



**Homeless Alliance**<sup>™</sup>  
of Western New York

# FY2023 Homelessness Summary Brief

**Erie County**

Prepared by The Homeless Alliance of Western New York



# 2023 Homelessness Summary Brief

Erie County

## Introduction

*Homelessness is one of the most difficult experiences a person can endure. This brief provides detailed information about the people in Erie County who are/were experiencing homelessness as well as the reasons they lost their housing.*

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The Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) leads efforts to reduce homelessness in Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties. As the region's designated Continuum of Care (CoC), we collect vital data through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which tracks both government-funded and community-based homelessness services such as shelters, outreach programs, and housing initiatives.

In fiscal year 2023, 5,682 people in Erie County faced the instability of losing their housing. While the CoC as a whole saw an increase in homelessness, Erie County experienced a 2.6% decrease in people experiencing homelessness over the past year, which included a 9% reduction in Chronic Homelessness and a 10% decrease in Youth Homelessness. Additionally, the proportion of clients with a disability decreased compared to last year. However, there was a concerning 16% increase in adults 62 years and over experiencing homelessness and the percentage of clients citing a court eviction by a landlord nearly doubled, rising from 5.3% to 10%. Despite these challenges, our efforts to understand and address homelessness continue, as we work toward securing more affordable and sustainable housing for everyone in our community.

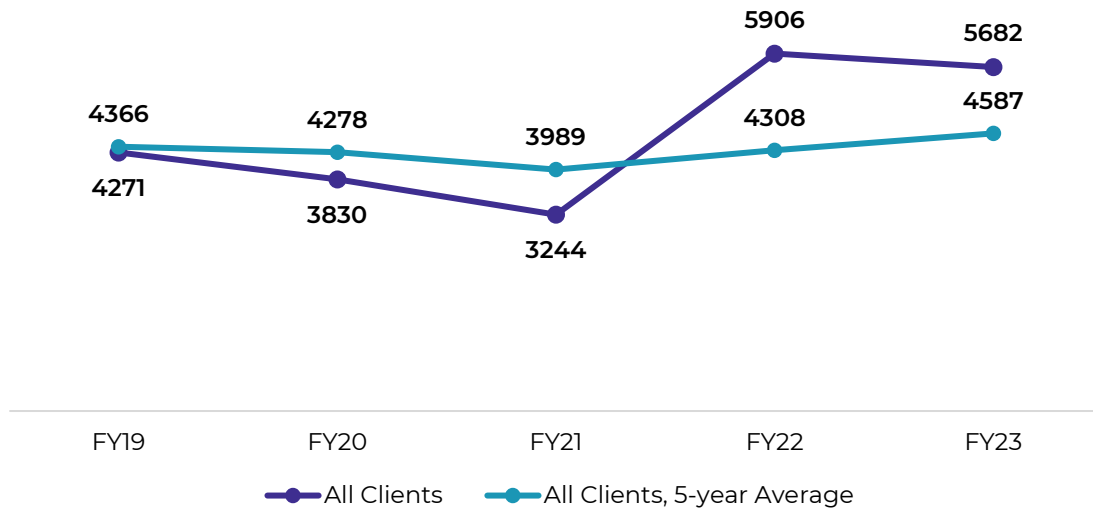
The data on clients experiencing homelessness in this report was downloaded from HMIS on November 11, 2023, and includes all data from Transitional Housing, Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, and Supportive Services Only projects that utilize HMIS. FY2023 is October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023. Data about community demographics and rental costs come from the American Community Survey, 2018-2022 Five Year Estimates.

## Demographics

### Who experienced homelessness?

- 83.0% of households who experienced homelessness were one-person households.
- 35.6% of people who experienced homelessness were aged 25-44.
- People who experience a disability are overrepresented in the homeless population.

