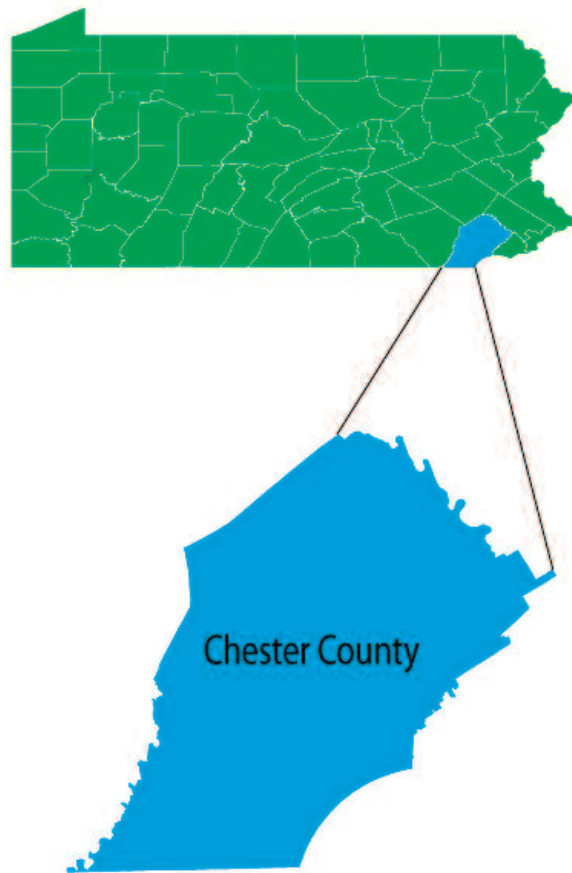




Chester County
Department of
Community Development
Investing in the future

Profile on Homelessness



November 2010

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Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Introduction

Dear Colleagues:

This document, the Profile on Homelessness, contains a tremendous amount of data related to the current conditions of homelessness in Chester County. In fact, the Chester County Department of Community Development will use this document as a starting point as we embark on a Strategic Plan to eliminate homelessness in our county. Moreover, it is our intention for you to use this information as a point of reference to better understand the future challenges and opportunities that we face in reducing homelessness and, ultimately, participate in crafting and implementing this Strategic Plan.

Please note that the data contained within this document will not be the only information used in crafting the Strategic Plan. We will also look toward the experience of our many public service providers for feedback on the homeless system in Chester County. Over the years, the Chester County Department of Community Development has relied upon many service partners to combat homelessness, which has included homeless shelters, community based agencies, municipalities and private businesses.

I strongly encourage you to review and reflect on the information provided in this document. We will be working on the strategic plan from the fall of 2010 to the summer of 2011. Please stay engaged with us – your feedback is truly valued. Most importantly, please feel free to continue to participate in our efforts to prevent homelessness within Chester County. There is certainly a role for you.

In closing, I want to thank the many individuals involved in producing the Homelessness Profile, which are listed on the first page of this document.



Patrick Bokovitz
Director of the Chester County Department of Community Development

Disclaimer:

Some of the data in this publication has been compiled by other organizations. Please note that the Chester County Department of Community Development does not control and cannot guarantee the accuracy of these materials. Due to the use of multiple sources, data may vary mutually.

General

Chester County

Characteristics

Population

Chester County encompasses 762 square miles in the Delaware Valley Region of Southeastern Pennsylvania. It contains seventy-three municipalities consisting of one city, fifteen boroughs, and fifty-seven townships. These fifteen boroughs and one city make up the urban centers.

According to the 2009 county population estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau, Chester County is Pennsylvania's fastest growing county. As of July 1, 2009, Chester County's population was 498,894, and has grown 1.1 percent or 5,613 people since July 1, 2008. Chester County grew by 15.1 percent or 65,393 persons since April 1, 2000. It is important to note that counties with the highest population growths include neighboring counties located from south-central to southeast Pennsylvania and northward along the Delaware River: Philadelphia, Montgomery, Bucks, Delaware, Lancaster, and Berks Counties, ranging from 401,109 persons to 1,448,394 persons.

Additionally, in 2002, the Chester County Planning Commission projected the population to reach 528,000 by the year 2020 and 571,800 by 2030. The areas with the largest concentration of growth are located in the central part of the county and along the Route 1 corridor in southern Chester County, in areas such as Avondale,

New Garden Township, Upper Uwchlan, and East Nottingham. The population increase in Chester County has averaged 7,500 people per year since 2000.

Since 2000, Chester County's population has become increasingly diverse. In 2000, 89.2% of the population was White and this has decreased to 87.7% in only six years. The African-American population has remained at 6.2%, while the Hispanic and Asian population has grown significantly. The Hispanic population represents 4.3% of Chester County's population, and has increased 28.8% since 2000 with a current estimate of 20,764 persons. The Asian population has increased from 2% (8,463 persons) in 2000 to 3.5% (16,695 persons) in 2006.

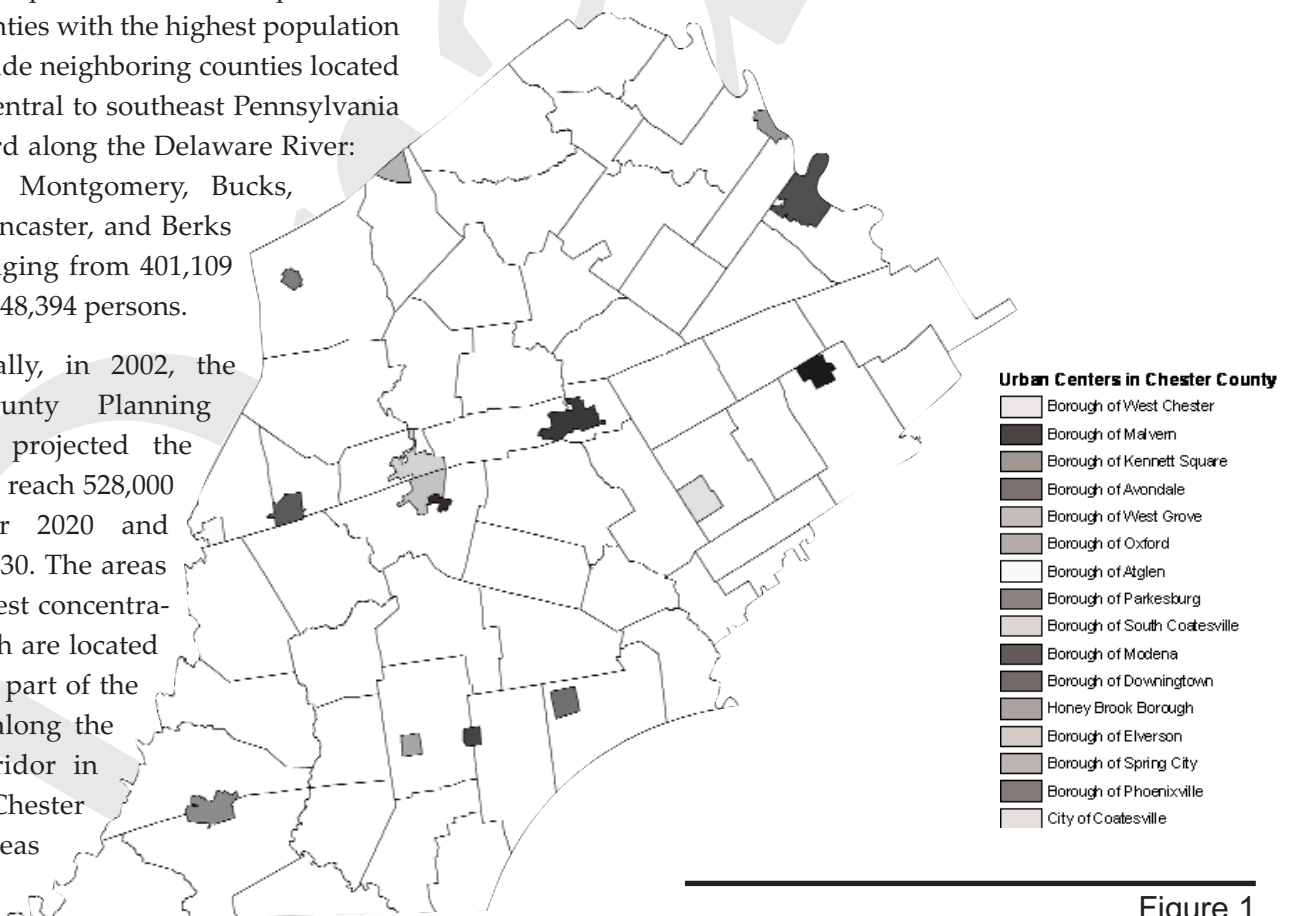


Figure 1
Map of Urban Centers

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Education

In the 2000 U.S. Census, Chester County ranked first among Pennsylvania's 67 counties in the percentage of adults age 25 and over who attained a High School diploma (89.3%). Chester County also ranked first in the percentage of adults age 25 and over with a Bachelor's degree or higher (42.5%).

More recently, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 American Community Survey 1-year esti-

mate indicates that 93% of adults age 25 and over had attained a High School diploma, GED/equivalent or higher. Of this number, 5.6% had an Associate's degree, 32.6% had a Bachelor's degree, 14% had a Master's degree, 3.5% had Professional school degrees, and 2.5% had Doctorate degrees. Only 7.1% of the population in the survey had not graduated High School or completed their GED.

In October 2006, Chester County public schools reported that 14.5% of their 69,826 enrolled students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. The largest concentration of students receiving free or reduced lunch

can be found in the school districts of Coatesville (36.2%), Kennett Square (32.3%) and Oxford (27.2%).

School districts with the fewest students receiving free or reduced lunch can be found in Downingtown (3.9%), Unionville-Chadds Ford (1.6%), and Tredyffrin-Easttown (.8%).

