

The District of Columbia

System Overview and Recent Achievements

Homeward DC, the District of Columbia Interagency Council on Homelessness's (ICH) strategic plan,¹ has laid a strong foundation for the Continuum of Care (CoC) with a vision to end long-term homelessness. Currently in its fifth year of implementation, *Homeward DC* provides a framework for a responsive system, ensuring that homelessness in the District will become rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

In the District of Columbia, homeless services are administered and primarily funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS). The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness is DHS's prime contractor for homeless services and is the Collaborative Applicant for federal resources awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). As a part those roles, TCP oversees the District's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS),² operates the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP)³ system, and completes data-driven projects for the CoC like Point in Time.

DHS and TCP work with the CoC's provider agencies who deliver the following services for residents facing housing crises: winter- and year-round emergency shelter, meal services, daytime services, street outreach, emergency rental assistance, targeted prevention assistance, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, targeted affordable housing,⁴ and permanent supportive housing. These services are available for unaccompanied adults, persons in families, unaccompanied youth, and pregnant and parenting youth. Moreover, the CoC targets many of its services to specific subpopulation groups such as veterans, the LGBTQIA+ population, and survivors of domestic violence to better meet their unique service needs.

Families in the District seeking homeless services may visit DHS's Virginia Williams Family Resource Center for referral to preventative and emergency resources based on need. All families placed in shelter from Virginia Williams have access to rapid rehousing resources while a smaller subset are matched to longer-term interventions via the CAHP system. Unaccompanied adults experiencing homelessness may access any of the District's low barrier emergency shelters for overnight accommodations and meals.

¹ ich.dc.gov/page/homeward-dc-ich-strategic-plan-2015-2020.

² HMIS is a community's primary repository for information on programs serving persons experiencing or formerly experiencing homelessness.

³ CAHP provides standardized access and coordinated referrals to the housing placement process that ensures that persons experiencing homelessness receive appropriate assistance with both immediate and long-term housing and service needs.

⁴ Targeted affordable housing is a permanent subsidy earmarked for use by the homeless services system that provides with light-touch services, targeted to those living with a disabling condition, who do not require the level of services associated with permanent supportive housing.

As part of Mayor Muriel Bowser’s strategy to close the DC General Family Shelter and replace it with smaller, community-based shelter facilities, the District has opened 202 new units of Short-Term Family Housing (STFH) with two more STFH programs set to open in 2020. Families in STFH have access to private space and neighborhood amenities while they receive services to support their exit to housing as quickly as possible. The STFH sites show first-hand the impact that building size and design can have on service quality and outcomes. These programs have helped to achieve a significant reduction of families in emergency shelter and reduction of shelter length of stay to an average of 90 days – all while maintaining year-round access to shelter for families.

In 2019 DHS also began the Family Rehousing and Stabilization Program Task Force to work together with stakeholders to assess what rapid rehousing is doing well and to outline opportunities to improve the program. The Task Force included people with lived experience of homelessness, CoC service providers, landlords, advocates, and representatives from the District Government. This group worked together to provide recommendations on improvements for customer experience and outcomes, program delivery, and oversight and accountability.

Further efforts were made to assist families at risk of homelessness with continued investments into the Homeless Prevention Program (HPP). HPP aims to help families resolve a housing crisis before a shelter stay is necessary and to connect them to shelter when there are no other safe options. Since its launch, HPP has prevented over 7,000 families from experiencing homelessness.

Having significantly advanced the work to close DC General and replace it with smaller, STFH sites throughout the District, in 2019 the District was able to turn more attention and resources to shelter improvements for unaccompanied adults. The design process for a new 801 East Men’s Shelter on St. Elizabeths Campus has been completed and construction is set to begin in 2020. The new shelter is designed with different spaces to meet the unique needs of various subpopulations (such as seniors, persons with physical disabilities, individuals who are working or seeking employment, etc.). The objective of this new facility is to provide more tailored assistance with the goal of helping individuals exit homelessness to permanent housing more quickly. Planning is also underway to replace the Harriet Tubman Women’s Shelter and to conduct extensive renovations of the New York Avenue Men’s Shelter, Blair Shelter, and Emery Shelter which serve men experiencing homelessness.

The launch of this work to reform the shelter system for unaccompanied adults coincides with other major changes to the “front door,” including the addition of a Downtown Day Services Center created in partnership with the Downtown DC Business Improvement District and Pathways to Housing DC. The Center is an important access point to the homeless services system and is a critical resource for laundry, showers, meals, and an array of health services and agency services including those from the District Department of Employment Services, the Department of Health’s Office of Vital Records, the Department of Motor Vehicles, DHS’s Economic Security Administration, Unity Health Care, and the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless. Since opening, the facility has

enrolled over 1,000 men and women in case management and has completed close to 800 Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)⁵ assessments to connect clients to housing resources. This complements a growing network of daytime services in the District, including the Adams Place Day Center, which serves an average of 160 people per day in Northeast DC.