**Figure 1: Number of Clients Served by NY-508 Over Time**  
FY2019-FY2023, Erie County



**Table 1: Household Type Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508**  
FY2023, Erie County

Household Type	Count of Households	% of Households
<b>Single Clients</b>	<b>3534</b>	<b>83.0%</b>
<b>Families</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
Couple with No Children	23	0.5%
Female Single Parent	513	12.1%
Male Single Parent	39	0.9%
Other	8	0.2%
Two Parent Family	139	3.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4256</b>	<b>100%</b>

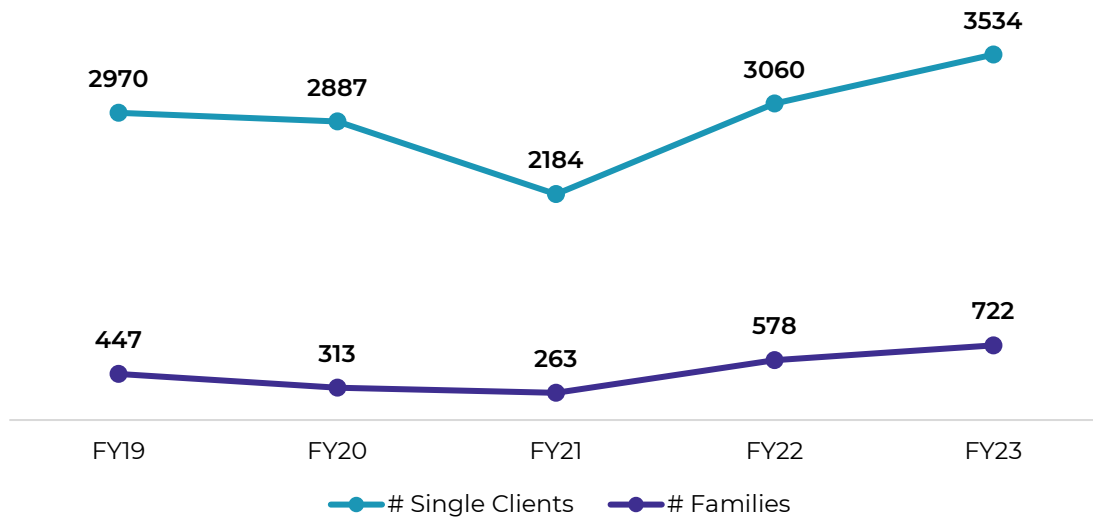
Note: 1 single client = 1 household



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**Figure 2: Household Type Served by NY-508 Over Time**  
FY2019-FY2023, Erie County

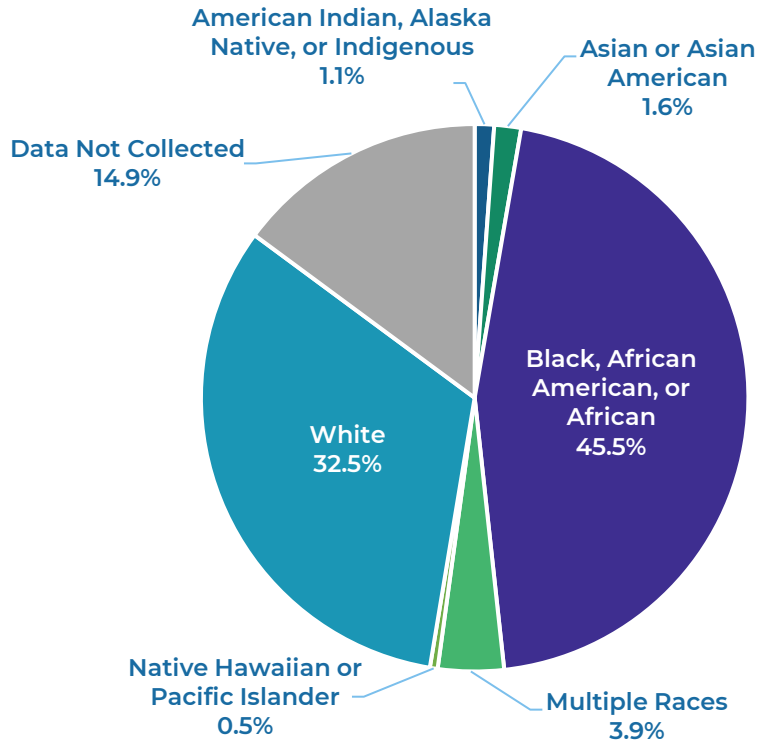


Note: In FY2022 only households with at least one adult and one child were considered Families.

