



## *Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness*

*...to educate and mobilize our community and coordinate services to  
prevent and reduce homelessness in the Capital Region.*

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# Point In Time Survey 2009

A study of the individuals and families seeking  
services in the Capital Area

Prepared by  
Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness  
Service Delivery and Data Collection Committee

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## **CAPITAL AREA COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS 2009 POINT IN TIME SURVEY**

### **Of individuals and families who experience homelessness and the services requested.**

A network of twenty-three agencies and thirty-four programs conducted a 24-hour survey from noon January 28 to noon January 29, 2009 to study the number of individuals and heads of households seeking homeless related services in Capital Area. These agencies are members of the Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness (CACH), an extensive collaboration of non-profit agencies, city, county, and federal representatives, businesses and foundations who are addressing homelessness in the Capital Area.

The participating agencies and programs that conducted this year's survey were:

1. Bethesda Mission: Men's Shelter, Women's Shelter, Trinity House, Community Soup Kitchen, and Mobile Street Mission
2. Brethren Housing Association
3. Bridge of Hope
4. Christian Churches United and HELP Ministries
5. Case Management Unit of Dauphin County
6. Center for Independent Living
7. Dauphin County Crisis Intervention
8. Dauphin County Housing Authority
9. DELTA Community, Inc.
10. Downtown Daily Bread
11. Evergreen House, Catholic Charities
12. Firm Foundation of PA, Inc.
13. HELP Ministries for Overnight Winter Shelter at Downtown Churches
14. Holy Spirit Medical Outreach
15. Interfaith Shelter, Catholic Charities
16. Keystone Community Mental Health Service
17. Lourdes House, Catholic Charities
18. NHS Edgewater Psychiatric Center
19. Pinnacle Health – Harrisburg Hospital
20. Salvation Army
21. Shalom House: Emergency Shelter, SHARP Program, Women Veteran's Services
22. St. Francis Soup Kitchen
23. YWCA of Greater Harrisburg: Emergency Shelter, Domestic Violence Shelter, Bridge and Transitional, YW-WORKS Employment program, SRO, Permanent housing for Disabilities Program, VETS Program

The 2009 Point in Time survey tracked all participants through the use of anonymous identifiers enabling a count of services requested at different locations by one individual, as well as an unduplicated census of clients requesting those multiple services.

A total of 439 survey responses were collected with an unduplicated count of 433 adult and 182 children (96 boys and 86 girls) or **615 homeless adults and children.**

Basic client beneficiary information on gender, ethnicity, family size, marital status, residence of origin, sources of income, and veteran status was gathered. Further questions probed participants' current homeless situation, reasons for homelessness, and the pervasiveness of their homeless situation. The final set of questions queried client needs and services requested or rendered.

## I. BASIC BENEFICIARY INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS:

Table 1:

<b>SURVEY RESPONSES</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Total	439
Duplicate respondents	6
Unduplicated respondents	433

Table 2:

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
Female	215	49.65%
Male	216	49.88%
No response	2	0.46%

Table 3:

<b>ETHNICITY</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
African American	178	41.10%
Asian	3	0.69%
Bi-Racial	11	2.54%
Caucasian	171	39.49%
Hispanic	53	12.24%
Native American	4	0.92%
Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
Other	6	1.35%
No Response	7	1.61%

**Table 4:**

<b>VETERANS</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
	53	12.24%

**Table 5:**

<b>FAMILY OR SINGLE STATUS</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
Single Only	318	73.44%
1 child family	41	9.46%
2 child family	34	7.85%
3 child family	11	2.54%
4 child family	5	1.15%
5 child family	4	0.92%
Over 5 children	0	0.00%
No Response/unknown	20	4.61%

**Table 6:**

<b>DUAL PARENT STATUS</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
	23	5.31%

**Table 7:**

<b>COUNTY ORIGIN</b>	<b>Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 unduplicated respondents*</b>
A. A resident of Dauphin County all of life?	99	29.73%
B. i. If not all of life, a resident of Dauphin County before? Response “Yes”	132	39.64%
B. ii If not all of life, a resident of Dauphin County before? Response “No”	92	27.63%
B. iii If not all of life, a resident of Dauphin County before? No Response	10	3.00%

\*100 (23.09%) of 433 unduplicated participants used basic forms which did not have this question.

