

City of Chicago Department of
Family and Support Services

2014 HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT & SURVEY REPORT



CITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY
AND SUPPORT SERVICES



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INTRODUCTION

The City of Chicago through its lead department, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), conducted a point-in-time (PIT) count of homeless persons on the night of January 22, 2014. The collaborative effort included coordination among local governmental entities, local policy and advocacy groups, service providers, other essential partners, and over 250 volunteers. This report highlights the data from the 2014 PIT count, paying particular attention to homeless subpopulations in the city and how figures have changed over time.

METHODOLOGY

Using methodology developed in 2007, DFSS brought together input from its collaborative partners to conduct the 2014 PIT count. The count includes both a comprehensive tally of all persons residing in emergency or transitional shelters on that evening and a count of individuals residing unsheltered on the streets, on public transportation, in parks, cars, and other locations not meant for sleeping. The PIT also included a survey interview component that collects demographic, social service, and other information from a subset of homeless individuals.

Sheltered Homeless

DFSS program staff worked with all shelters to conduct a comprehensive count of all homeless persons in Chicago’s emergency shelters and transitional housing that evening. All shelters were provided tally sheets and a set of surveys, each with a unique number. A designated staff person or volunteer was responsible for counting all homeless people staying at the shelter that evening using the tally sheet. In addition to the PIT count, shelters were also instructed to administer a survey interview to no less than 10% of individuals and/or families in the shelter on the evening of the count randomly selected following DFSS guidelines. To produce figures for the entire population, a ‘weight’ was calculated based on the proportion of individuals surveyed at each site and applied to the survey data.

Unsheltered Homeless

Counting and surveying of the unsheltered homeless population was conducted using trained volunteers to provide a comprehensive sweep of city locations.

When possible, interview surveys were administered to unsheltered individuals.

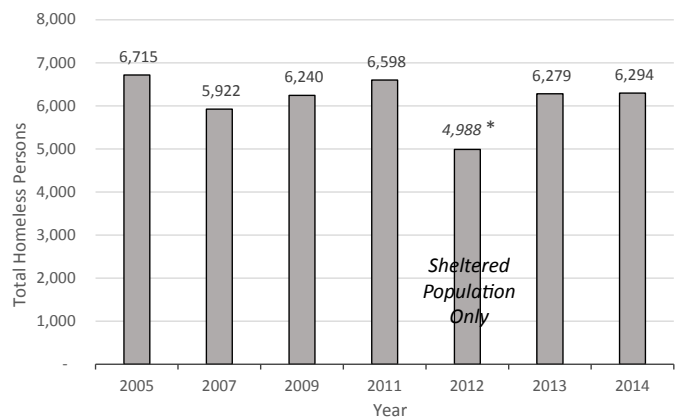
Weather Conditions

The conditions for the 2014 PIT count were representative of one of the most severe winters in the history of Chicago. Frostbite and hypothermia warnings were in place during the entire time of the count. These extreme weather conditions likely drove many homeless individuals to indoor shelter locations.

RESULTS

The number of homeless individuals counted in the 2014 general street and shelter count was 6,294. This figure remained relatively unchanged from the 2013 count, increasing 0.2% from the previous year (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Total Homeless Population



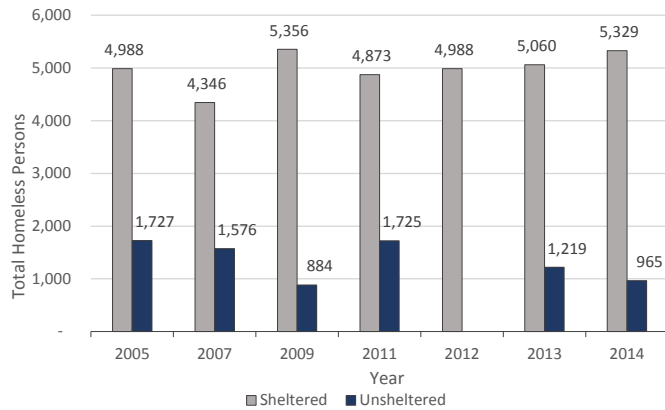
Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts

