

Information about Homelessness and Services in Amherst and the Region

How many people are homeless in Amherst?

Every year during one week in January, Eliot CHS Homeless Services leads a team which conducts a “Point-in-Time” count of persons who are homeless in Amherst. The same count is conducted in communities throughout the US at the direction of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2015, the year of most recent available data, there were 39 adults counted, 29 were in Craig’s Place, 3 were in Jessie’s House, and 7 were unsheltered. A much larger number of individuals and families are served throughout the year.

Amherst-based Service Organizations

Craig’s Doors operates the seasonal shelter in Amherst, Craig’s Place, located at the First Baptist Church. [<http://www.craigdoors.org>] The shelter has a regular capacity of 22 beds, but can expand to 34 on very cold nights with the permission of the Town Manager. During the past year (November, 2015 through April, 2016) 189 individual guests were served. 76% were male and the average age was 40.5. More detailed data is available in the linked table below, provided by Andrea Miller, data analyst for the CoC.

[<https://public.tableau.com/s/profile/waypoints#!/vizhome/SeasonalShelterReport2015-2016/WinterShelterReport>]

Jessie’s House, a family shelter located in Amherst. [<http://chd.org/adult-services/homelessness-services/jessies-house/>]

Amherst Community Connections (ACC) provides case management, information/ referral, and advocacy services to people who are low-income, homeless, disabled, incarcerated, or struggling with substance abuse and addiction problems to create positive and lasting changes to their lives. [<http://www.amherstcommunityconnections.net>]

Amherst Survival Center (ASC) provides a welcoming community where families and individuals who are struggling to make ends meet can come for food, clothing, health care and for companionship and relief from isolation. [<https://amherstsurvival.org>]

Not Bread Alone is at the First Congregational Church. Lunch is served at noon on Saturdays and Sundays and at 4pm on Wednesdays to anyone who wishes to come. Groceries are given out at 12:30pm on Saturdays. Not Bread Alone is a program of the Center for Human Development. [http://www.firstchurchamherst.org/not_bread_alone.html]

Free Community Breakfast on Wednesday mornings is located at the Unitarian Meetinghouse and sponsored by Craig’s Doors. [<http://www.craigdoors.org/community-breakfast/>]

Family Outreach of Amherst (FOA) is the safety net for low-income families in Amherst and the surrounding communities. It intends to address all the issues struggling families face: mental health, domestic violence, addiction, housing, and life skills. It is a program of the Center for Human Development. [<http://chd.org/child-adolescent-and-family-services/educational-developmental-support-services/family-outreach-amherst/>]

Amherst Housing Authority (AHA) is dedicated to providing quality, affordable housing to eligible, low and moderate income households, elders, and persons with disabilities. Its programs are intended to support programs, services and resources that promote economic self-sufficiency, and improve community quality of life, tenant empowerment and responsibility. The Authority is a public agency operated with state and federal funding. [<http://www.amhersthousingauthority.org>]

Veteran's Outreach Services is a State-funded program designed to serve veterans and their families with a range of services including local Amherst-Northampton offices that also serve the surrounding towns.

<http://www.mass.gov/veterans/health-and-well-being/outreach-centers.html>

Amherst Police Department Crisis Intervention Team. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an innovative police-based first responder program that has become nationally known as the "Memphis Model" of pre-arrest jail diversion for those in a mental illness crisis. This program provides law enforcement based crisis intervention training for helping those individuals with mental illness. The Amherst Police Department also assigns a small group of officers who regularly visit Craig's Place when the shelter is open.

Amherst Fire Department: Emergency Medical Services are provided to Amherst and the surrounding towns.

Amherst Senior Center. For people who are 60 years and older, lunch is served at the Senior Center (Bangs Center, 70 Boltwood Walk) Monday-Friday, 11:45-12:15 PM. Suggested donation for the meal is \$3; however, everyone 60 and older is welcome whether they can afford to pay for lunch or not.

Regional Service Organizations

The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness launched the **Western Massachusetts Opening Doors: A Collective Impact Framework to Prevent and End Homelessness** in June, 2015. The Network coordinates efforts in the four county area of Western Mass. It has a wealth of information on its website. <http://westernmasshousingfirst.org>

The 3 County Continuum of Care (Berkshire, Franklin and Hampshire) consists of 62 HUD-funded programs operated by 25 providers. The CoC evaluates and ranks its programs on a number of measures designed to assess progress toward reducing homelessness. For more information go to CoC website: <https://3countycoc.wikispaces.com>

Eliot Community Human Services homeless outreach begins with the federal project for assistance in transition from homelessness (PATH), which provides services to individuals with serious mental health illnesses, as well as those with co-occurring substance use disorders, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Outreach clinicians and shelter specialists provide support services directly to homeless individuals residing in emergency shelters or on the streets in Amherst and elsewhere in Massachusetts. [<http://www.eliotchs.org/services/homeless-services/>]

Health Care for the Homeless is a national program operated by Mercy Medical Center in Western Massachusetts. Primary care medical services are provided on-site at 46 shelters (including Craig's Place and the Northampton Resource Center), soup kitchens, job placement sites

and transitional programs throughout Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire counties throughout the year on a daily basis. [<http://www.mercycares.com/health-care-for-the-homeless>]

Clinical and Support Options (CSO) is a comprehensive behavioral health corporation serving clients throughout Western Massachusetts and the North Quabbin region. It provides Emergency and Acute mental health services in Hampshire County. It has recently merged with Friends of the Homeless. [<http://www.csoinc.org>]

ServiceNet is a comprehensive behavioral health organization serving Hampshire and Franklin Counties. Its shelter and Housing Services provides support to families and individuals who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or who have previously been homeless. [<http://www.servicenet.org/content/shelter-and-housing-services>]

Soldier On is a private nonprofit organization committed to ending veteran homelessness. The organization provides homeless veterans with transitional and permanent housing, as well as supportive services. [<http://www.wesoldieron.org>] Through Springfield Partners for Community Action it supports an Amherst-based veterans case manager.

Safe Passage is dedicated to ending domestic violence and abuse. It provides services and supports to people in crisis, as well as those seeking support or information about domestic violence. Hotline: **(413) 586-5066** or **(888) 345-5282 (toll-free)** [<http://www.safepass.org>]

Youth Services are provided by Dial/Self, a community-based non-profit agency that serves the youth and communities of Western MA. [<http://www.dialself.org>]

Massachusetts Fair Housing Center provides free legal services and accepts housing discrimination complaints based on race, national origin, color, ancestry, religion, sex, disability, presence of minor children, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, marital status, military or veteran status, receipt of housing and other public assistance. [<http://www.massfairhousing.org/about-us>]

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