

Vermont 2014

Point-in-Time Annual Statewide Count of Homelessness



Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness
and Chittenden County Continuum of Care

Last year, I had to take a few days off work when one of my kids broke his leg. I got fired, and it took me two months to find another job, and now I get paid less than I did before. I got behind on bills when I was out of work, and we were evicted. My kids have gone to live with my sister for awhile, and I'm at a shelter. I am having a really hard time finding a place for us all to live. I'm a smart person, but this is really shaking my confidence in myself. I never thought I would be homeless. I miss my kids.

Marie

I remember when I was ten, me and my sisters and my mother had no place to live. We got a tent and went to a campground. It was scary. Sometimes people there would get drunk and fight. My mom would cry, and I tried to distract my little sister so she wouldn't be afraid. We had to go to the faucet for water, and sometimes our food would spoil in the cooler. We all have places now, but I'll never forget that summer. It was really hard going back to school in the fall, and I had a hard time concentrating. I know that my mother's depression wouldn't be so bad if this hadn't happened. Homelessness affects you in a way that stays part of you, even once you have a place to live.

Serena

Summary

The Annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, an unduplicated count of persons experiencing homelessness, took place on the night of January 28, 2014. The total number of homeless Vermonters counted on that single night was 1,556.

The total count showed homelessness increased by 9.27% compared to the 2013 Point-in-Time Count.

This year's statewide count and its findings were supported by the Chittenden County Continuum of Care and the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (the Balance of State Continuum of Care). The Continuums of Care are comprised of homeless and human service organizations as well as housing agencies and other partners that strive to eliminate homelessness throughout Vermont.

These efforts were also supported by the Agency of Human Services, the City of Burlington, the Vermont State Housing Authority, and United Ways of Vermont.

The 2014 count identified 1,556 people in Vermont who were unsheltered, in emergency shelter, or in transitional housing, on the night of January 28, 2014.

On the night of the count there were 371 children and 1,185 adults found to be homeless.

Key Notes:

- Total found homeless on one night increased by 9.27% from 2013's count.
- 371 persons, 24%, or nearly one in four of those counted, were children.
- 150 persons identified as chronically homeless.
- The number of unsheltered persons, those living outdoors or taking shelter in a place unfit for human habitation, was 166 persons, an increase of 58% from the 105 counted in 2013.
- 702 persons, or 45% of those counted, reported having a disability.
- 227 persons reported as a victim of domestic violence, that count does not include children impacted.

State of Vermont Point in Time Homeless Survey - Statewide Summary
January 28, 2014

County	2013 Totals Persons	2014 Totals Persons	%	2010 VT Census
Addison	82	87	5.59%	5.90%
Bennington	96	95	6.11%	5.90%
Caledonia	61	77	4.95%	5.00%
Chittenden	483	537	34.51%	25.00%
Essex	1	0	0.00%	1.00%
Franklin	43	72	4.63%	7.60%
Grand Isle	2	0	0.00%	1.10%
Lamoille	36	38	2.44%	3.90%
Orange	18	28	1.80%	4.60%
Orleans	17	12	0.77%	4.40%
Rutland	146	162	10.41%	9.90%
Washington	141	100	6.43%	9.50%
Windham	126	170	10.93%	7.10%
Windsor	172	155	9.96%	9.10%
Unknwn Cnty	N/A	23	1.48%	N/A
Totals	1424	1556	100%	1

County	Reported as Having a Disability	Reported as a Victim of Domestic Violence	Reported as Being a Veteran
Addison	40	23	5
Bennington	28	8	1
Caledonia	12	5	0
Chittenden	262	88	31
Essex	0	0	0
Franklin	30	6	2
Grand Isle	0	0	0
Lamoille	10	6	3
Orange	26	1	16
Orleans	3	0	1
Rutland	83	25	21
Washington	59	21	26
Windham	87	26	8
Windsor	58	13	7
Unknwn Cnty	4	5	0
Totals	702	227	121

State of Vermont Point in Time Homeless Survey - Statewide Summary
January 28, 2014