*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

SHELTERED VERSUS UNSHELTERED

Homeless individuals were counted as either sheltered (staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing the evening of the count), or unsheltered (residing in a place not meant for sleeping such as a park, street, abandoned building, or on public transportation). In 2014, 84% of homeless individuals counted (5,329) were located within shelters while 16% (965) were unsheltered, living on the street. While the number of total homeless individuals remained largely unchanged from figures in the previous year, the number of sheltered versus those living unsheltered on the streets did shift. The number of individuals in shelters increased 5% from 2013 figures, while those unsheltered decreased 21% from 2013 (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Sheltered & Unsheltered Population



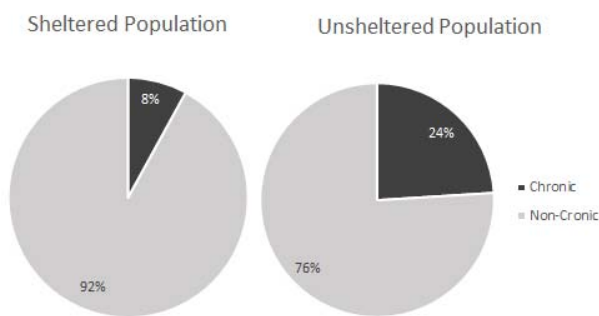
Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts

*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Chronic homelessness is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as persons or families who have been continuously homeless for at least one year *or* on at least four separate occasions in the past three years. (Not included in the count are individuals under the age of 18 or those in transitional shelters). At the time of the 2014 count, there were an estimated 655 chronically homeless individuals in Chicago of which 421 were living in shelters and 234 were unsheltered. This represents 8% (11% of those 18 and older) of the sheltered population and 24% of the unsheltered population. (See Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Chronic Homelessness, 2014



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

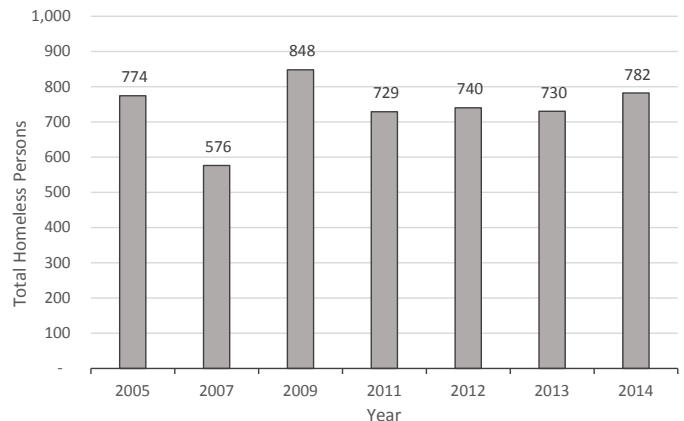
In 2014, data on homeless families illustrate both an increase in the number of families in shelters as well as an increase in the size of families in shelters.

Number of Families with Children

The number of families with at least one adult and at

least one child up to age 21 living in shelters increased from 730 in 2013 to 782 in 2014—an increase of 7% (see Fig. 4). For 2014, there were two families living unsheltered, down from five in the previous year.

Fig. 4: Number of Families in Shelters

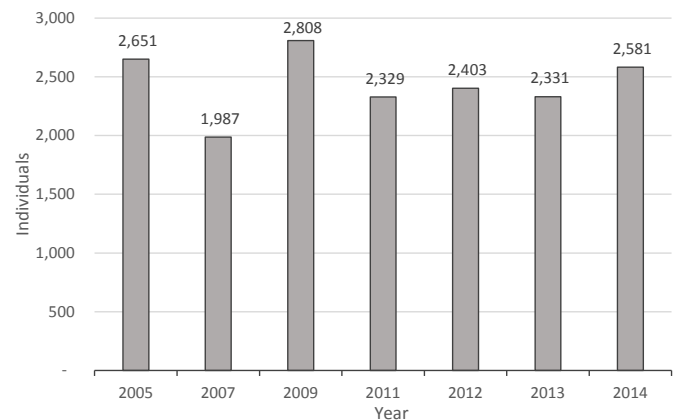


Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

Individuals in Families

Concurrent with an increase in the total number of families, the number of homeless persons living in shelters with at least one other family member also increased from 2013, albeit at a faster rate. In 2013, there were 2,331 persons living in shelters with at least one family member. For 2014, this figure increased 11% to 2,581 (see Fig. 5). This demonstrates not only an increase in the number of families living in shelters, but an increase in the size of families living in shelters. Average family size among the homeless population increased from 3.19 in 2011 to 3.31 in 2014. Among the unsheltered population, 14 people were identified as living with at least one other family member—a 36% decrease from 2013.

