

Homelessness is one of the most difficult experiences people have in our community. In the five counties of our continuum of care, 7,872 people are experiencing the traumatic instability that results from losing. About a fifth, 1,600 people, were in Niagara County. Homelessness decreased 6.02% in Niagara County, but that does not mean it no longer needs continued attention. Efforts in the community to reduce homelessness among particular subpopulations, such as the chronically homeless or veterans, have been successful due to data-driven, targeted efforts to ensure there are sufficient housing resources available that meet these population's needs. The same tactics can be applied to the broader community through efforts to secure more affordable, sustainable housing.

The Continuum of Care refers to the unified geography covered by the HUD HEARTH Act Continuum of Care grants. The Homeless Alliance of WNY is the lead agency for this region NY508, which includes Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties, coordinating the application and facilitating strategic dialog between grantees of this grant and other funding sources to ensure a unified, effective, and efficient effort to end homelessness in the region. The Homeless Alliance also operates the local Homeless Management Information System, also known as BAS-Net (Buffalo Area Services- NETwork) which collects information on all HUD-funded and voluntarily participating non-HUD-funded homelessness alleviation providers, including outreach, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing (including all housing first programs), rapid re-housing, and transitional housing providers. That information, other aggregate data shared by non-participating providers, and community demographic data from the American Community Survey are used to inform this report, which covers federal fiscal year 2018 (October 1, 2017-9/30/2018).

Main Findings:

- 1,600 people experienced homelessness in Niagara County, a decrease of 6.02% from the previous year
- Despite only being 7.2% of Niagara County's population, black people made up nearly a third (36.9%) of all clients experiencing homelessness
- Nearly a third of this year's homeless population in Niagara County were children
- 65.9% of clients served were single adults; 82.3% of single adults identified as male
- 22.0% of clients reported their release from an institution as their reason for homelessness; 17.9% reported coming directly from jail, prison or a juvenile detention facility
- 38% of clients went to a permanent housing destination after exiting from a program

Key Findings

Annual Counts of People Experiencing Homelessness

	2017 HMIS	2017 Estimated Total Count	2018 HMIS	2018 Estimated Total Count	% Change
NY-508	5092	7888	5550	7872	-0.20%
Niagara County	814	1702	1069	1600	-6.02%

