

Scranton/Lackawanna Unsheltered Plan

CoC PA-508

Unsheltered Plan Taskforce Committee

This plan illustrates unsheltered homelessness in Lackawanna County and demonstrates various pathways to housing for those who are unhoused. This plan was written between April to July 2023 in conjunction with a special Unsheltered Plan Taskforce Committee. The Taskforce Committee met three times during the months of May and June 2023 to provide insight into unsheltered homelessness within Lackawanna County and share how their organization helps the unsheltered find stable housing. The Taskforce Committee was supported by the sixteen organizations listed below. This plan was only made possible through their support, and the SLCoC is grateful to work with so many outstanding organizations in Lackawanna County!

- Catherine McAuley Center (CMC)
- City of Scranton - Multiple Departments
- Keystone Mission (KM)
- Lackawanna County Veterans Affairs (VA)
- North Penn Legal Services
- St. Joseph's Center (SJC)
- United Way of Lackawanna & Wayne Counties
- Valley Youth House (VYH)
- Wright Center for Community Health
- Catholic Social Services (CSS)
- Community Intervention Center (CIC)
- Lackawanna County Department of Health and Human Services (LCDHS)
- NEPA Youth Shelter
- Scranton Primary Health Care Center (SPHCC)
- United Neighborhood Centers (UNC)
- Women's Resource Center (WRC)

Collaboration

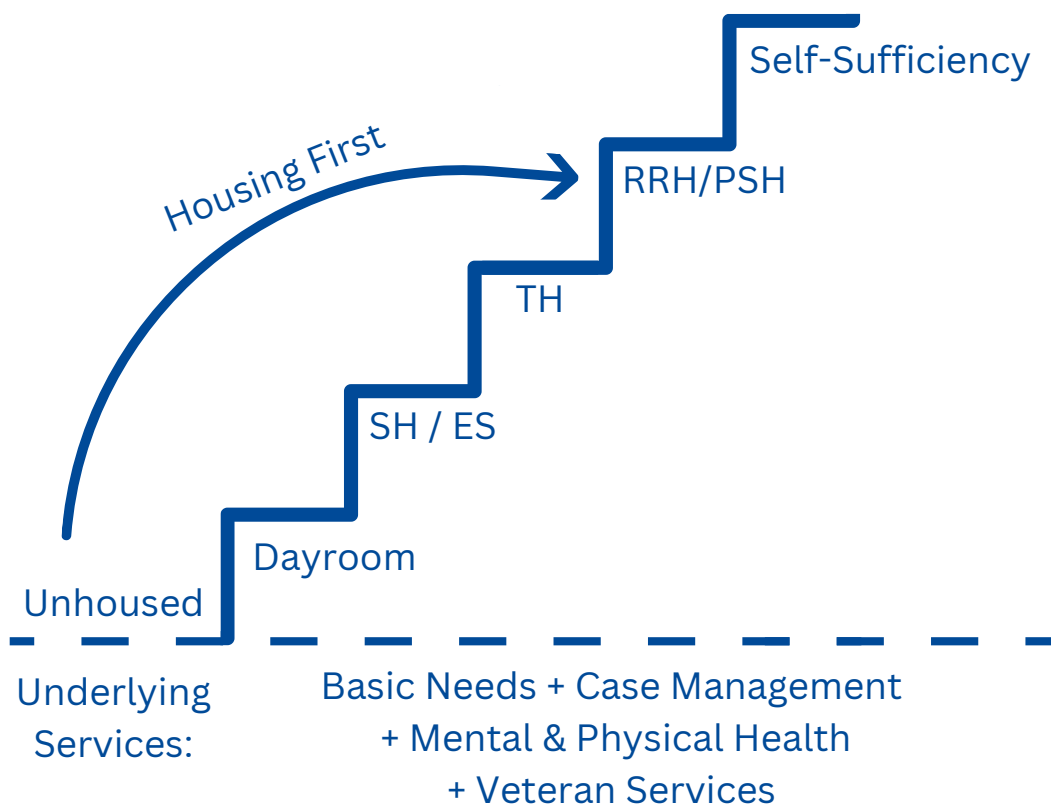
Supporting those experiencing homelessness requires county-wide collaboration and a multifaceted approach. As such, the SLCoC supports a "No Wrong Door" approach where CoC-funded agencies share one centralized Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). As stated by HUD, "a 'No Wrong Door' approach in which a homeless family or individual can present at any homeless housing and service provider in the geographic area but is assessed using the same tool and methodology so that referrals are consistently completed across the CoC" (Source: [Link](#)). This approach allows for smooth referrals between the five HMIS participating organizations, including CIC, CMC, CSS, UNC, and VYH. Looking beyond the SLCoC, this spirit of collaboration is true of many service providers in the area who frequently collaborate and welcome client referrals.

