

# 2015 REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS



# GEORGIA'S 14,000



# Georgia's 14,000 2015 Report on Homelessness

## Georgia's Homeless Population

In the last ten days of January 2015, communities nationwide conducted a count of individuals and families who were homeless, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The resulting homeless census, referred to as a "Point in Time Count," provides an indication of the size and characteristics of the nation's homeless population.

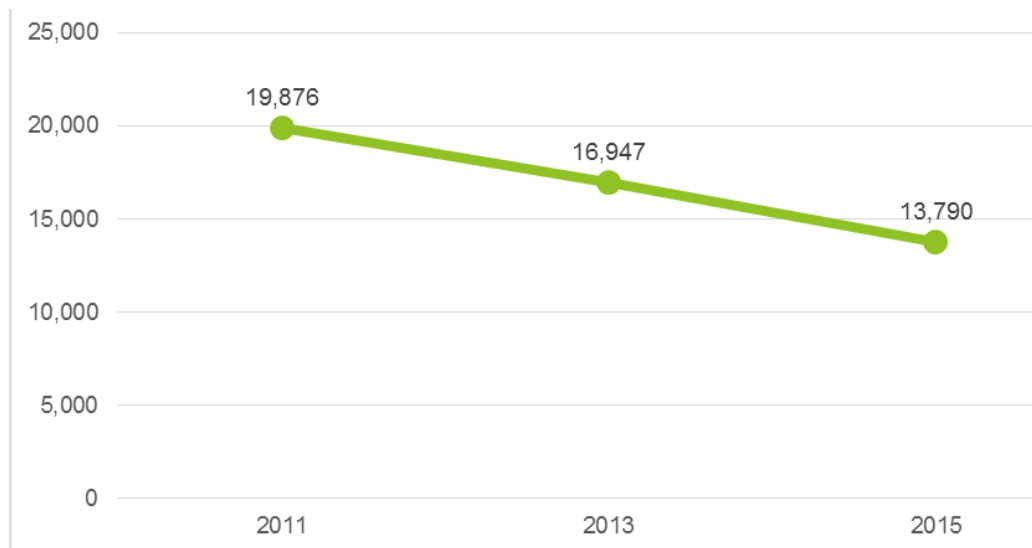
In Georgia, all nine of the state's homeless program regions, called Continua of Care, conducted a count of individuals and families who are homeless in their respective jurisdictions. Georgia's homeless population isn't static; some of the people who were homeless on the January count date will find housing. Other people, who had housing on the count night, will later become homeless.

During the Point in Time Count in January 2015, at least 13,790 people were literally homeless in Georgia – a 19% decrease from 2013.

### Georgia's Literally Homeless Population: Single Night (Point in Time Count)

Housing Status	Number of Individuals per Year		
	2011	2013	2015
Unsheltered	11,384	8,450	5,803
Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing	8,492	8,497	7,987
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,876</b>	<b>16,947</b>	<b>13,790</b>
<b>Change from previous count (%)</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>-15%</b>	<b>-19%</b>

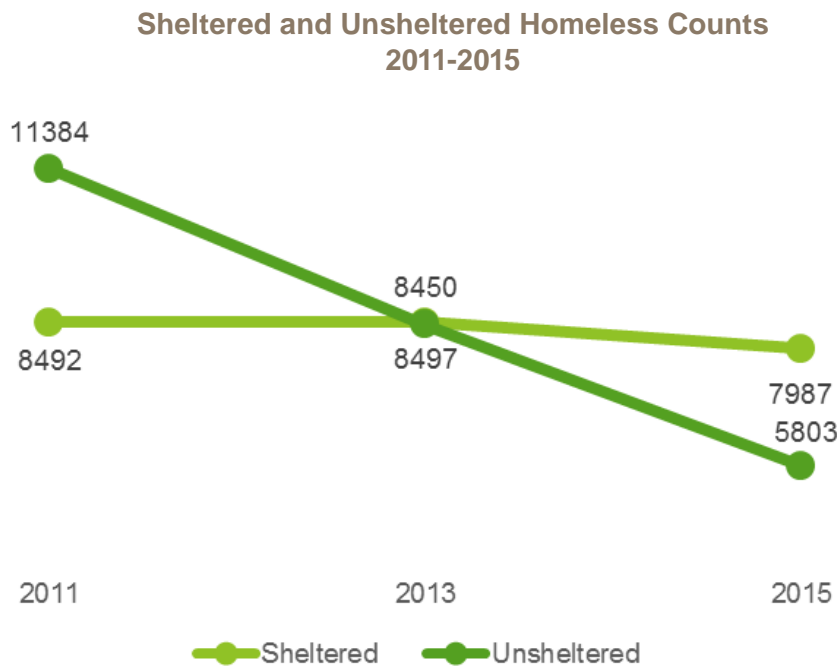
2011-2015 Point in Time Homeless Count Trend