Table 1: Overall Homelessness in Niagara County

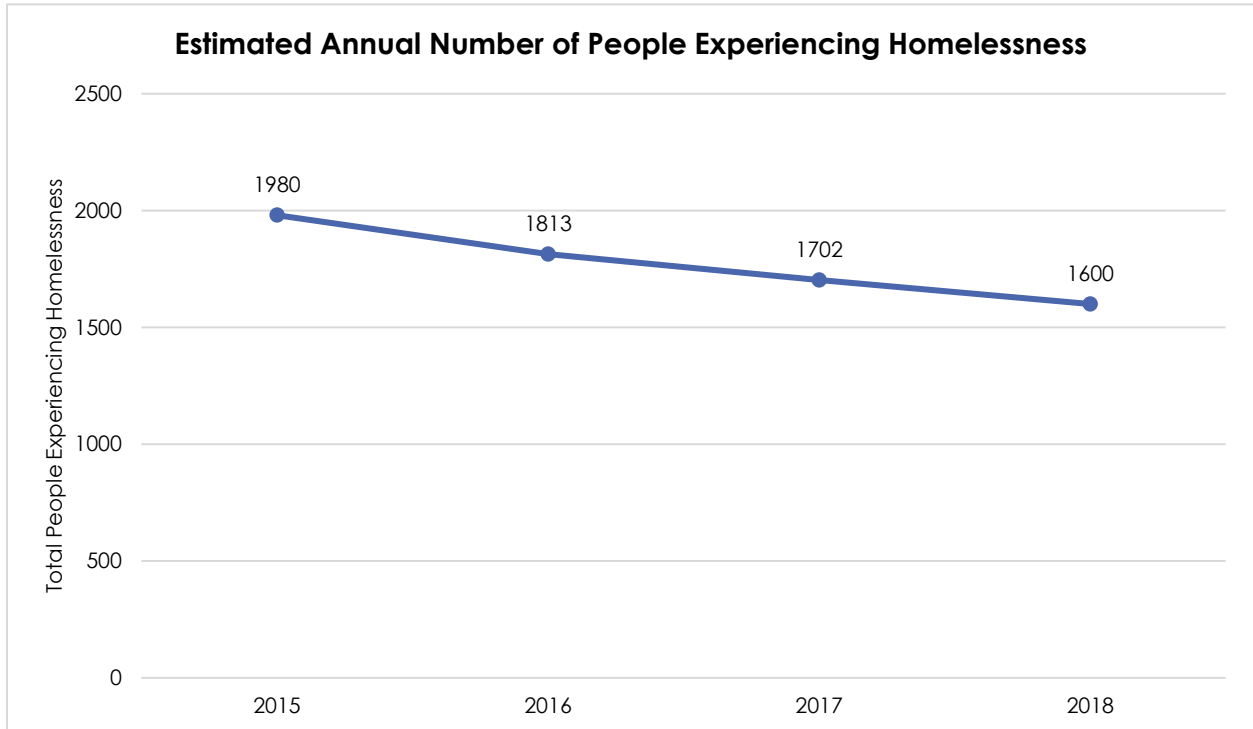


Figure 1: Homelessness in Niagara County 2015-2018

Point in Time Data

		Households with Adults + Kids	Adult Only Households	Children-Only Households	Total
2018	Households	30	104	3	137
	Total People	82	105	4	191
2019	Households	33	96	5	134
	Total People	100	96	5	201

Table 2: Point in Time Data for Niagara County, 2018-2019

Demographics of Homelessness

Race and Homelessness

Race	% of People Experiencing Homelessness	% of All City of Niagara Falls Residents	% of All Niagara County Residents
Asian	0.1%	1.0%	1.0%
Black	36.9%	22.6%	7.2%
Native American	2.4%	1.5%	1.1%
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%
White	46.6%	69.5%	87.8%
Multiracial	11.0%	4.6%	2.3%

Table 3: Racial demographics of people experiencing homelessness, residents of the city of Buffalo, residents of Erie County¹

