

# KnoxHMIS

## 2021

# Addendum

to Annual Dashboard Report

**Homeless Services in  
Knoxville / Knox County,  
Tennessee**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE

SOCIAL WORK OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH & PUBLIC SERVICE



# The University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS)

*Nate First, LCSW, MA, KnoxHMIS Program Manager*

*Gary Moats, BA, Senior Developer*

*Forrest Wentzel, BA, IT Specialist*

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# Introduction



## The Annual Report report has moved! Sort of.

Every year since 2007, KnoxHMIS has produced an Annual Report to summarize the state of homelessness and homeless services in Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee.

Starting with this Annual Report for 2021, most annual data is **now available ONLY at the Knoxville-Knox County Community Dashboard on Homelessness**.

To get there, please visit: [knoxhmis.org/dashboard](https://knoxhmis.org/dashboard).

**Why the move?** We're hoping this transition to the Community Dashboard will make our community's homelessness data more accessible by (1) consolidating all reports into a centralized data hub, and (2) expanding the tools available to help viewers dig into the data in meaningful, interactive ways.

The ultimate goal of KnoxHMIS is to support the community's ongoing efforts to make data-informed, reliable, and effective decisions about how best to respond to the profound challenge of homelessness, so that fewer Knox households enter homelessness to begin with, and those who do are met with the quickest, most effective, most equitable responses possible at what is, for many, the most vulnerable seasons in their lives. Along with all of our agency and municipal partners, we are privileged to put our shoulders to that giant wheel.

KnoxHMIS is grateful to the City of Knoxville for supporting this effort, as well as to the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) and the College of Social Work here at the University of Tennessee. And of course, most, our gratitude goes to the many community partners (page 6) and the 130+ social workers, administrators, and other do-gooders who tirelessly do the heavy lifts, not only of serving these thousands of households directly, but of entering hundreds of thousands of bits of data each and every year. You are truly wonderful. I hope we say that enough.

Finally, a wholehearted (and we hope slightly embarrassing) word of thanks to Dr. David Patterson, the KnoxHMIS founding director who retired from his post in July, 2022 after 18 years of thoughtful, insightful, compassionate and always effective leadership. Dr. P., thank you.

Nate First  
Program Manager, KnoxHMIS

## Before you visit the new dashboard, a note on the numbers:



"How many people are homeless?" It's the most basic question, right? Or maybe something more specific: How many *Veterans, Youth, Seniors, or Families* are homeless?

In our experience at KnoxHMIS, these are the kinds of data points people most often talk about after visiting the [Dashboard](#) or the KnoxHMIS Annual Report. But sometimes there is a disconnect between the real answers to these questions and the numbers people actually use. **To make the best use of HMIS data, it's important to note three things:**

- (1) **No count can ever capture all homeless neighbors.** KnoxHMIS only counts individuals served by local homeless service providers. Given that persons in Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing are absolutely engaging the system, counts of sheltered homelessness are quite reliable. But some individuals who find themselves in unsheltered situations (cars, abandoned buildings, outdoors) never interact with service providers. Because of this, unsheltered homelessness is almost certainly underrepresented.
- (2) **Not all KnoxHMIS clients are homeless.** To be sure, most are. But beyond those who were literally homeless in 2021 (those staying in shelters or in places not meant for habitation), KnoxHMIS reports also include other households supported by our partnering homeless service providers. These households include those at imminent risk of losing housing, as well as some who, after one or more episodes of homelessness, now receive formal, ongoing support to *remain* stably housed. All such services are key to our community's strategic response to reduce the prevalence and negative impact of homelessness. So please make note of whether the data you're viewing is of individuals in KnoxHMIS more broadly or of those experiencing literal homelessness.
- (3) Most important of all, perhaps, **counts from our Dashboard and Annual Reports have historically been quarterly and annual totals**, which are often far different from those "on a given day" counts. In other words, they *don't* answer the question, "How many people are homeless?"

KnoxHMIS clients in 2021 serve as a case in point:

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Total</b> clients spending at least one day interacting with the Knox homeless service system <u>throughout the year</u> in 2021:</p> <p><b>8,695</b></p> | <p><b>Daily Average</b> of Knox neighbors <b>engaged in KnoxHMIS</b> in 2021:</p> <p><b>2,431</b></p> | <p><b>Daily Average</b> of KnoxHMIS neighbors <b>experiencing homelessness</b> in 2021:</p> <p><b>1,908</b></p> |
|---|---|---|

Where traditionally we would've shown the annual total – the 8,695 – **we are moving to approximate daily averages** – for the example above, the 2,431 and the 1908 – because these more closely represent the data people look for – and often think they're getting – from the quarterly and annual counts.

