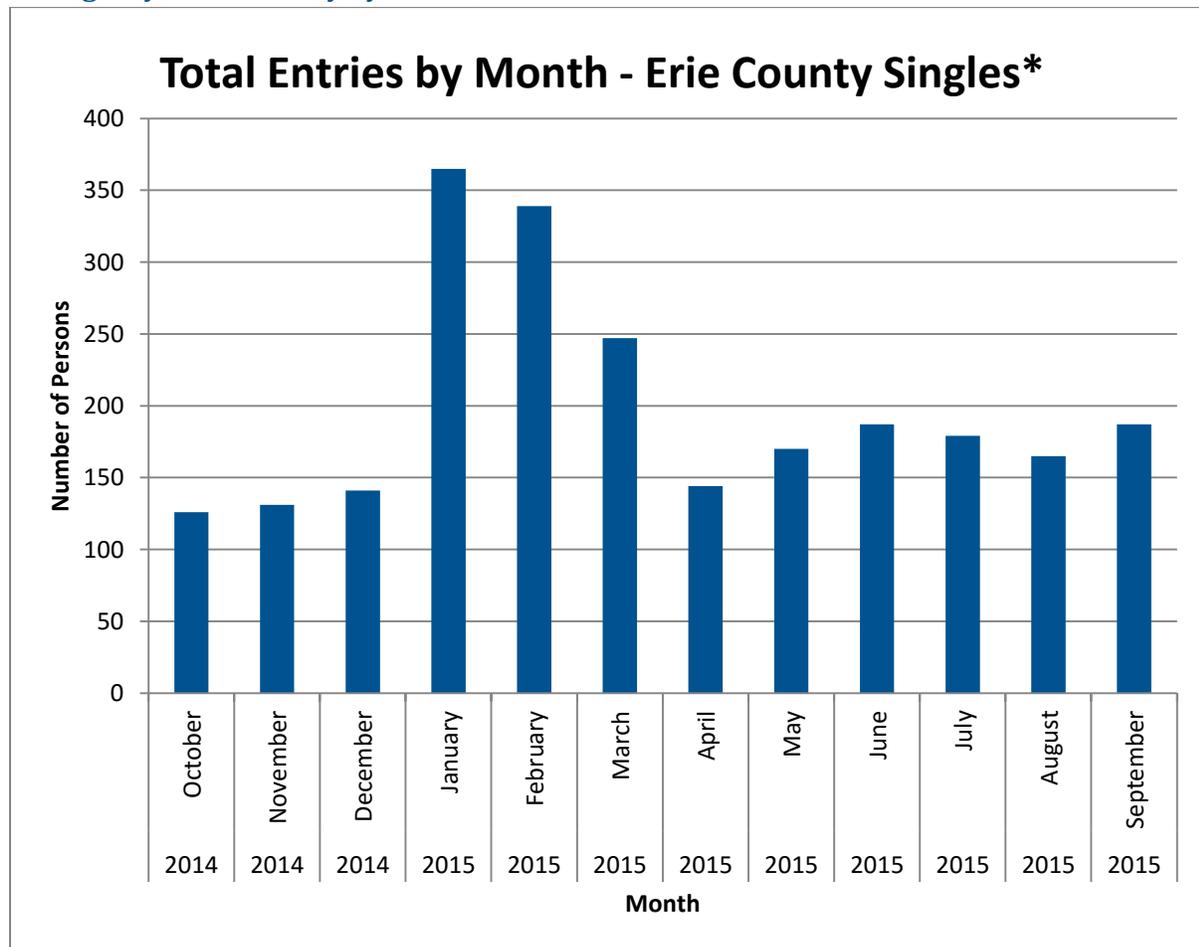


Figure 2.4: Entries in Erie County Emergency Shelters

*The spikes in January, February, and March are the result of Code Blue.

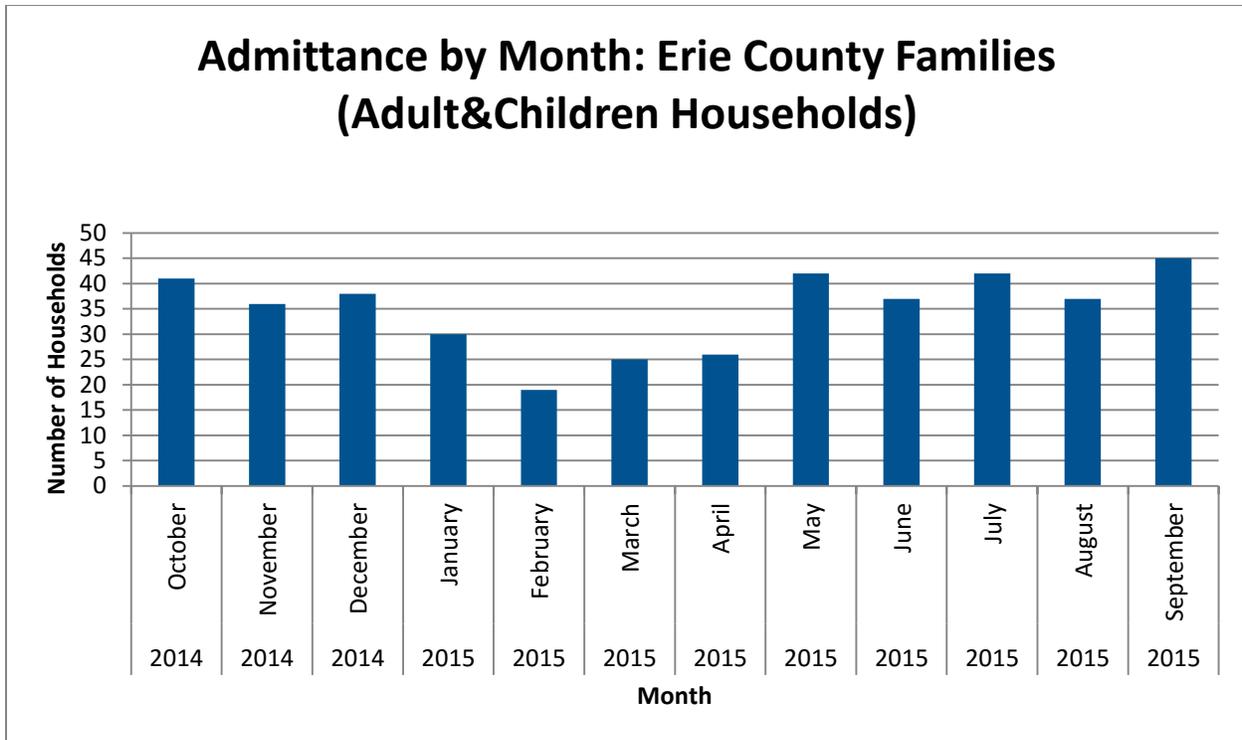


Figure 2.5 Erie County Families entries into Emergency Shelter by Month

Length of Stay (excluding Code Blue stays)

| | Total | Percent |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Less than 30 days | 2002 | 69.37% |
| 31 to 60 days | 595 | 20.62% |
| 61 to 180 days | 278 | 9.63% |
| 181 to 365 days | 8 | 0.28% |
| More than a year | 3 | 0.10% |
| Total | 2886 | 2886 |

Table 2.23: Erie County Length of Stay in Shelter

The average length of stay was 25.7 days. The median was 16 days for those who exited during the reporting year and 23 days for those who had not exited during the reporting year.²¹ Code Blue shelters were not reported because the length of stay is always recorded as one day due to how the shelter operates.

Length of Stay in days By Demographic

| | Average | Median |
|----------------------|---------|--------|
| All in ES | 26 | 16 |
| Singles in ES | 24 | 12 |
| Families in ES | 30 | 22 |
| Single Females in ES | 22 | 9 |
| Single Males in ES | 31 | 18 |

Table 2.24: Erie County Length of Stay by Household Composition

²¹ What this means is that people who entered prior to 10/1/2014 or exited after 9/30/15 had a slightly longer length of stay than those whose time was entirely contained within the reporting year. There are only 292 people in the former condition and 2594 people in the latter, so the reason is likely just sample size.

*Due to program design, all Code Blue stays are registered as one-night, and are thus excluded from this measure.

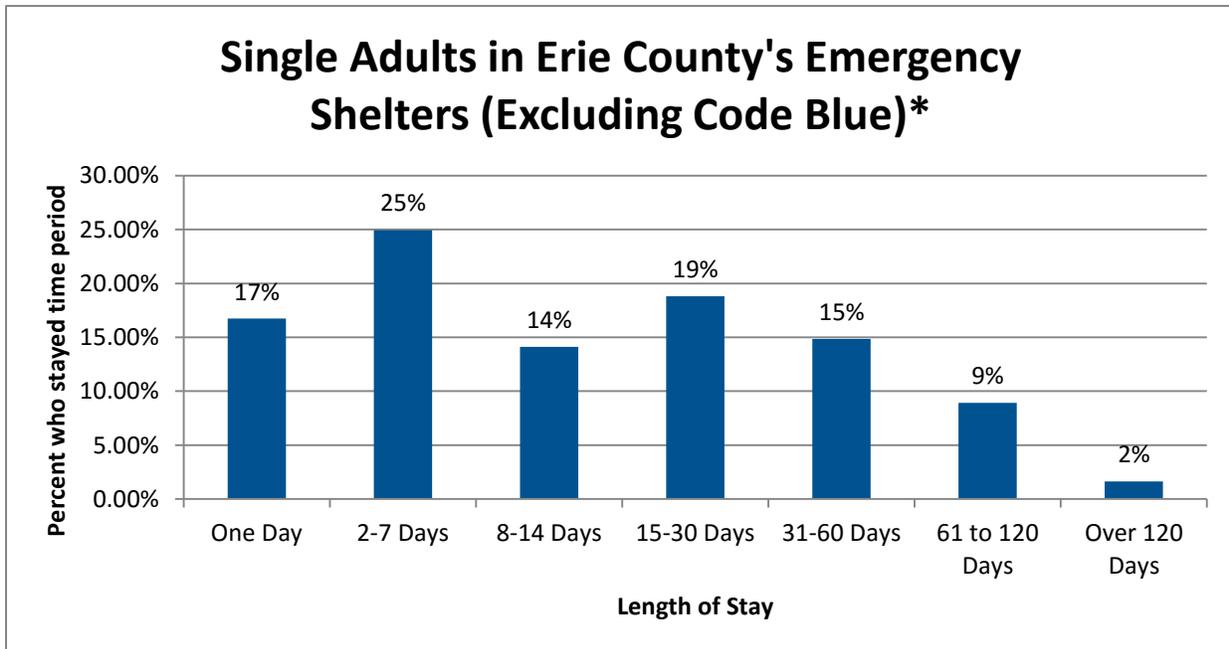


Figure 2.6: Erie County Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter – Single adults, excluding Code Blue

The average length of stay for single adults was 24 days. With that said,

- 17% stayed only a day
- 42% stayed a week or less
- 56% stayed 2 weeks or less
- 75% stayed a month or less

The 25% of clients with longer lengths of stay pulled the average higher. The median length of stay for adults was just over 2 weeks at 16 days.

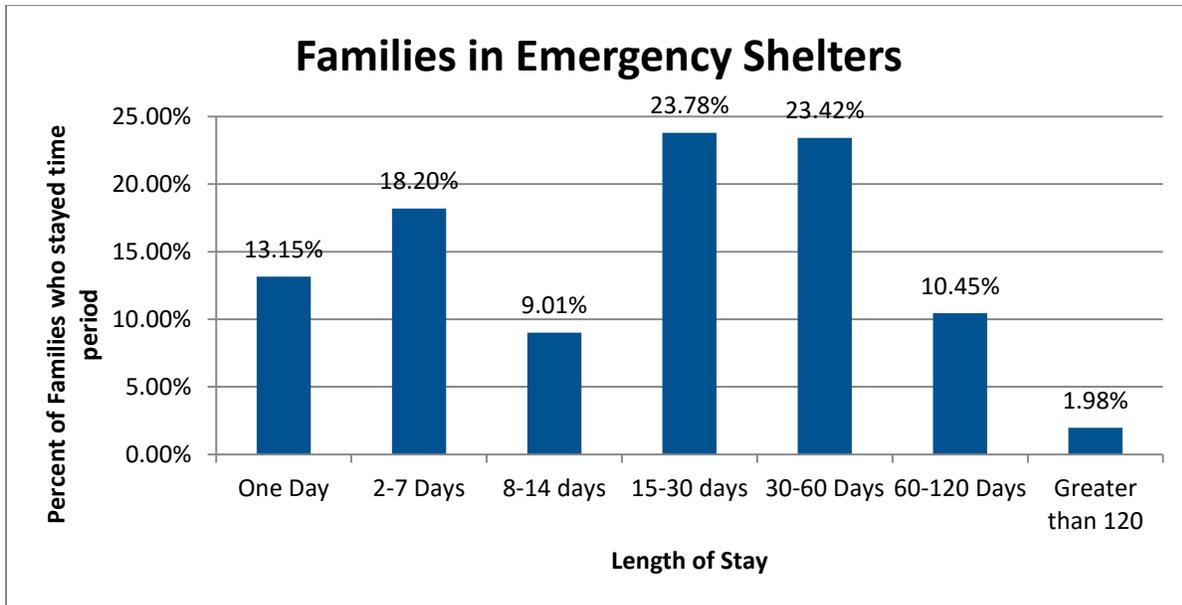


Figure 2.7: Family Length of Stay in Erie County Emergency Shelters

Almost half of all people stayed in the emergency shelter less than two weeks. Total is smaller than overall residents in emergency shelters as this does not include those who had not exited by 10/1/2015. 63% exited by 14 days.

