



Community Alliance
for the Homeless

2021 Annual Report

Letter to Memphis

Simply put, this has been an unprecedented year. The ways in which we work, approach safety, and consider our neighbors have been disrupted in ways both good and bad, and few have been as affected as the community we seek to serve.

Yet, as important as it is to hold onto the hard realities, there are lessons being learned by many that give us hope for dismantling old ways, for terms like equity and dignity to move away from mere buzz words and into reality.

We have witnessed renewed attention to debates over universal healthcare, living wages, and racial justice; we have seen what can come from enhanced unemployment benefits and child tax credits; we have been reminded of the importance of school-houses and hospitals; we have re-engaged with civic responsibility and the power it wields; and we've been reminded that the problems we face stateside are the same problems faced by all countries and all environments.

While the outcomes may not have aligned with what we all wish, a consensus that cannot be denied is the number of people who care.

For the many Memphians who are insecure in their current housing, for the many Memphians experiencing homelessness for reasons beyond their control, please know there are committed providers within your community who are working day and night to take your calls, to feel your fears.

We want to say thank you to providers both in the Continuum of Care and outside of it, who are focused on bringing an end to homelessness in Memphis/Shelby County.

With Gratitude,
D. Cheré Bradshaw
Executive Director

Who We Are

Community Alliance for the Homeless is the Lead Agency for the Memphis/Shelby County Continuum of Care (CoC).

A CoC is a group of regional agencies that may include homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, public housing authorities, school districts, mental health providers, hospitals, affordable housing developers, formerly homeless individuals, and many other collaborative bodies. A CoC is responsible for the coordination and provision of homeless services and homelessness prevention activities in a certain geographic area.

Across Memphis/Shelby County, Community Alliance provides planning, technical assistance, and service coordination to public and private agencies that are working to end homelessness. We link planners, providers, data, and resources to develop an effective and outcomes-driven system for ending homelessness.

We believe that housing is a basic human right.

We believe that homelessness is a solvable problem.

We believe that our community is equipped with resources to impact positive change.

COVID-19 Response

Strong partnerships between the City of Memphis, CAFTH, Shelby County, and multiple homeless service providers allowed for quick and sustained responses to COVID-19. Biweekly meetings with stakeholders ensured immediate needs were met and longer-term planning occurred, not only for future response systems but for incorporating emergency funding streams.

Rapid Testing

A partnership brokered by CAFTH between UT Health Science Center's labs and the Hospitality Hub allowed for daily walk-up COVID testing for individuals who are homeless at the Hospitality Hub Plaza. At the height, shelters required negative tests to enter, and this was a large gap that existed since the beginning of the pandemic. Since November 2020, hundreds of individuals have been tested with very few positive results reported, allowing hundreds of individuals access to shelter safely. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are placed in non-congregate shelter and provided services through a process developed in partnership with the Shelby County Health Department.

Vaccine Rollout

A COVID-19 vaccine distribution partnership with Memphis Fire Department has ensured over 300+ individuals experiencing homelessness have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at the time of this report, with additional events underway and vaccinations now widely available to all.

Sheltering

Non-congregate hotel stays were provided for over 600 individuals and families to ensure that the most vulnerable were not placed in congregate settings. During this past year's record-breaking winter weather emergency in Memphis, stakeholders met daily to ensure the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness were as met as possible. The coordinated response ensured up to 200 individuals per night could access the City's three Warming Centers, and an additional 105 individuals, including 34 children, were provided with hotel stays to remain safe and connected with case management services.

Safe Reentering

A new Memphis/Shelby County Criminal Justice System discharge program, 901 STARR (Safer Transition for At-Risk Residents), was created and is facilitated by CAFTH. This innovative partnership includes the Shelby County Public Defender's Office, the Shelby County Health Department, Shelby County Community Service Agency, and others. The program ensures access to services for people who are homeless and discharged from high-risk congregate facilities. Participants are provided with a safe space to get tested for COVID-19, connected with outreach services, and to safely quarantine.

By the Numbers

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. Each year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (CoCs) conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter and transitional housing on a single night. HUD mandates that CoCs conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year, but Memphis completes a PIT every year.