## Homelessness in Georgia

In accordance with HUD guidelines, for the 2015 Count, Continua of Care used the following categories to define homelessness:

- Literally Homeless
  - Sheltered Homeless – lives in emergency shelter, transitional housing for homeless persons, or a hotel or motel with the stay being paid for by an organization
  - Unsheltered Homeless – lives in a car, park, abandoned building, encampment, dilapidated building, on the sidewalk, or similar location
- Imminently Homeless – is facing loss of housing within two weeks, has no subsequent residence identified, and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing
- Other Homeless – is in jail, a hospital, or a detox program, but would otherwise have been homeless<sup>1</sup>



2013 marked the first year in which just under half of the homeless individuals and families were unsheltered; the remainder were in emergency or transitional housing. In 2015 the number of people who were unsheltered homeless continued to decline with just 42% of the state's overall homeless population being unsheltered.

<sup>1</sup> Literally homeless, imminently homeless and, other homeless categories based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of homelessness in 2012.

In addition to people who are literally homeless, other people are living in motels, hotels, or are doubled up with friends or family. They may move frequently among temporary living arrangements. For some public programs, these living conditions also are categorized as homelessness.

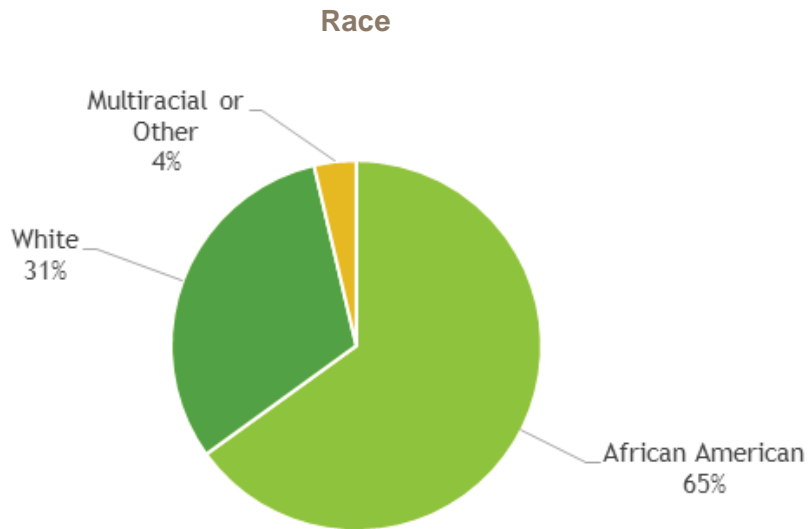
The unifying condition for virtually all of Georgia's homeless population is poverty. Many people who are homeless also experience some type of personal vulnerability that places them at risk, such as:

- Family violence
- Physical disability or chronic medical problems
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Development disability or brain injury
- Criminal background

### Georgia's Continua of Care

- Athens-Clarke County
- Augusta-Richmond County
- City of Atlanta
- Columbus-Muscogee County
- DeKalb County
- Fulton County
- Georgia Balance of State (152 counties, administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs)
- Marietta-Cobb County
- Savannah-Chatham County