**Table 8:**

<b>RESIDENCE IN PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS BEFORE HOMELESS</b>	<b>Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 unduplicated respondents*</b>
City of Harrisburg	187	56.15%
Dauphin County outside Harrisburg	42	12.61%
Central PA outside Dauphin County (Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, Lancaster, , Lebanon, York)	48	14.41%
Other areas of PA	28	8.40%
Outside PA (Other states or country)	23	6.90%
No response	5	1.50%

\*100 (23.09%) of 433 unduplicated participants used basic forms which did not have this question.

**Table 9A:**

<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE IN PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS BEFORE HOMELESS</b>	<b>Unduplicated Adult survey Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 unduplicated respondents*</b>
City of Harrisburg	264	60.97%
Other	158	36.49%

\*11 unduplicated participants did not respond to this question.

**Table 9B:**

<b>SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE IN PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS BEFORE HOMELESS</b>	<b>Number of children N=182</b>	<b>% of 182 children</b>
City of Harrisburg	126	69.23%
Other	56	30.77%
Breakout of Other		% of 56
Steelton	5	8.93%
Central Dauphin	2	3.57%
York County	3	5.36%
Millersburg	2	3.57%
Susquehanna	4	7.14%
Halifax	3	5.36%
Middletown	3	5.36%
Lancaster County	2	3.57%
Other PA	8	14.29%
Other States	5	5.36%
Other – Not specified	19	33.93%

**Table 10:**

<b>SOURCES OF INCOME</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 Unduplicated Respondents*</b>
Employment	66	19.81%
Welfare TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)	45	13.51%
Welfare General Assistance (GA)	41	12.31%
Food Stamps	139	4.74%
Medical Insurance/ACCESS	108	32.43%
Money From Relatives/Partners	8	2.40%
Child Support	7	2.10%
SSI	60	18.01%
SSDI	25	7.50%
SS	15	4.50%
Unemployment Benefits	9	2.70%
None	64	19.22%
Other: Pension	4	1.20%
Other: Retirement	1	0.30%
Other: Private health	1	0.30%
Other: Veterans' benefits	2	0.60%
Other: Savings	1	0.30%
Other: Side work	1	0.30%

\*100 (23.09%) of 433 unduplicated participants used basic forms which did not have this question.

## II. HOMELESS CAUSE AND CURRENT SITUATION

Table 11:

<b>HOMELESS SITUATION</b>	<b>Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
Living on streets or abandoned building	59	13.63%
Homeless shelter	131	30.25%
Transitional Housing	94	21.71%
Evicted within a week	5	1.15%
Discharged from an Institution	10	2.31%
Fleeing Domestic Violence	5	1.15%
Living with others in home temporarily but have to leave	44	10.16%
Living in private housing	74	17.09%
No response	11	2.54%

**Table 12:**

<b>REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS- Ranked as Primary and Secondary Causes</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 Unduplicated Respondents</b>
Drug or Alcohol Use- Primary	91	27.33%
Drug or Alcohol Use- Secondary	28	8.41%
Institutional Discharge- Primary	19	5.70%
Institutional Discharge- Secondary	15	4.50%
Domestic Violence- Primary	26	7.81%
Domestic Violence Secondary	8	2.40%
Nonpayment of Rent- Primary	22	6.61%
Nonpayment of Rent- Secondary	17	5.11%
Family Break Up- Primary	24	7.21%
Family Break Up- Secondary	33	9.91%
Fire/other disaster- Primary	2	0.60%
Fire/other disaster- Secondary	4	1.20%
**HIV status- Primary	0	0.00%
**HIV status- Secondary	5	1.50%
Job loss- Primary	26	7.81%
Job loss- Secondary	61	18.32%
Medical Problems/costs- Primary	20	6.01%
Medical Problems/costs- Secondary	20	6.01%
Mental Illness- Primary	58	17.42%
Mental Illness- Secondary	35	10.51%
Money Management Problems- Primary	12	3.60%
Money Management Problems- Secondary	52	15.61%
Race/Nationality- Primary	0	0.00%
Race/Nationality Secondary	1	0.30%
Temporary Living situation ended primary	26	7.81%
Temporary Living situation ended- Secondary	55	16.52%

