The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

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PART 2
Estimates of Homelessness in the United States
Acknowledgements

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**Summary of Contents**
I\n\nIt is my pleasure to submit to Congress the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) Part 2. The AHAR provides national estimates of homelessness in the United States. Like previous annual reports, this report is the second part in a two-part series, supplementing the Part 1 report that was published in November 2013. This report augments our understanding of homelessness by providing 1-year, national estimates of people in shelter and in-depth information about their characteristics and service-use patterns.

HUD has released the AHAR each year since 2007, giving policymakers and local service providers the information needed to serve this vulnerable population. At the Federal level, HUD and its partner agencies on the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness are using the AHAR to track progress against the goals set forth by Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (2010). At the local level, stakeholders are using the AHAR to inform their policy decisions and benchmark their service systems against the national estimates presented in the report. With the knowledge gained through this report, we are on the path to ending homelessness in the United States.

The report shows steady reductions in homelessness nationwide. In 2013, the number of people who used shelters during the year declined by 4 percent in the past year and by 11 percent since 2007, when HUD began tracking this information. These reductions are substantial—more than 160,000 fewer people are homeless in shelter than in 2007. The report also shows large declines in the number of unsheltered homeless people on a single night, down by 23 percent since 2007. These reductions are attributable to the hard work of local homeless service providers nationwide. HUD and other Federal agencies have continued to target resources and emphasize evidence-based interventions to support this work. Remarkably, this progress has occurred during challenging economic circumstances in both the labor and housing markets that are now behind us. As the national economy continues to improve, we must remember those Americans with no place to call home and judge our Nation’s prosperity by the number of Americans sleeping in shelters or on the streets.

Ending homelessness as we know it is the ultimate goal. To achieve this goal, we need a continued bipartisan commitment from Congress to break the cycle of homelessness among our most vulnerable citizens and prevent others from falling into homelessness. Congress must maintain its support of practices and program models that are making a measurable difference, moving our citizens out of shelters and off the streets and into stable
housing. We must continue to support experimentation with new program models that create effective and sustainable solutions. Finally, we must continue to press for comprehensive and accurate data that can be harnessed by policymakers and homeless services providers to advance the most effective approaches to ending homelessness.

This report shows significant progress toward ending a social wrong that deprives people of their full potential. Indeed, ending homelessness means more than providing a roof over people’s heads. It is also about restoring people’s dignities, providing families with a place to raise their children, and ensuring that our Nation’s veterans can heal in their own home.

Secretary Julian Castro
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Key Terms

Please note: Key terms are used for AHAR reporting purposes and accurately reflect the data used in this report. Definitions of these terms may differ in some ways from the definitions found in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and in HUD regulations.

Children are people under the age of 18.

Chronically Homeless Individual refers to an individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years.

Chronically Homeless People in Families refers to people in families in which the head of household has a disability, and that has either been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years.

Continuums of Care (CoC) are local planning bodies responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or an entire state.

Emergency Shelter is a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless people.

Family refers to a household that has at least one adult and one child. It does not include households composed only of adults or only children.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless people. Each CoC maintains its own HMIS, which can be tailored to meet local needs, but must also conform to HUD’s HMIS Data and Technical Standards.

HMIS Data provide an unduplicated count of people who are homeless in shelter and information about their characteristics and service-use patterns over a one year period of time. These data are entered into each CoC’s HMIS at the client level but are submitted to HUD in aggregate form for the AHAR.

Homeless describes a person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Household Type refers to the composition of a household upon entering a shelter program. People enter shelter as either an individual or as part of a family, but can be served as both individuals or family members during the AHAR reporting year. However, the estimates reported in the AHAR adjust for this overlap and thus provide an unduplicated count of homeless people.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is produced by each CoC and provides an annual inventory of beds in each CoC.

Individual refers to a person who is not part of a family during their episode of homelessness. They are homeless as single adults, unaccompanied youth, or in multiple-adult or multiple-child households.

