

JUN 22 2022

Ravalli County Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

Greetings from the Bitterroot Affordable Housing Coalition. Since our last meeting with you in December of 2021, the Coalition has gathered more data on homelessness that we'd like to share. We also wanted to keep you abreast of some progress member nonprofits are making in housing development.

This January, Coalition members went out into the community to perform the annual Point in Time (PiT) survey, a process that the department of Housing and Urban Development requires of each Continuum of Care nationwide. Using HUD's definition of homelessness, the PiT team gathered information about 138 people who were homeless in Ravalli County on the night of January 27th. Later, the BAHC reviewed the data and noticed several themes in the responses. **Attached is a document outlining these themes and some potential solutions, along with a full spreadsheet of PiT Survey findings.**

For context, the PiT survey is a tool that captures a limited snapshot of the housing insecurity problem in our community. The count takes place on one night in the middle of winter, by which time many experiencing homelessness have found temporary solutions (couch-surfing or moving somewhere else for the season). A team of 6 surveyors are responsible for gathering as much data as they can across the entire county, over the course of a week. The HUD definition of homelessness is also limiting, and only includes people living on the street, using emergency housing services, and residing in structures not meant for permanent habitation (tents, sheds, and campers without access to hookups); there are many in Ravalli County who do not fall under this exact definition who still lack access to safe and stable housing. None the less, the data we retrieved from this section of Ravalli County's homeless population does give some insight to general trends.

Two of BAHC's member organizations, SAFE (Supporters of Abuse Free Environments) and the Human Resource Council (HRC) are making progress on projects that address the current housing crisis. SAFE is expanding their emergency shelter and increasing their capacity by 100%. SAFE applied for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds with the City of Hamilton and was granted an initial \$1,065,500. SAFE has applied for additional grants and is running a capital campaign to meet their ultimate goal of \$2,375,000 for the project. HRC acquired a centrally located, shovel-ready parcel of land in the City of Hamilton for construction of 8 affordable rental units. HRC will apply for grant funds for the construction of the affordable rental units. This follows HRC's development of a 16-unit affordable housing project, Box Bird, in Stevensville in 2021.

While we hope these projects will provide some relief from the stress of the current housing crisis, there is much work to be done. Lack of affordable housing is the number one issue in the County. High housing costs have increased overcrowding, homelessness, and reliance upon campers for permanent housing. A historical lack of housing development at all levels combined with staggering growth rates have led to a shortage of housing, in particular housing affordable to low and moderate income households. Limited housing supply has led to skyrocketing prices for both homeownership and rentals.

Members of the Bitterroot Affordable Housing Coalition are always available to come and share our ideas about the current challenges facing our County. If you'd like more information or if you'd like to talk more about housing solutions, contact Stacey Umhey at SAFE – 363-2793, sumhey@safeinthebitterroot.org or Jim Morton at HRC - 728-3710, jpm@hrcxi.org

Thank you for your time,

The Bitterroot Affordable Housing Coalition, District XI Human Resource Council, Supporters of Abuse Free Environments (SAFE), The Bitterroot Family Shelter, Ravalli County Head Start, Habitat for Humanity, Summit Independent Living, Salvation Army, Valley Villas, and community members.

The Bitterroot Affordable Housing Coalition is a volunteer organization formed in 2015 to address the lack of affordable housing in Ravalli County. The Coalition is a community effort composed of a broad range of members representing social service organizations, educators, non-profit organizations, local public assistance, faith-based groups, and concerned citizens.

Each year, members of the Coalition conduct a local count of adults and children who are unhoused as part of the annual Point in Time (PIT) survey. The PiT is an annual federal assessment that counts the number of people who are homeless on a single night in January. The survey also includes questions about demographics and community resource use. The HUD definition of homelessness is defined as sleeping in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or an environment unsuitable for human habitation, including sheds, vehicles, or campers without hookups.

In Ravalli County, surveyors connect with people experiencing homelessness through service-providing organizations and door-to-door outreach. The count does not include every person who experiences homeless in this community but rather those who were visible to surveyors and willing to take the survey during a small window of time. During this year’s PiT, surveyors also encountered several people who may have qualified for the survey and did not want to participate.

