

# Annual Report on Homelessness Conditions in Florida 2006



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Office on Homelessness  
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### **Cover photo:**

San Francisco Chronicle's photographer Brant Ward, as part of the series "Shame of the City" published in December 2003, documenting the extent of homelessness in San Francisco. Used with Permission.

## Executive Summary

The Department of Children and Families submits its annual report on homelessness in Florida, in accordance with its responsibility pursuant to subsection 420. 623(4), Florida Statutes. The Department wishes to thank all of the local homeless coalitions that provided the data on the homeless population in their area for 2006.

Based on this information from 29 local homeless coalitions, the current estimate is that 85,907 persons are homeless on any given day in 2006. The primary causes of homelessness are poverty, and the lack of affordable housing. The housing issue was identified as the single-most pressing need by the local homeless coalitions. The impact of the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes that hit Florida and its neighboring states have destroyed many low cost housing units, and have contributed to a rise in the cost of housing statewide.

Florida continues to make positive strides in addressing homelessness. As a result of greater planning and state partnerships, Florida's 27 continuum of care plans for homeless service are being implemented. As a result of targeted homeless grants from this department, over 52,600 persons received direct services, including food, shelter, health care, case management, emergency financial assistance and transportation. Another 6,536 families were aided to help resolve housing emergencies.

Further, over the last five years, the supply of shelter and housing beds to serve the homeless has grown 43 percent. This is due to the success of our local homeless providers in competing for federal grants for homeless housing, as well as the ability to tap state homeless housing grants from the department.

Florida's commitment to be a strong partner with the local homeless service agencies needs to continue. Since the creation of the Office on Homelessness, and the state's Challenge and Homeless Housing Assistance Grants, planning for and the delivery of comprehensive homeless services has been enhanced. Florida continues to compete successfully for federal homeless grants, resulting in more of our homeless residents being served.

The Department of Children and Families, its Office on Homelessness, and our local homeless services partners remain strongly committed to reducing homelessness in Florida, and helping those who are homeless end their episode of homelessness as quickly as possible. Our mission remains to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.

## **Section 1 Homeless Conditions in Florida**

### **How many people are homeless in Florida?**

The Department has received information collected by the network of local homeless coalitions that coordinate services for the homeless in all 67 counties. The data collected and reported for 2006 comes from various sources for 2006. This includes point-in-time counts, homeless provider agency records on persons served, records from local homeless management information systems, and the street counts done in 2005.

Based on the data reported by 29 local homeless coalitions, 85,907 persons were homeless on any given day in 2006. Some areas of the state reported increased numbers of persons homeless, particularly the areas impacted by 2005 hurricanes and the relocation of evacuees from Hurricane Katrina. Other areas reported decreases in homeless populations, where local programs are succeeding in reducing street homelessness and where recovery efforts from the 2004 storms are well underway.

While single adults make up sixty (60) percent of the homeless population, the issue of family homelessness continues to grow, with forty (40) percent of the homeless living in family households. Of these households, a significant portion include children. In fact, households with minor children make up thirty-seven (37) percent of the overall homeless population.

Children under the age of eighteen compose twenty-three (23) percent of all homeless. Elderly persons over sixty years of age make up just over eight (8) percent of the homeless, with adults constituting the balance of sixty-nine (69) percent.

For many, experiencing homelessness in 2006 was a new challenge. Thirty-seven (37) percent reported that they were homeless for the first time. Twenty-nine (29) percent, were homeless for a second or third time. The other thirty-three (33) percent reported having four or more episodes of homelessness.

The length of time that the person or family was homeless varied as well. Episodes lasting less than one month were reported for nineteen (19) percent of the homeless. Another twenty (20) percent were without housing of their own from one to three months. Longer periods of up to one year were experienced by just over twelve (12) percent, with thirty-five (35) percent being homeless for longer than one year.

## **What are the reasons leading to a person becoming homeless?**

In all of the studies and research, homelessness is rooted in poverty and the limited supply of housing units affordable to those with extremely low incomes. Other contributing factors include:

- Loss of a job
- Breakup of the family
- Domestic violence
- Physical or mental illnesses
- Alcohol and substance abuse

The local homeless coalitions cite as a major factor in the rise homeless populations, the impacts of hurricanes on Florida and neighboring states. These storms have reduced the supply of lower cost housing units, and have contributed to the rise in rents and home costs. Further, the loss of jobs and wages due to storm damage is cited as contributing to increased homelessness. Florida also received thousands of evacuees from our neighboring states from hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, placing pressure on an already taxed housing supply.

## **Section 2 Development and Implementation of Continuum of Care Plans**

### **What is a continuum of care plan?**

A continuum of care plan is intended to be a “framework for a comprehensive and seamless array of emergency, transitional and permanent housing, and services” to address the needs of the persons who are homeless, in accordance with section 420.624, Florida Statutes. This homeless assistance planning effort is used by both the state and our federal partner, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to guide the allocation and award of homeless grants.

This locally developed service plan covers the following components of the continuum of care for the homeless.

1. Outreach, intake and assessment of the person or family to identify their needs and link them to local services
2. Emergency sheltering
3. Transitional housing
4. Support services
5. Permanent supportive housing
6. Permanent housing
7. Referrals among all components to move persons toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency.
8. Services and resources to prevent homelessness.

Such planning is intended to reflect the community’s vision for solutions to its homeless needs. Each continuum of care plan serves a specific geographic area of one or more counties.

### **Florida’s Continuum of Care Plans**

Currently there are 27 of these local homeless plans in Florida. The 2006 plans filed with the Office on Homelessness in May 2006 cover 62 of the 67 counties in the state. In 2001 when this planning concept was placed into state law, there were just 23 plans covering only 31 counties. The incentives created by the state, especially the Challenge and Homeless Housing Assistance Grants, have played a significant role in promoting the development of more plans, covering more of the state’s counties. The map in Exhibit 2 depicts the existing continuum of care planning areas, and the counties covered by each local plan.