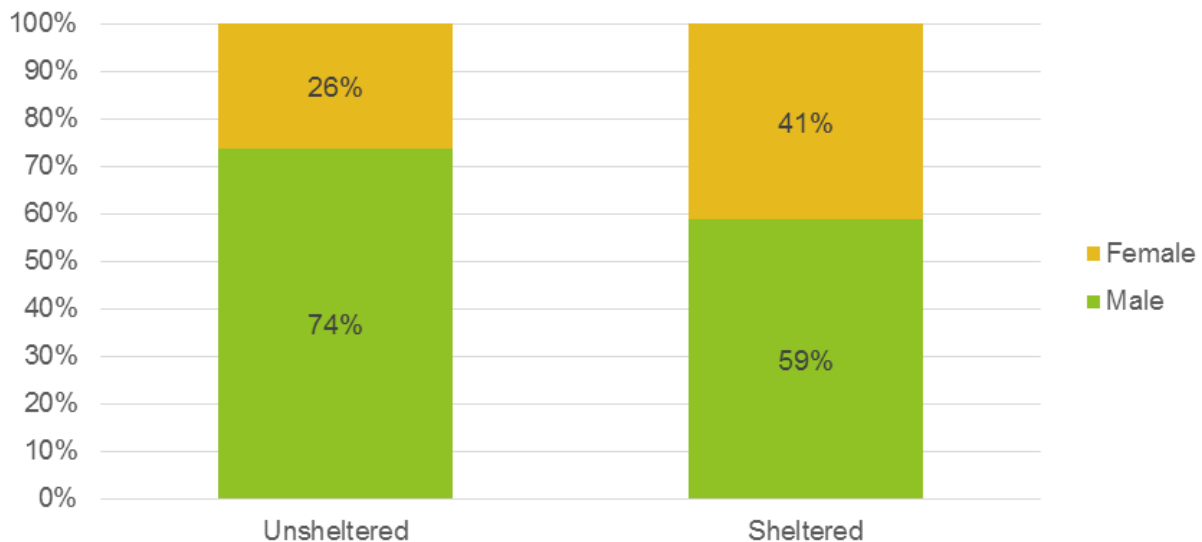
## Race, Ethnicity, and Age



The majority (65%) of the state's homeless population is African American. Four percent of the homeless population is Hispanic or Latino. Children under the age of 18 comprise 18% of the homeless population; 13% of the homeless population are youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

## Gender

**Gender by Homeless Status**



Overall, 64% of the people who are homeless are men, however that percentage increases when looking at those who are unsheltered, as three out of four of the people who are unsheltered homeless are men. When taking a closer look at gender by homeless status, the percentage of unsheltered homeless who are women (26%) is disproportionately smaller than the percentage of sheltered homeless who are women (41%).

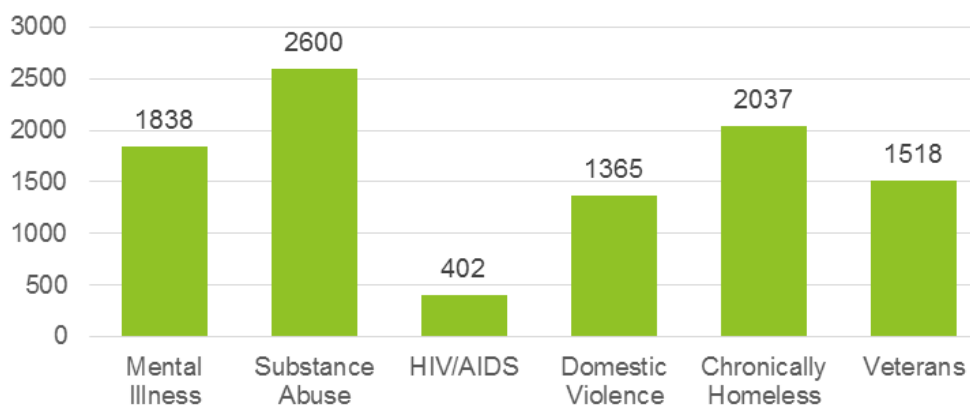
## Family Composition



Taking a look at family composition, 30% of the total homeless population are in families with children; 70% individuals and households with only adults. This year, 36% of the total homeless population are unaccompanied adults. Four percent of heads of household are youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

