

Homelessness in New Haven



Last year, Connecticut's emergency shelters served more than 11,000 people, including over 1,500 children. The number of people in shelters and transitional housing programs increased 3% from 2009 to 2010 and shelters have been operating over 100% capacity for almost two full years. Roughly one in six homeless individuals in Connecticut is sheltered in New Haven.

Homeless Persons: Connecticut and New Haven¹

	In Connecticut		In New Haven	
	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Total People	3,770	695	616	44
Adults Without Children	2,419	654	388	42
Adults in Families	496	17	76	1
Children in Families	800	24	152	1

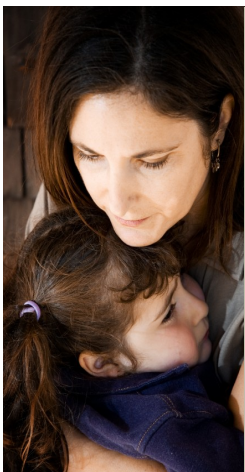
Of the 4,465 total people counted during a one-day snapshot of Connecticut homelessness in 2011, 660 were counted in New Haven. More than one-third (35%) of the people counted in New Haven were in families with children. About two-thirds (65%) of those counted in New Haven were adults without children.

Homeless people in New Haven are relatively well-educated.

Two-thirds (66%) of adults experiencing homelessness in 2010 had a high school education or higher.² This average among adults without children and in families has remained around fifty percent (50%) over the past three years. In 2010, an additional seventeen percent (17%) of homeless adults reported further education in technical, college and graduate schools.

More than four of every ten (41%) people counted in New Haven shelters on one night in January 2010 had never before been homeless.

Nearly one-half (45%) of adults in families were working at the time of their homelessness. Adults without children were about half as likely to have been working (21%). Both groups have shown increased rates of employment since 2008. People who have served in the military comprised more than one-tenth (13%) of the homeless population in New Haven.



Family Homelessness in Connecticut

Families headed by young, single women of color are overrepresented in family shelters across the state. Family homelessness is typically part of a longer period of economic strife and separation.

It is common for families to stay with friends and family members out of economic need. Nationally, families are more likely to enter shelter from a doubled up housing situation than from anywhere else.

In one day alone, 484 homeless families were counted in Connecticut. Seventy-five of those families, including 153 children, were from New Haven.

Nationally and across the state, adults without children are much more likely to experience chronic homelessness than families. While more than one-third (41%) of adults without children in New Haven experienced chronic homelessness during *CT PIT 2010*, one-quarter of families were found to be chronically homeless.³ Nearly three-quarters (70%) of all adults in families reported no disabling health issues.



Why People Are Homeless in New Haven

People who become homeless are those with the fewest resources and multiple barriers to economic and health security. In addition to inadequate income and high cost of housing as forces of homelessness, interpersonal violence, disabling health conditions, as well as re-entry and criminal justice involvement are complex contributing factors. *In Connecticut, rent problems and domestic violence were the most common reasons people had left their last place of residence.* More than half (52%) of the adults without children and over a third (39%) of the families in New Haven reported rent problems, foreclosure or eviction as a contributing cause of homelessness. Close to half (40%) of the adults in families responded 'yes' when asked if they 'had been in a relationship where they had been physically hurt or felt threatened' and twenty-two percent (22%) said domestic violence contributed to their homelessness.

Shortage of Affordable Housing

In the combined New Haven-Meriden metropolitan region, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,246.⁴ In order to afford this level of rent and utilities, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn \$23.96 hourly or \$49,840 annually. A minimum wage worker earns \$8.25 hourly. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 116 hours per week. Or, a household must include more than two minimum wage earners in order to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable.⁵

Income Instability and Poverty

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Connecticut saw an average unemployment rate of 9.1% in 2010, as unemployment in the New Haven-Meriden metropolitan area averaged at 9.2%.⁶ The unemployment rate in this part of the state has nearly quadrupled in the past ten years while the cost of living remains among the highest in the nation. In 2010, Connecticut was ranked the most expensive state to buy groceries, the second most expensive state in the price of utilities, the fifth most expensive state in housing expenses, and the sixth most expensive state in health care costs.⁷ Census reports show that 8.4% of Connecticut's population lived below the federal poverty level (FPL) in 2010. Compared to the state, New Haven residents were nearly three times (24.4%) as likely to live below the FPL.⁸ This figure does not include those struggling to earn enough income to meet their basic needs.

Healthcare Issues

For individuals and families already struggling to pay for basic needs, a serious illness or disability can begin a cascade of lost wages, depletion of assets, and eventual eviction. One-third (34%) of adults who were homeless in Connecticut and one-third (33%) of homeless adults in New Haven had been hospitalized in the past for mental health conditions. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of adults experiencing homelessness in the state reported a need for substance abuse services, while fewer than one-quarter (22%) of adults in New Haven reported a need for such services. Healthcare represents an important component in ending homelessness. As we look to the issues of inability to work, interpersonal violence, trauma and disability, we make the connection between appropriate and relevant mental, behavioral and physical health and housing stability.

¹ New Haven data presented are provided by the *CT PIT 2011*, a one-day snapshot of homelessness conducted on January 27, 2011. *CT PIT 2011* was conducted in shelters, housing programs, and included a street count. *CT PIT* data underestimates the extent of homelessness, as it does not capture numbers of people turned away or who do not seek shelter, or those living in doubled up and other precarious housing situations.

² From *CT PIT 2010*, a one-day snapshot of homelessness conducted on January 27, 2010. *CT PIT 2010* was conducted in shelters and housing programs only and did not include a street count.

³ "A Chronically Homeless Person or Family is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition or a family with at least one adult member who has a disabling condition and has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. The term homeless in this case means a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets), in an emergency homeless shelter, or in a Safe Haven as defined by HUD." <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/chronic.cfm>.

⁴ FMRs are the monthly amounts "needed to rent privately owned, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of a modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities." Federal Register. HUD determines FMRs for localities in all 50 states.

⁵ National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach 2011*. See <<http://www.nlihc.org>>.

⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010). *Economy at a Glance*. See http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.ct_newhaven_mn.htm

⁷ Missouri Economic Research and Information Center. http://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost_of_living/index.stm

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, Five Year Estimates; American FactFinder. See <http://factfinder.census.gov>.