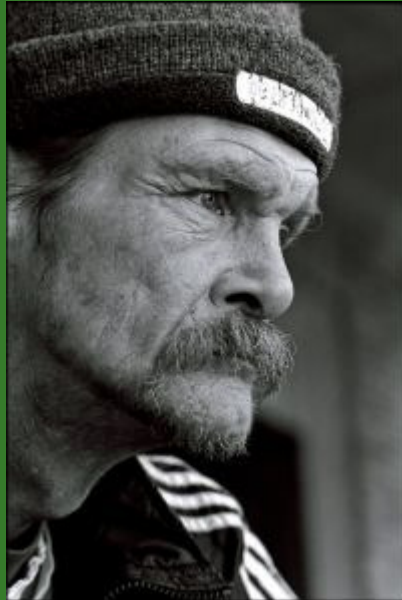




## GWINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA



## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT & SURVEY

2008

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Gwinnett County Homeless Task Force and Pathways Community Network acknowledge the time and effort of the numerous individuals and organizations that assisted in the successful 2008 Gwinnett County Housing Stability Census and Survey. We thank the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta for funding the projects. We extend our gratitude to Ellen Gerstein and Suzy Bus of the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services who made the projects successful through their hard work and dedication. We also are grateful to the Norcross Co-operative Ministries for providing a safe place to deploy staff and volunteers on the morning of the count. Finally, we thank the people and agencies that provided additional support towards the achievement of the 2008 Gwinnett County Housing Stability Census and Survey. Together we are collecting the data necessary to track our progress in the fight against housing stability concerns.

<b>2008 Gwinnett County Homeless Task Force Partners</b>	
<b>Asian American Resource Center</b> <b>Atlanta Children's Shelter</b> <b>Duluth Hands of Christ</b> <b>Family Promise</b> <b>Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services</b> <b>Gwinnett County for Health and Human Services</b> <b>Gwinnett County Schools Social Workers</b> <b>Impact Housing</b> <b>Lawrenceville Co-operative Ministry</b>	<b>Lilburn Co-operative Ministry</b> <b>Norcross Co-operative Ministry</b> <b>Partnership Against Domestic Violence</b> <b>Partnership for Community Action</b> <b>Perimeter Church</b> <b>Rainbow Village</b> <b>Snellville Co-operative Ministry</b> <b>The Center for Pan Asian Community Services</b> <b>The Salvation Army</b> <b>Trinity Life Church</b>

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## KEY FINDINGS

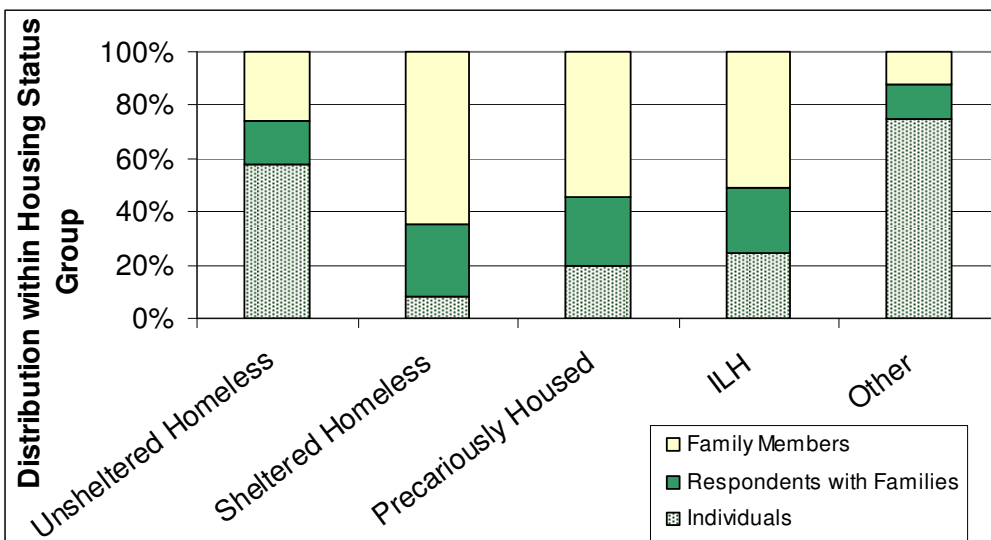
### HOUSING STABILITY COUNT

#### Total Number for 2008 Point-In-Time Count

- A total of 910 persons were found to be experiencing housing instability on January 27, 2008 in Gwinnett County.

	Individuals	Family Members	Totals	%
Unsheltered Homeless	18	13	31	4%
Sheltered Homeless	20	218	238	26%
Precariously Housed	107	432	539	59%
Imminent Housing Loss and/or Dilapidated Housing	23	71	94	10%
Other	6	2	8	1%
<b>Totals and %</b>	<b>174 (19%)</b>	<b>736 (81%)</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>100%</b>

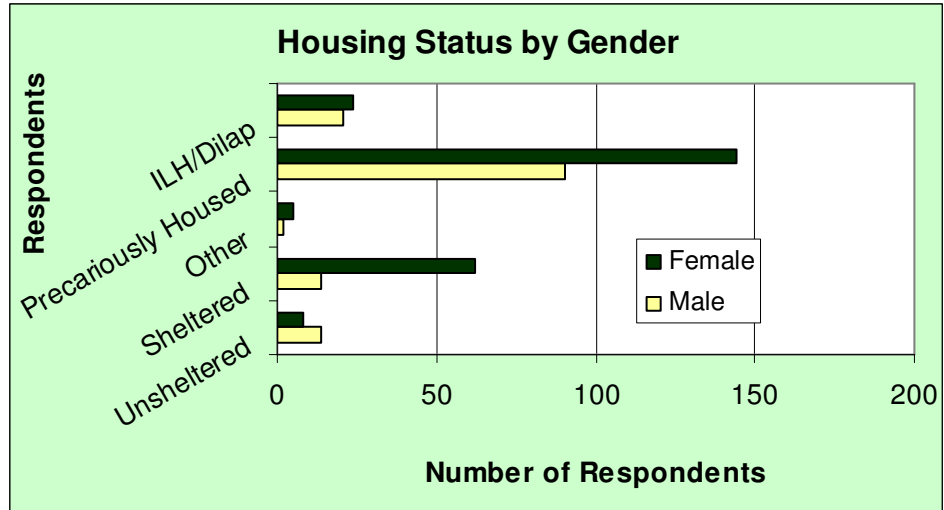
- *Homeless:* Of those 910 persons, 277 (or about 30%) were homeless (unsheltered, sheltered, and other).
- *Age:* Out of the 910 persons included in the count, 522 persons (57%) were 18 years old or older, 353 persons (39%) were under the age of 18, and 35 persons (4%) did not provide age information.
- *Homeless Children:* Of the 353 people under the age of 18, 37% were homeless on the night of January 27, 2008 (including those in hotels whose stays were paid for by service agencies or faith based organizations).
- *Family:* As might be expected in a largely suburban county, housing instability is a family problem in Gwinnett County. On the night of January 27, 2008, 57% of the count respondents reported that they had family members with them.



## KEY FINDINGS

### Distribution of Family Status within Housing Group

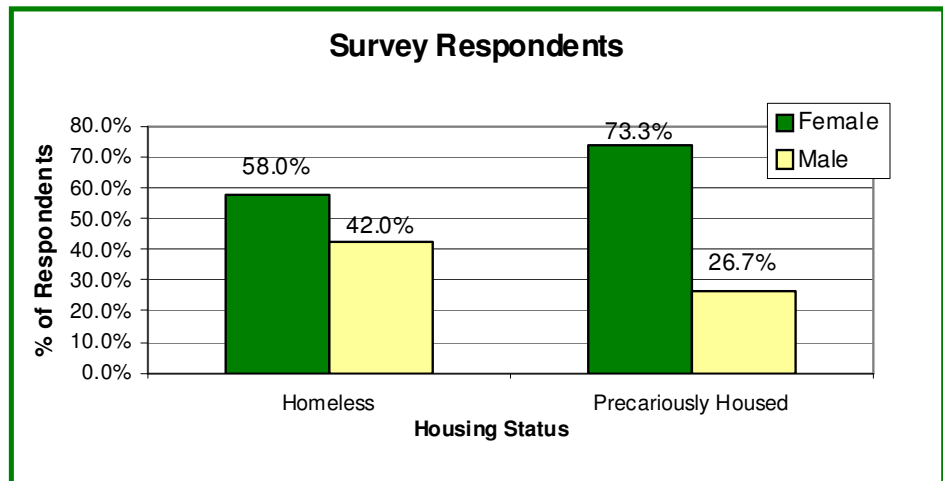
- Gender:** Women comprised the largest proportion of count survey respondents, except among persons who were unsheltered.



### HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY

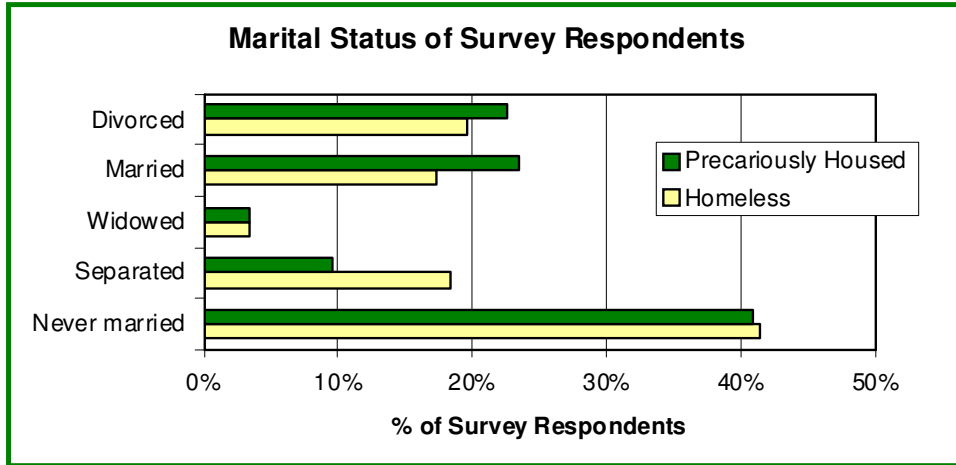
- The housing stability surveys were administered to 88 persons classified as homeless (both sheltered and unsheltered) and 116 persons classified as precariously housed (including persons facing imminent loss of housing or living in dilapidated housing).
- Homeless:** Approximately half of the homeless persons surveyed were unsheltered -- not in some type of housing for the homeless (emergency shelter, transitional housing or a treatment program).

- Gender:** The majority of all survey respondents were women, and a much larger proportion of women than men were precariously housed.