Disparities between students enrolled in Chester County public schools are also found in their standardized test scores.

According to the PA Department of Education, the 2007 PA State Standardized Assessments reported that 57.3% of students in grades 4-11 in the Coatesville Area School District are proficient or above in Math and 59.5% are proficient or above in

Legend

- Avon Grove School District
- Coatesville School District
- Downingtown School District
- Great Valley School District
- Kennett Consolidated School District
- Octorara Area School District
- Owen J Roberts School District
- Oxford Area School District
- Phoenixville Area School District
- Spring-Ford Area School District
- Tredyffrin-Easttown School District
- Twin Valley School District
- Unionville-Chadds Ford School District
- West Chester School District

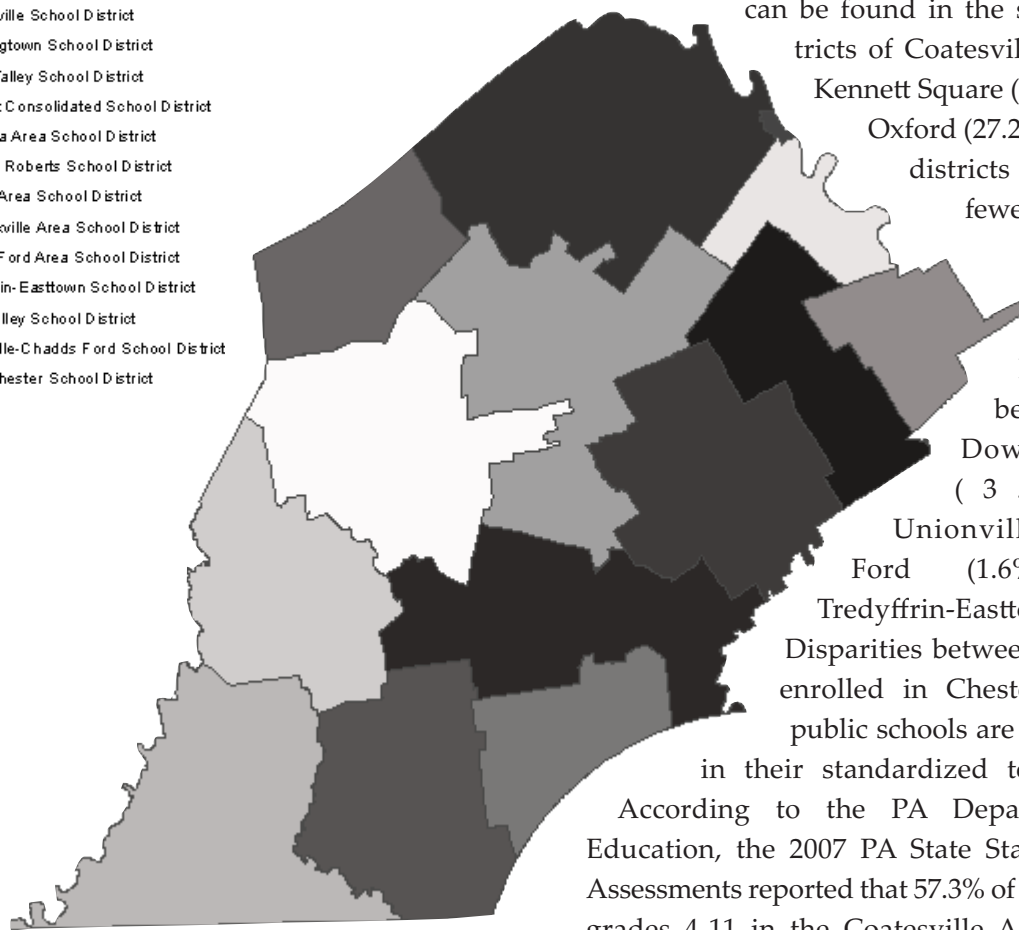


Figure 2
Map of Chester County School Districts

Income and Poverty

Chester County is ranked among the wealthiest counties in the United States based on Median Household Income and by many standards is the wealthiest county in Pennsylvania. In March of 2010, Forbes Magazine recognized Chester County as the nation's 24th wealthiest county out of a total of 3,141 counties. However, according to the 2006-2008 American Community Survey the number of individuals living in poverty in Chester County is 28,416 or 6% of the county population. In 2009, 97% of the individuals and 95% of the families housed in the emergency shelters in Chester County had incomes below 30% of the Area Median Family Income (AMI). For an individual that amounts to an income of less than \$16,350 and for a family of four it is less than \$23,350.

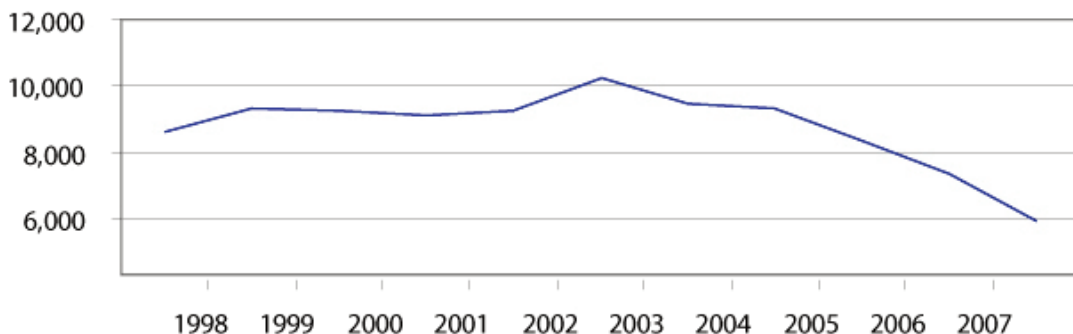
According to the 2006-2008 American Community Survey the median household income in Chester County is estimated to be \$84,844. While the median household income for Chester County as a whole is over \$30,000 above that for the United States in general there are communities in the county that have considerably lower household incomes. In the City of Coatesville the median household income is \$29,912 while in the Borough of Parkesburg the median household income is \$44,934.

In a 2010 study, prepared for PathWays PA, a single person living in Chester County would need to have an annual income of \$28,160 to be considered self-sufficient, and for a family with two kids the income rises to between \$49,163 and \$76,690 depending on the age of the children and the number of adults in the household.

	Adult	Adult + Preschooler	Adult + Schoolage & Teenager	2 Adults + Infant & Preschooler
Housing	1059	1267	1267	1267
Child Care	0	977	590	1949
Food	278	422	734	794
Transportation	276	283	283	542
Health Care	130	326	367	398
Miscellaneous	174	327	324	495
Taxes	462	886	782	1279
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	0	-50	-50	-100
Child Tax Credit (-)	0	-83	-167	-167
Making Work Pay Tax Credit (-)	-33	-33	-33	-67
Self-Sufficiency Wage				
Hourly	\$13.33	\$24.55	\$23.28	\$18.16 (per adult)
Annual	\$28,160	\$51,853	\$49,163	\$76,690

Figure 3
Self-Sufficiency Standard for Chester County
Pathways PA 2010

Ending Homelessness in Chester County



Housing

For individuals and families living at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) the cost of maintaining housing is a challenge. According to 2009 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data provided by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 87% of the Chester County homeowners with incomes at or below 30% of the AMI face a cost-burden or severe cost-burden in maintaining housing. For renters at or below 30% AMI, 72% face a cost burden or sever cost-burden to maintain housing. A cost-burden is defined as paying more than 30% of your monthly income toward rent and utilities.

Figure 4

Amount of House Sales

Chester County Planning Commission

Twenty-nine percent of Chester County residents are currently spending 30% or more of their before-tax income on housing. This compares with 25% in 2000, before the real estate boom drove Chester County's median home price up more than 59%.

The Chester County Planning Commission reports a median home sale price in Chester County of \$300,000 in 2008. This is a decrease of 4% from 2007, and shows the first decline in the median sales price since 1991. In 2008,

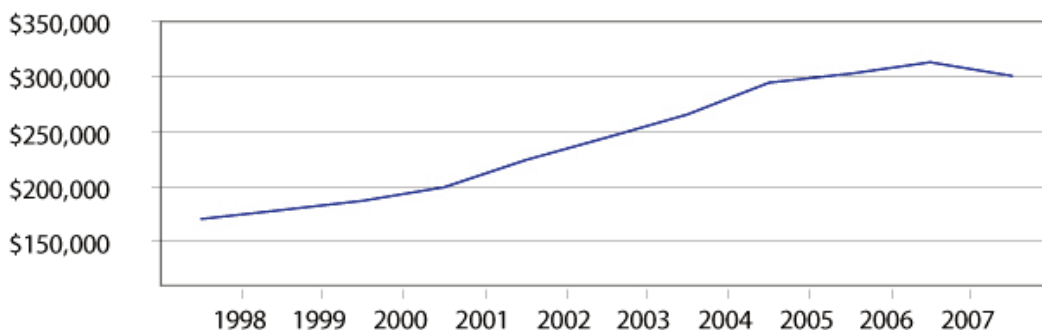


Figure 5

Median Home Prices

Chester County Planning Commission

slightly more than 30 percent of the housing units sold were in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 price range. Less than 20 percent of homes were sold for under \$200,000. The percentage of homes sold above \$400,000 was 30 percent, and the most expensive area to purchase a home in Chester County was the Unionville-Chadds Ford

school region with a median sales price of \$453,500. The Coatesville and Octorara school regions in western Chester County had the lowest median sales prices, \$210,000 and \$225,000 respectively. The West Chester, Downingtown, and Coatesville school regions had the largest volume of housing sales during the year. The median sales price of a newly constructed home was \$372,800 in 2008. This was a decrease of \$53,400 (-12.5%) from the median new home sales price of \$426,200 in 2007, the first decrease since the Planning Commission began collecting data for new housing units in 2004. In 2008, there were a total of 5,911 housing units sold, a decrease of 19 percent from 2007. This was the third consecutive year with a decrease in sales volume exceeding 10 percent. The number of sales was the lowest since 1995.

