

# 2011 Homeless Count Shows Highest Level Since 2007

On January 27, 2011, the Indiana University Public Policy Institute (PPI) in coordination with the Coalition on Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP) conducted the point-in-time 2011 Homeless Count (the count) in Marion County. The count is a biennial requirement by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD is charged with oversight of the distribution of federal funding for programs that aid in combating homelessness. The data collected from the count are used to calculate the amount of funding Marion County receives, and to give more detailed information about people experiencing homelessness to service providers.

## Methodology

After consultation with CHIP, we gathered data from the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) program that some shelters utilize, and for the remainder of the sheltered and unsheltered (street) populations we used surveys. Surveys are not self-administered; instead they are read aloud to each survey participant and the answers recorded by the survey conductor. Shelters and transitional housing providers were contacted to determine whether their own staff would conduct the surveys or if they would require students, from IUPUI's *Do the Homeless Count* course, to administer them. Sixty trained volunteers administered

the surveys. Ten teams, consisting of a professional outreach worker or an Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) officer and a volunteer to conduct the surveys, administered the "street" surveys. Target areas identified by social service outreach teams that regularly engage the homeless were mapped out on a grid, and the IMPD teams checked abandoned buildings and other areas. In addition, several students went to facilities of service providers to administer the survey. All survey data were integrated with the data collected from HMIS.

## Findings

We identified 1,567 persons in Marion County without permanent housing on the night of the count. As shown in Table 1, the number is the highest it has been in the past three years. This was the first year we integrated data from HMIS, a different methodology than previous years. HMIS provides more complete data on subpopulations. Also, there were housing providers included as count locations last year, but because of definitional changes, such as changing from transitional to permanent-supportive housing, had to be left out of this year's count. Given these considerations, the findings from this year may not be directly comparable to previous years. It should be noted that



Students and volunteers administer the 2011 Homeless Count Surveys at Wheeler Lighthouse Center



**Table 1: Sheltered and unsheltered individuals, January 2007-2011**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Change 10-11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>1,454</b>	<b>1,488</b>	<b>1,567</b>	<b>5%</b>
Low temperature night of count	19°F	3°F	16°F	32°F	23°F	
Persons in emergency shelters	691	758	712	628	686	8%
Persons in transitional housing	943	633	555	694	746	7%
Persons in Safe Havens*	-	-	-	33	21	-36%
Persons unsheltered/"street"	234	133	187	133	114	-14%

\*According to HUD, a Safe Haven is a form of supportive transitional or permanent housing serving hard to reach people with severe mental illness, who are on the streets and have been unwilling or unable to participate in supportive services. It is a separate category from transitional or emergency shelter.

while the total number is up, the number of unsheltered or street individuals is the lowest in five years. Some of the decrease could be attributed to success in moving people from the street into shelter.

Table 2 shows data for eight separate adult subpopulations. Individuals may be included in more than one category. There were 1,319 adults (total minus children) included in the 2011 count.

**Table 2: Count results by subpopulations for persons 18 and Older, January 2011**

Subpopulation	Persons in emergency shelters	Persons in transitional shelters	Persons in Safe Havens	Persons unsheltered ("street")	Total
<b>TOTAL COUNTED</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>1,567</b>
Chronically homeless*	120	-	-	48	168
Severely mentally ill	50	80	21	29	180
Chronic substance abuse problems	153	346	-	36	535
Veterans	49	195	-	18	262
Persons with HIV/AIDS	6	4	-	1	11
Victims of domestic violence	172	200	-	18	390
Felony conviction	138	191	-	39	368
Foster care	36	34	-	16	86

\*Chronic homelessness is defined as: an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had a least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency shelter/safe haven during that time.

HUD defines a homeless individual as: (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or (2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:

- A. a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
- B. an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- C. a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

This definition excludes people who double up with family or friends, or those who met the HUD definition, but are now in the justice or healthcare system.