## Special Populations and Disabilities

Special Populations and Disabilities<sup>3</sup>



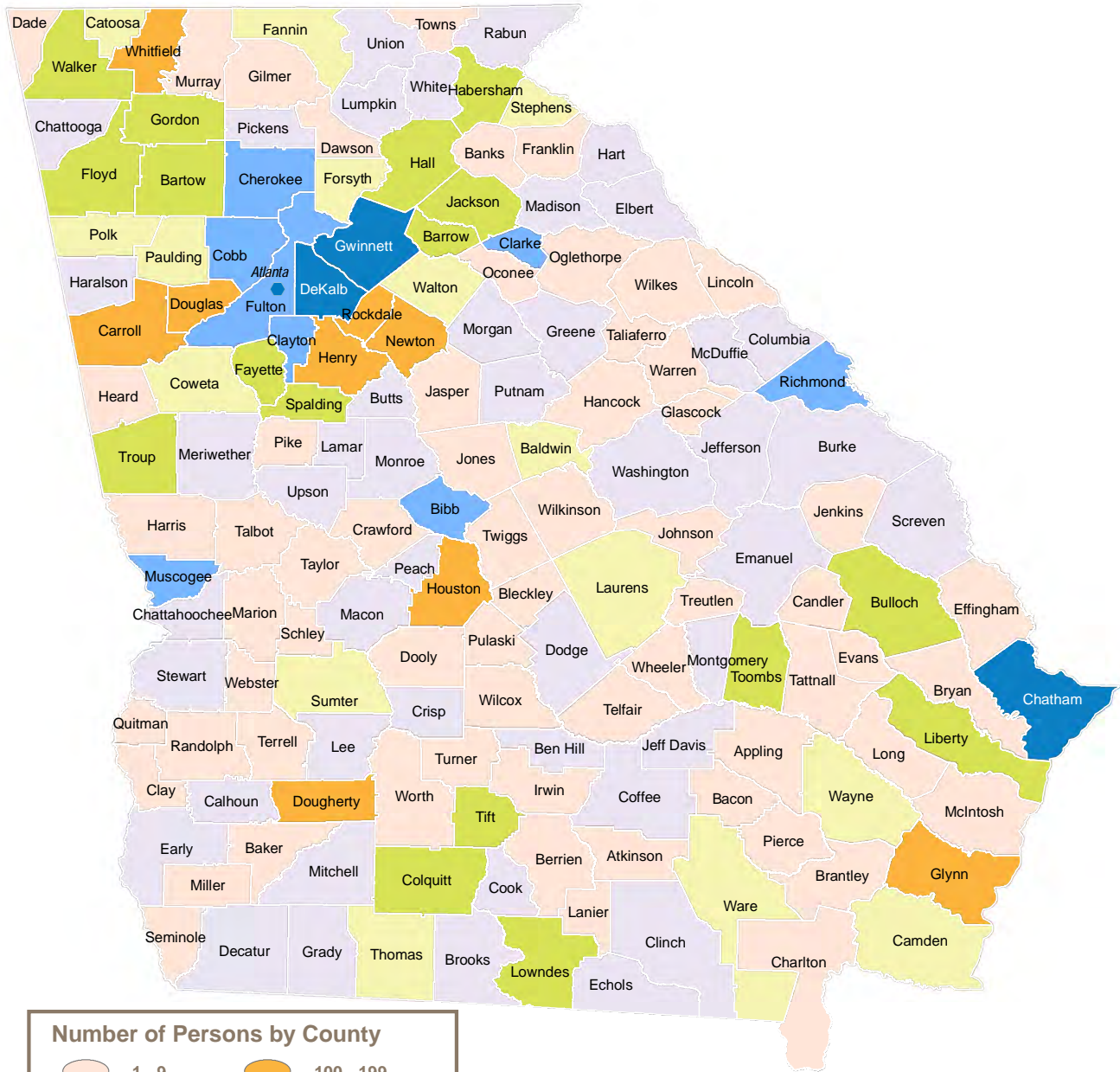
People with special needs are the most vulnerable subset of the homeless population. Sixteen (16) percent of the people who are homeless are chronically homeless, meaning that they have a disability and have been homeless for one full year or longer, or have experienced multiple occasions of homelessness in the past. Additionally, 12% of Georgia's homeless population are veterans, which is striking because only 7% of Georgia's overall population are veterans.<sup>2</sup> Substance abuse is the most

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Georgia QuickFacts, (2014), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13000.html>

<sup>3</sup> These conditions are not mutually exclusive. An individual could be included in more than one of these categories.

