4 Homeless Veterans in the United States

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KEY TERM

VETERAN refers to any person who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. This also includes military reserves and National Guard who were called up to active duty.

HIGHLIGHTS

On a single night in January 2012, 62,619 veterans were homeless in the United States, representing 13.3 percent of all homeless adults.

Between 2011 and 2012, 4,876 fewer veterans were homeless, a 7 percent decline. This decline was entirely driven by the 4,890 fewer veterans in shelter, with the number of unsheltered veterans remaining essentially unchanged.

Compared to 2009, 12,990 fewer veterans (a 17.2% drop) were homeless in the United States in 2012. Nearly two-thirds of the decline is attributable to fewer veterans in shelter, and the remaining third to a decline in unsheltered veterans.
An estimated 62,619 veterans were homeless in the United States in January 2012, a 7% decline from last year.

On a Single Night in January 2012

- 62,619 veterans were homeless in the United States, representing about 13.3 percent of homeless adults.
- 56.1 percent of homeless veterans were sheltered (35,143 veterans), and 43.9 percent were in unsheltered locations (27,476 veterans).

Between January 2011 and January 2012

- The number of homeless veterans declined by 7.2 percent (4,876 fewer veterans). The decline was driven by a 12.2 percent decrease (4,890 fewer veterans) in the number of sheltered homeless veterans, with the number of unsheltered homeless veterans remaining almost the same.

Between January 2009 and January 2012

- The total number of homeless veterans declined by 12,990 people (a 17.2% drop). Nearly two-thirds of the decline (63.3%) is attributable to the decrease in the number of sheltered veterans and approximately one-third to the decrease in unsheltered veterans (36.7%).

Data Source: PIT 2009–2012
Includes Puerto Rico and U.S. territories
By State

On a Single Night in January 2012
- Four states accounted for half of the nation’s homeless veterans: CA (26.3% or 16,461 veterans), FL (8.5% or 5,331 veterans), NY (7.9% or 4,961 veterans), and Texas (7.0% or 4,364 veterans).

Between January 2011 and January 2012
- The number of homeless veterans decreased in 32 states (totaling 6,157 fewer veterans).
- California had the largest decline in the number of homeless veterans (2,172 fewer veterans).
- 18 states and D.C. had increases in veteran homelessness (totaling 1,281 more veterans) with Tennessee (320 more veterans) and North Carolina (165 more veterans) having the largest increases.

Between January 2009 and January 2012
- 37 states and D.C. had declines in its number of homeless veterans (totaling 14,554 fewer veterans).
- Five states had at least 1,000 fewer homeless veterans than in 2009 (in # of fewer veterans): CA (3,071), FL (1,804), NV (1,200), TX (1,127), and LA (1,086).
- Of the 13 states with increases in veteran homelessness since 2009, North Carolina (295 more veterans) and Missouri (200 more veterans) had the largest increases.

Data Source: PIT 2009–2012
Maps include Puerto Rico and U.S. territories; tables do not
By State and Sheltered Status

On a Single Night in January 2012
- Almost two-thirds of all unsheltered veterans in the United States were in California (43.5% or 11,949 veterans), Florida (11.4% or 3,130 veterans), and Texas (9.0% or 2,480 veterans).
- 11 states have 90 percent or more of its homeless veterans in shelter (in # of veterans): PA (1,321), MA (1,126), WI (525), UT (297), IA (205), ND (144), NH (116), ME (116), SD (114), RI (96), and DE (64).
- The majority of homeless veterans were unsheltered in nine states (in # of veterans): CA (11,949), FL (2,201), TX (2,480), GA (1,203), OR (798), NV (728), HI (277), MI (173), and MT (147).

Between January 2011 and January 2012
- Tennessee had large increases in both sheltered (241 more veterans) and unsheltered veterans (785 more veterans).
- The number of sheltered veterans decreased in 34 states and D.C. (totaling 5,813 fewer veterans), and increased in only 16 states (totaling 944 more veterans).
- The number of unsheltered veterans dropped in 24 states (totaling 770 fewer veterans) and increased in 21 states (totaling 785 more veterans).