Living Arrangement before Entering Shelter refers to the place a person stayed the night before their first homeless episode captured during the AHAR reporting year. For those that were already in shelter at the start of the reporting year, it refers to the place they stayed the night before beginning that current episode of homelessness.

Minority refers to people who self-identify as being a member of any racial or ethnic category other than white and not Hispanic/Latino. This includes African Americans, Asians, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indian, and people of multiple races. This report uses the term “Hispanic” to refer to people who self-identify their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.

Multiple Races refers to people who self-identify as more than one race.

One-Year Shelter Count is an unduplicated counts of homeless people who use an emergency shelter or transitional housing program at any time from October through September of the following year. The 1-year count is derived from communities’ administrative databases, or Homeless Management Information Systems, and represent the federal estimates of sheltered homelessness for each year.

Other One Race refers to a person who self-identifies as being one of the following races: Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a program designed to provide housing (project- and tenant-based) and supportive services on a long-term basis to formerly homeless people. McKinney-Vento-funded programs require that the client have a disability for program eligibility, so the majority of people in PSH have disabilities.

People in Families are people who are homeless as part of households that have at least one adult and one child.
**Point-in-Time (PIT) Count** is an unduplicated 1-night estimate of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations. The 1-night count is conducted according to HUD standards by CoCs nationwide and occur during the last week in January of each year.

**Principal City** is the largest city in each metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area. Other smaller cities may qualify if specified requirements (population size and employment) are met.

**Sheltered Homeless People** are people who are staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.

**Total U.S. Population** refers to people who are housed (including those in group quarters) in the United States, as reported in the American Community Survey (ACS) through the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Total U.S. Poverty Population** refers to people who are housed in the United States that fall below the national poverty line, as reported by the American Community Survey (ACS) through the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Transitional Housing** is a type of housing program in which homeless people may stay and receive supportive services for up to 24 months.

**Unaccompanied Children** are people who are not part of a family or in a multi-child household during their episode of homelessness, and who are under the age of 18.

**Unaccompanied Youth** are people who are not part of a family during their episode of homelessness and who are between the ages of 18 and 24.

**Unduplicated Count of Sheltered Homelessness** is an estimate of people in shelter that counts each person only once, even if they enter and exit the shelter system multiple times throughout the year within a CoC.

**Unsheltered Homeless People** include people whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for people, such as the streets, vehicles, or parks.

**Veteran** refers to any person who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States. This also includes military reserves and National Guard who were called up to active duty.
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PIT data estimate the number of people homeless in shelter and on the street on a single night during the year.

HMIS data estimate the number of people homeless in shelter at any time during the year.
Since 2007, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has released an annual report on the extent of homelessness in the United States—the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). The report documents how many people are using shelter programs for homeless people, and how many people are in unsheltered locations that are often called “the streets.” The AHAR is submitted each year to the U.S. Congress, and its contents are used to inform federal, state, and local policies to prevent and end homelessness.

This report is the second part of a two-part series. The first part is called The 2013 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness: Part 1 of the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress and was published in November 2013. The Part 1 report provides estimates of homelessness based on the Point-in-Time (PIT) count data gathered by communities throughout the country on a single night in January. The estimates are provided at the national-, state-, and CoC-levels. New to the 2013 AHAR is information on unaccompanied homeless children and youth and chronically homeless people in families.

Part 2 of the 2013 AHAR builds on the Part 1 report by adding 1-year estimates of sheltered homelessness based on data from Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS). The HMIS estimates provide detailed demographic information about people who use the nation’s shelters during a 12-month period.

Types of AHAR Estimates and Data Sources:
PIT Count and HMIS
The estimates presented throughout this report are based primarily on aggregate information submitted by hundreds of communities nationwide about the homeless people they encounter and serve. There are two types of estimates: 1-night PIT counts and 1-year counts based on HMIS data (See Exhibit 1).

