
HOUSING NEEDS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN FLORIDA

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I. Introduction and Summary of Findings

This section of the Rental Market Study estimates the number of homeless families and individuals in Florida, including people in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and unsheltered locations. The report then estimates the supply of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing units.

Statewide, the report finds the following:

- There are 34,432 homeless single adults, unaccompanied youth, and married adults without children in Florida. The state has 14,470 transitional housing and permanent supportive housing beds for this population.
- There are 7,751 homeless families with children. The state has 3,242 transitional and permanent supportive housing units for family households.

Following a discussion of methodology, this report breaks down the homeless population and housing supply by Continuum of Care regions, which consist of single counties or multiple contiguous counties.

II. Methodology

The numbers of homeless households and transitional and permanent supportive housing units come from the Continuum of Care plans developed by Florida's local homeless coalitions as part of applications to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for McKinney Act homeless assistance funds. Each coalition represents a county or a group of counties in Florida.¹ Sixty-three of Florida's 67 counties are represented by homeless coalitions; Baker, Union, Gilchrist, and Dixie Counties were unrepresented in the 2009 Continuum of Care plans. The Office on Homelessness of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) supplied the Shimberg Center with the 2009 Continuum of Care plans.

In 2009, the State of Florida adopted a new definition of homelessness that is more expansive than the federal definition used in the Continuum of Care plans. The federal definition includes persons living in shelters, transitional housing, temporary institutional settings, or in public or private places not designed for regular sleeping accommodations. The state definition includes these persons but also those who are doubled up with others due to economic hardship; those living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds; and those leaving settings such as prison, mental health facilities, or foster care settings who do not have subsequent housing. Beginning in 2010, local homeless coalitions are reporting data to the Florida State Office on Homelessness using the new definition.

However, this Rental Market Study uses the federal definition, because separate counts of homeless individuals and homeless families are necessary to calculate housing need. In this first year with the new state definition, the State Office on Homelessness and local coalitions concluded that it was not feasible to provide separate counts of individuals and families. The Continuum of Care plans do provide household counts of families and individuals meeting the federal homeless definition. We expect that for the 2013 Rental Market Study, the full counts of family households and individual households using the state definition will be available.

Need

The Continuum of Care plans divide homeless persons into two groups: 1) families with dependent children, referred to as "family households" in this report, and 2) households without dependent children, including single individuals, unaccompanied youth, and other adults such as a married couple without children. The latter group is generally referred to as "individuals" in this report.

Some previous rental market studies measured the demand for homeless housing in terms of the number of homeless persons from each group. Presently, the Continuum of Care plans allow us to count the number of *households* consisting of families with children, as well as the number of housing units designed for this population. Therefore, we can estimate the need for housing units for homeless families, a number more relevant for allocation of affordable housing resources, rather than just beds within those units.

¹ Polk County is represented by two separate Continuum of Care plans. One, identified as #503, represents Lakeland. The other, #516, represents the rest of Polk County. The Polk County data used in this report represent the summation of the two plans.

For homeless individuals, the Continuum of Care plans provide data on the number of beds in transitional and permanent housing facilities, but the plans do not provide the number of units. Therefore, in this report we use the number of persons rather than households for this particular group, allowing us to compare need to supply. There is an 11% difference in the count of persons versus the number of households for this population.² The majority of homeless persons in this category are single adults rather than members of multi-person households.³

The estimates of the numbers of homeless individuals and families with children come from the plans' counts of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons and households in each coalition's service area. HUD establishes strict guidelines both for the definition of homelessness and for the methods for counting homeless persons:

- *Definition:* In addition to unsheltered populations who are living in places not meant for human habitation, the sheltered homeless population includes only those in homeless and domestic violence shelters and transitional housing. (See footnote for full definitions and populations excluded from this definition.)⁴

² The Continuum of Care plans list both the number of homeless individuals and the number of households they constitute. In most regions, because most of these "households" comprise one single individual, the count of households is only slightly lower than the count of individuals. In fact, seven of the 29 Continuum of Care plans for the state list the same totals for individuals and households. The statewide total of individuals is 34,432, while the statewide total of households is 31,142, an 11% difference.