We hope this move is helpful to avoid confusion and support meaningful change. As always, we welcome any feedback.



As noted above, **the real data** illustrating the state of homelessness and homeless services in Knoxville-Knox County in 2021 are now available in their **new interactive format** at the [Knox Community Dashboard on Homelessness](#). Please do visit the Dashboard and select “2021” at the top to view additional information on **families, veterans, youth** and other populations, as well as **causes** for homelessness, housing **outcomes**, and interactive mapping showing where our KnoxHMIS neighbors are from. And check back in. We’ll be adding more soon.

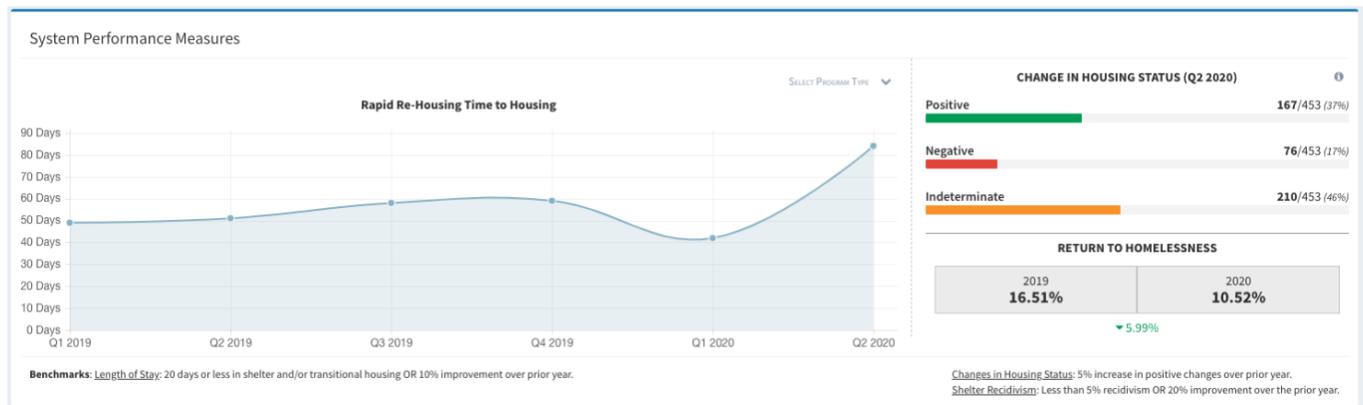
Thank you to our community partners for your relentless efforts to serve our most vulnerable neighbors.



## Additional Resources featuring KnoxHMIS Partner Data

### Community Dashboard on Homelessness

For more current quarterly trends in Knox community homelessness data, please visit the Knoxville Community Dashboard on Homelessness, an interactive, public-facing website that has homelessness counts, length of stay, time to exit, return to homelessness, housing placement status, point in time counts, bed-utilization rates, and subpopulation data (e.g., youth, families, veterans, and seniors). The Community Dashboard is the fruit of an ongoing collaboration between KnoxHMIS, UT SWORPS, and the City of Knoxville. For those reading a paper copy, please visit: [knoxhmis.org/dashboard](https://knoxhmis.org/dashboard).



### Knox Housing Help

A public-facing directory of services provided by community partner agencies for those experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis.

### National Alliance to End Homelessness: State of Homelessness Report – 2022 Edition

The *State of Homelessness in America* is a public-facing website that charts progress in ending homelessness in the United States. Features include national, state, and county level data filters. Using the most recently available national data, the website is intended to serve as a reference for policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the public on trends in homelessness, homeless assistance, and at-risk populations at the national and state levels.

### CoC Housing Inventory Count (HIC) Reports

A community's inventory of housing that is conducted annually during the last ten days of January. Inventories are available at the national and state level, as well as for each CoC. The reports tally the number of beds and units available on the night designated for the count by program type and include beds dedicated to serve persons who are homeless as well as persons in Permanent Supportive Housing. New for this year, the reports also include data on beds dedicated to serve specific subpopulations.

### CoC Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports

A report that provides counts for sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons by household type and subpopulation, available at the national and state level and for each Continuum of Care.

### National Summary System Performance Measures 2015 – 2021 \*interactive\*

An interactive report on trends in homeless service system performance, nationally and for communities nationwide, since 2015. The Continuum of Care for Knoxville-Knox County is TN-502.

To access a copy of this 2021 Annual Report with clickable links, along with an archive of prior reports, please visit: <https://knoxhmis.sworpswebapp.sworps.utk.edu/resources/>