**Table 2: Age Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508**  
FY2023, Erie County

Age	Count of Clients	% of Clients
<5	324	5.7%
5-12	490	8.6%
13-17	340	6.0%
<b>All Youth (under 18)</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>20.3%</b>
18-24	499	8.9%
25-34	1058	18.6%
35-44	966	17.0%
45-54	643	11.3%
55-61	452	8.0%
62+	399	7.0%
<b>All Adults (18 and Older)</b>	<b>4017</b>	<b>70.7%</b>
Data Not Collected	511	9.0%

**Figure 3: Race Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508  
FY2023, Erie County**

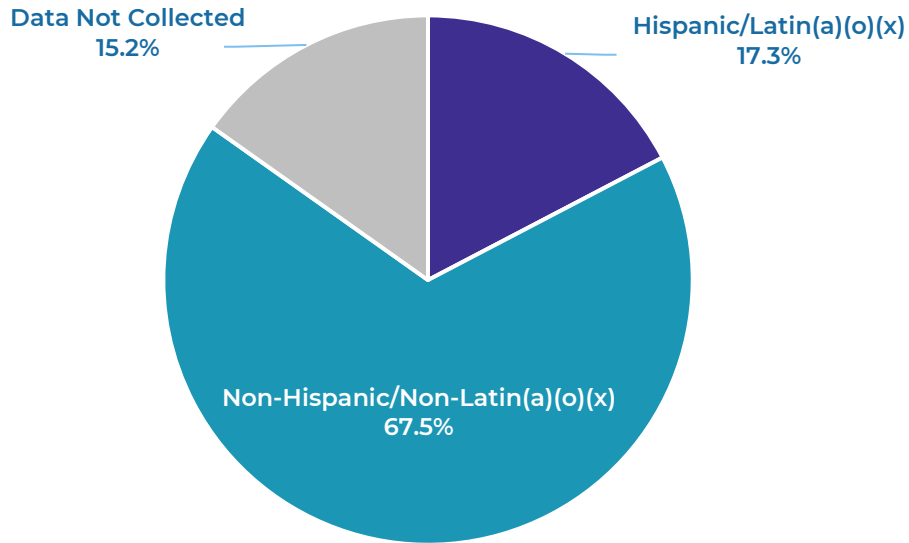


**Table 3: Comparison of Race Distribution between People Who Experienced Homelessness and All Residents  
FY2023, Erie County**

Race	% of People Experiencing Homelessness	% of All Erie County Residents
Asian or Asian American	1.9%	4.3%
Black, African American, or African	53.5%	12.9%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	1.3%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.0%
White	38.2%	75.4%
Other Race	N/A	2.3%
Multiple Races	4.6%	4.6%

*Note: Clients whose Race was not known are excluded from the People Who Experienced Homelessness calculation. (n=4837)*