<b>REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS- Ranked as Primary and Secondary Causes</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 Unduplicated Respondents</b>
Other - Secondary	36	10.81%
Criminal behavior	1	0.30%
Death of partner	2	0.60%
Evicted, breaking rules	2	0.60%
Home condemned	3	0.90%
Informal eviction	2	0.60%
Lost house	3	0.90%
Released from jail	1	0.30%
Relocated	12	3.60%
Son/Wife died	2	0.60%
Not enough money	2	0.60%

Respondents were asked to mark only one primary and another secondary reason from the above categories that they felt contributed to their homeless situation. 3 participants gave 3 primary reasons.

\*100 (23.09%) of 433 unduplicated participants used basic forms which did not have this question.

\*\*Respondents were informed that the HIV status question could be voluntarily skipped or not answered if so desired.

**Table 13:**

<b>CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 433 Unduplicated Participants</b>
Have you been in Emergency Shelter or stayed on the streets 4 different times in the past 3 years OR several different times in the past 12 months?	152	35.10%

24 participants did not respond to this question

Table 13 reflects in part the Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of Chronic Homelessness.

### III. NEEDS AND REQUESTS FOR HOMELESS SERVICES

**Table 14A:**

<b>MEDICAL NEEDS</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 Unduplicated Participants*</b>
Can't get/afford Medications	28	8.41%
Developmental challenges (Mental Retardation)	4	1.20%
Disabled	41	12.31%
Mental Health problems	132	39.64%
Long Term physical problems	46	13.81%
Substance abuse problems	86	25.82%
Dental	30	9.00%
No medical insurance	34	10.21%

\*100 (23.09%) of 433 unduplicated participants used basic forms which did not have this question.

**Table 14B:**

<b>MEDICAL NEEDS "Other (written explanation)" – where applicable answers were put into Table 14A</b>	<b>Number of Unduplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of 333 Unduplicated Participants</b>
Back Problems	5	1.50%
Chest/Respiratory/Asthma	4	1.20%
Chronic pain	1	0.30%
Vision	1	0.30%
Diabetes	2	0.60%
Blood Pressure	8	2.40%
Intestinal	1	0.30%
Head Injury	2	0.60%
Mental health/depression	5	1.50%
Feet/Podiatry	3	0.90%
Joints, Bones, Arthritis	13	3.90%
Dental	1	0.30%
Hearing Loss	1	0.30%

**Table 15** surveys the services requested or rendered during the 24-hour period. All services are categorized into one of four possible statuses; service received, service referred out by the reporting agency, service requested but waiting, and finally services requested but unavailable. The % of responses for each category is taken out of the total number of responses given for the particular services.

<b>SERVICES RENDERED</b>	<b>Total non duplicated Responses</b>	<b>% Of total responses in the category RECEIVED</b>	<b>% of total responses in the category REFERRED</b>	<b>% of total responses in the category WAITING</b>	<b>UNAVAIL-ABLE</b>	<b>% of total responses in the category</b>
Alcohol/drug abuse services	122	57 46.7%	53 43.44%	5 4.10%	7	5.74%
Case management	214	185 86.45%	25 11.68%	3 1.40%	1	0.47%
Domestic violence services	24	15 62.5%	6 25.0%	0 0.00%	3	12.5%
Homeless Daytime Drop-In Center	15	4 26.67%	6 40%	1 6.67%	4	26.67%
Clothing	153	131 85.62%	20 13.07%	1 0.65%	1	0.65%
Food/hot meals	164	143 87.20%	20 12.20%	0 0.00%	1	0.60%
Health care	109	21 19.27%	82 75.23%	3 2.75%	3	2.75%
Job help/job search	108	54 50.0%	48 44.44%	2 1.85%	4	3.70%
Job education or training	62	25 40.32%	30 48.39%	1 1.61%	6	9.68%
Legal services	41	12 29.26%	24 58.54%	0 0.00%	5	12.20%