Between January 2009 and January 2012
- Three states had the largest decreases in both sheltered and unsheltered veterans: FL (706 sheltered and 1,098 unsheltered veterans), CA (2,287 sheltered and 784 unsheltered veterans), and NV (638 sheltered and 562 unsheltered veterans).
- The number of sheltered veterans decreased in 37 states and D.C., totaling 9,216 fewer veterans, while only 13 states had a net increase of 940 veterans.
- Unsheltered homelessness among veterans decreased in 30 states (totaling 5,922 fewer veterans) and increased in 19 states and D.C. (totaling 1,183 more veterans).

EXHIBIT 4.5: Sheltered Homeless veterans by State
Largest Change in PIT Estimates, 2009–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th># Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>State</th>
<th># Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 to 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2009 to 2012</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>California</td>
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<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>-876</td>
<td>-16.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>-481</td>
<td>-20.3</td>
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<td>Missouri</td>
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<td>13.9</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
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<td>-30.4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2009 to 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2011 to 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>California</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
<td>-638</td>
<td>-48.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

EXHIBIT 4.6: Unsheltered Homeless veterans by State
Largest Change in PIT Estimates, 2009–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th># Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>State</th>
<th># Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>2009 to 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
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<td>90.1</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
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<td>-45.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>-58</td>
<td>-11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>Texas</td>
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<td>-1.8</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>-17.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009 to 2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2011 to 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>-1,098</td>
<td>-26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
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<td>47.2</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
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<td>125.6</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
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<td>Arizona</td>
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<td>-58.2</td>
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<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>-562</td>
<td>-43.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: PIT 2009–2012
Excludes Puerto Rico and U.S. territories
PROFILE

The typical sheltered homeless veteran in the United States in 2012 was:

- a man living alone in a one-person household
- 51 to 61 years old
- white and not Hispanic
- disabled
- located in a city
- already homeless before entering shelter
- in an emergency shelter for 19 nights

HIGHLIGHTS

137,995 veterans were in shelter in the United States at some time between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012. The number of veterans in shelter has declined each year since 2009, totaling 11,640 fewer veterans (a 7.8% drop).

While veterans make up only 9 percent of the U.S. adult population in 2012, veterans make up 12 percent of the homeless adult population.

While only 20 percent of the total U.S. Veteran population were minorities (i.e., Hispanic, African American, and other non-white race), nearly half of sheltered veterans in the U.S. were in a minority group.

In 2012, the share of disabled veterans in shelter was 1.9 times higher than in the total U.S. Veteran population. Since 2011, however, the proportion of disabled sheltered veterans declined by 5.4 percent (3,892 fewer veterans).

Since 2009, the number of elderly veterans (age 62 and older) in shelter increased 16.8 percent (2,190 more veterans), exceeding the rate of increase among all U.S. Veterans (a 6.8% rise).

The geographic location of sheltered veterans mirrors that of all sheltered homeless people, with the vast majority located in cities (70.8%) rather than suburban and rural areas (29.2%).

Nearly half of all sheltered veterans (48.3%) were already homeless prior to entering shelter in 2012, with many of them cycling through the shelter system (58.5%) and others coming off the street (41.5%).
One-Year Estimates
OF SHELTERED VETERANS

HMIS

Since 2009, HUD has estimated the annual number of homeless veterans in shelter. The one-year estimates account for all veterans who used an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, including programs that specifically target veterans, at any time from October 1 through September 30 of the reporting year. The estimates are based on a nationally representative sample of communities that submit aggregate HMIS data to HUD. The estimates are statistically adjusted to include veterans in shelter programs that do not yet participate in its local HMIS—thus providing a complete enumeration of sheltered veterans in each community—and are weighted to represent the entire country. The one-year estimates do not include: (a) sheltered veterans in Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories; (b) veterans served by victim service providers; and (c) veterans in unsheltered locations who never accessed a shelter program for homeless people during the 12-month period. We estimate that the number of homeless veterans using shelter during this period was between 115,288 and 160,702 (± 22,707).

