

2018 Spokane Regional Point-in-Time Count

Executive Summary

What is the Point-in-Time Count?

As a recipient of federal and state fund supporting homeless services, our community is required to conduct an annual point-in-time count of persons experiencing homelessness during the last 10 days in January. The 2018 Point-in-Time Count took place in Spokane (and across Washington State) on Thursday, January 25th, 2018.

The Point-in-Time Count is a *snapshot* census of individuals and persons in families, including youth, who on the night of the count are:

- *Sheltered* (living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary housing, including congregate shelters, transitional housing, safe havens, and hotels/motels paid for with emergency shelter vouchers) or
- *Unsheltered* (with a primary nighttime residence that is out of doors or a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground).

How many were counted?

- 1245 persons (a person may be part of a family household, or an unaccompanied individual).
- 1012 households (a household may include one or more persons).

Who were the people experiencing homelessness?

- 86% were in households without children.
- 12% were in households with adults and children.
- 2% were in households with only children.
- 62% were male.
- 38% were female.
- 76% were over age 24.
- 8% were age 18-24.
- 16% were under age 18.

Sources of Shelter

- 75% (935) people) were sheltered in temporary lodging projects, including Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing
- 25% (310 people) were unsheltered and sleeping in places not designed for habitation including streets, parks, vehicles and abandoned buildings.

Reasons for Homelessness

Survey takers were asked to report the primary reasons for their homelessness. This is a methodology change from previous years in that survey takers were prompted to select only one reason. The hope is that this will force prioritization of needs that will, in turn, provide more meaningful and actionable data. The ten most common reasons reported were:

- Lack of Income (74 households)
- Family Conflict (46 households)
- Lack of Affordable Housing (46 households)
- Drug Use (42 households)
- Alcohol Use (33 households)
- Evicted (31 households)
- Fleeing Domestic Violence (29 households)
- Mental Health Problem (24 households)
- Other (24 Households)
- Family Rejection (19 households)

Veteran Homelessness

- 96 veterans were counted during the 2018 Point-in-Time Count.
- 98% were in households without children.
- 2% were in households with adults and children
- 95% were male and 5% were female
- 70% were sheltered in temporary lodging projects.
- 30% were unsheltered and sleeping in places not designed for habitation.

Chronic Homelessness

For purposes of the 2018 Point-in-Time Count, chronic homelessness is defined by the presence of a disabling condition *and* either a history of repeated episodes of homelessness or long duration of continuous homelessness (at least one year). Our community counted:

- 249 chronically homeless individuals who were either unsheltered or staying in Emergency Shelters.
- 16 chronically homeless families with adults and children who were either unsheltered or in Emergency Shelters.

Other Homeless Subpopulations

- 307 adults counted are experiencing serious mental illness.
- 184 adults counted have a substance abuse condition.
- 121 people counted are survivors of domestic violence.

Some Important Point-in-Time Count Trends

- Family homelessness continues to trend downwards from 2011, despite a slight increase in the 2018 totals.
- Individual household totals continue to trend upwards. 2018 (874) represents the highest single count of individuals since 2009. It is worth noting that the 2017 count was the previous highest total for individuals.
- Our community counted 96 total veterans in 2018, representing a 19% decrease in the overall total; 29 unsheltered veterans were counted, 20 more than were counted in 2017 (9). The unsheltered veteran count, while small, has been trending upwards since 2012. More engagement from veteran service providers, increased media attention and outreach, and a broader geographical area being covered likely had a big role to play in the increase.
- Our community counted 310 unsheltered persons in 2018, a 125% increase over our 2017 count and the largest number counted since the tracking of PIT data began in 2009. 264 were counted within the City of Spokane, where past PIT count efforts have largely focused. The remaining distribution is as follows: 28 (Spokane Valley), 12 (Deer Park), Cheney (5), and Fairwood (1). The biggest single factor contributing to the increase in the unsheltered count is attributed to the greatly increased geographical coverage, additional volunteers and outreach teams, and the inclusion of new agency partners based out of the surrounding communities.
- Those identifying as having severe mental illnesses decreased slightly in 2018 (307) from the previous all-time high in 2017 (329), but this represents only a slight deviation from an upwards trend that started in 2013.
- Chronic substance abuse use surveyed lower in 2018 (184) from the all-time high set in 2017 (229). The 2018 numbers are more consistent with the long-term averages and available longitudinal data.
- In 2018, our community counted 121 survivors of domestic violence. This upwards swing breaks a three year trend downward.
- 249 chronically homeless individuals were counted in 2018, representing a decrease over 2017 numbers (292), but still well above the all-time low of 74 counted in 2011. Chronic homelessness for both singles and families has trended upwards since 2011.

