



SNAPSHOT OF HOMELESSNESS IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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Ask any organization, individual, or charity serving the homeless in Middle Tennessee how many people are experiencing homelessness in the community, and you will get vastly different answers.



WHAT'S THE DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS?

Before you can answer the question of who is homeless, you must first decide which definition of homelessness to use, because there is more than one “official” definition. Both definitions come from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a United States federal law that was the country’s first significant legislative response to homelessness. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

definition in Subtitle I provides a general definition of homelessness and is used by the majority of federal agencies. The definition in Subtitle VII has a much broader definition including those in motels, living with family/friends, and specifically applies the education of homeless children and youth.

WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS LEADING TO HOMELESSNESS?

A great number of factors contribute to someone becoming homeless. And while the vast majority of people who become homeless do so for a short time, the number of people experiencing episodes of homelessness continues to rise.

Here are some of the factors that contribute to a person experiencing homelessness:

Job Loss – A job loss leads to a loss of income, which can lead someone on a downward spiral.

Substance Abuse – Addiction to drugs and alcohol are on the rise. The rates are disproportionately high among the population without homes.

- According to the Tennessee Department of Health, drug overdose deaths increased from 1,451 in 2015 to 1,631 in 2016. This is a 12 percent increase from 2015-2016 compared to a 14 percent increase the previous year. The most dramatic increase in drug overdose deaths was among young people: In 2015 there were 87 drug overdose deaths in the 15 to 24 year age group, compared to 116 in 2016.

Jail or Incarceration – Many of those released from jails or prisons leave with just the clothes on their back. Without family intervention, many have no other safety net to help them get back on their feet.

Illness / Physical Disabilities – For families and individuals struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for care, and eventual eviction. For those receiving SSI (Social Security Income), they often struggle to obtain and maintain stable housing.

Mental Illness – Approximately 20-25 percent of single adult people experiencing homelessness suffer from some form of severe and persistent mental illness. According to the Treatment Advocacy Center (a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating barriers to the timely and effective treatment of severe mental illness), “People with untreated serious mental illness comprise an estimated one-third of the total homeless population in the United States and an even higher percentage of women and individuals who are chronically homeless.”

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Severe Depression/Tragedy

– A person experiencing PTSD, severe depression, or other illnesses stemming from a tragic event may find themselves unable to function and care for themselves.

Domestic Violence – Battered women who live in poverty are often forced to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness.

Other things such as **low wages, poverty, natural disasters**, (e.g., fire, tornado, or flood), which renders housing inhabitable, may also contribute to a person experiencing homelessness.

It is also worth mentioning that a **lack of affordable housing** may also lead to homelessness.

- As the economy in the mid-state has been on the rise, according to the *Tennessean*, an analysis in 2015, reported a shortage of 17,754 affordable rental housing units to meet the demand for households that earn 60 percent or below of the median household income, which is currently \$52,026. With a low unemployment rate, and a record number of 80 to 100 new people moving to Nashville each day, this number will most certainly continue to rise.

HOMELESSNESS IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

The area described as Middle Tennessee is made up of 41 counties in the middle of the state. The principal city of Nashville, located in Davidson County, sits in the middle and is the state’s capital. Other major sizable cities in Middle Tennessee include Clarksville and Murfreesboro. The rural nature of the majority of the counties surrounding Davidson County do not have adequate resources to care for those who may become homeless in their communities. This leads most of those seeking emergency shelter to Nashville, where there are a number of resources available to assist the homeless.

According to the *U.S. Conference of Mayor’s Report on Housing and Homelessness in 2016*, the rate of homeless in Nashville rose 9.8 percent from 2015 to 2016, which was the sixth-largest leap among major U.S. cities. The report goes on to say that two out of five homeless people in Nashville, or 40.3 percent, are experiencing chronic homelessness—defined as lacking shelter while also having repeated medical issues, mental illness, substance abuse disorders, or remaining homeless for long stretches. That percentage tops all cities.

Here’s a snapshot of those living in Davidson County according to the city’s 2016 Community Needs Assessment:

Population	668,347
High School Graduate	87.7%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	37.3%
Median Age	34.4 years



Age 65 and Over	11.1%
Median Earnings for All Workers	\$28,296
Living in Poverty	19.9% or 129,057
Population with Low Food Access	26.2%

WHAT'S THE POINT IN TIME COUNT?

