



## 2019 Homelessness Summary Brief

### Overall: NY-508 Continuum of Care

Homelessness is one of the most difficult experiences a person can endure. In our community this year, 6,963 people experienced the traumatic instability that results from losing housing. Compared to last year, homelessness in Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming counties decreased by 11.6%, an effort that should be applauded. This decline likely results from our community's combined efforts to reduce homelessness and improve data quality in how people who experience homelessness are counted. However, this overall decrease does not mean there is no longer cause for concern; thousands of people still presented as homeless this year and continue to need help to secure more affordable, sustainable housing. The common denominator for everyone who lost their housing is that they lived circumstances where they could not afford it.

The Homeless Alliance of WNY is the Continuum of Care (CoC) Lead Agency for **Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties**. The CoC refers to the unified geography covered by the HUD HEARTH Act that makes agencies like the Homeless Alliance responsible for coordinating and overseeing the CoC application for HUD and facilitating strategic dialogue 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.

The purpose of this summary brief is to provide the rates of homelessness for our entire Continuum of Care, each of the Continuum of Care's five counties, and a breakdown of the number of people experiencing homelessness by provider; further demographic breakdown for all of the clients served in Erie, Niagara, and Genesee-Orleans-Wyoming counties can be found in the county summary briefs on the Homeless Alliance of WNY website under local statistics.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

### Overall

	2018 HMIS	2018 Estimated Total Count	2019 HMIS	2019 Estimated Total Count	% Change
<b>NY-508</b>	5550	7872	5344	6963	-11.55%
<b>Erie County</b>	4289	5742	4271	5244	-8.68%
<b>Niagara County</b>	1069	1600	1127	1649	+3.08%
<b>Genesee County</b>	65	304	183	209	-31.20%
<b>Orleans County</b>	236	280	271	300	+7.18%
<b>Wyoming County</b>	0	56	0	69	+23.21%

Table 1: Total Homelessness

## Methods of Tabulation

The adjusted total is determined using repeat rates based on the number of duplicated clients served at HMIS-participating providers to account for clients who could have been counted in both participating and non-participating programs.

Only providers who receive city and federal funding are required to use HMIS; other service providers may opt in. Those who do not have an entire year's worth of data in HMIS provide the Homeless Alliance of WNY with annual counts of the number of clients they served. In order to account for clients who may have been served by both participating and non-participating HMIS providers, we adjust their provided total based on the duplication rates for that household and project type in HMIS.

ADJUSTED BY DATA SOURCE		
Source	Total	Adjusted Total
HMIS Participating Providers	5344	5344
Erie County DSS - Hotels	484	399
Faith-Based Fellowship	101	63
Haven House	171	171
Haven House TH	29	29
Little Portion Friary	447	280
St. Luke's (Estimate)	50	31
Carolyn's House (DV)	94	94
God's Woman – WINGS (Estimate)	11	11
Lockport Cares	171	141
Passage House (DV)	161	161
YWCA Niagara DV Shelter	84	84
YWCA Niagara DV TH	31	31
Genesee DV - YWCA	26	26
Orleans DV - Pathstone	29	29
Wyoming County Community Action	3	3
Wyoming County DSS	66	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7302</b>	<b>6963</b>

Table 2: Overall Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	4271	4271
Erie County DSS - Hotels	484	399
Faith-Based Fellowship	101	63
Haven House	171	171
Haven House TH	29	29
Little Portion Friary	447	280
St. Luke's Estimate	50	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5553</b>	<b>5244</b>

Table 3: Erie County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	1127	1127
Carolyn's House (DV)	94	94
God's Woman – WINGS (Estimate)	11	11
Lockport Cares	171	141
Passage House (DV)	161	161
YWCA Niagara DV Shelter	84	84
YWCA Niagara DV TH	31	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1679</b>	<b>1649</b>

Table 4: Niagara County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	183	183
Genesee DV - YWCA	26	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>209</b>

Table 5: Genesee County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS	271	271
Orleans DV - Pathstone	29	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

Table 6: Orleans County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
Wyoming County Community Action	3	3
Wyoming County DSS	66	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>

Table 7: Wyoming County Homelessness Tabulation

Household Type and Location	Duplication Rate
Emergency Shelter – Families	0.176
Emergency Shelter – Individuals	0.374
Transitional Housing – Families	0.000
Transitional Housing – Individuals	0.039

Table 8: Duplication rates used to determine likely duplication among non-HMIS participating providers based on data from HMIS participating providers. These numbers were not applied to programs in counties where there is only a single point of entry (DSS) from which clients can seek emergency shelter or programs dedicated to serving clients seeking refuge from domestic violence.