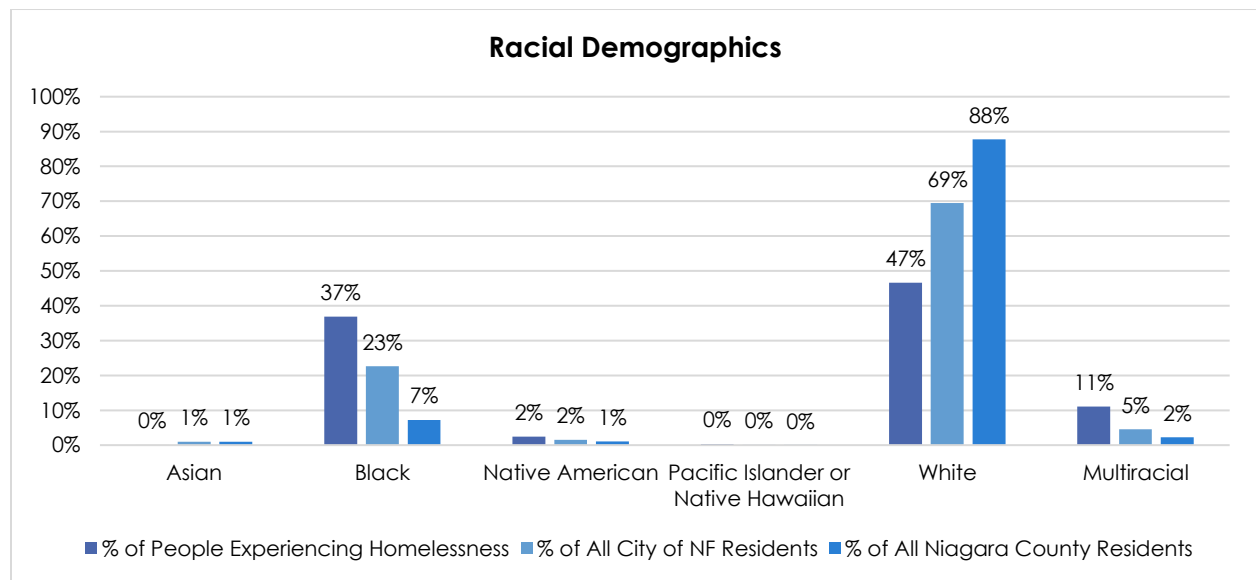


Figure 2: Percent of population in each racial category

Ethnicity	% of People Experiencing Homelessness	% of All City of Niagara Falls Residents	% of All Niagara County Residents
Hispanic or Latino	8.3%	3.6%	2.7%
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	79.3%	96.4%	97.3%

Table 4: Ethnicity demographics of people experiencing homelessness, residents of the city of Buffalo², residents of Niagara County

¹ American Community Survey, 2013-2017 five-year estimates

² American Community Survey, 2013-2017 five-year estimates

Age, Gender, Household Type, and Homelessness

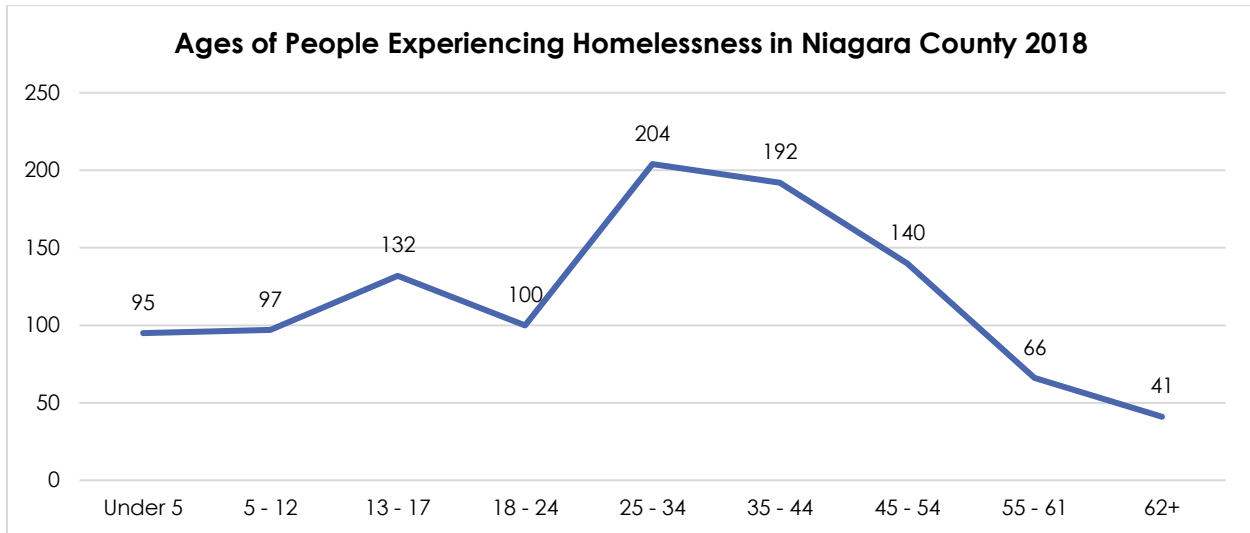


Figure 3: Age distribution of people experiencing homelessness

	Client Count	Percent
Children	324	30.3%
Under 5	95	9%
Age 5-12	97	9%
Age 13-17	132	12%
Adults	743	69.5%
Age 18-24	100	9%
Age 25-34	204	19%
Age 35-44	192	18%
Age 45-54	140	13%
Age 55-61	66	6%
Age 62+	41	4%

Table 5: Total adults/children experiencing homelessness

Gender	Client Count	Percent
Male	683	63.9%
Female	384	35.9%
Data not collected	2	0.2%

