



# City of Chicago

## 2017 HOMELESS Point-in-Time Count & Survey Report

Prepared by the Voorhees Center for Neighborhood & Community Improvement, University of Illinois at Chicago

CHICAGO



2017

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT  
OF HOMELESS PERSONS



**Nathalie P. Voorhees Center  
for Neighborhood and  
Community Improvement**



## INTRODUCTION

The Point in Time (PIT) count and survey of unsheltered and sheltered homeless persons in Chicago led by the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) took place on the evening of January 26, 2017. A mandate by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the intent is to produce a picture of homelessness in Chicago. The data collected annually is comparable to previous counts conducted since 2005 and can help Chicago develop a better understanding of the number of people in shelters and those who are unsheltered, including youth and chronically homeless persons, and their housing and service needs.

In addition, the data is used to estimate the needed resources and track progress in reducing the number of people who experience homelessness. This report describes the methodology used to conduct the 2017 PIT and the characteristics of homeless populations, analyzes trends using past data, and discusses important points to consider including limitations.

## ROLE OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES AND CONSULTANT

### Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS)

DFSS was responsible for coordinating the PIT count and survey; training and managing volunteers in the field on the night of the count; collecting all surveys and tally sheets, entering data; reviewing data collection tools, data analysis, and reports produced by the consultant; and disseminating findings. This year's PIT was conducted with over 500 staff and volunteers.

### All Chicago

All Chicago provided input to survey development, supplied HMIS data, review of preliminary results and subsequent, independent data analysis and dissemination of findings. All Chicago also provided coordination assistance and training to volunteers at site lead locations.

### Lead & Other City Agencies

The lead agencies involved in the count included Mercy Housing Lakefront, The Night Ministry, the

Polish American Association, Thresholds, Deborah's Place, A Safe Haven, and Olive Branch Mission. The Chicago Park District, Chicago Police Department, Chicago Transit Authority, Chicago Department of Aviation, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs assisted on the night of the count.

### Consultant

The Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood & Community Improvement at the University of Illinois at Chicago was contracted by DFSS to assist in completing the PIT count. This included:

- Reviewing any changes in HUD guidance that would require changes to the data collected on the tally, in the survey or both; coordination of the count; and/or requirements related to subpopulations such as chronic or youth.
- Recommending new and improved amendments to the 2017 methodology from the previous year's PIT count.
- Advising DFSS staff on data entry and creating a database to house the data.
- Analyzing the data collected by DFSS and producing the data tables required for submission to HUD as part of the Homeless Data Exchange (HDX).
- Producing a final report on the methodology, data, and analysis of populations, subpopulations, and trends including data beyond what is required for the HDX submission.

## METHODOLOGY

In 2017, the Chicago collaborative partners agreed to improve the method of counting people in shelter and on the street. As in the past, data would be collected from tallies of individuals in shelters and of individuals residing on the streets, riding public transportation, at 24-hour establishments, and in parks, cars, and other locations not meant for sleeping. The PIT count also includes a survey that collects demographic, social service and other information from a subset of homeless individuals.

The first improvement in 2017 demonstrates the strides Chicago has made to improve the quality of data collected from service providers. For the first time, the shelter count was a hybrid approach that

included data both from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and from the tally and survey submission. Future efforts will enable providers to collect and submit data electronically.<sup>1</sup> Second, building on a successful outreach approach for veterans in the previous PIT, extra resources were made available to conduct assessments of veterans in shelters and to engage with veterans identified on the street and connect them to a housing provider. Finally, youth with previous episodes of homelessness were recruited to lead teams during an extended 24-hour window on the night of the PIT count in order to identify and count homeless youth.

### ***Counting and Surveying Sheltered Homeless Persons***

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 percent of individuals and/or families in the shelter on the evening of the count randomly selected following DFSS guidelines. HMIS data was used for shelters that had complete demographic characteristics in the system. Data from the surveys were weighted to produce estimates for the remainder of the sheltered population (see Appendix A).

### ***Counting and Surveying Unsheltered Homeless Persons***

DFSS partnered with homeless providers to conduct a comprehensive street outreach count that covered all public areas. The homeless service providers acted as co-lead agencies responsible for hosting teams of volunteers at their site, making volunteer team assignments that included specific geographical areas of the city, and providing detailed instructions on how to complete the tally and survey. Volunteers were recruited from City staff, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher learning, and the general public. Over 500 volunteers and staff helped conduct the count, which was more than in any previous year.

<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the HMIS did not include domestic violence shelters, so only data from the survey and tally sheets were used for this sheltered subpopulation.

The entire City was divided into geographic areas based on Census Tracts in order to produce a complete canvas of the city. Specialized teams of experienced staff and volunteers were provided maps of the areas they were to canvas which included emergency rooms, known locations of encampments, and other hard-to-reach areas. The Chicago Park District assisted by counting in parks with reported sightings of homeless persons. Further, both airport terminals were covered by the Chicago Department of Aviation. The local U.S. Veterans Affairs staff also provided assistance at co-lead agency sites and provided staff to count homeless individuals in the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.

As safety and time allowed, unsheltered homeless persons were approached and asked to participate in a survey. On encounters where individuals were sleeping or refused to participate, information was gathered by observation. Homeless individuals were counted regardless of whether or not they agreed to participate in the survey and/or count. In areas or situations when the encounter was time sensitive, such as on the CTA, or when it was deemed too dangerous, such as an abandoned building or car, a "headcount" form was used to gather a count and basic demographic information on each person. Appendix B & C shows the distribution of unsheltered homeless individuals.

The survey responses are self-reported and were indicated by the survey enumerator based on actual responses received from the homeless person being interviewed. To ensure that individuals were not counted twice, respondents were asked if they participated earlier in the night and to provide their initials. Further, each form is individually numbered allowing for DFSS to log forms given to a shelter provider, co-lead agency, and specialized team as it relates to the geographical area assigned. All shelters, co-lead agencies and volunteers received training on the process and how to complete the forms.

Because homeless youth are not typically on the street after hours, the duration of the PIT was extended from midafternoon on the day of the count to dusk the next day. Youth that have experience with homelessness were recruited to lead teams. These youth-led teams were trained on the survey and allowed to provide input on which locations would be searched.

**Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Count**

In previous years, teams rode a sampling of Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) vehicles during the hours of the count, tallying and surveying homeless persons they encountered. Teams would board mid-route, check different cars, and then board another vehicle along the route. Beginning last year, teams of CTA personnel were stationed at the terminus points of the 24-hour Red and Blue lines all evening. CTA operations dictate that riders must exit the bus or train at the end of the line. Homeless individuals could be seen re-boarding the vehicles and thus were easily identifiable and counted at these points. Teams also tallied persons spending the night in major indoor transfer points in the downtown and Loop stations.

A team covering only a sample of vehicles along each route was not the best way to find homeless riders because it required estimating the number of homeless missed on vehicles not covered. This end-of-the-line method has been determined to be more accurate given that actual counts are conducted on each vehicle arriving at the station rather than just a sample, and this may account for some of the variation in the unsheltered count from previous years. Furthermore, tallying at terminus points reduces the likelihood of double-counting, as teams were able to observe which individuals re-boarded vehicles.

