



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

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from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Arkansas had an estimated 234 homeless families on a single night in 2009, with providers serving five times their bed capacity over the course of the year.<sup>1</sup> This brief summarizes some of the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

**State Taskforce on Homelessness**

**Taskforce:** The Arkansas Interagency Council on Homelessness (established by executive order in 1987) is the state's homelessness planning and policy body.

**Governor's Appointee:** Thomas Green, Assistant Director of the Office of Community Services in the Arkansas Department of Human Services, has chaired the Arkansas Interagency Council on Homelessness since its inception in 1987.



**Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization**

	Arkansas <sup>2</sup>	Pulaski County <sup>3</sup>
Persons in homeless families <sup>4</sup>	671	246
Number of family shelter beds <sup>5</sup>	604	300
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) <sup>6</sup>	7	13
Percent of families in poverty <sup>7</sup>	21.47%	16.97%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	No plan	2006
10-Year plan target population	No plan	Chronic
Point-in-time count frequency	Locally managed	Biennially
Point-in-time count managing agency	Locally managed	Central Arkansas Team Care for the Homeless
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Little Rock Community Mental Health Center	Little Rock Community Mental Health Center
Main organizing agency or Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant	Arkansas Department of Human Services	Central Arkansas Team Care for the Homeless

**Few Partnerships to Give Arkansas' Homeless Children a Head Start**

Few agencies collaborate or coordinate with local public schools or other non-profit or government agencies serving homeless families, according to a 2009 survey of all 22 Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant-Seasonal Head Start programs in Arkansas. Six programs (of 21 respondents) reported little or no contact with local service providers for homeless families and ten had similar experiences with area housing agencies and planning groups. Those surveyed expressed concern regarding their limited knowledge of resources available in their community for homeless children and half (of 18) had challenges engaging community partners in cross-training and planning activities. While one Head Start program is operated by a public school, sixteen agencies (of 21 respondents) had no working relationship with the local McKinney-Vento liaison and 17 (of 20) had little or no contact with the Title I Director, who oversees No Child Left Behind programs for migrant, neglected, or otherwise at-risk or disadvantaged children. Over half (of 19 agencies) reported some to extreme difficulty working with area organizations to transition homeless children to public schools.<sup>8</sup>



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 and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Arkansas and other states, visit [www.icprwb.org](http://www.icprwb.org)

### Welcome to Our House

Our House, a non-profit organization, has provided shelter and supportive services to homeless families and individuals in the City of Little Rock since 1987. Residents in Our House's 80-bed emergency shelter and 13-unit transitional housing facility must find full-time employment within 16 days of entry and save 75% of their earnings. Clients may access on-site child care; after-school activities; a summer camp; internships; state-issued professional certification programs; case management; and other services. In 2010, 773 homeless persons, 227 (29%) of whom were members of families, accessed Our House's emergency shelter. Seventy-one percent of adult shelter clients left with an average of \$1,200 each. Eighty-five persons, including 39 family members (46%), used the transitional housing program in 2010. Seventy-three percent of transitional housing graduates moved into their own homes and 85% had increased income.<sup>9</sup> Separate data are not available for families.

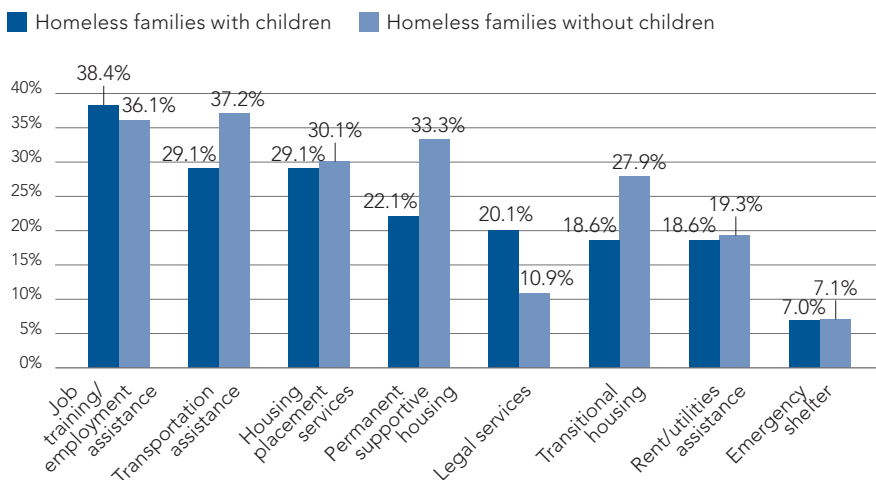
### Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program in Little Rock