2019 also marked the development of a locally funded Comprehensive Street Outreach Network, designed to increase resources, enhance coordination, and provide more real-time support to unsheltered residents. As these important pieces of system reform continue to take shape, they will improve the District’s ability to connect those experiencing homelessness to available housing resources and services while aiding in efforts to prevent homelessness whenever possible.

2020 Continuum of Care (CoC) Inventory

The following table shows the number of units for unaccompanied individuals and families (as well as beds within the family units) in the District’s CoC. This inventory includes all programs dedicated to serving households who currently are experiencing or who have formerly experienced homelessness. Most of the District’s programs receive funding from DHS, with additional funding coming from HUD and the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as from other private funding sources.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 2020 SHELTER & HOUSING INVENTORY			
Category	Units for Individuals	Units for Families	Beds in Family Units
Winter Shelter	792	-	-
Emergency Shelter	2,496	806	2,530
Transitional Housing	1,003	270	785
Rapid Rehousing	409	2,000	5,922
Permanent Supportive Housing	4,710	1,759	5,484
Other Permanent Housing	1,118	1,310	3,942

The District of Columbia is one of a few jurisdictions nationally and the only jurisdiction in Metropolitan Washington that is legally required to provide low-barrier emergency shelter to all residents who need it. As such, the District adds 792 beds for unaccompanied individuals to its shelter capacity during the Hypothermia Season, which

⁵ The VI-SPDAT is a survey administered to determine risk and prioritization for appropriate housing supports for persons who are experiencing homelessness or who are experiencing housing insecurity.

runs from November through March.⁶ The additional winter shelter beds consist of a combination of “seasonal,” “Hypothermia alert,” and “overflow” beds. Seasonal beds are open nightly throughout the Hypothermia Season, Hypothermia alert beds open during specific weather conditions,⁷ and overflow beds are added to the inventory, as necessary.

The CoC’s low barrier shelter model means shelter staff do not ask individuals for identification or documentation upon entry, with the goal of ensuring protection from cold weather injury or death for anyone who does not have a safe place to sleep. While the District does not have a set number of winter shelter units for families, the emergency shelter capacity for families is flexible throughout the year to meet the needs of households with children and women who are pregnant.

2020 Point-in-Time Results Overview

The number of persons experiencing homelessness in the District of Columbia on the night of PIT decreased by 2.2 percent from the 2019 count and is down by 23.6 percent from the PIT count conducted in 2016. Although the number of persons in families experiencing homelessness decreased by 8.0 percent from last year, the number of unaccompanied individuals increased by 1.9 percent. The two subsystem counts within the overall PIT count have been diverging since 2017.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT BY CATEGORY							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2019- 2020	% Change 2016- 2020
Unaccompanied Individuals	3,683	3,583	3,770	3,875	3,947	1.9%	7.2%
Persons in Families	4,667	3,890	3,134	2,646	2,433	-8.0%	-47.9%
Total Persons Experiencing Homelessness	8,350	7,473	6,904	6,521	6,380	-2.2%	-23.6%

Families

The number of families (as distinct from *persons in families*) counted at PIT has decreased by 48.5 percent since 2016 when shelter occupancy was at its highest point