The majority of organizations and agencies serving the homeless population in Middle Tennessee in the areas of food, clothing, and shelter operate using the HUD definition of homelessness. This is particularly important when the annual Point In Time (PIT) count takes place.

The Metropolitan Housing and Development Agency (MDHA) provides coordination assistance to the local agencies that collectively are Nashville's homeless-services Continuum of Care (COC), including helping coordinate the annual HUD Point-In-Time (PIT) count. The HUD 2017 PIT count as reported by the Nashville/Davidson (COC) gives the following statistics about people experiencing homelessness in Davidson County:

TOTAL HOMELESS PEOPLE	2,337
Sheltered	1,682
Unsheltered	655
TOTAL CHRONIC POPULATION	601
Sheltered Singles	210
Unsheltered Singles	382
Sheltered Families	1 w/ 9 members
TOTAL FAMILIES POPULATION	82
Sheltered Families	80 families w/ 296 members
Unsheltered Families	2 families w/ 10 members
TOTAL VETERAN POPULATION	231
Sheltered Veterans	184
Unsheltered Veterans	37
Unsheltered Veterans Families	2 w/ 10 members
Sheltered Chronic Veterans	2
Sheltered Families	1 w/ 9 members
UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH (<25)	108

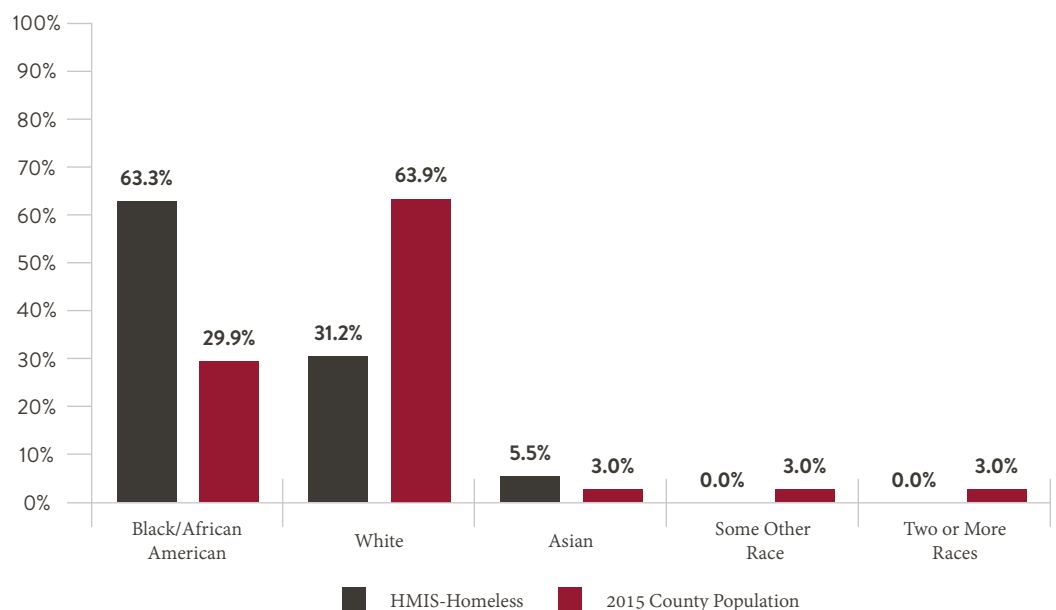


The PIT count is usually taken on one of the coldest days in January. It provides a fairly accurate count of those who are staying in shelters. The city saw roughly an increase of 10 percent in 2016 over 2015. This year that dropped a little more than 1 percent. However, 2017 saw the second highest number of homeless counted during the annual PIT since reporting in 2010.

HOW IS ALL THIS INFORMATION TRACKED?

MDHA also helps manage the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database into which agencies enter services data. Chart H-23 shows the percentage of these individuals served by Nashville COC agencies by race. American Community Survey 1-year estimates of the 2015 total population in Davidson County are shown for comparison.

