

# Ending Homelessness: Ten at a Time



## Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Advisory Council on Homelessness

Winter Point-in-Time Count and Shelter Survey Report

January 2012



**2012 Winter Point-in-Time Count and Shelter Survey Report**  
**Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing and Street Count**

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**Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Advisory Council on Homelessness**  
Winter Point-in-Time Count and Shelter Survey

**Introduction**

In order to qualify for federal homeless assistance funds, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to conduct an annual point in time count [PIT] of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. The Virginia PIT occurs yearly on a single night in late January in each jurisdiction. The Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Advisory Council on Homelessness is the lead entity for conducting the annual point-in-time count in the Roanoke region. Homelessness directly affects thousands of Virginians annually and the data collected provides valuable information to area service providers, policy makers, and the general public on the individual and family challenges and barriers associated with homelessness. A report issued to the Virginia House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, states that in the annual 2011 point-in-time count conducted by localities statewide, at least 9,025 individuals were homeless during a 24-hour snapshot in January 2011. Four to five times that number may actually experience homelessness at some point during the year, according to national homeless studies. Many of these persons have special needs based on situations ranging from physical or mental disabilities to chronic substance abuse. Of the total homeless population, many are also victims of other circumstances such as job loss or domestic violence.

In 2012 the number of homeless in the Roanoke Region increased by 4.7% from 536 in 2011 to 561 in 2012. An inability to pay rent, lack of jobs and substance abuse problems were most often cited as reasons for being homeless. It should be noted that this 4.7% increase this year over last is calculated based on HUD's counting criteria which does not allow inclusion of the homeless who are counted in jails. There would actually be a decrease of one percent<sup>1</sup> (6 people) this year (579) over last (585) if jailed populations were included in the count.

Unemployment rates in the Roanoke region remained high during 2011. In the City of Roanoke, unemployment ranged from a high of 9.1% in January 2011 to 7.9% in December as compared to ranges of 6.9% to 6.1% in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These and other socio-economic indicators continue to be painful reminders of the effects of the economic downturn on vulnerable individuals and families.

Roanoke continues to attract those who find themselves in a homeless condition. Of those surveyed this year, 55.4% came to Roanoke in a homeless condition as a result of referrals, seeking services and shelter availability.

Measuring homelessness remains a challenging task. The annual point in time survey coupled with the use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) continue to be valuable tools in data collection to help determine whether the homeless population is

increasing or decreasing and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and strategies in place to help address the issue of homelessness.

A new component has been added to the Point in Time Survey process to provide data and information. Included in the Point in Time survey are homeless individuals who were also surveyed as part of the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness [VCEH] 1000 Homes for 1000 Virginians initiative. The goal of the initiative is to identify, and house, the most vulnerable people who are experiencing homelessness. These individuals cycle between the streets, emergency shelters, hospital emergency rooms, incarceration and mental health facilities. The combination of poor health status, mental health and/or substance abuse issues and homelessness make them far more likely to die while living on the streets. The 100,000 Homes Vulnerability Index was administered to those experiencing homelessness on the street by Jefferson College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant students. The instrument will continue to be used in the future to identify the most vulnerable people who are experiencing homelessness and to develop new strategies to house these individuals. The results of the Vulnerability Index Report and the tool itself can be found in Appendices A and B of this report.

### **Methodology**

While the survey instrument included some changes from the instrument used in 2011, the procedures utilized to collect information were as consistent as possible with those used in prior surveys. Daily adult occupancy totals were collected at participating shelters during the week of January 23-27, 2012. Average nightly count for the week was 561 individuals experiencing homelessness. Of these 561 individuals who were homeless that week, 240 homeless adults participated in the PIT survey process. Children under the age of 18 were not surveyed. 2 Homeless adult clients were surveyed by agency staff, the Homeless Assistance Team and other volunteers. Shelters were contacted for permission to survey clients with 100% of shelters electing to participate in the survey. These shelters are:

#### **Overnight Shelters:**

- Firebase Hope
- Rescue Mission
- Roanoke Valley Interfaith Hospitality Network [IHN]
- Salvation Army Red Shield Lodge and Turning Point Shelter
- TRUST House
- Total Action Against Poverty Transitional Living Center [TAP/TLC]

#### **Day Shelters:**

- Roanoke Area Ministries [RAM]
- Samaritan Inn

#### **Other Facilities:**

- Shenandoah Recover Center/Crisis Stabilization

#### **Street Outreach/Homeless Assistance Team**

The one day point in time count was designated as Monday, January 23, 2012, although a small amount of data was collected during the week of January 23-27.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that unless otherwise noted in this report, statistical significance between years cannot be assumed.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that data reports will not always total 100% due to non-response or multiple response by clients.

