

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK

#NC#SolidarityWeek August 3 – August 10, 2024



FACT SHEET: HOMELESS STATISTICS

Homelessness and housing advocates understand housing to be a human right. People may need to sleep outside exposed to the elements and other dangerous situations because they have no other place to go. ([Unsheltered Homelessness - HUD Exchange](#)).

Shelter systems are incredibly limited. Individuals and families experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness face multiple challenges to end the experience of homelessness. This can include sources of income, lack of a living or housing wage to obtain and maintain housing, and discrimination based on housing status.

Homelessness is increasing and disproportionately impacts historically marginalized groups of people. Current growing sectors experiencing homelessness are youth, senior citizens, and the LGBTQ community.

Fact: On a single night in 2023, roughly 653,100 people – or about 20 of every 10,000 people in the United States – were experiencing homelessness.

Fact: Experiences of homelessness increased nationwide across all household types. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 12 percent, or roughly 70,650 more people.

Fact: People who identify as Black, African American, or African, as well as indigenous people (including Native Americans and Pacific Islanders), continue to be overrepresented among the population experiencing homelessness.

Fact: More than one in five people experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2023 was age 55 or older

Fact: On a single night in 2023, more than 34,700 people under the age of 25 experienced homelessness on their own as “unaccompanied youth.”

**Information provided by [The 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report \(AHAR to Congress\) Part 1: Point-In-Time Estimates of Homelessness, December 2023 \(huduser.gov\)](#)*

Resources:

Bring America Home Now - <https://bringamericahome.org>

Don't Need A Home To Vote <https://nationalhomeless.org/voting/>

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week - <https://hhweek.org/>

Homeless Persons Memorial Day – www.nationalhomeless.org

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FACT SHEET: EFFECTS OF CRIMINALIZING HOMELESSNESS

HERE ARE SOME OF THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS THE GRANTS PASS VERDICT HAS ON THE HOMELESS, AND HOW INCREASED CRIMINALIZATION EXACERBATES THE CRISIS.

- 1. Increased Arrests and Fines:** Homeless individuals face more frequent arrests and fines for activities like sleeping in public spaces, loitering, or panhandling, which can lead to a cycle of debt and legal trouble.
- 2. Loss of Personal Belongings:** Police sweeps and confiscations often result in the loss of personal belongings, including essential items like identification documents, medications, and personal mementos.
- 3. Barriers to Employment:** Criminal records stemming from minor offenses can create significant barriers to securing employment, perpetuating homelessness.
- 4. Mental Health Strain:** Constant harassment and fear of arrest exacerbate mental health issues, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and depression among the homeless population.
- 5. Limited Access to Services:** Criminalization can deter homeless individuals from seeking help or accessing services such as shelters, healthcare, and social support due to fear of encountering law enforcement.
- 6. Disruption of Community Support:** Sweeps and arrests disrupt established community networks and support systems that unhoused individuals rely on for safety and assistance.
- 7. Health Risks:** The stress and instability caused by criminalization increase vulnerability to physical health issues, including chronic conditions and exposure-related illnesses.
- 8. Increased Costs for Communities:** Criminalizing homelessness diverts public resources to law enforcement and legal proceedings instead of investing in housing and supportive services that could address the root causes of homelessness.
- 9. Stigmatization:** Criminalization reinforces negative stereotypes and social stigma against the homeless, making it more challenging for them to reintegrate into society.
- 10. Violations of Rights:** Criminalizing basic survival activities can result in violations of human rights, as homeless individuals are penalized for behaviors they cannot avoid due to their circumstances.

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FACT SHEET: EFFECTS OF LIVING IN SHELTERS

CURIOUS ABOUT WHY SOME UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS CHOOSE TO LIVE OUTDOORS IN ENCAMPMENTS RATHER THAN IN SHELTERS? HERE ARE 10 REASONS WHY LIVING IN A HOMELESS SHELTER CAN SOMETIMES BE WORSE THAN LIVING OUTSIDE.

1. **Lack of Privacy:** Shelters often have limited space and communal living arrangements, which can result in a lack of privacy and personal space for individuals.
2. **Safety Concerns:** Shelters can sometimes be unsafe environments, with risks of theft, violence, or harassment among residents.
3. **Health Issues:** Close quarters and limited hygiene facilities can lead to the spread of illnesses and infections among shelter residents.
4. **Restricted Hours and Curfews:** Many shelters have strict hours of operation and curfews, which can limit individuals' ability to work late shifts or attend to personal needs outside of the shelter.
5. **Limited Storage:** Shelters often provide minimal storage space for personal belongings, forcing residents to carry their possessions with them or risk losing them.
6. **Barriers to Employment:** The instability of shelter living, along with restrictions on personal hygiene and appearance, can make it difficult for individuals to find and maintain employment.
7. **Family Separation:** Some shelters have policies that separate families, particularly single fathers or older male children from mothers and younger siblings, causing additional stress and trauma.
8. **Mental Health Strain:** The stress of living in a shelter, combined with the trauma of homelessness, can exacerbate existing mental health issues or contribute to new ones.
9. **Stigma and Discrimination:** Shelter residents may face stigma and discrimination from both shelter staff and the broader community, affecting their self-esteem and opportunities for social integration.
10. **Limited Access to Services:** While shelters provide basic needs, they may lack comprehensive support services such as counseling, job training, or substance abuse treatment, making it harder for residents to transition out of homelessness.

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FACT SHEET: HOMELESS STREET MORTALITY

THE GRANTS PASS VERDICT NOT ONLY CRIMINALIZES HOMELESSNESS BUT ALSO TARGETS INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING IT. HIGH MORTALITY RATES AMONG THE UNHOUSED ARE EXACERBATED BY INCREASED CRIMINALIZATION, WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR VULNERABILITY AND RISK OF HARM. (SOURCE: NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS, 2022; HATE CRIMES REPORT)

- 1. Higher Mortality Rates:** Homeless individuals face significantly higher mortality rates compared to the general population, with life expectancy often reduced by 20 years or more.
- 2. Increased Risk of Chronic Health Conditions:** Homeless people are more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory problems, which contribute to higher mortality rates.
- 3. Exposure to Extreme Weather:** Lack of shelter exposes homeless individuals to extreme weather conditions, including heat, cold, and storms, which can lead to hypothermia, heatstroke, and other weather-related health issues.
- 4. Violence and Trauma:** Homeless individuals are at a greater risk of experiencing violence, including assault and homicide, which significantly affects mortality rates.
- 5. Limited Access to Healthcare:** Homeless people often have limited access to healthcare services, leading to untreated or poorly managed health conditions that can result in premature death.
- 6. Mental Health Issues:** High levels of mental health disorders, including severe depression and schizophrenia, among the homeless contribute to higher suicide rates and overall mortality.
- 7. Lack of Preventive Care:** The absence of regular preventive healthcare, such as vaccinations and screenings, increases vulnerability to diseases and conditions that can be fatal.
- 8. Inadequate Nutrition:** Poor access to nutritious food and clean water affects overall health, making homeless individuals more susceptible to malnutrition and related health problems that can lead to death.
- 9. Increased Risk of Infectious Diseases:** Homeless individuals are at higher risk of contracting and dying from infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and hepatitis, due to overcrowded living conditions and limited access to medical care.