# 2015 Statewide Report on Homelessness

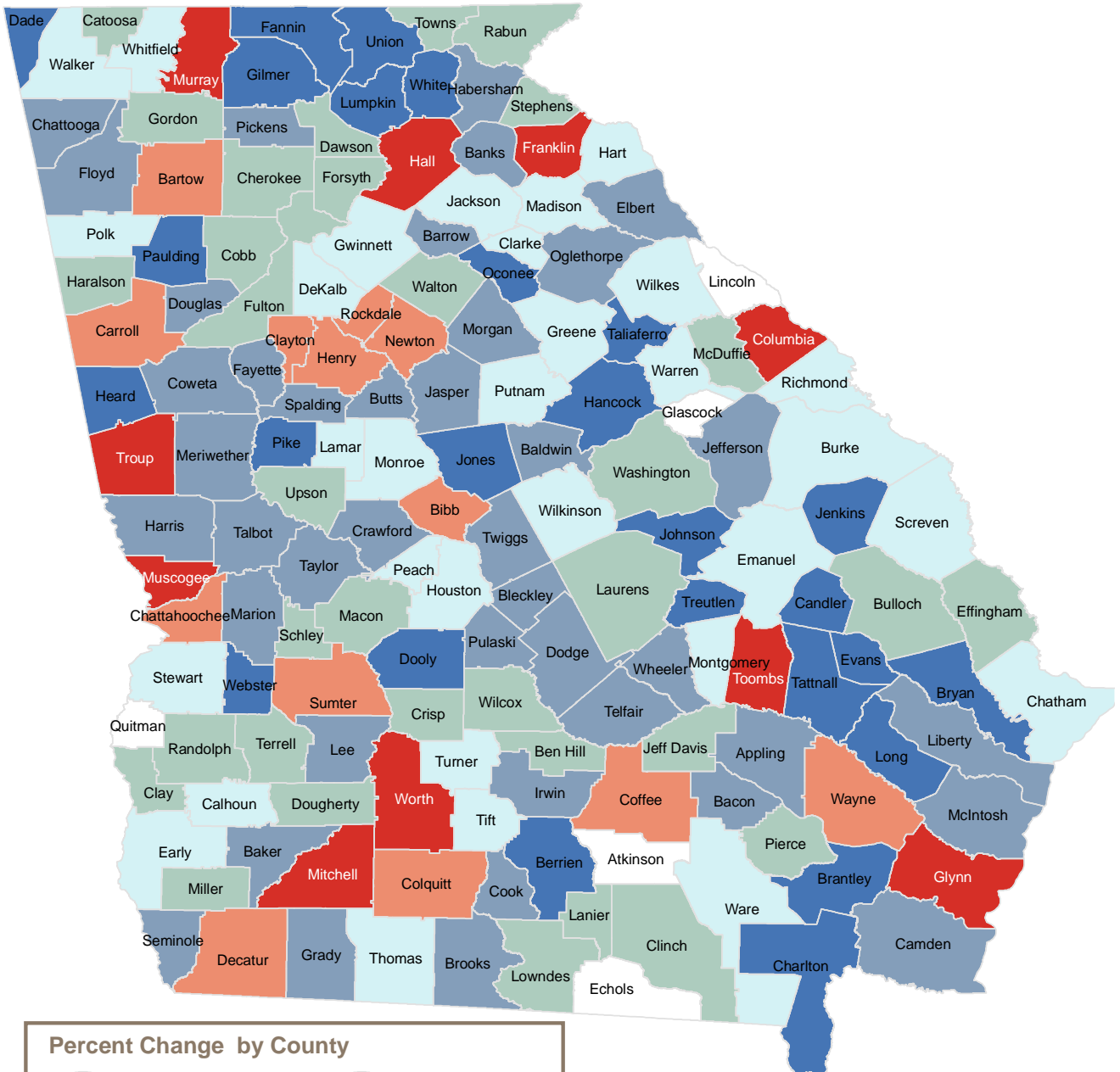
## Homeless Persons (Sheltered and Unsheltered)



Source: 2015 Sheltered Count;  
2015 Unsheltered Count and Predictive Model  
This map reflects circumstances on the night of January 26, 2015