Chart H-23: Percent of Homeless Clients Reported to HMIS by Race
Davidson County, June-Nov. 2016



Sources: Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency; 2015 American Community Survey Table B02001

For additional insight, here is the demographical breakdown of the individuals experiencing homelessness in 2017 served by Nashville Rescue Mission:



UNDUPLICATED INDIVIDUALS

Number of Unduplicated Men Served	5,325
Number of Unduplicated Women Served	1,948
Number of Unduplicated People Served Gender Unknown	1
Number of Unduplicated Children Served	569
Total of Unduplicated Individuals Served	7,842

AGE GROUPS SERVED

0-12	483
13-18	110
19-24	512
25-55	5,148
56+	1,510
Unknown	79

GENDER SERVED

Female	2,218
Male	5,623
Unknown	1

ETHNICITY SERVED

African American/Black	3,446
Caucasian/White	3,588
Hispanic/Latino	254
Asian/Pacific American Islander	41
Native American/Alaskan Native	33
Multi-ethnic	99
Unknown/Unreported	381

SPECIAL POPULATION SERVED

Formerly Incarcerated (self-reporting from jail)	379
Disabled	1,115
Veterans	494
Male	465
Female	29

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THE HOMELESS IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Free Emergency Shelter and Services:

There are only a few organizations providing free emergency shelter and services to the majority of the homeless in Middle Tennessee:

NASHVILLE RESCUE MISSION

- One of only a few true emergency shelters in Nashville.
- Over 1,000 bedding surfaces available for men, women, and children in the emergency shelter.
- Services include case management; life recovery programs for those in addiction; access to medical, dental, veterans, legal, and mental health assistance; educational advancement opportunities through tutoring, HSE test preparation, and mentoring, etc.
- In 2017, the Mission served over 7,842 unique individuals, providing over 591,335 meals, and 270,957 nights of safe shelter.

ROOM IN THE INN

- Limited emergency shelter in Nashville in partnership with local congregations from November 1 – March 31 working with 185 local congregations.
- Sheltered 1,200 individual guests last year providing nearly 32,000 beds, approximately 25,000 showers, and more than 62,000 meals to their homeless guests.
- *Guest House*, in partnership with the Metro Police Department, provides a safe alternative to jail for the publicly intoxicated and shelter for those seeking to recover from addiction. Almost 37,000 beds were provided last year for those in various stages of recovery.
- *Recuperative Care* provides medically fragile homeless individuals a safe place to recover from illness or hospitalization. Shelter, meals, and medications are provided. Around 400 individuals were offered an opportunity to recuperate and connect with vital social services last year, with an average length of stay of 25 days.
- *Veterans Program*, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, provides 32 beds to those who have served our country.
- *Downtown Comprehensive Center* includes 38 efficiency apartments and ongoing case management for residents.

Outside of Nashville:

There are only a few mission-type facilities near Nashville. They are limited in size, scope, and resources but can provide some assistance to those with immediate needs.

MURFREESBORO RESCUE MISSION

35 miles outside of Nashville

- Upstart.
- No permanent facility.
- Currently provides limited winter care through partnership with local churches.

RADICAL MISSION IN CLARKSVILLE

50 miles outside of Nashville

- Offers a variety of services including a food pantry, clothing room, emergency housing, shelter, and meal for up to 20 men, women, and children during winter months, Celebrate Recovery, community garden, furniture, food supplements for 30 middle school children, employment readiness program, and income-based counseling.

COOKEVILLE RESCUE MISSION

80 miles outside of Nashville

- Established in 1976.
- Provides emergency, temporary shelter for the homeless.
- Offers two residential buildings plus a chapel, general store, salon, and dental clinic.
- Offers assistance lasting from three to 30 days for men, women, and families in need.
- Also operates Step Upward Farm, a seven-acre working farm that offers a three- to nine-month program designed to help young, troubled fathers turn their lives around.

Free Family Shelter and Services:

When seeking emergency shelter specifically for mothers with children, or intact families, the options in Davidson County diminish.

SAFE HAVEN

- Safe Haven has 10 spaces for families with children.
- In 2016, Safe Haven served 20 couples, 56 single mothers, 11 single fathers, and one multi-generational family.
- Historically housed an average of 38 families, including 57 children, each year.
- Following their recent renovation, they anticipate serving at least 100 families, including more than 150 children, annually.

