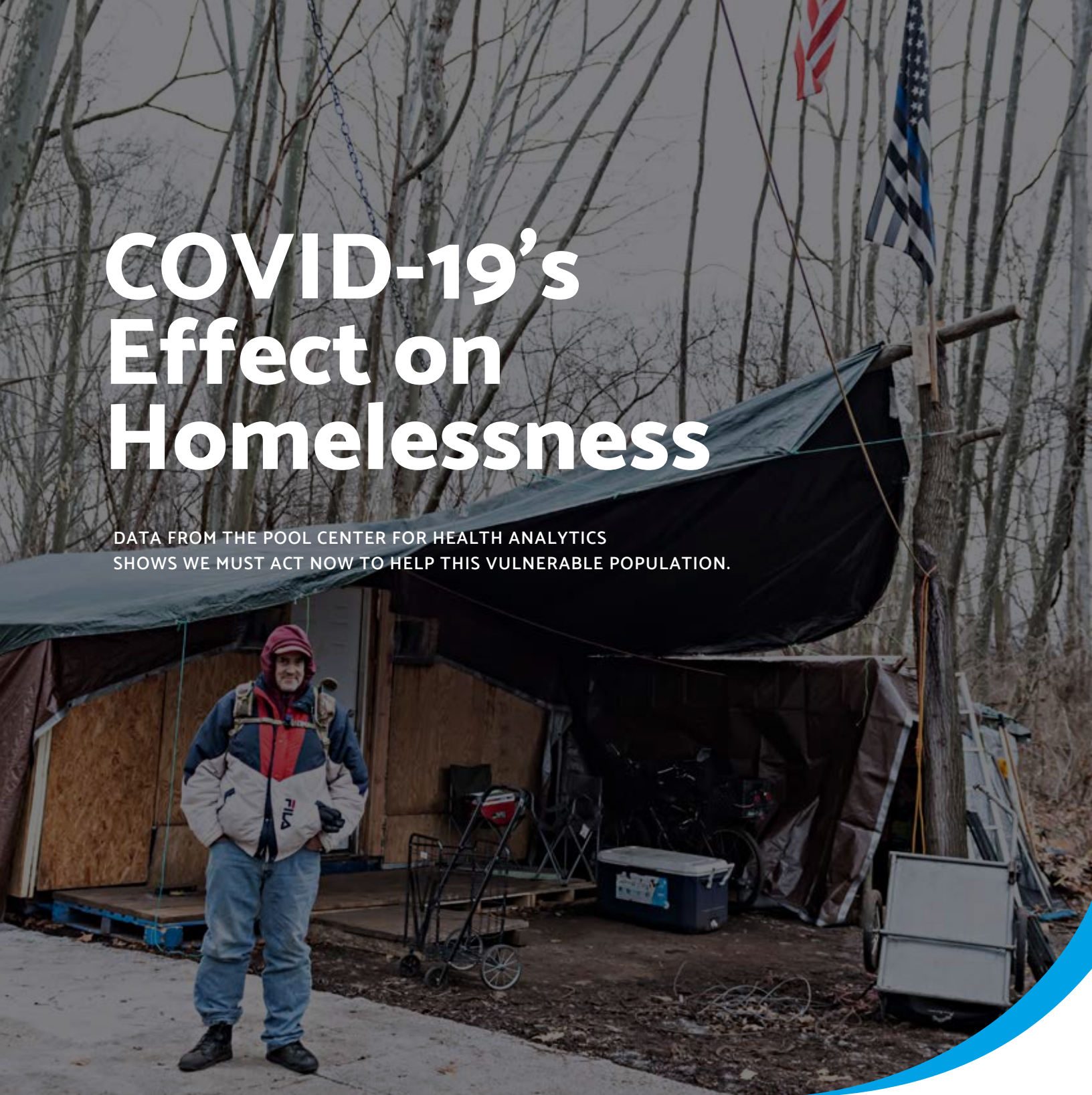


# COVID-19's Effect on Homelessness

DATA FROM THE POOL CENTER FOR HEALTH ANALYTICS  
SHOWS WE MUST ACT NOW TO HELP THIS VULNERABLE POPULATION.



 **Lehigh Valley  
Health Network**

Your health deserves a partner.