Ravalli County’s PiT surveyors interviewed some people who could not afford permanent housing and lived in campers with full hookups, but these numbers were kept separate and will not be compiled with the rest of the state’s results.

2022 Point in Time Survey Results

Number of Surveys Received:

	HUD Definition (including campers with no hookups)	Campers With Hookups	Total
Total Surveys conducted	45	13	58
Adults	58	20	78
Children	49	11	60
Total People	107	31	138

Family Composition:

	HUD Defined - # Surveys	# Adult s	# Childre n	Camper s # Surveys	# Adult s	#Childre n	Total # Survey s	# Adult s	# Childre n
Couples or two unrelated adults	5	10	0	4	8	0	9	18	0

Couples with children	4	8	9	2	4	3	6	12	12
Single Adults	13	13	0	4	4	0	17	17	0
Multi-generational *	2	5	5	0	0	0	2	5	5
Single female with children**	19	20	32	3	4	8	22	24	40
Single male with children	2	2	3	0	0	0	2	2	3
Total	45	58	49	13	20	11	58	78	60

*Multi-generational includes an adult accompanied by a parent AND the person's children or an adult with only grown children.

**Single female with children-includes families with children but also with adult children.

How long respondents have lived in this community:

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
< 1 Week	0	0	1	2	1	2
More than 1 month	2	3	4	0	6	3
More than 4 months	11	9	2	0	13	9
More than 1 year	8	1	2	0	10	1
More than 2 years	8	10	7	8	15	18
More than 5 years	8	7	0	0	8	7
More than 10 years	20	19	3	1	23	20
No answer	1	0	1	0	2	0
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Time in community	Over 10 years - 16	Over 5 years - 7	Over 2 years - 7
Income	Full-Time Job - 16	Part-Time Job - 12	SSDI/SSI/SS - 13
People with disabilities	Physical disability - 13	Chronic health conditions - 8	Mental health conditions - 8
Reason for homelessness	Domestic violence -25	Inability to pay rent - 19	Hospitalized - 2

Point in Time Conclusions

- 1) Children account for more than half of the individuals.
- 2) The majority of the unhoused are long-term Ravalli County residents. Some participants' homes were sold, while others experienced untenable increases in the amount of rent.
- 3) 37 percent of the participants had physical or mental disabilities or chronic health conditions. Even with these challenges, the majority held jobs. Most incomes from Social Security, Social Security Disability, or Supplemental are well below the ability to afford a place to live.
- 4) Most participants held full-time jobs. This fact demonstrates that it is not a lack of employment that results in homelessness but the lack of affordable housing relative to the wages and salaries in the area.
- 5) Domestic violence survivors face tremendous housing challenges due to the lack of affordable housing. Assistance through local organizations is extraordinarily challenging even if funds are available because of no housing options.

Methods to increase affordable housing and reduce the number of homeless

- 1) Build more affordable housing: implement infill, tax breaks for developers, ADUs...
- 2) Support organizations that work to find and develop affordable housing
- 3) Assist organizations that assist domestic violence survivors.
- 4) Support organizations that help children who are homeless or at high risk.
- 5) Work to find programs to assist those with physical and mental disabilities with housing.
- 6) Find ways to support affordable housing through the county and throughout the community.

2022 Ravalli County Point In Time Survey

Surveys collected from individuals meeting the HUD definition of homelessness: Homeless individuals are those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, those whose primary residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular permanent sleeping accommodation and those who are living or staying at emergency shelters or hotel rooms used for emergency shelter. These surveys were tabulated using the category “HUD Definition.”

Surveys were also collected from individuals and families who do not meet the definition of homelessness but who are living in local campgrounds, with full sewer and water hookups. While not technically meeting the HUD definition of homelessness, the circumstances and needs of those living in campgrounds are important to understand when fully analyzing our community’s housing needs. For data purposes, these surveys were tabulated and collated separately and are in the columns labeled “Campers.”

