



Homeless Youth Census 2017

District of Columbia

BACKGROUND

The End Youth Homelessness Act of 2014 requires that the District of Columbia Department of Human Services (DHS) conduct a youth-specific homeless census. DHS tasked The Community Partnership (TCP) with conducting the Homeless Youth Census in summer of 2017.

Similar to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-required the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count that TCP conducts each January, the intention of the Homeless Youth Census (HYC) was to help the District better understand the scale and scope of homelessness and housing instability among youth up to age 24. The information collected was used by the District of Columbia Interagency Council on Homelessness (DCICH) to inform its strategic plan for addressing youth homelessness and by DHS and TCP to make decisions about resource allocation for youth in the District.

While similar to PIT, the Homeless Youth Census differed in three key ways:

- 1) The HYC is focused solely on unaccompanied individuals and heads of family households who are age 24 and under;
- 2) The HYC occurred over the course of nine days instead of a single day (the 2017 HYC was held from September 22nd through 30th);
- 3) In addition to “literally homeless” youth – youth who are experiencing homelessness while in shelter, transitional housing or living in unsheltered situations – the HYC also included young people who are living in unstable housing arrangements (e.g. in doubled up situations or “couch surfing”).

Further, the End Youth Homelessness Act required that a questionnaire/needs assessment be completed with the youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability counted during the HYC. To that end, TCP engaged homeless services providers, homeless outreach teams, and other providers who serve homeless and unstably-housed youth to request that these agencies survey any persons 24 years old or younger served by their program or agency between September 22nd through 30th who was an unaccompanied person or head of household.

The results of these surveys were reviewed by TCP to determine the number of unaccompanied persons or heads of household who were either homeless or unstably-housed, and their survey results were aggregated according to their age group, housing status, and household configuration.

HYC Definitions

For the purposes of the HYC:

- **Literally homeless** means any youth residing in an Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing facility, or who is otherwise unsheltered (living in a place not meant for habitation like a car or sleeping outside);
- **Unstably-housed** means a person who is precariously housed and/or living in doubled up situations (generally with family or friends);
- **Youth** are persons who are 24 years old or younger, based on self-reported age or date of birth; distinctions are made below between minors (persons under 18) and transition age youth (TAY) (persons 18-24);
- **Unaccompanied persons** are single persons who are living on their own and not residing with others;
- **Heads of household** are those who are living with at least other adult or with at least one child who is in their care.

2017 HYC TOTALS

A total of 1,117 unaccompanied youth and youth heads of family households were counted in the 2017 HYC, representing both those experiencing literal homelessness (668 youth) and those who were unstably-housed (449 youth) at the time of survey.

The total numbers of unaccompanied persons and heads of family households in both age and housing status categories counted during the HYC are charted in the tables below:

2017 Homeless Youth Census
Total Population: Literally Homeless

Population	Emergency Shelter	% Literally Homeless Population	Transitional Housing	% Literally Homeless Population	Unsheltered	% Literally Homeless Population	Total Literally Homeless
All Persons							
All Persons	346	52%	243	36%	79	12%	668
Household Composition							
Unaccompanied Youth	164	25%	153	23%	77	12%	394
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 - 24)</i>	151	23%	148	22%	73	11%	372
<i>Unaccompanied Minors (Under 18)</i>	13	2%	5	1%	4	1%	22
Family Heads of Household (HoH)	182	27%	90	13%	2	0.3%	274
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 - 24)</i>	182	27%	90	13%	2	0.3%	274
<i>Minors (Under 18)</i>	0	-	0	-	0	-	0

2017 Homeless Youth Census
Total Population: Unstable Housing Arrangements

Population	Unstably-Housed	% Unstably-Housed Population
All Persons		
All Persons	449	100%
Household Composition		
Unaccompanied Youth	262	58%
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 - 24)</i>	228	51%
<i>Unaccompanied Minors (Under 18)</i>	34	8%
Family Heads of Household (HoH)	187	42%
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 - 24)</i>	180	40%
<i>Minors (Under 18)</i>	7	2%

LITERALLY HOMELESS UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

2017 Homeless Youth Census
% Change 2016-2017 Literally Homeless Unaccompanied Youth

Population	2017 Sheltered*	2016 Sheltered*	% Change	2017 Unsheltered	2016 Unsheltered	% Change	Total Difference	Total % Change 2016 - 2017
Unaccompanied Youth	317	300	6%	77	85	-9%	9	2%
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 -24 years old)</i>	299	285	5%	73	72	1%	15	4%
<i>Unaccompanied Minors (under 18)</i>	18	15	20%	4	13	-69%	-6	-21%

* Sheltered is both transitional housing and emergency shelter.