**Weather**

The 2017 PIT was conducted on the evening of Thursday January 26th. The 2017 winter was uncharacteristically mild for Chicago. According to Weather Underground, temperatures on the night of the count ranged from a high of 34F to a low of 27F with winds averaging 14 mph. This temperature is above average for this time of year and slightly warmer than temperatures for the previous year’s count. This mild weather may have resulted in a higher number of homeless persons remaining outside when compared to colder years.

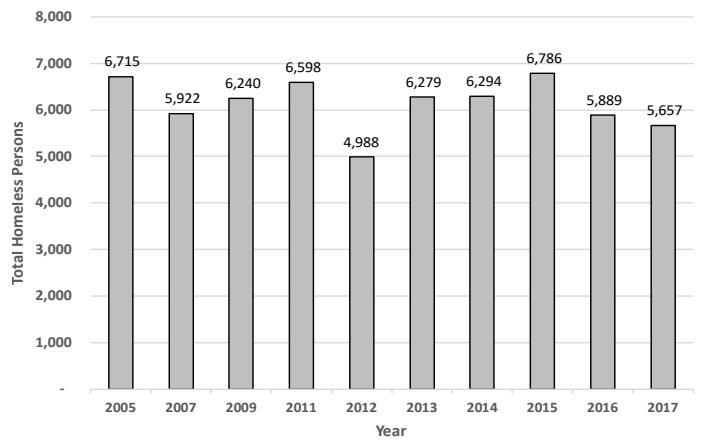
**RESULTS**

*Number of Homeless*

The 2017 PIT count identified a total of 5,657 homeless persons, a total decrease of 4 percent, which is smaller than the 13 percent decrease between the 2015 and 2016. This is the first time since adopting Chicago’s PIT count methodology in 2005 that a total count of under 6,000 homeless persons has been recorded for two

consecutive years. (See Figure 1). It should be noted that 2012 did not include a count of unsheltered persons.

**Fig. 1: Total Homeless Population**



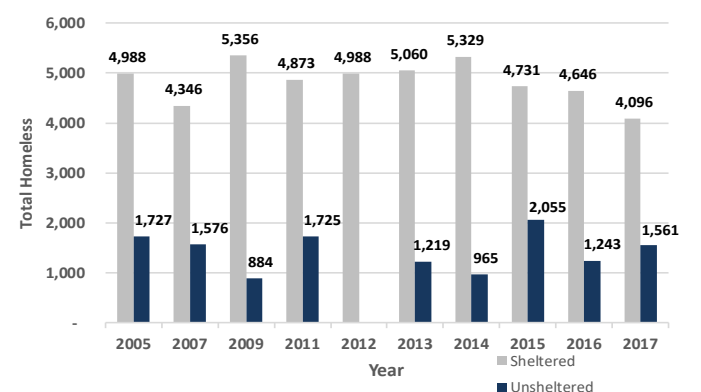
Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

**SHELTERED VERSUS UNSHELTERED**

The 2017 count identified 4,096 homeless individuals residing in shelters and 1,561 unsheltered on the street or other locations not meant for human habitation (see Figure 2). The number of sheltered individuals make up 72 percent of all homeless counted and has decreased by 12 percent since 2016. In fact, the number of sheltered individuals is the lowest recorded number of all of the PIT homeless counts. The number of unsheltered individuals has increased by 26 percent and are 28 percent of the total homeless population documented. The results of the 2017 sheltered and unsheltered count are both very similar to the pre-recession results of a decade ago in 2007.

**Fig. 2: Sheltered & Unsheltered Homeless**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

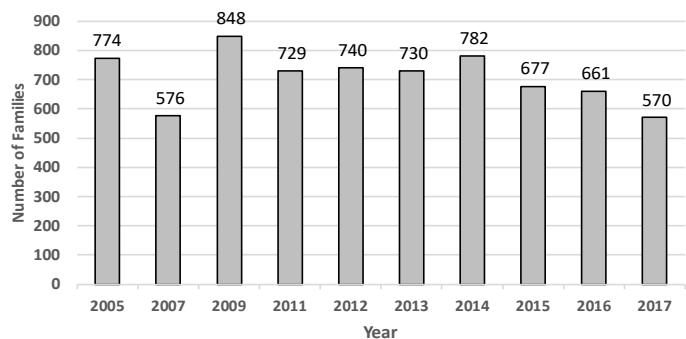
\*2012 did not include a count of the unsheltered population.

## HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

### Number of Households with children

The PIT survey found 570 families living in shelters with children (See Figure 3). This marks a 13 percent decrease and the lowest number of families since Chicago has been conducting counts under the current methodology.

**Fig. 3: Number of Families in Shelters**

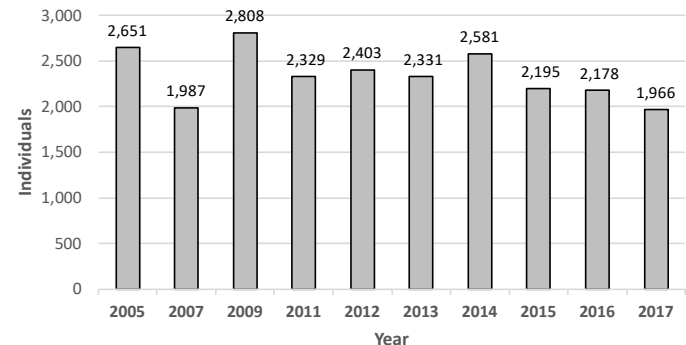


Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts/Surveys

### Individuals in Families

The number of persons within sheltered families has decreased by 10 percent from 2016. Along with the number of families with children, the 1,966 individuals counted is the lowest amount ever recorded (See Figure 4). The average family size has slightly increased from 3.25 to 3.45 in 2017.

**Fig. 4: Number of Individuals in Families**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts/Surveys

### Parenting Youth

In 2017, 26 percent of homeless families were parenting youth households (parents or legal guardians of children who were not accompanied by an adult household member over age 24). The total of 161 parenting youth includes 150 youth with children and 11 partners, all between the ages of 18 and 24

and sheltered. (See Figure 5) These families had 217 children for a combined total of 378 persons living in households headed by parenting youth, which was a 16 percent decrease from last year. This also marked the third year that sheltered parenting youth households decreased with a 22 percent decline from 2016.

**Fig. 5: Parenting Youth**

Parenting Youth	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Under Age 18	0	0
Age 18 to 24	161	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: 2017 PIT Count/Survey

Homeless parenting youth are overwhelmingly female, non-Hispanic and Black/African American (See Figure 6, 7 and 8).

