



# 2016

## THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN ALASKA

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Report



Anchorage Coalition to End  
Homelessness



August 2017



Photo Credit: "Forget-me-Nots" by A. Gonzalez

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Alaska Project Manager	1
Homelessness in Alaska	2-4
State Estimates and Regional Distribution	3
Point-in-Time Count and Project Homeless Connect	4
Population in Depth	5-8
Individuals Experiencing Homelessness	6
Families Experiencing Homelessness	6
Racial Disparities	6
Unaccompanied Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness	7
Veterans Experiencing Homelessness and Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	8
References and About ICA	9
Continuum of Care Map	10

*Cover Photo Credit:* Young men from Cornerstone, Juneau’s youth shelter, spent the night on the Juneau Ice fields, where, for most of them, they saw the Northern Lights for the first time. Cornerstone provides more than food and shelter. The staff offer healthy activities that enrich lives, giving runaway and homeless youth the opportunity to truly experience the natural beauty of Juneau, one of the most beautiful locations in Alaska.

# LETTER FROM THE ALASKA PROJECT MANAGER



The Institute for Community Alliances is excited to present the State of Alaska with its first-ever Annual Report based on data entered into the Alaska Homeless Management Information System (AKHMIS). During 2016, we saw some significant accomplishments, including:

## **A significant increase in overall data completeness**

- An average of 67% data completeness in July 2015 to an average of 93% data completeness in October 2016

## **Increased capacity, both in users and projects, entering data into AKHMIS**

- In 2016, there were 78 new user licenses issued that are still being used today
- 67 new projects began entering data into AKHMIS in 2016

## **Trainings provided for new users, current users, new processes, data changes, etc.**

- 249 trainings were provided in 2016, totaling in a minimum of 500+ hours dedicated to training and updating our users

## **Data sharing started in three major communities**

- Mat-Su Valley in January 2016
- Juneau in July 2016
- Anchorage in August / September 2016

The Annual Report includes data collected and entered into AKHMIS and, therefore, does not include data from victim service providers, from persons living doubled-up or in a hotel / motel they paid for themselves, or from people experiencing literal homelessness who had no interactions with homeless service providers utilizing AKHMIS. This report focuses on clients served during 2016, and we anticipate including comparisons to previous years' data in future annual reports.

The work to end homelessness continues as Coordinated Entry Systems are implemented in both the Anchorage and Balance of State Continua of Care, and providers continue the work they do every day to provide services to the most vulnerable individuals and families within Alaska. The Institute for Community Alliances greatly values our involvement in the work to end homelessness in the State of Alaska, and we will continue to partner with both Continua of Care today and every day by:

- Providing new user trainings, refresher trainings, information about updates to the system in a timely manner, and updates from HUD and its federal partners;
- Working together with the communities in which we serve to ensure that HMIS is tailored to fit their local needs, while remaining in alignment with national objectives;
- Supporting coordinated entry and all other efforts working to end homelessness across the State of Alaska; and
- Working with communities and CoC leadership to analyze their data and use reports to make data-informed decisions.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication as we work to end homelessness in Alaska.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alissa Parrish".

Alissa Parrish  
Alaska Project Manager

# HOMELESSNESS IN ALASKA



*Photo Credit:* A youth's bedroom at the newly expanded Dena'ina House on 5th Avenue, where residents ages 18-21 are mentored through Covenant House Alaska's "Rights of Passage" program. Here at-risk youth learn how to hold down a job, pay the rent, gain life skills and finish their educations. The expansion of Dena'ina House was made possible through a partnership between Covenant House Alaska and Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

## State Estimates

7,187 clients experiencing homelessness received services and shelter from agencies entering data in HMIS in Alaska in 2016.

5,071 clients (71%) used emergency shelter or motel vouchers. 16% of clients received longer-term temporary services and housing in transitional housing projects. 7% of clients entered rapid re-housing projects, which aim to return individuals and families experiencing literal homelessness to permanent housing as quickly as possible. 4% of clients entered permanent supportive housing or other permanent housing projects during 2016. 7% received services through homeless outreach, and 8% received services at service-only projects.

## Regional Distribution

Nationally, the distribution of persons experiencing homelessness is overwhelmingly urban. Urban areas have the highest rates of homelessness followed by “mostly urban” areas, while the rates of homelessness within rural communities varies widely. Many people in rural areas facing extreme poverty will live “doubled up” with family or friends, or they may live in substandard housing. In other cases, they may leave rural areas for the promise of increased employment opportunities and social services in larger communities.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest number of persons experiencing homelessness in Alaska are in and around population centers.