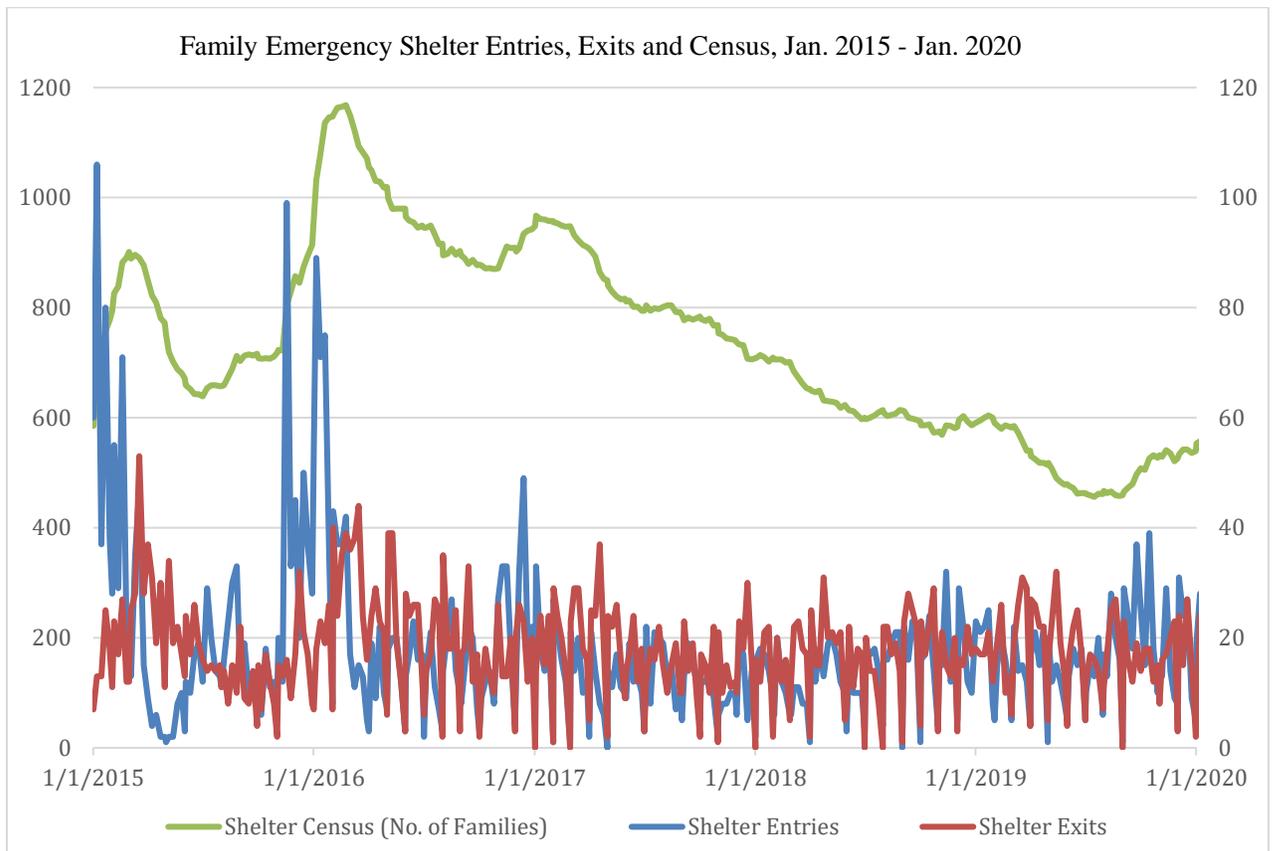
⁶ Defined in the *Homeless Services Reform Act* (HSRA).

⁷ Activation of Hypothermia alert beds is determined through consultation between DHS, the District’s Homeland Security & Emergency Management Agency, and the National Weather Service. The alert is activated when the actual or forecasted temperature is 32 degrees or below, though DHS may also call an alert when the temperature is forecasted to be 40 degrees or below with a 50 percent chance or greater for precipitation. The Hypothermia alert was active on the night of the 2020 PIT count.

over the last five PIT counts.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT, FAMILIES & PERSONS IN FAMILIES							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2019-2020	% Change 2016-2020
Families	1,491	1,166	924	815	768	-5.8%	-48.5%
Persons in Families	4,667	3,890	3,134	2,646	2,433	-8.0%	-47.9%

Prior to 2015, the District made family shelter placements only during the Hypothermia season. Opening shelter to families in need of placement throughout the year has resulted in a decreased strain on the system, which was previously seen in winter months, because both shelter entries and exits now occur year-round. The chart below illustrates how shelter entries outnumbered exits in winter months leading to increased census counts.



This shift benefits families as they can access shelter when they need it, not just during certain weather conditions. In turn, families entering shelter have access to housing assistance that enables them to exit shelter quickly, and families served by prevention can get assistance that provides stability before a shelter placement is necessary. Families

exiting shelter through the Family Rehousing and Stabilization Program (FRSP), also known as rapid rehousing, enter their own housing while receiving rental assistance and case management. Once in housing, families can connect with more intensive service interventions through CAHP if households need deeper levels of service. Due to the limited amount of permanent housing resources available, the CoC reserves placements into permanent housing subsidies for families who are the most vulnerable and who are at the greatest risk of returning to shelter without long-term supports. Between the 2019 and 2020 PIT counts, nearly 800 families exited the emergency shelter system for permanent destinations, including FRSP. The CoC’s HMIS data continues to show that 85 percent of rapid rehousing recipients retain their housing for at least two years after the subsidy ends, which is similar to rates of housing retention among families receiving permanent subsidies.