## Overview of Point-in-Time Count and Survey Findings

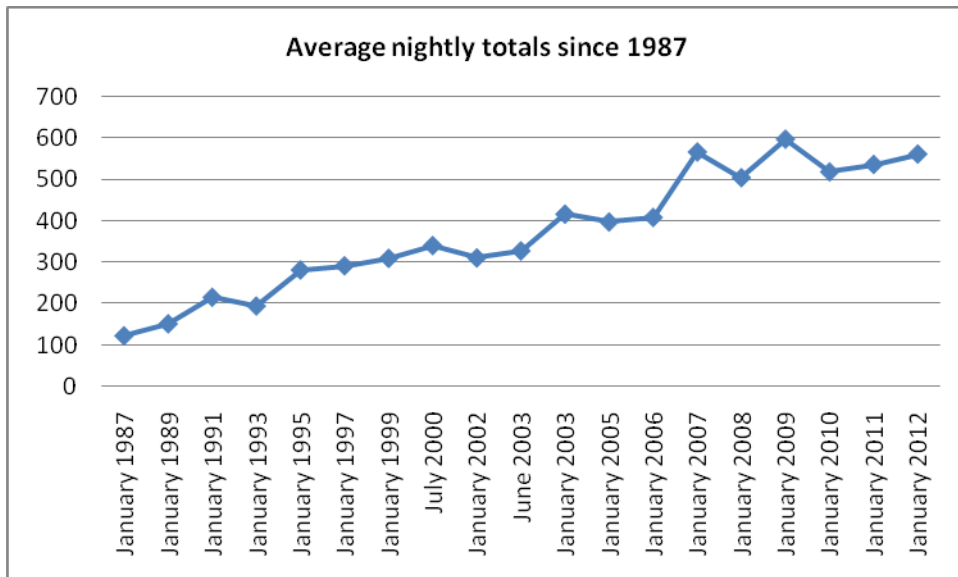
- Nightly count averages increased this year by 4.7% (561 compared to 536 in 2011).
- 240 respondents completed the survey this year; a decrease of 10% compared to 2011 [267]. Only adults older than 18 were surveyed.
- 44.2% (106) respondents were living in the City of Roanoke when they became homeless.
- The five top challenges experienced by homeless in 2012 include:
  - Inability to find employment (#1 in 2011)
  - Affordable housing (#2 in 2011)
  - Medical problems (Medical problems ranked #3 in 2011)
  - Dental problems (Dental problems ranked #4 in 2011)
  - Substance abuse (not in top 5 in 2011; Physical disability was #5 in 2011)
- The number of women surveyed decreased 25% in 2012 (69 compared to 92).
- The oldest respondent is 70 years old. The average age of respondents is 45 years old.
- 58% of homeless surveyed identified themselves as white and 35% identified themselves as African American.
- 22.1% (53) of those surveyed were veterans.
- 32.9% (79) respondents are currently receiving mental health services (73 in 2011).
- 39.6% (95) respondents reported having received mental health services in the past (43.4% in 2011).
- 32.9% (79) of respondents reported having received alcohol abuse treatment at some point (33.7% in 2011).
- 77.9% (187) of respondents reported having a high school/GED education or more (73.4% in 2011).
- 40.8% (98) of respondents were employed either "on" or "off" the books.
- 26.7% (64) of respondents receive food stamps (43.8% in 2011).
- 51.7% (124) of respondents were actually looking for work (50.9% in 2011).
- 66% (142) of respondents reported they had never heard of the Community Housing Resource Center. A total of 6 respondents (2.5%) had received services from CHRC.
- Survey respondents reported 59 children under age 18 with their homeless parent[s]
- 36 children between the ages of 5-18 were attending school
- 8 children between the ages of 5-18 were not attending school
- 4.2% [10] of those who took the survey met the HUD definition of chronically homeless [homeless over one year, homeless more than two times, co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems.

### 2012 Total Shelter/Street Count

This year adults experiencing homelessness totaled 561, a 4.7% increase over the 536 total in 2011. There were 80 children experiencing homelessness in 2012. The 2012 aggregate number is from facilities and localities listed below.