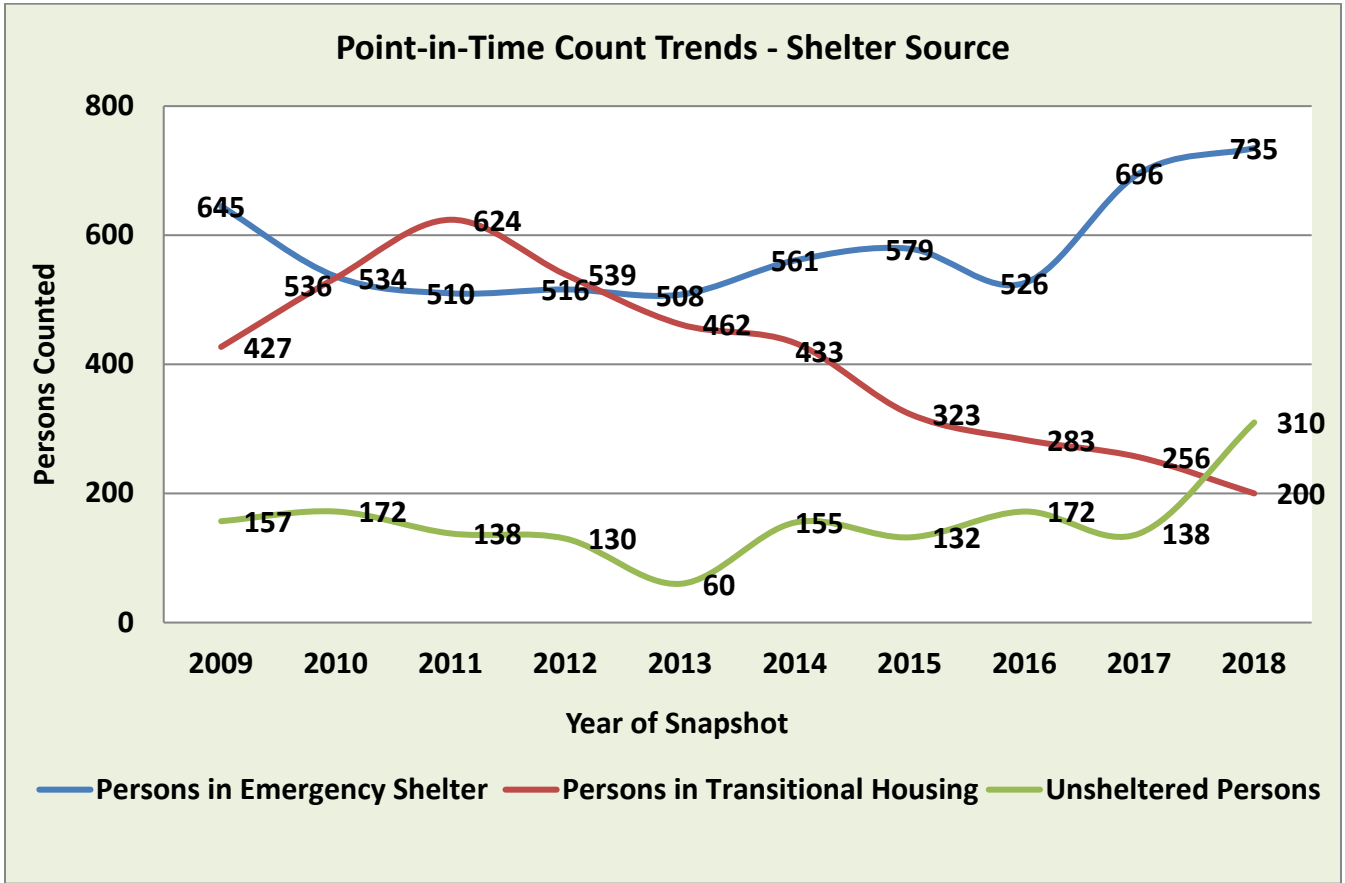
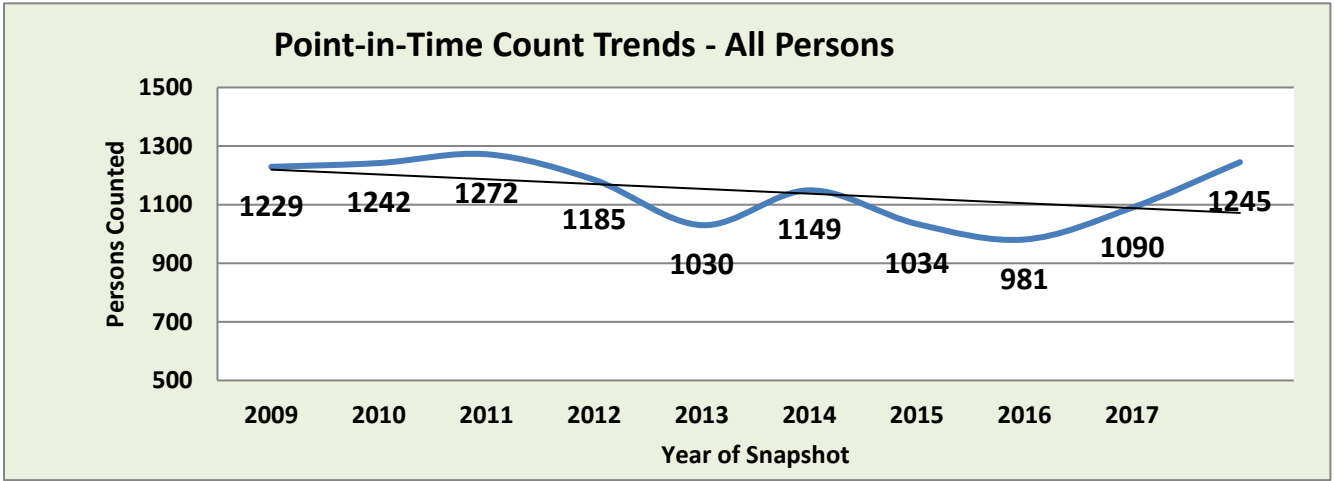
2018 Point-in-Time Methodology – Key Strategies

