Homelessness in Corvallis and Benton County

League of Women Voters of Corvallis
Housing Committee
Prepared by Sara Ingle and Lynn Jarvis

April 2020

CONTENTS

Table of Figures 2
Introduction 4
Sources of data 5
What does it mean to be homeless? 6
How many people in Corvallis are homeless? 8
Other methods to estimate a homeless count 11
Data from the SNAP (Food Stamp) Program, DHS 11
Data from school districts 12
Data from community shelters 13
Community Outreach, Inc. 14
Men's Cold Weather Shelter 15
Room at the Inn 17
Jackson Street Youth Services 18
Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence 19
Oregon State University Human Services Resource Center 20
Data from the Benton County Health Department 21
Data from Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center 22
Demographics 23
Where are homeless individuals from? 25
What does it mean to be unsheltered? 26
Conclusion: What is the size of the homeless population? 27
Final thoughts 31
Appendix 32

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Spectrum of housing insecurity 6

Figure 2: Type of shelter for homeless students, as defined by McKinney Vento Act, Benton County school districts and the Corvallis School District, 2016-17 to 2019-20 7

Figure 3: Counts of homeless individuals in Oregon and Benton County, January 2015-2019 8

Figure 4:Homeless individuals in Benton County, by shelter status, PIT counts, 2015-2020 9

Figure 5: Homeless individuals in Benton County, by location, 2020 PIT count..... 10

Figure 6: Food stamp recipients identifying as without home, by sex, 2015-2019.... 11

Figure 7: Homeless students, by shelter status, Corvallis and Benton County School Districts, 2016-17 through 2019-20 12

Figure 8: Benton County PIT count of homeless children under 18, 2015-20 12

Figure 9: Number of children and adults served by Community Outreach, Inc. EMERGENCY shelter, by year 14

Figure 10: Number of children and adults served by Community Outreach, Inc. TRANSITIONAL shelter, by year 14

Figure 11: Number of individuals at Men's Cold Weather Shelter by season 15

Figure 12: Number of bed nights provided at Men's Cold Weather Shelter, by season 15

Figure 13: Number of clients served at Room at the Inn women's shelter, by season* 17

Figure 14: Number of bed nights provided at Room at the Inn women's shelter, by season* 17

Figure 15: Number of Benton County clients served by Jackson Street Youth Services, by type of shelter, by season 18

Figure 16: Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence shelter for adults and children, 2017-18 to 2019-20 19

Figure 17: Number of OSU students identifying as homeless, Fall 2018-Fall 2019.. 20

Figure 18: Homeless patients from Corvallis and Benton County seen in Benton and Linn health clinics, 2012-2018 21

Figure 19: Discharges and bed nights for individuals who were homeless, Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, 2016-2019 22

Figure 20: Origins of Oregon residents and MCWS residents, by state, 2018-19 25

Figure 21: Homeless persons reporting street, camp, or bridge residence at Linn and Benton County community health centers..... 26

Figure 22: Estimated count of homeless persons, Corvallis/Benton County, 2019 — Method 1 28

Figure 23: Estimated count of homeless persons, Corvallis/Benton County, 2019 — Method 2 29

Figure 24: Number of homeless persons, estimated range, Corvallis/Benton County, 2019-20 29

HOMELESSNESS IN CORVALLIS AND BENTON COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

UPDATING THE NUMBERS

In 2017, the Housing Committee of the League of Women Voters of Corvallis published a report on homelessness in Corvallis prepared by Judy Ball and Karen Rockwell. It concluded that there were 800-1200 homeless Corvallis community members, a number composed of mostly Oregon-born people, with an average age of 44. This update brings current the numbers reported in 2017. It also expands the scope to include more information for Benton County, including information from school districts and health care in smaller towns of Benton County. It is important to realize that data collection for this report ended in mid-February 2020, pre-COVID-19.

The League took on the original project because no one knew how much homelessness there was in Corvallis and that study is often cited. The League has received requests for updated numbers. Such an expansion could help to determine trends in the homeless population. Homelessness and sheltering the homeless were, and continue to be, controversial issues in the community. The League has had a longstanding reputation for integrity, nonpartisanship, and balance in dealing with public policy issues and, because of this, the Housing Committee felt it appropriate to continue the work begun in 2017.

Updating the 2017 Report is consistent with the principles of the League of Women Voters. Since the 1960s, the League of Women Voters of the U.S. has advocated for housing as a basic human need. The Housing Position of the League of Women Voters of Corvallis states: The City and County should aggressively support the development of low- income housing units. The Corvallis League's Housing Committee is a dedicated advocate for affordable housing in Corvallis and Benton County.

SOURCES OF DATA

Some data, e.g., the annual Point-in-Time counts, could be collected directly from public sources.

Members of the League's Housing Committee requested de-identified data counts, demographics, and trends, when available, from local agencies that support people who are homeless. The League is grateful to the following agencies which supplied data used in this report.

- Alsea School District
- Benton County Health Department
- Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV)
- Community Outreach, Inc. (COI)
- Community Services Consortium
- Corvallis Housing First (CHF)
- Corvallis 509J School District
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, Corvallis
- Jackson Street Youth Services
- Monroe School District
- Oregon State University Center for Human Services
- Philomath School District

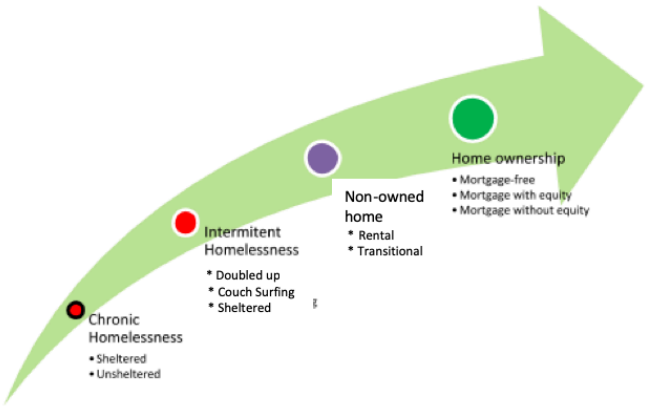
Since 2015, Oregon Point-in-Time counts have been done by Continuum of Care organizations using the same methodology and we consider these counts to be comparable. The same method is used in odd and even years and this is an improvement over the past. However, many agencies have not had standard systems for tracking the services they provide. When we requested data for this update, the methods used for tracking were often different from those used three or more years ago.

Tallies of homeless students in county public schools are cumulative over the school year, not at a point in time, and a student is classified as homeless according to a broad definition in Federal law. No other agency that we encountered used a definition so broad. Cumulative counting, as contrasted with counting at a point in time, was common across agencies.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HOMELESS?

One reason it is so difficult to define homelessness is that those with income insecurity can slide quickly down the housing spectrum (Figure 1). It is no myth that many homeowners and renters live a paycheck or two away from homelessness. With intermittent homelessness, a person or family can end up doubled up with others (couch surfing), in transitional housing which helps one get back into housing, or in a shelter. Failing all those things, unsheltered homelessness can occur, and this is the state of many of the chronically homeless (homeless for more than one year with a disability).

FIGURE 1: SPECTRUM OF HOUSING INSECURITY



In Benton County:

For every 100 families with extremely low income*, there are only 14 affordable rental units available.

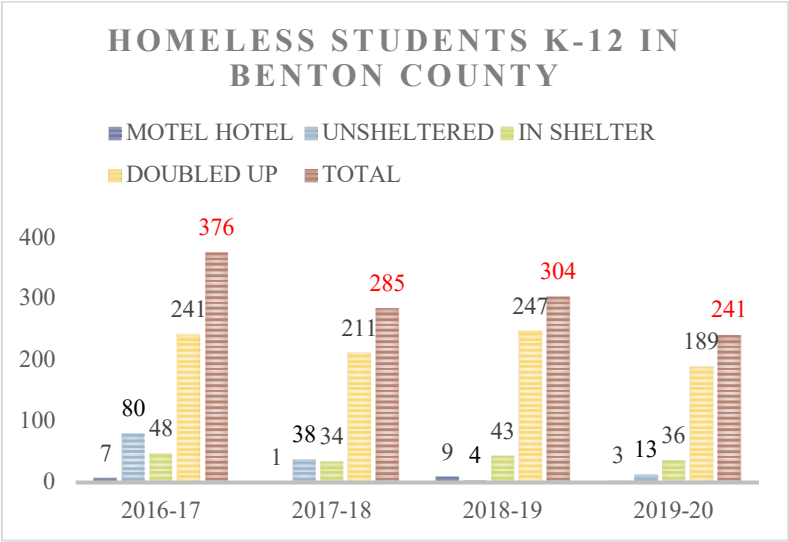
Forty percent of renters pay more than 50% of their income for rent and for renters with extremely low income*, 83% of them pay more than 50% of their income for rent.