**Table 15 (continued):**

<b>SERVICES RENDERED</b>	<b>Total non duplicated Responses</b>	<b>% of total responses in RECEIVED the category</b>	<b>% of total responses in REFERRED the category</b>	<b>WAITING</b>	<b>% of total responses in the category</b>	<b>UNAVAIL-ABLE</b>	<b>% of total responses in the category</b>
Medication	101	21 20.79%	74 73.27%	1	0.99%	5	4.95%
Mental Health	110	21 19.09%	78 70.91%	6	5.45%	5	4.55%
Obtaining Identification	21	13 61.90%	7 33.33%	0	0.00%	1	4.76%
School/ Education	29	15 51.72%	9 31.03%	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Housing (private unsubsidized)	71	17 23.94%	34 47.89%	13	18.31%	7	9.86%
Public Housing/ Section 8	127	33 25.98%	48 37.80%	38	29.92%	8	6.30%
Non-public housing (rental assistance)	43	9 20.43%	22 51.16%	4	9.30%	8	18.60%
Permanent Hsg w rental assistance & supportive services	98	56 57.14%	29 29.59%	9	9.18%	4	4.08%
Transitional housing	110	75 68.18%	19 17.27%	12	10.91%	4	3.64%
Emergency shelter	133	104 78.20%	26 19.55%	0	0.00%	3	2.26%
Showers	21	14 66.67%	2 9.52%	2	9.52%	3	14.29%
Storage	14	11 78.57%	1 7.14%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%
Translation services	20	10 50.00%	4 20.00%	2	10.00%	4	20.00%
Transportation tickets/services	112	63 56.25%	45 40.18%	2	1.79%	2	1.79%

#### IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

A total of 439 surveys were collected, 6 of which were duplicated participants. 615 homeless persons including 182 children were counted. The number of male and female participants was virtually equal. The majority of homeless clients were single but the next largest consists of single parent families with only one or two children. 41.10% were African American and the second highest race was Caucasian at 39.49%. 97.0% were residents Dauphin County residents at some time in their lives and 56.15% of respondents indicated that they resided in Harrisburg three months prior to homelessness. 60.97% of adults and 69.23% of children belonged in the Harrisburg school district geographically when first becoming homeless. 59.16% received various forms of public cash assistance, 19.22% had no income source, and 19.81% were employed. 12.24% were veterans.

The highest given primary reason for homelessness was drug or alcohol abuse (27.33%), followed next by 17.42% who indicated mental illness as their primary cause. Job loss was also listed as the highest secondary reason for homelessness by 17.42% of the respondents. Temporary living situation ending was next secondary cause at 16.52%. 35.10% or 152 persons experienced homelessness chronically (as defined by US Department of Housing and Urban Development.)

The highest health issue or need indicated was mental health (39.64%).

*Several needs or records of services utilized topped the 100 mark of services requested, referred, received or unavailable. They are grouped and ranked below in descending order of number of requests above 100.*

*Case management 214  
(This is primarily because several agencies conducting the surveys have case managers who work with the participant population on various and separate issues.)*

Food/hot meals	164	Clothing	153
Emergency Shelter	133	Public Housing/Section 8	127
Alcohol/drug Abuse Services	122	Transportation Assistance	112
Transitional Housing	110	Mental Health	110
Health Care	109	Job Help/Search	108
Medications	101		

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*Submitted by Tim Whelan on behalf of the CACH Data Collection Committee.*