Veterans can experience homelessness as individuals and as part of a family. Homeless veteran individuals are those that are homeless without at least one child, while homeless veterans in families are those in households including at least one child.

2012 Estimate of Sheltered Veterans
- An estimated 137,995 veterans used an emergency shelter or transitional housing program at any time from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012.
- 1 in 156 veterans in the U.S. was homeless in shelter at some point during this time. While veterans make up only 9 percent of the U.S. adult population, veterans make up 12 percent of the homeless adult population.

Changes Over Time
- Between 2011 and 2012, the number of veterans in shelter decreased 2.4 percent (3,454 fewer veterans).
- Since 2009, the number of sheltered veterans in the United States has declined steadily every year, resulting in 11,640 fewer veterans overall (a 7.8% decline).

EXHIBIT 4.7: One-year Estimates of Sheltered Veterans, 2009–2012

Data Source: HMIS 2009-2012; ACS 2011
Gender and Age

In 2012
- More than 9 in 10 (92.2%) sheltered veterans were men. This is about the same as the share of men among all U.S. Veterans (92.7%), but higher than the share among U.S. Veterans in poverty (89.3%).
- The largest group of sheltered veterans was ages 51 to 61 (43.4%), with 37.1 percent ages 31 to 50, and 8.5 percent ages 18 to 30.
- Elderly veterans were underrepresented in shelter compared to the total U.S. Veteran population. All U.S. Veterans were 4.8 times more likely to be age 62 and older than veterans in shelter (53.2% versus 11.1%).

Changes Over Time
- Between 2011 and 2012, the number of sheltered female veterans declined 22.4 percent (3,095 fewer women). The number declined 3.7 percent (417 fewer women) since 2009.
- Since 2009, the number of sheltered veterans age 62 and older increased 16.8 percent (2,190 more veterans), exceeding the relative increase among all U.S. Veterans (a 6.8% rise).
- Between 2009 and 2012, the number of veterans ages 31 to 51 declined 9.4 percent in the total U.S. Veteran population, while it decreased by 23.4 percent (15,587 fewer veterans) among those in shelter.

Ethnicity and Race

In 2012
- Hispanic veterans were slightly overrepresented in the sheltered population compared to the broader U.S. Veteran population (7% versus 5.6%).
- Nearly half (48%) of sheltered veterans in the U.S. were minorities (i.e., Hispanics, African Americans, and other non-white races). Veterans in shelter were 2.4 times more likely to be of a minority group than those in the total U.S. Veteran population (48% versus 19.7%). Sheltered veterans were 3.2 times more likely to be African American than were all U.S. Veterans (35.5% versus 11%).
- Although whites made up the majority of the sheltered veteran population, they were still at lower risk of being homeless in shelter than any minority. All veterans in the U.S. were 1.5 times more likely to be white (non-Hispanic) than those in shelter (80.3% versus 52%).

Changes Over Time
- While the number of all U.S. Hispanic veterans increased 3.3 percent between 2009 and 2012, sheltered Hispanic veterans decreased 40.4 percent (6,489 fewer veterans).
- Between 2009 and 2012, the number of sheltered veterans in minority groups declined 12.5 percent (9,362 fewer veterans), while the number in the total U.S. Veteran population increased by only 1.4 percent.
- The number of African American veterans in shelter declined 4.1 percent (2,092 fewer veterans) since 2009, while the number among all U.S. Veterans increased by only 0.8 percent.

Household Size and Disability Status

In 2012

- More sheltered veterans were homeless as individuals (135,119 veterans) than in families (4,344 veterans).
- The proportion of disabled veterans in shelter is 1.9 times higher than among the total U.S. Veteran population (51.3% versus 26.9%).

