

THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

2014

NH Coalition
to End Homelessness

AN EXAMINATION OF HOMELESSNESS, RELATED
ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS, AND
CHANGES AT THE STATE AND COUNTY LEVELS



NH Coalition to End Homelessness

Research. Education. Advocacy.

The NH Coalition to End Homelessness (NHCEH), a nonprofit organization with headquarters in Manchester, NH, was founded in 1990 during a time in which 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 community leaders, service providers and everyday 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 third annual report on the State of Homelessness in New Hampshire. The Coalition believes strongly that creating effective solutions to a complex and dynamic problem such as homelessness requires data that can help us to understand the intricacies of the problem and to track our progress in solving it. This report is intended for use by a wide variety of audiences including homeless service providers and advocates, homeless and formerly homeless clients, policy makers and concerned citizens. By reporting data both on the state and the county levels, we hope that this report will be helpful to communities as they engage in their planning efforts and continue to create a robust and responsive system of homeless services.



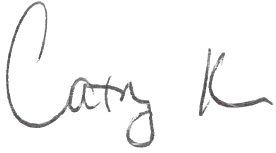
I am happy to report that for the third year in a row, the number of people who were homeless in our state declined. Moreover, for the first time in many years, homelessness among school-aged children is down by over 4% percent. These improvements are a testament both to the collaborative and client-centered nature of service providers within multiple systems of care, as well as to the proficiency of homeless service agencies and the highly talented staff they employ. Additionally, we have had strong leadership and support from policy makers at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as firm dedication from public and private funders, all of which have contributed to the progress we have made on homelessness. Lastly, collective support from New Hampshire's citizens, who volunteer at their local shelters and financially support nonprofit organizations in our state, has played a major role in our ability to continually reduce the number of people who are without a home.

Yet despite these improvements, there is much work to be done. We are still seeing increases in certain subpopulations of the homeless, including veterans and those who are chronically homeless, and we have far too many parents and children who enter the homeless services system each year. Thus, it is imperative that we continue to focus our efforts on reaching those who are the hardest to serve and who have multiple barriers to stability. Furthermore, we must prioritize public policies that increase affordable housing, emergency and preventative housing programs and key support services that ensure people remain stably housed.

As a state that has a long history of caring for those who are most vulnerable, New Hampshire

has the expertise, compassion and determination to put an end to homelessness once and for all. I invite you to join us as we work towards this achievable goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy K". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Cathy Kuhn, Ph.D., Director

New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness

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Introduction

The State of Homelessness in New Hampshire 2014,¹ produced by the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness, examines homelessness in the state between 2010 and 2014. Although there has been significant fluctuation in the state of homelessness during this time period, we are beginning to see gradual improvements in the latter years. As the economy begins to recover from the most recent economic recession, those who were forced into homelessness as a result of a recession-related incident, such as a sudden loss of employment or a home foreclosure, may now be less likely to fall into homelessness. The situation remains dire, however, for those on fixed incomes or with few skills to acquire jobs that pay enough to afford private rental housing. The lack of high quality employment that pays a sustainable wage remains a significant challenge for many low income New Hampshire citizens. Furthermore, like in many states, New Hampshire suffers from a significant shortage of affordable housing, a fact which only compounds the many other factors that might drive an individual or family into homelessness, such as interpersonal violence, trauma and mental or physical illness.

In addition to reviewing current levels of homelessness, this report also examines key economic and demographic data that impact homelessness in the state. Data is derived from numerous sources, including the New Hampshire Department of Corrections, the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority, the New Hampshire Bureau of Homeless and Housing Services, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Chapter One presents data on homelessness at the state and county levels using the State of New Hampshire Official Point-In-Time Count estimates reported to the New Hampshire Bureau of Homeless and Housing Services by the three Continuums of Care (CoC) across the state. Additionally, Chapter One reviews data on student homelessness as collected and reported by the New Hampshire Department of Education. Chapter Two describes key demographic factors related to homelessness, including trends among particular populations that have been shown to be at an increased risk of homelessness. Finally, Chapter Three describes economic and housing factors that impact homelessness, including vacancy rates, income, and housing costs.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness is a highly complex issue that may assume a range of scenarios and have varying effects on each person that experiences it. Social service providers, policy makers and researchers continue to have ongoing dialogue about what it means to be homeless; yet, the responses remain inconsistent. Although this discussion is outside the scope of this report, it is clear that inconsistencies about the definition of homelessness do have serious 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 2014* references data sources that utilize different definitions of homelessness, which can create some apparent inconsistencies among common data

¹ This report is modeled after *The State of Homelessness in America*, an annual report produced by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

elements. More information regarding a particular set of data can be found by referring to the cited sources.

THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

The data from Chapter One of this report comes from the 2012, 2013 and 2014 State of New Hampshire Official Point-In-Time Count and captures changes in overall homelessness and in homelessness among subpopulations across the state.² 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 week in January, an event commonly referred to as the “Point-In-Time Count.” In some respects, the data captured from these counts is limited not only because they merely capture 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 homeless people throughout New Hampshire and across the country.

Although not part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time Count, the U.S. Department of Education also conducts annual counts of students that are attending school, from kindergarten through high school, who are reported as being homeless across the country. The U.S. Department of Education uses a different definition of homelessness than the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. While not directly comparable to the Point-in-Time counts, these counts are useful in tracking trends in homelessness among young people and families in New Hampshire.

Notable trends in these counts include:

- After a modest decrease of approximately two percent between 2012 and 2013, the homeless population continued to decrease by about three percent from 1,685 in 2013 to 1,635 in 2014. As will be discussed in more detail later, while the overall homeless population has decreased marginally over the past three years, certain subpopulations of the homeless have increased significantly during that same timeframe.
- A majority of homeless people counted during the 2014 Point-In-Time Count were in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs. However, almost one in four were unsheltered, living in cars, abandoned buildings, tents, or other places not intended for human habitation.
- While homelessness among individuals remained relatively unchanged, the number of homeless persons in families dropped by almost 10 percent between 2012 and 2014.
- For the first time in several years, the number of homeless students decreased, although marginally, declining by about one percent from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2013-2014

² New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, "Homeless Data." Last modified 2014. Accessed August 4, 2014. <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcbcs>

school year.³

RISK FACTORS FOR HOMELESSNESS

Chapter Two examines various risk factors that affect people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless using data from the 2014 State of New Hampshire Official Point-In-Time Count, the New Hampshire Department of Corrections, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files. These indicators are examined for the state of, and counties within, New Hampshire.

Notable trends in these risk factors include:

- The unemployment rate in the state decreased by almost four percent, from 5.3 percent in 2013 to 4.5 percent in 2014. The unemployment rate decreased by double-digits in all 10 counties during this time, ranging from a 14 percent decrease in Carroll County to just under a 22 percent decrease in Strafford County.
- After two-years of significant increases, the doubled-up/precariously housed population (people temporarily living with friends, family or nonrelatives for economic reasons) decreased sharply by 37 percent from 891 in 2013 to 562 in 2014.
- After a significant decrease between 2011 and 2012 in the number of people released from prison, there was a modest increase in prison discharges between 2012 and 2013, from 1,552 to 1,657.

HOUSING AND THE ECONOMICS OF HOMELESSNESS

Chapter Three 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. Using data from the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files, this chapter describes changes in some of these housing and economic indicators.

Notable trends in these indicators include:

- While median gross rents and median household renter incomes have increased at comparable rates in recent years, between 2013 to 2014, median household renter incomes remained relatively flat, increasing by only 0.5 percent, while median gross rents rose more substantially, increasing by three percent.
- Vacancy rates decreased markedly between 2013 to 2014, from 3.4 percent to 2.7 percent.
- The number of rental households in poverty that are "severely housing cost burdened," meaning that they spent more than 50 percent of their income on rent, increased from 73 percent in 2010

³ National Center for Homeless Education. (October 2013). "Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program: Data Collection Summary." Available at: <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data-comp-0910-1112.pdf>

to 75 percent in 2012.

- The average real income of working poor people, defined as the mean income of households in poverty who worked at least 27 weeks during a given year, decreased by over 16 percent, from \$8,864 in 2010 to \$7,406 in 2012

CHAPTER ONE



THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Homelessness in NH continues to decline,
following a trend beginning in 2011.*

The most recently available state data on homelessness come from the January 2014 State of New Hampshire Official Point-In-Time Count. Data from the 2014 count show that 1,635 people experienced homelessness in New Hampshire on a given night.

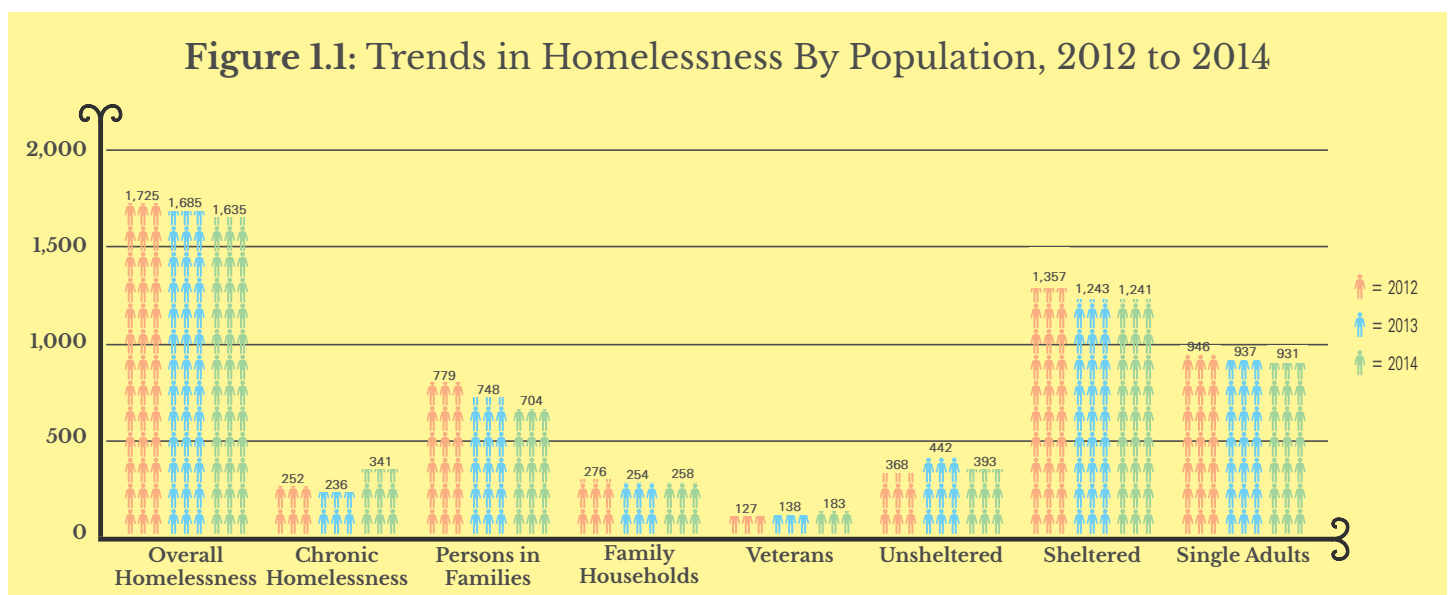
Figure 1.1 displays a breakdown of the homeless population in New Hampshire between 2012 and 2014. Significant findings from the 2014 count include:

- Families with children comprise 43 percent of the overall homeless population (a total of 704 people, composing 258 households).
- Slightly more than a third of the single adult homeless population is considered chronically homeless⁴ (341 people).
- Veterans comprise 11 percent of New Hampshire’s homeless population (183 people).

