



April 2018

Results of 2018 Point in Time (PIT) Count Released

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) has released its results from Nashville’s 2018 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. The total number of persons experiencing literal homelessness counted on the night of the count was 2,298, a slight decrease from 2017. The count also documented a 25 percent decrease in the number of persons in families experiencing homelessness. Although a point-in-time count is important to establish some dimension of the problem of homelessness, the method is not without its limitations, and should be considered as one among a variety of sources of data needed to tell the whole story of homelessness.

“While it’s good to see that our homelessness numbers dropped during this year’s Point-in-Time Count, we can’t stop working until the numbers drop all the way to zero,” Mayor David Briley said. “Helping all Nashvillians find housing is a priority for our city.”

More than 100 volunteers from 23 different agencies and universities took part in this year’s count. The temperature dropped to 33 degrees during the count, which was held on the evening of January 25 and the early morning hours of January 26. Room in the Inn and the Nashville Rescue Mission operated their winter shelter program and counted people staying with them during that night. No Metro overflow shelters were opened on the night of the count, and the cold weather plan was not activated.

“The annual count is a reminder of why we do the work we do, and I’m grateful to my staff and all of the volunteers who participate each year,” said MDHA Executive Director Jim Harbison. “The information we are able to gather on a single night allows us to better direct our efforts to reduce homelessness in our city.”

In order to access its Continuum of Care homeless funding, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that communities across the country conduct an annual Point-In-Time count of persons experiencing homelessness that are unsheltered, as well as sleeping in emergency shelter or transitional housing, on a single night during the last 10 days of January. The count numbers will be reported to HUD in late April.

These numbers represent merely a point-in-time snapshot, and do not reflect the extent of the problem over an entire year. In order to support an effective Housing Crisis Resolution System that meets the needs of people experiencing any type of housing crisis, we must utilize a variety of data sources. To that end, an annualized count that accounts for all types of homelessness over the course of a year will be invaluable to painting a more complete picture of the state of homelessness in Nashville-Davidson County.

In addition, the Point-in-Time count did not capture individuals and families who are defined as homeless under federal statutes other than HUD. For example, the US Department of Education employs a broader definition of homelessness that includes children in families who are doubled up (the bottom of the pyramid, in the following graphic), or living in area motels without a voucher due to economic hardship or housing loss. The graphic on the next page, adapted from the 2011 Portland/Multnomah County Oregon Point-in-Time Report, illustrates the populations that are and are not included in the PIT count. As indicated, the count does not include those who meet the broadest definition of homelessness.

Levels of Homelessness

☑= Included in PIT Count

☒= Not included in PIT Count



- Adapted from 2011 Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon, Kristina Smock Consulting, June 2011

Key Tasks - Achievements and the Work Ahead

- Increasing access to housing

With the tight housing market and an ever increasing need for low-income affordable housing, prevention and access to housing are issues that need to be addressed to truly reach a significant decrease in homelessness. Yet, we also need to acknowledge the work that is being done while we focus on increasing resources and efforts.

With the support of city funding, MDHA implemented a new incentive program to encourage more Davidson County owners/landlords to rent their units to homeless Veterans who have been determined eligible for rental assistance under the MDHA Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. Funds from the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County offer participating landlords a \$1,000 lease-signing bonus and payment of unpaid rent or damages after a VASH participant moves from a unit.

Staff from an array of nonprofit agencies in the city serve as Housing Navigators & meet weekly to develop a housing plan for the most vulnerable persons/households experiencing homelessness, help collect documentation needed for housing placement, and connect them to mainstream benefits/services as needed. The work of the Housing Navigators helps to build a system that ensures homelessness is a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence. MDHA commits HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to assist people experiencing homelessness with utility deposits and first-month's rent.

Since 2013, the Nashville community has increased collaboration among more than 30 partners and, by leveraging existing resources, has continued to house people experiencing literal homelessness. In 2017, there was an average of 79 households or 117 individuals experiencing literal homelessness that moved into housing each month.

- Improving Data Collection

The city's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) boasts an overall Data Completeness Quality of 94.5 percent of the data entered into the system. But collection of data must expand to encompass all beds for homeless persons in the county. An ad hoc committee of the Continuum of Care (CoC) Governance Board has formed to increase the coverage of the city's data collection in HMIS, to better define the extent of homelessness and plan for needed housing and services. To enhance overall data collection through HMIS, CoC members and service providers recognize that the community must bolster local resources devoted to optimizing the system.

- Improving connections to services

Metro Government is working with private partners to increase coordination in addressing homelessness in the downtown area that will integrate a social services model that is a departure from an enforcement-only approach and adopts a partnership approach.

Access to services is often hindered by a lack of transportation. To address this barrier, the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission has partnered with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to provide annual bus passes at no cost to people who are at risk of, or are experiencing, chronic homelessness. To be eligible, bus pass recipients will have to actively work with a community housing navigator, who work at nonprofit partner organizations.

Staff at the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission is working with community partners to strengthen a Coordinated Entry System (CES) that standardizes the way individuals and families at risk of homelessness or

experiencing homelessness are assessed for and referred to the housing and services that they need for housing stability. An effective CES prioritizes assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs, as well as length of homelessness, to ensure that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner. Coordinated entry processes also provide information about service needs and gaps to help communities plan their assistance and identify needed resources.

MDHA is partnering with the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission, Oasis Center and other local stakeholders on an application to HUD for funding that would assist in preparing a coordinated approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

Here's How You Can Help:

Volunteer with a community partner who serves people experiencing homelessness. You can go through a partner organizations list at howsnashville.org/partners.

Donate items such as water, sunscreens, new underwear, socks, non-perishable food items, to help people experiencing homelessness. There is a great need for water during summer months. Contact the Metro outreach team by emailing troy.jenkins@nashville.gov or sally.besuden@nashville.gov to find out where to drop off donations.

Consider a financial contribution to pay for move-in costs including first month rent, security and utility deposits. How's Nashville assists people with up to \$1,000 in move-in costs per household and there is an urgent need to replenish the community's fund. Donations are tax-deductible. For more information, visit howsnashville.org or email judith.tackett@nashville.gov.

MDHA needs landlords willing to accept Section 8 Vouchers. This program provides low-income individuals and families an opportunity to find affordable housing in the private market. Currently, there are 956 landlords who accept the more than 7,000 vouchers administered by MDHA, but the number of such landlords has been declining. If you are a landlord and would like more information about the program, please email section8@nashville-mdha.org.

Join a listserv of more than 400 interested agencies and individuals who want to end homelessness by emailing stolmie@nashville-mdha.org. Attend a meeting of the Nashville Coalition for the Homeless & the Continuum of Care, from 9 to 11 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the Nashville Rescue Mission.

About the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency

MDHA provides quality affordable housing opportunities to more than 13,000 families, and strengthens communities in Nashville and Davidson County. It also manages federally-funded community development and homeless assistance programs, and fosters sustainable growth through 12 redevelopment districts that guide economic development through design and land-use zoning controls. Additional information about MDHA can be found on www.nashville-mdha.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Google+](#).

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