

William G. McGowan Charitable Fund—Learning and Impact
Landscape Analysis of Homelessness in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, PA
Dec 2020

Table of Contents	Page #
Executive Summary	1
1. Overview of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, PA	8
1.1 General demographics	8
1.2 Poverty, income, cost of living, and housing	
1.2 Poverty, wages, and housing market	8
1.3 Unemployment and job market	12
2. Homelessness in Rochester, NY	15
2.1 Continuum of Care collaborative	15
2.2 Homelessness data trends	16
3. Conclusions	21
Appendix A. Out of reach housing analysis – State of PA	24
Appendix B. Wages by occupations and required education	27

Executive Summary

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre metropolitan area in Northeastern Pennsylvania is facing an enormous housing deficit. Rising income inequality, lack of affordable housing, a large stock of older housing units that require costly repairs, and high property taxes are putting housing out of reach for low-income residents and increasing the risk of homelessness. One third (32%) of homeowners and half (52%) of renters in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area are cost overburdened (paying for housing with more than 30% of their income). Preventing the looming crisis in homelessness requires a comprehensive approach, including providing more job training that would lead to better paying opportunities and building more multifamily housing. The area is predominantly white and, like the rest of the state, rapidly aging.

1. Overview of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, PA

1.1 General demographics

The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre metropolitan area in Northeastern Pennsylvania is the 101st-largest metropolitan area in the United States and the 4th largest in Pennsylvania. In 2019, it had an estimated combined population of 553,885, 1.73% less than its 2010 count. The area also has the highest percentage (96.2%) of non-Hispanic whites of any U.S. metropolitan area with a population over 500,000. Like the rest of the state, the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area is rapidly aging, with the percentage of seniors increasing by 14% in the last two decades, while the prime working age population has grown by 6%.

Lackawanna County

Lackawanna County is a county in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Scranton is the county seat and the largest city. The highest population densities are spread along the Lackawanna River Valley. This area is the northern end of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Metropolitan Area, which extends from Nanticoke in Luzerne County to Carbondale, and includes the cities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre.

In 2018, there were 86,628 families and 99,659 housing units, 13.1% of them vacant. Two-thirds (65%) of the houses are owner-occupied, slightly lower than the state of PA (69%). The 2019 estimated population of the county is 209,674, a 2.2% decrease from the 2010 census count. Since 2010, the county received 6,084 international immigrants, but lost 6,146 residents to other places of the U.S. The decrease in total population is due to negative population change (births minus deaths equaled -4,552 from 2010 to 2019) and negative net migration (-62).

The county is more homogeneously white than the state (91.6% vs. 80.8%). The largest minority group is Latinos/Hispanics (7.1%), 75% of them foreign born. About 1 in 5 county residents are over the age of 65 and the median age is 42.3, higher than PA (40.7) and the U.S. (37.9). Most of the households are single person (32.9%) followed by married couples with no children (29.1%). The percentage of households with children under the age of 18 has been steadily decreasing, from 29.1% in 2000, to 27.6% in 2010, and an estimated 25.8% in 2018.

The county has a poverty rate of 14.2%. The percentage of children living in poverty increased from 17.1% in 2000 to 18.8% in 2010 and 20.3% in 2018. Almost two-thirds (61.9%) of the children qualify for free or reduced lunch at school. Per capita income is \$47,730/year, but a quarter (25.4%) of the

households in Lackawanna County earn less than \$25,000 a year, and half (49.2%) earn less than \$50,000 a year. Six percent of the households are on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and 3.3% receive income from public assistance.

Only 9% of the population in Lackawanna County has no high school diploma, while over a third (38%) earned a high school diploma or equivalent. A quarter of the population (24%) has an associate degree or incomplete college credits, and 29% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Educational attainment

91.4%

High school grad or higher

about the same as the rate in Pennsylvania: 91%

a little higher than the rate in United States: 88.6%

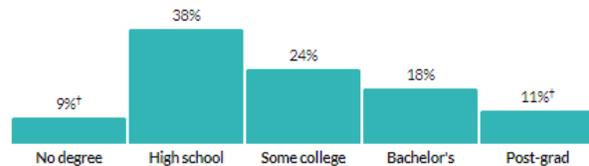
29.1%

Bachelor's degree or higher

about 90 percent of the rate in Pennsylvania: 32.3%

about 90 percent of the rate in United States: 33.1%

Population by minimum level of education



Luzerne County

Luzerne County is southwest of Lackawanna County, with an estimated population of 317,417 in 2019. Its county seat and largest city is Wilkes-Barre. The four largest ethnic groups in Luzerne County, PA, are white (non-Hispanic) (80.4%), white (Hispanic) (7.06%), other (Hispanic) (3.92%), and Black (non-Hispanic) (3.68%). The county has a larger number of Latinos/Hispanics (11%) than Lackawanna County (35,000 vs. 15,000); approximately half are foreign born.

The total number of families in 2018 was 81,294 and the total number of housing units was 149,897; 14.6% of them vacant. Two-thirds (68.6%) of the houses are owner-occupied. The 2019 estimated population of the county was 317,417, a 1.1% decrease from the 2010 census. Contrary to Lackawanna County, Luzerne had a net positive migration of 4,334 due to a higher number of international immigrants (7,971 since 2010) and lower out migration (-3,637). The decrease in total population is exclusively due to negative population change (births minus deaths of -7,535 from 2010 to 2019). About 1 in 5 county residents are over the age of 65 and the median age is 43, higher than Lackawanna County. Most of the households are single person (31.4%) followed by married couples with no children (30.1%). The percentage of household with children under the age of 18 has remained similar from 2000 to 2018 (28.6% and 27.1%).

The county's poverty rate is 10.7%. The percentage of children living in poverty increased at a higher rate than Lackawanna County, from 16.6% in 2000 to 18.7% in 2010 and 23.2% in 2018. Three out of four children (74%) qualify for free or reduced lunch. Per capita income is \$45,219/year, a quarter (24.5%) of the households earn less than \$25,000 a year, and half (48.8%) earn less than \$50,000 a year. Six percent of the households are in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and 3.7% receive income from public assistance.

In Luzerne County, 8.5% of the population over the age of 25 had no high school diploma, and 40% earned a high school diploma or equivalent, 30% had an associate degree or some college credit, and 22% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Educational attainment

91.5%

High school grad or higher

about the same as the rate in Pennsylvania: 91%

a little higher than the rate in United States: 88.6%

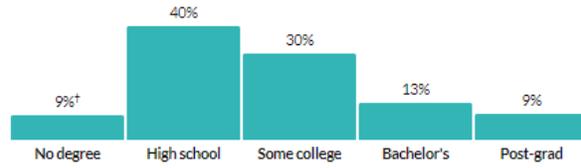
21.6%

Bachelor's degree or higher

about two-thirds of the rate in Pennsylvania: 32.3%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 33.1%

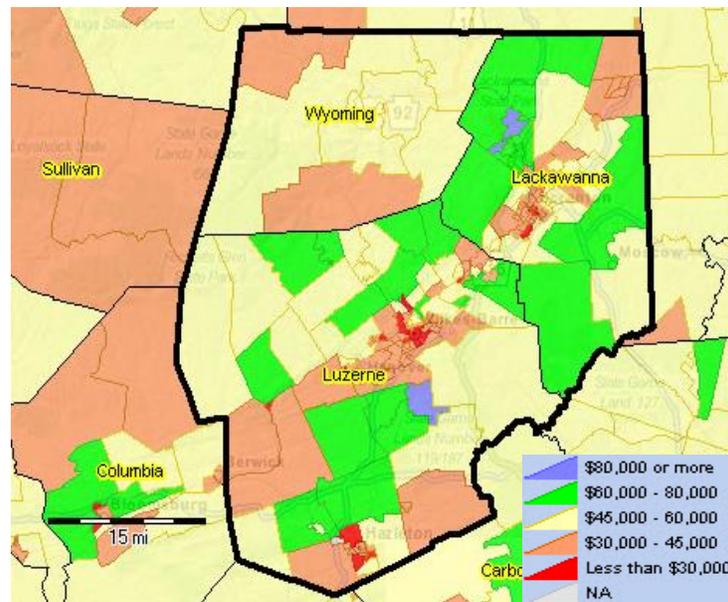
Population by minimum level of education



1.2 Poverty, income, cost of living, and housing

Poverty in the Wyoming Valley is concentrated in the inner urban center areas of Scranton, Wilkes-Barre and Hazelton (Fig 1). One in six (17.0%) Northeast Pennsylvania residents had an income below the poverty level in 2017, greater than the poverty level of 12.5% across the entire state. Among residents not living in families, 20.1% of high school graduates and 40.4% of non-high school graduates live in poverty. The poverty rate was 43.4% among disabled males and 19.0% among disabled females. The renting rate among poor residents was 81.9%. For comparison, it was 36.7% among residents with income above the poverty level.

