

# The Demographics of Homelessness

The estimated odds of experiencing homelessness in the course of a year are approximately 1 in 200 for the general population though the odds vary by economic circumstance. The odds of experiencing homelessness within a given year for people at or below the federal poverty line are estimated to be 1 in 25. According to the *2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, the demographic subgroup at greatest risk of homelessness is veterans, with 1 in 10 odds of experiencing homelessness in a given year. This chapter focuses on a number of additional demographic subgroups with elevated odds of experiencing homelessness.

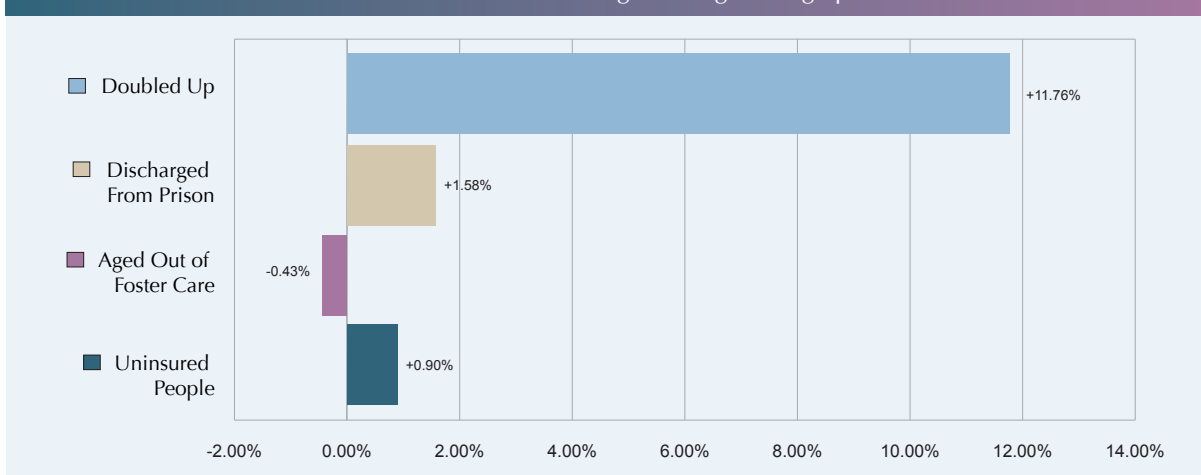
One group at elevated risk of homelessness<sup>1</sup> is doubled up people; that is, people who are living with friends or family due to economic need. Staying with friends or family is the most common living situation among adults in families prior to entering the shelter system. Using data on prior living situations from the *2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* and estimates of the doubled up population from the 2009 American Community Survey, this report estimates that the

odds of experiencing homelessness for a doubled up person in the course of a year are 1 in 10.

Another group with elevated odds of experiencing homelessness is people discharged from prison. Approximately 6 percent of individuals using the homeless shelter system identify jail, prison, or detention – including the juvenile justice system – as their living situation prior to entering shelter. Combining data on prior living situations among users of the homeless shelter system with data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics on annual prison and jail releases, this report estimates that the odds of experiencing homelessness for a released prisoner in the course of a year are 1 in 11.

A third group with elevated odds of homelessness is young adults who age out of foster care. Using data from the Department of Health and Human Services on emancipations from foster care along with data on prior living situations among users of the homeless shelter system, we estimate that the odds of experiencing homelessness after emancipation from foster care in the course of a year are 1 in 6.

FIGURE 3.1 National Percent Change Among Demographic Indicators



<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, “homeless” refers to the definition set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development: “an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; an individual whose primary nighttime residence is shelter, an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. <http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/homelessness/definition>

Increases in the size of the aforementioned subgroups – doubled up people, people released from prison and jail, and young adults emancipated from foster care – would be expected to lead to increases in the size of the homeless population.

The nation's doubled up population increased from 5,402,075 in 2008 to 6,037,256 in 2009, an increase of 12 percent. The national number of prison and jail releases increased from 669,194 in 2007 to 679,738 in 2008, an increase of 2 percent. Lastly, the national number of foster care emancipations remained relatively stable at approximately 29,500 people in both 2008 and 2009.