- 13% of families left after only one night
- 31% of families stayed a week or less
- 40% left after two weeks or less
- 64% of families left after a month or less.
- Only 12.4% of families stayed over 60 days.

Household Composition Type

There were 385 households with adults and children as measured by household heads, but 400 as measured by distinct households. A single parent who entered the homelessness alleviation system with one child, and then again with two children would count as two households in this measure, and that affects 15 of the 400 unique iterations.

Notably

- 79% of the families with children households were single female parents.
- 90% of all households were from the City of Buffalo. 80% of female single parent households were from the City of Buffalo, % were from elsewhere in New York State and 11% were from out of state.
- Pre-school aged children were in 67% of homeless households though only 45% of children overall. School-aged children were in 61% of homeless households and 55% of all children were in this age range.

| Household Type | Total Households |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Female Single Parent | 321 |
| Grandparent(s) and Child | 3 |
| Male Single Parent | 20 |
| Other Relative | 3 |
| Adult Only | 1670 |
| Two Parent Family | 48 |

Table: 2.25: Type of households in Erie County Emergency Shelter

| Age of Children in Adult/Child Households | Percent of Households |
|--|-----------------------|
| Pre-School Age Only (under 5) | 39% |
| School Age Only (5-17) | 33% |
| Households with both preschool and school-age children | 28% |

Table 2.26: Percent of households with children of particular age categories

| Age of Children | Number of Children | Percent of Children |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Pre-School Age Only (under 5) | 367 | 45% |
| School Age Only (5-17) | 449 | 55% |

Table 2.27: Percent and Number of Children in families experiencing homelessness in Erie County Shelters

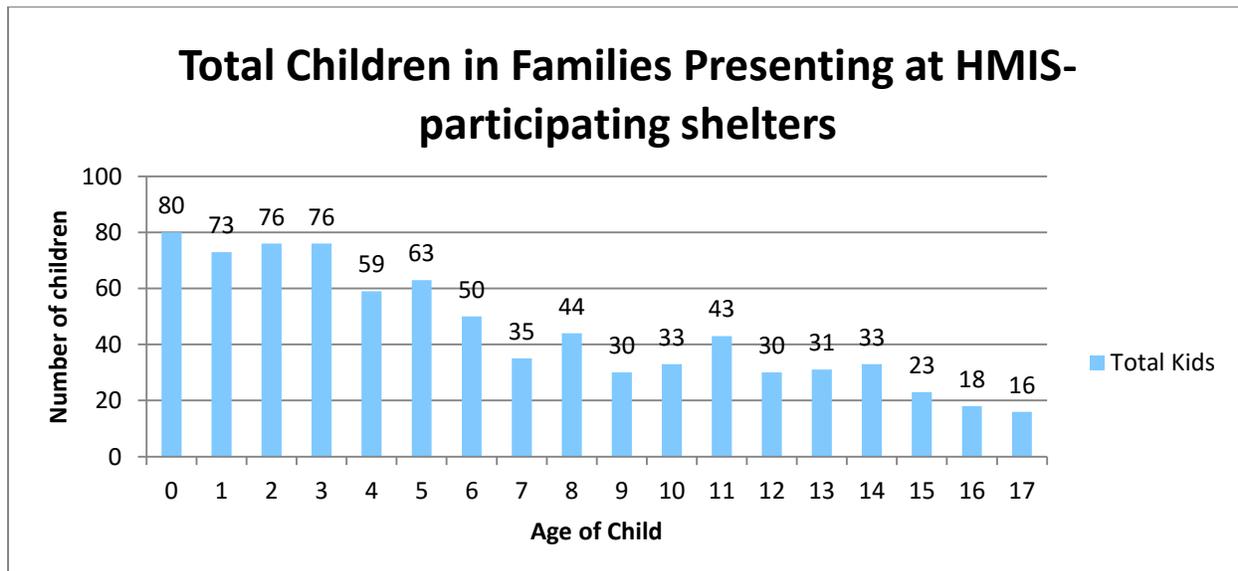
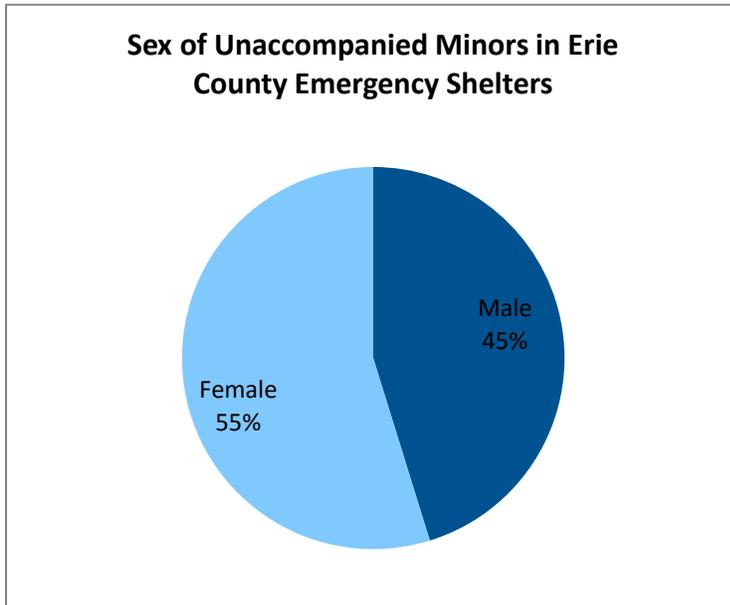


Figure 2.8: Total Number of children of presenting at HMIS participating shelter

There were 778 children who entered as part of a family. The total of the above chart is 816, as some children entered multiple times and were different ages at entries.

There does not appear to be a significant difference in the time of year for school-age or pre-school-age children to enter homelessness. This means that the school year, or lack thereof, does not appear to be playing a big role (the low number of entries in January, February, and March are thought to be the result of the atypically cold winter). There also was not a relationship between the age of the child and the length of stay for the family to experience homelessness. The modal age for a child was under a year.



Females continue to be overrepresented among unaccompanied minors. This was also found in 2014.

Figure 2.9: Sex of unaccompanied minors in Erie County Shelters

Code Blue Shelters

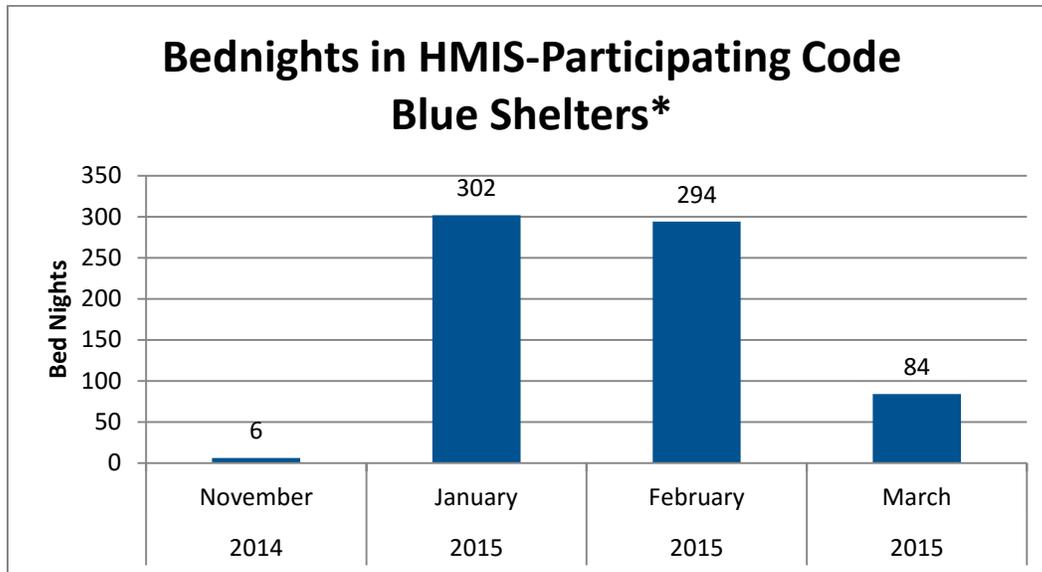


Figure 2.9: Bednights in Code Blue Shelter by Month (people multiplied by days)

*In 2014-2015 these shelters were Buffalo City Mission and Cornerstone Manor. St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy also participated in Code Blue, but did not participate in HMIS. There were no Code Blues in December of 2014 as the lows never dipped below 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

508 people utilized the Code Blue shelter. The average number of days a client utilized HMIS-participating Code Blue was 4.6, median is two days (mode: 1, range 1-36 days).²² On an average night, 51 people were in an HMIS participating Code Blue shelter. Reportedly, the non-HMIS shelter of 15 beds was full every night, for an average of 66 total people per night.

The winter of 2015 was unusually cold. The average high in the season was 33.1°F and the low 19.4°F, but the average lows in the month of January was 12.5°F and the month of February was 3.5°F. Thus, nearly the entirety of those two months were under the then-threshold of 15°F and considered “Code Blue” days.

Code Blue is a low-demand shelter designed to house shelter-reluctant clients in extreme cold who would otherwise stay on the streets. The frequency of Code Blue means that entry into shelter overall. The general shelter population decreased in the family shelters; the Department of Social Services also reported atypically low census. The thought is that the brutal cold made local landlords hesitant to evict and doubled-up leaseholders reluctant to cast out families until the weather broke in May.

²² There is some dispute as to whether all people who utilize Code Blue are homeless, as opposed to being housed persons whose housing lost heat or other utilities.

Housing Interventions

There are three homeless-specific intervention types in Erie: permanent supportive housing, rapid-rehousing, and transitional housing. All permanent supportive housing is operated under a “Housing First” philosophy, which stipulates that clients should receive the housing voucher with few therapeutic strings attached, in contrast with service-intensive transitional housing interventions. Rapid re-housing is a “Housing First” alternative to shelter stays, where families who have experienced homelessness before are quickly placed into apartments while they stabilize from the circumstances that contributed to their homelessness (unemployment, illness, etc) with case management and a time-limited rental voucher that the family takes over within the year. Transitional housing programs are also time delimited, and the timing is related to program goals including therapeutic issues and a housing crisis. This chapter will describe the utilization of these various programs.

Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing is a Housing-First intervention in which a client receives a time-limited housing voucher intended to replace extra time in emergency shelters. They also provide housing search assistance, landlord mediation, and case management with a “light touch” approach (meaning the client guides it). Homelessness is primarily a housing problem and rapid rehousing is designed to assist clients in stabilizing their housing as soon as possible. We have found that permanent housing outcomes are higher and more cost-effective than transitional housing. Three agencies administered rapid rehousing vouchers in Erie County²³: Catholic Charities, Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, and the Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center. The numbers below reflect the totals of people entering rapid rehousing in the 2015 fiscal year.

The average days to housing was 32 days, with the median being 18 days.²⁴ The average length of stay per household was 69 days, and the median was 37.

| Household Type | Household totals | Client totals | Adults | Kids |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|--------|------|
| Female Single Parent | 62 | 191 | 65 | 126 |
| Male Single Parent | 4 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Other Relative | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Two Parent Family | 12 | 55 | 24 | 31 |
| Single Adults | 48 | 48 | 48 | 0 |

Table 2.28: Types of Households Served by Rapid Rehousing in Erie County

²³ Only one program serves Niagara County: Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier. These numbers are not reported here due to statistically small numbers.

