

# Point In Time Homeless Count 2009 Fact Sheet

*Burke County, NC.*

The Burke County Continuum of Care for the Homeless conducted the annual HUD Point-In-Time Count of Homeless Persons on January 28 - 29. HUD requires this count at least annually. During that 24-hour period the count identified 167 unduplicated homeless individuals. The annual count by the Burke County Continuum of Care Committee consists of some 21 local agencies. More than 25 additional community volunteers assisted with count.

The count is needed to obtain accurate data on homelessness to determine the size and scope of the homeless problem at the local level, plan services and programs appropriately to address local needs, measure progress in addressing homelessness, and measure performance of individual programs and the system as a whole. HUD needs data to understand the extent and nature of homelessness throughout the country, to make funding decisions more.

## **DEFINITIONS OF “HOMELESS” FOR THIS COUNT:**

According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the following places:

- **A *sheltered* homeless person resides in:**
  - An emergency shelter
  - Transitional housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters
- **An *unsheltered* homeless person resides in:**
  - A place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the streets

## **COLLECTION METHODS**

The data collection included both street counts and service-based counts (establishing stations in a service location where it is known that homeless will be). The service-based stations were highly successful in locating and identifying the homeless. A significant increase in the number homeless participants who completed surveys greatly contributed to the quality of the information collected.

## **RESULTS OF THE 2009 BURKE POINT IN TIME COUNT**

- 167 people were counted as homeless which represents a 12% increase from 2008.
- 55% were male adults and 21% female adults
- 41% consisted of two or more persons identified as a family member with 24% of those being children.

### **Subpopulations**

- 25% were identified seriously mentally ill
- 5% were identified as chronically homeless
- 42% had diagnosable substance use disorders
- 2% were victims of domestic violence
- 16% were veterans
- 18% were discharged during the previous 30 days from the criminal justice system
- 5% were discharged during the previous 30 days from the behavioral health system

**-More-**

- 10% were discharged during the previous 30 days from the health care system
- 70% of homeless people found were in seasonal, emergency or transitional shelters.
- 30% of homeless people in Burke County avoid shelters and survive on the street.
- 97% of the homeless people counted were Burke County citizens.

**TRENDS:**

The count indicated an overall increase of 12% in the last 12 months which mirrors the Burke County unemployment figures at that time. Two additional factors are of significant note when comparing the 2008 and 2009 statistics. The numbers of those HUD defines as chronically homeless fell by 18% while the numbers of families who were homeless increased by 75%. It should also be noted that the large number of sheltered homeless persons was due almost exclusively to the efforts of local churches operating under temporary zoning variances.

**GAPS IN SERVICES:**

Burke County currently supports about 20 beds for transitional housing which, for the most part are program specific targeting drug and alcohol recovery. Additionally, there are six transitional units available for families. The current trends indicated by the Point In Time count point to six fundamental gaps in services.

- Resources that target homeless prevention (emergency rental assistance, short term support)
- Emergency shelter and services
- Sufficient units for women and families
- Transitional housing for ex-offenders reentering the community
- Supportive housing for veterans

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Burke County Continuum of Care for the Homeless makes the following recommendations based on the 2009 HUD Point-in-Time count.

- Develop and coordinate resources for homeless prevention
- Secure federal funding to establish or expand services to bridge the gaps in services indicated above.
- Work cooperatively with local government entities to target and develop shelter and services for the at risk groups identified above.
- Work with local governments, agencies and businesses to develop rapid re-housing opportunities for the homeless.
- Work closely with city and county leaders to implement accessible and affordable supportive housing through the NCHFA Supportive Housing Development Program.
- Request a representative from local governments to work with the Continuum of Care to develop a strategic plan to end homelessness as provided in the North Carolina Consolidated Plan 2006-2010.