



## 2010 Homeless Point-in-Time Count, City and County of Honolulu EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The City & County of Honolulu, Department of Community Services (DCS) collaborated with the State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services, Homeless Programs Branch and outreach workers and homeless service providers from the Partners in Care Hawaii coalition to conduct the 2010 Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of unsheltered and sheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness on Oahu.

### Results

The results of the 2010 PIT Count reinforces the pattern of homelessness that we witnessed in 2009; urban homelessness is characterized by a large number of single homeless individuals or couples with a proportionately higher number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons. The homeless population on the Waianae Coast continues to be overwhelmingly comprised of families with children. Many have taken advantage of new shelters developed by the State or nonprofit agencies which has led to an increase in the number of sheltered homeless families in this region. While in recent years the State and non-profit agencies have focused the majority of services towards families with children, the numbers clearly show that what is really needed are services targeted to the chronically homeless, particularly those who are unsheltered.

### ***Total Homeless Count***

- A total of 4,171 persons were identified as being homeless on January 25, 2010.
- Of the total number of persons experiencing homelessness, 1,374 (33 percent) were unsheltered (living in parks, beaches, and other places not meant for human habitation) and 2,797 (67 percent) were sheltered in one of Oahu's emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.

### **Total Homeless, 2010 Oahu Count**

	Households with Children		Persons in Households with Children		Singles and Individuals in Couples		Total Persons	
	Persons	Percent of Total	Persons	Percent of Total	Persons	Percent of Total	Persons	Percent of Total
Unsheltered Homeless	42	7.4%	176	7.9%	1,198	61.3%	1,374	32.9%
Sheltered Homeless	527	92.6%	2,041	92.1%	756	38.7%	2,797	67.1%
<b>Total Homeless</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,217</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,954</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,171</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### **Total Homeless, Comparison of 2009 and 2010 Oahu Counts**

	2009 PIT Count	2010 PIT Count	Numerical Change	Percent Change
Unsheltered Homeless	1,193	1,374	181	15.2%
Sheltered Homeless	2,445	2,797	352	14.4%
Totals	3,638	4,171	533	14.7%

### ***Unsheltered Homeless Individuals and Households***

- While the increases in unsheltered homeless documented in certain areas seem to coincide with a visible increase in homelessness at the time of the count, the increase can also be attributed in part to improved methodology that captured more of the unsheltered and the experience of the enumerators (mostly outreach staff).
- The PIT Count reveals what the community generally perceives – that the majority of unsheltered homeless reside along the Waianae Coast (30 percent); Downtown Honolulu, which includes Chinatown and Kakaako (29 percent); and East Honolulu, which includes Waikiki (22 percent).
- The large majority of unsheltered homeless individuals are singles and individuals in couples (87 percent). This group comprised 98 percent of unsheltered individuals in Downtown Honolulu and 97 percent in East Honolulu. In each of these regions, only ten individuals were in households with children.
- Two-thirds of all unsheltered households with children reside along the Waianae Coast. These households include 71 children under age 18, or approximately 73 percent, of all unsheltered children on Oahu. In recent months, homeless service providers have observed an increase in the number of Micronesian families moving from the Lighthouse emergency shelter in Waipahu to the Waianae Civic Center (Paiolu Kaiaulu) transitional housing program.
- In 2009 and 2010, the distribution of unsheltered homeless persons among the regions has remained relatively unchanged. It should be noted, however, that the Waianae Coast share of Oahu’s unsheltered homeless population increased by 3.3 percent and Downtown Honolulu’s share increased by 2.5 percent between 2009 and 2010.

### ***Unsheltered Chronically Homeless Persons***

- Between 2009 and 2010, the number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons on Oahu increased by 88 or by nearly 23 percent.
- Unsheltered chronically homeless persons as a share of Oahu’s total homeless population has increased from 10.7 percent in 2009 to 11.5 percent in 2010. In

other words, more than one out of ten people experiencing homelessness are chronically homeless and living on the streets or in parks and beaches.