²⁴ Of 84 families served by the three rapid rehousing, only 56 families had this information available. The other 28 families may have found their own housing after initial entry into the rapid rehousing program.

| Race | Families in Shelter | Rapid Rehousing | Difference |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 1.20% | 0.97% | -0.23% |
| Asian | 0.80% | 0.65% | -0.16% |
| Black or African American | 56.83% | 63.11% | +6.28% |
| Missing Information | 1.81% | 5.50% | +3.69% |
| Multiracial | 9.44% | 4.85% | -4.58% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 0.40% | 0.00% | -0.40% |
| White | 29.52% | 25.24% | -4.28% |

Table 2.29: Racial Composition of Families in Shelter versus Rapid Rehousing Families

The race of rapid rehousing clients approximately matches the racial makeup of families in emergency shelters; African American families are slightly overrepresented.

Transitional Housing

455 people and 81 families used Transitional Housing services in Erie County²⁵ in 2015. The average length of stay by client is 289 days. Transitional housing providers included:

- Cazenovia Visions Place (closed May 1, 2015) (singles suffering from substance abuse)
- Buffalo City Mission DREAM Transitional
- Living Opportunities of DePaul Transitional Housing (Single people)
- Cornerstone Transitional Housing (women)
- Gerard Place (Single parents)
- Teaching and Restoring Youth (females 16-21 years old)
- Plymouth Crossroads – United Church Home (Males & transgendered 17-20 years old)
- Hispanics United (Closed 5/1/2015)
- YWCA Scattered Sites Buffalo – Single Parent (mothers) families
- Haven House – Women and children who have experienced recent domestic violence

Funding for transitional housing has diminished as HUD prioritizes have shifted more into rapid rehousing and housing first modeled permanent supportive housing. Lengths of stay and program demographics reflected the programs as eligibility is tied to sex, age, and family status. 65% leave transitional housing to go to a permanent housing situation. Demographic makeup of transitional housing families directly reflects the eligibility requirements of the programs involved.

²⁵ There are three transitional housing providers in Niagara County: Carolyn's House (a domestic violence program), YWCA Niagara Transitional Housing (domestic violence), the Crib (minor girls with children), Vanessa Scott (single women), and Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission (single men). Domestic violence shelters are statutorily excluded from HMIS; the remaining HMIS coverage is too low for statistically meaningful findings. There are two transitional housing programs in Genesee County, excluded for the same reasons: Visions (operated by Pathstone) and Liberty Hall (substance abuse facility for veterans operated by Cazenovia Recovery Systems).

| Top 10 Destinations by Percent | Percent |
|---|---------|
| Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy (HUD) | 26.52% |
| Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy (HUD) | 20.08% |
| Staying with Family | 16.13% |
| Friends | 12.19% |
| Emergency Shelter | 8.60% |
| Transitional Housing | 4.30% |
| Substance Abuse Treatment Facility | 2.51% |
| Hospital or Non-psychiatric Medical Facility | 2.15% |
| Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility | 1.08% |
| Place not meant for habitation (HUD) | |
| Long-term care facility or nursing home (HUD) | |
| Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher (HUD) | 0.36% |
| Deceased (HUD) | |

Table 2.30: Destination of Rapid Rehousing Clients

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing refers to a perpetual voucher program for disabled persons experiencing homelessness. These programs cover all rent (minus 30% of a client's income if a client has income; it is entirely covered otherwise. It is typical for a client to be on SSDI).

Continuum of Care funded-programs in Erie County²⁶ served 848 people in Permanent Supportive Housing. One hundred eleven people were Veterans, or 13% of the total. 183 people ended their experience of homelessness through use of this voucher in FY2015, and 125 people left this voucher program in FY2015.

Of the 183 people who *entered* in FY2015:

- There were five families (all female single parent) and 173 single adults
- 14.2% were Veterans (26 veterans)
- 44.5% were white non-Hispanic, 42.6% were African American, 5% were multi-racial, 5% identified as Hispanic, 3.8% were Native American, the remaining were other races.
- 43.7% were female, 56.3% were male, no one receiving such services identified as transgender.

Of the 183 who entered, 154 (84%) were still housed in the program at FY2015's end. 29 exited with an average length of stay of 112 days, or 3.5 months.

The racial composition of permanent supportive housing entrants approximately reflects the racial composition of the chronically homeless population. In the past, white clients were overrepresented.

²⁶ There is one PSH program in Niagara County.

The use of coordinated entry, which prioritizes those chronic homeless clients of highest acuity, appears to have reduced the racial disparity without any racial demographics being used as admittance criteria.

| Race | Chronic Homeless Pop | PSH Entries | Difference |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Black or African American | 45% | 43% | -2% |
| White | 45% | 45% | 0% |
| Multiracial | 5% | 5% | 0% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 5% | 4% | -1% |
| Hispanic | 5% | 5% | 0% |

Table 2.31: Racial Composition of Permanent Supportive Housing New Clients versus the Chronic Homeless Population

| Length of Stay by Exit Status Number of Persons | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| | Total | Leavers | Stayers |
| Less than 30 days | 21 | 1 | 20 |
| 31 to 60 days | 16 | 1 | 15 |
| 61 to 180 days | 56 | 9 | 47 |
| 181 to 365 days | 86 | 17 | 69 |
| 366 to 730 days (1-2 Yrs) | 119 | 24 | 95 |
| 731 to 1095 days (2-3 Yrs) | 137 | 10 | 127 |
| 1096 to 1460 days (3-4 Yrs) | 98 | 17 | 81 |
| 1461 to 1825 days (4-5 Yrs) | 89 | 15 | 74 |
| More than 1825 Days (>5 Yrs) | 226 | 31 | 195 |
| Information Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 848 | 125 | 723 |

Table 2.32: Length of Stay by Exit status in Permanent Supportive Housing

125 people (14.7%) of permanent supportive housing clients exited. Of those who exited:

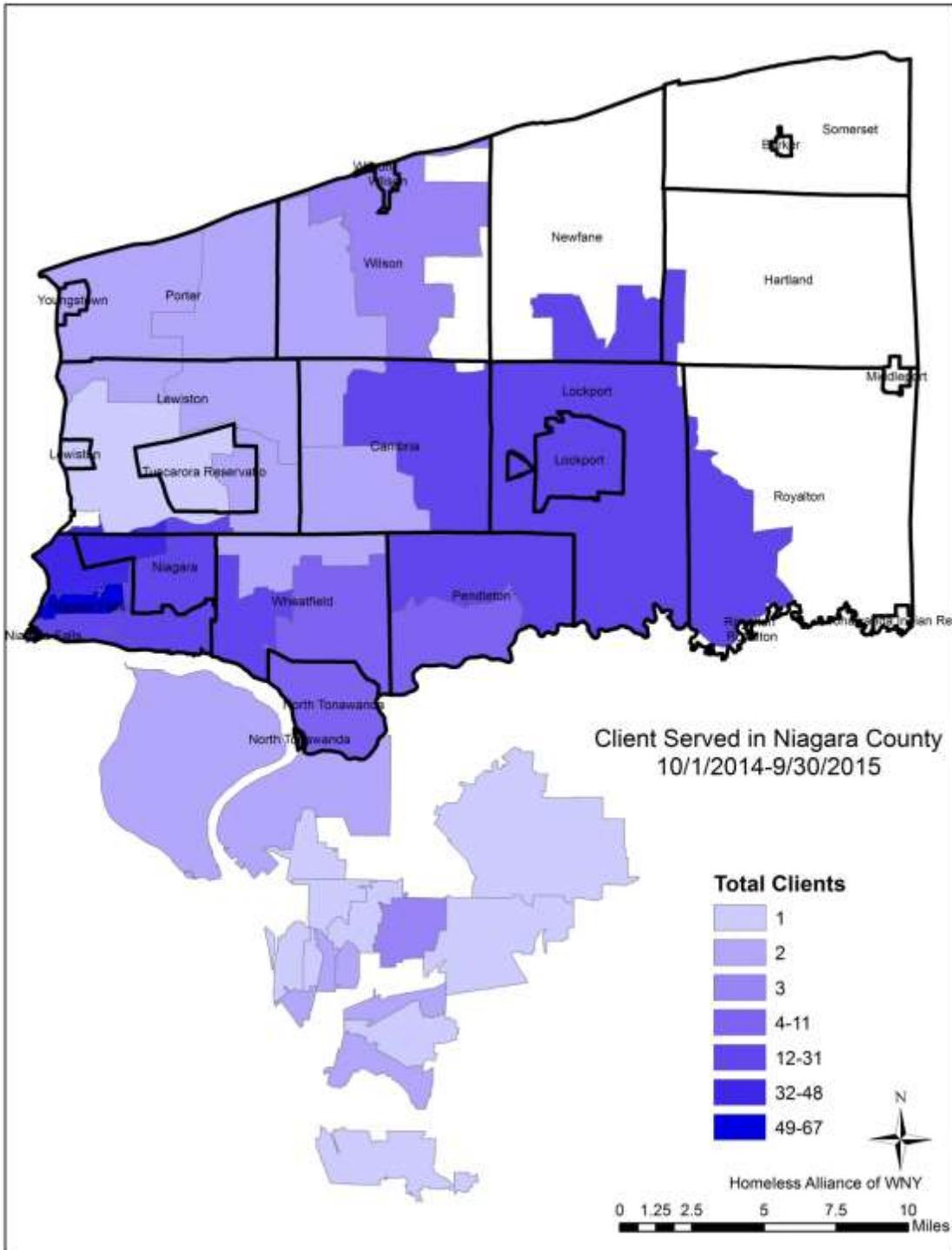
- Average length of stay of all people who left was 1,054 days (just under three years). The destinations are detailed below.
- 45.08% exited to a permanent housing destination
- 7.75% exited to a higher-level therapeutic setting
- 10.56% of exiting clients (1.5% of all clients in program) passed away.

| Destination | Percent |
|---|----------------|
| Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy (HUD) | 21.83% |
| Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy (HUD) | 16.20% |
| Deceased (HUD) | 10.56% |
| Other (HUD) | |
| Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility (HUD) | 4.93% |
| Long-term care facility or nursing home (HUD) | |
| Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher (HUD) | 4.23% |
| No exit interview completed (HUD) | |
| Staying or living with family, permanent tenure (HUD) | |
| Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center (HUD) | |
| Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)(HUD) | 2.82% |
| Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure (HUD) | |
| Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility (HUD) | 2.11% |
| Client refused (HUD) | 1.41% |
| Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility (HUD) | |
| Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth) (HUD) | |
| Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher (HUD) | 0.70% |
| Safe Haven (HUD) | |
| Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)(HUD) | |

Table 2.33 Destination of exiting permanent supportive housing clients

Since the use of coordinated entry, highest acuity clients willing to be housed receive priority for vouchers. The low number of exits to higher-level therapeutic programs (only 1.1% of all permanent supportive housing clients) suggests that, for the majority of permanent supportive housing clients, the level of case management received in housing-first style programs is adequate for maintaining housing.

Section 3: Niagara County



Map 3.1: Zip Code of Origin of All Homeless Clients in Niagara County

Niagara County Poverty Brief

Below is a brief overview of general poverty in Niagara County. The population of the very poor serves as a comparison group to those experiencing homelessness as many demographic characteristics are very similar.

Poverty is the Root Cause of Homelessness

- ▶ 25.3% of people in Niagara Falls and 13.6% of people in Niagara County live below the poverty line²⁷.
- ▶ 39.3% of female-headed households in Niagara Falls live below the poverty level, 31.6% in Niagara County.
- ▶ 20.5% of families live below the poverty level in Niagara Falls and 9.9% in Niagara County.
- ▶ 2.1% of full time workers in Niagara County and 15.8% of part-time workers in Niagara County were below the poverty line.
- ▶ 4.2% of full-time workers in Niagara Falls and 27.5% of part-time workers in Niagara Falls were below the poverty line.