Literally Homeless Unaccompanied Youth Overview

- 22 unaccompanied minors under the age of 18 were literally homeless at the time of the census
 - 82% were residing in emergency shelter or transitional housing
 - 18% were unsheltered
- 372 unaccompanied youth aged 18-24 were literally homeless at the time of the census
 - 80% were residing in emergency shelter or transitional housing
 - 20% were unsheltered
- The youngest literally homeless unaccompanied person counted was 13 years old when surveyed.
- Sexual Orientation: 31% of all literally homeless unaccompanied youth counted self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or queer/questioning.
- Gender: 6% of all literally homeless unaccompanied youth self-identified as transgender.
- Chronic Homelessness: 39% of unaccompanied youth meet the length of time and disability requirements to be considered chronically homeless.
- Unaccompanied youth reported that they were experiencing literal homelessness due several factors. *Note: factors are not mutually exclusive and respondents may have selected multiple factors.*
 - 49% noted they were experiencing literal homelessness due to conflict among family or friends, including 6% specifying that the conflict was due to their sexual orientation or gender expression.
 - 28% reported they were literally homeless because of a variety of economic factors, including eviction/foreclosure, job loss, lack of affordable housing, etc.
 - 17% reported they were literally homeless due to end of programs or systems discharge, including 8% aging out of foster care, 5% homeless because transitional housing programs ending, and 2% being discharged from juvenile justice.
 - 39% indicated that violence contributed to their homelessness, including emotional, physical or sexual abuse, domestic or intimate partner violence, and other threats to their safety.

Systems Involvement

- Literally homeless unaccompanied youth also responded to questions about past systems involvement:
 - 32% reported being CFSA involved in the past;
 - 30% noted DYRS involvement;
 - 30% noted CSOSA involvement; and
 - 29% noted living in an institutional setting such as hospital or treatment facility.

Education and Employment

- 59% of literally homeless unaccompanied youth reported that they have completed high school/obtained a GED or have obtained higher education, including 11% who have completed some college.
- 62% of literally homeless unaccompanied youth are not employed, yet 76% are currently seeking employment.

Violence and Trauma

- 39% of literally homeless unaccompanied youth report having been assaulted or physically attacked during this episode of homelessness.
- 17% of literally homeless unaccompanied youth have been forced, threatened, or pressured into performing a sex act with another person.

Immediate Needs and Housing Preference

- The most commonly reported immediate need cited by literally homeless unaccompanied youth was job training/work readiness programs at 38% of all respondents.
- Of the 251 literally homeless unaccompanied youth who responded, 67% pointed to some type of subsidized housing assistance as their primary need for exiting homelessness.

LITERALLY HOMELESS YOUNG FAMILIES

2017 Homeless Youth Census
% Change 2016-2017 Literally Homeless Young Families

Population	2017 Sheltered*	2016 Sheltered*	% Change	2017 Unsheltered	2016 Unsheltered	% Change	Total Difference	Total % Change 2016-2017
Family Heads of Households	272	275	-1%	2	2	0	-3	-1%
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 -24 years old)</i>	272	275	-1%	2	2	0	-3	-1%
<i>Unaccompanied Minors (under 18)</i>	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	-

* Sheltered is both transitional housing and emergency shelter.

Literally Homeless Young Families Overview

Residing in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, or otherwise Unsheltered:

- **274 heads of young family households were literally homeless at the time of the census:**
 - All literally homeless family heads of households were between the ages of 18 to 24, no minor heads of households were surveyed;
 - 99% of families were residing in emergency shelter or transitional housing; and
 - Two families reported being unsheltered.
- Sexual Orientation: 8% of all literally homeless heads of household counted self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or queer/questioning.
- 97% of families were female-led.
- 28% were chronically-homeless.
- 37% indicated that they were in a permanent housing arrangement prior to experiencing homelessness.
- Heads of household reported that their families were experiencing literal homelessness due several factors.
Note: factors are not mutually exclusive and respondents may have selected multiple factors.
 - 50% noted they were experiencing literal homelessness due to conflict among family or friends.
 - 16% reported they were literally homeless because of a variety of economic factors including eviction/foreclosure, job loss, lack of affordable housing, etc.
 - 17% indicated that violence contributed to their homelessness, including emotional, physical or sexual abuse, domestic or intimate partner violence, and other threats to their safety.

Systems Involvement

- Literally homeless heads of household also responded to questions about past systems involvement:
 - 19% reported being CFSA involved in the past;
 - 14% noted DYRS involvement;
 - 9% noted CSOSA involvement; and
 - 13% noted living in an institutional setting such as hospital or treatment facility.

Education and Employment

- 66% of literally homeless heads of household reported that they have completed high school/obtained a GED or have obtained higher education, including 11% who have completed some college.
- 50% of literally homeless heads of household are not employed; yet 82% are currently seeking employment.

Violence and Trauma

- 21% of literally homeless heads of household report having been assaulted or physically attacked during this episode of homelessness.
- 10% of literally homeless heads of household have been forced, threatened, or pressured into performing a sex act with another person.

