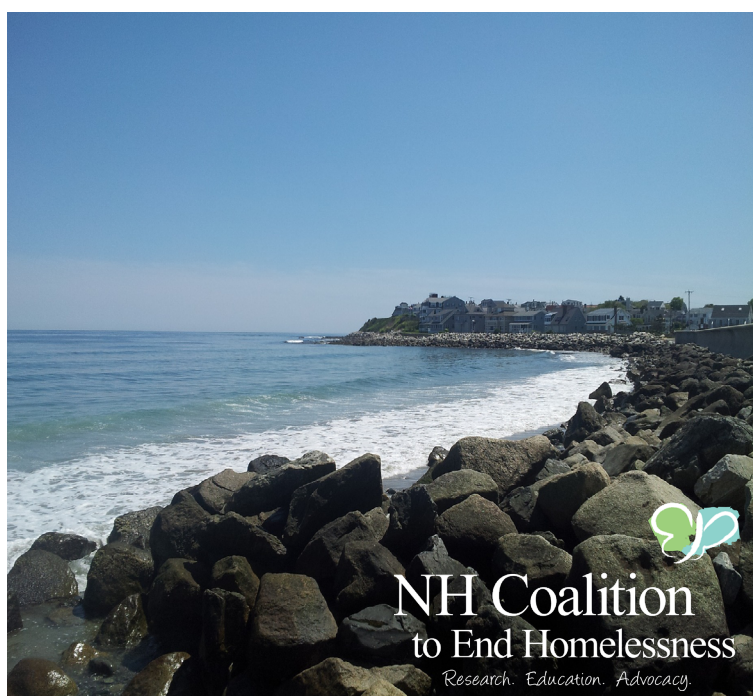


THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

An Examination
of Homelessness,
Related Economic and
Demographic Factors,
and Changes at the State
and County Levels

2018



NH Coalition
to End Homelessness
Research. Education. Advocacy.



NH Coalition to End Homelessness

Research. Education. Advocacy.

The New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness (NHCEH), a nonprofit organization located in Manchester, NH, was founded in 1990 when the issue of homelessness was becoming increasingly visible across the state. As concern about the increasing numbers of individuals and families facing homelessness was intensifying among policymakers, service providers and concerned citizens, it became clear that effectively addressing the problem would require strong leadership that could ensure the development of collaborative, thoughtful and informed solutions to this troubling problem. The NHCEH was formed to provide this leadership and has since played a key role in helping the State of New Hampshire plan, develop, and implement collaborative and constructive solutions to homelessness.

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness, I am pleased to present the 2018 State of Homelessness in NH report. This report is intended for use by a broad array of audiences to help raise awareness and understanding about the issue of homelessness in our state. As service providers in every corner of the state will tell you, each year the lack of affordable housing in New Hampshire leaves thousands of adults and children without a home, forcing them to reside in their cars, in tents, in emergency shelters or in overcrowded and sometimes unsafe living situations. The impact of homelessness is being increasingly felt across many sectors, from human service providers who feel overwhelmed by the rising numbers of people in need, to faith-based groups who are increasingly relied upon to step-in when other sources of support are unable to meet the need, to business owners who are frustrated by their inability to find employees due to the lack of safe and affordable housing. The good news, however, is that as the cross-cutting impacts of homelessness are more felt and understood, there is an accompanying desire to ensure that viable pathways to opportunity are open and accessible to all of our citizens, in all regions of the Granite State.



When looking at the numbers presented in the 2018 Point-in-Time count, some might celebrate our success in keeping the issue of homelessness at bay. While our numbers are still up 10 percent from two years ago, the count over the last year was unchanged. It is important to remember, however, that the Point-in-Time Count, one of the primary sources of data on homelessness, is conducted during one 24-hour period in January, a time when, due to the potentially life threatening consequences of living outside in freezing temperatures, some adults and children are more successful in finding temporary shelter with friends and family, and are thus not included in these numbers. This need is most clearly reflected in the data collected by the Department of Education which showed a 13% increase over the last year in young people identified as homeless within our public school system. As the affordable housing market continues to tighten, service providers consistently report more people falling into homelessness, with fewer new resources available to assist them to quickly regain safe housing.

Despite the increasing need, however, these numbers also remind us that ending homelessness in New Hampshire is possible. It is true that thousands of New Hampshire citizens are touched by homelessness each year; however, unlike in other parts of the country, our numbers are not insurmountable. With continued dedication and renewed investment, we can end this problem for good. Each year, New Hampshire's homeless services system implements new strategies and innovations that increase efficiencies, enhance collaborations and improve client outcomes. The time is now to build upon the strength of this system by making a meaningful investment in more robust system, which includes an adequate range of short and long term housing solutions for those who are currently unhoused.

New Hampshire is in a unique position to become the first state in the nation to end homelessness among all of our citizens. Reaching this goal will require that every community understand the many ways in which safe and affordable housing impacts their social and economic health and wellbeing. Relatedly, it is essential that all citizens understand the role that they play in bringing an end to homelessness. Whether you are a policy maker, landlord, volunteer, donor or a member of the general public, you can help in this effort. I invite you to find out more what YOU can do to make New Hampshire a stable and prosperous state for all of our citizens.

Best,



Cathy Kuhn, Ph.D.
Director

"The biggest thing about being homeless is that you feel like you have a sign on your head and everyone knows you're homeless, and they think you're worthless. You can't give up on yourself, you have to be willing to accept assistance."

- Emergency shelter guest



Introduction

Section I: State of Homelessness in New Hampshire

- 1.1 Overall Homelessness
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INTRODUCTION

The State of Homelessness in New Hampshire 2018¹ examines homelessness in the state between 2016 and 2018. Homeless census data during this time period reveals that the overall number of those experiencing homelessness remains relatively unchanged. The poverty rate in New Hampshire continues to fall, and remains well below the national rate of 15.1 percent². Moreover, at the same time that unemployment remains relatively low in New Hampshire, median income of renters has shown slight increases. At the same time, however, data also show increasing rents compounded by extremely low vacancy rates across the state, two key factors which significantly hinder the state's progress in ending homelessness.

This report examines key homeless census, economic and demographic data over a three year time frame with the goal of tracking the state's progress towards ending homelessness. By monitoring homeless numbers and specific indicators that affect trends in homelessness, this report provides a unique year-to-year analysis on New Hampshire's state of homelessness. Data included in this report are derived from various sources including the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority, New Hampshire Bureau of Housing Supports, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Section I presents data on homelessness at the state and county levels using the State of New Hampshire Official Point-In-Time Count estimates, as reported by the three Continuums of Care (CoC) across the state to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and mapped by the New Hampshire Bureau of Housing Supports. Additionally, Section I reviews data on student homelessness as collected and reported by the New Hampshire Department of Education. Section II describes key economic and housing factors that impact homelessness, including unemployment, median incomes, median rents, and vacancy rates.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness is a highly complex issue with a wider range of contributing factors. Social service providers, policy makers, and researchers continue to have an ongoing dialogue about what it means to be homeless and the perspectives remain varied. Although this discussion is outside the scope of this report, inconsistencies about the definition of homelessness do have implications for the state's ability to adequately respond to the problem and to serve those who are in need. In order to facilitate a complete understanding of the issue, The State of Homelessness in New Hampshire 2018 references data sources that utilize different definitions of homelessness, which can create some apparent inconsistencies among common data elements. More information regarding a particular set of data can be found by referring to the cited sources.

STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NH

Section I of this report includes data from the 2016, 2017, and 2018 State of New Hampshire Official Point-In-Time Counts and chronicles changes in overall homelessness and in homelessness among subpopulations.³ In order to track trends in homelessness across the country, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mandates that each Continuum of Care (CoC) conduct a count of homelessness during one 24-hour period during the last ten days in January, an event commonly referred to as the "Point-In-Time Count." In some respects, the data gained from these counts is limited not only because it merely captures the extent of homelessness at one moment in time, but also because of the varying methodologies utilized by CoCs across the state and nation in conducting these counts. However, despite these limitations, when compared over time, the counts

can provide an indication of upward or downward trends in the number of people experiencing homelessness throughout New Hampshire and across the country.

Also included in Section I of this report is data from the U.S. Department of Education's annual count of students that are attending public schools reported as being homeless, from kindergarten through high school. In the enumeration of students experiencing homelessness, the U.S. Department of Education utilizes a definition of homelessness that is notably different from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition. While not directly comparable to the Point-in-Time Counts, these counts are particularly useful in tracking trends in homelessness among young people and families in New Hampshire.

Notable trends in these counts include:

- Between 2016 and 2018, the overall number of people experiencing homelessness rose by 10 percent.
- The number of people in families experiencing homelessness rose by 14 percent from 2016 to 2018.
- The number of individuals living temporarily doubled-up decreased by 18.5 percent from 2016 to 2018.
- From the 2016-2017 school year to the 2017-2018 school year, the statewide number of students experiencing homelessness was 4,043.

HOUSING AND THE ECONOMICS OF HOMELESSNESS

Section II examines various housing and economic indicators that are helpful in assessing conditions that may impact the number of people who become homeless in New Hampshire. This chapter describes changes in some of these housing and economic indicators using data from the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Notable trends in these indicators include:

- The poverty rate continues to decline, dropping from 8.9 percent in 2015 to 8.5 percent in 2016, well below the national rate of 15.1 percent for 2016.
- The unemployment rate remains low in New Hampshire, holding steady at three percent in 2018.
- Increases in median gross rents continue to outpace increases in median household renter incomes, diminishing an already sparse market of affordable housing.
- The vacancy rate increased by .5 percent between 2016 and 2018, yet the state average of two percent still falls below what is considered a typically healthy vacancy rate, five percent.

“When we became homeless we ended up in a tent by the railroad tracks. We have a limited, fixed income. Most landlords told us we didn’t make enough to afford a studio. We spent 11 months in the tent until we were able to get into a shelter.”

