



# Georgia's 10,000

2017 Report on  
Homelessness

March 2018

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## Georgia's Homeless Population

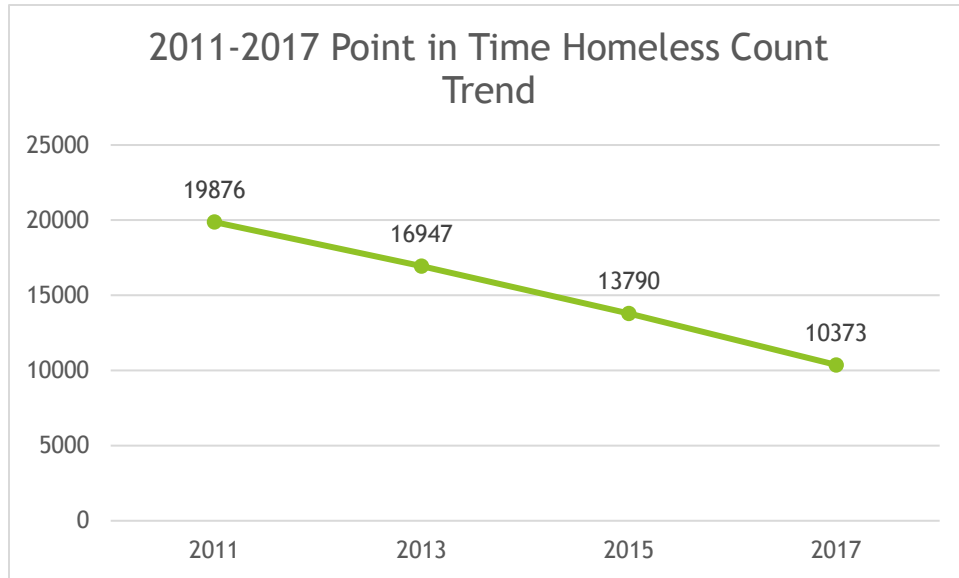
In the last ten days of January 2017, communities nationwide conducted a count of individuals and families who were homeless, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The resulting homeless census, referred to as a "Point in Time Count," provides an indication of the size and characteristics of the nation's homeless population.

- 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

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 on various nights in the last ten days of January. 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 2017, at least 10,373 people were literally homeless in Georgia – a 25% decrease from 2015.

Georgia's Literally Homeless Population: Single Night (Point in Time Count)			
	Number of Individuals per Year		
Housing Status	2013	2015	2017
Unsheltered	8,450	5,803	3,692
Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing	8,497	7,987	6,681
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,947</b>	<b>13,790</b>	<b>10,373</b>
Change from previous count (%)	-15%	-19%	-25%



#### Homelessness in Georgia

In accordance with HUD guidelines, for the 2017 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>

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<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.



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 2017 the number of people who were unsheltered homeless continued to decline with just 36% of the state’s overall homeless population being unsheltered.

There are several homeless subpopulations that HUD is tasking CoCs with prioritizing, two of which are veterans and chronically homeless. Seven percent (7%) of the homeless population in Georgia on the night of the count were veterans. Ten percent (10%) of the homeless population was experiencing chronic homelessness on the night of the count. Chronic homelessness is defined as someone experiencing continuous homelessness for at least one year or at least 4 times in the past 3 years with their total time in shelters or on the street adding up to over 1 year and who has a disabling condition.

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
- Developmental disability or brain injury
- Criminal background

## **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>1</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 Continuum of Care, HUD is now able to issue an annual assessment of homelessness to Congress. In the most recent assessment, the *2013 Annual Assessment Report to Congress*<sup>2</sup>, HUD estimated that 610,042 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 seven Continuum 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, the seven Continua have been working cooperatively with a single HMIS provider (Pathways Community Network) and share data related to their counts.

### Sheltered Homeless Counts

The census of homeless persons and families in shelter is typically done annually, in conjunction with a housing inventory. The housing inventory 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). Eventually, HMIS will provide this data for all participating service providers, leaving only the independent providers to be surveyed.

### Unsheltered Counts

There are two generally accepted methodologies for conducting counts of unsheltered persons.<sup>3</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.

In Georgia, the locally-based Continua have typically relied on a street count or canvassing methodology. Some Continua have relied exclusively on the canvassing method to obtain their unsheltered counts, where other Continua mostly relied on a canvassing method but also used supplementary surveys to count those who had been hard to locate on the point-in-time night. Some continua relied entirely on service-based 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>4</sup> In 2017, the data used for the model came from survey counts conducted in 95 counties.<sup>5</sup> 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>1</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>2</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>3</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>4</sup> Jennifer Lewis Priestley. May 2008. *Every Georgian Counts: Final Report on Sampling and Modeling*. Kennesaw State University, Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Lewis Priestley. June 2013. *Every Georgian Counts: 2013 Estimates of Homelessness in Georgia (Revised)*. Kennesaw State University, Center for Statistics and Analytical Services.