PIT Count
The PIT counts offer a snapshot of homelessness—of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations—on a single night. The 1-night counts are conducted CoCs in late January and reported to HUD as part of their annual applications for McKinney-Vento funding. In addition to the total counts of homelessness, the PIT counts provide an estimate of the number of homeless people within particular subpopulations, such as chronically homeless people and veterans. Typically, CoCs conduct a PIT count in shelters every year and a street count every other year (on the odd numbered year). In 2013, all 420 CoCs conducted both sheltered and unsheltered PIT counts of homeless people.

Communities across the nation typically conduct their PIT counts during a defined period of time (e.g., dusk to dawn) on a given night to minimize the risk of counting any person more than once. Many CoCs also collect identifying information to unduplicate their counts of unsheltered homeless people.

For the 2013 AHAR Part 1, 420 CoCs in the United States reported PIT estimates of homeless people in their communities, covering virtually the entire United States. HUD has standards for conducting the PIT counts, and CoCs use a variety of approved methods to produce the counts. Researchers review the data for accuracy and quality prior to creating the PIT estimates for this report. Pending HUD approval, the previously reported PIT estimates are subject to change if communities adjust their counts.
ABOUT THIS REPORT

PIT counts are particularly useful because they account for both sheltered and unsheltered homeless people. However, these counts enumerate the homeless population on a single night during the year and thus do not capture changes in homelessness throughout the year and may over-represent frequent homeless service users, whom are more likely to be present on the night of the PIT count.

HMIS
The 1-year HMIS estimates provide unduplicated counts of homeless people who use an emergency shelter, transitional housing facility, or PSH program at any time from October through September of the following year. These 1-year estimates provide information about the self-reported demographic characteristics of sheltered homeless people and their patterns of service use. The 12-month counts of sheltered homelessness are produced using HMIS data from a nationally representative sample of communities. Data are collected separately by shelter type and for individuals, people in families, and veterans. For the 2013 AHAR, the estimates were derived from aggregate HMIS data reported by 381 CoCs nationwide, representing 89 percent of all CoCs nationwide. The data are unduplicated, offering information on 1,167,742 people served by CoCs, and are weighted to provide a statistically reliable estimate of the total number of people who access shelter throughout the year (1,422,360 people). Excluded from the HMIS-based estimates are people in unsheltered locations, in programs targeting victims of domestic violence, and in Safe Havens.

In combination, the PIT and HMIS estimates provide a comprehensive picture of homelessness in the United States that includes counts of people on the street as well as information on people who use the shelter system. The PIT estimates of homelessness will be smaller than the annual HMIS estimates because the PIT count data capture homelessness on a single night, whereas HMIS estimates capture anyone that enters the shelter system at any point during the year, including some people that may have been on the street the night of the PIT count.

Exhibit 2 shows the trends in PIT count and HMIS data since the first AHAR was released in 2007, and places them in a larger policy context.
EXHIBIT 2. Policy Context Surrounding Trends in Homelessness
PIT & HMIS 2007-2013

FEBRUARY 2009
President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, including $1.5 billion for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program.

MAY 2008
Congress funds and HUD and the VA re-establish the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.

MAY 2009
President Obama signed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.

JUNE 2010
“Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness” is released.

AUGUST 2012
Release of the Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule.

One Year Estimate of Homelessness
HMIS Data
2007
1,588,595
2008
1,593,794
2009
1,558,917
2010
1,593,150
2011
1,502,196
2012
1,488,371
2013
1,422,360

One Day Estimate of Total Homelessness
PIT Data
651,142
643,668
633,616
640,466
625,217
622,982
591,768

SEPTEMBER 2009
Communities begin to use the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program funding.

JULY 2011
The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs announces the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program (SSVF).
Supplemental Data Sources

Two other data sources are used in the 2013 AHAR: Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data and U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) data. The HIC data provide an inventory of beds for people who are homeless, and thus describes the nation’s capacity to house homeless people. Like the PIT count data, the HIC data are compiled by CoCs and represent the inventory of beds for people who are homeless on a single night. The HIC data are used in this report to produce the statistical weights for the national estimates.

