In 2022, Joseph’s House worked with 2,907 homeless or formerly homeless Capital District residents throughout all of its programs – an increase of more than 50% over the prior year.

We worked with 2,344 single individuals, and 563 members of 151 families – including 356 children under 18. Across all programs, 1,440 people (50% of all clients) reported having a disabling condition, and 414 people (14%) were chronically homeless under the HUD definition.

This report contains information from clients served across each of our programs. Joseph’s House operates emergency shelters for single adults and families with children which increase in capacity during the winter months; a rapid re-housing program for homeless families and single adults; homeless street outreach programs in Rensselaer and Albany counties; a Housing First scattered-site apartment and case management program for families with children and parents with disabilities; and three Housing First site-based supportive housing programs for chronically homeless single adults. We used federal funds for COVID aid to pilot a shelter diversion program and expand our homeless services programs. We also operate a Coordinated Entry system which facilitates access to homeless housing and homeless prevention supports in Rensselaer County.

Homeless Services Programs

The Single Shelters

The Single Shelters for adults served 208 unduplicated homeless individuals in 2022. Occupancy since the pandemic has been greatly reduced from typical years as a direct result of the closure of four emergency shelter beds in order to facilitate social distancing and prevent potential spread of COVID-19. Reduced availability of rental units and treatment programs also contributed to longer lengths of stay in shelter for single adults. During the course of 2022, we re-opened 3 of these previously closed beds.

The average age among all singles was 44 years, and nearly 70% of single guests served were male. Fifty-two percent of guests identified as Caucasian, 39% as African American, 3% as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1% as Asian, 2% identified with multiple races, and 3% did not report a racial
The shelters provided 8,299 bed nights during the year. Some other place not intended for habitation, and 5% percent of guests left with whereabouts unknown. The shelters, single shelters, overflow shelter, the Inn from the Cold, or to another shelter in the case that we were not able to meet a person’s needs or the guest was not from Rensselaer County. Two percent of guests left to the streets or transitional housing or temporarily doubling up with family or friends. Another 35% were referred to our transitional housing program or other residential housing program (14 persons), and moving in with a friend or roommate (6 persons). Approximately four percent entered a treatment program, hospital, psychiatric center, or other inpatient setting. Fourteen percent of guests left the shelter to a temporary situation, such as transitional housing or temporarily doubling up with family or friends. Another 35% were referred to our overflow shelter, the Inn from the Cold, or to another shelter in the case that we were not able to meet a person’s needs or the guest was not from Rensselaer County. Two percent of guests left to the streets or some other place not intended for habitation, and 5% percent of guests left with whereabouts unknown. The shelters provided 8,299 bed nights during the year.

Sixty percent of guests identified having a disabling condition which affects their ability to live independently. Fifty-five percent of single guests reported having a mental health condition; 33% reported having a substance abuse issue; and 46% reported having a chronic health condition, developmental disability, or physical disability. HUD defines chronic homelessness as having a disabling condition, as well as having been homeless for longer than 12 months continuously, or 12 months or more over 4 times in the last 3 years. Overall, about 10% of persons admitted to our shelters were chronically homeless under HUD’s definition. However, 47% of guests who entered our shelter this year reported that this was their first episode of homelessness in the last three years.

Forty-seven percent of single guests in the shelter were receiving any kind of cash income when they arrived to the shelter. Among those who did have income, the most common source was SSI/SSDI benefits (seventy-five percent of those who did receive income). Nineteen percent of those with income received wages from employment. Those with employment income were generally from working part-time hours, evidenced by the average gross of $1,243 monthly. Overall, the average guest who had income received just $955 monthly or $11,460 annually – a slight decrease from the previous year.