## Conclusion: Policy Recommendations

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.

### All Levels of Government should together:

- Fund the production of more housing specifically for single adults, separate and apart from their respective existing supportive housing commitments.
- Fund the production of units for families that include units for large families.
- Fund a Market Study to determine the number of units by bedroom size needed to house people at various income levels, especially at the lowest income levels.
- Once the market study is complete, the State, County and Municipalities should use their available resources to direct funding for those units.

### New York State Must:

- Implement the [Home Stability Support \(HSS\)](#) program to create a State-funded, long-term rent subsidy for households receiving public assistance who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing due to eviction, domestic violence, or hazardous housing conditions.
- Follow the recommendations of the Bring it Home Campaign and adequately fund existing community based housing programs for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.
- Ensure effective reentry planning for individuals being released from State prisons in order to identify viable housing options prior to each individual's scheduled release date.
- Reform punitive parole practices that allow parole officers to exercise wide discretion and deny placement at potentially viable addresses for individuals leaving State prisons.
- Reconstitute the New York State Interagency Council on Homelessness to continue the coordination of state and federal efforts to end homelessness.

### Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance must:

- Permanently eliminate the statewide requirement that shelter residents pay rent for shelter or enroll in a savings program as a condition of receiving shelter.
- Stop sanctioning individuals with higher needs that have difficulties in complying with complex assistance requirements.

*The solution to homelessness is a home.*

## Acknowledgements

The Homeless Alliance of WNY facilitates strategic dialog to end homelessness in Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties. Our community is as effective as it is in assisting the members of our community who have lost their housing because there is a strong spirit of

collaboration. This report would be impossible without the enthusiastic assistance of so many agencies in the area.

Thank you to all agencies participating in HMIS, which include:

- Altamont Veterans Program
- Back to Basics
- Best Self Behavioral Health
- Buffalo City Mission
- Casey House Teen Shelter
- Catholic Charities of Buffalo
- Cazenovia Recovery Systems
- Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier, Inc
- Compass House
- Cornerstone
- Eagle Star Emergency Housing
- Erie County Department of Mental Health
- Erie County Department of Social Services
- Evergreen Health Services
- Family and Child Services of Niagara County (The Crib)
- Family Promise of WNY
- Genesee County Department of Social Services
- Gerard Place
- Jericho Road Community Health Centers
- Living Opportunities of DePaul
- Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center
- My Place Home (Temple of Christ)
- Niagara County Department of Social Services
- Niagara Gospel Rescue Mission
- Olmsted Center for Sight (WNY 211)
- Orleans County Department of Social Services
- Pathstone
- Restoration Society, Inc
- Salvation Army of Buffalo
- Saving Grace Ministries
- Spectrum Health Services
- Teaching and Restoring Youth
- Transitional Services, Inc
- United Church Home, Inc (Plymouth Crossroads)
- US Department of Veteran Affairs Healthcare for Homeless Veterans
- Veteran Outreach Center
- Veteran One-stop of Western New York

Thank you to all agencies who provided aggregate or de-identified client-level data to the Homeless Alliance, including:

- Erie County Department of Social Services

- Faith-Based Fellowship
- Haven House
- Little Portion Friary
- Lockport Cares
- PathStone Corporation of Orleans County
- Passage House
- WINGS- God's Woman
- Wyoming County Community Action
- Wyoming County Department of Social Services
- YWCA of Genesee County, Inc.
- YWCA of Niagara Frontier

Thank you to all of our partners in ending Veteran's Homelessness, especially the programs specifically serving veterans:

- The US Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Care for Homeless Veterans
- Altamont Veteran Program
- Buffalo City Mission
- Cazenovia Recovery Systems
- The Veteran One-Stop of WNY
- Veteran Outreach Center
- Pathstone
- The City of Buffalo
- The City of Niagara Falls
- The City of Tonawanda
- The City of Lockport

Most of all, thank you to all the direct-service providers who give the time and labor to ensure that all people experiencing homelessness obtain a home. Homeless outreach workers are the guardian angels of our area. Thank you to advocates and policymakers who ensure there are enough resources to get the members of our community experiencing homelessness into housing. The only solution to homelessness is a home.