**Table 3: Aid received by individuals without permanent housing, sheltered and unsheltered, January 2011**

Aid Received	Sheltered	Unsheltered ("street")	Total
Social Security	60	5	65
SS Disability	74	7	81
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	50	2	52
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	37	4	41
Child support	23	2	25
Food stamps	504	31	535
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	29	1	30
Unemployment benefits	25	0	25
Workers Compensation benefits	2	0	2
Veterans benefits	32	1	33
Veterans disability/pension	49	2	51
Veterans healthcare	144	4	148
Hoosier Healthwise	62	3	65
Healthy Indiana Plan	15	1	16
Wishard Advantage	308	22	330
Medicaid	106	6	112
Medicare	37	2	39



Since 2010, the number of individuals in the count experiencing severe mental health illness and those that reported having been a part of the foster care system have decreased. These decreases may be due to improved programs and housing for clients in these subpopulations. Those subpopulations that have seen significant increases since last year are the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, chronic substance abuse problems, domestic violence, and those with a felony conviction. The number of people reporting themselves as veterans and having HIV/AIDS was similar to last year.

Table 3 shows the aid received by individuals without permanent housing. The majority of those who receive aid are receiving food stamps. Of those receiving healthcare aid, the majority receive Wishard Advantage, but there is a large percentage of individuals without healthcare aid. Of the individuals who identified themselves as veterans, 36 percent are not receiving some kind of veteran assistance.

As Figure 1 shows, there are a number of different reasons for someone to lose permanent housing. The majority of adults, sheltered or unsheltered, identify lost job as the reason for their lack of permanent housing. Of those who responded, 13 percent indicated that they were in school or training and 15 percent said that they were employed.

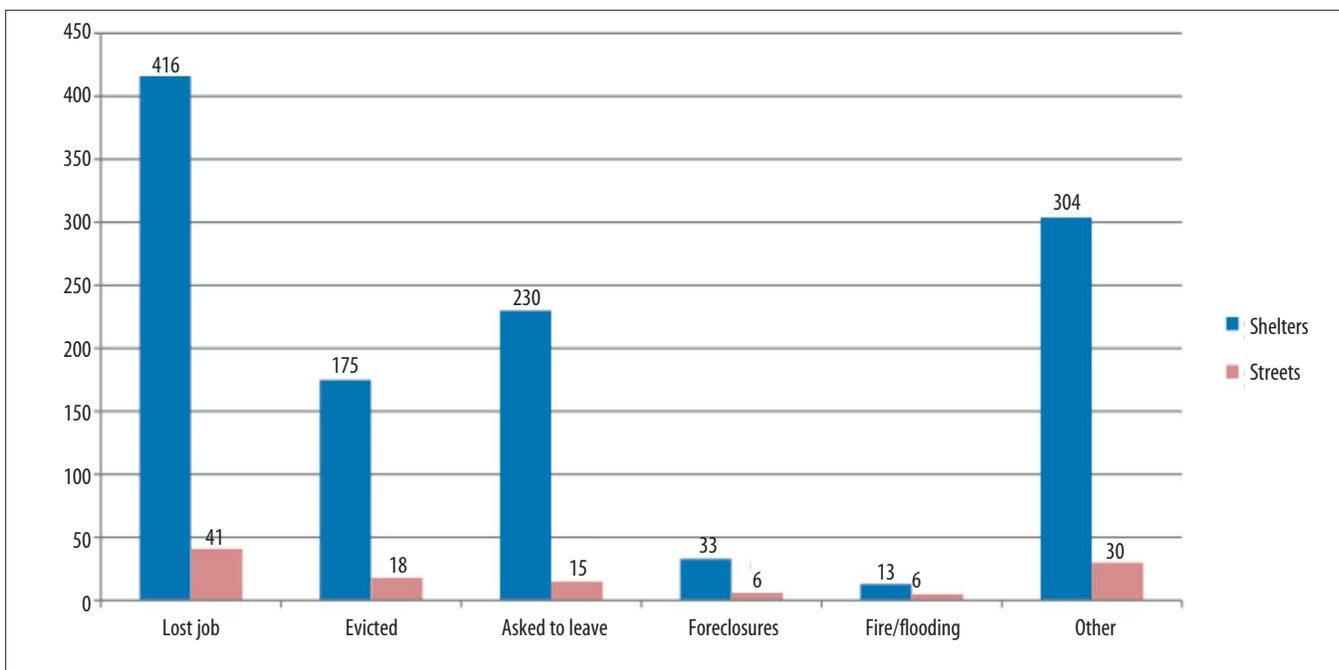
Medical conditions (respondents can indicate more than one) reported by adults without permanent housing are shown in Table 4. The most prominent condition is a substance abuse prob-

lem (alcohol and/or drugs). According to the 2008 Community Assessment conducted by the United Way of Central Indiana, "individuals in need of treatment often cannot pay the high costs of services because they either do not have insurance, their insurance does not cover substance services, or they are underinsured. Insurance companies cap coverage for substance abuse disorders at low levels" (chapter 5A, p. 11.). In 2010, according to Connect2Help there were 580 calls for assistance with drug abuse and mental health issues where they were unable to meet their needs. In the absence of an Engagement Center, all facilities require clients to be sober. An Engagement Center is a temporary