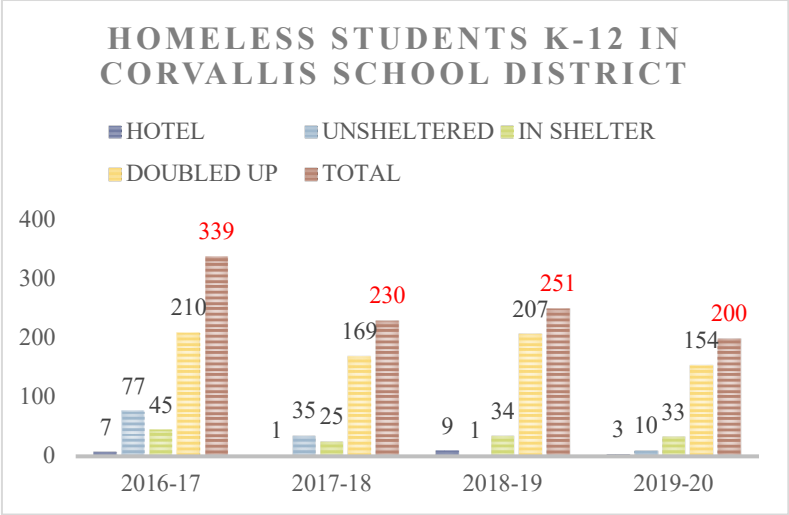
Benton County ranks with Multnomah County for the highest rate of income inequality in Oregon and those with very low incomes compete with those with very high incomes for the limited housing in Corvallis.

The homeless who are most difficult to track and who go uncounted are those who are doubled up and couch surfing. We have no way to find them. The lower end of the homeless spectrum is especially well illustrated by data on homeless students from Corvallis and Benton County (Alsea, Corvallis, Monroe and Philomath) public schools (Figure 2). Because the Federal McKinney Vento Act defines homelessness in student populations broadly, these data give us a more expansive picture of homelessness than other sources, in that many without a home of their own double-up or couch surf. Note that the 2/3 to 4/5 of school children without housing who were doubled-up were not included in our homeless count.

*Extremely Low Income (ELI) is defined as that amount of income which does not exceed the greater of either 30% of the median family income (or 60% of the Very Low Income limit) or the DHS federal poverty guideline. These adjust for family size.

FIGURE 2: TYPE OF SHELTER FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS, AS DEFINED BY MCKINNEY VENTO ACT, BENTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT, 2016-17 TO 2019-20





Almost three out of four public school students classified as homeless are in "doubled up" housing situations. While this may be preferable to no housing at all, research has shown that it impedes the student's ability to learn and to graduate.

-See Nat'l Health Care for the Homeless Council (Jan 2016) Engaging Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Core Practices & Services (available at www.nhchc.org).

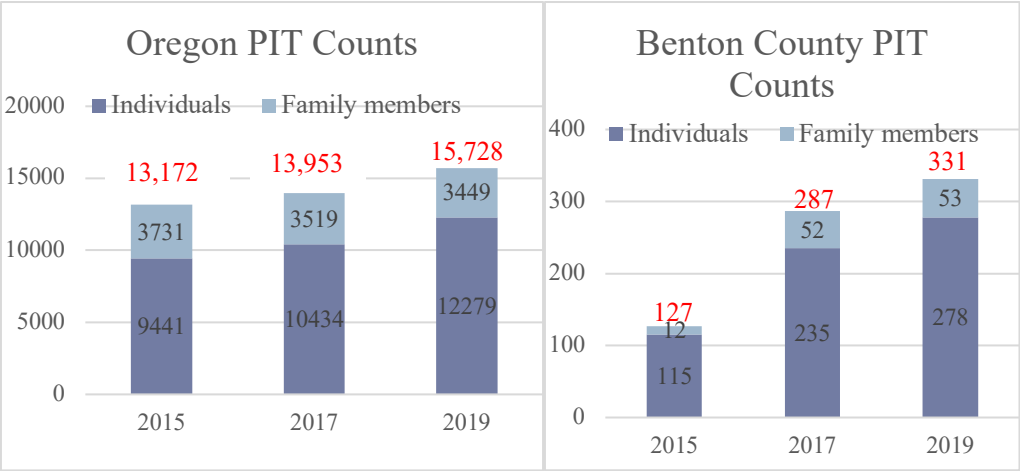
Also not included as homeless are those who have entered transitional housing. With extra support, it is hoped that these people will move to independent living.

HOW MANY PEOPLE IN CORVALLIS ARE HOMELESS?

The only semi-comprehensive count of individuals experiencing homelessness is the Point-in-Time (PIT) count. The PIT is an annual census that attempts to count all individuals experiencing homelessness at one point in time, one night in January. It follows a standard methodology defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD methodology since 2015 has been consistent and in Benton County it is consistent in even and odd years. Nevertheless, field operations can vary across time and the sample size is relatively small for drawing statistically meaningful conclusions.

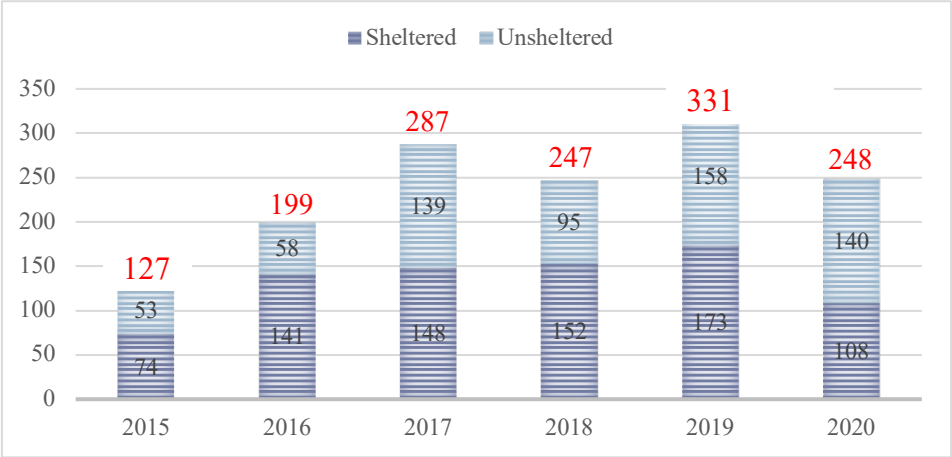
"Unsheltered" for the purposes of the PIT means that someone is staying in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., streets, parks, cars, abandoned buildings, etc.).
The PIT count is conducted by local organizations called Continuums of Care (COC).

FIGURE 3: COUNTS OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN OREGON AND BENTON COUNTY, JANUARY 2015-2019



When we look at the PIT for all years 2015-2020 (Figure 4, below), the PIT for 2017 through 2020 shows no obvious trend upward or downard, both sheltered and unsheltered (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4:HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN BENTON COUNTY, BY SHELTER STATUS, PIT COUNTS, 2015-2020



In January 2019, the PIT count, which included the unsheltered, yielded a total count of 15,728 homeless persons in Oregon (Figure 3), up 19.4% from 2015.[1] The Benton County PIT count increased 160.6% over 2015, although the growth rate since 2017 appears to be slowing or flattening.

In 2015, Benton County, with 2.2% of Oregon's population, counted 127 homeless persons, about 1% of the Oregon total. By 2019, Benton County, with 2.25% of Oregon's population, had 331 homeless by the PIT, about 2.1% of the Oregon's total. Neighboring Linn County, with 3.0% of Oregon's population, counted 277 homeless persons, about 1.76% of the Oregon total, similar to its 1.7% in 2015. The raw data from the 2020 Corvallis PIT identified 248 homeless individuals, 140 of those unsheltered.

OREGON IN THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE[2]

In 2019 California and New York had the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness and the highest rates of homelessness, at 38 and 46 people per 10,000. Hawaii and Oregon also had very high rates, with 45 and 38 people experiencing homelessness per 10,000. As large states, Florida and Texas contributed large numbers of homeless people to the national estimates, but they had rates of homelessness lower than the national average of 17 people per 10,000 (14 per 10,000 for Florida and 9 per 10,000 for Texas).

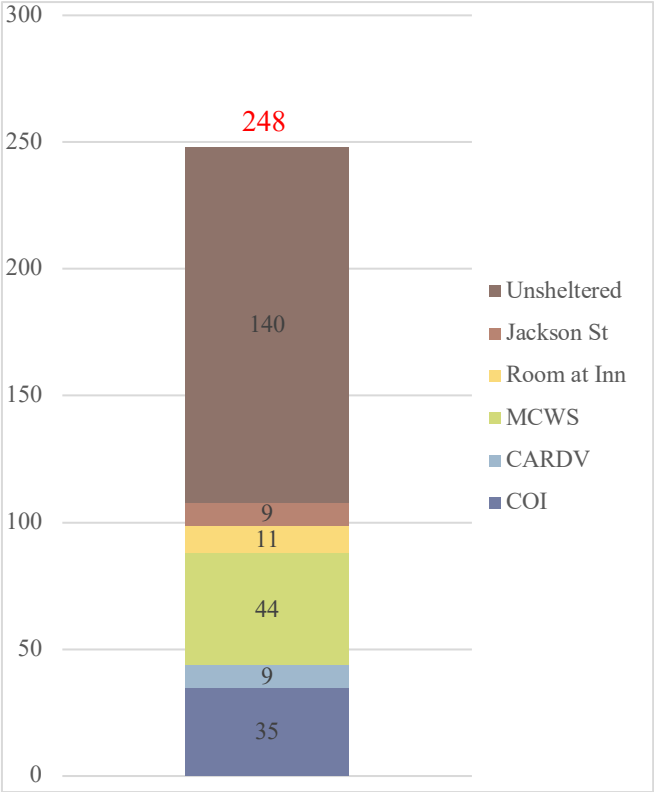
In Oregon 63.9% of the homeless were unsheltered, CA had 71.7%, and HI 56.8%. Homelessness in Oregon grew at the rate of 9.7% in Oregon from 2018 to 2019. Of the chronically homeless in Oregon, 79.7% were unsheltered.