For some, the financial burden is far worse: 10% of homeowners with mortgages — more than 13,000 households in Chester County — spend at least half their gross monthly income to cover their home loan, property taxes, insurance and utilities.

According to City-Data.com the median contract rental price in Chester County in 2008 was \$924 while for the State of Pennsylvania in general it was \$584.

With 22% of households being renter occupied, it is also important to examine what it takes to afford rental housing in Chester County.

According to the Fair Market Rent standards created by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a person can afford to rent a one-bedroom unit if they make \$14.87 per hour during a forty hour work week. The PA Minimum Wage rate is currently \$7.15 per hour. For someone making \$8.00 per hour, they must work 88 hours per week in order to afford a one-bedroom unit in Chester County. In order to rent a three-bedroom unit, a household must earn at least \$25.75 per hour during a forty hour workweek. At \$8.00 per hour, this household must work 129 hours per week to meet the housing cost burden.

The figures provide a striking look at how wages and salaries can fail to keep up with surging housing costs. Behind those numbers lie the daily, difficult choices many families have to make about where they can afford to live, how far they have to commute, and whether to take a second job. Will they have enough money for health care, food, and necessities, or are they on the path to homelessness?

Fair Market Rent	Minimum Affordable Housing Wage*
1-Bedroom Unit: \$915/month	40-hour week: \$17.60/hour, \$36,600/year At \$8/hour, must work 88 hours/week
2-Bedroom Unit: \$1,095/month	40-hour week: \$21.06/hour, \$43,800/year At \$8/hour, must work 105 hours/week
3-Bedroom Unit: \$1,339/month	40-hour week: \$25.75/hour, \$53,560/year At \$8/hour, must work 129 hours/week

Figure 6
Renting a House

* Affordable Housing Standard: Pay no more than 30% of gross income on housing.

* Occupancy Standard: No more than two people per bedroom.

* Fair Market Rent: Determined by HUD for the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area.

* The Minimum Wage in Pennsylvania is \$7.15.

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Workforce

Despite the current economic downfall, Chester County remains one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, maintaining a strong, diverse economy, and a relatively low unemployment rate.

But obviously, the downturn does have an impact. The unemployment rate in Chester County has gone from 4.5% in August 2008 to 7.3% in August 2010. The PACareerLink-Chester County, an One-Stop employment and workforce development resource center, has seen an increase in clients requesting walk-in services, with a monthly average of 1,757 walk-ins. Chester County is projected to have 3,288 individuals exhaust unemployment compensation bene-



Figure 7
Unemployment Rate in Chester County
US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010

fits in 2010, which is increasing the need for social service programming to support these dislocated workers through the job loss and re-employment process. Additionally, a monthly average of 27 new employers is registering on the PA CareerLink system. As a response to the increased volume of job seekers, the PACareerLink-Chester County has

begun offering new and more frequent workshops.

In 2008, the population of Chester County averaged the highest wage per job (\$57,560) in Pennsylvania, 40th highest in the nation (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Industry	Employees	Establishments
Professional & Scientific Services	26,105	2,396
Retail Trade	28,714	1,558
Construction	11,432	1,545
Health Care	30,571	1,354
Finance and Insurance	21,801	1,077
Wholesale Trade	12,439	1,029
Accommodation and Food Services	15,554	901
Manufacturing	15,712	571

Figure 8
County Business Patterns
US Census Bureau 2007

The largest, and fastest growing, industry is the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry.

Homeless Populations

County Perspectives

Shelter, housing, home - it is the foundation of life. Without a safe place to call home, temporary or permanent, the likelihood of maintaining a job or performing well at work or in school is low. Whether it is a systems failure or a personal failure, living homeless should not be an experience for any man, woman, or child.

In June 2010, the federal government released 'Opening Doors', the federal strategic plan to end and prevent homelessness. This plan is designed to end homelessness in our nation within ten years. In fact, almost five years ago the Pennsylvania Interagency Council on Homelessness shared its vision for the future, "Pennsylvania envisions a state where there are no homeless individuals or families. Each person will have the support services needed to live as independently as possible in permanent housing of his or her choice. The mainstream services will be adequate, well coordinated, consumer driven, and recovery-oriented. All housing and services will be offered with dignity and respect, and will provide hope.

Chester County also has a new standard for addressing homelessness. No longer will we manage the problem or accommodate the response. We desire to see change, both visible and measurable. It is not only important for the homeless individuals living in Chester County, but for our neighborhoods and communities. Today, there is new research about the costs of homeless resources. There are new technological systems for accurate data collection and

analysis. There are renewed partnerships that allow Chester County to reach those in need.

In 2009, the Chester County Department of Community Development conducted a countywide needs assessment with regard to the perspective of residents toward homelessness. When asked how much of a problem homelessness is in Chester county, 75% of the respondents concluded that homelessness is a large problem in Chester County. Some respondents (20%) declared that they are unaware of such a problem and even less (5%) described the area as not having much of a problem at all.

Myth #1: Homelessness is usually a long-term condition.

Fact #1: To the contrary, the most common length of time that someone is homeless is one or two days, and half the people who enter the homeless shelter system will leave within 30 days, never to return.

Myth #2: Most of the homeless have a severe mental illness.

Fact #2: Because the relatively small number of people living on the streets who suffer from paranoia, delusions and other mental disorders are very visible, they have come to stand for the entire homeless population - despite the fact that they are in the minority (13-15%).

Figure 9
Five Myths About America's Homeless I

The Washington Post July 11, 2010

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

When residents were asked if they knew of anyone homeless in Chester County, most respondents (67%) stated that they did; a few admitted to being homeless. Half as many respondents (33%) stated that they have not seen homelessness in Chester County.

When asked what is the main cause of homelessness in the county, most respondents (29%) believed that it is the lack of affordable housing in Chester County. Following close behind is drug and/or alcohol abuse (24%) and mental health (24%) issues. Some thought the economy (10%) and lack of education (10%) are contributing factors, and the least amount of respondents believed that physical disabilities (5%) and lack of shelters/services (3%) lead to homelessness.

When asked what were the two most important aspects of homelessness that the government should address, most respondents supported the implementation of certain types of funding, especially job training programs and more affordable housing. However, some discouraged extending programs to the homeless thinking that the homeless would benefit in the long run from having incentives to motivate themselves.

When asked how the County government can better help people move out of homelessness, respondents expressed the need of helping with education/job training, affordable living, as well as better access to assistance and/or programs.

Research and experience allow us to look at ending homelessness in manageable pieces. The following pages describe the various groups that fall under one category - homeless.

Myth #3: Homeless people don't work.

Fact #3: According to a 2002 national study by the Urban Institute, about 45% of homeless adults had worked in the previous 30 days.

Myth #4: Shelters are a humane solution to homelessness.

Fact #4: Shelters are notoriously overcrowded where people experience the ritualized indignities of destitution: long lines for bedding or a squeeze of toothpaste; public showers; thieves; conflict. Shelters may be the final safety net, but that net scrapes perilously close to the ground.

Myth #5: These poor you will always have with you.

Fact #5: Get people back into housing as quickly as possible and the treatment for everything else can quickly follow - with greater benefits. According the HUD, "housing first" programs have helped reduce the number of chronically homeless nationwide by a third since 2005, to 112,000.

Figure 10
Five Myths About America's Homeless II

Single Men

Most single men that end up in homeless shelters in Chester County are there as a result of job loss, divorce, criminal justice involvement, or struggles with drugs, alcohol, and mental illness. Many have also “burned their bridges” with family members and friends, thus have little social support. In addition, due to the recent difficult economic climate, many homeless men have not been able to find gainful employment for a prolonged period of time. Specifically, homeless men that have criminal records experience significant barriers in finding steady employment.

Another major barrier for single homeless men in Chester County is the limited supply of affordable housing. Even men who are able to overcome the issues that initially lead them to becoming homeless often are unable to sustain housing because of the high cost of living in Chester County. This is particularly true for men with limited education and/or job skills. Even when these men are able to find employment, they often have to work in low paying jobs that do not allow them to meet their basic needs. The current minimum wage in Pennsylvania is \$7.25 per hour for hourly workers and \$2.83 for workers making more than \$30.00 dollars per month in tips.

According to “The Self Sufficiency Standard for Pennsylvania 2010-2011”, Chester County is one of the three most expensive counties in Pennsylvania (with neighboring Bucks and

Quick Facts

‘In 2009 629 single men stayed in at least one homeless shelter in Chester County. Of that number over 61% reported drug and/or alcohol issues. Nearly 28% reported a mental health issue, and over 42% were unemployed.’

Figure 11
Quick Facts I
Chester County Shelter Statistics

Montgomery being the others). A single man has to work at least eight hours a day, 22 days per month, making a minimum of \$10.13 an hour in order to sustain housing in Chester County.