**Figure 4: Ethnicity Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508  
FY2023, Erie County**

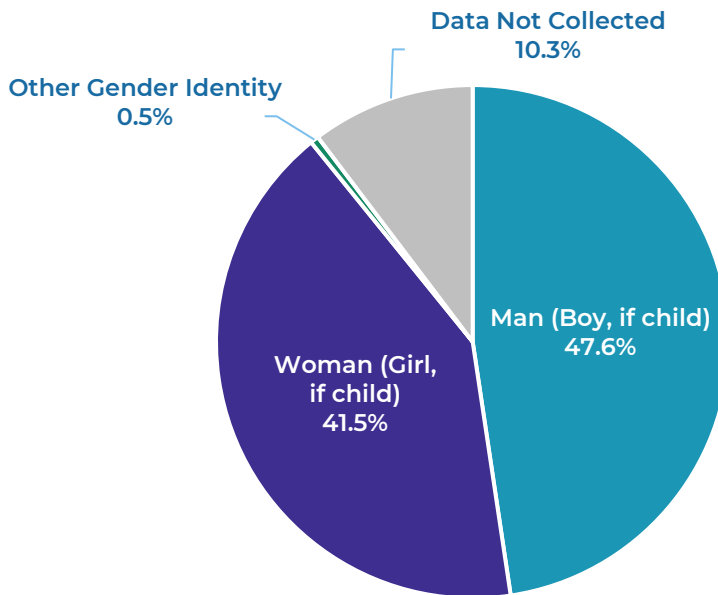


**Table 4: Comparison of Ethnicity Distribution between People Who Experienced Homelessness and All Residents  
FY2023, Erie County**

Ethnicity	% of People Experiencing Homelessness	% of All Erie County Residents
Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x)	20.4%	6.0%
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x)	79.6%	94.0%

*Note: Clients whose Ethnicity was not known are excluded from the People Who Experienced Homelessness calculation. (n=4819)*

**Figure 5: Gender Identity Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508  
FY2023, Erie County**



**Table 5: Comparison of Gender Identity Distribution between People Who Experienced Homelessness and All Residents  
FY2023, Erie County**

Gender Identity	% of People Experiencing Homelessness	% of All Erie County Residents
<b>Man (Boy, if child)</b>	53.1%	48.7%
<b>Woman (Girl, if child)</b>	46.3%	51.3%
<b>Other Gender Identity</b>	0.6%	N/A

*Note: Clients whose Gender Identity was not known are excluded from the People Who Experienced Homelessness calculation. (n=5090)*

**Table 6: Comparison of Disability Status Distribution between People Who Experienced Homelessness and All Residents**  
FY2023, Erie County

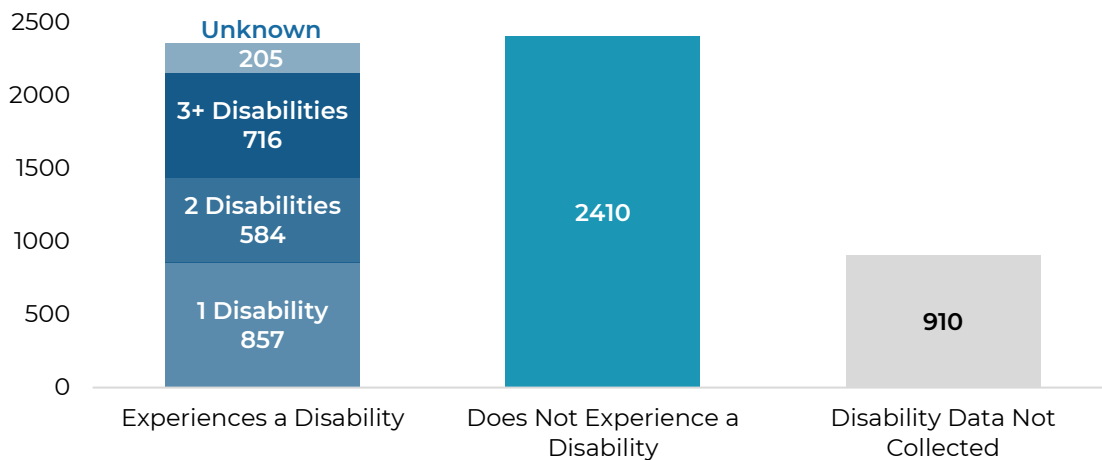
	% of People Experiencing Homelessness	% of All Erie County Residents
Experience a Disability	41.6%	13.7%

