

**Homelessness in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District
On January 28th, 2009**
Seventh Annual Homeless Census & Point-In-Time Count



The Thomas Jefferson Area Coalition for the Homeless (TJACH) conducted the 7th annual Homeless Census and Point-in-Time Count January 28-30, 2009. Shelter providers provided data on available and occupied beds on January 28, 2009 and surveys to collect additional information were taken by teams to homeless shelters and soup kitchens. Survey teams did not visit outdoor locations for this Point in Time (PIT) count.

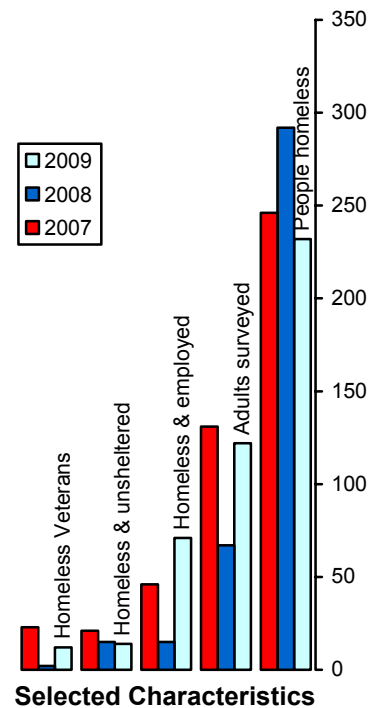
232 people were found to be homeless on January 28. 191 homeless adults with 27 dependent children were residing in emergency shelters, or transitional or permanent housing. (There were 231 sheltered adults and 46 children in 2008). Unsheltered persons were identified only through surveys administered at soup kitchens. A total of 122 surveys were completed, indicating 14 people unsheltered, compared to 15 in 2008. Schools, who use different reporting criteria, reported 327 children homeless: in shelters, doubled up, in motels, or in substandard housing (354 in 2008).

Since the 2008 PIT Count, Hope Village, the emergency shelter operated by the Hope Community Foundation, has closed. In 2008 Census, 45 people were sheltered there. Even with this loss of shelter beds, the census showed that there were a total of 206 beds available January 28 for individuals and families, with 135 of those beds occupied – an excess of 71 beds. For the 2008 PIT, there were a total of 240 emergency shelter beds available, with 156 of those occupied – an excess of 84 beds. Programs providing permanent supportive housing were near capacity, housing 33 people in the 34 beds available.

Occupants at the Salvation Army’s emergency shelter at the Point-in-Time count dropped from 57 in 2008 to 49 in 2009. Occupancy at PACEM rose from 45 in 2008 to 65 in 2009. Adriana Nicholson, Guest Advocate for PACEM, reports that “We have seen some new faces this season, but we’ve also done a good job at getting former clients into permanent housing. A few have gone to the new Step Up Program operated by Region Ten, but we have also placed about 30 clients in permanent housing available on the open market since last year. Those clients worked through getting identification, finding a job, learning how to budget, and securing housing within their budgets, and are no longer homeless.” Step Up is a program for persons who are chronically homeless and also experience mental illness, including substance addiction. The program provides an array of services to help participants leave the streets. The Step Up program housed 11 persons in permanent housing on January 28, 2009.

During the survey, temperatures ranged between 22 and 47 degrees, with temperatures below normal on two days. Emergency shelters had additional capacity, reporting 135 occupants in 206 available beds. Transitional housing had 70 beds available, with 50 occupied. Permanent housing was at or near capacity, with 33 of the 34 available beds occupied. Last year temperatures were between 18 and 58 with rain on two mornings.

- January 28: high 47°, low 29° - freezing rain in morning
- January 29: high 42°, low 22° - clear
- January 30: high 41°, low 27° - clear



HOMELESSNESS IN THE THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT

JANUARY 28, 2009

General Findings

The number of homeless identified in 2009 decreased from 2008. The total reported in 2008 was 292. Last year's figure erroneously included 20 residents at Piedmont House. Clients at Piedmont House are discharged men from the regional jail and do not meet HUD's definition of homelessness. Last year's total without Piedmont House would have been 271, which is still 16% higher than the 2009 count of 232. The following demographic data are taken from surveys. In 2009, a total of 122 surveys were completed, compared to 67 surveys in 2008. Percentages are reported for comparison purposes. Bar charts with indicate the number of responses for that question or category, and not a percentage.