**Fig. 6: Gender of Parenting Youth**

Parenting Youth - Gender	% of Total
Male	5%
Female	95%
Transgender	0%

Source: 2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 7: Race of Parenting Youth**

Parenting Youth - Race	% of Total
White	3.7%
Black/African American	93%
Other	1.2%
Multiple Races	2%

Source: 2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 8: Ethnicity of Parenting Youth**

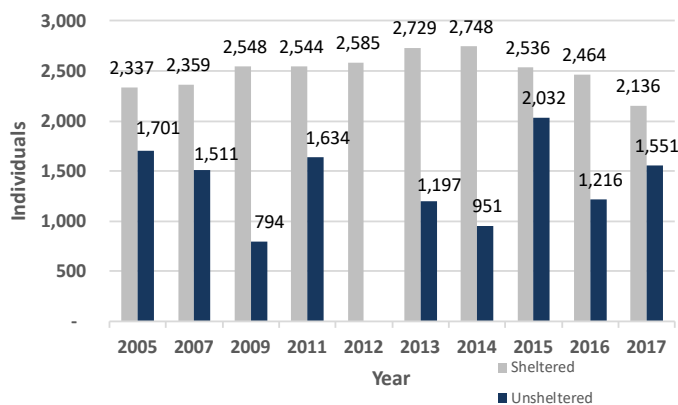
Parenting Youth - Ethnicity	% of Total
Non-Hispanic/Latino	93%
Hispanic/Latino	7%

Source: 2017 PIT Count/Survey

### Single Persons

The 2017 PIT identified a total of 3,687 single homeless persons not living with families. This is only 7 more single homeless persons than counted in 2016. Of the individuals not in family households, 2,136 were in shelters and 1,551 were found in unsheltered conditions. Mirroring the total homeless numbers, the sheltered individual count has decreased while the unsheltered individual count has increased (See Figure 9).

**Fig. 9: Number of Individuals not in Families**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

## POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

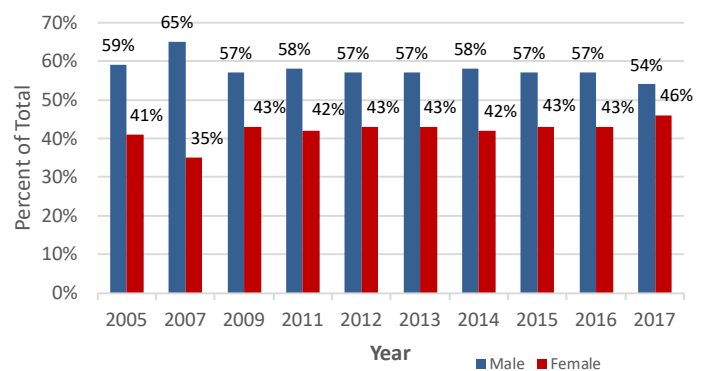
As done in the past, the counting of homeless persons both in shelter and on the street was completed by hand by shelter staff and volunteers. The tally data allows for the tabulation of all gender, age, race, veteran status, household size, and location of homeless persons. In shelter, every household was counted on a tally. Shelter providers are required to maintain demographic data of persons residing in their shelters on any given night. In 2017, for the first time Chicago was able to extract partial data from over 70 percent of the participating providers from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Based on the results of 2017, Chicago anticipates improving the rate of shelters that will participate via HMIS data in future counts.

The following is demographic data collected in 2017 and compared to previous counts.

### Gender

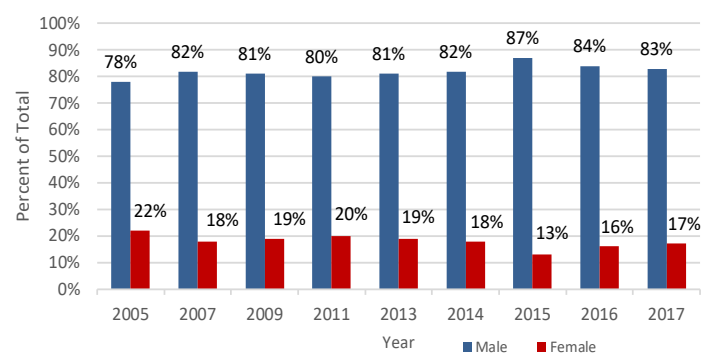
The gender distribution for the sheltered population has slightly shifted with the female population rising by 3 percent and the male population falling by 3 percent. The gender of the unsheltered population stayed consistent from last year with males making up a dominant 83 percent of all individuals. (See Figures 10 & 11) Similar to last year, 0.4 percent of the sheltered and 0.6 percent of the unsheltered population identified as transgender or reported not identifying as any gender.

**Fig. 10: Sheltered Population by Gender**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

**Fig. 11: Unsheltered Population by Gender**



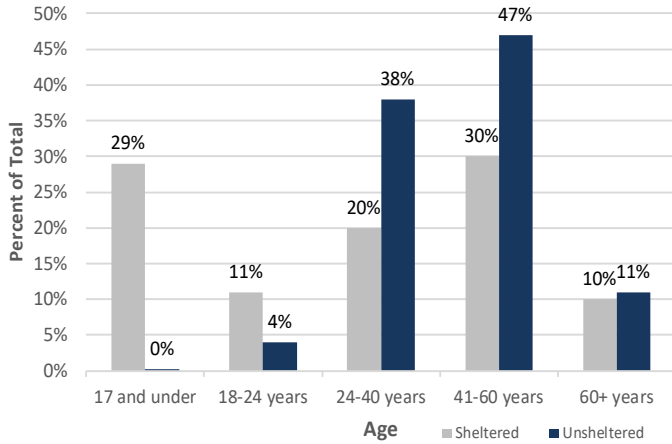
Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

### Age

Age distribution for the sheltered population closely matched the 2016 count with the 41-60 and 17 and under cohorts making up the greatest proportion. The ten percent increase in persons age 25-40 (from 28% to 38%) and 11 percent decrease in persons age 41-60 (from 58% to 47%) makes the unsheltered population much younger than last year. (See Figure 12).

**Fig. 12: Homeless Population by Age**

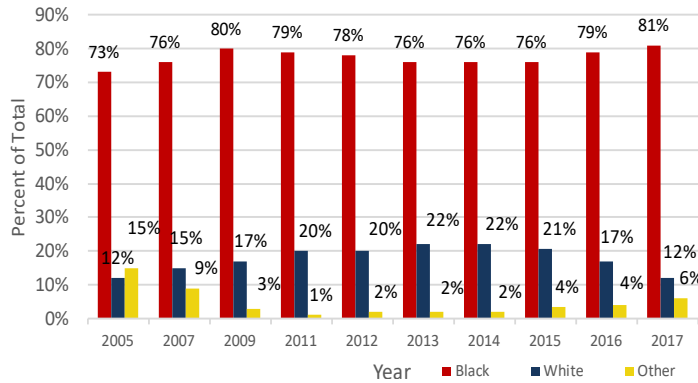


Source: 2017 PIT Counts

**Race & Ethnicity**

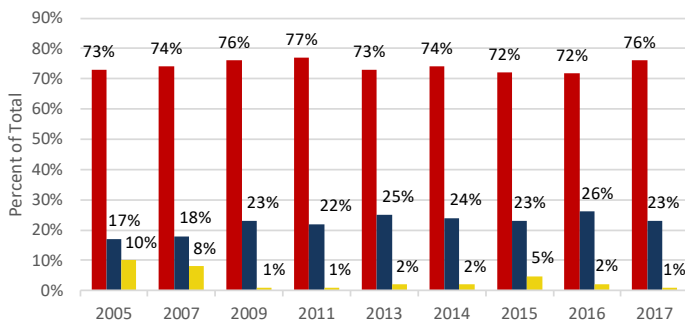
Despite making up only about one-third of the city of Chicago’s total population, the Black/African American representation remains high at 81 percent of sheltered and 76 percent of unsheltered populations. Whites comprise 12 percent of the sheltered population and 23 percent of the unsheltered population. The percentage of unsheltered African Americans rose by 4 percent while the number of unsheltered whites has decreased by 3 percent. (See Figure 13 & 14)