	2012	Children
RVIHN	11	6
Recovery Center/Crisis Stabilization	4	0
Street Count	27	0
TAP-TLC	15	2
TRUST	27	3
Safe Home Systems (Covington)	2	2
YWCA (closed in 2011)	0	0
Turning Point	36	21
Firebase Hope-Salem VA	8	0
Red Shield Lodge	49	0
Rescue Mission Recovery	371	46
Alleghany County	11	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>561*</b>	<b>80</b>

\*The 561 number does not include the 18 homeless individuals counted in the Roanoke City Jail



Average nightly totals have increased 360 % since 1987 reaching its highest in 2009 with 597 being homeless.

## Point-in-Time Survey Results

### Gender

Male	67.5% [162]
Female	28.8% [69]
Missing	3.8% [9]

### Race

White/Caucasian	58.0% [139]
Black/African American	35.0% [84]
Asian	0.4% [1]
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4% [1]
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.4% [1]
American Indian/Alaska Native/White	0.4% [1]
Mixed Race	2.9% [7]
Other	2.5% [6]*

\*4 respondents indicating "other" identified as Hispanic/Latino

### Length of time homeless

[How long has it been since you had a place to live?]

Less than one month	13.8% [33]
1-3 months	16.7% [40]
4-6 months	15.4% [37]
7-11 months	9.6% [23]
1-2 years	25.4% [61]
3-5 years	12.5% [30]
6-10 years	4.2% [10]
10+ years	2.5% [6]

### Primary reason cited for homelessness

Unemployed	31.3% [75]
Substance abuse	15.8% [38]
Unable to pay rent	12.5% [30]
Other	10.0% [24]
Victim of domestic violence	9.6% [23]
Family problems	7.5% [18]
Eviction unrelated to payment	6.7% [16]
Mental health	2.5% [6]
Institutional discharge	1.7% [4]
Physical/Mental Disabilities	0.8% [2]
Unspecified	0.8% [2]
Missing	0.4% [1]

*Unemployment, inability to pay rent and substance abuse were also the top reasons cited for homelessness by 2011 survey respondents.*



### Times Homeless

[How many times have you been homeless prior to your current situation?]

Never before	42.1% [101]
One time	22.9% [55]
2-3 times	22.1% [53]
4-5 times	5.0% [12]
6+ times	7.5% [18]
Unsure	0.4% [1]

*"Never before" is a decrease of 7% from 2011.*

### Became Homeless Location

[Where were you residing when you became homeless?]

City of Roanoke	44.2% [106]
City of Salem	2.1% [5]
Roanoke County/Vinton	4.2% [10]
Botetourt	1.7% [4]
Clifton Forge	1.3% [3]
Alleghany County	1.3% [3]
Other	45.0% [108]
Unknown	0.4% [1]

*Of those who came to Roanoke from some other place, 76 were from other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth and 32 came from other states.*

### Why did you come to Roanoke?

Other	7.5% [18]
Shelter only	7.1% [17]
Find employment	6.7% [16]
Substance abuse program	6.7% [16]
Friends/family in Roanoke	6.3% [15]
Veterans Administration	4.2% [10]
Referred to services	2.1% [5]
Probation/parole	1.7% [4]
Personal reasons	1.3% [3]
Domestic violence program	0.8% [2]

### Where did you sleep last night?

Emergency shelter	47.9% [115]
Transitional shelter	21.7% [52]
Outdoors	10.4% [25]
Domestic violence shelter	5.8% [14]
Other	5.4% [13]
Staying with family	3.3% [8]
Substance abuse program	2.9% [7]
Hotel/motel [no voucher]	0.8% [2]
Rented housing unit	0.4% [1]
Unknown	1.3% [3]

### Denied shelter

[Have you been denied a bed at a local shelter in the past 12 months?]