Changes Over Time

- Between 2011 and 2012, the proportion of sheltered veterans with a disability declined 5.4 percent (3,892 fewer veterans), while the proportion of all U.S. Veterans with a disability increased 1 percent.
- The share of veterans as individuals and as family members has remained stable since 2009, with between 97 and 98 percent of all veterans in shelter homeless as individuals and between 3 and 3.5 percent homeless in families.

EXHIBIT 4.12: Sheltered Veterans Estimates
By Household Type, 2009–2012

Note: The number of sheltered veterans served as individuals and in families may not sum to the unduplicated total number of sheltered veterans because some veterans were served as both individuals and in families at different points during the reporting period.

EXHIBIT 4.13: Disability Status
Sheltered Veterans and Total U.S. Veterans, 2009–2012

Geographic Location

In 2012
- About 7 in 10 (70.8%) sheltered veterans were located in principal cities, with the remaining 29.2 percent in suburban and rural areas.
- The geographic location of all U.S. Veterans and those in poverty is almost exactly opposite that of the sheltered veteran population. About 8 in 10 veterans (81.9%) in the U.S. lived in suburban and rural areas, with the remaining 18.1 percent in cities. Almost three-quarters (74.2%) of veterans in poverty lived in suburban and rural areas, with the remaining 25.8 percent in cities.

Changes Over Time
- Between 2011 and 2012, the number of sheltered veterans increased 1.1 percent (427 more people) in suburban and rural areas, and declined 3.7 percent (3,784 fewer people) in cities. Since 2009, sheltered veterans declined in cities by 6,844 veterans (a 6.5% drop) and in suburban and rural areas by 4,794 veterans (a 10.6% drop).
- Sheltered veterans have consistently been concentrated in cities since 2009, while veterans in poverty and in the total U.S. population have consistently been concentrated in suburban and urban areas.
- Between 2009 and 2012, the number of poor veterans increased 10.4 percent in suburban and rural areas, exceeding the 3.4 percent increase in cities. Veterans in the U.S. overall declined 7 percent in cities, exceeding the 4.3 percent decline in suburban and rural areas.

Characteristics by Geography

In 2012

- A larger share of veterans in shelter located in suburban and rural areas were women than in cities (8.5% versus 7.5%).
- A larger proportion of veterans in shelter located in cities were Hispanic than were those in suburban and rural areas (7.9% versus 4.7%).
- A larger percentage of sheltered veterans in cities were minorities (i.e. Hispanics, African Americans, and other non-white races) than those in suburban and rural areas. Sheltered veterans in cities were 1.4 times more likely to be in minority groups than those in suburban and rural areas (51.9% versus 38.4%), and were 1.3 times more likely to be African American (38.1% versus 29%).
- Sheltered veterans located in cities were just as likely to have a disability as those located in suburban and rural areas (11% and 11.1%).

Changes Over Time

- Between 2011 and 2012, the proportion of disabled sheltered veterans decreased 5 percent (2,537 fewer veterans) in cities and 6 percent (1,292 fewer veterans) in suburban and rural areas.
- Despite their continued concentration in cities, sheltered veterans who are minorities were increasingly located in suburban and rural areas. The number of sheltered veterans who are minorities and were located in suburban and rural areas increased 8 percent (1,133 more veterans) between 2011 and 2012, while the number in cities declined 7.5 percent (4,057 fewer veterans).

EXHIBIT 4.16: Characteristics by Geography
Sheltered Veterans, 2012 (in %)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Principal Cities</th>
<th>Suburban &amp; Rural Areas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Gender of Adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>91.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>95.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>Black or African American</td>
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<td>Other One Race</td>
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<td>62 and Older</td>
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<td>Disability Status of Adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Disabled</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: HMIS 2009–2012
Living Situation Before Entering Shelter

In 2012

- 48.3 percent of veterans in shelter were already homeless. Of these, 58.5 percent (37,820 veterans) stayed in a shelter program, and 41.5 percent (26,807 veterans) were in unsheltered locations.