**Fig. 13: Sheltered Population by Race**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

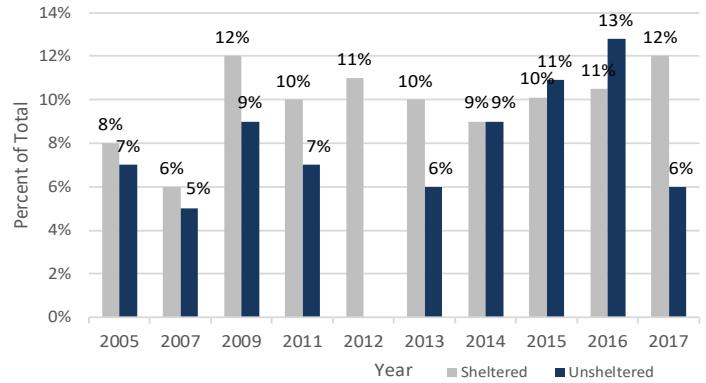
**Fig. 14: Unsheltered Population by Race**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

While the percentage of Hispanic/Latino Origin sheltered population increased one percent from last year to 12 percent, the percentage of the unsheltered Hispanic/Latino Origin population has decreased from 13 to 6 percent. (See Figure 15)

**Fig. 15: Hispanic or Latino Origin**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

**Chronic Homeless**

Homeless individuals and families are defined as chronic by HUD if they have a disability and either have resided in emergency shelters, safe havens, or places not meant for human habitation or have been homeless continuously for at least one year or on four separate occasions in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions was at least 12 months. HUD modified this definition prior to the 2016 PIT with the most significant change being the combining of homeless episodes to arrive at the combined length of time homeless. Chicago modified its survey questions so interviewers would ask homeless persons about the number of episodes and duration of those episodes to determine if the person is chronically homeless. The end result is that many homeless persons surveyed did not meet the 12 month requirement.

Based on volunteer feedback and provider input, the questions used to determine chronic homelessness were reviewed to ensure that Chicago was accurately enumerating this vulnerable population. It was determined that shelter staff and volunteers needed better training to ensure that interviewers understood the underlying importance of the questions and subsequently how to ask them in the course of an interview to illicit more accurate responses. The

resulting increase in the number of chronically homeless was expected given the estimate of chronic homelessness in HMIS.

Taking this into consideration, the 2017 numbers were more than twice the 2016 count, which estimated 343 chronically homeless persons with 110 living in shelters and 233 unsheltered. In 2017, the total number is 863 with 291 in shelter and 572 unsheltered. The number of chronic identified in 2017 in a shelter is only 7 percent but 37 percent of the unsheltered population, which is slightly higher than 2015 (33%), before the questions were modified. These rates correspond with reports from street outreach and shelter service providers.

Chronic homelessness among veterans increased from less than one percent in 2016 to 2.3 percent in 2017. This year marks the first year with chronic families identified during the count. One chronic family was found in shelter and one on the street. Based on the results, the improvements made to training both shelter staff and volunteers was the correct approach as Chicago continues to improve its surveying techniques each year.

**Veterans**

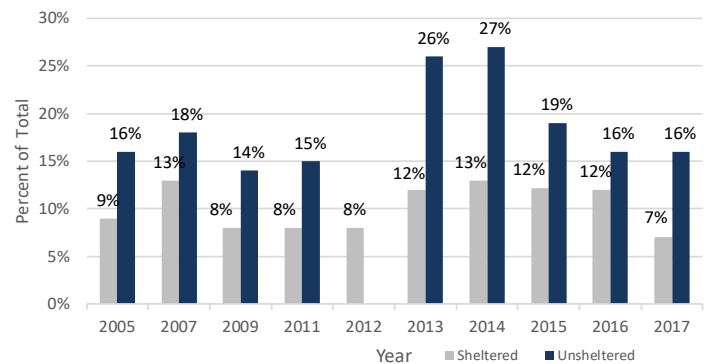
The PIT data collection on veterans has evolved over time, and has been used to effectively plan for achieving “functional zero” – the term used to describe a point in time when available permanent housing resources exceed the number of veterans at risk of becoming homeless. Chicago amended its methods of counting veterans in 2013 which improved its accuracy through the interview questions used to determine veteran status. In 2014, community partners came together to pool resources for the Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative. The creation of a by-name list of homeless veterans both in shelter and on the street currently resides in HMIS.

Figure 16 demonstrates the impact on veteran homelessness over the short time span. From 2016 to 2017, total homelessness among veterans has decreased by 10 percent. The number of veterans in shelter has diminished due to the amount of housing resources available for veterans from Chicago’s partners including the many providers that serve

veterans, HUD, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Corporation for Supportive Housing and the Chicago Housing Authority. At the time of the PIT in January 2017, the number of veterans on the by-name list was nearly equal to the number counted. This level of accuracy is testimony to the service providers that worked to develop and maintain the known persons on the by-name list.

Figure 17 demonstrates the military era and age of homeless veterans in Chicago. Nearly one-third of veterans in shelter and on the street are from the Vietnam War. As both the largest and oldest group, they are also the most vulnerable.

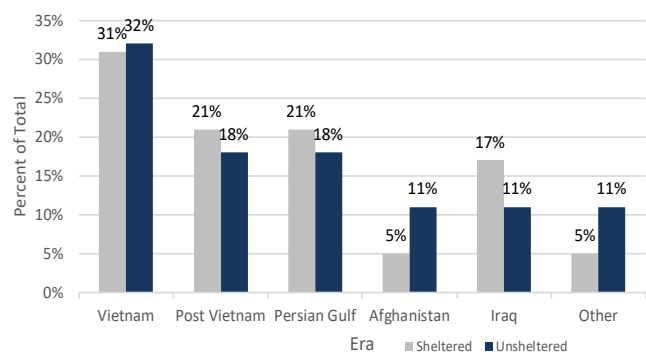
**Fig. 16: Homeless Veterans**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

**Fig. 17: Homeless Veterans By Era**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

**Unaccompanied Youth**

Since 2013, Chicago has been working with its partners to develop a methodology to determine the number of homeless youth in need of shelter, stable housing, or intervention. Most unaccompanied youth without stable housing options are distrustful of typical service



systems such as schools, justice or other governmental programs, and homeless service providers that are geared more toward serving only families or adults. A very resourceful group, many do not seek shelter services at night or stay out after hours. Instead, they often utilize their social network of friends and family to find a bed for the night. Some even exchange sex for temporary living or housing options.