Diagram: From Unhoused to Self-Sufficiency

Most pathways to housing begin at CIC or KM. Both CIC and KM offer drop-in dayrooms, food, and other basic services. CIC and KM are readily accessible to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness and serve as a frequent first point of contact in Scranton. From CIC or KM, people are often referred to one of the area's Emergency Shelters (ES) or, if eligible, CIC's Safe Haven (SH). From ES or SH, people are often referred to a Transitional Housing (TH) program, Rapid ReHousing (RRH) program, or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) when ready. The SLCoC's Housing First model also empowers people to enter housing through RRH/PSH at their own discretion. The SH, TH, RRH, and PSH categories below are used as defined by HUD.

Underlying services can be accessed at any point during one's journey from unsheltered homelessness to self-sufficiency. Basic needs include food, clothing, showers, and laundry services. Various providers offer services to address basic needs, as listed below under 'Programs & Services.' Other underlying services include physical health services at SPHCC and similar providers, mental health services at Scranton Counseling Center, and other veteran-specific services. CoC and Non-CoC agencies alike offer case management to connect people with housing resources and help maintain safe and affordable housing.

SLCoC Housing First Diagram:



Lackawanna's Unsheltered Population

Unsheltered homelessness can affect anyone at any time. In Lackawanna County, homelessness most often affects single mothers with children and single, middle-aged males. Frequent causes of homelessness include financial instability, rising rent prices, and a limited housing stock in and around the City of Scranton. In this plan, homelessness is described in two categories as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): [literal homelessness](#) and [chronic homelessness](#).

Literal Homelessness: Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

1. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; *or*
2. Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); *or*
3. Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Source: [CoC and ESG Homeless Eligibility - Category 1: Literally Homeless - HUD Exchange](#)

