

# Denver Metropolitan Area 2009 Homeless Point-In-Time Key Findings

Ninth Point in Time Study, 2009



*A Collaborative Effort Between  
The Metropolitan Denver Homeless Initiative  
&  
The Colorado Department of Human Services*



**Colorado Department of Human Services**

*people who help people*

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## Study Limitations

This is the first time that the Metropolitan Denver Homeless Initiative attempted to conduct a homeless point in time study using data collected and entered into the Colorado Homeless Management Information System. A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a computerized data collection tool used by providers in communities to collect ongoing data on persons who are homeless or receive assistance from the community. Several challenges were discovered during the data analysis process that limit the ability to compare results to previous studies and raises some questions as to accuracy of certain findings as outlined below.

Two different methods were utilized to collect the data that were entered into the HMIS system resulting in some inconsistencies on how certain variables could be analyzed and reported.

- Participating HMIS agencies entered information directly into the HMIS system on their clients upon intake into their programs.
- Non-participating and some participating HMIS agencies collected information on persons seen on the count day on revised HMIS intake forms that did not include the full scope of information that is collected upon intake. Data were then entered into the HMIS system by temporary data entry clerks.

The issues and challenges associated with those methods are outlined below:

*Issue:* Participating HMIS agencies collect and enter information about the persons they serve on a daily basis. Persons who are currently participating in programs are marked as “active” in the system. Participating agencies “exit” individuals and family members when they leave the program or receive a one-time service. Only homeless persons who were marked as active in the system were included in the data exported for data analysis.

*Challenge:* It is possible that some HMIS participating agencies may not have exited all homeless persons who were no longer participating in their program, resulting in a potential over count of persons considered homeless on January 27, 2009. For example, the total number of persons counted as residing in emergency shelter in the City and County of Denver exceeds the total number of beds available. Even taking into consideration the cold weather that night, the use of overflow beds, and the opening of an additional emergency overflow shelter, the total count of persons residing in emergency shelters in Denver on the night prior to the survey appears to be high.

*Additional Challenge:* Data collected upon intake on individuals and families currently residing in transitional housing were collected on the initial intake date, resulting in some of the information being out of date. Contributing factors to homeless situation, disability status, and the number of times persons reported having experienced homelessness related to their situation at the time of intake and not to their situation on the day of the count. In addition, data for persons residing in longer term emergency shelter programs and in transitional housing was modified to reflect where they actually spent the night prior to the count day, rather than where they reported spending last night upon their initial intake.

*Issue:* Data collected by HMIS participating agencies and entered directly into the HMIS system is collected on all persons in the family.

*Challenge:* Some of the questions on the revised intake form only related to the person completing the form and/or adults in families and some of the questions related to all persons included within a family unit. This resulted in the inability to comprehensively analyze the responses to some of the questions for all persons in the family and some of the results are only reported on the head of family households, adults in families and single individuals.

*Issue:* Previous homeless point in time surveys only collected and reported data on the primary respondent, limiting the ability to comprehensively report some demographic information on other family members.

*Challenge:* Previous surveys not using HMIS reported contributing factors to homelessness for only the head of family households and single individuals. In the HMIS system, contributing factors to the homeless situation automatically cascades to all persons in a family. While infrequent, it is possible that the information that cascades from head of family households to all family members is not accurate for all family members. For example, a head of household may have reported spending last night in jail as a reason contributing to homelessness, but other family members may have spent last night in an emergency shelter. Conversely, it could be assumed that the circumstances of the head of households impact the family unit.

*Issue:* Disability status was determined based upon whether or not adults and unaccompanied youth responded, “yes” to (Do you have a disabling condition?) at the beginning of the survey form. An additional multiple response question later in the survey asked respondents to indicate types of disabling conditions.

*Challenge:* Participating HMIS agencies often collect disability status on all members of the family, regardless of age while the revised intake form only collected disability status on adults. Therefore, disability status is only reported on adults and unaccompanied youth.

*Additional Challenge:* Not everyone who reported having a disabling condition indicated a type(s) of disabling condition. In addition, a total of 1,503 head of households and single individuals indicated having a type of condition, but did not report that they were disabled. A total of 84% of the persons who indicated that they had a type of condition, but did not report being disabled, were persons who reported having problems with alcohol or drugs or physical disabilities. Persons were only counted as disabled, if they responded “Yes” to (Do You Have a Disabling Condition?). Many individuals with substance abuse issues or temporary physical disabilities may not meet the federal definition of disabled and may not consider themselves disabled. Conversely, many of the respondents who indicated a type of condition but who did not indicate having a disability, may in fact be disabled.

*Additional Challenge:* Previous surveys requested that respondents indicate types of disabling conditions, but did not specifically ask if they were disabled. Persons were assumed to have a disabling condition if they reported having a type of disabling condition. Disability comparisons to previous surveys are not possible due to the change in methodology.

*Issue:* One criterion for determining if a homeless person is chronically homeless is based upon disability status.