---

[1] Oregon Housing and Community Services, Point-in-Time Count, January 2019, https://public.tableau.com/profile/oregon.housing.and.community.services#!/vizhome/2019Point-in-TimeDashboard/Story1 2019

[2] National HUD PIT https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/ahar/#2019-reports

FIGURE 5: HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN BENTON COUNTY, BY LOCATION, 2020 PIT COUNT



The 2020 data are not official yet from HUD but we obtained the raw data and were able to see where the sheltered count was made. This will be important for our discussion later.

Note that 56.5% of those in the PIT who identified themsleves as homeless were unsheltered.

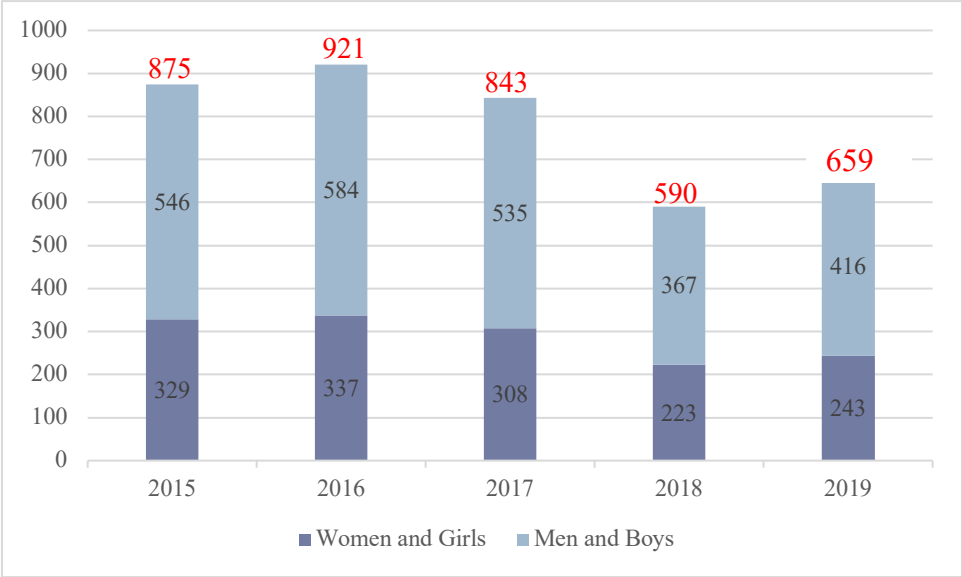
OTHER METHODS TO ESTIMATE A HOMELESS COUNT

We also explored other potential sources of counts for individuals experiencing homelessness. Although we knew that none of these other sources would be comprehensive, we believed that each could give us more data for the complex issue of counting individuals without homes and understanding trends in this community.

DATA FROM THE SNAP (FOOD STAMP) PROGRAM, DHS

For this edition of our report we were able to get information about the Corvallis office SNAP applicants from the Oregon Department of Human Services for the years 2015 to February 2020. Data in our previous report were gathered by the Corvallis office itself.

FIGURE 6: FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS IDENTIFYING AS WITHOUT HOME, BY SEX, 2015-2019

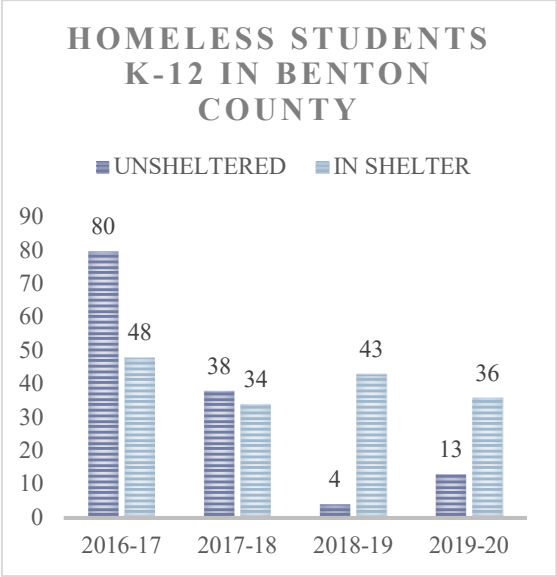


The January 2019 PIT counted 331 homeless individuals; the monthly count from the DHS data found 189 SNAP clients in the month of January 2019. The DHS clients for 2019 were 63% male; the homeless individuals in the PIT count were also 63% male.

DATA FROM SCHOOL DISTRICTS

We already noted that the school districts use a broad definition of homelessness based on McKinney Vento, and that the schools count homeless students cumulatively over the school year, not at a point in time. Looking at only the students in shelters or unsheltered, as shown in Figure 6, it is encouraging to see that the number of homeless students without shelter is trending down sharply. This may be due to the success of mandated outreach by schools using McKinney Vento funds.

FIGURE 7: HOMELESS STUDENTS, BY SHELTER STATUS, CORVALLIS AND BENTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 2016-17 THROUGH 2019-20



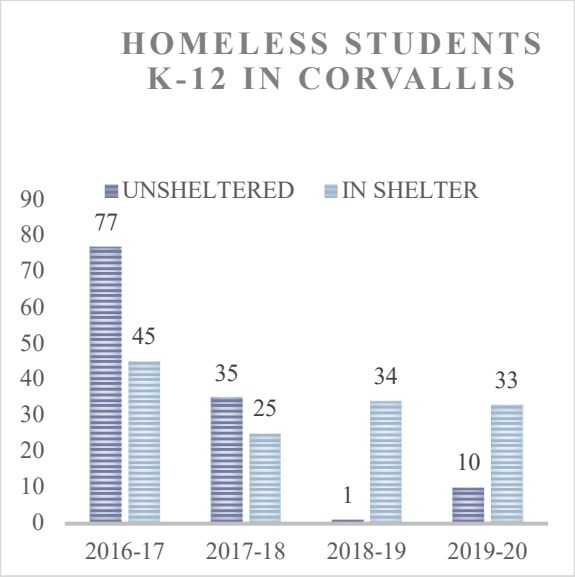
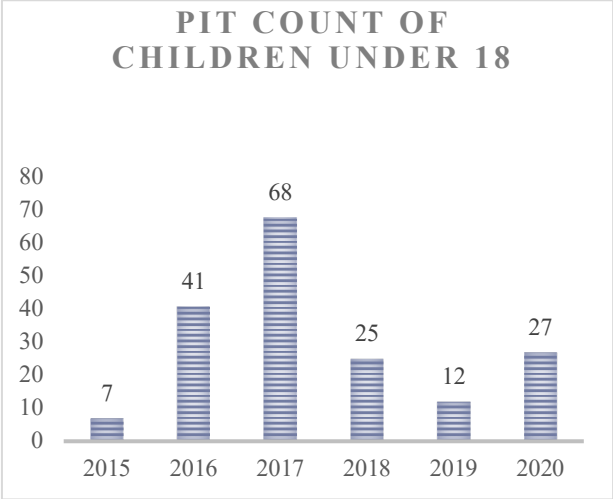


FIGURE 8: BENTON COUNTY PIT COUNT OF HOMELESS CHILDREN UNDER 18, 2015-20



The PIT does not report on students, per se, but it does provide breakdowns by age. A graph of six years shows a less dire outlook than 2017. However, it covers just one day as well as including children of pre-school age.

DATA FROM COMMUNITY SHELTERS

Currently, Corvallis has five primary shelter providers:

1. Community Outreach, Inc., which provides both emergency and transitional shelter services for adults and families;

2. The Men's Cold Weather Shelter, which operates from November through March;

3. Room at the Inn, which is a November through March shelter for women;

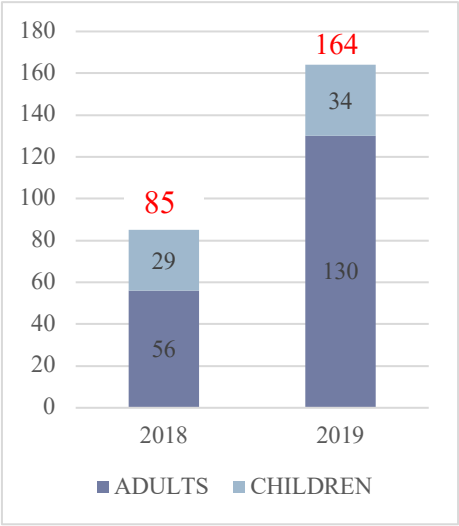
4. Jackson Street Youth Services, which provides emergency and transitional shelter for homeless youth ages 10 to 20; and

5. Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, which provides shelter for victims of domestic abuse.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, INC.