The average length of each program stay for singles in the emergency shelter was 37 days\(^1\), which was 15 days longer than the pre-COVID average. Throughout the year, each single shelter guest stayed an average of 40 days\(^2\). About 39% of guests exited the program to a stable permanent housing situation, including: a private rental with or without a subsidy (46 persons), a permanent supportive housing program or other residential housing program (14 persons), and moving in with a friend or roommate (6 persons). Approximately four percent entered a treatment program, hospital, psychiatric center, or other inpatient setting. Fourteen percent of guests left the shelter to a temporary situation, such as transitional housing or temporarily doubling up with family or friends. Another 35% were referred to our overflow shelter, the Inn from the Cold, or to another shelter in the case that we were not able to meet a person’s needs or the guest was not from Rensselaer County. Two percent of guests left to the streets or some other place not intended for habitation, and 5% percent of guests left with whereabouts unknown. The shelters provided 8,299 bed nights during the year.

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\(^1\) Average length of all program stays for leavers in 2022, not unduplicated

\(^2\) Calculated as: bed nights provided in the year divided by unduplicated number of persons served
Code Blue Emergency Shelter

During the 2020 - 2021 winter season, the Joseph’s House Code Blue project continued under modified operations in order to meet COVID-safe guidelines and maximize safety for guests and staff. In general, the program was designed to provide additional nights of safe shelter when the overnight low temperature outside was 32°F or below.

The first operating night for Code Blue was 11/19/2021 and the last was 4/15/2022. Unlike in previous years, this season the Code Blue project operated continuously without closing, for a total of 147 nights. The Code Blue project operated under a very low-demand model, in which guests were not required to meet with a housing advocate, provide staff with much information, or present at RCDSS for assistance. Last winter, Joseph's House served 148 persons in the Code Blue program, providing a total of 1401 nights of shelter to men and women (350% more than previous season – this was much closer to pre-COVID levels than the dip in usage during the previous season). On average, each person who accessed Code Blue during the season used it for 9 nights.

Twenty-seven percent of persons served reported having one or more disabling conditions. Thirty-seven percent of persons who accessed shelter through the Code Blue program told us they had stayed out on the street or in another emergency shelter the night prior to coming in, and 18% had been discharged directly from an institutional setting such as a hospital, jail, or inpatient treatment center. Thirty-five percent had been doubled up with family and friends before coming in to Code Blue, and 9% had been residing in their own housing (such as a private apartment, permanent supportive housing, or transitional housing).

Outcome tracking greatly improved for this program in recent years. At program exit, 60% of clients were referred to another emergency shelter such as the main emergency shelter at Ferry Street. Six percent moved directly to a housing situation such as a private rental or permanent supportive housing, and another eight percent of guests left to a temporary situation such as doubling up. One percent of guests left Code Blue to an institutional setting such as a hospital, jail, or inpatient treatment setting. Twenty percent left the program to stay outside or in a place not meant for human habitation. Five percent of Code Blue guests left with whereabouts unknown and did not return.

The Ferry Street Family Shelter

Last year, the Family Shelter at Ferry Street directly provided emergency shelter to 79 people in 22 families, including 47 children under 18 years old. Forty-one percent of families were headed by two adults together. Family size averages between 3 - 4 persons per household, with a typical family having one parent and 2 or 3 children. Approximately 68% of the family members identify as African American, 18% as Caucasian, and 1% did not report a racial identity. Thirteen percent of family members identify with more than one race. Ten percent also identified as being of Hispanic origin.

The family shelter operates on a referral system from Rensselaer County Department of Social Services. Families staying in the shelter are often referred to Joseph’s House because of their exceptional difficulties in finding housing. Most families (64%) had already been staying in motels throughout the Capital District prior to coming to the shelter, receiving emergency shelter vouchers from RCDSS.
Eighteen percent of families had been doubled up with family or friends, three families were in their own rental apartment, and one had been renting a public housing unit.

Approximately 15% of persons in families reported having some kind of disabling condition which affects their ability to live independently. This is a much lower rate than we see among homeless single adults in shelter. Twenty-seven percent of all heads of household had a disabling condition. Nine percent of all family members reported having a mental health problem; one person reported a substance abuse issue; and 19% identified having a chronic physical, development, or health condition. None of the families served this year were identified as meeting the HUD criteria for chronic homelessness at intake.

