

2021 Homelessness Summary Brief

NY-508

Erie | Niagara | Genesee | Orleans | Wyoming Counties

Prepared by The Homeless Alliance of Western New York



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NY-508: Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, Wyoming

Introduction

Homelessness is one of the most difficult experiences a person can endure. 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.

In our community this year 5,140 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 19%. There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic had some impact on this significant decrease. FY 2021 represents the middle of the pandemic period which saw reduced shelter capacity, increased homeless prevention funding from the CARES Act, and a NYS eviction moratorium. This moratorium allowed households to remain in housing that may have otherwise ended in homelessness and the increased funding through the CARES act granted agencies to provide services to those at risk of homelessness. A decrease in people experiencing homelessness was expected to be reflected in these numbers. We anticipate the number of homeless persons represented in this report to increase in the next year but at the same time this will also reflect a return to pre-pandemic levels.

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 (HMIS), 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 data in this report, unless otherwise stated, comes from the HMIS, which uses self-reported client-level information that is recorded on intake by these homelessness alleviation providers. All data in this report is aligned with federal fiscal years. FY2021 is October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021. Data about community demographics comes from the American Community Survey, 2016-2020 Five Year Estimates.



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Key Findings

Annual Counts of People Experiencing Homelessness

| Region | 2020 Totals | | 2021 Totals | | % Change |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| | HMIS | Estimated Count | HMIS | Estimated Count | |
| NY-508 | 4872 | 6375 | 4072 | 5140 | -19% |
| Erie County | 3830 | 4897 | 3244 | 3700 | -13% |
| Niagara County | 849 | 1212 | 763 | 1050 | -24% |
| Genesee County | 178 | 193 | 161 | 185 | -4% |
| Orleans County | 91 | 121 | 100 | 115 | -5% |
| Wyoming County | 64 | 92 | 65 | 85 | -8% |

Table 1: Count and percent change of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County and Year. Percent change calculated using the estimated count.

The estimated 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.

The data source for the remainder of this report, excluding the community race and ethnicity data, is from NY-508's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).



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Demographics of Homelessness

Household Type and Homelessness

| Household Type | Erie County Households | | Niagara County Households | | GOW Counties Households | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Single Adults | 2184 | 89.2% | 585 | 89.3% | 140 | 84.8% |
| Families | 263 | 10.7% | 70 | 10.7% | 25 | 15.2% |
| Couple with No Children | 3 | 0.1% | 7 | 1.1% | 1 | 0.6% |
| Female Single Parent | 215 | 8.8% | 46 | 7.0% | 19 | 11.5% |
| Male Single Parent | 13 | 0.5% | 5 | 0.8% | 2 | 1.2% |
| Other Relative | 3 | 0.1% | 3 | 0.5% | 0 | 0% |
| Two Parent Family | 29 | 1.2% | 9 | 1.4% | 3 | 1.8% |

Table 2: Household type distribution among the households experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County (1 single adult = 1 household).

Gender and Homelessness

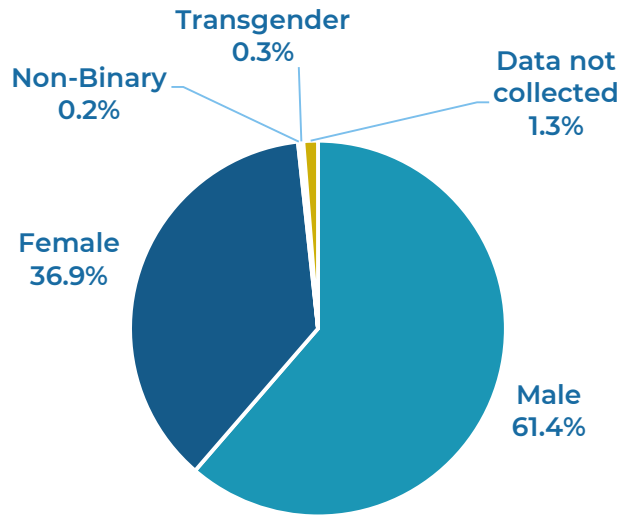


Figure 1: Proportion of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by Gender.

| Gender | Erie County Clients | | Niagara County Clients | | GOW Counties Clients | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Male | 1866 | 61.1% | 550 | 63.1% | 131 | 58% |
| Female | 1135 | 37.2% | 305 | 35% | 93 | 4% |
| Non-Binary | 6 | 0.2% | 1 | 0.1% | 0 | 0% |
| Transgender | 11 | 0.4% | 1 | 0.1% | 0 | 0% |
| Data not collected | 35 | 1.1% | 15 | 1.7% | 2 | 1% |

Table 3: Gender distribution of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County.