ACS data are nationally representative and include people who are housed, including those housed in group quarters. ACS data are used to provide a profile of the total U.S. population and U.S. subpopulations, including households in poverty. The AHAR reports ACS data on gender, age, ethnicity, race, household size, disability status, and geographic location to serve as a comparison to the nationally representative HMIS data. The ACS data come in several forms, and this report uses the 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) that correspond most closely to the HMIS data for any given year.

The 2013 AHAR compares the estimate of homelessness with census data about all people in housing units or group quarters throughout the U.S. Through this comparison, the report provides a clearer picture for how homeless people differ from, or are similar to, the broader population. If one group is more common in the homeless population than in the general U.S. population, this group is more vulnerable to fall into homelessness. If a group is less common in the homeless population than in the general U.S. population, this group is less vulnerable to fall into homelessness.

This report on homelessness also compares the homeless population with the U.S. poverty population. People in poverty are the most vulnerable to become homeless and thus are an interesting comparison group. Differences between these populations may highlight subgroups at greatest risk of becoming homeless.

Data Notes

Data collected as part of CoCs’ PIT counts and HMIS records are generally self-reported by homeless people. This information may be collected using a standard survey or intake form. Some information may require additional supporting documentation if the information is necessary to establish eligibility for services.

PIT count and HMIS data quality has improved considerably since HUD began to compile these data. PIT count methodologies have become more robust, and rates of missing data have declined. HMIS bed-coverage rates have increased sharply over time, resulting in more reliable estimates of homelessness.

Throughout this report, information in the narrative may not be reflected in the corresponding tables. For example, the report uses the supplemental data sources to inform the narrative. Also, the tables present the percentage of homeless people within a particular category, and rather than present the percentage-point change across the years, the narrative highlights the percentage change. The supporting 2013 HMIS data used to produce the tabulations in the report can be downloaded from HUD’s Resource Exchange at http://www.hudexchange.info/.

Those tables are:

1. 2013 AHAR HMIS Estimates of Homelessness.xlsx
2. 2013 AHAR HMIS Estimates of Homeless Veterans.xlsx
3. 2013 AHAR_HMIS Estimates of People in PSH.xlsx
4. 2013 AHAR_HMIS Estimates of Veterans in PSH.xlsx

The AHAR estimation methodology and underlying assumptions for the information presented in this report are consistent with past reports, thus making data comparable over time and across AHAR reports. For more details, the 2013 AHAR Data Collection and Analysis Methodology can be downloaded from: http://www.hudexchange.info/.
Putting Data into Perspective
For more than a decade, HUD has supported local efforts to collect information about people experiencing homelessness. Together, the PIT count and HMIS data present a detailed picture of who is experiencing homelessness in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or in unsheltered locations, what their demographic characteristics are, and how they utilize residential services available for homeless people.

HUD and its federal partners use many other data sources to get a full picture of homelessness and housing instability, including data collected and reported by other federal agencies as well as national and local studies and evaluations. Each of these data sources provides an important perspective on homelessness. For example, the American Housing Survey (AHS) estimates the number of people who are living in overcrowded situations or living with other people temporarily, the Department of Education collects and reports data on the extent of children experiencing homelessness including doubled-up situations, and Department of Veterans Affairs data provides crucial information about veterans experiencing homelessness that is not captured in the PIT count.

Federal agencies use data to inform a broad set of policy solutions across many different programs to meet the goals of ending homelessness set forth in Opening Doors. Ending homelessness cannot rely solely on programs that are targeted to persons experiencing homelessness. HUD and its federal partners recognize that homelessness, housing affordability, health care, service needs, and employment are closely linked, and the mainstream programs that address these needs have a substantial role in ending homelessness.