Table 6: Gender of those experiencing homelessness

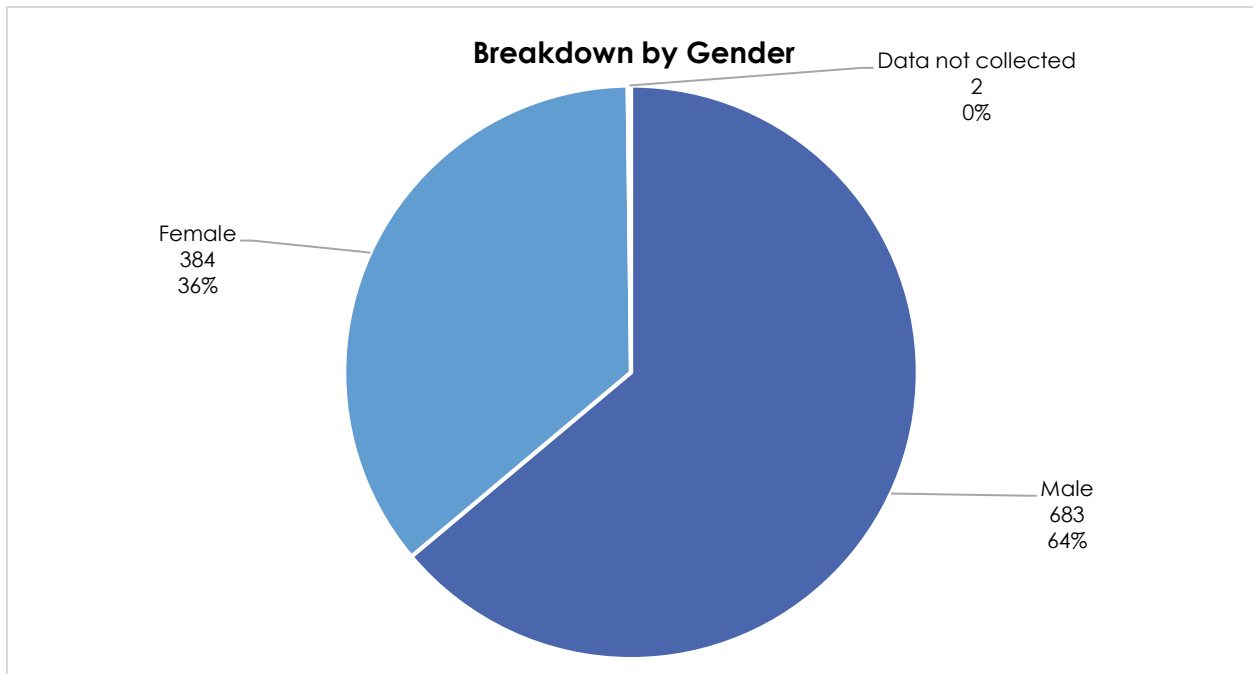


Figure 4: Gender distribution of people experiencing homelessness

Household Type	Female	Male
Single Adult	17.7%	82.3%
Families	71.7%	28.3%
Couple with No Children	40.0%	60.0%
Female Single Parent	96.9%	3.1%
Male Single Parent	0.0%	100.0%
Other	62.5%	37.5%
Two Parent Family	54.0%	46.0%

Table 7: Gender of all adults (ages 18+) experiencing homeless in each household type

Household Type	Count of Households	% of Households	Count of Clients	% of Clients
Single Adult	704	87.0%	704	65.9%
Families	105	13.0%	365	34.1%
Couple with No Children	6	0.7%	11	1.0%
Female Single Parent	67	8.3%	210	19.6%
Male Single Parent	5	0.6%	15	1.4%
Other	2	0.2%	9	0.8%
Two Parent Family	25	3.1%	120	11.2%
Grand Total	809		1069	

Table 8: Family type distribution of the households experiencing homelessness (1 single adult = 1 household)