Race and Homelessness

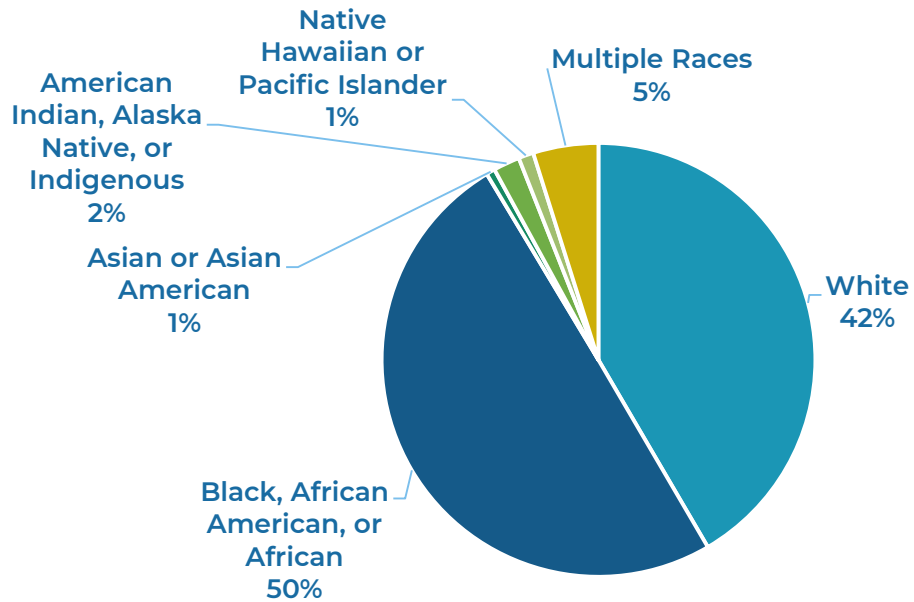


Figure 2: Proportion of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by self-reported Race.

| Race | Erie County Clients | Niagara County Clients | GOW Counties Clients |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| White | 993 | 358 | 225 |
| Black, African American, or African | 1527 | 294 | 66 |
| Asian or Asian American | 24 | 1 | 0 |
| American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous | 52 | 23 | 0 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 39 | 3 | 0 |
| Multiple Races | 122 | 53 | 10 |

Table 4: Self-reported Race of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County.



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| Race | % of All City of Buffalo Residents | % of Erie County People Experiencing Homelessness | % of All City of Niagara Falls Residents | % of Niagara County People Experiencing Homelessness |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| White | 49.9% | 36.02% | 70.65% | 48.91% |
| Black, African American, or African | 37.2% | 55.39% | 20.36% | 40.16% |
| Asian or Asian American | 6.7% | 0.87% | 1.54% | 0.14% |
| American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous | 0.5% | 1.89% | 1.05% | 3.14% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.1% | 1.41% | 0.12% | 0.41% |
| Multiple Races | 5.7% | 4.43% | 6.28% | 7.24% |

Table 5: Race of the communities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls and the people experiencing homelessness in Erie and Niagara Counties.

Ethnicity and Homelessness

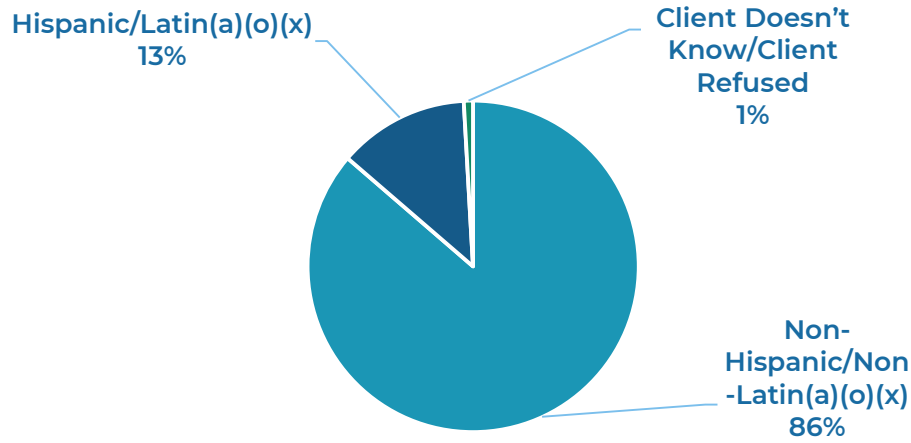


Figure 3: Proportion of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by self-reported Ethnicity.

