



ALLIANCE FOR HOUSING

2019 ANNUAL STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

The Alliance for Housing is Oakland County's Continuum of Care. The Alliance members address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness through a community-based process of coordination of care including housing and self-sufficiency through linking with community resources. The members are dedicated to ending homelessness and to make a difference in the lives of persons in need.

The 2019 Homeless Data Report is designed and intended to provide a snapshot of the state of homelessness in Oakland County using data extrapolated from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and data provided by various other service organizations that also serve homeless persons in local programs, but do not use the HMIS. This data is compared to data for the total general population in Oakland County and comes from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data provided through the U.S. Census.

This report contains data on the demographics of the people served in Oakland County and is a tool to inform the community of the types of services provided to persons seeking assistance and to show the success of the programs and the persons served. As part of Michigan's statewide system, the HMIS helps the Alliance for Housing measure and report out patterns of homelessness, measure service effectiveness, and improve care.

The numbers presented in this report tell the story of persons in Oakland County who experienced homelessness in 2019 and sought out assistance from organizations committed to ending homelessness.



THOSE EXPERIENCING LITERAL HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes persons on the street, in an emergency shelter, and places not meant for human habitation. The Alliance for Housing uses the federal Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) definition of literally homeless, the first category of homelessness as defined by HUD.

Current Conditions

The data included in this section summarizes basic demographic information for persons identified as homeless in Oakland County. The homeless data in this section is also used to provide context to other homeless sub-populations in this report and to highlight outliers and trends.

In 2019, there was a total of 2,965 persons experiencing homelessness in Oakland County. This represents a 14% increase in homelessness over the last three years.

Persons experiencing homelessness are disproportionately Black or African American at 67%, compared to 14% for the county overall.

Women also have a slightly higher representation in the homeless population at 55%, compared to 51% in the county. Homelessness impacts children disproportionately where 29% of persons experiencing homelessness are children, compared to 22% in the county. This also results in a lower average age of homeless persons at 31 years, compared to 41 years of age in the County.

Persons with disabilities are impacted at higher rates by homelessness than the non-disabled population.

Approximately 50% of all persons experiencing homelessness have a disability, compared to 12% in the County.

A quarter of all persons experiencing homelessness in Oakland County were homeless for the first time in 2019. In contrast, 22% of persons experiencing homelessness have been homeless for more than 12 months continuously.

Persons experiencing homelessness and entering the homeless response system seeking assistance are most often coming from a place not meant for habitation at 38% or emergency shelter at 32%.

THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Those who are chronically homeless (CH) are defined by HUD, as an individual or family that is homeless and resides in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter and has been homeless and residing in such a place for at least 1 year, or at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years. The statutory definition also requires that the individual or family includes a head of household with a diagnosable substance use disorder,



serious mental illness, developmental disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability.

Current Conditions

In 2019, there were 378 persons experiencing chronic homelessness in Oakland County. Persons that are experiencing chronic homelessness are disproportionately Black or American at 61% compared to 14% for the County overall. This is slightly lower than the total homeless population of 67%. Females that are chronically homeless in the County comprise 48% of the total population experiencing chronic homelessness, which is lower than the homeless population of women overall, at 55%.

Chronic homelessness impacts adults most frequently at 99% compared to 71% adults experiencing homelessness overall. Persons that are chronically homeless also tend to be singles at 79% compared to 56% homeless overall.

The average age of persons experiencing CH is similar to the overall population for the County at 44 years, compared to 41. This is also higher than the average age for the overall adult homeless population at 31 years of age. A higher number of CH persons are seniors aged 55+ with 24%, compared to 14% of the overall number of persons experiencing homelessness in Oakland County.

All persons that are defined as chronically homeless have a disability. This far exceeds the incidence of persons with disabilities in the overall population of persons experiencing homelessness at 50%.

HOUSING PRIORITIZATION REGISTRY/CIST

The Alliance for Housing (Oakland County's Continuum of Care) established a centralized housing registry to provide equitable and consistent access to all potential program participants seeking permanent supportive housing in our local community. A workgroup was established through the Alliance's Systems and Integration Committee, under the CIST (Community Interagency Service Team) to develop both a centralized intake process with prioritization standards, and to provide continued implementation and oversight of the disposition process. Over time, this group has expanded to include representation of youth programs, rapid rehousing and transitional housing.