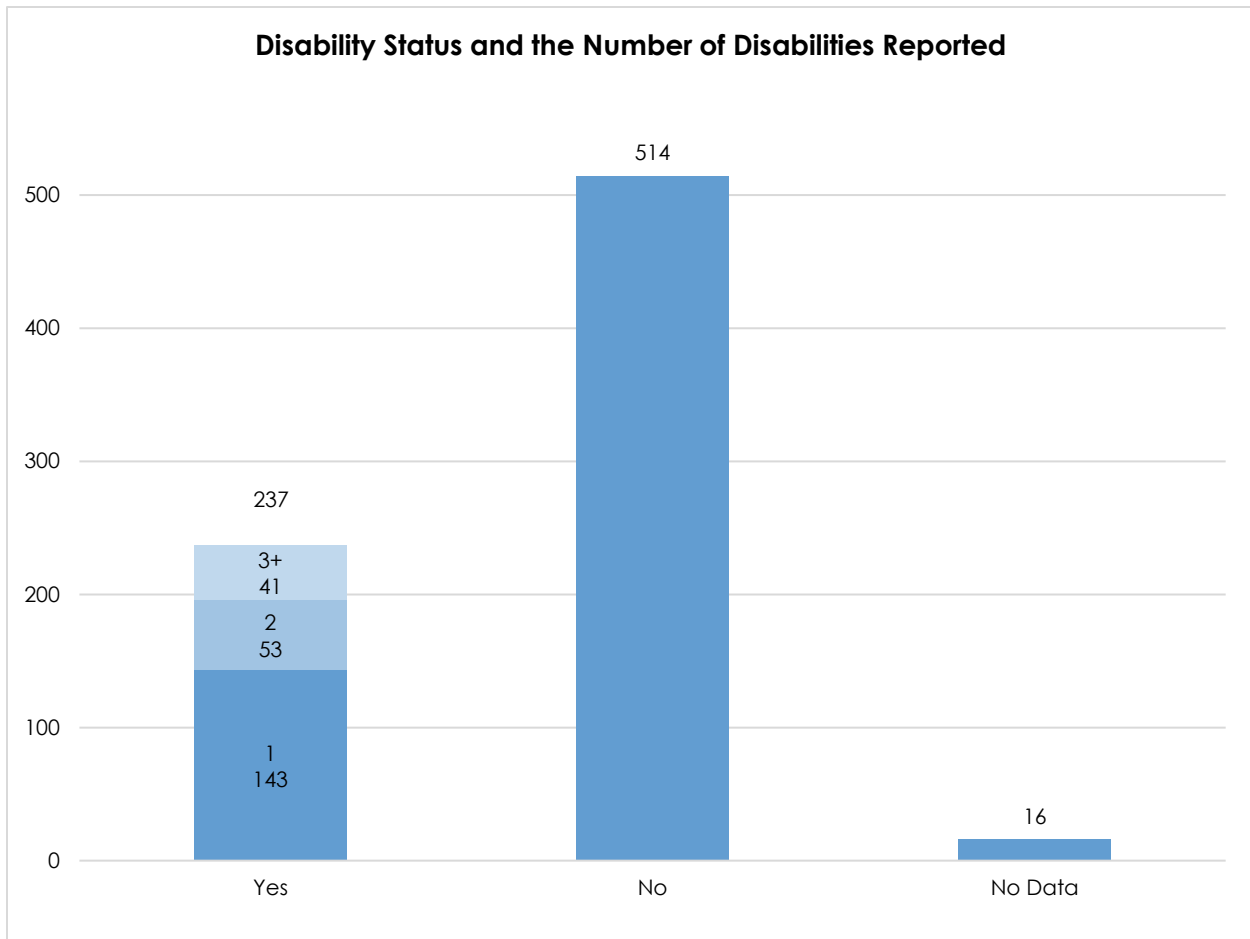


Figure 5: The disability status of all heads of households; if reporting yes to having a disability, the number of disabilities is indicated

Before and After Homelessness

The situations that lead to homelessness, where people resided prior to entering a program, and where they go to after exiting