As part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the City of Little Rock was awarded \$682,197 in Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program funds. As of January 2011, Little Rock has disbursed 64.0% of those monies on cash assistance (data on other outlays are unavailable), providing an average of \$2,413 to 50 homeless households and \$2,450 to 129 at-risk households.<sup>10</sup>

### Homelessness by Household Composition in Northwest Arkansas

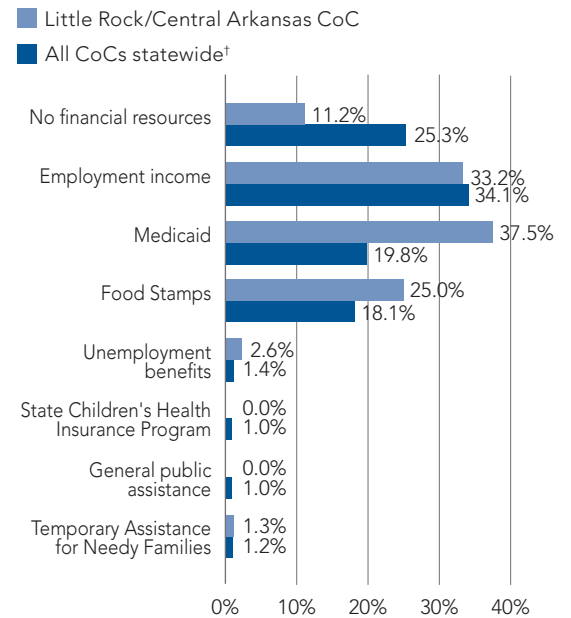
In Benton and Washington counties' 2009 point-in-time count, half (49.0%) of the 359 persons surveyed were members of homeless families. Lower percentages of adults in families than single individuals reported unmet service needs in 16 of 20 categories. In particular, fewer parents reported inadequate transportation assistance (29.1%, versus 37.2% of single adults), permanent supportive housing (22.1%, compared to 33.3%), or transitional housing (18.6%, as opposed to 27.9%). While basic needs, including emergency shelter (7.0% of parents and 7.1% of individuals), were rarely unaddressed, adults from all households experienced more difficulty accessing services that promote long-term self-sufficiency, such as employment assistance (38.4% and 36.1%) or housing placement services (29.1% and 30.1%).<sup>11</sup>

### Unmet Service Needs in Benton and Washington Counties (by population and service type)



Source: University of Arkansas Community and Family Institute, Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census: A 24-Hour Point-in-Time Count, 2009.

### Percent of Clients Exiting Programs\* with Access to Mainstream Benefits (by program type and CoC)



\*Data are presented for Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy Dwellings Program.  
†Boone, Marion, Baxter, Newton, Greene, Craighead, Mississippi, Poinsett, Crittenden, Phillips, Crawford, Franklin, Sebastian, Logan, Scott, Polk, Montgomery, Garland, Hot Spring, Howard, Pike, Clark, Sevier, Little River, Hempstead, Nevada, Miller, and Lafayette counties are not members of a Continuum of Care.  
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2009 CoC Application.

### Endnotes

- 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.
- Homelessness statistics for Arkansas exclude Boone, Marion, Baxter, Newton, Greene, Craighead, Mississippi, Poinsett, Crittenden, Phillips, Crawford, Franklin, Sebastian, Logan, Scott, Polk, Montgomery, Garland, Hot Spring, Howard, Pike, Clark, Sevier, Little River, Hempstead, Nevada, Miller, and Lafayette counties.
- Statistics for Pulaski County include Saline, Lonoke, and Prairie counties.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2009 Homeless Populations and Subpopulations.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD's 2009 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Housing Inventory Chart Report.
- 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.
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey.
- Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office, Needs Assessment, April 2009.
- Ben Goodwin (Grants Manager, Our House), interview with ICPH, February 2011; Our House, 2010 Year In Review; Our House, <http://www.ourhouseshelter.org>.
- Doris Turner (Community Development Administrator, City of Little Rock), interview with ICPH, March 2011; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HPRP Quarterly Performance Report Q3, 2010.
- University of Arkansas Community and Family Institute, Northwest Arkansas Homeless Census: A 24-Hour Point-in-Time Count, 2009.