Fig. 5: Number of Individuals in Families

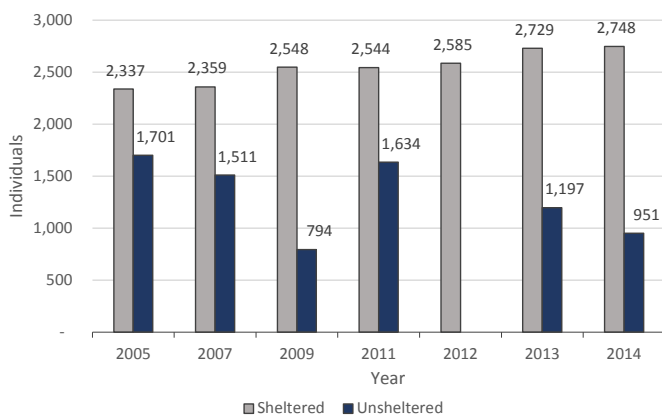


Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

Individuals Not in Families

In 2014, there were 2,748 people staying in shelters who were not accompanied by another family member—a 0.7% increase from the 2013 count (see Fig. 5). Among the unsheltered population, there was a decrease of 21% individuals counted on the streets without a family member (951, down from 1,197 in 2013). The number of individuals in shelters has increased slightly each year since 2011, while the number of individuals on the street has decreased since 2011 in each year an unsheltered count was conducted.

Fig. 6: Number of Individuals Not in Families



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

Homeless Youth

At the time of the 2014 PIT count, there were 1,644 homeless individuals under the age of 18. The vast majority of homeless children were accompanied by one or more adult family members and were located in a shelter. Seven children were accompanied by neither an adult nor other child family member. Children make up roughly one-third of those living in shelters, but only 23% of Chicago’s population.¹

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

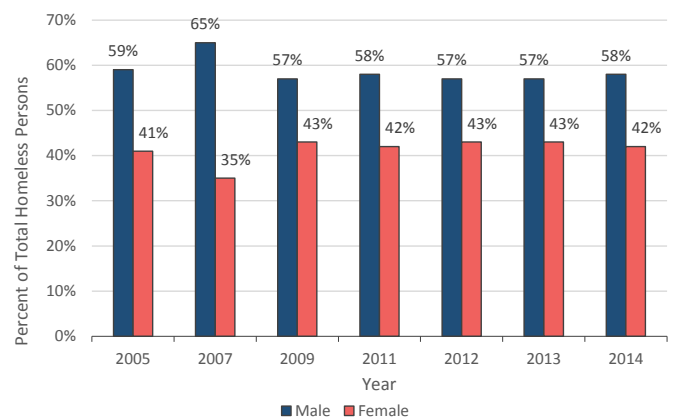
Demographic, social service, health, and other information was obtained from responses to the Point-In-Time Questionnaire, a survey administered to subsets of both the sheltered and unsheltered population. When survey information could not be obtained from an individual, tabulators were instructed to fill in any observable characteristics

(i.e. gender, age, and race). Questionnaire responses represent a sample of the homeless population. Therefore, demographic, social service, health, and other figures reflect an estimate of the total population characteristics.

