



NATIONAL SURVEY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

MAINE
Winter 2011

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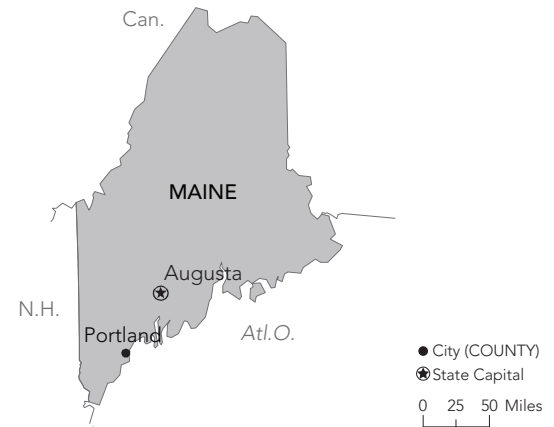
from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN, POVERTY, AND HOMELESSNESS

Maine had an estimated 281 homeless families on a single night in 2009, with providers serving nearly three 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 Maine Statewide Homelessness Council (established by executive order in June 2005) implements the state's ten-year plan to end and prevent homelessness.

Governor's Appointee: Nancy Fritz, Director of Homeless Initiatives for Maine State Housing Authority, has chaired the Statewide Homelessness Council since its inception in 2005.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Maine	Portland
Persons in homeless families ²	1,320	253
Number of family shelter beds ³	1,574	324
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁴	31	138
Percent of families in poverty ⁵	14.47%	18.88%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	2008	No plan
10-Year plan target population	All	No plan
Point-in-time count frequency	Annually	Annually
Point-in-time count managing agency	Maine State Housing Authority	Maine State Housing Authority
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Maine State Housing Authority	Maine State Housing Authority
Main organizing agency or Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant	Maine State Housing Authority*	Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

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

Leading Efforts to End Homelessness in Maine

The Maine State Housing Authority's (MaineHousing) Homeless Initiatives Department, an independent state agency, coordinates statewide efforts to end and prevent homelessness. With federal Emergency Shelter Grant, Real Estate Transfer Tax, and State General Fund allocations, MaineHousing finances emergency shelters, affordable housing options, rental subsidies, and homelessness prevention services. The agency also provides staff, technical assistance, and fiscal support for the Statewide Homelessness Council, three regional homeless councils, and three continua of care. In 2008, the Statewide Homelessness Council adopted *Maine's Plan to End & Prevent Homelessness*, which seeks to graduate homeless families from shelter to supportive, transitional, or affordable rental housing to self-sufficiency. Maine's regional homeless councils and continua of care engage community-level stakeholders in plan implementation using a grassroots approach that emphasizes proactive intrastate collaboration.⁶

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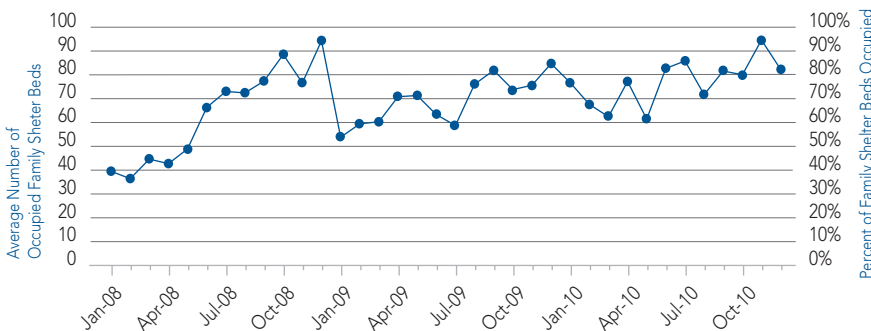
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The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Maine and other states, visit www.icprwb.org

Coordinating Portland's Family Shelters

Established in 1987 by the United Way and the City of Portland, the Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC) is a homelessness planning and advocacy body that oversees the city's emergency shelters. Under the City of Portland's Health and Human Services Department, ESAC is a collaborative of local and state entities, homeless service providers, and community advocates. Portland has a total of 101 family shelter beds available at the Family Shelter (77), Family Crisis Center (14), and Step Up! Family Resources for pregnant or parenting women and children (10). Thirty-seven homeless families, consisting of 119 persons, accessed the Family Shelter (operated by the City of Portland's Health and Human Services Department, Social Service Division) in December 2010, a 48.4% increase from December 2009. One-third (34.5%) of its clients experienced homelessness for the first time in December 2010. All three shelters combined provided 2,517 shelter nights in December 2010, with an average of 26 families entering shelters on a single night. Since January 2008, the number of persons in families residing in shelters per night has more than doubled (161.3%, from 38 to 81 in December 2010) and the bed occupancy rate has jumped from 38.0% to 80.4%.⁷