Referrals that are populated on the registry contain information that is compiled from a basic screening which can include self-reporting from the individual/household related to their demographics, including history of homelessness and disability. These factors must be verified in order to determine eligibility for programs, including determination of homelessness. As HUD and the community are emphasizing the goal to end chronic homelessness, this will include certification of chronic homelessness as applicable. In addition, all potential program participants must meet a minimum of Category I Homelessness for permanent supportive



housing and rapid rehousing programs. Other programs may have different requirements related to contractual and funder requirements. The Alliance also adheres to HUD's recommended order of priority and the certification will include where the person is experiencing homelessness (streets, shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, etc.). Upon referral, the participating partner begins the process of contacting the program participant and verifying all information. The partner is also responsible for updating the HMIS record to reflect up to date and accurate information throughout this process as well as providing input and updates to the coordinated entry system in weekly calls and monthly face to face meetings.

Currently the Oakland County's Centralized Prioritized Housing Partners include representation from the following groups/entities:

Alliance for Housing

CHN - Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA)

PSH/RRH/SHU Provider - Community Housing Network

PSH/RRH/TH Provider – Lighthouse/SOS (Additionally Transitional Housing Provider)

PSH Provider - Training and Treatment Innovations

TH Provider - Common Ground (Youth Transitional Housing) and Victim Advocate Crisis Line

Oakland County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

HAVEN – local shelter for Domestic Violence

HOPE, Inc. - Local Low Barrier Shelter and Recuperative Care Center

Oakland County Health Network – local CMH provider and their network of providers

Oakland County Schools Homeless Liaison

Oakland County Health Division

Honor Health – local FQHC

OLHSA HOPWA

MSHDA

Veteran's Administration

Oakland County Veterans' Administration

MSHDA Voucher Agents, as needed

CHRONIC HOMELESS PROJECTS

The main housing projects that provide housing assistance for persons experiencing chronic homelessness are Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Both projects are permanent housing as defined by HUD and provide rental assistance along with case management.

Persons defined as CH are prioritized to receive PSH which is a long-term housing solution, meaning there is no limit to the length of stay in project.

VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs uses Title 38 of Code of Federal Regulations to define a veteran as "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was



discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable". The eligibility criteria for housing projects use this definition, however other services are available for veterans experiencing homelessness regardless of discharge status.

Current Conditions

In 2019, there were 114 veterans experiencing homelessness in Oakland County.

Persons that are veterans experiencing homelessness are disproportionately Black or African American at 39%, compared to 14% for the County overall. However, when compared to the overall homeless rate, veterans experiencing homelessness have a higher proportion of persons that are White at 59% compared to 31%. Women have a much lower representation in the veteran population at 17% compared to 55% for the overall population of women experiencing homelessness.

Veterans experiencing homelessness are mostly single (meaning presenting as not part of a family) at 86%, compared to 56% for the overall population of persons experiencing homelessness. The average age for veterans experiencing homelessness is higher than the overall adult homeless population and total Oakland County population at 50 years, compared to 31 and 41, respectively. This also aligns with a higher percentage of veterans over age 55 at 46%.

The proportion of veterans experiencing homelessness with a listed disability is notably higher at 70%, compared to 51% for the overall population of people experiencing homelessness.

Veterans experiencing homelessness have similar homeless histories as the overall population of people experiencing homelessness. Approximately one half are experiencing homelessness for the first time, while nearly a just over a fifth have been homeless over a year.

OAKLAND COUNTY VETERAN TASKFORCE

The Alliance for Housing, Oakland County Veteran Taskforce, is a group of partner agencies that work together to end veteran homelessness in Oakland County. Goals of the Taskforce include: Successfully identify all veterans experiencing homelessness in Oakland County and list each veteran by name on the By-Name-List within 72 hours of identification. Permanently house all identified veterans experiencing homelessness seeking housing within 90 days of identification.

Partner Agencies

The Oakland County Veteran Taskforce is comprised of agencies that range from emergency shelter to permanent housing. A list of core partner agencies are listed below:

Alliance for Housing
Bluewater Center for Independent Living (BWCIL)



Community Housing Network (CHN)
Disability Network Oakland & Macomb (DNOM)
HOPE
John D. Dingell VA Medical Center (VAMC)
Oakland County Community Health Network (OCHN)
Oakland County Veterans' Services
Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA)
South Oakland Shelter (SOS)
Training and Treatment Innovations (TTI)

VETERAN PROJECTS

Oakland County has a variety of Veteran-specific housing projects available to eligible participants. This includes Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Prevention funding through Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is also available through Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers. VASH combines rental assistance veterans experiencing homelessness with case management and clinical services provided by the VA.