**Table 7: Disability Type Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508**  
FY2023, Erie County

Disability Type	Count of Clients	% of Clients w 1+ Disability	% of All Clients
Mental Health Disorder	1539	65.2%	27.1%
Alcohol Use Disorder	169	7.2%	3.0%
Drug Use Disorder	296	12.5%	5.2%
Both Alcohol and Drug Use Disorder	437	18.5%	7.7%
Chronic Health Condition	593	25.1%	10.4%
HIV/AIDS	51	2.2%	0.9%
Developmental Disability	267	11.3%	4.7%
Physical Disability	872	36.9%	15.3%

*Note: Number of clients who experienced one or more disabilities is 2362. Columns may not sum to 100% as clients may experience multiple disability types or not experience any disability.*

**Figure 6: Number of Disabilities Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508**  
FY2023, Erie County





## Special Populations

**What groups of people have unique needs?** Some individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to have more severe service needs and are referred to as “Special Populations.” In NY-508 there are four main Special Populations: chronically homeless, survivors of domestic violence, veterans, and youth\*. Clients who meet the criteria for one or more of these special populations have access to resources designed specifically for their needs. Due to the extremely sensitive nature of information on clients who are youths or survivors of domestic violence limited data is available for these special populations.

*\*See Table 14 in the Appendix for definitions*

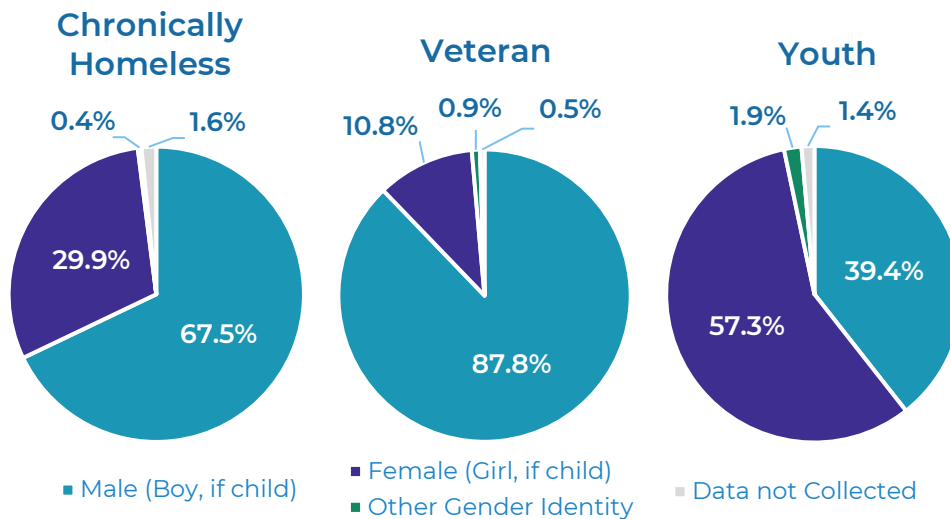
**Table 8: Special Populations Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508 FY2023, Erie County**

Special Population	Count of Clients	% of Clients
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	502	8.8%
<b>Survivor of Domestic Violence</b>	677	11.9%
<b>Veteran</b>	222	3.9%
<b>Youth</b>	625	11.0%

*Note: Columns may not sum to 100% as clients may meet criteria for multiple Special Populations or not meet criteria for any Special Population.*