- Although the emergency shelter capacity has increased significantly over the last several years, the number of chronically homeless persons residing at these facilities has declined between 2009 and 2010. In 2010, 74 persons or approximately 13 percent of chronically homeless individuals utilized an emergency shelter or safe haven, compared to 109 persons or nearly 22 percent in 2009.
- In 2009 and 2010, the majority of unsheltered chronically homeless individuals resided in Downtown Honolulu and East Honolulu. Over the last year, the number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons increased by 18 in Downtown Honolulu and 22 in East Honolulu.
- In 2009, 98 persons or over 41 percent of Downtown Honolulu's chronically homeless population resided in an emergency shelter or safe haven. In 2010, the number and share declined significantly – only 62 chronically homeless persons resided in an emergency shelter or safe haven, comprising 28 percent of all chronically homeless individuals in the region. This decrease could be attributed in part to successful targeting of chronic homeless individuals for permanent supportive housing programs. According to homeless service providers, nearly 40 chronic homeless persons were placed into the Shelter Plus Care Program over the last year.
- Although East Honolulu has the second highest concentration of unsheltered chronically homeless individuals, there are no emergency shelters or safe havens in the region.
- The number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons along the Waianae Coast more than doubled from 35 to 78 between 2009 and 2010. Although the Waianae Coast has one of the largest concentrations of homeless shelters, the majority of the facilities are for families with children.

### ***Sheltered Homeless Persons***

- Between 2009 and 2010, the number of sheltered homeless persons increased by 352 or approximately 14 percent. Over three-fourths of this increase, or 271 individuals, were sheltered along the Waianae Coast.
- In 2010, the regions with the greatest numbers of sheltered persons were the Waianae Coast with 39 percent of the island's sheltered homeless population, followed by Downtown Honolulu (34 percent) and Ewa (20 percent). Collectively, these three regions account for 93 percent of sheltered homeless islandwide. Many of the shelters are located in these areas.

- In 2010, persons in households with children comprised nearly three-fourths or approximately 73 percent of Oahu's total sheltered population.
- 62 additional persons sought shelter in Downtown Honolulu in 2010 versus 2009, comprising nearly 18 percent of the annual increase in sheltered homeless.
- According to the State of Hawaii, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a total of 6,265 individuals (singles and persons in families with children) were served in 2009 by an emergency shelter or transitional housing program on an annualized basis. A total of 4,557 persons or 73 percent of the 2009 annual number have already received services through May 2010. If this trend continues, we can expect to see significantly more homeless persons seeking assistance from homeless service providers this year compared to 2009.
- On the positive side, many people have been helped out of homelessness or prevented from becoming homeless during these challenging economic times. In 2009, a total of 1,569 individuals (singles and persons in families with children) exited transitional housing programs into permanent housing. As of May 2010, 773 persons have made this transition.

### ***How Does Oahu Compare to the State and Nation?***

#### **Oahu's Homeless Population Compared to the State and Nation, 2009 and 2010**

Homeless Category	Oahu				State of Hawaii 2010		Nation 2009	
	2009		2010		Persons	Percent of Total	Persons	Percent of Total
	Persons	Percent of Total	Persons	Percent of Total				
<b>Total Homeless</b>								
Unsheltered	1,193	32.8%	1,374	32.9%	2,299	39.4%	237,935	37.0%
Sheltered	2,445	67.2%	2,797	67.1%	3,535	60.6%	405,132	63.0%
Total	3,638	100.0%	4,171	100.0%	5,834	100.0%	643,067	100.0%
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>								
Unsheltered	390	78.2%	478	86.6%	705	88.0%	66,550	60.0%
Sheltered	109	21.8%	74	13.4%	96	12.0%	44,367	40.0%
Total	499	100.0%	552	100.0%	801	100.0%	110,917	100.0%
<b>Chronically Homeless as a Percent of Total Homeless</b>								
Unsheltered	10.7%		11.5%		12.1%		10.3%	
Sheltered	3.0%		1.8%		1.6%		6.9%	
Total	13.7%		13.2%		13.7%		17.2%	

- Due to increased capacity at emergency shelters and transitional housing programs, over two-thirds of Oahu's homeless population was sheltered in 2009 and 2010,

compared to approximately 61 percent for the State in 2010 and 63 percent nationwide in 2009.

- While we have successfully provided shelter and services to the majority of households with children, we have not fared as well in serving the chronically homeless population as there are few facilities for singles. Only about 22 percent of chronically homeless individuals were sheltered in 2009. In 2010, this percentage dropped to only about 13 percent. On the national level, approximately 40 percent of chronically homeless individuals were sheltered in 2009.
- Although the share of chronically homeless individuals to the total homeless population is lower on Oahu (13 percent) compared to the nation (17 percent), only a fraction of these individuals are sheltered. In 2009, chronically homeless persons in shelters on Oahu made up only three percent of the total homeless population, compared to more than double that share for the nation (seven percent).