Thirty-eight percent of the 32 adults in the program entered the emergency shelter with zero cash income. Among those who did receive cash income, sources were: cash public assistance benefits (20%), wages from employment (50%), SSI/SSDI benefits (20%), and unemployment benefits (10%). Among those adults who did receive income, the average amount received was $1,021 per month, or $12,252 annually to support a family with an average of 3 – 4 persons.

Families who left the program had stayed an average of 60 days in the shelter, which was 9% longer than the previous year. The family shelter provided a total of 5,282 bed nights of shelter, and the average unit occupancy rate for the year was 83%. Rental housing at an affordable price was especially difficult to locate this year. Twenty-two percent of families were successfully placed in permanent housing destinations, such as a private rental with or without a subsidy (3 households) or reunification with family (1 household). One family moved to transitional housing, and about 28% transferred to another emergency shelter or motel. Twenty-two percent of families left the shelter to temporarily double up with family or friends, and another 22% left with whereabouts unknown.

**Rapid Rehousing / Resettlement Program**

The Rapid Rehousing / Resettlement program served 277 persons in 108 Rensselaer County-based homeless households in 2022 – which was 36% more people than the previous year. This program works to rapidly re-house currently homeless households from shelter or motel voucher placements into permanent housing in the community by providing advocacy and case management services, and occasionally short-term rental assistance. The project also continues to provide case management support to households for an additional six months following housing attainment in order to ensure the family remains stably housed. While the Resettlement program normally serves a majority of families, with a short-term influx of pandemic funding it has grown to serve more single adults in the last year.

Among 139 minor children served by the program in 2022, nearly 60% were younger than ten years old and about 25% percent had not yet reached school age. The average age of adults in the program was about 37 years. Fifty-seven percent of household members identified as African-American; 37% as Caucasian; one percent as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; and less than 1% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Four percent identified with more than one race. Seventeen percent reported having Hispanic ethnicity. About 44% of households served were single individuals (twice the rate served in the previous year), 18% were families headed by two parents together, and 38% were single parent-families. Families with children who received assistance though the project were comprised of 4 persons on average.
Forty households exited the program during the year: 40% successfully located and maintained safe and affordable permanent housing such as a private rental or a supportive housing apartment for at least six months. Fifteen percent were doubling up or in another temporary situation at program exit, and thirteen percent left to another shelter not served by Joseph’s House or otherwise re-entered homelessness. One household was discharged to the hospital, and one individual passed away. Eleven households (28%) left the program with whereabouts unknown. Among the 68 households still enrolled and receiving services from the program at the end of the year, 33 households (49%) had moved from emergency shelter to stable permanent housing.

Joseph’s House manages funds for rental assistance to supplement our efforts to rapidly transition single adults and families from homelessness into housing. This allows us to assist households who have sustainable income, but due to circumstance, would benefit from short-term financial assistance such as a grant for security deposit and up to six months of rent. These households had been literally homeless staying in our emergency shelter, in motels, or were out on the street; and with financial assistance were able to obtain private rental apartments in the community.

Homelessness Diversion

The Homelessness Diversion program was created as a new pilot program during the COVID pandemic to respond to an anticipated need for emergency housing assistance and help manage the lack of available shelter beds in the community. Currently, Joseph’s House and Shelter operates the only shelter for the general single adult population in the county. The Homelessness Diversion team was create to assess each individual as they seek entry into the shelter to determine whether safe housing options exist and quickly find solutions to conflicts as an alternative to shelter placement. Program staff members also continued to provide case management support to households for an additional six months following the housing crisis event, in order to ensure the household can remain stably housed. This project began design and ramp-up in April 2021 and closed out by the end of December 2022.

This new project served 94 Rensselaer County-based homeless households in 2022. The average age of the head of household in the program was about 43 years. Forty-eight percent of people served identified as African-American; 45% as Caucasian; and 1% as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Indigenous. Five percent identified with more than one race. Fourteen percent also reported having Hispanic ethnicity.

Among all households served during the year: 80% successfully located and/or maintained safe and affordable permanent housing such as a private rental or a supportive housing apartment at the end of the program. Ten percent went to a temporary location such as doubling up with friends or relatives or a transitional housing program. Four households (4%) were discharged to homelessness as their situation was not able to be immediately resolved. Six households were exited with whereabouts unknown, either because they did not further engage with the team or were not able to be contacted.