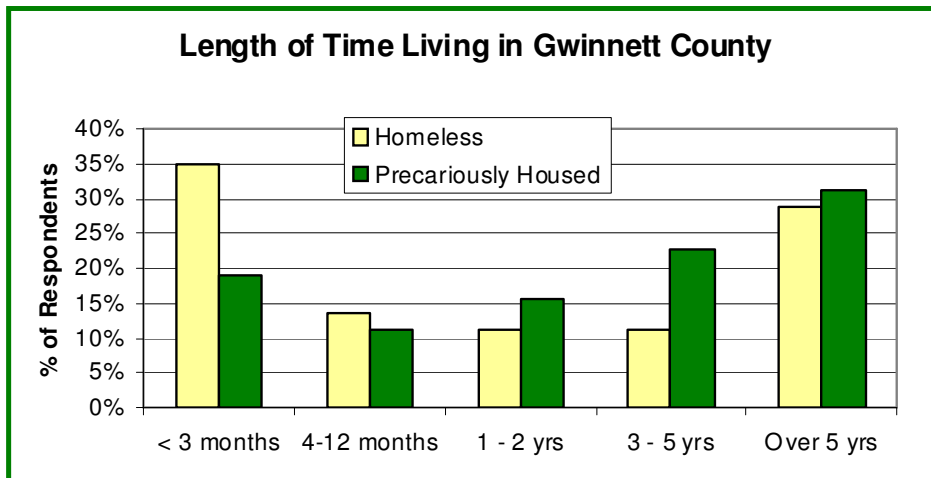


## KEY FINDINGS

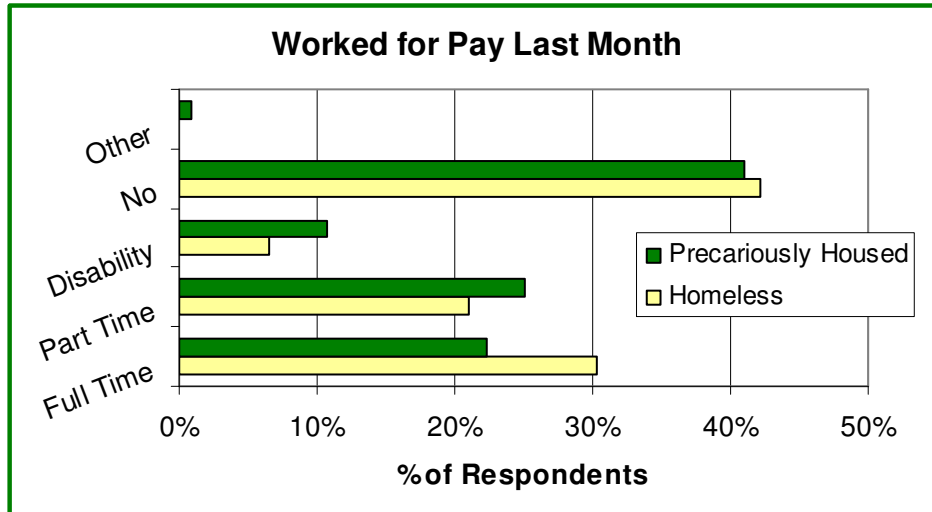
- Marital Status:** The percentage of respondents who had never been married was similar for both the precariously housed and the homeless groups, but a larger percentage of those who were precariously housed were either currently married or divorced (46% combined) than for those who were homeless (36.7%).



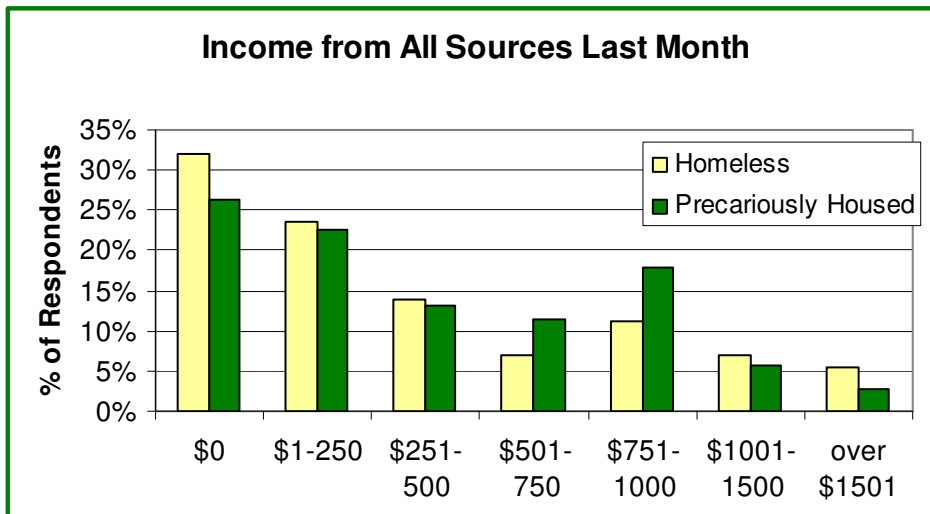
- Living:** A large majority of survey respondents, whether homeless or precariously housed, indicated that their last permanent address was in Gwinnett County. The survey respondents who were homeless were more likely to have been in Gwinnett a very short time (less than three months) than were those who were precariously-housed. Close to 30% of both groups indicated that they had lived in Gwinnett County for more than five years.



## KEY FINDINGS



- Income:* Respondents who were homeless were more likely to report working full time than those who were precariously housed. The homeless respondents include people who are in emergency shelters, treatment programs, and transitional housing. Many of these shelter organizations have either employment programs or employment requirements, which may account for that higher percentage. Incomes, whether from employment, benefits, or both, are extremely low for both respondent groups. Only 12.5% of respondents who were homeless and 8.5% of those who were precariously-housed had incomes of \$1,000 or more in the month prior.





## INTRODUCTION

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While the generally held picture of homelessness in the United States is essentially urban in character, the lone individual sleeping on a sidewalk grate or under a highway overpass, homelessness is actually much more complicated and varied. Individuals and families may be homeless in suburbs and in rural areas, as well as this country's cities. People facing homelessness outside of the urban core are often hidden, staying in cars, makeshift encampments, and abandoned buildings. In recognition of local housing needs and acknowledging that homelessness doesn't only impact neighboring Atlanta, Gwinnett County's service providers came together to develop this first data-based effort to assess homelessness locally.

Gwinnett County covers over 430 square miles and 15 different municipalities. Based on 2005 population estimates, some 726,000 people reside in the county, making it the second most populous county in Georgia, behind Fulton County's population of 915,000. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, Gwinnett was one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. In the 1990's, Gwinnett County saw significant increases in its minority population. From 1990 to 2000, the number of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian residents quadrupled. The County also experienced a sharp increase in poverty levels. In 1989, when 14.9% of the state's population had incomes below the poverty level, less than 4% of Gwinnett's population lived in poverty. By 2007, Gwinnett's poverty level had more than doubled to 8.4%, a dramatic increase over 20 years (U.S. Census Bureau, *Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates*).

To meet its growing social service needs, Gwinnett County has a variety of mainstream human service agencies. However, instead of a large, formalized homeless service-provider network like that found in the City of Atlanta, it has an independent human services planning organization, the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services. The Coalition is a public/private partnership whose mission is to facilitate collaboration that improves the well-being of the community through identifying needs and resources, setting priorities, planning solutions, and educating and motivating the community to action. While there are some transitional housing programs in the county, there is not a fixed-site emergency shelter. A network of faith-based programs pays for short-term hotel stays for homeless families and provides homeless prevention services such as rent and utility payments and food pantries.

The Gwinnett Homeless Task Force is a working partnership of leaders in non-profit, human services and government agencies within Gwinnett County. The Task Force works collaboratively to address issues of homelessness through planning, policy development and service delivery. In 2006, the Taskforce decided that getting objective and accurate data on the number and characteristics of homeless persons residing in the community was a top priority. Pathways Community Network reduce costs and increase impact, so more people find the path to success, was asked to undertake the point-in-time count and survey on behalf of Gwinnett County.





## INTRODUCTION

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To more fully understand the housing needs of individuals and families, Gwinnett County elected to conduct a two-part study of people with housing stability issues. The first part consisted of a point-in-time count of individuals and families who were experiencing homelessness, imminent housing loss, living precariously housed or in dilapidated housing. The second part consisted of a survey administered to a representative sample of individuals and adult family members experiencing the same housing issues. While the count provides an estimate of the number of individuals experiencing housing instability, the survey reveals the characteristics and experiences of this specific population.

In January 2008, Pathways conducted the first successful comprehensive housing count, and in fall 2008, they conducted the housing stability survey. This report describes the purpose, methodology and results of that effort.

## PURPOSE

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The Gwinnett County Homeless Task Force identified several important goals for the count and Survey:

- Provide the number and characteristics of people with housing needs;
- Provide the local community with data to use in the planning, funding, and implementing services that meets the needs of people residing in unstable housing; and
- Provide a report that increases awareness of the local issue of those who have housing needs.

## COORDINATION and OVERSIGHT

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Pathways Community Network is a non-profit organization that supports human service providers with a variety of tools that encourage collaboration, reduce costs and increase impact, so more people find the path to success. Pathways coordinated the Gwinnett homeless census and survey by providing research expertise in the areas of project design, methodology, data collection and data analysis, along with writing the report and presentations.

Oversight was provided by the Gwinnett County Homeless Task Force composed of leaders in - non-profit, human services, faith-based and government agencies. The Task Force functions included assisting Pathways in developing and refining the methodology and instruments used for the census and survey, along with providing general oversight for the projects.



## DEFINITIONS

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The Gwinnett Housing Stability Task Force, based on community feedback about the nature of the housing need in Gwinnett County, decided that the point-in-time count and survey include both literally homeless and precariously housed persons.

### **Homeless**

People who were literally homeless met the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of homelessness. According to the HUD definition, people were homeless if they

- lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence;
- have a primary nighttime residence that is either a public or private shelter or an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- stay in a public or private location that is not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

For both the count and survey, the homeless group was comprised of individuals and families who were either staying in *unsheltered*, *sheltered*, or *other* sleeping locations.

- *Unsheltered* people were living on the street, in cars, or camping non-recreationally.
- *Sheltered* individuals and families were living in transitional housing, domestic violence shelters, or in a hotel or motel with their stay paid for by an agency, church, or other service provider.
- *Other* represented people living in prison or jail, a hospital, or at other non-permanent housing locations such as the workplace. People who were in prison, jail or a hospital on the point-in-time count night were included in this report if they indicated that, but for being at these locations, they would otherwise be homeless.

The count lists individuals and families at these sleeping locations separately, while the survey lists people sleeping at the locations as one homeless group due to their small size.

### **Precariously Housed and Imminent Housing Loss**

#### *Precariously Housed*

People who were precariously housed met a definition similar to the Department of Education's (DOE) definition of homelessness which is an expanded definition from HUD's to also include adults as well as children who

- share the housing of other persons (referred to as "doubled-up") due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; or
- live in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.



## DEFINITIONS

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### *Imminent Housing Loss and/or Dilapidated Housing*

People facing imminent housing loss were living in their own house or apartment or with friends and family and were facing eviction within one week. This group also included people staying in hotels or motels facing eviction within one week due to a lack of funds. On charts and graphs, this category is sometimes abbreviated as ILH. Dilapidated housing indicates people who were living in their own house or with friends or family in housing which was not fit for human habitation.

For the count, the precariously housed group is listed separately, while the imminent housing and dilapidated housing groups are listed together due to their small size. For the survey, all three groups are listed as precariously housed.



# HOUSING STABILITY COUNT

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## COUNT METHODOLOGY

### **Mixed-Methods Approach**

The Gwinnett Task Force decided on a mixed methods approach that combined a service based and hot spot methodology to conduct the point-in-time count. The mixed methodology was chosen over a full count canvassing method where all streets in Gwinnett County are either driven or walked based on two concerns: the planning group thought a canvassing count covering the entire county would be difficult because of the large size of the county and thus the large number of volunteers needed, and a canvassing count could jeopardize the safety of volunteers who would be conducting the count during the early morning or late night hours. Also, the Task Force believed that the combined service based and hot spot counts would provide a comprehensive point-in-time snapshot of community housing needs in Gwinnett County.

When conducting a combination methodology, administration of the count forms must occur at multiple service agencies at the same time to avoid double counting such groups as those who sleep outdoors and also receive services from one or more agencies. Also, the methodology occurred at a variety of service provider agencies to collect data on people who do not access services frequently and/or who may not access homeless specific services at all. An expanded data collection time of two weeks occurred during the count to accommodate the co-operative ministries that provide the majority of homeless services and are open only a few days per week. Since the data collection occurred over time, people were asked on the count form about their housing status (where they stayed) for the same night - census night.

One methodology used in the housing stability count was the service based approach. This process relied heavily on administering count forms to persons with housing needs who were accessing service providers - ranging from mainstream government agencies such as the Department of Children and Families to small, faith-based service organizations.

The other methodological element used in this mixed methods approach was the hot spot count in which volunteers administered count forms to persons with housing needs at locations where homeless and/or precariously housed people were known to stay. In communities such as Gwinnett that does not have homeless outreach services or that have large populations of unsheltered populations that do not access the services that are available, the hot spot count offered data collection opportunities to a subpopulation that might not otherwise be included in the count.