No	85.4% [205]
Yes	6.7% [16]
Unknown	7.9% [19]

### Children – number under 18 years with parent

None	88.8% [213]
1 child	4.2% [10]
2 children	3.3% [8]
3 children	2.1% [5]
4 children	0.8% [2]
5+ children	0.8% [2]

*18 school aged children are attending school.  
8 school aged children are not attending school.*

### Children – child care (of the 240 survey respondents)

I do not need child care	3.3% [8]
I take care of my children myself	3.3% [8]
Friends/family	2.1% [5]
Child care center	2.1% [5]
Other	0.8% [2]

### Military

Yes	22.1% [53]
No	77.9% [187]

### Education

K-8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1.3% [3]
Some high school	20.8% [50]
High school graduate	29.6% [71]
GED	11.7% [28]
Some college	28.8% [69]
College graduate	6.3% [15]
Post graduate	1.7% [4]

*In 2011, 73.4% of respondents reported having a high school diploma or more. This year 77.9% report having a high school diploma or more, an increase of 5.6%.*

### Employment

[Are you actively looking for work?]

Yes	51.7% [124]
No	27.1% [65]
Not applicable	13.8% [33]
Unknown	7.5% [18]

## Income

[How do you make money? Select all.]

I have no income	27.5% [66]
Food stamps	26.7% [64]
Work – on the books	22.9% [55]
Work – off the books	17.9% [43]
Social Security Supplemental Income/SSI	7.9% [19]
Social Security Disability Income/SSDI	6.7% [16]
Unspecified other	5.8% [14]
Veterans Administration	5.0% [12]
Panhandling	5.0% [12]
Public assistance	4.6% [11]
Recycling	2.5% [6]
Pension/Retirement	1.7% [4]
Drug trade	1.3% [3]
Sex trade	-0-

## Transportation

[How do you mainly get around? Select all.]

Walk	57.9% [139]
Valley Metro Bus	43.3% [104]
Licensed motor vehicle	12.5% [30]
Ride with family/friends	9.6% [23]
Scooter/bicycle	4.2% [10]
Other	4.2% [10]

## Health – Medical Treatment

[If you get sick, where do you go for medical treatment?]

Emergency room	29.2% [70]
Rescue Mission Healthcare Center	17.5% [42]
VA Medical Center	16.7% [40]
Urgent care	14.6% [35]
Private doctor	8.3% [20]
Bradley Free Clinic	4.2% [10]
New Horizons	2.1% [5]
Health department	0.4% [1]
Other	13.3% [32]

## Health – Medications

[Do you take medications?]

Yes	50.0% [120]
No	42.5% [102]
Unknown	7.5% [18]

### Health – Medications

[How do you obtain your medications?]

Obtained from service provider	18.8% [45]
Purchased from a drug store	13.3% [32]
I cannot afford my medications	5.4% [13]
Other	27.9% [67]

*“Other” responses include Bradley Free Clinic, Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare, City of Roanoke HAT Team, Health Department, Rescue Mission, Medicare, Medicaid, VA Premier, Veterans Administration Medical Center and charity care.*

### Health – Cost

[How do you pay for medical care?]

I pay out of pocket for care	20.4% [49]
I get Medicaid	17.1% [41]
I get Medicare	4.6% [11]
I use private medical insurance	1.3% [3]
Other	52.1% [125]

*“Other” responses include VA Premier, Veterans Administration Medical Center and charity care.*

### Mental Health Services

	Currently Receiving	Previously Received
Yes	32.9% [79]	39.6% [95]
No	66.7% [160]	59.2% [142]

### Substance Abuse - Alcohol

[Have you ever received treatment for alcohol problems?]

Yes	32.9% [79]
No	65.8% [158]
Unknown	1.3% [3]

### Substance Abuse – Drugs

[Have you ever been treated for drug dependency?]

Yes	25.8% [62]
No	72.9% [175]
Unknown	1.3% [3]

### Community Housing Resource Center [CHRC]

[Have you received CHRC services?]

Yes	2.5% [6]
No	88.3% [212]
Unknown	9.2% [22]

### **Community Housing Resource Center [CHRC]**

[Why didn't you receive CHRC services?]

Never heard of CHRC	59.2% [142]
Did not qualify for services	3.8% [9]
No appropriate services available	12.5% [30]
Unknown	24.6% [59]

### **Common characteristics and challenges experienced by those without a home.**

Cannot find affordable housing	58.8% [141]
Cannot find work	57.5% [138]
Medical problems	31.7% [76]
Dental problems	29.6% [71]
Past incarceration	28.3% [68]
Substance abuse	25.0% [60]
Divorce	22.5% [54]
Physical disability	22.5% [54]
Domestic violence	17.9% [43]
Cannot afford medications	17.5% [42]
Legal/police problems	14.2% [34]
Previously in foster care	4.2% [10]
Child custody	4.2% [10]
Other	6.7% [16]

## Conclusion

The information found in this report reflects both success in addressing homelessness and the challenges to this effort going forward.