## **Contributing Factors to the Count Results**

### ***Count Methodology***

- This one day point-in-time count provides a **snapshot** of homelessness during a specific time period. The unsheltered count includes persons encountered during the one week period, January 26, 2010 – January 31, 2010, who were asked “Where did you sleep this past Monday, January 25?” and acknowledged that they were in an unsheltered situation. The sheltered count represents persons residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs that participate in the State of Hawaii, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and who were residing in these facilities on January 25, 2010. Various programs not participating in the HMIS were also asked to provide data for the sheltered count.
- The nature of the point-in-time count methodology, as well as factors such as weather and implementation of new park rules, excludes a certain percentage of the homeless population.
- The State of Hawaii, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was used to extract data for both the unsheltered and sheltered counts. While prior PIT Counts used a sampling method to survey persons encountered, the 2009 and 2010 HMIS PIT Count methodology required that all unsheltered persons included in the count complete a survey in order to enter persons into the HMIS and unduplicate the data with confidence. Persons approached to complete a survey but either refused, were already surveyed, or did not indicate where they slept on January 25, 2010 were not included in the count. Since this was the second year using the same methodology, procedures were refined and may have contributed to more persons being identified and surveyed than the previous year.

- Outreach agencies were assigned to areas on the island where they regularly provide outreach services since they would have first hand experience of areas frequented by unsheltered homeless populations, as well as have rapport with many of the consumers that they encountered in their existing service areas. Unlike 2009 when more community volunteers were involved, in 2010, field staff was comprised of mostly outreach workers. Community volunteers that participated in the count were paired with experienced service provider staff.
- The 2010 unsheltered survey instrument added a new option for surveyors to complete the survey questions on behalf of consumers with whom they made visual contact during the PIT Count period and who they also encounter on a consistent and ongoing basis but may have refused or were unable to participate in the survey due to factors such as serious mental illness or inebriation. One-hundred fifteen (115) unsheltered survey forms for single individuals were marked as being completed by the interviewer; 63 of these surveys were done for persons identified as being chronically homeless according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition.

### ***New Arrivals***

- New arrivals coming to Oahu from other places is a factor that has affected both the unsheltered and sheltered homeless populations. Advocacy efforts need to continue to ensure that more funds from the federal government and other entities are provided to Hawaii to serve these populations. Further strategies are being discussed among service providers regarding how best to serve new arrivals.

### **Reducing the Number of Persons Experiencing Homelessness on Oahu**

#### ***Increasing Requests for Services***

- Service providers acknowledge that recent changes in park rules have resulted in persons becoming more receptive towards requesting services and assistance to improve their situations. Outreach workers continue to work on engaging unsheltered persons in order to link them to available resources.

#### ***Programs Providing Rental Assistance with Needed Supportive Services***

- City-initiated or -administered programs are in place to prevent homelessness and/or house persons experiencing homelessness. These programs include supportive services aimed at helping households obtain the skills and resources needed to remain housed.

- The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, since it began in September 2009, has provided financial assistance to 747 persons in 226 households to remain in their rental units. Eighty-five (85) persons in 31 households that were homeless received financial assistance to rent a place of their own.
- The Shelter Plus Care Program provides ongoing rental assistance and supportive services to over 345 formerly homeless individuals with disabilities and their families.
- The Rent to Work Program (RTW) is providing limited term rental assistance to homeless families aiming to obtain employment or increase their household income. Twenty-nine (29) have found a rental unit; 43 vouchers have been issued; 46 clients completed the referral process; 190 new clients are in the RTW process; 223 applications have been received; 408 individuals have attended briefings; and 628 outreach contacts have been made.
- According to a recently released report by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness<sup>1</sup>, “Housing First” is a proven model advocated by service providers as one of the key solutions to addressing homelessness. This model centers on providing people with housing quickly and following up with supportive services as needed. Assistance may include addiction and mental health services, case management, and general support to provide stability for individuals who are homeless, thereby improving their ability to stay in permanent housing and achieve self-sufficiency. Providing permanent supportive housing to prevent and end chronic homelessness is one of the report’s ten outlined objectives.

### ***Other Community Initiatives***

- The creation of “safe zones” is being considered by various communities. It is critical for these communities to consider the time, effort, and cost required to properly manage and operate such an area. Safety, particularly deterring drug use, and sanitation must be of paramount concern in implementing this option.

### ***Collaboration is Key***

- Homelessness is a complex issue with no easy solution. Government agencies, non-profit service providers, faith-based and other community groups are collaborating to implement the most viable options using the resources available. Increasing collaboration with additional entities, such as the business community, neighborhood boards, law enforcement, and others will further enhance efforts to reduce homelessness in the City & County of Honolulu.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Opening Doors, Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, 2010.