

**HOMELESS SERVICES NETWORK
2008 Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless in
Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties and the City of Orlando**

The Homeless Services Network is mandated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to complete an annual count of the homeless in its Continuum of Care. HSN completed a Point-in-Time Count in January 2008 in partnership with the University of Central Florida of the area's homeless. The count included the sheltered homeless, as well as a segment of the unsheltered homeless living in camps or on the streets who receive services at soup kitchens, drop-in shelters and food pantries in Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties and the City of Orlando.

Persons being discharged from a hospital or correctional facility without access to shelter were not included because of barriers to obtaining accurate data. Unsheltered homeless living in abandoned buildings, on the streets or in approximately 140 of the 180 camps in Orange Seminole and Osceola Counties were not counted individually due to a lack of financial and staffing resources.

Not included in the count were 2,700 homeless children and their parents (who are classified as homeless by the US Department of Education, but do not meet HUD's definition of homelessness).

Based on the limited point-in-time count that was conducted, the results of the 2008 Point in Time count produced the following data about the homeless on any given day in Central Florida.

POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) ONE DAY COUNT – January 2008				
<i>Homeless Population</i>	<i>Sheltered homeless</i>		<i>Unsheltered homeless</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
	<i>Emergency</i>	<i>Transitional</i>		
Number of persons in households with children	589	721	627	1,937
Number of persons in households without children	448	608	741	1,797
Total	1,037	1,329	1,368	3,734

Using HUD-recommended statistical analyses based on the PIT data collected, HSN estimates that 8,466 persons experienced homelessness in 2007 in Central Florida. County analyses are shown below:

DISTRIBUTION OF HOMELESS POPULATION BY COUNTY, BASED ON JANUARY 2007 POINT IN TIME COUNT			
<i>County</i>	<i>Sheltered homeless</i>	<i>Unsheltered homeless</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Orange	3,781	1,129	4,910
Osceola	455	1,238	1,693
Seminole	928	935	1,863
TOTAL	5,164	3,302	8,466

HOMELESS POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Based on HSN surveys of the homeless population and results of the 2008 Point-in-Time County the following data emerges:

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- 49% of the homeless (4,148) are white;
- 47% (3,979) are African-American;
- 13% (1,101) consider themselves Hispanic or Latino.
- 20% of the homeless population (1,693) are veterans.

DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS:

- 35% (2,963) of the homeless population has been homeless more than one year
- 32% (2,709) of the homeless reported being homeless for three months to one year
- 19% (1,609) of the homeless reported that they had been homeless for one to three months.
- 14% (1,185) reported that they had been homeless from one week to one month.

EDUCATION LEVEL:

25% (2,117) dropped out of high school or do not have a diploma
21% (1,778) have a high school diploma
32% (2,709) have post-secondary school education
22% (1,862) did not respond or have a grade school education

TRENDS:

- The fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families with children.
- Children make up 24% of the homeless population locally when excluding children whom HUD does not classify as homeless. If these 2,700 children were included, then 32% of the homeless are children.
- 45% of the homeless are employed every day.

THE INVISIBLE HOMELESS – Project Homeless Connect Data Analysis

Project Homeless Connect (PHC) is a one day event to provide housing, services, and hospitality in a convenient one-stop model directly to men, women and families experiencing homelessness. The target population was chronically homeless individuals and families living in camps, on the streets, in vehicles and in abandoned buildings. It is this segment of the population – the invisible homeless -- that Project Homeless Connect seeks to serve by offering practical, compassionate services that encourage participants to re-engage with agencies that can help them back to shelter, self-sufficiency and a productive life.

HSN sponsored and funded four PHC events from mid-June 2007 through July 19, 2007 in Osceola, Seminole, East Orange and West Orange Counties. More than 30 social service providers, churches, hospitals, EMT, and police from all three counties as well as the DMV, Social Security and the Veterans Administration participated. A local PHC Team assisted in planning and implementing each event. From 80 to 120 volunteers participated at each event. HSN staff managed the client intake and participation process, and trained the volunteers for those activities. HSN recruited the regional service providers for all locations.

Services provided included medical care (emergency wound care, medical screening, diagnostic testing, physicals and referrals), showers, meals, shelter, employment opportunities, mental health services and counseling, substance abuse services and detox beds, DMV access to obtain driver's licenses, Vital Statistics to obtain birth certificates, Social Security to file disability claims, benefits claims and replace lost cards, TB testing and HIV testing. Services were provided by agencies serving the entire region (the Coalition for the Homeless, Wayne Densch and Covenant House for example), and localized agencies (Osceola Christian Ministry, Osceola Vital Statistics, Seminole United Help Now) depending on the individual community's needs.

PHC HOMELESS POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS:

DISTRIBUTION OF 2007 PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT (PHC) CLIENTS SERVED BY COUNTY				
<i>County</i>	<i>Homeless*</i>	<i>Not Homeless*</i>	<i>No answer</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
East Orange	48	18	4	70
West Orange	207	26	1	234
Osceola (Kissimmee)	185	62	4	251
Seminole (Sanford)	176	79	11	266
TOTAL	616	185	20	821

* self-reported by clients which underreports homelessness because clients believe that living in an emergency shelter, or temporarily with a family member means they are "not homeless."

81% (664 persons) were not in the HMIS Servicepoint database, which means they had not previously received food, shelter, or services from any HSN agency within the last five year.

- 96% of Seminole County participants were not in HMIS Servicepoint
- 83% of East Orange County participants were not in HMIS Servicepoint
- 77% of Osceola County participants were not in HMIS Servicepoint
- 68% of West Orange County participants were not in HMIS Servicepoint

DURATION OF HOMELESSNESS:

- 45% (278) of the homeless population has been homeless more than one year
- 18% (111) of the homeless reported being homeless for three months to one year
- 15% (90) of the homeless reported that they had been homeless for one to three months.
- 13% (82) reported that they had been homeless from one week to one month.

HOMELESS FREQUENCY:

43% (267) reported this was their first time being homeless
34% (212) reported they had been homeless 2-3 times in the past
10% (64) reported they had been homeless four or more times in the past
11% (68) were unable to say how long they had been homeless

CURRENT LIVING SITUATION:

44% (271) lived in a place not meant for habitation (van, car, camp, abandoned building)
21% (129) were living temporarily with family/friends
9% (55) were living in an emergency shelter
6% (37) were living in a transitional housing shelter
13% (80) other (hotel/motel with emergency voucher, jail, hospital, institution)