The final group whose population is tracked in this chapter is uninsured people. Given the fact that the most common institutional living situation among shelter users prior to entry is medical facilities and the fact that almost 40 percent of the homeless population is estimated to have some sort of disability, we conclude that the uninsured population is at increased risk of homelessness. The size of this population has remained relatively stable, increasing by only 1 percent to 47,151,404 from 2008 to 2009.

## A New Baseline for Homeless Veterans

Since 2007, the Alliance has documented the overrepresentation of homelessness among veterans in the *Vital Mission* series. The reports have used estimates of the veteran homeless population made available by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) through its Community Homeless Assessment, Local Education and Networking Group (CHALENG) process.

The most recent *Vital Mission* update, released on Veterans Day in 2009, estimated that there were 131,230 homeless veterans at a given time in 2008 and calculated a rate of homelessness among veterans that is more than double the rate of homelessness in the general population. The update also documented the overrepresentation of homelessness among African American veterans.

Like data on homelessness for many subpopulations, data on homeless veterans has varied widely across sources. For example, while the 2008 Continuum of Care point-in-time count data submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) suggest that one in ten homeless people is a veteran, the 2008 CHALENG data suggest that the ratio is closer to one in five. Recently, HUD and VA have sought to eliminate these inconsistencies through a process that will result in a single estimate of the homeless veteran population. We anticipate documenting the changes in the veteran homeless population using this new measure in the next *State of Homelessness in America* report.

# State-level Changes in the Demographics of Homelessness, 2008 to 2009

As with the counts of the homeless population and the economic measures described in earlier chapters of this report, the national changes in demographic indicators fail to tell the complete story because there are considerable differences across states. While the vast majority of states saw increases in the

size of their doubled up population, for example, some states saw decreases; moreover, the size of the increases ranged from small in some states to more than double in others. The other measures exhibited similar state by state variation. The following sections illuminate the state by state differences.