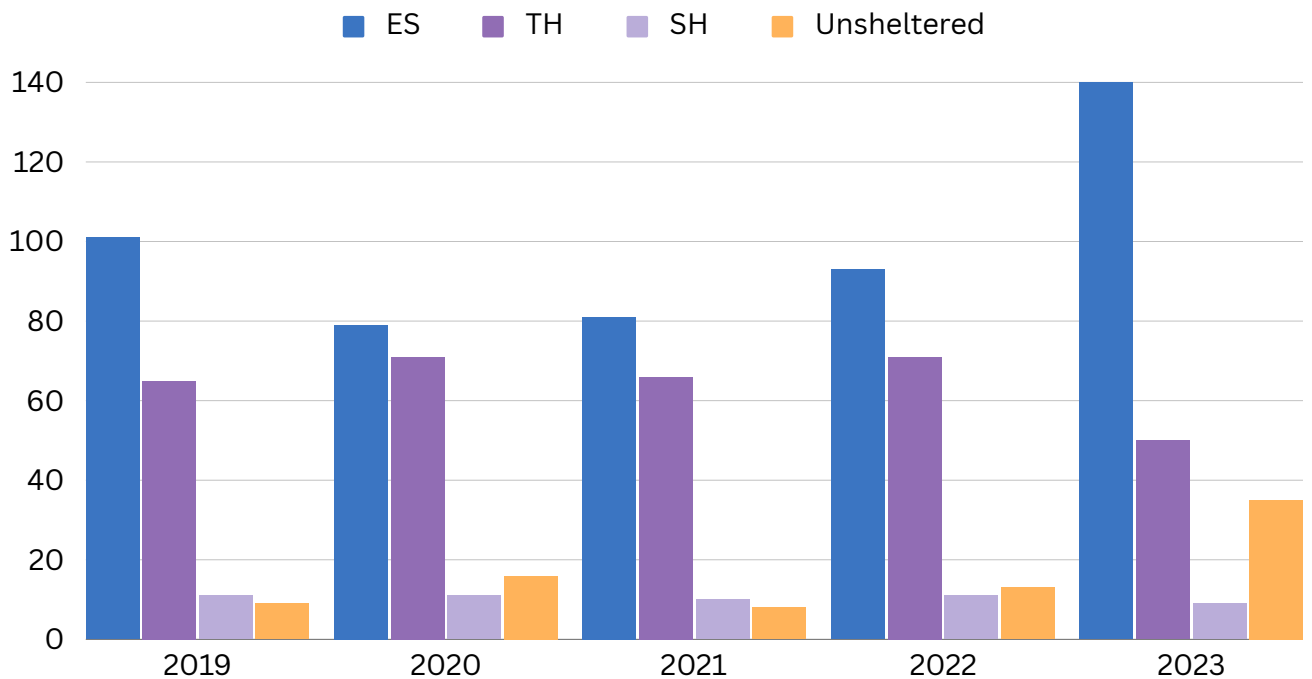
Causes: Initial homelessness can be caused by any major life change or catastrophic event that causes a loss of stable housing. Common life changes include: job loss, a health condition, divorce, domestic abuse, a substance use disorder, familial rejection due to LGBTQ+ status, or any other personal or family crisis.

Sleeping at Night: Cars, abandoned buildings, emergency shelters, transitional housing, or motel/hotel vouchers paid with government or charitable funds.

Narrative: In Lackawanna County, a loss of housing typically stems from the loss of employment or an inability to pay rent. Post-pandemic rent prices have been on the rise due to a limited housing stock in Lackawanna County and out-of-state landlords raising rent prices. Rising rent continues to be the leading cause of literal homelessness in Lackawanna County. This reality is reflected in PA-508's Point-In-Time data, with increasing Emergency Shelter (ES) stays and increasing total homelessness from 2021-2023.

Point-In-Time (PIT) data from 2019–2023 suggests that the majority of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness are residing in Emergency Shelters (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), or a Safe Haven (SH) program. While insightful, efforts to improve the SLCoC PIT in 2024 may reveal a larger unsheltered population than previously reported.

Point-In-Time by Program: 2019-2023 (Appendix 1)



Common Unsheltered Locations: Individuals without access to a personal vehicle or who are not enrolled in an ES, TH, or SH program often sleep outside in cars, abandoned buildings, behind public buildings, in public parks, under bridges, or in tent communities. Most people sleeping outside reside near Scranton's two homeless hospitality centers: Community Intervention Center (CIC) and Keystone Mission (KM). The Lackawanna Heritage Trail in Scranton is a frequent destination for tent communities given its thick surrounding forest and numerous overpass bridges. With the exception of the Scranton Expressway, all of the bridges listed below cross over the Lackawanna Heritage Trail. This trail also supports a community pavilion near W. Olive St. between CIC and KM that is frequently visited by those without housing. The pavilion offers shade, has power outlets used to charge mobile devices, and is a known area for drug trafficking and alcohol consumption.

Parks	Lackawanna Heritage Trail; Rockwell Park; Sweeny Beach; Nay-Aug Park
Bridges	W Lackawanna Ave; Linden St; US 11 near Mulberry St; W Olive St; Poplar St; Scranton Expressway
Business	U-Hal Moving & Storage of Scranton; Sheetz Gas Station on 7th Ave; Lackawanna Transit Center; Steamtown Mall Parking Garage
Other	Cars (parking lots at night); Wooded areas near CIC & KM; Railroad tracks along Lackawanna River

Local Data: CIC and KM offer various services, including a dayroom, meals, showers, laundry, food pantry, clothing closet, and more. A full list of CIC and KM's programs is provided below. CIC and KM both report around 70 known unsheltered individuals in the City of Scranton and about 100 people who use their services daily. Both organizations report that the vast majority of their consumers are middle-aged, white/Caucasian males. These reported demographics align closely with local Census and SLCoC data (Appendix 3 & 4).