- Over 30 different agencies throughout Spokane County participated in the 2018 Point-in-Time Count including social service and housing providers, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations, outreach professionals and local governments.
- Social media (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) and a more formal communications outreach effort to local media improved community awareness.
- Two additional dedicated department staff were provided to help with coordination and communication. This added capacity proved crucial to the expanded effort!
- An increased emphasis was placed on volunteer recruitment in an effort to increase geographic coverage. City staff worked with local universities to encourage participation by MSW (Master of Social Work) and BSW (Bachelors in Social Work.) This effort resulted in a 100 additional volunteers to assist with data collection.
- Point-in-Time Count data was sourced from Spokane’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and via the Counting Us mobile data collection tool built and supported by Simtech Solutions, LLC, virtually eliminating the use of paper collection forms and allowing for immediate access to the data.
- The 2018 Point-in-Time Count Data Collection Form, via the Counting Us app, was revised for ease of use and consistency with data collection practices suggested by past PIT steering committees and identified as

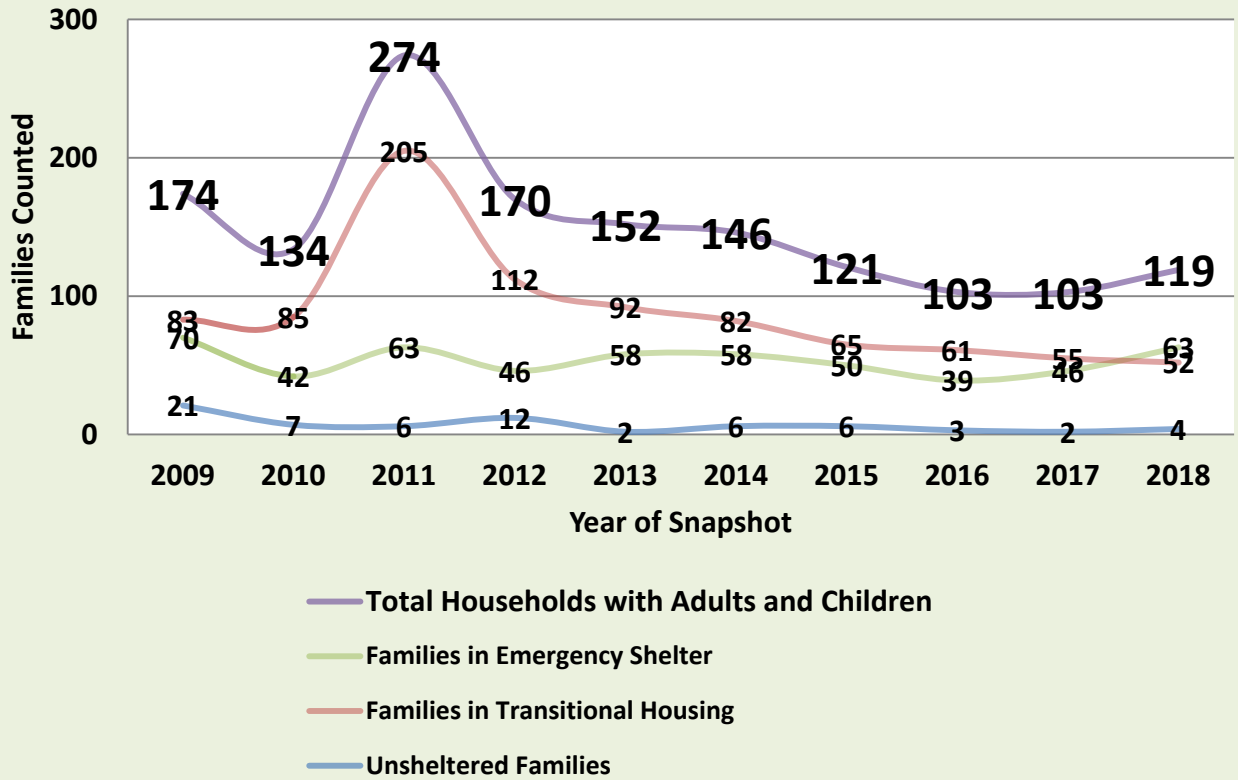
strategically valuable to the community by the HMIS Team. Local priorities and initiatives were supported through the use of customized data collection points such as: the number of ER visits, location of last permanent residence, total months residing in the Spokane community, the primary reason for homelessness, etc.