COVID-19 greatly impacted the 2021 PIT Count of homelessness in Memphis/Shelby County. Although unsheltered homelessness doubled since 2020, according to the 2021 PIT Count, overall homelessness numbers have declined. However, we are not considering this an opportunity to celebrate, due to the impacts of COVID-19 on this year's count and homelessness overall.

Specifically, the 2021 PIT Count in Memphis/Shelby County was impacted in the following ways:

Decrease in emergency shelter and transitional housing capacity and enrollments:

Between the 2020 and 2021 PIT Counts, the number of individuals and families reported in emergency shelter and transitional housing decreased by 27% and 63%, respectively. Many shelters and transitional housing facilities have decreased capacity over the past year to allow for social distancing and other COVID-19 safety protocols. In addition, many facilities have required a negative COVID-19 test result, which is an additional barrier to entry; many individuals have also reported feeling unsafe in congregate settings like emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities during the pandemic, regardless of safety protocols in place.

Change in unsheltered count methodology:

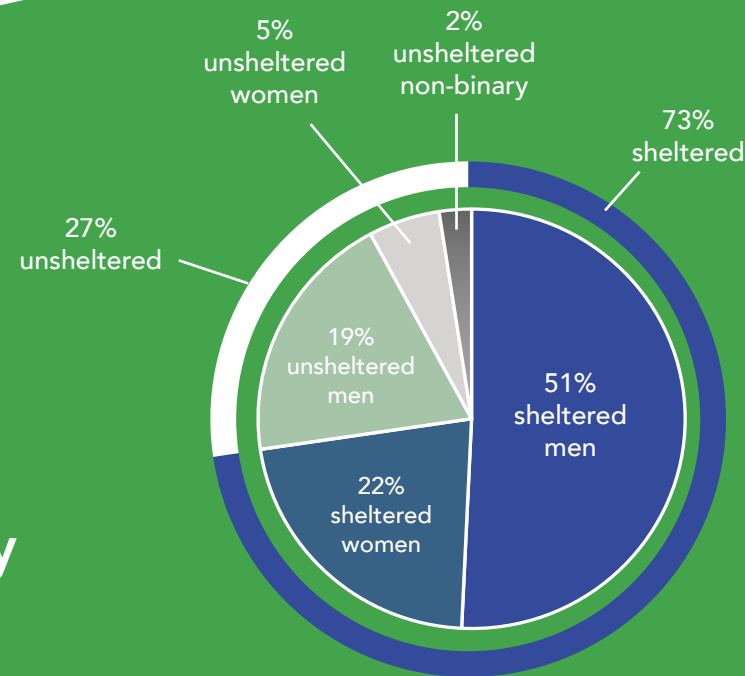
Between the 2020 and 2021 PIT Counts, unsheltered homelessness numbers doubled. In 2020 and other recent years, the unsheltered PIT Count was conducted entirely in one day, largely by volunteers who canvas the city in assigned team areas or visit open service sites to conduct surveys. In order to increase safety for volunteers, agency staff, and individuals experiencing homelessness, the unsheltered count methodology was changed this year to utilize existing staff and volunteers at open service sites. To utilize a larger number of open sites and reach a larger number of individuals, the count was extended to take place over a one-week period instead of just one day as in the past. In addition to an increase in individuals who have not entered emergency shelter or transitional housing facilities for the reasons indicated above, we believe that reaching and surveying a larger number of individuals in this method allowed for a more accurate unsheltered count than in past years.

Impact of eviction moratorium:

