

**CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**Office of the Mayor**  
**Thomas M. Menino**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mayor Announces Decrease in Adult Homelessness on Boston's Streets & Shelters**

Census reveals on-going family homelessness crisis

Mayor Thomas M. Menino today announced preliminary results from the 28th Annual City of Boston Homeless Census. On the night of the census, Mayor Menino was joined by city officials, leaders of key state agencies and more than 350 volunteers. Mayor Menino would like to thank the homeless advocates and leaders of Boston's business, non-profit and faith communities that participated in the annual street count of unsheltered homeless persons two weeks ago.

"This census is a mixed picture once again. We saw a major decrease in the number of homeless people living on the streets this winter, combined with fewer adults in emergency shelter for the third consecutive year. That is terrific news. The reason for that trend is that more of these individuals are in permanent housing," Mayor Menino said. "Our housing strategy has focused on moving elderly and disabled individuals from the streets into permanent housing. This demonstrates what I have always believed: housing is the solution to homelessness. Where we have had the resources, we are having an impact."

During the census, more than 100 emergency shelter, transitional housing, domestic violence, behavioral and medical health providers responded to surveys in what is believed to be the longest-held and most comprehensive count of homeless men, women and children in the country. Mayor Menino also noted that key leaders of the State Administration and the new leaders of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Boston all joined him and homeless advocates for the street count.

For the third year in a row, unaccompanied adult homeless numbers are down, while family numbers have increased significantly. Like other major cities Boston bears the brunt of this unmet need. The City of New York reported a record number of homeless families last year. The number for families is higher for the third year in a row, meaning that children continue to be our fastest growing homeless population.

"While we have increased our efforts to prevent homelessness among families, keeping hundreds more housed and out of shelter, the availability of federal and state funding for family housing has not kept pace with the increased demand. Funding for rental assistance programs like the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program is far below what is needed," Mayor Menino added. "It is time for the Federal government to recognize the growing crisis in family homelessness

and to target more resources toward solutions. The Federal government is leaving families behind.”

Other numbers: 2006-07 2007-08 % change

Adults 4,000 3,817 -4.6%

Street Count 306 184 -40%

Families (men, women and children) 2,636 3,084 +17%

Children 1,523 1,849 +21.4%

Total All Homeless 6,636 6,901 +3.9%

Mayor Menino and hundreds of volunteers participated in the City of Boston Homeless Census last December 18th. The street figure is combined with the one-night census numbers from all residential homeless facilities to aggregate the total number of homeless on that night in the city. With a total of 6,901 homeless men, women and children, the overall number increased by 3.9 percent over last year’s total of 6,636.

“The Mayor has called for housing solutions, and we are responding,” said Jim Greene, Director of the Emergency Shelter Commission. “The number of people living unsheltered on Boston’s streets decreased significantly and the emergency shelter and hospital numbers did not increase. We have focused on the housing needs of the elderly homeless population for the past three years, and this year the Mayor launched the Boston Common Ground Housing Initiative with the Boston Housing Authority and our homeless outreach and housing partners. But the housing picture for low-income families continues to be bleak without greater federal and state aid.”

The City of Boston reports on emergency shelter and transitional housing, domestic violence and unsheltered homeless populations as required by HUD, but the aggregate number includes homeless individuals and families in hospitals, medical respite, mental health, detoxification and recovery home programs.

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