Based on a national directive from HUD, and working in conjunction with the Georgia Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless census, Gwinnett County's census night was January 27, 2008. The count form administration period ended February 10, 2008, two weeks after census night. During the data collection period, count form respondents were asked about their housing status on census night, Sunday, January 27, 2008.



## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT METHODOLOGY

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Two “hot-spot” counts took place during the first week of the data collection period. On the morning of January 28, 2008, approximately 70 volunteers administered count forms at 20 locations where homeless and precariously housed persons were known to stay. On February 2, 2008, approximately 45 volunteers administered count forms at ten hotels and motels from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm.

### **Community Collaboration**

The mixed method count requires a significant amount of community collaboration. In Gwinnett County, the lack of a formalized provider network required providers to work together to gain the resources necessary to implement the count. During the service-based component, a variety of service providers, including mainstream service providers such as DFCS, used staff to administer the count form for all clients experiencing housing difficulties on the night of January 27, 2008. Thus, the service-based component of the count relied on pre-existing resources.

Conversely, the hot-spot component required additional resources in the form of volunteers and incentives for respondents. A network of faith-based organizations recruited volunteers and conducted a donation drive for incentives to be given out at the hot-spot counts. During the hot-spot counts, teams of volunteers, service provider staff, and formerly homeless persons administered the count forms.

### **Count Form and Double Counting**

The count form collected personal identifiers, basic demographic information, and housing information for the night of January 27, 2008. To ensure that clients of multiple agencies were not counted more than once, Pathways staff eliminated duplicate data based on the personal identifiers (initials and date of birth) provided by the respondents.

### **County Challenges**

Since the 2008 count was the first systematic homeless count in Gwinnett County, there were significant challenges. Implementation of the service-based count was affected by service providers’ personal translation of the definitions of “homelessness” and whether or not to have a client fill out the count form based on that decision. Further, coordinating the hot-spot data collection was complicated by the difficulty of getting persons from immigrant communities to participate in the count and provide much needed translation of the count form. A final challenge involved locating unsheltered people who often hide for reasons of safety and to avoid law enforcement in the early morning hours.

## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

### Total Number for 2008 Point-In-Time Count

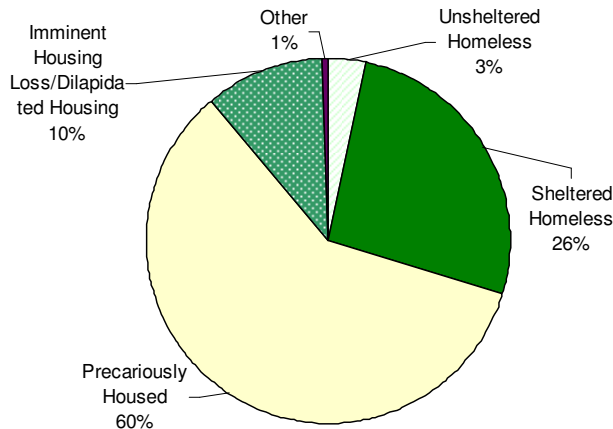
A total of 910 persons were counted as experiencing some type of housing instability on January 27, 2008 in Gwinnett County. Of those 910 persons, 277 or about 30% were homeless (unsheltered, sheltered or other). The Gwinnett count also included 633 persons who were precariously housed (living doubled up, in a hotel or motel, in dilapidated housing, or facing loss of housing within the week).

In a county as large as Gwinnett, one would clearly expect that there are more than 910 persons - about a tenth of a percent (.12%) of the total population - facing housing instability, especially with a county-wide poverty rate that is over 8%. Thus, this first count should be interpreted as a baseline indicator of the type of housing need for the county rather than the total amount of people facing housing difficulty.

**2008 Gwinnett Point-In-Time Count – Individuals and Families**

	Individuals	Family Groups		Total	%
		Respondent	Family Members		
Homeless					
Unsheltered Homeless	18	5	8	31	3.4%
Sheltered Homeless	20	64	154	238	26.2%
Other Homeless	6	1	1	8	0.9%
Precariously Housed	107	138	294	539	59.2%
Imminent Housing Loss and/or Dilapidated Housing	23	23	48	94	10.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>910</b>	

**Housing Status -- Gwinnett County Surveys  
2008**



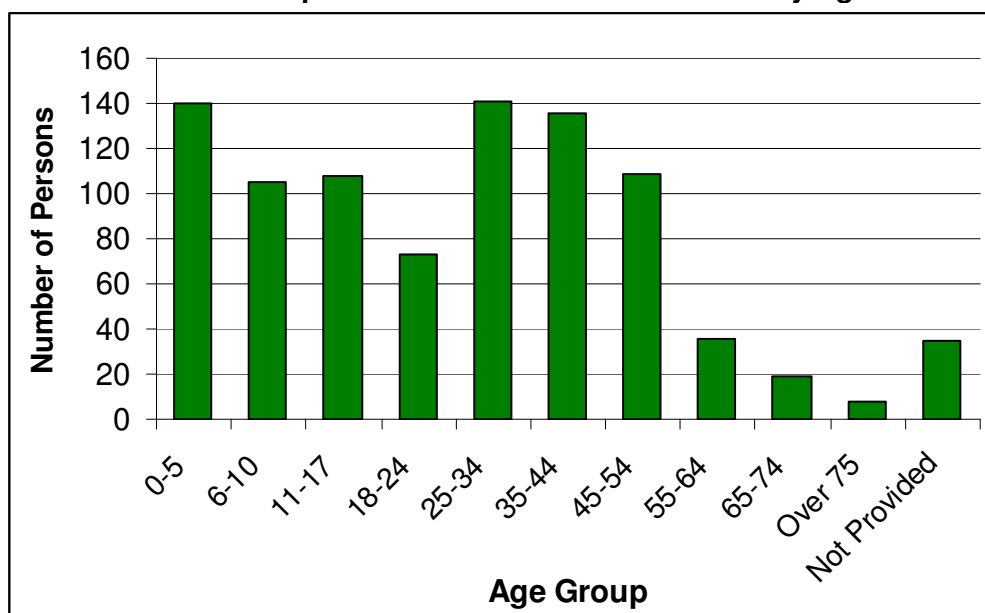
## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

### Age Composition

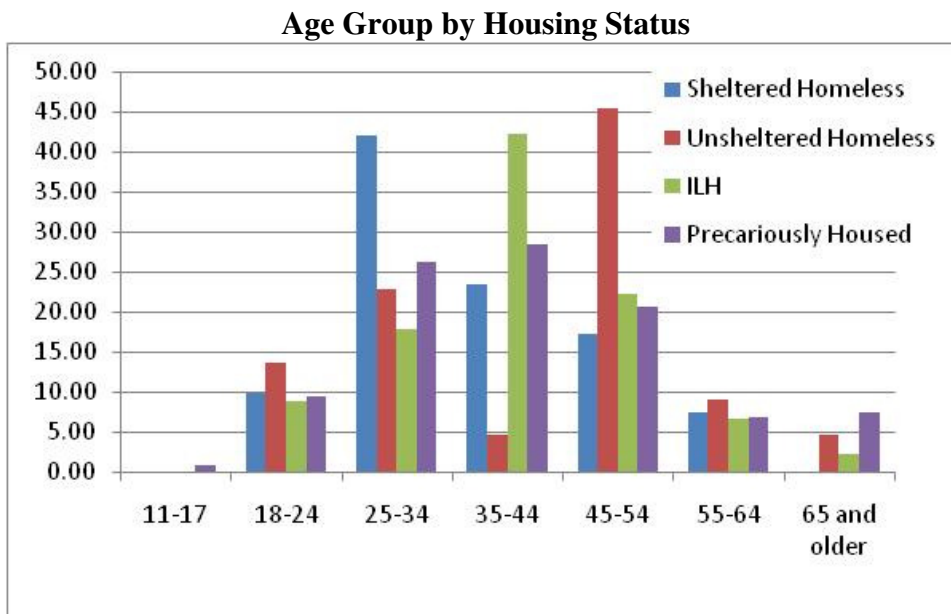
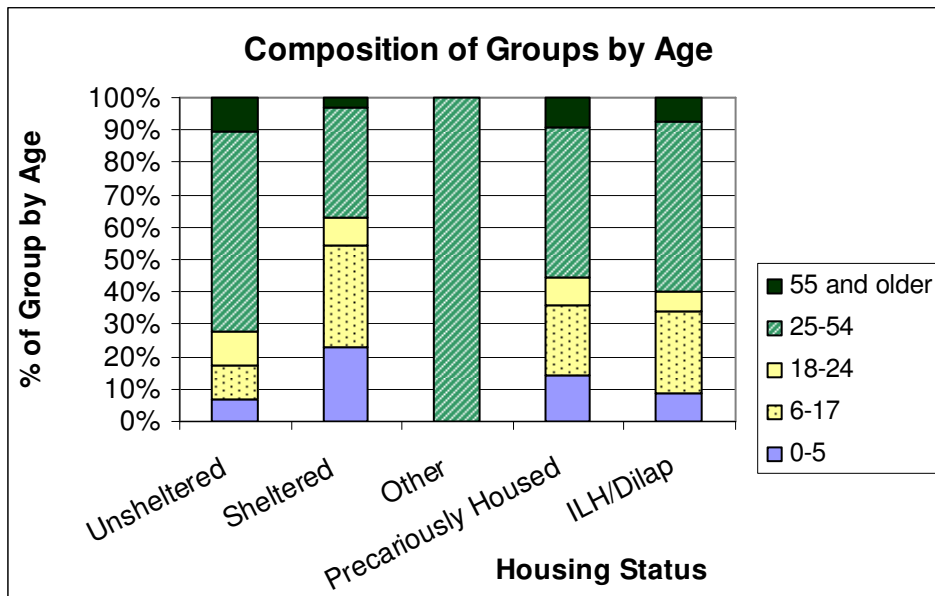
The age distribution of persons with unstable housing varied by their housing status. Children were more likely to be in shelters or precariously-housed, while people who were unsheltered homeless were generally middle-aged adults.

Out of the 910 persons included in the count, 522 persons (57%) were 18 years old or older, 353 persons (39%) were under the age of 18, and 35 persons (4%) did not provide age information. Of those under the age of 18, 126 children (almost 36%) were among the sheltered homeless on the night of January 27, 2008 (including those in hotels whose stays were paid for by service agencies). Only 5 children under age 18 were unsheltered on census night.

**Persons Represented in Point-In-Time Count by Age**



## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS



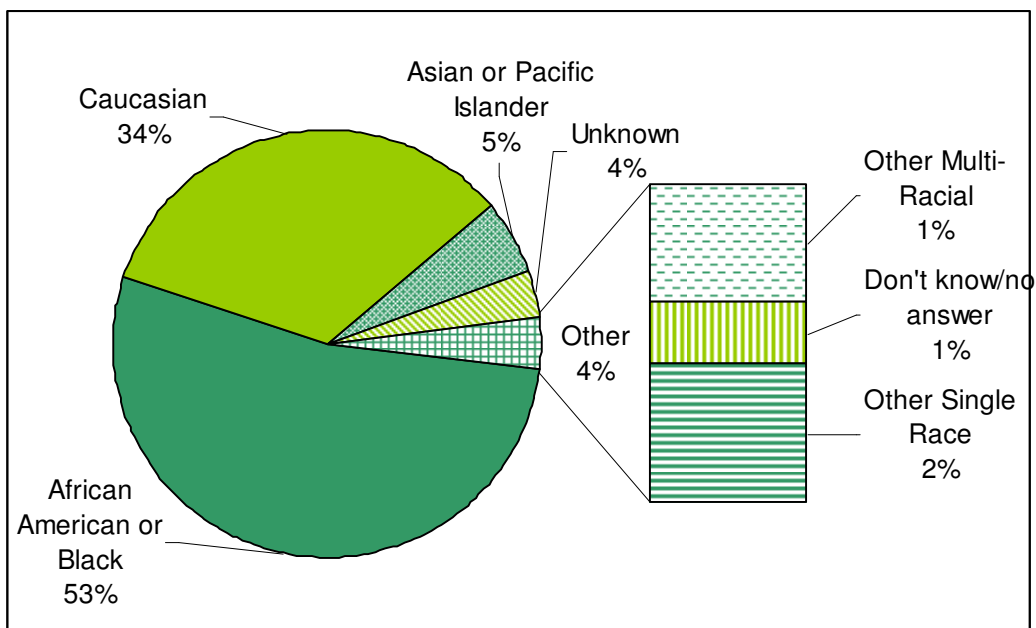


## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

### Race/Ethnicity

A disproportionate number of persons who were unstably housed in Gwinnett County were racial minorities, compared to the Gwinnett County population as a whole. Of the count respondents, 53% were Black and 34% were White. Census Bureau estimates for 2007 indicated that the County's population was 67% White, 21% Black, 17% Hispanic, and 9% Asian.