- Excluding those who were already homeless prior to the start of the reporting period can offer a sense of flow into the shelter system. Of veterans not already homeless, 58.9 percent (40,742 veterans) came from housing. Of those, 34.9 percent (14,199 veterans) stayed with family, 33.6 percent (13,669 veterans) with friends, 27.8 percent (11,330 veterans) in rental housing, 2.8 percent (1,136 veterans) in owned housing, and 1 percent (408 veterans) in permanent supportive housing prior to entering shelter.

- Excluding those already homeless, 24.8 percent of veterans in shelter entered from institutional settings (17,145 veterans). Of those, 33.7 percent (5,781 veterans) came from a substance abuse treatment or detox center, 25.8 percent (4,418 veterans) from a correctional facility, 24.6 percent (4,213 veterans) from a hospital, and 15.9 percent (2,733 veterans) from a psychiatric facility.

Changes Over Time

- The number of veterans who entered shelter from another homeless situation increased 6.8 percent (4,212 veterans) between 2011 and 2012. Most of this increase is from the additional 2,413 veterans that came from another sheltered situation.

- Veterans who entered shelter from institutional settings declined 10.9 percent (2,143 fewer veterans) since 2011. Of those, the number of veterans entering shelter from hospitals declined 22.4 percent (1,252 fewer veterans) and 15.7 percent from correctional facilities (850 fewer veterans).

- The number of veterans entering shelter from another situation, such as a hotel, increased 16.2 percent (1,641 more veterans between 2011 and 2012.

Data Source: HMIS 2009–2012
Length of Stay and Other Bed-Use Patterns

Emergency shelter and transitional housing programs are designed differently. Emergency shelters are high-volume, high-turnover programs; its primary purpose is to provide temporary shelter for homeless people. In contrast, transitional housing programs offer homeless people shelter as well as supportive services for up to 24 months and intend for people to stay longer than they do in emergency shelters.

In 2012
- During the 12-month reporting year, more than one-third of veterans in emergency shelter stayed one week or less (36.5%), 63.2 percent stayed one month or less, and 5.3 percent stayed more than six months.
- Within the reporting year, 63.6 percent of veterans in transitional housing programs stayed between one and six months, 19 percent stayed one month or less, and 30.7 percent stayed more than six months.
- The average length of stay for veterans in emergency shelter was 45 nights.
- The average length of stay for veterans during the 12-month reporting period within transitional housing programs was 138 nights (about 5 months).
- Most veterans in shelter used only an emergency shelter at some point during the reporting year (64.8%). Fewer people used a transitional housing program only (29.5%) or accessed both types of housing during the year (5.6%).

Changes Over Time
- Between 2009 and 2012, the length of stay decreased in both emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. For example, the median number of nights in emergency shelter decreased from 21 to 19, and in transitional housing programs from 120 to 105 nights.

EXHIBIT 4.19: Length of Stay
Veterans in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Programs, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Stay</th>
<th>Emergency Shelter</th>
<th>Transitional Housing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 days or less</td>
<td>35,426 36.5%</td>
<td>2,744 5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 to 30 days</td>
<td>25,912 26.7%</td>
<td>6,470 13.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 to 180 days</td>
<td>30,632 31.6%</td>
<td>24,397 50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 360 days</td>
<td>3,964 4.1%</td>
<td>10,587 21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>361 to 366 days</td>
<td>1,173 1.2%</td>
<td>4,291 8.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Length of stay accounts for multiple program entries/exit by summing the total number of (cumulative) days in a homeless residential program during the 12-month reporting period. The maximum length of stay is 366 days, corresponding to the total days observed for this reporting period.

EXHIBIT 4.20: Bed-Use Patterns
Veterans in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Programs, 2009–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bed Use Patterns</th>
<th>Emergency Shelter</th>
<th>Transitional Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median number of nights</td>
<td>21 21 19</td>
<td>120 105 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of nights</td>
<td>47 50 45</td>
<td>149 138 138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The maximum length of stay is 366 days, corresponding to the total days observed for this reporting period.

Data Source: HMIS, HIC 2009–2012