The clients of Community Outreach, Inc (COI) may use the emergency shelter, the transitional shelter, or both. *Clients of COI must be residents of Benton, Lincoln and Linn Counties and are required to be clean and sober*. Lengths of stay are variable (and unavailable for this analysis). The COI data cover an entire year, reflecting the fact that COI shelters are open year-round. COI clients may move from homelessness into housing.

FIGURE 9: NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS SERVED BY COMMUNITY OUTREACH, INC. EMERGENCY SHELTER, BY YEAR

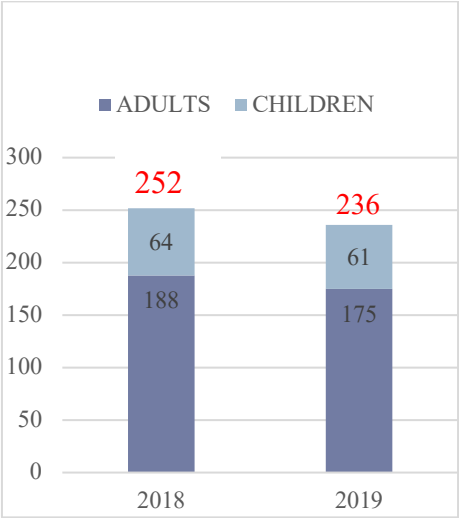


The uptick from 85 to 164 in one year was explained by COI as follows:

"It was the second season that we invited single men and women to use the shelter. Until 2018 we were primarily a family shelter with a few single adults being referred by community partners."

"The increase in numbers was primarily seen when cold weather shelters closed for the season."

FIGURE 10: NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS SERVED BY COMMUNITY OUTREACH, INC. TRANSITIONAL SHELTER, BY YEAR



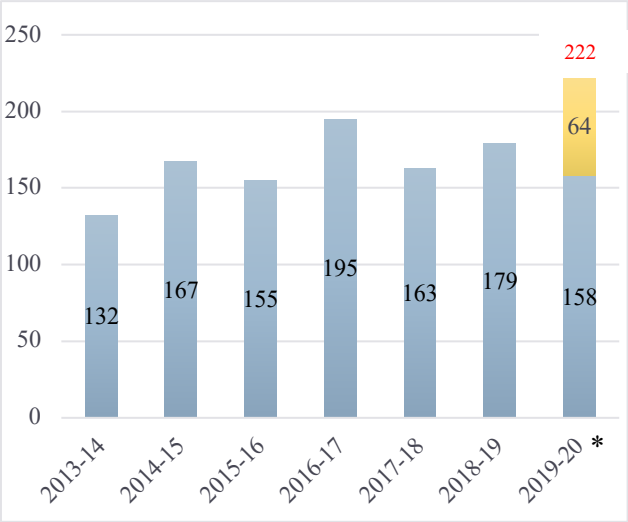
In 2019, COI served 164 emergency clients and 236 clients they were assisting in transitioning to more stable permanent housing.

MEN'S COLD WEATHER SHELTER

The Men's Cold Weather Shelter (MCWS), operated by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis since 2017-18 and by Corvallis Housing First before that, serves homeless men during the five-month period from November 1 through March 31. During the shelter season, men are admitted each evening for overnight stays and then leave in the morning. Many of the men served fall into the category of "chronically homeless" and have physical and mental health disabilities as well as addiction problems. There are 50 beds available.

MCWS maintains in-depth data on their clients. Some clients may move to the COI facility (and vice versa), but it is not possible from either agency's data to assess those movements, so some duplication of counts is probable.

FIGURE 11: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS AT MEN'S COLD WEATHER SHELTER BY SEASON

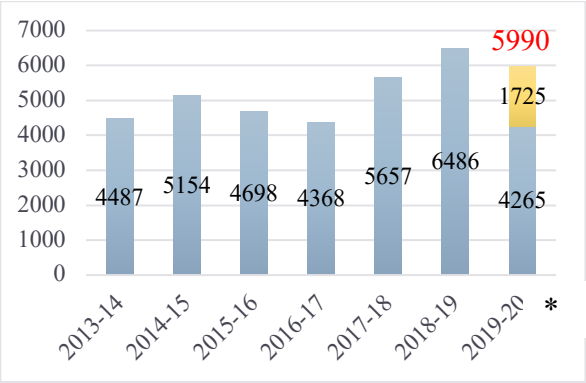


In 2018-19:

52% of clients reported being homeless for more than 1 year, 55% of clients had used the shelter in a previous year.

17% were military veterans.

FIGURE 12: NUMBER OF BED NIGHTS PROVIDED AT MEN'S COLD WEATHER SHELTER, BY SEASON



Clients rarely use the shelter every night it is open. Hospitalizations, periods of incarceration, visits with family or friends, missing the entry window (entry is prohibited after 8 p.m.) are a few of the reasons.

In 2018-19, veterans used 24.3% of bed nights.

* Data from 2019-2020 cover the 104-day period from November 1, 2019 through February 13, 2020, with estimates (yellow) through March 31.

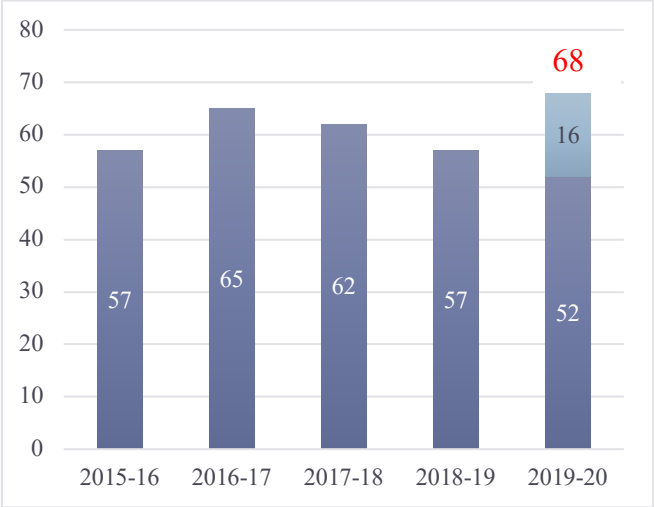
Other demographic findings for MCWS in 2018-19 were:

- the average length of stay was 47 nights and the average age was 37,
- the median length of stay was 13 nights (half of men stayed 13 nights or more, half 13 nights or less) and the median age was 45,
- ten percent of the clients stayed 120 nights or more and their average age was 47.
- another ten percent stayed 77-119 nights,
- one-third of the clients stayed 5 nights or less.

ROOM AT THE INN

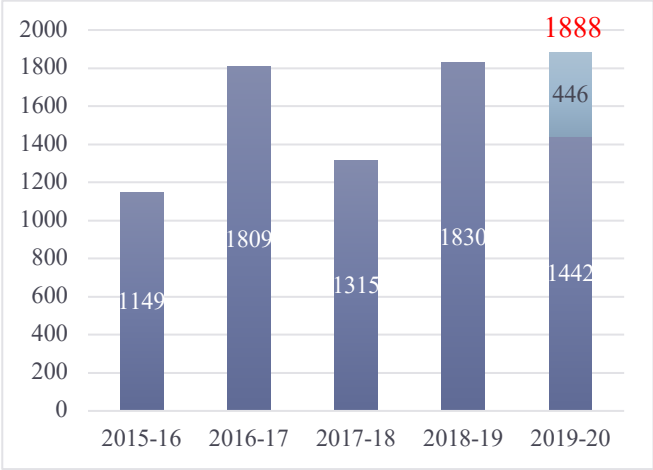
Room at the Inn operates a cold weather shelter for homeless women and relies on the same data system as the Men's Cold Weather Shelter. There were 18 beds available in 2019-20 with roughly 80% occupancy, although the shelter is sometimes full. As with the MCWS, clients may move back and forth between COI and Room at the Inn.

FIGURE 13: NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED AT ROOM AT THE INN WOMEN'S SHELTER, BY SEASON*



The number of women using the shelter has not increased over the years and the estimate for additional women in 2020 is probably high since the clientele is fairly steady.
In 2018-19:
8.8% of clients were veterans and used 5.5% of bed nights.
38% were homeless one year or more.
About 40% had used the shelter in a prior year.

FIGURE 14: NUMBER OF BED NIGHTS PROVIDED AT ROOM AT THE INN WOMEN'S SHELTER, BY SEASON*



Demand for bed nights may vary for weather reasons as well as numbers of homeless in the community.

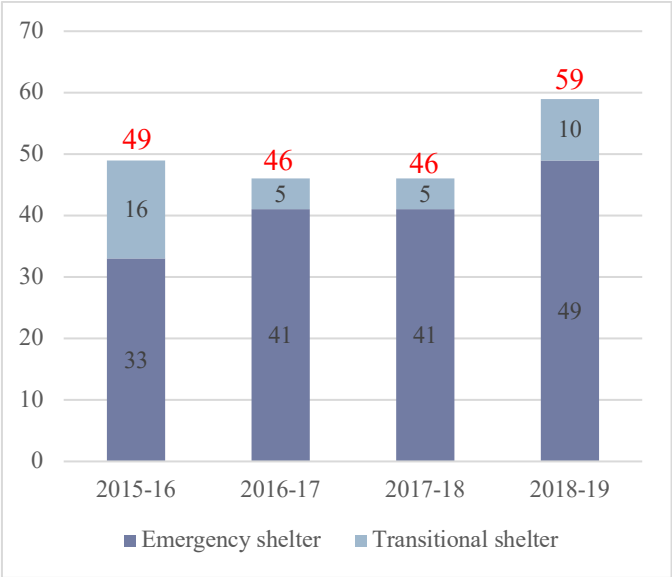
* Data from 2019-2020 cover the 105-day period from November 1, 2019 through February 13, 2020 with an estimate through March 31.