Recognizing all this, the hours of the count were extended for the purposes of identifying homeless youth. The supplemental youth count began at 3 PM the day of the count and extended into the next day. During the designated hours of the youth count, enumerators were deployed to youth drop-in centers and other places youth may be found to conduct surveys. Any persons identified during the official hours of the PIT count (9pm to 2am) were included in the PIT count numbers reported to HUD and above. Based on previous success and during the Voices of Youth Count lead by Chapin Hall in the summer of 2016, Chicago trained and deployed currently homeless youth to lead canvass teams during the 2017 PIT.

The advantage of having youth-led teams is twofold. First, the youth recruited possess the knowledge of where they could find other homeless youth and how to identify them. Still, many homeless youth do not want to disclose exactly where these “friends” could be found. Therefore, the locations where the teams went or interviewed other youth were not tracked or mapped. Second, the recruited youth were able to get more forthcoming answers during interviews than adult volunteers.

Youth count enumerators tallied a total of 35 individuals and surveyed 68 for a total of 103 people. Of the 103 youth tallied and surveyed, 64 were unsheltered (Figure 18). This is an increase from the 28 counted in 2016 but not as high as the 121 counted in 2015. The 213 unaccompanied youth in a shelter that night and reported to HUD marked a 24 percent decrease from 2016. Overall, Chicago marked a 10 percent decrease in unaccompanied youth from 309 in 2016 to 277 in 2017.

**Fig. 18: Unaccompanied Youth**

Unaccompanied Youth	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Under Age 18	0	3
Age 18 to 24	213	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>64</b>

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

The majority of unaccompanied youth are male (63.5%) with females making up only 34 percent of this population. The percentage of transgender youth has decreased from 5 percent last year to 2.2 percent this year. (See figure 19) This population is largely black/ African American and Non-Hispanic. (See Figure 20 & 21) All but two of the people counted/surveyed were age 18 to 24. None were under 18, and two were over age 24. (See Figure 22)

**Fig. 19: Gender of Unaccompanied Youth**

Gender	Count	Percent
Female	94	34%
Male	176	63.5%
Transgender	6	2.2%
Don't identify as male, female or transgender	1	0.4 %

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 20: Race of Unaccompanied Youth**

Race	Count	Percent
White	52	18.7%
Black/African American	211	74.8%
Native American/Alaskan Native	0	0 %
Multiple Races	1	0.4%
Other	0	0%
Don't know	13	2.9%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 21: Ethnicity of Unaccompanied Youth**

Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	46	13.6%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	231	84.5%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 22: Age of Unaccompanied Youth**

Age	Count	Percent
Under 18	0	0.0%
18-24	100	97.1%
25-40	2	1.9%
Unknown	1	1.0%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

Similar to the parenting youth, a majority of the youth counted were non-Hispanic and black/African American. In contrast to that group, however, males made up the dominant percentage at 65 percent. (See Figures 23, 24 & 25)

**Fig. 23: Homeless Youth Gender**

Gender	Percent
Female	31.1%
Male	65.0%
Transgender	2.9%
Don't identify as male, female or transgender	1.0%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 24: Homeless Youth Race**

Race	Percent
White	18.7%
Black/African American	74.8%
Native American/Alaskan Native	1.9%
Multiple Races	
Other	1.9%
Don't know	2.9%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 25: Homeless Youth Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	13.6%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	84.5%
Don't know	1.9%
Don't identify as male, female or transgender	1.0%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

Half of the youth counted reported that they were going to be staying in an emergency or transitional shelter the night of the PIT and one in five youth

stated that they would be staying with friends or family. Before homelessness, 51.4% of homeless youth were staying with their families either permanently/temporarily. (See Figures 26 & 27).

**Fig. 26: Location Night of Count**

Where are you going to stay tonight?	Percent
Emergency or Transitional Shelter	50.0%
With family/guardian/friends but not living there/can't stay (doubled up, couch surfing)	20.1%
Outside	5.9%
On the CTA	4.4%
Other	5.9%
Didn't know	7.4%
Refused to answer	4.4%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 27: Location Before Homelessness**

Location before Homeless	Percent
With family permanently	33.8%
With family temporarily	17.6%
With friends temporarily	11.8%
Foster/group home	5.9%
Place owned/leased (with or without subsidy)	5.9%
With friends permanently	4.4%
Other	4.4%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

Seventeen percent of homeless youth reported having a mental health condition while 10 percent conveyed that they had some form of disability. While 37 percent of homeless youth have conditions that require medical assistance, only 26.5 percent reported using Medicare/Medicaid. (See Figures 28 & 29)

**Fig. 28: Homeless Youth Characteristics**

Population Characteristics:	Percent
Mental Health Condition	17.6
Substance Use	10.3
Developmental Disability	5.9
Physical Disability	4.4

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

**Fig. 29: Homeless Youth Assistance Usage**

Program/Assistance Usage	Percent
LINK/Food Stamps	52.9%
Medicare/Medicaid	26.5%
SSI	7.4%
WIC	4.4%
Food Pantry usage	4.4%
Unemployment benefits	2.9%
SSDI	1.5%
Job training/placement services	1.5%

Source: 2017 PIT Count/Survey

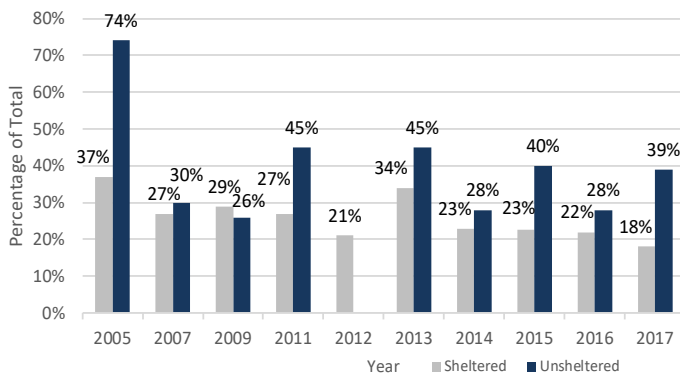
**CHALLENGES TO HOUSING ACCESS**

The survey includes a series of questions related to physical and mental health conditions and service access. The purpose is to understand challenges and needs among the across homeless populations. 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**

Eighteen percent of the sheltered population and 39 percent of the unsheltered population reported receiving services for substance abuse (alcohol and/or drug use). The number of unsheltered persons receiving these services has increased by 11 percent while the amount the sheltered group has decreased by 4 percent. (See Figure 30)

**Fig. 30: Recieved Services for Substance Use**



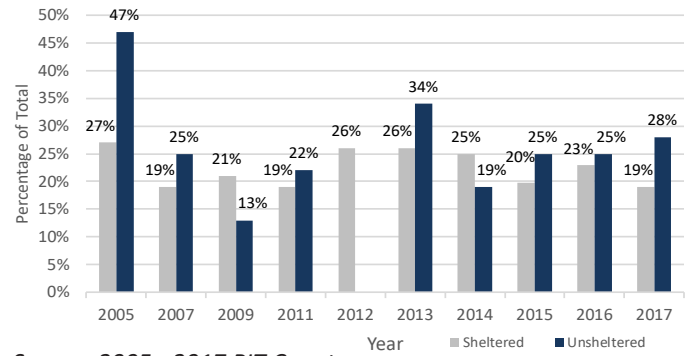
Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