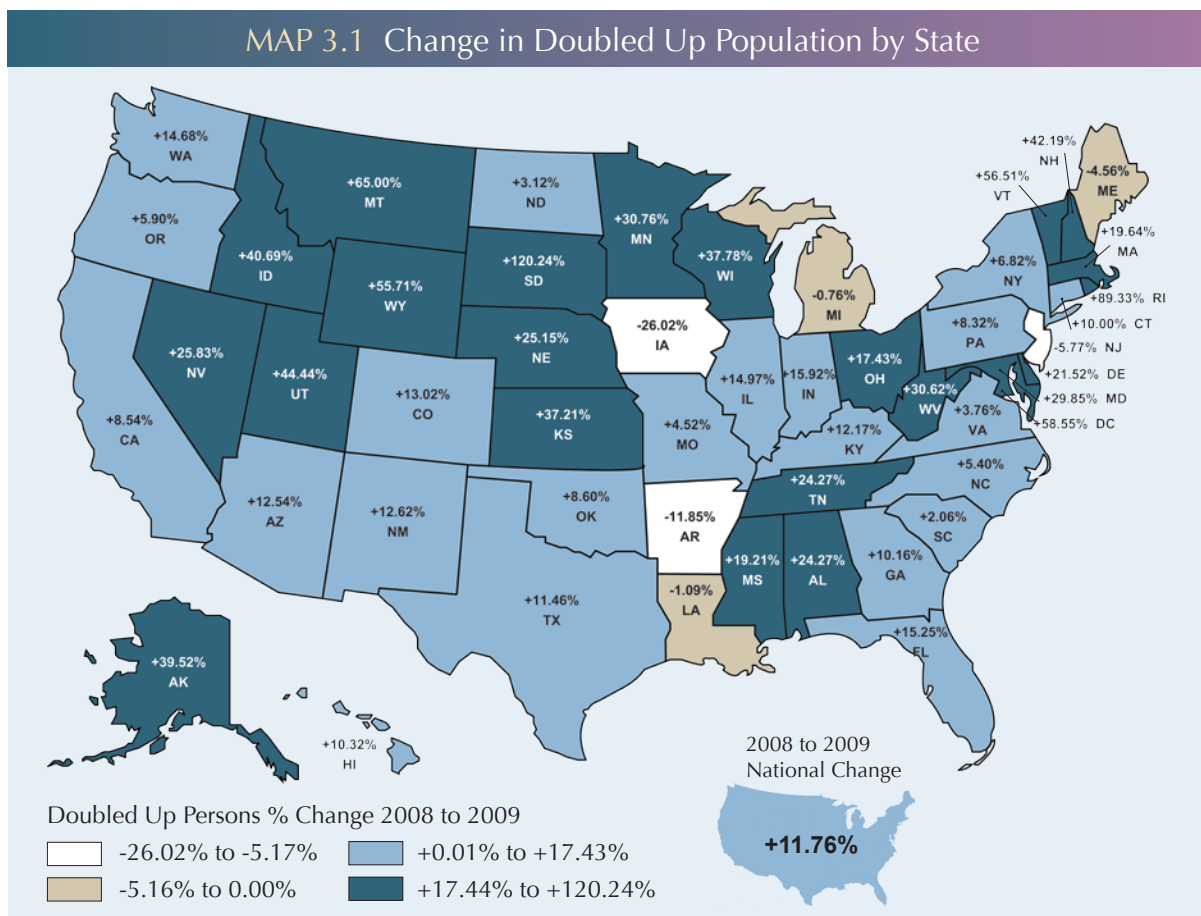
# Doubled Up Population by State

One of the most common living situations prior to entering homelessness is living with friends or family due to economic need, known as doubling up. The *2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* reveals that 30 percent of all homeless shelter users and 43 percent of sheltered adults in families enter shelter from living with family and friends. In *Economy Bytes: Doubled Up in the United States*, the Alliance defined a doubled up person as a low-income individual or member of a family who is living with friends, extended family, or other non-relatives due to economic hardship. The doubled up measure makes use of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 and 2009 American Community Survey Public

Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files, which include information on household relationships and income.

