
Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless Survey Results 2008



**THE COALITION
FOR THE NEEDY**



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Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Individuals and Families: January 31, 2008

Oklahoma City conducted its annual “Point-in-Time Count” of the homeless on Thursday, January 31, 2008. The intention of this one-day survey was to determine the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City and gather information about their characteristics and needs. It should be noted that a one-day count is only a snapshot and is not designed to be comprehensive or a complete count. This is the fifth consecutive year the count has been conducted, which provides a year-by-year comparison of the findings.

DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions apply to this report.

- *Homeless*: an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who has a primary nighttime residence that is 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), an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (HUD definition).
- *Chronically homeless*: unaccompanied homeless individuals, not families, with a disabling condition (mental illness, substance abuse, physical illness or disability, or the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions) who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in places not meant for human habitation or in an emergency shelter during that time (HUD definition).
- *Emergency shelter*: short-term lodging for people experiencing a housing crisis. Emergency shelters serve as the point of entry into the homeless assistance system by assisting those confronted with an immediate loss of housing or those who are already homeless. Emergency shelters generally have an official length of stay ranging from one to 90 days, depending on the individual program, but many chronically homeless people manage to live in the emergency shelter environment for years. Most emergency shelters are congregate in nature, but can also include individual hotel or motel vouchers and short-stay apartments.
- *Transitional housing*: a step between emergency shelter and permanent housing. Transitional housing provides interim housing and services for persons who are not ready for or do not have access to permanent housing. This type of housing is time-limited, with programs ranging from six months to two years. Typically, transitional housing programs provide specialized services to various subpopulations with multiple barriers to housing and employment, which can include families in which the head of household has a chronic illness such as substance abuse or severe mental illness, people living with AIDS, victims of domestic violence, substance abusers, people with mental illness, and youth. Residents have access to intensive services, often provided on site or through community partners. Providers are expected to help residents find permanent housing as they become stabilized.
- *Permanent supportive housing*: Supportive housing is permanent (not time-limited) housing with integrated wrap-around services. It differs from transitional housing in two ways: 1)

tenants of supportive housing pay rent and sign leases, and 2) there is no limit for duration of stay. Integrated services vary by the needs of the residents but can include basic healthcare, mental healthcare, support for recovery from addiction, and employment and training.

METHODS:

A Point in Time committee with representatives from the City of Oklahoma City, the Coalition for the Needy, the Homeless Alliance, and other community volunteers planned and coordinated the Point-in-Time Count. The count had four components for the day-long count: a shelter/transitional housing count, a meal site count, a service agency count, and a street count based on known locations.

At each of the counting locations, volunteers asked homeless persons to complete a survey that included their first name and last initial, sex, race, age, whether they had completed the survey earlier and where they would be sleeping on the night of the count. This information was used to correct duplication.

- *Emergency Shelter Count:* A combination of staff and community volunteers conducted the count by surveying and interviewing as many persons as possible at shelters and transitional housing facilities. Results were calculated using both survey responses and official “bed counts” maintained by the agencies.
- *Transitional Housing Count:* Transitional housing staff completed survey forms and returned the data to the Point-in-Time committee.
- *Meal Site Count:* Volunteers visited sites where free meals were served to the public throughout the day on January 31 and February 1. The meal site count was focused on identifying and interviewing people who were homeless whether or not they were planning to stay in one of the city’s homeless shelters that night.
- *Street Count:* Prior to the count, a list of locations where homeless people were known to sleep was identified. An outreach team from the Veterans Administration went to day labor sites and other locations where homeless people are known to congregate or sleep. Other volunteers talked to people on the street outside City Rescue Mission, at NW 39th and Pennsylvania (evening), and the downtown library.
- *Aerial Count:* A police officer and a Point in Time committee member flew in a city helicopter on February 1 (inclement weather prevented the use of the helicopter on January 31) to identify encampments that were more than one mile from downtown Oklahoma City. Camp locations were noted, and photographs were taken of the sites. This information will be helpful for future counts. Approximately 80 persons were identified during the helicopter count.
- *Follow-up Counts:* Volunteers surveyed people at one meal site on Friday, February 1, and two meal sites on Saturday, February 2. At these sites, people were asked where they slept on the night of Thursday, January 31 to ensure they were homeless on that date.

In total, 75 volunteers from more than 30 organizations surveyed people across Oklahoma City.

