

Greater Lansing Area 2016 Annual Homeless Report



Virg Bernero, Mayor



*The state of homelessness in
Ingham County*



Our mission *is to serve the most vulnerable in our community with dignity and respect, valuing self-determination and choice while prioritizing services for those most in need.*

Our Vision

We are working to be a community where homelessness no longer exists and those who are facing a housing crisis get the help they need before they lose their housing. The needs of people experiencing a housing crisis in our community are being addressed by the collaborative efforts of the **City of Lansing Human Relations and Community Services Department, the Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network (GLHRN) member agencies, and our community partners.** We believe we can create a system that addresses the many causes of homelessness – unemployment, poverty, lack of affordable housing, high health care costs, mental and physical disabilities, addiction, domestic violence – and works to mitigate the compounding hardships that homelessness brings to households in crisis.

The City of Lansing Human Relations and Community Services Department (HRCS) manages the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Ingham County that provides data on who is homeless in our community, their needs, and the assistance they receive. HRCS acts as fiduciary, assists with community planning, and is the Collaborative Applicant for the Ingham County Continuum of Care for homeless assistance funds in our community.

The Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network (GLHRN), as the Continuum of Care (CoC) for Ingham County, is a group of more than 40 member and partner agencies devoted to ending homelessness in the Lansing/East Lansing/Ingham County area.

This report is a profile of the state of homelessness in our community – who has been homeless, the assistance that was provided, and how the assistance addressed their needs.

Homelessness in Ingham County

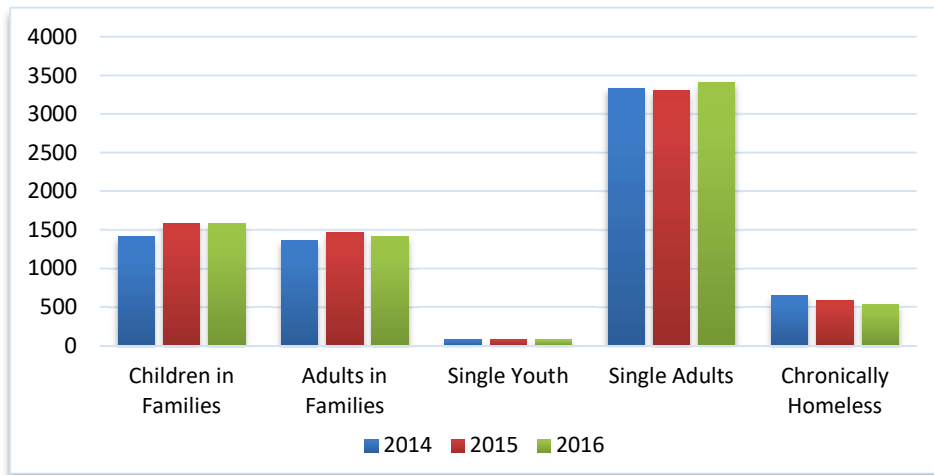
5,136 people experienced homelessness in 2016 in Ingham County, a 3.4% increase from 2015. The data shows people of ALL ages, races, and family backgrounds face housing crises and seek help from CoC agencies. In fact, over 50% of people who experienced homelessness were families with children or unaccompanied minors.

One factor for the increase was the inclusion of the City Rescue Mission of Lansing's men's shelter to the data set. As a result, the 2016 data is the most comprehensive, since this information has been collected.

A Day in Ingham County

In January of each year, Greater Lansing area agencies come together for a "Point in Time", or PIT, count. The PIT counts people staying in local shelters or on the streets on a single night. **Although more than 5,000 people were assisted throughout the year, about 471 were homeless on any given night.** This included 49 families, 297 individuals, and 6 youth. The vast majority of people counted were indoors at a shelter, a warming center or in transitional housing. However, each year outreach efforts find people staying outdoors or in public places, despite the community efforts to accommodate everyone who needs a warm, safe place to spend the night.