In 2016, 63% of homeless clients were served in Anchorage.

While a large portion of Alaska’s population (about 40%) live in Anchorage, the borough also has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the state. Nome Census Area has the highest rate of homelessness at 2%, followed by Kodiak Island Borough, Juneau City and County Borough, and the Anchorage Municipality at 1.6-1.5%.

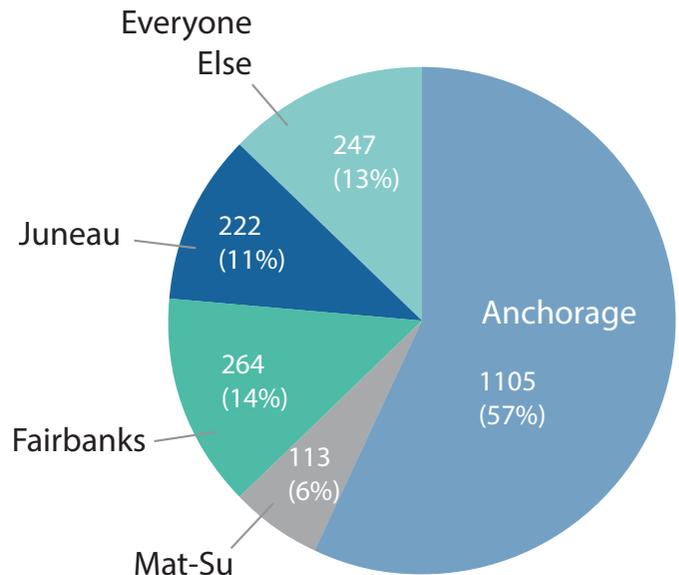
# Point-in-Time Count and Project Homeless Connect

On the night of January 26, 2016, volunteers in Alaska surveyed 1,940 persons experiencing homelessness. 442 (23%) were unsheltered, sleeping in places not meant for human habitation.

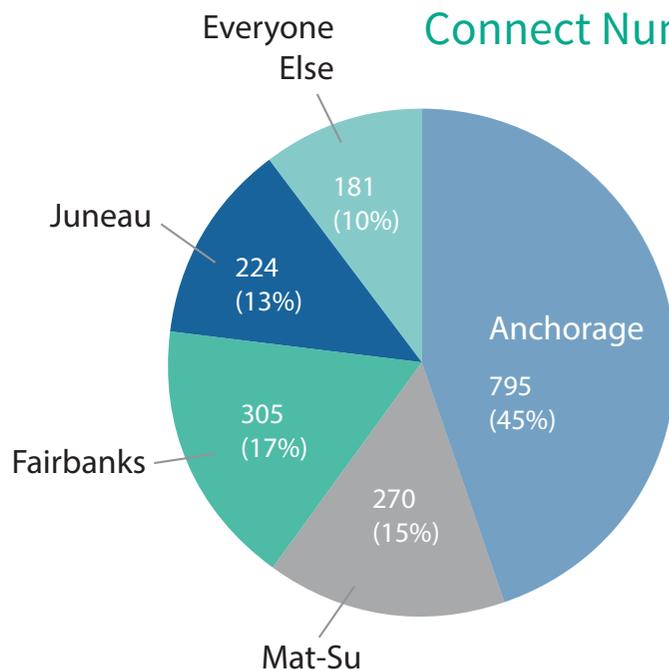
The day after the PIT count, on January 27, 2016, volunteers around Alaska conducted Project Homeless Connect (PHC) to provide housing, services, and hospitality in a convenient one-stop model directly to people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, or struggling with poverty. PHC is a way to bring service providers, government agencies, and the general community together to address a problem that affects everyone. Statewide, the event touched 1775 people.

The PHC numbers are informative in a stand-alone capacity, but they are additionally used to capture as much data as possible about people who may have slept in a place not meant for habitation. There were 263 people identified as unsheltered the night before PHC.

January 2016  
PIT Count



January 2016  
Project Homeless  
Connect Numbers



# POPULATION IN DEPTH



*Photo Credit:* Salvation Army's McKinnell House, an emergency shelter for families with children

## Single Adults Experiencing Homelessness

68% of clients served by HMIS projects in 2016 were single adults.