**Table 4:** Reported medical conditions of adults without permanent housing, January 2011

Medical Condition	Sheltered	Unsheltered ("street")	Total
Problem with alcohol	393	32	425
Problem with drugs	360	19	379
Chronic health condition	232	25	257
Developmental disability	238	9	247
Mental health illness	130	29	159
Physical disability	178	19	197
HIV/AIDS	10	1	11

**Figure 1:** Reasons for lack of permanent housing, January 2011





shelter for people who are publicly intoxicated. It provides them the opportunity to begin engagement in treatment services.

Demographic data are given for the adult and child populations in Table 5. The largest age group among the survey population was in the 35-49 age group, followed by those 50-61 years of age. Those 18 and younger are the third largest category. In all but the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups, there were more males than females.

**Table 5:** Age and gender of adults and children without permanent housing, January 2011

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-61	62 & over	Not reported	Total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,567</b>
Female	110	63	107	159	75	11	23	555
Male	112	60	93	302	310	44	23	942
Not Reported	26			1	3	1	44	75

**Table 6:** Race/ethnicity of adults without permanent housing, January 2011

	Hispanic or Latino (any race)	African American/Black	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Caucasian/White	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Other
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>60</b>
Emergency	23	284	6	5	187	1	26
Transitional	16	293	7	3	266	1	19
Unsheltered	13	44	4	0	42	0	15

Race/ethnicity of surveyed adults is shown in Table 6. African Americans are overrepresented relative to their representation in the total population of Marion County—close to 50 percent of adults without permanent housing are African American, while the 2009 African American population in Marion County was 26 percent. In contrast, 4 percent of adults without permanent housing were Hispanic, compared to 8 percent of the population in Marion County in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

## Children and Their Families

As Table 7 shows, there were 248 children and 196 adults in families without permanent housing on the night of the count. The number of families without permanent housing has declined since last year. This may in part be due to the continued funding of programs like the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). New to this year's count is the identification of chronically homeless families.

Rapid re-housing is intended to serve individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness (residing in emergency or transitional shelters or on the street) and need temporary financial assistance and case management services to obtain

**Table 7:** Number of families without permanent housing, January 2011

	Emergency shelters	Transitional shelters	Unsheltered ("street")	Total
<b>TOTAL FAMILIES</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>155</b>
Number of adults in families	127	67	2	196
Number of adults in chronically homeless families*	19	-	2	19
Number of children (under 18) in families	135	113	0	248
Number of children (under 18) in chronically homeless families*	6	-	0	6
<b>Total number of people in families</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>444</b>
<b>Total number of people in chronically homeless families*</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>

\*A chronically homeless family is a household with at least one adult member who has a disabling condition and who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had a least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency shelter/safe haven during that time.



A young woman and her children at Wheeler Mission Center for Women and Children

**Table 8:** Total number of households served by Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program

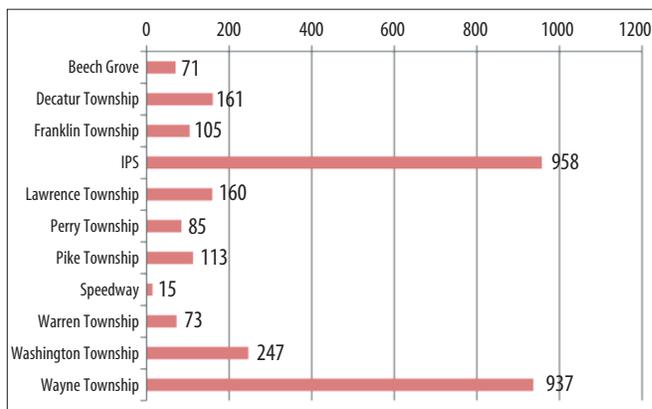
	Number of households being served on 1/27/11	Number of households served from 1/21/10 through 1/27/11
<b>Total served</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>387</b>
<i>Financial assistance</i>		
Rental assistance	181	312
Security and utility deposits	4	236
Utility payments	2	228
Moving cost assistance	0	23
Motels & hotel vouchers	0	9
<b>Total financial assistance</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>330</b>
<i>Housing relocation &amp; stabilization services</i>		
Case management	34	365
Outreach and engagement	0	257
Housing search and placement	4	213
Legal service	0	5
Credit repair	0	31
<b>Total housing relocation &amp; stabilization services</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>387</b>

