



DENTON COUNTY HOMELESS COALITION
RESULTS OF THE 2009 DENTON COUNTY
POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT
CONDUCTED ON JANUARY 28, 2009

RELEASED OCTOBER 1, 2009

Community	Population ¹	Average Rate of Homelessness Per 10,000 ²	Overall Estimated Number of Homeless	Estimated Number of Non-Service Using Homeless	In Emergency Shelter	Unsheltered	In Transitional Housing	In Permanent Supportive Housing	Total Homeless Counted
Denton County 2005	533,151	8.6	458	178	108	44	76	52	280
Denton County 2007	588,081	8.6	506	286	68	41	64	47	220
Denton County 2009 ³	636,557	8.6	547	385	49	26	44	46	165

TABLE 1. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOMELESS IN DENTON COUNTY

Community	Population ⁴	Average Rate of Homelessness Per 10,000 ⁵	Overall Estimated Number of Homeless	Estimated Number of Non-Service Using Homeless	In Emergency Shelter	Unsheltered	In Transitional Housing	In Permanent Supportive Housing	Total Homeless Counted
City of Denton 2005	101,292	8.6	87	0	108	39	76	52	275
City of Denton 2007	110,483	8.6	95	0	68	39	64	47	218
City of Denton 2009	119,454	8.6	103	0	49	23	44	46	162

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOMELESS IN CITY OF DENTON

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires that all communities applying to use HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) funding to serve the homeless conduct a count of the homeless annually during the last week of January. This annual count is referred to as the “Point-in-Time Count,” and is important to all communities, providing a tally of who is homeless on a given night and producing a snapshot of who experiences homeless throughout the year.

Collecting information on the number and characteristics of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people in our community helps with program planning, allowing the CoC to adjust the types of services available according to need and use resources as efficiently as possible. If certain subpopulations are being underserved in the community (such as singles or families), the point-in-time count may reveal these unmet needs, allowing the Continuum of Care to shift its planning by providing for different types of shelter and/or other services.⁶

Denton County conducted its point-in-time count for 2009 on January 28, 2009. There are two primary sources of data for the Point-in-Time Count. The first source is data collection directly from social service agencies in Denton and Denton County. Several of the social service agencies in Denton County use the Denton County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). These participating agencies record services for programs as clients receive support from the community.

For HMIS-participating agencies, reports were produced from the HMIS system, giving counts and demographic information for clients serviced on the date of the Point-in-Time Count based on information collected from the clients at enrollment or during case management. Additional counts and demographic information was obtained directly from local agencies that do not participate in the HMIS or who are prevented from

The United States Code contains the official federal definition of homeless. In Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, homeless is defined as:

§11302. General definition of homeless individual

(a) In general

1. For purposes of this chapter, the term “homeless” or “homeless individual or homeless person” includes— an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and 2. an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is — A. a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); B. an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or C. a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

See the HUD web site at

<http://www.hud.gov/homeless/definition.cfm> for further details.

participating in the HMIS for regulatory and privacy reasons. This collection of data provided for the count of sheltered homeless. These people meet the federal definition of homeless even though they were sheltered through the services provided by a social service agency on the date of the Point-in-Time Count.⁷

In addition to data collection from social service agencies, volunteers visited several sites in the area, conducting interviews. These interviews used a standardized questionnaire developed by the Count Committee of the Denton County Homeless Coalition. This questionnaire allowed for the collection of additional information from respondents which may not be revealed through the data collected directly from the social service providers themselves or through the Homeless Management Information System. The primary locations for interviews were Salvation Army Denton Corps, Our Daily Bread, and Emily Fowler Library in Denton, with additional interviews taking place at Christian Community Action in Lewisville.

Finally, additional information was collected from local school districts. School districts serve homeless children and youths. They use the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in public schools in the United States.⁸

The Count Committee of the Denton County Homeless Coalition reviewed and analyzed the information from these sources and produced this report for the community. The most salient results are produced here in Tables 1 and 2, found on page 1. The following section includes further analysis of the characteristics of the homeless in the City of Denton and Denton County.