	Total	Women	Men	Nonbinary
Unsheltered Population*	71	12	59	-
CIC Daily Average	90-110	25-30%	70-75%	0-3%
KM Daily Average	80-100	16%	74%	11%

*Reported on May 15, 2023 by CIC Street Outreach Coordinator

Chronic Homelessness: People experiencing chronic homelessness have been literally homeless for +12 months and have a disabling condition. Disabling conditions can include physical, mental, or emotional impairment, typically caused by an underlying mental or physical health condition, alcohol dependence, or substance abuse.

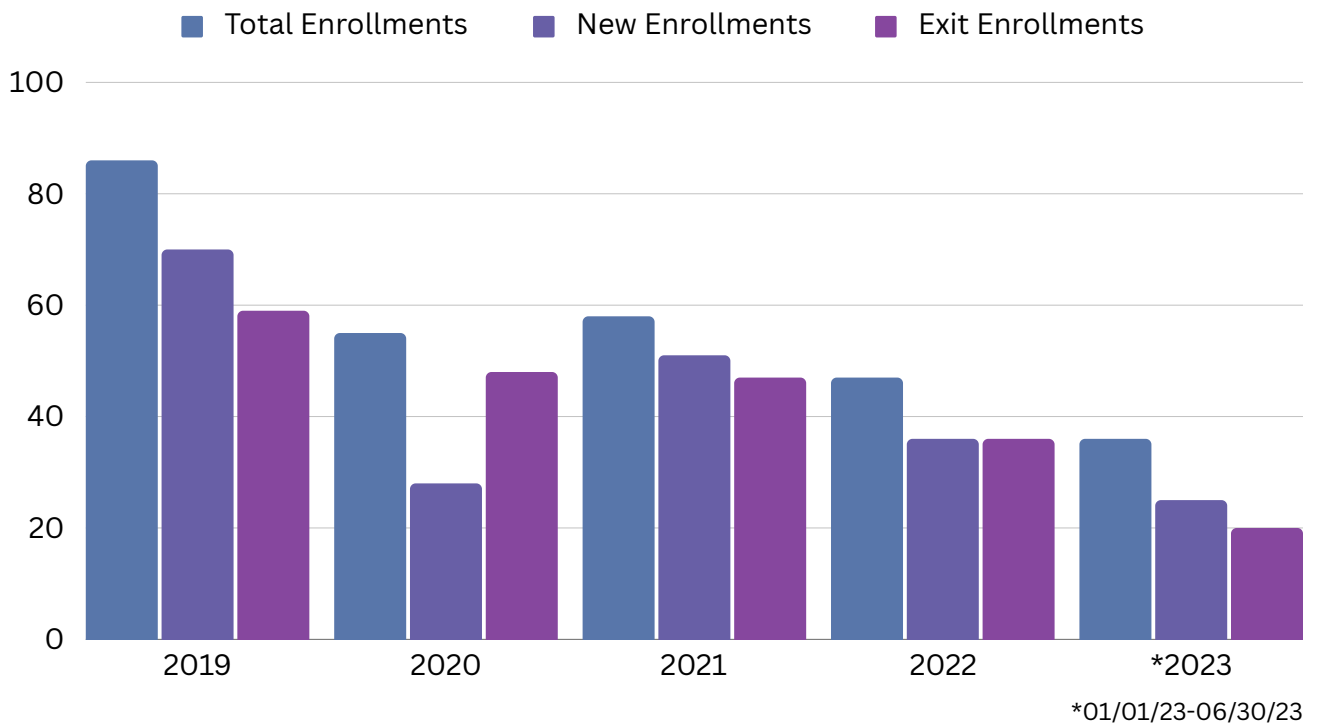
HUD Criteria:

- A homeless individual with a disability as defined in section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360(9)), who:
 - Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, *and*
 - Has been homeless and living as described for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described.
- An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for less, including jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria of this definition before entering that facility; or
- A family with an adult head of household (or, if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Source: [CoC and ESG Homeless Eligibility - Chronic Homelessness - HUD Exchange](#)

Narrative: Enrollment to the Chronic Homeless list requires a Coordinated Assessment conducted by any CoC funded agency with access to HMIS. The vast majority of enrollments (+70%) are conducted by CIC. Enrollments for 2023 will have overlapping data with the Unsheltered Population statistics presented above in Local Data.