# 2015 Statewide Report on Homelessness

## Unsheltered Change Since 2013

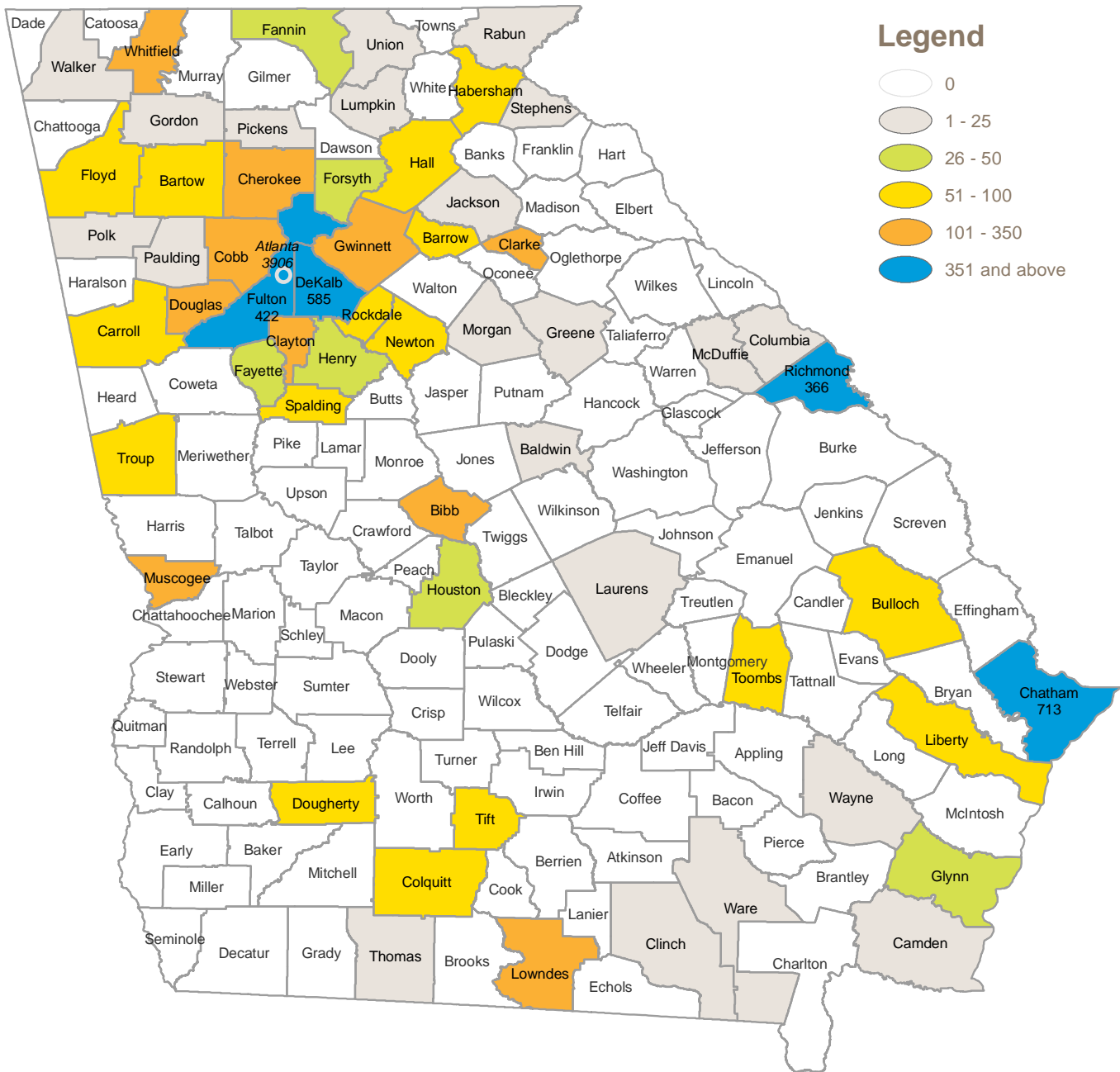


Source: 2015 Sheltered Count;  
 2015 Unsheltered Count and Predictive Model  
 This map reflects circumstances on the night of January 26, 2015



# 2015 Statewide Report on Homelessness

## Emergency and Transitional Housing Beds



## Special Thanks

The 2015 Point in Time Count and the 2015 Homeless Count Report would not have been possible without the efforts of many people and organizations across Georgia.

- Katie Arce, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Lynda Barrs, CSRA Economic Opportunity Authority
- Christie Bevis, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley
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- Samanta Carvalho, Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County
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- Liz Dillard, Homeless Resource Network
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- Daniel Evans, Augusta-Richmond County
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- Marjorie Lacy, Haven House
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- Jessica Mitcham, Good Neighbor Homeless Shelter
- Tina Moore, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Dr. Josie Parker, Pathways Community Network Institute, Inc.
- Frances Phillips, Faith Community Development Services
- Dr. Jennifer Priestley, Kennesaw State University
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- Kelly Strozier, South Georgia Partnership to End Homelessness
- Michelle Thompson, AVITA Community Partners
- Joan Toder, The Center for Family Resources
- Kelly Trapanier, Kennesaw State University
- Paul Vaughn, Kennesaw State University
- Shauntae Walker, City of Brunswick

## Appendix A: The Homeless Count Requirement and Methodology

### Congressionally Mandated Data Collection – Homeless Counts and HMIS

In order to better respond to homelessness in America, Congress has incorporated data collection requirements into the McKinney-Vento Act's programs for the homeless. The hope is that through data collection, progress toward eliminating homelessness can be tracked and programs can be tailored to better meet the need. Through amendments to the McKinney Vento Act and by HUD regulation, the nation's homeless service providers must:

- 1) Adopt a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is a person-level data collection system on people who access homeless services.<sup>4</sup>
- 2) Conduct a regular homeless census. Point-in-time homeless counts must be conducted during the last ten days of January in odd years (January 2011, 2013, and so on).

A homeless census consists of counting both sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons.

- A count of sheltered homeless people is comprised of those who occupy emergency shelters, transitional housing, recovery programs that serve homeless and non-homeless clients, and motels if motel vouchers are provided by a service agency. The goal for the sheltered count is for the data to ultimately come from HMIS.
- A count of unsheltered homeless people is comprised of those who reside in places not meant for human habitation, such as on the streets, in vehicles, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, and makeshift shelters such as tents.

As a result of data requirements placed on the Continua of Care, HUD is now able to issue an annual assessment of homelessness to Congress. In the most recent assessment, the *2014 Annual Assessment Report to Congress*<sup>5</sup>, HUD estimated that 578,424 people across the country were on the streets, in emergency shelters, or in transitional housing programs on a single night in January of that year.