JACKSON STREET YOUTH SERVICES

Jackson Street Youth Services provides emergency and transitional shelter for youth ages 10 to 20 in Benton and Linn Counties. Jackson Street Corvallis House for Benton County youth is a 12-bed facility for youth ages 10 to 17 (sometimes 18) with both emergency stays and long-term transitional stays. Next Steps in Corvallis provides transitional housing services in a 4-bed facility for youth age 18 to 20 with stays as long as 18 months. More capacity is available in Albany. The fiscal year is July1 to June 30.

We cannot estimate the overlap between Jackson Street clients and the homeless youth served by the Corvallis 509J School District.

FIGURE 15: NUMBER OF BENTON COUNTY CLIENTS SERVED BY JACKSON STREET YOUTH SERVICES, BY TYPE OF SHELTER, BY SEASON



Jackson Street had a waiting list for transitional shelter in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

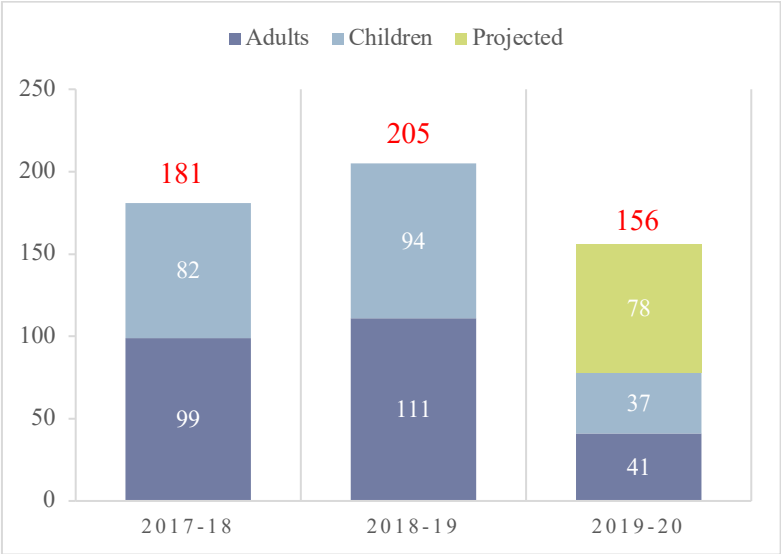
Average length of stay in emergency shelter in 2018-19 was 10 days but varies widely.

During FY 2018-19, Jackson Street Youth Services reported serving 13 unaccompanied youth, not from families. This is an increase over the 5 and 7 unaccompanied youth in the prior two years.

CENTER AGAINST RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV) provides emergency shelter to adults (all genders) and children who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking. The average length of stay is approximately 30 days and can be extended as needed. The fiscal year is July1 to June 30.

FIGURE 16: CENTER AGAINST RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN, 2017-18 TO 2019-20

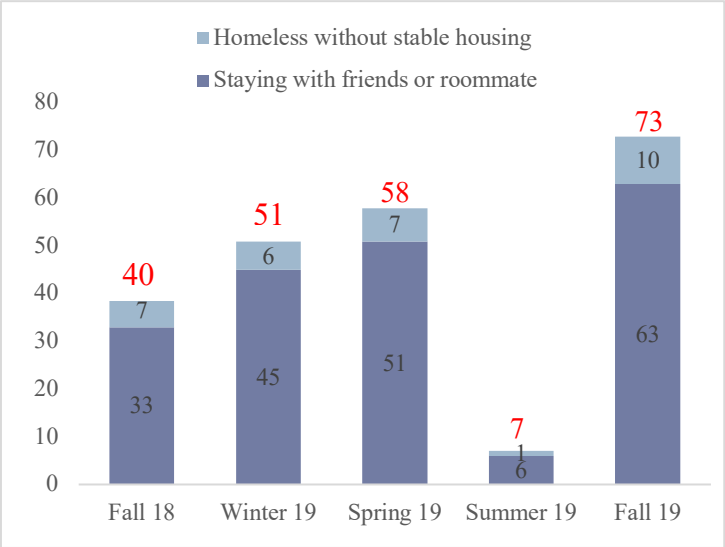


Our previous report did not include CARDV and the number of people sheltered here was significant compared to the numbers sheltered elsewhere.

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCE CENTER

In recent years, Oregon State University has put an emphasis on helping students with food and housing insecurity. While housing insecurity (living one paycheck from losing housing) is widespread at all levels of our community, we do not deal with it in this homelessness report. The OSU Human Resource Center has gathered data on student homelessness through self-reported data collected from students applying for financial aid that is used with their student ID for purchasing meals. As with school age children, these figures can include doubling-up or couch surfing and those numbers are shown separately.

FIGURE 17: NUMBER OF OSU STUDENTS IDENTIFYING AS HOMELESS, FALL 2018-FALL 2019



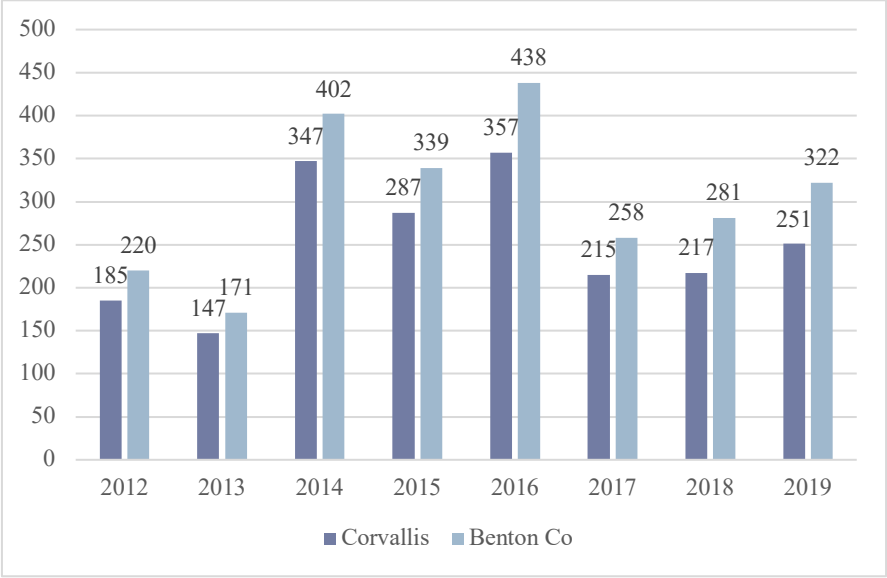
The Human Services Resource Center runs an Emergency Housing Program for homeless students as determined by a Basic Needs Navigator. Ten students stayed in the housing provided by the Emergency Housing Program for a total of 170 nights during Fall Term 2019.
Currently, 10 beds are available.

The OSU data indicate that only 10-20 students per term meet the "homeless" criteria. It is important to note that homelessness is an additional burden these students carry in their effort to gain an education and research has shown that being homeless has a negative impact on their ability to learn.

DATA FROM THE BENTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annually, the Benton County Health Department compiles a report on the homeless individuals treated at its Community Health Centers (CHCs) located in Linn and Benton Counties. Clients treated in CHCs self-identify by community and so those from Corvallis can be identified as well as those from other communities in Benton County.

FIGURE 18: HOMELESS PATIENTS FROM CORVALLIS AND BENTON COUNTY SEEN IN BENTON AND LINN HEALTH CLINICS, 2012-2018

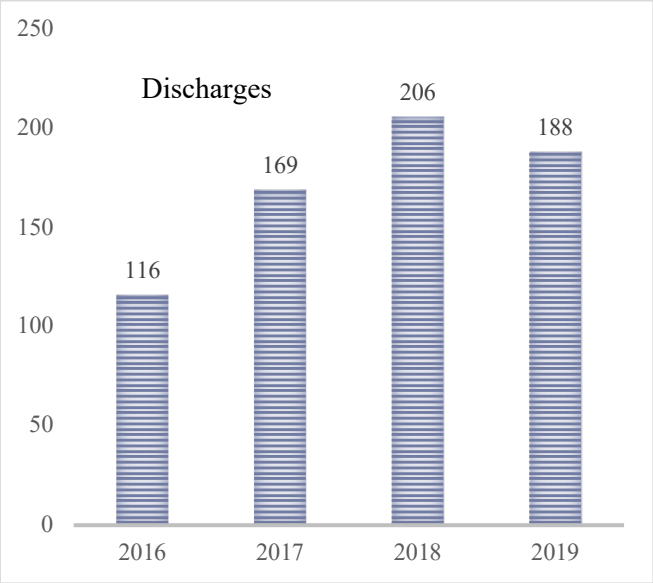


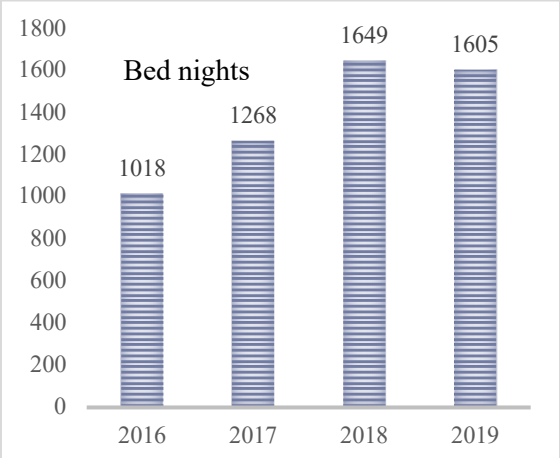
We cannot estimate the overlap between COI clients, shelter clients, Jackson Street clients, and Health Department clients.