| Ethnicity | Erie County Clients | Niagara County Clients | GOW Counties Clients |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x) | 2297 | 600 | 369 |
| Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) | 413 | 47 | 24 |
| Client Doesn't Know/Client Refused | 13 | 6 | 15 |

Table 6: Self-reported Ethnicity of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County.

| Ethnicity | % of All City of Buffalo Residents | % of Erie County People Experiencing Homelessness | % of All City of Niagara Falls Residents | % of Niagara County People Experiencing Homelessness |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x) | 87% | 84.36% | 95% | 91.88% |
| Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) | 13% | 15.17% | 5% | 7.20% |
| Client Doesn't Know/Client Refused | N/A | 0.48% | N/A | 0.92% |

Table 7: Ethnicity of the communities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls and the people experiencing homelessness in Erie and Niagara Counties.

Age and Homelessness

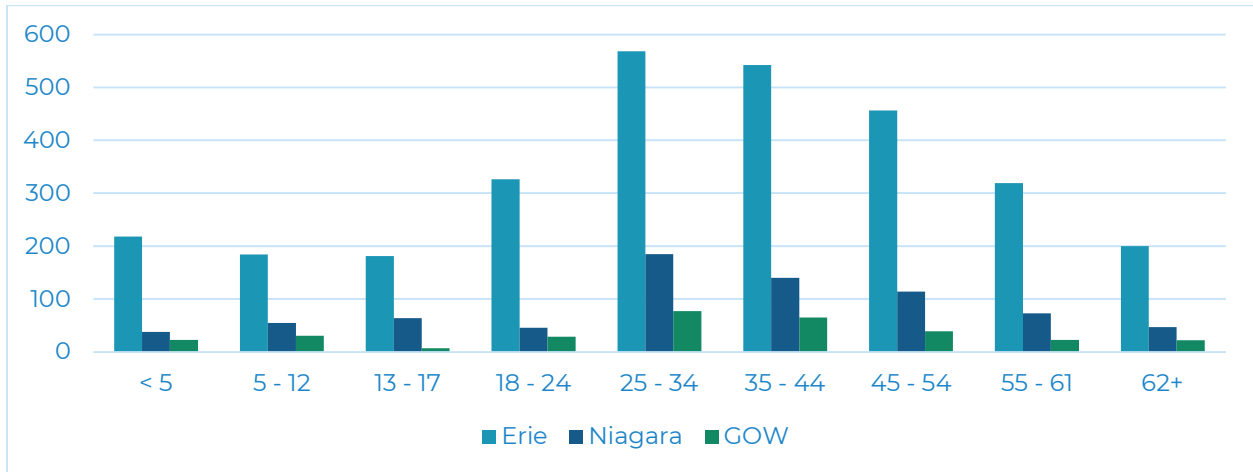


Figure 4: Age of people experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County.

| Age | Erie County Clients | Niagara County Clients | GOW Counties Clients |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| <5 | 218 | 38 | 23 |
| 5-12 | 184 | 55 | 31 |
| 13-17 | 181 | 64 | 7 |
| All Youth (under 18) | 583 | 157 | 61 |
| 18-24 | 326 | 46 | 29 |
| 25-34 | 568 | 185 | 77 |
| 35-44 | 542 | 140 | 65 |
| 45-54 | 456 | 114 | 39 |
| 55-61 | 319 | 73 | 23 |
| 62+ | 200 | 47 | 22 |
| All Adults (18 and Older) | 2411 | 605 | 255 |

Table 8: Total Youth and Adults experiencing homelessness in NY-508 by County. Counts exclude those who did not provide a date of birth.

Disability and Homelessness

| Experiencing a Disability | Erie County Clients | Niagara County Clients | GOW Counties Clients |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Yes | 1709 | 383 | 102 |
| No | 966 | 386 | 102 |
| Unknown | 199 | 65 | 77 |

Table 9: Distribution of clients experiencing a disability in NY-508 by County.

| Disability Type | Erie County Clients | | Niagara County Clients | | GOW Counties Clients | |
|--|---------------------|-----|------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Mental Health Disorder | 1241 | 37% | 198 | 39.4% | 44 | 47% |
| Alcohol Use Disorder | 155 | 5% | 16 | 3.2% | 4 | 4% |
| Drug Use Disorder | 281 | 8% | 42 | 8.3% | 7 | 7% |
| Both Alcohol and Drug Use Disorders | 360 | 11% | 47 | 9.3% | 3 | 3% |
| Chronic Health Condition | 451 | 14% | 88 | 17.5% | 10 | 11% |
| HIV/AIDS | 27 | 1% | 2 | 0.4% | 2 | 2% |
| Development Disability | 222 | 7% | 38 | 7.6% | 6 | 6% |
| Physical Disability | 595 | 18% | 72 | 14.3% | 18 | 19% |

Table 10: Distribution of disability type experienced by clients in NY-508 by County. Excludes clients who did not report experiencing a disability.