**Mental Health Services**

Nineteen percent of the sheltered population (the lowest since 2011) and 28 percent of the unsheltered population (the highest since 2013) reported receiving mental health services in 2017. (See Figure 31)

**Fig. 31: Recieved Mental Health Services**



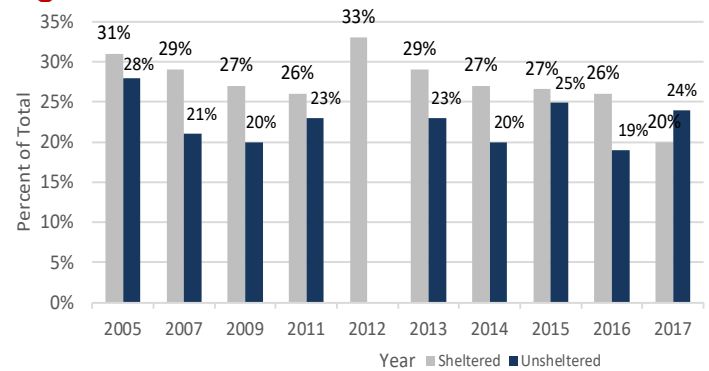
Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

**Domestic Violence**

One-in-five sheltered and one-in-four unsheltered homeless persons reported being a victim of domestic violence. This is almost the opposite of last year's figures. (See Figure 32)

**Fig. 32: Domestic Violence Victims**



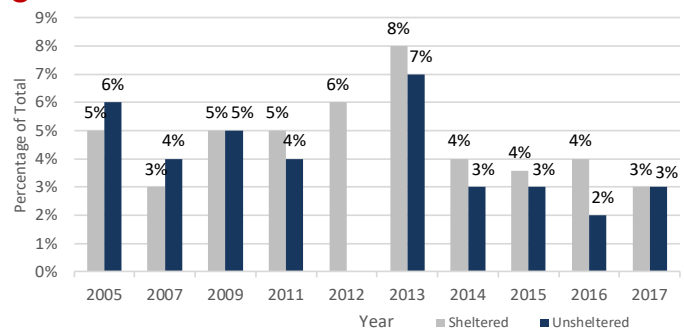
Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Count

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

**HIV/AIDS**

Three percent of both sheltered and unsheltered persons report having HIV/AIDS. This percentage is close to the figures reported on average in the last few years. (See Figure 33)

**Fig. 33: Persons With HIV/AIDS**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

### Disability

Sixteen percent of sheltered persons and 28 percent of unsheltered persons reported having a disability. These figures are 3 percent higher than last year. The rates of persons with disabilities in the homeless population are higher than that of the City of Chicago which is 11% for those under age 65.

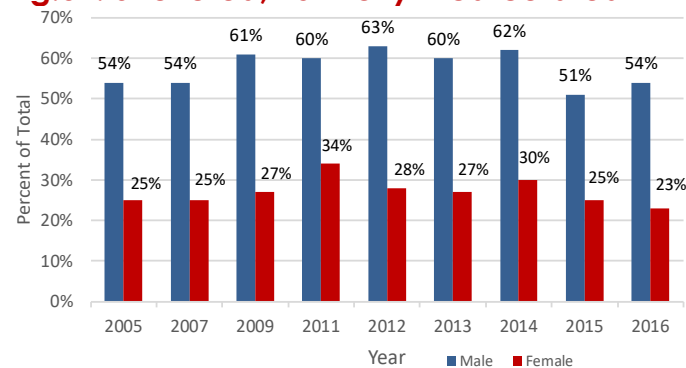
### Foster Care

In 2017, 11 percent of sheltered adults and 10 percent of unsheltered adults report previously being in foster care. These figures are consistent with the previous year's report.

### Incarceration

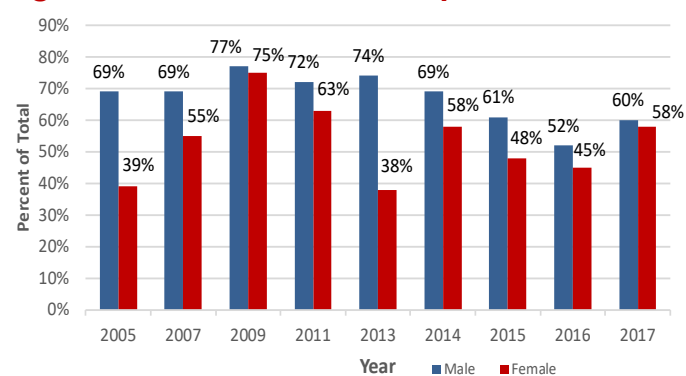
Forty-three percent of males and 19 percent of females in the sheltered population reported having been in jail or prison at some point in their life. Both of these figures have decreased in the past year with the male percentage dropping by 11 percent. The unsheltered population that reported being in prison/jail has increased with the female population going up by 13 percent. (see Figure 34 & 35)

**Fig.34: Sheltered, Formerly Incarcerated**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

**Fig. 35: Unsheltered, Formerly Incarcerated**



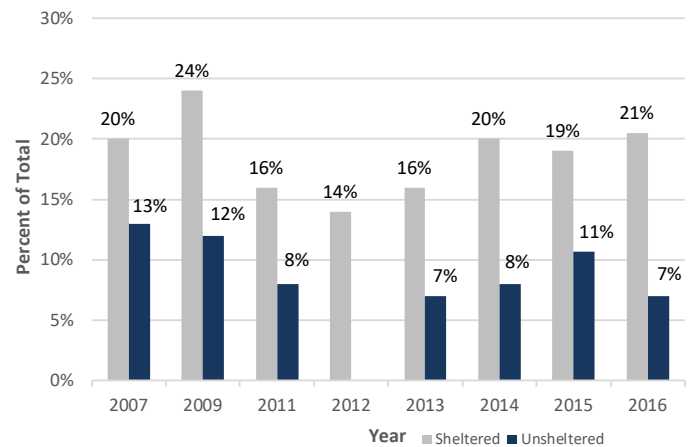
Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Twenty-five percent of the sheltered and 8 percent of the unsheltered population reported being employed. This marks a four percent increase among the sheltered population, and a slight increase among the unsheltered population from figures in the previous year. (See Figure 36)

**Fig. 36: Employment Status**



Source: 2005 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

Following the trend from the past few years, access to Medicaid/Medicare continued to improve for both the sheltered and unsheltered population in 2017. Also, LINK/Food Stamp usage has notably increased for both sheltered (up 7%) and unsheltered (up 8%) populations. (See Figure 37 & 38) Note that figures represent the percentage of all homeless adults reporting access to services regardless of eligibility. For example, no unsheltered persons reported use of WIC, however, almost all unsheltered persons were not living in families with children and were thus ineligible.