- Emergency shelter guest

I n Section

State of Homelessness in New Hampshire

- 1.1 Overall Homelessness
- 1.2 Chronic Homelessness
- 1.3 Family Homelessness
- 1.4 Veteran Homelessness
- 1.5 Unsheltered Homelessness
- 1.6 Student Homelessness
- 1.7 Temporarily Doubled-Up

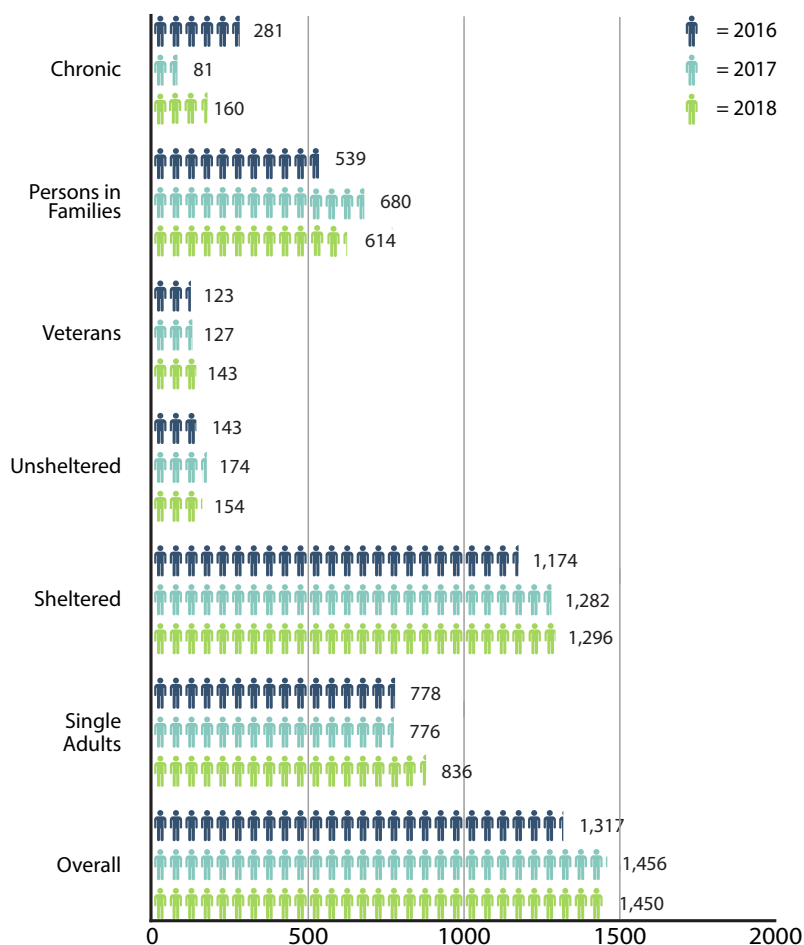
STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NH

The number of people experiencing homelessness in New Hampshire increased between 2016 and 2018 (133 people), but remained relatively unchanged from last year. Sub-populations that experienced an increase in homelessness between 2016 and 2018 include veterans, persons in families and people who are unsheltered, by 16, 14, and eight percent respectively. The number of individuals reported as temporarily doubled-up dropped by almost 19 percent from 2016 to 2018. While these estimates can vary from year to year, in part due to changes in the number of people experiencing homelessness and in part due to the difficulties of obtaining accurate data on a transient population, the relatively little change seen over the past year indicates that the rental market continues to be out of reach for many of those with the lowest incomes and other barriers to housing stability.

Figure 1.1 illustrates comparisons between various subpopulations of persons experiencing homelessness in New Hampshire. Notable findings during this period include the following:

- Seven of the ten counties in New Hampshire reported an increase of people in families experiencing homelessness with seven reporting an increase of at least ten percent between 2016 and 2018.
- Veterans comprise eight percent of the homeless population (143 people in 2018); with nine counties reporting fewer than ten veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Data among those experiencing chronic homelessness remains changeable, indicating continued difficulties in adequately identifying and capturing this population.

Figure 1.1: Trends in Homelessness By Population, 2016 to 2018



1.1 OVERALL HOMELESSNESS



After experiencing an eleven percent increase in the number of people reported as living without a home from 2016 to 2017, the number of people experiencing homelessness in New Hampshire in 2018 has not changed significantly. Map 1.1 and Table 1.1 illustrate changes in the total number of persons experiencing homelessness from 2016 to 2018 for each of the ten counties in New Hampshire. Overall, the state saw a ten percent increase in homelessness from 2016 to 2018. However, changes in homelessness varied significantly across counties over the two year period. Most recently, seven counties experienced increases in homelessness, ranging from a four percent increase in Sullivan County to a 118 percent increase in Belknap County. Cheshire and Grafton counties both experienced a decline in their homeless populations over the two year period, with Cheshire decreasing from 96 individuals in 2016 to 78 individuals in 2018, and in Grafton County, from 85 individuals in 2016 to 72 in 2018.

Map 1.1: Changes in Overall Homelessness, 2016 to 2018

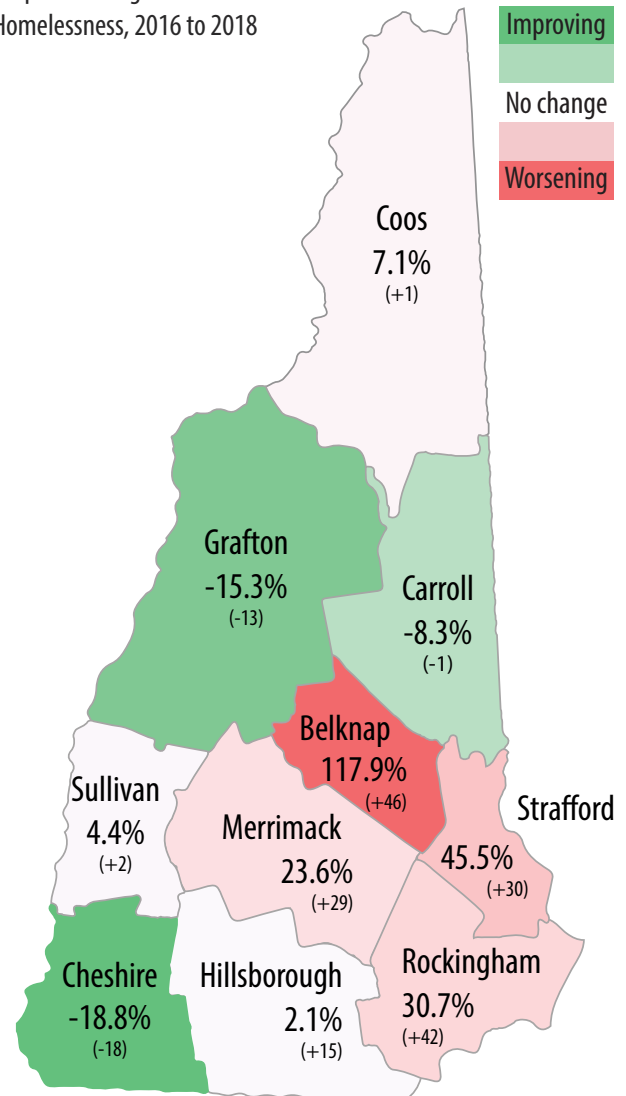


Table 1.1: Overall Homelessness

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| State | 1,317 | 1,456 | 1,450 | 10.10% |
| Belknap | 39 | 60 | 85 | 117.95% |
| Carroll | 12 | 17 | 11 | -8.33% |
| Cheshire | 96 | 72 | 78 | -18.75% |
| Coos | 14 | 13 | 15 | 7.14% |
| Grafton | 85 | 73 | 72 | -15.29% |
| Hillsborough | 700 | 713 | 715 | 2.14% |
| Merrimack | 123 | 158 | 152 | 23.58% |
| Rockingham | 137 | 183 | 179 | 30.66% |
| Strafford | 66 | 110 | 96 | 45.45% |
| Sullivan | 45 | 57 | 47 | 4.44% |

1.2 CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development uses a detailed definition⁴ for chronically homeless individuals and families who have experienced long episodes of homelessness or numerous episodes over a long period of time and who suffer from a long-term disabling condition. Individuals and families who are chronically homeless typically have complex and long-term health conditions, such as mental illness, substance use disorders, or physical disabilities. Once they become homeless, they may experience longer or repeated episodes of homelessness and have an increased difficulty returning to stable, long-term housing.

In 2010, the Obama Administration set a goal to end chronic homelessness by 2015. Efforts were focused on increasing the supply of supportive housing, and promoting the adoption of a Housing First model in order to help individuals obtain housing quickly and without barriers or preconditions. A number of communities, such as Bergen County, LA, Lancaster County, PA, and Rockford, IL⁵, have announced that they have achieved the goal of ending chronic homelessness as defined by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness⁶. The current Administration has reset the time-frame for achieving this goal on a nationwide level, as federal agencies work closely with national partners and communities to continue implementing strategies and best practices that will enable communities to end chronic homelessness.

In New Hampshire, progress is being made to accurately identify and count this population during the annual point-in-time count. While there appear to be large fluctuations over the past two years, the relatively low number of chronically homeless persons in NH coupled with the complexities of the definition and of the documentation process can cause data from one or two regions to drastically inflate or deflate the count. As a result, continued efforts on accurate reporting are critical as New Hampshire moves toward ending chronic homelessness⁷.

In 2018, it was reported that there were 160 chronically homeless individuals in New Hampshire. The counties with the highest instances of chronic homelessness include Belknap and Rockingham Counties (27 individuals), followed by Hillsborough and Strafford Counties (25 individuals). The counties reporting the lowest numbers of chronic homelessness include Coos and Sullivan Counties (2 individuals) and Carroll County (4 individuals). Map 1.2 and Table 1.2 illustrate the changes in chronically homeless persons from 2016 to 2018 for each county in New Hampshire.

Map 1.2: Changes in Chronic Homelessness, 2016 to 2018

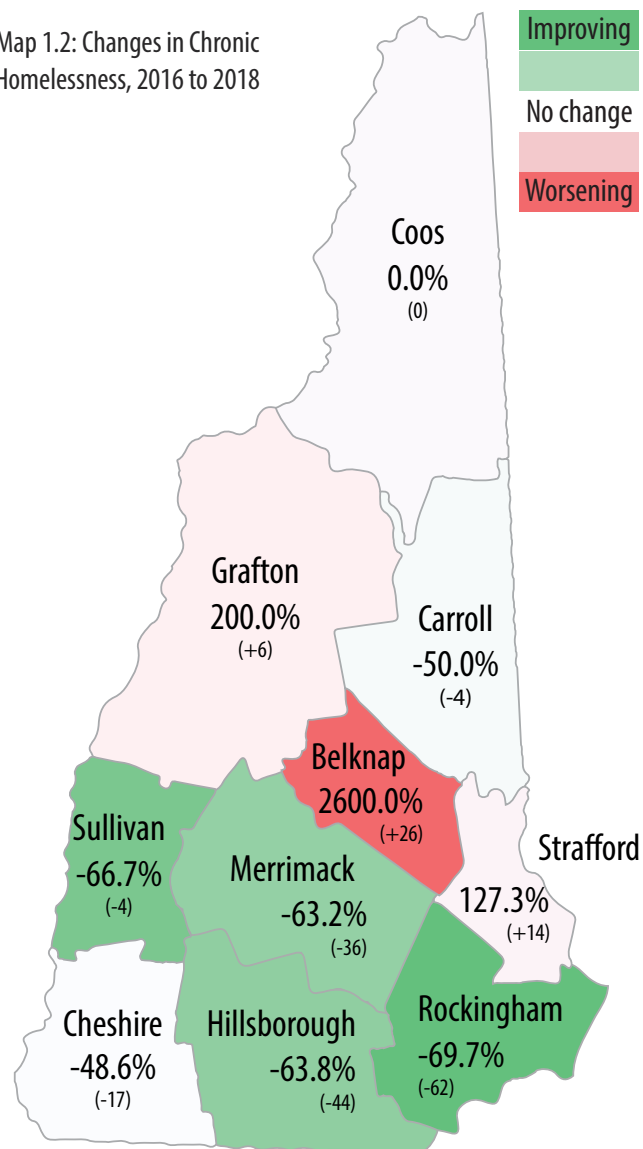


Table 1.2: Chronic Homelessness

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|---------------------|
| State | 281 | 81 | 160 | -43.06% |
| Belknap | 1 | 4 | 27 | 2600.00% |
| Carroll | 8 | 0 | 4 | -50.00% |
| Cheshire | 35 | 8 | 18 | -48.57% |
| Coos | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0.00% |
| Grafton | 3 | 0 | 9 | 200.00% |
| Hillsborough | 69 | 31 | 25 | -63.77% |
| Merrimack | 57 | 13 | 21 | -63.16% |
| Rockingham | 89 | 11 | 27 | -69.66% |
| Strafford | 11 | 6 | 25 | 127.27% |
| Sullivan | 6 | 7 | 2 | -66.67% |

1.3 FAMILY HOMELESSNESS



While homelessness is perceived to be an issue primarily associated with single adults, particularly single men, families comprise a substantial portion of this population. In 2018, the number of persons in families experiencing homelessness contributed to almost half of the overall homeless population in New Hampshire. Family homelessness is categorized as at least one parent with a child under the age of 18. National data indicates that many families experiencing homelessness are made up of young (ages 18-30) mothers with one or two children⁸. Homeless families are more likely to live in a shelter, hotel/motel or temporarily doubled-up rather than living unsheltered, and in many cases may become homeless due to an event or temporary condition such as loss of a job, mental and/or physical illness, domestic violence, or divorce⁹. In addition, families who have experienced homelessness are more susceptible to generational poverty.

