

# City of Cambridge: 2016 Census of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

## OVERVIEW

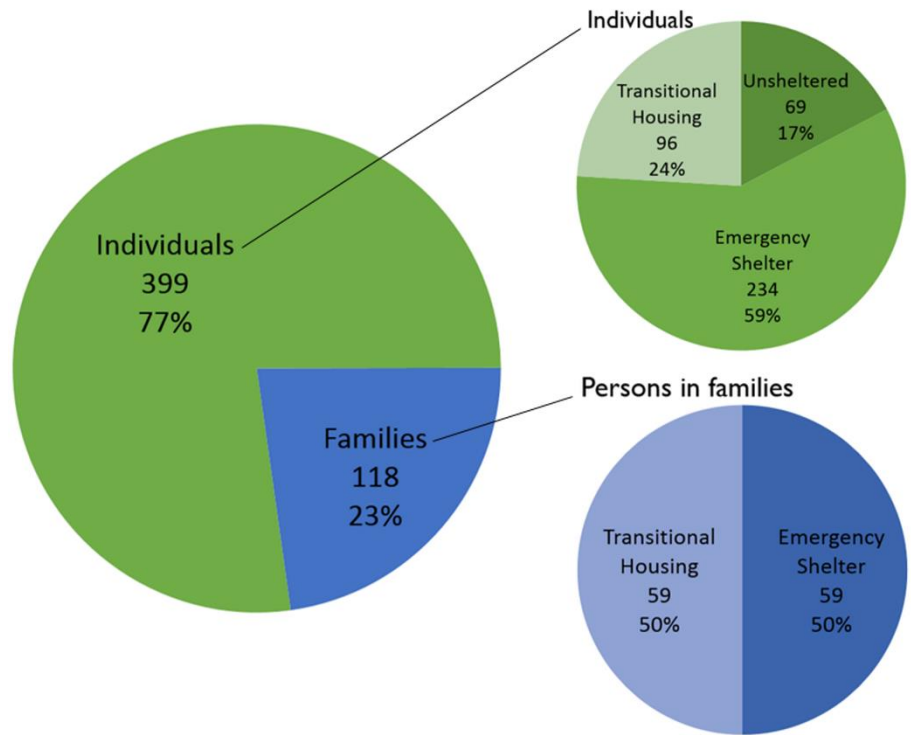
On the night of January 27, 2016, staff from the Department of Human Service Programs, partner agencies, and community volunteers completed the annual count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The census is conducted in accordance with requirements outlined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and includes a count of individuals and families staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing, and an overnight count of unsheltered individuals.

*Persons experiencing homelessness the night of Jan. 27, 2016*

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Cambridge counted 517 persons experiencing homelessness during the night between January 27 and January 28, 2016. Single individuals made up the majority of persons counted (77%), and persons in family households represented less than one quarter (23%) of the total count. The total count of 517 persons includes:

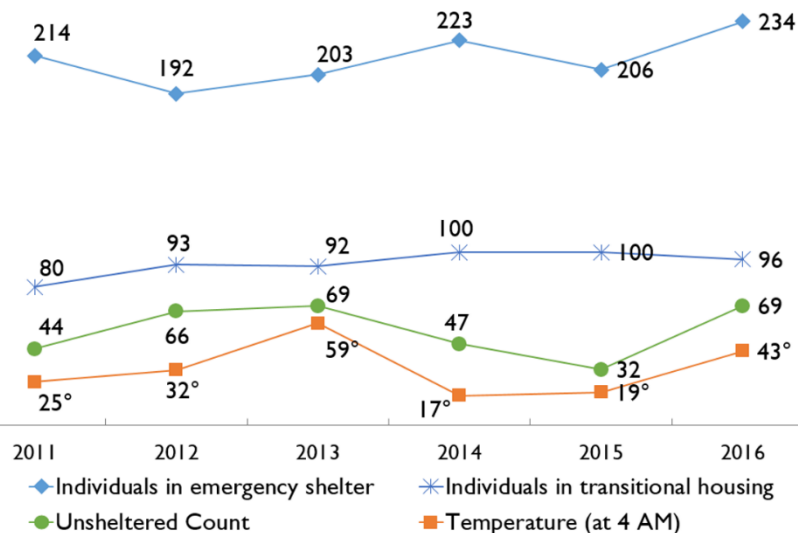
- 46 families (118 persons)
  - 24 in emergency shelter (59 persons)
  - 22 in transitional housing (59 persons)
- 399 individuals
  - 69 unsheltered
  - 234 in emergency shelter
  - 96 in transitional housing



## COMPARISON TO 2015

The 2016 total count increased by 53 persons from 464 in 2015 to 517 in 2016. One factor contributing to the increase was an increase in emergency shelter capacity resulting from the December 2015 opening of a new 22 bed shelter for young adults experiencing homelessness.

