



State of Homelessness in California: Fact Sheet

Author: Claudia Galliani

WHO IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN CALIFORNIA?

- The people experiencing homelessness in California are locals. **90% of the people experiencing homelessness in California became homeless while living in the state**, 75% currently live in the same county where they fell into homelessness, and 66% were born in California.¹
- Consistent with national trends,² individuals who are Black/African American, Indigenous/Native American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders are **overrepresented groups** in the population of Californians experiencing homelessness.³
- Latinx Californians are experiencing an alarming increase of homelessness; while homelessness in California rose by 6.2% from 2020 to 2023, homelessness among Latinx Californians increased by 22% over the same period.⁴
- In Los Angeles County, the population of Latinx people experiencing homelessness increased 4.9% from 2022 to 2023 (1,412 person increase) while the American Indian/Alaskan Native population experiencing homelessness increased by 18.5% (113 person increase) during that time period.⁵
- Black people have experienced, and continue experiencing, **systemic racism** in the form of **disproportionate levels of policing, housing segregation, employment discrimination, and the ongoing disinvestment from Black communities**, which have led to their significant overrepresentation in the population experiencing homelessness.⁶
- People who are Black/African American make up only 7.6% of L.A. County's population, yet account for 31.7% of the people experiencing homelessness in the County.⁷
- Regarding adults ages 18+ experiencing homelessness in California, **69% are cisgender men, 30% are cisgender women, 1% are transgender, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming individuals**.⁸ Among Transition Age Youth (ages 18-24 not living with minor children), the numbers are 64% cisgender men, 30% cisgender women, and 6% transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming individuals.⁹
- California reports the **highest number of unaccompanied youth** in the nation (9,590); this is a third of all unaccompanied youth (32%) and half (52%) of unsheltered unaccompanied youth in the nation.¹⁰

¹ UCSF 2023

² National Alliance to End Homelessness 2020

³ UCSF 2023

⁴ California Budget and Policy Center July 2023

⁵ LAHSA 2023

⁶ CSH & CHP 2022

⁷ LAHSA 2023

^{8,9} UCSF 2023

¹⁰ HUD 2023

- The homeless population is aging; **44% of people experiencing homelessness are over the age of 50**, and 41% of them experienced their first episode of homelessness after the age of 50.¹¹
- More than a **third (36%)** of individuals experiencing homelessness in California are considered **chronically homeless**, accounting for 45% of all individuals experiencing chronic patterns of homelessness in the country. *An individual experiencing chronic homelessness is defined as a person with a disability who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time unhoused is at least twelve months.*¹²
- The median length of time experiencing homelessness is nearly two years (22 months).¹³
- Those at the greatest risk of homelessness are people with a history of trauma, older adults, and people of color.¹⁴

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HOMELESSNESS IN CALIFORNIA?

- Home to only 12% of the nation’s population, **California encompasses a third (30%) of the nation’s population experiencing homelessness and half (49.4%) of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness** in the United States.¹⁵
- As of 2023, **over 171,000 people** are experiencing homelessness in California.¹⁶
- Homelessness in California **increased more than 23% from 2007 to 2022**.¹⁷ From 2020 to 2022 alone, the number of people experiencing homelessness in California **increased by 6.2%**.¹⁸
- The majority of unhoused Californians live in Los Angeles (49.9%) or in the San Francisco Bay Area (22.2%),¹⁹ but the rise in homelessness is occurring throughout the state; **30 of 43 (70%)** California Continuums of Care (CoC) in California saw **increases** in homelessness between 2020 and 2022.²⁰
- **67.3% of people experiencing homelessness in California are unsheltered**, which is the highest proportion of unsheltered homelessness of any state.²¹
- Compared with people staying in shelters, people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are far more likely to face **health challenges, disabilities, racial discrimination, violence and trauma, and longer lengths of homelessness**.²²
- People experiencing unsheltered homelessness also encounter **disproportionate levels of policing** and are more likely to engage with **emergency health services** than people experiencing sheltered homelessness.²³
- Violence against unhoused folks is common; **38%** of unhoused Californians reported experiencing **physical or sexual violence** during their current episode of homelessness,²⁴ and 47% report being “roughed up” or harassed by police.²⁵