In the 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, known as Opening Doors, family homelessness was recognized as a key federal priority. Since that time, national data report a 23 percent reduction in family homelessness. In 2017, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness began the process of revising the current plan that will build on this success to have a systematic response in place by 2020 preventing or otherwise making family homelessness a rare, brief and non-recurring experience.

Map 1.3 and Table 1.3¹⁰ depict the change of people in families experiencing homelessness from 2016 to 2018 in New Hampshire. Despite a statewide decrease between 2017 and 2018, the number of people in families experiencing homelessness increased by 14 percent over the two year time period. Seven of the ten counties in New Hampshire saw increases in family homelessness ranging from an 11 percent increase in Hillsborough and Merrimack Counties to an almost 67 percent increase in Sullivan County. While almost every county experienced an increase between 2016-2018, Carroll County saw a decrease of 70 percent, followed by Cheshire County with a 29 percent decrease and Grafton County with a 22 percent decrease.

Map 1.3: Changes in Family Homelessness, 2016 to 2018

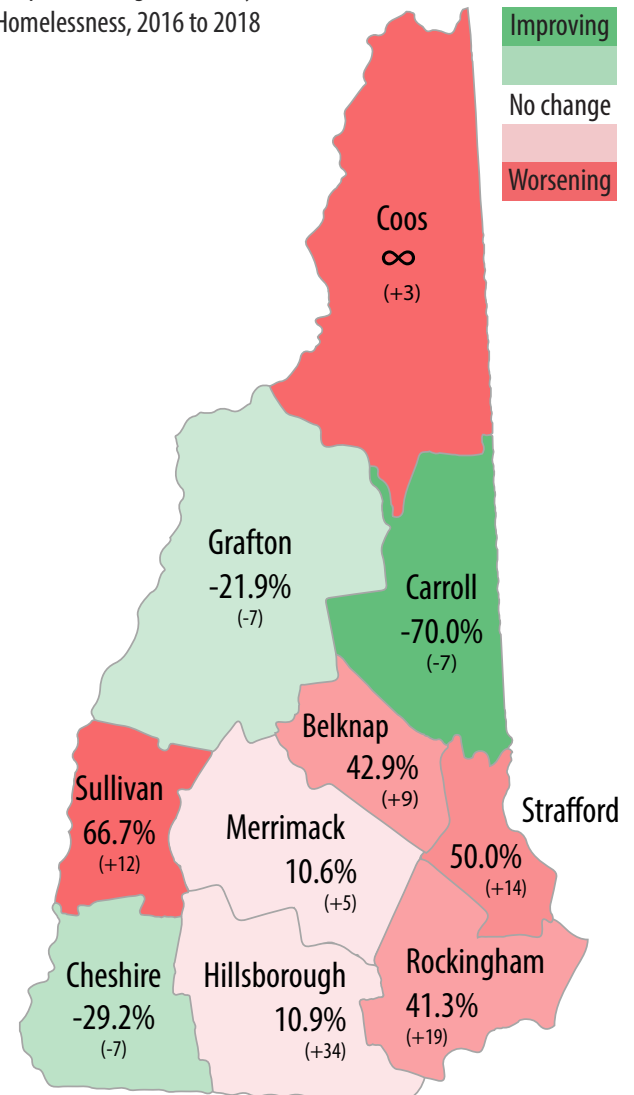


Table 1.3: Persons in Families Experiencing Homelessness

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| State | 539 | 680 | 614 | 13.91% |
| Belknap | 21 | 31 | 30 | 42.86% |
| Carroll | 10 | 16 | 3 | -70.00% |
| Cheshire | 24 | 19 | 17 | -29.17% |
| Coos | 0 | 4 | 3 | ∞ |
| Grafton | 32 | 24 | 25 | -21.88% |
| Hillsborough | 313 | 348 | 347 | 10.86% |
| Merrimack | 47 | 80 | 52 | 10.64% |
| Rockingham | 46 | 91 | 65 | 41.30% |
| Strafford | 28 | 44 | 42 | 50.00% |
| Sullivan | 18 | 23 | 30 | 66.67% |

1.4 VETERAN HOMELESSNESS



Addressing veteran homelessness has been at the forefront of national attention. A significant federal investment has been made to provide housing and services for veterans experiencing homelessness, with federal agencies encouraging more in-depth collaborations among community providers and the local Veteran Administration.

In 2017, the City of Nashua received certification from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness for effectively¹¹ ending homelessness among veterans in the Greater Nashua region (Nashua, Brookline, Amherst, Hollis, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Hudson, Litchfield and Mason)¹². Nationally, three states including Connecticut, Delaware and Virginia, as well as 61 communities (including Greater Nashua, NH) have received this federal designation. The State of New Hampshire is focusing efforts to replicate the system statewide and will be pursuing an End to Veteran Homelessness designation¹³.

Homelessness for veterans in New Hampshire has increased by 16 percent from 2016 to 2018. Five counties reported an increase in veterans experiencing homelessness, including Belknap, Grafton, Hillsborough, Rockingham, and Sullivan Counties. Merrimack and Strafford Counties both reported no change in their count. Carroll¹⁴ and Coos Counties both reported that there were zero veterans experiencing homelessness in their regions.

While veteran homelessness continues to increase throughout the state, a closer look at the data shows that the vast majority of homeless veterans (95%) are staying in an Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing program, with only 5% being unsheltered. These locations are safer and have more access to resources than living outside and can quickly connect veterans to permanent housing.

Map 1.4: Changes in Veteran Homelessness, 2016 to 2018

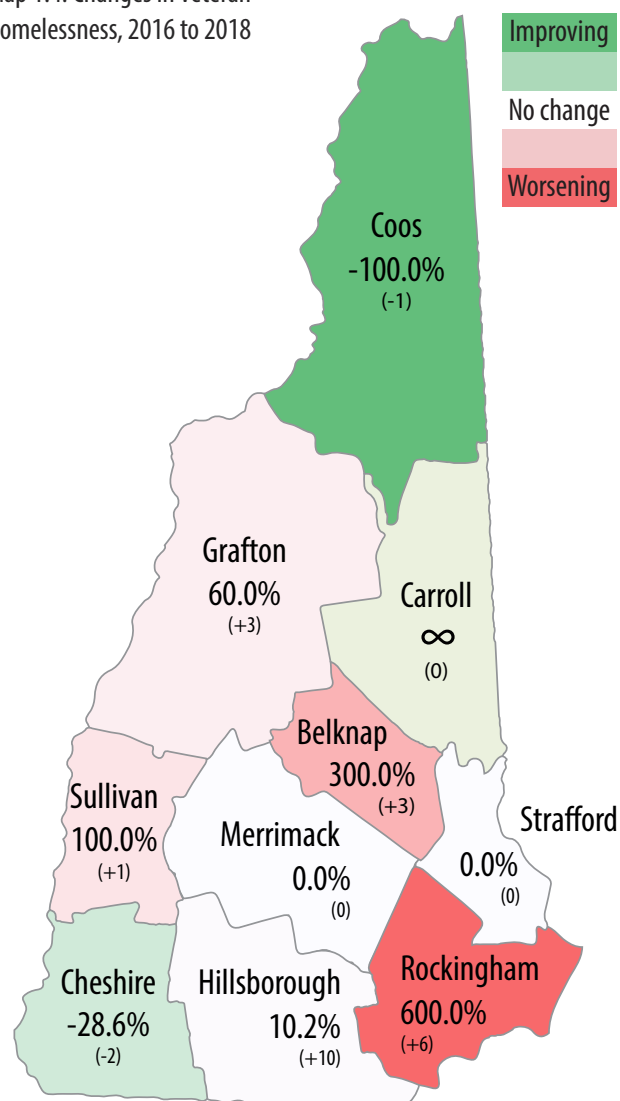


Table 1.4: Veteran Homelessness

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| State | 123 | 127 | 143 | 16.26% |
| Belknap | 1 | 1 | 4 | 300.00% |
| Carroll | 0 | 1 | 0 | ∞ |
| Cheshire | 7 | 9 | 5 | -28.57% |
| Coos | 1 | 0 | 0 | -100.00% |
| Grafton | 5 | 4 | 8 | 60.00% |
| Hillsborough | 98 | 87 | 108 | 10.20% |
| Merrimack | 6 | 14 | 6 | 0.00% |
| Rockingham | 1 | 6 | 7 | 600.00% |
| Strafford | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0.00% |
| Sullivan | 1 | 1 | 2 | 100.00% |

1.5 UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS



For purposes of the federal Point-in-Time Count, people experiencing homelessness are defined in one of two distinct categories: those who are living in temporary shelters such as emergency shelters or transitional housing, and those who are living unsheltered, such as a tent, a car, or somewhere else not meant for human habitation. Although those experiencing unsheltered homelessness in New Hampshire comprise only 1/10th of the homeless population, they are the most visible face of homelessness, and in many cases face the greatest barriers to stability. Unsheltered individuals often have longer histories of homelessness and higher rates of physical, mental and behavioral health challenges. Unsheltered individuals are also exposed to increased health and safety vulnerabilities, including increased exposure to violence and a greater involvement with the criminal justice system¹⁵. While there are many factors that can lead to unsheltered homelessness including shelter capacity, low-barrier access to services, and knowledge of the resources available to people experiencing homelessness, a recent study indicated that there is a strong correlation between higher median rental costs and unsheltered homelessness¹⁶.

Between 2016 and 2018, the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in New Hampshire increased by almost eight percent. It is worth noting, however, that there was a decrease of 11.5 percent from 2017 to 2018. Additionally, while there appears to be stark changes in unsheltered data in certain counties, most counties report low numbers of unsheltered homelessness. As a result, small changes can result in large percentage shifts. That being said, the increase in Belknap County of 34 individuals is worth monitoring going forward. Other counties that saw an increase in the number of unsheltered individuals include Strafford, Rockingham and Carroll Counties by 27, six and four individuals respectively. Four counties saw a decrease in this sub-population. In Hillsborough County, the count decreased by 37 individuals and Grafton County saw a decrease of 12 individuals. The count in Cheshire County remained the same (two individuals), and Coos¹⁷ and Sullivan Counties both reported counting zero unsheltered homeless.