Primary Reason for Homelessness	Client Count	Percent
No reason provided	342	42.4%
Release from Institution	177	22.0%
Household Disputes (not DV)	51	6.3%
Eviction by primary tenant	36	4.5%
Court eviction by landlord	27	3.3%
Loss of Job/Income (includes public benefits)	27	3.3%
Relocation from out of the NY-508 CoC Area	23	2.9%
Substance Abuse	20	2.5%
Mental Health	18	2.2%
Ask to leave by landlord	17	2.1%

Table 9: The top reasons cited for homelessness by heads of households at the most recent stay

Residence Prior to Project Entry	Client Count	Percent
Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house	169	21.2%
Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	143	17.9%
Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house	105	13.2%
Place not meant for habitation	69	8.7%
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	68	8.5%
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with shelter voucher	62	7.8%
Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	33	4.1%
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	31	3.9%
Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	29	3.6%
Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)	17	2.1%

Table 10: The top ten locations clients were residing at before entering the homelessness system according to the heads of household

Exit Destinations	Count	%
Permanent	385	38%
Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	1	0.1%
Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons	1	0.1%
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	255	25.5%
Rental by client, with other ongoing housing subsidy	12	1.2%
Rental by client, with RRH or equivalent subsidy	9	0.9%
Staying or living with family, permanent tenure	86	8.6%
Temporary	145	15%
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with shelter voucher	28	2.8%
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	3	0.3%
Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria	1	0.1%
Safe Haven	6	0.6%
Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)	32	3.2%
Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)	51	5.1%
Transitional housing for homeless persons (including homeless youth)	25	2.5%
Institution	64	6%
Foster care home or foster care group home	4	0.4%
Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	5	0.5%
Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	22	2.2%
Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility	18	1.8%
Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	13	1.3%
Place not meant for habitation	1	0%
No Data Available	414	41%
Client doesn't know	7	0.7%
Client refused	2	0.2%
Data not collected	96	9.6%
Deceased	1	0.1%
No exit interview completed	186	18.6%
Other	122	12.2%
Grand Total	1009	

Table 11: Exit destinations provided by the heads of household during their most recent stay in fiscal year 2018

Locations of Homelessness and Housing Costs

Zip Code of Last Permanent Address	Percent
14301	27.2%
14305	13.6%
14094	8.9%
14304	8.0%
14303	7.1%

Table 12: Top five zip codes of all heads of households' last permanent address who provided data

Percent of Income Towards Rent	City of Buffalo	Niagara County - All	Niagara County Excluding Buffalo
Less than 15.0 percent	15.70%	15.81%	15.87%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	10.90%	12.17%	13.17%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	9.10%	9.80%	10.37%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	9.50%	9.71%	9.91%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	8.40%	7.87%	7.47%
35.0 percent or more	46.40%	37.60%	30.46%

Table 13: American Community Survey – percent of people paying a certain percent of their income on their housing in the city of Buffalo (ACS 2012-2016 estimates)

Homelessness is concentrated in the populated areas of Niagara County. Overall, 46.08% of all Niagara County's renters are paying more of their income than what is considered affordable (30% of one's income). This is true for 43% of renters in Lockport and 54.76% of renters in the city of Niagara Falls. The median for the county is 29.7% of income, just at the threshold of affordable, while the City of Niagara Falls has a median that is higher than affordable.

Conclusion: Policy Recommendations

Homelessness continues to be a persistent social problem, despite the slight decrease in the number of people who experienced it in the CoC service area. We recommend the following:

- There is a growing affordable housing crisis throughout Western New York. Rents are increasing at alarming rates and those living in poverty are getting priced out of housing altogether.
- A report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition states that the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area has a shortage of 46,000 affordable housing units.
- An increase in the number of Section 8 vouchers is needed to give low income renters greater mobility rather than having limited affordable housing options.
- Local, State and National leaders must recognize the affordable housing crisis and develop a plan to address the need.
- New York State needs to adopt the Housing Stability Support Initiative which would increase the rental subsidy for five years for those who are homeless.

The solution to homelessness is a home.