



**NATIONAL SURVEY
OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

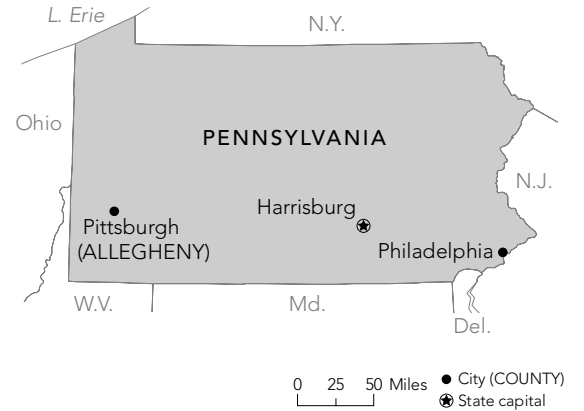
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Pennsylvania had an estimated 2,526 homeless families on a single night in 2008, with providers serving more than twice their bed capacity over the course of a year.¹ This brief summarizes the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: The Governor's Housing Cabinet, responsible for policy formation and the coordination of all systems related to housing in the commonwealth, has served as the Pennsylvania Interagency Council on Homelessness since 2004.

Governor's Appointee: None.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Allegheny County
Persons in homeless families ²	7,644	3,392	471
Number of family shelter beds ³	9,820	4,156	829
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁴	18	70	12
Percent of families in poverty ⁵	13.51%	28.33%	14.07%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2005	2005	2005
10-Year plan target population	All	All	All
Point-in-time count frequency	Annually	Annually	Biannually
Point-in-time count managing agency	The Regional Homeless Advisory Board in each of the four regional CoCs	City of Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing; Project H.O.M.E.	Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development	City of Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing	Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant or main organizing agency	Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development	City of Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing	Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Philadelphia as a National Model

Philadelphia has been touted as a national model by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) because of its success in reducing street homelessness during the 1990s and early 2000s. By placing chronically homeless persons directly into permanent housing, Philadelphia reduced its street count by 70% from 1997 to 2005.⁶ In spite of this initial success, the city's street population has increased in recent years, questioning this strategy as a viable long-term solution.⁷ With much of the attention focused on individuals, homeless families were largely ignored during this period.

Following the strategy for individuals, the Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness created SafeHome Philadelphia in 2005, a privately funded initiative providing permanent housing for homeless families with an emphasis

The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental, nonprofit, and voluntary sector work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Pennsylvania and other states visit www.icprwb.org



on homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing. Despite recognition of its early success this year, the program's long-term effectiveness remains uncertain. To contrast, the People's Emergency Center (PEC) helps families become self-sufficient by addressing the root causes of their homelessness. PEC's transitional housing program has seen extremely low recidivism rates with 90% of families remaining stable after five years and has also been recognized by HUD as a national best-practice model.⁸

Current Status in Philadelphia

In 2008 there were 7,644 homeless persons in families on a single night in Pennsylvania, with almost half (44%) residing in Philadelphia.⁹ Within the city, requests for food assistance increased by 23%, despite a 26% decrease in the amount of food actually being distributed.¹⁰ This trend reflects a growing number of low-income residents; in 2007 Philadelphia had the highest rate of poverty amongst the nation's ten largest cities at 23.8%.¹¹ In May 2008, in an effort to reduce homelessness, Mayor Michael A. Nutter announced a plan with the Philadelphia Housing Authority to provide new housing opportunities. The plan promises 200 new units and 500 subsidies for families and chronically homeless individuals.¹² A *One Year Status Report* finds the plan approximately 75% complete, despite a rise in the Center City street population and a 16.6% increase in the number of persons in homeless families from 3,054 in 2007 to 3,561 in 2009.¹³

A Timeline of Philadelphia's Efforts to End Homelessness

<p>1972</p> <p>People's Emergency Center (PEC) opens as an emergency shelter and food bank for homeless families.</p>	<p>1982</p> <p>Philadelphia signs a consent decree requiring not to deny any homeless person shelter. This right expired three years later.</p>	<p>1985</p> <p>Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness (PCEH) is founded and develops a "homeless to housed" continuum of services.</p>	<p>1988</p> <p>Mayor W. Wilson Goode establishes the Office of Services to the Homeless and Adults (now the Office of Emergency Shelter Services).</p> <p>Project H.O.M.E. is created to assist chronically homeless men and women.</p>	<p>1998</p> <p>Advocates strike a compromise in the passing of the city's Sidewalk Behavior Ordinance, mandating police to contact street outreach teams when encountering homeless persons.</p>	<p>1999</p> <p>Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition publishes <i>Our Way Home: A Blueprint to End Homelessness in Philadelphia</i>.</p>	<p>2001</p> <p>PCEH publishes <i>Opening the Door to Let the Future In: 2010 Plan to End Homelessness</i>.</p>	<p>2004</p> <p>HUD names Philadelphia one of seven best practice cities for addressing chronic homelessness.</p> <p>Mayor John F. Street forms the Task Force on Homeless Services to create a plan to end homelessness.</p>	<p>2005</p> <p>Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund is established to develop affordable housing and prevent family homelessness.</p> <p>Mayor Street endorses <i>Philadelphia's Ten-Year Plan To End Homelessness: Creating Homes, Strengthening Communities, and Improving Systems</i>.</p>	<p>2007</p> <p>Family Service Provider Network is formalized as an advocacy coalition of homeless service providers.</p>	<p>2008</p> <p>Mayor Michael A. Nutter announces a plan to reduce homelessness through the creation of affordable housing opportunities with the Philadelphia Housing Authority.</p>
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Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2008 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2008 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons.
- ² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.
- ³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2008 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2007 American Community Survey.
- ⁶ City of Philadelphia Mayor's Task Force on Homeless Services, *Philadelphia's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness: Creating Homes, Strengthening Communities, and Improving Systems*, October 2005.
- ⁷ Jennifer Lin, "Philadelphia Program to Ease Homelessness Shows Results," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 27, 2009.
- ⁸ Trish Downey (Manager of External Communications, People's Emergency Center), e-mail message to author, October 9, 2009.
- ⁹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Conference of Mayors, *Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, A 25-City Survey*, December 2008.
- ¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Earnings, and Poverty Data From the 2007 American Community Survey*, August 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places over 100,000, Ranked by July 1, 2008 Population: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008*.
- ¹² City of Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Communication, "Mayor Nutter Announces New Initiatives to Address Homelessness in Philadelphia," May 28, 2008.
- ¹³ City of Philadelphia Mayor's Office, *Mayor's Initiative to Address Homelessness: One Year Status Report*, May 28, 2009; Jennifer Lin, "Philadelphia Program to Ease Homelessness Shows Results"; Michele Mangan (Project Management and Program Analyst, City of Philadelphia, Office of Supportive Housing), e-mail message to author, August 11, 2009.