Federal agencies and local stakeholders use many data sources to measure homelessness and housing instability to inform policies for targeted and mainstream programs that serve persons experiencing homelessness.
How to Use this Report
The 2013 AHAR Part 2 is intended to serve as a data reference guide. It is divided into seven sections, by each subpopulation of interest:

1. All homeless people,
2. Homeless individuals,
3. Homeless people in families,
4. Unaccompanied children and youth,
5. Homeless veterans,
6. Chronically homeless people, and
7. Formerly homeless people in permanent supportive housing (PSH).

The sections begin with a summary of the PIT count data and a state-level analysis. The HMIS data follow, with information on the gender, age, ethnicity, race, household size, disability status, geographic location, characteristics by geography, living situation before entering shelter, length of shelter stay, and bed-use patterns for each section. HMIS data are not available for unaccompanied children and youth or chronically homeless people. The section on people in PSH is based only on HMIS data.

This report is intended for several audiences: Members of Congress, staff at local service providers and CoCs, researchers, policy-makers, and advocates. These audiences may have various reasons for reading this report, but all audiences can find answers to questions that can be useful to them. For example:

At the national level, Congress and policymakers can mark the progress on the nation’s Opening Doors initiative to prevent and end homelessness. Key stakeholders can also identify what sub-populations require more attention in this effort or which groups are improving at a slower rate than others.

At the state level, policymakers and state-level CoCs can determine how they compare to the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia on a range of important measures. The report shows which states experienced substantial changes in their homeless populations compared to other states, and these comparisons can foster collaborations and propel efforts towards ending homelessness.

At the local level, community leaders and local service providers can determine how their community compares to the nation. This comparison can highlight ways in which the community’s homeless population is similar or different from the national profile of homelessness.

This report can address many questions that may be of interest across all audiences. Some sample questions include:

1. How many people are homeless in the U.S. in any given year? How has this changed over time?
2. Are women more likely to become homeless than men? How many people are homeless as individuals, and how many are homeless in families with children?
3. How many children are homeless in the U.S.?
4. What is the race and ethnicity of people who are homeless in the U.S.?
5. What is the rate of disability among people who are homeless?
6. Where do homeless people stay before they enter the shelter system?
7. How long do people stay in shelter?
8. How many U.S. veterans are homeless? How has that number changed over time?
9. How many people are chronically homeless in the U.S.?
10. How many people are in a permanent supportive housing program? Where were they living beforehand? Where did they go once they left?
Key Findings

Homelessness in the United States

One-Night Estimates

- On a single night in January 2013, 591,768 people were homeless in the United States. This is a 9.1 percent decline from January 2007, representing 59,374 fewer people homeless in 2013. This change is due to a reduction of the number of people in unsheltered locations. The number of sheltered homeless people in 2013 was similar to the number in 2007.
- Together, California and New York have one in three of all homeless people in the United States in 2013.
- In 2013, at least 90 percent of the homeless population was living in shelter rather than in unsheltered locations in Delaware, Maine, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Nebraska, Wisconsin, the District of Columbia, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania.

One-Year Estimates

- In 2013, an estimated 1.42 million people used a shelter program at some point during the reporting year, representing a 10.5 percent decline since 2007. As the number of homeless people using shelter during a year dropped, those in shelter were using it more intensively, with somewhat longer average stays. At the same time, the share of sheltered homeless people using transitional housing declined.
- Minorities are among the populations most vulnerable to fall into homelessness. One in 134 people identifying as minorities and one in 68 African Americans were homeless in shelter in 2013.
- The share of adults in shelter with a disability increased from 37.1 percent in 2007 to 39.6 percent in 2013.
- Between 2007 and 2013, the number of people using shelter programs increased 8.5 percent in suburban and rural areas and declined 16.4 percent in cities, tracking a similar geographic trend in the U.S. poverty population. The number of people using shelter programs declined in both types of geography between 2012 and 2013.

