

Fact Sheet on Homelessness and Housing Instability in DC

District of Inequality

- DC is experiencing an economic boom: in June 2018 the DC Council finalized the **\$14.5 billion FY2019 budget**.¹
- DC's population surpassed 700,000 in 2018 -- the US Census Bureau states that **19%** of the population lives in poverty.²
- As of 2016, Washington DC had the **highest per capita rate of homelessness in the country**, with more than 15,000 people experiencing homelessness over the course of a typical year.³
- DC's homeless population increased by 34% between 2009 and 2016.⁴ According to the 2018 Point in Time count, it decreased slightly, by 7.6%, from 2017 to 2018.⁵

The Numbers - DC 2018 Point-in-Time Count

- The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is conducted each January, and while it is the official government count of persons who are homeless, it undercounts homeless families because it doesn't include families who are homeless but not in the DC emergency shelter system. For example, many families are forced to double up with other households in crowded living situations after they lose housing – these families would not be included in the PIT. The 2018 PIT counted **9** unaccompanied minors and **1,924** children in families, but some **6,000 District school children** are estimated to have started the 2017-2018 academic year in homelessness. That number has nearly doubled since 2014.⁶
- Based on the PIT count, on a single night in January 2018, **6,904** persons in the city were counted as homeless: **3,761** single adults, **9** unaccompanied minors, and **924** families (totaling **3,134** family members, 1,924 of whom were children).⁷
- On the night of the 2018 PIT, at least **600** people were unsheltered on the street.⁸
- **51%** of single adults and **19%** of adults in families counted in 2018 are chronically homeless.⁹

¹ "D.C. Council finalizes \$14.5 billion budget, including new taxes and spending" The Washington Post, June 26, 2018. Accessed July 5, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-council-finalizes-145-billion-budget-including-new-taxes-and-spending/2018/06/26/ed221158-795a-11e8-93cc-6d3beccdd7a3_story.html?utm_term=.8de9d9dc571a

² United States Census Bureau Quick Facts, District of Columbia, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/dc/PST045217>

³ United States Conference of Mayors, Hunger and Homelessness Survey, Dec. 2016

⁴ Id.

⁵ DC Department of Human Services 2018 Point-in-Time Fact Sheet. <https://dhs.dc.gov/page/2018-point-time-count-people-experiencing-homelessness-district-columbia>

⁶ "More than 6,000 homeless D.C. kids head to school this year. Here's the first day through one of their eyes" The Washington Post. August 20, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/it-feels-great-to-go-back-the-districts-students-return-to-school/2018/08/20/e2d4f528-a491-11e8-8fac-12e98c13528d_story.html?utm_term=.78781b83f222

⁷ DC Department of Human Services 2018 Point-in-Time Fact Sheet. <https://dhs.dc.gov/page/2018-point-time-count-people-experiencing-homelessness-district-columbia>

⁸ Id.

⁹ Id.

- **50%** of homeless single adults report having been formerly institutionalized – many people become homeless for the first time upon being discharged from an institution, such as a hospital or a jail.¹⁰
- **34%** of adults in homeless families, and **19%** of single adults, report a history of domestic violence.¹¹
- **30%** of single homeless adults, but only **2%** of adults in families, are living with chronic substance abuse.¹² Chronic substance abuse is defined as ...
- **32.4%** of single adults and **7.4%** of adults in families are living with severe mental illness.¹³
- **24.6%** of single adults and **1.5%** of adults in families are living with chronic health problems, and **18%** of single adults have a physical disability.¹⁴
- African American DC residents, despite making up **47.7%** of the District’s population on the whole, comprise **88.4%** of adults experiencing homelessness.¹⁵
- Median age of adults in families experiencing homelessness: **29 years old**.¹⁶
- Median age of single adults experiencing homelessness: **51 years old**.¹⁷
- Median age of children in families experiencing homelessness: **5 years old**.¹⁸

Income Inequality in the Nation’s Capital

- **19% of DC residents live below** the US Department of Health & Human Services federal poverty guideline, which for a family of four is **\$25,100**.¹⁹
- 2016 data shows **31,000 DC children (26 percent)** living in poverty.²⁰
- HUD lists the DC metropolitan area as **Median Family Income as \$117,200²¹ annually** – an extremely high number when one considers DC’s vast wealth gap. Housing units are sometimes considered “affordable” when they are affordable to people whose incomes are 80% of the Median Family Income. These units are still out of reach for many working class and low-income households. People experiencing deep poverty, especially those who need family-sized units, are often left out of the equation.
- Employment is the primary source of income for **34%** of single homeless adults in DC and **26%** of adults in homeless families.²² Minimum wage in DC is **\$13.25/hour**.²³

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ Id.

¹² DC Department of Human Services 2018 Point-in-Time Fact Sheet. <https://dhs.dc.gov/page/2018-point-time-count-people-experiencing-homelessness-district-columbia>

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Id.