*Challenge:* There were a total of 1,088 single individuals who did not indicate that they were disabled, but did report a type of condition. A total of 342 additional single individuals would have met the chronic homeless definition, if those persons were considered disabled.

## Key Findings

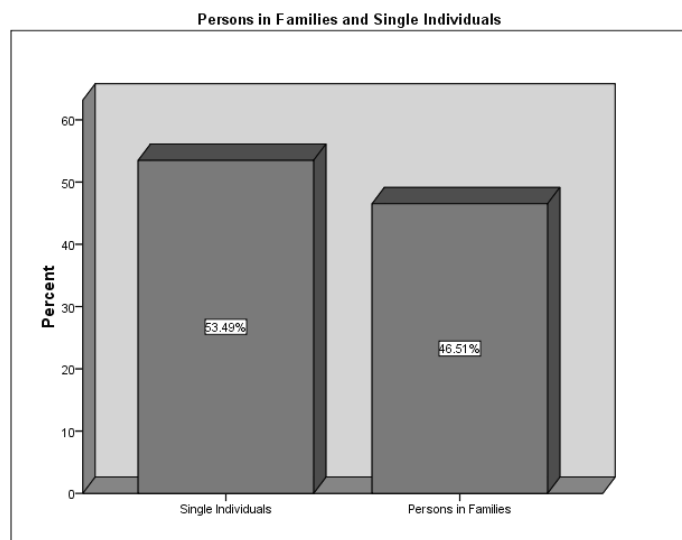
This study provides an illustration of the people experiencing homelessness in the seven-county Denver metropolitan area on a single day and evening on January 27, 2009. The findings reported are based on demographic and descriptive information entered into the Colorado Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).



**A total of 11,061 persons in the seven-county Denver metropolitan area were counted as homeless on Tuesday, January 27, 2009.**

Total Number of Persons Counted		
	# of Persons	Percent
Single Individuals	5916	53.5
Persons in Families - includes families with children and couples without children	5145	46.5
Total	11061	100.0

- ❖ There were 1,643 family households counted. Single parent households comprised almost 75% of the family households surveyed.
- ❖ Children and teens under the age of 18 totaled 2,965 persons and comprised 26.8% of all persons counted.

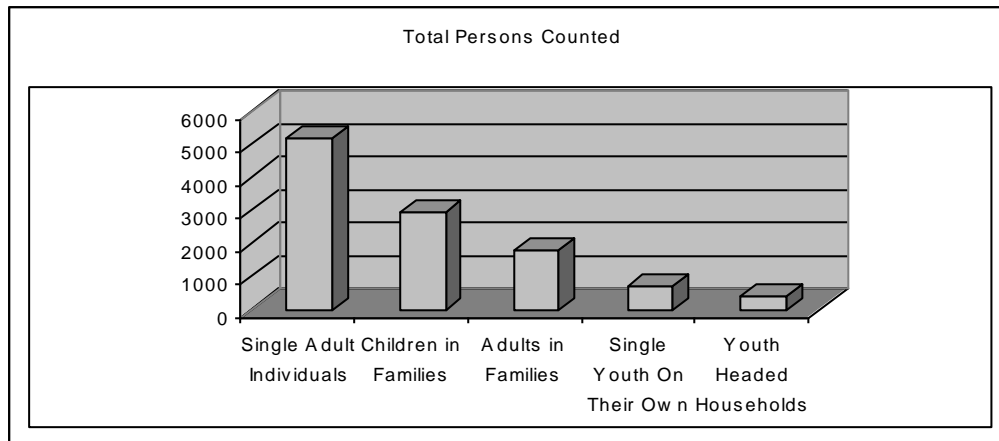


## Population Types

The following table provides a further breakdown of population types.

Persons Counted by Population Type		
Population Types	Total Persons Counted	Percent
Single Adult Individuals (25 and older)	5193	46.95
Single Youth On Their Own (13 to 24)	723	6.54
Adults in Families (Non Youth Headed Families) (18 and older)	1792	16.20
Youth Headed Families (16 – 24)	412	3.72
Children in Families (Under 18)	2941	26.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>11061</b>	<b>100.00</b>

- ❖ Single adult individuals comprised almost 47% of persons counted.
- ❖ Single youth not in families totaled 6.5% of all persons counted. A total of 723 homeless youth not in families were counted with just over 50% of youth on their own spending the evening in shelters or on the streets.
- ❖ Adults in families comprised 16% of persons counted. This included parents, grandparents, adult children, and extended family members. Couples without children were counted in this category, as well.
- ❖ A total of 412 youth headed families between the ages of 16 and 24 were counted.
- ❖ Of the 11,061 homeless people counted, 2,941 were children under the age of eighteen living in families.



## Gender All Persons Counted

Of the 11,041 people who answered this question, 58.2% were male.

Gender – All Persons Counted			
Gender All Persons Counted	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	6425	58.2	58.2
Female	4612	41.8	100.0
Don't Know	4	.0	100.0
Total	11041	100.0	
Missing	20		
Total	11061		

## Race All Persons

Black/African Americans and American Indian/Alaska Natives are disproportionately represented among persons who are homeless in the Denver metropolitan area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau Black persons comprised just over 11% of the population in comparison to 27% of the homeless population. In addition, American Indians and Alaska Native persons comprised only 1.3% of the general population in comparison to 8.5% of the homeless population.