**Fig. 37: Share of Sheltered Population with Access to Government Services/Benefits**

Sheltered	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Benefit	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Food Stamps	60%	69%	67%	74%	72%	73%	66%	73%
Medicaid or Medicare	24%	22%	25%	19%	23%	43%	48%	53%
SSI	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	12%	11%	14%
SSDI	5%	2%	na	9%	8%	8%	4%	5%
Unemployment	3%	5%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%

Source: 2009 - 2017 PIT Counts

**Fig. 38: Share of Unsheltered Population with Access to Government Services/Benefits**

Unsheltered	2009	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Benefit	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
LINK/Food Stamps	18%	33%	na	41%	33%	41%	28%	36%
Medicaid or Medicare	3%	5%	na	3%	3%	11%	17%	19%
SSI	11%	9%	na	9%	10%	13%	13%	11%
SSDI	5%	2%	na	9%	8%	8%	4%	5%
Unemployment	2%	7%	na	0.0%	2%	2%	1%	2%

Source: 2009 - 2017 PIT Counts

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

## LOCATION OF HOMELESSNESS

### Location of Unsheltered Homeless

When asked where they were going to stay that evening, the greatest number (39.7%) of survey respondents intended to stay anywhere outside which is more than double the rate of persons who had that answer last year (15.3%). This high response may be attributed to the unseasonal warmth seen the day of the PIT count. At the same time, 18.8 percent were planning to stay on a CTA train/bus while another 10.9 percent were temporarily staying with friend and family. Respondents that stated they would spend the night in an emergency room (5.7%) or police station (3.1%) would likely wait there for transport to shelter. (See Figure 39)

**Fig. 39: Location Night of Count**

Responses to "Where are you going to stay tonight?"	Percent
Anywhere outside	39.7%
On the CTA	18.8%
Staying temporarily with family or friends but not living there	10.9%
Hospital or Emergency Room	5.7%
Don't know	5.7%
An abandoned building, vacant unit, or garage	4.4%
24-hour restaurant/laundromat or other establishment	3.5%
Police Station/ Jail	3.1%
A car or other vehicle	1.7%
Hotel or motel	1.3%
Airport	0.9%
Refused to Answer	0.9%
Church/Charitable Organization	0.4%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

### Location Before Experiencing Homelessness

In the 2017 PIT survey, respondents were asked where they were residing before they most recently became homeless. Just like last year, more than half (53%) of sheltered persons reported staying with family or friends either temporarily or permanently. Close to one third of the sheltered and unsheltered populations owned or leased a place before becoming homeless. While 13.6 percent of the unsheltered population was in jail or prison, only 3.9 percent of the sheltered population was prior to becoming homeless. (See Figure 40)

**Fig. 40: Location Before Homelessness**

Location Before Current Homelessness		
2017 Response	Sheltered	Unsheltered
With family/friends temporarily	35.4%	27.3%
Place you owned or leased	28.7%	33.3%
With family/friends permanently	18.1%	15.2%
Place you owned or leased with subsidy	4.3%	1.0%
Jail or prison (incl. juvenile detention facility)	3.9%	13.6%
Substance use treatment facility	2.4%	0.0%
Hotel/motel	1.9%	0.5%
Hospital or medical facility	1.5%	1.5%
Outside/place not meant for habitation	1.1%	1.5%
Foster home or group home	0.2%	1.5%
Nursing Home	0.2%	1.0%
Other	0.0%	1.0%
Abandoned Building	0.0%	1.0%

Source:2017 PIT Count/Survey

## CONCLUSION

Last year Chicago identified the lowest total number of homeless persons in over ten years. In 2017 that figure decreased by another 4%. A significant portion of the decline was in shelters. The number of the homeless on the street has increased. The increase is concentrated in a few community areas and on transit lines.

2017 marked the third year that the rate of sheltered families decreased. Compared to 2016, families in shelters decreased by 10 percent and youth-headed families by 22 percent from 2016. Another significant

decrease in the shelter population was among veterans which decreased by 27 percent. The number of single households in shelter also decreased; however, the number on the street increased. Households in shelter also decreased; however, the number on the street increased.

Since 2016, Chicago has seen a rise of street homelessness in specific areas. Similar to findings in 2016, this year's results show that locations where unsheltered homeless persons are found continue to shift over time. This year, communities in the downtown area and along the lakefront have more visible encampments and identified hot-spots than 2016. See Appendix B for unsheltered data by community area and ward.

Based on the survey, the proportion of those that said they would sleep outdoors rose to 40 percent from 15 percent in 2016 whereas those saying they would seek shelter decreased by 10 percent. The homeless found on CTA lines also increased from 2016 as did the number of respondents stating that they would be sleeping on the train lines.

Currently, Chicago is in the implementation stages of the Coordinated Entry System (CES) which incorporates a universal standardized assessment for all homeless populations to be entered into HMIS. The system will be expanded to act as the communication tool used by outreach and service providers to connect to housing opportunities. The disjointed and confounding points of entry into permanent housing programs will be eliminated creating a navigational entryway that prioritizes the most vulnerable for effective and appropriate housing. By the end of 2017, all homeless populations, youth, families, etc., will be assessed and housed through this system. The PIT is one measurement that will be used to gauge CES progress over time and its effect on reducing the duration of homelessness.

## **APPENDIX A: SAMPLE WEIGHTING**

The shelter survey data, which is a sample, was extrapolated based on sample weights constructed relative to the shelter/program response rate. Although each shelter was instructed to interview 10 percent of all clients on the night of the PIT count, practical considerations in many instances result in a smaller or larger percentage of all residents being interviewed. To account for this variation, shelter-level weights were constructed in order to ensure that the representation of persons staying in each shelter during the 2017 count, relative to all shelter residents, is correct. This method allows for inclusion of all surveys collected in producing estimated percentages and reduces the impact of over and under sampled sites (i.e. more or less than ten percent).

The following procedure was used to construct these weights:

1. The selection probabilities ( $f$ ) for each shelter were first estimated:  $f = (n / N)$ ; where:  $n$  = total persons interviewed within the shelter; and  $N$  = total tally of persons staying in the shelter the night of the count.
2. Expansion weights ( $w_e$ ) for each shelter were next estimated as the reciprocal of the selection probabilities:  $w_e = (N / n)$ .
3. Relative weights ( $w_r$ ) for each shelter were subsequently constructed as their expansion weight divided by the mean of all expansion weights:  $w_r = [(w_e / (\sum w_e / n))]$ .
4. Those persons interviewed outside of shelter settings were assigned a value of 1.0 for their relative weight, as were those persons interviewed in a small number of shelters for which a complete tally was not available.

