

DATA BRIEF: Allegheny County YOUTH Count 2016

The YOUTH Count survey was designed to measure the population size and service needs of unaccompanied homeless and unstably housed youth, especially those who may not be counted by the annual Point-in-Time count of all people experiencing homelessness conducted in the County each January. First conducted in 2015, the second YOUTH Count survey was conducted from April 29 through May 6, 2016, and asked respondents where they slept on the night of Thursday, April 28. Below are the data collected from the second annual count.¹

¹ For background and data from the first YOUTH Count, see [Allegheny County YOUTH Count 2015](#)

- The survey was conducted in both paper and online formats.
- Based on feedback from the first dissemination of the YOUTH Count survey in 2015, the survey was shortened to focus on demographics and housing instability. Outreach efforts were also increased and included an online video to spread survey awareness and involvement by community partners who engaged youth to encourage them to complete the survey.
- Respondents were included in the findings if they met the following criteria:
 - Age 18 through 24
 - Not residing with a parent or guardian
 - Were homeless on the night in question (i.e., residing in a place not meant for human habitation, such as a street, park or bus station; staying in a shelter; or residing in transitional housing) or were unstably housed (i.e., residing in an unsafe location or a place where they could not stay as long as they wanted)

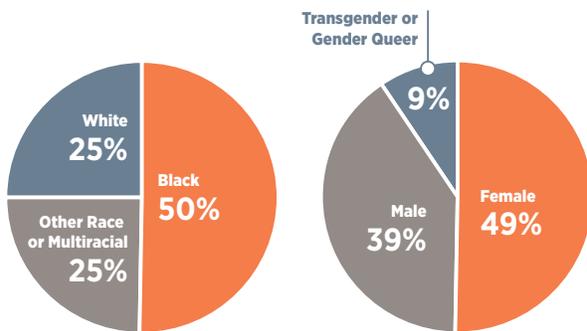
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Homeless and unstably housed unaccompanied youth responded. Last year, 56 were identified.



- 11 were doubled-up with a friend or family member
- 6 were in their own apartment or home
- 2 were in juvenile detention, adult jail or prison
- 2 were in a care facility (hospital, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric hospital, etc.)

- 19 were in a shelter
- 11 were in transitional housing
- 6 were in a car, on the street, in an abandoned building, etc.



26% had children or were expecting

35% identified as LGBTQ

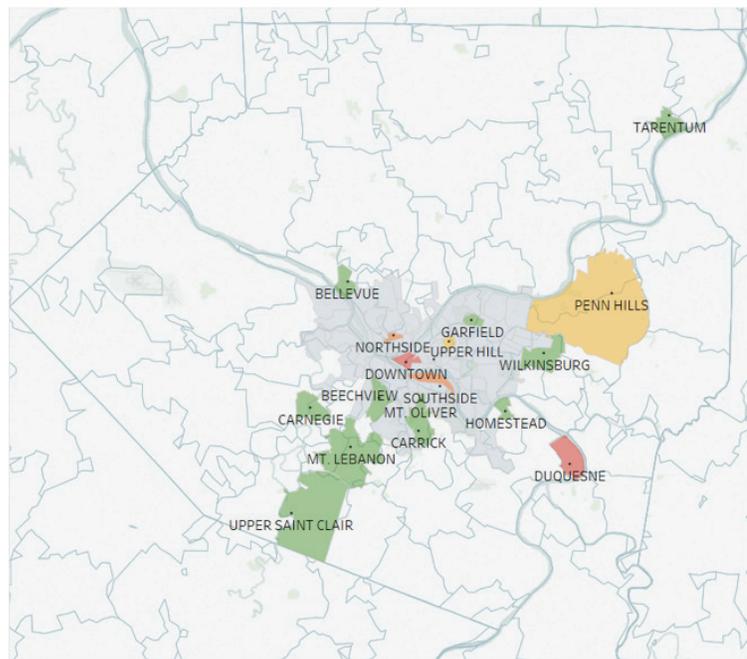
74% reported experience with at least one of the following systems: juvenile detention, adult jail or foster care

Survey Respondents' Reported Sleeping Locations on April 29, 2016

- 28 were in the City of Pittsburgh
- Mostly around the city center
 - 11 in Pittsburgh, Downtown, Uptown Areas
 - 7 Hill District and Oakland Area
 - 3 Southside
 - 4 Northside
 - 1 Garfield
 - 1 Beechview
 - 1 Carrick
- 29 were outside the City limits
 - 9 in Duquesne and McKeesport areas
 - 6 in the eastern suburbs (Penn Hills, Plum, Verona)
 - 1 in Tarentum
 - 1 Wilkinsburg
 - 1 Homestead
 - 1 Mt. Lebanon
 - 1 Upper St. Clair
 - 1 Carnegie
 - 2 Bellevue
 - 2 Mt. Oliver
 - 3 were blank
 - 1 said "It varies"

Number of Homeless and Unstably Housed Youth

■ 1-2 youth ■ 3-4 youth ■ 6-7 youth ■ 9+ youth ■ Pittsburgh



Note: Four survey respondents did not provide locations.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Over a third (37%) of survey respondents were unstably housed, but not homeless. The intent of the survey was to go beyond the literal definition of “homeless” and capture housing instability, but in so doing and identifying these youth, we must consider what it means to support them as they cannot access many services available within the homelessness system.
- Similar to the results of the first YOUth Count, three-quarters of respondents reported experience with at least one of three other systems (adult jail, juvenile detention or foster care), indicating that there may be opportunities to connect with this population through systems other than the homelessness services continuum and at times other than when youth are requesting housing assistance.
- Compared to the County population as a whole, unstably housed and homeless youth were more likely to be black (50%). Nationally, approximately 40 percent of people experiencing homelessness are black,² while the overall U.S. population is approximately 13 percent black.³ Further research is needed to determine if this disproportionality applies to youth in particular.
- Unstably housed and homeless youth were more likely to identify as LGBTQ (35%). As with race, this finding is supported by national research about homelessness. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that 20 to 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ.⁴
- Although the YOUth Count survey identified more unsheltered youth than were identified during the January PIT Count (six vs. two), this could simply be a function of the time of year (i.e., youth are more likely to be on the streets when the weather is mild).
- On the night of the YOUth Count, the County’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which tracks the number of people accessing homelessness services, counted 26 youth staying in shelters and 79 staying in transitional housing, compared to the YOUth Count survey, which captured responses from only 19 youth in shelters and 11 in transitional housing. This indicates that, despite increased outreach efforts, the YOUth Count survey fell short of reaching youth in those programs.

2 HUD 2016 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CoC_PopSub_NatlTerrDC_2016.pdf

3 2015 U.S. Census Data

4 <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-lgbt-homelessness/#resources-for-homeless-lgbt-individuals-in-crisis>

NEXT STEPS

Based on two years of experience, the County has decided to 1) integrate YOUth Count’s focus on better identifying unaccompanied and unstably housed youth into the stronger methodology of the PIT Count, and 2) conduct an additional PIT Count in July to supplement the January PIT Count. The process will include expanded outreach efforts to youth-serving providers to assist in data collection efforts, to ensure that as many youth as possible are identified in the count.

DATA ANALYSIS

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