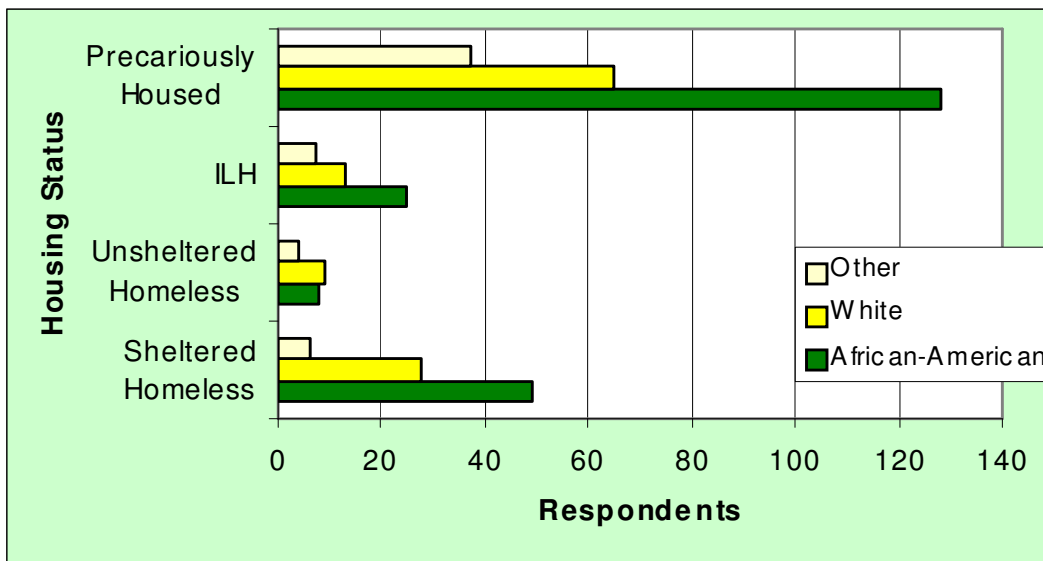
### Respondents to Point-In-Time Count by Race



Blacks were the largest racial group of respondents in all housing status categories, except unsheltered where the dominate group was whites.

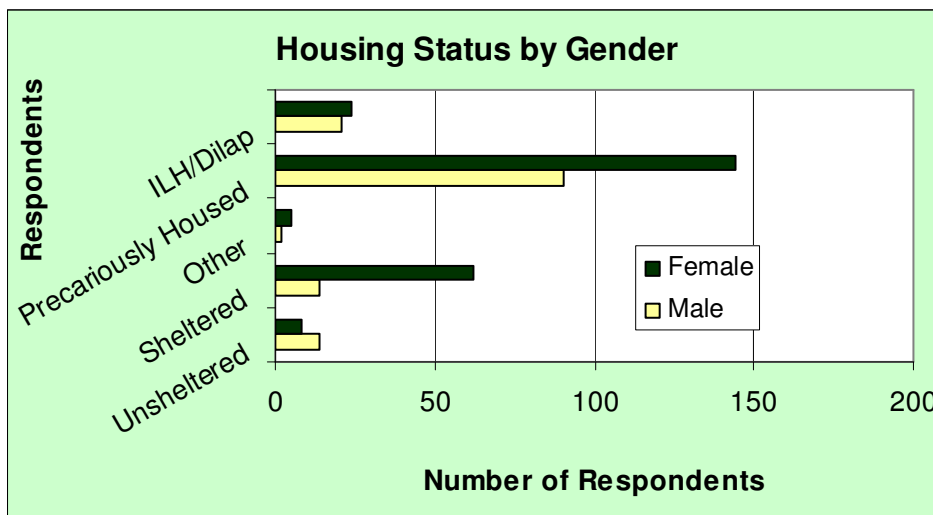
## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

### Housing Status by Race and Gender



### Gender

Women comprised the largest proportion of count respondents in all housing status categories, with the exception of those who were unsheltered.

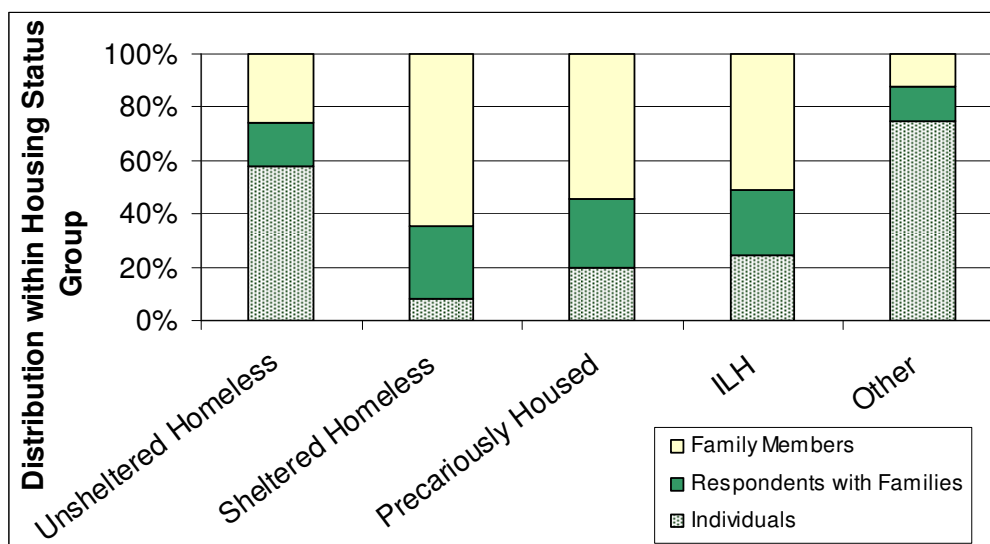


## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

### Families

As might be expected in a largely suburban county, housing instability was a family problem in Gwinnett County. On the night of January 27, 2008, 64% of the housing count respondents - homeless and precariously housed combined - reported that they had family members with them.

**Distribution of Family Status within Housing Group**

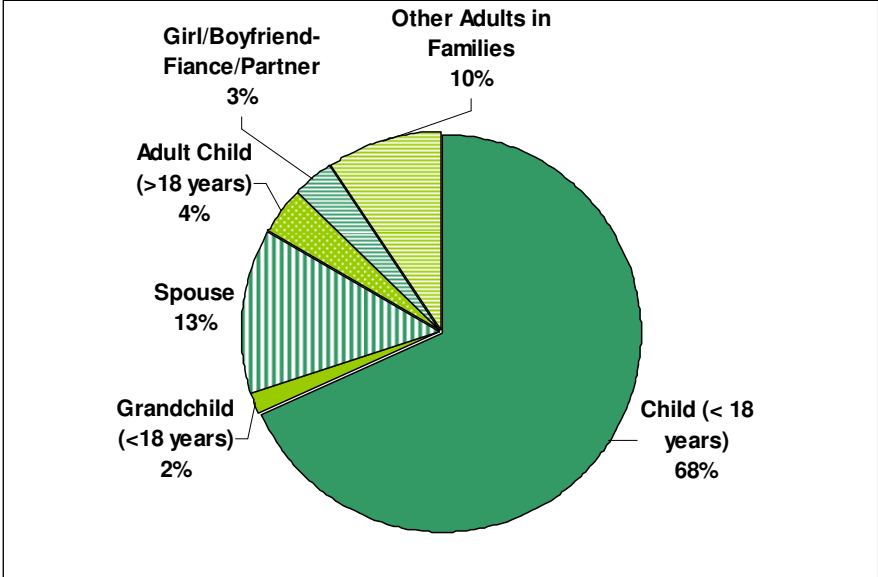


Families were more prevalent than single individuals in each category with the exception of the unsheltered homeless or the much smaller group of "other homeless," which were represented more heavily by single individuals.

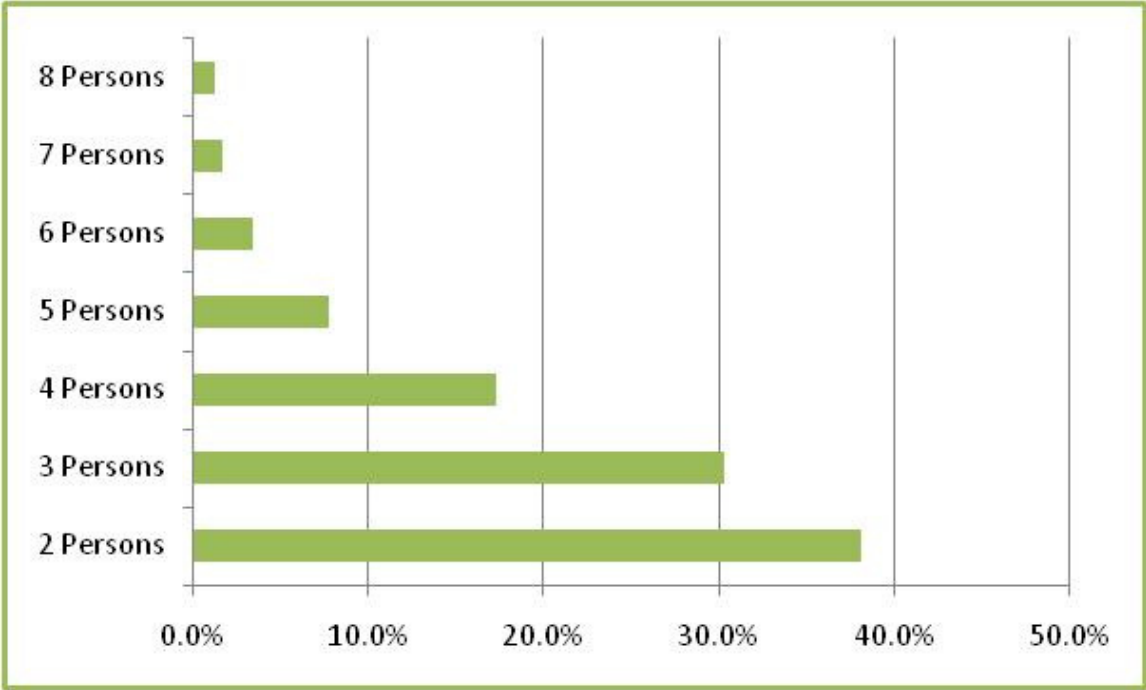
Approximately 70% of family members represented in the count were children under age 18. The other 30% of family members were adults, including spouses, adult children, cousins, and other extended family members. The average family size was 3.18 persons. About 30% of families had more than four members.

# HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

**Relationship of Family Members to Respondent**



**Size of Families**



## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

### Family Size by Housing Status

<i>Housing Status</i>	<i>Average Family Size</i>
<b>Unsheltered Homeless</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Sheltered Homeless</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>Precariously Housed</b>	<b>3.13</b>
<b>Imminent Loss of Housing/Dilapidated Housing</b>	<b>3.08</b>

### Homelessness

The 2008 housing stability count represented the first time that Gwinnett County attempted to estimate the number of unsheltered homeless and precariously-housed persons. In the past, only the number of homeless persons in shelters was collected. Results of past shelter counts (see table below) shows a sharp increase in the number of individuals in Gwinnett County in 2008 compared to 2007 and 2006.