Table 3.1 illustrates the extent of poverty among Niagara County's women and children:

| NUMBER OF RELATED CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS | City of Niagara Falls, % of Female-headed households in poverty | Niagara County, % of Female-headed households in poverty |
|---|---|--|
| No children | 16.8% | 11.7% |
| 1 or 2 children | 45.3% | 37.7% |
| 3 or 4 children | 68.8% | 59.2% |
| 5 or more children | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Table 3.1: Female Households by Number of Children- ACS 2010-2014 5-year Estimates

- ▶ 50.7% of renters in Niagara County and 57.2% of Niagara Falls residents pay more than 30% of their income for rent.
- ▶ Niagara Falls' unemployment rate is 11.6%, slightly higher than all of our neighboring cities, and much higher than the national rate of 9.2%

²⁷ Data shown in this section is from American Community Survey 2010-2014 5 years estimates except where stated

Housing affordability is usually considered to be no more than 30% of rent compared to a household's income. Although Niagara Falls's owner occupied units are considered to be very affordable compared to the national market, the majority (57.2%) of renters in the city are paying more than 30% of their income.

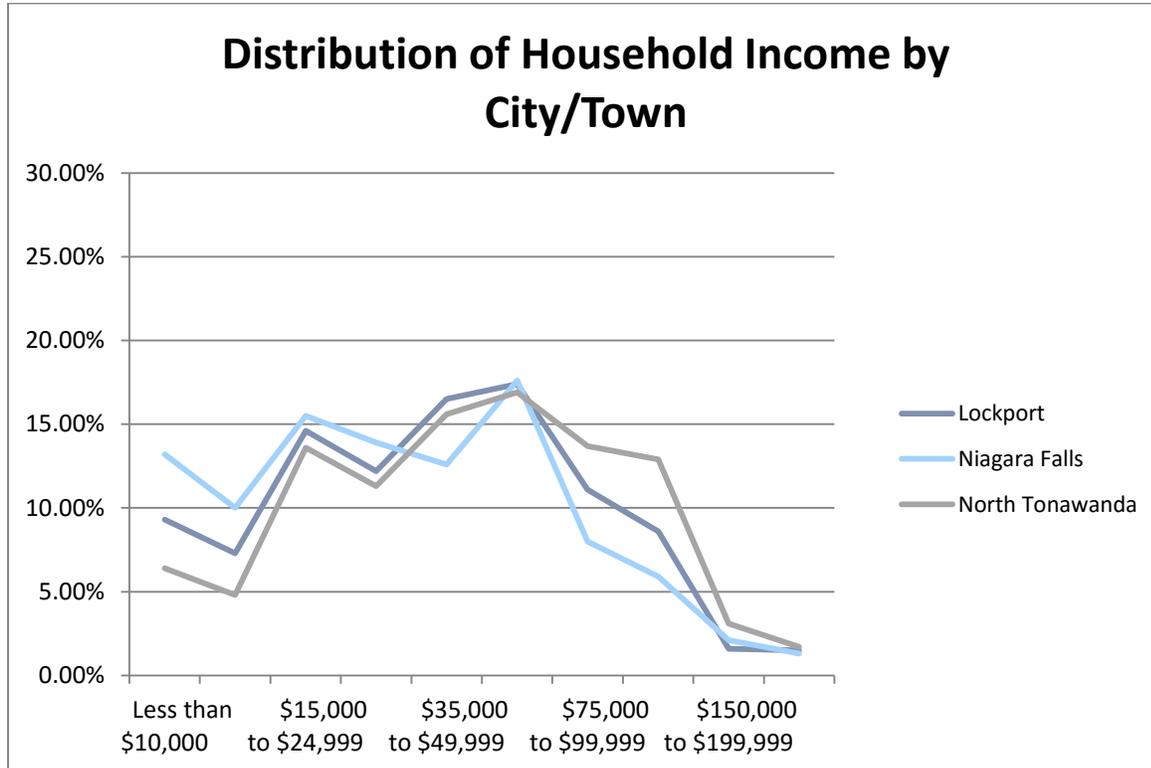


Figure 3.1: Distribution of Household Income of Select Niagara County Municipalities

The median household income in Niagara County varies by municipality:

- Lockport: \$40,111
- Niagara Falls: \$33,009
- North Tonawanda: \$47,604

Other notable Niagara County statistics are as follows:

- 25% of Niagara Falls is on SNAP benefits
- The poverty rate is 13.4%
- The median income for workers (by person) is
 - Lockport: \$28,577
 - Niagara Falls: \$25,262
 - North Tonawanda: \$31,997
- The median income of full-time employed women in Lockport and Niagara Falls is 84% the median income for similarly employed men.
- The median income of full-time employed women in North Tonawanda is 77% the median income for similarly employed men.

Overview of Homelessness in Niagara County

This chapter presents the 2014 estimates of homelessness as well as the capacity of homeless services for sheltering and housing those who experience homelessness in Niagara County. The latest point-in-time count was conducted on January 29th, 2014. The annual count is based on both HMIS data and count of homeless persons in non-participating programs.

Point In Time Count (PIT)

HUD requires each CoC across the nation to conduct an annual point in time count of both the sheltered and unsheltered homeless during the last ten days of January. On July 22, 2014, the CoC chose to voluntarily count unsheltered clients. Homeless outreach workers and community volunteers went to soup kitchens, homeless encampments, under bridges, and other places where the homeless are known to congregate to conduct the counts. The data collected was entered into HMIS to ensure an unduplicated count.

| | Unsheltered Homeless Count | Sheltered Homeless Count | Total |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| January 30, 2013 | 0 | 136 | 136 |
| January 29, 2014 | 0 | 152 | 152 |
| January 28, 2015 | 0 | 132 | 132 |

Table 3.2: Point in Time Counts in Last 3 Years

Point in Time numbers are a one day snapshot of the homeless population. Outreach teams, volunteers, and shelter staff interview every homeless person that they can find in an attempt to construct a one count. 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, we estimate there to be at least 100 people homeless on any given night in Niagara County.**

Annual Homeless Count

This chapter includes information entered into HMIS from Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing programs, Safe Havens, Code Blue, Outreach programs and programs that provide services only. The total unduplicated count of homeless persons entered into HMIS during this time period was 483*. As discussed in the introduction, there are programs that do not enter data into HMIS. In order to get a total number of homeless in a given time period, we have to estimate the numbers served by non-participating HMIS programs. **The total estimated unduplicated homeless count is 1943** (see appendix two for details of the estimation). While more clients have been served, we are seeing decreases in lengths of stay, and thus higher turnover.

| Program Type | 2014 HMIS Count | 2014 Estimated Count | 2015 HMIS Count | 2015 Estimated Count |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Unique Homeless Persons | 452 | 1,888 | 483 | 1943 |

Table 3.2: Overall Homelessness in Niagara County 2014-2015

Comparison of Bed Inventory²⁸

There are five types of housing programs in the Niagara County.

| | Total Beds | HMIS coverage Rate |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| ES | 120 | 62.5%* |
| TH | 77 | 57%* |
| PSH | 19* | 100% |
| Safe Haven | 0 | - |
| TOTAL | 216 | 80% |

Table 3.3: Bed Inventory Comparison- HMIS Participation

*In 2016, HMIS coverage for ES increased to 79% and for TH increased to 74%.

Domestic Violence providers are not allowed to enter data into HMIS currently. Some agencies have capacity issues that prevent them from entering into HMIS, and HAWNY is working with them to facilitate this process.

Household Composition (HMIS)

All demographic information presented in this chapter comes from our HMIS system from participating providers.

| 2014 | Total | Without Children | % | With Children and Adults | % | With Only Children | % | Unknown HH Type |
|-------------------|------------|---------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Households | 408 | 292 | 71% | 23 | 6% | 92 | 23% | 1 |
| Persons | 452 | 293 | 65% | 61 | 13% | 96 | 21% | 1 |

Table 3.4: Homeless Persons Household Composition 2014

| 2015 | Total | Without Children | % | With Children and Adults | % | With Only Children | % | Unknown HH Type |
|-------------------|------------|---------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Households | 423 | 323 | 76% | 32 | 8% | 61 | 14% | 7 |
| Persons | 483 | 330 | 68% | 84 | 17% | 61 | 13% | 8 |

Table 3.5: Homeless Persons Household Composition 2015

²⁸ These are numbers of beds in the CoC by housing type; this is not a count of people. HMIS coverage is the percentage of beds that are entered into HMIS of those which are eligible to be entered. Domestic violence specific beds are not HMIS eligible and thus not included in the coverage rate calculation.

Our HMIS system recorded more people; however, there was more duplication with the department of social services which is why we estimate an unchanging overall population. 31 more people were recorded in HMIS, with increases in the without children adults and with children families and decreases in the youth shelter. There were thirty less unaccompanied minors than the previous year, a 33% decrease.

Gender for Homeless Adults

| | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Male | 255 | 243 | 11 |
| Female | 114 | 86 | 28 |
| Transgendered | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Table 3.6: Homeless Adults- Gender 2015

Like in Erie County, males were overrepresented in the single adult without children category and females were overrepresented in the category of households with adults and children.

Age

106 children under the age of 18 were homeless last year, 22% of the total HMIS-recorded homeless population. Twenty-two percent of the homeless children were young children who were less than 5 years old. HUD and CoC now define homeless youth as being up to the age of 24. HUD defines homeless youth ages 13-17 as households with only children. The number of homeless youth (18-24) totaled 54, or a 6% decrease in the total proportion of homeless population from last year though the number of those experiencing homelessness, in the aggregate, increased.

| | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children |
|---|------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Under 5 | 24 | 0 | 23 | 1 |
| 5 - 12 | 20 | 0 | 18 | 2 |
| 13 - 17 | 62 | 0 | 4 | 58 |
| 18 - 24 | 67 | 54 | 13 | 0 |
| 25 - 34 | 108 | 95 | 12 | 0 |
| 35 - 44 | 83 | 72 | 11 | 0 |
| 45 - 54 | 67 | 64 | 3 | 0 |
| 55 - 61 | 33 | 33 | 0 | 0 |
| 62+ | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Don't Know/Refused | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Information Missing | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Age Error (Negative Age or 100+) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 483 | 330 | 84 | 61 |

Table 3.7: Homeless Population- Age by Household Types 2015

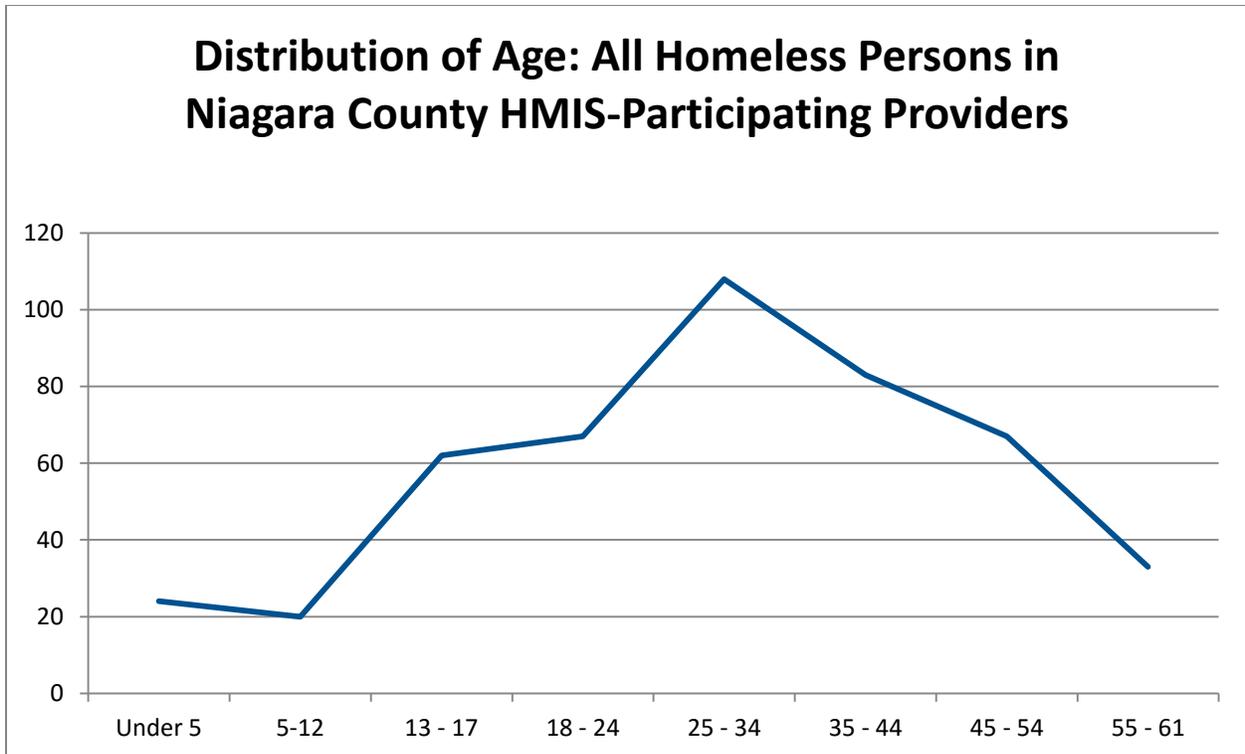


Figure 3.2: Homeless Population- Age (2012-2015 comparison)

Single adults or households with two adults were evenly distributed between 18-54, slightly leaning towards the 45-54 age group with a fair drop off after the age of 54. However, families with children were most likely to be young single mothers aged 18-34, with children under 12.