## **Implementation of the Continuum of Care Plans**

Florida's local homeless service plans are being successfully implemented, with both federal and state homeless grants. In the 2005 national competition, Florida's continuums were awarded \$58.1 million to accomplish the following:

- 25 of Florida's 27 continuums of care were funded
- 225 housing projects were funded, including 29 new projects.

The state's targeted homeless Challenge Grant also awarded \$2.1 million to 22 of the 27 continuums of care to carry out a wide variety of homeless services. An additional \$5.0 million in Homeless Housing grants supported 12 projects to build 225 units of housing for the homeless in 9 continuum of care areas. In five years, every continuum has received one or more of these state grants to implement its homeless service plan.

Florida's Challenge Grants	
Homeless Services	
<u>Year</u>	<u>Persons Served by Grant</u>
2001-02	14,636 *
2002-03	28,000
2003-04	31,866
2004-05	23,219
2005-06 (Planned Services)	34,611

\* Represents services for only 4 months of year.

Funding Levels  
\$3,838,799 for 2001-02 and 2002-03  
\$2,116,025 for 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06

### Section 3 Local Plans, Programs and Resources

The framework for local planning for homeless services is the continuum of care process. As such, it helps to guide the use of available federal, state and local resources to address the community's needs. The plan also is a valuable tool to assess existing programs and services, and to define those needs that remain to be met or addressed.

Based upon the continuum of care plans filed with the Department in 2005, there were a total of 59,372 persons who were homeless, of which 27,265 persons were sheltered in emergency or transitional housing. This left 32,062 persons without shelter services. The plans also include the inventory of housing resources that are available, or being created, to serve the homeless population. This supply and the projected need still to be met is summarized below. The existing housing supply totals 31,840 beds, enough to serve fifty-four (54) percent of the homeless. An additional seasonal supply of shelter space is reported for a capacity to serve another 9,051 persons, or about fifteen (15) percent of the homeless persons identified.

2005 Continuum of Care Plans in Florida  
Housing Bed Inventory

<u>Type of Housing</u>	<u>Existing Inventory</u>	<u>Under Development</u>	<u>Unmet Need</u>
Emergency Shelter	8,642	588	9,889
Transitional Housing	12,423	1,002	9,883
Permanent Housing	<u>7,592</u>	<u>1,593</u>	<u>13,671</u>
<b>TOTALS</b>	28,657	3,183	33,443

This inventory of homeless housing beds has risen significantly over the last five years. In 2001, the total number of beds to serve the homeless was 22,239. Florida's homeless providers have created 9,601 new housing beds, an increase of over forty-three (43) percent in the last five years. Contributing to this growth has been the success of Florida's continuums of care in competing for the homeless housing grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the continuum of care funding. Further helping to create these new housing units has been Florida's targeted Homeless Housing Assistance Grants. Over 1,600 housing units have been constructed as a result of \$25 million in grants from this state program, and invested through the continuums over the last five years.

The local homeless coalitions also work with the Department's districts to create spending plans for the use of the state's homeless grant in aid program. With over \$1.1 million per year statewide, this program supports local services to nearly 18,000 persons each year. Essential services assisted include referral

hotlines, case management, emergency financial aid, food and clothing, sheltering and transportation. Nearly all of the local coalitions participate in the development of the district spending plans, setting the priorities and allocation of these service dollars.

Local support is also critical to the success of the continuum of care services. Local government aid, along with private sector support and foundation grants are all resources used to support homeless services. Based on 2004 data, local support contributes nearly \$85 million per year to homeless programs.

### **Priority Needs to Be Addressed**

While much is being accomplished, there are still unmet needs. When asked to identify their top three unmet needs, the local homeless coalitions clearly identified the singular most pressing unmet need as the availability of affordable housing. This was identified as the number one need by 19 of the 26 coalitions responding. The lack of affordable housing was identified as the number two need by the other coalitions.

The identification of unmet needs of the homeless by the local coalitions also highlighted the following issues as common across Florida's communities:

- More sheltering capacity
- Greater funding for supportive services
- Need for jobs at living wage levels
- More case management services
- Medical and health services
- Transportation assistance
- Outreach teams
- Prevention assistance

### **Recommendations for Local Government**

In addition to the assessment of needs, the local coalitions also have submitted their ideas and recommendations for enhancing local community support and participation in homeless assistance. The following are the issues and recommendations common across Florida's coalitions:

#### **Local Government Recommendations:**

1. Support the implementation of the local 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.
2. Provide land use control incentives to promote affordable housing.
3. Provide financial aid to create more affordable housing.
4. Local government support for homeless service providers.
5. More local government participation in the continuum of care planning.
6. Discharge planning prior to release of persons from local jails.

Private Sector Recommendations:

1. Provide financial support for homeless services.
2. Build lower cost housing.
3. Support for the homeless and services for their needs
4. Greater awareness of homeless issues.
5. Advocate for positive policy changes to address homelessness.

## **Section 4**

### **Recommendations for Programs and Funding**

To support and enhance the service delivery by our local partners, the homeless coalitions have provided their suggestions for state programs, policies and funding. These suggestions are summarized below, starting with funding proposals, which were the most frequently cited needs from state government.

#### Funding Proposals: State Government

- More funding for affordable housing programs
- State aid for emergency shelters and services
- More funding for supportive services to replace cutback in federal grants for services
- Increase funding levels for homeless Challenge and Housing Assistance grants.
- Increase funding for state homeless prevention, and grant-in-aid services.
- Support costs of the local homeless coalitions, and lead agencies of the continuum of care plans, including covering point in time counts and homeless cost studies.
- More aid for access to health care.
- State funds for day care.