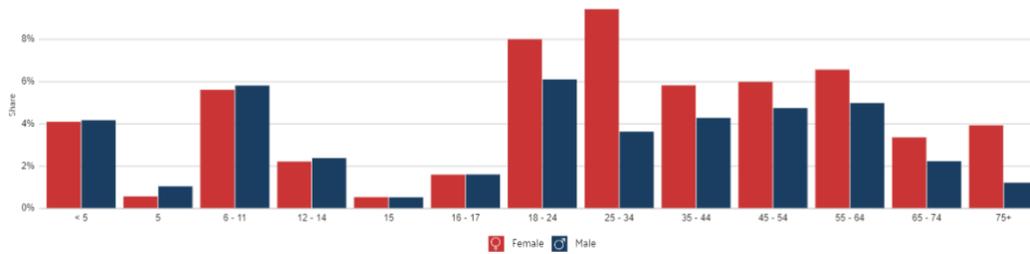
Fig 1. Median income by census tracts – Wyoming Valley, PA



Lackawanna County

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimate, median household income in Lackawanna County in 2018 was \$50,875, \$11,000 less than the median annual income of across the entire United States (\$61,937). About 15% of the population (30.7k out of 203k people) live below the poverty line, higher than the national average of 13.1%. The largest number of individuals living in poverty are Females 25-34, followed by Females 18-24 and then Females 55-64 (Figure 2). In terms of race and ethnicity, 68% of the population (approx. 25,500) living in poverty is white (non-Hispanic), a smaller number but much higher percentage than Luzerne County. Latino/Hispanic residents represent 17.4% of the poor (6,500), three times as high as their overall demographic proportion, and Black residents represent 5.13% (1,900), twice as high as their representation in the county's population.

Figure 2. Poverty by age and gender in Lackawanna County, PA (ACS 2014-2019)

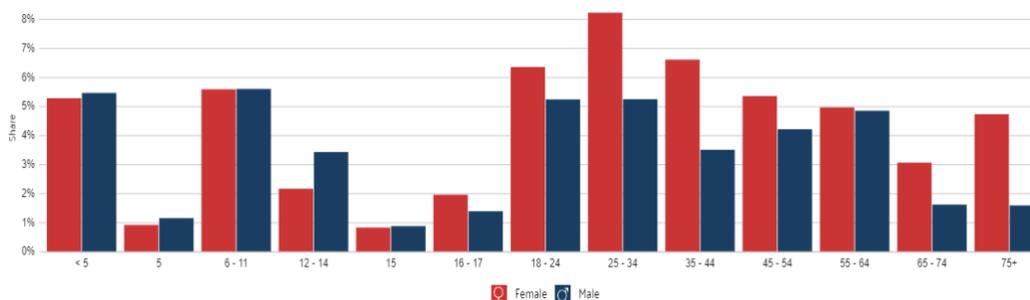


In 2019, the average hourly wage in Lackawanna County was \$21.42, the median annual wage was \$35,470, and the average annual entry wage was \$22,210. Unemployment was 7.7% in Oct. 2020.

Luzerne County

The 2018 ACS 5-year estimate shows a median household income of \$51,646 in Luzerne County, \$4,000 higher than Lackawanna but still \$8,000 less than the PA median. More women than men over the age of 16 live in poverty in Luzerne County (Figure 2). This disparity is particularly stark among the elderly, with twice as many women as men aged 65-74 and three times as many over 75 living in poverty. In terms of race and ethnicity, 57.6% of the population (approx. 33,000) living in poverty is white (non-Hispanic). Latino/Hispanic residents represent 20.6% (11,844) of the poor and Black residents represent 8.92% (5,116). Both groups have poverty rates about three times more than their overall demographic representation.

Figure 2. Poverty by age and gender in Luzerne County, PA (ACS 2014-2019)



In 2019, the average hourly wage in Luzerne County was \$21.42, the median annual wage was \$35,470, the average wage was \$44,050, and the average annual entry wage was \$22,040. Unemployment was 8.4% in Oct. 2020.

Cost of living and wages

Although employees in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton region live in one of the most affordable areas in the state of Pennsylvania, the current minimum wage of \$7.25 would not allow even a single individual to be self-sufficient. The Economic Policy Institute’s family budget calculator

<https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/>) estimates that a family composed of two parents with two children needs \$82,500 a year in Lackawanna County and \$81,584 a year in Luzerne County in order to attain a modest yet adequate standard of living.

The area is often promoted as a low wage alternative to neighboring metropolitan areas. Labor costs in Northeastern Pennsylvania are around 20% below the U.S. average, and 40% below neighboring metro areas of New York and New Jersey. Labor costs for food and beverage and plastic manufacturing industries are the lowest in the region. In the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton metropolitan area, the average hourly wage is \$6 lower, and the average annual wages are \$12,000 lower, than the averages for the state of Pennsylvania.

However, as displayed in Table 1, the \$7.25 minimum wage does not provide a living wage to any family, not even for a family with two working adults and no children (MIT living-wage calculator: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/42540>). The living wage model is an alternative measure of basic needs. The calculations displayed in Tables 1 and 2 correspond to a market-based approach that uses geographically specific (Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA) expenditure data related to a family’s likely minimum food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g., clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs. The living wage draws on these cost elements and the rough effects of income and payroll taxes to determine the minimum employment earnings necessary to meet a family’s basic needs while also maintaining self-sufficiency.

Table 1. Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA living hourly wages by family size (dollars)

ADULTS	1 adult				2 adults (1 working)				2 adults (both working)			
CHILDREN	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
Living Wage	10	22.7	28.5	35.8	17.5	21.3	23.8	26.7	8.4	12.7	15.6	18.6
Poverty Wage	6	8.13	10.3	12.4	8.1	10.3	12.4	14.5	4.1	5.1	6.2	7.3
Minimum Wage	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25

Table 2 shows the typical annual and hourly salaries paid by the main occupation areas in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The typical salaries paid in the food preparation and serving sector would allow only a single individual to earn a living wage for the area. A single parent with one child needs a job that pays above \$16/hour or \$32,548/year. A single parent with 2 children needs to earn above \$30/hour or \$61,406/year, salaries paid by occupations on the higher end of the occupation area.

Table 2. Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton MSA living wages by family size (dollars)

Occupational Area	Typical Annual Salary	Typical Hourly Salary
Management	\$95,082	\$46
Architecture & Engineering	\$73,228	\$35
Computer & Mathematical	\$67,149	\$32
Life, Physical, & Social Science	\$65,634	\$32
Business & Financial Operations	\$61,406	\$30
Legal	\$58,245	\$28

Occupational Area	Typical Annual Salary	Typical Hourly Salary
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$58,001	\$28
Education, Training, & Library	\$53,975	\$26
Protective Service	\$46,118	\$22
Construction & Extraction	\$45,742	\$22
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$41,991	\$20
Community & Social Service	\$38,799	\$19
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	\$37,274	\$18
Production	\$35,628	\$17
Office & Administrative Support	\$33,503	\$16
Transportation & Material Moving	\$32,548	\$16
Healthcare Support	\$30,962	\$15
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	\$28,157	\$14
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	\$25,209	\$12
Sales & Related	\$23,928	\$12
Personal Care & Service	\$23,745	\$11
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$21,448	\$10

Living wage by family type		
	1 adult 0 children	\$10
	2 adults 2 working 2 children	\$16
	1 adult 1 child	\$23
	2 adults 1 working 2 children	\$24
	1 adult 2 children	\$29

Housing

There are 250,987 housing units in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties. Of those, 150,280 are in Luzerne County and 100,707 in Lackawanna County. There is a limited amount of buildable land in the area, due to flood plains and a large amount of pre-WWII housing stock. This creates challenges for both owners and renters because of the high rehabilitation and maintenance costs associated with older units. This situation is compounded by the increase in the number of seniors, many of whom cannot afford costly upgrades to older housing stock.

Most households (65.6%) in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA are owner occupied (69% in Luzerne County and 64% in Lackawanna County). Even though homeownership is twice as high as renting, more than three quarters of the net growth in households since 2000 has been among renter households. The share of renters has increased by 2% in both counties since 2000.