**Tens of thousands of vulnerable Pennsylvanians, many in the seven counties served by Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), are so far behind in rent or mortgage payments that they live in fear of eviction from their homes now that federal protections against eviction put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted.**

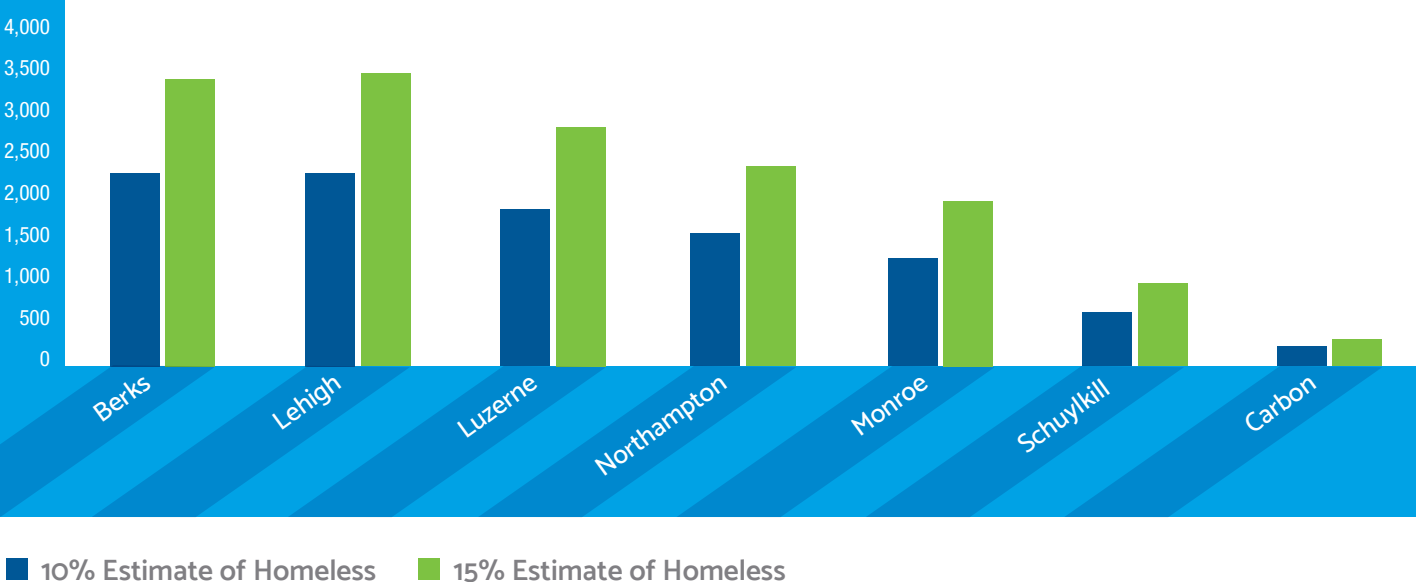
Many are newly vulnerable victims of COVID-19 or the economic fallout from the pandemic. They are our neighbors, friends and co-workers. Families who have not experienced the fragility of poverty or housing insecurity are quickly running out of options, leaving young and old alike in fear of losing their homes.

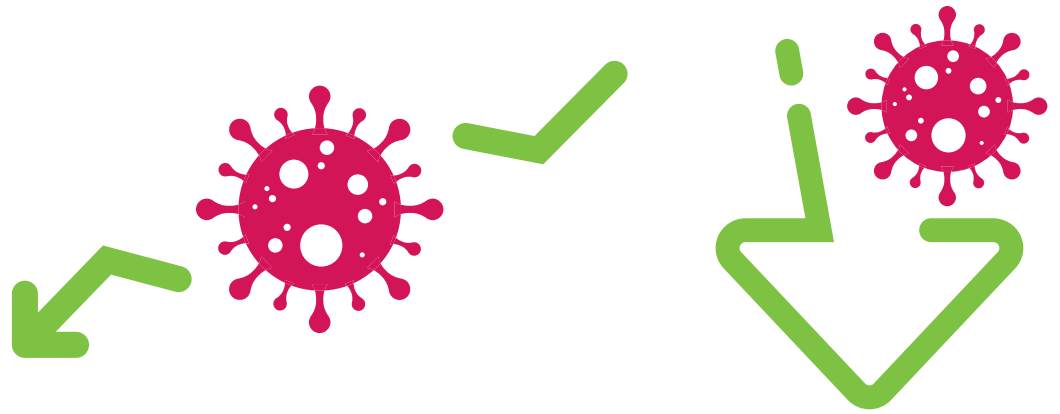
Most will be able to keep a roof over their heads for a time by sharing living arrangements with friends and family or securing a spot in public shelters. However, too many will end up on the street or in scattered home encampments.