In addition to recent improvements in family shelter services and the availability of permanent housing resources after shelter, DHS’s HPP has been a key resource in the District’s work to end homelessness among families. However, there remains a gap between what families exiting the homeless services system earn on average and the cost of rent in the District. To address this and to bolster housing retention after exiting shelter, DHS is currently working to better integrate homeless services with the TANF Employment Program by helping families connect to, or reconnect to, a TANF employment vendor. Additionally, DHS’s Economic Security Administration (ESA) has on-site office hours at the newly opened STFH programs to connect families to their TANF vendors and provide other connections to public benefits.

Unaccompanied Individuals

Despite the number of families experiencing homelessness has decreased over the past five years, the count of unaccompanied individuals is increasing, albeit to a lesser extent in 2020 than in recent PIT counts. Between the 2019 and 2020 PIT counts, the number of unaccompanied individuals increased by 1.9 percent, which followed increases of 2.8 percent from 2018 to 2019 and 5.2 percent from 2017 to 2018.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT, UNACCOMPANIED INDIVIDUALS			
	2019	2020	% Change 2019-2020
Emergency Shelter	2,520	2,580	2.4%
Transitional Housing	747	714	-4.4%
Unsheltered	608	653	7.4%
<i>Total</i>	3,875	3,947	1.9%

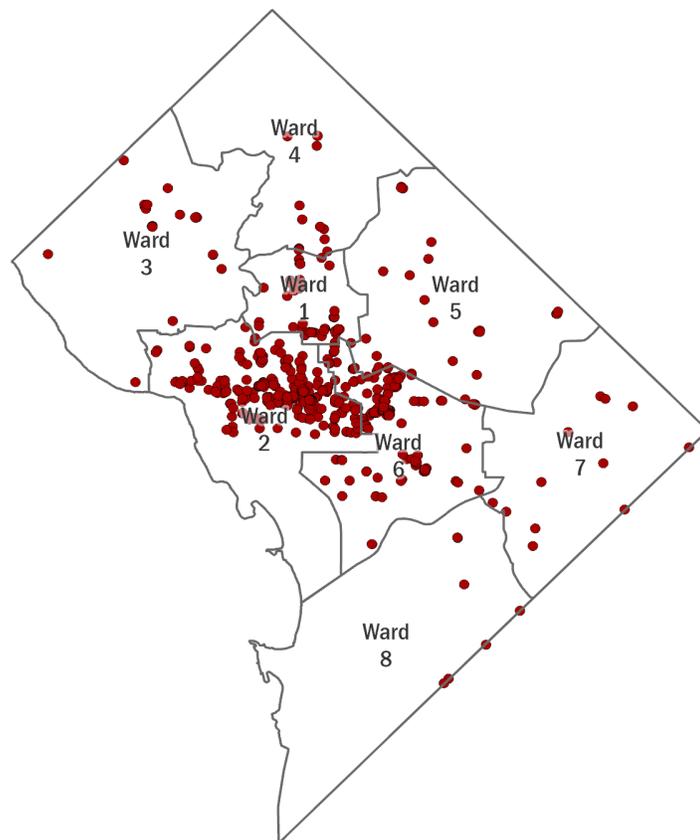
Unlike the family system, there are several front doors to the homeless services system for individuals, which requires more strategic engagement, and this is particularly the case for unsheltered individuals. At PIT 2020, homelessness among unsheltered individuals increased by 7.4 percent, even as homelessness among all unaccompanied

individuals rose only by 1.9 percent.

Mapping PIT engagements shows that most unsheltered persons were clustered in the Downtown area, with smaller concentrations in the rest of the District. Having a better understanding of where people are staying when experiencing unsheltered homelessness allows for a more strategic approach within homeless services and the new housing-focused Comprehensive Street Outreach Network. The Network, launched by DHS in consultation with DBH and CoC providers, increases resources, enhances coordination, and provides more real-time support to outreach providers to better support individuals who are staying on the streets. The Network is designed to provide a coordinated entry point to services, including access to housing supports.

As we continue to map engagements over time, we can begin to better understand how people move throughout the system and more effectively meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Map: Unsheltered Engagements at PIT (January 22, 2020)



In 2019, the CoC averaged 88 monthly exits of unaccompanied individuals from the homeless services system into a permanent housing resource, for a total of more than 1,000 for the calendar year. The CAHP system matches individuals to rapid rehousing, targeted affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing based on their service

needs, and the CoC's HMIS data shows housing retention rates among individuals placed in these programs – 85 percent for time limited subsidy recipients and 94 percent for permanent subsidy recipients – is higher than those seen in the family subsystem.⁸ Despite high rates of placements and housing retention, the CoC saw the number of individuals newly enter the system increase by 25 percent between 2016 and 2019. As part of its continued effort, DHS has increased investment in PSH resources for FY20, ramping up CAHP housing matches to the PSH system since August 2019, and has seen an increase in monthly housing placements in 2020.