- For improved data quality and control, sheltered persons were only counted at the Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing facilities they were staying at on the night of the Point-in-Time Count. Additionally, city staff monitored the app as each survey was submitted to correct errors and direct volunteers. Furthermore, volunteers were trained on engagement strategies and questions were included on the survey to help ensure that each survey taker was only counted once.
- Those that identified their living situation as 'doubled up' were allowed to complete surveys. This additional data point, in conjunction with diversion and prevention program data available in the HMIS, will help provide a more complete picture on the number that are in unstable housing situations or are at risk of homelessness.
- Youth-specific magnet, such as a VR experience at the Downtown Library, events were held to draw-in youth that either might be experiencing homelessness or were interested in learning more about the subject. It is well known that homeless youth tend to rely on living situations that would meet the definition of 'doubled up', meaning that they're staying with friends or other family.
- Closer coordination and communication with Spokane County schools resulted in the placement of posters and educational flyers in area schools, resulting in more effective outreach and education regarding available homeless services and the importance of the PIT Count.

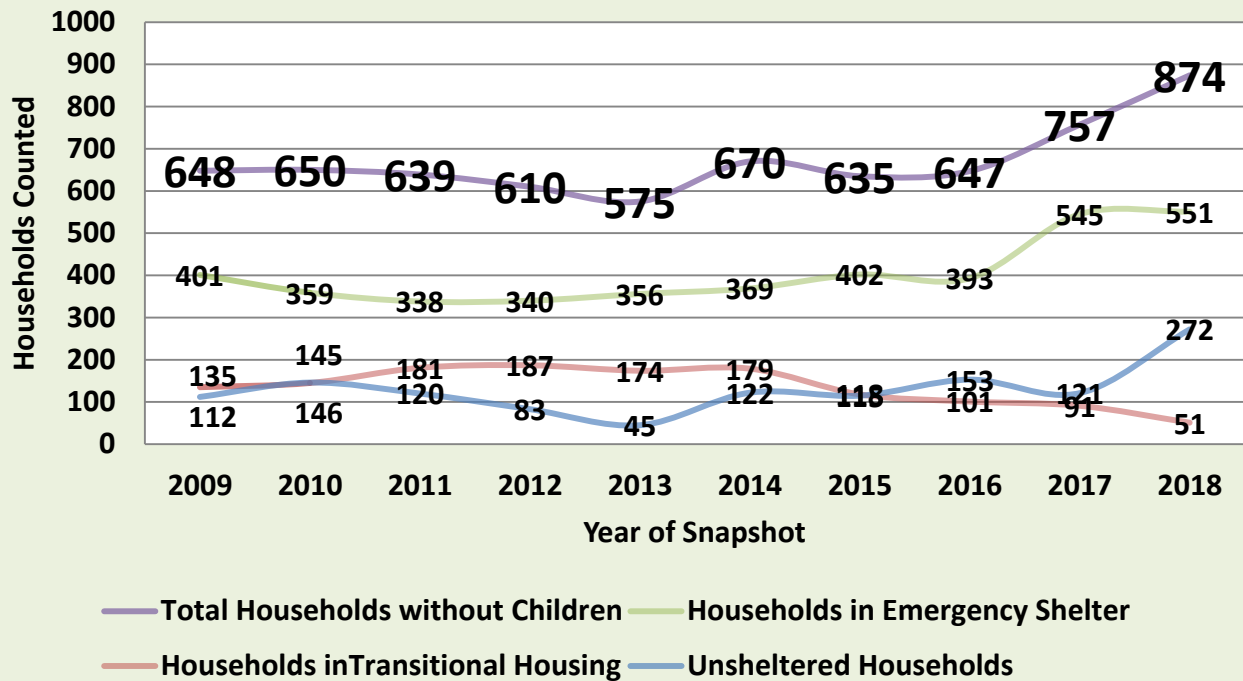
Point-in-Time Count Trends – Selected Charts: Persons and Shelter Type