Figure 1.1 also displays changes among the overall homeless population and subpopulations over a three-year span. Notable trends include:

- After increasing 16 percent between 2012 and 2013, the number of unsheltered homeless fell 11 percent between 2013 (442 people) and 2014 (393 people).
- After falling significantly from 2012 to 2013, the number of sheltered homeless in 2014 (1,241 people) was almost identical to the number in 2013 (1,243 people).

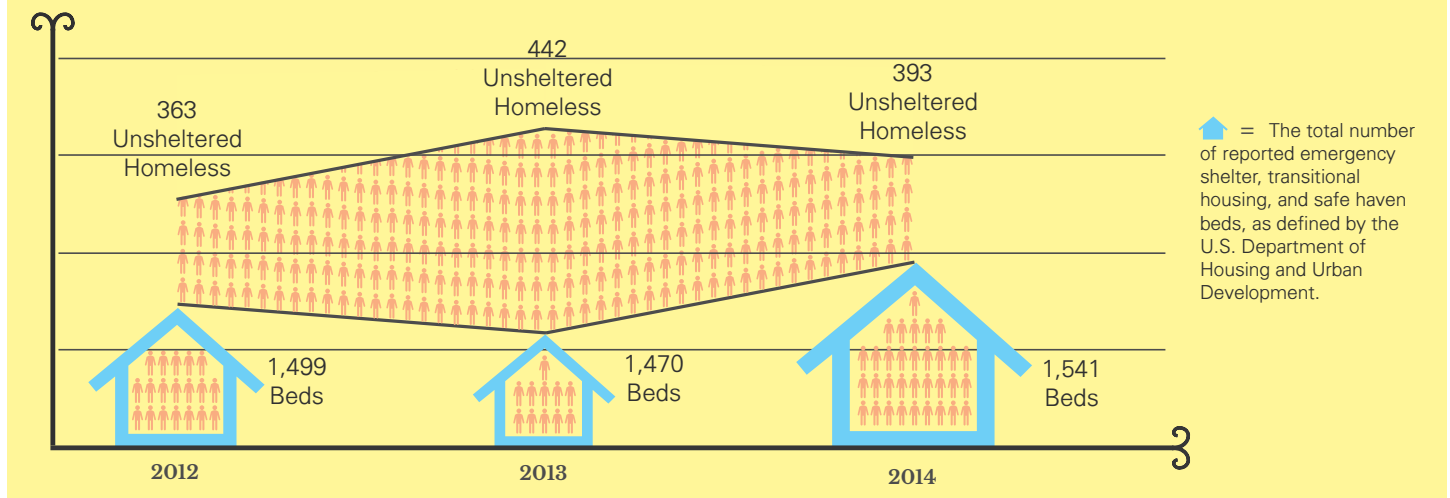
Figure 1.2 illustrates the relationship between available housing stock for the homeless and the number



⁴ Chronically Homeless is a homeless individual or head of household with a disabling condition who has either
 1. been continuously homeless for a year or more OR
 2. has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter.

Figure 1.2: Trends in Unsheltered Homelessness and System Bed Capacity, 2012 to 2014



of unsheltered homeless people and, consequently, the total number of homeless people. Between 2012 and 2013, the number of beds dedicated to homeless persons decreased in the state. During that timeframe, the number of unsheltered homeless persons increased, from 368 to 442. Likewise, between 2013 and 2014, the number of beds dedicated to homeless persons increased while the number of unsheltered homeless persons decreased from 442 to 393. Although not surprising, this trend is notable because it supports the notion that housing, dedicated to the homeless, is effective in decreasing the number of homeless living on the streets or in other places not meant for human habitation.

OVERALL HOMELESSNESS

Map 1.1: Changes in Overall Homelessness, 2012 to 2014

Map 1.1 and Table 1.1 show the change in the overall number of homeless people from 2012 to 2014 for each of the 10 counties in New Hampshire.⁵ The data show that homelessness decreased by slightly more than five percent across the state and that five of the 10 counties had decreases in homelessness during this period. Changes ranged from a decrease of 43 percent in Coos County to an increase of over 17 percent in Rockingham and Strafford Counties. Carroll, Grafton, Hillsborough, and Merrimack Counties had no significant change in their homeless population over the two-year period.

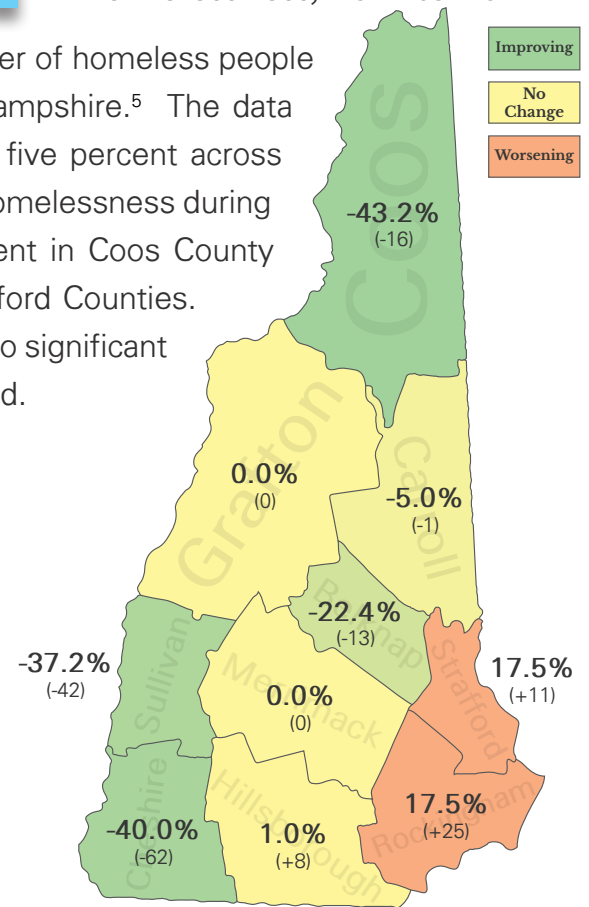


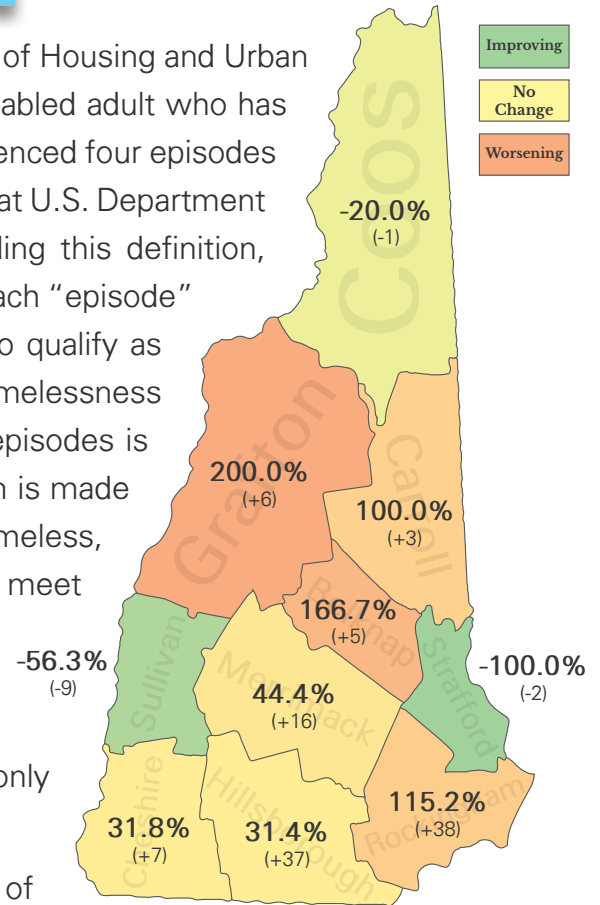
Table 1.1: Overall Homelessness				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	1,725	1,685	1,635	-5.22%
Belknap	58	47	45	-22.41%
Carroll	20	26	19	-5.00%
Cheshire	155	128	93	-40.00%
Coos	37	41	21	-43.24%
Grafton	89	101	89	0.00%
Hillsborough	766	789	774	1.04%
Merrimack	281	249	281	0.00%
Rockingham	143	161	168	17.48%
Strafford	63	85	74	17.46%
Sullivan	113	58	71	-37.17%

5 New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, "Homeless Data." Last modified 2014. Accessed August 4, 2014. <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcbcs/bhhs/homelessdata.htm>

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Map 1.2: Changes in Chronic Homelessness, 2012 to 2014

“Chronic homelessness” is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as an individual or family with at least one disabled adult who has been continuously homeless for over one year, or has experienced four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. It is worth noting that U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed amending this definition, specifically by adding parameters to the length of time that each “episode” of homelessness would need to be in order for a person to qualify as chronically homeless. In its proposed definition, chronic homelessness can only be established if the cumulative total of the four episodes is equal to or greater than one year. If this proposed definition is made final, it will significantly reduce the number of chronically homeless, as the criteria for the proposed rule will be more difficult to meet than the rule currently in place.⁶ The implications that this change of definition will have on those who experience longtime or repeated episodes of homelessness is uncertain, though it is anticipated that access to resources dedicated only to the chronically homeless will be further restricted.



Map 1.2 and Table 1.2 show the change in the number of chronically homeless persons from 2012 to 2014 for each of the 10 counties in New Hampshire. An increase of nearly 35 percent was reported during that time, with the total population rising from 253 in 2012 to 341 in 2014. The range between counties varies from a 100 percent decrease (two people) in Strafford County to a 200 percent increase (six people) in Grafton

Table 1.2: Chronic Homelessness				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	253	236	341	34.78%
Belknap	3	5	8	166.67%
Carroll	3	3	6	100.00%
Cheshire	22	18	29	31.82%
Coos	5	0	4	-20.00%
Grafton	3	2	9	200.00%
Hillsborough	118	116	155	31.36%
Merrimack	36	25	52	44.44%
Rockingham	33	55	71	115.15%
Strafford	2	9	0	-100.00%
Sullivan	16	3	7	-56.25%

⁶ "Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program and Revisions to the Definition of "Chronically Homeless"." March 1, 2013. Accessed October 1, 2014. https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/RHSPProposedRule_FormattedVersion.pdf.

County. It should be noted that these percentages can be deceptive due to the small chronically homeless populations in many New Hampshire counties. Nevertheless, the overall population has seen an alarming increase within the last three years, with particular concern in Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties. Hillsborough County experienced a large increase within the last year, while Rockingham County's chronically homeless population more than doubled between 2012 and 2014. Over the past decade, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has made it a priority to end chronic homelessness by 2016, which has resulted in significant federal investment in serving this population. While these resources have permanently housed a significant number of chronically homeless people throughout New Hampshire, they have also increased the state's capacity to identify those who suffer from chronic homelessness, which is likely a contributing factor in the increased numbers seen over the past three years.

FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

Map 1.3: Changes in Homeless People in Families, 2012 to 2014

Although many people still perceive homelessness to be a problem primarily among single men, and to a lesser extent single women, homelessness among families is a growing concern in many communities. Family homelessness in New Hampshire increased sharply in the years following the most recent economic recession. In recent years, however, the state has seen gradual decreases in the number of families living in shelters or on the streets on the day of the Point-in-Time Count.

Map 1.3 and Table 1.3 show the change in the number of homeless people in families from 2012 to 2014 for each of the 10 counties in New Hampshire. The state’s population of homeless people in families decreased by 10 percent from 779 persons in 2012 to 704 persons in 2014. Seven counties saw decreases in family homelessness while three saw increases, ranging from a 77 percent decrease in Coos County to a 47 percent increase in Strafford County.

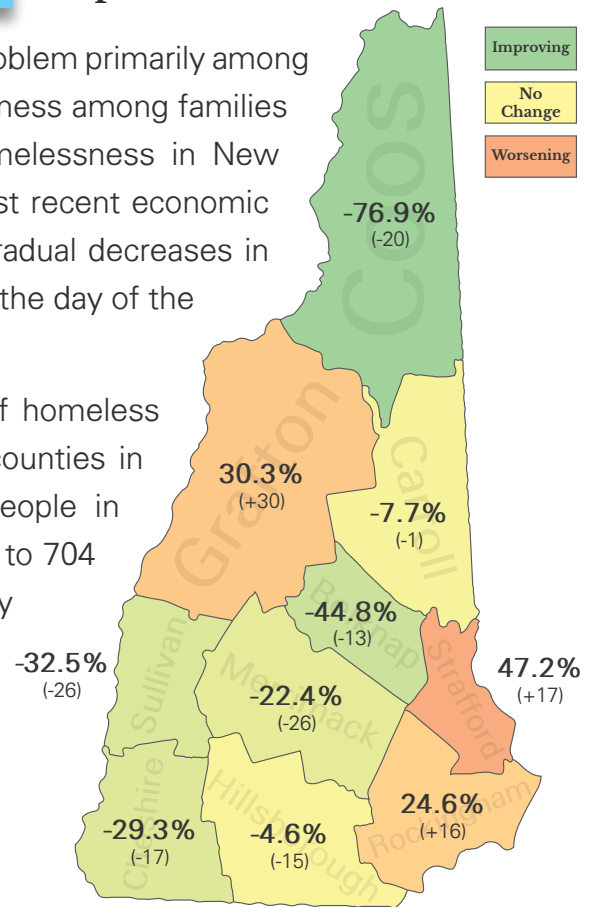


Table 1.3: Homeless People in Families				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	779	748	704	-9.63%
Belknap	29	26	16	-44.83%
Carroll	13	12	12	-7.69%
Cheshire	58	40	41	-29.31%
Coos	26	28	6	-76.92%
Grafton	33	44	43	30.30%
Hillsborough	323	338	308	-4.64%
Merrimack	116	102	90	-22.41%
Rockingham	65	66	81	24.62%
Strafford	36	54	53	47.22%
Sullivan	80	38	54	-32.50%

VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

Map 1.4: Changes in Veteran Homelessness, 2012 to 2014

Like many states, New Hampshire has seen a recent rise in veteran homelessness, with veterans now comprising nearly 11 percent of the state’s homeless population. While significant federal investments have helped to house many veterans over the course of the past three years, adequately serving the flow of veterans returning from recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan remains a challenge for many communities.

Map 1.4 and Table 1.4 show the change in the number of homeless veterans from 2012 to 2014 for each of the 10 counties in New Hampshire. Between 2012 and 2014, the number of homeless veterans increased by slightly more than 44 percent, with the majority of these increases occurring in Southern New Hampshire. Hillsborough County has seen a particularly large increase in homeless veterans, with 77 percent of the veteran homeless population residing there. Other counties in the state have significantly fewer numbers of homeless veterans and have therefore seen less drastic fluctuations.

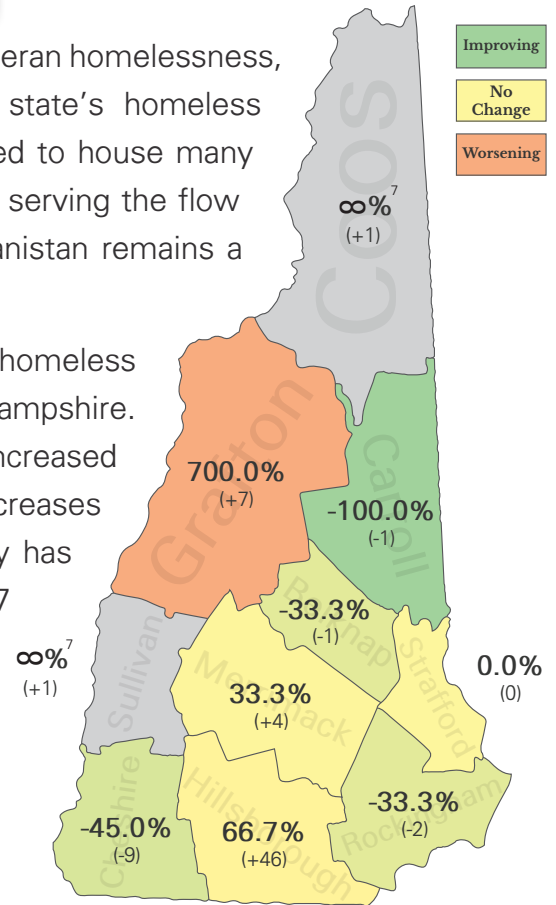


Table 1.4: Veteran Homelessness				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	127	138	183	44.09%
Belknap	3	2	2	-33.33%
Carroll	1	0	0	-100.00%
Cheshire	20	16	11	-45.00%
Coos	0	0	1	∞% ⁷
Grafton	1	7	8	700.00%
Hillsborough	84	95	140	66.67%
Merrimack	12	12	16	33.33%
Rockingham	6	3	4	-33.33%
Strafford	0	3	0	0.00%
Sullivan	0	0	1	∞% ⁷

⁷ A change from zero is calculated as an infinite percent change. Therefore, the infinity symbol is used to represent this change.

UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

Map 1.5: Changes in Unsheltered Homelessness, 2012 to 2014

Although the majority of people who experience homelessness in New Hampshire are sheltered, a significant portion of the homeless live on the streets or in other places not intended for human habitation. These individuals experience severe hardship and are often most susceptible to illness, substance abuse and violence.⁸

The number of unsheltered homeless in New Hampshire has fluctuated over the past three years, with an increase occurring between 2012 and 2013 followed by a smaller decrease between 2013 and 2014. As stated previously, these fluctuations are in line with changes in the housing stock dedicated to the homeless during this time period.

Map 1.5 and Table 1.5 show the change in the number of unsheltered homeless people from 2012 to 2014 for each of the 10 counties in New Hampshire. Cheshire County's unsheltered population decreased from 35 individuals to seven within the last three years, while Merrimack County saw their population nearly double in size during the same time period.

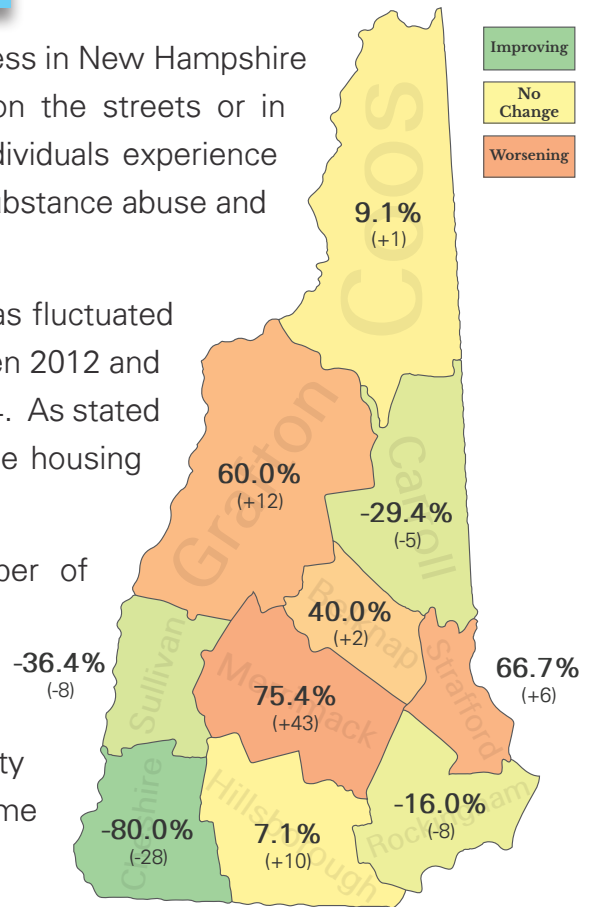


Table 1.5: Unsheltered Homelessness				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	368	442	393	6.79%
Belknap	5	3	7	40.00%
Carroll	17	18	12	-29.41%
Cheshire	35	25	7	-80.00%
Coos	11	4	12	9.09%
Grafton	20	35	32	60.00%
Hillsborough	142	182	152	7.04%
Merrimack	57	79	100	75.44%
Rockingham	50	57	42	-16.00%
Strafford	9	34	15	66.67%
Sullivan	22	5	14	-36.36%

8 As noted on page 19 of The State of Homelessness in America 2012.

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

Map 1.6: Changes in Student Homelessness, 2012 to 2014

County and statewide data on the homeless student population are reported annually by the New Hampshire Department of Education. While recent data show that New Hampshire is ranked seventh nationwide in terms of child wellbeing,⁹ the overall number of homeless students is still alarming, as homelessness can severely disrupt a child’s social, emotional and academic development. Although homelessness among students has decreased for the first time in several years, this data understates the problem of childhood homelessness, as children not enrolled in school or who are not of school-age are not included.

Map 1.6 and Table 1.6 display the changes in the number of homeless students that were enrolled in local educational agencies from school years 2011-2012 to 2013-2014.¹⁰ Although eight out of 10 counties saw increases in their homeless student population, the statewide population declined by just over one percent between 2012 and 2014. Hillsborough County was primarily responsible for the statewide decrease, declining by 13 percent (173 people). The largest increases were seen in Grafton (41 percent or 45 people) and Carroll (27 percent or 44 people) Counties.

