



## **Homeless Quarterly Count: July 2013**

### ***Methodology of the Count***

The DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) conducts quarterly homeless counts, building upon the data received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Point in Time (PIT) count. According to the 2013 PIT there are 6,865 homeless persons, including families with children, in the District of Columbia; of this number, 512 are currently unsheltered and over 4,000 are residing in emergency shelter. Quarterly counts, held within the boundaries of the BID, allow for a more accurate understanding of the current state of homelessness and the opportunity to identify trends and changes that are occurring in the Downtown region.

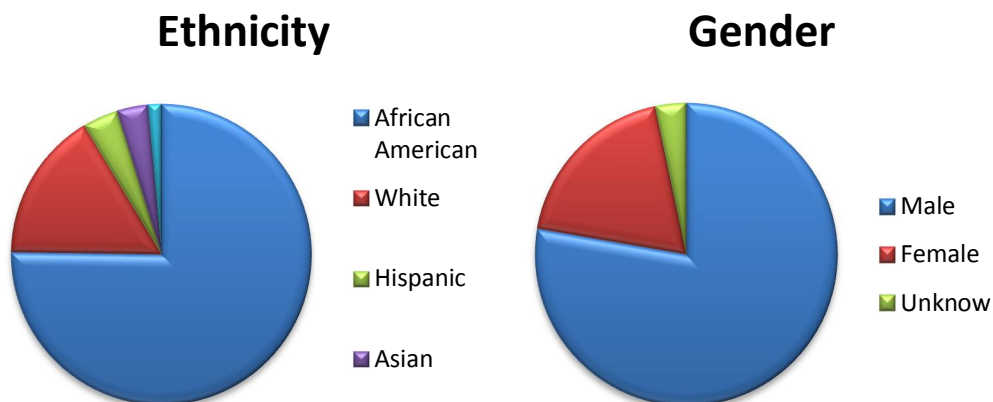
The landscape encompassing the area of the Downtown BID is divided into eight zones. Staff from the Public Space Management (PSM) department, Pathways to Housing DC, the Safety and Hospitality SAMs, along with volunteers are assigned a specific zone, capturing the location and basic demographics of the homeless. Staff utilized the *Field Asset Management Mobile Application* to record the location, race, gender, age, veteran status, recent shelter stays, health problems, and current employment (if any) of the homeless individuals. Homeless individuals were engaged directly, unless they declined or could not be woken up. In these instances, staff recorded visual observations regarding individual demographics; therefore, each demographic category has an "unknown" percentage. The count occurred on Monday, July 15, 2013 beginning at 10:00 p.m., with staff returning between 1:30 and 2:00 a.m. The engagement teams handed out resource cards and for their participation, homeless clients received \$5 gift cards to McDonalds. The purpose of the count includes four main objectives: 1). Document the state of homelessness; 2) Identify trends and changes to the Downtown homeless population; 3). Address any unmet needs stated by individuals; 4). Justify additional funding and resources for individuals to utilize.

## Results

During the count, the BID identified 210 homeless individuals. This number is up 21.4 percent from the quarterly count held in April 2013 and 8.6 percent from July 2012. Due to the transient nature of this population, the lack of adequate shelter space, and warm weather, this increase is on par with the seasonal data trend.



Of the 210 counted, 78 percent were male and 19 percent were female, with the other 3 percent unidentifiable due most likely to blankets shielding their face. Of this population, 75 percent were identified as African-American or Black, with only 16 percent identified as White, 4 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian. Additionally, 3 percent either didn't self-identify and/or outreach teams were unable to visually determine.



In addition, 7.6 percent were identified as veterans, down from 8.5 in April 2012. This decrease may be partly due to the success our Downtown Homeless Services Team (DHST) has had in the past several months housing homeless veterans located within the BID. Nearly 8 percent had some form of employment, up from 3 percent in April 2013. Of the individuals, almost 28 percent has some type of self-identified health problem. Surprisingly, 16 percent stated they had recently stayed in a shelter; despite the recent hypothermia season, only 6.7 percent stated they had recently stayed in a shelter during the April 2013 count.