Joseph’s House managed a grant of private funds to supplement our efforts to rapidly transition single adults and families from crisis into stable housing. This allowed us to assist households who have sustainable income, but due to circumstance, would benefit from short-term financial assistance such as a grant for security deposit and/or rent, or transportation to another location. The program provided 41 units of financial assistance valued at an average of $727 each during the calendar year.
Rensselaer County Street Outreach

The Rensselaer Street Outreach Team served 270 homeless participants in 2022 – about 30% more than in the previous year. This program works with homeless individuals who are sleeping out in the streets, in abandoned buildings, parks and ravines, and other places where they may be unsafe or exposed to dangerous conditions. The Street Outreach Team provides low-demand housing-first services to people with a variety of mental health or substance abuse issues who may not always be able to access the emergency shelter.

The Street Outreach program served 63 females, 182 males, and 25 people of unknown gender. Street Outreach clients were about 44 years of age on average – though age and date of birth information was missing for about 59% of participants. Fifty-seven percent of participants identified as White/Caucasian, 25% as Black/African-American, 2% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1% as Indigenous, and 2% identified with multiple races. Less than 1% of participants identified as Asian. Racial identify information was not collected for 13% of participants. Eight percent identified as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Eight clients (3%) reported having served on active duty in the US armed forces.

Fifteen percent of the clients served by the Street Outreach program have been homeless four or more times in the previous three years when they began working with the program, and 20% were homeless for 12 months or longer in the last three years. About 55% of persons served had some kind of disabling condition which affects their ability to live independently. Thirty-one percent of clients had an active substance abuse issue, and 31% had a mental illness – and 15% of all clients had dual issues of mental illness and substance abuse challenges. Seventeen percent of outreach clients were receiving cash income at intake, most frequently SSI benefits, at an average rate of $899 monthly. Fourteen percent of clients met the HUD definition of chronic homelessness.

The Outreach Team tracks participant contacts electronically real-time or close to real-time. Last year, the Team recorded contact with 233 individuals, provided at least 1,416 food packages and gave out at least 153 items of clothing or blankets. Transportation service was mostly suspended due to COVID. On average, 7 participants were contacted each day. Seventeen percent of outreach clients were identified as engaged in pursuing a housing plan at some point during the year.

Among the 196 clients who exited the program during the year, the outreach team assisted 22 clients with obtaining stable permanent housing (11%) - including 6 exits to permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless persons and 5 exits to public housing. Two clients went to temporarily double with friends or family, seventeen continued to sleep outside but disconnected from the program, eight went to emergency shelter, and three participants were incarcerated. Nearly three-quarters of clients who left the program exited with whereabouts unknown and/or dropped out of the program voluntarily.

Albany County Street Outreach

In 2022 there were 1,558 homeless clients enrolled in the two Street Outreach programs operating within Albany County throughout the year. These programs works with homeless men and women who are sleeping out in the streets, in abandoned buildings, parks and ravines, and other places where they may be unsafe or exposed to dangerous conditions. The Outreach Teams provide low-demand
housing-first services to people with a variety of mental health, substance abuse, or other issues, many of whom may not be able to access the emergency shelter.

Outreach participants identified as approximately 23% female, 67% male, and less than one percent transgender. Nine percent of participants had no gender information recorded. Outreach clients were about 45 years of age on average – though the eldest client was 86 years and the youngest was 19 years old (missing birth date data for 80% people). Fifty percent of participants identified as Caucasian; 32% as African-American; 1% as American Indian, Alaskan Native or Indigenous; 1% as Asian; less than 1% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and 2% as multiple races (missing data for 14% of people). Seven percent identified as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (missing data for 40% of people). Twenty-nine clients (2%) reported having served in the US armed forces.

The Outreach Teams track participant contacts electronically real-time or close to real-time. Last year, the Teams recorded contact with 1,359 individuals, provided at least 14,766 food packages and gave out at least 781 items of clothing or blankets, and conducted at least 39 behavioral health assessments. Transportation service was mostly suspended due to COVID. On average, 51 participants were contacted each day between both teams. Approximately 11% (175 persons) of persons receiving services from the programs were recorded as being actively engaged in a housing plan.