Table 3.1 and Map 3.1 show the change in the number of doubled up people from 2008 and 2009 for each of the 50 states, plus the District of Columbia. The nation's doubled up population increased from 5,402,075 in 2008 to 6,037,256 in 2009, an increase of 635,181 people (12 percent). The data show that 45 of 51 states<sup>2</sup> had increases in their doubled up population from 2008 to 2009 and that the median state change in doubled up people is an increase of 15 percent. State changes range from a 26 percent decrease in Iowa to a 120 percent increase in South Dakota.

MAP 3.1 Change in Doubled Up Population by State



<sup>2</sup> For ease and simplification purposes, in the remainder of this report a reference to "the 51 states," "each state" or "the states" refers to the 50 U.S. states, plus the District of Columbia.

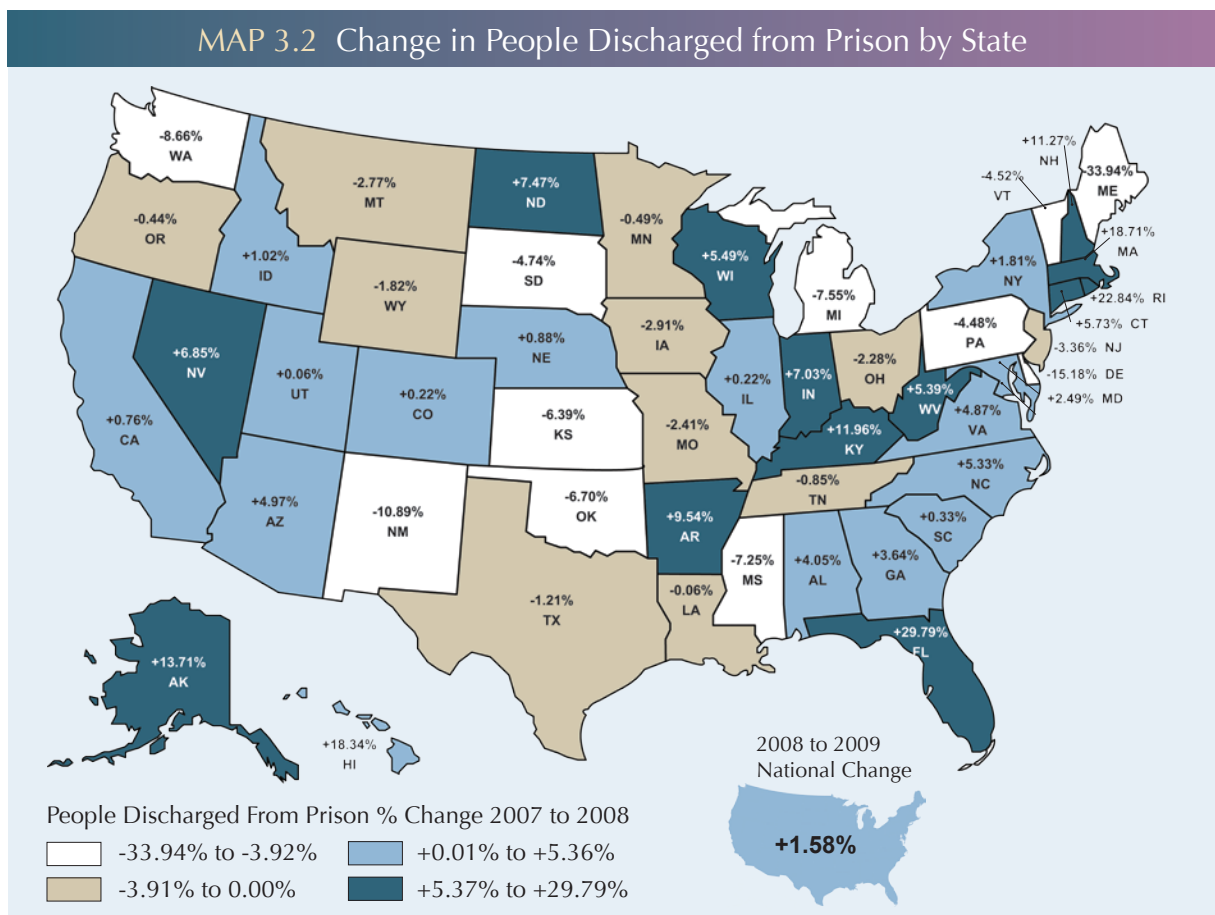
# People Discharged from Prison by State