### Recent Shelter Stay

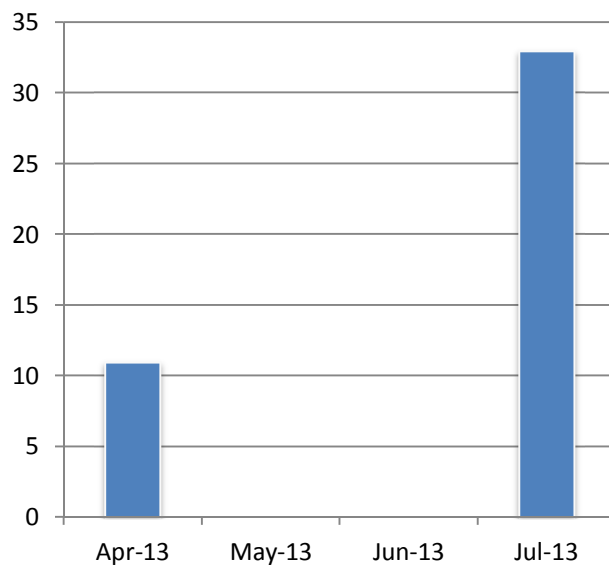


Chart 1.1\*

### Employment

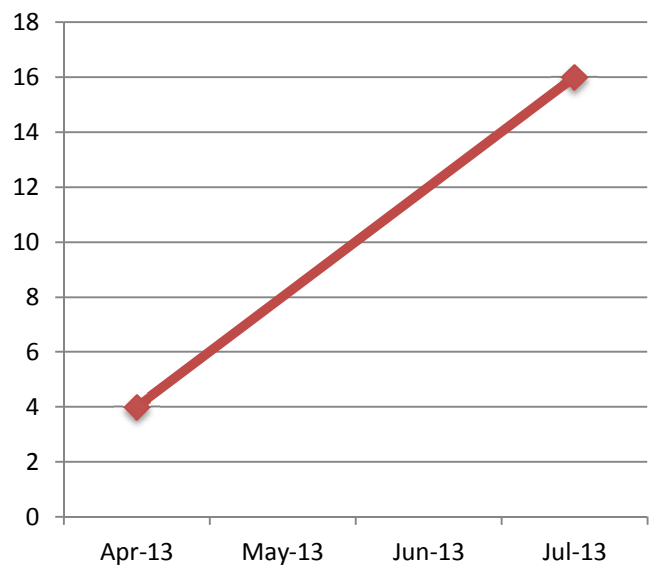
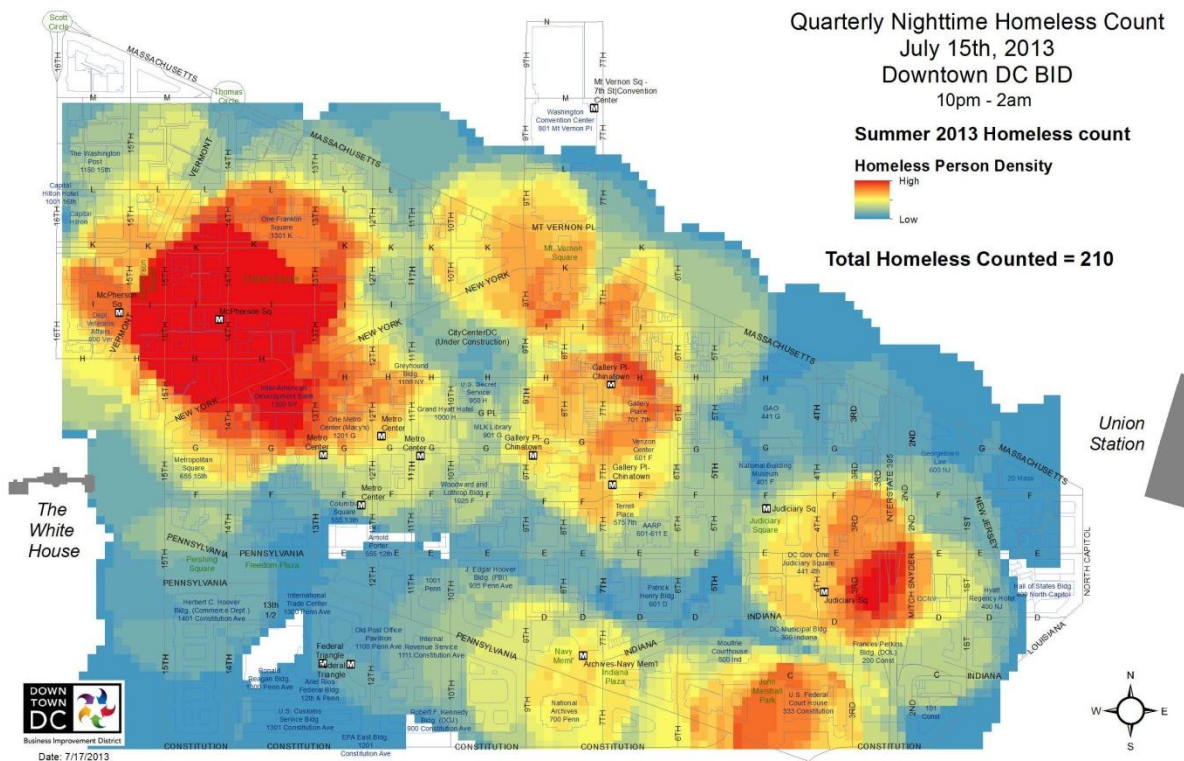


Chart 1.2\*

Despite the increasing summer temperatures the location of the 210 homeless individuals, captured using the *Field Asset Management Mobile Application*, relatively mirrors the data collected in April 2013. McPherson Square, located in zone one, continues to have high density radius. The southwest quadrant of New York Avenue is home to buildings with significant overhangs, helping protect homeless individuals from the elements and making it a popular area with these individuals. Despite that city parks often serve as a safe haven and are accessible public space for the homeless, the number located within Franklin Park has decreased since April. While not proven, this reduction may be due to the recent increased activity of the U.S. Park Police enforcing Quality of Life behaviors.

\*Both Charts 1.1 and 1.2 look at the total number of homeless individuals counted within the demographic category.



### Follow-up

Downtown regions often provide a safe haven for the homeless through building security and heavy night time foot traffic. During the April 2013 count the BID realized that several of the requests for follow-up services came from individuals that do not spend the day time hours within the downtown boundaries, only seeking shelter during the night. This made it particularly difficult for the Downtown Homeless Services Team, contracted through Pathways to Housing DC, to coordinate efforts to meet the needs of these individuals. After identifying this limitation, modifications were made to the quarterly survey with a focus on obtaining phone numbers from individuals who requested follow-up. Since 1985 the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) has administered the Lifeline Program, a federal program that assists eligible low-income individuals pay for home telephone or wireless service. This allows many homeless individuals the opportunity to have a form of communication. Any requests for service received during the count were followed up within subsequent days by staff from the DHST.

The BID will conduct the next quarterly count in October. The high number identified in this July count, on par with numbers from the previous October 2012 count of 215, leads the BID to believe that the number of unsheltered homeless will only continue to rise as the year progresses prior to hypothermia season. The DHST continues to conduct street outreach on a daily basis, working to meet the needs of the homeless within the Downtown BID.