



# Homeless Services Erie County



# Agenda

- **HAWNY**
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- **What Causes Homelessness?**
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  - Access Points
  - Referral Process
  - Housing Services (RRH, PSH)
- **Outreach**
  - Targeted Housing Services

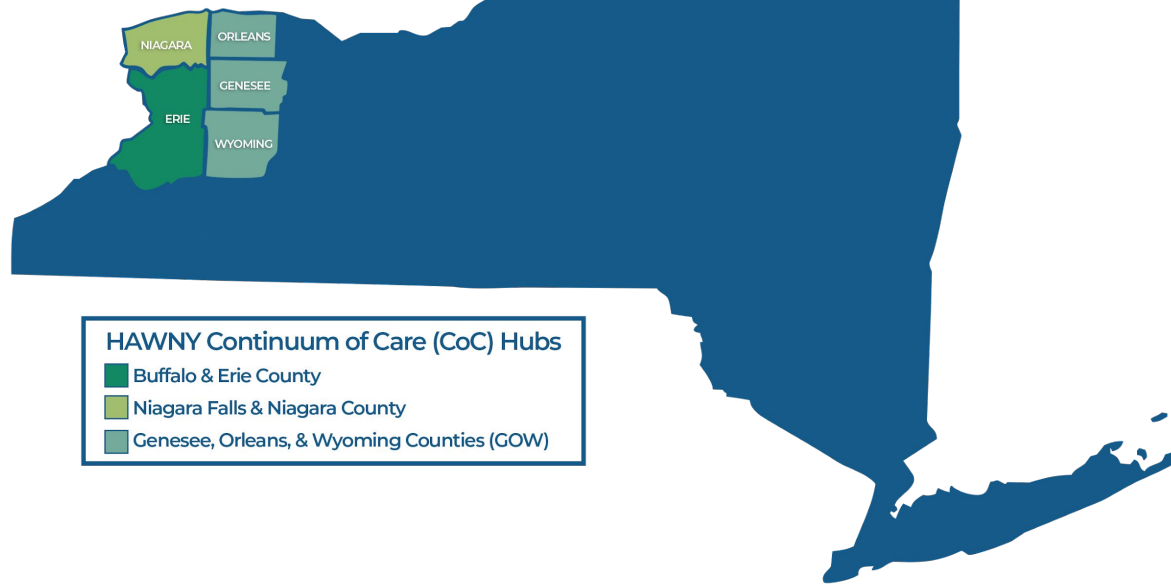
# The Homeless Alliance of WNY

Since 2015, The Homeless Alliance of Western New York (HAWNY) has been the lead agency for:

- The Continuum of Care (CoC)
- The Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) database
- Submit Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Conduct Point In Time (PIT) Count for five counties

HAWNY serves the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, as well as Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming Counties (NY-508).

# Coverage Area



# Continuum of Care (CoC)

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing service funding for homeless individuals and families.

The CoC Program is set up to promote community wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness and improve coordination to mainstream resources and other programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness.