Among the 1,028 clients who were discharged from the program during the year, the majority (82%) were discharged due to no contact and left with whereabouts unknown. However, among the 168 clients for whom we do have destination information, sixty-five persons (35%) went directly from the streets to identified safe, secure permanent housing. Eight persons (4%) left to long-term incarceration; eight persons (4%) went to a temporary setting; five persons (3%) were admitted to an institutional setting; five persons (3%) were admitted to an emergency shelter; and eighty-eight persons (47%) continued sleeping out but were disengaged from the program. We received word that six participants (3%) had passed away.

Rensselaer Coordinated Entry

Joseph’s House is the Lead Agency for the Rensselaer County Homeless Services Collaborative Coordinated Entry (CE) system. In this role, staff is responsible for implementing HUD regulations and guidelines for entry into certain HUD-funded projects. The system has been managing assessments and applications for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for several years, Rapid Rehousing (RRH) projects for a few years, and has recently expanded to include Homelessness Prevention (HP), Homelessness Diversion (HD), and Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) projects as well.

In 2022 there were 501 individuals enrolled in the CE program. Among these, there were 114 new assessments received for PSH, RRH, and EHV projects, and 98 of those assessments were complete and the applicants were considered eligible for permanent housing programs operating in the County and placed on the relevant assessment list. The CE system used a locally designed priority assessment to refer an average of 6 households per month to housing vacancies in programs throughout the community. During the year, 105 households were screened for HP assistance, and another 67 households were screened for HD assistance.
Permanent Supportive Housing Programs

Troy Singles PSH Programs

Permanent Supportive Housing for single adults is provided at the Lansing Inn & Hill Street Inn and one or more private apartments in the community. This program provides safe, affordable, harm-reduction housing to single adults with a mental illness who were formerly chronically homeless and lack other resources and supports in the community to maintain their housing. All tenants receive a housing subsidy and are offered on-site case management to support stability in housing.

Last year, the programs served a total of 58 single adults throughout the year. Program participants were over 70% male, but there were 17 females in the program. The average age of tenants across all programs was approximately 51 years, although the youngest tenant was 25 years and the eldest was 71. Seventy-nine percent of tenants identified as Caucasian, 16% as African American, 2% as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; and 4% of tenants reported multiple races. Two percent of tenants (one person) served also identified as Hispanic.

At program admission, all participants had a serious and persistent mental illness, and two-thirds of tenants also had co-occurring substance abuse issues. Twenty-six percent of tenants reported having some kind of chronic physical, developmental, or other health condition at program admission. This project is dedicated to serving people who are chronically homeless, so each person admitted met the definition of chronic homelessness in effect at the time of their admission, unless there were no such people seeking housing at that time. Last year, 72% of tenants met the HUD 2016 definition of chronically homeless.

A notable success of the program has been assisting tenants with accessing mainstream benefits and other resources. A total of nine tenants who had not been receiving SSI/SSDI benefits related to their disability at program start are now receiving those benefits. Specifically, eight tenants who entered the program with zero cash income were receiving SSI/SSDI benefits as of their most recent income recertification, increasing their average monthly income to $1,058. Among all tenants who have been in the program for longer than a year, the average increase in monthly income since program entry is $361.

Twelve tenants left the program during the year. Two tenants participated in the Moving On program and obtained an EH Voucher through Troy Housing Authority. Two tenants passed away in their housing. Four tenants were asked to leave and referred to emergency shelter; one tenant had medical circumstances and transitioned to a nursing home; one tenant was admitted to a long term psychiatric setting; one tenant was incarcerated; and one tenant abandoned his apartment and left to stay outside. Among those who remained in the program, the average tenant had been in the program for five years and ten months.

