

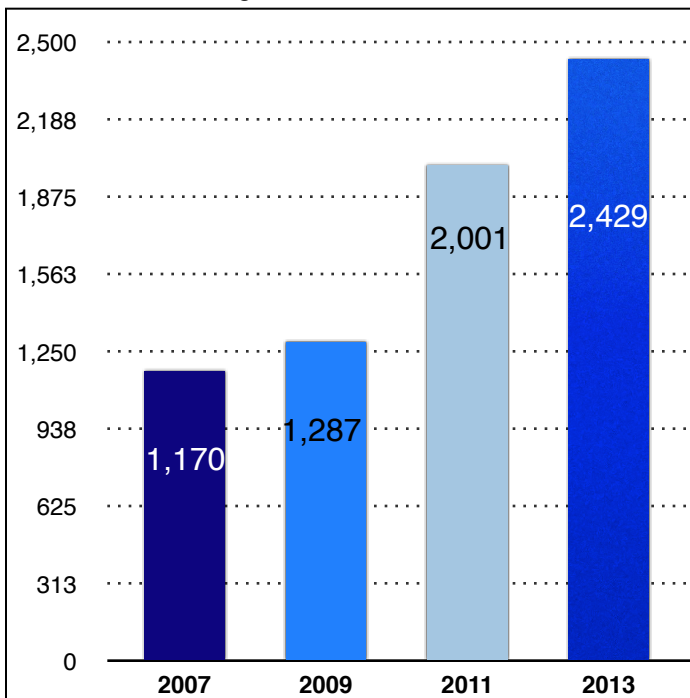
Community Fact Sheet

Counting NWA's Homeless: Preliminary Results from the 2013 Homeless Census

Kevin M. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D. Professor, Sociology & Jones Chair in Community, Don Willis, and Gail O'Connor. Community and Family Institute, University of Arkansas <http://sociology.uark.edu/3550.php>

Volume 3, Issue No. 6

Figure 1. Total Estimate of Homeless Persons
Benton and Washington Counties



Sources: Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2007); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2009); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2011); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2013)

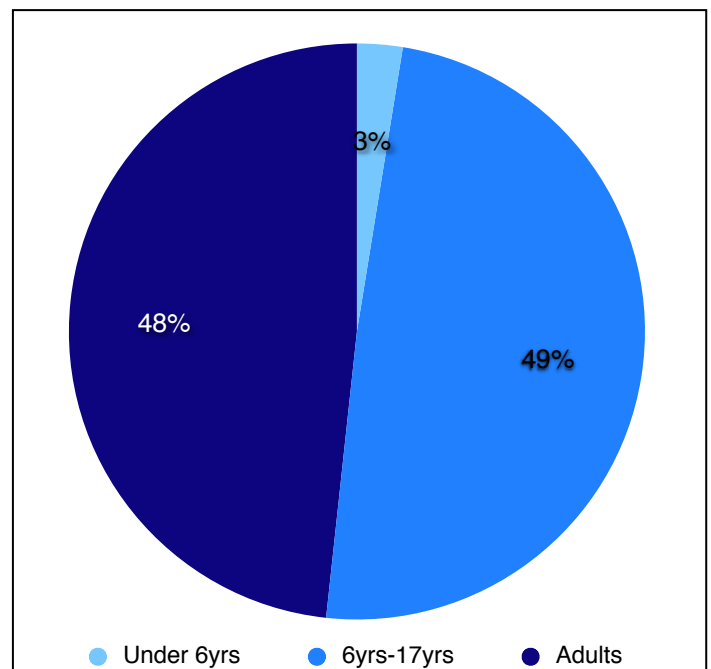
The 2013 point-in-time (PIT) homeless census in Northwest Arkansas is completed and the news, as expected, is not good. As the country slowly recovers from the the most significant economic downturn since the Great Depression, the number of homeless in Northwest Arkansas increased from an estimated 2,001 in 2011 to 2,429 (18% increase) in 2013. The rise is alarming, but not surprising as service

providers throughout the region continue to report record numbers of persons being served.

Youth at Risk

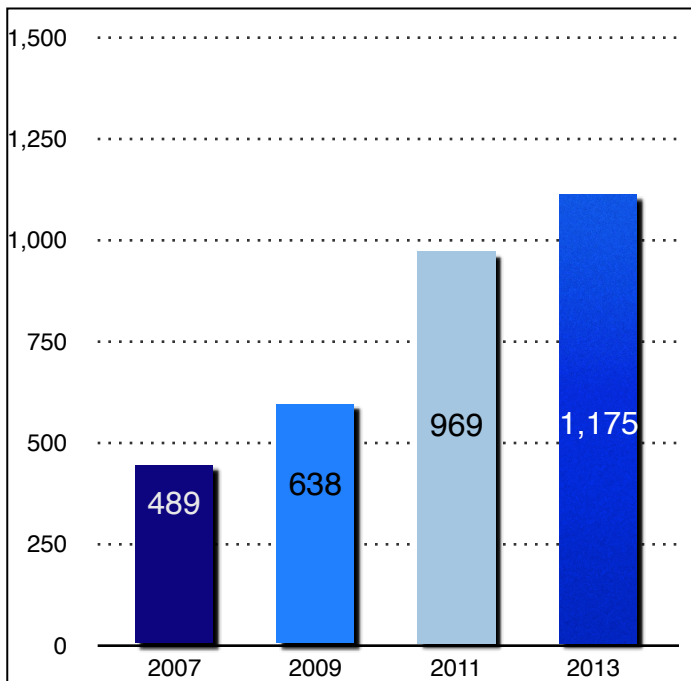
More than one-half of homeless persons in the Northwest Arkansas region are 18 and under. Nearly one-quarter of those with parents who were interviewed in shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens, and day centers were under the age of 18, and over half of those youth were under the age of 6. These youth were identified by their parent or guardian as residing with them in a variety of circumstances including shelters, hotels, homes of friends or relatives, and even the streets (car, RV, camps, etc.).