¹⁶ Id.

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness-Facts & Figures: District of Columbia CoC FY2018 Point in Time. Accessed July 5, 2018. <http://www.community-partnership.org/facts-and-figures>

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation: 2018 Poverty Guidelines. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

²⁰ Id, at 56.

²¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Economic and Market Analysis Division, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2018/2018summary.odn>

²² The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness-Facts & Figures: District of Columbia CoC FY2018 Point in Time.

- SSI/SSDI/Disability/VA Disability is the primary source of income for **32.9%** of homeless single adults.²⁴ In 2018, the monthly SSI payment amount is **\$750**.²⁵ The only source of income available to disabled adults who are waiting to be approved for SSI is Interim Disability Assistance, which is only **\$370/month**.
- TANF/Public Assistance/WIC is the primary source of income for **57.4%** of homeless adults in families.²⁶ In 2018, the maximum benefit for a family of three is **\$576** per month.²⁷
- The maximum monthly benefit allotment for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/ Food Stamps) is **\$192** for one person and **\$504** for a family of three.²⁸
- Despite having an overall unemployment rate of **5.6** (as of May 2018),²⁹ the unemployment rate for African Americans in DC is **12.9%** - the highest African American unemployment rate in the country.³⁰ DC also has the highest black-white unemployment disparity, at **8.5-to-1**.³¹ The Latinx unemployment rate in DC is **3.1**.³²

DC's Emergency Shelter System

- In DC, there is a right to shelter only during hypothermic (below 32 degrees Fahrenheit) or hyperthermic (above 95 degrees Fahrenheit) conditions. Although no legal right exists to shelter outside of those weather conditions, the DC Department of Human Services does make some family shelter placements throughout the year. Massachusetts and New York City are the only other jurisdictions in the United States with right-to-shelter laws.
- From November 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, **1599 families applied for family emergency shelter – a 3% increase** from the 2017 hypothermia season.³³ Only **924** families were in the shelter system

²³ DC Department of Employment Services Office of Wage Hour Compliance. Accessed July 5 2018.

<https://does.dc.gov/service/office-wage-hour-compliance>

²⁴ The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness-Facts & Figures: District of Columbia CoC FY2018 Point in Time

²⁵ United States Social Security Administration, SSI Federal Payment Amounts For 2018. Accessed August 23, 2018.

<https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/SSI.html>

²⁶ The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness-Facts & Figures: District of Columbia CoC FY2018 Point in Time

²⁷ Coventry, Kate. "What's In the Approved Fiscal Year 2019 Budget for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families." DC Fiscal Policy Institute, July 13, 2018. Accessed August 23, 2018. <https://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/TANF-FY-2019-Final.pdf>

²⁸ The United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Accessed August 28, 2018.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility#How%20much%20could%20I%20receive%20in%20SNAP%20benefits?>

²⁹ US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics: Economy at a Glance, District of Columbia. Accessed July 5, 2018.

<https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.dc.htm>

³⁰ Jones, Janelle. "In 14 states and DC, the African American unemployment rate is at least twice the white unemployment rate." Economic Policy Institute, May 17, 2018. Accessed July 5, 2018. <https://www.epi.org/publication/state-race-unemployment-2018q1/>

³¹ Id.

³² Id.

³³ The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness. Hypothermia FY18 Debrief – Families, Prepared for the District of Columbia Interagency Council on Homelessness. May 2018.

when the Point-in-Time happened, meaning that many families were turned away from emergency shelter.³⁴

- As of May 2018, DC has **809** emergency shelter units for families – a number that includes government contracted motel rooms for overflow capacity. With DC General family shelter slated to close in 2018 without all the planned replacement shelters being ready, capacity is likely to drop significantly.³⁵
- As of September 2017, DC had **890** year-round emergency shelter beds for single adult men, who make up **72%** of DC's **3,761** single homeless adults. Additional beds are made available during hypothermia season.³⁶
- As of September 2017, DC had only **218** year-round emergency shelter beds for single adult women, who make up **26%** of DC's **3,761** single homeless adults (978 women). As a result, women were turned away from shelter on a regular basis during the last year because there is not enough capacity. Additional beds are made available during hypothermia season.³⁷
- There are no shelter spaces for adult couples without children.

DC's Family Rapid Re-Housing Program

- In FY 2017 (October 2016 to September 2017), only 26% of families in RRH managed to increase their income.³⁸
- In FY 2017, families who exited RRH only had an average monthly income of \$541. Meanwhile, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment among RRH participants was \$1,712.³⁹
- In FY 2017, a staggering 1,184 families were exited from RRH, nearly three times as many as the prior year. The reason for exit was only reported for 755 of these families, leaving more than 1/3 unaccounted for. Only 83 families were listed as exiting the program because they were able to afford the full rent.⁴⁰
- 70% of families in RRH receive TANF.⁴¹
- 13% of families in RRH have a head of household on disability.⁴²
- Families are required to pay between 40 and 60% of their income towards the rent, not including utilities. As a result, the RRH rules effectively mandate that most families will be severely rent burdened the entire time they are in the program.⁴³

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³⁵ Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. *Homelessness in Metropolitan Washington: Results and Analysis from the Annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of Homeless Persons, May 9, 2018*. P. 72.