General findings

Tables 1 and 2 show the estimated numbers of homeless in Denton County and the City of Denton respectively. With the tremendous population growth in both the city and county the number of homeless in the region has also increased. Using Martha Burt's formula⁹, the Coalition estimates that the overall number of expected homeless is 547 in Denton County and 103 in the City of Denton. The actual Point-in-Time Count of 162 individuals in the City of Denton actually exceeded this estimated number, indicating that the city has a greater number of homeless that would be expected from a city of its size.

The Point-in-Time Count was a particular challenge this year as the night before the count was unusually cold for the region, with frozen precipitation (and widespread ice on the roads), and a morning low of 16°F. The schools and many of the social service agencies were closed, as were many businesses. As the day progressed, the roads began to thaw, reaching a high of 37°F. Nevertheless, the weather made an impact on the survey team and the homeless population who may have shifted their normal activities by seeking services and shelters that they may not normally use. For example, in reviewing the survey responses, we found that 21 people interviewed indicated that they had stayed in an emergency shelter that night due to the extreme weather, but reported that they normally live unsheltered. Had these people not gone into emergency shelter due to the weather, we may have had an unsheltered count of 44 individuals out of the 79 respondents.

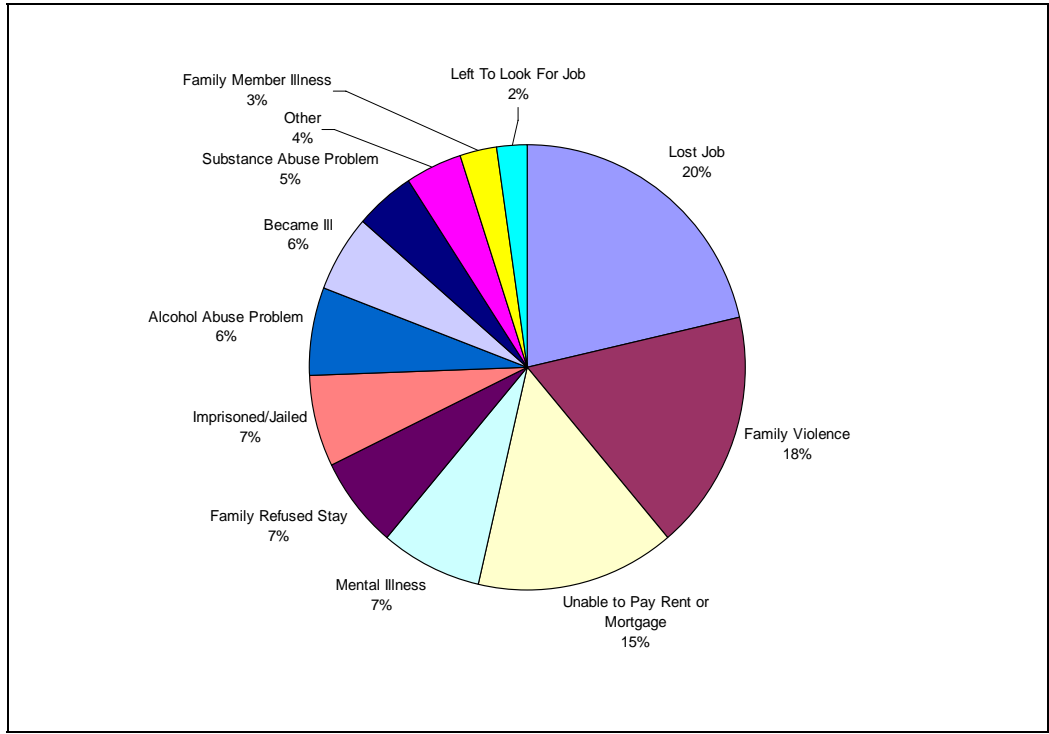


FIGURE 1. REASONS RESPONDENTS CLAIM FOR BECOMING HOMELESS AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL RESPONSES.

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

The count volunteers collected unduplicated responses on causes of their homelessness from 130 people. When asked the reason for the respondent’s most recent episode of homelessness, 177 total responses were given—as multiple responses were allowed. Figure 1 shows the most common responses for interviewees. The percentage indicates the percentage of responses (count divided by 177). “Lost my job,” “Family Violence,” and “Unable to keep up with my rent or mortgage” are overwhelmingly the most common responses, together accounting for a total 53 percent of the responses given. This was followed with 13 interviewees reporting mental illness, making ten percent of the total responses.