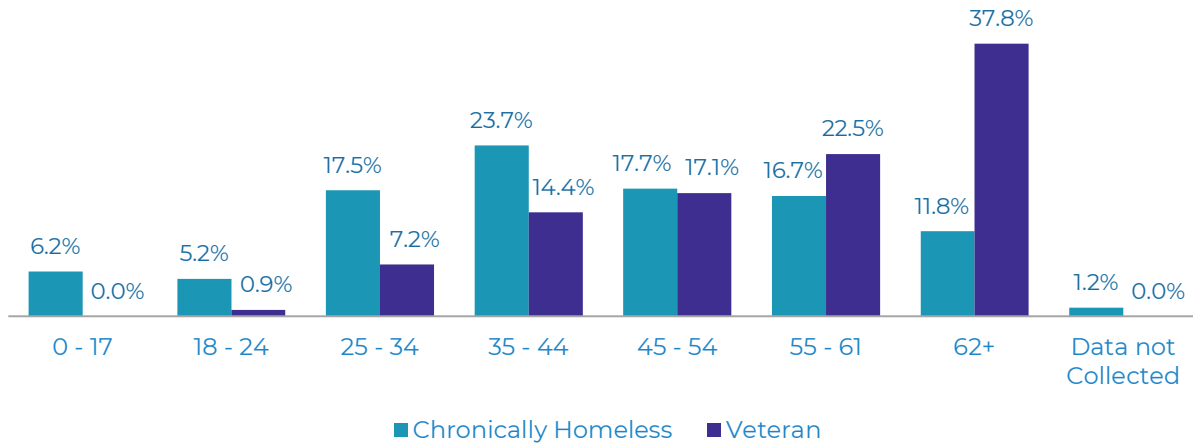
**Figure 7: Gender Distribution Among Special Population Clients Served by NY-508**

FY2023, Erie County



**Figure 8: Age Distribution Among Special Population Clients Served by NY-508**

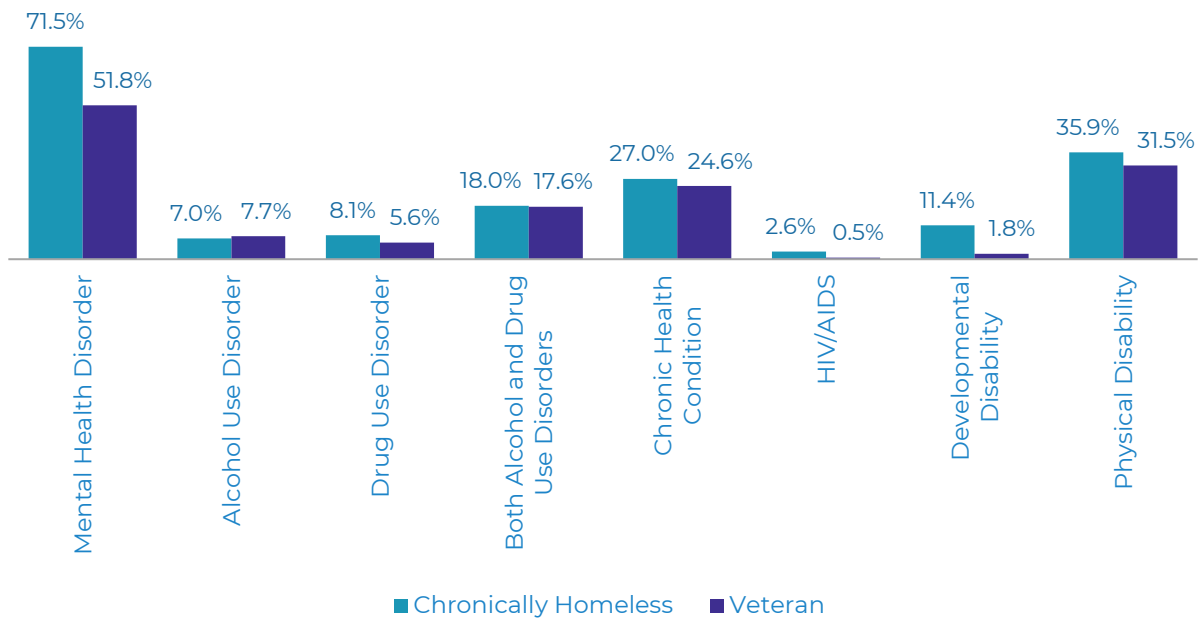
FY2023, Erie County



Note: The denominators for the percentage calculations are the number of Chronically Homeless (n=502) and the number of Veterans (n=222).