To aid in the CoC's understanding and strategic planning efforts for this population, TCP conducted an analysis in 2018 of the inflow and system use patterns of the unaccompanied men and women counted during that year's PIT count.⁹ The inflow analysis brought a greater understanding of the different ways individuals are using the homeless services system; however, it raised questions on causation and led to taking a deeper look at prevention strategies further upstream. As a follow-up to the 2018 inflow analysis, TCP and DHS conducted a second, more qualitative analysis alongside PIT 2019, called "Point-in-Time Plus."¹⁰

The 2019 PIT Plus survey was conducted with a statistically significant sample of unaccompanied individuals who were either accessing shelter or transitional housing, a day or meal program, or who were engaged by outreach teams. The survey helped to expand the CoC's knowledge about the challenges faced by unaccompanied individuals and uncovered opportunities to address these issues. The main takeaways include:

- A lack of employment and income were the largest drivers of homelessness cited by respondents. When asked what might have helped prevent their experience of homelessness, employment exceeded rent or mortgage assistance by 20 percentage points.
- Thirty-three (33) percent of respondents said they were living in Maryland, Virginia, or another state prior to using homeless services in the District. This has important implications for how to work with CoCs in Metropolitan Washington to connect unaccompanied individuals to shelter and eventually sustainable housing resources.
- Many individuals have support or social networks that might prove useful for prevention and diversion efforts. Most people surveyed reported that they had networks that included friends, people who makes them feel comfortable or safe, and someone who will help them out when they are in need. For those with adult children, the overwhelming majority are still in communication with them and over 30 percent of respondents reported staying with friends or family when shelter is not an option. Connection to these networks may help to build on last year's launch of Project Reconnect, a diversion and rapid exit program for single adults.

⁸ Per the System Performance Metrics as reported to HUD annually via the Homelessness Data Exchange.

⁹ Results of the Inflow Analysis can be found at: www.community-partnership.org/facts-and-figures

¹⁰ Results of the Point-In-Time Plus Survey can be found at: www.community-partnership.org/facts-and-figures

- Two questions revealed opportunities to change client perceptions about shelter conditions to increase the use of available shelter and about benefits eligibility to increase applications to benefits.
- Most respondents were previously incarcerated and most experienced homelessness immediately after incarceration. Additionally, 30 percent of respondents had previously been in a residential treatment facility and almost 60 percent exited that treatment into homelessness.

These and other lessons learned were documented in a progress report from the ICH, entitled “[Homeward DC: Looking Back to Move Forward - Progress and Lessons Learned During the First Four Years of Implementation.](#)” *Homeward DC 2.0*, the second iteration of the District’s strategic plan, builds on these lessons and outlines dozens of new strategies. The plan was approved by the ICH in March 2020 and is expected to be released later this year.

2020 Point-in-Time Results: Characteristics and Service Needs

Surveys conducted with adults – both unaccompanied and in families – during PIT update and inform the CoC on the demographic make-up, service needs, barriers to housing, and economic indicators of persons experiencing homelessness. Publicly funded programs in the District collect the information included the survey in HMIS. Although the same information is collected throughout the year by these providers, TCP queries the HMIS for information on persons served on the PIT date to inform the count. Providers that do not use the HMIS (domestic violence programs, privately funded providers, etc.) send the survey information from their program participants to TCP for the purposes of having similar information on the entire population experiencing homelessness.¹¹

The following tables detail the rates at which adults reported living with various disabling conditions or their affiliation with various subpopulation categories. The CoC uses this information to develop programming that addresses the disability or subpopulation specific-related service needs seen among the persons counted at PIT.

REPORTED DISABLING CONDITIONS AMONG ALL ADULTS						
	Unaccompanied Adults 2020	Unaccompanied Adults 2019	Adults in Families 2020	Adults in Families 2019	Total (All Adults) 2020	Total (All Adults) 2019
Substance Abuse (SA) History (Only)	9.3%	9.4%	0.6%	1.1%	7.5%	7.7%
History of Mental Illness (MI) (Only)	22.5%	18.3%	11.5%	5.8%	20.3%	18.0%
<u>Dual Diagnosis (SA & MI) (Only)</u>	13.3%	12.5%	1.4%	1.9%	10.9%	10.2%
Chronic Health Problem	22.4%	21.1%	1.9%	6.5%	18.2%	17.9%

¹¹ Information from domestic violence programs does not include the program participants’ names or program locations.