Race			
Race	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
White	6553	61.5	61.5
Black or African American	2875	27.0	88.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	905	8.5	97.0
Multi-Racial	183	1.7	98.8
Asian	97	.9	99.7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35	.3	100.0
Total	10648	100.0	
Missing System	413		
Total	11061		

## Ethnicity All Persons

The homeless Hispanic population compares similarly (30.7%) with the Hispanic population for the Denver metropolitan area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau persons of Hispanic or Latino origin comprised 31.7% of the Denver metropolitan area population.

Ethnicity			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not Hispanic	7575	69.3	69.3
Hispanic	3355	30.7	100.0
Total	10930	100.0	
Missing	131		
Total	11061		

### Factors Contributing to Homelessness Head of Family Households and Single Individuals

*Unemployment and housing costs are top contributing factors to homelessness.*

- ❖ Losing a job (34.7%) was the most frequent contributing factor respondents reported to their homeless situation.
- ❖ Inability to pay rent or mortgage (31.2%) was the second most frequent contributing factor respondents reported to their homeless situation.
- ❖ Sixty families indicated that they became homeless as a result of foreclosure.
- ❖ Single individuals were more likely than head of family households to report substance abuse (35.4%) and mental illness (19.2%) as significant contributing factors to their homeless situation.

Respondents were asked to choose reasons or contributing factors to their homeless situation. Respondents could choose as many contributing factors as applied to their situation; therefore the total percent of respondents will be greater than 100%. The following table is based on responses from the head of family households and single individuals only.



<b>Reasons/Contributing Factors to Homelessness</b>		
Contributing Factors	Responses	
	N	Percent of Respondents
Lost Job	2327	34.7%
Rent or Mortgage	2093	31.2%
Alcohol/Substance Abuse	1978	29.5%
Family Problems	1278	19.1%
Mental Illness	1089	16.2%
Asked to Leave	816	12.2%
Illness	701	10.5%
Domestic Violence	664	9.9%
Discharged from Jail	535	8.0%
Legal	534	8.0%
Bad Credit	527	7.9%
Discharged from Prison	501	7.5%
Utilities	503	7.5%
Moved to Work	457	6.8%
Medical Expenses	389	5.8%
Problems with Public Benefits	361	5.4%
Discharge from Foster Care	81	1.2%
Sexual Orientation	53	.8%
Unable to Obtain ID	50	.7%
Foreclosure	26	.4%
Death in Family	26	.4%
Child Care Expenses	12	.2%
Hurricane	11	.2%
Refugee	14	.2%
Bed Bugs	6	.1%
Total	15032	224.1%

## First Time Homeless

First time homeless individuals and families are those persons who answered "1 Time" in response to the question, "How many times have you been homeless (including this time)?", indicating that this was the first episode of homelessness experienced by that person.

- ❖ In 2009, the number of persons reporting homelessness for the first time was 4,924 persons out of 11,061, or 44.5%.
- ❖ Of the 4,924 persons reporting homelessness for the first time, 2,797 (56.8%) had been homeless less than three months.
- ❖ Inability to pay rent or mortgage (37.7%), losing a job (32.5%), and relationship problems/family break-up (22.1%) were the most frequent contributing factors first time homeless reported. Respondents could choose as many contributing factors as applied to their situation; therefore the total percent of respondents will be greater than 100%.

## Newly Homeless

A newly homeless individual is defined as a person who became homeless on the day of the Point-In-Time survey.

- ❖ A total of 101 persons reported being newly homeless on the day of the count, having spent the previous night in their own home.
- ❖ Primary contributing factors to a newly homeless situation included the inability to pay rent or mortgage (31.7%) and the loss of a job (23%).

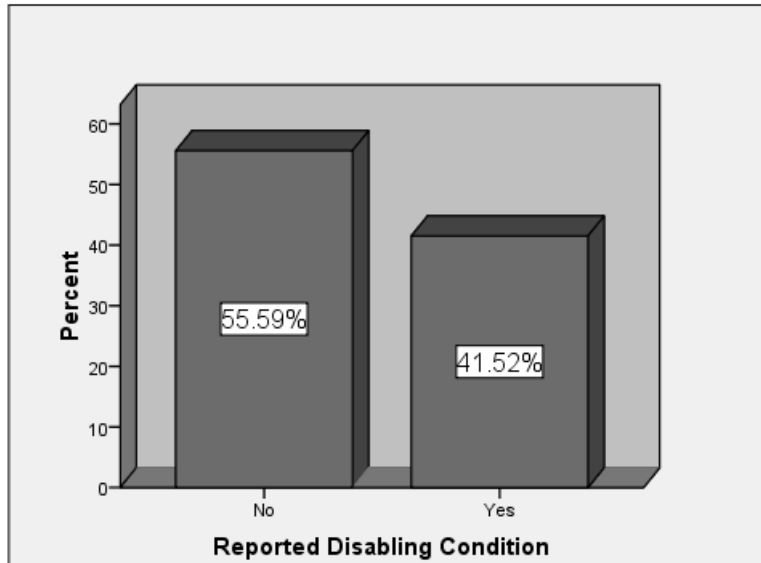
## Persons Who Are Homeless Experience High Rates of Disability

- ❖ A significant number of head of families and single individual respondents indicated that they had a disabling condition (41%).