# What is the PIT?

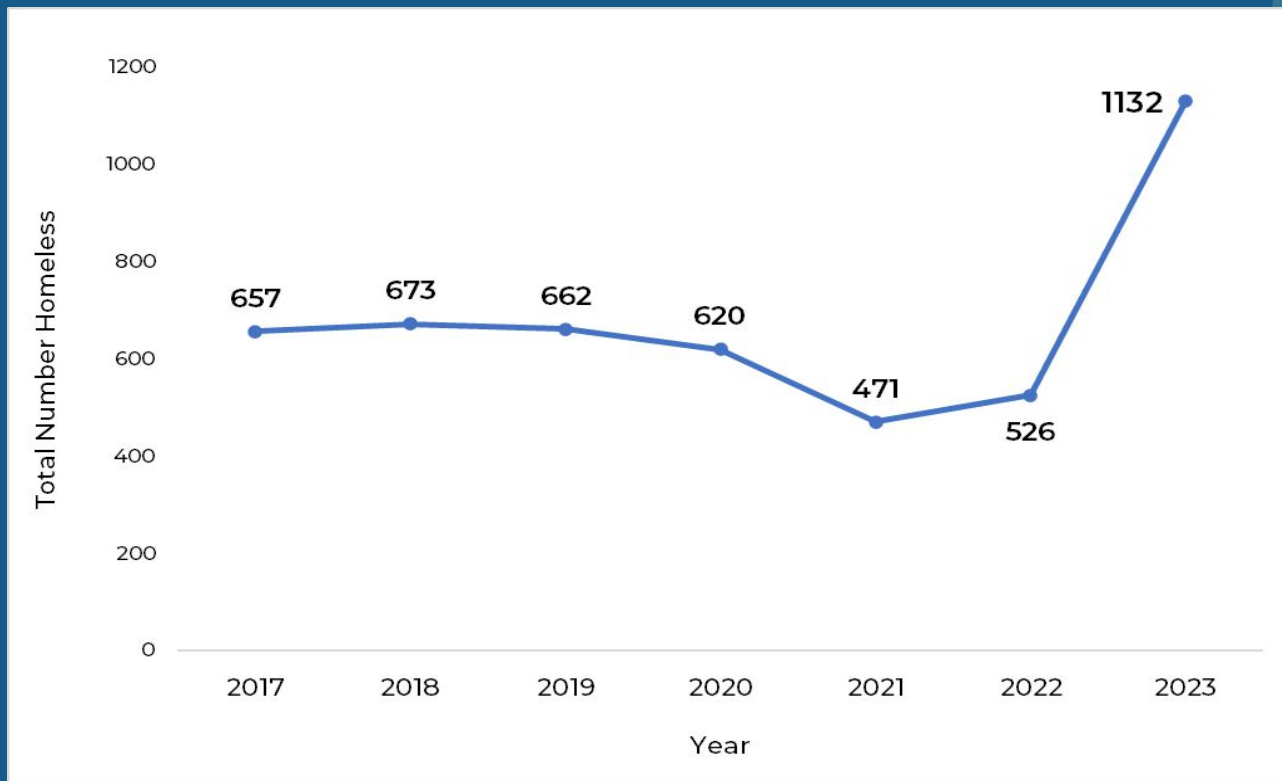
The Point-in-Time (PIT) is a **count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January**. HUD requires that Continuums of Care (CoC) conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Safe Havens, and those also unsheltered on a single night. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

# Unsheltered Locations

## Examples:

- Abandoned Building
- Bus and Train Stations
- Airports
- Parks
- Parking Garages
- Playgrounds
- Public Restrooms
- Alleys
- Streets/Sidewalks
- Tents
- Under Bridges/Overpasses
- Vehicles (car, van, RV, truck)
- Woods/outdoor
- Encampment
- Doorways

# Erie County Annual PIT Counts





# What Causes Homelessness?

- **When Housing is Out of Reach**
  - The rise in rent costs and the lack affordable to low income community members results in fewer options resulting in eviction, instability, and homelessness
- **Lack of Affordable Housing**
  - Low income households often do not earn enough to pay for food, clothing, transportation and a place they can call home.
  - When someone spends 30 percent of their monthly income on rent they are considered Rental Burdened.