Chronic Homeless Enrollments: 2019-2023 (Appendix 2)



Programs & Services

In this plan, programs for unsheltered homelessness are separated into three categories: [immediate response](#), [pathways to housing](#), and [preventative programing](#). Programs that offer immediate services include soup kitchens, clothing closets, day rooms, food pantries, and emergency shelters. Pathways to housing help place individuals in rental units alongside financial and case management support. Preventative programs aim to keep people from entering homelessness, often through rental or utility assistance, housing counseling, or job application assistance.

Immediate Response: As mentioned above, CIC and KM are the primary two homeless hospitality centers in Scranton. Their respective dayrooms are a safe place to go during the day. Each organization's mailbox and paperwork services are vital for helping individuals prove residency and obtain eligibility for local services. Both organizations work closely with the area's Emergency Shelters and Scranton Counseling for Mental Health services.

Basic Needs:

Dayroom	CIC & KM
Shower & Laundry	CIC; KM; CSS St. Anthony's haven
Hot Meals	CSS St. Francis of Assisi Soup Kitchen; KM; CIC

Food Pantry	Food pantry: Friends of The Poor; CHOP; CMC; UNC's Angel's Attic; NEPA Youth Shelter; SJC Baby and Children's Pantry
Clothing	CSS St. Francis of Assisi Soup Kitchen; UNC's Angel's Attic; Friends of The Poor; Dress For Success; NEPA Youth Shelter
Mailboxes	CIC; KM
Government IDs & Paperwork	CIC; KM
Physical Health	<p>SPHCC for physical health, dental care, OB department, and clinic in South Scranton. SPHCC administers flu shots and vaccinations on behalf of The City of Scranton. SPHCC also administers flu shots and COVID-19 vaccinations at various locations such as the St. Francis of Assisi Soup Kitchen</p> <p>The Wright Center for Community Health works with CIC and KM to offer vaccines and other walk-in services</p> <p>City of Scranton Health Fair @ CIC offers vaccinations and other healthcare services</p>
Mental Health	<p>UNC Community Health Department for mental health diagnosis and individual counseling for adults</p> <p>Scranton Counseling Center for Mental Health diagnosis, drug and alcohol dependence diagnosis, medication, and psychiatric appointments</p>

Emergency Shelters:

Catholic Social Services (CSC)	<p>Overnight beds for 6 Female beds and 20 Male beds at St. Anthony's Haven. Includes laundry, showers, and a hot dinner</p> <p>St. Anthony's Haven is Scranton's foremost overnight shelter</p>
Catherine McAuley Center (CMC)	<p>Multiple shelters for women, single mothers</p> <p>Shelter for fathers with children</p>
NEPA Youth Shelter	Drop-in youth shelter for homeless or runaway youth
Uniter Neighborhood Centers (UNC)	Motel vouchers for qualifying individuals or families through UNC's Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) & the Lackawanna County Office of Youth and Family Services (OYFS)

Valley Youth House (VYH)	Group living and individual apartments for single or parenting youth between the ages of 16 & 22
St. Joseph's Center (SJC)	Shelter for up to four women during their pregnancies at SJC's Walsh Manor
Women's Resource Center, Inc. (WRC)	Shelter for unsheltered survivors fleeing Domestic Violence (DV) or Sexual Assault (SA) & 24/7 Phone Hotline
Code Blue Shelter (Temporary)	KM converts a gym Weston Field on Providence Road into an overnight shelter when the City of Scranton declares a Code Blue emergency

Pathways to Housing: As stated above, most pathways to housing begin at CIC or KM, where individuals are referred to an emergency shelter. From the emergency shelter, people are referred to a Safe Haven (SH), Transitional Housing (TH) program, Rapid ReHousing (RRH) program, or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program. The SLCoC's Housing First model also empowers consumers to enter housing whenever without prerequisites. The programs listed below are separated into SLCoC-funded projects and non-SLCoC-funded projects. The SH, TH, RRH, and PSH categories are as defined by HUD for the Housing Inventory Count.