Most survey questions are broken down into the number of adults and children who are impacted by each answer. (ie a couple that includes 2 unrelated adults will be counted as 2 adults and three children in the corresponding category). These responses will correlate with the total number of adults and children counted. Some questions didn’t lend themselves to this analysis, such as number of emergency room visits, and are tabulated based just on the number of survey respondents who answered in a given category. These questions are marked “survey respondents only.” These responses will correlate with the total number of surveys received.

Number of Surveys Received:

	HUD Definition	Campers	Total
Total Surveys conducted	45	13	58
Adults	58	20	78
Children	49	11	60
Total People	107	31	138

Family Composition:

	HUD Defined- # Surveys	# Adults	# Children	Campers # Surveys	# Adults	#Children	Total # Surveys	# Adults	# Children
Couples or two unrelated adults	5	10	0	4	8	0	9	18	0
Couples with children	4	8	9	2	4	3	6	12	12
Single Adults	13	13	0	4	4	0	17	17	0
Multi-generational*	2	5	5	0	0	0	2	5	5
Single female with children**	19	20	32	3	4	8	22	24	40
Single male with children	2	2	3	0	0	0	2	2	3
Total	45	58	49	13	20	11	58	78	60

*Multi-generational includes and adult accompanied by a parent AND the person's children or an adult with only grown children.

**Single female with children-includes families with children but also with adult children.

Q5 How long have you been in this community:

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
< 1 Week	0	0	1	2	1	2
More than 1 month	2	3	4	0	6	3
More than 4 months	11	9	2	0	13	9
More than 1 year	8	1	2	0	10	1
More than 2 years	8	10	7	8	15	18
More than 5 years	8	7	0	0	8	7
More than 10 years	20	19	3	1	23	20
No answer	1	0	1	0	2	0
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q6. Where are you sleeping or did you sleep on the night of Thursday January 27th? (the temp hovered between a high of 19 at 6 pm on Jan 27 and a low of 3 degrees at 6am Jan 28)

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Outside or place not meant for sleeping such as under a bridge, in a camp, park, vehicle, bus station or abandoned structure	32	17			32	17
Emergency Shelter	12	9			12	9
Transitional Housing	10	15			10	15
Camper with full hookups			20	11	20	11
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q9. Age?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
0-3		7		1		8
4-11		22		6		28
12-17		20		4		24
18-24	4		2		6	
25-39	25		10		35	
40-55	17		6		23	
56-75	9		2		11	
75+	1				1	
No answer	2				2	
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q10. What is your gender?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Male	21	24	8	1	29	25
Female	37	25	12	10	49	35
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q11. What is your race? (Respondents could choose more than one answer)

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous	2	5	1		3	5
Asian or Asian American		2				2
Black, African American or African	1	3			1	3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			1	2	1	2
White	57	44	19	9	76	53
Total	60	54	21	11	81	65

Q12. Are you Hispanic or Latin(a)(o)(x)?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Yes	2	2			2	2
No	55	46	18	11	73	57
No answer	1	1	2		3	1
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q13. Do you have any income? Please check all that apply (Survey responders only)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
None	5	2	7
Part-time job	12	1	13
Full-time job	16	4	20
TANF cash assistance	4	2	6
Unemployment			
Social Security	3		3
SSI or SSDI	9	5	14
Other Disability			
Other	3	1	4
Total	52	15	67

14. Are you or your family receiving any of the following non-cash benefits? Please check all that apply (Survey responders only)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
SNAP (food stamps)	23	7	30
Medicaid	34	10	44
Medicare	2	1	3
State Children's Health Insurance	8	2	10
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women (WIC)	1		1
VA Medical Services			
TANF Child Care, Transportation or other TANF services			
Section 8, Public Housing or other rental assistance	1		1
Other		1	1
Total	69	21	90

