

# NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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## Indicators of Increasing Homelessness Due to the Foreclosure and Economic Crises

The foreclosure and economic crises are significantly increasing homelessness and the number of families at risk of homelessness in cities and counties across the country. Philip Mangano, the Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, has said that he is hearing of preliminary data from cities and organizations showing homelessness increases of as much as 20 percent.<sup>1</sup> Reuters has reported that local and state homeless groups have seen a 61 percent rise in homelessness since the foreclosure crisis began in 2007.<sup>2</sup>

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty is tracking news stories and reports from around the U.S. on its new Wiki site, <http://www.nlchp.org/display/Forum/News>. The following statistics, taken from these stories and reports, are indicators of increasing homelessness in the U.S.: (1) increasing foreclosures and evictions, (2) increasing numbers of homeless students, (3) increasing use of shelter, and (4) increasing use of food stamps, food pantries, and soup kitchens.

### **Increasing Foreclosures and Evictions**

- On March 27, 2008, CBS News reported that 38 percent of foreclosures involved rental properties, affecting at least 168,000 households.<sup>3</sup>
- The Sarasota, Florida, *Herald Tribune* has said that, by some estimates, more than 311,000 tenants nationwide have been evicted from homes this year after lenders took over the properties.<sup>4</sup>
- The *Boston Herald* has reported that eviction filings in Massachusetts rose by 15% in the past quarter alone.<sup>5</sup>
- Contra Costa County, California, Supervisor Federal Glover has said that, "We're finding our homeless population [in Contra Costa County] is changing because of what is happening in foreclosures..."<sup>6</sup>

### **Increasing Number of Homeless Students**

- In Fairfax County, Virginia, there are around 1,200 homeless students in the public school system, a 25% increase from last year's 900, which is attributed to foreclosures.<sup>7</sup>
- The Iowa City school district is reporting a sharp increase in the number of homeless students living in the district. There were 354 homeless students in the 2007-2008 school year, up from 279 in 2006-2007, and from 234 the year before that.<sup>8</sup>
- The Cincinnati school system reports it has almost 1,200 homeless students, a 28% increase from last year; most are from families evicted from foreclosed properties.<sup>9</sup>
- A record number of Utah students have been displaced by the economic downturn. Social service liaisons at many Utah public school districts say they have already noticed an increase in the number of displaced students over the same time last year. Some school

districts have almost as many displaced students this school year as all of last school year.<sup>10</sup>

- There are twice as many homeless students this year as last year in Grand Junction, Colorado according to the coordinator of the Grand Junction District's homeless children program.<sup>11</sup>
- The number of homeless students in the Springfield Public Schools district rose by more than 25 percent just over the last month. Meaning this year, Springfield schools could be dealing with the highest number of homeless students it's ever seen.<sup>12</sup>

### **Increasing Shelter Use**

- In St. Paul, Minnesota, Dorothy Day Center sheltered 458 families in the first nine months of the year (almost as many as in all of 2006), with a record 88 families in September alone.<sup>13</sup>
- Massachusetts reports that number of families living in shelters has risen by 33% in the past year.<sup>14</sup>
- Since November 2007, the number of homeless families living in motels and hotels in Massachusetts has soared from 69 to 638.<sup>15</sup>
- In New York City, 2,747 families applied for shelter in September 2008, up from 2,087 in September 2007.<sup>16</sup>
- In Hennepin County, including Minneapolis, 880 families were in shelters from January through August 2008, up from 698 in that period last year. At least 10% this year came from foreclosed properties where most had been renters, says Cathy ten Broeke, county coordinator to end homelessness.<sup>17</sup>
- In Denver, nearly 30% of the homeless are newly homeless. Services provided by the Denver Rescue Mission have gone up about 10% as the faces of the homeless population in Denver change.<sup>18</sup>
- A shelter in South San Francisco has seen a 300 percent increase in requests for emergency rental assistance from people who have been laid off or have had trouble getting enough work hours to pay the rent.<sup>19</sup>
- In Concord, New Hampshire, applications for assistance from the human services department have jumped by 15 percent over the last year, with about 90 percent of the department's assistance going to rent.<sup>20</sup>
- In Los Angeles, at least one shelter reports that half its clients are formerly middle-class people.<sup>21</sup>
- According to the *St. Petersburg Times*, Tampa Bay's fastest-growing homeless population is parents and children. Area shelter directors, homeless advocates, government officials and child welfare agencies say the rising unemployment rate, the sluggish housing market and the spiraling economy have forced an unprecedented number of families out of their homes.<sup>22</sup>