RESULTS¹:

The Point-in-Time Count found a total of 1415² homeless persons during this year's count. This number included people identified as homeless in emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, crisis facilities, street/public locations, and by aerial count.

Type of Accommodation	Number	Percent
Emergency Shelters	600	43%
Transitional Housing	397	28%
Crisis Facilities	16	1%
Streets and Other	402	28%
Total	1415	100%

The total number of homeless persons identified in 2008 decreased 26% compared to 2007. Some of this decrease may have been caused by the icy, windy conditions on the day of the count, resulting in family, friends or churches opening their doors.

Type of Accommodation	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Emergency Shelters	698	724	627	683	600
Transitional Housing	500	569	490	577	397
Streets, Crisis Facilities, and Other	270	189	438	670	418
Total	1468	1482	1555	1930	1415

Housing Capacity of Homeless Service Agencies

The following table shows the number of agencies providing emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals and families. The overflow beds (sometimes cots or mats on the floor) are used only during times of emergency, such as extreme weather.

	Individuals			Families		
	Agencies	Beds	Overflow	Agencies	Beds	Overflow
Emergency Shelter	9	598	86	4	119	39
Transitional Housing	9	306		5	176	
Permanent Supportive Housing	4	140		2	20	

¹ Please note that some of the statistics in this report do not total to 100% or 1415 people. This is because some participants in the survey did not answer all the questions and the estimated count by helicopter has no additional detail.

² The Point-in-Time Count did not attempt to enumerate the "couch homeless," people who are homeless but temporarily staying with a friend, relative, or acquaintance. The Point in Time committee is exploring ways to count – or at least estimate – that population.

Chronic Homelessness

A total of 304 people (23%) met HUD’s definition of chronically homeless: an individual who has a “special need” and has been homeless for at least one year or has had four or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years. In 2008, both the number and percentage of chronically homeless decreased. It is thought that this decrease was due to the significant reduction in the number of people counted at meal sites as a result of the inclement weather.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Chronically homeless	241	236	544	304

The following information was used to calculate this number, including number of homeless episodes, length of current episode, and special needs.

Episodes			Length of Time		
Homeless in last 3 years	Number	Percent	Length of Homelessness	Number	Percent
First time	775	63%	1 - 7 days	89	7%
Second or third time	352	28%	8 - 90 days	413	32%
4th time or more	111	9%	3-6 months	198	15%
			6-12 months	210	16%
			1-2 years	149	11%
			> 2 years	250	19%

Eighty nine percent of those who completed surveys (1194 people) said they had at least one of the following special needs.

Special Needs	Number	Percent
Mental Illness	398	33%
HIV/AIDS	13	1%
Substance Abuse	516	43%
Physical Illness/Disability	221	19%
Mentally Retardation / Developmental Delay	46	4%

Gender, Age, and Race

The following table gives an overview of the population experiencing homelessness on the night of January 31, 2008.

TOTAL 1335 ³	Race							Age						
	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiple	Native American	White	Total	0-5	6-17	18-25	26-39	40-59	60+	Total
	14	424	91	56	88	662	1335	92	75	85	332	678	73	1335
	1%	32%	7%	4%	6%	50%	100%	7%	6%	6%	25%	51%	5%	100%
Male	8	313	37	31	61	454	904	63	51	58	223	459	50	904
904 / 68%	1%	35%	4%	3%	7%	50%	100%	7%	6%	6%	25%	51%	5%	100%
Female	6	111	54	25	27	208	431	29	24	27	108	220	23	431
431 / 32%	1%	26%	13%	6%	6%	48%	100%	7%	6%	6%	25%	51%	5%	100%

A comparison of the racial and ethnic backgrounds of homeless persons with data collected during the 2000 US Census Data reveals similarities between the homeless population and the broader community population for Asian and Hispanic people and for those who claim multiple ethnicities. Black people are over-represented in the homeless population, while White people are under-represented.

Race/Ethnicity	2007 Homeless	2000 Census OKC	2000 Census Metro
Asian	1%	4%	3%
Black	32%	15%	11%
Hispanic	7%	10% ⁴	7%
Multiple	4%	4%	4%
Native American	6%	4%	4%
Other	0%	5%	3%
White	50%	68%	76%

Personal and Residential History

Of those responding, 21% reported being a member of a homeless family and 79% reported being alone. 18% reported veteran status.