The second most common pre-shelter institutional living situation, after a medical facility, is incarceration. According to the *2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, 6 percent of adult homeless shelter users came directly from jail, prison, or juvenile detention. To measure any changes in the size of the population at risk of homelessness due to release from jail or prison, this report measures the changes in the number of people released from federal and state prison or jail each year. This measure makes use of data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics National Prisoner Statistics Series,<sup>3</sup> which includes information on

prison population and releases from federal and state correctional facilities, including juvenile detention facilities.

Table 3.2 and Map 3.2 show the change in the number of people released from prison or jail from 2007 and 2008 for each of the 50 states. The national number of releases increased from 669,194 in 2007 to 679,738 in 2008, an increase of 10,544 people (2 percent). The data show that 28 of 50 states had increases in prisoner releases from 2007 to 2008.<sup>4</sup> State changes range from a 34 percent decrease in Maine to a 30 percent increase in Florida.

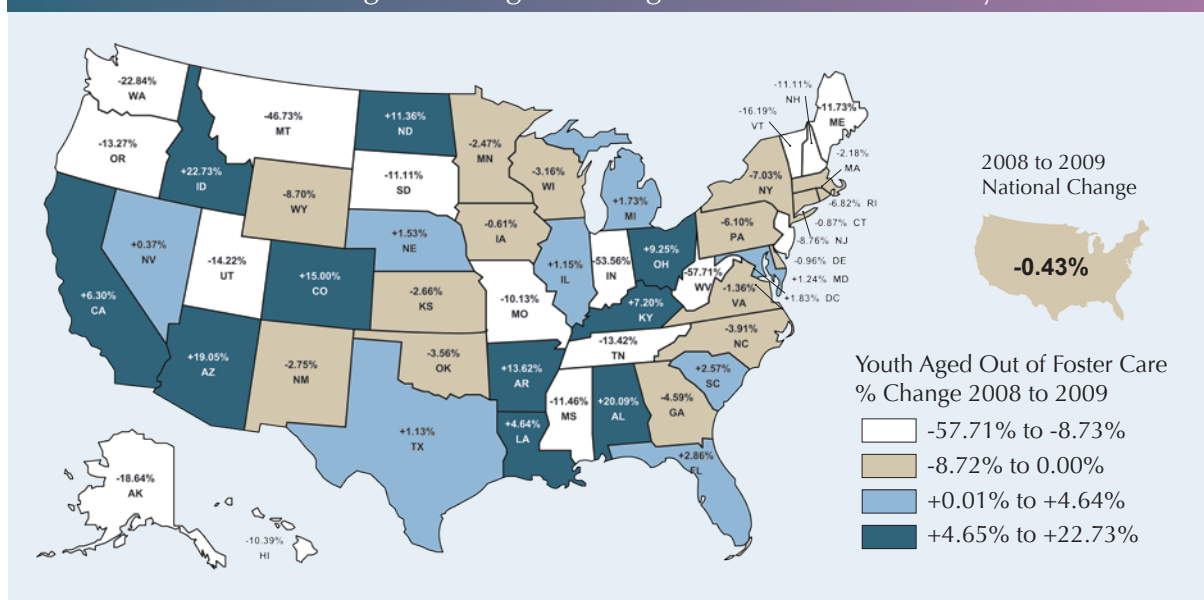
MAP 3.2 Change in People Discharged from Prison by State