The shift toward renting reflects a range of demographic and economic factors, including trends toward smaller, childless households, but also a growing income gap between the higher and lower income groups. The urban areas in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA have more renters than the rural areas. Renters are not equally distributed by race/ethnicity either. Black residents rent at a much higher rate than any other group, with approximately 5 out of 6 Black households renting, about 7 out of 10 Latinos/Hispanics and Native American households, and about 3 out of 10 among non-Hispanic white households.

The housing inventory in the region is older than the rest of the state. Housing units are on average 68 years old, 10 years older than the average for the state. Over a third (38%) of the area housing stock was built 80 years ago or earlier. Homes built between 1940 and 1970 make up a quarter (26%) of the housing stock and houses built between 1970 and 2000 make another quarter (26%). Just 9.5% of housing stock that has been built since 2000. As the housing stock ages, the number of uninhabitable vacant units is rising. About 12.4% of the housing units are vacant (approximately 33,000), higher than the vacancy rate for the state (11%). Statewide, only 24% of vacant units are for rent or sale, with the remaining 76% vacant for “other reasons” (likely that the unit is uninhabitable), used for seasonal occupancy, undergoing, or awaiting renovation, or used to house migrant workers.

Newly constructed units tend to be large single-family homes. The supply of single-family homes has increased by about 20,000 (approximately 15%) units in the MSA since 2000, and now makes up 2% more of the overall stock. The number of units in larger multifamily buildings has also grown, making up 1% more of the stock. This trend has occurred despite smaller household sizes among owner occupants, a decreased share of large households, and a growing share of renters, and corresponds to a longstanding national trend towards building larger new homes.

Meanwhile, the number of smaller multi-family buildings is declining at a rate of nearly 3,000 units per year. Small multifamily buildings (duplexes, fourplexes, and bungalow courts), have declined 22% since 2000. Such buildings are considered “the missing middle” because they integrate well with single-family housing in residential neighborhoods and provide more affordable choices and generate enough density to support transit.

Mortgages

A quarter of mortgages in NE Pennsylvania goes to households making between 50% and 80% of the HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI), and another quarter goes to those making between 120% and 200% of the area median income. Households earning less than half of the HAMFI receive the least mortgages. This breakdown has remained constant over time, even as the absolute number of mortgages has changed significantly. The rate at which mortgage applications are denied has decreased across the board since 2007. Loan applications are denied at different rates, and for different reasons by race and income. Extremely low-income mortgage applicants receive by far the most denials (43% for families with incomes at or below 30% of HAMFI). Black households have the highest denial rate of any racial or ethnic group (17%), closely followed by Latinos/Hispanics (16%). Black applicants are denied based on their credit score 16% of the time. Asians are most likely to be denied because of a too-high debt-to-income ratio, and whites are more likely to be denied because of a lack of collateral.

Housing discrimination complaints are filed at a lower rate in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties (1/10,000) than in the rest of PA (1.2/10,000). Most of the fair housing complaints in the area relate to National Origin. There are fewer complaints of being discriminated against because of being Black than

in the rest of the state. With few exceptions, fair housing information and applications for subsidized or private market rental housing is unavailable in Spanish in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA.

Median gross rent increased by nearly 19% in NE Pennsylvania since 2000 (adjusting for inflation), and now consumes nearly 30% of the median household’s income. This is due to the decrease in low-cost rental units, since the supply of units renting for less than \$600/month in 2017 dollars has shrunk by more than 25% since 2000.

Increasing income inequality, combined with fewer low-cost housing options, is translating into large cost burdens and a deficit of affordable and available units at the low end of the income spectrum. The number of severely burdened renters in these counties doubled between 2000 and 2017. One third (32%) of homeowners and half (52%) of renters in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area are cost overburdened (paying for housing more than 30% of their income). Households that make 30% of HAMFI have an annual income of \$11,165.40. This leaves low-income households with just \$279.13 per month to spend on housing. There are very few housing options available for families at this rental level in the NEPA area. Renters, low-income households, and Blacks and Latinos/Hispanics are disproportionately housing cost burdened. A 2018 study found that in communities where people spend more than 32% of their income on rent, the homeless rate increases sharply. Rising rents and stagnating incomes creates an affordability crunch that increases the risk of homelessness for the poorest families.

The availability of subsidized housing remains far short of need. As of 2015, there was a deficit of 3,500 units of housing affordable to households below 30% of HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA (Figure 3). This deficit has grown since 2010. Households at 30-50% of HAMFI, though still considered low-income, benefit from a narrow surplus of about 2,500 units affordable to them, and those at 50 to 80% of HAMFI enjoy a surplus of over 17,000 units affordable to them. This inequity could widen in the future for a variety of reasons, including declining federal funding for federal housing initiatives and local block grant programs, federal taxation, and the expiration of affordability restrictions on privately owned subsidized properties in the coming decades.

Figure 3. Supply of Affordable Units by Renter Income, Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties
(PA Comprehensive Housing Study, 2020)

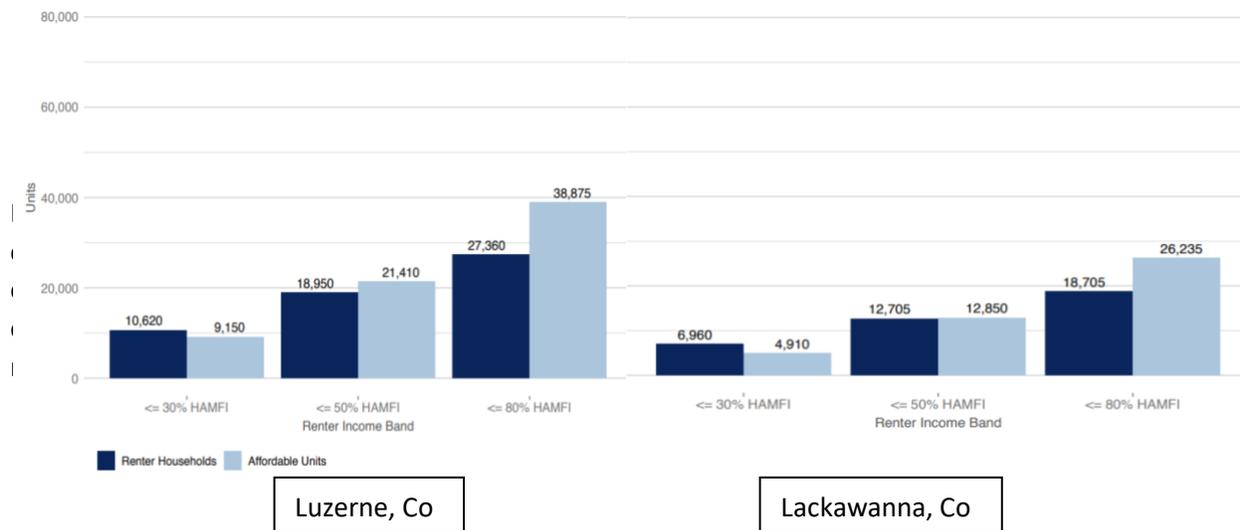


Table 3 shows an analysis of the market prices in 2020 according to the income of renters for the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA. The analysis of wages needed to afford housing show that PA’s minimum wage (\$7.25/hour) is not enough to afford even a studio apartment. At minimum wage, an individual living in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA would need to work 60 hours a week to afford a studio and 70 hours to afford a one-bedroom apartment. A two-bedroom apartment requires an income above \$15.5/hour or \$32,120/year. A person receiving supplemental security income (SSI) of \$805/month in PA, can only spend \$242 in housing to be able to afford other minimum basic needs. Appendix 1 shows the out of reach housing analysis for the entire state of Pennsylvania, with separate profiles for each county.

Table 3. Out of Reach Housing Analysis Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA 2020		
Number of Households		
	TOTAL	225,466
	RENTER	72,964
	PERCENT RENTERS	32%
Housing Wage		
	ZERO-BEDROOM	\$10.88
	ONE-BEDROOM	\$12.63
	TWO-BEDROOM	\$15.44
	THREE-BEDROOM	\$20.00
	FOUR-BEDROOM	\$21.33
Fair Market Rent		
	ZERO-BEDROOM	\$566
	ONE-BEDROOM	\$657
	TWO-BEDROOM	\$803
	THREE-BEDROOM	\$1,040
	FOUR-BEDROOM	\$1,109
Annual Income Needed to Afford		
	ZERO-BEDROOM	\$22,640
	ONE-BEDROOM	\$26,280
	TWO-BEDROOM	\$32,120
	THREE-BEDROOM	\$41,600
	FOUR-BEDROOM	\$44,360
Work Hours/Week at Minimum Wage		
	ZERO-BEDROOM	60
	ONE-BEDROOM	70
	TWO-BEDROOM	85
	THREE-BEDROOM	110
	FOUR-BEDROOM	118
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Payment		
	SSI MONTHLY PAYMENT	\$805
	RENT AFFORDABLE TO SSI RECIPIENT	\$242

1.3 Job market

The Wyoming Valley region has more low wage jobs than high skilled opportunities, but also has a diversity of local sectors: defense, tourism, office/commercial, manufacturing, distribution, education, and healthcare. The labor force is 265,100, 21,000 of whom were unemployed as of October 2020.