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| Number of Disabilities Experienced | Erie County Clients | Niagara County Clients | GOW Counties Clients |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 612 | 145 | 39 |
| 2 | 428 | 86 | 24 |
| 3+ | 571 | 99 | 7 |

Table 11: Distribution of number of disabilities experienced by clients in NY-508 by County. Excludes clients who did not report experiencing a disability and those whose disability is unknown.



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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 | Erie County Households | | Niagara County Households | | GOW County Households | |
|---|------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Household Disputes (not DV) | 351 | 20% | 78 | 16% | 1 | 2% |
| Loss of Job/Income (includes public benefits) | 228 | 13% | 45 | 9% | 3 | 7% |
| Eviction by primary tenant | 169 | 10% | 47 | 10% | 7 | 17% |
| Domestic Violence | 251 | 15% | 28 | 6% | 1 | 2% |
| Release from Institution | 150 | 9% | 142 | 29% | 10 | 24% |
| Asked to Leave by landlord | 123 | 7% | 26 | 5% | 5 | 12% |
| Relocation from out of the NY-508 CoC Area | 128 | 7% | 48 | 10% | 4 | 10% |
| Substance Abuse | 105 | 6% | 24 | 5% | 2 | 5% |
| Mental Health | 138 | 8% | 34 | 7% | 0 | 0% |
| Court Eviction by Landlord | 70 | 4% | 21 | 4% | 8 | 20% |

Table 12: Distribution of the top ten reasons cited for homelessness by heads of households in NY-508 by County. Excludes households who did not provide a response.



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| Residence Prior to Project Entry | Erie County Households | | Niagara County Households | | GOW County Households | |
|--|------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-------|
| | # | % | # | # | % | # |
| Emergency shelter, hotel/motel paid w/ voucher, or RHY Host Home shelter | 649 | 28% | 87 | 16% | 35 | 15.8% |
| Place not meant for habitation | 424 | 18% | 71 | 13% | 39 | 17.6% |
| Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house | 383 | 17% | 82 | 15% | 39 | 17.6% |
| Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house | 330 | 14% | 59 | 11% | 33 | 14.9% |
| Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy | 141 | 6% | 51 | 10% | 6 | 2.7% |
| Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility | 106 | 5% | 73 | 14% | 38 | 17.1% |
| Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility | 107 | 5% | 36 | 7% | 5 | 2.3% |
| Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher | 105 | 5% | 39 | 7% | 18 | 8.1% |
| Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center | 43 | 2% | 24 | 4% | 8 | 3.6% |
| Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility | 29 | 1% | 14 | 3% | 1 | 0.5% |

Table 13: Distribution of the top ten locations clients were residing at before entering the homelessness system according to heads of households in NY-508 by County. Excludes households who did not provide a response.



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| Exit Destination | Erie County Households | | Niagara County Households | | GOW Counties Households | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Permanent | 848 | 36% | 173 | 22% | 64 | 32% |
| Temporary | 916 | 39% | 152 | 19% | 17 | 8% |
| Institution | 114 | 5% | 55 | 7% | 3 | 1% |
| Other/Unknown | 490 | 21% | 417 | 52% | 118 | 58% |

Table 14: Distribution of the housing types were residing at after exiting the homelessness system in NY-508 by County.

| Exit Destination Type Specifics | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------|
| Permanent | Temporary | Institution | Other/Unknown |
| Owned by client (with or without subsidy) | Emergency shelter, hotel/motel paid with voucher or RHY Host Home shelter | Foster care home or foster care group home | Client doesn't know |
| Permanent housing (other than RRH) for formerly homeless persons | Host Home (non-crisis) | Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility | Client refused |
| Rental by client (in public housing or with or without subsidy or voucher) | Hotel/motel without voucher | Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility | Data not collected |
| Staying or living with family or friends (permanent tenure) | Residential project or halfway house with no homeless criteria | Long-term care facility or nursing home | Deceased |
| | Safe Haven | Psychiatric hospital or other psychiatric facility | No exit interview completed |
| | Staying or living with family or friends (temporary tenure) | Substance use treatment facility or detox center | Other |
| | Transitional housing for homeless persons | | |