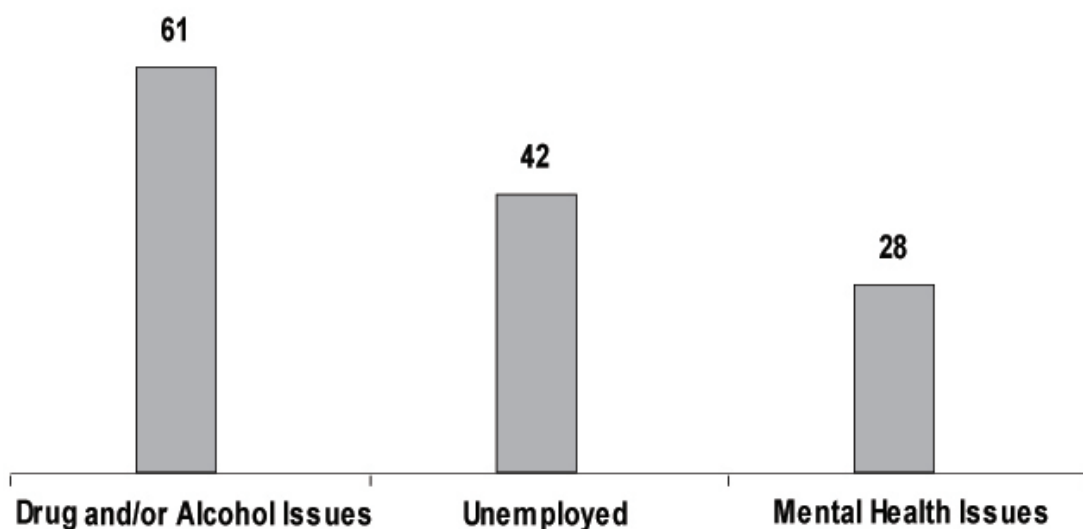


Figure 12
Issues facing homeless single men
Chester County Shelter Statistics

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Single Women

A single homeless woman is: "A person with no fixed address, stable, safe and healthy housing, extremely low income, adversely discriminated against in access to services, with problems of mental health, alcohol and drug abuse or social disorganization and not a member of a stable group" World Health Organization Working Definition (1999).

In Chester County during 2009, there were 105 single woman served in the emergency shelter system compared to 33 in 2008 (2009 DCD Emergency Shelter Statistics). In the U.S., 36% of the single sheltered population is single women (AHAR IV). In Chester County, about 20% of the single homeless population is female (AHAR V, Chester County Data).

The causes of homelessness for single women are often different than single men. Low-income is one cause. If a single woman has no other income than public benefits, she could become homeless. Second, divorce often leaves one of the spouses homeless. Also, domestic violence often affects women more than men, who may have more resources. Among other reasons are drug and alcohol related problems, job loss, lack of affordable housing, low wages, mental illness, poverty, roommates, severe depression, and tragedy and trauma. The trends that have been observed over the past several years show

an increase in people who are diagnosed as severely mentally ill (SMI), co-occurring, mentally challenged, or as having a learning disability.

Additionally, homelessness impacts women differently than men, and services need to address these needs. Services that are currently available include, but are not limited to case management, drug and alcohol programs, health care provision, counseling, mental health services, legal support, employment guidance, food assistance, and services for both the elderly and the young.

Frequently, education and employment skills are overlooked. Often, as providers we want our female clients to be productive in terms of securing employment, however, many need to be trained in how to use computers and technology in order to make themselves marketable in today's economy.



Figure 13
Length of Shelter Stay for Single Women
AHAR V

Families and Children

Not since the Great Depression have so many families been without homes (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2008). Nationally, 40% of the homeless population is comprised of families. In 90% of the cases a homeless family is comprised of a single mother with one or two young children (U. S. Conference of Mayors). In 2009 in Chester County, 97 families were served in family shelters. 90% of these families were female-headed households. Overall, 102 adults and 183 children stayed in Chester County family shelters in 2009. Out of the 64% of children sheltered, over 36% were between 0 and 5 years old, 23% were between 6 and 12 years old, and 4.6% were between 13 and 18 years of age. (2009 DCD Shelter Statistics) Pennsylvania ranks 14th in the nation in child homelessness (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2009).

Families in Chester County end up homeless for a variety of reasons. They usually have low incomes or no income when they enter a family shelter. Some families are dealing with trauma, domestic violence, or divorce; others may require mental health services or are completing a substance abuse program. Families trying to survive on minimum and low wage incomes have difficulty affording Chester County rent when times are good. In the current economy, many families have lost income or have had an unexpected expense (medical bills, high utility bills, or car repairs) or a job-hour reduction which puts them on the street.

Homeless families face multiple issues. Homeless children have over twice as many health problems as other children. They experience twice as much traumatic stress and three

Quick Facts

‘Nationally, approximately 40% of the homeless population is comprised of families.’

‘In Chester County, approximately twelve percent of the homeless population is comprised of families.’

Figure 14

Quick Facts II

National Center on Family Homelessness and Chester County Shelter statistics

times as many mental health issues as other children. They score lower on educational achievement tests than other students and the graduation rate for homeless children is less than 25%. Homelessness increases the likelihood that families will separate or dissolve, which compounds stress for all family members. There is a strong link between foster care placement and homelessness (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2008 & 2009).

Chester County has three general family shelters: Friend’s Emergency Family Shelter in West Chester, CYWA Shelter in Coatesville, and St. Mary’s Shelter in Phoenixville. In addition, Open Hearth, Friends Association, Home of the Sparrow, CYWA, Building Bridges, Bridge of Hope and Interfaith Housing all help support homeless families with housing services.

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Unaccompanied Youth

Recently, Chester County's Department of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) has begun receiving funds to address issues for families at risk of losing their children due to homelessness. Cases exist where youth are unable to remain with their families due to lack of housing and, as a result, are facing an additional challenge of child welfare placement. Only one year into program development, 12 families with 32 children have been referred to the CYF program.

Many youth, who transition out of child welfare placements and mental health residential treatment facilities, lack appropriate housing resources. Some may have an immediate plan for housing which commonly disrupts with no back-up options. Barriers

with transition-age youth are two-fold. Sometimes the youth are on a waiting list for public housing or Section 8 housing, which prohibits the ability to enter into an affordable housing lease agreement in the months prior to independent living. The largest barrier, according to the CYF cases, is the lack of stable employment for many transition-age youth. Lacking a consistent form of income puts landlords and departments such as CYF in high risk financial situations.

For youth struggling with a major mental illness or a child abuse or neglect background, successfully achieving independence at age 18 is even more challenging. These youth may not have completed high school, may lack job training or past job history, usually have no means of transportation, may lack basic life skills and have no means to pay for the higher cost of housing in Chester County. For the youth leaving placements without a parent or relative's home open for their return, they may have no support system to help them navigate achieving independence.

Without family members, mentors and community members to rely on and no steady source of income, many youth find themselves either living on the streets, in cars, or "couch-surfing" (moving from home to home wherever someone is willing to let them lay their head). Lacking a permanent address further complicates the quest for a steady source of income and social services. There appears to be an increase in the number of young adults who are being charged with crimes after exiting mental health residential treatment facilities.



Unfortunately, even unaccompanied youth experience homelessness (<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/>).

Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence encompasses a wide range of acts committed by one person against another in an intimate relationship or within a family. It is a pattern of coercive behavior that is used by one person to gain power and control over another. This may include physical violence, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse, stalking and economic control. Victims can be found in every geographical area, as well as in every ethnic/social/economical aspect of our society and can be male and female. Consistent with national and state statistics of domestic violence affecting one in four women (NCAVD, 2009), the majority of victims in Chester County are female. In 2009, 6.62%, or 55 women and children, of the 1,019 homeless reported to DCD in Chester County were victims of domestic violence. On the night of the point-in-time count, conducted on January 27, 2010 by DCD, there were 79 women and children in housed in the shelters and transitional housing operated by the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County.

For victims and their children, the home is often a dangerous place. However, the decision of leaving housing although unsafe or being homeless is often hard to make. In addition to physical violence, abusers may prevent victims from accessing or obtaining financial resources to pay their housing costs. The barriers to victims securing affordable housing can include finding employment necessary to pay for housing and establishing a good credit rating to obtain a mortgage or lease. Additionally, much of Chester County's moderately priced housing is concentrated in older, often deteriorating, communities, in buildings

Year	Women and Children	Percentage of total population
2005	89	9.83%
2006	74	9.34%
2007	66	8.43%
2008	59	6.47%
2009	55	6.62%

Figure 15
Total of women and children staying in shelters reporting domestic violence
Chester County Shelter Statistics

requiring significant repair, or in rural areas of the County with few employment opportunities nearby and no public transportation. The downturn in the economy has compounded this problem. As a result, many victims and their children are forced into the transient life of the homeless.

The needs of victims of domestic violence are often different than other persons experiencing homelessness. They need immediate safe, anonymous housing coupled with legal services and counseling for trauma and to encourage self-advocacy.

According to the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence, domestic violence victims may only stay at a domestic violence shelter for 30 days or less so shelter is often very short term. Documentation of homelessness is different than other groups because it does not need to be verified due to the sensitivity of the situation. Key legislation related to domestic violence and housing has included the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994.

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Substance Abusers

Individuals with drug and/or alcohol addictions are at a much higher risk for homelessness. Addictive Disorders disrupt relationships with family and friends, negatively impact employment, and often lead to involvement in the criminal justice system. The loss of support from family members, unemployment, and incarceration are all factors in why people struggling with substance abuse issues may lose their home.

This population needs specialized services for recovery, often including residential treatment. Many also need medical, dental, and mental health care, educational and vocational assistance, and daily living and money management skills. From a treatment perspective, it's habilitation vs. rehabilitation.

There is a full range of treatment options available for homeless and/or uninsured Chester County residents, ranging from outpatient care to residential services. The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol reports a steady demand for longer treatment, focused on habilitation/supported community reintegration in early recovery.

Stability must be achieved for individuals to obtain and maintain housing and move forward with recovery. Simply re-housing individuals with active addictions, without first providing appropriate treatment & recovery skills, will only result in recurring homelessness. Even after completing treatment for their substance abuse issues, many individuals with addictions find themselves without basic resources needed for long term success. The limited availability of low income housing in Chester County often leads people in recovery no choice but to stay in homeless shelters until they can save enough money to afford to rent their own apartment.

2009 Chester County Department of Community Development shelter statistics report 42% (of individuals served), admit to a problem with drug dependency and 34% were struggling with alcoholism. In 2009 these numbers slightly decreased to 32% reporting drug dependency and 29% reporting alcoholism. Individuals with substance abuse disorders often move from house to house, until family and friends have had enough, so it is expected that the overall percentage of homeless people with addiction issues is actually higher.

