



Our Invisible Families: Library Services with Families Experiencing Homelessness

IFLA World Library and Information Congress

82nd IFLA General Conference and Assembly

13–19 August 2016, Columbus, Ohio, United States of America

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The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act) defines "homeless" as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"--

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes--

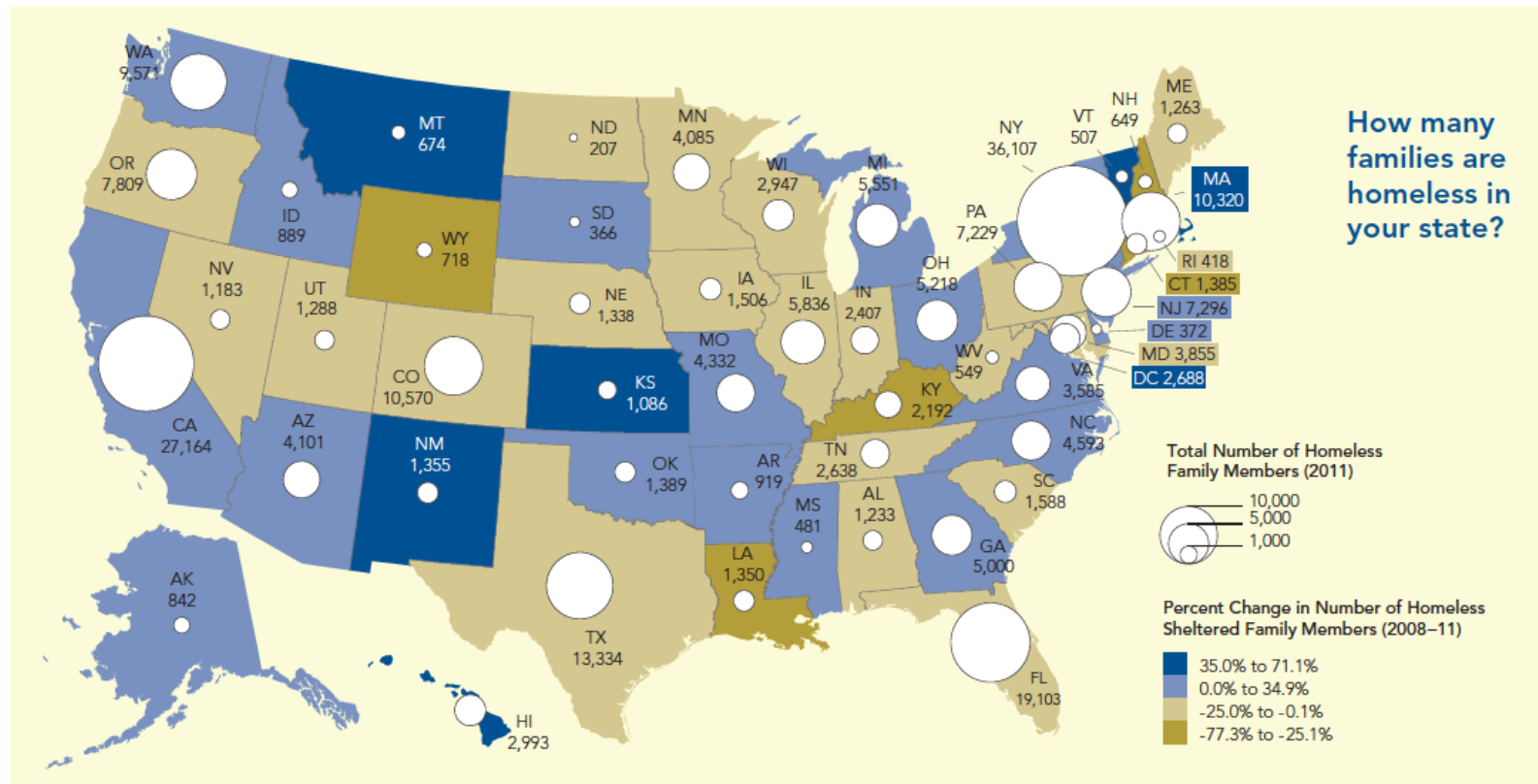
(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