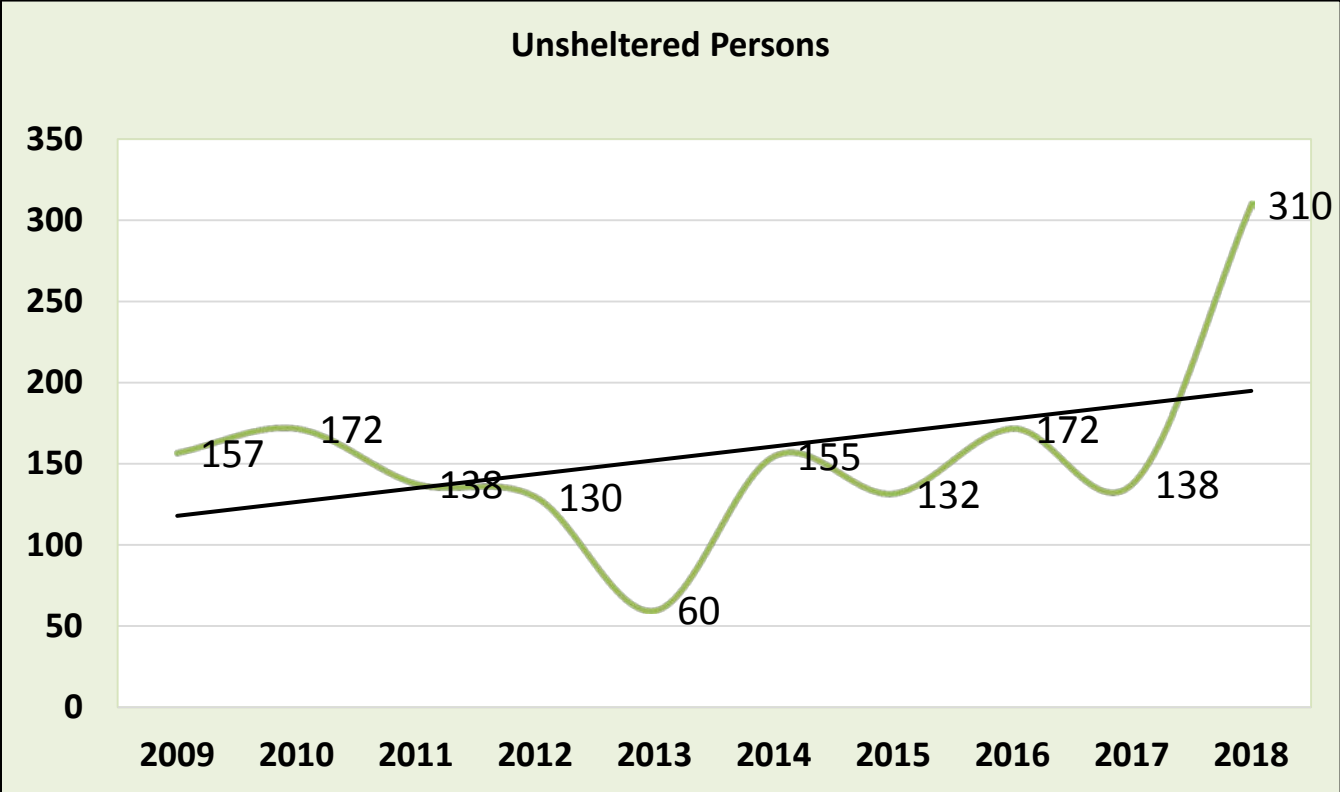