Year	2008		2009	
	Total	Percentage of total population	Total	Percentage of total population
Drug dependant	296	42%	266	32%
Alcohol dependant	257	34%	245	29%

Figure 16
Total of people staying in shelters reporting drug and/or alcohol dependency
Chester County Shelter Statistics

Mentally ill

Mental Illness is any of various conditions characterized by impairment of an individual's normal cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning, and caused by social, psychological, biochemical, genetic, or other factors, such as infection or head trauma.

Mental Illness is a major concern in our society. It affects almost 60 million Americans. That's an estimated one in every four adults and one in every five children. Mental Illness is more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease, making it the leading cause of disability in the United States.

Homelessness is in epidemic proportions in the United States and exists here in Chester County. It is estimated that up to 16% of homeless people suffer from some type of mental illness. When people refuse treatment for mental illness, their symptoms tend to get worse. In addition to becoming more isolated, many people display odd symptoms like talking to themselves or imaginary others, thus prompting them to become even more isolated from society. Sadly, many of these homeless people suffered from their mental illnesses before becoming homeless. Due to lack of treatment or refusal of treatment, they wound up out of jobs and alienated from family and friends. As the mental illness remains untreated on the street, most symptoms are exacerbated. These individuals are often incarcerated for public nuisance offences which lead to a host of problems that often leaves the person homeless after release from prison.

Year	Mentally ill	Total Homeless Population	Percentage of total population
2005	293	905	32%
2006	314	805	39%
2007	260	783	33%
2008	302	912	33%
2009	231	831	28%

Figure 17
Total of people staying in shelters reporting mental health problems
Chester County Shelter Statistics

Prejudice against and fear of people who have a mental illness is of great concern in Chester County. People who have a mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence than its perpetrators, but one instance of an assault by an individual with mental illness reconfirms the violent and unpredictable stereotype as real in the community's eyes, with negative effects on employment opportunities, housing and life of that individual. The community's perspective also affects the willingness to allocate funds for support services for people in the community, thus they are very limited.

During the 2009 Point in Time Count 27 homeless persons with a severe mental illness were reported. Unfortunately, one out of those 27 was unsheltered.

Chester County through a variety of non-profit agencies provides homeless shelters, transitional housing, shared housing, community housing, supportive housing and case management services for these special populations.

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Persons with an Intellectual Disability

According to The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), an Intellectual Disability is one which occurs before the age of 18 and is characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Currently, there are approximately 1500 consumers registered for service who reside in Chester County. However, Chester County census and current clinical indicators of prevalence for individuals with an Intellectual Disability (per AAIDD) would tell us that there may be as many as 4000+ individuals with an Intellectual Disability who reside in Chester County.

Homelessness in this population can be contributed by unemployment and underemployment with sub-average earnings. For those able to work, full time employment is much less common. This impacts their ability to have sufficient income to cover rent and other everyday living costs. Adults with Intellectual Disabilities often live with their elderly caregivers until they are unable to take of them. In many cases, there are no other relatives to fill this gap, leaving the individual potentially homeless.

Individuals with intellectual disabilities are much more likely to be victimized. Currently, within the 1,500 known ID consumers served in Chester County, none of them are homeless.

The trends we have seen over the last ten years have been an increase in the number of individuals with sufficient resources who would like to live independent of their families.

However, they are discouraged to move by their families to keep the money in the family budget. We have also seen an increase of individuals who are requesting residential supports that include housing costs. These are individuals who are capable of living with minimal supports but who cannot afford to maintain their housing costs. This is usually due to the fact they are unemployed or underemployed.

Quick Facts

‘In 2010, the intellectually and developmentally disabled consumers gathered together in large groups and self-advocated to the Chester County Commissioners to have the Department of Mental Retardation changed to its current name, Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This name change helps to reduce stigma to this population.’

Physically Disabled

People with physical disabilities are defined as individuals between the ages of 18-59 whose primary disability limits their mobility or physical functionality and can be represented on a scale of severity from limited use of fine motor skills sometimes associated with milder forms of Cerebral Palsy or Stroke to full physical disability in the form of quadriplegia.

The primary cause for homelessness for this population is affordability. For a person living with a physical disability their sources of income are limited to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Social Security Income (SSI) or a combination of the two. The federal government through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognize that accessible housing is often rented at premium rates and allows Public Housing Authorities (PHA) to pay up to 110% above Fair Market Rent (FMR) for accessible units. This is obviously a benefit for people with Housing Choice Vouchers but if one does not have a voucher then the smaller income of a person living on disability income often doesn't cover the necessary accessible housing.

This population also lives a delicate balance between housing and services; often if

someone becomes homeless their services stop until they have stable housing, however, this causes further instability making the individual harder to house as their needs increase and self-sufficiency decreases. The final obvious problem faced by this population in Chester County is the lack of physically accessible homeless shelters and/or the dollars to support them in motels until suitable housing can be found.

In 2005, 33 homeless persons reported having a physical disability. Throughout the years this amount fluctuated. 21 persons with disability were reported in 2009. This is 2.53% of the total cases served by shelters that year, which was 831.

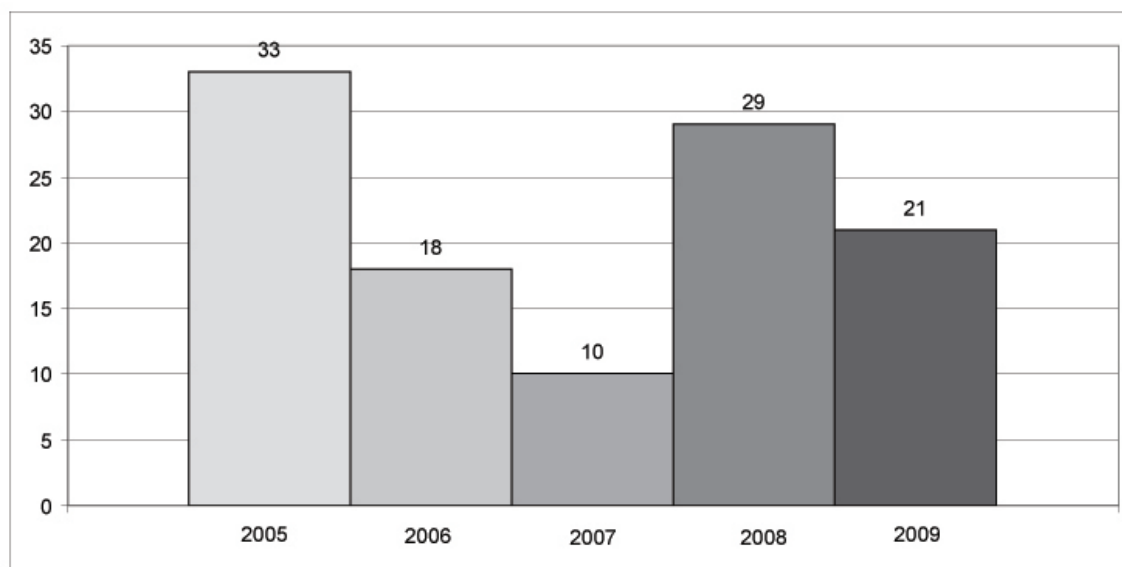


Figure 19
Total of physically disabled people staying in shelters
Chester County Shelter Statistics

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Veterans

A Veteran is defined as a man or woman who served in the active military, naval, or air service and were honorably discharged or released as documented by the military discharge paper called the DD214. A Reservist or National Guard member who was called to active duty by a Federal Order (for other than training purposes) and completed the full call-up period and was honorably discharged or separated for medical reasons, early out, or hardship.

Current population estimates suggest that about 131,000 Veterans are homeless on any given night in the United States and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year. 97% of homeless Veterans are men, most are single,

and come from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds. Approximately 45% suffer from mental illness, and slightly more than 70% suffer from alcohol and other drug abuse problems. The most recent United States Department of Justice statistics survey of inmates in local jails from 2002 indicated that 9.3% of people incarcerated in jails are Veterans. Most Veterans who become homeless lack an adequate income or employment opportunities. Affordable housing is difficult to locate. Public transportation accessibility is limited. Most often, a homeless Veteran has problems that contributed greatly to his or her homeless status. These problems are not easily overcome and can include chronic substance use or cognitive brain disorders to name a few.

Locally, Coatesville VA Medical Center (CVAMC) offers 229 beds to provide structured treatment programming for homeless Veterans, one of the largest programs in the country. These beds are contained in the Homeless Domiciliary, the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Treatment Unit, the Substance Abuse Treatment Unit, and the Power of Women Embracing Recovery unit-a separate treatment unit for Women Veterans.

Additionally, CVAMC is home to several transitional residences (Grant and Per Diem programs)

run by nonprofit organizations with beds totaling 185. These programs are typically a next step after Veterans have spent time in a homeless domiciliary.

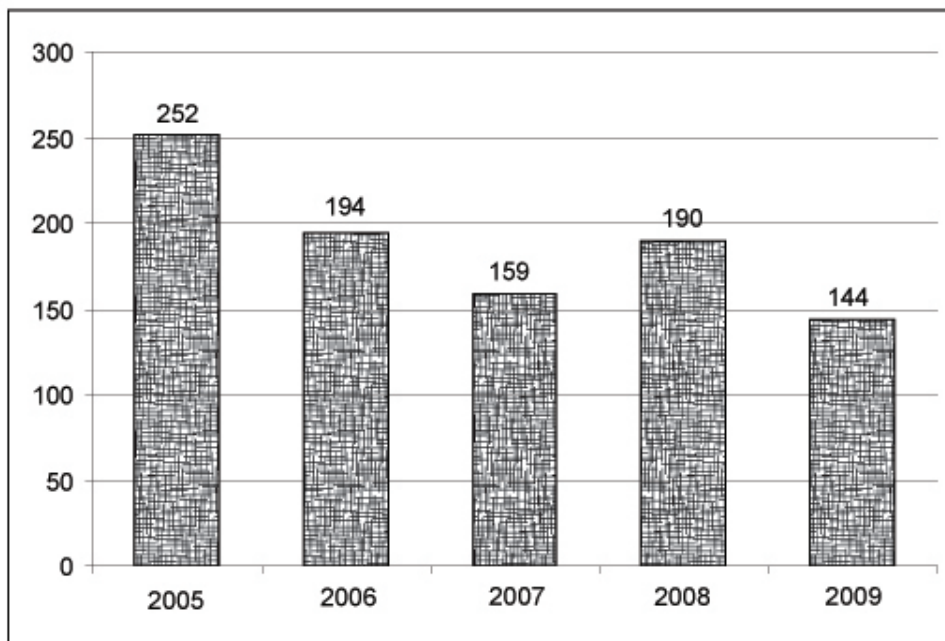


Figure 20
Total of Veterans staying in shelters
Chester County Shelter Statistics

Immigrant population

Overall, in 2009, 6.5% (54 people) of those served in Chester County homeless shelters were Hispanic/Latino individuals.