SOPHIA'S HEART *(now closed)*

- In 2010, Sophia's Heart was established in Antioch to provide flood relief for victims of the historical May flood. Following flood relief efforts, the organization attempted to provide services to homeless families in the Middle Tennessee area. At one time caring for 25 to 30 families and at full capacity could have housed 100 to 150 individuals per year. Unfortunately, Sophia's Heart closed in 2017, leaving a gaping hole in the area of emergency services to homeless families in the Nashville area.

Free Subset Shelters with Criteria:

Over and above organizations providing general emergency services to homeless women, and moms with children, there are a few subsets with very limited capacity. The largest subset is for women seeking shelter as a result of domestic violence issues.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Within Davidson County, women who are escaping domestic violence have a handful of shelters to choose from, assuming they meet each organization’s criteria. **YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter** can accommodate up to 50 women and children. Additional shelters for domestic violence include **The Mary Parrish Center** and **Morning Star Sanctuary**.

Outside of the Nashville area, there are a few additional beds available for mothers with children suffering from domestic violence, and they include **Bridges Domestic Violence Center** in Franklin; **Home Safe** in Hendersonville; **Urban Ministries** in Clarksville; and **Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter** in Murfreesboro.



INCARCERATION

Within Davidson County, there are a handful of shelters and/or programs specifically available to those who were formerly incarcerated, assuming they meet each organization’s criteria. These include **Dismas House** (men), **The Next Door** (women), and **Center House** (men).

HUD Housing Options:

In addition to shelter facilities, Nashville has access to a variety of low-cost, HUD-approved housing units.

Urban Housing Solutions is Nashville’s largest nonprofit provider of affordable housing. Urban Housing Solutions owns and operates 30 properties—with over 900 apartments in Nashville.

MDHA operates 56,399 units in 20 public housing properties. Also, MDHA manages Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers that are a form of HUD housing subsidy that residents may use to find apartments of their choice.

Here is a list of additional HUD-approved housing developments, of which only eight are for families.



TYPE OF PUBLIC HOUSING	APARTMENT NAME	LOCATION	UNITS
Family	Cayce Place	701 South 7 th Street, 37206	710
Family	Napier Place	648 Claiborne Street, 37210	378
Family	Edgehill Homes	1277 12 th Avenue North, 37203	380
Family	Sudekum Apartments	101 University Court, 37210	443

(list continued)

TYPE OF PUBLIC HOUSING	APARTMENT NAME	LOCATION	UNITS
Family	Cheatham Place	1564 9 th Avenue North, 37208	314
Family	Andrew Jackson Courts	1457 Jackson Street, 37208	374
Family	Cumberland View	2316 25 th Avenue North, 37208	226
Family	Neighborhood Housing	(Scattered sites)	368
Contemporary/Market	Vine Hill	601 Benton Avenue, 37204	152
Contemporary/Market	Preston Taylor	3900 Clifton Road, 37209	338
Contemporary/Market	Levy Place	303 Foster Street, 37207	226
Contemporary/Market	J. Henry Hale	1433 Jo Johnson Avenue, 37203	228
Contemporary	Parkway Terrace	196 North 7 th Street, 37206	125
Elderly Only	Edgefield Manor	525 Shelby Avenue, 37206	220
Elderly Only	Carleen Batson Waller Manor	106 31 st Avenue South, 37212	53
Elderly Only	Gernert Studio	1101 Edgehill Avenue, 37203	176
Elderly and Disabled	Hadley Park Towers	2901 John Merritt Blvd. 37209	154
Elderly and Disabled	Madison Towers	591 North Dupont Avenue, 37115	211
Elderly and Disabled	Parthenon Towers	301 28 th Avenue North, 37203	295
Elderly and Disabled	Vine Hill Studio	625 Benton Avenue, 37204	147

Low-Cost Shelter Options:

Nashville is home to a number of Pay Per Night and/or Pay Per Week Motels that come as a very last resort.

Pay Per Night Motels in the area include **America's Best Value Inn, Cumberland Inn, Days Inn Hotel, The Drake Motel, Knight's Inn, Stadium Inn, and Twelve Oaks.**

Conclusion:

Just as there are numerous reasons for homelessness, the options for solving this crisis are just a varied. As the largest service provider to the homeless, Nashville Rescue Mission exists to provide those who are hungry, homeless, and hurting with hope for today, hope for tomorrow, and hope for eternity. The Mission is always evaluating its services and making adjustments accordingly to meet the ever-changing needs of the homeless community and the people it serves.



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