Kendal House
The Kendal House program for single adults provided safe, affordable, harm-reduction SRO-style housing to a total of 39 single adults over the course of the year in 2022. Each tenant was provided with both housing subsidy and on-site case management. The program is targeted toward individuals with a history of chronic street homelessness coupled with long term alcohol abuse diagnoses, who have a track record of no success in conventional alcohol treatment programs and who lack other housing resources in the county. With minor renovations, under-utilized space was converted into two additional housing units which were opened in 2020, expanding the size of the program to 32 units.

Program participants were 95% male, but there were also 2 females served in the program. The average age of tenants across all programs was approximately 57 years, although the youngest tenant was 26 years and the eldest was 71. Sixty-nine percent of tenants identified as Caucasian, 28% as African American, 3% of tenants (one person) reported multiple races. One tenant also identified as being of Hispanic ethnicity.

At program intake, all participants had a substance abuse diagnosis, and 33% of tenants also had a co-occurring mental health problem. Nearly 60% of tenants reported having some kind of chronic physical, developmental, or other health condition at program entry. Each tenant met the criteria for chronic homelessness in effect as of January 2016, or transferred from another program and met the criteria prior to their previous placement.

A notable success of the program has been assisting tenants with accessing mainstream benefits and other resources. A total of seven tenants who had not been receiving SSI/SSDI benefits related to their disability at program start are now receiving those benefits as of last income evaluation, increasing their average monthly income to an average $790. Among all tenants who have been in the program for longer than a year, the average increase is monthly income since program entry is $192.

A total of eight tenants left the program during the year. One tenant moved to her own apartment in a public housing project. Three tenants passed away in housing, and three tenants were asked to leave following numerous incidents. One tenant was incarcerated. Among those who remained in the program, the average tenant had been in the program for four years and nine months.

The Bethune Program

In 2022, the Bethune Program provided permanent supportive housing to a total of 26 formerly homeless Rensselaer County households throughout the year. The Bethune Program serves families with children in which at least one parent has a disabling condition that impacts their ability to obtain and/or maintain housing independently, and there is a history of numerous or long episodes of homelessness and housing instability. Occasionally, the program continues to serve households with only adults when the head of household loses primary custody of the children, or when the children age into adulthood but continue to be served together as a household. The program provides supportive case management with a housing first, harm-reduction philosophy while adding in financial supports for the family in the form of a rental subsidy for private apartments in the community.

The 26 families served in the year were comprised of 42 adults and 67 minor children. Seventy percent of children in families were age 12 and under, and 18% had not yet reached school age. Fifty-four percent of family members identified as Caucasian, forty-two percent as African-American, and four
percent identified with more than one race. Seventeen percent of persons in the program also identified as Hispanic. Although the average family size was 4 persons, there were seven families comprised of at least 6 people.

All families were considered literally homeless at program admission and staying either in an emergency shelter/DSS motel, or transferred to the program from transitional or another permanent supportive housing program and met eligibility criteria prior to admission. Forty-three percent of all adults in the program had no income at program entry. On average, adults in families who had income received about $516 monthly ($6,192 annually) at program entry. Four were employed; one received unemployment benefits; six received SSI/SSDI benefits; thirteen received cash public assistance benefits; and three received child support payments. As of the most recent financial eligibility survey, five of the adults who had no income at entry were receiving income. Of these, two were receiving SSI/SSDI, one was employed, and two were receiving public assistance resulting in an average monthly income increase of $864. Overall, adults in program who had been in the program longer than a year had increased monthly income by about $488 since entering the Bethune Program.

Each head of household had at least one disabling condition that led to their eligibility for the program. Half of all heads of households had multiple diagnoses at program admission. Specifically, 24 family heads were diagnosed with a mental illness, 5 with substance abuse issues, 9 with a chronic health condition or physical disability, and 4 with a developmental disability. Two families met the HUD criteria for chronic homelessness in effect as of January 2016.

Five families exited the program during the year. One family had applied for and was accepted to public housing with Troy Housing Authority and another transitioned to a voucher program. Another family was accepted to the program but due to child custody issues was not successfully placed in a private apartment. One family moved out of state, and another left their apartment due to domestic violence issues. Among the 21 families who remained in the program at the end of the year, the average length of program participation was six years and eight months.