

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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BALTIMORE HOMELESS SERVICES RELEASES 2007 CENSUS REPORT

Baltimore , MD (September 14, 2007) Baltimore Homeless Services, a division of the Baltimore City Health Department, is releasing the report of the 2007 Homeless Census today. The 2007 census took place on January 26. It included both a review of data from homeless service providers and an in-person survey administered by more than 100 volunteers.

The 2007 homeless census finds:

- **An estimated 3,002 individuals were homeless on January 26.** Because data sources do not include all who are homeless, this figure is considered a minimum estimate.
- **Homeless individuals are most likely to be African-American males in Baltimore City.** The in-person survey of 497 individuals found that 337 (68%) of those homeless were men and 160 (32%) were women. The survey found that 384 (80%) of the homeless were African-American, 83 (17%) were white, and 15 (3%) were Latino or other.
- **At least 331 of the 3,002 homeless (11%) were younger than 18 years of age.** At least 156 (5%) were under 5 years of age. A parallel count by the Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative found 272 youth (aged 8 to 25) to be unstably housed on January 26.
- **More than half of homeless individuals are without a home for more than a year.** Two hundred and fifty-five of 481 respondents (53%) reported being homeless for more than a year. All told, 299 of 493 respondents (61%) met the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of "chronically homeless," having been consistently without a home for a year or having had at least three incidents of homelessness in the past four years.
- **Health and housing concerns are the primary reasons for homelessness.** Health-related issues, cited by 147 of 419 respondents (35%), included substance/alcohol abuse, mental illness, disability and medical problems. One hundred and thirty-five individuals (32%) cited lack of housing as the primary reason for homelessness.

- **The primary need of those experiencing homelessness is housing.** Of 367 respondents, 245 (67%) listed housing as their most important need. Obtaining a job was listed as the most important need by 47 (13%) of those surveyed. Among multiple secondary needs listed by at least half of those surveyed were housing, a job, food, dental care, medical care, public benefits, and transportation.
- **Between 2005 and 2007, the number of homeless in Baltimore did not change appreciably.** The 2007 count is nearly identical to the 2,943 homeless individuals counted in 2005. In addition, those surveyed in 2005 and 2007 were comparable demographically. One troubling change, however, is that the percentage of individuals who report being homeless for more than three years increased from 15% to 24% from 2005 to 2007.

The results show that despite economic progress in the city of Baltimore, homelessness remains a serious and persistent problem.

A coordinated plan to end homelessness within a decade is expected this fall; the 2007 Homeless Census will inform this and other efforts to address homelessness in our community.

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