The barriers to gaining and keeping appropriate housing have not changed. The economy is improving slowly. This is reflected in the number of well-educated people who were surveyed in the shelter system and the report of unemployment, and under-employment. Many of those who experience homelessness over and over have alcohol, drug and mental health problems that are very difficult to address. The region is fortunate to have an excellent system of emergency housing and services. Transitional housing is available. However, maintaining a sufficient amount of quality, affordable housing in areas with good public transportation and resources continues to be a challenge. These challenges are made more difficult to solve when one of the most successful strategies, intensive case management, is under-funded.

The number of people identified as experiencing homelessness in 2012 is only slightly higher than that number in 2010 and 2011. The rate appears to be remaining relatively flat and this at a time of increased economic hardship for many people in our region. Unemployment and the shrinking of benefits available to prevent homelessness combined would have predicted more people losing housing. Our success as a community is in working together to prevent homelessness. In its' third year of operation, the Community Housing Resource Center partners and the service referral network will continue to work together to positively affect housing stability. The Blue Ridge Continuum of Care and the Roanoke Alleghany Regional Advisory Council on Homelessness have worked diligently to assure that scarce resources are efficiently and effectively used. Creative new partnerships brought the Alleghany Highlands service providers into our network. New initiatives and an improving economy can only positively affect our efforts.

## SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENTS

- I want a helping hand to make a down payment.
- [Participant] wants to give name. [I] worked with HAT before and they were super helpful. This is the first time being homeless and it is [a] very humbling experience.
- It was not fun. It was a period in my life that I needed to get through. They provided me a meal and a locker and that's what I needed.
- [Participant] wants to give name and phone number. Would love information on any services that he may qualify for.
- Appreciate all you do!
- Wish they would do more for felons to get a job/housing.
- I'm not giving up. I have to take care of my kids.
- Better job services. Employment training and assistance linking with jobs.
- Main concern is getting full time work so he can do it himself.
- Very disturbing, can't find work
- It is easy to get discouraged. Would be better if there were more resources to help with employment. Likes Rescue Mission resources for medicine and medical care. Surprised there are so many resources here. Does volunteer work.
- I'd like to get a job and get off the streets. SSI not enough to cover monthly expenses. COPD.
- Looking for work
- It is scary and mentally exhausting. Being homeless has been very humbling. When my home was foreclosed on after losing my job, I had no place to go. The Salvation Army is just that, my salvation. I have a safe place to stay in (transitional housing program) and I am beginning to get my future re-established.
- Very eye opening. It's a wake.
- It's alright but it would be better if I could have my own stuff.
- Depressing and interesting at the same time.
- Stressful – I have started going to church
- Makes you appreciate what you have – it could be beneficial
- Living situation isn't the greatest – can be frustrating.
- It sucks. It [is] hard trying to find a job without a private address or phone number. Criminal background makes it harder.
- Had to leave a relationship with nothing an having to start all over is not easy – getting involved with the wrong people can turn out to not work out the way that you want it to.
- Not a happy sight – depressed
- It's good if you need it but keep trying to do better.
- I am glad that [I] am alive and have friends. Thanks you all for the friends and food and a bed to sleep in and food to eat. May god bless you all. I may not have a home but I have god in [my] thoughts.
- Although I'm not a coffee drinker, due to certain men who really seem to need "that jump" start in the AM (only) I'm surprised that at least one free cup is not available to them. Also, I wish ex-military would/could have some type of ring to wear so we could identify each other and also, it would let others know we are veterans. Also, I wish an IQ test could be completed before being allowed to stay here, because my experience in live I've found that casting pearls before swine.... And last, I wish certain dental videos would be (a must see) so men would know that the lack of "flossing" can cause some really, really Bad Breath!!! And also that they could be reminded that flushing feces without paper usually always ensures a flush (paper after).
- Working homeless! Why I work? Why ex-wife steals my money? Why State of Oklahoma steals my money? Why I work? Why?