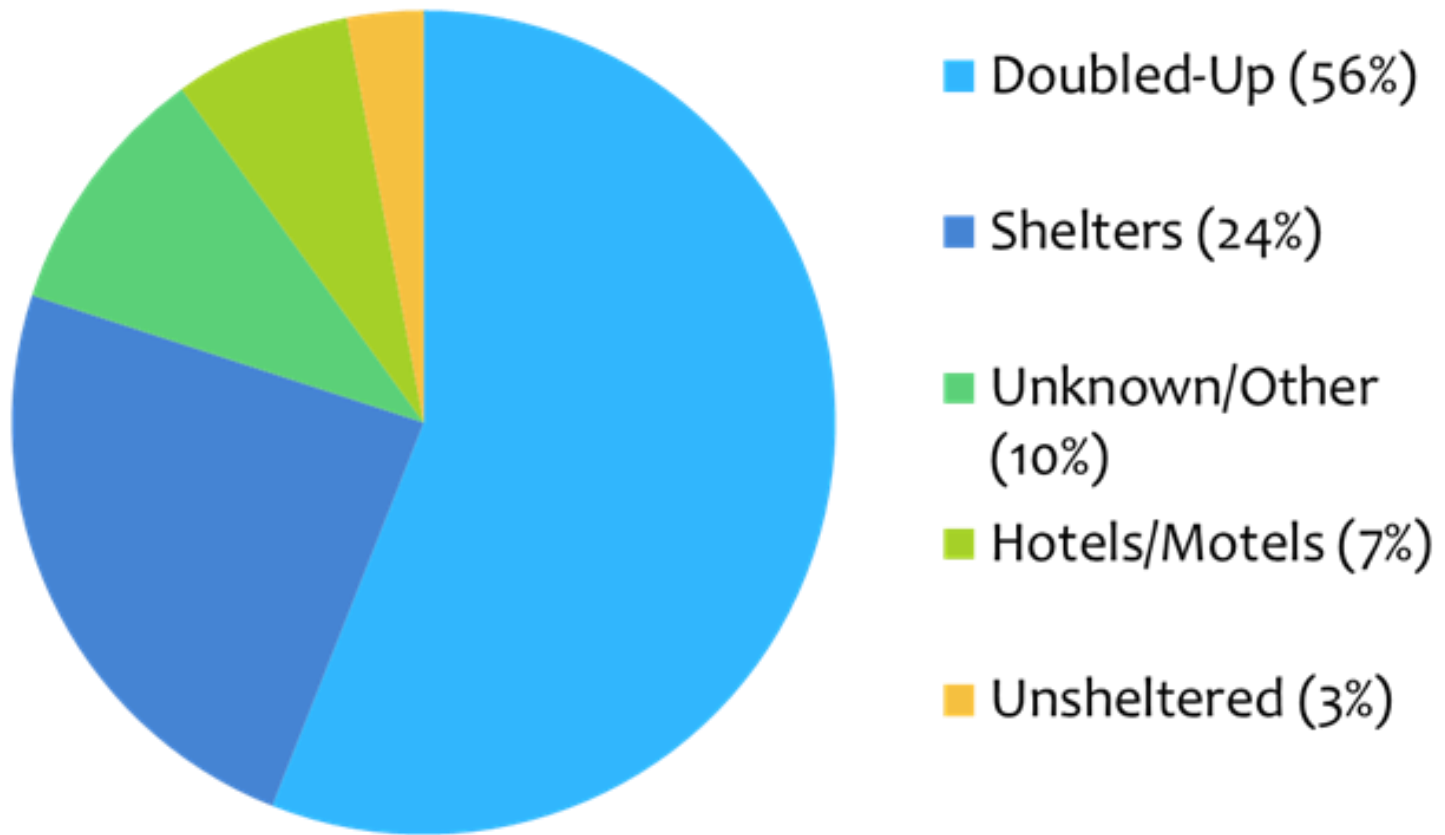
(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Family Homelessness (2011)



Source: www.icphusa.org



Where Homeless Children Call Home

Family Homelessness in the US

- Almost 2.5 million children experienced homelessness in 2013.*
- On any given day, more than 200,000 children have no place to live.
- 84% of families experiencing homelessness are female-headed.
- 42% of children in homeless families are under age six.