**Figure 9: Disability Type Distribution Among Special Population Clients Served by NY-508**

FY2023, Erie County



Note: The denominators for the percentage calculations are the number of Chronically Homeless (n=502) and the number of Veterans (n=222).



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## Prior Residence

### Where were people living before losing their housing?

- 24.7% of clients reported that their last permanent address was in the East Side, Kensington, and Schiller Park area.
- The proportion of clients who had been living in a place not meant for habitation decreased from 15.4% to 12.3% between FY2022 and FY2023.
- The proportion of clients who had been living in a rental house or apartment increased from 8.0% to 9.3% between FY2022 and FY2023.

**Table 9: Top Ten Zip Codes for the Last Permanent Residence Among Clients Served by NY-508 FY2023, Erie County**

Zip Code of Last Permanent Address	% of Clients	Zip Code of Last Permanent Address	% of Clients
14215	14.3%	14208	3.7%
14211	10.4%	14207	3.7%
14212	6.1%	14214	3.7%
14213	4.2%	14201	3.0%
14206	3.8%	14203	2.5%

Note: Clients whose Zip Code of Last Permanent Address was not known are excluded from the calculation (n=2934). The Zip Code of Last Permanent Address is provided by the Head of Household upon their first entry into a NY-508 Service Provider during FY2023.

**Table 10: Top Ten Previous Residence Types Among Clients Served by NY-508 FY2023, Erie County**

Residence Prior to Project Entry	Count of Clients	% of Clients
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	1740	43.0%
Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house	523	12.9%
Place not meant for habitation	498	12.3%
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	376	9.3%
Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house	328	8.1%
Rental by client, with ongoing housing subsidy	116	2.9%
Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	112	2.8%
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	105	2.6%
Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility	81	2.0%
Substance use treatment facility or detox center	63	1.6%

Note: Clients whose Prior Residence Type was not known are excluded from the calculation. (n=4051). The Prior Residence Type is provided by the Head of Household upon their first entry into a NY-508 Service Provider during FY2023.

### Causes

#### Why did people experience homelessness?

- The proportion of clients who reported that a court eviction by their landlord is the primary reason they lost their housing increased from 5.3% to 10.0% between FY2022 and FY2023.
- The proportion of clients who reported that substance use is the primary reason they lost their housing decreased from 4.1% to 2.7% between FY2022 and FY2023.
- 49.1% of Erie County residents who rent their residence pay more than 30% of their income on rent alone.

**Table 11: Top Ten Primary Reason for Homelessness Clients Served by NY-508**

FY2023, Erie County

Primary Reason for Homelessness	Count of Clients	% of Clients
Relocation from out of the NY-508 CoC Area	930	29.2%
Household Disputes (not DV)	325	10.2%
Court eviction by landlord	319	10.0%
Loss of Job/Income (includes public benefits)	229	7.2%
Ask to leave by landlord	217	6.9%
Domestic Violence (DV)	216	6.8%
Eviction by primary tenant	146	4.6%
Mental Health	136	4.3%
Release from Institution	133	4.2%
Substance Use	86	2.7%

*Note: Clients whose Primary Reason for Homelessness was not known are excluded from the calculation. (n=3181). The Primary Reason for Homelessness is provided by the Head of Household upon their first entry into the Homelessness Alleviation System during FY2023.*

**Table 12: Percent of Income Towards Rent Distribution Among Residents 2018-2022 Average**

Percent of Income Towards Rent	City of Buffalo	Erie County - All	Erie County Excluding Buffalo
Less than 15.0 percent	15.9%	14.9%	13.9%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	13.6%	13.1%	12.6%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	11.8%	12.1%	12.5%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	8.9%	10.9%	12.7%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	5.6%	6.8%	7.9%
35.0 percent or more	44.2%	42.3%	40.4%

*Note: Residents that the American Community Survey reported were unable to have their Percent of Income Towards Rent computed are excluded from the calculation.*



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## Exit Destination

**When people exit the system, where do they go?** In FY2023, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased from FY2022, but the number of supported housing beds and affordable housing units stayed relatively the same. As a result, clients remained in shelters for longer and fewer were able to find stable housing.