#### State Programs: Suggested Changes

1. Emergency Financial Assistance for Housing.
  - Contract out administration to local providers.
  - Expand program authorization to cover first month's rent.
2. Homeless Grant-in-Aid Program
  - Lower the 25 percent match requirement.
3. Homeless Housing Assistance Grant
  - Authorize the grant to acquire land and property improvements in addition to construction costs.
  - Fund as a fixed capital outlay budget item.
4. Office on Homelessness
  - Operate a centralized, statewide homeless management information system.
  - Provide training and technical assistance on strategic planning and capacity building for local coalition and continuums.

5. Independent Living
  - Change rules for Independent Living, Road to Independence program to help youth aging out of foster care from becoming homeless.
  
6. State Apartment Incentive Loan Program
  - Target 30 percent of the program funds to serve extremely low-income households.
  
7. State Policy Issues Suggested
  - Increase the state's minimum wage.
  - Increase state health insurance coverage.
  - Require stronger discharge plans for medical and correctional facilities, and mandate aftercare plans.
  - Focus on the outcome of reducing the time that a person or household is homeless.
  - Promote land use incentives to create more affordable housing.
  - Eliminate barriers that keep homeless persons from accessing benefits available by state funded agencies.

EXHIBIT 1

**2006 SURVEY ESTIMATES**

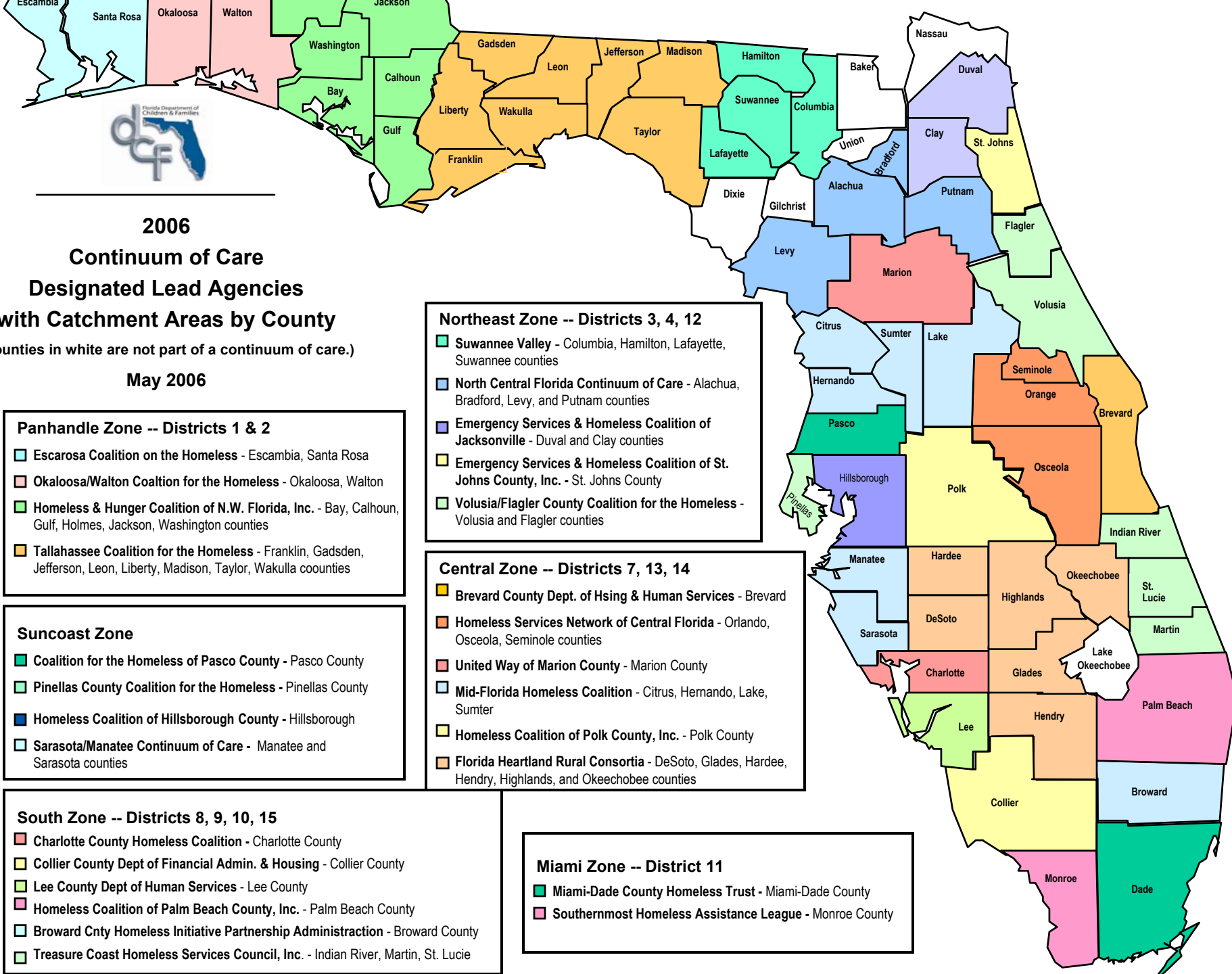
Homeless Population

<b><u>DCF Districts/Coalitions Reporting</u></b>	<b><u>Counties</u></b>	<b><u>Estimated Daily Homeless</u></b>	
<b><u>Population</u></b>		<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>
<b><u>District 1</u></b>			
EscaRosa Coalition on the Homeless	Escambia	9,100	2,911
	Santa Rosa	7,363	2,527
Okaloosa Coalition on the Homeless, Inc.	Okaloosa	1,755	2,026
	Walton	140	155
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>18,358</b>	<b>7,619</b>
<b><u>District 2</u></b>			
Big Bend Coalition for the Homeless	Franklin	30	0
	Gadsden	135	139
	Jefferson	42	0
	Leon	739	739
	Liberty	22	0
	Madison	56	0
	Taylor	58	0
	Wakulla	78	0
Homeless & Hunger Coalition of of Northwest Florida, Inc.	Bay	1,051	1,051
	Calhoun	0	0
	Gulf	0	0
	Holmes	0	0
	Jackson	0	0
	Washington	6	0
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>2,217</b>	<b>1,929</b>
<b><u>District 3</u></b>			
Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry	Alachua	733	1,217
	Bradford	133	149
	Dixie	70	77
	Gilchrist	75	86
	Levy	380	201
	Putnam	170	797
	Union	64	79