Reported Disabling Condition Head of Family Households and Single Individuals				
Do You Have a Disabling Condition?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4161	55.0	55.6	55.6
Yes	3108	41.1	41.5	97.1
Don't Know	162	2.1	2.2	99.3
Refused	54	.7	.7	100.0
Total	7485	99.0	100.0	
Missing – No Response	74	1.0		
Total	7559	100.0		

- ❖ Substance abuse at (32%) and mental illness at (28%) are the most frequently reported type of disability by single individuals and heads of families.
- ❖ Almost 19% of individuals and heads of families reported a physical disability.
- ❖ Over 14% of individuals and heads of families have co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

**Single Individuals and Heads of Households**



Not everyone who reported having a disabling condition indicated a type(s) of disabling condition. In addition, a total of 1,503 head of households and single individuals indicated having a type of condition, but did not report that they were disabled. The following table outlines per type of condition the number of persons who indicated a type of condition, but reported that they were not disabled. Persons were only counted as disabled, if they responded “Yes” to (Do You Have a Disabling Condition?).

Disabling Condition & Type of Condition Identified							
Do You Have a Disabling Condition?	Types of Condition Identified						
	Substance Abuse	Mental Illness	Physical Disability	Developmental Disability	HIV/AIDS	Co-Occurring Disorders	Total
Yes	1425	2033	1126	326	71	1018	2838
No	975	87	286	62	33	60	1503
Total	2400	2120	1412	388	104	1078	4029

## Chronic Homelessness

In order to meet the federal definition of chronically homeless the following criteria must be met:

- The person must be an unaccompanied individual;
- The person must have a disabling condition;
- The person must have been either continuously homeless for a year or more OR has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.
- The person must be either living in an emergency shelter or sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation.

The total count of persons who were chronically homeless in the seven-county Denver metropolitan area on January 27, 2009 was 497. The chronic homeless population comprised 4.5% of the total homeless population and 8.4% of the single individual population.

<b>Chronically Homeless</b>				
Count of Persons Chronically Homeless Compared to All Persons Counted	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Chronically Homeless Individuals	497	4.5	100.0	100.0
All Other Persons Counted	10564	95.5		
Total	11061	100.0		
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>				
Count of Persons Chronically Homeless Compared to Single Individuals Only	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Chronically Homeless Individuals	497	8.4	100.0	100.0
Other Homeless Individuals – Not Chronic	5419	91.6		
Total	5916	100.0		

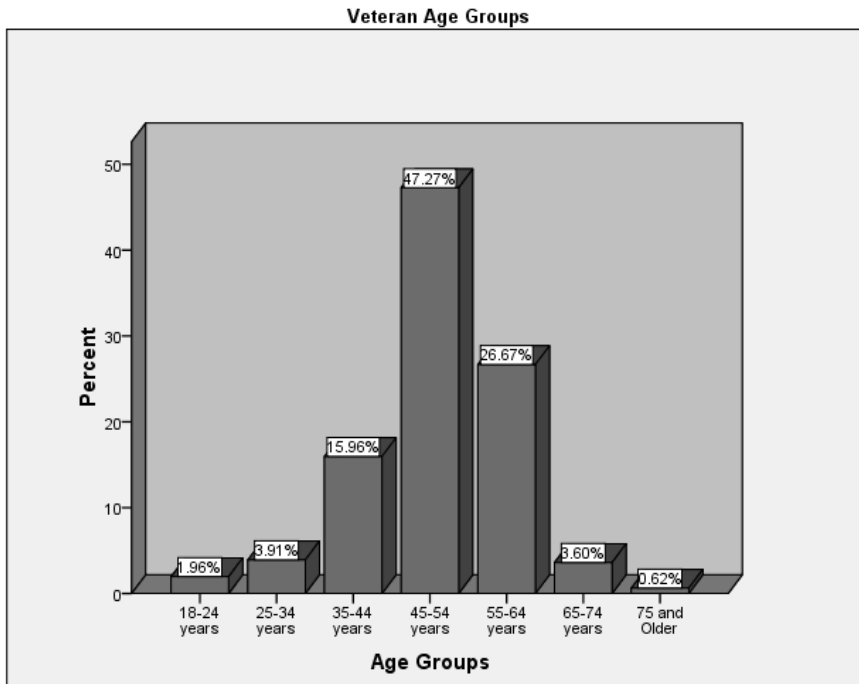
Males comprised almost 76% of the chronically homeless population in 2009.

