

Homelessness in Western MA: Five Year Trends 2007 - 2012

The number of people in Western MA who are homeless doubled between 2007 and 2012, increasing from 1,220 persons prior to the Great Recession to 2,470 persons at the last regional Point In Time (PIT) Count. Persons in families comprised 83% of all homeless persons counted during 2012s PIT survey.

Data Source: HUD's CoC Homeless Assistance Programs - Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports, 2007 to 2012; and The Boston Globe, "For homeless families, hotel is a life in limbo," March 25th, 2012.

The rise in family homelessness mirrors what has occurred throughout the state, though annual changes in Western MA have been steeper than elsewhere. Regional family shelters have been at capacity since mid-2008, with hotels/motels used as overflow since then. The current proportion of homeless families in hotels/motels in Western MA (~65%) exceeds the proportion of families in hotels/motels in the state overall (~42%).

Year	Individuals	Persons in Families	All Persons	% Change
2007	500	720	1,220	
2008	470	800	1,270	↑4
2009	466	1,165	1,631	↑28
2010	429	1,771	2,200	↑35
2011	419	1,542	1,961	↓11
2012	426	2,044	2,470	↑26



In contrast to homelessness among families, homelessness among individuals decreased between 2007 and 2012. The number of homeless individuals declined by 15% during this time, similar to the statewide decline of 18% while surpassing the national decline of 6%. The reduction is especially pronounced among unsheltered individuals, whose numbers declined by 26%.