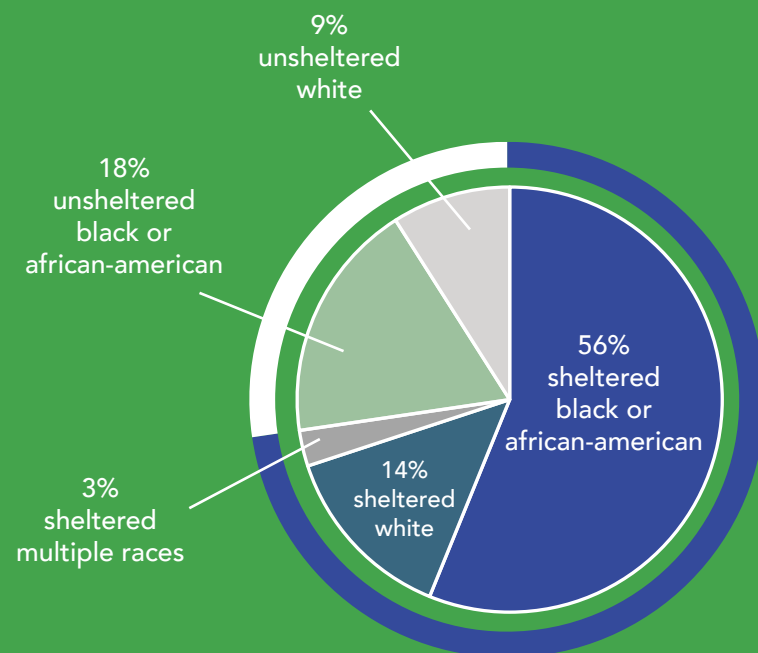
While the CDC Eviction Moratorium was imperfect and households have still been evicted through both formal and informal means during the pandemic, eviction filings in Shelby County have been lower than average during COVID-19, leading to fewer evictions overall. According to data from Eviction Lab, during the three months preceding the PIT Count (November 2020 - January 2021), there were nearly 3,000 fewer evictions filed in Shelby County than on average during that same period in the past three years, a decrease of 44%. This decrease in eviction filings and formal evictions likely led to a decrease in individuals entering into homelessness, especially families.

2021 PIT Count

identity



race

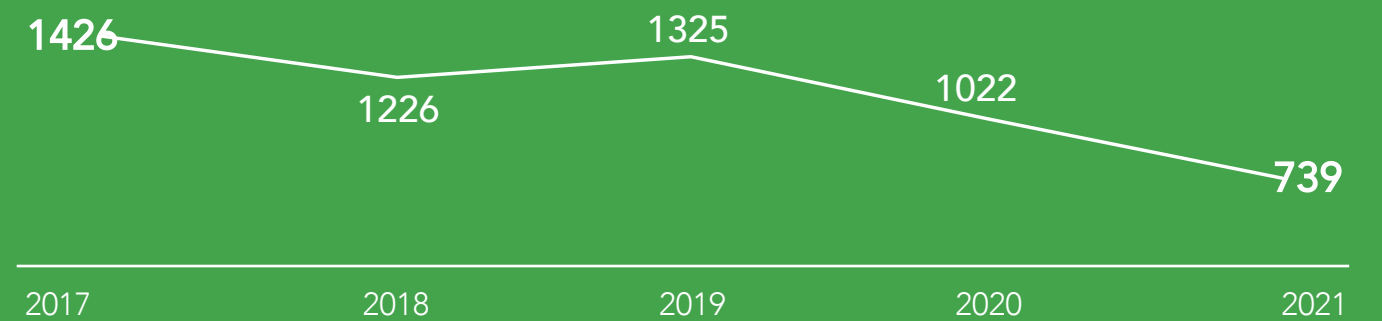


Sheltered

537	136	102	20
individuals	in families	veterans	youth households

Unsheltered

202	0	20	13
individuals	in families	veterans	youth (ages 18-24)



Note: This graph includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations; it should be stressed once again that these numbers do not reflect the true state of homelessness for reasons given on the previous pages but are accurately recorded in good faith.

Note on Demographics: These graphs only include percentages of the highest reporting demographics. During the count, all identities/expressions are self-reported. With regards to race/ethnicity, in the 2021 count, there were 3 American Indian, Indigenous, or Native Alaskan individuals reporting, accounting for <1% of the sheltered count; all others reporting are represented above.

Equity

The events of the last year have shed light on multiple concerns, many of which do not bear relisting, but all of which bear confronting. When it comes to addressing concerns of equity in housing and homelessness, the contributing factors are multiple and interrelated. However, it's more possible to try and understand how our homeless response system is working to serve everyone who may be forced to touch it.