Of the 895 persons who responded to the question of where they lived immediately prior to becoming homeless, the most common answer was rental housing (49%). This was followed by living doubled-up with a friend or relative (24%), a situation commonly called “couch homelessness.” The number of couch homeless is uncertain, but it is much larger than the population that meets the HUD definition of homelessness. In the 2007-08 school year, the Oklahoma City Public School district served 1,832 homeless children, the majority of which were couch homeless. This number does not include the many other school districts in the Oklahoma City area, such as Putnam City, Mid-Del, Bethany, etc.

³ This number does not match the overall total of 1415 because demographic data were not collected during the helicopter count.

⁴ U.S. Census figures do not total to 100% because race and ethnicity were counted separately; that is, “Hispanic” is not included in totals for race for census data.

Prior Living Situation

Home owner	Rental	Relative/Friend	Domestic violence ⁵	Jail, incarceration	Hospital	Other
100	460	225	5 ⁵	55	25	25
13%	49%	24%	1%	6%	3%	6%

Of those persons answering surveys, 56% reported Oklahoma City as their most recent place of residence. 29% reported coming from other cities in Oklahoma, and 15% came to Oklahoma City from out of state. Last year, 74% reported their most recent place of residence as Oklahoma City.

Last Permanent Residence	Number	Percentage
OKC	530	56%
OK (non-OKC)	267	29%
Out of State	148	15%

Income

Source of Income	Number	Percent	Source of Income	Number	Percent
Job/employment	16	8%	Unemployment	1	1%
Day Labor	47	24%	Medicaid	6	3%
Family or friends	17	9%	TANF	1	1%
Food stamps	37	19%	Veterans benefits	3	2%
Social Security	12	6%	Donate blood or plasma	3	2%
SSI	19	10%	Panhandling	9	5%
Pension	1	1%	Other Income	18	9%

One out of every three persons polled reported being employed. Those employed worked a median of 26 hours a week for a median wage of \$6.26/hour (down slightly from 2007, which found an average of 25 hours per week at \$6.50/hour). A variety of other sources of income were reported, though few if any of them would generate enough regular income to support a person in secure housing.

⁵ The small percentage of persons coming from domestic violence situations reflects only those directly surveyed with extended interviews and does not include the number of persons in the domestic violence shelters or transitional housing.

Point in Time Counting Sites

The following table shows the number of people counted at each site, after correction for duplication.

Street	55
Aerial/Helicopter	80
Meal Sites:	196
City Rescue Mission	21
Salvation Army	26
Grace Rescue	20
Love Links	21
City Church	87
OKC Compassion	21
Crisis Facilities:	16
Oklahoma County Crisis Intervention Center	6
Public Inebriate Alternative	10
Emergency Shelters:	616
Rose Home	19
City Rescue Mission	265
Grace Rescue Mission	64
Jesus House	81
Red Rock - Parkview	3
Salvation Army - Men	49
Salvation Army - Women and Family	53
Sunbeam Family Services	9
Youth Services for OKC	17
YWCA of Oklahoma City - Passageway	56
Transitional Housing	397
Catholic Charities	71
City Care--Pershing Center	59
City Rescue--Success	47
Neighborhood Services Organization	35
Hand Up Ministries	95
Latino Community Development Agency	23
RAIN	7
Red Rock - Dacotah Village	16
Travelers Aid	11
VA Homeless Program	10
YWCA of Oklahoma City - YES	14
Winds House	9
Later Counts	9
Maranatha	7
Mayflower 363--Wiley Post	2
Other	46
Library	46
TOTAL	1415

**Point in Time Committee
2008**

Shelly Kuhn, Co-chair	City of Oklahoma City
Laurie Barbour, Co-chair	Former Chair of the Coalition for the Needy
Jill Spangler	Consultant
Dana Hope-Chism	Upwards Transition
Joy Clark	Rose Home
Matt Gabrielson	City of Oklahoma City
Jennifer Gooden	Homeless Alliance
Shelley Reeves	RAIN Oklahoma
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Gerald Scott	Eagle Ridge
Dan Straughan	Homeless Alliance
Anthony Yandell	Homeless Alliance
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Pam Williams-Stark	Veterans Administration
Tammie Vail	North Care Center
Lauren Weeks	North Care Center
Kenny Holloway	Department of Corrections
Susan Geurin	Healing Hands Health Care
Marcus Butler	Oklahoma Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services