<u>DCF District/Coalition Reporting</u>	<u>Counties</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
<b><u>District 3 (continued)</u></b>			
Suwannee Valley Coalition for the Homeless	Columbia	77	208
	Hamilton	18	50
	Lafayette	10	26
	Suwannee	47	134
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>1,777</b>	<b>3,024</b>
<b><u>District 4</u></b>			
Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of Jacksonville	Duval	2,911	2,877
	Baker	0	0
	Clay	78	(report in Duval)
	Nassau	0	0
Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County, Inc.	St. Johns	1,000	997
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>3,989</b>	<b>3,874</b>
<b><u>District 7</u></b>			
Homeless Services Network of Central Florida, Inc.	Orange	6,500	6,500
	Osceola	1,000	1,300
	Seminole	1,300	1,500
Brevard County	Brevard	2,300	1,600
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>10,900</b>
<b><u>District 8</u></b>			
Coalition for the Homeless of Southwest Florida	DeSoto	136	644
	Glades	7	50
	Hendry	218	448
Lee County Coalition for the Homeless	Lee	2,056	2,078
Charlotte County Homeless Coalition	Charlotte	4,793	3,314
Collier County Hunger and Homeless Coalition	Collier	418	513
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>7,628</b>	<b>7,067</b>
<b><u>District 9</u></b>			
Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach Co.	Palm Beach	2,697	1002
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>2,697</b>	<b>1002</b>

<u>DCF District/Coalition Reporting</u>	<u>Counties</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
<b><u>District 10</u></b>			
Broward Coalition to End Homelessness	Broward	2,286	3,314
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>3,314</b>
<b><u>District 11</u></b>			
Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust	Dade	5,160	4,709
Southernmost Homeless Assistance League	Monroe	981	981
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>6,141</b>	<b>5,690</b>
<b><u>District 12</u></b>			
Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless	Flagler	181	191
	Volusia	2,486	2,505
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>2,696</b>
<b><u>District 13</u></b>			
Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition	Citrus	461	498
	Hernando	409	452
	Lake	331	395
	Sumter	66	68
Marion County Coalition for the Homeless	Marion	1,954	2,149
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>3,562</b>
<b><u>District 14</u></b>			
Homeless Coalition of Polk County	Hardee	24	749
	Highlands	508	436
	Polk	749	801
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>1,986</b>
<b><u>District 15</u></b>			
Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council	Indian River	402	741
	Martin	495	759
	Okeechobee	28	296
	St. Lucie	676	813
	<b>District Total</b>	<b>1,601</b>	<b>2,609</b>

<u>DCF District/Coalition Reporting</u>	<u>Counties</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
<b><u>SunCoast Region</u></b>			
Hillsborough County Coalition for the Homeless	Hillsborough	8,598	8,598
Community Coalition on Homelessness	Manatee	1,419	6,722
Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless	Pinellas	3,786	4,385
Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County	Pasco	4,194	3,677
Sarasota County Coalition for the Homeless	<u>Sarasota</u>	<u>431</u>	<u>7,253</u>
	<b><u>Region Total</u></b>	<b><u>18,428</u></b>	<b><u>30,635</u></b>
<b><u>STATEWIDE ESTIMATED DAILY POPULATION</u></b>		<b><u>83,391</u></b>	<b><u>85,907</u></b>



2006

**Continuum of Care  
Designated Lead Agencies  
with Catchment Areas by County**

(Counties in white are not part of a continuum of care.)

May 2006

**Panhandle Zone -- Districts 1 & 2**

- Escarosa Coalition on the Homeless - Escambia, Santa Rosa
- Okaloosa/Walton Coalition for the Homeless - Okaloosa, Walton
- Homeless & Hunger Coalition of N.W. Florida, Inc. - Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington counties
- Tallahassee Coalition for the Homeless - Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla counties

**Suncoast Zone**

- Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County - Pasco County
- Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless - Pinellas County
- Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County - Hillsborough
- Sarasota/Manatee Continuum of Care - Manatee and Sarasota counties