Racial Disparities

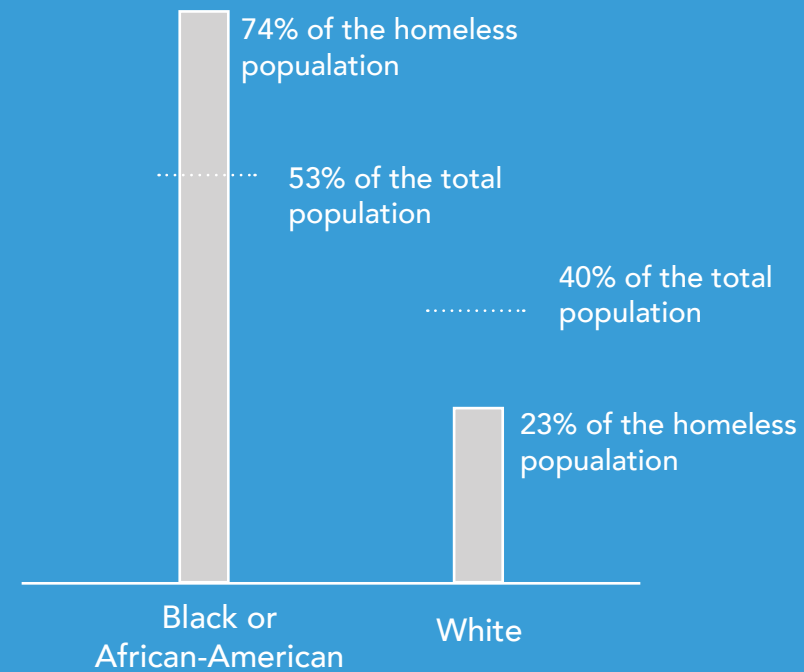
The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends utilizing their racial disparities tool to better understand the ways structural and institutional racism cause disproportionate detriment across our community, particularly when it comes to homelessness and housing security. The tool is focused on comparing the demography of the annual Point-in-Time count alongside the size of the overall population, as tracked by the American Community Survey (Census Bureau). To the right is a visual that represents the outcome of HUD's tool, and the same concept applied to how care within the Memphis homeless response system is delivered.

Identity Disparities

The CoC enforces a Housing First approach by all service providers that receive funds, but there is regrettably not enough data collected to grasp how identities outside historic, binary constructs are served in our community, because access to resources are not as expansive for this population. Without understanding the full picture of where community resources fall short, conclusions around outcomes are insufficient. Over the next year, CAFTH will be working to better articulate these gaps.

Note: The graphs to the right represent data from calendar year 2020 stored in HMIS; total population percentages are from the American Community Survey's 2019 estimates.

Racial Disparities Tool

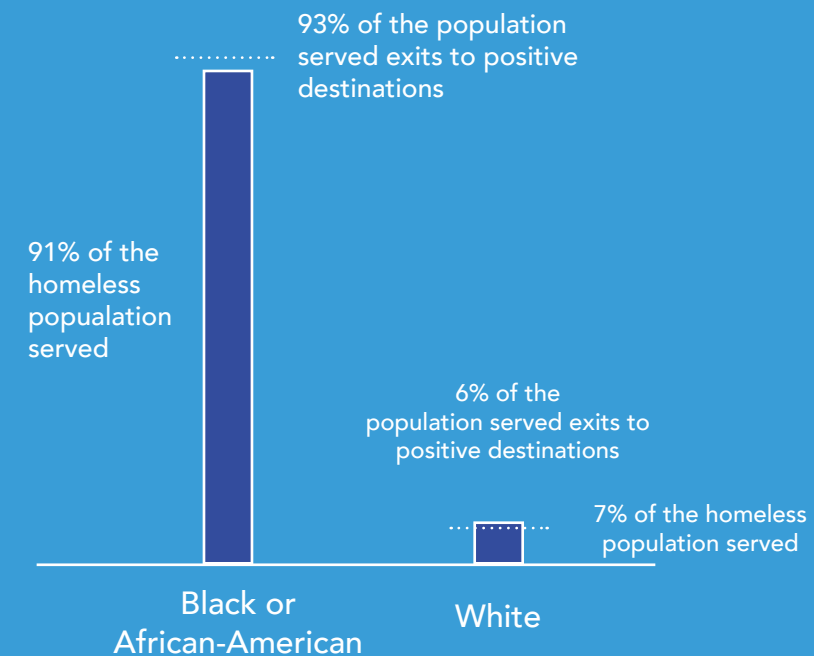


To summarize, the graph is explaining that while Black or African-American individuals account for 53% of the total Memphis population, they represent 74% of the population experiencing homelessness.