### Georgia's Homeless Counts

In response to the mandates described above, each of Georgia's nine Continua of Care is engaged in an effort to count their jurisdiction's sheltered and unsheltered homeless population. Although each Continuum has an independent responsibility to meet McKinney-Vento data collection requirements, eight of the Continua have been working with a single HMIS provider (Pathways Community Network Institute, Inc.) and all nine share data related to their counts.

### Sheltered Homeless Counts

The census of homeless persons and families in shelter is done annually, in conjunction with a housing inventory count. The housing inventory count is an opportunity for each Continuum of Care to track the available housing resources for homeless persons. The goal of each inventory is to account for all housing resources for people that are homeless (emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing), not just those that are funded by the state or federal government. Each January, the Continua attempt to collect data from all homeless service providers about the number and type of beds (emergency, transitional, or permanent supportive) provided. Additionally, those service providers are asked to provide information on how many people they had utilizing the beds on a single specified night (sheltered count).

## Unsheltered Counts

There are two generally accepted methodologies for conducting counts of unsheltered persons.<sup>6</sup> The service based method uses surveys collected from persons seeking service. The surveys are generally collected during a one to two week period, but focus on a single point-in-time. The other method is the street count or canvassing method that uses a visual count of people sleeping outdoors, in encampments, and in abandoned buildings on a single night. The implementation of these methodologies varies considerably across jurisdictions, and some communities use a hybrid methodology that combines features of each approach.

This year in Georgia, most Continua relied on a hybrid methodology that included a street count or canvassing on the night of the count as well as service based administration of surveys the following week. However, some continua, such as the DeKalb County Continuum and the Savannah-Chatham Continuum have relied more heavily on the canvassing method to obtain their unsheltered counts. For the 2015 count, the Columbus-Muscogee Continuum and the City of Atlanta Continuum worked collaboratively with the Balance of State Continuum to conduct a their homeless count.

The Georgia Balance of State Continuum of Care covers 152 counties, many of them rural, presenting a significant challenge in conducting the biennial unsheltered count. While DCA was able to conduct a sheltered count to comply with the 2004 count requirement, until 2008 it did not have a feasible way to count unsheltered homeless people in the 152 counties. To meet the federal requirement, estimation techniques based on count data from other jurisdictions were used. Beginning in 2008, DCA has used a sampling methodology and predictive model developed by statistics faculty at Kennesaw State University.<sup>7</sup> In 2015, the data used for the model came from survey counts conducted in 68 counties. Additionally, the model used data from the street counts in the other Continuums. The counts conducted in the Balance of State were done using surveys collected at locations where people receive services and in places where homeless persons are known to congregate and stay.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Office of Community Planning and Development. August 2001. *Report to Congress: HUD's Strategy for Homeless Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting.*

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Office of Community Planning and Development. November 2013. *The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress.*

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Office of Community Planning and Development. October 2004. *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People.*

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Lewis Priestley. May 2008. *Every Georgian Counts: Final Report on Sampling and Modeling.* Kennesaw State University, Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

## Appendix B

COUNTY	Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)	Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)	Total Homeless Persons	Total Emergency and Transitional Beds
APPLING	6	0	6	0
ATKINSON	2	0	2	0
BACON	5	0	5	0
BAKER	5	0	5	0
BALDWIN	30	8	38	8
BANKS	6	0	6	0
BARROW	34	41	75	93
BARTOW	37	57	94	59
BEN HILL	23	0	23	0
BERRIEN	6	0	6	0
BIBB	92	252	344	256
BLECKLEY	9	0	9	0
BRANTLEY	6	0	6	0
BROOKS	10	0	10	0
BRYAN	5	0	5	0
BULLOCH	32	45	77	58
BURKE	22	0	22	0
BUTTS	10	0	10	0
CALHOUN	10	0	10	0
CAMDEN	30	5	35	24
CANDLER	3	0	3	0
CARROLL	72	82	154	86
CATOOSA	38	0	38	0
CHARLTON	3	0	3	0
CHATHAM	522	578	1,100	713
CHATTAHOOCHEE	17	0	17	0
CHATTOOGA	19	0	19	0
CHEROKEE	108	233	341	234
CITY OF ATLANTA	1,037	3,280	4,317	3,906
CLARKE	91	135	226	153
CLAY	5	0	5	0
CLAYTON	147	97	244	107
CLINCH	6	12	18	22
COBB	91	324	415	348
COFFEE	23	0	23	0
COLQUITT	11	54	65	68
COLUMBIA	13	3	16	3
COOK	13	0	13	0
COWETA	40	0	40	0
CRAWFORD	7	0	7	0
CRISP	19	0	19	0