SLCoC Housing Programs:

SH	CIC: 4-unit house for Individuals
TH	WRC: For DV & SA Survivors
RRH	CMC: For Individuals UNC: For Families VYH: For Youth (Single or Parenting) WRC: For DV or SA Survivors
PSH	CMC: For Individuals & Families CSS: For Individuals CIC: For Individuals UNC: For Individuals and Families
Veteran Services	CSS: PSH for Veterans

Non-SLCoC Programs:

TH	SJC: For Mothers with Infants
RRH (ESG)	CMC: For Individuals
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	Multiple SH, TH, PSH, RRH, and SH programs are funded through the local VA. These programs are administered through CSS, CEO, and local housing authorities The VA also offers a monthly food pantry for veterans and a job-readiness program

Preventative Programing:

Rental & Utility Assistance	UNC, CMC, CSS, Salvation Army, TreHab Additional support may be available at other organizations given periodic or one-time funding opportunities
Housing Counseling	UNC for housing navigation, budget workshops, and landlord-tenant mediation
Legal Representation	North Penn Legal, Lackawanna Pro Bono

Success Stories

The SLCoC boasts of hundreds of success stories every year thanks to the continuum’s collaboration and commitment to serving our clients. One client, Dan, was kind enough to share his success story with the SLCoC. With respect to privacy, Dan’s story below intentionally does not contain Personal Identification Information (PII).

Dan’s Story:

Dan’s experience of homelessness alternated between living outside, couch surfing, and sleeping at emergency shelters in Scranton. When asked what this period of his life was like, Dan stated that being homeless was “too difficult to describe” and attributed financial instability as the primary cause for his homelessness. Dan shared that the only thing he looked forward to was a hot meal at St. Francis of Assisi Soup Kitchen. Dan also benefited from Keystone Mission and other local charities while being unhoused and is continually grateful for their support.

Life began to improve for Dan in 2018 when he approached UNC's Community Service office in search of rental assistance. Dan was identified as Chronically Homeless, referred to PSH, and assigned a case manager. Within one month of visiting UNC, Dan's case manager helped place him in his own apartment. Dan also benefited from CSS St. Anthony's Haven and CIC's Dayroom while waiting for an apartment.

Today, Dan continues to maintain his own apartment and enjoys fishing and drawing. When asked what the biggest factor in his success was, Dan said, "The biggest part is having a place to live and somewhere safe to go." Dan said he would not be where he is today without his loyal case manager and financial support through PSH. Dan is currently interviewing with several local stores and is optimistic about reentering the workforce.

Room for Improvement

While boasting many success stories, the SLCoC and county alike has room for improvement in serving our unsheltered population.

County-Wide:

- Increased *safe* and *attainable* housing stock
- Improved engagement with out-of-state landlords
- Increased access for mental health services and diagnoses
- More emergency shelters for men and single fathers

SLCoC:

- Improved PIT count and volunteer coordination
- Improved engagement with out-of-state landlords
- Improved HMIS capturing of youth 18-24 y/o data

Appendix 1: PIT Program Enrollments 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ES	101	79	81	93	140
TH	65	71	66	71	50
SH	11	11	10	11	9
Unsheltered	9	16	8	13	35
Total	186	177	165	188	234

Source: 2023 PIT Data & [PIT and HIC Data Since 2007 - HUD Exchange](#)

Appendix 2: Chronic Homeless Enrollments Demographics: 2019-2023

Chronic Homeless enrollments are conducted and tracked through the SLCoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Service providers able to enroll people onto the Chronic Homeless list are all located within the City of Scranton.