Hispanics, those whose origins are Latin American or Spain, have a growing presence in Chester County. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, in 2008, Hispanics were 5% of the county's population, as compared to 2% in 1990. There are sizable Hispanic communities in Phoenixville, Coatesville, Oxford, Kennett Square and West Chester working in the service, hospitality, agriculture, construction, and light manufacturing industries.

Hispanics are usually underrepresented among the homeless. Research suggests several reasons for the low number of Hispanic homeless including the strong cultural tradition of extended family support which may prevent homelessness. However, according to 2009 Chester County Shelter Statistics, there was a 93% increase in the number of Hispanic/Latino families served in family shelters (29 out of 97 people in 2009 versus 15 out of 161 people in 2008). Consistent with this trend, a 150% increase was seen in the number of Hispanic/Latino clients accessing services at shelters serving individuals.

Local social service providers have noted this strong commitment to family where families will share living space in order to obtain decent, affordable housing. Conversely, this willingness to support family members with housing may cause occupancy rate violations, leaving families vulnerable to eviction.

Hispanics face many barriers in accessing housing assistance, such as immigration status

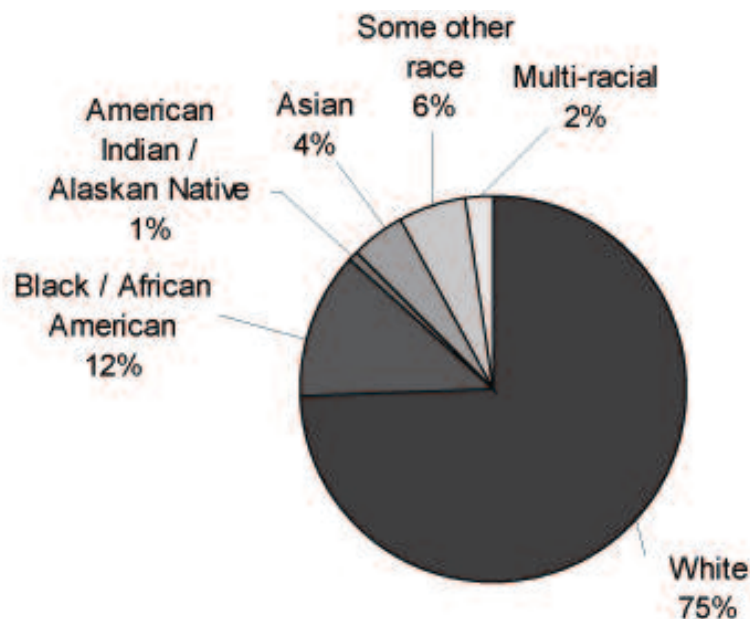


Figure 21
Racial Breakdown of the total Chester County population

American Community Survey 2006-2008, <http://census.gov>
*Please note Chester County has 178 inhabitants of the Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islanders Race. This represents less than 0.1 percent of the total population and is not shown in the chart.

which prohibits undocumented immigrants from receiving publicly funded housing assistance or services, even though they meet the financial eligibility criteria for housing assistance. Other barriers faced include limited English proficiency, lack of knowledge of housing resources, and a reluctance to seek out housing assistance for fear of discrimination or deportation.

Many local organizations serve Hispanics in Chester County, including Catholic Social Services, Maternal and Child Health Consortium, La Comunidad Hispana, Alliance for Better Housing, Phoenixville Area Community Services, and Oxford Neighborhood Services Center.

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Ex-offenders

An individual convicted of a crime and returning to the community from prison or jail without a plan for appropriate housing is considered a homeless ex-offender. Studies have shown that the first month after release is a susceptible period “during which the risk of becoming homeless and/or returning to criminal justice involvement is high.” (New York: Council of State Governments, 2005)

Issues of homelessness among ex-offenders are complex. This population faces many of the same social and economic conditions that lead to homelessness with the general population. The use of the criminal justice system to deal with drug addiction and the mentally ill and subsequently barriers to housing associated with their criminal justice involvement are

among the root causes of homelessness (Rodriguez and Brown, 2003). The policies and practices within many jurisdictions that serve to restrict ex-offenders’ exposure to people and situations that put themselves and the community at risk, especially for sex offenders, create significant obstacles to housing.

Recently released ex-offenders have insufficient funds for private market rental housing and the increased use of criminal background checks among landlords who are often unwilling to rent to people with criminal records creates significant obstacles. Public Housing often places restrictions on those with criminal histories involving drugs or violence. Further complicating the situation is a lack of employment opportunities for ex-offenders. Studies find that serving time in prison reduces the number of job opportunities for ex-offenders, making it harder to find housing, which in turn makes it even more difficult to find employment (Metraux & Cuhane, 2004).

The Chester County prison provides services to those with mental health and substance abuse issues and collaborates with Court programs such as Treatment Court to facilitate continuity of care upon release. Providing this continuity of care between the prison and the community can shrink re-arrests and prevent homelessness (National Health Care for Homeless Council, 2002 Policy Statement). The Reentry Unit of Adult Probation provides pre-release planning to all inmates and supervision during the critical period immediately after release. Criminologists have found that inmates that do not get pre-release plans are up to 50% more likely to return to jail (Abel, 2002). Life Transforming Ministries, the REDI program and The Beautiful Door all provide reentry services to this population within the County.

Quick Facts

In a national survey of jail inmates, 15.3% reported having been homeless at some point during the prior year.

At a “point in time” survey, the Chester County Prison reported nine inmates with a status of homeless out of 936 inmates (May 2010). The County Adult Probation & Parole Department’s Re-entry Unit conducted 66 pre-parole plans in 2009 where the parolee was considered homeless.

Figure 22
Quick Facts IV

Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008 and local Chester County data

Elderly

The homeless population seen by Chester County Department of Aging Services (CCDAS) consists of people age sixty and over who are typically low income and/or have dementia, a mental health disorder, lack family/community supports and/or have been financially exploited.

Homeless seniors who contact the CCDAS for assistance are usually living on a single, fixed income below the poverty level. These seniors experienced difficulty paying bills on time leading to foreclosures and evictions. Their monthly bills usually exceeded their income substantially. Family members were not able to provide any assistance. Those who had the good fortune to plan for retirement are living past the age where their nest eggs can sustain them or have lost large portions to the recent collapse in the economy, scams or other forms of financial exploitation.

Dementia, Alzheimer’s and mental health disorders also contribute to senior homelessness in our county. These populations of seniors are not able to adequately manage their finances, complete forms to apply for assistance, lack the ability to comply with Housing Authority requirements, and/or do not understand the consequences of failing to pay bills in a timely manner.

There has been an increase in the number of reports to CCDAS regarding homeless seniors and of those soon facing homelessness. As the population of people over the age of sixty in our county increases the number of homeless seniors is expected to increase as well.

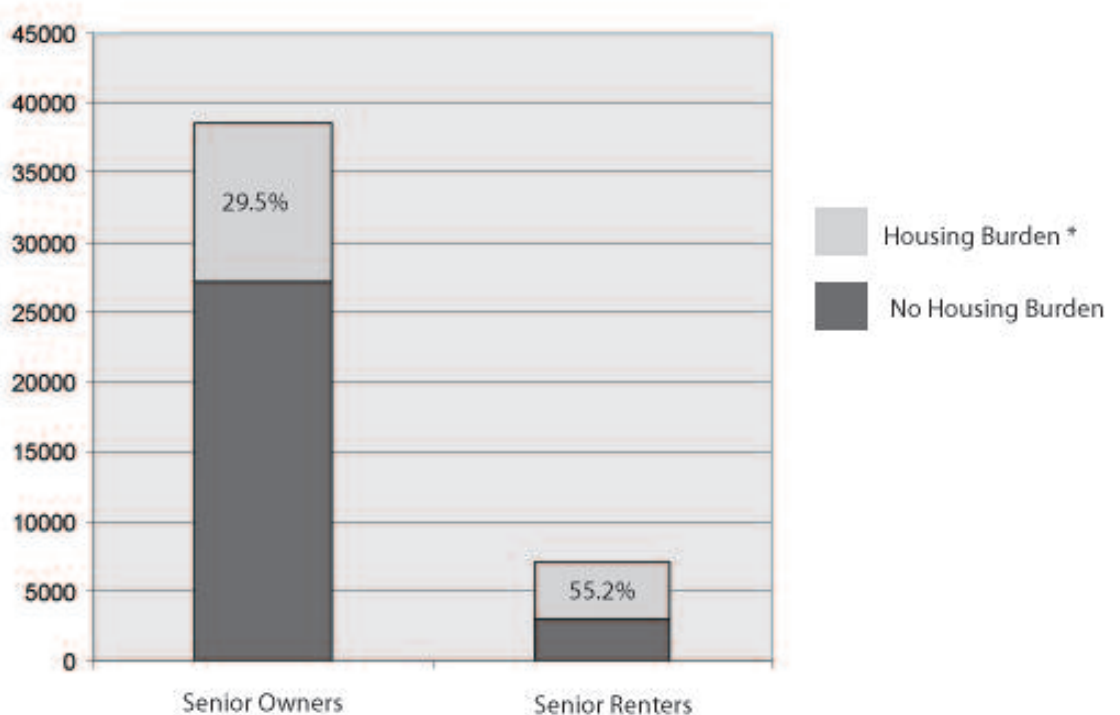


Figure 23
Total of seniors experiencing a housing burden

2009Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy

* A housing burden is defined as a household that is either cost burdened or living in substandard or overcrowded conditions.