### Sheltered Homeless Numbers for 2006, 2007, and 2008

Year	Sheltered Homeless Adults	Sheltered Homeless Children	Total Sheltered Homeless
2006	55	68	123
2007	30	29	59
2008	110	128	238

Currently, a comprehensive count of homeless individuals in the Metro-Atlanta Area does not exist. Of the 10 counties in Metro-Atlanta, only Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton Counties systematically count the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons. With this count effort, Gwinnett County has begun to track its unsheltered homeless population, in addition to the regular counts of its sheltered homeless population that have historically been part of the State of Georgia bed inventory and sheltered census. Cherokee and Fayette Counties participated in the 2009 State Homeless Count, which will provide an unsheltered count for those two counties as well. Reports from the Point-in-Time counts in Clayton County and the Tri-Jurisdictional Area (DeKalb and Fulton Counties) are available on the Pathways website at [www.PCNI.org](http://www.PCNI.org). The state count reports, "Homeless in Georgia," can be found at [www.dca.state.ga.us](http://www.dca.state.ga.us).

## HOUSING STABILITY COUNT RESULTS

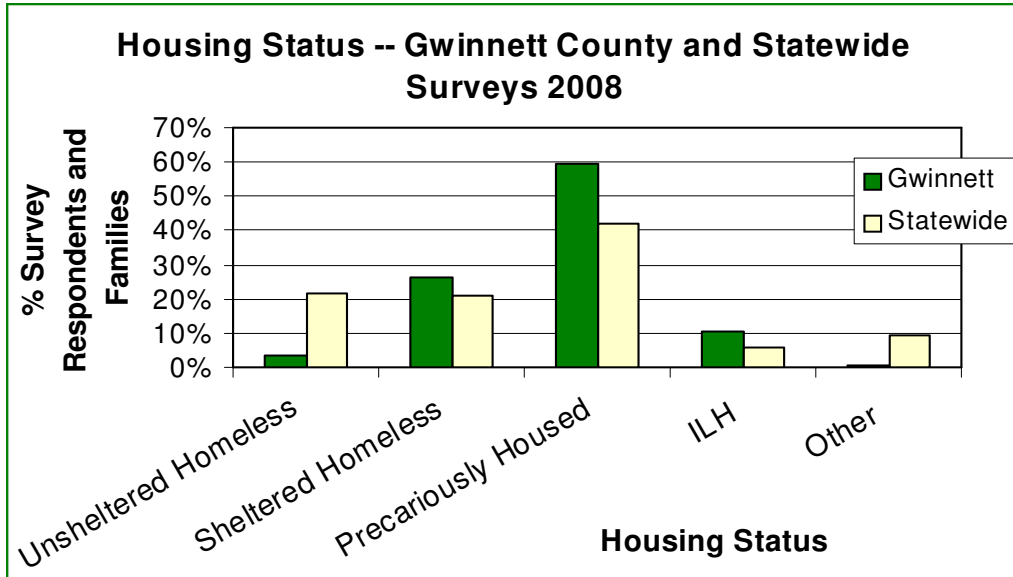
### Homeless Numbers for Metro-Atlanta Counties\*

County	Unsheltered Homeless	Sheltered Homeless	Year
Gwinnett County	31	238	2008
Clayton County	65	149	2008
Cobb County	208	329	2007
DeKalb County*	194	589	2007
Fulton County*	1921	4136	2007

\*Includes the City of Atlanta within County

The chart below compares results from the 2008 Gwinnett County Housing Stability count to the 2008 state count. It underscores the family nature of housing instability in the county, with the higher percentages of respondents categorized as precariously-housed or sheltered homeless. It is important to note, however, that the state count primarily focused on collecting data on persons who met the HUD definition of homelessness. In most of the counties participating in the state count, data collected on the precariously-housed and persons facing imminent loss of housing were a by-product of the homeless count rather than its focus.

### Comparison of Housing Types: Gwinnett County to State Count





# HOUSING STABILITY IN-DEPTH SURVEY

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## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

### Participants

On January 27, 2008, 906 people were found to be homeless or precariously housed in Gwinnett County. Based on the 2008 Count, it was determined that a minimum sampling number of 197 people needed to be interviewed. Surveys were therefore conducted with 204 respondents at four service provider locations throughout Gwinnett County.

### Design and Procedure

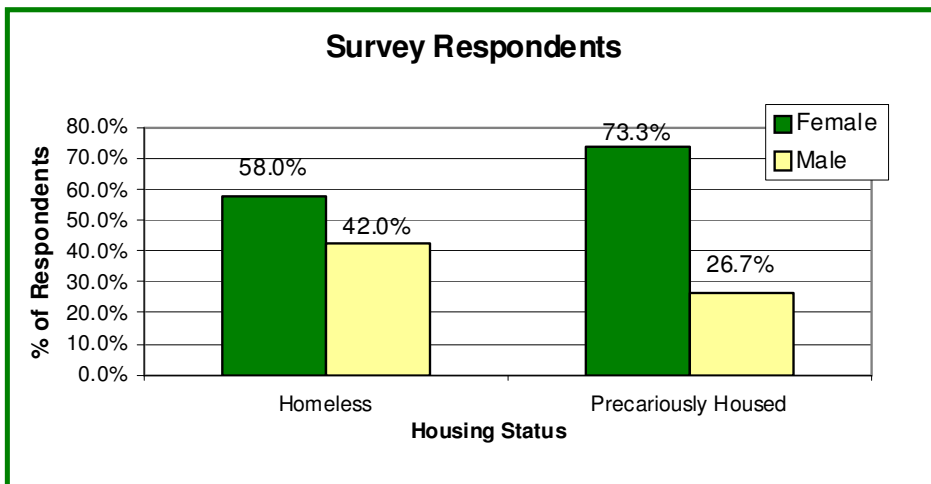
The 2008 Gwinnett County Homeless Survey was designed and conducted by Pathways Community Network, working closely with the Gwinnett Task Force. The survey asked respondents about their demographics, homeless history, income, place of origin, and service needs. The completed survey data were collected from August to October, 2008. The surveys took approximately 15 minutes each. The surveys were primarily administered by service provider staff, along with community volunteers.

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

The housing stability surveys were administered to 88 persons classified as homeless - both sheltered and unsheltered - and 116 persons classified as precariously housed, including persons facing imminent loss of housing and/or living in dilapidated housing. Almost half of the homeless persons surveyed were unsheltered (not in some type of housing for the homeless such as emergency shelter, transitional housing or a treatment program). Since the sheltered and unsheltered homeless are reported together, this group will look more similar to the precariously housed than would be the case if unsheltered homeless persons were considered separately.

### Gender and Race/Ethnicity

The majority of all survey respondents were women, with an even greater proportion of those who were precariously-housed. Homeless women, particularly if they had children, were more likely to be in some sort of shelter than were men who were homeless.



The majority of survey respondents in both housing groups were Black or African American, 67% of those who were homeless and

57.5% of those who were precariously-housed. Conversely, almost 28% of those who were homeless were White, and approximately 34% of those who were precariously-housed were White.

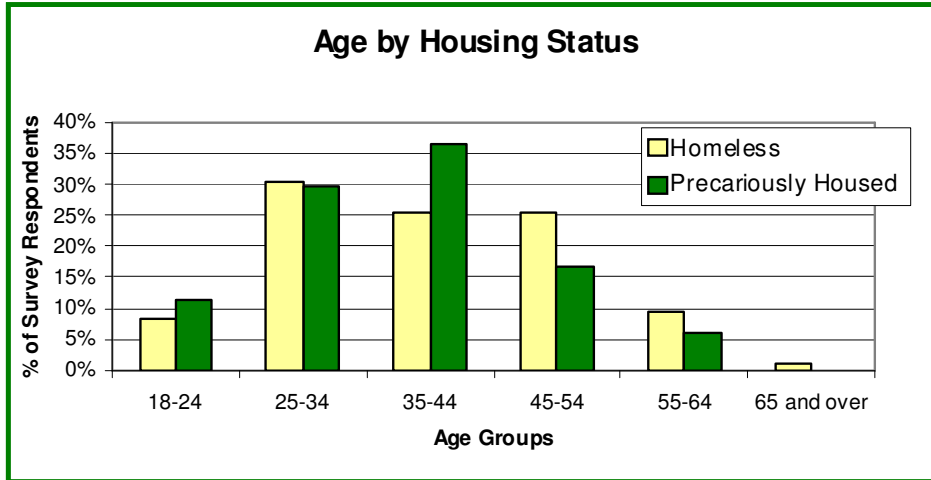
Over 96% of the survey respondents in both the homeless and the precariously-housed groups indicated that their first, or native, language was English. However, participation in the survey was low for some racial or ethnic groups including Hispanics and Asians. While Hispanics made up 17% of Gwinnett's population in 2007, less than 6% of the homeless group and less than 10% of the precariously-housed considered themselves to be Hispanic or Latino. Similarly, although Asians comprised 9.2% of Gwinnett's population in 2007, less than 3% of the precariously-housed and none of the homeless respondents were Asian. Therefore, it is difficult to know whether language is a barrier to obtaining assistance for these groups.



## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

### Age, Education and Veteran Status

The average age of the survey respondents was similar for both those who were homeless (38.7 years) and those who were precariously-housed (37.5 years), but the distribution of respondents across age groups differed. The age distribution among those who were homeless artificially



appears to be older because of a few individuals who are much older than most of the others in that group. Using the interquartile range (i.e., the age range of the middle 50% of the group) removes the effects of those who are atypically young or old for a more accurate

estimate. The interquartile range for the homeless group was between age 30 and 48, while the interquartile range for those who were precariously-housed was between 28 and 44 years old.

Education Level	Homeless	Precariously Housed
No High School Diploma	18.2%	27.8%
HS Diploma or GED	33.0%	23.5%
Some college	29.5%	28.7%
2 yr, 4 yr or tech degree	15.9%	16.5%
Grad school or advanced degree	3.4%	3.5%

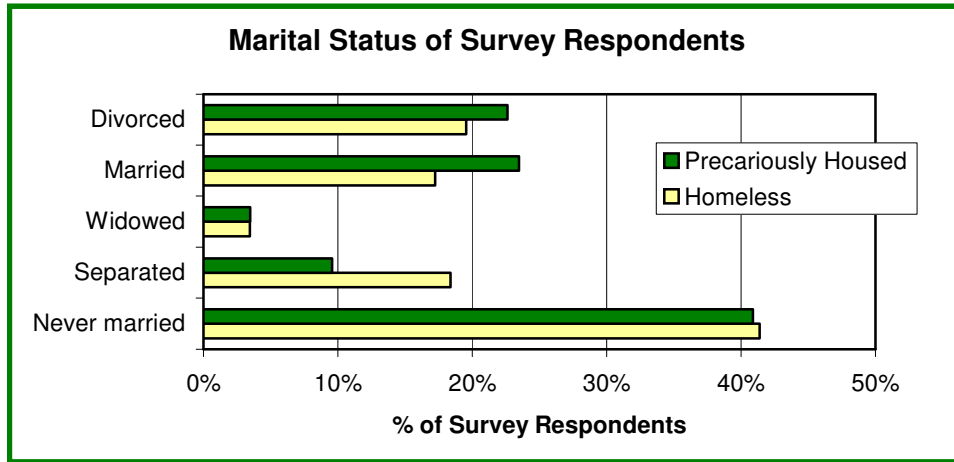
The homeless survey respondents generally had a higher level of educational attainment than did the precariously-housed survey respondents. However, respondents with a two-year, four-year, or technical college degree were more often precariously-housed than homeless.

Only about 10% of the respondents in both housing categories were veterans. Their service period was evenly distributed from the 1960's to recent discharges.