<sup>3</sup> See Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2009. "Prisoners In 2008" webpage. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1763>. And Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2008. "Prisoners In 2007" webpage. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=903>.

<sup>4</sup> 2009 prison release data become available too late to be included in this version of the report so we analyzed the changes from 2007 to 2008. An addendum will be released in late January 2011.

MAP 3.3 Change in Young Adults Aged Out of Foster Care by State



# Young Adults Aged Out of Foster Care by State

Young adults who age out of foster care are at an elevated risk of homelessness. To measure changes in the size of this population, this report measures the changes in the number of young adults emancipated from state custody each year. This measure makes use of data from the Department of Health and Human Services,<sup>5</sup> which includes information on all youth exits from foster care.

Table 3.3 and Map 3.3 show the change in the number of young adults who aged out of foster care from 2008 and 2009 for each of the 51 states.

The national number of people who aged out of foster care decreased slightly from 29,577 in 2008 to 29,449 in 2009, a decrease of 128 (less than 1 percent). The data show that 19 of 51 states had

increases in the number of people who aged out of foster care from 2008 to 2009. State changes range from a 58 percent decrease in West Virginia to a 23 percent increase in Idaho.

## Where are the Youth?

Estimates for the national number of youth experiencing homelessness vary widely. The number of unaccompanied youth reported in point-in-time counts is roughly 12,000 and the 2009 *Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress* estimates that 22,000 unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 use the shelter system each year. The federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Street Outreach Program identified 845,372 contacts each year. The Alliance has estimated that there are 50,000 street-dependent homeless youth.

Despite these disparities, what is consistently recognized is the dearth of information about this population and the likely undercount of homeless youth during point-in-time counts. To illustrate this undercount, the Alliance has analyzed 2008 and 2009 point-in-time count data to identify the number and percentage of communities that reported zero unaccompanied homeless youth – a highly unlikely reality. The adjacent table outlines Alliance findings.

	2009	2008
Number of CoC's that reported a point-in-time count	452	448
Number of CoC's that reported zero unaccompanied homeless youth in their point-in-time count	158	150
Percentage of total CoC's reporting zero unaccompanied homeless youth in their community	35%	34%

Source: Alliance analysis of point-in-time counts.

<sup>5</sup> Emancipation data obtained from the Department of Health and Human Service's Administration for Children and Families. The data is collected through the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

# Uninsured Population by State

Another common pre-shelter living situation for homeless shelter users is a health facility. According to the *2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, 8 percent of adult homeless shelter users came directly from a psychiatric facility, substance abuse center, or hospital. To measure changes in the size of the population at risk of homelessness for medical reasons, we measure the size of the uninsured population. This measure makes use of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 and 2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files, which include information regarding the existence and type of health insurance.

Table 3.4 and Map 3.4 show the change in the number of uninsured people from 2008 and 2009 for each of the 51 states. The nation's uninsured population increased from 46,728,637 in 2008 to 47,151,404 in 2009, an increase of 422,767 people (1 percent). The data show that 33 of 51 states had increases in their uninsured population from 2008 to 2009 and that the median state change in uninsured people is an increase of 2 percent. State changes range from a 9 percent decrease in the District of Columbia to a 16 percent increase in South Dakota.