The California Homeless Housing Needs Assessment estimates that the state of **California needs to commit \$8.1 billion each year for 12 years to solve homelessness**. Current state and federal governments are projected to allocate an average of \$1.2 billion toward affordable and supportive housing annually, leaving a **\$6.9 billion gap** equivalent to **2.7% of the 2022-23 state budget**.²⁶

¹¹ UCSF 2023
¹² HUD 2022
¹³ UCSF 2023
¹⁴ LAHSA 2023
^{15, 16} UCSF 2023
¹⁷ National Alliance to End Homelessness 2023
¹⁸ HUD 2022
¹⁹ California Budget and Policy Center March 2023
^{20, 21} LAO 2023
^{22, 23} California Policy Lab 2019
^{24, 25} UCSF 2023
²⁶ CSH & CHP 2022

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- Housing in California has long been more expensive than the rest of the country, but as construction slowed significantly from 1970 to 1980, home prices in California increased from 30% above the national average to more than 80% higher.²⁷
- Thousands of Californians began falling into homelessness in the 1980's when widening income inequality prevented wages from keeping up with housing costs.²⁸
- The **median rent** in California has increased by 38% since the year 2000, and 4% in the last year alone, but the median renter household income has only increased by 7% in the same time period, adjusted for inflation.²⁹
- Today, renters would need to earn **2.9 times the state minimum wage** to afford average rent in California.³⁰
- California is experiencing a **shortage of 1.2 million affordable homes** given the demand for affordable housing.³¹ In California, there are **24 units of affordable housing for every 100 extremely low-income households**.³²
- California spends twice as much supporting homeowners (e.g. mortgage interest reduction, property tax reduction) than renters (e.g. renter's credit, low-income housing tax credits), and while 97% of support for homeowners is permanent, meaning ongoing sources of funding, only 17% of renter resources are permanent.³³
- California's history of explicitly racist government policies, such as redlining and housing discrimination, has systematically denied Black households entry into middle-class neighborhoods and the wealth-building power of homeownership.³⁴
- Across the nation, income inequality is the widest it has been in decades, encompassing an enormous racial wealth gap. In 2019, while the median white family had \$184,000 in wealth, the median Latinx family had \$38,000 and the median Black family had \$23,000.³⁵
- Black renter households are 41% more severely cost burdened than white renter households.³⁶

WHAT ARE THE EMERGING ISSUES IN LOS ANGELES?

- Homelessness in Los Angeles continues to rise. As of 2023, on any given night, approximately **75,518** people experience homelessness in L.A. County (a **9% increase** from 2022), and **46,260** of them live in the City of L.A. (a **10% increase** from 2022).³⁷
- From **2022 to 2023** alone, the County of Los Angeles saw a **14% increase** in the **unsheltered** homeless population, and the City experienced a **15% increase**.³⁸
- In Los Angeles County, about **14,844** people are chronically homeless and unsheltered.³⁹
- Chronic homelessness increased by 18% in Los Angeles CoC from 2022 to 2023, including a 21% increase in unsheltered chronic homelessness and a 7% increase in sheltered chronic homelessness.**40** This reflects the statewide trend of a steady increase in chronic homelessness over the past decade.⁴¹

²⁷ LAO 2017

²⁸ CSH & CHP 2022

^{29,30} California Housing Partnership 2023

³¹ California Housing Partnership 2021

³² UCSF 2023

³³ California Housing Partnership 2023

³⁴ Rothstein 2017

³⁵ UCSF 2023

³⁶ California Housing Partnership 2023

^{37,38} LAHSA 2023

³⁹ LAHSA 2022

⁴⁰ LAHSA 2023

⁴¹ LAHSA 2023 [Video]

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