Race of All Homeless People in Niagara Falls

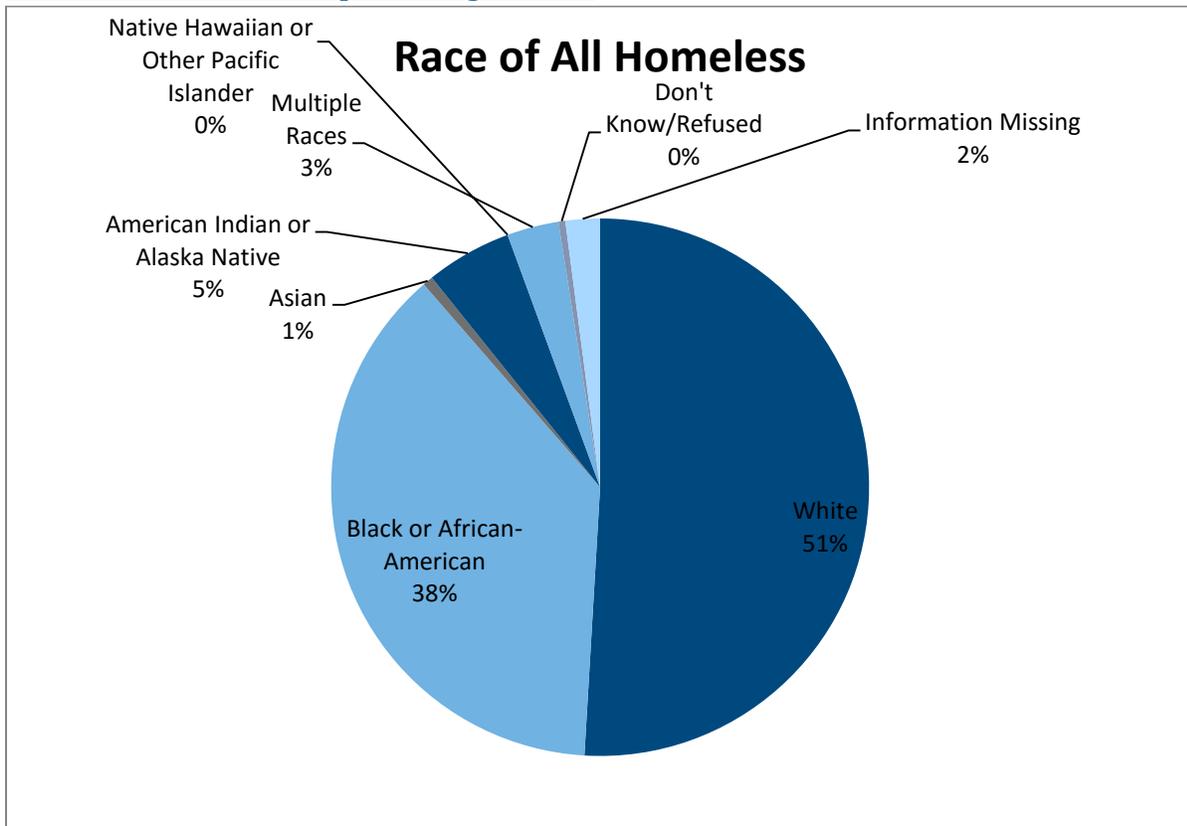


Figure 3.3: Race of Niagara County's HMIS – recorded clients

Ethnicity of all Homeless People in Niagara Falls

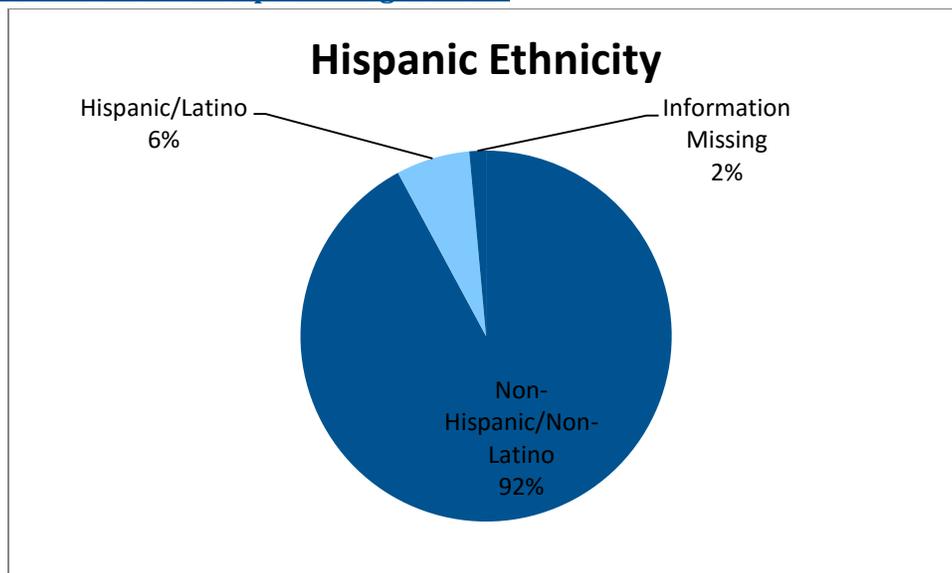


Figure 3.4: Ethnicity of Niagara County's HMIS – recorded clients (Hispanic/ Latino is considered an ethnicity, not a race)

Of those in Niagara County who live below the poverty line, 6% are Hispanic. Homeless people are thus not disproportionately represented relative to the population of those in poverty.

Veteran Status

8% of all homeless adults in the NY-508 CoC were Veterans. 4% of Niagara County HMIS-recorded adults were veterans.

| | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults |
|----------------------------|------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Veteran | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| Not a Veteran | 353 | 313 | 39 |
| Don't Know/Refused | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Information Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 370 | 330 | 39 |

Table 3.8: Veteran Status in Niagara County as recorded in HMIS

Disabling Conditions

Overall, 79% of homeless persons do not have a disability and 18% have one or more disabling conditions (3% data errors/missing). The most common disability types were mental illness (72% of disabled) and substance abuse (35%). Percentages do not add up to 100% as 45% of disabled homeless people had more than one disability.

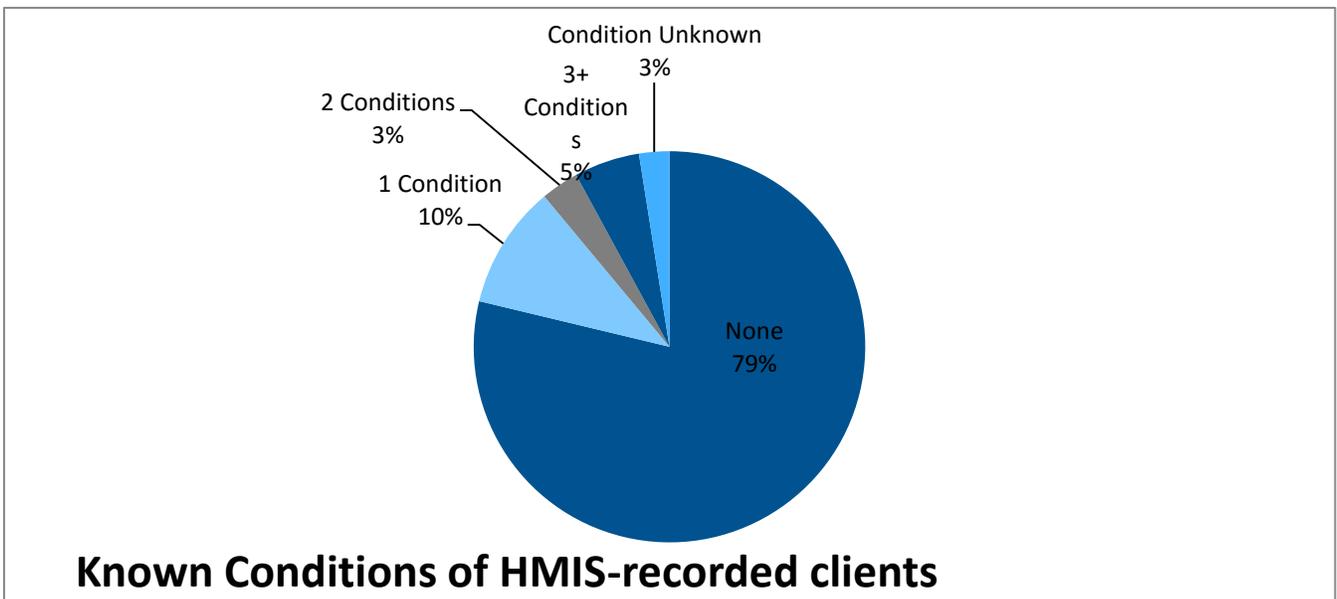


Figure 3.5: Known Disabling Conditions of HMIS-Recorded Clients

| Condition | Total | Without Children | With Children and Adults | With Only Children |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Mental Illness | 65 | 62 | 0 | 3 |
| Alcohol Abuse | 19 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| Drug Abuse | 13 | 12 | 0 | 1 |
| Chronic Health Condition | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| HIV/AIDS and Related Diseases | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Developmental Disability | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| Physical Disability | 30 | 28 | 2 | 0 |

Table 3.9: Homeless Population-Disability Types

Zip Code of Last Permanent Address

The zip code of their last permanent address refers to the last address where the client lived for more than 90 days. To use the previous example of a client who was evicted and then stayed with their sister, this would be the zip code of their former apartment, not their sister's domicile. Maps reflecting the homeless count based on Zip Codes can be found in Appendix Four-Map 1 and Map 2. Full tables

| Total Clients | Zip Code of Last Permanent Address(976) | County | State | City |
|---------------|---|----------|-------|-----------------|
| 67 | 14301 | Niagara | NY | Niagara Falls |
| 47 | 14305 | Niagara | NY | Niagara Falls |
| 31 | 14304 | Niagara | NY | Niagara Falls |
| 24 | 14303 | Niagara | NY | Niagara Falls |
| 22 | 14094 | Niagara | NY | Lockport |
| 11 | 14120 | Niagara | NY | North Tonawanda |
| 4 | 94601 | Alameda | CA | Oakland |
| 3 | 10036 | New York | NY | New York |
| 3 | 14172 | Niagara | NY | Wilson |
| 3 | 14215 | Erie | NY | Buffalo |
| 2 | 14006 | Erie | NY | Angola |

Table 3.10 Top Ten Originating Zip Codes of Niagara County's Homeless Clients in HMIS

Homelessness Among Niagara County's Schoolchildren

| School District | 11-Oct | 12-Nov | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 |
|---|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| BARKER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 5 | 5 | <4 | 0 | <4 |
| LEWISTON-PORTER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 38 | <4 | <4 | <4 | <4 |
| LOCKPORT CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 99 | 80 | 84 | 88 | 98 |
| NEWFANE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 10 | 5 | <4 | 0 | <4 |
| NIAGARA FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 54 | 27 | 53 | 59 | 76 |
| NIAGARA-WHEATFIELD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 36 | 38 | 34 | 62 | 73 |
| NORTH TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 24 | 14 | 15 | 18 | 20 |
| ROYALTON-HARTLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 5 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 19 |
| STARPOINT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 15 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | <4 | <4 | <4 | <4 | <4 |

Table 3.11 McKinney-Vento Defined Homelessness as Reported by Niagara County's School Districts

The above chart shows the number of students who were designated as homeless using McKinney-Vento's definition since 2011 in Niagara County's school districts. McKinney-Vento has a more expansive definition of homelessness than the HUD definition used in the rest of the report: couch surfers, unstably housed, and imminently homeless count for McKinney Vento though they do not count under the HEARTH act. It is worth noting that while the majority of those who were homeless as defined by the HEARTH act came from Niagara Falls, the number neither matches the number of people from Niagara Falls City School District, and that Lockport actually has more homeless students than the Niagara Falls City School District, though few people registering on HMIS from Lockport. There is only one shelter in Lockport (Lockport Cares) and it is not on HMIS; most people in Lockport could be receiving assistance from the Department of Social Services (also, not on HMIS). Increased HMIS coverage would assist in understanding this discrepancy.