DATA FROM GOOD SAMARITAN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

The Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis provided month-by-month data on patients identified as homeless discharged for 2016 through 2019*. The data show that the number of individuals treated has increased over recent years with about a 60% increase in discharges and bed nights in 2019 over 2016.

FIGURE 19: DISCHARGES AND BED NIGHTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE HOMELESS, GOOD SAMARITAN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, 2016-2019





Samaritan tracked use of their services by men's shelter clients in 2018-19. Of 179 individuals, 152 could be identified by Samaritan and their usage measured. These 152 individuals had:

232 primary care visits (primarily pain related)
533 emergency room visits (most common diagnoses: substance abuse or mental health)
47 hospitalizations

In November 2019, Samaritan began Mobile Van Services Thursday mornings at the Men's Shelter for vaccinations, cold/flu symptoms, STI testing, wound care, minor infections, sore throat and ear pain. At MCWS, the Benton County Health Department provides Community Resources for Food and Healthcare and Oregon Health Plan assistance.

*These data differ greatly from the 2016 data for admissions presented in our prior report and it is believed that the prior data were for the entire Samaritan system.

DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER
Of 331 homeless identified in the 2019 PIT, 210 (63%) were male, 119 (36%) female and 2 (~0.5%) trans/non-binary. The percentage of women increased slightly from 32% in 2015.

AGE
Average age of men at the Men's Cold Weather Shelter has increased from 44 to 46 from 2015 to 2019. The average age of women at Room at the Inn was 44 for 2018-19. The ages of homeless populations for the 2019 PIT were not available.

VETERAN STATUS
The 2019 PIT found 26 military veterans without housing, 22 men and 2 women
At the Men's Cold Weather Shelter in 2018-19, 30 (16.8%) of clients identified as veterans, consistent with prior years.
At Room at the Inn in 2018-19, 5 (8.8%) identified as veterans

RACE AND ETHNICITY
Ethnic data are available from the Department of Human Services SNAP program, Benton County Health Department and the Men's Cold Weather Shelter. The diversity of SNAP clients appears greater than that of clients of the Benton County Health Department.

	SNAP		BCHD		MCWS*	
Asian	7	1.1%	8	1.4%	2	1.1%
Black	24	3.6%	5	0.9%	5	2.8%
Native American	25	3.8%	5	0.9%	19	10.7%
Multiple	5	0.8%	28	4.9%	4	2.2%
Other	6	0.9%	32	5.6%		
Pacific Islander	4	0.6%	3	0.5%	5	2.8%
Unknown	31	4.7%	38	6.7%	50	28.1%
Hispanic	31	4.7%	37	6.5%	14	7.9%
Non-Hispanic white	527	80.0%	414	72.6%	79	44.4%
	659		570		178	

*Data from MCWS are distorted for non-Hispanic whites because 28% of men did not volunteer information on race or ethnicity. The majority of those men were probably non-Hispanic and white.

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND HEALTH INSURANCE

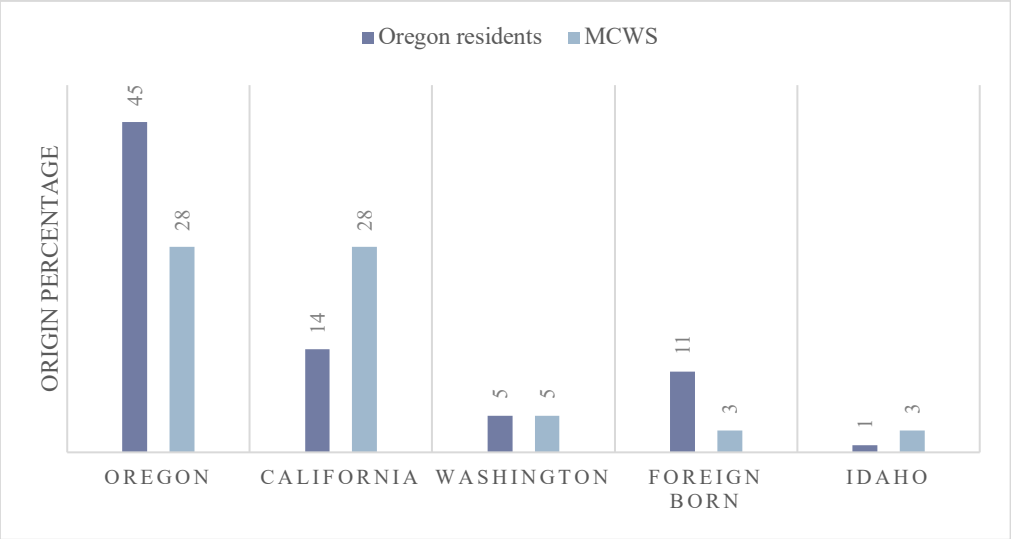
The Men's Cold Weather Shelter asks clients to self-identify on public support used. The Benton County Health Department tracks health insurance for those self-identifying as homeless treated in their clinics. The BCHD figures include both Benton and Linn Counties. The data for MCWS in 2018-19 and BCHD for 2019 are shown below:

	MCWS		BCHD	
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	34	19.1%		
Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)	30	16.9%		
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	99	55.6%		
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	1	0.6%		
Oregon Health Plan (OHP) (Medicaid)	93	52.2%	481	68.2%
Medicare			79	11.2%
Other			1	0.1%
Private insurance			58	8.2%
None			86	12.2%
			705	

WHERE ARE HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS FROM?

We have records of birth state from the Men's Cold Weather Shelter and Room at the Inn. The origins were not a lot different from what was found in our first report. Note that 18% percent of MCWS clients failed to identify a place of origin.

FIGURE 20: ORIGINS OF OREGON RESIDENTS AND MCWS RESIDENTS, BY STATE, 2018-19

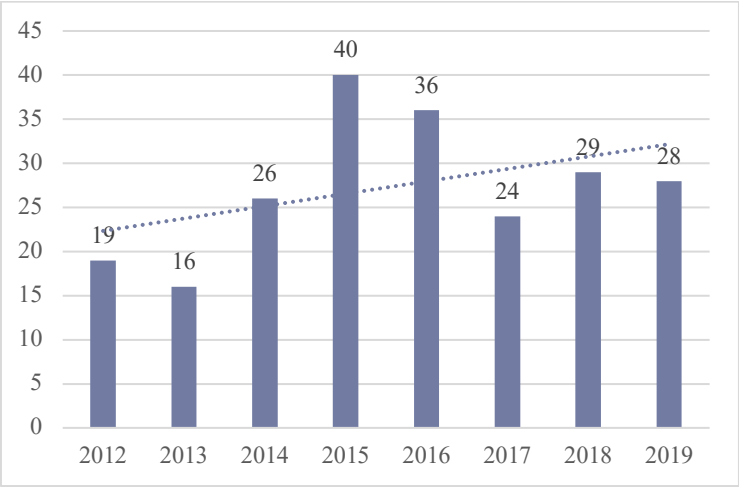


The Oregon percentage at MCWS was 4% higher than the average in 2014-2015 to 2016-2017, while the California percentage rose from about 17% and Washington remains about the same. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, which publishes data on state-to-state migration patterns, only 45% of Oregonians in 2018 were born in Oregon (down from 46% in 2015); all others were born in another state or country.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE UNSHELTERED?

No group is more difficult to count than the unsheltered. In our extensive search across service agencies, only one provided any information whatsoever on particular unsheltered situations: streets, camps, and bridges. Unfortunately, these data are not limited to Corvallis or Benton County.

FIGURE 21: HOMELESS PERSONS REPORTING STREET, CAMP, OR BRIDGE RESIDENCE AT LINN AND BENTON COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



SURPRISING RESULTS:

What was a very alarming trendline from 2012 to 2015, now has flattened somewhat, with an increase in people who are unsheltered appearing to be about 50%.

CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION?

Clearly, we still have no way to account for all people experiencing homelessness in Corvallis and Benton County. Two factors in particular must be taken into account:

- A point-in-time snapshot of a single day will differ from a number that is cumulative over a period of time.
- Some types of homelessness may be more likely to be underrepresented in data sources than others. As our analysis has shown, data on individuals experiencing homelessness may be much less complete than data on those who are sheltered and, therefore, more easily counted and assessed.

