Red, White, and Blue Book

NATIONAL SURVEY
OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

ALABAMA
Winter 2010

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from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Alabama had an estimated 509 homeless families on a single night in 2009, with providers serving nearly four times their bed capacity over the course of the year.[1] This brief summarizes some of the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: The Alabama Governor's Statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness (established by executive order in August 2005) developed and implements the state's ten-year plan to end homelessness.

Governor's Appointee: Sydney Hoffman, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, has chaired the Governor's Statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness since its inception in 2005.

Tenn.

Birmingham
(JEFFERSON)

Miss.

ALABAMA

Ga.

Montgomery

Mobile

Fla.

● City (COUNTY)
⊛ State Capital

0   25   50 Miles
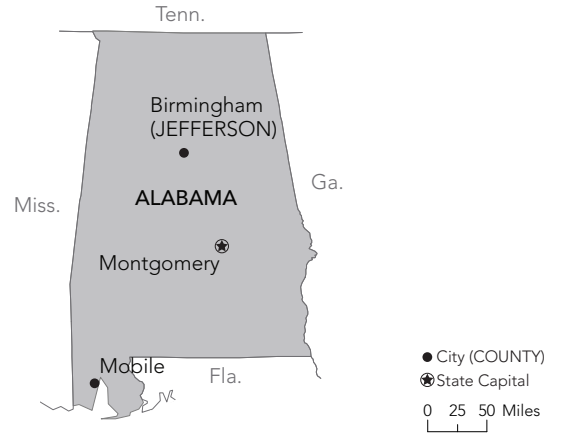
Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Alabama[2]	Jefferson County[3]	Mobile County[4]	Montgomery County[5]
Persons in homeless families[6]	1,394	628	175	72
Number of family shelter beds[7]	1,349	478	201	86
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families)[8]	9	18	8	6
Percent of families in poverty[9]	19.39%	13.77%	21.43%	18.86%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2006	2007	2005	2004
10-Year plan target population	All	Chronic	Chronic	Chronic
Point-in-time count frequency	Annually*	Biennially	Annually	Annually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Alabama Governor's Statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness	One Roof	Housing First	Mid-Alabama Coalition for the Homeless
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	PromisAL Steering Committee	One Roof	Housing First	Volunteer and Information Center
Main organizing agency or Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant	Alabama Rural Coalition for the Homeless*	One Roof	Housing First	Mid-Alabama Coalition for the Homeless

*Corresponds to the Balance of State Continuum of Care, which comprises areas of Alabama that are not included in a regional or local CoC.

Increasing Numbers of Homeless Students in the Heart of Dixie

The number of homeless students identified in Alabama public schools has risen by 49.3% (from 10,907 to 16,287) between the 2006–07 and 2009–10 school years. The number of students living doubled up experienced the largest increase (58.7%), while the number of unsheltered students decreased by 13.0%.[10] Economic factors stemming from the recession and the improved ability of homeless school liaisons to identify homeless students mainly account for the rise in numbers. One of the primary obstacles school personnel face to enrolling and ensuring the educational success of homeless children is lack of funding for transportation.[11]

Unmet Service Needs in Mobile County

The number of homeless persons in families in Mobile County increased by 54.9% (from 113 to 175) between 2005 and 2009.[12] Unemployment was cited by 29.8% of surveyed individuals as the primary reason for homelessness in 2009.

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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 interconections between governmental and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Alabama and other states, visit www.icprwb.org

One-third (33.6%) of homeless women had no income and one-third (34.6%) of women with a source of income earned wages from temporary or day labor. When asked whether their needs were met, half (49.9%) of the 385 persons surveyed required job search assistance and had been unable to attain such services. Nearly three-quarters (73.2%) had difficulty accessing housing and 70.6% lacked rental assistance. The county's Section 8 housing voucher waiting list is five years long as of December 2010 and there is a lack of low-income housing.[13]
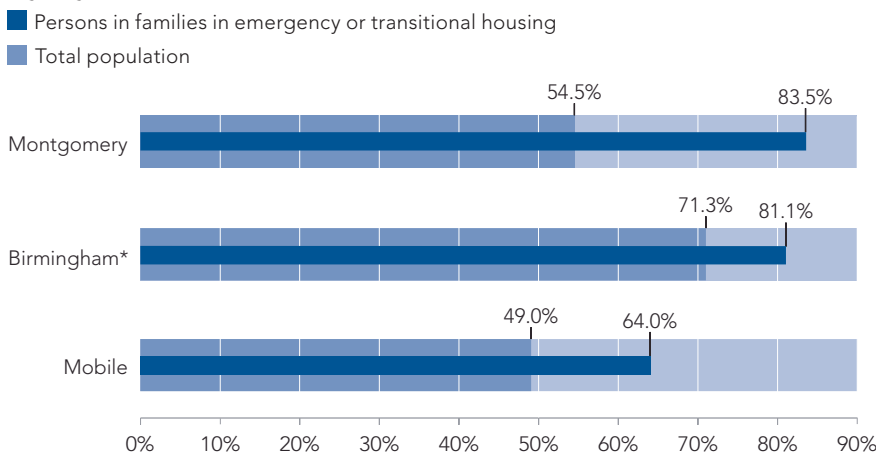
A Pathway to Self-sufficiency for Birmingham's Homeless Families