Gender

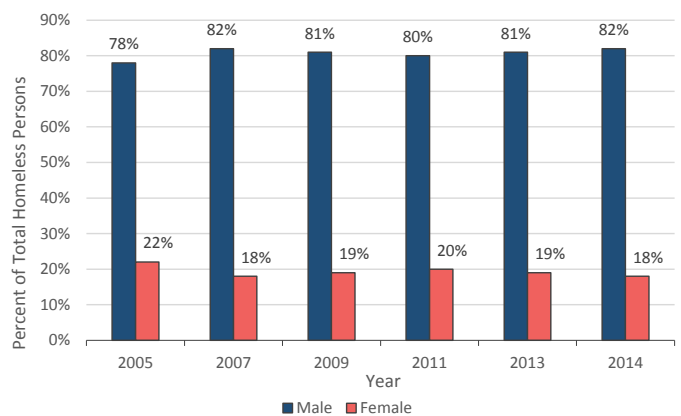
The gender breakdown among homeless individuals has remained fairly consistent since 2005 with the exception of 2007, which saw a larger proportion of males located in shelters than in previous years. For the 2014 PIT count, 63% of all homeless individuals were male and 37% were females. Of the sheltered population, 58% were male while 42% were female (see Fig. 7). Among unsheltered individuals, 82% were male and 18% were female (See Fig. 8).

Fig. 7: Sheltered Population by Gender



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

Fig. 8: Unsheltered Population by Gender



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

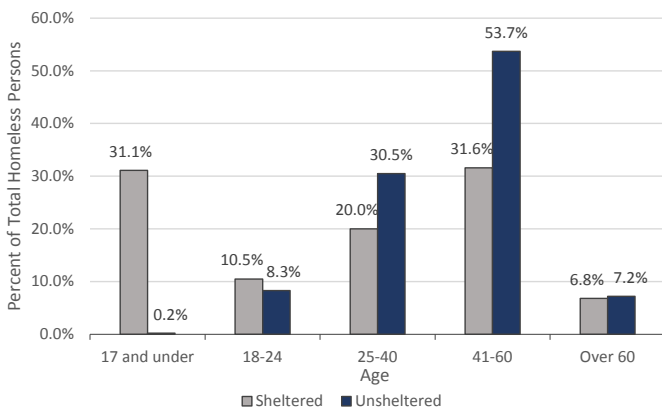
¹ 2012 American Community Survey

Age

In relationship to percentages among different age groups, the unsheltered population is significantly older than the sheltered population (see Fig. 9):

- Nearly one third (31%) of the sheltered population is under 18 years of age, while less than 1% of the unsheltered population is under 18.
- Over 60% of the unsheltered population is over age 40 while less than 40% of the sheltered population is over age 40.
- Over 90% of the unsheltered population is age 25 and older.

Fig. 9: Homeless Population by Age



Source: 2014 PIT Count/Survey

Race & Ethnicity

While African Americans make up roughly one third of the city’s population (31%)², they comprised three quarters of both the sheltered and unsheltered population (76% and 74% respectively). Whites (who comprise 48.3%³ of the city’s population when including white Hispanics), were the second largest racial group of both the sheltered and unsheltered population (22% and 24% respectively). (See Fig. 10 and Fig. 11).

Individuals of Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) comprise 29.0%⁴ of Chicago’s total population, but

² 2012 American Community Survey

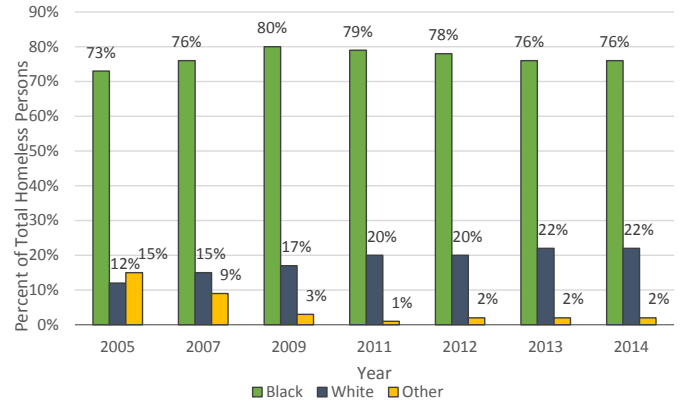
³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