- I had problems with TAP/TLC, the project manager has no respect for my First and Fifth Amendment rights, and is very disrespectful. I was laid off 49 times, other people poked their nose into my business 42 times. Had 20 threats on my life last year. Fifth Amendment right violated 11 times, First Amendment violated 5 times. Got suicidal 4 times, and was stalked last year. I am waiting on hearing for disability. As soon as I get it, I am taking the Smart Bus to Lynchburg to get away from ex-stepmother and sister. They caused a scene at my old man's wake and funeral and made him turn over in his coffin twice in a two-day period, cannot trust family anymore.
- Need employment
- You feel like you lost everything and it makes you feel depressed.
- No children make it [hard to] qualify for housing.
- The Rescue Mission Substance Abuse program "saved my life and kept me out of prison."
- It's hard being homeless; having to leave early in the morning and take all of your stuff.
- Have a home. Here for substance abuse program.
- Very bad feeling.
- Staff need to correct people that are bullying other in [*cannot read*]
- Blessed – working with case management to get on her own again
- Sad – states Bosnians and Croatian people have been persecuted and not receiving help they need.
- Can't wait to get back on her feet.
- Still owes Housing Authority for past bill. In process of paying off and will be paid off in March, then will be open to reapply for housing. At first depressed, but coming out of it. Seeing her therapist and psychiatrist has helped. Also, MHSS [mental health social worker?] has assisted with many things.
- Not good being in weather with extremely hot or cold.
- Glad shelter is here.
- Desperate people will do desperate things
- I don't like it.
- Wants to get back to work and get apartment
- Rescue Mission is a great place to stay – allows you to get out of the elements.
- Came home from prison (incarceration) – unable to obtain employment for those who are actually trying.
- Living condition of some of the residents – blow test to determine intoxication level.
- Would like to have housing, but has a lot of anxiety and depression due to living here and being homeless.
- Very difficult.
- I will be glad to get a place. I appreciate having a place to start but it is not the same. I miss doing my own cooking and laundry. I studied cooking after high school.
- December 5<sup>th</sup> got to Roanoke from [Lynchburg]
- Section 8 – [he/she] needs help with application – referred to Rescue Mission case manager.
- Need ID in order to work.
- I would like to have a job and a home or apartment.
- I don't consider myself homeless. I have benefited from medical care since being here.
- Embarrassing – comfortable at the Rescue Mission but strives to have own place.
- Wish the economy was better – more jobs out there.
- No comment.
- In the program at the Rescue Mission but has a home to go back to once [he/she] leaves the program.



- Disheartening. Rescue Mission is providing help – learning the area has been challenging but having friends has helped. [from Chicago]
- The economy hurts. Living here is touchy – surrounded by all these people – too close for comfort.
- Grateful for Rescue Mission – hopeful to get back into society – wishes no one to be without housing. Wish people could be more understanding about such situations. Appreciate Roanoke and all available agencies in area.
- I've put in applications; I have not heard anything. I believe it's due to my credit, due to the domestic violence.
- I can't use them at this moment. Can't work at this time.
- Once you're not in your own place. Makes you feel like you failed. I lost my job; it gives me the drive to regain it back. You can't give up.
- Going from work, steady income and having medical problems. I didn't what I was going to do.
- There is a constant feeling of hopelessness when you cannot live the life you would like.
- Applied for disability
- Very stressful, suicide rate increases, lack of trust, hard on the family
- I have been working on my credit report but I am skeptical that this still won't interfere with my ability to find housing.
- Don't give up
- No comment.
- There should be places other than [the] Mission. I got beat there twice. They are all over the place. That place is not safe. Consumer Empowerment leadership training – led to Trust House. There should be more like this. This shelter is well run. City should not condemn house because of no gas heat. Was using kerosene heat and it was condemned. I think they [Mission] should clean it up with more rules like no alcohol. Got a smashed arm and beat up face going by.
- Trust House is a vital program for homeless vets! Trust House is well- structured environment for people in recovery! Staff is friendly and helpful. Provides an opportunity to save money for future housing.
- Lot of services in the community that will help you out if you are willing to help yourself.
- Trust House and staff have been amazing and more than helpful!
- It's very stressful. Amazing that shelter system is what it is today. Second time at TH and feels very indebted to them. Can't imagine what people would have done 100 years ago without shelters like this.
- Demeaning, causing low self-esteem, not the American way. Looked down upon. Handle it but embarrassing. Can feel people judging you. Feels there [are] a lot of people worse off than him and that Roanoke needs more shelters like Trust House.
- Very depressing. Hard to find a place to live. Stressful having 2 children without a place to live.
- It's depressing. Working towards getting employment and eventually housing here in Roanoke.
- I have been helped by many agencies including Rescue Mission, RAM and Trust House.
- It \*\*\*\*\* sucks!
- Homelessness ha shown me where I need to be and where I don't want to be.
- Roanoke needs to get more information out to area shelters about local resources.
- Currently looking for a place to live. Has been turned down a few times because of his past. Works from 5 in morning to 5:30 at night. When he gets out all resources are usually closed.
- [Thoughts or comments] None that she can think of.