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

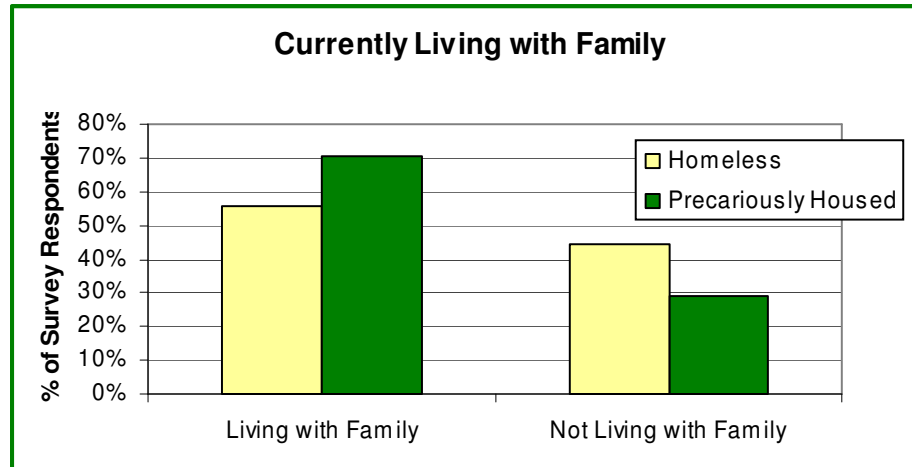
### Marital Status

The percentage of both groups that had never been married was similar, 41.4% of homeless respondents compared to 40.9% of precariously-housed respondents. But a larger percentage of the precariously-housed respondents were either currently married or divorced – a combined total of 46% – than for those who were homeless (36.8% married or divorced).

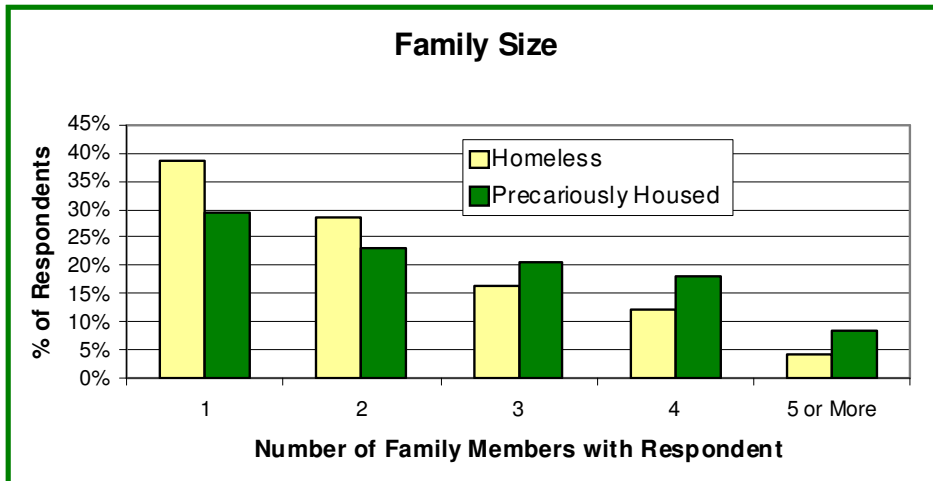
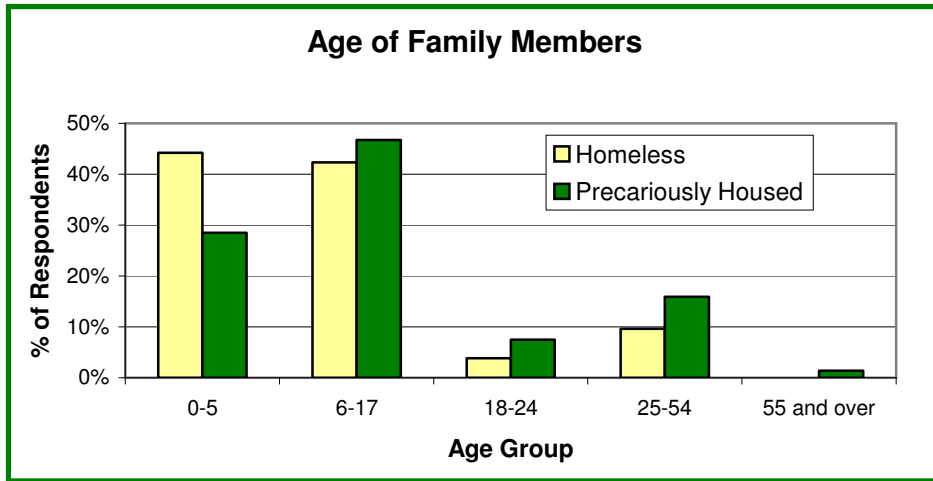


### Families

About 71% of the precariously-housed respondents reported that they were currently living with family members, compared to about 56% of those who were homeless.



## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

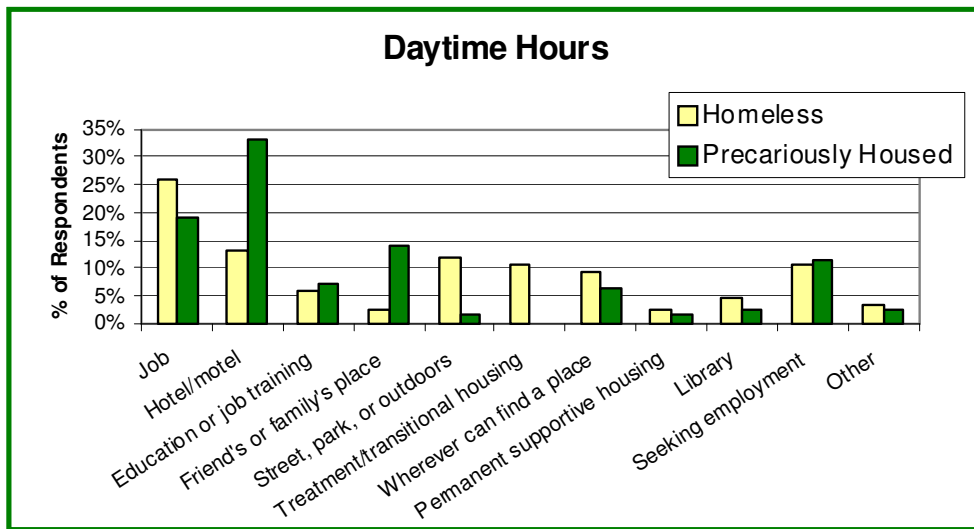


Of those respondents who reported living with family members, the majority were living with two or more other persons. The number of family members with the homeless respondents averaged 2.2 members, compared to 2.6 for the precariously-housed respondents. The percentage of families with preschoolers is almost even for both the homeless (52%) and the precariously-housed (52.5%). Most of the homeless families with minor children were living in some sort of shelter.

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

### Daytime Hours

While homelessness is defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, the daytime hours also present a challenge to people who are not stably housed. When asked where they spent most of their daytime hours, almost 26% of the homeless survey respondents said they were at work, compared to 19% of those who were precariously-housed. Approximately 29% of homeless respondents said they spent the day in various public places like the street, park, library, “wherever,” or other. Over 47% of precariously-housed survey respondents were more likely to spend the day at a hotel/motel or at a friend’s or family member’s place, presumably where they were staying.

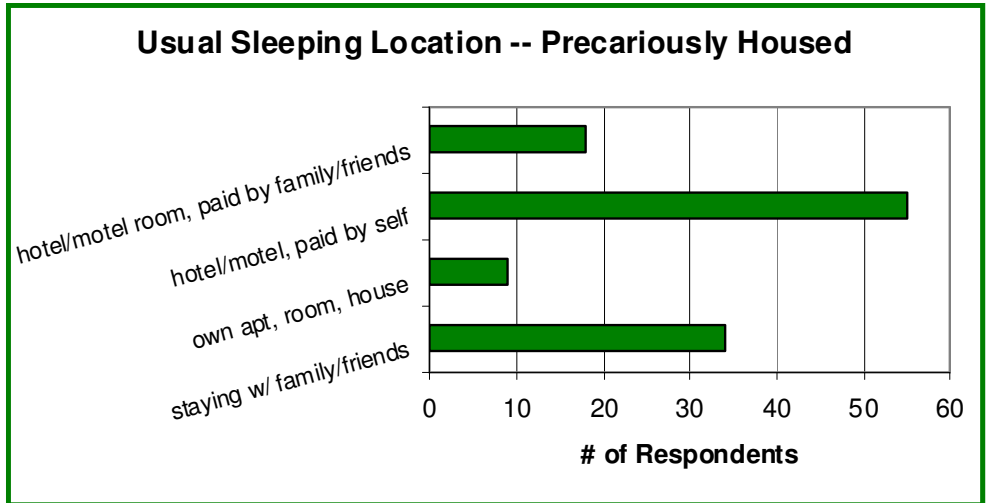


Daytime Hours	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Job	25.9%	19.3%
Hotel/motel	12.9%	33.3%
Education or job training	5.9%	7.0%
Friend's or family's place	2.4%	14.0%
Street, park, or outdoors	11.8%	1.8%
Treatment/transitional housing	10.6%	0.0%
Wherever can find a place	9.4%	6.1%
Permanent supportive housing	2.4%	1.8%
Library	4.7%	2.6%
Seeking employment	10.6%	11.4%
Other	3.5%	2.6%

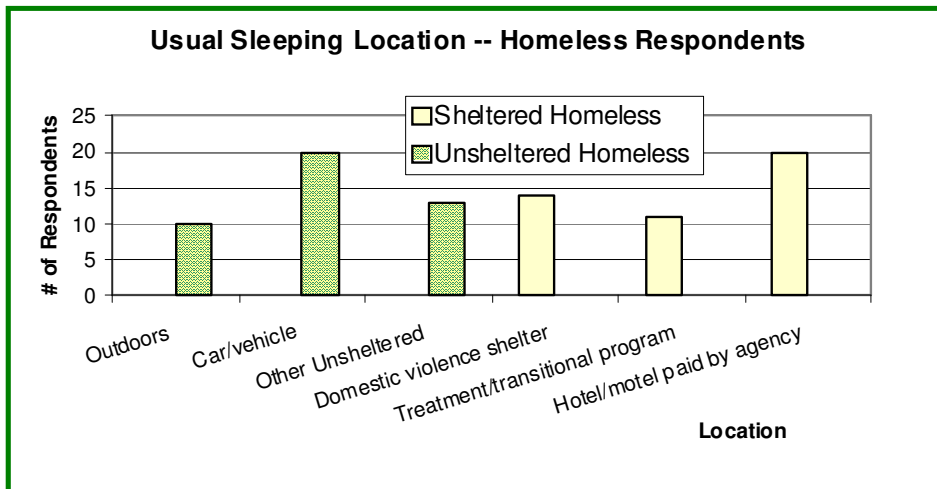
## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

### Sleeping Location

Among the 88 homeless persons surveyed, 45 (or 51%) reported that their usual sleeping location was in a sheltered location. Such locations included domestic violence shelters, treatment or transitional housing programs, or hotels/motels paid for by a service provider. Of the 43 homeless persons who reported that they usually stayed in an unsheltered location, 20 (or 46.5%) were sleeping in a car or other vehicle.