Each project has specific eligibility criteria that the Taskforce reviews when matching persons needing housing with the best intervention.

In addition to housing, veterans have access to other veteran services. A list of services and a description of each is available in the Oakland County Veteran Taskforce Policies and Procedures, which is located on the Alliance for Housing website. Veterans are not limited to veteran-specific services and can utilize other eligible projects.

VETERAN BY-NAME-LIST

The Veteran By-Name-List (BNL) is an active list of veterans that are currently experiencing homelessness in Oakland County. Persons that are referred to the list are connected to agencies that provide housing assistance to veterans. The list is a tool to help partner agencies track a veteran through the coordinated entry process and into housing. The list is updated on a weekly basis to track the status of veterans that are looking for housing, moved into a unit, or can no longer be found and are deactivated.

HOMELESS VETERANS BY MONTH

In 2019 there were 114 veterans experiencing homelessness in Oakland County. This equates to an average of 10 to 15 active homeless veterans per month.

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH (UNDER 18)

Defining Homelessness

Unaccompanied youth are defined as persons entering shelter under the age of 18 without a parent or guardian. This includes youth that have children.



Current Conditions

In 2019, there were 68 unaccompanied youth in Oakland County. Persons that are unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are disproportionately Black or African American at 66%, compared to 14% in the County overall. This percentage is similar to the overall homeless population.

The proportion of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness with a listed disability is slightly higher at 59%, as compared to 50% for the overall population of people experiencing homelessness.

More than half of the unaccompanied youth are entering homelessness for the first time at 53%, compared to 45% for the overall population experiencing homelessness. Unaccompanied youth are also less likely to be homeless for more than 12 months at just over 1%, compared to 22% for the overall homeless population. This also indicates that unaccompanied youth are rarely defined as chronically homeless.

Unaccompanied youth are more likely to have a prior living situation in a family's residence at 56%, compared to 9% of the overall homeless population. The number of persons with a prior living situation from an emergency shelter is 14% and much lower than that of the overall homeless population of 32%.

SENIORS

Seniors in this report are defined as persons that are literally homeless (HUD category 1) and over the age of 55.

Current Conditions

In 2019, there were 429 seniors experiencing homelessness in Oakland County. Seniors experiencing homelessness are disproportionately Black or African American at 51%, compared to 14% for the County overall. However, when compared to the overall population of persons experiencing homelessness, seniors experiencing homelessness have a higher proportion of persons that are White at 47% compared to 31%. Women also have a lower representation in the senior population at 41%, compared to 55% for the overall population of women experiencing homelessness.

Seniors experiencing homelessness have a significantly higher incidence of disabilities at 78%, compared to 50% for the overall homeless population. The average age of seniors experiencing homelessness is 60, with 86% between the ages 55 and 64.

Many seniors experiencing homelessness are doing so for the first time at 49%. This is higher than the overall homeless population at 45% experiencing homelessness for the first time. Seniors experiencing homelessness also have a slightly higher percentage of those that have



been homeless for more than a year at 25%, compared to 22% for the overall homeless population.

Most seniors experiencing homelessness have a prior living situation of a place not meant for habitation at 37% and emergency shelter at 25%.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Emergency Shelter (ES) is any facility, where the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

The number of beds available in emergency shelters (and all other projects, as well) can fluctuate throughout the year. Once per year, in accordance with HUD regulations and in conjunction with the annual Point in Time Count (always held the last Wednesday of each January), a count of all available beds in the CoC is calculated. Per the Housing Inventory Count, dated 1/29/20, Oakland County had 170 year-round beds, 82 seasonal beds, and 2 overflow beds, for a total of 254 ES beds available in the county.

Projects

Common Ground's Sanctuary operates a safe, 24-hour emergency shelter for runaway, human trafficked, or at-risk youth between the ages of 10 -17 for up to 3 weeks. There are 10 beds available throughout the year. The Sanctuary provides trauma-informed care to youth and families in crisis through individual, family, and group counseling. The goal of this program is family reunification.

HAVEN's residential program is Oakland County's only 24-hour emergency shelter exclusively for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and their children.

HOPE offers services to the community through a low-barrier adult shelter and a referral-based Recuperative Care Center. The shelter is a 62-bed co-ed facility, offering showers, meals and service navigation. The Recuperative Care Center is a 15-bed facility, offering medical oversight, meals, and service navigation to guests with acute medical conditions.