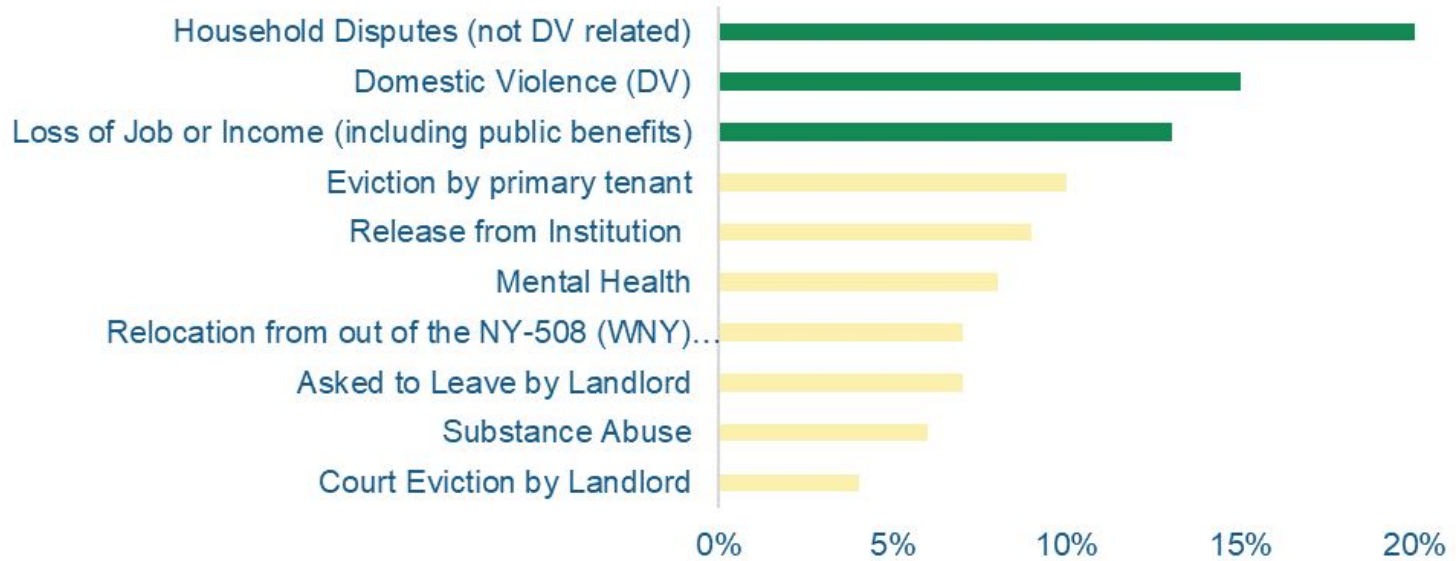
# What Causes Homelessness?

- **Connecting Homelessness & Health**
  - Health problems can cause a person's homelessness as well as exacerbate their situation. Housing is key to addressing the health needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- **Escaping Violence**
  - Many survivors of domestic violence become homeless when leaving an abusive relationship.
- **Impact of Racial Disparities**
  - Most minority groups in the United States experience homelessness at higher rates than Whites, and therefore make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population.



# What Causes Homelessness?

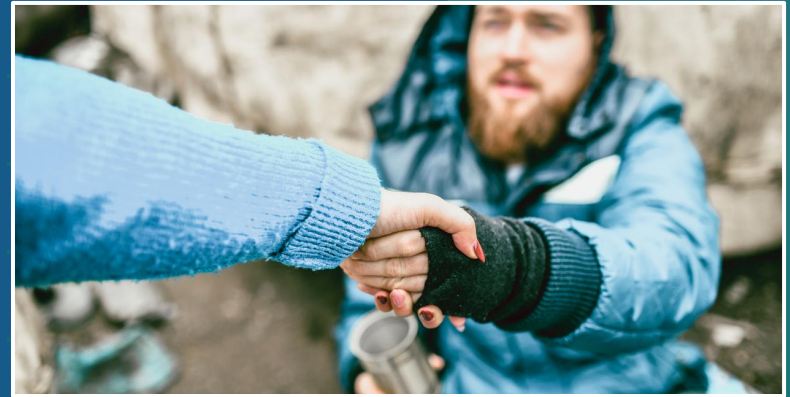
## Primary Reasons for Homelessness in Erie County, 2021



# HUD Definitions

Four categories from the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

1. Literally Homeless
2. Imminent Risk of Homelessness
3. Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes
4. Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence



# Chronically Homeless

- With a disability
- Who lives in a place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, or emergency shelter;

## **History of Homelessness**

- Continuously for at least 12 months OR
- On at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months.

Often considered “not ready for housing” because of unmanaged mental illness, substance use disorders, and/or physical disabilities

# Housing First

- Everyone deserves a safe and permanent place to live.
- Housing is a human right, not a privilege.
- Over 400 CoCs utilize this best practice.
- This approach prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness.
- No preconditions and rental assistance is offered on day one.
- Meet someone's basic needs first (food and a place)
- Providing wrap-around services to offer people choice to pursue finding a job, enrolling in school, or attending mental health and substance use counseling.
- Allowing people personal choice increases their rate of success

# Coordinated Entry (CE)

- CE assesses and connects individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate services available (Adult/Family, DV, Veterans, and Youth).
- CE is designed to be low barrier, equitable, housing first, person-centered, and inclusive.
- Entry points and accessibility are vital to an effective system and to assist the most vulnerable.
- All CoC and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funded programs are required to use HMIS, follow CE policies and procedures, participate in Coordinated Entry.
- CE is a ranking system which takes into account risk factors and the duration of homelessness.