An estimated 10% of people who live below the federal poverty level experience homelessness during any 12-month period – and this is before the pandemic. This translates into 10,164 people in the seven-county LVHN service area. That number could increase by 40%-50%, leaving up to an estimated 15,245 people homeless now that the COVID-19 moratorium has been lifted, as projected by the Pool Center for Health

Projections based on 2019 U.S. Census data

**Estimated Potential Homeless: LVHN Seven-County Service Area**





## Federal eviction moratoria

As the pandemic took hold in the United States, officials ordered a temporary halt to evictions of most renters and homeowners unable to pay landlords or mortgages. In summer 2021, the order was reversed, putting thousands of local residents at risk of losing shelter.

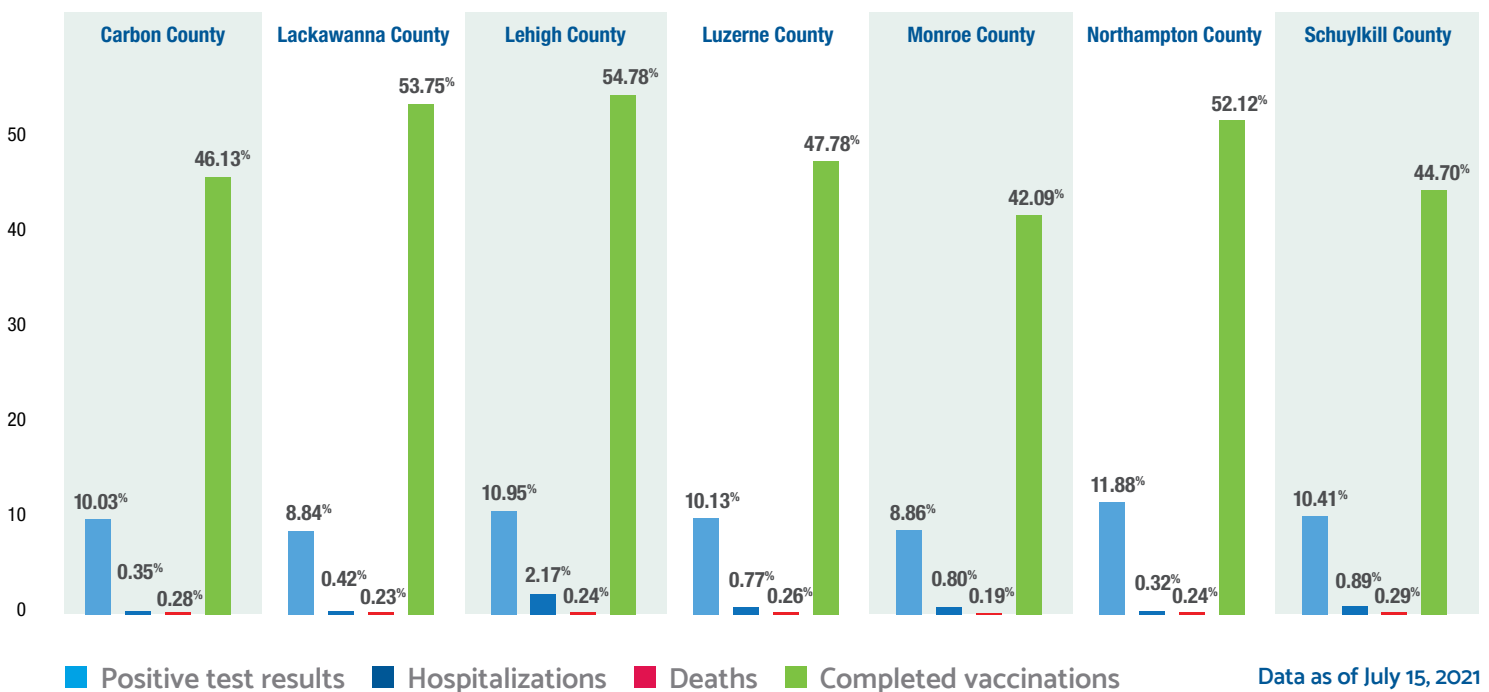
## COVID-19 health and economic impacts

Known medical and human equity factors affecting disease vulnerability, severity and survival in general have come into sharper focus as the COVID-19 pandemic has swept the nation. Residents have lost family members and lost jobs, suffering sharp economic loss that further threatens their physical and mental health.

## Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Positive Test Results, Hospitalizations, Mortalities and Vaccination Rates

Data represents the percentage of people who are COVID-19 positive, were hospitalized and COVID-19 positive, and had COVID-19-related deaths.

Source: data.pa.gov







## VALLEY HEALTH PARTNERS

### VALLEY HEALTH PARTNERS STREET MEDICINE PROGRAM



Valley Health Partners is a nonprofit organization closely aligned with LVHN. Since 2013, its Street Medicine program has been dedicated to providing care to the homeless of Lehigh and Northampton counties, regardless of ability to pay. The program was already challenged before COVID-19 hit in early 2020, but the pandemic has brought a cascade of complications and needs.



COVID-19 strikes and kills a disproportionate number of people with underlying conditions including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and asthma, conditions that many patients cared for by the Street Medicine team have.



The Street Medicine staff is bracing for the thousands more likely to be evicted and facing homelessness in the Lehigh Valley now that the eviction moratorium has expired. Its vulnerable clientele will be forced into shared housing, crowded shelters, tent encampments or the streets. Already thin resources – supplies, medications, food, tents, sleeping bags and blankets – are expected to be stretched beyond need by the anticipated surge.