Appendix A:  
Vulnerability Index Report

# The Vulnerability Index Report

Roanoke is one of the twelve sites<sup>3</sup> in the Commonwealth that surveyed individuals living on the streets with the following goals:

- Identify the most vulnerable using a tool called the Vulnerability Index [Appendix B].
- Rank their vulnerability by severity
- Systematically house them before their homelessness causes them to die.

Data was collected by Jefferson College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant students on Monday, January 23. Students worked in teams of four with a team leader to canvas all known locations previously identified by Roanoke Homeless Assistance Team where street homeless were known to spend the night. These locations included parks, bridges, parking garages, an elevated walkway, and the Market area. Teams began the survey at 4 AM in order to increase the likelihood of finding vulnerable individuals before they dispersed for the day. Seventeen people experiencing homelessness on the streets were identified. Those surveyed reported 45 emergency room visits in the previous three months and 14 inpatient hospitalizations in the past year.

## Medical vulnerability

Asthma	17.6% [3]
Diabetes	29.4% [5]
Heart conditions	35.2% [6]
IV drug use	17.6% [3]
Liver disease	5.9% [1]
Limited mobility	35.2% [6]
Reported mental health treatment	52.9% [9]
Alcohol use daily	35.2% [6]
Tuberculosis	5.9% [1]
Observed mental health issue	17.6% [3]
Observed substance abuse	23.5% [4]
Observed serious health condition	17.6% [3]
Any emergency room visits	64.7% [11]
Any inpatient hospital stay	41.1% [7]

## Environmental Conditions

Victim of physical attack	35.2% [6]
Incarceration – Jail	88.2% [15]
Incarceration – Prison	11.7% [2]
Foster care	11.7% [2]
Military veteran	5.9% [1]
Sleeps most often – shelters	41.1% [7]
Sleeps most often – streets	47.0% [8]

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<sup>3</sup> Richmond, Arlington, Roanoke, Hampton, Newport News, Williamsburg, York County, James City County, Martinsville, Norfolk, VA Beach, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Isle of Wight County, Franklin and Southampton County, Prince William County, Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

## Demographic Information

Male	82.3% [14]
Female	17.6% [3]
White/Caucasian	52.9% [9]
Black/African American	41.1% [7]
Native American	5.9% [1]
US citizens	100.0%

## Health care providers used

Carilion Community Hospital Urgent Care  
Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital  
Rescue Mission Clinic  
New Dimensions Health Care  
Bradley Free Clinic  
Salem VA Hospital

## Medical Vulnerability

Three people experiencing homelessness on the streets scored medically vulnerable. Efforts are underway to relocate and house them. They are:

### Male01 [Vulnerability Index 2]

56 years old  
Homeless 1 year 1 month  
Homeless 2 times  
2 visits to emergency room in last three months  
1 hospitalization in the past year  
Heart disease  
Diabetes  
Observed illness  
Substance abuse  
Alcohol use  
Mental health – treated and observed  
Attack victim  
Physical disability – wheelchair  
Health insurance – Veterans Administration  
Veteran  
NO sources of income  
African American  
Reported homeless because of physical/mental disabilities

### Male02 [Vulnerability Index 1]

27 years old  
Homeless 1 year  
Homeless 3 times  
10 visits to emergency room in past three months  
Drug and alcohol abuse reported  
Consumed alcohol every day for a month  
No health insurance

Has been in jail  
Reports working on and off the books  
Native American  
Reported homeless because unemployed and unable to pay rent/mortgage

**Male03 [Vulnerability Index 2]**

43 years old  
Homeless 4 years  
Homeless 2 times  
6 visits to emergency room in the past three months  
4 hospitalizations in past year  
Heat stroke/heat exhaustion  
Heart disease  
Diabetes  
Insurance – Medicare  
Has been in jail  
Reports working off the books  
African American