Developmental Disability	5.6%	4.0%	1.0%	2.3%	4.6%	3.6%
Living with HIV/AIDS	2.3%	3.0%	0.1%	1.1%	1.9%	2.6%
Physical Disability	20.3%	16.3%	3.1%	5.8%	16.8%	14.1%

The characteristics and service needs reported during PIT are typically consistent from year to year, with disabling conditions and subpopulation affiliation being more prevalent (in most categories) among unaccompanied persons as compared to adults in families. The rates at which unaccompanied individuals and adults in families report different life experiences show some notable differences. In particular, the rate of past experiences of domestic violence is higher for adults in families than for unaccompanied individuals. Conversely, the rate of having resided at some point in an institutional setting, which includes incarceration as well as inpatient hospital stays, is higher for individuals than for adults in families.

REPORTED SUBPOPULATION AFFILIATION AMONG ALL ADULTS						
	Unaccompanied Adults 2020	Unaccompanied Adults 2019	Adults in Families 2020	Adults in Families 2019	Total (All Adults) 2020	Total (All Adults) 2019
Domestic Violence	19.8%	20.7%	30.3%	32.3%	21.9%	23.2%
Limited or No English Proficiency	5.1%	4.0%	4.0%	5.7%	4.9%	4.4%
U.S. Military Veteran	7.5%	7.6%	1.5%	0.5%	6.2%	6.0%
Formerly in Foster Care	9.9%	9.4%	11.1%	9.7%	10.2%	9.5%
Resided in an Institutional Setting	47.1%	41.0%	14.0%	10.6%	40.3%	34.5%

While PIT data for unaccompanied persons is usually reported out on that group as a whole, TCP conducts a gender-based analysis of the information collected to look at the differences between unaccompanied men and women¹² (as shown in the tables below). Since women make up only 27.9 percent of the total population of unaccompanied persons, this unequal distribution can have the effect of statistically “diluting” women’s characteristics and experiences when considering the unaccompanied population at large. One example of where this bears out is the differing rates of mental health histories among women as compared to men.

REPORTED DISABLING CONDITIONS AMONG UNACCOMPANIED ADULTS						
	Unaccompanied Men 2020	Unaccompanied Men 2019	Unaccompanied Women 2020	Unaccompanied Women 2019	Total (All Adults) 2020	Total (All Adults) 2019
Substance Abuse (SA) History (Only)	11.1%	11.6%	4.6%	3.5%	9.3%	9.4%

¹² “Unaccompanied Men” and “Unaccompanied Women” comprises all male- or female-*identifying* single adults, this includes all transgender single adults in the gender category of their identification. Single adults whose gender identity is not binary (i.e. male or female) are included in the totals for all single adults.

History of Mental Illness (MI) (Only)	19.9%	15.5%	29.2%	26.0%	22.5%	18.3%
Dual Diagnosis (SA & MI) (Only)	13.1%	12.6%	13.9%	11.9%	13.3%	12.5%
Chronic Health Problem	21.5%	18.7%	24.7%	27.7%	22.4%	21.1%
Developmental Disability	5.7%	4.2%	5.1%	3.6%	5.6%	4.0%
Living with HIV/AIDS	2.5%	2.7%	2.0%	3.6%	2.3%	3.0%
Physical Disability	21.2%	16.0%	17.9%	17.3%	20.3%	16.3%

Like the information collected regarding persons living with disabling conditions, there are differences between unaccompanied men and women’s characteristics and experiences, particularly for reported histories of domestic violence as highlighted in the following table.

REPORTED SUBPOPULATION AFFILIATION AMONG UNACCOMPANIED ADULTS						
	Unaccompanied Men 2020	Unaccompanied Men 2019	Unaccompanied Women 2020	Unaccompanied Women 2019	Total (All Adults) 2020	Total (All Adults) 2019
Domestic Violence	10.5%	13.0%	43.4%	42.20%	19.8%	20.7%
Limited or No English Proficiency	5.5%	4.4%	4.2%	3.20%	5.1%	4.0%
U.S. Military Veteran	9.2%	9.0%	2.8%	3.50%	7.5%	7.6%
Formerly in Foster Care	8.9%	7.9%	12.3%	13.90%	9.9%	9.4%
Resided in an Institutional Setting	51.9%	43.7%	34.5%	33.60%	47.1%	41.0%

Income & Employment

The tables below provide income information for unaccompanied individuals and adults in families, including whether they receive income of any kind, whether they are employed, and the primary income source for those with some type of income. While information collected at PIT continues to show that most persons experiencing homelessness have some type of income, only 16.7 percent of individuals and 25.5 percent of adults in families report having employment as an income source.

The differential between wages relative to rental costs has not changed significantly for low-income households over the last several years, remaining a primary driver of homelessness in the community as it leads to both system inflow and makes system exits difficult for those who do not qualify for permanent financial supports. Any shock to the household (job loss, a health crisis, death, divorce, etc.) can lead to housing instability or housing loss. This instability is seen most keenly in the system serving unaccompanied individuals, where there is relatively less assistance available in terms of housing resources and income and food assistance.