Almost 7 out of 10 single adults experiencing homelessness were men. 38% of single adults experiencing homelessness in Alaska had a disabling condition of long duration. More than 10% of clients are missing disability information in the database. (This includes clients who did not know if they had a disabling condition, who refused to answer the question, or for whom the answer was not recorded.)

## Families and Children Experiencing Homelessness

27% of persons experiencing homelessness in Alaska who sought services did so as members of a family or household.

93% of these households contained at least one adult and one child. 7% of households were adults only, though they may include adult children. 2/3 of families are households with one adult and at least one child, likely single parent households.

## Racial Disparities

While about 1 in 197 white Alaskans experienced homelessness in 2016, the rate is 1 in 46 for Alaska Natives and American Indians.

Alaska residents who are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders are about 5.5 times more likely to experience homelessness.\* Alaska Natives are 4.3 times more likely to experience homelessness, and Black Alaskans are 4.2 times more likely to experience homelessness. Alaska residents who are multi-racial are 3 times more likely to experience homelessness, and Latino/a residents are almost twice as likely to experience homelessness.

\*Compared to white, non-Latino Alaska residents

# Youth and Unaccompanied Children Experiencing Homelessness

Youth ages 18-24 represented 14% of persons served by HMIS homeless service providers in Alaska in 2016.

The majority of youth (85%) were served as singles, not as members of a family.

3 out of 4 children who experienced homelessness were members of a family unit.

In 2016, there were 286 unaccompanied children who received homeless services, about 4% of the total homeless population. 97% of unaccompanied children are teens (age 13-17). Children experiencing homelessness as members of a family unit are generally younger - 80% are under 13.

Beginning April 15, 2015, all Runaway and Homeless Youth Program grantees are required to use HMIS. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHY) supports street outreach, emergency shelters, and longer-term transitional living and maternity group home programs.<sup>2</sup> The addition of these projects to HMIS allows us to gain a better sense of homelessness among unaccompanied teens and children in Alaska.



*Photo Credit:*

(top) Covenant House Alaska's art room, where youth experiencing homelessness can express themselves through art and engage in healthy activities. At-risk youth are offered a myriad of services at Covenant House Alaska's "Youth Engagement Center" on A Street, like trauma and substance abuse counseling; education and job training services; and music, art and physical fitness programs.

(bottom) Salvation Army's McKinnell House, an emergency shelter for families with children

# Veterans Experiencing Homelessness and Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

11% of adults experiencing homelessness were veterans.

In December 2015, HUD released the final rule on the definition of chronic homelessness. According to HUD, an individual is experiencing chronic homelessness if they:

- Reside in a place not meant for habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter
- Have experienced homelessness and resided in such a place for at least 1 year or at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years. (The 4 episodes of homelessness must sum to 12 months.)
- Have a diagnosable disability (substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, PTSD, cognitive impairments, or chronic physical illness or disability.)

Families are defined as experiencing chronic homelessness if the head of household meets the definition of chronic homelessness. Because the method of recording chronic status has changed recently, we do not recommend comparing this rate of chronic homelessness to rates in previous years.

An estimated 6% of clients served by HMIS providers in 2016 were experiencing chronic homelessness.



*Photo Credit:*  
Landscaping outside of Karluk Manor, a Housing First facility in Anchorage, Alaska. It includes 46 furnished efficiency units.



*Photo Credit: The community comes together at the 2016 Candlelight Vigil in Anchorage to support and raise awareness of Covenant House Alaska's mission to end youth homelessness and serve suffering children of the street. Photo by André Horton.*

## REFERENCES

1. Family and Youth Services Bureau. Runaway & Homeless Youth. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Web. 18 May 2016.
2. National Alliance to End Homelessness. "How do we compare urban and rural homelessness?" Frequently Asked Questions. National Alliance to End Homelessness. Web. 7 Aug. 2014.

## ABOUT ICA

*The State of Homelessness in Alaska* was compiled by the Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) reporting tool.

ICA is a non-profit organization headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa that provides HMIS training and support for homeless service agencies around the country. The Alaska office is located in Anchorage. The Institute for Community Alliances engages in research and produces reports on homelessness and related issues. In cooperation with state and federal agencies, private research firms, and university researchers, ICA works to inform regional and national efforts to end homelessness.