- In Panama City, Florida, 40% of the rescue mission's clients are homeless for the first time, due to foreclosure, job loss or both.<sup>23</sup>
- In some communities, including Reno, Portland and Seattle, tent cities are going up as shelters overflow.<sup>24</sup>

### **Increasing Food Stamp and Pantry Use**

- The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities recently reported that food stamp caseloads have increased dramatically in recent months, rising by 2.6 million people or 9.6 percent between August 2007 and August 2008.<sup>25</sup>
- In Concord, New Hampshire, the food pantry at First Congregational Church serves about 4,000 meals to over 800 people each month, around double the rate from last year.<sup>26</sup>
- The San Mateo County Department of Health and Human Services says the number of people receiving federal food stamps jumped by 21 percent between this September and last.<sup>27</sup>
- Second Harvest Food Bank, which supplies several food pantries in San Mateo County, saw a 55 percent increase this fall in the number of direct food requests on its emergency hotline over last year.<sup>28</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Adam Jadhav, *St. Louis and National Homeless Numbers Likely to Rise*, White House Official Says, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Dec. 4, 2008, available at <http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/stlouiscitycounty/story/B664504C02B38E578625751500138F2E?OpenDocument>.
- <sup>2</sup> Ross Colvin, *Family Homelessness Raising in the United States*, Reuters, Nov. 12, 2008, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSTRE4AB18I20081112?pageNumber=2>.
- <sup>3</sup> NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS, *NCH Public Policy Recommendations: Foreclosure and Homelessness Prevention*, available at [www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/2008Policy/Foreclosure.pdf](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/2008Policy/Foreclosure.pdf).
- <sup>4</sup> Kate Spinner, *You're Paying; Is Your Landlord?*, Herald Tribune, Dec. 1, 2008, available at [http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20081201/ARTICLE/812010376/2055/NEWS?Title=You\\_re\\_paying\\_Is\\_the\\_landlord](http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20081201/ARTICLE/812010376/2055/NEWS?Title=You_re_paying_Is_the_landlord).
- <sup>5</sup> Laura Crimaldi, *Evictions Spike Leaving More Bay States Out in the Cold*, Boston Herald, Nov. 23, 2008, available at <http://news.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view.bg?articleid=1134253>.
- <sup>6</sup> Karen Rarey, *Hundreds Attend Antioch Event in Effort to Stem Home Foreclosures*, Mercury News, Oct. 28, 2008, available at [http://www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci\\_10838530](http://www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci_10838530).
- <sup>7</sup> *Homeless Students in Fairfax Schools Up 25 Percent*, FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES, Nov. 19, 2008, available at <http://fairfaxtimes.com/news/2008/nov/19/homeless-students-fairfax-schools-25-percent/>.
- <sup>8</sup> *Number of Homeless Students in Iowa City Increases*, Chicago Tribune, Nov. 8, 2008, available at <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2008/nov/08/business/chi-ap-ia-homelessstudents>.
- <sup>9</sup> *Foreclosure Forcing Tenants Out*, WKRC-TV CHANNEL 12, Nov. 17, 2008, available at [http://www.local12.com/news/local/story.aspx?content\\_id=7822f2cd-38b2-43ef-9c15-7f9018fa7c9c](http://www.local12.com/news/local/story.aspx?content_id=7822f2cd-38b2-43ef-9c15-7f9018fa7c9c).
- <sup>10</sup> Ben Fulton, *More Utah Students Displaced*, Salt Lake Tribune, Dec. 1, 2008, available at [http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci\\_11108620](http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_11108620).
- <sup>11</sup> Cassie Hewlings, *Number of Homeless Students on the Rise*, Daily Sentinel, Dec. 3, 2008, available at [http://www.gjsentinel.com/hp/content/news/stories/2008/12/03/120408\\_3A\\_homeless\\_students.html](http://www.gjsentinel.com/hp/content/news/stories/2008/12/03/120408_3A_homeless_students.html).
- <sup>12</sup> Chris Grogan, *Homeless Springfield Student Population Spikes 25 Percent*, OzarksFirst.com, Dec. 3, 2008, available at <http://ozarksfirst.com/content/fulltext/?cid=90901>.
- <sup>13</sup> Steve Brandt & Warren Wolf, *Wave of Foreclosures Hits Renters*, STAR TRIBUNE, Oct. 29, 2008, available at <http://www.startribune.com/business/11245186.html>.
- <sup>14</sup> Laura Crimaldi, *Evictions Spike Leaving More Bay States Out in the Cold*, Boston Herald, Nov. 23, 2008, available at <http://news.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view.bg?articleid=1134253>.
- <sup>15</sup> Marie Szaniszlo, *Homeless families test schools*, BOSTON HERALD, Nov. 24, 2008, available at [http://news.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view/2008\\_11\\_24\\_Homeless\\_families\\_test\\_schools/srvc=home&position=also](http://news.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view/2008_11_24_Homeless_families_test_schools/srvc=home&position=also).
- <sup>16</sup> Wendy Koch, *Homeless numbers 'alarming'*, USA TODAY, 22 Oct. 2008, available at [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-10-21-homeless\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-10-21-homeless_N.htm).
- <sup>17</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>18</sup> Nelson Garcia, *Economy goes down, service to homeless goes up*, KUSA-TV CHANNEL 9 NEWS, Nov. 15, 2008, available at <http://www.9news.com/news/article.aspx?storyid=103973>.
- <sup>19</sup> Julia Scott, *Newly Homeless Putting Pressure on Shelters*, San Mateo County Times, Nov. 22, 2008, available at [http://www.insidebayarea.com/sanmateocountytimes/localnews/ci\\_11044756](http://www.insidebayarea.com/sanmateocountytimes/localnews/ci_11044756).