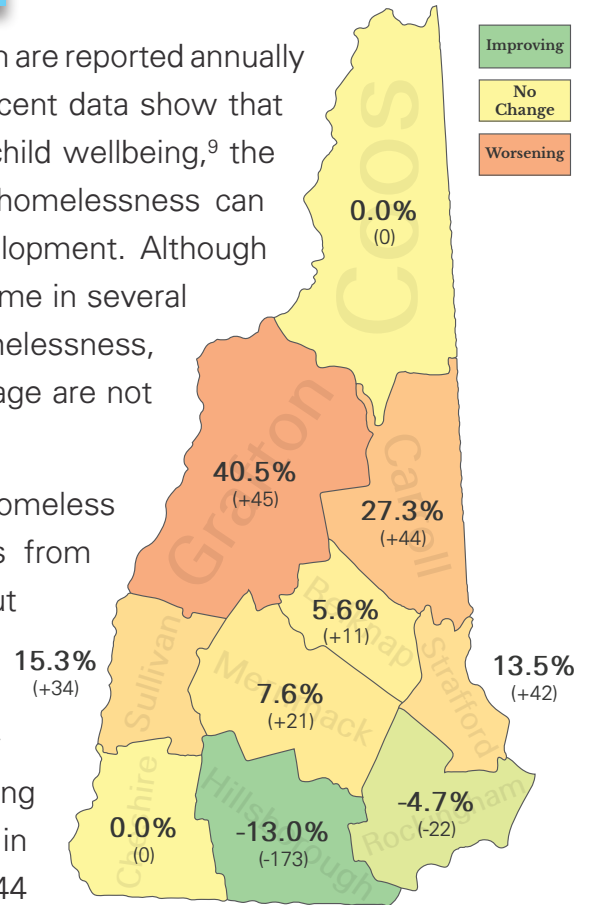


Table 1.6: Student Homelessness				
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	% Change, 2011-2014
State	3,307	3,417	3,272	-1.06%
Belknap	198	238	(197 - 221)	5.56%
Carroll	161	190	(201 - 209)	27.33%
Cheshire	180	181	(168 - 192)	0.00%
Coos	47	57	(27 - 67)	0.00%
Grafton	111	106	(108 - 204)	40.54%
Hillsborough	1,330	1,296	(1,125 - 1,189)	-13.01%
Merrimack	276	256	(281 - 313)	7.61%
Rockingham	470	545	(384 - 512)	-4.68%
Strafford	311	312	(333 - 373)	13.50%
Sullivan	223	236	(241 - 273)	15.25%

9 “America’s Youngest Outcasts.” November 1, 2014. Accessed November 20, 2014. <http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/mediadocs/280.pdf>.
 10 While statewide data for the 2013-2014 school year was available at the time of this report, much of the data at the school district-level was only available in ranges, and was not attainable in a format that permitted the accurate aggregation of county-level data. Therefore, county-level data are expressed as ranges, from the minimum to the maximum possible values for each county. Percent changes at the county-level for the 2013-2014 school year were calculated based on the average of each county’s range.

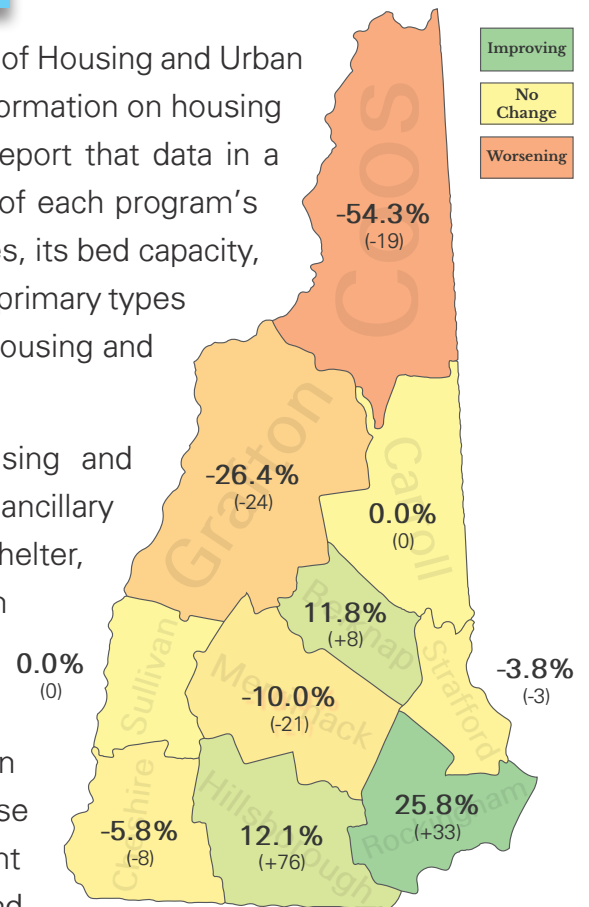
HOMELESS ASSISTANCE BEDS

Map 1.7: Changes in Temporary Housing Beds, 2012-2014

During the annual Point-in-Time Counts, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development also requires Continuums of Care to collect information on housing programs that have beds dedicated to the homeless and report that data in a Housing Inventory Chart. This chart provides a breakdown of each program’s characteristics including the household type it primarily serves, its bed capacity, and the type of housing assistance it provides. There are two primary types of housing that are dedicated for the homeless: temporary housing and permanent housing.

“Temporary” housing is intended to be short-term housing and typically accompanies intensive case management and other ancillary services. Temporary housing generally includes emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing programs. Residents in temporary housing are still considered to be homeless, and thus are included in the Point-in-Time Counts.

“Permanent” housing is intended to be long-term or for an indefinite amount of time, and may be accompanied by case management and other supplementary services. Permanent housing generally includes permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing programs. Residents in permanent housing are not considered to be homeless, and thus are not included in the Point-in-Time Counts.



Map 1.7 and Table 1.7 show the change in the number of temporary beds from 2012 to 2014. Temporary bed capacity in New Hampshire has increased by almost three percent in the last three years, with notable increases occurring in Hillsborough (increase of 76 beds) and Rockingham (increase of 33 beds) Counties. Coos and Grafton Counties experienced significant decreases in their stock of temporary

Table 1.7: Homeless Assistance Beds in Temporary Housing Programs				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	1,499	1,470	1,541	2.80%
Belknap	68	68	76	11.76%
Carroll	19	19	19	0.00%
Cheshire	139	135	131	-5.76%
Coos	35	41	16	-54.29%
Grafton	91	84	67	-26.37%
Hillsborough	629	625	705	12.08%
Merrimack	210	188	189	-10.00%
Rockingham	128	133	161	25.78%
Strafford	80	77	77	-3.75%
Sullivan	100	100	100	0.00%

beds, declining by 54 percent (19 beds) and 26 percent (24 beds), respectively.

Map 1.8: Changes in Homeless Assistance Beds in Permanent Housing Programs, 2012 to 2014

Map 1.8 and Table 1.8 show the change in the number of permanent beds from 2012 to 2014. Permanent bed capacity in New Hampshire has increased by almost 17 percent in the last three years, with notable increases occurring in Hillsborough (increase of 195 beds) and Sullivan (increase of 62 beds) Counties. Merrimack and Rockingham were the only counties that experienced decreases in their stock of permanent beds, declining by 49 percent (96 beds) and 19 percent (25 beds), respectively.

Between 2012 and 2014, Hillsborough County continues to encompass the bulk of both temporary housing (46 percent) and permanent housing (61 percent) in the state. However, with a large portion of the homeless population (47 percent), the concentration of beds in this urban region of the state appears to be consistent with the need. Following trends set at the federal level in recent years, which have emphasized the production of permanent housing, it is also notable that the gap between temporary housing stock and permanent housing stock has shrunk by almost half since 2012. Nevertheless, given the inverse relationship shown here between housing production and homelessness, it is reasonable to assume that increased local, state, and federal investments in all housing dedicated for the homeless will result in continued decreases in homelessness.

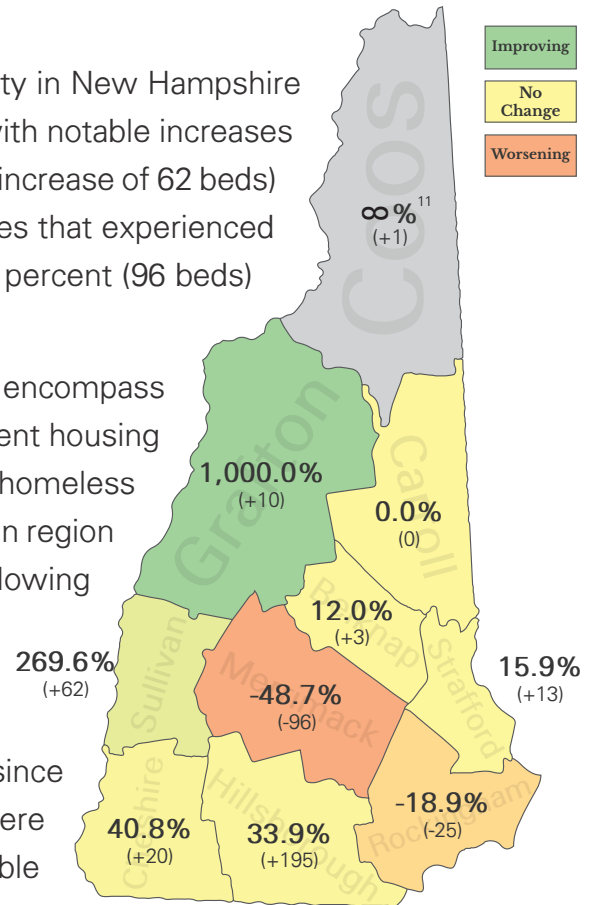


Table 1.8: Homeless Assistance Beds in Permanent Housing Programs				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	1,084	1,070	1,267	16.88%
Belknap	25	25	28	12.00%
Carroll	0	0	0	0.00%
Cheshire	49	63	69	40.82%
Coos	0	2	1	∞% ¹¹
Grafton	1	11	11	1000.00%
Hillsborough	575	671	770	33.91%
Merrimack	197	84	101	-48.73%
Rockingham	132	107	107	-18.94%
Strafford	82	69	95	15.85%
Sullivan	23	38	85	269.57%

¹¹ A change from zero is calculated as an infinite percent change. Therefore, the infinity symbol is used to represent this change.