Source: The National Center on Family Homelessness <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/facts.php?p=tm>

* American Institutes for Research <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Americas-Youngest-Outcasts-Child-Homelessness-Nov2014.pdf>

Educational Considerations

- 53% of all homeless mothers do not have a high school diploma.
- Compared to their housed peers, children experiencing homelessness:
 - are 4 times more likely to show delayed development.
 - are 2 times more likely to be diagnosed with learning disabilities.
 - have 3 times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems.
- Only 21.5% of homeless elementary students are proficient in math and only 24.4% in reading.
- Only 11.4% of homeless high school students are proficient in math and only 14.6% in reading.

Source: The National Center on Family Homelessness <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/media/306.pdf>

Homelessness in NYC



**Shelter census for 7/28/16 = 58,347 people
(22,953 children, 35,394 adults)**

The “New” Homeless



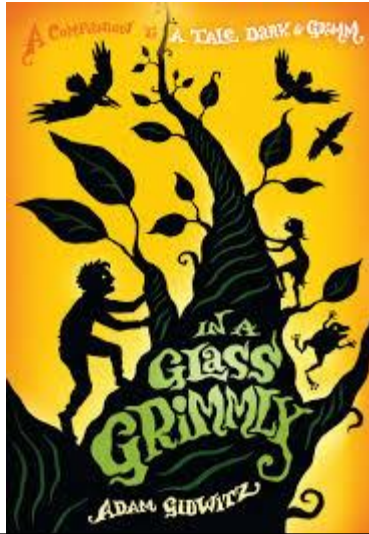
Source: February 2012 article in *The New York Times* about family homelessness in NYC:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/05/nyregion/ordinary-families-cloaked-in-a-veil-of-homelessness.html?pagewanted=all>

Outreach to Family Shelters

- Through partnership with NYC Department of Education Students in Temporary Housing Office.
- Directly with recreation/education coordinators.
- **LIBRARY CARDS!** for **EVERYONE**: kids, parents, staff.
- Special Events.
- Parent Workshops/Programs.
- **RELATIONSHIPS!**



Programming



Adam Gidwitz
@AdamGidwitz

TWEETS 1,136 FOLLOWING 282 FOLLOWERS 1,791 FAVORITES 1,096

Adam Gidwitz @AdamGidwitz · 27 Nov 2012
Best lines from Queens Family Shelter: 3) "You talk like a movie star. That guy... Adam Sandler!" (I think this was meant as a compliment.)

Adam Gidwitz @AdamGidwitz · 27 Nov 2012
Best lines from Queens Family Shelter: 2) When I'm reading I feel like myself leaves my body and goes into the book.

Adam Gidwitz @AdamGidwitz · 27 Nov 2012
Best lines from Queens Family Shelter: 1) Why did Cinderella's sisters lose their eyes? "Because they never saw real beauty—inside beauty."

Adam Gidwitz @AdamGidwitz · 27 Nov 2012
Event tonight: Queens family shelter. Awesome kids. Writer friends, if you haven't done a book group at a shelter, ask your local librarian.



Policy Considerations

- Reconsider policies around behaviors that are only enforced against people who are (or are perceived to be) homeless
- Reconsider policies on ID requirements that may act as a barrier to library use by certain populations, i.e. people in temporary housing, people who are transgender.
- Reconsider requiring a library card (or a for-fee pass) to use the library's wireless connection
- Reconsider policies that prohibit food and drink
- Consider amnesty days or other fees/fines forgiveness programs or have procedures for waiving fees in special circumstances

Resources

The National Center on Family Homelessness

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/index.php>

Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness

<http://www.icphusa.org/>

National Alliance to End Homelessness

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

Homelessness Resource Center

<http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Default.aspx>

National Association for the Education of Homeless
Children and Youth

<http://www.naehcy.org/>

Horizons for Homeless Children

<http://www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org>

60 Minutes “Hard Times Generation” (2011)

<http://www.cbsnews.com/search/hard-times-generation/>

Contact Information

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