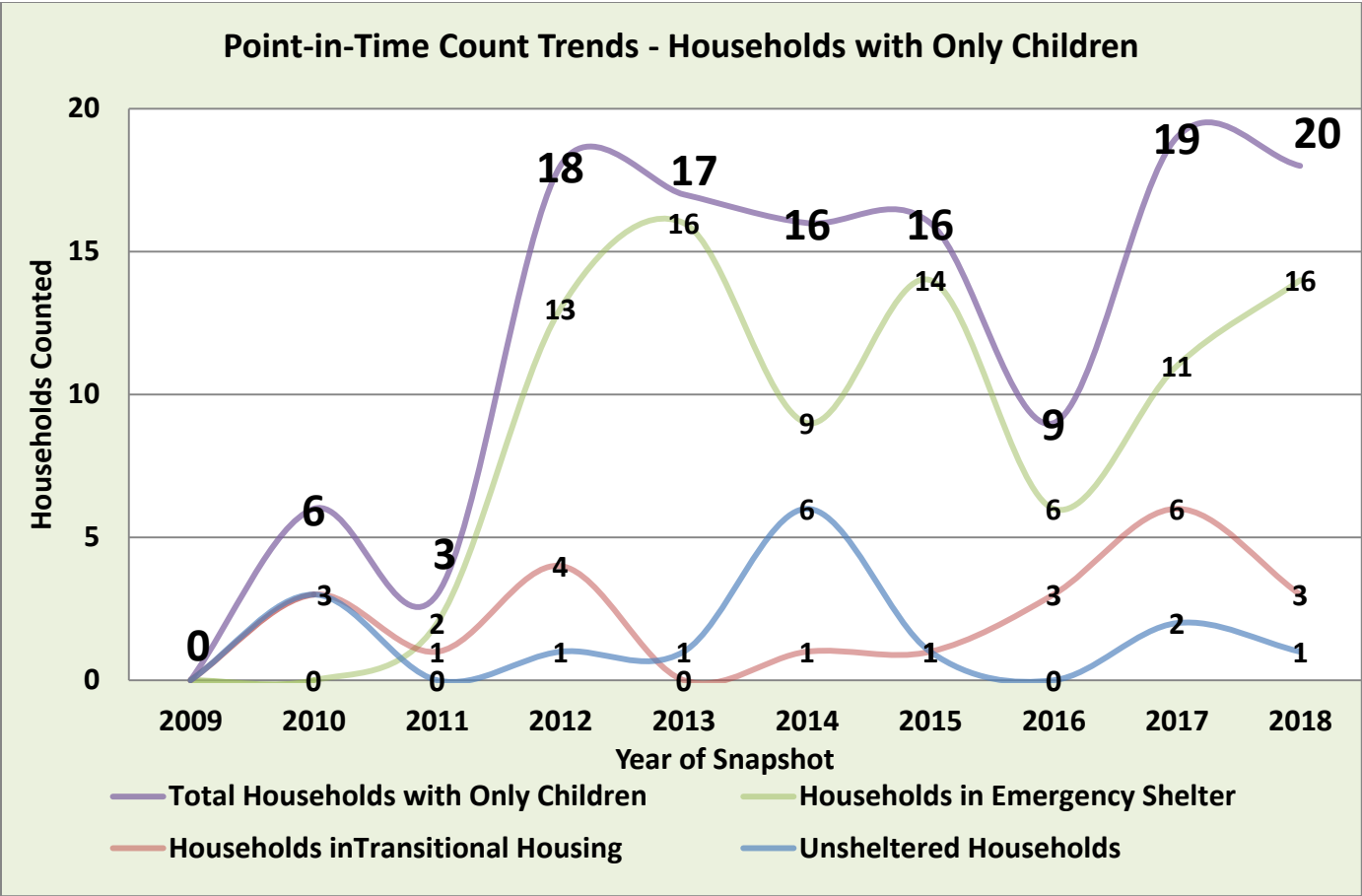