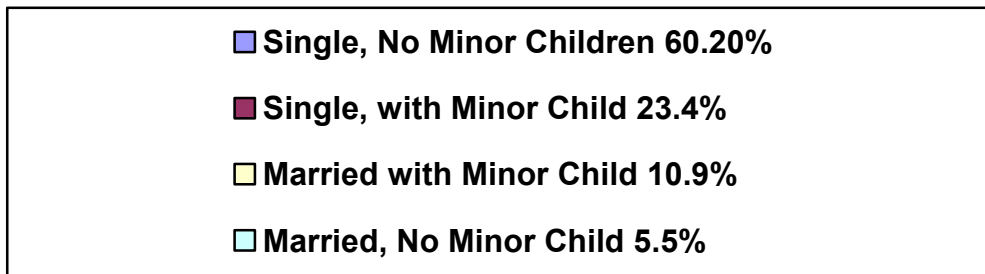
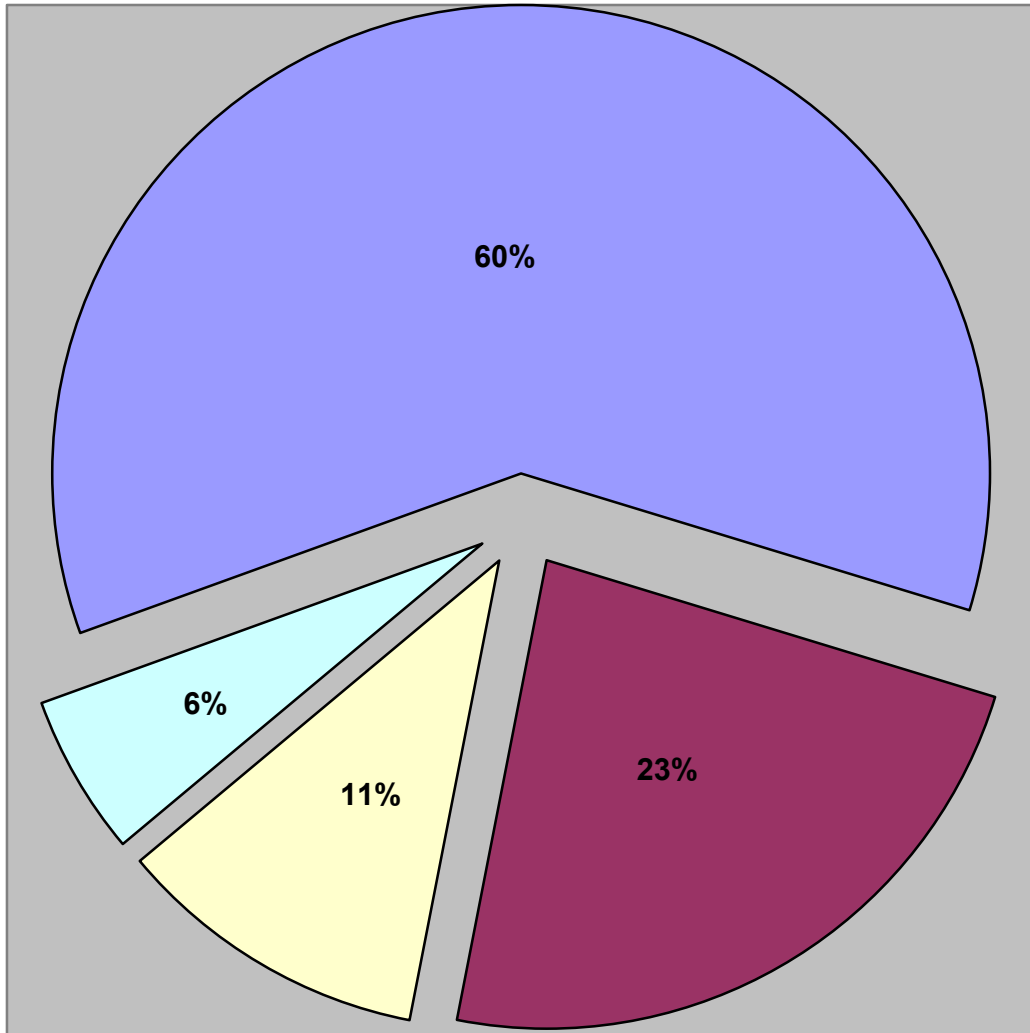
**South Zone -- Districts 8, 9, 10, 15**

- Charlotte County Homeless Coalition - Charlotte County
- Collier County Dept of Financial Admin. & Housing - Collier County
- Lee County Dept of Human Services - Lee County
- Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc. - Palm Beach County
- Broward Cnty Homeless Initiative Partnership Administraction - Broward County
- Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc. - Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie

**Miami Zone -- District 11**

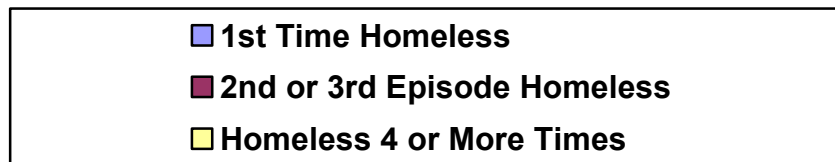
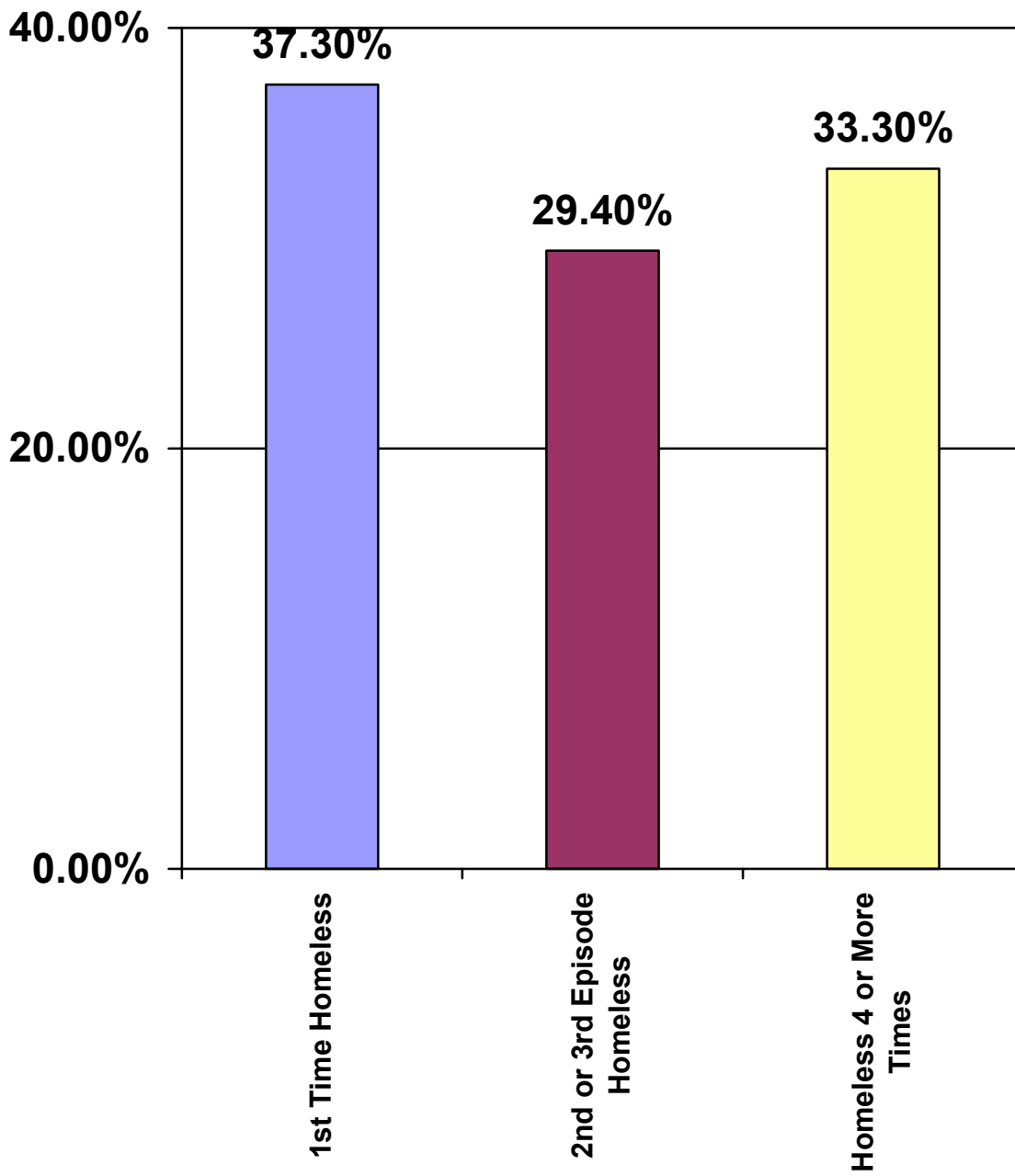
- Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust - Miami-Dade County
- Southernmost Homeless Assistance League - Monroe County