Gender Identity:

	HMIS Total	Percent
Female	76	29.92%
Male	175	68.90%
Multiple-Genders	3	1.18%
Total	254	

Age:

	HMIS Total	Percent
Under 18	36	14.17%
(18 - 24)	20	7.87%
(25 - 34)	49	19.29%
(35 - 44)	49	19.29%
(45 - 54)	59	23.23%
(55 - 64)	29	11.42%
(65 or older)	12	4.72%
Total	254	

Race:

	HMIS Total	Percent
White	203	79.92%
Black, African American, or African	34	13.39%
Multi-Racial	14	5.51%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	2	0.79%
Client doesn't know	1	0.39%
Total	254	

Ethnicity:

	HMIS Total	Percent
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latin(a)(o)(x)	222	87.40%
Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x)	32	12.60%
Total	254	

Source: SLCoC HMIS Database

Appendix 3: PIT Demographics 2019-2023

Gender Identity:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female	66	72	66	73	86
Male	119	103	97	114	139
Non-Binary	-	-	1	-	1
Questioning	<i>Not Collected</i>	<i>Not Collected</i>	<i>Not Collected</i>	-	6
Transgender	1	2	1	1	2
Total	186	177	165	188	234

Age:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total # Of Households	155	134	117	121	139
Under 18	24	38	46	51	81
18 to 24	27	18	16	20	22
Over 24	135	121	103	117	131
Total	186	177	165	188	234

Race:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	-	-	-	-	3
Asian or Asian American	-	-	2	-	-
Black, African American, or African	32	16	31	33	34
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	-	1	2	-	-
White	143	151	126	146	180
Multiple Races	11	9	4	9	17
Total	186	177	165	188	234

Ethnicity:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Non-Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x)	153	157	147	166	187
Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x)	33	20	18	22	47
Total	186	177	165	188	234

Source: 2023 PIT Data & [PIT and HIC Data Since 2007 - HUD Exchange](#)

Appendix 4: Scranton & Lackawanna County Demographics in 2020 Census

Gender Identity:

	Lackawanna County Total	Lackawanna County Percent	City of Scranton Total	City of Scranton Percent
Male	105,707	49.00%	37,477	49.40%
Female	109,956	51.00%	38,390	50.60%
Total	215,663		75,867	

Age:

	Lackawanna County Total	Lackawanna County Percent	City of Scranton Total	City of Scranton Percent
Under 5 years	10,784	5.00%	4,492	5.90%
5 to 9 years	12,196	5.70%	4,158	5.50%
10 to 14 years	14,232	6.60%	4,058	5.30%
15 to 19 years	12,831	5.90%	6,228	8.20%
20 to 24 years	12,450	5.80%	6,218	8.20%
25 to 34 years	27,729	12.90%	10,059	13.30%
35 to 44 years	25,717	11.90%	9,080	12.00%
45 to 54 years	25,850	12.00%	8,568	11.30%
55 to 59 years	14,710	6.80%	4,482	5.90%
60 to 64 years	15,543	7.20%	4,362	5.70%
65 or older	43,621	20.2%	14,162	18.6%
Total	215,663		75,867	

Race:

	Lackawanna County Total	Lackawanna County Percent	City of Scranton Total	City of Scranton Percent
One race	194,548	90.20%	65,139	85.90%
Two or more races	21,115	9.80%	10,728	14.10%

White	197,743	91.70%	63,386	83.50%
Black or African American	10,915	5.10%	6,445	8.50%
American Indian	5,102	2.40%	1,843	2.40%

and Alaska Native				
Asian	8,013	3.70%	4,892	6.40%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	-	0.00%	-	0.00%
Some other race	18,391	8.50%	11,623	15.30%
Total	215,663		75,867	

Ethnicity:

	Lackawanna County Total	Lackawanna County Percent	City of Scranton Total	City of Scranton Percent
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	20,389	9.50%	12,688	16.70%
Not Hispanic or Latino	195,274	90.50%	63,179	83.30%
Total	215,663		75,867	

Source: [DP05: ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND ... - Census Bureau Table](#)