The labor force participation rate in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties has consistently remained lower than the rates in the rest of the state and nation (Table 4). Given the age composition of the two-county population, nearly 75,000 workers aged 55-64 might be leaving the workforce, while about 65,000 people aged 6-15 would be entering the workforce in the next 10 years. Assuming that the area returns to pre-COVID employment dynamics and that older workers will keep retiring about age 65, the region could face a net deficit of close to 10,000 workers in the following decade. Some of those jobs may be lost to automation or downsizing, but this deficit still provides re-employment opportunities for jobless individuals if they are trained and able to fill those occupations.

Table 4. Labor force and Employment in PA and the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA MSA, 2020

Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Pennsylvania	6,357,000	5,921,000	436,000	6.9%
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA MSA	265,100	244,100	20,900	7.9%

Source: PA Dept of Labor and Industry

Table 5 shows the number of jobs by industries in the two counties. The largest industry is healthcare and social assistance, employing nearly 42,000 people. The second largest industry in Luzerne County is transportation and warehousing (17,369) and in Lackawanna County is manufacturing, although more people (14,000) are employed in manufacturing in Luzerne County. Healthcare and warehousing were projected to generate about 6,000 new jobs from 2016 to 2026. The food and drinks services sector is also a major employer in the area and was projected to generate about 2,000 new jobs from 2016-2026, but as shown in Table 2, it is at the bottom of the wage scale.

Table 5. Industries and number of jobs in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

Industry	Lackawanna County	Luzerne County
Health Care and Social Assistance	18,931	22,980
Manufacturing	9,104	14,603
Retail Trade	9,375	13,918
Educational Services	7,811	9,378
Professional and Technical Services	2,814	3,124
Transportation and Warehousing	4,772	17,369
Finance and Insurance	4,916	5,161
Administrative and Waste Services	4,527	8,320
Accommodation and Food Services	4,866	6,123
Public Administration	3,030	5,321

Source: PA Dept of Labor and Industry

Given the occupational relevance of the healthcare and social assistance sector, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Health Care Foundation and the Scranton Area Community Foundation conducted community consultations in 2019 to explore the region’s healthcare workforce challenges, finding that there is a high demand for nurses at all levels, and that each level has its own set of challenges and opportunities including staffing shortages and high turnover rate problems which can directly affect patient care. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated nursing staff turnover. These funders are emphasizing investments in healthcare workforce pipeline programs in the following 5 years.

Table 6 below shows the industries with the highest total annual percent change in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA MSA for the 2016-2026 period. The top three industries in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA MSA with the highest total projected annual percent change are Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction (2.75%), Warehousing and Storage (2.23%), and Ambulatory Health Care Services (1.87%). In terms of the raw number of expected job growth, Ambulatory Health Care Services and Warehousing and Storage are estimated to provide about 6,000 new jobs by 2026. Both industries provide above average wages.

Table 6. Industries by Projected Growth Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA MSA

Rank	Industry	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Total Annual % Change	Total 2016-2026 Employment Change
1	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	1,440	1,890	2.75%	450
2	Warehousing and Storage	11,330	14,130	2.23%	2,800
3	Ambulatory Health Care Services	15,540	18,700	1.87%	3,160
4	Specialty Trade Contractors	5,240	6,140	1.60%	900
5	Construction of Buildings	1,790	2,080	1.53%	290
6	Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry	150	170	1.18%	20
7	Support Activities for Mining	150	160	1.18%	10
8	Nonstore Retailers	2,350	2,640	1.15%	290
9	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	3,800	4,230	1.06%	430
10	Food Services and Drinking Places	17,370	19,300	1.06%	1,930

Source: PA Dept of Labor and Industry

Considering industry growth and workforce composition changes (e.g., retirement, out-migration, etc.) in the next few years, the industries with the highest job demand will be healthcare (forecasted job demand 2018-2023 = 25,450), retail trade (forecasted job demand 2018-2023 = 19,319), accommodation and food services (forecasted job demand 2018-2023 = 16,583), transportation, warehousing and logistics (forecasted job demand 2018-2023 = 12,951) and manufacturing (forecasted job demand 2018-2023 = 11,093).

In terms of required training and wages at the entry level, Table 7 shows the 18 occupations that pay over \$30,000 a year at an entry level for individuals with a high school degree and some trade specialized short-term training, but less than an associate degree. At entry level, these occupations pay an average salary above the living wage (>\$15/hour) for any family of more than a single childless individual or couples with one or no child. (See Table 1 for reference.)

It is particularly relevant for organizations supporting families suffering from or at risk of homelessness that none of the 98 occupations listed by the PA department of labor as requiring only short-term on-the-job training provide an hourly salary over \$12. Such a salary supports only a single individual or a couple both working. On the other hand, the same data shows 83 occupations that require medium term on the job training and would pay wages over \$15/hour.

These findings require deeper analysis, but they suggest that short term post-secondary or short-term on-the-job training will provide living wages only to single individuals or couples where both are working (no children). Employment programs for families with children should focus on post-secondary trade training or medium or longer on-the-job training. Again, trade or short term on the job training would suffice only for families with one or two individuals (both working) with no children.

Complete lists of wages by occupations are in Appendix 2. Wages corresponding to occupations that require less than a bachelor’s degree are listed in a separate tab and are ranked by education level required on the two tabs on the left of the excel workbook.

Table 7. Occupations that pay over \$30,000/yr at entry and require some post-secondary training (wages in \$)

Occupational Title	Educ. Level	Average Hourly Wage	Average Annual Wage	Median Annual Wage	Entry Annual Wage	Exper'd Annual Wage
Electrical & Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation & Relay	PS	37.27	77,520	78,190	62,080	85,240
Aircraft Mechanics & Service Technic.	PS	34.78	72,340	67,980	48,400	84,300
CNC Tool Programmers	PS	28.18	58,620	57,850	45,410	65,230
Court Reporters & Simultaneous Captioners	PS	24.92	51,820	48,560	38,940	58,260
Health Info Techs, Surgical Asst's & Other HC Workers	PS	31.53	65,590	59,980	38,630	79,060
Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	PS	21.48	44,670	45,120	37,850	48,080
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	PS	23.80	49,500	47,460	36,730	55,880
Surgical Technologists	PS	21.09	43,870	41,610	35,830	47,890
Sound Engineering Technicians	PS	24.91	51,810	43,600	33,910	60,770
Prepress Technician & Workers	PS	20.70	43,050	41,240	33,110	48,020
Computer, Automated Teller & Office Machine Repairers	PS	18.14	37,730	36,470	32,880	40,150
Audio & Video Equipment Technicians	PS	24.26	50,470	49,350	32,780	59,310
Dental Assistants	PS	19.56	40,690	39,980	31,790	45,140
Motorcycle Mechanics	PS	17.81	37,050	36,190	31,450	39,860
Electronic Home Entertainment Equipment Installers & Repairers	PS	20.51	42,660	42,980	30,880	48,560

Computer User Support Specialists	PS	21.02	43,730	38,500	30,830	50,190
Medical Dosimetrists, Records Specialists & Other Techs	PS	21.23	44,160	41,030	30,640	50,930
Medical Transcriptionists	PS	17.74	36,910	37,160	30,630	40,050

2. Homelessness in Northeastern Pennsylvania

2.1 Continuum of Care collaboratives

Wilkes-Barre/Luzerne County CoC: The Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) is the overall lead agency on homelessness for the Luzerne County Continuum of Care and is responsible for the submission of the CoC consolidated application. CEO coordinates with other agencies in providing services to the area's homeless and near homeless. Coordinated assessment is accessible through the “no wrong door approach” to any CoC agency and 24-hour helpline. The “no wrong door approach” means that individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness can present at any agency within the continuum of care seeking homeless assistance services. This approach provides people with, or links them to, appropriate service regardless of where they enter the system of care.

Scranton/Lackawanna County CoC: The lead agency of the CoC in Lackawanna County is United Neighborhood Centers (UNC). UNC provides administrative support and technical assistance for the CoC and its functions. UNC is responsible for the completion and submission of the Continuum of Care Consolidated Application, the Housing Inventory Chart, and the Point in Time Count. The Scranton-Lackawanna County CoC also adheres to the “no wrong door approach.”