# Family Status



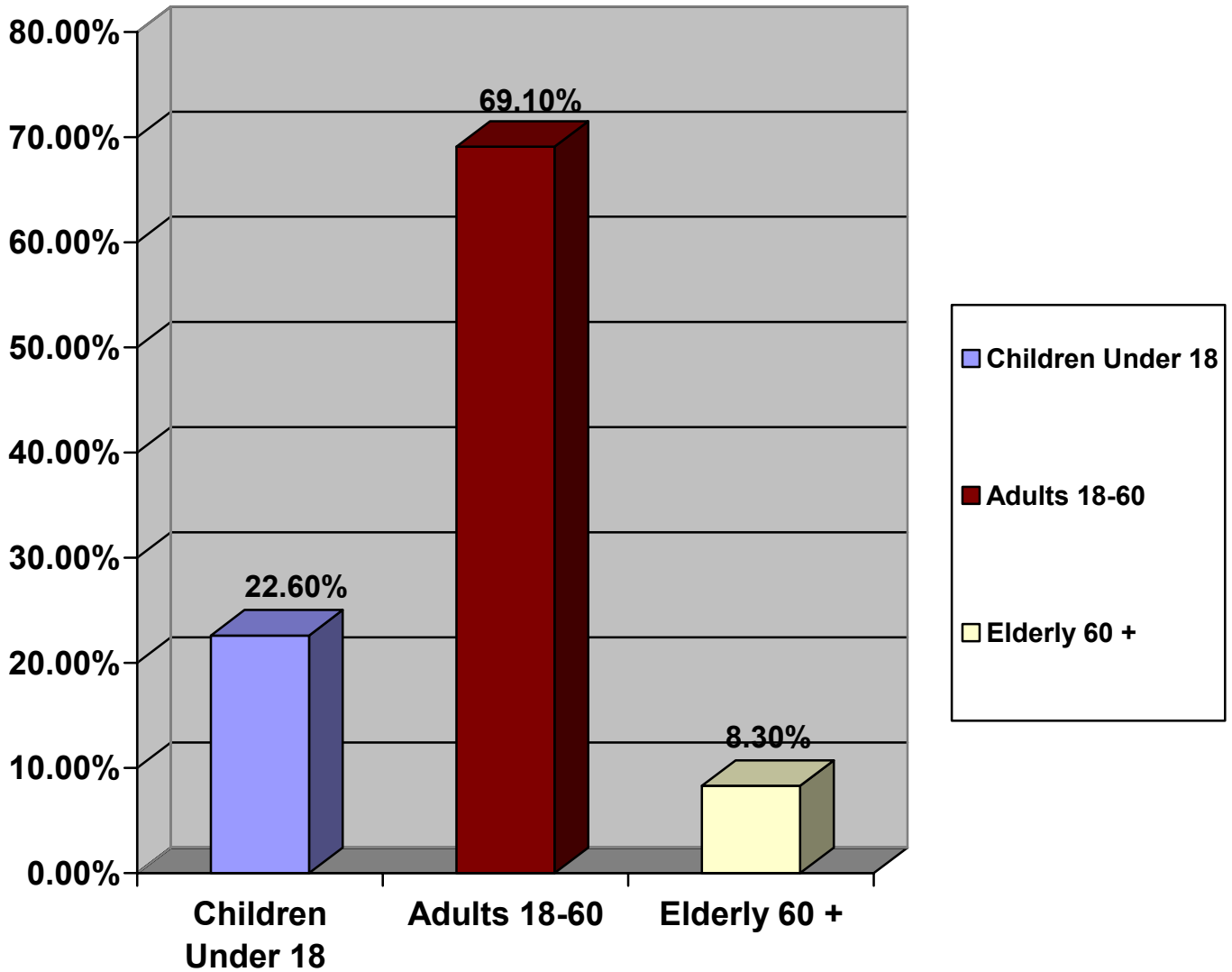
Sample Size: 36,030 persons

# Homeless Experience



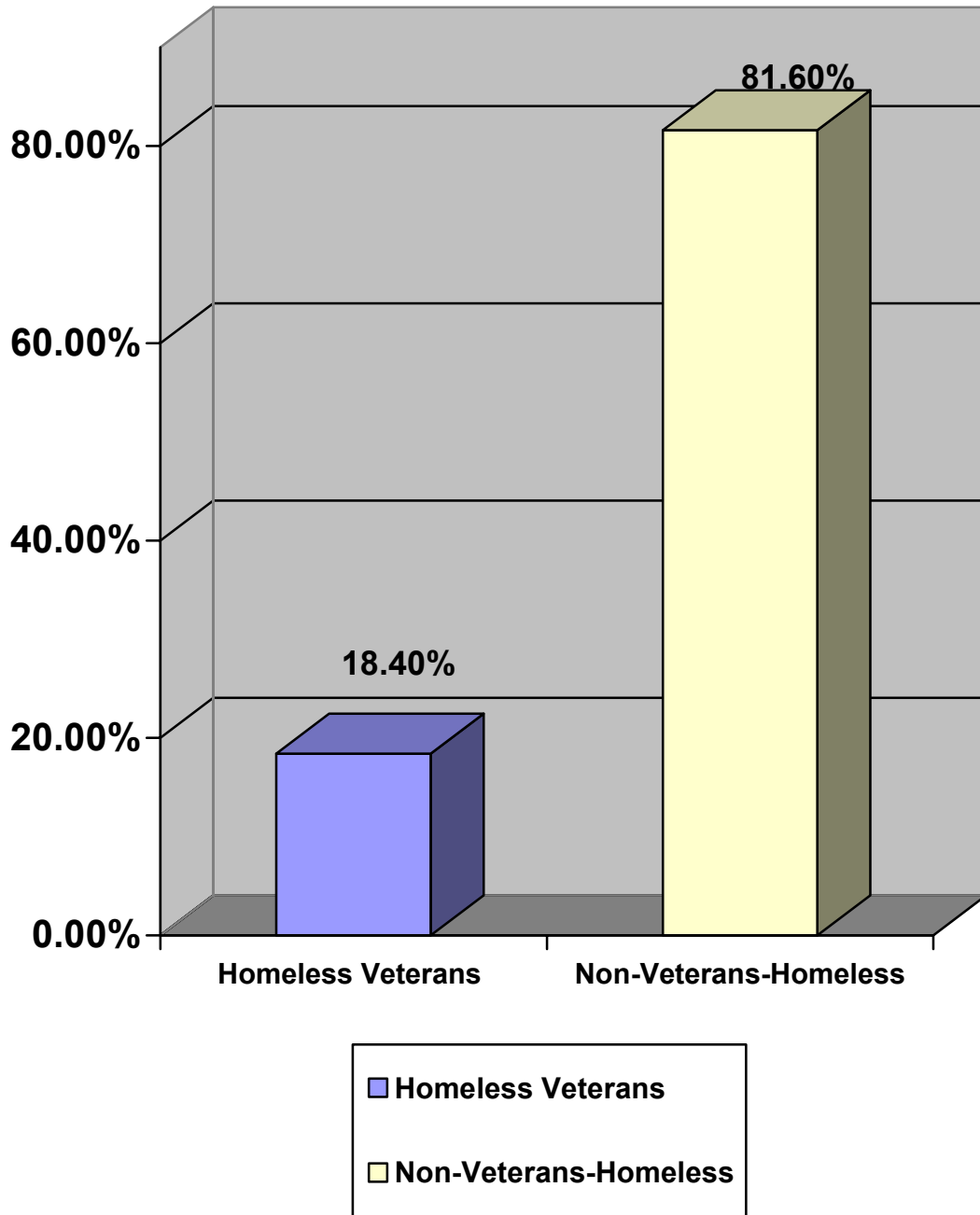