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<sup>20</sup> Shira Shoenberg, *Homeless Rolls Grow, Worry Local Agencies: Needs May be Greater than Resources*, THE CONCORD MONITOR, Oct. 19, 2008, available at <http://www.concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?Date=20081019&Category=FRONTPAGE&ArtNo=810190337&SectionCat=s&Template=printart>.

<sup>21</sup> *'Middle Class' Joining the Homeless on Skid Row*, Los Angeles Sentinel, Oct. 30, 2008, available at <http://www.lasentinel.net/Middle-Class-Joining-the-Homeless-on-Skid-Row.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Cristina Silva, *New Homeless: Families in Bind*, St. Petersburg Times, Dec. 2, 2008, available at <http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article922647.ece>.

<sup>23</sup> *Panama City Rescue Mission Seeking Assistant*, WTVY CHANNEL 4, Nov. 24, 2008, available at <http://www.wtvynews4.com/news/headlines/35012524.html>.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> Sharon Parrott, *Recession Could Cause Large Increases in Poverty and Push Millions Into Deep Poverty: Stimulus Package Should Include Policies To Ameliorate Harsh Effects Of Downturn*, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities: Washington, DC (Nov. 2008), available at <http://www.cbpp.org/11-24-08pov.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> Shira Shoenberg, *Homeless Rolls Grow, Worry Local Agencies: Needs May be Greater than Resources*, THE CONCORD MONITOR, Oct. 19, 2008, available at <http://www.concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?Date=20081019&Category=FRONTPAGE&ArtNo=810190337&SectionCat=s&Template=printart>.

<sup>27</sup> Julia Scott, *Newly Homeless Putting Pressure on Shelters*, San Mateo County Times, Nov. 22, 2008, available at [http://www.insidebayarea.com/sanmateocountytimes/localnews/ci\\_11044756](http://www.insidebayarea.com/sanmateocountytimes/localnews/ci_11044756).

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*