2.2 Homelessness data trends

Homelessness data in the United States is imprecise. The best available source comes from the yearly Point in Time counts (PIT). The PIT is a count of people experiencing homelessness sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe havens, and unsheltered, on a single night in January. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally. CoCs put great effort into having the most accurate and reliable PIT every year, and this data provides a very valuable window into the problem of homelessness. Caution should be taken interpreting trends given important sources of bias, such as seasonal variations and the challenge of counting homeless individuals that are not in shelters or visibly on the street (e.g., people living in their cars).

Wilkes-Barre/Luzerne County

Using PIT counts provided by HUD for every congressional district in the US, the data for PA-503 (Wilkes-Barre/Luzerne County CoC) shows an average 1.4% yearly decrease in the number of homeless since 2010 (Figure 4). Gender data available since 2015 show that this slight decrease is equal for males and females (Figure 5). In terms of age, there has been an increase in the number of homeless children under 18 and youth aged 18-24, and a decrease in people aged 25 and older (Figure 6).

Figure 4. Overall Homeless - Wilkes-Barre/Luzerne County CoC, 2010-2019 (PIT Counts)

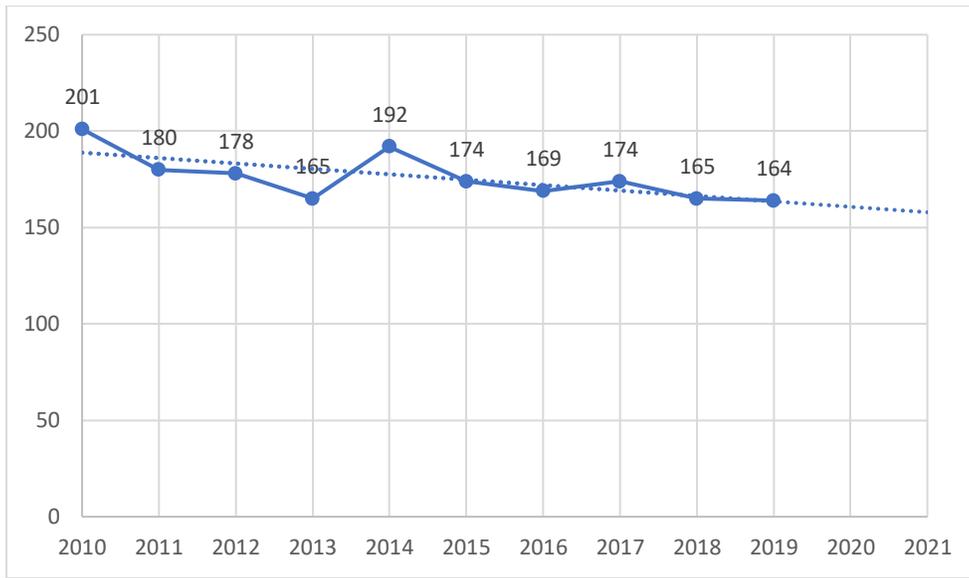


Figure 5. Homeless population by gender in Wilkes-Barre/Luzerne County CoC, 2015-2019 (PIT Counts)

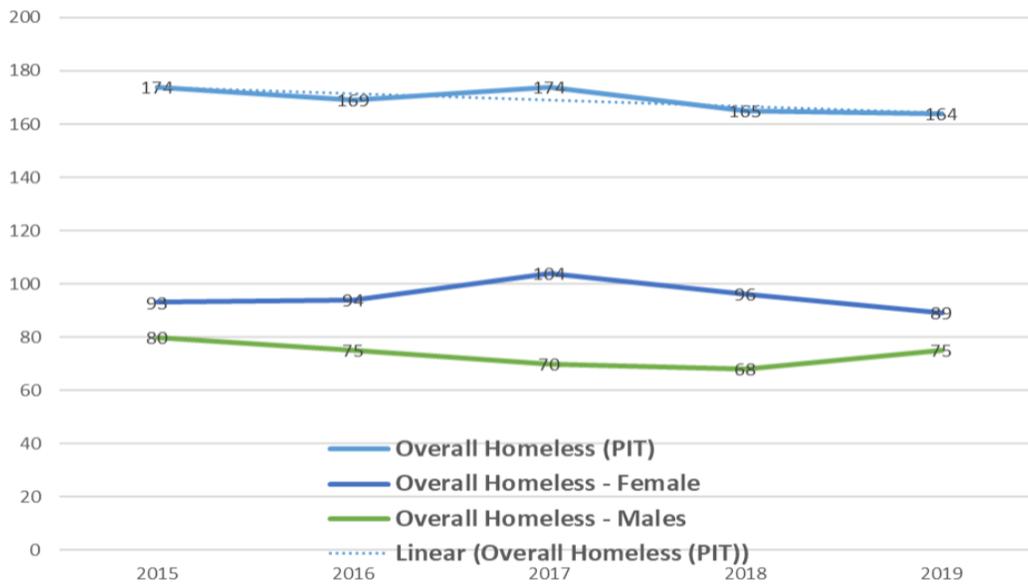
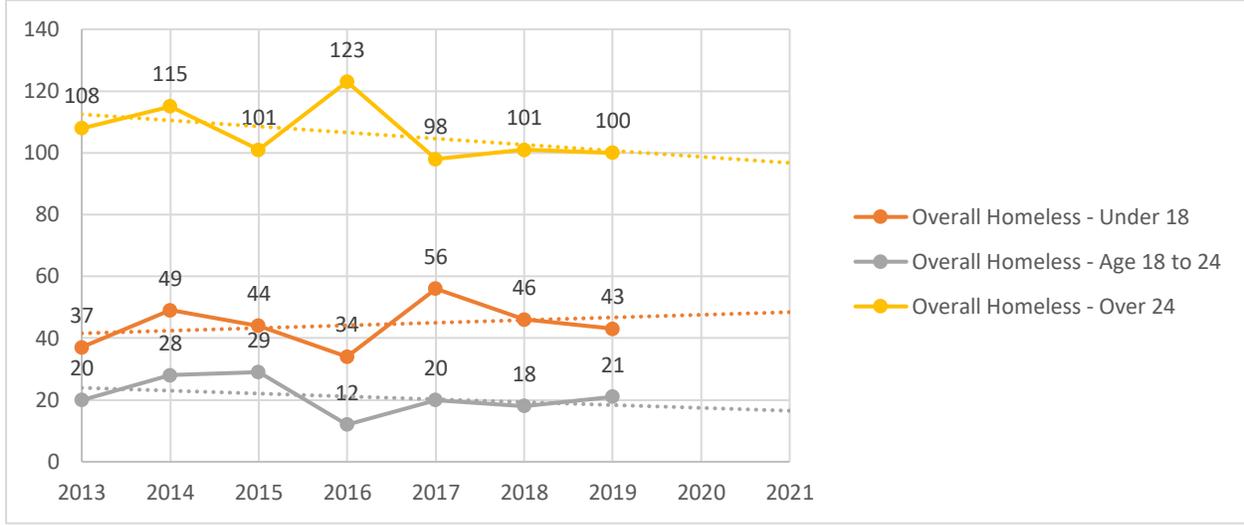


Figure 6. Homeless population by age group in Wilkes-Barre/Luzerne County CoC, 2015-2019 (PIT Counts)