³ The Jacksonville Coalition reported 1,902 individuals without dependent children and 0 households in this same category. According to a phone conversation with Dawn Gilman on May 6, 2010, this reporting may be the result of a misunderstanding of definitions. To rectify the problem, this study assumes that each individual in Clay-Duval-Nassau comprises its own household, resulting in 1,902 homeless households without dependent children.

⁴ HUD's specific instructions for counting sheltered homeless persons are as follows:

HUD defines sheltered homeless persons as adults, children, and unaccompanied youth who, on the night of the count, are living in shelters for the homeless, including:

- *Emergency shelters;*
- *Transitional housing;*
- *Domestic violence shelters;*
- *Residential programs for runaway/homeless youth; and*
- *Any hotel, motel, or apartment voucher arrangements paid by a public or private agency because the person or family is homeless.*

[According to HUD's definition of homelessness] the following types of people should not be counted as part of the sheltered population:

- *Persons living doubled up in conventional housing;*
- *Formerly homeless persons living in Section 8 SRO, Shelter Plus Care, SHP permanent housing or other permanent housing units;*
- *Children or youth, who because of their own or a parent's homelessness or abandonment now reside temporarily or for a short anticipated duration in hospitals, residential treatment facilities, emergency foster care, or detention facilities;*
- *Adults in mental health facilities, chemical dependency facilities, or criminal justice facilities.*

HUD's instructions for counting unsheltered homeless persons are as follows:

- *Counting method:* These populations must be counted through a one-day census of homeless persons in each Continuum of Care region to be conducted at least every two years during the last week of January. HUD does not allow the use of multipliers or other estimating methods to produce a population number.

Supply

To estimate the amount of transitional and permanent supportive housing available, we used the counts from the 2009 Continuum of Care plans. Again, note that the report counts *units* for families with children and *beds* for persons in other households. The average family housing unit houses 3-4 family members. An individual bed, whether in its own housing unit or in a shared facility, by definition houses one person.

The report does not include emergency shelter beds as part of the housing supply. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation does not consider shelter beds to constitute anything but temporary housing, and persons residing in emergency shelters are counted in the homeless population.

An unsheltered homeless person resides in a place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the street.

From U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs, *A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People Second Revision*, January 15, 2008, p.5.

III. Need and Supply

Need

Statewide, 34,432 single adults, unaccompanied youth, and married adults without children are homeless in Florida. This represents a slight (4%) increase over the total of 33,088 homeless individuals found in the 2007 Rental Market Study. The counties or multi-county regions with more than 1,000 individuals from this population are Orange-Osceola-Seminole, Broward, Hillsborough, Clay-Duval-Nassau, Miami-Dade, Okaloosa-Walton, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, St. Johns, Manatee-Sarasota, Indian River-Martin-St. Lucie, and Flagler-Volusia.

Among families with children, 7,751 households are homeless. The percentage increase over the 2007 Rental Market Study is far greater for families; this is a 20% increase over the 2007 total of 6,466 homeless families. The counties or multi-county regions with more than 200 homeless families are Broward, Orange-Osceola-Seminole, DeSoto-Glades-Hendry-Hardee-Highlands-Okeechobee, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Okaloosa-Walton, Pasco, Pinellas, Manatee-Sarasota, and Indian River-Martin-St. Lucie.