Average Number of Daily Occupied Family Shelter Beds in Portland and Occupancy Rate (by month)

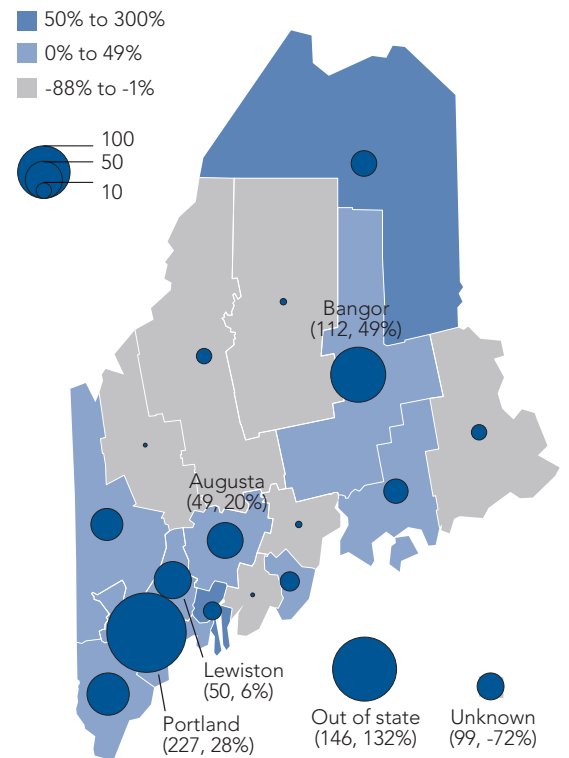


Source: Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee, *Monthly Shelter Statistics*, June 2008–December 2010.

Not The Way Life Should Be: Homeless Families in Lewiston and Auburn

Hope Haven Gospel Mission, a non-profit organization, is the only emergency shelter that serves families in the twin cities of Lewiston and Auburn. Families establish goals to attain self-sufficiency and the City of Lewiston's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) caseworkers visit the facility on a weekly basis to connect families with supportive services. The shelter consists of 30 beds, 16 for women and children and 14 for men and boys over the age of 14. While Hope Haven provided shelter to 486 homeless persons and 12 families in 2010, 23 families were unable to be accommodated at the fully occupied facility. With limited community resources, Hope Haven consistently operates at or over capacity, turning away two families for every family served. The closest family shelter alternatives are located in the cities of Portland and Rumford, roughly 40 miles away, and are difficult to access without transportation. There is no transitional housing designated for families in the Lewiston-Auburn area and with waiting lists ranging from eight months to three years, federally subsidized housing vouchers are challenging to obtain. Therefore, families that are unable to access shelter at Hope Haven are referred to Lewiston Housing Authority where they can redeem motel vouchers as a short-term housing solution. General Assistance, financial aid for income-eligible families in crisis, is also available through Maine's DHHS.⁸

Number (2010) and Percent Change (2008–10) of Homeless Persons in Emergency Shelter (by county of last residence)



Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2008 Point In Time Survey—Statewide; Maine State Housing Authority, 2010 Point In Time Survey—Statewide.

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*.
- 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*.
- Statewide Homelessness Council, *Maine's Plan to End & Prevent Homelessness*, March 2008; Maine State Housing Authority, "Homeless Initiative," <http://www.mainehousing.org/HOMELESSInitiatives.aspx>
- Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee, *Monthly Shelter Statistics*, June 2008–December 2010; City of Portland, "Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee," <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/ssesac.asp>
- Sarah Curran and Frank O'Hara, *2008 Lewiston Auburn Homelessness Needs Assessment Report*; Beverly Robbins (Office Manager, Hope Haven Gospel Mission), interview with ICPH, January 2011; Hope Haven Gospel Mission, <http://www.hopehavengospelmission.org/Stats.htm>