As in our previous report (2017), we have attempted to establish a reasonable range for the homeless population, to the best of our ability, with the PIT count as our minimum. Two other methods of estimating a maximum homeless count over a year were used.

METHOD 1

For Method 1, we included the following groups:

For the sheltered homeless:

- Clients of COI (transitional and) emergency shelters.
- Clients of CHF Men's Cold Weather Shelter.
- Clients of Room at the Inn women's shelter.
- Clients of Jackson Street Youth Services (transitional and) emergency shelter.
- Clients of CARDV (2020 only)
- Clients of Emergency Program, OSU Human Services Resource Center (2020 only)

While some overlap will exist as a result of transfers from one shelter to another, those numbers are unlikely to materially impact the conclusions. Importantly, COI and Jackson Street shelters operate year-round, while the men's and women's shelters do not. This is one reason that accounting for the unsheltered homeless is critical.

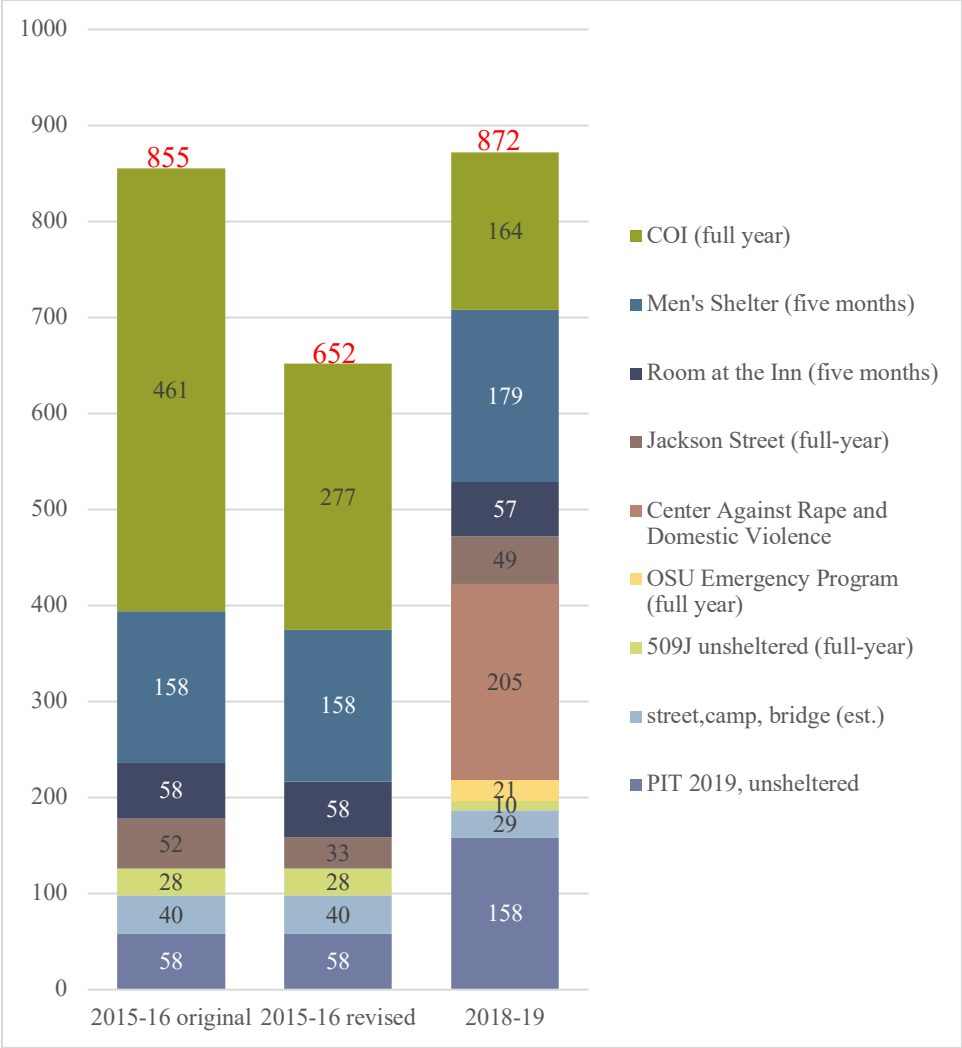
For the individuals that are unsheltered:

- Unsheltered students of Corvallis 509J school district. Sheltered students were excluded because they are likely captured elsewhere (e.g., COI or Jackson Street). Similarly, 509J students who were classified as "doubled up" were excluded because that category is unique to the school district's accounting. Unfortunately, the extent of this "doubled up" or "couch surfing" in the general population is unknown.
- Patients of Linn and Benton County CHCs whose residence was reported as street, camp, or bridge. Other patients of the CHCs were not counted because that would likely lead to significant double counting. While it was not possible to separate Linn and Benton County in these data, this is unlikely to materially impact the conclusions.

- Individuals that are unsheltered from the PIT. Their inclusion is our best attempt to compensate for the obvious problem of undercounting the unsheltered. Other sources simply do not exist.

Those in transitional housing and shelter should not be included as homeless. They usually go on to other housing or remain in permanent supported housing. Revised Method 1 eliminates the transitional residents from Community Outreach and Jackson Street Youth Services.

FIGURE 22: ESTIMATED COUNT OF HOMELESS PERSONS, CORVALLIS/BENTON COUNTY, 2019 — METHOD 1



METHOD 2

Because of the myriad of problems with data on unsheltered persons, we also adopted a second method of indirectly estimating the unsheltered.

- We used the ratio of unsheltered to total persons who are unhoused (48%) in Benton County from the 2019 PIT and applied it to the sheltered homeless counts from the six sources of shelter, above. The ratio from the 2015 PIT was (42%).
- The result was an estimated annual count of unsheltered homeless persons that did not rely on school district or Benton County Health Department data and did not simply accept the PIT count of unsheltered persons, which did not cover the entire year.

FIGURE 23: ESTIMATED COUNT OF HOMELESS PERSONS, CORVALLIS/BENTON COUNTY, 2019 — METHOD 2

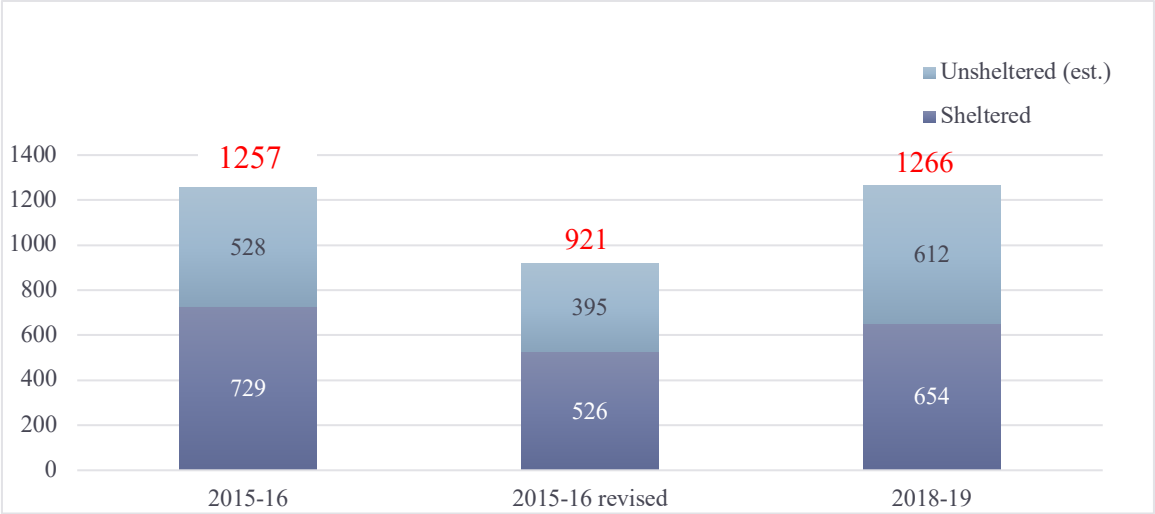
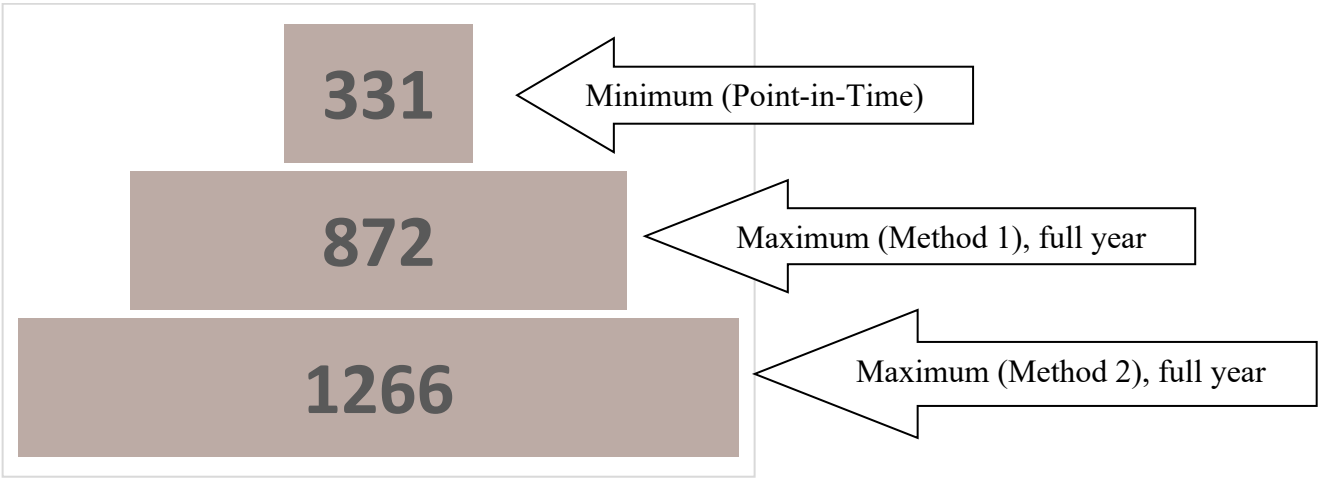


FIGURE 24: NUMBER OF HOMELESS PERSONS, ESTIMATED RANGE, CORVALLIS/BENTON COUNTY, 2019-20



Is 872 a credible maximum?