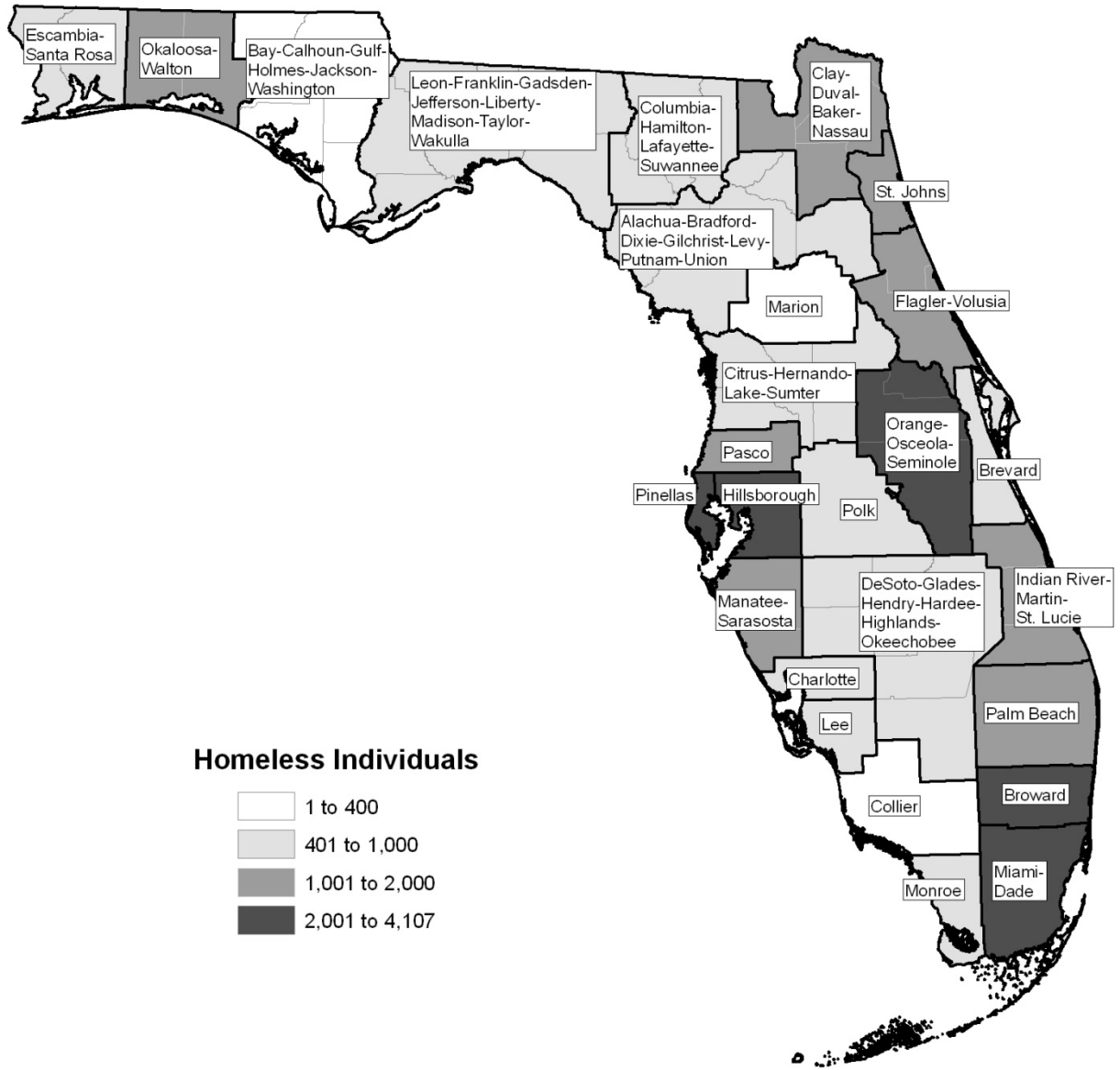
Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2 on the following pages show the number of homeless individuals and families by county or multi-county region.