People Experiencing Homelessness or at Imminent Risk by Year 2014 - 2016



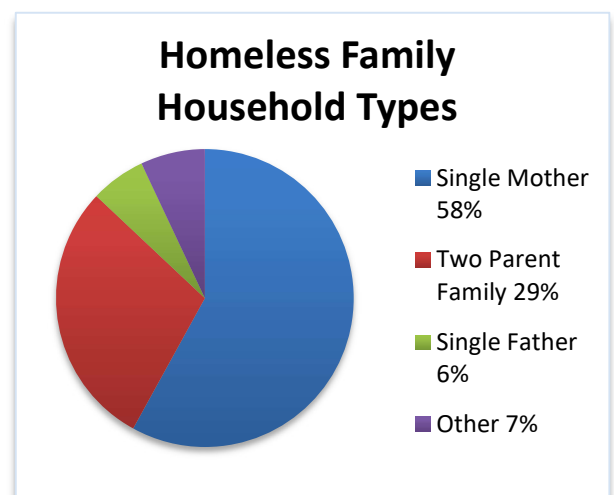
	Children in Families	Adults in Families	Single Youth	Single Adults	Chronically Homeless	Total
2014	1,410	1,355	72	3,334	640	5,064
2015	1,584	1,462	76	3,305	581	4,964
2016	1,577	1,413	81	3,410	535	5,136

* A person may be counted in more than one grouping during a year so the sum of the categories is greater than the total unduplicated count of persons served.

- African Americans comprised 52% of the people experiencing homelessness in 2016, while whites were 45% and other races 3%. African Americans represent just 14% of Ingham County's total population.
- Children (under 18) comprised 27% of the homeless population.
- Housing instability disproportionately impacts households where a member has a disabling condition. Almost half, 45%, of homeless single adults and 26% of adults in families had a disabling condition in 2016.

Families Facing Homelessness

- **69 fewer families experienced homelessness compared to 2015.** However, households with adults and minor children still made up nearly half of all people (49%) who sought homeless assistance or prevention services.
- 75% of the families were literally homeless and 25% were "at imminent risk" of homelessness.
- 58% of families were headed by a single, female parent. On average, a homeless family is a single mother in her early 30's with two children. She has a high school diploma, with some college, but is unemployed or under-employed.
- 20% were young parents between 18-24 years old and 58% were younger than 35.
- 17% reported a history of domestic violence.



Single Adults

- Single adults constituted 56% of people seeking assistance in our agencies last year.
- 91% were literally homeless and 9% were “at imminent risk” of becoming homeless.
- Individuals are more likely to have a disability such as a mental illness or physical impairment (45%), and are predominantly male (65%).
- 1 in 7 is a US Military veteran.
- More than half of individuals (54%) had a history of prior homelessness.
- 35% of homeless single adults have a high school diploma and another 35% have had at least some college or technical schooling.
- 22% of individuals are seniors. **The number of seniors experiencing homelessness increased by 17% over last year.** One in four males were age 55 or older and the ratio for females was one in six.

Chronically Homeless

There was an 8% decrease in 2016 in the number of people considered to be chronically homeless. Being chronically homeless is defined as being diagnosed with a severe, permanent disability and having been homeless 4 or more times in the past 3 years, or have been homeless continuously for a year. 535 people met these criteria. These are the people at the greatest risk in our community and are prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs. Permanent housing for the most vulnerable in the community is more a cost-effective solution to homelessness than continued dependence emergency services, such as shelters and ER’s, and leads to better outcomes and quality of life for the participants. New grant funding led to 36 additional PSH units in Ingham County in 2016.

Homeless Veterans

The CoC and local Veterans Affairs office, along with community partners, have a collaborative workgroup to locate and house every homeless veteran in Ingham County. The group has witnessed much success over the past year, yet we continue to see new veterans coming into Ingham County to utilize veteran-specific transitional housing opportunities unique to the region.

There were 289 homeless veterans in Ingham County, an 8% increase from 2015 (268). The increase is not surprising. In pursuing an end to veteran homelessness, the CoC stepped-up efforts to seek out and engage all veterans experiencing homelessness and offer housing resources.

- 95% of homeless veterans were male and over half (54%) had a disability that impedes their ability to maintain stable housing.
- 91% of homeless vets were individual adults and nearly half (49%) were age 55 or older.
- 10% sought prevention assistance and 90% were literally homeless. Veterans are more frequently considered to be chronically homeless than non-veterans.
- 99 veterans were housed in 2016, many with veteran-specific housing resources.