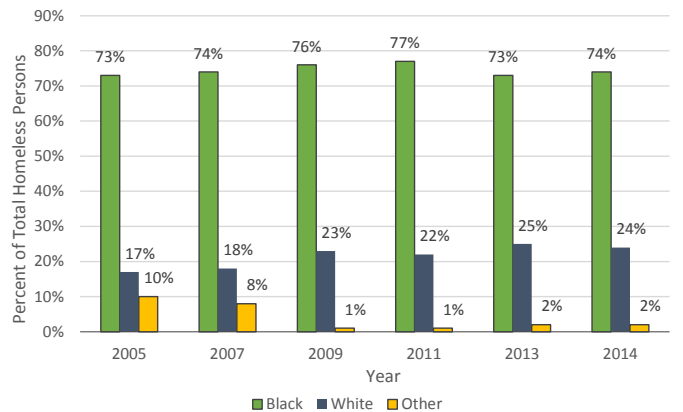
less than 10% of the sheltered and unsheltered population (see Fig. 12). These figures have not changed appreciably since 2013.

Fig. 10: Sheltered Population by Race



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

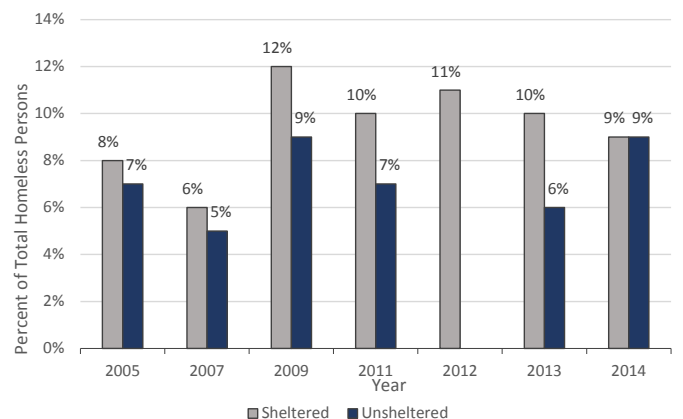
Fig. 11: Unsheltered Population by Race



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts

*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

Fig. 12: Hispanic or Latino Origin



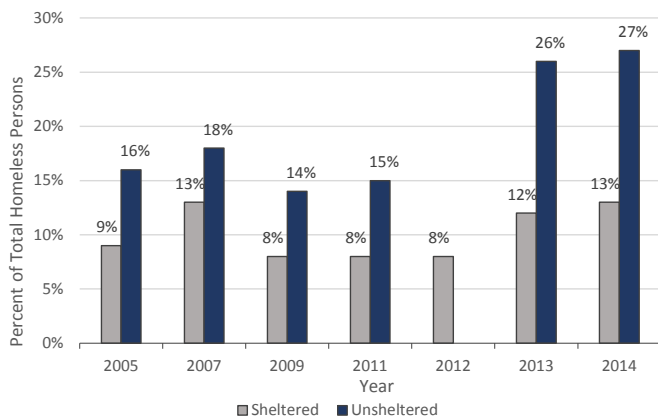
Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

Veterans

Veterans comprise a disproportionate share of the homeless population. Three percent of the Chicago population are veterans⁵, yet veterans represented an estimated 16% of the homeless population. The 2013 homeless count marked a significant increase in the percentage of veterans among the total unsheltered population (see Fig. 13), climbing from 15% of all unsheltered individuals in 2011 to 26% in 2013. This uptick is largely attributable to improved identification and locating of veterans through close collaboration with the local VA. Figures for 2014 were similar to those in 2013 at 27%. The increase in veterans among the sheltered population was less severe, growing from 8% in 2011 to 12% in 2013, leveling off at 13% in 2014.