Point-in-Time Count Trends - Households with Children



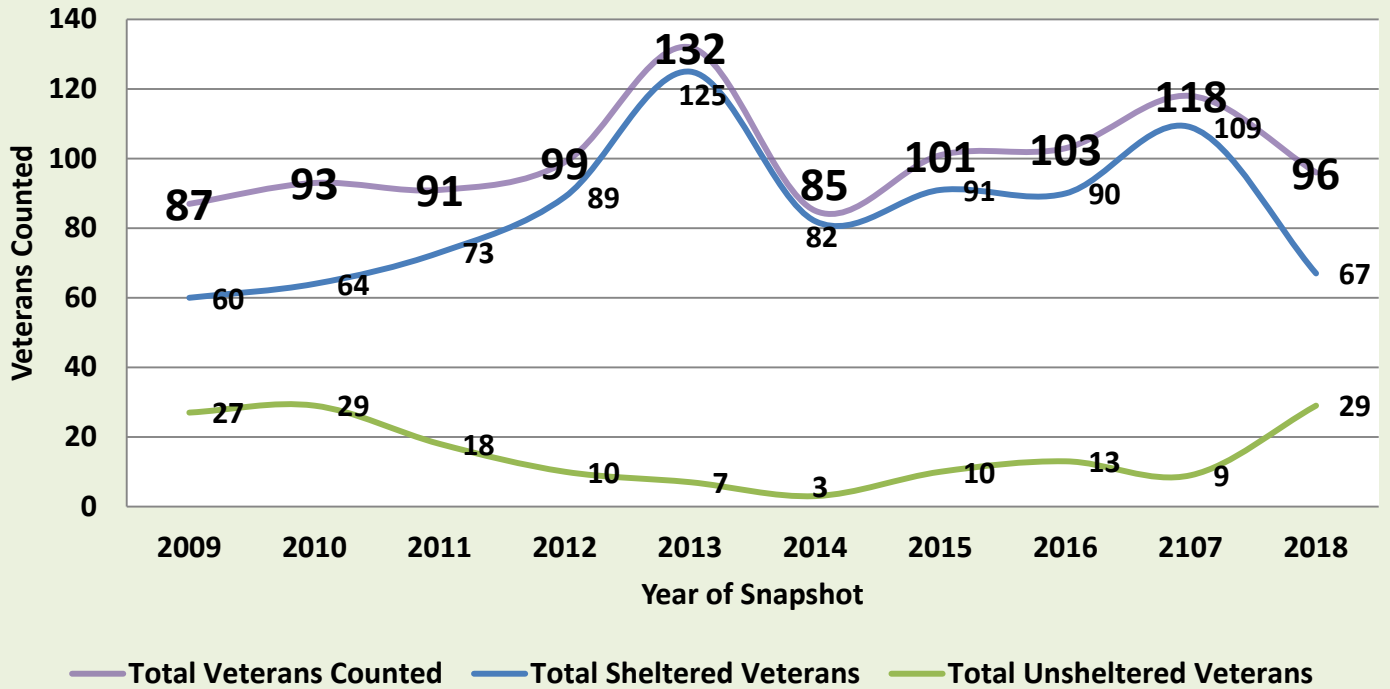
Point-in-Time Count Trends - Households without Children