Sample Size: 26,344 persons

# Age Breakdowns



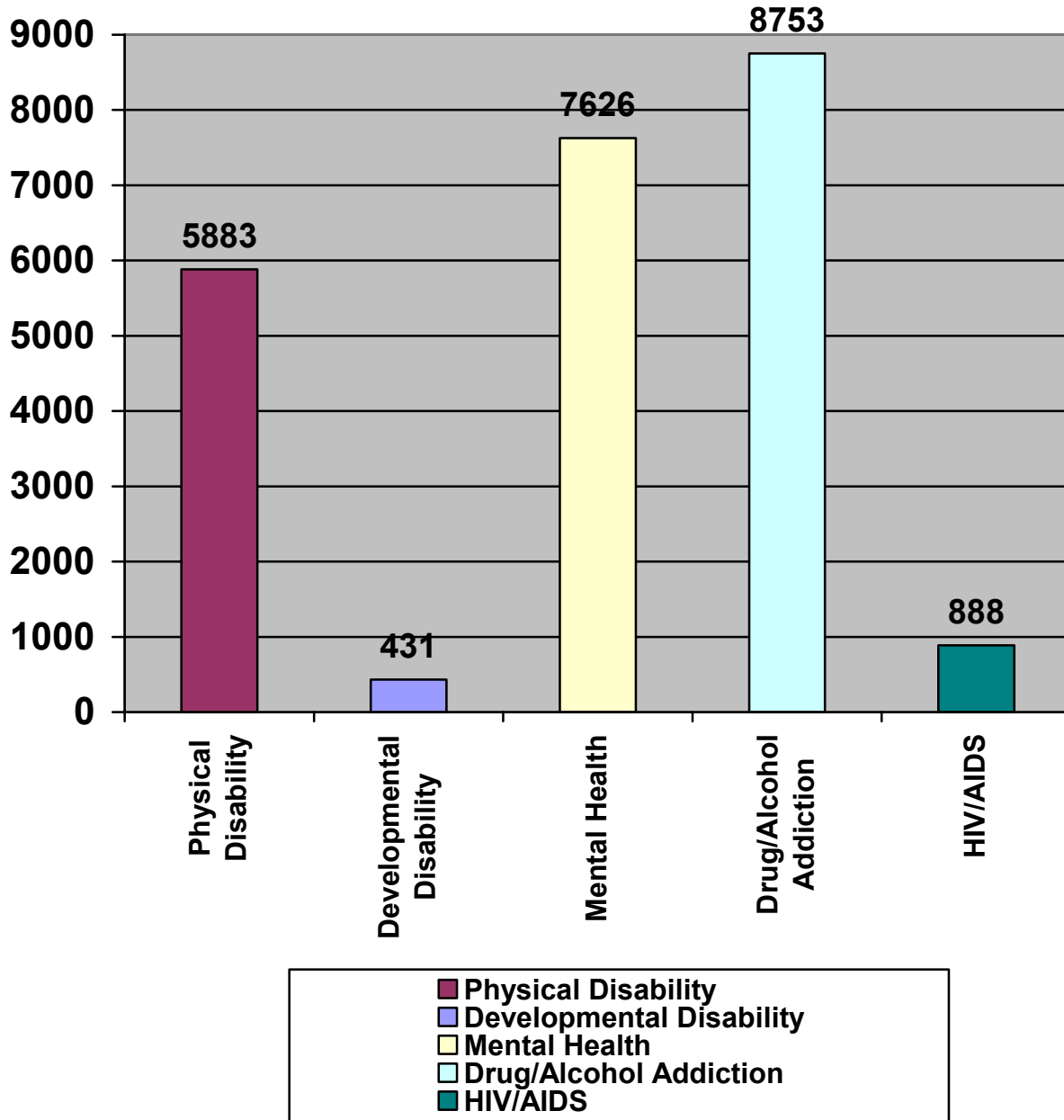
Sample Size: 55,595 persons homeless

# Veterans Status

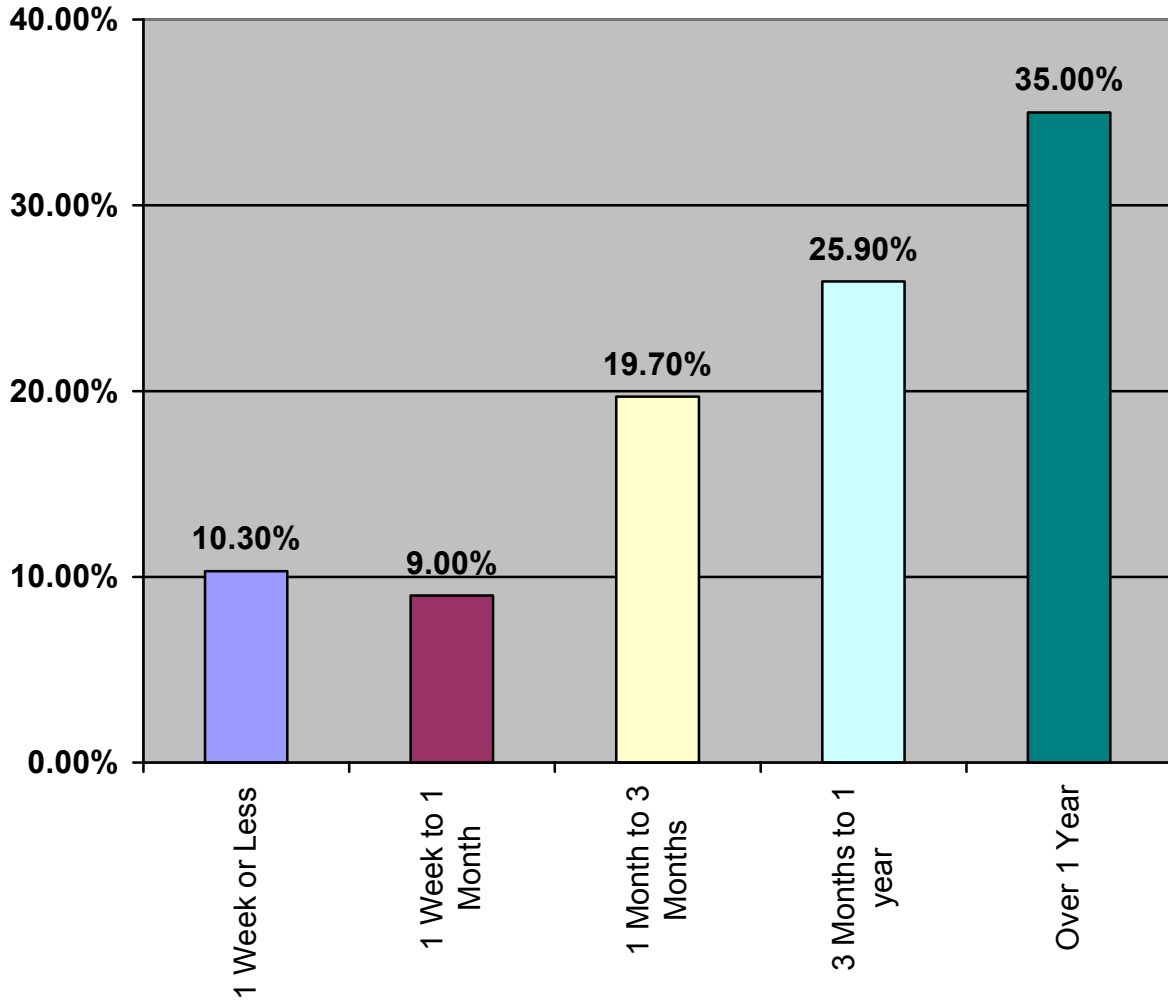


Sample Size: 34,145 homeless persons

# Disabling Conditions of the Homeless



## Length of Time Homeless



Sample Size: 22,124 homeless persons