Fig. 13: Homeless Veterans



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

CHALLENGES TO HOUSING ACCESS

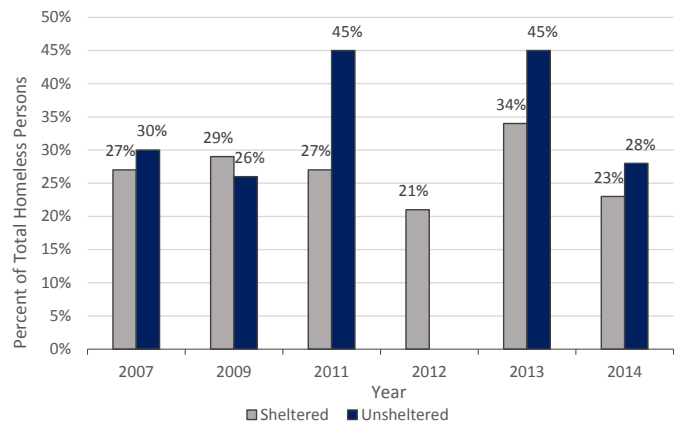
The PIT survey contains a series of questions related to physical and mental health conditions and service access. The purpose of these questions is to understand challenges and needs among the homeless population. It is important to note that these data are self-reported by the individual being interviewed and represent a subset of the total homeless population.

Substance Use

2014 was marked by a decrease in the number of individuals with a substance abuse issue or who had received services for substance abuse in the past. 27.6% of homeless individuals reported a current or past substance abuse issue, down from 37.1% in

2013. This figure was higher among the unsheltered population; however, figures declined significantly from 45% in 2013 to 28% in 2014 (see Fig. 13). The decrease among the sheltered population was not as dramatic, but still significant, declining from 34% in 2013 to 23% in 2014. As noted above, it is important to note that these figures are self-reported by the individual being interviewed.

Fig. 14: Substance Use

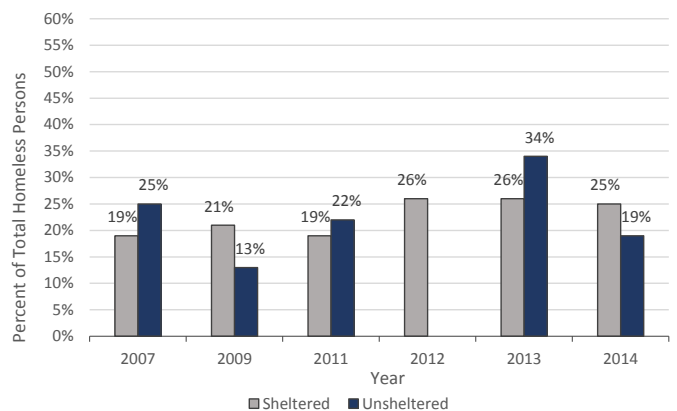


Source: 2007 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

Mental Illness

Since 2007, the proportion of individuals reporting a current or past mental health condition varied, particularly among the unsheltered population. In 2014, 25% of the sheltered population reported a current or prior mental health condition, which is similar to figures from 2013. Nineteen percent of the unsheltered population reported receiving mental health services, which is down from 34% in the previous year (see Fig. 15).

Fig. 15: Use of Mental Health Services



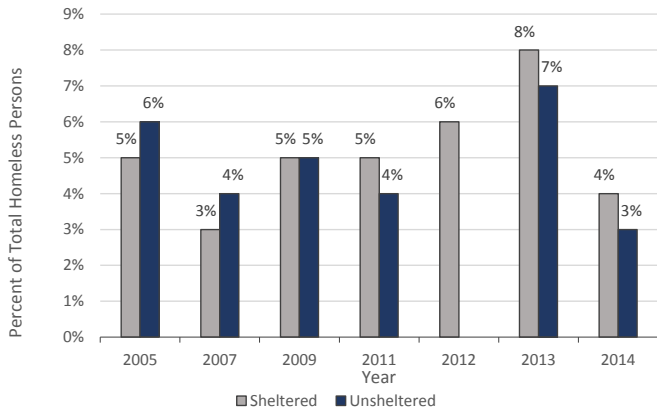
Source: 2007 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

⁵ 2012 American Community Survey

HIV/AIDS

Three percent of survey respondents reported having AIDS or being HIV positive, down from 8% in 2013 (see Fig. 16).