Niagara County Emergency Shelters

Overview

New York State is a right-to-shelter state, which means, at least in Western New York, that Emergency Shelter statistics are the best ones to ascertain a picture of homelessness as it is happening. While transitional housing and Safe Haven participants are also defined as “homeless” by HUD, these are longer term interventions with long lengths of stay and thus the characteristics of the population are not necessarily reflective of those immediately experiencing homelessness in that year.

Niagara County’s emergency shelters are listed below. An asterisk indicates that it is recorded in our HMIS system. PASSAGE is a domestic violence shelter and is statutorily exempt from HMIS participation. Lockport Cares is entirely privately-funded and have opted not to participate in HMIS. The Homeless Alliance contacts non-HMIS participating shelters for aggregate client counts and imputed using the HMIS return rate for the final total. All shelters are single site with the exception that the Niagara County Department of Social Services pays for hotel rooms in privately operated hotels

| Shelter Name | Serving | Beds |
|---|-----------------------------------|------|
| Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier* | All | 48 |
| Lockport Cares | Single Men+Women, Women with kids | 12 |
| Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission* | Single Men | 16 |
| PASSAGE Domestic Violence | Single women and children | 15 |
| Casey’s House* | Unaccompanied Youth | 12 |

Table 3.12: Emergency Shelters in Niagara County

Clients Served

There were 469 people served in HMIS shelters (total estimate of all shelters: 847)

| Household type | HMIS recorded Clients | HMIS Recorded Households |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Adult only | 469 | 323 |
| Unaccompanied Youth | 61 | 32 |
| Families (Adult head of household with children) | 84 | 61 |

Table 3.13: Type of Households as recorded by Niagara County Emergency Shelters

As recorded in HMIS, the average length of stay was 21 days and the median length of stay was 9 days.

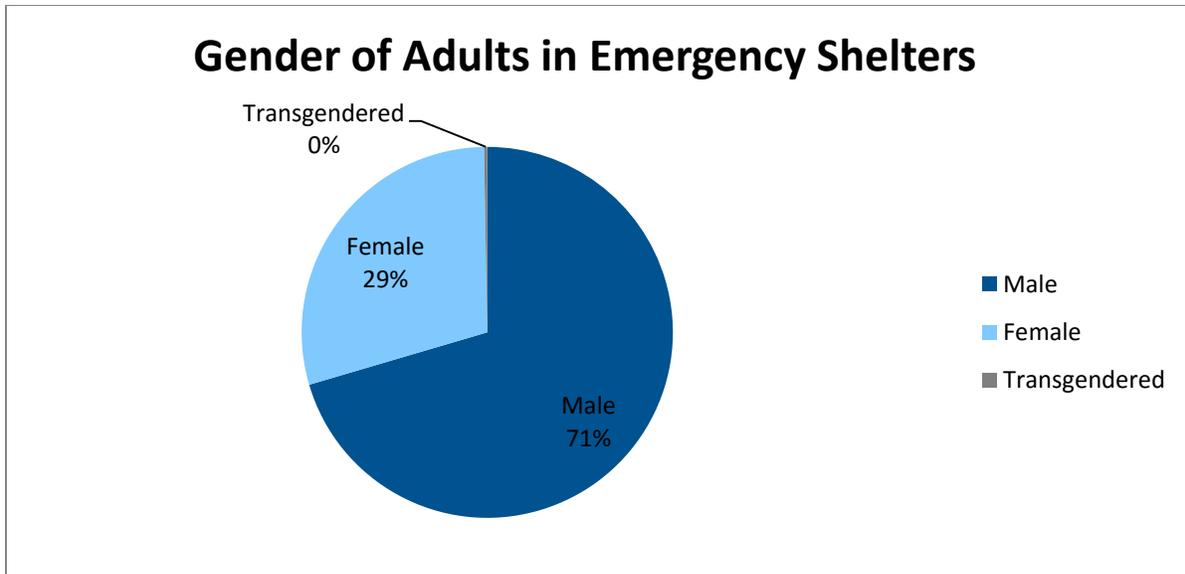


Figure 3.6: Gender of Adults in HMIS Participating Shelters in Niagara County

The gender of Niagara County’s HMIS-participating shelters were mostly male; however, there are several domestic violence shelters serving women that do not participate in HMIS.

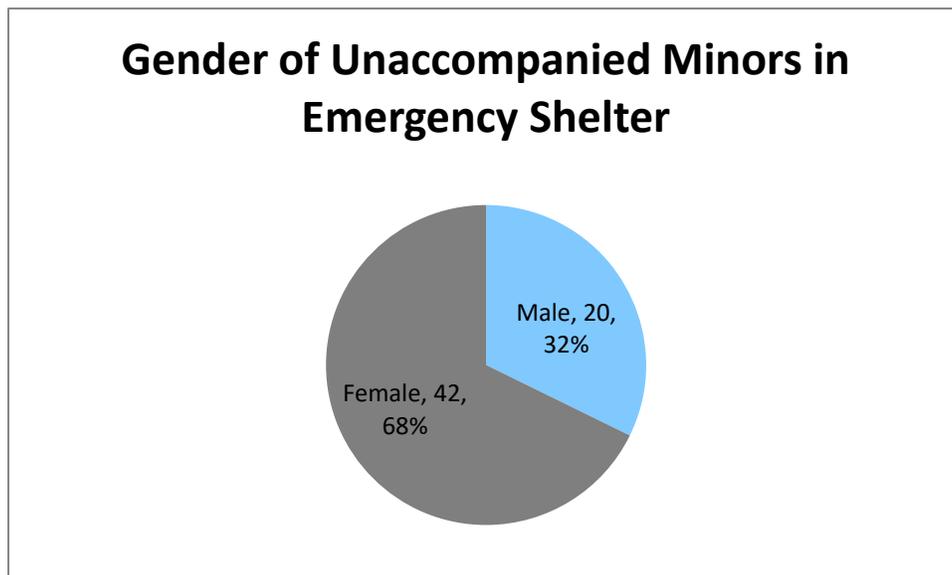


Figure 3.7: Gender of Unaccompanied Minors in HMIS Participating Shelters in Niagara County

This is the second year where females were overrepresented among unaccompanied youth. When asked why this may be the case, shelter providers suggested that teenage girls can get pregnant, which leads to conflict, or are less willing to sleep outside due to risk of attack.

Section 4: Rural Counties Homelessness

This section will detail statistics from Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties. While there are sections of Erie and Niagara Counties that are relatively rural, the structure of homelessness assistance, which uses the county as the proxy for the State of New York, means that people residing in those counties are served by an infrastructure which serves the metro-areas in those counties. We are finding that rural homelessness is distinct in some ways from urban homelessness which will be detailed here.

Demographics and Counts

| | 2015 Estimated Total Count |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| NY-508 | 7964 |
| Genesee County | 383 |
| Orleans County | 103 |
| Wyoming County | 35 |

Table 4.1: Total Homelessness

This is the first year of data collection for Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties, therefore we cannot make a determination if homelessness increased, decreased, or stayed the same.

In New York State, for the purposes of receiving assistance with homelessness, a homeless person is considered a resident of the county that they present for help. However, our HMIS system asks clients seeking assistance at HMIS-participating providers to indicate the zip code of their last permanent address. 27 people sought assistance in Niagara and Erie Counties who last had a permanent address in Genesee, Orleans, and

Wyoming Counties, including two families with a total of five children. Of those in emergency shelters, the average length of stay was 36 days (see Appendix).

Poverty Statistics of Rural Western New York

The below gives a snapshot of the poverty statistics of Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties²⁹. The poverty rate varies by county, with Orleans having the highest and Wyoming the lowest. Overall, there are 5,508 children living below the poverty line in the combined counties (18.9% of all children in these counties – nearly one in five) though most homeless people recorded by the departments of social services are single adults.

Racial minorities are overrepresented in the poor populations of the rural counties as they are in Erie and Niagara. According to the information in the American Community Survey, Genesee County is 92.5% white, and 10.9% of Genesee County’s white people are in poverty (79% of all people in poverty). 2.8% of Genesee County is African American, and over half of that population (51.1%) lives under the poverty line (3% of all people living in poverty in Genesee County are African American). 23% of Orleans County’s African American population lives under the poverty line, and African Americans are 5.9% of that county’s total population, and 5.6% of the population under the poverty threshold. In Wyoming County, 43% of the county’s African Americans live under the poverty threshold, while comprising only 1% of total poor population and 5.7% of total population.

²⁹ All figures from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Genesee County | Total Population | 60,079 |
| | Percent below Poverty | 12.60% |
| Orleans County | Total Population | 42,883 |
| | Percent below poverty | 15.50% |
| Wyoming County | Total Population | 41,679 |
| | Percent Below Poverty | 10.20% |

Table 4.2: General Poverty Statistics of Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties

| | Genesee County | Orleans County | Wyoming County |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Overall Poverty Rate | 12.60% | 15.50% | 10.20% |
| Under 18 years | 18.90% | 22.60% | 14.60% |
| Related children under 18 years | 18.80% | 22.00% | 14.50% |
| 18 to 64 years | 11.70% | 14.80% | 9.50% |
| 65 years and over | 7.90% | 7.90% | 7.40% |
| Male | 11.80% | 14.20% | 9.10% |
| Female | 13.50% | 16.70% | 11.30% |

Table 4.3: General Poverty Statistics of Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties

Percent of County Below Poverty Threshold:

| All Individuals below: | Genesee County | Orleans County | Wyoming County |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 50 percent of poverty level | 4.81% | 6.53% | 3.44% |
| 125 percent of poverty level | 16.24% | 21.01% | 14.93% |
| 150 percent of poverty level | 20.40% | 27.27% | 20.55% |
| 185 percent of poverty level | 26.92% | 34.07% | 26.79% |
| 200 percent of poverty level | 29.76% | 37.00% | 29.74% |

Table 4.4: Percent of Counties Below Poverty Threshold

| | Genesee County | Orleans County | Wyoming County |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Imputed Poverty Statistics for Single Individuals | 27.30% | 25.10% | 23.40% |

Table 4.5: Poverty Rate among single individuals

Genesee County

These statistics represent the 189 people served by the Genesee County Department of Social Services³⁰.

| Gender | Single Adults | Adults in Family |
|--------|---------------|------------------|
| Female | 27% | 73% |
| Male | 73% | 27% |

Table 4.6: Gender of adults served by Genesee County DSS by Household Type

Like Erie and Niagara Counties, most single adults are male and most adults in families are women, and single-parent headed households are overwhelmingly single mothers. Of families, 68% were single mothers, 6% were single fathers, and 26% were two-parent families.

The average age of someone experiencing homelessness in Genesee County, as served by DSS, is 25. The median age is 24.

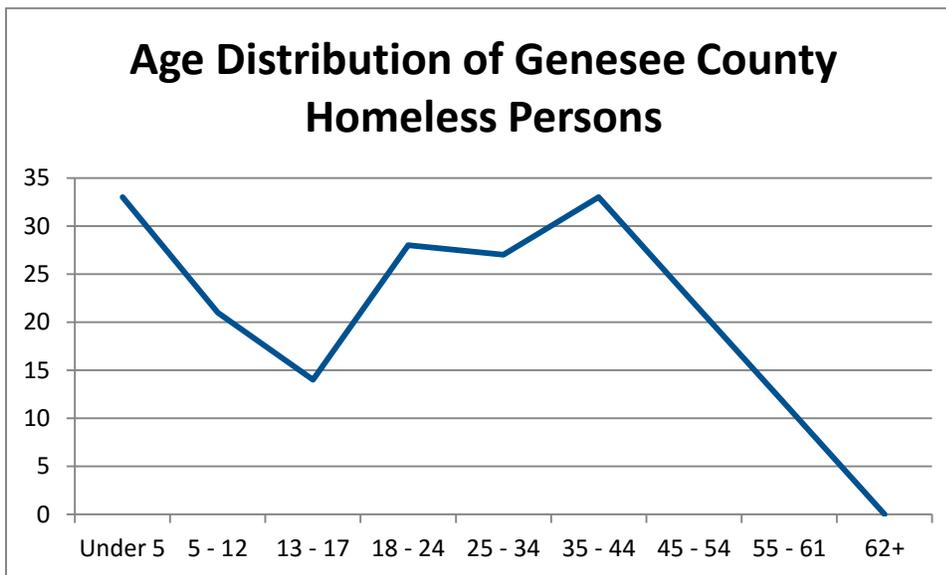


Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Genesee County's Homeless Population

2.6% of Genesee County's homeless receiving assistance at the Department of Social Services identified as Hispanic. The racial composition of Genesee County's homeless was 12.7% African American and 87.3% white. Eagle Star is a Veteran Affairs contract residence of adults that served 136 people; however, not all originated in Genesee County. Liberty Hall is a Cazenovia Recovery Systems-operated Veterans Grant-Per-Diem program, where everyone is a veteran. Thirty people were served who previously were homeless. Nearly half of the homeless people in Genesee County are veterans, but that is because of the definition of the assistance and that these facilities pull people from the broader Western New York area and do not necessarily originate in Genesee County.

