



2010 Point In Time Oklahoma City



**THE COALITION
FOR THE NEEDY**



The key to solving homelessness is understanding the causes to effectively address the identified needs. By looking at information about homeless individuals and families in our community we can develop the most effective and appropriate housing and services to help them move out of homelessness as quickly as possible and remain in permanent housing.

While the Point In Time Count of the Homeless is not the definitive measurement of homelessness, it does provide information that can provide insight, trends and a snapshot of homelessness in Oklahoma City.

For the past seven years The City of Oklahoma City, The Homeless Alliance and the Coalition For the Needy have partnered to conduct this count. In a city with over 600 square miles and more than 800 people per square mile, this is a daunting task and could not be accomplished without volunteers and support from the community.

The Point in Time Committee would like to thank the following corporate sponsors who provided donations and volunteers to make this year's count a success.

**Ingrid's
Pizza Hut
Neighborhood Market Store #2875
Be The Change, Inc
Gipson Designs
Moore Lions Homerun Club
Ed Commander
City of Oklahoma City**

**IC Mobile Media
Subway Sandwiches
Brown's Bakery
Homeless Alliance
Dale Talley
Target Stores
Be The Change, Inc
Regional Food Bank**

The following organizations or non-profit agencies provided trained staff, incentives and resources that made the 2010 Annual Count possible.

**Regional Food Bank
RAIN
Veterans Administration
Spangler and Associates
Salvation Army
City Care
Upward Transitions
OKC Transit Services
OU Health Science Center
Mercy Health Ministry Outreach
Cathedral of Hope
Neighbor Services Organization
Dell Corporation**

**Oklahoma AIDS Care Fund
North Care
Anglin Public Relations
OKC Police Department
OK Department of Corrections
Community Health Centers (Healing Hands)
Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and
Substance Abuse Services
Department of Rehabilitative Services-Disability
Determination Division
Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness
Red Rock Behavioral Health Care Services**

Thanks to our local media, who reported on the event and helped show the true faces of homelessness.

Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Individuals and Families: January 27, 2010

Oklahoma City conducted its annual "Point-in-Time Count" of the homeless on Wednesday, January 27, 2010. The intention of this one-day survey was to determine the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Oklahoma City and gather information about their characteristics and needs. It should be noted that a one-day count is only a snapshot and is not designed to be a complete analysis of the problem of homelessness.

This is the seventh consecutive year the count has been conducted, which provides a year-by-year comparison of the findings.

DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions apply to this report

Homeless: an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and seek shelter in places not meant for habitation such as cars, camps, streets and abandoned buildings. Public or privately operated congregate emergency shelters are also places that house individuals and families who are experiencing a housing crisis.

Chronically homeless: unaccompanied homeless individuals, not families, with a disabling condition (mental illness, substance abuse, physical illness or disability, or the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions) who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in places not meant for human habitation or in an emergency shelter during that time (HUD definition).

Emergency shelter: short-term lodging for people experiencing a housing crisis. Emergency shelters serve as the point of entry into the homeless assistance system by assisting those confronted with an immediate loss of housing or those who are already homeless. Emergency shelters generally have an official length of stay ranging from one to 90 days, depending on the individual program, but many chronically homeless people manage to live in the emergency shelter environment for years. Most emergency shelters are congregate in nature, but can also include individual hotel or motel vouchers.

Transitional housing: Transitional housing provides time limited temporary housing and services for persons who have multiple barriers to obtaining housing. This type of housing, as defined by HUD, can be for up to 2 years and the living arrangements are usually similar to permanent housing. Typically, transitional housing programs provide specialized supportive services to various subpopulations with multiple barriers to housing and employment. With assistance, people in transitional housing work to resolve their housing issues within two years. Transitional Housing Providers are expected to help residents find permanent housing as they become stabilized.

Permanent supportive housing: Supportive housing is permanent (not time-limited) housing with integrated wrap-around services for persons who are homeless and have a disabling condition. It differs from transitional housing in two ways: 1) tenants of supportive housing pay rent and sign leases, and 2) there is no limit for duration of stay. Integrated services vary by the needs of the residents but can include basic healthcare, mental healthcare, support for recovery from addiction, case management, employment services and training.

METHODS:

Planning for the OKC Point in Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless is a year long process. Members of the planning committee includes representation from the City of Oklahoma City, the Coalition for the Needy, the Homeless Alliance and other community volunteers who work to coordinate the activities on the day of the count. This Committee is responsible for locating counting sites, recruiting volunteers, providing survey instruments, entering survey data, locating and distributing the incentives and reporting the results. Planning begins during the summer months and concludes with the release of the PIT Annual Report in the spring.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to conduct the Point in Time counts on a day in the last week of January every other year, so it can collect national data that is used to calculate funding for housing and supportive services.