In 2009, 15 people reported **veteran status**, a rate of 12%. Veterans accounted for 3% of those surveyed in 2008, 18% in 2007, 19% in 2006, 18% in 2005, and 8% in 2004.

39% reported having difficulty getting help with dental problems. This was a slight decrease from the 45% reported in 2008. Dental services increased in the past year, through an expanded program for uninsured working adults and their families at the Charlottesville Free Clinic.

The number of **chronic homeless** remained relatively steady at 80, compared to 82 in 2008.

Interviewees General Characteristics

Number of Surveys: 122

Gender: male 74%, female 26%

Average age: 41

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Homeless	155	175	173	266	292	232
Sheltered	129	154	163	238	*277	218
Unsheltered	35	21	10	28	15	14

*2008 figures erroneously included 20 residents at Piedmont House

Circumstances

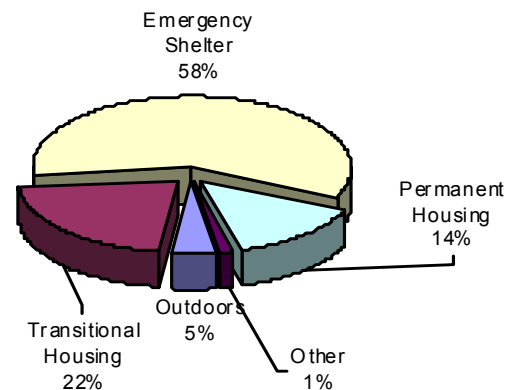
Most identified homeless were in emergency shelters (135), transitional housing (50) or permanent housing (33). Eleven unsheltered adults indicated they were living outdoors (5), or in abandoned buildings (6). The other four reported "other." The total number of people homeless is a combination of the number living in shelters and the number living without shelter. People living in overcrowded conditions or substandard housing are not counted as homeless.

- 7% had been homeless less than 30 days
- 9% had been homeless less than 6 months

Education Level

- 32% had a technical, vocational or college degree
- 40% had completed high school or equivalency
- 27% had not finished high school

Where did adults who were homeless spend last night?



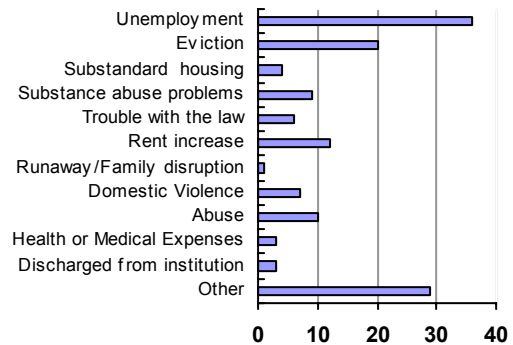
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Reasons for Leaving Prior Housing

Respondents were asked about their reasons for leaving their prior housing. Unemployment and eviction were the most commonly cited reasons.

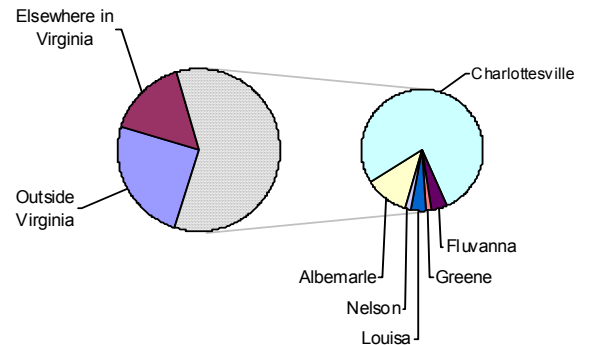
Eviction	16%
Unemployment	29%
Domestic violence	5%
Rent increase	10%



Origins

- 58% of those homeless were from within the Planning District.
- 45% called Charlottesville their hometown.
- 15% were from elsewhere in Virginia.

By Hometown



Sources of Income

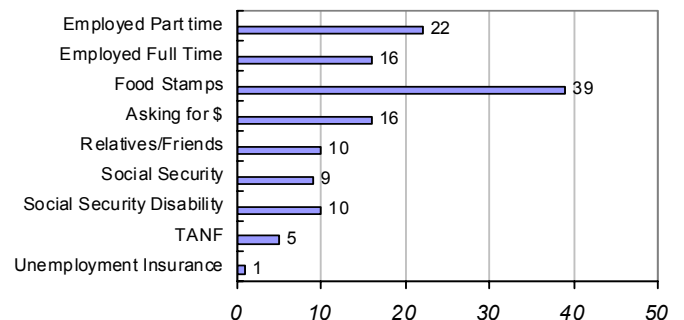
The most common source of income for the homeless continued to be employment. The majority had not received any public assistance funds in the last six months. A small number (9 out of 122) received Social Security retirement or Social Security Disability Insurance (10 out of 122).