Lighthouse MI (formerly South Oakland Shelter) is a unique rotating shelter model that harnesses the volunteer power of over 60 Oakland County congregations representing a variety of faiths. Each week, a congregation takes on the responsibility of hosting SOS's shelter guests. These community partners provide guests with overnight accommodations, three daily meals, and transportation.

South Oakland Citizens for the Homeless operates the Welcome Inn which provides the only day warming center in the county.



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Transitional Housing (TH) is a project that provides temporary lodging for homeless persons that are transitioning into permanent housing within a 24-month period. Requirements and limitations for these programs/projects vary by funder criteria. Per the 2020 HIC, Oakland County had 115 year-round TH beds available.

Projects

Common Ground's A Step Forward (ASF) is a 24-month transitional housing program for youth experiencing homelessness and runaway youth aged 16-17. Youth receive individual counseling and case management services weekly while attending school, gaining employment, and developing essential life skills. The goal of ASF is to foster independence, reunite with family, or locate safe, stable housing.

Common Ground's Graduated Apartment Program (GAP) is a 24-month transitional housing program for homeless young adults aged 18-24. Participants receive case management, counseling, life skills education, budgeting assistance, employment planning and support, and educational planning and support. GAP's goals are to provide and connect participants to safe and stable housing and foster independence.

Lighthouse PATH provides stabilization services to pregnant women and/or women with children who are currently experiencing homelessness or are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. The program is intended to target mothers whose income is at 50% or less than the Area Median Income (AMI) and have no other existing housing options. If accepted into the program, participants can remain in a leased unit for up to 24 months and receive a long-term rental subsidy that includes all utilities. Program participants also receive case management services, links to wraparound services, and up to 12 months of follow-up outreach and engagement services after discharge.

RAPID REHOUSING

Rapid Rehousing (RHH) is a permanent housing project that provides short and/or medium-term rental assistance to help expedite the transition of households into permanent housing. Per the 2020 HIC, Oakland County had 254 year-round beds available for Rapid Rehousing.

Projects

Oakland County Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) RRH serves residents below 30% Area Median Income (AMI) that meet the HUD definition of Category 1 homeless (literally homeless). There is one Oakland County ESG RRH project in the County, operated by Lighthouse (formerly South Oakland Shelter). The project provides a maximum of 6 months of rental assistance.



MSHDA ESG RRH serves residents below 30% AMI that meet the HUD definition of Category 1 homeless and that have a disability. There is one MSHDA ESG RRH project in Oakland County, operated by Community housing Network (CHN). The project provides a maximum of 6 months of rental assistance.

HUD RRH serves residents below 30% AMI that meet the HUD definition of Category 1 homeless or Category 4 homeless (fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence, including human trafficking). There are two HUD RRH projects in the county that are operated by CHN and Lighthouse. The project provides a maximum of 12 months of rental assistance.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) RRH provides a maximum of 6 months of rental assistance for those 30% to 50% AMI and a maximum of 9 months for those under 30% AMI. There are three SSVF RRH projects in the county that are operated by OLHSA, Blue Water for Independent Living (BWCIL), and Training and Treatment Innovations (TTI). SSVF is specific for veterans that have at least one day of active duty service and have any discharge other than dishonorable.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) provides long-term rental assistance, supportive services, and case management to homeless persons with disabilities. Services are designed to enable persons to live independently and connect people to community resources. Per the 2020 HIC, there were 665 year-round beds available for permanent supportive housing.

Projects

Permanent Supportive Housing

There are 11 PSH projects in the county that are operated by CHN, Lighthouse/SOS, TTI and the Veterans Administration. The projects serve residents below 30% AMI that meet the HUD definition of Category 1 homeless (literally homeless). The project does not have a limit on the length of stay. Project eligibility varies by grant requirements.

PSH is funded by HUD and accounts for the largest long-term housing project in the county. PSH functions like a voucher, where the person can take their subsidy to any landlord in the county as long as it meets fair market rent (FMR) and the landlord accepts the project. The demand for PSH exceeds the availability of assistance available, and the Alliance for Housing utilizes the Housing Prioritization Registry methodology to house those with the greatest need first.

The Alliance for Housing established the registry to provide equitable and consistent access to all potential program participants seeking permanent supportive housing in the local community. Referrals are made to the registry based on self-reported demographics, homeless history and disability information. In accordance with guidance from HUD, the community will prioritize all available beds to chronically homeless individuals and households. In situations



where housing can be made available to a potential program participant that is not chronically homeless, the group will consider the person with the most need who meets the eligibility for the available PSH.