

Homeless Point-In-Time Count Results – January 30, 2008

Every other year HUD requires cities that receive homeless funds to conduct a point-in-time (24-hour period) homeless survey (or count) in order to estimate the number of homeless, disabilities of the homeless, and chronically homeless.* The January, 2007 count was a required count and January, 2009 will be the next required count. Lawrence, in an effort to better understand the local homeless situation, conducts annual homeless surveys.

The survey form is developed by a group of homeless service providers and city staff with an emphasis on brevity and simplicity. Surveyors have found that people are more willing to participate in a short survey.

Surveys are usually conducted on-site at the following agencies: First Step House (FSH), Lawrence Community Shelter (LCS), The Salvation Army (TSA), and Women’s Transitional Care Services (WTCS). The Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority contributes data from their Transitional Housing waiting list and the Bert Nash Homeless Outreach Team conducts surveys outside of agencies (on streets, at camps, clients that are doubled-up, etc.). First Step House did not participate in the 2008 count.

Data provided by the surveyors is compiled and distributed by Community Development staff. The quality of the data is influenced by many factors and most significantly by the willingness and ability of agencies and outreach workers to survey clients. During the 2008 survey, First Step House did not participate and the outreach team was not able to cover as much ground as in 2007 due to one member having recently resigned and one member being out sick the day of the survey. Additionally clients can and do refuse to

Surveyed	215	
Living w/someone	36	
Living on the street	8	
Living in emergency shelter	150	
Living in transitional housing	21	
With a partner	19	
Children Homeless	103	in 75 families
Additional Children Impacted	67	
Veteran	26	
Domestic Violence	40	
Physically Disabled	35	
HIV/AIDS	2	
Developmentally Disabled	5	
Mental Illness	40	
Addiction	17	
Other Disability	33	
<1 mo. Homeless	9	
1-6 mo. Homeless	26	
6-12 mo. Homeless	12	
1-3 yrs. Homeless	35	
>3 yrs. Homeless	33	
<1 mo. In Lawrence	8	
1-6 mo. In Lawrence	30	
6-12 mo. In Lawrence	10	
1-3 yrs. In Lawrence	22	
>3 yrs. In Lawrence	45	
Homeless Once	19	
Homeless 2-3 Times	42	
Homeless 4 or more Times	16	
Chronically Homeless*	50	
Total # of Homeless	318	

* The Federal definition of a chronically homeless person is “either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.”

participate, although this happens less than in the past. Thus, this survey must be viewed as a rough snapshot of the homeless population and not a scientific study. Additional information, provided by service providers and other experts in the field, should also be taken into account. National statistics* suggest that:

- 38% report alcohol use problems
- 26% report other drug use problems
- 39% report some form of mental health problem, and 20-25% meet criteria for serious mental illnesses
- 3% report having HIV/AIDS
- 23% percent are veterans (compared to 13 percent of the general population)

In Lawrence, only 8% reported alcohol and/or drug use problems and only 19% reported a mental health problem. Service providers and outreach workers estimate from experience that local numbers related to these categories more closely mirror national statistics.

* <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/homelessness/>