³⁰ The Homeless Alliance thanks GCDSS for providing detailed basic demographics.

Homelessness Among Genesee County School Children

| School District | 2014-2015 |
|--|-------------------|
| ALEXANDER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | s = <4 |
| BATAVIA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 73 |
| BYRON-BERGEN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | s = <4 |
| ELBA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | s = <4 |
| LE ROY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 6 |
| OAKFIELD-ALABAMA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 9 |
| PAVILION CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 10 |
| PEMBROKE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 9 |
| | total = 107 + <12 |

Table 4.7: McKinney-Vento Defined Homelessness as reported by Genesee County’s School Districts

The above chart shows the number of students who were designated as homeless using McKinney-Vento’s definition in Genesee County’s school districts. McKinney-Vento has a more expansive definition of homelessness than the HUD definition used in the rest of the report: couch surfers, unstably housed, and imminently homeless count for McKinney Vento though they do not count under the HEARTH act.

Orleans County

The Orleans County department of social services³¹ assisted 71 people: 22 single adults, and 49 people in nine families (3 two parent, 6 single mother with a total of 37 children). 68% of Orleans County’s homeless population served by the Department of Social Services was White, 26% were African American, and 4% were multi-racial. 14% of Orleans County’s homeless were Hispanic. The average length of stay for everyone was 22 days, for families was 32 days and for singles were 9 days. The average age was 27 and median age was 26. In addition, Pathstone Visions Transitional Housing served 32. Aggregate statistics are not provided on that program due to its small size and the fact it is the only program of its type in the area.

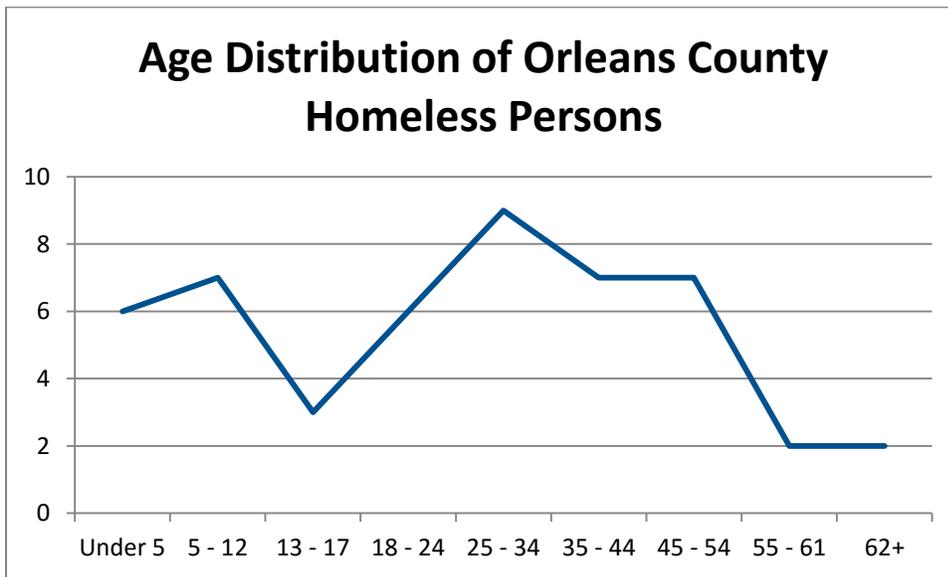


Figure 4.8: Age Distribution of Orleans County’s Homeless Population

Homelessness Among Orleans County Schoolchildren

| School District | 2014-2015 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| ALBION CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 21 |
| KENDALL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 13 |
| HOLLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 15 |
| MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 19 |
| LYNDONVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 0 |
| Total = 68 | |

Table 4.9: McKinney-Vento Defined Homelessness as reported by Orleans County’s School Districts

The above chart shows the number of students who were designated as homeless using McKinney-Vento’s definition in Orleans County’s school districts. McKinney-Vento has a more expansive definition of homelessness than the HUD definition used in the rest of the report: couch surfers, unstably housed, and imminently homeless count for McKinney Vento though they do not count under the HEARTH act.

³¹ The Homeless Alliance thanks the Orleans County Department of Social Services for providing basic demographics

Wyoming County

The Wyoming County Department of Social Services³² aided 35 people including 3 families (2 single mothers, one single father each with one child) and 28 single adults and one unaccompanied minor. 72% of household heads reported a substance-dependency problem. 17% of clients had a mental health disturbance. One client was a veteran. The average age was 32 and all clients were white and 2 (6%) were Hispanic. 80% of single homeless people (adults and unaccompanied minor) were male. No age distribution graphic was created on account of the small population.

Homelessness Among Wyoming County Schoolchildren

| School District | 2014-2015 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| ATTICA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 9 |
| LETCHWORTH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | s = <4 |
| WYOMING CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | s = <4 |
| PERRY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 9 |
| WARSAW CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | 14 |
| | total = 32 + <8 |

Table 4.10: McKinney-Vento Defined Homelessness as reported by Genesee County's School Districts

The above chart shows the number of students who were designated as homeless using McKinney-Vento's definition in Wyoming County's school districts. McKinney-Vento has a more expansive definition of homelessness than the HUD definition used in the rest of the report: couch surfers, unstably housed, and imminently homeless count for McKinney Vento though they do not count under the HEARTH act.

³² The Homeless Alliance thanks the Wyoming County Department of Social Services for providing detailed statistics.

Section 5: Chronic Homelessness

Chronic homelessness refers to the circumstance in which a person with a disability experiences a single episode of homelessness or four episodes that total over a year. There were 137 people whose homelessness fit the chronic definition in fiscal year 2015. This number reflects the number of clients whose histories were vetted by homelessness alleviation providers. These clients are typically heavy utilizers of services, as shown below. They have also been the target of housing-first interventions. There were nine US military veterans who were chronically homeless: six were housed, one was incarcerated, and two continue to be homeless but are being actively assisted.

| Type of Service | Percent of Chronic Clients Using Service |
|------------------------------|--|
| Permanent Supportive Housing | 47% |
| Rapid Re-Housing (HUD) | 6% |
| Safe Haven (HUD) | 4% |
| Day Shelter | 45% |
| Emergency Shelter | 61% |
| Homelessness Prevention | 1% |
| Services Only | 55% |
| Street Outreach | 84% |

Table 5.1: Percent of Chronic Homeless Population using a particular type of program

| Number of Providers Used | Clients in Category | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1 | 13 | 9% |
| 2 | 23 | 17% |
| 3 | 25 | 18% |
| 4 | 31 | 22% |
| 5 | 24 | 17% |
| 6 | 16 | 12% |
| 7 | 5 | 4% |
| 8 | 1 | 1% |
| 9 | 1 | 1% |

Table 5.2: Percent of Chronic Homeless Clients who used a particular number of providers

The average homeless person accesses 1.2 homeless programs in their attempt to resolve an episode. Chronically homeless people average 3.7 programs used.

| Sex | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| Female | 24.09% |
| Male | 76.26% |

Table 5.3: Sex of Chronic Homeless Population (0% reported being transgender)

The proportion of chronically homeless clients who were male approximately mirrors the proportion of single adults who are male.

| Race | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Black or African American, NonHispanic | 44% |
| White, NonHispanic | 41% |
| Multiracial | 5% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 5% |
| White, Hispanic | 4% |
| Black or African American, Hispanic | 1% |

Table 5.4: Race and Ethnicity of Chronically homeless clients

Like other homeless populations, African-Americans are overrepresented relative to the larger geographic community.

| Ethnicity | Percent |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Hispanic/Latino | 5% |
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 95% |

Table 5.5 Ethnicity of Chronically homeless clients

The age of clients ranged from 19 to 67 and the average was 46.

Though there was a total of 137 chronically homeless people in the CoC during the fiscal year, the fiscal year ended with thirty with ten refusing housing. 81 were housed or otherwise placed, the remaining disappeared. The average length of time from referral to housed was 49 days. The below chart shows the destinations of those that are known.

| Housing Destination | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Housing First | 44.44% |
| Other PSH | 34.57% |
| Self-Pay Rental | 11.11% |
| Psychiatric Hospitalization | 2.47% |
| Section 8 | 1.23% |
| Nursing Home | 1.23% |
| Friends/Family | 3.70% |
| RRH | 1.23% |

Table 5.6: Destinations of 81 placed chronically homeless clients

Section 6: Veterans

There were 236 Veterans experiencing homelessness in the entire CoC reported in HMIS: 222 were in Erie County and 14 were in Niagara County. Veterans used services on average of 1.5 times with the median number of times services were accessed once. Thirty-one of these clients (26 men and five women) ultimately received assistance from a CoC- or ESG-funded permanent housing program. As of this publication, all but six were housed; of these, two went to transitional housing, 1 unknown destination, one returned to homelessness, one became deceased, one imprisoned. The clients who used PSH had higher service utilization than others (1.7 times). The number of female veterans increased 20%, but this is an increase of only seven people.

| Sex | Total People |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Female | 43 |
| Male | 191 |
| Transgender male to female | 2 |

Table 6.1: Sex of Veterans recorded in HMIS

| Race | Ethnicity | Total Veterans |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 1.71% |
| Multiracial | Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 2.56% |
| Black or African American | Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 50.00% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | Hispanic/Latino | 0.43% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 0.43% |
| White | Hispanic/Latino | 2.56% |
| White | Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino | 42.31% |

Table 6.2: Race and Ethnicity of Homeless Veterans Recorded in HMIS

Appendix

Appendix A: Homeless Count Methods

The Homeless Alliance’s method includes counting only clients that fit Category 1 of HUD’s definition: An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence.³³ We included all programs that were intended for those experiencing homelessness and whose clients retain the homeless designation when receiving assistance. For instance, emergency shelter clients would be included, but permanent supportive housing clients would not be. We aimed for a conservative count – this is the floor for how many people experienced homelessness. Non-HMIS participating providers were de-duplicated using the AHAR HMIS deduplication rate. The Niagara County department of social service count was deduplicated using the number of clients that shelters reported receiving from DSS.

³³ For more information, please see this document:
https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf

The Entire CoC Homeless Count

| ADJUSTED BY DATA SOURCE | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Source | Total | Adjusted Total |
| HMIS | 4769 | 4769 |
| Haven House ES/TH deduplicated | 524 | 524 |
| Little Portion Friary | 471 | 407 |
| Faith-Based Fellowship | 30 | 25 |
| Back to Basics | 24 | 21 |
| Erie County DSS - Hotels | 40 | 35 |
| St. Luke's Estimate | 50 | 43 |
| Altamont TH Estimate | 88 | 88 |
| Left NYS | 19 | 19 |
| Niagara DSS | 1026 | 905 |
| PASSAGE (DV) | 15 | 15 |
| Lockport Cares | 237 | 237 |
| Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission | 185 | 163 |
| Carolyn House DV | 57 | 57 |
| YWCA niagara DV total deduplicated | 104 | 104 |
| Vanessa scott | 19 | 19 |
| Orleans County DSS | 71 | 71 |
| Wyoming County DSS | 37 | 37 |
| Genesee County DSS | 189 | 189 |
| Eagle Star | 136 | 136 |
| GOW Salvation Army | 30 | 30 |
| Liberty Hall | 28 | 28 |
| Pathstone Visions | 32 | 32 |
| TOTAL | 7658 | 7964 |

Table A.1: CoC Homeless Count

AHAR 2015 Duplication Rate applied to the non-HMIS participating shelters unless other information was available. For instance, Niagara County shelters were surveyed as to how many of their clients were also Niagara County Department of Social Services clients, and the adjusted DSS number reflects that de-duplication.