Considering the percentage of interviewees giving particular answers, more than one quarter (29%) of respondents said “Lost my job” when answering the question “What happened that made you need a place to stay?”

HOW LONG HAVE BEEN WITHOUT A PLACE OF YOUR OWN?

Interviewers asked the respondents, “How long have you been without a place of your own to live?” in order to determine the length of time people have been homeless. Of those responding to the question (77), 67 percent said they had been without a place of their own for over one year. The greatest number of respondents said that they had been without a place of their own for 2-5 years (28 percent).

NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS

The interview teams asked the homeless “What do you need right now?” and “Of these services, which do you need the most?” in order determine the most pressing needs of the homeless. Permanent housing was the most desired service among those interviewed, with 55% saying it is their most needed service. This was followed by jobs or job training, with 20% indicating it was their most-needed service.

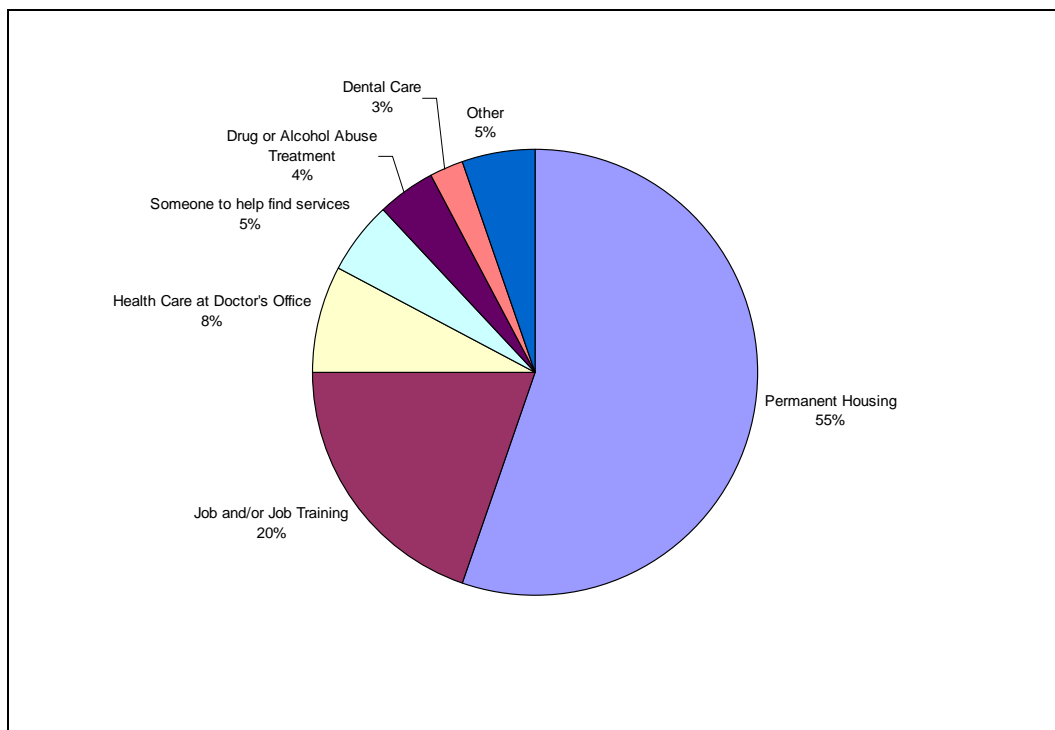


FIGURE 2. MOST PRESSING NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS.

Percentage of respondents indicating their most-desired need is the indicated service. ($n=76$)

88 percent of those answering indicated that they desired permanent housing, while 75% answered “Someone to help me find services and get back on my feet.” However, of those interviewed only 5% said that the latter was their most-desired service at this time. Permanent housing and jobs/job training are the most commonly needed service and most highly desired among those interviewed.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE HOMELESS

Age	Males	Females	No Response to Gender Q
18-25	0	0	0
26-35	2	1	0
36-45	6	0	0
46-55	7	1	0
56-65	2	0	2
66+	1	0	0
No Response to Age Q	2	0	2

TABLE 3. AGE AND GENDER OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESS.

A total of 26 people were recorded including one additional person accompanying an interviewee who was counted as unsheltered but for whom no data was recorded on age/gender.