The Street Medicine program currently serves 1,200 homeless patients living in Lehigh County, mostly in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton. That number could easily rise by another 600 because the moratorium has been lifted. The two Street Medicine clinicians and their small staff of volunteers bring medical care directly to their patients, working out of backpacks and cars. In recent days and weeks, they have rushed to bring vaccine to their patients.





### Funding for landlords with available units

The Landlord Engagement program encourages landlords to join a network of their peers who have agreed to rent to homeless or at-risk households. Provided by the Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board (LVRHAB), the program ensures guaranteed rent, reimbursement for property damage, missed rent, case management for tenants and other support.

Landlords who agree to working with LVRHAB clients are eligible for a \$1,000 sign-on bonus. Landlords also have access to \$2,500 in funds to assist with bringing vacant units to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standards.

To learn more or sign up, contact one of the organizations listed in this brochure.

## Need help?

If you or someone you know is homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, contact the agency below in the county you currently reside.

## Are you a landlord?

If you are a landlord interested in state funding for available units, contact the agency below in the county where your units are located to learn about the new Landlord Engagement program.

---

### Lehigh County

#### **Catholic Charities**

900 S. Woodward St.  
Allentown, PA 18103  
610-541-2191  
Rental assistance application:  
[catholiccharitiesad.org/rent-assistance/](http://catholiccharitiesad.org/rent-assistance/)

#### **The Lehigh Conference of Churches**

457 Allen St.  
Allentown, PA 18102  
610-433-6421 or 610-439-8653  
Walk-in assessments: Monday-Thursday,  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Free meals: Monday-Friday, 8-9 a.m.,  
11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m., 4-4:30 p.m.

### Northampton County

#### **New Bethany Ministries**

333 Fourth St.  
Bethlehem, PA 18015  
610-691-5602, option 2  
Housing assistance applications:  
[newbethanyministries.org/housing-assistance/](http://newbethanyministries.org/housing-assistance/)

Office hours:

- Monday, Tuesday, Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Wednesday, Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Free meals: Monday-Friday, Noon-1 p.m.  
Food pantry: Monday-Friday, 10:30-11:30 a.m.  
Showers available: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-noon;  
1-4 p.m.

**Call 211 for help and information in other counties served by LVHN.**