



Cunningham Township

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Housing Insecurity & Homelessness in Champaign County • Jan. 22, 2020

Income has not kept up with rents, leading to rent burden, evictions, and risk of homelessness.

- Last year in Champaign County, a person had to work 73 hours a week at minimum wage to afford the average two-bedroom apartment and the cost of utilities. (United Way of Champaign)
- 66% of Urbana renters and 63% of Champaign renters are paying more than one third of their income on rent. (American Community Survey)
- 1350 Champaign County households had evictions filed against them in 2017 or about 5 per work day. (Champaign Circuit Clerk)
- Homelessness amongst school children in Champaign County increased an estimated 132% from 2011 to 2016. (United Way of Champaign County)

People with disabilities can not afford any independent housing without a subsidy.

- Federal SSI payments to the disabled are a maximum of \$783 per month which means they are rented burdened if they pay more than \$258 in rent. The lowest available rents in the county are about double this amount.

There is a rapidly growing supply of available rental units in Champaign, but low income families can't access them.

- Vacant rental stock in Champaign-Urbana has increased 50% from 2000 to almost 3000 empty units in the past 9 years. This amount would house the number of known homeless residents in the county several times over. (American Community Survey)
- 85 holders (or 6%) of Housing Choice Voucher holders were circling looking for a place to live each month last year. They report to CTSO facing discrimination and landlords concerned with renting to voucher holders. (Housing Authority of Champaign County)

There is a growing demand for rental assistance.

- 22% of calls to 211 in Champaign County were for rental assistance last year. The majority of 2800 calls to Centralized Intake for the Homeless were for rental assistance. (United Way, Regional Plan Commission of Champaign County)
- School districts are required by state law to provide transportation for homeless students. Champaign Unit 4's homeless liaison reports \$200,000 spent last year on transportation. Thanks to a law passed in 2017, districts have the option to provide rental and financial assistance to keep students in their home. Neither Champaign or Urbana have used this provision to date. (Education for Homeless Children Act & Amendment Homeless Prevention HB 0261)

The Housing Authority of Champaign County serves a fraction of demand.

- An estimated 80% of local households in need of rental subsidies are not served. (Champaign Urbana Tenant Union)
- 5200+ households signed up in a 3 week open application period in June 2019 for Housing Choice Vouchers, which are used to move into private rentals. Only 1500 of these applicants were added to the waitlist, now totalling 1615. About 1500 Champaign County households have HCVs. Applicants typically wait 2-4 years to receive a voucher. The oldest application in the waitlist is 3.5 years. (Housing Authority of Champaign County)

Champaign lacks year round emergency shelter; particularly dire is the lack of same day shelter for families.

- As we face increasingly fierce weather events, Champaign County has lacked same-day, year round shelter for men, women, transgender folks, and families for the past four years. We currently have youth shelter for up to age 24.
- Emergency Family Shelter has 8 units for the entire county. Families wait 6-150 days (average wait of 30 days) to access this shelter.
- Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education has discontinued its hotel voucher program providing 3-8 days to families with children in local schools, leaving almost no options for homeless K-12 students.

Homeless women and children are largely invisible.

- At Cunningham Township, 72% of adults who have received Homeless Assistance are women, and 52% of those served are children.
- An alarming number of females served report a time when they had to resort to “survival sex” to secure housing either from tenants or landlords.
- 10% of women served conceived their first child under the age of 16, indicating they were victims of childhood sexual abuse - compared to less than 1% countywide.
- Among industrial nations, the US has the largest number of homeless women and the highest number on record since the Great Depression. (Project Renewal, NYC)
- An estimated 50% of all homeless people in the U.S. are women.
- Nationwide, up to 92% of homeless women have experienced severe sexual or physical assault at some point in their lives and 57% of homeless women cite sexual or domestic violence as the direct cause of their homelessness. (Project Renewal, NYC)