

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR
WESTON WAMP

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First “Hamilton Counted” Report Shows Increase in Clients at Homeless Health Clinic; Overdoses, Crime Remain High But Stable Year-Over-Year

Hamilton County released a first-of-its-kind data report today unveiling county-wide statistics on crime, overdoses, and homelessness. Generated by the county’s Senior Data Analyst, Jennifer Baggett, this monthly report is aimed to provide accountability through data by giving citizens a transparent look into the daily challenges facing our communities.

“Embracing a data-driven philosophy will help us understand the core challenges facing our community,” said Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp. “Each statistic in this report represents a distinct story and a family whose lives have been forever changed. While much of this data is sobering, it is important for leaders in our community to confront the difficult reality of crime, drug abuse, and homelessness in order for Hamilton County to reach its potential.”

The Homeless Health Care Center has seen an increase in patients coming to their clinic in 2023, namely from the “street” — which matches the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) definition of “unsheltered.” Through the first seven months of the year, the clinic has served 1,160 “street” patients, whereas a point in time count by the Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition (CRHC) from earlier in the year showed 607 unsheltered people in Hamilton County.

This difference highlights the challenges inherent to measuring homelessness in our community; to address this, Senior Data Analyst Jennifer Baggett launched an effort in July, in partnership with the City of Chattanooga and the CRHC, to convene partners in a quarterly “Homelessness Data Day” to collaborate on common challenges and potential solutions.

Fatal overdoses have decreased through the first eight months of this year compared to the same time frame last year. Fentanyl remains the driver in overdose deaths, accounting for nearly three-fourths of all opioid-related deaths in the county last year.

“My goal is to provide the public with the most comprehensive set of data available to illustrate where Hamilton County stands when it comes to crime and public health,” Baggett said. “As we expand this project, we hope to share ways in which we have turned that data into meaningful action to make Hamilton County a haven for all residents.”

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