Note that this weighting process was not applied to HMIS data for shelters that provided accurate HMIS data. HMIS data contains information collected during client intake about each client and thus represents a full census of the population characteristics for that shelter, not just a sample. If collected and reported correctly, this data can be more accurate than a sample. Shelters for which HMIS data was not available or usable relied on the survey sampling and weighting method described above

**APPENDIX B : UNSHELTERED HOMELESS COUNT BY COMMUNITY AREA, 2015-2017**

Community Area	2015		2016		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
ALBANY PARK	6	0.7%	9	1.2%	1	0%
ARCHER HEIGHTS	3	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0%
ARMOUR SQUARE	9	1.0%	11	1.4%	15	2%
ASHBURN	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1	0%
AUBURN GRESHAM	26	2.9%	11	1.4%	3	0%
AUSTIN	49	5.5%	23	3.0%	21	2%
AVALON PARK	11	1.2%	1	0.1%	0	0%
AVONDALE	5	0.6%	43	5.6%	25	3%
BELMONT CRAGIN	8	0.9%	3	0.4%	7	1%
BEVERLY	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0%
BRIDGEPORT	3	0.3%	3	0.4%	1	0%
BRIGHTON PARK	3	0.3%	0	0.0%	6	1%
BURNSIDE	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	0	0%
CALUMET HEIGHTS	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
CHATHAM	2	0.2%	12	1.6%	11	1%
CHICAGO LAWN	7	0.8%	8	1.0%	1	0%
CLEARING	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0%
DOUGLAS	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0%
DUNNING	0	0.0%	3	0.4%	1	0%
EAST GARFIELD PARK	26	2.9%	13	1.7%	16	2%
EAST SIDE	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0%
EDGEWATER	3	0.3%	6	0.8%	8	1%
EDISON PARK	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
ENGLEWOOD	6	0.7%	6	0.8%	12	1%
FOREST GLEN	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
FULLER PARK	14	1.6%	18	2.3%	28	3%
GAGE PARK	0	0.0%	3	0.4%	3	0%
GARFIELD RIDGE	1	0.1%	3	0.4%	4	0%
GRAND BOULEVARD	8	0.9%	1	0.1%	5	1%
GREATER GRAND CROSSING	1	0.1%	2	0.3%	2	0%
HEGEWISCH	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
HERMOSA	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	0	0%
HUMBOLDT PARK	7	0.8%	3	0.4%	6	1%
HYDE PARK	18	2.0%	10	1.3%	4	0%
IRVING PARK	6	0.7%	6	0.8%	10	1%
JEFFERSON PARK	4	0.5%	2	0.3%	4	0%
KENWOOD	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
LAKE VIEW	34	3.8%	20	2.6%	24	3%
LINCOLN PARK	6	0.7%	18	2.3%	22	2%
LINCOLN SQUARE	7	0.8%	1	0.1%	3	0%
LOGAN SQUARE	16	1.8%	45	5.8%	44	5%
LOOP	131	14.8%	75	9.7%	165	
LOWER WEST SIDE	38	4.3%	53	6.8%	45	5%
MCKINLEY PARK	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0%
MONTCLARE	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%

Community Area	2015		2016		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
MORGAN PARK	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
MOUNT GREENWOOD	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0%
NEAR NORTH SIDE	56	6.3%	65	8.4%	116	
NEAR SOUTH SIDE	0	0.0%	9	1.2%	12	1%
NEAR WEST SIDE	115	13.0%	60	7.8%	68	8%
NEW CITY	6	0.7%	4	0.5%	4	0%
NORTH CENTER	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0%
NORTH LAWNDALE	15	1.7%	20	2.6%	38	4%
NORTH PARK	0	0.0%	5	0.6%	1	0%
NORWOOD PARK	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0%
OAKLAND	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	2	0%
O'HARE	22	2.5%	37	4.8%	24	3%
PORTAGE PARK	3	0.3%	6	0.8%	4	0%
PULLMAN	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
RIVERDALE	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
ROGERS PARK	9	1.0%	2	0.3%	1	0%
ROSELAND	3	0.3%	6	0.8%	2	0%
SOUTH CHICAGO	17	1.9%	0	0.0%	3	0%
SOUTH DEERING	4	0.5%	1	0.1%	0	0%
SOUTH LAWNDALE	4	0.5%	5	0.6%	8	1%
SOUTH SHORE	15	1.7%	14	1.8%	5	1%
UPTOWN	41	4.6%	73	9.4%	31	3%
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS	5	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0%
WASHINGTON PARK	11	1.2%	0	0.0%	4	0%
WEST ELSDON	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	3	0%
WEST ENGLEWOOD	16	1.8%	4	0.5%	7	1%
WEST GARFIELD PARK	26	2.9%	12	1.6%	6	1%
WEST LAWN	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0%
WEST PULLMAN	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0%
WEST RIDGE	1	0.1%	4	0.5%	3	0%
WEST TOWN	44	5.0%	27	3.5%	33	4%
WOODLAWN	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	13	1%

**APPENDIX C: HOMELESS COUNT BY WARD, 2015-2017**

Ward	2015		2016		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	31	3.5%	1	0.1%	12	1%
2	17	1.9%	25	3.2%	79	9%
3	25	2.8%	24	3.1%	49	5%
4	16	1.8%	9	1.2%	17	2%
5	20	2.3%	8	1.0%	6	1%
6	0	0.0%	11	1.4%	12	1%
7	21	2.4%	1	0.1%	1	0%
8	16	1.8%	16	2.1%	1	0%
9	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	0	0%
10	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	2	0%
11	22	2.5%	22	2.8%	28	3%
12	3	0.3%	3	0.4%	6	1%
13	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0%
14	5	0.6%	1	0.1%	1	0%
15	1	0.1%	2	0.3%	5	1%
16	20	2.3%	8	1.0%	7	1%
17	24	2.7%	18	2.3%	8	1%
18	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0%
19	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	3	0%
20	11	1.2%	8	1.0%	16	2%
21	12	1.4%	4	0.5%	8	1%
22	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	7	1%
23	0	0.0%	3	0.4%	12	1%
24	26	2.9%	29	3.7%	42	5%
25	49	5.5%	52	6.7%	43	5%

Ward	2015		2016		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
26	9	1.0%	9	1.2%	7	1%
27	84	9.5%	39	5.0%	52	6%
28	53	6.0%	39	5.0%	43	5%
29	16	1.8%	18	2.3%	12	1%
30	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	4	0%
31	4	0.5%	3	0.4%	9	1%
32	19	2.1%	69	8.9%	44	5%
33	8	0.9%	13	1.7%	10	1%
34	4	0.5%	2	0.3%	4	0%
35	8	0.9%	46	5.9%	16	2%
36	4	0.5%	1	0.1%	0	0%
37	28	3.2%	1	0.1%	2	0%
38	0	0.0%	5	0.6%	1	0%
39	5	0.6%	7	0.9%	0	0%
40	6	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	0%
41	23	2.6%	38	4.9%	25	3%
42	185	20.9%	120	15.5%	218	24%
43	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0%
44	32	3.6%	18	2.3%	22	2%
45	4	0.5%	7	0.9%	13	1%
46	37	4.2%	53	6.8%	22	2%
47	7	0.8%	3	0.4%	4	0%
48	3	0.3%	27	3.5%	16	2%
49	9	1.0%	2	0.3%	1	0%
50	1	0.1%	4	0.5%	4	0%