The Point-in-Time Count interviewed 25 people who were unsheltered on the day of the count, with one additional person who was counted, but not interviewed, for a total of 26. Table 3 shows the number of unsheltered homeless by gender and age. Those homeless interviewed on the day of the Point-in-Time count who reported themselves as unsheltered were overwhelmingly male. This represents a considerably larger number of males percentage-wise when compared to the sex-ratio of the interviewees in general (both sheltered and unsheltered). See Table 4.

Age	Males	Females
18-25	1	3
26-35	6	13
36-45	21	17
46-55	28	2
56-65	5	0
66-	2	1
Total	63 (63.6%)	36 (36.4%)

TABLE 4. AGE AND GENDER FOR ALL INTERVIEWEES

(n=99).

Age and gender counts for all interviewees for whom age/gender data was collected are shown in Table 4, with over 63% percent of those interviewed recorded as male. Of the 99 for whom the count committee determined veteran status, 15 respondents (or 15.2% percent) reported being veterans.

Homeless in the schools

School districts serve homeless children and youths. They use the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless*. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in public schools in the United States.¹⁰ The school districts provide support to families that meet this definition, and have a designated “Homeless Liaison” to coordinate services related to the homeless. Denton Independent School District reported that they had 426 homeless children and youth in pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade in June of 2009.¹¹ Sanger Independent School District reported 52 for the same period.¹² The Count Committee acknowledges that the methods of obtaining counts for homeless children in the schools is challenging and cautions against comparing this number to that reported for the 2007 count.

“Children or youth who have run away from home and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets, or other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless, even if their parents have provided and are willing to provide a home for them....Throwaway children or youth (i.e. those whose parents or guardians will not permit them to live at home) are considered homeless if they live on the streets, in shelters, or in other transitional or inadequate accommodations.”¹³

According to the Texas Homeless Education Office, among unaccompanied youth, the primary causes of homelessness are physical and sexual abuse by a parent or guardian, neglect, parental substance abuse, and family conflict.¹⁴ National data on children and

McKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS:

Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act) defines "homeless" as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"—
(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and
(B) includes--
(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

See the web page at the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) on at <http://www.serve.org/nche/definition.php> or the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2002-1/030802a.html> or the Texas Homeless Education Office (THEO) at <http://www.utdanacenter.org/> for more details.

youth in homeless situations reveals that they do not fit the stereotypical images. Many children in homeless shelters are very young—over 40 percent of children living in homeless shelters are under the age of five.¹⁵

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¹ U.S. Census Bureau, County Population Estimates, “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008,” <http://www.census.gov/popest/counties/CO-EST2008-01.html>. Accessed March 3, 2009.

² Burt, M. R., L. Y. Aron, E. Lee, & J. Valente (2001). *Helping America's homeless: Emergency shelter or affordable housing?*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

³ Population estimates are U.S. Census Bureau estimates from July 1 of the previous year.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, Incorporated Places and Minor Civil Divisions, “Places over 100,000: 2000 to 2008.” <http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/tables/SUB-EST2008-01.xls>. Accessed July 23, 2009.

⁵ Burt (2001).

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development, (2008). *A guide to counting sheltered homeless people*. Revised ed.

⁷ See the Department of Housing and Urban Development web site at <http://www.hud.gov/homeless/definition.cfm> for the definition of homeless according to The United States Code Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I.

⁸ See the National Center for Homeless Education site at <http://www.serve.org/NCHE/m-v.php> and the U.S. Department of Education Site at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html> for details.

⁹ Burt, M. (2001).

¹⁰ See the National Center for Homeless Education site at <http://www.serve.org/NCHE/m-v.php> and the U.S. Department of Education Site at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html> for details.

¹¹ Source: Denton Independent School District.

¹² Source: Sanger Independent School District.

¹³ U.S. Department of Education Preliminary Guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Title VII, Subtitle B (June 1995), 22-3.

¹⁴ Texas Homeless Education Office, “Who is Homeless?” fact sheet at <http://www.utdanacenter.org/theo/resources/factsheets.php>. Accessed July 23, 2009.

¹⁵ Interagency Council on the Homeless. Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve, Summary Report. December 1999 as cited in the above THEO “Who is Homeless?” fact sheet and highlighted at <http://www.huduser.org/publications/homeless/homelessness/highrpt.html> accessed August 4, 2009.