Gender – Chronically Homeless Persons				
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	374	75.3	75.7	75.7
Female	120	24.1	24.3	100.0
Total	494	99.4	100.0	
Missing – No Response	3	.6		
Total	497	100.0		

Note: There were a total of 1,088 single individuals who did not indicate that they were disabled, but did report a type of condition (*problems with alcohol or drugs, psychiatric or emotional problems*,). A total of 342 additional single individuals would have met the chronic homeless definition, if those persons were considered disabled.

## Veterans Comprised 13% of the Adult Homeless Population

(Adult population – persons age 18 or older)



❖ A total of 986 persons or 13% of the adult homeless population identified themselves as having served in the United States military.

- 933 were single individuals;
- 34 were adult heads of households; and
- 19 were adult family members.

Homeless veterans ranged in age from 20 to 84, with the largest percentage between the ages of 45 and 54. The average age of a homeless veteran was 50 and the median age was 51.

Veteran Age Groups				
Age Group Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24 years	19	1.9	2.0	2.0
25-34 years	38	3.9	3.9	5.9
35-44 years	155	15.7	16.0	21.8
45-54 years	459	46.6	47.3	69.1
55-64 years	259	26.3	26.7	95.8
65-74 years	35	3.5	3.6	99.4
75 and Older	6	.6	.6	100.0
Total	971	98.5	100.0	
No Response to Age	15	1.5		
Total	986	100.0		

### County Summary Information

Sixty percent of study participants were staying in Denver on January 27, 2009. Counties outside of the Denver metropolitan area were combined into “Other Colorado County” and other states or countries were combined into “Other State or Country.”

Where did you stay last night? By County				
County Last Night	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Denver	6659	60.2	60.2	60.2
Jefferson	1242	11.2	11.2	71.4
Adams	1205	10.9	10.9	82.3
Boulder	1050	9.5	9.5	91.8
Arapahoe	676	6.1	6.1	97.9
Broomfield	157	1.4	1.4	99.3
Douglas	47	.4	.4	99.8
Other State or Country	19	.2	.2	99.9
Other Colorado County	6	.1	.1	100.0
Total	11061	100.0	100.0	

The following table identifies the location and the county where homeless persons spent the night prior to Tuesday, January 27, 2009.

Where Last Night by County Last Night – All Persons										
Location Spent Last Night	County Last Night									Total
	Adams	Arapahoe	Boulder	Broomfield	Denver	Douglas	Jefferson	Other State or Country	Other Colorado County	
Outside Anywhere	156	46	171	8	1146	4	160	6	0	1697
Emergency Shelter	133	132	309	12	1871	2	68	10	0	2537
Transitional Housing	460	169	207	31	1825	11	558	0	0	3261
Hotel or Motel	170	148	108	17	620	8	183	3	2	1259
Staying with Family or Friends	217	122	198	86	713	17	220	0	3	1576
Housing Unit You Rent or Own	19	14	17	0	36	2	13	0	0	101
Treatment Facility (hospital, substance abuse, psychiatric)	30	24	9	0	180	3	4	0	0	250

Jail, Prison or Juvenile Detention	14	18	29	3	172	0	30	0	1	267
Other	6	3	2	0	96	0	6	0	0	113
Total	1205	676	1050	157	6659	47	1242	19	6	11061

The following table identifies the county where homeless persons spent last night and the county of their last permanent residence.

Last Permanent County & County Last Night Cross-Tabulation										
Last Permanent County	County Last Night									Total
	Adams	Arapahoe	Boulder	Broomfield	Denver	Douglas	Jefferson	Other State or Country	Other Colorado County	
Adams	455	10	11	10	245	0	51	0	0	782
Arapahoe	171	313	6	2	677	12	149	0	0	1330
Boulder	3	7	752	1	34	0	7	0	0	804
Broomfield	0	0	7	117	11	0	1	0	0	136
Denver	386	235	64	9	2588	0	218	0	1	3501
Douglas	1	2	1	0	29	19	4	0	0	56
Jefferson	56	24	23	0	327	2	676	0	0	1108
Other State or Country	105	49	117	9	809	4	97	17	0	1207
Other Colorado County	26	35	46	7	257	9	26	0	2	408
Total	1203	675	1027	155	4977	46	1229	17	3	9332



# Methodology

## Overview & Change in Methodology

One hundred and fifteen agencies, covering 235 different programs within the seven-county Denver metropolitan area, collected information for the 2009 Homeless Point in Time Survey. Information about clients served by participating agencies was collected on Tuesday, January 27, 2009. Paper survey information was reviewed and entered into the Colorado Homeless Management Information System. In the past, homeless point-in-time counts were conducted by collecting paper surveys from homeless persons. These data were then entered into an electronic data set and subsequently analyzed using SPSS, a statistical software package. In 2009, two different methods were utilized to collect the data that were entered into the HMIS system. Participating HMIS agencies entered information directly into the HMIS system on their clients upon intake into their programs. Non-participating and some participating HMIS agencies collected information on persons seen on the count day on revised HMIS intake forms that did not include the full scope of information that is collected upon traditional HMIS intake. Data collected on paper forms were then entered into the HMIS system by temporary data entry clerks. Existing and newly collected information about homeless individuals and families was then exported from the Homeless Management Information System database into SPSS for analysis. This is a significant shift in survey methodology from previous Point in Time surveys. Thus, comparisons between the 2009 results with previous survey results are limited.