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Persons with HIV/AIDS

The HIV disease and homelessness have many points of intersection. Lack of education, unemployment, isolation, and stigma may put county residents at higher risk for these end results. This article reports information on residents of Chester County who are HIV positive or whose disease has progressed to AIDS. Issues of medical care, medications, and transmission place People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) at high priority. According to a research study conducted about homelessness and HIV/AIDS in Philadelphia, homelessness is three times more prevalent among people with HIV/AIDS than the general population (The Co-Occurrence of AIDS and Homelessness, 2001).

The only service available for housing PLWHA in Chester County is Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS (HOPWA). HOPWA is program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides housing assistance and related supportive services. HOPWA in Chester County is managed by Family Service of Chester County. There are currently 16 HOPWA slots available through this program, and they are all filled. Five slots are site based with the rest being scattered-site depending on the consumer's housing preference.

Stable housing is seen as a major component in healthcare and one of the best indicators of long-term health for PLWHA. According to the National AIDS Housing Coalition "3%-10% of homeless are

HIV positive" and "PLWHA who received a housing placement were twice as likely at 12 months to have an undetectable viral load as those who did not receive housing". In 2009, Family Service of Chester County, Project One-HIV/AIDS case management saw 125 clients with 27 clients being new to case management. Of those clients 106 were at or below Federal Poverty Level, 12 more were between 101%-200% of Federal Poverty Level. Through April 2010 Family Service of Chester County has seen 90 clients. 73 of these 90 clients are at or below Family Poverty Level with 10 more between 101% - 200%.

In 2009, Chester County shelters served 6 persons with AIDS related diseases. This compares to 4 persons in 2008. On January 27, 2010, Chester County's Point in Time count of homeless persons was conducted. During this evening 1 sheltered and 1 unsheltered person with HIV/AIDS were reported.

Quick Facts

In the United States of America there are over 50,000 new infections per year. It is estimated that each HIV+ person will average \$300,000 in medical costs in a lifetime.

Figure 24
Quick Facts V

Near-homeless

Persons who are considered near-homeless make up a broad population that is hard to categorize by just one definition. A few possible examples of persons considered to be near-homeless are those who are “doubled-up”, living in a motel, or have an eviction notice. This group can also include those who have fallen behind in rent and/or utilities and have no way of getting caught up, even if they have not yet received an eviction or shut-off notice. Those living in unsafe or substandard housing that could become condemned are also in danger of becoming homeless. This group may include persons whose financial management decisions affect their ability to stay in rental housing.

Causes of becoming near-homeless can be linked to limited income vs. expensive cost of living. A lack of education, basic financial literacy, and support systems often leads to poor financial decision making allowing priorities to sometimes go in the direction of luxury or wants instead of needs. The near-homeless population often has poor credit, family issues, medical expenses, disabilities, criminal backgrounds, and is often under-employed.

If an individual or family is doubled-up or in a hotel, it is already too late for prevention services yet they do not qualify for resources like housing vouchers because they are not literally homeless. Other issues faced by the

near-homeless include a lack of subsidized or affordable housing and a lack of transportation to find gainful employment.

In general, there is a lack of data being collected on the near-homeless population. The mainstream rental assistance program turns away hundreds of callers who are near-homeless every quarter. Recent trends show more people are doubling-up and/or living in hotels. There are more families facing homelessness for the first time and they do not know how to access services that can assist them.

There are several services that can help the near-homeless population in Chester County. Limited rental assistance is available to those who qualify. There are agencies that offer limited help with food and clothing. Finally, there are services that can help people get a job, keep their job, increase their income, and better manage their finances.

Quick Facts

In 2009, Chester County began a pilot program focussed on enhanced prevention services for near-homeless. At program exit, 86% of those served acquired rental housing without subsidy assistance, 10% acquired rental housing with subsidy assistance and 3% moved in permanently with family or friends.

Figure 25
Quick Facts VI

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Chronically Homeless

HUD's definition is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition (disability is long-term and substantially impedes their ability to live independently) who has either been continuously homeless (on the streets, in a shelter, or a place not meant for human habitation) for a year or more or had at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years. Chronic homelessness does not include families.

On a given night, there are approximately 124,135 chronically homeless individuals in the U.S. compared to 46 chronically homeless individuals in Chester County; this represents 14% of Chester County's homeless population. (AHAR 4 and Point in Time Chester County 2010).

Nationally, there are strong correlations between chronic homelessness and serious mental illness and substance abuse. According to Chester County homeless statistics, over 1/3 of the homeless population are self identified as having a mental health and/or substance abuse issue (Chester County Shelter Statistics 2008). The trends also show a steady increase in chronically homeless women and the creation of tent communities.

The chronically homeless population has numerous, significant barriers to maintaining decent, safe, and affordable housing including low-income, lack of supportive services, and discrimination. The majority of these individuals find maintaining employment extremely difficult due to disabilities and are dependant on public assistance or social security for income which falls between 0-30% of MFI (less than \$16,450 a year for 1 person).

These individuals need support not only accessing but also maintaining housing and mental and physical health. Due to the seriousness of their disability, many experience periods of exacerbation which can sometimes be attributed to the harsh life on the street. These symptoms can be manifested through behaviors and health issues that may be disruptive to a community and can result in criminal action. Without supports and culturally competent services in place, it can be difficult for these individuals. Although there are several laws that address discriminatory practices towards the disabled population, stigmatization and discrimination still occur none the less.

Current available programs include case management, health care, permanent housing, and SSI/SSDI assistance, and substance abuse and mental health programs.

	Chester County	United States
Homeless Individuals on a given night	319	664,000
Chronically Homeless Individuals on a given night	46	124,135
Percentage	14.4%	18.7%

Figure 26

Chronically Homeless in Chester County and the U.S.
AHAR IV and Point in Time Chester County 2010

Services

Shelters

Often, shelters are the first point of contact for people who do not have a residence anymore.

Homeless shelters and emergency shelters are temporary residences, usually located in urban neighborhoods. Homeless shelters are usually open to anyone, without regard to the reason for need, but the main difference is that an emergency shelter typically specializes in people fleeing a specific type of situation, such as battered women, victims of domestic violence in general, or victims of sexual abuse. The minor difference is that people staying in emergency shelters are more likely to stay all day, except for work, school, or errands, while homeless shelters usually expect people to stay elsewhere during the day, returning only to sleep or eat. Some shelters limit their clientele by gender or age. Emergency shelters sometimes offer support groups or provide meals. If they do not offer such services, Chester County's homeless shelters connect clients to other services, such as a soup kitchen, job seeking skills training, job placement, and/or substance abuse treatment.

Chester County is fortunate enough to have eleven emergency shelters for its homeless populations. Together they offer a total of 127 beds on a given night of the year.

The Chester County Department of Community Development (DCD) provides

funding for eight emergency shelters in Chester County, PA. Quarterly reports are submitted to DCD from these emergency shelters, which provide the following information.

Of the emergency homeless shelters serving individual clients, 629 single men (a 12% decrease from 2008) and 105 were single women (a 17% increase from 2008). Not uncommon with homeless individuals, 86% of those sheltered in 2009 were men.

Family shelters served 92 single-parent families (a 5% decrease from 2008) and 5 two-parent families (a 28% decrease from 2008).