Homeless Individuals

One-Night Estimates

- On a single night in January 2013, 369,571 people were homeless as individuals in the United States. Over the last six years, the number of homeless individuals dropped by 11.1 percent, or 46,026 people.
- Declines occurred in both sheltered and unsheltered individual homelessness, but the largest declines were among those staying in places not suitable for human habitation.
- In January 2013, 55 percent of homeless individuals were in sheltered locations and the remaining 45 percent were in unsheltered locations.
- In January, 2013, almost half of all homeless individuals were in California, Florida, New York or Texas. California and Florida together had more than half of all unsheltered individuals in the U.S.
- In four states—Nevada, Arkansas, California, and Georgia—homeless individuals represented more than three quarters of all homeless people in January 2013.

One-Year Estimates

- An estimated 943,017 individuals used a shelter program in the United States in 2013 over the course of a year. The number of homeless individuals in shelter dropped by 2.7 percent between 2012 and 2013 and by 15.4 percent over a six-year period.
- While still a fairly small share of individuals using shelter, both the number and share of elderly individuals in shelter continued to increase between 2012 and 2013.
- Although minorities living in poverty as individuals increased substantially between 2007 and 2013, minorities in shelter programs as individuals declined by 11.2 percent over the same period. The share of sheltered individuals identifying as white
and not Hispanic increased from 42.6 to 44.7 percent since 2007.

- The share of sheltered individuals with a disability increased from 40 percent in 2007 to 44 percent in 2013.
- The number of individuals using shelter programs in suburban and rural areas was almost unchanged between 2007 and 2013, but 20 percent fewer individuals used shelters in cities.

### Homeless People in Families

#### One-Night Estimates

- On a single night in January 2013, 222,197 people in families were homeless in 70,960 family households in the United States. About 36 percent of all homeless people on a single night were in families.
- Between 2012 and 2013, the number of homeless people in families dropped by 7.2 percent (17,206 fewer people). The number of homeless family households dropped by 8 percent (6,197 fewer households).
- In 2013, 86.2 percent of all people who were homeless in families were found in shelter programs. More than half of all states and D.C. had at least 90 percent of their family homeless population in shelter.
- Since 2007, the number of sheltered people in families on a single night increased by 7.4 percent, while the number of unsheltered dropped by 46.5 percent.
- New York and Massachusetts had notable increases in sheltered homelessness, both between 2012 and 2013 and over the six-year period between 2007 and 2013. Unsheltered family homelessness increased substantially over the same period in several states—California, Georgia, Texas, Nevada, and Oregon.

#### One-Year Estimates

- In 2013, 495,714 people in 156,540 family households used shelter programs at some point during the reporting year, comprising 34.9 percent of the total sheltered homeless population.
- Between 2012 and 2013, the number of people in families using shelters dropped by 7.4 percent or by 39,706 people.
- Sheltered family homelessness increased by 19.8 percent (97,793 people) between 2007 and 2010, but has declined by 12.6 percent (71,620 fewer people) since then.
- In 2013, 20 percent of sheltered adults in families had a disability. Among all adults in U.S. families, only 8.1 percent have a disability.
- Between 2007 and 2013, the number of people in families using shelters in suburban and rural areas increased 29.1 percent, while people in families using shelters in cities dropped 4.3 percent. However, between 2012 and 2013, the trend reversed, with 31,608 fewer people in families using suburban and rural shelter programs and only 3,240 fewer people using shelter programs in cities.