Map 1.5: Changes in Unsheltered Homelessness, 2016 to 2018

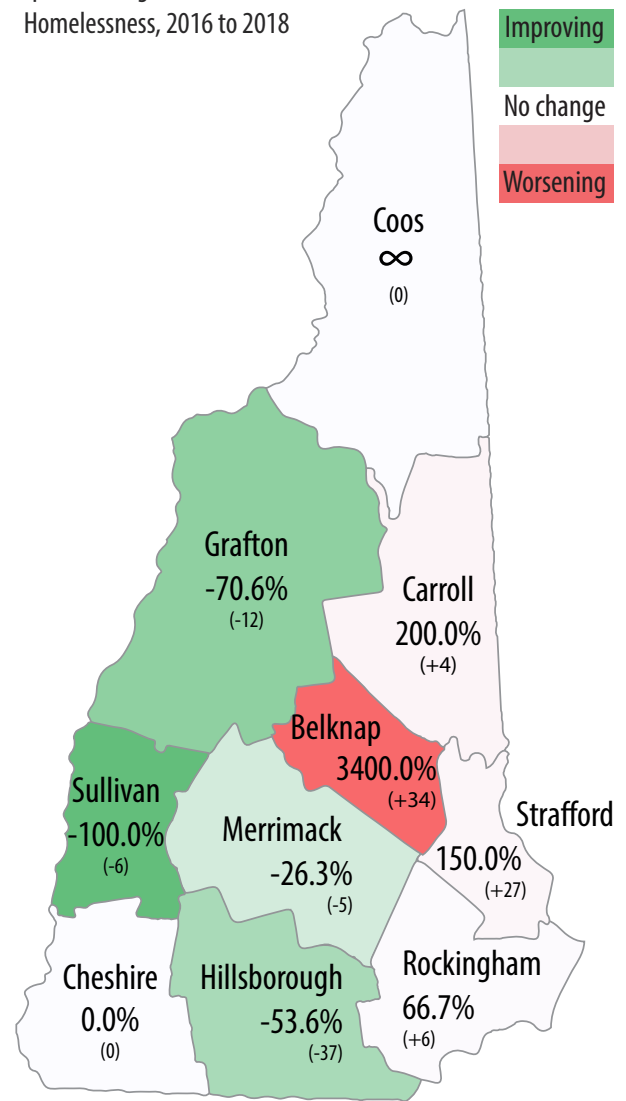


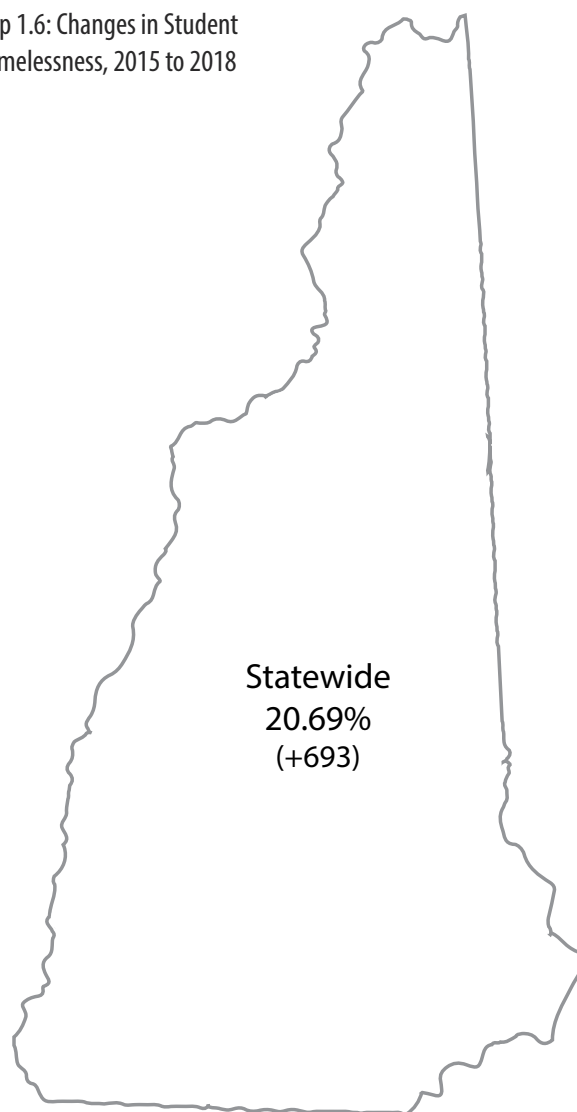
Table 1.5: Unsheltered Homelessness

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|
| State | 143 | 174 | 154 | 7.69% |
| Belknap | 1 | 11 | 35 | 3,400.00% |
| Carroll | 2 | 5 | 6 | 200.00% |
| Cheshire | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0.00% |
| Coos | 0 | 0 | 0 | ∞ |
| Grafton | 17 | 12 | 5 | -70.59% |
| Hillsborough | 69 | 66 | 32 | -53.62% |
| Merrimack | 19 | 5 | 14 | -26.32% |
| Rockingham | 9 | 21 | 15 | 66.67% |
| Strafford | 18 | 38 | 45 | 150.00% |
| Sullivan | 6 | 11 | 0 | -100.00% |

1.6 STUDENT HOMELESSNESS



Map 1.6: Changes in Student Homelessness, 2015 to 2018



School-aged youth experiencing homelessness are a uniquely vulnerable population. Research indicates that abuse, family breakdown and disruptive family relationships are common contributing factors to student homelessness¹⁸. Negative outcomes of student homelessness include poor school performance, food insecurity, poor physical and mental health with limited access to health care, exposure to violence, increased risk of substance use disorders and juvenile delinquency¹⁹. Oftentimes, students experiencing homelessness may be couch-surfing, living in a shelter, or outside in a car or tent, and may be accompanied by friends or family, or may be unaccompanied. In NH, there are currently no emergency shelters specifically designated for youth 18 and under²⁰. Child and Family Services provides crisis intervention by connecting homeless youth with emergency shelter through host homes and local facilities²¹.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVA), enacted in 1987 by the federal government, equips schools with services to help alleviate the numerous barriers students experiencing homelessness may face while in pursuit of education. As mandated by the MVA, each district has a designated staff member to assist students experiencing homelessness. This Homeless Liaison can assist students and their families with enrolling in public education, accessing transportation to and from school, acquiring necessary school essentials, connecting to community services and navigating issues related to legal guardianship requirements. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is widely credited with significantly enhancing the extent to which students experiencing homelessness are able to remain in school²².

The New Hampshire Department of Education annually collects statewide data on school-aged children experiencing homelessness²³. Map 1.6 and Table 1.6 reflect changes in student homelessness for the 2017-2018 school year. Statewide the number of students experiencing homelessness increased from 3350 students in 2015-2016 to 4043 students in 2017-2018. County level data was unavailable at the time this report was published.

Table 1.6: Student Homelessness

| | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | % Change, 2015-2018 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| State | 3350 | 3562 | 4043 | 20.69% |
| Belknap | 256 | (225-241) | - | - |
| Carroll | 202 | (166-214) | - | - |
| Cheshire | 202 | (223-247) | - | - |
| Coos | 61 | (32-64) | - | - |
| Grafton | 152 | (134-246) | - | - |
| Hillsborough | 1200 | (1299-1403) | - | - |
| Merrimack | 262 | (207-279) | - | - |
| Rockingham | 422 | (395-483) | - | - |
| Strafford | 287 | (386-394) | - | - |
| Sullivan | 306 | (271-295) | - | - |

1.7 TEMPORARILY DOUBLED-UP



Individuals that are considered “doubled-up” stay temporarily with family or friends because they are unable to find or afford their own housing. Networks of friends and family can prevent someone from falling into homelessness, providing some with the stability and support needed to regain independent housing. Yet this population often lives at the precipice of homelessness and their living arrangements, which are typically uncertain, can cause the entire doubled-up household to experience a number of financial and social stressors. Sometimes these doubled-up situations can cause more harm than good, for not only the person or persons added to the home, but for the receiving household as well.

Those who are living temporarily doubled-up do not fall within the scope of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s definition of what it means to be homeless. Although each Continuum of Care makes efforts to capture this population during the annual Point-In-Time count, only those people who happen to have contact with a homeless service agency and self-report as living doubled-up are enumerated. It is important to note that this population is commonly referred to as the “hidden homeless” and is therefore one of the most difficult to accurately and consistently measure. As such, this data is widely acknowledged as a significant undercount of the true population total.

Between 2016 and 2018, it was reported that the number of individuals living temporarily doubled-up decreased by 18.5 percent. Sullivan County reported a decrease of 100 percent (from 97 individuals to zero) while in contrast Belknap County reported an increase from zero individuals to 41.

Map 1.7: Changes in Temporarily Doubled- Up Individuals, 2016 to 2018

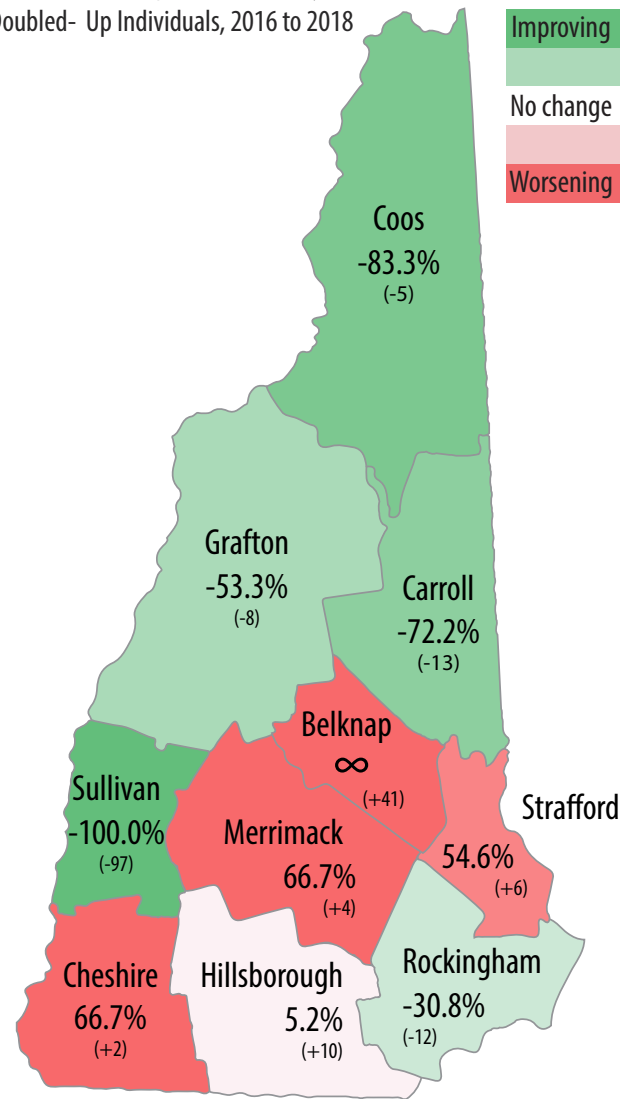


Table 1.7: Temporarily Doubled-up Individuals

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| State | 389 | 398 | 317 | -18.51% |
| Belknap | 0 | 2 | 41 | ∞ |
| Carroll | 18 | 6 | 5 | -72.22% |
| Cheshire | 3 | 9 | 5 | 66.67% |
| Coos | 6 | 13 | 1 | -83.33% |
| Grafton | 15 | 11 | 7 | -53.33% |
| Hillsborough | 194 | 170 | 204 | 5.15% |
| Merrimack | 6 | 9 | 10 | 66.67% |
| Rockingham | 39 | 34 | 27 | -30.77% |
| Strafford | 11 | 38 | 17 | 54.55% |
| Sullivan | 97 | 106 | 0 | -100.00% |

"Due to the overwhelming need for shelter for families with children, we have a long waitlist of families, many of whom are reporting sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation. There are new families calling every single day looking for shelter and we do not have the capacity to meet the need."