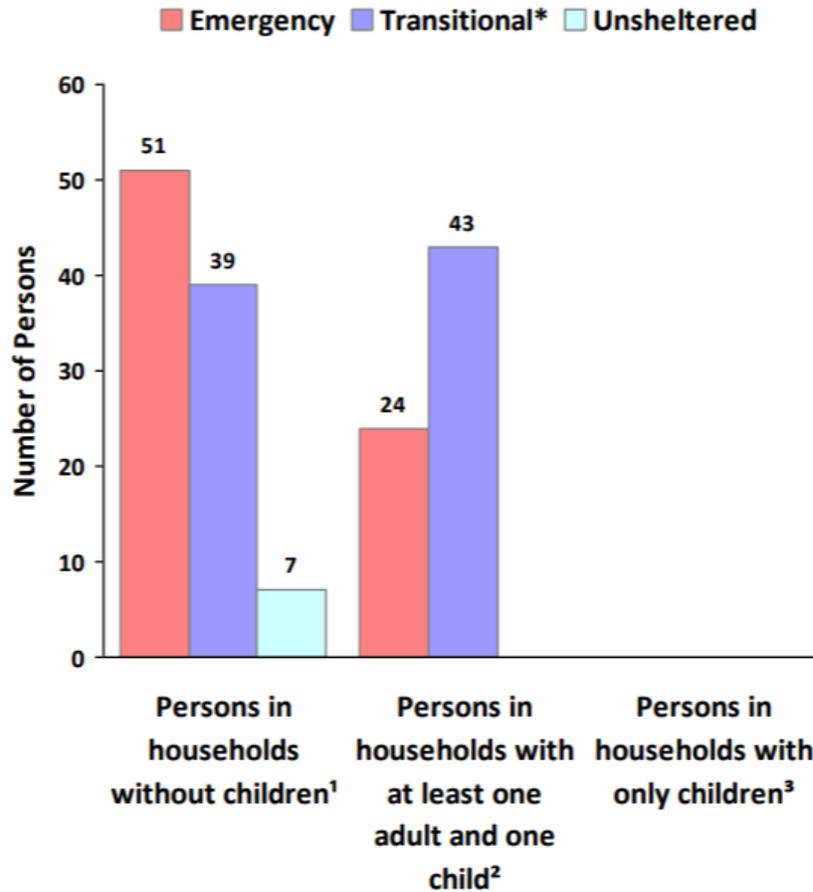


The data quality of the PIT counts has progressively increased, although not all the variables are compatible throughout the years. Ethnicity data available from 2017 shows that homelessness in NEPA disproportionately affects Blacks. While Blacks are less than 4% of the total population in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA, they represent over a third of the homeless population (Table 8). Blacks are also overrepresented in emergency shelters. Half of Black homeless individuals are found at emergency shelters and half at transitional housing, while 40% of white homeless individuals are at emergency shelters and 60% at transitional housing. Figure 7 shows the housing distribution of families by type during the 2019 PIT count. Even though twice as many families with children were in transitional housing than in emergency shelters, still a third of them were in emergency shelters, which often do not provide appropriate conditions for minors.

Table 8. Homeless vs. total population by race/ethnicity, Wilkes-Barre-Luzerne Co CoC, 2015–2019 (PIT Counts)

Year	Overall Homeless (PIT)	Overall Homeless - Latinos/Hispanics, 2019	Overall Homeless - White, 2019	Overall Homeless - Black 2019
2019	164	21 (13%)	102 (62%)	56 (34%)
2018	165	13 (8%)	94 (57%)	65 (40%)
2017	174	39 (22%)	93 (54%)	67 (39%)
ACS 2019 estimates		43,740 (13.8%)	251,502 (79.2%)	12,858 (4.1%)

Figure 7. Wilkes-Barre, Hazelton/Luzerne County 2019 Point in Time Count



¹This category includes single adults, adult couples with no children, and groups of adults.

²This category includes households with one adult and at least one child under age 18.

³This category includes persons under age 18, including children in one-child households, adolescent parents and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children

The 2019 housing inventory for Wilkes-Barre, Hazelton/Luzerne County shows that, of the total 323 Permanent Supportive Housing beds, 194 were available for families with children. The inventory for rapid rehousing and transitional housing also showed twice as many beds available to families with children than for single individuals with no children (Figure 8). This distribution reflects the funding allocation priorities of the CoC, (Figure 9) with almost half of the HUD grants dedicated to permanent supportive housing, a little under a fourth to transitional housing, and about 15% to rapid rehousing.

**Figure 8. Wilkes-Barre, Hazelton/Luzerne County CoC
2019 Housing Inventory by Household Type Served**

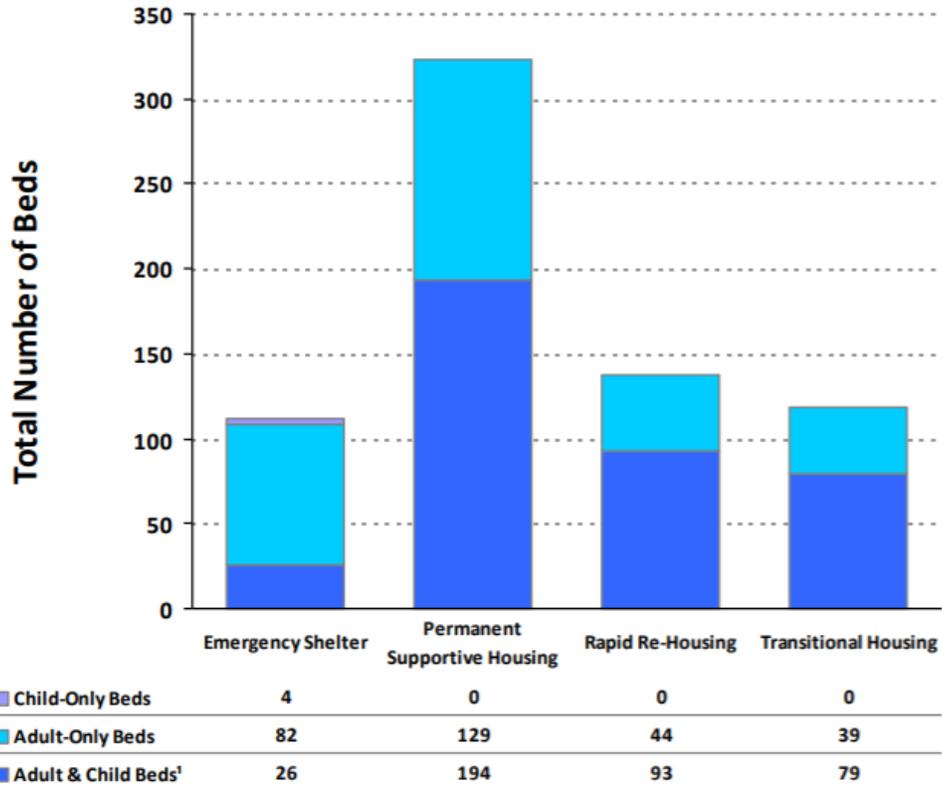
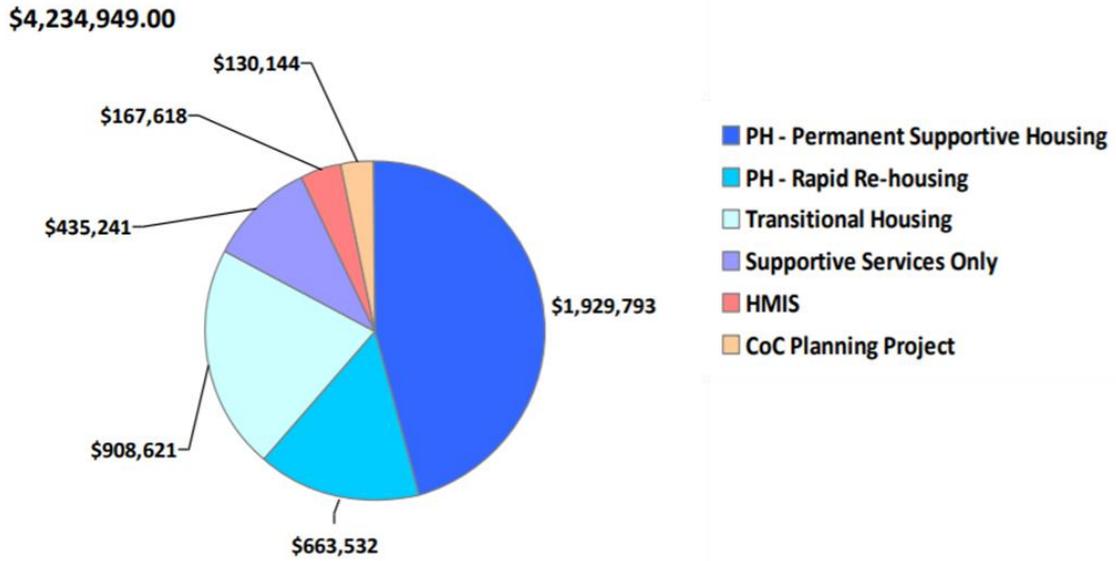


Figure 9. Wilkes-Barre, Hazelton/Luzerne County CoC 2019 HUD Grant by Type of Program



Scranton/Lackawanna County

The PIT counts for PA-508 congressional district (Scranton=Lackawanna County CoC) shows an average 4.2% yearly decrease in the number of homeless since 2010 (Figure 10). Gender data available since 2015 shows this decrease to be due to fewer females since 2017, while it has remained the same for males (Figure 11). In terms of age, there has been a stark decrease in children under 18 since 2014, but a 15% increase in those aged over 24 since 2018 (Figure 12).