**Appendix B**

*Homeless Counts by County*

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b><i>Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)</i></b>	<b><i>Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)</i></b>	<b><i>Total Homeless Persons</i></b>
APPLING	7	0	7
ATKINSON	2	0	2
BACON	4	0	4
BAKER	0	0	0
BALDWIN	1	0	1
BANKS	3	0	3
BARROW	29	35	64
BARTOW	16	26	42
BEN HILL	0	0	0
BERRIEN	0	0	0
BIBB	174	136	310
BLECKLEY	5	0	5
BRANTLEY	7	0	7
BROOKS	0	0	0
BRYAN	2	0	2
BULLOCH	14	19	33
BURKE	11	0	11
BUTTS	9	0	9
CALHOUN	0	0	0
CAMDEN	20	9	29
CANDLER	4	0	4
CARROLL	21	47	68
CATOOSA	26	0	26
CHARLTON	2	0	2
CHATHAM	363	563	926
CHATTAHO	0	0	0
CHATTOOG	12	0	12
CHEROKEE	67	211	278
CITY OF ATLANTA	681	2891	3572
CLARKE	93	146	239
CLAY	1	0	1

	<b><i>Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)</i></b>	<b><i>Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)</i></b>	<b><i>Total Homeless Persons</i></b>
CLAYTON	150	100	250
CLINCH	3	22	25
COBB	118	285	403
COFFEE	16	0	16
COLQUITT	0	16	16
COLUMBIA	35	0	35
COOK	0	0	0
COWETA	27	0	27
CRAWFORD	6	0	6
CRISP	8	0	8
DADE	7	0	7
DAWSON	1	0	1
DECATUR	4	0	4
DEKALB	185	275	460
DODGE	8	0	8
DOOLY	5	0	5
DOUGHERTY	20	40	60
DOUGLAS	27	104	131
EARLY	0	0	0
ECHOLS	0	0	0
EFFINGHAM	22	0	22
ELBERT	7	0	7
EMANUEL	8	0	8
EVANS	4	0	4
FANNIN	10	24	34
FAYETTE	29	21	50
FLOYD	37	25	62
FORSYTH	6	19	25
FRANKLIN	9	0	9
FULTON	90	203	293
GILMER	11	0	11
GLASCOCK	1	0	1
GLYNN	68	44	112
GORDON	22	9	31
GRADY	0	0	0



	<i>Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)</i>	<i>Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)</i>	<i>Total Homeless Persons</i>
GREENE	7	8	15
GWINNETT	84	179	263
HABERSHAM	3	33	36
HALL	45	78	123
HANCOCK	4	0	4
HARALSON	11	0	11
HARRIS	14	0	14
HART	0	0	0
HEARD	6	0	6
HENRY	42	34	76
HOUSTON	29	20	49
IRWIN	0	0	0
JACKSON	24	0	24
JASPER	6	0	6
JEFF DAVIS	6	0	6
JEFFERSON	7	0	7
JENKINS	2	0	2
JOHNSON	4	0	4
JONES	13	0	13
LAMAR	7	0	7
LANIER	1	0	1
LAURENS	17	23	40
LEE	0	0	0
LIBERTY	8	34	42
LINCOLN	3	0	3
LONG	7	0	7
LOWNDES	5	67	72
LUMPKIN	0	10	10
MACON	6	0	6
MADISON	13	0	13
MARION	3	0	3
MCDUFFIE	8	0	8
MCINTOSH	5	0	5
MERIWETH	10	0	10
MILLER	0	0	0

	<i>Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)</i>	<i>Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)</i>	<i>Total Homeless Persons</i>
MITCHELL	1	0	1
MONROE	13	0	13
MONTGOME	3	0	3
MORGAN	7	0	7
MURRAY	6	0	6
MUSCOGEE	73	246	319
NEWTON	41	33	74
OCONEE	12	0	12
OGLETHOR	7	0	7
PAULDING	49	9	58
PEACH	5	0	5
PICKENS	12	0	12
PIERCE	8	0	8
PIKE	8	0	8
POLK	7	8	15
PULASKI	4	0	4
PUTNAM	9	0	9
QUITMAN	1	0	1
RABUN	5	12	17
RANDOLPH	3	0	3
RICHMOND	246	199	445
ROCKDALE	17	65	82
SCHLEY	2	0	2
SCREVEN	6	0	6
SEMINOLE	0	0	0
SPALDING	32	7	39
STEPHENS	5	7	12
STEWART	1	0	1
SUMTER	11	0	11
TALBOT	3	0	3
TALIAFERRO	1	0	1
TATTNALL	10	0	10
TAYLOR	4	0	4
TELFAIR	3	0	3
TERRELL	0	0	0

	<b>Unsheltered Homeless Persons (Counts and Predictive Model)</b>	<b>Sheltered Homeless Persons (Emergency and Transitional Housing)</b>	<b>Total Homeless Persons</b>
THOMAS	10	20	30
TIFT	0	26	26
TOOMBS	5	8	13
TOWNS	0	0	0
TREUTLEN	3	0	3
TROUP	27	96	123
TURNER	0	0	0
TWIGGS	4	0	4
UNION	0	13	13
UPSON	10	0	10
WALKER	26	17	43
WALTON	34	0	34
WARE	13	11	24
WARREN	2	0	2
WASHINGT	9	0	9
WAYNE	7	12	19
WEBSTER	1	0	1
WHEELER	3	0	3
WHITE	3	0	3
WHITFIELD	17	106	123
WILCOX	4	0	4
WILKES	4	0	4
WILKINSON	4	0	4
WORTH	0	0	0
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	<b>3692</b>	<b>6681</b>	<b>10373</b>

*Based on 2017 Homeless Counts from CoCs and Predictive Model*