*Individual sheltered and outdoor count: 2011-2016*



Another factor contributing to the overall increase was a comparatively high unsheltered count of 69 individuals. The 2016 unsheltered count total is consistent with past counts, but compared to the 2015 count represents a significant increase of 37 persons. This increase in count can be explained primarily by the relatively low unsheltered count in 2015. Very inclement weather with several feet of snow on the ground resulted to a lower than usual unsheltered count in 2015. The high unsheltered count coupled with high utilization rates for emergency shelters on the census night and an increase in shelter capacity contributed to the increase in total count compared to 2015.

## HOMELESS SUBPOPULATIONS

The table on the following page shows the demographic characteristics of the 517 persons counted on January 27, 2016. The census includes basic demographic information extracted from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Subpopulation data for unsheltered persons were extrapolated using survey data from the City's two street outreach programs collected during the week following the count.

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## Characteristics of persons counted in 2016 census

	Sheltered				Unsheltered		Total	
	Emergency Shelter		Transitional Housing		N	%	N	%
	N	%	N	%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>517</b>	
<b>Household type</b>								
Single individuals	234	80%	96	62%	69	100%	399	77%
Households with children	59	20%	59	38%	0	0%	118	23%
<b>Age</b>								
Children (under 18)	32	11%	32	21%	0	0%	64	12%
Age 18-24	36	12%	11	7%	3	4%	50	10%
Over 24	225	77%	112	72%	66	96%	403	78%
<b>Gender</b>								
Female	81	28%	80	52%	13	19%	174	34%
Male	212	72%	74	48%	56	81%	342	66%
Transgender	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%
<b>Ethnicity</b>								
Non-Hispanic/Latino	255	87%	116	75%	55	80%	426	82%
Hispanic/Latino	38	13%	39	25%	14	20%	91	18%
<b>Race</b>								
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	2%	0	0%	0	0%	7	1%
Asian	6	2%	0	0%	0	0%	6	1%
Black or African-American	96	33%	48	31%	5	7%	149	29%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pac. Islander	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%
White	167	57%	94	61%	64	93%	325	63%
Multiple Races	17	6%	12	8%	0	0%	29	6%
<b>Veteran Status</b>								
Veteran	4	1%	3	2%	0	0%	7	1%
Not a veteran	289	99%	152	98%	69	100%	510	99%
<b>Youth Households<sup>1</sup></b>								
Parenting youth	5	2%	3	2%	0	0%	8	2%
Unaccompanied youth	28	10%	3	2%	3	4%	34	7%
<b>Other Subpopulations (18+ only; persons may be counted in multiple categories)</b>								
Serious mental illness	45	17%	15	12%	41	59%	101	22%
Substance use disorder	46	18%	65	53%	64	93%	175	39%
HIV/AIDS	3	1%	10	8%	0	0%	13	3%
Victim of domestic violence	30	11%	31	25%	0	0%	61	13%

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

While the annual report to HUD focuses on persons who meet HUD's category 1 definition of homeless<sup>2</sup>, counts of formerly homeless persons demonstrate the progress the City and service providers have made in placing clients into permanent housing. On the night of the 2016 census, 447 formerly homeless individuals and 34 formerly homeless families were living in Permanent Supportive Housing (housing with services available), including 131 veterans utilizing HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) vouchers administered by the VA Boston Health Care System and the Cambridge Housing Authority.

Additionally, numerous households are prevented from falling into homelessness through work supported by the City and the federal Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program based at the Multi-Service Center. As of January 27, 2016, 183 households had received homelessness prevention services, including assistance with back rent, eviction prevention, and stabilization case management since the ESG program began in 2012. Please visit [cambridgecoc.org](http://cambridgecoc.org) for additional information about homeless services in the City.

<sup>1</sup> Youth households included in this report are 18-24 year old parenting or unaccompanied youth who meet HUD's category 1 definition of homelessness.

<sup>2</sup> "An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which includes a primary nighttime residence of: place not designed for or ordinarily