Between October 2008 and September 2009, 318 homeless adults in families and 542 children accessed emergency and transitional shelter in metropolitan Birmingham.[14] Responding to an increase in demand for programs serving homeless women and children in Birmingham, two shelters that had been in operation since the early 1980s merged to form Pathways: A Woman's Way Home in 2003. In 2009, the non-profit organization provided transitional shelter for 358 homeless women and children (an increase of 30.2% since 2006). To prepare families for self-sufficiency, Pathways offers classes on 1) employment readiness to mothers, 2) financial literacy to mothers and their older children, and 3) emotional and social skills using an arts and crafts curriculum to children. Between 2007 and 2009, these programs served a total of 239, 150, and 170 clients respectively.[15]

Disbursing Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Funds

As part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Alabama was awarded $20,073,696 in Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program stimulus monies. The majority ($13,328,942) was administered to the state program, while the rest has been disbursed with varying success by six Alabama localities (Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Mobile County, Montgomery County, and Jefferson County). As of March 31, 2010, the state program served 1,168 unduplicated clients, spending an average of $946 per client and using only 4.5% of disbursed funds to cover administrative costs. Mobile city and county assisted a combined 109 clients, dispensing $2,465 per person and 7.3% on administrative expenses. Jefferson County, however, did not serve any clients.[16] Separate data for families are not available.
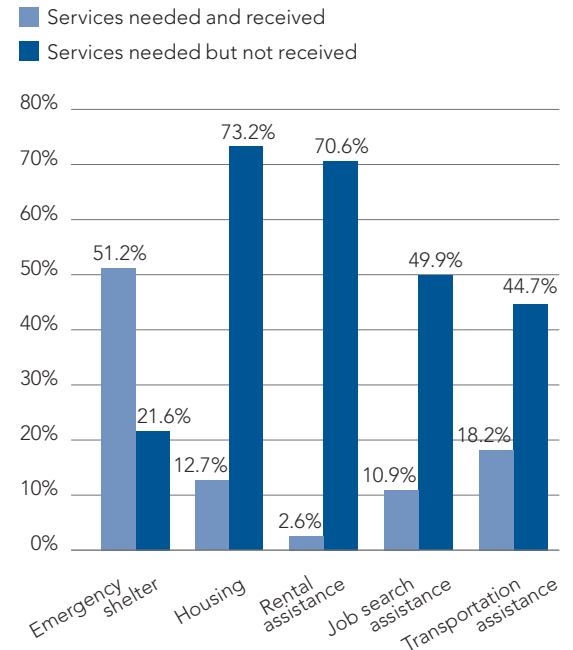
Percent of Homeless Families and the Total Population that are Black (by city)

Persons in families in emergency or transitional housing
Total population

Montgomery — 54.5% / 83.5%
Birmingham* — 71.3% / 81.1%
Mobile — 49.0% / 64.0%

(x-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%)

*Data for persons in homeless families include Jefferson, St. Clair, and Shelby counties.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons;* U.S. Census Bureau, *2006–2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.*

Self-identified Service Needs of Homeless Adults in Mobile County (by receipt and type)

Services needed and received
Services needed but not received

Emergency shelter: 51.2% / 21.6%
Housing: 12.7% / 73.2%
Rental assistance: 2.6% / 70.6%
Job search assistance: 10.9% / 49.9%
Transportation assistance: 18.2% / 44.7%

Source: Housing First, Inc., *Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless,* January 29, 2009.

Endnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs — Homeless Populations and Subpopulations;* U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2009 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons.*
[2] Statistics for Alabama exclude Russell County.
[3] Statistics for Jefferson County include St. Clair and Shelby counties.
[4] Statistics for Mobile County include Baldwin County.
[5] Statistics for Montgomery County include Autauth, Bullock, Elmore, and Lowndes counties.
[6] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.*
[7] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs — Housing Inventory Chart Report.*
[8] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations;* U.S. Census Bureau, *2006–2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.*
[9] U.S. Census Bureau, *2006–2008 American Community Survey.*
[10] U.S. Department of Education, *Consolidated State Performance Reports,* 2006–10.
[11] Beth Thompson (Education Specialist, Alabama Department of Education), interview with ICPH, December 2010.
[12] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2005 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs — Homeless Populations and Subpopulations;* U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.*
[13] Housing First, Inc., *Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless,* January 29, 2009; Anna Montanaro (Director of Information Management, Housing First, Inc.), interview with ICPH, December 2010.
[14] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2009 *Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons.*
[15] Pathways: A Woman's Way Home, *Pathways 2009 Annual Report,* Summer 2010; Lara Wheeler (Development Director, Pathways: A Woman's Way Home), interview with ICPH, December 2010.
[16] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HPRP Quarterly Performance Report Q1,* 2009; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HPRP Quarterly Performance Report Q3,* 2010; Barnett Wright, "Jefferson County Commission Kills $583,000 Federal Homeless Prevention Contract with Local Agency," *The Birmingham News,* April 21, 2010.

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