



# Family Shelter Partnership

## RECIDIVISM DATA REPORT


2006-2007



**Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati**


*The Faith Community's Response to Family Homelessness*






This report is based on the case management and data entry work provided by the following agencies:

- Bethany House Services, Inc.
- Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati
- Mercy Franciscan at St. John
- Salvation Army Shelter
- YWCA of Greater Cincinnati




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Data for the report was generated by VESTA<sup>®</sup> a database application designed by the Partnership Center, Ltd. to coordinate shelter and housing services and track outcomes.



Technical data was generated from VESTA by  
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## Introduction

*You must be the change you  
want to see in the world.*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

Beginning in 1999 the family shelters in the Cincinnati/Hamilton County Continuum of Care for the Homeless created a partnership approach to providing quality shelter and services for homeless families within the Continuum. Together five shelters including Bethany House Shelter, Interfaith Hospitality Network Shelter, Mercy Franciscan at St. John's Temporary Housing at their Over-the-Rhine location and Anna Louise Inn, Salvation Army Shelter and the YWCA Battered Women's Shelter worked with programmers to create the first VESTA® database designed to coordinate shelter services and track outcomes.

One of the focuses of the Family Shelter Partnership has always been to reduce recidivism within the shelters and to develop best-practice approaches to integrating service and housing delivery to assist clients in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

This report focuses on two full years of VESTA data from all of the participating shelters to look critically at the recidivism rates and the successes of the programs.

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## Recidivism Summary

In summary, data generated on persons in families with children residing within the family shelter system between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007 shows the following:

- ∞ *Families served:* The Family Shelter Partnership (FSP) provided emergency shelter to 1,287 unduplicated families, totaling approximately 3,350 persons served within the two year period.
- ∞ *One time stays:* 86% of families had only one stay during the twenty-four month period.
- ∞ *Multiple stays:* Families with duplicate stays (i.e. more than one stay per the 24 month period) broke down as follows: 14% had two stays, 11% had three stays and 2% (less than ten cases) had more than three stays.
- ∞ *Average nights of single stayers sheltered:* For families with one stay the average nights sheltered was 32, with the shortest length of stay being 0 nights and the longest being 201 nights. Twenty-six percent of families stayed a week or less and 58% of the families stayed a month or less.
- ∞ *Average nights sheltered for repeat stayers:* For families with two stays the average nights sheltered during all stays was total 59 nights (a low of 5 nights and a high of 185 nights); families with three stays averaged 82 total nights (a low of 13 nights and a high of 290 nights); families with four stays averaged 111 nights (a low of 24 nights and a high of 198 nights).

☞ *Episodes:* An episode of homelessness is a discrete period of time in which the family was continuously homeless, although not necessarily continuously sheltered in an single emergency shelter. A family in shelter for one week who disappears for three days and then shows up in another shelter might be considered to have 2 stays but only one episode of homelessness. When stays are combined based on the time lapsed between stays the number episodes can be calculated.

☞ *Episode Calculations:* Episodes with 30 days or less between stays was 89%; episodes with 60 days or less between stays was 91%; episodes with 120 days between stays was 92%

Number of Episodes	When a shelter stay = one episode	When multiple shelter stays are broken by less than 31 days between stays	When multiple shelter stays are broken by less than 61 days between stays	When multiple shelter stays are broken by less than 91 days between stays
1	86%	89%	91%	92%
2	11%	8%	7%	6%
3	14%	1%	1%	1%
4 or more	2%			

☞ *Special needs of families with multiple stays:*

- Alcohol Abuse 17%
- Drug Abuse 24%
- Mental Illness 44%
- Domestic Violence 64% (outside of the Battered Women’s Shelter 27%)
- Pregnancy 24%

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## Analysis

The data was collected by the individual agencies using VESTA, which tracks basic client information, household information and shelter service delivery for all those who were sheltered. The database was queried and the data on those persons entering Family Shelter Partnership Program shelters (including Bethany House Shelter, Interfaith Hospitality Network Shelter, Mercy Franciscan at St. John's Temporary Housing at OTR and ALI, Salvation Army Shelter and YMCA Battered Women's Shelter) between the times of January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007 was retrieved. This provided a two year range to consider for recidivism.

The data, however, included those that entered the family shelters who, in fact, were single occupants, as many family shelters will serve single women if they have available space. In order to concentrate on families only, adults with no child, step-child or ward in the database were filtered out. The database was then filtered to exclude abnormalities that were present in the data (i.e. when the dates on intake and exit indicated an overlapping stay in two different shelters causing a negative value to occur in the column which measured days between stays). This resulted in a minimum exclusion of less than .5% of the data.

After the data was filtered clients were designated as one stay, two stay, three stay etc. based on the number of "stays" that were present under each name. A "stay" is not considered the same as an "episode" for the purposes of this report, as a "stay" is created for every intake/exit regardless of time frame in which it occurs (with the exception of the filtered overlapping stays). "Episodes" will be discussed in greater detail later in this report.