- Its principal flaw is that it undercounts the unsheltered. It primarily counts sheltered individuals.

Is 1,266 a credible maximum?

- It relies on a rough estimate of the unsheltered homeless, but it is probably superior to the Method 1 maximum.

These numbers provide an even wider range for homelessness than those of our report of 2017 which showed 127/855/1257 for the three methods.

The 2019 PIT was 331 (sheltered and non-sheltered) and was up 160% over 2015
The 2020 PIT was 248 (sheltered and non-sheltered), up 95% over 2015
The 2015 PIT was only 127, but Figure 4 appears to show a leveling off of PIT counts in the last four years.

What was a very alarming trend line for 2012 to 2015 in our last report is much less severe in the four years included here.

Of most concern in these data is the increase in the ratio of unsheltered to sheltered. While the PIT count of unsheltered in 2015-16 was 58 the rise to 158 in 2018-19 was huge and the drop to 140 in 2020 is hardly significant.

There are severe limitations to our data:

- There is clearly overlap in provision of services by various shelters.
- The PIT count is voluntary, and some people choose not to respond.
- The PIT count at COI appears to include those in transitional housing who generally have not been counted as homeless. Additional people in transitional housing are at Housing First, Jackson Street and other programs and are not included in the PIT.
- Organizations are still developing their recordkeeping abilities. In gathering data for this report, some agencies noted deficiencies in their recordkeeping. A standardized tracking system among agencies would reduce duplication and improve the quality of the data.
- Data in this report include those sheltered at CARDV. These people were not included in our sheltered counts in our 2017 report but were included in the PIT (at least in 2020).

FINAL THOUGHTS

Public decision making requires good information. Budgets cannot be built without it. Taxes cannot (or should not) be levied without it. Health care quality cannot be improved without it. Even the U.S. Constitution contains the requirement for a decennial census because the Founders recognized how important counting the population was for governance.

In this report, the Housing Committee of the League of Women Voters of Corvallis has presented a better set of numbers regarding homelessness in Corvallis/Benton County than in our last report. We and the agencies we work with continue to refine data collection and coordination.

Our numbers reiterate and reinforce our 2017 report in the essence of the conclusion reached: Our community has an identified group of persons without housing and without adequate services for mental and physical health. They are a very visible segment of our society whose needs, absent a formal governmental structure for housing and care, call for an individual response from our community members. Because the only solution for homelessness is addressing each person, one case at a time, our community must address this challenge. Whenever we can bring a person into shelter, there is the opportunity to connect that person to services that allow them to move out of homelessness. More shelter and permanent supported housing is needed.

According to the ECONorthwest Report of 2019 (Homelessness in Oregon), the concrete actions our community can employ to address homelessness are four:
1. Expand the housing supply
2. Increase low-mid income housing opportunities
3. Provide for the chronically homeless
4. Establish permanent shelter for emergency use

The data sources cited in this report are actively involved in one or more of these action areas. Community members who desire to participate in these efforts will find basic information in the attached pages about the named groups along with contact information for each. So long as the efforts to help persons experiencing homelessness are reliant on individual effort from the other community members, the more of us who become involved means the more progress we will make towards solutions.

If you can't measure it, you can't fix it.
--- DJ Patil
First U.S. Chief Data Scientist

APPENDIX

CORVALLIS HOUSING FIRST

Target population: chronically homeless

Admission requirement: behavior-based; person's needs fit available housing

Facilities: Partners Place (14 units); Van Buren House (18 units + respite); DeDe's Home (4 beds + respite)

Services: transitional & supportive housing; case management; rent support

Number served: housing: 34 units + 2 respite; case management in-house plus 50+ in outreach services to men's shelter, Safe Place and on the street

Funding: donations, tenant rent, grants

Annual budget: $400,000

Contact: 541 230-1297
director@corvallishousingfirst.org
www.corvallishousingfirst.org

CORVALLIS MEN'S SHELTER

Target population: unsheltered men 18 and over

Admission requirement: behavior-based

Facility: 211 SE Chapman Place (50 beds) Nov 1-Mar 31

Services: shelter, food, showers, case management

Number served: 180 (2019-20 season)

Funding: City of Corvallis, Benton County, donations

Annual budget: $165,000

Fiscal agent: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis

CONTACT: on-site/message phone: 541-250-5113 (answered only during operational hours in season)
Shelter manager: 541 791-6691
Mens.Shelter.Manager@gmail.com

ROOM AT THE INN WOMEN'S SHELTER

Target population: unsheltered women

Admission requirement: behavior-based

Facility: First United Methodist Church 1165 NW Monroe St (18 beds)

Services: shelter & snacks Nov 1-Mar31; case management year-round

Number served: 64 individuals yearly

Funding: donations, grants, fundraisers

Annual budget: $120,000

Contact: 541 232-6772
outreach@corvallisfumc.org

COMMUNITY OUTREACH INC

Target population: families, men, women who are experiencing homelessness

Admission requirement: sobriety; appropriate behavior

Facility: 865 NW Reiman Ave, Corvallis (11 family units, 16 men's beds; 12 women's beds)

Services: transitional housing; emergency shelter as available; hold medical & dental clinics; out-patient mental health, alcohol & drug treatment; childcare; day services such as food boxes, showers, mail service

Number served: 5500 individuals annually

Funding: grants, donations, contracts with service agencies

Annual budget: $1,665,856 (2018)

CONTACT: 541 758-3000
http://communityoutreachinc.org

JACKSON ST YOUTH SERVICES

Target population: youth ages 10-24

Admission requirement: need and behavior-based

Facilities: 555 NW Jackson St, Corvallis (12 beds); Next Steps (4 beds) confidential; 1240 SE 7th Ave, Albany (10 beds)

Services: outreach; harm reduction; support groups; shelter; family. mediation; transitional housing; life skills training; case management

Number served: FY 18-19 outreach 563, 24/7 shelter 142, Next Steps 26

Funding: government and private grants, community donations, contracts with partners

Annual budget: $1,700,000

CONTACT: Corvallis 541 754-2404
Albany 541 220-2950
24 HR HOTLINE: 1-800-901-2904

STONE SOUP CORVALLIS, INC.

Target population: the hungry

Admission requirement: behavior-based

Facilities: St Mary's Catholic Church, 501 NW 25th St; First Christian Church, 602 SW Madison

Services: one hot meal per day

Funding: donations, grants

Number served: 32,000 per year

Annual budget: $73,500

CONTACT: 541 752-6634
www.stonesoupcorvallis.org
PO Box 2381, Corvallis OR 97339

CENTER AGAINST RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (CARDV)

Target population: individuals affected by sexual and domestic violence (including stalking, sex trafficking and teen dating violence).

Admission requirement: contact the 24-hour crisis and support line (541-754-0110) or meet with a CARDV advocate in person. CARDV services are free, confidential, and available to those affected by sexual and domestic violence.

Facilities: 3 public offices (2 in Corvallis and 1 in Lebanon), 2 confidential emergency shelters

Services: 24-hour crisis and support line; online chat advocacy; confidential emergency shelter; legal advocacy; community crisis response advocacy; weekly support groups; resources for sexual assault survivors; community education

Number served (approximate numbers from 2018/2019, not a comprehensive list of all services): answered 6,000 crisis and support calls; sheltered 200 people; provided legal advocacy to 900 survivors; crisis response advocacy to 3,600 individuals

Funding: grants and private funding

Annual budget: 1.5 million
CONTACT: Crisis and Support Line: 541-754-0110

Administrative Building
541-758-0219
4786 SW Philomath Blvd
Corvallis, OR 97330

Advocacy Center
541-738-8319
2208 SW 3rd St.
Corvallis, OR 97333

Mailing address: P.O. Box 914, Corvallis OR, 97339

EMAIL: info@cardv.org

WEBSITE: www.cardv.org

League of Women Voters of Corvallis
P.O. Box 1679
Corvallis, OR 97339

Website — www.lwv.corvallis.or.us

Facebook — LWV Corvallis