Figure 2. Age of Homeless Respondents (2013)
Benton and Washington Counties



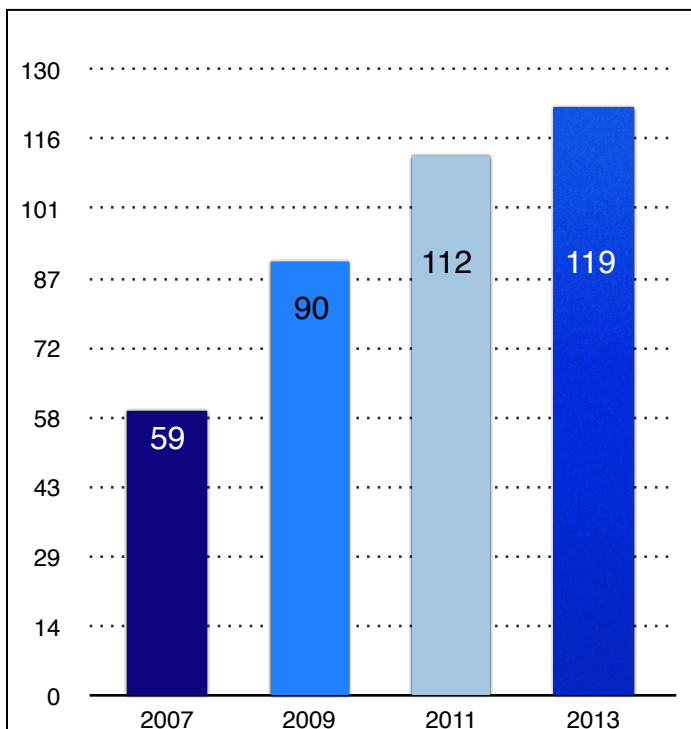
Source: Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2013); Benton and Washington County school district counts (2013)

Figure 3. Total Number of Homeless Youth: K-12
Benton and Washington Counties



Sources: Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2007); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2009); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2011); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2013).

Figure 4. Total Number of Homeless Youth Residing with Interviewed Adults
Benton and Washington Counties



Sources: Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2007); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2009); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2011); Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census (2013)

Clearly, the story behind the 2013 homeless census and the preliminary data presented here is the continuing growth in the number of homeless youth. As seen in Figure 3, homeless youth attending school in the two largest counties in Northwest Arkansas have nearly **tripled** since 2007.

Representing 14 districts, all the schools reported some K-12 homeless students while 5 schools reported more than 100 homeless students. The majority of school-age homeless youth reported doubling up with friends and relatives (76%). The percentage of students doubling up with friends and relatives has remained constant since 2009.

Figure 4 shows the number of youth that were part of a family unit **identified during the interview**. In 2013, over half of the 119 youth identified as living in family units (93) were under the age of 6. This number was similar to that reported in 2011. In 2013, as before, many of these children were not attending day care or a pre-K program and the majority were part of a single-parent family mostly headed by females.

Methodological Note

The total number of homeless persons in Northwest Arkansas is based on three separate counts: a) a 24-hour PIT census of homeless adults and youth (under the age of 18) identified as living with them; b) counts of homeless students provided by Benton and Washington County school districts; and c) an estimate of “invisible” homeless persons derived from interviews conducted in soup kitchens, food pantries and day centers.

Summing these counts produced an estimate of 2,429 homeless persons in Benton and Washington Counties on January 31, 2013. Of this number: (a) 443 adults were interviewed with 62 youth under 6 years of age; (b) 1,175* youth attending local schools along with their 571** estimated parents/guardians; (c) 178 additional “invisible” homeless estimated from soup kitchens, day centers, food pantries, and K-12 students not attending school.

* An estimate of 1,141 homeless K-12 youth represents an adjustment of school district figures, calculated as the total number of homeless youth identified by school districts (n=1,175) minus those youth ages 6 or older already counted during the PIT census (n=57).

** The estimate of 571 parents/guardians is the product of a two-step calculation. First, the total number of homeless students living **without** a parent or guardian is calculated. This value is estimated as 2.9 percent of all homeless students (n=34). The total number of these unaccompanied K-12 students is then subtracted from the total (1,175 - 34 = 1,141). The second step is to calculate the number of parents/guardians for these 1,141 accompanied students. This value is calculated using an estimated ratio of two students per parent, for an estimate of 571.

Details of the census will follow in a report that will be posted on the CFI website.