



## 2020 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, 6,375 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 8.44%, a similar trend to what service providers are seeing nationally as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and eviction moratorium.

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, which collects information on all HUD-funded and voluntarily participating non-HUD-funded homelessness alleviation providers, including outreach, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing providers.

The purpose of this summary brief is to provide the total estimate of homelessness for the five counties within the NY-508 Continuum of Care 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 on the Homeless Alliance of Western New York's website under local statistics.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

### Overall

	2019 HMIS	2019 Estimated Total Count	2020 HMIS	2020 Estimated Total Count	% Change
<b>NY-508</b>	5344	6963	4872	6375	-8.44%
<b>Erie County</b>	4271	5244	3830	4897	-6.61%
<b>Niagara County</b>	1127	1649	849	1212	-26.50%
<b>Genesee County</b>	183	209	178	193	-7.66%
<b>Orleans County</b>	271	300	91	121	-59.67%
<b>Wyoming County</b>	0	69	64	92	33.33%

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.

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
<b>HMIS Participating Providers</b>	4872	4872
<b>Erie County DSS – Hotels/Motels for Singles</b>	309	226
<b>Erie County DSS – Hotels/Motels for Families</b>	373	321
<b>Faith-Based Fellowship</b>	192	141
<b>Haven House</b>	151	151
<b>Haven House TH</b>	18	18
<b>Little Portion Friary</b>	236	173
<b>St. Luke's (Estimate)</b>	50	37
<b>God's Woman – WINGS (Estimate)</b>	10	10
<b>Lockport Cares</b>	128	115
<b>Passage House (DV)</b>	106	106
<b>YWCA Carolyn's House (DV)</b>	65	65
<b>YWCA Niagara Shelter (DV)</b>	52	52
<b>YWCA Niagara TH (DV)</b>	15	15
<b>Genesee DV - YWCA</b>	15	15
<b>Orleans DV - Pathstone</b>	30	30
<b>Wyoming County Community Action</b>	28	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6650</b>	<b>6375</b>

Table 2: Overall Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
<b>HMIS Participating Providers</b>	3830	3830
<b>Erie County DSS – Hotels/Motels for Singles</b>	309	226
<b>Erie County DSS – Hotels/Motels for Families</b>	373	321
<b>Faith-Based Fellowship</b>	192	141
<b>Haven House</b>	151	151
<b>Haven House TH</b>	18	18
<b>Little Portion Friary</b>	236	173
<b>St. Luke's (Estimate)</b>	50	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5159</b>	<b>4897</b>

Table 3: Erie County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	849	849
God's Woman – WINGS (Estimate)	10	10
Lockport Cares	128	115
Passage House (DV)	106	106
YWCA Carolyn's House (DV)	65	65
YWCA Niagara Shelter (DV)	52	52
YWCA Niagara TH (DV)	15	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1225</b>	<b>1212</b>

Table 4: Niagara County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	178	178
Genesee DV - YWCA	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>193</b>

Table 5: Genesee County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	91	91
Orleans DV - Pathstone	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>121</b>

Table 6: Orleans County Homelessness Tabulation

Source of Information	Total	Adjusted
HMIS Participating Providers	64	64
Wyoming County Community Action	28	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>

Table 7: Wyoming County Homelessness Tabulation

Household Type, Location	Erie	Niagara	Genesee, Orleans, Wyoming
TH Singles	0.960123	0.962962963	x
TH Families	0.333333	1	x
ES Singles	0.732739	0.684434968	0.9146
ES Families	0.861818	0.896995708	0.2875

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 that only serve DV populations.

## Conclusion: Policy Recommendations

The solutions to homelessness is a home. Some people may need more support to remain housed but the basic solution is still finding people safe, affordable and decent housing. The biggest problem is there are not enough affordable housing units available for those at the lowest income levels.

While New York State's laudable initiative to create 100,000 affordable housing units and 6,000 supportive housing units is a good start, these projects often don't reach those at the lowest income levels. A soon-to-be released study by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is

going to verify and quantify the deficit of housing options for those at the lowest income levels. Until we address this deficit, homelessness and people living in substandard housing will continue to be an issue.

Even with the additional Section 8 vouchers provided by the federal government, homelessness will still be an issue because there are not enough available housing units. Some people are losing their allocated vouchers because they can't find housing.

National, State and local elected officials will proclaim they are doing the best they can to address this issue, and there is no doubt of their sincerity, it simply isn't enough. We all have to do better.

The Homeless Alliance of WNY recommends:

1. There are three ways to provide housing to those most in need:
  - a. Subsidize renters with more Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)
  - b. Further subsidize the developers with HOME funds and project based Section 8 vouchers.
  - c. Invest in public housing through rehabilitation of existing units and the creations of new public housing units.
2. The housing marketing study conducted by LISC cannot be allowed to collect dust on a shelf. Once it is released, all levels of government, nonprofits and the private sector must embrace and commit to building more affordable housing for those at the lowest income levels.
3. Housing is an undisputed Social Determinant of health. The medical community must be more involved in providing housing and end questionable releases of patients into homelessness and unstable housing.
4. There needs to be better discharge planning between correctional facilities and homelessness providers. Too often, people cycle between homelessness and corrections. It's been proven that stable housing reduces recidivism.

In conclusion, the solution to homelessness is housing, housing and housing. The solution is very easy and very complex at the same time.

## **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
- BestSelf Behavioral Health
- Buffalo City Mission
- 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 Promise of WNY
- Friends of Night People
- Genesee County Department of Social Services
- Gerard Place
- Hispanos Unidos
- Independent Living of the Genesee Region
- 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
- Pinnacle Community Services (Casey House, The Crib)
- Restoration Society, Inc
- Rural Outreach Center
- 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 Center of Western New York
- Wyoming County Department of Social Services

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
- YWCA of Genesee County, Inc.
- YWCA of Niagara Frontier

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.