Where Our Clients Come From

Although the majority of people experiencing homelessness appear to originate from Lansing, homelessness affects households throughout Ingham County.

- In some cases, the zip code of a Lansing-based shelter gets used as a person’s “last residence”, which may overstate the number of Lansing residents who became homeless.
- People often move to escape abuse or other negative situations. This has led to 405 clients who came from outside Ingham County, a 4% increase, and 137 more from outside Michigan.

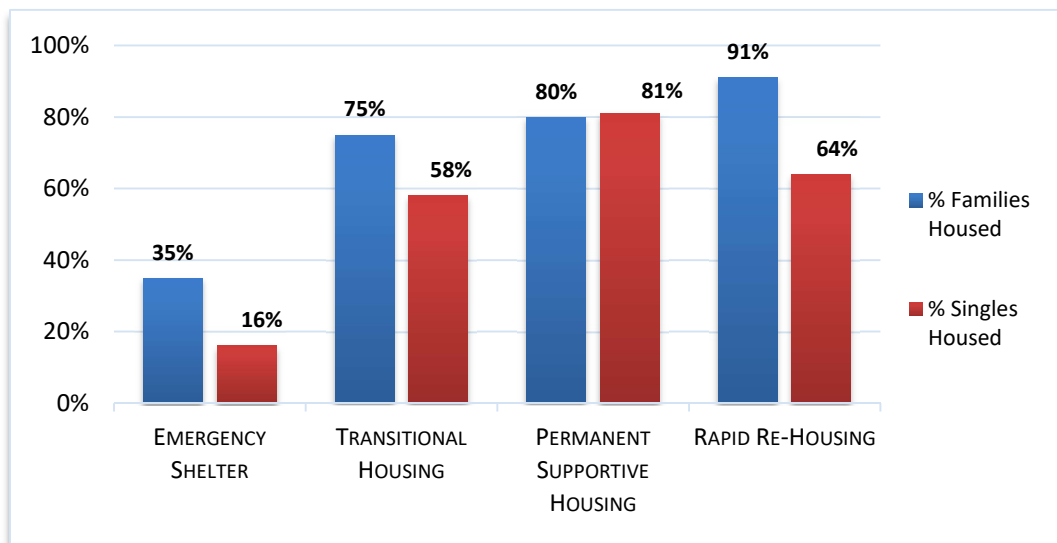
2016 Achievements

The HRCS Department, on behalf of the GLHRN, monitors progress of CoC member agencies' programs. It is an outcome-based endeavor that reviews agencies' performance based on established targets. The agencies are committed to providing effective, high quality assistance to those in need.

Client Engagement and Stable Housing

Safe and decent housing is a basic need and is the top priority of our housing assistance programs. Knowing where a client goes after they leave a program is crucial in evaluating effectiveness. This is known as the "engagement rate". The engagement rate has held steady for the past few years at 77%. For longer-term, more intensive programs the rate was 96% while shelters and street outreach had a 71% rate. The target rate, excluding shelters, is 80%. Shelters often have a much lower engagement rate due to the crisis-oriented nature of their services.

A related measure is the permanent housing rate that looks at how many clients leave a program for "permanent" housing. Subsidized and unsubsidized rentals and moving in with family or friends are the most common housing destinations.



- There is a higher rate of exits to housing for families, particularly from emergency shelters, partly due to more available Rapid Re-Housing programs and mainstream resources for families with children.
- One in four people who left shelters go to stay with family or friends temporarily. People often leave shelters for a temporary situation which leads to permanent housing without additional assistance. This accounts for part of the low housing rates from shelters.
- 8.5% of people staying in a shelter leave for permanent housing within 30 days or less.
 - Most people who experience homelessness only interact with an emergency shelter, the CoC's coordinated referral system, and mainstream resources through MDHHS.
 - The vast majority of transitional housing programs only serve special populations, such as veterans, youth, and those recovering from substance use.

Rapid Re-Housing

- More than 200 households were assisted by Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) programs that provide short- and medium-term rental assistance and case management intended to move individuals and families back into affordable housing as quickly as possible. Families are primarily targeted for this type of

assistance because of the limited shelter space for families.