Employment

- Full-time employment among homeless adults fell to 13% from 24% in 2008.

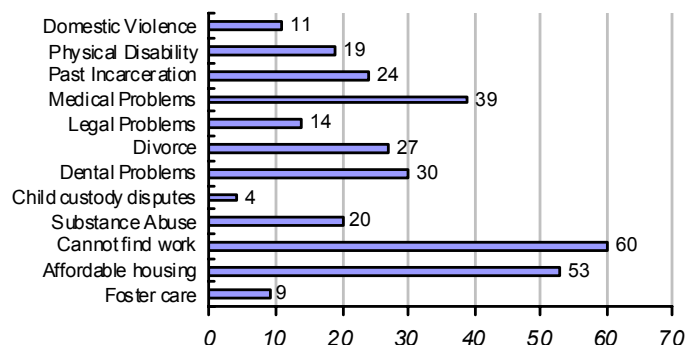
Families

- 10% of those surveyed were homeless with dependent children
- 22% of homeless adults were divorced
- 13% of homeless adults cited domestic violence or abuse as a cause of their homelessness



Other Factors

The most commonly identified challenge was inability to find work following by inability to find affordable housing. Medical and dental problems were also significant challenges.

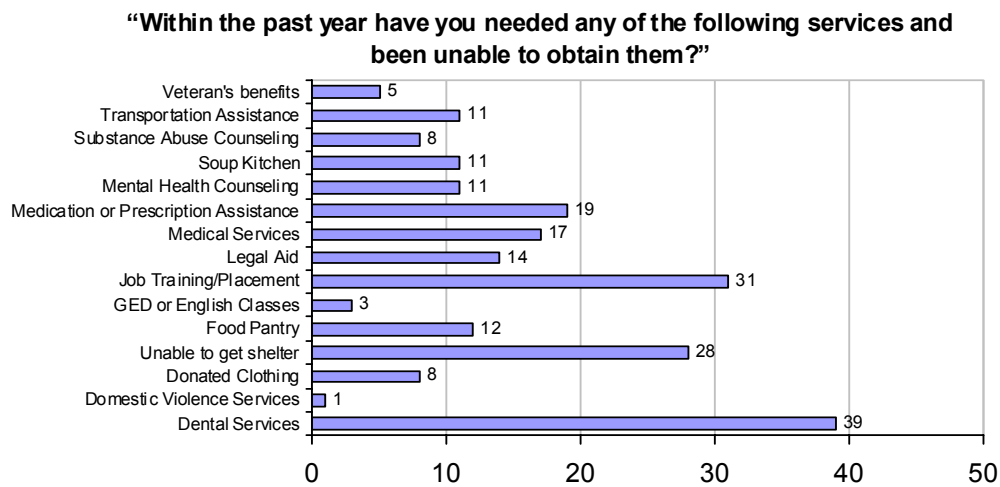


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Unmet needs

The number reporting difficulty accessing shelter fell slightly from 25% in 2008 to 22% in 2009.



Census Undercount

It is difficult to get an accurate count of how many people are homeless, in part because the number is always fluctuating. Information regarding the homeless was gathered in urban areas, and less is known about the rural homeless. The rural homeless are more likely to be housed with extended family, and therefore not homeless by strict HUD definition, or living in tents, vehicles, or in the woods, and therefore difficult to locate. The net result is that any census count will be an undercount of the homeless population and omit significant groups of individuals. Despite these limitations, an empirical census is still the most accurate approach to homeless enumeration.

Definition of Homeless

The definition of homelessness used is that of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.), and is based on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 and its subsequent revisions. In this context, a homeless person is defined as 1.) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or 2.) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is either a.) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, b.) an institution that provides 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.

This definition includes adults and children living in places not meant for human habitation, including abandoned buildings and vehicles, and those in emergency or transitional shelters. It does not include those living in substandard housing or overcrowded conditions, or those imprisoned or detained pursuant to an Act of Congress or State law.

Chronic Homeless

The definition of a chronically homeless person is an unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.