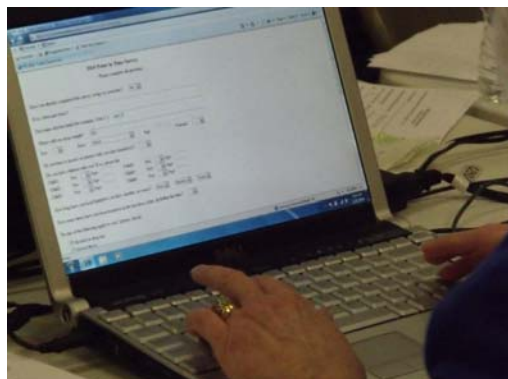
In 2010, the count had four components for the day-long count: surveys completed in emergency shelters, electronically formatted counts in transitional housing programs, a meal site count and street count of locations throughout the city known to harbor homeless people. WestTown Resource Center, owned by the Homeless Alliance was used as the staging area for all activities on the day of the count. Volunteers received training in how to conduct interviews, outreach techniques and safety. Local restaurants provided lunch, dinner, water and soft drinks for the volunteers.

Area businesses, local government, nonprofits and private citizens donated items to thank individuals and families for taking part in the survey. These items included food, clothing, blankets and transportation vouchers which are in short supply for people who are homeless.

At each of the counting locations, volunteers asked homeless persons to complete a survey that included their first name and last initial, sex, race, age, whether they had completed the survey earlier and where they would be sleeping on the night of the count. This information was used to prevent duplication. In total, over 100 volunteers from more than 30 organizations surveyed people across Oklahoma City.

The future home of the WestTown Homeless Resource Center was the location for real-time data entry of the surveys. Guided by the Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) administrator from the Homeless Alliance community volunteers donated their time to assist with entering the information from the surveys into an online database. By entering the information the same day the information can be easily checked for duplication and preliminary numbers can be reviewed within a matter of days instead of weeks or months as in past counts. In 2010 the preliminary numbers were available within 5 days.

Information from surveys are entered into the PIT database. This helps to streamline the analysis.



Locations:

Emergency Shelter Count: A combination of staff and community volunteers conducted the count by surveying and interviewing as many persons as possible at emergency shelters. Results were calculated by comparing survey responses and official “bed counts” provided by the agencies.

Transitional Housing Count: Transitional housing staff completed census forms in an electronic format and returned the data to the Point-in-Time committee. This was counted separately to be used for specific program data and then aggregated with the information from the survey instrument to determine total counts after eliminating duplication.

Meal Site Count: Volunteers visited sites where free meals were served to the public throughout the day on January 27. The meal site count was focused on identifying and interviewing people who were homeless but not planning to stay in one of the city’s homeless shelters that night.

Street Count: Prior to the count, a list of locations where homeless people were known to sleep was identified. A vehicle loaned by IC Mobile Media that was easy for persons on the street to identify was used to set up counting stations in the inner city area and the Downtown Transit Center. A trained outreach team from the Oklahoma AIDS Care Fund engaged people living on the street.



Surveys are conducted at locations throughout the city. Here participants are offered donuts and other incentives in exchange for information at the Metro Transit Center.



Volunteers from the Oklahoma AIDS Care Fund prepare to conduct the street count.

PIT Analysis

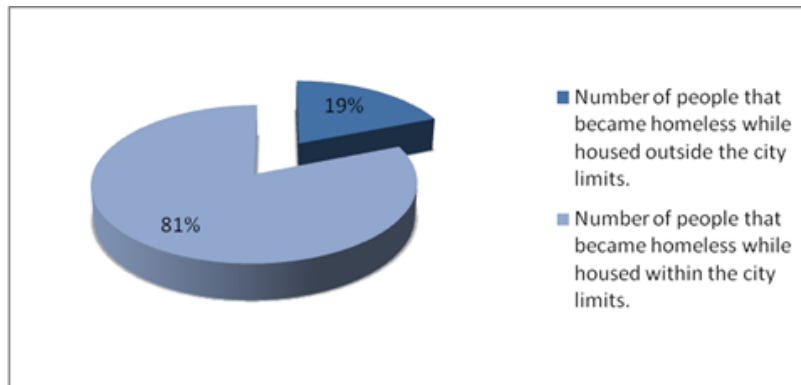
Total Number of Homeless

The total number of homeless may change from year to year depending on weather conditions and economic factors. Information about the total number of homeless in Oklahoma City is used over time to look at trends in the homeless population.