Fig. 16: HIV/AIDS

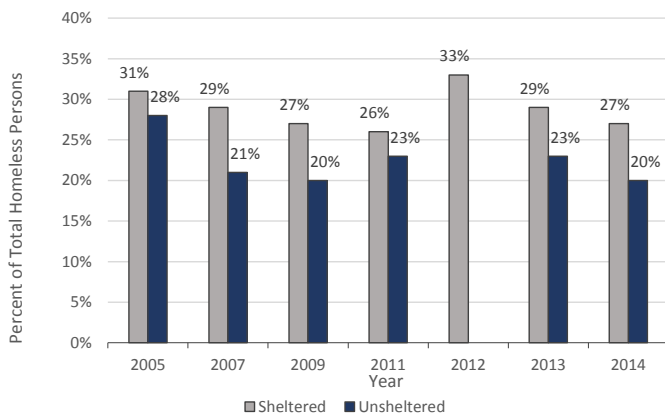


Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

Domestic Violence

Over 25% of the surveyed homeless population reports being a victim of domestic violence. Victims constituted 27% of the sheltered and 20% of the unsheltered population. These figures are down slightly from those in the previous year (see Fig. 17).

Fig. 17: Victims of Domestic Violence

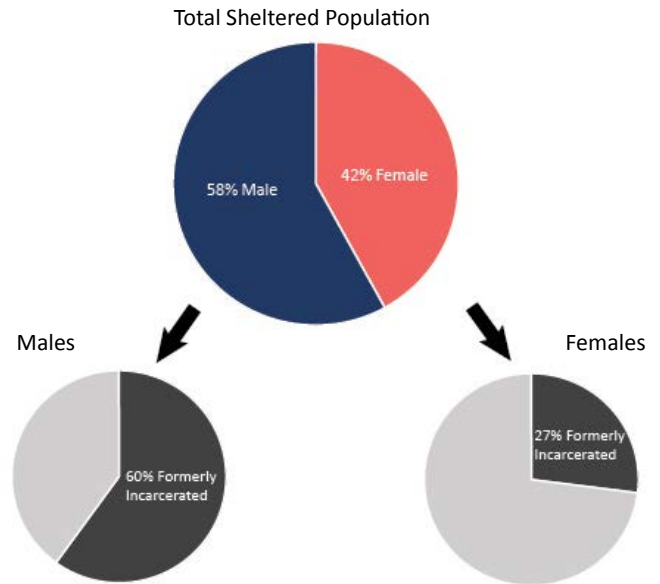


Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys
 *2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

Incarceration

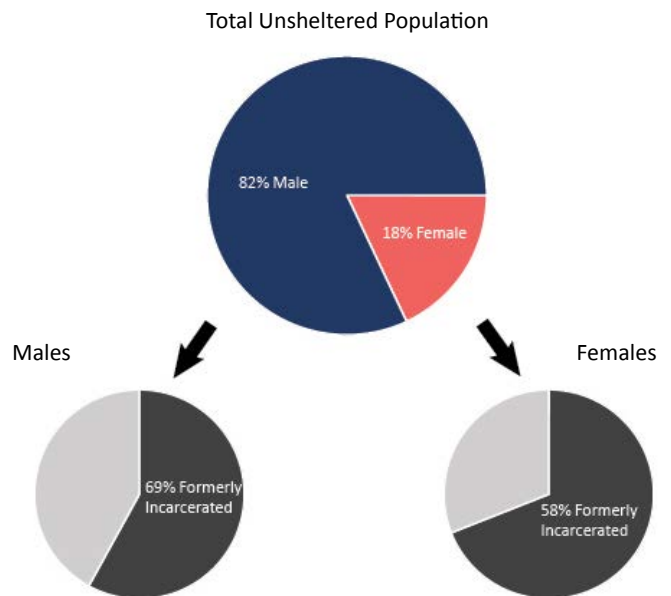
Former incarceration was prevalent among the sheltered and unsheltered population, with 61% of homeless males and 32% of homeless females surveyed reporting having spent time in jail or prison. Figures were higher among males and among the unsheltered population (See Fig. 18 and Fig. 19).