Once the data had been separated, the cases and persons served by the shelters over the two year span were calculated (see table 1). Based on the data, the vast majority of shelter nights were provided to those families

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only staying one time (86.3%). This is partially because over a two year period it is more difficult to enter and exit the facilities multiple times.

**Table 1**

Number of intakes during the period	Number of cases	Number of persons within the cases*	Percentage of Total (by cases)
1	1,111	2,875	86.3
2	141	392	11.0
3	27	62	2.1
4	7	16	0.54
6	1	1	0.07
TOTAL	1,287	3,346	

\*For 2 or more intakes the household counts were averaged because of changes in counts between intakes.

The length of stay was then computed for each intake and exit and a mean was taken for each of the groupings (one stay, etc.). The longest and shortest stay was then found for each group as well. For the families with one stay the average nights sheltered was 32 with the shortest length being 0 nights and the longest 201 nights. Two stay families saw the average of total nights sheltered during all stays as 59 with the low at 0 nights and the high at 185 nights. For families with three stays the average total nights sheltered during all stays was 82 with the low at 13 nights and the high at 290 nights. And lastly, families with four stays saw the average total nights sheltered during all stays as 111 with the low at 24 nights and the high at 198 nights.

Next, data was compiled and a graph was made to determine patterns in days between stays. When clusters appeared natural breaking points were noted. The graph was created for each grouping and similar results were found: the break occurred at approximately 14 days, 35 days and 61 days on all graphs and there was not enough data containing longer stays to analyze breaking points at any other points along the graphs (it should be noted that these breaks were fairly large in width and had overlapping values that the approximations project).

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After completing the length of stay analyses the time between stays for families with multiple stays was compiled and analyzed for a breaking point in the same manner as above. The results were concluded to fall close enough to standard measurements of 7, 14, 30, 60, 90, and 120 days that it would be acceptable to use those values as breaking points. The purpose of doing this comparison was to find an acceptable cut-off value to determine "episodes" of homelessness. An "episode" is a discrete time in which the family moves to being in a state of homelessness from a point in which they are no longer homeless. This cut-off value can be argued because the time in which a person is still considered homeless after leaving a shelter is not clearly defined. Certainly a gap of 0 to 14 days is not significant to say that the family was housed and no longer homeless. The analysis showed a significant change from 30 to 60 days and then began to slow as the numbers began to condense around one, two, and three stays eliminating outliers. (See attached appendix for table containing these data).

Lastly, the families with multiple stays were considered in the area of special needs (specifically alcohol abuse, drug abuse, mental illness, domestic violence and pregnancy). The following results were found: 17% of the families with multiple stays had a primary member with alcohol abuse problems, 24% had drug abuse problems, 44% had a mental illness, 64% were victims of domestic violence (27% outside of YWCA) and 24% were pregnant.

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## Appendix Tables

### Appendix Table A

If Discrete Episodes are considered to be greater than **7 days** apart (must be out of shelter for at least one week):

Number of Episodes	Number of Cases	% Diff (From Orig)	% Diff (From Prev)
1	1140	2.6	
2	119	-15.6	
3	22	-18.5	
4	5	-28.6	
5	0	0	
6	1	0	

### Appendix Table B

If Discrete Episodes are considered to be greater than **14 days** apart (must be out of shelter for at least two weeks):

Number of Episodes	Number of Cases	% Diff (From Orig)	% Diff (From Prev)
1	1143	2.9	.26
2	120	-14.9	.84
3	18	-33.3	-18.2
4	5	-28.6	0
5	0	0	0
6	1	0	0

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### Appendix Table C

If Discrete Episodes are considered to be greater than **30 days apart**  
(must be out of shelter for at least one month):

Number of Episodes	Number of Cases	% Diff (From Orig)	% Diff (From Prev)
1	1157	4.1	1.2
2	108	-23.4	-10
3	16	-40.7	-11.1
4	5	-28.6	0
5	1	100	100
6	0	-100	-100

### Appendix Table D

If Discrete Episodes are considered to be greater than **60 days apart**  
(must be out of shelter for at least two months):

Number of Episodes	Number of Cases	% Diff (From Orig)	% Diff (From Prev)
1	1173	5.6	1.4
2	96	-31.9	-1
3	16	-40.7	0
4	2	-71.4	-60
5	0	0	-100
6	0	-100	0

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### Appendix Table E

If Discrete Episodes are considered to be greater than **90 days** apart (must be out of shelter for at least three months):

Number of Episodes	Number of Cases	% Diff (From Orig)	% Diff (From Prev)
1	1185	6.6	1
2	86	-39.0	-10.4
3	16	-40.7	0
4	0	-100	-100
5	0	0	0
6	0	-100	0

### Appendix Table F

If Discrete Episodes are considered to be greater than **120 days** apart (must be out of shelter for at least four months):

Number of Episodes	Number of Cases	% Diff (From Orig)	% Diff (From Prev)
1	1189	7	.34
2	82	-41.8	-4.7
3	16	-40.7	0
4	0	-100	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	-100	0