### Unaccompanied Homeless Children and Youth

#### One-Night Estimates

- 45,616 homeless children and youth were unaccompanied on a night in January 2013—86.4 percent were youth and 13.6 percent were children.
- About half of unaccompanied youth were unsheltered in January 2013, nearly the same rate as individual homeless people 25 and older. Unaccompanied children are more likely than unaccompanied youth to be unsheltered, with nearly 6 in 10 found in places not suitable for human habitation.
Homeless Veterans
One-Night Estimates
- On a single night in January 2013, 55,779 veterans were homeless in the United States, representing 9.4 percent of all homeless people and 12.3 percent of all homeless adults.
- More than 6 in 10 homeless veterans were using shelter programs in 2013, and nearly 4 in 10 were in unsheltered locations.
- Fewer veterans were homeless in 2013 than in 2012. Veteran homelessness declined by 8.2 percent or 4,990 fewer veterans, which was driven by the 4,756 fewer unsheltered veterans found during the point-in-time count. The sheltered veteran population dropped by less than 1 percent between 2012 and 2013.
- Between 2009 and 2013, veteran homelessness dropped 24.7 percent, or 18,271 fewer veterans, with the decline slightly more attributable to fewer unsheltered (53.5%) than sheltered veterans (46.5%).

One-Year Estimates
- 139,857 veterans were in shelter programs in the United States at some time between October 1, 2012 and September 30, 2013. The number of veterans using shelter programs at some time over the course of a year dropped by 6.5 percent since 2009, totaling 9,778 fewer veterans.
- While only 20.4 percent of the total U.S. veteran population identified themselves as part of a racial minority group, nearly half (49.8%) of sheltered veterans in the U.S. were in a minority group.
- More than three quarters of sheltered veterans used emergency shelter and transitional housing programs in principal cities. The geographic pattern both of all U.S. veterans and of veterans with poverty-level incomes is the reverse, with 8 in 10 of all veterans and almost three quarters of poor veterans living in suburban and rural areas.

- Very few veterans using shelter programs are 62 years or older, in marked contrast to the overall population of veterans in the U.S. However, between 2009 and 2013, the share of sheltered veterans who are elderly increased, from 8.7 to 11.4 percent.

Chronically Homeless People
One-Night Estimates
- On a single night in January 2013, 86,455 people were chronically homeless as individuals in the United States, with two-thirds in unsheltered locations and one-third in shelter programs.
- 37,378 fewer individuals were chronically homeless in January 2013 than in January 2007, a 30.2 percent decline. The drop in unsheltered chronically homeless individuals was responsible for 67 percent of this decline.
- Of all homeless individuals, the share that was chronically homeless declined from 29.2 percent in 2007 to 23.4 percent in 2013.
- In 20 states, more than half of the chronically homeless individual population was unsheltered in 2013. Six states had over 75 percent in unsheltered locations: California, Florida, Oregon, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

People in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
One-Year Estimates
- 291,352 people in the United States were living in permanent supportive housing in 2013. Almost two-thirds of PSH residents are individuals rather than people in families with children, and the share of people using PSH who are individuals has been increasing over time.
- The number of PSH beds continued to rise, reaching 284,298 in 2013, a 3.5 percent increase from 2012.
- People are staying longer in PSH over time. The share staying more than five years rose from 18.3 percent in 2010 to 23.3 percent in 2013. The share staying a year or less has dropped.

- People in families who moved out of PSH were more likely to move into another housed situation than were individuals who exited PSH (79.3% versus 59.3%). A larger share of people in families who exited PSH to other housing moved into rental housing than did individuals (65.4% versus 52.6%), while a larger share of individuals who exited PSH to other housing went to stay with friends than did people in families (11.7% versus 5.9%).

- The number of veterans using PSH continues to grow, reaching 31,158 in 2013, which does not include many of the veterans served by the HUD-VASH program.
The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is now in its seventh year. With each additional year of data, the report becomes more valuable for understanding patterns of homelessness and for tracking progress in the nation’s efforts to prevent and end homelessness. The 2013 report shows how homelessness in America has changed since the end of the 2008 recession, highlighting patterns that may be reverting back to pre-recession trends or setting new directions in how Americans experience homelessness.