Figure 10. Overall Homeless (PIT) - Scranton-Lackawanna Co CoC

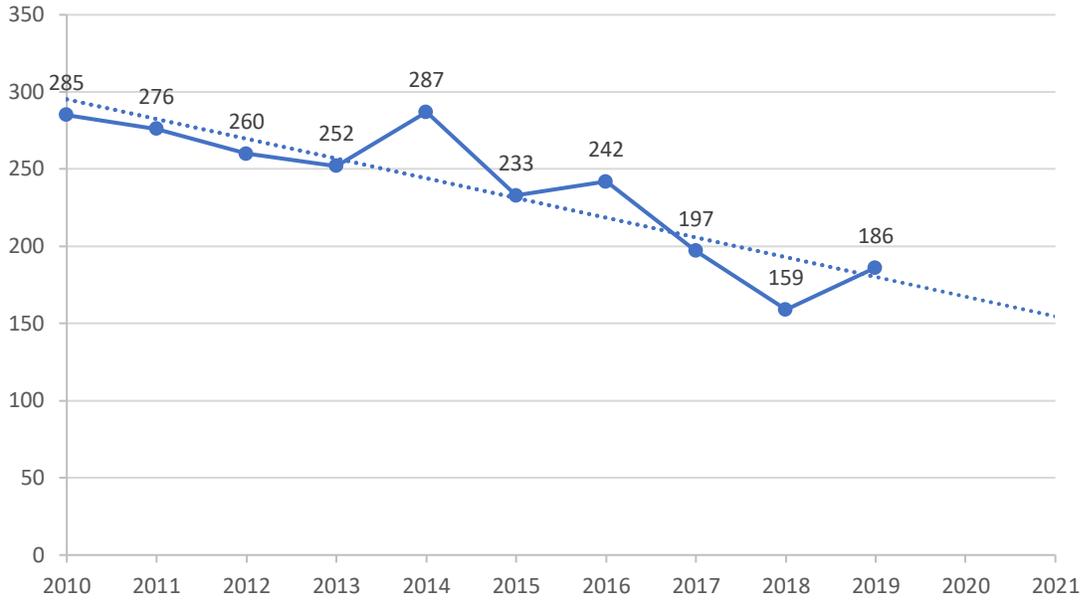


Figure 11. Overall Homeless – Scranton-Lackawanna Co CoC, 2010–2019 (PIT Counts)

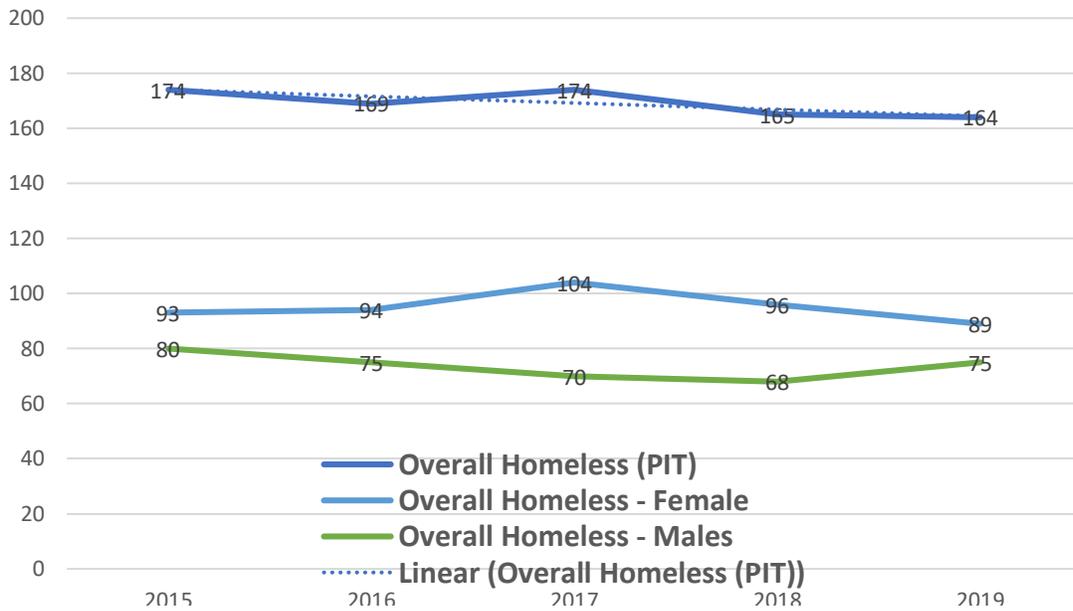
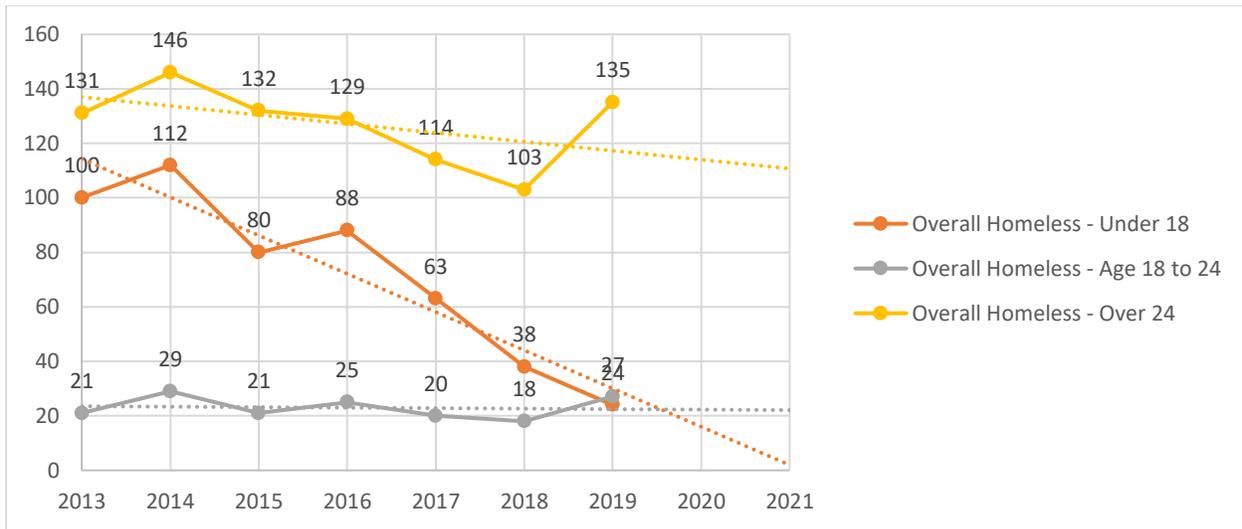


Figure 12. Homeless population by age group in Scranton-Lackawanna Co CoC, 2015–2019 (PIT Counts)



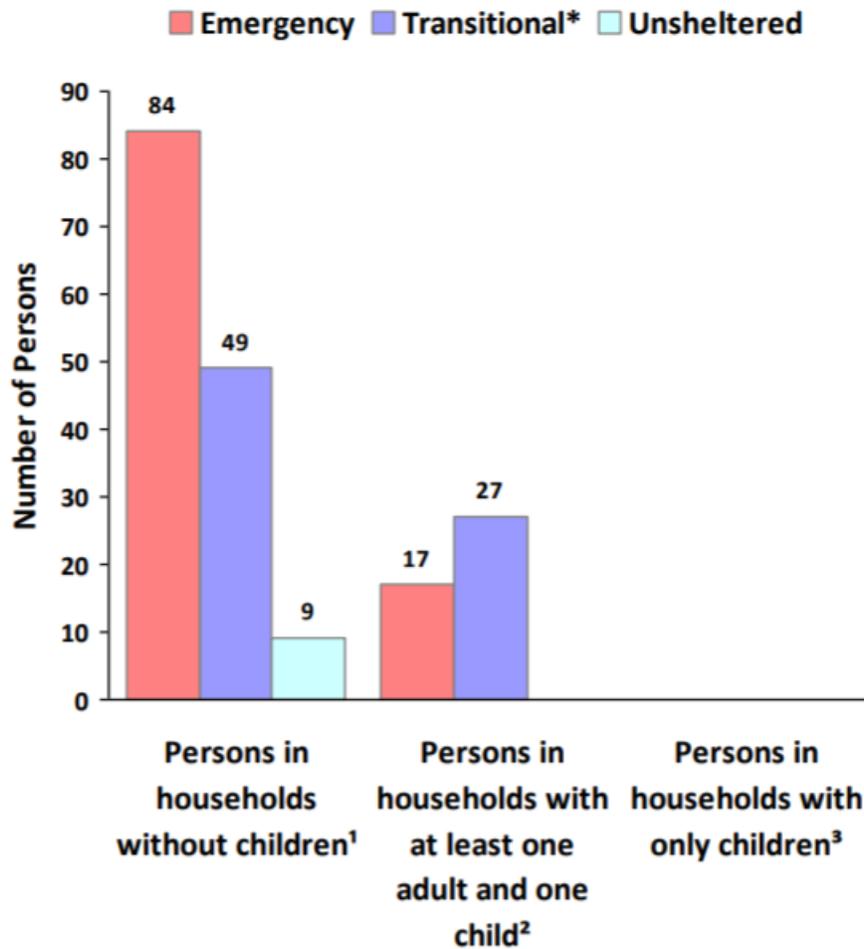
Similar to the data from Luzerne County, homelessness disproportionately affects people of color in Lackawanna County. Blacks represent 3.4% of the total population in Lackawanna County, but their percentage in the homeless population is 5 times higher (Table 9).

