

Homelessness in the DMV

The government’s official definition of homelessness is “people who reside in emergency shelter, transitional housing, domestic violence shelters, runaway youth shelters, safe havens, or places not meant for human habitation such as streets, parks, alleys, abandoned buildings, and stairways”.

Some statistics:

- 9,784 people in the metropolitan Washington region experience homelessness according to the 2019 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness, one of the most reliable sources of data (good news—this is 686 people fewer than in 2018)
- The region has shown modest but steady declines in the number of people experiencing homelessness since 2015
- 1,242 families in our region are experiencing homelessness
- Homelessness in DC is 2x the national average

The point-in-time count does not include people who “double up” with relatives or friends. While not yet considered homeless, many households are believed to be doubled up and/or living in overcrowded situations. Homelessness is often the next step for such households while family/friends who have been sheltering them can no longer do so.

Let’s talk about it:

- What are some causes of homelessness in our region that you can name? (see answers below)
- How is the current public health emergency affecting individuals experiencing homelessness?
- What would be one thing you would want to see changed in order to decrease the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in our city?

Major causes of homelessness:

- Severe lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable healthcare
- Untreated mental health conditions
- Substance use
- Huge gap between wages and the cost of living in DC
- Domestic violence

Children and homelessness:

Children face particularly adverse effects from experiencing homelessness. They are often uprooted from their schools, friends, and relatives; bullied from the stigma surrounding homelessness; and experience poor health outcomes, more violence, and severe emotional distress. Homeless children are twice as likely as their peers to experience hunger and have a learning disability, repeat a grade, or be suspended from school.

Take action:

- Volunteer at So Others Might Eat (SOME) or Food and Friends to pack meals (see the special precautions they have taken to keep volunteers safe)
- Donate to an organization serving individuals experiencing homelessness right now
- Create toiletry kits at home and donate them now or later (see our guide)

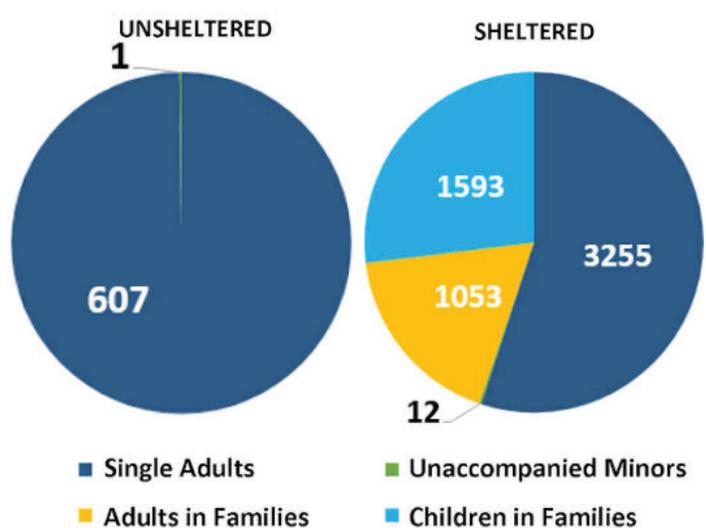
Want more? Visit our partners fighting homelessness:

- [Miriam’s Kitchen](#)
- [Community of Hope](#)
- [So Others Might Eat](#)

Population Totals and Percent Changes, 2018-2019

Household Type	2019	2018	% Change
Total Persons	6,521	6,904	-5.5%
Singles	3,875	3,770	+2.8%
Single Adults	3,862	3,761	+2.7%
Unaccompanied Minors	13	9	+44.4%
Families	815	924	-11.8%
Family Members	2,646	3,134	-15.6%
Adults in Families	1,053	1,210	-13.0%
Children in Families	1,593	1,924	-17.2%

Sheltered and Unsheltered Populations, by Household Type



For more information and ways to get involved, visit

edcjcc.org/volunteer