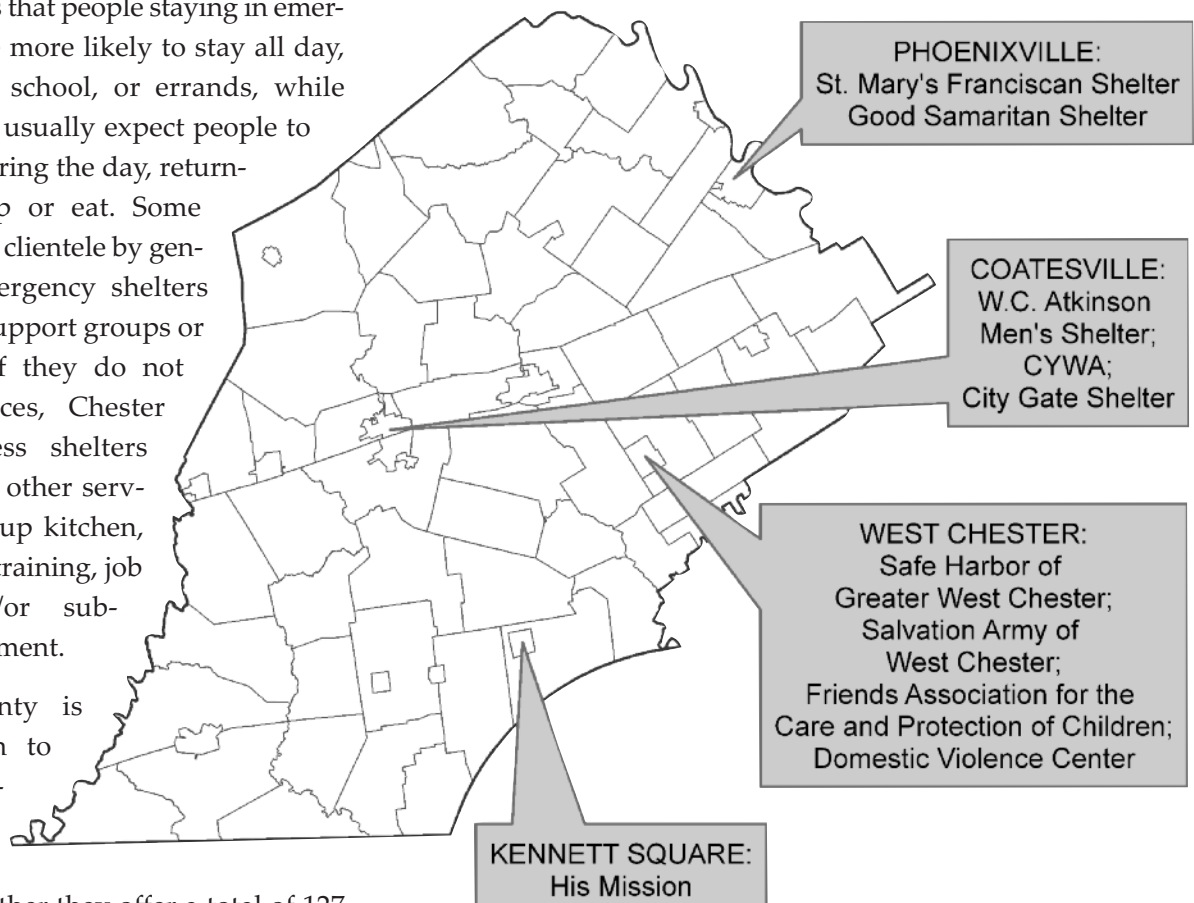


Figure 26
Emergency Shelters in Chester County

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Transitional and Permanent Housing

Please note that these terms “transitional housing” and “permanent supportive housing” differ in meanings across social service systems. For example, permanent supportive housing in the mental health field looks a little different than permanent supportive housing in the homeless sector. For the purposes of this article, we are describing housing in relation to the homeless system.

Transitional housing in Chester County is typically a 12-24 month program. It can include on site housing, scattered site housing, or shared housing. For example, someone could be in transitional housing and live in a physical building with other transitional housing participants. They could also live in their own apartment through a “transition in place” type model where they receive a subsidy and support services in their home. Overall, housing is usually linked intensive case management.

There are 14 transitional housing programs in Chester County. Four programs of the 14 programs serve single males. Three specifically serve households with children. There are three transitional housing programs expressively for victims of domestic violence. According to the 2010 Chester County Housing Inventory, there are a total of 211 transitional housing beds in the county on a given night. This bed number can fluctuate depending on family composition. For instance, if a unit has 4 beds, but there are 3 people in the family, the unit would be full at 3 beds instead of 4.

Permanent housing is permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals and families with disabilities. Typically, an individ-

ual or family need to be homeless as per HUD’s definition (on the street, in a shelter, in transitional housing, in a car, or in a place not meant for human habitation) and where at least one adult has a physical, mental, or emotional disability impairment which is expected to be of long-continued and indefinite duration; substantially impedes his or her ability to live independently; and is of such nature that such ability could be improved by more suitable housing conditions. If a person has a developmental disability, they could also be considered for the program depending on their situation (www.hudhre.info).

There are 12 permanent supportive housing programs in Chester County not including the HUD-Veterans’ Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH). Based on the 2010 Chester County Housing Inventory, there are a total of 207 permanent supportive housing beds in the county on a given night. Of the 12 programs, 5 programs serve families with children. The other 7 programs serve individuals.

Quick Facts

In Chester County, there are a total of 127 emergency shelter beds, 211 transitional housing beds and 207 permanent supportive housing beds available on a given night.

Figure 28
Quick Facts VII

Rental Assistance, Prevention Activities & Supportive Services

Helping individuals and families avoid losing their current housing through rental assistance and supportive services is a vital component in addressing homelessness in Chester County. Those facing eviction due to temporary financial hardships may qualify for rental and other financial assistance based on their individual situation. There are multiple programs designed to prevent homelessness.

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program can provide a one-time emergency rent or security deposit payment for eligible Chester County residents facing eviction or currently homeless. In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, 44 families with children and 16 adult only households (174 people overall) received assistance through this program.

Funding from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act can provide one-time emergency assistance for rent, mortgage, and utilities for eligible Chester County residents facing eviction or utility shut off. In 2009, 180 households received rental assistance, 17 households received mortgage assistance, and 200 households received utility assistance through these programs.

The Stable Family Program of Chester County is a temporary program that can provide short and intermediate term rental and financial assistance for eligible Chester County residents facing eviction and impacted by the current economic downturn (recent job loss or reduction in income). As of October 1, 2010, 73 households (198 people overall) have been served through this program.

There are also various Information and Referral, social service and faith based organizations that provide financial and/or rental assistance to residents of Chester County in need.

	Persons	Households
Financial Assistance		
Rental Assistance	91	33
Security and Utility Deposits	44	10
Utility Payments	34	9
Unduplicated Total	91	33
Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services		
Case Management	198	73
Outreach and Engagement	58	19
Housing search and Placement	48	14
Legal Services	16	5
Credit Repair	25	8
Unduplicated Total	198	73

Figure 29
Persons and Households served through the Stable Families Program from October 1, 2009 through October 1, 2010

Ending Homelessness in Chester County

Quick Facts

According to the financials submitted by the eight Chester County funded shelters, it cost more than \$2.2 million in 2009 to provide a shelter bed for 1,019 homeless individuals.

This equates to a total cost of \$2,244 per person and does not include the costs spent by non-County funded shelters.

Figure 30
Quick Facts VIII

The past ten years

While various local organizations and foundations have contributed to Chester County's homeless system services, the Department of Community

Development has been allocating federal, state and local dollars to support the Continuum of Care as well.

It is important to note that these government funds are leveraged from nine separate funding streams, each requiring varying compliance, reporting, and program regulations.

This means ensuring that the homeless individual served with these dollars meets the eligibility criteria of a specific funding stream.

Additionally, Figure 30 represents the level of funding from each federal, state and local resource, with the majority of dollars coming from the U.S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development. Since 2000, Chester County has invested more than \$14,585,000 into the homeless services delivery system.

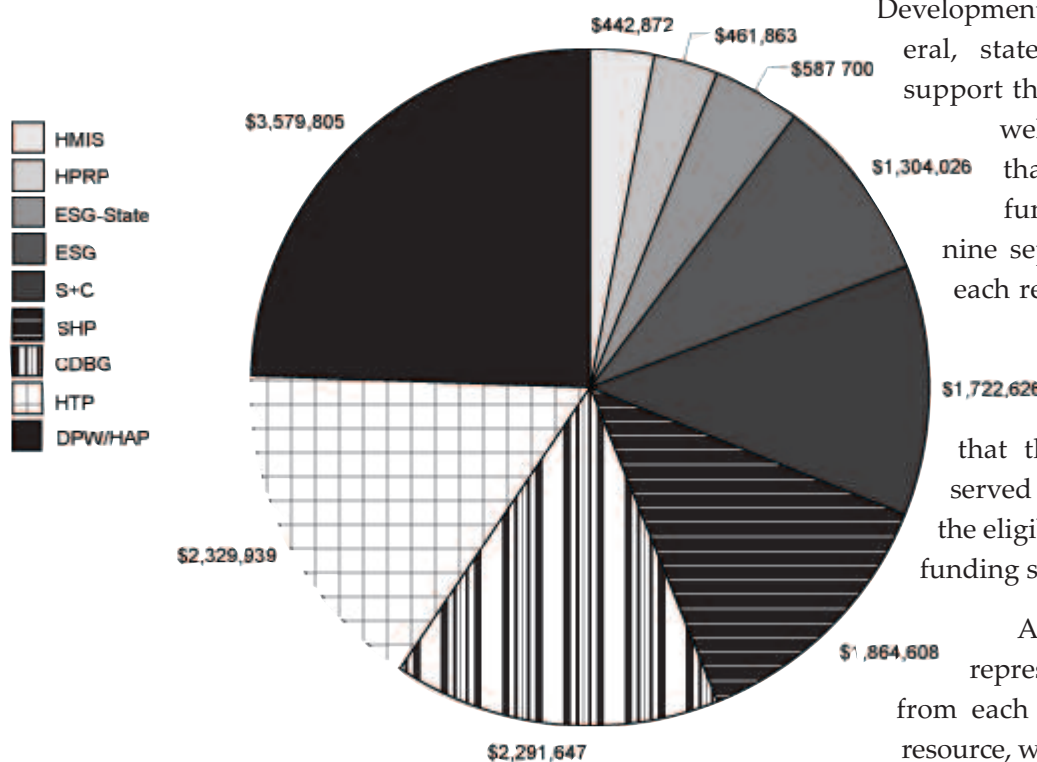


Figure 31
County Funding for emergency shelters
2000-2010

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The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Developmental Programs Bulletin August 13, 2008

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<http://www.hudhre.info/documents/4thHomelessAssessmentReport.pdf>

Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov/>

<http://www.census.org/>

<http://city-data.com>

Chester County Department of Community Development

<http://chesco.org/ccdcd>

Chester County Planning Commission

<http://dsf.chesco.org/planning>

Coalition Against Domestic Violence/State Facts: Pennsylvania

<http://www.ncadv.org/files/Pennsylvania%20new%20202.09.pdf>

Department of Labor and Industry

<http://www.dli.state.pa.us/>

<http://www.paworkstats.state.pa.us/>

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/aidshousing/programs/>

US Department of Housing and Urban Development

<http://hudhre.info>

National AIDS Housing Coalition

<http://nationalaidshousing.org/>

Pathways PA

http://pathwayspa.prg/policy/FINAL_P-2006_full%20report5-15-06.pdf

The Co-Occurrence of AIDS and Homelessness: Results from the integration of administrative databases for AIDS surveillance and public shelter utilisation in Philadelphia

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1731940/pdf/v055p00515.pdf>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/en/>

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