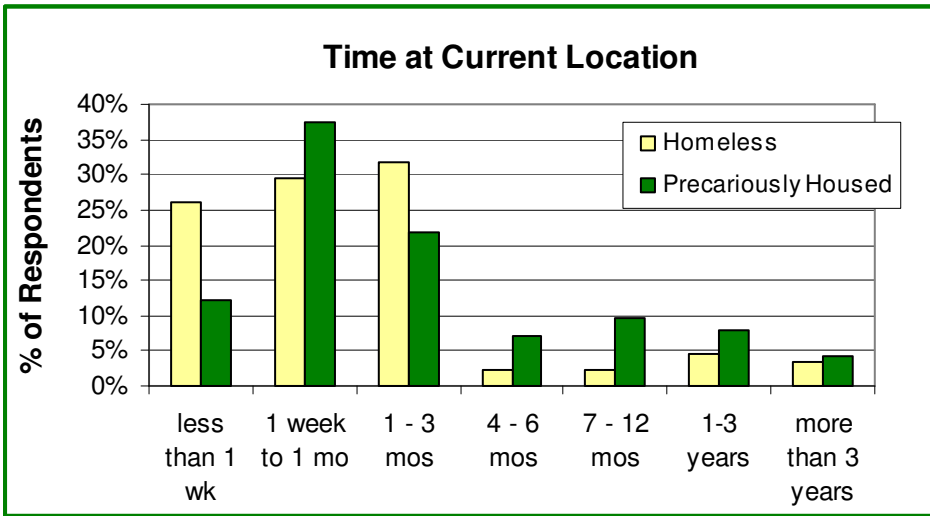


Among the 116 precariously-housed survey respondents, almost 47% reported that they were paying for a hotel/motel themselves. An additional 15.5% were staying in a hotel/motel being paid for by friends or family. One of the reasons that such a large portion of the precariously-housed survey respondents in this report were hotel/motel residents is that those locations were specifically targeted for data collection. There were doubtless many more people in Gwinnett County staying with friends or family, but surveying this group is much more difficult because they were hard to identify and contact.



## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

As one might expect, when asked how long they had been living or staying at their current location, the precariously housed were less mobile or transient than the homeless respondents. When asked how much longer they would be able to stay at that location, over half of the homeless survey respondents didn't know or were uncertain. More than 39% of those who were precariously housed were similarly unsure. Although the precariously housed respondents were



better able to estimate how much longer they would be able to stay at the current location, they were far from stably housed. Almost a third of the precariously housed and a fourth of the homeless expected to be able to stay at the current location for less than a week, and even fewer of both groups expected to be able to stay for a month or more.

Duration Left to Stay	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Less than 1 wk	24.4%	32.1%
1 wk to 1 mo	14.0%	15.6%
1 - 3 mos	3.5%	7.3%
4 - 6 mos	1.2%	1.8%
7 - 12 mos	2.3%	0.9%
Over 1 yr	2.3%	2.8%
Don't Know/uncertain	52.3%	39.4%

### Reason for Housing Instability

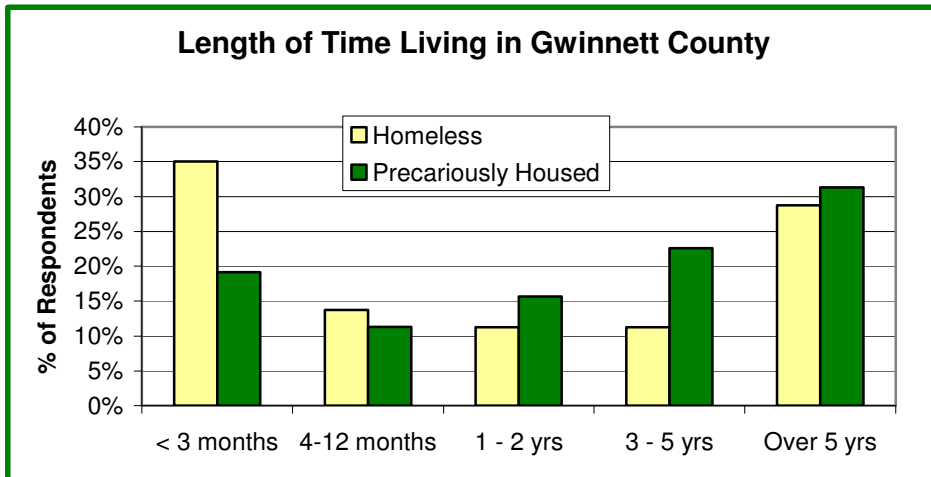
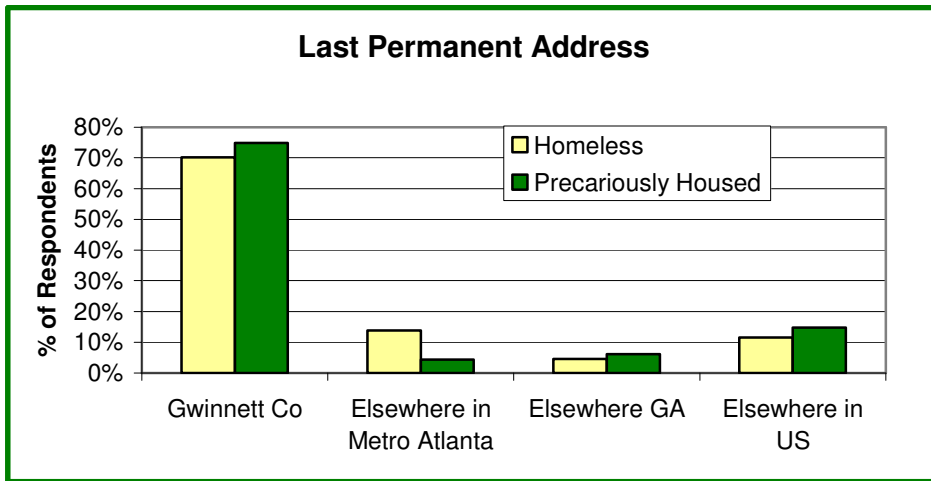
Economic reasons play a major role in housing instability. When asked about the circumstances that led to their current housing difficulties, the most frequent answer from both those who were homeless and those who were precariously housed was unemployment or lost job. The second most frequent reason from both groups was an inability to pay rent or mortgage.

Family issues were also frequently given for current housing instability. Nineteen (or 21.5%) of the homeless respondents gave family violence as a reason and 18 (or 20%) listed argument with family or friends. Six of the precariously housed respondents (5%) listed family violence and 8 (7%) listed an argument with family or friends. (Please note that this survey question allowed multiple responses).

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

### Residence in Gwinnett County

A large majority of survey respondents, both those who were homeless and those who were precariously housed, indicated that their last permanent address was in Gwinnett County. Of those who were from elsewhere, the homeless survey respondents were more likely to indicate that they were from somewhere else in the Metro Atlanta region, while the precariously-housed respondents were more likely to indicate they were from elsewhere in the U.S. The most notable difference in the two groups was in the length of time they had lived in Gwinnett County. The homeless survey respondents were more likely to have been in Gwinnett a very short time, less than three months, than were the precariously-housed respondents. Their short tenure might indicate fewer ties to the community. An absence of ties to the community could contribute to homelessness if the person has a smaller social network through which to obtain housing, a job, or financial support. Less than one-third of both groups indicated that they had lived in Gwinnett County for more than five years.



## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

When asked about why they came to Gwinnett County, the reasons mentioned most often by both groups were:

- job opportunities;
- family or friends lived there;
- a better place to live; or
- better schools.

None of the respondents indicated that they came to Gwinnett County to receive social services or because they were a Hurricane Katrina evacuee.

Location	Homeless		Precariously Housed	
	Sought Shelter	Able to Stay	Sought Shelter	Able to Stay
Named Shelter	43	9	35	6
Extended stay hotels	26	28	53	54
Friends or family	11	5	33	34
Own apartment, room or house	11	12	18	16
Named co-op	31	18	28	21
Did not seek	18	NA	14	NA
Found none available		5		2
Other	5	9	10	7

### Seeking Shelter

When asked about their experiences seeking shelter in Gwinnett County, the survey respondents often looked to private resources – extended stay hotels, friends or family, or attempts to stay in their own housing. (Please note that this survey question allowed multiple responses.) Precariously housed survey respondents listed private

resources 104 times, while homeless respondents mentioned these options 48 times.

When asked what places they had been able to stay after seeking shelter, respondents in both groups again listed private resources more often than shelters or co-ops. However, a success gap occurred between the two groups. Precariously housed respondents were able to stay with family and friends 97% of the time after seeking shelter with them, but homeless respondents were able to stay with family and friends only 45% of the time.



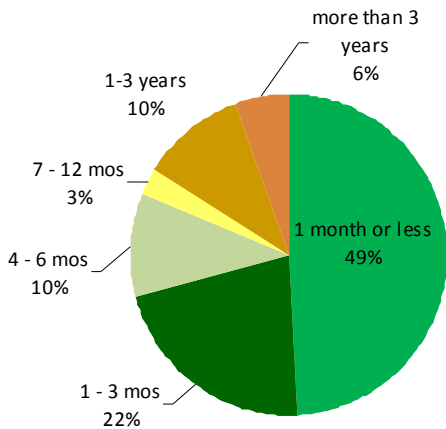
## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

When respondents listed public resources as places where they had sought shelter, they often gave names of specific local shelters or co-ops, such as Rainbow Village or Norcross Co-op. (Please note that this survey question allowed multiple responses.) For both groups, a very small percent (less than 20%) were able to stay in the shelter or co-op where they sought shelter. The gap between seeking shelter and obtaining it may reflect a lack of beds available or it may indicate that the respondent did not meet the program’s target group or qualifications.

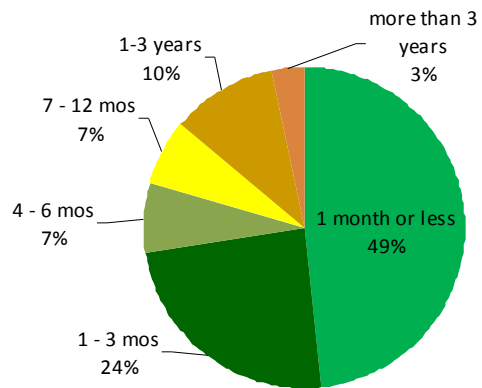
### Length and Duration of Homelessness

Although definitions of “homelessness” vary among service providers and funding agencies, the individuals and families without stable housing felt as if they are homeless. Both precariously housed and homeless survey respondents were asked how long they had been continuously homeless. What was most striking about the responses to this question is how little difference there was between the homeless and the precariously housed survey respondents. Among both groups, almost half of the respondents indicated that they had been homeless a month or less.

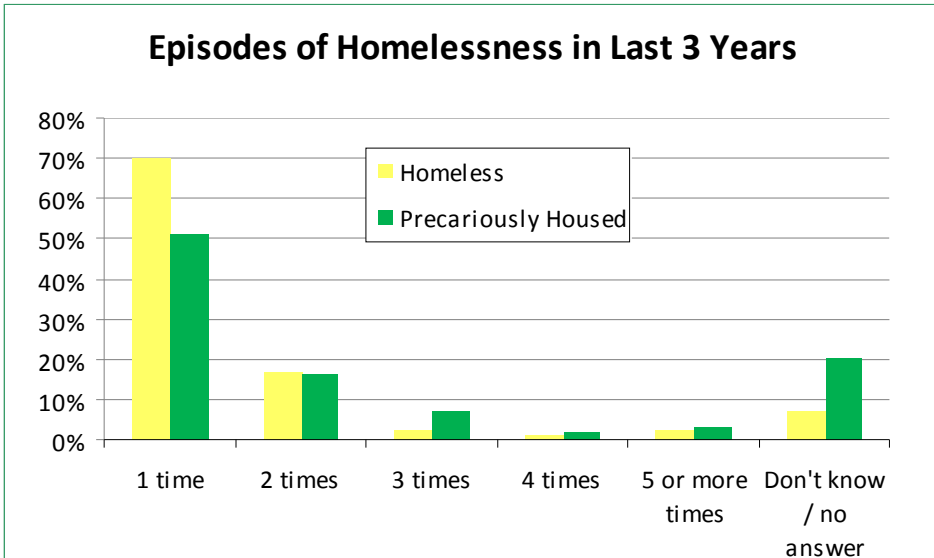
**Length of Time Homeless -- Precariously Housed**



**Length of Time Homeless -- Homeless Respondents**



## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS



While the majority of both groups indicated that this was their first episode of homelessness in three years (70% of the homeless and 51% of the precariously-housed), the precariously-housed respondents indicated that they had experienced somewhat more episodes of homelessness in the last three years than the homeless respondents. Approximately 7% of the precariously housed

respondents indicated that they had been homeless three times or more in the last three years, compared to 2% of the homeless respondents. Over 20% of the precariously housed and 7% of the homeless respondents either gave no answer or responded that they “don’t know” how many episodes of homelessness they experienced over the last three years.