# Access Points: Erie County

## **By Phone:**

- Restoration Society- Coordinated Entry Line: 716-842-4184 ext 131.

## **Hubs:**

- Harbor House Resource Center at 241 Genesee St in the City of Buffalo
- Buffalo Central Library

## **Partner Shelters:**

- Back to Basics (Re-entry Program), Buffalo City Mission (Men's Shelter), Cornerstone Manor, Haven House, Hope House.

## **Community Partners:**

- Friends of the Night People, Matt Urban, NFTA Bus Station



# Referral Process

- After the Vulnerability Index (VI) is completed the households information is then inputted into HMIS
- This information is put into the By-Name List based on the household's Vulnerability Index score and Verification Of Homelessness.
- When an agency has an opening, they alert the Lead CE (RSI or HLS) to provide their program with a written referral for the next person or family eligible to enter their program.

# Rapid Re-housing (RRH)

- Rapid Re-housing is a HUD best-practice model for alleviating homelessness.
- The Core Components of a RRH program are housing identification, move-in and rental assistance, case management services, and linkage to community resources (public assistance, employment, and education services).
- RRH can serve families, individuals, or be used as a bridge for the chronically homeless while they are waiting for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

# Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- Combines low-barrier affordable housing and supportive services using a Housing First approach.
- Designed to assist those with a qualifying disability, experiencing homelessness or are unstably housed, experience multiple barriers to housing, and are unable to maintain housing stability without supportive services.
- PSH has a one-year housing retention rate of up to 98 percent.
- Housed people are less likely to use emergency services, including hospitals, jails, and emergency shelter.

## **Documentation needed:**

- Current homeless status
- History of homelessness
- Proof of disability

# Homeless Outreach

## General Population:

- **Matt Urban Hope Center- 716-893-7222 ext. 305**

## Mental Health / Substance Use:

- **BestSelf Behavioral Health- 716-884-0888**

## Veterans:

- **VA Homeless Outreach- 716-881-5855**

# Domestic Violence Providers

## Erie County

**Haven House**- Emergency Hotline: 716-884-6000

**Crisis Services**- Emergency Hotline: 716-834-3131

\*Human Trafficking Victim Services: **International Institute of Buffalo:**  
716-883-1900 ext. 304

# Veteran Services

*Veterans can enter through mainstream shelters, outreach, and prevention services.*

- **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans**

1325 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14209  
Drop-in Center: M-F 8:30 am-3 pm  
P: 716-862-8885  
F: 716-883-8420

- **Soldier On**

Client intake line: 1-866-406-8449

- **Veteran One-Stop Center of WNY**  
Walk-ins or Schedule appointment  
P: 716-898-0110

Locations:

Buffalo: M-F 8:30 am-4:30 pm  
1280 Main Street, Suite 204  
Buffalo, NY 14209

Lockport: M-Th 8:30 am -4:30 pm  
140 Genesee Street  
Lockport, NY 14094

# Youth Services:

## Erie County

### **BestSelf- 430 Niagara Street, p. 716-566-1870**

- **SafeSpace:** Drop-In center for youth during the hours of 11 pm-7 am. Allows youth to have a safe place to be during the night.
- **Family Engagement Team (FET):** Connects youth with their families (family of their choosing, it could be a friend, or anyone they could trust).

### **Compass House- 1451 Main Street, p. 716-886-1351**

- **Joint Transitional Housing** and **Rapid Re-housing** is a program that provides transitional housing to female youth (their CoC funded TH-RRH provides TH to male youth) 24 or under as well as short term rental assistance.
- **Resource Center** provides drop-in services during the hours of 9 am-10 pm.



# Thank you

Ryan Trubits

Senior Program Coordinator

[trubits@wnyhomeless.org](mailto:trubits@wnyhomeless.org)