- Coordinated Entry Specialist, Manchester Region

II Section

Housing and the Economics of Homelessness

2.1 Unemployment Rate

2.2 Poverty Rate

2.3 Renter Income & Gross Rent

2.4 Vacancy Rate: 2-Bedroom Units

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HOUSING AND THE ECONOMICS OF HOMELESSNESS

Although there are many factors that can lead an individual or family into homelessness, poverty and the lack of affordable housing are two key drivers. This section utilizes economic and housing data from the American Community Survey and the Bureau of Labor Statistics as well as from the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority to explore the economic landscape for those struggling to attain or maintain housing.

2.1 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



The loss of employment for individuals and families can quickly lead to housing instability and put people at a greater risk of homelessness, especially if that unemployment persists over a long period. While significant portions of people experiencing homelessness are employed, many are underemployed or working part-time²⁴. Table 2.1 and Map 2.1 show the change in the unemployment rate²⁵ from 2016 to 2018²⁶. New Hampshire has traditionally experienced a lower unemployment rate than the rest of the nation, with its current rate less than three percent compared to about five percent nationally. The unemployment rate in each county remains low in New Hampshire, with a low of 2.2 percent in Grafton and Sullivan Counties and a high of 3.5 percent in Coos County.

Despite unemployment rates that are close to historic lows, it is important to note that many low-income people are still unable to attain stable housing due to low wages and/or temporary and irregular work opportunities. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition²⁷, an individual working full-time at minimum wage²⁸ would need to work 123 hours per week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent in New Hampshire. The same report lists New Hampshire as having the 14th highest housing wage in the country, with a worker having to earn \$22.32 per hour in order to afford a 2-bedroom unit in the state.

Map 2.1: Changes in Unemployment Rate, 2016 to 2018

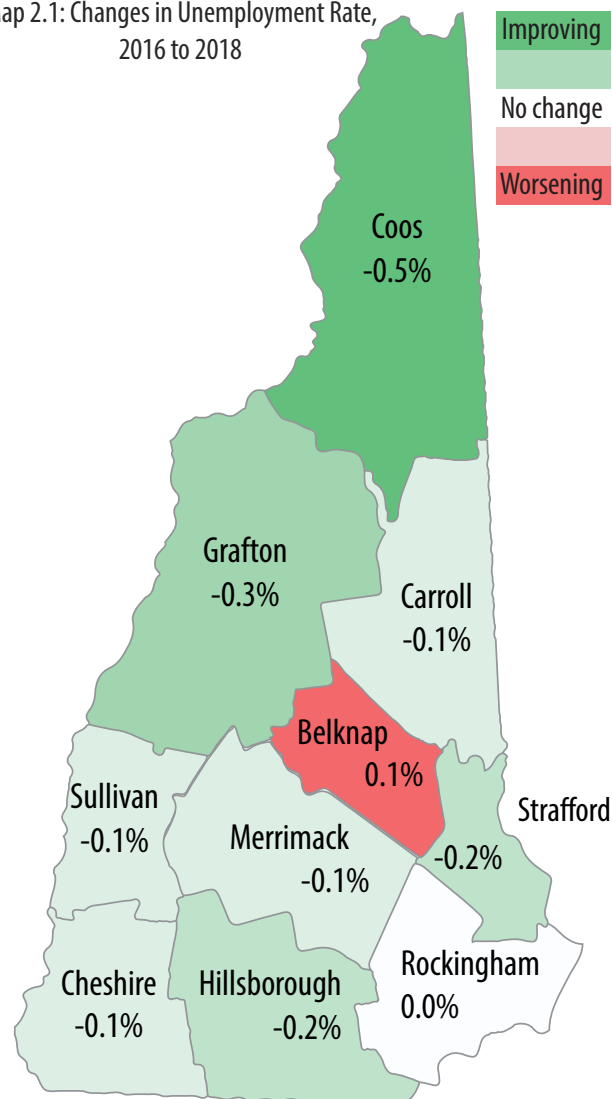


Table 2.1: Unemployment Rate

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| State | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.7% | -0.1% |
| Belknap | 2.6% | 2.7% | 2.7% | 0.1% |
| Carroll | 2.8% | 2.9% | 2.7% | -0.1% |
| Cheshire | 2.8% | 2.8% | 2.7% | -0.1% |
| Coos | 4.0% | 3.8% | 3.5% | -0.5% |
| Grafton | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.2% | -0.3% |
| Hillsborough | 3.0% | 3.0% | 2.8% | -0.2% |
| Merrimack | 2.5% | 2.5% | 2.4% | -0.1% |
| Rockingham | 3.0% | 3.0% | 3.0% | 0.0% |
| Strafford | 2.6% | 2.4% | 2.4% | -0.2% |
| Sullivan | 2.4% | 2.4% | 2.3% | -0.1% |

2.2 POVERTY RATE



Although there are many factors that can lead to homelessness, those who have the lowest incomes are often at greatest risk, as one unexpected financial, medical or social hardship can cause them to fall into homelessness. As a result, many low income households often find themselves fluctuating in and out of homelessness year after year. The rate at which people are living below the poverty line can be an important indicator of the extent to which people are living on the fringes of homelessness.

After several years of increases, the poverty rate has declined, with the 2016 rate at 8.5 percent²⁹. While New Hampshire's poverty rate continues to be considerably lower than the national average (at 15.1 percent for 2016³⁰), financial stability is still out of reach for many in New Hampshire.

Table 2.2 and Map 2.2 depict the change in the rate of poverty in New Hampshire from 2014 to 2016.

Map 2.2: Changes in Poverty Rate,
2014 to 2016

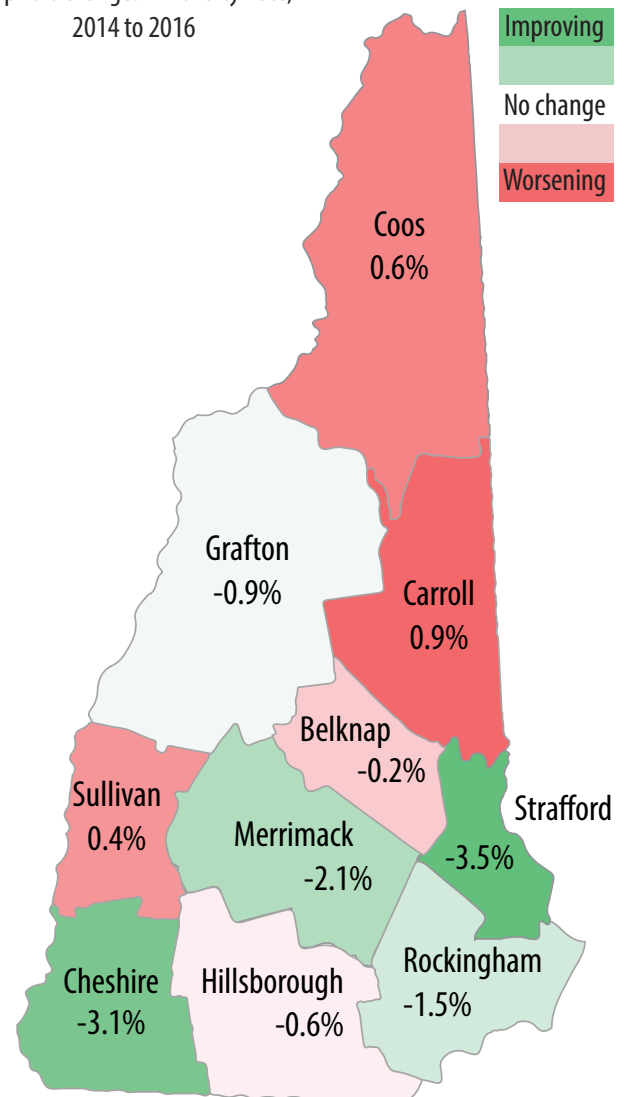


Table 2.2: Poverty Rate

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | % Change, 2014-2016 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| State | 8.9% | 8.9% | 8.5% | -0.4% |
| Belknap | 10.2% | 8.8% | 10.0% | -0.2% |
| Carroll | 9.6% | 9.6% | 10.5% | 0.9% |
| Cheshire | 11.7% | 9.9% | 8.6% | -3.1% |
| Coos | 13.2% | 16.1% | 13.8% | 0.6% |
| Grafton | 11.2% | 11.2% | 10.3% | -0.9% |
| Hillsborough | 8.6% | 8.0% | 8.0% | -0.6% |
| Merrimack | 9.5% | 8.3% | 7.4% | -2.1% |
| Rockingham | 5.7% | 5.2% | 4.2% | -1.5% |
| Strafford | 11.2% | 11.4% | 7.7% | -3.5% |
| Sullivan | 9.1% | 11.2% | 9.5% | 0.4% |

2.3 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD RENTER INCOME & MONTHLY MEDIAN GROSS RENT



The relationship between income and rent is an important indicator of the extent to which people are able to access housing. When gross rents outpace the growth of renter household income, housing becomes less and less affordable, forcing renters, particularly economically vulnerable renters, into a position where they either need to cut expenses in other parts of their lives or attempt to find other more affordable housing.

Table 2.3.1 and Map 2.3.1 show the change in median renter household incomes between 2016 and 2018³¹, while Table 2.3.2 and Map 2.3.2 show the change in median gross rents during that same time frame. Both sets of data come from the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority's Annual Residential Rental Cost Surveys. Statewide, median renter incomes have continued to rise, increasing by about 6.2 percent, from \$37,949 in 2016 to \$40,305 in 2018. Eight counties saw an increase in median renter income, while two counties Belknap and Grafton, experienced a decrease of 7.6 and 1.3 percent respectively. While the increase in median income is a positive sign, it is being outpaced by increases in median rents across the states, which have risen by about 7.5 percent, from \$1,206 in 2016 to \$1,296 in 2018. The median cost of a 2-bedroom rental rose in all ten counties, ranging from a \$6 increase in Sullivan County to a \$135 increase Rockingham County.

