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2017 Homelessness Summary Brief

Homeless Alliance of New York

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2017 Homelessness Summary Brief

Abstract

The Homeless Alliance of WNY publishes reports of homelessness in the five-county region that we serve. The information is from HMIS, departments of social services, and providers. HMIS serves as the primary data source and nearly all agencies in the five-county area who are not on HMIS provide aggregate counts. Increased coverage of HMIS has led to an improved understanding of homelessness in Western New York.

Keywords

homelessness, buffalo, housing

Homelessness is one of the most difficult experiences people have in our community, resulting in 8,200 people experiencing the traumatic instability that results from losing housing.

Homelessness decreased slightly, however its persistence is cause for concern. 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 common denominator for everyone lost their housing is that they lived circumstances where they could not afford it.

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, 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.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Overall

| | 2015 HMIS | 2015 Estimated Total Count | 2016 HMIS | 2016 Estimated Total Count | 2017 HMIS | 2017 Estimated Total Count | % Change |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| NY-508 | 4769 | 7964 | 5240 | 8272 | 5378 | 8200 | -0.8% |
| Erie County | 4273 | 5455 | 4690 | 5953 | 4430 | 5824 | -2.17% |
| Niagara County | 469 | 1980 | 623 | 1813 | 1041 | 1929 | +6.40% |
| Genesee County | - | 383 | 104 | 165 | 201 | 298 | +80.61% |
| Orleans County | - | 103 | 35 | 229 | 252 | 272 | +18.7% |
| Wyoming County | - | 35 | - | 39 | - | 47 | +20.51% |

Table 1: Total Homelessness

Over 8,000 people were homeless in the five-county area in 2017.

| NY-508 Point-in-Time ¹ | Unsheltered Homeless Count | Sheltered Homeless Count | Total |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| January 26, 2011 | 178 | 760 | 938 |
| October 26, 2011 | 135 | N/A | N/A |
| January 26, 2012 | 106 | 804 | 910 |
| July 26, 2012 | 131 | N/A | N/A |
| January 30, 2013 | 98 | 750 | 848 |
| January 29, 2014 | 64 | 784 | 848 |
| July 22, 2014 | 119 | N/A | N/A |
| January 28, 2015 | 61 | 858 | 919 |
| January 26, 2016 | 57 | 905 | 962 |
| January 25, 2017 | 18 | 907 | 925 |
| January 24, 2018 | 15 | 942 | 957 |

Table 2: Point-in-Time

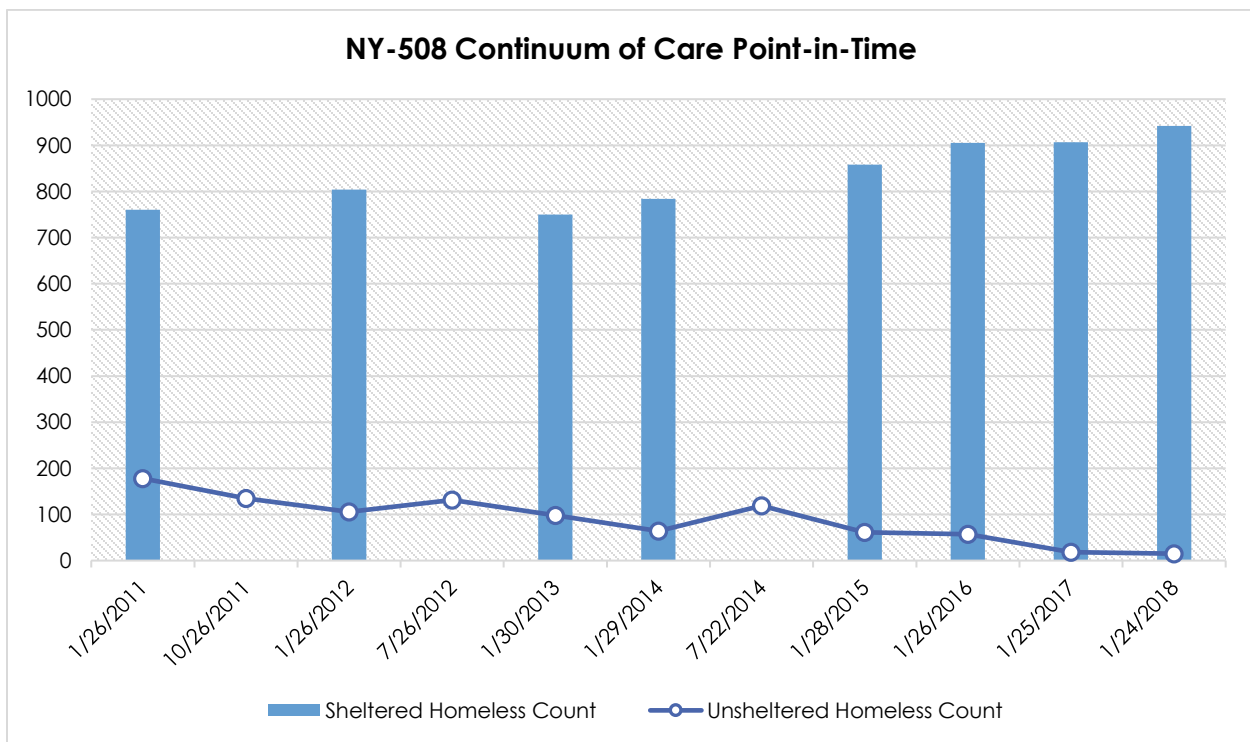


Figure 1: Total homelessness during PIT counts

¹ In 2011 and 2012, NY-508 included Erie County. In 2013-2015, it included Niagara County as well. In 2016 to present, it includes Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties

Methods of Tabulation

| ADJUSTED BY DATA SOURCE | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Source | Total | Adjusted Total |
| HMIS Participating Providers | 5448 | 5448 |
| Haven House | 484 | 423 |
| Little Portion Friary | 362 | 314 |
| Faith-Based Fellowship | 56 | 49 |
| Back to Basics | 102 | 89 |
| Erie County DSS - Hotels | 542 | 474 |
| St. Luke's Estimate | 50 | 44 |
| Niagara DSS Shelter Placements | 438 | 383 |
| PASSAGE (DV) | 141 | 123 |
| Lockport Cares | 285 | 249 |
| YWCA Niagara DV Shelter | 79 | 69 |
| YWCA Niagara DV TH | 44 | 44 |
| God's Woman - WINGS | 20 | 17 |
| Orleans DV | 22 | 19 |
| Orleans County DSS | 272 | 238 |
| Wyoming County DSS | 47 | 41 |
| Genesee County DSS | 201 | 176 |
| Total | 8593 | 8200 |

Table 3: Overall Homelessness Tabulation

| Source of Information | Gross | Adjusted |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| HMIS Participating Providers | 4430 | 4430 |
| Haven House | 484 | 423 |
| Little Portion Friary | 362 | 314 |
| Faith-Based Fellowship | 56 | 49 |
| Back to Basics | 102 | 89 |
| St. Luke | 50 | 50 |
| Erie County DSS - Hotels | 542 | 471 |
| Total | 6026 | 5824 |

Table 4: Erie County Homelessness Tabulation

| Source of Information | Total | Adjusted |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| HMIS Participating Providers | 1041 | 1041 |
| Niagara DSS Shelter Placements | 438 | 382.7975 |
| PASSAGE (DV) | 141 | 123.2293 |
| Lockport Cares | 285 | 249.0806 |
| YWCA of the Niagara Frontier DV Shelter | 79 | 69.04339 |
| YWCA of the Niagara Frontier DV TH | 44 | 44 |
| God's Woman - WINGS | 20 | 20 |
| Total | 2048 | 1929 |

Table 5: Niagara County Homelessness Tabulation

| Source of Information | Total |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Orleans DV | 22 |
| Orleans County DSS | 252 |
| Total | 272 |

Table 6: Orleans County Homelessness Tabulation

| Source of Information | Total |
|------------------------------|------------|
| HMIS Participating Providers | 97 |
| Genesee County DSS | 201 |
| Total | 298 |

Table 7: Genesee County Homelessness Tabulation

| Source of Information | Total |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Wyoming County DSS | 47 |
| Total | 47 |

Table 8: Wyoming County Homelessness Tabulation

| Annual Homelessness Assessment Report Shell | Repeat Percentage |
|---|-------------------|
| ES-FAM | 0.126033 |
| ES-ID | 0.131894 |
| TH-FAM | 0 |
| TH-ID | 0.007177 |

Table 9: AHAR Repeat rates used to determine likely duplication among non-HMIS participating providers

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:

- Tenant-based targeted interventions that make housing affordable, such as an increase in the Department of Social Service shelter allowance to match HUD Fair Market Rent
- The state should adopt and fully fund the Home Stability Support initiative
- The state should adopt a policy that requires any funding they provide for the provision of housing for those experiencing homelessness utilize Coordinated Entry in order to make these units available to those who are currently without housing
- More Housing Choice Vouchers need to be made available to HUD
- Market-based interventions to make housing more affordable, such as inclusionary zoning in the City of Buffalo
- An increase in the number of one bedroom and single-room occupancy units available for low-income individuals
- All Public Housing Authorities need to adopt a homeless preference based upon the HUD definition of "homeless"
- Better discharge planning by the Department of Corrections, or a rapid rehousing program funded by the department to keep the formerly incarcerated from immediately entering the homelessness system
- Efforts to assist female single parent households afford housing, particularly mothers of very small children
- Engaging in all efforts to eliminate institutional racism, such that all people have equal and equitable access to the social and economic institutions that lead to the acquisition of wealth and financial resources

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
- Best Self Behavioral Health
- Buffalo City Missions
- Catholic Charities of Buffalo
- Cazenovia Recovery Systems
- Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier, Inc
- Compass House
- Eagle Star Emergency Housing
- Erie County Department of Mental Health
- Evergreen Health Services

- Family & Children's Service of Niagara
- Family Promise of WNY
- 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 Gospel Rescue Mission
- Olmsted Center for Sight (WNY 211)
- Orleans County Department of Social Services
- Pathstone
- Restoration Society, Inc
- Salvation Army of Buffalo
- 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
- YWCA of Niagara Frontier
- YWCA of Western New York

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

- Back to Basics, Inc
- Erie County Department of Social Services
- Faith-Based Fellowship
- Genesee County Department of Social Services
- Haven House
- Little Portion Friary
- Lockport Cares
- Niagara County Department of Social Services
- Orleans County Department of Social Services
- Salvation Army of Genesee
- WINGS- God's Woman
- Wyoming County Department of Social Services
- 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

Thank you to everyone who participated in the BeCountedWNY effort, especially Nadia Pizarro of Best Self Behavioral Health for co-chairing the effort. It would not have been possible without the collaboration of all agencies involved:

- Compass House
- Casey House
- United Church Home (Plymouth Crossroads)
- Teaching and Restoring Youth
- Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York
- ReNU Niagara
- Harvest House
- Youth Movement
- WNY Coalition for the Homeless
- Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center
- Lake Shore Behavioral Health
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- Restoration Society, Inc.

Most of all, thank you to all of 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.