Figure 13 shows the housing distribution of families by type during the 2019 PIT count. More families with children were in transitional housing than in emergency shelters. Over half of them were in emergency shelters, a higher proportion than Luzerne County. This data is somewhat puzzling, given the decreased number of children under 18 in the PIT counts, and warrants further confirmation from reliable sources in the community.

Table 9. Homeless vs. total population by race/ethnicity, Scranton-Lackawanna Co CoC, 2015–2019 (PIT Counts)

Year	Overall Homeless (PIT)	Overall Homeless – Latino/ Hispanic, 2019	Overall Homeless - White, 2019	Overall Homeless – Black 2019
2019	186	33 (17%)	143 (77%)	32 (17%)
2018	159	23 (15%)	115 (72%)	29 (18%)
2017	197	29 (15%)	129 (66%)	42 (21%)
ACS 2019 estimates		17,602 (8.4%)	175,627 (83.8%)	7,316 (3.4%)

Figure 13. Scranton/Lackawanna County 2019 Point in Time Count



¹This category includes single adults, adult couples with no children, and groups of adults.

²This category includes households with one adult and at least one child under age 18.

³This category includes persons under age 18, including children in one-child households, adolescent parents and their children, adolescent siblings, or other household configurations composed only of children

The 2019 housing inventory for Scranton/Lackawanna County shows that, in general, this CoC has much lower availability of housing resources, although it counts more homeless individuals than Luzerne County. Most of the difference is in permanent supportive housing (204 vs. 323) but Lackawanna County has 60 more rapid rehousing beds than Luzerne County (197 vs. 137). Lackawanna County also has fewer transitional housing beds (70 vs. 118), but it has 11 safe haven beds available while Luzerne County has none (Figure 14). The funding allocations of the CoC are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 14. Scranton/Lackawanna County CoC - 2019 Housing Inventory by Household Type Served

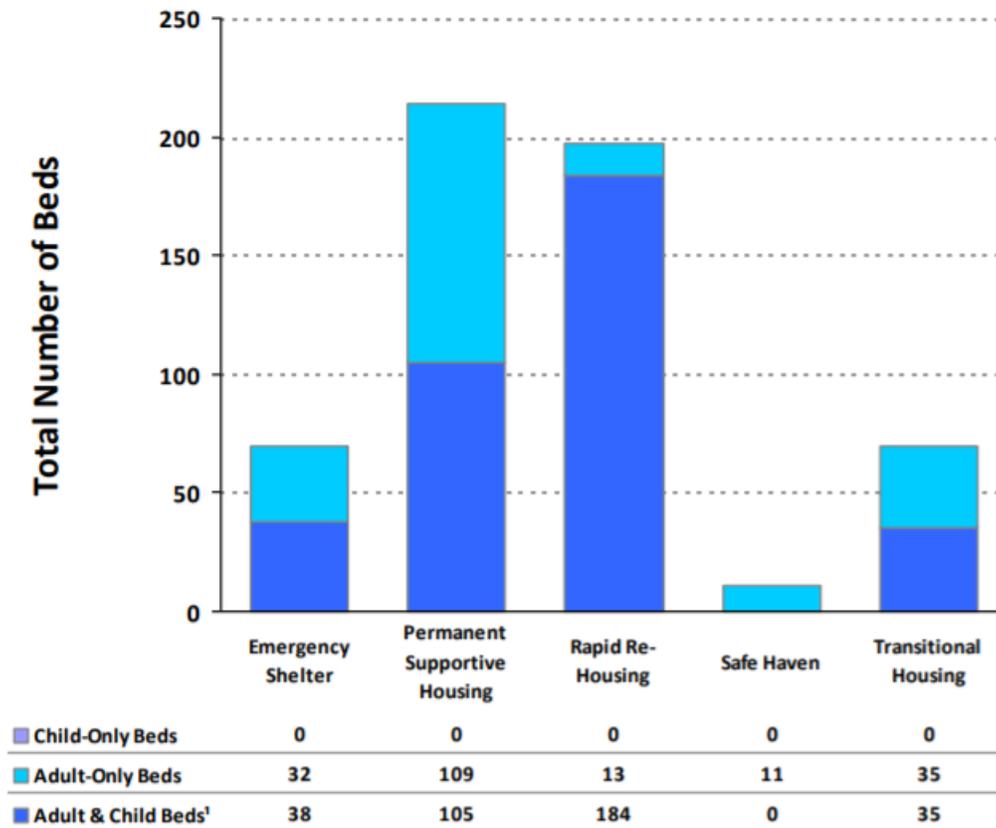
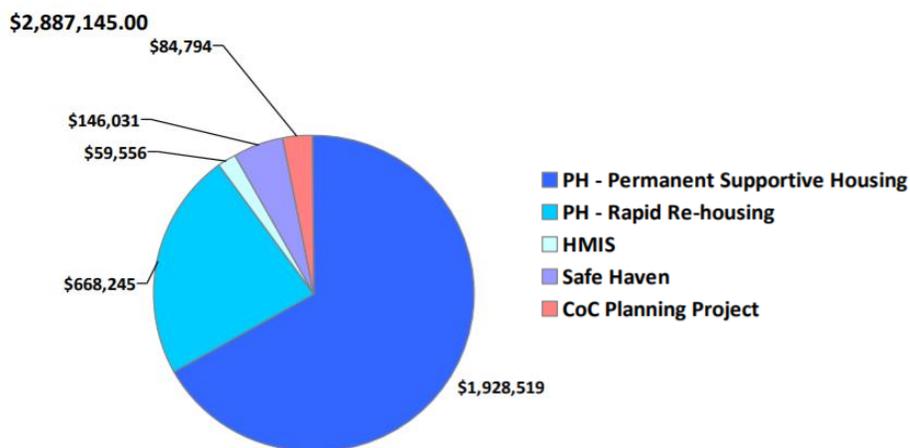


Figure 15. Scranton/Lackawanna County CoC - 2019 HUD Grant by Type of Program



Homelessness among veterans

In the area corresponding to the Scranton/Lackawanna County Coc, the 2019 PIT count found 30 homeless veterans, all of them in transitional housing, a very significant step towards eliminating homelessness among veterans. The 2019 Luzerne County PIT included 14 veterans, 1 of them in

an emergency shelter, and the other 13 in transitional housing. There has been a trend since 2017 in both counties with fewer veterans in emergency shelters each year, and more in transitional housing

3. Conclusions

1. A comprehensive approach to homelessness is necessary. With multiple determinant factors, no single organization or funder can address the issues or aspire to solve them.
2. Demographically, the area is primarily white, has negative net migration, has increasing aged-to-youth ratios, and faces a deficit in the population entering the labor force in the next 10 years. Most immigrants to the area are Latino/Hispanic.
3. Although housing in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA is cheaper than in the state of Pennsylvania as whole, there is an enormous deficit of affordable housing. People earning minimum wage are unable to afford even a studio.
4. Four-fifths of the housing inventory in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA is more than 30 years old. New construction has focused on larger more expensive houses. The aging lower cost housing units need costly repairs, which along with high property taxes, make it very difficult for low-income people to qualify for a mortgage.
5. There is a critical lack of affordable housing, due to a combination of very low wages, and lack of new construction of low-income units.
6. None of the 98 occupations listed by the PA department of labor as requiring only short term on the job training provide an hourly salary over \$12 in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA, while 83 occupations that require medium term on the job training and would pay wages over \$15/hour.
7. It is likely that short-term post-secondary or on-the-job training will provide living wages only to single individuals or couples where both are working and have no children. Employment programs for families with children should focus on post-secondary trade training or medium or longer on the job training.
8. The Scranton/Wilkes-Barre MSA community has succeeded in finding permanent supportive housing for homelessness among veterans. Homelessness among youth has decreased but the overall number of homeless have shown only marginal decrease.