housing and retain that housing. Table 8 displays the number of households served by the HPRP. The program was started when President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which included \$1.5 billion nationally for homeless prevention. There were 186 households comprised of 380 individuals being served with rapid re-housing on the day of the count, and 387 households have been served since the 2010 count, assisting 729 individuals.

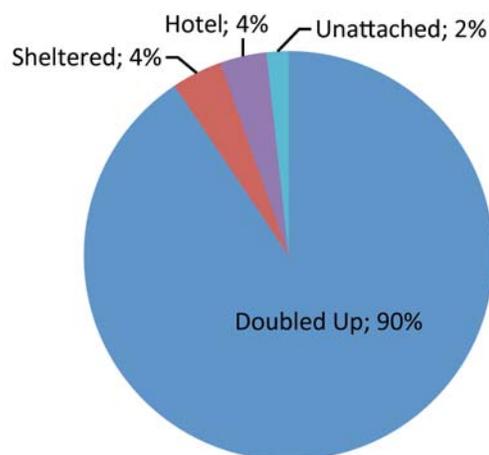
In addition to counting people who meet the HUD definition, we also counted children being served in Marion County schools under the McKinney-Vento Act. This Act requires that public schools identify students without permanent housing and accommodate necessary provisions, such as allowing those students to immediately enroll and providing transportation to and from their school of origin. According to the McKinney-Vento definition (which differs from the HUD definition by including families who are doubled-up), 2,925 students in Marion County were identified as living in homeless conditions, excluding charter schools (Figure 2). IPS and Wayne Township combined have the vast majority of students, with 33 percent (958) and 32 percent (937), respectively.

As Figure 3 illustrates, 90 percent of students classified under McKinney-Vento are doubled up. The remainder of students whose living situations are known, were living in shelters (4 percent), hotels/motels (4 percent), and 3 percent were unsheltered or unattached. Unattached means the student is not

**Figure 2:** 2011 Count day McKinney-Vento Data by school district\*



**Figure 3:** Reported location of children without permanent housing by McKinney-Vento liaisons, 2011



**Table 9:** Children by age, McKinney-Vento data, 2011

School District*	8 and under	9 to 12	13 to 16	17 and older
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>338</b>
Beech Grove	28	23	17	3
Decatur Township	47	65	38	11
Franklin Township**	44	26	17	14
IPS	314	286	257	101
Lawrence	42	47	53	18
Perry Township	27	29	22	7
Pike Township	23	26	32	32
Speedway	3	4	0	8
Warren Township	10	16	17	30
Washington Township	62	61	66	58
Wayne Township	333	324	224	56

\*Does not include charter schools.

\*\*Missing some data points.



part of a family.

Table 9 identifies the McKinney-Vento students by age. The majority of children are 8 years of age and younger, followed by the 9 to 12 category. The under 12 age groups represent 63 percent of students without permanent housing (1,840).

Students without permanent housing can have trouble in school for many obvious reasons, such as not having the proper supplies, being stressed out about family life, and malnutrition. Studies have found that children who are homeless for more than a year are subject to developmental delays at four times the rate of their peers, are twice as likely to repeat a grade, and are identified with learning disabilities twice as often” (Holgerson-Shorter, 2010, p. 32).

The large number of children without permanent housing demonstrates the need for programs in Marion County aimed at serving this population. One such program is the Indy School on Wheel’s Tutors in Action program which trains community volunteers to mentor homeless children in every family homeless shelter in Indianapolis and one elementary school. Since 2001, over 1,600 School on Wheels community volunteers have provided more than 30,000 hours of tutoring to 3,100 Indianapolis homeless children at 11 locations. They also provide school uniforms for children in need. Their Ignite Learning program works with the parents to make sure their children are on track to academic success with a focus on a college education. The program enrolls students in the 21st Century Scholars program to receive four years of free college tuition.