Erie County All Homeless Count

| Erie County ADJUSTED BY DATA SOURCE | | |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|
| Source | Total | Adjusted Total |
| HMIS | 4273 | 4273 |
| Haven House ES/TH deduplicated | 524 | 524 |
| Little Portion Friary | 471 | 407 |
| Faith-Based Fellowship | 30 | 26 |
| Back to Basics | 24 | 21 |
| Hotels | 40 | 35 |
| Red Cross | 22 | 19 |
| St. Luke's Estimate | 50 | 43 |
| Altamont TH Estimate | 88 | 88 |
| Left NYS | 19 | 19 |
| TOTAL | 5541 | 5455 |

Table A.2: Erie County Homelessness Numbers and Adjustment

Erie County Emergency Shelter Count

| Erie County Emergency Shelter | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| HMIS | 3179 |
| Haven House | 490 |
| Hotels | 35 |
| Little Portion | 471 |
| Red Cross | 19 |
| St. Luke's | 43 |
| Faith-Based | 26 |
| Back to Basics | 21 |
| Total | 4284 |

Table A.3: Erie County Shelter Count

Niagara County Homeless Count

| Source of Information | TOTAL | Adjusted |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| DSS | 1062 | 905 |
| HMIS floor | 483 | 483 |
| PASSAGE (DV) | 15 | 15 |
| Lockport Cares | 237 | 237 |
| Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission | 185 | 163 |
| Carolyn House DV | 57 | 57 |
| YWCA niagara DV total deduplicated | 104 | 104 |
| Vanessa scott | 19 | 19 |
| TOTAL | 2162 | 1983 |

Table A.4: Niagara County Homeless Count and Adjustment

Genesee County Homelessness Tabulation

| Provider | Total |
|--|------------|
| Genesee County Department of Social Services | 189 |
| Eagle Star* | 136 |
| Salvation Army | 30 |
| Liberty Hall* - Cazenovia Recovery System | 28 |
| Total | 383 |

Table A.5: Genesee County Homeless Count

*Provider is a Veteran's Affairs affiliated Grant-Per-Diem or Contract Residence facility. It is presumed that all clients came from distinct sources and thus are all unique.

Because the programs in Genesee serve entirely different sub-populations, and that the Veterans in Eagle Star and Liberty Hall often originate from outside Genesee County, it is presumed that there is no duplication. General demographics were provided via an excel spreadsheet from the Genesee County Department of Social Services to the Homeless Alliance.

Orleans County Homelessness Tabulation

| Provider | Total |
|--|------------|
| Orleans County Department of Social Services | 71 |
| Pathstone Visions Transitional Housing | 32 |
| Total | 103 |

Table A.6: Genesee County Homeless Count

Again, due to the nature of these programs, it is presumed that there is no duplication between services. Orleans County demographic data was provided via Excel spreadsheet from the Orleans County Department of Social Services to the Homeless Alliance.

Wyoming County

The department of social services in this County is the only providers of homelessness alleviation services and the number served constitutes the entire count for the county. General demographics were provided to the Homeless Alliance by the Wyoming County department of Social Services by printout of a spreadsheet, which was then transcribed into Excel for the purposes of generating aggregate statistics.

Appendix B: Zip Codes

Erie County Homeless Clients

Last permanent address from clients who are assisted in Erie County by states

| Sum of Total Clients | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| State | Total | State | Total | State | Total | State | Total |
| AL | 5 | IL | 5 | MO | 6 | PA | 20 |
| AR | 1 | IN | 3 | MS | 5 | PR | 23 |
| AZ | 7 | KS | 2 | MT | 1 | SC | 8 |
| CA | 22 | KY | 3 | NC | 23 | TN | 5 |
| CO | 3 | LA | 3 | NE | 1 | TX | 13 |
| CT | 3 | MA | 7 | NH | 1 | UT | 2 |
| DC | 2 | MD | 9 | NJ | 12 | VT | 1 |
| DE | 2 | ME | 4 | NY | 3494 | WA | 10 |
| FL | 54 | MI | 13 | OH | 22 | WI | 2 |
| GA | 25 | MN | 2 | OK | 2 | | |
| Grand Total: 3826 | | | | | | | |

Table B.1

Erie County HMIS Clients who Originated in NYS by County

| County | Total | County | Total |
|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Albany | 1 | New York | 10 |
| Allegany | 6 | Niagara | 81 |
| Bronx | 8 | Oneida | 2 |
| Broome | 2 | Onondaga | 7 |
| Cattaraugus | 13 | Ontario | 6 |
| Cayuga | 1 | Orange | 2 |
| Chautauqua | 33 | Orleans | 4 |
| Chemung | 3 | Oswego | 1 |
| Clinton | 3 | Queens | 13 |
| Columbia | 1 | Rockland | 1 |
| Delaware | 1 | Saint Lawrence | 1 |
| Dutchess | 2 | Schenectady | 3 |
| Erie | 3193 | Seneca | 1 |
| Genesee | 10 | Steuben | 1 |
| Greene | 1 | Tompkins | 3 |
| Jefferson | 2 | Warren | 1 |
| Kings | 6 | Washington | 1 |
| Livingston | 2 | Wayne | 1 |
| Monroe | 56 | Wyoming | 11 |
| Total: 3494 | | | |

Table B.2

Erie County HMIS Clients who Originated in the NY-508 Geography

| County | City | Total | County | City | Total |
|-------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|-----------------|-------|
| Erie | Akron | 3 | Genesee | Basom | 1 |
| | Alden | 7 | | Batavia | 6 |
| | Angola | 6 | | Elba | 1 |
| | Bowmansville | 2 | | Le Roy | 1 |
| | Buffalo | 3028 | | Oakfield | 1 |
| | Clarence | 3 | Genesee Total | | 10 |
| | Clarence Center | 1 | Niagara | Barker | 1 |
| | Collins | 2 | | Lockport | 10 |
| | Depew | 23 | | Middleport | 1 |
| | Derby | 5 | | Niagara Falls | 57 |
| | East Amherst | 1 | | North Tonawanda | 11 |
| | East Aurora | 1 | | Sanborn | 1 |
| | Eden | 4 | Niagara Total | | 81 |
| | Elma | 3 | Orleans | Albion | 3 |
| | Getzville | 2 | | Medina | 1 |
| | Glenwood | 1 | Orleans Total | | 4 |
| | Grand Island | 8 | Wyoming | Arcade | 2 |
| | Hamburg | 14 | | Attica | 2 |
| | Holland | 4 | | Bliss | 3 |
| | Lancaster | 10 | | Gainesville | 1 |
| | Lawtons | 1 | | Strykersville | 1 |
| | Marilla | 1 | Warsaw | 2 | |
| | North Boston | 1 | Wyoming Total | | 11 |
| | Orchard Park | 8 | | | |
| | Sardinia | 1 | | | |
| | South Wales | 1 | | | |
| | Spring Brook | 1 | | | |
| Springville | 6 | | | | |
| Tonawanda | 45 | | | | |
| Erie Total | | 3193 | | | |

Table B.3

Erie County Homeless Originating From Erie County

| City | Zip Code of Last Permanent Address(976) | Total | City | Zip Code of Last Permanent Address(976) | Total |
|---------|---|-------|-----------------|---|-------|
| Buffalo | 14201 | 145 | Akron | 14001 | 3 |
| | 14202 | 87 | Alden | 14004 | 7 |
| | 14203 | 202 | Angola | 14006 | 6 |
| | 14204 | 87 | Bowmansville | 14026 | 2 |
| | 14205 | 14 | Clarence | 14031 | 3 |
| | 14206 | 101 | Clarence Center | 14032 | 1 |
| | 14207 | 162 | Collins | 14034 | 2 |
| | 14208 | 127 | Depew | 14043 | 23 |
| | 14209 | 91 | Derby | 14047 | 5 |
| | 14210 | 101 | East Amherst | 14051 | 1 |
| | 14211 | 406 | East Aurora | 14052 | 1 |
| | 14212 | 217 | Eden | 14057 | 4 |
| | 14213 | 223 | Elma | 14059 | 3 |
| | 14214 | 101 | Erie | 16504 | 1 |
| | 14215 | 478 | | 16508 | 6 |
| | 14216 | 60 | Getzville | 14068 | 2 |
| | 14217 | 37 | Glenwood | 14069 | 1 |
| | 14218 | 49 | Grand Island | 14072 | 8 |
| | 14219 | 11 | Hamburg | 14075 | 14 |
| | 14220 | 71 | Holland | 14080 | 4 |
| | 14221 | 20 | Lancaster | 14086 | 10 |
| | 14222 | 57 | Lawtons | 14091 | 1 |
| | 14223 | 22 | Marilla | 14102 | 1 |
| | 14224 | 29 | North Boston | 14110 | 1 |
| | 14225 | 65 | Orchard Park | 14127 | 8 |
| | 14226 | 20 | Sardinia | 14134 | 1 |
| | 14227 | 24 | South Wales | 14139 | 1 |
| | 14228 | 15 | Spring Brook | 14140 | 1 |
| | 14231 | 4 | Springville | 14141 | 6 |
| | 14270 | 1 | Tonawanda | 14150 | 45 |
| | 14280 | 1 | | | 3200 |
| | Buffalo Total | | 3028 | Erie County Total | |

Table B.4

Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Residents seeking assistance at HMIS participating shelters in Erie and Niagara Counties

| Row Labels | Sum of Total Clients |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Genesee | 10 |
| 14013 | 1 |
| 14020 | 7 |
| 14058 | 1 |
| 14125 | 1 |
| Orleans | 8 |
| 14103 | 3 |
| 14411 | 5 |
| Wyoming | 9 |
| 14009 | 2 |
| 14011 | 2 |
| 14024 | 1 |
| 14066 | 1 |
| 14145 | 1 |
| 14569 | 2 |
| Grand Total | 27 |

Table B.5

Niagara County Clients Zip Code of Origin

| State | County | | Total | |
|---------------|------------|-------|-------|----|
| AL | Houston | | 2 | |
| CA | Alameda | | 4 | |
| CO | Boulder | | 1 | |
| MI | Wayne | | 1 | |
| NM | Bernalillo | | 1 | |
| NY | Bronx | | 1 | |
| | Erie | | 29 | |
| | Genesee | 14020 | 1 | |
| | New York | 10036 | 3 | |
| | Niagara | 14092 | | 1 |
| | | 14094 | | 22 |
| | | 14120 | | 11 |
| | | 14131 | | 2 |
| | | 14132 | | 2 |
| | | 14172 | | 3 |
| | | 14174 | | 2 |
| | | 14301 | | 67 |
| | | 14303 | | 25 |
| | 14304 | | 31 | |
| 14305 | | 48 | | |
| Niagara Total | | | 214 | |
| Ulster | | 1 | | |
| NY Total | | | 249 | |
| PA | Erie | | 1 | |
| WA | King | | 2 | |
| Grand Total | | | 261 | |

Table B.6

Appendix C: Poverty Thresholds for 2015 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years³⁴

| Size of family unit | Related children under 18 years | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| | None | One | Two | Three | Four | Five | Six | Seven | Eight or more |
| One person (unrelated individual)..... | | | | | | | | | |
| Under 65 years..... | 12,331 | | | | | | | | |
| 65 years and over..... | 11,367 | | | | | | | | |
| Two people..... | | | | | | | | | |
| Householder under 65 years..... | 15,871 | 16,337 | | | | | | | |
| Householder 65 years and over..... | 14,326 | 16,275 | | | | | | | |
| Three people..... | 18,540 | 19,078 | 19,096 | | | | | | |
| Four people..... | 24,447 | 24,847 | 24,036 | 24,120 | | | | | |
| Five people..... | 29,482 | 29,911 | 28,995 | 28,286 | 27,853 | | | | |
| Six people..... | 33,909 | 34,044 | 33,342 | 32,670 | 31,670 | 31,078 | | | |
| Seven people..... | 39,017 | 39,260 | 38,421 | 37,835 | 36,745 | 35,473 | 34,077 | | |
| Eight people..... | 43,637 | 44,023 | 43,230 | 42,536 | 41,551 | 40,300 | 38,999 | 38,668 | |
| Nine people or more..... | 52,493 | 52,747 | 52,046 | 51,457 | 50,490 | 49,159 | 47,956 | 47,658 | 45,822 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Table C.1

³⁴ The poverty thresholds are a statistical measure that differs from the poverty guidelines by HHS. Poverty guidelines are used as eligibility criteria for federal programs and the thresholds are used as descriptive statistics to understand how a population is faring.