

## Homelessness in Hartford

During 2011, Connecticut's homeless shelters and transitional housing programs served over 14,000 people and 1,300 families including 2,500 children.

The number of people in emergency shelters increased over 12% from 2010 to 2011. Across the state, most emergency shelters have been operating at 100% capacity for over two years <sup>1</sup>.

Total Persons in Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing								
	Connecticut				Hartford			
	Annual		One Day		Annual		One Day	
Population	Total	Percent of total persons	Total	Percent of total persons	Total	Percent of state population	Total	Percent of state population
Total Persons	14,266	100%	3,524	100%	3,570	25%	747	21%
Adults without Children	10,271	72%	2,261	64%	2,883	28%	527	23%
Adults with Children	1,571	11%	497	14%	237	15%	79	16%
Children	2,564	18%	766	22%	464	18%	140	18%
<b>Total Families</b>	1,387	n/a	432	n/a	216	16%	68	16%

Footnote: Annual numbers collected by the Connecticut Homelessness Management Information System (CTHMIS) during calendar year 2011. One-day numbers collected by the annual homelessness point in time count, CT PIT 2012. Emergency shelters and transitional housing programs included. Unsheltered homeless not included.  
Sources: CT HMIS, CT PIT 2012

During 2011, 3,570 persons and 216 families slept in Hartford's homeless programs. These families comprised 16% of all families experiencing homelessness statewide. Over the course of the year, 13% of all persons sleeping in the city's shelters and transitional housing programs were children. On one day alone, 747 people and 68 families including 140 children were counted in Hartford shelters and transitional housing programs.

Four years into the country's recession, Connecticut families living below the poverty line have exhausted support networks and turned to their last resort, a homeless shelter. Homelessness has been reported to affect the overall health of a child, leading to both physical and mental distress <sup>3</sup>.

In 2011, more than three-quarters (76%) of families who utilized a Connecticut shelter were experiencing their first-ever episode of homelessness. Of Connecticut's homeless families, over one-third (35%) stated that domestic violence had directly contributed to their homelessness <sup>4</sup>.



Across Connecticut, chronic homelessness is on the rise, increasing by more than one-quarter (26%) in only two years. Among those living on the streets, chronic homelessness<sup>5</sup> increased 92% between 2009 and 2011. On any given day, nearly half (44%) of adults without children in Hartford's emergency shelters are chronically homeless. Of the 30 adults with children counted in Hartford shelters during the most recent one-day snapshot, none were experiencing chronic homelessness.



Rates of both chronic and acute illness are extremely high among the homeless population<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, studies have shown that while pre-existing illness may result in homelessness, homelessness itself can also have an adverse effect on a person's health. In Hartford, 44% of sheltered adults reported a mental illness and 52% cited issues with substance abuse. Additionally, 3% of Hartford's homeless population reported a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, matching the statewide rate. Veterans, comprising 8% of Hartford's homeless population, are especially prone to conditions of mental illness and substance abuse as well<sup>7</sup>.

**In addition to health-related contributing factors to homelessness lay two underlying and arguably greater factors, unemployment and a dearth of affordable housing throughout the state.**

The cost of living is steadily increasing in Connecticut, already the fifth most expensive state in which to live<sup>8</sup>. As of June 2012, Connecticut maintained an unemployment rate of 8.4%, and Hartford saw an unemployment rate of 15.5%<sup>9</sup>. The U.S. Census reports that 9.2% of the Connecticut population lives below the federal poverty level (FPL), while in Hartford, more than three times as many (32.1%) live below the FPL<sup>10</sup>.



More than 119,000 households in Connecticut spend over half of their income on rent. In the Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford metropolitan area, the Fair Market Rent (FMR)<sup>11</sup> for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,038. In order to afford this rate, a household must earn \$19.96 an hour, or a minimum-wage earner would have to work 97 hours per week<sup>12</sup>.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Homelessness Management Information System (CT HMIS) data presented here include clients entered into CT HMIS participating emergency shelters during calendar year 2011. CT HMIS findings underestimate the extent of emergency shelter usage as they do not include numbers from faith-based and other shelter programs around the state that do not enter data into CT HMIS.

<sup>2</sup> *CT PIT 2012* is a one-day snapshot of homelessness conducted on January 25, 2012. *CT PIT 2012* was conducted in shelters and housing programs. *CT PIT* data underestimates the extent of homeless, as it does not capture numbers of people turned away or who do not seek shelter, or those living in doubled up and other precarious housing situations.

<sup>3</sup> National Child Traumatic Stress Network, *Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children*, 2005.  
[http://www.nctsnet.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/promising\\_practices/Facts\\_on\\_Trauma\\_and\\_Homeless\\_Children.pdf](http://www.nctsnet.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/promising_practices/Facts_on_Trauma_and_Homeless_Children.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *CT PIT 2011*, a one-day snapshot of homelessness conducted on January 27, 2011. *CT PIT 2011* was conducted in shelters, housing programs, and included a street count. *CT PIT* data underestimates the extent of homeless, as it does not capture numbers of people turned away or who do not seek shelter, or those living in doubled up and other precarious housing situations.

<sup>5</sup> "A Chronically Homeless Person or Family is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition or a family with at least one adult member who has a disabling condition and has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. The term homeless in this case means a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets), in an emergency homeless shelter, or in a Safe Haven as defined by HUD."  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/chronic.cfm>.

<sup>6</sup> NCH-National Coalition for the Homeless, Health Care and Homelessness July 2009.  
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/health.html>

<sup>7</sup> National Alliance on Mental Illness, *Mental Illness and Veterans*, 2012. <http://goo.gl/ny1KA>

<sup>8</sup> Cost of Living Data Series for the First Quarter of 2012 formatted and scaled by Missouri Economic Research and Information Center. [http://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost\\_of\\_living/index.stm](http://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost_of_living/index.stm)

<sup>9</sup> Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Market Information-Local Area Unemployment Statistics, June 2012.  
<http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/laus/default.asp>

<sup>10</sup> Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report, August 2012. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/09000.html>

<sup>11</sup> *FMRs* are the monthly amounts "needed to rent privately owned, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of a modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities." Federal Register. HUD determines *FMRs* for localities in all 50 states.

<sup>12</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. Statewide numbers [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/CDP-CT\\_0.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/CDP-CT_0.pdf). Wage and *FMR* Calculator <http://nlihc.org/library/wagecalc>.