Q15. How long have you been in this episode of homelessness?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
1 week or less						
1 week to 1 month	1	2			1	2
1 to 3 months	11	15	1	2	12	17
3 months-1 year	21	22	8	2	29	24
1 year or longer	25	10	10	7	35	17
Not sure						
Refused to answer			1			
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q16. Is this the first time you have been homeless?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Yes	27	28	15	10	42	38
No	30	19	4	1	34	20
Not sure	1	2			1	2
Refused to Answer			1		1	
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q17. How many times have you been on the streets (homeless) in the past three years including today?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Never	6	9			6	9
Once	29	22	15	10	44	32
Twice	11	13			11	13
Three Times	5	3	2		7	3
Four or More Times	6				6	
Not Sure	1	2	2	1	3	3
Refused to Answer			1		1	
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q 18. How many months have you been homeless in the past three years?

HUD Defined Homeless: Average 12 months

Campers: Average 17 months

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
0 months			2	1	2	1
1-3 months	8	9	3		11	9
4-6 months	9	6			9	6
6 months- 1 year	9	15	4		13	15
12-15 months	3	2			3	2
16-24 months	5	2			5	2
24-36 months	6		4	1	10	1
36 months +	3					
No answer	14	13	6	9	20	22
Not sure	1	2			1	2
Refused to Answer			1		1	
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q19. Have you ever served on active duty in the US Military? (Survey Responders only)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
Yes			
No	43	11	54
Not Sure	2		2
No Answer		1	1
Refused to Answer		1	1
Total	45	13	58

Q20. Will drinking or drug use make it difficult for you to stay housed or afford your housing?

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
Yes	2	1	3
No	38	11	49
Not Sure	4		4
Refused to Answer	1	1	2
Total	45	12	58

Q21. Have you ever had trouble maintaining your housing, or been kicked out of an apartment, shelter program or other place you were staying because of: a mental health issue or concern, a past head injury, a learning disability or other impairment? (Survey Responders only)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
Yes	7		7
No	37	11	48
Not Sure	1		1
Refused to Answer		1	1
No Answer		1	1
Total	45	13	58

Q22. Do you have a physical disability? This could include something that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reading, lifting or carrying?

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
Yes	16	4	20
No	29	7	36
Refused to Answer		1	1
No Answer		1	1
Total	45	13	58

Q22. Did you leave your last place of permanent residence for any of these reasons? (Respondents could choose more than one)

	HUD Defined Survey responders only	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers Survey responders only	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Couldn't pay rent	14	17	14				17	14
Domestic violence	20	22	29	1	1		23	29
Aged out of foster care								
Kicked out due to LGBTQ identity								
Substance abuse	2	2	1				2	1
Hospitalized, physical health	1	3					3	
Hospitalized, mental health	1	2					2	
Incarcerated								
No answer	11	14	3	10	16	8	30	11
Other-House sold	6	9	12				9	12
Other	1	1	2	1	3	3	4	5
Total	56	70	61	13	20	11	90	72

Q24. Please indicate any disabilities that you have currently: (Survey Respondents Only) (Respondents could select more than one)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
Physical	13	4	17
Chronic health condition	8		8
Mental health condition	11	4	15
Substance abuse condition	2		2
HIV/AIDS			
None	22	5	27
No Answer	1	1	2
Total	57	14	71

Q25. Are you experiencing homelessness because you are currently fleeing domestic violence, dating violence or stalking?

	HUD Defined # Adults	HUD Defined # Children	Campers # Adults	Campers #Children	Total # Adults	Total # Children
Yes	20	29			20	29
No	38	20	19	11	57	31
Not sure						
Refused to answer			1		1	
No answer						
Total	58	49	20	11	78	60

Q26. Have you used emergency hospital services in the last year? (Survey Respondents Only)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
No	28	7	35
Once	12	3	15
Twice	4	1	5
3 times or more	1		1
No answer		2	2
Total	45	13	58

Q27. Have you been jailed or arrested in the last year? (Survey Respondents Only)

	HUD Defined # Adults	Campers # Adults	Total # Adults
No	40	11	51
Once	2		2
Twice			
3 times or more	2		2
No answer	1	2	3
Total	45	13	58