CHAPTER TWO



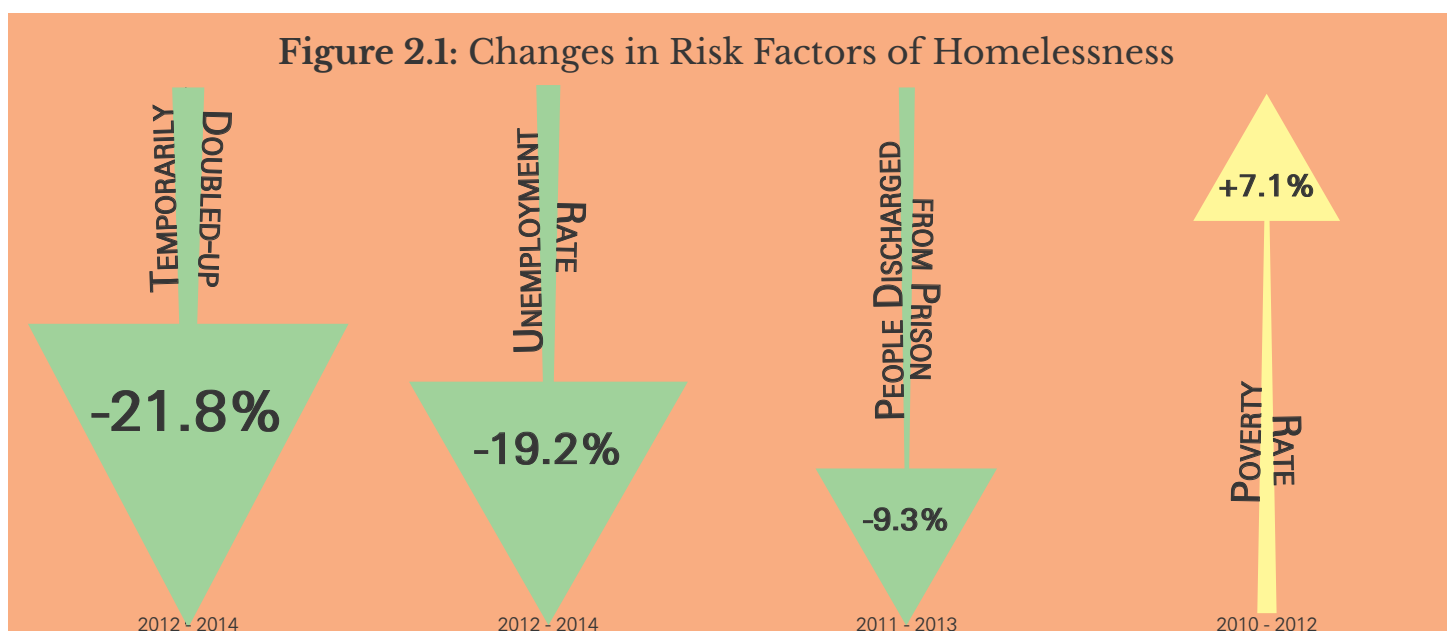
RISK FACTORS OF HOMELESSNESS

Increases in poverty rates conflict with other, improving factors.

One of the principle reasons that homelessness is so complex is because of the many difficult and often interrelated factors that can lead to it. Some fall into homelessness because of a physical or mental health disorder that is often untreated due to limited access to healthcare.¹² Others suffer from histories of trauma or violence that preclude them from leading healthy and productive lives. Untreated substance use disorders, lack of employment, education and job skills and simple poverty are other common factors that can drive an individual or family into homelessness. Although not an exhaustive examination of the many precursors to homelessness, this chapter examines four situational factors that are commonly identified among those who enter the NH homeless services system. These factors include being temporarily “doubled-up,” being recently discharged from prison, being unemployed and being in poverty.

People who live with friends or family due to economic need are considered doubled-up.¹³ Prior to their entrance into the homeless shelter system, the most commonly reported living situation is living with friends or family.¹⁴ Oftentimes these living situations lead to overcrowding and almost always place significant stress on all parties involved. Because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development does not consider this population to be “homeless,” people in these situations often struggle to find resources that can prevent them from ultimately entering the shelter system or being forced to live on the streets, in cars, in campgrounds or in other places not meant for human habitation.

People being discharged from prisons or jails represent another group with an elevated risk of homelessness. Many of the homeless who are discharged from prison are homeless before they enter the prison system and remain so upon release, while others lose their housing while in prison and thus



¹² National Healthcare for the Homeless Council. “Working To Eliminate Barriers to Care for Homeless People”. June 1, 2010. Accessed Oct. 1, 2014. <http://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/JuneHealinHandsweb.pdf>.

¹³ This report uses “doubled-up” to refer to a low-income individual or member of a family who is living with friends, extended family, or other non-relatives due to economic hardship. Low-income is defined here as 125 percent of the federal poverty line. See Homelessness Research Institute (2010) Economy Bytes: Doubled-up in the United States, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Washington, DC.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC. The 2011 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress. Available at: https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2011AHAR_FinalReport.pdf

have nowhere to reside upon exiting the system. It is common, in many places, for a person to be released from the prison system directly into the emergency shelter system. Finding housing for those released from prison can be further challenged by the nature of the crime(s) for which a person was convicted.

Without gainful employment opportunities, it is nearly impossible for the homeless to secure safe and stable housing. The lack of high quality employment opportunities is compounded by additional barriers to employment commonly faced by the homeless, including the lack of reliable transportation options, stigma associated with physical appearances and mental or physical disabilities.¹⁵ When unemployment rates are high, more people struggle to make ends meet and, in some cases, eventually lose their housing. Thus, the employment rate can be an important indicator in projecting future trends in homelessness.

Poverty is another risk factor associated with homelessness. Many people living in poverty frequently face difficult financial decisions, such as whether to pay for rent or to pay for food, fuel, medication and other needs. Events that could affect a person's ability to pay for their living expenses, even those that might be considered marginal to many people, could quickly turn an unstable living situation into a homeless situation for people living in poverty.

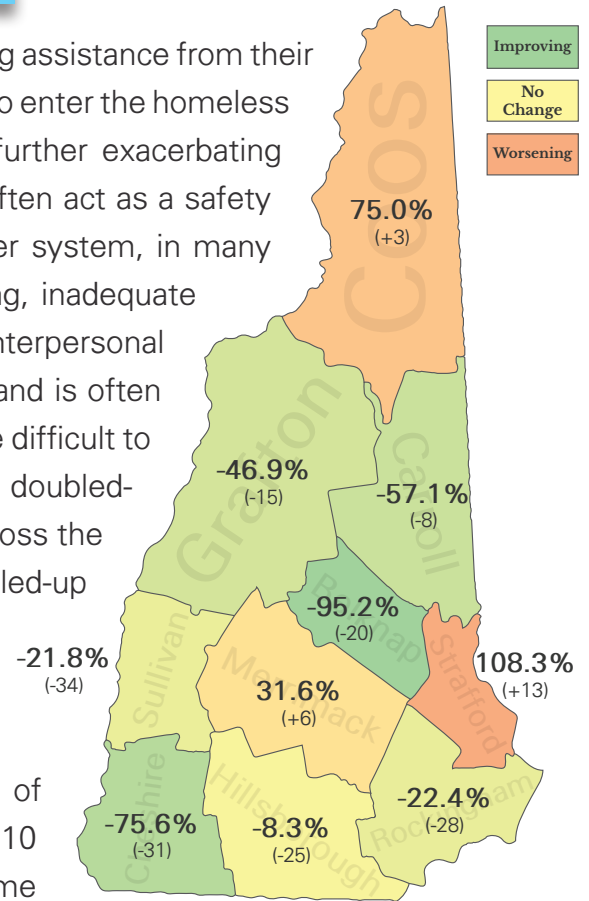
Figure 2.1 displays the changes in these risk factors of homelessness. While rates of doubled-up, unemployment and prison discharge have decreased in recent years, the poverty rate continues to increase. As with counts of the homeless population, these risk factors related to homelessness vary significantly across counties in the state. When data is available, the following sections describe in further detail the county-by-county differences in situational factors that have been shown to place people at a higher risk for entering the homeless system.

¹⁵ "Employment and Homelessness." National Coalition for the Homeless. July 1, 2009. Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/employment.html>.

TEMPORARILY DOUBLED-UP

Map 2.1: Changes in Temporarily Doubled-up, 2012 to 2014

Many people without housing often seek financial and housing assistance from their family and friends. Families with children are often reluctant to enter the homeless shelter system for fear of creating greater instability and further exacerbating the stress on their children. While family and friends can often act as a safety net, preventing or delaying people from entering the shelter system, in many cases, it can lead to other problems, including overcrowding, inadequate living environments, increased financial strain and greater interpersonal stress. Because this population tends to be very transient and is often not connected with the service and housing system, it can be difficult to obtain an accurate count as to how many people are living in doubled-up situations. Nevertheless, each year service providers across the state attempt to capture the number of people who are doubled-up during the State of New Hampshire Official Point-in-Time Count. Over time, this data can be used to monitor changes in the size of each county’s doubled-up population.¹⁶



Map 2.1 and Table 2.1 show the change in the number of people living doubled-up from 2012 to 2014 for each of the 10 counties in New Hampshire as reported in the Point-in-Time Count. During this time, the doubled-up population decreased by 21 percent. Changes in this population from year-to-year have been sporadic, increasing by 25 percent (178 people) between 2012 and 2013 and subsequently decreasing by 37 percent (329 people)

Table 2.1: Temporarily Doubled-up				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	713	891	562	-21.18%
Belknap	21	11	1	-95.24%
Carroll	14	17	6	-57.14%
Cheshire	41	36	10	-75.61%
Coos	4	14	7	75.00%
Grafton	32	31	17	-46.88%
Hillsborough	289	426	265	-8.30%
Merrimack	19	14	25	31.58%
Rockingham	125	113	97	-22.40%
Strafford	12	50	25	108.33%
Sullivan	156	179	122	-21.79%

¹⁶ Counting the number of doubled-up people has been methodologically challenging for Continuums of Care across the country. Although the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development does not include people in these situations in their official counts of homelessness, many CoCs have attempted to get estimates of the number of people who are doubled-up during their annual Point-in-Time counts. Due to the methodological difficulties in finding and counting people who are doubled-up on the day of the count, however, it is widely believed that these numbers are a vast underestimate of the true numbers of doubled-up individuals and families in the state.

between 2013 and 2014. Changes in the number of temporarily doubled-up people between 2012 and 2014 ranged from a 108 percent increase (13 people) in Strafford County to a 95 percent decrease (20 people) in Belknap County.

PEOPLE DISCHARGED FROM PRISON

Map 2.2: Changes in Prison Discharges, 2011 to 2013

People who are being discharged from prison are often at an elevated risk of homelessness, in many cases due to a lack of social and financial resources. Housing and homeless service providers report that finding housing for people with significant criminal backgrounds, particularly for those with sexual or violence-related offenses, can be extremely difficult, if not impossible. There are three state prison facilities in New Hampshire, and each year many inmates throughout the state are discharged from these institutions, sometimes directly into homelessness. To monitor changes in the size of the population who may be at risk of homelessness due to a release from prison, the change in the number of people released from state prison in New Hampshire between 2011 and 2013 is presented based on data obtained from the NH Department of Corrections Annual Reports.¹⁷

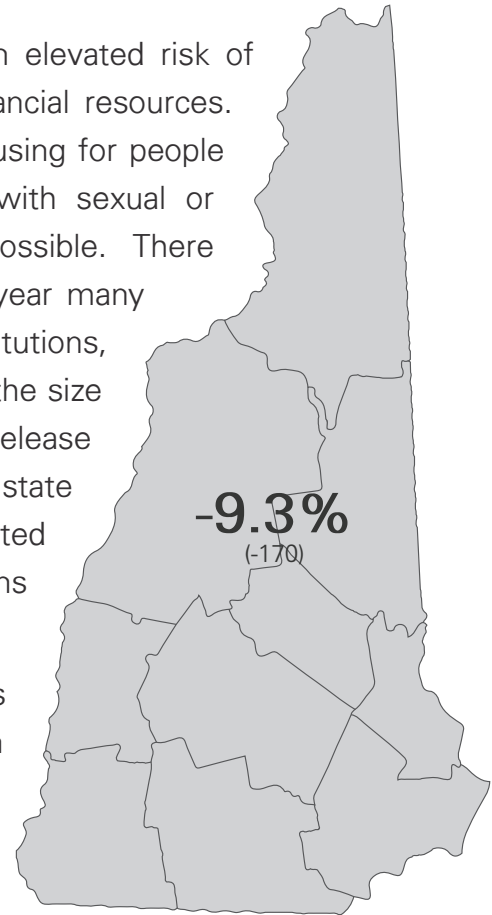


Table 2.2 shows the change in the number of discharged individuals from prison from 2011 to 2013 in New Hampshire.¹⁸ Between 2011 and 2013, the number of people discharged from prison decreased by roughly nine percent, from 1,827 in 2011 to 1,657 in 2013. Between 2011 and 2012, data show a declining number of prison discharges, around 15 percent. However, discharges then increased by about seven percent between 2012 and 2013.

