

# July 2015 Snapshot of Panhandlers

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## Experiencing Homelessness in the Richmond Region

The following data were collected in Homeward's 9<sup>th</sup> summer (July 29, 2015) count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the Richmond region. A total of 607 adults and 89 children were counted, and 79.4% of adults completed the Homeward point-in-time survey. The statistics below represent the 20.7% of individuals surveyed who indicated that they had gotten money in the past year from "panhandling or asking strangers for money."

- 86.5% are males, and 13.5% are females. Most panhandlers (62.1%) are single, never married adults. 37.9% are or have been in families, including those who are married, as well as those who are separated, widowed, or divorced.
- 4.2% reported having children living with them.
- The highest percentage of respondents report that they are African-American (43.2%), followed by White (41.1%). 4.3% indicated that they are Hispanic.
- The average age for adults is 44.3 years.
- 52.6% have only a high school education or GED. 17.9% attended some college, and 12.7% have a college degree or higher.
- 22.1% are veterans.
- The majority (83.7%) 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), 56.3% reported serving time in jail, 2.5% reported serving time in prison, and 25.0% indicated that they had served time in both jail and prison. Of those who served time in jail and/or prison, 53.7% indicated that they were homeless when they last went to jail/prison, and 53.0% indicated that they were homeless upon release.
- 38.5% have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime. Of those experiencing domestic violence, 28.6% had experienced it in the past year.
- 70.4% report having a problem with alcohol sometime in their lifetime. Of those reporting a problem with alcohol, 73.7% are currently in recovery.
- 65.4% report having a problem with drugs sometime in their lifetime. Of those reporting a problem with drugs, 82.7% are currently in recovery.
- 61.7% report having a mental health problem sometime in their lifetime. Of these, 64.0% are currently being treated, and 48.0% are taking medication for mental health problems. 90.0% have received counseling for mental health problems at some time.
- 64.9% report having a long-term disability. Of those reporting a long-term disability, 80.0% indicated that their disability was drug or alcohol abuse; 52.1% indicated that their disability was a mental illness; and 32.6% indicated that their disability was a physical disability. (Note that respondents could select all, some, or none of these options.)
- 7.6% are employed.
- The median length of time respondents have lived in Greater Richmond is four years; 27.3% have lived in the area for 20 years or more.
- The largest percentage of respondents (40.5%) reported having their last housing in Richmond. Others indicated previous housing in Henrico (6.3%) and Chesterfield (8.9%). 17.7% of respondents last lived elsewhere in Virginia, and 15.2% lived in other states.
- In the past three years, most people have been homeless once (31.2%) or twice (29.2%); 39.5% have been homeless three or more times during this time period.
- A little less than half (48.9%) of homeless persons have been homeless for nine months or less.

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