### Help to Get into Permanent Housing

Respondents were asked, “What would be the most help to you in getting into permanent housing, such as an apartment or house?” This was asked as an open-ended question and respondents were able to give as many answers as they wished. Both groups of respondents, homeless and precariously housed, thought the keys to obtaining permanent housing would be employment, affordable housing, and money or financial assistance.

#### Most Help to Get into Permanent Housing

	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Employment	57	83
Affordable Housing	50	65
Shelter	10	12
Money/Financial Assistance	44	66
Child Care	12	20
Education	12	9
Transportation	20	36
Medical Care	10	15
Already in Perm Housing	0	3
Other	1	2

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

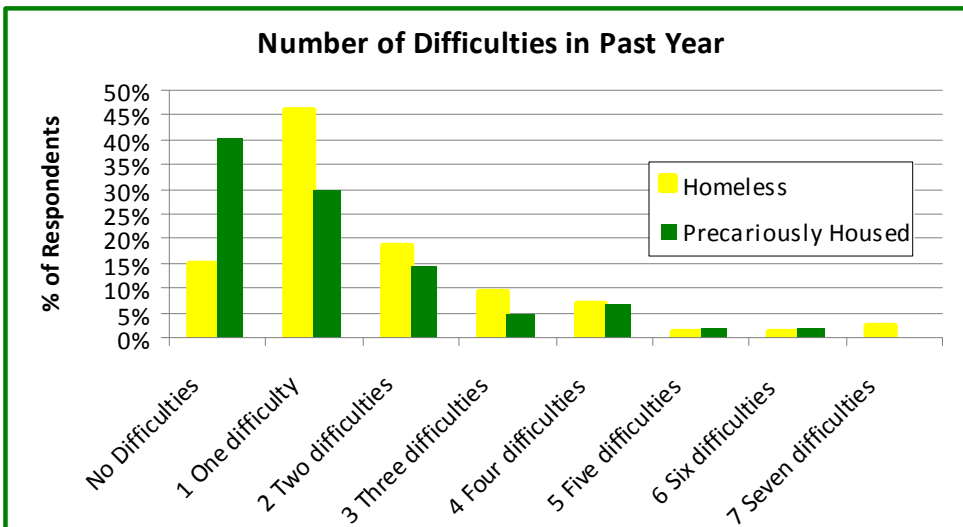
### Disability and Personal Vulnerabilities

#### Experienced Problems with Any of These in the Last Year

	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Alcohol	7	8
Drugs	4	5
Physical Health	21	27
Mental Health	18	10
Depression	29	42
Chronic Health Problem	8	16
HIV/AIDS	3	0
Domestic Violence	24	7
Being Arrested	12	10
None of These	28	42

People who are unstably housed often have disabilities and personal vulnerabilities, such as past experiences with domestic violence, abuse, or history of criminal activity that can leave them particularly susceptible to loss of housing. Survey respondents were asked about whether they had experienced a range of problems in the last year. (Please note that this survey question allowed multiple responses.)

The problem most frequently mentioned by both groups of respondents was depression, probably indicating the toll that housing instability plays on the individual. Among the homeless respondents, the next most frequently mentioned problem was domestic violence. However, since surveys were administered to residents of domestic violence shelters, which residents are classified as homeless according to the definition of homelessness used in this report, the relatively high number may reflect the survey population rather than the general population of Gwinnett County. When the number of difficulties per respondent was analyzed, it was clear that the precariously housed reported a much lower number of problems than the homeless respondents. Approximately 40% of the precariously housed respondents reported none of the listed difficulties, compared to only about 15% of those who were homeless.



A follow-up question was asked about whether the respondent was currently receiving treatment for the problem listed in the previous question. Among the 62 precariously-housed respondents who reported one or more problems, only 24 (or 39%) reported that they were currently receiving treatment. Similarly, of the 74 homeless respondents who

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

reported having one or more difficulties, only 30 (or 40.5%) indicated that they were currently receiving treatment. For those who reported receiving treatment, the type and location of treatment varied widely.

### Medical Attention

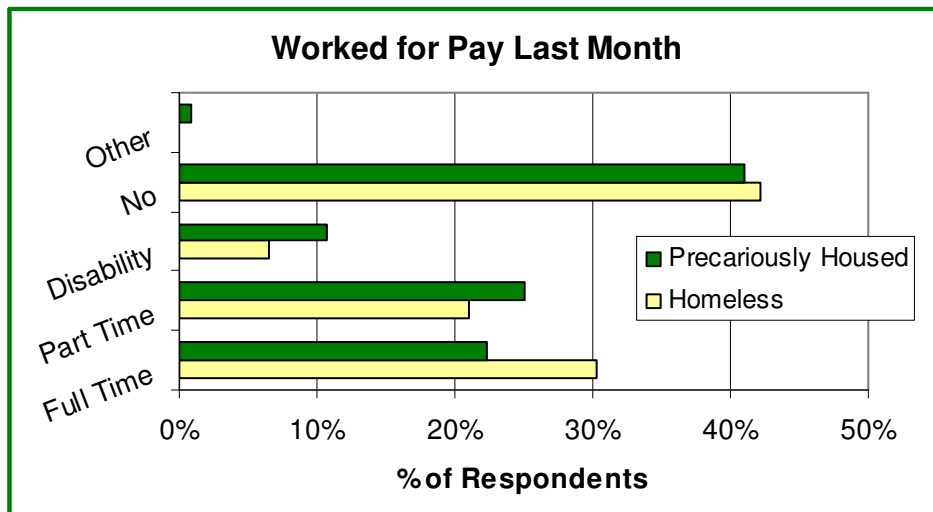
**Usual Source of Medical Attention**

Location	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Community Clinic	9	12
Emergency Room	35	58
Other	7	6
Private Doctor	22	25
VA Medical Center	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>103</b>

One serious problem facing people with housing difficulties is health care. When asked where they usually get medical attention, respondents from both groups most often cited the emergency room, particularly the emergency room at Gwinnett Medical Center. The next most frequently given response was “Private Doctor.” (Please note that this survey question allowed multiple responses.)

### Benefits, Employment, and Income

To state the obvious, a key to getting and maintaining housing is to have a steady income that is sufficient to cover monthly housing costs. Income typically is derived from employment and/or benefit programs. Not surprisingly, those who are unstably housed have very low incomes and

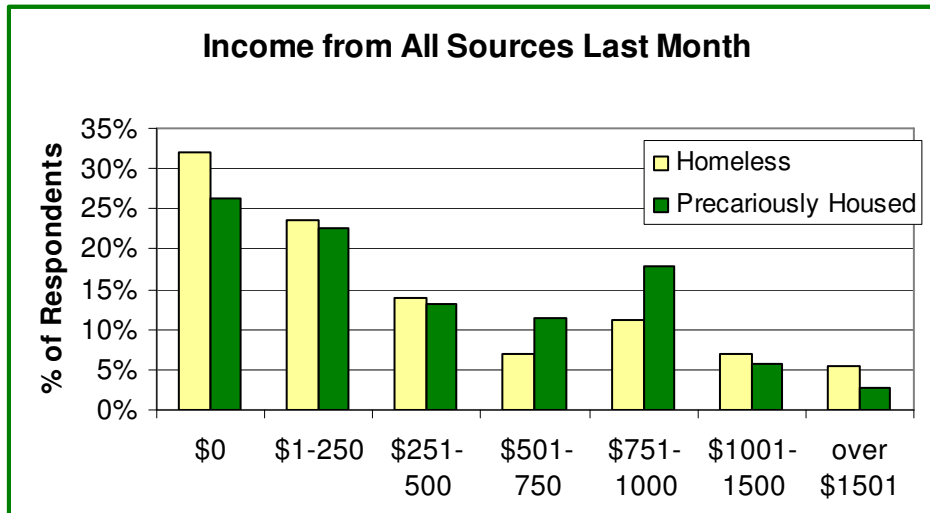


high rates of unemployment. When asked if they had worked for pay in the last month, over 48% of respondents from both groups stated that they were unemployed.

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

Homeless respondents were more likely to report working full-time than were those who were precariously housed. As the homeless respondents include people who are in emergency shelter, treatment programs, and transitional housing, many of these homeless shelter organizations have either employment programs or employment requirements which likely accounts for that higher percentage.

Incomes, whether from employment, benefits, or both, are extremely low for both respondent groups. Only 12.5% of respondents who were homeless and 8.5% of those who were precariously- housed had incomes of \$1,000 or more in the month prior. To put this income data in perspective, the 2009 Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a one-bedroom apartment in the Atlanta metro area was \$789 per month. The FMR is the rent for a modest, but standard condition, rental unit without subsidy. A single worker, working 40 hours per week, would need to earn \$16.43/hour (or \$2629 per month) in order to afford a one-bedroom apartment at the FMR, paying 30% of gross income for housing costs (the standard set by HUD). This level of income is clearly beyond that of those included in this survey.



In addition to employment, benefits such as Social Security and SSI can provide an income stream that can enable someone to obtain housing. The survey asked respondents to indicate all of the benefits which they currently receive. The most frequently mentioned benefit among both groups was food stamps, followed by Medicare and Medicaid. Interestingly, very few respondents in either group indicated that they participated in the PeachCare program, in spite of having a total of 251 minor children living among them.

## HOUSING STABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

### Benefits Currently Received

	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Food Stamps	30	49
SS Disability	2	5
SSI	3	5
TANF	5	3
Veterans Benefits	4	2
Workers Compensation	0	0
Unemployment	4	4
Medicare/Medicaid	18	29
PeachCare	4	8
Child Support	3	7
Social Security	0	2
Don't Receive Any	21	35
Other	4	4

### Daily Necessities

#### Daily Necessities Having Most Trouble Getting

	Homeless	Precariously Housed
Food/water	39	60
Housing/shelter	55	73
Personal Care Items	32	46
Gas/gas money	29	45
Medication/medical care	13	23
Employment	55	60
Transportation	36	43
Clothes/shoes	27	23
Church support	6	9
Rent	28	55
Money	52	81
Baby items	6	16
Showering/bath	25	11
Cell Phone	10	14
No Problems	4	1
Other	1	1

The last question of the survey asked, “What important necessities are you having the most trouble getting each day?” The necessities that were mentioned most frequently were:

- Money
- Housing or shelter
- Employment
- Food or Water
- Rent

(Please note that this survey question allowed multiple responses.)



## CONCLUSION

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The primary conclusion that emerged from the Gwinnett Housing Stability Count and Survey is that housing instability in the county is a problem of families. While the count should not be taken as an objective measure of the size of need, it does clearly indicate the type and composition of that need. For example, the largest proportion of people included in the count were precariously housed -- families who were doubled up due to economic emergency or who were living in the county's modestly-priced hotels and motels. The Gwinnett families who are unstably housed are very poor and are grappling with a number of personal vulnerabilities. When seeking shelter, the survey respondents tend to look to private resources for housing. They are people who have had permanent housing in the county in the past. Approximately a third of them have been residents of Gwinnett County for many years.

For the social service network in the county, the challenge will be to help these families obtain affordable housing along with an adequate income to maintain that housing -- through mainstream benefits and/or employment. But for many of these families, housing assistance may not be enough to insure housing stability. The majority of survey respondents listed one or more disabilities or personal vulnerabilities, indicating a high level of need for service supports. In a large, sprawling suburban county, providing enough services and making sure that those services are accessible to these susceptible families presents many challenges made more difficult in the current economic crisis.

That there are so many families represented in the count and survey has important implications for the Gwinnett County School System. Research on unstably housed families clearly shows that their children have worse educational outcomes, including higher drop out rates. For a school system with a history of educating children from middle and upper income families, these children will represent a significant challenge and require resources directed toward their unique needs.

In order to develop a clearer picture of the size and composition of the County's homeless and precariously housed population, the Task Force should consider conducting an annual or biannual count. With each count experience, the Task Force will improve the quality of its data and gain more confidence in the results.