Table 2.2: People Discharged from Prison				
	2011	2012	2013	% Change, 2011-2013
State	1,827	1,552	1,657	-9.30%

17 New Hampshire Department of Corrections. (2011, 2012, 2013). NH Department of Corrections 2011, 2012, 2013 Annual Report. Accessed Oct. 1, 2014 <http://www.nh.gov/nhdod/divisions/publicinformation/index.html>

18 Aggregated county data was not obtainable for this report.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Map 2.3: Changes in the Unemployment Rate, 2012 to 2014

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. Unemployment rates are released annually by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and can be utilized to help inform the state of homelessness and overall economic wellbeing within a given area.

Table 2.3 and Map 2.3 show the changes in the unemployment rate from 2012 to 2014.¹⁹ Overall, the state’s unemployment rate decreased over this time period and continues to stay substantially below the national rate of 5.9 percent. Although some counties experienced larger decreases in the unemployment rate than others, there were no counties that experienced increases. Changes across the state range from a 14 percent decrease in Carroll County to a 22 percent decrease in Strafford County.

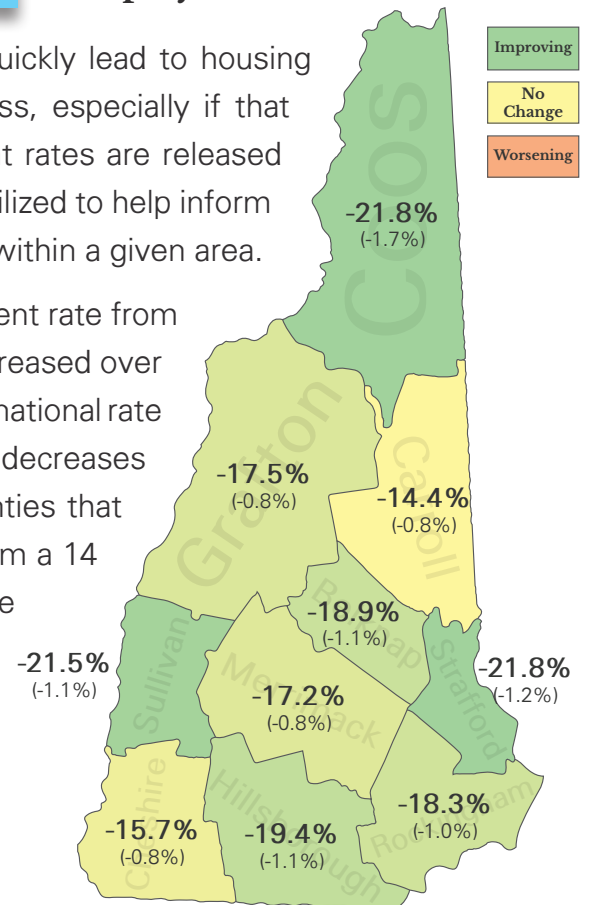


Table 2.3: Unemployment Rate				
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	5.50%	5.30%	4.46%	-19.22%
Belknap	5.40%	5.20%	4.34%	-18.85%
Carroll	5.20%	5.10%	4.42%	-14.40%
Cheshire	5.30%	5.10%	4.47%	-15.72%
Coos	7.70%	6.40%	6.04%	-21.78%
Grafton	4.40%	4.30%	3.61%	-17.53%
Hillsborough	5.70%	5.40%	4.63%	-19.39%
Merrimack	4.90%	4.80%	4.06%	-17.23%
Rockingham	6.00%	5.70%	4.96%	-18.32%
Strafford	5.50%	5.10%	4.34%	-21.80%
Sullivan	4.80%	4.50%	3.74%	-21.54%

¹⁹ Since this report was released prior to the end of 2014, the 2014 unemployment rate was calculated using the most current data, from January 2014 to September 2014.

POVERTY RATE

Map 2.4: Changes in the Poverty Rate, 2010 to 2012

At just over eight percent, New Hampshire has the lowest poverty rate in the nation, with the national average at 15 percent. However, since 2010, the poverty rate in New Hampshire has steadily increased in almost all regions.²⁰ The state saw a seven percent increase between 2010 and 2012, with Belknap, Carroll and Hillsborough Counties seeing more drastic increases.²¹ While no county's poverty rate is higher than the national average, Coos County has observed the highest poverty rate in New Hampshire each year between 2010 and 2012. Counties in South-Central and Southeastern New Hampshire experienced lower poverty rates than the rest of the state.

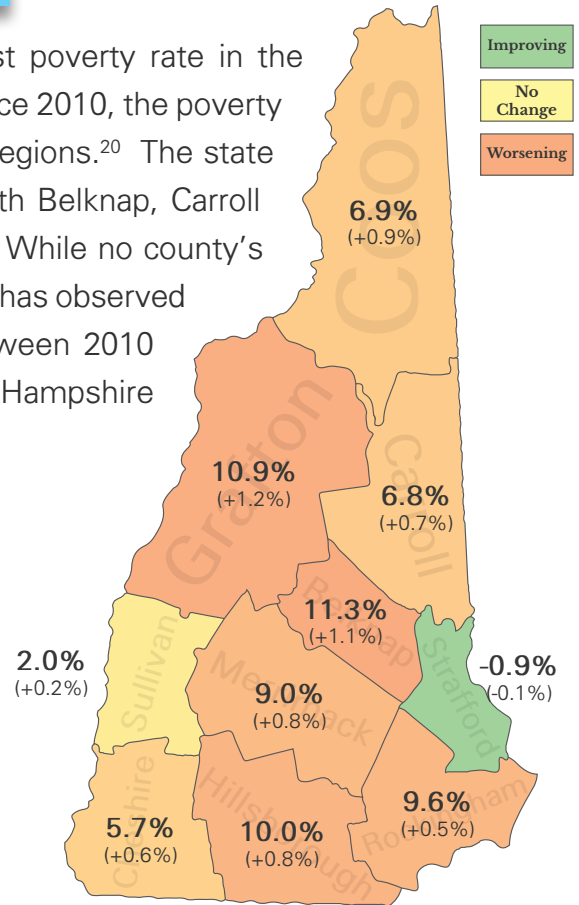


Table 2.4: Poverty Rate				
	2010	2011	2012	% Change, 2010-2012
State	7.80%	8.00%	8.40%	7.14%
Belknap	8.60%	8.50%	9.70%	11.34%
Carroll	9.60%	10.30%	10.30%	6.80%
Cheshire	10.00%	9.90%	10.60%	5.66%
Coos	12.10%	13.00%	13.00%	6.92%
Grafton	9.80%	9.90%	11.00%	10.91%
Hillsborough	7.20%	7.50%	8.00%	10.00%
Merrimack	8.10%	8.30%	8.90%	8.99%
Rockingham	4.70%	4.90%	5.20%	9.62%
Strafford	11.30%	10.80%	11.20%	-0.89%
Sullivan	10.00%	10.40%	10.20%	1.96%

20 Because regional data for 2013 was not available at the time of this report's release, this table does not include the most recent poverty data.
 21 This report uses five year data estimates on a number of variables including poverty rate, median household income, average real income of the working poor, and severe housing cost rental burden. More information about the use of multi-year estimates can be found at the U.S. Census Bureau http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/estimates/

CHAPTER THREE

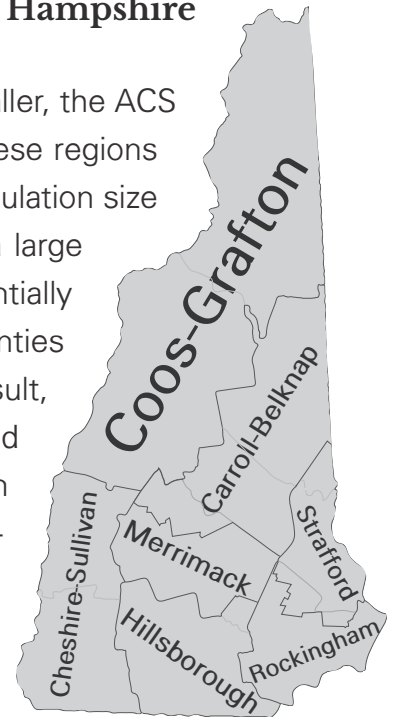


HOUSING AND THE ECONOMICS OF HOMELESSNESS

*Rents continue to rise, despite falling
incomes of the working poor.*

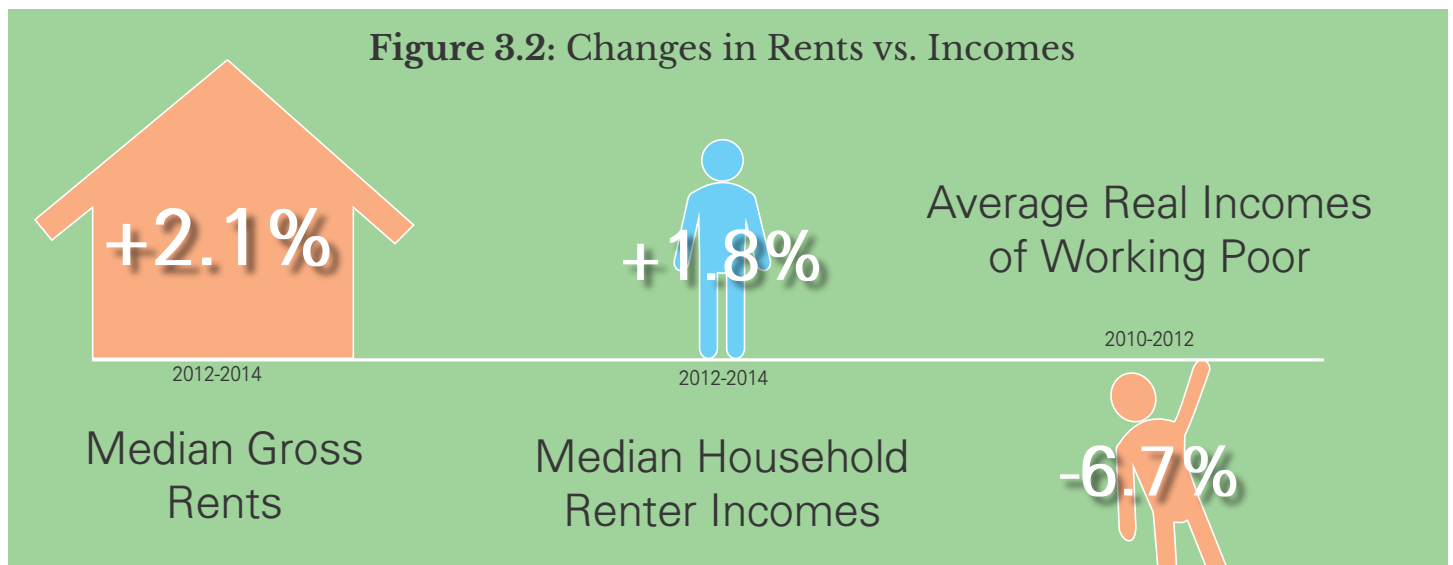
The U.S. Census Bureau conducts The American Community Survey (ACS) every year, which, while not as extensive as the decennial Census, is useful in that it provides more current data. However, since the number of surveys collected is substantially smaller, the ACS only provides yearly data for regions containing at least 60,000 people; these regions are called Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Because of the small population size in many areas of New Hampshire, county-level data is not available for a large portion of the state. Fortunately, however, New Hampshire’s PUMAs essentially fall along county lines,²² resulting in three PUMAs that encapsulate two counties each, with the remaining four counties having their own PUMA. As a result, meaningful, regional information about New Hampshire can still be obtained that is comparable, if not equivalent, with county level data.²³ As is seen in Figure 3.1, New Hampshire’s PUMAs encapsulate Carroll-Belknap, Cheshire-Sullivan and Coos-Grafton as well as the single counties of Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham and Strafford. This report utilizes these regions for data pertaining to the average income of the working poor and severe cost burdened households.