County	Chronically Homeless	Motel Vouchers	Unsheltered	Households	Singles	Children
Addison	10	20	5	57	38	22
Bennington	13	41	7	49	30	36
Caledonia	1	61	4	50	36	22
Chittenden	81	222	89	381	297	104
Essex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Franklin	1	1	2	38	20	20
Grand Isle	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lamoille	1	26	1	17	6	14
Orange	0	0	5	25	24	0
Orleans	0	0	2	10	9	2
Rutland	22	79	19	111	84	42
Washington	5	21	2	75	59	16
Windham	6	74	5	103	61	49
Windsor	9	37	23	109	82	42
Unkwn Cnty	1	8	2	20	15	2
Totals	150	590	166	1045	761	371

Point-In-Time Background

A point-in-time count is a one-night, unduplicated count of people experiencing homelessness in a Continuum of Care (CoC). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that CoCs count their sheltered homeless population every year. They require that CoCs count their unsheltered homeless population every other year, on odd numbered calendar years. Despite not being required, the majority of CoCs nationwide conduct unsheltered counts in both even and odd years.

Point-in-time counts allows local communities and state policy makers to understand current problems of homelessness, target limited funding to appropriate housing and services, and track progress. The findings are also used by the State's Continuums of Care in their funding applications to HUD.

In addition to counting persons in transitional and emergency housing, the point-in-time also counts those in unsheltered locations. The counts can miss people, as do most censuses. Given the difficulty with obtaining a complete count of everyone who is homeless on a given night, the

actual number of people who were homeless in Vermont on January 28 is likely higher than the number documented.

Weather conditions, local volunteer and stakeholder participation should be taken into account when evaluating the data. Also, during extremely cold weather, family and friends are more likely to provide homeless individuals and families a temporary place to stay, especially when children are involved. Furthermore, many more experience homelessness at some point in the course of the year other than on the single night captured. The point-in-time offers a snapshot of how many people are homeless on a single night, and does not represent the totality of homelessness in the state.

The Point-In-Time did not collect comprehensive information on those precariously housed, doubled up with friends and family, or couch surfing.

Challenges

It is estimated about half of those homeless in the United States work, yet permanent housing remains beyond reach for many. When working people often cannot earn enough to support a family and keep up with the rising costs of housing, utilities, and food, it makes it more likely more families will become homeless.

In Vermont, the 2014 Fair Market Rent (FMR) determined by HUD for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,007. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities – without paying more than 30% of income on housing – a household must earn \$3,356 a month. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$19.36. 62% of renters in Vermont do not earn enough to afford a two-bedroom unit at the average statewide Fair Market Rent. High rents and low vacancy rates remains a barrier for finding housing.

Due to sequestration and other federal cutbacks Vermont recently saw cuts to human services, homeless assistance grants, and lost over 11% of its Section 8 rental assistance vouchers, which could have provided housing for 774 very low-income families. Despite the recent budget deal that ended sequestration, housing agencies are expected to replace less than half of the lost vouchers. Reduced funding and increased workload also continues to present challenges for those serving the state's most vulnerable population.

I've had some trouble with drugs. My dad kicked me out of his house. I stayed with friends sometimes, and camped sometimes. I can't get a place to live. This winter, when it got really cold, I stayed in a church basement with some other guys. Now that it's getting warm, the place is closed. We're camping in the woods, and it's still pretty cold at night. I'm not sure when things will change for me.

Tim

I'm a vet. I have PTSD, and I have trouble controlling my anger. My wife asked me to leave. She had no choice, it was bad for the kids to see me when I got so mad... After that, I was sleeping wherever I could find a place. When I got down to the VA, the doctors didn't help me. They just said "be a man" and one gave me some pills that made me feel so awful I threw them away. Now I'm in a transitional house, and the people there are really supporting me. Maybe I'll get to the point where I can put my life back together.

Lonnie

These stories were told by individuals experiencing homelessness at the time the Point-in-Time Report was released.

Local Continuums of Care

Each region of Vermont has its own continuum of care. Ideally, a continuum is a partnership of:

- Local service providers (Community Action Agencies, Mental Health Providers, homeless shelters, private health care providers, etc.)
- Local resource providers (Economic Services, Department of Children & Families, private lenders, etc.)
- Non-profit and for-profit housing managers
 - Housing Developers
- People who are or were homeless
 - Any other key players in the homelessness or low-income service or housing systems

Together, this collection of partners meets regularly to monitor the needs in their region and works to streamline services and housing.



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