Primary changes in methodology include:

1. Participating agencies enter data directly into the HMIS system upon intake and exit, rather than having the data collected on a single day on paper forms and entered into an electronic data set by temporary data entry workers. Data entered directly into the HMIS system by participating agencies for persons residing in 30-120 day emergency shelter programs and in 2-year transitional housing programs may have been entered prior to the count date. However, all persons still residing in those programs would be captured by the HMIS system. Data collected in HMIS is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure that it is comprehensive and accurate leading to more precise counts and with less missing information.
2. HMIS intake questionnaires and corresponding Point-in-Time Survey forms have been standardized to meet HMIS data standards resulting in some changes to questions that had been asked on previous survey forms.
3. The HMIS system traditionally collects data on every person in the household. Previous surveys collected minimal information about children and other family members in a household, limiting the ability to get comprehensive demographic information about family members. It should be noted that data collected on paper forms on the day of the 2009 count collected demographic information for all members of the family, but did not collect information from all family members for every question solicited on the survey.
4. The HMIS system collects personally identifying information from every person entered into the system. Collected identifying information includes full name, social security number, gender, and data of birth. An algorithm is then applied to the personal information to create a unique identifying PIN (Z-WNPP-SUGE-SNQFQ). This PIN allows for more accurate de-duplication of the data and a more accurate count.

In addition, federal law prohibits domestic violence shelters from entering information into HMIS systems. In response, an EXCEL Spreadsheet was created so that Domestic Violence Shelters could report aggregate information on clients served on January 27, 2009 using the same data fields contained within the HMIS system.

This study was completed on the streets, in emergency shelters, transitional housing projects, food lines, day shelters, treatment programs, area hospitals, and work programs. Persons were counted as homeless who lacked a permanent place of their own to live. This includes persons who were staying on the streets, in emergency shelters, in transitional living facilities or were using services for the indigent, living in hotels or motels, or were staying temporarily with family or friends and identified themselves as being homeless and were therefore requesting emergency shelter and services.

### **Point-in-Time Data Collection Information**

While HMIS collects information over time on persons who are homeless, it is possible to export data based upon persons who are considered homeless at a specific point in time. Data was exported for this survey for persons who were identified as homeless on January 27, 2009. Exporting data is a process where data that is collected in one system is copied and moved into another software program so that it can be analyzed. Homeless persons completed survey forms with the assistance of staff and volunteers at homeless provider facilities. Final data analysis was performed by using a statistical software program called SPSS. Data analysis for homeless characteristics, demographics and other statistics are based solely upon respondents who completed either an HMIS intake form or the Point-in-Time survey form and indicated through their responses that they were homeless. The study provides counts of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. Sheltered persons are persons who were staying in shelters, transitional housing programs or other places fit for human habitation. Unsheltered persons are persons who identified that they spent the night prior to the survey on the streets or other outside locations.

### **Data Entry Process**

The majority of HMIS data were entered primarily by each HMIS-participating agency. A total of 154 programs who were either not currently using HMIS or who wanted assistance with data entry, chose to participate in the Point-in-Time count by collecting information from homeless persons seen by the program on January 27, 2009 on standard HMIS intake forms. Trained temporary data entry workers then entered the data collected on paper forms into HMIS. Over 5,000 paper forms were collected. All forms collected on January 27, 2009 that were entered into the HMIS system were reviewed by HMIS staff and separated into three classifications:

- Homeless
- Not Homeless
- Not enough information to determine homeless status

Forms that were incomplete and forms that clearly indicated that the person surveyed was not homeless were not entered into the system. A total of 977 forms were not entered because the person or family surveyed was not homeless. An additional 222 forms were not entered because the form was either not legible or there was not enough information recorded to determine homeless status. A total of 3,597 forms were determined to meet the homeless definition and were entered by the temporary data entry workers.

### **Process and Methods for Collecting Point in Time Data**

In order to gain an accurate enumeration of the number of homeless persons in the Denver metropolitan area, comprehensive demographic information was collected upon intake by agencies that serve the homeless throughout the seven counties and then entered into the HMIS system either by each agency or by the temporary data entry workers. Participating agencies included emergency shelters, day shelters, transitional housing facilities, soup kitchens, county departments of human services, workforce development programs, day labor programs, outreach programs, head start agencies, faith based organizations, mental health centers, food banks, and health care clinics. In addition, outreach teams conducted surveys with persons sleeping on the streets and other public places.

HMIS staff from the Colorado Department of Human Services and members of the MDHI Research Committee spent six months preparing homeless agencies in the Denver metropolitan area by training new agencies and working to ensure that all participating agencies had the capacity and ability to enter comprehensive and complete information on all clients being served.