Fig. 18: Former Incarceration, Sheltered Population



Source: 2014 PIT Survey

Fig. 19: Former Incarceration, Sheltered Population

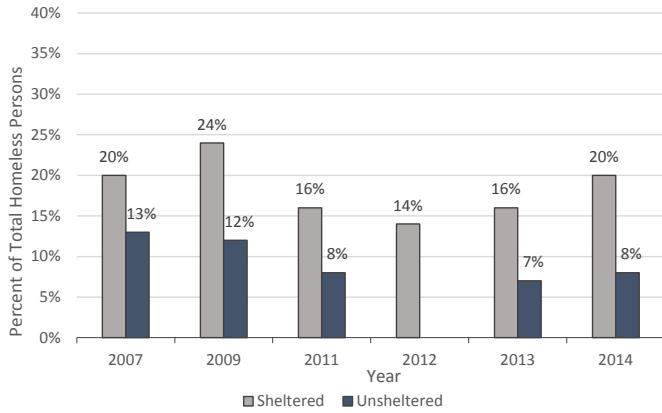


Source: 2014 PIT Count/Survey

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

A higher percentage of the sheltered population reported being employed in 2014 than in any count since 2009. Nearly 20% of sheltered individuals and heads of households reported being employed—a 4% increase over 2013 (see Fig. 20). The percentage of those employed among the unsheltered population did not change appreciably.

Fig. 20: Employment Status



Source: 2005 - 2014 PIT Counts

*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

The PIT survey also includes a series of questions about individual access to government and social services. Like other figures, data on access to services are self-reported by survey respondents. There are several trends of note among access to service figures (See Fig. 21):

Fig. 21: Percent of Homeless Population with Access to Government Services/Benefits

Sheltered	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014
SSI	10.6%	11.1%	10.8%	11.3%	10.9%
SSDI	4.6%	6.2%	5.6%	5.2%	4.6%
Medicaid or Medicare	23.5%	22.2%	24.7%	18.6%	23.1%
Food Stamps/SNAP	60.0%	69.2%	67.6%	73.7%	72.4%
WIC	6.5%	7.9%	8.5%	5.3%	6.1%
Kid Care	5.2%	7.2%	5.6%	5.6%	4.6%
TANF	8.7%	10.6%	9.0%	9.8%	10.3%
Unemployment	3.2%	4.7%	3.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Unsheltered	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014
SSI	10.5%	9.4%	NA	9.4%	10.2%
SSDI	4.6%	2.2%	NA	8.9%	8.2%
Medicaid or Medicare	2.9%	4.9%	NA	3.3%	2.6%
Food Stamps/SNAP	17.6%	33.3%	NA	41.1%	32.7%
WIC	0.4%	2.2%	NA	1.1%	2.0%
Kid Care	0.0%	4.0%	NA	0.0%	0.5%
TANF	0.4%	1.1%	NA	1.1%	1.5%
Unemployment	1.7%	7.1%	NA	0.0%	1.5%

Source: 2009 - 2014 PIT Counts/Surveys

*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

- With the exception of SSDI benefits, access to government services was higher among the

sheltered population when compared to the unsheltered population.

- WIC, Kid Care, and TANF access was higher among the sheltered population, which is largely the result of significantly higher proportions of homeless families with children (those eligible for such services) residing in shelters rather than on the streets.
- Use of Food Stamps/SNAP and Medicaid/Medicare was notably higher among the sheltered population. (See Fig. 20).
- Access to Food Stamps/SNAP grew significantly (more than 10%) since 2009.
- After peaking in 2011, use of unemployment benefits dropped in 2013 and 2014. Stronger economic performance in conjunction with the expiration of benefits among those that lost jobs at the height of the recession may be causing these trends.

CONCLUSION

While the overall size of the homeless population remained largely unchanged from the 2013 count, 2014 data illustrates several trends of note. First, the number of homeless persons located in shelters has increased, while the number of those unsheltered has declined. While the higher rate of sheltered homeless may be in large part the result of an extremely cold winter, this shift can be observed since 2011, indicating that 2014 figures are part of a larger trend in Chicago. A second important trend is the growing population of homeless families. Not only did the number of families with children in shelters grow, but family size has increased, which poses additional challenges to service providers seeking to keep families intact in emergency and transitional housing.

2014 PIT count data confirmed many disparities long-observed among the homeless population. Chicago’s homeless population is overwhelmingly African American and outpaces the city population in its proportion of children and veterans. Mental illness, substance abuse, unemployment, domestic violence, former incarceration, and other conditions continue to be prevalent among the homeless population and poses challenges to obtaining and maintaining stable housing.