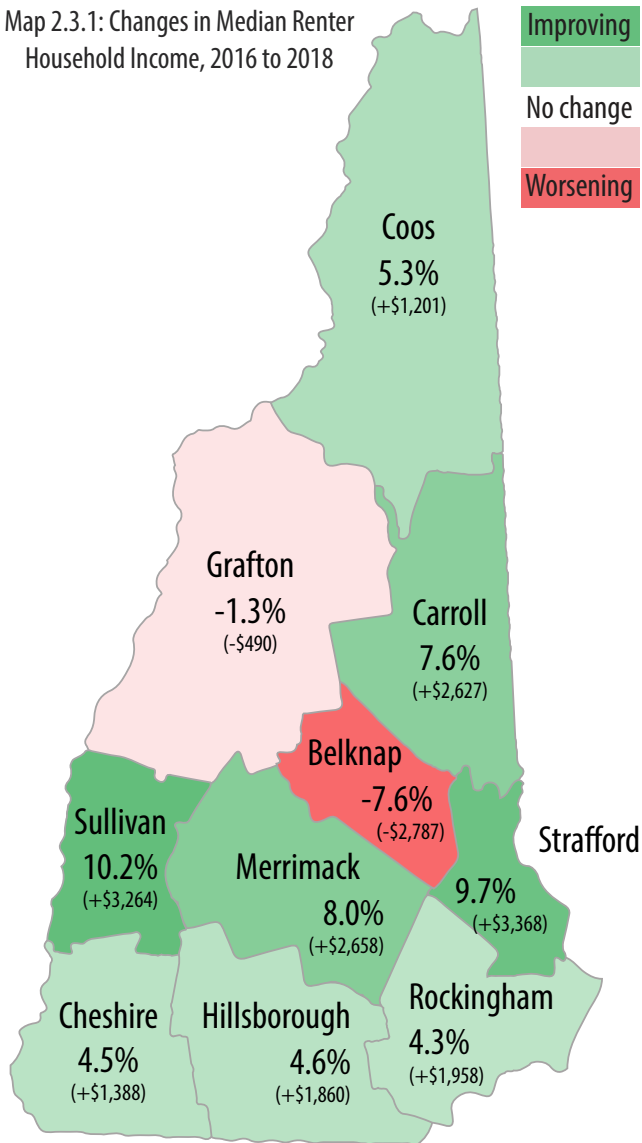
Table 2.3.1: Median Renter Household Income

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| State | \$37,949 | \$38,560 | \$40,305 | 6.21% |
| Belknap | \$36,690 | \$37,533 | \$33,903 | -7.60% |
| Carroll | \$34,404 | \$35,602 | \$37,031 | 7.64% |
| Cheshire | \$30,655 | \$30,921 | \$32,043 | 4.53% |
| Coos | \$22,834 | \$22,029 | \$24,035 | 5.26% |
| Grafton | \$37,105 | \$36,334 | \$36,615 | -1.32% |
| Hillsborough | \$40,482 | \$40,772 | \$42,342 | 4.59% |
| Merrimack | \$33,324 | \$34,335 | \$35,982 | 7.98% |
| Rockingham | \$45,068 | \$46,124 | \$47,026 | 4.34% |
| Strafford | \$34,857 | \$34,640 | \$38,225 | 9.66% |
| Sullivan | \$31,968 | \$31,601 | \$35,232 | 10.21% |

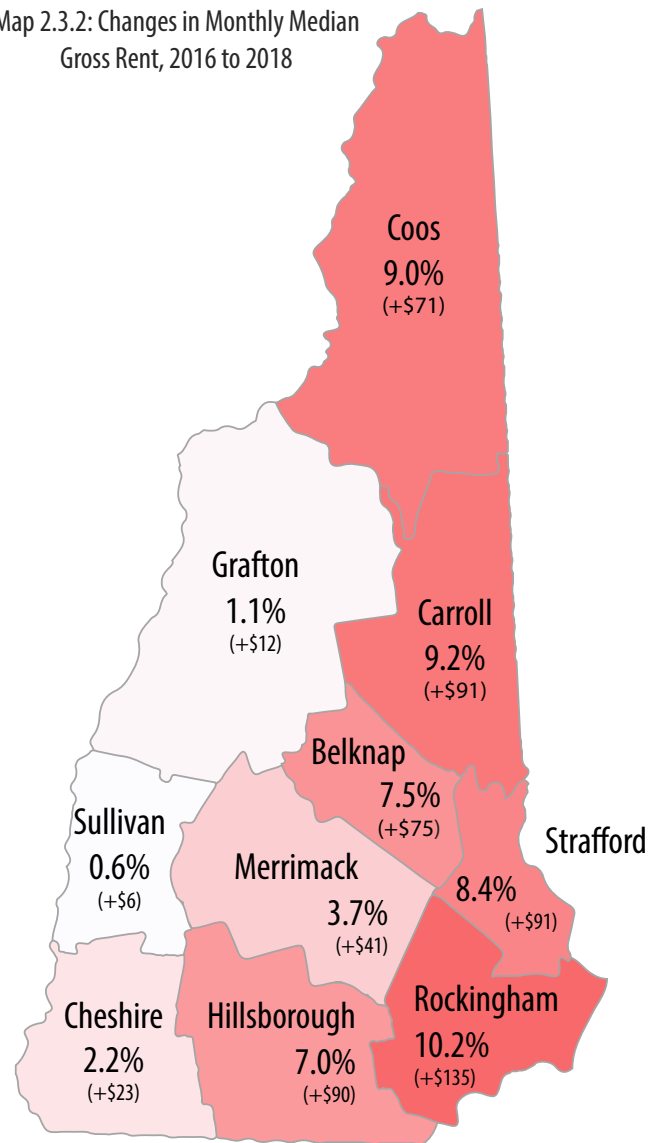
Table 2.3.2: Monthly Median Gross Rent 2-Bedroom Units

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| State | \$1,206 | \$1,259 | \$1,296 | 7.46% |
| Belknap | \$996 | \$1,028 | \$1,071 | 7.53% |
| Carroll | \$986 | \$1,040 | \$1,077 | 9.23% |
| Cheshire | \$1,045 | \$1,063 | \$1,068 | 2.20% |
| Coos | \$790 | \$818 | \$861 | 8.99% |
| Grafton | \$1,134 | \$1,147 | \$1,146 | 1.06% |
| Hillsborough | \$1,278 | \$1,384 | \$1,368 | 7.04% |
| Merrimack | \$1,120 | \$1,176 | \$1,161 | 3.66% |
| Rockingham | \$1,321 | \$1,409 | \$1,456 | 10.22% |
| Strafford | \$1,083 | \$1,156 | \$1,174 | 8.40% |
| Sullivan | \$965 | \$968 | \$971 | 0.62% |

Map 2.3.1: Changes in Median Renter Household Income, 2016 to 2018



Map 2.3.2: Changes in Monthly Median Gross Rent, 2016 to 2018



"I work full-time and I take home \$28k after taxes and deductions. I can't find affordable rent within an hour of work. I have never been without a place to live but with the high rents coupled with the high fuel and food costs I have found myself staying back with my parents over an hour away. When winter comes I will have to stay in my van to ensure I can make it to work."

- Paul, NH Resident

2.4 VACANCY RATE: 2-BEDROOM UNITS

Vacancy rates are the percentage of available rental units in a given area. An adequate number of vacancies allows for normal changes in the housing market and for consumers to have a reasonable level of choice. A balanced rental market is thought to have vacancy rates of around five percent, while lower rates indicate fewer options for renters and higher rates indicate that the available options may not be desirable for renters.

There was an increase in the overall vacancy rate in New Hampshire, rising from 1.5 percent in 2016 to two percent in 2018³². The vacancy rates in Merrimack and Strafford counties saw an increase of 1.3 and 1.2 percent respectively. Belknap, Cheshire, Coos, Rockingham and Sullivan counties all saw a decrease in vacancy rates. The vacancy rate of Rockingham County remained unchanged between 2016 and 2018, at one percent.

These low vacancy rates further exacerbate the scarcity of affordable housing in these regions of the state, making it even more difficult for low income renters to find stable housing. The combined impact of rising rents and declining vacancy rates often leads many individuals and families to live in temporary rooming houses, campgrounds or motels, often described by advocates as “housing of last resort.” These living environments can be particularly difficult for children and families who are forced to relinquish their privacy and to live in very cramped and sometimes unsafe quarters in order to maintain shelter.

Map 2.4: Changes in Vacancy Rates,
2016 to 2018

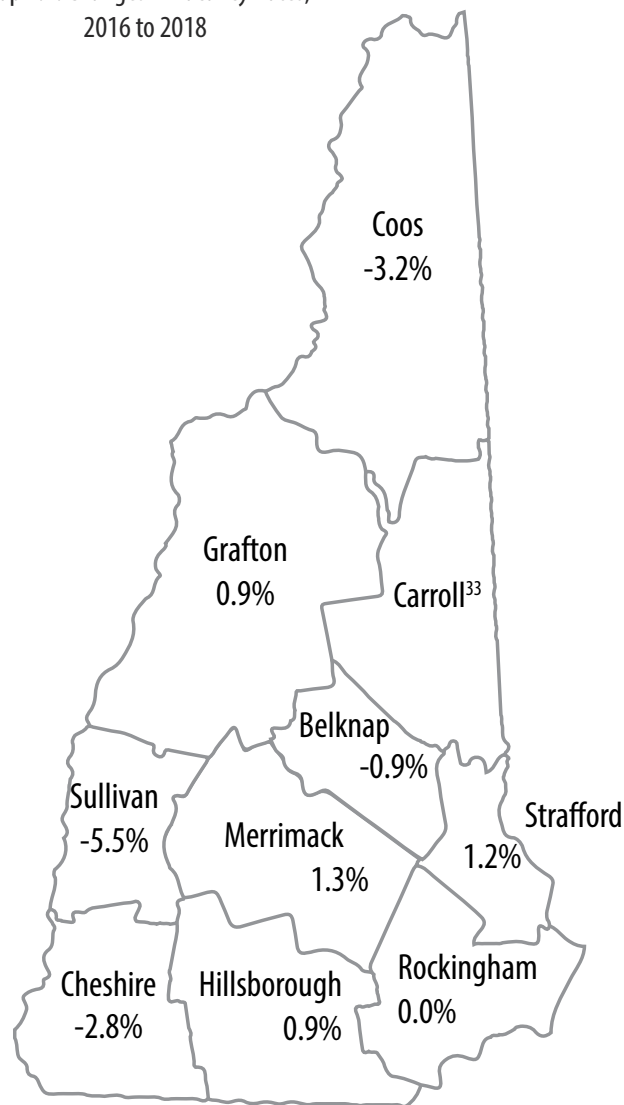


Table 2.4: Vacancy Rate: 2-Bedroom Units

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | % Change, 2016-2018 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| State | 1.50% | 1.40% | 2.00% | 0.5% |
| Belknap | 4.90% | 4.63% | 4.00% | -0.9% |
| Carroll | 1.40% | N/A% | N/A% ³³ | N/A |
| Cheshire | 4.50% | 0.96% | 1.70% | -2.8% |
| Coos | 6.90% | 10.69% | 3.70% | -3.2% |
| Grafton | 3.00% | 2.96% | 3.90% | 0.9% |
| Hillsborough | 0.90% | 1.20% | 1.80% | 0.9% |
| Merrimack | 1.20% | 1.08% | 2.50% | 1.3% |
| Rockingham | 1.00% | 1.11% | 1.00% | 0.0% |
| Strafford | 1.40% | 1.25% | 2.60% | 1.2% |
| Sullivan | 6.40% | 2.25% | 0.90% | -5.5% |

CONCLUSION

The data in this report indicates that our efforts to end homelessness have been successful in some areas, and that more work remains to be done in others. Between 2016 and 2017, overall homelessness decreased slightly, while homelessness among families as well as among those who are unsheltered decreased more substantially. At the same time, however, we saw increases in chronic homelessness, homelessness among students, and homelessness among veterans. While our progress among these subpopulations varies, New Hampshire's goal is to end homelessness among all of those who are experiencing homelessness in our state. As outlined in the newly released Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, New Hampshire is making consistent progress towards strengthening our systemic response which ensures that homelessness can be prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, is a brief and one-time occurrence. Towards this end, the state is working to strengthen and streamline our statewide coordinated entry process, which helps to ensure that those who are experiencing a housing crisis are quickly connected to resources that are tailored to their unique needs. Relatedly, we are creating new "By-Name" Lists, which help us to coordinate efforts to actively outreach to those who are unsheltered or who have been homeless for extended periods of time. Additionally, we continue to enhance the services provided within our portfolio of high quality, permanent supportive housing, ensuring that it is closely connected to other essential systems of care including mental, physical and behavioral healthcare. And perhaps most importantly, we continue to strongly advocate for additional investments in affordable housing in the state, undeniably the most critical component in effectively ending homelessness in NH. While the state certainly faces significant challenges, there is a common understanding of what we need to do to prevent and end homelessness in NH, and a growing enthusiasm to get there. As always, we invite you to be a part of this growing enthusiasm and learn what you can do to help ensure that every adult and child has access to the safe housing they need to become healthy, successful, contributing citizens of our state.