Homelessness is largely an urban phenomenon, particularly among those Americans experiencing homelessness in the nation’s shelter system. Increases in the use of shelters and transitional housing programs in suburban and rural areas between 2007 and 2013 reversed in 2012-2013, with numbers of homeless people at some time during the year declining more in suburban and rural areas than in principal cities. The reversal may suggest that the housing crisis during the recession, especially in suburban and rural areas, has waned and more Americans located in these areas are regaining their housing stability.

Not surprisingly, the most populous states also have the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, and some regional patterns have emerged. California, Florida, New York, and Texas continue to account for nearly half of the homeless population in the United States. States with mild climates are less likely to have their homeless populations in shelters when compared to states with colder climates—which may be partly related to weather and partly to hard-to-break forms of encampment homelessness. And some states have large and growing numbers of sheltered homelessness and sizable declines in unsheltered homelessness, probably related to the expansions of their homeless services systems and targeted efforts to reach those staying in unsheltered locations.

The AHAR data show some shifts in the makeup of the homeless services systems in communities across the country. Even after the end of the recession, people are staying longer in shelters, and this may reflect the success of diversion policies in keeping people who would be short-term stayers from entering shelters in the first place. The overall number of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds has stayed the same since 2007; however, there has been a shift in the mix of these beds. During this time, the number of emergency shelter beds increased 18 percent, while, at the same time, the number of transitional housing beds declined by 18 percent as many communities adopt a rapid re-housing approach for helping people leave shelter for permanent housing. The shift to a rapid rehousing approach is further highlighted by the dramatic increase in permanent supportive housing beds, which increased by 51 percent since 2007. Many of these beds have been added to the nation’s inventory in an effort to serve more chronically homeless clients.

People also are staying longer in PSH, which may reflect success in providing residents of PSH with the supportive services they need. A shift in the target population of PSH toward individuals rather than families may also reflect efforts by communities to use this resource for the highest needs people who are most likely to have chronic patterns of homelessness. Communities have just started estimating the numbers of families that have chronic patterns of homelessness, and these estimates confirm that most people with chronic patterns become homeless as individuals.

Demographic patterns among people experiencing homelessness continue to shift moderately. For example, while rates of homelessness remain high among minorities, the overall growth in the U.S. minority populations has far outpaced the number of minorities experiencing homelessness. This trend is likely driven by Hispanics or Latinos in the United States. While the share of Hispanics in the total U.S. population increased from 15 percent in 2007 to 17 percent in 2013, the share of Hispanics in the shelter population dropped from 22 to 16 percent. Also, people homeless as individuals, still predominately men, are both younger and older, with growing portions 25 or younger and 51 or older. The proportion of homeless individuals who are elderly, 62 years or older, continues to increase slightly, both among all individuals and among veterans.
While the many American veterans who are elderly are at low risk of becoming homeless overall—since so many are not poor or disadvantaged in other ways—veterans who are at highest risk for homelessness, such as post-Vietnam era veterans, are aging and beginning to enter their sixties.

The 2013 AHAR has a new section that focuses on the nearly 47,000 unaccompanied homeless children and youth. The section shows that unaccompanied children and youth are up to four times more likely to be unsheltered than those in families. Thus, many of the nation’s most vulnerable children and youth experience homelessness in places that are both dangerous and difficult to reach and provide services.

Finally, and most importantly, the 2013 AHAR shows some progress towards ending homelessness, with 12 and 11 percent declines in counts of homeless people on a single night and in people using shelters at some time during the course of a year, respectively. Family homelessness is declining, and very few people who are homeless as members of families are living in unsheltered locations. Chronic homelessness has declined by almost a third since 2007.

Veteran homelessness is declining even as the number of veterans rises overall, with programs for veterans who become homeless showing some success. But much remains to be done—by the federal government, by states, and by the local communities that have the primary responsibility for shaping the nation’s response to homelessness. As shown in the 2013 AHAR, there are 1.4 million people who use shelters throughout the year, and finding a stable and decent home for each person will require a sustained commitment by policymakers at all governmental levels and effective solutions by local practitioners.