### Homeless Youth

In addition to homeless youth who are attached to one or both parents and the nearly 3,000 children who are attached and living with family and friends while attending Marion County schools, there are other distinct populations of homeless youth. As shown in Table 5, there were 123 youths (ages 18-24) included in the count. Of those, most (88 percent) are residing in emergency or transitional housing but 12 percent are on the street. In addition, there were 338 young people (ages 17 and older) identified by the McKinney-Vento liaisons. The liaisons also identified 3 unsheltered students and 30 unattached students. These students are at an even higher risk than those with their families.

Homeless youth come from many different circumstances. The National Alliance to End Homelessness attributes reasons for youth homelessness on two broad conditions: family breakdown and system failure (2006). Youths report some of the same reasons for homelessness as adults (see Figure 1), but for this age group, the most common reason identified for their lack of permanent housing was *asked to leave by family or friend*. There are also factors such as physical and sexual abuse, as well as the youth’s sexual orientation that might cause detachment from their families.



Young man seeks help at 2011 Indy Homeless Connect

Another source of data for this population is Outreach, Inc., which has a street outreach program as well as case management services and a program in high schools. In 2010, they entered 379 young people (ages 14-24) into their client database, and an additional 245 unduplicated street encounters with youth for a total of 624, up from a total of 456 in 2009.

This age group (14-24) has a different set of needs than their younger counterparts as they are trying to graduate, find work, obtain healthcare, and secure housing for themselves. There are some programs available to this vulnerable population such as Outreach Inc.’s G.O.A.L. program and Mary Rigg’s Fostering Independence program.

The G.O.A.L. program helps students experiencing homelessness to **G**raduate, find an **O**ccupation, and **A**ddress and change their **L**ifestyle. The program does this by offering resources including; “advocacy, transportation to school, school lunches, textbooks, tutoring, a GED satellite classroom, and even caps and gowns” (Hochstedler, 2010). In 2010, they had 29 graduates and expect 38 to graduate this spring. Of students in the program, 65 percent graduate from high school, and of those, 50 percent continue to post-secondary opportunities (college, vocational/technical school, or the military).

The Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center offers a number of programs that aid students of all ages in their educational endeavors. The programs include; Head Start (preschool), Before/After School, Youth Employment, GED Preparation, and the Fostering Independence program. The Fostering Independence program offers supportive services to the nearly 100 young adults in Marion County that are emancipated from the foster care system each year. The services include independent housing, financial education, employment services, job training, and more (Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, 2009). As shown in Table 2, there are many currently homeless adults that were once part of the foster care system. A total of 21 percent of 18-24 year olds without permanent housing in Marion County were once part of the foster care system.

*A point-in-time count like this one does not provide the total number of people who experience homelessness during the course of a year. Based on national research, estimates suggest that the number of people who experience homelessness at some point during the year is three to five times the number counted on January 27, 2011. Thus, between 4,500 and 7,500 individuals in Marion County experience homelessness during a year.*

### Thoughts for Policymakers

This past year was greatly impacted by the struggling economy, which holds challenges for efforts to implement the remainder of the Blueprint to End Homelessness, the 10-year community plan that is in its 9th year. The number of people without permanent housing in Marion County on the night of the count, 1,567, has increased since last year's count, while the number of families has decreased. The federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, which provides funding to support individuals and families who would be homeless but for the immediate sup-

port they receive in that program, was serving 380 people on the day of the count. But for the federal help, the numbers likely would have increased more. Homelessness prevention is an essential element of any effort to end homelessness. Preventing homelessness is crucial, both to reduce the high cost of providing crisis care and to eliminate the disruption that results, especially to children, when people become homeless.

As the data illustrate, there are thousands of children and youth in Marion County affected by a lack of permanent housing. While there are programs serving both children and youth, the data demonstrate a need to do more. If we do not want children to repeat the cycle of homelessness, policymakers should consider programs to prevent families from losing permanent housing. For families without permanent housing, the focus should be on rapid re-housing and on services for children to help prevent some of the negative consequences. The foster care and juvenile justice systems lack enough programs to provide young people with the skills and supportive services to be successful once they are released or age out. Policymakers should consider the costs of inaction. Addressing issues in youth can save money in the long-term by assisting them to become productive citizens.

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2011 Indy Homeless Connect helped young woman find temporary housing



INDIANA PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE

## Indiana University Public Policy Institute

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