



**NATIONAL SURVEY
OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES**

Georgia had an estimated 1,722 homeless families on a single night in 2008, with providers serving four times their bed capacity over the course of a year.¹ This brief summarizes the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: The Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council (formed by executive order in February 2004) implements the state's plan to end homelessness.

Governor's Appointee: Department of Human Resources Commissioner BJ Walker and Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Mike Beatty have co-chaired the Georgia Interagency Homeless Coordination Council since 2004.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Georgia	Fulton County ²	Cobb County	Chatham County
Persons in homeless families ³	5,367	1,218	191	166
Number of family shelter beds ⁴	4,199	1,516	335	253
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁵	15	20	7	20
Percent of families in poverty ⁶	16.02%	15.91%	8.89%	17.91%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2002	2003	No plan	2005
10-Year plan target population	Chronic	All	No plan	Chronic
Point-in-time count frequency	Biennially	Biennially	Biennially	Annually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative on Homelessness	Cobb Community Collaborative Policy Council on Homelessness	Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant or main organizing agency	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Fulton County Human Services Department	Cobb Community Collaborative Policy Council on Homelessness	Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless

Policy Changes in Atlanta

Atlanta's overall stock of family beds in emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing has increased by 377 between 2005 and 2008. However, the distribution of family beds has shifted. Emergency shelter beds have decreased by 165, while permanent supportive housing beds have increased by 490.⁷ These trends are indicative of recommendations in Atlanta's plan to address homelessness, the *Blueprint to End Homelessness in Atlanta in 10 Years*.

The majority of permanent supportive housing initiatives have been financed through the Homeless Opportunity Fund, which was established by the Atlanta Development Authority (ADA) in 2005. ADA used an innovative rental car tax to issue a \$22 million revenue bond. As of July 2008, the fund contributed to the

The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental, nonprofit, and voluntary sector work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Georgia and other states visit www.icprwb.org

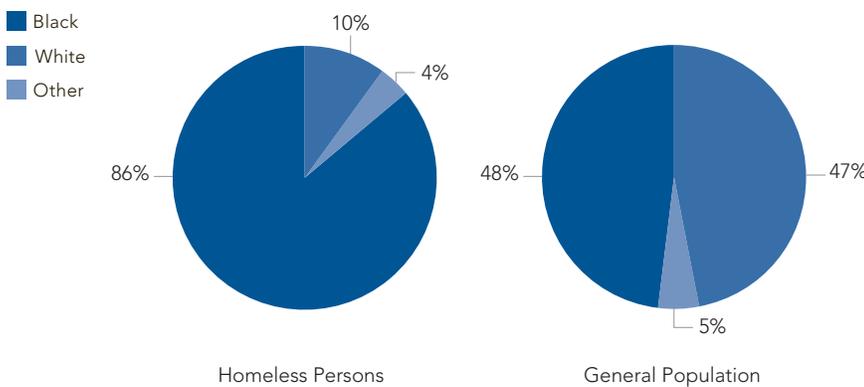


development of 485 permanent supportive housing units, 635 workforce-housing units, and the 24/7 Gateway Center.⁸ The center, a drop-in facility offering comprehensive services to unsheltered individuals and families, is one of the largest non-profit providers of homeless services in the state and has been recognized as a best-practices model by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Racial Composition of Homeless Persons in Atlanta

Blacks are greatly overrepresented among homeless persons compared to the overall population in the Atlanta area. Eighty-six percent of all homeless persons are black, compared to 48% of the general population. In contrast, 10% of homeless persons are white compared to 47% of the general population.⁹ Separate data does not exist for families, highlighting the need for additional information.

Racial Composition of Homeless Persons and the General Population

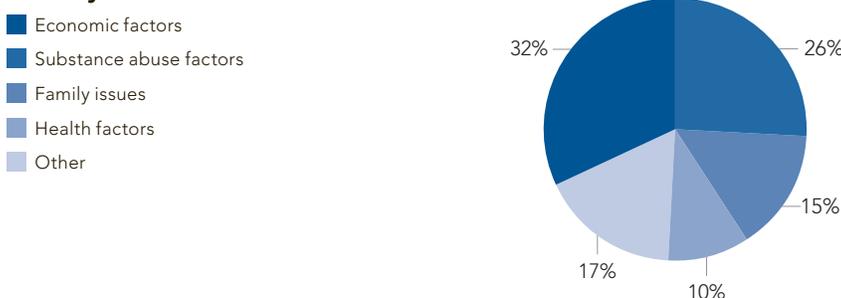


Source: Pathways Community Network, 2007 Tri-Jurisdictional Homeless Survey Frequency Tables; U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race Alone or in Combination, and Hispanic Origin for Counties in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008.

Primary Reasons for Homelessness in Atlanta

Over half of homeless persons in Atlanta cited either economic factors (32%) or substance abuse (26%) as the primary causes for their homelessness. In particular, unemployment, loss of public benefits, and inability to pay rent were ranked highest among economic issues that led to homelessness. Other reasons included family issues (15%) such as arguments, family violence, divorce, and death; health factors (10%) such as medical problems, mental illness, release from hospital, and disability; and other (17%) reasons such as relocation, loss of public housing or Section 8 benefits, natural disasters, and release from prison.¹⁰ Once again, primary reasons for homelessness are not separately available for families.

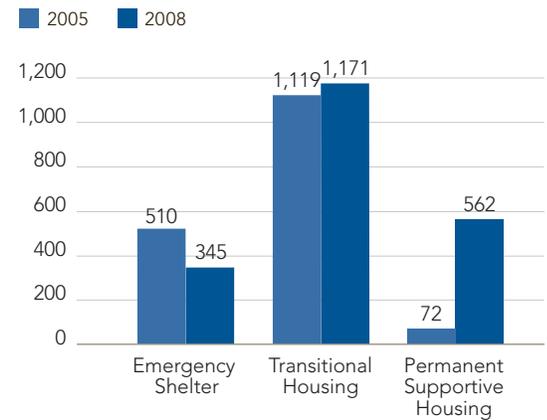
Primary Reasons for Homelessness



Source: Pathways Community Network, 2007 Tri-Jurisdictional Homeless Survey Frequency Tables.

Number of Family Beds

(by shelter type and year)



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2008 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2005 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.

Endnotes

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2008 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2008 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons.
- Statistics for Fulton County include DeKalb County.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2008 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2005–2007 American Community Survey.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2008 Housing Inventory Chart Report; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2005 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, "Innovation Number 4: Atlanta's Homeless Opportunity Bonds: New Resources Invested in 10 Year Plan Solutions," http://www.ich.gov/newsletter/archive/07-24-08_5-5_e-newsletter.htm
- Pathways Community Network, 2007 Tri-Jurisdictional Homeless Survey Frequency Tables; U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race Alone or in Combination, and Hispanic Origin for Counties in Georgia: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008.
- Pathways Community Network, 2007 Homeless Survey.