

January 2015 Snapshot of Panhandlers

Experiencing Homelessness in the Richmond Region

The following data were collected in Homeward's 17th winter (January 28, 2015) count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the Richmond region. A total of 730 adults and 88 children were counted, and 84.8% of adults completed the Homeward point-in-time survey. The statistics below represent the 17.0% of individuals surveyed who indicated that they had gotten money in the past year from "panhandling or asking strangers for money."

- 75.2% are males, and 23.8% are females. Most panhandlers (59.4%) are single, never married adults. 40.6% are or have been in families, including those who are married, as well as those who are separated, widowed, or divorced.
- 5.0% reported having children living with them.
- The highest percentage of respondents report that they are African-American (49.5%), followed by White (44.4%). 5.2% indicated that they are Hispanic.
- The average age for adults is 45.4 years.
- 51.5% have only a high school education or GED. 21.8% attended some college, and 6.8% have a college degree or higher.
- 17.2% are veterans.
- The majority (85.6%) served some time in jail and/or prison. Out of all individuals surveyed (including those who have not served time in jail and/or prison), 51.3% reported serving time in jail, 1.3% reported serving time in prison, and 32.9% indicated that they had served time in both jail and prison. Of those who served time in jail and/or prison, 47.7% indicated that they were homeless when they last went to jail/prison, and 58.5% indicated that they were homeless upon release.
- 38.6% have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime. Of those experiencing domestic violence, 40.7% had experienced it in the past year.
- 73.7% report having a problem with alcohol sometime in their lifetime. Of those reporting a problem with alcohol, 60.7% are currently in recovery.
- 73.7% report having a problem with drugs sometime in their lifetime. Of those reporting a problem with drugs, 66.1% are currently in recovery.
- 48.7% report having a mental health problem sometime in their lifetime. Of these, 62.2% are currently being treated, and 48.6% are taking medication for mental health problems. 89.2% have received counseling for mental health problems at some time.
- 50.6% report having a long-term disability. Of those reporting a long-term disability, 68.9% indicated that their disability was drug or alcohol abuse; 50.0% indicated that their disability was a mental illness; and 52.3% indicated that their disability was a physical disability. (Note that respondents could select all, some, or none of these options.)
- 14.3% are employed.
- The median length of time respondents have lived in Greater Richmond is eight years; 35.6% have lived in the area for 20 years or more.
- The largest percentage of respondents (50.0%) reported having their last housing in Richmond. Others indicated previous housing in Henrico (5.3%) and Chesterfield (7.9%). 11.8% of respondents last lived elsewhere in Virginia, and 23.7% lived in other states.
- In the past three years, these persons have been homeless once (43.0%) or twice (22.0%); 35.0% have been homeless three or more times during this time period.
- A little more than half (52.7%) of homeless persons have been homeless for nine months or less.

For more information:

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