Finally, while the results of this study provide a good estimate of the number of homeless persons within the Denver metropolitan area on January 27, 2009, it should be noted that only homeless persons receiving and requesting assistance from participating agencies, or those found through outreach efforts were entered into the system and counted. It is unlikely every homeless person in the metro area on that particular day was counted. Because it was very cold on Monday, January 26 and Tuesday, January 27, with temperatures ranging from a low of 3° F to 12° F, outreach workers found it difficult to contact homeless persons.

Families and/or individuals not requesting assistance and who were not found through outreach efforts were not counted. This is a point in time census count and formulas were not utilized to estimate the number of persons not counted due to this factor.

### **Reasons Chosen for This Method**

One primary reason for conducting this homeless point in time survey was to determine whether or not HMIS could be a viable instrument used to gather demographic and statistical information about homeless persons in the Denver metropolitan area. In addition, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires that communities interested in receiving federal homeless assistance conduct annual point in time surveys.

### **Defining the Homeless**

Guidelines and requirements established by the federal government were used to conduct an enumeration of the homeless population. The federal definition of homelessness includes homeless persons with emergency housing and service needs and homeless persons who are receiving transitional housing and services. Persons residing in transitional housing were not counted as needing emergency services. Also included as homeless were persons who lacked a permanent place to live, who were accessing services for the indigent, who were living in hotels or motels, or who were staying temporarily with family or friends. In this group, persons who reported they were staying or living with family and friends were counted as homeless if they identified themselves as being homeless and were therefore requesting emergency shelter and

services. Persons who reported they had a current permanent place to live were not counted as homeless.

**Homeless Client Categories**

The definitions of population types analyzed for this survey are as follows:

Homeless Families - Includes families with children under the age of 18, youth with children, and couples without children.

Single Individuals - Overall count includes unaccompanied single men and women.

Homeless Youth - Overall count includes unaccompanied single youth ages 12 to 24.

Youth Headed Families – Includes youth with children between the ages of 16 and 24.

Chronically Homeless - Chronic homelessness refers to an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more **OR** has had at 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 during that time.

**De-Duplication**

A unique identifier or PIN is automatically generated in the HMIS system for every person entered. The unique identifier (PIN) is created through an algorithm based upon the individuals first name, middle name, last name, date of birth, gender, and social security number. Each PIN is assigned a validity rating based upon the number of elements entered and available to generate the unique identifier. 95.9% of individuals entered had a PIN rating of 75% or better, which simplifies the process of identifying duplicates through use of a PIN. In addition, each household is assigned a household ID. An initial de-duplication was conducted by merging duplicates within agencies. A second de-duplication process was conducted in SPSS by identifying duplicate PINs across agencies and manually deleting records that were duplicated. The most comprehensive record in each duplicate case was kept. Occasionally there were persons who were entered as individuals by one agency and also entered as a family member by other agencies. In those instances, the individual record was deleted and the person was counted as a family member.

**Frequencies – Number of Total Duplicates Cleaned from Final Data Set**

A total of 881 duplicates were deleted from the aggregate database, totaling about 8% of all persons originally counted.

Indicator of each first matching case as Primary

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Duplicate Case	881	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Removing Not Homeless, Not Interested and Insufficient Information**

1,199 surveys were not entered into the system after the initial paper review showed that they were either not homeless or there wasn't enough information available on the survey to determine homeless status. An additional, 1,125 persons were deleted from the data set for insufficient information, a determination that they were not homeless, or because the respondent did not complete the homeless intake section on the form, resulting in the ability to make a determination of homeless status.

**Homeless Status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Insufficient Information	29	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Homeless Status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Homeless Intake	112	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Homeless Status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Homeless	984	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Determining Homeless Status**

Homeless status was determined by running checks and cross tabs on the respondents answer to the following data fields:

Are you homeless:

Response of Yes

Where Did You Stay Last Night AND Where Did you Stay Before Your Most Recent Location:

Automatic Homeless Qualifying Responses:

- Bus
- Camping
- Car/Vehicle
- Emergency Shelter
- Hotel/Motel Paid For With A Voucher
- Migrant Shelter
- On the Street, Under a Bridge, Etc.
- Transitional Housing for Homeless Persons
- Transportation Site/Station

Not Homeless Qualifiers if, - Are You Homeless Response is No:

- Apartment Or House That You Own Or Rent
- Permanent Housing For Homeless Persons

Additional cross tab checks are run on the following data fields:

Total Number of Times Homeless (including this time, choose one):

A response of 1 or more times in combination with Where Spent Last Night or Most Recent Location.

Not Homeless Qualifiers if, - Are You Homeless Response is No:

- Not Applicable

How Long Have You Been Homeless This Time:

Any response other than Don't Know, Refused or Not Applicable indicating a time frame in combination with response to Where Spent Last Night or Most Recent Location.

Not Homeless Qualifiers if, - Are You Homeless Response is No:

- Not Applicable

Reasons or Contributing Factors to Homeless Situation:

Any response in combination with other cross tabs.

Not Homeless Qualifiers if, - Are You Homeless Response is No:

- Doesn't apply to me

**Determining Chronically Homeless Status:**

The following criteria were utilized to meet the federal definition of chronic homelessness:

- The person must be an unaccompanied individual;
- The person must have a disabling condition;
- The person must have been either continuously homeless for a year or more OR has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.
- The person must be either living in an emergency shelter or sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation.