Immediate Needs and Housing Preference

- The most commonly-reported immediate need cited by heads of household was job training/work readiness programs at 42% of all respondents; additionally 39% indicated childcare as a primary need.
- Of the 274 young families, 80% pointed to some type of subsidized housing assistance as their primary need for exiting homelessness.

YOUTH IN UNSTABLE HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS

2017 Homeless Youth Census <i>Unstable Housing Arrangements</i>		
Population	2017 Totals	% of Total Unstably-Housed Youth
All Youth in Unstable Housing Arrangements		
All Youth	449	100%
Household Composition		
Unaccompanied Youth	262	58%
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 -24 years old)</i>	228	51%
<i>Unaccompanied Minors (under 18)</i>	32	7%
Family Heads of Households	187	42%
<i>Transition Age Youth (18 -24 years old)</i>	180	40%
<i>Unaccompanied Minors (under 18)</i>	7	2%

Unstably-Housed Youth Overview

- **262 unaccompanied youth were currently staying in an unstable housing arrangement during the HYC:**
 - 228 were transitional age youth (18 to 24 years old)
 - 32 were unaccompanied minors (under 18)
- **187 heads of household of young families were in an unstable housing arrangement during the HYC, including being doubled-up, or couch-surfing:**
 - 180 were transitional age youth (18 to 24 years old)
 - 7 were unaccompanied minors (under 18)
- 67% of all unstably-housed youth were couch-surfing or doubled up with another family when they were surveyed at HYC.

- 11% of unstably-housed youth were in imminent risk of homelessness, having to leave their residence within 90 days.
- 7% of unstably-housed youth indicated that they were staying in some place or with someone who they didn't know just because they needed a place to stay.
- Sexual Orientation: 24% of unstably-housed unaccompanied youth counted self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer or questioning.
- 96% of all unstably-housed young families are female-led.

Systems Involvement

- Unstably-housed unaccompanied youth and family heads of household also responded to questions about past systems involvement:
 - 26% reported being CFSA involved in the past;
 - 35% noted DYRS involvement;
 - 34% noted CSOSA involvement; and
 - 27% noted living in an institutional setting such as hospital or treatment facility .

Education and Employment

- 45% of unstably-housed unaccompanied youth and family heads of household reported that they have completed high school/obtained a GED or have obtained higher education, including 11% who have completed some college or have a technical certificate.
- 70% of unstably-housed unaccompanied youth and family heads of households are not employed and 74% are currently seeking employment.

Violence and Trauma

- 41% of unstably-housed unaccompanied youth and family heads of household report having been assaulted or physically attacked during this episode of housing instability.
- 16% of unstably-housed unaccompanied youth and family heads of household have been forced, threatened, or pressured into performing a sex act with another person.

Immediate Needs and Housing Preference

- The most commonly-reported immediate need cited by unstably-housed youth was job training/work readiness programs at 38% of all respondents; additionally 36% indicated healthcare as a primary need.
- Of the unstably-housed youth and family heads of household of young families, 62% pointed to some type of subsidized housing assistance as their primary need for exiting homelessness and 16% indicated family reunification.

Special thanks to 2017 HYC partner organizations:

<i>Capitol Hill Group Ministry</i>	<i>DC Public Libraries</i>	<i>N Street Village</i>
<i>Casa Ruby</i>	<i>DC SAFE</i>	<i>National Community Church</i>
<i>Catholic Charities</i>	<i>DCCADV</i>	<i>NEBW</i>
<i>Children and Family Services Administration (CFSA)</i>	<i>District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH)</i>	<i>Office of D.C. Council Member David Grosso</i>
<i>Coalition for the Homeless</i>	<i>Eschelon Community Services</i>	<i>OSSE ReEngagement Center</i>
<i>Community Connections</i>	<i>Friendship Place</i>	<i>Pathways to Housing DC Outreach</i>
<i>Community of Hope - Health Centers</i>	<i>Georgetown Ministry Center</i>	<i>Sasha Bruce Youthworks</i>
<i>Courtney's House</i>	<i>Healthy Babies</i>	<i>SMYAL</i>
<i>Covenant House Washington</i>	<i>HIPS</i>	<i>SOME</i>
<i>DBH Our Time</i>	<i>House of Ruth</i>	<i>The DC Center</i>
<i>Dept. of Behavioral Health (D.C.)</i>	<i>Jobs have Priorities</i>	<i>The Salvation Army</i>
<i>Dept. of Human Services (D.C.)</i>	<i>LAYC</i>	<i>The Wanda Alston</i>
<i>Dept. of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)</i>	<i>Metropolitan Memorial UMC</i>	<i>Thrive DC</i>
<i>DC Alliance of Youth Advocates (DC AYA)</i>	<i>Miriam's Kitchen</i>	<i>Total Family Care Coalition</i>
<i>DC General</i>	<i>Mayor's Office on LGBTQ Affairs</i>	<i>Wayne's Place</i>
	<i>My Sister's Place</i>	<i>Whitman-Walker</i>