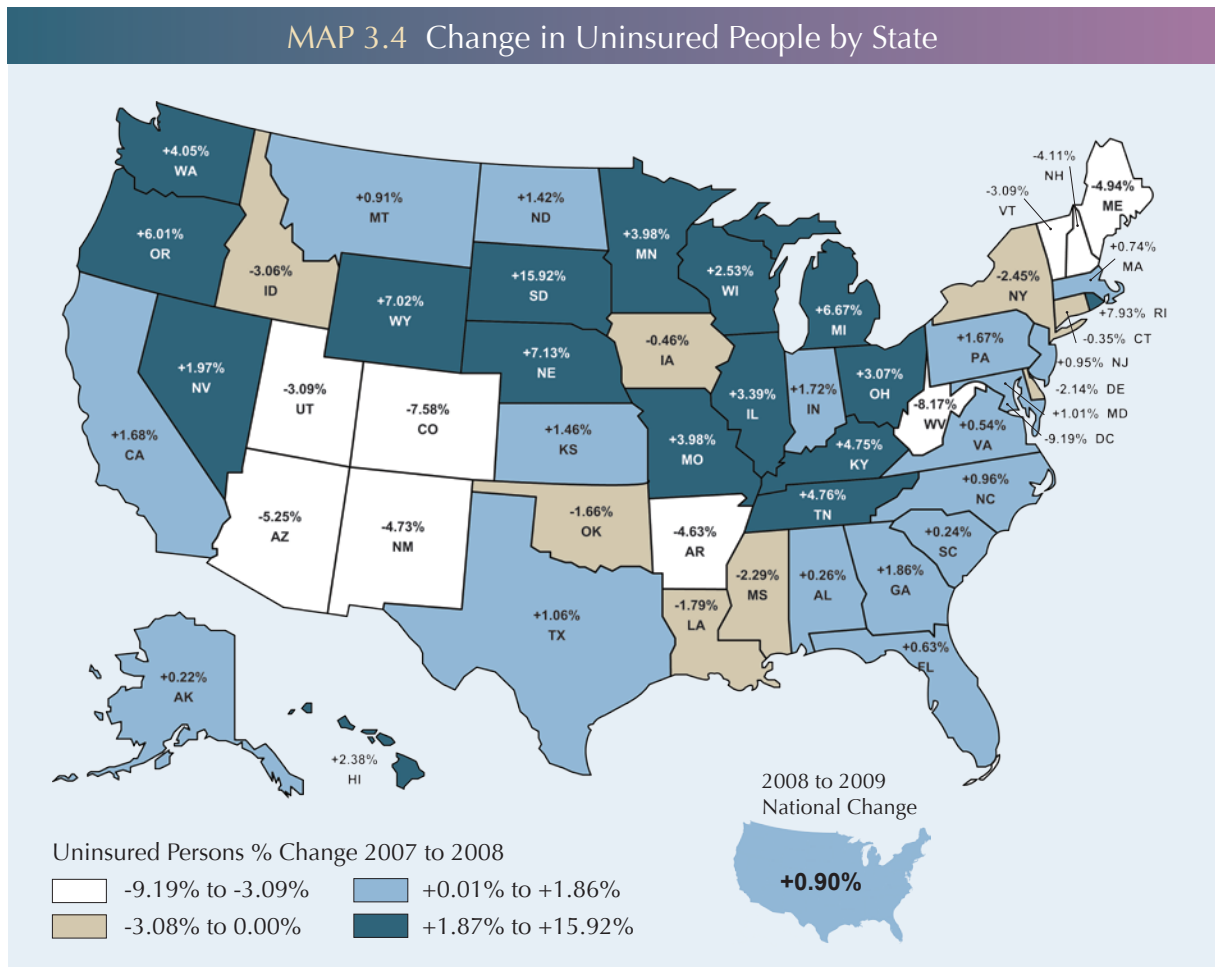


TABLE 3.1 Doubled Up People by State

STATE	2009 DOUBLED UP PEOPLE	2008 DOUBLED UP PEOPLE	2008 TO 2009 CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE
AK	11,781	8,444	39.52%
AL	133,281	107,254	24.27%
AR	61,491	69,754	-11.85%
AZ	193,546	171,979	12.54%
CA	841,467	775,253	8.54%
CO	75,380	66,694	13.02%
CT	39,933	36,303	10.00%
DC	19,950	12,583	58.55%
DE	18,494	15,219	21.52%
FL	405,566	351,909	15.25%
GA	272,305	247,195	10.16%
HI	22,582	20,469	10.32%
IA	17,998	24,329	-26.02%
ID	23,503	16,706	40.69%
IL	241,093	209,702	14.97%
IN	110,924	95,689	15.92%
KS	37,193	27,107	37.21%
KY	104,803	93,434	12.17%
LA	128,682	130,099	-1.09%
MA	72,567	60,655	19.64%
MD	90,748	69,888	29.85%
ME	14,336	15,021	-4.56%
MI	185,035	186,449	-0.76%
MN	50,251	38,430	30.76%
MO	94,870	90,769	4.52%
MS	117,040	98,182	19.21%
MT	24,672	14,953	65.00%
NC	189,465	179,751	5.40%
ND	5,258	5,099	3.12%
NE	19,425	15,521	25.15%
NH	11,687	8,219	42.19%
NJ	103,083	109,397	-5.77%
NM	53,330	47,355	12.62%
NV	53,570	42,574	25.83%
NY	343,727	321,770	6.82%
OH	192,978	164,340	17.43%
OK	75,034	69,095	8.60%
OR	56,041	52,921	5.90%
PA	172,671	159,403	8.32%
RI	12,509	6,607	89.33%
SC	117,589	115,210	2.06%
SD	15,895	7,217	120.24%
TN	161,924	130,296	24.27%
TX	681,895	611,775	11.46%
UT	38,686	26,783	44.44%
VA	109,260	105,298	3.76%
VT	6,977	4,458	56.51%
WA	91,817	80,062	14.68%
WI	68,282	49,557	37.78%
WV	39,971	30,601	30.62%
WY	6,691	4,297	55.71%

TABLE 3.2 Discharges From Prison by State

STATE	2008 DISCHARGED PEOPLE	2007 DISCHARGED PEOPLE	2007 TO 2008 CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE
AK	3,732	3,282	13.71%
AL	11,454	11,008	4.05%
AR	6,565	5,993	9.54%
AZ	13,105	12,484	4.97%
CA	136,733	135,701	0.76%
CO	10,573	10,550	0.22%
CT	6,380	6,034	5.73%
DC	N/A	N/A	N/A
DE	1,604	1,891	-15.18%
FL	36,981	28,493	29.79%
GA	19,326	18,648	3.64%
HI	1,781	1,505	18.34%
IA	5,535	5,701	-2.91%
ID	3,870	3,831	1.02%
IL	35,708	35,630	0.22%
IN	18,240	17,042	7.03%
KS	4,630	4,946	-6.39%
KY	15,335	13,697	11.96%
LA	14,866	14,875	-0.06%
MA	2,639	2,223	18.71%
MD	10,314	10,063	2.49%
ME	720	1,090	-33.94%
MI	13,501	14,604	-7.55%
MN	7,919	7,958	-0.49%
MO	18,776	19,239	-2.41%
MS	7,755	8,361	-7.25%
MT	2,108	2,168	-2.77%
NC	10,511	9,979	5.33%
ND	1,050	977	7.47%
NE	1,957	1,940	0.88%
NH	1,303	1,171	11.27%
NJ	13,815	14,296	-3.36%
NM	3,995	4,483	-10.89%
NV	5,240	4,904	6.85%
NY	27,348	26,863	1.81%
OH	28,446	29,110	-2.28%
OK	7,825	8,387	-6.70%
OR	5,020	5,042	-0.44%
PA	15,464	16,189	-4.48%
RI	1,081	880	22.84%
SC	9,422	9,391	0.33%
SD	3,096	3,250	-4.74%
TN	15,351	15,482	-0.85%
TX	71,708	72,588	-1.21%
UT	3,388	3,386	0.06%
VA	13,094	12,486	4.87%
VT	2,239	2,345	-4.52%
WA	15,023	16,448	-8.66%
WI	9,350	8,863	5.49%
WV	3,107	2,948	5.39%
WY	755	769	-1.82%