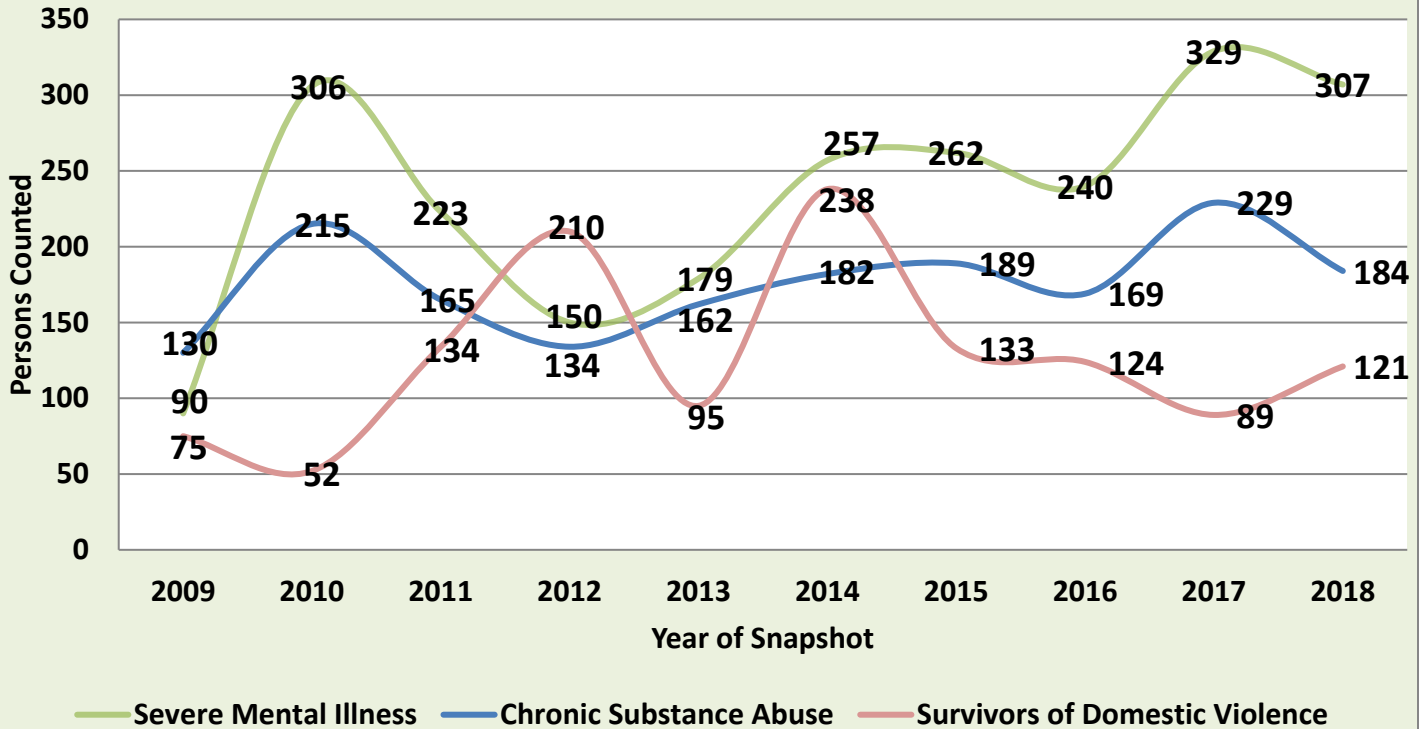


Point-in-Time Count Trends – Selected Charts: Special and other Sub-Populations

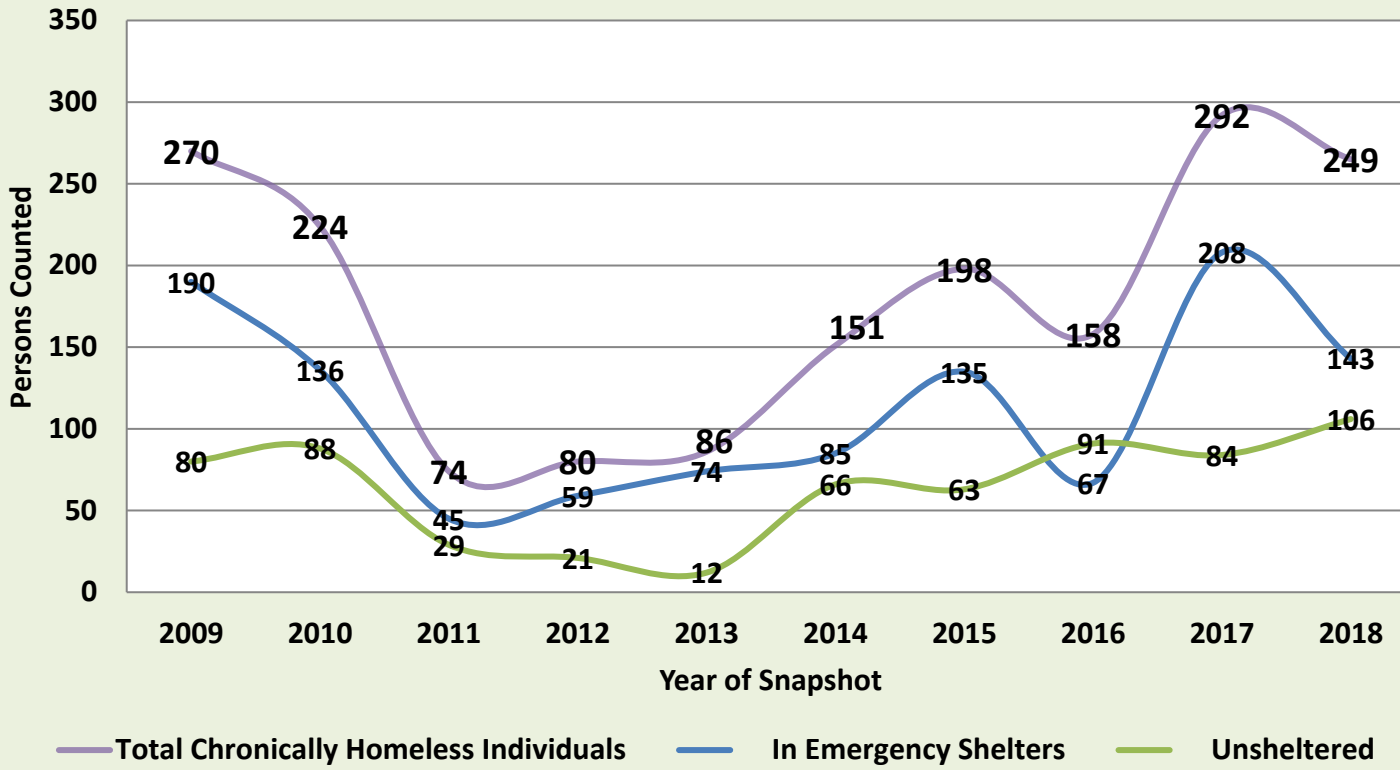
Point-in-Time Count Trends - Veterans



Point-in-Time Count Trends - Barriers



Point-in-Time Count Trends - Chronically Homeless Individuals



UNSHELTERED BY SURVEY LOCATION

■ Cheney ■ City of Spokane ■ Deer Park ■ Fairwood ■ Spokane Valley