Table 1. Homeless Individuals and Families by Region, 2009

Coalition	Coalition Counties	Individuals	Families with Children
Big Bend	Leon-Franklin-Gadsden-Jefferson-Liberty-Madison-Taylor-Wakulla	475	48
Brevard	Brevard	881	109
Broward	Broward	2,575	206
Central Florida	Orange-Osceola-Seminole	2,246	574
Charlotte	Charlotte	437	54
Collier	Collier	233	30
EscaRosa	Escambia-Santa Rosa	685	148
Heartland	De Soto-Glades-Hendry-Hardee-Highlands-Okeechobee	812	1,619
Hillsborough	Hillsborough	4,107	1,201
Jacksonville	Clay-Duval-Nassau	1,902	150
Lee	Lee	824	38
Marion	Marion	318	47
Miami-Dade	Miami-Dade	3,023	338
Mid-Florida	Citrus-Hernando-Lake-Sumter	571	132
N. Central	Alachua-Bradford-Levy-Putnam	750	63
Northwest	Bay-Calhoun-Gulf-Holmes-Jackson-Washington	225	20
Okaloosa/Walton	Okaloosa-Walton	1,515	368
Palm Beach	Palm Beach	1,682	138
Pasco	Pasco	1,312	1,286
Pinellas	Pinellas	2,843	226
Polk	Polk	606	35
Southernmost	Monroe	838	81
St. Johns	St. Johns	1,099	50
Suncoast	Manatee-Sarasota	1,201	231
Suwannee	Columbia-Hamilton-Lafayette-Suwannee	724	159
Treasure Coast	Indian River-Martin-St. Lucie	1,041	305
Volusia/Flagler	Flagler-Volusia	1,507	95
Total		34,432	7,751

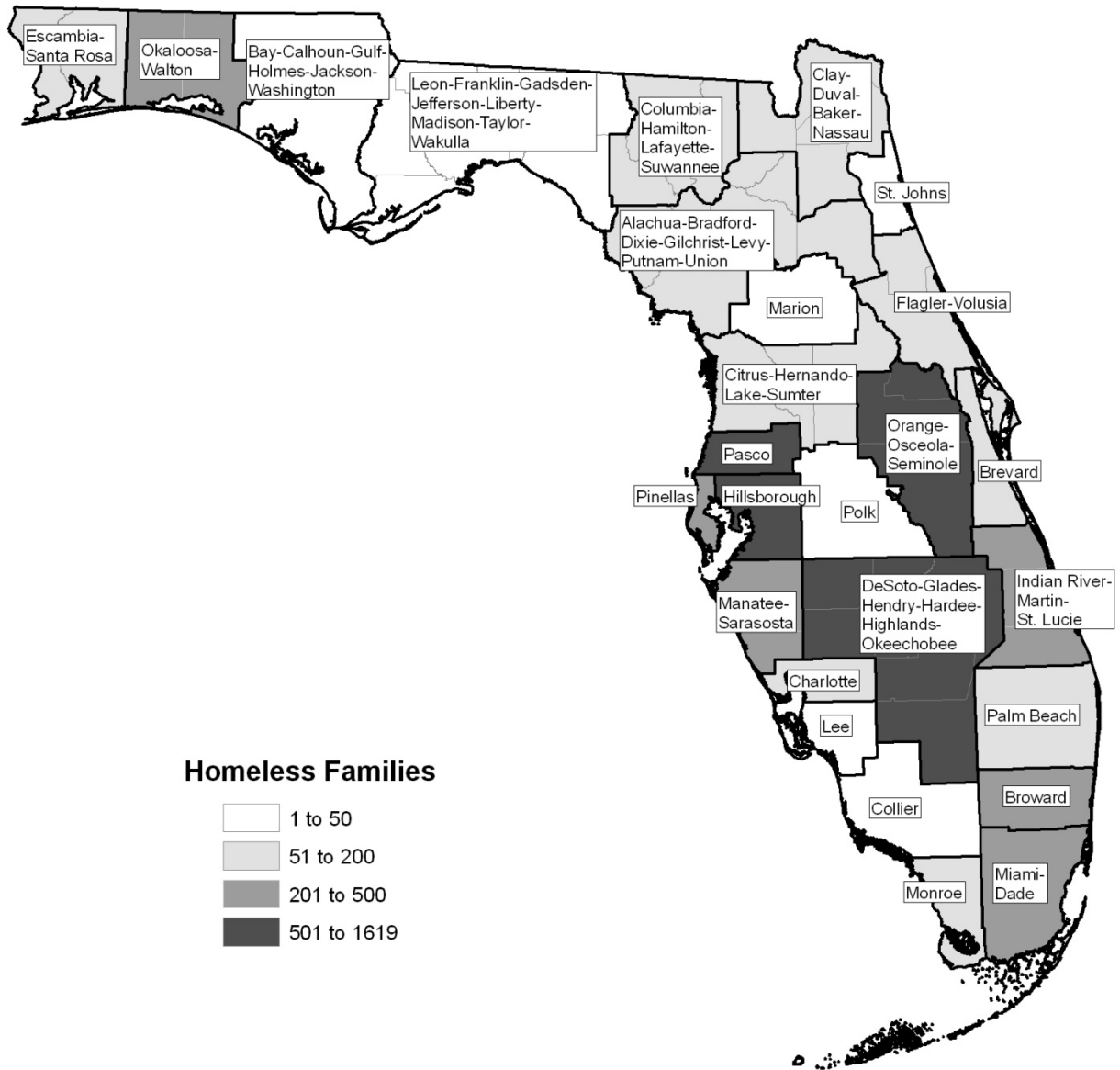
Source: Local Homeless Coalitions, *HUD Continuum of Care Plan: Exhibit 1*, 2009.