**Table 13: Residence Type Upon Exit Distribution Among Clients Served by NY-508 FY2023, Erie County**

Exit Destination Type*	Count of Leavers	% of Leavers
Permanent	1047	23.2%
Temporary	1597	35.4%
Institution	95	2.1%
Other/Unknown	1773	39.3%

*Note: The denominator for the percent calculation is the number of clients who exited a NY-508 Service Provider during FY2023 (n=4512).*

*\*See Table 15 in the Appendix for definitions*

## 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.

Of course, these agencies could not operate without the dedicated direct-service providers who give their time and labor to our community members when they are actively experiencing the challenges associated with losing their housing. These staff provide critical, immediate support and guidance for clients as they begin to navigate our homeless response system. Thank you for all that you do.

Thank you to all agencies participating in HMIS whose data is included in this report:

- Altamont Veterans Program
- Back to Basics
- BestSelf Behavioral Health
- Buffalo City Mission
- Compass House
- Cornerstone
- Erie County Department of Social Services
- Family Promise of WNY
- Friends of Night People



## 2023 Homelessness Summary Brief

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- Jericho Road Community Health Centers
- Little Portion Friary
- Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center
- My Place Home (Temple of Christ)
- Restoration Society, Inc
- Rural Outreach Center
- Salvation Army of Buffalo
- Transitional Services, Inc
- Twin Cities Task Force

Thank you to all agencies who provided aggregate or de-identified client-level data to the Homeless Alliance for the NY-508 estimates:

- Child and Family Services Haven House
- Eastgate Mission
- Faith-Based Fellowship
- Family & Children's Services
- Saving Grace Ministries
- United Church Home
- WINGS- God's Woman



## Appendix

**Client:** An individual who has or is currently experiencing homelessness and was or is receiving services from a NY-508 Service Provider.

**Continuum of Care (CoC):** A community with a unified plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency.

**NY-508:** The HUD designation for the Western New York CoC, the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls and Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming counties.

**Disability:** A diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness that is expected to be of long-continues and indefinite duration that substantially impairs the person’s ability to live independently.

**Emergency Shelter (ES):** ES are any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

**Household:** All the people who occupy, or will occupy, a housing unit. A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, who share, or will share, the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit is counted as a household.

**Leavers:** Clients who stopped receiving services from any NY-508 Service Provider during FY2023.

**Street Outreach (SO):** SO activities are designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and providing them with urgent, non-facility based care.

**Supportive Services Only (SSO):** SSO projects provide supportive services, such as conducting outreach to sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons and families and providing referrals to other housing or other necessary services to families and individuals experiencing homelessness. These projects do not provide housing or housing assistance.

**Transitional Housing (TH):** TH provides temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing.

**Table 14: Special Populations Definitions/Criteria**

Population	Definition/Criteria
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	An individual with a disability who has been homeless for at least 12 consecutive months <b>or</b> has been homeless on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years and the combined time homeless equals at least 12 months.
<b>Survivor of Domestic Violence</b>	An individual who has previously or is currently experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking.
<b>Veteran</b>	An individual who has ever been on active duty in the armed forces of the United States.
<b>Youth</b>	An individual between the ages of 12 and 24 alone or in a household with no members over age 24.

*Note: Definitions/Criteria are summarized.*

**Table 15: Residence Type Upon Exit Definitions**

Exit Destination Type Specifics			
Permanent	Temporary	Institution	Other/Unknown
Owned by client (with or without subsidy)	Emergency shelter, hotel/motel paid with voucher	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 prefers not to answer
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		