<https://www.mwcog.org/documents/homelessnessreport/>

³⁶ Id., p. 15

³⁷ Id., p. 16

³⁸ DC Department of Human Services. Budget and Performance Oversight Responses. 2018.

http://dccouncil.us/files/user_uploads/budget_responses/dhs_Part1.pdf

³⁹ Id.

⁴⁰ Id.

⁴¹ Id.

⁴² Id.

⁴³ Tipping, Max. *Set Up to Fail: Rapid Re-Housing in the District of Columbia*. May 2017. The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless. <https://www.legalclinic.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Set-up-to-fail-2nd-edition.pdf>

- Over 90% of families in RRH live east of the Anacostia River.⁴⁴
- 45% of families in RRH for at least 1 year were sued for eviction while still in the program.⁴⁵
- Sanford Capital received over \$100,000 in RRH subsidies in a single month.⁴⁶
- As of October 2016, one out of every eight families in the shelter system had already gone through a RRH program at least once.⁴⁷
- Compared to a permanent housing voucher, RRH is 54% more expensive per family per year (\$20,820 v. \$32,000).⁴⁸ (ICH documents)

DC's Affordable Housing Crisis

- Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in DC is **\$1,793**,⁴⁹ although apartments in DC are routinely listed for much, much higher.
- National Low Income Housing Coalition calculates that in order to afford FMR without paying more than 30% of income on housing, working full time, 52 weeks per year, **renters must earn \$34.48 per hour** (minimum wage in DC is \$13.25/hour). As compared to all 50 states and Puerto Rico, DC has the 2nd highest 2-bedroom housing wage in the nation, second only to Hawaii.⁵⁰
- To afford that same FMR 2-bedroom apartment, **a minimum wage earner must work 104 hours per week**.⁵¹
- Between 2000 and 2012, the number of low-cost rental units in DC fell by half, and the number of lower-value homes fell by nearly three quarters. Low-cost units that remain are likely to be subsidized by either federal or local programs.⁵²
- The DC Housing Authority administers housing vouchers and operates public housing in DC. DC's public housing stock has decreased by 4,000 units since the 1990s, to only 8,000.
- The waiting list for housing resources through DCHA closed in 2013. There are **26,000** applicants waiting for public housing, and **40,000** waiting for vouchers.⁵³
- Despite the sharp rise in housing costs in the early 2000s, the lowest-income 40 percent of DC households did not see statistically significant change in income between 2000 and 2010.⁵⁴

⁴⁴ Id.

⁴⁵ Id.

⁴⁶ Id.

⁴⁷ Id.

⁴⁸ District of Columbia Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness

⁴⁹ National Low Income Housing Coalition. *Out of Reach 2018*. Accessed July 5, 2018.

http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2018.pdf

⁵⁰ Id.

⁵¹ Id.

⁵² Reed, Jenny. DC Fiscal Policy Institute. *Disappearing Act: Affordable Housing in DC is Vanishing Amid Sharply Rising Housing Costs*. May 7, 2012. Accessed August 23, 2018. <https://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/5-7-12-Housing-and-Income-Trends-FINAL.pdf>

⁵³ DC Housing Authority. District of Columbia Housing Authority 2018 Oversight and Performance Hearing, Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, Responses to Pre-Hearing Questions. 2018 http://dccouncil.us/files/user_uploads/budget_responses/dcha.pdf

- In 2018, **57,656** renter households are extremely low income, and there is a shortage of **31,666** rental homes affordable and available for extremely low income renters.⁵⁵
- As of 2016, DC's multi-family market had only a 4.3% rental vacancy rate.⁵⁶ In first quarter 2017, the vacancy rate was 2.7% and crept up to 3.6% in the second quarter.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Id.

⁵⁵ National Low-Income Housing Coalition. 2018 District of Columbia Housing Profile. Updated June 26, 2018. Accessed August 23, 2018. http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP_DC.pdf

⁵⁶ Cushman & Wakefield. Washington, DC Multi-Family Snapshot – Mid-Year 2016. Second Quarter, 2016. Accessed August 23, 2018. <http://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/research-and-insight/unitedstates/washington-dc-multifamily-snapshot>

⁵⁷ Bisnow. "D.C.'s Multifamily Absorption Rate Is Starting To Slow, But Construction Isn't." July 20, 2018. Accessed August 23, 2018. <https://www.bisnow.com/washington-dc/news/multifamily/dcs-multifamily-absorption-rate-is-starting-to-slow-but-construction-isnt-90929>