By contrast, white individuals account for 40% of the total Memphis population, but represent only 23% of the population experiencing homelessness.

In an equitable world, the total population would be equal (or close) to the population experiencing homelessness.

Positive Housing Outcomes



Applying the same logic to positive housing outcomes:

Black or African-American clients accounted for 91% of total clients served (6,914) and 93% of clients exiting the system to positive destinations. Likewise, white clients accounted for 7% of total clients served (558) and 6% of clients exiting to positive destinations. In other words, service to clients within the system displayed more equitable care.

Positive housing outcomes refer to those exit destinations that do not include a return to places not meant for habitation, emergency shelter, or other temporary solutions.

Ways to Get Involved



Home-Warming Baskets

For those living without a place to call home, getting the keys to an apartment is life-changing. Many people begin this new opportunity with only their family and very few belongings.

We are collecting "Home Warming Baskets," a laundry hamper filled with cleaning supplies and essential items to help them get started in their new home. Ideas and information about the baskets can be found on the link below.

Your support will provide encouragement to people who need it most.

Open Link: <http://bit.ly/home-warming-baskets>

Care Bags

One of our ongoing projects for our community is the care bags. These quart size resealable bags are filled with items such as travel size soap, shampoo, a washcloth, toothbrush & paste, and deodorant.

The bags are put into backpacks with socks and other seasonal items and are given to our partner agencies to distribute at events and outreach checks. We appreciate the donations that have kept us stocked with these bags, especially during the past year.

You can find ideas and information about the bags on the link below.

Open Link: <http://bit.ly/unsheltered-care-bags>

Memphis/Shelby County Homeless Consortium

The Consortium is the voluntary association that provides leadership, services, advocacy, and information related to Memphis and Shelby County's homeless population and serves as the TN-501: Memphis/Shelby County Continuum of Care (CoC). The Consortium has over 52 active association and individual members from many different sectors across Memphis and Shelby County, and meets quarterly. Currently, it has nine open committees and working groups that meet more regularly and focus on specific populations or services provided by member agencies.

The mission of the Consortium is to develop, sustain and coordinate a comprehensive continuum of care for citizens of the City of Memphis and Shelby County who experience homelessness in order to establish pathways to self-sufficiency and ultimately to eliminate homelessness.

AGAPE

Alliance Healthcare Services
Alpha House
Alpha Omega Veterans Services
Baptist Operation Outreach
Barbara Johnson-McKinney
Barron Heights CDC
Behavioral Health Initiatives
Calvary Church
Catholic Charities
City of Memphis Housing & Community Development
CMI Healthcare Services
Door of Hope
Dorothy Day House of Hospitality
Family Promise of Memphis
Family Safety Center
Friends for Life
Hannah's Hope
HOPE - Mid-South Peace & Justice Center

Hope House
Hospitality Hub
Housing the Homeless
Kim Daugherty
Lewis Davis CME Church
Outreach Ministry
Living Grace
Lowenstein House
Memphis Area Legal Services
Memphis VA Medical Center
Mending Vessels Ministry
Meritan
MIFA
Minact
Odessa's Foster Care Home -
Visions of Hope
Open Door
Operation Stand Down
Mid-South
OUT Memphis
Patch
Promise Development Corporation

Safe Place Emergency Shelter
Shelby County Division of Corrections
Shelby County Schools
SHIELD
Synergy Treatment Center
The Hagar Center
The Jasmine Center
The Life Church
Uplifting Veterans Center
Urban Family Ministries
Youth Changes
Youth Villages
YWCA Greater Memphis

Leading effective practices to end homelessness in Memphis and Shelby County.



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