Figure 3.1: PUMA Regions in New Hampshire



This chapter also examines both the number of available housing units as well as the cost of rental units, which can play important roles in one’s ability to obtain and maintain housing. The interrelated effects of all these factors on housing and homelessness are detailed in this chapter.

Figure 3.2: Changes in Rents vs. Incomes



22 There are the following exceptions:

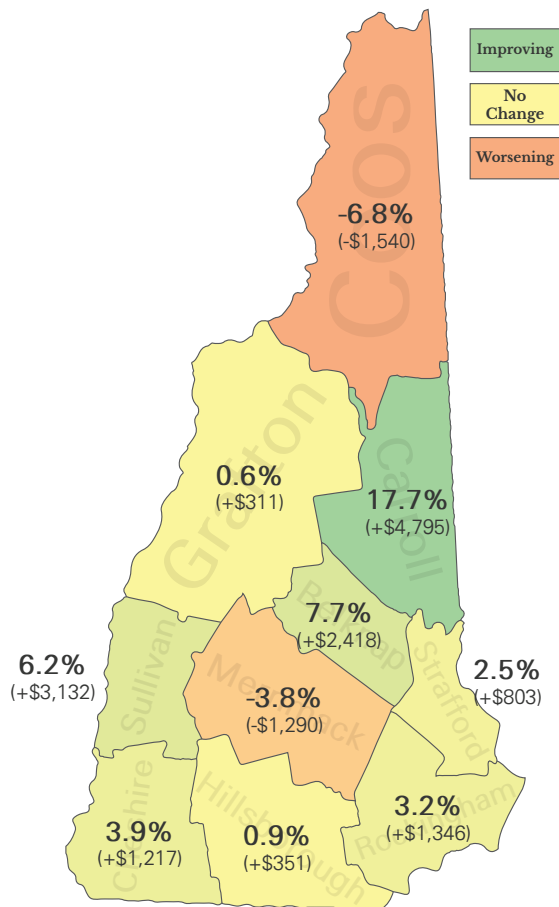
1. Carroll-Belknap PUMA gains the towns of Andover, Danbury, Hill, Franklin, Northfield, and Wilnot from Merrimack PUMA and loses the towns of Brookfield and Wakefield to Strafford PUMA
2. Hillsborough PUMA gains the town of Hooksett from Merrimack PUMA
3. Merrimack PUMA loses the above-mentioned towns
4. Strafford PUMA gains the above-mentioned towns and also the towns of Newfields, Newmarket, Northwood, and Nottingham from Rockingham PUMA
5. Rockingham PUMA loses the above-mentioned towns.

23 This report uses five year data estimates on a number of variables including poverty rate, median household incomes, average real income of the working poor, and severe housing cost rental burden. More information about the use of multi-year estimates can be found at the U.S. Census Bureau http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/estimates/

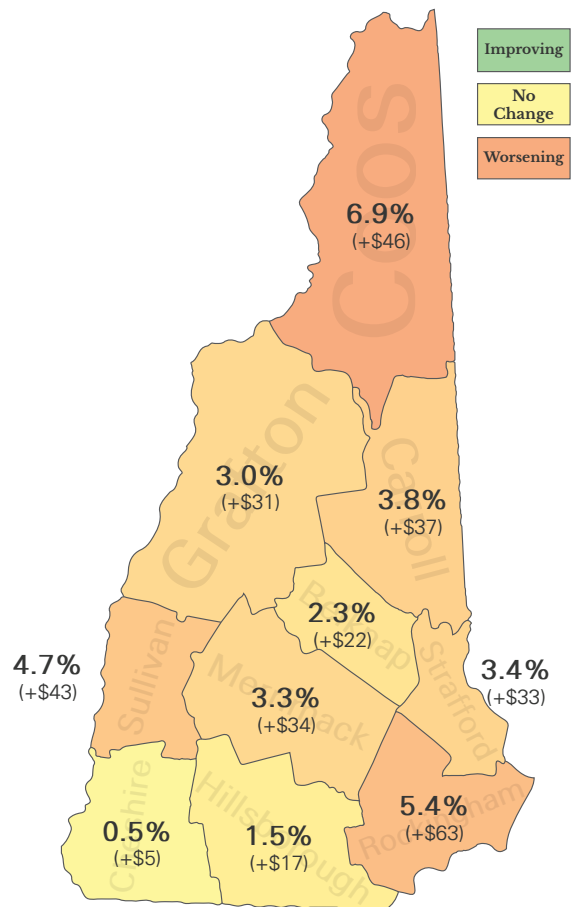
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD RENTER INCOME & GROSS RENT

The relationship between income and rent can be an important indicator of the extent to which people are able to access housing. Table 3.1 and Map 3.1 show the change in median household renter incomes between 2012 and 2014, while Table 3.2 and Map 3.2 show the change in median gross rents during that same time-frame. Both sets of data are based on New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority’s Annual Residential Rental Cost Surveys.²⁴ Statewide median renter incomes have increased by almost two percent from \$35,965 in 2012 to \$36,593 in 2014. The increase in median income is a positive sign, which could suggest a greater ability for individuals and families to afford housing on the private market. At the same time, however, recent data show a comparative increase in median rents across the state, which in a rental market with few vacancies, can make it very challenging for people making the median income or below to access affordable rental housing.²⁵

Map 3.1: Changes in the Median Household Renter Income, 2012 to 2014



Map 3.2: Changes in the Monthly Median Gross Rent, 2012 to 2014



24 New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority. (2012, 2013, 2014). Residential Rental Cost Survey. Accessed Oct. 1, 2014 <http://www.nhffa.org/housing-data-research.cfm>
 25 “Median Gross Rental Cost.” New Hampshire Housing Data. January 1, 2014. Accessed November 4, 2014. <http://nhhousingdata.nhffa.org/diverport#page=a0010>.

Table 3.1: Median Household Renter Income

	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	\$35,965	\$36,409	\$36,593	1.75%
Belknap	\$31,628	\$34,153	\$34,046	7.65%
Carroll	\$27,039	\$29,020	\$31,834	17.73%
Cheshire	\$31,520	\$31,850	\$32,737	3.86%
Coos	\$22,700	\$21,613	\$21,160	-6.78%
Grafton	\$36,498	\$36,803	\$36,811	0.86%
Hillsborough	\$38,944	\$38,827	\$39,295	0.90%
Merrimack	\$33,658	\$33,860	\$32,368	-3.83%
Rockingham	\$42,354	\$42,977	\$43,700	3.18%
Strafford	\$32,703	\$34,063	\$33,506	2.46%
Sullivan	\$50,689	\$51,678	\$53,821	6.18%

Table 3.2: Monthly Median Gross Rent

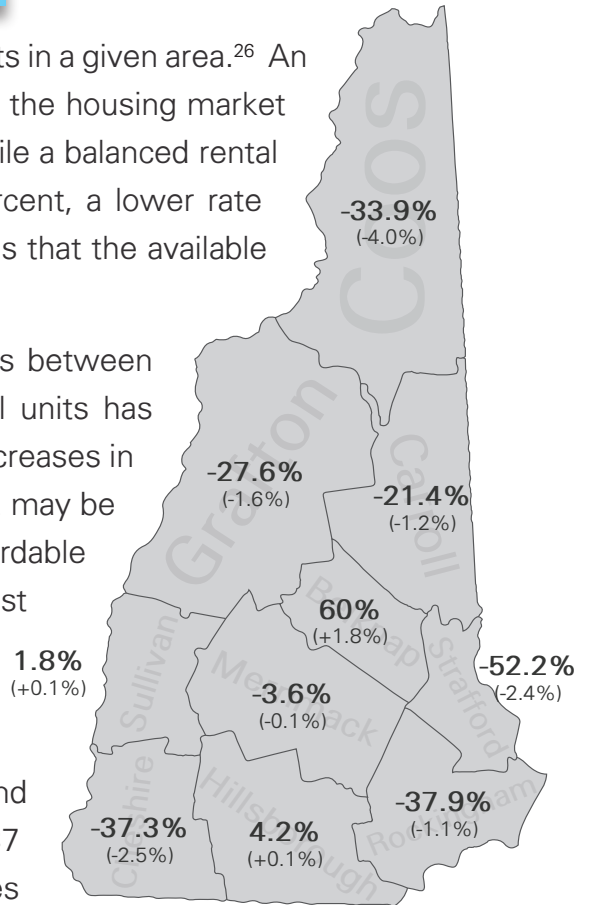
	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	\$1,085	\$1,076	\$1,108	2.12%
Belknap	\$975	\$1,005	\$997	2.26%
Carroll	\$964	\$964	\$1,001	3.84%
Cheshire	\$1,039	\$1,039	\$1,044	0.48%
Coos	\$664	\$657	\$710	6.93%
Grafton	\$1,022	\$985	\$1,053	3.03%
Hillsborough	\$1,139	\$1,147	\$1,156	1.49%
Merrimack	\$1,045	\$1,064	\$1,079	3.25%
Rockingham	\$1,166	\$1,224	\$1,229	5.40%
Strafford	\$979	\$981	\$1,012	3.37%
Sullivan	\$914	\$925	\$957	4.70%

VACANCY RATE

Map 3.3: Changes in the Vacancy Rate for 2-Bedroom Units, 2012 to 2014

Vacancy rates represent the percentage of available rental units in a given area.²⁶ An adequate number of vacancies allows for normal changes in the housing market and for consumers to have a reasonable level of choice. While a balanced rental market is thought to have vacancy rates of around five percent, a lower rate indicates fewer options for renters and a higher rate indicates that the available options may not be desirable for renters.²⁷

Map 3.3²⁸ and Table 3.3 show the changes in vacancy rates between 2012 and 2014. Statewide, the number of available rental units has been decreasing, though there have been some moderate increases in the southern region. While some of the decreases observed may be hindering the ability of people with low-incomes to obtain affordable housing, the decrease experienced by Coos County, the largest in the state, is likely a positive change for a region that has had historically high vacancies. Between 2012 and 2014, the vacancy rate in Coos County declined from about 12 percent in 2012 to about eight percent in 2014. Cheshire and Rockingham Counties also saw decreases, both of about 37 percent between 2012 and 2014. Increases in vacancy rates were seen in Sullivan, Hillsborough, and Belknap Counties. Merrimack, Hillsborough, Rockingham, and Strafford Counties continue to exhibit an extremely tight rental market.