Figure 1. Homeless Individuals by Region, 2009



Source: Local Homeless Coalitions, *HUD Continuum of Care Plan: Exhibit 1*, 2009.

Figure 2. Homeless Families by Region, 2009



Source: Local Homeless Coalitions, *HUD Continuum of Care Plan: Exhibit 1*, 2009.

Supply

The state has 14,470 transitional housing and permanent supportive housing beds for single adults, unaccompanied youth, and married adults without children. For families with children, there are 3,242 transitional and permanent supportive housing units statewide. The number of beds for homeless individuals increased by 5% between the 2007 and 2010, while the number of units for homeless families increased by 17%.

Table 2 on the following page lists the supply of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing for individuals and families in each county or multi-county region. The table lists the number of beds for individuals and the number of housing units for family households. While the table includes all individual beds and family units together, note that some of these units are reserved for specific populations: homeless veterans, people with HIV/AIDS, and so forth. Therefore, not all units can serve all people and households counted in the demand tables in the previous section.

The table also calculates each region's "level of effort" in providing permanent supportive housing compared to the homeless population. The level of effort equals the number of permanent supportive housing units divided by the number of individuals or families who are currently homeless. A level of effort ratio below 1.0 indicates that there are more individuals or families currently homeless than there are permanent supportive housing beds or units. A ratio of 1.0 indicates a region that has an equal number of homeless individuals or families and of beds or units. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the region has more permanent supportive housing beds or units than individuals or families who are currently homeless. Note, however, that the permanent housing supply is likely to be largely occupied and therefore unavailable to currently homeless individuals and families. Therefore, a ratio greater than 1.0 does not imply that there is not a need for additional housing for homeless persons.

Statewide, the level of effort ratio is 0.18 for housing for individuals and 0.21 for housing for families.