ENDNOTES

Introduction

- 1 This report is modeled after The State of Homelessness in America, an annual report produced by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau. Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017. 2018. <http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-259.html>.
- 3 NH Department of Health and Human Services. Point in Time Surveys. 2018. <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcbcs/bhhs/homelessdata.htm>.

1.2 Chronic Homelessness

- 4 HUD Exchange. 2015. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Defining-Chronically-Homeless-Final-Rule.pdf>.
- 5 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Communities That Have Ended Homelessness. 2018. <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/communities-that-have-ended-homelessness/>.
- 6 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Criteria and Benchmark for Achieving the Goal of Ending Chronic Homelessness. 2018. <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-and-benchmark-for-ending-chronic-homelessness/>.
- 7 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Ending Chronic Homelessness in 2017. 2015. https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Ending_Chronic_Homelessness_in_2017.pdf.

1.3 Family Homelessness

- 8 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress." Last modified 2018. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>.
- 9 Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness. "FAQ About Family Homelessness." Last modified June 19, 2017. <https://www.icphusa.org/blog/faq-family-homelessness/>.
- 10 A change from zero is calculated as an infinite percent change. Therefore, the infinity symbol is used to represent this change.

1.4 Veteran Homelessness

- 11 Federal benchmarks that indicate that communities are meeting those goals include 1) chronic and long-term homelessness among veterans has been ended; 2) Veterans have quick access to permanent housing; 3) The community has sufficient permanent housing capacity; 4) The community is committed to housing first and provides service-intensive transitional housing to veterans experiencing homelessness only in limited instances.
- 12 New Hampshire Public Radio. "Veteran Homelessness' Effectively' Ended in Nashua Area." 2017.
- 13 U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Ending Veteran Homelessness. 2018. <https://www.va.gov/homeless/endingvetshomelessness.asp>.
- 14 Ibid., 13.

1.5 Unsheltered Homelessness

- 15 National Alliance to End Homelessness. "Exploring the Crisis of Unsheltered Homelessness." 2018. <https://>

endhomelessness.org/exploring-crisis-unsheltered-homelessness/.

16 Gabriel, Stuart A., and Gary D. Painter. UCLA Affordable Housing Policy Brief. 2017. https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/Documents/areas/ctr/ziman/AH-Policy-Brief_Gabriel-Painter_08.29.17.pdf.

17 Ibid., 13.

1.6 Student Homelessness

18 Edidin, Jennifer P., Zoe Ganim, Scott J. Hunter, and Niranjana S. Karnik. "The Mental and Physical Health of Homeless Youth: A Literature Review." *Child Psychiatry & Human Development* 43, no. 3 (2011), 354-375. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-011-0270-1>.

19 Wilkins, Brittany T., Mary H. Mullins, Amber Mahan, and James P. Canfield. "Homeless Liaisons' Awareness about the Implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act." *Children & Schools* 38, no. 1 (2015), 57-64. doi:10.1093/cs/cdv041.

20 New Hampshire Magazine. "On the Streets with Manchester's Homeless Teens - January 2017." Accessed October 30, 2018. <https://www.nhmagazine.com/January-2017/On-the-Streets-with-Manchesters-Homeless-Teens/>.

21 Child and Family Services of New Hampshire. "Runaway and Homeless Youth." Accessed October 30, 2018. <https://www.cfsnh.org/index.php/programs-services/teen-young-adult-services/runaway-and-homeless-youth>.

22 U.S. Department of Education. Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance. 2016. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>.

23 While data sources in Section I are mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are sources from the same annual Point-in Time Count event, the U.S. Department of Education collects data on students experiencing homelessness and uses a definition. This definition of "homeless" includes students that are couch surfing or are otherwise living doubled-up and is collected over the course of the school year, resulting in a higher total than the data from the Point-in-Time count. As a result, it is critical to acknowledge that this data is completely separate from all other homeless data presented in Section I.

2.1 Unemployment Rate

24 National Coalition for the Homeless. National Coalition for the Homeless. February 21, 2009. <https://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/employment.html>.

25 Bureau of Labor Statistics. Local Area Unemployment Statistics Map. 2018. <https://www.bls.gov/data/#maps>.

26 2018 data is an average of the monthly unemployment rates from January to October.

27 National Low Income Housing Coalition. Out of Reach. 2018. <http://nlihc.org/oor/>.

28 The minimum wage in NH is listed as \$7.25 per hour, according to the Out of Reach Report.

2.2 Poverty Rate

29 United States Census Bureau. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: New Hampshire. 2018. https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/16_1YR/DP03/0400000US33.

30 Ibid., 6.

2.3 Renter Income & Gross Rent

31 New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority. Residential Rental Cost Survey. 2016-2018. <http://www.nhhfa.org/studies-publications-presentations>.

2.4 Vacancy Rate

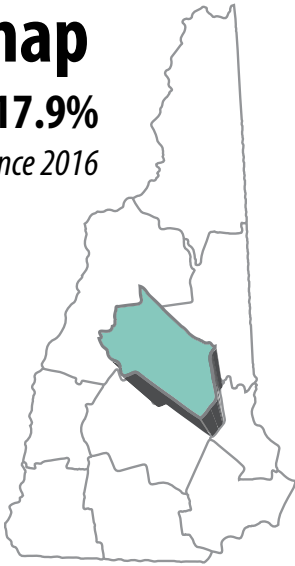
32 Ibid., 22.

33 The sample size in Carroll County for 2017 and 2018 were considered too small, resulting in inconsistent and volatile results and are not released by NHHFA.

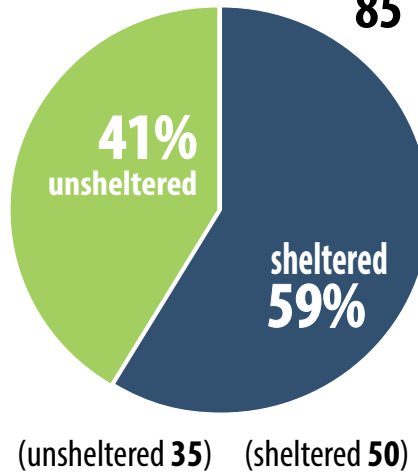
Belknap

117.9%

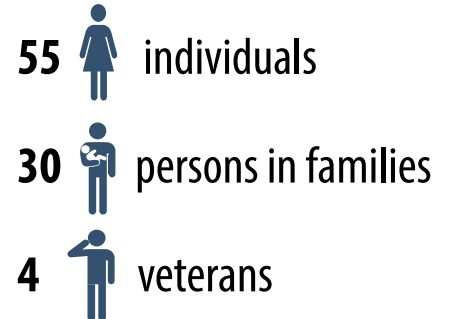
increase since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
85



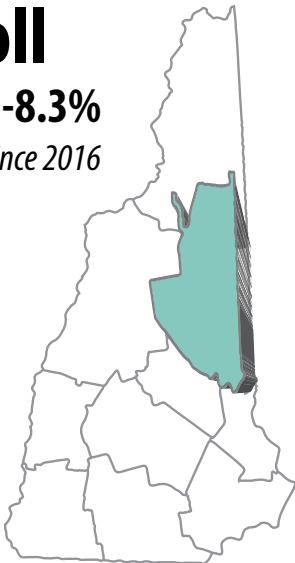
Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population



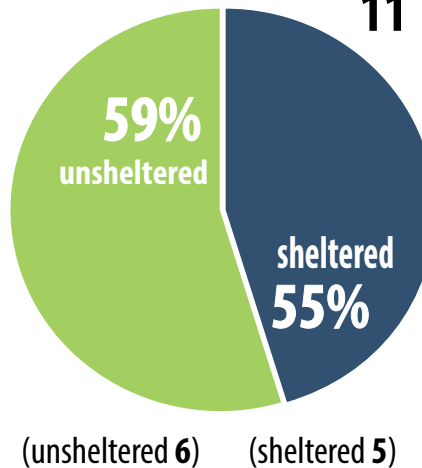
Carroll

-8.3%

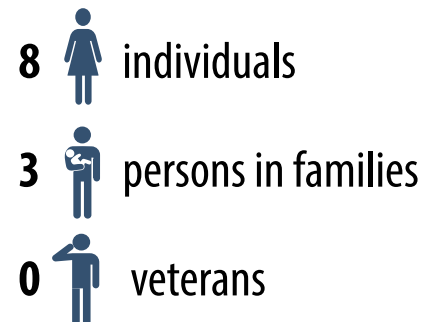
decrease since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
11



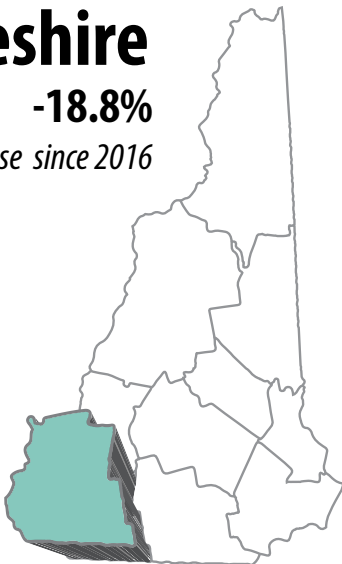
Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population



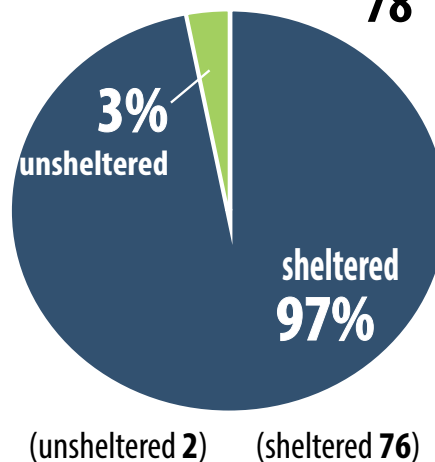
Cheshire

-18.8%

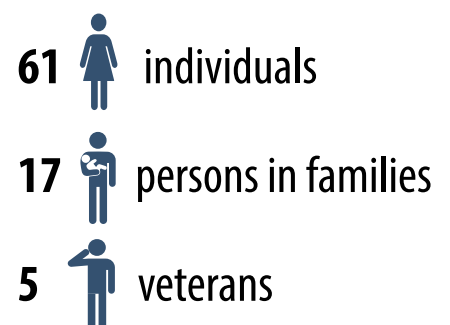
decrease since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
78