Year	Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	Total
2008	616	397	402	1415
2009	803	300	372	1475
2010	630	226	225	1081

Where Did They Become Homeless?

Oklahoma City provides the vast majority of housing and services for people who are homeless within the metro area. In the 2010 PIT count of the homeless, 19% of those surveyed became homeless while located in zip code areas outside the city limits and came to Oklahoma City to locate housing and financial resources.



Chronically Homeless:

Oklahoma City has focused on creating housing for individuals who are chronically homeless through funding from the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) competitive grant and a commitment of matching HOME funding. Using the annual PIT to gauge the needs of chronically homeless persons, the City through community partnerships has worked to create permanent supportive housing beds in its efforts to eliminate chronic homelessness.

Total Number of Chronic Homeless in Oklahoma City

Year	2008 PIT	2009 PIT	2010 PIT
Number Chronic Homeless in OKC	304	384	294

Families with Children:

In the last five years, families with children have become the fastest growing sub-population of homeless. Oklahoma City has focused efforts through the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Supportive Housing Program and the short-term Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program funding with the intention of decreasing the number of families with children that enter shelters. The most recent PIT count indicates that the number of families with children in shelters have decreased 20% from the previous year. When taking into account the recent downturn in the economy, rising unemployment and the increase in the number of foreclosures, the efforts made through the targeted initiatives have had a significant impact on this population.

PIT Year	Shelter	Transitional	Unsheltered	Total
2008	28	56	12	96
2009	46	47	3	97
2010	36	36	6	78

Special Needs:

The subpopulations chart below shows the most recent trend for people who experience homelessness with special needs. Most categories have small increases but proportionately these are insignificant. Substance abuse and domestic violence have the most significant increase.

Special Needs	2010	%	2009	%
Veteran	179	17%	228	15%
Chronic Homeless	294	27%	384	26%
Substance Abuse	356	33%	397	27%
Severe Mental Illness	261	24%	327	22%
HIV/Aids	17	2%	17	1%
Domestic Violence	53	5%	38	3%

Race/Ethnic Groups

Over the past three years, there has been some fluctuation in both race and ethnic groups. The chart below demonstrates the data collected during the PIT count for these three years and compares this information to information from the most recent US Census. The most notable change is the decrease in the percentage of people who are reported as white and the increase in the percentage of people who are black/African American.

Comparison of OKC Homeless Population By Race/Ethnic Group				
	2010	2009	2008	2000 Census OKC Metro
White	44%	56%	50%	76%
Black	38%	23%	32%	11%
Native American	4%	9%	6%	4%
Hispanic	6%	7%	7%	7%
Asian	4%	2%	1%	3%
Other	4%	1%	0%	3%



Top: A volunteer conducts surveys with people who live on the street in downtown OKC.



Bottom: A young homeless mother answers questions at the downtown library after accessing the public internet service looking for a job.

Solutions and Strategies:

Oklahoma City has worked to develop a strategy to prioritize homeless needs and allocations based on the information from the annual PIT count of the homeless and the annual Housing Inventory analysis that takes place during the annual count. This information is used to analyze a snapshot in time for trends and information concerning subpopulations and to compare this information against the available housing stock. The *Oklahoma City 10-Year Plan to Create Lasting Solutions is used to coordinate community efforts and funding to solve homelessness in Oklahoma City.

Permanent Supportive Housing is created through HUD's competitive Continuum of Care grant. Funding is awarded to local housing and service providers through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. A point system that focuses on the priority needs is used to rate and rank the proposals. A ranking is given based on the average score of the proposal. This process includes evaluation of existing programs that are eligible for renewal funding based on performance measurements, which mirrors the HUD National Standards. The Homeless Management Information System is used to calculate bed utilization rates, length of stay in permanent housing and increase in income of program recipients.

According to the most recent PIT data, based on year round usage, Oklahoma City has a sufficient number of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds. Permanent housing with supports continues to be in short supply for chronically homeless persons. The data suggest that substance abuse has surpassed mental illness as the number one special need of chronically homeless people in Oklahoma City. Households with dependent children is another subpopulation with continued housing needs.

**The Oklahoma City 10 Year Plan to Create Lasting Solutions can be found at:
http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/docs/10_Year_Plan.pdf*



A homeless couple waits for a bus to transport them to the shelter.

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