



Advocating and Speaking Out for Our Neighbors September 2023

Housing insecurity is experienced by many of our neighbors within the community, regardless of race, age, relationship status, or family composition, etc. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) previously identified single adults, children and families, youth and young adults, veterans, the elderly, individuals with limited incomes, and folx with marginalized identities as distinct populations experiencing the spectrum of homelessness in Nebraska.

To better promote understanding of how housing insecurity affects our community, we've explored some of the challenges each group faces and the makeup of the local unhoused population based on current data.

Single Adults are the largest population of people experiencing homelessness in our Continuum of Care (CoC), comprising about 88% of the unhoused population per our 2023 Point In Time (PIT) data. PIT counts help us and our partners understand the level of need for housing assistance in Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties. A lack of accessible and affordable housing, inadequate support systems, and less community resources can all contribute the higher level of homeless among single adults. For those that we engage at initial onset of homelessness, housing instability may be brief and nonrecurrent. However, single adults also show the highest rates of chronic homelessness.

Children & Families often face housing insecurities when adults in the household become unemployed or have a reduction in work hours. Disputes with family members, unexpected medical costs, and/or domestic abuse are also main causes for children and families to become unhoused. According to NAEH, families who experience homelessness are often headed by a single mother with limited education and young children. Housing insecurity is devastating, regardless of age; but for children it can have serious physical, emotional, and psychological implications. While children make up only a small percentage of our unhoused neighbors—just under 12% of the population per our current PIT data—the effects of housing insecurity can be enduring and especially traumatic for children.

NAEH has found that children experiencing homelessness:

- Have higher levels of emotional and behavioral issues
- Have an increased risk of serious health problems
- Are more likely to experience separation from their families
- Tend to have more school mobility, repeat a grade, be expelled or drop out of school, and have lower academic performance.

Youth & Young Adults living on their own go to sleep each night without the safety, stability, and support of a family or a home. The main causes for youth and young adults experiencing housing insecurity are family strife, racial inequality, poor economic conditions, mental illness, and drug addiction. Housing insecurity disproportionately affects young people who have experience with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Our 2023 PIT count found that youth and young adults between the ages of 18-24 make up about 7% of the metro's unhoused population.

Veterans in our community face increased vulnerability to housing insecurity. The trauma of combat may make them more vulnerable to becoming unhoused. In addition to the difficulties posed by repeated and prolonged deployments, they must also manage the lack of affordable housing and economic hardship that everyone experiences. Together, these elements result in a population in need of housing but frequently faces difficulties obtaining it. According to our 2023 PIT count, veterans make up 6.5% of our unhoused neighbors.

Elderly Folx & Individuals with Limited Incomes are more likely to experience chronic housing insecurity than any other category. Often, this population has physical and mental health conditions, fixed incomes, and increased health care expenses that amplify their chances of experiencing housing insecurity. These are our neighbors, friends, and family members facing health challenges, which could mean years or decades of chronic homelessness on the streets and/or in shelters. According to NAEH, the population of adults aged 65 and older experiencing homelessness is anticipated to grow from 40,000 to more than 100,000 by 2030.

An intersectional analysis of homelessness also means examining the breadth of factors that affect people's ability to access housing. Across race, gender, sexuality, and class, historically marginalized people experience homelessness at increased rates. From historical tactics such as redlining to overcriminalization and mass incarceration, Black folx in particular can face significant hurdles in accessing housing. Research from the University of California Los Angeles has shown that despite growing levels of protections, LGBTQIA+ folx still demonstrate lower rates of homeownership. The same study showed that almost 40 percent of all unhoused youth identify as LGBTQIA+.

If you or a neighbor are facing housing instability or feel that their rights to housing have been violated, please connect with MACCH through our Access Points and CoC organizations in our community. We have a network of resources to prevent individuals and families from facing housing insecurity and gain access to safe, quality housing. We would like our neighbors and community to know they are not alone. Everyone's circumstances are unique, MACCH and our CoC partners are committed to addressing each of our neighbors' needs.

Please add us on [Facebook @MACCHOMAHA](#) and [X @MACCH_OMA](#) to stay connected and engage in our community's collective response to housing insecurity in Douglas, Sarpy, and Pottawattamie Counties.