	2012	2013	2014	% Change, 2012-2014
State	3.20%	3.40%	2.70%	-15.63%
Belknap	3.00%	4.70%	4.80%	60.00%
Carroll	5.60%	3.60%	4.40%	-21.43%
Cheshire	6.70%	2.70%	4.20%	-37.31%
Coos	11.80%	10.50%	7.80%	-33.90%
Grafton	5.80%	3.80%	4.20%	-27.59%
Hillsborough	2.40%	2.90%	2.50%	4.17%
Merrimack	2.80%	4.20%	2.70%	-3.57%
Rockingham	2.90%	3.10%	1.80%	-37.93%
Strafford	4.60%	4.70%	2.20%	-52.17%
Sullivan	5.60%	5.90%	5.70%	1.79%

26 It is important to note that the rate only indicates the number of available units and not the condition, price, or size of the unit.
 27 New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority 2013. "NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING RENTAL SURVEY SHOWS MARKET STILL TIGHT." July 9, 2013. Press release can be accessed at: <http://www.ncsha.org/story/new-hampshire-hfa-rental-survey-shows-market-still-tight>
 28 As noted, a balanced rental market is thought to have vacancy rates around five percent. As representing positive and negative changes equally in the form of a heat map isn't possible under this scenario, Map 3.3 is displayed as a neutral, gray color.

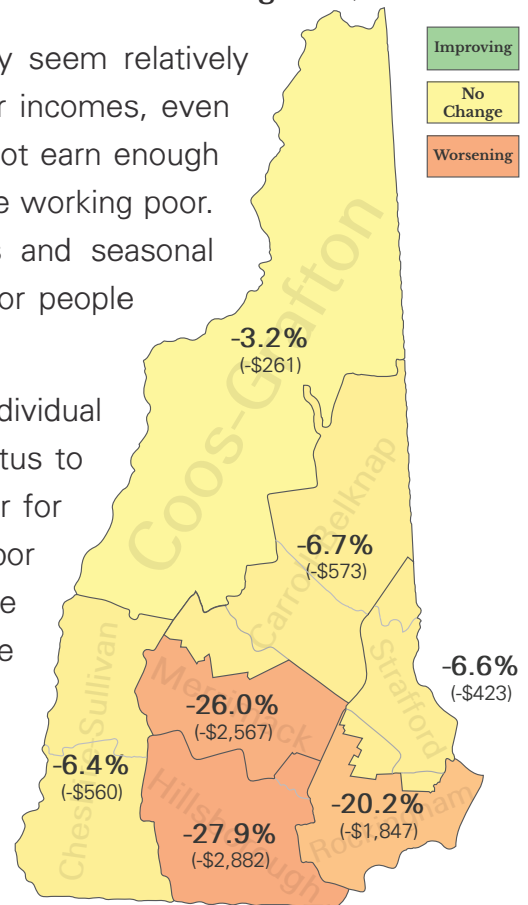
AVERAGE REAL INCOME OF WORKING POOR PEOPLE

Map 3.4: Changes in the Average Real Income of Working Poor, 2010 to 2012

While the median household renter income of \$36,593 may seem relatively sustainable, many New Hampshire citizens have much lower incomes, even among those who work. Those who are employed, yet do not earn enough to lift themselves out of poverty, are collectively known as the working poor. Employment factors such as low wages, infrequent hours and seasonal positions contribute to the increasing number of working poor people both nationally and across New Hampshire.

The average real income of the working poor uses data on individual income, number of hours worked and household poverty status to estimate the financial resources available to the working poor for housing and other needs. Following the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' definition of working poor people, only those who have worked at least 27 weeks in the past year and whose income still falls below the poverty line are included in this analysis.²⁹

Map 3.4 and Table 3.4³⁰ show the change in average real income of working poor people between 2010 and 2012. Statewide, the average real income of working poor people decreased by more than 16 percent, from \$8,864 in 2010 to \$7,406 in 2012. All seven regions had decreases in average real income of working poor people, with the most significant decreases occurring in the Hillsborough (decrease of 28 percent), the Merrimack (decrease of 26 percent), and the Rockingham (decrease of 20 percent) regions.



	2010	2011	2012	% Change, 2010-2012
State	\$8,864	\$8,869	\$7,406	-16.45%
Carroll-Belknap	\$8,586	\$8,558	\$8,012	-6.68%
Cheshire-Sullivan	\$8,716	\$8,307	\$8,155	-6.43%
Coos-Grafton	\$8,105	\$8,302	\$7,844	-3.22%
Hillsborough	\$10,344	\$9,943	\$7,462	-27.86%
Merrimack	\$9,859	\$9,434	\$7,292	-26.04%
Rockingham	\$9,128	\$9,599	\$7,281	-20.23%
Strafford	\$6,418	\$7,033	\$5,995	-6.59%

29 Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) A Profile of the Working Poor, 2012, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswp2012.pdf>

30 This report uses five year data estimates on a number of variables including poverty rate, median household incomes, average real income of the working poor, and severe housing cost rental burden. More information about the use of multi-year estimates can be found at the U.S. Census Bureau http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/estimates/

SEVERE HOUSING COST BURDENED RENTAL HOUSEHOLDS

Map 3.5: Changes in the Number of Severe Housing Cost Burdened Rental Households, 2010 to 2012

According to generally accepted definitions of affordability, when housing costs account for more than 30 percent of monthly household income, it is considered unaffordable.³¹ Households below the poverty line face the most intense cost burden and spend a substantially larger fraction of their income on rent. For this analysis, a severely housing cost burdened rental household is defined as being below the federal poverty line and spending more than 50 percent of its income on rent and basic utilities (e.g. heat, electricity, water).

Map 3.5 and Table 3.5 show the change in the percentage of households who are in poverty and who pay more than 50 percent of their income on rent and utilities between 2010 and 2012. Over this timespan, the percentage of these households has increased by almost three percent across the state. Four of the seven regions exhibited increases during this time span. Changes across the state range from a seven percent decrease in the Carroll-Belknap region to a 25 percent increase in the Coos-Grafton region.

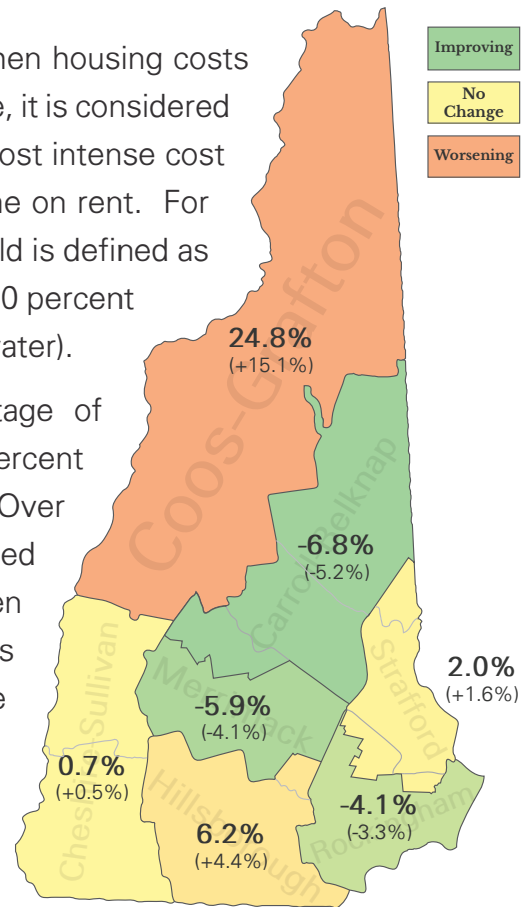


Table 3.5: Severe Housing Cost Burdened Rental Households				
	2010	2011	2012	% Change, 2010-2012
State	72.57%	71.02%	74.55%	2.74%
Carroll-Belknap	76.07%	70.78%	70.90%	-6.80%
Cheshire-Sullivan	67.59%	65.40%	68.07%	0.71%
Coos-Grafton	60.96%	62.32%	76.09%	24.83%
Hillsborough	71.61%	73.35%	76.02%	6.17%
Merrimack	70.27%	65.42%	66.14%	-5.87%
Rockingham	80.14%	74.19%	76.84%	-4.12%
Strafford	79.47%	78.01%	81.09%	2.04%

31 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Affordable Housing. Accessed Oct. 1, 2014. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing

Conclusion

New Hampshire has made significant progress in decreasing the number of individuals and families who are homeless in our state, continuing a trend of decreases that began in 2011. Over the course of the next year and beyond, the state will be presented with some important opportunities to build on our progress and continue our march towards ending homelessness. In 2015, the system of homeless services in New Hampshire will undergo a significant transformation. One key element of this transformation will be a change in the way that the homeless gain access to key services. Known as Coordinated Access, this new system will direct people who become homeless to one regional location where they can be quickly and comprehensively assessed and then referred to the intervention that will best meet their unique needs. As more service providers join in this coordinated effort, New Hampshire is in a unique position to build upon our culture of partnership and collaboration to make even greater reductions in our homeless numbers.

In order to maximize our impact, it will be important that communities continue to assess the unique needs of the homeless in their locales, and then have the flexibility to respond to those needs with a wide range of tools and services. Meeting the needs of multiply challenged individuals requires that communities have the resources needed to respond to complex and varied needs. New trends in homeless services such as Rapid Re-Housing and Housing First are important tools for assisting segments of the homeless in the state. Yet, traditional tools, including transitional housing and service-enriched permanent supportive housing, are also necessary to fully respond to the complex needs of adults and children who find themselves homeless. Research shows that making these investments in housing and key services for those experiencing homelessness is not just the right thing to do, but it is also creates important cost savings for the community as a whole.

Under federal guidance, communities are also being asked to implement stronger “diversion” practices, which in some cases can successfully prevent people from ever entering the homeless services system. While preventing entry into the system is a clear goal, it will be important to ensure that diversion practices do not prematurely divert those who do need assistance from the homeless services system, potentially placing them in greater harm. Investments in responsible prevention and diversion practices can play a significant role in further reducing the numbers of people who fall into homelessness in our state.

Finally, the voices of the homeless themselves will be critical to making this transformation a success. No one understands the impacts of homelessness more than those who have experienced it themselves. Leadership training programs such as Granite Leaders, administered by the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness, empower the currently- and formerly-homeless to share their experiences and their opinions on the decisions that impact their lives and the lives of others in similar situations. The perspectives of these leaders are fundamental to creating an accessible and robust service system.

2015 will be a transformative year for homeless services in the state. By maintaining our commitment

to collaborative, flexible services guided by open and inclusive dialogue and evidence on what works, New Hampshire will continue its march towards ending homelessness and has the potential to become a model of success across the nation.

Appendix: Data Sources

CHAPTER 1: THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NH Coalition to End Homelessness

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