## Acknowledgements

This is the ninth Homeless Point-in-Time study conducted by The Metropolitan Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) since 1998. Linda Barringer and Pat Lease, Co-Chairs of MDHI's Research Committee, supervised the study. Mile High United Way provided funding for data entry.

Training, data entry oversight and database management were completed with the assistance of Susan Belyea and Dawn Fransua, HMIS Specialists, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs.

Data analysis and written findings were completed by Tracy D'Alanno, Homeless Programs Manager, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs.

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<i>Adams County:</i>	<i>Alicia Aguilera</i>
<i>Arapahoe County:</i>	<i>Signy Mikita</i>
<i>Aurora:</i>	<i>Brooke Davidson &amp; Sharon Duwaik</i>
<i>Boulder County:</i>	<i>Catherine Bedell</i>
<i>City and County of Broomfield:</i>	<i>Sharon Farrell</i>
<i>City and County of Denver:</i>	<i>Pat Coyle</i>
<i>Douglas County:</i>	<i>Valerie Robson</i>
<i>Jefferson County:</i>	<i>Linda Barringer</i>
<i>Outreach:</i>	<i>Randle Loeb</i>

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**This research project could not have been completed without the support and dedication of the many homeless providers throughout the Denver metropolitan area. A special note of thanks goes to the hard working people who strive to provide a decent and safe place for homeless persons to live.**

**Finally, this report would not have been possible without the cooperation of the more than 11,000 survey respondents who completed surveys and provided us with confidential information about their experiences and reasons for homelessness.**

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## Participating Agencies

Not all agency subprograms or outreach locations are included on this list.

ACCESS Housing	Colorado AIDS Project
Adams County Food Distribution	Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Adams County Housing Authority	Colorado Homeless Families
Adams County Social Services Department	Colorado Veterans for Housing
Almost Home, Inc.	Columbine Hotel Apartments
Alternatives to Family Violence Safe House	Comitis Crisis Center, Inc.
Arapahoe County Department of Human Services (DHS)	Community Reach Center
Arapahoe County Detention Center	Cornerstone Food Bank
Arapahoe Douglas Works	Delores Project, The
Arapahoe House	Denver Department of Human Services (DHS)
Arapahoe/Douglas Mental Health Network	Denver Health and Hospital Authority
Arvada Community Food Bank	Denver Rescue Mission
Association for Senior Citizens	Denver Safe House
Aurora Housing Authority	Denver Urban Ministries (DenUM)
Aurora Mental Health Center	Disability Center for Independent Living
Bayaud Industries, Inc.	Doctors Care
Boulder County Advocates for Transitional Housing	Douglas County Department of Human Services (DHS)
Boulder County AIDS Project	Douglas/Elbert Task Force
Boulder County Housing and Human Services	Downtown Denver Outreach
Boulder County Public Health	Dry Bones
Boulder Creek Path-Outreach	El Comite
Boulder Housing Partners	Emergency Family Assistance Association
Boulder Shelter for the Homeless	Empowerment Program, The
Boulder Valley School District	Evergreen Christian Outreach
Boulder/Broomfield Mental Health Center, The	Exempla Lutheran Medical Center
Bridgeway	Family Homestead
Broomfield Detention Center	Family Tree Women in Crisis
Broomfield Health and Human Services	Family Tree, Inc.
Carriage House	First Christian Church (Boulder)
Catholic Charities	FISH Incorporated of Broomfield
Center for People with Disabilities	Forward Steps
Center of Hope	Friends of St. Andrew
Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores	Gateway Battered Women's Services North
Children Youth Resources	Gateway Battered Women's Services South
Christ's Body Ministries	Gathering Place, The
Colfax Community Network	Good News Center
	Growing Home

## Participating Agencies (CONT)

Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement  
Inn Between of Longmont, Inc. (The)  
Inter-Faith Community Services  
Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Denver  
It Takes a Village  
Jeffco Action Center  
Jeffco Head Start  
Jefferson Center for Mental Health  
Jefferson County Department of Social Services  
Jefferson County Jail  
Journey  
Longmont Children's Council  
Longmont Housing Authority  
Longmont United Hospital  
Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD)  
Metro CareRing  
Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN)  
Mile High Ministries  
Nederland Community Presbyterian Church  
New Genesis  
Outreach United Resource Center, Inc.  
Parent Pathways  
Parker Task Force  
Road Called Strate, The  
Sacred Heart House of Denver  
Safe House Progressive Alliance for NonViolence  
Safe House Shelter of St. Vrain Valley  
Salvation Army, The (Denver)  
Senior Support Services  
Sox Place  
St. Francis Center  
St. Paul Local Assistance Ministry  
Step 13, Inc.  
Stride  
Third Way Center, Inc.  
Urban Peak  
Volunteers of America

Volunteers of America Brandon Center  
Warren Village, Inc.  
Wellsprings Food Pantry