TABLE 3.3 Youth Aged Out of Foster Care by State

STATE	2009 YOUTHS AGED OUT	2008 YOUTHS AGED OUT	2008 TO 2009 CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE
AK	48	59	-18.64%
AL	281	234	20.09%
AR	292	257	13.62%
AZ	700	588	19.05%
CA	5,470	5,146	6.30%
CO	598	520	15.00%
CT	456	460	-0.87%
DC	167	164	1.83%
DE	103	104	-0.96%
FL	1,475	1,434	2.86%
GA	728	763	-4.59%
HI	138	154	-10.39%
IA	490	493	-0.61%
ID	108	88	22.73%
IL	1,232	1,218	1.15%
IN	137	295	-53.56%
KS	476	489	-2.66%
KY	864	806	7.20%
LA	293	280	4.64%
MA	1,076	1,100	-2.18%
MD	818	808	1.24%
ME	158	179	-11.73%
MI	1,118	1,099	1.73%
MN	670	687	-2.47%
MO	71	79	-10.13%
MS	85	96	-11.46%
MT	57	107	-46.73%
NC	492	512	-3.91%
ND	98	88	11.36%
NE	332	327	1.53%
NH	72	81	-11.11%
NJ	375	411	-8.76%
NM	106	109	-2.75%
NV	268	267	0.37%
NY	1,495	1,608	-7.03%
OH	1,453	1,330	9.25%
OK	487	505	-3.56%
OR	255	294	-13.27%
PA	970	1,033	-6.10%
RI	164	176	-6.82%
SC	359	350	2.57%
SD	72	81	-11.11%
TN	587	678	-13.42%
TX	1,522	1,505	1.13%
UT	193	225	-14.22%
VA	1,015	1,029	-1.36%
VT	88	105	-16.19%
WA	331	429	-22.84%
WI	490	506	-3.16%
WV	74	175	-57.71%
WY	42	46	-8.70%

TABLE 3.4 Uninsured People by State

STATE	2009 # OF UNINSURED PEOPLE	2008 # OF UNINSURED PEOPLE	2008 TO 2009 CHANGE IN PERCENT	2009 PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION UNINSURED
AK	141,236	140,932	0.22%	20.22%
AL	666,752	665,038	0.26%	14.16%
AR	493,474	517,457	-4.63%	17.08%
AZ	1,179,067	1,244,394	-5.25%	17.88%
CA	6,757,500	6,645,696	1.68%	18.28%
CO	786,013	850,497	-7.58%	15.64%
CT	318,109	319,242	-0.35%	9.04%
DC	42,221	46,494	-9.19%	7.04%
DE	94,375	96,441	-2.14%	10.66%
FL	3,935,470	3,910,740	0.63%	21.23%
GA	1,919,622	1,884,557	1.86%	19.53%
HI	87,833	85,795	2.38%	6.78%
IA	265,037	266,259	-0.46%	8.81%
ID	264,231	272,568	-3.06%	17.09%
IL	1,732,332	1,675,495	3.39%	13.42%
IN	914,246	898,823	1.72%	14.23%
KS	364,836	359,593	1.46%	12.94%
KY	638,810	609,820	4.75%	14.81%
LA	800,242	814,867	-1.79%	17.81%
MA	285,298	283,200	0.74%	4.33%
MD	649,326	642,841	1.01%	11.39%
ME	134,040	141,001	-4.94%	10.17%
MI	1,256,423	1,177,893	6.67%	12.60%
MN	477,236	458,965	3.98%	9.06%
MO	813,234	782,090	3.98%	13.58%
MS	532,993	545,478	-2.29%	18.06%
MT	184,254	182,601	0.91%	18.90%
NC	1,501,991	1,487,698	0.96%	16.01%
ND	64,174	63,273	1.42%	9.92%
NE	206,942	193,165	7.13%	11.52%
NH	138,198	144,125	-4.11%	10.43%
NJ	1,105,169	1,094,715	0.95%	12.69%
NM	411,483	431,896	-4.73%	20.48%
NV	580,676	569,454	1.97%	21.97%
NY	2,283,143	2,340,525	-2.45%	11.68%
OH	1,431,220	1,388,551	3.07%	12.40%
OK	700,533	712,388	-1.66%	19.00%
OR	675,506	637,189	6.01%	17.66%
PA	1,250,583	1,230,059	1.67%	9.92%
RI	119,132	110,375	7.93%	11.31%
SC	772,499	770,667	0.24%	16.94%
SD	109,692	94,624	15.92%	13.50%
TN	914,470	872,942	4.76%	14.52%
TX	5,989,388	5,926,837	1.06%	24.17%
UT	403,771	416,663	-3.09%	14.50%
VA	920,454	915,552	0.54%	11.68%
VT	53,422	55,128	-3.09%	8.59%
WA	904,686	869,485	4.05%	13.58%
WI	536,854	523,594	2.53%	9.49%
WV	260,375	283,552	-8.17%	14.31%
WY	82,833	77,403	7.02%	15.22%