Table 2. Transitional and Permanent Housing Supply by Region, 2007

Coalition	Counties	Individuals			Families		
		Transitional Housing Beds	Permanent Supportive Housing Beds	Permanent Supportive Housing Level of Effort	Transitional Housing Units	Permanent Supportive Housing Units	Permanent Supportive Housing Level of Effort
Big Bend	Leon-Franklin-Gadsden-Jefferson-Liberty-Madison-Taylor-Wakulla	270	139	0.29	51	118	2.46
Brevard	Brevard	205	45	0.05	82	31	0.28
Broward	Broward	1,073	545	0.21	171	424	2.06
Central Florida	Orange-Osceola-Seminole	675	615	0.27	209	22	0.04
Charlotte	Charlotte	64	40	0.09	27	13	0.24
Collier	Collier	46	34	0.15	10	2	0.07
EscaRosa	Escambia-Santa Rosa	268	166	0.24	35	-	-
Heartland	De Soto-Glades-Hendry-Hardee-Highlands-Okeechobee	64	86	0.11	26	18	0.01
Hillsborough	Hillsborough	378	241	0.06	111	109	0.09
Jacksonville	Clay-Duval-Nassau	1,119	804	0.42	137	44	0.29
Lee	Lee	260	134	0.16	12	5	0.13
Marion	Marion	265	32	0.10	17	6	0.13
Miami-Dade	Miami-Dade	1,164	1,567	0.52	237	615	1.82
Mid-Florida	Citrus-Hernando-Lake-Sumter	162	57	0.10	13	8	0.06
N. Central	Alachua-Bradford-Levy-Putnam	246	256	0.34	30	5	0.08
Northwest	Bay-Calhoun-Gulf-Holmes-Jackson-Washington	101	0	0.00	23	-	-
Okaloosa/Walton	Okaloosa-Walton	46	71	0.05	36	-	-
Palm Beach	Palm Beach	220	191	0.11	25	76	0.55
Pasco	Pasco	58	15	0.01	-	47	0.04
Pinellas	Pinellas	705	314	0.11	91	18	0.08
Polk	Polk	161	38	0.06	58	44	1.26
Southernmost	Monroe	136	135	0.16	14	10	0.12
St. Johns	St. Johns	6	73	0.07	56	-	-
Suncoast	Manatee-Sarasota	271	400	0.33	39	-	-
Suwannee	Columbia-Hamilton-Lafayette-Suwannee	51	11	0.02	-	-	-
Treasure Coast	Indian River-Martin-St. Lucie	36	130	0.12	29	4	0.01
Volusia/Flagler	Flagler-Volusia	168	113	0.07	73	11	0.12
Total		8,218	6,252	0.18	1,612	1,630	0.21

Source: Local Homeless Coalitions, *HUD Continuum of Care Plan: Exhibit 1*, 2009.

IV. Data Limitations

By nature, estimates of the number of homeless persons contain uncertainty. Because all population estimates are now done using the one-day point-in-time survey, they are likely more consistent across the various homeless coalitions than in the years when coalitions chose their own methods of estimating population. However, the one-day counts are difficult to perform accurately, particularly as coalitions attempt to identify unsheltered populations. Factors such as the weather on the day of the count and the coalitions' familiarity with the locations most likely occupied by unsheltered persons affect the accuracy of the count. Moreover, as noted above, this Rental Market Study does not reflect the new expanded definition of homelessness adopted by the state in 2009. As local coalitions and the State Office on Homelessness begin to collect full data for the state definition in subsequent years, we expect that future Rental Market Studies will reflect the expanded definition.

Because they are based on counts of actual beds provided by local agencies, the supply estimates in the Continuum of Care plans should be more reliable. It is likely that Table 2 above includes most if not all of the state's supply of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. Nevertheless, the supply data have both obvious and more subtle limitations. One clear omission in the supply data is the availability of housing for homeless persons other than the transitional and permanent supportive housing beds reserved specifically for them, such as the state's general supply of public and assisted housing.

In other ways, the supply numbers likely mask the true housing needs of Florida's homeless population. First, homelessness is a fluid characteristic. Estimates reported in this section of the assessment reflect the magnitude of the homeless population only at a single point in time. However, individuals and families move in and out of homelessness at varying rates. Some are homeless only for a brief period due to a short-term crisis or transition, while others are cyclically or chronically homeless. Consequently, a greater number of persons are homeless during the course of a month or year than at any given instant, and more housing may be needed throughout the year to accommodate them.

Second, as noted earlier, the various types of beds for homeless persons are not interchangeable. Housing facilities serving homeless persons often are directed toward a specific population, and these facilities and their services may not be appropriate for other populations. For example, a supportive housing facility for single adults with HIV/AIDS is not interchangeable with a facility for persons with mental illness, but both would be counted in the general supply of housing for single adults. Therefore, the aggregate supply numbers mask the need for a number of types of facilities matching the different types of services needed by homeless individuals and families.



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