COUNTY	Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)	Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)	Total Homeless Persons	Total Emergency and Transitional Beds
DADE	7	0	7	0
DAWSON	3	0	3	0
DECATUR	22	0	22	0
DEKALB	197	487	684	585
DODGE	17	0	17	0
DOOLY	6	0	6	0
DOUGHERTY	72	42	114	67
DOUGLAS	60	101	161	109
EARLY	15	0	15	0
ECHOLS	13	0	13	0
EFFINGHAM	3	0	3	0
ELBERT	12	0	12	0
EMANUEL	15	0	15	0
EVANS	4	0	4	0
FANNIN	7	25	32	40
FAYETTE	29	24	53	26
FLOYD	44	47	91	69
FORSYTH	24	22	46	27
FRANKLIN	7	0	7	0
FULTON	53	420	473	422
GILMER	8	0	8	0
GLASCOCK	2	0	2	0
GLYNN	74	43	117	48
GORDON	43	21	64	21
GRADY	14	0	14	0
GREENE	9	9	18	12
GWINNETT	527	265	792	345
HABERSHAM	16	74	90	67
HALL	33	28	61	52
HANCOCK	3	0	3	0
HARALSON	15	0	15	0
HARRIS	9	0	9	0
HART	20	0	20	0
HEARD	5	0	5	0
HENRY	125	31	156	39
HOUSTON	112	38	150	44
IRWIN	6	0	6	0
JACKSON	43	11	54	16
JASPER	6	0	6	0
JEFF DAVIS	11	0	11	0
JEFFERSON	21	0	21	0
JENKINS	2	0	2	0

COUNTY	Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)	Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)	Total Homeless Persons	Total Emergency and Transitional Beds
JOHNSON	2	0	2	0
JONES	8	0	8	0
LAMAR	14	0	14	0
LANIER	7	0	7	0
LAURENS	21	5	26	15
LEE	11	0	11	0
LIBERTY	5	56	61	71
LINCOLN	4	0	4	0
LONG	3	0	3	0
LOWNDES	21	65	86	112
LUMPKIN	7	9	16	12
MACON	20	0	20	0
MADISON	17	0	17	0
MARION	7	0	7	0
MCDUFFIE	11	3	14	3
MCINTOSH	5	0	5	0
MERIWETHER	16	0	16	0
MILLER	5	0	5	0
MITCHELL	10	0	10	0
MONROE	18	0	18	0
MONTGOMERY	13	0	13	0
MORGAN	8	3	11	3
MURRAY	6	0	6	0
MUSCOGEE	165	206	371	258
NEWTON	92	28	120	65
OCONEE	7	0	7	0
OGLETHORPE	9	0	9	0
PAULDING	10	17	27	23
PEACH	15	0	15	0
PICKENS	7	7	14	7
PIERCE	4	0	4	0
PIKE	5	0	5	0
POLK	27	6	33	17
PULASKI	6	0	6	0
PUTNAM	15	0	15	0
QUITMAN	3	0	3	0
RABUN	6	7	13	12
RANDOLPH	8	0	8	0
RICHMOND	129	278	407	366
ROCKDALE	59	41	100	74
SCHLEY	5	0	5	0
SCREVEN	14	0	14	0

COUNTY	Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)	Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)	Total Homeless Persons	Total Emergency and Transitional Beds
SEMINOLE	5	0	5	0
SPALDING	45	47	92	52
STEPHENS	37	4	41	9
STEWART	11	0	11	0
SUMTER	29	0	29	0
TALBOT	4	0	4	0
TALIAFERRO	2	0	2	0
TATTNALL	8	0	8	0
TAYLOR	4	0	4	0
TELFAIR	7	0	7	0
TERRELL	9	0	9	0
THOMAS	24	16	40	23
TIFT	28	41	69	52
TOOMBS	5	79	84	80
TOWNS	3	0	3	0
TREUTLEN	2	0	2	0
TROUP	61	38	99	54
TURNER	7	0	7	0
TWIGGS	4	0	4	0
UNION	5	15	20	15
UPSON	16	0	16	0
WALKER	61	13	74	18
WALTON	47	0	47	0
WARE	15	14	29	14
WARREN	7	0	7	0
WASHINGTON	23	0	23	0
WAYNE	26	12	38	12
WEBSTER	1	0	1	0
WHEELER	3	0	3	0
WHITE	11	0	11	0
WHITFIELD	62	83	145	112
WILCOX	6	0	6	0
WILKES	8	0	8	0
WILKINSON	9	0	9	0
WORTH	4	0	4	0
STATE TOTAL	5,803	7,987	13,790	9,606

Based on 2015 Continuum of Care Housing Inventory and 2015 Homeless Count and Predictive Model





Georgia<sup>®</sup> Department of  
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