



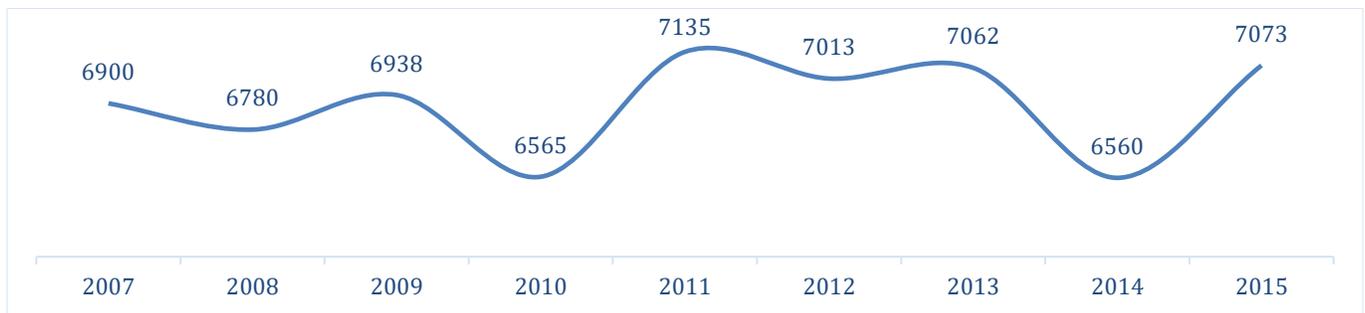
The Face of Homelessness: Demographic Myths and Data

Strategies to End Homelessness leads the coordinated system of care for the homeless and those at-risk of becoming homeless in Greater Cincinnati.

“Homelessness” is literally defined as (people who are) living in emergency shelters or are sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, such as on the streets.

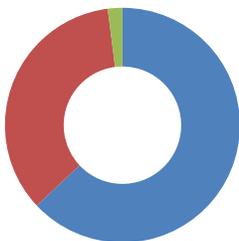
People Sleeping on the Street or in an Emergency Shelter in Hamilton County

Homelessness in Hamilton County has remained stable. In 2015, 7,073 people found themselves on the street or in a shelter, an overall increase of 7.8% from 2014, but a slight decrease of 0.9% over the past five years.



What does homelessness look like in Hamilton County

GENDER



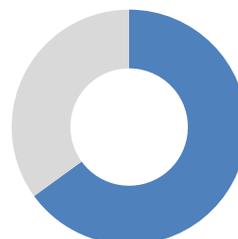
In 2015, 59% of the homeless population were male, and 41% were female. 0.2% identified in other ways.

CHILDREN



Youth under the age of 18 make up 27% of the homeless population. 57% are under the age of 35.

RACE



African Americans make up about 25% of Hamilton County¹, but make up 66% of the homeless population.

VETERANS



A decrease over recent years, 6% of Hamilton County's homeless population are Military Veterans

¹ www.Census.gov

Debunking the Myths of Homelessness

Myth **The homeless population is mainly made up of older men.**

Reality Homelessness is a **community-wide** problem that doesn't discriminate. With over 40% of those affected being female, and more than half under the age of 35, homelessness affects men and women in every stage of life.

Myth **You can help the homeless by giving spare change to people who ask for money.**

Reality While it is important to treat people with dignity and respect, a more effective and sustainable way to help the homeless is to give to or volunteer at your local homeless services agencies. Studies have found that only a small percentage of people who "panhandle" are homeless. Conversely, only a small percentage of homeless people panhandle.²

Myth **Homelessness is often a long-term situation.**

Reality Over 800 people are either on the streets or in shelters, in Hamilton County on any given night. With just over 7,000 unduplicated people each year, the homeless population actually turns over almost 10 times per year. On average, homelessness is a relatively short-term crisis.

Myth **People who live on the streets are there by choice.**

Reality Most of the time there is sufficient shelter capacity for people to come indoors, in part because shelter capacity is expanded at times of peak demand. Still, some people do not come inside due to factors such as untreated substance abuse or mental illness. Therefore, as opposed to people "choosing" to be out on the streets, the fact that some people have not come into shelter has more to do with their illness(es) than it has to do with a choice.

Myth **There is no solution to homelessness.**

Reality Homelessness is in fact a problem which can be solved. Cost-effective homelessness prevention services reduce the number of people who ever become homeless, while high quality service-enriched shelters focus on helping return people to housing, and supportive housing solutions provide the last bit of support needed to help people achieve independence.³

¹ 2015 STEH Progress Report on Ending Homelessness

² Center for Problem-Oriented Policing

³ 2015 STEH Progress Report on Ending Homelessness

Unless otherwise noted, all data presented in this report was gathered by Strategies to End Homelessness from VESTA™, our community's Homeless Management Information System, which is operated by The Partnership Center, Ltd.

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