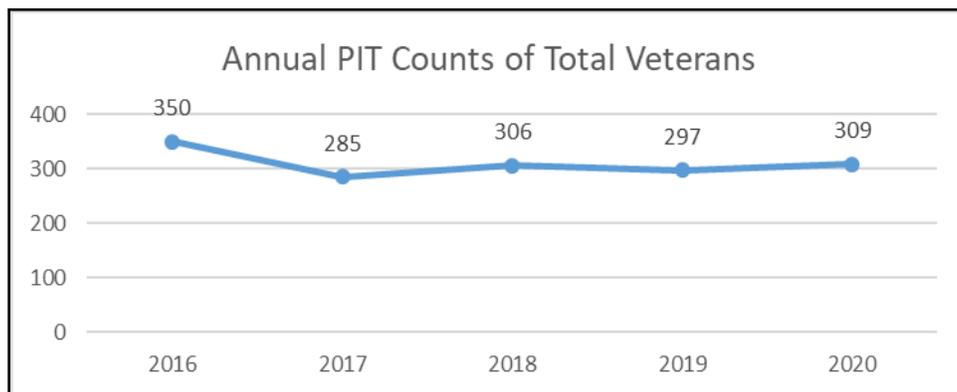
INCOME & EMPLOYMENT			
	Unaccompanied Persons 2020	Adults in Families 2020	Total (All Adults) 2020
Receives Income	55.1%	75.9%	59.3%
Employed	16.7%	25.5%	18.6%
PRIMARY INCOME SOURCE			
From Employment	30.5%	31.2%	30.4%
Social Security / Retirement	4.6%	0.3%	3.4%
SSI / SSDI / Disability	46.4%	13.8%	37.9%
TANF / Public Assistance	11.1%	51.0%	21.5%
Other Income Source	7.4%	3.8%	6.4%

2020 PIT Results: Subpopulation Highlights

Veterans

The District's count of veterans experiencing homelessness has increased by four (4.0) percent between the 2019 and 2020 PIT counts. Of the 309 veterans counted, 294 were unaccompanied individuals and 15 were persons in families. Though an increase overall, the number remains relatively flat with 12 more veterans counted year-to-year. Despite this year's increase, the number of veterans is still down from 2016 by 11.7 percent.

Through the efforts of the Veteran Leadership Team and CAHP workgroups, the CoC has had success in connecting known veterans to housing resources. Between the 2019 and 2020 PIT counts, the Veterans CAHP team housed an average of 29 veterans per month, totaling to more than the number of veterans counted at PIT 2019 PIT. Moreover, the Veteran Leadership Team continues to improve coordination among CAHP systems within the region. Since the summer of 2019, the CoC has helped more than 70 veterans reconnect with CAHP systems in surrounding jurisdictions based on history of housing and homelessness as well as client preferences. Additionally, a new veteran-specific permanent supportive housing program on the Walter Reed campus opened in 2019. Sixty-one (61) veterans experiencing homelessness obtained housing at the site with another 14 more placements to be made in 2020.



Despite ongoing work to end of veterans' homelessness, this year's increase is likely a result of overall increases in unaccompanied homelessness over the last few years, as the vast majority (95.1 percent) of veterans experiencing homelessness in the District are unaccompanied individuals.

Youth

The District continues progress towards the goals outlined in *Solid Foundations DC*,¹³ the CoC's strategic plan to prevent and end youth homelessness and has made significant investments over the past year to serve the unique needs of youth experiencing homelessness. Now, in the middle of its third year of implementation and with new resources provided by the District, efforts include further refining the CAHP system for young people and expanding shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing options available to youth experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness. The District's Youth Action Board, which was created in 2018 to ensure youth who have experienced homelessness have a role in planning services for this population, has served in a leadership role on several efforts over the past year.

The counts of Transition Age Youth (TAYs, young people aged 18 to 24 years) remained relatively flat between the 2019 and 2020 PIT counts, with 485 TAYs counted in 2020, a decrease of four (4) from the previous year. However, there was a difference in the share of TAYs in families versus unaccompanied households between years. TAYs in families increased by 4.8 percent, whereas unaccompanied TAYs decreased by 5.8 percent.

In 2019, the District added new transitional housing beds and extended transitional housing (ETH) beds for youth with the highest needs. ETH allows for up to six years of housing placement with intensive supportive services, progressive engagement, and a housing first approach.