- RRH programs can help cover costs of application fees, deposits, rent and utilities, as needed, while the participants work to regain financial stability to maintain housing.
- In some cases, people just need a little help to pay a deposit or cover other up-front costs. RRH assistance can help make that manageable and reduce the length of time a family is homeless.
- 91% of RRH clients are in permanent housing when the program assistance ends. This is a 7% improvement over last year.

Recidivism Rate – Returns to Homelessness

- Recidivism is when a household moves into permanent housing, but then has another housing crisis causing them to become homeless again. This is used for identifying which interventions are making a lasting impact at ending homelessness and to identify which cases may need additional support.
- Recidivism rates vary considerably for the different program types with returns to homelessness being the highest for people who stay at a shelter and do not also receive financial assistance. Longer-term transitional housing has the lowest recidivism rate, which is very promising considering that TH is primarily for veterans, youth, and people in recovery. PSH and RRH fall in the middle. This is partially because PSH units are prioritized for people who are chronically homeless and have the highest barriers to maintaining housing. For RRH, many people are living paycheck-to-paycheck and many events may lead to a housing crisis. It is important for assistance to be flexible to meet the unique needs of each household on a case-by-case basis.

Income and Employment

- Helping clients obtain stable employment is critical to reducing homelessness. It is essential clients are assisted in locating jobs, and securing cash and non-cash benefits. This has been a positive trend for local agencies in the past few years. In 2016, 42% of adults who left a homeless assistance program, including shelters, had cash income and 60% were receiving at least one form of cash or non-cash benefit.
- Nearly half (48%) of the people discharged with cash income were employed. SSI and SSDI are the next most common sources of income, as a result of the high incidence of disability among people experiencing homelessness.
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is the most common non-cash benefit.
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
 - PSH targets people with long-term disabilities and therefore a large number of participants had SSI/SSDI income (50%). Others may have pending cases or state disability benefits.
 - 24% had earned income or are employed.
 - 92% maintained or increased their income while in a PSH program.
- Transitional Housing & Rapid-Re-Housing
 - Many adults (62%) leave programs with cash income that will permit them to maintain housing after the program assistance ends.
 - 77% had at least one source of cash or non-cash income at exit.
 - 32% had employment income at exit.
- Emergency Shelter
 - Earned income is the most common source of income for people who stayed in shelters with at least 18% exiting with employment, but the average income was less than \$800 per month.
 - Many others are not able to work and receive only SSI/SSDI income. Often, some form of housing subsidy is needed in order to afford housing. People with disabilities or low incomes are eligible for public housing or housing choice vouchers where rent is charged based on a person's income level. This is the only way for many people to avoid homelessness.

Permanent Supportive Housing

- PSH combines housing with case management and supportive services for people with severe barriers to maintaining housing. Individuals and families with a history of chronic homelessness and with permanent disabling conditions are a priority for these long-term housing programs.
- This intensive, long-term assistance is limited and there is often a waitlist associated with PSH units. In 2016 new federal grant awards provided funding for 36 additional PSH units.
- 71 households were moved into PSH units in 2016 and 88 in 2015. This is a positive outcome because overall, more people remained stably housed in affordable units during the year.
- 32 people, or 54% of those who left PSH, successfully transitioned into other permanent housing, most often subsidized housing, without supportive services. This create opportunities to serve more people who do need ongoing case management support in addition to subsidized housing.
- PSH case managers work with clients to improve essential life skills, (budgeting, housekeeping and landlord-tenant relations) that are needed to maintain a stable housing environment and to end the cycle of homelessness.

Looking Forward

The Human Relations and Community Services Department, the Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network, and our community partners continue to make progress and measurable impacts on ending homelessness in Ingham County. In order to continue this positive trend, agencies are targeting resources, advocating for more affordable housing, and seeking additional grant funding. New partnerships are being fostered to broaden the array of services available and to improve access to assistance. Concerted efforts are being made to end chronic homelessness and homelessness for veterans by implementing best practices and proven strategies. Drastically reducing homelessness in our community is an attainable goal, reachable by continued cooperation and strengthening relationships between agencies and those we serve, the most vulnerable in our community.