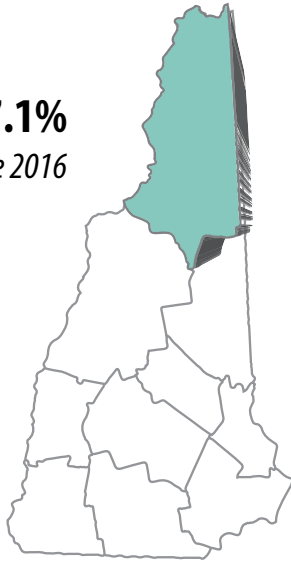


Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population

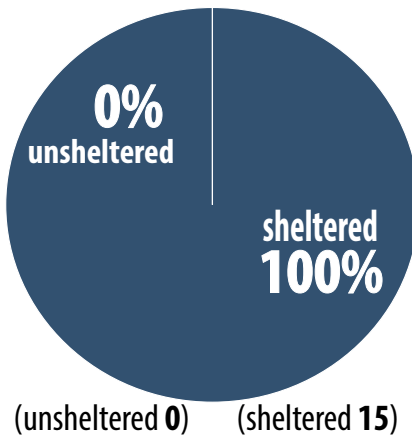


Coos

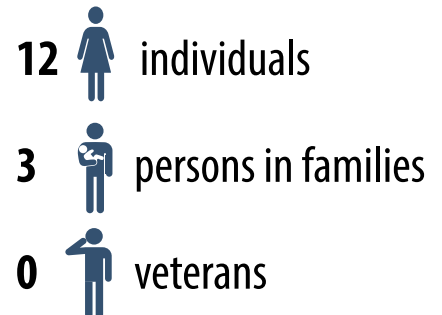
7.1%
increase since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
15

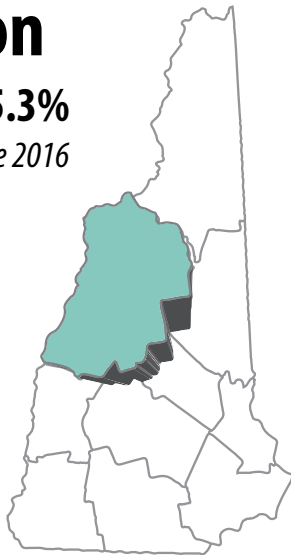


Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population

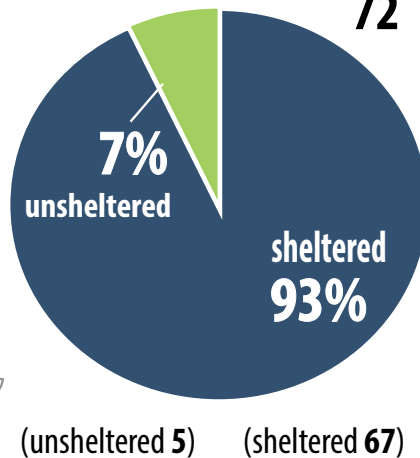


Grafton

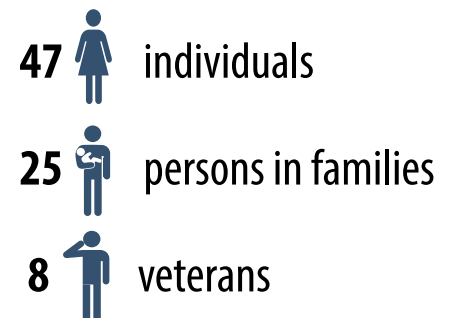
-15.3%
decrease since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
72

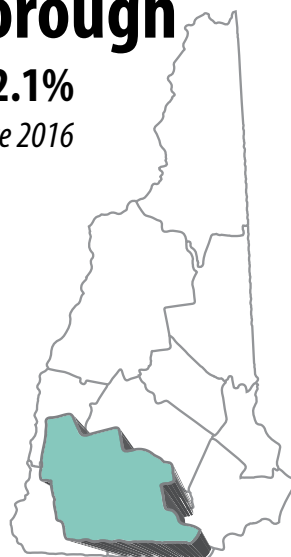


Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population

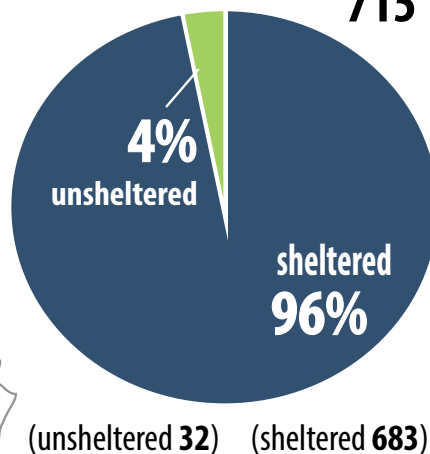


Hillsborough

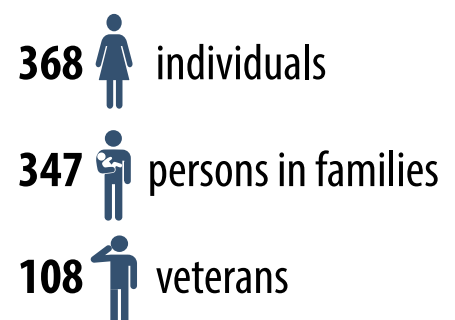
2.1%
increase since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
715



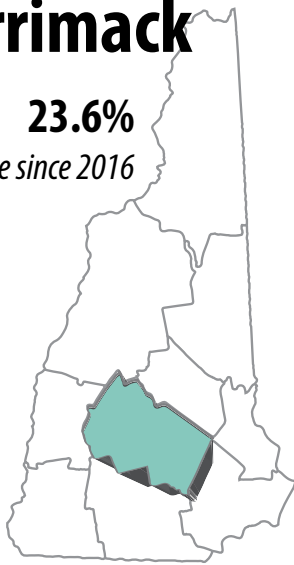
Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population



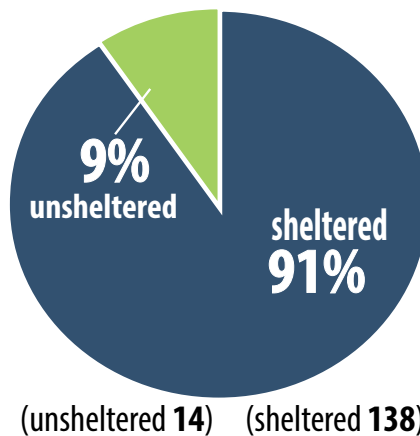
Merrimack

23.6%

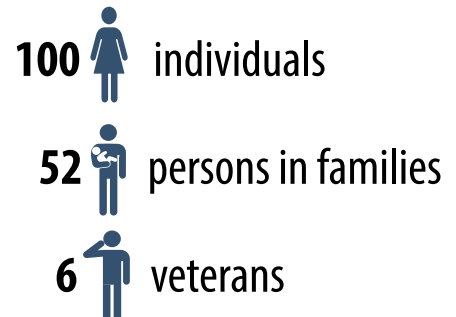
increase since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
152



Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population



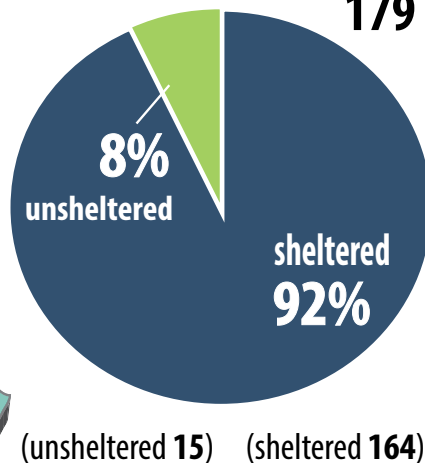
Rockingham

30.7%

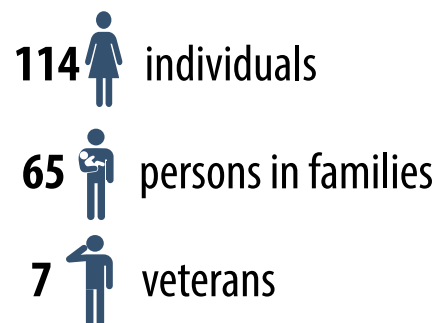
increase since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
179



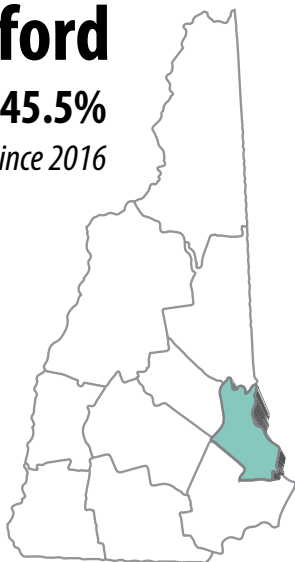
Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population



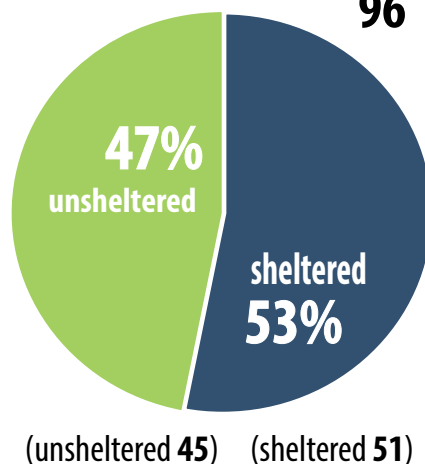
Strafford

45.5%

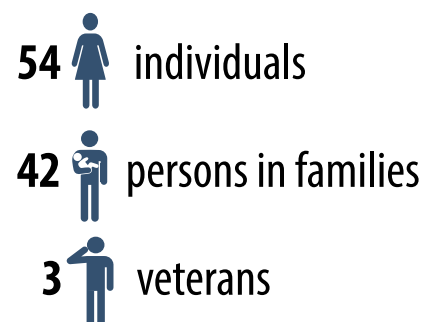
increase since 2016



Overall Homeless in 2018
96

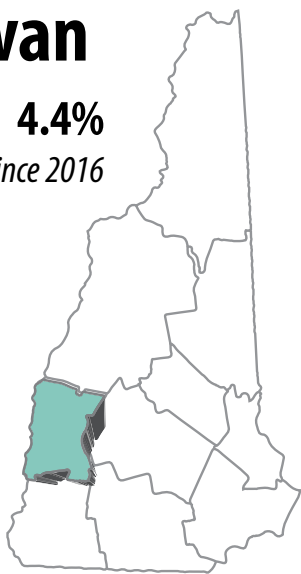


Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population

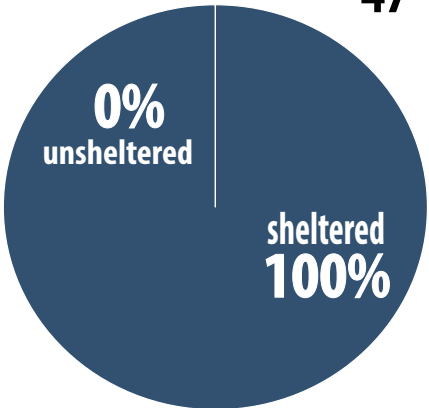


Sullivan

4.4%
increase since 2016






Overall Homeless in 2018
47



(unsheltered **0**) (sheltered **47**)

Estimates of Homelessness
by sub-population

- 17**  individuals
- 30**  persons in families
- 2**  veterans



NH Coalition to End Homelessness

Research. Education. Advocacy.