We welcome your questions, feedback, and input. Please direct correspondence to:

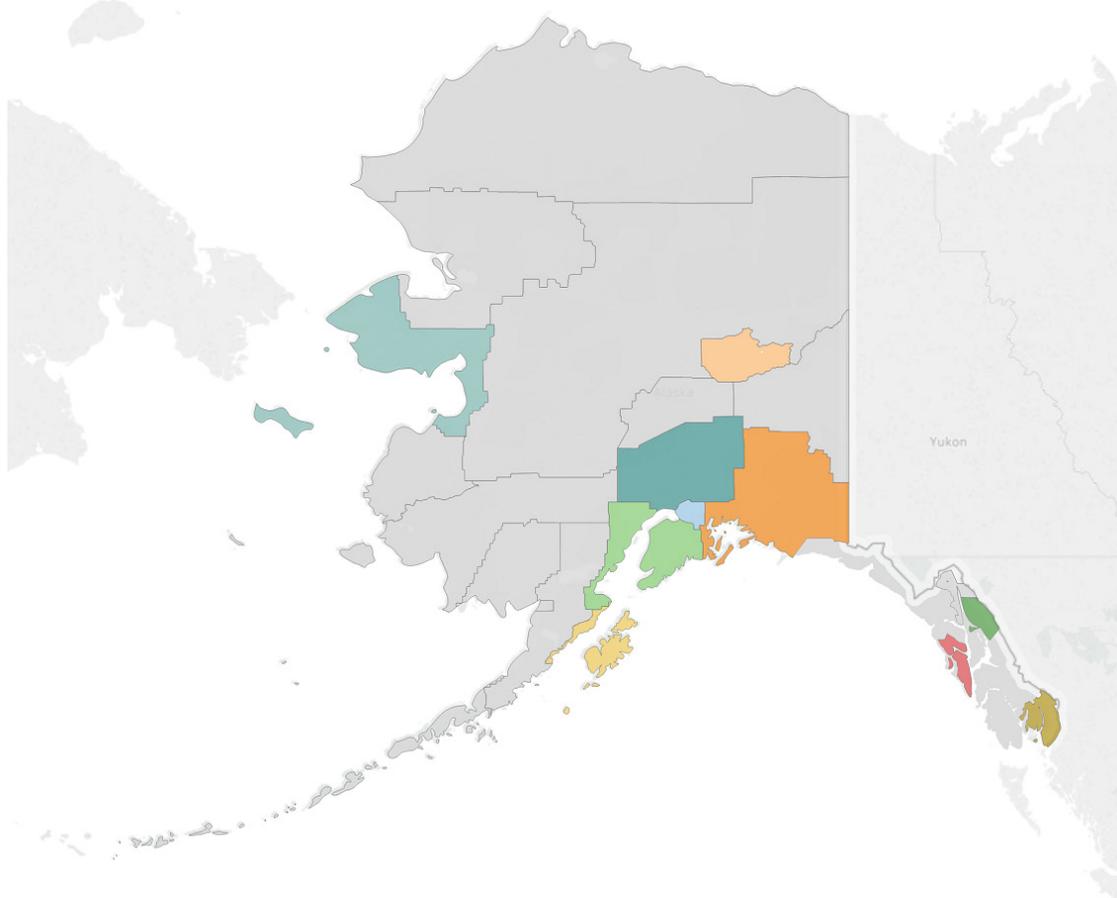
Alissa Parrish  
Alaska Project Manager  
[alissa.parrish@icalliances.org](mailto:alissa.parrish@icalliances.org)

Zach Burgess  
System Administrator  
[zach.burgess@icalliances.org](mailto:zach.burgess@icalliances.org)

Kim Seitz  
System Administrator  
[kim.seitz@icalliances.org](mailto:kim.seitz@icalliances.org)



# Continuum of Care Map



- No AKHMIS entering agencies in 2016
- Anchorage
- Cordova
- Fairbanks
- Juneau
- Kenai
- Ketchikan
- Kodiak
- Mat-Su Valley
- Nome
- Sitka



## Everyone Deserves a Home

Institute for Community Alliances - Alaska Office

3201 C Street, Suite 110

Anchorage, AK 99503

(907)249-6647

[akhmis@icalliances.org](mailto:akhmis@icalliances.org)

[www.icalliances.org/alaska](http://www.icalliances.org/alaska)



*Photo credit:* Cornerstone, a youth shelter in Juneau, Alaska. Staff drove a number of younger runaway/homeless residents to Lena Beach, about eight miles from the shelter. For something more entertaining than sitting inside on a rainy day, the youth had a chance to explore the tide pools. Some of the kids had never really spent time along the shoreline. The tide had been very low that day, hence the starfish and barnacles. The day was well spent, talking about sailboats and ocean dwellers.