Through the collaborative effort of the ICH, DHS, TCP, the Youth Action Board, and other youth-serving partners, the District was awarded a \$4.28 million grant under the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) from HUD. Being a demonstration site has given the District an opportunity to conduct a thorough mid-plan review to examine where efforts under *Solid Foundations* are working and where there are gaps to fill. New resources from this award will be online in 2020.

Lastly, at the beginning of 2020, the District launched Zoe's Doors – a 24-hour drop-in center for youth ages 24 and under. Zoe's Doors provides a safe, welcoming space for young people in the District, offering meals, laundry facilities, shower facilities, healthcare services, life skills workshops, connection to education and employment resources, and social supports.

Chronic Homelessness

Chronic homelessness is defined by HUD as persons who have experienced

¹³ ich.dc.gov/page/solid-foundations-dc-comprehensive-plan-end-youth-homelessness

homelessness for a year or more, or who have had four or more episodes of homelessness in three years (which total at least 12 months), and who are living with a disabling condition. Families are considered to be experiencing chronic homelessness if at least one adult person in the household meets the definition of chronic homelessness.

The success on the family side of the homeless services system is highlighted in the significant reduction of families experiencing chronic homelessness in 2020 versus 2019. The rapid exit to housing provided by FRSP has helped keep families from timing into chronicity while in shelter, and has enabled those who need a longer term housing support transition from rapid rehousing to permanent supportive housing or targeted affordable housing after shelter exit.

Relatedly, the small reduction in chronic homelessness among unaccompanied individuals points to the challenges the CoC experiences as many begin to meet the definition of chronic homelessness while waiting for a housing resource to enable their shelter exit. Despite CAHP’s success in facilitating exits throughout the year, the existing resources for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are generally at capacity and have low rates of turnover. While the CoC lauds its permanent supportive housing providers for helping participants maintain their housing, without additional resources the CoC’s ability to make new placements will decrease over time. To that end the CoC continually looks to expand its permanent housing portfolio using all available resources.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG ADULTS				
	Unaccompanied Adults 2020	Unaccompanied Adults 2019	Adults in Families 2020	Adults in Families 2019
Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	41.5%	44.1%	6.1%	19.6%

Permanent Housing Solutions

As a part of the PIT count, TCP also counts formerly homeless persons – unaccompanied individuals and persons in families whose experience of homelessness ended upon entry into a dedicated housing resource. Most of these households would still be in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or living in unsheltered situations if not for these resources. At PIT 2020, 4,727 formerly homeless unaccompanied individuals and 4,074 formerly homeless families were in permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, or other permanent housing programs (such as targeted affordable housing).

	Number of Unaccompanied Individuals	Number of Family Households
Other Permanent Housing (e.g., TAH)	773	650
Permanent Supportive Housing	3,724	1,588
Rapid Rehousing	230	1,836

<i>Total</i>	4,727	4,074
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Funding for these units comes primarily from the District, but also from HUD, the VA, and private sources. The resources have increased the number of permanent housing solutions the CoC is able to offer to persons experiencing homelessness, and the array of services provided at each have led to better matching of individuals and families to programs that meet their needs. While there is still work to do, the CoC recognizes resources like these are the key to achieving *Homeward DC*'s overarching goal of quickly connecting residents to permanent housing with the supports needed to maintain that housing over time.

Methodology notes

As in previous years, TCP coordinated with both District and Federal agencies, the ICH, and the CoC's public and privately-funded outreach providers, meal programs and drop-in centers, winter and emergency shelters, and transitional housing programs to complete the PIT count. The District's permanent housing programs also provide information for determining the number of formerly homeless persons. To determine the unsheltered portion of the PIT count, TCP again engaged roughly 300 trained volunteers and professional outreach workers to canvass the District between 10:00 PM and 2:00 AM.

For the 2020 PIT count, nearly 90 percent of the PIT information collected at shelter and supportive housing programs comes from HMIS, with service providers that use HMIS submitting rosters and demographic information of persons served on the night of the count. Providers that do not use the HMIS instead conduct PIT surveys with their program participants and submit these to TCP; TCP in turn aggregates this with HMIS information to produce the final, District-wide count and survey results.

In addition to HMIS, TCP used Survey123 for ArcGIS to complete the PIT Survey. Survey123 for ArcGIS is a phone application that allows volunteers to collect survey data and location data quickly and accurately. This smart survey uses skip logic, prompts volunteers with hints on how to best ask a question, and requires certain questions be answered so the data collected is accurate and high quality. A unique username and password were required to access the survey, which ensured that the data was submitted securely. Surveys were automatically removed from the individual device upon successful upload.

This methodology ensures the PIT count is thorough, unduplicated, and accurately reflects the size and scope of the population of persons experiencing homelessness on a given night.